

From: [Beth Brown](#)
To: [Montoya, Michelle](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] April 2 Climate Change SubCommittee Meeting - put into public record
Date: Tuesday, April 1, 2025 4:34:36 PM

Dear Members:

I am writing to note, once again, that the City of Santa Rosa will never reach any climate goals without addressing its lack of tree canopy, especially in neighborhoods in areas with lower socio-economics. I am baffled why the city is so resistant to developing its tree canopy. Bay Area cities (Petalume, San Francisco, etc) have been busy getting new trees planted. Santa Rosa abdicated responsibility for its tree canopy years ago to residents who do not have the expertise to pick up where the city left off. Trees require expertise like every trade and thus should never have been put on homeowners with no resources or support. It is very obvious that the city's tree canopy is old - like 20 years old; the city has many empty wells and abused trees. Oddly, the city's response to its numerous empty tree wells has been to brick, cement, and asphalt over them. New cement work done by the city often omits tree wells. This is the wrong approach!

It was obvious to me when I arrived in Santa Rosa 3 years ago, that unlike so many cities, Santa Rosa has not been planting/caring for its street trees. The tree situation in the Luther Burbank District is quite shocking. Santa Rosa Ave is an embarrassment. How about bike/walking trails with ZERO tree canopy? It is baffling that these trails were built with no protection from the elements while biking/walking.

Santa Rosa ReLeaf has stepped in over the last few years to try to compensate but without a city master plan, a tree program, any expertise, a few city partnerships, we will be limited in what we can accomplish. People want trees! But there are numerous issues to be successful such as the city's poor sidewalk infrastructure that does not properly support trees. In addition, the city has no consequences for cutting down street trees and there is no notification to residents/neighbors/city council when trees are going to be removed. Chad Hedges, Parking Dept, last year, cut down over ten trees on 5th and D street - right in the middle of downtown - with no public input. He cut down redwood trees! A number of us have repeatedly asked him to hold a community meeting to discuss the removal of the numerous trees and any plans for replacement. He has refused to hold any such meeting because he is not required to do so. This is completely unacceptable. Public notifications are standard policy in cities. In addition, most cities require trees to be replaced within a few months. On 5th and D Street we will be going into a SECOND HOT SUMMER with no trees along 5th and D Street. The first order of business should be to have Chad Hedges hold a public meeting so we can plan for replacement trees along that hot, dry downtown strip. Why would Santa Rosa want its downtown to look so ugly and be so miserable to walk? I would think that the city would want to draw people down to downtown - not repel them with a blighted parking lot.

In summary, I will repeat my mantra that any climate change action plan must be made to prioritize tree canopy. The city is very much behind other cities (I know because I work with them) in not getting trees in the ground so that in the years ahead, when it is even hotter and more difficult to be outside, the city will have an improved tree canopy that will provide health benefits, comfort, and beauty. Why is the city requiring its residents to continue to accept its current sad tree canopy?

I would welcome an opportunity to present to any of the council members information about the city's current tree canopy and ideas for improvement. I can be reached at 415-517-9359.

Sincerely,

Beth Brown

Santa Rosa ReLeaf

<https://santarosareleaf.org/>