PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: AUGUST 22, 2013 **ITEM NUMBER: 9a**

SUBJECT: TREE REMOVAL REQUEST - 248 24TH PLACE

DATE: AUGUST 15, 2013

FROM: PUBLIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT, MAINTENANCE SERVICES DIVISION

PRESENTATION BY: BRUCE A. HARTLEY, MAINTENANCE SERVICES MANAGER

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: BRUCE A. HARTLEY (714) 754-5123

RECOMMENDATION

Deny the request for the removal of one City-owned parkway tree located in the public right-of-way at 248 24th Place.

BACKGROUND

The Maintenance Services Division was initially contacted by the son of the Applicant, on May 2, 2013, requesting removal of the parkway tree on her behalf, as the pod debris is a significant hazard for her when she is walking near the tree.

ANALYSIS

The City Arborist inspected the tree, an American Sweet Gum, *Liquidambar styraciflua*, on May 7, 2012, and found it to be healthy and in good condition. The tree is approximately thirty feet (30') in height with a trunk diameter of ten inches (10"). The tree is growing in an open turf area with irrigation and no sidewalk. The public right-of-way width at this location is five feet (5'). The Arborist could not find any health and safety concerns with the tree that would meet the criteria for a Category 1 removal. The tree is not a 'problem tree species' and therefore did not meet the criteria for a Category 2 removal. The tree has been pruned on a typical three year trimming cycle with an additional 'customer service' trim performed in 2009, in between the scheduled 2007 and 2010 trim dates, at the request of the homeowner.

There is a second parkway tree located at this address. A Carob Tree, *Ceratonia siliqua,* is growing in the public right-of-way. It has received the same trimming program as the American Sweetgum and is not a source of complaint at this time.

The American Sweetgum tree requested to be removed, does not meet criteria for a staff level authorization for removal as stated in the Streetscape and Median Development Standards. The Applicant was informed of that decision and was provided the removal criteria.

The City received a letter from the Applicant dated, June 30, 2013, requesting the City remove the American Sweetgum tree. See Attachment 1. The Applicant's letter provided the following reasons for the removal request:

- The seed pods have become increasingly hazardous.
- Due to age of the Applicant, she is no longer able to sweep and clean up after the City tree.

The City Arborist evaluated the tree for possible relocation, but believes that due to the size and cost of relocating the tree, relocation is not recommended. The tree was last pruned on April 22, 2013. No root pruning has been completed or barriers installed at this location.

The Applicant has been notified of the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting and has been sent a copy of this staff report.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

1. The Commission could authorize the removal and replacement of the tree, per the Streetscape and Median Development Standards, Section 4.0.3 – Discretionary Removals, which would require the replacement of the tree with one (1) twenty-four inch box-size tree to be planted at the same address and two (2) fifteen gallon-size trees to be planted elsewhere on City property. The applicant would pay all removal and replacement costs.

   If approved by the Commission, the tree must be removed and mitigation trees provided to the City within one year from the date of final approval, after which the approval expires.

2. The Commission could authorize the removal of the tree as a Category 1 – 'Health and Safety' removal with all removal and replacement costs paid for by the City.

FISCAL REVIEW

There would be no fiscal impact to the City if the request to remove the tree was either denied or approved as a Category 3 - Discretionary Removal, as the applicant would pay all costs.

For the Commission's information, the cost for the removal of the tree would be $150. The replanting costs for the mitigation trees (1 – 24" box size and 2 – 15 gallon size) would be $425. Costs are based on current City contract prices. Total cost for removal and replacement would be $575. The value of the trees is estimated to be $1,380.

LEGAL REVIEW

No legal review is required for this item.

CONCLUSION

The City-owned street tree that is being requested to be removed is located within the public right-of-way at 248 24th Place. The tree is in good condition. The Applicant is requesting removal of the tree, as she believes the seed pods pose a hazardous condition, and is unable to maintain the seed pods due to her age.

The tree does not meet criteria required to allow for staff approval. The City Arborist determined that the tree is in good condition, and therefore, it is recommended that the Commission deny the request.

Bruce A. Hartley

BRUCE A. HARTLEY
Maintenance Services Manager

ERNESTO MUNOZ
Public Services Director

ATTACHMENTS:
1. Letter from Applicant
2. Tree Information
3. Photographs

C: Jewel Focht
248 24th Place
Costa Mesa, CA 92627

Jewel Focht
248 24th Pl.
Costa Mesa, Ca 92627
Home: [redacted]
e-mail [redacted]

June 30, 2013

Subject: Street tree at 248 24th Pl.

I am sending you this letter in regards to a Liquidambar street tree which is located adjacent to my entry walk. Each year this tree gets larger and produces numerous seed pods which are hard and round. These seed pods have become increasingly hazardous to myself and to my guests and, being that I'm in my 80's, I am no longer able to sweep and clean up after this city tree.

I would like to request that the city remove this tree and would like to know of how to go about formally making this request. I also have a giant existing carob tree as a street tree so I don't believe it is necessary to replace the liquidamber with another tree.

I would appreciate it if you could contact me in regards to this hazardous tree.

