Date: June 18, 2024

To: Brian Saeki, City Manager

From: Kyle Cason, Public Works Director

Subject: Greenleaf Promenade

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file the report and provide direction as necessary.

BACKGROUND

In November 2008, the City Council approved the Uptown Whittier Specific Plan (UWSP) to assist in revitalizing the 185-acre, 35-block Uptown area through adoption of a form-based code. The goal of the Specific Plan is to implement the following eight principles for design and future development: 1) Pedestrian orientation, 2) Mix of land uses, 3) Infill development, 4) Interconnected street system, 5) Quality of the public realm, 6) Distinct character, 7) Housing choice, and 8) Smart transportation and parking.

On February 26, 2019, the City Council selected a concept design from SWA Architects for the Uptown Whittier Streetscape Beautification project inclusive of improvements from “paseo to paseo” along Greenleaf Avenue. The project area was approximately midblock north of Wardman Street to midblock north of Philadelphia Street and improvements consisted of new parklets, curbs, gutters, paving, concrete, tree removal, tree preservation, and tree replacement. At the time of the City Council discussion, the project costs were estimated at $3.8 million.

On May 28, 2019, the City Council was presented with a summary of public input gathered as part of the Uptown Streetscape Plan process referencing desired improvements including outdoor dining and parklets, gathering spaces, enhanced safety, cleanliness, and walkability, among others, and adopted the Uptown Whittier Streetscape Beautification Plan encompassing all 35 City blocks in Uptown.

In June 2020, due to the COVID-19 public health crisis, the City Council approved a temporary three-block closure of Greenleaf Avenue to facilitate the Greenleaf Promenade Outdoor Dine & Shop program. The closure, commonly referred to as the Greenleaf Promenade, has allowed retailers and restaurants to operate their businesses in the City-owned public right-of-way through approval of a temporary encroachment permit while adhering to indoor occupancy restrictions. The application process detailed equipment guidelines, current health order protocols, and notice of the City’s right to revoke the permit at any time should it be deemed necessary due to non-compliance or public safety.

On March 23, 2021, the City Council received a presentation featuring a draft concept of a single-block closure of Greenleaf designed by SWA Architects. At that time, City Council directed staff to research traffic control alternatives and perform further outreach to stakeholders in the impacted Uptown area, specifically businesses, property owners, and nearby residents.

On August 10, 2021, the City Council received the results of the Greenleaf Promenade community survey indicating support for the Promenade concept and feedback in alignment with the prior Streetscape Plan outreach process, including: outdoor dining, aesthetic uniformity, security, cleanliness, and diversification of businesses. Additional improvements including sidewalk repair, lighting, public art, and community gathering space were also noted. City Council action included approving an extension of encroachment permits through February 1, 2022 and directing staff to bring back a report containing further information regarding various options for the construction of a future hybrid or permanent Greenleaf Promenade.

On October 26, 2021, the City Council authorized a hybrid concept for the Greenleaf closure that would include the installation of bollards to facilitate expedited police and fire response, uniform build-outs for dining and outdoor gathering, and hosting of special events along Greenleaf Avenue.

On March 8, 2022, the City Council authorized the City Manager to enter into an agreement with SWA Group for preliminary engineering and design services and directed staff to bring back an analysis of concerns brought forward by the Whittier Uptown Association (WUA), Uptown Whittier Improvement Association (UWIA) and Whittier Area Chamber of Commerce.

On June 14, 2022, the City Council directed staff to request a design option from SWA that details a “paseo to paseo” full closure from mid-block north of Philadelphia Street to mid-block south of Philadelphia Street along Greenleaf Avenue, with the remaining portions open to vehicular traffic.

On June 28, 2022, the City Council directed staff to proceed with the Open Street promenade design, with the understanding that traffic access will be temporarily closed at a minimum from Thursday through Saturday.

On September 27, 2022, the City Council was presented with a 30% design progress report.

On November 8, 2022, the City Council received and filed the progress report on the 30% design for Greenleaf Promenade Streetscape Project and authorized the City Manager to execute Amendment No. 1 with SWA for the Greenleaf Promenade Projected Professional Service Agreement A22-039, adding $675,200 to the project.

At a study session held on February 14, 2023, the City Council directed staff to proceed with 4 x 4 pre-cast unit pavers, a running bond pattern with a gradient color blend, and a pillowed finished for skate deterrence; pre-cast concrete unit pavers with central concrete panels for the intersection crosswalks and midblock crosswalks; primary overhead structures at Hadley and Wardman reviewed and approved by LA County Fire and secondary column structures at Bailey and Philadelphia; either a metal canopy option or a cantilevered umbrella option for businesses along Greenleaf Avenue; a paseo plaza in front of the Multideck Parking Structure that would be open space and to close the side driveway to the parking structure between the alley and Greenleaf Avenue; and the creation of a pocket park with open space at 7018 Greenleaf Avenue.

On March 21, 2023, the City Council directed Staff to work with the consultant to design a blend of sign options and then obtain input from the Uptown Association and the Business Improvement Area; to move forward with an open space design; and to explore design options similar to the lights in East Whittier.

As of May 1, 2023, all businesses removed their outdoor enclosures and Greenleaf Avenue was reopened to traffic.

On May 9, 2023, the City Council directed staff to move forward with streetlight options, modular tenant structures in consultation with the branding team, and removable bollards. The City Council also directed staff to move forward with a small pocket park at the City-owned property located at 7018 Greenleaf Avenue.

On August 22, 2023, the City Council authorized the City Manager to execute Amendment No. 2 with SWA for the Greenleaf Promenade Project Professional Services Agreement (A22-039). The amendment expanded the work limits to include designing and rehabilitating street, sidewalk, and alley approaches for an additional cost of $84,500.

On September 12, 2023, the City Council discussed design options related to the new, small pocket park at the City-owned property located at 7018 Greenleaf Avenue and directed staff to move forward with the Weevos + Evos option manufactured by Landscape Structures.

On December 12, 2023, the City Council approved the final design documents for the Greenleaf Promenade and adopted Resolution No. 2023-87 approving an addendum to the approved Negative Declaration under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Uptown Whittier Streetscape plan along with an amendment to the Uptown Whittier Streetscape Plan.

On January 23, 2024, the City Council directed Staff to gather the public’s questions and agendize a Special Study Session to further address those questions related to the Greenleaf Promenade. City Council requested public comments be addressed in a robust presentation.

