



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: June 26, 2024
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 setback tree removal requests:

1. 628 Willowglen Road – *Washingtonia robusta*, Mexican Fan Palm – W. Scott Burns

The Committee reviewed the Mexican Fan Palm noting it was in good health and reasonably maintained. They evaluated the reasons listed on the application to support removal, which included a desire to relandscape the front yard. The applicant stated that the tree was too large and out of scale for the proposed landscape improvements. The Committee discussed the tree and its value to both the property and immediate neighborhood. They agreed that the palm tree was very tall and provided limited benefit. Consistent with most applications for individual removal of Mexican Fan Palms, the Committee stated that a smaller scale shade tree would provide more benefit to the property than the existing palm. While the applicant did not directly say they would plant a new tree, the Committee determined that a replacement tree would be critical to support removal. After review, they concluded that the replacement of the palm tree with a tree that could achieve a mature height of 25 feet would be a good fit for the property.

After review, 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 proposed removal.

The Committee recommends (4/0) that the Commission approve the removal on the condition the applicant plant a new tree capable of reaching a height of 25 feet at maturity.

2. 2501 Medcliff Road – *Schinus terebinthifolius*, Brazilian Pepper – Guillaume de Zwirek

The Parks and Recreation Commission previously reviewed this application during the regular meeting of April 24, 2024. After review, the Commission voted to defer the application back to the Street Tree Advisory Committee for further review in the context of the overall landscape plan.

The Committee re-reviewed the Brazilian Pepper as well as the landscape plans that were not part of the original submittal. During review of the landscape plans, the Committee commented that there were a significant number of native trees proposed for planting. The Committee also commented that if the applicant desired to promote the use of native trees that using the native California Sycamore in lieu of the London Plane Tree would make practical sense. During discussion members noted that given the number of new trees there was significant gained benefit to the property and neighborhood and agreed that the removal of the Brazilian Pepper Tree would not negatively impact the property or the neighborhood. After review, the Committee agreed to support the removal on the condition the applicant plants a new tree that can achieve a height of 30 feet at maturity. They also commented that it would be ideal if the replacement tree was also a native tree.

After review, 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 proposed removal.

The Committee recommends (3/0) that the Commission approve the removal on the condition that the applicant plant a new tree capable of reaching a height of 30 feet at maturity.

3. 504 Owen Road – *Pinus pinea*, Italian Stone Pine – Kathleen Peterson

The Committee evaluated the Italian Stone Pine requested for removal noting the tree was in good health but had a pronounced lean and unbalanced canopy due to competition with a neighboring Italian Stone Pine. They reviewed the reasons listed on the application for removal, which primarily consisted of concerns with tree failure. The applicant referenced that the tree immediately adjacent to the one requested for removal had fallen over during the winter storms and they were concerned that the other tree may now fail too due to the lean. The Committee discussed the tree. The arborists on the Committee expressed concern for the unbalanced canopy, the lean, and the trees placement on the slope. There was consensus amongst the members that the tree had a relatively high probability of failing due to the noted issues and that the canopy would likely never fill in and continue to get more unbalanced due to the growth habit of Italian Stone Pines.

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

The Committee recommends (3/0) that the Commission approve the removal on the condition the applicant plant a new tree that can achieve 30 feet at maturity.

B. Partially approve the following setback tree removal requests:

1. 535 Arroyo Avenue – (1) *Araucaria columnaris*, Cook Pine, and (1) *Hesperocyparis macrocarpa*, Monterey Cypress – Jaclyn Guerrero

The Committee reviewed the Cook Pine and the Monterey Cypress. They noted that the Cook Pine was in good health, but previous owners had improperly pruned the tree causing it to have a disfigured appearance and poor structure. They also noted the Cook Pine was close to the curb and gutter and roots from the tree had damaged it. They remarked that the Monterey Cypress was in good health and well maintained. The Committee discussed the reasons listed on the application for removal, which included the curb and gutter displacement created by the Cook Pine and concerns with property damage from the Monterey Cypress. The Committee concluded that due to the poor overall structure and form of the Cook Pine, they supported its removal if offset with a new tree. Given the significance and good health of the Monterey Cypress they commented that there should be more evidence of structural issues or damage to the property to support the removal of the Cypress.

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

The Committee recommends (4/0) that the Commission approve the removal of the Cook Pine on the condition the applicant plant a new tree that can achieve a mature height of 20 feet and that the Commission deny the removal of the Monterey Cypress without prejudice to allow the applicant to return with more detailed information to support the removal.

C. Deny the following the setback tree removal requests:

1. 1403 Portesuello Avenue – *Cedrus deodara*, Deodar Cedar – John Keller

The Committee reviewed the Deodar Cedar noting that the tree was in great health and well maintained. They reviewed the reasons listed on the application for removal, which included risks associated with fire and potential for insurance cancellation. The Committee discussed the reasons commenting that pruning could alleviate some of the overhang of the limbs to the property and that given the good health of the tree that it was at low fire risk. They also noted that while insurance continues to be a challenge all throughout the state, concerns with

cancellation are markedly different than actual cancellation. The applicant was present during the meeting and while on site and expressed how fond they were of the tree and took the Committee's comments under advisement.

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

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

2. 1616 Hillside Road – *Liquidambar styraciflua*, American Sweetgum – Christopher Vigilante

The Committee reviewed the American Sweetgum proposed for removal remarking it was in great health, well maintained, and a particularly nice specimen of the species. They evaluated the reasons listed on the application for removal, which included the roots from the tree making the front yard unusable for their family, concerns with limb failure, stating previous limb failures that had occurred, and debris. The Committee discussed the reasons noting that while they were understanding of the continual challenge Sweetgum debris poses, it is not valid criteria for tree removal. Additionally, while the front yard does have limitations due to the tree and its roots it also adds considerable value to the property and the neighborhood warranting preservation.

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

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

3. 2025 Red Rose Way – (2) *Pinus radiata*, Monterey Pine – Gerda Magdalena

The Committee reviewed the two Monterey Pines, noting they were in fair health and reasonably maintained. The Committee evaluated the reasons listed for removal, which included concerns with sewer lateral root intrusion and possible disruption to the structure by the neighboring tree's root system. They discussed both issues raised by the applicant noting that repairs to sewer lateral issues rarely necessitate the need for tree removal and without any actual information that the trees are causing structural damage it would not make practical sense to support their removal.

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

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

4. 3091 Calle Rosales – *Cedrus deodara*, Deodar Cedar – Michael Giuffrida

The Committee evaluated the Deodar Cedar proposed for removal noting it was in good health. The applicant expressed a desire to remove the tree due to a history of limb failures, maintenance concerns, and the tree being both out of scale and not part of the overall landscape aesthetic for the property. The Committee discussed the reasons noting that it did appear the tree had potentially lost limbs and that was likely why the top of the tree was missing. Despite potential issues in the past, they commented that normal routine maintenance could alleviate most issues with potential limb failure. Additionally, they commented that the tree was too significant to the property and the street to support its removal.

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

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

- ATTACHMENTS:**
1. 628 Willowglen Road
 2. 2501 Medcliff Road
 3. 504 Owen Road
 4. 535 Arroyo Avenue
 5. 1403 Portesuello Avenue
 6. 1616 Hillside Road
 7. 2025 Red Rose Way
 8. 3091 Calle Rosales

PREPARED BY: Nathan Slack, Urban Forest Superintendent

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