

Environmental Quality Commission



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Date: 6/17/2026
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: Teleconference and
Belle Haven Community Campus
100 Terminal Ave., Menlo Park, CA 94025

A. Call To Order

Chair Hill called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Present: Angiel, Goodwin, Hernandez, Hill, Kissel (remote), McKenna
Absent: None
Staff: Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer, Management Analyst II Liz Tapia

C. Public Comment

D. Regular Business

D1. Approve the May 20, 2026, Environmental Quality Commission meeting minutes (Attachment)

ACTION: Motion and second (McKenna/ Hernandez), to approve the May 20, 2026 Environmental Quality Commission meeting minutes with an modifications to item D4., passed unanimously.

D2. Review and discuss the annual City Arborist report (Attachment)

City Arborist Jillian Keller and Management Analyst II Joanna Chen made the presentation (Attachment)

- Canopy Executive Director JP Renaud spoke in support of ongoing partnerships and community forestry.
- Vamsi Velagapudi spoke in support of early action tree planting and on tree maintenance.
- Nancy Hedley spoke on concerns about tree removals and administrative guidelines.
- Kathy Orrico spoke on tree safety and leaf removal.
- Mary Gunn spoke on concerns related to tree removals.
- Pat Harris spoke on concerns related to backyard tree safety.
- Pam D. Jones in support of partnership with Canopy, concerns related to the Urban Forest Management Plan and Environmental Justice Element, increased water bills and street cleaning.
- Marlene Santoyo spoke in support of the tree arborist report, outreach to inform residents, tree planting, and on concerns related to tree removals.
- Nina Wouk spoke on concerns related to tree removals and flooding.

The Commission discussed street and private tree maintenance and safety, leaf removal, development tree removals, the Heritage Tree Ordinance administrative guidelines, early action tree planting timeline, street tree maintenance schedule, the Urban Forest Management Plan and Environmental Justice Element, the Commission's Heritage Tree Ordinance Administrative Guidelines Ad Hoc Subcommittee November 2024 report out (Attachment), tree planting goals, heritage tree ordinance code violations, residential water stipends for newly planted trees, available tree species in the City's nursery and new tree planting locations.

- D3. Discuss Belle Haven Child Development Center (BHCDC) electrification project and grant funding from Bay Area Regional Energy Network (BayREN) (Attachment)

Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer made the presentation (Attachment)

- Jocelyn Anaya Galvan spoke in support of the BHCDC electrification project and on electrification education.

The Commission discussed construction timeline, grant constraints and how this project can serve as a model for other cities.

ACTION: Motion and second (McKenna/ Angiel) to advance the funding agreement with BayREN for the Decarbonization Showcase program to advance electrification of the BHCDC, passed unanimously.

E. Reports and Announcements

- E1. Reports and announcements from staff and Commissioners

Commissioner McKenna reported out on Make Polluters Pay Town Hall event.

Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer reported out on Juneteenth event at Belle Haven Community Campus (BHCC).

F. Informational items

- F1. 2025-26 Environmental Quality Commission work plan (Attachment)

G. Adjournment

Chair Hill adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Management Analyst II Liz Tapia

Minutes approved at the July 15, 2026 Environmental Quality Commission meeting

The background of the slide is a photograph of a park. In the foreground, there is a wooden fence made of vertical posts and horizontal rails. Beyond the fence is a grassy field. In the distance, two people are standing on a path. The sky is overcast.

