

Comments & Questions: Meeting #5

Date	Commentor Name	Meeting #	Comment or Question	Response
9/30/2025	Drew Ready	Meeting #5	I'm wondering if monitoring replacement trees for 5 years is enough? Could a developer see this as a loophole where trees are removed after the 5-year mark?	Thank you for your comment and suggestion. We wish to support community stewardship of oak trees. We are in the planning stages of developing such a publicly accessible map as you described. We will follow up for more detail.
			I'm thinking maybe a publicly accessible map of replacement trees, so neighbors and community members can alert the county if there are these kind of premature removals.	For the benefit of others reading this response, here is some relevant context: In the existing Oak Tree Permit, the monitoring period is two years with three visits from the Forestry Division. In the Oak Tree Permit update, we are proposing to extend the monitoring period from two to five years with three visits from Forestry. Replacement oak trees, even after the monitoring period, are protected oak trees, regardless of their size.
9/30/2025	Lynne Plambeck	Meeting #5	I just want to reiterate that even for the administrative permit, if it's a heritage oak, it requires a permit. That's something that SCOPE worked real hard on making sure was in the ordinance. I assume it didn't get changed . . . you said administrative permits didn't require hearings, I just want everybody to know if it is a heritage oak tree, it just still requires a permit.	No planned changes in the Oak Tree Permit update for heritage oak trees. Any removal of a heritage oak tree (an oak tree with a DBH of 36" or greater, or a combined DBH of 54" if a multitrunked oak tree) requires a public hearing.

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9/30/2025	Lynne Plambeck	Meeting #5	I was a little unclear about the use of onsite trees as replacement trees. Does this mean that you can move the trees someplace, or does that mean trees that are going to grow anyway, now [the applicant won't] have to plant a new tree? Which I don't think is really a very good idea. I think they should leave the trees that are on site and still have to put in a new tree.	Thank you for your comment. We are proposing to allow "Stewardship Trees" as AN OPTION for replacement trees. 1. Depending on where nurseries are located, trees purchased from nurseries may be acclimated to a different microclimate than that of Southern California even if they are the correct species. For example, the nursery may be located in a cooler area, so the oak seedlings and saplings from there may not be well-adapted to warmer temperatures in LA County. 2. Planting oak trees from elsewhere may introduce pathogens (e.g., <i>Phytophthora</i>) into new areas which can infect vegetation on site. 3. Protecting naturally-occurring native seedlings may give native oaks a chance to develop resistance to invasive pests like the Gold-Spotted Oak Borer (GSOB). At present, GSOB, has no natural predators in Southern California. The only defense against GSOB is limited use of a pesticide for high-value oak trees that are located far from water bodies, or removing infested oak trees before they become amplifier trees that will infect adjacent oak trees. Since GSOB prefers to infest mature oak trees while ignoring leaving younger oak seedlings and saplings alone, protecting younger oak seedlings and saplings and allowing them to become protected replacement trees, these younger oak trees may become the next generation of oak trees to develop resistance to GSOB. These are the reasons why Planning is introducing the idea of allowing naturally-occurring seedlings to serve as protected replacement trees, as "Stewardship Trees".
9/30/2025	Lynne Plambeck	Meeting #5	I'm worried about the use of drones because while it's fine in some cases, I don't see how you can really do an up-close assessment of the tree or see birds' nests or anything. I guess you're not using it to find birds' nests, but I would just like to raise that concern.	Thank you for your comment. We are not suggesting using drones to find bird's nests. Drones are currently being used for enforcement for other ordinances. The proposal is to enable use of drones for enforcing the Oak Tree Permit, just as they are used to enforce other land use regulations.
9/30/2025	Lynne Plambeck	Meeting #5	I had a lot of trouble getting on the alternative meeting, which I might need to do again. I tried the alternative meeting link and it did not work.	I will follow up with you.
