



# City of Sierra Madre

Office of the City Clerk

232 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.,

Sierra Madre, CA

(626) 355-7135

THE BROWN ACT PROVIDES THE PUBLIC WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE PUBLIC COMMENTS AT ANY PUBLIC MEETING.

THE FOLLOWING WRITTEN COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED IN ADVANCE OF THIS MEETING AND WILL BE POSTED ONTO THE CITY'S WEBSITE FOR PUBLIC ACCESS AND TRANSPARENCY. ANY ATTACHMENTS TO THE E-MAILS MAY BE PUBLICLY INSPECTED BY CONTACTING THE CITY CLERK OFFICE DURING NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS.

THE COMMENTS ATTACHED ARE SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC. THE CITY DOES NOT CONFIRM THE VERACITY OF THE STATEMENTS PROVIDED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

## Katelyn Huang

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**From:** Joshua Wolf  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 11, 2025 2:10 PM  
**To:** Katelyn Huang; Clare Lin  
**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] Public comment regarding 81 Victoria Lane

**From:** Anna Groehnert [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 11, 2025 2:03 PM  
**To:** Public Comment <publiccomment@sierramadrecal.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public comment regarding 81 Victoria Lane

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Hello,

I would like to submit a public comment for the December 18th Sierra Madre City Council meeting regarding the proposed development at 81 Victoria Lane in Sierra Madre, California.

As proposed, the development will include the removal of a healthy native California tree (coastal live oak) that is 100 plus years old. With an existing history of building over green spaces and natural landscapes in LA County, the City of Sierra Madre approving and moving forward with the removal of this tree would be incredibly disappointing and would set a precedent for developers to ask municipalities to consider removal of already incredibly scarce resources: public greenery, shade space, and mature native ecosystems of southern California. Issues with heat and lack of shade already affect residents, mainly children. Removal of this tree would exacerbate these issues at the expense of the community and for the developer's benefit.

The arborist's report describes the tree as being in good condition, with no visible signs of rot or decay. The report also cites buildings being in close proximity of the tree, with possible root intrusion, as necessitating removal of the tree. However, the site plans show that these buildings will be demolished so that reasoning isn't enough in itself to remove the tree. A native tree that is over 100 years old and in good health cannot truly be replaced or replanted and is certainly not worth removing for yet another 3 unit (all at market rate!!!) building in a single family residential neighborhood.

Furthermore, neither the arborists report nor the site plans (at least what is posted) state what kind of tree they plan on replanting. Would it be another coastal live oak or up to the developer?

I agree we need more housing but not at the expense of important historic resources that offer a unique benefit to the neighborhood. Even small developments like these destroy important pockets of nature for communities without providing any equitable benefit.

The developer has no interest in preserving shade and greenery because they do not live in the neighborhood. Approval of removal of the live oak tree would have a net negative effect on the immediate community and should not be considered.

Thank you for your time, attention, and consideration for this comment. Please confirm receipt of my public comment.

Thank you,

Anna Groehnert

## Katelyn Huang

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**From:** Joshua Wolf  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 11, 2025 8:00 AM  
**To:** Katelyn Huang  
**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] DRP 25-01 81 Victoria Lane (Destruction of Coast Live Oak)

**From:** Sara McDermott [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 10, 2025 9:25 PM  
**To:** Public Comment <publiccomment@sierramadeca.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] DRP 25-01 81 Victoria Lane (Destruction of Coast Live Oak)

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I learned that the City is considering sanctioning the destruction of a mature, hundred-year Coast Live Oak, in connection with the DRP 25-01 & DDP 25-03 - 81 Victoria Lane project (listed as a pending project here: [https://www.cityofsierramadre.com/cityhall/departments/planning\\_community\\_preservation\\_department/pending\\_projects/](https://www.cityofsierramadre.com/cityhall/departments/planning_community_preservation_department/pending_projects/)). I think it would be a tragedy for the City to destroy a native tree—one that, per the arborist's report, is in excellent shape—without very good reason. And simply redeveloping a property is not a good reason. Coast Live Oaks are keystone plants and crucial for a healthy urban ecosystem. One of this size and age is irreplaceable. I would urge the City to require this mature and healthy native tree to be preserved as a condition of approving any redevelopment plan.

Sara McDermott



California Wildlife Foundation/California Oaks, 201 University Avenue, H-43 Berkeley, CA 94710, (510) 763-0282

December 16, 2025

Sierra Madre Planning Commission  
232 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.  
Sierra Madre, CA 91024

Transmitted via Email: [publiccomment@sierramadreca.gov](mailto:publiccomment@sierramadreca.gov)

RE: 81 Victoria Lane, Design Review Permit 25-01

To the members of the Planning Commission:

The [California Oaks](#) program of the [California Wildlife Foundation](#) works to conserve oak ecosystems because of their critical role in sequestering carbon, maintaining healthy watersheds, providing plant and wildlife habitat, and sustaining cultural values. California Wildlife Foundation/California Oaks is writing this letter at the request a concerned neighbor regarding the proposed removal of a protected coast live oak at the 81 Victoria Lane property.

