

-PROJECT NARRATIVE-

The City of Crossville has, in the past, met all four (4) of the standards that are required to have a sustainable urban forestry program. The City has an active Tree Board, a management plan, a mission statement, a tree ordinance, and has had an urban forester on staff. The urban forester on staff was a City employee working in the City Engineering Department, and had been trained and certified as an arborist. In December of 2014, the urban forester chose to take employment elsewhere. Currently there is no on-staff forester, nor is one envisioned in the near future. To remedy this shortfall, the grant would allow a trained and certified urban forester to be brought on board and devote 100% of their time to urban forestry management issues. Their office would be in the Public Works Department, since this department is directly related to most of the functions of the urban forester.

The City of Crossville has expanded its urban forest program significantly over the past 10-15 years through a commitment from the City of Crossville and the use of grant dollars from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture and the Tennessee Agriculture Enhancement Program. The active Tree Board participates annually in Arbor Day and has been designated a Tree City USA since 2000 and has earned the Growth Award ten times. They were also presented with the 2004 Urban Forestry Award of Excellence for Tree Boards at the Annual Conference of the Urban Forestry Council.

The Crossville Tree Board has always had strong support from the Crossville City Council. The City Council approved this grant application unanimously on June 11, 2015.

The Arbor Day festivities include planting trees with students at all three of the local high schools, which provides an excellent educational opportunity for the students. On average, the Crossville Tree Board gives out 2,000 trees per year on Arbor Day, as well as publishing information about trees and proper care in the newspaper on a regular basis. The Crossville Tree Board also coordinates with our local forester, Brad Canfield, on articles to publish, demonstrating a good working relationship between the two entities. The Crossville Tree Board also participates in the annual Sustainability Fair for 5th graders. During this event, the tree board teaches the students how to plant acorns to grow into trees, as well as distributing educational brochures about proper tree planting.

Continuing education of the urban forester would be an important tool in improving our urban forest. Upon approval of this grant, plans would be made to allow the urban forester to attend the Partners in Community Forest Conference, Society of Municipal Arborists Conference, and the Tennessee Urban Forestry Conference.

In 2014, the City of Crossville requested a canopy survey through the TN Department of Forestry, who coordinated it with the University of Tennessee's Department of Urban Forestry. UT's staff and students completed the top-down survey of the Crossville urban forest. The City is currently working with UT to develop a ground inventory survey in two phases. The first phase of the survey will include: a vegetative inventory excel spread sheet to include all residential and commercial areas that contain trees that are City-owned; and a review of the current management plan and update to include pruning, care, and maintenance schedule; estimated value of public trees; identification of areas that would help diversify the tree inventory. Phase 2 will include a review of 10-12 residential areas for comparison purposes.

We believe that the primary mission of the new urban forester will be to take the information provided by the two surveys and turn it into recommendations that will be actionable by the Tree Board and the City of Crossville. Additionally, the new urban forester will provide training to City maintenance

personnel who conduct tree planting, trimming, and removal activities. The urban forester will also be a technical advisor to the Tree Board and City Council, and will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the urban forest. The urban forester will also be a technical advisor to the City Clerk during acquisition of right-of-ways. Many times, a tree valuation is needed and an urban forester could provide that assistance.

There are several programs already in place that could be taken over by the urban forester. The Crossville Tree Board has been working with Tennessee Department of Transportation for permission to landscape the interchanges within the City limits of Crossville on Interstate 40. The urban forester could be beneficial to ensure that this program is implemented no later than Spring 2016, as this project has taken several years to get initiated.

The urban forester would be able to schedule and conduct on-the-job training for staff in the Public Works Department, as well as schedule educational workshops for the residents. These meetings could cover such topics as tree topping, proper tree planting & maintenance, and proper tree selection.

If this grant proposal is awarded, our urban forester's technical and advisory skills, combined with the supportive involvement of the Crossville Tree Board and Crossville's Public Works Department, will assure a healthy future for our urban forest with the future population of Crossville as the beneficiary.