



Motion to address tree removals under the Sidewalk Repair Program

Agenda Item: GB102617-2

Date: 26 October 2017

Proposed By: Westside Regional Alliance of Councils

Background

While the importance of safe and accessible sidewalks for all City residents is undeniable, there is increasing community concern for the environmental impacts of mass tree removals under the City's Sidewalk Repair Program.

At a time when Los Angeles is facing ongoing challenges to its urban forest through drought, invasive pests, development, and lack of maintenance through reduced funding for the Urban Forestry Division, further damage to our already insufficient and threatened urban forest canopy will have inevitable effects on the public health of all Angelenos, wherever they live. This sends the City in the wrong direction in its efforts to address the effects of climate change and implement sustainability solutions.

If amended, the Sidewalk Repair Program could provide an important opportunity for Los Angeles not only to create accessible and safe sidewalks for its residents, but to support the City's much vaunted sustainability goals by undertaking the Program in a careful, informed, and well-considered way in order to maximize its benefits and minimize its harms.

Proposed Motion

The South Robertson Neighborhoods Council recommends the following actions and amendments to the Sidewalk Repair Program's draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR):

- I. **Halt tree removals until EIR completed:** The City should stop removing healthy street trees in its implementation of the Program until the SRP EIR is completed and alternative methods and materials to maximize tree retentions citywide have been fully considered and analyzed.
- II. **If removals continue, preserve existing trees wherever possible:** If the Program continues with tree removals while the EIR is in process, then, whenever possible, viable existing trees should be preserved, and their growing spaces and conditions improved, if feasible, through the introduction of sustainability features. Tree removal should be viewed as a last resort. Mass removals of entire street blocks or rows of trees for project convenience or cost savings are short-sighted and will result in long-term costs for residents and the City as a whole. Each tree should be evaluated individually, on-site, by an ISA-certified arborist/municipal specialist who also at minimum holds a Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ).
- III. **Increase tree replacement ratio:** There should be no net loss of canopy as a result of the Program. Trees should be replaced at a minimum ratio of 2:1. When a tree's canopy exceeds 30 feet, the replacement ratio should be 4:1.
- IV. **Update best management practices:**
 - a. *Remove use of root barriers from Standard Plan S-456-2:* Use of root barriers results in decreased root system stability. Root barriers are costly to install, raise the risk of tree failure, and do not reliably prevent growth of tree roots under sidewalks.
 - b. *Use 15-gallon trees for residential plantings:* 15-gallon trees are significantly less expensive than 24"-box-size trees, result in a

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- healthier tree with lower establishment watering needs, and will match the size of a planted 24"-inch box tree within a few years.
- c. *Update City's list of approved trees/increase species diversity:* The City's list of approved tree species for planting should be reviewed. New species that are low-water-use and will be more adaptive to warming conditions due to climate change should be added to the approved list, and higher-water-use trees should be removed.
 - V. **Complete a Tree Inventory:** The City should complete a tree inventory, which is a basic urban forest management tool the City currently lacks, and without which there is no known baseline from which to assess the Program's impacts on the urban forest. The last inventory was completed in 1991.
 - VI. **Create an Urban Forest Master Plan:** The City should create an Urban Forest Master Plan, another essential urban forest management tool the City currently lacks.
 - VII. **Give timely public notice of proposed tree removals:** All proposed tree removals should be notified well in advance to local residents, council district offices, and neighborhood councils, as well as to the general public via a City web page. The timeline should be sufficient to allow public participation, such as the consideration and discussion of alternatives to tree removal.
 - VIII. **Disclose tree replacement locations:** A frequently updated publicly accessible online tracking system and map should be available to provide data on tree replacements, specifying the locations of replacement trees, to give the public confidence that the City is meeting mitigation requirements.
 - IX. **Install sustainable features:** Green infrastructure features such as curb cuts, bioswales, and larger tree wells should be integrated into reengineered sections of the City's sidewalks, to increase the overall benefits to the City of its expenditure on the Sidewalk Repair Program.
 - X. **Increase funding to the Urban Forestry Division:** The budget of UFD should be increased so that the Division's ability to continue to perform its existing work is not compromised and diminished through the use of its resources in serving aspects of the Sidewalk Repair Program.
 - XI. **Address effects on wildlife habitats and wildlife:** Effects on wildlife and their habitats need to be quantified by appropriately qualified specialists, and mitigation measures identified to prevent or minimize negative impacts. For example, tree removals should not occur during nesting season.
 - XII. **Revise the Bureau of Engineering's outreach presentation:** The BoE's current public outreach presentation on the SRP (and the rebate program for property owners) insufficiently addresses the extent and manner in which street trees and the City's urban forest as a whole will be impacted by the SRP. Revised public outreach materials should explain the many ways in which the City's urban forest is important, the environmental and public health impacts of tree losses, and the benefits of retaining existing street trees and ensuring the survival of newly planted replacement trees. Alternative methods and materials that will allow the preservation of existing trees should be well-publicized to residents and business owners. Information about the availability of green infrastructure components should likewise be well-publicized.
 - XIII. **Periodically assess environmental impacts until program completion:** Given the length of the Program, periodic reassessments of environmental impacts should take place, along with consideration of incorporation of newly available mitigation measures, and advances in alternative sidewalk repair methods and materials.
 - XIV. **Monitor and ensure the survival of the replacement trees:** The establishment period of a tree is generally accepted to be five years. The City has committed to a compromise 3-year watering period for SRP replacement trees. Watering after that time by property owners is not guaranteed. Survival



