



April 4, 2016

Mr. Michael Byerts
Resch Polster & Berger
1840 Century Park East
Los Angeles, CA 90067

Re: Ficus Street Trees at 497 and 505 S. Lake Avenue

Dear Mr. Byerts,

I understand that your firm is negotiating with the City of Pasadena to remove the Ficus trees. As part the process, your firm, the judge and the City wants to know whether it would be possible to trim the trees back severely, including the roots so that the trees are not affecting the building. You have provided several reports: (1) the initial engineering report; (2) the engineer's supplemental report; and (3) the report of your traffic safety engineer. I have reviewed them and my previous support.

The subject Indian laurels, *Ficus m. Nitida*, have trunk diameters of 28 to over 30 inches. They are not exceptional specimens or rare. Rather they are a common nuisance species and a bane to street tree superintendents all over southern California. The destructive nature of their roots is well known to arborists, urban foresters and laypeople.

It has been well established in the reports mentioned above that these trees pose several significant risks to the adjoining building, to pedestrians, skate board riders, and to legally parked trucks.

Now that the sidewalk around these trees was excavated and the local drain lines examined, it should be clear to all that these trees have over-stayed this location. Street trees do not last forever. The July, 2007 South Lake Avenue Streetscape Plan in Chapter 4 discusses trees and states that the ficus trees should be removed and replaced over time. These last few were planted in the 50's and 60's. According to American Forests Magazine, the City of Los Angeles and the City of Miami said the average life of their urban street trees is 17 years. The average nationwide was 7 years. So these trees have probably "served" much longer than would be expected, especially for this notorious species.

One should also note that these three trees are the last of their kind within view of this location. I'm sure the other Indian laurels that were planted when these three were planted were removed for good reason. That reason still remains for these, but they have never been removed. At present it is long past when they should have been removed.

ARBORGATE CONSULTING, INC.

Horticulture & Arboriculture

1131 Lucinda Way, Tustin, CA 92780, Ph. 714.731.6240, Cell: 714.292.7184, Fax 714.731.6138

The City's proposition to just cut back the canopy and roots is not reasonable for the following reasons:

1. Severe cutting back of the canopy would not change the size of the roots or make the trunk less thick.
2. Cutting back the top severely, i.e. more than 30%, will reduce the health and increase necessary maintenance over future years.
3. Due to past lion-tailing type pruning, heading and topping would be require to reduce the size of the trees to any noticeable degree. Heading and topping are destructive practices according to all known standards of care.
4. Cutting back the top severely is the same as topping which is decried in State Government Code 53067.
5. Cutting back the roots severely, i.e. more than 5 times trunk diameter or 12.5 feet from the trunk will destabilize the trees according to Dr. Tom Smiley of Bartlett Tree Research.
6. Cutting back into such large diameter roots is likely to result in root decay which will continue to rot at an unknown rate, below ground and out of sight.
7. The sidewalk cannot be higher than the store entries. Water must drain away from the building, but the roots must grow thicker every year, causing the sidewalk to rise more every year.
8. Without cutting the roots back more than 12.5 feet, the sidewalk will continue to be uplifted and new roots sprouting off the cut ends will still grow and cause future damage.

These last ditch efforts to save them are not reasonable. It is time for them to be replaced with the common street tree species on Lake Avenue.

Respectfully submitted,



Arbrogate Consulting, Inc.
Greg Applegate, ASCA, ASLA
Registered Consulting Arborist #365

ARBORGATE CONSULTING, INC.

Horticulture & Arboriculture

1131 Lucinda Way, Tustin, CA 92780, Ph. 714.731.6240, Cell: 714.292.7184, Fax 714.731.6138