

MOTION

Los Angeles depends on a thriving urban forest. Aside from the natural beauty and recreational benefits that trees provide for our neighborhoods, trees are a critical bulwark against the heat island effect and the impacts of climate change on our neighborhoods.

The Urban Forestry Division of the City's Bureau of Street Services is responsible for the stewardship of the urban forest in Los Angeles. This work includes maintenance of existing City trees, assessing the overall health of the tree population in Los Angeles, and making recommendations as to best management practices for the health of city trees.

There are several challenges facing the health and sustainability of the City's street trees. For example, the xylella disease renders many trees nonviable and in need of replacement; the City's comprehensive sidewalk repair program will necessitate the removal of many mature trees; and new construction often impacts the urban canopy within a neighborhood.

The Council and the Board of Public Works have sought to address these concerns and others in the development of street tree policies and the programs that support them, with a focus on ensuring that neighborhoods in Los Angeles continue to enjoy the benefits that trees provide. Given the challenges facing the City's street trees and overall urban canopy, it is time to revisit those policies and programs with a focus on a long-term sustainable urban forestry program in Los Angeles.

For several months, the Urban Forestry Division, along with the Board of Public Works and the Mayor's office, have been grappling with these questions, both in the context of sidewalk repair and in the context of a more sustainable urban forest. With the upcoming implementation of the Comprehensive Sidewalk Repair Program, the Council should begin in earnest to develop a more robust and comprehensive program for urban forestry management.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Council INSTRUCT the Urban Forestry Division to report on the implementation of the City's tree removal and replacement policies and the programs that support them, as well as an accounting of the net losses and increases in tree canopy as a result of those programs.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Council INSTRUCT the Urban Forestry Division to develop and report to Council with an urban forestry management plan, backed by relevant data, that will result in a more sustainable urban forest with greater diversity and resiliency, encourage increased plantings in the neighborhoods of the City that are lacking in tree cover, and produce a significant net increase in tree canopy throughout the city over time.

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