



Minutes
Regular Meeting
Public Works and Sustainability Commission – 7 P.M.
Monday, September 22, 2025

A. CALL TO ORDER

A Regular Meeting of the Redondo Beach Public Works and Sustainability Commission and Budget and Finance Commission was called to order by Chair Arrata at 7:00 P.M., in the City Hall Council Chambers, 415 Diamond Street, Redondo Beach, California, and teleconference.

B. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Simpson, Bajaj, Anderson, Nafissi, Beeli, Tsao, Chair Arrata

Commissioners Absent: None

Officials Present: Andy Winje, Public Works Director
Rob Osborne, Public Works Senior Management Analyst
Mark Garlock, City's Arborist, Urban Forester, Park Manager
Jesse Reyes, Capital Projects Program Manager

C. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Nafissi led the Commissioners in a salute to the flag.

D. APPROVE ORDER OF AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Nafissi, seconded by Commissioner Bajaj, to approve the order of the agenda.

Motion carried 7-0 by voice vote.

E. BLUE FOLDER ITEMS - ADDITIONAL BACK UP MATERIALS

E.1. BLUE FOLDER

Capital Projects Program Manager Reyes reported no Blue Folder Items but one email requesting that Herondo Park be named after the late Mayor Bill Brand would be entered into the record.

Motion by Commissioner Nafissi, seconded by Commissioner Tsao, to receive and file the email received for the record.

Motion carried 7-0 by voice vote.

F. CONSENT CALENDAR

F.1. APPROVE AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING FOR THE PUBLIC WORKS AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION MEETING

F.2. APPROVE THE PUBLIC WORKS AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES FOR THE AUGUST 25, 2025 REGULAR MEETING

Capital Projects Program Manager Reyes reported no hands raised on Zoom and no eComments.

Motion by Commissioner Bajaj, seconded by Commissioner Simpson, to approve the Consent Calendar.

Motion carried 7-0 by voice vote.

G. EXCLUDED CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS - None

H. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

H.1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Jim Mueller questioned why there are not more businesses and people spending time in the Artesia corridor and stated it is because the public and pedestrian space along the boulevard feels cramped, noisy, and dangerous; described the negative atmosphere of the area and gave suggestions to improve the area such as: discouraging through traffic, make it more pedestrian friendly, reduce the speed limit and the timing of the crosswalks, require new build plans have greater setbacks along Artesia; suggested to pay for the changes the City could apply for state grant programs for traffic calming and improvement projects and asked that the Commission request staff to study these issues and recommend changes to improve the Artesia corridor.

Lara Duke reported on September 30th at 3:00 p.m. the groundbreaking of the nature park off of Herondo and PCH will take place and recommended that the park be names after the late Mayor Bill Brand; spoke about Mayor Light and the late Mayor Bill Brand's efforts in making the nature park; hoped that the park would eventually expand to the sea along the 190th and be lined with trees; spoke more of Bill Brand's vision in bringing back the area to its native state.

Capital Projects Program Manager Reyes reported no other cards, no hands raised on Zoom, and one eComment in support of naming the park after the late Mayor Bill Brand.

I. ITEMS CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS AGENDAS - None

J. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION PRIOR TO ACTION

J.1. DISCUSSION PRIOR TO ACTION DISCUSSION ON STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING THE CITY'S TREE CANOPY

Public Works Director Winje noted he is joined by Mark Garlock, the City's Arborist, Urban Forester, Park Manager, to talk about increasing the City's tree canopy; presented a

PowerPoint and started by providing some background regarding the item referenced the Strategic Plan, the City Tree Protection Ordinance and listed the benefits of trees; stated that Rob Osborne, Public Works Senior Management Analyst, was also there that evening if they had any questions regarding the history (noted he is retiring soon); provided information on the City's urban forest including statistics, species, age and noted there are over 11,300 City owned trees; noted they have more mature trees and need to focus on the numbers for younger trees; reported the average life of a street tree is 7 years; provided information on the City's canopy coverage and stated data is available on USDA and USFS; noted RB is below state average but on average with other beach cities; spoke of the quality of the data provided and felt it would be an advantage to do a specific study for Redondo Beach to see where they could increase their canopy coverage based on their terrain and temperature; spoke about goals and timelines and focusing on what is achievable; stated PW puts trees into two categories: ones they take care of and ones they don't take care of, the ones they take care of are City owned trees; explained the Tree Protection Ordinance, the approved species list, their standard of care policy manual, and the planting programs; reported the City aims to plant 100 trees every year, not all are new trees some are replacement trees; stated the City encourages private citizens and corporations to plant trees but it is not addressed in the municipal code; spoke about ways to improve the tree canopy regarding privately owned trees such as in development or establishing conditions, preservation requirements, and developing necessary partnerships since 75% of the area is private property; asked that the Commission help staff with their presentation to City Council which will happen in a month or so; provided a strategic approaches towards improving the City's tree canopy: 1) an Urban Forest Management Plan which is a long term, comprehensive approach, about 2 to 4 decades, and provided details regarding that plan, 2) a Priority Plan which gateway cities developed which is more of a 5 to 10 year short-term plan identifying and assessing the local canopy for each city and their potential for additional trees, and 3) Quick Action plans or ideas; provided staff's recommendation for the Commission that evening was to provide input regarding priorities, scope, values, and strategies for staff to present to City Council and any other recommendations as determined by the PWSC.

