

RECEIVED ON: January 22, 2024

From: [Chrystal Solis](#)
To: [Rigo Garcia](#)
Subject: Uptown trees
Date: Monday, January 22, 2024 2:51:42 PM

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Dear council,

I would like to begin my letter by first saying: “thank you”. Thank you for taking comments and suggestions from community members regarding Greenleaf Promenade Project and the associated tree removal plans. It is my sincere held belief that a community thrives when we have open discussions about policies or plans that have a significant effect on the direction of our city. It is my hope that this letter will help convey my concerns, as well as concerns from others in our community, who do not wish to see the removal of Uptown Whittier’s trees as part of the Greenleaf Promenade Project.

Whittier has a rich history of honoring and maintaining its historical roots. From the preservation of the nearly 150-year-old Jonathan Bailey House, to raising \$80,000 to maintain the Pio Pico mansion, to the rescuing, renovating, and relocating the Southern Pacific Railroad depot: Whittier has track record of preserving its historical heritage. While Whittier maintains its connection to the past, it has not shied away from modernization or beautification projects either. Projects like updating the Whittier Public Library or building out the Whittier Greenway Trail have been a source of pride and joy to see completed. I am proud to see Whittier be a city which continues to move forward while maintaining a connection to its past.

Knowing this about Whittier, I was very surprised by the proposed plans to remove over 100 Ficus trees from the sidewalks lining Uptown Whittier as part of the Greenleaf Promenade Project. While I do not object to the Greenleaf Promenade Project as a whole, I believe the city is capable of completing this project without removing all these trees. I believe these trees are as much a part of Whittier’s identity as the historical sites mentioned previously.

While these trees highlight Whittier’s small-town culture and beauty, it also serves a practical functionality: providing shade, cooling, and protection from the ever-present California sun. At a time when it feels like record-breaking temperatures hit Southern California every year, proposing removing a prominent source of cooling and shade seems shortsighted. Even if Whittier plans to replace the tree they remove, it may take years before Uptown Whittier sees the benefits of these new trees.

With regards to concerns that the existing trees may

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damage the new renovation after a couple of years, I wonder if it is not possible to also alleviate those issues while we are breaking ground in the area. I imagine that the city will be removing the existing trees from the root; would it not be possible to keep the existing trees while addressing the root problem (no pun intended)? It is my hope we can address the underlying issues regarding the tree while preserving them through the renovation.

I understand the city's desire to renovate and modernize Uptown Whittier. I want to reaffirm my support for Whittier's decision to continue improving our city. These plans will no doubt improve local businesses, build a vibrant center for community gatherings, while continuing Whittier's tradition of modernization while honoring its past. I believe Whittier is capable of reaching these goals without sacrificing our trees in the process, which is as much a part of Whittier's identity as our historical sites.

I would like to thank you again for your time in reading this letter as well as for your work for improving Whittier. I hope this letter helps illustrate my concerns to you and that helps better inform your ultimate decision.

Best,

Chrystal

Rivera