



Tree Protection Ordinance Implementation Update

City Council

June 19, 2023

www.cityofpaloalto.org/treeordinanceupdate

TREE ORDINANCE IMPLEMENTATION

- Timeline of Review Process
- Review of Changes
- Data from first 10 months
- Completed Implementation Items
- Upcoming Implementation Items



TIMELINE OF IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW PROCESS

July 21, 2022 – Updated Tree Ordinance Effective Date

June 19, 2023 – Update on Implementation Efforts to City Council

Fall 2023 – Review Ordinance with Parks & Recreation Commission

Fall 2023 – Review Ordinance with Planning & Transportation Commission

Winter 2023 – Return to City Council with any Proposed Changes



KEY TREE ORDINANCE CHANGES

- Expanded Definition of Protected Trees
- Updates to allowable reasons for Protected Tree Removal
- Focus on Maintenance of Private Protected Trees
- Revisions to Notification and Appeals for Protected Tree Removal

PROTECTED TREES

New protected species and introduction of diameter at breast height (DBH) size thresholds for protection:

Species now protected at 11.5" DBH:

- *Acer macrophyllum* (Bigleaf Maple)
- *Calocedrus decurrens* (Incense Cedar)
- *Quercus agrifolia* (Coast Live Oak)
- *Quercus douglasii* (Blue Oak)
- *Quercus kelloggii* (California Black Oak)
- *Quercus lobata* (Valley Oak)

Species protected at 18" DBH:

- *Sequoia sempervirens* (Coast Redwood)



Newly protected species at 15" DBH including all other species except:

- Invasive species per Cal-IPC
- High Water Users per WUCOLS



TREE REMOVAL PERMIT IMPACTS

Tree removal outside of development

TREE REMOVAL PERMIT DATA	Under new TPO (22/23*)	Same Timeframe for 21/22	Same Timeframe for 20/21
Total Tree Permit Applications	66	36	44
Calendar Year Totals (Projected for 2023)	150 (2023)	52 (2022)	43 (2021)
Storm Damage / Dead / Dying	25	9	18
Damaging Structures	8	7	6

* Data from 7/21/22 to 5/31/23

For the 66 applications under updated TPO, 43% of trees included were protected under old ordinance, 57% of trees included are newly protected.



PROTECTED TREE MAINTENANCE NOTIFICATION



This is not a permit, there is no fee required, and the City does not approve or deny.



The form instructs tree owners about the maintenance requirements for protected status trees, and they must agree to follow best arboricultural practices when maintaining protected trees.



A total of 55 maintenance notifications were submitted between Sept 1, 2022, to May 1, 2023.



NOTICING FOR TREE REMOVAL

- Postcard noticing system active and working
- Notice posting on property, on city website and by mail to addresses within 300 ft. Notice required both when applying to remove a protected tree and once a decision is made



COMPLETED OUTREACH EFFORTS

- City web pages updated
 - New ordinance information page created
 - New Trees FAQ's page created
- Email distribution list of arborists and tree care companies
 - List is used to send updates on aspects of ordinance
- Canopy website updated
 - Canopy Tree-News; 3 issues discuss updated ordinance, reach 4500 subscribers

2023 STORM SEASON

Unprecedented Winter Storms:

- **Four** of top twenty recorded peak flows on San Francisquito Creek occurred between 12/31/22 and 3/22/23
- Multiple storm events with high rainfall totals in short time period.
- Most storm events included high winds from non-prevailing directions immediately after high rain totals
- Saturated soils & high winds
- Staff involved in storm clean up from 1/1 to 4/30



2023 STORM SEASON DATA

From 12/31/22 to 4/1/23

- 10 emergency tree removal permits issued
- 243 Limb failures/pickups (206 City / 37 private)
- 6 private trees removed (trees that failed and affected the public right-of-way)
- 43 City trees removed
- 50 tree related electric outages
- 563 tons of green debris removal



For comparison, in same time period for 2022, staff responded to 40 limb failures, 5 city trees were removed, and there were 3 tree related electric outages.

UPCOMING OUTREACH EFFORTS

These outreach items are in progress

- A direct mailed Postcard to all Palo Alto residents providing information about the updated TPO
- Utility bill insert and email highlighting new ordinance information
- Informational ads in local printed and electronic press
- Live webinar sessions targeted at local arborists and tree care companies to review new ordinance requirements. These will be recorded and posted to the city website



THANK YOU



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www.cityofpaloalto.org/TreeOrdinanceUpdate

pwps@cityofpaloalto.org

Peter Gollinger
Urban Forester