

CONTRA COSTA

Contra Costa is currently in the process of updating their General Plan: EnvisionContraCosta2040.org

Protections in place:

	Oak Tree Retention/ Replacement Provisions	Oak Protection During Construction	Heritage Tree Protection	Riparian Vegetation Protections	Oak Canopy Retention	Oak Woodland Conservation Program
General Plan Language	Conservation Element defines oak and riparian woodlands as significant ecological resources (8-5, table 8-1) and mitigation measures include discussion of the importance of 3:1 replacement with trees of the same species, where appropriate and to the extent legally-permissible (8-18, point 8-l). The Zoning Ordinance should be amended to encourage propagation of native oaks using proper planting and maintenance techniques.	Open Space-Scenic Resource Policies emphasis conservation when building on hills or ridgelines, developers shall generally be required to restore land after development (9-7). In specific areas such as the Crockett area, the plan calls for the preservation of vegetation (3-73, point 3-142).	The Conservation Element calls for protection of mature native oaks (8-16, point 8-28). Damage to heritage trees during construction or by irrigation is prohibited (8-17, point 8-i). Conservation Element demands amendment of ordinance to protect heritage trees during construction (8-17, point 8-i)	The Conservation Element calls for 50' foot setbacks on each side of a creek (8-46, point 8-89).	None	Contra Costa County has not adopted an Oak Woodland Conservation Plan, however the Conservation Element identifies significant ecological areas, including some woodlands, and designates them for low intensity land use (8-15, point 8-8).

Specific Ordinance	<p>Tree Protection Ordinance 816-6 Requires a tree permit for removal of 6.5” dbh trees on all properties within the unincorporated area of the county and other specified areas in or adjacent to riparian, foothill woodland, oak savanna areas, or part of a stand of 4 or more trees.</p>	<p>Tree Protection Ordinance 816-6 requires a permit to trench, grade, or fill within dripline of protected trees and use of fencing. Accidental destruction requires replacement with an equivalent tree. An arborist may be required to be present and has the authority to require protective measures to protect the tree’s roots. The dripline of trees has to be free from potential harmful materials.</p>	<p>Heritage tree ordinance 816-4 (Applies to a tree seventy-two inches or more in circumference measured four and one-half feet above the natural grade; or</p> <p>Any tree or a group of trees particularly worthy of protection, and specifically designated as a heritage tree by the board of supervisors pursuant to the provisions of this chapter, because of:</p> <p>Having historical or ecological interest or significance, or</p> <p>Being dependent upon each other for health or survival, or</p> <p>Being considered an outstanding specimen of its species as to such factors as location, size, age, rarity, shape, or health.) may not be removed without a permit except in circumstances when the zoning administrator or building inspector (if designated by the zoning</p>	<p>Subdivision Ordinance 914-4 restricts the removal of vegetation and protects natural watercourses that may be used in drainage, including trees within area. The Tree Protection Ordinance includes protections for trees in riparian woodlands.</p>	None	None
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			<p>administrator) determines the tree poses a hazard to the safety of structure(s) or human life.</p> <p>Special construction techniques are required within 12' of trunk or within the dripline.</p>			
Voluntary Guidelines	None	None	None	None	None	None

Documents reviewed:

Date of Review: 06/7/2021

☒ Open Space Element
☒ Conservation Element
☒ Land Use Element
☒ Zoning Ordinance

☐ Roads/Sidewalk Tree Ordinance
☒ Trees Ordinance
☐ Voluntary Guidelines
☒ Other County Codes: Tree Obstruction of Views

X Subdivision Ordinance
 Grading and Erosion Ordinance

Combining District (816-2), Heritage Tree Preservation (816-4)

Summary of Oak Protection Policies:

MEASURE C	MEASURE C-1990: created the 65/35 Land Preservation Standard and Urban Limit Line (ULL) of land for non-urban uses including agriculture, open space, wetlands, and parks. Institutional/public uses such as schools, transit facilities, fire and police stations, water and wastewater treatment plants, correctional facilities, and airports are also counted as non-urban. On November 7, 2006, County voters approved Measure L, which extended the term of the ULL and 65/35 Ordinance to December 31, 2026.
Land Use Element, 2005	The Land Use Element includes protective policies for specific areas and projects including Crockett, San Pablo Ridge, Gale Ranch, and Countrywood. Policies call for preservation of significant natural features including ridgelines, creek corridors, and natural vegetation to conserve scenic beauty and avoid erosion. Due to 65/35 land preservation standard significant acreage is designated open space.

