

## Community Tree Survey Results

Draft March 6, 2013

### Introduction

Between January 24 and February 21, 2013 a "Community Tree Survey" was conducted by the Parks and Recreation Department. The survey was conducted to learn more about the public's concerns surrounding trees, priorities they feel the City should have, and their familiarity the City's tree preservation ordinance. The survey also sought to understand what type of information the public would like to learn more about.

Information collected from the Community Tree Survey will be used to inform the development of the Urban Forest Management Plan. While it is recognized that the pool of respondents is not a random sample, the survey allowed for broader interaction with the public than would have otherwise been made available. Information gathered does reflect and highlight known tree issues as well as provide insight into the public's knowledge and concerns of Santa Barbara's urban forest.

### Methodology

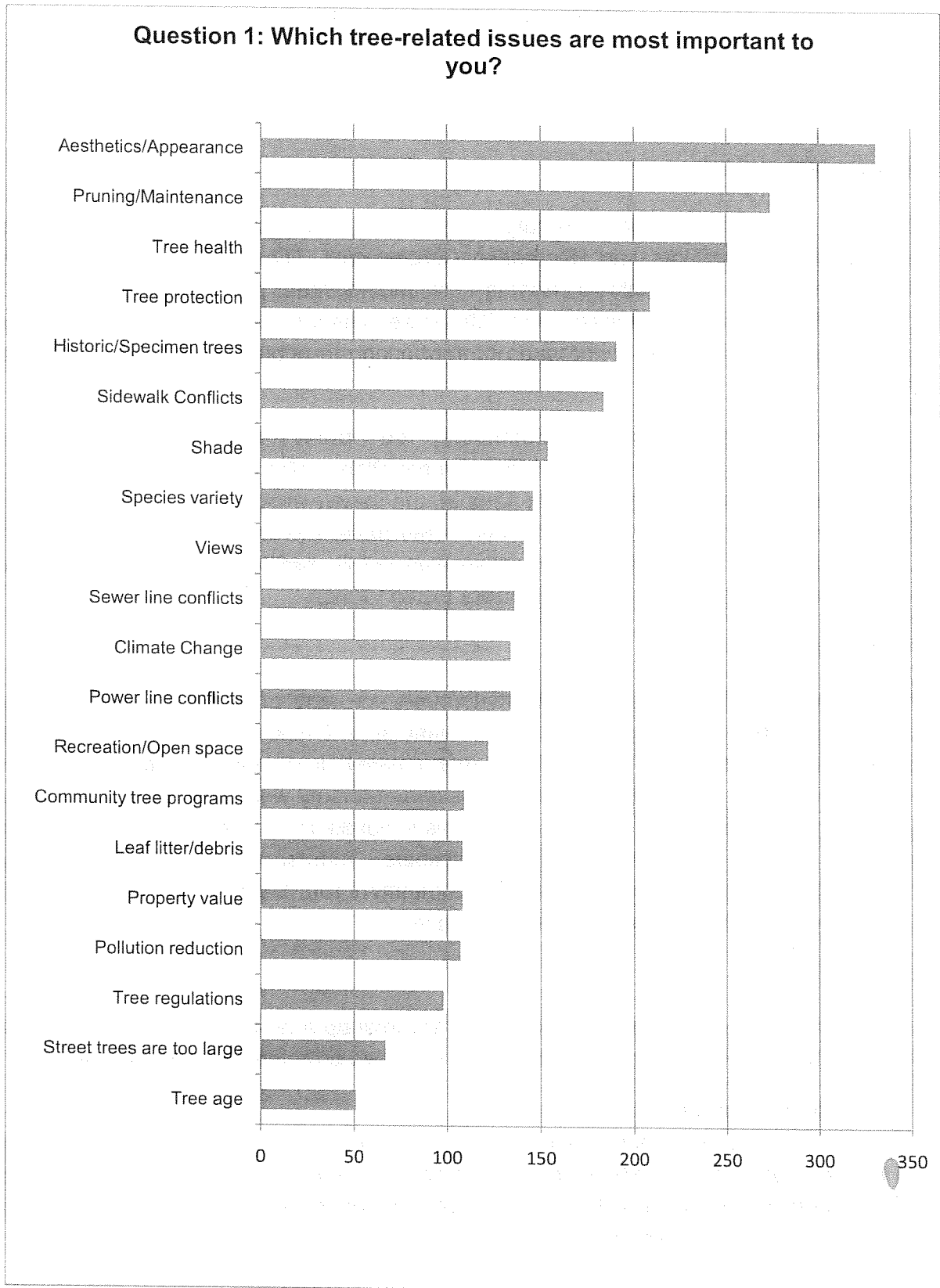
Surveys were distributed and collected through a variety of methods. Initial surveys were administered to attendees of the January 24 and 26, 2013 Urban Forest Community Workshop. Two surveys were emailed to residents upon request and returned via mail. The online survey tool Survey Monkey was used to broaden survey responses. A link to the online survey was emailed to a select group of residents including: City of Santa Barbara e-subscribers, subscribers to the City's weekly newsletter, and members of the online community forum Nextdoor.com. Additionally, the survey was placed on the Forestry webpage.

