



Tree Committee  
AGENDA

Monday, December 2, 2024, 5:30 p.m.

Council Hearing Room, 990 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE TREE COMMITTEE**

The Tree Committee holds in-person meetings. Zoom participation will not be supported at this time. Attendees of City Council or Advisory Body meetings are eligible to receive one hour of complimentary parking; restrictions apply, visit [Parking for Public Meetings](#) for more details.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Public Comment prior to the meeting (must be received 3 hours in advance of the meeting):**

**Mail - Delivered by the U.S. Postal Service.** Address letters to the City Clerk's Office at 990 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo, California, 93401.

**Email - Submit Public Comments via email to [advisorybodies@slocity.org](mailto:advisorybodies@slocity.org).** In the body of your email, please include the date of the meeting and the item number (if applicable). Emails *will not* be read aloud during the meeting.

**Voicemail - Call (805) 781-7164 and leave a voicemail.** Please state and spell your name, the agenda item number you are calling about, and leave your comment. Verbal comments must be limited to 3 minutes. Voicemails *will not* be played during the meeting.

*\*All correspondence will be archived and distributed to members, however, submissions received after the deadline ma not be processed until the following day.*

**Public Comment during the meeting:**

**Meetings are held in-person.** To provide public comment during the meeting, you must be present at the meeting location.

**Electronic Visual Aid Presentation.** To conform with the City's Network Access and Use Policy, Chapter 1.3.8 of the [Council Policies & Procedures Manual](#), members of the public who desire to utilize electronic visual aids to supplement their oral presentation must provide display-ready material to the City Clerk by 12:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting. Contact the City Clerk's Office at [cityclerk@slocity.org](mailto:cityclerk@slocity.org) or (805) 781-7114.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Elizabeth Lucas will call the Special Meeting of the Tree Committee to order.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

The public is encouraged to submit comments on any subject within the jurisdiction of the Tree Committee that *does not* appear on this agenda. Although the Committee will not take action on items presented during the Public Comment Period, the Chair may direct staff to place an item on a future agenda for discussion.

**3. CONSENT**

Matters appearing on the Consent Calendar are expected to be non-controversial and will be acted upon at one time. A member of the public may request the Tree Committee to pull an item for discussion. The public may comment on any and all items on the Consent Agenda within the three-minute time limit.

**3.a CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES - OCTOBER 28, 2024 TREE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

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Recommendation:

To approve the Tree Committee Minutes of October 28, 2024.

**4. NEW BUSINESS**

**4.a CONTINUED REVIEW OF 2025-2027 TREE COMMITTEE GOAL SETTING**

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Recommendation:

Continued review of Tree Committee goals for the 2025-27 Financial Plan, which were discussed at the previous meeting on October 28, 2024.

#### 4.b COMMUNITY FOREST PLAN INTRODUCTION

##### Recommendation:

Review the City of San Luis Obispo Community Forest Plan and identify discussion item(s) to be placed on a future agenda.

### 5. COMMENT AND DISCUSSION

#### 5.a ARBORIST REPORT

Receive a brief update from Urban Forest Program Coordinator / City Arborist Walter Gault.

### 6. ADJOURNMENT

The next Regular Meeting of the Tree Committee meeting is scheduled for **January 27, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Hearing Room** at City Hall, 990 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo. The Regular Meeting of December 23, 2024 will be cancelled due to the Christmas Holiday.

LISTENING ASSISTIVE DEVICES are available -- see the Clerk

The City of San Luis Obispo wishes to make all of its public meetings accessible to the public. Upon request, this agenda will be made available in appropriate alternative formats to persons with disabilities. Any person with a disability who requires a modification or accommodation in order to participate in a meeting should direct such request to the City Clerk's Office at (805) 781-7114 at least 48 hours before the meeting, if possible. Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (805) 781-7410.

Agenda related writings or documents provided to the Tree Committee are available for public inspection on the City's website:

<https://www.slocity.org/government/mayor-and-city-council/agendas-and-minutes>. Meeting video recordings can be found on the City's website:

<http://opengov.slocity.org/WebLink/Browse.aspx?id=61087&dbid=0&repo=CityClerk>





## Tree Committee Minutes

October 28, 2024, 5:30 p.m.

