



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: MARCH 26, 2015

ITEM NUMBER:

SUBJECT: TREE REMOVAL REQUEST - 248 24th PLACE

DATE: MARCH 18, 2015

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 contacted by the Applicant via letter on January 20, 2015, requesting that the City remove the tree because it produces numerous seed pods that have become a hazard to the Applicant and their guests. See Attachment 1. The Applicant believes the tree roots from the City-owned tree will eventually encroach upon and cause damage to their concrete entry walkway in a manner similar to how the roots have uplifted the curb and gutter adjacent to the tree. This request was heard and denied at the Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting held on August 22, 2013. The request is being brought to Commission following the required one year waiting period that must elapse prior to having the item reconsidered by the Commission.

ANALYSIS

On January 30, 2015, the City Arborist inspected the tree, an American Sweetgum, *Liquidambar styraciflua*, and found it to be in excellent condition and possessing a very upright and balanced structure. The tree is growing in irrigated turf, directly behind the rolled curb, with no sidewalk at this location. The City right-of-way at this location is five feet (5') from back of curb. The tree is thirty-five feet (35') in height with a trunk diameter of eleven inches (11"). The Arborist observed that the tree had no signs of disease, nor any weakness associated with its branching structure. Maintenance records indicate that the tree was last pruned by the City's contracted tree service on April 22, 2013. The tree is scheduled to receive its next 3-year cyclic pruning in Spring of 2016. See Attachment 2.

The City Arborist did not observe a significantly greater amount of seed pods from this tree than what would be expected from a typical tree of this species. The impacts on the

surrounding private property entry walkway concrete were non-existent at the time of inspection. The fruit typically develops in the winter, but may be retained by the tree and drop over several months each year. The curb adjacent to the tree showed uplift displacement of approximately ½ inch (1/2"). Further displacement could be prevented by root pruning the tree and installing root barriers. This could also be performed to protect the walkway.

The Arborist noted that, while the tree does have an extensive root system which networks directly below the grass surface of the Applicant's front lawn, the tree is not creating any unreasonable impacts where it is located on the property. See Attachment 3.

The City received a letter from the Applicant, dated January 20, 2015, requesting the City remove the tree.

The Applicant's letter and subsequent conversations between the Applicant's son and the City Arborist provided the following reasons for the removal request:

- The tree's production of numerous hard and round seed pods each year has created an increasing hazard to the Applicant and their visiting guests.
- The tree's root system is encroaching on the home's concrete entry walkway. Applicant wants to prevent potential future damage from occurring.

The tree does not meet the criteria for a staff level authorization for removal, as stated in the Streetscape and Median Development Standards. 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 does not meet Category 1 or 2 removal criteria.

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

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

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.

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, removal and stump grinding cost for this tree would be \$165. 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 \$590. The value of the tree is estimated to be \$1,380.

LEGAL REVIEW

No legal review is required for this item.

CONCLUSION

The City-owned tree that has been requested to be removed is located within the public right-of-way at 248 24th Place. The tree is in excellent condition. The basis of the Applicant's request centers on a concern that the tree creates a hazard for themselves and their guests due to the numerous seed pods that are produced annually by the tree. The Applicant has also expressed a concern with the encroachment and damage potential of the tree's roots that continue to extend out further from the tree toward the home's concrete entry walkway.

The tree is not currently causing any observable damage to private property. The extent of public property damage, likely attributable to the tree's roots, consists of an approximate ½" uplift to the curb and gutter section adjacent to the tree. At present, the tree does not meet the criteria required to allow for staff to approve its removal.

The City Arborist determined that the tree is safe and is not producing seed pods in a quantity atypical for the species. Lacking any substantive reasons as a basis for removal, staff recommends that the Commission deny the request.



BRUCE A. HARTLEY
Maintenance Services Manager



ERNESTO MUNOZ
Public Services Director

- ATTACHMENTS:
1. Letter from Applicant requesting removal of parkway tree
 2. Tree Information and Work Order
 3. Photographs

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

Jewel Focht
248 24th Pl.
Costa Mesa, Ca 92627

RECEIVED
JAN 20 2015

January 15, 2015

Attn. Bruce Hartley

Subject: Street tree at 248 24th Pl.

I am sending you this letter in regards to the Liquidambar street tree located adjacent to my entry walk. Each year this tree produces numerous seed pods which are hard and round. These seed pods have become an increasing hazard to myself and gust. What do I need to do to have this tree removed? I have a huge existing carob tree as a street tree also so I am not particular whether or not one is replaced in the place of the Liquidambar.

Please realize this is not the first time I have tried to address this problem with the City.

Please contact me in this manner.

Sincerely,

Jewel Focht

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

ATTACHMENT #2

Denial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Category	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Category	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>

Date Request Received: 5/2/2013 (1st request that went to PRC in August 2013); 1/20/2015 (2nd request)

Name of Resident: Jewel Focht Requesting Party: Larry (Son)

Address: 248 24th Place Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Date Inspected: 1/30/15

Inspected By: Doug Kokesh, Superintendent Parks & Urban Forestry / City Arborist

Parkway Maintenance Report:

Tree Species: Liquidambar styraciflua (F-2) Removal Cost: (DBH x \$15.00)= \$ 165.00

Height: 35 Feet Width of Sidewalk: NA

Trunk Diameter: 11 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 tree's value. Estimated value stated in Arbor Access is \$1,380.00. This value is believed to be "LOW" in the opinion of the City's Arborist.**

Concrete Damage: Yes No

If Yes, describe damage: **Slight (1/2") 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 and the predominance of root pruning would need to occur on private property.**

Date of Response to Resident: _____

Date Information Packet Mailed: _____

Photos Taken: Yes No

Date Photos Taken: 1/30/2015

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

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

Photo #3: **Street view looking west (poor lighting...can be retaken closer to Commission Meeting)**

Photo #4: **Base of the tree**

Subject:

Tree removal request.

Detailed description:

Letter received on 1/20/15 requesting removal of Liquidambar tree due to seed pods posing a hazard. May reference previous request 5/02/13.

Req'd date:

2015-01-20 (Request entered by: MStueve)

Req'd by:

Jewel Focht

Location:

248 24th Place

Phone:

Work Order Nr:

15010080

District:

29

Supervisor:

City Arborist

Employee:

Kokesh, Douglas

Call back needed:

Y

Contacted date:

2015-01-30

OSHA safety concern:

N

Status:

In Progress

Completion date:

0000-00-00

Inspection date:

2015-01-30

Hours:

0 Minutes: 35

Material cost:

0.00

Action taken:

Met with resident on 1/30/15 after receiving letter in the mail dated 1/20/15. Coordinated meeting so that I met with Ms. Focht in-person with her son on the phone during my visit. F-2 Liquidambar (11"dsh X 35'H). Tree observed to be in excellent condition with a very straight and balanced overall structure. No signs of private concrete damage. Roots were felt below the grass surface running through lawn area, but were not observed on the surface except in the immediate vicinity of the tree's trunk. Observed 1/2" uplift of rolled curb/gutter directly adjacent to tree. Minimal seed pods from the tree were seen on the ground or in the tree during my inspection. No mention of problems with water or sewer service. Explained that request to have tree removed would need to go before PRC as a Category 3 Tree Removal Request. Informed them that I would use their letter to agendize their request for the March PRC meeting. Pictures taken. DK

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