By consensus, at the February 20, 2024, Study Session Special Meeting, the City Council directed Staff to take back questions and comments and work with the consulting team on mitigation options, along with tree irrigation and maintenance.

By consensus, at the April 30, 2024, Study Session Special Meeting, the City Council directed Staff to agendize a future meeting to discuss additional information pertaining to the Greenleaf Promenade project, including options for 72-inch box trees and a phased approach.

DISCUSSION

Staff received several general and specific questions regarding tree removal, phasing, retention, carbon sequestration, streetlights, liability, project size, environmental documentation, and project design components. Staff will provide a presentation detailing the good faith efforts made to complete additional tasks to provide answers to these questions. These good faith efforts include the evaluation of potential tree preservation by certified arborists at West Coast Arborists, air spading of six Ficus tree roots on Greenleaf Avenue as selected by West Coast Arborists, analysis of the carbon sequestration, discussions with staff at other tree cities, exhibits to visualize findings, and further analysis of additional concerns. Furthermore, a memorandum (ATTACHMENT A) of additional responses to questions, comments, and concerns from a variety of sources has been attached. Staff will provide a presentation of options to increase tree box sizes and increase shade options.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

STRATEGIC PLANNING GOAL

- Transparent & Open Government

ATTACHMENTS

A. Greenleaf Promenade Questions & Answers
B. Greenleaf Phased Tree Removal Summary
C. Tom Bihr – Letter – Carbon Sequestration
D. Greenleaf Carbon Sequestration Response to Tom Bihr
E. Steve Rydzon - Memo – Tree Protection Zone Conflict

Questions from Public Comments in person, online and via email:

Section 1: Questions and Concerns Directly Related to Trees

1. What happened to the tree reports?

Answer: Per the City's Tree Manual, Tree Reports are required after a project is approved, when it appears that construction plans and a particular tree may have an interaction. If mitigating measures are not an option, then a tree report is ordered for the tree. That process is underway and will be completed, per the Tree Manual, before the City Council is presented with final plans and specifications.

2. Why was the expert opinion of local tree expert, Don Hodel, not considered?

Answer: Jeff Crain, who worked directly with Don Hodel, spoke with Don Hodel, and explained his perspective on the analysis. Don and Jeff had a great conversation and Don agreed with the professional assessment provided by Jeff Crain.

3. Does the City's environmental review meet the severity of a complete canopy destruction along the massive carbon dumping? Will these impacts be discussed?

Answer: The 2008 Uptown Specific Plan EIR and the 2019 Uptown Streetscape Plan's Negative Declaration both contemplated the full removal of Ficus trees. Specifically, page 27of the 2019 Streetscape Plan states "Indian Laurel Figs (or Ficus Trees) are a prominent feature of Uptown Whittier, especially along Greenleaf, Philadelphia, and Painter. While grand in stature, these trees have many problems that have resulted in the Uptown Whittier Specific Plan identifying them for removal and replacement with street trees more suitable to the Uptown's urban condition". Additionally, pages 68 and 96 of the Streetscape Plan indicate the replacement of the Ficus Trees. The Greenleaf Promenade project is properly tiered off the prior CEQA documents and proposes fewer tree removals compared to the broader scope of the 2008 Specific Plan.

4. Staff said that the Greenleaf Promenade plan removed 108 and replaces them with 120. This is inaccurate and misleading. The pocket park tree accounts for 1/3 of trees but the pocket park is not part of the plan. Those 34 trees counted as replacement trees won't be part of the promenade construction, resulting in a net loss of 22 trees. Are you going to discuss this next week?

Answer: The project plans to provide 119 new trees while removing 109 trees. The parks will indeed be constructed as part of this project, and their proximity to the removed trees makes them suitable replacements. It is important to highlight that Uptown is one of the most park-deficient areas in the City of Whittier. Creating new park spaces with abundant and dense tree planting was contemplated in the 2008 Uptown Specific Plan and will be appreciated for generations to come.

5. The Conservancy stands by the solution proposed in February: to stick to the phasing of tree removal as defined in the Uptown Specific Plan and send the historic components to the Historic Resources Commission for review.

Answer: This is a phased tree removal of 40% of the Uptown Ficus trees, and the HRC does not have purview over infrastructure items in the public right-of-way. The 2008 Uptown Specific Plan and the 2019 Uptown Streetscape Plan both contemplated options and provided suggestions for the removal of all Ficus trees, including the replacement of half of the Ficus trees with Palm trees.

6. On April 30, Staff presented conclusions including (1) a questionable carbon sequestration chart, (2) mature trees sequester less carbon as they age and die naturally and (3) all trees must go. No facts to support these conclusions have been produced.

Answer (1): Michael Baker, Inc., is an industry leader with over 3,900 engineers, architects, planners, and experts across 85 offices. Their unparalleled expertise and extensive resources make them one of the most highlight qualified consulting firms in the field. MBI utilized i-Tree, a state-of-the-art peer reviewed software suite from the United States Department of Agriculture - Forest Service (https://www.itreetools.org/about) to estimate the long-term

environmental benefits of a tree. MBI considered the location, lifetime, mortality rate, species, diameter of breast height, condition, sunlight exposure, and quantity of the trees when utilizing i-Tree.

Answer (2) & (3): All Ficus trees must go based upon the analysis provided by the Certified Master Arborist. The Certified Master Arborist identified 21 trees for potential preservation or relocation.

7. A significant number of Ficus trees could be saved and maintained by pouring new concrete surrounding uplifting roots instead of using pavers in the areas around those trees.

Answer: The Ficus roots are right at the surface. Replacement of concrete, whether with pavers, concrete, asphalt, or any other kind of traditional sidewalk material, will require subbase preparation and base material installation. Any of these activities will require the removal of substantial roots for each Ficus tree, as the roots are at the surface.

8. Sidewalks could be designed to extend into the street without sacrificing all the Ficus trees.

Answer: This is not feasible, as the tree protection zones extend into the street, and the Fire Department requires a 26-foot minimum clearance on the drive lane.

9. Some pavers could be used decoratively, similar to what exists now.

Answer: With any new construction, the City is required to provide ADA-accessible pathways wherever it is possible for people to walk.

10. Tree Index notes the designated replacement trees for the three blocks of Greenleaf Ave in the Promenade Plan as laurel fig/Ficus trees.

