



**City of St. Helena
Special City Council Meeting
Tuesday, April 7, 2026 @ 4:30 PM
Vintage Hall Board Room - Second Floor
465 Main Street, St. Helena CA**

PLEASE NOTE: Any person who wishes to speak regarding an item on the agenda or make a comment under the "Public Forum" portion of the agenda may do so, but please observe the time limit of four minutes.

The City Council meeting will be live-streamed on Comcast Channel 28 and on the City's website.

Public comment for City Council meetings will be accepted via email via to publiccomment@cityofstheleena.gov. All public comments must be received three hours prior to the meeting. All other public comments received after the deadline will be attached to the item the next business day or soon thereafter. Public comments will not be read out loud but will be publicly available and attached to the online City Council agenda.

To ensure interpreters are available, requests must be made at least 72 hours in advance by calling the Office of the City Clerk at (707) 968-2640 or emailing cityclerk@cityofstheleena.gov.

The schedule of upcoming meetings and published meeting agendas can be found on the City of St. Helena website at cityofstheleena.gov.

Servicios de interpretación en español durante la reunión pueden ser solicitados por el público. Para asegurar que los intérpretes estén disponibles, los servicios tienen que ser solicitados al menos 72 horas antes de la reunión llamando a la oficina de la Secretaria de la Ciudad al (707) 968-2640 o por correo electrónico a cityclerk@cityofstheleena.gov.

El horario de las reuniones publicadas y próximas puede ser localizado en el sitio de web de la Ciudad en cityofstheleena.gov

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

Mayor: Paul Dohring, City Council Members: Aaron Barak, Michelle Deasy, Kate Spadarotto, Billy Summers

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

4. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

6. PUBLIC FORUM

Members of the public are entitled to speak on matters of municipal concern not on the agenda during Public Forum. Each person's comments shall be limited to 4 minutes. Each person is entitled to speak on any non-agendized item only once at any meeting. Brief questions by Council Members for clarifications may be posed and answered, and Council Members may make requests that items be placed on future agendas, but in accordance with state law, no substantive discussion or action may take place unless and until the matter properly appears on the agenda.

6.1. Public Comment

7. REPORTS BY STAFF AND CITY COUNCIL, FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS, AND AB 1234 REPORTS

Reports by staff and/or Council Members on items of general interest. Brief questions for clarification may be posed and answered, and Council Members may request that items be placed on a future agenda. Except under certain circumstances, the Brown Act prohibits any other discussion or action by the City Council.

8. PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLIC RECOGNITIONS

9. STAFF BRIEFING AND PRESENTATIONS

10. CONSENT ITEMS

Members of the Council or the public (present at the meeting) may ask that any items be considered individually for purposes of considering alternative action, for extended discussion, or for public comment. Unless that is done, one motion may be used to adopt all recommended actions. (Roll Call Vote)

11. PUBLIC HEARINGS

12. OLD BUSINESS

12.1. Discussion Regarding Utility Conflict with Planned Street Trees

CEQA Determination:

Prepared By: Eric Janzen, Asst. PW Director

Recommendation: Approve proposed re-location of new street trees.

13. NEW BUSINESS

14. CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

15. ADJOURNMENT

The next Regular City Council meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2026.

This agenda was posted at City Hall, 1088 College Avenue, and at Vintage Hall, 465 Main Street, St. Helena, California on April 3, 2026.

Andrew Bradley, City Clerk

In Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please call the City Clerk's Office (707) 967-2792. Notification 72

hours prior to the meeting as required by Section 202 of the Americans with Disabilities Act will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.

CHALLENGING DECISIONS OF CITY ENTITIES

The time limit within which to commence any lawsuit or legal challenge to any quasi-adjudicative decision made by the City of St. Helena is governed by Section 1094.6 of the Code of Civil Procedure, unless a shorter limitation period is specified by any other provision, including without limitation Government Code section 65009 applicable to many land use and zoning decisions, Government Code section 66499.37 applicable to the Subdivision Map Act, and Public Resources Code section 21167 applicable to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Under Section 1094.6, any lawsuit or legal challenge to any quasi-adjudicative decision made by the City must be filed no later than the 90th day following the date on which such decision becomes final. Any lawsuit or legal challenge, which is not filed within that 90-day period, will be barred. Government Code section 65009 and 66499.37, and Public Resources Code section 21167, impose shorter limitations periods and requirements, including timely service in addition to filing.

