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City of San Gabriel

# STREET TREE MASTER PLAN

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

January 2004


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# San Gabriel Street Tree Master Plan

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Resolution 04-02 – City Council adoption of the Street Tree Master Plan

# A. INTRODUCTION

## 1. Past and Present of San Gabriel Trees

The City of San Gabriel has a rich history of tree planting that dates back to the Spanish Missions. Native species such as the Coast Live Oak, California Sycamore, Toyon, and Willow trees dominated the landscape around the Mission. Ornamental trees such as Pepper and various fruit trees provided shade and food for the early settlers. In the past century leading up to recent years, new trees and new species replaced the old ones due to a steady rise in residential and commercial developments. The good practice of planting trees to make life more pleasant continues but with little respect to compliment the architecture and the natural environment. Without a direction, the wrong use of trees will diminish the sense of place among the communities in San Gabriel.

## 2. Purpose of This Master Plan

Today, street trees are considered to be a valuable city resource that contributes significantly to the environment and economy of a neighborhood. In addition to providing greenery and softening urban views, trees also provide numerous environmental benefits, such as cooling temperatures during summer months, providing wind breaks, and filtering out carbon dioxide by releasing oxygen. Trees enhance property values, which can attract homebuyers and businesses to settle within a city. An attractive and well-landscaped shopping district is sometimes the winning factor in gaining and retaining businesses. As a result of this resource, more tax dollars are likely to be generated by the community, of which a portion will be given to the city. In return, the city will have more funds to better serve its citizens through public services.

Understanding the past, and securing these benefits for present and future generations, therefore, was the purpose for developing this document.

## B. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### 1. Goal

The City of San Gabriel is comprised of many distinct neighborhoods and commercial corridors, each with its own unique development history and characteristics. The Street Tree Master Plan serves to preserve and enhance these qualities by establishing complementary but distinct sets of recommended species for each of these areas.

Ultimately, the goal of the Street Tree Master Plan is to beautify the streets and neighborhoods of San Gabriel, and to provide a guideline for the City, public and private developers, and property owners for the selection of street trees in the various neighborhoods and commercial corridors.

### 2. Objectives

- Identify neighborhoods, corridors, and portals within the city to implement the plan;
- Propose a plant palette that will accentuate, provide screening, shade and balance, and is suitable for the San Gabriel Valley region, and neighborhood characteristic;
- Strengthen the sense of community through the use of street trees with respect to opportunity and constraint of the target area;
- Mitigate the visual impacts of signage, inconsistency in color, and traffic as a result of the increase in commercial developments on the commercial corridors;
- Provide visual relief for residential neighborhoods at the edge of commercial corridors;
- Provide alternative tree species for existing street trees that are not performing well, or which are no longer appropriate due to changes in street scale resulting from recent commercial development; and
- Maintain appearance of existing tree canopies in the City of San Gabriel.

## C. SAN GABRIEL COMMUNITIES

The City of San Gabriel is comprised of many neighborhoods and points of interest. Factors such as time of development, natural and manmade boundaries, landmarks, and municipal land use policies have contributed to making them unique and identifiable. Many of these neighborhoods, however, do not have established names for easy identification. Therefore, for the purpose of this survey, staff has drawn neighborhood boundaries and developed neighborhood names based on the aforementioned factors. It is important for the reader to understand that the boundary lines are not finite and rigid; on the contrary, these neighborhoods sometimes blend into one another.

To identify the neighborhoods, corridors and portals also mean to discover the characteristics, personality, and the needs within San Gabriel. Based on the cultural resources information provided by the City's planning staff, the ideal street tree will reflect the culture of the target area. This document uses the terms "Neighborhoods," "Portals" and "Corridors" to identify different types of sub-areas (see Figure 1).

### 1. Neighborhoods

"Neighborhoods" refer to small, contiguous sub areas that share certain common features, and which generally, although not always, can be completely traversed by a pedestrian without crossing a major arterial or commercial corridor. The San Gabriel Village and the Period Revival residential neighborhood of Northern San Gabriel are two good examples of "neighborhoods". In those cases where an identified neighborhood is bisected by a major vehicular thoroughfare, the linkages are generally due to other factors such as a historical connection, similarities in the patterns of development, or identification with a particular community facility such as an elementary school or public park.

