

Meeting date: January 27, 2025

Planning Board Members c/o Nancy McPeak, Executive Assistant, Planning, Building and Transportation Department

Re: Item 5-A, Draft Urban Forest Plan

Dear Planning Board Members,

We all recognize the important positive impact that our urban forest has on the environment and the overall quality of life in Alameda. The goals and the best management practices spelled out in the Urban Forest Plan are ambitious.

Please request that it include site-specific opportunities ready for immediate action with a proposed schedule. By including a section in the plan that identifies specific sites which are quickly achievable, a starting point is listed to achieving our long term goals. This initial step can be easily measured at the mid-cycle and build confidence in the community that it's more than a plan on paper.

The following are examples of low hanging fruit suitable for immediate action.

Reclaim the city-owned strips and tree wells

Of particular interest is the goal of increasing the tree canopy by planting more street trees in strips and/or tree wells. The plan states that the city inventory “reflects 4,234 vacant tree planting sites. It may be possible to add additional planting sites by cutting new tree wells, removing asphalt, and other depaving practices.”

The city has had a practice of waiting to be contacted by property owners requesting trees before planting trees in the city-owned strips of property between sidewalks and streets. The city could take a proactive, not a reactive, approach and reclaim the city property for planting trees.

As the city schedules its tree planting, property owners could be told that a new tree will be planted in compliance with city policy and explain how the city will take care of the tree during its infancy.

Most importantly, the city could proactively remove the pavement that property owners, not necessarily the current owners living there, have illegally placed in the city-owned strips of land in front of their property and then plant trees.

The West End

There are additional opportunities for more trees to be planted at the west end of Alameda, advancing the plan's social equity goals.

For example, the entire linear park along Main Street has plenty of space for more trees. And the Willie Stargell Avenue Complete Street project, now in the planning stage, could easily include a generous amount of trees on that public right-of-way.

Other excellent site opportunities for trees to be easily planted include:

- (1) the parade grounds at City Hall West at Alameda Point
- (2) Enterprise Park near the ferry maintenance facility at Alameda Point
- (3) the front and rear yards of the O'Club at Alameda Point
- (4) the Webster Street entrance to Alameda

In the near future, EBMUD will be connecting its East Bayshore Recycled Water Line to the west end of Alameda, which will deliver ample amounts of recycled water for watering landscaping and eliminate previous concerns about using potable water to irrigate trees and landscaping.

Let's establish a starting point. This will provide quick wins with measurable success.

Thank you for your consideration.

Irene Dieter

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