



Staff Report

City of Pomona Planning Commission

May 27, 2026

FILE NO: MAJOTP-000505-2025

A request for a Major Oak Tree Permit for the retroactive approval of the removal of nine (9) mature Oak Trees within on-site perimeter landscaping of an industrial property located within the Workplace District 5 (WD5) zone.

ADDRESS: 2300 S. Reservoir Street (APN: 8330-012-022)

APPLICANT: Ranscapes, Inc.

PROJECT PLANNER: Alan Fortune, Associate Planner

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15304 (Class 4: Minor Alterations to Land) of the California CEQA Guidelines in that the project consists of the alteration of landscaping.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve File No(s). MAJOTP-000505-2025 and adopt PC Resolution No. 26-008.

Project Information:

GENERAL PLAN DISTRICT: Workplace District Edge

ZONING DISTRICT: Workplace District 5 (WD5) [MM2-G1-IX1]

TRANSECT: T5

SPECIFIC PLAN DISTRICT: NA

GENERAL PLAN DENSITY: 80 DU/AC, 4 floors max

Project Request:

The applicant, Ranscapes Inc., is requesting the retroactive approval of a Major Oak Tree Permit for the unpermitted removal of nine (9) mature oak trees that lined the site's west property line along Reservoir Street. These trees were removed in 2025 as part of larger improvements within the site; no permit was obtained for the removal of these trees. Though no longer possible to definitively verify, the City Arborist determined, through historic imagery, that the trees were both mature and likely in healthy condition. According to the applicant, the trees had matured to the point where they had begun interfering with overhead utilities, making their continued maintenance more dangerous and necessitating their eventual removal. Oak Trees are protected in the City of Pomona pursuant to Section 1300.J (Oak Tree Preservation) of the Pomona Zoning and Development Code.

Project Background:

The industrial park located at 2300 S. Reservoir Street, consisting of multiple buildings with smaller industrial tenants, is known as "Five Elements Business Park." Previously known as "McGee Business Center," this development was part of the larger Reservoir Street Redevelopment Project Area created in 1978. With development of the site shortly after, perimeter landscaping was installed with intermittent oak trees to act as a buffer between the redevelopment project area and multi-family residential uses across the street, as well as to increase the relative low amount of landscaping within the redevelopment project area.

The subject nine (9) oak trees, likely dating from site development, were removed without any permits in summer of 2025 with an associated citation issued by the Code Compliance Division shortly thereafter. Pursuant to Section 1300.J (Oak Tree Preservation) of the Pomona Zoning and Development Code, a Major Oak Tree Permit is required for the removal or relocation of any oak tree.

According to the applicant, the nine (9) trees had matured to the point where they had begun interfering with overhead utilities, making their continued maintenance more dangerous and necessitating their eventual removal, though this is no longer possible to verify. Staff is conditioning that these trees be replaced according to the objective methodology established in the Pomona Tree Preservation Guidelines with a four-to-one ratio, requiring that a total of 36 trees be planted on site or, if infeasible, an in-lieu fee be paid so the City may plant the replacement trees nearby in the same Council District within city parks or within public rights-of-way. The subject site is located within City Council District 3.

Project Review:

A Major Oak Tree Permit is required to be approved by the Planning Commission for the removal or relocation of any healthy and mature Oak tree, pursuant to Section 1300.J (Oak Tree Preservation) of the Pomona Development and Zoning Code. The City has also adopted the Pomona Urban Forestry Manual which specifies the specific species approved to be planted for every parkway within public right-of-way. In this case, since the trees were removed without a permit, we have no way of determining the size and health of the trees, which makes determining a tree value impossible. As an alternative, the City used the objective methodology used as part of the tree preservation program for the protection of trees in historic districts. A replacement ratio is determined through an objective methodology established within the Pomona Tree Preservation Guidelines, which have been provided as Attachment No. 4 for the Commission's reference.

REPLACEMENT RATIO:

The Pomona Tree Preservation Guidelines establishes an objective replacement methodology based on the type of tree proposed for removal, its size (diameter at breast height or dbh), and the proposed replacement tree species. Pursuant to this methodology, the trees must be replaced on a four-to-one ratio, resulting in a total of 36 replacement trees. The Replacement Methodology is as follows:

Tree Type x Heritage Tree x Retroactive Permit = Total Replacement Value.

Any tree replaced with the same species **or** replaced with a tree on a preferred or required list is replaced with a 1:1 replacement ratio.

Any tree removed over twenty-four (24) inches in diameter shall be replaced at a rate double the rate specified under "Tree Type." (2:1 replacement). The City arborist, based on google imagery, estimated that all nine removed Oaks had diameters greater than 24".

All applications requiring approval of a tree removed prior to approval are replaced at double the combined rate of Tree Type and Heritage Tree. This requires that the 2:1 replacement be doubled, requiring that each tree be replaced on a 4:1 ratio, totaling 36 trees.

The Oak Tree Preservation Section of the Code (Section 1300.J.8.b) states removal of Oak trees shall be replaced at a one-to-one ratio and with a 36-inch box tree. It also states that "additional or larger trees and other vegetation may be required as conditions of permit approval, if they are determined to be necessary to compensate for the loss of the original oak trees and/or to aid in erosion control or to otherwise protect the environment from the effects of the tree removal". Staff's recommendation is that a ratio greater than one-to-one is required to compensate for the loss of mature, healthy trees and that the four-to-one ratio with 36-inch box trees as determined in the tree preservation guidelines is an appropriate ratio to compensate for the tree loss.

