

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

Agenda Date: September 8, 2022

SUBJECT: Street Tree Removal Applications

REPORT BY: John Hawkridge, Urban Forester

SUMMARY

The item before the Commission is to review the following:

- Dead Tree Removals at 1040 Ventura Ave., 1014 Pomona Ave., and 909 Ordway St.
- Emergency Tree Removal at 1072 Neilson St.
- Street Tree Removal Applications
 - 1) 1431-1433 Washington Ave.
 - 2) 545 Pierce St.

DEAD TREE REMOVALS

1040 Ventura – dead Australian Willow (*Geijera parviflora*), reported to Urban Forestry by the property owner.



1014 Pomona – dead Jacaranda (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*).



909 Ordway – dead Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*).



EMERGENCY TREE REMOVAL

The following tree has been removed per the **City Tree Removal Policy and Procedures, Section 1: Emergency City Tree Removal.**

- 1072 Neilson – The property owner reported that the trunk of the Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) at this address was cracked. Staff inspection revealed splits in 3 directions, on the east, west and south sides at about the same height along the trunk, at the junction of major limbs. Staff requested a proposal from a city tree contractor for cabling/bracing and reduction pruning on this tree, but it was determined that the damage was too extensive. The decision was made to have the tree removed.



This and the 3 dead trees were reported to the Recreation and Community Services Director on August 5, 2022. The trees were issued to a contractor for removal and stump grinding.

Replacement trees for each location will be planted as part of next street tree planting project.

STREET TREE REMOVAL APPLICATIONS

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the following removal applications.

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.

- 1) **1431 & 1433 Washington Ave. Street Tree Removal Applications:** Removal of 2 Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) 25" and 28" dbh, approximately 55' height, with a 28'-35' crown spread.

These 2 two trees are being considered together because of their proximity to each other and therefore co-dominance. What affects one will affect the other. If only one is removed, the other tree will be open to increased wind where it has not acclimated itself and therefore will be more susceptible to limb or trunk failure.

Removal of these trees is being requested by the respective property owners. This was initiated when the tree at 1431 dropped a 25' limb on the night of August 16, 2022. Inspection of this tree revealed several defects that indicate the continued probability of continued limb failure. This tree is structurally unsound as seen in several tight branching unions with included bark, as well as many diagonally extended limbs. Both are features of liquidambar that often lead to limb failure. In 2018, a cracked large vertical limb over the street was removed from this tree by a city tree contractor. Later in 2018, the sidewalk was repaired as part of the City Sidewalk Repair program. Although the new sidewalk was arched away from the trunk, many large roots were pruned relatively close to the trunk. These large cuts are visible without excavation and appear to be dying back. Although the sidewalk was repaired, extensive damage to the curb and gutter, caused by this tree, remains. Repairs would require further extensive root pruning which would further destabilize this tree. Another observation of note is the oozing on one stem of the tree indicating bacterial infection, such as slime flux or canker, causing further weakness and instability. While there is no cure for these diseases, removal of the afflicted area is recommended. In this case, that would be a main stem.

The tree at 1433 Washington has severe structural problems and an area of decay in the lower trunk. This tree has 4 co-dominant stems, all of which have included bark at the stem

unions. Decay in the lower trunk at the union of 2 main stems is of great concern with this tree. Many lateral limbs in the crown are horizontally over-extended and show included bark as well.

Staff requested that a tree contractor evaluate these trees for hazard reduction pruning. The contractor recommended removal for the above reasons.

Both property owners submitted applications requesting removal of the trees.

If removals are approved, replacement trees of suitable species for the location, as determined by the property owner and Urban Forestry, will be planted as part of the City's next annual planting project.

Removals and replacement trees will be completed by a city contracted tree crew. Replacement trees will be planted during the next seasonal planting project. Red maple is recommended as the replacement species for liquidambar. Red Maple has many similar features of liquidambar (large, full canopy, colorful fall foliage), without the negative features such as extensive sidewalk damage, sudden limb drop, and spiky seed capsules that cause slip and fall hazards.

These proposed tree removals qualify for removal per the **Non-Emergency City Tree Removal Criteria 2.1e and 2.1f.**

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(s) will be removed outside of the nesting period or after completion of a bird nest survey. All trees have been inspected for nesting.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Removal and replacement of these trees will cost approximately \$6000 and would be funded from the annual operating budget for Street Tree maintenance.



(photo of 2 Liquidambar at 1431 – 1433 Washington Ave.)



