

PMM
DRH Meeting 5/13/26
RTC 26-468
Item 2

From: Tracie Johnson <johnson.tracie@rocketmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2026 2:33 PM

To: Daniel Sobczak <dsobczak@Santaclaraca.gov>; Cindy Baldanzi <cindyb@finelinegd.com>; Mayor and Council <MAYORANDCOUNCIL@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Manager <Manager@santaclaraca.gov>

Subject: Re: Letter in opposition of removing Heritage native Oak tree at 108 Brookside Ave 5/13/26

On Wednesday, May 13, 2026 at 02:29:18 PM PDT, Tracie Johnson <johnson.tracie@rocketmail.com> wrote:

Dear Mr. Sobczak,

Here is the letter for todays meeting at 4pm. See you then.

I am sharing this with City Council and the City manager because I want to explore changing City Code (lack of) to strengthen the protection of Heritage Trees, and especially our native Oaks that are critical habitat for wildlife in Santa Clara Valley. The letter is one page with a second page of photos and relevant resources I found online.

Regards,
Tracie Johnson
220 Bel Ayre Drive

<https://www.santaclaraca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/77296/637874465116930000>

May 12, 2026

PLN26-00121
108 Brookside Ave
Santa Clara, CA 95050

Dear Mr. Kurupati and Ms. Bhandari,

Congratulations on your new home here in the South of Forest Neighborhood of Santa Clara. I have lived here for 27 years and have served on the Board of the South of Forest Neighborhood Association (SOFNA) for the majority of that time. And I would love to share with you some of the history of this neighborhood in the future.

My wife Jane and I bought our home on Bel Ayre Drive in 1999 because it was close to work, because of the large lot, and because Jane loves to garden. We are also avid bird watchers and over the years have come to realize that the best way to support the conservation of birds was to include native plants in our garden. We are known for the large field of poppies that dominates our front yard in the spring. We are also known for our Christmas Decoration display of over 160 vintage plastic snowmen, so we chose plants that stay relatively low to the ground.

Brookside Ave. has several native heritage size trees including several Coastal Live Oaks. Oaks are especially important because they are keystone species that support over 400 hundred other native plants and animals. The tree in your backyard is one such precious specimen that is probably at least 100 years old. It is not replaceable.

You are part of our urban forest in "The South of Forest" Neighborhood. Brookside Ave is especially important as it is bordered by Parkway Park on the West which is part of this continuous forest canopy. Several other Estate homes that have recently been built on Brookside Ave. have incorporated the existing trees. 63, 143 and 159 Brookside are the best examples where the architects preserved the trees to enhance the calm, peaceful ambiance of this neighborhood. And as well as improving aesthetics and the environment, trees can increase home valuations by upwards of 15%.

I hope you can carve time out of your busy schedules to take a walk down your quiet street to the park and enjoy nature. And if you hear a screech, and look above you might be lucky enough to see one of our resident Coopers Hawks. I just saw one a few days ago.

The plans I saw for your home are beautiful. It is a very classic design that I would expect to see in Palo Alto or Menlo Park. I looked at the architect's website. She does beautiful work. Please consider giving her the opportunity to pair your home design with the priceless gem towering in your back yard.

I hope you can share in the joy Jane and I feel when we see the Western Bluebirds foraging for insects on our "lawn", or the Lesser Gold Finches and Anna's Hummingbirds drinking and bathing in our fountain, or the Chestnut-backed Chickadees gleefully chattering with each other as they dart among the branches of the heritage Modesto Ash in our back yard. Please consider joining us in being stewards of our urban forest.

Regards,

Tracie Johnson
220 Bel Ayre Drive

Please see references on the following page.

Internet photos:



Western Blue Bird



Lesser Gold Finch



Anna's Hummingbird



Chestnut-backed Chickadee

<https://urbancanopyblog.com/urban-benefits/trees-and-property-value-connection>

National Wildlife Federation article on Oak Trees.

<https://blog.nwf.org/2024/05/building-wildlife-havens-one-acorn-oak-at-a-time/>

The first five shrubs in this article are natives that feed birds and give them nesting sites. They can be incorporated into a formal, manicured garden.

<https://positivebloom.com/plant-these-shrubs-instead-of-boxwood-in-california-yards/>



63 Brookside Ave.



143 Brookside Ave.



159 Brookside Ave.



108 Brookside Ave. May 2026



Coopers Hawk

May 12, 2026

PLN26-00121

108 Brookside Avenue
Santa Clara, CA 95050

Dear Mr Kurupati and Ms. Bhandari,

Welcome to our wonderful South of Forest Neighborhood (SOFNA) of Santa Clara. I have lived in my home that is directly behind your “new” home for 33 years and have also been a resident of Santa Clara for 67 years.

I bought my home in 1993 at 109 Harold Avenue from the original owner that built it in 1939. I have always taken great pride in my home and our amazing neighborhood, its history with our long-time residents and new residents. Our SOFNA neighborhoods have built a wonderful community over the many decades and have made great improvements in working with our beautiful city for many years. IN 2012 we achieved getting sidewalks installed and new paved streets throughout our neighborhoods. We also added picnic tables to our local Parkway Park and over many years worked on creating a walk-way around the park for all to enjoy. All done with our neighborhood community and its support.

A little bit about me. I have always enjoyed our spacious lots sizes and the amazing open space and country-type feeling that it has provided. But the most important thing is the privacy that our large lots allows us to enjoy. I spend most of my time outdoors throughout the year and in my gardens, always enjoying the sound of nature that surrounds us.

I have known the original owners of your current home for the past 33 years and have supported them in maintaining the beautiful heritage oak tree that is in your backyard. Throughout the year we all enjoyed this amazing oak tree that offers a habitat to not only our local wildlife, but privacy to the surrounding neighbors and myself and helps to act as a sound barrier to the rush hour traffic along San Tomas Expressway. Removing this tree would certainly alter this for all of us and in our lifetimes would not be replaceable. Let alone, disrupt the eco-system that it provides in our area.

I want to say that your home plans are simply beautiful and I thank you for adding such beauty to our neighborhoods. I love the classic lines and style and look forward to watching it evolve.

In closing and reviewing your plans, I saw the landscape drawings for the front yard but noticed that the backyard was void of any landscaping. Are you considering building an ADU in the back in the future? Would love to meet you both when you have a chance as well when you possibly have time.

Many thanks and once again, welcome to our neighborhood.

Cindy Baldanzi

109 Harold Avenue
Santa Clara, CA 95050
408-205-8839



View of Heritage Oak Tree from Front of 108 Brookside



View of Oak Tree from My Home- 109 Harold Avenue Driveway



View of Heritage Oak Tree from Street View - Front of 109 Harold Avenue