

From: [REDACTED]  
To: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Urban Forestry Council / Environment Commission  
Date: Thursday, December 11, 2025 3:27 09 PM

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Hi Commissioners,  
Regarding the Environment Commission and Urban Forestry Council (UFC), I have a suggestion. The UFC hasn't done what is required by the City Code at [https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/san\\_francisco/latest/sf\\_environment/0-0-0-2](https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/san_francisco/latest/sf_environment/0-0-0-2). The City needs something better than the UFC. I suggest an Urban Greenspace Council as a replacement, along with strong oversight.

#### The Existing UFC

For about a decade, I have been asking the UFC to draft a management plan for the City's trees in open spaces—i.e., trees other than those on sidewalks and privately owned land. I said the plan should address wildfire risk. The UFC outright refused to do this. Then a few months ago, I discovered that the Environment Code says it is the UFC's responsibility to create Phase 2 of the Urban Forest Plan for trees in open spaces. The UFC has had a decade to begin drafting Phase 2; Phase 1 was completed and adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2015. <https://slplanning.org/urban-forest-plan>

I attended many meetings of the UFC and its Funding Committee. Each meeting would begin with a land acknowledgement, then proceed to disrespect Ramaytush Ohlone land by talking about planting more nonnative street trees. UFC discussions focused on creating a list of street tree species, Committee discussions on funding the planting of more street trees. At one particular meeting, I asked if the Committee could spend some time discussing funding the drafting of the Urban Forest Plan, Phase 2. The Committee chairperson's response was, "That's not what we're about." Soon afterward, the Committee was disbanded. I'm told that RPD may have begun working on a management plan for its trees.

#### An Urban Greenspace Council

What the City really needs is a Vegetation Management Plan that addresses wildfire risk. Conditions for wildfire exist here every fall when temperatures are high, vegetation is dry and Diablo winds blow. Climate change has caught up with us. The NWS issued unprecedented red flag wildfire warnings for SF in October and November 2024. The City has 127 acres of dense, unirrigated, dangerous eucalyptus on the most dangerous terrains for spreading fire quickly—the slopes of Mts. Sutro and Davidson and Glen Canyon Park. The City's 2008 Hazard Mitigation Plan<sup>1</sup> put the entire City at risk of catastrophic fire and recommended vegetative fuel reduction. The Board of Supervisors expressed their concern about increasing wildfire risk during their 2019 Wildfire Risk hearing.

A new council should be comprised of members who understand ecology, native biodiversity, and wildfire prevention and preparedness. I have drafted an update to the City code, below.

\* [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qFFNAUllkpZTbFix\\_7a\\_z8gzVFMwVWif/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qFFNAUllkpZTbFix_7a_z8gzVFMwVWif/view)

#### The Significance of Wildfire Risk Mitigation and Habitat Restoration

Eucalyptus trees are known to ignite easily, to burn hot, and to send burning embers flying for miles. It is commonly accepted that eucalyptus fueled the 1991 Oakland and Berkeley Hills fires. Embers from those fires reached SF. Still, RPD General Manager refuses to acknowledge wildfire risk among RPD's unirrigated eucalyptus. Hence, RPD has *not* removed a single tree for the purpose of wildfire risk mitigation. Eucalyptus are also nonnative and invasive.

The City is also at risk of a massive earthquake similar to the 1906 quake, per the USGS. Fires will ensue where gas lines break. To avoid the structure-to-structure fires we saw in LA, we all need to engage in fire smart landscaping.

SF is an important part of the biodiversity hotspot that is California. This means we are blessed with an abundance of species, many of which we humans have brought to the brink of extinction. The Board of Supervisors' 2018 Biodiversity Resolution explains more at <https://sbos.org/sites/default/files/r0107-18.pdf>.

Years ago, the Presidio Trust and UCSF addressed wildfire risk mitigation with the removal of eucalyptus trees and other vegetation from the Presidio and the Open Space Reserve on Mt. Sutro. Last year, the PUC was busily clearing eucalyptus from its parcels of SF for the dual purposes of reducing fuel and restoring native habitat. Planting local native plants has been taking place in the Presidio, on Mt. Sutro and on PUC parcels around the City. These are excellent examples for City departments.

#### Oversight

SFED Director Tyrone Jue tells me that, aside from administrative matters, he has no oversight of what the UFC does. There has been no accountability for the UFC's failure to meet their responsibilities per the City Code. Perhaps the Environment Commission or SFED Director should have the authority to hold the Council to account.

#### Conclusion

I strongly urge you to recommend *replacing* the Urban Forestry Council with an Urban Greenspace Council and to ensure appropriate oversight. I welcome your comments about my draft Code update.

