

San Mateo County Tree Ordinances Update Project

A Collaboration of the Planning and Building, Parks, and Public Works Departments and the Office of Sustainability

Facilitated by the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center

September 29th, 2016

San Mateo County Board of Supervisors Chambers

9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Draft Meeting Notes

Meeting Goals:

1. Agree on project goals and objectives
2. Agree on meeting process and establish agreements on the issues to be discussed in the subsequent meetings
3. Receive a briefing on Past, Present and Future of County Trees and Tree Canopy

9:35	Welcome and Greeting Steve Monowitz, Community Development Director
9:40	Group and Facilitator Introductions Michelle Vilchez, Facilitator, Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center
10:03	Steering Committee Roles and Responsibilities and Project Goals and Objectives Joe LaClair and Mike Schaller, Planning and Building Questions, comments, concerns: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Climate change – can carbon sequestration be included?2. Considerations of planting trees as part of permitting: Make sure that trees are planted in places where they can grow to full size.3. Is there going to be an opportunity to review recent regulation changes? A: Subsequent meetings will address these. Clear picture of hierarchy and interrelationships in County4. Is there a time when we will be able to talk with representatives of specific cities and the policies they've been working with? A: Each individual city manages its trees and tree canopy within its jurisdiction. State and federal policies come into play.5. Should we have canopy cover goals? Is it just about preserving existing heritage trees or does it include thinking about the future? A: There may be a need in the future to address these issues of climate change and landscape. We're not developing a landscaping ordinance, but will gather info for future efforts. The regulations address trees and tree canopy, which do not include other plants, which is a concern for some people.6. Protection of nesting birds species – over the counter permits for tree removals can be harmful if issued during nesting season

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Umbrella County-wide – some sort of overall goal and consistency throughout the County is needed 8. Obligation for people to remove hazardous trees – a new County rule could address this. Many local areas in the US do have rules around this topic. Is that under consideration? Who would make the decision that the tree is hazardous?
10:18	<p>Past, Present and Future: Presentation & Discussion Joe LaClair, Planning and Building</p> <p>Questions, comments and concerns</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not any acre in SMC that hasn't been affected by people 2. Monterey Cypress not native to SMC, its impact is huge on the coast side. 3. Add Willow Sausal and Riparian Corridor to the canopy types and describe – not all places are going to change as dramatically and that should be taken into consideration 4. Ladera was primarily grasslands 5. 2100 prediction is impressive 6. Emerald Hills area – ranching activity may have impacted (picture may not be accurate) 7. Be more specific and complete on ecosystem and ecological services trees bring to the county and link that to sustainability, water quality, air quality, public health – it will bring strength to the discussion. 8. Growing evidence of connecting trees to public health 9. Add map showing what is County and what is city jurisdiction 10. Stanford Weekend Acres and West Menlo Park are missing from the list (p 10) 11. Heat island effect and health impact 12. Climate change impacts – mechanism for incorporation of new (updated) information (on a regular basis) on policies and ordinances 13. Climate change should be part of a more general conversation, not the center or core 14. Committee should understand that there are different jurisdictions where SMC doesn't have a say because of its limited jurisdiction – some areas may be managed by other jurisdictions
10:47	BREAK
11:04	<p>Framing the Project: Steering Committee Work Plan (Issues) Joe LaClair, Mike Schaller and Michelle Vilchez</p> <p>Questions, comments and concerns:</p> <p>Meeting 2:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Representative from PG&E interested in participating, especially for trimming discussion?

