

The City of Los Angeles is currently in the midst of a broad and fruitful discussion regarding planning processes. This discussion coincides with the appointment of a new Planning Director and presents an opportunity for the City Council to address the most pressing opportunities for planning reform. Communities deserve transparent, fair, and systematic processes to evaluate impacts on their neighborhoods to ensure that the city can effectively deliver on its planning responsibilities.

An extensive network of paper streets exists within the City of Los Angeles. A paper street is one that has been impassable for vehicular travel for a period of five consecutive years and for which no public money was expended for maintenance during that period (Ref. Sec. 8331 California Streets and Highways Code).

In order to conduct extensive public works improvements, including widening or paving of a paper street, a permit owner/applicant must obtain a "B" Permit from the Bureau of Engineering.

"B" Permits are most frequently issued for public works improvements adjacent to land being developed. In these instances, the extent and type of improvements depend on conditions imposed by the Council, City Engineer, Planning Department, or some other jurisdictional body in accordance with the Municipal Code, City Charter, State Law, or City Ordinance.

The Municipal Code does not currently require any public notice for applications for "B" Permits.

Construction impacts due to improvements in the Public Right-of-Way can significantly affect residents in the vicinity. The issuance of "B" Permits often requires specialized vehicles, equipment, and workers for the improvement to be completed and these impacts are felt by abutting and nearby residents. "B" Permit work in the hillside communities can exacerbate the problem due to the complexities of infrastructure and topography.

There are numerous examples within the Planning as well as the Building and Safety Departments where public notices are issued to affected residents located within a specific radius of a proposed project.

Noticing "B" Permit applications for the improvement of paper streets to affected residents within the vicinity of the improvement could help mitigate construction impacts. Such noticing will provide affected property owners a sufficient opportunity to protect their legitimate interests while ensuring public safety and protecting the public interest.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Bureau of Engineering, with the assistance of the Department of City Planning and the City Attorney, be directed to report with recommendations for an ordinance to mandate public notice of "B" Permit applications for the improvement of paper streets.

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