

**Board Report**

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**OPERATIONS, SAFETY, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE  
APRIL 21, 2022****Motion by:****DIRECTORS HAHN, SOLIS, MITCHELL, DUTRA, BONIN, AND KREKORIAN****Creating a Metro Tree Policy Motion**

In FY22, Metro will spend more than \$3 billion on infrastructure projects throughout LA County, including transit, highway, and street projects. Measure M alone provides more than \$60 billion over the next 35 years toward capital improvements, many of which will directly impact local streets and highways.

As Metro continues to focus its efforts on increasing ridership and addressing issues of equity, the role that tree canopies play in both carbon capture and the experiences of riders traveling by foot or bike to transit stations is a critical component in the success of Metro's capital projects and transit services.

Many of LA's lower-income communities are burdened with worse urban heat island effects, poorer air quality, fewer trees, and a lack of green spaces. This directly affects riders' ability to access and ride transit in comfort. Many of these same affected communities are also areas with higher transit ridership, meaning that people more likely to rely on the bus or train as their primary means of transport are also disproportionately in hotter locations with poorer air quality. With climate resiliency as one of the top four priority pillars of the Biden Administration's "Justice40 Initiative," we have an opportunity to further demonstrate Metro's commitments to both equity and climate action with a tree policy.

As an agency heavily-invested in our region's infrastructure, Metro has a role to ensure that its capital projects do not undermine the existing urban tree canopy. And with its commitment to equity, Metro has a role to increase what urban tree canopy exists in service to transit riders across LA County.

**SUBJECT: CREATING A METRO TREE POLICY MOTION****RECOMMENDATION**

APPROVE Motion by Directors Hahn, Solis, Mitchell, Dutra, Bonin, and Krekorian that the Board direct the Chief Executive Officer to:

- A. Create a Metro Tree Policy, with consideration of and recommendations for the following:
1. Protecting trees during construction;
  2. Appropriate species, palette, and planting strategies that maximize opportunities for native species, carbon capture, mitigating urban heat island effect, implementing low-flow water runoff, minimizing maintenance costs and damage to other infrastructure, and providing a robust tree canopy;
  3. A tree replacement approach that is, at minimum, two-for-one replacement of any trees removed as a result of Metro capital projects or on Metro property, including planting and establishment;
  4. In-lieu fees for instances where a minimum two-for-one replacement of trees on Metro property is not possible;
  5. Encouraging creative approaches, including but not limited to parkway strips, parklets, or pocket parks, where permeable surfaces are increased and planted for greater visual, cooling, and air and water quality impact;
  6. Coordination with local jurisdictions to plant and establish street trees along transit corridors in equity-focused communities, in accordance with jurisdictions' existing urban forestry policies, and as part of Metro's Complete Streets Policy, including a minimum tree canopy coverage threshold for high-quality transit corridors;
  7. For trees on Metro property and where Metro is responsible for maintenance (e.g., as the adjacent property owner), develop maintenance standards including but not limited to: watering, trimming, and replacement;
  8. Opportunities for partnership with private and non-governmental organizations; and,
  9. Community engagement;
- B. Present this Metro Tree Policy to the Board in August 2022 for consideration and approval; and,
- C. Identify and pursue funding opportunities to plant and maintain trees along Metro transit corridors no later than January 2023.