



# Tree Ordinance Update: An Overview

Planning Commission Briefing

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Presented by Bharat Singh, Planning Services Manager

July 10, 2024

**COUNTY** OF **SAN MATEO**





# Why Update the Tree Ordinance?

- Community concerns: increased construction impacting trees
- Consolidate Significant and Heritage Tree Ordinances
- Clear process for tree removal and trimming
  - Development vs. non-development
- Equitable enforcement costs for unincorporated communities
- Align with other environmental and development requirements



# Community Involvement





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## Feedback received and addressed:

- Variety in County landscapes call for different tree regulations
- Clarify definitions
- Applicants express challenges with inconsistencies in ordinance interpretation between individual planners
- Resources needed for measuring trees, determining species, basic tree care
- Arborist report template needed
- Evaluate replacement requirements and in-lieu fees



# Summary of Changes - Protected Trees

- All trees >12.1” DSH\*
  - Undesirable species are excluded (invasive, fire risk)
- Heritage Trees
- Mitigation trees, trees retained by permit conditions, etc.
- A community of trees
- Protected indigenous trees

\* Tree size is stated as DSH (diameter at standard height), which is a trunk diameter measurement taken at 4.5 feet above ground

# Summary of Changes – Protected Indigenous Trees

- Species-specific protections
- Replant with same species when appropriate

Table 3.1 Protected Indigenous Trees

| Botanical name   | Common Name        | Minimum Trunk Diameter (measured at 4.5 feet above natural ground height)              |
|--|--------------------|--|
| <i>Arbutus menziesii</i>   | Pacific madrone    | 10 inches  |
| <i>Aesculus californica</i>  | California Buckeye | 10 inches  |
| <i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>   | Douglas fir        | 18 inches  |
| <i>Quercus agrifolia</i>   | Coast live oak     | 10 inches  |
| <i>Quercus chrysolepis</i>   | Canyon live oak    | 10 inches  |
| <i>Quercus douglasii</i>   | Blue oak           | 10 inches  |
| <i>Quercus parvula</i> var. <i>shrevei</i>   | Shreve Oak         | 10 inches  |
| <i>Quercus garryana</i>  | Oregon white oak   | Any Size   |
| <i>Quercus kelloggii</i>   | Black oak          | 10 inches  |
| <i>Quercus lobata</i>  | Valley oak         | 10 inches  |
| <i>Quercus wislizenii</i>  | Interior live oak  | 10 inches  |
| <i>Salix lasiolepis</i> , <i>Salix laevigata</i> ,<br><i>Salix lasiandra</i> , <i>Salix sitchensis</i> | Willow             | Any size in riparian corridors; six inch or larger "trunks" outside riparian corridors |
| <i>Sequoia sempervirens</i>  | Redwood            | 18 inches  |





# Summary of Changes – Pruning Permits

- Branches greater than 6” diameter on Protected indigenous tree
- Any size branch on oak trees with trunks >30” diameter
- Pruning Heritage trees

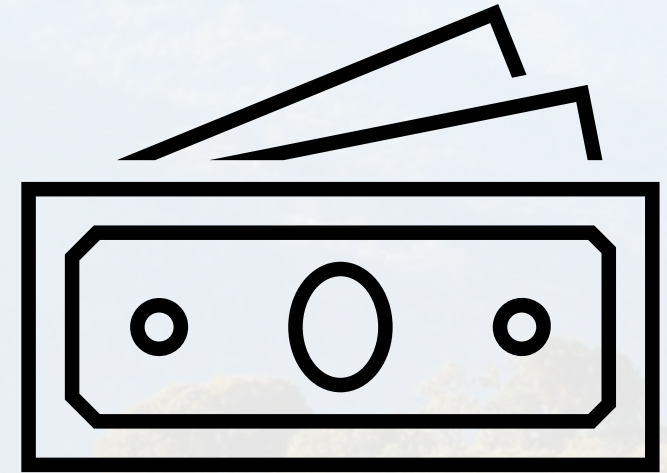
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| <i>Sequoia sempervirens</i>  | Redwood            | 18 inches  |



