

Grant Narrative for
Pittsburgh Vacant Lots Tree Planting
City of Pittsburgh
FY2024

Funding Amount: \$1,000,000

Grant Period: *April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2029*

Lead Contact(s):

Primary Project Contact:

Lisa Ceoffe

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Financial Contact

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Proposal Abstract:

Although the City of Pittsburgh appears to have high canopy cover, the topography of Pittsburgh's hillsides and natural terrain does not allow for the reduction of the heat island effect we see across City neighborhoods. The urban forest is not evenly distributed with wealthier communities having both more tree cover and higher quality urban forest resources than disadvantaged and minority communities. This project seeks to address some of these climate injustices by identifying and restoring publicly-owned parcels of urban forest within disadvantaged communities and restoring them to safe and beneficial resources through the removal of safety hazards, installation of new trees, and creation of new public assets in these communities.

Project Partners:

Urbankind Institute

President and CEO

5 Esther Street

Pittsburgh, PA 15227

Phone: (814) 441-5419

Email: Jamil@urbankind.org

PARTNER INVOLVEMENT:

This project will focus on building urban forests in our disadvantaged communities while investing in the people living in those neighborhoods. Over the course of 5 years, the Urbankind Institute will assist the City in transforming 20 city-owned properties from abandoned lots to thriving forests with 1,000 new trees. Their forestry division will work closely with local nonprofits, communities, and datasets to identify the parcels and

appropriate native and fruit tree varieties for planting.

PARTNER COMMITMENT LETTER INCLUDED: **YES** (see appendix)

2. Crumrine, Danielle

Tree Pittsburgh

Executive Director

32 62nd St

Pittsburgh, PA 15201

Phone: (412) 781-8733

Email: danielle@treepittsburgh.org

PARTNER INVOLVEMENT:

Tree Pittsburgh recognizes the opportunity that vacant lots present to expand tree canopy in otherwise low-canopy areas. Their forestry team is committed to supporting the City's effort by planting and caring for trees on vacant lots while educating and engaging residents along the way to ensure the effort is most sustainable. This project supports their larger Pittsburgh Canopy Alliance effort to achieve no-net loss in tree canopy over the next ten years and to increase all communities to a minimum of 30% tree canopy.

PARTNER COMMITMENT LETTER INCLUDED: **YES** (see appendix)

3. Manspeizer, Ilyssa

Landforce

Executive Director

201 North Braddock Ave

#230

Pittsburgh, PA 15208

Phone: (412) 727-6936

Email: ilyssa@landforcepgh.org

PARTNER INVOLVEMENT:

Since 2015, Landforce has been combining environmental stewardship with workforce development to ensure people who have been excluded from the workforce can stabilize their lives prior to transitioning to family-sustaining careers. As part of the City of Pittsburgh Vacant Lots Tree Planting we will assist with lot preparation and maintenance, and anticipate providing crews to assist with approximately 20 lots per year over the five years. In addition, we will continue to work with the Department of Public Works, and the Forestry Department in particular, to reinforce the job pipeline from Landforce into the Department of Public Works.

PARTNER COMMITMENT LETTER INCLUDED: **YES** (see appendix)

Scope of Work:

1. Project Scope Alignment

The City of Pittsburgh has some of the highest canopy cover of any city in the United States. However, this canopy is not evenly distributed, and the quality of urban forest canopy varies widely, with wealthier communities having both more tree canopy cover and higher quality

urban forest resources than disadvantaged and minority communities. Citywide, Pittsburgh has an average canopy cover of 41%, while two of our identified equity neighborhoods, Larimer and Homewood South, fall under 20%. This project seeks to address some of these climate injustices by identifying and restoring publicly-owned parcels of urban forest within disadvantaged communities and restoring them to safe and beneficial resources for their residents. This project will contribute to the goals of the Justice40 by providing direct material benefits to disadvantaged communities identified in the White House Council on Environmental Quality Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) through the removal of public safety hazards, installation of new trees, and creation of new public assets in these communities. Furthermore, the restoration and expansion of tree canopy in these neighborhoods will improve health outcomes, combat the loss of urban forest canopy, and help reduce the impact of climate change within Justice40 communities. This project also contributes directly to the goals of the Ten-Year Urban Forestry Action Plan by centering the community in the planning and development of projects, increasing awareness, and putting the sustainable management and health of urban forest resources in the spotlight for both community members and the City at large. Anticipating community desires, this project is also planning on creating urban food forest resources to improve food security in underserved food desert communities within the City.

