



Sunnyvale

Appeal of the Denial of a Tree
Removal Permit
1365 Fisher Hawk Drive
PLNG-2026-0293

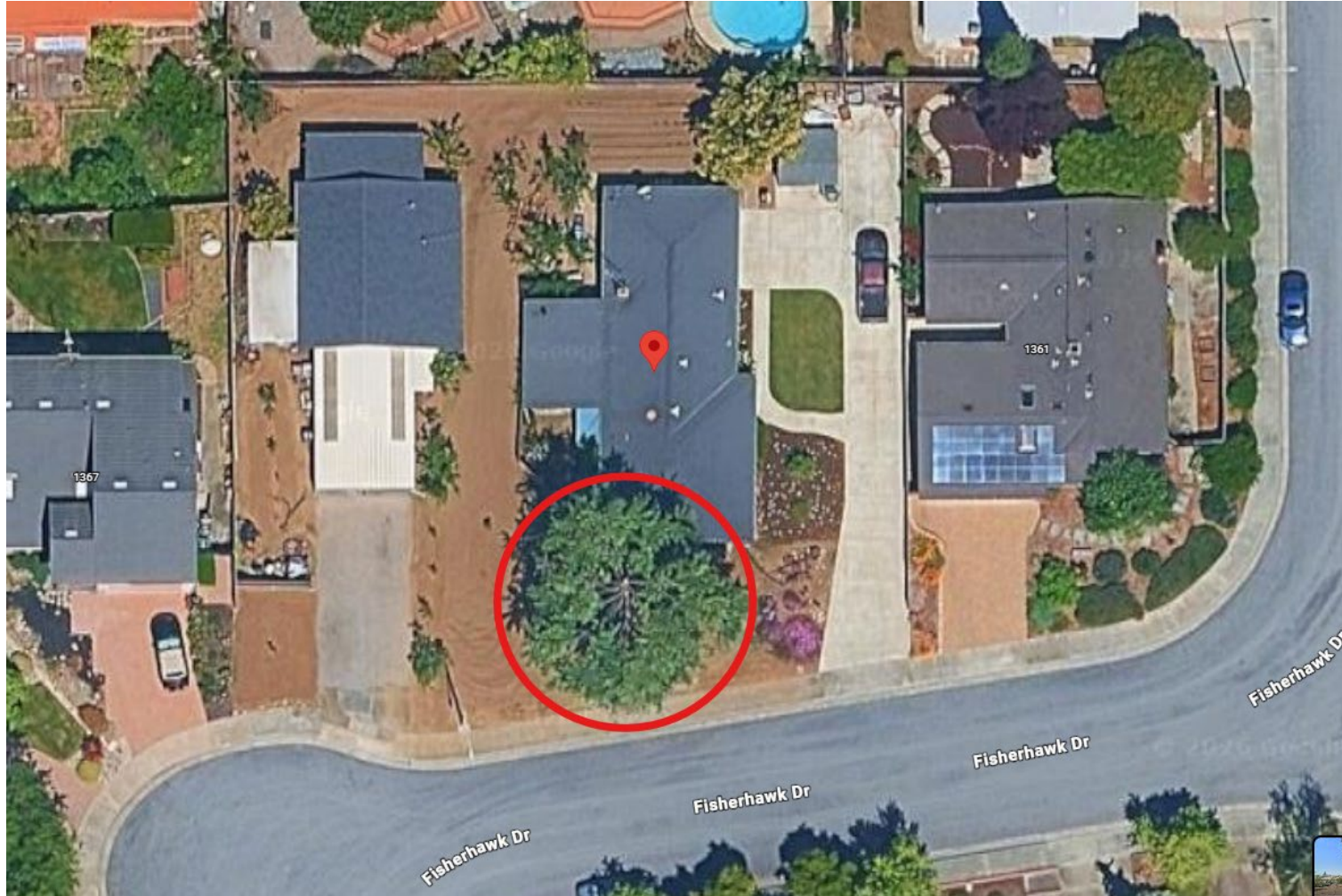
Gino Victoria, Assistant Planner
Planning Commission, August 10, 2026



Overview

- Request for removal of Deodar Cedar (100.5-in diameter) filed on April 28th with a Tree Removal Permit (without Arborist Report).
- City Arborist Site Visit conducted on....
- Decision Letter to deny the Tree Removal Permit issued on May 20th.
- Appeal of denial filed on May 28th.

Site Context and Photo



Subject Tree and Photos



Subject Tree and Photos



Basis of the Appeal

- Potential hazard if a limb breaks, falls, and damages the house.
- Restricts reasonable use of the property because the spread of tree roots impacts soil quality and reduces the owner's ability to plant fruit trees and vegetables.
- The Deodar Cedar is not native and was planted in the late 1970's for screening.
- The tree has outgrown its useful landscape value due to its inappropriate species, size and location relative to the existing structures on the property because it makes "25% of our soil unusable."

Staff Analysis

- The tree does not meet the criteria for removal found in SMC 19.94 Tree Preservation.
 - ◆ The tree is healthy and without structural defects.
 - ◆ The applicant has estimated its age to be approximately 50 years old. Deodar Cedars may have a life span of up to 100 years. *verify with Travis
 - ◆ Routine structural pruning and periodic inspections are appropriate measures to reduce branch weight, maintain clearance from nearby structures, and mitigate the potential for future limb failures.
 - ◆ Deodar Cedars are commonly planted in California and are adapted to the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone 9b. They are proven to be drought resistant.
 - ◆ The property is zoned R-0 for low-density residential use, as the primary use. Additionally, there is space elsewhere on the property to accommodate planting of fruit trees.

Staff Analysis (cont'd)

- For broader consideration, the tree provides significant environmental benefits:
 - ◆ Long-term carbon storage and annual carbon sequestration
 - ◆ Stormwater interception
 - ◆ Atmospheric cooling through shade and evapotranspiration
 - ◆ Improved air quality
 - ◆ Wildlife habitat
- These benefits cannot be replicated by newly planted replacement trees for a considerable period and at the same scale.

Staff Analysis (cont'd)

- The preservation of the tree is consistent with the General Plan.
 - ◆ Community Vision Goals
 - **II. ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY** - To maintain and enhance the appearance of Sunnyvale, and to distinguish it from surrounding communities, through the ...the maintenance of a healthy urban forest...
 - ◆ Land Use and Transportation
 - **Policy LT-2.4** Maintain and regularly review and update regulations and practices for the planting, protection, removal, replacement, and long-term management of large trees on private property and City-owned golf courses and parks.
 - **Policy LT-2.5** Recognize the value of protected trees and heritage landmark trees (as defined in City ordinances) to the legacy, character, and livability of the community by expanding the designation and protection of large signature and native trees on private property and in City parks.

Recommendation

Alternatives

1. Deny the appeal and uphold the decision of the Director of Community Development to deny the Tree Removal Permit.
2. Grant the appeal and approve the Tree Removal Permit with the Recommended Conditions of Approval.
3. Grant the appeal and approve the Tree Removal Permit with modified Conditions of Approval.

Staff Recommendation

Deny the appeal and uphold the decision of the Director of Community Development to deny the Tree Removal Permit based on the Recommended Findings for Denial in Attachment 2.

End

