

1 [Supporting San Francisco's Inflation Reduction Act Grant Request for Urban and Community
2 Forestry]

3 **Resolution supporting San Francisco's grant application to the U.S. Department of
4 Agriculture in response to its Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Inflation
5 Reduction Act Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), which would provide once-in-a-
6 generation funding to restore San Francisco's urban canopy damaged by recent
7 storms, as well as make long-term tree canopy investments in high-need environmental
8 justice communities in San Francisco, and create urban forestry and green workforce
9 opportunities.**

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11 WHEREAS, In 2014, the San Francisco Planning Department, in collaboration with San
12 Francisco Public Works, the Urban Forestry Council, and Friends of the Urban Forest,
13 developed the City's Urban Forest Plan (Phase 1: Street Trees), which called for the creation
14 of a citywide street tree maintenance program and the planting of thousands of street trees to
15 promote public health, achieve greening equity and provide environmental benefits, which
16 was amended into the City's General Plan by reference and adopted by the Board of
17 Supervisors on February 20, 2015, and on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in
18 File No. 141264, Ordinance No. 12-15, which is hereby declared to be a part of this
19 Resolution as if set forth fully herein; and

20 WHEREAS, On November 8, 2016, 79% of San Francisco voters passed Proposition
21 E's "Healthy Trees & Safe Sidewalks" ballot measure, which is on file with the Clerk of the
22 Board of Supervisors in File No. 230549, which is hereby declared to be a part of this
23 Resolution as if set forth fully herein; and

24 WHEREAS, 2016's Proposition E successfully shifted maintenance responsibility of
25 streets trees and root-damaged sidewalks from property owners to the City, and established

1 long-term dedicated funding via an annual \$19 million set-aside from the San Francisco
2 General Fund, adjusted annually based on the City's revenues, for the maintenance of those
3 125,000 street trees and trees on public schoolyards by San Francisco Public Works, as well
4 as the ongoing maintenance of all new street trees that are planted, in an acknowledgement
5 that a healthy urban canopy is critical public infrastructure which the City is committed to
6 investing in as a long-term public asset; and

7 WHEREAS, San Francisco's 2017 Street Tree Census identified approximately 40,000
8 vacant and potential street tree planting spaces in San Francisco; and

9 WHEREAS, San Francisco Public Works' Street Tree Planting Strategy identified the
10 need for planting 80,000 street trees over twenty years to achieve the Urban Forest Plan's
11 goal of increasing the street tree population to 155,000 street trees, including replacing trees
12 in existing empty sites due to natural mortality; and

13 WHEREAS, Maximizing trees throughout the public realm to sequester carbon is a key
14 component of the Healthy Ecosystems Strategy of San Francisco's 2021 Climate Action Plan;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, While Proposition E's annual set-aside dedicates a specific investment for
17 ongoing tree maintenance, the ballot measure also explicitly restricts those dedicated tree
18 maintenance funds from being used for new tree planting, and the City has limited additional
19 funding sources to plant new trees at the scale needed to halt San Francisco's urban tree
20 canopy decline, expand tree cover in low-canopy neighborhoods, and replace trees lost
21 during storms; and

22 WHEREAS, San Francisco is projected to experience a variety of impacts associated
23 with climate change, including an increase in extreme heat days and air quality hazards, the
24 most impacted communities are those that already carry the heaviest health burdens; and
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1 WHEREAS, Because trees capture and store carbon dioxide (the primary greenhouse
2 gas responsible for climate change), planting in neighborhoods with fewer trees and those
3 most prone to climate impacts will help create shade, reduce temperatures in “urban heat
4 islands”, and clean the air by absorbing pollutants and capturing particulate matter on leaves,
5 thus helping to address issues of environmental injustice as a result of bad air quality; and

6 WHEREAS, The unprecedented storms this year required emergency response and
7 repair work that included assessing, removing and mitigating damage to hundreds of downed
8 trees, the removal of thousands of fallen branches and responding to hundreds of other tree-
9 related emergencies; and

10 WHEREAS, San Francisco Public Works’ Bureau of Urban Forestry (BUF) is
11 committed to preserving and growing the City’s tree canopy, as detailed in the 2021 BUF
12 Planting Strategy abiding by the three principles: Preserve, Promote, and Advance; and

13 WHEREAS, San Francisco’s tree canopy coverage, defined as the amount of area
14 covered by trees, lags behind most large U.S. cities at 13.7%, and planting street trees serves
15 to preserve the existing canopy by replacing trees that must be removed as well as increasing
16 the City’s overall tree canopy with a diversity of new and durable tree species; and

17 WHEREAS, While BUF’s Planting strategy has an overall goal of planting more trees in
18 every community to connect all San Franciscans to the many benefits that street trees and
19 greener neighborhoods provide, the 2021 Strategy has a specific emphasis on street tree
20 equity, by prioritizing new tree planting in neighborhoods with the lowest tree canopy and
21 fewest street tree, which, in San Francisco, often correlates to communities of color and low-
22 income communities that experience disparities in public health and historic patterns of
23 resource disinvestment; and

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1 WHEREAS, San Francisco Public Works' BUF Planting Strategy also seeks to benefit
2 residents with limited access to job opportunities by providing employment and green
3 workforce training in arboriculture, tree planting and watering; and

4 WHEREAS, San Francisco is fortunate to have strong established community-based
5 organizations experienced in tree planting, tree watering and green workforce development
6 that could support the City's tree planting goals and implementation of the IRA grant if
7 awarded; and

8 WHEREAS, The City of San Francisco has recognized the importance of trees and has
9 established various programs, such as the Friends of the Urban Forest and the StreetTreeSF
10 program, to support tree planting and long-term care efforts; and

11 WHEREAS, The Federal Government passed the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022,
12 which included \$1 billion to provide competitive grants through the United States Forestry
13 Services' Urban and Community Forestry Program for tree planting and related activities, with
14 a priority for projects that benefit underserved populations; and

15 WHEREAS, San Francisco Public Works is preparing a \$50 million grant application
16 due on June 1, 2023, to dramatically upscale street tree planting over a five-year period in
17 collaboration with community partners with a focus on green jobs creation, workforce
18 development and greening underserved communities; now, therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors supports the City's grant
20 application to the U.S. Department of Agriculture in response to its Forest Service Urban and
21 Community Forestry Inflation Reduction Act Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), which
22 would provide once-in-a-generation funding to restore San Francisco's urban canopy
23 damaged by recent storms, as well as make long-term tree canopy investments in high-need
24 environmental justice communities in San Francisco, and create urban forestry and green
25 workforce opportunities.