

Folsom City Council Staff Report

MEETING DATE:	10/11/2022
AGENDA SECTION:	New Business
SUBJECT:	Landmark tree Considerations and Direction to Staff
FROM:	Community Development Department

RECOMMENDATION / CITY COUNCIL ACTION

Consider additional landmark tree designations and provide direction to staff on whether to proceed with initiating landmark tree designations for specific privately owned trees on behalf of private property owners. Additionally, provide direction to staff on whether to proceed with initiating the process for designating oaks located along the Oak Parkway Trail on city property between the two intersections of Willow Creek Drive as a landmark grove.

BACKGROUND / ISSUE

Trees are both community and environmental assets, unique in their ability to provide a multitude of benefits that appreciate over time. Longstanding trees contribute to the City of Folsom's character and "Distinctive by Nature" adage. One of the ways in which the City of Folsom shows recognition for particularly noteworthy specimens is through a landmark tree Registry. Landmark trees are trees that have been designated by the City Council as exceptional due to outstanding characteristics, special ecological contributions, or historical importance.

Prior to this year, the City of Folsom landmark tree program had not added a new tree to the registry since 1999. However, at the urging of staff, this year the California Independent System Operator Corporation (California ISO) became the first applicant in 23 years to submit an application to establish a landmark tree. The subject tree was an impressive interior live oak located on the property, estimated to be at least 150 years old. The application was well received at the February 22nd, 2022 City Council meeting; during which, council expressed great interest in revitalizing the landmark tree program and requested staff to look into bringing additional landmark tree proposals forward in the future. This report represents City Arborist recommendations and other suggestions to designate

three individual trees and two groves of trees as landmark with City Council direction and property owner authorization as required.

POLICY / RULE

Section 12.16.170 of the Folsom Municipal Code gives a private property owner or interested party the right to submit an application to the Community Development Department, requesting that the City Council establish by Resolution a tree or group of trees as a landmark tree(s). In order to designate a tree as a landmark tree, the City Council must find that the tree is a significant community benefit because it possesses one or more of the following attributes:

- 1) historical value,
- 2) outstanding habitat value,
- 3) unusual species, or
- 4) superior beauty.

The City Council, on its own motion and without the payment of the application fee, may also commence the process of designating a landmark tree. If the owner of the proposed landmark tree is not the applicant, the Community Development Department shall notify, by first-class mail, the owner of the proposed landmark tree thirty days before the hearing of the application. The owner must provide written confirmation to the city that they support the application.