2. Where does the PG&E staff put the waste wood? What do we do with it?
3. Need to address how trees will be preserved at construction sites; Measures to ensure what is needed as a minimum to not interfere with the roots (related to construction).
4. A lot of different requirements for zoning – constricts where houses can be put and makes it hazardous for trees (they become the lowest priority)
Are there any trade-offs regarding zoning rules that can be considered?
Putting new rules in neighborhoods where traditionally have not complied.
Do we want to have flexibility?
5. Emerald Hills – size of houses (is County checking on footprints or relying on private architects and engineers?)
6. Eucalyptus and Acacia trees – is the committee maintaining the idea of not protecting them (consistent the state’s and others policies)?
A: There are different points of view. It has to be species by species in figuring out what to protect and why.
Sensitive discussion – allowing widespread removal, growth
A: Not a straightforward answer –Eucalypti provide habitat and we don’t want to be cavalier about protecting these trees. We are going to go into where do you save them? Where don’t you? Why?
7. We need experts in the steering committee to consider the topics that are going to be covered: focused expertise that can clarify misinformation (Ex. Pollen)
A: Plan to bring experts depending on the topic, but we want this group for continuity and integrate different points of view. We can’t have everybody on the committee, though.
8. Document *Tree Technical Manual* (City of PA) widely used around the world – we should utilize it
A: We have it and will use as a resource
9. As we face climate change and drought, we might be able to use trees that are not hazardous, but may be unpopular, e.g., Eucalyptus.
10. Invite representatives from Caltrans regarding trimming
11. Interesting discussions: native, endemic

Meeting 3

1. Midpen had to replant Redwoods – some actions have been unnecessary – balance and be sensitive to context of project – comply with codes
2. Consider trees even when they are not in the rural areas
3. Do the ordinances come with a fiscal impact? Is there a budget for enforcement?
4. Can we encounter resistance to the proposed changes?
A: If it is expensive, yes. County has regulatory policy that people have to comply with. County has a code enforcement team that engages in compliance of ordinances, to ensure people implement projects in a manner consistent with policies and permits. Our goal is to develop policies that can be

implemented.

5. Experts and special guests – have they been identified, invited? Can we add to the list, e.g., Denise Enea, Woodside Fire?

A: Have not been identified, we want the Committee's input (Send recommendations to Joe: see Next Steps)

6. Length of project

A: Goal: present final ordinance to BOS a year from now

7. Will there be subcommittees for specific issues?

A: That's a possibility, we're trying to scope a project that staff can manage and participate in. If we need subcommittees, we'll consider it when time comes.

8. Instead of subcommittees, if there's a need for more meetings, everyone should be included (inclusive).

Meeting 4 and 5:

1. Moss Beach – many Monterey Cypress

Clarification of who is responsible for street trees and others in public ROW – some people think they can't trim because it's the County's responsibility

A: Staff will send a tree brochure prepared by Public Works.

2. How can we be sure arborists are objective?

3. Authorizations – does it include the trees damaged during construction? Can we look into penalties? Accidental damage vs repeat offenders

4. Worry about mitigation fee – be very careful on how it's structured to ensure that some areas don't experience a net loss of canopy

5. Replacement trees and enforcement – does anyone check that they were put in? Does anyone check that they survived? Whose responsibility is it?

6. Is view shed part of this discussion? – Can it be part of the discussion? Need to consider planting of "spite trees" to block private views

7. Tree replacement – county has required measures to assure replacement trees survive, e.g., bonding. But what happens after three years?

8. Where does mitigation happen?

9. Communities of color and underserved communities (unincorporated) will be affected more by climate change and we don't have representatives here.
Invite

10. Invite Jonathan Cox – expert pertinent to these meetings

New division in the department has been created; new state laws regarding planting in high-hazard fire areas

11. Is there enough space to put replacement trees?

12. Is it an option to have a smaller house? Should we consider regulations around this?

13. Counterintuitive to talk about no permits required for solar access when trees provide the cooling for homes, so it's not inclusive.

14. Trimming for solar access needs to be discussed

15. May need advice from County Counsel of some of the issues raised

11:52	<p>Wrap- up: Summary of Next Steps & Meeting Evaluation, Michelle Vilchez and Joe LaClair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Next steps: describe preliminary division of upcoming meetings - Reminder of November 17th meeting, location, agenda items, facilitator team, etc. - Quick evaluation of meeting <p>Next steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff will include parking alternatives with next meeting’s agenda (for the November 17 meeting at 1044 Middlefield Road), look into possibly providing parking permit. 2. Staff will send link to website and documents. 3. Consider space and rearrangement of tables (circle). 4. Staff will clarify May date and mail information to participants 5. Committee participants will send Joe LaClair recommendations for experts or guests for meetings. 6. Staff will send tree brochure 7. Staff will develop and provide staff reports on issues so that participants have County’s take on issues; participants can provide input on characterization of issues and alternatives.
11:58	Close & Thank you