

Additional Documents

December 2, 2024 NREC Special Meeting



NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA

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**SPECIAL NREC MEETING
DECEMBER 2, 2024 6:00PM
WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**FROM: BARBARA EISENSTEIN
AGENDA ITEM: GENERAL COMMENT**

Dear Members of City Council, and Natural Resources and Environmental Commission:

I am writing to express my continued concerns regarding the Arroyo Seco Water Reuse Project. Most importantly I believe that there was not adequate environmental review of the project. The Mitigated Negative Declaration that was prepared did not sufficiently address impacts from the project. These are some of my specific concerns:

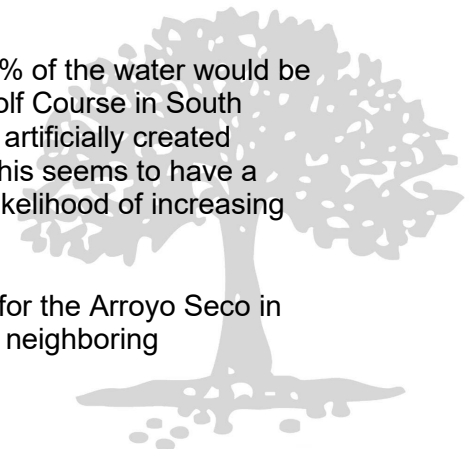
1. The removal of large native coast live oaks, Southern California black walnuts, blue elderberries, and toyons, especially in the San Pascual Park area, will have a significant impact on wildlife. In spring of 2023 Ted Gerber, South Pasadena Director of Public Works, and Dawn Petschauer of Pasadena gave me a tour of this site. At that time, I expressed my concern about the significant ecological disturbance that this project would cause. Replacement plans would not mitigate for the loss of habitat provided by mature trees in this heavily wooded area. I would like to see a thorough and independent environmental review of this project before it goes forward. Along with the review of the negative impacts of the project, I would like to see whether there are other designs that would meet the project goals with less loss of trees and habitat.

2. Additionally, the MND does not give sufficient information of how this project would impact natural stream restoration and the reintroduction of steelhead trout by CDFW into the Arroyo Seco.

3. A third concern regards water usage and water rights, as they currently exist and how that would change if this project proceeds. Do the cities of South Pasadena and Pasadena have state water rights to use this water? How much water would be diverted from the channel, and how much would be released downstream?

I believe that the materials on the project suggest that approximately 40% of the water would be returned to the Arroyo Seco, 10% would go to water the Arroyo Seco Golf Course in South Pasadena, and 50% would infiltrate into go into local aquifer through an artificially created wetlands. Although water purification is, on the face of it, a good thing, this seems to have a very significant impact on water flow downstream, especially given the likelihood of increasing drought due to climate change.

4. Finally, I have been following this and other similar project proposals for the Arroyo Seco in South Pasadena for many years. It is my belief that the community, and neighboring



communities have not been adequately informed of these projects, and this one in particular. I have been working with community members for the past 18 years as organizer of the Friends of South Pasadena Nature Park and few people know anything about these projects. In addition, this area is sacred to the Gabrieleno Kizh Nation, yet they were not appropriately consulted in the planning process as required by AB 52.

These and other concerns can only be met with a complete unbiased environmental review process for this project, with robust public engagement.

Thank you,
Barbara Eisenstein

FROM: ANGELO GLADDING

AGENDA ITEMS: ITEM 2: TREE HEARING 1040 ORANGE GROVE AVE.

ITEM 3: TREE HEARING 1108 DIAMOND AVE.

Commissioners, please take the following into consideration. Thank you.

1040 Orange Grove Ave

These Canary Island Palms do not have a "diseased dieback" and are not suffering from Fusarium Wilt.

One-Sided Frond Death

The characteristic symptoms of Fusarium wilt include one-sided death of the fronds or palm leaves (Figure 1). Initially, the leaflets on the other side of the infected frond stay green (Figure 2), but eventually the whole frond dies and desiccates.

Reddish-brown streaks appear on the rachis affected fronds.

FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2



www.lsuagcenter.com/~media/system/5/e/e/c/5eeca4db5b91d54c332ff1436a6f1b95/pub3472fusariumwilt1115.pdf

Applicant's Specimens

There is not a single identifiable frond (living or dead) with the characteristic one-sided wilt. The canopies are symmetrical in their living fronds and dieback as is typical of a healthy palm.

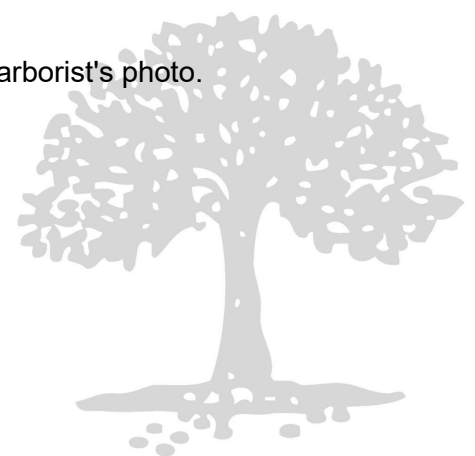
Boots (the stub of a pruned frond left on after pruning) falling off the bud is a natural part of the lifecycle of a healthy palm. Plants growing in the nooks between boots is common and does not in and of itself indicate decay.