2. Implementation Strategy/Methodology/Timeline

This project will work with community members, local non-profits, and other key regional stakeholders to both improve the quality of existing tree canopy and expand canopy in the City of Pittsburgh's most disadvantaged communities. The project will be broken into three phases, with each phase having a strong focus on community engagement and empowerment, while still making data-driven decisions and experts in the field to ensure strong outcomes. Owing to the wide scope of this project, rollout will be staggered over multiple seasons in different areas of the City. We are planning to perform work on 50 publicly-held parcels over the course of five years, with an average of 10 parcels per year being restored or expanded into healthy urban canopy.

Objectives

Goal	Objective
Goal 1: Restore and make safe 50 publicly-held forested parcels in disadvantaged communities across the City of Pittsburgh	Objective 1.1: Identify 50 publicly held parcels located in CEJST census blocks within the City of Pittsburgh Tree Equity Neighborhoods to be restored or expanded into healthy urban forest canopy
	Objective 1.2: Remove all hazardous and dead trees from the 50 publicly held parcels from Objective 1.1

	Objective 1.3: Remove all trash, debris, and other unsafe or unsightly materials from the parcels identified in 1.1
	Objective 1.4: Re-seed, restore, and replant trees on the 50 Parcels identified in objective 1.1
Goal 2: Build healthy community relationships over the course of five years through regular community meetings, direct engagement activities, plantings, and tree care events.	Objective 2.1: Hold ten community scoping events to identify the key areas within each Tree Equity Neighborhood to be the targets of tree canopy restoration
	Objective 2.2: Hold ten community walkthrough events to explore and discuss intervention opportunities within the areas defined in 2.1 to inform the completion of Objective 1.1
	Objective 2.3: Hold ten community tree planting events over the course of five years
	Objective 2.4: Hold ten community care events on the restored sites over the course of five years
Goal 3: Plant 500 trees on the parcels identified and restored over the course of five years to improve urban forest canopy while considering community needs and food security	Objective 3.1: Plant 375 native trees and shrubs to expand and restore urban tree canopy in Tree Equity/CEJST neighborhoods
	Objective 3.2: Plant 125 fruiting trees, bushes, or other perennial food-bearing plants to promote local health and food security

Implementation Strategy & Timeline

Phase One: Scoping and Outreach

During the Scoping and Outreach phase (January-March of year one), we will use a number of datasets and selection criteria in order to ensure that we maximize the impact of our work. Beginning with the City's existing Street Tree Equity Plan, which identified ten key neighborhoods with inequities in canopy, street tree counts, and access to parks and green spaces, we will identify key neighborhoods and will then apply the White House Council on Environmental Quality Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) in order to ensure that our areas of intervention fall into areas identified as highest concern within this grant framework. We will then further apply regional heat island map layers, layers identifying neglected publicly held properties, and select a number of potential project areas with sufficient impact potential. After we have determined the areas with the highest potential, we will follow the Equitable Street Tree Investment Communications Plan guidelines to engage with community groups, local residents, local non-profits, and other regional actors through community meetings, surveys, and field walks to identify the areas of greatest concern within the community and their specific wants and needs for these locations. Parcels selected for intervention will be identified from the County tax roll listing as being delinquent on taxes and abandoned which will have been returned to municipal control. These parcels are a source of

