



## CITY OF MORRO BAY

CITY HALL  
595 Harbor Street  
Morro Bay, CA 93442

### TREE REMOVAL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Nov. 5, 2021**

#### **Why do trees need to be removed along the bike path?**

Some trees located near the bike path south of Atascadero Road near Lila Keiser Park were identified for removal due to proximity to the Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) pipelines and high-voltage lines, safety of construction crews, and overall tree health. A total of 27 trees located along the bike path south of Atascadero Road, near Lila Keiser Park, have been removed to make way for new pipelines associated with the Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) project. These trees were removed to allow sufficient access for the work and to facilitate construction worker safety and future public safety.

#### **Who approved the tree removals?**

The California Coastal Commission (CCC) issued the City of Morro Bay a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) for the project. The CDP approval documents include project construction plans that have been reviewed, approved, stamped, and signed by the CCC. The CCC approved plans include the following provisions:

- The City may utilize a 70-foot-wide easement along the bike path for the project.
- The City may remove specific identified trees within this easement.
- The City may clear and grub all other vegetation and/or brush that has a trunk diameter of less than six inches, as measured at the height of an adult's breast (arborists measure trees this way). This measurement, called "diameter at breast height" or DBH, is estimated at 4.5 feet above ground surface.

The CCC approved plans ([available on the City's WRF website](#)) include the following notes allowing the removal of 23 trees:

- DRAWING 05-PP-6, KEYNOTE 9, TREE REMOVAL, TYPICAL OF 2, BIKE PATH
- DRAWING 05-PP-7, KEYNOTE 2, TREE REMOVAL, TYPICAL OF 5, BIKE PATH
- DRAWING 05-PP-8, KEYNOTE 2, TREE REMOVAL, TYPICAL OF 10, BIKE PATH
- DRAWING 05-PP-9, KEYNOTE 2, TREE REMOVAL, TYPICAL OF 2, BIKE PATH
- DRAWING 05-PP-10, KEYNOTE 2, TREE REMOVAL, TYPICAL OF 4, BIKE PATH

In an email dated August 20, 2021, the CCC granted approval to remove four additional specific trees to allow access for the jack and bore tunnelling work being used to avoid the Willow Camp Creek Jurisdictional Area. The additional tree removals were deemed necessary to facilitate worker safety. This brings the total number of removed trees to 27 as noted above.

#### **Who oversees the contractor's work to verify compliance?**

A team of biologists at Kevin Merk Associates was awarded the City contract to provide biological monitoring services for the project, and their team has been approved by U.S. EPA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife as the project's "Service-Approved Biologist," with responsibility to oversee compliance of all associated biological and regulatory requirements. The City's Program and Construction Manager, Carollo Engineers, is responsible for monitoring and verifying compliance with all Construction Contract provisions and requirements, including the work noted here.

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**Have trees along the bike path been removed by others besides the City?**

Yes. Part of the 70-foot-wide easement noted above is within PG&E and Vistra property with active power lines and utility infrastructure that requires regular trimming and shrub/tree removal. There has been vegetation maintenance including tree removal work performed by PG&E throughout the life of the power plant, and possibly other agencies, before the City of Morro Bay conveyance project work started, and since the project work has commenced. The City of Morro Bay does not have control over PG&E operations nor their activities on PG&E right-of-way. There are numerous overhead power lines along the bike path and, as such, tree maintenance and periodic removals by PG&E are necessities.

**Will more trees need to be removed?**

The City is currently evaluating the need for any additional tree removals to complete the project. The City is required to obtain prior written approval by the CCC before removing any additional trees, and the City will ensure all tree removal is mitigated following current City policies.

**What will the bike path look like in the future?**

The bike path will be reconstructed to be in better condition than it was prior to the start of the project. Before it is safely re-opened to the public in 2022, the path will be paved and a native hydroseed mix will be applied to all disturbed areas. The seed mix will include grasses, wildflowers, and shrubs that are native to the area. Locations for future tree and shrub plantings are also being identified by the City's Public Works Department to mitigate tree removals in this area and to have trees planted in suitable locations (i.e., not under power lines). The goal will be to create a safe bike path and healthy urban forest for generations to come.