



Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council

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June 24, 2005

Hon. Mayor James K. Hahn
City of Los Angeles
200 North Spring Street
Third Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Hon. Mayor-elect Antonio Villaraigosa
City of Los Angeles
200 North Spring Street
Third Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

City Council
City of Los Angeles
200 North Spring Street
Fourth Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Planning and Land Use Management Committee
City of Los Angeles
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Sunland Tujunga Neighborhood Council supports efforts to enhance protections for trees in our communities, and urges the City Council to amend the City's Protected Tree Ordinance as called for in Garcetti-LaBonge Motions (03-1459 & 03-1459-S1) in 3 major ways:

1. Expand the types of tree protected from Oaks to include 3 other native trees: Sycamore, Bay, and Walnut;
2. To eliminate the requirement that the tree be on a lot of greater than 1 acre; and
3. Provide for the potential withholding of land use permits from those who might illegally remove trees protected by the ordinance.

The Sunland Tujunga Neighborhood Council supports measures such as this which we believe will only serve to encourage thoughtful planning and collaboration with property owners within communities to preserve and enhance the quality of life for all in our communities. Presently, and unfortunately, there is clearly too little incentive for this collaboration, as evidenced by the alarming rate at which our biological and scenic resources

are being consumed without reasonable efforts to preserve them. To be perfectly clear about this, we know that no ordinance will prevent a property owner from reasonable development, including this one, and that is not the objective. Rather, at issue is the continuing and unnecessary degradation of our communities through insensitive development standards and practices.

The stakeholders in our community have evidenced through participation in surveys, town hall meetings, and public comment that the protection of scenic and biological resources is a significant quality of life concern and continuing point of frustration in the planning and building process.

The benefits of [retaining mature] trees in our communities are numerous and well documented, including the positive impact on air quality, water quality & conservation, temperature management, energy conservation, and alleviation of blight and increased patronage of local businesses where trees are present. One need not care about the specific trees, or the value to wildlife in order to see the numerous benefits to people.

While opinions may vary as to whether the protections should be limited to only the native tree species, and we will forego an exhaustive discussion of the merits here, we view the proposed amendment as a critical positive step towards tree protections and the native species are obviously well suited for their respective locations. It should be noted, however, that we do not specifically support continuing to exclude protection for any species classified as "rare" simply because of it's common name. We refer to *Quercus dumosa*, also known as Nuttall's scrub oak, classified by the California Native Plant Society as rare, and currently excluded from protection under the ordinance.

We urge you to recognize this important tool for preserving quality of life in our communities and take this critical step in the right direction by approving the Garcetti-Labonge motions for enhancing native tree protections.

Respectfully,



Ken McAlpine
Chair
Sunland Tujunga Neighborhood Council