City of Mountain View

MEMORANDUM

Public Works Department

DATE: May 13, 2026

TO: Urban Forestry Board

FROM: Naveen Govind, Senior Project Manager
David O. Printy, Principal Project Manager
Edward Arango, Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer

VIA: Jennifer Ng, Public Works Director

SUBJECT: **Public Safety Building, Project 20-49**

RECOMMENDATION

Review the proposed Heritage tree mitigation for Public Safety Building, Project 20-49, and forward a recommendation to the City Council to approve the mitigation of forty (40) Heritage trees at a 2:1 replacement ratio, with the planting of eighty (80) 24" box trees within the project site.

BACKGROUND

On March 17, 2026, a Heritage tree mitigation plan for Public Safety Building, Project 20-49, was presented to the Urban Forestry Board (UFB) to obtain a recommendation to Council to approve the mitigation of forty-two (42) Heritage trees at a 2:1 replacement ratio, with the planting of eighty-four (84) 24" box trees within the project site. The UFB reviewed and discussed the proposed mitigation at the meeting and adopted the following motion: directed staff to return to the UFB with a revised mitigation plan focusing on canopy replacement, with a preponderance of native trees, at a 2:1 replacement for Heritage Trees and a 1:1 replacement for non-Heritage trees. Additionally, explore the placement of mitigation trees within the neighborhood and immediate area if on-site space is not available for all mitigation trees. The updated site layout plan with the proposed new and existing trees is shown in Figure 1.

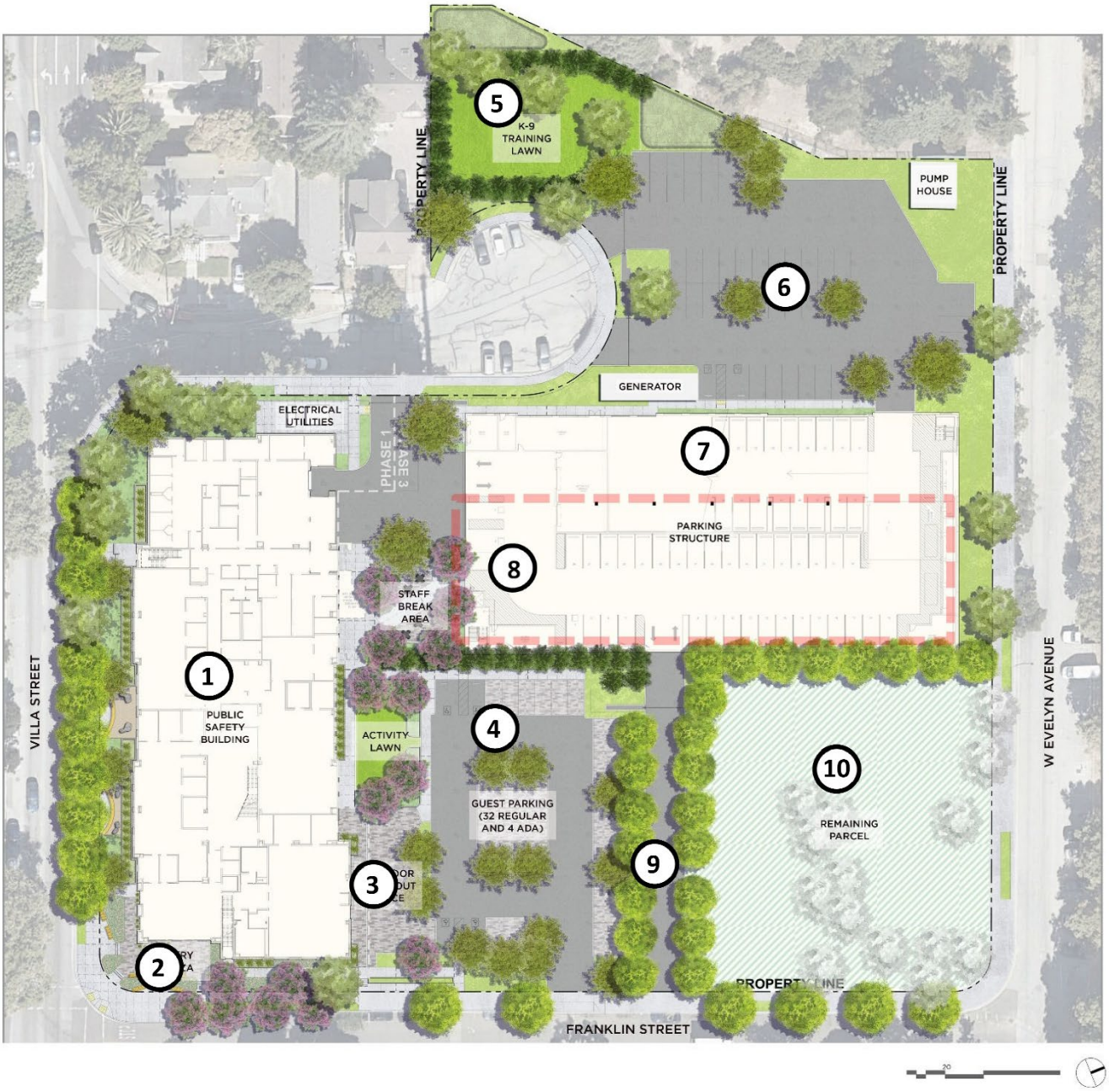

Figure 1: Site Layout

1. 75,000 square foot building
2. Corner public entry plaza
3. Public event plaza
4. Public parking
5. K9 Training Area
6. Secure staff surface parking
7. Secure staff parking structure
8. 15-lane shooting range (top level)
9. Second public safety vehicle access
10. Future City use (0.6 acre)