### Survey Results

A total of 517 surveys were collected: 20 from workshop attendees, 2 from mail-ins, and 495 from Survey Monkey link. The survey is provided on Page 6 of this document.

#### *Most important tree-related issues*

The top five issues most important to the public include: Aesthetics/Appearance, Pruning/Maintenance, Tree health, Tree protection, and Historic and specimen species. The graph below includes the full list. Sidewalk conflicts are the sixth most important tree issue and are a frequently commented on topic in Question 2.



*Top City priorities*

Question #2 asked residents to identify priorities the City should have when managing City trees. Tree health and aesthetics, public safety, tree planting, tree maintenance, and tree protection were among the most widely discussed topics. Comments on public safety generally referred to sidewalk and infrastructure conflicts, but also included power and sewer line conflicts, seed and leaf litter debris, safety from falling palm fronds, and overhanging branches onto private property. The majority of comments on tree maintenance included the need for early and frequent tree pruning. A few respondents suggest an overly pruned forest. Tree planting comments primarily discussed right-tree-right-place and a more rapid replacement of removed trees. Other comments included: the use of natives, planting more trees, not planting more trees until the current inventory is better maintained, incentives for homeowners to plant trees and the use of or discontinued use of specific species (oaks, fruit trees, eucalyptus, palms). Although to a lesser extent than the comments above, other respondents made the following comments: protect birds, protect views, use water-wise trees, work with residents when planting and addressing street trees, public education, and appropriate funding.

*Resident contribution*

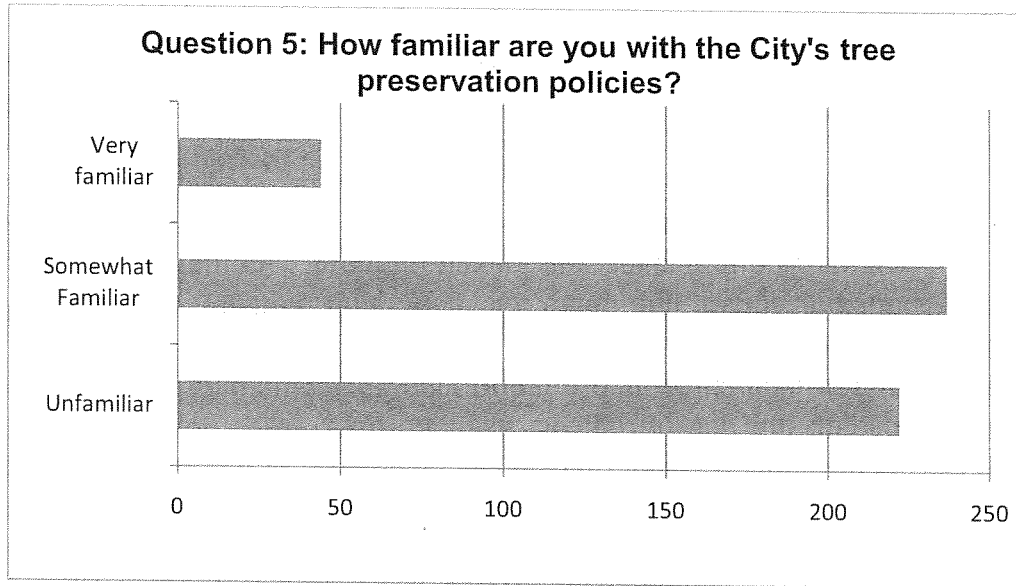
Question #3 asked residents to identify ways in which they felt they could contribute to the urban forest. Maintaining and planting trees on private property, reporting problems, and understanding City policies and practices were the three most frequently discussed items. Other comments included proper waste disposal, watering parkway trees, following fire guidelines, and acquiring the ability to trim parkway trees.

