

**City of Santa Barbara Urban Forest Management Plan  
Vision, Mission, Goals, Objectives and Actions  
Draft - July 26, 2013**

**Vision**

The vision of Santa Barbara's Urban Forest Management Plan and Urban Forest Program is that:

*Santa Barbara's urban forest is healthy and diverse, and contributes to the community's economic, environmental, and aesthetic vitality. It is valued and cared for by the City and its citizens, and reflects our horticultural heritage.*

**Mission**

The mission of the urban forest management plan is to:

*"Preserve, protect and enhance our trees, promote the benefits of trees, and foster a healthy and diverse urban forest."*

**Goals**

The urban forest management plan has four main goals:

1. Elevate the importance of the urban forest.
2. Continue Santa Barbara's horticultural legacy.
3. Promote a vibrant and healthy community.
4. Foster awareness and appreciation of trees.

## Urban Forest Objectives

The fifteen objectives and corresponding implementation actions of the urban forest management plan are organized under three categories: 1) Tree Resource Management, 2) City Organization and Policy, and 3) Community Involvement.

### I. Tree Resource Management

#### **Objective 1: Maintain City trees to promote safety, health and longevity.**

##### Actions

1. Continue to maintain the city tree database to achieve urban forest objectives and monitor tree management.
2. Increase frequency of the street tree trimming /maintenance cycle to promote safety, aesthetics, and tree health.
3. Develop multi-year plan to address tree maintenance, planting and removal citywide.
4. Conduct periodic tree assessments to monitor tree performance.
5. Develop a young tree training program to reduce the potential for mature trees to conflict with high voltage lines and other utilities and infrastructure.
6. Broaden and formalize partnerships with Southern California Edison (SCE), Caltrans and other utility companies through MOU's or other means to implement tree trimming plans that minimize conflict/maximize safety while promoting tree canopy, health and longevity.
7. Continue to work with the Fire Department to develop and implement proactive maintenance plans for street trees located in high fire zones.

#### **Objective 2: Enhance street parkway growing conditions where feasible.**

##### Actions

1. Identify existing parkways that could be enlarged to accommodate greater canopy and/or larger canopy trees.
2. Revise City infrastructure construction specifications to maximize tree health and longevity and minimize infrastructure damage.
3. Provide extra protection for newly planted trees such as curb adjustments and protective barriers where necessary.
4. Promote streetscape redevelopment to maximize parkway planting area.
5. Improve parkway soil conditions to promote young tree root development and minimize infrastructure damage.
6. Where feasible, include irrigation during parkway and sidewalk redevelopment.
7. Revise parkway and tree planting guidelines and specifications to maximize tree health.
8. Work with adjacent land owners and neighborhoods to provide supplemental water and weed management.

### **Objective 3: Optimize tree canopy.**

#### Actions

1. Identify planting locations along City streets, in City parks and on other public property that can support greater canopy and/or large canopy tree species.
2. Increase the use of large-canopy trees where practical.
3. Expand street tree planting and replacement program placing priority on neighborhood with the least trees and in neighborhoods willing to provide supplemental early tree care.
4. Expand young tree care program to increase plantings and associated care and maintenance.
5. Determine the extent of available planting space and opportunities to increase available planting space along City streets, in City parks and on other public property.

### **Objective 4: Optimize age and enhance species diversity.**

#### Actions

1. Maintain existing species diversity and investigate methods for increasing desirable species that are rare.
2. Assess and develop age and species criteria for City parks and other City property.
3. As part of the Street Tree Master Plan (STMP) update, define appropriate age and species diversity distribution and locate areas where new or replacement trees should be planted.
  - Increase planting species that have longer average life spans and decrease use of those with shorter average life spans.
  - Determine potential life spans in Santa Barbara for designated trees and potential designated trees.
  - Determine potential growth size of designated and potentially designated trees in Santa Barbara.
  - Formalize the criteria and methodology for change to street tree designations.
5. Enhance and preserve historic and culturally significant trees city-wide.
6. To the extent feasible, work with local and regional nurseries and other public agencies to grow/propagate unique and desirable tree species not commercially available.

### **Objective 5: Maximize the economic, environmental, and aesthetic benefits of the urban forest.**

#### Actions

1. Locate new tree plantings in areas that will maximize energy conservation in building and shading of pavement.
2. Encourage the use of parking lot and streetscape designs that provide greater amounts of pavement shading.
3. Develop an economic/environmental tree resource calculator/performance checklist to evaluate the tree resource as it relates to other capital resources during land development.
4. Develop long-term street tree plans for major commercial corridors and public areas such as Upper State St, De La Vina Street, Carrillo Street, Milpas Street, Chapala Street and Cliff Drive. Integrate plans in land development projects and public infrastructure improvements.

5. Require street tree plantings and maintenance as part of permitting for all land development and/or redevelopment, when new trees are planted.
6. Develop tree resource management guidelines that balance tree resource value with solar access and solar energy system design.
7. Work with private landowners to minimize the potential for private trees to conflict with public infrastructure.

**Objective 6: Provide urban forest benefits that enhance visitor experiences in City parks and facilities.**

Actions

1. Increase park tree maintenance for prolonged health and longevity.
2. Develop a tree replacement program that enhances aesthetics and promotes recreation.
3. Continue to work with the Fire Department to develop and implement proactive maintenance plans for parks located in high fire zones.
4. Protect and enhance trees in historically significant parks such as Alameda Park, Alice Keck Park Memorial Gardens, Orpet Park and Franceschi Park through increased tree maintenance and tree planting programs.
5. Maintain the history, design, cultural integrity, and functional use of developed parks, particularly during replanting and/or redesigning elements of developed parks.
6. Increase canopy cover to enhance habitat for wildlife and for public benefit, where appropriate.
7. Maintain stands of large trees in open spaces and community and developed parks.

