

Ranu Aggarwal

From: Jim Wing <jameswing@msn.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 8, 2022 3:42 PM
To: Public Comment - EC
Subject: Public Comment EC 06.13.2022 Commission Distribution

Environmental Commission Chair Teksler and Distinguished Commission Members

EC 06/13/2022 Meeting Public Comment. Tree Protection Ordinance / Tree Removal Permit Procedure

I am a 54 year “customer” of Los Altos Tree Protection Ordinance and request you provide Council and Staff with objective code / procedure improvements. This will allow residents and staff make better decisions for tree removal, replacement tree selection and planting.

Please consider making following recommendations for improvements to Los Altos Tree Protection Ordinance / Tree Removal Permit Procedure:

- Remove from Los Altos Street Tree Planting List all Category I & II trees that have lateral or evasive roots. Only trees with deep “water table plume” seeking roots should be allowed. Lateral and evasive tree roots will seek / steal irrigation water from plants and lawns causing home owners to increase use of water. Current residential water restrictions are already impacting health of established trees with lateral and evasive roots. Many such trees have already caused damage to sidewalks and street travel lanes. My lawn water consumption reduced 20% when lateral tree roots were cut back.
- Require that all new Category I & II & III trees are planted per Los Altos LI-1 with hole size / location inspection required prior to planting. Revise LI-1 to require “Deep Root Barrier” to be mandatory for all Category I & II trees.
- All new Category I and II trees to be 3 feet box size to ensure rapid healthy growth because of mature root structure that will quickly seek / reach ground water table plume
- Develop tree spacing standards for new Category I and II trees. Example Valley Oak trees to be spaced 35 feet apart to ensure natural canopy spread and balance tree growth. My 70-year-old liquid amber tree 15 feet from neighbor’s 50-year-old costal oak, blocked afternoon sun from oak, causing it to grow leaning over neighbor’s bedroom.
- Develop new tree shade objective limits for home rooftop solar. I recommend you make trees a priority! Many Los Altos roofs are small or facing wrong direction to provide much more than 3% of household daily electric usage.
- Add Carbon Dioxide sequestration rating for all trees in Los Altos Tree Planting List. This will help residents to make better environmental tree selection decisions. Use United States Department of Agriculture CUFR Tree Carbon Calculator [CTCC] tool. Good news is Oak is highest rated tree.
- All tree removal requests require arborists report to be done on **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**

Los Altos is very fortunate to be mostly built on a geology alluvial fan with sediment called alluvium that provides great drainage for both surface and soil depth. Alluvium allows deep down fully saturated water table to form a upper low percent water saturated “plume” that is perfect for deep tree roots. Ground water table is close to surface and replenished by Adobe and Stevens Creek watersheds that both start on Skyline highway 35 Christmas Tree Farm. Watershed has not had fire for over 300 years and “thick surface duff” stores water with slow release. Water table depth is stable even in dry years as evidenced by Adobe Creek year-round standing water for past 54 years just south of Manresa bridge. A creekbank native fish can even be found in this standing water.

Los Altos only has Oak and Willow as native trees. This is evidenced by History House pre 1850 Los Altos alluvial fan photos showing only native grass with a few well-spaced Oak Trees with Willow’s along Adobe Creek.

Thank you for your consideration!

Jim Wing, Milverton Road, Los Altos