*Contact with the City about trees*

Question #4 asked residents if they have ever contacted the City about a tree-related issue. 51% report had contacted the City and 48% had not. Reasons for contacting the City included: reporting tree problems and hazards, requesting a removal of a street tree or setback tree, requesting a street tree planting, inquire about tree regulations in general and discuss a view conflict. Other lesser commented reasons included notification of nesting birds and appreciation for City work.

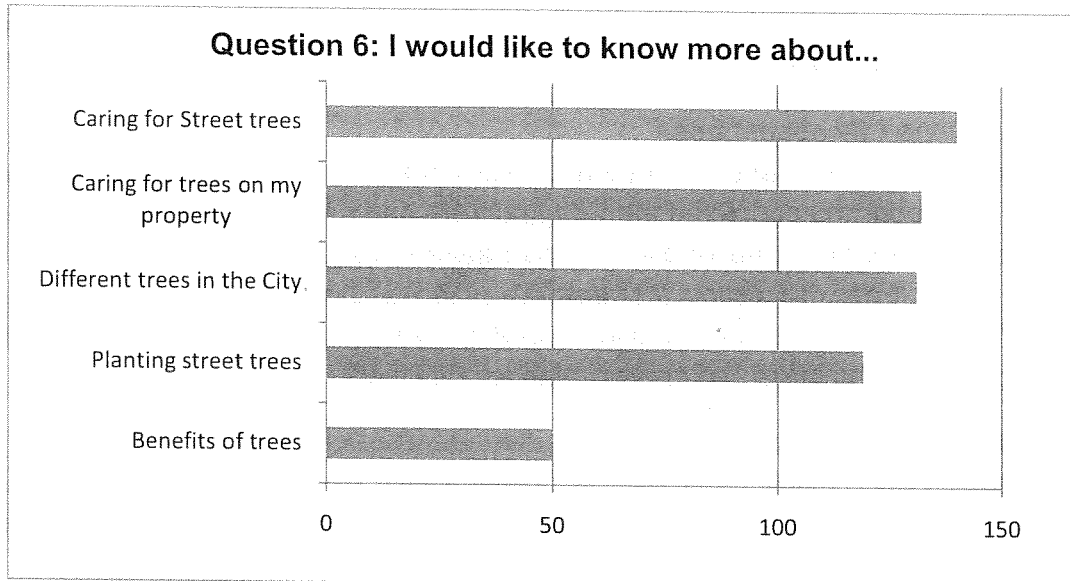
*Familiarity with tree preservation policies*

When asked how familiar the public is on the City's tree preservation policies, 44% reported being unfamiliar, 47% reported being somewhat familiar, and 9% reported being very familiar.



*Residents want more information on...*

The following graph reflects what residents would like to know more about. 24% of respondents reported an interest in caring for street trees, 23% in caring for their trees, 22% in different trees within the City, 21% in planting street trees, 8% in the benefits of trees and 1% chose "other".



*Additional Comments*

Survey respondents were provided with space to add additional comments and 205 respondents did so. Most all comments were positive with approximately 50

respondents giving thanks and appreciation for the survey or general appreciation for the Forestry program. Other comments include: requesting tree information (such as that on the City's interactive MAPS and designated street trees), attention be paid to view and solar access, more funding for forestry work, more protection for historic and specimen trees, reduced fire hazards and adherence to fire safety guidelines, Edison poor pruning practices, and more/less enforcement and regulations.

Tree Survey

January 24, 2013

1. Which of the following tree-related issues are most important to you?

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics/Appearance      | <input type="checkbox"/> Species Variety            | <input type="checkbox"/> Pruning/Maintenance     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sidewalk Conflicts         | <input type="checkbox"/> Sewer line conflicts       | <input type="checkbox"/> Power line conflicts    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Street Trees are too small | <input type="checkbox"/> Street trees are too large | <input type="checkbox"/> Leaf litter/debris      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tree regulations           | <input type="checkbox"/> Shade                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Pollution Reduction     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stormwater Retention       | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree health                | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree age                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tree protection            | <input type="checkbox"/> Views                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Tree Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation/Open Space      | <input type="checkbox"/> Property Value             | <input type="checkbox"/> Historic/Specimen Trees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Climate Change             |   |  |

2. What priorities should the City have in managing City trees?

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3. What do you think residents can do to contribute to the health of the urban forest?