Answer: The Uptown Streetscape Plan, approved in 2019, was adopted after a series of public meetings and following substantial public input, and thus supersedes the Tree Index for the Uptown area. Modifications to the Streetscape Plan for the Greenleaf Promenade will modify that palette for the 3-block project area. WMC

12.40.030 provides for the PRCS Director to approve the type of replacement tree. Section X of the Parkway Tree Manual provides the Tree Index as a guideline for replacement trees, not a requirement.

11. Why wasn't SWA provided with the Tree Index list and the Appendix to the Uptown Specific Plan in making decisions about tree-succession, phasing of tree removal, and selection of replacement trees?

Answer: SWA had access to the Tree Index for both the 2019 Streetscape plan and the Greenleaf Promenade update that SWA created. SWA utilized their professional experience, along with consideration from the public, council, and staff, to create a more unique and appropriate palette for a unique area of Uptown.

12. Why are the proposed "future" pocket park's trees (34) considered as replacements for the Greenleaf trees when not part of the project?

Answer: They are a part of the project.

13. Do not remove any camphor trees.

Answer: 6 of the 8 camphor trees have existing and visible dead wood and are not good candidates for preservation.

14. Do remove every other Ficus tree or more but keep the canopy with the help of a real arborist.

Answer: The Uptown Specific Plan called for the removal of ALL Ficus Trees in phases. Upon further detailed studies by engineers, landscape architects, and certified master arborists, every other phasing has proved infeasible. West Coast Arborists provides arborist services to over 330 municipalities, they carry a Tree Care Industry Association accreditation as a model tree company ensuring professional practices and standards are being met. They are as qualified as an arborist company can be.

Section 2: Questions and Comparisons to Other Cities

15. How is the City of Pasadena addressing Ficus trees along Green Street?

Answer: Green Street replacement Ficus trees will be installed utilizing funds from a local Pasadena non-profit with a root barrier that provides for a 15-year guarantee. This is not optimal. And it still requires the removal of all full-grown Ficus trees.

16. How is the City of Beverly Hills addressing Ficus removal?

Answer: Beverly Hills removed Ficus trees by declaring a Categorical Exemption under the lowest form of CEQA analysis, justifying it as a repair to existing infrastructure. This CEQA analysis is currently being challenged and has not yet been ruled upon. The outcome of this challenge could set a precedent for future tree removals under this exemption. In contrast, the Greenleaf Promenade has employed a more comprehensive and legally sound CEQA analysis, using a Negative Declaration properly tiered off an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Section 3: Questions regarding Funding & Financial Issues

17. Where is the $20 million coming from and what are the funding sources?
Answer: Local RDA loan repayment and Bond Funds, Measure W, and Local sources.

18. How is the $20 million allocated per project component?

Answer: Construction estimates will be finalized through the construction drawing process as details are refined.

19. The City should pay half of all sewer replacement costs.

Answer: This program assumes an incredible amount of liability to the City and would constitute a gift of public funds.

20. The City should assess all new developments that require bigger infrastructure.

Answer: Yes, this process is already in place.

Section 4: Questions Regarding Environmental & Compliance Issues

21. Where is the report/documentation supporting compliance with Sec. of the Interior standards on streetlamp removal/relocation?

Answer: CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b)(3) indicates a less than significant impact when the Secretary of Interior Standards are utilized. As stated, Restoration, Preservation, and Rehabilitation of the Streetlights will be accomplished under the Secretary of Interior standards. In typical fashion, the applicable standards are anticipated to be printed on the construction drawings for the project and thereby incorporated into the design, bid and construction specifications of the project.

22. Where are the individual tree assessments/evaluations promised, per the Tree Manual requirements? Where are the reports on 6 trees that were air-spaded?

Answer: For a City project, per section 9 of the Tree Manual, “Trees may be removed to allow construction through the City’s permit process if all mitigation measures have been exhausted and/or deemed impractical, the tree may be removed pending a written evaluation by a certified arborist stating that the tree must be removed to proceed with the project. If the tree(s) is removed solely to accommodate a construction project, the full appraised value per ISA Standards must be paid prior to removal and the tree(s) shall be replaced.” The Parkway Tree Manual has been and will continue to be followed.

23. Where is the data used by the consultants to produce the carbon sequestration numbers/projections? Citations?

Answer: This information has been shared with the party that requested it. Please see Section 1, question number 7.

24. What concrete data connects the Greenleaf Ficus trees with the City's liability exposure?

Answer: Uplifted sidewalks caused by the roots of the Ficus trees lead to trip-and-fall incidents, making all such sidewalks assumed liabilities. At the request of the public and the City Council, WCA certified master arborists evaluated each tree in the project area and identified "no work zones" necessary to protect the health of the trees. It is now clear that any work around the Ficus trees in Uptown increases liability, as it may weaken the trees. Consequently, the "no project" alternative is no longer viable because repairing any uplifted sidewalks associated with these trees would fall within the "no work zones."

25. Where is the evidence requested by the Council about what other cities are doing about tree issues?

Answer: Other Cities remove irreparable tree liabilities immediately. The City of Whittier has the most stringent tree removal policy related to tree removal of the 7 tree cities staff spoke with. No other city staff spoke to provides for a protest process for trees that need to be removed due to liability related issues.

Section 5: Project Planning & Implementation

26. At the May 14, 2024, meeting, during a discussion of a tree replacement on Comstock Ave., the City Manager admitted that the City was not following the codified Tree Index. Trees that Council approved for Greenleaf Ave. 8 years ago are the Ficus trees. This means that trees approved on December 12, 2023, for Greenleaf promenade project do not meet the City's codified list. Are you going to discuss this?

Answer: The Uptown Streetscape Plan, approved in 2019, supersedes the Tree Index for the Uptown area. WMC 12.40.030 provides for the PRCS Director to approve replacement tree type. Section X of the Parkway Tree Manual provides the Tree Index as a guideline for replacement trees, not a requirement. This plan was adopted after a series of public meetings and extensive public input. Consequently, any modifications to the Streetscape Plan for the

Greenleaf Promenade will adjust the tree palette for the three-block project area accordingly.

27. There are two cities, Tustin, and Orange (both are CIPA members), that have implemented a phased planting of Ficus trees.

