

RECEIVED ON: April 30 , 2024

Council Meeting: 04/30/2024

Agenda Item No: 9

From: [Ken Bodger](#)
To: [Rigo Garcia](#)
Subject: Resident comment for tonight's City Council meeting regarding amended Streetscape Plan for Greenleaf Avenue and proposed tree removal
Date: Tuesday, April 30, 2024 2:58:04 PM

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For the attention of the Mayor and City Council ...

Dear Mayor Vinatieri, Mayor Pro-Tem Warner, and Concilmembers Dutra, Martinez, and Pacheco,

As a resident of Whittier since 1994, I am deeply invested in the preservation of our city's unique character. This is why I am writing to express my strong opposition to the current iteration of the Streetscape Plan, particularly its proposal to remove the mature ficus trees that have been a part of our landscape for decades.

My primary concern with the Streetscape Plan is the planned removal of the mature ficus trees. I believe this action represents a significant step backward in our collective fight against climate change. It will also increase temperatures along Greenleaf Avenue and make Uptown a less inviting place to visit and shop, particularly during the scorching summer months.

A recent *LA Times* [article](#) reported that the Center for Climate Integrity projected that Los Angeles County will need to spend \$12.5 billion through 2040 on climate change mitigation efforts, including \$1.4 billion for urban forests.

It is ironic that at roughly the same time the report was released, our city decided to eliminate 108 trees with less than 1:1 replacement. The replacement trees will be small and have much less carbon sequestration ability.

After a quick Google search, I learned that, on average, the softwood forest industry in North America [plants three trees for every one cut down](#), a 3:1 replacement ratio. Surely, our city, which takes pride in its urban forest and many Tree City USA awards, can do better!

I would also like to see more creative thinking, investigation of alternatives, and openness to them from those responsible for this project.

The attached photos of the front yard of a Whittier home near where I live (at the northwest corner of Rose and Greenleaf, across from Hellman Park) as the new owner, during the course of refurbishing the landscape and house, creatively dealt with the problem of a mature ficus with extensive roots. The first

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photo was taken in June of 2022. The remaining photos were taken just a few weeks ago, almost two years later. The massive roots (over one foot in diameter in places) have been cut back, so they are nowhere near the house's foundation, yet the tree is quite healthy.

It is clear that if there is a desire to save a tree or trees, solutions can be found.

If one homeowner can do this, why can't our city?

For example, would it not be possible to trim offending roots as the above-noted homeowner did, thus satisfying building owners' concerns; rebuild sidewalks to satisfy ease-of-passage, safety, and legal-liability concerns; install braces or supports, or selectively remove weaker trees, also to satisfy safety and legal-liability concerns; and devote some of the excessive \$20 million proposed budget to more frequent sidewalk sweeping to keep the sidewalks cleaner?

This is one possible solution that could meet the needs of the climate, building owners, Uptown visitors, and Whittier residents.

Surely, there must be others.

Whittier can fight climate change, improve our local quality of life, and still meet the concerns of building owners.

Let's work together to find a solution that serves the needs of everyone in our beautiful city and Mother Earth as well.

Sincerely,

Ken

Walter Kenneth Bodger, Jr.

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Whittier, CA 90601

Enclosures - photos



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