

MOTION

The San Fernando Valley is home to some of the hottest temperatures in the City of Los Angeles. During extreme heat events, temperatures can exceed 110 degrees fahrenheit and have reached as high as 121 degrees fahrenheit in the San Fernando Valley. On April 16, 2026, Mayor Bass released her Climate Action Plan for Los Angeles, which includes 14 main objectives, including connecting green spaces and reducing risks from extreme heat and climate change.

Studies of Los Angeles and other urban areas have shown that tree canopy provides a vital role in addressing both of those objectives. Research in Greater Los Angeles found daytime air temperature at pedestrian height to be approximately 5 degrees cooler beneath tall tree canopy than over bare ground. In practical terms, tree shade could make conditions beneath the canopy on a 110 degree fahrenheit day feel closer to the air temperature of a 105 degree fahrenheit day, while providing even greater reductions in radiant heat and surface temperatures. Increased tree canopy can therefore help reduce disparities in heat exposure between neighborhoods, particularly in communities with historically lower canopy coverage.

Despite the clear benefits that an increased tree canopy can provide, tree care and maintenance has been historically underfunded over decades. If the city has any hope of addressing the Mayor's goal of increasing citywide tree canopy to 25% by 2035, including at least 15% canopy in all neighborhoods, a clear multi-year implementation plan with quantifiable goals must be created and executed.

To address these climate concerns, the Bureau of Street Services mapped approximately 74,910 vacant tree wells available for immediate planting, including 16,746 in the top 20%, prioritized based on equity and environmental factors. However, existing tree guarantee fee revenues are insufficient to fund planting at all 74,910 locations within a reasonable timeframe.

Adopting proactive maintenance and watering practices alongside innovative structural solutions, such as soil cells or modular structural cells (e.g., Silva Cells, Soil Vault, Permavoid), which allow for the removal of root barriers in favor of Silva Cells, can enhance long-term tree vitality, maintain safe and accessible sidewalks, and significantly minimize future municipal liabilities.

The Bureau of Street Services should therefore report to the Council on the staffing, funding, data, and operational resources needed to implement a comprehensive citywide program for planting and maintaining trees in vacant tree wells that factors in the unique watering needs of different species throughout the city.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Bureau of Street Services be INSTRUCTED to report back in 30 days on the following:

- A 3, 5, 10, and 25 year staffing and resource plan, including a detailed list of the classifications and their availability, needed to plant trees in all vacant tree wells identified in the Tree Planting Prioritization Plan, specifically factoring in neighborhoods identified in the Clean Up Green Up Ordinance.
- Recommendations about the departmental resources needed to water and maintain these trees to maximize their long term health and benefit, yearly goals for tree planting and care, how to expedite tree planting permits for community based organizations, and any other actions needed to effectuate implementation of the plan.
- Clear metrics and a performance accountability dashboard to track CBO tree planting activities, including permit and tree applications, inspection pass rates, and survival rates, supported by

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data such as container sizes, tree species, watering schedules, photos of tagged and planted trees, and project close-out reports.

- Staffing needs for long-term tree well maintenance, including recommendations on removing tree well covers where a tree may outgrow its cover, addressing broken covers, weed overgrowth, and soil depressions to improve pedestrian accessibility, reduce safety hazards, and maintain tree health.
- Staffing, funding, and resources needed to complete an updated citywide tree inventory, including procedures to maintain the inventory as a continuously updated, active living database.
- The cost of tree-related claims against the City and how improved maintenance, including innovative options, such as soil cells or modular structural cells (e.g., Silva Cells, Soil Vault, Permavoid), can enhance long-term tree health, prevent sidewalk uplift, and limit future claims.

PRESENTED BY:

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