



**Date:** June 22, 2004  
**To:** Mayor Beverly O'Neill and City Councilmembers  
**From:** Rob Webb, Councilman - Eighth District (RW)  
**Subject:** Agenda Item - Moratorium On Oak Trees

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Currently, there is no Long Beach City protection for large, old oak trees, as there exists in Los Angeles City and County, and in many other municipalities and counties throughout California. These trees can be freely cut down or damaged beyond recovery during routine trimming and maintenance, and during construction and development, and the citizens of Long Beach could lose an irreplaceable part of their history and heritage. Hence, a moratorium is requested while the City can initiate an ordinance to protect such oak trees, those that may be of historical significance and may be of irreplaceable value to the citizens of Long Beach.

A tree preservation ordinance is contemplated as a prohibition against damaging, cutting down, or removing certain oak trees of historic significance, and such an ordinance would require a Long Beach city permit before an oak tree could be damaged or removed, on both public and private property within the City limits. This would include whenever there is a "land disturbance" (clearing for development of a subdivision and/or a single building, or digging for foundations, driveways, or utility lines, or other similar actions) that might harm such trees.

Until a final tree preservation ordinance can be enacted, including proper notice and debate, a moratorium is needed to preserve from harm the current inventory of oak trees within the City. During the moratorium period, and as a first step toward a tree preservation ordinance, an inventory/mapping of the City of Long Beach of all oak trees should be initiated, but regardless of this inventory, existing large oak trees which might be deemed potentially historic should be protected from harm while the City engages in the democratic process to enact a protective ordinance.

**REQUESTED ACTION:** Adopt a minute order requesting (1) that the Planning Commission initiate a zoning regulation or General Plan amendment study in regard to the protection, city-wide, of oak trees which are either of historic significance or which are 100 years of age or older; and (2) that the City Attorney, in cooperation with the Department of Planning and Building, prepare an interim (moratorium) ordinance in accordance with Chapter 21.50 of the Long Beach Municipal Code for notice and placement on the City Council agenda for hearing at its third meeting following the adoption of the requested minute order. It is also requested that during the period between the adoption of the requested minute order and the adoption or rejection of the proposed interim ordinance, that no permit or entitlement of any kind shall be issued by any Department of the City that would in any way permit or facilitate any action, including, but not limited to, the alteration or destruction of any oak tree of historical significance or which is more than 100 years of age.