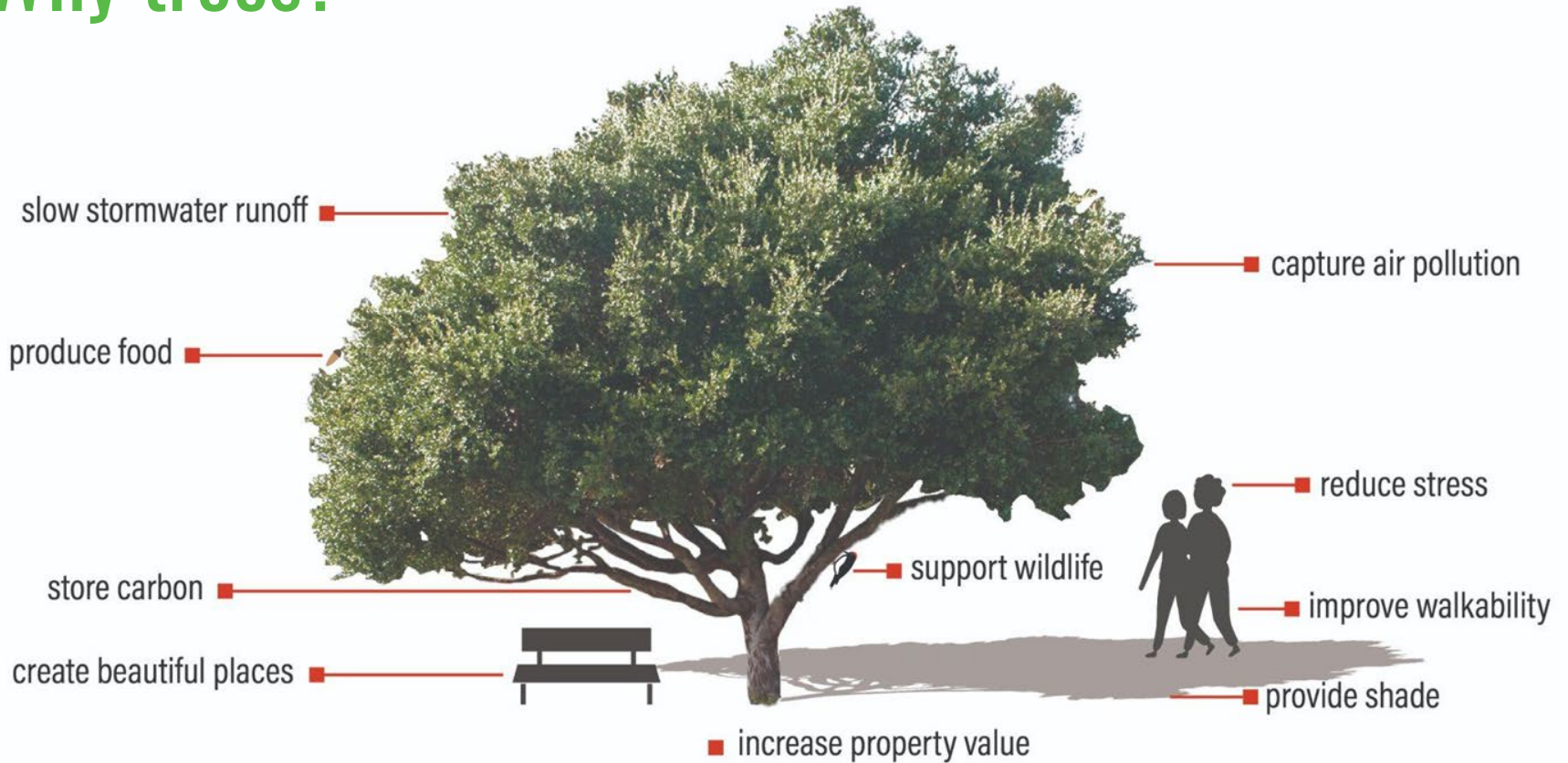


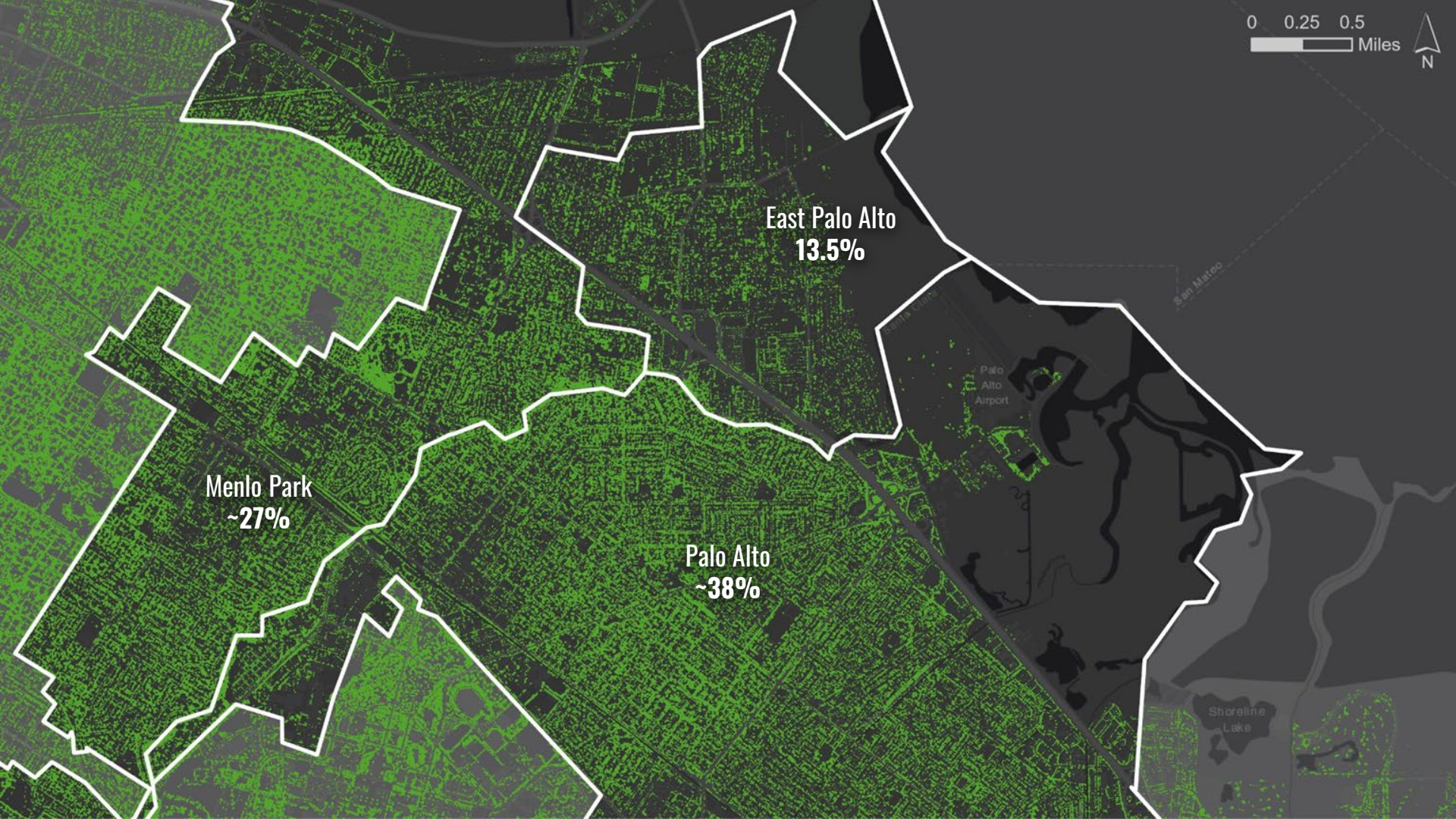
# Growing & Protecting the East Palo Alto Urban Forest

