Caring for new trees takes time and money. Community support for an equitable urban forest from both individuals and local community-based organizations.

**HOW CAN WE EQUITABLY EXPAND L.A.'S TREE CANOPY?**

**20% OF TREE CANOPY**
in the City of Los Angeles is located in FOUR NEIGHBORHOODS.

**REDLINING**
is one major reason for this uneven distribution of trees.

Redlining was a federal policy that refused to provide mortgage loan guarantees for neighborhoods primarily based on racial composition. This prevented some neighborhoods from investing in improvements, like parks.

**THE CITY OF L.A. AIMS TO INCREASE URBAN TREE CANOPY BY 50% IN AREAS WITH GREATEST NEED BY 2028.**

**EQUITABLY EXPANDING L.A.'S TREE CANOPY ISN'T AS EASY AS PLANTING MORE TREES**

Neighborhoods with the fewest trees also tend to have the least space for new trees.

Caring for new trees takes time and money.

**COMMUNITY SUPPORT**
for an equitable urban forest from both individuals and local community-based organizations.

**FUNDING**
for major infrastructure changes to plant in areas with limited space and fewer trees.

**HOLISTIC PLANNING**
that promotes tree planting, establishment, preservation, and maintenance. Planning efforts should include updates to city codes and involve active participation and input from the communities targeted for tree planting.

**MORE THAN JUST TREES**
should be included in an equity-based tree program. An equitable urban forest should center neighborhoods’ needs, like affordable housing, living-wage jobs, and pedestrian infrastructure.

**BENEFITS OF TREES**
include cooling shade, clean air, and saving money on electricity bills.

When trees aren’t distributed evenly, neither are their benefits.

**THE CITY OF L.A. AIMS TO INCREASE URBAN TREE CANOPY BY 50% IN AREAS WITH GREATEST NEED BY 2028.**

50% of the City of Los Angeles is located in FOUR NEIGHBORHOODS OF TREE CANOPY.

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Large trees provide more benefits (e.g. shade, energy savings, stormwater management) than small or medium trees, even after accounting for their higher maintenance costs. However, many places in L.A. cannot accommodate large trees being planted due to limited aboveground and belowground space. Simply planting more large trees is not enough for L.A. to reach tree canopy equity goals. Mature trees should be preserved as much as possible.

Research also shows that the urban tree canopy cover is declining nationally. This means that there is less shade in our cities today than there was five years ago, which is especially problematic for places that had little to no shade to begin with.

Tier 1: Available
No site modification needed. Tree canopy goals can be achieved by planting in existing vacant locations, e.g. vacant parkways and street medians.

Tier 2: Moderate
Minimal site modifications needed. Tree canopy goals can be achieved with additional financial resources and site modifications, e.g. creating new concrete cuts.

Tier 3: Hard
Drastic site modifications needed. Significant tree canopy increase cannot be achieved with existing infrastructure, and policy modifications are needed to reach canopy equity goals, e.g. roads must be redesigned to accommodate more street trees.

This tiered approach model provides a common language to describe how easily new trees can be planted at a site. This helps decision-makers prioritize planting given current resources, policies, and infrastructure.
HOW DOES THE L.A. URBAN FOREST EQUITY GUIDEBOOK INFORM FUTURE TREE EQUITY PLANNING?

TIER 1 PLANTING PROJECTIONS

This research study found that in all but one council district, planting small trees in Tier 1 locations does not enable L.A. to achieve tree canopy goals. In this image from the study, light green areas indicate possible additional tree canopy with planting small trees in only Tier 1 locations, while dark green areas indicate existing tree canopy.

Image credit: Cindy Chen

TRADEOFFS WITH TIER 2 AND TIER 3

Effort/Investment
installation, maintenance, implementation time

Tier 1

Tier 2

Tier 3

Greening
potential tree canopy expansion

Each of these tree canopy investments must be weighed against their individual challenges and trade-offs in a discussion among city experts, the community, and urban foresters.

NEXT STEPS FOR URBAN FOREST EQUITY RESEARCH

Based on new site condition data from L.A.'s street tree inventory, explore the impact of planting a variety of tree sizes on expanding urban tree canopy.

Consider how private property plantings and open space acquisition can contribute to meeting the City’s tree canopy goals.

WHAT ACTIONS CAN YOU TAKE TO HELP GROW AN EQUITABLE URBAN FOREST IN LOS ANGELES?

LEARN MORE ABOUT L.A. URBAN FOREST EQUITY
- "Los Angeles Urban Forest Equity Assessment Report." Available at https://www.tinyurl.com/urbanforestequity
- "Los Angeles Urban Forest Equity Streets Guidebook." Available at https://www.tinyurl.com/urbanforestequity
- Google Environmental Insights Explorer – Tree Canopy Labs. Available at https://insights.sustainability.google/labs/treecanopy
- Los Angeles County Tree Viewer. Available at https://tinyurl.com/treeviewer

PLANT AND CARE FOR MORE TREES
City Plants offers free yard and street trees to residents of the City of Los Angeles! Learn more at https://www.cityplants.org/

LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO ENCOURAGE TREE PLANTING, PRESERVATION, AND MAINTENANCE

SHARE WITH YOUR ELECTED OFFICIAL WHY URBAN FOREST EQUITY IS IMPORTANT TO YOU

Infographic created by Kimberly Guo, 2021 California Climate Action Corps Fellow