If a person wishes to challenge the above actions in court, they may be limited to raising only those issues they or someone else raised at the meeting described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of St. Helena, at or prior to the meeting. In addition, judicial challenge may be limited or barred where the interested party has not sought and exhausted all available administrative remedies.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL RECEIVED AFTER THE POSTING OF THE AGENDA

Any supplemental writings or documents distributed to a majority of the City Council regarding any item on this Agenda, after the posting of the Agenda, will be available for public review in the City Clerk's Office located at 1088 College Avenue, St. Helena, California, during normal business hours and by appointment. In addition, such writings or documents will be made available on the City's website at cityofsthenelena.gov and will be available for public review at the respective meeting.



Agendas Report to the Special City Council

Agenda Section: PUBLIC FORUM

Department: Admin

DATE:	April 7, 2026
FROM:	
SUBJECT:	

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Public Comment - Michelle Covell

Public comment for Public Forum (April 7th, 2026) Regular City Council

From Michelle Covell <michelle@covellarchitects.com>

Date Mon 4/6/2026 10:37 AM

To Public Comment <publiccomment@cityofsthelena.gov>

Hi City Council, City Clerk,

I would like to request putting this Planning Commission hearing item on a future agenda of the City Council. Please take a look at the video. I'd like to have an open discussion with the city regarding the role of the Planning commission.

<https://sthelena.civicweb.net/document/264676/?splitscreen=true&media=true>

January 21, 2025. Planning commission hearing video: Roughly 2 hours 35 minutes in.

Should planning commissions be described as Kafkaesque?

I'd like to better understand policies and processes that safeguard private citizens from potential abuse of power. What are the objective unbiased checks and balances for residents in St. Helena?

I wonder what would have happened to the applicants/residents if the person in the audience had not spoken up. Note- I do not know these residents- neither the applicant, nor the person who spoke from the audience. I have had no communication with them directly, and they have not requested this. This is solely my request.

I am speaking as a resident, not representing any other roles that I serve.

Kafkaesque describes situations that are nightmarishly complex, bizarre, illogical, and oppressive, often involving bewildering bureaucracy, senseless rules, and a sense of entrapment

Respectfully,
Michelle Liu Covell



Agendas Report to the Special City Council

Agenda Section: OLD BUSINESS

Department: Public Works Department

DATE:	April 7, 2026
FROM:	Eric Janzen, Asst. PW Director
SUBJECT:	Discussion Regarding Utility Conflict with Planned Street Trees and Consideration of Proposed Remedy
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Approve proposed re-location of new street trees.
PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:	Item was presented at the March 24, 2026, Regular Council Meeting.
STATEMENT OF THE PURPOSE:	Discussion of Utility Conflict with Planned Street Trees in the Downtown St. Helena Sidewalk Improvement Project (CIP R18-81). Consideration of the remedy proposed by Public Works.
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	None at this time. Depending on Council Direction, a change order increasing the cost of the project is likely. Cost will vary with the direction provided by Council.
CEQA DETERMINATION:	

BACKGROUND:

The City Council approved the Downtown St. Helena Sidewalk Improvement project (CIP R18-81) at the May 23, 2017, Council Meeting. Council considered street tree replacement options at the November 12, 2024, Council Meeting.

DISCUSSION:

The Council and the Public raised several questions at the April 24, 2026, Council Meeting, regarding the discovery of the utility conflict with the proposed new street trees. Public Works has summarized these questions and provided the responses below:

Could the trees have been saved?

No. Sidewalk replacement will necessitate removal of too many roots to save the existing trees.

Was there mis-management?

No. The utility conflict encountered is a common occurrence in all construction projects involving earth movement. Underground utilities are notoriously difficult to map accurately. For this reason, the State requires every project obtain a "dig ticket" and utility owners to show the location of their facilities within the work zone. In addition, the City requires every contractor to pothole each nearby utility to confirm its location and depth.

Is there an arborist report?

No. The street trees were being replaced because sidewalk replacement would necessitate removal of too many roots. For this reason, further evaluation of tree health was not warranted. The City Arborist did advocate for the replacement of the trees and advised Council on which species would be better suited to Downtown.

Why did the City proceed with the tree removal?