April 19, 2022



# Why trees?





East Palo Alto  
13.5%

Menlo Park  
~27%

Palo Alto  
~38%

Palo Alto Airport

San Mateo

Shoreline Lake

# Taking Action

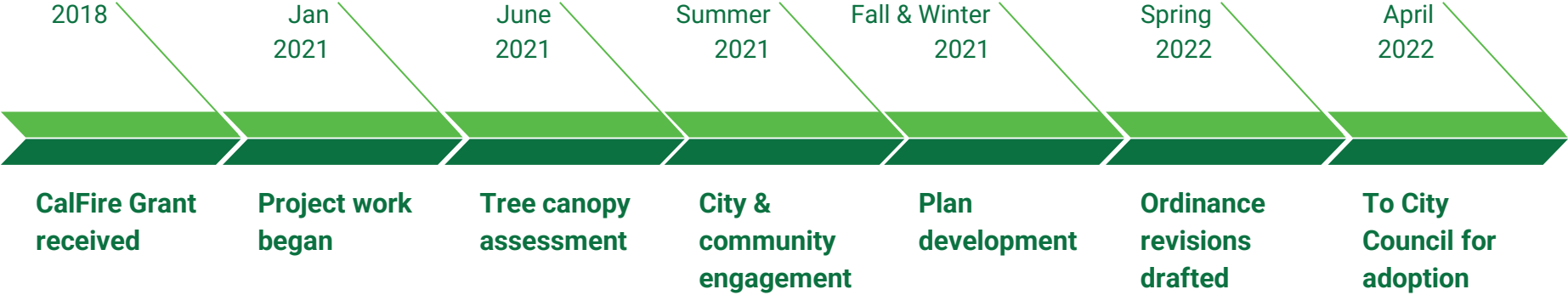
Funded by CalFire, the City has drafted an Urban Forest Master Plan to evaluate and plan for the City's trees.

The project includes tree planting through the non-profit Canopy.

Recommendations from the Plan can be implemented in part through changes to the City's Tree Protection Ordinances and related staff procedures.



# Project Timeline





# An Urban Forest Master Plan for East Palo Alto

# What is an urban forest master plan?

A roadmap towards a shared vision for the future of the city's tree canopy

1

Evaluate the current status, management, protections, and perceptions of the urban forest

2

Set goals for the future and make recommendations to achieve these goals

# Current status

Lack of Tree  
Canopy

Water Scarcity &  
Climate Change

Legacy of Urban  
Design Without  
Room for Trees

Unclear Authority  
& Responsibility

Reactive Approach  
to Tree  
Maintenance

Effectiveness and  
Enforcement of  
the Tree  
Protection  
Ordinance

Lack of Trust  
Between City &  
Community

Limited Resources



# Setting goals

**Goal 1:** Grow a healthy, extensive, vibrant, and diverse urban forest to provide 20% canopy cover by 2062 and 30% by 2122.

**Goal 2:** Connect with an engaged and informed community to provide stewardship of the urban forest.

# Objectives

1. Grow the urban forest
2. Define responsibilities and support improved maintenance practices and protections for public and private trees
3. Connect with the community around tree stewardship

# Objective 1: Grow the urban forest

**Action 1.** Develop a **city-wide tree planting strategy** to increase equity with neighboring cities.

**Action 2.** Plant climate-adapted species with the intention of planting the right tree in the right place to **maximize benefits** for public health, wildlife, and resilience.

**Action 3.** Integrate trees into **future urban design** .



## Objective 2: Define responsibilities and support improved maintenance practices and protections for public and private trees



**Action 4.** Codify responsibility and set standards for **proactive public tree maintenance** and protection.

**Action 5.** Revise the **tree protection ordinance** and implementation process to provide strong protection for private trees.

**Action 6.** Seek opportunities for **additional funding** .

## Objective 2: Define responsibilities and support improved maintenance practices and protections for public and private trees



**Action 4.** Codify responsibility and set standards for **proactive public tree maintenance** and protection.

**Action 5.** Revise the **tree protection ordinance** and implementation process to provide strong protection for private trees.