Street trees (see Figure 2) must accentuate or complement the characteristics of the neighborhoods through the use of historical significant species or by complimenting the architectural theme of existing structures. Historical significant neighborhoods such as the Mission District and the Period Revival architecture of Northern San Gabriel should use trees such as the Camphor tree, California Sycamore, Chinese Evergreen Elm, or California Pepper- large shade trees that are consistent with the history and trend of landscaping at the time of development. Neighborhoods without a definite point of interest, or that blend into other neighborhoods have the opportunity to make a definite unique identity through street planting. Some trees suggested for these neighborhoods would be a species with season foliage or floral features, such as Chinese Pistache or Jacaranda. Larger shade trees need wider parkway space to allow growth. For neighborhoods with shallow parkways, smaller tree species will have to substitute for large species. These smaller species might not be consistent with the history and trend of landscaping, however, these species will still have to compliment the style of the architecture.

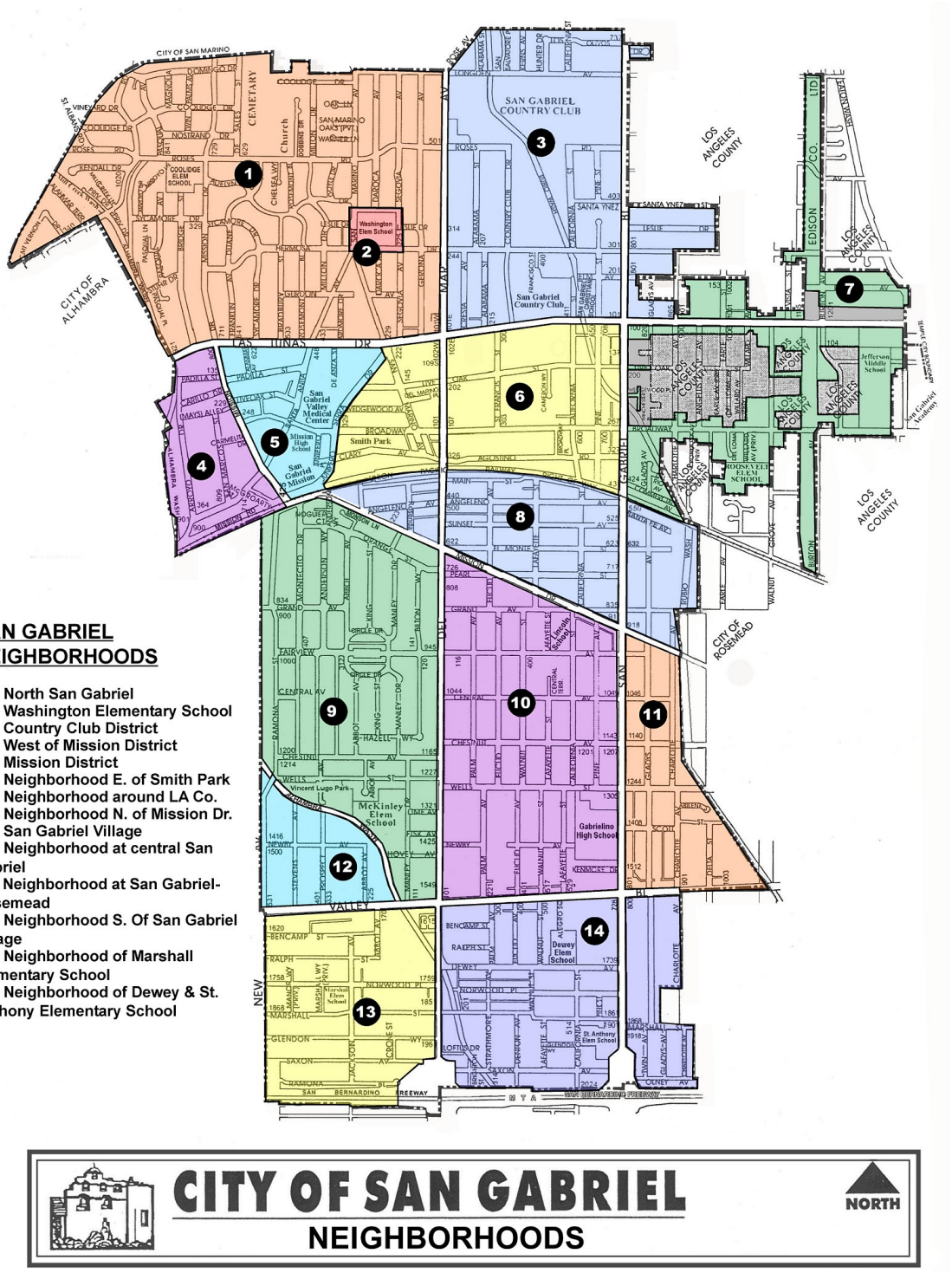



**Figure 1. Neighborhoods. For the purposes of this plan, the City was divided into the target neighborhoods shown above.**

## 2. Corridors

"Corridors" are the linear equivalent to neighborhoods, and refer to major vehicular thoroughfares, which are generally found throughout commercial patterns of development. Corridors often provide linkages to and from adjacent cities, as well as the greater San Gabriel Valley region. The major corridors within the city include San Gabriel Blvd., Del Mar Ave., Las Tunas Dr., and Valley Blvd.

