



November 25, 2019

City Of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

CC: LA City Council
LAC Board of Supervisors
LAC Office of Sustainability

Dear Mayor Eric Garcetti,

The Sierra Club Angeles Chapter would like to renew our recommendations that the City of Los Angeles become a model for water-wise landscaping. Though the City has made great strides on City Hall property, this is an opportune time for the City to plan landscape improvements that rely on drought-tolerant and native vegetation including increasing our tree canopy throughout the city.

In 2009, the Sierra Club Angeles Chapter expressed concern about the effects of California's persistent water shortage and recommended that the City alter its water-use habits and lead by example to promote water conservation through sustainable landscaping and the city responded under Mayor Villaraigosa.

The Sierra Club Angeles Chapter again urges the City of Los Angeles to take the lead by taking these actions:

1. Become a role model and educator by replacing the lawns at city owned sites and facilities, except for public parks, with drought tolerant flora (especially natives) and suitable mulches, including gravel. The sites should be properly sculpted with swales and berms to reduce storm-water run-off and allow storm-water percolation into the ground. The sites should be provided with interpretative signage and can serve as demonstration sites that show residents how to change their own landscaping.
2. Update and implement a stronger Protected Tree Ordinance
3. Better enforcement of said Tree Ordinance
4. Earlier notification of tree removal
5. Stronger protections for Heritage trees
6. A review of tree trimming, management policies and adoption of best practices from successful cities such as Sydney, Australia on their Urban Forests.

Embracing drought tolerant and mulched landscaping will benefit the local economy by promoting green jobs. Landscapers and arborists who currently make a living mowing and tending water reliant lawns will continue to be needed for ongoing care of new landscaping.

Experts on climate change predict that the American Southwest, including Southern California must expect permanently and extensively reduced rainfall. As we must come to terms with this new status quo of reduced supply, best practices to reduce water use must be implemented. A thriving urban forest can be one of those best practices. It will provide cleaner air, filtered stormwater and less heat islands by lowering temperatures. Trees shrubs and other natives create important habitat for birds, insects and reptiles and make for beautiful city streets. Streets filled with trees and landscaping has the added benefits of stress reduction by bringing us all closer to nature.

Increasing tree shade throughout the City of Los Angeles would provide critically needed environmental justice benefits such as reducing energy use for expensive air conditioning and protecting vulnerable communities from heat related health conditions.


We urge the City of Los Angeles to set the standard as a leader and an educator in promoting and demonstrating water conservation through improvement and enforcement of its Tree Canopy Ordinance and in implementing the Tree Canopy Strategy set forth in LA's Green New Deal (Chapter 11) and Our County LA Sustainability pLAN.

Let's make the City of Angels green again.

Sincerely,



Charming Evelyn
Chair Water Committee
Sierra Club Angeles Chapter



Yvonne (Martinez) Watson
Chair Environmental Justice Committee
Sierra Club Angeles Chapter

John Monsen
Chair Forest Committee
Sierra Club Angeles Chapter

