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SILVER LAKE
NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

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2658 Griffith Park Blvd #308
Los Angeles, CA 90039

October 15, 2012

Dear Councilmembers:

Re: Sidewalk Repair Options C.F. 05-1853 and 05-1853-S1 and 05-1853-S2 and 05-1853-S3

We, the Governing Board of the Silver Lake Neighborhood Council (SLNC), are offering an alternative to the lengthy and costly study of Sidewalks proposed by Councilman Buscaino at the Public Works Committee meeting on August 22nd.

The long range plan that's been proposed does nothing for our neighborhoods for more than five years. In addition, this proposal is likely not cost effective as the City must expect to spend additional multiple millions in trip and fall law suits before sidewalks are fixed. Not to mention that a bond measure to actually repair sidewalks might well not pass in today's economic environment.

Our neighborhoods deserve and expect a less expensive and more expeditious solution to the existing and worsening state of our sidewalks. All pedestrians, infants in carriages to seniors with canes, as well as bicyclists who use our sidewalks, deserve better.

Our proposal: train groups of neighborhood volunteers to make determinations at each sidewalk area of each parcel throughout the City. The below is from the report from NazarioSauceda, Director, Bureau of Street Services to the Public Works Committee of the Los Angeles City Council dated August 16, 2012.

"A (simple) sidewalk condition survey would document:

1. Sidewalk segment location – Address, parcel number, council district, etc.
2. Sidewalk segment description – Dimensions, terrain, slope, materials, etc.
3. Sidewalk condition – types and extent of damage and wear
4. Sidewalk damage causes, repair methods, costs, etcetera"*

Depending on the training, such a survey could be as above or more comprehensive selecting some or all of the items from the proposed expanded survey of 16 items to manage the full public right-of-way infrastructure such as:

5. Sidewalk compliance with current standards
6. Slopes, bulkheads or other hardships that affect complaint sidewalk construction
7. Curb and gutter condition
8. Encroachments

9. Parkway illegal construction
10. Trees"*...etc.

A simple sidewalk condition survey would be sufficient to begin sidewalk repair.

There are City precedents for surveys conducted by volunteers such as when the Planning Dept. trained volunteers from Hollywood Heights Association to determine existing zoning on each and every property parcel in preparation for developing the previous Hollywood Community Plan. Also, citizen volunteers in many communities did surveys of existing billboards.

The expense for a sidewalk study conducted by trained community volunteers would be negligible, a tiny fraction of what has been proposed as an asset management database for the full public right-of-way infrastructure, including sidewalks, urban forest, and the City parkway.

“Where sidewalk damage resulted from tree growth, the City is responsible and, where other damage is present, the adjacent property owner is responsible pre LAMC 62.104 and California Code section 5600 et seq. At damaged sidewalk areas, both types of damage are often present creating mutual responsibility.”*

We propose that the City allocate all funds currently under discussion for a comprehensive study and eventual databaseto, instead, be applied to the immediate improvement of neighborhood sidewalks, starting with sidewalks meeting both of two criteria – (1) most in need of repair and (2) most heavily traveled pedestrian thoroughfares. These are not difficult to determine.

Existing neighborhood groups such as the Transportation & Public Works Committee of the Silver Lake Neighborhood Council could attend trainings and conduct surveys.

The Silver Lake Neighborhood Council has previously submitted a short list, although not a comprehensive survey, to the Bureau of Street Services; this list and others may also be consulted to begin repairs. Each Council office may already haverecorded numerous requests for sidewalk repair and could provide lists as well.

Please repair our crumbling and hazardous sidewalks now. We need safe sidewalks for our residents and visitors to our City.

Sincerely,
Governing Board, Silver Lake Neighborhood Council

*City of Los Angeles Inter-Departmental Correspondence August 16, 2012

To: Public Works Committee of the Los Angeles City Council
From: NazarioSauceda, Director, Bureau of Street Services
Subject: Sidewalk Repair Options (C.F. 05-1853 and 05-1853-S1)