

The Future of LA's Streets and Sidewalks

Building and Institutionalizing a Capital Infrastructure Plan (CIP)
for the City of Los Angeles.

Overview

Every year, Los Angeles has at least \$1 billion public dollars dedicated to making the streets and public spaces work for the people of LA. But that money is fed into a system that's broken and doesn't deliver the services we deserve. There is a simple fix that is used by almost every major city across the U.S., from New York to San Diego: creating a multi-year Capital Infrastructure Plan, a capital planning process for sidewalks and streets.

Right now in Los Angeles, there's no list of projects to be prioritized and no guiding plan for people both inside and outside the City bureaucracy to understand the vision for our streets and sidewalks. LA City's public works and transportation programs are so broken that only those who understand the broken system can reap the benefits of it. This is the opposite of equity.

On top of that, the City of Los Angeles isn't ready ...

- To prioritize future infrastructure investments based on equity
- To make the best use of the influx of federal infrastructure investments
- To make good on its 2028 Olympic commitments



... because the City does not have a process for long-term planning and budgeting related to the public right-of-way that considers the needs of all who use these critical public assets: our streets and sidewalks.



What is the Ideal Solution?

The City of Los Angeles needs a comprehensive, multi-year Capital Infrastructure Plan (CIP) for our public right-of-way (PROW). This plan must include all funds and projects related to the streets, sidewalks, trees, and public spaces in a given budget year, and must include a defined projection for funding needs in out-years (five to 10 years is typical). It should also include unfunded needs in order to be ready for future funding opportunities and grants.

This vision includes more than just the pavement and road bed; this is a new vision for the city of LA that prioritizes clean and regularly maintained sidewalks and streets. This vision is centered around a transparent and accessible budgeted plan:

- Community members, employees, and business owners will know what to expect in their neighborhoods and have reliable City services.
- City Council members can agree on a citywide vision and process for supporting it with adequate funding, working to eliminate the “divide by 15” accounting that defines the current spending approach.
- City staff will have a clear, multi-year work plan.
- With knowledge of projects in the pipeline in the next few years, City staff can develop robust workforce development programs to meet the short- and long-term demands of infrastructure projects.

Because of this, our goal is to deliver a community-informed, model Capital Infrastructure Plan to the City in 2024.

Why?

LA needs a CIP in order to know where the City is going, so we can honestly assess if the City is meeting our needs. Policymakers must be able to articulate their desired outcomes regarding the public right-of-way so that the City can budget accordingly, measure successes and failures, and course correct as needed. The elements in our right-of-way are crucial assets. With fair investment and proper maintenance, these assets can support goals related to climate resilience, social equity, and mobility justice.

What Have We Learned?

Investing in Place has read and researched CIPs from over 30+ cities and there is no ONE plan for Los Angeles to copy. LA differs from most cities by the sheer size, the levels of income disparity among neighborhoods, and certain policies (like Prop 13). But our research has helped identify the following criteria for a model CIP to help develop our plan:

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| 1. Articulate a clear vision | 6. Include an unfunded needs assessment |
| 2. Internally engage and coordinate | 7. Make it legible and accessible |
| 3. Externally involve and communicate | 8. Address emergency preparedness and climate change |
| 4. Use clear prioritization metrics | |
| 5. Include a state-of-good repair | |



First Steps for the City of LA

We have identified three tasks as the first steps LA needs for creating a CIP:

1. **Vision:** Develop, articulate and adopt a vision for the streets and sidewalks that incorporates all competing uses this critical public space contains. Policymakers need to agree on outcomes the City wants to achieve in the public right-of-way over the next several years.
2. **Inventory & Assessment:** Collect asset management inventories from all departments and bureaus, starting with the five Public Works Bureaus and Department of Transportation. The City needs to inventory assets to understand the scale and conditions.
3. **Planning Efforts:** Identify and coordinate all of the existing, disconnected, and often conflicting efforts to plan for the public right-of-way from various City entities.



Our Own Progress is Well Underway

Since launching our Capital Infrastructure Plan (CIP) campaign in Fall 2022, Investing in Place has achieved the following milestones:

- Convened an "Infrastructure for the People" luncheon, bringing together community leaders, funders, and the Office of Mayor Bass.
- Researched CIPs from over 30 municipalities, identifying criteria for a model CIP that takes into account Los Angeles' unique characteristics (such as its size, income disparity among neighborhoods, and specific policies like Prop 13).
- Published the only comprehensive inventory of City public right-of-way assets, providing a crucial baseline for our CIP development.

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- Presented our campaign to influential stakeholders, including the Deputy Mayor of Infrastructure and key City staff from various departments, fostering crucial partnerships.
- Organized three public online educational workshops and curated a library of accessible resources about CIPs, successfully engaging the public in the process.

These efforts have laid a solid foundation for our CIP and positioned our work to lead to meaningful change for Los Angeles' streets and sidewalks.



Next Steps for Investing in Place

We plan to create a model Capital Infrastructure Plan (CIP) for the City of Los Angeles and publish it in 2024. We want this model CIP to demonstrate what this kind of inclusive budgeting and planning can look like and how it can be done for the LA's sidewalks and streets. Through our process of creating the CIP, we want to support conversations and efforts that lead to the City adopting its own. In order to accomplish this, we are focused on **three key actions** in the near term:

1. Initiating and supporting inclusive conversations across the city about the need for a CIP, what it should look like, and how it will prioritize equity.
2. Establishing infrastructure priorities, identifying key assets and elements within LA's public right-of-way, and identifying standard capital and maintenance costs for those assets – based on the findings from #1.
3. Expanding our network for partnerships and supporters to advance our work, our collaborations, and the impact of both.

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Starting with #1 above, the following is an initial work plan:

With input on infrastructure priorities from policymakers, civic and business leaders, community-based organizations and community members, we will present a comprehensive plan for the City to consider for adoption. Our community engagement goal is to collaborate with and incorporate diverse audiences to ensure demographic and geographic representation in the final draft plan.

We are approaching this in multiple ways:

- Hosting luncheons, roundtable discussions and convenings – with people and organizations working for climate justice, arts, economic development, affordable housing, accessibility and more.
- Researching cost estimates and forecasted revenue for LA's public works and transportation programs.
- Continuing meetings with Council Offices and the Mayor's office and experts in municipal finance, transportation and public works, to advise the creation of a CIP.
- Tabling at public events, such as CicLAVias.
- Partnering with local organizations to collect input on infrastructure priorities from Angelenos, including communities that speak languages other than English.
- Presenting at conferences, such as the Fall 2023 Neighborhood Council Conference.
- Providing background on key issues and connecting media to leaders and community members to tell a more complete story about LA's investments.



The Bottom Line

The elements in our right-of-way are crucial assets. With fair investment and proper maintenance, these assets can support goals related to climate resilience, social equity, and mobility justice.

About Us

Investing in Place is an award-winning, human-centered public policy implementation and nonprofit advocacy group in Los Angeles.

Investing in Place provides an independent and thoughtful voice to LA's power and politics around public works and transportation policy, thanks to independent funding from foundations such as The James Irvine Foundation, The California Endowment, Energy Foundation, Transit Center, individual donors and more. Investing in Place is a project of Community Partners.

For More Information

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