

14-0163-54 Citywide Sidewalk Repair Plan: Details Please, Mr. Krekorian

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LA WATCHDOG-Councilman Paul Krekorian (photo) has asked the Neighborhood Councils to submit a **Community Impact Statements** in support of the his Citywide Sidewalk Repair Plan that was discussed at a Joint Meeting of his Budget and Finance Committee and Joe Buscaino's Public Works Committee on Monday, August 18. After additional consideration on August 26, the City Council directed Miguel Santana, the City Administrative Officer, to prepare a report with options for a "comprehensive and sustainable sidewalk repair strategy."

A Community Impact Statement allows a Neighborhood Council to submit its official position on an issue that is before the City Council. Importantly, this statement of no more than 100 words becomes an integral part of the Council File and is

referenced on the City Council's agenda when the matter is up for consideration.

But it is very difficult to craft a precise Community Impact Statement when there are very few specifics about the Citywide Sidewalk Repair Plan, including who is responsible for repairing the tree damaged sidewalks and who is going to foot the bill.

There are even fundamental questions as to extent of the damage. For instance, the City has estimated that 40% (4,600 miles) of our 10,750 miles of sidewalks are in need of repair at a cost of \$1.5 billion. On the other hand, a 2008 report by Bureau of Street Services shows that only 5.6% (600 miles) are tree damaged. This difference of 4,000 miles will lower the City's financial obligation by over \$1 billion.

Nevertheless, on Saturday, and after considerable discussion about how to pay for the repairs, the Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Coalition adopted a resolution approving the following Community Impact Statement as a basis for discussion by the City's 95 Neighborhood Councils.

The _____ Neighborhood Council supports a "fix and release" plan for the repair of our tree damaged sidewalks. The City will issue bonds to finance the repair. There will be no new taxes. The City may develop alternative plans (50/50 program, loan fund, Assessment Districts) that rely on the voluntary participation by Property Owners. Property Owners and the City may retain independent contractors and managers. The City will assess the status of our sidewalks and prioritize the necessary repairs. The City will establish a well-funded, independent Oversight Committee to ensure transparency throughout the process.

Under the "fix and release" plan, the City would pay for the repair of the tree damaged sidewalks, after which the property owners would be responsible for the maintenance and repair of their sidewalks and any associated slip and fall liabilities.



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Importantly, the City would finance its obligations, including those of any voluntary plans, through the issuance of long term bonds that would be serviced by the growth in future tax revenues. This would include the additional \$700 million from Ratepayers associated with the doubling of DWP's Power System revenues over the next ten to fifteen years. As such, no new taxes would be required.

Many homeowners questioned the efficiency and expense of the City's work crews, resulting in the desire to retain independent contractors – at City expense - to repair their sidewalks if the outside cost of repair is considerably less than the prices quoted by the City.

Finally, the proposed Citywide Sidewalk Repair Plan does not provide for any meaningful oversight of the process, starting with development of the Plan through its completion.

Krekorian has asked for Neighborhood Councils to submit Community Impact Statements in support of the Plan. But this request is premature as he and his colleagues on the City Council have not provided the Neighborhood Councils, homeowners and other property owners, and the voters with sufficient information to make an informed decision.

(Jack Humphreville writes LA Watchdog for CityWatch. He is the President of the DWP Advocacy Committee, The Ratepayer Advocate for the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council, and a Neighborhood Council Budget Advocate. Humphreville is the publisher of the Recycler Classifieds -- www.recycler.com. He can be reached at: lajack@gmail.com . Hear Jack every Tuesday morning at 6:20 on McIntyre in the Morning, KABC Radio 790.)

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