

# Agenda Report

August 16, 2010

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Department of Public Works  
**SUBJECT: AMENDMENT TO THE MASTER STREET TREE PLAN**

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that City Council;

1. Find that the proposed amendments to the Master Street Tree Plan are categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per Section 15061 (b)(3), the General Rule;
2. Approve an amendment to the Master Street Tree Plan (MSTP) at the following locations:
  - a. Amend Corson and Maple Streets on the freeway sides to allow for *Quercus spp*, Oak species in lieu of the *Magnolia grandiflora*, Magnolia tree;
  - b. Add the *Cercis occidentalis*, Western Redbud to the MSTP on the south side of Woodbury Road, between Casita and Canada Avenues;
  - c. Allow for the planting of the *Jacaranda mimosifolia*, Blue Jacaranda in the parking pop-outs only, along Catalina Avenue between California Boulevard and Cornell Road.
  - d. Allow for the planting of the *Cinnamomum camphora*, Camphor tree in lieu of the *Magnolia grandiflora*, Magnolia tree on Winona Avenue from Blake Street south to the dead end.
  - e. Allow for the planting of the *Pistacia chinensis*, Chinese Pistache on South Greenwood Avenue between Colorado and Del Mar Boulevards and the *Quercus spp*, Oak Species between Del Mar and the south City border in lieu of the *Magnolia grandiflora*, Magnolia tree.

## **URBAN FORESTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

On February 1, 2010, the Urban Forestry Advisory Committee (UFAC) unanimously voted to support recommendation number 4. amending the MSTP for Winona Avenue from Blake Street south to the dead end.

On April 5, 2010, UFAC voted to support the above recommendations as follows:

- Recommendation number 1 - UFAC voted three to one; and

- Recommendations number 2 and 3 - UFAC unanimously supported the recommendations.

On July 19, 2010, UFAC unanimously voted to support recommendation number 5 amending the MSTP for South Greenwood Avenue between Colorado and Del Mar Boulevards and the south City border.

### **RECOMMENDATION FROM THE DESIGN COMMISSION:**

On April 26, 2010 and July 26, 2010, the Design Commission unanimously supported all of the staff recommendations.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

As changes to the MSTP are needed, staff works to update and refine the MSTP to meet the needs of the community. The following recommendations reflect needed changes and take into account the tree species' growth pattern, site constraints, i.e., sidewalks, overhead and underground utilities, as well as the required maintenance for the various types of trees planted on Pasadena's public right-of-ways.

The approximately 2,500 street tree vacancies will be placed on the city's list of vacant tree sites and will be replanted when funding is obtained. Unless the planting is associated with a development project in which case a Public Works Condition of Approval would be to plant all vacant sites adjacent to the project site.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Corson and Maple Streets on the freeway sides: As a part of the development of the sound wall adjacent to the freeway, there was much discussion regarding the type of replacement tree as several existing locations are vacant in addition to the replacement tree for the project site. The project site includes 70 planting sites, which will be planted as a part of the Cal Trans Sound Wall project trees planted outside the project area will be planted as a part of the City's regular planting program, the type of replacement tree is an important element of the design, as it dictates spacing and water needs. Due to concerns about the characteristics of the *Magnolia grandiflora*, an amendment to the MSTP was pursued. A community meeting was held on March 18, 2010, to discuss the sound wall project and the amendment to the MSTP. The community unanimously chose the *Quercus spp.*, Oak species which includes the following four species: *Quercus agrifolia*, Coast Live Oak; *Quercus engelmannii*, Engelmann Oak; *Quercus suber*, Cork Oak; *Quercus virginiana*, Southern Live Oak. Staff supports the community's choice.

Southside of Woodbury Road between Casita and Canada Avenues: In conjunction with the School District, staff worked on the development of the proposed school lunch preparations facility on the southside of Woodbury Road between Casita and Canada Avenues, to add a street tree to the MSTP for this location. All of the adjacent properties

belong to the County; therefore there has never been a street tree designation for this location. However the development of this facility has allowed for the inclusion of street trees at this location. City staff, the School District, UFAC, and the Design Commission are unanimous in recommending the *Cercis occidentalis*, Western Redbud be added to the MSTP on the south side of Woodbury Road between Casita and Canada Avenues.