Answer: City staff spoke to staff in both Tustin and Orange, along with Pasadena and several other cities. Every single city that staff talked to removes a tree immediately once an irreparable liability is identified. If the City Council would like to consider a 15-year Ficus tree phased removal, as a public commenter suggested is happening in Orange, then staff can bring forward a report with a recommendation to do so. That would equate to removing 33 (7%) of the 472 city wide Ficus trees per year for each of the next 15 years. As a comparison, the Promenade project proposes a one-time removal of 17% of the Ficus trees in Whittier; 83% of the Ficus trees in Whittier are not contemplated in this project.

28. City Attorney Collins indicated that City is exempt from compliance with Title 18. If that is the position of the City, is the City also exempt from the Uptown Specific Plan, which is an integral part of Title 18? Title 18 exempts the Historic Resources Commission from looking at historical features. This needs further clarification.

Answer: The City is not asserting that it should be exempt from the Uptown Whittier Specific Plan. In fact, the Promenade Project furthers the Specific Plan goals, many of which were specifically related to public infrastructure improvements including improved landscaping, tree replacement, upgraded lighting, wider sidewalks, public paseos and parks, and street furniture including expanded outdoor seating and dining.

Separate from the Specific Plan, Whittier Municipal Code title 18 exempts the City from Historic Resources Commission (HRC) from review in certain contexts. City projects reviewed by the HRC have involved City-owned historic buildings. The HRC's review authority does not extend to the consideration and approval of street, sidewalk, and associated infrastructure improvements. This area is not a designated historic district, and the streetlights do not have a historic landmark designation. City staff have consulted with historic

preservation experts and determined that using the Secretary of Interior Standards is appropriate to ensure a less than significant impact. All 18 streetlights in the project area will be restored, preserved, rehabilitated, and relocated to more prominent locations within the project area.

29. The Conservancy has made requests for Secretary of Interior (SOI) reports on the historic lights and all tree evaluations in compliance with the manual. None have been provided.

Answer: Restoration, preservation, and rehabilitation of the Streetlights will be accomplished under the Secretary of Interior standards. In typical fashion, the applicable standards are anticipated to be printed on the construction drawings for the project and thereby incorporated into the design, bid, and construction specifications of the project.

30. A significant number of Ficus trees could be saved and maintained by pouring new concrete around uplifting roots instead of using pavers in the areas around those trees.

Answer: The Ficus tree roots are right at the surface. Replacement of concrete, whether with pavers, concrete, asphalt, or any other kind of traditional sidewalk material, will require subbase preparation and base material installation. This construction will require removal of substantial roots for each Ficus tree, as the roots are at the surface.

31. Sidewalks could be designed to extend into the street without sacrificing all the Ficus trees.

Answer: This is not feasible, as the tree protection zones extend into the street, and the Fire Department requires a 26-foot minimum clearance on the drive lane.

32. Some pavers could be used decoratively, similar to what exists now.

Answer: With any new construction, the City is required to provide ADA-accessible pathways wherever it is possible for people to walk. Replacement of concrete, whether with pavers, concrete, asphalt, or any other kind of traditional sidewalk material, will require subbase

preparation and base material installation. This construction will require removal of substantial roots for each Ficus tree, as the roots are at the surface.

33. The City could institute a significant and frequent sidewalk power washing schedule.

Answer: In addition to the Uptown Whittier Improvement Association's bi-weekly and weekend cleaning schedule, the City of Whittier power washes on Tuesdays and Thursdays and conducts daily cleaning of litter, trash receptacles and blowing of debris.

34. What is the status of the 51% increase in project plan scope approved by Council on Consent Calendar on August 22, 2023? Where is the environmental documentation for those additional impacts?

Answer: There was not a 51% increase from in project scope approved on August 22, 2023. The environmental approvals are for all streets across the 185 acres and 35 city blocks of Uptown. The agenda report for August 22, 2023, updated the design agreement for the Promenade project to ensure a smooth transition between the three blocks of Greenleaf improvements and the intersecting east-west streets.

35. Where is the carbon sequestration data used to calculate conclusions on the City's graph of 4/30/23?

Answer: This information has been shared with the party that requested it. Please see Section 1 Question 7 for more information on carbon sequestration calculations and the USDA itree model. The dataset is available on the City's website under the Greenleaf Promenade tab.

Section 6: Business and Stakeholder Concerns

36. Why were the business owners considered the only "stakeholders" in the Promenade Project?

Answer: Businesses were not the only survey respondents, nor the only stakeholder accounted for. 83% of the 1,934 survey respondents were residents or community members; only 81 were identified as Uptown business owners and 241 as Uptown property owners. The intent was to hear from a wide demographic with an interest in the Uptown area and planned improvements. To accomplish this, City staff established a 27-question online survey related to the Promenade via SurveyMonkey which was made available to Uptown stakeholders in late June 2021 through various methods of distribution. Information on the Promenade and how to complete the survey was sent by hard copy letter to property owners in Uptown Whittier through the Uptown Whittier Improvement Association (UWIA) mailing list, and the Whittier Uptown Association (WUA) and Whittier Chamber of Commerce shared the survey on behalf of the City with their business members through email blasts and social media channels. Additional distribution included posting a project visual and direct survey link on the City's website homepage; adding an article to the News section of the City's website; sharing the survey on the City's official social media channels including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and the Nextdoor app; and emailing information to approximately 30,000 community members in weekly and monthly City-wide newsletters to assist with ensuring that feedback received was inclusive, widespread, and comprehensive. As noted in all communications, all members of the community, including residents, business and property owners, and visitors, were encouraged to participate in the survey process, which was available for approximately one month and closed on Monday, July 19th, 2021, at 5:00 p.m.

