



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 16, 2011

ITEM NUMBER: 10c

SUBJECT: TREE REMOVAL REQUEST – 2822 ELLESMERE AVENUE

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

Deny the request for the removal and replacement of up to three City-owned parkway trees located in the public right-of-way at 2822 Ellesmere Avenue.

BACKGROUND

The Maintenance Services Division was contacted by telephone on August 30, 2011, inquiring if a tree in the Ellesmere Avenue parkway at the above address was scheduled to be removed in conjunction with recent curb and gutter repair work; and requesting root pruning be performed.

The City Arborist conducted a site visit and confirmed that the tree did not meet criteria for removal as outlined in the Streetscape and Median Development Standards (Standards).

The Maintenance Services Division received a letter from the property owner (Applicant) on September 26, 2011, requesting the Parks and Recreation Commission consider the removal of the parkway trees in front of the home. See Attachment 1. It was not clear from the letter if the Applicant desired only the tree on Ellesmere Avenue be removed, or they wished to include the two Cajeput trees located on the Pitcairn Avenue side of their home. Attempts to contact the Applicant by telephone to clarify the request were unsuccessful.

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

1. The roots were so dense in the parkway that they have stopped the grass from growing.
2. The roots uplifted the decorative brick in the walkway.
3. The roots are encircling the sprinklers and are exposed in the lawn.
4. The tree is invasive, unhealthy, an eyesore to lawns and parkways; has leaves that are troublesome to car engines and increases the risk and rate of fire.

The Applicant also stated several other reasons for requesting the trees be removed throughout the body of the letter. See Attachment 1.

ANALYSIS

The City Arborist evaluated three Cajeput Trees, *Melaleuca quinquenervia*, and found them to be healthy and in good condition. The tree on Ellesmere Ave. is approximately thirty feet (30') in height, with a trunk diameter of twenty-two inches (22"). The trees on Pitcairn Ave. are twenty to twenty-five feet (20-25') in height with trunk diameters of twelve inches (12"). The trees are located in five foot (5') wide parkways adjacent to four foot (4') wide sidewalks. The aerial portions of the trees were last pruned on October 28, 2010, by the City's tree maintenance contractor. See Attachment 2.

The curb and gutter were recently replaced adjacent to the tree on Ellesmere Ave. with the damaged turf reseeded. Newly established turf was observed. No evidence or record of root pruning and barrier installation was found. The roots of the tree were pruned on the curb side of the tree as part of the recent Parkway Maintenance project. Additional roots were likely removed during the installation of a concrete walkway through the parkway. There is a minor crack in the sidewalk immediately adjacent to the tree, with no height differential. There are no City property maintenance or damage issues associated with the trees on Pitcairn Ave., however there are significant tree roots observable at the surface and growing along the curb adjacent to both trees.

The trees are currently in bloom. Cajeput trees typically have a fairly heavy bloom, generating pollen and dropping parts of the flowers in addition to the normal leaf litter. No significant flower or leaf litter was observed by the City Arborist. There did not appear to be any notable fire danger presented by these trees.

The trees do not meet the criteria for a staff level authorization for removal, as stated in the Standards. The City Arborist evaluated the trees for possible relocation, but believes that due to the age and large size of the trees, relocation would cause damage to the trees, the surrounding parkway, sidewalk and curb. Therefore, relocation is not recommended.

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(s), per the Streetscape and Median Development Standards, Section 4.0.3 – Discretionary Removals, which would require the replacement of each tree with one (1) twenty-four inch box-size tree to be planted at the same address and two (2) fifteen gallon-size trees to be planted elsewhere on City property, for each tree removed. The applicant would pay all removal and replacement costs.

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

FISCAL REVIEW

There would be no fiscal impact to the City if the request to remove the tree(s) was either denied or approved as a Discretionary Removal, as the applicant would pay all costs.

For the Commission's information, the cost for the removal of the trees would be:

Ellesmere tree removal: \$341

Mitigation trees: \$306

Pitcairn tree removal: \$186 each; \$372 for both

Mitigation trees: \$306 for one tree, \$612 for both

Total cost for removal and replacement of all three trees: \$1,631

Costs are based on current City contract prices.

LEGAL REVIEW

No legal review is required for this item.

CONCLUSION

The parkway trees that have been requested to be removed are located within the public right-of-way in front of and to the side of 2822 Ellesmere Avenue. The trees are healthy and in good condition. The trees do not meet the removal criteria as outlined in the Standards. It is recommended that the Commission deny the request for removal of the City parkway trees.

BRUCE A. HARTLEY
Maintenance Services Manager

ERNESTO MUNOZ
Interim Director, Public Services Department

ATTACHMENTS: 1. [Letter received 09/26/11 from Applicant Requesting Removal of City Parkway Trees](#)
2. [Tree Information](#)
3. [Tree Maintenance Information](#)
4. [Photographs](#)

C: Mona and Mike McClanahan
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Peter Naghavi, Interim Assistant Chief Executive Officer