We understand that the proposed project is quite far along in the approval process and read in the 9/3/24 arborist report that a mitigation plan for the removal of the tree will be developed by a Department of Public Works Commission. We enclose, for your reference, a brochure recently issued by the Los Angeles Department of Planning, which encourages re-design of projects to keep existing trees standing. The coast live oak in question is a healthy tree. Its shade, habitat, beauty, oxygen production, carbon sequestration, improvement of soil conditions, air pollution control, and acorn production will not be adequately mitigated by planting of immature trees. Further, the economic value it adds to the property exceeds the \$77,000 estimated appraised value in the arborist's report.<sup>1</sup>

The climate crisis is a failure of imagination. As we dismantle our natural infrastructure, we are diminishing the resilience of our natural and built communities. The City of Sierra Madre has done a great deal of work to keep its native trees standing. Please consider working with the project applicant to incorporate the coast live oak into the new construction.

Sincerely,

Janet Cobb  
Executive Officer, California Wildlife Foundation  
[jcobb@californiawildlifefoundation.org](mailto:jcobb@californiawildlifefoundation.org)

Angela Moskow  
California Oaks Program Director  
[amoskow@californiaoaks.org](mailto:amoskow@californiaoaks.org)

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<sup>1</sup> See R.B. Standiford and T. Scotts' article, *Value of oak woodlands and open space on private property values in Southern California*, where they calculate if native oak stands were immediately adjacent to an owner's house, then the average home price would be an increase of almost 12 percent in the Santa Rosa Plateau area in southern Riverside County.

# LIVING AMONG OAKS?

## HOW TO RESTORE LOS ANGELES COUNTY OAK WOODLANDS BY STARTING IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

Dear Homeowner,

We need your help! The mountains, foothills, and valleys of Los Angeles County were once the site of majestic oak woodlands. These oak woodlands are the ancestral homelands of Indigenous Peoples who continue to steward oak woodlands through cultural practices. This pamphlet provides information to residents who are new to appreciating or to living among oaks: what benefits oak woodlands provide to both human and non-human communities, why oak woodlands are important to Los Angeles County's natural heritage, and how you can protect, restore, and preserve these amazing trees in the residential landscape.



Circa 1870 landscape painting by Hermann Herzog of oak trees in a valley near Los Angeles. Courtesy of the Robert B. Honeyman, Jr. Collection of Early Californian and Western American Pictorial Material. Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley.

The Los Angeles County General Plan, which guides future development in the County, sets a policy to ensure no net loss of existing oak and native woodlands. Oaks face many threats including drought, climate change, and development pressures. To help achieve this goal of conserving and perpetuating oak woodlands, homeowners can contribute by preserving existing oak trees while protecting and planting new oak seedlings, which will be the oak woodlands of the future.



Photo credit: Rosi Dagit



Photo credit: Rosi Dagit

Every spring, oak seedlings sprout in many backyards, planted by squirrels, scrub jays, woodpeckers, and other wildlife. Homeowners can contribute to the Los Angeles County goal of no net loss by taking some simple steps :

- » **Re-design building projects** to preserve existing oaks
- » **Allow oak seedlings to grow** under and around oaks
- » **Integrate oaks** into drought-tolerant landscape designs
- » **Locate structures, driveways, and paths away from existing oaks** to minimize ground disturbance near roots
- » **Utilize mulch** to protect soil moisture around oak seedlings and saplings
- » **Protect oak seedlings from wildlife** with tree tubes, milk cartons, and above- and below-ground wire fencing to prevent them from being eaten



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As your oak seedling matures you will see a greater variety of birds, insects, and other wildlife appear in your backyard. Oak trees provide an outsized contribution to the local ecosystem where they grow. They provide food and shelter to thousands of species of plants, wildlife, and insects. They improve the air we breathe and the quality of water we drink. They hold water in our watersheds to keep the soil from drying out, recharge groundwater, help to stabilize soil and prevent erosion, lower the air and soil temperature, and provide cooling shade, while enhancing views and property values. In addition, some species of oak have fire-resistant qualities and when maintained following guidelines from Los Angeles County Fire and Planning, may block embers from igniting structures.



To slow climate change, greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced. Oak trees have dense wood which can capture or “sequester” more carbon than many other types of trees. Oak trees can also live for centuries, sequestering carbon for centuries. When mature oak trees are cut down, the carbon that was stored in the trees and soil will begin to release back into the atmosphere, contributing again to climate change. This is another reason why preserving mature oak trees is just as important as protecting and planting new ones.

