

July 24, 2024

Whittier City Council

13230 Penn St.

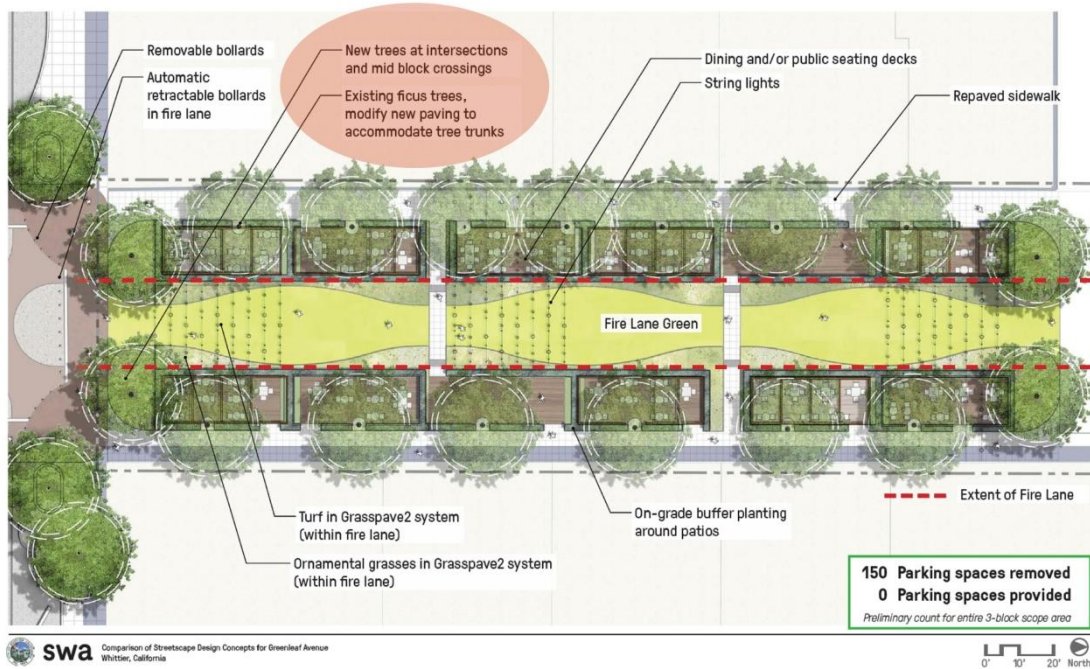
Whittier, CA. 90602

**Dear Mayor and City Council Members:**

At your last Council meeting on July 9, a **WIN-WIN** path forward was identified during Public Comments involving the closed street Pedestrian Promenade. That Plan was overwhelmingly supported by 86% of almost 2,000 participants, residents AND businesses, in the City's professionally-contracted Community Survey. That Plan was one of three options designed by the City's contracted architects, SWA for your consideration. Those three options were presented at your City Council meetings in June 2022. But as described in my comprehensive letter to you on July 8, and in abbreviated public comments at the July 9 Council meeting, the City Council narrowly voted it down two years ago after the City Manager **erroneously** told you that adopting it would require ALL new trees, the same as the Open St. plan that was adopted.

The closed street Pedestrian Promenade Plan designed by SWA clearly specified retaining more than half of the existing trees, with new trees **ONLY** at intersections and cross walks. Had the City Council adopted that Plan that saved the tree canopy, it could be well on its way to completion by now with **FULL PUBLIC SUPPORT and EXCITEMENT!** Instead, your adopted Plan to chop down ALL of the existing trees is propelling public outrage to new heights, including more than 5,110 signatures on a Petition to Save Our Trees in Uptown Whittier <https://chnng.it/fFN5cS8yVP>.

## 1/2 Block Concept - 2021 Pedestrian Promenade Option

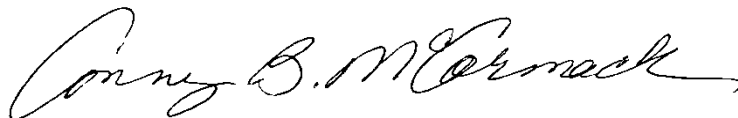


After the July 9 City Council meeting, the Whittier Daily News(WDN) splashed a headline across the front page with a lengthy article about this **WIN-WIN** proposal as a possible new lifeline for our iconic trees on Greenleaf Av. The City immediately issued a press release citing SWA conducting a new “analysis” and, oops, it turns out they can’t deliver a Promenade that keeps ANY of the existing trees.

SWA is a large, global firm that would not have proposed any option to the City Council unless they could carry it out. Their design for the closed Pedestrian Promenade specifically identified “overcoming grading challenges exceeding 2% in multiple directions, addressing that issue with a comprehensive design strategy, landscaping, and upgrading pavement throughout the site, including paving around existing tree trunks, preserving the eclectic feel and modularity of the current street configuration.” Development of that SWA Plan required thorough on-site assessment, evaluation and analysis occurring over many months at a significant cost. Yet the City issued a retaliatory press release within two hours of the WDN story appearing online on the evening of July 10. Could the inserted quote that SWA had conducted an instant “analysis” contradicting their previously detailed design plans be influenced by the \$1 million they have been paid to date for their contacted services?

The City's latest press release announcing the Aug 20 special council meeting states SWA will present their Open St. Promenade, the option your Council already approved. That is the **LOSE-LOSE** proposal that involves chopping down ALL of the existing trees, inciting outrage from the public you represent. The Whittier Community is entitled to hear SWA also re-present the **WIN-WIN** closed St. Promenade that they designed overcoming the challenges they enumerated in recognition of saving the tree canopy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Conny B. McCormack". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Conny McCormack**

**28-year resident of Whittier**

**Former L.A. County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (Ret.)**

**Cc: Brian Saeki, City Manager**

**Rigo Garcia, City Clerk**