



LA County and LA City UFMP Engagement

LA County Neighborhood Workshops

Meta-Summary

March 26, 2024

LA County and the City of Los Angeles are working together as they each develop Urban Forest Management Plans. At the center of this process was a set of 50 neighborhood workshops, 25 held across unincorporated communities in LA County, and 25 held in communities across the City of Los Angeles. The project team partnered with and provided a stipend to 22 community organizations (called community partners in this document) to support the development, facilitation and promotion for these workshops, held from December 2023 through early March, 2024. The project team organized 21 in-person events and 7 digital workshops for residents of unincorporated communities in LA County. In total, nearly 500 people attended these events.

Workshop Goals

- Provide opportunities for residents in LA County unincorporated communities to share their vision and priorities for trees and the urban or community forest where they live
- Collect community feedback to inform the vision, goals and actions of the LA County community forest management plan
- Include opportunities for participants to share what benefits, needs and concerns resonate in their communities to help craft future messaging campaigns and educational opportunities
- Use an open house-style event with stations set up around a meeting space to encourage more equitable access to material and spaces for providing responses
- Partner with community organizations with relationships in historically underserved communities and with residents who need access to the planning process

Workshop Preparation and Materials

The project team worked with partners to identify times, locations and venues to hold workshops. Partners used their own meeting spaces or reserved nearby library or park meeting spaces to hold workshops. The project team reserved community room spaces at LA County Parks and LA County library facilities where there was not an identified community partner to support the organization of the workshop.

The project team developed a set of materials to support the workshops, including a short PowerPoint presentation which described the UFMP process, goals and timeline; explained the benefits of trees; defined the urban forest and its role in our communities; and introduced the workshop activities. The team produced a set of activity boards, each focused on a theme that would provide guidance for the City and County in developing their plans. These posters identified the key questions to ask participants and provided space for comments.

The project team developed a facilitator's guide with suggested questions for each activity poster to help guide conversations and input to the activities. The project team also developed a workshop flyer for each event and a set of social media sample posts that partners and others could use to publicize the workshops.

Workshop Outcomes

This document includes a meta-summary of the themes heard across all 28 neighborhood workshops organized by the project team and community partners in LA County unincorporated communities, organized by the six poster activities held at each. The sections below describe the high-level themes heard throughout the workshops, using the summary documents developed for each neighborhood workshop by the project team and community partners.

Each of the six workshop activities included a visual and prompts asking participants to respond with their priorities and tell us why these things were important to them. The summary sections below include visuals of what the responses looked like from one of the workshops. Participants were asked to write comments on post-it notes, or they could write down their thoughts on the agenda/comment sheet provided at the workshop and collected by the project team. All of the documentation for the 28 workshops is available as an appendix to this summary and includes photos of all of the activity boards and scanned agenda/comment sheets.

A map and list of workshop locations is available at the end of this document.

Summary of Neighborhood Workshop Findings

Vision, Values, Storytelling

My Vision and Values for the Urban Forest...

Workshop attendees were asked to share their vision and values for the urban forest using post-it notes, or by drawing a picture. Some of the themes among the comments we heard from participants and comments which illustrate these themes include:

The future forest is an equitable urban and community forest – *“Every community can enjoy the shade and beauty of healthy trees” “Trees change the environment, and I want my community to have the clean air, clarity, life lessons from trees that other neighborhoods have”*

The forest is full of tree-lined streets and sidewalks, and trees fill our parks and schoolyards – *“Tree-lined sidewalks in all our neighborhoods” “More trees planted at the parks and schools”*

The forest is green, verdant, biodiverse and a habitat for wildlife – *“Native trees that provide habitat, food and nesting for animals and birds”*

The forest provides access to food and nourishment – *“Food Forests to support the work in communities as well as food deserts”*

