



# Request for Proposals

## B.E.S.T. PROGRAM-COMMUNITY OUTREACH

City of Buffalo

2024-2027

March 8, 2024

**RE: Request for Proposals  
2024-2027 City of Buffalo  
B.E.S.T. Program – Community Outreach and Education**

The City of Buffalo Department of Public Work, Parks, and Streets, Division of Parks and Recreation is seeking a qualified firm to provide services necessary for the community outreach and education component of the Buffalo Equity in Street Trees (B.E.S.T.) Program, as identified in Scope of Services. The firm shall have the necessary expertise, personnel, and facilities to perform the services as a consultant for this project.

Any contract resulting from this solicitation will be awarded to that responsive and responsible firm whose proposal conforms to the solicitation and will most effectively meet the needs of the City. The City will take into consideration level of effort, technical qualifications, responsiveness to objectives identified under Scope of Services, efficiency, and cost. Selection of a proposal that will serve as the basis of negotiation for the award of the contract will be accomplished in accordance with all State rules and regulations and is pending formal grant agreement from USDA Forest Service. The resulting contract will be for the summer/fall of 2024.

**Summary of Project**

The B.E.S.T. Program will concentrate on growing and managing the city's urban forest through the long-term to ensure that all residents may reap the health, social, and environmental benefits that trees and tree canopy cover offer. The program will increase street tree planting and maintenance efforts and focus education and community outreach exclusively within identified Climate and Economic Justice (CEJ) areas. To amplify the voices of historically underrepresented communities in urban forestry planning, and ensure resident buy-in, the selected firm shall implement Community Partners and Ambassador Programs. Through this partnership, B.E.S.T. aims to foster equitable community participation in environmental justice initiatives. Resident support and participation will be critical to ensure equity and diversity in community leadership and a voice in the urban forestry planning process.

**Scope of Services**

The selected firm, in coordination with the City, shall implement a large-scale, multi-year community outreach and education program focused on spreading awareness of the value of tree planting and maintenance. The plan will disseminate knowledge of the benefits of trees and a robust tree canopy and engage residents in the planning and implementation stages of the program. The goal is to increase the number of residential street tree planting requests submitted to the City in the defined CEJ areas through community outreach strategies such as neighborhood level, in-person community meetings and development of Community Partnerships and implementation of an Ambassador Program.

The following request for proposals shall be published in the City of Buffalo City Record and on the City of Buffalo Website on the following date: **Friday, March 8, 2024.**

**CITY OF BUFFALO  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, PARKS, AND STREETS  
DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

A mandatory pre-proposal meeting will be held in Room 505 in City Hall two (2) weeks prior to the due date.

Sealed proposals for: **B.E.S.T. Program – Community Outreach and Education**

will be received by the Commissioner of Public Works, Parks, and Streets, Room 502 City Hall, Buffalo, New York, 14202, UNTIL FOUR P.M. LOCAL TIME ON:

**FRIDAY, April 5, 2024**

The following RFP will be made available on the City’s Website. Proposal documents may be examined and obtained, at no cost, at the Department of Public Works, Parks, and Streets, City Hall, 65 Niagara Square, Room 505 – City Hall, Buffalo, New York, 14202, from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. weekdays from March 8, 2024, through April 5, 2024.

The City of Buffalo is requesting proposals from qualified individuals and firms to provide necessary services for 2024-2027 B.E.S.T. Program – Community Outreach and Education. The City’s objective in soliciting a Request for Proposals is to enable it to select a Respondent that will provide the greatest value, quality, and cost-effective services to the citizens of Buffalo.

**PROPOSERS SHALL COMPLY WITH ALL APPLICABLE LOCAL LAWS AND ORDINANCES.**

The City of Buffalo reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive any informalities therein.

Any questions on this project should be referred to:

**Ross Hassinger, City Forester**  
**Department of Public Works, Parks, and Streets**  
**Division of Parks and Recreation**  
**65 Niagara Square**  
**Room 505 City Hall**  
**Buffalo, New York**  
Phone: (716) 851-4170

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Andrew R. Rabb  
Deputy Commissioner of DPW, Parks and Recreation

Consulting services shall be described below.

