

## Item 19 Background: Preserve and Create New Urban Green Space in Venice

Background: It is known that cities and neighborhoods can fight climate change by preserving and creating urban tree cover that can mitigate greenhouse emissions, reduce the energy needed to cool homes and businesses, and create a more pleasant and healthier urban space. In addition the unsealed ground can absorb storm-water run off and create a healthy habitat for urban and migratory animals and insects. Since the last comprehensive Los Angeles General plan was written over 50 years ago, the urban canopy has been shrinking despite many programs by several city administrations promising Millions of Trees planted. Los Angeles has one of the lowest rates of urban tree cover among America's largest cities at 15.2%, despite its sunny climate and favorable conditions for plant growth. It is only surpassed by New York's 13.5%, according to MIT's "Green View Index". Further data shows an unequal distribution of trees, with a disproportionate amount of tree cover concentrated in Los Angeles' richer neighborhoods, according to a drone survey by KCET. Hancock Park maintains a healthy 37% of urban forest cover while South LA barely survives on a minuscule 7%. Los Angeles has a dismal record of maintaining the trees that were planted during various initiatives in the past. Almost half the trees planted will die because of lack of water and/or poor management. More trees are destroyed yearly by urban development and removals due to safety concerns. Tree experts suggest a 4-1 tree replacement proposal for sidewalks instead of the 2-1 currently practiced, which will be insufficient to address long-term environmental damage. In addition, Venice faces unprecedented and unique environmental challenges, such as tsunami impacts and rising sea levels, as well as local, manmade problems like the reduction in private green space due to over-development, increased impermeable surfaces, and the over-charging of ground water due to the failure to maintain absorbent surfaces throughout the neighborhood. These are just a few of the challenges that are facing our city and Venice in particular. To overcome these challenges, Venice's Planning and Land use committees should support efforts to implement recommendations of Venice's established and future committees that deal with maintaining and improving urban tree cover, so as to be one step ahead of similar efforts made by the city of LA at large. Given these facts and the City of Los Angeles' failings as a whole to implement a manageable Urban Forestry Plan, this motion proposes to assess and catalog the current urban tree canopy in Venice and to start a community effort to improve the tree canopy in Venice. Along with the goals and efforts of the already established Venice Arbor committee\*, the following measures should be implemented to ensure a better and more climate-ready urban environment for Venice's future.