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4. Have you ever contacted the City about trees?  Yes  No

For what reason did you contact the City? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. How familiar are you with the City's tree preservation policies?

- Unfamiliar                       Somewhat familiar                       Very Familiar

6. I would like to learn more about:

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caring for trees on my property | <input type="checkbox"/> Caring for Street Trees     | <input type="checkbox"/> Planting Street Trees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefits of Trees               | <input type="checkbox"/> Different trees in the City |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                     |  |  |

Additional Comments:

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**Santa Barbara Urban Forest Project  
Key Issues – March 21, 2013**

In order to develop goals and actions for the Urban Forest Management Plan, a number of key issues and considerations are presented for discussion. These issues have been identified by or discussed in a range of venues by the Department and other City staff, appointed Board and Commission members, and members of the public attending Community Meetings and Tree Survey respondents. Also included are comments from Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members. Key issues have been categorized into five subject areas: Tree Resource Management, Policy and Planning, Program Funding, City Organization and Community Involvement.

Description of Key Issue	Also Identified by Public	Comments
<b>Tree Resource Management - Street Tree Management and Maintenance</b>		
Low diversity/Overuse of similar species in existing population	✓	TAC identified key issue
Need to develop a proactive approach to systematic removal and replacement of poor performing trees, or trees at the end of their life	✓	Community attendees and survey respondents identified quick replacement of dead and dying trees as a key issue
Need to develop a plan to systematically address/minimize infrastructure conflict	✓	Public safety as it relates to infrastructure conflicts was one of the top five issues identified in both the Community Meeting and Tree Survey. Sidewalk conflicts fall at #6 as most important tree issue in Tree Survey.
Tree planting and landscaping challenges when buildings are constructed at property line and/or building heights limit tree sizes and/or ability to plant trees		Redevelopment/Urban infill changes street scapes and tree options.
8,000 vacant planting sites	✓	Community attendees and survey respondents identified quick replacement of dead and dying trees as a key issue
Maintenance focus on grid pruning and citizen response	✓	Proactive Pruning/Maintenance second most important issue most important to public in Tree Survey and most commented on City priority.
Climate change impacts have unknown consequences on tree population	✓	Identified by TAC and City departments.

Description of Key Issue	Also Identified by Public	Public, TAC and City staff comments
<b>Street Tree Management and Maintenance continued</b>		
Conflict between trees/solar access/views likely to increase	✓	TAC, City departments, survey respondents identified this as a key issue.
Need for proactive vs. reactive pest management		
Value of trees not frequently considered		
Trees not treated as a capital resource		
<b>Park Tree Management and Maintenance</b>		
Park tree maintenance focused on safety		
Significant number of park trees occur only once with no plan to offset loss of unique species	✓	Identified by TAC and public as a key issue. Tree health and protection identified as #3 and #4 most important tree issues in Tree Survey.
Climate change impacts have unknown consequences on tree population health, longevity and maintenance requirements		
Value of trees not frequently considered (such as water sequestration to reduce runoff)		
Opportunity to restore/enhance riparian canopy, eliminate invasive species and increase native habitat in open space parks and parks with creeks	✓	Tree protection identified as 4th most important to public in Tree Survey. Bird habitat frequently commented on as important resource.
Trees not treated as a capital resource		
<b>Private Tree Management and Maintenance</b>		
Poor or no maintenance and inappropriate planting and pruning practices	✓	Identified by City Fire Department as key issue. Tree Survey respondents listed planting and maintenance as number 1 way residents can contribute to the health of the urban forest.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire access and vertical height clearance</li> <li>• Private trees that damage public infrastructure- City liable</li> </ul>		
Loss of tree resources through removals		
Conflict between trees and access to solar and views likely to increase	✓	Identified by TAC, City staff of various departments, Community Meeting attendees and Tree Survey respondents
Tree planting and landscaping challenges when buildings are constructed at property line and/or building heights limit tree sizes and/or ability to plant trees	✓	



