



December 22, 2020

Design Commission
City of Pasadena
175 North Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91109

RE: 350 Cordova

The tree canopy within Pasadena's urban core is quickly dwindling and in many cases, this reduction is related to the replacement matrix of our tree ordinance and zoning code encouraging "urban edge" development. Our current tree ordinance is just not strong enough to save even the most protected trees when a developer is given massing and increased density through state-mandated concessions.

The developer of 350 Cordova wants to remove beautiful protected trees from the property even though they should be integrated into the proposed development. The removal of the protected trees does not conform with the very first Guiding Principle of our General Plan, which says, "*Growth will be targeted to serve community needs and enhance the quality of life ... New development will build upon Pasadena's tradition of strong sense of place, great neighborhoods, gardens, plazas, parks, and trees.*"

Over this past year, it has become obvious that the Affordable Housing Concession Permits (AHCP) has damaged and diminished our urban tree canopy, going so far as to destroy healthy trees and leave no room for in-ground plantings. After the AHCP is awarded, protected trees cannot be saved by giving further incentives to the developer with height or reduced garden requirements because the project is already out of the scope of the General Plan. The design commission has to choose between two evils: remove the last protected trees on the block or go even bigger, which will not be consistent with our General Plan.

Goal Five of our General Plan is currently being set aside to accommodate these new developments and something must change. Policy 5.5 of our General Plan is one of the most distinguishing and unique aspects that has created our city: "*Civic Open Space. Continue to protect the character of the Civic Center as defined by its landscaped open spaces and tree canopy. Locate and design new civic structures to respect this urban form, character, design and functionality.*" We cannot lose what makes Pasadena so

special and it is our hope you will consider changing our tree ordinance and zoning code to help reduce the destruction of our urban tree canopy.

The developer of 350 Cordova must take our tree canopy into consideration just as our General Plan requires in Policy 5.5. It is the City's duty to protect its current residents from both developments that might hinder livability and from a higher urban heat index. Sadly, our city is quickly losing what differentiates us from other cities: mature trees.

Tree loving residents of Pasadena arguably agree that front, rear, and side setbacks must be maintained in all developments to allow for the opportunity to retain and plant more trees. We also believe subterranean garages should not be going from lot line to lot line, a practice that destroys all trees on a property as well as those that sit between buildings. I strongly request that no tree removal and replacement permit be granted for 350 Cordova unless replacement trees can be planted in the ground and have a chance to grow to maturity and provide a shade canopy.

We must ensure that the city we pass down to our children isn't made of just parking lots and concrete developments. It falls on the city staff, council and design commission to follow our General Plan and protect us from development that contradicts this fundamental imperative. While our City does have tree protections in place, it is clear they are no match for developers using the density bonus.

The City needs to take a stronger stance on maintaining mature trees in the urban center. We must create a City that has strong urban forestry efforts with dense vegetation and a beautiful urban canopy. We need to band together and insist on stronger protections for our trees.

Thank you,

Erika Foy