



**MEMORANDUM**

Community Services Department

**DATE:** October 10, 2018

**TO:** Urban Forestry Board

**FROM:** Jakob Trconic, Forestry and Roadway Manager  
J.P. de la Montaigne, Community Services Director

**SUBJECT: Heritage Tree Appeal: 732 Wake Forest Drive**

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**RECOMMENDATION**

Deny the appeal and allow the redwood tree to be removed.

**FISCAL IMPACT** – None.

**BACKGROUND**

Article II, Protection of the Urban Forest, Sections 32.22 through 32.38 of the City Code, was established to preserve large trees within the City, which are growing on private or public lands. The preservation program contributes to the welfare and aesthetics of the community and retains the great historical and environmental value of these trees. The Parks and Open Space Manager, under the authority granted in the Code to the Community Service Director, has been designated as the enforcement agent in this matter. Under the Code, there are specific criteria for removal. The determination on each application is based upon a minimum of one of the following conditions. The decision-maker shall consider additional criteria, if applicable, in weighing the decision to remove a Heritage tree, with the emphasis on the intent to preserve Heritage trees.

1. The condition of the tree with respect to age of the tree relative to the life span of that particular species, disease, infestation, general health, damage, public nuisance, danger of falling, proximity to existing or proposed structures, and interference with utility services.
2. The necessity of the removal of the Heritage tree in order to construct improvements and/or allow reasonable and conforming use of the property when compared to other similarly situated properties.

3. The nature and qualities of the tree as a Heritage tree, including its maturity, its aesthetic qualities such as its canopy, its shape and structure, its majestic stature, and its visual impact on the neighborhood.
4. Good forestry practices such as, but not limited to, the number of healthy trees a given parcel of land will support and the planned removal of any tree nearing the end of its life cycle and the replacement of young trees to enhance the overall health of the urban forest.
5. Balancing Criteria: In addition to the criteria referenced above which may support removal, the decision-maker shall also balance the request for removal against the following which may support or mitigate against removal:
  - a. The topography of land and effect of the requested removal on erosion, soil retention, water retention, and diversion or increased flow of surface waters.
  - b. The effect of the requested removal on the remaining number, species, size, and location of existing trees on the site and in the area.
  - c. The effect of the requested removal with regard to shade, noise buffers, protection from wind damage and air pollution, and the effect upon the historic value and scenic beauty and the health, safety, prosperity, and general welfare of the area and the City as a whole.

Also, within the Code, Section 32.31, an appeals process has been included that states:

“Any person aggrieved or affected by a decision on a requested removal may appeal the decision by filing a written notice of appeal with the City Clerk stating the grounds for the appeal, and paying the requisite appeal fee, as established by Council resolution, within ten (10) calendar days after the notice of the decision is posted or mailed.”

### **HERITAGE TREE REMOVAL REQUEST**

An application submitted by Rouja Pakiman to remove a Heritage-sized *Sequoia sempervirens* (Coast redwood) was received on August 21, 2018. The comments under reason for removal were: “The tree’s root flare and roots are severely impacting the sidewalk, curb and gutters. They are impaing the driveway and walkway in front of the property and encroaching into water and sewer lines.” The box was checked for: Condition of tree with respect to age of the tree relative to life span, etc. A letter from an arborist was also included with the application describing the root flare and issues

with the sidewalk and driveway. A decision to approve the removal of the Redwood was posted on August 27, 2018.

An appeal was filed on September 7, 2018 for the tree by Imelda Omana Zapata. The appeal letter states: "The tree has recovered from drought, it is not in declining condition and has new growth."

## ANALYSIS

When evaluating Heritage Tree Removal Applications, staff looks to see if the reason(s) for removal on the application match what is observed in the field. If the reason(s) meet the criteria, staff looks to see if issue(s) regarding the tree can be reasonably mitigated. Based on inspection and evaluation of the redwood tree, the appeal should be denied.

