MANDEVILLE CANYON ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 49802 Los Angeles, CA 90049



February 19, 2014

RE: Council File #14-0019 – Street Tree Guidelines and Policies

I am here as the President of Mandeville Canyon Association to address our concern over the lack of proper policies that have allowed dozens of trees to be completely ruined in our community. We request a more thorough approach to the establishment of tree trimming policies that address safety issues but are also inclusive of the City's obligation to protect the natural habitats within its communities.

Mandeville Canyon Association represents more than 500 homeowners in lower Mandeville Canyon. For 75 years we have worked to protect our natural environment of which we are entrusted its stewardship.

In all there are now 1300+ homes in our community represented by 3 homeowner associations. There is one way in and one way out, and that road is Mandeville Canyon which is lined with the mature Sycamores we are here to protest many of their demise. We are all united in our concern for more protective guidelines.

I have supplied a short handout of materials which includes:

- 1.) Historical Milestones of Mandeville Canyon. Even if you review this for a moment you will notice the efforts made to protect this environmentally rich canyon. It was originally planned as a botanical garden and even today many of the trees planted 75+ years ago still remain.
- 2.) The front page of MCA's website which is illustrative of our rural setting.
- 3.) A few pages of photos illustrating the damage done to Mandeville's Sycamore trees.

This packet underscores our commitment to the environment. The very trees that have been ruined due to poor oversight and lack of coordinated policy have protected status by the City of Los Angeles. If one of our homeowners had done to even one tree what the LADWP has done to dozens, they would be in violation of city code.

We are in support of one agency having responsibility and oversight of a more environmentallycomprehensive tree-trimming policy and the complete abolishment of the practice of tree-topping.

Furthermore, native sycamores and oaks also provide important natural habitat for hundreds of species of birds within Los Angeles that are protected by the California Department of Fish and Game when it comes to nesting periods, whose season is very soon upon us.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Durbin President of MCA

Date:	2.	- 19-	.14	-	
Submitte	d in	Ping	R	Com	nittee
Council F	ile No	10	f-0	19	
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## Historical Milestones, Events & Challenges in Mandeville Canyon SOMETHING WORTH PROTECTING AND PRESERVING

- 1926 Mandeville Canyon is dedicated as a Botanical Garden by the Garden Land Company
- 1928 Historic Concrete Arch Bridge is constructed over Arroyo Canyon on lower Westridge Road
- 1929 The Crash of '29' occurs and plans for a world-renowned Botanical Garden are put on hold
- 1930's Riviera Country Club hosts the dressage equestrian for the 1932 Summer Olympics.
- 1938 Major flood strikes Mandeville Canyon causing severe damage
- 1939 Mandeville Canyon Association is established with 5 Board Members.
- 1945 MCA is incorporated with CC&R rights to enforce deed restrictions from the Garden Land Company
- 1955 Paul Revere Junior High is built. 1000 horses reside in Mandeville
- 1957-1960s Upper Mandeville: Tract of 200 homes are built.
- 1957-1960s Lower Westridge and Westridge Terrace are developed. MCA Board increased to 15 board members
- 1960 MCA works with the City to install horse and 'Peoples Path" along MCR
- **1961** Bel Air Fire sweeps across Westside and torches upper boundary of Mandeville Canyon
- 1968 MCA and UMCA wage bitter fight to stop Linkletter-Schwartz's plan for 3400 homes up to Mulholland
- 1968 Disastrous Flood hits MC. Homes damaged, homes destroyed, life lost, road washed out
- 1970 Underground Flood Control Channel installed by the Army Corp of Engineers
- 1970s- 1980s TMCA & UMCA fight Tucker-Eastman Proposed development at end of MCR
- 1970's-2002 MCA collaborates efforts in support of Sullivan Canyon Riding Rink
- 1978 Mandeville Fire starts at Mulholland and 405 Frwy and sweeps westward destroying 30 homes
- 1979 2005 MCA, BHHA & SOMI fight Bert Boeckman Proposal to build 230 homes at top of Westridge
- 2005 SMMC purchases Bert Boeckman property and creates Westridge Terrace as a gateway to SM Mountains
- 1980's-1990's MCA fights Hilton Development proposal to build 127 homes at MCR & Chalon.
- 1990s-present: MCA works to reinstall "People's Path". Goal is to provide unobstructed safe passage on MCR
- 1997 Entrance to Mandeville is landscaped. The Holiday Lights Program begins
- 2003 MCA People's Path receives formal support from Council District 11
- 2005 Councilman Bill Rosendahl formally supports MCA People's Path Program
- 2007 Entrance to Mandeville is Redesigned, Widened & Reconstructed. Left turn lane is installed
- 2008 MCA challenges proposed development on Mango for environmental and safety reasons
- 2009 The Bulletin Board corner is re-landscaped and made central corner for MCA
- 2010 City of LA supports the Open Streambed Project and People's Paths are built north of Chalon
- 2011 MCA Young Families is formed to help neighbors meet neighbors
- 2013 MCA 1st Annual Family Roundup brings 350 neighbors together from the Canyon