Sincerely, [redacted]

Jewel Focht

City of Costa Mesa
Maintenance Services Division
FIELD INSPECTION – TREE INFORMATION

ATTACHMENT #2

Denial	☒	Category	1☒	2☐	3☐
Supporting	☐	Category	1☐	2☐	3☐

Date Request Received: **6/30/2013**

Name of Resident: **Jewel Focht** Requesting Party:

Address: **248 24th Place F2** Address:

Home Phone: [redacted] Home Phone:

Work Phone: Work Phone:

Date Inspected: **7/18/13**

Inspected By: **Daniel Dominguez III – Interim City Arborist**

Parkway Maintenance Report: ☐

Tree Species: **Liquidambar styraciflua F2** Removal Cost: (DBH x $15.00)= **$ 150.00**

Height: **30 Feet** Width of Sidewalk: **NA**

Trunk Diameter: **10 inches** Size of Right-of-Way: **5 Feet**

Health: Good☒ Fair☐ Poor☐ Date of Last Pruning: **4/22/2013**

Is the Tree a good candidate for Relocation? Yes☐ No☒

Likelihood of survival: Good☐ Fair☒ Poor☐

Comments: **Tree growing in an open turf area with no sidewalk. The cost of boxing and relocating the tree is greater than the trees value. Estimated value stated in Arbor Access is $1,380.00.**

Concrete Damage: Yes☒ No☐

If Yes, describe damage: **Slight displacement of rolled curb.**

Can the Tree be Root Pruned: Yes☒ No☐ Date: _____

Root Pruning Comments: **Root pruning would not solve the complaint of tree litter.**

Date of Response to Resident:

Date Information Packet Mailed:

Photos Taken: Yes☒ No☐ Date Photos Taken: **7/18/2013**

Photo #1: **Street view looking north**

Photo #2: **Street view looking east**

Photo #3: **Street view looking west**
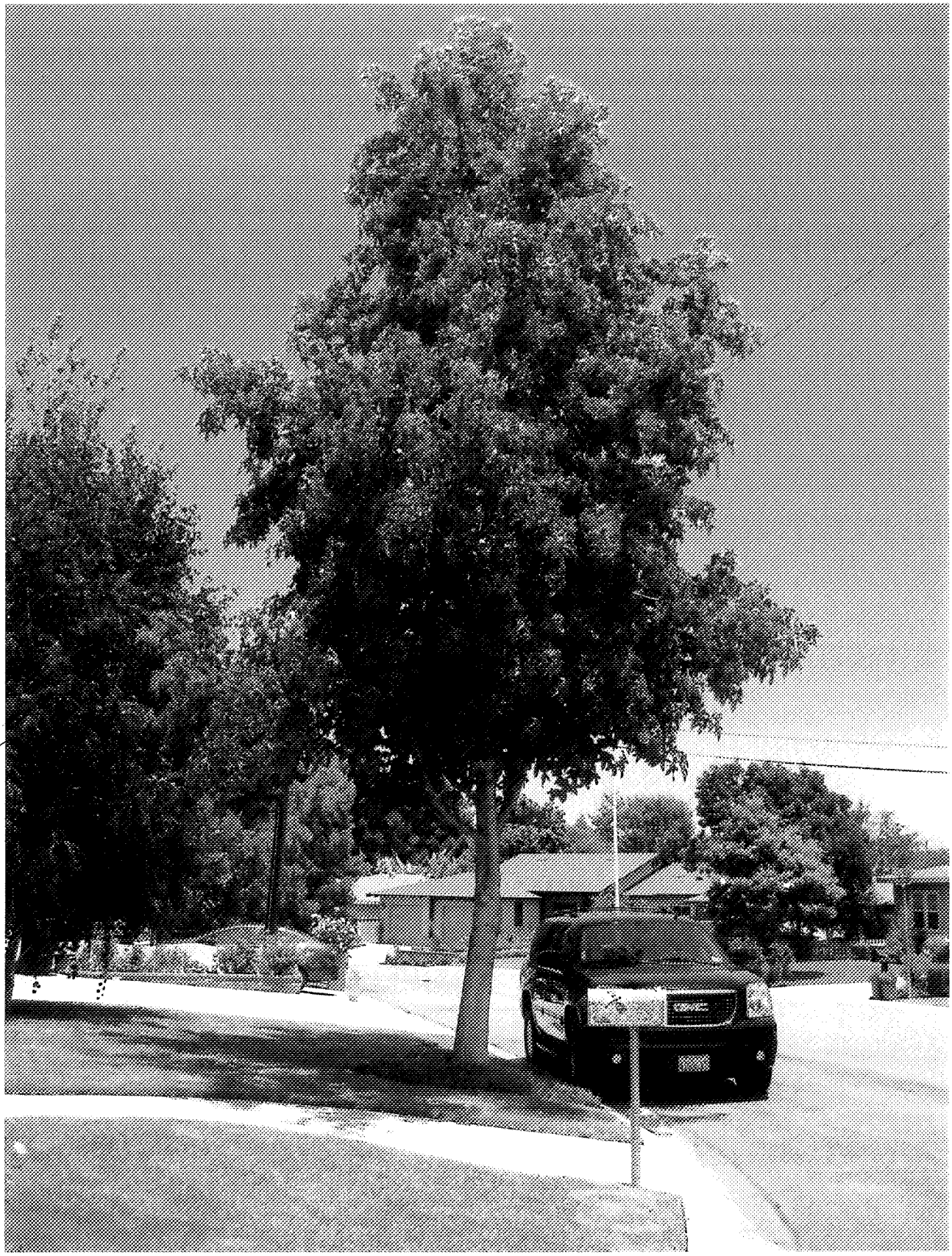
Photo #4: **Base of the tree**