

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Shelley L Billik

**Date Submitted:** 04/03/2022 04:59 PM

**Council File No:** 21-1030-S1

**Comments for Public Posting:** The City's Community Forest Advisory Committee (CFAC) wholeheartedly supports the appeal filed by Donna Jones on behalf of the West Adams Avenues Association and its Quality of Life committee. Furthermore, we are appalled that the Watt Company and its lawyers have disregarded and even mocked community's concerns regarding removal of protected CA Western sycamore trees (*Platanus racemose*) that have been part of the community for nearly a century! The Project is located within a South Los Angeles community that has been identified as a Tree-Canopy Poor Community of Color that is subject to an inequitable distribution of Los Angeles's urban forest. Thus, the removal of a canopy of mature trees, and especially Protected Trees, is in conflict with the City's Tree Equity policies, Climate Resilience goals, and the Mayor's Green New Deal. We understand that the removal of 41 private property trees (and 11 public right of way trees) probably cannot be avoided. But although this project has been in development for several years, it was only in the late Fall of 2021 that local community members and stakeholders first learned of the planned removal of three additional mature protected CA Western Sycamore trees (*Platanus racemose*) as a result of an off-hand comment by a project rep. Since then, the local neighborhood council (United Neighborhoods Neighborhood Council – UNNC), local residents and members of CFAC have been advocating for the preservation of these trees, with the support of the City's Urban Forestry Division, who also filed a Notice to Comply (which was also disregarded). There are an additional 7 protected western sycamore trees that were planted as mitigation for prior removals (for the Crenshaw Line construction). Per the City's Urban Forestry Division, those trees are also protected, but the applicant plans to remove them and not mitigate according to the city's Protected Tree Ordinance. On February 4, 2022, Donna Jones and members of the community met with CD 10 staff and a project representative, Jennifer McElyea with Watt Companies (the developer) for initial discussions. Community members specifically requested more detailed site plans that explained why the trees had to be removed. (Initially the community was told that this was due to LADWP power infrastructure. But after further research, LADPW stated that they had no communication from

the project applicant in over a year and a half). We were told that a follow-up meeting would be convened to discuss in detail the design constraints that are said to mandate tree removals and discuss a potential agreement. However, no further meeting was scheduled. Donna Jones received communication from the developer in mid-February offering to plant 3 large sycamore trees and guarantee their survival for 3 years. Donna Jones and community members felt that this was completely inadequate. In response to that communication, Donna Jones submitted a proposal outlining requests for additional community considerations in the hopes of reaching an agreement and moving the project forward. Since then, Donna Jones has not received a response or any other communications from the developer or the council office. Advocates have voiced frustrations over the lack of transparency in disclosing the planned removal of 10 protected Western sycamore trees and substantial concerns regarding the exclusion of equity measures in early analysis, approvals and subsequent planned actions in light of South LA's existing designation as a tree-poor region of the City. Additionally there is no long term maintenance plan for the new trees the project plans to plant. So likely, they will look like the rest of the young trees in the city – neglected, scrawny, and doomed to die in a few years (which is also a waste of public resources). Ultimately, the appellant and community members are interested in continuing conversations and reaching an agreement, and we support a 30 day continuance on the matter before you in order to reach consensus in what will ultimately be a better project for all. From a local resident/advocate: “The city has all of these plans around climate resilience but the community isn’t brought into any of these discussions, coordination is non-existent, and in real-time policy issues there is such consistent dismissal of community voices as well as the significance of these actions, not to mention the manufactured lies... honestly it feels like a new era of redlining. But it’s explicitly environmental.”

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Elizabeth M Evans

**Date Submitted:** 04/03/2022 05:36 PM

**Council File No:** 21-1030-S1

**Comments for Public Posting:** Council File Number: 21-1030-S1 Dear Chair Harris-Dawson and Committee Members, I am writing in support of the Appeal to the Crenshaw Crossing Project, and the protection of my community's natural resources. I am a resident of CD 10 and an advocate for my community's environment. I stand with other voices in my community that advocate for the quality of life that is our right – understanding that other communities in our city are not asked to choose between shelter and shade. We know that decisions to remove healthy, large, mature and legally protected trees have consequences that will endure for generations, particularly in neighborhoods like those of South Los Angeles which statistically suffer from disproportionate environmental impacts when compared to other parts of the City. Housing and trees are not in opposition to one another. We know that this messaging is an ongoing tactic made to divide and distract our community from the resources and access that are our fundamental human rights. We acknowledge and support the provision of housing in our neighborhood, as do we acknowledge and support the protection of our tree canopy. We encourage our leadership to support the momentum and continuity of planning for the sustainability of our neighborhoods as spearheaded by the goals and priorities of: the Mayor's Office of Sustainability, the Los Angeles Green New Deal, C40, the Los Angeles Biodiversity Index, the Climate Emergency Mobilization Office, Cool Streets LA, Next Phase Urban Cooling Program, City Plants, StreetsLA, Bureau of Street Services - Urban Forestry Division, and more. This week, as we prepare for Arbor Day at the City – we ask that the PLUM Committee stand with advocates in working to close the tree equity gap in South LA by requiring the Project to guarantee maintenance of all trees associated with the Project for at least 10 years, including the preservation and replanting of the existing seven (7) young Sycamore trees as a condition of its approval. Thank you for your leadership. Elizabeth Evans