**Action 6.** Seek opportunities for **additional funding** .

# Objective 3: Connect with the community around tree stewardship

**Action 7.** Design a cohesive and inclusive **public outreach program** focused on building awareness of the benefits of trees and how and why trees are protected in the City.

**Action 8.** Become a **Tree City USA**.





# Tree Ordinance Updates

# Why update?

- Want to support the goals of the Urban Forest Master Plan
  - Encourage more tree planting
- Current public tree ordinances lack standard components, including specifying responsibilities and standards
  - Need to acknowledge and standardize work being done
  - Add BMPs (ANSI A300)
- Current tree protection ordinance (private) has a different definition of a protected tree than the practice





# Current Tree Ordinances

## Chapter 12.16

Cutting And Trimming Trees  
On City Streets And Public  
Places

## Section 13.24.410

Street trees

## Development Code

## Chapter 18.28

Landscaping and Trees

# Proposed Tree Ordinances

## Development Code

### Chapter 12.16

Trees on Public Property and  
in the Public Right-of-Way

### Chapter 18.28

Trees on Private Property

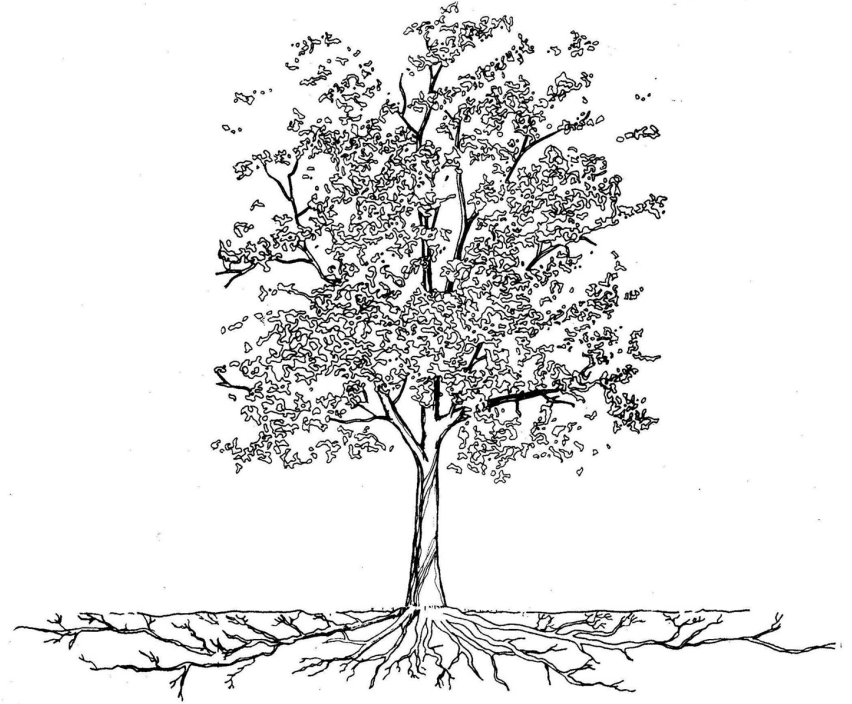
~~Section 13.24.410~~

### Chapter 18.30.090

Parking Lot Design  
Standards

# Key changes proposed

- Public - Proactive maintenance practices
- Landscaping code – Enhance tree planting requirements in parking lots
- Private - Definition of a protected tree to include standard measurements
- Private - Require tree removal permits for development projects, amend criteria for removal to reflect change



# Public tree management

- The City will take responsibility for maintenance of trees in the public right-of-way
  - *No change, formalizing current workflow*
- Adopt a proactive grid pruning approach to regularly prune all City trees
  - *Change in contracted work to improve tree care*



# Parking lot shading

New shade conditions will require **shading over 50% of parking lot areas** (15 years of permit approval).

In alignment with California Green Building Code and ordinances adopted by Davis, Sacramento, West Sac, and Pleasanton.

