

RECEIVED ON: January 22, 2024

**From:** [Whittier Citizen](#)  
**To:** [Rigo Garcia](#); [WebMail - CCD](#)  
**Subject:** Whittier Promenade: Removal of ficus trees (comment)  
**Date:** Monday, January 22, 2024 7:31:23 PM

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Dear Whittier City Council,

I write to you regarding your decision to remove the ficus trees on Greenleaf. I understand the topic of the Greenleaf Promenade & Streetscape Beautification Project has been on the agenda at 15 Whittier City Council meetings, some of which I have attended. However, I believe the first time the actual removal of the ficus trees was discussed was at the most recent December 2023 meeting with the publishing of the December 12, 2023 report. Given the fact that the decision to remove the trees was made about a month ago, it should come as no surprise to the council that word is quickly spreading about your decision to remove the ficus trees, engendering a desire to discuss your decision. I strongly encourage you to take the public's comments on the topic under submission.

One of the reasons I purchased my home in Whittier three years ago was because of the abundance of trees in both the uptown and residential areas. The ficus trees make uptown quite unlike any of our neighboring cities like La Mirada, La Habra, Downey, Montebello and others, which are desirous of trees and the shade they bring in the hot summer months. Though I understand that keeping the ficus trees would mean an increase to the overall cost of the beautification project, I believe there is room for compromise. I urge the council to reconsider keeping a percentage of the ficus trees. For instance, if 25-40% of the ficus trees are kept, this would allow the council to minimize costs and also allow the new trees to reach maturity and provide the shade the ficus trees currently provide. Once the new trees reach maturity, the remaining ficus trees could be removed based on a set schedule and replaced with new trees.

To emphasize the importance of the ficus trees and how iconic they are, I'd like to direct you to (1) the "Destination California: Whittier" link available on the city's instagram social media account (published 8/26/2021), (2) Spectrum News "Spotlighting the Picturesque Streets of Whittier" (published 9/28/2023), and (3) RSM's October 24, 2023 update to the city counsel on the Branding Outreach to Whittier residents to revamp the city's brand. In the first example, "Destination California: Whittier", the attention grabbing header of the article reads "Destination California: **Stolling the tree-lined streets of Whittier**". The article goes on to share, in relevant part, "[n]ew restaurants and small shops have popped up along the **tree-lined streets of uptown**...About 20 miles southeast of downtown Los Angeles, you'll find **city streets lined with over 20,000 trees**." In the second example, Spectrum News - The SoCal Scene, features uptown Whittier businesses and historical buildings, and described Whittier as **picturesque**. Picturesque is defined as "visually attractive, especially in quaint or pretty style." Without the ficus trees it is hard to imagine Whittier being described as *picturesque*. In the third example, RSM's representative presented the results of their outreach to Whittier residents. One of the topics RSM discussed in their presentation was *What Makes Whittier*, and stated, "natural beauty, the city's parks program is really vast and great, **it is a really big part of why people want to live here...the trees, the hills, all of these natural elements are a huge part of the story...so we want to make sure we include these ideas as part of a**

**really great aspect of living in Whittier.**" RSM suggested "Charm.Culture.Community" as the new brand for Whittier. Without the Greenleaf ficus trees there is no charm.

Again, I **strongly** encourage the city council to reconsider their decision to remove all the ficus trees on Greenleaf given their iconic value to our city. Without the **tree-lined streets** of Whittier there is no **picturesque**, there is no **charm**. Removing all the ficus trees at once would be, in my opinion, a gross misstep by the city council.

Thank you for your consideration,

Brenda (concerned Whittier resident)