Proposed trees on commercial corridors (see Figure 3) will need to tolerate pruning, due to traffic and utility constraints, pedestrian foot traffic, littering, and smog. Furthermore, tolerance to pruning and thinning is essential due to concerns with merchant signage. Deciduous species are suitable for commercial corridors for it can provide summer shade and winter warmth. Users of bus stops and street-side parking can benefit from this feature. Unlike evergreen species, deciduous trees provide the fresh green leaves in spring, and fall leaf color in autumn. Adding decorative lighting in the holiday seasons is another benefit of using deciduous species on commercial corridors.

## 3. Portals

"Portals" represent significant and important points of entry into the City. Portals are generally located where major commercial roads meet the City's geographical boundaries. Entrance portals within the city include the intersection at New Avenue and Valley Boulevard, and intersections of major corridors with the I-10 Freeway. The use of street trees also provides an opportunity to distinguish the city's boundaries from neighboring cities.

Portal trees (see Figure 3) comprise of species that feature showy floral patterns, which can distinguish San Gabriel's landscapes with that of adjacent cities. The singletree species that is proposed for the Portal areas is the Pink Trumpet Tree. At maturity, the Pink Trumpet Tree will develop showy pink foliages that are 2-3 inches long from spring through early summer.

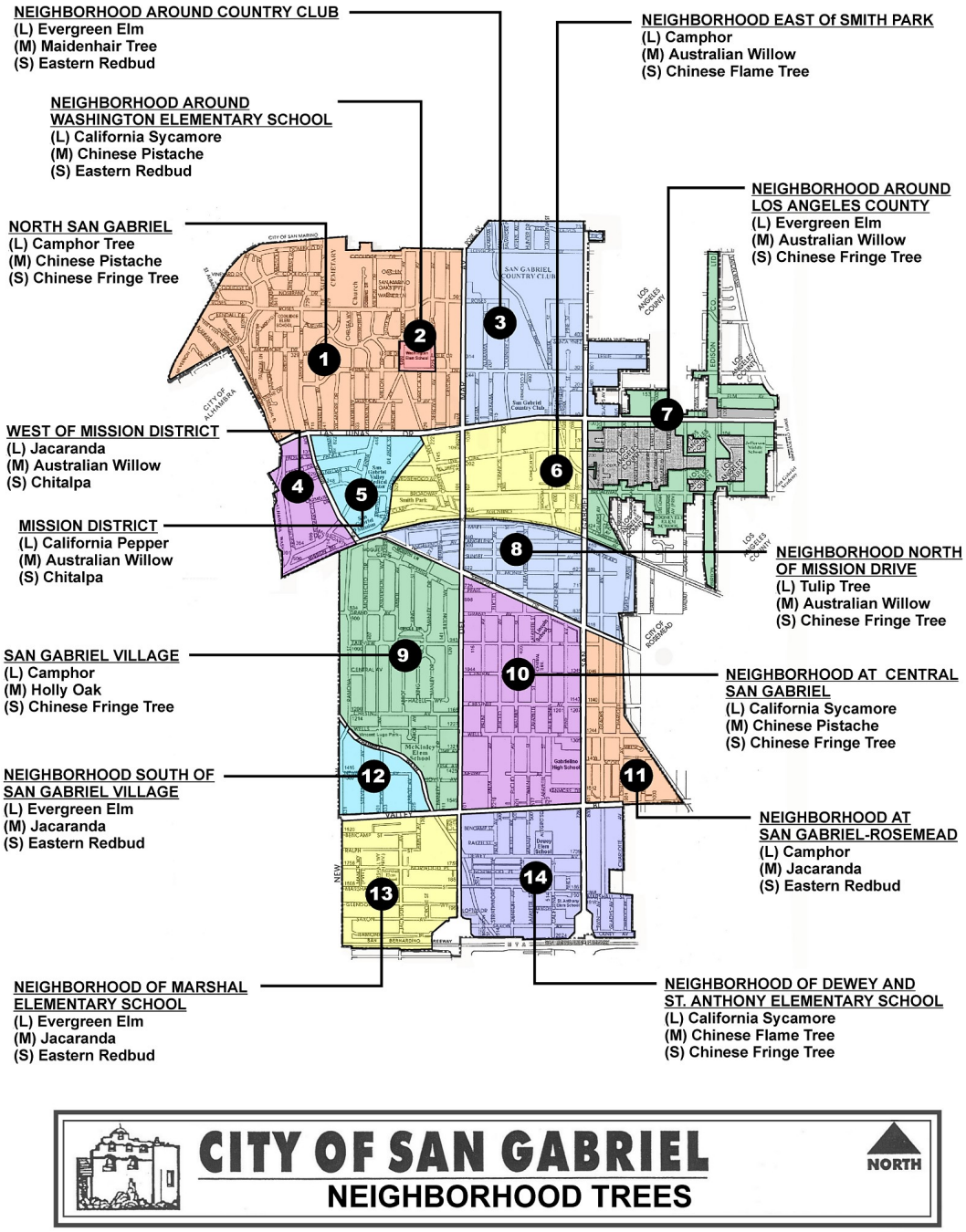



**Figure 2. Neighborhood Trees. This plan assigns trees to each neighborhood to create a sense of place, with recommendations for small (S) 1-2', medium (M) 3-4', and large (L) 5-6+ parkways.**