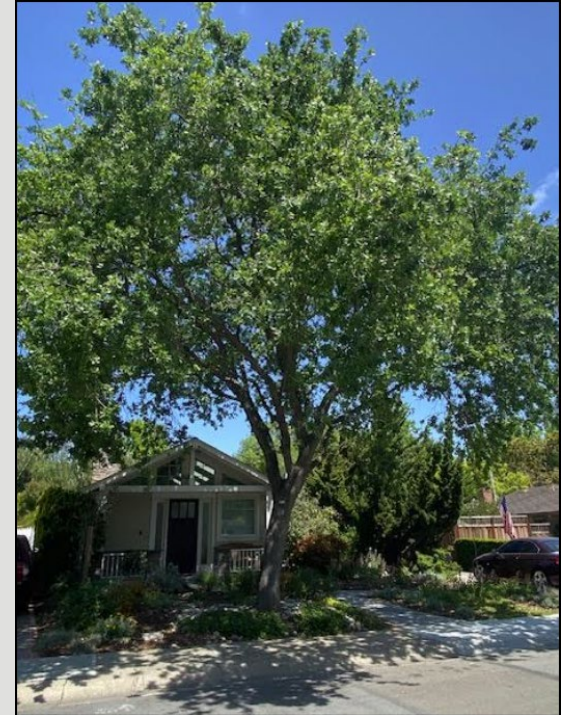
ANNUAL ARBORIST REPORT

Jillian Keller, City Arborist

Joanna Chen, Management Analyst II

AGENDA

1. Urban forest canopy
2. City tree team overview
3. Heritage and street tree regulations
4. Community events
5. Ongoing projects
6. Recent developments
7. Next steps





URBAN FOREST CANOPY

- 18,906 street and park trees
 - 5,524 park trees
 - 12,382 right-of-way/street trees
 - WCA provides routine maintenance every 5 years
 - Residents may request an evaluation of work needs outside of 5-year cycle, too
- Fiscal year 2025-2026
 - Number of Trees planted: 132
 - Number of Trees pruned: 2,952
 - Number of Trees removed: 135



PUBLIC WORKS MAINTENANCE DIVISION

TREE TEAM OVERVIEW

- City staff
 - Three maintenance workers, City Arborist, Management Analyst
 - Tree maintenance contractor
 - Permit review contractor
- Tree City USA for 27 years
 - Maintain a tree board or department
 - Have a community tree ordinance
 - Spend at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry
 - Celebrate Arbor Day
- Growth Award for 11 years
 - High level of tree care and community engagement





RESPONSIBILITIES

- Uphold the heritage tree ordinance and street tree ordinance
 - Review building and demolition permits for compliance
 - Help ensure protection of trees during construction
 - Investigate potential heritage tree violations
 - Review and update administrative guidelines
 - Provide root pruning consultation for city hardscape work
 - Maintain public trees
- Act as disaster service workers, such as during stormy weather
- Organize annual Arbor Day celebration with EQC

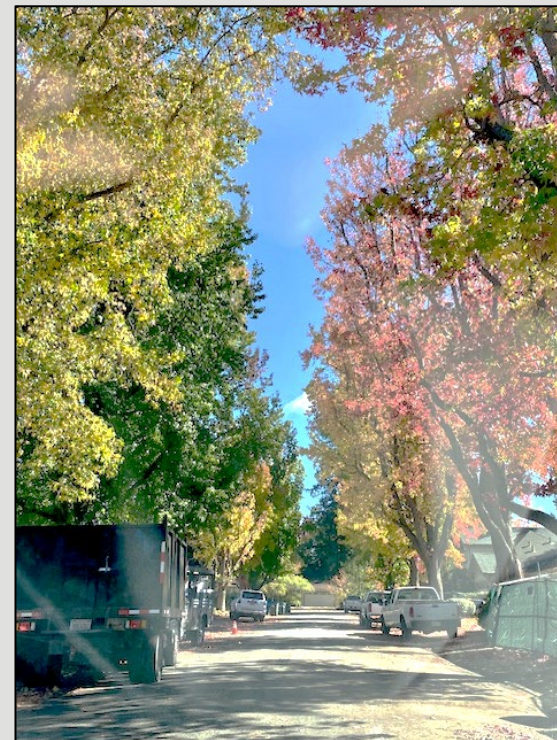




HERITAGE TREE ORDINANCE

Purpose

- To ensure that there will be a significant population of large, healthy trees over the long term; and
- To protect and preserve the scenic beauty and natural environment, prevent erosion of topsoil and sedimentation in waterways, encourage quality development, provide shade and wildlife habitat, counteract pollutants in the air and decrease wind velocities and noise.





