



**Proposed Changes to
Title 8 of Palo Alto
Municipal Code**
Policy & Services
recommendations to
City Council

October 18th, 2021

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REASONS FOR UPDATING TITLE 8

- Tree protection first included in PAMC in 1951, last substantive update in 2001
- New City of Palo Alto policy documents: Urban Forest Master Plan; 2030 Comprehensive Plan; Sustainability / Climate Action Plan
- New legislation: State Executive Order B-29-15, e.g. the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance; CA SB-247 Wildland fire prevention: vegetation management

URBAN FOREST MASTER PLAN

Specific goals related to Title 8

- Achieve a greater percentage of native, drought-tolerant species
- Ensure no loss of benefits
- Increased habitat, health, and social benefits
- Strive for no net loss / increase in canopy cover
- Minimize any negative effects on the urban forest from development



Motion details from P&S August 10th, 2021

1. Accept resident “ad-hoc” group changes to Title 8;
2. Direct staff to include development moratorium;
3. Accept staff recommended ordinance changes;
4. Direct staff to make associated code changes;
5. Evaluate making Urban Forester an Assistant Director;
6. Direct staff on the role of the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) serving as a community forum for UF;
7. Recommends staff forward recommendations to the Council for consideration in September; and
8. Direct staff to explore possible tree planting incentives & information regarding tree species, growth, and other parameters.



Alternative Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that Council direct staff to:

1. Use Policy & Services Committee recommendations 1-4 to develop an updated draft ordinance;
2. Analyze the workload, staffing, and budgetary impacts of the draft ordinance;
3. Conduct community engagement regarding the draft ordinance changes;
4. Following the analysis and community engagement, make appropriate revisions to the draft ordinance and return to City Council; and
5. Explore Policy and Services Committee recommendations 5, 6, and 8 and return to Council as needed to discuss and potentially implement the recommended programs.



Updates to Title 8 of PAMC

Ordinance Areas Requiring Further Study

October 18th, 2021

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8.10.020- PROTECTED TREES

Review proposed protected species and protected size threshold:

Expanding the number of protected species is a key component in preserving and expanding the urban forest. Items to consider:

- Is the native species list from the UFMP too large? Should exemptions be listed in Title 8?
- Consider lowering the size threshold from the 36” DBH in current draft to simplify the regulations



8.10.020- PROTECTED TREES

Palo Alto Native Trees (UFMP)

- Coast Live Oak*
- Valley Oak*
- Coast Redwood*
- Blue Oak
- CA Black Oak
- CA Incense Cedar
- Bigleaf maple
- Toyon
- CA Bay
- CA Buckeye
- Western Redbud
- CA Flannel Bush
- Catalina Cherry
- Madrone
- CA Wax Myrtle
- Western Sycamore
- Box Elder
- White Alder**
- Oregon Ash
- Fremont Cottonwood
- Yellow willow
- Blue Elderberry

* denotes currently protected species. ** denotes high water users per WULCOS list





8.04.020-8.04.040 – PUBLIC TREE PERMITS

Review these sections and consider revisions for clarity:

Residents may request to have tree work done on public trees by a private contractor. This process is not well described in the current draft. Consider additional revisions of these sections to clarify the process.



8.10.140 - APPEALS

Review and update as needed:

Consider extending appeals to protected tree removals in the absence of development.

Currently there is no mandated neighbor notification requirement or formal appeals process for protected tree removals in the absence of development.

8.10.050 PROHIBITED ACTS

Review and update as needed to ensure no net loss of canopy across all removal types. Items of concern:

- Potential loophole regarding protected tree removal in advance of application for development. Consider expanded fees or possible development moratorium.
- Existing Title 8 and current draft update rely on “preserving the dripline” of certain protected tree removals. This is cumbersome and difficult to track or enforce. Consider alternatives such as required replanting.





ADDITIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

- Internal vetting to understand impacts on ADUs, solar, SB9, other areas
- Additional Public Outreach: provide opportunities for the general public to provide feedback. Recommend review by the Architectural Review Board and the Parks and Recreation Commission
- Analysis of impact on staff created by expanding protected trees



RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

- **October-November 2021:** Development of updated draft ordinance incorporating Council direction
- **November-January 2021/22:** Analyze workload and budgetary impacts of protected tree species expansion and other changes; Conduct additional outreach and Architectural Review Board and Parks & Recreation Commission study sessions
- **March-April 2022:** Council approval of updated Title 8 and City Manager approval of revised Tree and Landscape Technical Manual; Council discussion and potential action on Policy and Services recommendations 5, 6, and 8.

THANK YOU



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Brad Eggleston

Director of Public Works

Brad.Eggleston@CityofPaloAlto.org

Peter Gollinger

Acting Urban Forester

Peter.Gollinger@CityofPaloAlto.org