

Butte Environmental Council



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October 3, 2014

To: City of Chico

RE: Appeal of BPPC Tree Removal Permit for Mission Ranch CMD

The Butte Environmental Council requests the Chico City Council reconsider the Bidwell Park and Playground Commission's 9/29/14 approval of the permit submitted on 9/2/14 by Mission Ranch CMD to remove twenty-five sycamores from the City right-of-way. We base our appeal on our belief that the project has undergone inadequate environmental review because the cumulative effects on the urban forest have not been discussed.

Last year about this time we appealed to Council a decision to remove another set of trees. We withdrew the appeal, in part, because the City committed to completing the Urban Forest Management Plan within a year. Almost a year later, the Plan is not much closer to completion.

The sub-committee tasked with finalizing the plan has not met in three months. In 2014, the Tree Committee has cancelled 6 out of 9 meetings. Last year, in 2013, the committee meetings were cancelled from July – December. Completion and adoption of the Urban Forest Management Plan requires that key staff and committee members commit to finalizing the draft document.

The position of the Urban Forester remains unfilled. The City's own Sustainability Indicators Report has found the Urban Forest "needs improvement." For five straight years the City has removed more street trees than it planted. Twenty-five trees here, twenty-five trees there. What will Chico's tree canopy look like ten years from now if this trend continues? Will we still be able to call Chico the City of Trees?

We respectfully request you reconsider this decision. We request that Council consider the following items before final approval of the tree removals at Mission Ranch Blvd:

- **A detailed tree replacement plan, including timeline, budget, and species list should be presented and approved.** The municipal code (16.66-5) says that tree removal permits "shall include a condition that the removed trees be replaced" with a new 15-gallon tree for every six inches in DBH removed.
- **Set a timeline for selection of the Urban Forest Manager.** Funding has been approved for this position in the current fiscal year but the position remains vacant.
- **Set a deadline on adoption of the Urban Forest Management Plan.**

In the interest of upholding the City of Chico's tree preservation goals, as stated in the municipal code, we call for a moratorium on further tree removals until these steps are addressed by City Council.

Respectfully,

Robyn DiFalco
Executive Director, Butte Environmental Council