



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: August 24, 2022

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. 714 N. Voluntario Street – (2) *Syagrus romanzoffiana*, Queen Palms, and (1) *Washingtonia robusta*, Mexican Fan Palm – Jennifer Buck

The Committee evaluated the two Queen Palm street trees and the Mexican Fan Palm located within the front setback, commenting that the trees were in good health and reasonably maintained. They discussed all three of the palms and their close proximity to the overhead electrical lines that ran along the street. Members stated that it was only a matter of time until all three of the palms would be subjected to heavy pruning due to close proximity to the electrical lines, and that eventually removal of the street trees, and likely the Mexican Fan Palm, would be required. The Committee also evaluated the replacements proposed by the applicant, which included two new street trees and a Tree Aloe for the front setback. There was consensus amongst the members that two new shade trees would provide more environmental benefits than the existing palms. Additional discussion took place regarding the merit behind removing the Mexican Fan Palm. After review, the members determined that the removal constituted principles of good forest management due to the long-term challenges between the palm and the overhead utility lines. They also noted that the addition of the tree aloe would increase diversity of trees for the property and street.

The Committee recommends (4/1) that the Commission approve the removal of (2) *Syagrus romanzoffiana*, Queen Palms, and (1) *Washingtonia robusta*, Mexican Fan Palm, on the condition the applicant plant two new designated street trees and a replacement Tree Aloe within the front setback as proposed.

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

2. 2151 Mission Ridge Road – (1) *Corymbia citriodora*, Lemon-Scented Gum, and (1) *Araucaria columnaris*, Cook Pine – Will Sofrin

The Committee reviewed the Cook Pine and the Lemon-Scented Gum proposed for removal, noting they were both in fair health and reasonably maintained. They reviewed the reasons listed by the applicant for removal, which included a desire to update the landscaping in front of the property. The applicant stated that the property owner wished to utilize new Olive trees to match several existing Olives in the area. Members discussed the potential merits of removing the existing trees and planting new trees as proposed on the application. During review, they commented that there would be a significant increase in biomass and shading with the newly proposed trees in comparison to the existing trees. There was additional discussion about the use of native Coast Live Oak trees in lieu of the Olives, with members remarking that there were also a large number of Coast Live Oaks in the area. During discussion, the applicant expressed a willingness to use both species. After extensive discussion regarding the request, the Committee determined that the planting of five new trees, two of which were large native species, would more than offset a loss in total biomass for the area and result in a net gain of tree canopy and environmental benefits for the community.

The Committee recommends (5/0) that the Commission approve the removal of (1) *Corymbia citriodora*, Lemon-Scented Gum, and (1) *Araucaria columnaris*, Cook Pine, on the condition the applicant plant a minimum of three Olives and two Coast Live Oak trees as proposed by the applicant.

B. Deny the following street tree removal request:

1. 920 Garden Street – (2) *Schinus molle*, Pepper Trees – Mike Lewbel

The Committee reviewed the two Pepper Trees proposed for removal, noting they were both in good health. The applicant listed multiple reasons for removal on the application, including interference with utilities, hardscape damage, and maintenance concerns. The members reviewed each reason listed for removal, noting that there was no evidence that the trees were causing any physical issues that warranted repair at this time. The Committee also commented that it appeared the trees could benefit from some routine pruning, but otherwise, there is no valid criteria for the trees' removal at this time.

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

C. Deny the following setback tree removal requests:

1. 528 W. Figueroa Street – (1) *Persea americana*, Mexican Avocado, (1) *Diospyros kaki*, Japanese Persimmon, and (1) *Prunus armeniaca*, Apricot – Lonnie Roy

The Committee reviewed the three fruit trees proposed for removal in the front setback of the property. The applicant requests removal of the trees as part of comprehensive property developments, expressing concern that the trees required removal due to impacts of onsite construction. The Committee reviewed the request, noting that the trees were all in fair to good health and of high value to the property as fruit trees. They discussed the proposed landscape improvements to the property, which showed two new palm trees in the front setback and a new designated street tree. Members expressed concern there was not enough room to install a new street tree in the parkway due to the existing guywire for the utility pole. Additionally, members commented that the fruit trees provided much more benefit than the proposal to add two new palm trees to the property. After extensive review, the Committee determined that, since only landscape improvements were occurring in the front setback, incorporating the trees into the project was feasible and would add considerable benefit to the project through their retention.

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

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

2. 326 W. Sola Street – *Cupressus sempervirens*, Italian Cypress – Arbor Services, Inc.

The Committee evaluated the Italian Cypress proposed for removal, noting the tree was in good health and reasonably maintained. The applicant expressed a desire to remove the tree in hopes of replacing with two new trees, one on each side of the entrance to the building. Previously, an Italian Cypress matching the existing tree existed on the west side of the entrance to the building. That tree died two years ago. The Committee reviewed the request and noted that at this time no finding would support the removal of the existing Italian Cypress.

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

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

D. Approve the following change to the Street Tree Master Plan:

1. All of Paterna Road – *Syzygium australe*, Brush Cherry species co-designation change – Staff

Staff requests modifying an existing designation for Paterna Road to co-designate Brush Cherry in addition to the existing designation of Engelmann Oak. The request comes as part of a project where staff will facilitate tree replacement in front of a property where three unpermitted street tree removals occurred.

Community expectation is that the trees replaced will be the same as the species removed. In addition to that expectation, there is additional motivation to include Brush Cherry as a co-designation. Of the 35 total street trees planted on Paterna Road, 25 of them are the Brush Cherry. The inclusion of more than one co-designation will also aid staff in providing flexibility when finding trees to plant on this specific street.

The Committee recommends (5/0) that the Commission approve *Syzygium australe*, Brush Cherry, as a co-designation for all of Paterna Road.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 714 N. Voluntario Street
2. 2151 Mission Ridge Road
3. 920 Garden Street
4. 528 W. Figueroa Street
5. 326 W. Sola Street
6. All of Paterna Road

PREPARED BY: Nathan Slack, Urban Forest Superintendent

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