

STAFF REPORT



PARKS AND RECREATION

DATE: September 18, 2023

TO: Sustainable Burbank Commission Members

FROM: Marisa Garcia, Park, Recreation, and Community Services Director

SUBJECT: Aleppo Pine Tree Reforestation Update

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Sustainable Burbank Commission (Commission) discuss and provide feedback on the Reforestation Strategy of the City's Aleppo Pine trees.

BACKGROUND

Trees are living organisms and a successful urban forest requires diversity, maintenance, and a planting strategy that considers multiple criteria, including growth rate, disease and pest vulnerability, drought tolerance, size, and root system. Burbank's commitment to its 33,000-tree urban forest is strong, as evidenced by its 46-year involvement with Tree City USA and the Parks and Recreation Department's (Department) ongoing investment in a successful tree maintenance program. The tree maintenance program reflects an ongoing effort to ensure the health, safety, and longevity of the City's existing urban forest and includes regular pruning and trimming of trees to remove dead or diseased branches and to maintain their proper shape and size. The Department's Forestry Division also conducts regular inspections of its trees to proactively identify any potential hazards or health issues. The Forestry Division includes four International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborists on staff, one of which is also an ISA Certified Tree Risk Assessor.

In addition to routine maintenance, the Department has a tree planting program to ensure the continued growth and health of its urban forest. Most recently in 2019, the Department in partnership with Burbank Water and Power and the Community Development Department launched Plant for a Greener Burbank, a tree planting initiative. This campaign aims to plant at least 500 new trees annually. Through this multi-pronged approach, Burbank maintains a vibrant and healthy urban forest that provides numerous benefits, including improving community health, aesthetics and quality of life.

Over the past several years, the science of urban forestry has evolved to incorporate climate resilience into tree planting and urban forest management to help improve the adaptive capacity of a community's tree canopy. With ongoing environmental changes, certain tree species will likely perform better in Burbank. Moreover, despite the

Department's best efforts, climate changes and the multi-year drought have impacted the City's existing urban forest. The Department observed significant impact to trees citywide from the combination of heavy rain and high winds on February 28, 2023.

DISCUSSION

To proactively maintain the City's tree canopy for today and future generations, the Department's long-term plan includes a citywide Reforestation Strategy. The Strategy includes strategically planting, removing, and replanting trees. While the decision to remove trees in our community is difficult, prior to any tree removal, the Department identifies alternative treatments and solutions as well as balances the tree's remaining useful life expectancy with the potential benefit of replanting. Unfortunately, adequate alternative solutions are not always available, and sometimes trees will need to be removed. To acknowledge the loss, the Department will replant more trees than it removes.

In May 2023, the City's arboriculture experts identified approximately 125 Aleppo Pine trees citywide that have likely reached their mature life, and for which there may now be greater value in removing and replanting in a phased approach. The Reforestation Strategy of the Aleppo Pine trees was presented to the City Council (Council) and approved during the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget Process.

In early July 2023, staff proceeded to begin executing the Strategy to remove and replace 121 trees without adequately informing and engaging the impacted residents. Initial outreach was limited to only residents and property owners with affected trees adjacent to their properties. Moreover, the initial plan was to remove and replace all mature Aleppo Pine trees in two-phases over one year. The absence of community engagement and lack of communication to inform the entire impacted blocks resulted in confusion, concern, and a lack of trust by some community members.

In response to the feedback received, implementation of the Aleppo Pine Tree Reforestation was paused to allow for additional staff research, and community education and engagement.

While the City's arboriculture experts initially identified trees for removal and replacement, due to the community's varied concerns the City also hired a third party, independent ISA Certified Arborist to provide an additional assessment and recommendation for the multi-year phased approach. Preliminarily, the City's direction to the arborist was that they assess the Aleppo Pine trees assuming the City was willing to accept only very low risk of failure based on the Department's commitment to community safety. It is important to note this lens upon review of the draft arborist report, which was received by the Department on Tuesday, September 5 (Attachment 1).

Additionally, to engage the community, this matter was scheduled for the Parks and Recreation Board's September meeting as well as the September meeting of the Sustainable Burbank Commission. Separately, over 1,000 letters were mailed to residents living on blocks where an Aleppo Pine tree may be strategically removed and replaced (Attachment 2). The letter includes information on the plan, the September meeting dates as well as directs residents to www.BurbankCA.gov/CityReforestation, a

web page created to ensure residents remain informed of current plans. The web page also includes a full list of the affected Aleppo Pine trees.

