



# **PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT**

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MEETING DATE: MAY 26, 2016

ITEM NUMBER: **10a**

**SUBJECT: TREE REMOVAL REQUEST - 2069 SWAN DRIVE**

**DATE: MAY 10, 2016**

**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**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

Deny the request to remove one (1) City owned parkway tree growing in the public right-of-way at 2069 Swan Drive as a Category 1 – Health and Safety Removal.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Maintenance Services Division was initially contacted by the Applicant via telephone on April 29, 2016. The Applicant stated that the tree in front of their home was damaging the sidewalk and had 'taken over the public right-of-way'.

On May 2, 2016, the City Arborist inspected the tree and evaluated the reported problems associated with the tree. The property owner was present during the inspection. Two (2) areas of raised sidewalk were observed. They were less than 3/8" in height and will be ground smooth in the near future. The trunk flare and roots of the tree are pronounced, taking up the full width of the parkway and extending either direction from the base of the tree, as is normal for large parkway trees. It was observed that root pruning was completed and a root barrier installed across the parkway at the time the brick walkway was replaced. The work was not performed by the City and was intended to provide protection for the brick walkway only. There were no other significant issues observed.

The Arborist determined that tree did not meet the criteria to be removed as a Category 1 – Health and Safety Removal, according to the Streetscape and Median Development Standards. The Applicant was informed that the tree would not be removed, but that upon request, could be agendized for consideration by the Parks and Recreation Commission. The Arborist informed the Applicant that the City would root prune and add 18" root barrier panels to insure the tree would cause no further lifting of the sidewalk.

The Applicant submitted a letter dated May 3, 2016, requesting the tree be removed. See Attachment 1. The reasons for removal, as stated by the Applicant in the letter are:

1. Last year, I replaced the brick walkway from curb to sidewalk as a result of the massive root growth extending west from this tree and now protruding above ground. The broken walkway had become a safety hazard.

2. Several years ago, the City replaced (Seven) 5 foot slabs of sidewalk due to root penetration adjacent to this tree. I noticed that one of the slabs has elevated ¼ inch due to root penetration.
3. I believe this is a dangerous situation. Children ride their skateboards, razors, and bicycles on this walkway and pedestrians use this area as well.
4. In the fall, this tree sheds numerous 1 inch ugly spiked brown balls that cover the entire walkway, parkway, and part of the lawn in front of the house. If someone, adult or child, in bare feet steps on or falls on one of these “spikes”, major skin damage would occur. I trust, if that occurs, I would not be the liable party.
5. If the tree is removed, I would be willing to plant grass where needed and repair the sprinkler system or add suitable drought resistance plants. In the interim, repairing the sprinkler system or replacing the grass is a futile effort.

## **ANALYSIS**

The tree is an American Sweetgum, *Liquidambar styraciflua*. The tree was found to be in good health with no apparent structural issues or diseases present. The tree is approximately forty-feet (40') in height with a trunk diameter of fifteen inches (15"). It is growing in an irrigated turf parkway five foot (5') in width. The tree has been maintained by the City on a consistent two to three-year cycle and was last trimmed on May 2, 2012. The tree was root pruned in 2001. No root barrier was observed; likely removed during the sidewalk replacement. See Attachment 2.

At the time of the inspection, there was no evidence that the tree produces excessive quantities of seed pods, leaves or other debris, as compared to other trees of the same species.

The tree is not a risk to health and safety, is not dead, diseased or dying and does not appear to be creating any significant exposure to liability for the City. 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 due to the size, low probability of success and the cost of relocating the tree, relocation is not recommended.

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

## **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

1. 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 and determine if a replacement tree is to be planted.
2. The Commission could authorize the removal and replacement of the tree, per the Streetscape and Median Development Standards, as either a Category 2 – Accelerated Removal or Category 3 – Discretionary Removal, which would require the replacement of the tree with one (1) twenty-four inch box-size tree and two (2)

fifteen gallon-size trees to be planted elsewhere on City property. The Commission would determine if the Applicant or City would pay removal and replacement costs.

If the tree removal is approved by the Commission, and determined to be at the expense of the Applicant, payment for the removal of the tree and any required mitigation trees must be provided to the City prior to removal and 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 2 - Accelerated Removal or Category 3 - Discretionary Removal, with the Applicant paying all costs.

For the Commission's information, removal cost for this tree would be \$300. The replanting costs for the mitigation trees (1 - 24" box-size and 2 - 15 gallon container-size) would be \$425. Costs are based on current City contract prices. The total cost for removal and replacement would be \$725.

If approved as a Category 1 - Health and Safety Removal, the cost to the City for the removal would be \$300; with a cost of \$225 for the installation of one 24" box-size replacement tree. Total cost would be \$525.

