



April 27, 2026

Los Angeles City Council

Los Angeles City Hall
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

ShadeLA Letter of Support for Street Services Budget Request 8604

Dear Council President and Honorable Members of the Los Angeles City Council,

On behalf of ShadeLA, we write to express our strong support for the reinstatement of **Public Works Bureau of Street Services (BSS) Budget Program 8604 request for the Urban Forestry Division (UFD) to expedite Community-Based Organization permits for tree planting** to the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget. This includes a Special Events Permitting System for the 2028 Games and the associated UFD staff.

In preparation for the 2028 Games, Los Angeles has a unique opportunity to invest in visible, lasting improvements that will shade and cool residents long after the event concludes. Expediting permits and increasing staffing for tree planting are practical, high-impact investments that can help ensure trees are planted and established in time to provide shade, cooling, and beautification across our communities.

ShadeLA is a people-powered campaign to cool Los Angeles, co-organized by USC Dornsife Public Exchange and the UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation. The campaign brings together researchers, community-based organizations, technical experts, and public agencies, including the City of Los Angeles, to expand equitable tree canopy and other shade infrastructure.

The community organizations in our coalition are eager to plant and care for trees to achieve this goal, but permitting delays and limited staffing at UFD are slowing progress. ShadeLA recently published a [research brief](#) on tree permitting reform that documents challenges and offers practical recommendations to streamline processes, strengthen coordination, and ensure the success of legacy investments in LA's urban forest.



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Key findings include:

- Over the past two years, budget cuts reduced UFD's authorized positions by 25%, forcing staff to prioritize tree emergencies, removals, and deferred maintenance over permitting and new plantings.
- More than 50% of surveyed respondents reported leaving trees unplanted due to delays or restrictions in the permitting process.
- 33% of respondents said they were unable to spend grant, operational, or internal funds within the required timelines. One respondent alone reported \$300,000 in unspent grant funds.

This budget request directly addresses those barriers by providing the systems and personnel needed to accelerate review, approval, coordination, and implementation of tree planting projects across Los Angeles. Without augmented support for permitting, ShadeLA community partners will continue to struggle to permit and plant trees that provide much-needed shade.

We respectfully urge the City Council to reinstate this budget request and strengthen the Urban Forestry Division's capacity to deliver timely, equitable, and lasting climate resilience investments for Los Angeles.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,
ShadeLA



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Supporting Signatories

- Ben Stapleton, Executive Director, **USGBC California**
- Bo Savage, Deputy Director of Conservation Programs, **Los Angeles Conservation Corps**
- Bruce Reznik, Executive Director, **Los Angeles Waterkeeper**
- Will Wright, Director of Government and Public Affairs, **American Institute of Architects, Los Angeles Chapter**
- Carlos Moran, Executive Director, **North East Trees**
- Cassie Rauser, Chief Executive Officer, **TreePeople**
- Catherine Baltazar, Associate Director for Advocacy and Organizing, **Climate Resolve**
- Charles Hannah, CEO, **Forward Alliance Los Angeles**
- Drew Ready, Senior Project Manager, **Council for Watershed Health**
- Edith de Guzman, Water Equity and Adaptation Policy Cooperative Extension Specialist Researcher, **UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation**
- Kate Weber, Executive Director, **USC Dornsife Public Exchange**
- Mia Lehrer, President, **Studio-MLA**
- Miriam Bar-Zemer, Program Manager, **Festival Trail**
- Norma Quiñones, Executive Director, **San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corps**
- Pablo Cardoso, Director of Environmental Services, **Koreatown Youth and Community Center**
- Sharyn Romano, Chief Executive Officer, **Los Angeles Beautification Team**
- Stephanie Landregan, Director, **Altadena Green**
- Theresa Maysonet, Co-Founder, **South LA Tree Coalition**
- Veronica Hahni, Executive Director, **Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative**

**Organizational affiliations are listed for identification purposes only and do not imply institutional endorsement*



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