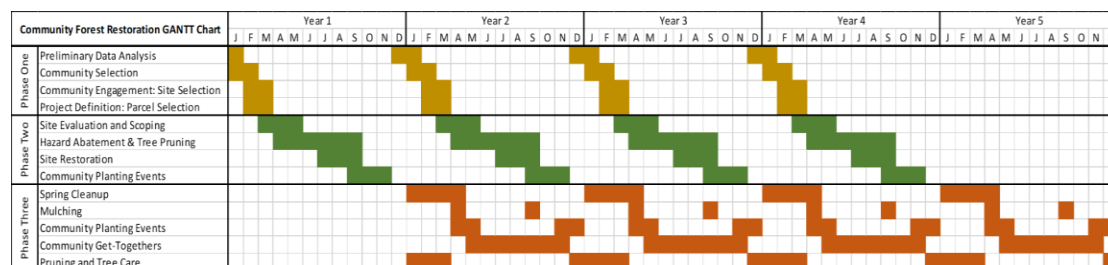
hundreds of complaints per year in disadvantaged communities and offer an opportunity to create significant improvements to the local urban forest ecosystem while simultaneously resolving citizen complaint calls and creating/restoring safe public urban forest patches.

Phase Two: Restoration, Planting, and Community Engagement

Once the communities have selected the location, the specific needs of each cluster of parcels will be assessed by the Community Forestry Equity Specialist. Other staff from the City Forestry Division will conduct a needs assessment of the work required to bring each site to a safe condition and restore it to the point where it can be improved (canopy expanded, food forest created, beautified, etc.) per the objectives set out by the community during phase one. Work will then be completed by a contractor during the Spring and Summer (April-October each year) in order to have the site ready for community-led cleanups and planting events. The first major tree planting event will be conducted that fall with all activities following this planting event, including tree plantings, will be considered as part of Phase Three.

Phase Three: Ongoing Site Care and Monitoring

Following the first two phases, the parcel clusters will move to Phase Three, which focuses on community-engaged care and maintenance of the parcels. No fewer than two additional tree planting events shall be conducted at each location, with a focus on establishing woody and herbaceous perennials that meet the goals specified during Phase One. Weeding and mulching events will be held in partnership with local non-profits and community groups to ensure that maintenance is completed on time and to standard, while also creating inviting events and welcoming community members into their newly restored urban forest resources.



Standards and Best Management Practices

For planting projects, species lists will be developed by a technical expert knowledgeable of local climate, site characteristics, and tree species. Planting projects will not install any state-listed invasive species, including invasive species listed as “restricted,” “pending further review,” or “non-restricted,” or that are on a watch list.

All tree-related work completed under this grant will follow the latest relevant ANSI standards (e.g., ANSI Z60.1 Nursery Stock Standards, A300 Standards for Tree Care Operations) and International Society of Arboriculture Best Management Practices or equivalent.

3. Capability and Capacity

The City of Pittsburgh: Lisa Ceoffe, Professional Arborist, is the City Forester since 2014 and is responsible for operations of the Forestry crew along with implementation of the City's Urban Forest Master Plan and the Pittsburgh Shade Tree Commission's Equity Street Tree Investment Plan. It is our desire to utilize a portion of the grant funds to hire a Community Forestry Equity

Specialist who will have direct responsibility for the day to day activities related to this project including but not limited to interdepartmental communications, site assessments, bid documentation, scheduling, quality control, communications with contractors, partner organizations and neighborhood representatives of the most marginalized communities as identified across the City, along with providing record keeping and regular updates to City Forester.

LandForce: Illyssa Manspeizer, Ph.D. Executive Director, leads a team of professionally skilled crews who assist with restoration and management of green assets across the City. Landforce is committed to recruit, train, educate and employ adults with structural barriers based upon race and personal history. It is our intention to deploy Landforce to the lots to perform all stages of environmental management. This program will allow additional candidates to be employed and trained at Landforce. It is intended to allow candidates to eventually migrate into the Department of Public Works as full time City employees. Landforce is also working directly with the City Of Pittsburgh on a new wood reuse plan that will provide for a higher use of recycling of the city's tree debris. Founded in 2015, this program has been highly successful at documenting past projects and outcomes. The expansion into a new endeavor to help the Forestry Department with wood debris is proof they are solid and committed to both the people they employ and the City of Pittsburgh. Landforce will provide detailed records of the number of participants engaged in land clearing activities, as well as an account of the job training and skill building activities conducted to prepare them for work in the wider green jobs sector.

