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April 21, 2021

Honorable Paul Krekorian, Chairperson, Budget and Finance Committee  
Honorable Budget and Finance Committee Members

## **RE: CF 21-0600 STREETSLA 2021-22 BUDGET RESPONSE**

StreetsLA is grateful to the Mayor and the CAO's Office for their hard work and dedication in developing a bold, balanced, and progressive 2021-22 Proposed Budget that supports not only pandemic recovery efforts, but also essential services, along with critical sustainability, equity, and justice initiatives so needed in our City.

The Mayor's 2021-22 Proposed Justice Budget for StreetsLA is a \$205M Budget and includes the restoration of one-time funding cuts made in 2020-21. While the proposed StreetsLA Budget amount is similar to 2019-20 funding levels, StreetsLA staffing authorities have been reduced by a net (-150) positions as a result of SIP. StreetsLA requires the authority and flexibility to quickly hire sufficient and qualified staff in order to effectively perform the work envisioned by this budget and to support economic recovery through infrastructure investments.

StreetsLA respectfully requests the reconsideration of the following budget requests. All requests listed below, with the exception of #5, is either a no-cost request, is backed by revenue or was already approved in 2020-21:

1. Sidewalk & Transit Amenities Program (STAP) - StreetsLA requests (3) positions to be offset with revenues, and will result in a \$12-\$15M revenue contract to provide services to install and maintain street furniture in the City. The Program is in the proposal review stage and in an extremely critical and complex negotiation process. StreetsLA must also develop a deployment plan, including community engagement, before the end of 2021 in order to swiftly launch the new contract without risking any revenue or impacting services. This revenue-generating program has currently only (1) authorized position which is not sufficient to achieve full revenue potential nor maximize the efficacy of this important safety, equity and mobility Program. The Bureau requests that these (3) positions be approved without funding to ensure a successful and fruitful result that will benefit City residents for years to come.

2. Technical Corrections - The City Council amended the 2020-21 Budget to approve an additional (9) positions (CFs 20-0600, 20-0600-S55, and 20-0600-S28) with corresponding offsets. These positions were inadvertently missed from the StreetsLA initial Budget submission and submitted late. StreetsLA requests to continue (3) critical leadership positions to support activities such as Safety/Emergency Management, Risk and Liability reduction, grants development and management, Asset Management and Advanced Planning, and Bureau-wide efforts to enhance efficiencies. Additionally, (6) tree trimming positions (\$0 Funding) were approved with Street Lighting Assessment Funding (SLAF). While the SLAF tree trimming funding is not available in 2021-22, StreetsLA respectfully requests to maintain the authorities without funding due to the critical need.
3. Metro Projects - StreetsLA is working with the Mayor's Office and Metro to consider an agreement for StreetsLA to construct active transportation and transit access projects within the City. Several projects, valued at hundreds of millions of dollars, which would otherwise be privately contracted, need to be delivered in the next five years. While StreetsLA is reviewing the feasibility of this agreement, which would mutually benefit the City and Metro, we request that applicable positions that were slated to be deleted as a result of the SIP program be instead reinstated without funding. If the positions are deleted, StreetsLA would be delayed in mobilizing resources, even once funding is secured, which may conflict with Metro project delivery timelines.
4. Restore 23 Unfunded/As-Needed Positions - In addition to the Bureau's Proposed \$205M Budget, there is an additional \$28M in Streets-related quality of life enhancements allocated in various Special Fund Schedules including the continuation of earmarks for: Failed Streets (\$9M); Alleys (\$3M); Landscaped Median Island Maintenance (\$3M); Concrete Streets (\$3M); and Cool/Sustainable Pavement (\$2M). StreetsLA also welcomes new 2021-22 earmarks for new tree planting (\$4M) and bikeway repairs (\$4M).

While StreetsLA has a 'can do' attitude, the Bureau is not provided with staffing nor resources to complete the \$28M in earmarks. StreetsLA does not currently have adequate staffing resources, including administrative staffing, necessary to perform, track, establish/monitor contracts and oversee/support this work. In the past, StreetsLA staff worked overtime on weekends to fix failed streets, alleys and concrete streets, and other off-budget work. The resource challenges facing the Bureau have increased due to SIP, DSW work, the hiring freeze and lengthy hiring process, along with contract cost containment. Additional "off budget" as-need staffing authorities will ensure that StreetsLA can ramp up quickly to complete this work.

5. Urban Forestry/CEQA & CFAC Recommendations - StreetsLA is grateful for the addition of (2) new positions in the Budget to support the processing of tree removal permit applications pertaining to the recently-revised Protected Tree Ordinance. There is a critical need for (1) additional position in the group,

Environmental Supervisor, to handle the many CEQA determination reviews that are generated by the caseload. StreetsLA had previously requested this position in previous budget cycles, but did not request in 2021-22 due to economic uncertainties at the time of budget submission. Furthermore, StreetsLA supports the City Forest Officer's request for (1) position to support her work in strengthening the City's tree protection policies.

Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent financial emergency will require increased staffing to deliver upon the new financial resources in the FY 2021-22 budget. StreetsLA encourages the Committee to pursue city-wide efforts to expedite contracts and hiring and to enable managerial flexibility to deploy resources as needed to achieve the goals envisioned in this transformational budget.

I look forward to discussing this memo with your Committee during our budget hearing. If you have any questions or request further clarifications, please call me at (213) 847-3333.

Sincerely,



Adel H. Hagekhalil, P.E.  
Executive Director and General Manager  
Bureau of Street Services

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