

## Flynn, Allison

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**From:** Norma Jean  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 28, 2022 6:31 PM  
**To:** Parks and Recreation Commission  
**Subject:** Community tree master plan

**CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL - Ensure you trust this email before clicking on any links or attachments.**

I have been a Mtn. View Resident for >40 yr., having chosen my home based on the large no. of mature trees with all the esthetic, cooling and other benefits that make everyone love trees. During my decades here, I've been saddened to see little or no actions in line with, or enforcement of the beautifully written Heritage Tree Ordinance.

Mature trees have vanished at a horrifying rate, just as we have finally awakened to the need to combat global warming by preserving forests and planting more trees. It appears that whenever a developer buys a property and demolished the existing house, wanting ease of access for heavy equipment, they petition for approval to destroy the heritage trees and that permission is all too readily granted, so very often unjustifiably so.

I have personally participated in 3 appeals of such petitions by spec developers on my own short (1-block long) street. I really did my homework, brought in expert's opinions, provided thorough documentation for the reasons the tree should be preserved and, in ea. case, prevailed. But at the same time the City approved developments near me where they permitted huge nos. of Heritage Trees to be killed, rather than asking for plans to preserve more of them. And they seemed to have permitted one developer to simply come in one day and destroy many healthy trees unlikely to have been permitted for destruction. We have seen all too often that it's better for a developer to say "woops!" and perhaps pay a fine than to seek a permit.

At the same time the City has verbally committed to expansion of Urban Canopy! Great sounding, but what is being allowed to happen is the exact opposite.

Mtn. View was once what it is euphorically described as being in the excellent Heritage Tree Ordinance, But it is less so each year. At the time of the public outcry over a developer's intention to destroy 3 magnificent redwoods on Sierra, one of those who organized the community protest had a spreadsheet showing that there were, at the time, >800 Heritage Trees that the city had agreed to allow to be destroyed. Even if they required the developers to plant 800 little yard high saplings in their place, it would be 20 yr. before they would provide those ecosystem services and the beauty and cooling that the mature Heritage Trees had provided.

Once I obtained and read the Heritage Tree Ordinance, I discovered that homeowners are required to maintain in good health any Heritage Tree on their property. That was quite a surprise, as the city seems to do nothing whatever to inform a home buyer that there is a Heritage Tree on their property let alone educate them about the regulation requiring they maintain it in good health and educating them as to how to do so. That is not one but two egregious failures to adhere to their own regulation and each is a worthy goal for corrective action.

There are many who care about this who would be happy to talk with anyone genuinely committed to doing better, correcting the ever-worsening situation in Mtn. View over recent decades, I among them.

This city has not lived up to what they are supposedly so committed to. It is making Mtn. View a far less desirable place to live.

During the pandemic, I have tried to walk in Cuesta Park and am grateful that the City set aside land for parks. But as I've told friends, it gives me "botanical and environmental indigestions". While not being a botanical garden where that

would be expected, it is a molyglot collection of all kinds of trees whereas it could have been planted with native trees, to the great benefit of the environment as well as setting a good example for residents. Trees like our native oaks attract pollinators and are absolutely loaded with insect larvae that feed birds. Comparative studies have shown that beautiful exotic ornamentals will have few caterpillars on them at all, do not attract pollinators, do not feed the birds. The California Native Plant Society can provide extensive information on the value of planting natives, with all the ecosystem services they provide.

I'm heartened that the City is FINALLY, belatedly, looking into the importance of trees here and hope you will take this seriously and do a thorough job of research before drafting a plan. This once was a nice place to live. But at least in my area you'd think the City had a formal scorched earth policy from the visual evidence.

Thank you.

Norma Jean Bodey Galiher

Mtn. View 94040



## Flynn, Allison

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**From:** Gena Zolotar  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 28, 2022 1:07 PM  
**To:** Parks and Recreation Commission  
**Subject:** Community trees, birds, and pollinators

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Dear Parks and Recreation Commission,

Thank you for your work on the community tree master plan and biodiversity in Mountain View. I have lived in Mountain View for over 20 years, and recently I have noticed more and more notifications of tree removals in the city, and it feels like fewer new trees are being planted. At the same time, I have noted a decline in the number of birds and other wildlife in my own neighborhood. It is discouraging! My hope is that the master plan will include a detailed roadmap for reaching quantifiable tree planting and biodiversity goals with a reasonable timeframe. Planting trees is a key tool for the city that can and must be used to build a livable, green, sustainable, and climate resilient city that its residents want and to support biodiversity in Mountain View.

Trees provide critical environmental services, including heat island mitigation, air purification, and habitat for birds and pollinators. It would be wonderful if the city adopted a policy of planting California native vegetation, with habitat linkages where feasible along creeks and streets, in order to build a resilient urban ecology and re-wild the City. Parks should bring nature home, with fewer manicured spaces and more birds and butterflies.

Finally, I hope that the master plan will include guidelines for maintaining parks and trees in an ecologically friendly way. For example, limit tree trimming to fall and winter when birds and other wildlife are not nesting. Create adequate space around trees and plants to allow them to flourish in their habitat, rather than being hemmed in by concrete or other obstacles.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Gena Zolotar  
Mountain View