Respectfully,  
Denise Louie  
SF Native

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DRAFT CODE UPDATE by Denise Louie -- Open for your comment

#### ENVIRONMENT CODE, CHAPTER 12: URBAN FORESTRY COUNCIL

[https://url.avanan.click/v2/r01/\\_\\_\\_https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/san\\_francisco/latest/sf\\_environment/0-0-0-2\\_\\_\\_YXAzOnNmZHqYOmE6bz03ZDl3MWEwYTNlN2RmN2lxNTNhYjhlZmVmNmJjczNGQxNj03OmYyY2Y6OTdjZTNkZGM2M2U5NTEyOGY2MmUxMjkzYTZmMTQ3ZTZkZTE3YjY4ZTNlM2FhOTQ0JUM0MkxZmY2ZWF1YmRlNDp0OIQ6t9](https://url.avanan.click/v2/r01/___https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/san_francisco/latest/sf_environment/0-0-0-2___YXAzOnNmZHqYOmE6bz03ZDl3MWEwYTNlN2RmN2lxNTNhYjhlZmVmNmJjczNGQxNj03OmYyY2Y6OTdjZTNkZGM2M2U5NTEyOGY2MmUxMjkzYTZmMTQ3ZTZkZTE3YjY4ZTNlM2FhOTQ0JUM0MkxZmY2ZWF1YmRlNDp0OIQ6t9)

#### SEC. 1200. PURPOSE – URBAN FORESTRY GREENSPACE COUNCIL.

(a) It is the intent of the Board of Supervisors to form an Urban Forestry *Greenspace* Council that will protect *and enhance* the community interest *City's vegetative environment and that will inform City officials and the public*, and ensure that San Francisco realizes the full range of tree *environmental* benefits into the future. The Board also intends to replace any existing tree advisory bodies that the Board of Supervisors has created through legislation. *The Greenspace Council ("Council") replaces the former Urban Forestry Council 30 days following adoption of this Code.*

(b) The purpose of the Council is to guide the stewardship of San Francisco's trees *unceded Ramaytush Ohlone land* by promoting a healthy and sustainable urban forest *environment* that benefits *prioritizes native species* all San Franciscans while ensuring *as well as* public health and safety.

(c) To meet these purposes, the Council shall work with all the affected stakeholders to:

(1) Develop and adopt a comprehensive urban forest *vegetation management* plan *that includes planting a majority of indigenous plants to address the Biodiversity Crisis, maintaining healthy vegetation in open spaces, fuel reduction to mitigate wildfire risk, removal of trees known to fuel fire with burning embers, a Street Tree List, and a list of plants credibly reported to ignite quickly or to widely spread burning embers, including eucalyptus, Mexican palm, juniper, bamboo and others;*

(2) Educate the public on urban forestry *vegetation* issues;

(3) Develop and adopt tree *vegetation* care standards *incorporating current Cal Fire landscaping guidelines and addressing wildfire warnings from the National Weather Service;*

(4) Identify funding and staffing needs and opportunities for urban forestry *biodiversity and vegetation* programs;

(5) Report on the state of the *City's native habitats and vegetation and related plans, programs and practices* urban forest;

(6) Help secure and encourage commitment of adequate resources for tree *native biodiversity and vegetation* programs; and

(7) Facilitate coordination among agencies with tree *vegetation* management responsibilities;

(8) *Help create an ordinance that minimizes outdoor lighting used for aesthetic purposes or any purpose other than public safety; an ordinance that prohibits the installation or replacement of artificial turf; and an ordinance that requires cats to be kept from roaming freely outdoors.* This Chapter applies the Precautionary Principle to the management of trees *vegetation* in San Francisco by emphasizing public participation, preservation, *invasive plant removal* and expansion of the urban forest *vegetative fuel reduction to mitigate wildfire risk;*

(9) *Help create an ordinance that limits displays of fireworks, laser lights and any similar shows that interrupt the night sky to a maximum of two events per year for a total of 30 minutes. Such shows shall be prohibited during bird migration periods in spring (February through May) and fall (August through October); and*

(10) *Help create an ordinance that prohibits the installation of artificial turf on any City-owned land and on any privately-owned land in the City.*

(Added by Ord. 171-03, File No. 030422, App. 7/3/2003)

(Derivation Former Administrative Code Section 5.230)

#### SEC. 1201. DEFINITIONS

(a) *Biodiversity shall mean diversity of indigenous plants and wildlife that coevolved with them.*

(b) *The Biodiversity Crisis shall mean the rapid loss of indigenous plant and wildlife species, populations and biomass, along with their native habitats and ecosystems.*

(c) *Invasive plants shall mean plants identified as such by the California Invasive Plant Council or the San Francisco Weed Management Area, as well as plants on Cal-IPC's watchlist. Blue gum eucalyptus (Eucalyptus globulus) shall be considered to be invasive.*

#### SEC. 1202. SCOPE OF AUTHORITY.

(a) The Council's scope of authority is limited to the territorial boundaries of the City and County of San Francisco, *in addition to the Significant Natural Resource Area at Sharp Park in San Mateo County.*

(b) The Council shall consider issues as they relate to trees *vegetation and artificial turf* on property managed *owned* by government agencies and non-profit organizations, *in addition to trees on* and private property owners.

(c) *The Council shall discuss the naming and renaming of official City plants and wildlife and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.* In order to effectively address the whole of the urban forest, the Council also shall consider issues as they relate to trees on private property.

(d) The Council's scope of authority is completely advisory and educational in nature. The Council will have no authority to legislate.

