



CITY OF SACRAMENTO

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
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SEP 16 1981

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

3520 FIFTH AVENUE
(916) 449-5200

SACRAMENTO, CA 95817

CROCKER ART MUSEUM DIVISION
GOLF DIVISION
METROPOLITAN ARTS DIVISION
MUSEUM AND HISTORY DIVISION
RECREATION DIVISION
PARKS DIVISION
ZOO DIVISION

OLON WISHAM, JR.
DIRECTOR

September 15, 1981

City Council
Sacramento, California

Honorable Members in Session:

SUBJECT: Response to Requests for Supplemental
Tree Services Programs

SUMMARY

Requests have been received from Councilman Roberts, Mayor Isenberg and Councilman Connelly for program identification and costs to supplement the Tree Services operating budget. The requested information is for elm tree reforestation, supplemental elm tree spraying and continuation of the mistletoe tool loan program. A program combining these requests is described and a recommendation is made that the Council receive and consider the information.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Approximately 6,000 of the 11,000 elm trees in Sacramento have suffered severely from attacks by the elm leaf beetle during the summer of 1981. The results have been noted throughout the City in the form of leaves turning brown and dropping. This problem has been intensified by unduly restrictive State pesticide regulations, severe reductions in Tree Services CETA program resources, and two prior mild winters favoring insect survival. The older elm trees are now declining in vigor due not only to the insect attacks, but also to old age, prior street construction work and a dropping water table. Although we do not face an immediate large scale loss as with the mistletoe infested ash trees, we will see a gradual increase in death of elm trees.

Councilman Roberts at the Council meeting of August 4, 1981, requested a staff report describing a selective replanting program to gradually replace old elm street trees with more desirable species. There are approximately 2,700 elm trees in the Old City Community bounded by the two rivers and W and 29th Streets. The staff recommendation would be to commence any reforestation program in this area of concentrated elm planting. The replacement plantings should be trees not subject to beetle attack or Dutch Elm Disease and of appropriate mature sizes to provide harmony of scale in our City street tree plantings.

APPROVED
BY THE CITY COUNCIL

SEP 23 1981

OFFICE OF THE
CITY CLERK

*referred to
Bud/Fin
Comm*

Mayor Isenberg requested preparation of an informational flyer for Council use responding to constituent inquiries about the elm trees being attacked by insects. The staff has prepared an information flyer (see Exhibit A attached). Mayor Isenberg also requested information on current Tree Services efforts to control the elm leaf beetle.

Normal Tree Services career staffing is 13 positions for tree spraying. Under the current Council approved hiring freeze, there are six unfilled vacancies in this activity. Coupled with the loss of 16 CETA employees last spring, the tree spraying activity was reduced to one crew during most of the season.

Tree watering was virtually eliminated in the summer of 1981. Operations are further hampered by rigid application of the current State Agricultural Administrative Code. The Code requires excessive personnel usage, shutting down when winds exceed 5 mph, etc. A request has been made to the State for exemption from the Code (see attached letter dated August 14, 1981 marked Exhibit B).

Councilman Connelly requested cost information to continue the popular self-help mistletoe tool loan program for which the State grant expires on September 30, 1981. Those estimates are included herein.

Although the staff recommendation is for a combined program to combat the elm leaf beetle problem, the following responses to the three requests are presented for Council information.

A. Councilman Roberts' Reforestation Request

Any reforestation program could be tailored to fit the amount of funding made available. If the 2,700 large trees in the Old City Community are selected as the target for an initial program, some program alternatives are as follows:

Remove and replant 540 trees per year for 5 years - \$432,000 per year.
Remove and replant 270 trees per year for 10 years- \$216,000 per year.
Remove and replant 100 trees per year for 27 years- \$ 80,000 per year.

The figures above would have to be increased annually for inflation; they are based on current bid prices.

B. Mayor Isenberg's Request for Adequate Tree Spraying

An adequate spraying program to achieve a reasonable level of insect control would necessitate a Parks Division budget increase. Approximately 6,000 trees must be sprayed twice during 1982 to effectuate at least 80% control of the elm leaf beetle. The first application should begin about mid-April and be completed prior to commencing a second round in mid-June. Employees must be hired by March 1st to implement training. To accomplish dual spraying would require the following budget increases:

Employee Services - 14 hourly employees for 6 months	\$101,920
Equipment - add 4 mist blowers and 2 trucks	140,000
Other Services & Supplies - add chemicals (\$22,400), enterprise vehicle rental (\$9,000) and tools, etc. (\$5,000).	<u>36,400</u>
Total Needed	\$278,320

C. Councilman Connelly's Request for Extension of Tool Loan Program

It is necessary to continue leasing the van for delivery and return of the tools and to employ one Tree Trimmer to operate the program.

