

San Mateo County Tree Ordinances Update Project

Preliminary Goals and Objectives

Preliminary Project Goal:

Amend the County's significant and heritage tree removal ordinances, and the Resource Management and Planned Agricultural District zoning ordinances to improve management of individual trees and tree canopy in the County, and to improve the tree removal and trimming permit process, consistent with the County's General Plan.

Preliminary Steering Committee Goal:

Collaborate with County staff by providing input and guidance that helps shape amendments to the County's ordinances governing tree protection and removal, in a manner consistent with the County's General Plan.

Preliminary Project Objectives:

- Implement General Plan policies that promote: (1) conserving, enhancing and protecting vegetative... and wildlife resources through appropriate regulation of development and control of incompatible vegetation, and (2) protecting and enhancing the natural visual quality of the County; and (3) minimizing the removal of visually significant trees and vegetation
- Characterize the environmental, economic and aesthetic tree canopy and individual tree benefits
- Determine whether there are geographic, ecological or cultural characteristics of trees or tree canopy in the County that warrant different policies for effective management to achieve County General Plan goals
- Review and improve tree protection requirements for construction and demolition that will ensure trees to remain will survive and thrive
- Develop flexible, adaptable and appropriate tree removal mitigation requirements and mechanisms that will sustain and enhance trees and tree canopy
- Enhance compliance and enforcement
- Facilitate habitat restoration by allowing removal of trees necessary to achieve the ecological goals of an approved restoration project
- Maintain and enhance solar access for energy generation
- Reconcile the amended tree ordinance with other County zoning ordinances
- Reconcile and integrate with Public Works and Parks Department's plans and policies for tree and canopy management
- Create an over the counter permit for certain tree removals
- Develop new tree replacement lists that advance the County's sustainability in light of climate change, and environmental, economic and aesthetic goals