(Added by Ord. 171-03, File No. 030422, App. 7/3/2003)

(Derivation Former Administrative Code Section 5.231)

#### SEC. 1203. COUNCIL COMPOSITION AND ADMINISTRATION.

(a) Council members will represent the full range of urban forest stakeholders including City agencies, non-profit organizations, tree management organizations, and community members. The Council shall be composed of *approximately sixteen* fifteen voting members. *In the event of a tie vote, votes benefitting native species or native habitats shall be weighted more heavily.*

- (1) The Board of Supervisors shall appoint seven voting members, *of which no fewer than five shall have a background in ecology*:
- (A) One member *or retiree* from an educational organization involved with tree management ecology (*University of California, San Francisco State University, City College of San Francisco, Cooperative Extension, etc.*);
  - (B) Two *One* members *member who has been an instructor of ecology and one member who is* or certified by a professional tree management organization (International Society of Arboriculture, American Society of Consulting Arborists, or American Society of Landscape Architects, etc.);
  - (C) Two members of non-profit organizations involved in urban forestry or other environmentally *ecology*-related issues; and
  - (D) Two *Four* members from the *local community involved with biodiversity-related issues, of which only two may vote at any Council meeting*.
- (2) The Mayor shall appoint two voting members:
- (A) One member from the tree care industry; and
  - (B) One member at large *involved with biodiversity-related issues*.
- (3) The Director or General Manager of each of the following departments or his or her designee, *of Public Works and the Director of the Planning Department shall each* serve as a voting member: *appoint a voting member*.
- (A) The Director of the Department of Public Works;
  - (B) The Director of the Planning Department. and
- (4) The Director of the Environment Department shall appoint two or more of its biodiversity specialists as voting members.*
- (5) The General Manager of the Recreation and Park Department shall appoint a voting member involved with biodiversity-related issues.*
- (6) The San Francisco Water and Power Public Utilities Commission shall appoint one voting member.*
- (7) The Golden Gate National Recreation Area is *shall be* invited to appoint one voting member. If the Golden Gate National Recreation Area does not make an appointment within 60 days after the seat is vacant, the Presidio Trust may appoint one voting member to serve that term. If the Presidio Trust does not make an appointment within 30 days after it is authorized to do so, the Mayor shall appoint an at-large member *involved with biodiversity-related issues* to fill the seat for the duration of that term.
- (8) The Port of San Francisco shall be invited to appoint one voting member.*
- (b) Council members shall serve for two years. A Council member may serve successive terms if reappointed by the authority that originally appointed the Council member. Council members serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority that appoints each Council member, as specified above. The appointing authority that appoints Council members also may appoint at-large members to serve any unfilled Council positions.
- (c) The Council shall meet at least six times per year.
- (d) The Council shall establish its own operating procedures, which, at a minimum, shall meet the public notice, meeting, voting, agenda and other procedural requirements set forth in local law.
- (e) The Council shall make every effort to meet all its responsibilities.*
- (f) Subcommittees shall be created to adequately address other special areas of concern on an as needed basis.*
- (g) The Department of the Environment Department, with adequate funding to assist the Council in carrying out its mission, shall provide professional and administrative staff to the Council.*
- (h) All members of the Council shall serve without compensation.*
- (i) Members of the Council may lose their membership by a majority vote of the voting members. For a replacement, the relevant appointing authority may make a substitute appointment to fill the seat for the duration of that term.*

(Added by Ord. 171-03, File No. 030422, App. 7/3/2003; amended by Ord. 210-08, File No. 080233, App. 9/19/2008; Ord. 239-14, File No. 140953, App. 12/4/2014, Eff. 1/3/2015)

(Derivation: Former Administrative Code Section 5.232)

