

**Downtown Decorative Lighting: Introduce
an Ordinance Amending Section 37.02.040
of the Davis Municipal Code prohibited acts
related to Street Trees and City Trees**

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Background

- Proactive tree pruning (7-year cycle) in area that includes downtown this FY
- To prepare for pruning (in summer, with less traffic & activities), decorative lighting on trees previously installed had to be removed
- Trees exhibited significant impacts from previously wrapped lighting, also concerns with electrical connections



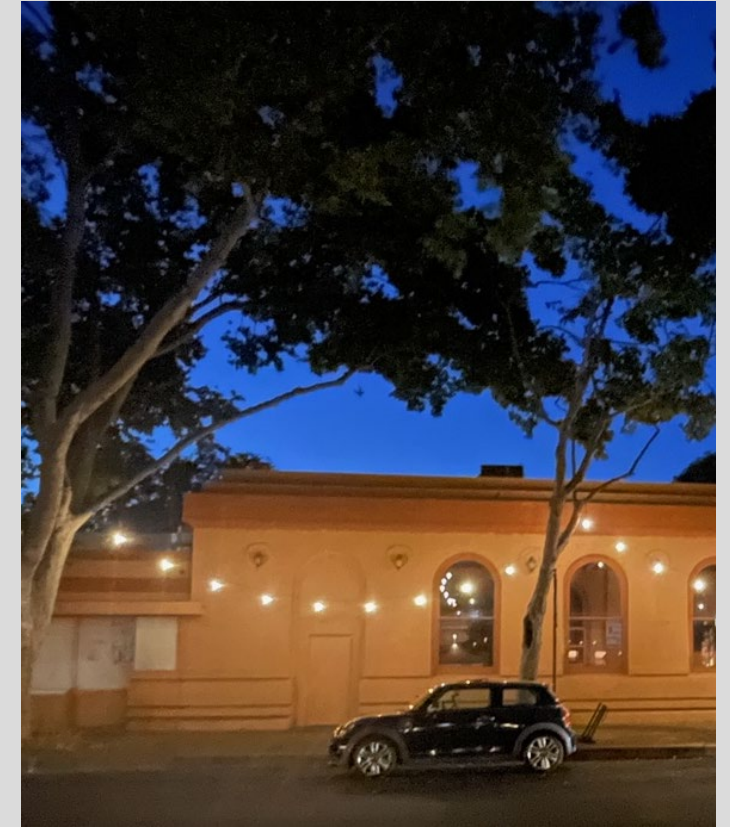
Balancing Competing Goals

- Removing wrapped lighting harming trees
- Minimizing impact to tree health with any future lighting
- Providing ambiance and atmosphere in active downtown spaces for enjoyment
- Ensuring all electrical connections to decorative lighting are compliant with Fire Codes



Temporary Solution to Lighting

- **Removal of lighting highlighted need for long-term policies to protect trees and standardize approach**
- **Until long-term plan could be created, and to mitigate impacts to downtown atmosphere and ambiance from the lighting, temporary lighting was suggested for areas where the wrapped lights were removed**



Community Discussion

- **Concerns raised about City Code related to 37.02.040: Prohibited Acts, doesn't allow for lighting contact with trees; and Article 8.17 in Buildings related to outdoor lighting**
- **Concerns also raised about timing, temporary nature of lighting, and involvement of Tree Commission and others in discussion**

Tree Commission Action

- **Heard update from staff on September 6, provided a motion for City Council consideration. Motion concludes with the following:**

“Therefore let it be resolved that the Tree Commission urges the City of Davis to prohibit lights in the downtown trees until a pilot project is approved by City Council. In order to determine what specific practices can be put in place to put up lights which won’t harm the tree and can serve for updating City code.”

Key Points to Consider

- **Based on input heard, staff is recommending targeted change to the ordinance which allows City Council to determine what decorative lighting, if any, is placed within the City tree canopy**
- **Also recommending via resolution the allowance of temporary decorative lighting minimally attached to City trees within the downtown**
- **City staff will work on temporary exemption for outdoor lighting (Chapter 8: Buildings)**
- **Continue to work on long-term plan with key collaborators**

Proposed Process for Long-term Lighting

- **August/September:** Temporary lights placed that meet current safety codes and electrical connections, minimize impacts to tree health and are weather proof and reflect general downtown ambiance
- **Fall 2023:** City staff examine and research options for permanent processes and procedures for decorative lights in downtown in collaboration with Tree Commission and others
- **Early 2024:** Draft lighting installation options and potential decorative tree lighting process and procedure, with funding and a maintenance plan to be discussed with key collaborators including Tree Commission and Council

Staff Recommendations

- **Introduce an Ordinance amending section 37.02.040 of the Davis Municipal Code regarding prohibited acts related to Street Trees and City Trees and find the ordinance amendment exempt from environmental review pursuant to CEQA Sections 15061(B)(3) and 15304(E); and**
- **Approve the Resolution authorizing the installation of temporary decorative lighting by City staff in the trees within the downtown; and**
- **Direct City staff to prepare documentation for an administrative exemption from City Municipal Code 8.17.030 - Outdoor Lighting Control General Requirements for the purposes of installing temporary decorative lighting in the Downtown.**