## **Canyon Living**





Mandeville Canyon is a haven for outdoor enthusiasts

#### Welcome to Mandeville Canyon and It's Ridges.

UPPER MANDEVILLE CANYON ASSOCIATION http://www.uppermandeville.org/

BRENTWOOD HILLS

WINDING ROAD WATCH FOR

CHILDREN AND NORSES

HOMEOWNERS

ASSOCIATION

http://brentwood-hills.org

You will find our website filled with information about our unique and treasured canyon and ridges. Discover the canyon's ambitious beginnings in the 1920's as a research botanical garden for UCLA to the formation of the Mandeville Canyon Association in 1939 whose mission remains to protect and preserve this rural area. Today, with the devoted hard work of its Board members and residents, Mandeville Canyon continues to be regarded as a tranquil country-like setting amongst multi-million dollar estates. There is something here for the sophisticated, the playful, the easy going, the creative, and the country-minded resident to enjoy and to learn.

Mandeville is the place where we enjoy life in a rural area though we are just moments from the City. There are lots of opportunities to explore our ridges and canyons, horseback ride, test your cycling endurance, or spy on nature's wonders. Try your hand at gardening, grow your own vegetables, relax and read a book, write a book or paint. The only threats of interruption are the sounds of hawks flying overhead or the hooting of owls if you will remember to keep your cell phone off and hang a "do not disturb" sign on your door.

Our web pages are meant as guides to whatever may interest you in this area. We have included useful links to recommended vendors, schools, government officials, and archived our Newsletters and other community information. There are suggestions how to be more community involved, to reading up about emergency preparedness, wildlife behavior, the history of our flora and fauna, as well as maps of places to hike.

We invite you to come and take a look. Got questions or suggestions? You can contact us at <u>News@mandevillecanyonassociation.com</u>. We'd love to hear your comments and suggestions to improve the website. Want to talk to a Board member? You will find a list of our current members with their email addresses on the *MCA At Work* signpost.

In the mean time a hardy welcome to our canyon and ridge. Relax and enjoy our website.



Visit us at... www.MandevilleCanyonAssociation.com



Beautiful Sycamore trees untouched - NOT TOPPED. A sycamore tree grows to 60 -175 feet if pruned correctly and maintained by removing dead branches, shaping, and proper pruning. These canopies are not a fire hazard in the event of a fire and the large healthy trucks do not threaten the power lines.



Sometimes when the city goes in and tops a tree, the homeowner will ask their tree trimmer to balance out the tree, topping it more and making the problem even worse for the tree. We suspect this is what happened in this case. Notice the new growth on the perimeter of the tree with bare limbs in the middle.



Large stately Sycamore trunks with a bush on top - forever sentenced to all it will never be again: a tree!



Large Sycamore trees reduced to "stump" effects by the complete removal of the crown of the trees. It is impossible for these trees to have a recovery to their natural beauty.

