

November 12, 2012

Seattle Department of Transportation
Peter Hahn, Director
700 5th Avenue, Suite 3800
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Mr. Hahn:

As a resident of the 900 block of 34th Avenue, I wanted to share with you my thoughts regarding the dilemma you face addressing the street trees on 34th Avenue in Madrona. As a profound lover of Seattle and trees, understanding their role in addressing stormwater issues, lowering carbon in the atmosphere, mitigating heat island effects, and providing habitat for local wildlife, while enhancing our cityscape; I cannot overlook their impacts either, particularly when they are the wrong tree in the wrong place. We cannot disregard the role street trees play in impacting our lives in a negative way.

I frequently applaud Madrona neighbors with caring deeply for our neighborhood. There are many evidences of residents taking the initiative to make Madrona an even better place, with festivals, hanging flower baskets in the summertime, cleaning up and enhancing our parks, and restoring forests that surround us and lend a unique character to our neighborhood. Their efforts to look for a win-win solution to our current dilemma regarding street trees is characteristic of what I believe has come to distinguish our neighborhood from many others. However, a tree lined street that one drives through on their way home provides a very different experience for the homeowner who not only drives the street but must also live on the street under the heavy canopy of trees that have overgrown their severely limited environment.

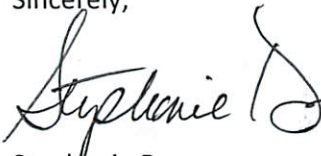
The trees, planted forty or more years ago, have matured and in the process have exceeded the size of the very limited planting strip (22")in which they were mistakenly placed. Everyone knows how the trees have since buckled sidewalks creating a hazardous pedestrian environment, but they are also undermining retaining walls against which many front yards are dependent. In the process, having been untended for too many years, their crowns have overgrown the airspace between a home and the street so as to darken the front yard and home entry, creating an unsafe environment after dark. In the process, their roots have also entered into sewer lines and other pipes and conduits servicing homes along the street and have resulted in costly repairs to the homeowners, who are told that the roots that reach their property and thereby affect their utilities, are their problem.

For too long, I have been told by City arborists and others that they share my concerns, and have documented damage being done to our properties, but that their hands are tied. Oft cited reasons include too few resources to pay additional crews to maintain the City's trees, as well as, the anticipated backlash in a city like Seattle to the prospect of removing mature trees. City Light has "maintained" trees on the east side of the street for the expressed purpose of protecting power lines. This form of maintenance has only served to not only destroy the look of the tree but to also throw into question, its

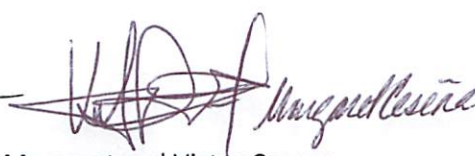
survivability over time as these trees will continue to grow in awkward and perhaps hazardous ways. If we do nothing, we will have to live with the disruptions and problems that they continue to create. We currently have to suffer a substandard sidewalk and pedestrian environment. We also experience challenges to our property and service lines, as well as a dark and uninviting entrance to our home, all for the sake of trees whose lives have taken precedence over our own. I am not anti-tree, I only ask that you take the steps now that will resolve the issue that was created by our well-intentioned forefathers. Don't take stop gap measures that place the responsibility for these trees on future decision makers. Don't be swayed by the well meaning residents who (Likely) do not live on the street and who may ask that you take extraordinary measures to preserve what is, rather than look at what can be. Living with substandard sidewalks and/ or continuing property damage concerns, is not a long-term solution. You have the opportunity to do the right thing, now, for the right reasons. Anything less is an abdication of local government's role to protect and work on the behalf of property owners and residents who deserve to have the mistakes of past decision makers, no matter how well-intentioned, remedied.

The urban forest is an important part of our environment, and we should take the necessary steps to ensure that our city embraces trees in our parks, in our greenbelts, and yes, along our streets and in our yards. But as any gardener, arborist, or botanist will tell you, it's all about the right tree in the right place. If we follow this axiom, we will find that people love the trees that surround them; and that these properly placed trees add value to their property, as well as to the community they love. Here's hoping you take the necessary steps to solve this problem. To do the just and proper thing, and not be misled by false, stop gap "solutions" that may make some people happy but avoids the real truth. The unavoidable local criticism of those who support trees over any other concern will surely accompany any decision related to the removal and replacement of these trees and should not sway you from making the right decision for now and the future .

Sincerely,



Stephanie Doran
723 34th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98122



Margaret and Victor Cesena
719 34th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98122



Pat Vadasy and Jim Nelson
722 34th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98122

Lizzy Bowring
724 34th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98122

