

MOTION

The urban environment is a web of natural and built features interacting daily. Whether it's the sun beating down on streets and sidewalks; or rain running off asphalt and saturated lawns into gutters, these daily workings of life in a city are all surrounded by an important piece of green infrastructure – trees. Trees are combatants of the urban heat island effect, providing necessary shade to streetscapes. Trees are interceptors of rainwater, providing stormwater retention for overloaded drainage systems. Trees are absorbers of air and water pollutants, improving health and wellness in neighborhoods, and they are beautiful green canopies housing wildlife and improving the character of communities.

In the City of Los Angeles, the Urban Forestry Division manages nearly 700,000 street trees growing along 6,500 miles of public roads, making the City's street tree population the largest urban forest in the nation. Having the largest urban forest does not come without its share of problems. The conflicts between tree roots and sidewalks in Los Angeles are widespread, resulting in recurring expenses for repair and even at times, tree removals. In 2016, the City settled a \$1.4 billion class action lawsuit, commonly known as the "Willits Settlement," that determined the City's crumbling sidewalk infrastructure was not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and prevented people with disabilities from traveling and accessing opportunities in Los Angeles. This legal action led the City to develop the "Sidewalk Repair Program," which as of today is the only program for sidewalks in the City.

In an effort to comply with the Willits Settlement, the City prepared a comprehensive EIR that supported the need to remove some 13,000 street trees. However, in late January 2023, the Los Angeles Superior Court ruled that the EIR failed to thoroughly examine the impacts to wildlife and the environmental consequences of trading mature trees for young replacement trees.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council direct the Bureau of Street Services, in coordination with the Urban Forestry Division and the City Forest Officer, to report back on sustainable solutions and best practices to sidewalk repairs, implemented by other cities, that preserve our City's mature street trees while ensuring safe sidewalks.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Council instruct the City Administrative Officer, and all other relevant departments, to report back on the steps necessary, or already underway, to secure federal funding under the urban forestry program of the new infrastructure bill.


PRESENTED BY



JOHN S. LEE

Councilmember, 12th District

SECONDED BY



FEB 14 2023

ORIGINAL

PK