



# ROOM TO GROW

A COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR LOS ANGELES COUNTY



PREPARED BY  
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# Why the County Needs a Community Forest Management Plan

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## Our community forest is part of our **infrastructure**.

Like power lines or transportation systems, trees provide vital services that all of us rely on.

Unlike traditional infrastructure, trees offer a wide variety of benefits – everything from shade and cooling to mental and physical health improvements to biodiversity and food production and much more.

Much like trees themselves, the investments we make in trees today will grow over time, as mature trees provide more benefits than the resources needed to manage them.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lindenmayer and Laurance, 2016

# Benefits of Trees



## SEQUESTERING CARBON

A single mature tree may take about 50 pounds of carbon dioxide per year, equivalent to the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from driving a car about 50 miles.



## SAVING ENERGY

Shade trees can lower air conditioning costs, which in turn lowers carbon emissions.



## CLEANER AIR

Trees absorb pollutants and filter particulates out of the air by trapping them on their leaves and bark.



## BEAUTY

Trees add character to our communities with their colors, flowers, textures, and shapes.



## CONNECTING WITH NEIGHBORS

Trees can encourage civic pride while tree plantings provide opportunities for community involvement.



## SHADE AND COOLING

Trees provide not only shade but also cooling due to evapotranspiration from leaves.



## FRESH FOOD

Trees provide food in the form of fruits and nuts.



## WILDLIFE HABITAT

Trees support the lives of many wildlife and insect species and provide them with food, shelter, and nesting sites.



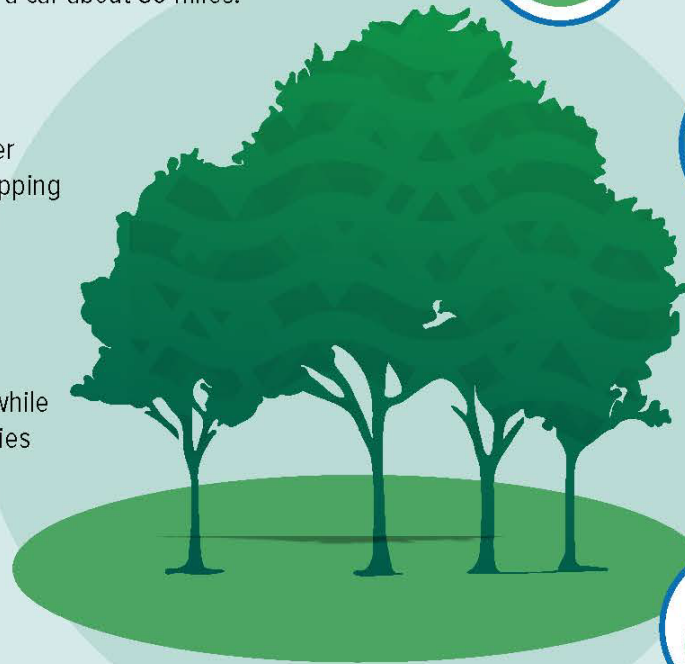
## HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

Trees improve mental and physical health and wellbeing in many ways, including by decreasing respiratory illnesses, calming traffic, and encouraging outdoor recreation.



## RAINWATER CAPTURE

Trees capture rainfall, recharging groundwater supplies and helping prevent stormwater from carrying pollutants to the ocean.



# County Partners



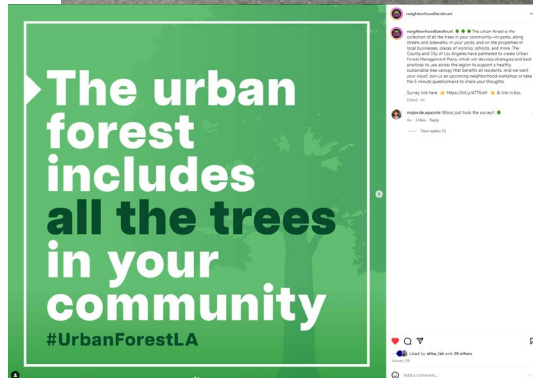
# Community Partners



# Neighborhood Workshops



# Community Engagement Activities



# Challenges

To realize the full potential of our community forest, the County must address several interrelated challenges.

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**1 / Equity and Access.** Not everyone in the County has equal access to the benefits of trees, to opportunities related to community forest management, or to decision-making and representation related to planning and caring for trees. When it comes to our community forest, we must consider the past and present legacy of inequity, including tree inequity, inherited by some communities in the County, including Tribes, low-income communities, and communities of color. And we must consider the legacy we would like to leave for future generations – caring for our community forest is a long-term commitment that requires investing today for returns many years from now.

**2 / Climate Change.** We can already feel the impacts of climate change in our communities, including extreme heat and drought, heavy precipitation and flooding, increased wildfire risk, and sea level rise. Trees are vulnerable to these threats just like people. We stand to lose many of the trees in our communities if we don't help our community forest prepare for the impacts of climate change. At the same time, a properly managed community forest can help alleviate some of the risks associated with climate change by providing benefits such as cooling, stormwater management, and fire breaks.

**3 / Regional Coordination.** LA County is complex and large, spanning 4,751 square miles and made up of a patchwork of dozens of unincorporated areas and 88 incorporated cities. The unincorporated areas and cities within the County each have different opportunities and challenges, including different forms of governmental authority, varying levels of impacts from climate hazards, different forms of infrastructure, and diverse demographics. These communities also interact with and benefit from the community forest differently. This CFMP is intended to serve as a resource not only for unincorporated areas, but for cities and other stakeholders in our region.







## 1. Equitable Tree Canopy + Actions

A community forest that ensures equitable access to the benefits of trees for all County residents.

## 2. The Regional Community Forest: + Actions

A community forest that is collaboratively managed across jurisdictions to support biodiversity and protect against regional threats.

## 3. County Tree Management + Actions

A County-managed community forest that is maintained with best practices and expanded for social, cultural, and ecological benefits.

## 4. Workforce and Economic Opportunities + Actions

A community forest that provides economic opportunities and is supported by a skilled local workforce.

## 5. Commitment to Funding and Partnerships + Actions

A community forest that is supported by creative, long-term funding and collaborative partnerships.

# Discussion: Priority Next Steps

- Equitable extended establishment watering
- Depaving and shade equity
- Equitable workforce development opportunities
- Tree procurement from local nurseries
- Equitable tree canopy in parks