

City of Costa Mesa
Landscape Review Committee

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Streetscape and Median Development Standards

Adopted: September 7, 1999

City Council Resolution No. 99-60



Amended: July 16, 2001 per City Council Resolution No. 01-49

Amended: May 20, 2002 per City Council Resolution No. 02-35

2.01 Tree Selection Criteria

The street setback landscaping on private property provides an image of the City to the public. The establishment of a list of appropriate trees for the Costa Mesa area, grouped into categories based on projected root growth, can assist private property owners in their selection of trees in the setback area.

Trees selected for street landscaped setbacks shall be suitable to the property with regard to the soil, other plant material, site design, location (near hardscape, meters, electrical transformers, backflow prevention devices, overhead/underground utilities, sewer pipes, signs, and street lighting) and building architectural style. When necessary, trees shall be planted with root barriers to control linear root growth. Acceptable tree species include those trees listed on applicable street(s) in Appendix B "Recommended Street Tree Palette (By Street)," and trees listed in Appendix D "Private Property Tree Palette."

2.02 Street Tree Palette Description

The list of trees in Appendix C, "Public Parkway and Median Street Palette," is grouped according to the growth needs of their root systems. Tree species are identified by botanical and common name, mature height, remarks concerning special characteristics or growth habits of each tree, and tree type (evergreen, deciduous, semi-deciduous, conifers, and palms).

3.0 PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY AND PARKWAYS – GENERAL CRITERIA

The conservation of parkway trees, in the public rights-of-way, is a joint effort between the City and the adjacent property owner/tenant. Property owners/tenants are requested to properly irrigate their parkway, including trees, and report any damaged or suspected diseased trees to the Public Services Department. The Public Services Department is responsible for tree planting, insect and disease control, periodic tree pruning, and removal, if warranted.

In residential areas, a parkway suitable for landscaping typically exists between the street curb and sidewalk. This area is normally part of the public rights-of-way, and requires a permit from the City to install any improvements other than ground cover, turf, or low shrubs. In order to soften the appearance of the public rights-of-way, which consists mostly of pavement and concrete, the City requires that this area be landscaped and continuously maintained and irrigated by the adjacent homeowner.

The preferred landscape materials for the parkway area include turf, ground cover, and shrubbery with a maximum mature height of 18 inches. If contacted by the adjacent property owner, the City will plant a tree in the parkway at no cost

to the property owner. As noted in the previous paragraph, parkway trees are to be property irrigated by the property owner.

Unacceptable materials in the parkway area include asphalt, concrete (other than a four foot wide walkway from the curb to the sidewalk), brick, pavers, raised planters, fencing, structures (other than mailboxes), hazardous plant material (such as cactus, roses, and other thorn-bearing or highly poisonous plants), and trees other than as designated in these Standards.

4.0 CRITERIA FOR PARKWAY TREE REMOVAL/REPLACEMENT

Based on guidelines established by City Council ordinance, the Public Services Director is authorized to approve or deny all tree removal requests, or may agendaize any removal request for review by the Parks, Recreation Facilities and Parkways Commission.

Any removal decision made by the Public Services Director may be appealed to the Parks, Recreation Facilities and Parkways Commission for review. Decisions made by the Parks, Recreation Facilities and Parkways Commission are final and may not be appealed to the City Council. The Public Services Director will notify the property owner/applicant of every decision to ensure that any appealed decision will not be implemented until after the appeal is heard.

All property owners/applicants wishing removal of a parkway tree(s) shall complete the "Request for Tree Removal" application available from the Public Services Department. Removal requests will fall into one of three categories:

- Category 1 – Health and Safety Removals
- Category 2 – Accelerated Removals
- Category 3 – Discretionary Removals

4.0.1 Category 1 – Health and Safety Removals

Conditions Considered for Health and Safety Removal

Removal of a street tree at no cost to the property owner/applicant may be considered on the following basis, and in accordance with Public Services policies:

- If the tree is dead, dying, critically diseased, or damaged beyond reasonable repair.
- If the tree is causing a safety hazard (such as significant sidewalk and curb uplifting), and root pruning is determined not to be a viable option. Root pruning, sidewalk shaving, and sidewalk rerouting shall be considered as