

Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: Wilmington Neighborhood Council

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The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(10) Nay(0) Abstain(0) Ineligible(2) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 5-23-2018

Type of NC Board Action: Against

Impact Information

Date: 06/07/2018

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 16-0416

Agenda Date: 5-23-2018

Item Number: 5.a.i

Summary: We the Wilmington Neighborhood Council are against CF 16-0461. Adding Section 62.177 to Los Angeles Municipal Code to establish a Tree Replacement in-Lieu Fee gives the Urban Forestry Division (UFD) the authority to accept payment instead of planting tree replacements. We prefer the current rule, any city tree that is cut down for construction must be replaced by a ratio of 2:1. See attachment

The Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance's (NCSA's) Trees Committee is dedicated to the preservation and stewardship of our urban forest. Trees are the leading soldiers in the fight against climate change, air pollution, and the urban heat island effect. To that end, we advocate for common-sense policies that safeguard our urban forest and restore it as much as possible.

Council File: 16-0461. Adding Section 62.177 to Los Angeles Municipal Code to establish a Tree Replacement In-Lieu Fee gives the Urban Forestry Division (UFD) the authority to accept payment instead of planting tree replacements.

The update to the code *changes the way city trees are restored after being cut down for construction.*

Under the current rules, any city tree that is cut down for construction must be replaced by a ratio of 2:1. Where there is no space to plant the required replacements after construction, a tree removal permit applicant may deliver the required replacement tree(s) to a city tree yard.

Under the proposed changes, tree removal permit applicants will be allowed to pay a fee instead of undergoing re-design of plans to preserve existing trees, planting replacement trees, or delivering unplanted trees to a city tree yard.

The NCSA Trees Committee recognizes that there are very legitimate concerns about replacement trees being sent to the city tree yard where they are often stored for long periods of time. Given this reality, it is understandable that the City would want to establish a tree replacement in-lieu fee.

However, there are important issues that should lead lawmakers to delay the ordinance:

- The UFD *is not ready to plant the required replacement trees*: The UFD does not have the crew or the equipment to plant replacement trees. Although the UFD has submitted a budget request for equipment and one planting crew, there is no certainty that this request will be approved, and the UFD has already admitted that one tree planting crew is not enough. It has been suggested that no-profits could step in to do the planting. If that is a possibility, why has it not already happened for the 202 trees that are sitting in storage at the city tree yard?
- The UFD does not have a professional and comprehensive tree inventory, the most fundamental tool for planning and understanding which replacement tree species are needed or where they can be planted. Without adequate planning, there is no way to ensure trees are equitably distributed across city neighborhoods. (Recently, KCET's drone survey showed Hancock Park with a 37 percent urban forest cover—while South L.A. has only 7 percent.)