

From: [Robin](#)
To: [Montoya, Michelle](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Climate Action Subcommittee 6.1 TRESS - EXISTING CODES, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES
Date: Tuesday, February 4, 2025 8:34:00 AM

Dear Committee Members

The existing city codes, policies and procedures in regards to trees are completely outdated and promote the active destruction of our urban tree canopy.

In looking for ways to mitigate climate change, Santa Rosa is completely ignoring nature-based solutions such as increasing the urban tree canopy. Current policies are causing reductions in canopy and increases in the urban heat island effect.

Real time canopy reduction rates can be found here: <https://treecanopy.us/>

Things that Santa Rosa can do to nurture and increase our urban tree canopy:

Change tree policies to favor tree education, planting and care of trees rather than removal.

Dedicate staff to urban forestry matters

Take responsibility for street tree maintenance away from homeowners.

Seek funding from other agencies such as CalFire, the State of California, California Urban Forests Council

Cultivate relationships and co-operate with non profits and citizen groups such as Santa Rosa Releaf including: Staff participation in planting and maintenance events, sharing goals and information on street tree actions, assisting with cutting new tree planting wells, assisting with curb cutting to allow street runoff into tree planting wells, assisting with watering of new and established trees especially along main corridors and the downtown core.

Expansion and care of an urban canopy is a long-term and lower cost component in the efforts to adapt to our changing climate that must be included in city policy and action now.

Thank you,

Robin North [REDACTED]

From: [Beth Brown](#)
To: [Montoya, Michelle](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Climate Change SubCommittee 2025
Date: Friday, January 31, 2025 7:43:17 PM

January 31, 2025

Dear Members of the Climate Change Sub-Committee:

Four years ago, I purchased a home in the Luther Burbank Garden District and was shocked to find that the “City of Trees” has a serious tree canopy problem including:

- The lack of a health equitable tree canopy!
- The lack of a city tree program,
- The absence of city-community organization partnership,
- Many old, sick trees,
- Trees being cut down, right and left, with no consequences,
- Many empty tree wells – even right outside City Hall,
- New/replacement trees were hard to find,
- No one at the city to call about its trees!

I was even more dismayed to discover that the City of Santa Rosa, unlike many cities in California, did not apply, and thus was not awarded, Inflation Reduction Act tree funds. I was beside myself to discover that the City of Santa Rosa, not only did not apply for these funds but did not even know about these funds, despite the news of the availability of these funds being widely disseminated. Cities are currently using their tree money to make huge inroads in regards to climate change readiness and building their tree canopy for the future. I have met with numerous leaders from other cities in the bay area and they have updated tree lists. They have arborists. They respond to issues and partner with community groups on plantings. They have conducted tree canopy surveys and have mandates to address tree inequity. None of these actions are happening in Santa Rosa. You know how I know this? Because I have tried and tried and tried for 4 years to work with the City of Santa Rosa and I have come up empty handed. I have been told directly that tree canopy is not a priority for the city of Santa Rosa. I have been told directly that City Leaders do not care about this issue. I have been told directly that The Mayor does not care about climate change. City staff have not responded to calls. They have looked at me dumbfounded when I have asked questions about its tree program. I have a neighbor across the street who cut down two 20 year old crape myrtles street trees with no consequences. I now live across the street from stumps. There have been numerous large trees cut down in my neighborhood, completely distressing neighbors, but they have no one to turn to and there is no Notification Process for tree cutting in the

city. In fact, Chad Hedges, who works for the Parking Dept cut down a row of trees on 5th and D Street just based on his own whim. When asked to hold a community meeting to explain to neighbors what happened and what the plan would be for landscaping on this now boiling hot, barren, downtown street - he refused, saying he was not required to notify the community. So this is how it goes in Santa Rosa - complete disrespect for its tree canopy and the community.

The Climate Change Sub-Committee will be discussing trees at this upcoming meeting? What is the chance that this meeting will actually happen? Last year you held only one meeting. Numerous times we lined up at the door to find that the meeting was cancelled due to lack of attendance by its city council members. So I will not take another chance at being stood up but instead will send you yet another letter pleading that the city finally develops a tree program!!!!

