Honorable Board of Public Works  
Of the City of Los Angeles  

Commissioners:

BSS PACKAGE 16 – CITYWIDE SIDEWALK REPAIR PROGRAM IN COUNCIL DISTRICT THREE, FOUR AND NINE REQUEST BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS AUTHORIZE A NO-FEE PERMIT TO REMOVE 14 STREET TREES WHICH INCLUDE 9 CAMPHOR (CINNAMOMUM CAMPHORA), AND 5 RED RIVER GUM (EUCALYPTUS CAMALDULENSIS) TREES FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE OFF-GRADE PUBLIC SIDEWALK. TREE REPLACEMENTS ARE REQUIRED.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Public Works (Board):

1. FIND that the tree removal (1) classifies as operation, repair, maintenance or minor alteration of existing street, sidewalk, and gutter, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that previously existing; and does not involve the removal of a scenic resource; (2) that the action is exempt under Article III, Section 1, Class 1, Category 3 (existing facilities – sidewalk repair or maintenance) of the City of Los Angeles Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (2002); and (3) that none of the exceptions to the use of a categorical exemption as set forth in Section 15300.2 of the State CEQA Guidelines apply.

2. Review and approve this tree removal permit request for the removal of 14 street trees which includes 9 Camphor (Cinnamomum camphora) and 5 River Red Gum (Eucalyptus camaldulensis) trees for the reconstruction of an off-grade sidewalk and curb ramp installation. Tree replacements are required.

TRANSMITTALS:

1. Tree removal notification
2. Service Request 1-536067909, 1-1099831201, 1-1149165751
3. Electronic correspondence, dated December 18, 2019
4. Electronic correspondence, dated February 3, 2020
5. Property owner’s authorization for tree removal
6. Photographs of the trees to be removed
CONDITION:

All tree replacements comply with the Board of Public Works 2:1 tree replacement policy and shall be planted by the Office of Community Beautification (OCB) or its contractor. The Bureau of Street Services (StreetsLA) shall begin weekly watering of the tree replacements upon tree planting confirmation from the OCB. Tree watering shall continue for a three-year period.

- Ten, 24-inch box size Brisbane Box (Lophostemon confertus) trees to be replanted at the following addresses on West Lopez Street: one at 21901, two at 21907, two at 21913, two at 21917, one at 5072, and two at 5062 North Topanga Canyon Boulevard on West Lopez Street side;

- Six, 24-inch box size Cork Oak (Quercus suber) trees to be replanted at the following addresses on North Observatory Avenue: one at 2217, one at 2221, two at 2222 and two at 2227;

- Two, 24-inch box size Cork Oak (Quercus suber) trees to be replanted at 4221 West Los Feliz Boulevard on North Observatory Avenue; and

- Ten, 24-inch box size Jacaranda (Jacaranda mimosifolia) trees to be replanted at the following addresses on South Orchard Avenue: one at 2620, one at 2622, two at 2623, one at 2624, one at 2627, one at 2640, one at 2644, one at 2660, and one at 2663.

ALTERNATIVE METHODS AND OPTIONS EXPLORED:

Except for four trees, the health and location of ten trees negate the possibility of tree preservation or relocation. Two River Red Gum trees at 5062 North Topanga Canyon Boulevard located on West Lopez Street side; one River Red Gum tree at 21913 and one Red River Gum tree at 21917 West Lopez Street are mature and appear to be healthy; however, will be severely impacted by proposed repair of the off-grade sidewalk and curb. StreetsLA requested Bureau of Engineering (BOE) seek alternative methods to repair sidewalks and curb in order to retain the three trees; however, BOE determined that due to existing site constraints, alternative sidewalk and curb repair options are not feasible.

RECITAL:

The Bureau of Engineering (BOE) is the lead agency in identifying defective sidewalks at locations throughout the City of Los Angeles as part of the Citywide Sidewalk Repair Program, BSS Package-16.
The BOE is working in close collaboration with the Bureau of Street Services (StreetsLA) in addressing potential impacts to street trees adjacent to targeted locations.

The BOE contacted StreetsLA in reference to reconstruction of off-grade sidewalk conditions at 16 sites located throughout the City of which 3 sites have trees that will be severely impacted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
<th>CD</th>
<th>NO. OF TREES IMPACTED</th>
<th>TREE SPECIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5062 Topanga Canyon Bl on W Lopez St Side</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Red River Gum (Eucalyptus camaldulensis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21901 Lopez St</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Red River Gum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21913 Lopez St</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Red River Gum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21917 Lopez St</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Red River Gum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2217 Observatory Av</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Camphor (Cinnamomum camphora)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2221 Observatory Av</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Camphor</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2623 Orchard Av</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Camphor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2627 Orchard Av</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Camphor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A StreetsLA Arborist inspected the subject location on October 9, 2019 through November 6, 2019 and verified that 15 of 80 street trees will be severely impacted by the project and require removal. Of the 14 trees, 4 are in fair condition and 10 are in poor condition showing signs if decay, die back, and fruiting bodies (Laetiporus sulphureus) at the base of tree trunk. The trees measure approximately 22 to 48-inches in diameter by approximately 25 to 75-feet in height growing in 5 to 7-feet wide parkways.

StreetsLA is proposing to replace the defective sidewalks, curb and gutter due to uplift and severe disruption by the roots and root crowns of the subject trees. The trees have severely outgrown their growing space and defective sidewalks, curb and gutter are prevalent throughout the area. The required root pruning to allow the trees to remain would significantly and adversely affect the trees’ health and roots’ structural integrity leaving them potentially unstable. Hence, sidewalk reconstruction will require tree removal.
CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

StreetsLA finds the tree removal (1) classifies as operation, repair, maintenance or minor alteration of existing street, sidewalk, and gutter, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that previously existing; and does not involve the removal of a scenic resource; (2) that the action is exempt under Article III, Section 1, Class 1, Category 3 (existing facilities - sidewalk repair or maintenance) of the City of Los Angeles Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (2002); and (3) that none of the exceptions to the use of a categorical exemption as set forth in Section 15300.2 of the State CEQA Guidelines apply.

The CEQA Guidelines for street tree removal and replacements were used in making this finding and are on file with StreetsLA and available to the public upon request.

CONCLUSION

Michael Owens, Council District Three; Nikki Ezhari, Council District Four; and Bryce Rosaura, Council District Nine were informed of the tree removal requests on December 16, 2019 and will notify StreetsLA of any objections received by their office.

Public comments on this tree removal requests will be received and heard, both in-writing and in-person, during the scheduled public hearing with the Board. The following public noticing of these tree removal permits were conducted:

- Notice of the proposed tree removals were physically posted on the subject trees on November 18, 2019;
- Proposed tree removals were included in the Bureau of Street Services Tree Removal Notification System; and
- The Community Forest Advisory Committee and Department of Neighborhood Empowerment were notified.

StreetsLA, Urban Forestry Division shall begin weekly watering of the tree replacements upon tree planting confirmation from the OCB. Tree watering shall continue for a three-year period.

All tree replacements comply with the Board of Public Works 2:1 tree replacement policy and shall be planted by the Office of Community Beautification (OCB) or its contractor.
The applicant has been advised of the recommendations contained in this report.

Respectfully Submitted,

ADEL H. HAGEKHALI, P.E.
Executive Director and General Manager
Bureau of Street Services

Prepared by:
Urban Forestry Division Ext. 7-3077

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