

Celia Ramos and Richard Slechta
4381 Motor Avenue, Culver City, CA. 90232
(310)699-8238

December 21, 2020

Charles Herbertson, Public Works Director
c/o City Clerk, City of Culver City
9505 West Jefferson Blvd.
Culver City, CA 90232

Re: Request for Parkway Tree Removal – Appeal

Dear Mr. Herbertson,

We are appealing the denial of our application for removal of 2 parkway trees located at 4381 Motor Avenue, Culver City CA 90232, received on December 12, 2020 (postmarked December 10, 2020).

The reason for the denial did not address our reason for removal. The response read: “Minor changes to sidewalk can be repaired and mitigated with root pruning. Trees are both healthy and have moderate hazard rating.”

Our application, dated May 19, 2020, is based on the aggressive encroachment and invasion of roots into our new construction home. On our application, we stated the reason for removal:

We have 2 large Ficus trees that have aggressive root growth throughout the front yard of our new home construction. In less than a year from installing new landscaping, we have shallow Ficus roots 1.5” in diameter that were not present when we installed the landscaping in March 2019. This presents property damage risk for near and mid-term to our foundation, driveway and hard-scaping. We are willing to pay for removal of trees, replacement with 2 new oak trees as outlined in Urban Forest Master Plan and repair to damaged concrete sidewalk.

In our application, we provided supporting documentation (see Exhibit A and B) outlining that **in a span of 1.5 years, new root growth has encroached on our property, traveling 20+ feet from the tree to ~4 feet from our slab foundation.** These are new roots. During demolition, we cleared the property of old roots. Also, to install new utilities, we dug 4-foot deep trenches, severing and removing any found roots. **This discovery of new roots, nearly at our front door, demonstrates how aggressive the Ficus tree roots are on our property.**

In Carlson Park, Ficus trees are a known problem species with invasive roots causing extensive and repeated damage to residential properties, not just public sidewalks.

- On Motor Avenue, several Ficus trees have been removed.
- The original 1952 structure on our property had significant damage to the foundation, attributed to the Ficus roots that traversed underneath the property. This was the reason we took extra care clearing the property of roots prior to construction of our forever home.
- Soon after we filed our tree removal application, the very thing we are fear happened to David Lai @ 4311 Le Bourget. David discovered massive (at least 4” in diameter) Ficus roots had encroached under his driveway, continuing under their slab foundation (see Exhibit C). Their city tree was removed. David’s home was a recent construction, and the entire driveway had to be removed and replaced. Driveways can be replaced – foundations cannot.

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We request approval of our application/appeal. According to the application procedure notice and appeals (§ 9.08.210), we have met the criteria for removal of these trees. We want to be part of the solution by covering the cost to remove and replace the elderly Ficus trees with ones detailed in the Urban Forest Master Plan.

With this application, we are putting the city on notice of **probable (not possible) property damage due to encroaching roots from a known invasive tree species**. We believe it is a matter of time before these roots cause damage to our driveway and foundation, just as it did at 4311 Le Bourget. At such time, we are prepared to file a claim against Culver City for property damage and abatement.

Sincerely,

Celia Ramos and Richard Slechta

ATTACHEMENTS

- Page 3: Exhibit A
- Page 4: Exhibit B
- Page 5: Exhibit C
- Page 6: Denied application

EXHIBIT B

Ficus 1.5" diameter roots found encroached 20+ feet at location of Flags near the foundation.



2 ficus trees in front of new home at 4381 Motor Ave. Culver City.



EXHIBIT C

Neighbors Foundation & driveway root damage at 4311 Le Bourget Ave. Culver City.





Public Works Department
Maintenance Operations Division



CITY OF CULVER CITY

9505 West Jefferson Boulevard, Culver City, California 90232

Request for Parkway Tree Removal

(Pursuant to Culver City Municipal Code Section 9.08.210: See reverse side of this form)

Applicant: Richard Slechta
(Name)
4381 Motor Ave. Culver City, CA 90232
(Address)

Telephone 310-699-8238

Request for removal of 2 tree(s)

Location: In front of, and/or Left & right side of driveway apron
 On side of property located at _____
(Street Address)

Reason for removal:
(Criteria set forth in Culver City Municipal Code Section 9.08.210.C must be satisfied. See reverse side of this form.)

We have 2 large Ficus trees that have aggressive root growth throughout the front yard of our new home construction. In less than a year from installing new landscaping, we have shallow ficus roots 1.5" in diameter that were not present when we installed the landscaping in March 2019. This presents property damage risk for near and mid term to foundation, driveway and hard-scaping. We are willing to pay for removal of trees, replacement with 2 new oak trees as outlined in Urban Forest Master Plan and repair to damaged concrete sidewalk.

- Supporting documentation is attached.
- Request for removal (subject to availability of City resources and funds), OR
- Request for priority removal at applicant's expense.

PROCEDURE FOR TREE REMOVAL:

If applicant's request for tree removal is granted, removal of aforementioned tree(s) will be accommodated on a priority basis subject to availability of City resources and funds. Applicant has the option to be granted priority removal if they agree to pay for the removal at their expense. Applicant will be presented with a quote from City's tree trimming contractor prior to removal. Upon authorization of quote and payment by applicant, tree(s) will be removed by City's tree trimming contractor as their schedule permits.

FILING FEE:

The applicant shall post a non-refundable filing fee in the amount of \$75 along with this request form.

DECISION AND APPEAL:

The decision of the Public Works Director is final, unless appealed by the Applicant, a member of the City Council or an Interested Person. Appeals shall be submitted in writing and filed with the City Clerk within 10 days after the decision date identified in the notice of decision. (See CCMC Section 9.08.210.E and F for more information.)

Date May 19, 2020 Signature _____
(Applicant)

FOR CITY USE

Species of tree(s) to be removed: Ficus Microcarpa nitida

Tree(s) to be removed: 22/25 inches 25-30 feet ~56 feet
(Approx. diameter) (Approx. height) (Parkway width)

- Permission is hereby:
- Granted for removal (subject to availability of City resources and funds)
 - Granted for priority removal at applicant's expense
 - Denied

Date 11/19/2020 Signature _____

White: Property Owner/Applicant

Yellow: Public Works Director

Pink: Maintenance Operations Division

Minor damage to sidewalk can be repaired and mitigated with root pruning. Trees are both healthy and have moderate hazard ratings.