Description of Key Issue	Also Identified by Public	Comments
<b>Private Tree Management and Maintenance continued</b>		
Lack of knowledge of landowner responsibility for maintenance of private infrastructure and regulated trees	✓	City liability when private trees and infrastructure damage City property identified as key issue by various City departments.
Enforcement of City tree preservation rules complaint driven	✓	Tree protection identified as #4 most important issue to public in Tree Survey.
Opportunities for restoration and enhancement of oak woodland and riparian woodland habitat		
Climate change impacts have unknown consequences on tree population health, longevity and maintenance requirements		
<b>Policy and Planning</b>		
Street Tree Master Plan outdated, provides limited guidance	✓	Identified by TAC and City staff
No overall Park Tree Master Plan	✓	Fire prevention a key issue identified as a key issue in Community meeting and Tree Survey, although discussed to a lesser extent.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of coordination with fire guidelines in open space parks</li> <li>• Fire prevention and species selection in parks and open spaces (Honda, Hale, canyons, Parma park, examples)</li> <li>• Defensible space considerations</li> </ul>	✓	Identified by TAC members as key issue
Landscape design guidelines require the planting and maintenance of some trees on private property, yet enforcement of those plans is limited		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single Family Residential landscape plan trees are not protected unless the design review approval includes a protection condition</li> </ul>		
<b>Tree Plantings on rooftops and design review</b>		
Santa Barbara General Plan, Climate Action Plan, Local Coastal Plan outline support for urban forest management but implementation not fully identified	✓	Implementation identified by City staff of various departments as key issue
City has a strong foundation for tree protection and enhancement		
Well-established advisory boards provide a solid framework to address urban forest issues.		

Description of Key Issue	Also Identified by Public	Comments
<b>Policy and Planning continued</b>		
Tree preservation ordinances do not completely address native trees, native habitat areas, or wildlife corridors	✓	Tree protection identified as #4 issue most important to public in survey. Bird habitat commented on.
Pedestrian Master Plan does not adequately address need for space to plant trees		
Design Review Boards require landscaping within parkways without regard to maintenance needs		
Risk Reduction Plans based on reducing wind/falling limb hazards-identify potential high hazard trees or areas		
High Fire Hazard Area Defensible Space requirements limit tree planting opportunities and require certain tree maintenance	✓	Identified by Fire Dept. as key issue
Purpose and function of Historic and Specimen designations not well defined	✓	Identified by TAC and City staff of various departments as a key issue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of definition and designation process with consideration of replacement species and location</li> </ul>		
<b>Program Funding</b>		
Limited funding resources to plant, establish and maintain new street trees	✓	Community attendees and survey respondents identified quick replacement of dead and dying trees as a key issue
Limited funding resources to maintain existing street trees	✓	Proactive Pruning/Maintenance second most important issue most important to public in Tree Survey and most commented on City priority.
Lack of funding and mechanisms for community education/outreach and tree planting programs	✓	Involvement in tree planting and maintenance was one of three main items identified in the Tree Survey as ways in which residents can contribute to the health of the urban forest. The number one item they would like to learn more about- Caring for Street Trees.
Limited funds (recent reductions of 20%) for park tree maintenance		
Limited of funding for new park tree planting and establishment	✓	TAC and staff identified key issue especially as it relates to lost park species diversity

Description of Key Issue	Also Identified by Public	Comments
<p><b>City Organization</b></p>		
<p>Budget implications across many departments with proactive identification and resolution of infrastructure conflicts</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>Maintenance number one item discussed at Community Meeting and on Tree Survey</p>
<p>No comprehensive enforcement program that is proactive, education based</p>		
<p>Limited staff training</p>		
<p>Competing priorities among different departments can create conflict and adversely affect trees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Wildland Fire Plan and high voltage wire street clearance requirements can lead to radical pruning with aesthetic and tree value impacts</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p>	<p>SCE trimming practices commented on as aesthetically unpleasing in Community Meeting and on Tree Survey</p>
<p>Inconsistent interdepartmental communication and coordination can result in missed opportunities to plant/maintain and protect trees</p>		
<p>Lack of staff knowledge on tree preservation and maintenance requirements results in missed opportunities, delayed project decision-making, loss of trees, lost opportunities for planting new trees and other issues.</p>		
<p><b>Community Involvement</b></p>		
<p>Limited community involvement in street tree selection, planting and maintenance</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>Involvement in tree planting and maintenance was one of three main items identified in the Tree Survey as ways in which residents can contribute to the health of the urban forest. Out of 5 options, Survey respondents would like to learn most about Caring for Street Trees, followed by Caring for trees on their property, Different trees in the City, Planting Street Trees and last Benefits of trees.</p>
<p>Limited public knowledge of tree preservation policies</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>Tree Survey respondents familiarity with Tree Preservation Policies:                      44% Unfamiliar                      47% Somewhat familiar                      9% Very familiar</p>

