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# Information Item

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Date: May 17, 2012

To: Mayor and City Council  
From: Martin Pastucha, Director of Public Works  
Subject: Temporary Relocation of Two Trees on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street during the Construction of Parking Structure 6

## Introduction

This information item provides an update on the proposed temporary relocation of two Ficus trees on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street while the new Parking Structure 6 is being constructed.

## Background

On [June 30, 2009](#), Council approved a contract with Morley Construction Company as the design-builder for the rebuilding of Parking Structure 6. The demolition and rebuilding of Parking Structure 6 commenced in March 2012 and the anticipated completion date is November 2013.

## Discussion

Demolition of the existing structure is nearly complete. Excavation and shoring will occur between May and August 2012.

During construction, the Parking Structure 6 site can only be accessed by either 2<sup>nd</sup> Court alley or 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, with the latter being the only option for large deliveries, placement of the crane for hoisting of shoring members into the excavation pit, and for staging.

Two Ficus trees located directly in front of Parking Structure 6 on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street create a physical obstacle while swinging and hoisting loads, also risking the health of the trees if contact is made with the equipment. The trees also create a visual hindrance for equipment operators. Crane operators will have difficulty seeing through the trees as

they attempt to pick up construction materials over the trees. This results in compromised safety for the workers. The trees become a safety hazard not only to the construction workers on site, but also to the public should an accident occur.

Through Morley Construction Company, the City hired an arborist Senna Tree Company to evaluate the health and structural condition of the two trees that are proposed for temporary relocation. Each tree was assessed to determine its overall health, structural characteristics, appraised value, and its ability to thrive if relocated, in order to determine if the trees would be suitable for relocation. Staff is proposing to temporarily relocate these trees to Senna Tree Company's Oro Vista nursery in Tujunga, California. Once construction of Parking Structure 6 has been completed, the trees will be replanted in their original locations.

The decision to temporarily relocate the trees was reached in consultation with the City Arborist and a consultant arborist taking into consideration the potential damage to the trees from construction activity, the survivability of the trees if relocated, and the safety concerns in the trees remained onsite. A secondary benefit is that the relocation of these trees will allow a reduction to the number of traffic lane closures required on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street during the course of construction since delivery trucks will be able to utilize the area currently occupied by the trees.

Attached is a temporary tree relocation plan prepared by Morley Construction Company, and the tree relocation procedures prepared by Senna Tree Company. These reports provide the following information:

- Description of the trees and their suitability for relocation.
- Proposed procedure for relocating the trees, including pruning, side boxing, bottom boxing and transport, planting and post relocation maintenance.
- Appraised value of the tree in relation to its relocation cost.
- Existing utilities and other elements of the City's infrastructure.
- Information regarding the maintenance and irrigation of the trees.
- Risks of relocating the trees.
- Environmental and community benefits.

Excavation and shoring of Parking Structure 6 is scheduled to begin on May 24, 2012. In order to allow time to relocate the trees and receive shoring materials at the site, Senna Tree Company would need to begin preparing the trees for removal on May 17, 2012. The boxing and removal of the trees would occur in mid to late May 2012.

**Prepared by:** Karen Domerchie, Project Manager

Attachment A: Tree Relocation Plan and Procedure

## **PS #6 - Temporary Tree Relocation Plan**

In order to complete construction of Parking Structure #6, two (2) existing street trees need to be temporarily relocated. This course of action is necessary due to logistical constraints caused by the trees and will help ensure the safety of the trees and the public as well as minimize the overall impact of the project on the community. Following is an overview of the conditions as well as a description of the factors considered in making this recommendation.

### **DESCRIPTION OF TREES AND SUITABILITY FOR RELOCATION**

- (1) - 108" Canopy Ficus nitida located at 1431 2<sup>nd</sup> St.
- (1) - 132" Canopy Ficus nitida located at 1431 2<sup>nd</sup> St.

