



clerk CIS <clerk.cis@lacity.org>

Your Community Impact Statement Submittal - Council File Number: 15-0499-S2

1 message

LA City SNow <cityoflaprod@service-now.com>
Reply-To: LA City SNow <cityoflaprod@service-now.com>
To: Clerk.CIS@lacity.org
Cc: jhartwick@studiocitync.org

Mon, Dec 2, 2024 at 6:23 PM

A Neighborhood Council Community Impact Statement (CIS) has been successfully submitted to your Commission or City Council. We provided information below about CISs and attached a copy of the CIS.

We encourage you to reach out to the Community Impact Statement Filer to acknowledge receipt and if this Community Impact Statement will be scheduled at a future meeting. Neighborhood Council board members are volunteers and it would be helpful if they received confirmation that you received their CIS.

The CIS process was enabled by the to Los Angeles Administrative Code §Section 22.819. It provides that, "a Neighborhood Council may take a formal position on a matter by way of a Community Impact Statement (CIS) or written resolution." NCs representatives also testify before City Boards and Commissions on the item related to their CIS. If the Neighborhood Council chooses to do so, the Neighborhood Council representative must provide the Commission with a copy of the CIS or rResolution sufficiently in advance for review, possible inclusion on the agenda, and posting on the Commission's website. Any information you can provide related to your agenda setting schedule is helpful to share with the NC.

If the CIS or resolution pertains to a matter *listed on the Commission's agenda*, during the time the matter is heard, the designated Neighborhood Council representative should be given an opportunity to present the Neighborhood Council's formal position. We encourage becoming familiar with the City Council's rules on the subject. At the Chair's discretion, the Neighborhood Council representative may be asked to have a seat at the table (or equivalent for a virtual meeting) typically reserved for City staff and may provide the Neighborhood Council representative more time than allotted to members of the general public. They are also permitted up to five (5) minutes of time to address the legislative body. If the CIS or resolution pertains to a matter *not listed on the agenda*, the designated Neighborhood Council representative may speak during General Public Comments.

We share this information to assist you with the docketing neighborhood council items before your board/commission. If you have questions and/or concerns, please contact the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment at empowerla@lacity.org.

***** This is an automated response, please DO NOT reply to this email. *****

Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: Studio City

Name: Jeffrey Hartwick

Email: jhartwick@studiocitync.org

The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(9) Nay(2) Abstain(0) Ineligible(0) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 10/23/2024

Type of NC Board Action: For

Impact Information

Date: 12/03/2024

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 15-0499-S2

City Planning Number:

Agenda Date:

Item Number:

Summary: The Board of the Studio City Neighborhood Council (SCNC) encourages the Los Angeles City Council to declare a Tree Canopy Mandate. Los Angeles needs to make an urgent effort to reverse the long term degradation of our urban canopy through the planting of new trees and improved maintenance of the existing trees that comprise our urban forest. (Attached is a supporting letter.)

SCNC BOARD

Kevin Burkhart
Kim Clements
Dean Cutler
Dmitri Gatsiounis
Jeff Hartwick
Aaron Justis
Charlotte Larsen
Heather Lee
Jerry Lewis
Chip Meehan
Richard Niederberg
Mimi Rhee
Laurie Rittenberg
Adele Slaughter



PRESIDENT
Chip Meehan
VICE PRESIDENT
Jerry Lewis
TREASURER
Kim Clements
SECRETARY
Adele Slaughter
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY
Jeff Hartwick

4024 Radford Ave. Editorial Bldg. 2, Room 6, Studio City, CA 91604 studiocitync.org

October 23, 2024

Addressed to:

Council President Paul Krekorian
Councilmember Nithya Raman
Councilmember Eunisses Hernandez
Councilmember Bob Blumenfield
Councilmember Katy Yaroslavsky
Councilmember Monica Rodriguez
Councilmember Hugo Soto-Martinez
Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson
Councilmember Curren Price
Councilmember Heather Hunt
Councilmember Traci Park
Councilmember John Lee
Councilmember Kevin de Leon
Councilmember Tim McOsker
Mayor Karen Bass
City Forest Officer Rachel Malarich
CFAC Chair Joanne D'Antonio
Denise Schall
Sidney Liss