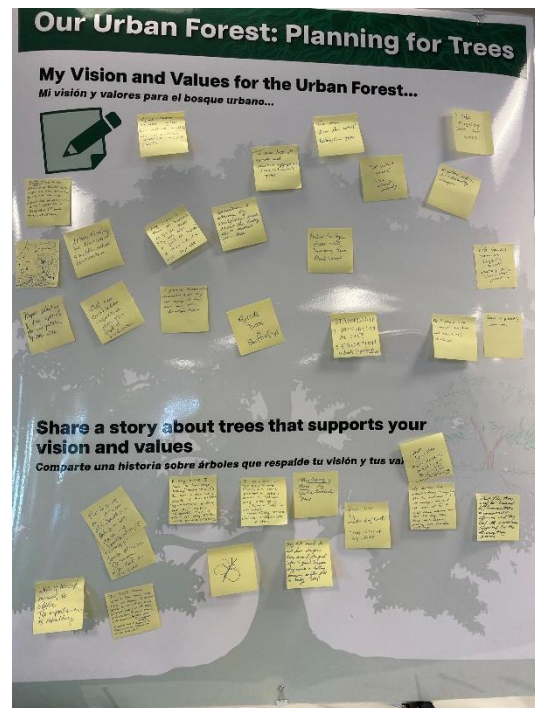
The forest supports and inspires healthy communities – *“Children growing in green spaces where connections to nature support healthy, beautiful and strong communities”*

The forest is sustainable, growing and well-maintained - *“We need trees of mixed ages to allow for a sustainable forest in the future” “New development incorporates existing and new trees into design”*

The forest is a valuable resource and provides opportunities for stewardship, education and income for community members – *“It is important to give the next generation a sense of purpose, stewardship and responsibility to care for the environment, and hope for the future”*

The forest connects us to each other and to our shared histories – *“My Father planted my tree. It'll be his living memory”*

The forest is full of protected mature, heritage trees – *“Old standing trees are key to the urban forest. Make preserving living trees a priority”*



Share a story about trees that supports your vision and values

Workshop participants were also encouraged to share a story about trees that supports their vision and values. Stories could be shared through a video recording posted to social media using the hashtag #UrbanForestLA, using a post-it, drawing a picture, or writing their story in their agenda/comment sheet. These stories mentioned the following themes, exemplified by the comments shared under each:

Shade - *“Walking home from school, my siblings and I would speedwalk to get to the next tree and rest under the shade, especially during the summer.”*

History and connection - *“Growing up watching your parents plant trees and carrying on that habit. Going back to view those trees.”*

Food and fruit - *“I grew up eating pecans, oranges, apple and a lot of different fruits from trees as a child. I want my children and grandchildren to have that same experience.”*

Biodiversity and habitat for wildlife - *“Every time I see a heritage oak (Coast or live) I am awed how it is the perfect ‘apartment building’ for our native wildlife.”*

Inspiration to care and advocate for trees and the forest - *“I saw an albino redwood tree and ever since I've been excited to work with trees”*

Play and activity - *“In my childhood, our toy was a tree :)”*

Community and cultural traditions - *“My avocado tree brought the community together”*

Tree loss - *“[My community] used to be much cooler before the old trees were removed”*

Native Species - *“When we have removed the non-native trees, the oaks come back on their own.”*

Caring for trees as a renter - *“I have invasive trees in my backyard, but I can't remove and replace them because I'm a renter.”*



Benefits of Trees

Which of these benefits from trees matter most to you and why?

Workshop participants were asked to indicate which benefits from trees mattered most to them and why, from a group of suggested benefits, shown in the picture of the poster at right. These are the major themes heard at workshops from participants related to each benefit:

Shade and cooling

- Trees provide shade when walking and during outdoor activities
- Trees cool neighborhoods and save lives during summer months and on hot days
- Tree shade provides comfortable space for relaxation
- Trees help reduce energy costs and use of air conditioning

Habitat for wildlife

- Trees provide food and shelter for wildlife—insects, birds, animals
- Opportunities to enjoy and watch birds, animals, bees, butterflies
- We need to protect and restore biodiversity

