

MOTION

A healthy urban forest offers multiple benefits to city residents, aesthetic, economic, and environmental. Street trees are a cornerstone of the urban forest. However, they are frequently in conflict with sidewalk infrastructure, the cause of sidewalk damage in all parts of the City.

The City is embarking on an ambitious 30-year program to repair sidewalks. It is important that this program properly consider the value of our urban forest when addressing existing trees and planning for new ones.

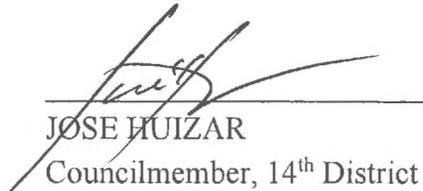
“Restoring LA’s Urban Forest” is a recent UCLA Master of Urban and Regional Planning student analysis and report, which offers numerous recommendations for improvements in practice and policy related to the City’s urban forest. It states “Restricted growing space is reported to be the single most important cause of conflicts between tree roots and hardscape.”

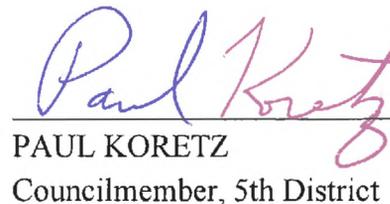
The report also cites successes of Los Angeles’s efforts in a period before the economic recession led to dramatic cutbacks in the City’s tree program: it limited tree removal to 7% of the 6,500 trees that were involved in the repair of 74 miles of sidewalk. It did so “by utilizing root pruning in conjunction with multiple engineering strategies to address sidewalk repair.” These and other strategies cited include: enlarging sidewalk cutouts and tree wells, meandering sidewalks that curve around existing trees, sidewalk ramping, underground root guards that deter sidewalk lift, permeable sidewalk materials, reverse parkways, curb bump-outs, sidewalk grinding, and the removal of portions of lifted sidewalk to allow for a larger tree well where replacement of concrete is not necessary for access.

It is in the City’s interest to preserve and plant trees, as they foster pedestrian activity, improve aesthetics and property values, reduce pollution and heat, and provide habitat.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Urban Forestry Division of the Bureau of Street Services, in collaboration with the Community Forest Advisory Committee and other experts as necessary, report on its guidelines for tree removal and also on its guidelines for tree wells and the accommodation of trees in the practice of sidewalk repair and construction. The report should also provide recommendations for how the sidewalk repair program can anticipate and enable tree plantings and future growth of the urban forest that lessens conflict with sidewalk infrastructure.

PRESENTED BY:


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MAY 22 2015