Description of Key Issue	Also Identified by Public	Comments
<b>Community Involvement continued</b>		
Public perception of street trees is diverse	✓	Tree Survey and Community Meeting responses range in opinion of aesthetics, proper maintenance, species type and more.
Lack of knowledge of City preservation rules and landowner responsibility for maintenance of private infrastructure and regulated trees	✓	See above comments. Survey respondents chose "Caring for trees on their property" as the 2 <sup>nd</sup> most requested item to learn more about.
Limited resident participation in street tree maintenance	✓	Care for street trees was rated as the number 1 topic residents would like to know more about.
Community involvement primarily focused on street tree maintenance through tree permitting.		
Incentive programs do not exist to promote tree planting on private property	✓	Identified as key issue by TAC, Community Meeting attendees and Tree Survey respondents
Residential homeowners often have an expectation that the City will provide prompt response based pruning	✓	Proactive Pruning/Maintenance 2nd most important issue to public in Tree Survey and most commented on City priority.

**Santa Barbara Urban Forest Project**  
*Preserving and Protecting Our Community Trees*

## Vision

Santa Barbara's urban forest is healthy and diverse, and contributes to the community's economic, environmental, and aesthetic vitality. It is valued and cared for by the City and its citizens, and reflects our horticultural heritage.

## Mission

Preserve, protect and enhance our trees, promote the benefits of trees, and foster a healthy and diverse urban forest.

## Draft Objectives and Key Actions

### Tree Resource Objectives

- Maintain trees to promote safety, health and longevity
- Provide community wide sustainable tree canopy
- Maximize canopy cover
- Optimize age and enhance species diversity
- Maximize the economic, environmental, and aesthetic benefits of the urban forest
- Enhance and preserve native trees in riparian areas and protected open spaces

### Key Actions

- Maintain the City tree inventory and assess citywide tree canopy
- Update Street Tree Master Plan to establish diversity criteria, revise street tree designations, etc.
- Expand street tree planting and replacement program to 500 trees per year
  - Prioritize neighborhoods with the fewest trees
- Increase street tree trimming/maintenance cycle
- Develop long-term street tree plans for major commercial corridors and public areas including: Upper State, De La Vina Street, Carrillo Street, Milpas, etc
  - Integrate street tree plans with land development and public infrastructure improvements
- Develop tree resource management guidelines that balance tree preservation with solar access and solar energy system design
- Develop Park Tree Master Plan

- Organize by park type, location open space, developed parks, community parks
  - Develop planting plan to increase canopy, restore riparian areas, address aging tree resources
- Work with Southern California Edison to develop tree replacement plans for City streets and public areas where mature trees conflict with high voltage lines
- Develop a tree preservation outreach and education program to
  - Expand community participation in tree preservation efforts
  - Enhance public knowledge and compliance with tree preservation policies
  - Provide incentives for the planting and proper maintenance of trees on private property

#### City Organization Objectives

- Increase funding to better manage tree resources and community outreach
- Improve interdepartmental communication and coordination related to tree preservation/enhancement
- Improve interagency coordination and partnerships
- Increase staff and Board and Commissioner knowledge of tree preservation policies and urban forest management objectives

#### Key Actions

- Develop a comprehensive budget as part of the City's annual budget process
- Identify and obtain external sources of funding to support the goals and strategies of the Management Plan.
- Establish formal urban forest team comprised of staff from Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Community Development
- Implement annual staff and board/commission tree training program

#### Policy and Planning Objectives

- Integrate urban forest management plan with General Plan, Climate Action Plan, Local Coastal Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan, Wildland Fire Plan
- Ensure tree preservation ordinances support urban forest management goals

#### Key Actions

- Update the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element of the General Plan
- Update tree preservation ordinances to be consistent with urban forest management plan objectives

Community Involvement Objectives

- Enhance public awareness of the urban forest as a community resource
- Expand outreach and education programs to enhance public participation in urban forest preservation and enhancement.
- Expand public/private partnerships
- Broaden public participation in the management of City street trees
- Provide community wide sustainable tree canopy

Key Actions

- Expand Develop Adopt-a-block or Adopt-a-Tree program to encourage healthy long-lived street trees
- Develop partnerships with organizations, businesses and the public school system to encourage tree health and plantings on private property
- Develop a technical assistance program to support the planting and care of private trees
- Develop a comprehensive tree education program to provide city residents with information about tree preservation policies