Furthermore, the improvements proposed for the Promenade project (tree planting, park development, additional lighting, sidewalk widening and repair, street furniture and outdoor dining, special paving at gateway intersections, monumentation to mark gateways to Uptown, and upgrading of sewer and water supply lines) were all specified in the 2008 Uptown Specific Plan, which began in May of 2006 with robust community outreach. Through the study of other cities and participation in a week-long charette in preparation of the Specific Plan, stakeholders and experts involved identified local issues the Plan would aim to address and satisfy, including the crucial role of retail, addressing inadequate public amenities and

improvements to utilities and streets infrastructure, and the need to create a unique destination and rich urban experience (page 1.4 of the Uptown Specific Plan). Also, in the Uptown Specific Plan (as noted on page 1.4), the following stakeholders participated in the development of the plan that is proposed to be implemented by the Promenade Project:

- Citizens of Whittier
- Whittier City Council
- City of Whittier Heads of Departments
  - Assistant City Manager
  - Community Development Director
  - Community Services Manager
  - Library Director
  - Parks Director
  - Police Chief
  - Public Works Director
- Whittier Planning Commission
- Whittier Design Review Board
- Whittier Historic Resources Commission
- Whittier Parking and Transportation Commission
- Boys and Girls Club of Whittier Developers, Property Owners, and Brokers
- First Christian Church
- First Day
- Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital
- Skills Foundation
- St. Matthias Episcopal Church
- Whittier Chamber of Commerce
- Whittier City School District
- Whittier Coalition Whittier College
- Whittier Conservancy
- Whittier High School
- Whittier High School Alumni Association
- Whittier Historic Neighborhood Association
- Whittier Union High School District
- Whittier Uptown Association
- YMCA of Greater Whittier

37. The City does not have the County approval for whether businesses can use the back doors during construction.

Answer: Preliminary discussions about using alternate entrances have been held with the Whittier Uptown Association (WUA) and the Uptown Whittier Improvement Association (UWIA) to gauge business interest. It's important to note that while some buildings can accommodate alternate entry, others cannot. Until there is a definitive project plan and timeline, it is premature to engage in hypothetical discussions with regulatory agencies, which will require specific drawings and locations.

38. The City should help businesses with relocation costs.

Answer: The City Council has expressed interest in assisting businesses through construction, and both WUA and UWIA also have ideas about what assistance might look like. However, it is premature to discuss the specifics of such a program until the City is closer to construction, as exact timelines, staging, and locations are not yet determined.

39. Phase construction in front of businesses, which could easily take 36 months to complete.

Answer: Part of City Council's direction is to consider phasing construction.

Section 7: Infrastructure and Design Concerns and other Project Comments

40. Install sub-surface tree irrigation.

Answer: New trees will be properly irrigated. The existing tree wells cannot have sub-surface tree irrigation installed due to the overwhelming existing tree roots. The trees are mature and well established and have grown to this size with natural resources. Existing trees cannot have sub surface tree irrigation installed.

41. Plant 48-inch box trees, no smaller.

Answer: The tree sizes proposed for the project are as follows:

16- 72" Box Trees (13%):
(8) PLATANUS RACEMOSA – California Sycamore
(8) TABEBUIA IMPETIGINOSA – Pink Trumpet Tree

21- 60" Box Trees (18%):
(4) FRAXINUS UDEHEI – Evergreen Ash
(12) PLATANUS X ACERFOLIA 'COLUMBIA' – Columbia London Plane Tree
(3) PLATANUS RACEMOSA – California Sycamore
(2) QUERCUS AGRIFOLIA – Coast Live Oak

59- 48" Box Trees (50%):
(37) GLEDITSIA TRIACANTHOS VAR INERMIS 'SHADEMASTER' – Thornless Honeylocust
(2) PLATANUS RACEMOSA – California Sycamore
(9) TABEBUIA IMPETIGINOSA – Pink Trumpet Tree
(11) ULMUS PARVIFOLIA – Chinese Elm Tree

9- 36" Box Trees (7%):
(5) PLATANUS RACEMOSA – California Sycamore
(4) TABEBUIA IMPETIGINOSA – Pink Trumpet Tree

14- 24" Box Trees (12%):
(14) PROSOPIS X 'PHOENIX' – Thornless Mesquite

42. Install signage to/from parking structures.

Answer: There are dozens of existing signs pointing vehicles to City-owned parking lots and structures.

43. Install a band stand with power in pocket park.

Answer: A band stand is part of the project.

44. Repair all broken concrete surfaces.

Answer: The WCA-certified master arborist analysis found that no work can be completed within the “no work” zones, including repair of concrete surfaces.

45. ADA Standards are minimum sidewalk width of 3 feet with passing spaces every 200 feet.

Answer: This is part of the ADA standards, but what is of more importance are the precise measurements required slopes and uplifts. Full analysis of the ADA accessibility of the project area has not been requested or completed. The 2008 Uptown Specific Plan states in Section 2.3.2 that “The notion of “sufficient space” varies with location and intensity of adjacent land uses, but a clear walking width of 5 feet is the minimum. In many instances, obstacles in the sidewalks, including shrubs and planters, constrain the sidewalks well below this minimum, to the point that in some locations pedestrians cannot comfortably pass by each other.”

Section 8: Opposition to Certain Project Aspects

46. Do not install parking meters.

Answer: Parking meters are not a part of this project

47. Do not install any zero “flat” curbs.

Answer: the project will have standard curbs and will meet all requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including curb ramps.

48. Do not narrow Greenleaf.

Answer: The street section will meet LA County Fire Department requirements. The sidewalks will be widened as directed by the 2008 Uptown Specific Plan and the 2019 Uptown Streetscape Plan.

49. Do not plant spikey/dangerous plants.

Answer: There are no plans to plant dangerous or overly spikey plants. The street tree standards can be found on pages 28 to 29 of

the 2023 Greenleaf Promenade Amendment to the 2019 Streetscape Plan. The understory planting standards can be found on pages 30 to 31 of the 2023 Greenleaf Promenade Amendment.

50. Do not install modern/weird streetlights.

Answer: New lights will meet Secretary of Interior standards while also meeting the necessary photometric requirements to safely light the public right-of-way. The addition of lighting is called for in the 2008 Specific Plan and the 2019 Streetscape Plan.

51. Do not eliminate 104 parking spaces.

Answer: The project proposes reducing on-street parking in favor of implementing the “park once” principles contemplated in both the 2008 Uptown Whitter Specific Plan and 2019 Uptown Streetscape plan. The completion of the Comstock parking structure in 2021 added 351 new parking spaces to Uptown, and the City’s recent acquisition of property on Bright will add another 40 new spaces. With a fixed right-of-way width along Greenleaf, it is necessary to reduce parking to accommodate wider sidewalks, outdoor dining, and new landscaping.

52. Do remove every other Ficus tree or more but keep the canopy with the help of a real arborist.

Answer: Both the 2008 Uptown Specific Plan and the 2019 Streetscape Plan identified all Ficus trees for removal. The 2008 Uptown Specific Plan also calls for the replacement of every other Ficus tree in Uptown with palm trees. There will be 119 new trees, none of which are palm trees, planted to replace the 109 trees removed.