I would hope that the Committee is aware of the scientific evidence on the ecological and public health benefits of trees and tree canopy. Surely you must know that the clock is ticking and thus we must be working to mitigate the effects of climate change now, most specifically addressing increasing heat and the uneven rains. Trees are one of the few things that we can do relatively easily and inexpensively to address the effects of a changing climate plus mitigate the impact of urban pollution and noise, and to create more healthy communities. In the absence of a tree program in Santa Rosa I initiated Santa Rosa ReLeaf where I have self-funded and put in myself hundreds of trees for residents and local businesses and I continue to monitor them for their health and summer watering needs. I have expected that the city would partner with Santa Rosa ReLeaf - most specifically on assisting with watering new trees using the city's watering trailer that SITS unused. But no request for partnering has been met - unlike so many other cities that instead respects its nonprofits, sharing resources and skills. Let me say that I have been shocked and disappointed that I have had to take on Tree Canopy because the city has abdicated its responsibility and then fails to partner/offer assistance when asked. You can no longer hang signs bellowing that Santa Rosa is "The City of Trees" when you have sick and old trees, empty tree wells stocked with parking meters or bricked over. It is ridiculous that the city has no arborist, no policies to protect its trees, and continues to swat away the concerns of educated ecology activists. The city's time is up on that.

I am writing to tell the Committee that it has no choice but to make tree canopy a priority across all city departments which means:

1. Task staff to seek out funding for tree canopy;

2. Implement and enforce policies regarding the cutting of all trees;
3. Implement public notification requirements of trees being removal so the public can weigh in, ensure that the removals are necessary, and to create a value toward trees and to help the public understand the importance of eliminating trees, especially mature trees;
4. Require trees to be planted along sidewalks and bike lanes;
5. Require any tree being removed to be replaced within 60 days;
6. Require every home to contribute to sidewalk tree canopy; Permits for other home renovations cannot be signed off on unless there is the presence of a street tree.
7. Require all public works projects to include the addition of trees; Start cutting tree wells in all the concrete that lines the city's neighborhoods!
8. Make sidewalk cutting for trees same day/over the counter permitting or eliminate permitting all together;
9. Provide residents a fee for service by DPW to cut tree wells when requested by residents,
10. Implement significant fines to tree service companies that violate policies;
11. Plant in open areas, along major transit corridors, in school yards, etc large native trees; these trees are likely to be able to sustain the future's climate changes;
12. Create a program to help homeowners repair sidewalks possibly damaged by trees and to cut tree wells bigger. Relatedly, remove the extra cement, bricks, asphalt installed to covered open curbs which would result in increasing the city's permeable surfaces. And stop putting in parking meters in existing tree wells. These permeable spaces are for trees NOT for parking meters.
13. Hire an arborist to do a city-wide tree canopy assessment to examine the health of the city's tree canopy and to identify canopy inequities.

The list above is not complete nor are these ideas new. These approaches are currently being employed by many cities in California. The City of Santa Rosa can look to Petaluma, a city a fraction of the city's size, who is many years ahead of Santa Rosa in understanding the importance of its tree canopy in mitigating climate change. They also applied and received significant funding from the Inflation Reduction Act for trees. Staff really should have been aware of funding opportunities and now it's on the city to make up for this loss!

In summary, The City of Santa Rosa needs to prioritize tree canopy, task staff with identifying and applying for funding, and work to get a functional and progressive Tree Program ASAP. I completely support the Climate Change Subcommittee FINALLY

putting tree canopy on its agenda and hope it moves forward with an extensive tree program.

Beth Brown

Founder of Santa Rosa Releaf

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From: [Paul Miller](#)
To: [Montoya, Michelle](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Climate Subcommittee / Tree planting in Santa Rosa
Date: Sunday, February 2, 2025 12:32:08 PM

Dear Ms. Montoya:

I will unfortunately not be able to attend this Wednesday's climate action subcommittee meeting, which intends to address the tree canopy and planting of trees in Santa Rosa.

I have been aligned with Beth Brown, who has – singlehandedly – created a Santa Rosa chapter of the non-profit ReLeaf, and has planted over 180 trees – solely at her own expense – in Santa Rosa. We have a small but passionate group, and we continue to learn about, and are approached by, other individuals in Santa Rosa who are equally passionate about it.

City resources are stretched thin, and are being stretched even further, with budget cuts to come. Funds to plant and care for trees will likely be the first on the chopping block, when compared to other necessities like road repair and fire and police services.

We have an active, engaged, and passionate group of citizens who are passionate about planting trees in Santa Rosa, and we would love to have the City make the ability to plant and care for trees easier.

We can purchase the trees.
We can plant the trees.
We can water the trees.
We can trim the trees.

We just need your help to make it easier to do so.

Please help break down barriers in place to allow us to plant these trees easily. Give us a point person who we can get easy approvals for, and get questions answered. Get creative and think outside the box on ways to streamline the process, and make approvals easier.

We have the passion, energy, and means to replant Santa Rosa with trees, but nothing snuffs out this passion quicker than running into a bureaucracy.

I would encourage the City of Santa Rosa to do everything in its power to make the planting and replanting of trees as easy as possible.

Thank you.

Paul Miller, Esq.
Estate Planning Law

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