



## CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

### PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** May 13, 2020

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission

**FROM:** Parks Division, Parks and Recreation Department

**SUBJECT:** Street Tree Advisory Committee Recommendations

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Commission:

A. Conditionally approve the following street tree removal requests:

1. 200 Block of State St. – (3) *Jacaranda mimosifolia*, Jacaranda, and (3) *Washingtonia robusta*, Mexican Fan Palm – Eric Goodall, City of Santa Barbara PW Engineering (May 7, 2020)

The Committee recommends (4/0/1-Cunningham) that the Commission approve removal of the six trees on the condition the applicant plant six replacement trees in accordance with the approved landscape plan for the 200 block of State Street.

The Committee noted the existing trees are in good health, but acknowledged that the proposed public improvements would have a positive impact on the safety and usability of the State Street Undercrossing. Given the gained public benefit of the project, the Committee determined that pro-active removal and replacement of the identified trees made sense. The Committee additionally commented that if the large Mexican fan palms could be transplanted, they would be supportive of this approach. Forestry staff will work in conjunction with Public Works staff to see if transplanting the existing palms is feasible.

2. 1020 Chapala St. – *Platanus x hispanica*, London Plane Tree – LMA Architects on behalf of Gowdy Mission (May 7, 2020)

The Committee recommends (4/0/1-Cunningham) that the Commission approve the removal of the tree on the condition the applicant work with the City Arborist to find a location for a replacement street tree within the vicinity of the project.

The Committee noted the existing tree is in good health, but recognized the challenges it poses for people entering and exiting Metropolitan Transit District buses in this area. Due to the continual presence of buses along this section of the 1000 block of Chapala Street, the Committee determined that finding a suitable location for a new street tree within the vicinity of the proposed removal was adequate mitigation for the removal.

3. 301 Mohawk Road – *Metrosideros excelsa*, New Zealand Christmas Tree – Jacob Niksto, Becker Henson Niksto Architects (May 7, 2020)

The Committee recommends (5/0) that the Commission approve the removal of the tree on the condition the applicant reduce the number of proposed *Acacia* trees and make room in the planting plan for a New Zealand Christmas Tree street tree to be planted in the parkway along Mohawk Road.

The Committee noted the existing tree is in good health, but does prevent a reasonable and practical development of the property. While not proposed on the initial application, the applicant is receptive to the planting of a new street tree to offset the loss of the existing New Zealand Christmas Tree. The Committee discussed potential competition with the proposed planting of private trees and a new street tree. During this discussion the applicant agreed that a reduction in the proposed planting of private trees would allow for a new street tree to offset the loss of the existing tree, while allowing for proper long term development of the new street tree.

B. Deny the following street tree removal requests:

1. 1721 Gillespie St. – *Brachychiton discolor*, Queensland Lacebark – Cameron Clark (May 7, 2020)

The Committee recommends (5/0) that the Commission deny the removal.

The Committee noted that the existing tree is in good health, but did acknowledge that the existing sidewalk is disrupted. During discussion, the Committee recognized the challenges that the existing street tree can cause, but also referenced that there currently exists a large population of this species of tree along Gillespie Street. The Committee determined an argument of similar issues with other trees of this species on the street could be made, and if removal of the proposed tree is approved, it would set a precedent for additional removals on Gillespie Street. The Committee determined that while the species can be challenging, the tree has significant merit, the issues could be managed, and the tree did not warrant removal at this time.

2. 1618 Grand Ave. – (5) *Stenocarpus sinuatus*, Fire Wheel Tree – Brian J. Dempsey (May 7, 2020)

The Committee recommends (4/0/1-DeMola) that the Commission deny the removal.

The Committee noted that Firewheel Trees are slow growing trees and as they mature, a substantial view corridor will remain. The Committee commented that if

street tree removal requests for views are approved, there would be very few street trees. Further, the Committee determined that the existing street tree did not warrant removal pursuant to SBMC 15.20.110.

3. 2526 Oak Crest Dr. – *Eucalyptus polyanthemos*, Silver Dollar Gum – Alicia J. James (May 7, 2020)

The Committee recommends (4/1-Reed) that the Commission deny the removal.

The Committee noted that while the tree is large, it can be pruned, it is one of the few trees on this street, and did not warrant removal pursuant to SBMC 15.20.110. The Committee further requested staff to review re-populating this street with additional street trees, and after they mature, at a future date, the removal of this tree could be revisited.

C. Conditionally approve the following setback tree removal requests:

1. 153 Vista De La Cumbre – *Fraxinus uhdei*, Evergreen Ash – Heidi LeVay (March 5, 2020)

The Committee recommends (3/1) that the Commission approve removal on the condition the applicant plant three 15-gallon trees that can reach a minimum height of 40 feet at maturity.

The applicant, prior to review by the Street Tree Advisory Committee, had partially removed the Evergreen Ash without first obtaining a permit. Staff responded to an inquiry from the public as the removal was underway, and asked the applicant to stop the removal. The applicant was unaware of the regulations for trees within the front setback and complied with the request to stop work. The applicant is now requesting removal of the subject tree.

The Committee noted the Evergreen Ash tree was likely in good health and structurally stable prior to the work performed. After review, the Committee determined that the remaining portion of the tree would be difficult to manage and restoring the canopy of the tree would be challenging to implement.

The Committee determined that pursuant to SBMC 15.24.090 A and C, the Commission could make the findings that principles of good forest management will be best served by the proposed removal, and that the character of the immediate neighborhood with respect to forestation will not be materially affected by the proposed removal.