Section 3.1.3 of the Specific Plan contains a chart of actions, which includes as Step 1 “Prepare streetscape plan identifying tree replacement species, tree planting design, hardscape treatments, etc.” Step 2 states “identify first blocks on Greenleaf and/or Philadelphia for aging/damaged trees for replacement in tree succession plan."

Section 9: Liability Concerns

53. What concrete data connects the Greenleaf Ficus trees with city's liability exposure?

Answer: Uplifted sidewalks caused by the roots of the Ficus trees lead to trip-and-fall incidents, making all such sidewalks assumed liabilities. At the request of the public and the City Council, WCA certified master arborists evaluated each tree in the project area and identified "no work zones" necessary to protect the health of the trees. It is now clear that any work around the Ficus trees in Uptown increases liability, as it may weaken the trees. Consequently, the "no project" alternative is no longer viable because repairing any uplifted sidewalks associated with these trees would fall within the "no work zones."

54. Where is the evidence requested by the Council about what other cities are doing about tree issues?

Answer: Other cities remove irreparable tree liabilities immediately. The City of Whittier has the most stringent tree removal policy related to tree removal of the 7 tree cities contacted by staff. No other city contacted by staff provides a protest process for trees that need to be removed due to liability related issues.

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

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MEMORANDUM

To: City of Whitter

From: Zhe Chen, Michael Baker International
Tina Yuan, Michael Baker International

Date: June 12, 2024

Subject: Data Summary of Greenleaf Avenue "One-Block Concept" Carbon Sequestration

Project Summary

The Greenleaf Promenade Carbon Sequestration Analysis prepared for the proposed project (dated May 8, 2024) included analysis of the proposed replacement of 109 existing trees with 118 new trees along Greenleaf Avenue.

At the City's request, Michael Baker International (Michael Baker) has provided additional carbon sequestration analysis related to the "One-Block Concept" that was previously approved by the City as part of the Gardens of Uptown landscape plan. The One-Block Concept (near the Greenleaf Avenue/Philadelphia Street intersection) proposed to remove 22 existing trees and plant 31 new trees. Refer to Table 1, *Project Details Comparison*, for the difference between the two scenarios. Compared to the Greenleaf Promenade project, the One-Block Concept would only remove good and fair condition trees with a lower mortality rate (only 3 percent and 10 percent). Also, most trees proposed to be removed (81 percent) as part of the One-Block Concept have a large Diameter of Breast Height (DBH) ranging from 20 to 28 inches. As such, the previously approved One-Block Concept would take longer to reach the breakeven year of carbon sequestration as compared to the Greenleaf Promenade Project; refer to Table 2, *Data Summary of One-Block Concept Tree Removal Carbon Sequestration*.

Table 1
Project Details Comparison

Scenario	Existing/Proposed	Tree counts	Annual Tree Mortality (percent)	DBH ranges from (inches)	Shade	Condition
Greenleaf Promenade Analysis	Existing	109	3, 10, 15, 20	5-30	Full sun or partial sun	Poor, Fair, Good
	Proposed	118	3	2.5-7	Full sun	Excellent
One-Block Concept Analysis	Existing	22	3 and 10	5-28	Partial sun	Fair, Good
	Proposed	31	3	5	Full sun	Excellent

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Table 2
Data Summary of One-Block Concept Carbon Sequestration

Project Lifetime	Existing/Proposed	Annual Tree Mortality (percent)	DBH ranges from (inches)	Shade	Condition	Carbon Dioxide (CO_2) Sequestered (pounds)
1	Existing[1]	3 and 10	5-28	partial sun	Fair, Good	10,843.00
	Proposed[2]	3	5	Full sun	Excellent	2,002.10
					Net Change	**(8,840.90)**
40	Existing[1]	3 and 10	5-28	partial sun	Fair, Good	256,486.50
	Proposed[2]	3	5	Full sun	Excellent	206,451.30
					Net Change	**(50,032.20)**
61 (Breakeven Year)	Existing[1]	3 and 10	5-28	partial sun	Fair, Good	277,189.10
	Proposed[2]	3	5	Full sun	Excellent	278,152.50
					Net Change	**963.40**

Footnotes:
1. Annual mortality, DBH, and shade condition of the existing trees are based on what is provided in the Spreadsheet of Greenleaf Promenade Carbon Sequestration Data provided by the project applicant. The condition of the trees was provided by WCA.
2. The new trees are assumed to have a three percent annual mortality rate, be fully sun-covered, and be in excellent condition. They are also assumed to have a 5-inch DBH as it is the average DBH of the proposed trees of the Carbon Sequestration Analysis prepared by Michael Baker International, dated May 8, 2024.
3. The CO_2 sequestrations are estimated using the i-Tree Planting tool.

Sources:

1. Michael Baker International, Greenleaf Promenade – Carbon Sequestration Analysis, May 8, 2024.
2. WCA

ATTACHMENT C

Thomas A. Bihr
Landscape Architect, 4115
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Tom Bihr's Cell (562) 242-8927
bihrtom@gmail.com

Date: May 28, 2024

TO: Whittier City Council
C/O: Rigo Garcia, City Clerk RGarcia@cityofwhittier.org

RE: Public Comments City Council Meeting 5-28-24

The City consultant stated on 5/7/2024, Utilizing the Itree Program- "a new tree will sequester more carbon than a mature Ficus microcarpa (Ficus), in just 24 years".

My telephone conversationon 5/28/2024 with Donald R. Hodel, Emeritus Environmental and Landscape Horticulture Advisor, Specializing in Palms, Trees, and Landscape Management, University of California Cooperative Extension Los Angeles County:

"That's a false statement, data for the Itree program is doubtful. A full tree report is necessary and data from the report can be directly input and analyzed with the ITree carbon Sequestration model.

Ficus, in the study at INTEC , Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, an Urban Forest was analyzed. This study also utilized the Itree program. Ficus microcarpa was found to have the greatest levels of carbon sequestration of all the trees in the Urban Forest. The is notable, since the Ficus represented just 4% of the urban forest, yet sequestered 38% of the total carbon.

See the attached charts and references from the INTEC study below.

