



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: February 24, 2010

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Parks Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Storm Damage Report

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive a report on the loss of trees and other damage as a result of the January 19-22, 2010 storm events.

DISCUSSION:

City street trees and park trees sustained damage as a result of the January 19-22, 2010 storm events, which included 3.4 inches of rain and windy conditions.

Seven street trees fell during the three days of rain. On January 20, 2010 a tree fell at Micheltorena Street adjacent to Alameda Park, pulling down wires and telephone poles causing slight damage to the fascia of one building. The most significant loss was five Red Flowering Gum Eucalyptus trees in the 200 block of West Haley Street. A reported microburst struck just before noon on January 21, 2010, blowing over the trees which in turn knocked down telephone poles and wires, causing damage to five cars. A microburst is a very localized column of sinking air, producing damaging divergent and straight-line winds at the ground. The roadway was completely blocked. All trees were cleared from the street by 8 p.m., and the remaining stumps were removed the following day. In the evening of January 22, a Coast Live Oak located in the road right-of-way adjacent to Hale Park had a large split in the trunk and had to be removed, and a Eucalyptus tree fell at Old Coast Highway adjacent to Montecito Country Club. Neither of these trees caused any property or roadway damage.

Two City park trees that fell include a large Blue Gum Eucalyptus in La Mesa Park, and a California Bay in Oak Park. Neither tree caused park or roadway damage.

Additionally, many trees were damaged at the Garden Street Parking Lot due to another microburst. The damage ranged from broken out tops to split branches. Forestry crews were able to repair this damage through pruning. Throughout the city, crews cleaned up numerous broken branches and fallen palm fronds.

The majority of the clean-up work was completed by Friday, January 22, 2010. Forestry crews worked diligently to clean up the damage from these storms with assistance from Parks Operations staff and Public Works Streets Division staff.

Media coverage of the storms included the damage from the fallen trees on West Haley St. and the Eucalyptus in La Mesa Park. The Parks Division maintains up-to-date records of all street and park tree maintenance. A review of these records indicates that at the time of the storm events, there was no indication of any hazardous conditions. These records indicate that the trees on West Haley St. were inspected and trimmed the week of November 5, 2007, and the La Mesa Park tree was inspected and trimmed on July 23, 2009. Despite regular maintenance, unexpected weather events can result in tree loss, property, or infrastructure damage.

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