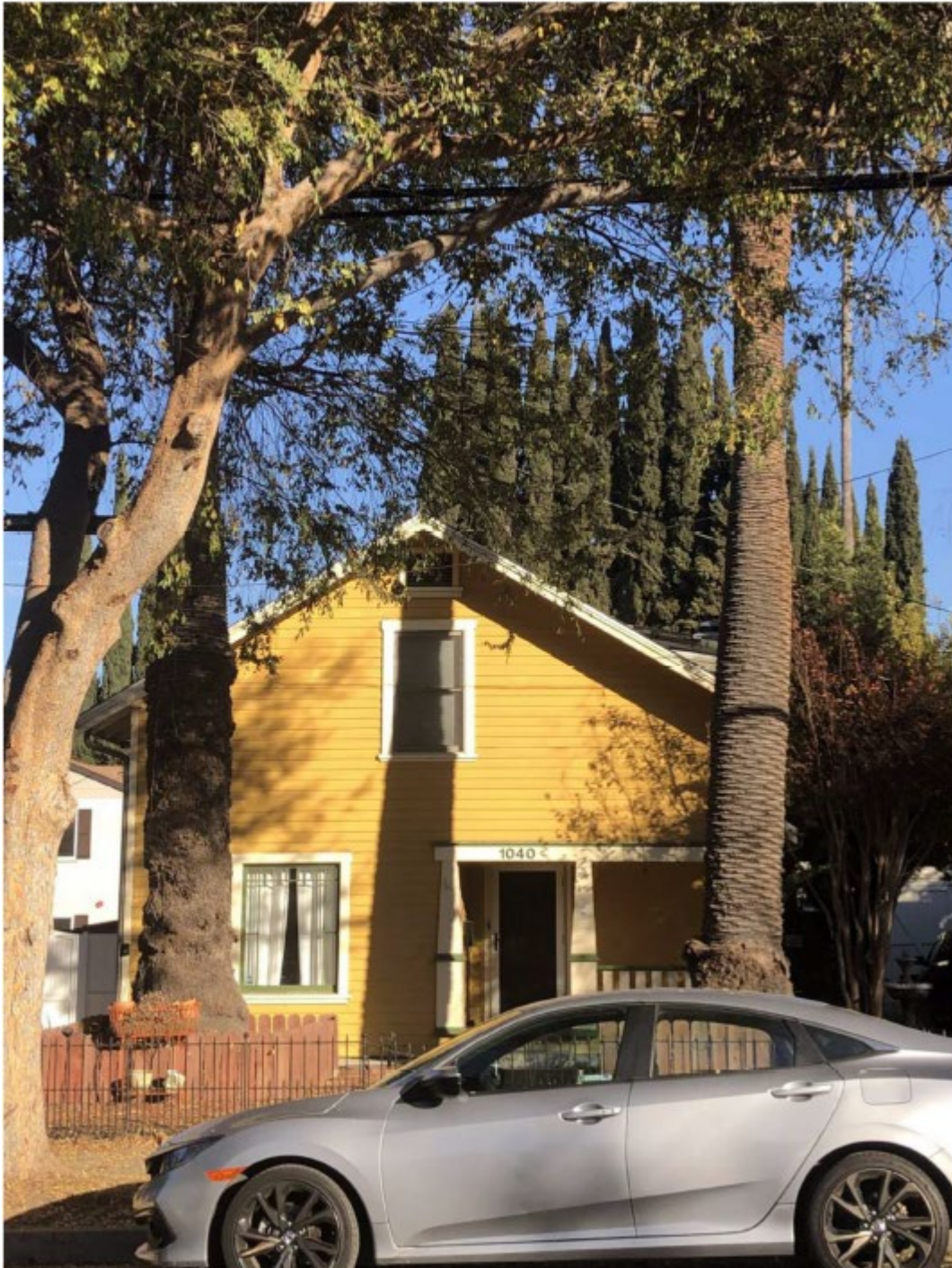




Lean

The ever so slight lean is corrected immediately above the cutoff of the arborist's photo.

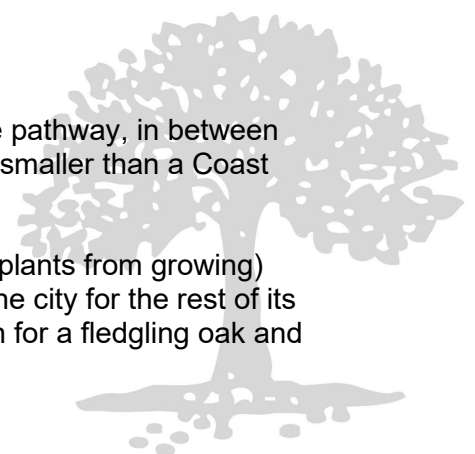




Applicant's Front Yard

There is room for an oak to be planted near the sidewalk, in place of the pathway, in between the front door and the street. An Engelmann Oak or Blue Oak would be smaller than a Coast Live Oak but any could be made to fit in the space.

