



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

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APPROVED STREET TREE MASTER PLAN CRITERIA, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

On November 11, 2002, the City Council approved the Street Tree Master Plan (STMP), which designated tree species for public street parkways and medians in the City. The intent of the STMP is to foster coherent and sustainable tree plantings, through the use of drought-tolerant species, that have low maintenance needs. The STMP designates tree species for each public street or segments of streets throughout the City. The tree species identified in the STMP are provided as the requirement for what basic species of tree shall be planted in a given location. However, tree species may also have different varieties (Cultivars) that would fit different situations. For the most part the STMP does not specify the Cultivars of the species to allow for flexibility. The City's Tree Maintenance Supervisor shall determine which species Cultivar is appropriate for the specific planting location. The following criteria, policies and implementation mechanisms, and the attached STMP spreadsheet constitute the approved STMP.

The tree species in the STMP are those with the fewest faults that typically cause negative impacts to the community. The trees are expected to have long lives and retain their attractiveness into their maturity. The trees are also reasonably free of insect infestation, and typically have less aggressive and invasive deep-root systems in order to reduce the potential for negatively impacting sewer lines, sidewalks, curb and gutters, and streets. However, any tree after several decades of growth may produce aggressive and invasive root systems.

In additions to the negative impacts that some trees cause, there are other trees that emit naturally occurring hydrocarbon compounds that contribute to the creation of ozone and fine particulate matter which assist in the formation of air pollution. To the extent practical the STMP includes tree species that emit low or moderate amounts of these "Biogenic Volatile Organic Compounds" (biogenics). The STMP does include some species that do generate high amounts of biogenics, but their use has been limited and generally are limited to the areas where they are currently planted. Some of the higher emitting tree species are the Liquidambar styraciflua (Sweetgum) and the Tristania conferta (Brisbane box). The STMP no longer includes inappropriate tree species with infrastructure damaging characteristics, such as Ficus microcarpa "Nitida," Indian Laurel Fig.

Species Selection Criteria

The following is the list of criteria used for selecting the STMP tree species pallet:

1. Maintain appearance of the existing tree canopy of the neighborhoods/districts, where possible. The City has an extensive and varied tree inventory that includes a significant number of mature trees. The intent of this criterion is to build on the established character in the neighborhoods and districts.
2. Eliminate problem tree species from the tree inventory and identify replacement species, respecting existing canopies and conforming to parkway widths, traffic and utility constraints. This criterion has been used in an attempt to reduce costs of maintaining the City's infrastructure, which may be subject to increased potential for damage from invasive root systems.
3. Reduce the total number of species in the City inventory, while maintaining sufficient bio-diversity, health and beneficial environmental effects. This criterion has been used in an attempt to reduce costs of maintaining the City's tree inventory and focus on trees best suited for growth in our climate zone.
4. Enhance the aesthetics of the streetscapes. This criterion has been used to support the urban design goals of the City.
5. In residential areas, use canopy and Pine tree species verses Palm trees. This criterion has also been used to support the urban design goals of the City and to positively address climate effects in residential areas of the City.
6. Selected tree species should be anticipated to be readily available for the long term. This criteria has also been used in an attempt to reduce costs of maintaining the City's tree inventory.

General Policies

The STMP identifies a specific species for a given public street or street segment. Overtime this will result in a consistent aesthetic theme in the City's neighborhoods and districts. In order to address potential planting questions, the following policies for the implementation of the STMP have been established:

1. Single tree species are provided for each City street, street segments, and median, except where large structural trees are used in combination with canopy trees to provide enhanced vertical identity and smaller-scale trees are used to provide shade and aesthetics in specific commercial districts and projects. A second species may also be present if utility lines are present on only one side of a street and existing approved trees are not suited for planting underneath the lines.

2. Due to the City's irregular borders and street layout, some streets within the City are actually small fragments of larger areas in neighboring jurisdictions. The intent of the STMP is to establish the Culver City identity for these fragments as well as those streets more readily identifiable in the City, and serve as important transportation corridors. As such the STMP implementation strategy is based on the following policies:
 - a) The Public Works Director or their designee shall determine the locations of street tree plantings in order to assure standard vehicle/pedestrian sight-clearance are provided.
 - b) At the intersection of a non-residential street and a residential street, the identified species for the non-residential street would be continued down the residential street to the end of the non-residentially zoned property, public alley, or a maximum of 120 linear feet from the nearest end of the corner radius, whichever is less.
 - c) At the intersection of residential streets, the identified species for each street will be continued to the intersection.
 - d) At the intersection of non-residential streets, the identified species for the classified higher-capacity street, as established in the City's current General Plan Circulation Element, Street System Classification section, would be continued down the intersecting street to the end of the corner property, public alley, or a maximum of 120 linear feet from the nearest end of the corner radius, whichever is less.
 - e) At the intersection of non-residential streets with the same classifications, the identified species for the street which generally is oriented in an East/West alignment (such as, Venice, Washington, Culver and Jefferson Boulevards), would be continued down the intersecting street to the end of the corner property, public alley, or a maximum of 120 linear feet from the nearest end of the corner radius, whichever is less.
3. Focus areas, significant intersections and designated districts/projects may be established by the City, which may use alternative species in order to highlight or otherwise enhance the visibility of the locations. If these types of areas are identified, the STMP shall be amended as discussed in Policy 4., below.
4. Future amendments of the STMP are anticipated. The STMP allows for amendment where new circumstances arise, such as identification of focus areas, significant intersections and designated districts/projects, as has been done for Downtown and East Washington Boulevard Overlay Districts. The STMP also may be amended, as desirable new tree species become available and new diseases and/or pest infestation impact existing species.

The STMP shall be amended in the manner it has been adopted, subject to Park, Recreation and Community Services Commission review and recommendation and City Council approval.

5. Pursuant to the City Council's direction on November 11, 2002 the participants in the Proposition 12, Residential Infill Tree Planting Project, may request a change in the designated species for their streets. Provided that the proposed replacement tree species meets the above referenced STMP criteria, the City's Street Tree Maintenance Supervisor may administratively approve the participants' request.

STMP Implementation

The City has limited resources for implementing the STMP. The implementation of the STMP will occur in the following manner:

1. Tree planting in the approximately 1,200 identified vacant street tree sites through the use of grant funds, such as the State of California, Proposition 12, Park Water Bond 2000, tree planting grant.
2. Annual replacement of trees due to attrition using General Fund monies.
3. As part of any City conditional approval of "Discretionary Projects".
4. As part of Capitol Improvements Projects undertaken by the City or possibly other governmental/public agencies.
5. The General Public may plant trees in the public parkway, provided they have first obtained a tree-planting permit from the City.

Contacts:

Questions regarding the species, planting locations and/or obtaining tree-planting permits, should be addressed to:

Tree Maintenance Supervisor, 310/253-6420