

NAME _____

DATE _____

The town council of Center City is facing a dilemma. Ms. Keesha Thomas owns a vacant lot downtown. She wants to build a car dealership on the lot to sell low-emission and electric cars. But she wants to remove the huge, 150-year-old oak tree, known as the Heritage Oak, that grows in the middle of the lot.

The town's plan does not prohibit developing a car dealership downtown, but it does require that people obtain special permission to remove trees. The plan also requires that all lots have at least one street tree for every 20 feet (6.1 m) of sidewalk frontage. Since the vacant lot is about 120 feet (36.6 m) long, it will require six trees.

The town council has heard from the following stakeholders in this case:



MS. THOMAS: My downtown lot is perfectly situated to attract customers to my new business. I plan to build a small sales office and pave the rest of the area for parking cars. I would like to remove the Heritage Oak because I need the space for cars and because the tree would damage the cars with falling branches, acorns, leaves, and bird droppings. I do not want to plant any street trees for the same reason; they would create a mess that could damage the cars.



NEIGHBORS: We live in an apartment complex behind the lot and are strongly against the car dealership. We currently enjoy a beautiful view of the Heritage Oak from our windows and do not want to look out onto a sea of cars. We also worry that the business would create lots of traffic and make a lot of noise.



CLEAN CENTER CITY: As a local civic group, we support the sale of environmentally friendly cars, as they help reduce carbon emissions and pollution. We believe that forward-thinking businesses like Ms. Thomas's will help Center City in the long run. We urge the town council to do all it can to help Ms. Thomas's business thrive—including removing one tree, if need be.



TOWN PLANNING DEPARTMENT: Our department oversees the long-term planning and development of Center City. We believe that trees are important for the town, as they provide beauty, shade, and habitat for birds and wildlife. Large trees like the Heritage Oak are especially valuable because they clean pollution from the air and absorb lots of carbon, storing it in the wood. Even if the tree is allowed to remain in the lot, paving over its roots could harm it and threaten its health. We also stand behind our town's street tree plan, which ensures that all lots have street trees.

What should the town council do?

I LOVE MY
GREEN JOB

CAREER CORNER

COMMUNITY PLANNERS develop land-use plans to help meet the changing needs of cities, towns, and counties. They also recommend whether new proposals should be approved or denied.