HERITAGE TREE DEFINITION

- Any tree other than oaks that has a trunk with a circumference of 47.1 inches (diameter of 15 inches) or more, measured at 54 inches above natural grade
- Any oak tree native to California that has a trunk with a circumference of 31.4 inches (diameter of 10 inches) or more measured at 54 inches above natural grade
- A tree or group of trees specifically designated by the City Council for protection because of its historical significance, special character or community benefit



PERMIT PROCESS

Type of heritage tree permit	Application requirement	Replacement tree requirements	Appeal process
Non-development • Dead • Tree risk • Tree health • Low desirable tree species	• Application form • City-approved arborist report • Replacement tree plan	• Correlates to trunk diameter size	Only the permit applicant may appeal
Development-related	Additional requirements: • Proposed construction plans • Alternative design • Cost analysis	• Correlates to the tree's appraisal value	• Any community member may appeal • Notices are mailed out within 300 feet of the property • On-site postings are required
Emergency removal	• Residents contact city arborist directly • Tree must show signs of overall extreme risk.	• Correlates to trunk diameter size	Not applicable



RESOURCES

- For more information about applying for a permit, visit:
menlopark.gov/trees
- To submit and search for a heritage tree permit application, visit:
Menlopark.org/permitcenter
- For statistics for permit application submittals, visit:
menlopark.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/90ab3ab183ad4ece9a936c9446d3bd59

Home Building Planning **Public Works** Special Event Permits

Search Applications

Search for Records
Enter information below to search for records.
• Site Address
• Parcel Number
• Record Information
Select the search type from the drop-down list.

General Search General Search

Record Number: Record Type: Heritage Tree Permit

Project Name:

Start Date: End Date:

Street No.: Street Name: Unit No.:

City: State: Zip:

Parcel No.:

