

CITY OF ENCINITAS
ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL

Policy Title: Urban Forest Management Program Section: Council Policy

Responsible Department: City Manager Number: C027

Approved By: City Council Date Approved: 3/18/09; 4/26/17

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I. Policy Statement

The City of Encinitas recognizes that its urban forest is an integral part of the City's infrastructure. Properly planned, managed, and maintained, the urban forest provides significant ecological, health, and economic benefits. These include improved air and water quality, sequestration of carbon dioxide, reduced erosion and stormwater runoff, energy conservation, habitat for wildlife, a source of shade, enhanced livability, traffic calming, noise reduction and increased property values.

The City recognizes that Urban Forest Management is based on scientific principles that govern a natural ecosystem occurring in the midst of, and interacting with City and human processes. It involves the protection and enhancement of urban trees and forests and the natural resources and processes on which their health depends.

The City is responsible for the management of the City's urban forest, which is composed of all trees and plants, both intentionally planted or occurring naturally within the public right-of-way and on public property. The City recognizes that the effective and efficient management of the City's critical green infrastructure requires leadership, appropriate planning, proactive programs and education.

The City also develops standards and reviews, conditions, and approves development projects on private property, including landscape plans. The City Council finds that policy guidance is necessary to ensure:

- Continued protection, management, maintenance, care and replacement of the City's urban forest
- Consistency in practice among the various City departments involved in urban forest issues
- Compliance with the City's Climate Action Plan
- Consistency with the City's General Plan and Specific Plans

Adoption of this policy will serve to guide City programs and will serve to protect and enhance the health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of Encinitas. Through implementation of

this policy and the Urban Forest Management Program, the City will continue its role as a leader in environmental stewardship.

II. Program Goals

The goals of the City's urban forest management program are to:

- a. Maximize the environmental, economic and health benefits derived from the urban forest by creating and enhancing a thriving and safe urban forest without compromising public health and safety.
- b. Provide clear and consistent guidance to City departments and members of the public regarding the implementation of the urban forest management policies and plans.
- c. Resolve conflicts between the preservation of City trees and other vital infrastructure
- d. Encourage community and private partnerships related to the urban forest.
- e. Ensure that municipal tree maintenance funds are spent in a cost-effective manner.
- f. Ensure that trees planted are appropriately sized for the space in order to reduce the greenhouse gas generating impacts of pruning and processing of trimmings to help the City achieve the goals of its Climate Action Plan.
- g. Preserve the City's Heritage trees and City Trees whenever there exists maintenance or infrastructure solutions through which this can be reasonably accomplished.

III. Urban Forest Advisory Committee

The City Council, in consultation with the City Arborist, shall establish an Urban Forest Advisory Committee (UFAC), composed predominantly of community members with relevant expertise. The City Arborist shall serve as the staff liaison for the UFAC, which will select a chair from among its members. The Committee shall meet as needed, but no less than quarterly. The UFAC will advise the City Arborist and other staff on tree-related issues consistent with the goals of the Urban Forest Management Program.

IV. Management Principles

In order to manage the City's urban forest, the City Manager shall designate a City Arborist, who will serve as the City's resource and will advise the City Manager and all departments on urban forestry matters.

City Departments will act in accordance with the following principles:

1. Tree selection: trees will be selected from the Approved Tree Species Master List found in the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) or as approved by the City Arborist. Factors to consider in selecting trees for public property include:

