

URBAN FORESTRY STREET TREE MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Public Works Department

BUDGET ENGAGEMENT COMMISSION
October 10, 2024

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BACKGROUND

- The City of Riverside is known as a City of Trees, having been designated as a "Tree City, USA" by the Arbor Day Foundation.
- City supports and services street trees to ensure the health of the urban forest and enhance the quality of life for residents.
- Management of the Street Tree Program was transferred to the Public Works Department in 2006.



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BACKGROUND

- The City Charter specifies that the Park and Recreation Commission establish policies for the proper planting and removal of street trees.
- Street Tree Program activities remain part of the purview of the Commission.
- 2024 Manual is a comprehensive plan that sets forth the types of trees that can be planted, etc.
- Tree maintenance is provided by contract tree trimmers and overseen by three tree inspectors.



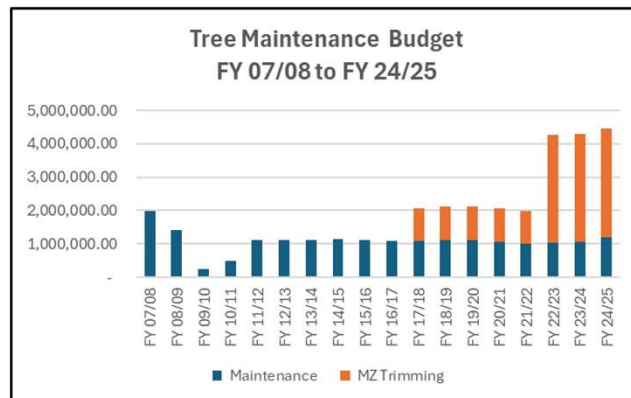
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PAST TREE MAINTENANCE BUDGETS

- The following graph depicts the Public Works Department tree trimming budget from FY 2007/08 to FY 2024/25.



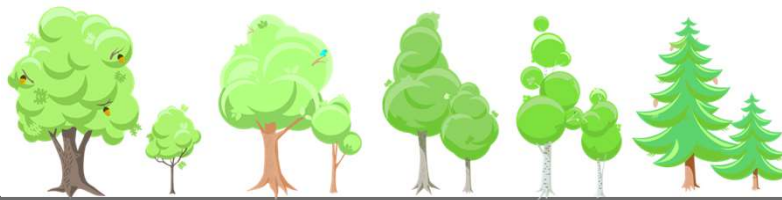
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MEASURE Z INVESTMENT

- In FY2017/18, \$1,000,000 in Measure Z funding was allocated to Urban Forestry to increase tree maintenance funding
- Improved the 11-year tree trimming frequency cycle to 4-6 years.
- Tree trimming costs since 2017 have resulted in more tree trims each year.
- In June 2022, City Council approved \$2,250,000 in Measure Z funding to increasing planting of trees and trimming of City-serviced palm trees.



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UTILITY LINE TREE AND VEGETATION CLEARANCE

- In the last two years, Riverside Public Utilities increased their budget to \$4,000,000 annually to maintain tree and vegetation clearance from utility wires to comply with state requirements.
- As a result, service interruptions related to trees and vegetation have been reduced to approximately 8% in 2024.



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FY 2023/24 TREE TRIMMING INVESTMENT

The City currently invests more than \$8.3 million in tree maintenance

| General Fund | Measure Z | Public Utilities | # Tree Trimmed |
|--------------|-------------|------------------|----------------|
| \$1,056,389 | \$3,250,000 | \$4,000,000 | 52,625 |

