



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

City worker Harry Petrakis readies new tree area located near the Cooper House.

Sick trees removed from mall; new, colorful species planned

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SANTA CRUZ — The Pacific Avenue Mall has 17 fewer trees — for now.

The diseased trees have been cut by crews during the past two weeks. They will be replaced with different species of trees by early August.

The tree removal was part of the city's "routine maintenance," according to Ken Hockenbery, field supervisor for the Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department. None were among the 19 trees that started a controversy last year after they were targeted for removal as part of a mall street-lighting plan.

"These were either sick and diseased trees, or trees that were being crowded by adjacent trees," said William Rubel, chairman of

the Downtown Commission, the seven-member city advisory body which oversees landscape maintenance on the mall as part of its job.

As a result, the trees "had never really been vigorous growers, and weren't strong or well-shaped," Hockenbery said. They included such species as spruces, maples and ginkgos.

Their replacements will be smaller, mostly deciduous and flowering trees. "We want to keep the scale of the trees small and the texture light," Hockenbery said. "Where possible, we went for trees that provide color either by flowers or foliage."

Cost of the removal and replacements will be \$11,000, Hockenbery said. The new specimens will be 24-inch boxed trees that will be 6-8 feet high. Mature size will be around 25 feet high.

The replacements will include: golden trumpet (tabebuia), which features huge clusters of pink flowers; floss silk (chorisia), a subtropical species with large red and white flowers; sour gum (tupelo), a good fall foliage tree; and gold-enrain (koelreuteria), with yellow clusters of flowers in early summer.

"I think it's going to be a good change in the way we look at the mall," Hockenbery said. "Up until now, we just kind of inherited the mall and kept it status quo. Now, we're trying to make a few changes for the better."

Rubel said the Downtown Commission is also starting work on a re-landscape plan for the shrubs on the mall. "We'll like to bring more color to the mall, and give it a new, fresh, revitalized look."

That plan is expected to take at least six months to complete.