



# **Steering Committee Meeting**

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March 23, 2017

## **Policy Options: Arborist Reports**

**When should they be required?**

**Who can Write Them?**

**What should they Contain?**

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# Project Goal

Amend the County's significant and heritage tree removal ordinances, and the Resource Management and Planned Agricultural District zoning ordinances to improve management of individual trees and the tree canopy in the County, and to improve tree removal and trimming permit process, consistent with the County's General Plan.



# Steering Committee Goal

Collaborate with County staff by providing input and guidance that helps shape amendments to the County's ordinances governing tree protection and removal, in a manner consistent with the County's General Plan.



## Meeting Purpose

**Evaluate Policy Options for Achieving Defensible Space and Arborist Report Requirements for Managing Urban and Suburban Trees**





## Arborist Credentials

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Three member-based, professional organizations offer credentials in the field of arboriculture: the American Society of Consulting Arborists (ASCA), the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA), and the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA).





## Arborist Report Formats

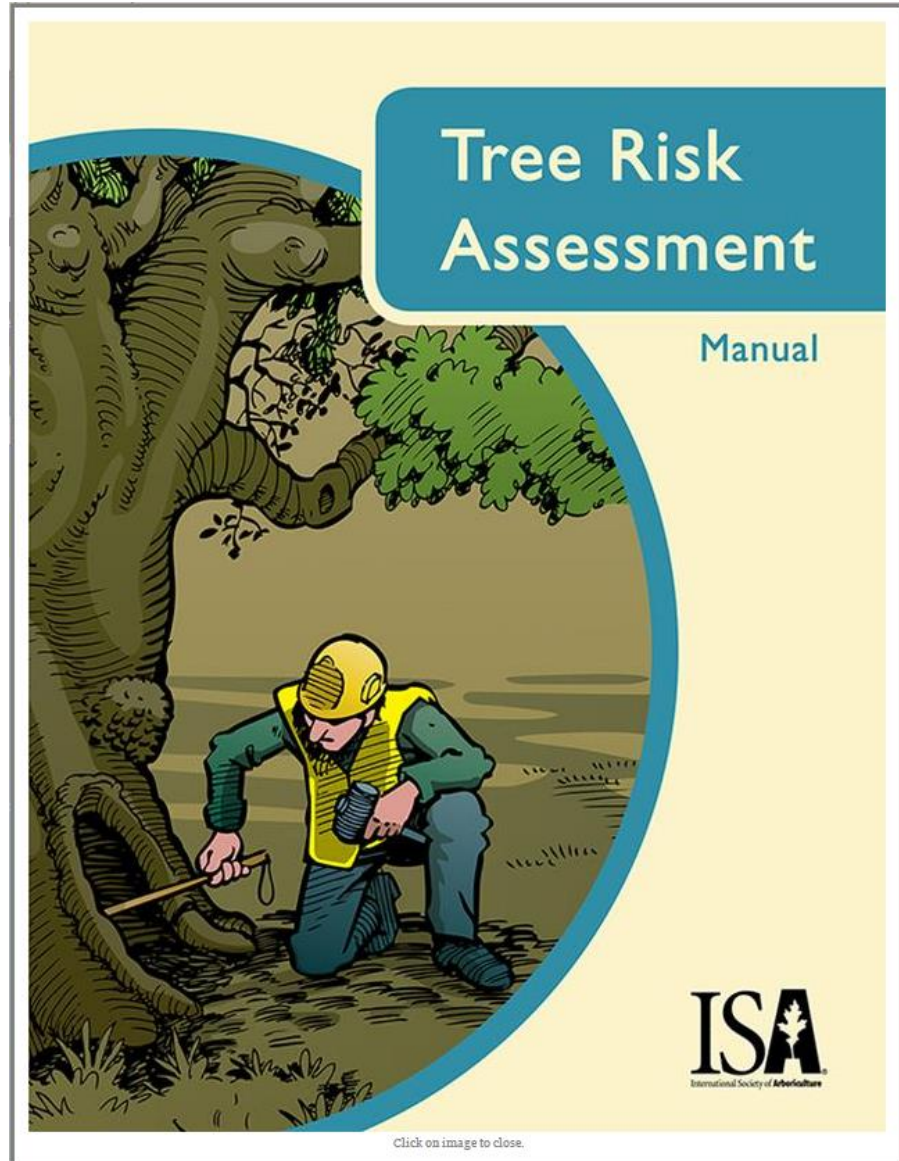
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- Oral Report
- Form or Letter Report
- Booklet Report, Level 3 Report
- ANSI 300 Risk Assessment
- Tree Preservation and Maintenance Strategy on Development Sites