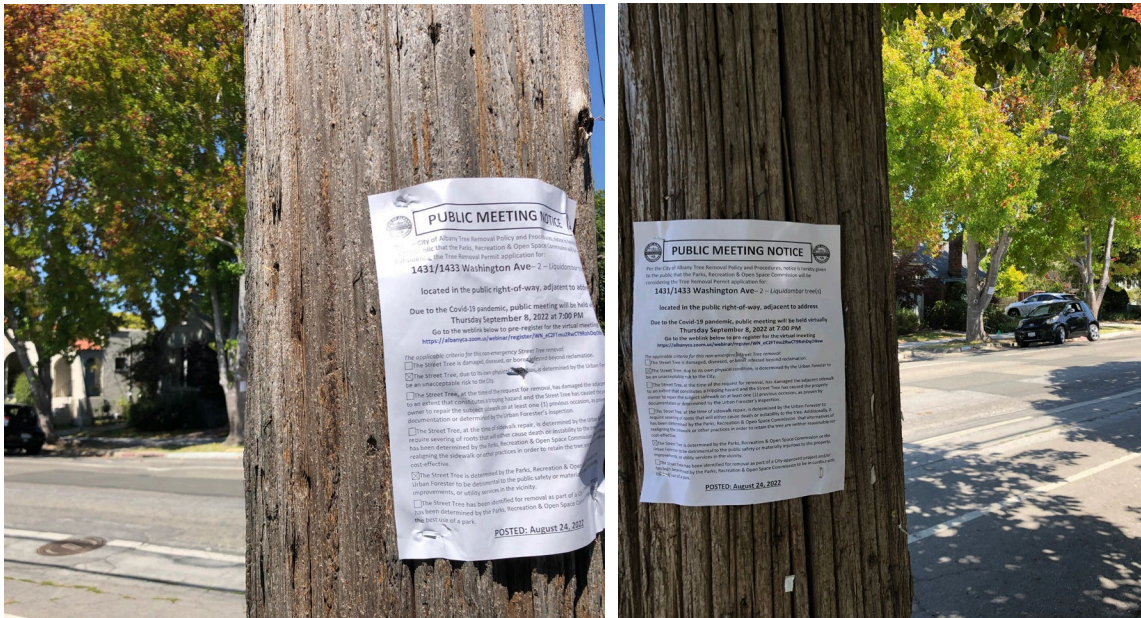
(photo of downed limb at 1431 Washington)



(multiple stems at 1433 Washington)



(public meeting notices posted on trees)



(notices posted on power poles across the street)

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1000 SAN PABLO AVENUE PUBLICWORKS@ALBANYCA.ORG
ALBANY, CA 94706 WWW.ALBANYCA.ORG/PW

URBAN VILLAGE BY THE BAY

Non-Emergency City Tree Removal Application

Owner's Name: mike Shea / Chris Rockwell
Property Address: 1431 Washington Av Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED] #of trees requesting to be removed 1
[REDACTED]

No permit to remove a living City Tree may be issued unless one or more of the following criteria is met:

- ☐ The City Tree is damaged, diseased, or borer infested beyond reclamation
- ☒ The City Tree due to its physical condition is an unacceptable risk to the City
- ☐ The City Tree has damaged the adjacent sidewalk to an extent that constitutes a tripping hazard, and the City Tree has caused the property owner to repair the adjacent sidewalk on at least one (1) previous occasion, as proven by documentation or Urban Forester inspection.
- ☒ The City Tree is detrimental to the public safety or materially injurious to the property, improvements or utility services in the vicinity
- ☐ The City Tree has been identified for removal as part of a City-approved project and/or has been determined by the Parks, Recreation & Open Space Commission to be in conflict with the best use of a park.

I understand that removal of a City Tree which does not pose a clear and imminent danger to the safety of the general public requires review by the Urban Forester and the Parks, Recreation & Open Space Commission at a public meeting. **A replacement tree will be required for all approved tree removals.** Removal application fee is \$218.03. Return fee and application to: Finance - City of Albany, 1000 San Pablo Ave., Albany, CA 94706

Signature: Justin Rockwell / Mike Shea Date: Aug 21, 2022
(add digital signature, or print and sign)

City Action

Date Application Revd: _____ Fee Received (Amt): _____

Approved ☐ Declined ☐ Date: _____

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URBAN VILLAGE BY THE BAY

Non-Emergency City Tree Removal Application

Owner's Name: Steve Savage
Property Address: 1433 Washington Ave Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED] #of trees requesting to be removed 1

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Signature: [Signature] Date: 8/21/22
(add digital signature or print and sign)

City Action

Date Application Rcvd: _____ Fee Received (Amt): _____

Approved ☐ Declined ☐ Date: _____

2) 545 Pierce Street: Street Tree Removal Application: 4 Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) 8-10" dbh, ~25' height, ~15' average crown spread.