Tree Pittsburgh: Danielle Crumrine MS, the Executive Director, leads a team of Arboricultural Professionals who work to plant, manage and maintain the City of Pittsburgh's Urban Forest. The organization believes in equitable treatment for all and that all should feel welcomed to participate in environmental stewardship. Tree Pittsburgh also has a Heritage Nursery, which grows trees from seeds collected around the City of Pittsburgh. Tree Pittsburgh also manages a Tree Tender Program, which gives citizens the opportunity to plant and care for trees. For this project, Tree Pittsburgh will mobilize their volunteers to assist the City and community in tree planting events, tree maintenance, and community outreach and education. The Tree Pittsburgh Organization is a non-profit organization founded by the City of Pittsburgh Shade Tree Commission in 2006. This organization has a proven track record of success with record keeping, training and regularly communicating with over 1000 Tree Tenders across the Pittsburgh Region and expansion into a new state of the art building on an old steel mill site. The newest addition of a Heritage Tree Nursery, highly successful, where thousands of trees are grown and then planted by volunteers on restoration sites across Pittsburgh's parks, trails, greenspaces and schools. thousands of trees are also distributed and tracked through free tree giveaways twice a year.

The UrbanKind Institute: Jamil Bey, Ph.D. is the founder of the organization rooted in a commitment to equity and social justice. Initiatives include the BLACK Environmental Collective, Equitable & Just Greater Pittsburgh and the Trust Trees Campaign. This equity-based group specializes with working along non-profit partners and the City of Pittsburgh to assist community-based groups to understand, evaluate and discuss issues that matter to their lives. It is our intention to utilize the Trust Trees program to provide for safe and healthy greenspaces

as identified in the Equity Street Tree Investment Plan with a focus around the many benefits that trees provide. It is our intention to build up trust in communities through unique education and outreach with direct impacts to the lives of the people that live and play there.

All the organization are part of a cohort created by Tree Pittsburgh called the Canopy Alliance. There are regular meetings and communications that have developed a symbiotic relationship. These relationships have provided for countless collaborations and have been key to the successful implementation of the City's Urban Forest

4. Communications Plan

Project Communications will be approached through multiple different media and strategies to maximize outreach and awareness. The following table delineates planned approaches for communications, additional methods of communication will be considered as the project evolves. All appropriate marking and branding will be applied per the requirements of the funding agency and partner organizations, with all communications clearly acknowledging the funding source.

Project Phase	Communcation Strategy	Target audience	Objective
Phase One	Door hangers	Community Residents	Recruit Participants
	Flyers	Community Residents	Recruit Participants
	Email Blasts	Community Residents	Recruit Participants
	Social Media Posts	Community Residents	Recruit Participants
	Press Release	City at large	Project Awareness
Phase Two	Banners	Community Residents	Event Awareness
	Yard signs	Community Residents	Recruit Participants
	Flyers	Community Residents	Recruit Participants
	Permanent Signage	Community Residents	Project Awareness
	Email Blasts	Community Residents	Recruit Participants
	Social Media Posts	Community Residents	Recruit Participants
Phase Three	Banners	Community Residents	Event Awareness
	Flyers	Community Residents	Recruit Participants
	Email Blasts	Community Residents	Recruit Participants
	Social Media Posts	Community Residents	Recruit Participants

5. Evidence of Disadvantaged Community Status for projects requesting Match Waiver

One hundred percent of the work and funding of this project is to be completed in disadvantaged communities where the majority of our vacant lots are located. Using the White House Council on Environmental Quality Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST), the City of Pittsburgh Tree Equity Plan, Google Environmental Insights Explorer, and the American Forests Tree Equity Score, we will work to ensure that our work is restricted to the areas within the most disadvantaged communities where the highest level of benefits would be realized. Our selection process for worksites uses the City of Pittsburgh Tree Equity Program, which relies on demographic data, climate data, and specific environmental justice criteria, as its primary filter. Within these identified neighborhoods, individual parcels will be selected that fall within CEJST identified census tracts in order to ensure that all areas under consideration

are in full compliance with the match waiver requirements. Parcels thus identified will then be made available to the community members during the community-driven project development phase. All selected parcels will be identified with their parcel number and clearly tracked on our GIS systems to provide clear documentation that all work can be cleanly tracked.