#### SEC. 1204. RESPONSIBILITIES.

- (a) The Council's responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
- (1) Advise the Mayor, City Attorney, Office of Hazards and Climate Resilience and Board of Supervisors on progress by relevant City Departments (including San Francisco Airport, Animal Care and Control, Children Youth and Families, Municipal Transportation Agency, Planning Department, Port, Public Health Department, Public Library, SFWP, Public Works Department, Real Estate Department, and Recreation and Park Department; San Francisco Unified School District; Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure; and Treasure Island Development Authority) regarding ongoing and future initiatives to support biodiversity, in accordance with the Board of Supervisors' 2018 Resolution 107-18.
- (2) Advise the Mayor, City Attorney, Board of Supervisors, city departments and commissions on urban forestry concerns; *the Council's progress related to initiating a broad discussions with fellow departments and the public around the following five citywide goals: (a) Biologically Rich Ecosystems: Restore, maintain, and monitor robust and interconnected indigenous habitats, natural areas, open spaces, watersheds and marine ecosystems, so that they support a diverse web of life, and mitigate climate change impacts to rare species and communities; (b) Equitable Access, Awareness, and Experience of Nature: Connect all residents, workers, and visitors with nature every day in neighborhood green spaces, parks, and natural habitats; (c) Community and Ecological Stewardship: Empower people and partnerships to promote, cultivate, enjoy, and restore nature in every neighborhood; (d) Ecological Planning and Design: Incorporate biodiverse, purposeful greening into all building and open space development, with a priority on creating diverse habitats for many species of wildlife; (e) Resilience in a Living City: Leverage Consider that local natural ecosystems to sequester carbon, conserve water, manage flooding, control pests, and improve air quality to support San Francisco's adaptation into a climate-protected resilient and ecological city, in accordance with the Environment Commission's 2017 Resolution No. 003-17-COE.*
- (3) Review and issue permits for public and private landscaping projects in excess of 1000 square feet.
- (4) Review project plans for major publicly-sponsored developments and civic improvements and changes to the public right-of-way as they may impact trees *vegetation*. Based on its review, the Council shall make recommendations regarding these projects to the Planning Department and other affected agencies;
- (5) Establish *Update* criteria for a *the* landmark/heritage tree program to provide for the protection of valuable trees on public and private property. *Criteria shall include potential storm impacts and wildfire risks. Coast Live Oaks, Quercus agrifolia, shall be treated the same as landmark trees, regardless of size or location, due to their ecological significance.* The program shall propose administrative procedures and a tree removal appeal process for landmark/heritage trees;
- (6) Adopt guidelines for protecting trees *vegetation* during project design and construction;
- (7) Encourage early and continuous public participation in urban forestry *biodiversity* projects and programs that includes consideration of neighborhood interests;
- (8) Facilitate the cooperative interaction of tree *vegetation*-related activities among various city, State, and federal agencies, as well as among businesses, public utilities, non-profit organizations, and the public;
- (9) Notify and involve public agencies when issues relate to trees *vegetation* on lands under their jurisdiction;
- (10) Provide at designated Council meetings for a regular forum that follows an agenda of scheduled topics for public discussion of urban forestry *vegetation* issues;
- (11) Assist with the formulation of legislation and policies that affect trees *vegetation*;
- (12) Serve as a clearinghouse for information related to the urban forest *vegetation* through the *Environment* Department of the Environment;
- (13) Prepare the plans and reports as set forth in this legislation; and
- (14) Assist agencies with tree *vegetation* management responsibilities in their efforts to incorporate and follow the Urban forest *Greenspace Management Plan* guidelines, best management practices, and other Council recommendations and policies.

(Added by Ord. 171-03, File No. 030422, App. 7/3/2003)

(Derivation: Former Administrative Code Section 5.233)

#### SEC. 1205. LANDMARK TREES. [from PUBLIC WORKS CODE, ARTICLE 16, SEC. 810. LANDMARK TREES.]

- (a) **Designation Criteria.** The Board of Supervisors in Resolution No. 440-06, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors File No. 060487, adopted uniform criteria for the designation of landmark trees, which included consideration of the age, size, shape, species, location, historical association, visual quality, and other contribution to the City's character, as set forth in Section 810(f) 1205(e)(4)(A)-(E) below. *All Coast Live Oaks, Quercus agrifolia, shall be considered to be landmark trees, due to their ecological significance. This These* designation criteria, which may be amended from time to time, shall apply to all trees within the territorial limits of the City and County of San Francisco.
- (b) **Designation Process.**
- (1) **Nominations.** A tree may be nominated for designation as a landmark tree by any of the following parties: (i) the property owner whose property contains the subject tree by a written request to the Urban Forestry *Greenspace* Council; (ii) the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, or Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board by adoption of a resolution of intent to nominate a tree for landmark status; or (iii) the director of any City agency or department by filing a nomination letter with the Urban Forestry *Greenspace* Council. Each tree nominated for landmark tree status shall be the subject of a separate individual nomination.
- (2) **Content of Nominations.** Nominations shall be made in writing to the Urban Forestry *Greenspace* Council and shall include the basis for the nomination, which may address one or more of the adopted designation criteria, including the factors listed below in Section 810(f) 1205(g)(4)(A)-(E) below; the lot, assessor's block, and street address of the subject property; one or more pictures of the tree; and any other information that the nominating property owner or entity believes would be pertinent to the nomination.
- (3) **Urban Forestry *Greenspace* Council Hearing and Determination.** The Urban Forestry *Greenspace* Council shall hold a public hearing on a completed nomination request, and shall determine whether the tree qualifies as a landmark tree pursuant to the adopted designation criteria. After the conclusion of the public hearing, the Urban Forestry Council shall adopt written findings that specify the basis for its decision to approve or reject the nomination and shall forward these findings to the applicant for the nomination and the affected property owner. If the Urban Forestry Council determines that the subject tree meets the adopted designation criteria *and is located on City-owned property, the Council*, it shall forward said decision to the Director *or General Manager of the*, as to a tree on private property, or to the subject City agency, commission or department, as to a tree on City-owned property. If the Urban Forestry Council rejects the nomination, the Council shall not accept a new request for the subject tree for three years from the date of its decision. If the Urban Forestry Council determines that a tree qualifies as a landmark tree, its written findings on the nomination, along with any recommendations of relevant City agencies, commissions or departments, shall be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors for its consideration pursuant to Section 810 1205(b)(4) of this Article. If the Urban Forestry Council fails to forward said findings to the Board of Supervisors within 120 days of the Urban Forestry Council's receipt of the nomination request, the Board of Supervisors may, in its discretion, schedule a public hearing on the nomination, in which event, the failure of the Urban Forestry Council to forward said findings within the 120 day period shall constitute its approval of the nomination.
- (A) If *Whether* the nominated tree is on private or public property, the Council shall provide mailed notice of the hearing to the subject property owner and all property owners adjoining the subject property where the tree is located at least seven (7) days prior to its hearing. The Council, in its discretion, also may provide delivered notice of the hearing to residents adjoining the subject property, posted notice, or both.

