

**Santa Barbara Urban Forest Project
Key Issues – March 21, 2013**

In order to develop goals and actions for the Urban Forest Management Plan, a number of key issues and considerations are presented for discussion. These issues have been identified by or discussed in a range of venues by the Department and other City staff, appointed Board and Commission members, and members of the public attending Community Meetings and Tree Survey respondents. Also included are comments from Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members. Key issues have been categorized into five subject areas: Tree Resource Management, Policy and Planning, Program Funding, City Organization and Community Involvement.

Description of Key Issue	Also Identified by Public	Comments
Tree Resource Management - Street Tree Management and Maintenance		
Low diversity/Overuse of similar species in existing population	✓	TAC identified key issue
Need to develop a proactive approach to systematic removal and replacement of poor performing trees, or trees at the end of their life	✓	Community attendees and survey respondents identified quick replacement of dead and dying trees as a key issue
Need to develop a plan to systematically address/minimize infrastructure conflict	✓	Public safety as it relates to infrastructure conflicts was one of the top five issues identified in both the Community Meeting and Tree Survey. Sidewalk conflicts fall at #6 as most important tree issue in Tree Survey.
Tree planting and landscaping challenges when buildings are constructed at property line and/or building heights limit tree sizes and/or ability to plant trees		Redevelopment/Urban infill changes street scapes and tree options.
8,000 vacant planting sites	✓	Community attendees and survey respondents identified quick replacement of dead and dying trees as a key issue
Maintenance focus on grid pruning and citizen response pruning	✓	Proactive Pruning/Maintenance second most important issue most important to public in Tree Survey and most commented on City priority.
Climate change impacts have unknown consequences on tree population	✓	Identified by TAC and City departments.

Description of Key Issue	Also Identified by Public	Public, TAC and City staff comments
Street Tree Management and Maintenance continued		
Conflict between trees/solar access/views likely to increase	✓	TAC, City departments, survey respondents identified this as a key issue.
Need for proactive vs. reactive pest management		
Value of trees not frequently considered		
Trees not treated as a capital resource		
Park Tree Management and Maintenance		
Park tree maintenance focused on safety		
Significant number of park trees occur only once with no plan to offset loss of unique species	✓	Identified by TAC and public as a key issue. Tree health and protection identified as #3 and #4 most important tree issues in Tree Survey.
Climate change impacts have unknown consequences on tree population health, longevity and maintenance requirements		
Value of trees not frequently considered (such as water sequestration to reduce runoff)		
Opportunity to restore/enhance riparian canopy, eliminate invasive species and increase native habitat in open space parks and parks with creeks	✓	Tree protection identified as 4th most important to public in Tree Survey. Bird habitat frequently commented on as important resource.
Trees not treated as a capital resource		
Private Tree Management and Maintenance		
Poor or no maintenance and inappropriate planting and pruning practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire access and vertical height clearance • Private trees that damage public infrastructure- City liable 	✓	Identified by City Fire Department as key issue. Tree Survey respondents listed planting and maintenance as number 1 way residents can contribute to the health of the urban forest.
Loss of tree resources through removals		
Conflict between trees and access to solar and views likely to increase	✓	Identified by TAC, City staff of various departments, Community Meeting attendees and Tree Survey respondents
Tree planting and landscaping challenges when buildings are constructed at property line and/or building heights limit tree sizes and/or ability to plant trees	✓	

Description of Key Issue	Also Identified by Public	Comments
Private Tree Management and Maintenance continued		
Lack of knowledge of landowner responsibility for maintenance of private infrastructure and regulated trees	✓	City liability when private trees and infrastructure damage City property identified as key issue by various City departments.
Enforcement of City tree preservation rules complaint driven		
Opportunities for restoration and enhancement of oak woodland and riparian woodland habitat	✓	Tree protection identified as #4 most important issue to public in Tree Survey.
Climate change impacts have unknown consequences on tree population health, longevity and maintenance requirements		
Policy and Planning		
Street Tree Master Plan outdated, provides limited guidance	✓	Identified by TAC and City staff
No overall Park Tree Master Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of coordination with fire guidelines in open space parks • Fire prevention and species selection in parks and open spaces (Honda, Hale, canyons, Parma park, examples) • Defensible space considerations 	✓	Fire prevention a key issue identified as a key issue in Community meeting and Tree Survey, although discussed to a lesser extent.
Landscape design guidelines require the planting and maintenance of some trees on private property, yet enforcement of those plans is limited <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single Family Residential landscape plan trees are not protected unless the design review approval includes a protection condition 	✓	Identified by TAC members as key issue
Tree Plantings on rooftops and design review		
Santa Barbara General Plan, Climate Action Plan, Local Coastal Plan outline support for urban forest management but implementation not fully identified	✓	Implementation identified by City staff of various departments as key issue
City has a strong foundation for tree protection and enhancement		
Well-established advisory boards provide a solid framework to address urban forest issues.		