Ghilotti scheduled tree removal for 3/10/2026 - 3/16/2026. Since tree removal was required for all other phases of the project to proceed, City Staff directed Ghilotti to proceed with tree removal as scheduled. Notification of this schedule was sent to the Parks and Recreation Department, stakeholders within the work zone and the Chamber of Commerce on 3/9/2026.

Who approved removal of the trees?

The decision to replace the existing street trees was a multi-step process. The initial decision was made by the City Council who approved the scope of work for the project at the 5/23/2017 Council Meeting. This decision was revisited, with much public debate, at the Council meeting held on 11/12/2024. Council elected not to amend the decision to replace the trees. The specific date for removal was determined by the construction sequence (tree removal needed to occur before any sidewalk demolition or excavation) and the availability of the subcontractor to perform the work. Approval to proceed with tree removal was issued by City Staff on 3/9/2026.

Why did the tree removal occur just before the City's 150th Birthday Celebration?

Staff wanted to avoid the noise of the tree removal from interfering with the event. This was communicated to the Sesquicentennial stakeholders.

Why didn't the City delay tree removal until after the City's 150th Birthday Celebration?

Voluntary delay by the City extends the overall project and can increase costs. City Staff have purposely scheduled this project to avoid business disruption in Downtown during the peak-Summer season.

Did tree removal create unreasonable risk to the gas line?

No. Only stump-grinding presents an unreasonable risk.

Can Ghilotti finish the west side of the street before Council can consider options?

Yes. City Staff provided this direction to Ghilotti prior to the 3/24/2026 Council meeting. Sidewalk demolition for the northwest quadrant of the project was completed

the week of March 23rd.

Can the City reduce the scope of the project to allow PG&E time to relocate their utility?

Yes, but this is not advisable. A significant reduction in scope does not entitle the City to a "refund" from Ghilotti. Ghilotti will retain the right to full payment regardless of the scope reduction. In addition, the project must be complete in order to receive the full OBAG funding and meet the City's funding-match requirement. A significant reduction in scope will reduce the City's ability to receive the full funding award.

The City's best path forward is to deliver the full project. Reducing the project in the middle of construction will likely deliver less benefit at greater cost.

Can the City get PG&E to pay for new sidewalk like they did near Sunshine Market?

No. The Sunshine market project was the sole financial responsibility of PG&E and is not comparable.

PG&E is obligated to adjust the elevations of their vaults and meter boxes at no cost to the City. The sidewalk improvements are the sole financial responsibility of the City.

What about the water lines?

The water laterals were not expected to be affected by the project nor were they deemed deficient. Some of the meter boxes will be replaced as a part of the project. The concerns expressed by members of the public are their opinion and not based on past reporting by Staff or direction from Council. As of the writing of this report, city staff and the contractor have been directed to replace water services within the work zone.

What about future utility repairs damaging the new sidewalk?

As with all paving projects, a 5-year moratorium on trenching will be implemented following the project. Parcel owners who need to replace utilities during this period will have to use directional boring techniques or enhanced surface restoration methods to complete their work. Since the City identified several sewer laterals for which this restriction would be a hardship, the City elected to replace these sewer laterals as part of the project. This work is being performed at no cost to the owners.

Following the moratorium, parcel owners may use the same "full sidewalk flag" surface restoration methods required elsewhere in the City.

What flexibility does Council have?

Options that also preserve the Federal funding are limited. The funds for the project are obligated and budgeted in the current Federal Fiscal Year ending September 30, 2026. Federal FY 2026 is the last year of the OBAG - Round 3 program. Failure to deliver the project within Federal FY 2026 runs the risk of de-obligation. This will make the City's unspent grant funds available to other Bay Area project sponsors that are able to deliver but require additional funding. The City's award would diminish as our unspent funds are awarded to other projects.

The City's best path forward is to select the option that causes the least delay and smallest additional expense.

The Council also requested more information regarding the utility location process and

an explanation for why the utility conflict was not discovered prior to the start of construction.

Public Works wishes to emphasize that the location of the utility is not the principal conflict. It is the shallow bury depth of the utility that prevents the project from moving forward in accordance with the plan. Had the utility been buried at a more conventional depth of 3'-4' below grade surface, stump grinding could have continued with only minor revision to the plan.

