

Urban Forestry Our Green Infrastructure Assets

Community Forest Advisory Board
April 8, 2026



1

SD Urban Forestry Program



Why this Presentation on Trees?

- **Trees are infrastructure assets**, ensuring livable, walkable and sustainable communities.
- In order to protect our assets and increase their value:
 - Grow trees in appropriate growing spaces
 - Existing trees need to remain in place with hardscape enhancements
- **Urban Forestry Program 5-Year-Plan:**
 - Increase tree canopy cover
 - Maximize the efficiencies in maintaining the urban forest
 - Minimize the risk of trees in an urban environment
- **MISSION:**
Plant, protect, promote, and maintain trees for livable and sustainable communities.

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2



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- City Forester - Transportation Department
 - Manage the Transportation Forestry Operations
 - All City trees under his jurisdiction
- 31 staff in Parks & Transportation
 - Over half maintain tree infrastructure for tree health and public safety
- 600K+ trees in parks, 250K+ street trees
- Dedicated planting programs
- Arborist, Get It Done, Infrastructure Tracker
 - Over **600 trees** saved on redesigns last FY
- \$3.2M in tree maintenance contracts
- [SanDiego.gov/trees](https://sandiego.gov/trees)





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3






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Growing and Protecting City Tree Assets

- Trees are City Assets - Green Infrastructure
 - **Trees are stormwater infrastructure**
 - **Solar voltaic projects**
 - **Underground utilities**
- Trees grow slowly - Goal: protect long-term investment
- Provide ecosystem services + carbon sequestration
- Replanting success matters
 - Larger tree wells and planting strips
- Tree protection counts for long term safety and continued growth
 - **Construction (Whitebook 5-14.7) minimize damages during construction**






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4



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How Do Trees Function?

Pruning

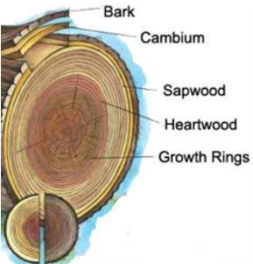

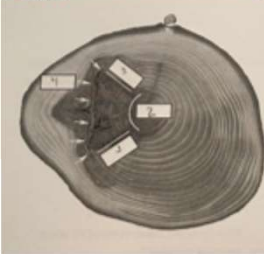

- Proper pruning is important
- It creates a wound
- We structure trees for ROW clearance
- End weight/Lions tailing - Arm extension
- Topping and tipping

Trees Have Layers

- Compartmentalization


Roots

- Roots in urban areas: ~3 ft deep, tunneling possible
- Roots grow under favorable conditions







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5




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Standards / Practices: Existing and New Trees

- Whitebook 400-3.1 General. You shall prevent or minimize the following:
 - Root cutting or damage
 - Soil compaction
 - Injury to the trunk, major roots, and crown
- Piling equipment / materials on trees is tree damage
- Consider small shifts (e.g., ADA ramps, HAWK crosswalks) to protect trees in place
- New projects need to incorporate existing, large trees
- Minimum tree well: 40 sq ft (5 ft min. sides): Landscape Code §142.0403; ideal tree well may be 60 sq ft or larger



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6



Success



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Learn more at: www.sandiego.gov/trees