

# Sweet Gum Tree

Presented by: Andrew Dirks- Public Works Director

Location: 218 E Jewett Blvd

Description: “The tree is a mature 25” DBH *Liquidambar styraciflua* that is 64’ tall and approximately 35’ wide with minor crown asymmetry.”  
(Treecology)



# Background and Context

- This tree has been heaving the sidewalk and asphalt, dropping limbs on adjacent property owners and encroaching upon infrastructure (water and sewer) on E Jewett Blvd in WSDOT Right-of-way for many years.
- As of late, there have been observations and statements from the public regarding the lack of a sidewalk, for example a citizen required assistance from the Bingen-White Salmon Police Department because his wheelchair was stuck in the gravel where the sidewalk used to be.
- Pedestrians are walking out into Jewett Blvd to avoid the gravel, placing themselves in the roadway.

## Gray and Osborne Report – Sweet Gum Tree Options

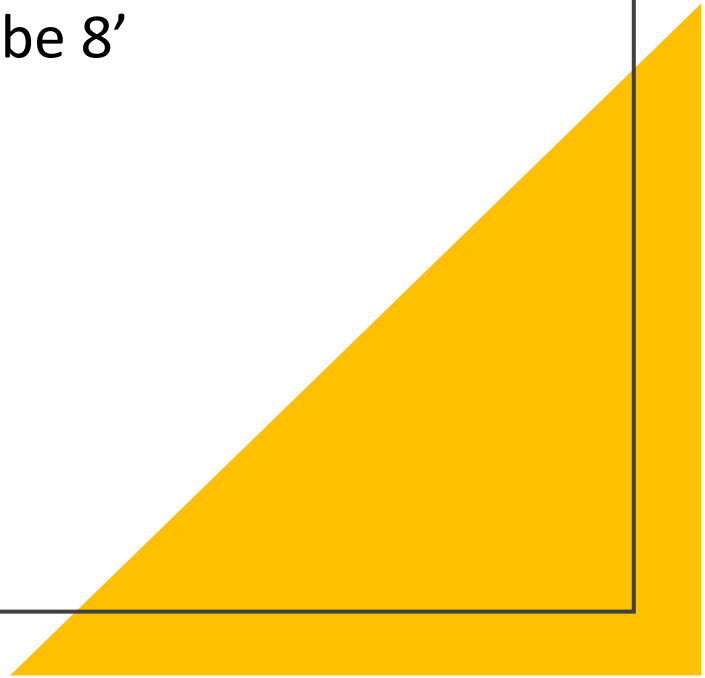
*Prices based of 2022 figures*

City Council approved two separate line items in the 2023 budget to address the Sweet Gum Tree: \$5,000 for general street tree maintenance and \$19,000 for the Sweet Gum Tree Improvements.

Option Name	Construction Cost	Total Project Cost	Comments
<b>Option 1-</b> Do Nothing	\$0	\$0	Creates liability concerns for the City
<b>Option 2-</b> Build a new elevated sidewalk	\$95,000	\$123,500	
<b>Option 3-</b> Build a sidewalk using a segmented surface (pavers) or hinge joints	\$66,000	\$86,000	
<b>Option 4-</b> Build a sidewalk bulb-out	\$57,600	\$75,000	
<b>Option 5-</b> Reroute sidewalk traffic to use the business sidewalk	\$75,700	\$128,000	Requires a right-of-way acquisition
<b>Option 6-</b> Remove the tree, rebuild and existing sidewalk	\$56,000	\$73,000	

# Treecology Tree Assessment Comment

“The site is not ideal for this large-stature-at-maturity tree with an aggressive root system. The ideal planter width should be 8’ wide.”



# Final Thoughts



WSDOT has pushed out Jewett Blvd paving and installation of the bulb-outs until an estimated 2026. Staff requests for City Council to choose an appropriate street tree to remedy the issues related to public safety, liability risk and further damage to infrastructure.



WSDOT has confirmed their approval for the City to choose an appropriately sized, native species tree to replace the Sweet Gum Tree. The removal of the Sweet Gum Tree will not affect WSDOT funding for the bulb out during the Jewett Repaving.



**Recommended Motion:** Council authorize staff to remove the Sweet Gum tree and work with the Tree Board to bring forward a recommendation for an appropriate tree to be planted at the site once the planned bulb-out sidewalk improvement is in place.