



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: October 26, 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 request:

1. 1226 Hutash Street – *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*, King Palm – Sandra Lugo

The Committee evaluated the King Palm, noting it was in good health. Members commented that the tree was located directly under overhead utility lines. Due to the tree's placement, a sub-contractor for the utility provider is pruning the tree frequently to control its growth. During discussion, they evaluated the distance of the palm to the overhead utility lines and determined it would be a considerable amount of time until the tree would be subject to removal due to conflicts with the lines. After review, the Committee concluded it made practical sense to allow the applicant to remove the tree and plant a new designated street tree, stating the palm provided little value due to the frequent pruning.

The Committee recommends (3/0) that the Commission approve removal on the condition the applicant replace with a new designated street tree.

B. Deny the following street tree removal requests:

1. 106 San Rafael Avenue – *Ficus benjamina*, Weeping Fig – Dawn McGrew

The Committee evaluated the Weeping Fig, commenting that the tree was in great health. During evaluation of the tree, they determined that the tree had displaced the sidewalk. Upon further review, members determined sidewalk repair without the need for tree removal was feasible. Additionally, the Committee commented that, Weeping Fig is not necessarily a great street tree species, but the fact that it is performing well and providing benefits to the community warrants its retention.

The Committee recommends (3/0) that the Commission deny the removal.

2. 745 Dolores Drive – *Ficus microcarpa*, Indian Laurel Fig – Andrew Sheppard

The Committee assessed the Indian Laurel Fig, noting it was in great health and a nice example of the species. Members noted the sidewalk was recently patched using asphalt to alleviate existing displacements. During discussion, there was consensus amongst the members that sidewalk repair without the need for tree removal was feasible. Brief discussion took place regarding the applicant's concerns relating to their private sewer lateral. The Committee reiterated the longstanding approach towards private sewer laterals and street tree removal, stating that in almost all cases repairs do not require tree removal. Further, members commented the applicant stated on their application that repairs to the sewer lateral had already occurred. There was no evidence of structural damage provided.

The Committee recommends (3/0) that the Commission deny the removal.

C. Approve the following setback tree removal request:

1. 211 Via Sevilla – *Ficus microcarpa*, Indian Laurel Fig – Gail Gorton

During the February 23, 2022, regular Parks and Recreation Commission, a previous application was submitted for tree removal. The Commission voted to deny the removal without prejudice, consistent with the Street Tree Advisory Committee's recommendation.

The Committee evaluated the Indian Laurel Fig, stating it was in good health, but was causing noticeable damage to the surrounding private hardscape and minor damage to the sidewalk. Members discussed at length the challenges the tree posed for the property owner, noting that even if repairs to the hardscape took place, there was a high probability displacement would continue, requiring additional repairs and costs. After extensive review, the Committee determined it made practical sense to recommend approval of the removal. As part of this discussion, the Committee evaluated options for replacement, agreeing that there was no suitable place for a replacement tree on the property. Additionally, members commented that the street had extensive canopy cover, and while the subject tree was large, its removal would not have a material impact on the street.

The Committee recommends (2/1) that the Commission approve the removal.

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

D. Conditionally approve the following setback tree removal requests:

1. 200 N. La Cumbre Road – (5) *Cupaniopsis anacardioides*, Carrot Wood, (1) *Afrocarpus falcatus*, Fern Pine, and (2) *Jacaranda mimosifolia*, Jacaranda – Jianhua Chen

The Committee evaluated the trees proposed for removal, noting they were all in fair shape and reasonably maintained. While on site, members reviewed the plans for the proposed affordable housing project. They commented that the removals of the trees constituted a reasonable development of the property and noted that the proposed replacements occurring within the public right of way and on the property significantly offset the existing trees.

The Committee recommends (3/0) that the Commission approve the removals on the condition the applicant plant the replacements as proposed on their application.

2. 2131 Red Rose Way – *Araucaria heterophylla*, Norfolk Island Pine – Chris Joyce

The Committee assessed the Norfolk Island Pine, noting it was in good health and well maintained. Focus quickly shifted to the abundance of young maturing fruit scattered throughout the tree's canopy, which was the applicant's primary concern. Members discussed the applicant's concerns regarding fruit production, remarking that this species is capable of producing very large cone like fruit that can mature to 3-4" wide by 3.5-4.5" in height on female trees, whereas male trees produce much smaller cones. Extensive discussion took place between the members as they discussed the challenges the persistent large fruit posed for both the property owners, neighbors, and those in the public right of way. After review, members determined the fruit production was too challenging to manage and that removal and replacement made practical sense.

