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Date: 11/16/15
Submitted in Public Works + Budget/Finance Committee
Council File No: 14-0163-53
Item No.: 1
Communication
from the Public

November 12, 2015

Honorable Board of Public Works Commissioners
Los Angeles City Hall
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Willits Settlement Sidewalk Repair - Recommendations for Tree Replacement Values

Honorable Commissioners,

The Community Forest Advisory Committee (CFAC) has discussed the LA City standard 2:1 planting replacement policy for Street Trees removals in relation to the Willits Settlement and recommends an adjustment to the current policy. Our recommendation for an appropriate tree replacement policy is as follows:

- **For the removal of a tree with canopy of 1-29' average diameter:**
 - replace with (2) 24" boxed trees
 - 3 years watering and maintenance
 - structural pruning in the third year of the maintenance period

- **For the removal of a tree with canopy of 30' average diameter or greater:**
 - Replace with (4) 24" boxed trees
 - 3 years of watering and maintenance
 - structural pruning in the third year of the maintenance period

A simple formula based on **average diameter of the tree canopy**, rather than trunk diameter provides a superior assessment of the environmental value of an individual tree. Most trees involved in sidewalk conflicts are mature and have a large trunk diameter but not all provide the same environmental benefits. A tree with a large canopy of leaves provides greater environmental services than one that may have the same trunk diameter but a smaller leaf canopy due to improper pruning, decline in health or other causes. In recommending an easy to implement formula we recognize that unfortunately the value of upright species, such as Canary Island Pines is underestimated. The canopy average diameter is simply measured at the widest and narrowest points and the average taken.

Three years of establishment care has been proposed for replacement trees and this is considered the minimal acceptable time for tree establishment. CFAC recommends that establishment care include appropriate watering, replacement plantings, re-staking or stake and tie removal, and removal of base sprouts, weeds and trash **and young tree structural pruning**. Young tree structural pruning is typically performed the third year after planting to remove weakly attached branches, promote a strong central leader and reduce the potential for future branch failures or conflicts.

Massed plantings will be more economical to install and establish as well as becoming a source of community pride. The new, well cared for trees, necessarily of appropriately selected species, will provide needed environmental mitigation, have improved health and be less costly to maintain in the long term.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Mayer", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

