

September 20, 2021

Honorable Mayor Kate Colin and City Council members
City of San Rafael
1400 Fifth Avenue, room 203
San Rafael, CA 94901
Via email: lindsay.lara@cityofsanrafael.org

Please include this letter in the correspondence for agenda item 6.(c). FY 2021/22 Budget Amendments

Honorable Mayor Kate Colin and City Council Members:

We ask for your support to modify the budget goal from adopting a "Street Tree Ordinance" to adopting a "San Rafael Tree Ordinance" in order to accelerate the City's goal to implement General Plan 2040's newly adopted tree policies and programs and respond to our Climate Emergency.

The City of San Rafael has been awarded the designation of TREE CITY USA by the Arbor Day Foundation, an organization which supports the planting, care and preservation of trees in our communities. They also recognize the important role that trees play in reducing greenhouse gases. See link: <https://www.arborday.org/trees/climatechange/>

In June, the City Council adopted a 2021/22 goal of creating and adopting a "Street Tree Ordinance" to clarify responsibility and maintenance of trees within the right of way. Since then, the City Council adopted General Plan 2040 which addresses the community's concern for better Tree management policies and tonight you will consider a Climate Emergency Declaration.

Given this additional information, we encourage you to re-characterize the "Street Tree Ordinance" as a more comprehensive "San Rafael Tree Ordinance," encompassing the planting, preservation/maintenance, and replacement of trees throughout the city, including trees in our parks, along our streets and other public rights-of-way, and elsewhere. Defining a policy for protected trees is an important part of this work. It is inefficient to separate out one use or location of trees when trying to implement our tree policies and responsibility for environmental stewardship.

We appreciate Council member Llorens Gulati's role as the Sustainability Liaison for the City Council and we request her assistance in forming a working group that would include city staff and members of the public working together to determine the scope, research other jurisdictions, and accomplish the adoption of a comprehensive "San Rafael Tree Ordinance" in the near future.

By working together, we can assist the City's new goals for greenhouse gas reduction through the sequestration of carbon that trees provide, while accelerating the implementation of related tree programs and policies in our newly adopted General Plan 2040.

Thank you for supporting our community goals.

Sincerely,

Victoria DeWitt
William Carney
Amy and Joe Likover
Kate Powers
Gina Silvestri, President, Gerstle Park Neighborhood Association