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VIA EMAIL ONLY

August 1, 2018

Timothy Tyson
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Jennifer Pope McDowell
Associate Director of Infrastructure
Mayor's Office of City Services
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RE: Request to Create Opt-In Notification System for All City-Wide Tree Removals

Dear Mr. Tyson and Ms. Pope McDowell:

On July 12, 2018, the Community Forest Advisory Committee (CFAC) convened its duly noticed monthly Committee meeting. During this meeting, CFAC passed a motion, approved by unanimous vote, for the creation of an opt-in notification system for all city-wide tree removals.

I. CFAC's Role in Making Policy Recommendations for Tree-Related Issues

On June 30, 1993, City Council mandated CFAC to make policy recommendations concerning the entire Los Angeles City Urban Forest. The Los Angeles City Urban Forest is managed by the City's Urban Forestry Division (UFD), a division of the Bureau of Street Services (BSS). In addition, CFAC was "established to facilitate constructive interaction between community members and all city agencies involved in tree maintenance, to analyze urban forestry programs and to foster community support in the enhancement and preservation of

a high quality urban forest.¹” To that end, CFAC has standing to make policy recommendations regarding measures that may encourage transparency and improve communication between the City and the public.

II. CFAC’s Recommends an Opt-In Notification System for All City-Wide Tree Removals Accessible to the Public

Over the course of the past few years, CFAC has received numerous complaints from stakeholders regarding the lack of transparency and poor communication with the notifications of tree removals from UFD. CFAC has discussed the matter at length and recommends that the City adopt an opt-in notification system for all city-wide tree removals. This system should be an email-based system like the Los Angeles City Planning Department’s Notification of New Entitlement Applications – Early Notification Report. Please find attached to this letter an example of an Early Notification. Given that the Planning Department can implement a similar notification system, there is no reason UFD should be precluded from adopting a similar system for tree removals. In addition to the system employed by the Planning Department, there are numerous other systems available, such as CityGrows which the City of Santa Monica uses, that should be also be explored.

Outreach for the opt-in notification system may initially begin at the neighborhood council level, but the system must be accessible to the public. UFD may also consider partnering with other City departments to implement the system. For example, the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) has graciously offered to host and manage the system, but cooperation from UFD will be required.

CFAC welcomes the opportunity to further develop this opt-in notification system for all tree removals. We think that it is imperative that the City implement this system as soon as possible. Implementing this system will resolve many of the issues of transparency and communications that have been frustrating our stakeholders. Working together, the City and the public, is a win-win situation. We look forward to engaging in constructive dialogue with the City and UFD on the matter.

Sincerely,



Enclosures.

Ryan Allen
Chair, Community Forest Advisory Committee

¹ **City of Los Angeles Urban Forestry Policies**, available at: http://www.bss.lacity.org/urbanforestry/index_policies.htm

cc: Kevin James, President, Board of Public Works Commissioners, City of Los Angeles
Heather Repenning, Vice-President, Board of Public Works Commissioners, City of Los Angeles
Fernando Campos, Executive Officer, City of Los Angeles Board of Public Works
Nazario Saucedo, Director, Bureau of Street Services, City of Los Angeles
Grayce Liu, General Manager, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, City of Los Angeles
Stephen Box, Public Information Officer, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, City of Los Angeles