



CITY OF POMONA COUNCIL REPORT

July 20, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Anita D. Scott, City Manager

Submitted By: Meg McWade, Public Works Director

SUBJECT: AWARD OF AGREEMENT FOR CITYWIDE TREE MAINTENANCE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICES TO MARIPOSA TREE MANAGEMENT, INC. IN RESPONSE TO THE CITY'S REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council take the following actions:

- 1) Award a three-year contract to Mariposa Tree Management, Inc. to provide citywide tree trimming, maintenance and emergency response services, at prices bid, for an initial three-year term, retroactive to July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2029, with the option to extend for up to two additional one-year periods; and
- 2) Authorize the City Manager, or designee, to execute a three-year agreement, with two one-year renewal options with Mariposa Tree Management, Inc., including extra work, and any extensions or amendments thereto, subject to review by the City Attorney.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Staff recommends awarding a tree maintenance and emergency response services agreement to Mariposa Tree Management, Inc. (Mariposa) for citywide tree trimming, maintenance and emergency response services. Routine, grid-cycle tree maintenance helps preserve the health and structure of the City's urban forest, while as-needed emergency response addresses hazardous tree conditions caused by storms, disease, or other public safety concerns.

SB1439/GOVERNMENT CODE §84308 APPLICABILITY:

☒ When this box is checked, it indicates the agenda item is subject to the Levine Act SB1439 requirements. Councilmembers are reminded to check their campaign contributions and determine whether they have received a campaign contribution of \$500 or more that would require disclosure

and/or recusal from discussing or acting on this agenda item. Campaign contributions of \$500 or more made 1) by any person or entity who is identified in the agenda report as the applicant or proposer or 2) on behalf of the applicant or participant, including a parent, subsidiary or otherwise related business entity, or 3) by any person who has a financial interest in the agenda item requires a councilmember to comply with SB1439.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Funding in the amount of \$1,499,680 was budgeted for tree trimming, maintenance and emergency response services in the Adopted FY 2026-27 Operating Budget.

Worktags	Adopted FY 26-27 Budget
FD101 General Fund CC4011 Parks Maintenance Tree Services	\$ 354,000
FD101 General Fund CC4011 Parks Maintenance Contingency Tree Trimming Citywide Extraordinary	\$ 250,000
FD128 Measure R CC4021 Street Tree Maintenance Tree Services	\$ 154,680
FD208 State Gas Tax CC4021 Street Tree Maintenance Tree Services	\$ 630,000
FD254 Assessment District – University Corporate Center #4 CC4073 University Corporate Center MD#4 Zone H Tree Services	\$ 1,000
FD256 Assessment District – Phillips Ranch Maintenance CC4073 Phillips Ranch Zones A and B Tree Services	\$ 110,000
Total	\$1,499,680

Funds for subsequent fiscal years of the agreement will be requested in the annual budget process.

PUBLIC NOTICING REQUIREMENTS:

In accordance with Section 2-993.1(4)a of the City’s Purchasing Ordinance, a Public Notice inviting bids was posted on the City’s electronic bidding platform, PlanetBids, on April 29, 2026 and bids were due on June 10, 2026.

PREVIOUS RELATED ACTION:

On July 15, 2026, Staff responded to a bid protest and letter from bidder, Golden West Arbor Services, Inc. (Attachment No. 4)

On July 6, 2026, the City Council continued the consideration of award of a three-year contract to Mariposa Tree Management Inc. to provide citywide tree trimming, maintenance and emergency response services to the July 20, 2026 City Council meeting.

On July 6, 2026 Staff responded to a bid protest and letter from bidder, West Coast Arborists, Inc (WCA). (Attachment No. 3).

On December 15, 2025, the City Council rejected the bids received for Invitation For Bids (IFB) No. 2025-29 after Staff review with the City Attorney determined that a Request for Proposals (RFP) was a more appropriate bid approach. The Scope of Work was modified to include a separate proposal for the Phillips Ranch area, as well as updated models and pricing for multiple service levels to ensure tree care remains within budget.

