

RECEIVED ON: November 12, 2024

Council Meeting: 11/12/2024

Agenda Item No: 10

November 12, 2024

Whittier City Council  
13230 Penn St.  
Whittier, CA. 90602

Dear Mayor & City Council Members:

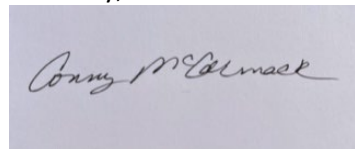
The day after your last City Council meeting two weeks ago, a front-page article appeared in the Whittier Daily News entitled ***Whittier's Change of Firms at Former Alpha Beta Site Sparks Transparency Concerns***. The article discusses your Council's Closed Session action on Sept 10<sup>th</sup> to replace Thomas Safran & Associates with Jamboree, another housing developer, without the legally-required public bidding process to select developers. The purported reason they pulled out of the City's project to develop eight parcels of city-owned land in Uptown was due to "sickness of a key employee". The news article refers to the fact that Thomas Safran & Associates has been named in a criminal complaint filed by the LA County District Attorney, due to their involvement in a corruption scheme involving an LA City Council member accused in an alleged conflict of interest case. Whittier Mayor Joe Vinatieri is also involved in an ongoing conflict of interest investigation, he by the State of California's Fair Political Practices Commission, over the controversial Greenleaf Av tree removal plan.

Myself and many others have been working this entire year advocating to Save Our Trees in Uptown Whittier, including over 6,200 signers of the petition to Save Our Trees. A super-majority of 85-90% of Whittier residents agree it is NOT mutually exclusive to support Uptown Whittier revitalization while at the same time keeping our tree canopy. During a conversation with Mayor Vinatieri in June, he insisted the ficus trees in Uptown need to go, admonishing me for not understanding THE BIG PICTURE.

Whittier residents understand THE BIG PICTURE. We know developers favor "clear-cutting" of trees during construction projects. Look at Whittier's Groves/Nellis housing development, where over 500 mature trees were ALL chopped down just to make it easier and cheaper for developers. Other cities, including Pasadena and Santa Monica, have completed major construction projects alongside large ficus trees, preserving their mature tree canopies because **they** recognize the irreplaceable value and well-known health benefits to residents. Myself and other residents have provided you numerous examples documenting such projects over the past year. Why do you continue to refuse to listen and learn?

We've said it repeatedly and will say it again: We the People are United and will NOT allow OUR Uptown Tree Canopy to be sacrificed!

Sincerely,



Conny McCormack  
Former L.A. Co. Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (ret.)  
28-year resident of Whittier

cc: Brian Saeki, City Manager

CC: CM; ACM; CA; Council; Original to CC; Public Binder; Department

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Rigo Garcia, City Clerk