Trees along the frontage of 545 Pierce Street are to be removed as part of PG&E's underground conduit rehab project. The project entails removing PG&E substructure (conduits, vaults, transformers) running beneath the eastern sidewalk along Pierce Street from 555 Pierce to Cerritos Creek. The work entails removing the sidewalk and removing the soils, conduits and structures which run directly beneath these four trees. Preserving the trees is not feasible.

From PG&E's permit application for this project:

"The scope of this permit includes the removal of PG&E owned and operated electric utility substructures and equipment from beneath the sidewalk along the eastern side of Pierce Street, from 555 Pierce Street to Cerrito Creek Bridge. Targeted substructures include seven (7) concrete utility enclosures and associated equipment (e.g., transformer, switch, line recloser); PVC conduit and associated aluminum conductor. The locations of the referenced enclosures and conduit can be found in the attached Joint Trench Composite Drawing. Soil in the immediate vicinity of the referenced substructures may also be excavated if exhibiting visual or olfactory evidence of impact by dielectric fluid...it is anticipated that limit of the excavation associated with the substructure removal activities should be confined to the width of the sidewalk and the depth of bedrock which is being encountered from 3-feet to 8-feet below ground surface."

Tree #1 has been in decline with about one-third of its canopy dead.

Tree #2 has some crown dieback and is basically asymmetrical.

Tree #3 is situated within 1.5' of PG&E vault.

Tree #4 is causing sidewalk damage and is within 5' of a fire hydrant.

The City will work with PG&E to replace the trees with a more appropriate species for this location with reconfigured tree wells that meet ADA standards.

This application qualifies for removal per Non-Emergency City Tree Removal Criteria 2.1e, and 2.1f.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Removal and replacement of these trees will be performed by and paid for by PG&E.



(tree #1)



(tree #2)



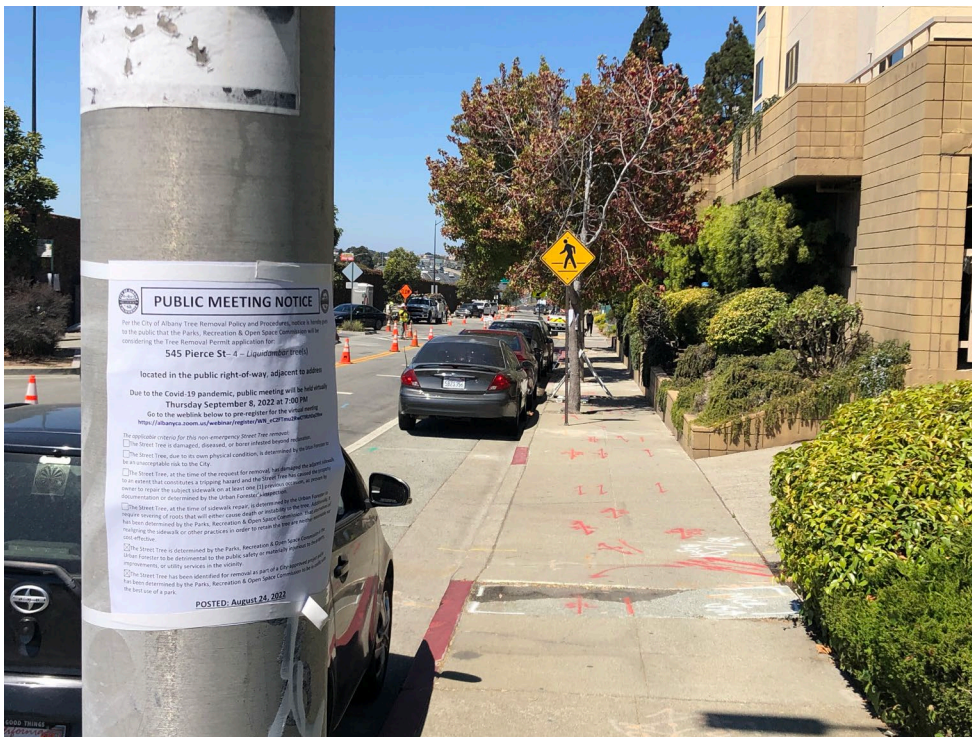
(tree #3)



(tree #4)