As part of the Reforestation Strategy, residents will have the opportunity to select replacement trees from a list of approved trees at no cost. Understanding the impact of the removal of large trees, the size of the replacement trees will be as large as possible depending on the available parkway space at each location. Additionally, the City will plant additional, new trees in currently vacant parkways, resulting in more city trees in impacted neighborhoods.

Furthermore, staff has reconsidered the timeline of the removals and is planning to strategically remove and replace the trees in a multi-year phased approach. Upon review of the independent arborist's final report, and with community engagement, the Department will develop a plan of action to include an appropriate multi-phased removal and replacement schedule. Council will receive a report on the Aleppo Pine tree removal before any further action is taken.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

CONCLUSION

To proactively maintain the City's tree canopy for today and future generations, the citywide Reforestation Strategy will ensure that replacement trees will be more resilient, will better compliment the spaces that house them, and will offer wide-ranging benefits including: reducing air pollution; saving energy and reducing energy costs; reducing stormwater runoff and better stormwater management; reducing daytime temperatures; minimizing noise pollution; and providing habitat for local wildlife and native species. This Strategy will help to ensure the optimal trees are planted in appropriate locations.

ATTACHMENTS

- ATTACHMENT 1 – Draft Arborist Report
- ATTACHMENT 2 – Reforestation Letters


**Customer
Information:**

City of Burbank
 Attn: Mike del Campo
 (818) 238-5343
mdelcampo@burbankca.gov
 Aleppo Pine Tree Inspection
 150 N. Third St., 3rd Floor
 Burbank, CA 91502-1232

ARBORIST REPORT

- Residential Commercial HOA Other:
 New Client Existing Client New Job Site/Property

Date: 09/1/2023

Summary

Tree risk assessment for 119 Aleppo Pine trees (*Schinus molle*) located in the city of Burbank. There are concerns about failing trees or tree parts and has requested a tree risk assessment be conducted on all Aleppo Pine trees for general health and safety concerns (potential failures). There has been a history of tree failures in the past year with two (2) complete tree failures occurring during rainy weather conditions. There were no reported injuries but there was a significant amount of property damage. The trees in question were planted roughly 100+ years ago when the properties were first developed. These trees are located in a residential neighborhood with active pedestrian traffic and possible 24-hour occupancy in the homes and businesses located in the target zone. Trees are planted in park strips. The project's objectives and requirements are referred to as the "Scope of Work" and stated below.

Scope of Work

The goals of the assessment are to:

- Evaluate the current health, conditions, and defects of the trees listed.
- Identify and evaluate potential targets, tree parts, and likelihood of failure.
- Assess and categorize overall tree risk.
- Make recommendations/mitigation options for hazardous trees and any additional recommendations.

Management's acceptable risk (amount of risk manager is willing to accept) has been determined to be very low. Per the client's request, any hazardous trees that are deemed unsafe or expected to fail under normal or extreme weather conditions within the next five years will be recommended for removal or mitigation (i.e. trimming, treatment, etc.).

Level(s) of Assessment & Job Details

A limited visual assessment (level 1) will be conducted on all requested tree species to identify trees with imminent, probable, or possible likelihood of failures. Visual assessments will be done via drive-by (car) and walk-by (on foot) to look for obvious defects or other conditions of concern. Any trees that require a higher level of assessment (level 2- Basic Assessment) due to significant defects will be identified and conducted.

Tools to be used for level 1 & 2 assessments includes:

- Measuring tools
- Binoculars
- Magnifying glass
- Probe and soil probe
- Compass
- Camera

Limitations

I relied upon information of the site and subject tree(s) that you have provided to me and assumed all the information to be correct and true. If any of the information is found to be inaccurate, the conclusion of the final report may be invalidated. Observations and findings are valid up to the day the assessment(s) is performed and cannot predict natural phenomenon, unexpected events, or tree health issues (i.e. pest infestations, diseases, cultural practices, etc.) that may arise later resulting in tree failure or decline.

My observations will be based only on a visual inspection of the tree(s) at the time of inspection. Any issues buried within the trees or ground that are not visible will require specialists or a Level 3 assessment.

All trees are associated with some levels of risk. According to Dunster, Smiley, Matheny and Lilly (2017), "It is impossible to maintain trees free of risk; some level of risk must be accepted to experience the benefits that trees provide." Trees are living organisms and cannot predict with certainty when, where or how a tree will fail in the future. However, trees and the risks they carry can be managed at acceptable levels, but they cannot be entirely eliminated. The only way to do so is to remove all trees.

