



October 25, 2018

Re: Council File 03-1459-S3; Motion by Councilmembers Koretz & Bonin proposing to strengthen LA Protected Tree Ordinance – WRAC letter of support

Hon. Paul Koretz, Council District 5
Hon. Mike Bonin, Council District 11
Los Angeles City Hall
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Via Email

Dear Councilmembers Koretz and Bonin,

The Westside Regional Alliance of Councils has resolved, by a supermajority of voting Councils in our Alliance, to support your Motion to strengthen the City's Protected Tree Ordinance.

Our Alliance agrees that protecting the urban tree canopy across Los Angeles is crucial in order to maintain the ecosystem we all value. We support your call for more strict enforcement, recognizing that, under current regulation and enforcement mechanisms, trees are too easily removed without permit. A major contributing cause of this is the inadequate public notice before trees can be removed. Communities have little notice time to object or oppose the cumulative cutting down of trees, ultimately impacting all Angelenos.

Trees are being cut before development permits are applied for and are not being protected during construction. Furthermore, building permits are routinely issued without the Department of Building and Safety being aware of the presence of protected trees on the affected properties.

We urge the City to increase its Urban Forestry budget to provide adequate funding to allow robust enforcement of the City's Protected Tree ordinances. The current budget is insufficient to assure the preservation, increase, maintenance and restoration of the urban tree canopy. LA currently spends approximately .25% on trees, which pales in comparison to what is spent by cities such as San Francisco or Seattle.

Member Councils: Bel Air-Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council, Brentwood Community Council, Del Rey Neighborhood Council, Mar Vista Community Council, Neighborhood Council of Westchester/Playa, Pacific Palisades Community Council, Palms Neighborhood Council, South Robertson Neighborhoods Council, Venice Neighborhood Council, West LA-Sawtelle Neighborhood Council, Westside Neighborhood Council, Westwood Community Council, Westwood Neighborhood Council

We also request that Urban Forestry Department be directed to notify each NC and CC, simultaneously with its notice to the relevant City Council District office, when trees are to be removed from the public right of way within its jurisdiction. This notice is necessary to enable affected NC and CCs to inform their constituents and meet hearing dates/deadlines. The current three-day notice of action to remove trees from the city right of way is inadequate time for the public to investigate and communicate with the applicable City Council office. Notice to Neighborhood and Community Councils prior to the nonemergency removal of any street tree or protected tree should be not less than 45 days, given that most Councils meet once every 30 days (monthly).

Respectfully submitted,

Maryam Zar
Chair, WRAC

Cc: WRAC Member Councils, PWGR Chair and Vice Chair, Hon. Bob Blumenfield & Hon. Joe Buscaino, Michael Espinosa Michael.espinosa@lacity.org, Lisa Cahill lisa.cahill@lacity.org, Debbie Dyner Harris Debbie.dynerharris@kacity.org, Lauren Faber lauren.faber@lacity.org, Mike Fong mike.fong@lacity.org, Tim Tyson tim.tyson@lacity.org, Ileana Wachtel wachtelileana@gmail.com, David Card davidcard22@gmail.com, Jill Stewart jilltepleystewart@gmail.com