Lower 24th Street
Ficus Trees
Ficus History
• Ficus trees are common in SF (more than 7,000) and have an impressive canopy

• 2014 Director’s Order eased removal criteria to address increased number of large limb failures as ficus began to age

• Public Works is in the process of identifying specific ficus trees that are vulnerable to failure near schools, senior centers, along highly travelled corridors, neighborhood commercial districts and on busy street corners
Ficus trees are considered vulnerable to failure if they:

- have competing trunks
- have a history of limb failures
- have a live canopy that makes up less than 30 percent of the tree
- are experiencing canopy decline
- have roots that have been significantly pruned
- are at least 50 feet tall
- have a canopy or trunk that conflicts with streetlights or power lines
Scar from fallen limb, now filled with decay

Competing branches
Live canopy that makes up less than 30 percent of the tree
Canopy decline

Healthy canopy

Declining canopy
Ficus: A citywide safety issue
Fallen Tree Shuts Down Fillmore Street

Storm knocks down trees, causes Muni delays

Massive tree falls onto Dolores Street, smashes Audi

A Tree Falls On Fell Street
Citywide Ficus Removals

• Fillmore Street
  o Trees removed and in process of replanting

• Oak / Fell Streets
  o Trees removed and in process of replanting

• 16th and Church Street (Everett Middle School)
  o Trees removed and replanted

• Columbus Avenue (Washington Square Park)
  o Seven trees
  o In hearing process
  o Replacement tree species already picked out and ready to plant

• Hayes Valley
  o 39 trees
  o Public notification period ended recently
  o Hearing will be scheduled for April 2019
  o Will be replanted 2-3 months after removals take place
Ficus safety along Lower 24th Street
Lower 24th Street has experienced approximately 41 limb failures in the last 10 years

- Lower 24th Street from Mission Street to Potrero is a high pedestrian, cyclist and motor vehicle commercial corridor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pedestrians</th>
<th>Vehicles</th>
<th>Cyclists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission and 24th</td>
<td>4,388</td>
<td>2,208</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Van Ness and 24th</td>
<td>2,148</td>
<td>4,032</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>6,536</td>
<td>6,240</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional issues

• Pruning for building clearance has caused imbalances

• Narrow sidewalk
Tree Crashes into Mission Girls Roof After Storm
Lower 24th Street
Tree Removal Plan
## Removal Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ficus before removals</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ficus to be removed</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ficus to receive experimental pruning</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ficus remaining untouched (no pruning, no removal)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-ficus to be removed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total # Trees to be removed</strong></td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Replanting Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sites not replantable</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sites replantable</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empty / new basins to plant (clear of utility issues and meet all street tree planting guidelines)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empty / new basins with potential to plant (pending utility clearance)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total # replantings and new plantings</strong></td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Totals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total # trees before removals (all species)</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total # ficus to be removed</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total trees remaining (non-removals &amp; experimental prunings; ficus &amp; other species)</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total replantings / new plantings (includes sites pending utility clearance)</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total # trees after removals &amp; replantings / new plantings</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

includes sites pending utility clearance
## Breakdown of work phases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Removals</th>
<th>Sidewalk Work</th>
<th>Replanting and new plantings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Trees and stump grinds</td>
<td>• Repair cracked and raised sidewalk</td>
<td>• Replant tree basins that are free of utility conflicts and meet all tree planting guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dedicated professional tree contractor</td>
<td>• Enlarge/reduce tree basins</td>
<td>• Plant in new basins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Move tree basins</td>
<td>• Dedicated Public Works planting crew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pave over unplantable basins</td>
<td>• Engage community in designing and customizing tree stakes and cross brace stickers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dedicated Public Works cement crew</td>
<td>• 4 stakes and wire mesh will be used on all new trees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Removals

**Dedicated** professional tree contractor

**Timeline:** From the start of removal to completion, three to four months

**Start date:** Subject to change depending on
- public notification protests
- public hearings
- the scheduling of work with contractors and in-house crews

**When scheduling,** we will take into account 24th Street events such as the Carnaval Parade and Festival (May 25 & 26) and Fiesta de Las Americas (September 15)
Sidewalk Work

**Dedicated** Public Works cement crew

**Timeline:** work begins as soon as tree removal contractors finish a block

**Scope of work:**

- Repair cracked and raised sidewalk
- Enlarge or reduce tree basins
- Move tree basins
- Pave over unplantable basins
Planting

**Dedicated** Public Works planting crew

**Timeline:** Two to three months after removals are completed

**Species:**
- Red maple (Armstrong Maple) along 24th (midblock)
- Ginkgo (Maidenhair tree) on corners of 24th

**Watering:** Public Works will water with community support where possible
New Trees

- Some new trees will be 36” boxes with 4x4 foot basins
- Some will be 24” boxes also with 4x4 foot basins
Currently empty tree basins along Lower 24th Street have been replanted (where sidewalk repair was not required)
Community Requests

- Christmas lights
- Custom-designed tree stakes and/or crossbrace stickers
Project Commitments

- Public Works will provide bi-weekly project updates to Supervisor Ronen’s Office and community while project is ongoing.

- Public Works will provide dedicated contact for questions, concerns, updates, etc. while project is ongoing.
Common concerns to tree removals

Aren’t you supposed to be growing our Urban Forest? Why do these trees have to come out if we want more trees in San Francisco?

Our aim at Public Works is for San Francisco to have a thriving, robust urban forest.

However, while we celebrate the many important benefits that mature trees provide, and while we always look for all alternatives prior to choosing tree removal, protecting public safety remains our Number 1 priority.
Common concerns to tree removals

How can we trust that you will replant the trees you are removing and that you will plant them in a reasonable amount of time?

ANY time we remove a lot of trees in one area we prioritize a replacement tree replanting plan for that area.

Lower 24th Street will be prioritized for replanting given that is a major city corridor that will be losing a large amount of trees.
Common concerns to tree removals

How can you ensure the new trees won’t bring their own problems?

The City is now responsible for the care and maintenance of all trees in the public right of way. The StreetTreeSF program is funded so that each and every street tree in San Francisco is cared for and inspected on a frequent, ongoing basis.

Structural pruning of these new 24th Street trees will be managed by Public Works Bureau of Urban Forestry. This will ensure the trees grow in a way that works with, and not against, the structures along 24th Street.
Moving Forward

- Look for updates from:
  - Supervisor Ronen’s Office
  - Calle 24 Merchants

- Walk 24th with Public Works arborist

- sfpublicworks.org/ficustrees
Questions?