Food and fruit

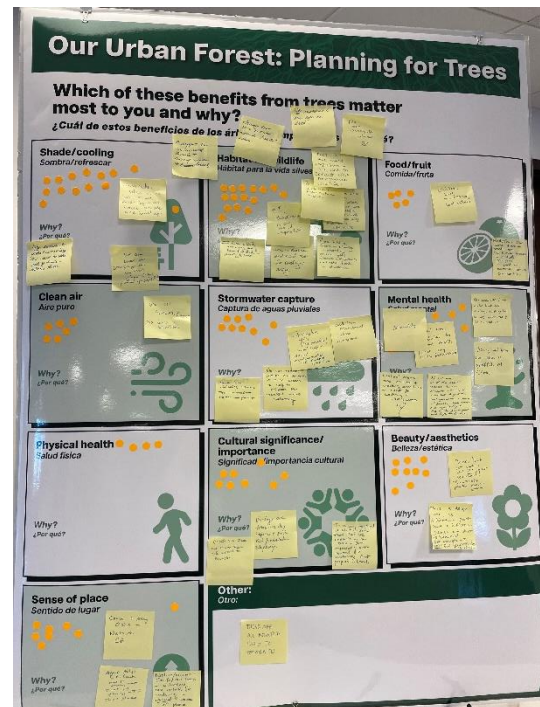
- Trees with fruit can provide nourishment, food security and economic opportunity
- Sharing fruit with neighbors builds community
- Memories of fruit trees at home enjoyed with family

Clean air

- Trees can help improve air quality and counter some of the effects of exhaust and pollution
- Communities with high rates of respiratory illness and asthma might benefit from more trees
- Communities near highways, heavy industrial areas need more trees

Stormwater capture

- Trees can help capture runoff during rainstorms, crucial in a region experiencing drought
- Water is a dwindling resource we need to respect and protect
- We need to increase the amount of permeable surface in our communities
- Need for more water catchment sites, cisterns and better management of local aquifers



Santa Monica Mountains Fund Workshop,
Agoura Hills

Mental health

- Trees and greenspace provide opportunities for tranquility and relaxation, and can help to calm our nervous systems and improve our moods
- Trees help us reconnect to nature and to the world around us
- Trees inspire a sense of purpose and responsibility, and hope for the future

Physical health

- Trees and greenspaces are inviting places to exercise and spend time outdoors
- Shade makes it easier for older residents and people with chronic conditions to get out and walk to improve their health
- Trees inspire children as places to play and climb

Cultural significance/importance

- Trees hold significance in many communities and cultures, and are an important component in many families' food traditions
- Trees are relatives and revered in native cultures
- Heritage trees like oaks are used by indigenous people as food, medicine, art, shelter, in ceremony

Beauty/aesthetics

- Trees provide happiness and peace, inspiration,
- instill pride in community and offer a sense of friendly neighborhoods

Sense of place

- Trees provide recognition and pride for neighborhoods and residents
- Trees offer navigation benefits
- Connection to family memories, history and community

Other benefits mentioned by participants

- Trees provide privacy and protection
- Trees enhance the economic value of neighborhoods and commercial corridors



TreePeople Workshop, Castaic

Concerns and Priorities

What is your greatest concern related to trees?

At the workshops, the project team asked participants to think about the concerns they have related to trees and share why these were an issue. Each of the concerns listed below includes a brief summary of the themes we heard from residents at the workshops.

Mess (from leaves, flowers, fruits)

- Some species of trees drop leaves, flowers, fruit, sap, seed pods and other matter that can create a mess on sidewalks or cause damage to cars or other property
- Cleaning up fallen leaves in gutters and on/near homes can be costly
- Tree flowers or leaves can make sidewalks and streets slippery to walk or bike on
- Leaves and other materials dropped from trees can provide benefits to the soil as mulch

Maintenance (cost and need)

- Trees need regular, proper maintenance and care as they grow but that can be expensive
- Regular and skilled maintenance from county professionals is needed to prevent trees from becoming hazards (such as falling limbs, sidewalks broken by roots)
- Consistent care may lead to more support for trees in the community
- Funding is needed to assist homeowners with the cost of care and maintenance of their trees

Hazards from falling leaves or limbs

- Tree limbs fall during storms and wind events
- Damage to buildings and property, costs of repair
- Fears people hold regarding the hazards of big trees can be mitigated by proper pruning and care

Obstructed power lines

- A focus on proper placement and pruning to address any fire risk and obstructions to power lines

Lifted or broken sidewalks

- Broken sidewalks can make walking and moving along sidewalks unsafe for pedestrians, wheelchair users
- Lots of repairs needed on sidewalks in many communities
- There are solutions/techniques that can be used to prevent the sidewalk from lifting when planting large trees such as oaks
- We need to plant the right tree in the right place to prevent this problem