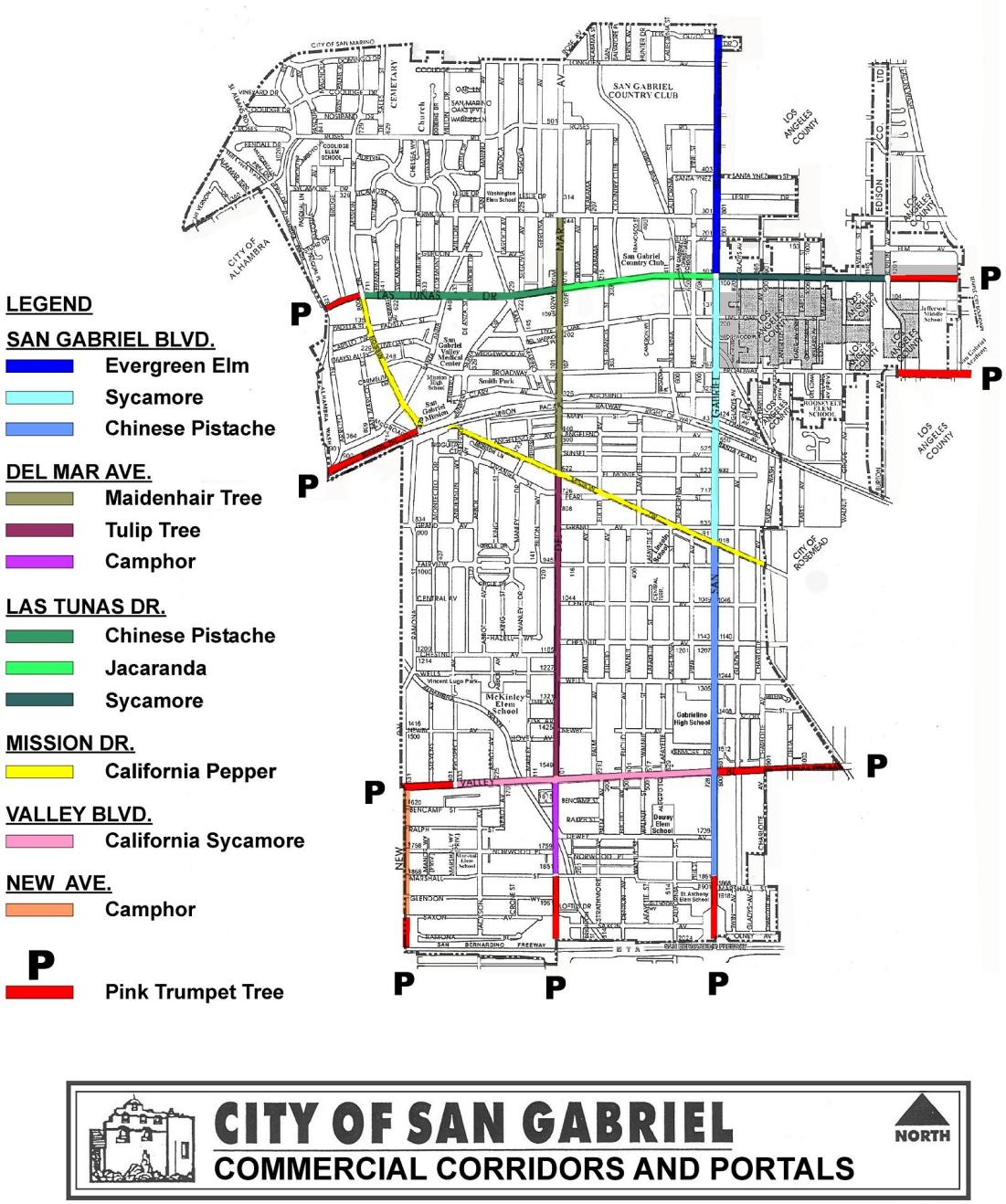



**Figure 3. Commercial Trees. This plan assigns street trees to major commercial roads and entrances (or portals) at the city limit.**

## BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTO SIMULATION

**Figure 4. (Before) Las Tunas looking east towards Temple City intersection of Burton. (Source: Lawrence R. Moss & Associates)**

**Figure 5. (After) Las Tunas looking east towards Temple City intersection of Burton Ave. (Source: Lawrence R. Moss & Associates)**

**Figure 6. (Before) Las Tunas looking west towards San Gabriel Blvd. (Source: Lawrence R. Moss & Associates)**

**Figure 7. (After) Las Tunas looking west towards San Gabriel Blvd. (Source: Lawrence R. Moss & Associates)**

**Figure 8. (Before) Mission Drive looking northwest, at Pearl Street intersection. (Source: Lawrence R. Moss & Associates)**

**Figure 9. (After) Mission Drive looking northwest, at Pearl Street intersection. (Source: Lawrence R. Moss & Associates)**

**Figure 10. (Before) Mission Drive looking southeast, at Pearl Street intersection. (Source: Lawrence R. Moss & Associates)**

**Figure 11. (After) Mission Drive looking southeast, at Pearl Street intersection. (Source: Lawrence R. Moss & Associates)**

**Figure 12. (Before) Fairview Av. at San Gabriel Village looking east towards Del Mar Ave. (Source: Lawrence R. Moss & Associates)**

**Figure 13. (After) Fairview Av. at San Gabriel Village looking east towards Del Mar Ave. (Source: Lawrence R. Moss & Associates)**

**Figure 14. (Before) Mission Drive looking northwest, at Pearl Street intersection. (Source: Lawrence R. Moss & Associates)**

**Figure 15. (After) Mission Drive looking northwest, at Pearl Street intersection. (Source: Lawrence R. Moss & Associates)**

## D. PLANTING STANDARDS

### 1. Needs

One of the objectives is to propose a plant palette that meets the needs of San Gabriel. Other than to provide the basic amenities of a street tree such as greenery, screening, and shade, all trees need to be compatible with the climate of the San Gabriel Valley region. Tolerance to seasonal pruning and those species that are typically free from pest are