

ORDINANCE 2303

ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS AMENDING CHAPTER 29 (TREE PROTECTION) OF THE TOWN CODE REGARDING WEED ABATEMENT REGULATIONS

WHEREAS, the Town of Los Gatos; recognizes that the community benefits from preserving the scenic beauty of the Town;

WHEREAS, the Town Council acknowledges that trees provide multiple benefits it also recognizes that a significant portion of the Town is located in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone;

WHEREAS, the State mandates 100 feet of defensible space around buildings and structures within Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones;

WHEREAS, the Town Council recognizes that the development and maintenance of defensible space is essential to reducing wildfire risk within the community;

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment changes will reduce the risk of wildfire and effectuate safer passage for first responders and residents in the event of a wildfire;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION II

DIVISION 2 – TREE PROTECTION

Section 29.10.0950. Intent of Town Code Chapter 29 are hereby amended to read as follows:

Sec. 29.10.0950. - Intent.

This division is adopted because the Town of Los Gatos is forested by many native and non-native trees and contains individual trees of great beauty. The community of the Town benefit from preserving the scenic beauty of the Town, preventing erosion of topsoil, providing protection against flood hazards and risk of landslides, counteracting pollutants in the air, maintaining climatic balance, and decreasing wind velocities. It is the intent of this division to regulate the removal of trees within the Town in order to retain as many trees as possible consistent with the purpose of this section and the reasonable use of private property. While trees provide multiple benefits, it is also the intent of this division to acknowledge that a

portion of the Town is located in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone as defined by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and the associated wildfire threat that exists for the community. It is the intent of this division to preserve as many protected trees as possible throughout the Town through staff review and the development review process. Special provisions regarding hillsides are included in section 29.10.0987 of this division in recognition of the unique biological and environmental differences between the hillside and non-hillside areas of the Town. This section does not supersede the provisions of Chapter 26 of this Code.

Section 29.10.0955 Definitions of Town Code Chapter 29 are hereby added to read as follows:

Defensible Space means an area around the perimeter of a structure in which vegetation, debris, and other types of combustible fuels are treated, cleared, or reduced to slow the rate and intensity of potentially approaching wildfire or fire escaping from structures.

Section 29.10.0970 Exceptions are hereby amended to read as follows:

The following trees are excepted from the provisions of this division and may be removed or severely pruned without Town approval or issuance of a tree removal permit:

- (1) A fruit or nut tree that is less than eighteen (18) inches in diameter (fifty-seven-inch circumference).
- (2) Any of the following trees that are less than twenty-four (24) inches in diameter (seventy-five (75) inches in circumference):
 - (1) Black Acacia (*Acacia melanoxylon*)
 - (2) Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)
 - (3) Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*)
 - (4) Blue Gum Eucalyptus (*E. globulus*)
 - (5) Red Gum Eucalyptus (*E. camaldulensis*)
 - (6) Other Eucalyptus (*E. spp.*)-Hillsides only
 - (7) Palm (except *Phoenix canariensis*)
 - (8) Privet (*Ligustrum lucidum*)
- (3) Any removal or maintenance of a tree to conform with the implementation and maintenance of Defensible Space per Chapter 9 – Fire Prevention and Protection with the exception of any tree listed in subcategories (3) and (10) of Sec.29.10.0960 – Scope of Protected Trees.

Section 29.10.0992 Required Findings are hereby added to read as follows:

The Director, Director's designee, or deciding body shall approve a protected tree removal permit, severe pruning permit, or pruning permit for Heritage trees or large protected trees only after making at least one (1) of the following findings:

- (1) The tree is dead, severely diseased, decayed or disfigured to such an extent that the tree is unable to recover or return to a healthy and structurally sound condition.
- (2) The tree has a tree risk rating of Extreme or High on the ISA Tree Risk Rating Matrix as set forth in the ISA Tree Risk Assessment Best Management Practices, or successor publication.
- (3) The tree is crowding other protected trees to the extent that removal or severe pruning is necessary to ensure the long-term viability of adjacent and more significant trees.
- (4) The retention of the tree restricts the economic enjoyment of the property or creates an unusual hardship for the property owner by severely limiting the use of the property in a manner not typically experienced by owners of similarly situated properties, and the applicant has demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Director or deciding body that there are no reasonable alternatives to preserve the tree.
- (5) The tree has, or will imminently, interfere with utility services where such interference cannot be controlled or remedied through reasonable modification, relocation or repair of the utility service or the pruning of the root or branch structure of the tree; or where removal or pruning is required by a public utility to comply with California Public Utility Commission (CPUC) or Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) rules or regulations.
- (6) The tree has caused or may imminently cause significant damage to an existing structure that cannot be controlled or remedied through reasonable modification of the root or branch structure of the tree.
- (7) Except for properties within the hillsides, the retention of the protected tree would result in reduction of the otherwise-permissible building envelope by more than twenty-five (25) percent.
- (8) The removal of the tree is unavoidable due to restricted access to the property.
- (9) The removal of the tree is necessary to repair a geologic hazard.
- (10) The removal of the tree and replacement with a more appropriate tree species will enhance the Town's urban forest.
- (11) The removal of the tree is necessary to conform with the implementation and maintenance of Defensible Space per Chapter 9 – Fire Prevention and Protection per direction by the Fire Chief or his/her designee.

SECTION III

With respect to compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Town Council finds as follows:

A. These Town Code amendments are not subject to review under CEQA pursuant to sections and 15061(b)(3), in that it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the proposed amendment to the Town Code would have significant impact on the environment; and

B. The proposed Town Code amendments are consistent with the General Plan and its Elements.

SECTION IV

If any provision of this ordinance or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this ordinance are severable. This Town Council hereby declares that it would have adopted this ordinance irrespective of the invalidity of any particular portion thereof and intends that the invalid portions should be severed and the balance of the ordinance be enforced.

SECTION V

Except as expressly modified in this Ordinance, all other sections set forth in the Los Gatos Town Code shall remain unchanged and shall be in full force and effect.

SECTION VI

This Ordinance was introduced at a regular meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Los Gatos on the 21st day of January 2020 and adopted by the following vote as an ordinance of the Town of Los Gatos at a regular meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Los Gatos on the 4th day of February 2020 and becomes effective 30 days after it is adopted.

In lieu of publication of the full text of the ordinance within fifteen (15) days after its passage a summary of the ordinance may be published at least five (5) days prior to and fifteen (15) days after adoption by the Town Council and a certified copy shall be posted in the office of the Town Clerk, pursuant to GC 36933(c)(1).

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

AYES: Rob Rennie, Marico Sayoc, Barbara Spector, Mayor Marcia Jensen
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

SIGNED:



MAYOR OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS
LOS GATOS, CALIFORNIA

DATE: 2/5/20

ATTEST:



TOWN CLERK OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS
LOS GATOS, CALIFORNIA

DATE: 2/5/2020