

## Q15 - How much of a priority to you are the trees in Rollingwood on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest priority?

- 114 @ 5 - Highest Priority
- 89 @ 4
- 46 @ 3
- 11 @ 2
- 13 @ 1 - Lowest Priority

## Q16 - Is our current tree ordinance doing enough to save protected and Heritage trees?

CRCRC Conclusions: The responses to question 15 were highly positive to the idea of preserving, maintaining, and enhancing the tree canopy in Rollingwood. Although many thought the present tree ordinance was doing enough to protect the tree canopy, many were uncertain of what the tree ordinance does to accomplish that result and were open to changes in the ordinance that would strengthen protection of our current tree canopy. The CRCRC believes the current ordinance can be modified and enhanced to better save protected species and especially "Heritage" trees (those on the protected species list with diameters greater than 24 inches). The CRCRC believes the community supports those changes if they can be done without creating onerous restrictions on house renovation and new construction by owners.

Following summaries provided by ChatGPT:

### Yes (51%)

Respondents exhibit diverse perspectives on tree ordinances. Some individuals, uncertain about the details, express a positive inclination toward tree preservation, using "yes" as a placeholder. Others claim unawareness of any issues with the existing tree ordinance. Balancing appreciation for trees with uncertainty about restricting property owners' rights, some emphasize the need for equilibrium. Inconsistencies in enforcement are noted, with suggestions for enhanced monitoring and inspections, recognizing associated costs. Critiques are raised about survey requirements for various projects, citing concerns about increased expenses for homeowners. Support for ongoing evaluation is voiced, along with an appreciation for the uniqueness of Rollingwood compared to the City of Austin. There's also strong criticism of the perceived excessiveness of the tree ordinance, particularly the financial burden imposed by mandatory tree replacements. Additionally, concerns are expressed about misconceptions regarding tree benefits, advocating for nuanced considerations such as addressing overcrowding and disease. The responses collectively paint a nuanced picture, reflecting varying sentiments on issues related to tree preservation and ordinances.

## No (40%)

### **Inconsistent Enforcement:**

Concerns are raised about inconsistent enforcement, with enforcement seeming to rely on homeowner self-reporting. There's frustration over spending time and money to follow the code while watching neighbors disregard it. Builders appear undeterred.

### **Support for Tree Preservation:**

Strong support for tree preservation, emphasizing the importance of saving trees despite the challenges associated with construction. The character and beauty of Rollingwood, especially heritage trees, are deemed vital.

### **Irrigation and Mitigation Enforcement:**

Suggestions include requiring irrigation for heritage trees during construction and enforcing tree mitigation more rigorously. Concerns are expressed about trees planted during the permit process but left to die without proper care.

### **Issues with Heritage Tree Definition:**

Criticism is voiced regarding the lack of a clear definition for heritage trees in the code. The replacement process, involving permits for 12" diameter trees, is seen as problematic, with a capped maximum for replacement trees.

### **Flexibility and Reasonableness in Ordinance:**

Advocacy for a level of reasonableness in the tree ordinances is emphasized, considering factors like sloped lots and power lines that affect tree placement. Flexibility in planting replacement trees is sought, especially for lots facing significant hardship due to natural events.

### **Challenges with Tree Loss and Disease:**

Challenges related to tree loss due to factors like oak wilt, ice storms, and wind storms are highlighted. Keeping up with nature's destruction is acknowledged as a significant difficulty.

### **Concerns about Developer Actions:**

Criticism is directed at developers who clear-cut lots and replant smaller trees, potentially diminishing the value and character of Rollingwood. The need for efforts to preserve and protect native trees is emphasized.

### **Lack of Enforcement and Regulatory Gaps:**

Expressions of doubt about the effectiveness of current enforcement mechanisms are shared. Concerns are raised about the absence of building limits based on tree size, health, and age. There's a call for better oversight and exploration of alternatives to cutting trees during construction.

Blank (9%):

Respondents generally lack specific knowledge about the current tree ordinance, with uncertainty prevailing regarding its details. Despite this, there is an overall positive sentiment toward trees, viewed as valuable assets for the community. Concerns arise over the practice of clearing large lots for larger homes, indicating a perceived need for enhanced tree protection measures. Criticisms are directed at the question's wording and insufficient information, hindering informed responses. Respondents call for additional details on the current tree ordinance, believing that more information would facilitate the formation of well-informed opinions. The protection of Heritage trees emerges as a consistent theme, with respondents expressing the importance of safeguarding these trees, even in the absence of comprehensive knowledge about the existing ordinance.