Employee Services - 1 Tree Trimmer	\$ 23,000
Other Services & Supplies - lease of van	<u>4,800</u>
	\$ 27,800

Program Recommended by Staff

The staff recommends a combination of programs featuring some elements of each Councilman's request. A gradual phase-out of the elm trees with replacement by more desirable species could be scheduled for only those trees showing significant decline in vigor. These removals and replacements could be made in winter and remaining funds for elm tree work expended in spring supplemental tree spraying.

The mistletoe tool loan could be limited to a winter only activity rather than year round. We have noted that most requests are made after the trees have lost their leaves and the mistletoe is more visible. A funding level of \$413,000 per year would be an adequate supplement for commencement of these special programs.

A. Remove and replant 150 elm trees	\$120,000
B. Spray 6,000 elm trees twice a year	279,000
C. Operate mistletoe tool loan program for six months	<u>14,000</u>
Budget Increase Needed	- \$413,000

FINANCIAL DATA

The current Parks Division operating budget has no funding identified for these special programs. Assuming the Council wishes to supplement the FY 1981-82 budget, it is recommended that this report be referred to Budget and Finance Committee for consideration.

City Council
Page Four
September 15, 1981

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council receive this report for information and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



G. ERLING LINGGI Acting Director
Department of Community Services

Approved for Council Information:



WALTER J. SLIPE, City Manager

GEL:GR:ket

Attachments: Exhibit A & B

September 23, 1981
All Districts

ELM LEAF BEETLES

Every spring in Sacramento, elm leaf beetles emerge and begin feeding on elm leaves. Two distinct insect life stages occur:

1. The adults, which can fly, are marked lengthwise with brown and yellow stripes. The adult beetles are about 1/3 of an inch long and eat irregular shaped holes about 1/4 inch in diameter through the leaves.
2. The larvae, which crawl very actively, are also marked lengthwise with brown and yellow stripes. The larvae only eat part way through the leaves, which turn brown and have a lacey appearance. The crawlers are about 1/4 of an inch long.

When the adults come out in the spring they lay eggs which hatch into crawlers. The crawlers feed, then come down the tree trunk or fall from branches to the ground. They are most noticeable when they migrate in this form by the hundreds. They hide in crevices everywhere, including buildings and houses, to pupate and become adults. The adults then emerge and fly back to the elm trees to commence the cycle over again. There can be up to six generations in a season repeating this process. The insects are harmless to humans and pets, but they devastate elm trees.

City crews spray City street trees during spring and summer, but under current budget and pesticide use restrictions, not enough trees are sprayed at the right time. About 6,000 trees are badly infested and should be sprayed twice a year, but are reached only once a year. The City does not spray trees in back yards or other private property, and these unsprayed trees infest others. The spray material used by the City contains the chemical "Sevin", the same material used by many home gardeners and found in many pet flea powders. It is safe to humans and pets when used as directed on the label.

Property owners can help in either of two ways. If you can afford it, hire a licensed, professional tree spraying company. Have them spray your elm tree when you see signs of beetle activity. They should use acid solution "Sevimol 4" or inject the tree with Maugey "Bidrin" (Bidrin is available only to licensed applicators). If you cannot afford to hire professional tree sprayers, then you still can help by doing spraying as far as you can reach using a homeowner's pump type or hose-end garden sprayer. Buy a spray material containing "Sevin" at any garden supply store. Follow directions on the label carefully when applying. Use the spray on the elm tree trunk and any branches you can reach whenever you see the leaf beetles, especially when the crawlers are active. In the City of Modesto, where they only have 300 elms, this trunk spraying technique (called "banding") produced only moderate results the first year but gave good results when followed up with spraying the second year. It takes a couple of years of spraying at the right time to effectively reduce the insect population.



CITY OF SACRAMENTO

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

PARKS DIVISION

3520 FIFTH AVENUE

SACRAMENTO, CA 95817

TELEPHONE (916) 449-5200

GENE ROBINSON

PARKS SUPERINTENDENT

August 14, 1981

California Department of Food & Agriculture
1220 N. Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Gentlemen:

Thank you for the opportunity described in your release #81-113 to comment on regulations governing pest control operations.

Current inappropriate and unnecessary over-regulation of pesticide usage may lead to a loss of 11,000 elm and 8,000 zelkova trees in the City of Sacramento. These trees are annually attacked and defoliated by elm leaf beetles (*Pyrrhalta luteola*), an insect which could be controlled by timely usage of the pesticide Cabaryl (Sevin). This annual defoliation severely weakens the trees and eventually causes decline and death.