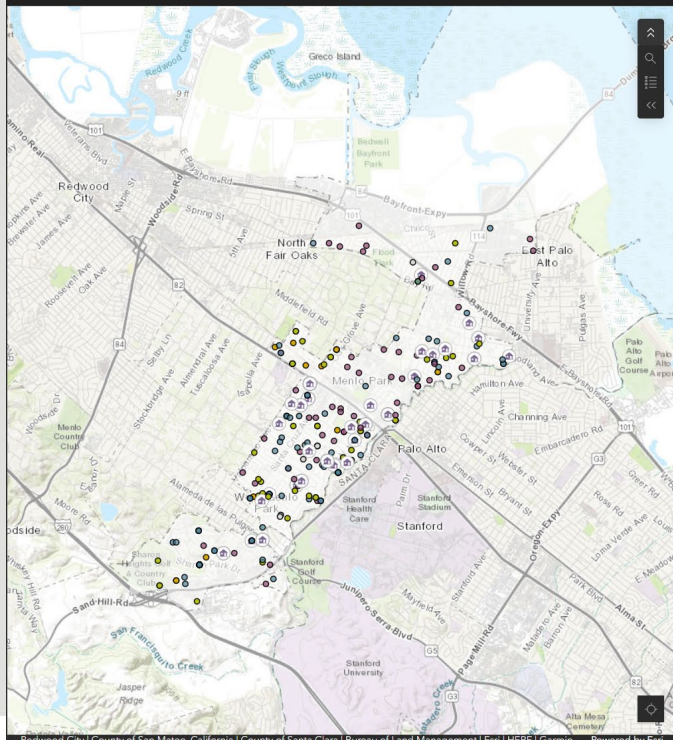
► Search Additional Criteria

FISCAL YEAR 2025-26 DASHBOARD



FY2025-26 Heritage Tree Permit Applications

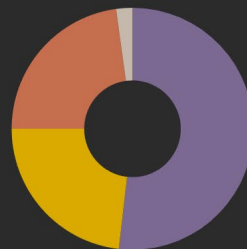
Last update: June 10, 2026



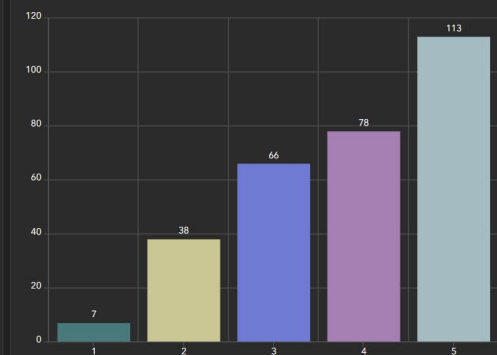
District **All** 1 2 3 4 5

Permit application status

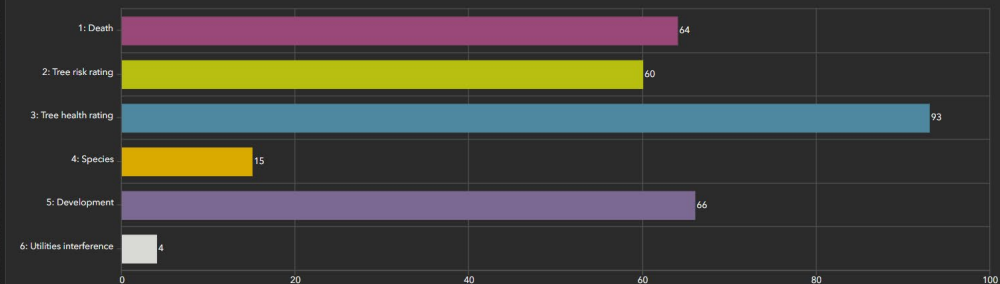
*Applications may have multiple tree removal requests.
**This graph does not show all tree removal requests.



Tree requests by district



Primary removal reason





STREET TREE ORDINANCE

Purpose

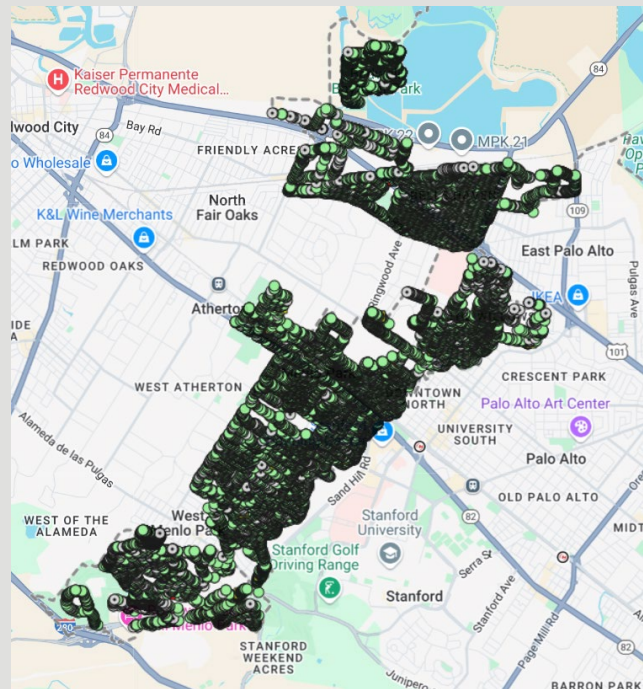
- Define the City's responsibilities for the maintenance of street trees; and
- Establish protections for city street trees. No person shall plant, remove, or prune a street tree without permission from the city.





STREET TREE REQUESTS AND REPORTING

- Residents can request that street trees be planted in front of their property in the public right-of-way
 - City's street tree management plan
 - Partnership with Canopy
- Residents can also report tree- related issues to ACT Menlo Park
 - menlopark.gov/actmenlopark





FISCAL YEAR 25-26 CITY TREE DATA

- Planted: 132
 - Replacement trees and property owner requests

- Removed: 135
 - Mainly due to tree death/severe decline
 - Other reasons include conflict with existing/proposed infrastructure, tree risk/compromised structure

STORM DAMAGE 2025-2026

- Compared to previous years, this past year's storm damage was minimal
- All storm-related tree emergencies were related to branch failures and whole tree failures
- Storm damage stats:
 - FY25-26: Approximately 55 tree-related calls
 - FY24-25: Approx. 55 calls
 - FY23-24: Approx. 80 calls
 - FY22-23: Approx. 340 calls



COMMUNITY EVENTS

- Tree plantings with local groups
 - Tree Care with Summer of Service kids
 - Tree Plant with Boy Scouts at Burgess Park
 - Arbor Day Planting with Canopy Teen Urban Foresters and Boy Scouts





PROJECTS

- Early Action Tree Planting Plan
 - Planting ~70 trees around Belle Haven with community outreach and education
 - Canopy selected as contractor
 - Kick-off meeting was held on 5/5
 - Currently working on developing outreach materials and identifying planting sites

2025-26 DEVELOPMENTS

- Added one new tree maintenance worker to the team
- Added more consulting arborists to the city's approved list
- Continuing to update administrative guidelines with City Attorney Office's guidance
- Started Early Action Tree Planting Plan