Commissioner Tsao referenced the slide with the American Planning Association and asked what the 125% credit was referring to.

Public Works Director Winje stated his understanding would be that there would be a program set up that when you redevelop a property, you would need to achieve certain credits with contribution to tree canopy; noted that preserving an existing mature tree would give more credits than planting a new tree.

Commissioner Tsao wondered if there were any incentives tied for private owned properties.

Public Works Director Winje stated the Community Development Department has more experience and ideas regarding redevelopment and can address those items.

Commissioner Nafissi suggested having less flowering and fruit trees on their list because they take up more water and they leave a mess; spoke about informing people in the

early permit stage of development about tree preservation and stated she was not informed about it until all her permits were submitted and approved; noted the cost was high to change her plans; spoke in support of the Harbor give-a-way and felt it is a good way to get people to plant trees; felt that the Galleria should be a priority area for more trees.

Motion by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Bajaj, to receive and file documents from Mara Lang.

Motion carried 7-0 by voice vote.

Mara Lang, Public Amenities Commission, stated she presented to this Commission a few years ago when the City was first exploring a tree ordinance; reported she and Lara Duke have started a group called Redondo Beach Citizens for Trees and is also a member of the South Bay Parkland Conservancy Board; referenced the City of Encinitas and the success they have had with their urban forest; spoke of being an activist on the tree issue for nine plus years and recommended they do some research and look at other cities for ideas; mentioned the number of palms in the City, stated they don't capture carbon they way woody trees do and suggested removing them from the list; spoke in support of the long-term plan and offered her assistance if needed.

Jim Mueller, District 5, spoke about his neighborhood being R multiple zoning and all the trees being on private property; stated the current tree ordinance allows homeowners or developers to remove any tree they want on their property; suggested that the Commission must recommend to the Council that the City is bound to protect trees living on private property; spoke of the negative effect developers have had on the environmental situation the City is in with regard to trees; urged the Commission to recommend to Council that the City change its planning and development ordinances and rules so review of existing vegetation takes place at the earliest stage of design with priority given to preserving existing mature trees.

Teresa Mitchell, District 4, spoke of having a master's in Urban Planning with a concentration in Environmental Sustainability; recommended that the Commission suggest to Council to maximize single driveways and add permeable surfaces to the sidewalks; hoped that the AACAP is one of the priorities since there is a glut of trees and open space in that area; commented that San Diego and Sacramento have interesting programs and gave some details on their programs.

Lara Duke was in support of the item and hoped the lack of proper tree canopy in Redondo Beach would be addressed; spoke of the new group that was recently formed, Citizens for Redondo Trees, and hoped the Commission would work with them; commented on the value and benefits trees bring to neighborhoods; felt the City needs to include Redondo residents in matters of mature and new trees; opined the City needs an official and enforceable tree plan or the results will be dire; agreed with Commissioner Nafissi's comments about the Planning Department informing people in the initial stage of development and that the City may need to incentivize so people will abide by it.

Capital Projects Program Manager Reyes reported no hands raised on Zoom, two eComments in support of moving forward with more trees and one eComment neutral but no flowering or fruit trees.

Commissioner Anderson asked if Rob Osborne could come up and speak about the item.

Public Works Senior Management Analyst Rob Osborne stated his area of expertise is with the City's tree ordinance which started in 2021; provided some background regarding the tree ordinance and reported that, at that time, the Council decided against regulating trees on private property and only focused on public property; spoke about the formalized procedures and the strict guidelines for requests to remove trees on public property.

Commissioner Anderson asked how the ordinance will work on the private side.

Public Works Senior Management Analyst Osborne stated he is a career Public Works person and public property is his area but in his opinion if the City wanted to increase the tree canopy they would need to look at private property; reiterated that 75% of the area in Redondo Beach is not under the City's control so private property is where they would need to focus.

Commissioner Bajaj went back to the topic of the City having no control over developers removing mature trees on lots with zero consequences; asked if staff is proposing with a revised or new ordinance that some type of enforcement or regulation would be put in place, and each scenario would be reviewed on a case by case basis to determine if a tree can be removed and offset by planting a new tree, or if the building permit would just be denied.

