



**City of St. Helena
Parks & Recreation Commission Special Meeting
Monday, July 27, 2026 @ 5:30 PM
Carnegie Building
1360 Oak Avenue, St. Helena CA**

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

Members of the public and other parties are welcome to email their comments to the Staff Liaison Ashley Sylvester at asylvester@cityofstheleena.gov. All public comments must be received three hours prior to the meeting. 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 agenda.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

Commission Chair: Vacant

Vice Chair: John Thompson

Members: Julie Jenanyan, Denise Nelson, Elaine de Man

Staff Liaison: Ashley Sylvester, Director of Community Services

3. PUBLIC FORUM

4. REPORTS BY STAFF/COMMITTEE

Reports by staff and/or committee on items of general interest. Brief questions for clarification may be posed and answered, and Committee 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 Parks & Recreation Commission.

4.1. Park Maintenance Update

4.2. Community Services Update

4.3. GrapeVine Monthly Report

5. CONSENT ITEMS

5.1. Parks and Recreation Meeting Minutes of June 15, 2026

6. SCHEDULED ITEMS

6.1. Parks and Recreation Chair and Vice Chair Selection

6.2. Elm Tree Tunnel

6.3. Parks and Recreation Department and Commission Goals for 2026-2027 Terms

7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

8. ADJOURNMENT

The next Regular Parks and Recreation Commission meeting is scheduled for August 17, 2026.

This agenda was posted at City Hall, 1088 College Avenue, St. Helena and at Carnegie Building, 1360 Oak Avenue, St. Helena on July 24, 2026.

Ashley Sylvester, Director of Community Services

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.

Community Services Update

- Summer Recreation Program
- Introduction of Recreation Coordinator
- Special Event Calendar
- Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan
- Youth Commissioner

City of St. Helena
Parks & Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, June 15,2026 @ 5:30pm
Carnegie Building-Second Floor
1360 Oak Avenue

Present: Chair Doug Boesch, Vice Chair John Thompson, Commissioner Julie Jenayan,
Commissioner Stephanie Smithers, Commissioner Denise Nelson

Absent: None

1. CALL TO ORDER: 5:31pm

2. ROLL CALL

Chair: Doug Boesch

Vice Chair: John Thompson

Members: Stephanie Smithers, Julie Jenayan, Denise Nelson

Staff Liaison: Mara Strickler, Deputy Director of Community Services - Library

3. PUBLIC FORUM

- Public Comment from Elaine de Man
- Public Comment from Jeff Farmer

4. REPORTS BY STAFF AND COMMISSION

4.1 Park Maintenance Update

- Operations Manager Carlos Uribe gave update on park maintenance and clean up underway in St. Helena Parks:
- Parks crews have been assisting Streets crews raising the tree canopy to address sign clearance and increase visibility; Commissioner Smithers inquired regarding Parks staff being assigned duties not related to parks
- Maintenance at Lyman Park including in advance of summer events
- Repairing irrigation systems, particularly at McCullogh Park
- Staff have completed stump grinding to approximately 15
- Weed abatement is ongoing at all parks and City maintained sites
- Staff will be performing mowing and weed abatement at Crane Park
- The pump and motor of the irrigation well at Meilly Park failed last week Potable water and sprinklers are being used in the interim. Repairs should be completed within two weeks.

4.2 Community Services Update

- The Deputy Director of Community Services gave an update on the following subjects:
- Summer Concert Update
- Master Plan Update
- Staffing Update
- Community Soccer Night
Chair Boeschen encouraged Commissioners to attend this annual program that brings diverse members of the community together
- Community Services Award
- Youth Commissioner

4.3 Ad-Hoc Subcommittee Updates

- None

5. CONSENT ITEMS

5.1 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes of May 18, 2026

- Motion: Commissioner Jenanyan; Second: Commissioner Nelson
 - Unanimously Approved

6. SCHEDULED MATTERS:

6.1 Lewis Station Park

- Local resident Tracy McBride gave a presentation on behalf of ad-hoc committee of community members and staff who have been working on plans for a restoration of Lewis Station Park
- Commissioners asked clarifying questions regarding the presentation
- Operations Manager Carlos Uribe expressed appreciation for the work of the ad-hoc committee
- Commissioners expressed support for moving forward with the project, while encouraging patience with the governance processes, securing funding, and implementation of plans, and ongoing maintenance