of the replacement trees is essential to restoration of the City’s tree canopy and mitigation of ecosystem impacts. Their health and survival should be monitored and ensured.

- XV. **Quantify health effects of tree losses:** The EIR should quantify the health effects on the City’s residents of loss of trees and tree canopy as a result of the SRP if it continues on its present course.
- XVI. **Study alternative methods and materials for sidewalk repair:** Professional specialists in sidewalk repair practices should be consulted for expert opinions and analysis of viable alternatives to tree removals, as well as advice on the implementation of added-benefit green infrastructure during sidewalk repairs and replacements. The sidewalk repair methods and materials used in environmentally progressive cities such as Portland and Seattle, which have addressed the same issues in recent years, should be reviewed to identify smart solutions and best practices. Sustainable design alternatives include such methods as meandering sidewalks, bridging over existing roots, curb bump-outs, larger tree-wells, and permeable sidewalk designs.

Considerations

Committee review:
(highly recommended)

Votes For: 0

Against:

Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget: \$
(applies to funding motions only)

Arguments for:

Balances tree protection with sidewalk improvement

Arguments against:

Sometimes these conflicts are unresolvable



Motion to call for City divestment from Wells Fargo Bank

Agenda Item: GB102617-3

Date: 26 October 2017

Proposed By: Westside Regional Alliance of Councils

Background

Recently, Wells Fargo was hit with another round of scandals for opening over 3.5 million fake accounts. This comes in addition to yet another lawsuit for charging improper mortgage fees. And it was also disclosed that the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has been investigating Wells Fargo.

Their misconduct and immoral behavior also includes engaging in predatory lending against people of color and the elderly.

On June 27th, Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously (14-0) to direct the Office of Finance and other city departments to report on options to divest approximately \$40 million in Wells Fargo securities. The motion also directs the Office of Finance and the City Attorney's office to report on ending the city's contract with Wells Fargo due to their downgraded Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) rating.

The passing of this motion was an important first step towards divestment and protecting the citizens of Los Angeles, but it does not guarantee that full divestment will be approved by City Council. Community support is crucial.

Further, the creation of a municipal public bank (introduced on July 25th by Councilmembers Herb Wesson, Paul Krekorian and David Ryu, seconded by Mitch O'Farrell, Paul Koretz, Mike Bonin, and Gil Cedillo) is being explored by the Council as an alternative to using outside banks. It is unclear if such a bank is possible, nor are the regulatory issues defined; **the Council's motion, therefore, is just to explore the feasibility of a Bank of Los Angeles.** Note that it may or may not lead to further action, nor does the NC's motion endorse any particular plan.

Proposed Motion

- I. The South Robertson Neighborhoods Council supports the City Council's call to divest the City's approximately \$40 million in securities and end its contract with Wells Fargo, due to the bank's fraudulent and grossly unethical conduct in opening millions of fake accounts and improperly charging mortgage fees, and the subsequent downgrading of their Community Reinvestment Act rating.
- II. Further, SORO NC supports exploring the feasibility of creating a Los Angeles City Municipal Bank, chartered to reinvest in our communities, affordable housing, and small businesses, and aid in the City's transition to renewable energy.

