

Agenda Report

July 14, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Water and Power Department

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH UTILITY TREE SERVICE, LLC. FOR TREE TRIMMING, VEGETATION MANAGEMENT, AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICES FOR POWER LINE CLEARANCE FOR UP TO SIX YEARS FOR A GRAND TOTAL AMOUNT NOT-TO-EXCEED \$25,800,000

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Class 1, Section 15301, Existing facilities, Subsection (h) which exempts maintenance of existing landscaping and that there are no features that distinguish the project from others in the exempt class and, therefore, there are no unusual circumstances; and
2. Award contract to lowest and best bid dated March 11, 2025, submitted by Utility Tree Service, LLC ("UTS") in response to the project plans and specifications for Tree Trimming, Vegetation Management, and Emergency Response Services for Power Line Clearance, authorize the City Manager to enter into a contract for up to six years for a grand total amount not-to-exceed \$25,800,000, which includes the option for one additional one-year extension or an amount not-to-exceed \$4,600,000, whichever occurs first, at the discretion of the City Manager.

BACKGROUND:

Pasadena Water and Power Department ("PWP") delivers electricity to over 65,000 residential, commercial, and industrial customers within the city of Pasadena. As a key provider of essential utility services, PWP plays a critical role in supporting the City's infrastructure by ensuring the reliable delivery of water and power, while also advancing environmental sustainability and maintaining a high standard of customer service.

In compliance with California Public Utilities Commission General Order 95, the electric utilities in California must engage in proactive vegetation management around overhead power distribution lines. This practice is widely recognized as a best practice within utility

sector to enhance public safety, ensure reliability of electric service and substantially reduce wildfire risks, particularly in designated high-threat areas.

PWP traditionally procures dedicated contract services for powerline tree trimming, routinely trimming approximately 7,800 trees each year that pose a potential interference with energized electrical lines. Most of the tree trimming work occurs behind residential properties rather than within the public right-of-way. Regular vegetation management around energized lines is essential for maintaining public safety and uninterrupted reliability of electric service.

In addition to routine vegetation management, the proposed contract will include 24/7 emergency response capability. This includes unplanned tree trimming or removal required to restore service or ensure safety following events such as high winds, storms, wildfires, or vehicle collisions involving trees. It also applies when vegetation must be cleared to access damaged electrical equipment such as downed power lines or broken utility poles, enabling safe repairs. The proposed contract will be structured to provide PWP with the flexibility and responsiveness necessary to address unforeseen events that may threaten public safety or disrupt electric service.

All contractors performing powerline tree trimming for PWP must utilize Qualified Line Clearance Tree Workers who have specialized training, experience, and expertise necessary for working safely near energized lines. These operations require electrically insulated equipment and are typically performed within residential areas. Additionally, PWP mandates that a certified arborist, credentialed by the International Society of Arboriculture, serve as an on-site job foreman to ensure the trimming preserves the natural character and health of each tree to the greatest extent possible.

On February 11, 2025, a Notice Inviting Bids for the Specifications was published on the City’s electronic procurement platform, OpenGov. The notice was automatically distributed to all vendors registered with the City under the applicable commodity codes for related services. A total of 66 vendors downloaded the Specifications, none of which were local. A total of three responsive and responsible bids were received by the bid due date of March 11, 2025, with no bids received from a local firm. The responsive bid results are summarized below in Table I.

Table I: Bid Results

Bidder	Location	Annual Bid Amount
Utility Tree Service, LLC. (“UTS”)	Chino Hills, CA	\$3,972,431.80
West Coast Arborists	Anaheim, CA	\$4,488,000.00
P31 Enterprises, Inc.	Oroville, CA	\$4,541,000.60

UTS was the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. PWP staff recommends that the City Council authorize the City Manager to enter into a contract with UTS for a grand total

amount not-to-exceed \$25,800,000, for up to six years, which includes the base contract amount of \$21,200,000 for five years, and the option for one additional one-year extension, or an amount not-to-exceed \$4,600,000, whichever occurs first, at the discretion of the City Manager.

The recommended grand total not-to-exceed amount of \$25,800,000, which includes the optional one-year extension, is based on PWP's anticipated workload, projected cost increases, and an allocation to support emergency response activities throughout the term of the contract.

The proposed contract will provide PWP with access to qualified contractor resources to maintain vegetation clearance around power lines and other electrical distribution infrastructure. Having these services readily available will support more efficient field operations, enhance emergency response capabilities, and help reduce customer outage durations. The contract is structured as an ongoing, as-needed agreement and does not obligate the City to a minimum amount of labor hours.

The proposed contract complies with the Competitive Bidding and Purchasing Ordinance pursuant to Pasadena Municipal Code Chapter 4.08 and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder.

The City of Pasadena has awarded two purchase orders and two contracts to UTS since 2015 for a total not-to-exceed amount of approximately \$22,490,049.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The proposed contract is consistent with the City Council's goals to maintain fiscal responsibility and stability, and PWP's strategic initiatives to enhance customer satisfaction and confidence, improve efficiency and business continuity, and maintain PWP's fiscal health and stability.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The project is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines in accordance with California Code of Regulations Title 14, Chapter 3, Article 19, Section 15301, Existing Facilities (Class 1). The Class 1 categorical exemption consists of "the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use." Among the examples of the types of projects included in Class 1 is, "Maintenance of existing landscaping, native growth, and water supply reservoirs" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Subsection (h)). The proposed contract allows for continued tree trimming services of existing trees near energized electrical lines. There would be no expansion of use, and all tree trimming will continue to comply with applicable code requirements. In addition, there are no features that distinguish the project from others in the exempt class and, therefore, there are no unusual circumstances.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The cost of the recommended action is \$25,800,000 over six years, if the optional one-year extension is exercised, as broken out in the following table.

Fiscal Year	Amount
2026	\$ 4,000,000
2027	\$ 4,100,000
2028	\$ 4,200,000
2029	\$ 4,400,000
2030	\$ 4,500,000
2031	\$ 4,600,000

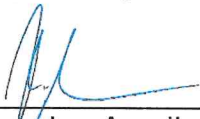
The Department will utilize existing budgeted appropriations in the Power Operating Fund (401) to support the first year of contract costs. Future contract costs will be budgeted as part of the department's annual operating budget. There is no impact to the General Fund.

Respectfully submitted,



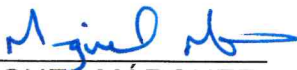
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