Christopher Donovan
Fire Chief

CITY OF MONROVIA
OFFICE OF THE FIRE CHIEF

Monrovia Fire Department
Hazardous Tree Removal Cost-Sharing Program

Dear Resident,

- Do you live in Monrovia's Fire Hazard Zone?
- Do you want to remove a **fire-hazardous tree** from your property?
- Do you want half of the costs paid through a cost-sharing program?

Through a competitive grant from the California Fire Safe Council and the U.S. Forest Service, the Monrovia Fire Department is offering a 50/50 cost-share program to assist residents in removing palms and other fire-hazardous trees. You will pay only 50% of the removal cost and the city, through grant funds, will pick up the rest.

Palms and other trees, such as eucalyptus and any unhealthy tree, can act like torches increasing the risk of fire near your home.

Here are some basic requirements for eligibility:

- ✓ You must live in the Monrovia Fire Hazard Zone (see attached brochure)
- ✓ You must be the homeowner or have the homeowners written consent
- ✓ The tree must belong to you
- ✓ The tree must be fire-hazardous (see attached brochure)
- ✓ You must be willing to pre-pay your 50% match to the Monrovia Fire Department
- ✓ Eligibility is only for tree removal. Tree trimming is not eligible for this program
- ✓ The City approved contractor must remove all the wood from the site as wood-piles are a frequent fire hazard
- ✓ Tree removal work must be completed by ***January 31, 2015***.

Limited grant funds are available – first-come, first-served

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This is how the program works:

1) Contact the Monrovia Fire Department Brush Hotline at 626-256-8109 or email rwing@ci.monrovia.ca.us. Provide your address, tell us how to contact you, describe the tree or trees that you want to remove and why you consider them fire-hazardous. This puts you on the list but does not obligate you to participate in the program.

2) Monrovia Fire Department will call you back to discuss the project and arrange for an inspection/site walk with staff and the contractor's representative.

3) After the site walk, you will be re-contacted with *eligibility status and costs to complete the project

4) If you choose to proceed, you will need to visit City Hall, sign an agreement with the City, and deposit your 50% share of the project costs.

5) Monrovia Fire Department staff will coordinate with you and the contractor for the actual removal date. *(In order to secure the lowest possible cost, project scheduling will be done for maximum efficiency, so please plan to accommodate the contractor's schedule. You will want to be onsite for the tree removal to oversee the work, open gates, etc).*

6) It is highly recommended that you send "before, during and after" pictures to the Fire Department to be included in our Grant Report. Please try to get someone to photograph you with the tree beforehand, and again, in the same place, after the work is complete, showing how you have reduced flammable fuels and improved your home's wildfire survivability.

7) You will also need to record all your hours spent working on this project and report them to the Fire Department. Your hours are valuable and contribute to the work of mitigating fire hazards in your neighborhood; This project can't be done without your help!

8) Once the work is satisfactorily completed, the City will pay the contractor the remaining 50% due.

9) On receipt of your photos and record of hours, you are done, and can enjoy a safer Defensible Space. *(Please refer to the attached brochure, "Trees for Monrovia's Hillside Neighborhoods").*

Respectfully Yours,

Christopher Donovan
Monrovia Fire Chief

**The Monrovia Fire Department reserves the right to deny project requests based on cost estimates, property ownership verification concerns or other unforeseen circumstances that do not have a public safety benefit.*

TREES FOR MONROVIA'S HILLSIDE NEIGHBORHOODS

MONROVIA LOVES TREES

Monrovia loves trees! Our streets are lined with them, some are even named for them (e.g. Myrtle Avenue, Royal Oaks, Maple, Walnut, to name a few.). Trees provide priceless benefits, such as shade, beauty, and wildlife habitat, and they may also protect us by stabilizing soil or screening us from heat and embers of a fire.

Want to know more?

Check out the Arbor Day Foundation website: arborday.org/trees/treefacts/. And if you want to join an effort to map our trees visit treemapla.org.