IN PROGRESS

- Updating the heritage tree ordinance administrative guidelines
- Fully transitioning to electric equipment (chainsaws) by 2027
- Executing the Early Action Tree Planting Plan
- Working towards an urban forest management plan





THANK YOU



APPEALS PROCESSED

- 68 Willow Rd.
 - Large development project
 - 13 heritage trees
- 763 College Ave
 - One heritage Southern Magnolia street tree
 - Applicant withdrew the HTR permit application
- 2174 Calyton Dr
 - Tentatively schedule for July EQC meeting

Considerations for Tree Removal Valuation

HERITAGE TREE ORDINANCE
ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES
AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE

NANCY HEDLEY
SUSANNAH HILL
JEFF SCHMIDT



**Impacts of removals
across health, climate,
environment,
geography, and
aesthetic
considerations**

Tree removals impact community priorities

Tree canopy size and health

Property values

Climate change resilience

Public health

City actions always consider all residents' interests

Expanded Valuation to Reflect City -wide Impacts

Urban Canopy Reduction

Decades of investment in Menlo Parks urban canopy are valued by Menlo Park's residents and are embodied in Heritage Tree Ordinance

Shared Air Quality

Cumulative impact of city-wide tree removals reduces Menlo Park's shared air quality

City's Desirability

Cumulative impact of city-wide tree removals reduces Menlo Park's beauty as it appeals to new home buyers

Full Neighborhood Impact

Tree removal impacts its property parcel and also adjacent parcels, immediate neighborhood, and magnitude of canopy's diminishment

Multiply base valuation figure by important factors

$$V_{\text{tree}} = V_{\text{base}} \times M_{\text{air}} \times M_{\text{canopy1}} \times M_{\text{canopy2}} \times M_{\text{removal}} \times M_{\text{input}}$$

$$V_{\text{base}} \times M_{\text{air}} \times M_{\text{canopy1}} \times M_{\text{canopy2}} \times M_{\text{removal}} \times M_{\text{input}}$$

Factor	Factor	Intent	Calculation
V_{base}	Baseline value	Today. Existing calculation from arborists commonly used formula	per today's HTO formula with arborists society data set
M_{air}	Impact on air quality	Neighborhoods with poorer air quality can less afford the loss of a tree, since it contributes to air quality improvement.	Data: census tract air quality from County. Variable: 10% of tracts with highest pollution get highest weighting, down to 10% with least pollution
M_{canopy1}	Impact on canopy of neighborhood	The density of tree cover in the immediate neighborhood affects the value of a tree. A lone tree has more canopy value	Data: tree census by Arborist at site and city-wide Variable: Highest weighting for lack of trees
M_{canopy2}	Time to replace canopy impact	Years for proposed replacement tree to reach the same size, volume, canopy as removed tree, to account for the prolonged absence of the tree's benefits.	Data: Comparison of new with removed tree for measurement and species Variable: Highest weighting for no replacement tree, lowest rating for identical tree
M_{removal}	Recent tree removals	A neighborhood with many tree removals requires increased canopy protection	Data: permits, citizen reports, City Arborist reporting Variable: Highest weighting for (tract? ¼ mile?) with most healthy trees removed past 5 years, lowest weighting for no healthy trees removed
M_{input}	Community input (where applicable)	Community input multiplier, reflecting quantity and quality of residents' input in a specific case <i>example - large development with many removals</i>	Data: City Arborist office summary of written and in person input from community about tree removal Variable: in cases where this variable applies, the Environmental Quality Commission determines the qualitative weight of reasons given by commenters and their standing/how impacted they would be

URBAN FOREST RECOMMENDATIONS

HERITAGE TREE ORDINANCE ADMINISTRATIVE
GUIDELINES AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE

NANCY HEDLEY, SUSANNAH HILL, JEFF SCHMIDT

D4-PRESENTATION





Photo credit: Jean-Paul Renaud, originally published in The Almanac on 10/15/24

IMPORTANCE OF THE URBAN FOREST

TREES ARE ESSENTIAL

- Public Health and Social Benefits
- Environmental Benefits
- Economic Benefits
- Community Engagement & Education