The Committee recommends (3/0) that the Commission approve the removal on the condition the applicant plant a replacement tree as reflected on their application.

The Committee determined that pursuant to SBMC 15.24.090 E, the Commission could make the finding that regard for safety of persons or property dictates removal.

3. 917 Alphonse Street – *Robinia pseudoacacia*, Black Locust – Veronica Wynn

The Committee reviewed the Black Locust located within the front setback, noting the tree was in fair to poor health. They commented that the tree had recently appeared to defoliate, but was now producing new growth. Discussion regarding causes for the defoliation took place, with members remarking it likely had to do with a general decline in the tree's overall health. During evaluation of the tree,

they determined it was in a state of decline and that it made practical sense to allow the applicant to remove the tree and plant the two new trees as proposed on their application.

The Committee recommends (2/1) that the Commission approve the removal on the condition the applicant replace with two new trees as proposed on their application.

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.

E. Deny the following setback tree removal requests:

1. 1212 Punta Gorda Street – *Cedrus deodara*, Deodar Cedar – Ricardo Frustockl

The Committee evaluated the Deodar Cedar, noting the tree was in good health and reasonably maintained. The applicant expressed a desire to remove the tree to allow for the installation of a larger mobile home unit on the lot. Members assessed the feasibility of retaining the tree while allowing for the installation of the larger unit. After review, they concluded that it appeared to be possible to save the tree, but that it was difficult to make an accurate determination since there were no plans provided that would illustrate how the tree prevents installation of the larger unit. The Committee commented that the removal of the tree to allow a larger unit to be installed made practical sense, but it would require more evidence before a finding could be identified that would support removal of the tree.

The Committee recommends (3/0) that the Commission deny the removal without prejudice, to allow the applicant to provide additional information that illustrates why the tree cannot be retained.

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

1. 500-700 blocks of N. Voluntario Street – request for species designation change – Staff

Staff is requesting a change to the existing street tree designation for the 500-700 blocks of North Voluntario Street. The request is due in part to a conditional replacement from a recent tree removal application located at 714 North Voluntario Street, where two Queen Palms were approved for removal on the condition two new designated street tree species were planted.

The existing designation for the 500-700 blocks of North Voluntario Street is *Abizia julibrissin*, Silk Tree, a species that has shown a high level of susceptibility to the Invasive Shot Hole Borer. This pest, which spreads a fungal pathogen, leads to a

relatively quick death of the tree once established. This pest/disease complex is currently present on the street. Due to the pest related issues, staff determined it did not make practical sense to plant any more of this particular species.

The applicant requested to plant *Acacia podalyriifolia*, Pearl Acacia, which is currently a species that does not exist in our inventory nor as a designated species for use. Staff evaluated the feasibility of incorporating this species. After review, it was determined that Pearl Acacia was a species of merit and would be a nice introduction as a new street tree designation.

While staff determined that Pearl Acacia was suitable for use, it can often be difficult to locate, and our limited experience with the tree as a street tree warranted additional evaluation for other species to designate. Staff evaluated the parkway width, potential above and underground infrastructure conflicts, and compatibility with the Pearl Acacia. Staff presented two additional species for designation, *Tristaniopsis lauriana*, Water Gum, and *Acacia baileyana*, Bailey Acacia, for use on the 500-700 blocks of North Voluntario Street.

The Committee reviewed the new proposed species designation changes and concluded they would be good selections for use.

The Committee recommends (3/0) that the Commission approve *Acacia podalyriifolia*, Pearl Acacia, *Tristaniopsis laurina*, Water Gum and *Acacia baileyana*, Bayley Acacia, as designations for the 500-700 blocks of N. Voluntario Street.

- ATTACHMENTS:**
1. 1226 Hutash Street
 2. 106 San Rafael Avenue
 3. 745 Dolores Drive
 4. 211 Via Sevilla
 5. 200 N. La Cumbre Road
 6. 2131 Red Rose Way
 7. 917 Alphonse Street
 8. 1212 Punta Gorda Street
 9. 500-700 blocks of N. Voluntario Street

PREPARED BY: Nathan Slack, Urban Forest Superintendent

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