Arborists use their education, knowledge, skills, and experience to inspect trees, make recommendations to enhance their beauty and health, and reduce potential risks that are associated with living trees. Often times conditions are hidden within the trees or below ground that are not always visible. Trees and the environment they are situated in are dynamic and change throughout the year. Arborists cannot guarantee the health or safety of the tree(s) assessed under all circumstances, or within the specified time frame. Cultural practices, weather conditions (abiotic) or living organisms (biotic) can contribute to the decline or failure of tree(s) and tree parts. Mediation recommendations are based on the arborist's experience, professional judgement and opinion, and up to the clients to choose or disregard the provided information and/or recommendations. There is no guarantee, expressed or implied, that tree failure will not occur in the near future.

Recommendations

After inspecting and reviewing the list of addresses with Aleppo pine trees throughout the city, I am recommending the majority of the trees to be removed. In general, the trees inspected have a multitude of problems including poor structure, included bark, severe leans, canopy die back, and in some cases, borers compromising the structures, the average age of the trees, and limited root space. I have created a scoring table to organize the list of trees into four categories to correspond with the attached excel sheet of each tree's evaluation. Three (3) trees I recommend removing as soon as possible due to the imminent danger they propose to the potential targets in the residential area. These three (3) trees are marked as Urgent. Forty-six (46) of the trees I have recommended as the next hazardous due to their overall health, structure, and potential targets if they were to fail. These trees have been scored with a 3. I recommend this group be removed before severe weather seasons. Fifty-two (52) of the trees I recommend as a third stage of the removals due to their overall health, structure, and potential targets if they were to fail. Many of these trees need to have the canopy heavily reduced, large dead/dying branches removed, or to be removed if canopy reduction is not an option. The final eighteen (18) trees I am recommending to be monitored after canopies are thinned and any dead branches are removed at this time. These eighteen (18) trees still should be planned for removal but I recommend in the next 3-5 years if their condition does not change. I recommend yearly inspections until replaced to monitor for stressors and structural warnings.

Aleppo Pine Trees with a Score of "Urgent"

434 N. Niagara St.
400 S. Keystone St.
113 N. Niagara St.

Aleppo Pine Trees with a Score of "3"

2920 W. Verdugo Ave	500 S. Buena Vista -6
716 Niagara St.	500 S. Buena Vista -7
731 N. Niagara St	129 N. Niagara St -2
734 N. Niagara St	200 N. Niagara St
814 N. Niagara St	204 N. Niagara St
1130 N. Niagara St	210 N. Niagara St
1133 N. Niagara St -1	211 N. Niagara St
1133 N. Niagara St -2	218 N. Niagara St.
1210 N. Niagara St	219 N. Niagara St
1226 N. Niagara St	226 N. Niagara St. -2
1433 N. Niagara St	236 N. Niagara St
1600 N. Niagara St -2	237 N. Niagara St
1604 N. Niagara St	241 N. Niagara St.
1613 N. Niagara St	242 N. Niagara St
1633 Niagara St -1	246 N. Niagara St -1
3003 W. Olive Ave. -1	246 N. Niagara St -2
209 Orchard Dr.	310 N. Niagara St
1706 Pass Ave.	324 N. Niagara St
1707 Pass Ave	332 Niagara St
1750 N. Pass Ave	540 S. Keystone St.
2100 N. Pass Ave.	2027 N. Fairview St.
519 Santa Anita Ave.	1023 E. Santa Anita Ave.
500 S. Buena Vista -1	
500 S. Buena Vista -2	

**Aleppo Pine Trees with a Score of "2"**

532 S. Niagara St.	4200 Woodland Ave
346 N. Niagara	130 N. Screenland Dr.
433 N. Niagara St.	514 S. Keystone St.
435 N. Niagara St-1	500 S. Buena Vista -5
435 N. Niagara St-2	500 S. Buena Vista -8
439 N. Niagara	500 S. Buena Vista -9
739 N. Niagara St.	500 S. Buena Vista -10
806 Niagara St.	1012 N. Frederic St. -1
810 N. Niagara St	1012 N. Frederic St. -2
951 N. Niagara St	1536 N. Keystone St.
1135 N. Niagara St -1	1539 N. Keystone St.
1135 N. Niagara St -2	2017 Monterey Ave -1
1208 N. Niagara St	2017 Monterey Ave -2
1348 N. Niagara St	2017 Monterey Ave -3
1513 N. Niagara St	124 N. Niagara St
1550 N. Niagara St -1	125 N. Niagara St
1550 N. Niagara St -2	128 N. Niagara St.
1633 Niagara St -2	129 N. Niagara St -1
2239 N. Niagara St	201 N. Niagara St
3003 W. Olive Ave. -2	208 N. Niagara St
620 Palm Ave	226 N. Niagara St. -1
1703 Pass Ave.	233 N. Niagara St.

