

Communication from Public

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Council File No: 24-1399

Comments for Public Posting: Please see letter below from South LA Tree Coalition in support of Council File 24-1399.



August 10, 2026

Los Angeles City Council
Planning & Land Use Management Committee
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Council Motion 24-1399, Landscape and Site Design Ordinance

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

The South LA Tree Coalition (SLATC) is pleased to support adoption of Council File 24-1399 the City's new Landscape and Site Design Ordinance.

This ordinance represents an important step forward in how Los Angeles plans for, values, and protects its urban forest. By bringing Urban Forestry Division (UFD) into the development review process much earlier, the City is recognizing that trees should be considered as community assets during project design, not obstacles after project designs have already been completed.

For SLATC, this ordinance has special significance.

In 2022, SLATC's founders worked with a local community member to prepare and support an appeal of the proposed removal of a native grove of mature protected California sycamores as part of the Crenshaw Crossing development project in South Los Angeles. Although the appeal was ultimately unsuccessful, it highlighted a significant weakness in the City's development review process. By the time Urban Forestry Division became involved, the project had already advanced to a stage where meaningful redesign around the trees was far more difficult.

Rather than focusing on a single project, SLATC worked collaboratively with the Office of Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson to improve the City's process so that Urban Forestry Division's expertise could be incorporated earlier in future development proposals. That joint effort produced Council Motion 15-0499-S2, whose objectives are now incorporated into Council File 24-1399.

Early coordination between Planning, Building and Safety, Bureau of Engineering, and Urban Forestry Division will help create better projects, reduce unnecessary conflicts, and increase opportunities to preserve mature trees while still allowing new housing and development to

move forward. These are not competing objectives - they are complementary goals that produce healthier, more resilient neighborhoods.

This change is especially meaningful for South Los Angeles. South Los Angeles has historically experienced some of the City's lowest tree canopy coverage, higher urban heat exposure, poorer air quality, and fewer parks and green spaces than many other communities. Every mature tree that can be incorporated into thoughtful development helps strengthen neighborhood resilience, improves public health, provides shade, supports biodiversity, and contributes to a more equitable urban forest.

The protected California sycamores at Crenshaw Crossing still stand today because the original development was never constructed. It is likely that this important transit-oriented property will one day be proposed for redevelopment again. When that occurs, we hope this ordinance will help ensure that preserving those mature, protected, native trees is considered at the beginning of the design process rather than at the end.

SLATC thanks Council President Marqueece Harris-Dawson for his leadership and acknowledges the many City departments, Urban Forestry Division staff, Planning staff, Community Forest Advisory Committee members, and community advocates whose work has contributed to this important milestone.

While this ordinance represents significant progress, we also recognize that it is one component of a broader effort to strengthen Los Angeles' urban forest. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with the City as updates to the Protected Tree Ordinance, the Urban Forestry Management Plan and other urban forestry policies move forward, ensuring that future development both addresses our housing needs and protects the mature trees that make healthy neighborhoods possible.

Sincerely,
Theresa Maysonet
Co-Founder
[South LA Tree Coalition](https://www.southlatrees.org)

The South LA Tree Coalition (SLATC) is a community-based nonprofit organization dedicated to expanding and sustaining tree canopy in South Los Angeles. Founded in 2022, SLATC works to address inequities in urban tree coverage through community engagement, advocacy, and on-the-ground greening efforts.