



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 16, 2011

ITEM NUMBER: 10e

SUBJECT: TREE REMOVAL REQUEST – 1696 NEWPORT BOULEVARD

DATE: NOVEMBER 1, 2011

FROM: PUBLIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT / MAINTENANCE SERVICES DIVISION

PRESENTATION BY: BRUCE A. HARTLEY, MAINTENANCE SERVICES MANAGER

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: BRUCE A. HARTLEY (714) 754-5123

RECOMMENDATION

Provide direction to staff on the request for the removal of one City-owned tree located in the public right-of-way at 1696 Newport Boulevard.

BACKGROUND

The Maintenance Services Division was contacted by the property manager (Applicant) of a retail center located at the northeast corner of East 17th Street and Newport Boulevard on October 11, 2011 requesting that the City remove a tree growing adjacent to the property managed by the company.

There are four Red Gum eucalyptus trees growing on the property of the retail center and one City owned Red Gum growing in a cut out in the sidewalk at the northwest corner of the property. The Applicant has stated that the property owner has directed the removal of the four privately owned trees due to their declining health and relentless insect attack. The Applicant is requesting the City do the same.

The following justifications for the request, as stated in the Applicant's arborist report are:

1. The City tree is heavily infested by Redgum lerp psyllids, *Glycaspis brimblecombei*.
2. The tree has a very small open root space to support recovery.
3. If the City were to cut the roots to repair the sidewalk or curb, it would probably be the beginning of a terminal decline in its health.

ANALYSIS

The representative of Stonington Properties Limited, (SPL, Ltd.) forwarded an arborist report dated July 13, 2011 (See Attachment 1) evaluating 5 Red Gum eucalyptus trees, *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*. Of the five trees evaluated, one is located within the City's right-of-way, with the other four located within the property of the retail center.

The report states that all five of the trees are heavily infested with Red Gum lerp psyllids, a sucking-type insect that draw nutrients out of the leaves, exudes a sticky substance which leads to the formation of sooty mold; drops sap-like substances, defoliates the tree and attracts a secondary leaf feeding pest, turquoise beetles. This cycle of pests generally results in a gradual

decline of the affected tree and is accelerated in trees that are already under stress from drought, compaction or development impacts; all present at this location. Healthy, vigorous Red Gum eucalyptus trees can typically withstand a few years of insect attack, and if treated with injectable pesticides, may recover. In this circumstance, all the trees, including the City tree have been under stress from road widening, parking lot development, surrounding hardscape or other negative site related factors for some time. The stress has resulted in a decline in vigor, branch die-back, leaf drop; and in the case of the private trees, some secondary disease issues. Treatment of the privately owned trees in the past has not yielded any significant improvement; likely due to the very poor condition of the trees and the resulting inability of the trees to translocate the pesticide to the point of insect attack in the leaves.

The City Arborist evaluated the tree growing in the public right of way and found it to be distressed and in poor condition. The tree is approximately thirty to thirty-five feet (30-35') in height, with a trunk diameter of fifteen inches (31.5"). The tree is located in the public right of way of Newport Bl. and is surrounded by a six foot (6') wide sidewalk and the adjacent roadway. See Attachment 2. It is an irregular shaped planting area as it is on the corner of two streets. It has several dead branches and scarring evident. It appears to have had some pruning in the past, but does not appear to have been maintained recently. This tree is not in the City's tree inventory and there is no record that the City's tree maintenance contractor has ever trimmed it. However, since it is growing in the public right of way, it is the City's responsibility.

No fungal diseases (rot) or boring insects were evident. The tree has never been treated by the City for the lerp psyllid. At this point, the tree may or may not benefit from treatment, as it is in poor condition. The tree does meet the criteria for a staff level authorization for removal, as stated in the Standards, but due to the large size, nice form and prominent location of the tree, staff felt it would be best to bring the property manager's request to the Commission for review.

The Applicant has been notified of the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting and has been sent a copy of this staff report.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

1. The Commission could authorize the removal and replacement of the tree, per the Streetscape and Median Development Standards, Section 4.0.3 – Discretionary Removals, which would require the replacement of the trees with one (1) twenty-four inch box-size tree and two (2) fifteen gallon-size trees to be provided to the City to be planted elsewhere on City property. The Applicant would pay all removal and replacement costs.

If approved by the Commission, the tree must be removed and mitigation trees provided to the City within one year from the date of final approval, after which the approval expires.

2. The Commission could authorize the removal as a Category 1 – Health and Safety Removal, per the Streetscape and Median Development Standards, Section 4.0.1 with the removal performed at City expense. No replacement trees would be required.
3. The Commission could direct staff to perform appropriate pruning to insure the safety of the tree; treat the tree with appropriate pesticides and provide a fertilization program in an effort to control the pest infestation and re-establish the health and vigor of the tree. This may take up to one year to yield positive results, if successful.

FISCAL REVIEW

Alternative 1: There would be no fiscal impact to the City if the request to remove the tree was either denied or approved as a Discretionary Removal, as the Applicant would pay all costs.

The cost for the removal of the tree would be \$496. The replanting costs for the three mitigation trees (1 – 24” box size and 2 – 15 gallon size) would be \$306.00. Costs are based on current City contract prices. Total cost for removal and replacement would be \$802.

Alternative 2: The cost for the removal of the tree would be \$496.

Alternative 3: The cost for the pruning, pesticide treatment and fertilization program is estimated to be approximately \$650 for the first year.

LEGAL REVIEW

No legal review is required for this item.

CONCLUSION

The Red Gum eucalyptus tree that has been requested to be removed is located within the public right-of-way in front of 1696 Newport Boulevard. The tree is in poor condition, having sustained damage from a heavy infestation of Red Gum lerp psyllids. The tree meets the removal criteria as outlined in the Standards, but due to its large size and prominent location Commission is requested to provide direction to staff regarding the Applicant’s request for removal.

BRUCE A. HARTLEY
Maintenance Services Manager

ERNESTO MUNOZ
Interim Director, Public Services Department

ATTACHMENTS: 1. [Independent Arborist’s Report](#)
2. [Tree Information](#)
3. [Photographs](#)

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