



Legislation Text

File #: 21-0335, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to direct City Manager and all appropriate departments to report back within 90 days on establishing a citywide Tree Replacement Program that establishes standards and streamlined processes for maintaining the community's urban forest and promoting the health and safety of City trees, from the time they are planted through maturity.

If a resident wants a street tree in Long Beach, they can apply to Public Works for a permit to plant a tree from a City approved list, which they can then buy and plant themselves.

If they're patient, however, residents can go through the Long Beach Office of Sustainability, which has a street tree planting program where residents can request individual trees be planted next to the sidewalk in front of their home with a wait time of about 6 months, give or take.

Development Services also has a tree planting program-I Dig Long Beach 10,000 Trees by 2022 initiative-where the Housing and Neighborhood Services Bureau partners with neighborhood and community groups to help plant new street trees and volunteers plant them on a predetermined planting day thanks to funding by the Port and Cal Fire.

While these are all great options to improve the tree canopy throughout the City, what we lack is a dedicated tree replacement program or standards when trees are removed, especially by the City. For example, in District 5, street repairs have required the removal of a good number of heritage trees in neighborhoods with no budget, timeline or plan for their replacement. Heritage trees are characterized as trees with historical significance, special character, or community benefit. One day a resident has a tree in front of their house, the next day it's slated for removal and they're either stuck with the bill to replace it or find themselves at the bottom of the list for one of the City tree planting programs.

It just doesn't seem fair or smart. Wouldn't it be better if the trees were replaced as part of the street improvements? Don't we want to replace trees in a uniform way rather than depending on the haphazard schedule of individuals or other programs? We believe we can and should do better by our trees and neighborhoods.

Therefore, we move to direct the City Manager to work with all appropriate departments to develop a tree replacement program that:

- Promotes the protection and maintenance of natural resources whenever possible, including but not limited to the conservation of mature tree canopies;
- Sets standards for planting replacement trees when significant or heritage trees are

removed;

- Provides a streamlined process for residents getting their trees replaced in the instance that a tree in front of their home is slated for removal;
- Offers a resource page that establishes clearly defined standards for tree removals conducted by Public Works;
- Includes, whenever possible, the replacement of trees by the City whenever they are removed by the City; and
- Reviews policies of other cities for tree replacement program best management practices.

This matter has been reviewed by Budget Manager Grace H. Yoon on April 12, 2021.

The recommendation requests the City Manager to work with the appropriate departments to report back within 90 days on establishing a citywide Tree Replacement Program. The requested action is anticipated to have a moderate impact on staff hours beyond the budgeted scope of duties and is expected to have moderate impact on existing City Council priorities, as this recommendation may result in difficult prioritization decisions due to staff diversion from other critical citywide priorities such as the pandemic response, federal grants funding set up and implementation, and the budget situation, where resources, regardless of funding, are severely constrained. There is no local job impact associated with the recommendation.

Approve recommendation.

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