



URBAN FORESTRY BOARD RECOMMENDATION 20140917-G03

Date: September 17, 2014

Subject: Pilot Program for the Care and Maintenance of Prominent Trees in the Urban Core

Motioned By: Board Member Brewer

Seconded By: Board Member Fleming

Recommendation

Approve the process presented for the nomination, application, care, maintenance, and review of the Prominent Tree Pilot Project, including the council letter.

Description of Recommendation to Council

On September 19, 2012, the Urban Forestry Board submitted a proposed protocol for the identification, selection and care process for at-risk prominent trees in the urban core.

Additional time was requested in December 2012 to review, refine, and simplify the process for the pilot. Meetings with Forestry, the City Arborist and council representatives reflect these changes.

Rationale:

Austin City Council Resolution 20120426-076, passed on April 26, 2012, which directed the city manager "to work with staff and the Urban Forestry Board to develop a pilot program using the Urban Forest Replenishment Fund and the planting for the Future Fund to identify, maintain, and preserve prominent trees along transit corridors and in the urban core.

Vote

For: (7) – Kite, Maceo, Brewer, Brown, Classen, Fleming, Newsom

Against: (0) - None

Abstain: (0) -- None

Absent: (0) -- None

Attest:

Robert Clawson
Urban Forestry Board Staff Liaison

Attachments

September 17, 2014

To: Mayor Lee Leffingwell and the Austin City Council Members

CC. Marc Ott, City manager; Burt Lumbreras, Assistant City manager; Sara Hensley, PARD Director; Greg Guernsey, PDRD Director; W. Pat Fuller, Division manager, Forestry; Michael Embesi, City Forester.

RE: Pilot Program for the care and maintenance of prominent trees in the urban core.
Council Resolution 20120426-076.

On September 19, 2012 the UFB submitted a proposed protocol for the identification, selection, and care process for at risk prominent trees in the urban core.

After meeting with Representatives from Council member Tovo's and Council member Morrison's office, sponsors of this resolution, the UFB requested additional time in December 2012, to review, refine, and simplify the process for the pilot. After many meetings with forestry, the city arborist, and council representatives. we believe the process now reflects these changes. The UFB recommends an easy to use, simplified application by which the public can nominate trees. We have also streamlined the selection process for the board.

The UFB recommends a new fund be created to pay for the pilot program using both the Planting for the Future Fund and the Urban Forest Replenishment Fund sited in the resolution. Allocations from these sources and the total amount of the fund will be determined by the city manager's office with input from forestry and the city arborist.

The proposed process also includes inspection and review of tree work done in regards to the pilot program. This review will be provided by the city arborist with monthly reports to the UFB. These reports will inform the board of potential problems. A quarterly review by the board of this process will allow for needed changes and revisions to ensure our success with this important project.

Sincerely,

Chris Kite Chair
Peggy Maceo Vice Chair
Ryan Fleming
Nicholas Classen

Keith Brown
Len Newsom
Patrick Brewer

Attachments

PROCESS

Who can nominate: The public. Limit one person per nomination per month.

Applications: applications will be posted to the Care for Prominent Trees web site and will be a subsection of the UFGP with links to the application from the Urban Forestry page and the city arborist web site. An icon or link will be added on the Tree Portal link. Application will be submitted to both the UFB staff liaison and UFGP, with the UFB liaison forwarding to Forestry, Public Works, and the City Arborist.

Selection: Applications will be forwarded to city arborist's office, Forestry, and Public Works. Preliminary screening of applications will determine which trees need inspection, with no more than 5 applications per month being considered for assessment. Two of the three arborists will inspect each tree using the Prominent Tree Care Assessment forms. Applications received up to the last day of the month will be considered for the next month nomination.

Applications received after the first day of the month will be considered the following month. Tree applications will be considered in the order they were received.

Only eligible trees, as defined in the application, will be submitted to the UFB for nomination. Up to 3 nominations will be presented to the UFB per month. One tree is selected by the UFB based on the recommendations by the arborists. Other eligible trees not selected will be considered at the next UFB meeting. The UFB will select one tree each month for care.

Forestry arborists or Public Works arborists will do work on Public Trees.

Forestry wants to accumulate approved applications and care for nominated trees in one group, at one time, citing preferred seasonal work to care for trees. Nominations would proceed monthly then a fixed number would be cared for, the month being selected by forestry, with notification to the UFB.

Although the intent of the resolution is for public trees, a private tree may be eligible. Work on private trees will be determined by the city arborist, the scope of work being provided by an assessment from the city arborist based on Prominent Tree Care Assessment forms.