Catalina Avenue between San Pasqual Street and Cornell Road: As a part of a development project at Polytechnic School, which includes renovations to the existing sports field along Catalina Avenue, Polytechnic is required to install parking pop-outs and landscaping on Catalina Avenue. The parking pop-outs will provide additional planting locations for street trees. Catalina Avenue between San Pasqual Street and Cornell Road is planted with the *brahea edulis*, Guadalupe palm. Staff met with the residents at a community meeting on March 13<sup>th</sup>. At this meeting, residents requested that the pop outs be planted with a flowering tree, the *Jacaranda mimosifolia*, Blue Jacaranda was selected by the UFAC and was supported by the community.

Winona Avenue from Blake Street south to the dead end: Staff inspected Winona Avenue for tree planting vacancies. A number of residents contacted staff and asked that *Cinnamomum camphora*, Camphor trees, be planted instead of the *Magnolia grandiflora*, which is the designated tree for Winona Avenue from Blake Street south to the dead end. The residents informed staff that they wanted the Camphor trees because they have a larger canopy than the magnolia. Additionally, a resident circulated a petition requesting that the MSTP be amended to reflect their desire with more than two thirds of the residents supporting the change. Staff supports the request for the following reasons: 1) The parkway is five feet wide allowing room for the larger tree; 2) there are different species of trees already planted on the street so the change would not effect the continuity; and 3) the Camphor tree provides lots of shade which will further the City's goal of more canopy coverage.

South Greenwood Avenue between Colorado Boulevard and the South City Border: Residents from South Greenwood Avenue have voiced concerns regarding the designated street tree for South Greenwood Avenue, which is *Magnolia grandiflora*, Magnolia. Many of these concerns are based on the fact that this tree species requires more water to thrive than many other trees. In responses to these concerns, staff held a community meeting on May 1, 2010, to discuss the process for amending the street tree designation and discuss the potential tree species qualities that would be important to the residents. The residents requested a list of tree species that are: 1). evergreen; 2). drought tolerant; 3). fast growing; 4). native; and 5). have a low potential for root problems. Staff returned to the community on June 12, 2010, with the following five species for consideration:

*Cinnamomum Camphora*, Camphor Tree  
*Quercus spp*, Oak Species  
*Pistacia chinensis*, Chinese Pistach  
*Cassia leptophylla*, Gold Medallion Tree

*Platanus racemosa*, California Sycamore

There are 40 residents on South Greenwood Avenue between Colorado and Del Mar Boulevards and 21 residents signed the attached petition indicating they are in favor of changing the designated tree species. Nineteen residents who signed the petition support amending the MSTP to provide Chinese Pistach as the designated street tree.

There are 49 residences on South Greenwood Avenue south of Del Mar Boulevard and 42 residents signed a second petition; 34 of whom indicated a preference to amend the MSTP to provide for Oak species as the designated street tree species.

The appearance of the section of South Greenwood Avenue north of Del Mar Boulevard is significantly different from the section south of Del Mar. The blocks north of Del Mar are made up of several multifamily residences and the two most common tree species in the right-of-way are Canary Island Palms and Camphor trees. Housing in the blocks south of Del Mar is primarily comprised of single family homes and the two most common tree species in that area are the Magnolia and Carob. Del Mar Boulevard is a main thoroughfare made up of four traffic lanes and divides Greenwood Avenue into two distinct sections.

Staff supports the residents' requests to amend the MSTP to allow for the planting of the *Pistacia chinensis*, Chinese Pistache on South Greenwood Avenue between Colorado and Del Mar Boulevards and the *Quercus spp*, Oak Species between Del Mar and the south City border in lieu of the *Magnolia grandiflora*, Magnolia tree.

**COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION**

All tree planting and future tree plantings further Urban Accord #11 "Tree Canopy" by increasing canopy coverage. Although Urban Accord # 11 was met by the City in 2008, the City strives to increase canopy coverage by 5 percent over the next 20 years. As areas of the City change, there are additional locations for trees to be planted. Parks and Natural Resources staff works with residents, business owners, associations, and constituents to ensure that the trees that are planted in the public right-of-way meet the neighborhood wants and needs and that the trees are appropriate for the overall goals of the Cities urban canopy.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

The proposed project is an amendment to the adopted Master Street Tree Plan to change the types of trees that are required to be planted at specific locations. This project is exempt from CEQA per Section 15061 (b)(3) the General Rule which states CEQA only applies to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. The proposed changes are only to the types of trees permitted to be planted. There are no changes that have the potential for causing a significant environmental effect.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The change in species for all locations will not incur any additional installation or maintenance costs. Rather the street tree vacancies will be replanted as a part of the regular street tree planting and maintenance program.

Respectfully submitted,



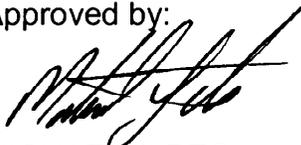
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