

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

NO. 04-269

DATE September 1, 2004

CD All

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: WEST COAST ARBORISTS, INC. - REQUEST THAT THE GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT RENEW CITYWIDE CONTRACT

K. Chan	_____	*J. Combs	<u><i>JCC</i></u>
H. Fujita	_____	J. Kolb	_____
F. Mok	_____	G. Stigile	_____

[Signature]
General Manager

Approved _____

Disapproved _____

Withdrawn _____

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board

1. Direct staff to request that the General Services Department (GSD) renew the City Contract No. 57570 with West Coast Arborists, Inc., for emergency tree trimming services; and,
2. Find that in accordance with Charter Section 1022, the Department does not have personnel available in its employ with sufficient time and expertise to undertake these specialized professional tasks in a timely manner, and it is more feasible and economical to secure the services by contract.

SUMMARY:

The Forestry Division of the Department manages the park system's urban forest, including regular tree trimming and inspection, and responding to the numerous emergency and non-emergency work requests received daily. However, unexpected or cataclysmic events or pest infestations create hazardous situations requiring large and immediate dedication of knowledgeable, well-equipped staff which is not practical or economical for the Forestry Division to retain on hand all the time.

Major weather events or fires may engender urgent public safety responses beyond the ability of the staff and equipment of the standing resources in the Forestry Division. Moreover, notable in recent years are two plagues experienced by urban park trees in which the ability to call upon the immediate and temporary assistance of expert tree removal services was crucial in maintaining safe conditions.

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One such plague situation was the Lerp Psyllid infestation of eucalyptus trees, which resulted in the death of over 5,000 eucalyptus trees that were removed in a timely manner from City parks before they caused any injuries. The second plague is the Pine Beetle, currently killing hundreds of pine trees in California forests including pine trees in three of our camps: Seeley, Valcrest and High Sierra. The beetle infestation has also been spreading into our City parks. As of July 2004, the Department has removed over 150 pine trees from remote camp areas but needs to be prepared to timely remove and prune more trees which are suffering and dying from the consequences of these two infestations. It is impractical to divert all Forestry personnel to this temporary disease-response task at the detriment of other necessary work all over the City, whereas the contractor has proven ability to accomplish sizable emergency projects in a single concentrated effort, such as required for large-scale tree trimming projects and tree removals.

The Department has relied on the use of an independent contractor, West Coast Arborists, Inc., for special emergency tree services for the last five years. This contractor understands and complies with the Urban Forest management practices and policies adopted by the Department for park trees. The Bureau of Public Works, Street Tree Division also occasionally uses the contract, but they have a number of additional contractors which help them handle emergency peak demand on street tree trimming and removal services. The initial contract term for West Coast Arborists, Inc., has expired, and GSD has requested that the principal Department using the contract confirm the need to renew this Citywide contract.

This report was prepared by Teresa Prosciewicz, Forestry Division.