Amigos de los Rios Workshop, Arcadia

Blocked streetlights

- Concerns about safety along darkened streets
- Blocked street signs can be traffic hazards when branches aren't pruned properly

Broken pipes

- Tree roots can harm residential pipes and other below ground infrastructure
- Concerns about potential damage from tree roots keeps people from planting trees
- Planting species with less aggressive root systems

"I had a 50 ft Shammel ash in my yard that we had to cut down because its roots were in our pipes... I always imagined my daughter would play/swing on it, but we had to cut before she could. The neighbors came by to watch it cut down, concerned about losing some of the little shade and green we have."
– West Carson workshop participant

Fire risk

- Trees not the cause of fires – powerlines, people are the biggest risks
- Planting trees in the right place to protect properties and trees from fire
- Brush clearance removes vegetation and habitat and provides opportunities for invasive species
- Insuring homes against the risk of fire is growing more expensive
- Air quality from smoke also an issue

Pests

- Citrus tree decline in the region due to psyllids and citrus greening
- Several species of invasive beetle (borers) affecting trees in the region
- Urgent need to address and deal with local infestations
- Concerns about how planting new trees during drought can stress trees and make them susceptible to pests

Water use

- Water is growing scarce and getting more expensive to use
- Need to focus on tree species including natives that are more resilient and require less water

We also heard from participants

- Not having trees is a concern and a health and safety issue
- Concern about vandalism against trees
- Younger trees in the right of way have to deal with trucks that hit low hanging branches
- A lot of current tree management practices seem to be focused on risk management

Neighborhood Needs

Where do we need to maintain/preserve existing trees and plant new ones?

Workshop participants were asked to share where there were existing trees in their community that needed to be preserved or taken care of, where new trees needed to be planted, and why this was needed. Four place types were suggested on the activity board, and participants were encouraged to suggest others.

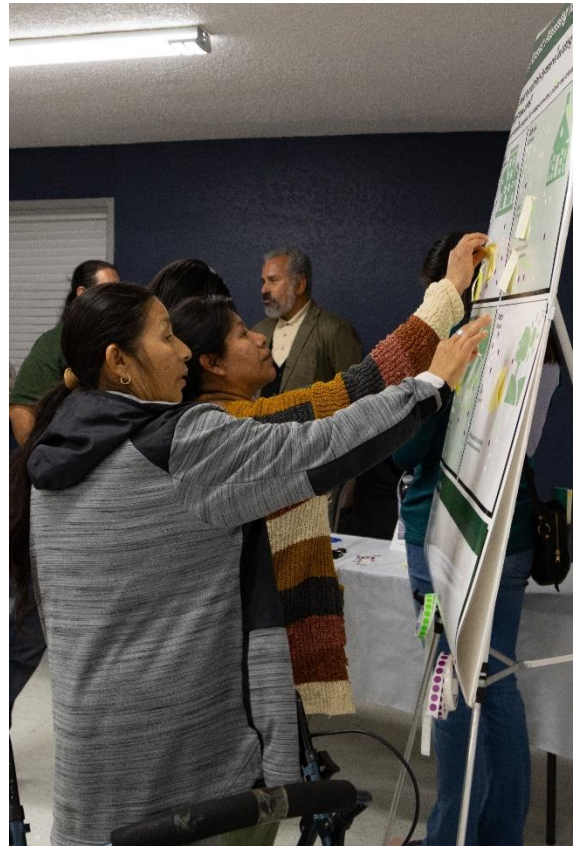
Front and Backyards

Preserve Trees: why is this needed here?

- Trees can provide shade, food, and bring up the value of a property
- Pruning needed on yard trees
- Seeing the effects of over- and underwatering on trees

Plant Trees: why is this needed here?

- Neighborhoods need more shade
- Planting trees in locations around homes to serve as wind barriers and fire protection
- Opportunities to educate residents and homeowners about resilient and native landscaping



North East Trees Nueva Maravilla Workshop

Schools

Preserve Trees: why is this needed here?

- Support mental health of students
- Kids need nature and green spaces
- Opportunities for stewardship and interactive programs for young people that foster curiosity, encourage citizen science and inclusion

Plant Trees: why is this needed here?

- Offset the amount of asphalt/cement at schools
- Provide more shade
- Many schools have few or no trees
- Children experience heat related illnesses like heat stroke on hot days

Sidewalks, medians and right-of-way

Preserve Trees: why is this needed here?