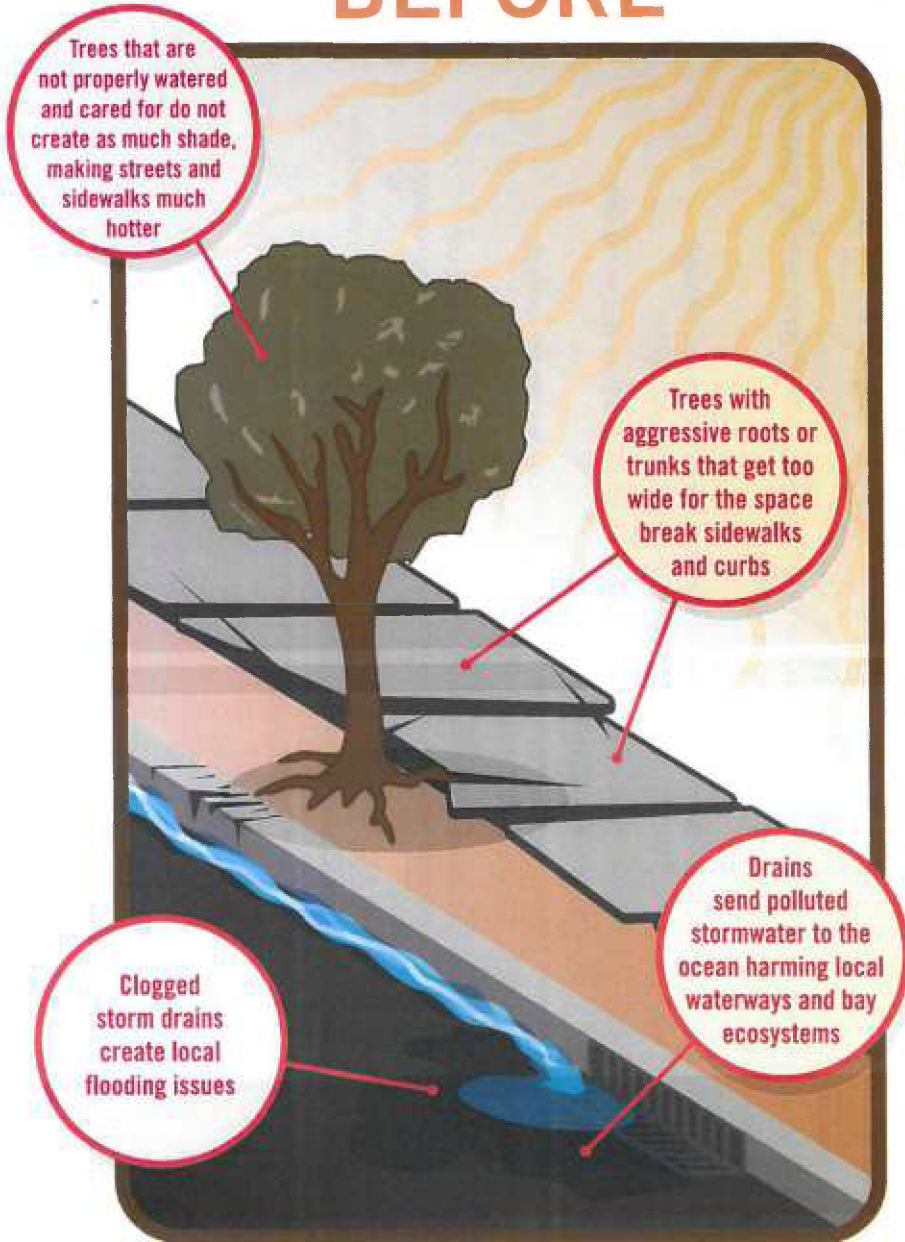
Rick Mayer
Chair, Community Forest Advisory Committee