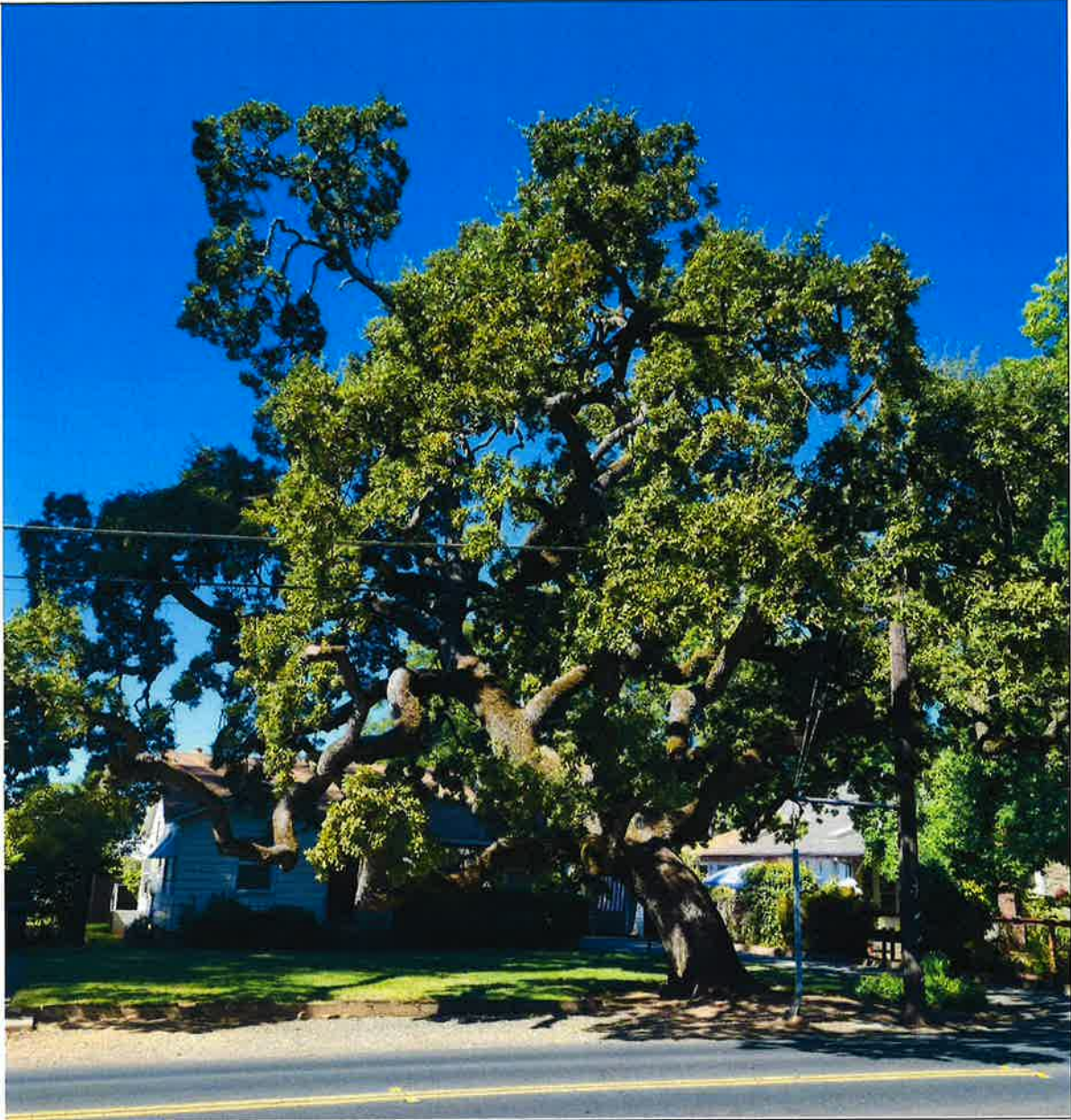
Section 12.16.170 of the Folsom Municipal Code further specifies that, upon the request of a property owner, the city arborist may arrange for a landmark tree to be inspected and a report prepared which assesses the tree's health and provides recommendations for maintenance. Section 12.16.160 grants utilization of the Tree Planting and Replacement Fund for maintenance of landmark trees at the recommendation of the city arborist.

ANALYSIS

Staff are cognizant of a handful of trees, both on public and private properties within the city that would be appropriate candidates for landmark tree status. In recent years staff have engaged with a few owners of particularly outstanding tree specimens to inform them of the landmark tree registry, the benefits of owning a landmark tree, and the process for garnering formal approval for a landmark tree designation. Although some tree owners have expressed interest, California ISO is the only owner to bring forward an application.

Staff have identified the following trees and groves as potential landmark candidates for City Council consideration and direction:

Landmark Tree Candidate #1



Location: 710 Sibley St, residential front yard

Owner: Leo P Grover Trust

Species: Valley oak (*Quercus lobata*)

Trunk Diameter: 41.5"

Description: Picturesque heritage-sized oak (*Quercus lobata*) along Sibley Street.