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Considerations

Committee review
(highly recommended)

Votes For: 0

Against:

Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget: \$
(applies to funding motions only)

Arguments for:

The motion just calls for a feasibility study of an LA City bank. The regulatory and oversight issues have not even been identified, let alone solved. It could also help resolve the new cannabis industry's banking issues.

Given their unethical behavior, Wells Fargo should not profit from City deposits and financial instruments.

Arguments against:

The City's ability to oversee a bank is questionable.

There aren't a lot of other options, particularly when banks are measured against an ethical yardstick.



Motion to address issues with RecycLA Franchise Waste Program

Agenda Item: GB102617-4

Date: 26 October 2017

Proposed By: Westside Regional Alliance of Councils

Background

The City recently introduced the new recycLA Franchise Waste Program. All commercial and industrial businesses, as well as large multifamily buildings, are now served exclusively by one waste collection company in each region. The program, according to the City's Bureau of Sanitation: "allows the City to engage selected waste haulers through a recycLA agreement by which they are held accountable for a set of environmental, community, customer service, and rate standards. Under these recycLA agreements, recycLA waste hauler requirements will include

- Clean fuel low emission vehicles
- Efficient truck routing
- Enhanced recycling opportunities
- Improved accountability and customer service
- Transparent and predictable rates
- Reporting requirements
- Other environmental protections
- Annual bin cleaning
- Graffiti removal for containers

As an employee or tenant, you will enjoy the following benefits:

- Universal recycling throughout Los Angeles
- Reduced dependence upon landfills
- Cleaner air as a result of reduced generation of methane and other greenhouse gases (GHGs) from landfills
- Enhanced quality of life, thanks to quieter clean fuel burning trucks with the latest safety features, and because of more efficient collection routes, fewer trucks congesting and deteriorating city streets)
- Improved health and safety for solid resources workers"

While the intent is laudable, the rollout has generated numerous complaints to the City. Extra fees, neglected pickups, and more have called the program into question.

Proposed Motion

In response to widespread stakeholder complaints with the new RecycLA Franchise Waste Program, the South Robertson Neighborhoods Council calls upon the City to immediately:

- I. mandate franchisees publicly document they have both the equipment and resources necessary to provide the timely and satisfactory services to ALL their customers;
- II. proactively provide ALL customers of the new franchisees appropriate education on what the intent of the new regulations are and how they can manage their waste to keep their fees close to those paid under their previous service providers;

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- III. ensure that condo owners, apartment owners and businesses throughout Los Angeles are charged appropriately for the services contracted and that those payments do not exceed those for equivalent services paid by single-family homeowners;
- IV. set up a complaint line separate from the 311 call center to ensure issues are properly addressed until the transition is complete to customer satisfaction;
- V. re-open the fee schedule (and conditions for extra services) as created by outside consultants and approved by the City Council to include stakeholder input through the Neighborhood Council system; and
- VI. to avoid worsening the homelessness crisis in the City, develop and implement strategies to mitigate the impact of rate increases on low-income households.

Considerations

Committee review
(highly recommended)

Votes For: 0

Against:

Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget: \$
(applies to funding motions only)

Arguments for:

The additional nit-picky fees have strained budgets of landlords, and threaten to worsen the homelessness crisis as costs are passed down to tenants.

Arguments against:

The program's extra costs are more than offset by the public benefits of cleaner trucks and living wages paid to sanitation workers.



Motion to reduce parking requirements for therapy practices

Agenda Item: GB102617-5

Date: 26 October 2017

Proposed By: Westside Regional Alliance of Councils

Background

Given:

- a) the shortage of medical office space in Los Angeles, resulting in rents 30% higher than comparable commercial office space;
- b) that therapists, forced to choose between medical office space (zoned with reduced parking requirements) and non-medical space (which requires five parking spaces per 1,000 sq ft), often choose medical and thus further drive up demand; and
- c) that therapists do not require the specialty plumbing and facilities of other medical specialties;

Proposed Motion

The South Robertson Neighborhoods Council recommends that for psychotherapy and marriage and family therapist (MFT) practices which service single patients per session during normal business hours (9am to 5pm), the City should reduce the requirement from five (5) parking spaces per 1,000 sq ft of non-medical office space to three (3) parking spaces.

