

**CITY OF ALBANY  
PARKS RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION AGENDA  
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: Apr 14, 2022

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_

**SUBJECT:** Street Tree Removal Applications

**REPORT BY:** John Hawkrige, Urban Forester

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**SUMMARY**

Review of Street Tree Removal applications at the following locations:

- 620 Curtis St,
- 654 San Gabriel Ave,
- 841 Santa Fe Ave,
- 1000 San Pablo Ave,
- 1350 Washington Ave, and
- 1435 Thousand Oaks Blvd.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends approval of the above noted removal applications with the exception of 1120 Masonic Ave. Trees will be removed and replaced with appropriate species.

**BACKGROUND & DISCUSSION**

The following presents background information and analysis of each tree recommended for removal. The analysis includes a reference to the specific removal criteria under which the removal is recommended.

Unless noted, trees recommended for removal will be removed, including stump grinding, by a tree care contractor hired by the City. Replacement trees of an appropriate species will be planted during next season as part of the City's annual tree planting project. Species selection is coordinated with the adjacent property owner.

**620 Curtis (Chinese Pistache with DBH of 2.75"):** This removal is information only as the trunk diameter does not meet the 3" minimum to require a removal permit under this City's Tree Removal Policy and Procedures. This request was made by Comcast as part of an encroachment permit to install a backup power cabinet at this location. Staff worked with Comcast to identify the least impactful location to place the cabinet that still meets the project requirements. Comcast's contractor will be responsible for removing the tree and planting a replacement tree of the same species at this general location.

**654 San Gabriel (Coast Live Oak with DBH of 9.5”):** This is a volunteer Coast Live Oak located on the southern fence line of the property and is within Ohlone Greenway park area adjacent to the Albany Loop art installation. The property owner request removal of the tree because it is damaging their fence. The tree has grown at a very steep angle – almost perpendicular to the ground – due to limited sunlight availability from the other shrubs in the area. This tree is at a risk of failure due to the angle of growth and will continue to damage the fence. This application qualifies for removal per Non-Emergency City Tree Removal Criteria 2.1e.

This tree will not be replaced as the surrounding vegetation makes it undesirable for tree planting.

**841 Santa Fe (2 Liquidambar with DBH of 17.5” & 27.5”):** These large trees are causing extensive damage to the sidewalk, curb and street. The property owner has paid for two previous sidewalk repairs due to sidewalk damage, including arcing the sidewalk to create more space for the tree, but the roots have continued to cause damage. Additionally, these trees have a history of limb failure and have been topped/stubbed.

This location is included in the Phase 5 of the City’s Sidewalk Repair Program and the application was submitted by Staff. Liquidambar trees are known for damaging sidewalks. These trees have a history of damaging the sidewalk even after incorporating measure to mitigate damage. These trees are likely to continue damaging the sidewalk and the amount of root pruning needed to prevent future damage would cause decline leading to death. Santa Fe has a larger planting strip that can support a tree such as Red Maple that provides a similar scale and canopy as the Liquidambar without impacts to the sidewalk. This application qualifies for removal per Non-Emergency City Tree Removal Criteria 2.1c and 2.1d.

**1000 San Pablo (Fan Palm with DBH of 15”):** This removal is for information only. The Fan Palm is in a planter box along the southwestern side of City Hall. The palm was intended to be a low scale planting in the planter box running along the edge of the building. It has outgrown the planter box and is damaging the building (gutters, downspouts and eaves) and blocking a secondary exit from the administrative wing of City Hall.

**1350 Washington (Liquidambar with DBH of 22”):** This large Liquidambar is located near the intersection of Washington and Carmel. This tree has a history of limb failure, including failure of a large limb this past winter. There are also signs of weakness at the connections of several of the remaining large stems. This tree has also been repeatedly topped by PG&E to provide clearance around the overhead power line clearance.

This location is included in the Phase 5 of the City’s Sidewalk Repair Program and the application was submitted by Staff. This tree is being recommended for removal because the amount of root pruning needed for the sidewalk repair will weaken the tree and increase the likelihood of limb failures. These are significant limbs that could damage the adjacent house and vehicles and would pose a danger to pedestrians. The property owner is in favor of removal. This application qualifies for removal per Non-Emergency City Tree Removal Criteria 2.1b and 2.1d.

**1435 Thousand Oaks (Camphor with DBH of 29"):** This large Camphor tree is located adjacent to the property backyard the property on San Carlos Ave. The tree has outgrown its location and is causing severe uplifting of the sidewalk and adjacent utility cabinet. This sidewalk has been repaired at least once before, including arcing the sidewalk away from the tree to increase its growing space.

This location is included in the Phase 5 of the City's Sidewalk Repair Program and the application was submitted by Staff. This location will require significant cutting of the root crown to install the new sidewalk. Our experience is that the projected amount of cutting required for the sidewalk repair will lead to the tree dying within years of the work. Staff investigated ramping the sidewalk to avoid removal but could not meet grade compliant with ADA requirements (5% or less running slope) while conforming with the grades at the adjacent property's driveway. This application qualifies for removal per Non-Emergency City Tree Removal Criteria 2.1c and 2.1d.

### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT**

Per the Migratory Bird Treaty Act as well as California State Codes 3503 and 3503.5, bird nests are to be protected while there is active nesting. California Department of fish and Wildlife have defined nesting season as February 1st through August 15th. If approved, the tree will be removed outside of the nesting period or after completion of a bird nest survey.

All tree have been inspected for nesting.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Removal and replacement of these trees will cost approximately \$8000 and would be funded from the annual operating budget for Building Maintenance, Park Maintenance and Street Streets.