key factors. There will be no tree species that can develop fruits, large berries, and cones due to maintenance and safety reasons. This document will omit overused tree species such as Crape Myrtle, Bottlebrush spp., and Carrotwood from the palette. The proposed plant palette list comprises of a group of trees, both deciduous and evergreen species, which meets the needs mentioned beforehand.

While one of the goals and objectives is to provide trees that can compliment the architectural theme and landscaping trend at the time of neighborhood development, there will be exceptional cases where the city cannot plant the designated tree species due to site constraints and other unforeseeable reasons at its present time. In those circumstances, the Community Development Department or the Public Works Division will work with the city Landscape Architect for alternative tree species that can fulfill the goals and objectives of this document. Streets that have an existing pattern of significant trees with an established specie type will also be exempt from the Tree Master Plan. Those streets will be noted as having cultural landscapes that should be preserved.

### 3. Installation

The Public Works Division will be responsible to retrofit existing city trees, while the Engineering or Planning Divisions will be responsible to make recommendations of construction of new tree wells and parkways. Applicants who wish to build in San Gabriel are also responsible for planting street trees under the City's guidelines and must conform to maintenance and irrigation requirements. In addition to these conditions, an applicant for a commercial development will be required to make a $750/tree Tree Performance Guarantee to ensure the longevity of the tree and any planting immediately adjacent to the real property for a minimum of five years (funding and implementation will be discussed in a later chapter). Upon conclusion of the five year term, any remaining balance will be returned to the applicant. No Tree Performance Guarantee is required for any resident who would like to plant a street tree. Please refer to Figure 16a and 16b for planting standards.

