



CITY OF POMONA

PHILLIPS RANCH ASSESSMENT DISTRICT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

AGENDA REPORT

December 2, 2025

To: Phillips Ranch Assessment District Oversight Committee

From: Meg McWade, Public Works Director

Submitted By: Shandy Dittman, Public Works Fiscal and Project Manager

SUBJECT: TREE MAINTENANCE PROGRAM AND BUDGET

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Phillips Ranch Assessment District Oversight Committee review an update on tree maintenance costs and funding levels within the Assessment District.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report provides an update on current and projected tree maintenance expenditures for the Phillips Ranch Assessment District. Tree maintenance services within the Phillips Ranch Assessment District are currently limited due to several “no” votes by the Community related to a requested assessment increase to provide appropriate service levels. The “no” votes result in long-term funding constraints. Extended trimming cycles and rising service costs continue to impact the level of maintenance that can be provided.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The FY 2025/26 Adopted Budget allocates \$110,000 to Contract – Tree Maintenance (Account No. 256-4073-52931-00000). As of November 18, 2025, approximately \$32,475 has been expended under the current West Coast Arborists (WCA) contract. The agreement with WCA expires on December 31, 2025.

A new tree maintenance contract will be considered for award by City Council for an effective date of January 1, 2026. The new agreement is anticipated to have an annual cost between \$157,000 to \$220,400 (range of the two lowest responsive bid contractors currently under evaluation) for a five-year grid trim schedule for Phillips Ranch trees. The prorated six-month cost (approximately \$78,500 on the low end to \$110,200 on the high end) will result in total FY 2025/26 expenditures exceeding the current Adopted Budget. As a note, any funding used for emergencies and tree removals, reduces the grid trim cycle.

The recommendation for an appropriate level of annual funding for tree services in Phillips Ranch would be \$320,400 which is \$220,400 for grid trimming plus \$50,000 for emergency response and \$50,000 for tree removals.

DISCUSSION:

Currently, tree maintenance services are provided by West Coast Arborists under a piggyback agreement executed in 2021. This agreement was extended through December 31, 2025 to allow time to rebid tree maintenance services. The new agreement is scheduled for consideration to be awarded by City Council on December 15, 2025 for a contract effective date of January 1, 2026.

The current tree maintenance budget for the Assessment District for FY 25/26 is \$110,000, which is consistent with the budget allocated in FY 24/25. However, due to emergency tree maintenance, actual expenditures for FY 24/25 slightly exceeded the original adopted budget, totaling \$111,915. A budget transfer from Office Supplies and Other Expenses was required to cover the overage.

Except for Phillips Ranch, Citywide street trees and park trees are maintained based on City standards of five- and three-year grid trimming cycles, respectively. The Phillips Ranch Assessment District is woefully underfunded to meet the standard five-year grid trimming cycle, which for the District's roughly 12,000 trees, is approximately 2,400 trees trimmed per year. A five-year grid trim service level is recommended and estimated to cost approximately \$220,400 for the first year of the new tree contract, with Consumer Price Index adjustments on future years. Additionally, there is a need for funding to support specialty services, both to provide emergency response coverage until all trimming is completed and to address the recommended tree removals. The recommendation for an appropriate level of funding would be \$320,400, which is \$220,400 for grid trimming plus \$50,000 for emergency response and \$50,000 for tree removals.

The Phillips Ranch Assessment District has operated without a regular grid trimming schedule, but is maintained at an approximate 20-year cycle based on available funding. Tree maintenance in Phillips Ranch is primarily conducted on an emergency response basis, addressing needs as they arise rather than through routine trimming. Last year, 30 trees were removed, which alone comprises more than half of the tree budget. It is important to note that, due to lack of funds, trees located on slopes within Phillips Ranch are typically not trimmed, with maintenance focused on trees in parkways and medians. Typically, staff will prioritize emergencies throughout the year, and if funding is available at the end of the year, staff will select an area to trim as funding allows. While this emergency response model has helped manage costs within available funding, it also presents challenges related to long-term tree health, public safety, and the aesthetic quality of the urban forest, as routine maintenance is infrequent and reactive.

Looking ahead to FY 2026/27, based on the new bid amount, the Phillips Ranch Assessment District will continue facing a significant funding shortfall if the current budget remains unchanged. To address this, the Committee will need to consider either increasing the tree maintenance budget, potentially requiring reductions in other service areas, or further reducing the scope of tree maintenance services.

Prepared by:

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