Public Works has prepared the following timeline and added explanations where applicable:

1. Utilities were originally located during plan development using available record drawings obtained by our consultant (BKF) from PG&E and the City. These historic resources indicated that the gas lines were located in the street. The locations were then incorporated into the plan between 2018-2021.
2. At the start of construction activities, Ghilotti opened a "dig ticket". PG&E then marked their utility on the ground. These marks were the first indication of a conflict. However, utility depth information remained unknown since this information is not included with a "dig ticket".
3. Ghilotti informed the City of the potential conflict on 2/12/2026. City Staff directed Ghilotti to proceed with potholing to confirm depth of the utility. Staff issued this direction because utility depth was needed to determine if stump grinding could be performed, performed at a shallower depth or not at all.
4. Potholing work began the week of 2/16/2026. Because the gas line was located in the sidewalk, additional potholes were needed and these had to be approved via a change order.
5. City Staff received the Change Order request on 2/24/2026.
6. Additional potholing was performed on 2/26/2026 and 2/27/2026. City Staff were notified that the gas line was shallow and penetrated the root balls of the trees on Friday, 2/27/2026 at 7:04 PM after City Hall had closed for the week.
7. City Staff received the full pothole report on 3/9/2026.
8. City staff prepared an alternate tree layout which was then reviewed by the Director of Public Works on 3/17/2026.
9. City Staff then presented the alternate tree layout to the City Manager who directed Public Works to present this change to Council at the 3/24/2026 meeting.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

NEPA Certification issued by Caltrans remains active and valid.

GOAL:

Goal 4: Provide Effective Community Information & Opportunities for Engagement; Goal 5: Enhance Quality of Life; Goal 8: Implement Capital Improvement Plans (CIP) Projects

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Presentation

2. Public Comment - Michelle Covell 2
3. Public Comment - Claudia Schmidt
4. Public Comment - Charles Covell
5. Public Comment - Kelly Wheaton
6. Public Comment - Kelly Wheaton 2
7. Public Comment - Kelly Wheaton 2a
8. Public Comment - Claudia Schmidt 2
9. Public Comment - Michelle Covell 3

Downtown Sidewalk Update

Impact of Existing Utilities

Recap

The PG&E gas pipe was thought to be under the east side of Main Street



Recap

The utility survey
found the gas pipe
below the sidewalk



Recap

The gas pipe is
very shallow,
1.5' to 2.5' below
the surface

It passes through
the tree stumps.



Questions from Council:

This item was presented to the City Council on March 24, 2026.

Council requested more information regarding design options, the utility location process and an explanation for why the utility conflict was not discovered prior to the start of construction.

Questions from Council:

Public Works wishes to emphasize that the location of the utility is not the principal conflict. It is the shallow bury depth of the utility that prevents the project from moving forward in accordance with the plan.

Had the utility been buried at a more conventional depth of 3'-4' below grade surface, stump grinding could have continued with only minor revision to the plan.

Questions from Council:

Can the City reduce the scope of the project to allow PG&E time to relocate their utility?

Yes, but this is not advisable.

1. A significant reduction in scope does not entitle the City to a reduction of the contract price.
2. The project must be complete in order to receive the full OBAG funding and meet the City's funding-match requirement.

The City's best path forward is to deliver the full project. Reducing the project scope, in the middle of construction, will likely deliver less benefit at greater cost.

Questions from Council:

Can the City get PG&E to pay for new sidewalk like they did near Sunshine Market?

No.

1. The Sunshine market project was the sole financial responsibility of PG&E and is not comparable.
2. PG&E is only obligated to adjust the elevations of their vaults and meter boxes at no cost to the City. The sidewalk improvements are the sole financial responsibility of the City.

Questions from Council:

What flexibility does Council have?

Options that also preserve the Federal funding are limited.

1. OBAG3 funding is available in the current Federal Fiscal Year ending September 30, 2026.
2. Unspent OBAG3 funds become available to other Bay Area project sponsors at the end of the Federal Fiscal Year.

The City's best path forward is to select the option that causes the least delay and smallest additional expense.

Questions from Council:

Why was the utility conflict not discovered prior to the start of construction?

Utility mapping acquired by our consultant, BKF, showed the gas utility in the street. BKF incorporated this information into the project plans.

Questions from Council:

When was the utility conflict discovered?

Ghilotti informed the City of the potential conflict on 2/12/2026.

How did the City respond?

City Staff directed Ghilotti to pothole the utility to confirm location and depth.

Questions from Council:

What does PG&E say about this conflict?

Public Works met with PG&E representatives on April 2, 2026. PG&E confirmed that planting street trees over a gas line is not the preferred practice.