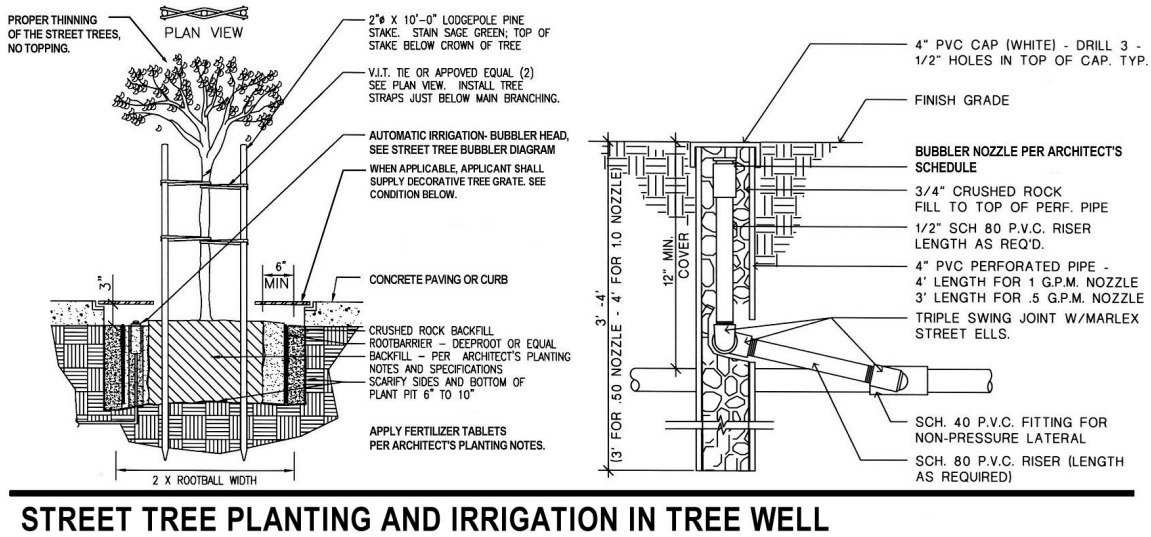



**Figure 16a. Street tree planting and irrigation standards in tree wells.**

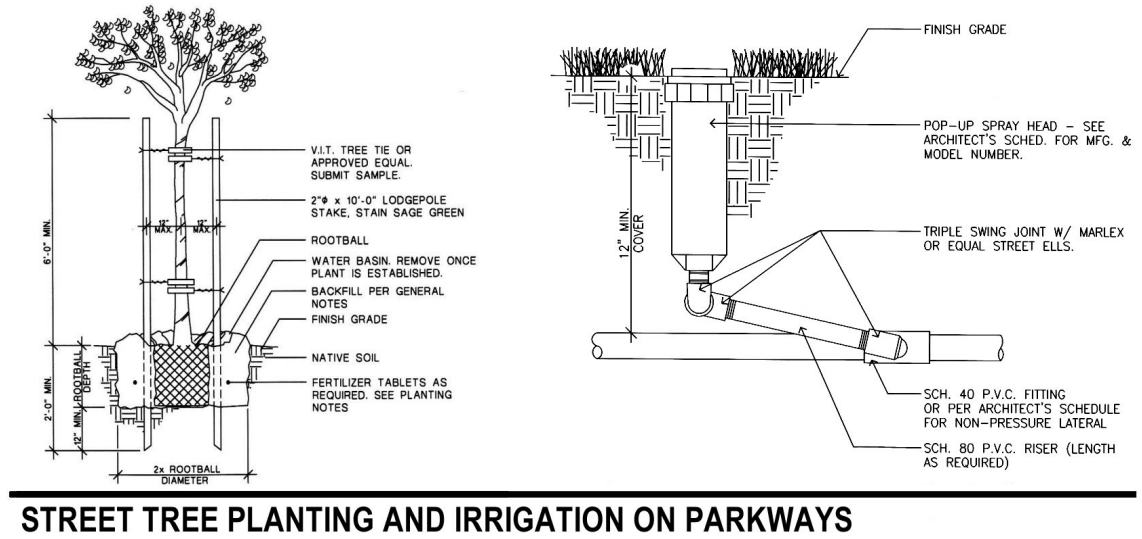



**Figure 16b. Street tree planting and irrigation standards in parkways.**

## 3. Maintenance

This plant palette typically has a less aggressive and invasive root system that decreases the risk of damage to sewer lines, sidewalk, curb and gutters, and street surfaces. However, all tree species after decades of growth may develop an aggressive and invasive root system. Typically, tree roots seek out a water path that has the least resistance toward street surfaces and openings in old water lines. The suggested strategy

to resolve this problem is through a mandatory application of root barrier, as shown in Figure 16a, and root pruning. Branch pruning shall be done through a thinning method rather than topping trees. In addition, green waste shall be reduced to mulch, which can be used as fertilizer.

