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Hollywood Trees Spared From Ax After Legal Battle

Most of the trees at the center of a legal battle and community demonstrations will be spared, city leaders announced Thursday.

By California News Wire Services, News Partner (https://patch.com/users/socal-patch) | Dec 7, 2018 1:55 am ET

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Hollywood, CA Fourteen of 18 ficus trees in Hollywood that are the focus of a legal battle and demonstrations after the city had slated them for removal will be spared, Los Angeles City Councilman David Ryu said Thursday.

The trees on the 1200 block of Cherokee Avenue were scheduled to be cut down according to a summer report from the Bureau of Street Services, which said the removals were needed in order to fix the sidewalks.

Two groups, United Neighborhoods for Los Angeles and Eastside Nature Alliance, took legal action to try and stop the removals, and a court injunction put the final decision in the hands of the City Council.

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Ryu said he worked with the Bureau of Street services on a solution, and a new report issued by the bureau concludes that 14 can be spared the ax.

"When I was first told that all 18 of these beautiful, mature trees had to be removed to fix the broken sidewalks on Cherokee Street, I thought `there must be a better way.' We cannot pit sidewalk repair against protecting our urban canopy," Ryu said. "This report makes clear - we can do both."

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The two groups fighting the tree removals were supported by the Coalition to Preserve LA, funded by the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, a frequent critic of the city's real estate development actions.

Jill Stewart, executive director of the coalition, and the groups used the Cherokee trees as an example to criticize the city's entire urban forestry management, and in August sought a temporary restraining order that would have stopped the city from removing trees as part of its \$1.3 billion sidewalk repair program.

The groups said the city's plan to cut down the Cherokee Avenue trees and six camphor trees in the 600 block of West 48th Street in South Los Angeles was in need of a full environmental impact review as part of the California Environmental Quality Act.

The restraining order would have applied citywide, but Superior Court Judge Richard Fruin struck the request down.

Stewart said in August that the city is cutting down too many trees as part of its sidewalk repair program and that the loss of shade in the city will cause power outages and rising heat levels.

"The Board of Public Works is in the 1980s -- the 1980s. They're wearing the wrong clothes on this one, so we're trying to wake them up," Stewart said.

Steward did not immediately respond to a request to comment on the announcement from Ryu's office.

Since the summer, Ryu has introduced three motions with Councilman Bob Blumenfield he said will reform the city's relationship to its urban forest, increase staffing and expertise at the Urban Forestry Division, and develop a long-range strategy for the city's urban forest.

The city's 30-year sidewalk repair program is an effort to spend at least \$31 million annually to repair or replace damaged sidewalks, and was enacted as the result of a 2015 settlement of a class action lawsuit brought by a group of disabled people who argued that the city was in violation of the Americans With Disabilities Act by failing over decades to properly maintain its sidewalks.

The ficus trees in the 1200 block of Cherokee Avenue are located at the site where a slip-and-fall incident led to the city agreeing to a \$3 million settlement in April with a woman, Holli S. Breakfield, who hit her head on a sidewalk there on New Year's Eve 2014 while being carried on the back of a man who "tripped on a pattern of defects," according to her lawsuit.

(https://

The Bureau of Street Services report outlines a plan to utilize a combination of root pruning, tree trimming and reduction in the sidewalk width as allowable by the ADA, which will save 14 of the trees, although four trees still marked for removal have caused significant damage to the sidewalk and cannot be pruned without compromising safety, Ryu's office said.

The report is expected to soon be voted on by the City Council.

City News Service; Photo courtesy of Google Earth.

More from Hollywood



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Man Beaten To Death In Hollywood, Killers At Large (https://patch.com/california/hollywood/man-beaten-death-hollywood-killers-large)

Nov 8



(https://patch.com/california/hollywood/hollywood-hills-killer-commits-suicide-death-row)

Hollywood Hills Killer Commits Suicide on Death Row (https://patch.com/california/hollywood/hollywood-hills-killer-commits-suicide-death-row)

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📍 Echo Park-Silver Lake (https://patch.com/california/echopark/calendar) | Featured Event

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Holiday Echo Park Craft Fair 2018: Silver Lake (https://patch.com/california/hollywood/calendar/event/20181209/469446/holiday-echo-park-craft-fair-2018-silver-lake)

Sunday at 10:00 am (https://patch.com/california/hollywood/calendar/event/20181209/469446/holiday-echo-park-craft-fair-2018-silver-lake)