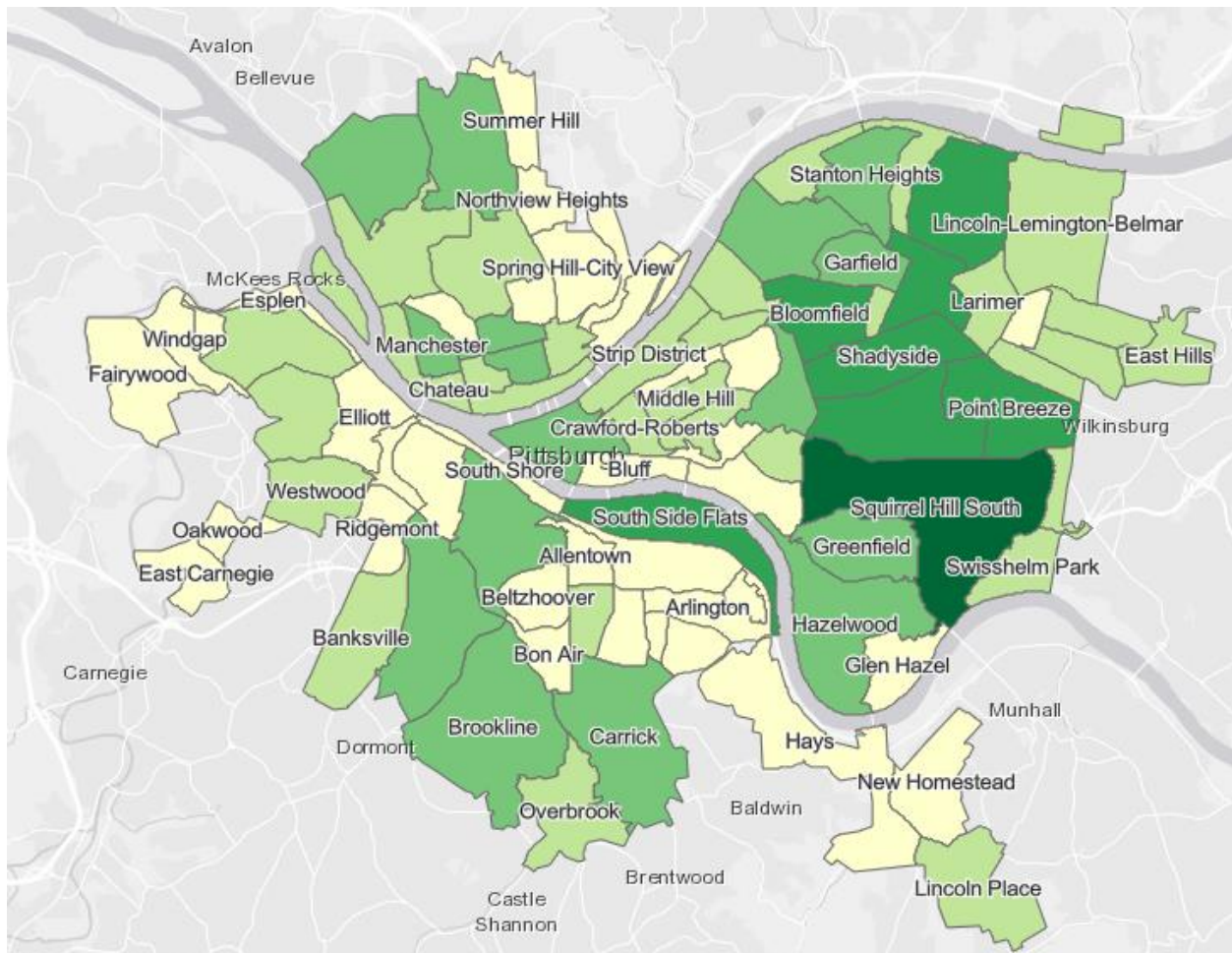


Figure 1 Map of relative canopy percentages across the City of Pittsburgh, lighter colors indicating lowest canopy cover.