**Q17: Should we consider a plan sponsored by the city, or private donations, to plant additional trees, with owner approval, in public ROW?**

**CRCRC Conclusions:** There is very strong support in the community for a program to support planting of trees in parks and possibly right of ways. CRCRC is supportive of this idea but has not included a program to accomplish this in the current tree ordinance revisions. This idea may be developed later and perhaps in conjunction with other city committees such as Parks and Recreation.

Yes (80%)

The responses reflect a generally positive attitude toward the idea of planting more trees in Rollingwood, with various reasons and considerations mentioned:

**Park Area Enhancement:**

A specific desire is expressed for more trees in the park area between the park and the pool.

**Acknowledgment of Tree Growth Time:**

While recognizing that trees take a long time to grow, there is an overall sentiment favoring extensive tree planting.

**Community Programs for Tree Planting:**

Mention is made of successful programs in other areas where residents were offered the opportunity to purchase and plant trees with city support.

**Concerns about Safety and Visibility:**

Some respondents express support for tree planting, as long as it does not compromise safety by obstructing visibility at intersections or shedding branches into streets.

**Private Donations and Owner Approval:**

Support for tree planting is extended to private donations, and some respondents emphasize the importance of owner approval for such initiatives.

**Cleanup and Maintenance:**

Suggestions include a cleanup of right-of-way areas and attention to creeks and green belts, emphasizing the need for maintenance along with new plantings.

**Consideration for Power Lines and Frost Exposure:**

The positive view of tree enhancement comes with a note of consideration for factors like power lines and frost exposure.

**Support for the Environmental Aspect:**

**The broader sentiment is that more trees contribute to the beauty and environmental health of Rollingwood.**

**Budget Considerations:**

While many express support, there are mentions of the need to consider budget constraints and ensure cost-effectiveness.

**Focus on Native Trees:**

Several responses highlight the importance of planting native trees and following a strategic plan for mature tree placement.

In summary, the majority of responses endorse the idea of planting more trees, with considerations for safety, community programs, maintenance, and a preference for native species.

**No (17%)**

The responses to the idea of having the city plant more trees in public spaces, particularly in the right-of-way (ROW), vary. While there is general support for increasing the number of trees in Rollingwood, some concerns and considerations are raised:

**Positive Responses:**

- Many respondents express enthusiasm for more trees, emphasizing the aesthetic and environmental benefits they bring to the community.
- Some suggest implementing programs similar to other cities where residents can participate in tree planting initiatives.

**Concerns and Considerations:**

- Several respondents highlight the need for caution to avoid impairing views and infringing on property owners' rights.
- Concerns are raised about potential safety issues, such as restricting sightlines at corners or shedding branches into streets.

- Some respondents propose focusing on preserving existing trees before introducing new plantings.
- The impact on visibility and utility access is mentioned as a consideration, with suggestions for responsible planting.

**Specific Suggestions:**

- Recommendations are made to prioritize private donations or owner approval for tree planting initiatives.
- Some suggest addressing existing overgrowth issues and cleaning up certain areas before introducing more vegetation.
- There's a call for a strategic plan to shade streets with mature trees and possibly burying power lines.

**Enforcement and Regulation:**

- Concerns are voiced about the lack of enforcement and adherence to tree protection during construction, suggesting the need for a landscape fund and strict regulations.

**Blank (3%)**

The responses express a range of opinions on the idea of the city planting more trees in public right-of-way (ROW) areas:

**Financial Considerations:**

There is reluctance to raise taxes, with a preference for shifting the responsibility and cost onto builders and new homeowners. The sentiment is to make those who don't reside in the area bear the financial burden.

**Support for Environmental Culture:**

Some respondents express support for the idea of the city promoting a culture of protecting, planting, and fostering trees and native landscapes. They believe that influencing such a culture could eventually impact those choosing to build in the area positively.

**Uncertainty due to Lack of Information:**

Several respondents express uncertainty or a lack of information regarding the concept of planting more trees in public ROW areas. They indicate a need for more details or clarification to provide a more informed response.

In summary, opinions range from financial considerations and pushing costs onto builders to supporting the development of a pro-environment culture in the community. There is also a common theme of needing more information for a comprehensive evaluation of the idea.