



City of Santa Barbara
Parks and Recreation Department

Memorandum

DATE: May 20, 2024

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Jill Zachary, Parks and Recreation Director

SUBJECT: East Anapamu Street Stone Pines

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Parks and Recreation Commission with a status report on the condition of the Italian Stone Pines within the parkway of 300-800 East Anapamu Street, and the Parks and Recreation Department's (Department) proposed approach to address safety concerns and develop a long-term plan to replant the street. As designated City Landmarks, the trees planted in 1908 and 1929, and others in subsequent years, are emblematic of the City's horticultural history and legacy. As outlined below, it is anticipated that there will be community concern due to recent and planned additional tree removals.

Tree Failures, Removals and Risk Assessment

As a result of significant rain on March 29 and March 30, Department Forestry Staff responded to two tree failures and proactively removed an additional three trees after evaluations revealed conditions that warranted expedited removal for public safety.

In early April, Forestry staff initiated a full risk assessment of all the 51 remaining Italian Stone Pines on the street, following current industry standards set forth by the International Society of Arboriculture's Tree Risk Assessment Qualification. This assessment involves a detailed review of each tree, its health, potential for failure, and consequences of full or partial failure.

The assessment identified five additional trees with conditions that warrant complete removal to protect public safety. While there are several complicating factors with each of these trees, the primary driver of this decision is extensive root decay related to root injury from repairs to the roads and hardscape over the last several decades. The remaining trees have decay within the visible root zone, indicating that very little, or none, of each tree's primary structural root zone remains. As a result, staff cannot guarantee that any of these five trees can remain standing and, therefore, cannot be considered safe. Given the condition of the five trees identified for removal, staff will prioritize their removal in the coming weeks to protect both people and property on East Anapamu Street.

In addition to the identified removals, staff noted seven additional trees categorized as being in poor health. Staff will monitor these trees but given the issues with decline and

potential for failure, they will likely require removal within less than a year, as the decline is irreversible.

Historic Plantings

As part of the review, staff identified which of the trees were part of the street's original plantings by Dr. Doremus (500 – 600 blocks of E. Anapamu, circa 1908) and Parks Superintendent Stevens (300-400 blocks of E. Anapamu, circa 1929.) Of the two trees that failed and the three proactively removed, four were likely planted by Dr. Doremus and one by Mr. Stevens. Of the 21 remaining trees thought to be original plantings, three are in good condition, 12 are in fair condition, and six are in poor condition.

Pathogens

In addition to the significant challenges and stress caused by root pruning over the years, root and above-ground tissue samples (wood and needles) submitted to a plant diagnostic laboratory came back positive for *Phytophthora*, a root rot pathogen. This fungal pathogen kills a tree's roots, first infecting small fibrous feeder roots before moving into larger roots of the tree. Infected feeder roots impact the tree's ability to uptake water and nutrients, leading to overall decline. Given the pathogen's ability to easily spread from one location to another, it is likely present in all parkways within the 300-800 blocks of East Anapamu. Testing also identified Diplodia tip blight within the canopies of tested trees. This fungal pathogen causes the decline and death of portions of the tree canopy over time. This easily spread pathogen is likely present in the canopies of all trees displaying some level of decline.

Given the complex issues involving both biotic and abiotic challenges and significant structural root loss, further decline can and should be expected for the remaining large trees of historic nature.

Next Steps

The Department's Forestry Team will continue to monitor the remaining trees and complete any removals that are warranted due to safety concerns. At the same time, the Department will develop recommendations for replanting East Anapamu Street, including consideration of whether the designated species should continue to be the Italian Stone Pine or whether there are other tree species that would successfully re-establish the canopy and honor the City's horticultural legacy. This effort will include review and discussion with the Historic Landmarks Commission, Street Tree Advisory Committee, and Parks and Recreation Commission. The Department will also engage community members and residents of East Anapamu Street and provide an informational webpage to serve as a public resource.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

cc: Nathan Slack, Urban Forest Superintendent
Jazmin LeBlanc, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director