

Community Tree Survey Results

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.

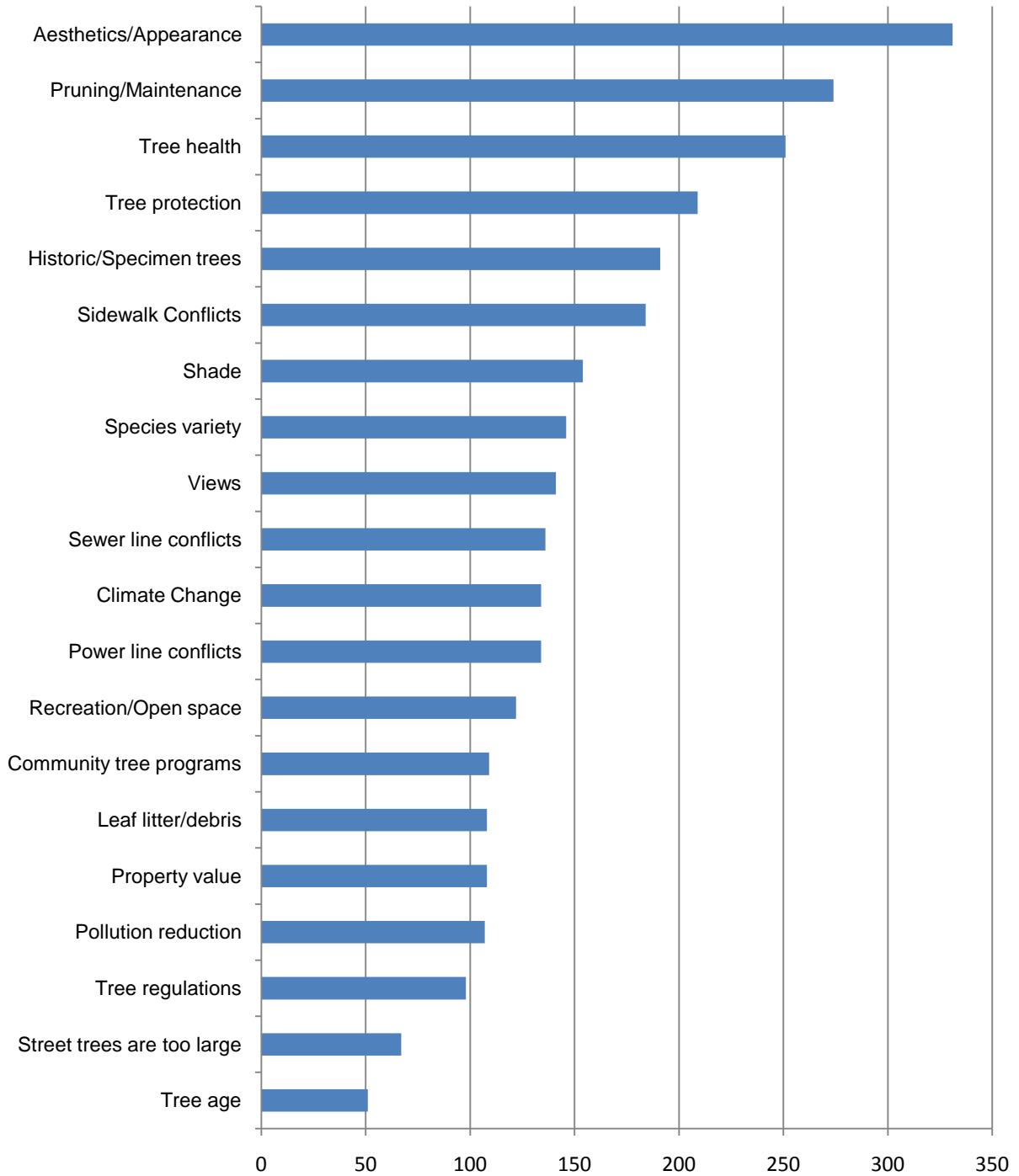
Survey Results

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.

Question 1: Which tree-related issues are most important to you?