However,

PG&E has not expressed any opinion about Public Works proposed plan to shift the tree wells, hydro-excavate and plant 24" box trees over the gas line.

Comments from the Public:

Ms. Covell's comments, dated 4/6/2026, nicely summarized past public comments about street tree replacement, species selection, professional design and review.

Council has considered these public comments in multiple meetings over the last 5+ years. The project plan represents all Council direction provided.

Further debate or design changes risk increasing cost and delaying delivery of the project.

Extended delay carries the added risk that the Federal funding will be de-obligated.

Public Works Recommendation:

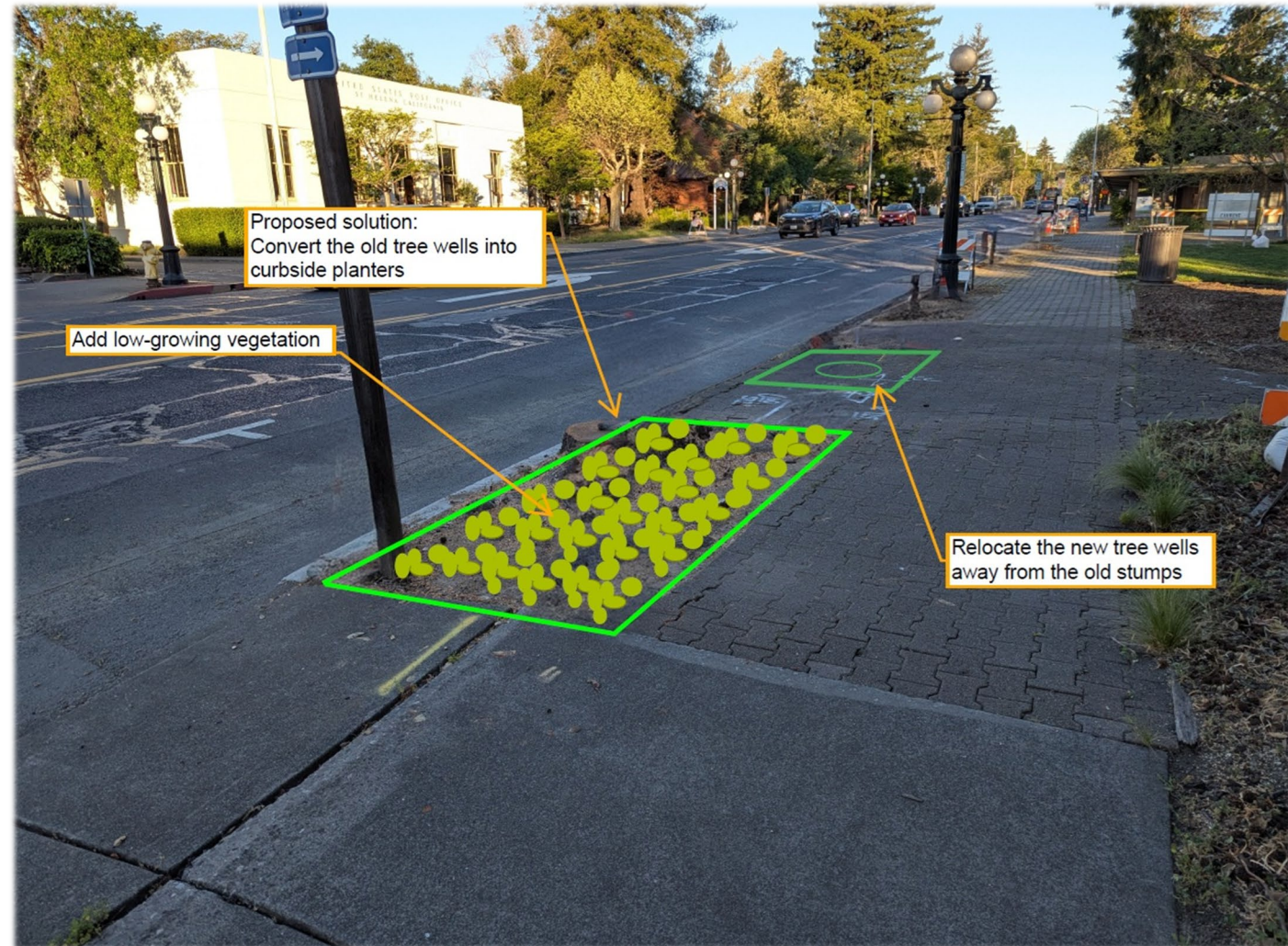
Public Works stands by the recommendation presented to Council on March 24, 2026.