Public Works Director Winje stated if the mature trees are in the right of way, the City won't move the tree to accommodate the build; mentioned a speaker spoke about the City of San Diego's landscaping points program and the APA having a points or bonus program but that he has not explored how those all work yet; reported that the Community Development and Public Works will work together on it; stated the Commission could invite one of the members of the audience up to speak on the topic.

Mara Lang stated she and Laura MacMorran approached the City Council and had drafted an ordinance but some of what they wanted did not get translated to the City Council; mentioned what was missing was a discussion to only protect the trees in the front setback on private properties and not those in the rear; stated the outcome that was presented to the City Council at that time was to protect trees in the rear but that was not something they were championing; noted that the City, as part of development standards, requires new builds to put a tree in the front yard but does not protect it, so once a Certificate of Occupancy is issued no one checks if the tree remained planted; stated that would be an easy first step for the City to protect the new trees planted as part of new builds, and the City can always amend the ordinance if they feel they can add more to the protection of trees on private property.

Commissioner Tsao asked Mara Lang how they are funding their initiative.

Mara Lang said it is a brand new initiative run by volunteers at this time but they are hoping the South Bay Parkland Conservancy Board will take this initiative under their name, and they will also be applying for grants to see if they can move it forward; mentioned they may just start with fundraising to put some trees in the ground but would need the City's buy in to do it on parkways.

Commissioner Tsao noted they would need to have a partnership with the City and they also need to educate the local residents; noted that between 2018 and 2022 there was a reduction in canopy due to the pandemic and people cutting trees down and landscaping.

More discussion continued on how to educate the residents on the importance of taking care of the trees in the City and growing the numbers.

Public Works Senior Management Analyst Rob Osborne reported that before they were directed by City Council to take private property off the table, there was a lot of discussion of creating a heritage tree designation, but they never got far enough in deciding what that protection would be.

Chair Arrata asked if there was time to form a subcommittee to do more research and make some recommendations.

Public Works Director Winje stated that the Strategic Plan asks staff to return to the Council by November 1st but said he believes that won't be the last time Council will hear them on the item and may refer it back to the Commission; felt they did not have time to form a subcommittee in the short term but probably in the long term.

Commissioner Beeli stated he has a large tree in his front yard that would probably be considered a heritage tree and he is doing his best to keep it alive but questioned whether he supports a program that could possibly hold him in violation resulting in covering the cost of five trees and a \$15,000 fine; spoke about the difficulties with the current regulations on private property and wondered how they can grow their tree canopy in those areas when they are fairly restrictive; mentioned the Building Department will have conflicts in not allowing home building since there is a demand in supply and if trees need to be taken out they may need to allow it for new builds to happen.

Public Works Director Winje agreed with Commissioner Beeli's points; added that due to the housing crisis a lot of local control has been taken away and stated any ordinances need to consider statewide requirements; provided some potential programs they could look into and liked the suggestion about the front yard setback.

Commissioner Beeli asked about the school properties.

Public Works Director Winje responded that schools function under the State Department of the Architect and have a whole different set of rules; noted the City Council has a subcommittee that is in regular contact with officials from the School District and they might be able to address trees with them.

Chair Arrata asked if the decline in trees has anything to do with the type of trees that

were there and the change in climate.

Public Works Director Winje stated he has not studied that enough to know if that is the reason.

Chair Arrata asked if there are any requirements for areas to be roped off or barricaded when installing new trees.

Public Works Director Winje reported there is a Construction Protection Zone around trees in the City's ordinance now for City owned trees and Mark Garlock monitors that.

Chair Arrata asked the percentage of native to non-native trees on the list provided.

Mark Garlock reported they have approximately four California Native species on the list and 18 species on that approved street tree list; felt they can look at other species and find ones that at maturity would be larger and increase the diversity.

Chair Arrata asked about the ability to increase the native species to 27%.

Public Works Director Winje noted that native trees to Southern California are not great canopy trees so they would need to go beyond the native species list to have the most effective canopy producing tree list.

Mark Garlock agreed with Director Winje and added that there are actually very few California native species trees.

More discussion followed regarding what type of plants would be more successful and provide maximum canopy in the City.

Commissioner Bajaj referenced the tall and skinny neighborhoods which have no real sidewalks and asked if there would be any opportunity for an ordinance to be placed that would require a tree to be installed.

Public Works Director Winje stated if the street is wide enough to install medians then they could put planters in them to improve the tree canopy in those areas.

Mara Lang gave an example of what other cities were doing and stated instead of having the parkway on the curbside they would have the parkway up against the property; felt there are a lot of creative solutions.

More discussion followed on the unique areas in North Redondo and solutions the City is working on to increase the canopy and the challenges with some of the solutions.

Mara Lang spoke of a narrow street in South Redondo on Avenue D that has a beautiful canopy that could be a guide in helping homeowners and the City determine what would be appropriate in a narrow space.