cc: City Attorney
Mayor Garcetti
Council Members

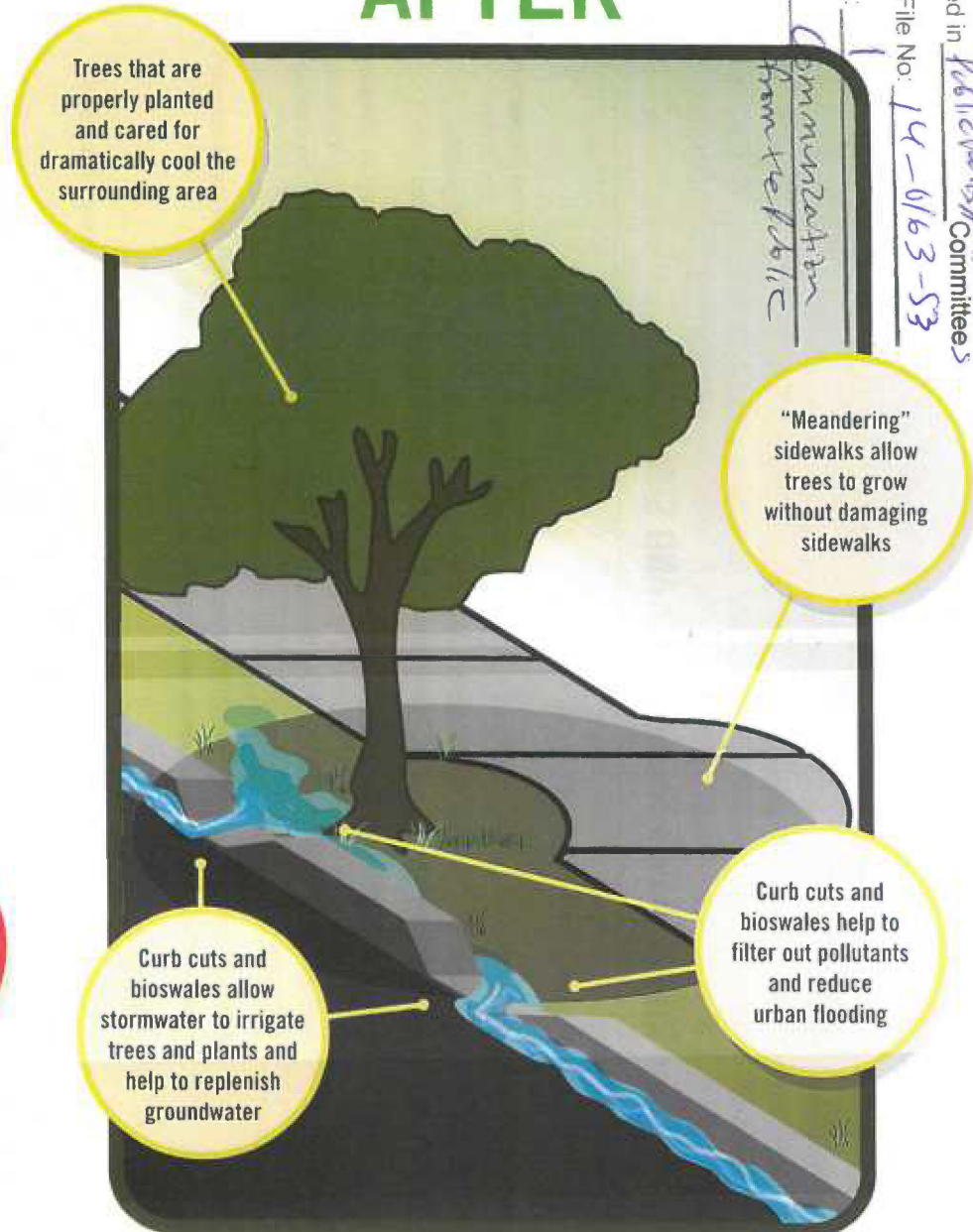
Invest in LA's Trees, Water AND Sidewalks



BEFORE



AFTER



Date: 11/16/15
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Invest in LA's Trees, Water AND Sidewalks

BACKGROUND

The City of Los Angeles is investing \$1.4 billion of much needed funding over the next 30 years to fix our long neglected, broken sidewalks as a result of a recent class action lawsuit, the Willits settlement. The City now faces decisions to preserve or remove trees due to root overgrowth: decisions that will have lasting implications for the health and well-being of Angelenos.

Now more than ever, we need healthy, ample tree canopy to protect us from the effects of climate change, such as extreme heat and flooding. Far too many Angelenos already live without the many environmental, health, and social benefits that trees provide. We cannot afford to lose more canopy and place further stress on vulnerable communities.

Decisions around our city sidewalks go beyond the fate of our trees. The future of many of our city's needs -- water supply, water quality, and flood control -- will all be impacted.

OPPORTUNITY

The City has an historic opportunity to transform Los Angeles for the better by putting into place sustainable infrastructure solutions that provide many benefits.

TreePeople urges city leaders to examine how pending sidewalk repairs can spur the creation of more holistic upgrades that can protect trees, increase local water supply, improve water quality, and provide flood control.

As the Los Angeles City Council works to draft guidelines for sidewalk repair policies, TreePeople is advocating that the following priorities are included:

1. Clear criteria for examining whether or not a tree should be removed (and if removal is necessary, guidelines for tree replacement);
2. A commitment to investing in best management practices that would save as many trees as possible;
3. An appropriate tree replacement ratio if a tree does require removal, with a commitment to maintenance funding for new trees;
4. A commitment to review City-wide needs and goals that intersect with sidewalk repairs as part of this process. There is great potential to leverage other funding sources for water supply, water quality and flooding issues to augment sidewalk repair funding, creating the ability to ensure any infrastructure changes have multiple benefits.

For more information, contact:
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