

## TREE COMMITTEE AGENDA REPORT

**SUBJECT:** REQUEST TO REMOVE 1 VELVET ASH STREET TREE LOCATED AT 1524 BALBOA ST (APPLICATION: TREE-0415-2025)

**FROM:** Walter Gault, Urban Forestry Program Coordinator / City Arborist  
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### RECOMMENDATION

Review the proposed tree removal application for consistency with the Municipal Code Section 12.24.090(E) and provide a recommendation to the Community Development Director.

### 1.0 APPLICATION DESCRIPTION



**Figure 1 – Site of proposed tree removal**

Troy Schwoerer, the applicant, has requested the removal of one (1) *Fraxinus velutina* (Velvet Ash) at 1524 Balboa Street located within the R-1 zone. The applicant has indicated in their application that the tree poses a seasonal nuisance (insect infestation and honeydew droppings) and is problematic for the sidewalk, sewer lateral and their landscaping plan.

The applicant would like to remove the street tree and replace it with one (1) compensatory *Quercus tomentella* (Island Oak) street tree onsite in the parkway at 1524 Balboa and one (1) *Lyonothamnus floribundus subsp. aspleniifolius* (Catalina Ironwood) in the front yard.

## 2.0 COMMITTEE PURVIEW

The Tree Committee's role is to review the removal request in accordance with the process set forth in San Luis Obispo Municipal Code (SLOMC) [Chapter 12.24](#), specifically Section [12.24.090\(E\)\(3\)](#) - tree removals related to property owner convenience. This code section utilizes the process set forth in [subsection F\(2\)](#), the relevant additional application requirements in [subsection \(D\)\(2\)](#) and the criteria set forth in [subsection \(G\)](#).



Figure 2 – View of Ash tree from Balboa (7-14-25)

### 3.0 TREE REGULATIONS

The City's Tree Ordinance (Municipal Code Chapter 12.24) was adopted with the purpose of establishing a comprehensive program for installing, maintaining, and preserving trees within the City. This ordinance establishes policies, regulations, and specifications necessary to govern installation, maintenance, removal, and preservation of trees to beautify the city; to purify the air; to provide shade and wind protection; to add environmental and economic value; and to preserve trees with historic or unusual value.

#### Criteria for Convenience Tree Removal Applications.

SLOMC §12.24.090 subsection (E)(3) requires review by the Tree Committee using the criteria set for in SLOMC §12.24.090(G). Applicable criteria are provided in italics below and followed by a description of the proposed tree removals as it relates to that criterion.

- *(G)(1). Size of Tree. The scale of the tree shall be considered, as well as the size of the tree's canopy. Larger, more visually prominent trees may have a higher preservation priority than smaller, less visually prominent trees.*

The tree proposed for removal is large and visually prominent in the neighborhood.

- *(G)(2). Location of Tree on Private Property. The location of the tree on private property shall be considered. Trees located in a private rear yard, which are not highly visible from the public right-of-way, may have a lower preservation priority than trees with a high visual impact to the neighborhood.*

The tree proposed for removal is located in parkway and is highly visible from the public right of way.

- *(G)(3). Species of Tree. Native trees shall have a higher preservation priority than non-native trees.*

The tree proposed for removal is non-native.

- *(G)(4). Forestry Best Practice. The number of healthy trees that a given parcel of land will support shall be considered, and whether removal would enhance the health or survival of remaining trees. Applications that increase biodiversity of native trees and tree age distribution within a given area are preferred.*

The removal and replanting would increase the biodiversity of the urban forest and tree age distribution.

- *(G)(6). Compliance with Subsection J of This Section Regarding Compensatory Plantings. The approving authority may consider an application proposal to provide compensatory plantings in excess of required minimums in evaluating this criterion.*

The applicant is proposing to exceed the minimum required replanting rate of 1:1 with a 2:1 replanting (1 tree offsite and 1 tree onsite).

- (G)(7). *Heritage Trees. Heritage trees have the highest preservation priority.*

The tree is not a heritage tree.

#### **4.0 ACTIONS**

- 4.1** Recommend findings of consistency with the Tree Regulations. An action recommending approval of the proposed tree removal(s) based on consistency will be forwarded to the Community Development Director for final action. This action may include recommendations regarding the compensatory replanting plan with size and species of tree(s).
- 4.2** Recommend findings of inconsistency with the Tree Regulations. An action recommending denial of the proposed tree removal(s) should include findings that cite the basis for denial and should reference inconsistency with the General Plan, Tree Regulations, or other policy documents.
- 4.3** Continue the project to a hearing date certain, or uncertain. An action continuing the review of the proposed tree removal(s) should include directions to the applicant and staff on pertinent issues.

#### **5.0 ATTACHMENTS**

- A - Tree Removal Application Form
- B - Site and Replanting Plan
- C - Photos