Council Hearing Room, 990 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo

Tree Committee Members Present: Member Henry Bonifas, Member Daniel Canella, Member Brian Pineda, Member Emily Rosten, Vice Chair Ben Parker, Chair Elizabeth Lucas

Tree Committee Members Absent: Member Alan Bate

City Staff Present: Urban Forest Program Coordinator / City Arborist Walter Gault, Principal Planner Rachel Cohen, Deputy City Clerk Megan Wilbanks

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER

A Regular Meeting of the San Luis Obispo Tree Committee was called to order on October 28, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Hearing Room at City Hall, 990 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo, by Chair Lucas.

### 2. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Public Comment:

None

--End of Public Comment--

### 3. CONSENT

#### 3.a CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES - AUGUST 26, 2024 TREE COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Motion By** Vice Chair Parker

**Second By** Member Rosten

To approve the Tree Committee Minutes of August 26, 2024.

Ayes (6): Member Bonifas, Member Canella, Member Pineda, Member Rosten, Vice Chair Parker, and Chair Lucas

Absent (1): Member Bate

CARRIED (6 to 0)

#### 4. TREE REMOVAL APPLICATION

- 4.a REVIEW A TREE REMOVAL APPLICATION TO REMOVE TWO (2) COAST LIVE OAK (QUERCUS AGRIFOLIA) TREES LOCATED AT 2675 JOHNSON AVE (TREE-0497-2024)

Urban Forest Program Coordinator / City Arborist Walter Gault presented the staff report and responded to Committee inquiries.

Applicant representative, Ron Combs, provided an overview of the Tree Removal Application and responded to questions raised.

Public Comment:

None

--End of Public Comment--

**Motion By** Member Canella

**Second By** Member Pineda

Recommend the Community Development Director approve removal of the 12-inch DBH Oak tree and deny removal of the 18-inch DBH Oak tree, consistent with Municipal Code Section 12.24.90.G (4, 5 and 6) (Forestry Best Practice, Public Right-of-Way Obstruction or Displacement and additional Compensatory Plantings). The Committee recommends the applicant reduce the number of replacement trees from 13 to a range of 5-10, given constraints of the site, and work with the City Arborist to select a more suitable species to replant, preferably a native species from the City's Master Tree list.

**Ayes (3):** Member Bonifas, Member Canella, and Member Pineda

**Noes (3):** Member Rosten, Vice Chair Parker, and Chair Lucas

**Absent (1):** Member Bate

**FAILED (3 to 3)**

**Motion By** Vice Chair Parker

**Second By** Member Rosten

Recommend the Community Development Director approve removal of both trees consistent with Municipal Code Section 12.24.90.G (4, 5 and 6) (Forestry Best Practice, Public Right-of-Way Obstruction or Displacement and additional Compensatory Plantings) and require the applicant to reduce the number of replacement trees from 13 to a range of 7-10, given constraints of the site. The Committee recommends the applicant consult with the City Arborist to select a species that may be more appropriate for the site.

**Ayes (5):** Member Bonifas, Member Canella, Member Pineda, Member Rosten, and Vice Chair Parker

**Noes (1):** Chair Lucas

**Absent (1):** Member Bate

**CARRIED (5 to 1)**

## 5. COMMENT AND DISCUSSION

### 5.a 2025-27 TREE COMMITTEE GOAL SETTING AND THE FINANCIAL PLAN AND BUDGET PROCESS

Urban Forest Program Coordinator / City Arborist Walter Gault and Principal Planner Rachel Cohen discussed Tree Committee goals and work programs for the 2025-27 Financial Plan and responded to Committee inquiries.

Public Comment:

None

*--End of Public Comment--*

**ACTION:** The Tree Committee provided the following initial feedback, but continued development of the 2025-27 Tree Committee goals and work programs to the next meeting, December 2, 2024:

1. Update the Tree Regulations in the Municipal Code based on Ordinance review, Advisory Body Case Study Report, and recent California State Laws.
  - Consider requirements regarding completion of compensatory replanting within a specific timeframe and appropriate enforcement.
  - Consider a section on removals requested due to ADA compliance concerns and outline the Tree Committee's options for approving or denying such requests.
  - Consider requirements for development projects to consult with the City Arborist before finalizing their plans and requesting removal of trees.
2. Implement the Community Forest Plan.
  - Request that staff provide a summary of the Community Forest Plan at the next Tree Committee Meeting, December 2nd.
  - Continue to invest in contacting tree trimming services along public streets to maintain the vitality of the city's urban forest.
3. Advocate for tree planting in public spaces.
  - Promote and enhance the Heritage Tree Program as a benefit to the city's cultural vitality for both residents and visitors.

