



Beautification and Growth for the Harbor Gateway North District 1 Community

1 message

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Honorable Chair and Members of the Budget and Finance Committee:

This letter respectfully urges the Budget and Finance Committee to support a targeted package of budget actions for Gardena Boulevard and adjacent streets in the Harbor Gateway North District 1 community. The requested investment is intended to address overdue infrastructure repairs, ADA accessibility deficiencies, corridor beautification, public safety concerns, and strategic economic growth in a part of Los Angeles that has long been underinvested.

The requested actions align with the Harbor Gateway planning framework, which calls for stronger commercial corridors, pedestrian-oriented improvements, improved transit connections, open-space amenities, and higher-quality public environments. Gardena Boulevard is an appropriate priority location because it combines visible infrastructure deficiencies with meaningful potential for commercial revitalization and broader neighborhood benefits.

Existing Conditions and Repair Needs

The corridor has persistent deficiencies, including damaged sidewalks, inadequate lighting, illegal dumping, aging public infrastructure, and limited visible investment in streetscape improvements. These issues undermine safety, accessibility, walkability, and the corridor's commercial appearance.



A particularly urgent concern is the condition of the sidewalk near 515 West Gardena Boulevard, where the pavement is described as severely lifted, cracked, and unsafe. These deficiencies create barriers for wheelchair users, people with mobility impairments, and residents who are blind or have low vision. They warrant priority treatment within any budget package for the corridor.



The physical condition of the public realm directly affects how the area functions. Unsafe sidewalks, inadequate lighting, and neglected frontage discourage pedestrian activity, erode neighborhood confidence, and signal disinvestment to businesses, property owners, and prospective investors. The Gardena Boulevard underpass currently features a dark, uninviting concrete setting that does not reflect the identity, pride, or goals of the nearby Harbor Gateway North community. Some fixtures are missing or emit only a faint light, and many of the remaining light covers are dirty or foggy, reducing visibility along the sidewalk and road. Vegetation grows from gaps in the ceiling, where birds nest and leave droppings on the sidewalk below. Portions of the structure also show evidence of water intrusion and fire damage, signaling neglect in a highly visible area used daily by pedestrians, motorists, students, families, and community centers.

Because this site lies along a major transportation route, its current condition conveys neglect rather than a sense of welcome, which conflicts with its role as one of the neighborhood's main entry points. The lack of color, beautification, and community identity leaves the underpass visually harsh and inconsistent with the pride residents take in Harbor Gateway North.



Recommended Enhancements

A professional and effective investment strategy for Gardena Boulevard should begin with core infrastructure repair. This includes street resurfacing, sidewalk reconstruction, curb and curb-ramp upgrades, tree-root mitigation, drainage corrections where needed, and prompt remediation of hazardous pedestrian routes.

The next category is corridor beautification and public realm improvement. This includes pedestrian lighting, street trees, landscaping, sanitation improvements, stronger illegal dumping prevention, façade enhancement support, and coordinated visual improvements that make the corridor safer, cleaner, and more attractive.

The third category is strategic place-based investment. City planning materials support pedestrian-oriented development, improved public space, and better-designed commercial corridors in Harbor Gateway, providing a policy basis for decorative streetscape elements, small landscaped areas where feasible, and identity-building improvements that strengthen the corridor's civic and economic role.



The City should also coordinate local improvements with the Caltrans and Metro I-10 and I-110 Beautification Project, which is advancing regional landscaping and public-realm upgrades along freeway-adjacent areas. Coordinated implementation would help connect neighborhood improvements along Gardena Boulevard to broader state and regional investments in the area.

Business and Employment Impacts

Public investment in Gardena Boulevard has direct business value. Safer sidewalks, improved lighting, cleaner frontage, and a better-maintained streetscape make commercial properties more usable, enhance customer comfort, and help existing merchants operate in a corridor that appears stable and well cared for.

The corridor also benefits from a strategically important location with freeway access, goods movement, and ties to the broader harbor-serving economy. In that context, infrastructure and beautification investments do more than improve appearance; they strengthen the conditions that support business retention, future leasing activity, local service growth, and expanded private reinvestment.

Planning sources further indicate that Harbor Gateway is intended to absorb targeted growth by improving corridor conditions, enhancing design, and strengthening connections between land use and transportation. As a result, public investment on Gardena Boulevard can support employment in both the short and long term, including construction-related work, landscaping and maintenance, improved business performance for corridor-serving establishments, and stronger competitiveness for future employers seeking well-located commercial space.

The Economic Case for the Gardena Blvd 110-Freeway Underpass Mural (Sample Artwork)

A mural on Gardena Boulevard at the I-110 underpass would be a significant economic asset, transforming a neglected, high-traffic thoroughfare into a vibrant, memorable landmark that draws visitors and boosts local commerce. Similar Clean California projects, such as those along the I-110, demonstrate that public art reduces vandalism, improves public safety by increasing activity, and fosters community pride, encouraging pedestrians and commuters to stop, take photos, and spend money at neighboring businesses. By highlighting Harbor Gateway North's unique cultural identity and history, the artwork serves as a "visual anchor," making the area a destination rather than a pass-through, thereby increasing property values and enhancing the Gardena Boulevard corridor's appeal to prospective investors and new businesses.



Requested Budget Actions

The Budget and Finance Committee should direct the preparation of a corridor-specific capital and service package for Gardena Boulevard and adjacent streets. The package should include clearly defined budget line items for sidewalk repair, ADA compliance, curb and curb-ramp upgrades, resurfacing, pedestrian lighting, landscaping, street trees, sanitation services, and illegal-dumping prevention.

The Committee should request a location-based assessment of the corridor that identifies specific repair sites, including the hazardous sidewalk conditions near [515 West Gardena Boulevard](#), and provides scope,

cost estimates, and departmental responsibility for implementation. This would move the request from general advocacy to actionable budget planning.

The Committee should also direct interdepartmental coordination among City Planning, StreetsLA, LADOT, Sanitation, and Public Works functions, and any other responsible entities, so that Gardena Boulevard is addressed as a unified initiative rather than through fragmented maintenance responses.

Finally, the Committee should require measurable deliverables and a public implementation schedule. Deliverables should include counts and timelines for sidewalk repairs, ADA barrier removal, lighting installation or upgrades, tree planting, landscaping completion, dumping hotspot interventions, and corridor beautification milestones to ensure the appropriation yields visible, accountable results.

Closing

The Harbor Gateway Community Plan was adopted on December 6, 1995, and has been undergoing a long-term update, building on previous iterations. Now is the time to shift to implementation! These requests are not for luxury improvements; they are for basic safety, equity, accessibility, and visible investment in a neighborhood that has waited too long for attention. A professional budget response to Gardena Boulevard should treat this request as a combined initiative encompassing infrastructure repair, accessibility, beautification, and economic development. Targeted investment would improve daily conditions for residents and businesses and advance the adopted planning goals for a stronger, safer, and more economically functional corridor in Harbor Gateway North District 1.

Thank you for your time and for considering these recommendations.

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