2. 3445 – 3449 Richland Dr. – (1) *Juniperus chinensis 'Torulosa'*, Hollywood Juniper, and (3) *Juniper sp.*, Juniper sp. – Richard Mason, Kitson Landscape Management (March 5, 2020)

This item was previously reviewed during the February 26, 2019 Commission meeting. During the meeting the applicant requested that they be allowed to mitigate the removal of the trees within the front setback, with new trees in the front setback in lieu of the Street Tree Advisory Committee recommendation to plant two new street trees in the parkway in front of 3445 Richland Drive. The Commission reviewed the information and made a motion to refer the item back to the Street Tree Advisory Committee for further review.

The Committee recommends (3/0) that the Commission approve the removal of all proposed trees, on the condition that a replacement tree that can achieve a minimum height of 25 feet at maturity be planted in the front setback of each of the four units, for a total of four trees.

The Committee noted that the trees were very close to the buildings and foundation, posing continual challenges between the trees and the buildings. The Committee also noted various levels of decline amongst the four trees proposed for removal. While it was unclear if there was actual damage to the foundation, the Committee determined the removal of the four trees made sense in the long term given their location and potential for continued decline.

Additionally, the Committee reviewed the applicant's new proposal for mitigation and felt that planting a new tree in the front setback of each unit at 3445 – 3449 Richland Drive was satisfactory mitigation for the proposed removals.

The Committee determined that pursuant to SBMC 15.24.090 C, the character of the immediate neighborhood with respect to forestation will not be materially affected by the proposed removals.

D. Deny the following setback tree removal requests:

1. 2711 Vernon Rd. – *Sequoia sempervirens*, Coast Redwood – Sylvia Acevedo (March 5, 2020)

The Committee recommends (4/0) that the Commission deny the removal.

The Committee noted that the Coast Redwood is in fair health, but does show subtle signs of stress, likely from the prolonged drought. The Committee also commented that the tree exhibits no reason for concern regarding the overall structural stability of the tree.

The Committee determined that the removal of the tree would be a material loss to the neighborhood and that none of the findings pursuant to SBMC 15.24.090 fit the circumstances of this request.

2. 910 Vincente Way – *Quercus agrifolia*, Coast Live Oak – Mary and Vincent Saubestre (March 5, 2020)

The Committee recommends (4/0) that the Commission deny the removal.

The Committee noted that the Coast Live Oak is in excellent health. The tree is very close to the driveway, but at this time, no hardscape damage is present. The Committee commented that if encountered, management of any disruptions could be performed without causing detrimental damage to the tree. The Committee also commented that the removal of the Coast Live Oak would have little impact on the rodent population present in the neighborhood.

The Committee determined that the removal of the tree would be a material loss to the neighborhood and that none of the findings pursuant to SBMC 15.24.090 fit the circumstances of this request.

E. Approve the following changes to the Master Street Tree Plan:

1. 00 block of Anacapa St. – consider a co-designation – Staff (March 5, 2020)

The request for co-designation on the 00 block of Anacapa Street is to add diversity to the existing designations of Little Gem Magnolia and Saint Mary Magnolia. This review is part of staff's continued efforts towards developing alternative designations to allow for the reduced use of Southern Magnolia, which continues to have problems with Tulip Tree Scale.

The Committee recommends (4/0) that the Commission approve *Lyonothamnus floribundus* subsp. *asplenifolius*, Catalina Ironwood, as an alternate designation for the 00 block of Anacapa St.

2. 800 block of E. Ortega St. – street tree designation – Staff (March 5, 2020)

The request for designation on the 800 block of E. Ortega Street is to develop a designation for the block, which currently does not exist in the Master Street Tree Plan. A development project in the 800 block of E. Ortega Street is proposing new street trees as part of project improvements. Staff wants to develop a designation in advance of the project to make sure any new trees will conform to the Master Street Tree Plan.

The Committee recommends (4/0) that the Commission approve *Quercus suber* Cork Oak, and *Prunus illicifolia* subsp. *Lyonii*, Catalina Cherry, as designations for the 800 block of E. Ortega St.

3. 300 – 600 blocks of Laguna St. – consider a co-designation – STAC (March 5, 2020)

The request for co-designation on the identified blocks of Laguna Street is to add diversity to the existing designation of Carrotwood. The performance of Carrotwood on Laguna has been varied over the years, and the trees have a tendency to generate significant amounts of debris as they mature. At the request of a property owner who intends to propose new street trees as part of a development project, a Street Tree Advisory Committee member requested the review and development of a co-designation for the 300 – 600 blocks of Laguna Street.

The Committee recommends (4/0) that the Commission approve *Firmiana simplex*, Chinese Parasol Tree, as an alternate designation for the 300-600 blocks of Laguna St.

- ATTACHMENTS:**
1. 200 Block of State St.
  2. 1020 Chapala St.
  3. 301 Mohawk Rd.
  4. 1721 Gillespie St.
  5. 1618 Grand Ave.
  6. 2526 Oak Crest Dr.
  7. 153 Vista De La Cumbre
  8. 3445 – 3449 Richland Dr.
  9. 2711 Vernon Rd.
  10. 910 Vicente Way
  11. 00 Block of Anacapa St.
  12. 800 Block of E. Ortega St.
  13. 300 – 600 Blocks of Laguna St.

**PREPARED BY:** Nathan Slack, Urban Forest Superintendent

**APPROVED BY:** Jill E. Zachary, Parks and Recreation Director