

# Whittier Elementary Tree Planting Proposal



## Overview

The Western side of the Whittier campus is a large open area consisting of a blacktop and a grassy sports field. This area serves as the primary location for students recess and physical education activity. Unfortunately there is very little to almost no shade for students. This creates an incredibly hot and potentially unhealthy situation for students engaging in physical activities during increasingly warmer months such as August, September, and Spring periods. Additionally the asphalt area traps and holds heat raising the ambient temperature of the area during warm weather periods. During the heatwave of August 25th, 2021 through August 27th, 2021, the blacktop reported temperatures over 112 degrees<sup>1</sup>. Climate change will continue to increase temperatures making this area an increased health risk for students and the community for years to come.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wlfi.com/content/news/August-24-330-PM-Weather-Forecast-Update-575163021.html>

## Proposal

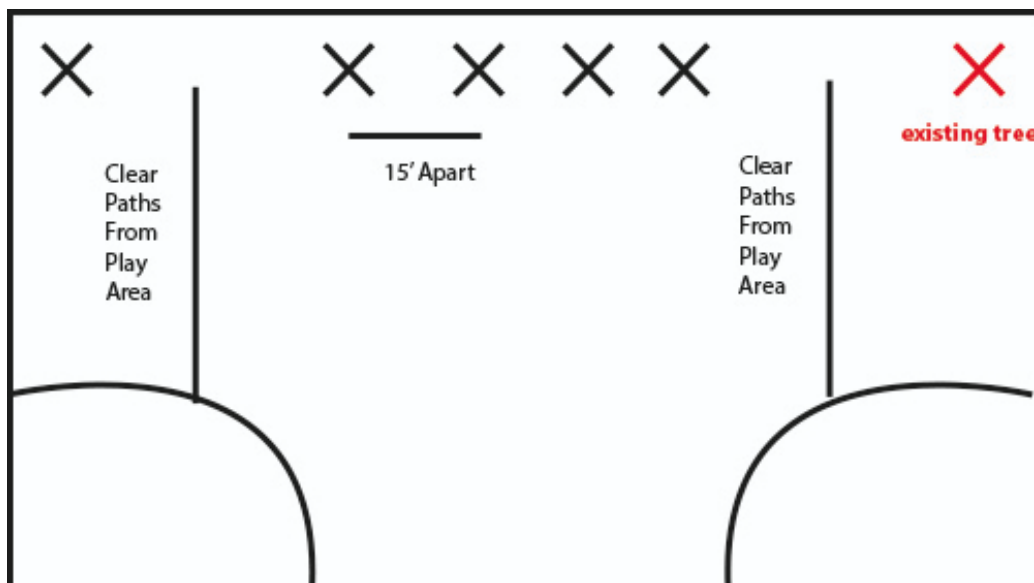
The Whittier PTO would like to donate five Ironwood trees to plant along the edge of the field and blacktop to reduce the heat index and provide much needed shade for Whittier student's and the community. Most importantly this will improve the overall aesthetic value of the campus, as demonstrated at Holmes Elementary, Beye Elementary and other D97 campuses that have implemented trees along their fields.

### Types of Trees and Location

The beautification committee met with the Oak Park Park District arborist, John Borland. He confirmed trees can be planted along the edge and recommended the following:

*My recommendations for the site would be one medium sized tree in the northeast corner and 3-4 medium sized trees along the curb in the space between the infields. The trees should be planted about 15 feet from the pavement and the same distance apart. This gives it plenty of space from the baseball fields.*

*My recommendation for species would be either an American hornbeam (*Carpinus carolinina*) or an ironwood (*Ostrya virginiana*) of 1.5-2 inch caliper. These should be available from any of the local nurseries*



Given the space needed for soccer and other sports, the D97 Grounds team and Park District agreed planting would have to be no further than 5 feet from the blacktop and 15

feet apart. The Ironwood is a fast growing and hearty tree that has a good chance of withstanding the heat and activity of the Whittier field location.

## Investment Options

The recommendation from Mr. Borland was to plant in the Fall, as trees will “take root” before the Winter and have a better chance of flourishing. Planting in the Spring is an option, but the risk of the tree not taking root is great as their branches “reach for the sun” rather than root.

### Recommended Option

Two of these nurseries can supply a larger tree of 2.5 diameters, which requires more labor to dig holes and plant. The PTO would need landscaper assistance to plant, but watering could be managed through a water bag ensuring the tree gets the water it needs without manual labor.

Total estimated cost for trees, installation and maintenance is \$2,313<sup>2</sup>. This gives us a more mature tree and the lowest installation and maintenance.

<b>Hinsdale Nursery</b>	2.5” diameter Tree	\$256/tree	
		\$70	Delivery
		\$105.30 for tax	(tax exemption applies)
		<b>\$1,456 Total Cost</b>	(planting not included)
<b>Christy Weber Farm &amp; Garden</b>	2.5” diameter Tree	\$239/tree	
		\$100	Delivery
		\$142.45	tax
		<b>\$1,538 Total Cost</b>	(planting not included)
<b>Rasta with a Rack</b>		Up to \$700	Planting and Labor
		\$75	5 water bags
		<b>\$775 Total Cost</b>	

<sup>2</sup> Please note these prices are from August 2021. We anticipate pricing will increase by 3% for 2022.

## Maintenance

In order to give the trees the best chance of survival the PTO Beatification teams recomms the following:

1. The Whittier PTO will commit to watering and caring for the trees until the end of the 2024-2025 school year.
2. We will educate and “dedicate” each tree to a grade, combining K/1st. In an effort to teach the kids about the importance of taking care of the trees, and creating “ownership” we hope this will lead to “community” care and reduce the chance of vandalism.

## PROPOSED PROJECT TIMELINE

October is the most ideal time to plant the trees and gives them the best chance to root and flourish in the Spring.

- AUGUST 2022: Order trees from selected nursery and schedule planting
- SEPTEMBER 2022: Trees delivered by nursery and planting
- SEPTEMBER 2022 - SEPTEMBER 2025: Bi-weekly watering and trimming

## RISKS:

We understand that a school yard is a tough environment for a newly planted tree and there is a higher than normal probability for intentional or accidental vandalism.

New trees need time to take root requiring regular attention during first years of growth.

The size and depth of holes needed to plant more mature trees requires professional planting and there is the potential of discovering unknown obstruction (old concrete, pipes etc below the turf).

## SOLUTIONS:

To help ensure the safety of the new trees we are planning on first contracting a landscape company for the first two years of the trees life to guarantee regular watering and care. The PTO will partner with the Whittier Staff to have each grade “adopt” a tree to create ownership in maintenance, naming and caring of the tree. This will create a sense of community with our students, giving them both ownership and educating them about the importance of trees in our urban environment.



To provide the trees time to properly take root we are proposing they are planted in the Fall. Fall planting is less stressful on trees as they are going into their dormant period and the Fall and Winter do not offer the same threats that the hot Oak Park Spring and Summer seasons do.

In order to avoid any surprises in relation to possible obstructions under the sod we will work with a contracted landscaper to survey the area and create test digs in order to identify any issues.