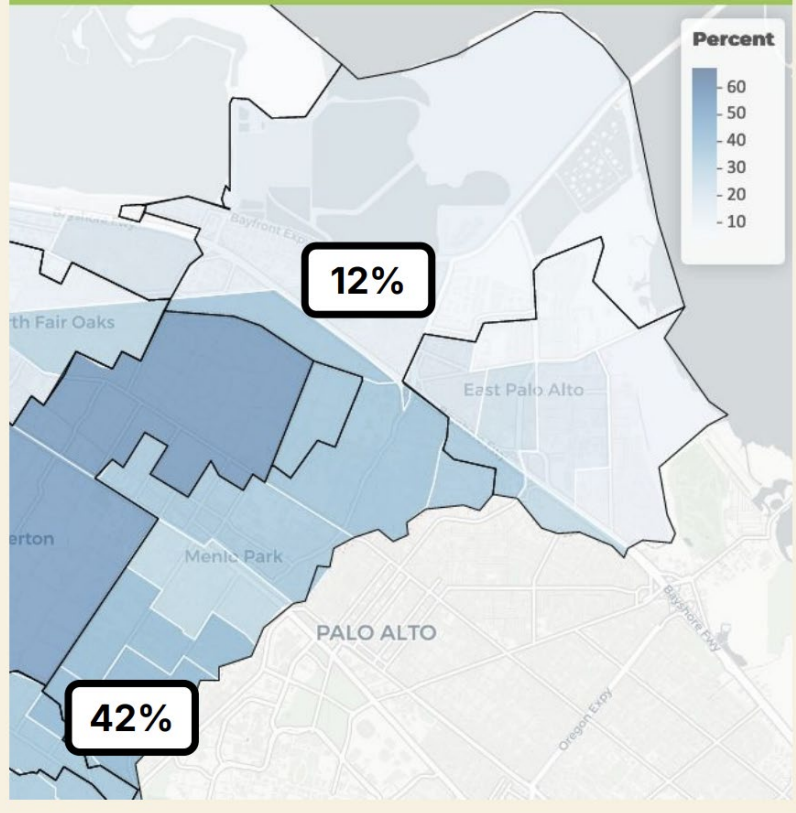
LET'S GET STARTED

Sources:

<https://canopy.org/tree-info/benefits-of-trees/>

<https://dashboard.sustainablesanmateo.org>

Urban Tree Canopy



Source: Source : US Forestry Service. (2018). Urban Canopy GIS Data via Sustainable San Mateo County

OBSERVATIONS OF OUR CHALLENGES

- Trees are not valued for their full benefits to our neighborhoods and residents (GHG, heat/shade, air quality, public health, wildlife habitats, and quality of life)
- Current standards for tree removal and replacement during development, including large-scale city projects and public works, are not sufficient. Missing elements include:
 - Larger replacement ratios
 - Replacements with more mature trees
 - Adding replanting and tree education to community benefits in development agreements
 - Verify tree replacement planting and survival
- Lack of data on total canopy
- Canopy inequities across the city and no long-range strategy to address them (Belle Haven 12% coverage, Menlo Park overall at 28%)



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Photo credit: City of Menlo Park Instagram

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS



CREATE NEW PROJECT PLAN FOR URBAN FOREST MGMT PLAN (UFMP)

Reset project plan after the CalFIRE decision



INVENTORY

Perform canopy inventory for entire city



DEFINE CITYWIDE METRICS & TARGETS

Set goals for our urban forest



CREATE THE NEW UFMP

To guide and direct the city's investments in urban forestry over the long-term



BUILD COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

Promote tree planting, care, and protection through outreach, engagement, and education



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Photo credit: City of Menlo Park Instagram



CREATE NEW PROJECT PLAN

Reset the main steps and timing to create an Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP):

1. Identify project lead(s)
2. Create project teams
3. Establish project plan
4. Communicate project plan to EQC and City Council and regularly provide updates



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Photo credit: City of Menlo Park Instagram



INVENTORY

Perform canopy inventory:

- Complete drone-based canopy inventory for entire city
- Analyze results to determine priorities



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Photo credit: City of Menlo Park Instagram



DEFINE METRICS AND TARGETS

Define citywide metrics and targets for our urban forest:

- Identify key metrics to assess the current state of our urban forest (e.g. canopy coverage by census tract or district, number of public and private heritage trees, trees planted and removed, etc.)
- Identify targets for the protection and growth of our urban forest, especially including healthy heritage tree removals
- Track progress toward goals and report out during annual arborist updates to EQC
- Update dashboards providing community members with insight into year-over-year trends for key metrics (Dashboards currently report on [heritage tree removals](#) for the most recent fiscal year and [Arbor Day/Mayor tree plantings](#).)

