

**A COALITION OF TREE ADVOCATES
KEY COMMUNITY CONCERNS
City of Sacramento's
PROPOSED TREE ORDINANCE REVISIONS**

The proposed Tree Ordinance revisions conflict with General Plan policies for the Urban Forest, degrade existing standards for tree removal, remove the right of citizens to appeal removals of city-owned trees, and will result in more frequent removal of healthy trees and their public benefits to residents.

WEAKENS EXISTING TREE POLICIES

- Conflicts with the 2035 General Plan Environmental Resources (ER) Goal 3.1.3 to protect and retain trees.
- Eliminates existing requirement that trees be included in new development and redevelopment projects - makes tree requirement optional at Director's discretion.
- Requires Director to approve tree removals for "reasonable use of private property" and if a tree could possibly threaten a main building in the future, even if it is not currently a problem.
- No authorization language is provided for the Director to try to retain trees by working with a private developer to redesign a project.
- No requirement to replace removed protected trees or pay a mitigation fee for tree removals.
- Dutch elm disease protection eliminated - endangering other trees.
- Eliminates existing language that protects city street trees from damage.

CITY-OWNED TREES ARE NOT PROTECTED FROM REMOVAL - EXEMPT FROM KEY ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS

- Ordinance conflicts with General Plan ER 3.1.3., which requires retention of city trees.
- Excludes trees in city parks and on other city property from protections accorded to street trees.
- Double standard established --city is exempt from making findings for tree removal, while private property owners have to meet criteria to remove a private protected tree.
- City "public projects" only require written request to Director for removal, and only on street trees proposed for removal in the project.

TREE PERMIT FACTORS (CRITERIA) ARE BIASED IN FAVOR OF TREE REMOVALS

- Biased factors (criteria), such as age and ground space available, could be used to remove healthy, structurally-sound trees.
- No factors consider tree benefits, i.e. canopy, streetscape aesthetics, air quality, energy reduction, etc.
- No documentation or proof is required for tree removals, e.g., an arborist's report showing structural damage has occurred.
- Requires Director to approve tree removals for uses permitted by right.
- No "weighting" of factors to help retain trees.

REPLACEMENT AND MITIGATION FOR TREE REMOVALS MADE OPTIONAL

- Eliminates existing requirement to plant a tree or pay a fee when removing a protected tree.
- Conflicts with General Plan Environmental Resources (ER) Goal 3.1.3 which requires replacement or mitigation for removal of city and Heritage trees - allows Director to decide whether replacement or mitigation is required.
- No appraised tree value required when a tree has to be removed.
- Director can approve removal of trees, even if trees had been required as a condition of development; tree replacement would not be required.

WEAKENS TREE NOTIFICATIONS AND APPEALS

- No notification for tree removals in park or city-owned properties, unless a street tree, or part of a city project.
- Removes Parks and Recreation Commission as authority to hear citizen appeals of proposed protected tree removal in favor of a less public process with a Hearing Officer. No requirement that a Hearing Officer be independent (not city staff) and a qualified arborist.
- Citizen appeals of city street tree removals reduced to a meeting with the Director of Public Works, creating a conflict of interest.

UNLCEAR ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES

- Enforcement process is not clear or transparent to the public.
- Urban Forestry not responsible for enforcement
- Penalty fees are not directed to tree plantings and maintenance.

The City of Sacramento's Law and Legislation Committee will hear the proposed revisions to the Tree Ordinance on Tuesday, January 12, 2-16 at 3 pm at the new City Hall, 915 I Street.

For more information contact: trees4sacramento.org

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