



DATE: February 8, 2023

AGENDA ITEM #3

TO: Parks & Recreation Commission

FROM: Manny A. Hernandez, Parks & Recreation Director/Staff Liaison

SUBJECT: Hetch Hetchy Trail – SFPUC Vegetation Management Update

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive an update from staff on the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission vegetation management plan on the Los Altos portion of the pathway.

BACKGROUND

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (“SFPUC”) is responsible for the delivery of potable water and the collection and treatment of wastewater for some 800,000 customers within the City of San Francisco; it is also responsible for the delivery of potable water to 26 other water retailers with a customer base of 1.8 million.

The City of Los Altos currently has a land use permit with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission that allows the City to maintain SFPUC parcel numbers 236 and 237 (between Los Altos Ave. and the Adobe Creek pedestrian bridge) as a bike and pedestrian path that connects to Palo Alto along the Hetch Hetchy trail. As part of this land use permit the City is expected to maintain the landscaping along these parcels and are subject to approval by the SFPUC for any modifications or improvements.

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission recently updated the land use permit with the City of Los Altos that will allow for the continued public use of the Hetch Hetchy trail as a bike and pedestrian trail that connects to Palo Alto across Adobe Creek.

DISCUSSION

As part of recently executed license agreement, the City of Los Altos will be expected to maintain all of three parcels of land between Los Altos Avenue and Mercedes Avenue, as well as maintain both parcels included in the current Land Use agreement, in accordance with the SFPUC amended Right of Way Integrated Vegetation Management Policy. The initial work to bring the vegetation up to the SFPUC requirements for clearance. Following the initial work, the SFPUC will hand over maintenance duties to the City.

According to the SFPUC Vegetation Management Policy, it is established to manage vegetation on the transmission, distribution and collection systems within the SFPUC Right of Way so that it does not pose a threat or hazard to the system’s integrity and infrastructure or impede utility maintenance and operations. The existence of large woody vegetation

and water transmission lines within the right of way are not considered compatible. Roots can impact transmission pipelines by causing corrosion. The existence of trees and other vegetation directly adjacent to pipelines makes emergency and annual maintenance very difficult, hazardous, and expensive, and increases concerns for public safety. The risk of fire within the ROW is always a concern and the reduction of fire ladder fuels within these corridors is another reason to modify the vegetation mosaic. One of the other objectives of this policy is to reduce and eliminate as much as practicable the use of herbicides on vegetation within the right of way and to implement integrated pest management.

City staff recently walked the pathway to review and update the removal and trimming plan. As a result of that review, no tree removals were added to the plan that was initially laid out pre-COVID. In fact, some trees were taken off the list and will remain in place. White dots on the trees signify removals. In addition, some large trees that have a canopy extending over the pipeline will require pruning for aerial clearance as outlined in the SFPUC Vegetation Management plan.

City Council will review the final plan prior scheduling the tree removals and pruning work. All work must be completed by the City within 270 days as required by the recently executed License Agreement with the SFPUC.

Attachments: None