Sent by Email:

councilmember.krekorian@lacity.org
contactcd4@lacity.org
councilmember.hernandez@lacity.org
councilmember.blumenfield@lacity.org
councilmember.yaroslavsky@lacity.org
councilmember.rodriquez@lacity.org
councilmember.soto-martinez@lacity.org
councilmember.harris-dawson@lacity.org
councilmember.price@lacity.org
CD10ConstituentServices@lacity.org
councilmember.park@lacity.org
councilmember.lee@lacity.org
councilmember.deleon@lacity.org
councilmember.mcosker@lacity.org
mayor.bass@lacity.org
rachel.malarich@lacity.org
cd2cfac@gmail.com
denise.schall@lacity.org
sidney.liss@lacity.org

COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Board of the Studio City Neighborhood Council (SCNC) encourages the Los Angeles City Council to declare a Tree Canopy Mandate. Los Angeles needs to make an urgent effort to reverse the long term degradation of our urban canopy through the planting of new trees and improved maintenance of the existing trees that comprise our urban forest. (Attached is a supporting letter.)

Chip Meehan
President,
Studio City Neighborhood Council

Dear City Council Members,

RE: Request for Mandate to Increase the City's Tree Canopy

The City of Los Angeles is experiencing a tree crisis. Los Angeles City's average [tree canopy is 21%](#). Today, [U.S. Forest Service researchers](#) recommend average urban tree canopy be between 40 and 60%. Across Los Angeles City, there are disturbing inequities.

Canopy coverage is significantly lower in many of the denser populated areas.

Some communities, such as

- Los Angeles, 90058, have a 1.95 % tree canopy,
- Valley Village, 91607, has a 14.99% canopy;
- Sun Valley, 91605, has a 13.29% canopy.

We must take swift and decisive measures to prevent further loss and restore our tree canopy. The Studio City Neighborhood Council urges the Los Angeles City Council to create a **Tree Canopy Mandate** and resolve that all city agencies prioritize tree preservation and planting across the entire city.

[USC Dornsife](#) researchers have found that mass-produced dwellings and home expansion have reduced residential green cover by as much as 55 percent. Losing so much of our tree canopy makes our city hotter and increases the possibility of heat stroke and other deadly conditions. The cost of [heat-related death and injury weighs heavily](#) on our city.

A vibrant urban tree canopy helps lower the heat island effect in densely populated areas and can protect the health and well-being of our residents. According to Arbor Day Foundation shaded areas can feel 20–45°F cooler at peak temperatures than unshaded areas. The Planning Director for the City of Los Angeles, Vince Bertoni's recent newsletter noted we are experiencing climate change with hotter heat waves, but made no mention of trees as mitigation.

The 2016 Los Angeles County Tree Canopy Assessment clearly states, "Preserving existing tree canopy is critical. The ecosystem services provided by trees are directly related to the amount of canopy they provide. When trees are removed and replaced, there is not only a size difference in the canopy provided by the new tree compared with the mature tree; there is also a time lag of reduced benefits until the new tree can grow to the size of the mature tree. Keeping the trees you have is more efficient than removing and replacing them."¹

As the city densifies, construction and subsequent concrete and metal will exacerbate the heat island effect we already suffer, which requires a healthy tree canopy to offset the increased heat. Other US cities have created tree canopy resolutions, such as [New York City, which has a 30%](#) tree canopy goal, and [Seattle, which has a 30% goal by 2037](#). [Washington, DC](#), and [Orlando](#) have a 40% tree canopy goal. ([Link to a list of Urban Forest Initiatives](#) including Denver, Charlotte, N.C., Minneapolis, Portland, Ore., Dallas, and Austin, Texas, and to an even greater degree in the California cities of Sacramento and San Francisco.)

Increasing the tree canopy has been a long-standing aspiration for the Mayors of L.A. (although City planting programs have repeatedly failed to meet expectations). We need to change the way we think about trees so that **the preservation and planting** of trees is on an equal footing with the needs of the city, citizens and developers. LA's existing trees are critical green infrastructure that we require for our physical and mental health and well-being.