<p>Conservation Element, 2005</p>	<p>NATIVE VEGETATION: The Conservation Element calls for preservation of significant trees and natural vegetation (8.6) and for the preservation of natural woodlands to the maximum extent possible (8-12). Development on hillsides must be limited to maintain valuable natural vegetation (8-14). Existing native vegetation shall be retained in the major open space areas (8-15). Planting native trees and shrubs is encouraged in order to preserve the visual integrity of the landscape, provide habitat conditions suitable for native wildlife, and ensure that a maximum number and variety of well-adapted plants are sustained in urban areas (8-21). Efforts shall be made to identify and protect the County's mature native oak, bay, and buckeye trees. (8-28)</p> <p>HERITAGE TREES: Mature trees need to meet criteria listed in the chart above and then, unless it they are 72-inches greater circumference, be given heritage designation by the board of supervisors: All efforts are to be made to identify and protect the County's mature native oak, bay, and buckeye trees (8-28). A biotic resources evaluation may be required prior to the approval of discretionary permits involving parcels in significant ecological resource areas (8-e). Mitigation measures may include requiring three new trees be planted for every one mature tree removed as part of a development (8-h). Replacement trees must be the same species as the tree removed, and be native or naturalized. Damage to heritage trees by soil compaction, grading, filling or alteration of drainage patterns beneath the root zones of heritage trees during construction is prohibited (8-I). Watering programs for lawns and gardens in new subdivisions must be designed to prevent soil saturation around the root zones of oak trees during the summer months to avoid infection by oak root fungus.</p> <p>OAK WOODLANDS: Encourage the propagation of native oaks using proper planting and maintenance techniques and/or by limiting cattle grazing to compatible light or moderate levels in foothill woodlands (8-u).</p> <p>RIPARIAN BUFFERS: Riparian areas should be preserved by 50' foot setbacks on each side of the creek. The county should seek deeded development rights for lands within riparian buffers (8-90). Guidelines for creek maintenance practices that limit removal of native vegetation are to be developed.</p>
<p>Open Space Element, 2005</p>	<p>The Open Space Element restricts development on open hillsides and significant ridgelines (9-11). Public and private projects shall be designed to minimize damages to significant trees and other visual landmarks (9-15, 9-23).</p>

Tree Protection/ Preservation, 816-6	<p>TREE REMOVAL: This ordinance provides for the preservation of protected trees by controlling removal (.2004) of trees adjacent to or part of a riparian, foothill woodland or oak savanna area, part of a stand of 4 or more trees, measuring 6.5” dbh on all properties within the unincorporated area of the county and other specified areas. No person may cut down, top, or remove any protected tree on private property within the county without a tree permit (.6002). Applications must include information on trees, reason for removal, methods and effects of removal on soil stability and erosion (.8004). A report by an arborist or RPF may be required (.8008). Permits may be denied when redesign of a site plan will avoid alteration of a healthy tree, if removal will cause drainage, erosion, stability problems, or if value to the neighborhood is greater than hardship to the owner (.8010).</p> <p>TREE PROTECTION: No person may trench, grade or fill within the dripline of any protected tree on private property within the county without a tree permit (.6002). Trees must be protected during development by installation of fencing at the dripline. No grading, compaction, stockpiling, trenching, paving or change in ground elevation is permitted within the dripline unless indicated on the grading plans approved by the county and addressed in any required report prepared by an arborist. If grading or construction is approved within the dripline, an arborist may be required to be present during grading operations (.1202). A cash deposit is required and may be held by the county for 2 years (.1204). Accidental destruction of a tree requires replacement with a tree of equivalent size (.1206).</p>
Tree Obstruction Of Views, 816-2	This ordinance provides a method for private property owners to gain restoration of views and sunlight lost due to tree growth by another private property owner. Methods including tree trimming, windowing and replacement and replanting may be imposed through arbitration if the reconciliation process breaks down.
Heritage Tree Preservation, 816-4	HERITAGE TREES: This chapter requires adequate protection of heritage trees (72” dbh or any tree in a group of trees worthy of protection, and designated as a heritage tree by the Board of Supervisors because of historical or ecological significance, or an outstanding specimen in location, size, age, rarity, shape, or health) during construction (.402). No one may remove any designated heritage tree without a permit (although trimming, pruning, and maintenance is allowed) (.602). Special construction techniques are required when proposed developments encroach within 12’ of the trunk. Storage, dumping, and burning are prohibited. Permits may be issued only if the tree is a danger of falling or a nuisance. (.802)
Subdivision, Drainage, 914	When using natural watercourses for subdivision drainage, the advisory agency may determine it must be protected in its natural state. (4.002) Only downed trees or those with the potential to cause major obstruction can be removed. Removal shall be done in a way that minimizes damage to other trees and the waterway. (4.006).

Contact Information:

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County Contacts:

_____ No contacts

_____ Policies provided by county staff

_____ Policies discussed with county staff

 X Policy inventory reviewed by county staff