

MOTION

In a dense urban environment like Los Angeles, parks and trees are indispensable.

The benefits of parks and trees are well-documented: improving air quality, reducing the urban heat island effect, reducing violent crime, reducing the rate of obesity and diabetes in youth and adults, increasing property values, providing a habitat for wildlife, providing shade from increasingly intense sunlight and heat, and beyond. In fact, in 1925 the Board of Freeholders who formed our modern City Charter so passionately believed in the importance of parks they included a provision that guarantees the Department of Recreation and Parks funding equal to 0.0325% of assessed value of all real property in the City.

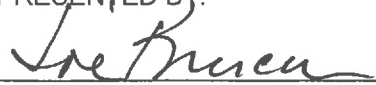
Today, the Department manages 16,000 acres of parkland at 444 park sites, 422 playgrounds, 321 tennis courts, 184 recreation centers, 72 fitness areas, 62 swimming pools and aquatic centers, 30 senior centers, 26 skate parks, 13 golf courses, 12 museums, 9 dog parks, 187 summer youth camps, 13 lakes, 92 miles of hiking trails, Venice Beach, Griffith Observatory, the iconic Greek Theatre and the famous Hollywood Sign. According to the Trust for Public Land, the combined economic benefits of parks in the City exceeds \$3 billion.


Unfortunately, as the Department and expenditures have grown, the revenue guaranteed by the City Charter is no longer enough to sustain the operations of the Department and fund critical infrastructure improvements. According to the *Parks Condition Assessment Report* issued by the Department in July of 2018, a total of \$2.1 billion in funding is needed to replace, renovate and/or upgrade existing facilities. Further exasperating the financial strain, recent court decisions now prevent the Department of Water and Power from providing free water and electric service at Recreation and Parks facilities, resulting in an additional expenditure of \$26 million annually. With the City hosting the 2028 Summer Olympics, and several of Recreation & Parks facilities serving as venues for various competitions, we must act now, to ensure all needed upgrades and repairs are completed prior to the games.

Furthermore, a recent report - *First Step: Developing an Urban Forest Master Plan for the City of Los Angeles* - commissioned by City Plants, the City's non-profit partner responsible for coordinating tree-planting, recommends increased funding for the Bureau of Street Services' Urban Forestry Division to \$65 million annually in order to properly plant and maintain trees along the City's thousands of miles of median islands and parkways. These landscaped areas of our public street and sidewalk network serve as an extension of the park system into every neighborhood and block. The combined effects of invasive pests, disease, and years of drought conditions, Los Angeles is in imminent danger of a massive tree die off, reducing our tree canopy cover by 1/3, in the next five years. With the effects of climate change already apparent in our region, it is vital that we care for and expand this essential defense against increasingly hotter summers.

WE THEREFORE MOVE that the City Administrative Officer, with the assistance of the Department of Recreation and Parks and Bureau of Street Services, be DIRECTED to report with recommendations on a ballot measure that would provide funding for the capital improvements described in the *Parks Condition Assessment Report*, additional funding as recommended by the Department of Recreation and Parks for land acquisition for new parks, staffing and park operations, and funding to properly maintain public trees maintained by the Department of Recreation and Parks and Bureau of Street Services Urban Forestry Division, as recommended in *First Step: Developing an Urban Forest Master Plan for the City of Los Angeles*.

PRESENTED BY:


JOE BUSCAINO
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GIL CEDILLO
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Councilmember, 6th District

SECONDED BY:

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