## **SCOPE OF SERVICES**

### **ITEM 1: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER**

1. The selected firm shall have experience in and a demonstrated capacity for direct community organizing. The firm shall have a team that is diverse and brings a variety of skill sets to produce and manage all required areas of the scope of services. The firm shall assign a Community Engagement Manager to the B.E.S.T. Program – Community Outreach and Education.
  - a. Qualifications and expertise to be considered:
    - i. Facilitation of conversation surrounding Program goals
    - ii. Project management skills
    - iii. Use of creative and responsive participatory planning activities, leading to consensus building
    - iv. History of direct community involvement
2. Focus neighborhoods and communities shall be located within the CEJ areas as illustrated in Exhibit A. The firm shall adhere to and provide a program schedule as per outline in Exhibit B.

### **ITEM 2: COMMUNITY PARTNERS PROGRAM**

1. Community Partners, such as faith-based and/or civic organizations, will be sought by the Community Engagement Manager to learn and understand the value of the health, quality of life, and environmental benefits trees provide. The goal would be to understand and address barriers to participation in tree planting opportunities, and to build trust and share information. Community Partnerships will be integral to shaping the stories told and to build enthusiasm for the B.E.S.T. Program. They may also play a pivotal role in their long-standing relationship with the City of Buffalo.
2. Funding would be used to compensate community organizations for their participation in education and outreach; a minimum of 2 entities. Proposers should include detailed planning if preference is for additional entities.

### **ITEM 3: AMBASSADOR PROGRAM**

1. The Ambassador Program will consist of individuals as identified through community members, including respected elders, board members, community associations, etc. These individuals will help the City of Buffalo and its selected firm to identify residents interested in having street trees in front of their homes, encourage them to attend workshops, and recruit volunteers. Once the trees are planted the ambassadors may monitor the trees and serve as a point of contact for the City of Buffalo and the selected firm with any concerns regarding tree health and establishment. The program would evolve and be customized to reflect the unique need of CEJ area neighborhoods and the communities that live there.
2. Stipends for at least 4 Ambassadors. Proposers should include if detailed planning if preference is for additional individuals.

#### **ITEM 4: MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

1. The selected firm shall assign Community Engagement Manager to attend and assign Ambassadors, as appropriate, to planned engagements as coordinated through the City's Office of Strategic Planning, Division of Citizen Services, and BPD as outlined below. Any travel expenses shall be the responsibility of the firm and included within item 4, Meetings fee.
2. Forecasted Office of Strategic Planning engagement meetings for 2024 to be coupled with B.E.S.T. ambassador program attendance below, total meetings/events estimated at 31 meetings, 5 Buffalo Police Department District days, and 33 clean sweeps. Please note, this is an example of meetings in a calendar year, actual meetings are subject to change.
  - a. Envision Neighborhoods – **10 Engagement Events** + additional events (ex. Juneteenth). Description: The project began in the early spring of 2022 to help Mayor Byron Brown reach his goal of addressing the needs of underserved and minority communities in the city. Through a series of community conversations and surveys, the staff with the office of strategic planning works to understand the priorities and needs of the residents in the community, to help guide and determine future development at the neighborhood level throughout the City of Buffalo.
  - b. Legacy Cities – **4 Engagement Events** (usually 1 every three months). Description: The City of Buffalo is one of five cities participating in the 2023-2024 Legacy Cities Community of Practice program through the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. The Community of Practice is an 18-month long program that aims to support cities in understanding land use issues and implement equitable place-based solutions. With support from a team of interdisciplinary experts, the City of Buffalo and its partners will produce a neighborhood development strategy focused on infill housing within the Hamlin Park and Masten Park neighborhoods that will include several community meetings.
  - c. River Rock Connections – **3 Engagement Events** (1 for finalized plan, 2 for intersection improvements design project with DPW). Description: The River Rock Connections Project is focused on determining the opportunities and feasibility within the Riverside and Black Rock communities of achieving multi-modal access/connectivity to waterfront parks, complete streets that include more opportunities for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders, and multi-use trails that traverse neighborhoods.
  - d. Climate Action Plan – **4 engagement events** (2 in person, 2 virtual). Description: The City of Buffalo has begun developing a Climate Action Plan that will include at least four engagement events in 2024, two in-person workshops and two virtual meetings.
  - e. Smart Growth – **Estimated 4 engagement events**. Description: Final scope pending but tbd ahead of contracting. Intended to be a holistic neighborhood redevelopment plan targeted in four East Buffalo planning neighborhoods: Delavan-Grider, MLK Park, Genesee-Moselle and Broadway-Fillmore.
  - f. Grant Street Corridor Plan – **Estimated 2 engagement events**. Description: Planning efforts are focused mainly on infrastructure improvements, but inclusive of small business support and placemaking opportunities along Grant Street in the Upper West Side from Forest Avenue to Arkansas.

