

CITY OF CERRITOS

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS REQUESTING THE REMOVAL OF PARKWAY TREES

1. The goals of the Cerritos General Plan have been adopted to encourage a park-like community through the development of landscaped public areas and open spaces, which includes a vigorous parkway tree planting program.
2. The City has caused to be planted approximately 30,000 trees along parkways, medians and in parks and maintains said number of trees.
3. The existence of healthy, mature trees which have been planted in accordance with the recommended street tree list can increase the property value of adjacent properties.
4. It is the City's intent to preserve and protect healthy trees that provide valuable benefits to the environment and create a desirable aesthetic appearance for the community's neighborhoods.
5. Trees located in parkways, medians and parks which are dead, dying or diseased are replaced for the purpose of maintaining the park-like appearance of the City.
6. The City recognizes that from time to time, certain conditions may exist which would cause private property owners to request the removal of a parkway tree located adjacent to their parkway.
7. Property owners may qualify for residential parkway tree removal if the property owner has pursued and received financial reimbursement from the JPIA for damages to private property resulting from a City maintained parkway tree where the accumulated amount of the awarded claim(s) exceeds the cost for tree removal and replacement.
8. Should multiple trees on a specific residential block satisfy the tree removal criteria, removal schedule shall be determined based on the individual growth characteristics of each tree approved for removal and the severity of damage to each property. No more than twenty percent of the total number of trees on the subject residential block may be removed annually.
9. Other than trees which are diseased, dying or dead, must be removed for public health and safety reasons, or have caused significant damage to private property, a maximum of fifty (50) additional parkway trees may be removed during any calendar year. This will minimize the possibility of having all of the parkway trees removed from large areas of the City at one time.

10. Requests to remove a tree because a tree drops leaves, needles or flowers are not valid reasons to consider the tree to be eligible for removal. Damage to sidewalks and curbs caused by the roots of a tree shall not qualify the tree for removal. Special problems caused by the roots of a parkway tree such as mounding or damage to public improvements may be considered on a case by case basis. Reasonable efforts such as installing root barriers or pruning will be made to save a healthy tree or trees rather than removing or replacing the tree or trees. Trees removed and replaced due to special problems will not be included as part of the fifty (50) tree per year limit and associated tree removal and replacement costs will be the responsibility of the City.
11. Costs associated with repairing improvements on private property shall be the responsibility of the property owner. Trees which are replaced due to root problems may be replaced with the same species of tree.
12. The Property Preservation Commission is responsible for prioritizing the removal of trees and shall serve as an appeal board for property owners requesting the removal of the parkway tree adjacent to their property. Upon appeal, applications for removal of parkway trees shall be submitted to the Department of Public Works. City staff will prepare recommendations for qualifying requests to the commission for consideration. The Commission's decision shall be final unless appealed to the City Council.
13. Homeowners have the opportunity to request the removal and replacement of the parkway tree adjacent to their property providing the policy requirements are met.
14. Individual property owners may request the removal and replacement of the parkway tree adjacent to their property. An application must be submitted to the Department of Public Works. Staff will review the request and approve or deny the request. If the request is denied, the applicant shall have the opportunity to file an appeal to the Property Preservation Commission. The appeal application must be submitted to the Department of Public Works within ten (10) days of receiving denial of their tree removal request from the Department of Public Works. Staff will prepare a report and forward the appeal to the Property Preservation Commission for consideration. The Commission's decision shall be final unless appealed to the City Council.
15. Notice of a request to the Property Preservation Commission to remove a parkway tree or trees shall be conspicuously posted on each tree being considered for removal not less than ten (10) days before the hearing date.
16. Upon the Property Preservation Commission's review and approval of a tree removal application, any cost associated with the removal of City trees shall be incurred by the City of Cerritos.

17. Property owners and/or residents shall not cause the parkway tree adjacent to their property to be removed or damaged in any way.
18. Property owners may have the opportunity to contract tree trimming/tree removal services through the City of Cerritos for City maintained parkway trees should tree maintenance be necessary or tree removal be approved in accordance with City of Cerritos policy and with an approved tree trimming/removal permit. Contracted parkway tree trimming shall be in accordance with City of Cerritos, International Society of Arboriculture and National Arbor Day Foundation standards. Tree replacement species shall be determined by the City of Cerritos, Public Works Department.
19. The City shall continue to implement preventative actions and practices such as installing root barriers when installing curbs, gutters and sidewalks or when planting new trees.