## WILDLIFE THAT RELY ON OAK HABITAT



**California Sister** (*Adelpha californica*)

Photo credit: © 2007 Ron Wolf. All Rights Reserved



**Western Tiger Swallowtail** (*Papilio rutulus*)

Photo credit: © 2011 Christopher L. Christie



**Acorn Woodpecker** (*Melanerpes formicivorus*)

Photo credit: Hayley Crews



**Gold Hunter's Hairstreak** (*Satyrium auretorum*)

Photo credit: © Chris Mallory



**California Scrub Jay** (*Aphelocoma californica*)

Photo credit: Chris Orr / Great Backyard Bird Count



**Nuttall's Woodpecker** (*Picoides nuttallii*)

Photo credit: Mick Thompson

Oak trees are regulated in Los Angeles County. One way to save time and avoid fees is to integrate oak trees into your project design and avoid removing any oak trees. To encroach upon or cut down an oak tree, an oak tree permit is required. The permitting process will include a counseling session with a planner to help locate and design the project to prevent or minimize impacts to oak trees. Issuance of oak tree permits is not automatic and may include a public hearing for any impact to oak trees. Mitigation may include planting more oak trees to offset oak tree impacts and/or removals that are permitted. Mitigation may also include an appraisal of the value of the oak tree and payment of this amount into an oak conservation fund to ensure no net loss of Los Angeles County oak woodlands.

Preserving and restoring Los Angeles County oak woodlands can begin in your own backyard. By preserving existing oak trees, and protecting and planting new oak seedlings, you can become an OAK TREE STEWARD today!

To learn more about the importance and benefits of oak trees, and Los Angeles County's oak tree protections, including regulations in the Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Program and the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan, contact us:

**OAKTREE@PLANNING.LACOUNTY.GOV**  
**BIT.LY/OAKTREEPROGRAM**  
**(213) 974-6411**

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## Joshua Wolf

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**From:** admin  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 17, 2025 6:45 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment -Tentative Tract Map 65348

<table border="0" cellspacing="0" cellpadding="0" align="left" width="100%"> <td width="100%" style="width:100.0%;background:#783973;padding:5.25pt 3.75pt 5.25pt 11.25pt;word-wrap:break-word" cellpadding="7px"> CAUTION: This message is from an EXTERNAL SENDER - be CAUTIOUS, particularly with links and attachments.

Planning Commission meeting December 18, 2025

It is important that the Tentative 65348 Tract Map be very specific that any of the land not being divided into the 9 building lots be Zoned 0.

In the case of the large subdivision at 1 Carter, there were two parts that were left as open space to be monitored by a HOA. The HOA never materialized, the bank defaulted on the taxes and as the property changed different developers over time it went to the county for back taxes.

Those lots, Zoned 0, were bought up by poorly advised individuals who now come to the city Planning Department to see if they can't get the zoning changed. It is listed for sale at varying times and would be buyers arrive at the Planning Department with the same question.

Zero zoning is intentional as a fire buffer or as a consequence of steep terrain as referenced in the Hillside Ordinance.

Sincerely,  
Caroline Brown, Sierra Madre, CA  
Participant in two Hillside Management Zone Committees

## Joshua Wolf

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**From:** deb sheridan  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 18, 2025 11:10 AM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Ginko Stonehouse Project

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Dear Commissioners,

I'm sorry I can't attend the rescheduled meeting tonight. I find it ironic that about 20 people attended the Open Space workshop, to discuss how we as a City will comply with the new State law, requiring more open space, and to protect wildlife corridors, while you are discussing the Environmental Impact Report of yet another development which will take away some of that very open space and corridor.

I believe what would help with this thorny problem, are the following:

1. Fences - please ban them, or require minimal height of fences. Since the fires, we all have had wildlife running through our yards.
2. Lighting - excessive lighting actually harms wildlife. We have a dark skies ordinance in our general plan.
3. Nesting birds - please protect our bird population but limiting the time of construction.
4. "Unbuildable space" in the 9 acres - please make sure that appears in the EIR. This will help maintain the wildlife corridor.

Thank you for serving on the Planning Commission,

Deb Sheridan  
Valle Vista Drive

## Joshua Wolf

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**From:** Jean Pfaffinger  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 18, 2025 2:56 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Ginkgo Stonehouse Development

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I am the owner of 891 East Grandview, the property located immediately to the west of the Ginkgo Stonehouse Development.

I have several requests related to the work to be done as outlined below in EIR report.

- 1) That any grading and drainage structures done on the west edge of the property be reviewed with me prior to digging particularly as regards to my 100 year old carriage house located on the property line.
- 2) That use of heavy equipment be limited to 5 days a week M-F and not carried on on Saturdays. Two days without substantial noise and dust does not seem to be an unreasonable accommodation.

## Joshua Wolf

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**From:** Amy Wasson  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 18, 2025 2:58 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Ginko Stonehouse Project: December 18th Meeting

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I have concerns regarding the abovementioned project regarding the following: impact on the water supply, wildlife habitat, and wildlife corridor. There is also the very real concern of building is a high-risk fire zone. Please take these issues into consideration.

Thank you,

Amy Wasson  
Sierra Madre Resident