



The roots of a liquid amber tree buckle the Center Street sidewalk between Church and Locust streets.

SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

# Seven trees to get the ax

Official: Liquid amber trees outside downtown library caused repetitive damage

By J.M. BROWN

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SANTA CRUZ — The city plans to remove four heritage trees and three others outside the Central Library that have caused an estimated \$20,000 in sidewalk and curb damage during the past decade.

Leslie Keedy, the city's urban forester, determined the heritage liquid amber trees, as well as two trees of the same variety that are not of heritage size, should come out and be replaced because of their invasive root system. A seventh tree, a jacaranda, will be removed to improve access in the area.

"What's happening is the city has repaired the sidewalk, remedied the curb area and patched to the degree we can patch," Keedy said. "Now, we need to do remov-

al and replacement."

The trees are healthy but damage to the concrete sidewalk and curbs has caused a public safety hazard. If the city were to leave the trees in place and just do repairs, Keedy said the trees would require pruning that would significantly compromise their health.

"It's something we needed to do," Library Director Teresa Landers said of the removal.

She noted that the library has shouldered the financial burden of repairs, adding, "Continuing to treat the problem costs us more money."

The trees, most of which are about 40 years old, are on Center Street between Church and Locust streets. Heritage is not a designation of age but of size;

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Liquid amber trees surround the Central Branch library in downtown Santa Cruz. The trees have damaged the sidewalk, making it a safety hazard for pedestrians, said Leslie Keedy, the city's urban forester.

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## TREES

Continued from B1

they must be at least 14 inches in diameter and stand 54 inches above the grade of the ground.

For 10 days, the city posted two notices near

the trees regarding the proposed removal. Keedy said several library patrons and workers contacted her with questions, but none appealed the proposed removal by a Monday deadline.

To maintain a canopy of shade on the street, the city will plant four 36-inch boxside ginkgo biloba trees that grow quickly and present autumn colors. The city is accept-

ing bids to do the removal, replanting and sidewalk repair, which is estimated to cost \$40,000.

The costs will be shared among the library, Parks and Recreation Department and donations from PG&E, which sets aside funding for new trees when it has to remove others because of utility access. The work is expected to begin in a couple of weeks.