6.2 Public Art Discussion

- Commissioners Nelson and Smithers shared a draft Call for Art document.
- The Commissioners expressed appreciation for their work and support to bring the revised document to the Commission for review
- It was suggested that a special meeting may be necessary in order to have sufficient time to evaluate the subject

6.3 Parks and Recreation Commission Priorities

- Postponed until July meeting

7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Parks and Recreation Commission Priorities
- Grapevine Ticket Report
- Valley Oak Seedlings at Pope Street and Chiles Avenue (Submitted by community members, supported by Commissioners)
- Valley View Street Multi-Purpose Path (Submitted by community members, supported by Commissioners)

8. ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting adjourned at 7:33pm

Dist	COUNTY	ROUTE	POST MILES TOTAL PROJECT	SHEET No.	TOTAL SHEETS
04	Nap	29	29.3/29.6	1	2

INDEX OF PLANS

SHEET No.	DESCRIPTION
1	TITLE SHEET AND LOCATION MAP
2	LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE PLAN

LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT
IN NAPA COUNTY
IN ST. HELENA
AT THE TUNNEL OF ELMS

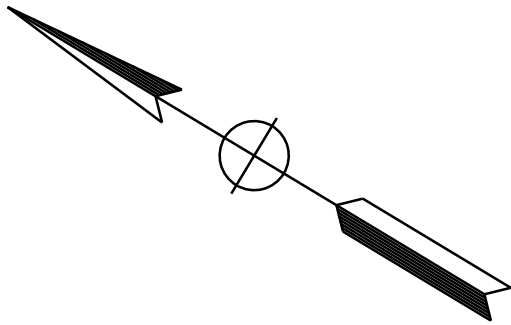
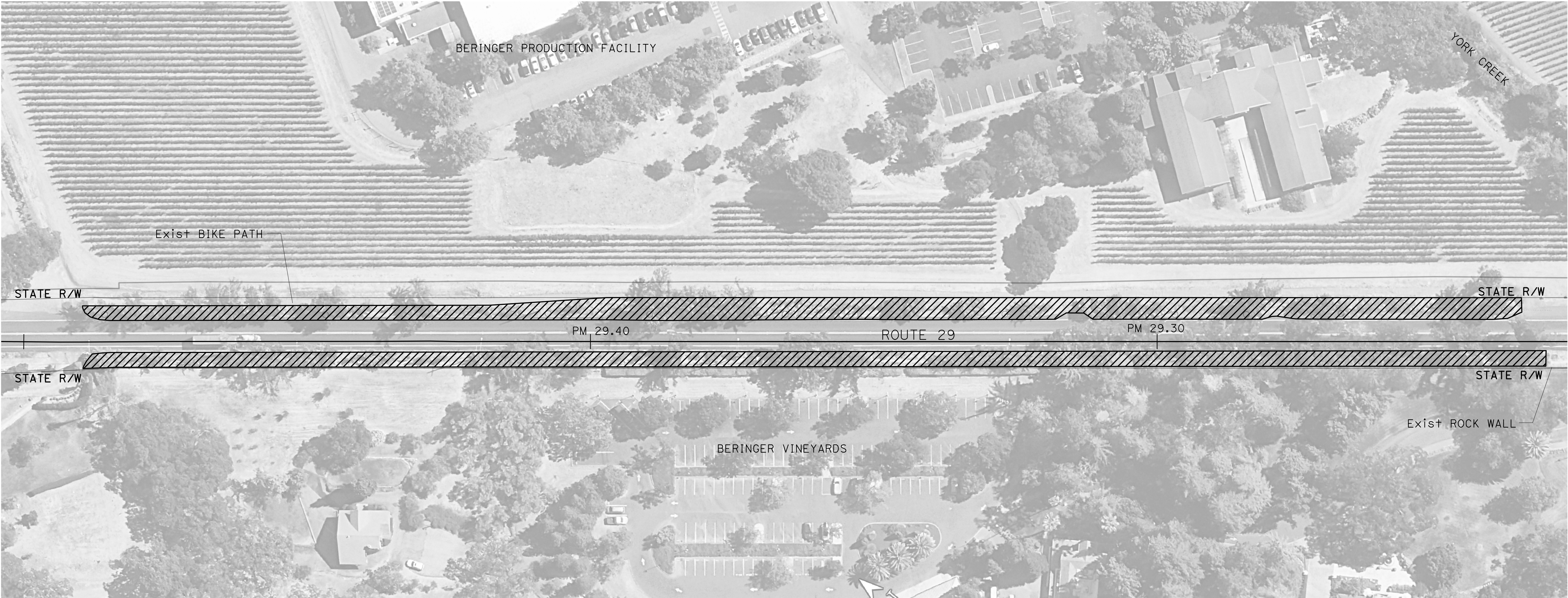
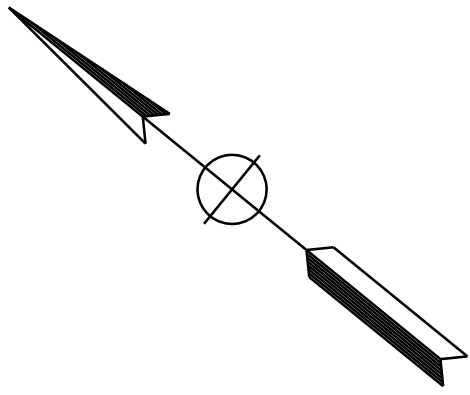


