



May 9, 2022

To: Planning & Land Use Management Committee  
From: City of LA Community Forest Advisory Committee (CFAC)  
Re: **CF 15-0499-S2, Tree Canopy Preservation/Sustainable Built Environment, and DCP Report-Back Considerations**

Honorable Chair & Councilmembers:

The Community Forest Advisory Committee (CFAC) **supports the CF 15-0499-S2 motion** presented by Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson, and we are submitting the following summary of recommended considerations in the development of the report requested in the motion.

The mission of CFAC is to achieve a healthy, safe, and thriving Los Angeles urban forest ecosystem for wildlife as well as for the enjoyment and well-being of all Angelenos. CFAC's role is to advise City Council in developing policies to protect, expand and improve Los Angeles' urban forest and biodiversity, as well as advise City departments on procedures regarding preservation, tree care, and tree planting.

**Our Recommendations for the Report Analyses and Considerations:**

**Part A: Utilize existing City of LA tree-related reports, resources and recommendations as baseline for report development.**

- [LA Urban Forest Equity Assessment Report](#) (by Mayor's Office of Business and Innovation, City Plants, LASAN, City Forest Officer and partners)
- [LA Urban Forest Equity Streets Guidebook](#)
- [LA Urban Forest Equity Fact Sheet](#)
- [LA City Plants First Step to a UFMP Report](#) (by City Plants/Dudek)
- [2020 Los Angeles Biodiversity Report](#) (by LASAN)
- [City of LA Tree Inventory](#) (by StreetsLA)
- [Tree Canopy Map](#) (Center for Urban Resilience (CUREs) at LMU & Chapman University)

**Part B: Address the following critical questions regarding procedural processes as key Report Elements.**

The following is a list of significant considerations for reviewing impacts to trees, including proposed tree removals, that are recommended as elements and points of inquiry in the report's analyses.

1. **Overview of General Process for Projects with Existing Trees:** What is the City's process for reviewing and making determinations regarding an applicant's request for project approval when trees are located on the project's site? Please specify the **sequence** of review steps/phases, and identify responsible departments. Recommend how this process can be improved.

2. **Overview of Process for Reviewing Proposed Tree Removals:** What is the City's process for reviewing and making determinations regarding the proposed removal of trees on a project site (not only street trees)? Please specify the sequence of review steps/phases, and identify responsible departments. Recommend how this process can be improved.
3. **Overview of Tree-Related Forms and Application Materials:** At which points in the City's permit and review process(es) are the various forms pertaining to trees (including those listed below) reviewed and verified? Please specify the sequence of review steps/phases, and identify responsible departments.

Existing City Forms and Disclosures

(Used During Tree Review Sections of Permitting and Environmental Review Processes):

- [LA City Environmental Assessment Form](#) (Department of City Planning)
  - [Tree Disclosure Statement](#) (Department of City Planning)
  - [Tree Report](#) (Department of City Planning)
  - [Tree Removal Permit Application](#) (Urban Forestry Division)
- a) How do these documents relate to each other?
  - b) What methods are used to verify/ensure the accuracy of reported information from the applicant pertaining to trees?
  - c) Is the completion of these documents required prior to the advancement or approval of an applicant's project? If not, please explain why.
4. **Review by Tree Specialist:** At which points in the City's process(es) for reviewing and making determinations regarding proposed tree removals for an applicant's project do an arborist, tree expert, or environmental planner contribute to decision-making?
  5. Recommendations of all the above for "By-Right" development.

We thank Councilmember Harris-Dawson and contributors for putting forth this important motion. History has shown us that the details as well as expediency in implementation are key to distinguishing between rhetoric and action. In these times when climate change is already promising more frequent and intense heat waves coupled with a state of extreme drought, it is more critical than ever to be protecting, better caring for, and growing our existing urban tree canopy - for our health and our very existence. Yet we are continually presented with the misleading option of choosing between housing needs or maintaining our tree canopy. This is a false choice as thoughtful multi-benefit design can provide both. The loss of our mature tree canopy cannot be replaced by planting more young trees. If they survive at all, it takes several decades for young trees to grow the shade provided by mature trees with large canopies, and we simply don't have the luxury of time.

We are looking to you, our leaders, to take bold policy steps and improve funding, in order to protect this precious and vital resource.

With gratitude,



Shelley Billik, Chair

Cc: Rachel Malarich, City Forest Officer  
Robin Gilliam, CFAC Rep CD8  
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