How Pasadena Advocates for Trees!

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Historic Actions

- Street trees planted as early as 1855
- Pasadena incorporated in 1886
Historic Advocacy

- 1800s - Trees planted
- 1960 - Pasadena Beautiful (non-profit group) partners to expand street tree program
- 1991 - Master Street Tree plan adopted by City Council
- 2002 – Tree Protection Ordinance amended adding the Urban Forestry Advisory Committee (UFAC) to help protect Pasadena Trees
Tree Protection Ordinance Amended in 2002
Tree Protection Ordinance

- City Council adopts an amendment to the "City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance" (TPO) on May 5, 2002 to include trees on Private Property.

- This amendment to the TPO was sparked by interest of community & government.

- Protections for Public, Native, Specimen and Landmark trees included in ordinance; only in a specified location.
Advocating for Trees

- Public outcry for tree protection
- People called for changes in regulations in response to the removal of several valued trees
- Staff held public meetings to demonstrate the benefits of protecting the Urban Canopy and to gain community support for the amendment
The Amendment Does More

- Establishes Standards of Tree Care
- Creates standards for Landmark tree designation
- Provides a tree removal procedure for protected trees
- Provides penalty provisions for failure to comply with the TPO
  - Citations and prosecution with potential fines and jail time
Public Tree Protections
Tree Protection Ordinance

Public trees - All

- A public tree is located anywhere on public property.

“Street Trees” are located between the curb and the...
The Role of City Staff

- Regulates all public trees for care & maintenance including planting, pruning, & removal

- Maintains the Master Street Tree Plan

- Reviews development plans for public trees
Advocating for Public Trees

- Providing information on better tree care practices
- Updating regulations when appropriate
Development Review

- All plans reviewed for public and private tree issues
- Staff works with developers to alter plans for tree protection
- UFAC makes advisory review of applications for
Public Tree Removals

- Applications submitted to Public Works for review

- City Manager evaluates for health and safety conditions

- The community is provided with 10 days notice of public tree removals

- City Council notified of all public tree removals
Public Tree Penalties

- Violations to the TPO can result in fines or imprisonment
- Other penalties may include payment of the assessed value of the tree and replacement costs
Urban Forestry Advisory Committee

- Reviews Master Street Tree Plan amendments for consistency

- Removal applications for non hazardous
Alice Sterling, Senior Project Manager
Landmark Trees

- A landmark tree is a tree of historic or cultural significance and of importance to the community because:
  - it is one of the largest or oldest trees of the species located in the city, or
  - it has significance due to an association with a historic building, site, street, person or event, or
  - it is a defining landmark or significant outstanding feature of a neighborhood.
Landmark Trees

- Anyone can nominate a tree for Landmark status
- Reviewed by Cultural Heritage Commission
- Review and approved by City Council
- The property owner has the opportunity to object
- Landmark designation is recorded with county clerk
Native Tree Protections
Native trees – size & location

13 species of Native trees protected by the TPO including:

- Arroyo Willow
- Black Cottonwood
- California Alder
- California Bay
- California Buckeye
- California Sycamore
- California Walnut
- Canyon Oak
- Coast Live Oak
- Cottonwood
- Engelmann Oak
- Scrub Oak
- Valley Oak
Native Trees

Criteria for protection:

- Sizes larger than 8-inches in DBH
- Protected in all non-residential zones
- Protected in required setbacks and front yards in
Specimen Tree Protections
Specimen trees – size & location

- Specimen trees are critical to maintaining the diversity of Pasadena’s urban forest.
- Each species must meet the minimum size and be in a protected location.
Specimen Trees

- City Council created protections for 108 species of trees including certain varieties of Maple, Pine, Palm, Cedar, Floss Silk, Fig, Gum, Walnut, Elm, Pine & Coral trees.
- For residential zones trees are protected in required setbacks and front yards.
Guidelines for care of private protected trees
Private Tree Removals

- Removal of a Specimen, Native, or Landmark tree requires an application & approved permit
- Applications must include Certified Arborist or Landscape Architect’s evaluation of tree
- Review of tree removal considers
  - Condition of tree
  - Objective feature
  - Public benefit (health, safety, welfare)
  - Substantial monetary hardship to property owner
  - Replacement will result in a greater tree canopy
Tree Protection Plan during Development

- Tree Protection Guidelines adopted by City Council
- All projects must include an approved Tree Protection Plan
- Failure to comply can impact the issuance of certificate of occupancy & forfeiture of bonds
Tree Protection Guidelines

- Root protection zone fencing
- Adequate care before, during and after construction
- Avoid mechanical injury to tree
- Avoid changes to grade that impact tree
Darya Barar, Program Coordinator
Tree Ordinance Benefits & Issues
Tree Ordinance Strengths

- Sends a clear message that City values trees
- Elevates awareness of tree protection
- Protecting private trees for first time
- Mandate for tree protection during construction
- Doesn’t “take away” property rights
Tree Ordinance Perceived Issues

- Perceived as too regulatory
- Prosecution of violators difficult
- Weekend warriors hard to catch
- Planning staff must rely on outside experts
- Trees removed before they achieve protected size
- Findings for removal not definitive (e.g., replace tree with a “greater tree canopy” does not define when the
Trees & Law

- No penalty can stop someone from committing a crime
- Once the crime has been committed the tree is gone forever
- Intention to commit a crime is not a crime
Overall Success

- The amended TPO is working to protect 118,000 private trees, 61,000 street trees and 25,000 park trees
- These trees bring splendor to Pasadena
Looking to the Future

- Still working to perfect the TPO
- Reviewing the adoption of the Urban Accords
- Training staff at all levels
- Community perception of trees as a public utility
Questions & Answers
City of Pasadena

www.ci.pasadena.ca.us/publicworks/PNR

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