

PROTECTING THE CITY OF L.A.'S URBAN FOREST

An Overview of the the Sidewalk Repair Program EIR Lawsuit



Filed in 2010, *Willits v. City of Los Angeles* was a class action lawsuit alleging that the City was in violation of Federal and State disability laws by failing to properly maintain its sidewalks.

In January 2016, the City entered into a settlement requiring it to spend \$1.4 billion over 30 years to make its sidewalks safe and accessible to persons with disabilities.

[Notice of Proposed Settlement](#)

UN4LA supports the Willits settlement and believes that it's important for all Angelenos to have access to safe sidewalks. However, in reviewing the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project, UN4LA was concerned about impacts that the proposed Sidewalk Repair Program (SRP) could have on the urban forest due to the removal of trees. LA's urban forest is already facing serious threats from climate change and environmentally irresponsible development. Along with numerous other individuals and groups, we submitted comments on the EIR. Unfortunately, the City chose to approve the SRP EIR without making any significant changes.

In June 2021, the LA City Council approved the SRP and adopted the associated EIR. Shortly after, we partnered with Angelenos for Trees to challenge the SRP EIR in court. Attorneys Sabrina Venskus and Jamie T. Hall filed a petition for writ of mandate seeking to overturn approval of the EIR.

[SRP EIR Petition for Writ of Mandate](#)

On January 17, 2023, Judge Mitchell Beckloff issued an order granting our petition. Among other things, the court found that:

- *The EIR did not assess significant impacts to the range of wildlife that relies on the urban forest;*
- *The EIR failed to assess short-term impacts from loss of tree canopy during the many years it will take the new, smaller replacement trees to reach mature size;*
- *The EIR failed to analyze cumulative environmental impacts resulting from other projects in the City.*

[Order Granting Petition for Writ of Mandate](#)