

PUBLIC WORKS AND GANG REDUCTION COMMITTEE REPORT relative to developing an urban forest management plan to enhance and protect the City's urban forest.

Recommendation for Council action, as initiated by Motion (Koretz – Huizar):

DIRECT the Bureau of Street Services to:

- a. Develop and publish a State of the Street Trees Report.
- b. Develop a Street Tree Sustainability Plan.

Fiscal Impact Statement: The Bureau of Street Services reports that this action will not impact the General Fund.

Community Impact Statement: Yes

For: Silver Lake Neighborhood Council
Atwater Village Neighborhood Council
Winnetka Neighborhood Council
Glassell Park Neighborhood Council

SUMMARY

In a report dated October 22, 2015, the Bureau of Street Services discusses the current health of the City's urban forest and the Bureau's role to manage and protect trees located in the public right-of-way. Street trees are a subset of the City's total urban forest which also includes trees and vegetation on private properties, in parks, and other public places such as other City facilities and wildlife areas. The Bureau's authority over protected trees in these areas resides only in the power to issue protected tree removal and replacement permits. Therefore, the ability to influence this portion of the urban forest relative to health, pest infestations, and climate change is very limited.

The Bureau goes on to discuss the threats faced by the City's urban forest, including multi-year pest infestations, prolonged drought, climate warming, and the removal of trees to repair damaged sidewalks. Drought effects are currently most evident on trees not receiving some form of irrigation. The two most prevalent pest infestations at this time are *Xylella fastidiosa*, commonly referred to as Oleander Leaf Scorch and a fungus, *Fusarium euwallacea*, spread by the Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer, both of which are infecting numerous tree species.

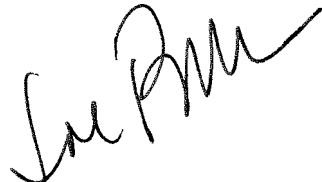
The Bureau believes that prolonged drought may cause severe stress and death in the urban forest. The Department of Recreation and Parks reports as many as 14,000 of their park trees are dying or have died due to drought. Trees residing in the City's freeway greenspaces show significant signs of drought stress. However, the Bureau does not believe that the majority of the street tree population is experiencing severe drought stress at this time. Street trees are not exhibiting significant drought effects since a large percentage of the population are in areas that continue to be irrigated. The Bureau goes on to states that continued drought without respite will assuredly manifest itself in impacts to the street tree population.

The Bureau has initiated a comprehensive assessment using accepted methods and criteria based upon urban forest sustainability models. The assessment criteria include tree and age diversification, health, tree stocking rate (number of available tree sites with trees planted relative to the total number of tree sites), and tree maintenance. After completing this assessment, the Bureau will develop a street tree sustainability plan. The sustainability plan will specifically address all of the stressors and impacts currently impacting the street tree population as well as incorporate public participation and outreach, investigating the necessity for code changes, necessary resources, and the future street tree population outlook.

At its meeting held October 26, 2015, the Public Works and Gang Reduction Committee discussed this matter with Bureau of Street Services staff. The Bureau representative summarized the highlights of the October 22nd, 2015 report, and went on to respond to concerns raised by Committee members such as the timely removal of fallen trees, preparations for an anticipated heavy rain season, and the Street Tree Division's staff resources. It is anticipated that the Bureau will publish its state of trees report by the end of the current calendar year. The Street Tree Sustainability Plan will be published in 2016. The Committee recommended that Council approve the recommendations of the Bureau's report.

Respectfully Submitted,

PUBLIC WORKS AND GANG REDUCTION COMMITTEE



MEMBER VOTE

BUSCAINO: YES

MARTINEZ: YES

PRICE: ABSENT

O'FARRELL: YES

RYU: YES

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-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-