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Abbot Kinney Holiday Block Party & Snow Day 2018: Venice (https://patch.com/california/hollywood/calendar/event/20181209/469305/abbot-kinney-holiday-block-party-snow-day-2018-venice)

Sunday at 11:00 am (https://patch.com/california/hollywood/calendar/event/20181209/469305/abbot-kinney-holiday-block-party-snow-day-2018-venice)



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📍 Beverly Hills (https://patch.com/california/beverlyhills/calendar) | Featured Event

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Holiday Concert & Mayor As Santa 2018: Beverly Hills (https://patch.com/california/hollywood/calendar/event/20181209/465862/holiday-concert-mayor-as-santa-2018-beverly-hills)

Sunday at 1:00 pm (https://patch.com/california/hollywood/calendar/event/20181209/465862/holiday-concert-mayor-as-santa-2018-beverly-hills)



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Hollywood Neighbor Posts (https://patch.com/california/hollywood/posts)

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🗣️ Contributor posted an announcement | 5d

MWP Entertainment Group Presents "WANTED," a Live Experiential Musical Event Series with H.E.R. (https://patch.com/california/hollywood/announcements/a/63955/mwp-entertainment-group-presents-wanted-a-live-experiential-musical-event-series-with-h-e-r) Read more > (https://patch.com/california/hollywood/announcements/a/63955/mwp-entertainment-group-presents-wanted-a-live-experiential-musical-event-series-with-h-e-r)



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Jamie Barren posted an article | Dec 1

Los Angeles New Year's Eve: Top 19 Events to Ring in 2019 (<https://patch.com/california/hollywood/los-angeles-new-year-s-eve-top-19-events-ring-2019>) Read more > (<https://patch.com/california/hollywood/los-angeles-new-year-s-eve-top-19-events-ring-2019>)

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Best Los Angeles Hotels to Celebrate New Year's Eve 2019 (<https://patch.com/california/hollywood/best-los-angeles-hotels-celebrate-new-years-eve-2019>) Read more > (<https://patch.com/california/hollywood/best-los-angeles-hotels-celebrate-new-years-eve-2019>)

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'A Carol Christmas' (A New Musical) 2018: North Hollywood (<https://patch.com/california/hollywood/calendar/event/20181209/469421/a-carol-christmas-a-new-musical-2018-north-hollywood>)

Sunday at 2:00 pm (<https://patch.com/california/hollywood/calendar/event/20181209/469421/a-carol-christmas-a-new-musical-2018-north-hollywood>)



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DealTown (<https://patch.com/us/dealtown/calendar>) | Featured Event

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Patch's Holiday Shopping Checklist (<https://patch.com/california/hollywood/calendar/event/20181210/462678/patchs-holiday-shopping-checklist>)

Monday at 10:00 am (<https://patch.com/california/hollywood/calendar/event/20181210/462678/patchs-holiday-shopping-checklist>)



(<https://patch.com/california/hollywood/calenda-holiday-shopping-checklist>)

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Hiker Knocked Unconscious In Hollywood Hills Fall (<https://patch.com/california/hollywood/hiker-knocked-unconscious-hollywood-hills-fall>)



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Holiday Event Guide: Hollywood & Nearby 2018 (<https://patch.com/california/hollywood/holiday-event-guide-hollywood-nearby-2018>)



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Kevin Hart Steps Down From Oscars Gig Over Old Homophobic Tweet
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Los Angeles (<https://patch.com/california/los-angeles/calendar>) | Featured Event

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Grand Performances Holiday Shows 2018: California Plaza, L.A.
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Wednesday at 11:45 am (<https://patch.com/california/hollywood/calendar/event/20181212/467243/grand-performances-holiday-shows-2018-california-plaza-l-a>)



(<https://patch.com/california/hollywood/calendar-event/20181212/467243/grand-performances-holiday-shows-2018-california-plaza-l-a>)

San Juan Capistrano (<https://patch.com/california/sanjuancapistrano>) | News | 17h

Bear Wants A Badge; Name This Reindeer: Animals Gone Wild In CA
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Dinner with Santa 2018: Echo Park

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- 5.  Hollywood, CA News (<https://patch.com/california/hollywood>)
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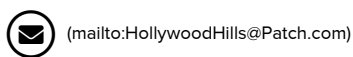
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