



## CITY OF COMMERCE AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** Honorable City Council

**FROM:** City Manager

**SUBJECT:** City of Commerce Tree Planting Program

**MEETING DATE:** July 2, 2019

Item No. \_\_\_\_\_

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

City Council to receive and file a report on the City's Tree Planting Program.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The City adopted a revised Tree Policy and Master Street Tree Plan List for City-owned public right-of-ways and parks on April 19, 2016. The purpose was to plant more appropriate species of trees in narrow residential parkways, median islands, and open spaces and reduce sidewalk displacements and encroachment of tree roots onto private property.

There are more than 3,100 City trees and a total of 53 approved tree species in the revised Tree Policy and Master Tree Plan List which uses California native and/or drought tolerant type trees arranged in three categories based on their growth and root structure needs as follows:

1. Parkway based on narrow (2'-3' wide) to medium (4'-5' wide) – 31 tree species.
2. Open space such as parks where large tree species can grow naturally up to 70 feet in height with canopy's 25-60 feet wide depending on species – 4 tree species.
3. Open space also suitable for median islands, which will vary depending on island width – 18 tree species.

As part of the revised Tree Policy, Council authorized staff to replace residential parkway Ficus trees each year to prevent or address existing damage caused by their root structure to both public and private property and/or due to tree height that is interfering with high voltage lines. The City initially had 474 Ficus trees planted Citywide. However, a large number were on Slauson Avenue and replaced as a separate CIP Project. The City currently maintains 74 Ficus trees planted throughout the City including 11 in commercial areas or parks which can accommodate their root structure and size and will remain in place. Some Ficus are younger, smaller trees that are being replaced before they can cause damage as part of the City's long-term goals to reduce its potential liability.

This work includes removal of existing Ficus trees, roots and stumps, planting replacement trees, and a 12-month watering, pruning, and fertilizing service. Replacement trees are selected from the City’s Master Tree Plan List and may or may not be planted in the exact same location the tree was removed from due to parkway settlement that may need additional months and added work to address. Replacement trees will be planted in the same location if feasible or as close as possible.

The following are some of the trees from the City’s tree list that are being planted as replacement trees.



A secondary tree planting program is underway as part of the I-5 Freeway expansion mitigation efforts funded by CalTrans and administered by the I-5 Joint Powers Authority (I-5 JPA), which represents the Cities of Commerce, Downey, La Mirada, Norwalk and Santa Fe Springs. Following a formal bid process, an agreement for \$5,000,000 was executed on March 4, 2019 between the I-5 JPA and Tree People, Inc., a California non-profit corporation to plant 11,600 15-gallon trees in these cities. Each city will determine tree location and will coordinate with TreePeople during the planting process. Specifically, the City of Commerce will receive approximately 1,100 trees to be planted in parkways, median islands and parks and another 220 5-gallon sized “neighborhood fruit trees” to be given to residents on a first come first serve basis for residents to plant on their private property.

TreePeople began planting recently in the City of Downey. Staff met with TreePeople on May 28, 2019 to begin coordinating Commerce’s planting project. This is a 3-year project that must be completed by October 31, 2022 per CalTrans. Commerce’s plantings are tentatively scheduled to start in Spring of 2020. In addition, staff was approached by Loyola Marymount University’s (LMU) Center for Urban Resilience who are also working with TreePeople to create a digital tree location database. Commerce has a tree inventory. However, LMU, with a grant from Edison International, is offering to create a digital database of all trees in the City that can be used to identify and prioritize tree planting locations most beneficial to improve the environment. Staff agreed to partner with LMU, free of charge, to the City and work in conjunction with TreePeople and LMU on the tree planting project and community outreach effort. Completion of the LMU tree database is expected in the fall of 2019.

Once the planting project is complete, the City will be responsible for tree maintenance of the new trees in the public right-of-way. TreePeople will hold one Outreach Workshop for each city to distribute the neighborhood trees, the date of which will to be determined at a later time and advertised locally for the Commerce community. Residents will be responsible for planting trees on their private property and maintaining them.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve staff recommendation
2. Disapprove staff recommendation
3. Provide further direction to staff

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The current Council-approved annual fiscal year budget is \$40,000 for replacing the Ficus trees with a 36” box tree from the City’s Tree Policy List. There is no fiscal impact for the I-5 JPA Tree Planting Project funded by CalTrans at this time. However, upon completion of this project in October 2022, the City will begin to incur approximately \$45,000 per year in added costs to maintain an additional 1,000 trees. Staff will request the additional funding as part of future budget requests.

**RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC GOALS:**

This item is related to a specific 2016 Strategic Goal to “create and pursue opportunities for collaboration and regional partnerships to maximize resources and address regional issues.”

Approved by: Maryam Babaki, Director of Public Works and Development Services  
Prepared by: Gina Nila, Deputy Director of Public Works Operations  
Reviewed by: Vilko Domic, Finance Director  
Approved as to form: Noel Tapia, City Attorney  
Respectfully submitted: Edgar P. Cisneros, City Manager

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ATTACHMENTS:  
Tree Policy and Master Street Tree Plan List