Due to the City Council rejection of bids for citywide tree trimming, maintenance and emergency response services, Council authorized a six-month extension to the Agreement with West Coast Arborists (WCA) to allow time to complete a competitive RFP for long-term tree trimming and maintenance services.

On September 22, 2025, the City issued Invitation for Bid No. 2025-29 for Citywide Tree Maintenance and Emergency Response Services.

On June 16, 2025, the City Council authorized a six-month extension to the agreement with WCA to allow time to complete a competitive IFB for long-term tree maintenance services.

On September 20, 2021, the City Council approved a three-year base term piggyback contract with WCA, with two optional one-year extensions for tree related services, not to exceed the annual budgeted amount.

DISCUSSION:

The Public Works Department, through its Parks and Facilities Division, is responsible for maintaining city trees in parks, streets, and public facilities as part of its commitment to sustaining a healthy and resilient urban forest. Routine tree maintenance is essential to promote tree health, reduce long-term maintenance costs, and mitigate risks associated with falling limbs or tree failures. Emergency response services are also a critical component, ensuring the City can respond quickly to storm damage, disease, or other urgent tree-related safety hazards.

On April 29, 2026, the City issued Request for Proposal No. 2026-17 (RFP) for Citywide Tree Maintenance and Emergency Response Services to 205 firms via PlanetBids. Thirty-six firms downloaded the RFP and eight bids were submitted. Following a review by the Purchasing Division for compliance with the solicitation requirements, two proposals were determined to be non-responsive and were not eligible for further evaluation. One submission consisted of a letter from a vendor indicating it would not be submitting a proposal, and the other did not follow the proposal content requirements identified in the RFP.

The six responsive proposals were evaluated by an evaluation committee comprised of City staff with expertise in urban forestry and public works operations. Proposals were evaluated in accordance with the criteria established in the RFP, including project approach, qualifications, and experience, with a maximum possible score of 240. Individual evaluator scores were submitted to the Purchasing Division, which compiled the results to determine the final ranking. Pricing proposals were not released to the evaluation committee until after the technical evaluations and scoring had been completed, consistent with the City's RFP evaluation process.

After a comprehensive evaluation, Mariposa was determined to be the most qualified and responsible bidder. Reference checks have been completed with positive feedback received from other cities who contract with Mariposa for tree maintenance services.

**Citywide Tree Maintenance and Emergency Response Services
RFP No: 2026-17**

Rank	Firm	Score
1	Mariposa Tree Management, Inc.	211.20
2	West Coast Arborists, Inc.	200.01
3	Great Scott Tree Service	177.01
4	North Star Land Care	154.73
5	Golden West Arbor Services Inc.	149.58
6	Tiger Tree Services, Inc.	140.00

As indicated in the RFP, the City's award of contract recommendation is based on overall qualifications of the bidder. The pricing component is evaluated for relevance and reasonableness, but it is only one criterion of several evaluated. As a specialized maintenance service, the City Council is not obligated to award the contact to the lowest-priced bidder as it is with a public works contract. The criteria set forth in the RFP then acts as the evaluation guide to determine which proposal is the best for the City based on its stated objectives and needs. Although cost was included as an evaluation criterion, the bid was conducted as a qualifications-based RFP, where award is based on the proposal that provides the best overall value to the City rather than the lowest price. For this reason, the original staff report emphasized the evaluation results and recommendation instead of comparing proposal pricing.

Direct comparison of total contract pricing is also limited because the agreement consists of two pricing components: (1) a geographic grid maintenance program with a known base cost, and (2) unit prices for on-call and as-needed services, including emergency response, hazardous tree removals, out-of-cycle pruning, stump grinding, tree planting, watering, and maintenance needs. These unit costs are dependent on service needs that arise throughout the year and may fluctuate significantly based on existing tree conditions, historical maintenance practices, weather-related events, storm severity, and other unforeseen circumstances.