Proposed Solution

Relocate the new tree wells away from the stumps

Leave the stumps in place but grind them just below the surface

Convert the old tree wells into curbside planters



Benefits

- Minimal delay to the Project
- Gas pipe is undisturbed
- Low additional cost
- Reduce the total amount of new concrete
- Adds greenery to Main Street
- Sidewalk remains ADA compliant

Detriments

- Reduces the number of new street trees by three (3)
- Surveyor will have to re-stake the tree well locations and add the planters
- Sidewalk is reduced to about 5'-0" wide
- The box size of the new trees must be reduced to 24-inches on the east side of the street
- The street trees on the west side will still have a box size of 48-inches and look "unbalanced"

QUESTIONS?

Public comment for item 12.1 - April 7th, Special City Council - regarding trees.

From Michelle Covell <michelle@covellarchitects.com>

Date Mon 4/6/2026 4:43 PM

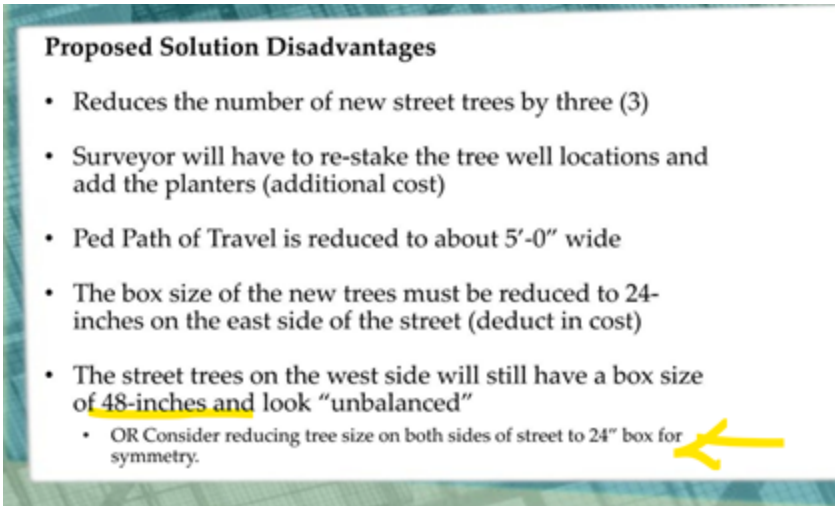
To Andrew Bradley <abradley@cityofsthelena.gov>; Public Comment <publiccomment@cityofsthelena.gov>

Public comment 12.1 utility conflict, April 7, special city council.

Michelle Liu Covell – resident, not in any other role.

I summarize my comments in bullet points below.

- For our town's Main Street, it would be helpful to see a rendering of 24-inch box trees before making this decision.
- I don't know what type of tree is currently proposed, but from personal experience, 24-inch box trees are quite small, even at a residential scale. Because of that, it's difficult to picture how Main Street would look with trees of that size.
- Perhaps we consider keeping the 48-inch box trees along the Post Office (west side) and hold off on planting along the east side for now.
- A rendering, or even a simple comparison image of 48-inch versus 24-inch box trees with a scale figure, would greatly help inform this decision. "Unbalanced" is not the only concern. There is also a risk that using residential-scale trees could feel out of place—and potentially embarrassing—for a main street corridor.
- Even a basic visual comparison—such as a quick search of 24-inch versus 48-inch box trees—would be useful. It would also help to know the specific tree species so the comparison is accurate.
- Additionally, please consider the implications of planting trees over existing gas lines. If PG&E needs to relocate those lines into the street in the future, would the town risk having to remove the trees?
- Has a landscape architect been consulted? Professional input could help ensure the selected trees are appropriate for the street—both in scale and in terms of sidewalk compatibility.



Proposed Solution Disadvantages

- Reduces the number of new street trees by three (3)
- Surveyor will have to re-stake the tree well locations and add the planters (additional cost)
- Ped Path of Travel is reduced to about 5'-0" wide
- The box size of the new trees must be reduced to 24-inches on the east side of the street (deduct in cost)
- The street trees on the west side will still have a box size of 48-inches and look "unbalanced"
 - OR Consider reducing tree size on both sides of street to 24" box for symmetry.

