



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

**AGENDA DATE:** September 28, 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. 1014A Calle De Los Amigos – *Schinus molle*, Pepper Tree – Barbara Smith

The Committee evaluated the Pepper Tree, noting it was in good health but could benefit from some routine pruning. They discussed the reasons listed on the application, which involved a desire to remove the tree due to allergies from the tree flowering. The Committee discussed the applicant's concerns relating to the tree producing allergens. They acknowledged during review that Pepper Trees do produce allergens that can be of impact to certain individuals. The Committee further discussed the presence of other trees in the immediate vicinity that could also contribute to and produce allergens. Members expressed concern that the removal of a single street tree for allergens could set a precedent, which could lead to the removal of numerous trees citywide. After review, the Committee determined that removal of the tree would be a material loss to the neighborhood.

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

B. Conditionally approve the following setback tree removal request:

1. 214 Eucalyptus Hill Drive – *Eucalyptus globulus*, Blue Gum – Barbara Masin

The Committee evaluated the blue gum requested for removal, commenting the tree was in fair health. They evaluated the reasons listed for removal on the application, which included concerns with failure, poor maintenance over the years, and decline in health. The Committee discussed the tree, remarking that the tree is the product of poor pruning over the years. There was also discussion regarding the applicant's proposal to plant two new Coast Live Oak trees to offset the loss of the existing tree. There was general agreement that Coast Live Oak was an improvement over the Blue Gum, but members noted concern regarding the other removals that had taken place near the subject tree. Staff advised that they had been consulted by a private tree care

company regarding the trees and that the removals performed were outside of the setback for the property and therefore legal. After discussion, the Committee determined that three new trees would better offset the loss of the existing tree and recommended approval with the condition to plant three new Coast Live Oak trees.

The Committee recommends (4/1) that the Commission approve removal on the condition the applicant plant a minimum of (3) 15-gallon, *Quercus agrifolia*, Coast Live Oaks in the setback.

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. Deny the following setback tree removal request:

1. 3775 Modoc Road – (1) *Eucalyptus sideroxylon*, Red Ironbark, (7) *Eucalyptus viminalis*, Manna Gum, and (1) *Corymbia citriodora*, Lemon-scented Gum – Rachel Raynor

The Committee evaluated the nine trees requested for removal, noting that all of the trees, aside from the second tree from the east, were in good health. They remarked that the second tree from the east was in poor to fair health, noting the presence of psyllids. The Committee reviewed the reasons listed for removal on the application, which included maintenance concerns involving debris, a desire to update the landscaping in the front of the complex, and safety concerns. The safety concerns were due to the imbalanced tree canopies because of continual pruning that takes place on the north side of the canopies due to their close proximity to overhead electrical lines. During review, the Committee commented that the trees were of significant size and, even if replaced, would take a considerable amount of time to offset the loss. Discussion took place regarding pruning. It was the Committee's opinion that if more frequent pruning occurred on the property side of the canopies, there would be less debris and a reduced probability of limb failure. After extensive review, the Committee determined that the trees still provide significant benefit and no finding supported their removal at this time.

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

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

1. All of Vernon Road – request for species designation change – Robert P. Richards

A local landscape architect recently requested that staff and the Street Tree Advisory Committee explore the feasibility of modifying the current Street Tree Designation for all of Vernon Road, proposing to change it to *Arbutus 'Marina'*, commonly referred to as Marina Madrone.

The request for species designation change is the result of a condition for a new street planting that was part of an approval of a setback tree removal located at 2711 Vernon Road. This item was reviewed and conditionally approved at the June 21, 2021, Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

Currently, *Platanus x hispanica*, London Plane Tree, is the designated species for all of Vernon Road. This designation dates back to the initial adoption of the designation listing in 1977. Staff evaluated the feasibility of the proposal, determined it made practical sense to modify the species designation, and presented it to the Street Tree Advisory committee for review.

