

From: [Jim Wing](#)
To: [Tania Katbi](#); [Casey Leedom](#)
Subject: Public Comment Agenda Item 02 Meeting Date 08/14/2023 New Tree Removal Procedure
Date: Friday, August 11, 2023 9:12:25 PM

Los Altos Environmental Commission Chair Delagneau and Commission Members,

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I recommend you continue this agenda item and recommend committee revise draft New Tree Removal Criteria to make it objective. As a 55-year resident, I have seen several major trees removed because Los Altos code was not objective and poor decisions to remove were made by inexperienced Arborist and Los Altos staff. Some examples are 86 Third Street, 571 Lassen and 604 Milverton. On Milverton an Oak tree was removed that once served as center of Ohlone Indian spring camp ground [ref 1970 Foothill College Archeological dig]. Los Altos is a small village and never had Planning Staff Member with arborist training. Also Planning staff has high turnover and staff member making decision, may be new on job. Objective code will help staff to make better decisions.

I recommend following changes to New Tree Removal Criteria:

- **Item I – Complete description of “Guide for Plant Appraisal”. Provide requirement that risk rating to be done using International Society of Arboriculture [ISA] Basic Tree Risk Assessment Form [rev. 2013 or later]. This will ensure that report recommendations are based on objective data and done by arborists who use current tools / knowledge to collect data. Based on form data, tree removal should be approved only if assessment risk if High or Extreme**
- **Item 3 – Define “utility” as electrical power cable, underground natural gas pipe, and fiber optic cable. Public Transportation as roads for “bus”, “cars”, and “trucks”. Waterway as ephemeral streams [Stevens, Adobe, Permanente, and Hale].**

Many arborists may have a low-level license [3 or below] and no objective experience in tree removal. By specifying ISA, Los Altos will insure well trained arborist and high-quality objective report. Also, it will allow staff with little experience to make good objective decisions.

Federal Clean Water Act / EPA regulations define edge of payment “swale” on Los Altos streets without curb and gutter as a waterway.

Thank You for your consideration! Jim Wing, Milverton Road, Los Altos