It is critical that the Los Angeles City Council responds in a meaningful relevant way to the decreased tree canopy, the massive increase in temperatures and the cost of heat-related deaths and injuries. We, the citizens of

¹Citation: Galvin, M., O'Neil-Dunne, J., Locke, D., & Romolini, M. (2019). Los Angeles County Tree Canopy Assessment.

Los Angeles, want a leafy umbrella to cool our neighbors and create a healthy and aesthetically pleasing cityscape.

If Los Angeles was willing to insist that our urban forest is as important as densification, we might stand a chance to build a healthy city. Scientists agree that a tree canopy of at least 40% increases health and well-being. Although Los Angeles has taken steps to address this, very little has changed. Today, City Planning does not support green life and growth.

We suggest the city develop a **Tree Canopy Mandate** to require each city department to prioritize trees and find ways to address inadequate tree policies and protect and increase our urban forest. We could solve this tree crisis, if only the City prioritizes trees. Trees Matter.

Signed,

Studio City Neighborhood Council

Backgrounder:

Our current City Forest Officer reports that the Urban Forestry Division's (UFD) budget has been essentially defunded, and it has no power to protect our trees. UFD no longer plants trees and is forced to rely on third-party partners, such as City Plants. UFD does not have the staff to care for existing trees adequately, and tree trimming is on an 18-year cycle, per the city controller. UFD has been tasked with mandating tree planting and preservation across all agencies of the City. The city's stated goal in Council File: 15-04990S2 is to join all departments with UFD in recognizing our need to grow the City's urban canopy, however, this approach has not resulted in making the Urban Forest a priority in Los Angeles. UFD is under the Department of Street Services, and LA spends less on trees than most US cities. [From City Plants report prepared by Dudek.](#)

Significant non-protected private property and public trees are being removed at an accelerated rate without regard to preservation or replacement. Existing mature trees require less maintenance and fewer resources. Existing mature trees have weathered droughts, fires, and heat waves, providing shade and sequestering carbon. Replacement trees take years to provide the same benefits. The City of Pasadena recognized the importance of trees by passing an [ordinance](#) that will protect the canopy of trees in Pasadena now and in the future. All city agencies could preserve significant trees if trees were a priority to our leaders.

Los Angeles is park-poor. Quimby Funds are collected when new residential lots are developed and can be used to expand, acquire, rehabilitate, or develop community-serving parks. However, [Quimby funds are often unused](#) or used to [maintain existing parks](#). According to the Quimby guidelines construction projects (those over 50 dwelling units) can dedicate land to offset the loss of open space, they can build a private park in the community, or they can pay the Quimby in-lieu fees. Quimby funds should be used to plant trees in parks.

The LA Times and UFD acknowledge that 90% of L.A.'s urban forest is on private property. The City has always relied on the trees on residential properties to maintain its tree canopy, yet today, developers are allowed to remove trees at an alarming rate. Housing without trees is unhealthy housing.

The LA Protected Tree Ordinance protects eight species of Native trees and shrubs but is rarely enforced. Nothing in the code helps preserve significant trees of other species. Science shows that trees native to our area support biodiversity, water savings, and cultural identity. We need to plant and protect our existing native trees.

Currently, citywide, there is a move to downsize our urban forest. The City is pushing to streamline all developments without regard for trees. Executive Directive 1 (ED1) proposes reducing the number of replacement trees by 25%. Trees need to be part of the planning process because the health of our communities depends on a healthy tree canopy.

When a developer cuts down trees without a place to plant replacement trees, funds go into an in-lieu account to plant trees within the council district that removed trees. The in-lieu fees do not reflect the value of the removed trees. On September 12, 2024 UFD reported to the Community Forest Advisory Committee that there are long delays in using the fees to plant new trees.

The state of Los Angeles sidewalks and street trees impact residents. According to [TreeKeeper](#), over 250,000 street tree wells and parkway sites are empty. Angelenos For Trees has calculated that at the current rate of planting, it will take 100 years to plant these empty tree wells and parkways. The 2024 EIR for the [Sidewalk Repair Program](#) (SRP) proposed the removal of 12,000 trees over 30 years. While the actual numbers are lower than expected, the SRP proposes to remove large mature trees that offer extensive canopy and replace them with smaller decorative trees, which will lead to a net loss by downsizing the urban tree canopy.