9/30/2025	David Rose	Meeting #5	After hearing about the proposed change, I'm disappointed to hear that there was no change in replacement trees. My thought is that [the replacement ratio] is 2:1 and [for heritage oak trees] it is 10:1. Now, we all know that it would take decades for an oak tree to grow to a heritage size. There should be more than two trees to replace one tree. That's one thought.	
9/30/2025	David Rose	Meeting #5	I have another question for you. During the construction [phase], there is a fence around oak trees. Where do they place the fence? Do they place it around the trunk or the dripline of the branches? If it is an old oak tree, do they put the fence around that radius? I am trying to find out where to put the fence to protect them.	I will follow up with you. During the construction phase, fencing should be placed around the tree protected zone. We discuss that in Meeting #2 and the recording is here: https://planning.lacounty.gov/long-range-planning/oak-tree-program/meetings-and-headings/

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9/30/2025	Ty Garrison	Meeting #5	I'm confused about the idea that allowing existing trees that are growing on site to be used as replacement trees because that doesn't make up for any loss of a tree that has been taken away. That doesn't seem like it replaces a tree, if you've already got trees growing on site, and say, okay, I'm cutting this one down, but those over there make up for it, so that's fine. To me, that's not a solution. Am I hearing that correctly, or am I mistaken about that? It makes no sense to me to say, use existing trees for replacement trees. That is not really mitigation.	Thank you for your comment and question. Please see the three reasons behind the proposed "Stewardship Tree" option (see our response to Drew's question in Line 7 above). In short, the rationale involves maintaining species adapted to local site conditions, avoiding introducing new pathogens, and helping local oaks develop resistance to the Gold-spotted Oak Borer (GSOB). Our understanding is that most naturally-occurring seedlings do not survive because they may be predated by animals, are not located in areas with adequate sun exposure, or do not receive adequate water to survive droughts. Our proposal is to consider naturally-occurring seedlings located areas where they receive adequate sun exposure and can grow to maturity without disturbance as potential replacement trees. In cases where such naturally-occurring oak seedling candidates exist, we propose allowing them to serve as replacement trees. If this option is chosen, these "Stewardship oaks" would require protection with wire fencing or a tree tube to avoid predation, and water until they are established.
9/30/2025	Ty Garrison	Meeting #5	Another question I had was about the usage of drones. I agree with Lynn. I've... I mean, I've used drones to inspect trees before, but not during bird nesting season. And if you're doing inspections, that would be a restriction. You'd have to say you can't use drones during bird nesting season. Because you'd be in violation of MBTA and, Fish and Game Code, number one, and number two, you know, there's problems with, you know, getting your drones attacked by, if it's a hawk nest. The using drones would have to be highly regulated, whether it's by the County or by, private people for tree inspections.	Thank you for your comment.
9/30/2025	Stephanie Landregan	Meeting #5	I would like to comment on the same issue: Rather than having the removal of a tree, have the replacement trees be the existing trees kept in place. It would be great if you worked with Planning so that instead of adding two NEW trees to areas, if they KEEP the existing trees . . . if they have sufficient shade cover. It's not directly related to the Oak Tree Permit, but I do think you have to look at what is happening right now in some of the rebuilds, especially in Altadena, where we've lost so many trees and people are still taking them out. If they keep them, they don't have to put in two new trees. If you are rebuilding, you are required by Planning to plant two new trees. However, if there are existing trees there... we've had people taking down trees because of their planning. If they don't remove any trees, they don't have to plant the two new trees [as long as they] keep the existing shade. Because the minute you remove a tree, the shade canopy is gone. [The shade] is huge compared to what you put in as a replacement [tree]. So some bargaining with the requirement that the County has for replacement [trees] in the burn area. So if we encourage people to keep as many of the existing trees that are healthy, there is not a requirement to plant two new trees. unless. of course. there is room for them.	Thank you for your comment and insight. The requirement to plant two new trees is from Tree Planting Ordinance and the Residential Design Ordinance, which is not covered in the update to the Oak Tree Permit ordinance. We will follow up for further discussion.

