



Information Item

Date: January 25, 2016

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Martin Pastucha, Director of Public Works
Subject: City Hall Sycamore Tree Pollarding

Introduction

The Public Works Department's Public Landscape Division, which maintains the City's parks, urban forest, downtown and Santa Monica State Beach, will pollard 31 California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*) trees in Ken Genser Square in front of City Hall in the first week of February.

Discussion

Pollarding prunes off all foliage from a tree until only a number of established pollard heads remain (Gilman, 2011). Pollarding is a historical pruning practice recognized by the American National Standard Institute (ANSI). Since they were planted, these California sycamores in front of City Hall have been pollarded annually to avoid obstructing the view of this landmarked building and to keep the pruning cuts on the pollard heads to a small size. The photo on the next page, taken of these trees in February 2015, illustrates the result of pollarding. The aforementioned pollard heads are the bulbous areas at the ends of the branches. This helps avoid excessive decay entering the heads and allows for good wound occlusion. In order to minimize biological stress on the trees, the work is performed carefully with hand tools when the trees are dormant in the winter. As a result, these trees have maintained good health over the years.



Prepared By: Matthew Wells, Urban Forester

References

American National Standards Institute (2008). *American National Standard for Tree Care Operations—Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Maintenance—Standard Practices (Pruning) (A300, Part 1)*. Tree Care Industry Association, Manchester, NH. 9 pp.

Gilman, E. (2011). An Illustrated Guide to Pruning. Cengage Learning.