

## COUNCIL ACTION/DISCUSSION

### **Background:**

In the 2017 adopted City budget, the first stated Council goal is “*Keep Venice Beautiful and Eco-Friendly*”. The City commits substantial energy to protecting our environment, enhancing the condition and appearance of our parks, beaches, and other public sites. The City is also committed to supporting private property enhancements that offer further protection of our ecosystem. Effective management of trees and other vegetation contribute significantly to establishing and maintaining a balanced and attractive environment.

Venice is a tree-friendly City. There are in place comprehensive regulations on the planting, removal, and replacement of trees. Careful attention is given to support a healthy, as well as attractive, ecosystem. Currently, the regulation of tree plantings, removals, and replacements is a county-managed function. A county arborist issues permits for removal, replacement, and planting of trees. The City does not operate a tree management function, nor does the City have a staff position of arborist.

From time to time, the City examines its own scope of services and its partnerships with the county in the delivery of services to the community. Occasionally, the City may consider adjustments in the sharing of responsibility for the management of specified public services. In the recent past, the City elected to assume responsibility for permitting and managing structures over water; a process historically regulated by the county. More recently, the City has been examining the process of tree management. The purpose of examining this process is to determine the most effective and efficient methods of regulating the tree permitting and oversight processes. This issue has been under discussion for several months.

### **Request:**

To further an understanding of the tree regulatory process and to help determine if efficiency and operational effectiveness can be enhanced, I propose to direct the City staff to research the tree permitting and management process; to include an examination of the costs, obligations, benefits, and responsibilities associated with the City assuming control of this process. Such issues to examine would include the cost of establishing a local tree regulating division; staffing, material cost, training, certification, capital costs, and related expenses. Pending the outcome of this research, consideration could be given to program this function into the City’s Fiscal 2018 General Operating budget.

Submitted by: Bob Daniels  
March 7, 2017