



Agenda Report

May 4, 2020

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Department of Public Works
SUBJECT: MASTER STREET TREE PLAN AMENDMENT FOR WEST WALNUT STREET – FROM NORTH PASADENA AVENUE TO NORTH FAIR OAKS AVENUE

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposal to amend the City Master Street Tree Plan (MSTP) as described herein is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Chapter 3, Article 19 Section 15304(b) – Minor Alternations to Land; and
2. Adopt the proposed amendment to the MSTP that would replace ornamental pear, *Pyrus calleryana*, tree with crepe myrtle, *Lagerstroemia indica*, tree as the designated street tree for West Walnut Street from North Pasadena Avenue to North Fair Oaks Avenue.

DESIGN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On February 25, 2020, the Design Commission voted in support of the recommended amendment to the MSTP as described herein.

URBAN FORESTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On November 13, 2019, the Urban Forestry Advisory Committee voted unanimously in support of the recommended amendment to the MSTP as described herein.

BACKGROUND:

On June 14, 2019, the Department received a request from EPT Design, as a representative for the 100 West Walnut (Parsons) project to amend the City's MSTP as described (Attachment A). The applicant is seeking to amend the MSTP to replace ornamental pear tree with crepe myrtle tree along the subject frontage of West Walnut

Street in order to provide a more consistent landscape along the parkway. Crepe myrtle trees are currently planted along the south side of West Walnut Street; and southern magnolia, *Magnolia grandiflora*, trees are currently planted on the north side of the street. However, ornamental pear is the current designated street tree per the City's MSTP. The project is required to replant parkway vacancies along West Walnut Street as a condition of the project.

Consistent with the process to amend the City's MSTP, EPT Design contacted the Avila Apartments property located at 75 West Walnut Street regarding the MSTP amendment proposal (Attachment B). The Avila Apartments are multi-family, for-lease units, and as such, the applicant can reach out to the Homeowners Association, property owner, or property manager to vote on behalf of the residents. Greystar Management, as the property management company for the Avila Apartments, submitted a letter of support for the amendment request (Attachment C).

Amending the MSTP as described will provide a continuity of crepe myrtle trees as the designated species along West Walnut Street from North Orange Grove Boulevard to North Fair Oaks Avenue (Attachment D).

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The proposed action of amending the MSTP is consistent with the City Council's goal of supporting and promoting the quality of life and the local economy. Given that this amendment request was initiated by the representative of the 100 West Walnut Street (Parsons) project, this amendment request is consistent with the community participation principle within the Land Use Element of the City's General Plan. This amendment request is also consistent with the design concepts of the Central District Specific Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

Planting tree species that are appropriate for their location in the City, and that are aligned with the best practices of arboriculture is the goal of the MSTP. Under CEQA Chapter 3, Article 19 Section 15304(b) – Minor Alternations to Land - tree planting is categorically exempt.

The proposed action seeks to amend the MSTP only and does not involve the removal of any healthy trees. Vacant planting sites would be replanted with the newly designated street tree as a result of this amendment.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact from this action. The average plant material unit cost for the existing tree species is the same as the proposed replacement species, which is approximately \$35 per 15-gallon tree. The labor cost to plant the existing tree species and replacement tree species is the same. Tree planting is funded through the *Tree Replacement/Planting – Citywide FY 2017 – 2021* Capital Improvement Program project (budget account 78958).

Respectfully submitted,



ARA MALOYAN, P.E.
Director of Public Works

Prepared by:



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Program Coordinator

Approved by:



STEVE MERMELL
City Manager

- Attachment A - Amendment Request Letter
- Attachment B - Amendment Process Flow Chart and FAQ Page
- Attachment C - Amendment Request Letter of Support
- Attachment D - Walnut Street MSTP Map and Tree Species Information