# Tree Evaluation Methods





## Arborists and Professional Ethics

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Arborists registered by the ISA and tree companies certified by TCIA commit to follow a code of ethics. ASCA arborists commit to follow Standards of Professional Practice







## Report Requirements- Other Jurisdictions

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Jurisdiction	Requirements
City of Palo Alto	Letter Report (brief, for removal of one or two trees), Tree Survey Report (More extensive than letter report, includes remedial actions) Tree Protection and Preservation Report ( <i>recommendations for the health and long-term welfare of trees</i> )
City of Atlanta	Require the arborists prescribing trimming or removal of a tree to do the work themselves
City of Menlo Park	Certified arborist reports submitted for removal or construction are reviewed by City arborist
County of Marin	Can be prepared by ISA, ASCA or experienced professional



## Current County Ordinance Requirements

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*“...significant or heritage trees proposed for removal on the basis of poor health, potential hazard, or when a significant or heritage tree(s) is proposed to remain, but new development would encroach within the dripline of the tree(s)”*





## Current County Ordinance Requirements

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Existing Tree Plan Application  
Requirements: *arborist report*  
*is required if trees outside of a*  
*proposed structure's footprint*  
*will be affected*





## Current County Ordinance Requirements

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### Content Requirements:

*“General health of tree to be trimmed, cut down or removed, as documented by a licensed arborist... The arborist report shall assess the condition and health of the tree proposed for removal, the actions that could be taken to avoid removal, and the recommended course of action...”*





## Current Ordinance Limitations

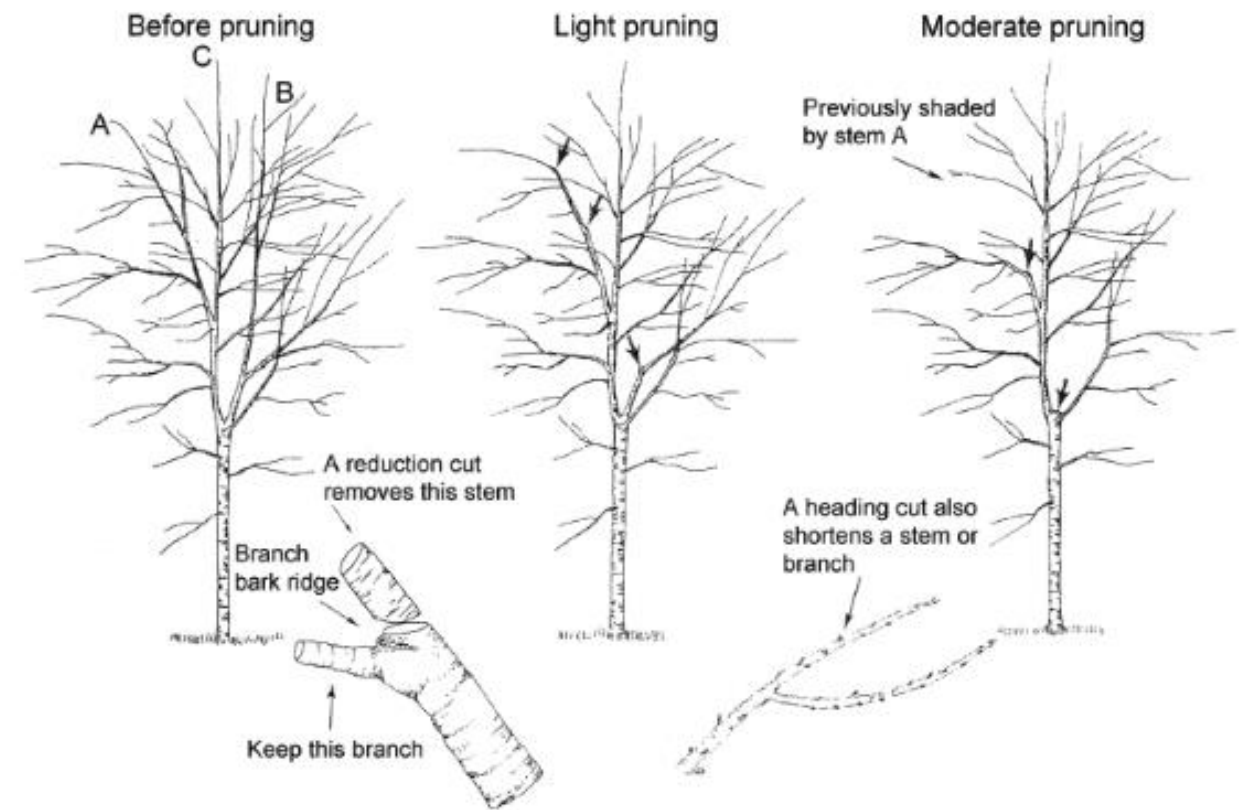
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- Consistent Terminology
- Clear and consistent requirements for when an arborist report is required what it must contain, who is allowed to prepare it
- Improvements to Tree Preservation Plans: Arborists Role



