

INVESTING *in* PLACE

Los Angeles Capital Infrastructure Plan (CIP) *April 2025 Update*

When you look at a city's sidewalks, streets, and parks (the collective backbone of every community), it will tell you a lot about how that city is governed. Right now, Los Angeles has a clear pattern of neglect, inefficiency, and missed opportunities. However, a five-year comprehensive Capital Infrastructure Plan (CIP) could help the City deliver well-maintained, accessible public spaces across Los Angeles.

The Problem: A Broken System Leading to Deterioration

As Los Angeles enters the 2025-26 fiscal year, a \$1 billion budget deficit is accelerating the decline of critical infrastructure and exposing deep structural issues.

One of those structural issues is the City's lack of a long-term financial plan to guide tough decisions, assess infrastructure needs, and establish shared priorities. City staff are left without clear direction and a multi-year funding strategy, making it impossible to work efficiently or measure success. Instead, Los Angeles continues to operate reactively, allocating funds without the ability to scale projects strategically based on budget realities.

A Capital Infrastructure Plan (CIP) is a budget and policy tool that defines the City's vision for public space and lists the specific projects, including funding sources and timelines, to help the City realize that vision. Los Angeles remains the only major U.S. city without one, perpetuating a broken system of inefficiencies and missed opportunities.

1. No CIP = Missed Funding and Poor Planning

- Los Angeles lacks a Capital Infrastructure Plan (CIP), leaving millions in funding untapped. Many federal and state grants require a structured plan, meaning LA is often ineligible or unprepared to secure these funds.
- Without a CIP, investment remains piecemeal and reactive. Other cities use multi-year planning to guide spending and staffing capacity, while LA continues to operate in a reactive, siloed response mode, which wastes time and resources.

2. Deteriorating Public Infrastructure without Clear Priorities

- Crumbling sidewalks, neglected parks, inaccessible public spaces, outdated street lighting, and failing streets create daily hazards for community members and businesses.
- Infrastructure investments are inconsistent and short-term. Without a strategy, improvements remain scattered, leading to repeated patchwork repairs instead of long-term fixes.

3. Fragmented Oversight, Inefficient Spending, and Bureaucratic Delays

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- Multiple departments oversee public space with overlapping responsibilities, which can lead to slow progress, a lack of accountability, and wasted resources.
- No single leader or agency is responsible for infrastructure planning, making coordination *and accountability* nearly impossible and long-term improvements rare.
- City departments lack the staffing and streamlined processes to implement infrastructure projects efficiently.
- Permitting, budgeting, and coordination across agencies remain slow and outdated, delaying even basic public space improvements.

4. Political and Financial Constraints

- Budget shortfalls, political inertia, and fragmented decision-making stall large-scale improvements.
- L.A. City Council offices prioritize district-level projects over long-term citywide planning, preventing a unified strategy.
- Uncertainty around federal funding, outdated guidelines, and disjointed policies leave City staff without the tools to implement lasting reforms.

5. Impact of Rising Liabilities, Disasters, and Upcoming Events

- Los Angeles is on track to pay at least \$320 million this fiscal year in liability claims and lawsuits, including use-of-force cases and other legal issues. However, a sizable portion stems from neglected infrastructure and dangerous conditions in public spaces.
- Recent devastating wildfires and disasters have deepened the City's budget deficit, leaving critical infrastructure more vulnerable.
- The 2026 World Cup, 2027 Super Bowl, and 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games will further strain public spaces. A CIP provides the long-term strategy Los Angeles needs to prepare for these challenges while ensuring lasting benefits for community members.

The Solution: A Citywide Capital Infrastructure Plan (CIP)

A CIP is essential to maintaining safe, accessible, well-planned public spaces across Los Angeles. It would provide:

- **A Structured Investment Plan** – Shifts from short-term fixes to a long-term strategy for sidewalks, streets, and parks.
- **Clear Funding Priorities** – Directs resources where needed most, ensuring all neighborhoods benefit.
- **Multiyear Planning & Efficiency** – Moves beyond one-year budgeting, improving coordination, resource allocation, and project delivery.

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- **Public Transparency** – Establishes a clear process to track project selection, funding, and completion.
- **Stronger Fiscal Oversight** – Reduces inefficiencies and ensures taxpayer dollars are spent effectively.
- **Better Access to Funding** – Positions LA to secure funding that currently goes to better-prepared cities.

What Needs to Happen Now

To move forward in 2025, the City must:

- **Commit to a Shared Vision** – The Mayor and City Council must prioritize a Capital Infrastructure Plan (CIP) grounded in a clear, measurable vision for public spaces. This will enable outcome-based budgeting and citywide consensus on infrastructure investments.
- **Act with Urgency** – In Fall 2024, Mayor Karen Bass issued Executive Directive #9, calling for a five-year CIP. This effort cannot remain an internal process—it requires full support from all elected leaders, especially the 15 Council offices. Further delays will increase costs and risks, and reduce the likelihood of a successful plan, particularly with major global events putting additional strain on infrastructure. Before the Mayor submits her 2026-27 budget letter, the City Council must adopt a high-level vision for public space with measurable, community-serving metrics.
- **Ensure Transparency and Accountability** – Community members and stakeholders must be engaged throughout the process, with clear goals and regular progress updates to ensure public trust.

Los Angeles cannot afford more delays. A five-year CIP is critical to securing funding, strengthening infrastructure, and restoring confidence in the City's ability to deliver essential services.

For more information:

- Investing in Place Memo on CIPs
 - [What is a CIP and Why Does LA Need one?](#) November 2022
 - [9 Key Principles LA's CIP Needs](#), Letter to Mayor Bass from over 85 organizations and individuals, December 2023
- Investing in Place [workshop materials](#) on CIPs, why LA needs one, and best practices
- Contact Jessica Meaney at jessica@investinginplace.org