

## MOTION

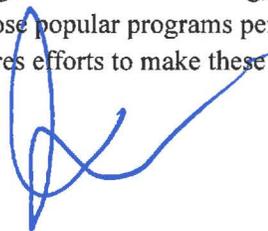
Los Angeles faces a climate crisis, a racial justice reckoning, and decades of underinvestment in public infrastructure that magnifies our city's inequities. L.A.'s Green New Deal aims to meet our environmental, economic, and equity challenges head-on with investment in the infrastructure and services needed to create a more sustainable and resilient city. Achieving the Green New Deal's environmental and mobility goals will require the City to manage our public right-of-way holistically with integrated planning and delivery of capital projects to support sustainable modes of transportation.

The City of Los Angeles divides responsibilities for core functions in the public right-of-way like no other major city, resulting in project delays, increased costs, and in some cases even injuries and deaths. The establishment of the Los Angeles Department of Transportation in 1979 was a groundbreaking step toward more intentional planning and coordination of mobility projects and services. At the time, Los Angeles had recently lost its extensive rail network and was experiencing unprecedented traffic congestion and smog, giving the newly formed department a mandate for innovation. Almost every large city in the United States followed suit by creating or fortifying a single department responsible for the integrated planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of mobility infrastructure and services. However, Los Angeles never implemented an intended second step of bringing planning and policy, civil design, construction, and maintenance responsibilities into a single department, leaving the City with the fractured system that we have today.

For example, under the City's current organizational structure, one department is responsible for paving streets and another is responsible for striping that pavement; one department is responsible for placement of bus stops and another is responsible for placement of bus shelters. One department oversees the operation of personal mobility devices on our streets and another regulates parking of those devices on sidewalks.

This fractured system is a structural barrier that has impeded the implementation of every major transportation plan or policy adopted by the City Council, from the Bicycle Plan to the Safe Routes to School Strategic Plan to the Mobility Plan to the Green New Deal. Mayoral initiatives like Great Streets and Vision Zero have also struggled to advance beyond temporary pilots and spot improvements, falling short of the systems change they were intended to catalyze. Departments routinely work at cross purposes, with one agency widening streets to outdated standards while others seek grant funds to narrow them back down for safety and livability. While different agencies manage the space inside the curb and outside of it, no one is responsible for making sure the curb is in the right place. Agencies often hire consultants or contractors because other agencies' in-house capacity is not available, while the City avoids adding new positions without reliable forecasts of revenue and work.

The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted that a bright-line distinction between "streets" and "sidewalks" is artificial and outdated. Relying on emergency powers, the City scrambled to stand up programs like L.A. Al Fresco, which facilitated outdoor dining both on sidewalks and in curbside streets, and Slow Streets, which sought to facilitate walking, jogging and rolling on low-traffic local streets. But as the City seeks to make those popular programs permanent, the red tape that they managed to cut using temporary authority now mires efforts to make these popular programs permanent.



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Over the years, there have been many efforts to improve coordination among the various departments and bureaus. After the passage of Measure M and S.B. 1 in 2016 and 2017, respectively, the City established a new coordinated effort to deliver street improvement projects. The Complete Streets Program will deliver six projects totalling over 100 lane miles of streets. Two of these projects, Reseda Boulevard and Avalon Boulevard, are delivering truly complete streets consistent with Mobility Plan 2035, including bike, transit, pedestrian, and vehicle scope elements. However, experience with the Complete Streets Program has revealed the limits of what can be accomplished through interdepartmental coordination without more fundamental structural reform and integration of the way that the City manages the public right-of-way. The program was burdened with excessive reliance on consultants and contractors, protracted disputes over project scopes, and lack of adherence to schedules leading to cost escalation. The CAO recently concluded that the program is not able to deliver its mobility, safety, and state of good repair benefits cost-effectively, calling into question the program's future. This leaves the City without an effective delivery mechanism for the comprehensive street improvement projects necessary to achieve our mobility, sustainability, and equity goals.

In March, President Joe Biden presented his American Jobs Plan to reinvest in our nation's infrastructure and modernize it to meet the needs of the 21st century. Both the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate are now deliberating reauthorization of the federal surface transportation bill. The promise of a surge in federal infrastructure spending makes now a critical time to revisit the way that Los Angeles plans, constructs, operates, and maintains our streets and transportation infrastructure so that the City is well-positioned to take full advantage of this new investment, to secure more funding to meet our infrastructure needs, and to create additional jobs.

With the likely infusion of federal infrastructure funding on top of existing State and voter-approved local funding, there is a window of opportunity to address structural inefficiencies, integrate public right-of-way management, grow the City's infrastructure delivery workforce, and deliver safe, mobile, and sustainable streets for Angelenos. The time is now to bring this critical issue back into policy committees for deliberation and action.

**I THEREFORE MOVE** that the matter of "Bureau of Street Services / Department of Transportation / Merger / Phased Action Plan / Feasibility Report" as recorded under C.F. 18-0458, which expired per Council policy (C.F. 05-0553), be reactivated and that the matter be restored to its most recent legislative status as of the date of the File's expiration.

PRESENTED BY:



MIKE BONIN

Councilmember, 11<sup>th</sup> District



BOB BLUMENFIELD  
Councilmember, 3<sup>rd</sup> District

SECONDED BY:



ORIGINAL