TREES AND FIRE HAZARD

Southern Californians know that wildfires are inevitable in our region due to our particular combination of weather, topography, vegetation, and the pace of building into fire-prone lands. In high fire hazard areas trees can increase or decrease wildfire risk to our homes, depending on the trees' location, condition, and other characteristics. The following table lists some characteristics of a harmful or fire-hazardous tree.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR – FIRE HAZARDOUS TREES

health	Diseased, stressed, damaged, dead or dying.
size	Too large for site; cannot grow naturally.
location	Tree not well-suited to site conditions. *"Wrong tree; wrong place"*
companion plants	Incompatible with preferred companion plants – needs more water, etc.
growth rate	Rapid growth, "grows like a weed".
maintenance	Tree is too costly or difficult to maintain; neglected, stressed or "topped"; fallen leaves and branches allowed to accumulate.
spacing	Crowded, no breaks between trees and homes.
leaves	Needles or narrow leaves; resinous.
spacing	Crowded, no breaks between trees and homes.

fire ladder	"Fire ladder" – bushes, vines, branches, dead palm fronds, peeling bark, etc. on or near trunk that could carry a ground-level fire into tree canopy.
water needs	Moderate to high water use – may become drought-stressed if irrigation is interrupted.
embers (firebrands)	Tree likely to produce flying embers that can spread fire long distances (e.g. palm fronds).
utility lines	Tree will grow to interfere with utility lines, or requires frequent or damaging pruning to avoid lines.
topping	Tree "topped", causing permanent damage to structure or health of tree.
invasiveness	Invasive tree – basically a large weed. May increase fuel for fires or clog drainages.

By contrast, a beneficial tree in Monrovia's Fire Zone is healthy, easy to maintain, well-suited to its site, non-weedy, slow-to-moderate growing, drought tolerant, never "topped", free of fire ladders, has extensive roots to hold the soil, with a root zone which is protected from disturbance. If it is a deciduous tree, its leaves fall where they can be readily raked up and removed. The canopy of a beneficial tree can help screen a home from flying embers, rather than being a source of them.

Want to know more?

Check out the Sustainable and Fire Safe Landscapes website at ucanr.edu/sites/SAFELandscapes/

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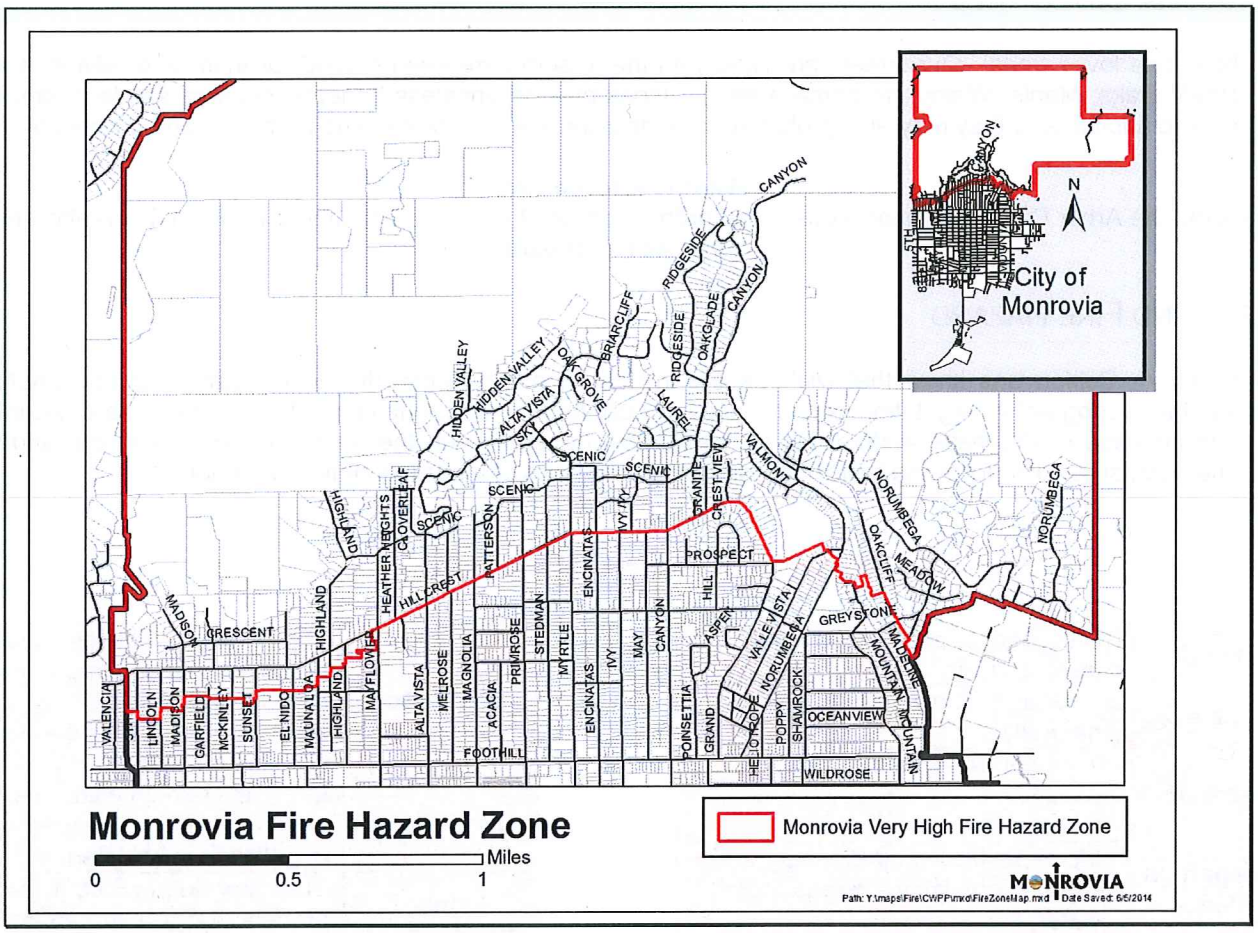
Fire Hazard Zone