Tree Removal

As part of the project, existing trees are required to be removed to accommodate the new Public Safety Building project. Staff requests that the Urban Forestry Board (UFB) provide a recommendation to the City Council for the number, size, and location of replacement trees, which is the focus of the UFB's purview, as defined in the following Municipal Code Section 32.33, City Capital Improvement Projects:

> "City capital improvement projects which propose the removal of any heritage tree shall be submitted by the city project staff to the city's arborist for review and recommendation of appropriate mitigation measures. The arborist's recommendations shall be forwarded by city project staff to the urban forestry board for their recommendation on the number, size and location of replacement trees. The recommendation of the urban forestry board shall be forwarded by city project staff to the city council for their consideration with the approval of the project."

ANALYSIS

The City engaged a professional arborist, Woodreeve Consulting, to assess the existing trees on-site. A total of 105 trees, representing 17 species, were evaluated. The existing tree locations are shown in Attachment 1.

Corrections to the March 17, 2026, staff report:
After the tree survey was submitted to the City, one of the heritage trees along Franklin Street, near Villa Street, (No. H-250, Alder tree species), was found to have died. In the fall of 2022, this tree was removed by the City Arborist staff for safety to prevent limb fall and or damage to adjacent cars or passers-by. The March 17, 2026, UFB report misidentified this heritage tree (No. H-250) as being impacted by the project when it had died of natural causes. While this results in one less Heritage tree for removal, staff is showing mitigating for this removed tree at a 2:1 ratio as part of the project. After staff's further review, another tree was mischaracterized as a heritage tree (No. 211 – Sweetgum) and has been reclassified as a non-heritage tree. Due to its location, it will still require removal and is mitigated at a 1:1 ratio. Lastly, staff has included one additional new tree beyond the above noted trees, as there was an opportunity to add a new tree within the site plan and increase the tree count.

With the above corrections, the Public Safety Building project (as shown on Figure 1 – Site Layout) will require the removal of 40 Heritage trees and 35 non-Heritage trees within the project site. At least 20 Heritage trees and 10 non-Heritage trees will be retained and preserved within and immediately adjacent to the project boundaries. Attachment 2 lists the trees on site, their species, size, Heritage tree status, and recommendations for removal. The site plan in Attachment 3 illustrates the locations of the Heritage and non-Heritage trees to be removed. The

majority of the trees to be removed are in direct conflict with planned facilities, and a few trees require removal to facilitate construction activities.

As noted in the March 17, 2026 UFB report, the removal of heritage trees is necessitated by the constraints of constructing a new Public Safety Building on the same site as the existing facility, while maintaining ongoing public safety operations. The design balances tree preservation with essential site and building requirements. Design flexibility was further limited by the need to accommodate construction phasing, contractor access, elevation and grading changes, and the City's utility easement along the Evelyn Drive frontage, which restricts the planting of new trees.

The previous March 2026 UFB report information regarding the evaluation of trees feasible for transplant, factors used, and rationale noted is still valid, and the recommendation is the same: planting new trees as a mitigation measure is recommended over transplanting trees.

Following the March UFB meeting, and in response to UFB comments, the design team, working in consultation with the City Arborist, have increased the species for the proposed trees from 9 native species to 51 native species, including 34 oak trees. This is an increase of 42 additional native trees. Please refer to Table 1 for the updated tree species list, which were selected for their site-specific qualities, low water use and suitability to be included in the draft Biodiversity and Urban Forest Plan. Attachment 4 outlines the revised Tree Planting Plan.

As mitigation for the removal of up to 40 Heritage trees, staff recommends replacement at a 2:1 ratio with 24" box trees, replacing the previously removed dead Alder tree at a 3:1 ratio with 24" box trees, and replacing the 35 non-Heritage trees at a 1:1 ratio with 24" box trees. This results in 118 new trees, 51 of which are native, as shown in Attachment 4, and the plant schedule in Table 1. After careful review of the revised planting plan and increasing the number of smaller trees in the police dog training area, the design team confirmed that all new trees will fit on the site and be installed by the completion of the last phase of the project.