- g. Vacant Lot InFill Strategy – **Estimated 4 engagement events** beginning Mid-March. Description: Citywide infill strategy being implemented in phases across different neighborhoods. City of Buffalo is partnering with BENLIC to develop housing through both the City and County’s American Rescue Plan Funding allocations.
- h. Buffalo Police Department (BPD) District Days – **5 Engagement events** in the summer, 1 per District. The BPD holds 5 community days, one per District, over the summer months where several vendors/community service providers gather to offer information, benefits, and program offerings to community members.
- i. Clean Sweeps – **estimated 33 sweeps** (May-October), Description: The City of Buffalo Clean Sweeps initiatives provides an opportunity for engagement/information sharing by federal, state and city level service providers via door-to-door engagement activities at the local neighborhood scale.

#### **ITEM 5: MARKETING AND MATERIALS**

1. The Community Engagement Manager, with assistance from the selected firm and in coordination with the City, shall create, distribute, and make available literature, flyers, and other materials outlining the B.E.S.T. Program and how to request and care for street trees. The firm shall take on associated printing fees. The proposer should identify a specific plan for marketing and materials.
2. The proposer shall create and maintain a B.E.S.T. Program website and social media presence which are be able to receive and answer comments and questions. The firm will take on associated web service fees.
3. The firm shall coordinate with the City of Buffalo on press releases and events.

#### **INSURANCE**

The "Consultant" shall secure professional liability insurance in an amount of at least \$1,000,000.00 total limit per claim and aggregate and shall provide a certificate of such insurance to the "CITY" providing for a thirty (30) days prior notice of cancellation of material change.

Additional types and amounts of insurance required to be maintained under this Agreement are as follows:

- a) Commercial general liability insurance for bodily injury liability, including death, and property damage liability, incurred in connection with the performance of this Agreement, with minimum limits of \$1,000,000.00 in respect of claims arising out of personnel injury, sickness, or death of any one person, \$1,000,000.00 in respect of claims arising out of personnel injury, sickness or death in any one accident or disaster. Such policy shall name the City of Buffalo as additional insured.
- b) Commercial automobile liability insurance in respect of motor vehicles owned, licensed or hired by the “Consultant” and their Subcontractors for bodily injury liability, including death and property damage, incurred in connection with the performance of this Agreement with minimum limits of \$500,000.00 in respect of claims arising out of personnel injury, sickness or death of any one person, \$1,000,000.00 in respect of any claims arising out of personnel injury, sickness or death in any one accident or disaster, and \$500,000.00 in respect of claims arising out of property damage in any one accident or disaster.
- c) Certificates of Workers’ Compensation & NYS Disability Insurance.

The Consultant shall furnish certificates of insurance and a copy of said policies to the City of Buffalo prior to execution of any contract.

The City of Buffalo shall be named as certificate holder and additional insured under all liability coverage.

### **INDEMNITY**

The Consultant agrees to procure and maintain insurance naming the City as additional insured where indicated, as provided, and described in the Certification of Liability Insurance.

For all matters other than those arising out of the Consultant's professional services, the Consultant shall, to the fullest extent permitted by law, indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the City, its officials, officers, departments, employees, agencies, and agents, from and against any and all liability, damage, claims, demands, costs, judgments, fees, attorney's fees or loss(es), arising out of the performance or failure to perform under this Agreement by the Consultant or third parties under the direction or control of the Consultant. In addition, the Consultant shall reimburse the City for any amounts incurred by or on behalf of the City in enforcing the provision, including, but not limited to, attorneys' fees.

