

Dawn Ross**Subject:** FW: Response to City Public Comment Form**From:** OpenForms <noreply@openforms.com>**Sent:** Monday, March 16, 2026 9:55 AM**To:** City Clerk <cityclerk@claremontca.gov>**Subject:** Response to City Public Comment Form

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Response to City Public Comment Form

Contact Information	
Name	Jeffery Smith
Street Address	[REDACTED]
City, State Zip Code	Claremont
Email Address	[REDACTED]
Phone Number	[REDACTED]
Meeting and Agenda Item Information	
Select the Meeting Type	City Council Meeting
Meeting Date	03/18/2026
Topic or Agenda Item	Tree Committee

Public Comment	<p>347 Indiana Ave;</p> <p>This tree is actually on the Michigan Dr side as the house is a corner one. We have much wild life in these tress; Owls of special interest to me. Michigan drive is a pine tree street; that is it's beauty.</p> <p>This tree is ok; I took a close look myself. The new neighbors (seniors, in their 80's) at this resident has cut down trees in his yard which is his choice. However, just because it is an inconvenience to this new neighbor, or messy as it is for every one, that is Not reason to take down.</p> <p>Also, just a few house up the street on Michigan, a request to take down a public pine was DENIED; should be the same.</p> <p>There is No public hazard to this public tree as determined a while back when all the sidewalks here were repaired.</p> <p>We NEED TO PROTECT OUT URBAN FOREST!!!</p>
Document or Image	

Subject: Request for Tree Removal, 347 Indiana Ave.

This document is intended to highlight the sharp contrast between the City's SUMMARY of the issue, published in the March 18 meeting Agenda, and the residents' "Corrected SUMMARY," submitted to you on March 14. Please note that the city SUMMARY never mentions the house nor the medical issue, which constitute the entire basis for the residents' request.

City's SUMMARY:

SUMMARY

The property owner at 347 Indiana Avenue is requesting the removal of one City-owned Canary Island pine tree located within the right-of-way in front of the property. The resident cites risk to economic and personal safety, stating that the tree's height and size and existing wind patterns could lead it to being blown over in a wind event. The property owner's request is included as Attachment A.

Resident's SUMMARY:

SUMMARY: The new owners of 347 Indiana Ave. are requesting removal of 1 of the 4 mature city-owned Canary Island Pine trees (CIPs) on the right-of-way on their property. The residents cite endangerment to their personal safety. They state they have become aware of the city's experience with CIP blow-over during Santa Ana wind events, including 70 CIPs blown over in a single Santa Ana event, and 7 CIPs lost in their neighborhood in the past 5 years. They state the tree's close proximity to their house (29 ft.), combined with existing Santa Ana wind patterns (see map), make it physically impossible for this tree to fall anywhere other than directly on top of their house. The residents state they are elderly (83, 73), disabled, and struggle to walk, and the sleep deprivation caused by this threat increases their risk of falling. A fall could prove fatal for the wife, who suffers from a rare bone disease which causes her bones to be so brittle that stepping off a curb in the Village a few years ago caused her left leg to snap in half. The couple state that the arborists' reports do not address the issue of healthy trees blowing over in strong winds. The couple pledge to present medical records to verify their medical conditions. The couple pledges to pay for the entire cost of tree removal and replacement out of their personal savings, so that the cost to the city is zero.

March 17, 2026

Tree Removal and Replacement Request, 347 Indiana Ave:

1. Recently we discovered Claremont has a big problem with its pine trees and Santa Ana wind events—seventy (70) blown over in a single wind event, eight (8) lost on our short street in 5 years, five (5) lost in one event last year, etc.
2. We discovered that one of our four street trees is located directly, on a straight line, between the direction of Santa Ana wind origin and our house, and that our house is only 29 feet downwind from this tree.
3. This threat, when Santa Ana winds are forecast, makes sleep impossible. We are both disabled, and trying to walk sleep-deprived greatly increase our risk of falling. While I might survive a bad fall, my wife likely would not.
4. My wife suffers from a rare bone disease. Just stepping off a curb in the village a few years ago caused her left leg to snap in half. The surgeries needed on both legs was followed by hospitalization for 3 weeks. This is truly a life and death matter! We cannot spend the rest of our lives this way!
5. We know this is our problem, not the city's, so we pledge to cover the entire cost of removal and replacement out of our savings, paid in advance. The cost to the city will be ZERO!
6. Finally, a comment about appearances, as appearances matter. The Department knows now that this is medically a life and death matter, and that fixing it will cost the city nothing. There are 25,100 trees in our urban forest, and we are talking about only ONE. Should our request be denied, how could the denial appear to be anything other than willful cruelty? If this matter moves up through the appeals process, why would any department want to appear in that light?

