



MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 22, 2007
TO: Brian McCarthy, Public Works Superintendent
FROM: Doug Riley, Public Works Supervisor
SUBJECT: CIVIC CENTER ORCHARD CONDITION

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends continuing to follow the Orchard Management plan for the apricot trees in the Civic Center orchard that was implemented in August 2006. The plan requires extra contract work and staff work to improve the long term health and vigor of the apricot trees.

BACKGROUND

Due to a lack of water and various diseases and pests the apricot trees in the orchard were dying. The Orchard Management plan was implemented to improve the health and vigor of the trees in the orchard.

DISCUSSION

The Orchard Management Plan recommended increasing the frequency of irrigation during the summer to reduce draught stress of the apricot trees. Water stressed trees are less vigorous and unable to defend themselves from root diseases like ring nematodes. Staff directed the contractor to water 3-4 times during the summer instead of the typical 1-2 times. The plan also recommended mowing the cover crop instead of disking. Disking reduces the incidence of ring nematodes and a soil bacterial canker that kills the trees. To keep the cover crop in control and attractive mowing is recommended 4-5 times per year instead of disking 2-3 times per year. Trimming the trees in July after the fruit harvest reduces the spread of brown rot and eutypa limb die back. The Plan also recommends the removal of the interior sucker growth on the apricot trees to reduce the spread of eutypa.

This extra work will be on going to improve the health and vigor of the orchard. The extra work will cost more. The cost increase should be fairly constant at about \$8000.00 total per year

The City of Saratoga has 14 acres of orchard and contracts most of the orchard work at a rate of \$5000/acre. The cost per acre for the City contractor including the extra work FY06 was \$2927/acre.


Doug Riley
Public Works Supervisor