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TO: Chi-Wai Chung, P.E.
City of Alameda Public Works Dept.

Location: 1704 Chapin

Species: Liquidambar Tree

Subject: Root-Sidewalk Conflict

Assignment: *Arborist was asked to provide assessment of the liquidambar tree with a focus on the roots. Comments cover tree condition, conflicts with surrounding hardscape and recommendations for treatment.*

Summary

This tree has been pruned excessively and is very one sided. Because of the pruning the tree is sure to become a liability. In addition roots were earlier severed at the edge of the sidewalk, likely done when the sidewalk repairs were last made. The roots are causing minor curb displacement and appear to be under the street.

Tree Description

The liquidambar tree has a DBH of 34". Health and structure are both poor due to the recent pruning that appears to have removed 70% to 80% of the tree. Large pruning wounds were created. If the tree remains, decay is expected to compromise the safety of the tree in time. Repair is not possible and corrective pruning will only help slightly and be quite costly.

Site Description

The tree is growing in a 5' parkway. The adjacent sidewalk has been recently replaced. A number of larger roots were cut in the process. The tree roots are displacing the curb and appear to be under the street pavement. There is a water meter close to the tree. An irrigated lawn is immediately adjacent on the opposite side of the sidewalk.

Assessment

The severe branch removal will surely slow down the tree growth. The loss in energy production would also slow the root recovery after pruning. There is little likelihood that the tree will be destabilized by root pruning due to the reduced stature.

Recommendations

If a phased tree replacement program is to be implemented, this tree would be a candidate for earlier replacement due to its condition. A smaller stature replacement tree could be planted slightly farther from the water meter.

Photo 1. Photo shows the base of the liquidambar tree is the parkway. The curb is being displaced and the street has indications that roots are under and lifting the pavement.

Apparently, large roots were cut when the sidewalk was last repaired.



Photos 2 & 3 below show the crown of the tree that has been pruned heavily on one side.