1740 N. Pass Ave
2011 N. Pass Ave
2114 N. Pass Ave.
2360 N. Reese Place

926 N. Lima St
330 Lutge Ave.
2829 Burbank Blvd
118 N. Niagara St

Aleppo Pine Trees with a Score of "1"

719 N Niagara St.
1245 N. Niagara St
1525 N. Niagara St -1
1525 N. Niagara St -2
1600 N. Niagara St -1
1609 N. Niagara St -1
1609 N. Niagara St -2
2921 W. Olive Ave -1
1726 N. Pass Ave

2125 N. Pass Ave. -1
2125 N. Pass Ave. -2
1131 N. Sparks St.
500 S. Buena Vista -3
500 S. Buena Vista -4
1036 N. Maple St.
1415 N. Avon St.
1010 Elmwood Ave
2144 Evergreen St.

If you have further questions, feel free to give me a call or email. Thank you.

Mandy Flaig
ISA Certified Arborist WE-12910A
ISA Qualified Tree Risk Assessor (TRAQ)
DPR Qualified Applicator License (QAL) #140441

RPW Services, Inc.
Office: (714) 870-6352
mflaig@rpwservicesinc.com
Office: 714-870-6352

Disclaimer & Limitations

Trees are living organisms and their life span cannot be predicted. Consultations, written reports and appraisals are considered an unbiased professional opinion and do not constitute a complete tree risk assessment or warranty against continued decline, failure, or tree mortality. The health and condition of trees will change throughout the year. recommendations are only based on limited visual observations gathered at the time of inspection. We cannot predict secondary or re-infestation from pests or diseases. As such, additional applications or treatment revisions may be needed. There is no guarantee, expressed or implied, that problems or deficiencies in the trees may not arise in the future. RPW Services cannot guarantee that any proposed treatments will save a tree or be effective if proper cultural practices (i.e. irrigation, mulching, pruning, fertilization, etc.) are not followed. However, we do guarantee that the materials will be applied correctly and at the maximum allowable rate as determined by the product labels and site conditions.



CITY OF BURBANK
Parks and Recreation Department
Administration
150 N. Third Street, Burbank, CA 91502
www.burbankca.gov

August 21, 2023

Dear Resident/Business Owner,

Last month the City of Burbank Parks and Recreation Department sent notifications regarding a Reforestation Strategy, that includes the removal of Aleppo Pine trees, only to residents with affected trees adjacent to their properties. We understand that trees are valued by entire neighborhoods and we regret that not all residents on the block were similarly made aware of the removals. We apologize for the omission.

The City prides itself on its urban forest and is committed to responsibly managing all 33,000 of our city trees. Maintaining a healthy and thriving tree forest that can sustain changes in climate, while continuing to provide aesthetic and functional value to the community are City priorities. Unfortunately, in our careful consideration of many factors even with the above priorities, sometimes the removal of mature trees becomes necessary. That decision is never easy.

Mature Aleppo Pine trees have been a beautiful and beloved part of our community for many decades, and we understand that these trees provide a great amount of shade, a habitat for wildlife, and benefit the environment. However, to proactively maintain a resilient urban forest, the City's arboriculture experts determined that 121 Aleppo Pine trees citywide have reached their mature life, and there is now greater value in replanting new trees as there are no alternative solutions. Over time we have also learned that this tree species is no longer optimal and has outgrown our residential neighborhoods. In addition, the Aleppo Pine trees have been impacted by our historic drought, and the recent losses during heavy storms highlight their incompatibility with their existing locations.

As we embark on this necessary change, replacement trees will be more resilient, will better compliment the spaces that house them, and will offer wide-ranging benefits including: cleaner air, energy efficiency, stormwater management, temperature regulation, noise reduction, and habitat for local wildlife. The City plans to replace the Aleppo Pine trees with as large of a tree as possible to maximize future success, which may vary depending on the available parkway space at each location. Replacement trees will be at no cost to residents. Additionally, the City will plant new trees in currently vacant parkways, resulting in more city trees planted in your neighborhood.

You are receiving this letter because the City has identified one Aleppo Pine tree on your block to be strategically removed and replaced. Please note that all other parkway trees will remain. The City is committed to engaging the community and reporting back to the City Council prior to the implementation of this plan. In an effort to maintain our residents well informed of this Reforestation Strategy, information including the list of trees to be removed, the removal schedule (once determined), upcoming community meetings, and the City Council meeting (once scheduled) can be found at www.BurbankCA.gov/CityReforestation. For questions, you can email ParksandRec@Burbankca.gov.

Further, there will be meetings to learn more about the City's Reforestation Strategy.

