

November 1, 2020

William and Linda Maddaus
9 Via Cerrada
Alamo, CA 94507

Ms. Sara Davis, City Forester
PO Box CC
City of Carmel by the Sea, CA 93921

Subject: Monterey Pine Tree Removal on Palou Avenue

Dear Ms. Davis:

Thank you for your guidance on the tree permit/removal process. I have enclosed a permit application for removal of the tall Monterey pine tree on City property in front of our house at Palou 4NE Casanova.

Our house fronts on Palou and backs up to Casanova. Consequently, we have a number of City trees in the road right of way. The subject pine tree has been there well before my mother purchased the home in 1968. Now it is estimated to be about 125 feet tall.

Since we met at the house three weeks ago I have spoken to Rob Thompson, a local arborist. Although he didn't have time to prepare a written report for some weeks, he did inspect our tree on October 29, 2020 and had some observations I can share with you.

1. There is decay at the base of the tree.
2. The tree has structural deficiencies.
3. The tree carries most of its weight on the south side.
4. If allowed to fall it would damage houses to the south on Palou.

Sara, you noted the decay and the need to balance the tree by removing some of the weight on the south side. You offered to have the City do that when we first met last winter.

There is a companion tree across the street and the tops of these trees almost comeingle (see photo 1). If ours were to fall it might also bring down the similar size pine tree across the street to the west. There are a number of houses at risk within 125 feet of either tree.

Two Monterey pine trees about half the size behind our house on City property on Casanova died and were removed while we owned the house since 1983. A third was removed earlier. In 2016 a replacement pine tree, Centennial Tree No. 49 was planted near the last one removed and we are watering it via a drip system, it's doing well and we are happy about that.

The existing large Monterey Pine Tree in front of our house is a safety hazard to the neighborhood. We have four serious safety concerns as follows.

- Branches from our tree and/or a companion tree across the street could fall on PG&E's power lines on Palou which are beneath these trees (see photo 1).
- The tree is very old, partially dead underneath, and if it were to fall might seriously damage our house and/or the neighbor's house(s) and seriously injure anyone inside at the time (see photo 2).
- The tree has already damaged our house's retaining wall along Palou (see photo 3).
- The City has a significant liability for falling urban trees like ours that could be eliminated by removing the tree. We will pay to have two new City trees planted if it is removed.

Fire Hazard. As photo 1 shows, there are PG&E high voltage lines passing below the two pine trees on Palou that serve the neighborhood. As we have all learned this fire season, high voltage power lines and nearby overhanging trees plus high winds can cause fires. So there is a fire risk on Palou and just one of the large branches from these trees falling could bring the PG&E lines down and start a fire. Fire equipment would have a hard time navigating the narrow street with a four-foot diameter tree laying across it. Houses on Palou to the north of us could also be at risk if the tree fell to the south and took out the power lines.

Age of the Tree. The lifespan of a Monterey pine tree, when not cut short by disease or harvesting, is 80 to 90 years (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinus_radiata). We believe these two matching pine trees were planted in the 1930's, or 90 years ago, around the time when our original home and others were built on Palou. The tree is at the end of its life. So our recommendation is for you to remove the tree now and replace it with two City native trees at our expense.

Damage to our Property. We recently had approved a Residential Design Study including replacing the retaining wall in front of our house. As the enclosed picture shows, the wall has been lifted up and cracked, most likely from the subject pine tree located a few feet to the west. Already there is evidence of dead wood under the center of the tree which is clearly visible and you verified, see photo 3. Our contractor has suggested cutting the offending root and then replacing the wall. The cost of a new retaining wall is \$35,000.

Our home is only 20 feet away from this tree and is mostly of board and batten construction made from clear heart redwood, as was common in the 1930's. A tree this massive falling on it would crush it and we have an elderly tenant living there now, that might be killed, as he commonly sits in the front living room to watch TV. It could easily severely damage two homes to the south if it fell in that direction.

City Liability. In the big picture, the liability for any damages from a falling City tree rests with the City. Homes on this street currently sell in the neighborhood of \$2,000,000. We estimate that the cost of removal (about \$8,000) is less than one percent of the City liability that could be caused by an uncontrolled falling of this tree (repair cost could be more than \$1,000,000). It is clear eventually the City will need to pay to remove this tree. The future liability cost should be weighed against the small savings from deferring the cost of removal to the coming years. We believe the cost of tree removal now is a wise investment for the City.

I have spoken with our neighbor to the south on Palou, Mr. David Sodaro (Palou 3NE Casanova). He shares our safety concerns and agrees with our position. We hope you agree with us on removing your tree and we know that managing an aging forest is challenging. We appreciate the time you spend managing the forest we all love.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William O. Maddaus". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

William O. Maddaus

bill@maddauswater.com

CC: Mr. David Sodaro, Owner, Palou 3NECasanova;

Mr. Rob Thompson, ISA Certified Arborist, Thompson Wildland Management



Photo 1. Two Monterey pine trees on Palou, Maddaus tree is on right



Photo 2. Underneath center of tree showing dead wood



Photo 3. Four-foot diameter Monterey pine tree showing retaining wall damage