(B) If the subject property exceeds one (1) acre in size, the Council shall provide posted notice in lieu of the mailed notice. Such notice shall be posted on at least two locations on each block face(s) tangent to the subject property at least seven (7) days prior to its hearing.

(C) If the Council either delivers or posts notice in accordance with these provisions, staff assigned to this task shall sign an affidavit, accompanied with any supporting material, stating when and where the notice was delivered or posted.

(4) **Designation.** Upon the recommendation of the Urban Forestry Council, the Board of Supervisors, by ordinance, may designate as a "landmark tree" any tree within the territorial limits of the City and County of San Francisco that meets the adopted designation criteria, or may rescind such designations. If the Urban Forestry Council does not issue findings in a timely manner pursuant to Subsection (b) (3), the Board of Supervisors shall adopt its own findings as part of the designation of a landmark tree.

**(c) Fees. The Council shall establish fees.**

**(d) Landmark Tree Designation Recorded Notice and Official Book.** Upon Board of Supervisors designation of a landmark tree, the *Environment* Department or *Council* affected agency shall record a notice on the subject property concerning the landmark tree. The Department shall record a notice on the subject property concerning the landmark tree. The Department also shall record the landmark tree designation in an official book entitled Landmark Trees. If the landmark tree is a street tree under the maintenance responsibility of the Department, the Department shall record the landmark tree designation in a separate section of the Landmark Tree book that is reserved for those landmark trees under the maintenance responsibility of the Department. The Department shall maintain this book for public review and update it on a regular basis with the assistance of affected agencies. *The Council shall notify affected agencies and the Zoning Administrator. The Council shall record landmark tree designations in its own official book entitled Landmark Trees.*

**(e) Temporary Designation of Landmark Tree Status.**

(1) At the time a member of the Board of Supervisors introduces a resolution of intent to initiate a nomination and submits to the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors the information required for a landmark tree nomination request as set forth in Section [§10\(f\) 1205\(b\)\(2\)](#), the subject tree shall be temporarily designated as a landmark tree ("temporary designation") and be subject to the provisions governing landmark trees set forth herein while proceedings are pending on the landmark tree designation. At the time the Planning Commission or Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board adopts a resolution of intent to initiate a nomination, temporary designation of the subject tree shall occur. If the Director of the Department *Public Works* or the director of any other City agency, commission or department initiates landmark tree designation, temporary designation shall occur when the Urban Forestry *Greenspace* Council adopts a resolution determining that the subject tree qualifies for landmark tree status. In addition, the Director of the Department *Public Works* shall have the authority to issue an emergency order that temporarily designates a tree *as a landmark tree* on private property or on any property under the jurisdiction of the Department *Public Works* to prevent the immediate removal of a tree. Upon initiation of a nomination pursuant to this Section, the entity initiating nomination shall immediately inform the Director who shall immediately cause a notice to be provided to the relevant department or private property owner informing them of the special permit and approval requirements pursuant to Section [§10\(f\) 1205\(g\)](#).

(2) If 215 days have elapsed from the date of temporary designation and final action on landmark tree designation has not been completed, the temporary designation status for the subject tree shall expire unless the Board of Supervisors adopts a resolution to extend the temporary designation. Such extension shall not exceed 90 additional days.

(3) Although the subject tree ultimately may be designated as a landmark tree sometime after expiration of temporary designation status, once the temporary designation has expired or is rejected as set forth below in Subsection (5), the affected tree shall not be subject to a new temporary designation for at least two years from the date of temporary designation.

(4) The 215-day term of temporary designation or any additional term, if extended through Board of Supervisors action pursuant to this Section, shall automatically be extended 30 additional days from the date the Mayor either signs the ordinance designating the subject tree as a landmark tree or the 10th day after the Clerk of the Board refers said ordinance to the Mayor and the ordinance is not signed or vetoed.

(5) If the Board of Supervisors rejects a resolution of intent to initiate nomination of a tree or the Urban Forestry Council rejects a nomination under subsection (b)(3), the temporary designation shall automatically terminate.

**(f) Zoning Administrator.** *In accordance with the Planning Code, Article 3, Section 307, the Zoning Administrator shall be required to identify designated landmark tree(s) trees on proposed development or construction sites and to notify the Urban Forestry Greenspace Council and the Department of Public Works or the affected City agency, commission or department. The Zoning Administrator and the Department of Public Works or such other City agency, commission or department with jurisdiction, shall be required to impose measures to protect such landmark trees on a construction site against damage to trunk, roots, and branches in accordance with the Public Works Code, Section [§06\(c\)](#) of this Article. Removal of such trees shall be subject to the rules and procedures for removal of landmark trees provided in this Section.*

**(g) Removal Criteria and Procedures.**

(1) **Removal Criteria.** The Urban Forestry Council shall develop and recommend for adoption by the Board of Supervisors uniform criteria, rules, and procedures governing determinations to remove landmark trees, *after considering Public Works' policies, practices and rules.* Removal criteria shall require consideration and written findings on all of the factors related to the landmark tree as set forth in Section [§10\(f\) 1205\(g\)\(4\)](#), below, and shall not authorize the removal of a landmark tree unless it constitutes a hazard tree pursuant to *the Public Works Code, Article 16, Section [§02\(o\)](#)*. Public notice, in accordance with the requirements of *the Public Works Code, Article 16, Section [§06\(b\)\(7\)](#)*, and a hearing shall be required.