## **LEGAL REVIEW**

No legal review is required for this item.

## **CONCLUSION**

The City-owned tree that has been requested to be removed at City expense is located in the public right-of-way at 2069 Swan Dr. The tree is in good condition, has been maintained appropriately on a regular schedule and is causing minor damage to the sidewalk; it does not meet the criteria for a 'no-cost' removal.

It is recommended that the Commission deny the request to have the tree removed.

  
BRUCE A. HARTLEY  
Maintenance Services Manager

  
ERNESTO MUNOZ  
Public Services Director

ATTACHMENTS:   1. Letter From Resident  
                      2. Tree Information & Maintenance History  
                      3. Photographs

C:     Art Reese  
       2069 Swan Drive  
       Costa Mesa, CA 92626

May 3, 2016

Mr. Bruce Hartley- Maintenance Service Mgr.  
City of Costa Mesa  
77 Fair Dr.  
Costa Mesa, Calif. 92628

Ref: tree ( American Sweetgum) problem, 2069 Swan Dr., Costa Mesa, Cal  
Residential property owner- Art & Ellie Reese

Dear Sir:

The subject tree is problematic. Below are the reasons that it should be removed.

1. Last year, I replaced the brick walkway from curb to sidewalk as a result of massive root growth extending west from this tree and now protruding above ground. The broken walkway had become a safety hazard.
2. Several years ago, the city replaced(Seven) 5 foot slabs of sidewalk due to root penetration adjacent to this tree. I noticed that one of slabs has elevated at least ¼ inch due to root penetration.
3. I believe this is a dangerous situation. Children ride their skate boards, razors, and bicycles on this walkway and pedestrians use this area as well.
4. In the fall, this tree sheds numerous 1 inch ugly spiked brown balls that cover the entire walkway, parkway and part of the lawn in front of the house. If someone, adult or child, in bare feet steps on or falls on one of these "spikes", major skin damage would occur. I trust, if that occurs, I would not be the liable party.
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As you are aware, the city requires that subject area is to be landscaped , continuously maintained, and irrigated by the adjacent homeowner. If you need additional document submittal i.e. "Request for Tree Removal" under Category 1, " Health and Safety". Please let me know.

Your attention would be appreciated,

  
Art Reese

cc: Jim Ortiz-Public Services department

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

**ATTACHMENT #2**

Date Request Received: May 6, 2016  
Name of Resident: Art Reese Requesting Party: Same  
Address: 2069 Swan Dr Address: Same

Date Inspected: May 10, 2016  
Inspected By: Jim Ortiz

Tree Species: American Sweetgum Removal Cost: (DBH x \$ 20.00)= \$ 300.00  
Height: 40 Feet Width of Sidewalk: 4 Feet  
Trunk Diameter: 15 Inches Size of Right-of-Way: 10 Feet

Health: Good  Fair  Poor  Date of Last Pruning: 5/02/12

Is the Tree a good candidate for Relocation? Yes  No

Likelihood of survival: Good  Fair  Poor

Comments:

Concrete Damage: Yes  No

If Yes, describe damage: **Two (2) lifts in Sidewalk**

Can the Tree be Root Pruned: Yes  No  Date: 4/12/01

Root Pruning Comments: **Tree can be root pruned.**

Date of Response to Resident: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Information Packet Mailed: \_\_\_\_\_

Photos Taken: Yes  No  Date Photos Taken: 5/10/16

Photo #1: **Front of Tree**

Photo #2: **Looking East**

Photo #3: **Looking West**

Photo #4: **Base of Tree**

<b>Site Detail</b> (33.668916270182,-117.94318062144)(WCA InventoryID: 1857726)					
District	Address	Location	Species	DBH	Height
16	2069 SWAN DR	Front-1	<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i> AMERICAN SWEETGUM	13-18	45-60
Condition	Maintenance	Removal Priority	Estimated Value	Parkway Type	Parkway Size
Good	Grid Trim	N/A	\$3,260	Parkway	5
Utility	Valid				
No	Yes				
<b>Work History</b>					
Crew	Work Date	Work Type	Job #/Acct #	Amount	
WCA	5/2/2012	Grid Pruning	19252	\$46.60	
WCA	7/9/2009	Grid Pruning	14385	\$46.60	
WCA	10/15/2007	Grid Pruning	11049	\$45.10	
WCA	3/31/2004	Grid Trimming	6173	\$41.50	
WCA	5/11/2001	Grid Trimming	3569	\$40.10	
WCA	4/12/2001	<u>Rt Prune &amp; 12" RB Instal.</u> (AMERICAN SWEETGUM)	3423	\$112.00	
<b>Notes</b>					

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