

RECEIVED ON: August 19, 2024

**FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS: Special Study Session--August 20, 2024**

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Dear Friends,

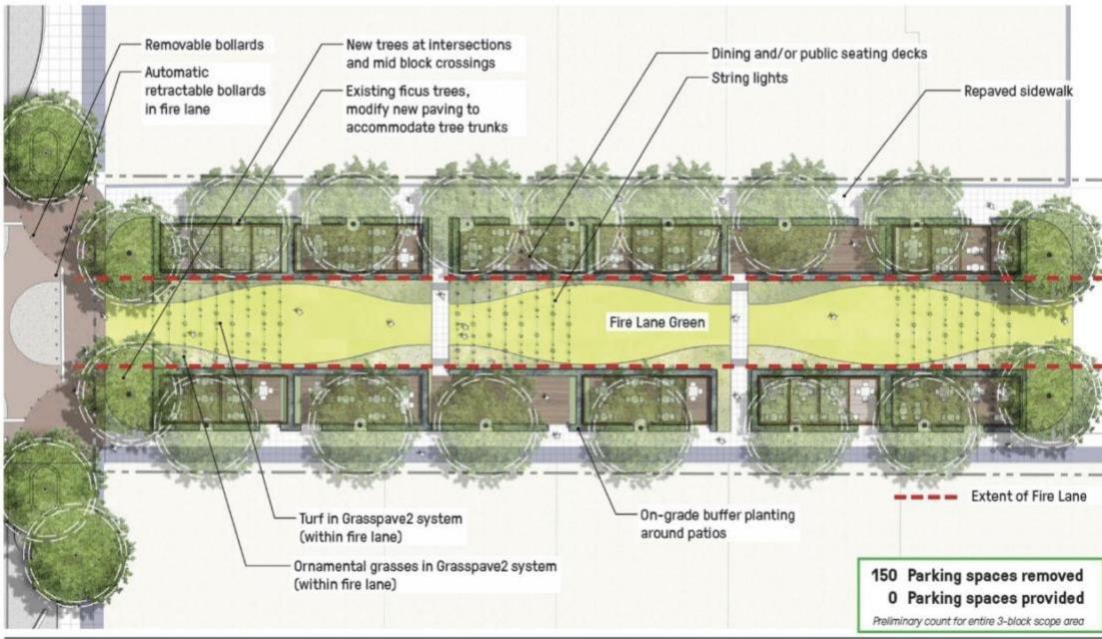
Thank you for adding a new study session to the calendar for August 20, 2024 to revisit the City Council’s current 3-1 decision to remove all 108 Ficus trees on Greenleaf Avenue.

There is a WIN-WIN Option!

I fully support the Pedestrian Promenade Option presented in the City Council meeting by several people in person and via email on July 9<sup>th</sup> during Public Comments.

On that day, local residents and community advocates, shared that on June 18, 2022, three plans for the revitalization of Uptown were discussed. One of the options proposed by SWA that night was called the **Pedestrian Promenade Option**. This SWA designed Pedestrian Promenade option preserves 70% of the Uptown Ficus trees (70%--unlike the current plan that was recently adopted to chop them all down). The **Pedestrian Promenade Option** offers a *pedestrian-only street experience (no parking), a park like environment, large dining and gathering patios, and new and enhanced landscaping*. When the City surveyed the local Uptown community about a pedestrian only Option, 86% of the general community supported a Pedestrian Promenade Option; including 74% of business owners and 83% of the Uptown property owners.

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



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Of the three options proposed that night **ONLY** the **Pedestrian Promenade Option** offers a WIN-WIN solution that keeps the shade canopy and our TREES. This Option was designed by SWA and proposed to the City Council and was enthusiastically embraced by a super majority in Whittier: AGAIN: 86% of total surveyed respondents, including 74% of Uptown business owners and 83% of Uptown property owners were in favor of this Option.

**Here's a SWA visualization of the eco-friendly Pedestrian Promenade Option (see visualization photo below).**



**The Pedestrian Promenade Option shown above was jettisoned in favor of the current 2024 Plan that will see 108 Ficus trees in Uptown cut down and destroyed (see visualization photo below).**



**(Note: the replacement tree pictured above IS NOT the actual size of tree that will be planted in 2024-2025 if the current Plan moves forward—the pictured tree size represents the projected 20-year growth)**

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Considering the current warming patterns and heat waves we are experiencing (with a predicted 5-7 degree increase over current temperatures in the near future), the currently approved Plan will destroy our protective shade canopy. The proposed tree replacement will not provide the same shade and health benefits in Uptown for at best 60 years, at worst, 80 years to come! Rather than improving business, this kind of concrete desert will discourage foot traffic. You can't walk a child, you can't walk a dog, you can't enjoy a day with your family strolling beneath a leafy canopy, visiting shops and frequenting restaurants or going to the movies because it will be TOO HOT TO SHOP.

Recent temperature readings in Uptown on a hot day are proof:

Under the Ficus shade canopy: 81 degrees

On the Concrete Pavement (no shade): 145 degrees

Please do the *right* thing—and reject the current Plan--and **adopt the Pedestrian Promenade Option** that was submitted by SWA and supported by the local community (the current plan is not) and is more eco-people friendly and will SAVE OUR TREES, OUR HEALTH, AND OUR BUSINESSES.

Thank you for your consideration and the work you do on behalf of the community.

Best,

Patti McCarthy  
Whittier Resident