## Arborist Reports: Policy Option 1 and 2

Require Arborist Reports for all Significant or Heritage Tree removal or trimming permit applications, and for all exterior development on sites where protected trees are located





## Arborist Reports: Policy Option 1.a

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Letter Form arborist reports shall include detailed information about the tree(s) in question, current health assessment, measures needed to enhance health, likely longevity, structural assessment, annotated photos and plans, reason for removal, proposed replacement

### Arborist Report Elements

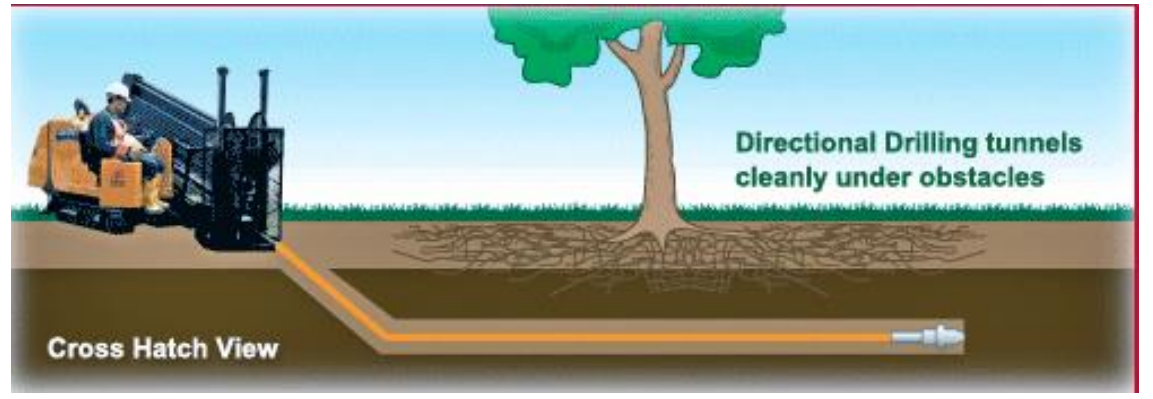
1. Assignment
2. Observations
3. Analysis or testing
4. Discussion
5. Conclusion(s)
6. Recommendation(s)
7. Supporting information (optional)



## Arborist Reports: Policy Option 1.b

A booklet arborist report shall be provided with all existing Tree Plans for demolition, planning, grading or building permit applications.

It should contain all the information required in a letter report, plus tree protection measures, arborist supervision during demolition, grading or construction, and post construction monitoring and maintenance.







## Arborist Reports: Policy Option 3

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**Who Can Prepare Arborist Reports?**

ISA Certified Arborists or  
ASCA Registered Consulting  
Arborists.

Should we allow Licensed  
Foresters? Experienced  
professionals without  
certification? Maintain a list?





## Policy Option 4: Conflict of Interest

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### Limiting Conflicts of Interest

- Require TCIA Accreditation for businesses that prepare arborist reports
- Require the trimming/removal permit applicant to pay for a 3<sup>rd</sup> party consulting arborist
- County list of certified arborists





**Thank you.**

**For more information about this project, please contact:**

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