

DATE ISSUED: April 22, 2002

REPORT NO. 02-089

ATTENTION: Public Safety & Neighborhood Services Committee  
Agenda of April 24, 2002

SUBJECT: Transportation Department, Street Division Tree Maintenance Contracts

REFERENCE: None

### SUMMARY

THIS IS AN INFORMATION ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE COMMITTEE OR THE CITY COUNCIL.

### BACKGROUND

This report is to provide information regarding the tree maintenance contracts managed by the Transportation Department, Street Division.

Council Policy 200-5, "*Planting of Trees on City Streets*," requires that after planting a tree in the street right-of-way, the owner of the adjacent property shall be responsible for watering and fertilizing, unless an assessment district has been formed to provide the required landscape maintenance. The Policy also states that the City shall be responsible for trimming street trees as required for public safety unless an assessment district has been formed to provide the required landscape maintenance.

Property owners wishing to perform maintenance on a tree within the street right-of-way at their own expense, must obtain a no-fee street tree permit. The issuance of the permit allows Street Division to provide the property owner with tree trimming guidelines to protect and maintain healthy street trees. The permit also helps to ensure consistency in the method of trimming and compliance with Street Division's tree trimming guidelines.

### DISCUSSION

Street Division manages four tree maintenance contracts including: palm tree trimming, broadleaf tree trimming, root pruning and tree removal.

#### Palm Tree Trimming Contract:

The current \$600,000 Palm Tree Trimming Contract was awarded to Aztec Tree Service. The contract started on June 1, 1998 with a completion date of May 31, 1999. However, this contract includes the option to renew for four additional one year periods beginning June 1, 1999 through May 31, 2003. The contract is in its third option year; June 1, 2001 - May 31, 2002. The final option will begin June 1, 2002 with a contract completion date of May 31, 2003.

Mutual agreement between the City and the contractor is required in order to enter into an option year. The agreement must be confirmed 60 days prior to the termination of the contract period. Either the City or contractor may decline to confirm the renewal of the contract for any reason. Price increases for the option years are granted only after the contractor furnishes the City with documentation showing the increase in cost to continue to perform the service. The price increases must be within the percentage stipulated by the contractor during the bidding process.

The contract provides complete trimming services of approximately 35,000 Queen, Fan and Date Palms at locations throughout the City. The contractor provides all equipment, labor and materials necessary for complete trimming and disposal of all debris generated by the work. The contract requires an arborist, certified through the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) to be the site supervisor working for the contractor to ensure trimming specifications are consistent with the current recognized National Arborist Association recommendations.

Over the years, the increase in the cost to trim the approximately 35,000 palms has exceeded the available funding. In order to address the short fall, it has been necessary to occasionally change the schedule for trimming Fan Palms from once annually to once every other year. The trimming of Queen and Date palms have remained on an annual schedule. The consequence of this reduced schedule is reassignment of Street Division staff to pick up thousands of palm fronds after high wind conditions.

The palm trimming schedule is routed by zip code for the ease of citizens identifying when work is to be expected. The work is also scheduled to avoid area with high traffic volumes such as the beach areas during the summer and university/college areas during active semesters.

#### Broadleaf Tree Trimming Contract:

The current \$450,000 Broadleaf Tree Trimming Contract was awarded to Aztec Tree Service. The contract started on October 1, 1997 with a completion date of September 30, 1998. This contract also includes the option to renew for four additional one year periods beginning October 1, 1998 through September 30, 2002. The contract is in its fourth option year; October 1, 2001 - September 30, 2002.

The contract provides complete trimming services of approximately 10,500 broadleaf street trees at locations throughout the City. The goal is to provide rotational trimming of all shade trees within the public right-of-way on a five to seven year cycle. This allows full trimming to be performed on street trees, increasing the attractiveness of the trees, ensuring safety of pedestrians and vehicles, as well as slowing the growth of the trees. As part of the contract specifications,

horticultural aspects of the trees are documented and entered into our data base, including the condition of the adjacent sidewalk. This allows street division to pro-actively identify sidewalk repairs needed due to tree roots.

#### Root Pruning Contract:

The current \$150,000 Root Pruning Contract was awarded to Tru-Green LandCare. The contract started on July 1, 1997 with a completion date of June 30, 1998. The contract includes the option to renew for four additional one year periods beginning July 1, 1998 through June 30, 2002. The contract is in its fourth option year; July 1, 2001 - June 30, 2002.

The contract provides complete root pruning, root barrier installation and trimming for approximately 1250 broadleaf street trees. The contract is utilized in conjunction with large sidewalk repair contracts where trees will be impacted, and in our new Sidewalk Preventative Maintenance (SPM) program. The SPM program includes root pruning street trees with minor raised sidewalks. The lifted concrete sidewalk panel is grinded down to eliminate the sidewalk displacement. A root barrier is then installed to prevent further damage thus saving the tree and sidewalk in one effort. A new contract is scheduled to be advertized in May 2002.

#### Tree Removal Contract:

The current \$369,868 Tree Removal Contract was awarded to West Coast Arborists. The contract started on January 15, 2002 and has a completion date of January 14, 2004. The contract includes the option to renew three additional one year periods beginning January 15, 2004 through January 14, 2007.

This contract provides complete removal of trees from the street right-of-way at locations throughout the City, including stump grinding, chip removal, backfilling, sawmilling, and grading. A new service added to the current contract is recycling wood from the trees which have been removed. The recycled wood may be used to produce furniture and craft products. Recycling the trees will significantly reduce the amount of material taken to our landfills.

#### Power Line Trimming:

This service is intended to provide a minimum safe distance from high voltage utility lines. This requirement is mandated by the State of California Public Utility Commission (PUC). The guidelines are directed at organizations responsible for the maintenance of facilities used in the distribution of electricity. To ensure compliance with the PUC requirements, SDG&E has trimmed numerous trees and removed approximately 1,000 trees over the past five years. SDG&E's "Tree Smart" tree planting program is used to compensate the required tree removals. The program planted approximately 1,000 trees throughout San Diego since 1997.

### CONCLUSION

As recommended by the Tree Advisory Board, in order to manage the maintenance of street

trees, it is necessary to have an accurate inventory of all the trees located within the public right-of-way. Preliminary estimates in 1999 placed the total number of broadleaf streets trees at 60,000. Street Division's data collection project has inventoried about 70% of the City and collected information on 150,000 street trees. It is projected that at the end of the data collection project, an estimated 175,000 broadleaf trees will be identified. Adding the 35,000 palm trees will bring the City's total inventory to approximately 210,000 street trees.

Respectfully submitted,  D. Cruz Gonzalez Director, Transportation Department		Approved: George I. Loveland
--	--	------------------------------

LOVELAND/MS