LA COUNTY PLANNING

Oak Tree Permit Update

Comments & Questions: Meeting #2

Date	Commenter Name	Meeting #	Comment or Question	Response
8/21/2025	Lori Paul	Alt Meeting #2	For those of us who are out in the community and see things happening in the evenings, over holidays, on weekends, even at night, for goodness sakes, in the past, there needs to be a fallback emergency contact that isn't just, you know, planning or calling Public Works and the County because we have seen oaks illegally go down and we can't call in violations then. It's not a 911 issue, but on the other hand, it is because large oaks are coming down. Try calling the sheriffs to come out to save an oak, and they will laugh at you. So, please work some sort of emergency reporting mechanism in for violations in progress. Just the way you call right in if a home's being robbed. You don't want to wait two days until the next Monday to call in, you know, a burglar report. There is no place to report emergency destruction of oaks.	Thank you for your comment. We do not presently have staff available to address emergency destruction of oak trees.

LA COUNTY PLANNING

Date	Commenter Name	Meeting #	Comment or Question	Response
8/21/2025	Lori Paul	Alt Meeting #2	There's a horrific loss of oaks going on right now up in Millard Canyon here. Those of us who reside in the Cheney Trail neighborhood and so forth have gotten notifications. Cabin owners, a couple of them who are still present after the fire, are pretty frantic....They are taking out healthy oaks so that there's "helicopter access"... They are taking out retaining walls.. and where oaks are helping hold up the hillside, when the oaks come down, there's going to be tremendous erosion damage... There is just no one up there supervising this area of the county where we have these oak trees, and when these oak trees are taken out and debris falls into the canyon, and so much damage is done. When we do get rain, and it comes hard and heavy like it did earlier this year after the fire, we're going to have real problems for trees and property owners downslope.... So, this is a very serious situation going on, and yet no one's paying attention. So, particularly because it's oak trees being destroyed. ... I wanted to bring that to your attention at this meeting, and hopefully we can get some sort of inquiry into this, because no one's paying attention to these contractors, and those of us who have had debris clearance on our properties can tell you things are not always done properly on site.	Please contact Zoning Enforcement to report a violation: Email zoningenforcement@planning.lacounty.gov or call (213) 974-6453
8/21/2025	Rachel Burnap	Alt Meeting #2	With some of the proposed changes - from care professional to requiring a ISA-certified arborist or a registered consulting arborist - that's really great that is really still going to depend on that person to see if that tree is infested or not with Goldspotted Oak Borer (GSOB). And with so many people looking at oak trees through this permitting process, why hasn't more GSOB been found yet? This really is going to depend on that person seeing if the tree is infested or not with GSOB. And with so many people looking at oak trees through this permitting process, why hasn't more GSOB been found yet? That we need to make sure that those arborists know what GSOB is when they're looking at a tree!	Thank you for your comment.

LA COUNTY PLANNING

Date	Commenter Name	Meeting #	Comment or Question	Response
8/21/2025	Robert Steller	Alt Meeting #2	Okay, so I'm a homeowner, or was a homeowner in Altadena, and we're working on trying to define the footprint that we can put our house in, because we had several rather large oaks, which were over our house when it burned. I've already contacted the forestry department and gotten permits, and had our arborists come in and clear out the damaged, the burned branches and so on. So we've kind of… we've pushed the drip line back a bit because of that removal. So my question is, as we're getting ready to do an application to LA County Planning Department, when we do our part plan, I need to have an outline of the drip line and the 5-foot setback from that, on our pot plan. Any suggestions on how we obtain that outline of the drip line? Do I need to get somebody in to fly a drone to get that? What's the typical procedure for that?	Typically, property owners hire an arborist to help them with the mapping of the footprint of the structure and dripline of the canopy of the tree.
8/21/2025	Lori Paul	Alt Meeting #2 chat	Does it concern anyone else that there are so few participants in these important update meetings compared with the vast number of persons and groups concerned about oaks and trees in general? 7 persons or perhaps less?? Excuse me, it appears to be only 10 attendees?	You are attending Alternative Meeting #2 to accommodate Altadena residents and other residents who had scheduling conflicts on Tuesday nights. You can help encourage Altadena residents to attend by sharing the OTP update outreach flyer.
8/21/2025	Lori Paul	Alt Meeting #2 chat	Instead of exempting oaks as so-called "landscape oaks" with less protection... why not give Oaks actual monetary value in terms of some program of carbon credit? In fact other trees should be included in a County woodland carbon credit program that encompasses the "urban forest" comprised of both street trees and privately owned trees. This value could provide actual income for the County that could then convey some portion of that actual benefit to property owners?	The scope of this project is to improve the Oak Tree Permit which has the purpose to preserve and maintain healthy oak trees in the development process on private property. The described carbon credit program concerns woodlands and the urban forest which is outside the scope of this update. Please contact the Chief Sustainability Office for more information about the LA County Community Forest Management Plan: https://cso.lacounty.gov/the-plan/cso-current-initiatives/community-forest-management-plan/
8/21/2025	Serena Burnett	Alt Meeting #2 chat	How does one find the ordinances/regs. relating to oak trees in incorporated areas of LA County?	To find oak tree regulations in other incorporated cities, visit the website of each local government and search for "protected tree" or "oak" to find their regulations.