Richard Suter, [REDACTED]

“Urban forest” or “urban forestry”

means the ecology of native and nonindigenous plantings creating a forest in the human living environment, and emphasizing the practice of wise, professional, planned management of all tree resources within an urban area for multiple use and benefit of the entire community.
(07-04; 12-04; 14-07)

§ 12.26.020 Duties of Community and Human Services Commission.

The Community and Human Services Commission serves as the City’s tree advisory board. The commission shall:

A. Study the problems and determine the needs of the City in connection with its tree planting and maintenance programs; establish the designated street tree list; approve major changes to the designated street tree list; and hold discussions of tree-related issues at public meetings.

B. Hear and determine appeals from staff decisions regarding street tree removal. The Commission may grant an appeal if it finds that the staff decision would result in a burden on the property owner that substantially outweighs the benefit to the public. The Commission’s decision may be appealed to the City Council if a written appeal, setting forth the grounds, is filed with the City Clerk within 10 days of the Commission decision. If no timely appeal is filed, the decision shall be final.

(07-04; 12-04; 21-06)

§ 12.26.030 Duties of Director of Community Services.

The powers and duties of the Director of Community Services, or designee, under this chapter are as follows:

A. To designate a particular place within the City easement or on any City-owned property where a City tree will be planted.

B. To approve minor changes to the designated street tree list; to recommend to the Community and Human Services Commission any major changes to the designated street tree list; and to determine if any change to the designated street tree list qualifies as “major” or “minor.”

C. To draft a tree policy manual that states policies and procedures concerning the selection, planting, maintenance and removal of trees in public places to promote a viable urban forest.

D. To grant or deny the issuance of permits in accordance with the terms of this chapter.

(14-07; 21-06)

§ 12.26.040 Duties of private property owners.

The duties of any owner of private property whose property has a City easement on it for street purposes are as follows:

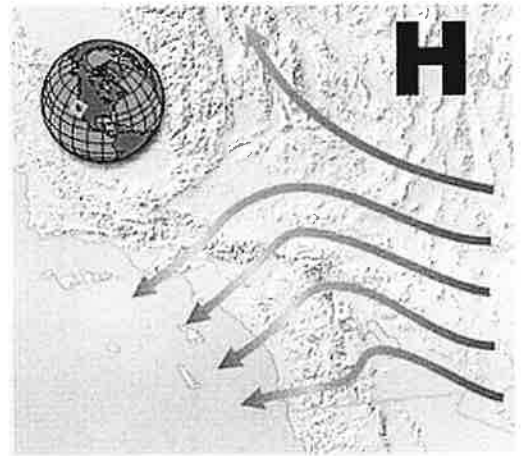
A. To accept, protect and provide adequate water to any City tree planted in the public easement over his or her property, and not to interfere with the City’s provision of water to such trees, whether by water truck or other means;

B. To notify the Community Services Department of any suspected tree hazards or maintenance needs of any City tree on his or her property;

C. To remove any vines from City street trees planted in the easement over his or her property;

D. To remove all fallen leaves and other deadfall from any City tree planted in the public easement over his or her property, and to properly dispose of the deadfall in an appropriate waste

Santa Ana winds originate from high-pressure airmasses over the Great Basin and upper Mojave Desert. Any low-pressure area over the Pacific Ocean, off the coast of California, can change the stability of the Great Basin High, causing a pressure gradient that turns the synoptic scale winds southward down the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada and into the Southern California region.^[9] According to one meteorology journal, "a popular rule of thumb used by forecasters is to measure the difference in pressure between the Los Angeles International Airport and Las Vegas; a difference of 9 millibars (0.27 inches of mercury) is enough to support a Santa Ana event."^[5] Dry air flows outward in a clockwise spiral from the high pressure center. This dry airmass sweeps across the deserts of eastern California toward the coast, and encounters the towering Transverse Ranges, which separate coastal Southern California from the deserts.^[10] The airmass, flowing from high pressure in the Great Basin to a low pressure center off the coast, takes the path of least resistance by channeling through the mountain passes to the lower coastal elevations, as the low pressure area off the coast pulls the airmass offshore.^[11]



This map illustration shows a characteristic high-pressure area centered over the Great Basin, with the clockwise anticyclone wind flow out of the high-pressure center giving rise to a Santa Ana wind event as the airmass flows through the passes and canyons of Southern California, manifesting as a dry northeasterly wind.

