



MEETING DATE: February 13, 2023

SUBJECT: Tree Protection Ordinance

PREPARED BY: Casey Leedom, Sustainability Coordinator

REVIEWED BY: Aida Fairman, Director of Environmental Services and Utilities

BACKGROUND

The City's Tree Protection Ordinance (Los Altos Municipal Code Chapter 11.08) provides regulations regarding the removal of certain trees within the City of Los Altos. The Ordinance was last updated in 2007. The City also has an existing Street Tree Planting List that regulates which trees may be planted in the public right-of-way.

On May 24, 2022, the Los Altos City Council directed the Environmental Commission and City staff to evaluate the existing Tree Protection Ordinance and provide recommendations for an updated ordinance.

Staff met internally with the Development Services Department to learn about the processes and procedures of Tree Removal Permits and researched neighboring jurisdictions' policies on protected trees. Staff presented initial recommendations on the Tree Protection Ordinance to the Environmental Commission Subcommittee on November 2, 2022.

To inform this update, City staff reached out to three certified arborists for fee proposals to provide technical recommendations related to tree species, tree replacement ratios, and prioritization of protected trees. The Arborist will also provide technical input on an updated Street Tree Planting List and a Replacement Tree Planting List.

STATUS UPDATE

Staff reviewed arborist proposals and selected a consulting firm to provide technical and policy recommendations to inform the update of the City's Tree Protection Ordinance and Street Tree Planting List, and to create a Private Tree Planting List for replacement trees. City staff are meeting with the consultant this week to kick off the project, assess the current implementation process for the tree protection ordinance, and review goals for the updated ordinance. The consultant will continue their work over the following weeks. City staff will bring updated recommendations to the Environmental Commission Subcommittee before bringing them to the Environmental Commission in March or April of 2023.