Description of Key Issue	Also Identified by Public	Comments
Policy and Planning continued		
Tree preservation ordinances do not completely address native trees, native habitat areas, or wildlife corridors	✓	Tree protection identified as #4 issue most important to public in survey. Bird habitat commented on.
Pedestrian Master Plan does not adequately address need for space to plant trees		
Design Review Boards require landscaping within parkways without regard to maintenance needs		
Risk Reduction Plans based on reducing wind/falling limb hazards-identify potential high hazard trees or areas		
High Fire Hazard Area Defensible Space requirements limit tree planting opportunities and require certain tree maintenance	✓	Identified by Fire Dept. as key issue
Purpose and function of Historic and Specimen designations not well defined <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of definition and designation process with consideration of replacement species and location 	✓	Identified by TAC and City staff of various departments as a key issue
Program Funding		
Limited funding resources to plant, establish and maintain new street trees	✓	Community attendees and survey respondents identified quick replacement of dead and dying trees as a key issue
Limited funding resources to maintain existing street trees	✓	Proactive Pruning/Maintenance second most important issue most important to public in Tree Survey and most commented on City priority.
Lack of funding and mechanisms for community education/outreach and tree planting programs	✓	Involvement in tree planting and maintenance was one of three main items identified in the Tree Survey as ways in which residents can contribute to the health of the urban forest. The number one item they would like to learn more about- Caring for Street Trees.
Limited funds (recent reductions of 20%) for park tree maintenance		
Limited of funding for new park tree planting and establishment	✓	TAC and staff identified key issue especially as it relates to lost park species diversity

Description of Key Issue	Also Identified by Public	Comments
City Organization		
Budget implications across many departments with proactive identification and resolution of infrastructure conflicts	✓	Maintenance number one item discussed at Community Meeting and on Tree Survey
No comprehensive enforcement program that is proactive, education based		
Limited staff training		
Competing priorities among different departments can create conflict and adversely affect trees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Wildland Fire Plan and high voltage wire street clearance requirements can lead to radical pruning with aesthetic and tree value impacts 	✓	SCE trimming practices commented on as aesthetically displeasing in Community Meeting and on Tree Survey
Inconsistent interdepartmental communication and coordination can result in missed opportunities to plant/maintain and protect trees		
Lack of staff knowledge on tree preservation and maintenance requirements results in missed opportunities, delayed project decision-making, loss of trees, lost opportunities for planting new trees and other issues.		
Community Involvement		
Limited community involvement in street tree selection, planting and maintenance	✓	Involvement in tree planting and maintenance was one of three main items identified in the Tree Survey as ways in which residents can contribute to the health of the urban forest. Out of 5 options, Survey respondents would like to learn most about Caring for Street Trees, followed by Caring for trees on their property, Different trees in the City, Planting Street Trees and last Benefits of trees.
Limited public knowledge of tree preservation policies	✓	Tree Survey respondents familiarity with Tree Preservation Policies: 44% Unfamiliar 47% Somewhat familiar 9% Very familiar

Description of Key Issue	Also Identified by Public	Comments
Community Involvement continued		
Public perception of street trees is diverse	✓	Tree Survey and Community Meeting responses range in opinion of aesthetics, proper maintenance, species type and more.
Lack of knowledge of City preservation rules and landowner responsibility for maintenance of private infrastructure and regulated trees	✓	See above comments. Survey respondents chose “Caring for trees on their property” as the 2 nd most requested item to learn more about.
Limited resident participation in street tree maintenance	✓	Care for street trees was rated as the number 1 topic residents would like to know more about.
Community involvement primarily focused on street tree maintenance through tree permitting.		
Incentive programs do not exist to promote tree planting on private property	✓	Identified as key issue by TAC, Community Meeting attendees and Tree Survey respondents
Residential homeowners often have an expectation that the City will provide prompt response based pruning	✓	Proactive Pruning/Maintenance 2nd most important issue to public in Tree Survey and most commented on City priority.