



CITY OF ORLAND STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: January 22, 2026

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Lisa Lozier – City Planner

SUBJECT: Tree Ordinance – Discussion and Direction

Background

At the January 6, 2026, City Council meeting, staff presented a report including general information and policy considerations related to the development of a Tree Ordinance for the City of Orland.

The purpose of the report was 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.

City Council directed staff to present a discussion item to the Planning Commission including additional information and direction to prepare a draft ordinance for Planning Commission review and recommendation prior to consideration by the City Council.

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.

Summarized City Council Comments –

- City Code for business landscaping is not regularly enforced for existing landscape areas.
- Currently there are no measures for enforcing maintenance and public safety for existing trees on residential and commercial properties.
- Consider punitive actions for safety considerations such as unsafe trees.
- Update the commercial tree list for trees that would require less maintenance.
- Provide landscape maintenance information to residential and commercial property owners.
- Consider solutions for drought restrictions and water rate increases.

Questions for Planning Commission Consideration -

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?
- 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 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.
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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.

Staff Recommendation

Receive 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.

ATTACHMENT: Red Bluff Ordinance – Chapter 23.A Trees and Shrubs