


CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

DATE: December 20, 2013

TO: Public Works and Gang Reduction Committee
of the Los Angeles City Council
Attn: Office of the City Clerk
Room 395 City Hall

FROM: 
Nazario Saucedo, Director
Bureau of Street Services

SUBJECT: Edible Landscapes – Council File 13-0478

On October 23, 2013, the City Council considered a report from the Board of Public Works, which outlined how “Edible Landscapes” might be managed in the City right-of-way adjacent to privately-owned residential properties (parkway areas). The Council adopted the report with recommendations that (1) the Bureau of Street Services (BSS) report back in 90 days with a list of nut or fruit bearing trees that can be added to the Select Tree Selection Guide, and (2) the Office of the City Attorney be requested to draft revisions to the relevant sections of the Los Angeles Municipal Code to allow planting of safe edible landscapes and select street trees without permits, while limiting the City’s liability and insuring on-going maintenance by the adjacent property owner or resident.

This report is responsive to the first recommendation with regard to an initial list of proposed trees bearing edible nuts or fruits that can be allowed in the City right-of-way under a No-Fee Permit from BSS.

Other affected City Departments named in the Council Motion will report back separately on the availability of surplus City property and the feasibility of using some of these for community gardens. This report only addresses tree planting in the City right-of-way areas (parkways).

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the proposed list of nut or fruit bearing street trees eligible for consideration of a No-Fee Permit from BSS.

BACKGROUND

Edible landscaping will not require permits or review from the Department of Public Works (DPW). The adopted DPW report outlined many potential concerns that will be monitored on mainly a complaint-driven basis, including maintaining pedestrian access and sight visibility and also avoiding

noxious, thorny, or invasive plantings. The adopted report also outlined concerns with certain liability issues.

During the initial City Council meeting, Councilmember Parks raised several issues to consider such as transfer of maintenance responsibility when a sponsor moves, possible rodent infestations, trip and fall liabilities, and how/if to require sponsors to maximize plantings on their private property before expanding into the parkway area. Councilmember Fuentes also expressed interest in how private maintenance and liabilities could be rolled into current laws and City Codes. Some of these concerns will likely be addressed in the forthcoming report from the Office of the City Attorney.

DISCUSSION

BSS believes the following trees to be the best edible representatives for planting in City parkways where adequate space and favorable conditions allow:

1. Apple (*Malus species*)
2. Pecan (*Carya illinoensis*)
3. Citrus species
4. Guava (*Feijoa sellowiana*)
5. Walnuts (*Juglans species*)
6. Laurel (*Laurus nobilis*)
7. Macadamia (*Macadamia integrifolia*)
8. Olive (*Olea europaea*)
9. Almond (*Prunus amygdalus*)
10. Apricot (*Prunus armeniaca*)
11. Nectarine (*Prunus persica nuciersica*)
12. Peach (*Prunus persica*)
13. Pear (*Pyrus communis*)
14. Avocado (*Persea americana*)

BSS will accept City right-of-way tree planting permit applications for this list immediately upon the adoption of this report by the City Council.

If you have any questions or if additional information is needed, please contact the Bureau's Contract Administrator, Lance Oishi, at (213) 847-0903 or Assistant Director Ron Olive at (213) 847-3333.