

## MOTION

The City of Los Angeles is home to one of the largest urban forests in the nation, comprised of trees, understory plants, wildland interface trees and plants, and all landscaping on both public and private property. According to the Los Angeles Canopy Cover Assessment (McPherson, et al. 2006) the City's estimated tree population is in excess of 10 million. Approximately 700,000 of these trees are located in the public rights-of-way and managed by the Bureau of Street Services.

Street trees represent a significant and indispensable portion of the City's urban forest, and a piece of the public works infrastructure system that is vital to Los Angeles' urban environment and ecosystem. This living infrastructure provides innumerable environmental, ecological, social, economic and aesthetic benefits to the City's four million residents.

Over the last decade a series of environmental, financial and policy developments have undermined that stated goal. Prolonged drought conditions have distressed street trees and made them more susceptible to disease, pests and invasive species. The 2008 financial crisis and the resulting across-the-board departmental budget cuts limited the Bureau's ability to properly maintain a safe and sustainable urban forest. And the City's commitment to reconstructing damaged sidewalks over the next 30 years will result in the removal and replacement of a significant number of street trees. In fact, recently a determination was made by the Board of Public Works that 18 mature, healthy ficus trees on Cherokee Avenue and another 12 trees on Spaulding Avenue in the Hollywood area of Council District Four would need to be removed in order to repair sidewalks on the street.

The Bureau of Street Services' *2015 State of the City's Street Trees Report* revealed an unacceptable condition of our street tree population largely due to three primary factors – poor age diversification, tree health and maintenance of our City's street trees. As was indicated in the report, if deferred tree maintenance, increasing pest infestations, drought and lack of programmatic tree replacements continue, the overall condition of our street trees will continue to decline.

Due to the unique benefits of street trees, future planning to resolve the current street tree condition and any future infrastructure conflict is necessary to ensure that as many vital and healthy street trees are retained as possible. The City's 2:1 street tree replacement policy and ongoing sidewalk repair work provides an opportunity for the City to develop policies and strategies that ensure for the long-term health and security of our urban forest.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Bureau of Street Services be instructed to report back to Council on the status of the Bureau's current hiring efforts for tree planting, tree trimming and dead tree removal crews, pursuant to Council File 18-0600-S139, as well as cost estimates and staff requirements necessary to bring departmental operations back to pre-recession levels, achieve a 97 percent Tree Stocking Rate in the City, along with associated planting, maintenance and care, and a BMP pruning cycle of 5-7 years.



I FURTHER MOVE that the Bureau of Street Services be instructed, and City Plants be requested, to report back on the status of current efforts to conduct a comprehensive street tree inventory, including, but not limited to costs, funding options and staff requirements; and existing technologies, inventories and software used by other city departments and/or City Plants to document the street tree system and guide future tree planting strategies and investment.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Bureau of Street Services be instructed, and the Community Forest Advisory Committee be requested, to review street tree maintenance and trimming practices among city departments that perform tree trimming functions, pursuant to the City Administrative Officer's October 21, 2016 report (CF 15-0467-S3), as well as the practices of other jurisdictions that have ongoing street tree management plans, and report back to Council with recommendations on best management practices for the City's street tree population.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Bureau of Street Services be instructed to report back with an analysis and recommendations to improve the City's 2:1 street tree replacement policy, including, but not limited to consideration of the holistic value of a tree slated for removal based on the tree's health, maturity and canopy size, and an evaluation of the existing tree planting in-lieu fee to ensure the City achieves full cost recovery for all tree removals, planting and maintenance costs, and appropriate age and species diversification.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Bureau of Engineering and Bureau of Street Services be instructed to report to Council with alternative sidewalk design options, that adhere to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and the terms agreed upon in the *Willits* settlement, that would allow the City to prioritize the preservation of healthy, established trees when conducting sidewalk repairs.

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