(2) **Removal on Private Property: Special Permit Required.** A property owner who desires a permit to remove a landmark tree shall apply to the Department *the Urban Greenspace Council* on the *its* designated form. Such application must be accompanied by an administrative fee in accordance with a fee schedule adopted by the Director *Council*. Except in the case of manifest danger and immediate necessity, landmark trees on private property shall be removed only after the Director's *Council's* determination and issuance of a permit, following a public hearing. If the Director *Council* determines that removal of a landmark tree is necessary or permissible in accordance with the adopted removal criteria, the Director *Council* may impose such reasonable conditions on the permit for removal as he or she deems necessary to compensate for the loss of the tree, including but not limited to the replacement value of the tree, administrative costs, and contribution to the Adopt-A-Tree Fund. The Director's *Council's* determination shall be final and appealable to the Board of Appeals. Any person seeking permission to remove a landmark tree must pay all costs related to the permit process and public hearings. Pending adoption of criteria for removal of landmark trees, the Department *the Council* shall rely on the general criteria set forth in Section [§10\(f\) 1205\(g\)\(4\)\(A\)-\(F\)](#).

(3) **Removal on City-owned Property; Special Approval Required.** Removal of a landmark tree(s) on City property under the jurisdiction of any City agency, commission, or department shall be subject to the criteria, rules, and procedures adopted by the Board of Supervisors pursuant to Section [§10\(f\) 1205\(g\)\(1\)](#), above, including the process for public notice and a hearing prior to removal of the tree. After following said criteria, rules, and procedures, the subject City agency, commission, or department shall make its decision on removal of a landmark tree tree(s). Such decision is final and nonappealable *not appealable*. Pending the Board of Supervisor's adoption of the criteria, rules, and procedures pursuant to Section [§10\(f\) 1205\(g\)\(1\)](#), the agency, commission, or department shall follow the general criteria of Subsection [§10 Section 1205\(f\)\(4\)\(A\)-\(F\)](#) and similar rules and procedures for removal of street trees as set forth in *the Public Works Code, Article 16, Section [§07\(c\)](#)* and for removal of hazard trees as set forth in this *the Public Works Code, Article 16, Section [§07\(a\)\(4\)](#)*. This Subsection [§10\(f\)\(3\)](#) shall not supercede *supersede* the Charter jurisdiction that has been granted to any City agency, commission, or department.

(4) **Required Findings.** As part of any determination that authorizes removal of any landmark tree, the City entity making such determination shall, in addition to the adopted removal criteria, consider and make written findings on each of the following factors related to the tree:

- (A) Size, age, and species;
- (B) Visual characteristics, including the tree's form and whether it is a prominent landscape feature;
- (C) Cultural or historic characteristics, including whether the tree has significant ethnic appreciation or historical association or whether the tree was part of a historic planting program that defines neighborhood character;
- (D) Ecological characteristics, including whether the tree provides important wildlife habitat, is part of a group of interdependent trees, provides erosion control, or acts as a wind or sound barrier;
- (E) Locational characteristics, including whether the tree is in a high traffic area or low tree density area, provides shade or other benefits to multiple properties, and is visually accessible from the public right-of-way; and
- (F) One or more criteria that qualify the tree as a hazard tree pursuant to *the Public Works Code, Article 16, Section [§02\(o\)](#)*.

(5) **Emergency Removal on Private Property.** In the case of manifest danger and immediate necessity, as determined by the Director *Council*, the Director *Council* may remove or require the responsible owner(s) to remove a landmark tree immediately *or have it removed at the owner(s) expense*. After such emergency removal, the Director *Council* shall provide written notice of the necessity for such action to the Board of Supervisors and the Urban Forestry Council and shall also provide such notice to all interested San Francisco organizations and, to the extent practical, to the owners and occupants of properties that are on or across from the block face where the affected tree was removed. If the Department *Council* incurs any costs related to an emergency removal, said costs, including labor, equipment, materials, inspection services, and administrative costs, shall be an obligation owing by the responsible owner(s) to the City. Removal of a landmark tree pursuant to this Subsection is not subject to Section [§10\(f\) 1205\(g\)\(4\)](#) above.

(6) **Emergency Removal on City-owned Property.** In the case of manifest danger and immediate necessity, as determined by the director *Council chairperson* or general manager of the subject agency, commission, or department, the *a majority of the Council* subject agency, commission, or department may *have* remove a landmark tree *removed* within its jurisdiction immediately. After such emergency removal, the *Council* subject agency, department, or commission shall provide written notice of the necessity of such action to the Board of Supervisors, Urban Forestry Council and Department of Public Works and shall also provide such notice to all interested San Francisco organizations and, to the extent practical, the owners and occupants of properties that are on or across from the block face where the affected tree was removed. Removal of a landmark tree pursuant to this Subsection is not subject to Section [§10\(f\) 1205\(g\)\(4\)](#) above.