Mountain passes which channel these winds include the Soledad Pass, the Cajon Pass, and the San Gorgonio Pass, all well known for increasing Santa Anas as they are funneled through.^[5] This increase in speed, often to near-gale force or above is due to the Venturi effect of the passes. At the same time, as the air descends from higher elevation to lower, the temperature and barometric pressure increase adiabatically, warming about 5 °F for each 1,000 feet it descends (1 °C for each 100 m).^[12] Relative humidity decreases with the increasing temperature. The air has already been dried by orographic lift before reaching the Great Basin, as well as by subsidence from the upper atmosphere, so this additional warming often causes relative humidity to fall below 10 percent.^[13]

The end result is a strong, warm, and very dry wind blowing out of the bottom of mountain passes into the valleys and coastal plain. These warm, dry winds, which can easily exceed 40 miles per hour (64 km/h), can severely exacerbate brush or forest fires, especially under drought conditions.

During Santa Ana conditions it is typically hotter along the coast than in the deserts,^[14] with the Southern California coastal region reaching some of its highest annual temperatures in autumn rather than summer. Frigid, dry arctic air from Canada tends to create the most intense Santa Ana winds.^[15]

While the Santa Anas are katabatic, they are not Föhn winds. These result from precipitation on the windward side of a mountain range which releases latent heat into the atmosphere which is then warmer on the leeward side (e.g., the Chinook or the original Föhn).

If the Santa Anas are strong, the usual day-time sea breeze may not arise, or develop weak later in the day because the strong offshore desert winds oppose the on-shore sea breeze. At night, the Santa Ana Winds merge with the land breeze blowing from land to sea and strengthen because the inland desert

Comments on request to remove the Canary Island pine at 347 Indiana Avenue, S2.

1. The publication *Street Trees Recommended for Southern California* has different recommendations for parkway width in each of its three editions. The narrowest recommendation is 7-foot wide parkways. This recommendation is based on potential for sidewalk and curb disruption, not on potential for whole tree failure. While the parkway at the site is approximately 3 feet wide, there is no significant pavement uplift at this time. I did note that the sidewalk slab directly opposite the tree is newer than the original pavement, but it doesn't appear to be a recent installation.
2. Tree stability in winds is chiefly a character of the architecture of the root systems of container-grown nursery trees. Root-bound trees will have stability issues when they mature. Claremont's trees have been subjected to two severe wind storms, one that occurred in January 2022 and another in January 2025. The subject tree was tested by the storms, and survived both without lifting either curb or sidewalk during either storm, while other trees in the neighborhood failed. This suggests that it came from the nursery with adequate root architecture.
3. The letter of January 14, 2026, tells the reader that the property was "newly purchased". It should be noted that the street tree was not a "hidden defect" of the property at the time of sale.

I did note that the section of sidewalk on the west side of the trunk has been replaced. It does not appear to be recent, but the texture of its surface is not like that of adjacent sections. I suggest that this section should be removed to allow examination of the roots to determine if any were cut or otherwise damaged in the operation.

Frederick Roth, Ph.D.

Faculty Emeritus, Cal Poly Pomona

Qualified Tree Risk Assessor

Certified Urban Forester (Society of American Foresters)

Certified Arborist (International Society of Arboriculture)

Honorary Life Member, Western Chapter ISA

Dawn Ross

From: Jeffery Smith [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 24, 2026 9:20 AM
To: Dawn Ross
Subject: please confirm receipt; attention Commissioner, reason 347 Indiana 91711; please deny tree removal

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Hello Commissioner,

I live on Michigan dr very close to subject address.

We bought our house 3 years ago because of the beauty of the Pines, the wildlife that the trees bring, and the environment created by them.

If I can save 1 healthy tree at a time from being removed without Proper substantiation to do so, I will speak up, as now.

No disrespect intended, I am just using logic.

The new owner of 347 Indiana rented a house for eleven years, literally 2 houses away. They were aware of the Preexisting Pine issues but still proceeded to buy that house. Also preexisting was their Age and Disabilities. In my opinion, this negates an approval of tree removal even at their own cost. They do not own that parkway.

We have other seniors and disabled neighbors, some new resident and others long time ones, that love the esthetics as described. So 1 tree is a big deal as it can start a domino effect for claim of personal issues. We all chose to live here!

We all deal with the good and bad of the trees, and inconvenience is also not a substantiating reason.

It is important to restate that this is a healthy tree. Just because you can afford to pay to take it done using a false premise why should not stand.

I will not be a alive to see this type of majesty of the pines again and nor with the replacements that might be planted.

Protect our Ecological system.

Please deny request.

Thank you,

Jeffery Smith
[REDACTED]