# Summary of Changes - In-lieu fee

- When replacing the tree(s) is not appropriate
- Flat fee: \$3,345.00 per tree
- County Tree Replacement Fund
  - Supports urban forest management program
    - Tree plantings, replacements
    - Public or Private property





# Summary of Changes - In-lieu fee

| Description   | Cost            |
|---|-----------------|
| 24" box tree (average cost across NorCal nurseries)   | \$ 225          |
| Three-year establishment care and maintenance, including planting, watering, and pruning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assumptions               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Labor rate: \$200/hr</li> <li>o Time per tree to prune: 0.75 hr</li> <li>o Ensure planting site is viable</li> <li>o Equipment for staking, moving trees, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | \$ 1,120        |
| Pruning maintenance, twice during the first 10 years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assumptions               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Labor rate: \$200/hr</li> <li>o Number of laborers: 2</li> <li>o Time per tree to prune: 2 hr</li> <li>o Focus on structural pruning</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  | \$1,600         |
| 40-year ecosystem services lost <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assumptions               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Including the loss of ecosystem services that come from tree removals helps offset the extra burden on infrastructure like stormwater, heat reduction, etc.</li> <li>o Generated using i-Tree</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                            | \$ 400          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>\$ 3,345</b> |



# Summary of Changes – Required Findings

## Required Findings

- Diseased or declining
- Hazard trees
- Removal of tree creates improved growing conditions for tree of higher value
- Causing damage to infrastructure
- Interference with utility services
- Geologic hazards

## Additional findings with development

- Existing tree plan and Tree Protection Plan
- No feasible alternative building site
- No more than 50% of existing canopy is lost on the property\*



# Summary of Changes – Other Changes

- Expedited Tree Permit
  - Undesirable species
  - 17-taxa list includes Acacia, Ailanthus (Tree of Heaven), Eucalyptus
- Tree replacement table
  - Replacement dependent on canopy size of removed tree

