

Comment regarding 14-0163-S3 Sidewalks Prioritization Program

Mehmet Berker <mehmetikberker@gmail.com> Thu, Dec 7, 2017 at 12:01 PM

To: Michael.Espinosa@lacity.org

I find it disturbing that my Councilmember would support a motion to take out HIN proximity from the prioritization scheme of Safe Sidewalks LA.

I've been to two or three of the meetings for the Safe Sidewalks LA program convened by BOE over the past year in my role as a Steering Committee member for LA Walks, and consistently Investing in Place and LA Walks have pushed to tie the sidewalk repair program more into the city's stated priorities rather than less. Also, we have pushed to tie the prioritization scheme more to our goals rather than to things like "date submitted" and other inequitable metrics that BOE put forward at times. It's disheartening that rather than seek to tie our pedestrian built environment more closely into our transportation network in a holistic way, my Councilmember seems to not care, not understand, or not support that.

I can understand, to a certain degree, the Councilmember's reasoning for proposing his motion such as it is. Mainly, CD5 has fewer miles of HIN than other districts and he wants more money for his district, or wants repairs done in his district sooner. Although----there's more than enough HIN segments in my area of CD5, Mid City West, that could use attention----streets like Fairfax, Melrose, La Brea, and 3rd. In any event, as a resident of CD5 I also, regularly, leave CD5 throughout the day for work, errands, and any other reason. It's in my interest that the city as a whole is as safe as possible. The HIN has been identified specifically to identify those streets that are most unsafe for people---I would like them to be addressed as soon as possible, and the sidewalks are a part of those streets as surely as the roads.

Lastly, though, this is primarily about equity. You have to give more to areas (like South LA) that have been disinvested in for years, first before areas---like CD5---that, comparatively, have had more attention from the city. I would hope that my Councilmember would understand the concept of equity and would defend it, not seek to undermine it.

Also, the rebate program will offer a lot of CD5 property owners the chance to repair their sidewalks as they see fit---which, seeing as CD5 has a lot of R1, and a lot of property owners of means (compared to the rest of the city especially)---seems like a good way for areas of CD5 to be repaired sooner rather than later. This, of course, might mean more outreach, or even a higher subsidy level for the rebate program. Those are discussions we can continue to have, regardless of how the prioritization scheme is formulated.

In any event, this is another really disappointing decision to see my Councilmember put forward as it comes to my safety, my wife's safety, and the safety of all other Angelenos who walk in our city (which is, of course, all of us at sometimes, but for those of us that don't own cars---like us---all the time).

Finally, I understand that the Councilmember may want to try and weigh locations with repeated pedestrian trip-and-falls higher. I would hope that that could be achieved by a) a separate "emergency" subfund, b) Council discretionary funds, or c) an increase in weight for such locations, so that they would be ranked higher----without taking out the HIN prioritization.

I hope that moving forward we could impress upon the Councilmember why we need more support from him and why actions like these are so disheartening to us as his constituents.

Respectfully,

Mehmet

LA City Council Pedestrian Advisory Committee Representative for CD5

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