Both trees are in good general health, with no signs of disease or pests. The canopy structure is asymmetrical due to growth adjacent to a structure and both trees lean westward away from the building. Other than removal of pavement, there are no restrictions which would prevent the trees from being located. Due to the asymmetrical canopy structures, it may be desirable to re-plant them in the same or similar location

### **PROPOSED PROCEDURE**

Canopies will be pruned to 14'-11" in preparation for transport. Tree roots will be excavated and boxed by hand. Approximate box sizes are 108"x108"x4.5' and 132"x132"x4.5'. The trees will then be lifted and laid on a flatbed truck for transport to Senna Tree Company's Oro Vista nursery in Tujunga, CA. The excavations will be backfilled and patched until construction activities are complete, at which time the trees will be returned to their original locations.

### **APPRAISED VALUE VS. RELOCATION COST**

The approximate value of the mature trees is \$6,000-\$8,000 each. The approximate value of the relocation and subsequent replanting is \$50,000.

### **EXISTING CITY UTILITIES**

The extent of excavation includes portions of the parking and outermost northbound traffic lane. Based on a review of the available as-builts, utility lines likely to be interrupted include irrigation and electrical for street lighting. If damage to these lines occurs, they will be repaired to their original condition.

### **MAINTENANCE AND IRRIGATION**

While at the nursery and until replanting is complete, the trees will be cared for by Senna Tree Company. Thereafter, irrigation and maintenance of the trees will be performed by the City of Santa Monica according to current protocols.

### **RELOCATION RISKS**

While the ultimate success of the temporary relocation of the trees cannot be guaranteed, Senna Tree Company estimates, based on their experience, that the likelihood of success is

approximately 95%. Senna's experience includes the recent relocation of the "Three Amigos" ficusses at the Palisades Park project.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS**

The proposed course of action minimizes risk to the existing trees caused by construction, creates a safer working environment for those involved in the construction, and benefits the community at large by preserving these natural resources and expediting potential noise- and dust-generating phases of construction. As the trees will ultimately be replanted in their original locations, there is no long-term change to aesthetic or cultural values of the trees.

# S E N N A

TREE COMPANY, LLC

## **TREE RELOCATION PROCEDURE**

Supervised by Senna Tree Company ISA Certified Arborist

### **PRUNING**

Pruning shall occur prior to boxing and consist of removal of deadwood and thinning if necessary to reduce leaf area by approximately 10-15%. Pruning performed is Class I Ornamental pruning, which does not reduce height or spread of tree. Trees that may fall prey to damaging insects when stressed are sprayed with preventative pesticide.

### **SIDEBOXING**

Sideboxing to occur in fall/winter months preferably. Sideboxing utilizes a backhoe tractor for soil excavation to dig an oversized rootball. All roots are cleanly cut by hand. The oversized and "roughed out" rootball is then shaved by hand with a sharpened shovel, loppers etc., to custom fit the box. Then the sides of the box are banded into place, a watering basin constructed and the tree is thoroughly watered. The same root pruning procedure applies to balled and burlaped material except the rootball is dug round and wrapped with burlap and twine.

### **BOTTOMBOXING AND TRANSPORT**

Bottomboxing is performed by tunneling under the box by hand enabling bottom boards to be installed. Further reinforcement of the box with skids, cleats, vertical steel banding and top padding, if required is performed. The tree is lifted by the box "not the trunk" and transported upright or lying down on a semi truck and flatbed trailer.

### **PLANTING**

The planting pit is excavated approximately 2' over box width to the same depth of the rootball, the tree is set approximately 2" to 6" higher than existing grade and backfilled with site soil. The earth watering basin is reconstructed at the rootball perimeter and the tree is watered thoroughly and if necessary guy wired into place.

### **POST RELOCATION MAINTENANCE**

The key to all successful tree relocation projects is sound, consistent maintenance. Maintenance of relocated or stored trees consists of bi-weekly waterings during warmer weather and weekly watering during cooler weather. Maintenance is required for several years after planting to insure establishment, depending on age of tree.

Rootball soil moisture must be monitored frequently with a soil probe in order to fine-tune the watering schedule to suit individual tree needs.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact our office at the number listed below.