

Email from Ray Moritz:

It appears that my risk assessment report to remove the two liquidambar across from Town Hall has caused a lot of misunderstanding and protest. I take full responsibility for the removal of the two trees. The Town, in fact, asked me to only assess the risk of one tree but when I got there I found another high risk tree and included it in my report. In accordance with the Tree Ordinance, when a tree is determined to be an imminent risk to people and property, abatement of the hazard can be approved by Town staff for removal. The determinations made as to the threat and abatement of the two trees was solely my decision and the Town would be remiss in its duty to provide public safety having been put on notice by my report. I conducted a thorough Tree Risk Assessment in accordance with International Society of Arboriculture "Best Management Practices – Tree Risk Assessment" and ANSI A300 (Part 9) -2011 for Tree Care Operations – Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Management – Standard Practices (Tree Risk Assessment a. Tree Structure Assessment). I have conducted tree risk assessments for 38 years and I am a TRAQ Qualified Tree Risk Assessor.

This subject tree species is notorious for poor structure, weak branch attachments, decay susceptibility and massive surface roots that damage infrastructure creating tripping hazards and obstructing access in violation of American Disability Act requirements. In addition, it had been topped in the distant past and sprouts from the old topping cuts were unstable due to fungal decay infestation of the old topping cuts. The northernmost tree was an immediate threat to pedestrians, the adjacent homeowners and the adjacent house. The tree immediately adjacent to the crosswalk ADA access ramp had suffered the same type of topping cuts as Tree 1, was infested with fungal decay and experienced two large branch failure onto the intersection and cross walk. Its defective main, acute angle crotch with included bark and a bacterial infection (*Pseudomonas* spp.) was a major trunk failure threat. This tree was an unacceptable risk to people and to the adjacent property and had demonstrated that risk with at least two prior failures. In addition its aggressive roots and base (root crown) had shaved the ADA ramp out of alignment and tilted the concrete slab. This tree had also greatly upheaved the sidewalk, obstructing access for the elderly and people with disabilities. While I was working around this tree, I also observed that northbound drivers at the stop sign could not see me when I was working on the ADA ramp and about to enter the crosswalk. I was very concerned about this view obstruction, particularly for children who are prone to entering the intersection abruptly without caution. Had the Town not acted promptly, it would have had major liability, having been put on notice by my report. I fully support the Town's action to promptly remove the two trees. Ray Moritz Senior Consultant Urban Forestry Associates, Inc. 8 Willow St., San Rafael, CA Office: (415) 454-4212 info@urbanforestryassociates.com

=====

Attachment: Liquidambar_Report_1