



City of Santa Barbara
Parks and Recreation Department

Memorandum

DATE: June, 27 2007

TO: Park and Recreation Commission

FROM: Randy Fritz, Street Tree Supervisor

SUBJECT: Denial removal request at 519 San Onofre Rd.

At the May 27th, 2007 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting, the Street Tree Committee recommended that the Commission deny the request for the removal of one *Quercus virginiana* at 519 San Onofre Rd. The Committee and Staff determined that the tree was healthy and had a beautiful canopy and that it represented a significant benefit element as part of the continuous planting of Oaks in an alley on San Onofre.

During this meeting, the applicant, Mr. Morse, presented photos to the Commission showing cracks in his garage floor that in his opinion were being caused by roots from this tree. The Committee and Staff evaluated the tree based on the information and rationale that the applicant supplied in their initial removal application. Because this was new information, submitted during the May 23rd meeting and not evaluated by the STAC, the Commission requested that Staff arrange to meet with the applicant to determine if the tree had a role in cracking the garage floor at this address.

Staff met with Mr. Morse on Tuesday May 31st at his home. I found that his garage is located 60 feet away from the tree and more than 45 feet outside of the canopy of the tree. As tree roots move further away from the base of the tree the diameter of these roots decrease. At a distance of 60 feet, surface roots would tend to be less than a ¼ inch in diameter. Roots of this size would not have the mechanical ability to lift or displace the concrete slab in the garage. While there is a possibility that there is a root mat that has grown due to the excess moisture formed at the soil/concrete interface, it is highly unlikely that these roots could have caused the cracks in the garage floor.

There is a concrete wall located in the Front Yard Setback and approximately 8 feet from the tree that shows no signs of displacement or cracking from roots. If the tree had roots that were of a diameter capable of moving the concrete slab more than 60 feet away, it would be expected that this wall, at eight feet, would have been displaced as well.

Staff recommends: **The application for removal be denied. The tree should be pruned along with the other Oak trees on this block. After this canopy pruning, the City will return in the fall to perform some root pruning along the driveway apron to reduce the likelihood of further damage occurring to the driveway and curb and gutter.**