



# CITY OF POMONA

## PARKS AND RECREATION

## COMMISSION

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**DATE:** February 20, 2020

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission

**FROM:** Gustavo N. Gonzalez, AICP, Planning Manager

**SUBJECT:** Historic Sites Tree Protection and Preservation Program Amendment

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) review the proposed amendments to the Historic Sites Tree Protection and Preservation Program, provide input, and recommend that the City Council amend the Historic Sites Tree Protection and Preservation Program.

### **BACKGROUND & PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

On May 1, 2000, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2000-72 (Attachment 1) adopting the Historic Sites Tree Protection and Preservation Program (Program); thereby providing a mechanism for preserving and maintaining mature trees within the City's Historic Districts. At the time, Public Works projects and line clearance activities in the City's Historic Districts made it apparent that the City needed to develop a clear policy on Public Works projects and trees and landscaping maintenance for historic sites. The goal of the Program was to develop a tree protection and preservation program for historic sites that would achieve historic preservation goals and be consistent with existing ordinances on street trees, landscaping and the City's street tree master plan.

In recent time, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) has raised concerns with the loss of mature trees within the City's Historic Districts as the Program does little to disincentivize the removal of trees because it lacks regulation for the replacement of trees and penalties for unpermitted tree removals. In addition, the HPC is concerned with the Program's exemption process, particularly as it relates to the criteria for the removal of trees that pose a threat to the public welfare as well as dead and diseased trees.

In fall of 2019, the HPC recommended the formation of a Tree Ad Hoc Committee (Committee) comprised of three HPC members, including Debra Martin, James Gallivan, and Ann Tomkins. The Committee was tasked with working with staff to review the current Program and make recommendations that improve the Program ability to minimize the loss of mature trees in the City's Historic Districts. Over the course of a year, staff worked with the Tree Ad Hoc Committee to review the current Program, and formulate and refine a set of recommended amendments based on input from the Committee.

The amendments were presented to the HPC on January 15, 2020, where staff gathered additional input. On February 5, 2020, staff again presented the amendments to the HPC, this time in redlined format. At this meeting, the HPC provided further input and recommended that the project return to the HPC at its meeting of March 4, 2020, after the PRC has provided input on the latest round of amendments, given that the amendments would affect trees in City parks and the public right-of-ways within historic districts.

#### Recommended Amendments

The recommended amendments, in essence, overhaul the current Program to address the HPC's concerns with the lack of regulations as follows:

1. Removing the exemptions section and adding a section that establishes criteria for obtaining a Minor Certificate of Appropriateness to remove character-defining landscaping;
2. Adding a section that establish a process for the replacement of trees with penalties for unpermitted removals.
3. Adding a section that establishes an appeal process.

While additional regulation is recommended to require replacements and minimize removals, the recommended amendments also include deregulation of certain aspects of the Program to encourage residents to protect and maintain the character-defining landscaping in the City's Historic Districts. These include the following:

1. Reducing the permit required for removal of character-defining landscaping from a Major Certificate of Appropriateness to a Minor Certificate of Appropriateness.
2. Removing the requirement to obtain a Minor Certificate of Appropriateness for tree pruning and trimming, so long as the pruning and trimming is consistent with industry standards.

The goal is to improve the Program to further protect and preserve the City's urban forestry within Historic Districts in a manner that replaces trees, disincentives the tree removals and does not endanger lives, or create hazards that could threaten critical infrastructure. Attachment 4 provides a summary of each of the recommended amendments. A redlined version and clean version of the draft City Council Resolution with the recommended amendments to the Program are also included as Attachments 2 and 3 for review and consideration by the PRC.

#### ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) Resolution No. 2000-72
- 2) Draft City Council Resolution
- 3) Clean Version of Program Amendments
- 4) Summary of Recommended Amendments