



Council Agenda Report

From: Darren Nash, City Planner

Subject: Deferred from the April 7 2026 City Council Meeting - Oak Tree Removal Permit 26-05– Request to Remove Oak Tree No. 903 in the Olsen South Chandler Specific Plan (OTR26-05, P26-0028)

CEQA Determination: An Environmental Impact Report (SCH 2019011065) was adopted for the Olsen South Chandler Specific Plan (Res. 20-024) including Exhibit B to the EIR, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Mitigation measure BIO-4(b) outlines required mitigation for oak trees removed to construct the OSCSP. Should the oak tree removal request be denied that action would not be a project under the California Environmental Quality Act, pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15060, subd. (c)(2)-(3), 15378.

Date: April 21, 2026

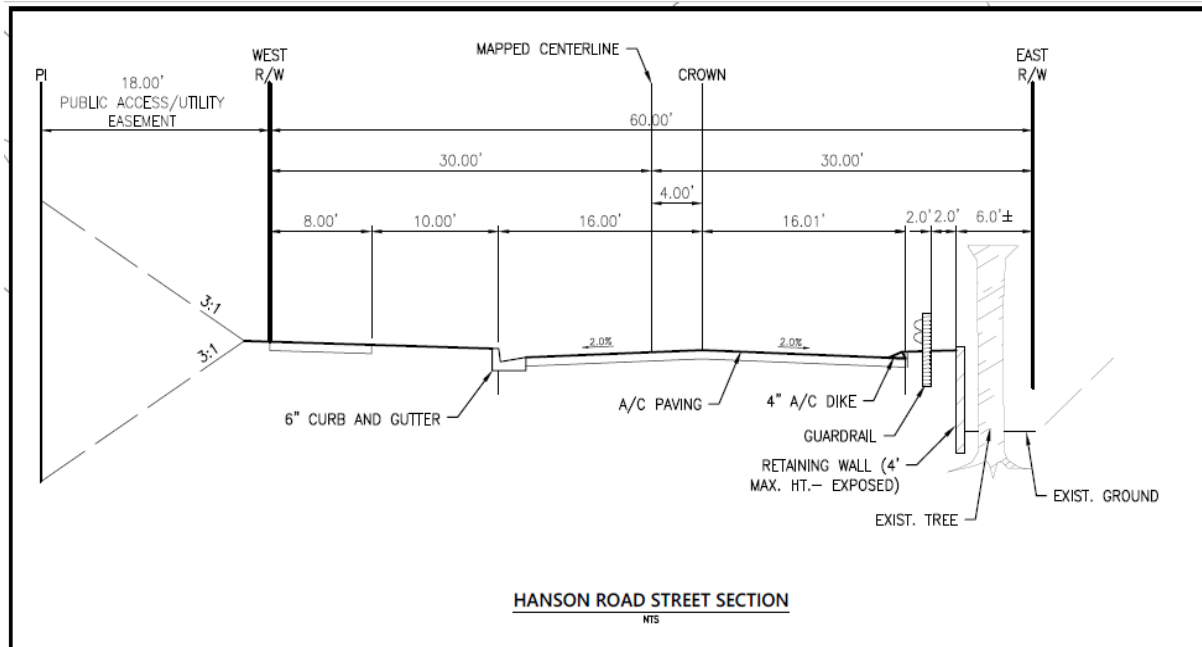
Facts

1. In February 2020, the City of El Paso de Robles (“City”) City Council approved the Olsen South Chandler Specific Plan (“OSCSP”) (“Res. 20-024”), allowing construction of one thousand two hundred ninety-three (1,293) housing units as part of a master planned development.
2. The OSCSP requires existing streets to be improved to City standards, including the existing Hansen Road on the project’s eastern boundary.
3. Alhouse and Meade, Inc. on behalf of Olsen 212 (“Applicant”), have applied for an oak tree removal (“P26-0028/OTR 26-05”), requesting to remove Tree No. 903, a forty-one (41)-inch diameter Valley Oak tree (*Quercus lobata*).
4. Tree No. 903 is located within the Hansen Road right of way, along the eastern edge of the OSCSP boundary, along the eastern edge of Planning Area (“PA”) 17 within the OSCSP (See location maps below.)



