

Meeting #1: Q&A

Q: How long does it take an oak tree to grow 8 inches in diameter at breast height?

A: It depends on the conditions, including availability of water.

Comments: [Oak canopy has changed so much] need to think seven generations ahead.

Q: Why are regulation sizes different?

A: (Will be answered in the next meeting) Jurisdictions have different protected tree ordinances. Protections can begin at 4", 6", or 12" DBH. Here in LA County, protections begin at 8" DBH.

Q: What is the replacement ratio?

A: In Los Angeles County, the replacement ratio is 2:1.

Q: Is anyone monitoring the oak fund when you plant oak trees in County parks? Is there a way of tracking that at all?

A: Yes, the Department of Parks and Recreation is monitoring the Oak Forest Special Fund.

Q: Can you please describe the administrative process for the ADUs and how staff are going to try to encourage people to work around the oak tree first and then the removals will be placed on a website where people are notified who want to be notified?

A: Yes, we will be sure to discuss this in Meeting #4 under "Design to Minimize Impacts (Development Standards)"

Q: Could your website talk about cumulative administrative permits? There is no place for historical archives for them.

A: We will ask our IT whether historical records may be made available.

Q: Do your oak removal charts include what other cities have taken out? Is that being counted?

A: No, we do not have information from other jurisdictions, but have assembled all tree data the County gathers into one place, the tree hub: <https://trees-lacounty.hub.arcgis.com/pages/oak-trees>

Comment: Oak trees are growing up within those potential encroachment areas near homes and are doing well.

Comment: Zone 0 will affect other trees. There are other big old trees that are not oak trees and so are not protected. The large old trees cool the temperature.

Comment: Help residents see oak trees are assets.

Comment: Educational processes are very important. Not just talking about the ordinance but about how trees are so important to us – the watershed. This would strengthen the reasoning behind why we should protect oak trees.

Comment: Also promote oak tree planting because LA County has more space than the City of Los Angeles. Oak trees as fire-protection. TreePeople gives out free oak trees. Can give those trees out at events.

Comment: The ratio between heritage oaks and non-heritage oaks is different! Ten to one and two to one.

Q: Will you be looking at how many oaks were lost in Altadena where there has been aggressive removal of oak trees? This may be something we would like to mitigate.

A: We will have before-and-after fire imagery but not until next year. We have not been privy to any conversations about mandated mitigation on private property. That said, the County Forester does have two nurseries that offer free oak trees for homeowners who wish to voluntarily mitigate oak trees that were removed from their property.

Q: Why is the protected area not the entire area of the root system

A: The protected zone is understood to cover enough of the root system to ensure the oak tree will remain healthy while balancing development rights.

Comment: We need an emergency phone number to call for illegal oak tree removals.

Q: Who can the public call to stop unpermitted oak tree removals or damage in progress when County offices are closed, as on weekends and holidays or even at night?

A: We do not currently have emergency Zoning Enforcement for illegal oak tree removals. LA County Planning's Zoning Enforcement is available during hours when LA County Planning is open which is Monday through Thursday from 7am to 6pm.

- Phone: (213) 974-6453
- Email: zoningenforcement@planning.lacounty.gov.

An infographic on their website how the enforcement process works:

<https://planning.lacounty.gov/enforcement/>

Education about proper oak tree care and the oak tree permit may be another method to prevent unpermitted oak tree removals and encroachments.

Q: Can the day for the oak ordinance meetings be changed? Altadena has a time conflict.

A: We cannot reschedule this Countywide meeting, but we will add three alternative meeting dates/times to ensure Altadena can participate in the Oak Tree Permit update.

Comment: In his experience, few people want to plant oak trees. Should promote *the planting* of oak trees. Allow the homeowner to prune it and go into the protected zone of the oak tree. Once the homeowner moves, then the oak tree ordinance goes into effect.

Comment: Neighbor's project omitted the location of the oak tree on his property. With all the construction that will happen in Altadena, we should require site plans to show trees that are within a few feet of the parcel, even if it is on an adjacent parcel. The trees may get lost.

Q: How to ensure the driplines are acknowledged if the tree is on another parcel?

A: The existing ordinance requires the inclusion of any oak trees whose protected area crosses will be impacted by the proposed project, even if the oak tree is on an adjacent property.