- a. Tree canopy cover and root growth: Canopy cover and root growth may vary depending on the area of the city, street size, existing infrastructure, community needs, environmental limitations and aesthetic considerations.
 - b. Long-term growth expectation and anticipated maintenance costs, including the amount of fruit and litter produced.
 - c. Appropriate species: climatically adapted and environmentally appropriate trees which recognize the water constraints facing our region.
 - d. Resistance to pests and diseases.
2. Tree maintenance will be conducted using current national standards and best management practices, including:
 - a. Strategic management: the City will periodically assess the entire streetscape to develop appropriate long-term management strategies that will enable planned replacement of trees while reducing adverse impacts to the overall corridor.
 - b. Avoiding conflicts with existing infrastructure (such as root conflicts with sidewalks or canopy conflicts with street signs) through proper tree selection and regular maintenance.
 - c. Ensuring vehicular clearance as well as traffic control sign visibility.
 - d. Recycling or reuse of all appropriate green waste generated through the maintenance of the City's urban forest.
 - e. Maintaining and regularly updating the City's electronic inventory of all City trees and all trees in accessible public property, including those trees not specifically planted by the City, to assist in the efficient management of these important assets and reduce City risk.
3. Protecting the trees that exist in City-maintained areas. Encourage other public and private entities in the City to plant and maintain healthy trees wherever possible.
4. Promote the benefits and management of the urban forest through community outreach and educational programs.
5. Work collaboratively with interested citizens and environmental groups to protect wildlife habitat and support environmental stewardship.
6. Create a greater public awareness of urban forestry benefits and challenges.
7. Comply with the City's invasive species and habitat management policies to avoid and eliminate invasive species where possible.
8. Require tree evaluation, protection plans and monitoring for any City project or projects requiring City discretionary approval that impacts existing trees.
9. Develop policies and procedures to assess monetary damages for vandalism, damage, or the unauthorized removal of City trees.

V. Requirement to Develop Administrative Manual and Procedures

As part of the City's overall Urban Forest Management Program (UFMP), there is an Administrative Manual for use by all City Departments. The Administrative Manual will

be compatible with this policy and with the City's General Plan (Resource Management Element: Goal 3, Policies 3.1 through 3.7). The City Arborist, in conjunction with input from the UFAC, will ensure that the Administrative Manual is reviewed annually and updated as needed. The Administrative Manual shall also contain a provision related to tree removals which includes an evaluation procedure, community notification and replanting procedure where appropriate.

VI. Trees of Community Significance

The City's General Plan (Resource Management Element: Policy 3.1) specifies that "Trees of community significance cannot be removed without City authorization."

A tree of community significance (hereinafter referred to as a Heritage Tree) is defined as:

A tree of community significance located in the City on public or private property designated by the City in accordance with the following criteria:

- a. That is one of the oldest and largest of its species
- b. Is of unique form or species
- c. Has historic significance due to an association with an historic building, site, street, person or event, or
- d. Is a defining landmark or significant outstanding feature of a neighborhood.

Any person or agency may nominate a tree for heritage designation. The UFAC will review all such nominations, in consultation with the City Arborist and make recommendations to the Planning Commission. Heritage Trees may be located on public property or on private property with the consent of the private property owner. Upon Planning Commission approval of the Heritage Tree application, the tree will be designated as a Heritage Tree and any work on this tree must be done under the provisions of a City-issued permit unless immediate action must be taken to protect the public health or safety. It will be the responsibility of any private property owner whose property contains a heritage tree to ensure that any new owner knows of the trees designation and the requirements that come with this designation.

VII. Tree Removal

Heritage Trees - Any removal of a Heritage Tree, whether located on public or private property, shall be reviewed by the City Arborist and UFAC; their comments and evaluation shall be considered, in a public hearing, for review and approval by the Planning Commission.

City Trees – Any City project subject to a discretionary permit that is proposing to remove or impact a City Tree shall be reviewed and considered by the UFAC and City Arborist to evaluate the potential impact of such removal. Such evaluation will be included in the public record and considered as part of any discretionary permit determination. Removal of any other City Tree, shall be reviewed by the UFAC and comments provided to the City Arborist for consideration in the determination of whether the tree shall be removed.

VIII. Arbor Day Foundation – Tree City USA Program

The City of Encinitas will complete all steps necessary to be officially recognized as a “Tree City USA” by the National Arbor Day Foundation. These steps include: designating a department with the overall responsibility for the City’s Urban Forest Management, establishing a community tree ordinance, funding the urban forestry management program at an annual level of at least \$2 per capita and sponsoring an “Arbor Day” observance event and proclamation.