- More regular care is needed for trees in medians and along the ROW
- Preserve shade for people walking, shade encourages activity
- Protect homes for wildlife

Plant Trees: why is this needed here?

- More trees along walking paths and shading bus stops
- Beautify neighborhoods and provide more greenspace in communities with lots of concrete
- Opportunities for wildlife bridges and growing amount of publicly managed tree canopy

Parks

Preserve Trees: why is this needed here?

- Prioritize the care of trees in parks as public spaces used by the community
- More outdoor recreational opportunities for families
- More space for denser canopies and larger trees
- Public areas that provide safe homes and habitat for wildlife

Plant Trees: why is this needed here?

- More trees needed along walking paths
- Plant around baseball and soccer fields, in playgrounds, near picnic areas
- Address areas that flood when it rains

We also heard from participants

- Trees are needed in parking lots, plazas, and along freeways to reduce heat and pollution
- Encourage businesses and commercial districts to preserve and care for trees
- Make connections with school campus stewardship initiatives
- There is need for more information about what residents can do to care for trees in public spaces
- Ensure tree trimming and care is happening at the appropriate time of year



Altadena Workshop

Your Role in the Urban Forest

We all have a role in the urban forest. What is your current role?

Workshop participants were asked to provide their thoughts on the current roles they hold in the urban forest. The following section provides a summary of the most common themes that were shared at the workshops related to each role topic.

Enjoy Trees

- Experiencing joy and inspiration, and spaces to play and relax
- Enjoying the fruits that trees provide
- Exercising and doing outside activities under the shade of trees
- Spending time in parks and tree dense neighborhoods to cool off during hot weather

Learn about Trees

- Going to workshops about trees
- Learning about different tree species
- Taking nature walks and going on hikes

Care for Trees

- Volunteering with community organizations
- Caring for neighborhood trees
- Protecting trees from removal

Speak for Trees

- Educating ourselves and others about the importance of trees
- Preventing trees from being damaged or cut down by others
- Raising awareness through public speaking

Plant Trees

- Working with organizations that plant trees
- Planting trees in my yard
- Improving my community and local environment



West Athens Westmont Workshop

Work with Trees

- Working with the community as a member of the Conservation Corps
- Working with trees as an arborist, landscape architect
- Working as a field researcher to determine community needs and benefits from trees

What would you like your role to be in the future?

Workshop participants were also asked to share what roles in the urban forest they would like to hold in the future, and what resources they would need to play those roles. This section includes a summary of themes related to these future roles and the resources participants need:

Enjoy Trees

- More benches and furniture under trees
- More shade/fruit tree adoption opportunities

Learn about Trees

- More accessible information about tree species and care, and local ecology and environments
- More resources for education and hands on experiences

Care for Trees

- More opportunities to learn how to care for trees
- Knowing who to contact when a tree needs help
- Clarity on protocols and permission for public to care for trees

Speak for Trees

- More educational opportunities so we can be better advocates
- Learn to talk about trees with respect to climate change
- Opportunities for training in coalition building & organizing

Plant Trees

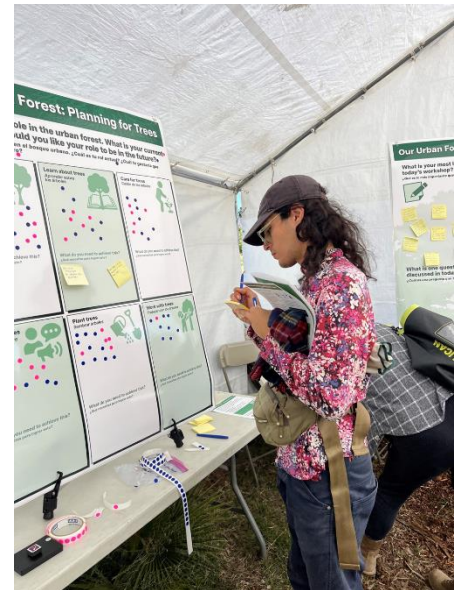
- Learn planting process, how to identify best species and location
- Funding/Grants related to community Greening
- Installation of new Food forests and fruit tree groves

Work with Trees

- Learn about proper species selection and space needs
- Classes and workshops on maintenance and care
- More information about how to get jobs in urban forestry

We also heard from participants

- Inclusion is necessary in decision-making about trees planted on streets and in front of their home
- There is a need for more funding for public employees assigned to tree care
- Community members want to help take care of trees when they are young, but need public/professional help when trees mature and care becomes more complex



CultivaLA Workshop,
Unincorporated El Monte

Reflections

What is your most important takeaway from today's workshop?