MANDEVILLE CANYON ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 49802 Los Angeles, CA. 90049

> Kathleen Durbin President - MCA 310.702.2043 Kathleen.Durbin@MandevilleCanyonAssociation.com

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# From: Marianne Perls <perlsdesign@gmail.com>

Subject: Mandeville Canyon: Butchered trees (1st page)

Date: February 19, 2014 8:24:47 AM PST

To: Debbie DynerHarris <debbie.dynerharris@lacity.org>

Cc: Daniel Tamm <daniel.tamm@lacity.org>, Mike.Bonin@lacity.org, Norman Kulla <Norman.Kulla@LAcity.org>, Jon <jc12345@ymail.com>, John Binder <jfbinder@roadrunner.com>, Kathleen Durbin <kathleen.durbin@gitool.com>, Gabriel.orona@lacity.org, Kenneth Guardado <westlabrush@gmail.com>, Eric Edmunds <Lalhasa@aol.com>, mike leslie <leslie@clnp.com>

5 Attachments, 2.5 MB

a few corrections: can't help myself

Date: 2/19/14 Submitted in PWGR Committee Council File No: 14-00/9 Item No.: 8 Deputy: Juntic

Dear Debbie,

Talking with you this morning brought back so many memories of working with you on many MCA and Castellemmare issues. Those were very busy days. Welcome back!!! ...

Our community is looking to everyone to work together; to find solutions to this very tragic practice of Topping Trees, to help the LAFD make our canyon a safer place to live, and for the LADWP to cure the damages they wreaked upon our canyon. This tragic topping of trees must never happen again to any community!!!

In the next 5 e-mails, I am sending the most blatant butchering of Sycamore trees in both upper and lower Mandeville. I took 45 pictures today but thought the following 20 or so would tell the story.

Know that I understand that most people are not familiar with what is

considered responsible tree care

and that they would not be able to recognize good pruning or trimming if asked. I believe ignorance is the cause of so many mistakes made by tree trimmers and home owners...

Having said this, I reiterate again that our community expects more from the LADWP and believe they know better than 'to top' any tree... We hold them accountable for this

latest travesty and look for your guidance on how Mandeville Canyon can possibly be cured.

When looking at these photographs take a look at the size of the trunks to the stubby branches and flat top.. these trees are typical examples of a

tree that has been destroyed by" topping it." by removing what is known as its crown. .. These sycamore trees are capable of growing 60 - 175 feet high

The sycamores under the power lines have been sentenced to much less than that.





It is so painfully obvious from these photos that LADWP's only interest/responsibility is to keep the branches from touching the power lines.

The question then is: Whose responsibility is it to keep the trees properly pruned, maintained and trimmed? I believe the fire department has an interest in the trees health so that dead branches and proper pruning alleviates any additional fire flare- up should a fire occur in the canyon. We are all interested in safety and support the outstanding work and dedication of the LAFD.

The California legislature law, as I understand it, is supreme over local governments and their departments. This practice of 'topping trees' was opposed by State code 53067. What is clear is that this law has not been followed by the LADWP. See attachment:



An Excerpt from California Government Code 53067: Tree Pruning, legislative declaration; Specifications

opposes the 'topping" of public and private trees.

"Topping is the practice of cutting back large diameter branches of a mature tree to stubs and is a particularly destructive pruning practice. It is

stressful to mature trees, and may result in reduced vigor,

decline, or even death of trees. In addition,

new branches that form below the cuts are only weakly attached to the tree and are in danger of splitting

out. Topped trees require constant maintenance to prevent this from happening and it is often

impossible to restore the structure of the tree crown after topping. Unfortunately many people believe

that topping is a proper way to prune a tree, and this destructive practice is prevalent in some

communities. It goes on to say: that trees are individually unique in form

and structure and that their pruning or maintenance needs may not always fit strict rules."

"There are advantages of pruning and caring for trees properly: This code states that properly trimmed trees not only require less man-hours on their next cycle but some may not even need trimming. Results

indicate a 25 percent reduction in work force and a 7.4 percent reduction in costs in the first three years."





