

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
BUREAU OF STREET SERVICES  
REPORT NO.1

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Date: May 10, 2024

Council District No. 10

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD  
PUBLIC WORKS OF THE CITY  
of Los Angeles California

MAY 10 2024

  
Executive Officer  
Board of Public Works

Honorable Board of Public Works  
Of the City of Los Angeles

Commissioners:

**8876-8888 WEST VENICE BOULEVARD - REQUEST APPROVAL FOR A FEE-PERMIT TO REMOVE TWELVE TREES WHICH INCLUDE SEVEN AFRICAN SUMAC (SEARSIA LANCEA) AND FOUR AMERICAN SWEETGUM (LIQUIDAMBAR STYRACIFLUA) AND ONE RUSTY-LEAF (FIG FICUS RUBIGINOSA) FOR STREET IMPROVEMENT WORK RELATIVE TO CITY PLANNING CASE NO. CPC-2021-9506-CPIO-SP-SPR-WDI. TREE REPLACEMENTS ARE REQUIRED.**

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Board of Public Works (Board):

1. FIND under the California Public Resources Code, Section 21166 and the State's Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15162, on the basis of substantial evidence contained in the whole record, that since the City's prior certification of Environmental Impact Report (EIR) No. ENV-2021-9507-EIR there have been no changes to the Project, changes with respect to the circumstances under which the Project is being undertaken, or new information of substantial importance concerning the Project, which cause new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects, and therefore no subsequent EIR, supplemental EIR, or other analysis is required for the Project.
2. SPECIFY that the Bureau of Street Services (StreetsLA), Urban Forestry Division, located at 1149 South Broadway, is custodian of the documents or other material that constitute the record of proceedings upon which the Board's decision is based.
3. CONCUR with the Bureau of Street Services determination that the site cannot feasibly accommodate all of the required replacement trees and pursuant to LAMC 62.177(c), authorize the Tree Replacement Guarantee Fee to satisfy the Board's tree planting requirement.
4. REVIEW and APPROVE the removal of twelve trees for street improvement work and improvements relative to planning case no. CPC-2021-9506-CPIO-SP-SPR-WDI. Tree replacements are required.

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**TRANSMITTALS:**

1. Copy of Tree Removal Notification Sheet
2. Application for a tree removal permit
3. Letter from Culver Crossings Properties LLC
4. Tree report, dated June 30, 2023
5. B Permit Bond and Fee Estimate for BR004853
6. Inter-Departmental Correspondence, dated October 31, 2022
7. Addendum to the Environmental Impact Report, SCH No. 2021110079
8. Letter of Determination CPC-2021-9506-CPIO-SP-SPR-WDI
9. Photographs of the trees
10. Plot plans

**RECITAL:**

Property Owner, Culver Crossings Properties, LLC, is in the process of constructing a new development consisting of a new integrated creative office complex on 4.46 acres located within the City of Los Angeles and Culver City jurisdictions. On the Los Angeles portion (Los Angeles Parcel) the project proposes construction of a new 334,517 square-foot, five-story office building measuring 71 feet in height to the top of the roof with a three-level subterranean garage as well as an additional four-story building containing 18,821 square feet of office uses within Culver City (Culver City parcel). The project is located at 8876 thru 8888 West Venice Boulevard and within the West Adams - Baldwin Hills - Leimert Community.

Property Owner Authorized Representative, Andrew Wallace of Trammell Crow Company, submitted an application to StreetsLA, Urban Forestry Division requesting a permit for the removal of twelve street trees in relation to the ongoing project. A field inspection was performed by a StreetsLA arborist on July 8, 2023. The StreetsLA arborist inspected and addressed potential impacts to street trees adjacent to the project. The inspection revealed that there are a total of fifteen trees within the public right of way near the project site.

Along the project's frontage, on Venice Boulevard, there are seven African Sumac (*Searsia lancea*) trees (F1 thru F7) in fair to poor condition measuring approximately 13 to 18-inches in diameter by approximately 15 to 24-feet in height. The seven trees were repeatedly topped by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) and severely pruned by prior ownership over the years and their branching structure has been negatively affected. The seven African Sumac trees require removal to allow for proposed roadway and public right of way improvements and project impact from proposed construction.

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One (F1) African Sumac tree will be directly impacted by the construction of a future catch basin and will be adjacent to a future intersection traffic signal; one (F5) African Sumac tree will be directly impacted by the construction of a proposed drop-off turn lane to allow accessibility by the mobility impaired at the project's main entrance; one tree (F6) is in poor condition with sparse foliage, leaning trunk and cavity decay within its main trunk. The remaining four (F2, F3, F4, F7) African Sumac trees have poor branching structure with some decay and will be impacted by the ongoing construction activities.