FUNDING

The prominent tree care resolution sites two funding sources to pay for tree care, the UFGP and the PFTF. The UFB working group recommends that a percentage from each source be allocated to create a new fund: The Prominent Tree Care Program. The total amount in the new fund, and percentages, will be determined by the city manager with input from forestry and the city arborist, with notification given to the UFB upon their decision. The new fund will be replenished annually.

REPORTING AND INSPECTION

The city arborist will review the tree work done in regards to this program, both private and public. The UFB will stay informed by "care provided" reports to the UFB, given monthly by forestry, PW, and the city arborist. Unsatisfactory tree work will not receive future contracts with this program. Contractor reviews will be reported to the UFB.

Purpose

On April 26, 2012, the Austin City Council passed a resolution to develop a pilot program to identify, maintain, and preserve prominent trees along transit corridors and in the urban core. The purpose of the pilot program is to provide immediate care and maintenance for significant trees. Trees are nominated by the public.

Prominent Tree Care Application

This is an application to provide free professional tree care for trees that need urgent care. Tree care will be provided if this tree is selected. Volunteer participation is expected in the form of spreading mulch and/or watering the tree. Volunteers are required to water the tree if this is determined necessary. Ball moss removal will not be included unless ball moss is excessive and detrimental to the tree. See *FAQs*.

Eligibility.

Tree must be located in a public ROW or within 15 ft of a public area.

Trees over 24" in diameter and on of a species from the tree list, (Appendix F, attached) will be given priority, including trees needing emergency care. Trees nominated must be within the zoning district of the City of Austin.

Address where tree is located:

Closest physical address.

Owner of property where tree is located (if applicable) or City of Austin.

If private property the owner must consent.

Signature of owner

Date

Print name

Location of tree on lot:

URL of a map where the tree is located:

URL can be of an image map, Google map, etc. or latitude and longitude coordinates if available, within one half square mile. Please be as specific as possible for someone unfamiliar with the site.

Tree Nominator Contact Information

Contact name:

Address:

Phone number:

Email address:

Description of the Tree

Tree species: see appendix F

Tree circumference (in inches) measured 4.5 ft. from the ground (see Attachment B):

Briefly describe the tree, the care you think this tree needs and why you are nominating this tree.
Do you think this tree needs emergency care?
Please, be concise but provide sufficient information

If the tree needs watering, will the owner of the tree commit to watering the tree?
If not, who will water the tree? Is there a water source near this tree?
See City of Austin watering guidelines and restrictions.
<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/watering-schedule>
<http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Watershed/growgreen/treecare.pdf>

Photo of the Tree

Please provide a photo of the tree. We would prefer you give us the URL of an online image, but you may upload a hard copy of the file if you wish.
If you have the URL of an online image, provide it here:
If you are uploading a file, do so here:

Only gif, jpg and png file extensions are allowed. Maximum file size of 800 KB.

Evaluation B: Prominent Tree Condition Assessment and Treatment Recommendations

To be completed by a certified arborist

Evaluator:

Certification #:

Signature:

Date: Property Address:

Public Private If Private, distance to Public property (ft)

1. TREE AND SITE CHARACTERISTICS

DBH: Species:

Estimated Height & Canopy Spread: Form:

Age Class: Percent Deadwood: % Crown Class:

Pruning History: crown cleaned topped pollarded utility clearance none
 excessively thinned crown raised crown reduced storm damage clean

Site Character Landscape Type Immovable Obstructions

If Other If Other If Other

2. TREE DEFECTS

Defect	Root Crown	Trunk	Scaffolds	Branches	Other Notes
Poor Taper					
Codominant/forks					
Multiple Attachments					
Included Bark					
Excessive end Weight					
Cracks/Splits					
Hangers					
Girdling					
Wounds					
Decay (See Section 3, below)					
Cavity					
Conks/Mushrooms					
Bleeding					
Loose/Cracked Bark					
Nesting Hole/ Bee Hive					
Stubs					
Borers/Termite/Ants					
Cankers/Galls					
Previous Failure					

3. DECAY ASSESSMENT

Root Collar/Plate Trunk Scaffold branches

- Advanced Decay Analysis Recommended
- Tree Risk Assessment Recommended

Comments:

1. TREE HEALTH

Foliage Color: Foliage Density: Annual Shoot Growth:

Callus Development: Vigor Class: Epicormics?:

Leaf Size: Twig Dieback?: Wind (tree position):

Major Pests/Diseases:

4. SITE CONDITIONS

Irrigation: Soil problems: Drainage Shallow Compacted Small Volume Other

Restricted Root Area: % CRZ Affected: Buttress Wounded?: Root Pruned: ft from trunk

% CRZ Paved: % CRZ grade lowered: Undermined:

