



**Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance  
Trees Committee and Environmental Health Committees’  
Position Statement on Removal of 18 Trees from North Cherokee Avenue**

It is the position of the Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance Trees Committee and Environmental Health Committee that the *Ficus microcarpa* trees located on the 1200 block of North Cherokee Avenue in Hollywood should be preserved because the trees provide exceptional functional value and their presence does not prevent a sidewalk repair that is ADA compliant.

We support a policy of repairing sidewalks while maintaining a healthy, safe and sustainable urban forest and urge the Department of Public Works, Bureau of Street Services to reaffirm its own 2001 policy goals:

- preserve as many large, healthy trees as possible
- remove trees in phases to retain an acceptable level of canopy cover
- limit tree removals to no more than 20 percent of the trees in a block or trees at three consecutive residences within one year
- foster neighborhood involvement in the decision-making process

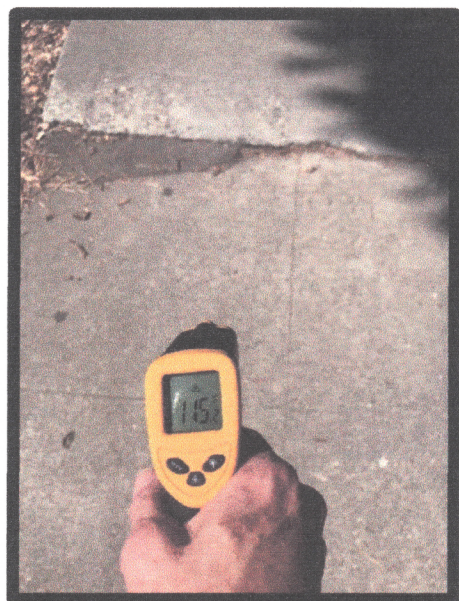
We believe that this position is most beneficial, in terms of public health and safety for *all* the citizens of Los Angeles.

**The Basis of Our Concern**

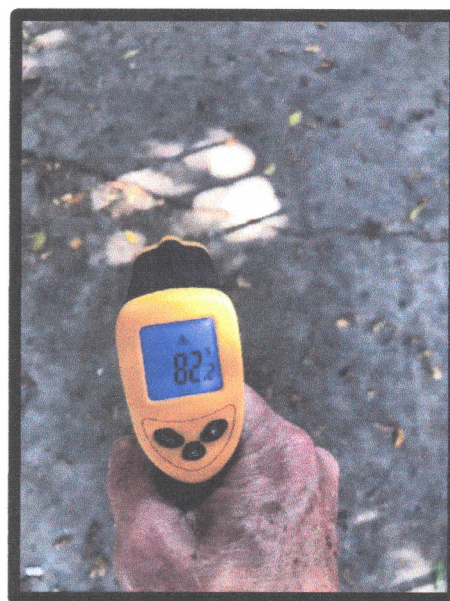
The removal of 18 ficus trees from North Cherokee Avenue not only may have a significant adverse effect on the environment, it *will* have a significant adverse effect on the environment.

The trees on N. Cherokee are healthy, structurally stable with an exceptional aesthetic and environmental quality. They define the neighborhood and enrich the lives of the residents through their majestic leafy umbrella, and through their contributions. They provide oxygen, shade, stormwater retention, pollution reduction, noise reduction, climate change mitigation, reduction of heat island effect \*, wildlife habitat, and spiritual respite.

\* On July 29, 2018, our own infrared thermometer reading showed a 33 degree reduction in temperature under the canopy of the trees on N. Cherokee Avenue.



**115 °** on the sidewalk *outside* shade of the ficus tree canopy at 3:30 PM, July 29, 2018



**82 °** on the sidewalk *under* shade of the ficus tree canopy at 3:30 PM, July 29, 2018

We believe feasible alternatives to the project with less severe adverse environmental impacts are available. Whenever tree roots are in conflict with the sidewalk, innovative sustainable solutions should be used to preserve trees and repair sidewalks. We have personally seen programs of thoughtful, efficient solutions to sidewalk repairs that preserve trees in other cities.

In response to removing these mature trees the City of Los Angeles will plant two trees for every one tree cut down under the perception that planting two sapling or young

trees for every mature tree cut down replaces the mature tree, or perhaps even doubles it. Planting a sapling or young tree only replaces another sapling, not a mature tree. Sixty years of growth are needed to realize the environmental cost-benefits of a mature tree. And new trees are particularly vulnerable to premature mortality. In the study about Los Angeles' million tree program (E. Gregory McPherson, et al., Los Angeles 1-Million tree canopy cover assessment. USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station, GTR-207 (2008)), a low mortality scenario projected that 17% of newly planted trees would be dead after 35 years, and a high mortality scenario projected 56% mortality.

A major reason for our concern is that decisions on this project have been unilateral, despite the fact that the removal of the trees along N. Cherokee threatens the quality of life of its residents and the interests of the public at large. Fostering neighborhood involvement in the decision-making process helps to protect the interests of the neighborhood and helps to ensure that the most environmentally superior project is performed. Hence, the Bureau should meet and confer with the residents in community meetings so that they are fully informed and involved in the decision-making process concerning their valuable tree canopy.

Lastly, we urge the City to stop thinking of these projects in isolation or about mature trees as disposable or replaceable. The City of Los Angeles is losing mature trees to sidewalk repair at an alarming rate. At the same time concrete covers land where trees once stood and where trees will never grow again. As with most environmental damage, the cumulative effect of many small, seemingly insignificant losses—each one with a good justification—eventually adds up to serious and sometimes irreversible problems.



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