Table 1: Tree Planting Schedule

SYM.	BOTONICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	SIZE	COUNT	WATER USE	NATIVE
	Quercia Lobata	Valley Oak	24" box	5	Low	Yes
	Arbutus 'Marina'	Marina Arbutus	24" box	7	Low	No
	Cercis Occidentalis	Western Redbud	24" box	17	Low	Yes
	Laurus Nobilis	Sweet Bay	24" box	19	Low	No

	Laurus 'Saratoga'	Saratoga Laurel	24" box	12	Low	No
	Hetermeles Arbutufolia	Toyon	24" box	29	Low	Yes
	Quercus Regal Prince	Regal Prince Oak	24" box	29	Low	No

To provide additional information, the design team and City Arborist have collaborated to include the following tree selection justification table for the rationale of each species choice and inclusion in the planting plan.

Table 3: Tree Selection Rationale

BOTONICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	CRITERIA FOR SELECTION
Quercia Lobata	Valley Oak	A large native tree was selected to anchor the corners of the Public Safety Building and the Parking Garage. It provides ample shade to help reduce heat absorption by the buildings.
Arbutus 'Marina'	Marina Arbutus	Due to the limited planting space in the courtyard between the Public Safety Building and the Parking Garage, this tree was selected for its compact size and form. Its pink flowers were also chosen to emphasize the significance of this space as an employee break area.
Cercis Occidentalis	Western Redbud	Due to the limited planting space in various locations, this native tree was selected for its smaller size and compact form. This species was used more frequently than the arbutus because it is a native plant. It also features attractive pink flowers, which were incorporated into more public areas of the site.
Laurus Nobilis	Sweet Bay	Chosen for its size and shape to maximize the number of street trees along Villa Street, providing shade for pedestrians and the building.
Laurus 'Saratoga'	Saratoga Laurel	A larger tree was selected for its dense, full canopy to help mitigate the urban heat island effect from surrounding surface parking lots.
Hetermeles Arbutufolia	Toyon	Chosen for its being a California Native with dense foliage to help screen the parking garage and employee courtyard.
Quercus Regal Prince	Regal Prince Oak	Features a compact, columnar growth pattern that allows for more trees to be planted within the designated areas. This species was selected in response to the City's preference for oaks.

A tree canopy study was also conducted to analyze the existing and proposed trees and ensure that the mitigation plan will achieve parity with the existing conditions. As noted in Attachment 5, the proposed canopy achieves 27.5% site coverage at maturity after 15 years, exceeding the existing 26% coverage.

Staff has evaluated the potential use of reclaimed wood from some of the existing trees on this site and has determined that the project can salvage select redwood trees and repurpose the reclaimed wood for constructing new benches in the public plaza and along Villa Street, and potentially for use in select interior and exterior furnishings on this project.

FISCAL IMPACT

Public Safety Building. Project 20-49 is funded as shown in Table 4.

Council approved a comprehensive funding plan on April 14, 2026, and subsequently authorized the issuance of the revenue bonds on April 28, 2026. Pending the sale of the recently authorized bonds, the project will be funded, and the mitigation for the on-site tree removals will be funded from the project budget.

Table 4: Project Funding

Total Project Funding Sources	
Bond Financing	$135,000,000
Public Safety Building Reserve	$26,500,000
Public Safety Building, CIP Project 20-49	$16,300,000
Shoreline Regional Park Community	$25,500,000
GOF Fiscal Year 2025-26 Recommended Budget Action	$2,000,000
TOTAL OF INITIAL FUNDING SOURCES	**$205,300,000**
Additional Funding Sources	
Other Sources, including interest income and CIP funds	Up to $10,000,000
TOTAL Contingency Funds	**Up to $10,000,000**

CONCLUSION

The project team has made every effort to preserve existing Heritage trees where feasible. However, due to the constraints of constructing a new Public Safety Building on the same site as the existing facility, while maintaining ongoing operations, the design balances tree preservation with essential site and building requirements. Design flexibility was further limited by the need to accommodate construction phasing, contractor access, elevation and grading changes, and the City's utility easement along the Evelyn Drive frontage, which restricts the planting of new trees. In response to the Urban Forestry Board's feedback, staff has increased the number of native trees from 9 to 51 and aligned the species selection with trees suitable for inclusion in the draft Biodiversity and Urban Forest Plan. The Urban Forestry Board's recommendation for tree mitigation will be forwarded to the City Council in June 2026, along with the approval of the project plans, specifications, and estimates for the first phase of construction of this project.

The project is estimated to begin the public bid process for the first phase of construction in the summer of 2026, following authorization by Council. Construction is expected to begin in the fall of 2026, and the last phase is anticipated to be completed in 2031.

PUBLIC NOTICING

In addition to the standard agenda posting, staff posted notices on the trees identifying them for removal and provided information for attending this Urban Forestry Board meeting. Notices were mailed to occupants and property owners within 1,000 feet of the project site.

Attachments:
1. Existing Conditions
2. Tree Assessment List
3. Tree Removal Plan
4. Tree Planting Plan
5. Tree Canopy Studies

cc: PWD, APWD—Arango, PPM—Printy, SPM–Govind, F/c (20-49)