% CRZ w/ Fill Soil: Exposed Roots: Erosion:

Other Site/Soil Problems:

COMPREHENSIVE RECOMMENDATION FOR TREE HEALTH AND STRUCTURE REMEDIATION

ALL RECOMMENDATIONS MUST BE CONSISTENT WITH THE FOLLOWING AND A CERTIFIED ARBORIST MUST BE ON SITE WHILE WORK IS PERFORMED:

1) Austin City Code, Chapter 6-3 Trees and Vegetation; 2) American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Standards for Tree Care Operations A300 & Z133

1. STRUCTURAL REMEDIATION Pruning Cabling/Bracing Other

Details

COST ESTIMATES

2. SITE AND SOIL REMEDIATION Site Modification Prescriptive Soil Treatment/Amendment Other

Details

3. TREE HEALTH CARE Pest / Disease Treatment Prescriptive Fertilization Supplemental Watering PHC Program Other

Details

Likelihood that prescribed treatment will result in a sustainably healthy tree

Recommend Reevaluation Treatment times every years

TOTAL

Prominent Tree Care Process

UFB	STAFF	STAFF	STAFF/UFB
NOMINATIONS	PURCHASING/FUNDING	TREE CARE	INSPECTIONS AND REVIEW
Application review	City Manager, Forestry, PW, and City Arborist to determine funding for Prominent Tree Care Program.	Public Trees: Care done seasonally from one group of applications, at one time. Private Trees; Care done monthly or as determined by the city arborist.	UFB receives monthly reports from forestry, PW, and city arborist on tree work.
Selection	Forestry uses appropriate funds.		City arborist inspects all work and reports to UFB.
Public trees to Forestry or PW	City Arborist uses appropriate funds.		Quarterly review by UFB for process revisions and changes.
Private trees to city arborist			

FAQs

1. Will ball moss kill the tree?

In most cases the answer is no. Ball moss needs to be removed only when the tree is heavily covered to the extent that the plants are covering the exterior of the canopy.

Ball moss is a small epiphyte commonly found clinging to trees, fences, utility lines, etc, typically on shaded areas. It's an aerial plant that attaches itself with pseudo-roots that don't absorb water and minerals. Sometimes, tree branches with ball moss seem to be dying, but it's not from the ball moss, but from the canopy shade.

More details at:

http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Planning/City_Arborist/Ball_Moss.pdf

2. How do I water a large prominent tree?

Large trees with a diameter larger than 16 inches need to be watered deeply ~~and~~ during periods of insufficient rainfall (when soils have received less than 1 inch of rain per month). Start by applying 10 gallons of water per inch of trunk diameter, slowly and evenly distributed to the outer half of the dripline (area under the tree's canopy) at minimum, and to the full dripline if feasible. Fine tune until you verify (by gently inserting a small hand trowel or screwdriver somewhere at the outer half of the dripline) that the top 6 inches of soil are moist.

Watering guidelines at:

<http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Watershed/growgreen/TreeCare.pdf>

3. Can prominent trees be watered with the City's Water restrictions?

Yes, the City recognizes the importance of preserving prominent trees due to the significant benefits they provide. Please check the city guidelines for restrictions.

Water restrictions at: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/stage-2-watering-restrictions>

4. How do I mulch a large prominent tree?

Use organic mulch only, spread it 2-3 inches deep, over as much of the dripline as possible (it's better to mulch the full dripline) and keep mulch 3-5 inches away from trunk. Make sure that mulch is not spread thicker than 3 inches because mulch absorbs water and prevents it from reaching the tree roots. If you have grass under part of the canopy and don't want to remove it, apply on that area 0.5 inches of organic compost yearly instead of mulch.

Demonstration video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLdbdQ9fVZE>

5. Where do I find information about Oak Wilt?

At this link: <https://austintexas.gov/page/oak-wilt-suppression>

6. Will I have to pay anything if I nominate a prominent tree?

No, the goal of this program is for the City to provide the funds and provide the appropriate tree care. However, if the tree that you nominated is chosen, it may be necessary that you provide supplemental watering-

7. Can I nominate my own prominent tree that needs care?

Only private trees within 15 ft. from public property-are eligible for this program. We encourage you to care for your prominent tree as these are the workhorses of the urban forest (e.g. clean air, provide shade, hold soil in place, improve our quality of life). If the tree doesn't qualify for this program, please see the attached links to assist you to locate a private arborist:

Why hire an arborist: <http://www.treesaregood.com/faq/faq03.aspx>

International Society of Arboriculture: <http://www.isa-arbor.com/findArborist/findarborist.aspx>

American Society of Consulting Arborists: <http://www.asca-consultants.org/>