Commissioner Anderson spoke in support of plans since they provide guidance but he is not a fan of telling people what they can do on their property; supports incentivizing

property owners; felt creating a list of accepted trees and not accepted trees would be helpful but that owners might need to do what works for them if they have maintenance issues with trees on their property; noted ADA issues in municipalities are a result of urban forestry issues; provided some suggestions for ordinances but felt if an owner wants to remove a tree on their property they should have that right.

Chair Arrata asked if there was any impact to the 2018 to 2022 margin for trees when the state changed the property line.

Public Works Director Winje was not sure about the cause and effect of that.

Chair Arrata spoke about the Commission needing to work on verbiage, liked Commissioner Nafissi's idea to do more education.

Commissioner Nafissi asked why all the give-a-ways are connected to a utility.

Mark Garlock explained that in most cases they are connected to utilities because the need to remove incompatibles with overhead conductors.

Commissioner Nafissi suggested the City work with SCE to institute a tree giving program and stated she would provide them with the link she found.

Discussion followed regarding the possibility of forming a subcommittee; Director Winje mentioned staff will go to the Council before November 1st and he is not certain of what they will do but if the Commission would like to suggest that the Commission develop a subcommittee to help craft whatever it is they do going forward then that can be part of the staff's recommendation; noted the Commission would need to recommend to staff to present to the City Council that forming a subcommittee would be a strategy to increase the canopy and then wait to see what Council decides.

Motion by Commissioner Anderson to look for funding opportunities to ultimately have an urban forest master plan, look at some replacement requirements, opportunities for Commission or Council approval depending upon if certain trees or certain amount of trees are removed, and creating a tiered list of trees for the City of Redondo Beach.

Motion died for lack of a second.

Commissioner Bajaj felt that those would be suggestions that would come out of the subcommittee.

Public Works Director Winje felt they needed to think of a recommendation based on the strategy they wanted to pursue; felt all their suggestions were good and would include them when they are ready to present; stated they are looking for what direction the Commission supports in terms of moving the item forward.

Chair Allen recommended the Commission form a subcommittee so they can collaborate with others to get all the data and make a proper recommendation.

Both Commissioners Beeli, Bajaj, and Simpson agreed that forming a subcommittee was a good idea; Commissioner Tsao felt partnering with a citizens group to get their feedback is needed.

Chair Arrata suggested a motion by made to form a subcommittee so that the Commission could be more strategic in their planning to help develop canopies and all of the other growth and development, maintenance, and other areas they spoke about that evening, and policy changes needed for protection of trees.

Motion by Commissioner Bajaj, seconded by Commissioner Simpson, to present to City Council that a subcommittee be formed to provide input regarding priority, scope, values, and strategies on the City's tree canopy.

More discussion followed.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Simpson, Bajaj, Anderson, Nafissi, Beeli, Tsao, Chair Arrata

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 7-0.

K. COMMISSION MEMBER ITEMS AND FUTURE COMMISSION AGENDA TOPICS

Commissioner Anderson stated back in April, as part of the Strategic Planning Session, he brought up to review some opportunities for the City to provide recommendations on first/last mile solutions and various other elements for the green line extension; understood it is going through final environmental review and will be adopted by LA Metro; recommended for a future Commission agenda item to think about areas that would be beneficial to the City that they can discuss with Metro as it gets installed.

Public Works Director Winje pointed out that it does require concurrence from the rest of the Commission.

Commissioner Bajaj felt they should wait until the environmental report is finalized and once Metro makes their firm decision; asked Director Winje if he knew when Metro would do the final adoption.

Public Works Director Winje heard it was speculated by the end of the year and that City Council has publicly opposed the locally preferred alternative; felt it might be premature to start talking about first/last mile around the locally preferred alternative and would be judicious to wait until the Environmental Impact Study Report has been adopted and the locally preferred alternative has been identified.

More discussion followed.

Commissioner Nafissi mentioned the new park opening on September 30th and asked if it was too late to have that item come back as the Bill Brand Park.

Public Works Director Winje said it is not too late, that the groundbreaking is happening on September 30th but that it will take several months for it to be completed.

City Engineer Lauren Sablan mentioned there is a memo they can do tonight to make that recommendation to Council and staff can provide that to them and it would go on the agenda for the next City Council meeting.

Commissioners were in agreement with including in the memo to the Council the naming of the new park be the Bill Brand Park.

L. ADJOURNMENT – 8:37 P.M.

Motion by Commissioner Bajaj, seconded by Commissioner Simpson, to adjourn at 8:37 p.m. to the next meeting of the Redondo Beach Public Works and Sustainability Commission, which will be a Regular Meeting to be held at 7:00 p.m. on October 27, 2025, in the Redondo Beach Council Chambers, at 415 Diamond Street, Redondo Beach, California.

Motion carried 7-0 by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted:

Andrew Winje
Public Works Director