



CITY OF ORLAND STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: January 6, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and Council

FROM: Lisa Lozier – City Planner

SUBJECT: **Tree Ordinance – Policy Discussion and Direction (Discussion)**

Background

At the request of the City Council, staff has prepared this report to provide general information and policy considerations related to the potential development of a Tree Ordinance for the City of Orland.

The purpose of this item is to facilitate discussion and obtain direction from City Council regarding:

- Whether a future tree ordinance should augment existing landscape regulations contained in Title 17 (Zoning) of the Orland Municipal Code, or
- Whether the City should pursue a stand-alone tree ordinance focused on tree conservation, protection, and maintenance for future development and/or existing properties.

Based on City Council direction, staff may return at a future meeting with additional information or prepare a draft ordinance for Planning Commission review and recommendation prior to consideration by the City Council. This information will also help inform the landscaping design for the new City water tank nearing completion on 6th Street.

Discussion

Existing Regulations -

Title 17 of the Orland Municipal Code currently includes landscape standards applicable to:

- Residential development
- Commercial and industrial development
- Parking lot landscaping

These standards address planting requirements but do not comprehensively regulate tree removal, long-term protection, or maintenance, particularly for mature or significant trees.

Policy Question for City Council -

Is the intent of a future “Tree Ordinance” to:

- Enhance and supplement existing Title 17 landscape regulations, or

- Establish a stand-alone ordinance addressing tree conservation, protection, and maintenance citywide?

Tree Ordinance vs. Tree Conservation Program

Understanding the distinction between these approaches is important for setting policy direction.

Feature	Tree Ordinance	Conservation Program
Nature	Mandatory legal regulation	Voluntary or incentive-based
Scope	Focused specifically on trees	Broader natural resource management
Authority	Enforced by local government	Administered by agencies, nonprofits, or partnerships
Goal	Protect trees for safety, canopy, and aesthetics	Promote long-term ecological health
Mechanism	Permits, standards, penalties	Education, incentives, grants

In summary: An ordinance emphasizes rules and compliance, while a program focuses on incentives, education, and voluntary participation to achieve broader environmental goals.

Common Elements of Tree Ordinances

If City Council directs staff to pursue a tree ordinance, typical components may include:

- **Permits:** Required for removal or significant pruning of protected trees (often based on size, species, or location).
- **Public Safety:** Clearance requirements for sidewalks, streetlights, traffic signs, and utilities.
- **Protected Trees:** Additional standards for native, heritage, or significant trees.
- **Development Standards:** Tree preservation, replacement, or mitigation requirements during construction.
- **Exemptions:** Emergency removal of dead or hazardous trees, often with documentation by a certified arborist.
- **Enforcement:** Penalties and replacement requirements for unauthorized removal.

Implementation Considerations

City Council may wish to consider:

- How a tree ordinance would interact with existing Title 17 development standards
- Potential unintended consequences, including:
 - Increased development timelines
 - Additional costs for arborist reports and mitigation
 - Administrative workload for staff

Tree Conservation Program (Alternative or Complement)

A tree conservation program could be implemented independently or in conjunction with an ordinance and typically includes:

1. Assessment & Planning

- Canopy mapping and goal setting
- Urban forestry or tree master planning

2. Protection & Policy

- Long-term goals and policies through the General Plan
- Tree protection orders or buffer areas

3. Active Management

- Strategic planting using diverse species
- Proper pruning, pest management, and wildfire mitigation
- Invasive species removal and restoration

4. Community Engagement

- Public education and volunteer planting programs
- Workforce training in arboriculture

5. Science-Based Practices

- Use of standards such as ANSI A300
- Ongoing monitoring and adaptation

Example for Reference

The City of **Red Bluff** has adopted a tree ordinance that:

- Protects Heritage Trees and mature native species
- Requires permits for removal or significant work
- Imposes replacement requirements for unauthorized removal
- Integrates tree protection into development standards

Staff may use similar ordinances as reference points if directed to prepare a draft for Orland.

Fiscal Impact

There is **no fiscal impact** associated with receiving this report and providing direction. Any future ordinance or program may have fiscal implications, which would be evaluated and presented at that time.

Staff Recommendation

Receive and file this report and provide direction to staff regarding whether to:

1. Prepare a Draft Tree Ordinance for review by the Planning Commission; and/or
2. Request additional information or alternatives, including consideration of a broader Tree Conservation Program or amendments to existing zoning regulations.