

Save Our Chinatown Committee

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City to Vote on Controversial Discard Policy for Riverside's Historic Chinatown Archaeological Site

Riverside, CA – On February 3, Jacobs Development Corporation uprooted and destroyed plants and century-old palm trees from Riverside's historic Chinatown archaeological site at the corner Tequesquite and Brockton Avenues. The actions were taken before the City Council approves the controversial archaeological treatment plan for a proposed office building at that location.

The proposed development is in the early stages of litigation brought by the Save Our Chinatown Committee (SOCC). “The developer [Doug Jacobs] has been granted access to the site by its current owner, the Riverside County Board of Education, and is acting as if he is already the rightful owner. Both parties appear to be acting in complete disregard of the law and the public's concerns,” said Eugene Moy, SOCC member. “The SOCC opposes any premature work on the site, including landscape removal, or surface grading which may destroy archaeological and historic context, until a final Historic Site Treatment Plan has been approved by the City of Riverside, and a work plan has been prepared by qualified professional archaeologists retained specifically for this project.”

Despite appeals by local citizens and recommendations from archaeological experts at a recent Land Use Committee hearing on January 29, the archaeological treatment plan submitted by environmental consulting firm IFC Jones & Stokes was approved and recommended to the City Council. The Land Use Committee approval was granted with the condition that substantial revisions be made to the controversial discard policy.

“I have never, in my experience, seen a research design [treatment plan] that included an explicit and detailed plan to justify the disposal of artifacts even approaching what is in this plan,” said Dr. Scott Fedick, Professor of Anthropology and Archaeology at UC Riverside. “This is clearly a plan for disposal rather than a plan for preservation.” The discard policy currently available to the public calls for the disposal of artifacts based on any of nine different criteria. Final approval of the archaeological treatment plan may be voted on by the City Council as early as February 10.

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