

Memorandum

REPORT TO: Sustainability Board

FROM: Alex Nordquest, Forestry Division Manager

SUBJECT: Forestry Division Update: Branch Out Bozeman and the 2026 Urban Forest Management Plan

MEETING DATE: April 8, 2026

AGENDA ITEM TYPE: Citizen Advisory Board/Commission

RECOMMENDATION: Forestry Division Update: Branch Out Bozeman and the 2026 Urban Forest Management Plan

STRATEGIC PLAN: 4.3 Strategic Infrastructure Choices: Prioritize long-term investment and maintenance for existing and new infrastructure.

BACKGROUND:

Branch Out Bozeman

The City's Forestry Division began partnering with the Gallatin Watershed Council on tree planting projects in 2021. This quickly developed into annual volunteer events and the creation of Branch Out Bozeman: Urban Forest Network (B.O.B.). In an effort to provide a healthy and resilient urban forest for all community members, B.O.B. seeks to increase Bozeman's tree canopy to its full potential and to develop tools that guide the community to strategically plant trees in priority areas. After receiving grant-funded technical assistance and tree canopy assessment, B.O.B. is now poised to develop a dedicated website, branding, and mapping tools to help realize the initiative's goals.

Urban Forest Management Plan

The City's current Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) was created in 2016 and presented a plan to "sustainably, holistically, and efficiently manage Bozeman's urban forest to realize the full expanse of benefits urban trees can provide." Now, nearly ten years later, many of the goals and recommendations from this UFMP have been accomplished, and an updated plan is desired. A 2026 UFMP would need to build upon its predecessor's framework and serve as an overarching guiding document for all Forestry Division operations, planning, and public outreach through 2036.

A 2026 UFMP will need to present a more in-depth review of Bozeman's urban forest management. Essential components of this project scope include:

- Analysis and recommendations regarding tree inventory

characteristics, canopy cover goals, staffing and equipment levels, contract budgeting;

- Evaluation and guidance on integration with other city departments, acceptance of contract tree installations, and assessment of private property trees impacted by construction;
- Recommendations and strategies to strengthen volunteer initiatives, address public concerns, and expand community education/outreach efforts.

This project was included in the Forestry Division's FY25-26 Work Plan and CIP budgeting; a Request for Proposals (RFP) was published in November 2025 detailing the desired scope for such an effort. DJ&A submitted a compelling RFP and was chosen as the desired consultant through a Scoring Committee.

Lilly McLane, Gallatin Watershed Council's Watershed Restoration Director, and Alex Nordquest, City of Bozeman's Forestry Division Manager, will co-present on Branch Out Bozeman. Alex Nordquest will follow with a presentation on the Urban Forest Management Plan. The Sustainability Advisory Board will be invited to ask questions.

UNRESOLVED ISSUES: None.

ALTERNATIVES: As suggested by the Board.

FISCAL EFFECTS: None.

Attachments:

[Forestry Update - Sustainability Board - April 8 - 26.pdf](#)

Report compiled on: April 2, 2026