

# Questions and Answers

**Q 1.** Why are you removing so many trees?

**A 1.** Each and every tree was evaluated on its own. There are many trees proposed for removal because Lower 24<sup>th</sup> Street is such a highly used corridor which creates a higher public safety concern.

*Updated information:* The number of trees proposed for removal has changed (decreased) since initial assessments of the corridor. Please see the next Question and Answer for more details.

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**Q 2.** Did you consider selective pruning vs. wholesale removal?

**A 2.** We (Public Works Urban Forestry) did. We always look to prune the tree or repair the sidewalk first. In the case of the majority of trees along lower 24<sup>th</sup> Street, each one that was evaluated was well past pruning or sidewalk repair efforts.

*Updated information:* After a review of certain trees along lower 24<sup>th</sup> Street, we have agreed to try a more aggressive, experimental approach to pruning rather than removal of some trees. This aggressive, experimental pruning does not meet City pruning standards and will drastically change the look of the trees as it will remove the majority of the tree canopy. Pruning of this nature will not reverse the poor health of these trees, but may mitigate structural defects (safety concerns) in the short-term.

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**Q 3.** Why didn't you (the City) take care of these trees? Why should they come out because of your negligence?

**A 3.** The consequences we are dealing with now are due to shared negligence of these trees. Due to improper care by the City as well as improper care by property owners when the trees were under their care, these trees have reached a point of no return.

These trees have also suffered because of poor past pruning practices, both by privately hired arborists and City arborists. Past pruning practices were based on limited knowledge of urban trees. In recent years, urban tree science has increased and has improved the standard of care for street trees. This standard has changed best practices for tree maintenance.

## Lower 24<sup>th</sup> Street Ficus Trees



Moving forward, the City now has a dedicated funding stream and program that is responsible for the care of all street trees. Under this program, we are looking at the future of our urban forest and how we can grow a healthy canopy. Removing these trees, replacing them with a species more appropriate for this street and using current best maintenance practices is a part of the goal to grow and enhance the City's urban forest.

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**Q 4.** Is there funding for each and every replacement tree?

**A 4.** Yes. Each and every replacement tree is already funded for this project.

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**Q 5.** What about the first year of the life of these trees, will you take care of them then?

**A 5.** Yes. That is when they will need watering the most and we will do that.

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**Q 6.** Are these removals happening to save the City money?

**A 6.** No. It is actually more expensive to leave these trees in the ground and deal with their issues and possibly fatal safety consequences rather than take them out.

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**Q 7.** Will there be another opportunity to choose new replacement species?

**A 7.** No. The replacement tree species were agreed to after a long process with the community that took place five years ago at St. Peter's Catholic Church. There were several meetings to review 123 tree species, then there was a voting process which decided the two species that were chosen, red maples and ginkgos.

The red maples were chosen because they are not as dense as ficus, they lose their leaves in the winter which is when the street likes some sun, they are not as big as the ficus or other species, they are easier to prune, etc. The ginkgos were chosen as accent trees, for their bright, fall colors that are different and compliment the red maples and because they also lose their leaves in the winter inviting sunlight onto the street. We would like to stay committed to the replacement species that were chosen and to the democratic process that the community organized and took the time to engage in.