

Dear Design Review Commissioners,

I am writing in regards to the proposed new two-story home at 446 S. Clark Ave to request post-construction protections for the coast live oak trees in the city's right of way.

The plans do not depict where the Engineering department's required street parking and swale will be located. In consideration of the long-term health of the oak trees, the specifics of how this proposed project will comply with the Shoulder Paving Policy SU-20B

([https://www.losaltosca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/public\\_works/page/27991/su-20a.pdf](https://www.losaltosca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/public_works/page/27991/su-20a.pdf))

should be detailed on the site plan before building permits are issued to ensure the parking space and swale are not located under the canopy of these protected trees.

Established oaks should not be watered in summer (see Caring for Oak Trees <https://www.losaltosca.gov/publicworks/page/tree-care>). All new landscape proposed under the oaks should be moved away from the trunks, outside of the critical root protection zones. This will protect the roots from digging, while also preventing oak root fungus caused by regular summer irrigation. Ideally this area of the landscape would have some barrier like small boulders or a small fence to prevent cars from parking next to the trunks. This has been an issue in the past where the current homeowners removed a small fence and parked cars head-in between the oaks. The soil still shows deep ruts when their cars' tires drove and parked within two feet of the trunk, leaving roots exposed. Pages A1.1 and C1 conflict as to how close plantings will be to the oak trunks. Before Planning signs off on the Building permit, oak protections should be verified.

Our neighborhood has dozens of large oak trees and other landscaping near the street is typical on San Luis and S. Clark. Thank you for helping to preserve the character of our neighborhood.

Please confirm that Mr. Ma will recuse himself from participating in this agenda item due to the conflict of interest with his role as project Architect. Presenting this project on behalf of the property owners would be seen as unfair due to his relationship with the other Commissioners. Any influence or participation he has regarding Commission decisions made on this project is simply unethical.

Thank you,

Jill Woodford  
542 Benvenue Ave  
Los Altos

## Caring for Oak Trees

Because Los Altos has a large number of oak trees, the Environmental Commission has provided some tips for their care:

- Do not water near mature oaks in the summer. Young oaks will need some water year round.
- Plant only drought-tolerant California native shrubs and ground covers within the root protection zone (RPZ), which is half as big as the area between the trunk and the drip line.
- Do not plant within 6 feet of the trunk. Limit the amount of digging you do in this area.
- Do not put extra soil on top of the RPZ or compact the soil in any way.
- Leave fallen leaf litter in place to act as a mulch.
- Provide adequate drainage around the tree. Basements and swimming pools that are downslope from oaks can act as dams, leaving oak roots too wet.
- Put all utilities in one trench, preferably bored 3 feet underground to avoid destroying feeder roots.
- Use decking rather than paving near oaks.
- Consult a certified arborist if the tree looks stressed or unhealthy or if you plan to do some home improvements that might impact it.
- To prevent Sudden Oak Death Syndrome, do not bring in plants that are possible carriers, do not bring in firewood from contaminated areas, and wash tires, boots and tools before leaving any contaminated areas.