- Parks and Recreation Board Meeting – Thursday, September 14 at 6pm, City Council Chambers, 275 E. Olive Avenue
- Sustainable Burbank Commission Meeting – Monday, September 18 at 5pm, Community Services Building, 150 N. Third Street - Community Room 104
- Community Workshop(s) – To be determined

As proud stewards of Burbank's diverse urban forest of over 33,000 trees, we remain dedicated to its health and longevity for present and future generations to enjoy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marisa Garcia".

Marisa Garcia
Parks and Recreation Director



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Parks and Recreation Department
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www.burbankca.gov

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Mature Aleppo Pine trees have been a beautiful and beloved part of our community for many decades, and we understand that these trees provide a great amount of shade, a habitat for wildlife, and benefit the environment. However, to proactively maintain a resilient urban forest, the City's arboriculture experts determined that 121 Aleppo Pine trees citywide have reached their mature life, and there is now greater value in replanting new trees as there are no alternative solutions. Over time we have also learned that this tree species is no longer optimal and has outgrown our residential neighborhoods. In addition, the Aleppo Pine trees have been impacted by our historic drought, and the recent losses during heavy storms highlight their incompatibility with their existing locations.

As we embark on this necessary change, replacement trees will be more resilient, will better compliment the spaces that house them, and will offer wide-ranging benefits including: cleaner air, energy efficiency, stormwater management, temperature regulation, noise reduction, and habitat for local wildlife. The City plans to replace the Aleppo Pine trees with as large of a tree as possible to maximize future success, which may vary depending on the available parkway space at each location. Replacement trees will be at no cost to residents. Additionally, the City will plant new trees in currently vacant parkways, resulting in more city trees planted in your neighborhood.

You are receiving this letter because the City has identified Aleppo Pine trees on your block to be strategically removed and replaced in a multi-year phased approach. Please note that not all parkway trees are being removed, only the mature Aleppo Pines. The City is committed to engaging the community and reporting back to the City Council prior to the implementation of this plan. In an effort to maintain our residents well informed of this Reforestation Strategy, information including the list of trees to be removed, the removal schedule (once determined), upcoming community meetings, and the City Council meeting (once scheduled) can be found at www.BurbankCA.gov/CityReforestation. For questions you can email ParksandRec@Burbankca.gov.

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Marisa Garcia
Parks and Recreation Director

ALEPPO PINE TREE REFORESTATION UPDATE

Sustainable Burbank Commission
September 18, 2023



PARKS AND
RECREATION

COMMITMENT TO URBAN FOREST

- 33,000-tree urban forest
- 46-year involvement with Tree City USA
- Investment in a tree maintenance program

