How does the City of Los Angeles create its annual budget?

related to public works and transportation



Psst! Look Back to Look Forward: Why LA City's Budget Process Doesn't Work

For the size and complexity of the City of Los Angeles, the City's budget process is:

Too short-sighted one year at a time

Too fragmented doesn't identify needs, doesn't link needs to investment targets

Too one-directional doesn't look back at past performance

Too hidden from public view mostly decided behind closed doors

Roadmap to understanding the City of LA's budget process

The players The money The process The questions



The Players

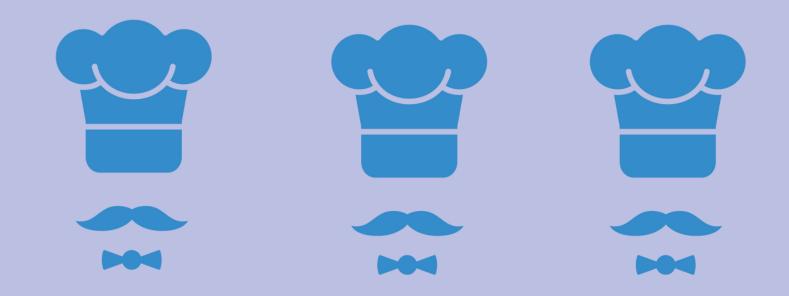
Who manages our public right-of-way? Meet the players, all 19 of them!

- 1. Mayor's office
- 2. City Council
- 3. Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
- 4. Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA)
- 5. Board of Public Works
- 6. Bureau of Engineering (DPW)
- 7. Bureau of Contract Administration (DPW)
- 8. Bureau of Sanitation (DPW)
- 9. Bureau of Street Lighting (DPW)
- 10. Bureau of Street Services (DPW)
- 11. Dept. of Transportation
- 12. Dept. of Water and Power
- 13. Dept. of Building and Safety (LADBS)
- 14. Dept. of General Services
- 15. City Planning
- **16. LAPD**
- 17. LAFD
- 18. Metro
- 19. Private development (including community and non-profit orgs)

Not in City agencies, but still significant players.

These players (minus 18 & 19):

- Are scattered throughout the City's org chart
- Have different managerial structures
- Only communicate with each other when it's necessary



L.A.'s budget process is like having lots of cooks in the kitchen to make one meal ...

but everyone is using different recipes they independently create.



Those players spend our money providing these services:

(and more)

- Police
- Fire and paramedics
- Residential refuse collection and disposal
- Wastewater collection and treatment
- Street maintenance and other public works functions
- Enforcement of ordinances and statutes related to building safety
- Public libraries
- Recreation and parks
- Community development
- Housing
- Aging services
- Planning
- Airports and the harbor
- Power and water services
- The convention center



The City of Los Angeles does NOT manage:



LAUSD



Metro



Public Health

Those letter grades for restaurants, and many other county-provided services in action because of the pandemic.



The Money

City of Los Angeles Annual Budget

The Fiscal Year from July 2022-June 2023 (FY23)



\$7.5 billion in the General Fund

General fund money is unrestricted – it can be spent on any of the City's priorities.

\$4.3 billion in Special Funds

Special Funds are restricted – designated to fund specific projects, programs, or priorities.

There are 700+ special funds, and these types of funds are where a majority of the funding for L.A.'s streets and sidewalks comes from.

How much money is in the annual city budget books for streets and sidewalks?

9 Special Funds

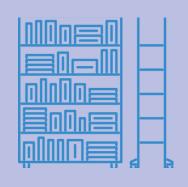
for public works and transportation

FY22 Appropriations

- 1. Proposition A Local Return (\$296 million)
- 2. Proposition C Local Return (\$93 million)
- 3. Measure R Local Return (\$60 million)
- 4. Measure M local return (\$70 million)
- 5. Special Gas Tax Fund (\$112 million)
- 6.Street Lighting Maintenance Assessment Fund (\$73 million)
- 7. Street Damage Restoration Fee (\$55 million)
- 8. Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Fund (\$5 million)
- 9. Sidewalk Repair Fund (\$23 million)







These departments have control of their own revenues and special funds:

- Airports
- Harbor
- City Employees Retirement System
- Pensions (Fire and Police)
- Recreation and Parks
- Water and Power
- Libraries

So they're not included in the City of LA's annual budget process.



What's NOT included in the City's annual budget books: information about other funding (like state and federal funding, foundation grants).

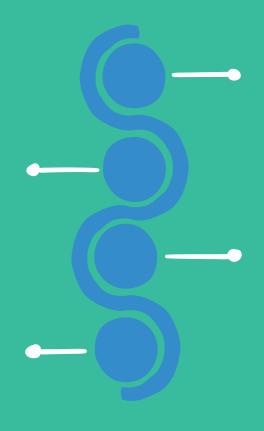
We don't know how much there is, and what's done with it.



