

Dear Councilman Huizar, Councilman Cedillo, Ms. Rachel Malarich, and Mr. Adel Hagekhalil,

The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council (HHPNC) represents over 60,000 Los Angeles stakeholders who reside, own property, or conduct business in the neighborhood of Highland Park. We are writing to you in regards to trees for the first time during this neighborhood council term. We would like to express to you our value for the historic trees in our neighborhood and our concern for the city's management of the canopy, despite goals and plans to preserve and grow the canopy. Furthermore, we call for immediate action to be taken, as a result of the social, environmental, and economic challenges we are facing, and would like to remind you of recently established goals and plans already outlined in the approved Green New Deal, the Dudek Report, and the Comprehensive Tree Care motion passed in City Council.

We know that trees provide a physical infrastructure for our communities that helps combat climate change, rising temperatures, health issues, and poverty. Trees are an integral part of our ability to be a sustainable city and usher in future generations. We want to provide future generations even more opportunities than what we have access to now by ensuring that trees are a cornerstone of the community. In our neighborhood specifically, we have a canopy of old and fully-grown trees that we believe the city does not have a method to retain or promote nor the policies that encourage development that co-exists with the trees. This is exemplified by how construction is carried out with little regard to the preservation of old and fully-grown trees. One study conducted by scientists at JPL and NASA concluded that heat waves in Los Angeles have become more frequent and longer lasting with an increase of 5 degrees to the average annual maximum temperature primarily due to the "urban heat island effect."¹ For our elderly, our children, and primary pedestrians, we are increasingly faced with limited options to enjoy our community's outdoor spaces, commute by foot, and are experiencing the increasing pressure of rising energy bills.

Call to action:

Many of our residents feel the burden of tree removals daily. The combination of our conversations with public officials and tree experts, as well as our online research, confirms the need for action and leads us to pursue dialogue and urge forward thinking, tree-embracing policy. The following is a call to action and we believe the city can help Historic Highland Park achieve our vision.

- We support City Council's recently approved comprehensive tree care legislation to secure the long-term health and safety of the City's urban forest and urge the Bureau of Street Services to implement the legislation's nine instructions².
- Extend the tree removal notification period to at least 90 days as the current time period of three days is an unreasonable amount of time for Neighborhood Councils to adequately consider and respond.

¹ <https://climate.nasa.gov/files/LAHeatWaves-JournalArticle>

² http://davidryu.lacity.org/press_release_comprehensive_tree_care_legislation_passes_council;
http://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/2015/15-0467-s8_mot_10-17-2018.pdf

- Avoid the removal of healthy trees whenever possible. We know that sidewalk repairs do not necessitate the removal of trees. There are alternatives including enlarging tree wells, root pruning, temporary patches, and meandering sidewalks that can and should be used. Indeed, these urban-canopy preserving alternatives are used by tree-rich neighboring communities, such as Pasadena, to repair sidewalks. We urge the City of Los Angeles to follow the example of Pasadena and other tree-rich communities and implement similar practices that preserve the urban canopy.
- Educate the public and development sector on the benefits and proper care of trees, including periodic deep watering during drought.
- Expand and enforce tree protection policies on private property.
- We call on Urban Forestry Department to use extant funds for the preservation, maintenance, and growth of urban canopy in Historic Highland Park.

We will be reaching out to discuss progress and consideration of these policy changes. With the increased capacity to coordinate tree preservation with the newly filled position of Tree Coordinator for the city of Los Angeles, we hope to move forward, not backward. The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council is ready and willing to partner with the City of Los Angeles to move this agenda forward.

Sincerely,
Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council