



City of Palo Alto City Manager's Report

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TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND
COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

DATE: OCTOBER 18, 1999

CMR:389:99

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL TO CONSIDER THREE APPLICATIONS TO DESIGNATE HERITAGE TREES: TWO PUBLICLY-OWNED TREES AND ONE PRIVATE TREE AT 1032 FOREST AVENUE

Heritage Tree #2 (See page 2)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Council approve the designation of three trees for heritage status: the El Palo Alto Coast Redwood located in El Palo Alto Park as Heritage Tree No. 1 (See Attachment A); a Coast Live Oak located in Rinconada Park as Heritage Tree No. 2 (See Attachment B); and a Dawn Redwood located at 1032 Forest Avenue as Palo Alto Heritage Tree No. 4, as requested by the owner of the property (See Attachment C). Heritage Tree No. 3 has already been designated as such by a previous Council action on February 22, 1999.

BACKGROUND

In 1996, the City Council enacted Ordinance No. 4362, effective January 1, 1997 providing for the preservation and maintenance of specified native oak and heritage trees on public and private properties.

Palo Alto Municipal Code, Chapter 8.10.090 entitled "Designation of Heritage Trees" provides for persons to nominate a tree on their property as a Heritage Tree. After City Council approval of such designation, the tree will be included in a listing, including such information as specific location, overall size, canopy spread, etc., and kept by the Department of Planning and Community Environment. Once designated, a heritage tree will benefit from the provisions of the Tree Preservation and Management Regulations, unless removed from the list by subsequent action by the City Council. These regulations include guidelines and restrictions regarding pruning, removal and development as it relates to the tree.


DISCUSSION

This section provides the basis for approval.

Heritage Tree No. 1. The Coast Redwood is located on the bank of San Francisquito Creek and is the symbol of both the City of Palo Alto and Stanford University. The El Palo Alto redwood has not been officially recognized in the heritage tree listing since the Ordinance became effective. In 1971, when El Palo Alto Park was dedicated by Council, the tree was described as the oldest living landmark in California, whose age was estimated to be more than 1,059 years old (see Arborist Report, Attachment A). On November 7, 1926 the Native Sons of the Golden West historic landmark committee placed a plaque on the large boulder at the tree's base declaring it the first official living California Landmark. In 1987, the tree was recognized by the National Arborist Association and the International Society of Arboriculture, for its significance, having lived since General Portola's early expedition in 1769 and during the signing of our nation's constitution. The Coast Redwood meets the standards for heritage tree designation set forth in Chapter 8.10.090 and Heritage Tree checklist (See Attachment D). Staff recommends the historical El Palo Alto Redwood be designated as Heritage Tree No. 1 based upon findings that it is unique and of importance to the community due to one or more of the following factors:

- (1) It satisfies PAMC Section 8.10.090 requirements;
- (2) It is an outstanding specimen of a desirable species;
- (3) It is one of the largest and oldest trees in Palo Alto; and
- (4) It possesses distinctive form, size, age and location

Staff has prepared an overview report of the tree's specific location, size, dimensions and brief history of the tree (see Arborist Report, Attachment A) for Council review.



Heritage Tree No. 2. The Coast Live Oak is located in the 20-acre Rinconada Park, in the picnic area near the intersection of Embarcadero Road and Guinda Street. This tree is a fine specimen with many qualities worthy of recognition. In 1994 the tree was publicly honored as a heritage tree by then Mayor Liz Kniss, and was distinguished with a bronze plaque placed near its base identifying it as such. As with the El Palo Alto tree, the Rinconada Oak has not been officially recognized within the heritage tree listing since the Ordinance became effective January 1, 1977. The Coast Live Oak meets the standards for heritage tree designation set forth in Chapter 8.10.090 and Heritage Tree checklist (See Attachment D). Staff recommends the historical Rinconada Oak be designated as Heritage Tree No. 2 based upon findings that it is unique and of importance to the community due to one or more of the following factors:

- (1) It satisfies PAMC Section 8.10.090 requirements;
- (2) It is an outstanding specimen of a desirable species;
- (3) It is one of the largest and oldest trees in Palo Alto; and
- (4) It possesses distinctive form, size, age and location

Staff has prepared an overview report of the trees specific location, size, dimensions and brief history of the tree (see Arborist Report, Attachment B) for Council review.

Heritage Tree No. 4. Ms. Karen Kolling, 1032 Forest Avenue, owner of the property, filed an application for heritage tree status for a Dawn Redwood located in the front yard of her property. The tree is a unique species, healthy and sizable, second in size only to the Dawn Redwood at the downtown post office, on the Waverley Street frontage.