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Canopy employees Arlene Nuñez García and Bria Blitch with young event attendees

Photo credit: City of Menlo Park Instagram



CREATE NEW UFMP

To guide and direct the city's investments, programs, and actions in urban forestry over the long-term:

1. Fund plan creation and its multi-year implementation via the annual budget
2. Secure grants to support UFMP outreach, creation, planting, care, and education
3. Leverage Canopy and other non-profits and community-based organizations
4. Write and publish an inspirational UFMP that succeeds in protecting and expanding our urban forest



EUGENE, OR



SAN FRANCISCO, CA



Source: National Band & Tag Company



BUILD COMMUNITY COMMITMENT (1/2)

Promote tree planting, care, and protection through outreach, engagement, and education:

- Continue community education initiatives about tree planting and care (record and create library of classes available online, offer tree tours)
- Continue to involve community in tree plantings and celebrations
- Celebrate trees planted with signage (see left for ideas)
- Create signage, arboretum-style, for heritage trees on city property. i.e. “Menlo Park protects heritage trees on public and private land. Learn more [QR code]”
- Invite community to add signage for heritage street trees on their property

CITY OF SAN JOSÉ STREET TREE DISCLOSURE FORM

The City of San José ("City") requires the seller or transferor of residential real property ("Property") in the City to disclose to the acquirer of the Property whether the Property fully complies with the City's requirements to have, maintain and if necessary, replace street trees pursuant to the San José Municipal Code ("SJMC").

13.28.195 Disclosure Obligations Upon Sale or Transfer of a Residential Real Property

A. Not less than seven (7) business days before the sale or other transfer of residential real property concludes a selling or transferring property owner must disclose to the acquiring property owner, on a disclosure form provided by the City, whether the residential real property to be sold or transferred fully complies with the City's street tree maintenance and replacement requirements of Sections 13.28.130.B and 13.28.190.

B. If the selling or transferring property owner cannot determine whether street trees located on the residential property are substantially in compliance with the approved development permits for the property, or the property's approved development permits are inconclusive as to the requirements for the presence and location of street trees on the property, then the following requirements for the planting and presence of street trees shall apply:

1. The property must have one (1) street tree for any adjacent street if it is an interior lot and at least three (3) street trees if it is a corner lot, unless otherwise modified by the Director in the interest of public safety.
2. If the current General Plan requirements for street trees on the property differ from the requirements specified in Subsection B.1, then the current General Plan requirements shall govern the number and location of street trees required on the property at the time of sale or transfer. If the property meets the General Plan requirement, then the selling property owner must indicate such compliance with the General Plan on the disclosure to the acquiring property owner.
3. All street trees shall be planted in accordance with the requirements of Section 13.28.070.

C. Upon a written request, the Director may grant the selling or transferring property owner an exemption in writing from the requirements of this Section if the Director determines in the interest of public safety that planting and maintaining street trees on the residential property at the time of sale or transfer is not appropriate. Such an exemption does not run with the land and shall not allow any deviations from the disclosure requirements upon residential real property sales or transfers for future sellers or transferors.

To the best of my / our knowledge but without any investigation, I / WE, _____ disclose that the street tree(s) on the Property to be sold or transferred and located at _____, San José, CA _____ are in the following condition:

- ☐ 1. The Property fully complies with the street tree requirements outlined in the SJMC.
- ☐ 2. The Property does not have the required number of street trees as required by the SJMC.
- ☐ 3. The Property has the required number of street trees but the street trees have not been maintained as required by the SJMC.
- ☐ 4. Seller/Transferor is unaware if the requirements to have and maintain street trees on the Property have been met.