List or Table of Census Tracts where Project Work is Planned/Eligible:

Neighborhood	Census Tract	Census Tract 2
Arlington Heights	42003561600	
Beltzhoover	42003562400	
California-Kirkbride	42003250700	
Esplen	42003562500	
Homewood North	42003130100	42003130200
Homewood South	42003130300	42003130400
Homewood West	42003120700	

Knoxville	42003300100	
Larimer	42003120400	42003120800
Middle Hill	42003050100	

If changes occur to work locations during grant implementation, an updated list will be provided to the U.S. Forest Service grant monitor for review.

Reporting and Acknowledgment:

Semi-annual progress reports for periods ending June 30 and December 31 will be submitted to SM.FS.R9SPFgrants@usda.gov and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) grant monitor no later than July 31 and January 31 each year. Project updates outside of these reporting timeframes will be provided upon request.

The U.S. Forest Service and Inflation Reduction Act will be acknowledged as a funding source for work performed under this grant, including any future signage requirements. The USDA non-discrimination statement will be present on products resulting from this grant (including online content). Use of the USFS logo will be pre-approved through the USFS grant monitor.

The Forest Service grant monitor will be included when sharing communication products, announcements, and other significant communication and outreach efforts regarding this grant.

Non-Federal Funds Match Waiver:

A match waiver has been authorized for this grant, requiring that 100% of work takes place in or benefits disadvantaged communities. Match waiver will be passed on to any sub-awardees.

Budget:

Instructions: Outline the federal grant amount based on the scope of work and methodology. A suggested table format is provided below for inserting budget information by each Object Class Category that is summarized in the SF 424A. Delete or add lines as needed to reflect work in this narrative. If any of these grant funds will be passed to a third party to complete the work, via sub-grants, provide that amount in the "Other" category.

Budget Items by SF 424A Object Class Categories	Federal \$
a. Personnel	
<i>Community Forestry Equity Specialist (Program Manager) (\$66k x 5 years)</i>	330,000
b. Fringe Benefits	
<i>PM Benefits (35% x 5 years)</i>	115,500
c. Travel	
d. Equipment*	
e. Supplies	
f. Contractual	504,500
<i>Site Preparation (50 parcels, at \$4,210)</i>	210,500
<i>Replanting/Reseeding (50 parcels)</i>	75,000
<i>Staff Vehicle</i>	39,000
<i>Land Management (50 lots, 4 years tree care only)</i>	180,000
g. Construction (Not allowable expense)	
h. Other	
<i>Subcontract to Tree Pittsburgh for Expansion of ReLeaf Planning into Equity Program</i>	50,000
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of a-h)	1,000,000
j. Indirect Charges	
k. Totals (i + j)	1,000,000
l. Program Income**	

* Equipment is defined as an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit. Equipment purchase is not approved for this grant funding. Equipment rental or lease may be included in the Contractual category, if approved by the USFS program monitor. Items that are less than \$5000 per unit may be included in the Supplies category.

** Program Income means gross income earned by the grantee that is directly generated by a supported activity or earned as a result of the grant during the period of performance. Program income includes, but is not limited to, income from fees for services performed, the use of rental or real or personal property acquired under the grant, the sale of commodities or items fabricated under the grant, license fees and royalties on patents and copyrights, and principal and interest on loans made with grant funds. Interest earned on advances of Federal funds is not program income. Except as otherwise provided in Federal statutes, regulations, or the terms and conditions of the grant, program income does not include rebates, credits, discounts, and interest earned on any of them. Consult with USFS grant specialist regarding how program income needs to be handled, if applicable.

Budget Narrative:

Instructions: Insert original budget narrative with proposed edits shown in track changes. Include unit costs for all items. Consider reasonable inflation and cost of living increases for outyears. If indirect costs are included, please specify if the federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) or the 10% de minimus rate is used.

Pittsburgh Vacant Lots Tree Planting = \$1,000,000

Personnel: \$330,000

The City will hire a Community Forestry Equity Specialist to serve as project manager to oversee the project and manage contracts and relationships with partners. The Community Forestry Equity Specialist will have direct responsibility for the day to day activities related to this project including but not limited to interdepartmental communications, site assessments, bid documentation, scheduling, quality control, communications with contractors, partner organizations and neighborhood representatives of the most marginalized communities as identified across the City, along with providing record keeping and regular updates to City Forester.

