

November 12, 2024—Public Comments

Dear City Council and Friends,

I support a “phase-in” WIN-WIN plan that will SAVE OUR TREES and revitalize Uptown. Not just for the shade, or for what our trees do to clean our air which is highly important—but also *because of how they make us FEEL* when standing beneath their leafy canopy and seeing them lined up along Greenleaf Avenue. It’s a feeling of awe and wonder that no concrete improvement could, or will, ever equal. Our trees beautify our community. They are a balm to our collective soul, and they *belong to the people*.

When conservationist John Muir learned Hetch Hetchy Valley, Yosemite’s twin, was planned to be submerged under 200 feet of water as a dam, he pleaded to save this natural wonder for future generations...stating,

Dam Hetch Hetchy! As well dam for water-tanks the people’s cathedrals and churches, for no holier temple has ever been consecrated by the heart of man... Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where Nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul alike. This natural beauty-hunger is made manifest in the little window-sill gardens of the poor, though perhaps only a geranium slip in a broken cup, as well as in the carefully tended rose and lily gardens of the rich, the thousands of spacious city parks and botanical gardens, and in our magnificent National parks—the Yellowstone, Yosemite, Sequoia, etc.—Nature’s sublime wonderlands, the admiration and joy of the world

(<https://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5720#:~:text=the%20Almighty%20Dollar,-.Dam%20Hetch%20Hetchy!,-257%2C%20260-262.>)

I believe that John Greenleaf, for whom our street is named, would agree with John Muir. And yet, Muir’s plea fell on deaf ears, Hetch Hetchy was submerged under 200 feet of water. Its destruction broke John Muir’s heart and the short-sighted action to create the dam robbed us of Hetch Hetchy’s wonder, beauty, and healing potential forever.

Our Uptown legacy Ficus trees are a natural treasure (and just as important as Hetch Hetchy) to the welfare of Whittier and if they are destroyed, I believe, it will create a deep wound in our collective spirit and scar our Whittier community for generations to come. Over 6,000 Whittier residents have signed a petition to SAVE OUR TREES. <https://chng.it/fFN5cS8yVP>

Please reconsider and SAVE OUR TREES (www.saveourtreeswhittier.com)

Thank you for taking the time to read, consider, and reflect.

Patti McCarthy
Whittier Resident