REPLACEMENT SPECIES:

The species of the now-removed subject Oak Trees is unknown. The replacement species were chosen through the Pomona Urban Forestry Manual and recommendations by the City Arborist.

As conditioned, the applicant shall plant 36-inch box Bronze Loquat trees (*Eriobotrya deflexa*) in the landscape strip on private property along Reservoir Street, the same area the subject Oak trees had been. As recommended by the City Arborist, these are to be planted between 25' and 40' on center; the applicant is proposing ten (10) Bronze Loquats in this area. Bronze Loquats are shorter than the previous Oak counterparts and is utilized by the City when utilities are present or narrower landscaped planters are available. This species of tree is approved to be used within street landscaping along S. Reservoir Street in this area, however Reservoir Street does not have space to accommodate landscaping within public right-of-way in this area. Because the subject site has a relatively large, landscaped areas lining the west property line, Bronze Loquats are conditioned to be used to act as parkway and buffer between the industrial park and the multi-family residential uses across the street.

Because the exact area of where the Oaks were can reasonably accommodate approximately sixteen (16) replacement trees, Staff is conditioning that the applicant plant the required 36-inch box trees within the existing parkway along Olive Street which bounds the subject site to the north. The Urban Forestry Manual requires that Silk Floss trees (*Ceiba speciosa*) be planted and be approximately 30' to 40' on center, as recommended by the City Arborist. This area, shown on the submitted planting plan as Attachment No. 2, can reasonably accommodate sixteen (16) trees. These trees will become City trees as they are planted within public right-of-way in the parkway along Olive Street. Because the parkway to the north does not have any City trees, these will similarly function as perimeter and buffer landscaping to screen on-site industrial uses.

Due to a relative lack of available space on site for additional tree planting, the applicant may pay an in-lieu fee to satisfy the required planting of the ten (10) trees remaining. This fee will go to the City to facilitate tree planting within parks and public right-of-way within City Council District 3.

Required Findings:

The findings required in Section 1300.J.4.f of the Pomona Zoning and Development Code for a Major Oak Tree Permit are contained in the attached resolution (Attachment No. 1).

Pursuant to Section 1300.J.4.f, a Major Oak Tree Permit for removal may only be approved based on the following findings:

1. *The proposed relocation or removal of the Oak tree(s) will not result in soil erosion through the diversion or increased flow of surface waters which cannot be satisfactorily mitigated;*
2. *The proposed relocation or removal of the oak tree(s) is necessary as continued existence at the present location impedes the planned improvement or proposed use of the subject property to such an extent that:*
 - a. *Alternative development plans cannot achieve the same permitted density or the cost of such alternative would be prohibitive, or*
 - b. *Placement of the Oak tree(s) precludes the reasonable and efficient use of such property for a use otherwise authorized;*
3. *The proposed trimming, cutting and pruning will be limited to the minimum necessary to promote the health of the tree and protect the public safety, and whenever possible trees should remain in place or be moved only the minimum distance necessary to preserve the health of the tree and protect the public safety.*
4. *The Oak tree(s) proposed for relocation or removal interferes with utility services or streets and highways, either within or outside of the subject property, and no reasonable alternative to such interference exists other than the relocation or removal of the Oak tree(s);*
5. *The condition of the Oak tree(s) proposed for removal with reference to seriously debilitating disease or danger of falling is such that it cannot be remedied through reasonable preservation procedures and practices; and*
6. *The proposed relocation or removal of the Oak tree(s) will not be contrary to or in substantial conflict with the purpose and intent of the Oak Tree Permit Process.*

Conclusion:

According to the applicant, the nine (9) oak trees had matured to the point where they had begun interfering with overhead utilities, making their continued maintenance more dangerous and necessitating their eventual removal. In accordance to the objective methodology for tree replacement in the Pomona Tree Preservation Guidelines, Staff is requiring that the trees be replaced on a four-to-one ratio, requiring that a total of 36 trees be planted to adequately compensate for the loss in canopy. There will be more trees on-site than there were previously and trees will continue to act as a buffer between the industrial park and adjacent multi-family residential uses across Reservoir Street.

Environmental Review:

Staff has determined that this project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15304, Class 4 (Minor Alterations to Land) of the California CEQA Guidelines in that the project consists of the alteration of landscaping.

Community Input and Noticing:

A copy of the public hearing notice (Attachment No. 5) was published in the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin on May 15, 2026. A public hearing notice was also sent to the owners and occupants of properties within a 400-foot radius of the subject site on May 14, 2026. As of the date of this report, Staff has not received any comments in opposition to or in support of the proposed project.

Conditions of Approval:

Staff has included draft conditions of approval to ensure adequate compensation for the loss of the screening and landscaping, as well as compliance with all applicable standards. A full list of Conditions of Approval are contained in the attached resolution (Attachment No. 1).

Among the conditions of approval is the requirement for the applicant to submit for a landscape plan check, as is required by the Pomona Municipal Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance, or MWELo (Ord. 4232), whenever 2,500 square feet of landscaping is rehabilitated. Also required is a landscape maintenance bond that shall be posted by the applicant to the City and held for a period of one year to ensure the project's compliance with approved landscaping.

Attachments:

1. Draft Planning Commission Resolution No. 26-008
2. Project Plans
3. Photographs of site and surrounding area
4. Pomona Tree Preservation Guidelines
5. Public Hearing Notice
6. Applicant Correspondence