

June 3, 2014

Comment for inclusion in File 14-0019

Gentlepersons:

It might be timely to make an initial report on information I am collating in regards to tree trimming, sensitive habitat, and breeding habitat protection, and the importance of canopy cover to the future of the City and its residents. A full report will be forthcoming in greater detail later this summer.

I have been in contact with Departments handling street services and tree maintenance in Culver City, Pasadena, and Redondo Beach. Each of these City Departments have made commitments to preserving canopy cover (Pasadena has an 85% coverage goal), to severely restricting thinning of tree foliage within trees (to considerably less than 20%) and to NOT trimming or thinning either foliage or canopy of trees with nests in them (Pasadena and Culver City do not touch trees in this category because it is known that owls use abandoned nests in large, mature trees.)

All of the three have directives that are designed to spare mature trees from *any* trimming except in the clear instance of actual public safety.

The commitment of each City is to recognize *sensitive habitat and breeding habitat* in their trees and to consult experts in habitat, either at Audubon or in the community itself *before* trees are trimmed, if there is a question about the use of the tree for breeding. *It is strongly urged that the terminology of **sensitive habitat and breeding habitat** be acknowledged as significant and that this language be incorporated into **directives – not ‘guidelines’** – for use with arborists and tree trimming contractors.*

Pasadena and Culver City exercise strong accountability with regard to their contracting trimmers. *It is strongly urged that the City of Los Angeles do away with ‘guidelines’ that are essentially unenforceable, and institute a practice of **clear policy rules and directives**, which will ensure accountability to prevent the destruction of trees and habitat.* There has been considerable damage done to mature trees in this last pruning session. There are many dead mature trees in the City as a result of how this session was conducted. This issue of accountability was urged at the last meeting; this is critical for the process to have any impact on tree maintenance.

*It is strongly urged that the City employ individuals that are independent biologists and habitat specialists to ensure accountability and protection of habitat – part time field expert individuals are readily available as are internship individuals via the local universities and colleges. Redondo Beach asked me if I would *volunteer* to be available to review a questionable tree at risk for trimming – I said yes, of course.*

I again thank Mr. Bonin, Mr. Buscaino and Mr. Koretz and their respective staff for allowing this dialogue to be opened and explored. We have seen neighboring Cities do remarkable work in this matter; we can do the same.

Respectfully,

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