My apologies for the late letter. I am getting use to the new portal.

Sincerely
MLC, Architect

Michelle Liu Covell

Architect, Partner, Director of Operations, LEED AP
707.968.9280

COVELL ARCHITECTS

1407 Main St. Suite 102 Saint Helena, CA 94574
www.covellarchitects.com

Main Street Project Public Comment

From Claudia Schmidt <claudia@claudiaschmidtlandscapedesign.com>

Date Tue 4/7/2026 12:16 PM

To Public Comment <publiccomment@cityofsthelena.gov>

Dear Mayor and City Council Members,
Thank you for your service to this special city. I appreciate you.

I'm a longtime resident and have worked for almost 30 years here as a landscape designer. I reviewed the slide presentation and understand the conflict with the gas lines. I'd like to express my concerns regarding the replant of street trees.

Having trees lining Main Street is important. I would take the time, extra cost and unfortunately a disturbance, in order to make conditions for the new trees and locations ideal. I'd move the gas line and remove the stumps. This delay would be worth it in the long term instead of a solution that accommodates in the short term.

Tree choice: I highly recommend *Pistacia chinensis* – straight/common one and not 'Keith Davy' variety. The Chinese Pistache is what was planted on the north end, it's the cleanest tree I know and has great seasonal interest. A naturally beautiful formed tree. I'd plant *Pistacia* trees where their canopy will fit i.e. the north end and in the narrow sections of Main St. another deciduous tree, possibly Crape Myrtle 'Tuscarora' standard form. The post office has two Crape Myrtles in front of their building flanking the entry door, has a rich coral/deep pink color in the summer and has fall foliage. In the planting pits next to the sidewalk and street, I'd plant the *Pistacia*, a wonderful tree, beautiful presence.

Tree Size: 48" box would be a good size to plant if conditions allow. If the above improvements are not possible, 24" Box trees will work fine. I would not be concerned with symmetry i.e. plant 48" or 36" box or 24" box wherever possible, they will all even out over a short amount of time. Buying quality plant material makes a difference too.

If moving the gas line and stumps is not possible, I'd relocate the tree wells but is not ideal.

I would not convert old tree wells into curbside planters with low growing plants. People would step into the plantings constantly as they come and go from their vehicles, would look unkempt, dogs would use as a poop/pee station, etc.

Making the tree planting a priority for Main Street is the way to go.

Sincerely,
Claudia Schmidt

Public comment - Utility conflict

From Charles Covell <chuck@covellarchitects.com>

Date Tue 4/7/2026 1:35 PM

To Public Comment <publiccomment@cityofsthelena.gov>

Dear Mr Mayor and City Council;

Has PG&E been contacted by staff about the lead time to move the line?

Ideally it seems the project would proceed as planned with gas line to be moved under the sidewalk as soon as possible - (placed by PGE subcontractors); the trees would be planted only once the new line can go 'live' and the old one abandoned so the stumps can be removed and the new trees installed correctly.

Please take the time and spend the money to do this project right. I agree with the public comment from Ms. Schmidt, an eminent landscape designer giving you free advice.

Main Street is the face of our town. It is not the place for compromise.

Thank you for your service,

Charles Covell

Principal

707.968.9280

COVELL ARCHITECTS

1407 Main St. Suite 102 Saint Helena, CA 94574

www.covellarchitects.com

CC Meeting Public comment 9.1

From Kelly Wheaton <a4est42@gmail.com>

Date Tue 4/7/2026 2:03 PM

To Public Comment <publiccomment@cityofsthelena.gov>

Dear Mayor Dohring and Councilmembers,

I feel a bit like Bill Murray in Ground Hog Day. Cost over runs, deadlines that lead to bad decision making. Always the same poor forced decision making that will be a short term less (or sometimes more) expensive fix to get this one off your plate and on to the next one.

Planting trees AGAIN over a shallowly buried pipeline is the definition of insanity. Either move the trees on to Lyman Park or in other locations put trees os small stature or in containers---but do not put trees over a gas line. Do what you can for now. Go through the process to get PGE to move the lines--no matter how ling it takes and do this properly.

For the record when pavers were put in 30 or so years ago it was so they could be reconfigured when roots became problematic.

This is not rocket science. Common sense seems to be absent from these deliberations. Please make a liar out of me.

Thank you.

Kelly Wheaton
Inglewood Ave.

