

RICHARD FAHEY VILLAGE GREEN – UPDATE ON DECLINING REDWOOD TREES

The park's Redwood trees (Redwood), which are native to coastal regions, have been adversely affected by the drought conditions and the high salt content of the reclaimed irrigation water.

In the summer of 2014, staff received a report from a consulting arborist indicating that the sodium and boron levels in the soil and tree tissue were many times higher than what is suitable for a Redwood. The Redwoods' symptoms were consistent with sodium/boron toxicity; a result of using reclaimed water for irrigation for several years combined with multiple years of extreme drought. Without the benefit of natural rainfall, the concentration of salts built up causing foliar damage and branch dieback which can ultimately kill the tree. As recommended by the arborist's report, staff watered some of the trees with potable water for several months in an effort to leach out the concentrated levels of salts in the soil in an effort to improve the health of the Redwoods.

On October 22, 2015, staff submitted a City Manager's Weekly Update providing an overview on the declining Redwoods. At that time, staff indicated that very little improvement was noticeable and staff decided to monitor the Redwoods through the winter months in hopes that the "El Niño" rains would flush the soil and naturally leach out the concentrated levels of salts.

It has been eight months and the Redwoods have not improved. According to the independent arborist, the trees will continue to decline and for safety it would be best to remove the dead Redwoods. The Redwoods are not the only tree species at the park to be affected by the use of reclaimed water; 45 Redwoods and approximately 15 other trees will need to be removed. Once removed, these trees will be replaced with approximately 55 new trees. Based upon staff's research, several sources recommend planting English Oaks and Crape Myrtles in areas irrigated with reclaimed water. The City has planted both of these species in other park and landscaped areas irrigated with reclaimed water and, to date; both species are growing well in these areas. The total cost of removing and replacing the trees is \$31,000.

In addition, the adjacent shopping center Country Club Shopping Center located at the corner of Village Parkway and Alcosta Blvd- applied for a permit on May 17th to remove the declining Redwoods on their property. These Redwoods run along the wall separating the shopping Center from the park. Public Works will work with Planning and the Shopping Center as the application moves through the process to coordinate the removal of the trees. Staff hopes that this will limit the impact to the surrounding area.