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

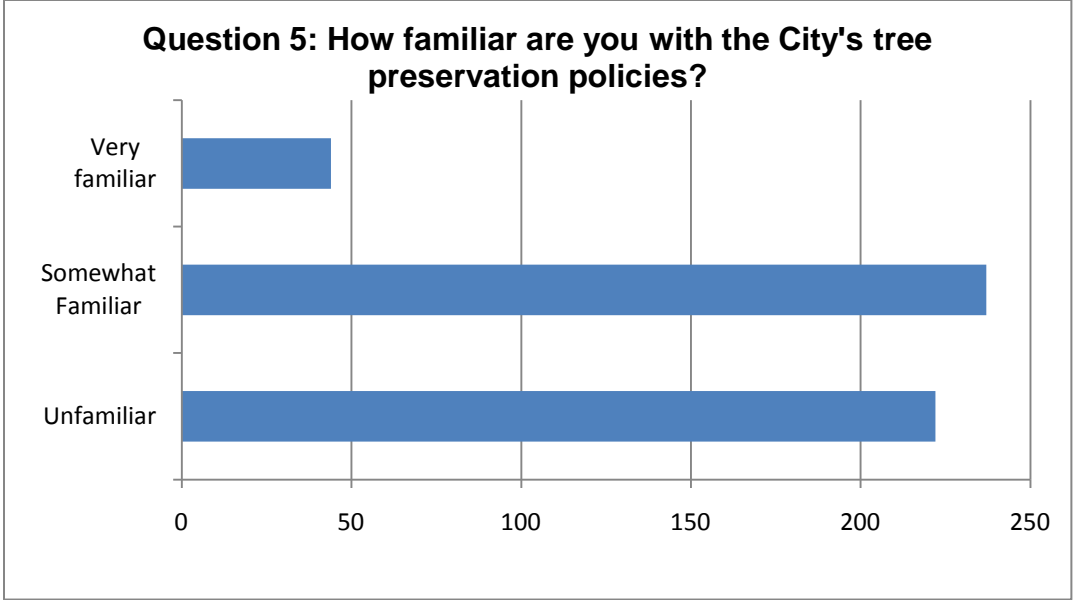
Question #3 asked residents to identify ways in which they felt they could contribute to the urban forest. Maintaining and planting trees on private property, reporting problems, and understanding City policies and practices were the three most frequently discussed items. Other comments included proper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

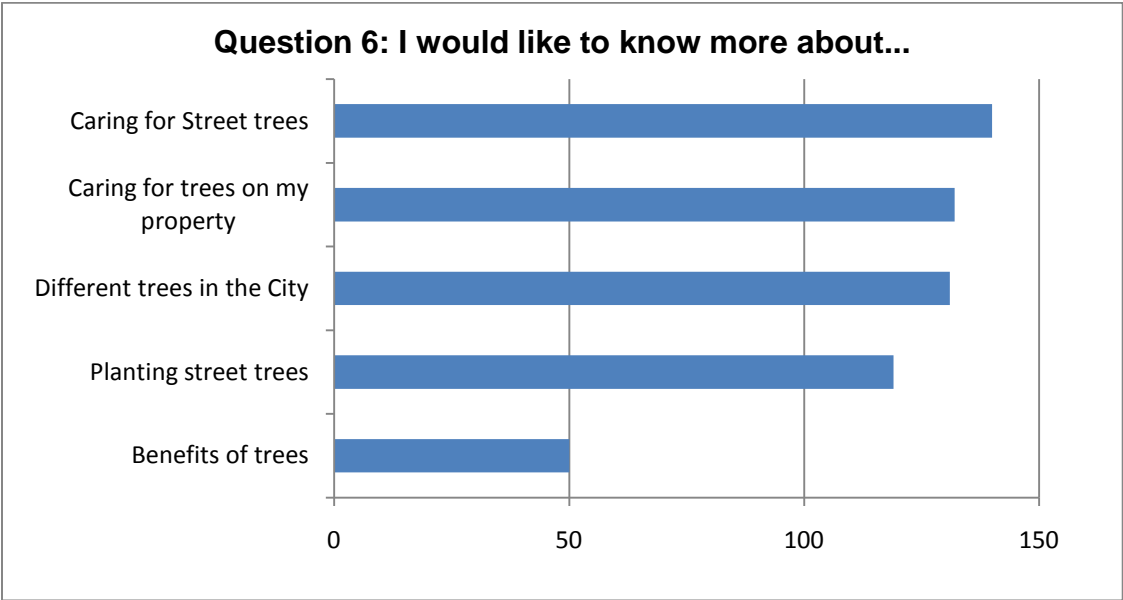
Familiarity with tree preservation policies

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?

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

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

For what reason did you contact the City? _____

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:

- Caring for trees on my property Caring for Street Trees Planting Street Trees
 Benefits of Trees Different trees in the City
 Other _____

Additional Comments:
