



April 5, 2019

Mayor Garcetti, City of Los Angeles  
 Budget and Finance Committee, Los Angeles City Council  
 200 N Spring Street  
 Los Angeles, CA 90012

**RE: Angelenos Need Healthy Trees NOW - Consideration of the Mayor's 2019-20 Proposed Budget for Urban Forestry**

Dear Mayor Garcetti and Budget and Finance Committee,

Thank you for your leadership and support for Los Angeles's urban forest!

**A healthy urban forest is essential infrastructure to a thriving, sustainable, and resilient city.** Los Angeles's urban forest, if properly planned and managed, can protect Angelenos from many of the current and future impacts of climate change including saving lives from extreme heat, capturing and cleaning water, improving human health and wellbeing, and providing many other benefits.

Sadly, **our urban forest is in a CRISIS** due to climate change (e.g., droughts and extreme heat), emerging pests and diseases, land use conflicts with development, insufficient funding, lack of a comprehensive urban forestry plan, interdepartmental coordination and other factors identified in the report of [First Step of Developing an Urban Forestry Management Plan for the City of Los Angeles](#). To help transform LA's urban forest into one of the best in the world, TreePeople and the Community Forest Advisory Committee (CFAC) recently organized a "Rooted in Urban Forestry Day" at

Los Angeles City Hall. Together, the premier urban forestry groups in the City delivered guidance on how to implement the recent recommendations from the Report.

Together, we strongly support all the priority recommendation and immediate actions.

**Priority Recommendations** include:

- City Councilmembers, the Mayor, and key agencies must prioritize the urban forest.
- Hire an urban forestry coordinator to make holistic changes to LA's urban forest management approach.
- Increase urban forestry funding to support sustainable management in the short term.
- Immediately begin and complete an Urban Forestry Financing Plan.
- Complete a comprehensive tree inventory as soon as possible.
- Implement a tree management software program to facilitate tree and urban forest management.
- Implement public outreach to improve urban forest awareness and engagement.
- Develop and Implement an Urban Forest Management Plan.

**Immediate Actions** include:

- Immediately start the process to integrate municipality-wide policies and practices that are needed to protect public and private trees. These need to be consistently enforced with penalties sufficient to deter violations; and
- Ensure urban tree care in the City using best management practices for both young and mature trees.

We look forward to working with you to implement all the Priority Recommendations and Immediate Actions collectively. Given funding has been identified as one of the top priorities to move all the recommendations forward, **we request that the following priority budgetary items should to be considered in the City's budget for fiscal year 2019-2020:**

- **Professional street tree inventory conducted by Certified Arborists as the first priority (\$3 Million);**
- **Funding for a complete Urban Forestry Management Plan (a minimum of \$400,000);**
- **Tree management software (\$35,000-\$250,000 initially with ongoing annual licensing fees);**
- **Financing study (\$100,000);**

- **Funding to create and implement a Public Education program (the City needs to immediately develop goals and scope to determine budget).**

Thanks again for your leadership and support. We look forward to working with you on this critical issue to achieve a greener, healthier, and more climate-resilient future for all Angelenos.

Sincerely,

Cc:

Miguel Sangalang, Deputy Mayor of Budget and Innovation

Barbara Romero, Deputy Mayor of City Services

Liz Crosson, Director of Infrastructure

Jennifer Pope McDowell, Associate Director of Infrastructure

Lauren Faber O'Connor, Chief Sustainability Officer

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Councilmember Price, Vice Chair, Budget and Finance Committee

Councilmember Koretz, Member, Budget and Finance Committee

Councilmember Blumenfield, Member, Budget and Finance Committee

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