LA COUNTY PLANNING

Date	Commenter Name	Meeting #	Comment or Question	Response
8/21/2025	Rachel Burnap	Alt Meeting #2 chat	One question under application- why the switch of 200 to 50 ft of distance of tree to proposed construction?	The existing Oak Tree Permit application requires a site plan showing any oak trees within 200 ft of the proposed project. Planning staff observed property owners in oak woodlands preparing extensive site plans, and oak tree reports mapping and documenting data from many oak trees which were ultimately not impacted by the proposed project. In light of the new data we are requesting in the oak tree report and to mitigate this cost burden on applicants, planning staff suggested requiring the location and size of all oak trees within 50 ft of proposed construction, instead of 200 ft.
8/21/2025	Joe Monaly	Alt Meeting #2 chat	I missed the first meeting because of work, is that session available?	Yes, all meetings are recorded and available on our website: https://planning.lacounty.gov/long-range-planning/oak-tree-program/meetings-and-headings/
8/21/2025	Serena Burnett	Alt Meeting #2 chat	Do the tree ordinances pertain to oaks in backyards and how does the county monitor what trees people are cutting down in their backyards?	Yes, the Oak Tree Permit applies to all oak trees on private property in unincorporated LA County that are 8" DBH and greater in backyards. Enforcement of LA County's code is complaint-based. If a violation is reported to Zoning Enforcement, Zoning Enforcement will investigate
8/21/2025	Joe Monaly	Alt Meeting #2 chat	When you are looking at geo tag locations, is Google Maps ok or do you need a surveyor to provide that information?	Yes, using Google Maps to obtain geocoordinates is fine. Planners will check by looking at aerial maps. No need to hire a surveyor.
8/21/2025	Joe Monaly	Alt Meeting #2	We already provide that information to Forestry. How do we provide that information to you?	Planning is still fleshing out the procedure, but generally, we are asking for a .csv file with a tree inventory with geocoordinates and other tree data.

LA COUNTY PLANNING

Date	Commenter Name	Meeting #	Comment or Question	Response
8/21/2025	Joe Monaly	Alt Meeting #2	We've been working with the fire department for years because Kegel Canyon got burned out pretty good, and every couple of years, we have another tree or two that will die off. As a result of the fire, I mean, we're doing everything we can to try to nurse them along, and we're also grateful if you're going to extend the length of time that a permit applies to a tree beyond the 90 days, that would be greatly appreciated, because we are doing our best to try to keep them alive. Trimming dead material off... Cutting them down is not our go-to, but I have a feeling we're kind of unique in that regard.	Thank you for your comment. If an Emergency Oak Tree Permit (EOTP) expires after 90 days, a resident can apply for a new no-cost EOTP from the Forestry Division.
8/21/2025	Joe Monaly	Alt Meeting #2	The Forestry Division had mentioned at the last walkthrough that they were considering using Kagel Canyon as a kind of lab, to see how trees can recover after fire, and I was wondering if you had, any comments or information on that? Because it actually makes a lot of sense. The Kagel Canyon fire happened, what, something like 8 years ago, and the lessons learned on that one could also be applied to what has happened in Altadena. And we were wondering if you had any thoughts about that, or had that made it onto your radar.	Will follow up to ask for more detail.
8/25/2025	Charles Miller	Defensible Space Working Group	[Exempting "Landscape Oaks" from Regulations] Our organization maintains that this is a terrible idea. As the urban environment ages, more and more of the native trees will be human-planted. We've never seen any data that comes close to suggesting that the number of native trees not planted due to fear of them being protected comes close to the damage of not protecting human-planted native trees which are in critical need of protection. The way to address Lisa's concerns, we maintain, is not to remove protections for human-planted native trees, but instead to create incentives for planting them over non-native species that provide less support for biodiversity.	Thank you for your comment. "Landscape Oaks" will only be exempted from regulations if residents register and document them with Planning, Residents are still free to plant oak trees *without registering* them as "Landscape Oaks" with Planning. Such human-planted oak trees will become protected oak trees. The incentive is "Landscape oaks" are permit-free. Another possible incentive would be to provide a County Landscape Oaks map with counts of the number of Landscape oaks are planted by community so residents can see where investments in the local ecology is occurring.

LA COUNTY PLANNING

Date	Commenter Name	Meeting #	Comment or Question	Response
8/25/2025	Lisa Fimiani	Defensible Space Working Group	the elephant in the State of California Room is our Draconian rules about MAINTAINING our Oaks, the state handcuffs owners/developers so no one wants to use them in huge development plans! How do we change THAT?! The other half to this coin is the aversion of planting oaks because you can't do anything with the land afterwards - the oaks, by their very presence, prevents their removal for future development plans. I personally am all for this but it may prevent the use of Oaks in proposed plant palettes. Yes, MORE incentives - if ever we have a reason, now, with these fires - YES, YES, YES TO MORE OAKS!!!!	In the Oak Tree Permit update, LA County is proposing to address aversion to planting oak trees by exempting voluntarily-planted, newly planted oak trees from regulations. These "Landscape Oaks" will have to be registered and documented by the Planning department and will be tracked on a public-facing map.
8/26/2025	Jacki Ayer	Email	Does this oak tree ordinance address any plant species other than oaks? or does it pertain solely to oak trees only?	Oaks only. The Oak Tree Permit pertains to all oak trees, regardless of nativity: https://trees-lacounty.hub.arcgis.com/pages/oak-trees
8/26/2025	Lisa Fimiani	Email	My experience in the past 38 years is that oaks are treated like pariahs by developers, and I can see why. Once planted they handcuff owners into complying with strict management requirements that are inconsistently explained and enforced by cities, leaving the property owner perplexed and confused about what to do. Net result: Oaks are rarely (if ever) used in urban planting. It breaks my heart.	We have heard this sentiment repeated over the years. It is an unintended consequence of protecting a valued resource. We are attempting to address this issue by proposing to exempt oak trees newly and voluntarily planted by residents and developers who then register the trees with LA County to be "landscape oak trees" so we have a record that these trees are to be exempted from regulations even after they reach the size when they would normally be regulated. We hope this will remove any second thoughts residents and developers have of planting oak trees.