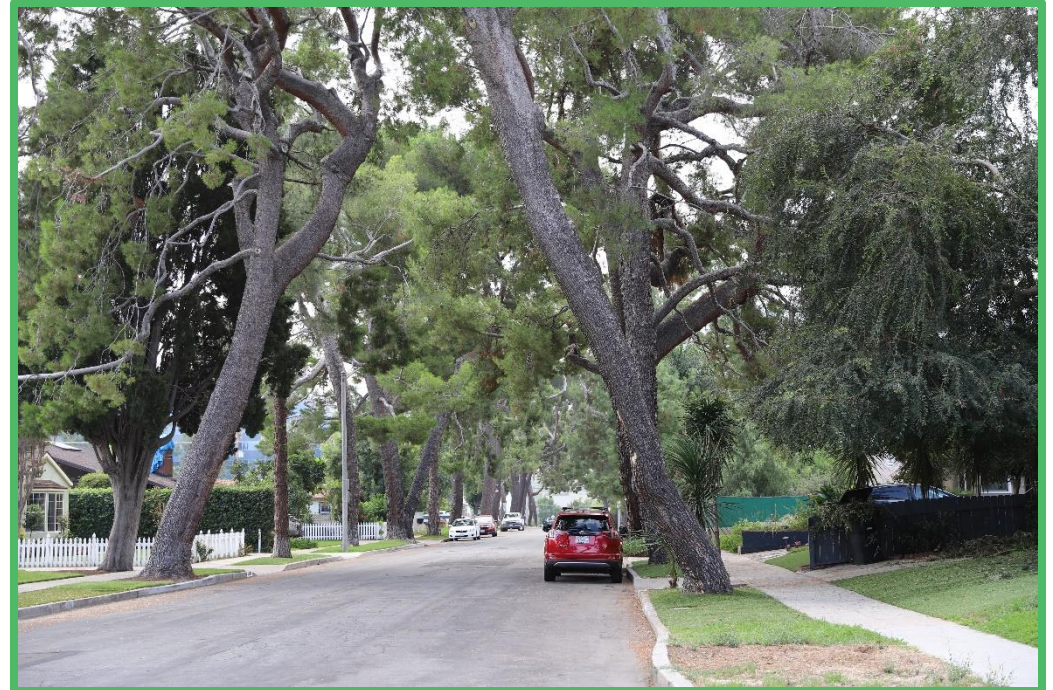
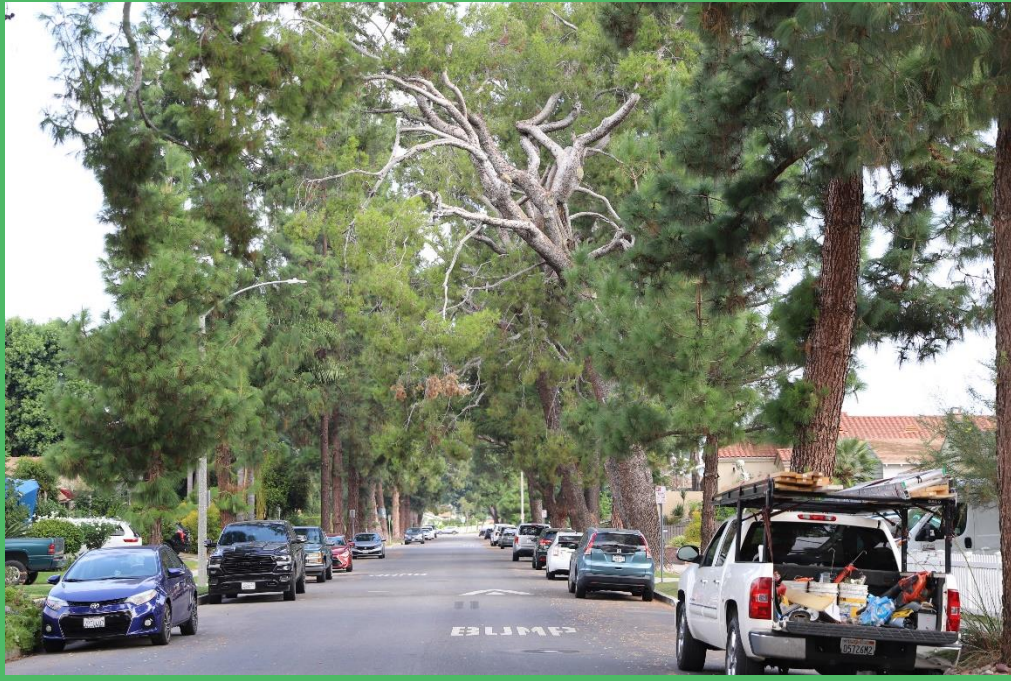


PLANT FOR A GREENER BURBANK

The Plant for A Greener Burbank Initiative aims to add a minimum of 500 trees in Burbank's parks, residences, businesses, and streets.



CITY'S ALEPPO PINE FOREST



IMPACT TO CITY'S EXISTING FOREST





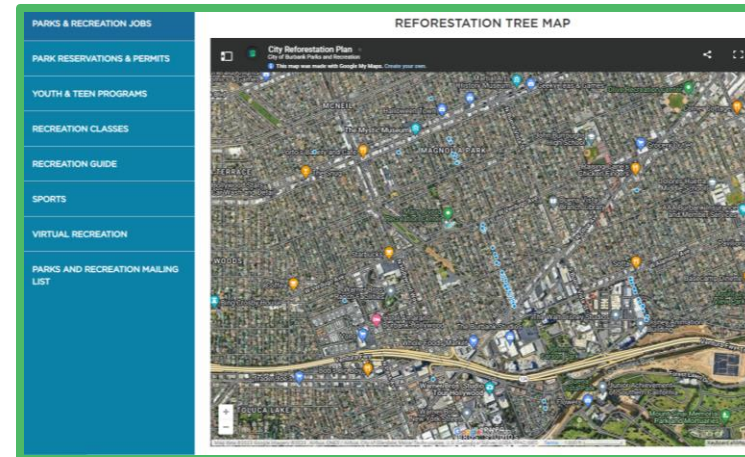
REFORESTATION STRATEGY

- Includes strategically planting, removing, and replanting trees
- May 2023 - Approximately 125 Aleppo Pine trees citywide identified that have likely reached their mature life
- Funding to implement Reforestation Strategy was approved in Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget
- July 2023 – City began executing the Strategy to replace 121 trees
- In response to feedback received, implementation was paused to allow for additional staff research, and community education and engagement.
- City hired a third party, independent ISA Certified Arborist

