

Agenda Report

Date: March 2, 2009

TO: CITY COUNCIL
FROM: CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF THE REMOVAL OF HEALTHY STREET TREES

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council direct the City Manager to temporarily suspend the removal of all healthy street trees, with the exception of certain cases as outlined in the body of this report, for a period of four months from date of this action or until staff has completed a review of all streetscape and specific plans for consistency with the Master Street Tree Plan and City Environmental Plans, along with a review of the City policy for public tree removals and the role of the Urban Forestry Advisory Committee (UFAC) in this review and present a report on the findings and any recommendations to the City Council.

BACKGROUND

On February 23, 2009, the City Council directed staff to return on March 2, 2009, to consider placing a moratorium on the removal of healthy street trees.

Recognizing that implementation of Streetscape and Specific plans may conflict with the existing Master Street Tree Plan, the City Council requested that staff review all plans and identify potential conflicts. In addition, City Council requested more information about the role of UFAC as it relates to public tree removals. Staff anticipates that this effort will take approximately four months at which time staff will report back to City Council.

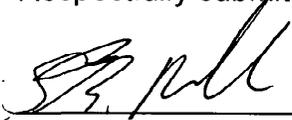
During this review period staff will analyze the various Streetscapes and Specific Plans in order to identify any conflicts between the plan recommendations for new trees and the Master Street Tree Plan. Staff will also review the selected species for compatibility and consistency with Green City Action Plan/ Urban Accords. Once staff has completed this review, it will note which conflicts exist and prepare a list of alternate species more closely aligned with the City's environmental policies. The completed report and recommendations will be presented to UFAC for review and comment prior to submission to City Council.

It is recommended that the removal of healthy street trees continue to be allowed under the following conditions: a) tree removals that have been previously reviewed and supported by UFAC; and b) wherein a determination has been made that removal is necessary or prudent for the public health, safety, and welfare. Under such conditions reasonable public notice (10 days unless determined infeasible given conditions) shall be provided. This would allow staff to proceed with traffic signal projects where trees may conflict with visibility of the signal, park projects where trees are removed to accommodate the new facilities (e.g. Robinson Park Phase 1), and for trees that prove an immediate health and safety hazard to the public. These exemptions are consistent with the tree removal criteria identified in the Tree Protection Ordinance of the City.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,


so MICHAEL J. BECK
City Manager

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