The Public Works Division will be responsible for the maintenance of all city trees and is recommended to follow the steps listed above.

**4. Planting Spaces and Dimensions**

Many residential and commercial streets have existing tree wells or parkways of varying sizes to accommodate the species on the plant palette. For streets that do not have tree wells or parkways, or sections with underground utility lines and fixtures such as street lights, signage, traffic lights, drive approaches, etc., the Engineering Division along with Planning Division will make site investigations and assess the feasibility to add new planting spaces. The analysis should consider utility components including manhole caps, sewer inlets, concrete utility boxes that are owned by the City of San Gabriel or other agencies such as Southern California Edison, which can impact the location for a new tree.

The minimum dimension for a new tree well should be 3'x 3'. Where possible, 4'x 4' or larger tree wells should be the ideal size to provide sufficient root space for all trees selected for this plan. Wider sidewalks can allow up to 6'x 6' tree wells with metal decorative tree grates (typical), or shrub/ground cover planting at the base of the tree trunk. The ideal width for a parkway is the width of its adjacent sidewalk. The minimum width for new parkways should be at least three feet wide.

There will be exceptional situations where certain streets, after an assessment, cannot yield additional space for planters. Under this unique circumstance, the Community Development Department may require that all future residential or commercial developments on this particular street be able to provide a generous street-front landscaping with designated tree species outlined by this document. Furthermore, the Planning Commission has adopted a policy which will require a right-of-access or at street tree planting easement on the inside edge of the sidewalk, so that it can provide an equivalent level of street tree placement that would be similar to a conventional parkway setting. Please refer to Figure 2 and 3 for designations.

## E. PLANT INFORMATION

The list describes some key information about the tree species. All trees require full sun and low to moderate amount of watering. The list indicates the following information: common name & scientific name/ size/ growth/ floral feature/ evergreen or deciduous/ water needs/ suggested planter dimension.

**1. Australian Willow Tree(*Geijera parviflora*)**
Small tree/20-30'/no bloom/evergreen/low to moderate water/3-4' planters

**2. California Pepper (*Schinus molle*)**
Large tree/50-80'/fall leaf color/deciduous/ moderate to regular water/5-6'+ planters

**3. California Sycamore (*Platanus raceamosa*)**
Large tree/50-80'/fall leaf color/deciduous/ moderate to regular water/5-6'+ planters

**4. Camphor Tree (*Cinnamomum camphora*)**
Large tree/50-60'+/no bloom/evergreen/low to moderate water/5-6'+ planters

**5. Chinese Evergreen Elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*)**
Large tree/40-60'/no bloom/semi-evergreen/
regular water/5-6'+ planters

**6. Chinese Flame Tree (*Koelreuteria bipinnata)***
Medium tree/20-40'/late summer to fall red
flowers/deciduous/low to moderate/3-4' planters

**7. Chinese Fringe Tree (*Chionanthus retusus*)**
Small tree/20'/white cream bloom and yellow fall
color/deciduous/moderate water/1-2' planters

**8. Chinese Pistache (*Pistacia chinensis*)**
Medium tree/30-60'/yellow and red fall color/
deciduous/low to moderate water/3-4' planters

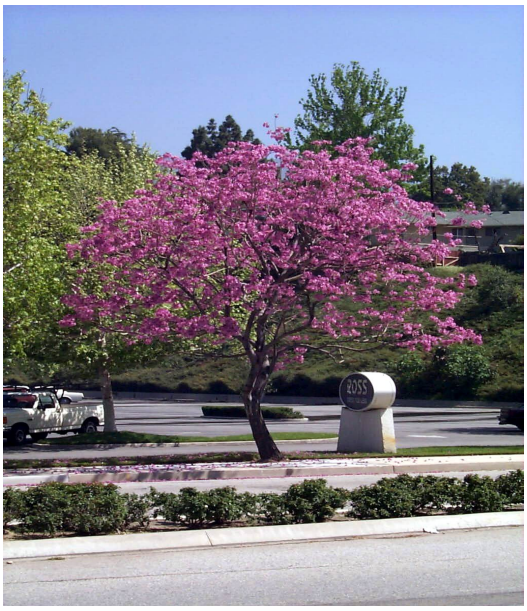
**9. Chitalpta (*Chitalpa toshkensis*)**
Small tree/25'/pink bloom from May to November/ deciduous/low water/1-2' planters

