



SAFETY AND CONDITION OF SAN FRANCISCO'S STREET TREES

Public Works Director Carla Short
Land Use and Transportation Committee Dec. 4, 2023



WINTER 2022-23 STORM IMPACTS

- **900+ trees and branches failed
Dec. 31-March 31**
- **Tree-related service requests received during
the 2022-23 winter storms: 3,312**
- **Neighborhoods hit the hardest: St. Francis
Wood, Brotherhood Way, Russian Hill,
Downtown, North Beach**



IMPACT OF StreetTreeSF

- Public Works has maintenance responsibility for San Francisco's 125,000+ street trees under the StreetTreeSF program approved by City voters in 2016 that provides \$19 million a year for tree care.
- Initiative allows for more consistent pruning.
- A well-maintained tree is a healthier tree and more resilient in storms.
- Dead/damaged trees removed during “worst-first” phase of StreetTreeSF: 6,852
- Trees targeted for maintenance annually: 12,000
- Tree maintenance cycle:
 - Pre-StreetTreeSF -- every 10 to 12 years
 - Current -- every 8 years
 - Target -- every 3 to 5 years



EFFICIENT RESPONSE

- The Bureau of Urban Forestry triaged tree-failure response based on severity and threat to life, property and transportation to optimize resources.
- Crews, undeterred by heavy rains and high winds, worked around the clock.



WHAT HELPED

- Mayor's Emergency Declaration allowed Public Works to quickly bring on contractor tree crews to augment City staff for more robust storm-response operation.
- Launch of the Public Works Operations Center and coordination with the citywide Emergency Operations Center streamlined the dispatch of tree crews through a prioritization lens.



FUNDING TO PLANT TREES

- Typical annual street tree planting budget: \$2 million
- In September, Public Works received a \$12 million federal grant through the Inflation Reduction Act to plant 3,500 trees over the next five years in low-canopy underserved neighborhoods, which also are hard hit by the storms.
- The California Natural Resources Agency provided an additional grant to plant 250 trees and support workforce development in the Tenderloin and the South of Market (SoMa), two neighborhoods with the lowest tree canopy.



THE FUTURE

Goal of the Urban Forest Plan is to grow San Francisco's street population to 155,000 by 2040.

Challenges to meeting the goal:

- Lack of sustainable funding source
- Storms, expected to increase in severity with climate change
- Vandalism
- High labor costs to water young trees during establishment phase





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