

From: [Jesse Hammer](#)
To: [WebMail - CCD](#)
Subject: Tree Removal / Concerned Local Architect
Date: Friday, November 8, 2024 6:31:21 PM

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Dear Whittier City Council Members,

I am writing to formally address what I believe to be a violation of the Ralph M. Brown Act, California Government Code Section 54950 et seq., in relation to the August 20, 2024, City Council meeting discussing the Greenleaf Promenade project.

This project, which includes the removal of 83 mature ficus trees, has significant financial and environmental implications that warrant full public participation.

As a neighbor to Whittier and having learned of the importance of shade to community health via the campaign “Why Not Shade?” put on by local nonprofit Materials & Applications. I am an architect and urban designer who has done significant research into the importance of shade, root systems, and more in creating a HEALTHY HUMAN HABITAT for all. This need feels critical and urgent and I hope you’ll act for your community members in hearing this cry!

Further, as a concerned community member, I am troubled by the lack of adequate public notice and the restriction of community input on this \$20 million project(!).

From what I understand, the following grievances have allowed this project to carry on unchecked, and likely without your community’s better judgement!:

1. **Failure to Provide Proper Notice:** The agenda for the August 20 meeting was either not posted within the 72-hour requirement for regular meetings or was not clearly communicated to the public. This lack of notice deprived community members of the opportunity to prepare and contribute meaningfully to the discussion.

2. **Inadequate Public Inclusion and Oversight:** Decisions about the tree removal and broader project costs were made without sufficient community involvement, infringing on the public’s right to participate and provide input as outlined in the Brown Act.

Additionally, I would like to propose a more fiscally responsible and sustainable approach to the project. Based on estimates, the removal of 83 trees could cost between \$60,000 and \$228,000, depending on size and stump removal needs. However, a redesign of the sidewalks to accommodate the trees, using root barriers or rerouting the sidewalk around the trees, is estimated to cost significantly less—between \$30,000 and \$100,000. Implementing a sidewalk redesign with root barriers offers the following advantages:

Cost Savings: A redesigned sidewalk could save between \$30,000 and \$168,000 compared to full tree removal. **Environmental and Community Benefits:** Preserving these mature trees retains their environmental value, including shade, air quality improvement, and the unique aesthetic they provide to Uptown Whittier.

Under Government Code Section 54960.1, I respectfully demand that the City Council “cure and correct” these violations by: Re-noticing the decisions made on August 20, 2024, with a fully compliant 72-hour advance public notice. Scheduling an additional public meeting to

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review the Greenleaf Promenade project, ensuring that all community members have a fair opportunity to express concerns and explore cost-saving alternatives like sidewalk redesigns and root barriers. If these actions are not taken within the legally required timeframe, I reserve the right to pursue all available legal remedies to uphold transparency and community involvement.

As a local architectural designer who works in construction, if there is anything I can do to offer my assistance it would be my pleasure to provide my services.

Thank you for addressing this matter promptly. I look forward to a resolution that respects both the community's voice and the city's fiscal responsibility.

Respectfully,
Jesse Hammer

J E S S E H A M M E R
Architecture, Objects, Furniture
Los Angeles, California
jesse-hammer.com