



**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA**  
**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT**

**AGENDA DATE:** April 27, 2022  
**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission  
**FROM:** Parks Division, Parks and Recreation Department  
**SUBJECT:** Street Tree Advisory Committee Recommendations

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Commission:

A. Deny the following street tree removal request:

1. 424 N. Milpas St. – *Ficus microcarpa*, Indian Laurel Fig – Tyler Benko

The Committee evaluated the Indian Laurel Fig tree proposed for removal, noting it was in good health and well maintained. They reviewed the reasons listed on the application for removal, which included concerns with damage to the building, surrounding sidewalk area, and the private sewer lateral for the building. The Committee discussed the hardscape damage surrounding the tree, noting that while cracked in several places, the sidewalk was not in need of repair at this time. They commented on the size of the tree and that, while there could exist the possibility of damage to the structure, there was no objective information provided by the applicant to illustrate the damage. As part of the tree removal application, the applicant provided photos showing tree roots pulled from the building's sewer lateral. During review of this information, the Committee reiterated the City's approach towards tree and private sewer lateral conflicts, noting that trees rarely require removal to make the necessary repairs to private sewer laterals. After review, there was consensus amongst the members that more information was needed that spoke to the issues the tree was causing to the building.

The Committee recommends (5/0) that the Commission deny without prejudice to allow the applicant a chance to return in the future with additional information illustrating damage to the structure.

B. Conditionally approve the following setback tree removal request:

1. 1319 E. Cota St. – *Cedrus deodara*, Deodar Cedar – Daniel Zandona

The Committee evaluated the Deodar Cedar proposed for removal, noting the tree was in fair health, but was showing signs of decline. The applicant listed decline in the tree's overall health, limb failure, and root disturbance as a result of driveway

repairs on the adjacent property as reasons to support the tree's removal. During review, the Committee commented that the tree was in a subtle state of decline and there was consensus that no strategies were available that would improve the tree's vigor over time. Additionally, they commented that the tree's removal would be a significant loss in biomass and a replacement tree made practical sense. During review of the site, the Committee noted that there was another smaller and healthier Deodar Cedar in the front yard, and that due to this tree it did not make sense to plant a new tree in their front yard. The Committee focused attention to the empty parkway in front of the home and made the determination that this location was ideal for a new tree.

The Committee recommends (5/0) that the Commission conditionally approve the removal on the condition that the applicant plant one street tree.

The Committee determined that pursuant to SBMC 15.24.090 A, the Commission could make the finding that principles of good forest management will be best served by the proposed removal.

C. Partially approve the following setback tree removal request:

1. 5 Rubio Rd. – (2) *Schinus molle*, Pepper Trees, and (2) *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*, King Palms – Amir Nashat

The Committee reviewed the trees proposed for removal, which included two Pepper Trees and two King Palms. They evaluated the reasons listed for removal, which consisted of a desire to remove the proposed trees as part of landscape improvements, damage to their wall, and concerns with fire susceptibility. The Committee discussed the issues outlined, noting that the small pepper tree growing amongst the wall was in a poor location and continued growth from the tree would cause additional damage. There was general agreement that the other pepper tree and the king palms were in fair health and that there was no finding that would support removal at this time. The Committee did comment that pruning would help to clean up the palms and that some supplemental watering would go a long way towards improving the palm trees' vigor.

The Committee recommends (5/0) that the Commission partially approve removal of the smaller Pepper Tree growing in the wall and deny the larger Pepper Tree in the front yard, as well as both King Palms.

The Committee determined that pursuant to SBMC 15.24.090 A, the Commission could make the finding that principles of good forest management will be best served by the proposed removal.

Additionally, the Committee determined that at this time, no findings pursuant to SBMC 15.24.090 satisfied the request for the remaining three trees.

D. Deny the following setback tree removal request:

1. 3711 Modena Way – *Phoenix canariensis*, Canary Island Date Palm – Lisa Daniel

The Committee reviewed the Canary Island Date Palm proposed for removal, noting the tree was in good health and well maintained. The applicant expressed a desire to remove the palm tree as part of planned landscape improvements and referenced that maintaining the palm is a costly endeavor. The Committee reviewed the reasons listed on the application for removal and commented that some of the plants the applicant expressed an interest in planting could be used in conjunction with the date palm. After review and discussion with the applicant, the Committee remarked that the tree provided significant value to the neighborhood aesthetic and that at this time no finding was identifiable to support the removal of the Canary Island Date Palm.

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

After review, the Committee determined that at this time, no findings pursuant to SBMC 15.24.090 satisfied this request.

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

1. 100-1200 blocks of W. Micheltorena St. – co-designate several species – staff

Currently, the existing street tree designation for the 100-1200 blocks of W. Micheltorena is the *Stenocarpus sinuatus*, or Firewheel Tree. The Firewheel Tree has historically been a successful street tree, but can be difficult to locate and has a narrow upright canopy, which does not maximize shading of the street. As previously discussed with both the Committee and the Commission, increasing diversity of tree species on a street allows for more flexibility in planting and helps to shore up the resiliency of a street tree population. Staff reviewed the existing designation with the Committee and expressed a desire to explore the creation of additional designations that would allow for needed flexibility in not only finding trees to plant, but to create a palate of trees that would allow staff to maximize canopy cover potential and to reduce infrastructure conflicts. Extensive discussion took place during the review of this item over two different meetings. The goal was to identify a medium to large canopy tree which would eventually become the dominant tree species used. There were additional species included in the recommendation that would allow staff to take advantage of smaller planting locations and to utilize where infrastructure conflicts would otherwise prevent the planting of a large tree. After review, the Committee determined that *Quercus agrifolia*, Coast Live Oak, *Tristaniopsis laurina*, Water Gum, *Arbutus* 'Marina', Marina Madrone, *Handroanthus chrysotrichus*, Golden Trumpet Tree, and *Stenocarpus sinuatus*, Firewheel Tree, as the designated species for the 100-1200 blocks of West Micheltorena.

The Committee recommends (5/0) that the Commission approve *Tristanopsis laurina*, Water Gum, *Arbutus 'Marina,'* Marina Madrone, *Stenocarpus sinuatus*, Firewheel Tree, *Handroanthus chrysotrichus*, Golden Trumpet Tree, and *Quercus agrifolia*, Coast Live Oak as designated species for the 100-1200 blocks of W. Micheltorena St.

- ATTACHMENTS:**
1. 424 N. Milpas St.
  2. 1319 E. Cota St.
  3. 1704 La Coronilla Dr.
  4. 5 Rubio Rd.
  5. 100-1200 blocks of W. Micheltorena St.

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

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