Do you live in one of the approximately 1,500 homes that are in Monrovia's designated fire zone? The map below shows the portion of Monrovia that is designated this way:



The map is based on the recommendation of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire), showing areas of significant fire hazards based on flammable vegetation, terrain and weather. These zones are referred to as Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ).

If you live within Monrovia's fire zone, you may already know that you are required to provide defensible space around your home, which may include trimming dead branches and palm fronds, pruning trees away from your roof, and cleaning the fallen leaves out of your gutter. Also, if you are building within this zone, you will be required to have your building and landscape plans checked by the Fire Department.

Even if you do not live within the designated fire zone, why not prepare your home (structure, landscape and trees) to resist fire?

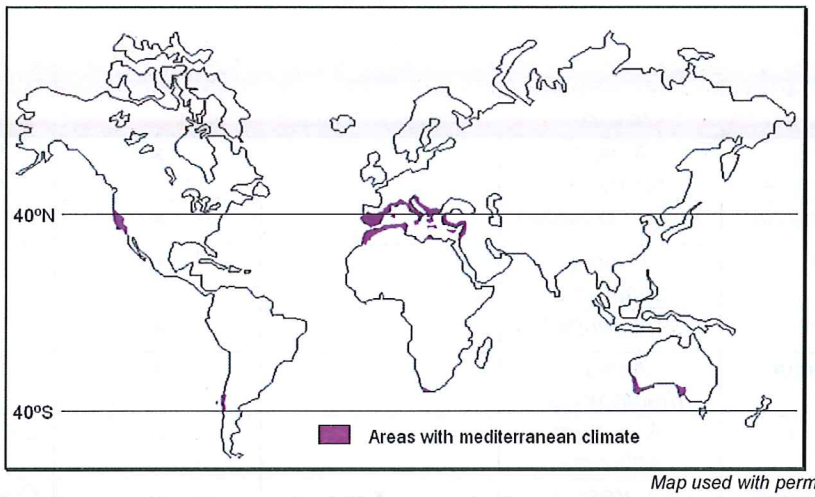
Want to know more?

You can find the defensible space requirements in Chapter 8.14 of Monrovia's Municipal Code at: cityofmonrovia.org/cityclerksoffice/page/municipal-code .

Climate and Ecology

Monrovia enjoys a particular type of climate known as a Mediterranean climate. There are only five spots in the whole world that enjoy this climate – parts of Southern California, Chile, South Africa, Australia, and, of course, the lands around the Mediterranean Sea.

The Mediterranean climate typically gives us cool, wet winters and warm, dry summers. Our native plants are adapted to this cycle of winter rains and summer drought, and it has given us several lovely native plant communities that thrived on our hillsides long before people inhabited them. These include:



Map used with permission from Wikimedia commons

Shrublands (includes Chaparral) – On our dry hillslopes, plants are deep-rooted and tolerant of long summers. Look for toyon with its red berries; pointy yucca, used by native people to make soap and rope, and sumac, able to resprout from its roots after fire. Mammals, reptiles, birds, and butterflies thrive in the shrublands.

