

PUBLIC WORKS AND GANG REDUCTION COMMITTEE REPORT relative to new policies for the consideration of existing parkway trees prior to approving plans for new garages, driveways, and curb cuts.

Recommendations for Council action, as initiated by Motion (Krekorian – Wesson):

1. INSTRUCT the City Administrative Officer (CAO), to:
 - a. Work with the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA), the City Planning Department, the Department of Building and Safety, the Bureau of Street Services Urban Forestry Division, the Los Angeles Department of Transportation, the Bureau of Engineering, the Community Forest Advisory Committee (CFAC), and any other relevant City departments to recommend new policies for the consideration of existing parkway trees prior to approving plans for new garages, driveways, and curb cuts.
 - b. Work with the CLA, the City Attorney, the Bureau of Street Services Urban Forestry Division, and any other relevant City department and to report in 30 days with recommendations for increased fines and penalties for removing street trees without permits.
2. INSTRUCT the Bureau of Street Services Urban Forestry Division to revise the tree replacement policy to require new 15-gallon trees to replace street trees removed due to new driveway cuts.

Fiscal Impact Statement: Neither the CAO nor the CLA has completed a financial analysis of this report.

Community Impact Statement: Yes

For: Greater Valley Glen Neighborhood Council
Studio City Neighborhood Council

SUMMARY

On April 14, 2015, Council considered Motion (Krekorian – Wesson) relative to new policies for the consideration of existing parkway trees prior to approving plans for new garages, driveways, and curb cuts. Motion states that many street trees are removed due to private development and new construction. In many cases, with better design, the street trees could be saved.

According to Motion makers, current policy allows for a street tree removal permit from the Bureau of Street Services Urban Forestry Division, for the installation of a driveway or new curb cut, or the expansion of an existing driveway. The Department of Building and Safety, Bureau of Engineering, Bureau of Street Services Urban Forestry, and the Planning Department are involved in the permitting process for new construction. Motion movers believe that better coordination and procedures are needed to limit the numbers of trees removed. Council referred Motion to the Public Works and Gang Reduction Committee for consideration.

At its meeting held September 14, 2015, the Public Works and Gang Reduction Committee discussed this matter with a representative of the CAO. The CAO's representative discussed

ongoing efforts to reestablish the City's sidewalk repair program and the damage of sidewalks caused by some street trees. The City's priority is access, but efforts are being taken to preserve as many of the City's street trees as possible. The CAO is also reviewing related Council Motions and attempting to identify potential program efficiencies.

During the public comment period, speakers discussed how new driveway cuts for the construction of so-called McMansions have resulted in the removal of street trees and public parkway spaces, and also reduced the available street parking space. Speakers urged the Committee to place a moratorium on all new driveway permits until a new street tree preservation program is implemented. It was also stated that the City needs to adhere to the stipulations of the California Environmental Quality Act to preserve its street trees.

Committee members expressed support for the Motion, as amended by the Committee Chair to direct the CAO to coordinate the requested reports and recommendations and to include the Community Forest Advisory Committee as a reporting agency. Councilmember O'Farrell suggested that the CAO look into the replacement of driveways rendered obsolete by new construction with parkways and trees, and to investigate the thousands of non-permitted paved parkways. Councilmember Martinez suggested that the CAO also look into the matter of sidewalks damaged by non-native trees. The Public Works and Gang Reduction Committee recommended that Council approve Motion's instructions, as amended above.

Respectfully Submitted,

PUBLIC WORKS AND GANG REDUCTION COMMITTEE



MEMBER VOTE

BUSCAINO: YES

MARTINEZ: YES

PRICE: ABSENT

O'FARRELL: YES

RYU: YES

jaw

-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-