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Considerations

Committee review
(highly recommended)

Votes For: 0

Against:

Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget: \$
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Arguments for:

Helps alleviate office space shortage (and corresponding high rents) for medical practices by allowing therapists a wider choice in office space.

Arguments against:

Very specific zoning request.

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Department of Neighborhood Empowerment Announces: 2018 Civic University 2.0 for Neighborhood Councils

The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment will once again collaborate with The Pat Brown Institute (PBI) for Public Affairs at Cal State LA to present the Civic University (Civic U 2.0) at LA City Council chamber on Mondays, January 8, 22, 29, 2018 and February 5, 2018 from 6 pm – 9 pm. Please register! Cal State LA's College of Professional and Graduate Education will provide non-credit university certificates to those who complete the course.

Civic U emphasizes civic and community engagement and gives Neighborhood Council leaders the tools they need to understand city government and influence policy at City Hall. Last year, the Civic U graduated more than 100 Angelenos in Civic U 1.0.

Civic U. 2.0 provides practical training around self-selected group projects, building on the information provided both in Civic U. 1.0 and in further presentations in 2.0.

This year, we invite each Neighborhood Council to select one male and one female to attend with first priority given to those who have attended Civic U 1.0 in either 2015 or 2017. However, you can sign up if you did not take Civic U 1.0 and if there is space available.

Space is limited, so please register as soon as possible!

“We cannot build a better Los Angeles without an engaged population that knows how to navigate city government,” said Mayor Garcetti. “That’s why the Civic U emphasizes civic literacy: it’s not just about your vote at the ballot box, it’s about making sure your elected officials are representing your interests.”

Instructors will be under the supervision of Dr. Raphael Sonenshein, Executive Director of the Pat Brown Institute (PBI), and author of three books on Los Angeles politics and government. Teaching staff, guest speakers, and group facilitators will be drawn from the Pat Brown Institute (PBI), Cal State LA Faculty, the Mayor’s Office, other city offices, the Center for Nonprofit Management, and trained by the Pat Brown Institute.

You can register at this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Civic2>

The last day to register will be Friday, December 15, 2017.



Motion to oppose installation of a wireless telecommunication facility at 2512 S. Robertson

Agenda Item: GB102617-10
Date: 26 October 2017
Proposed By: Land Use Committee

Background

In early 2016, Verizon applied for a variance to install a 54' cell tower and related equipment cabinets at 2512 S. Robertson Blvd, a commercial building that has been unoccupied for decades. After robust public testimony largely opposed to the proposal, the application was denied by the City's Zoning Administrator. That ruling was appealed, and eventually resulted in a Federal court case.

As part of court proceedings and negotiations, the City and Verizon agreed that Verizon would re-submit their application. The new application was presented to SORO NC's Land Use committee on October 3, 2017 for a 52' cell tower disguised as a eucalyptus tree, along with equipment cabinets that include a diesel backup generator.

After hearing public testimony, the committee voted to recommend that the new application be denied. Compelling considerations include, but are not limited to:

- After soliciting input from thousands of stakeholders, and holding multiple forums and working group sessions, the community has recently completed the planning phase of the Mayor's Great Streets initiative for this strip of South Robertson, with the goals of an integrated vision for the commercial district, and a safe, walkable, and vibrant commercial core. Visual aesthetics and active facades are key components to that transformation. For those reasons and others, the final Great Streets report submitted to the City identifies the cell tower as a project threat, undermining the decades-long effort and will of the community;
- The location of the 11'x9' tower footprint would, at a minimum, result in loss of two parking spots (and arguably, render any parking unfeasible) on the property, making the empty location less desirable for new tenants or potential purchasers. The property has one of the few commercial kitchens paired with on-site parking on the South Robertson commercial corridor. According to area commercial realtors, lack of parking is the primary reason cited by potential businesses for rejecting South Robertson locations;
- The monthly income would make the property owner less likely to seek a tenant (or buyer) for the decades-long-vacant building, causing it to continue to be a blight on the neighborhood. The tower would also arguably be a disincentive for investment and development of adjoining properties;
- At 52', the proposed tower is dramatically out of scale with the neighborhood and surrounding single-story buildings. No other building or tree within the vicinity is anywhere as tall, and the tower would visually dominate the area. The area is zoned for a maximum height of 45';

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- The industry is rapidly transitioning to 5G technology, which relies on a multitude of smaller, briefcase-sized transmitters. Verizon claims they still need the big tower, but actively supported California Senate Bill 649, which would have made installation of those smaller transmitters easier (<http://www.latimes.com/politics/la-pol-sac-skelton-telecom-att-verizon-california-bill-20170710-story.html>). The neighborhood would be stuck with the large tower even as Verizon and the industry moves away from them.

