PALISADES FORESTRY COMMITTEE (PFC)

a committee of the Pacific Palisades Community Council (PPCC)

September 1, 2019

Our Vision: Nurturing Trees in Pacific Palisades

MISSION STATEMENT

Enhance and sustain the health and beauty of the Pacific Palisades urban forest for future generations by facilitating the planting of appropriate trees and the caring for our existing trees;

Educate our community about the economic, environmental, health, social, emotional and aesthetic benefits of the trees that comprise our urban forest;

Protect the urban forest from unnecessary removals by better management, planning and enforcement, and honor the history of trees in the community; and

Establish a replicable model of a community urban forest task force for Pacific Palisades in partnership with the City of Los Angeles.

OBJECTIVES

1. **Primary Objective:** To facilitate the preservation, enhancement, and best practices management of the Pacific Palisades community's urban forest.
   A. The initial focus is on street trees in the public parkways, medians and rights of way, both our existing trees and the vacant spaces where street trees do not presently exist.
   B. We aim to maximize the number of urban forest trees and their canopy by facilitating the planting of more trees, and to minimize the number of trees that are removed.
   C. The goal is to develop an urban forestry policy that increases the age and species diversity in the public tree population, augments biomass and canopy coverage community wide, enhances the character and aesthetics of our neighborhoods, and achieves exemplary stewardship of the forest for all who live and work here.

2. **Urban Forest Policy:** To create urban forest policies that implement the Mission and the Primary Objective, and to work with both the City of Los Angeles urban forestry leadership and the Pacific Palisades community to discuss

and adopt urban forest policies to achieve that objective. Such policies may include:

A. **Designation Policy:** The Committee has decided to use as a template the designation criteria and policy in the Santa Monica Urban Forest Master Plan.

1) **Criteria: *** The template for the tree designation criteria is summarized below:

a) The Right Tree in the Right Place: If the existing dominant tree on the street segment is the right tree in the right place, it will remain as the designated tree. If not, the following criteria will be considered when selecting a different tree as vacancies occur:

b) Growspace Availability: Soil volume is the most important criteria. A bigger growspace allows for a larger tree species, while small growspaces require smaller tree species. The preference is for the largest species for the available growspace.

c) Water Requirements and Growing Conditions: The water requirement of the species and its ability to withstand little water when established. Micro-climate conditions, such as salt air, wind, heat, etc.

d) Species diversity: A new, different species, that does not share the same vulnerabilities.

e) Aesthetics and Neighborhood Character: Blend aesthetically with existing species and with the neighborhood character, that may compliment or contrast the species seasonality traits.

f) Canopy Size: Consider the mature tree's canopy size and form, and the proximity of buildings and other structures. Generally, the preference is for larger canopies.

g) Land Use and Traffic Considerations: Commercial vs. residential streets, truck traffic vs. limbs, pollution tolerance, root pruning tolerance, pedestrian shade, overhead wires, etc.

h) Disease Resistance and Susceptibility.

i) Availability: Monitor designated tree availability, and research new species introductions.

j) Special Cases: May decide to allow for the wrong tree in the wrong place for special reasons, such as Palm streets (Swarthmore?) or Camphor streets (Toyopa?) - or not.

2) **Designation List: ** ** The format of the designated tree list for each street segment is:

a) Existing tree (the dominant existing species in that street segment).

b) Primary species (this is the designated tree, which may be the same as the Existing species, or a new species as vacancies occur). See the "Right tree in the right place" criteria in Paragraph 2.A.(1)(a) above.
c) Secondary species (if the Primary tree is unavailable or no longer appropriate, at the discretion of Urban Forestry).

* See the attached Street Tree Designations Criteria in Appendix 2, pages 100-103, of the original 2011 Santa Monica Urban Forestry Master Plan.
** Those criteria are exemplified in the format of the SM Street Tree Designations List, Appendix 3 of the SM UF Plan, revised 2017 (see attached page 1 of the List).

B. **Diversity and Adaptation Over Time Policy:** A policy of diversity of species, genus, form, and aesthetics (evergreen, deciduous, broad leaf, small leaf, flowering or not, leaf color, etc.) across Pacific Palisades. A policy of flexibility and adaptation to changing conditions over time.

C. **Removal Policy:** A policy to not remove any street tree unless it is dead or near death, is a disease threat to the urban forest, or is a clear and present danger to people.

D. **Landmarked and Heritage Trees Policy:** A policy to identify and protect our significant trees.

E. **Maintenance Policy:** Policies to implement best practices for maintenance of all trees, especially newly planted trees.

F. **Sidewalk/Curb Policy:** A policy on sidewalk and curb repair and construction in a manner that will minimize tree damage and removal.

3. **Urban Forest Plans** (what to do):

A. **Manage Tree Removals:** Create a system to monitor tree removals and to seek consequences for unlawful or unpermitted removals (in cooperation with appropriate LA City agencies), in accordance with the Removal Policy. Robust education of property owners to protect existing trees from inappropriate trimming, neglect, or illegal removal.

