

PUBLIC SAFETY

MOTION ENERGY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Los Angeles has taken significant steps to improve its environmental footprint. There is, however, a powerful, multi-beneficial opportunity that is literally right under our feet. As devastating fires burn across the West, efforts to curb climate change, mitigate associated increased risks, and achieve climate drawdown -- the point at which greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere level off and begin to decline -- have never been more urgent.

LA's Green New Deal commits to piloting healthy soil projects by 2021 that will support carbon sequestration and increase water capture (absorption and storage), as well as amplify education campaigns on the benefits of healthy soils, biodiversity, and regenerative practices. Rebuilding healthy soil means increased carbon sequestration, water holding capacity, biodiversity, and many additional benefits. The 469 mi² of land in the City provides opportunities to build healthy soil, including in our parks, playing fields, medians, and other bare or landscaped City property.

LA's Green New Deal also commits to developing an overall Healthy Soils Strategy for the City. LA Sanitation, in conjunction with relevant City departments, is soliciting input from a Healthy Soils Advisory Panel, composed of representatives from local universities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and relevant governmental agencies, to develop a healthy soil strategy that will support urban agriculture, address carbon sequestration, and increase water capture, amongst other things.

There is opportunity to align current City legislation in order to improve and protect biodiversity (CF#15-0499), to establish organic regenerative park management (CF#18-0788), to reduce maintenance of landscaped medians (CF#20-1071), and existing efforts under state Senate Bill 1383 to convert organic waste into compost, as well as ongoing projects, including anaerobic digestion, that facilitate compost production for use on public lands.

LA Compost's existing decentralized network of compost infrastructure serves as a model for how to increase soil health and biodiversity across the City, including on urban farms. The park model, which currently serves Debs Park, allows for compost to be made onsite where it can be used to buffer against drought, restore soil health in parks and build new community green spaces and gardens in conjunction with community composters. Like other cities across the State where park services have transitioned to organic management, City parks managers could be trained to make this transition and experience significant cost savings for water and input costs (fertilizer and pesticides) as well as reduce health risks to City staff and park goers, including children and animals. Also, the City's food waste that is processed through anaerobic digestion is separated from the liquid to make a dewatered "cake," which is about 70% moisture and consists of the organic matter rich for soil.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Council direct LA Sanitation, in conjunction with relevant City departments, to develop a healthy soil strategy for the City to support urban agriculture, address carbon sequestration, and increase water capture, and to solicit input on these issues from local universities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and relevant governmental agencies.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Council direct LA Sanitation to work with the Department of Transportation, the Department of Recreation and Parks, StreetsLA, and other relevant departments to report back on opportunities for unpaving underutilized spaces and using them for composting/mulching operations and/or to create healthy soil.

SEP 23 2020

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Council direct LA Sanitation and Environment to work with the Department of Recreation and Parks, StreetsLA, the Library Department, General Services Department, and other relevant departments, and request the Department of Water and Power and the other proprietaries, where relevant, to report back on:

- Opportunities to develop small- and mid-scale compost operations on public lands;
- Opportunities to reduce chemical and water use in parks through compost and mulch use and other regenerative land and tree management in public green spaces;
- The current use and any excess availability of mulch from City forestry and landscaping operations across all departments, including proprietaries, and green-bin collection to support healthy soil in the City;
- Current and future availability of anaerobic digested “cake” that can be used to support healthy soil;
- Opportunities for increased soil carbon and risk mitigation (flooding/drought) by increased water infiltration/holding capacity on managed lands;
- Opportunities with the Departmental Chief Sustainability Officers to educate new and existing staff and other relevant managers on soil health, regenerative land management and integrated pest management.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Council direct LA Sanitation to report back on public/private funding sources, including grants, for projects that will help the City expand its healthy soils efforts.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Council direct LA Sanitation to work with the Economic and Workforce Development Department, the Office of Climate Emergency Mobilization and local trade schools, like Los Angeles Trade Tech, or job development organizations, like LA Conservation Corps or Homeboy Industries, to report back on opportunities for the creation and improvement of local, ‘green’ employment opportunities linked to healthy soil and compost projects and programs.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Council direct the Fire Department to report back on best practices to protect soil health during necessary brush clearance activities.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Council direct LA Sanitation to work with the Office of Climate Emergency Mobilization, the Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance and other relevant community organizations on opportunities for public-awareness efforts on the importance of healthy soil and regenerative land management for LA communities.

PRESENTED BY:



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MIKE BONIN (verbal)
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SECONDED BY:

DAVID E. RYU (verbal)
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