

**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](http://trees4sacramento.org)

January 4, 2016