Oak Woodland – Our lower slopes and ravines are home to noble oak woodlands, and many of our neighborhoods were constructed among these trees. Living in harmony with oaks requires special care. Monrovia has an Oak Tree Ordinance that protects mature oaks (link provided below).

Riparian (streamside) Woodland – Where water flows, at least part of the year, we find tall sycamores and graceful maples, as well as plants such as gooseberry that thrive in the shaded understory of the trees. Riparian areas are key for wildlife, as well as for flood protection and water supply.

Want to know more?

You can learn how to preserve oaks at: cityofmonrovia.org/communitydevelopment/page/oak-trees

Right Tree, Right Place

The key to a healthy and firesafe urban forest is the right tree in the right place. A tree is a legacy – choose one that will thrive and please you with minimal tending.

Certain trees are strongly discouraged in Monrovia's fire zone – for example, the fan palm, which can get to 100 feet tall and sport a massive "skirt" of dry palm fronds. Those fronds ignite easily from flying embers and then become like torches, spreading fire. Trimming of a tall palm is costly and can be dangerous.

The Monrovia Fire Department has identified 22 tree species that should be avoided in the fire zone. These are listed at the back of this brochure.

Want to know more?

Better tree choices are too numerous to list here, but you can find many online sources, such as: selectree.calpoly.edu, and fire.lacounty.gov/forestry-division/forestry-fuel-modification/.

Long Term Tree Maintenance

"A tree lives for 100 years and dies for 100 years." Often by the time they show signs of decline, the damage has already been done. Perhaps the roots or bark have been damaged, allowing disease or insects in. Grading, soil compaction, incorrect pruning or watering can severely weaken a tree. The professional who understands how to keep trees healthy is an arborist. For all but very routine care, it is recommended that you hire a qualified arborist.

Want to know more?

You can look up qualified arborists on the website of the International Society for Arboriculture, at treesaregood.com

Fire Zone "No-No List":
22 Trees to Avoid in Monrovia's Fire Zone

Common Name(s)	Botanical Name	Fire-Hazardous	Invasive *	Comments
Bailey Acacia; Cootamundra Wattle	*Acacia baileyana*		x	
Silver Wattle; Mimosa	*Acacia dealbata*		x	
Green Wattle	*Acacia decurrens*		x	
Golden Wattle	*Acacia longifolia*		x	
Blackwood Acacia	*Acacia melanoxylon*		x	
Tree of Heaven	*Ailanthus altissima*		x	Extremely invasive.
Mediterranean Cypress; Italian Cypress	*Cupressus sempervirens*	x		Creates heavy litter and hazard of vertical fire spread.
Russian Olive	*Elaeagnus angustifolia*		x	
Red Gum	*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*	x	x	Creates abundant flammable debris and stringy bark. Generates embers.
Blue Gum; Tasmanian Blue Gum	*Eucalyptus globulus*	x	x	Creates abundant flammable debris and stringy bark. Generates embers.
Shamel ash	*Fraxinus uhdei*		x	
Juniper	*Juniperus spp.*	x		Fine, dense foliage.
Myoporum; Ngaio tree; Mousehole Tree	*Myoporum laetum*		x	Extremely invasive.
Canary Island Date palm	*Phoenix canariensis*	x	x	Creates dead fronds.
Date Palm	*Phoenix dactylifera*	x	x	Creates dead fronds.
Pine	*Pinus species*	x		Needle accumulation; susceptible to pests
Peruvian Pepper; "California" Pepper	*Schinus molle*		x	
Brazilian Pepper	*Schinus terebinthifolius*		x	
Coast Redwood	*Sequoia sempervirens*	x		Fine foliage; stressed by drought, and sun exposure
Salt Cedar; Tamarisk	*Tamarix spp.*		x	Extremely invasive
California Fan Palm	*Washingtonia filifera*	x		Creates dead fronds.
Mexican Fan Palm	*Washingtonia robusta*	x	x	Creates dead fronds.

* *All invasive plants can become fire-hazardous if unchecked. This is because their "fast and furious" growth can increase fuel loads. They also can alter the structure or health of the vegetation in a way that may enable a fire to spread more readily. For a lits of other invasive species visit cal-ipc.org/ip/inventory/*