- Pursuant to the OSCSP, Olsen 212 is required to improve Hanson Road with curb, gutter, sidewalk, and new paving. The excavation and construction to build the road will impact Tree No. 903. Rick Engineering, project civil engineer, provided a preliminary design (see cross section below) that indicates that the road would require approximately four (4) feet of fill dirt and a retaining wall within one(1) foot of the trunk to preserve Tree No. 903 and build the road.

Cross Section of road, wall and tree



- Certified Arborist, Sophie Kroesche of Althouse and Meade on behalf of Olsen 212, evaluated Tree No. 903 and provided an Arborist Report (See Exhibit A of Attachment 1). The report concludes that on a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the best, Tree No. 903 has a health rating of 3 (*some past failures, some pest or structural defects that may be mitigated with pruning*). The Arborist Report indicates that the tree is in moderate to poor health, with significant rot at the base of trunk and roots, and Tree No. 903 has signs of stress in the canopy. In addition to the existing health of the tree, the Arborist report indicates that impacts to the tree from the construction of Hanson Road would severely impact the tree. As a result of the tree being in poor health and the anticipated impacts to the tree from road construction, the Arborist recommends removal of the tree.
- Under Paso Robles Municipal Code section 10.01.050(C), an oak tree is considered "healthy" unless the director determines it to be "clearly dead or diseased beyond correction."
- Paso Robles Municipal Code section 10.01.050.D.2 requires the Director of Community Development to prepare a report for the City Council's consideration of, among other things, "The necessity of the requested action to allow construction of improvements or otherwise allow reasonable use of the property for the purpose for which it has been zoned. In this context, it shall be the burden of the person seeking the permit to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the director that there are no reasonable alternatives to the proposed design and use of the property. Every reasonable effort shall be made to avoid impacting oak trees, including but not limited to use of custom building design and incurring extraordinary costs to save oak trees".

Options

1. Take no action;
2. Approve OTR 26-05 requesting the removal of Tree No. 903 based on the Arborist's determination that the tree is in poor health and the proposed improvements for Hanson Road will cause significant impacts to Tree No. 903 and require mitigation trees as required by the project EIR mitigation measures;
3. Deny OTR 26-05 requesting the removal of Tree No. 903 and direct the applicant to provide a design for Hanson Road that accommodates the road and protects and preserves Tree No. 903, in a manner approved by the City Engineer and Arborist, subject to mitigation measures for oak protection as required by the project EIR;
4. Provide alternative direction to staff.

Analysis and Conclusions

The Olsen-South Chandler Specific Plan (OSCSP) requires the developer to improve Hanson Road as part of the development of the Vinedo project. The project engineer has determined Tree No. 903 is within the City right-of-way for Hansen Road. In 2020, City Council approved Resolution 20-024, allowing the removal of 49 oak trees. Tree No. 903 was not approved for removal at that time and requires approval by the City Council.

Althouse and Meade evaluated Tree No. 903 and rated it a '3,' indicating that the tree is in poor health. Rick Engineering has provided a conceptual design for road improvements which propose constructing a retaining wall within 1-foot of the tree trunk. Building a retaining within 1-foot of the tree has a high probability of causing significant damage to the tree. The Arborist recommends removal of the tree based on the poor health and impacts from construction of the road improvements.