- Project manager: Annual salary: \$66,000 for five years for a total of \$330,000

Fringe: \$115,500

- Benefits at 35% of salary: \$23,100 for five years for a total of \$115,500

Contractual Service: \$504,500

Contractual services will be used for project implementation

Site Preparation: \$210,500 over five years = \$210,500

Site preparation will include the removal of any illegally dumped materials, debris, garbage, or other unsafe inorganic materials on the identified parcels. This will be followed by the removal of dead, dying, or unsafe trees, pruning of remaining trees to removed deadwood and improve structural health, and the removal of invasive understory species and vines. Minor grading will be performed as necessary to allow safe access to the interior of the site, chipped materials are to remain on site.

Replanting and reseeding: \$1,500 per parcel across 50 parcels= \$75,000

Cleared areas are to be reseeded with a seed mix of native and naturalized species suited to the site to reduce the rate of re-infestation of disturbed areas by invasive species. Trees ranging from 2" caliper to 3 gallon containerized stock and understory plants (3 gallon containerized stock) will be planted to restore the canopy of the site at a rate of 50 to 200 trees and 25 to 100 shrubs per acre in order, depending on the existing amount of tree canopy and the intended community goals.

Leasing Staff Vehicle: \$7,800 per year for five years = \$39,000

Land Management: \$900 per parcel across 50 parcels = \$180,000 Land management will consist of weed and grass suppression in planted areas, reseeding to prevent invasive incursions, and removal of resurgent invasive species. Methods to be employed will be spot removals, weed whacking, mowing, and chemical applications as required by the site.

Other

Subaward to Tree Pittsburgh ReLeaf Program: \$10,000 per year for five years = \$50,000
Tree Pittsburgh's community outreach and communications team will support the City's efforts to engage the community in visioning and planning for vacant lot planting projects. Activities will include:

- community walk-about to identify and assess available lots,
- community conversations to gather feedback and ideas to inform vacant lot designs,
- Giving Grove orchard designs
- volunteer recruitment for project implementation and stewardships, and
- Tree Tender training to educate the community on best tree planting and tree care practices.

	Federal Funds Requested Jan 2024 - Dec 2024	Federal Funds Requested Jan 2025 - Dec 2025	Federal Funds Requested Jan 2026 - Dec 2026	Federal Funds Requested Jan 2027 - Dec 2027	Federal Funds Requested Jan 2028 - Dec 2028	Total Federal Funds Requested
Personnel						
Giving Grove Program Manager (Y1 4%, Y2-Y5 8% FTE)	\$2,240.00	\$4,640.00	\$4,800.00	\$4,650.00	\$3,520.00	\$19,850.00
Community Education Coordinator (Y1 1%, Y2- Y5 3% FTE)	\$480.00	\$1,750.00	\$1,820.00	\$1,890.00	\$1,960.00	\$7,900.00
Communications Manager (Y1 1%, Y2-Y5 4% FTE)	\$640.00	\$2,640.00	\$2,720.00	\$2,800.00	\$2,880.00	\$11,680.00
Subtotal: Personnel	\$3,360.00	\$9,030.00	\$9,340.00	\$9,340.00	\$8,360.00	\$39,430.00
Fringe Benefits (15%)	\$504.00	\$1,354.50	\$1,401.00	\$1,401.00	\$1,254.00	\$4,660.50
						\$0.00
						\$0.00
Subtotal: Fringe Benefits	\$504.00	\$1,354.50	\$1,401.00	\$1,401.00	\$1,254.00	\$4,660.50
						\$0.00
Travel	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
						\$0.00
						\$0.00
						\$0.00
Subtotal: Travel	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

Equipment (No Equipment)						\$0.00
Supplies						
Subtotal: Supplies	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Direct Mail Service		\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,409.50	
Subtotal: Contractual	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,409.50	\$5,909.50
Total Direct Costs:	\$3,864.00	\$11,884.50	\$12,241.00	\$12,241.00	\$11,023.50	\$50,000.00
Indirect Cost (10%):						
Total Project Cost:	\$3,864.00	\$11,884.50	\$12,241.00	\$12,241.00	\$11,023.50	\$50,000.00