

**Summary of City of Goleta Heritage Tree Policies and Procedures
February 2024**

Excerpts from Urban Forest Management Plan

4.15 Heritage Trees

- 4.15.1 Use UFMP adopted procedures for defining and designating the protection of Heritage trees on city property.
- 4.15.2 The Public Tree Advisory Commission will implement future policies or ordinances that protect Heritage trees in the public right of way or on public property and make such recommendations to the City Council for approval.

4.16 Heritage Trees

Irreplaceable and significant urban trees in good health and of stable form are substantial components to the history of each urban forest. These trees, known as heritage trees, are considered outstanding because of their size, form, age, color, rarity, genetic constitution and/or shape. They can also be a distinctive landmark to a community; a specimen associated with a historic person, place, event or period; a representative of a crop grown by ancestors and their successors that is at risk of disappearing from cultivation; a specimen recognized by members of a community as deserving heritage recognition. Heritage trees also increase the prestige of the community and they play a vital role in maximizing environmental benefits.

A collection of co-located trees, forming a grove, may also be considered heritage based on the above description.

No trees were designated as heritage, historical, or significant when the City formed. A list of Goleta Heritage tree sites is identified in Appendix B. This list, and subsequent designations, are subject to recommendation by PTAC and approval by the City Council.

Guidelines

- 4.16.1 Use UFMP adopted procedures for defining and designating the protection of Heritage/landmark trees on city property.
- 4.16.2 The Public Tree Advisory Commission shall consider future policies or ordinances that protect Heritage trees in the public right of way or on public property and make such recommendations to the City Council for approval.

Objectives

- 1. Protection and enhancement of Heritage trees in Goleta.
- 2. Develop and maintain a list of candidate Heritage/landmark trees.

Criteria for Heritage Tree Designation:

Definition: A heritage tree is a tree that, because of its size, age, species, rarity, or historical or horticultural significance, is of special importance to the City.

Horticultural significance

A heritage tree must be of exceptional size and age. Since trees vary in size and lifespan by species, exceptional is relative to the size and age of other individuals of the same species located in the city.

Unless documented, age is difficult to determine without specialized equipment but size can be quantified by measuring the tree's trunk diameter at 4.5 feet above grade, which is also known as the diameter at breast height (DBH).

A tree may be classified as a Heritage tree because it is a defining landmark or it is considered to be rare in the area.

A tree may be considered rare because of its species, unique form, structure, unusual branch patterns, or its outstanding aesthetic contribution to a site or neighborhood.

Historical significance

A tree may qualify as a Heritage tree if it has a documented history that reflects our City's cultural heritage. This would include such things as its association with or contribution to a historic structure, site, or street, or its connection to a person of historical note or some historic event.

Nominating a Heritage Tree

Any Goleta resident or business may nominate a heritage tree. In addition to a filing fee, the nomination form (Appendix F) must include justification for designating the tree as historic consistent with the information contained in this section as well as pictures of the tree and its placement in the surrounding location.

Submit nomination form to the Public Tree Advisory Commission (PTAC) for a tree in the public right of way or on public property. Nomination forms will be received by Public Works and submitted to PTAC as an item on their next meeting agenda. The PTAC will evaluate the nomination and determine if it qualifies to be submitted to the City Arborist for further investigation in to the satisfaction of Heritage tree criteria. The City Arborist will provide a botanical assessment report to the PTAC. PTAC would then make a final recommendation to approve or deny based on these findings and if approved, direct staff to present a recommendation to the City Council for designation of the tree as a Heritage Tree.

If PTAC denies the designation, the nominating party may appeal the denial to the City Council within 10 days of notification that the request has been denied. Written appeals must be submitted to the City Clerk.

Naming a Heritage Tree

When considering a heritage tree designation, PTAC will also make a recommendation to the City Council on the naming of the heritage trees.

The name shall be informative:

Location

Common Name

ie: *the* Stow Grove Park Redwoods
the Ellwood Mesa Eucalyptus Grove
the Old Town Park Sycamore

Changing a Heritage Tree's Designation

PTAC may recommend to the City Council that a Heritage tree's designation be rescinded when or if the Commission finds that it is no longer appropriate.

Removal of a Heritage Tree

A Heritage Tree shall not be removed unless it is dead, dying, or dangerous, subject to prior PTAC notification unless the hazardous condition of the tree is deemed an emergency warranting swift action. An emergency is when the failure of a major limb(s) or the entire tree is imminent and a threat to public safety, homes, or structures. In the event of an emergency, the Public Works Director or his/her designee may order a limb(s) or the entire tree to be removed without scheduling a hearing with the PTAC. However, PTAC commissioners shall be informed as soon as practical.