

March 19, 2019

City Council Members
City of Los Angeles
c/o Michael Espinosa
City Clerk's Office
City Hall, Room 395
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Via Email: michael.espinosa@lacity.org

Re: Council File 19-0188. Report from Controller

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One of the Bureau's primary goals is to optimize street tree benefits by maintaining a sustainable, healthy, safe and appealing street tree population.

(Los Angeles Bureau of Street Services, 2015)

Dear City Council:

The street tree inventory is a vital focal point for Los Angeles's effort to promote and protect the City's Urban Forest.

While I am encouraged by the recent recognition of the importance of measuring and monitoring the urban forest, among the methods that did not make it into the report presented to the Board of Public Works and Gang Reduction Committee (Board) for consideration is a **ground-based Street Tree Inventory** by a third party certified arborist entity.

Though there are benefits of using trainees or volunteer-led inventories suggested in the report, it remains important to consider data quality, cost, time and trainee uptake. **Tree inventory data gatherers must have good knowledge and training to identify tree species, recognize planting sites, and evaluate pruning needs, tree risk, and other tree conditions.** Research has shown that trainee-led tree inventories have their limitations in accuracy and validity of data. For example, trainees cannot be relied on to evaluate and identify decay, poor branching habit, and other indicators of tree risk. Further, costs exist for recruitment, training, mobilization, and supervision. These costs have been found to be in line with the costs of an urban forest inventory conducted by professional third party certified arborist companies (Bloniarz and Ryan III, 1996).

A volunteer-led or trainee-led inventory approach reflects an under valuation of our City's urban forest.

A ground-based Street Tree Inventory by a third party certified arborist entity not associated with City divisions and departments, on the other hand, offers the most comprehensive, accurate, precise and timely completion, as well as, a fair and unbiased condition evaluation while

removing stress from City divisions and departments already hampered by the challenges of inadequate resources.

I urge you to provide strong leadership now and take the first step to significantly strengthen Los Angeles's urban forest by requiring a complete ground-based Tree Inventory by a third party certified arborist entity for the maximum level of data collection to develop informed policy, strategy, management or a master sustainability plan consistent with goals to optimize street tree benefits by maintaining a sustainable, healthy, safe and appealing street tree population.

Respectfully,

Diana N Zogran HP, OLC
Ecological Land Care Professional
Environmental Health Committee Chair
Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance