

June 12

To: Santa Clara City Council

Date: June 7, 2022

From: Craig Larsen

Topic: Santa Clara Tree Canopy Advocacy

Dear Mayor Gillmor and Councilmembers,

Per a 2020 risk mitigation report, over 400 Modesto Ash trees are subject to evaluation and removal. Some of the trees recently lost on our local streets, Bowers and Wade, we <sup>Re</sup> due to tree disease, rot or other natural factors. However, the current tree removal plan favors removing trees for whatever reason rather than seeking ways to preserve the trees.

I live on a street corner and thus we have two Modesto Ash trees which appear to be in good health. These trees provide shade for our home, curbside parking, an environment for wildlife and many other benefits. I had one concern with our trees and received a visit from the City Arborist Mr. Banuelos who stated that any issue with a Modesto Ash tree would result in its removal. There was no mention of preservation. I know we have Modesto Ash trees of varying degrees of health. I feel we should do more to preserve the health of the trees as best we can. For example, our neighbor's Modesto Ash tree has a limb supported by cabling that limb to an adjacent branch.

My fellow tree advocates could not attend tonight. We chose to advocate because we believe in the idea that trees are more than the obvious benefits they provide and, because of this, they need someone to be their voice in government. Like Dr. Seuss – we intend to “speak for the trees”.

Purpose to be on agenda:

1. Tree advocacy: protect the existing tree canopy
2. 2020 Risk Mitigation report review
3. Tree Advocacy Proposal

Cutting down so many of the Modesto Ash trees within three-four years would be devastating to the existing canopy, especially with our current drought conditions. As the Lorax said: "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Craig Larsen

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Addendum:

**What we know about City's Tree plan 2020 Risk Mitigation Plan:**

**City Tree Budget - Dept of Public Works - \$1,029, 268**

**\$458,000 for removal (44%)**

**\$107,000 for planting (10%)**

**\$310,000 for pruning (30%)**

**\$158,000 for emergency (15%)**

**Budget can be moved around, so instead of removal, can go to planting - other**

**Consultants recommended removing 169 MA trees, 264 further evaluation, likely many of these will be removed.**

**Benefits of Trees (from Casey Trees' Guide to Tree Advocacy in Washington, DC – Advocacy :**

**Discuss the Modesto Ash Risk Assessment report. Need to protect existing trees.**

- 1. Absorb Stormwater**
- 2. Clean Air**
- 3. Mitigate Climate Change**
- 4. Mitigate Heat**
- 5. Support Wildlife**
- 6. Community Cohesion**
- 7. Physical and mental health**
- 8. Public safety**
- 9. Traffic calming**
- 10. Build better business**
- 11. Saves energy**