**10. Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)**
Small tree/20'/spring magenta flowers/ deciduous/low water/1-2' planters

**11. Jacaranda (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*)**
Medium-large tree/25-40'/lavender blue spring-summer bloom/semi deciduous/moderate water/ 3-4' planters

**12. Holly Oak (*Quercus ilex*)**
Medium-large tree/30-60'/no bloom/evergreen/ low to moderate water/3-4' planters

**13. Maidenhair Tree (*Ginkgo biloba*)**
Medium-large tree/30-60'/yellow fall color/ deciduous/ low to moderate water/3-4' planters



**14. Pink Trumpet Tree (*Tabebuia impetiginosa*)**
Medium tree/25-50'/pink spring flower/semi deciduous/semi deciduous/regular water/3-4' planters

**15. Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)**
Large tree/50-70'/yellow fall color/deciduous/ regular water/5-6'+ planters

# F. IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. Administration Level

The Community Development Department, headed by the Deputy City Manager will be responsible for interpretation and implementing all aspects of the document. On an annual basis, the Community Development Department with the assistance of the City Landscape Architect will update the tree master plan to inventory existing street trees in the City. The City Landscape Architect may also recommend trees or additions to amend the plan as needed. The Public Works Division will be responsible for maintenance and retrofitting existing and new street trees, and the Engineering Division will be responsible for designating new planting locations. The Community Development Department will fund this plan through State grants, and application fees such as the Tree Removal Permit and Tree Performance Guarantee Deposits, and new development projects. The Planning or Engineering Division will be responsible for ensuring that the recommendations in this document be incorporated in project conditions of approval and for environmental compliance. Both divisions along with Building Division shall be held responsible to ensure that street trees are shown on the submitted plans, installed, inspected, and maintained in accordance with this plan and city codes.

The Community Development Department will also be responsible for accepting appeals in case an individual disapproves of the street tree recommendation. An appellant who is aggrieved by the determination of the City as to the suitability of any alternate materials or methods of construction, and/or as to the reasonable interpretation of the provisions of this document may appeal to the Community Development Department. Such an appeal must be in writing and must be filed with the Community Development Department not less than 10 days after notice of the determination by the Community Development Director which has been provided to the applicant in person, or by first class mail. The Community Development Director or designee shall consider the evidence and issue a final determination in writing within ten (10) days of receiving such appeal.

As an alternative, residents within a city block may choose the tree specie for their street other than what is proposed in this document. If this option is chosen, a statement indicating the tree preference along with a list of signatures of all property owners on the block must be submitted to the Community Development Department for review.

The City can also grant an adjustment or waiver to the plan when a street tree planting scheme will compromise the integrity of a historical or culturally significant property as defined by the City's historic register, an approved environmental document, or in the opinion of the City's independent historic preservation architect, landscape architect, or City arborist.

## 2. Property Owners & Developers

While the City has taken the initiative to prepare and adopt this Street Tree Master Plan, its implementation will be greatly accelerated by the assistance and participation of private developers and the citizens of San Gabriel. As stated in the beginning of this document, the Street Tree Master Plan provides a guideline for private developers whose projects will help to shape the future image of the city. For example, when an applicant submits landscape plans for city review, one of the conditions for approval by the Community Development Department is a requirement to provide both street trees and a generous amount of landscaping at the street-front. Where there are no existing fixed parkways, this requirement will help to beautify the streetscape. The mitigation fees received from applicants for tree removal will also contribute to the funding of neighborhood-level street tree planting. For projects of all types, the city requires applicants to pay a Tree Performance Bond, which will ensure the longevity of all installed street trees. In case a tree dies, the City will use the bond money to purchase another tree. These examples represent the fastest and most direct means of citizen participation to implement the Master Plan.

## 3. Primary Arterials

Implementation at the corridor level will involve longer project timing and funding. Applying for State and other grants is one way of funding this Plan. However, constraints such as the time to process the grant application, availability of government funds and the amount of funding available can all result in a protracted implementation process. Factors such as the precise locations on the corridors to plant trees, the purchase of plant material and related hardware such as tree grates and root barriers, and tree installation can increase the implementation time.

The Public Works Superintendent will assess the feasibility to construct new tree wells and parkways, coordinate all fieldwork with other divisions, and monitor the tree maintenance program. In contrast to property owners and developers, the lengthy implementation time means to ensure that all street trees would not interfere with the flow of traffic, underground and overhead utility lines, safety of all workers and pedestrians, and for the assurance of a higher quality of work.