At the past Council Meeting, Council member Fernando Dutra requested background on how other cities manage the Urban Forest issues. I contacted both the City of Orange and City of Tustin, both CIPA Insurance members. Both cities have active Ficus Tree replacement projects, whereby, Ficus Trees will be replaced over a 15 year period.

The City mentioned on the Council Meeting of 5/7/2024 that the Tree Protection Zone could not be provided because the trees had large driplines of 40 ft.- and fencing could not be placed. This doesn't follow City practice, the Santa Gertrudes Ave. Steet renovation project comes to mind, as you may be aware, the City contractor had no problem replacing sidewalks and working around the existing street trees, however one tree was lost , due to contractor error. The City can compromise; it can renovate the Greenleaf Promenade and save trees.

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Please contact the two aforementioned cities and consider a phased Ficus Tree removal and replacement program for the City of Whittier. The Itree Program might be a useful tool in the future to evaluate the entire Urban Forest in the City of Whittier, once the City Tree inventory is known. The total number of Street Trees was reported as more than 40,000 in 1969, per the publication, "Trees of Whittier".

Regards,

Tom Bihr
Landscape Architect, 4115

I. Tree Characteristics of the Urban Forest

The urban forest of INTEC has an estimated 206 trees with a tree cover of 27.9 percent. The three most common species are Dypsis lutescens (38.1 percent), Bucida buceras (10.0 percent), and Roystonea borinquena (8.0 percent).

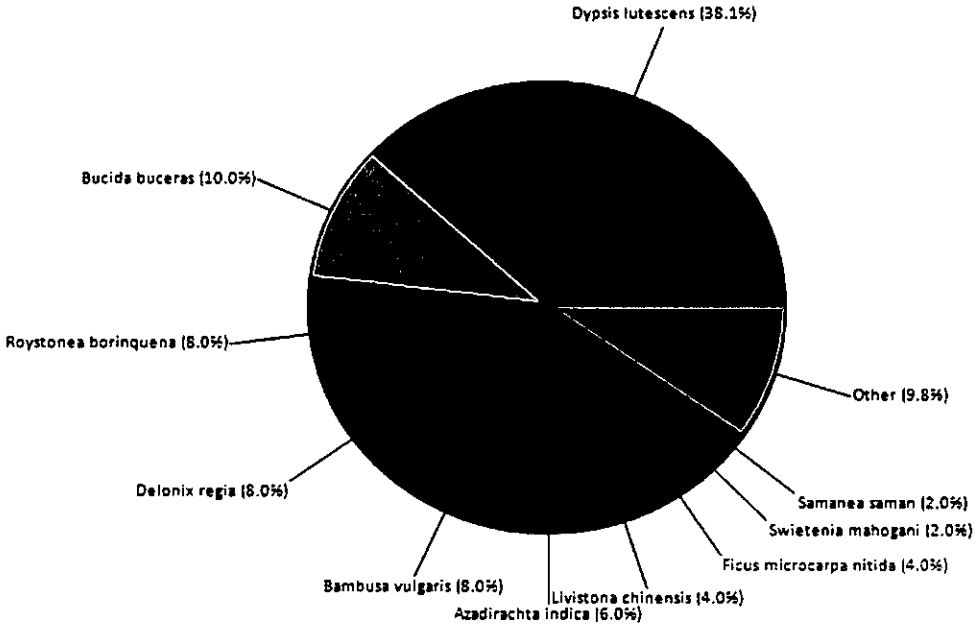

Figure 1. Tree species composition in INTEC

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Trees in INTEC are estimated to store 83.1 metric tons of carbon ($11.9 thousand). Of the species sampled, Ficus microcarpa nitida stores the most carbon (approximately 38% of the total carbon stored) and Pithecellobium dulce sequesters the most (approximately 19.2% of all sequestered carbon.)

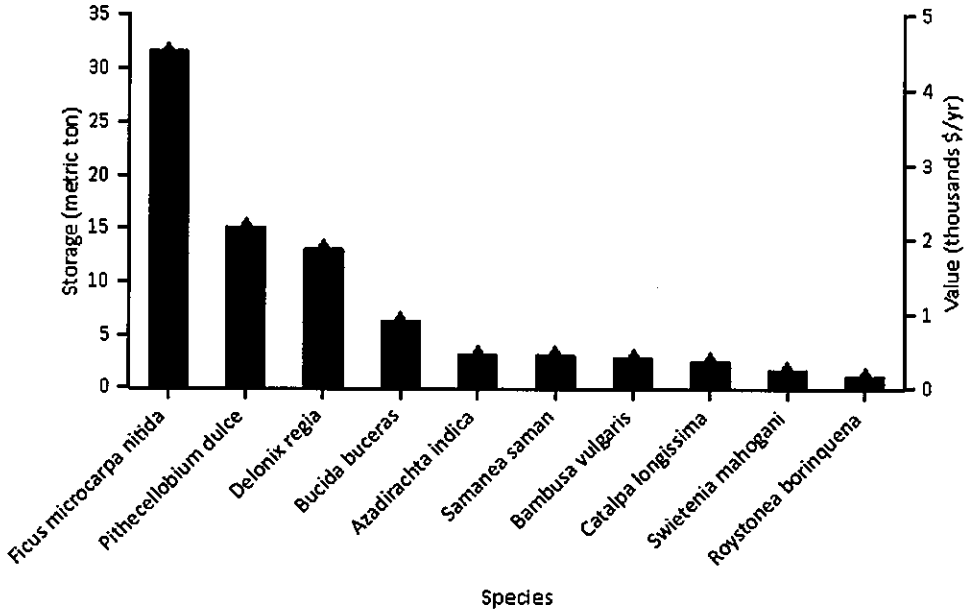

Figure 9. Estimated carbon storage (points) and values (bars) for urban tree species with the greatest storage, INTEC

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IV. Carbon Storage and Sequestration

Climate change is an issue of global concern. Urban trees can help mitigate climate change by sequestering atmospheric carbon (from carbon dioxide) in tissue and by altering energy use in buildings, and consequently altering carbon dioxide emissions from fossil-fuel based power sources (Abdollahi et al 2000).

Trees reduce the amount of carbon in the atmosphere by sequestering carbon in new growth every year. The amount of carbon annually sequestered is increased with the size and health of the trees. The gross sequestration of INTEC trees is about 3.424 metric tons of carbon per year with an associated value of $490. Net carbon sequestration in the urban forest is about 2.007 metric tons. See Appendix I for more details on methods.