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Over 1,000 letters mailed to residents living on blocks where an Aleppo Pine tree will be strategically replaced
- Webpage to keep residents informed

www.BurbankCA.gov/CityReforestation



COMMUNITY MEETINGS

- **Thursday, September 14 at 6pm – Parks and Recreation Board Meeting, City Council Chambers, 275 E. Olive Avenue**
- **Monday, September 18 at 5pm – Sustainable Burbank Commission Meeting, Community Services Building, 150 N. Third Street – Community Room 104**
- **To be determined – Community Workshop(s)**

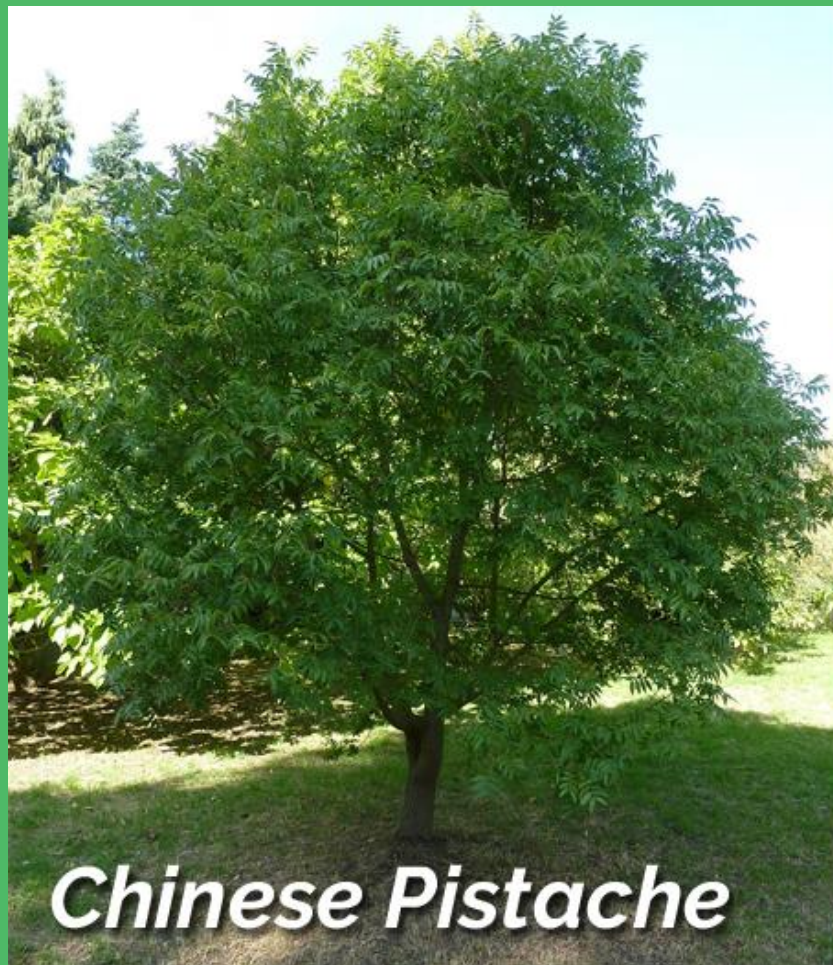
ALEPPO PINE TREE REPLACEMENT LIST

Drought Tolerant (low water)

- Canary Island Pine (*Pinus Canariensis*)
- Chinese Pistache (*Pistachia Chinensis*)
- Bottle Tree (*Brachychiton Populneus*)
- Raywood Ash (*Fraxinus Angustifolia*)
- Japanese Pagoda (*Sophora Japonica*)
- Holly Oak or Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*)
- Incense Cedar (*Calocedrus Decurrens*)
- Coast Live Oak (*Quercus Agrifolia*)
- Engelmann Oak (*Quercus Engelmannii*)

Non-Drought Tolerant (moderate water)