During review, the Committee evaluated the existing designation, noting that the London Plane tree's ability to hybridize with native Sycamore populations makes it an undesirable designation. In addition, the Committee evaluated the width of the parkway and its ability to support the growth of the newly proposed tree. After review, the Committee determined that Marina Madrone was a positive update to the current designation.

The Committee recommends (4/0) that the Commission approve *Arbutus 'Marina,'* Marina Madrone, as a designation for all of Vernon Road.

## 2. 1300-2100 blocks of Mountain Avenue – co-designate – Michael Fedyk

The request for species designation change for the 1300-2100 blocks of Mountain Avenue is the result of a request from a resident who lives on the 1300 block of Mountain Avenue. The request for designation change is part of a conditional approval for a street tree removal approved at 1325 Mountain Avenue. This item was reviewed and conditionally approved at the May 25, 2022, Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

Staff reviewed the request for designation change and evaluated all current Mountain Avenue designations, which included the 1300-2100 blocks. As part of this review, staff determined that several of the designations no longer made practical sense and presented all of Mountain Avenue to the Street Tree Advisory Committee for review.

The Committee reviewed each block's designation and the existing species composition. As part of the discussion, staff advised that developing multiple designations for the entire street was more effective and provided needed flexibility for locating species and maximizing planting locations. Both staff and the Committee reviewed overhead utility constraints and parkway widths. After extensive review, the Committee recommended *Arbutus 'Marina,'* Marina Madrone; *Lagerstroemia 'hybrids,'* Crape Myrtle; *Ginkgo biloba*, Maidenhair; *Prunus lyonii*, Catalina Cherry; and *Cassia leptophylla*, Gold Medallion, for the 1300-2100 blocks of Mountain Avenue.

The Committee recommends (5/0) that the Commission approve *Arbutus 'Marina,'* Marina Madrone; *Lagerstroemia 'hybrids,'* Crape Myrtle; *Ginkgo biloba*, Maidenhair; *Prunus lyonii*, Catalina Cherry; and *Cassia leptophylla*, Gold Medallion, as co-designations for the 1300-2100 blocks of Mountain Avenue.

### 3. 00-500 W. Los Olivos Street – co-designate – Staff

The request for species designation change for the 00-500 blocks of W. Los Olivos Street is to modify existing designations that no longer make practical sense in advance of upcoming planting efforts. As part of planting goals for this year, Forestry staff have identified several streets in the Oak Park neighborhood area for planting. Part of the Forestry Program's annual planting strategy involves planting trees in neighborhoods that have the largest percentages of vacant planting sites. This neighborhood currently has some of the highest number of vacant planting locations. During review of the existing designations, staff noticed a need to update existing designations for consistency and to remove trees that are no longer in use due to poor performance.

The Committee reviewed the existing designations, including parkway width and existing species composition, by block. Consistent with other reviews, staff explained the new approach towards moving away from block by block designations and instead looking at the whole street in context. The Committee and staff discussed and reviewed multiple options, including what species were currently performing well on the street, as well as utility constraints and parkway width. After review, the Committee recommended *Cinnamomum camphora*, Camphor, *Quercus agrifolia*, Coast Live Oak, *Chilopsis linearis*, Desert Willow, and *Robinsonella cordata*, Heartleaf Robinsonella for the 00-500 blocks of W. Los Olivos.

The Committee recommends (5/0) that the Commission approve *Cinnamomum caphora*, Camphor Tree, *Chilopsis linearis*, Desert Willow, *Quercus agrifolia*, Coast Live Oak, and *Robinsonella cordata*, Heartleaf Robinsonella as co-designations for the 00-500 blocks of W. Los Olivos Street.

- ATTACHMENTS:**
1. 1014A Calle De Los Amigos
  2. 214 Eucalyptus Hill Drive
  3. 3775 Modoc Road
  4. All of Vernon Road
  5. 1300-2100 blocks of Mountain Avenue
  6. 00-500 blocks of W. Los Olivos Street

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

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