



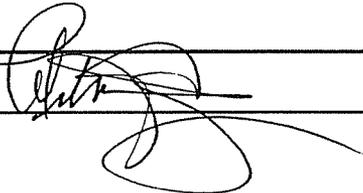
Memorandum

TO: TRANSPORTATION AND
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: Ed Shikada
Jim Helmer
Joe Horwedel

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: 09-10-07

Approved  Date 9/10/07

COUNCIL DISTRICT: City-Wide

SUBJECT: STATUS REPORT ON TREE PRESERVATION SERVICES REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION

Provide feedback to staff on tree preservation review activities.

OUTCOME

Acceptance of this staff report on the work plan will allow staff to continue progress, while ensuring consistency with City Council priorities, on improving tree preservation and stewardship in San Jose.

BACKGROUND

The City Council has directed several recent reviews and modifications related to tree regulations, largely responsive to community concerns about unpermitted or improper pruning or removal of trees. As a further response to these referrals, the City Manager's Office is working on a comprehensive review of tree-related services and regulations within the City and comparing them to those of other agencies. Representatives from departments and other key stakeholders are being utilized to conduct this review.

A tree preservation workplan was presented on May 21, 2007 and a progress report presented on June 4, 2007 to the T&E Committee and a progress report presented on August 9, 2007 to the Neighborhood Services & Education (NS&E) Committee. A final report is expected in the Fall of 2007 containing possible policy changes and other key recommendations.

ANALYSIS

Since reporting progress on the tree preservation workplan at the June 4, 2007 T&E Committee meeting, staff has proceeded with the following steps of the workplan:

- Heard community concerns and comments on the City's tree related policy and services. In addition to City Council discussion at the time the workplan was initiated and subsequent Council committee meetings, formal public input meetings were held on June 25 and 30, 2007. A total of approximately 125 residents and key stakeholders, such as private arborists, attended these meetings. In addition, to date there have been approximately 40 telephone calls or emails requesting information or providing comment on the City's tree related policies.
- Reviewed comments from the community and staff in order to develop a framework for potential strategies to be presented to community stakeholders; and
- Formed interdepartmental teams to work on:
 - a comprehensive City guideline for planting and maintaining trees including improvements to ensure that the process for City staff removal of trees that is consistent with private sector removal requirements;
 - a more consistent and streamlined tree removal permit process for public and private trees located in single family residential areas;
 - a process for the collection and distribution of in-lieu fee funds for planting trees;
 - a pilot program to remove and replace "nuisance" trees in neighborhoods, including lessons learned from recent tulip tree removal applications;
 - a street tree inventory, including a list of data to be collected and identification of the things needed for data collection by volunteers or staff;
 - a review of the best management practices of other agencies;
 - collaboration with PG&E;
 - state grant submittals for funding to enhance tree-related inventory, practices, constituent information/website, and outreach to better communicate with the citizens of San Jose.

A new round of community meetings have been scheduled between September 10 and September 22 to provide another opportunity to provide input, explain progress to date on proposal development and to continue efforts to improve the health and vitality of our urban forest. Staff is especially interested in obtaining input that can be used to refine proposals and to hear suggestions for alternatives. Staff will provide a snapshot of the community presentation and community input at the T&E Committee meeting.

Staffing and funding challenges are also being considered. Based on input and priorities determined by the community, T&E Committee and City Council, staff will begin to evolve the attached strategy by developing budget estimates and timelines for the individual actions. While priority will be placed on actions that can be taken within existing resources, it is likely that budget proposals will be necessary and forwarded to the Council for consideration in the annual budget process.

As this work proceeds, staff continues to make progress where possible. Staff completed work on a related grant and lease space agreement with Our City Forest that will be presented for Council consideration and includes an operating grant, a matching grant that is to be used for community volunteer capacity building, and provision of office space in the former City Attorney's Office at 151 W. Mission Street.

The original schedule for conducting this review of tree-related services anticipated completion of recommendations and a report to the City Council in September. At this time, staff anticipates that recommendations will be forwarded for City Council consideration in November.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

This report has been prepared to provide a venue for public discussion of tree preservation policy. Subject to Committee feedback, staff will refine the strategy for future community and committee presentations.

During the June 4, 2007 T&E Committee Meeting, staff was directed to expand its coordination efforts to include progress reports to the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee and to review the award of a purchase order for street tree Geographic Information System (GIS) services. A report was made to the NS&E Committee on August 9, 2007 and an information memo detailing the findings of the staff review of the street tree purchase order, dated June 20, 2007, was prepared in response to those requests.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

This review of the tree preservation policy is considered to be an item of "Significant Public Interest." In addition to several community and Council discussions of this issue, two community meetings were held specifically to solicit additional community comments and concerns about existing tree policy and services. A notice of the community meetings was posted on the City internet website and emailed to neighborhoods, environmental groups, realtors, arborist professionals, and recent tree removal permittees. Radio and newspaper articles also highlighted the City's interest in obtaining community input. In addition, email and telephone contact information was provided for a staff member who collected comments from anyone unable to attend the two scheduled meetings.

During the meeting, staff described the tree preservation workplan and heard comments on existing policy and services and suggestions for changes. Many comments were heard on the permit process, enforcement, master planning, guidelines, maintenance, inventories, outreach, education, goals and responsibilities.

Based on comments from the community, the scheduled community meetings are focused on obtaining feedback on potential policy and programmatic changes. Notice of these meetings has been posted on City internet websites, transmitted by email, to the groups noted above and to

interested persons who participated in the initial meeting discussions, and issued as a press release.

COORDINATION

Preparation of this report and memorandum was coordinated with the assistance of the Redevelopment Agency and the following Departments: Environmental Services, Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, Planning, Building and Code Enforcement, Public Works, Transportation, and the City Attorney's Office.

FISCAL/POLICY ALIGNMENT

The proposed work plan is consistent with the Council's direction to review and make recommendations on tree policies.

BUDGET REFERENCE

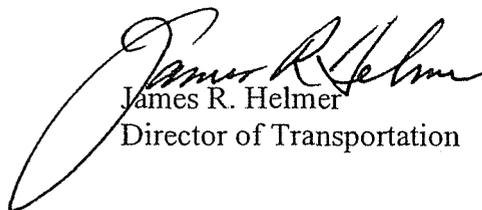
The current effort and work plan have been developed within existing operating funds. No special budget allocation has been made for tree preservation activities at this time.

CEQA

Not a project.



Ed Shikada
Deputy City Manager



James R. Helmer
Director of Transportation



Joe Horwedel
Director of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement

For questions please contact Kevin Briggs, Leadership Fellow, at (408) 535-8108.