Qualifying Attribute(s): historical value and superior beauty

Landmark Tree Candidate #2



Location: 192 Blue Ravine Rd, commercial parking lot

Owner: NickJake LLC

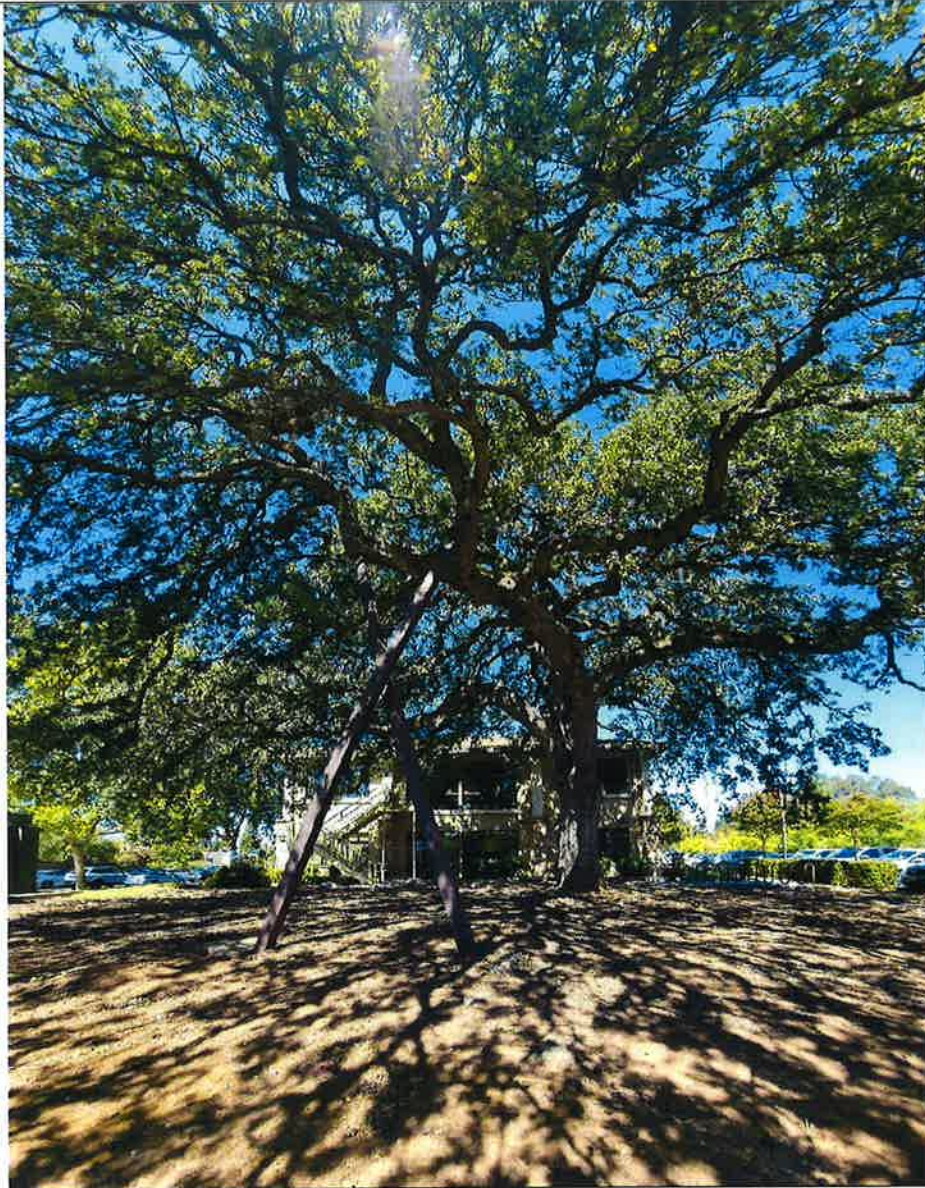
Species: Interior live oak (*Quercus wislizeni*)

Trunk Diameter: 53" at 18"

Description: Very large specimen for the species in the Folsom area. This tree was preserved during the original development of the parcel and has been carefully managed by the owner. Earlier this year, bracing rods and cables were installed in the tree by the owner to provide structural support for the large, ever-growing scaffold branches.