At the Oct. 19, 2017 zoning hearing, Verizon testified that other options are possible (if less desirable) but maintains that they opted for a single massive tower over multiple smaller towers due to the City’s preference for consolidation of cell locations. Verizon also claimed that other buildings on the Blvd. would require substantial structural reinforcement in order to place the facility on the roof; however, they admitted they ruled out those locations based on “experience” with those type of buildings but without physical inspection or engineering analysis.

Notably, the Zoning Administrator also reported that he had received 108 letters in opposition to the project. In response to a request by Council District 10 and SORO NC’s President, he extended the deadline for feedback to November 3 so that it could include the NC’s official position.

Proposed Motion

For the reasons stated above, the South Robertson Neighborhoods Council officially recommends and communicates that the City deny the application for a zoning variance for Verizon’s planned unmanned wireless telecommunication facility at 2512 S. Robertson Blvd. and continue to defend that position legally, if necessary.

Considerations

Committee review
(highly recommended)

Votes For: 6

Against: 0

Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget: \$n/a
(applies to funding motions only)

Arguments for:

Cited above.

Without expert analysis of the raw data, it is impossible to verify Verizon’s coverage claims. There may be other business reasons for wanting to pre-emptively claim the location.

It is not the community’s burden to solve Verizon’s business and engineering problems.

Arguments against:

Verizon maintains that they have sought to identify other locations in the area, with no success.

Verizon has provided exhibits to support their claim that there is a lack of cellular coverage in the area. It is also unlikely that Verizon would pursue the time and expense of installing a tower if they did not believe they needed it.

There is a general demand for reliable cell service. If the tower isn’t sited here, it still needs to be sited somewhere.



Motion for SORO NC to Sponsor and Fund a “Coffee With A Cop” Event Up To \$500

Agenda Item: GB102617-11
Date: October 26, 2017
Proposed By: SORO NC Public Safety Committee

Full Proposal

LAPD created the position of Senior Lead Officer (SLO) to patrol a designated area within each division, to foster and maintain a continuous positive relationship between the Police and the Community. Two of such designated areas (West LAPD- Car 59 and 95) are contained within the boundaries of the South Robertson Neighborhoods Council. The retirement of Mario Gonzalez has resulted in a new SLO for Car 95- Chris Baker.

To introduce Senior Lead Officer Baker to Stakeholders, the SORO NC Public Safety Committee (PSC) would like the SORO NC to sponsor a Coffee With A Cop event at the Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf (18th and Sawyer) from 10-noon on Tuesday, November 14, 2017 (tentative). Other LAPD officers and City representatives will also be invited to participate.

Stakeholders will have the opportunity to meet one-on-one and discuss whatever safety related issues they have on their mind in an informal and friendly environment. This location has plenty of adjacent parking to accommodate many stakeholders.

The Coffee Bean has offered to provide free coffee, as well as promotional and public relations support from their corporate marketing manager. They will also provide space for an information table.

Along with Event announcements on its website, FaceBook and NextDoor, the NC would benefit greatly by purchasing Social Media advertisement and printing flyers to reach as many SORO Stakeholders as possible, in coordination with the Outreach Committee.

Proposed Motion

To sponsor a “Coffee With A Cop” Event in November 2017, and to provide printing and/or social media outreach funding to promote the event, up to \$500.

Considerations

Committee review: Votes For: 5 Against: 0
(highly recommended)

Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget: \$ 1900
(applies to funding motions only)

Arguments for:

Great outreach opportunity for stakeholders to meet police officers.

Last year's CWAC was very successful, following the same formula

Arguments against:

Outreach Funds could be applied elsewhere.

Lack of NC members help in distributing flyers

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