(8) That the use of proper tree maintenance techniques benefits the public because of reduced costs,

reduced hazards, reduced public liability, protection from premature decline or death...

(9) (A) The Legislature's findings recognize that topping of trees is a widespread misunderstood

consumer request and this form of pruning detracts from public benefits including, but not limited to,

safety and property values, and causes premature decline, death, disease, insects, wood rot, and

increased maintenance costs. These findings also recognize that a great number of personnel performing

maintenance on trees unknowingly and unintentionally produce irreversible harm.

AS A SUGGESTED SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM, AND as part of the California Government Code, I request a City policy that abolishes "Tree top Trimming". also a policy that includes notification to the Council Office, community engagement and most of all, a certified arborist on site for all projects.

What you will see in the following emails are more samples of

'topped trees" with little regard to any thing that resembles the proper care of pruning and trimming trees.

Many thanks Debbie for all your help and guidance. I will be presenting this information tomorrow at the Public Works Committee, Wednesday, February 19 room 1060 City Hall AT 2 pm Might you want to send a representative from your office?. It is so important that this practice of topping trees be discontinued, abolished.

All the best to you and many thanks for your time and consideration on this very tragic subject.

Marianne

СС53067-...pdf (83.8 КВ)





Marianne Perls 1744 Reedvale Lane Los Angeles, Ca 90049 perlsdesign@gmail.com

RE Council File Number 12-0019 Tree Street Guidelines and Policies

The most important thing I can offer at todays hearing is to impress upon you To abolish, once and for all, the practice of "topping trees" more specifically a method that LADWP uses to keep branches of trees from touching their power lines.

I have here a copy for your review with excerpts from the California Government Code 353067 which opposes the use of TREE TOPPING

Its titled tree pruning; legislative declaration specifications:

- 1. the article opposes the use of tree topping
- 2. that the use of topping is often misunderstood . that the California Department of Forestry and fire Protection Guidelines for Developing and Evaluating Tree Ordinances ...state that an ordinance shall be developed for the purpose of prohibiting topping of public and private trees. Topping is the practice of cutting back large diameter branches of mature tree to stubs and is particularly a very destructive pruning practice.
- 3. It is stressful to mature trees, and may result in reduced vigor, decline, or even death of trees
- 4. The use of Tree Topping costs much more in maintaining trees than the use of proper tree maintenance techniques.

It is so painfully obvious from these photos that LADWPs only interest in the trees is to keep the branches from touching the power lines. The question then is: Whose responsibility is it to keep the trees properly pruned, maintained and trimmed?

I believe that there should be one agency that is responsible for all the City Trees of Los Angeles . That such an agency has licensed certified arborists that supervise every job. For instance this agency would be hired the DWP to take care of the trees that are located under the power lines. This agency's responsibilities would also include the notification to the Council Office and to community engagement. It is only under one agency that the proper pruning and care of these trees can be regulated and held accounted for.

## Excerpt From CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT CODE

#### 53067. Tree pruning, legislative declaration; specifications

(a) The Legislature finds and declares the following:

(1) That trees and other woody plants respond in specific and predictable ways to pruning and other maintenance practices.

(2) That careful scientific studies indicate that arboriculture practices including, but not limited to, "topping" are often misunderstood and misapplied.

(3) That the results of the 1988 California urban forestry survey prepared by Plant Science and Research for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Urban Forestry Program summarizes that an estimated 5.9 million street trees are managed by California cities of which approximately 30 percent of the cities and 20 counties do not have tree ordinances of any kind. That in 1988 an estimated one hundred nine million dollars (\$109,000,000) statewide was spent on municipal tree maintenance, less than 1 percent of most city and county budgets, with an average of sixteen dollars and 82 cents (\$16.82) per street and park tree per year and an average of four dollars and 68 cents (\$4.68) per resident per year. California's city governments support urban forestry. Support for tree programs is highest in communities where citizens are involved.

