

STAFF REPORT

Date: June 5, 2024

To: Mayor and City Council

Through: Doug Thornley, City Manager

Subject: Staff Report (For Possible Action): Acceptance of a donation from the NV Energy Foundation for \$25,000 for ReLeaf Reno.

From: Suzanne Groneman, Sustainability Manager

Department: City Manager's Office

Summary:

The City of Reno and NV Energy are collaborating on a number of sustainability measures under the new Energy Partnership Agreement adopted by Council. One of the goals under the agreement is to seek opportunities to restore and protect our urban forest. As part of this effort, NV Energy is donating funds to ReLeaf Reno to promote tree-planting efforts in the community.

| Consent Review | Yes | No |
|--|-----|-----|
| 1. Is this item an annual or standard item that comes before Council for regular approval? | | X |
| 2. Is this item an agreement required based on an item previously approved by Council? | | X |
| 3. Is this item included in the current budget approved and adopted by Council? | | X |
| Other Considerations | | |
| What percent of the total City budget does this item represent? | | N/A |

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

Infrastructure, Climate Change, and Environmental Sustainability
Arts, Parks, and Historical Resources

Previous Council Action:

May 22, 2024 – Council approved an Energy Partnership Agreement with NV Energy.

Background:

In 1982, Reno became the first city in Nevada to earn the Tree City USA designation. While still

recognized as a Tree City USA, Reno's canopy coverage is low. American Forests recommends 15% canopy cover as a baseline for desert cities. Enhancing the urban forest canopy in Reno requires the combined efforts of the city government, community fundraising, committed volunteers, and homeowners who are mindful of the value of trees. Using trees as a tool for heat mitigation and quality of life improvement can address many social and environmental issues if implemented effectively, meeting the goals of local and national governments, and social and environmental organizations.

NV Energy and the City of Reno entered into an Energy Partnership Agreement on May 22, 2024. The agreement calls for increased education about tree care and restoration activities.

Discussion:

The NV Energy Foundation funds programs and initiatives that have lasting, positive impacts on the community with a focus on the environment, education, safety, and wellness. This donation is for ReLeaf Reno, a City-sponsored program designed to preserve and expand Reno's urban forest. Reno's urban forest provides \$21 million in environmental and economic benefits each year by reducing stormwater run-off and removing air pollution. The City invests more than \$2 per capita on planting and caring for trees in parks and along streets every year, yielding two to five times that investment in benefits to our community. Trees increase property values and generate more sales for local businesses.

Trees provide shade, cool the air, and create rain and windbreaks, reducing energy use for heating and cooling by up to 25%. Trees improve quality of life by adding beauty to our neighborhoods, creating habitat for wildlife, strengthening social ties, and creating more peaceful communities. Trees absorb carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming, and release oxygen into the air. Planting a tree is an effective way to reduce your carbon footprint.

This donation will be used by the City of Reno to enhance and preserve our urban forest.

Financial Implications:

NV Energy will donate \$25,000 to ReLeaf Reno to be used at the discretion of the City to enhance the urban forest.

Legal Implications:

Legal review completed for compliance with City procedures and Nevada law.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends Council accept the donation from the NV Energy Foundation for \$25,000 for ReLeaf Reno.

Proposed Motion:

I move to accept the donation from the NV Energy Foundation for \$25,000 for ReLeaf Reno.

Attachments:

ReLeaf Reno Donation Letter