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9/30/2025	Lynne Plambeck	Meeting #5	My suggestion with this replacement issue, which I'm really concerned about, because if the trees are growing there, they just should be left not counted as something in replacement. But one of the things that happened with my neighbor is he had to take out a big tree because it was growing into a sewer line. I've been asking [Santa Clarita] if I could give [my neighbor] additional seedlings for a replacement to save money. That's not really a good option because they're so small, but also, a lot of times, they grow better than the ones that have been in a container for a long time. I don't know how to work that in, and maybe it is not relevant, but I was trying to get him to take a replacement tree.	Thank you for your comment. We will follow up for further discussion. Yes, the naturally occurring oak seedling in your yard is likely better adapted to your area than one from a nursery located in a different area, too.
9/30/2025	Kelly Decker	Meeting #5	I thought that the changes that were going to be proposed would be grander or more, like, significant in scope, and I feel as though the ones that I've seen are... are pretty small or nuanced, or just tweaks to the existing ordinance. I appreciate that you're taking comments and I've read the, notes that Caroline sends out afterwards where you respond to people's comments, and one of the suggestions that I had made at a previous meeting was about... it's the thing that I call "scorched earth," I don't know what other people call it, but we did talk about it a bit, where if somebody cuts down a tree, you know, just to be able to clear out a lot to build, and they pay the fine just as the cost of doing business, that the lot would have, let's say, like, a 5-year moratorium on building permits. The response that was given was that in another area, the moratorium was for 2 years, and that's how long it takes to get a building permit anyway, so it doesn't matter. So I guess I'm just not sure what the process is of like: you just decide you don't like that idea so it gets thrown out, or does anybody else get to weigh in and say, maybe this is something worth considering, because I just felt like that was pretty dismissive of a decent idea that I've heard lots of people talk about in the 15 years that I've lived here everybody at different county agencies has excuses as to why, like, it can't be implemented, and it seemed like this was the time, and now, like, according to the response in the comment, like, it's just over, and it's not happening. So, I just wanted to say that.	Thank you for your comment. We will follow up for further discussion.
9/30/2025	Ty Garrison	Meeting #5	I've always thought that 2 to 1 was not really a great ratio. I've worked in other jurisdictions where they, require something on the order of, well, you have to match the amount of square foot of trunk area at DBH, with your replacement trees. Of course, that can be quite cumbersome on a small lot, where you've got one tree that's, you know, 30 inches in diameter, and you have to find 31 1-inch trees or something, you know, whatever the formula is, which you can't fit on a lot. But there's got... it, you know, feels to me like two trees is probably not really adequate, unless you can ensure that they make it to maturity. And even then, you've got a long temporal loss.	Thank you for your comment. We will follow up for further discussion. In the existing Oak Tree Permit, all replacement oak trees are monitored for two years to ensure survival. In the Oak Tree Permit update, we are proposing to extend the monitoring period to five years for (regular, nursery-purchased) replacement oak trees. In the Oak Tree Permit update, we may propose a longer monitoring period for "Stewardship oaks" if these naturally-occurring oak seedlings are chosen as an option to serve as replacement oak trees.

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9/30/2025	Ty Garrison	Meeting #5	I didn't quite understand the question [from Stephanie Landregan] about the requirement for replacement trees from Altadena. I'm in Altadena, and I haven't heard that yet. I didn't lose my home, so I'm not dealing with it. But, in that respect, but that they're just requiring two trees, and... and the word trees was used a lot, but not oak trees, and so I'm not sure that it's relevant to this conversation. I still don't see a problem with putting in two sapling trees, or seedling trees, if... if that is a requirement. Are you guys aware of a requirement that everybody that's building has to put in two trees? I wasn't aware of it.	The requirement of two trees for rebuilds discussed above is referring to two other ordinances, the Tree Planting Ordinance, and the Residential Design Ordinance, not the Oak Tree Permit ordinance. We will follow up.
