

Scott & Carol Taylor  
50 Via Robles  
Alamo, CA 94507

November 6, 2024

Maria Lara-Lemus  
Contra Costa County  
Department of Conservation and Development  
30 Muir Road  
Martinez, CA 94553

Subject: Appeal Against the Removal of Heritage Oak Trees and Installation of Pickleball Court

Dear Maria,

I am writing to formally oppose the planned removal of heritage oak trees located at 15 Morningside Place, Alamo as well as the installation of a pickleball court on this site. These proposed changes threaten not only our local environment but also the character and livability of our neighborhood.

**Significance of Heritage Oak Trees to the Neighborhood**

The street name, Via Robles, reflects the legacy and natural beauty of the large heritage oak trees that define our neighborhood. These trees are not just a feature of the landscape, they are integral to the identity and appeal of this community. Many of the longtime residents, including us, chose to live in this area precisely because of the beauty and unique character provided by the oak trees. Their preservation is essential to maintaining the charm and distinctiveness of our neighborhood as they heritage trees will never be replaced once lost. They are unique to this valley and should be absolutely preserved.

**Environmental Impact and Threat to Wildlife Habitat**

Heritage oaks provide critical benefits to the local environment, including carbon sequestration, air purification, and habitat for numerous species of birds, insects, and small mammals. Their removal would severely impact the local ecosystem, resulting in habitat loss and negatively affecting the wildlife that depends on these trees for shelter and food. Moreover, these trees are near a riparian corridor, which serves as a vital buffer that supports biodiversity, water quality, and soil stability. The removal of these trees would disrupt the riparian corridor and lead to potential ecological degradation.

**Role of Heritage Oaks in Sound Attenuation**

In addition to their ecological and aesthetic value, the heritage oak trees provide natural sound attenuation for noise from the nearby I-680 freeway and Danville Boulevard. Noise pollution is already a concern for residents in this area especially after the expansion of the 680 freeway and addition of HOV lanes. Removing these trees would exacerbate the noise issue, further diminishing the quality of life by increasing exposure to traffic noise.

**Noise Impact of Pickleball Court**

The installation of a pickleball court in a residential neighborhood raises serious concerns about additional noise impacts to the residents. The repetitive, high-impact sound generated by pickleball paddles and balls is known to travel 500 feet beyond court boundaries, causing significant noise disturbances. Many jurisdictions are considering banning pickleball courts due to noise impacts to the neighborhood degrading quality of life and property values. The current considerations are to require a minimum 600-foot buffer around pickleball courts.

Unlike other recreational activities, pickleball noise is particularly intrusive in a quiet residential neighborhood, and there would be no regulated hours of play at this property. This will lead to prolonged noise exposure that negatively affects the quality of life for neighbors, with no community benefit, and only benefitting the subject property owners.

The prolonged noise from the court will lead to continuous disturbance to the neighborhood. Such noise disturbances also reduce property values, making the neighborhood less desirable for current and future residents.

**Harmful Impact of Pickleball Court Placement Within Heritage Oak Driplines**

Beyond the removal of heritage oaks, the planned placement of the pickleball court within the driplines of remaining trees poses a serious threat to their health. The impacted trees due to the construction of the court are on an adjacent property. Construction within the dripline can cause root damage, soil compaction, and hinder water and nutrient absorption, jeopardizing the long-term viability of these majestic trees.

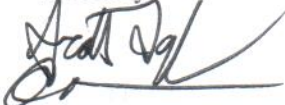
**Alternative Solutions**

While we appreciate the desire for property enhancements, we urge the Department of Conservation and Development and property owner to explore alternatives that respect the environmental, aesthetic, and community integrity of the neighborhood. Modifications to the design, such as preserving the heritage oak trees, eliminating any construction within the heritage oak driplines, eliminating the pickleball court and considering quieter recreational options could fulfill property goals while preserving the well-being and character of our community. There are public pickleball courts nearby that can be utilized.

Given these significant concerns, we respectfully request that the Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development deny the permit for both the removal of heritage oak trees and the installation of the private pickleball court. We believe that alternative solutions can balance property improvements with environmental conservation and community harmony.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me at 925-286-7070 should you need any further information.

Sincerely,



Scott & Carol Taylor

**From:** [Olga Chekene](#)  
**To:** [Maria Lara-Lemus](#)  
**Subject:** 15 Morningside Lane, County File #:CDTP24-00056  
**Date:** Monday, November 11, 2024 9:59:22 AM

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County Planning Department,

I am writing to formally add our voice to the appeal submitted by Heather and Mark Simone at 40 Via Robles regarding the removal of four code-protected trees at 15 Morningside Place.

We are concerned about the loss of these incredibly beautiful heritage trees that not only add to the character and property value of our street but also the environmental impact of losing trees in general and specifically the trees in our neighborhood. We certainly support the rights of owners to improve their properties but it seems there could be a way to reconfigure some of the proposed improvements in order to not harm the beautiful and important old growth which is so important to the character of Alamo at large.

We strongly urge the Planning Department to reconsider the removal of these trees.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Olga and Daniel Chekene  
55 Via Robles, Alamo

**O.**  
Olga Chekene  
415.730.2789