

# INVESTING *in* PLACE

## The Future of LA's Streets and Sidewalks

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

**Fall 2023**

### 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 its sidewalks and streets.

Right now, 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 this critical public asset: 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. 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.

# INVESTING *in* PLACE

- 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, robust local hire workforce development programs can be created to meet the short- and long-term demands of infrastructure projects.

## **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<sup>1</sup> 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, they 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 municipalities,<sup>2</sup> 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:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Articulate a clear vision</li><li>2. Internally engage and coordinate</li><li>3. Externally involve and communicate</li><li>4. Use clear prioritization metrics</li><li>5. Include a state-of-good repair</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>6. Include an unfunded needs assessment</li><li>7. Make it legible and accessible</li><li>8. Address emergency preparedness &amp; climate change</li></ol>
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## **What can be done right now?**

We have identified three key 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Outcomes are the **results** of an activity, whereas outputs measure the **activities** undertaken.

<sup>2</sup> [See our growing list of research here](#). Particular stand-outs include: Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, San Diego, and San Francisco.

# INVESTING *in* PLACE

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.

## **Progress is Well Underway**

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

1. Convened an "Infrastructure for the People" luncheon, bringing together community leaders, funders, and the Office of Mayor Bass.
2. 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).
3. Published the only comprehensive inventory of City public right-of-way assets, providing a crucial baseline for our CIP development.
4. Presented our campaign to influential stakeholders, including the Deputy Mayor of Infrastructure and key City staff from various departments, fostering crucial partnerships.
5. Organized 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 in Los Angeles' streets and sidewalks.

## **The Bottom Line:**

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

## **About Us:**

Founded in 2015, Investing in Place is an award-winning, human-centered non profit organization that is working to rethink the way Los Angeles maintains its streets and sidewalks.

Investing in Place provides an independent and thoughtful voice to LA's power and politics around public works and transportation policy, thanks to independent

# INVESTING *in* PLACE

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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