



January 29, 2024

By email

Dear Mayor Brotman, Councilmembers Asatryan, Devine, Kassakhian, and Najarian,

Re: City Council Meeting, January 30, Action Item 8b
Introduction of Ordinance for Public and Private Indigenous Tree Protections

Glendale Environmental Coalition thanks you for introducing this ordinance and commends the Urban Forest staff for all the work they've done to improve protection of Glendale's trees.

We also applaud the Urban Forest Department for embarking on planting thousands of trees in the attempt to restore the city's 20% loss of tree canopy over the past two decades and to increase it a further 5%.

However, GEC urges you to approve adopt the changes to the ordinances but to continue striving to:

1. Implement the Sustainability Commission's recommended changes to the ordinance to better protect mature trees.
2. Include education of Glendale residents about the value of trees as capital assets for their properties and neighborhoods.
3. Look more closely at our neighbors, La Cañada, Pasadena, San Marino, even L.A. These cities all protect more species and have stronger regulations.
4. Empower other Public Works staff to do more tree protection during permitting and inspections to reduce the load on the Urban Forest Department.

The proposed ordinance offers no real additional protection of healthy mature trees on private property beyond the six indigenous trees currently protected, even though these provide substantial and critical public benefits.

For example, most Deodar Cedars here were planted over 100 years ago and can live for 1,000 years here. These cedars and picturesque Aleppo pines can stay healthy without summer irrigation, even during drought. It takes decades to replace them. GEC members have witnessed the loss of healthy, mature trees throughout our city over the past decade.

Our city's Climate Action and Adaptability Plan relies on trees to strengthen Glendale's ability to withstand mounting climate-related threats. GEC members are the first to recognize that mature trees will not solve Glendale's climate problems alone but they are a critical line of defense. They store carbon, filter our air, and cool our homes and streets far better than man-made structures or newly planted trees.

Again, we hold our Urban Forest Department staff in the highest regard and are impressed that two arborists can do as much as they do to care for Glendale's tree canopy. But, as the department plants thousands of saplings, we cannot afford to keep losing mature trees at the rate of the past two decades. We hope you can do more to protect them.

Sincerely,

Jackie Gish and Jack Walworth
Board Co-Chairs
Glendale Environmental Coalition