B. **Street Tree Inventory:** The Committee will determine if and when it would be an appropriate use of resources to commission an inventory of all street trees and vacancies in the PPCC Area Map, including: determining the optimal means, methods, criteria, and required information, using the completed inventory to guide policy; and

selecting and managing professional people to do the inventory work, with the appropriate computer applications.

C. **Designation List:** An approved street tree palette (genus and species tree list of approved trees). Street tree designations for segments of streets or whole streets (a street tree designation list), showing the existing predominant species. If it's not the right tree in the right space, designating a new primary species and a secondary species as vacancies occur.

D. **Tree Planting Project:** Work with LA City agencies and community organizations to: identify locations for new trees, ensure the compliance with the Designation List, interact with the property owner, and facilitate the planting of the new tree.

E. **Urban Forestry Division** liaison suggestions:
   1) Work with City Planning / DWP/ Street Lighting, to design utilities in parkways for maximum tree planting sites.
   2) Work with realtors with home sales to maximize tree planting and offgrade sidewalk repairs.
   3) Work with Building & Safety to protect parkway trees during construction.
   4) Work with developers and owners to follow the Recreation & Parks Manual (Appendices G, H and I) by including in construction documents the Model Tree Preservation Specifications and by following the Manual's prescriptions on how to prevent damage to trees during construction.

4. **Public Outreach:**

A. **Liaison** to City staff and operations. Advocate for free exchange of information regarding City operations and for best practices by city workers and contractors.

B. **Organize** tree activists to build public support for the enhancement and protection of our urban forest.

C. **Reach out** to community organizations and stakeholders.

D. **Seek grants and donations** to fund the committee's expenses.

E. **Show the benefits** of a healthy and expanding urban forest: economic, environmental, public health, aesthetic, social and quality of life.

APPENDIX 2 - STREET TREE DESIGNATIONS CRITERIA

STREET TREE DESIGNATIONS CRITERIA

In order to designate future replacement trees as they succumb to disease, become hazardous, or die, street tree designation criteria are followed. The Designated Street Tree List appears at the end of this document.

All streets in the city are divided into segments based on tree populations, growspace size, and neighborhoods. Blocks with streets which exhibit similar characteristics are grouped into a segment. Some segments span the entire city, while some are only a block long.

Each street segment, and its existing trees, take into account quantity, size, health, and aesthetic appropriateness. If the dominant tree on the segment is determined to be the right tree for the right place, it will remain as the designated tree. If not, the following criteria will be considered when selecting a different species.

SPECIES DIVERSITY

The top 15 species should only be designated in existing healthy stands of trees that are considered to be the right trees for the right place. New species, which thrive in similar climates, should be regularly introduced to increase diversity of the urban forest. When filling vacancies to complete existing monocultures, combinations of two tree types with similar characteristics may be used.

AESTHETICS AND NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

If a new species is considered for a street segment, its appearance alongside existing trees must be considered. Since this plan will be implemented over time, new trees will be phased in one at a time, so they must blend aesthetically with existing trees and consider the neighborhood character during the replacement process.

TREE SITE AND GROWSPACE

The growspace available at the tree site is the most significant factor in tree selection. The soil volume is limited in small cut-outs and parkways and the list of trees that will thrive in those conditions is short. Root pruning may be necessary for trees planted in small growspaces, so a tree planted in such a space must be able to tolerate root pruning. Large growspaces offer an opportunity to increase canopy cover and environmental benefits for the City and a large range of trees can be planted in area with plenty of soil volume.

CANOPY SIZE

The mature size of the canopy is also a factor in tree selection. Adjacent building size and setback should be evaluated to determine whether a tree should have an upright, vase shaped, or spreading canopy.

Both vertical and horizontal shapes are considered. Increasing the canopy cover over the City is the objective, so the largest possible tree for the growspace should be considered.

LAND USE AND TRAFFIC CONSIDERATIONS

Commercial districts with boulevards will be considered differently than residential streets. Palms may be the preferred choice for major boulevards for way-finding purposes. Tree debris should always be considered on streets, which are used for parking.

Trees that line streets that have truck traffic need to be tolerant of being limbed up when young. Trees that are tolerant of pollution and help mitigate pollution should be used for high traffic streets and areas in close proximity to the freeway. Shade and comfort of pedestrians will always be considered.

MICRO-CLIMATE AND GROWING CONDITIONS

Some trees are adapted to grow in salt air and wind and others need some heat and protection from wind to thrive. Growing conditions for each street will be considered. Because the majority of trees will not be irrigated, the trees need to be able to survive on water when young, tapering off to little water when established.

AVAILABILITY

Research should continually be done for all new species introductions regarding the possibility of having them grown locally. Uncommon species may need to be contract grown to create availability for this species.

SPECIAL CASES: PALM ALLEES

The process of street tree selection for the Urban Forest Master Plan is motivated in large part, by recognition of the long-term environmental benefits of achieving a healthy, diverse urban forest with significantly enhanced canopy coverage citywide. This would seem to argue against preserving intact existing palm allees or initiating the designation of new palm allees due to their marginal canopy and pollutant absorption potential.

