

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Leilani Banday-Akau

**Date Submitted:** 04/04/2022 01:48 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.

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Dakota James

**Date Submitted:** 04/04/2022 02:52 PM

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

**Comments for Public Posting:** Dear Chairperson Harris-Dawson and Committee Members, I would like to share my concerns about the protected native Sycamore grove within the Crenshaw Crossing project. The fact remains that while affordable housing is a necessity, the time to recover from the destruction of the protected trees significantly eclipses the time to construct these units and grocery. The solution is harmonious development that accounts for these select few remaining trees in our endangered community, balancing each of the needs of its residents. As the information was not shared with the community during many outreach meetings with the developer, this is yet another example of the vision of outsiders dictating how the already marginalized spaces of this Black and Latinx community should be leveraged. Without guarantee to even see the replaced trees to adulthood, we leave our natural resources to the whims of the City Planning Department, an obsequious, overseeing body distanced from these streets who has already proven themselves to withhold information from its constituents, solidifying their stance as an enemy to our community at large. The allure of affordable housing is great, but does not solve the larger issue at hand: outside investors gentrifying our stores and homes, forcing us to be reliant on these same parties to grant us the “gift” of affordable housing. When does this cycle end? When we rip out the last tree older than my grandparents? When the last South LA native is forced to move, unable to afford a home and family in their own backyard? When the last mom and pop shop is demolished, or worse, converted into a chain restaurant or coffee shop? When will Crenshaw be given its say on when it is out of things to give? From the eyes of this resident, Crenshaw has been robbed of this ability to speak in any meaningful way. With the protected status of the Sycamore grove being initially overlooked by Metro followed by a dubious appeal response by the Planning Department, how can Crenshaw properly share its voice? To consider the map of tree canopy in the greater Los Angeles area, our community is nearly devoid of natural greenery due to repeated exploitation from outside investors and developers. Areas across Los Angeles, nay, the world that carry an air of wealth do not share this same problem. It is only in underprivileged communities such as this one, desiccated of cultural and terrestrial resources, that the issue of

affordable housing becomes a Band-aid on the gaping, festering wound of inequity afflicting its residents. Yet, something is better than nothing, so while we as a bereft community must rally to stave off its perpetual theft, affordable housing will have to do. But what is one to do about the protected trees? These century-old Sycamores, standing high above their neighbors, having offered shade and respite to residents for decades, now face the threat of eviction and death due to oversight and disregard. The cost of time dedicated to preservation pales in comparison to the decades to replace them, of which there is no guarantee. With minor adjustments to the affordable housing design plan, we can properly account for these pillars of our community, rooted in the very foundation of Crenshaw, while meeting the needs of its residents. We ask for this overseeing committee to reevaluate its cultural competence and the time necessary to construct a plan that saves these trees. To quote the tune from the early 1970s reformed into the iconic 2000s hit, “You don’t know what you got ‘til it’s gone. You paved paradise to put up a parking lot.” I hope those reading this find the sense and foresight to prevent the further exploitation of our beloved Crenshaw community’s native and protected natural resources.

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Theresa Maysonet

**Date Submitted:** 04/04/2022 02:57 PM

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

**Comments for Public Posting:** Dear Chairperson Harris-Dawson and Committee Members. My name is Theresa Maysonet and I represent the West Adams Avenues on the Board of the United Neighborhoods Neighborhood Council – UNNC. The appellant Donna Jones is my constituent. I write to you today in support of Ms. Jones’s appeal and to request the PLUM Committee require a minor redesign of the project to meet the City’s commitment to environmental justice in South LA. Shortly after being elected in July 2021, I was appointed as UNNC Tree Liaison to the Urban Forestry Division (UFD) and tasked with working with the Community Forest Advisory Committee (CFAC), to develop policy and advocate for shade tree equity in South LA. Let me share with you the pertinent facts regarding the appeal to this Metro joint development project with Watt Company known as Crenshaw Crossing: Fact 1. In 2012, during the construction of the Expo Line, Metro was informed of the three Protected Native Sycamores, placed protective fencing around the grove, installed irrigation to preserve the trees, and hired Global ASR Environmental Consulting firm to maintain and protect the sycamores. Additionally, as an homage to the sycamores that were destroyed during construction along Exposition Blvd., Metro planted seven additional sycamores adjacent to the protected grove. It’s now disingenuous for Metro say we were unaware of the protective status of the sycamores. Fact 2. In January 2017, Metro issued an RFP for a joint development project which could have included preservation of the Protected Sycamore Grove, but it did not. Metro narrowed the proposals to three developers, with one design firm acknowledging the protected sycamores and designing around them. Unfortunately, Metro did not select this proposal. Fact 3. In October 2021, Jennifer McElyea and associates with WATT Company attended the UNNC Planning & Zoning committee, where I asked her about all trees in the project; she said she would get me the tree report. It was then brought to my attention that the site had protected sycamores which were slated for removal. I found the tree report buried within thousands of other documents in the CFMS. It appears that not only Metro, but also WATT developers knew about the protected status of the sycamores and during their many outreach sessions with the community choose not to share this information. Fact 4. The

requirements for using the SCEA and CEQA process specifically state that SCEAs are only to be used when there are no unmitigated impacts. Although the removal of the protected trees can be conditioned per the LAMC, the impact cannot be mitigated and therefore using SCEA as the CEQA clearance should not have been permitted. This was a failure of the planning department.

