

## **CITY OF FORT WORTH ANNOUNCES PLAN TO CREATE A FORT WORTH URBAN FORESTRY MASTER PLAN**

**Fort Worth, TX** (May 17, 2022) - The Fort Worth City Council announced plans to move forward in partnering with the Texas Trees Foundation in creating the first Fort Worth Urban Forestry Master Plan, marking the city's continual forward momentum in protecting, expanding, and managing its green infrastructure during a City Council work session meeting today. Forests in urban areas generate a significant value over time, and provide critical physical, social, economic, and environmental benefits that make cities more sustainable and resilient.

"Fort Worth has long shown a steadfast commitment to maintaining our green infrastructure; from being the oldest and longest-running Tree city USA in Texas, a designation the city first received in 1978; to the designation of a wildlife sanctuary in 1964 that later became the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge; to the voter approval of a \$15 million bond proposition for open space conservation this month." said Fort Worth Mayor Mattie Parker. "Taking the initiative to create a Fort Worth Urban Forestry Master Plan is a perfect next step in our efforts to protect cherished natural amenities that residents will enjoy for generations to come."

The city's Development Services Department and Texas Trees Foundation will lead planning efforts to engage community stakeholders, developers, and forestry experts. The comprehensive report will evaluate current urban forest resources and, city policies and ordinances relative to the urban forest, recommend appropriate strategies to sustain and enhance the urban forest, and provide methods to measure progress while addressing the numerous urban forestry elements throughout the City of Fort Worth now, and in the future. Several elements of the plan will include, identifying strategic partners interested in investing in the growth of the urban forest, identifying priority planting and preservation areas, reassessing the current citywide tree canopy goal, and recommending amendments to the Urban Forestry Ordinance.

"Our Foundation has a vision of creating a cleaner, greener, cooler, and healthier Texas. For 40 years we have focused our mission on impacting the City of Dallas, and we are delighted to now be branching out into the City of Fort Worth to spotlight the importance of urban forestry and tree benefits," said Janette Monear, CEO of Texas Trees Foundation. "Trees are a vital pillar of a healthy community and we are looking forward to working alongside the City of Fort Worth and our funding partners to build an Urban Forest Master Plan that will leave a green legacy for generations to come."

Increased planning initiatives surrounding urban forestry in the city has been championed by Mayor Pro-Tem Gyna Bivens, due to the recent, illegal clear-cutting of trees in the Cross Timbers Region, located east of I-35. The region consists of a large area with ancient, drought-stressed and slow-growing trees, many of which predate not only statehood, but also the birth of the United States.

"The east side of Fort Worth has experienced instances of devastating tree loss, and it is absolutely incumbent upon us as City Council to ensure responsible development and look for every opportunity to enhance urban forest preservation," said Mayor Pro-Tem Bivens. "I am glad to put my wholehearted support behind the creation of a Fort Worth Urban Forestry Master Plan to ensure we are achieving those goals now and into the future."

Along with the city's \$50,000 contribution utilizing Tree Fund Collections, the Texas Trees Foundation will bring a minimum of \$250,000 to the project, which will come from a combination of partnerships and donations by organizations like Wells Fargo, Atmos Energy, Texas Trees Foundation, and the Fort Worth-based Nicholas Martin Jr. Family Foundation.

"Wells Fargo is committed to demonstrating leadership among financial institutions in sustainability, and believes that climate change is one of the most urgent environmental and social issues of our time," said Wells Fargo's North Texas Regional Banking Director Scott Wallace. "We are honored to support the Texas Trees Foundation and their important work that aligns with our commitment to help transition to a low-carbon economy and minimize society's environmental footprint."

"Our partnership with the Texas Trees Foundation and the City of Fort Worth aligns with Atmos Energy's commitment to fueling safe and thriving communities by investing in a safe and healthy environment for all," said Chris Felan, Atmos Energy Vice President of rates and regulatory affairs. "We are committed to helping the City of Fort Worth thrive and create a strategic roadmap for sustainable and safe forestry management and we are honored to help sponsor the development of this historic urban forest plan."

The collaborative work between the Texas Trees Foundation, the City of Fort Worth, Atmos Energy, Wells Fargo, and the Nicholas Martin Jr. Family Foundation, is just one more example demonstrating the city's dedication to breaking barriers with innovative thinking and partnerships.

"Much like a Land Use plan guides city planning and future development, we hope that a research-driven Urban Forest Master Plan will help facilitate a more efficient, effective and consistent decision-making process for the entire community, including city officials, non-profits, developers and homeowners alike," said Nick K. Martin, Representative of the Nicholas Martin Jr. Family Foundation.

The Texas Trees Foundation has served as a catalyst in creating reimagined green spaces through research-driven projects and programs such as their Cool Schools Program and NeighborWoods Program.

###

### **About Texas Trees Foundation**

Celebrating 40 years of addressing urban forestry issues in Dallas, the Texas Trees Foundation has served as a catalyst in creating a reimagined green legacy for North Texas. Scientific research has led our vision of transforming outdoor spaces into greener, cleaner, cooler and healthier communities, while educating the public of the social, economic, environmental, and health benefits that trees provide. For more information on Texas Trees Foundation and its programs and projects, visit [www.texastrees.org](http://www.texastrees.org).