In a last activity, attendees shared their most important takeaways from the workshop. Below is a summary of key ideas:

- Diversity of communities and needs across the County
- Prioritizing communities in need of equitable access to benefits of trees
- Dealing with existing service needs – maintenance, empty tree wells, street sweeping
- Policy changes needed to encourage (and do less to discourage) more residential/private tree planting and care
- Enough funding to ensure implementation happens
- Need to address concerns related to gentrification and expanding greenspace
- Continued outreach needed in communities to make sure residents have a voice in the process and during implementation
- Need for more and more publicity to ensure people hear about what is happening
- More multi-lingual education needed about benefits of trees and roles residents can take in the urban forest
- Expand outreach to young people and at schools
- Consider partnerships with educational institutions to expand workforce training and pipelines
- Trees give us so many benefits in return for our care for them
- Excitement and feeling inspired to act

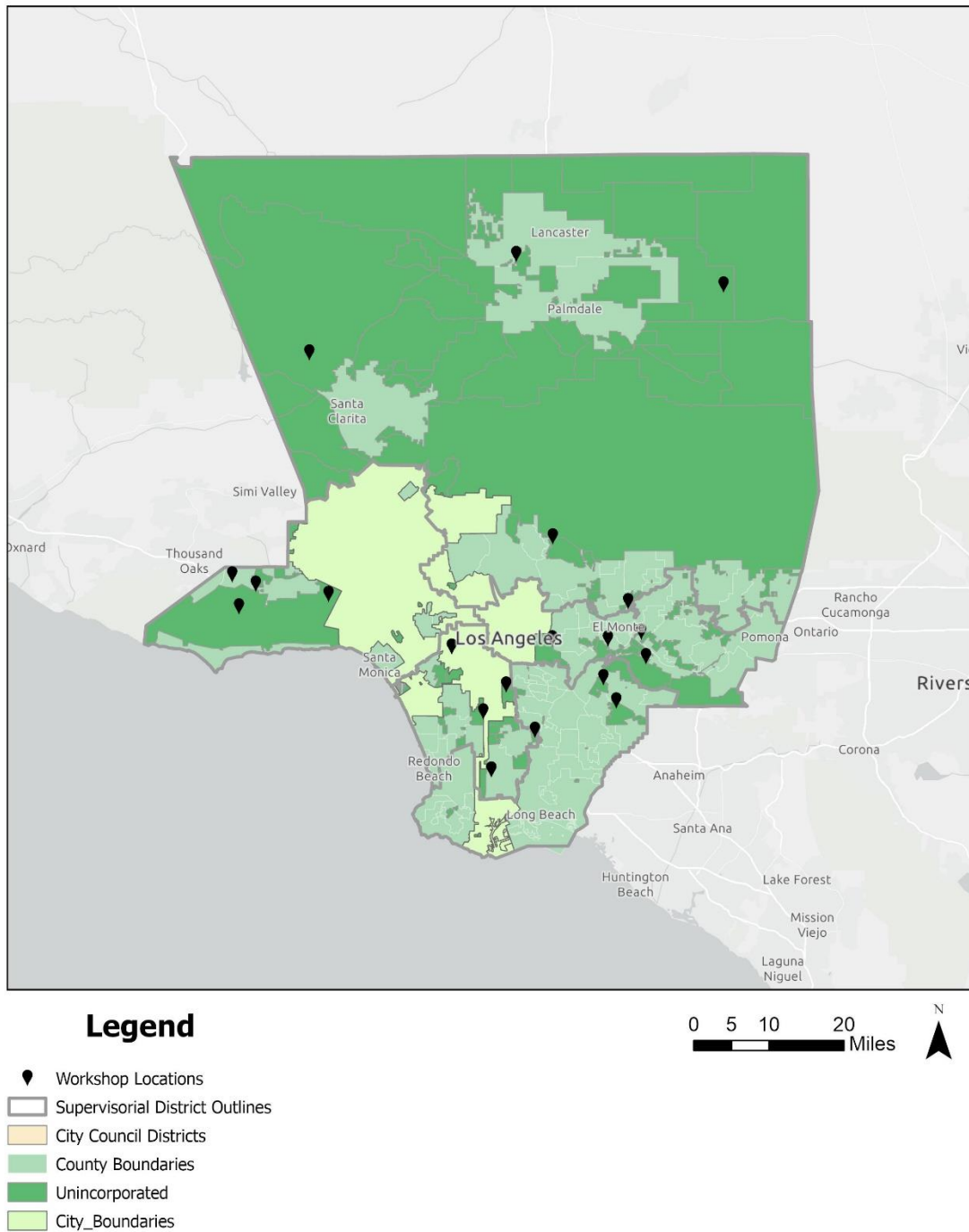
What is one question you still have about the topics discussed in today's workshop?