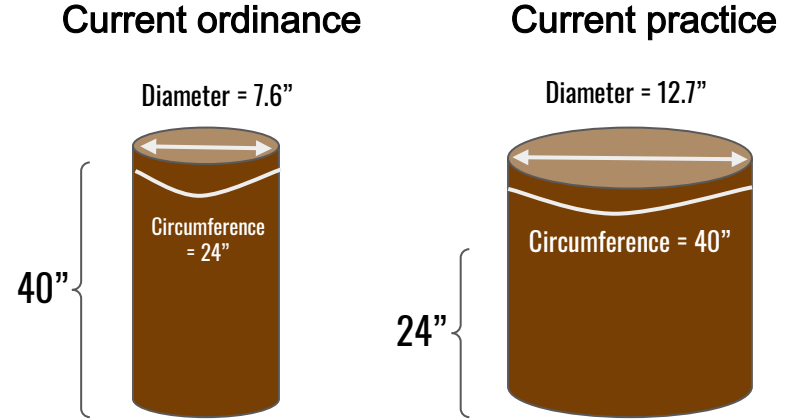
This ambitious goal seeks to increase tree canopy cover; building space for trees in parking lots.

Applies to projects that require an entitlement permit.

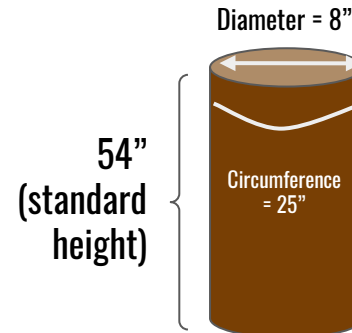


# Which trees are protected?

- All public trees (*no change*)
- Private trees that were required to be preserved or planted as a condition of development or to replace an unlawfully removed tree (*no change*)
- Private trees that are more than 24" circumference at a height of 40"
  - In practice, trees over 40" circumference at 24" height are protected
  - *Recommended change: trees over 8" diameter at 54"*