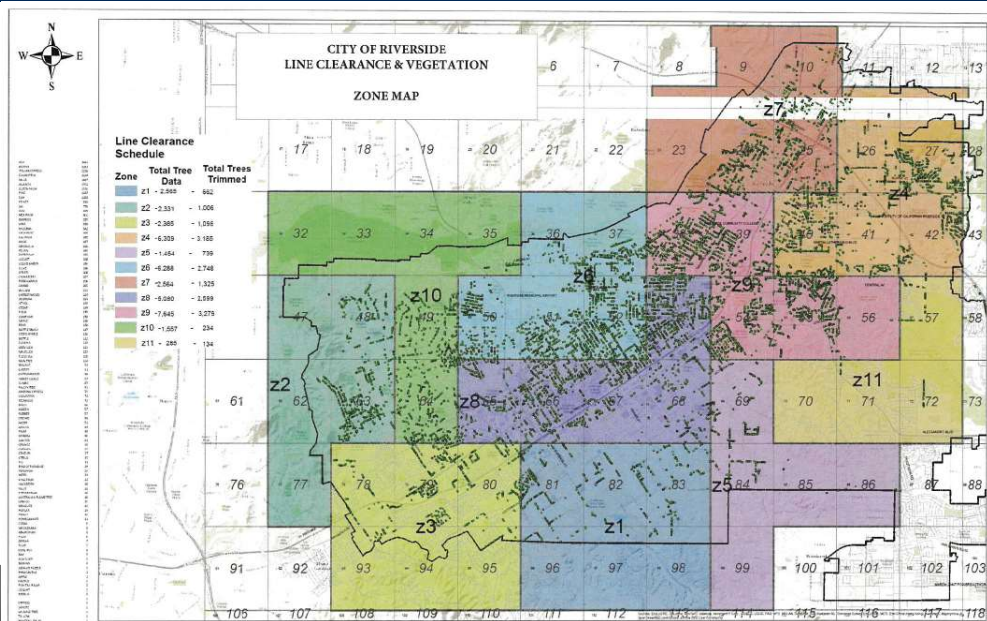


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UTILITY LINE TREE AND VEGETATION CLEARANCE



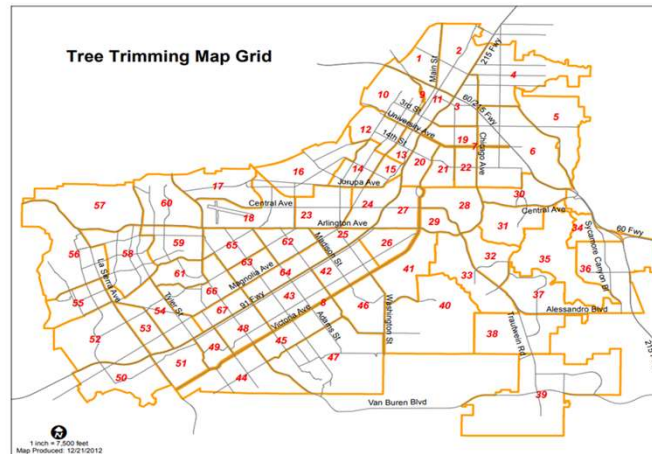
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STREET TREE TRIMMING GRIDS

- The Program currently provides trimming on a grid-by-grid basis with 67 grids.



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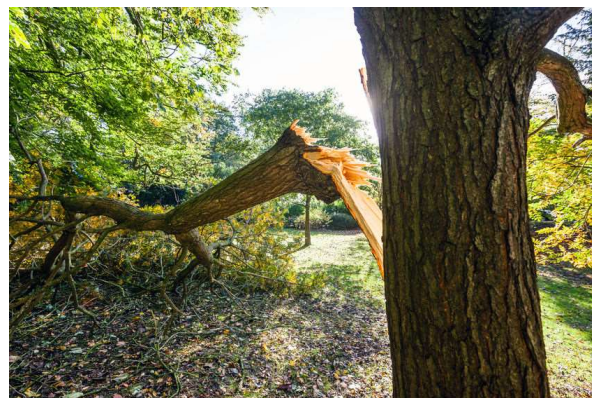
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SERVICE REQUESTS

- The Public Works Department receives a variety of service requests related to street trees through the 311 Call Center.

- The most common requests:
 - Tree, Limb or Tree, Broken or Fallen
 - Tree, Overgrown, Trim Request
 - Tree, Inspection Request
 - Tree, In Wires, Non-Emergency
 - Tree, Remove or Plant
 - Tree, Roots, Sewer Lateral Line
 - Tree, Clearance Trim



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CLAIMS

Current Liability Claims and Costs

- There are significant costs and potential liabilities associated with trees. Costs include repairing damaged curbs, sidewalks, etc.
- Below are the various types of damage claims received:

| Type of Item Damaged | Number |
|--|--------|
| Sewer Lines | 74 |
| Driveways and Other Concrete | 88 |
| Vehicles | 229 |
| Real Property (e.g. House/Fence/Mailbox) | 101 |
| Power Lines | 9 |
| Water Mains | 22 |
| Personal Injury | 41 |



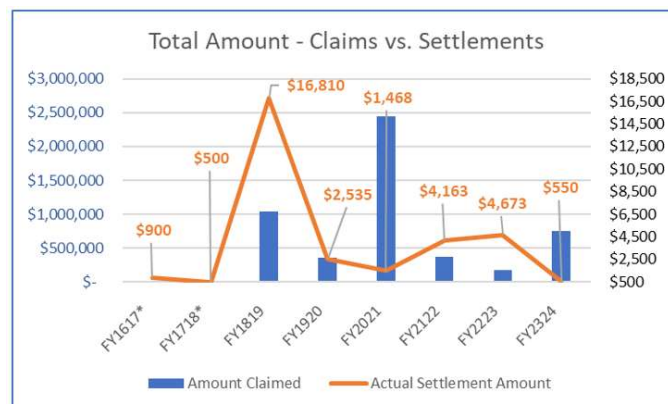
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CLAIMS

Claims have stayed low with continued tree trimming investment in recent years



*Data on amounts claimed unavailable due to handling of claims by a Third-Party Adjuster



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BENEFITS OF SHORTER TRIM CYCLE

- Earlier identification of diseased or dying trees
- Fewer emergency calls and claims, and reduced property damage
- Reduced need for Streets crews to clean up fallen palm fronds



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INCREASING TRIMMING COSTS

- Tree trimming costs over the past 8 fiscal years.
 - FY 2017/2018 - \$37.50
 - FY 2018/2019 - \$75.00
 - FY 2019/2020 - \$80.00
 - FY 2020/2021 - \$85.00
 - FY 2021/2022 - \$85.00 (Negotiated to hold previous year price)
 - FY 2022/2023 - \$89.95
 - FY 2023/2024 - \$94.95
 - FY 2024/2025 - \$94.95 (Negotiated to hold previous year price)
- As trimming costs have continued to increase, the number of trees trimmed each year is slowly declining.
- Tree trimming costs in next contract beginning July 1, 2025 are expected to be 10%-15% higher than today's costs



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STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT



Strategic Priority 4 – Environmental Stewardship

Goal 4.5: Maintain and conserve 30% of Riverside's natural lands in green space including, but not limited to, agricultural lands and urban forests in order to protect and restore Riverside's rich biodiversity and accelerate the natural removal of carbon, furthering our community's climate resilience.

Cross-Cutting Threads



Community Trust



Fiscal Responsibility



Sustainability & Resiliency



Equity



Innovation



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RECOMMENDATION

That the Budget Engagement Commission receive and file an update on the Urban Forestry Street Tree Program.



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