

Communication from Public

Name: Theresa Maysonet

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Council File No: 26-0757

Comments for Public Posting: Please see letter below prepared by the South LA Tree Coalition in support of Council File 26-0757.



August 17, 2026

Los Angeles City Council
Budget & Finance Committee
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Council File 26-0757, City Plants Funding

Dear Honorable Councilmembers:

The South LA Tree Coalition (SLATC) supports Council File 26-0757 and its call for the City to identify a sustainable future for City Plants. For more than two decades, City Plants has helped Los Angeles plant and distribute trees, engage communities, build partnerships, and test new approaches to growing our urban forest. These are essential City functions, that need a stable home and reliable long-term funding.

SLATC knows the value of City Plants from our work in South Los Angeles. City Plants has partnered with us at community events to provide residents with free shade and fruit trees for their homes, making tree planting accessible beyond the public right-of-way. City Plants also joined SLATC and other partners in community outreach through the Urban Forest Equity Collective. Our experience demonstrates the important role City Plants can play in connecting City programs, community organizations, and residents to expand tree canopy where it is needed most.

That ability to expand canopy beyond the public right-of-way is especially important. Los Angeles cannot meet its canopy goals through street trees alone. A citywide urban forestry strategy must provide opportunities for residents to plant trees in yards and other private spaces, while continuing to expand and care for the public right-of-way forest.

The City's recently issued Tree Planting Services RFP demonstrates how important these functions remain. The scope includes community engagement, tree distribution and adoption, private-property planting, program oversight, data management, nursery development, partnerships, public education, and evaluation. Addendum No. 1 also adds the physical planting of trees in the public right-of-way and other City-designated locations in accordance with Urban Forestry Division standards.

SLATC supports the City's effort to restore these services through the current procurement. But the RFP also underscores the larger question raised by this motion. The contract may provide services for up to three years and remains subject to funding and Board of Public Works approval. Los Angeles needs a permanent citywide tree planting and distribution program, not a program whose continued existence depends on the next contract or temporary source of funding.

As the City evaluates the future of City Plants, SLATC recommends that it:

- Establish City Plants as a permanent citywide program with dedicated, sustainable funding. The program should continue regardless of which organization may be contracted to provide particular services.
- Maintain a strong and clearly defined relationship with the Urban Forestry Division. UFD's professional expertise should help guide tree selection, planting standards, establishment practices, and the program's integration with the City's larger urban forest.
- Preserve private-property tree planting and distribution as a core function. Free yard trees, community tree adoptions, and similar programs expand the City's ability to grow canopy beyond the public right-of-way.
- Preserve City Plants' community partnerships and ability to develop innovative programs. Its flexibility has allowed the City to test new approaches, work with community organizations, and develop programs responsive to changing urban forestry needs.
- Develop a diversified, long-term funding strategy. LADWP has historically played an important role in supporting City Plants, and the City should continue to pursue funding partnerships across departments and other sources that benefit from a healthy and expanding urban forest.

SLATC also supports examining where City Plants can be most effectively housed within City government. The goal should not simply be to preserve the previous structure, but to establish clear responsibility, strong urban forestry oversight, and a structure capable of supporting the program for the long term.

Trees are long-term infrastructure investments. The benefits of the trees we plant today will be realized over decades. The programs responsible for growing Los Angeles' urban forest should be built with that same long-term commitment.

We urge the City Council to support CF 26-0757 and establish a sustainable future for City Plants and the important services it provides to communities throughout Los Angeles.

Sincerely,

Theresa Maysonet
Co-Founder
[South LA Tree Coalition](#)

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.