



City Busy Replacing Many Damaged or Missing Plants and Trees

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It is the City of Oakley’s goal to keep the parks and landscape areas in a beautiful and well maintained condition. With that intent in mind, many parks and streets throughout the city are receiving new plant material to replace missing, dead, or damaged trees and plants. Additionally, the work includes irrigation system checks and equipment repair.

Plant material and irrigation systems fail or are damaged as a result of vandalism (both intentional and unintentional), removal/theft, age, weather factors (i.e. freezing), disease, and other conditions. Jesse Dela Cruz, Oakley Parks and Landscape Foreman said, “Two years of drought and watering restrictions, along with the more recent prolonged rains and heavy winds are taking down some trees, and have showed a significant loss of trees and plants.”

Some of the plant and tree in-fill and improvements are taking place at Summer Lake Park, Novarina Park, Cypress Gove Park, Briarwood Park, Creekside Park, Crockett Park, Brown Road between Carpenter Road and Neroly Road; Frank Hengel Way, Picasso Drive, East Cypress Road, Neroly Road between Empire Avenue and Brown Road, and along the Cypress Trail near Vella Circle and Warhol Way, just to name a few.

Regrettably, some areas will not be addressed. Though the City of Oakley desires to maintain a uniform level of maintenance throughout the landscaped areas and parks; however, by law the City can only use funds collected from property owners within a benefit zone for the costs associated directly and specifically with that zone. In some zone areas, the assessments are not sufficient to pay for the maintenance costs and are currently “Underfunded.” Underfunded benefit zones have not kept pace with expenses, and are insufficient to adequately maintain their neighborhood landscape areas and have little or no reserve monies, or are in debt to the General Fund. Three underfunded area examples include Vintage Parkway, Country Fair/Bernard Rd. and Country Place/Nutmeg Park areas. All of the “underfunded” zones were created by Contra Costa County with no built-in annual inflators, with homeowners still paying the same assessment created 15 to 30 years ago.

Plans are underway to replace more plants and trees at some additional locations this spring. Mayor Sue Higgins said, “Landscaping, which includes trees, play an important

part our ecosystem. They are often taken for granted and replacing them will lend so much to our City.”