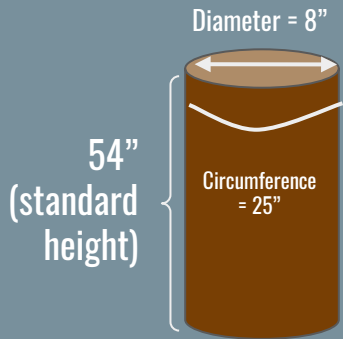


## Recommended



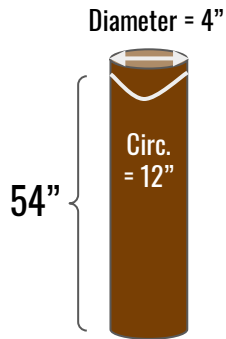
# Recommended for EPA

Protected trees

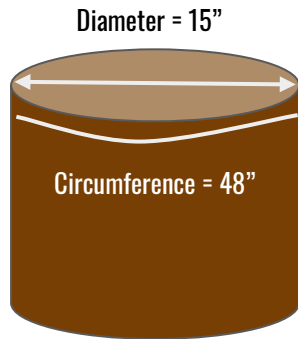


# Mountain View

Oaks, redwoods, & cedars

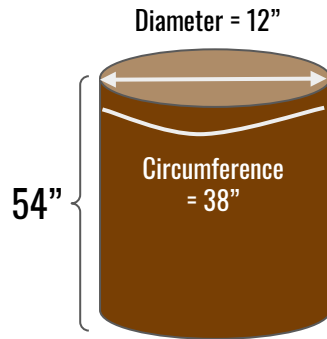


Heritage trees



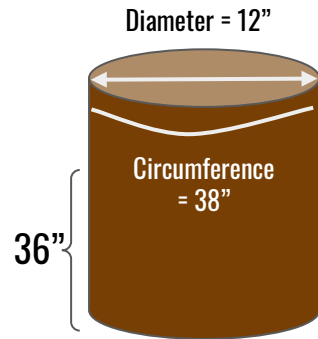
# Sunnyvale

Protected trees



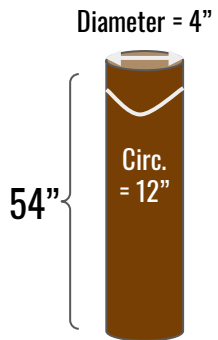
# Redwood City

Protected trees



# Hayward

Some native species

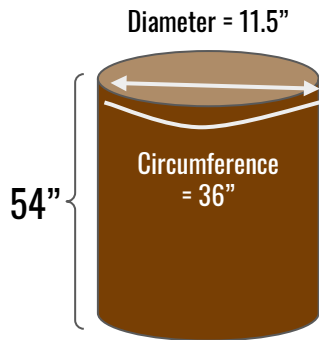


Heritage trees

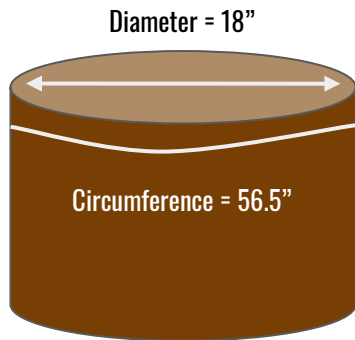


# Palo Alto

Oaks

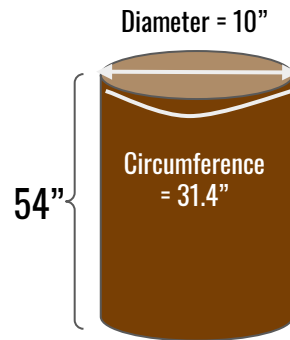


Redwoods

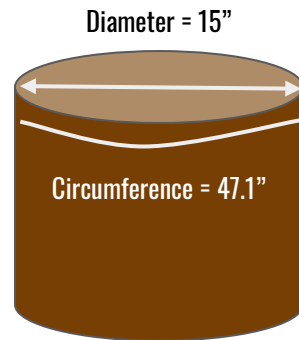


# Menlo Park and San Mateo

Native oaks



Heritage trees



# When can a private protected tree be removed?

- The tree is dead or dying
- The tree is structurally unsound and high risk
- The tree is causing damage that cannot be remedied
- The tree significantly interferes with development that meets the goals of the City's General Plan (*new*)
- A government agency requires the tree to be removed for health or safety (*new*)
- In case of emergency (*can obtain a permit afterwards*)

***A permit is always required to remove a protected tree!***



# Development requirement

	Current Ordinance	Proposed Changes
Criteria for Removal (Private Trees)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Dead or dying</li><li>2. Structurally unsound and cannot be corrected</li><li>3. Causing damage that cannot be remedied</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Dead, dying, high risk, or invasive</li><li>2. Structurally unsound and cannot be corrected</li><li>3. Causing damage that cannot be remedied</li><li>4. <b>The tree interferes with proposed development, repair, alteration, or improvement of a site and preservation would stop the implementation of a well-integrated and thoughtful design that enhances the property and neighborhood while meaningfully furthering the goals set forth in the General Plan and the project will incorporate replacement trees.</b></li><li>5. The removal is requested by a governmental agency due to a health or safety risk</li></ol>
Exemptions (Private Trees)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Emergencies.</li><li>2. <b>Project approval. No Tree Removal Permit is required where the removal of trees has been authorized as part of a development approval granted by the City.</b></li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Emergencies.</li></ol>

# Criteria for preservation

- The current ordinance allows a removal permit to be denied for the following reasons:
  - The tree is an important asset to the community.
  - The tree contributes substantially to the aesthetic beauty of an area and its removal would adversely affect the appearance of the area.
  - The tree is a member of a group of trees mutually dependent on each other for survival, structural integrity, or aesthetics.
- Difficult to make a determination on these criteria
- *Recommended change: permit denials and appeals are made on the basis of the criteria used to justify removal*



# Changes to process and implementation

1. Expanded weekend code enforcement (*Spring 2022*)
1. Transparency of removals associated with development
1. Ensure all noticing requirements are followed
1. Periodic updates to Planning Commission



# What are the next steps?

- Recommending that ordinance changes take effect October 1, 2022
  - Staff evaluates and undertakes necessary changes for implementation
  - Staff and community education on new ordinances