The Dawn Redwood meets the standards for heritage tree designation set forth in Chapter 8.10.090 and Heritage Tree checklist (see Attachment D). Written request, consent and photographs from Ms. Kolling, have been received along with a written analysis of the tree's specific location, size, dimensions and qualities by arborist Michael Young, of Urban Tree Management Company (see Arborist Report, Attachment C).

Staff recommends this tree be designated as a Heritage Tree No. 4 based upon findings that it is unique and of importance to the property owner and community due to the following factors:

- (1) It satisfies PAMC Section 8.10.090 requirements;
- (2) It is an outstanding specimen of a desirable species;
- (3) It is one of the largest and oldest trees in Palo Alto; and
- (4) It possesses distinctive form, size, age and location

RESOURCE IMPACT

There are no resource impacts expected by these designations.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The recommended action would continue to promote the pattern for other Heritage Tree designations and is also consistent with existing City policies and overall urban forest goals and objectives.

TIMELINE

After designation as Heritage Trees by Council, the Heritage Trees will be recognized as such immediately.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Heritage Tree action is exempt from provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Section 15061 (b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the designation will have a significant effect on the environment.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: El Palo Alto Arborist Report
Attachment B: Rinconada Park Coast Live Oak Arborist Report
Attachment C: Karen Kolling Request, Photographs and Arborist Report

Attachment D: Tree Preservation and Management Regulations, Ordinance 4568
and Heritage Tree Checklist

PREPARED BY: Dave Dockter, Planning Division Arborist


DEPARTMENT HEAD REVIEW:



G. EDWARD GAWF

Director of Planning and Community Environment

CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:



JUNE FLEMING

City Manager

cc: Ms. Karen Kolling
Canopy: Trees for Palo Alto



DATE: September 20, 1999 **ATTACHMENT B**

TO: Ed Gawf, Director of Planning and Community Environment

FROM: Dave Dockter, Planning Division Arborist

SUBJECT: Rinconada Oak Heritage Tree Designation
Arborist Report and Appraisal

PURPOSE: For City Council review as Attachment B of City Managers
Report dated October 25, 1999

ARBORIST REPORT

This report provides data for the Coast Live Oak known as the Rinconada Oak. The report is prepared for the purpose of providing City Council with an overview of the tree's size, health, history and value to the community, to aid their consideration for the tree to be designated as City of Palo Alto Heritage Tree #2, in addition to its status of a protected tree within the Palo Alto Municipal Code, Chapter 8.10.

LOCATION OF THE TREE

The tree, identified by a plaque mounted at the tree's base, is located in the 20-acre Rinconada Park picnic area, near the intersection of Embarcadero and Guinda Street.

SPECIES, HABITAT, SIZE AND AGE OF THE TREE

The subject tree, *Quercus agrifolia*, Coast Live Oak is native to California and indigenous to the Palo Alto region. The tree is 52-inches in diameter, 75-feet in height and has a crown spread of nearly 120-feet. The tree's age is over two centuries, as estimated during the 1994 Palo Alto Centennial dedication of the tree.

HEALTH AND CONDITION OF THE TREE

The Rinconada Oak is in relatively good health and condition. For decades, its growth has been opportunistic in the park soil, and benefiting from moisture and fertilizer supplied by turf maintenance surrounding the canopy perimeter.

My observation indicates that the tree is:

- ❖ well-rooted with little chance of toppling over
- ❖ supporting fair annual shoot growth (an average of six-inches over the last 5 years)
- ❖ of fair structure, fitted with several support guy wires

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

In 1994, during the Palo Alto Centennial celebration, the tree was publicly recognized as an outstanding specimen, and was honored with a plaque donated by the Palo Alto Tree Task Force and dedicated by Mayor Liz Kniss as Heritage Tree No.2.

MAINTENANCE OF THE TREE -- PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

The Rinconada Oak has been maintained by the Departments of Parks and Golf and Public Works operations and will continue to be in the future. The tree needs no special attention other than

periodic inspection of the tree and occasional loosening of the soil within the dripline of the tree. The branching architecture has been fitted with support cables to improve stability of massive branches during high winds. In 1998, Parks Department further improved conditions around the tree by removing the turf and irrigation and mowers away from the trunk area.

APPRAISAL

National, state, municipal and real estate recognize that plants have value beyond their aesthetic contribution to a landscape, and that their contribution can be assessed. The following horticultural appraisal, using the current Guide for Plant Appraisal authored by the Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers and published by the International Society of Arboriculture, includes consideration of the tree species, size, condition and location factors that influence the value of a tree. The appraised value of the Coast Live Oak known as the Rinconada Oak is estimated to be \$32,600.00.

RESOURCES

Paul Dias, Director of Parks and Golf, Community Services Department
Dave Sandage, City of Palo Alto, Public Works Managing Arborist
Wayne Fluss, City of Palo Alto Arborist