**Objective 7: Enhance and preserve trees within native habitats including riparian areas, oak woodlands and protected open spaces.**

Actions

1. Use large native trees in riparian zones and areas that connect to native landscaping and open spaces, where feasible.
2. Minimize compaction of soil under drip lines of trees by routing trails and pathways around trees.
3. To the extent feasible, control invasive, non-native vegetation that threatens trees in riparian areas and open space parks.
4. Develop riparian canopy restoration program in parks with creek habitats.
5. As part of the Park Tree Master Plan, address riparian and oak woodland management to preserve and protect mature trees, native tree saplings and native understory vegetation.

## **City Organization and Policy**

### **Objective 8: Enhance City investment in the health and management of the urban forest.**

#### **Actions**

1. Increase funding for the management and care of City trees in the urban forest.
2. Establish funding for community outreach programs and public education resources.
3. Identify and obtain external sources of funding to support the goals and strategies of the Management Plan.
4. Develop public-private partnerships to address tree resource needs not addressed in budget appropriations.
5. Evaluate the feasibility of the Street Tree/Parkway Management Assessment District.
6. Develop tree mitigation banking program that provides funding for the young tree care program.

### **Objective 9: Improve interdepartmental communication and coordination related to tree preservation and enhancement.**

#### **Actions**

1. Establish formal urban forest team comprised of staff from Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Community Development and Fire to address tree management and coordinate tree review for land development projects.
2. Implement annual staff and board/commission tree training program to review Tree Preservation and Tree Maintenance Policies, plus objectives and actions outlined in the Urban Forest Management Plan.
3. Collaborate with the Public Works Department to enhance street tree grow space during construction projects that involve sidewalks, curbs, gutters and other street-related work.

### **Objective 10: Elevate urban forest objectives in City policies and land development considerations.**

#### **Actions**

1. Update the Street Tree Master Plan to address long range tree management objectives.
2. Develop a Park Tree Master Plan that includes maintenance objectives, and planting and replacement strategies.
3. Continue to implement and update, as needed, urban forest objectives in the City's General Plan Climate Action Plan, Local Coastal Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan, and Wildland Fire Plan.
4. Integrate tree resource management objectives in the future update to the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element of the General Plan.

**Objective 11: Ensure tree preservation and land development ordinances support urban forest management goals.**

Actions

1. Review and update, if necessary, the City ordinances pertaining to trees and landscapes to ensure they are consistent with urban forest management plan objectives.
2. Develop Parkway Vegetation Planting and Care Guidelines/Checklist to better articulate and document plantings during land development review.
3. Review and revise, as needed, the definition of and criteria for designation of historic and specimen trees.
4. Clarify guidance for maintenance, longevity and replacement of designated Specimen and Historic trees.

**Objective 12: Improve interagency coordination and partnerships.**

Actions

1. Broaden and formalize partnerships with Southern California Edison (SCE), Caltrans and other utility companies through MOU's or other means to implement tree trimming and planting plans that minimize conflict/maximize safety while promoting tree canopy, health and longevity.
2. Develop partnerships with organizations, businesses and the public school system to encourage tree health and plantings on private property.

**Community Involvement**

**Objective 13: Enhance public awareness and appreciation of the urban forest as a community resource.**

Actions

1. Develop a comprehensive tree education program to provide city residents with information about tree preservation policies, the benefits trees provide, and the importance of tree canopy.
2. Strengthen citywide approaches to communicating about trees through web, print and media and social media plus continue to provide resources about urban forestry to the public through newsletters, permitting, websites, and other resources.
3. Hold annual public workshop to educate public on policies, maintenance and care of trees.
4. Develop partnerships with organizations, businesses, private schools the public school system and other public property to encourage tree health and plantings on private property.
5. Institute a program to acknowledge and publicize contributions to urban forestry by residents, businesses, institutions, and neighborhood group organizations.
6. Develop a heritage tree program to foster appreciation and inspire awareness of the contribution of city owned street trees and park trees to the City's history and heritage.

**Objective 14: Expand public participation in urban forest preservation and enhancement.**

Actions

1. Develop Adopt-a-block or Adopt-a-Tree program to encourage healthy long-lived street trees.
2. Develop a technical assistance program to support the planting and care of trees on private property.
3. Develop community service opportunities with schools and other institutions for urban forest stewardship projects.
4. Identify/Explore mechanisms for community involvement in street tree designations, maintenance, plantings and care.
5. Engage the community to identify opportunities and barriers for tree planting and preservation on public property.
6. Develop volunteer maintenance programs to increase public participation opportunities.

**Objective 15: Expand public/private partnerships.**

Actions

1. Develop partnerships with organizations, businesses, neighborhood associations, private schools and the public school system to encourage tree health and plantings on private property.
2. Seek opportunities to collaborate with universities and colleges and the public school system on urban forestry science and current research.
3. Partner with corporate programs that fund tree planting opportunities for carbon footprint reduction.
4. Encourage private landowners to apply the tree resource calculator when selecting trees to increase economic, environmental and aesthetic benefits and enhance property values.