**(h)** If a landmark tree tree(s) has been designated as part of a local historic district or landmark under [Article 10](#) of the Planning Code, removal of such tree shall be subject to the procedures set forth in the Planning Code [Article 10](#) in addition to the requirements of Subsection [§10\(f\) 1205\(g\)](#) above. In the case of a conflict between Section [§10\(f\) 1205\(g\)](#) and the Article 10 designation, the more restrictive provisions shall apply.

(Added by Ord. 165-95, App. 5/1995; amended by Ord. 17-06, File No. 051458, App. 1/20/2006; amended by Ord. 52-08, File No. 071672, App. 3/31/2008)

## **SEC. 1206. URBAN FORESTRY GREENSPACE MANAGEMENT PLAN.**

(a) To assure *ensure* well-guided stewardship of San Francisco's trees *vegetation*, the Council shall develop and adopt a long-term comprehensive plan that sets policy for the management of the City's public and private trees *vegetation*. This Urban Forest *Greenspace Management* Plan shall be developed in consultation with affected City agencies and with input from interested members of the public.

(1) The planning process for such Plan shall include an assessment of the current condition of the urban forest *City's vegetation* and create a vision and goals that incorporate community values on urban forestry stewardship.

(2) The Planning process also shall include consideration of and referral to existing *policies and plans* that relate to trees *vegetation*, including, but not limited to, *the City's Biodiversity Resolution 004-17-COE, the Natural Resources Management Plan, other resolutions and plans* for reforestation of parks *restoration and re-creation of native habitats* and plans for street trees, *shrubs and other vegetation*. *Street planting selections shall consider contribution to biodiversity. No new street trees shall be planted without dedicated 5-year maintenance funding or in the event that maintenance of existing street trees for planting areas is underfunded. No new street tree shall be planted if any part of the tree at maturity is likely to encroach upon a building's 5-foot perimeter.*

(3) The Plan shall include strategies and activities for achieving the envisioned urban forest *green environment*. It shall include specific guidance to agencies and the public in developing education programs, establishing continuous and consistent tree *plant* care practices, identifying funding priorities and opportunities, and assuring that all needs of the urban forest *environment and the safety of communities* are recognized and addressed.

**(a)** The Council shall oversee periodic updates to the Plan and evaluate the effectiveness of agencies in reaching the Plan's goals.

**(b)** Prior to adoption of the Plan or amendment thereto, the Council shall forward the plan and amendments to affected city agencies for review.

**(c)** The Council shall work with the Planning Department, *Public Works* and the *Environment* Department of the Environment to incorporate elements of the Urban Forest *Urban Greenspace Management* Plan into the City's General Plan.

**(d)** The Council shall work with the Recreation and Park Department, *Public Works, SFWP* and the *Environment* Department of the Environment to incorporate elements of the Urban Forest *Urban Greenspace Management* Plan into the Recreation and Park Department's *nurseries, Public Works' nurseries, and SFWP's Sunol nursery, as well as their* forestation *vegetation management* plans, *policies and practices*.

**(e)** *The Council shall work with the Recreation and Park Department and the San Francisco Botanical Society to prioritize propagating, planting and selling indigenous San Francisco plants and educating the public about the significance of protecting and re-creating native habitats.*

(Added by Ord. 171-03, File No. 030422, App. 7/3/2003)

(Derivation Former Administrative Code Section 5.234)

#### SEC. 1207. PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH.

- (a) To improve management by individual property owners and those who provide tree *landscaping and gardening* services to property owners, the Council shall assist with education programs *during the Environment Department's public events*. The Council shall design education programs for the public and tree care *landscaping and gardening* professionals to inform and gain public support for urban forestry, *native biodiversity, fire smart planting and tree* programs. *Programs shall concentrate on native biodiversity and fire smart planting.*
- (b) The Council shall promote trees *indigenous plants* as essential infrastructure with inherent value to the City of San Francisco. As infrastructure, trees *A majority of indigenous plants will be a* requirement consideration when designing and engineering *landscaping public projects and a goal for* private development projects..
- (c) The Council shall promote an understanding of San Francisco's urban forest *lands* as habitat for the wild animals that make up a significant part of San Francisco's natural heritage.
- (d) The Council's outreach shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
- (1) Fostering an understanding of the value of trees, *indigenous plants, native habitats, and fire smart planting according to Cal Fire and other fire smart landscaping guidelines (including a 5' combustibles-free perimeter around buildings);*
  - (2) Promoting public understanding of City tree *vegetation* programs and laws;
  - (3) Working with the media to bring urban forest *vegetation* concerns and information to the public;
  - (4) Facilitating presentations, programs, and other outreach to property owners and the business and corporate community; and
  - (5) Promoting special events such as a citywide Arbor Day *Earth Day*.