Nevertheless, significant palm allees play a limited but important role in Santa Monica's urban forest. In this much-visited beach community, palms indicate that the ocean is near when they line the principal entry corridors. On these major corridors as well as in some residential areas, existing palm allees ideally frame ocean or mountain views. In Palisades Park, palm allees mark pedestrian progress along Ocean Avenue and grace postcard views of the beaches and bluffs. In selected cases, palm allees are an integral part of the neighborhood's identity.

In cases where there are allees of towering, slender palms, inter planting with a more pedestrian-scaled deciduous or evergreen species will add diversity, canopy, and increased environmental benefits without impact on the aesthetic and community benefits.

There are a limited range of circumstances where the inter planting of broadleaf trees is not preferred and continuance of the existing palm monoculture is appropriate. They include (in some combination) the following:

- Where eighty percent (80%) or more of the trees on a street are of the same or closely-related species, providing an attractive, unified appearance.
- Where the placement and form of the mature trees in the allee do, or in the case of like-species replacements, will, frame and preserve an existing or exceptional view.
- Where historic photographs and records show that the existing trees date from the earliest period of development of the neighborhood or are like-species replacements of original trees, and that the historic allee has not been significantly altered over time.
- Where the mature scale of the species comprising the allee is well suited to the street width, parkway size and prevailing setback of adjacent structures.
- Where replacement trees of the same species or a species closely resembling the scale and character of the original species is both available in nurseries and falls at a price point within the norm for replacement street trees.*

*In situations where the purchase of replacement street trees to preserve a significant allee would be so costly that it would reduce the replacement budget for other areas of the city, residents or businesses located along the significant allee may be given the opportunity to form an assessment district under the City of Santa Monica's procedures to create a fund that could augment the City's tree replacement budget. Failing that, the City will designate an alternate replacement species which will achieve the goals of the Master Plan but may not preserve the monoculture.

Palm species may be recommended as a street tree in areas where the growspace for trees is severely limited and impinges on required sidewalk clearances. Unless and until significant infrastructure changes in those areas occur, designation of a palm species is the sole alternative to a treeless streetscape.

SPECIAL CASES: FICUS STREETS

The Ficus tree is the environmental workhorse of Santa Monica's urban forest. It absorbs more pollutants per unit of biomass than most of the other trees in the urban forest. It also shades homes and cars, reducing reliance on artificial climate control. Its wide canopy is loved by many residents. However, it is currently planted in many growspaces that are too small, encouraging the tree to lift sidewalks and disrupt infrastructure.

According to the current tree selection guideline, Ficus microcarpa would not be a suitable designation in many of the places it is currently planted, but the environmental benefits that the tree provides outweigh its potential downsides and it has been designated for streets that were known as "ficus streets." A "ficus street" segment has Ficus microcarpa making up eighty percent (80%) or more of the current street tree population.

Only in cases where a majority of the residents request that an alternate tree be chosen will a different tree be designated for the segment.

STREET SEGMENT #	STREET SEGMENT	FROM	TO	EXISTING SPECIES	PRIMARY SPECIES[1]	SECONDARY SPECIES[2]
1	02ND ST	MONTANA AVE	CALIFORNIA AVE	FICUS MICROCARPA	QUERCUS AGRIFOLIA	CORYMBIA APARRERINJA
2	02ND ST MEDIANS	MONTANA AVE	CALIFORNIA AVE	MELALEUCA QUINQUENERVIA	MELALEUCA QUINQUENERVIA	CORYMBIA CITRIODORA
3	02ND ST	CALIFORNIA AVE	WILSHIRE BLVD	FICUS MICROCARPA	AFROCARPUS FALCATUS	EUCALYPTUS NICHOLII
4	02ND ST	WILSHIRE BLVD	COLORADO	FICUS MICROCARPA	AFROCARPUS FALCATUS	CORYMBIA APARRERINJA
5	02ND ST	STRAND ST	SOUTH CITY LIMIT	CALLISTEMON CITRINUS	CALLISTEMON CITRINUS	TRISTANIOPSIS LAURINA
6	03RD ST	MONTANA AVE	WASHINGTON AVE	CINNAMOMUM CAMPHORA	CINNAMOMUM CAMPHORA	ANGOPHORA COSTATA
7	03RD ST	WASHINGTON AVE	CALIFORNIA AVE	CALLISTEMON CITRINUS	CALLISTEMON CITRINUS	STENOCARPUS SINATUS
8	03RD ST	CALIFORNIA AVE	WILSHIRE BLVD	PRUNUS KAWAKAMII	RHUS LANCEA	PYRUS KAWAKAMII
9	03RD ST	WILSHIRE BLVD	BROADWAY	JACARANDA MIMOSIFOLIA	WASHINGTONIA ROBUSTA	JACARANDA MIMOSIFOLIA
10	03RD ST	PICO BLVD	SOUTH CITY LIMIT	PODOCARPUS SP	PODOCARPUS MACROPHYLLUS	MELALEUCA LINARIIFOLIA

1. **PRIMARY SPECIES:**
   Trees that will be the designated species for individual street segments.
2. **SECONDARY SPECIES:**
   Trees that will be planted at the discretion of the Public Landscape Division.