



**SF Environment**

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A Department of the City and County of San Francisco

London N. Breed  
Mayor

Deborah O. Raphael  
Director

## Memo

Date: October 27, 2020  
To: Urban Forestry Council  
From: Urban Forestry Council Landmark Tree Ad Hoc Committee  
Re: Recommendations for Changes to the Public Works Code, Article 16, Section 810

## Introduction

Per Article 16, Section 810(f)(1), the Urban Forestry Council must develop for recommendation to the Board of Supervisors uniform criteria, rules, and procedures governing determinations to remove landmark trees.

Currently, the code states that a Landmark Tree cannot be removed unless it is determined to be a hazard tree by the Director of Public Works. Recognizing that overarching criterion, we have proposed the following changes to clarify the process and ensure removal is only a last resort. We propose the changes as an entire package; it is important to note that proposed deletions are dependent on the additions being adopted.

## Proposed Changes to Article 16

- From Section 810(f)(1), delete *“The Urban Forestry Council shall develop and recommend for adoption by the Board of Supervisors uniform criteria, rules, and procedures governing determinations to remove landmark trees.”*
- In Section 810(f)(1), correct reference to Section 810(g)(4) to read *“Section 810(f)(4)”*; and remove the word *“the”* between the words *“unless”* and *“it”*, respectively.
- To Section 810(f)(1), add after *“806(a)(2)”*:  
*“and 806(a)(3)”*
- Insert new subsections after Section 810 (f)(1):
  - A. *“If either a private property owner or a City agency desires to remove a Landmark Tree on its respective property, the owner or the agency, respectively, shall apply to the Department for a Landmark Tree Removal Permit, as per Section 806 for street trees, and shall obtain a tree risk assessment, per the most recent version of the ISA tree risk assessment manual, performed by an ISA certified arborist who is Tree Risk Assessment Qualified. The assessment shall inform the Director’s determination of whether or not a Landmark Tree is a hazard tree, as per Section 802.*

B. *The Director shall incorporate the tree risk assessment into the written finding that determines (as per Section 802) whether the Landmark Tree is a hazard tree. The Director's finding shall include an explanation of whether the hazardous condition could be mitigated by another method (e.g., cabling or heavy pruning) other than total removal of the tree. If the Director's finding indicates that the hazardous condition could be mitigated by an action or actions other than total removal of the tree, then the finding shall include specific recommendations for such actions.*

➤ Strike the last sentence from Section 810 (f)(2):

*"Pending adoption of criteria for removal of landmark trees, the Department shall rely on the general criteria set forth in Section [810\(f\)\(4\)\(A\)-\(F\)](#)."*

➤ Delete and replace phrase in Section 810(f)(3):

*Substitute the word "in" in place of the phrase "adopted by the Board of Supervisors pursuant to".*

➤ Strike the second to last sentence from Section 810(f)(3):

*"Pending the Board of Supervisor's adoption of the criteria, rules, and procedures pursuant to Section [810\(f\)\(1\)](#), the agency, commission, or department shall follow the general criteria of Subsection (f)(4)(A)-(F) and similar rules and procedures for removal of street trees as set forth in Section [806\(c\)](#) and for removal of hazard trees as set forth in this Section [806\(a\)\(4\)](#)."*

➤ Add new subsection 810(f)(4)(G):

*"(G) Whether the tree appears to have had routine maintenance and/or major maintenance as defined in Section [802](#)."*

➤ Add into appropriate footnotes in the code:

*"This ordinance was modified by the Board of Supervisors on recommendation from the Urban Forestry Council on X Date etc. etc."*