



Memorandum

Date: September 6, 2023
To: Tree Commission
From: Urban Forestry Program Staff
Subject: Item 6C – Downtown Decorative Lighting Short-term and Long-term

Recommendation

Informational/Action Item.

Receive information from City staff on work in the downtown to remove existing decorative lighting in trees and place temporary lighting while long-term planning for decorative lighting in the downtown gets underway with key collaborators, including the Tree Commission. The Commission may choose to provide recommendations to City Council on the efforts to remove lighting, the temporary placement lighting, and/or the process for the long-term plan for downtown decorative lighting in relation to City trees.

Background

The trees in the downtown area needed to be pruned per the City's proactive block pruning program, with work targeted to the summer months when there is typically less congestion downtown, and to coincide with construction where streets were already closed. The work being performed required the removal of existing decorative lights previously affixed to the trees. Initial planning efforts included reaching out to appropriate parties to inform them of work scheduled to take place in late-June, early-July. Upon performing tree assessments to prepare for the block pruning, multiple tree health and electrical issues were found related to the existing decorative lighting.

Prior to this work being performed in the downtown, the existing decorative lighting had been up for ten-plus years, and has become part of the ambiance in the downtown area that has benefitted the businesses and community at large. With this in mind, staff have approached a temporary solution to install some downtown lights until a more substantive conversation can take place with the Tree Commission, Tree Davis, Davis Downtown Business Association, Chamber of Commerce, the public and Council. These temporary lights will also provide examples on methods and appearance of lighting to aid in the conversation to develop recommendations on long term policies for decorative lighting.

The temporary solution as approached is meant to function as a bridge between the removal of the existing lights and the establishment of a longer term solution, based on the timeframe of the immediate tree work needing to be accomplished.

It is important to emphasize that several different styles/techniques will be utilized in the coming month to display what options might best fit the multiple goals identified for decorative lighting in the downtown, some options that may include trees and some that may not. Any temporary attachments to trees will be adhered in a way to minimize any possible damage and should have no long-term effects on the trees.

More information about outreach and process can be found here:

<https://www.cityofdavis.org/city-hall/improvement-projects/downtown-davis-lights-and-trees>