Conclusions of the urban forestry survey state that most cities need an aggressive tree planting program to maintain tree densities at current levels, to keep pace with urban growth, increase species diversity, maintain the health and vigor of their trees, and put more effort into long-term master planning of urban forests. To derive the maximum ecological benefit from the urban forest, the current trend towards planting smaller trees will need to be reversed. Counties lag far behind cities in urban forestry efforts. Most tree programs need to put greater emphasis on educating the public on the benefits the urban forest provides. A healthy flourishing urban forest cannot be developed and maintained without foresight, proper care, and good management.

(4) That the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Guidelines for Developing and Evaluating Tree Ordinances 1991publications states that an ordinance shall be developed for the purpose of prohibiting topping of public and private trees. Topping is the practice of cutting back large diameter branches of a mature tree to stubs and is a particularly destructive pruning practice. It is stressful to mature trees, and may result in reduced vigor, decline, or even death of trees. In addition, new branches that form below the cuts are only weakly attached to the tree and are in danger of splitting out. Topped trees require constant maintenance to prevent this from happening and it is often impossible to restore the structure of the tree crown after topping. Unfortunately many people believe that topping is a proper way to prune a tree, and this destructive practice is prevalent in some communities.

(5) That in an effort to promote practices that encourage the preservation of tree structure, and public safety and health, these standards developed through careful scientific studies by leading industry consultants, United States Department of Forestry scientists, and professors of horticulture and plant pathology, are recognized standards by the Department of Parks and Recreation, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, University of California Co-operative Extension Farm advisers, the

National Arborist Association, the International Society of Arboriculture, American Forestry Association, and numerous tree planting and preservation organizations throughout the state and nation.

(6) That those standards are working guidelines, recognizing that trees are individually unique in form and structure and that their pruning or maintenance needs may not always fit strict rules.

(7) That the International Society of Arboriculture founded in 1924 with over 21 chapters throughout the world publishes the monthly Journal of Arboriculture, which is devoted to the dissemination of knowledge in the science and art of growing and maintaining shade and ornamental trees. The Journal of Arboriculture, March 1988, Volume 14, No. 3, page 76, states that properly trimmed trees not only require less man-hours on their next cycle but some may not even need trimming. This conclusion was based on a study performed at Delmarva Power in Maryland during the 1982-84 trim cycles. Results indicate a 25 percent reduction in work force and a 7.4 percent reduction in costs in the first three years.

(8) That the use of proper tree maintenance techniques benefits the public because of reduced costs, reduced hazards, reduced public liability, protection from premature decline or death (conserving energy reducing carbon dioxide and ozone, absorbing particulate matter, producing more oxygen by increasing canopy spread, reduction in wind speed, reducing noise pollution, increasing real property values, enhancing visual and aesthetic qualities that attract visitors and businesses, serve as a source of community image and pride by providing maximum shade and canopy cover). As canopy cover increases the public benefits increase.

(9) (A) The Legislature's findings recognize that topping of trees is a widespread misunderstood consumer request and this form of pruning detracts from public benefits including, but not limited to, safety and property values, and causes premature decline, death, disease, insects, wood rot, and increased maintenance costs. These findings also recognize that a great number of personnel performing maintenance on trees unknowingly and unintentionally produce irreversible harm.

(B) The Legislature finds that non-regulated commercial tree service firms that advertise topping are widespread among commercial advertising including the yellow pages, but not limited to newspaper advertising, and that millions of dollars have been spent topping trees including publicly owned trees.

(C) The Legislature finds that modern techniques utilized by certified arborists through scientific study and continued education are of value and benefit to the citizens of California and to all who care for our resources.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection through Sections 4799.06 to 4799.12, inclusive, of the Public Resources Code, shall to the extent possible, furnish to every public agency, including the state, but not limited to, a city and county, school district, or community college district copies of these publications as listed: Western Chapter International Society of Arboriculture Pruning Standards, California Department of Parks and Recreation specifications for pruning trees, and National Arborist Association Standards of pruning shade trees.

(Added by Stats, 1992, c, 755 (A.B.3749), 1.)