9/30/2025	Drew Ready	Meeting #5	I have a number of Coast Live Oaks on my property and have seedlings every year. I can share that the good majority of those seedlings don't survive past the 3-year mark. They're just in the wrong place, they get too much shade or not enough water. There's rough competition, So, I'd really urge us to maybe rethink this seedling oak being a replacement for removed trees. Very, very often they won't make it past a couple of years. Now that could be [helped] . . . the tree could be watered. You could do things to support that tree and maybe have it grow to a mature size, but I would suggest we take another look at that.	Thank you for your comment. We will follow up.
9/30/2025	Drew Ready	Meeting #5	And, on the 36-inch Heritage Oak. I was on a property today, and we took out a 36-inch Coast Live Oak. It died due to Phytophthora. I know it was a 36" DBH oak tree because that was the size saw that was used. The tree was planted in 1953 when the house was built. That's a 75 year-old tree and I would argue that that tree was a heritage tree 20 years ago. I think there may be a better way to identify heritage trees. Requiring two trees for a 35" DBH oak and 10 trees for a 36" DBH oak doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me, and I think there's a lot of room for error when people measure tree diameter. The National Register of Big Trees uses a point system that uses trunk circumference and tree height, and crown spread. I think that may be more appropriate in identifying what a heritage tree is in the County.	Thank you for your comment. LA County does not have a Heritage Tree Ordinance at this time, but thank you for making us aware of the point system from the National Register of Big Trees.
9/30/2025	Sara Hammes	Meeting #5	Has there been clarification around replacement ratios? A lot of people have been asking for replacement ratios up to 10:1. I've seen 4:1, even 2:1 where the reality of some of these building sites is there is not really going to be an appropriate place to put all these trees. Is there clarification in the ordinance on where the trees are supposed to go? Is it in the ordinance to show where the trees planted with the in-lieu fees are located and where the fund is being used?	If there is not enough room on the property, then the existing Oak Tree Permit has the option to pay an in-lieu fee that is deposited into the Oak Forest Special Fund that is overseen by the Department of Parks and Recreation. The Fund pays for oak trees to be planted in LA County Parks. We do have geolocations and a map of where these trees are located.
9/30/2025	Jonathan Casas	Meeting #5	Will there be established criteria for tree relocation?	Thank you for the question. We have reached out to tree relocation companies for guidance as part of the research for this update, but would like to learn from other tree professionals who may have more information or experience to share with us.

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9/30/2025	Jonathan Casas	Meeting #5	How can I access responses to previous question and comments?	Please go to the project website and look at the third column in the Public Outreach Meetings table. Click on the " Q&A from Meeting # ": https://planning.lacounty.gov/long-range-planning/oak-tree-program/meetings-and-headings/
9/30/2025	Jonathan Casas	Meeting #5	[Regarding] a heritage oak tree that was removed... I know utilities because I've had experience working with Southern California Edison. I do not work for them anymore, but how they do their billing, is, through DBH. I think it's something that is simple, and it can be used to, say if, you know, something over... I would say something over 24 inches can be a heritage tree. [This is] just a suggestion on that to make it easier for people who may not have, a lot of experience. I'm not sure how many foresters you guys have.	Thank you for your comment. We will follow up for clarification.