For all matters arising out of the Consultant's professional services, the Consultant shall, to the fullest extent permitted by law, indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the City, its officials, officers, departments, employees, agencies, and agents, from and against any and all liability, damage, claims, demands, costs, judgments, fees, attorney's fees or loss(es), arising out of any negligent acts, errors or omissions of the Consultant, or third parties under the direction or control of the Consultant, in the performance of professional services under this Agreement which are logically or causally connected by any common fact, situation, event, transaction, advice, or decision. In addition, the Consultant shall reimburse the City for any amounts incurred by or on behalf of the City in enforcing this provision, including, but not limited to, attorneys' fees.

### **MINORITY EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES**

The City encourages the selection of individuals, firms and businesses that are active in the recruitment, training and retention of women, blacks, Hispanics, and all other minority groups. The inclusion of specific selection criteria for those individuals, firms and businesses desiring to provide professional services to the City, that also considers the firm's recruitment, training and retention of Women, Blacks, Hispanics, and all other minority groups, supports and encourages these practices.

Pursuant to Executive Order 16-04, issued in accordance with the laws of the State of New York and Article 2, Sections 2-3 and Article 4, Section 4-1 of the Charter of the City of Buffalo, all City departments are required to incorporate into their Requests for Proposals (RFPs) or Requests for Qualifications (RFQs) for professional services, including but not limited to, legal, architectural, accounting and engineering services, the following:

1. A minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the total score of the professional services response to a RFP or RFQ issued by the City of Buffalo is to be based on the Consultant's minority workforce development, community involvement and Consultant policies;

2. A minimum of five percent (5%) of the total score of the professional services response to a RFP or RFQ issued by the City of Buffalo is to be based on the Consultant’s women workforce development, community involvement and Consultant policies.

The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. **Workforce:** Consultants should describe any programs or actions they undertake to attract, recruit, train, retain and promote minority and female employees, partners and associates and current representation of minorities and women.
2. **Community Involvement:** Consultants should describe any programs or initiatives they sponsor or support that further the development of minority or women-owned business enterprises in the City of Buffalo.
3. **Consultant Policies:** Consultants should describe any procurement policies or practices they have adopted that provide M/WBE suppliers or services business opportunities.

Bidders should describe in their bid submissions any programs, actions, initiatives, policies, or practices relevant to their Workforce Development, Community Involvement, Vendor Policies that further the retention of minority or woman owned businesses in the City of Buffalo. Such programs can include, direct hire programs, minority and women business utilization plans, and youth hiring programs.

**EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS**

**EVALUATION PROCESS**

The review and selection team will consider, but may not be limited to, the following factors:

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>ESTIMATED WEIGHT</b>
<i>Experience with related and/or similar projects</i>	35%
<i>Work Plan</i>	35%
<i>Consultant Fee schedule</i>	10%
<i>Minority employment and business opportunities</i>	15% <sup>1</sup>
<i>Female employment and business opportunities</i>	5%

**CONTRACT TERM**

The successful Consultant may be awarded an initial one-year (1) contract, with two (2) one-year contract renewals, such renewals to be exercised or not exercised by determination unilaterally made in the sole discretion of the City.

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<sup>1</sup> Estimated weight for both criteria established in Executive Order #17-04. Any Department wishing to alter estimated weight should contact Office of Contract Compliance to discuss. Remaining selection criteria and estimated weight for each to be established by Department.



All renewals shall be in writing and are intended to allow for the City's exercise of its discretion to further contract with the successful Consultant to provide those professional services for current, and future Department of Parks projects, including but not limited to, additional services or components that were solicited in this Request for Proposals and contained in the successful Consultant's proposal which may be implemented at a future date and time.

Such terms are intended to ensure for the City that there will be no interruptions in professional services under the Parks term contract during further implementation of projects.

### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONSULTANTS SUBMITTING PROPOSALS**

1. Prepare a brief statement outlining your understanding of the scope of work and your approach to each task.
2. Provide a detailed description of your proposed team for this contract. Include professional resumes and experience. **Please limit experience to related work only.**
3. Complete the attached Proposer Fee Schedule.
4. Provide a detailed schedule for each task.
  - A. Team Proposers: The firms responding to this proposal as a team must include a scope of work in the proposal for each team member to be considered responsive to this RFP. Each team member's scope of work should correspond to the type(s) of experience being submitted when responding to the City's Request for Proposals.
  - B. Subcontractors: All subcontractors recommended by the consultant will be subject to the prior approval of the City before award of subcontract. As a prime contractor, the consultant will be required to perform a minimum of 50% of the professional services level of effort.
5. Three (3) copies of the proposal shall be submitted no later than **4:00 PM, Friday, April 5, 2024**. Proposals shall be submitted to:

Andrew R. Rabb  
Deputy Commissioner of DPW, Parks and Recreation  
65 Niagara Square  
Room 505 City Hall  
Buffalo, NY 14202

Please contact Ross Hassinger at 851-4170 or [rhassinger@buffalony.gov](mailto:rhassinger@buffalony.gov) with any questions.

### **PROPOSAL FEE SCHEDULE**

It is anticipated that this proposal will be developed as both a lump sum and unit bid contract. Invoices will be based on the percentage of each task complete. Percent complete must be backed up with a breakdown of effort, therefore respondents shall attach a detailed breakdown of each task to accompany this Proposal Sheet.

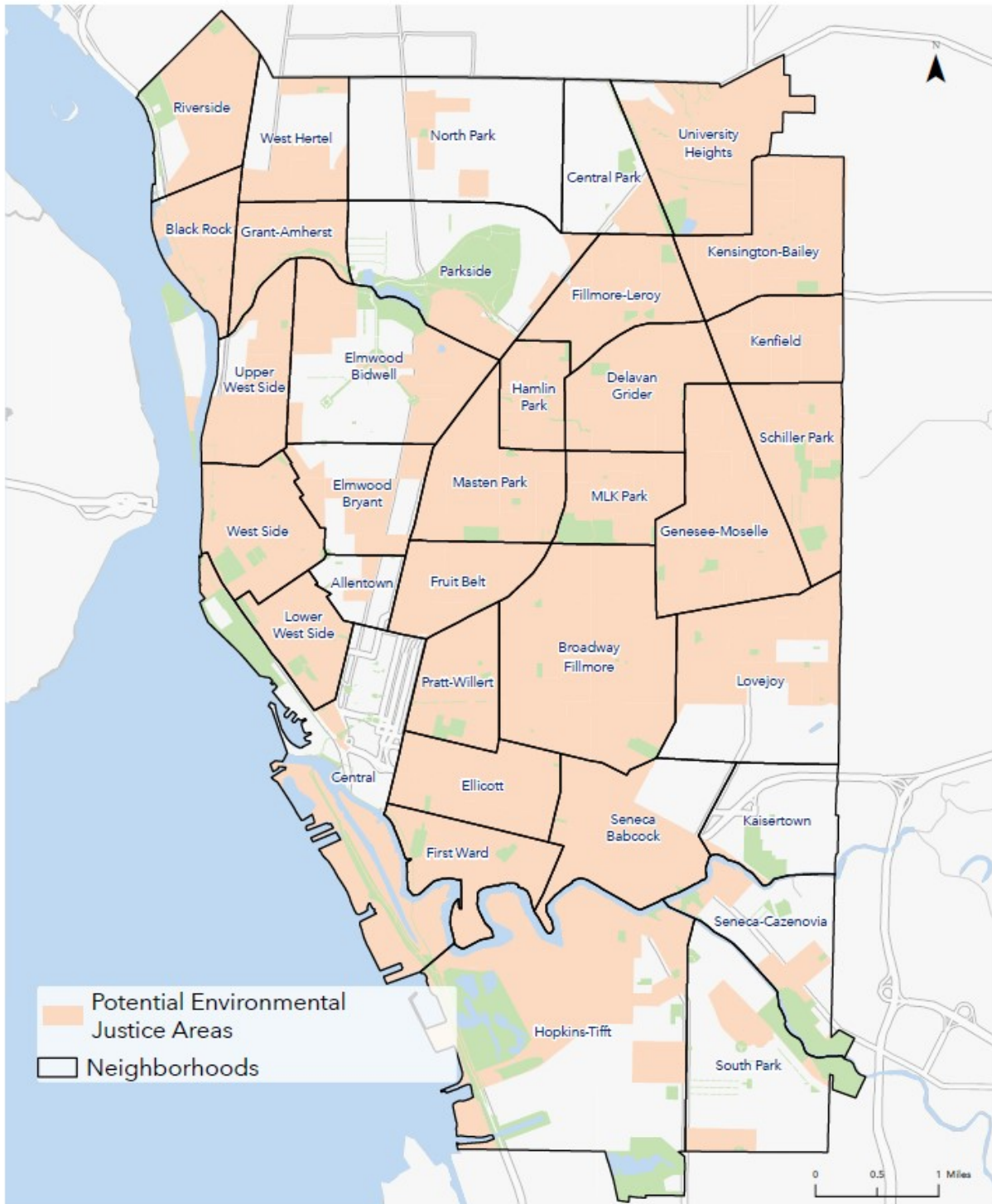
The sums listed below shall be based on your understanding of the tasks outlined in the Request for Proposals.