The table below reflects the pricing for the grid maintenance program, plus a cumulative total for the per unit costs for out-of-cycle and emergency tree maintenance requests:

Rank	Firm	Five-Year Base Cost
1	Mariposa Tree Management, Inc.	\$4,444,076.00
2	West Coast Arborists, Inc.	\$4,514,609.00
3	Great Scott Tree Service	\$4,923,557.72
4	North Star Land Care	\$3,446,347.00
5	Golden West Arbor Services Inc.	\$2,917,669.00
6	Tiger Tree Services, Inc.	\$1,806,907.00

Evaluation Criteria and Process

The City maintains its trees using a grid trim program for tree maintenance, in which geographic areas are serviced on a recurring schedule based on established trim cycles. As crews complete one area, they move to the next until the entire city has been serviced, and then the cycle begins again. Under the current cycle, street trees and palms are trimmed every five years, while Chinese Elms are trimmed every two years, City park trees are trimmed every three years, and Phillips Ranch and VPD trees are trimmed as-needed only, prioritizing emergency response.

Because tree maintenance costs have increased over time, the RFP established a recommended Level A Service standard that prioritizes public safety and long-term tree health. Under this standard, street trees would continue to be trimmed every five years, park trees every three years, Chinese Elms and palm every two years, VPD trees every three years, and Phillips Ranch trees every ten years.

Compared with the standard set in the RFP, the City's current maintenance schedule aligns with the proposed Level A Service only for street trees, Chinese Elms, and City park trees.

The RFP also defined a Level B Service standard consisting of a five-year cycle for street trees, four-year cycle for City park trees, two-year cycle for Chinese Elms, three-year cycle for palms, fifteen-year cycle for Phillips Ranch trees, and five-year cycle for VPD trees. Even under the less frequent Level B Service standard, the City's current maintenance schedule for palms, Phillips Ranch trees, and VPD trees remains below the proposed service levels in the new agreement. The primary difference between the two options is the frequency of the grid trimming cycle, allowing the City to select a service level that best aligns with available funding while still maintaining a structured, citywide tree maintenance program.

The most significant enhancement included in the new RFP is the redefinition of the City's standard grid cycle tree maintenance. For the first time, the City's standard level of service is clearly defined as a Full Trim, rather than the limited maintenance provided under previous contracts. A Full Trim includes structural pruning, removal of deadwood, crown cleaning, and crown raising to provide appropriate pedestrian and vehicle clearance. By comparison, prior contracts primarily focused on minimum clearance pruning and the removal of hazardous or dead branches.

This enhanced maintenance standard directly responds to years of feedback from the City Council, residents, and Staff regarding the condition of the City's urban forest and the need for more comprehensive tree care. Implementing a true Full Trim as the City's standard maintenance practice is expected to improve overall tree health and structural integrity, reduce the likelihood of branch failures over time, enhance public safety, and create a healthier and more attractive urban forest.

The RFP also acknowledges that many City trees have not received comprehensive structural pruning in decades. As a result, the specifications allow contractors to remove up to 40 percent of a tree's canopy during the initial maintenance cycle, when necessary, to correct deferred maintenance and restore proper tree structure. Subsequent maintenance cycles are expected to

require less intensive pruning as the City's tree inventory returns to a routine maintenance schedule.

In addition to improvements in tree maintenance, the RFP substantially enhances the City's palm maintenance program by reducing the trimming cycle from every five years to every two years and establishing clear maintenance standards, including palm skinning where appropriate. These changes are expected to improve the overall appearance of the City's palm inventory while reducing long-term maintenance needs and providing a more consistent level of service throughout the community.

The proposals were evaluated independently by three-person selection committee. As with all subjective evaluation processes, there are different ranges in scores based on the proposal submissions and the individual evaluator on the evaluation committee. The evaluators are selected based on their experience, professional judgment and impartiality. The evaluation committee members were provided with the RFP, evaluation criteria, and individual access to the evaluation portal via Planet Bids. These best practices procedures resulted in the recommended action.

Mariposa's proposal demonstrated the strongest overall understanding of the City's urban forestry objectives and maintenance standards and as such Mariposa was ranked the highest and deemed the finalist. Staff reviewed Mariposa's proposed grid cycle cost and unit pricing for out-of-cycle and emergency services and determined prices bid as reasonable.

