



MEETING DATE: August 14, 2023

PREPARED BY: Tania Katbi, Sustainability Coordinator

SUBJECT: Tree Protection Ordinance Updates

BACKGROUND

The City's Tree Protection Ordinance (Los Altos Municipal Code Chapter 11.08) was intended to protect trees within the City and contains regulations regarding the removal of certain types of trees. The Ordinance was last updated in 2007.

As directed by the City Council on May 24, 2022, the Environmental Commission Subcommittee began the process of updating the Tree Protection Ordinance. As the Sustainability Coordinator positions were filled, staff eventually took over this process.

Staff reviewed the Subcommittees' research, conducted peer review with neighboring jurisdictions, and consulted with a Certified Arborist. The Arborist provided technical expertise and guidance, policy recommendations, and informed the updates to City Tree Planting lists. The Subcommittee also reviewed and provided feedback on these lists. Additionally, Staff met internally with the Planning and Building Divisions to gain an understanding of the Tree Removal/Tree Protection processes.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The goal of updating the Tree Protection Ordinance is to protect more trees, promote planting of locally native species and provide clear tree removal criteria and replacement standards. This will help ensure that trees are not removed without proper assessment and trees that are removed are replaced appropriately and will provide similar environmental benefits to reduce tree canopy loss. Staff will present the policy recommendations to the Environmental Commission for review and feedback.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Environmental Commission consider the proposed Tree Protection Ordinance updates and recommend moving forward to City Council.