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To: [City Council FORWARD](#); [Pancholi, Diana](#); [Bonaccorsi, Rosalba \(ARC-SST\)\[SETI INSTITUTE\]](#); [bonaccor](#)
Subject: City Council 04/12/2022 Item 8.2 Commercial Development at 590 Castro Street - Permit to Remove Nine Heritage Trees
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Dear City Council of Mountain View,
Concerning City Council 04/12/2022 Item 8.2 (Commercial Development at 590 Castro Street - Permit to Remove Nine Heritage Trees), below are my comments.

Best Regards,
Dr. Rosalba Bonaccorsi

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The Problem

The **Mountain View Tree Ordinance (Chapter 32)**, established in 1961, was intended to protect the community's street trees and encourage the preservation of large, mature trees, the Heritage Tree Ordinance (Chapter 32.22-32.39) was adopted in 1975.

While the Municipal Code 32, Article 1 (Chapter 32.1) requires the protection of street trees during construction or repair projects, in development-related situations, the integrity of large trees is not-so-well protected. Project plans most rely on "planting replacement trees on-site and/or paying in-lieu fees". Effective mitigation measures and creative solutions to protect the integrity and functionality of large trees are warranted.

Please, consider that "planting replacement trees on-site and/or paying in-lieu fees" is not a viable replacement for the removal of heritage trees.

Concerning the Public Health and Social and Environmental Benefits (Items 1 and 2 discussed below), please, note that large and mature trees -with wide canopies (heritage trees) are most effective than newly planted trees that are the cornerstone of aesthetical landscaping (not including heritage trees).

Why we do love Heritage Trees

1. Public Health and Social Benefits

1.1 Clean air: The urban canopy directly contributes to meeting a city's regulatory clean air requirements. Trees capture airborne particulates, produce oxygen, and reduce smog, enhancing a community's respiratory health during a time of crisis (climate-change related wildfires).

1.2 Promote physical and mental health: Large trees, individual or in parks, reduce stress, thus improving the quality of life in our city.

- Studies show that urban vegetation slows heartbeats, lowers blood pressure, and relaxes brain wave patterns.
- Urban landscaping, including trees, helps lower crime rates.
- Girls with a view of nature and trees at home score higher on tests of self-discipline.
- Large Trees absorb and block sound, reducing noise pollution by as much as 40 percent.

2. Environmental Benefits

1.1 Climate change: Trees sequester carbon dioxide (CO₂), reducing the overall concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. <https://canopy.org/tree-info/benefits-of-trees/urban-trees-and-climate-change/>

1.2 Energy conservation:

- cooling effect. Large trees represent urban air conditioners. The evaporation from a single large tree can produce the cooling effect of ten room-size, residential air conditioners operating 20 hours a day.
- Acting as a natural air-conditioner, Mountain View's lush canopy ensures that summer temperatures are at least 6- 8 degrees lower than in neighborhoods without trees.
- Tree windbreaks can reduce residential heating costs by 10-15%; while shading and evaporative cooling from trees can cut residential air-conditioning costs by 20-50%.

1.3 Water filtration and retention: Urban forests promote beneficial water quality and **reduce stormwater management costs.**

Mountain View's Street and park trees can intercept 135 million gallons of rainwater. Expanded canopies slow rainfall and their roots filter water and recharge the aquifer. Trees reduce stormwater runoff, which reduces flooding, saves city stormwater management costs, and decreases the flow of polluted water into the Bay.

1.3 Wildlife habitat: Trees provide important habitats for the integrity and diversity of urban birds and other animals.

3. Economic Benefits

3.1 Communities and business districts with healthy mature tree-cover attract new residents, industry, and commercial activity.

- Homes landscaped with trees sell more quickly and are worth 5% to 15% more than homes without trees.
- Where the entire street is tree-lined, homes may be worth 25% more.
- Trees enhance economic stability by attracting businesses; people linger and shop longer when trees are present.
- Where a canopy of trees exists, apartments and offices rent more quickly, and workers' productivity and welfare increase.

Concerning today's City Council 04/12/2022 (Item 8.2 Commercial Development at 590 Castro Street - Permit to Remove Nine Heritage Trees) let me focus on the relevance of heritage trees.