- Invest in informational signage for trees that are located downtown, heritage trees and other 'statement' trees in certain neighborhoods.

#### 5.b ARBORIST REPORT

Urban Forest Program Coordinator / City Arborist Walter Gault provided the following update of upcoming projects and activities in the Tree Division:

- Arbor Day celebration will be held on Saturday, November 2nd from 10am - 2pm at Sinshiemer Park (meet at the Boulevard Del Campo cul-de-sac). Staff anticipate planting 25-30 trees along the Safety Trail and an additional 200 1-gallon trees, grown by Cal Poly, will be given away to community members.

#### 6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 p.m. The Tree Committee will hold a **Special Meeting on Monday, December 2, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Hearing Room** at City Hall, 990 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo. The Regular Meeting of November 25, 2024 will be cancelled due to the Thanksgiving Holiday.

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APPROVED BY TREE COMMITTEE: XX/XX/2024



## **TREE COMMITTEE AGENDA REPORT**

**SUBJECT:** CONTINUED REVIEW OF 2025-2027 TREE COMMITTEE GOAL SETTING

**FROM:** Walter Gault, City Arborist  
Phone Number: (805) 783-7578  
Email: wgault@slocity.org

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### **1.0 RECOMMENDATION**

Continued review of Tree Committee goals for the 2025-27 Financial Plan, which were discussed at the previous meeting on October 28, 2024.

### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

Every two years the City adopts a budget and financial plan. To prepare for the budget process, all City departments and advisory bodies are asked to identify their goals and major work programs for the next two years. The City Council then uses this information, along with public comment and other input, to set community priorities and allocate resources to accomplish the most important City goals. Advisory body members are involved in the goal setting process to provide important input as representatives of the community, with special expertise and experience working locally within their specific area of representation

#### **2.1 Objective**

This is a public process, and citizens are encouraged to contribute. The results of this project will include a list of Tree Committee goals and implementation programs or projects that will be forwarded to the City Council for consideration as part of the 2025-2027 financial planning and budget cycle.

### **3.0 DISCUSSION**

#### **Discuss Future Goals: 2025-2027**

On October 28, 2024, staff provided a [staff report](#) and presentation to the Tree Committee regarding the accomplishment of the Committee's current goals and discussed potential new goals, programs and/or projects. Below is an outline of the proposed goals and programs discussed:

- Update the Tree Regulations in the Municipal Code based on Ordinance review, Advisory Body Case Study Report, and recent California State Laws.
  - Consider requirements regarding completion of compensatory replanting within a specific timeframe and appropriate enforcement.

## Item 4a

- Consider a section on removals requested due to ADA compliance concerns and outline the Tree Committee's options for approving or denying such requests.
- Consider requirements for development projects to consult with the City Arborist before finalizing their plans and requesting removal of trees.
- Implement the Community Forest Plan.
  - Request that staff provide a summary of the Community Forest Plan at the next Tree Committee Meeting, December 2nd.
  - Continue to invest in contract tree trimming services along public streets to maintain the vitality of the City's urban forest.
- Advocate for tree planting in public spaces.
  - Invest in informational signage for trees that are located downtown, heritage trees and other 'statement' trees in certain neighborhoods.
  - Promote and enhance the Heritage Tree Program as a benefit to the city's cultural vitality for both residents and visitors.

### 4.0 REVIEW

The Tree Committee should review and approve the proposed FY 2025-27 goals and programs with the following criteria in mind:

- Prioritize the goals and programs, based on the Tree Committee's goals, community needs and input, opportunities, or special or urgent conditions; and
- Select the goals and programs that can reasonably be accomplished in the two-year budget period and can reasonably be accomplished with limited financial and staff resources.