As part of the required street improvement work, the applicant is required to install a new driveway on Venice Boulevard. To provide vehicular access from westbound Venice Boulevard, the applicant will be required to reduce and modify an existing landscaped median island along Venice Boulevard. There are eight trees (M1 thru M8) growing in the median which include five American Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), one Rusty Leaf Fig (*Ficus rubiginosa*), one Brisbane Box (*Lophostemon confertus*), and one Canary Island Pine (*Pinus canariensis*) tree. The eight median island trees are in fair to poor condition measuring approximately 3 to 18-inches in diameter by approximately 10 to 30-feet in height. Five of the eight (M2, M3, M4, M5, M6) median island trees which include four Sweetgum trees and one Rusty Leaf Fig tree will require removal to allow for the median island modification and construction of a new left-turn lane and allow access into the new development from west bound Venice Boulevard. The remaining three trees (M1, M7, M8) which include one (M1) Sweetgum, one (M7) Brisbane Box, and one (M8) Canary Island Pine tree will not be minimally impacted by construction and shall be retained and protected in place throughout construction.

#### **ALTERNATIVE METHODS AND OPTIONS EXPLORED:**

StreetsLA, Urban Forestry Division (UFD) endeavors to retain healthy mature street trees whenever possible and will only consider removal of mature street trees after all alternatives for tree preservation have been considered. StreetsLA Staff met the applicant virtually to discuss the project and the need to remove trees on several occasions. According to the applicant, the project requires the removal of twelve trees due to the project's proposed design and proposed street improvement work. UFD determined that the twelve trees will need to be removed to allow the applicant to implement the proposed street improvements and project as planned.

Due to the project scope, the size, species, and condition of the remaining trees, the possibility of tree preservation or relocation is not feasible for eight of twelve trees being requested for removal. An additional three trees within proximity of the future construction project will receive no impact and shall be protected in place throughout construction.

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**CONDITION:**

The applicant has agreed to plant ten, 60-inch box size Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) and two, 60-inch box size Brisbane Box (*Lophostemon confertus*) trees along Venice Boulevard; three 36-inch box size Coast Live Oak trees in the center medians on Venice Boulevard; and two (2) 60-inch box size Crape Myrtle 'Natchez' (*Lagerstroemia 'Natchez'*) trees along National Boulevard side.

All replacement trees shall be installed to the satisfaction of StreetsLA and shall be watered for a minimum five-year period after planting. The additional seven trees needed to meet the Board's 2:1 tree replacement policy cannot feasibly be planted on site due to spacing restrictions. Therefore, pursuant to LAMC Section 62.177, applicant shall pay the tree replacement guarantee fee of \$1,945.00 per tree not planted onsite totaling \$13,615.00.

The modified landscaped medians will be planted with new trees, irrigation systems, and California native and drought resistant landscaping. The applicant is pursuing a revocable permit from the Bureau of Engineering for the median island modifications, landscape, and planting. The applicant has agreed to improve and maintain all median island improvement work in perpetuity pursuant to conditions within the respective revocable permit (BR004853).

**CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)**

The Department of City Planning prepared a Notice of Determination (NOD) Case No. ENV-2021-9507-EIR (State Clearinghouse Number 2021110079) for the project finding that the project will have less than a significant environmental effect with the incorporation of mitigation measures identified in the EIR.

The project's Draft EIR and Final EIR along with Planning's environmental documents were utilized in forming the recommendations in this report and are located within the case file for the Project located at the City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, 221 North Figueroa Street, Suite 1350, Los Angeles CA 90012 and is available to the public upon request.

**NOTIFICATIONS:**

The Tenth Council District was informed of the tree removal request on September 20, 2023, and will notify StreetsLA of any objections received by their office.

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Public comments on this tree removal request will be received and heard during the scheduled public hearing with the Board. The following public noticing of these tree removal permits were conducted:

- Notice of the proposed tree removals were physically posted on the subject trees on December 27, 2023
- Proposed tree removals were included in the Bureau of Street Services Tree Removal Notification System
- The Community Forest Advisory Committee (CFAC) and Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) were notified

The applicant shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless the City, its agents, officers, or employees from any claim, action or proceeding against the City or its agents, officers, or employees relating to or to attack, set aside, void or annul this approval.

Respectfully submitted,



for

KEITH MOZEE,  
Executive Director and General Manager  
Bureau of Street Services

Prepared by:  
Urban Forestry Division Ext. 7-3077

KM/ATR/HB/BR  
S:\Board Reports\2023 board reports\8867-8888 West Venice Blvd.