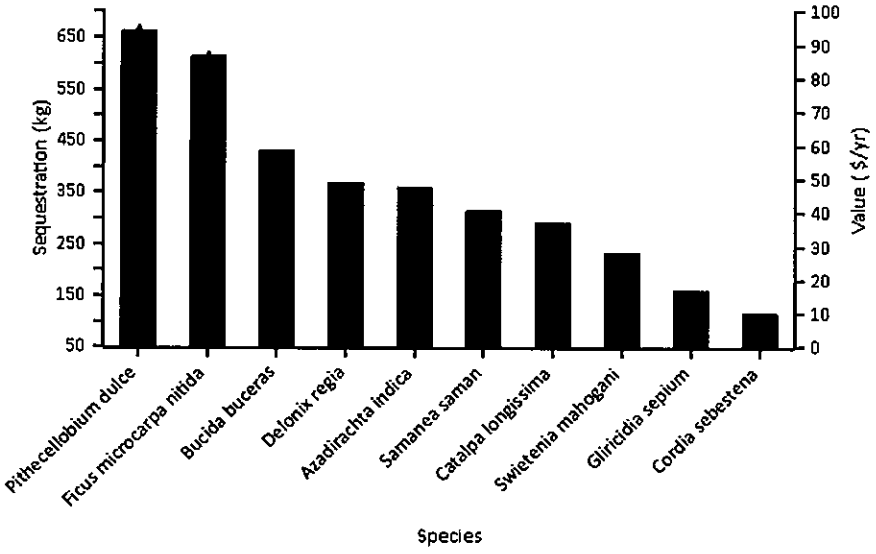

Figure 8. Estimated annual gross carbon sequestration (points) and value (bars) for urban tree species with the greatest sequestration, INTEC

Carbon storage is another way trees can influence global climate change. As a tree grows, it stores more carbon by holding it in its accumulated tissue. As a tree dies and decays, it releases much of the stored carbon back into the atmosphere. Thus, carbon storage is an indication of the amount of carbon that can be released if trees are allowed to die and decompose. Maintaining healthy trees will keep the carbon stored in trees, but tree maintenance can contribute to carbon emissions (Nowak et al 2002c). When a tree dies, using the wood in long-term wood products, to heat buildings, or to produce energy will help reduce carbon emissions from wood decomposition or from fossil-fuel or wood-based power plants.

Citation.https://www.google.com/url?esrc=s&q=&rct=j&sa=U&url=https://www.itreetools.org/documents/389/Reporte_Intec.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwjk55yyt7GGAxVGJ0QIHfadDLEQFnoECAYQAg&usg=AOvVaw0sQj28HecHK7x5w1N8-EWK

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

We Make a Difference

MEMORANDUM

To: Kyle Cason, City of Whittier

From: Zhe Chen, Michael Baker International
Tina Yuan, Michael Baker International

Date: June 12, 2024

Subject: City of Whitter, Greenleaf Promenade – Carbon Sequestration Analysis – Response to Comment Letter from Thomas A. Bihr Re: Public Comments City Council Meeting 5-28-24

Michael Baker International (Michael Baker), on behalf of the City of Whittier (City), has prepared this memorandum as a response to key points raised in the comment letter *Re: Public Comments City Council Meeting 5-28-24*, prepared by Thomas A. Bihr, dated May 28, 2024, regarding the Carbon Sequestration Analysis of the Greenleaf Promenade Project (project).

RESPONSE TO COMMENT

The commenter expressed concerns with the City's statement that "a new tree will sequester more carbon than a mature Ficus macrocarpa (Ficus), in just 24 years."

It is important to note that the Carbon Sequestration Analysis did not model carbon sequestration on a "one-for-one" basis; rather, the analysis modeled the project as a whole (replacement of 109 existing trees with 118 new trees). The 109 existing trees consist of various tree species with various tree conditions, sunlight exposure, and mortality rates, all of which affect the amount of total carbon sequestration. Of the 109 existing trees, only 78 are Ficus. Based on the modeling results, carbon sequestration of 118 new trees would exceed the 109 existing trees in 24 years. The 118 new trees and 109 existing trees were modeled as two groups to calculate the total carbon sequestration, and it is inappropriate to do the comparison between each existing tree on a one-for-one basis, as it would not reflect the entire proposed project.

The commenter also contacted Donald R. Hodel, Emeritus Environmental and Landscape Horticulture Advisor, and quoted him: "That is a false statement, data for the iTree program is doubtful. A full tree report is necessary and data from the report can be directly input and analyzed with the iTree carbon Sequestration model."

The iTree program was developed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service and numerous entities with expertise in this field, including Davey Tree Expert Company, the Arbor Day Foundation, the Urban and Community Forestry Society, the International Society of Arboriculture, and Casey Trees. It is a valid tool for assessing and managing forests and community trees by quantifying the

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environmental benefits that trees provide, including carbon sequestration, energy consumption, ecosystem, and air pollution. It is the best available tool to calculate carbon sequestration from trees and the results provide the City with the best available information for decision-making purposes.

The commenter recommends that the City consider a phased tree removal and replacement program for Ficus trees, due to their greatest levels of carbon sequestration of all trees in the urban forest. The commenter contacted the City of Orange and the City of Tustin, and both cities have active Ficus tree replacement projects across a 15-year period. This comment is acknowledged; the City is currently considering public input related to the project to determine next steps for project implementation.

ATTACHMENT E

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MEMORANDUM

To: The City of Whittier

From: Steve Rydzon

Date: June 10, 2024

Sent Via: Email

Project Number: WHIT301

Project Name: Greenleaf Promenade

Subject: Tree Protection Zone Conflict

I have reviewed the analysis performed by West Coast Arborists and concluded that the Greenleaf Avenue design proposed by SWA cannot be completed if the trees are retained. Additionally, the design depicted in 2019 Uptown Whittier Streetscape Beautification plan could not be completed.

The arborist's analysis establishes Tree Protection Zones. The zones prohibit the type of construction needed to complete the improvements in either of the plans. These zones cover the majority of the street – building face to building face. The small pockets free of the zones could not be constructed to plan as they would be unable to join the conditions in the protection zones.

Thank you,

Steve Rydzon, RLA CA 6038

swa