Source: <https://www.sccaoor.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/disc-sjtree.pdf>



BUILD COMMUNITY COMMITMENT (2/2)

Promote tree planting, care, and protection through outreach, engagement, and education:

- Consider municipal ordinance (city council approval) to implement real estate disclosure program to inform property purchasers of Menlo Park's Heritage Tree Ordinance and count of heritage and non-heritage trees on the property (ex: San Jose at left)
- Create "Menlo Park Tree Specialist" certification for real estate agents



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Photo credit: City of Menlo Park Instagram

IN SUMMARY



CREATE NEW PROJECT PLAN FOR URBAN FOREST MGMT PLAN (UFMP)

Reset project plan after the CalFIRE decision



INVENTORY

Perform canopy inventory for entire city



DEFINE CITYWIDE METRICS & TARGETS

Set goals for our urban forest



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BUILD COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

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Photo credit: City of Menlo Park Instagram



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EQC/CITY COUNCIL

SUPPORT AND FUND URBAN CANOPY

City Council to continue to support the protection and expansion of the urban forest, including the creation of the UFMP, as part of the annual budget process, with a particular emphasis on reducing canopy inequity across the city.

ENACT DISCLOSURE ORDINANCE

Enact an ordinance to require real estate disclosures from sellers to buyers upon transfer of property about our urban forest and Heritage Tree Ordinance

THANK YOU





Belle Haven Child Development Center electrification project update

Rachael Londer, Sustainability Manager



Presentation outline

- About the Belle Haven Child Development Center (BHCDC)
- Electrification project background
- Work to date
- Construction scope
- Funding sources
- Staff recommendation



Constructed in 1998, the BHCDC (401 Ivy Drive) is 8,722 square feet



About BHCDC

- Income based, high-quality child development education services for preschool-aged children (3 - 5 years)
- Open Monday through Friday from 7:30 am - 5:15 pm
- Preschoolers are provided with a daily breakfast, lunch, and snack



Photo from the City's website:
www.menlopark.gov/BelleHavenChildDevelopmentCenter



Electrification project background

- Electrification project purpose
 - Electrify the facility to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve indoor air quality, increase facility's resilience, and showcase electrification retrofit best practices
- Policy context
 - Advances Climate Action Plan strategy no. 5 to decarbonize municipal facilities
 - Implements EJ Element Program EJ1.A (prioritize capital improvements in underserved communities) and Action Item EJ3.G.1 (solar + storage at City facilities)
 - Leverages outside funding



Entrance to the BHCDC





Work to date

- 2023: No-cost electrification of water heaters through the PG&E Government + K-12 school energy efficiency program
- 2025: Applied and accepted into the BayREN decarbonization showcase, assigned technical assistance through kW Engineering
- 2026: No-cost installation of ~33.5 kW solar system through power purchase agreement with Peninsula Clean Energy (soon to be known as WestLight Energy)
- June 2026: Design completed by KPA group and permits issued
- June - July 2026: Advertised construction bids for the project (tentative award at July 14 City Council meeting)



Newly installed solar on the roof of the BHCDC

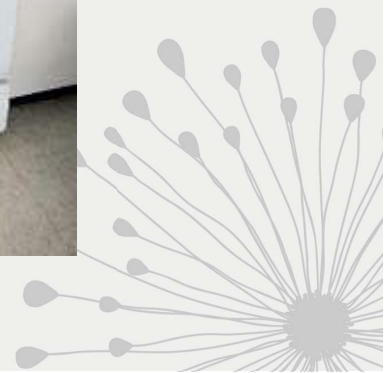
Construction scope - Fall and Winter 2026



- Replacement of heating, ventilation and air conditioning system in four classrooms and the administration area with heat pumps
- Updates to thermostats and HVAC control system with remote operation
- Installation of ductwork and insulation
- Upgrades to interior and exterior lighting to LED with lighting controls
- Replacement of gas range with electric
- Estimated total cost (including design, staff and contract project manager time and construction): \$900,000



Gas stove in BHCDC





Funding sources

Grant program	Funding source	Allocated	Amount
Communitywide electrification program	California Energy Commission	Yes	\$680-780K
Decarbonization showcase	Bay Area Regional Energy Network (BayREN)	Funding agreement requires City Council approval	\$100K
GovBE program	Peninsula Clean Energy (soon to be WestLight Energy)	Receive after construction	\$21K
		Total	Up to \$901K

Recommendation

- To advance funding agreement with the Bay Area Regional Energy Network for the Decarbonization Showcase program to advance electrification of the BHCDC

Public works staff identifying existing conditions of HVAC system during a site visit, May 2025