EXHIBIT A

LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF ST. HELENA

Dist	COUNTY	ROUTE	POST MILES TOTAL PROJECT	SHEET No.	TOTAL SHEETS
04	Nap	29	29.3/29.6	2	2



LEGEND:

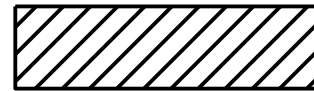
 LANDSCAPING WITHIN STATE R/W
MAINTAINED BY THE CITY OF ST. HELENA

EXHIBIT A

LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF ST. HELENA

SCALE: 1" = 50'

EXHIBIT B – LETTER OF CERTIFICATE OF CITY OF ST. HELENA_STATEMENT OF SELF INSURANCE

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT 4
111 GRAND AVENUE
OAKLAND, CA 94623
MS-4A
ATTN: Leah Budu, Deputy District Director Maintenance

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CITY OF ST. HELENA
Department of Finance

RE: Statement of Self Insurance for City of St. Helena Related to Landscape Maintenance Agreement with State of California Department of Transportation ("STATE") for the St. Helena Elm Tree Tunnel along Highway 29 in Napa County.

Dear Mrs. Budu

The purpose of this letter is to certify that the CITY is self-insured and self-funded covering third-party claims arising out of its general operations (for example, commercial general liability and automobile liability insurance). Further the CITY is self-insured covering workers' compensation claims and has received the consent of the State Department of Industrial Relations to do so.

Each fiscal year, as a part of its budgetary process, the CITY appropriates funds specifically to satisfy valid third-party claims and workers' compensation claims, which may be brought against the CITY.

The CITY certifies its self-insured, general liability coverage for bodily injury liability and property damage liability, meets the required coverage amounts in section 10.1 (INSURANCE) of the Maintenance Agreement, specifically general liability insurance, coverage of bodily injury liability and property damage liability in an amount of \$1 million per occurrence and \$2 million in aggregate and \$5 million in excess. The CITY further represents that regarding any claims made in connection with the Maintenance Agreement by the STATE, the STATE will be first-in-line regarding the reserved, self-insured amounts.

If you need any additional information regarding this letter, please direct those inquiries through my office.

Sincerely,

FINANCE MANAGER

EXHIBIT B – LETTER OF CERTIFICATE OF CITY OF ST. HELENA_ STATEMENT OF SELF
INSURANCE

July 22, 2026 – Norm Manzer’s request for action to improve the attempt to replace St Helena’s treasured Elm Tree Tunnel.

June 29, 2026 – Noted Napa County Arborist, Bill Pramuk’s pro-bono visit with Norm Manzer at the north end of the former Elm Tree Tunnel, spending 30 minutes walking the Vine Trail and examining adjacent replacement Elm trees.

Background comment: Over the years as tree after tree has died of Dutch Elm disease, well-intended efforts have been made to recreate the tree tunnel with Elms. The City of St Helena Public Works crew has basically been responsible for planting the first replacement trees. Pramuk stated that the Elm variety Frontier is predominant for the new plantings, and this cultivar is resistant. Pramuk stated that the planting is coming along well, it just needs a few changes in management.