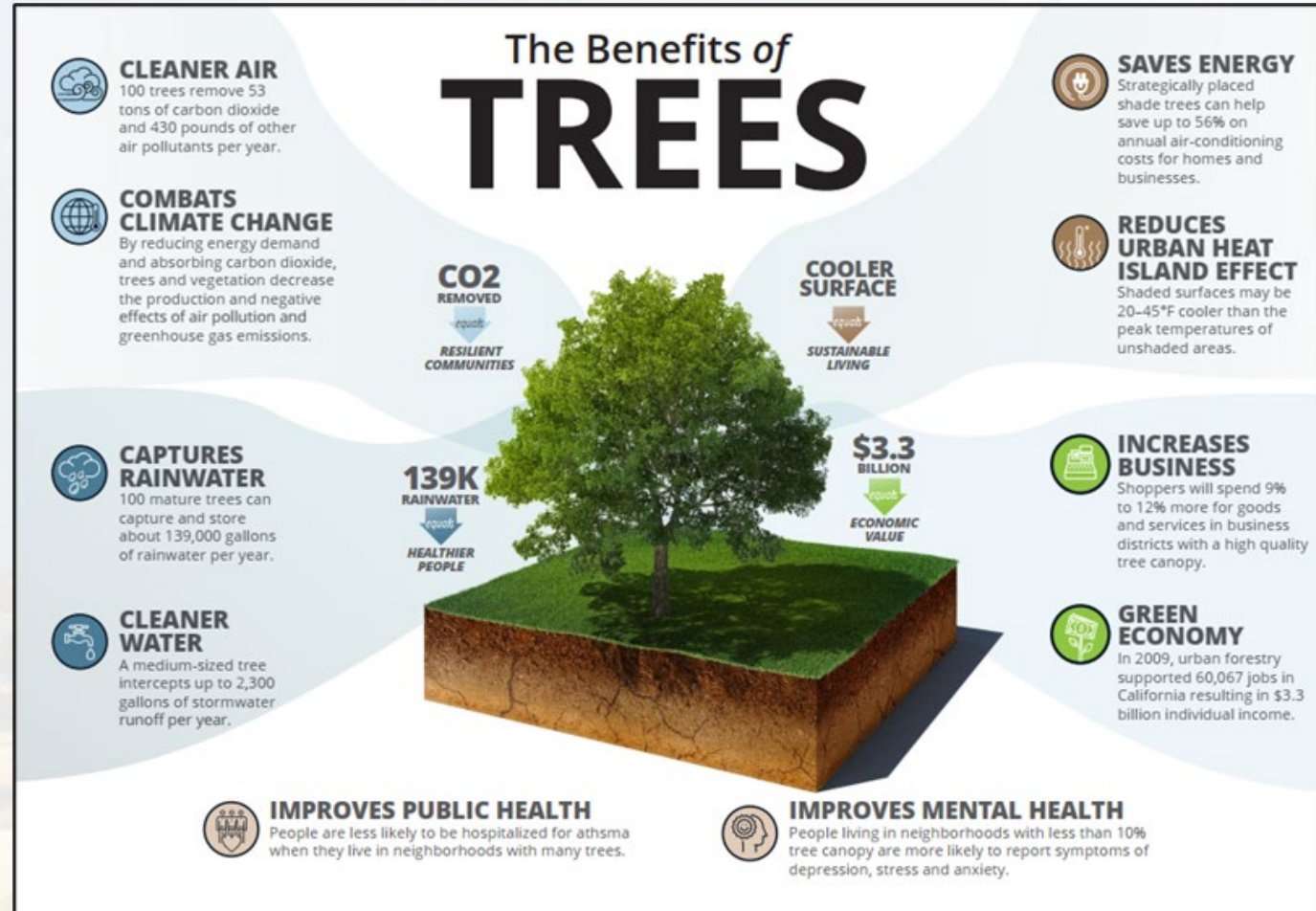
# Summary of Changes – Updated Tree list