Community members shared questions they still have about the workshop topics and the process going forward. These are summarized here:

- Who do I call for help related to trees or tree issues?
- What services does the County provide related to trees?
- What programs are available for tree maintenance?
- How do we educate the community to prevent tree removal and deal with pests?
- What kinds of trees should we be planting?
- How do we learn more about the history of trees in the region?
- How can community members express their opinions about future tree selection?
- How can renters advocate for trees?
- How does the County get the resources and staff to care for public trees and grow the private urban forest?
- How will you implement this plan, and how can we provide feedback on implementation?
- How will you involve communities/residents going forward?
- How will you coordinate with other planning efforts and other cities/agencies/departments?
- How will you evaluate and share the data you are collecting from these workshops?

Appendix: LA County UFMP Neighborhood Workshop locations

Map: LA County UFMP Workshops



The map above displays the locations of the 21 in-person UFMP neighborhood workshops held in unincorporated communities. The project team partnered with 12 community organizations to help secure venues and promote these workshops—18 in person and one digital workshop were supported by community partners; the project team organized and hosted four additional in-person and six digital workshops where no partner was identified to co-host or facilitate.

The table below lists the date and locations of all LA County UFMP workshops:

Date	Community	District
Thursday, January 11, 2024	Lake Los Angeles	SD5
Saturday, January 13, 2024	Santa Monica Mountains	SD3
Tuesday, January 16, 2024	Rancho Dominguez, East Rancho Dominguez	SD4
Wednesday, January 17, 2024	West Whittier, Los Nietos	SD4
Thursday, January 18, 2024	Countywide Digital Workshop	Countywide
Saturday, January 20, 2024	Altadena	SD5
Monday, January 22, 2024	Countywide Digital Workshop	Countywide
Tuesday, January 23, 2024	South Whittier, East Whittier, East La Mirada	SD4
Tuesday, January 23, 2024	Countywide Digital Workshop	Countywide
Wednesday, January 24, 2024	Castaic	SD5
Wednesday, January 24, 2024	Countywide Digital Workshop	Countywide
Thursday, January 25, 2024	Unincorporated East LA, morning	SD1
Thursday, January 25, 2024	Unincorporated East LA, evening	SD1
Thursday, January 25, 2024	Quartz Hill	SD5
Saturday, January 27, 2024	Unincorporated El Monte	SD1
Wednesday, January 31, 2024	Castaic	SD5
Thursday, February 1, 2024	Bassett, Avocado Heights, West Puente Valley	SD1
Saturday, February 3, 2024	Arcadia / Monrovia	SD1
Saturday, February 3, 2024	West Athens, Westmont	SD2
Friday, February 16, 2024	Hacienda Heights/Rowland Heights	SD1
Saturday, February 17, 2024	Florence-Firestone	SD2
Saturday, February 17, 2024	Topanga	SD3
Tuesday, February 20, 2024	West Carson	SD4
Thursday, February 22, 2024	Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation Workshop	SD3
Tuesday, February 27, 2024	Santa Monica Mountains Digital Workshop	SD3
Thursday, February 29, 2024	Ladera Heights/View Park	SD2
Thursday, February 29, 2024	Countywide Digital Workshop	Countywide
Friday, March 1, 2024	Arcadia	SD1