Item	Description	Qty	Unit	Unit Proposal Price	Total Proposal Price
1	Outreach Manager _____ Dollars and _____ Cents	1	Lump Sum		
2	Community Partners Program _____ Dollars and _____ Cents	2	Each		
3	Ambassador Program _____ Dollars and _____ Cents	4	Each		
4	Meetings _____ Dollars and _____ Cents	1	Lump Sum		
5	Marketing and Materials _____ Dollars and _____ Cents	1	Lump Sum		
				TOTAL	

**NOTES**

1. The above Proposal Fee Sheet shall be fully completed and included with your proposal. Payments shall be made no more than monthly, based on the provided rates as described above. In the event that a task is not required or project canceled, the Consultant shall be paid only for work completed.
2. Fees quoted for each item shall include all costs associated with the item, including, but not limited to: reproduction, phone calls, material testing, postage, etc. No additional direct expenses shall be billed under this contract.
3. Unit “Each” refers to the number of ambassadors or entities

# EXHIBIT A



City of Buffalo - Potential Environmental Justice Areas by Neighborhoods



MAYOR BYRON W. BROWN

**Buffalo Equity in Street Trees (B.E.S.T.) Program Outline**

	<b>Planting</b>	<b>Pruning &amp; Maintenance</b>	<b>Outreach &amp; Education</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	-Begin planting in public spaces (perimeters of parks, schools, community centers, and commercial strips) throughout EJA		-Begin neighborhood focused outreach and education to increase public awareness and residential demand for new trees in EJA
<b>Year 2</b>	-Begin planting in residential spaces by request throughout EJA -End planting in public spaces throughout EJA	-Begin pruning plan and maintenance by request throughout EJA and streets that have not been pruned in past 10 years	-Continue neighborhood focused outreach and education
<b>Year 3</b>	-End planting in residential spaces throughout EJA	-Continue pruning and maintenance throughout EJA	-End neighborhood focused outreach and education
<b>Year 4</b>	*Wrap up any remaining planting and pruning	-End pruning and maintenance throughout EJA	
<b>Year 5</b>	*	*	

## EXHIBIT B

**Year 1:** Appropriate and viable public, street tree planting spaces have been identified. Public planting spaces include those around the perimeter of parks, schools, community centers, and commercial strips throughout the identified Climate and Economic Justice areas (EJA). At the same time, neighborhood level, in-person outreach and education will begin throughout the CEJ areas conducted by the City’s community partner organization.

**Year 2:** Street tree planting will begin in appropriate residential spaces by request. This means that homeowners can reach out, empowered by the outreach and education performed by the community partner organization, and request that trees be planted in a viable, vacant space along their property. Outreach and education will inform community members of how to request street trees as well as how to care for them and their benefits. Outreach efforts will include planning neighborhood level meetings with residential stakeholders. Pruning and maintenance will begin by request in residential EJA and among identified streets that have not been trimmed within the past 10 years.

**Year 3:** Street tree planting in residential areas will end. Pruning and maintenance will continue by request and need throughout the EJA. Outreach and education will also come to an end.

**Years 4 & 5:** In year four, the pruning and maintenance plan will end. Years four and five will be used to wrap up any outstanding street tree plantings and maintenance. The planting and maintenance plans are to be supplemental to the City’s existing planting and maintenance plans.