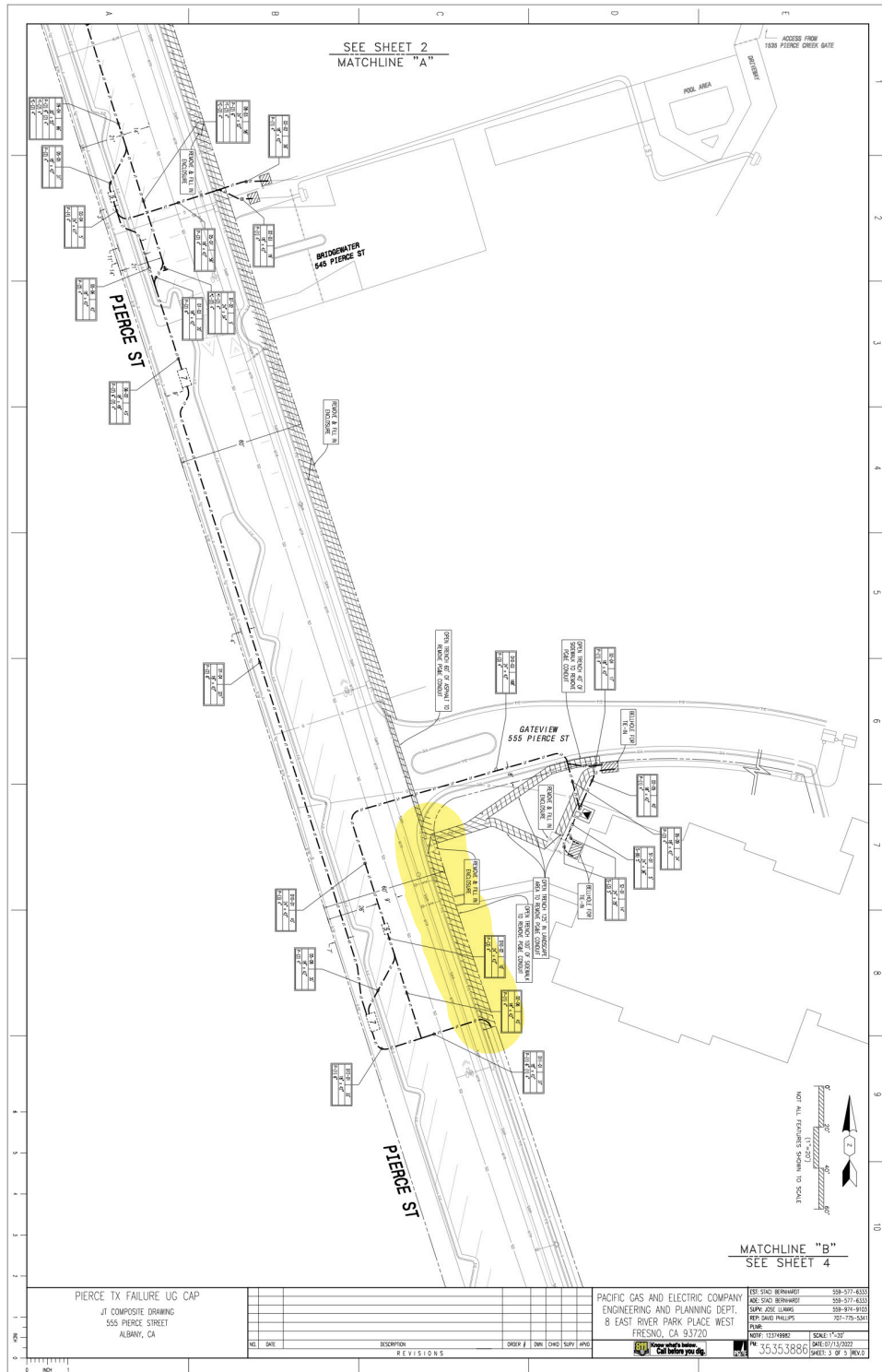


(photo of 545 Pierce St – 4 Liquidambar posted)



(light pole posted at 545 Pierce St)

(PG&E diagram indicating work zone at 545 Pierce St)



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URBAN VILLAGE BY THE BAY

Non-Emergency City Tree Removal Application

Owner's Name: City of Albany
Property Address: 545 Pierce St Phone: 510-559-4275
Email: urbanforestry@albanyca.org #of trees requesting to be removed 4
4 Liquidambar to be removed as part of PG&E project

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Signature: John Hawkrigde Digitally signed by John Hawkrigde
Date: 2022.08.29 11:30:37 -0700 Date: 8/15/2022
(add digital signature, or print and sign)

City Action

Date Application Rcvd: 8/15/2022 Fee Received (Amt): _____

Approved ☐ Declined ☐ Date: _____