The existing elm is an invasive with mild allelopathy (discourages other plants from growing) that has been topped and will continue to be a maintenance burden to the city for the rest of its life while looking unnatural with a flattened top. It can provide protection for a fledgling oak and



encourage vertical growth. When the oak becomes large enough to interact with the elm the elm could be removed to allow the oak to maximize its growth horizontally over the sidewalk and eventually over the street while remaining balanced.

If left alone the oak will grow to be a large shrub in the first 20 years that will provide lush privacy for the front door and windows. A certified arborist can help maintain a single leader while minimizing cuts and maximizing growth.

A native sugar bush shrub could be planted on the south side of the property to add diversity and coverage. They can live for over a hundred years.

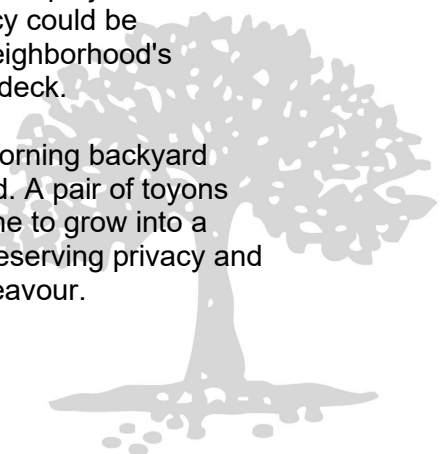


Applicant's Back Yard

There is a row of arborvitae on the property adjacent to the applicant's. This completely blocks all early morning sun until noon. They are planted too close together. The species is generally considered to be a fire hazard due to its high resin content, dense foliage and dry interior branches. They are especially dangerous adjacent to structures. That property owner is currently constructing an ADU adjacent to the arborvitae (as shown in the third photo).

I'm sure the privacy is welcome, especially considering the new development project. However, the scale is just too much. With a pruning and thinning of the hedge privacy could be maintained, beneficial early sun could be let in and at least some of the neighborhood's magnificent old growth canopy would be seen from the rear second-story deck.

The additional light and space would not only benefit your family's early morning backyard activities but also allow for an oak and a pine to be placed in the back yard. A pair of toyons (another long-lived native shrub) could be placed near the rear property line to grow into a hedge that would allow for the eventual removal of the arborvitae while preserving privacy and reactivating the space with all of the benefits that come from such an endeavour.



A grey pine is a good example of a native drought-tolerant pine that grows more vertically than horizontally and there's ample room for a coast live oak.



Surrounding Area

The old growth canopy surrounds the applicant's home.



1108 Diamond Ave

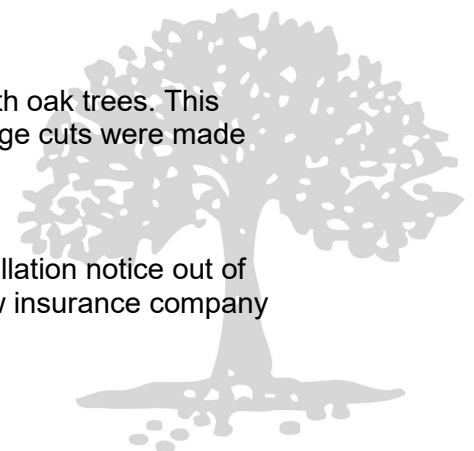


Overpruned & Pruned Incorrectly

Was there a permit for trimming? More than 10% was removed from both oak trees. This violates our tree code. Did a certified arborist perform the trimming? Large cuts were made incorrectly on what were already very small canopies.

Insurance Related Claims

What was the order of events? Was a claim made first or was it a cancellation notice out of nowhere. Did the pruning come after the cancellation notice? Has a new insurance company



inspected the property and found no problem? Our city needs to better understand these insurance related tree hazard claims.

Root Flare

The root flares are clearly buried. What is a "loose soil" measurement when the flare is 12-18 inches below grade?

Where is a photo of "roots uplifting the soil area"? If the root flare is buried then the soil around the base of the tree will take the shape of the last person who raked soil over it. Uplifting typically reveals cracks in the clay.

The status of the roots are the primary factor when assessing the stability of a leaning tree.

Trunk Stress

Where is a photo of "signs of stress observed at the base on the tension side of the tree"? There doesn't appear to be any visible issues with the trunk at all.

Replacement Plan

In the City of Trees removed oaks should be replaced on-site with oaks. Oaks should be prioritized over lawns every single time.

Angelo Gladding
1856 Hanscom Drive

