

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

DATE: June 17, 2014

TO: Public Works and Gang Reduction Committee
of the Los Angeles City Council
Attn: Office of the City Clerk
Room 395 City Hall

FROM: Nazario Saucedo, Director
Bureau of Street Services
Department of Public Works

SUBJECT: 50/50 Sidewalk Repair Plan for Commercial Properties – Council File 14-0163

This report is presented in response to the City Council Motion (CF 14-0163) introduced on February 4, 2014 by Councilmember Bob Blumenfield, which instructed the Bureau of Street Services with the assistance of other Departments, to report back on a pilot 50/50 time incentive sidewalk repair program focusing on major commercial and pedestrian corridors, transit routes, and transit hubs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. REQUEST the City Council to suggest a funding amount for the proposed pilot project.
2. INSTRUCT the Bureau of Street Services to report back on a staffing needs plan to implement the suggested project.
3. INSTRUCT the CAO and CLA to report back on a time incentive system as proposed in the Motion.

BACKGROUND

The City of Los Angeles funded a citywide sidewalk repair program from fiscal year 2000-01 through 2008-09, which supported reconstruction of between 26 – 98 miles of sidewalk annually. Funding was allocated equally among the 15 Council Districts and locations were selected with input from the respective Council Offices. In addition, a 50/50 Sidewalk Repair Program was funded in fiscal years 2005-06 through 2008-09, which enabled sidewalk reconstruction adjacent to approximately 500 residential properties (960 in 2008-09 with one-time additional funding and staffing). There has been no funding in the City's budget for sidewalk repair since fiscal year 2008-09, after which no staffing has been authorized. Since 2008-09, Bureau of Street Services (BSS) sidewalk reconstruction has been limited to using Council District discretionary funds on overtime and work related to transportation and pedestrian grant funded projects.

Since 2005, BSS has provided numerous report backs to Council Motions proposing a variety of sidewalk repair policy initiatives (CF 05-1853, CF 05-1853-S1, et. al.). These have included Point-of-Sale, Point-of-Permit, Point-of-Service, Citywide enforcement, enforcement focused along major and secondary highways, a complaint-driven program, a claims-driven program, assessment districts, etc. Other departments, stakeholders, and interested parties have been engaged in the process. Many of these initiatives would require a repeal of the LA Municipal Code 62.104 “tree root exception” referenced in the Motion. There is also a report pending at the City Council with a proposal for implementing a one time allocation of \$10 million for sidewalk repair (CF 13-0600-S109). At this time, without dedicated funding and an adopted comprehensive policy/program, BSS’ capabilities are limited to service request response with interim asphalt repairs, when feasible.

DISCUSSION

The City does not have an inventory of sidewalk condition. In the absence of this information, it would be very challenging to propose even a pilot project Citywide unless specific locations are identified. As stated previously, BSS no longer has staff authorized for sidewalk repair. BSS has previously proposed the assistance of an experienced engineering consulting firm to conduct a comprehensive sidewalk condition assessment and to develop an asset management system that would be a necessary tool to manage the sidewalk network moving forward.

Given the lack of information and tools, the most feasible way to implement a new 50/50 program as proposed would be on a first come, first served basis. The previous 50/50 program was Citywide and did not include any minimum allocation by Council District. While the previous program was restricted to residential property owners only, the Council could choose to restrict a new program to commercial property owners only and/or on designated transportation corridors that the Los Angeles Department of Transportation could help identify. As a point of reference, the previous 50/50 base program provided 27 staff positions and approximately \$2.4 million. Any significant program would require at least five (5) dedicated BSS positions for program management, conducting inspections, preparing estimates, conducting public outreach, and providing technical, administrative, and/or clerical support. Construction could be accomplished with newly authorized BSS staff or by private contractor.

BSS recommends waiting until the City Council decides on a comprehensive sidewalk repair policy. The initiative proposed by the subject Motion could be an important component of a comprehensive program once adopted. BSS further recommends that the time incentive system proposed in the Motion be studied and recommended by the CAO and CLA who have more expertise on how this could be incorporated into the City’s budget and what impacts it may have.

If you have any questions or if additional information is needed, please contact Bureau of Street Services Director, Nazario Saucedo, or Assistant Director, Ron Olive, at (213) 847-3333.