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Public Works and Gang Reduction Committee
City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012-4801

June 24, 2016

Dear Honorable Committee Chair Buscaino,

On behalf of the South Park Business Improvement District (SPBID), I write to express opposition to the proposed changes to the City of Los Angeles's tree pruning and removal policy in public right-of-way areas. The changes to this policy will make it more difficult to maintain a healthy tree canopy and safe neighborhood sidewalks. The proposed changes include an application fee increase of 200 dollars, a convoluted, time consuming and uncertain application process, and undefined post-pruning inspection standards. These changes stand to make the tree pruning process more difficult, less effective and more costly for both parties involved.

The SPBID supports the City's efforts to combat climate change; however, a policy like this one will only cause significant delays in the approval and pruning process. Timely pruning is essential to ensuring a tree's vitality as well as the safety of pedestrians. As such, implementing a permit approval process that requires inspection of a tree before the pruning process is unlikely to allow timely pruning to occur, therefore doing more harm than good to the trees. Undefined time limits for receipt of permit and post pruning inspections will add more delay and uncertainty to the process. In addition, increasing the permit application fee and applying a \$1,000 fine for improper pruning will only deter business owners from pruning altogether.

Because the City has not properly pruned trees in a timely fashion in the past, many of the trees in our district are unhealthy and have damaged our sidewalks. In order to encourage timely pruning of street trees, the City should streamline the process to receive a tree removal permit - not make it more difficult, which will only discourage more owners from pruning their trees.



As fellow residents of the City of Los Angeles, we are willing and eager to collaborate with the City to address climate change. Permitting and enforcing street tree pruning and removal can be done more effectively without sacrificing efficiency and pragmatism, and without subjecting citizens to egregious fines.

We ask that the Bureau of Street Services reconsider its recommendations and formulate solutions that will not drown business owners in unnecessary and ineffective administration and bureaucracy.

Sincerely,

Jessica Lall
Executive Director
SPBID

CC: Committee Vice Chair Nury Martinez
Councilmember Jose Huizar
Councilmember Curren D. Price, Jr.
Councilmember Mitch O'farrell
Councilmember David E. Ryu