Kelly Wheaton
a4est42@gmail.com
[Beginners Guide to Genetic Genealogy.](#)
WheatonWood.com

Fwd: TREES: Zelkova

From Kelly Wheaton <a4est42@gmail.com>

Date Tue 4/7/2026 5:09 PM

To Andrew Bradley <abradley@cityofsthelena.gov>

 1 attachment (4 MB)

20241111_151058.jpg;

Kelly Wheaton

a4est42@gmail.com

[Beginners Guide to Genetic Genealogy.](#)

WheatonWood.com

Photo atrached

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Kelly Wheaton** <a4est42@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, Aug 15, 2025, 1:28 PM

Subject: TREES: Zelkova

To: Aaron barak <abarak@msn.com>

First this is the Zelkova. This tree is about 40 years old. There are roots visible on the surface and you can see it would not fit on Main Street without constant pruning and butchering

Kelly Wheaton

a4est42@gmail.com

[Beginners Guide to Genetic Genealogy.](#)

WheatonWood.com



Comment on outcome of 4/7th special council meeting regarding street tree project.

From Claudia Schmidt <claudia@claudiaschmidtlandscapedesign.com>

Date Wed 4/8/2026 7:56 PM

To Public Comment <publiccomment@cityofsthelena.gov>

Dear Mayor & City Council,

I just finished watching last night's special council meeting regarding the utility conflict with the planned street tree project and have a couple comments:

- If this project has been in the works for a decade, why didn't someone thoughtfully and expertly verify the gas line location and depth earlier in the process?
- RE: ABOVE GROUND PLANTERS: The trees will not thrive in the above ground planters and will outgrow the planters very quickly. The canopies will not expand very much in width, definitely will not provide shade. They'll look like lollipops, an ornamental shape rather than natural looking. It will also be a visual eyesore as they decline. The summer extreme temps from the hardscape especially on the Lyman Park side will affect the trees and their rootzones. The trees will become wilted and stressed and need constant reviving through extra irrigation. The trees need to be in the ground where they can tap into the native soil. Also if you start with a 48" box size, the container will need to be larger than 4' x 4' to allow for the roots to grow into new soil. I think the overall look will be strange and amateur.
- I'm disappointed that after a decade we are pushed into a corner and making poor decisions that will erode our city's visual character.

Sincerely,

Claudia Schmidt

Re Claudia's follow up email re: planters

From Michelle Covell <michelle@covellarchitects.com>

Date Thu 4/9/2026 5:32 AM

To Public Comment <publiccomment@cityofsthelena.gov>; Paul Dohring <pdohring@cityofsthelena.gov>; Michelle Deasy <mdeasy@cityofsthelena.gov>; Billy Summers <BSummers@cityofsthelena.gov>; Kate Spadarotto <kspadarotto@cityofsthelena.gov>; Aaron Barak <abarak@cityofsthelena.gov>

I defer to Claudia's professional opinion on the planters.

The only reason I mentioned it in my public comment is because it sounded like from the staff presentations we weren't able to not have trees on that side without "jeopardizing" the OBAG funding.

To be clearer, staff mentioned it might take a couple or months to get PGE to put in a different gas line, a bypass. And that we had until Sept to finish this project, about 5 months away. It's possible. Perhaps.

I don't want trees to die in a box. And I don't want to lose funding. It seems like we don't have clear answers to make the decision. Perhaps we should wait until all of the answers are provided clearly and all meaningful options are on the table.

I don't see how PGE would want us to plant over the gas line. And I hope OBAG would understand that and allow us to change this plan due to an unfortunate and unforeseen location of a gas main.

I agree about feeling cornered to make a decision. I feel like during the questions and dialog of the agenda item more information came to light. And I feel there is more investigation of options that could happen.

Was there a reason this meeting was special and held at 430pm? It seemed rushed and not all of the info was gathered yet to give options based on facts.

And that's why it feels cornered. Jeopardize. No clear answers to the questions.

I'm sadden a decade long project encounters a hiccup as critical as this and the effort to mitigate appears as shallow as the gas line.

Respectfully ask you to ask staff to do the due diligence.

Give this more time to see if the project can be completed gracefully.

Perhaps pge would be excited to relocate the gas line deeper knowing that this current gas line is so shallow. Perhaps their current code is deeper.

It would be good to know the details of the call with pge.

Resident,
MLC

Sent from phone
Excuse typos