### ***Sequoia Sempervirens* (Coast Redwood)**

- *Sequoia sempervirens* (Coast redwoods) typical native range is a narrow strip of land approximately 470 miles in length and 5 to 47 miles in width along the Pacific coast of North America; the most southerly grove is in Monterey County, California, and the most northerly groves are in extreme southwestern Oregon. They usually grow in the mountains where precipitation from the incoming moisture off the ocean is greater. Coalescence of coastal fog accounts for a considerable part of the trees' water needs. It is an evergreen, long-lived, monoecious tree living 1,200 to 1,800 years or more in its native areas. Trees grown in an urban environment do not attain the same size and height as trees in their native ranges. In urban settings, trees would typically live 100 to 200 years and possibly longer.
- Staff estimates the redwood trees to be around 45 years old and around 65' tall. The tree is in fair to poor health.
- The tree has burls located on the trunk. A burl is a tree growth in which the grain has grown in a deformed manner. It is commonly found in the form of a rounded outgrowth on a tree trunk or branch that is filled with small knots from dormant buds. A burl results from a tree undergoing some form of stress. It may be caused by an injury, virus, or fungus. Most burls grow beneath the ground, attached to the roots as a type of malignancy that is generally not discovered until the tree dies or falls over.

- The tree is likely stressed due to the apparent lack of watering. It appears the home had a lawn, but with the recent drought, people have, in a lot of cases, shut off all watering to landscapes. This was not intended in the drought restrictions that were implemented, but some people chose to do so in order to save as much water as possible.
- The tree has a canker disease and they are caused by fungal infections. Cankers are dead, sunken spots found on trunks, limbs, and branches of infected trees. These infected areas can cause needles or entire limbs to turn yellow or brown and die. Cankers can girdle and kill limbs and entire trees. To prevent cankers, avoid planting redwoods in areas where growing conditions are not suitable. Redwoods prefer moist, cool areas. Prune out infected limbs immediately and provide proper irrigation, especially during drought conditions. The canker will slowly move through the tree over time and will impact limbs, creating hazards as they are girdled and limbs die. Equipment needs to be cleaned and disinfected between cuts, making the removal slow work, and might just slow the progression of the canker but not stop it. As limbs are removed from the lower canopy, the higher limbs do not have the buffer of lower limbs to slow them down as they fall if they should fail.
- The tree was installed without serious consideration of its eventual size in proximity to the sidewalk and driveway. The tree has grown to a size that the root flare of the tree is causing the lifting of the sidewalk and driveway versus a specific root or roots that are doing the lifting. This is important because root pruning to mitigate current or future damage is not feasible because it is the root plate that is causing the lifting. Redwoods are often placed in locations where their eventual size outgrows the planting space. Staff would advise against shaving the root plate to achieve a depth to pour a new sidewalk or driveway because this would be detrimental to tree health and would likely result in regrowth of shoots and new roots that would likely damage a new sidewalk or driveway in two to three years.
- The tree is planted in close proximity to the water line, but this issue could be mitigated by routing the lines around the tree and roots. It is not an ideal location due to its proximity to the root flare and tree.
- The letter mentions effect on the sewer line, but the line appears to be to the left of the tree and a reasonable distance away from the tree (approximately 10'). Any issue with the sewer line is likely due to the age of the system and effective life of the system. It is likely cast iron or clay pipe. Trenching to install a new sewer line would have an impact to some degree on the tree health.

## **SUMMARY**

Staff is of the opinion that the redwood should be allowed to be removed due to the large root flare impacting the sidewalk and driveway. Root pruning to mitigate lifting would not result in a solution, and the tree would soon lift the sidewalk again, creating a trip hazard. This type of shaving and pruning of the root flare would be detrimental to the health of the tree and would further negatively impact the tree. In addition to the root flare issue, the canker is girdling and killing limbs that eventually become hazards. Staff recommends that the appeal be denied and the trees be allowed to be removed.

JT-JPdIM/2/CSD

221-10-10-18M-1

Attachment: 1. Appeal Packet

cc: F/c