| Common Name                                     | Scientific Name                 | Tree Stature | Foliage Type <sup>1</sup> | Mature height (ft) | Canopy spread at maturity (ft) | Planting area (ft) | Protected Indigenous Tree | Overhead utility friendly | Water Use Rating <sup>2</sup> | Appropriate Planting Habitat |              |        |                   |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|--------|-------------------|
|   |                                 |              |                           |                    |                                |                    |                           |                           |                               | Wetland/Riparian             | Oak woodland | Forest | Urban/Street Tree |
| <b>California Native Trees</b>                  |                                 |              |                           |                    |                                |                    |                           |                           |                               |                              |              |        |                   |
| <b>4 ft Planter Well or Similar Small Space</b> |                                 |              |                           |                    |                                |                    |                           |                           |                               |                              |              |        |                   |
| California lilac                                | <i>Ceanothus thyrsiflorus</i>   | Small        | E                         | 15                 | 20                             | 4                  |                           | ✓                         | Low                           |                              |              | ✓      |                   |
| Manzanita                                       | <i>Arctostaphylos manzanita</i> | Small        | E                         | 15                 | 10                             | 4                  |                           | ✓                         | Very low                      |                              |              |        | ✓                 |
| Western redbud                                  | <i>Cercis occidentalis</i>      | Small        | D                         | 25                 | 20                             | 4                  |                           | ✓                         | Very low                      |                              |              | ✓      |                   |
| <b>4-7 ft Parkway</b>                           |                                 |              |                           |                    |                                |                    |                           |                           |                               |                              |              |        |                   |
| Arroyo willow                                   | <i>Salix lasiolepis</i>         | Medium       | D                         | 40                 | 25                             | 4-7                | ✓                         |                           | High                          | ✓                            |              |        |                   |
| California buckeye                              | <i>Aesculus californica</i>     | Medium       | D                         | 25                 | 20-30                          | 4-7                | ✓                         | ✓                         | Very low                      |                              | ✓            | ✓      | ✓                 |
| Pinyon pine                                     | <i>Pinus edulis</i>             | Small        | C                         | 40                 | 25                             | 4-7                |                           | ✓                         | Low                           |                              |              |        | ✓                 |
| Toyon   | <i>Heteromeles arbutifolia</i>  | Small        | E                         | 25                 | 15                             | 4-7                |                           | ✓                         | Low                           |                              | ✓            | ✓      | ✓                 |
| Wax myrtle                                      | <i>Morella californica</i>      | Small        | E                         | 30                 | 30                             | 4-7                |                           |                           | Moderate                      |                              |              | ✓      |                   |
| <b>8+ ft Parkway, Yard, or Park</b>             |                                 |              |                           |                    |                                |                    |                           |                           |                               |                              |              |        |                   |
| Black oak                                       | <i>Quercus kelloggii</i>        | Large        | D                         | 70                 | 50                             | >8                 | ✓                         |                           | Low                           |                              | ✓            |        |                   |
| Blue oak  | <i>Quercus douglasii</i>        | Large        | E                         | 70                 | 50                             | >8                 | ✓                         |                           | Very low                      |                              | ✓            | ✓      |                   |
| Canyon live oak                                 | <i>Quercus chrysolepis</i>      | Large        | E                         | 70                 | 30                             | >8                 | ✓                         |                           | Very low                      |                              | ✓            |        |                   |
| Coast live oak                                  | <i>Quercus agrifolia</i>        | Large        | E                         | 70                 | 70                             | >8                 | ✓                         |                           | Very low                      |                              | ✓            |        |                   |
| Coast redwood                                   | <i>Sequoia sempervirens</i>     | Very Large   | E                         | 200                | 100                            | >8                 | ✓                         |                           | High                          | ✓                            |              | ✓      |                   |
| Interior live oak                               | <i>Quercus wislizeni</i>        | Large        | E                         | 70                 | 80                             | >8                 |                           |                           | Very low                      |                              | ✓            |        |                   |
| Oregon white oak                                | <i>Quercus garryana</i>         | Very Large   | D                         | 90                 | 60                             | >8                 | ✓                         |                           | Low                           |                              | ✓            |        |                   |
| Pacific madrone                                 | <i>Arbutus menziesii</i>        | Large        | E                         | 70                 | 50                             | >8                 | ✓                         |                           | Low                           |                              |              | ✓      |                   |
| Red willow                                      | <i>Salix laevigata</i>          | Medium       | D                         | 50                 | 35                             | >8                 | ✓                         |                           | High                          |                              |              |        |                   |
| Valley oak                                      | <i>Quercus lobata</i>           | Large        | D                         | 70                 | 50                             | >8                 | ✓                         |                           | Low                           |                              | ✓            |        |                   |



# Companion Website - [sanmateocountytrees.org](http://sanmateocountytrees.org)

- Why are trees protected?
- Arborist report template
- Basic resources for tree care
- Interactive survey: Do I need a Permit?
  - Zoning district
  - Type of work
  - Tree species and size



# Tentative Schedule

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>May 28</b>           | Presentation to County Planning Staff   |
| <b>June 21</b>          | Public Release of the updated ordinance and associated website. Solicit feedback via website/email and at Community Council presentations.  |
| <b>Week of July 22</b>  | NFOCC and MCC presentations/feedback  |
| <b>August/Sept 2024</b> | PC Hearing  |
| <b>October 8</b>        | BOS Hearing   |
| <b>TBD</b>              | Coastal Commission Hearing regarding application of the updated ordinance in the coastal zone. (Updated ordinance to go into effect for all non-coastal unincorporated areas 30 days after BOS adoption.) |







**Thank You**  
[sanmateocountytrees.org](http://sanmateocountytrees.org)

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