

## Madeline Sutherland

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**From:** Laura Renninger <preservegarryoak@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 8, 2022 12:18 PM  
**To:** Community Development Email  
**Cc:** Christina Manetti; ecarleyroe@gmail.com; alicia@justagirlincamas.com  
**Subject:** Garry oaks in Camas

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Dear Hearing Examiner,

We have been made aware that property to be developed in Camas, Camas Heights Subdivision, file #SUB-21-01, contains multiple Garry oaks. We wish to be a party of record in urging Camas to enhance the natural landscapes by sparing all the Garry oaks during the subdivision construction process, not just two oaks.

We are the Oak Harbor Garry Oak Society, a non-profit 501c3 located in Oak Harbor, WA, whose mission includes the preservation of native oak trees, *Quercus garryana*, Garry oaks, otherwise known as Oregon White oaks.

Retaining healthy, native oak trees should be the goal, to the greatest extent possible, for enhanced water filtration and run-off, as we understand water run-off and flooding is already an issue on this site. Also, mature oak trees in particular provide critical wildlife habitat value to the landscape of Camas. Once established, Garry oaks are drought tolerant and are well poised to deal with future challenges related to climate change.

Careful planning of this building site is vital to preserving Camas's natural and historic character. From a historical perspective, Garry oaks were present in the region of the Columbia River at the time of European contact, and the Garry oak received its species name by famed Botanist David Douglas in the early 1800's. Your town's namesake, the Camas flower, grew in abundance in the prairie-oak savannahs. Ebey's Landing Historic Reserve here on Whidbey Island has design guidelines in regard to sparing heritage trees such as your oaks: [https://www.islandcountywa.gov/Planning/Documents/Ebey's/ENHR\\_Design\\_Manual\\_09-06-11.pdf](https://www.islandcountywa.gov/Planning/Documents/Ebey's/ENHR_Design_Manual_09-06-11.pdf)

Sadly, across the Pacific Northwest, Garry oaks now exist only in remnant populations. However, some cities have found a way to allow construction to proceed, yet spare the Garry oak (s). In Oak Harbor, WA: <https://www.whidbeynewstimes.com/news/council-adopts-amendment-to-spare-oak-tree/> and on SE Vancouver Island, B.C., Canada: <https://goert.ca/developers-government/success-stories/>

Since Garry oaks grow slowly while young, mitigation by replanting tiny oaks does not replace the cumulative power of mature mother trees. It is important for Camas to find different layouts or change required setbacks for construction in order to spare the heritage oaks, such as the alternate proposal to incorporate cul-de-sacs in the development.

Thank you for your attention.

Regards, Laura Renninger on behalf of the Garry Oak Society

**Laura Renninger**

President, Oak Harbor Garry Oak Society

[ohgarryoaksociety.org](http://ohgarryoaksociety.org)

PO Box 1564

Oak Harbor, WA 98277