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March 19, 2025

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The Honorable City Council
c/o Petty F. Santos
Office of the City Clerk
Room 360, City Hall

COUNCIL FILE NO. 25-0006-S23 - Special Motion 23 / Infrastructure Status / Affected City-Owned Facilities - 2025 Windstorm and Wildfire Recovery

SUMMARY

In response to Council File 25-0006-S23, this report provides an update on the Bureau of Street Services' (Bureau) efforts to conduct assessments of the impacts to the public infrastructure affected by the Palisades Fire. The Bureau has not received any reports of infrastructure damage related to the Sunset Fire, Hurst Fire, and Archer Fire. This report details the Bureau's initial findings as well as the additional assessments required in the future.

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council NOTE and FILE this report.

DISCUSSION

This discussion provides an overview of the assessment of infrastructure in the public right-of-way under the purview by the Bureau of Street Services, including streets, curb ramps, street trees, parkways and landscaped median islands.

Upon the Declaration of Local Emergency, the Bureau provided all available resources to assist in the emergency response in order to protect the health and safety of Angelenos and their property.

Immediate Emergency Response

The Palisades Fire destroyed a substantial amount of brush and trees on hillsides. This vegetation had served to limit stormwater runoff during rain events. However, the loss of vegetation has resulted in increased debris flow in the burn area. Due to the ongoing rains, the Bureau has been working closely with the Bureau of Engineering to install K-rail and sandbags.

To date, more than 10,000 sandbags have been placed, more than 10,000 linear feet of K-Rail have been installed, and over 1,000 square feet of tarp have been placed.

This work has been overseen by the Bureau and conducted by Clean Harbors who is contracted by the Bureau for maintenance of the public right-of-way within the burn area. The Bureau is currently front-funding this work due to it being an immediate threat to public safety, which is more clearly defined as reimbursable under FEMA guidelines.

Assessment of Damages

In order to determine the level of damage to public right-of-way assets maintained by the Bureau, staff conducted preliminary assessments of the areas affected by the Palisades Fire over the course of several weeks. Assessments were primarily conducted and captured via dashcam.

Streets and Curb Ramps

BSS uses the Pavement Condition Index (PCI) as one of the primary indicators of a street's condition. Street segments are inspected, analyzed and graded on a three-year cycle of continuous surveys of the road network. There are approximately 251 lane miles of city streets within the Palisades Fire burn area. PCI data for this area was last collected in August of 2023, with the average PCI score for fire affected streets being 80 before the fire. Due to no dedicated resources being available for emergency PCI analysis, the Bureau does not have up to date numbers on the PCI of affected streets post fire. However, from the dashcam assessments performed by staff, damage appears to be limited to pavement underneath burned cars or due to street cuts performed by utility companies.

There does not appear to be an immediate need for resurfacing. Due to the expected recovery efforts, the Bureau anticipates that further excavations or utility work will be performed/needed. Additional assessments will be conducted once more recovery work is completed.

Initial assessments show that curb ramps did not sustain more than minor surface damage due to adjacent trees or homes dropping debris. It should be noted that once streets are resurfaced, curb ramps will need to be updated to the most current ADA standards to achieve compliance.

Street Trees

Based on the City's Tree Inventory, there are 4,736 street trees in the Palisades Fire burn area. Due to the potential for hazardous soil, Bureau staff have performed existing assessments through dashboard surveys only. Once the adjacent soil is determined to be safe, additional in-depth assessments will be needed.

At the time of this report's publishing, using limited resources, the Bureau has conducted a preliminary survey of 1,824 trees within the burn area. 182 trees require removal, 840 require structural pruning, 97 stumps need removal, and 704 trees need further monitoring over the coming months.

Removal of dead or dying trees caused by the fire are eligible for FEMA reimbursement with a certified arborist's determination.

Parkways and Landscaped Median Islands

Based on a preliminary dashcam analysis of the burn area, public rights-of-way parkways and landscaped median islands have ash and debris. Most of this debris is concentrated adjacent to burned trees or next to properties that have fences or other structures immediately adjacent to the public right of way. It is not known at this time whether or not this debris is hazardous under the Phase 2 USACE removal standards. Further, evaluation needs to be conducted to determine the level of remediation necessary.

Resource Needs

The Bureau is working with the CAO to determine what work to be performed by the Bureau is eligible for FEMA reimbursement, but currently the Bureau possesses no front funding in order to perform more detailed assessments or initiate cleanup of debris.

FISCAL IMPACT

Receiving and filing this report has no fiscal impact on the city's general fund. Should you require more information about this report, please contact Shirley Lau, Executive Officer, at shirley.lau@lacity.org.

Sincerely,



KEITH MOZEE
Executive Director and General Manager
Bureau of Street Services

KM:SL/no