Manzer commented that while the city has had an “arborist” label for employees, the results do not reflect the care and direction of someone bearing that title – in the Tree Tunnel as well as other city properties.

Pramuk’s first inspection noticed perforations in the leaves by Elm Leaf Beetles. Bill’s advice, “It is not serious and can be ignored for now.” As he examined about 8 – 10 of the trees planted along the Vine Trail, his first comment was that the **bamboo stakes taped to the trees as saplings from the nursery must be removed immediately, and the green tape as well. Tape removal is long overdue since it is starting to girdle these trees.** The larger dual stakes set to each side of the saplings when they were planted also need attention; some are broken off, and others leaning improperly.

Lower branches appear to be in need of pruning, but Pramuk says they need to remain for now in order to provide shade to the bark of the young tree and provide caliber. They can be shortened to 18”, but not removed. These “temporary” lower branches can be removed when their thickness approaches about 50% of the trunk at their juncture.

SELECTING PERMANENT BRANCHES – The First Permanent future branch should be about 6ft above ground and NOT facing the highway, with lower branches trimmed back to about 18”.

The Second Permanent future branch should be about 2ft above the First Permanent. Smaller branches between the First and Second Permanent branches need to be removed as they become larger – but they are needed now to provide shade to the tree trunk. **The ISA (International Society of Arboriculture) has a video of care pruning.**

WEED CONTROL – City crews occasionally appear and try to knock down the plethora of weeds. It appears that the use of an herbicide is not protocol for this weed removal. The use of Weed Eaters has been observed, but they should NOT be used within two feet of the young trees. The plastic whip of the Weed Eater snags the bark of the trees and damages them. This is avoidable, and it should be stopped. A two-foot bowl around each tree should be weeded by hand. Pramuk’s recommendation is to place a paper or cardboard layer on the ground, with a thick layer (4 inches?) of mulch (wood chips) over the entire area between the Vine Trail and Hwy 29, and the Beringer stone wall and Hwy 29 on the opposite side. This mulch should remain two feet away from the trunk of each tree. An alternative would be to use an herbicide and then apply the mulch. ***** A safety issue is that when the Weed Eater and other mechanical methods of weed removal are used, rocks and debris are kicked up into passing vehicles as well as users of the Vine Trail, creating potential property damage and injury resulting in claims for damages from the public. The mulch will virtually eliminate this issue.**

IRRIGATION—On the Vine Trail side of the road is a black drip line with emitters, supposedly to each tree. **How are these drip lines being used?** Just last week a truck pulling a water wagon was on the Vine Trail and appeared to be watering trees. **What is the order-of-the-day for irrigating both sides of Hwy 29.**

DOMINANT TERMINAL-- Elms are highly problematic as they can develop two or more main stems or “trunks” that compete for dominance. This leads to weak branch unions, severe “included bark” (bark trapped between the stems), and a high risk of the tree splitting in half. This is not at all favorable for trees alongside a highway. Example: the fourth tree south of the Krug end of the tunnel has lost its Dominant Leader and now has Co-dominant leaders (plural). **The smaller ones should be cut off and the largest leader trained as dominant.** Many of the new trees have this same problem.

“BUSHES” OF NEW SHOOTS FROM REMOVED ELM TREES—When the diseased Elm trees were removed by Cal Trans, an effort was also made to grind the stumps and major roots. At present there are a large number of new Elm sprouts growing profusely from the remaining diseased roots. Pramuk commented that this can perpetuate the existence of the Dutch Elm disease, and they need to be pruned back. Manzer suggested that the stump grinder reappear in order to reduce this rapid growth of diseased sprouts. Pramuk agrees and commented that these trees require on-going maintenance for at least 10 years.

ST HELENA CITY COUNCIL APPROVES A 3-YEAR TREE MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT OF \$255,000 ON FEBRUARY 27, 2024 WITH THREE TREE MAINTENANCE SERVICES

On February 27, 2024 the St Helena City Council passed a Resolution for an agreement with maximum expenditures for: West Coast Arborist \$127,500; Mountain F. Enterprises \$56,250, and Skyview Tree Experts \$56,250, providing on-call tree maintenance services for performing safety and grid pruning, removal and planting of trees, inventory system management, watering and other arboriculture related services.