(Added by Ord. 171-03, File No. 030422, App. 7/3/2003)

(Derivation Former Administrative Code Section 5.235)

#### SEC. 1208. BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES.

- (a) In an effort to establish and maintain a healthy and sustainable urban forest *environment* and ensure public health and safety, the Council shall develop and adopt tree care best management practices for public and private trees *plants, including the removal of invasive plants*. The Practices for tree maintenance shall focus on *protection from damage, injury and death among neighbors, as well as* the protection of trees from premature death and irreversible damage caused by improper or inadequate tree maintenance.
- (b) The Council shall develop the best management practices in consultation with affected City agencies and with input from interested members of the public. The Council's evaluation of such practices shall incorporate an analysis of the projected costs for implementation of the practices. The best management practices shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
- (1) Species selection;
  - (2) Planting practices;
  - (3) Young tree *plant* care;
  - (4) Tree *Pruning* and maintenance; and
  - (5) Tree removal; *and*
  - (6) *Integrated pest management.*
- (c) The Council, with the assistance of the Board of Supervisors, shall urge and encourage City, State, and federal agencies, as well as private property owners and tree *and landscape and garden* care companies working in San Francisco, to adhere to the Council's *vegetation* management practices and tree care standards.

(Added by Ord. 171-03, File No. 030422, App. 7/3/2003)

(Derivation Former Administrative Code Section 5.236)

#### SEC. 1209. FUNDING ASSESSMENT.

- (a) The Board of Supervisors shall make efforts to provide adequate funding for the *Environment* Department's of the Environment's support of the Council. *The City's General Funds budget shall annually provide for a minimum of two Biodiversity Specialists to carry out Council responsibilities, as well as a Council Coordinator.*
- (b) In the event *sufficient* funding is not allocated by the City and County of San Francisco for staffing the Council, the Council shall pursue funds for any shortfall in the necessary staffing and support activities and additional funds for any other project it deems necessary to implement this legislation.
- (c) To ensure that adequate resources are available for tree *vegetation* management and that public funding is used wisely, the Council shall:
- (1) Review urban forest program budget priorities *based on the Council's full responsibilities, focusing on biodiversity issues*, and make recommendations about urban forest funding requirements to the Mayor, Board of Supervisors, and affected city departments and commissions;
  - (2) Investigate and pursue funding options for various urban forest *Council* activities;
  - (3) Assist agencies and organizations in securing funding for urban forest *vegetation* programs;
  - (4) Apply for and accept grants for public agency or privately sponsored urban forest programs pursuant to the procedures in the Administrative Code; and
  - (5) Determine whether there are opportunities to improve efficiency and eliminate possible redundancies among managing agencies through city-wide coordination of tree *vegetation* operations.

(Added by Ord. 171-03, File No. 030422, App. 7/3/2003)

(Derivation Former Administrative Code Section 5.237)

#### SEC. 1210. STAFFING SUPPORT AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

- (a) A *Coordinator* from the *Environment* Department of the Environment shall staff the Council. The *Coordinator's* responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
- (1) Fundraising;
  - (2) Developing and drafting guidelines for adoption;
  - (3) Preparing staff and annual reports;
  - (4) Coordinating with other agencies; and
  - (5) Develop an annual *unified* city-wide tree *planting, maintenance and removal* management budget for local governmental agencies. *In the aggregate, the majority of funds shall be dedicated to removing unirrigated City-owned groves of eucalyptus, reducing other vegetative fuel, and planting affected areas with indigenous plants.*
- (b) The *Coordinator* is essential in order to implement the intent of this legislation.

(Added by Ord. 171-03, File No. 030422, App. 7/3/2003)

(Derivation Former Administrative Code Section 5.238)

#### SEC. 1211. REPORTING RESPONSIBILITY.

- (a) The Council shall report to the Board of Supervisors, *City Administrator* and Mayor by September 1st of each year regarding the state of the urban forest *City's vegetation*. The report shall contain a review *of* the quality of urban forest *street tree and open space* stewardship and an assessment of how well public agencies and other urban forest *vegetation* managers are implementing the Urban Forest *Greenspace Management* Plan. The report shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
- (1) Condition of the urban forest *vegetation*, species composition, and other tree stand characteristics, *including the condition of unirrigated groves of trees;*
  - (2) Summary of urban forest *vegetation and biodiversity* activities, such as total number of trees *indigenous and other plants*, number of trees *and invasive plants* removed, and number of trees *indigenous and other plants* planted on private lands and under the jurisdictions of public agencies and non-profit organizations.
  - (3) Analysis of the adherence to the Urban Forest *Greenspace Management* Plan;
  - (4) Analysis of the adherence to the best management practices;
  - (5) The Council's public education and outreach projects;
  - (6) Notable achievements in urban forest;
  - (7) The status of funding for urban forest *planting, maintenance and removal* programs *and biodiversity programs;* and
  - (8) Proposals for tree care guidelines or changes to adopted tree care programs or plans.
- (b) City agencies and any non-profit organizations that accept city funding shall report to the Council regarding the trees *vegetation* they manage, the extent to which their management plans correspond to the Urban Forest *Greenspace Management* Plan, and implementation of the best management practices. The Council shall receive the report no later than June 30 of each year. Other public entities also are urged to submit reports to the Council regarding the trees *vegetation* they manage.
- (c) City agencies that do not adhere to the policies, guidelines, or standards outlined in the Urban Forest *Greenspace Management* Plan or best management practices shall explain their reasoning at a public hearing before the Council.
- (d) Within ninety (90) days of the Council's establishment, the Council shall adopt procedures to address the public hearing process specified in Subsection (c) above.

