

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

NO. 05-233


DATE September 14, 2005

C.D. ALL

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: PERSONAL SERVICES CONTRACTS WITH TRUGREEN LANDCARE AND WEST COAST ARBORISTS, INC. FOR EMERGENCY PARKLAND TREE TRIMMING AND REMOVAL

*J. Combs F. Mok
H. Fujita K. Regan
B. Jensen M. Shull
J. Kolb


General Manager

Approved Disapproved Withdrawn

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board:

1. Approve the proposed personal services contract in the amount not-to-exceed \$500,000 with TruGreen Landcare, substantially in the form attached, to provide as-needed emergency tree trimming of all parkland trees and removal of park trees within the City limits, subject to approval of the Mayor, City Council and the City Attorney as to form;
2. Approve the proposed personal services contract in the amount not-to-exceed \$300,000 with West Coast Arborists, Inc., substantially in the form attached, to provide as-needed emergency trimming/shaping of all parkland palms and removal of park trees outside the City limits, subject to approval of the Mayor, City Council and the City Attorney as to form;
3. Find that in accordance with Charter Section 1022, it is more feasible and economical to secure these emergency services by contract;
4. Direct the Board Secretary to transmit forthwith the proposed contracts to the Mayor in accordance with Executive Directive No. 16, and concurrently to the City Attorney for review as to form;

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

PG. 2

NO. 05-233

5. Authorize the Board President and Secretary to execute the contracts subsequent to receiving the necessary approvals.

SUMMARY:

In July, a park patron was injured when a tree branch fell on him without warning. The heavy winter storms resulted in an increased growth of heavy, weakly attached tree branches in many of our mature trees. Coupled with the extreme summer heat, a set of circumstances exists known as summer branch drop, a phenomenon whereby trees fail on hot calm summer and fall afternoons without warning or prediction. In hot weather conditions, trees absorb and transport water from the soil to the leaves and by doing so they change the weight distribution along the trunk and limbs, resulting in the failure of the trees branch systems. Another factor contributing to compromised tree stability is the past practice of "topping" trees and "excessive pruning" used 15 years ago in the Department. These poor practices weakened key branches, which once removed, affected the trees' structural integrity and could not be compensated for by other branches. Additionally, poor pruning created stress on the trees that lowered their immunity to disease and the ability to respond to environmental changes. Unfortunately, in some trees there is no mitigation to poor pruning and removal is the only way to ensure the tree does not fall.

The Forestry Division staff has inspected all parks for trees with structural defects, focusing on the most visited park locations. Staff has identified as needing immediate attention, 556 trees for removal, and 2,855 trees for pruning, for a total of 3,411 trees requiring emergency service. Recreation and Parks and Public Works Bureau of Street Services, Street Tree Division have removed 131 trees and pruned 162 trees after four weeks of work. Due to the public safety concerns, there is an urgent necessity to complete the work expeditiously through the use of contractors supplementing the work of City forces.

The Department attempted to enlist the assistance of tree trimming contractors of the Bureau of Street Services, Street Tree Division but was unsuccessful because the contracts were project and site specific. A new competitive bid would be required. For greater expediency, Recreation and Parks conducted its own competitive bid through a Request For Proposal (RFP). The proposal made certain to specify the unique qualifications required for parkland tree pruning and removal. Unlike the trimming of street trees, park trees are trimmed only as much as necessary to achieve aesthetics, shade, harmony, and the greatest ecological benefits. The contractors must provide certified arborists to supervise the pruning and removal using proper arboricultural practices so as to ensure against the mistakes of 15 years ago.

Nine companies were notified of the RFP, four companies attended the mandatory proposers conference, and two companies submitted written proposals. The Department has experience

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

PG. 3

NO. 05-233

working with both proposers and is satisfied that their service meets the qualifications specified in the proposal. Each proposer is willing to dedicate two crews to completing the emergency work. The Director of Forestry recommends contracting for three crews, for they will augment City forces in the removal of hazardous trees and enable us to complete by November 2005, work targeted in phase one of the emergency tree trimming project. Therefore, in the best interest of the City, staff recommends contracting with both companies to enable quicker removal of failing trees. With each company demonstrating their qualification through their past work, staff recommends awarding the contracts to the lowest bidders in each category as follows:

TruGreen Landcare:

Palm and Tree Removals within City limits
All Decurrent/Excurrent Tree Pruning

West Coast Arborists, Inc.:

Tree Removals outside City limits
All Palm shaping and frond removal

Information has been posted at all affected recreation facilities, and notice given to the Park Advisory Boards, Neighborhood Councils, Council offices about the tree removal effort. The Department met with Service Employees International Union, Local 347 to discuss potential impacts to their members and have satisfied their concerns.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

Funding in the amount of \$228,000 is available in the Department's account, 3040, Contractual Services, for this purpose. An interim budget request in the amount of \$755,929 has been submitted to the Mayor and City Administrative Office for consideration of additional funding for a Tree Hazard Removal crew of three full-time positions, overtime salaries, and additional funding for contractual services.

Report prepared by Dale Wong Nguyen, Administrative Resource Division