Thanks to Erika Opp’s research, payments to all three contractors to date are: West Coast - \$43,226.10 (this includes work on the Elm tunnel); Mountain F. \$28,500; and Skyview - \$53,255. None of this reflects removal of the diseased Elms. This was done by Cal Trans.

Norm's Closing Comment: In spite of engaging a professional to supposedly manage the tree tunnel rebirth, it is obvious that better direction and supervision is necessary in order to ensure the success of this expensive effort to restore the ancient beauty of St Helena's famous Elm Tree Tunnel. Immediate work is needed, and an accountability for the future management is required by the City of St Helena. "It isn't just the money. It is proper management."

Sincerely, Norm Manzer

Citizen of our beautiful St Helena

P.S. I would appreciate a reply as to what action will be taken to ensure success for our Elm Tree Tunnel. Thank you.

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https://napavalleyregister.com/star/news/local/high-tree-mortality-at-st-helena-s-elm-tunnel/article_d1722cd0-cb79-11e1-878f-001a4bcf887a.html

High tree mortality at St. Helena's elm tunnel

JESSE DUARTE

Jul 11, 2012

Almost half of the 44 new trees the city planted in the Highway 29 elm tunnel in March look like they're in serious trouble, and might have to be replaced in November.

With much fanfare, the city planted the trees in March. At first, city officials attributed the trees' unhealthy pallor to the fact that the two elm species that were planted are known to leaf at different times.

But now City Arborist Jim Haller is closely monitoring 20 of the new elms that might be dead or dying, Public Works Director John Ferons told the City Council on Tuesday.



Ferons said Haller has been giving each tree more than 20 gallons of water per week. Haller's also been checking the moisture of the soil in between waterings to make sure the trees are getting enough, Ferons said.

The problem lies in the season when the trees were planted, Ferons said. Bare root trees are typically planted in the winter months, and the city had hoped to plant the elms in November or December.

But Caltrans didn't allow the city to plant them until March, and even then repeatedly stopped the work over permitting issues, Ferons said.

"It was a struggle," he said. "Caltrans did not want us to plant all those trees at once. We fought hard, and we planted all 44 spaces."

"The late planting, combined with an early heat wave, stressed the trees," Ferons wrote in a staff report. "The trees began to put out leaf long before they had established a root system that could support it.

"[Haller] was expecting a high mortality rate due to the late planting," Ferons added.

Given the bad timing, City Councilmember Sharon Crull asked why the city didn't postpone the planting until this November.

Ferons responded, "We had serious concerns that we would lose the right to plant them by November, because of the problems we were encountering with our friends at the state."

Any elms that have died will be replaced this November, Ferons said.

There are still five elms at the wastewater treatment plant left over from this year's delivery. Caltrans owes the city another 10 trees related to the Highway 29 channelization project.

If more trees are needed, the city can draw on a list of mitigation trees that project applicants have pledged to provide to compensate for the removal of other trees around town.

The elm tunnel is one of St. Helena's most iconic features, and citizens have repeatedly rallied to preserve it — even as Dutch elm disease kills off the oldest trees, which the Beringer brothers planted in the 1880s.

The city and Caltrans have continually been at loggerheads over the tunnel. Caltrans has a rigid permitting system that generally frowns upon planting trees close to roads.

The high tree-mortality rate is unacceptable, St. Helena resident Bob Steinhauer told the council.

“If I planted a vineyard and 50 percent of the vines died, that wouldn't be acceptable,” Steinhauer said. “I'd hate to see the tunnel come to an end because we didn't do the right thing.”

City Councilmember Ann Nevero said, “I think the city as a whole really, really doesn't want to lose that tunnel.”

Timeline of elm planting

November/December is considered the optimal planting time.

- Feb. 24: Caltrans delivers elms
- March 16: City starts planting

- March 16: Caltrans halts planting
- March 21: Caltrans issues permit to allow planting
- March 21: City resumes planting
- March 21: Caltrans halts planting due to encroachment permit issues
- March 23: Caltrans allows city to plant 30 of 44 trees
- March 26: City resumes planting
- March 28: Caltrans halts planting
- April 9: City resumes planting without Caltrans permit
- May 5: City plants final tree
- June 26: Caltrans issues permit for city to plant final tree

Source: Public Works Director John Ferons