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## Center gets final OK to cut trees in space shuttle's path

**Officials agree to plant four times as many trees, provide scholarships and job training in exchange for clearing Endeavour's route.**

By Angel Jennings, Los Angeles Times

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The California Science Center received final approval Monday to chop down 265 trees to make room for the space shuttle Endeavour as it rolls through the streets of Los Angeles.

To garner residents' support, the center sweetened the deal at the last minute and agreed to replant four times as many trees, repair additional sidewalks, and offer scholarships and job training.

"While we sincerely regret the loss of many majestic trees which have aided this community for decades, what we accomplished through this agreement is a greener South L.A. for the health of our community, as well as educational opportunities at the Science Center for generations to come," said a statement released through the Neighborhood Council groups' attorney, Gideon Kracov.

In all, nearly 400 trees will be cut down in Inglewood and South Los Angeles in the 12-mile route between Los Angeles International Airport and the shuttle's permanent home in Exposition Park. (Of those, 119 are in South Los Angeles, 124 are in Westchester, 128 are in Inglewood and the rest are near LAX).

Community members packed the Board of Public Works meeting at City Hall on Monday morning to voice their concerns. Some residents said they felt slighted and left with few options.

"I'm tired of people coming to our community and doing things behind our backs and then at the last minute inviting us to the meetings and it's already too late," Ayana McCowen, 39, said to a boisterous crowd. "This is an injustice to me and my community."

South Los Angeles resident Lark Galloway-Gilliam, a driving force behind the deal, told the board of a recent visit to the California Science Center with a 10-year-old girl.

The youngster found a \$20 bill on the floor of the museum, but instead of keeping it, she told Galloway-Gilliam she wanted to donate it to the Endeavour fundraising effort.

"She is why we are here today to sign this agreement," Galloway-Gilliam said. "She exemplifies the integrity, the graciousness of the community I call home. The space shuttle will provide an exciting exhibit for our children."

Near the end of the three-hour meeting, Commissioner Andrea Alarcón applauded the work of residents in South Los Angeles communities.

"Your advocacy really pushed us to a new place," she said, adding later that the outspoken group was able to secure more improvements to their neighborhood.

Other neighborhoods, including Inglewood and Westchester, will receive the state minimum requirement of two replanted trees for every one removed.

In addition to the extra trees, the agreement calls for larger trees to be planted, \$400,000 toward tree trimming, and up to five years of tree maintenance.

The California Science Center also agreed to provide at least 10 scholarships to area students, pay \$100,000 to an education fund and train local teachers in science. Local youths will be hired to perform at least half of the tree maintenance.

Tree removal in Los Angeles could begin as early as next week in anticipation of a two-day parade from LAX to the California Science Center that will begin Oct. 12.

Although the parade is still on track, NASA officials pushed Endeavour's grand homecoming to Los Angeles back a day to Friday.

A cross-country farewell tour is still planned. On the back of a modified 747 aircraft, Endeavour will dip low over several NASA sites along the southern United States and spend one night in Houston before reaching Edwards Air Force base Thursday afternoon.

Endeavour will leave the Mojave Desert base early Friday, touring several landmarks across Northern California and the Los Angeles area before touching down at LAX midday.

NASA spokesman Michael Curie said despite the changes, officials were "expecting everything to fall into place."

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