While the RFP established a citywide grid-based maintenance program for all City trees, including those in the Phillips Ranch Assessment District and Vehicle Parking District, which currently are trimmed on an as-needed basis, Mariposa's proposal most closely aligned with the Level A service standards defined by the City Arborist. Mariposa took no exceptions to the maintenance standards set in the RFP for a standard grid trim. By comparison, WCA defined a pruning methodology based on removing no more than 25 percent of live foliage, which differed from the City's prescribed maintenance standards. For the past 26 years, the City's trees have been maintained under a grid trim defined only as raising canopy for clearance and removing severely poorly structured or dead branches. With the increased level of tree maintenance defined in the current RFP, and accepted by all proposals received, except for WCA, Staff defined a full trim as up to 40% of live foliage removed to increase the standard of care for tree maintenance to be in line with Council and community aesthetic and safety goals.

The RFP had an important scope of work item related to the ten-year grid cycle tree maintenance within the Phillips Ranch Assessment District, which is currently maintained on an as-needed basis with priority given to emergency situations and safety concerns. The RFP established a ten-year grid-cycle maintenance standard for Phillips Ranch and recognized the need for a more proactive approach to address deferred maintenance, fire mitigation, and overall tree health. The Phillips Ranch Assessment District provides approximately \$110,000 annually in dedicated funding for tree maintenance. Essentially, the funding available provides for 1,156 trees per year to be trimmed. Mariposa was the only potential contractor to acknowledge and affirm the City's request for a specialized plan for Phillips Ranch trees, given this extended cycle. Mariposa's proposal included a commitment to develop and submit a full work plan defining boundaries of the 10-year grid zones within thirty days of contract execution, prioritizing fire mitigation when it is identifying the 1,156 annual trees to be trimmed. This approach, outlined in Mariposa's response,

indicated the recommended Contractor has a clear understanding of City's project needs and supports the City's objective of proactively trimming trees and reducing wildfire risk within the Phillips Ranch Assessment District. Once the work plan is presented thirty days after contract execution, Staff will review and upon approval, Mariposa will implement the approved annual tree trimming strategy for Phillips Ranch.

Due to differences in the definition of trimming in the proposals received and the thoroughness of the proposal from Mariposa, independent Staff evaluations scored Mariposa higher on the criteria for project approach, resulting in Mariposa being deemed the finalist.

The new agreement also implements the City's expanded maintenance program as established in the RFP and requires the contractor to complete a full inventory of the City's trees. A full trim for all City trees has been defined by the RFP to meet International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) standards. Palm trimming will increase from a five-year grid trim cycle to a two-year grid trim cycle (approximately 2,507 palms North of Mission for Year One and approximately 2,507 palms South of Mission for Year Two, repeating every two years), and Chinese Elm trimming will remain on a two-year grid trim cycle. In addition, trees within the Phillips Ranch Assessment District and the Vehicle Parking District will transition from an as-needed maintenance approach to a proactive grid trim based maintenance program.

The annual cost of the Citywide Level A grid trim maintenance program with Mariposa is \$962,899 for year one of the agreement, leaving sufficient funding within the approved budget to address emergency storm response, hazardous tree removals, tree planting and watering, out-of-cycle pruning, and other unforeseen tree maintenance needs. This approach expands proactive tree maintenance coverage, while preserving flexibility to address priority and emergency services throughout the year.

The agreement with WCA for Citywide Tree Trimming, Maintenance and Emergency Response Services expired on June 30, 2026. To ensure continuity of service, Staff recommends City Council authorize the City Manager, or designee, to execute the attached retroactive agreement with Mariposa (Attachment No. 1) to start on July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2029, with the option to extend for up to two additional one-year periods.

Prepared by:
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ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment No. 1 – Mariposa Tree Management Agreement
Attachment No. 2 – PowerPoint Presentation
Attachment No. 3 – WCA Protest and Staff Response
Attachment No. 4 – Golden West Arbor Services, Inc. Protest and Staff Response