Qualifying Attribute(s): historical value and superior beauty

Landmark Tree Candidate #3



Location: 785 Hana Way, commercial parking lot

Owner: Folsom Dental Associates LLC

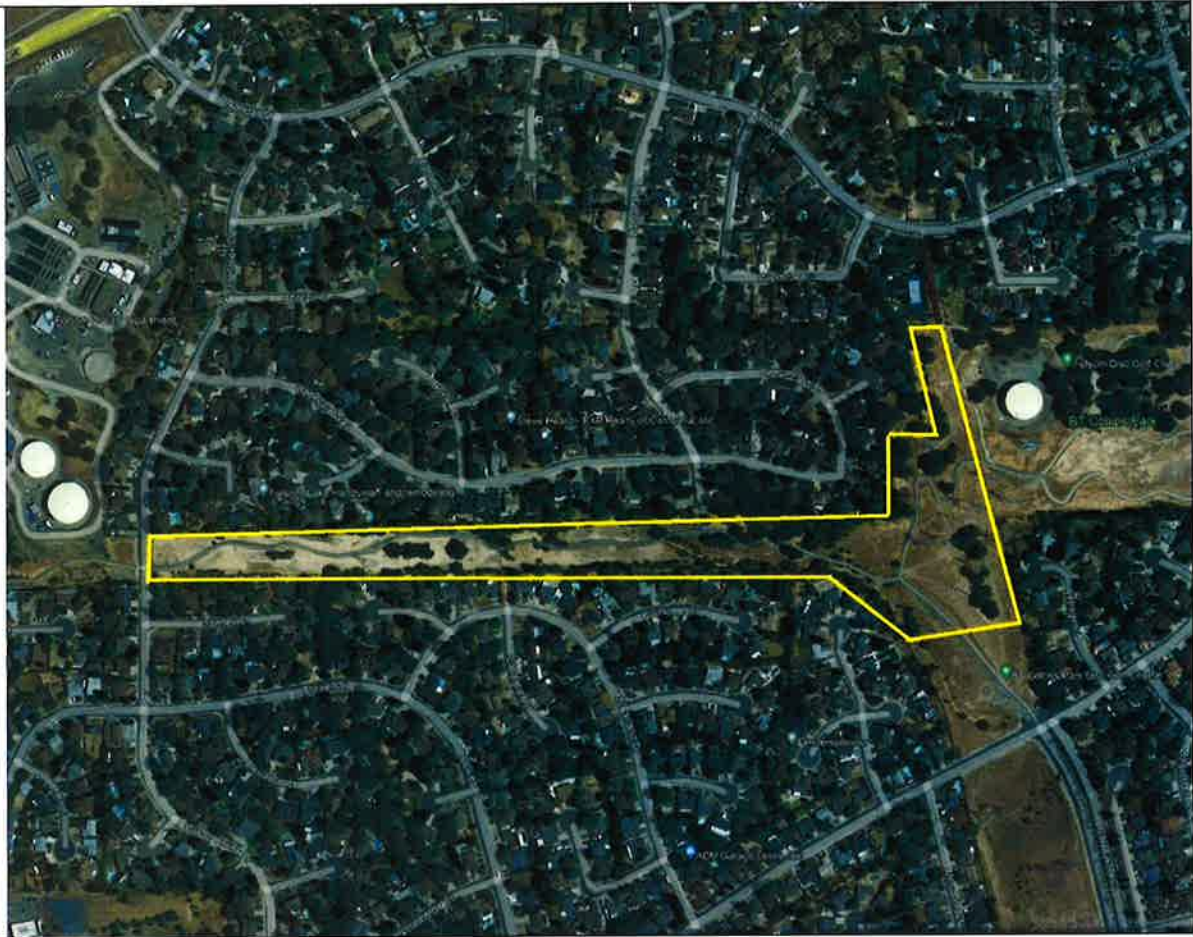
Species: Blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*)

Trunk Diameter: 44.5"

Description: Very large specimen that the original developer went to great lengths to preserve. In addition to working around the tree in the original site design, the developer also arranged to have a custom support structure constructed under the large eastern facing scaffold limb to reduce weight loads on the limb and ensure longevity.

Qualifying Attribute(s): historical value and superior beauty

Landmark Grove Candidate #4



Location: Oak Parkway Trail between both intersections of Willow Creek Drive

Owner: City of Folsom

Species: Primarily blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) and interior live oak (*Quercus wislizeni*)

Grove Acreage: approximately 50 trees

Description: This popular trail corridor is heavily used by both pedestrians and cyclists. The oak stands along the trail provide a nexus to natural habitat that Folsom users can enjoy.

Qualifying Attribute(s): historical value, outstanding habitat value, and superior beauty

Landmark Grove Candidate #5



Location: 300 Prison Rd,

Owner: State of California

Species: Primarily blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*)

West Grove Acreage: approx. 140 acres

East Grove Acreage: approx. 90 acres

Description: Owned by Folsom State Prison, these oaks are concentrated in two distinct western and eastern stands on the parcel. The historical and habitat value of these two groves are potential points of merit for a Landmark designation.

Qualifying Attribute(s): historical value outstanding habitat value, and superior beauty

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The current application fee for establishing a landmark tree designation is \$280.00. By initiating the process for establishing landmark tree designations on behalf of private property owners, the city would waive this application fee.