9/30/2025	Stephanie Landregan	Meeting #5	We may need some clarification... when we remove a tree, we diminish the canopy cover for that neighborhood or that area, so the shade cover is different. The Quimby Act, which was part of the City [of LA], not the County, requires replacements within a certain radius of the removal so that the neighborhood is not inadvertently diminished [of shade]. Is there some way of making a person who is taking out [a tree] look for a kind of mitigation banking place? There are so many removals that we allow and then we have less and less shade coverage in our neighborhoods so it is something to consider: the canopy... as well as the removal of the tree. If we look at the removal of the canopy as well. I don't know how to put that in, but I know in Washington D.C., they required that any reduction in canopy had to be mitigated through the size of the tree that was replaced, so either two 48-inch boxes, etc. It is something to consider because we are all part of Shade LA now, including the County, and I think we have to think outside of it being a single specimen and what that specimen contributes.	Thank you for your comment. We are aware of the Canopy Equity Sub-group that comprises Public Health's PLACE program, Public Works, Internal Services Department, and the Chief Sustainability Office. We will follow up to connect you with the Canopy Equity subgroup, They are working shade equity which is outside the scope of the Oak Tree Permit update.
9/30/2025	Ellen Walton	Meeting #5 Chat	Is there a way to refer to a local regulator via LACO website?	We will follow up for clarification
9/30/2025	Sara Hammes	Meeting #5 Chat	Can you repeat the definition of encroachment under the ordinance?	Any impacts that occur within the Tree Protected Zone. The definition of the Tree Protected Zone is: "The area within the dripline of an oak tree and extending therefrom to a point at least five feet outside the dripline, or 15 feet from the trunk of a tree, whichever distance is greater."
9/30/2025	Ellen Walton	Meeting #5 Chat	Who is monitoring the correlations for possible causes?	
9/30/2025	Lynne Plambeck	Meeting #5 Chat	[In response to Ministerial Permits] Except in the case of a heritage oak. A hearing is still required in that case. In administrative applications, the Planning Dept. is supposed to encourage planning that would preserve the tree. It also requires planting a new tree.	That is correct. Any removal of a heritage oak tree requires an Oak Tree Permit with a Public Hearing with a 10:1 replacement ratio.
9/30/2025	Drew Ready	Meeting #5 Chat	I'm wondering if monitoring replacement trees for five years is enough, couldn't developers see this as a loophole, where trees are removed after the five year mark?	Replacement trees are protected trees and removing them would require an Oak Tree Permit. We are considering requiring project arborists to submit geolocations of replacement oak trees so they will be mapped and documented.

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9/30/2025	Drew Ready	Meeting #5 Chat	Will there be a publicly accessible map of replacement trees so neighbors and community members can alert the County in the case of premature removals?	We are working on developing such a map. As a precursor to having a map of oak trees that enter the Oak Tree Permitting process, we first need the geolocations of oak trees from applicants or their project arborist. We are proposing this be an application requirement: an oak tree inventory with geocoordinates.
9/30/2025	Drew Ready	Meeting #5 Chat	Also, I have eight coast live oak trees and can share that not all seedlings survive the five year mark. Many fail to thrive beyond a couple of years if conditions aren't right (lack of sun, water, root competition, drought and other conditions don't always favor seedlings)	Please see the response on line 7 above. The proposed "Stewardship Oak Trees" would have to be protected from predation and watered until they are established.
9/30/2025	Drew Ready	Meeting #5 Chat	South Pasadena uses the in lieu fee program and trees are planted elsewhere in the City when trees can't be planted on site.	Thank you for your comment.
9/30/2025	David Rose	Meeting #5 Chat	I talked about protecting the oak tree in the construction site . I would love to put the chain link fence around where the longest roots underneath the tree is located. We need to protect all of the roots from damage. That is my thought	Thank you for your comment. We will follow up and send you images of the Tree Protected Zone, where the tree roots should be protected. We also discussed the definition of the Tree Protected Zone in Meeting #2. The recording is here: https://planning.lacounty.gov/long-range-planning/oak-tree-program/meetings-and-headings/
9/30/2025	Stephanie Landregan	Meeting #5 Chat	Is there a radius from the tree removal so that the tree canopy is within the same "neighborhood"	Thank you for your question. I will introduce you to the Canopy Equity Subgroup (of the LA County Tree Committee). They are addressing such questions. We will follow up.