Comment: Health checks for damaged trees because they may be weakened and be prone to infestation by beetles. The weakened trees need water. Need help from the County to water oaks and mature trees to save them.

Q: Is there a map that covers the native trees in southwest Los Angeles?

A: We do not have a map of native trees in southwest Los Angeles. This is not our jurisdiction. However, your jurisdiction may have one. We plan for the unincorporated communities in Los Angeles County and are mapping oak trees that have progressed through the Oak Tree Permit process – this is an ongoing project. You are welcome to visit our Tree Hub to see our existing LA County tree data: <https://trees-lacounty.hub.arcgis.com/pages/oak-trees>

Q: Will your office say “no” to (oak) tree removals? Will you protect them?

A: The purpose of the Oak Tree Permit is to preserve and maintain oak trees in the development process. We cannot prohibit development outright on private property because this would become a regulatory taking, but LA County planners can work with and counsel applicants to design projects to avoid impacts to oak trees. If avoidance is not possible, then the aim is to minimize impacts as much as possible.

Q: Will the info submitted in the survey prior to these Zoom meetings be reviewed?

A: The survey is still open for the duration of the meetings and will stay open through November. We are reviewing the comments as residents fill them out.

Q: Are you considering how Zone 0 and insurance company regulations will require catastrophic limb removal away from rooflines?

A: We are following the proposed Zone 0 regulations. If the regulations remain as they are proposed currently, the fire inspector will detail in an inspection report what pruning is required. What is detailed in the fire inspector's report will likely be exempt from the Oak Tree Permit.

Q: Oaks can block embers. This is an issue for CalFire and its emerging Zone 0 guidelines, but the County's new baseline should be aligned with this fact.

A: Yes, the Oak Tree Permit update will support fire code requirements.

Q: [Many oak trees were removed in the Eaton Fire]...going forward, oak protections need to be more proactive at this time.

A: We believe education can help the public understand the value of oak trees. Here are some resources:

- [The Oak Tree Brochure](#), developed in collaboration with the Santa Clarita Organization for Planning and the Environment, the Santa Monica Mountains Resource Conservation District, California Oaks, and the Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation.
- [The FAQ sheet about the Oak Tree Permit](#).
- The LA County [Tree Hub](#), where all LA County tree data are consolidated in one place. There is also one page devoted to oak trees and another to Engelmann oaks, an oak species on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species.
- Our GIS team also mapped the [potential impacts of Zone 0](#) for the public.

Q: Removed oak trees in the Eaton Fire area should be mitigated.

A: We do not compel mitigation for emergency oak tree removals. However, the Fire Department offers free oak trees and residents can plant them to voluntarily replace any oak trees that were removed.

Q: Too many oaks and other mature trees are covertly removed for building ADUs.

A: Education and neighborly conversations can prevent unpermitted impacts prior to harmful actions. Unpermitted impacts can be reported to Zoning Enforcement.

Q: [Have been caring for a naturally occurring volunteer oak tree] From what I am understanding I should remove them now before they become a legal and regulatory hassle in the future as I continue to develop the landscaping. I would just let the other trees grow. Is that what we are striving for?

A: We hope you will protect your oak tree and just let the tree grow. We are striving for more people to do as you do: care for oak trees and let them grow.

Some people are deterred from growing an oak tree because they worry about the potential for needing a permit in the future. We are proposing to remove this concern by exempting their planted oak tree (just register it with us).

Q: I offered the volunteer oak tree to grow – do not have “nearby nature”.

A: Perhaps the group can brainstorm offline about how to find “receiver sites” for oak trees that have no space and no home. This is somewhat outside the scope of the Oak Tree Permit update, but I understand this is an important issue to address to promote regeneration of oak trees.

Q: Research should follow to understand the efficacy of any major decision made. Evidence is key.

A: This is also our understanding and why the scope of this update is limited. We are looking to improve monitoring of oak trees so we can know how effective the oak tree permit is in preserving and maintaining oak trees in the development process.

Q: How can we address the urgent need to water trees?

A: This is outside the scope of the Oak Tree Permit update but we would be happy to connect with you offline to understand the problem and help brainstorm potential next steps.

Q: Are the maps of the zones available?

A: Followed up in an email, explaining that the Santa Monica Mountains Local Implementation Program map, the Significant Ecological Areas, and the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Community Standards Districts are where oak trees are protected at smaller diameter thresholds than in the rest of unincorporated LA County.