Upon the request of the property owner, the City Arborist may inspect a landmark tree and prepare a report on the health and recommendations for necessary maintenance. Maintenance activities for landmark trees are funded by the City's Tree Planting and Replacement fund in accordance with FMC 12.16.160. Given the potential financial impact of preparing the report and maintenance for landmark trees, the designation of landmark groves with multiple trees in particular has the potential for significant cost from the Tree Planting and Replacement Fund that could otherwise be used for planting new trees.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Landmark tree Classification is an administrative action and not considered a project under the California Environment Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3). As a result, the action is exempt from environmental review.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Public Comments

Submitted,

PAM JOHNS
Community Development Director

ATTACHMENT 1

Public Comments

**BRUCE C CLINE
152 REBECCA WAY
FOLSOM, CALIFORNIA 95630**

October 3, 2022

SUPPORT FOR CITY COUNCIL ITEM TO DESIGNATE LANDMARK TREES

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

I sincerely urge you to provide unanimous direction to Staff to bring back a City Council action to designate the Oak Trees and Groves between Willow Creek at the Water Treatment plant and Willow Creek at BT Collins Park.

As you know, last year PG&E threatened to cut scores of trees down in the Oak Parkway Corridor. At the last minute PG&E heard enough concern over the trees and agreed to trim them rather than remove them. Of Course, there is NO legal authority to remove these trees in PUC orders, easements or other statutes and regulations. I understand that PG&E recently suggested it had changed its position regarding some trees on PG&E land between Willow Creek and Natoma Street near St. Johns. Again, they have no legal authority to remove oak trees there either.

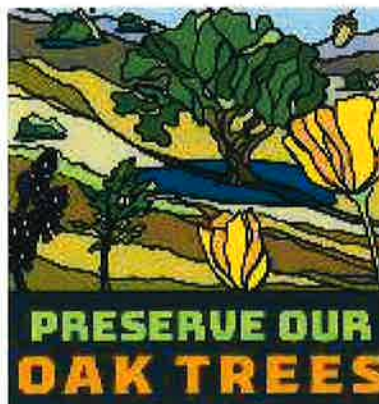
The City must take all actions it can to protect Oak Trees in our City and, in particular in the century plus year old groves and trees along the bike path corridor between each section of Willow Creek. These trees are a treasure and are a beautiful, shaded section of this corridor that exists in sharp contrast to the scorched earth area under the powerlines near BT Collins and on the PG&E owned section of the corridor.

PG&E will be back after these trees, mark my words. New staff will be assigned, people will retire, memories fade or new policies will be adopted. The City must take a firm stand and use all the tools available to it to demonstrate its support for Oak Tree preservation in this City and Corridor. Designation of these as Landmark Trees is just one tool.

I regret that I cannot be at the meeting in person, but trust you will protect ALL these trees and provide Staff clear direction to protect all of them including individual trees and Groves and to take all necessary steps to protect these and other oak trees in the City.

Thank you,

Bruce Cline, 32 year Folsom Resident





Friends of Folsom Parkways

P.O. Box 1501
Folsom, CA 95763-1501

Our vision is to promote the usage, preservation and development of parkways within the City of Folsom.

October 4, 2022

Mayor and City Council
50 Natoma St,
Folsom, CA 95630

SUPPORT FOR CITY COUNCIL ITEM TO DESIGNATE LANDMARK TREES

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

The Friends of the Folsom Parkway have long been advocates for the trails, trees and wildlife that exist in our City. We continue to urge the City to take positive action to protect the Oak Trees that are an integral part of our trail system. Last year, two of our Board Members Bruce Cline and Robert Goss addressed the City Council when trees were threatened by PG&E action along the Oak Parkway Corridor. We applaud the City Council's action to support these trees and to advocate to PG&E that there are viable alternatives simply removing Oak Trees along the Corridor.

The City Council has a great opportunity to push for protection of the Oak Trees in the bike corridor between Willow Creek at the Water Treatment Plant and Willow Creek at BT Collins. Please direct staff to bring back and action that will protect all the Oak Trees in this corridor and preserve this very unique and special section of bike trail.

On Behalf of Members and Supporters of the Friends of the Folsom Parkways and the hundreds of people that use this section of bike trail each week, we urge you to direct staff to take action at the earliest opportunity to designate the groves and trees in this section as Landmark Trees.

Thank you,

Lynn LePage
Vice President Friends of Folsom Parkways

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