CITRUS HEIGHTS
Solid roots. New growth.

COOL Program Matching Grant Program Guidelines

Program Purpose

The COOL (Canopy Over Our Lots) Matching Grant Program encourages commercial property owners to plant trees that increase shade in existing parking lots. The program supports the City's goals of reducing urban heat island effects, improving pedestrian comfort, enhancing corridor aesthetics, and advancing local sustainability and climate-resilience efforts.

Program Overview

This program provides matching grant funds to eligible property owners for qualified tree shade improvements.

- Funding Example: Projects are reimbursed at 50% of eligible costs, up to a maximum of $20,000. For example, a $12,000 project would receive $6,000 in reimbursement, while a $60,000 project would be capped at $20,000.
- Reimbursement-Based: The applicant is responsible for paying all project costs upfront; the City reimburses at the completion of the project.
- Funding Limits: Each property is eligible for one award under the COOL Program.
- Eligible improvements must directly increase shade within existing parking lots.

Eligible Applicants

The following are eligible to apply:

- Owners of commercial, office, or mixed-use properties located within city limits
- Property management groups responsible for the control and maintenance of shared parking areas

Ineligible Properties

The following properties are not eligible for funding:

- Residential-only properties
- New construction projects already required to provide parking lot shading under applicable code

Eligible Improvements

Grant funds may be used for the purchase and installation of improvements that directly provide shade within parking lots, including:

- Shade tree installations including removal of dead/dying trees and installation of new shade trees

- Installation of new or repair of existing irrigation systems serving shade trees
- Structural soil, suspended pavement systems, and root barriers
- Construction of tree wells and landscape islands within parking areas
- Asphalt or concrete removal necessary to install shade improvements
- Professional design or engineering services directly related to shade improvements

Ineligible Expenses:

Grant funds may not be used for:

- Routine landscape maintenance
- Full parking lot resurfacing not directly related to shade installation
- Improvements started or completed prior to grant approval
- Installation of turf in conflict with AB 1572

Shade Tree Standards

To ensure long-term shade benefits, all funded tree installations must meet the following standards:

Tree Type

- Drought-tolerant, climate-appropriate species with non-invasive root systems are required.
- Medium-to-large canopy shade trees are required. Ornamental trees that remain small at maturity are not eligible.
- Deciduous trees are preferred to allow winter sun and summer shade.

Tree Well and Soil Requirements

Location & Species Selection

- Tree planting locations must avoid conflicts with structures that may interfere with normal growth (e.g., overhead utilities, light standards, or similar structures).
- Native tree species are encouraged.
- All tree selections must be approved by City staff.
- Where overhead utilities are present, tree species shall be limited to small-stature, utility-friendly species identified on the approved tree list or as approved by City staff.

Soil Depth & Quality

- Tree planting sites (including wells, islands, parkways, medians, etc.) shall provide adequate uncompacted soil area suitable for root growth.

- Suitable soil depth shall be a minimum of 24 inches and a maximum of 36 inches, unless otherwise approved.

Minimum Soil Volume Requirements. Tree growth is directly related to available soil volume. The following minimum volumes are required:

- 60 cubic feet — Small stature trees (mature height under 30 feet)
- 300 cubic feet — Medium stature trees (mature height 30–50 feet)
- 500 cubic feet — Large stature trees (mature height greater than 50 feet)

Root channels, structural soil, connected tree wells, linear planters, suspended pavement systems, permeable paving, or other approved designs may be used to expand available root space and facilitate water and air infiltration.

Root Barriers

- Root barriers are required for trees in landscape planters less than 10 feet in width or located within five feet of a permanent structure.
- Root barriers shall not interfere with minimum planting site requirements.

Staking & Maintenance

- Trees shall be staked in compliance with International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) guidelines and/or ANSI A300 standards.
- Stakes and ties must be regularly inspected and adjusted to prevent trunk damage.
- Stakes and ties shall be removed within 12 months.
- Trees unable to stand upright after 12 months may be replaced at the discretion of the City.

Irrigation

- All trees shall be irrigated with root watering bubblers or equivalent drip emitters.
- Each tree shall be placed on its own irrigation valve, regardless of additional landscape irrigation.
- Local water purveyor shall approve any new irrigation and/or /shut oof valves to be installed for the project.

Parking Lot Shade Design Guidelines

Applicants should prioritize shade improvements in the following locations:

- South- and west-facing parking rows
- Pedestrian walkways through parking lots
- Areas near building entrances

- ADA-accessible parking spaces, where feasible

Designs are encouraged to incorporate:

- Planting islands at the ends of parking rows
- Tree islands every 8–12 parking spaces, where site conditions allow

Strategic placement of trees in these areas maximizes shade coverage, improves pedestrian comfort, and enhances overall site aesthetics.

Application Requirements

Applicants must submit at least three bids. The following information shall be provided for the for the selected bidder:

- Site plan showing the existing parking layout and proposed shade improvements
- Description of proposed work, including the number of parking spaces to be shaded
- Itemized cost estimate or contractor quote
- Current photographs of the project site
- Proof of property ownership or written authorization from the property owner
- Completed W-9 and signed grant agreement (required upon approval)

Incomplete applications may delay review and funding consideration.

Project Prioritization Criteria

Projects may be prioritized based on the following:

- Existing lack of shade on-site
- Number of parking spaces or pedestrian areas to be shaded
- Location along high-visibility corridors
- Use of large-canopy trees
- Location in areas with high heat vulnerability

Maintenance Requirements

Prior to the release of funds, the applicant must submit a maintenance plan to the City demonstrating how the site will be kept in good condition, including annual inspections by a qualified arborist to ensure tree health. Grant recipients are responsible for maintaining all funded improvements.

- Maintenance plan term: Minimum of 5 years (must be executed prior to reimbursement)
- Annual inspections: Conducted by a qualified arborist to ensure trees remain healthy

- Tree replacement: Dead or failing trees must be replaced within one year
- City inspections: The City reserves the right to inspect improvements periodically
- Removal: Removal of funded improvements during the maintenance period may require repayment of a prorated portion of grant funds

Program Process

1. Required pre-application consultation with staff
2. Application submission
3. Staff review for eligibility and design compliance
4. Grant approval and execution of grant agreement
5. Applicant obtains any required permits
6. Installation of approved improvements
7. City inspection
8. Reimbursement issued

Program Administration and Funding Terms

This program may be amended as necessary to improve clarity and implementation. Once a grant agreement has been executed, the City will reserve funds for project reimbursement. Projects without an executed grant agreement are not guaranteed funding. This program is subject to funding availability and may be modified or terminated at any time at the sole discretion of the City.

For more information on the COOL Program contact:

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