CHAPTER 8.12 DRAFT REVISIONS

Tree Protection Ordinance

Current code vs. proposed edits

October 27, 2026 · 3:30 pm · Sebastopol Youth Annex

What's protected

	CURRENT	PROPOSED
Protected tree	About 20 listed native species. 10" DBH, or 20" on single-family and duplex lots	Any species except escaped exotics. 10" DBH on all properties
Permit threshold	Single-family and duplex: 20". Multifamily and commercial: 10" natives, 20" other trees	10" on all properties
"Tree removal"	More than 1/3 of the crown or roots removed, the tree relocated, or the tree killed	Any act likely to kill, relocate, or destabilize the tree under A300. All work on a tree within 36 months counted together
Pruning exemption	Less than 1/3 of the crown	Less than 1/3 of the crown within any 36-month period

How tree work is judged

	CURRENT	PROPOSED
Work standard	Refers to the ISA pruning guidelines	**NEW** All work follows ANSI A300. Remove no more than the stated objective requires; no removal if the tree can be kept
Application	States the reason for removal	Objective chosen from a set list. "Reduce risk" needs a TRAQ assessment of current and remaining risk
Approval	Meets one of five criteria	Same criteria, verified by the City Arborist and compliant with A300
Exemptions	Utilities exempt	Utility exemption removed. Fire-code and defensible-space work exempt, minimum required
Phasing	Not addressed	**NEW** Splitting work into phases to avoid a permit is prohibited

Development sites

	CURRENT	PROPOSED
Tree protection zone	The dripline	Standard TPZ of 1 ft per inch of DBH, or site-specific TPZ approved by the City Arborist
TPP trigger	Work within the dripline. Single-family exempt under 20"	Any development area within the TPZ, incl. access and staging. Single-family threshold 10"
Arborist	An ISA arborist certifies compliance	**NEW** Designated arborist of record, in the public record, with 2 business days' notice before TPZ work
Responsibility	The developer	The owner, the permittee, and each contractor
Bond forfeits	Go to replacement or other tree uses	Go to the restricted Tree Replacement Fund

Replacement trees & fees

	CURRENT	PROPOSED
Number	Minimum of two trees, set case by case	Worksheet: 1 to 4 trees by DBH, ±1 for native species, public visibility, condition, and creek proximity
Size	15-gallon	15-gallon minimum. A 24" box counts as 2 trees
In-lieu fee	$75 per tree	Cost-based, about $1,750 per tree
Fund	General "tree fund"	**NEW** Restricted Tree Replacement Fund: buying, planting, and establishing trees only

Violations & penalties

	CURRENT	PROPOSED
Penalty	Up to $500 first offense, $1,000 after	Appraised value before minus after (Trunk Formula). Rebuttable, credit for replanting, plus enforcement costs
Intent	Not considered	**NEW** Multiplier: 1x negligent, 1.5x reckless, 2x knowing, 3x intentional or malicious
Criminal	All violations are misdemeanors	Misdemeanor if knowing or worse; otherwise an infraction
Professionals	Not addressed	**NEW** Business license suspension up to 180 days, or revocation. Penalties for false risk assessments

Public notice & work hours

	CURRENT	PROPOSED
Notice	Posted on the parcel and in 2 places within 300 ft, 10 days ahead	Same, plus mailed notice within 600 ft for development removals. Public trees: 14-day posting at entrances and newspaper notice
Hours	Weekdays 7 am–8 pm, weekends 8 am–5 pm, no holidays	Same, except permitted work weekdays 8 am–5 pm only

Values still in brackets

TPZ ratio · 36-month window · replacement counts and box sizes · in-lieu fee · intent multipliers · assessor penalty amount · citation chapter