Fact 5. The tree report produced by the WATT company consultant rates the 70 feet tall, protected sycamores as a “B” and “B-”. On February 4, 2021, UFD evaluated the trees and determined the protected trees to be healthy and then issued a “Notice to Comply” to Metro to continue to maintain the area.

Given these facts, the question remains what is the City’s commitment to shade tree canopy in South LA and will the PLUM committee demonstrate that commitment by supporting this appeal and asking WATT company for a minor redesign of the project to preserve the protected native sycamore grove?

Thank you for your consideration.

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Ua Banday

**Date Submitted:** 04/04/2022 06:40 PM

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

**Comments for Public Posting:** Hi everyone, Here's your call to action! Support the environment and raise your voice to protect trees in our community. Follow these steps below. Go to <https://cityclerk.lacity.org/publiccomment/> Input your name, email, and Council File Number: 21-1030-S1 Copy and paste your letter into the "Comments for Public Posting" box, OR upload attachment. Click "Submit" All done - You did it! Public Comment Letter (copy and paste from below or see PDF attachment). 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.

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Celio Banday

**Date Submitted:** 04/04/2022 06:43 PM

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

**Comments for Public Posting:** Hi everyone, Here's your call to action! Support the environment and raise your voice to protect trees in our community. Follow these steps below. Go to <https://cityclerk.lacity.org/publiccomment/> Input your name, email, and Council File Number: 21-1030-S1 Copy and paste your letter into the "Comments for Public Posting" box, OR upload attachment. Click "Submit" All done - You did it! Public Comment Letter (copy and paste from below or see PDF attachment). 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.

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Robin Gilliam

**Date Submitted:** 04/04/2022 09:09 PM

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

**Comments for Public Posting:** RE: Council File Number: 21-1030-S1 Dear Councilmember Harris-Dawson and PLUM Committee Members, I write to you in support of the Appeal regarding the Crenshaw Crossing Project and ask that the PLUM Committee support community efforts to ensure just and equitable decision-making in planning for our environment. I ask that the PLUM Committee issue a continuance for the Appeal's hearing in order to encourage reasonable collaboration between the Project's developer and community advocates in reaching an agreement pertaining to the proposed removal of the Protected Sycamore Tree grove. As you may know, discussion between parties stalled during CD 10 staff and leadership transitions. Community advocates hope to complete this forward progress by resuming conversations facilitated by current CD 10 staff, and require that the Project guarantees 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. As the City increasingly prepares for strategies to combat the threats of climate change and address systemic injustices, it is my hope that this moment presents itself as an obvious opportunity to put into action the decisions that are needed to close the ever-widening tree equity gap in South LA. Quite frankly, this is how we are losing the battle. Exempting even our most Protected natural resources from safekeeping in isolated development projects directly contributes to the rapid reduction in tree canopy coverage that our already "tree-poor" neighborhoods experience. This is documented time and time again in numerous studies conducted by the City and alongside partner organizations and research institutions. As data continues to be gathered in order to demonstrate the disparity, countless trees are being demolished – exacerbating the inequity in real-time. South LA is no stranger to struggle, and it is disappointing, to say the least, that our agencies have so little continuity and communication during tree analysis portions of proposed project review processes such as this. We deserve better. When community members voice concerns regarding a project, it is my hope that staff would address these concerns with respect and due diligence, exemplified by direct and timely communication with community members – at a minimum. There is no place for disparaging remarks towards community

members in a city that strives for justice, equity, and inclusion, like Los Angeles. Like nearly all other community members, I too support increased housing. I acknowledge that remarks from the Project and its proponents suggesting that our communities must choose between our needs for housing and a robust tree canopy, falls within a long lineage of attempts to divide and distract communities of color from the basic resources and quality of life that are our right. I stand with all of our community advocates in expecting a higher standard of treatment. Thank you for your consideration, Robin Gilliam

April 4, 2022

**RE: Council File Number: 21-1030-S1**

Dear Councilmember Harris-Dawson and PLUM Committee Members,

I write to you in support of the Appeal regarding the Crenshaw Crossing Project and ask that the PLUM Committee support community efforts to ensure just and equitable decision-making in planning for our environment.

I ask that the PLUM Committee **issue a continuance for the Appeal's hearing** in order to encourage reasonable collaboration between the Project's developer and community advocates in reaching an agreement pertaining to the proposed removal of the Protected Sycamore Tree grove.

As you may know, discussion between parties stalled during CD 10 staff and leadership transitions. Community advocates hope to complete this forward progress by resuming conversations facilitated by current CD 10 staff, and require that the Project guarantees 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.

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Thank you for your consideration,

Robin Gilliam