Such loss will be both environmentally and economically devastating. Large, stately elms are the predominant street tree planting along many older streets in Sacramento, and current removal/replacement costs for these elms ranges from \$700 to \$900 each. Elm leaf beetles, in their larval stage, create slip and fall hazards by dropping in great quantities to sidewalks. They also become an extremely annoying nuisance by invading homes and commercial buildings. Defoliation of the many large elms eliminates cooling shade during the peak of summer heat, thereby increasing energy consumption for air conditioning.

Prior to application of the current State pesticide regulatory program, the City of Sacramento was able to maintain an acceptable level of elm leaf beetle control by spraying street trees with Sevin during the spring and early summer. With use of rotomist sprayers by two employees per crew moving unhindered along the streets, all infested trees were sprayed at least once and, when needed, twice in a single season.

Currently five to seven employees are required to staff a crew, notice must be given to each property owner, spraying is stopped for pedestrians, stopped also whenever winds exceed five miles per hour (which is most of the time) and only about eighty percent of the infested trees are sprayed even once during a season. Of that eighty percent, less than half are sprayed on a timely basis as needed to achieve control of the elm leaf beetle. Due to this lack of control, it is anticipated that the insect population will increase in geometric proportions, further compounding the problem.

We bring the following to your attention for review:

1. Title 3 of the California Administrative Code is titled "Agriculture" and is clearly intended to regulate the animal and plant industries having primary orientation toward food production. Although the code covers plant nursery stock, it is largely silent regarding maintenance of ornamental plantings such as street trees. The elaborate pesticide usage regulations fail to take any cognizance of the need for urban pesticide usage on street trees. Application of this code in its present form to urban tree maintenance activities is completely inappropriate.

We Recommend: Change the code by adding an exemption from regulation of local government maintenance operations.

2. The necessity to regulate usage of Carbaryl (Sevin) in urban areas is questionable. Consider the fact that anyone can purchase a flea powder for their pet in most grocery stores from a shelf adjacent to food displays intended for human consumption. The active pesticide in that flea powder is Sevin, and there are no regulations limiting the number of direct contacts that the pet owner may make with that powder while handling the animal. Sevin is also readily available for purchase and usage on many home garden fruits and vegetables. Toxicity to humans is not a valid reason to restrict usage of Sevin.

We Recommend: Remove Carbaryl (Sevin) from the list of restricted materials in Section 2450 of Title 3 of the code, at least for urban usage.

3. Although Sevin is only slightly toxic to humans (the LD₅₀ is 500), we recognize that it is highly toxic to bees. Since bees are regarded as a health hazard in the urban environment, the usage of Sevin should not be constrained to protect bees in urban areas.

We Recommend: Remove Carbaryl (Sevin) from the list of restricted materials in Section 2450 of Title 3, but retain Section 3096 for protection of bees in agricultural areas.

4. If the above recommendations cannot be adopted, then some other relief must be provided to avoid disastrous losses of trees in the City of Sacramento. The regulations in Section 2452 of Title 3 were obviously written with agricultural crop spraying in mind as the primary usage. It is impracticable, if not impossible, to spray large street trees in urban areas without drift of the spray material to adjacent houses and yards. Furthermore, the insects destroying our trees are insensitive to written regulations under any interpretation; they will aggressively feed and reproduce and seek shelter in structures regardless of how hard the wind is blowing or how close the houses are or how many joggers pass beneath the trees, and they give no notice of site and time of their attacks.

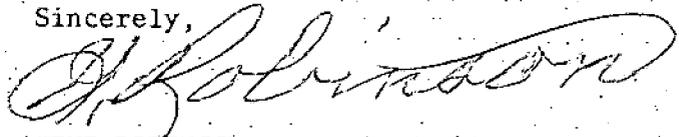
We Recommend: We repeat our prior recommendation for exemption of local government maintenance activities. If exemption is not granted, then we recommend adoption of a realistic new section specifically controlling tree spraying in urban areas. This new section should clear the way for timely and practicable spray applications. We offer our services to assist in writing such a section.

5. We draw your attention to an inconsistency in State Codes. The California Administrative Code, Title 3 "Agriculture" does not exempt governmental agencies. The California Business and Professions Code, Division 3, "Structural Pest Control Act" does provide exemption in Section 8555. The elm leaf beetle very annoyingly invades houses and other structures, thus meeting the definition of a household pest under Section 8505 of the Structural Pest Control Act.

We Recommend: Addition to the Administrative Code of an exemption for local government maintenance activities and clarifying references to clearly indicate which of the two codes shall regulate pesticide applications to urban trees for control of elm leaf beetle.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on your pest control regulations. We would appreciate notification of any hearings concerning changes in or review of regulations.

Sincerely,



GENE ROBINSON
Parks Superintendent

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