



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: September 26, 2012

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Parks Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Moreton Bay Fig Tree Park Planting Plan

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive a report and approve the amended plan.

DISCUSSION:

At their respective February 2012 meetings, the Street Tree Advisory Committee (STAC) and the Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed a request to remove 16 trees along Montecito Street and within Moreton Bay Fig Tree Park. A Public Works Department project necessitated the removals.

This project consists of installing a bypass box culvert for Mission Creek across Montecito Street and through Moreton Bay Fig Tree Park. Construction design took into consideration minimizing impacts on the Historic Moreton Bay Fig Tree. An independent arborist report was prepared with mitigation measures to protect the tree. The construction plan included all the recommended measures.

At the February 22, 2012, meeting, the Commission approved the removals on the condition that a permit is issued for the project and that a landscape plan be developed and submitted to the Commission for approval. The Commission indicated that the plan should include the tree replacement plan, the protection of the Moreton Bay Fig Tree, improved pedestrian access, and park amenities. The permit to construct the box culvert was issued, and construction began in July, 2012.

Since February 22, 2012, Parks and Recreation staff has worked with Public Works staff to develop the plan. While developing the plan, staff reviewed opportunities to add public walkways, benches, signage, trash cans, increase protection of the historic Moreton Bay Fig Tree, new trees, and other landscaping.

Staff determined that installing public walkways would trigger Americans with Disabilities Act, (ADA), compliance requirements. ADA compliance would require the installation of walkways through the park, including adjacent to the Moreton Bay Fig

Tree. This would require significant root pruning on two sides of the tree. Since this would be a significant impact to the tree, the public walkways were not included in the plan. In addition, any new walkway would also have an impact on the historic designation of the park according to the historic structures report prepared for this park. Similarly, if benches are installed, ADA access would be required.

The plan includes trash cans, improved irrigation, and improved signage for the Moreton Bay Fig Tree. The protection of the fig tree is addressed in the plan in two ways. The protective post and chain fencing will be located to the current drip line of the tree. The drip line has extended since the post and chain fencing was installed in 1999. The attached plan moves this fencing out to the current drip line of the tree on two sides. Additionally, bark mulch will be installed within the new fence line to reduce weeds and to provide a favorable environment for the tree.

The plan includes the installation of six, 24-inch box Jacaranda mimosifolia trees. Five of these trees will be planted along Montecito Street as street trees, and one will be planted within the park. In addition, the turf and other landscaping removed for the project will be replaced.

The plan provided to the STAC showed one fewer Jacaranda tree than the revised plan that is attached to this report. STAC reviewed the plan and commented that the plan did not reflect enough trees where a cluster of Brush Cherry trees were removed. The Committee recommended that the Commission and the Historic Landmark Commission approve the plan with the addition of one Jacaranda to be planted west of the parking lot turn around. The Public Works Department revised the plan to reflect STAC's motion. Staff recommends the Commission approve the revised plan.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Public Works Department Report
2. Final Landscape Plan

PREPARED BY: Santos Escobar, Parks Manager
Tim Downey, Urban Forest Superintendent

SUBMITTED BY: Jill Zachary, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director

APPROVED BY: Nancy L. Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director