### 5.0 NEXT STEPS

Staff will share the Tree Committee's proposed FY 2025-2027 goals and work programs in a report to the Finance Department, which will be submitted by December 13, 2024. The Council will receive the final report with all the advisory body recommendations in January 2025 before they begin the community goal-setting process.

## **TREE COMMITTEE AGENDA REPORT**

**SUBJECT:** COMMUNITY FOREST PLAN INTRODUCTION

**FROM:** Walter Gault, City Arborist  
Phone Number: (805) 783-7883  
Email: [wgault@slocity.org](mailto:wgault@slocity.org)

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### **1.0 RECOMMENDATION**

Review the City of San Luis Obispo Community Forest Plan and identify discussion item(s) to be placed on a future agenda.

### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

The City of San Luis Obispo adopted the Community Forest Plan<sup>1</sup> on April 4, 2023. The Community Forest Plan's vision is for the City to implement cost-effective enhancement and maintenance of the urban forest, increases public awareness of the value of our community forest, and maximizes its social, economic, and environmental benefits for current residents and future generations.

The mission of the plan is to achieve this vision by working with and empowering city residents and partners to establish innovative, science-grounded goals and strategies to protect, expand, and nurture the City's public tree cover and the associated benefits over the coming decades and collaborating between and within City departments that are involved in urban forest management, as well as between the City and other local stakeholders (e.g., community groups, nonprofit organizations, businesses, utilities, other cities, Cal Poly, other State agencies).

#### **2.1 Existing Programs, Policies and Goals**

The Community Forest Plan highlights programs, policies and goals that are contained in other City documents regarding the urban forest (referenced and summarized below):

- The [General Plan](#) Land Use Element (2014), contains Sustainability policies that call on the City to develop a long-term tree planting program and recommendations to renew and maintain the urban forest.
- The [Parks and Recreation Element Update](#) (2021), also known as the Parks + Recreation Blueprint for the Future: 2021-2041, calls for shading of play areas in part through the use of trees, and devotes a section to the selection of appropriate park trees.

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<sup>1</sup> The Community Forest Plan is published and available on the City's website at the following link: <https://www.slocity.org/home/showdocument?id=34110>

- The [City's 2020 Climate Action Plan for Community Recovery \(2020 CAP\)](#) called for rejuvenation and expansion of the City's urban forest through the planting of 10,000 new trees by 2035. Subsequently, the City Council incorporated this proposal into the City's 2021-2023 Major City Goal for Climate Action, Open Space & Sustainable Transportation

### 2.2 Financial Planning

In previous Financial Plans, the has City committed to engaging in projects and initiatives that favored accrual of the many benefits provided by trees, including shading and cooling, beautification, habitat, stormwater retention, and carbon sequestration. The Community Forest Plan identifies that the City should continue to focus efforts on completing urban forest-related tasks, as staff and budget allow, that will contribute to the adoption of an integrated, holistic, and equitable approach to urban forestry.

### 3.0 IMPLEMENTATION

The Community Forest Plan has four main goals:

1. Maintain and expand the urban forest,
2. Promote sustainability and climate resilience,
3. Pursue collaboration, and
4. Emphasize equity.

The plan involves multiple City departments and external partners, with a team-based approach for implementation that includes public outreach, equity considerations, and collaboration with local stakeholders and volunteers.

The Community Forest Plan Implementation section outlines the goals, objectives, and actions for San Luis Obispo's urban forest. A full list of objectives can be found on Table 5, the [Community Forest Plan](#) Implementation Matrix, on pages 36-47. Below are some general themes from the matrix.

- The City actively encourages participation in tree planting and stewardship, tree preservation and protection and increased public awareness of the value of our community forest in order to maximize its social, economic and environmental benefits for current residents and future generations.
- The City of San Luis Obispo aims to plant 10,000 new trees by 2035 as part of the 10 Tall Initiative.
- Objectives include accruing and analyzing data, strengthening maintenance practices, increasing new plantings, re-examining tree removal policies, and focusing on sustainability.
- Metrics such as average tree diameter, height, condition, and percent canopy cover will be used to track progress.

## Item 4b

- The City will use adaptive management to remain flexible and adjust strategies as needed over time.

### 4.0 NEXT STEPS

Review the [Community Forest Plan](#) and identify discussion item(s) to be added to a future agenda.