

Action Alert: Help Us Advocate for More Accessible, Greener, and Walkable Streets in Los Angeles!

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In response to LA City Council File #16-0395: Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of City Streets / Conditions D and F / Local Return Funding

As many know, LA County's game-changing transportation plan — [Measure M](#) — passed in November 2016. A portion of the estimated \$860 million per year for transportation improvements across the county will go back to the cities — something called [local return](#) — to be used on local infrastructure, like sidewalks, crosswalks, or traffic signals.

Sales tax revenue for Measure M will start to flow on July 1st, 2017 — less than 4 months from now. ***The big question remains: How will cities across the county set policies for how to spend their local return money?***

Help Us Advocate for Accessible, Greener, and Walkable Streets!

For the City of Los Angeles, that process will kick off next week at the City Council's Transportation Committee, chaired by Councilmember Mike Bonin, on **Wednesday, March 29 at 1:00 PM in Room 1010**. We encourage all our partners that care about funding for safe streets and vision zero, transportation equity, sidewalks, bike paths, and safe routes to school to come weigh in with testimony at next Wednesday's hearing.

For reference, the item number in Transportation Committee is #12 and the Council File number is 16-0395.

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This is a key moment for Los Angeles. With the passage of Measure M, HHH, and JJJ last fall, and the rejection of Measure S earlier this month, Los Angeles voters have clearly given city leaders a mandate to build a more equitable and transit-oriented city. Mobility Plan 2035—recently adopted by the City Council—is the roadmap for how investments in the city's streets and public spaces can support a more multimodal future.

How we spend Local Return is one of the most important decisions the City Council will make to actually fund and implement this vision. **Indeed, it is the first major implementation action for Mobility Plan 2035.** We need to ensure that Local Return policies *put safety first* and *invest in a network of complete streets and sidewalks* for all people who travel in our city.

We Need a *Comprehensive Approach* to Rebuilding Our Streets

At the heart of Mobility Plan 2035 is the idea that the City needs to look holistically at how its streets function. The quality of a street is about more than just potholes. These questions come to mind:

- Is it safe for people to walk and bike?
- Does it promote economic activity?
- Does it capture and clean stormwater?
- Is it accessible to children, older adults, and people with disabilities?
- Does it address the needs of low-income communities and communities of color?

These are all direct, measurable outcomes of the way streets are designed and maintained. There is a lot of support on the City Council for paving streets, but **Investing in Place urges the City to take a comprehensive approach to *rebuilding* streets to meet current and future needs, rather than just *replacing* outdated infrastructure.** This integrated approach is exactly what is called for in Mobility Plan 2035, but it is up to the City Council to now implement it with the resources made available by the potential ballot measure.

What We're Advocating For...

Here are some policy ideas for Local Return we're hoping to see discussed next week:

1. Comprehensive Performance Metrics for Street Projects

As called for in Mobility Plan 2035, complete streets and green streets upgrades should be integrated into regular street repaving. That doesn't necessarily mean every residential street needs a bike lane or a bioswale, but

it does mean that LADOT, City Planning, and Street Services need to work together to identify where the opportunities are for more comprehensive improvements and make sure that these elements are integrated cost-effectively. City departments should look at a range of measures of street condition in addition to pavement quality, such as:

- Safety (Vision Zero)
- Sidewalk condition
- Vehicle speeds
- Bike/ped counts
- Transit ridership
- Economic activity
- Stormwater quality and capture
- Tree canopy

2. Dedicated Funding for Vision Zero and Active Transportation

Mobility Plan 2035 calls for a minimum of 20% of Local Return for walking, biking, and safe routes to school. **This is a good starting point, but the reality is that less than \$12 million per year is not enough money to achieve zero traffic deaths by 2025.** Vision Zero is a comprehensive safety program that benefits people who walk, bike, take transit, and drive. It is also the City's top transportation priority. City Council should allocate a minimum of \$20 million per year for Vision Zero.

3. Accelerate Sidewalk Improvements with a 30-10 Plan for Safe Sidewalks

The City recently settled a \$1.37 billion lawsuit to fix its sidewalks so that people with disabilities can move around Los Angeles safely, requiring the City to spend over \$30 million per year for 30 years. **Fixing our sidewalks is a critical issue for children, older adults, and people in wheelchairs, and for many of our most vulnerable residents, waiting 30 years for safe sidewalks**

means they'll never see improvements in their lifetimes. While the City is obligated to spend a minimum amount from other funding sources, how can Measure M augment the Willits settlement and accelerate these improvements so that our communities can benefit from safe sidewalks sooner?

4. Regular Reporting and Accountability

The public deserves regular reporting on the status and effectiveness of Local Return investments. The City should produce an annual report documenting program expenditures and the status of projects in planning, design, and construction. The report should highlight the way in which the City has incorporated complete and green streets into routine projects. The Mobility Plan 2035 Technical Advisory Committee should be convened quarterly to review program updates and provide input into upcoming projects. The report should include a five-year capital improvement program of street projects. These are the ideas we're most passionate about, but we want to hear yours too!

Email us at jessica@investinginplace.org with your priorities for Local Return in the City of Los Angeles.