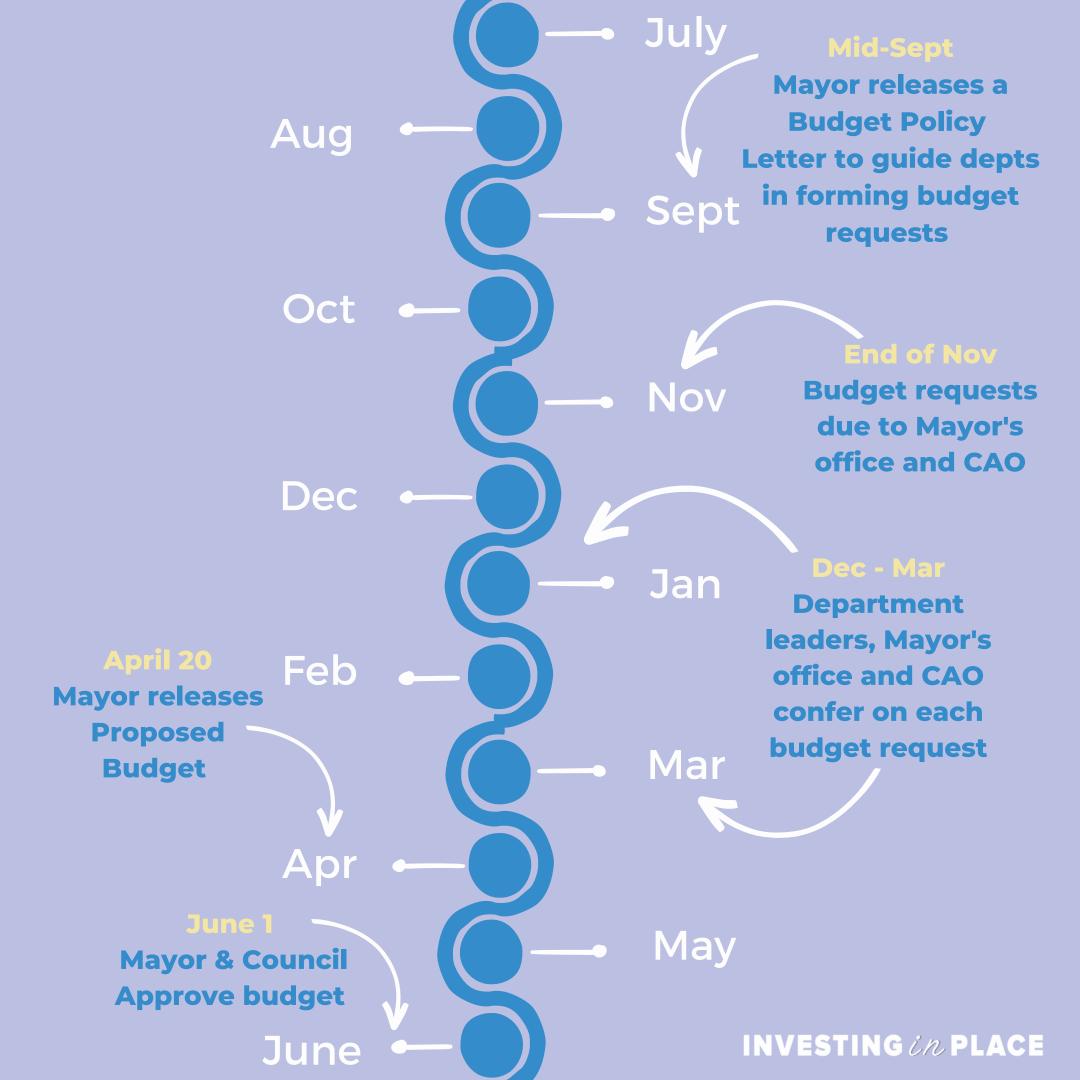
Because it's hard to find those funding sources and their amounts, it's difficult to determine, track and measure the money available every year for managing and investing in LA's public right-of-way.



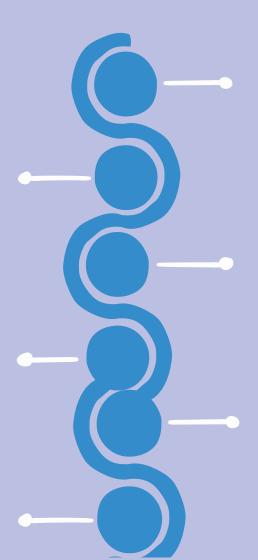
How much funding do we actually have for our public right-of-way?



The Process



While departments and bureaus are preparing their budgets from September to November ...



Who decides department priorities and how?

Do priorities build on existing plans?

How is the public consulted at this stage?

Budget choices and trade-offs are being made from September through April with very little public involvement until April 20.

Plus, all of this happens without:

- An articulated and adopted vision by the Mayor, City Council and other policymakers of what we are working toward for the city's streets and sidewalks.
- A shared understanding of total funding available for the City's public right-of-way.
- A current inventory and state of the City's existing infrastructure.



The Questions

These should be asked every year:

- What have we learned from previous budget expenditures?
- What does success for the City's public right-of-way look like in 10 years?

And, our #1 question:

What does an implementation plan look like, to achieve the projects and programs of the Mobility Plan, Vision Zero, sidewalk repair, urban tree canopy, safe routes to school, bus shelters, public bathrooms, and more - all rolled into one 10year comprehensive and accessible financial plan?

That's a question we're not only asking, but attemping to answer.

Where do we go from here?

Coming from Investing in Place in early 2023!

What are the City and other partners doing to address these issues?

Stay tuned!



About Investing in Place

We equip people to advocate for investments that strengthen their communities. We are focused on making LA's public right-of-way infrastructure useful for every Angeleno.

You can make your neighborhood:

Welcoming full of life and connection

Accessible so everyone can get around

Inspired by those who live there