



## **Recap Yalecrest Neighborhood Council meeting 11.14.24 on damaged neighborhood sycamore trees.**

### **Key highlights:**

1. Urban Forestry will send contractors to Yalecrest and nearby areas to prune sycamore trees and remove as much dead wood as possible.
2. By the end of 2024, Urban Forestry will finalize a new treatment plan that will be tested on small groups of sycamores in the spring. The city hopes to identify the best strategies that emerge. Yalecrest will be a test site.
3. The city and homeowners are facing tough choices: the tradeoff between pouring money into repetitive treatment options or replacing the most damaged trees. Annual costs can range from \$500-\$1,200 per tree.
4. Private and government arborists agree there are proven methods for controlling the bugs attacking sycamores, but controlling anthracnose is more difficult.
5. Byron Little of Save Our Sycamores advocated for a tighter community-government partnership to solve this problem, with better data collection.

### **Four meeting presenters:**

- Byron Little, chair, Save Our Sycamores & Yalecrest resident.
- Bryan Ostler, private arborist, with Thrive Tree Experts.
- Tony Gliot, director, SLC's Urban Forestry Division.
- MaKenzie Skaggs, Service Coordination Arborist; Part of team that worked on Plant Health Care sales and application for Arbor Care.

### **Other findings:**

1. At least four pathogens are currently undermining Salt Lake's sycamore trees: Anthracnose fungus, sycamore lace bug, sycamore scale, and mildew.
2. Watering in the fall, but especially in the summer, is key to the sycamore's health. Sustained soaking is recommended.
3. The city discontinued seasonal tree spraying programs about 10 years ago because of health concerns about broadcast aerial spraying in residential zones and environmental impact.
4. Although American sycamores have a lifespan of 600 years, the city's oldest, failing sycamore trees (about 100 years) reside in Yalecrest, the Avenues and Sugar House, according to the city. Chief SLC forester Tony Gliot said the trees on upper Michigan Avenue "are the worst in the city."

5. Residents who want to pursue private treatment plans can get a permit from the city. Fees will be waived but the treatment must be “safe and sound.”
6. The city does not have the budget to treat or replace the 4,500 sycamore trees in Salt Lake and even if it did, the costs would not be the best use of taxpayer money. SLC’s tree replacement budget: \$350,000; SLC’s treatment budget: \$80,000.
7. The city recommends replacing grass around the tree base with mulch.
8. Late spring snows and rain, blazing, hot dry summers and the explosive advancement of pathogens are crippling our sycamores.
9. The city intends to plant a more disease-resistant variety of sycamores in the future.
10. Many treatment options – with brand-specific choices – were discussed during the meeting. Check the meeting recording.