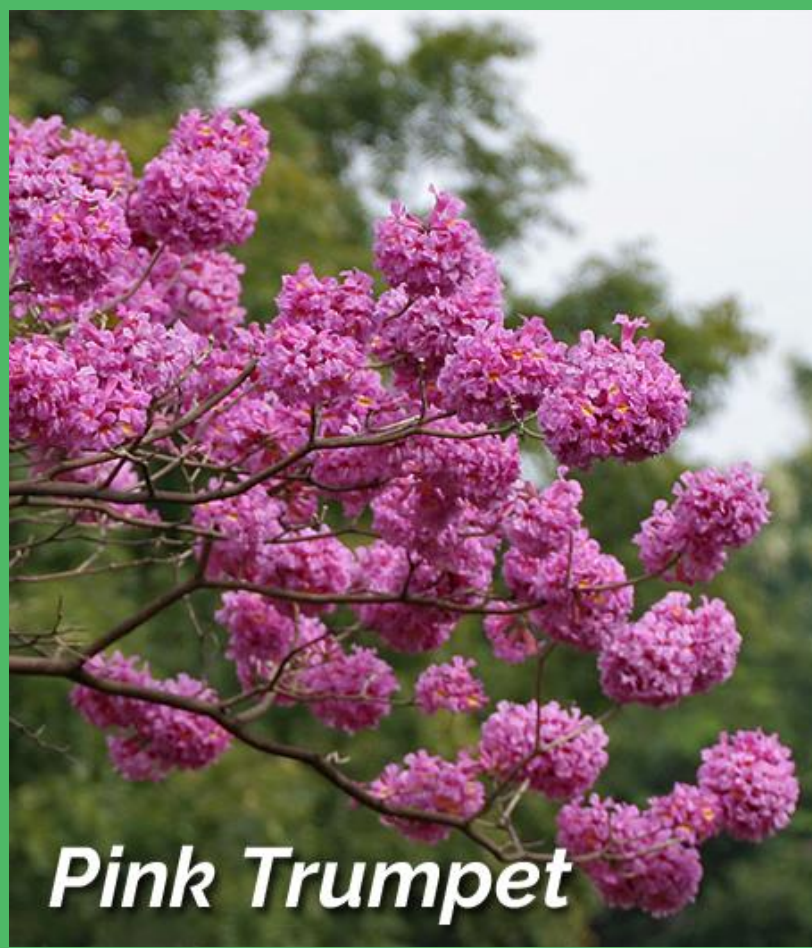
- Deodora Cedar (*Cedrus Deodora*)
- Chinese Flame (*Koelreuteria Bipinnata*)
- Eastern Redbud (*Cercis Canadensis*)
- Pink Trumpet (*Handroanthus Heptaphyllus*)
- Maidenhair (*Ginkgo Biloba*)



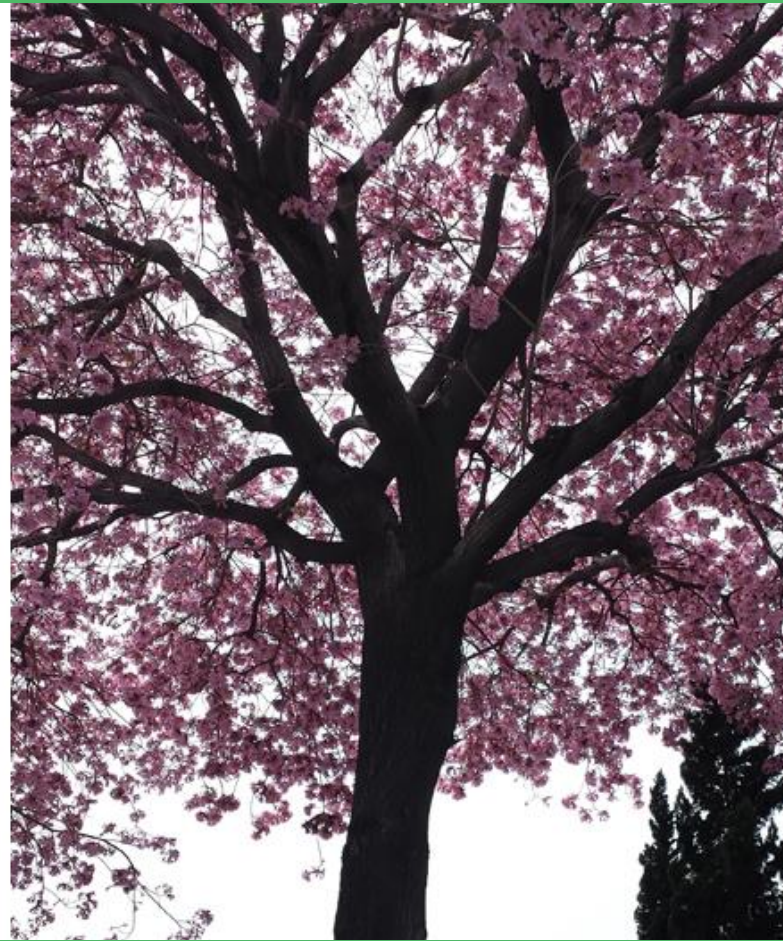
Chinese Pistache







Pink Trumpet



CONCLUSION

- The Department will develop a multi-phased plan to remove and replace the trees based on the independent arborist's tree risk assessment.
- Council will receive a report on the Aleppo Pine tree removal before any further action is taken

THANK YOU



Marisa Garcia: Parks & Recreation Director
Department website: BurbankParks.com
Contact Information: 818.238.5300