

## HAYES VALLEY TREE MAINTENANCE AND REMOVAL

---



*In an effort to support local businesses as they reopen, some tree work was accelerated in recent weeks. Urban Forestry apologizes for the lack of communication around this. The timing of the work was unexpected, but needed to be completed to support those requesting outdoor seating permits to reopen retail and dining opportunities along Hayes and Octavia streets. Completion of this tree work ensures that businesses can reopen without interruption.*

Dear Neighbors, as we begin to turn the corner (safely) back to some version of normal for our neighborhood, some long-awaited street tree maintenance is coming to Hayes Valley.

Over the past several years, we have been in communication with San Francisco Public Works Urban Forestry about the new citywide street tree maintenance program, StreetTreeSF. Since the start of StreetTreeSF, trees across the city that have been neglected for decades are now receiving much-needed care and maintenance.

All of Hayes Valley's street trees will receive love, care, and a long-awaited prune from StreetTreeSF in the coming months. In some cases, maintenance has been deferred so long that some trees are beyond saving and must be removed to protect public safety.

There are several types of trees in our neighborhood that fall into the removal category. Many of the trees to be removed are ficus trees, a species that inevitably develops structural issues (codominant stems) that cause them to drop large, heavy limbs. Ficus trees have long been known to be a [problematic species in San Francisco](#). While their canopies are a thing to behold, we have experienced a number of these limb failures throughout Hayes Valley in the last decade, which is why removing ficus that pose the highest risk is necessary.



666 Octavia Street



A thank you note for all that trees provide us with

Urban Forestry will replant most sites with a new tree and will water tree every week, for the first three years of its life to get it established. Watering is the most expensive cost related to planting new trees. If a new tree is not watered consistently in its first few years of life, it cannot establish and will die. A lack of watering resources is the primary reason Urban Forestry can't plant more trees throughout San Francisco.

Since watering is the vital missing piece, Urban Forestry can prioritize planting new trees when there is a commitment from neighbors or business owners to water a tree for the first few years. After three years, the established tree will be cared for and maintained by StreetTreeSF. If there is an empty basin in front of your home or business and you can commit to watering a new tree, please contact [urbanforestry@sfdpw.org](mailto:urbanforestry@sfdpw.org) to get the process started.

Even before plans were finalized for the upcoming tree maintenance and removals, Hayes Valley welcomed 37 new trees in empty basins throughout our neighborhood with the help of San Francisco Urban Forestry and Friends of the Urban Forest. In fact, these trees just celebrated their first birthday!



FUF, the HVNA, and neighbors have also installed more than 7,000 sq ft of sidewalk gardens throughout Hayes Valley.

**We want to thank you and all Hayes Valley neighbors and residents for being engaged and passionate advocates throughout the tree maintenance and removal decision-making process. We have worked closely with Urban Forestry to confirm where the riskiest issues are and to develop a plan to replace the trees to be removed. And now that plan is in motion.**

With so many new trees already planted, more new trees to be replanted and all street trees receiving a visit from StreetTreeSF soon, Hayes Valley can rest assured that residents and visitors alike are safe as they stroll under the beautiful canopy of our urban forest.

We hope you will join us in welcoming these improvements to the neighborhood.



## **Hayes Valley Tree Maintenance Q&A**

### **I understand tree pruning, but what does tree removal work include?**

Removing trees involves a series of steps including stump removal, sidewalk repair (where necessary), shifting replacement tree locations or modify basins (where necessary) and planting new trees. The various trades involved in the removal and replacement of a tree requires more time and labor than simply pruning a tree.

### **What is the timeline for replacing the trees removed?**

Trees will be removed and replaced within three months of initiating the removal of a tree at individual sites. During these three months the work detailed in the previous answer will be conducted. Again, the time and labor needed for the work involved in removing a tree requires a longer schedule when compared to pruning a tree.

### **How many trees will be removed?**

27 total trees will be removed. 26 are ficus and one is a poplar.

### **Will all the trees removed be replaced with a new tree?**

Yes. There are four sites that are not replantable in their immediate location, due to utility and spacing conflicts. However, alternate planting sites have been identified nearby to replace these four sites.

### **What tree species will replace the ficus trees?**

With the help of passionate and dedicated Hayes Valley residents, the Hayes Valley Neighborhood Association approved the palette of replacement tree species in April 2019. Sidewalk width, wind and sun exposure and deciduous or evergreen, were among the many factors taken into consideration while reviewing replacement species choices.

The approved palette of replacement species includes species such as Island Oak, London plane, Sweet bay, Ginkgo, Trident maple and Pink Dawn Chitalpa.



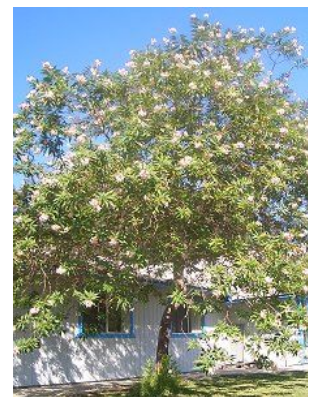
Island Oak  
(*Quercus tomentella*)



London plane(*Platanus x acerifolia* 'Columbia')



Trident maple  
(*Acer buergerianum*)



Pink Dawn Chitalpa  
(*Chitalpa tashkentensis*)

### **Do the tree removals really need to happen?**

Please know that San Francisco Urban Forestry always looks for all alternatives before choosing tree removal. With the responsibility of care for street trees comes the responsibility for the safety of residents and visitors. If a dying or structurally unsound tree threatens that safety, it is time to remove it. The removal of ficus and other tree

species that are currently posing a risk ensures that we prioritize public safety, and their replacement ensures that we grow a healthy and robust urban forest that thrives.

For more information about ficus trees, visit <http://sfpublicworks.org/ficustrees>.

For more information or to learn about the history behind the Hayes Valley ficus tree postings, walk throughs, hearings and hearing decisions, contact San Francisco Public Works Urban Forestry at [urbanforestry@sfdpw.org](mailto:urbanforestry@sfdpw.org).