

Community Meeting

Status on Van Ness Boulevard Median Trees

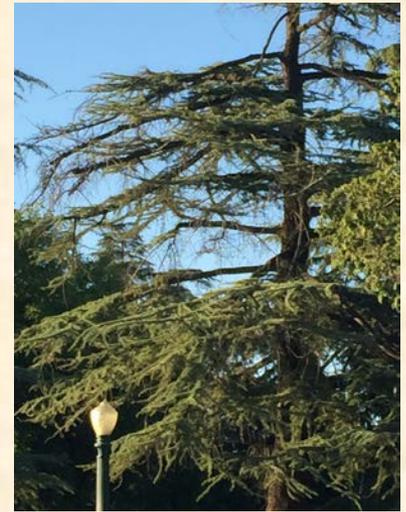


Councilmember Esmeralda Soria, District 1
Assistant City Manager Renena Smith
Public Works Director Scott Mozier

About Your Speakers...

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

- What we do:
 - **Landscape Maintenance**
 - **Division Manager Aaron Aguirre**
 - **Medians, Trees, Parks, Community Facilities Districts, Trails**
 - Street Maintenance
 - Traffic & Engineering Services
 - Facilities Management
 - Capital Management (Design & Construction)
- **John Pape, Consulting Arborist, ISA Certified Arborist of Kultz Pape Consulting, LLC**



2015 – Year 4 of Historic Drought

- Governor’s Executive Order
 - No watering of turf medians with potable water
- City Response
 - Turn off median spray heads
 - Apply reclaimed water with water truck
 - Initially 1x/week, increased quickly to 3x/week with water truck
- Community Concerns
- City Administration & Councilmember Engagement regarding the trees’ health



Tree Arborist Assignment

The City decided to hire John Pape, ISA Certified Arborist of Kutzt Pape Consulting, LLC, as an outside expert with 40 years experience in the field.



Scope of services:

- Basic inspection of the 46 Deodar Cedars and 23 Southern Live Oak trees
- Van Ness and Weldon Avenue medians
- Review all site conditions
- Evaluate the trees' overall condition, Identify any clearly recognizable safety or health issues observed.
- Provide a report of findings & recommendations so as to improve the trees' condition and longevity if possible.

Van Ness Site Assessment

- Based on an Arborist assessment, a majority of the 46 Deodar Cedars along Van Ness Avenue are in fair to good condition.
- There are several that have suffered from diseases by past cultural condition and practices which are directly related to being planted in turf areas.
- The current truck watering delivery method is helping the trees survive during this drought, but will need a long term solution should the drought continue.

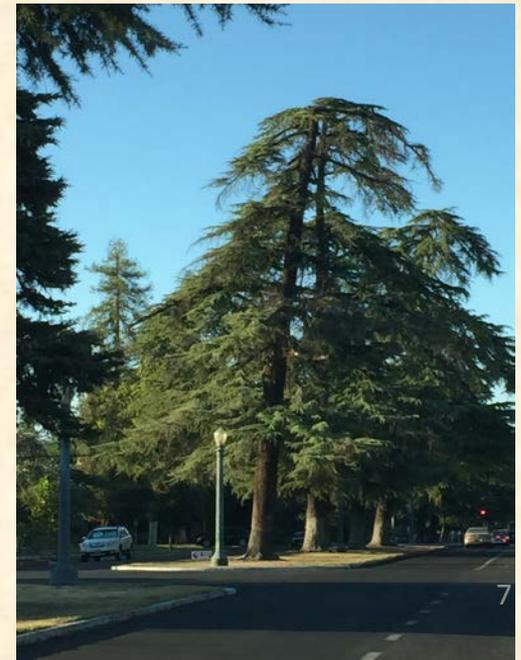


Van Ness Site Assessment

- The majority of the cedar trees have a ***live crown ratio*** (The ratio of the height of the crown containing live foliage to the overall height of the tree) of 70% to 90%, which is good.
- The majority of the Cedar trees have appropriate gray-green foliage color for their species.
- Nearly all of the larger, older trees, have some damage on the trunks near the base of the tree and on the ***buttress roots***, and many have in particular an area of damage on the west side. Areas of the bark are gone and inner wood is exposed. On several of these trees ***wood decay*** has set in.

Deodar Cedar Characteristics

- Deodar Cedar are tough trees, designed for the extremes of low temperatures in the winter, high temperatures in the summer and extremes of moisture availability in the soil. They typically do very well in Fresno, and are not overly affected by our hot dry conditions, in fact, they are more likely to have problems with wet conditions in hot weather.
- When these trees are grown in turf areas, they become more susceptible to fungal *pathogens* like *phytophthora*, and also root and wood decay.



Conclusions

- Of the Deodar Cedars, 4 are in very poor condition and should be removed, 7 are in poor to average condition and should be treated, and 35 are in average to good condition.
- The vast majority of problems, poor health and condition of these trees is due to factors that have existed for an extended period of years. The lack of irrigation by turf spray heads is a positive change. Watering with a water truck is helping maintain the trees through the drought in the short run, but is not the optimal long-term plan.
- There is ***dieback*** in the branches and leader of some trees. This appears to be due to mature trees in a harsh environment, overall stress on the trees caused by the damage to the buttress roots as described above, and due to sunscald, borers and sapsuckers.

Recommendations the City has implemented in September:

- Move the present water truck irrigation delivery off of the area around the base of the tree. Try to keep the water delivery in the area between a 3 foot radius from the trees to the drip line of the trees. (Completed)
- Trim any dead branches over 2” diameter out of the remaining trees. Remove no green foliage if possible, as it is what will help the trees resist stress and regrow. (Completed, see attached pictures)
- Make an application of copper fungicide per label instructions to exposed wood areas of the trunks of all the trees to help slow wood decay. (Completed, see attached pictures)
- Keep a 3 foot radius around the trunk of the trees free from turf or weeds by some other means than mowers or string trimmers. (Completed, see attached pictures)

Trimming of Dead Wood 2" and Greater

BEFORE



AFTER



Removal of Turf Near Tree



Copper Fungicide Application



Next Steps

- Two trees need to be removed within the next 60 days.
- Two other trees need to be removed within the next year.
- Replanting of deodar cedars with larger size box trees
- Future potential project to implement drip irrigation as recommended
- What happens to the turf median once the drought ends?



Questions & Discussion