Road Design – Preserving Tree No. 903

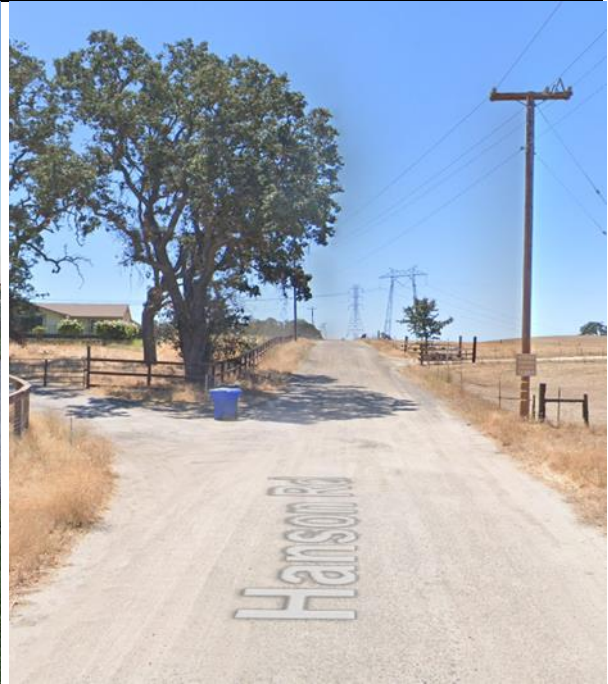
The cross section provided by Rick Engineering is conceptual. If it is determined that the Tree No. 903 is to be preserved, Rick Engineering must provide a design of the road around the tree. The design must be designed in a manner that is acceptable to the City Engineer as well as the project Arborist. It may be necessary to curve the road west to provide more distance between the tree and the road. Designs have not been completed to determine what necessary measures are required to accomplish both tree preservation and building the road. The retaining wall in the right-of-way will also create a new maintenance obligation for either the City or the OSCSP Home Owners Association. This maintenance obligation would require additional negotiations with the Applicant.

Hanson Road Property Owners

The City has been contacted by property owners that live on the east side of Hanson Road (outside of City limits). Shaylee and Jeremy Santoro (220 Hanson Rd.) and Dennis Camp (110 Hason Rd.) have communicated to City Staff that they would like to see Tree No. 903 remain. The tree is located along the Santoros' property frontage, next to their driveway. The Santoros have challenged the current survey marker that indicates the tree and their existing fencing is in the Hanson Road right of way. They believe their property line is on the west side of Tree No. 903. They have indicated they have hired a surveyor to verify where their property line is located in relation to Hanson Road. To date, the City has not received any survey information from the Santoros that would contradict the project engineer's determination that Tree No. 903 is in the City's right-of-way.



Photo taken from Santoro driveway looking north.



Hanson Road looking north at Tree No. 903

Olsen 212 and Rick Engineering have been notified of the neighbor concerns and are prepared respond to any questions at the City Council meeting related to the survey locations.



Tree No. 906

Tree No. 906 is a Valley Oak located just north and east of Tree No. 903 on the Santoros' property. The critical root zone (CRZ) for Tree No. 906 extends into the road right of way. Excavation to construct the road will impact Tree No. 906, though the anticipated impacts will be less severe than those to Tree No. 903. The road design must consider Tree No. 906 and the project Arborist must be involved with the

design to ensure that the tree protection measures outlined in the OSCSP Environmental Impact Report (“EIR”) are met.

Fiscal Impact

There is no direct fiscal impact on the City from this action.

CEQA

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Recommendation

Approve Resolution 26-XXX, authorizing the removal of Oak Tree No. 903 based on the Arborist’s determination that the tree is in poor health and the proposed improvements for Hanson Road will cause significant impacts to Tree No. 903, and meets finding 10.01.050.D.1, based on the finding that the condition of the tree with respect to general health, status as a public nuisance, danger of falling, proximity to existing or proposed structures, or interference with utility services, and require mitigation trees as required by the project EIR mitigation measures

Attachments

1. Resolution 26-XXX(A) - Approving Removal
 - a. Exhibit A – Site Plan
 - b. Exhibit B – Althouse and Meade Arborist Report
2. Resolution 26-XXX(B) - Denying Removal
 - a. Exhibit A – Site Plan
 - b. Exhibit B – Althouse and Meade Arborist Report