

October 25, 2022

Dear Neighborhood Organization,

Recently, some residents in the City apparently hired a tree trimming company to trim some City street trees. We on the Urban Forest Task Force wanted to reach out to you and let you know what the procedures are for tree trimming.

A Public Works permit is required to trim a tree in the parkway which is a public asset. This is done to make sure qualified firms are doing the work, they are abiding trimming guidelines established by the City in its Urban Forest Master Plan, and that the companies have insurance.

Normally, residents don't take on this task but it was apparently done in this situation because the subject Ficus trees bear fruit which some residents may have deemed a nuisance. The tops of the trees were chopped off nearly stripping 100% of the foliage of the trees which is unhealthy for the trees. Tree pruning should remove no more than 30% of the foliage in a year. The fact this work was done in the middle of a heat spell makes the potential harm to the trees even more concerning. These actions have endangered these public assets and time will tell if they survive.

Please note the city trims all the street trees on a regular schedule. Additionally, a 311 request can be submitted to the city if a resident has any concerns about a public tree or they wish to ask for an assessment for pruning or removal.

We ask that the public please contact the Public Landscape Division (310 458-8974) during normal business hours if they suspect trees are being trimmed illegally. If it is outside normal business hours, they should contact SMPD Dispatch on the non-emergency line (310 458-8491). Also, taking photos of any company at work (including vehicle license plates) will help the city follow up with them on a possible violation.

We all value our urban forest for its carbon sequestration, removal of air pollution, its cooling effects on our neighborhoods and the beauty it provides to our community.

As fellow residents and volunteers, want to make sure our urban forest is respected and nurtured with the highest professional standards.

Thank you.

Urban Forest Task Force  
Chair, Tom Cleys  
Vice Chair, Andrew Hoyer