2

Historical and Statutory Notes

1984 Legislation Former 53067 was repealed by Stats. 1984, c 885, 1. See, now, Public Contract Code 20103.

## **Excerpt From CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT CODE**

#### 53067. Tree pruning, legislative declaration; specifications

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(3) That the results of the 1988 California urban forestry survey prepared by Plant Science and Research for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Urban Forestry Program summarizes that an estimated 5.9 million street trees are managed by California cities of which approximately 30 percent of the cities and 20 counties do not have tree ordinances of any kind. That in 1988 an estimated one hundred nine million dollars (\$109,000,000) statewide was spent on municipal tree maintenance, less than 1 percent of most city and county budgets, with an average of sixteen dollars and 82 cents (\$16.82) per street and park tree per year and an average of four dollars and 68 cents (\$4.68) per resident per year. California's city governments support urban forestry. Support for tree programs is highest in communities where citizens are involved.

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(4) That the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Guidelines for Developing and Evaluating Tree Ordinances 1991publications states that an ordinance shall be developed for the purpose of prohibiting topping of public and private trees. Topping is the practice of cutting back large diameter branches of a mature tree to stubs and is a particularly destructive pruning practice. It is stressful to mature trees, and may result in reduced vigor, decline, or even death of trees. In addition, new branches that form below the cuts are only weakly attached to the tree and are in danger of splitting out. Topped trees require constant maintenance to prevent this from happening and it is often impossible to restore the structure of the tree crown after topping. Unfortunately many people believe that topping is a proper way to prune a tree, and this destructive practice is prevalent in some communities.

(5) That in an effort to promote practices that encourage the preservation of tree structure, and public safety and health, these standards developed through careful scientific studies by leading industry consultants, United States Department of Forestry scientists, and professors of horticulture and plant pathology, are recognized standards by the Department of Parks and Recreation, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, University of California Co-operative Extension Farm advisers, the

National Arborist Association, the International Society of Arboriculture, American Forestry Association, and numerous tree planting and preservation organizations throughout the state and nation.

(6) That those standards are working guidelines, recognizing that trees are individually unique in form and structure and that their pruning or maintenance needs may not always fit strict rules.

(7) That the International Society of Arboriculture founded in 1924 with over 21 chapters throughout the world publishes the monthly Journal of Arboriculture, which is devoted to the dissemination of knowledge in the science and art of growing and maintaining shade and ornamental trees. The Journal of Arboriculture, March 1988, Volume 14, No. 3, page 76, states that properly trimmed trees not only require less man-hours on their next cycle but some may not even need trimming. This conclusion was based on a study performed at Delmarva Power in Maryland during the 1982-84 trim cycles. Results indicate a 25 percent reduction in work force and a 7.4 percent reduction in costs in the first three years.

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(9) (A) The Legislature's findings recognize that topping of trees is a widespread misunderstood consumer request and this form of pruning detracts from public benefits including, but not limited to, safety and property values, and causes premature decline, death, disease, insects, wood rot, and increased maintenance costs. These findings also recognize that a great number of personnel performing maintenance on trees unknowingly and unintentionally produce irreversible harm.

(B) The Legislature finds that non-regulated commercial tree service firms that advertise topping are widespread among commercial advertising including the yellow pages, but not limited to newspaper advertising, and that millions of dollars have been spent topping trees including publicly owned trees.

(C) The Legislature finds that modern techniques utilized by certified arborists through scientific study and continued education are of value and benefit to the citizens of California and to all who care for our resources.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection through Sections 4799.06 to 4799.12, inclusive, of the Public Resources Code, shall to the extent possible, furnish to every public agency, including the state, but not limited to, a city and county, school district, or community college district copies of these publications as listed: Western Chapter International Society of Arboriculture Pruning Standards, California Department of Parks and Recreation specifications for pruning trees, and National Arborist Association Standards of pruning shade trees.

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(Added by Stats, 1992, c, 755 (A.B.3749), 1.)

Historical and Statutory Notes

1984 LegislationFormer 53067 was repealed by Stats. 1984, c 885,See, now, Public Contract Code 20103.