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## **2006 BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE – Pilot Program to Cost-Share Tree Watering with BIAs**

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### **Issue / Background:**

The General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation and the Acting Executive Director of Economic Development were requested to report to the Budget Advisory Committee, during the 2006 Operating Budget process, on offering to BIAs a cost-shared Pilot Program in 2006 for tree watering, in the amount of \$200,000 gross, \$100,000 net. The 2006 Budgets for BIAs have been established and discussions have not yet been held with BIAs about a cost-share program for Tree Watering.

### **Key Points:**

- This proposal would represent a new initiative in the City's relationship with its BIAs.
- Staff from the respective Divisions have discussed a number of options to deliver such a program in an effective and cost-efficient manner including:
  - A program to encourage store owners to take charge of watering trees;
  - Reimbursing BIAs half the costs for BIA initiated tree watering contracts;
  - Economic Development tendering a contract for hire a company to deliver the program to interested BIAs on a 50-50 cost share basis; and
  - Implementing a new BIA specific tree watering program operated by Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

Staff from the respective Divisions will discuss the various options at its regular meeting with BIA representatives in January in order to gauge interest and support for such a cost-shared program and to discuss the options for delivery.

- It is estimated that \$200,000 would pay for 16,000 to 18,000 deep root tree waterings. Assuming that a tree would be watered once a week for 8 weeks over the period from June to August (depending on weather), between 2,000 and 2,250 trees could be watered at a cost of approximately \$100/tree per season. If weather dictated fewer occasions per tree, more trees would be watered and the cost per tree would be less. Each tree would also receive occasional fertilizer and/or compost tea, and light corrective pruning if required.
- Staff will report back to Budget Advisory Committee in February 2006, if possible, on the results of its meetings with BIA representatives and potential for implementation of a cost-shared Tree Watering Program with BIAs in the future.

**Prepared by: Mike Major 2-0623 (EDCT); Richard Ubbens 2-1894 (PFR)**

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