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DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC WORKS

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February 13, 1990

Budget and Finance/Transportation and  
Community Development Committees  
Sacramento, California

Honorable Members in Session:

**SUBJECT: REPORT REGARDING CITY SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE POLICY**

**SUMMARY**

At the request of the City Council, this report describes the City's present sidewalk repair and maintenance policies and presents several alternative funding strategies for discussion. Staff recommends that the present sidewalk repair policy be retained.

**BACKGROUND**

The City's present sidewalk replacement program requires that the cost of replacement be borne by abutting property owners. These costs are usually levied against the property for payment within a one-year period or levied with the following year's property tax bill.

The City of Sacramento policy is similar to that of most California jurisdictions. Most cities opt for property owner sidewalk maintenance for the following reasons:

1. State law assigns the responsibility of funding sidewalk replacement to the abutting property owner.
2. The sidewalk directly abutting a property provides the most benefit to the adjacent property; therefore, its maintenance cost should be borne by the property owner.

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3. The owners of property abutting undamaged sidewalks object to paying for repairs to damaged sidewalks which abut other property.
4. Most cities have a backlog of pavement and curb maintenance needs which they are unable to fund with limited existing resources. The alternative is to fund the sidewalk repair work at the expense of the abutting owner. As discussed in the Right-of-Way Infrastructure Report, the City's maintenance liability for pavement, curbs, and gutters exceeds its available resources.

The passage of Measure A was a positive step toward meeting the Sacramento area's transportation funding needs. Despite the benefits of the additional 1/2 cent sales tax, however, funding for paving maintenance still falls short of the amount needed to address all of the City's needs. The City Council may decide to consider modifications to the present sidewalk maintenance program, even with these funding limitations. Therefore, a brief discussion of potential funding options is presented below. These modifications could be utilized individually or in combination to increase the City's sidewalk maintenance effort.

1. Modify existing City regulations to permit individual abutting owners to pay their sidewalk repair assessments over several years, instead of a lump sum as now required. However, initial outlays for repairs over the first few years would greatly exceed installment income, and would, therefore, require a significant pool of "start-up" funds. Such a pool could be generated by one or more of the following methods:
  - A. A general obligation bond issue, if approved by 2/3 of those voting.
  - B. A City-wide assessment district where bonds would be sold as needed and assessments levied only against those properties receiving sidewalk repairs.
  - C. An investment from the City's General Fund which would draw principal and interest from the yearly payments from properties receiving sidewalk repair. The investment would be secured by the properties as in a special assessment.

Another method would identify specific areas in the City needing extensive sidewalk repair and create special assessment districts and bond sales to fund the work area by area. This work could also cover curb and gutter replacement, where needed, since curbs as well as adjacent sidewalks are often damaged.

2. Convert the City's sidewalk repair program to one which is funded or partially funded at general public expense. Some possible alternatives are listed below:

| <u>Public Share</u> | <u>Property Owner Share</u> | <u>Conditions</u>       | <u>Estimated Yearly Cost</u> |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 50%                 | 50%                         | Street Tree Damage Only | \$ 400,000                   |
| 50%                 | 50%                         | All Damage              | 500,000                      |
| 100% Over \$500     | \$500 Maximum               | All                     | 600,000                      |
| 100%                | 0                           | Street Trees            | 2,500,000                    |
| 100%                | 0                           | All                     | 3,000,000                    |

The above cost estimates are based on previous City experience with partial and total public funding of sidewalk replacement. Previous experience with partial and total public funding indicates that 100% public funding will result in an increase of 5 to 6 times the cost of 50% public funding when it is known that the replacement of damaged sidewalks is accomplished at no cost to the abutting owner. While these figures are "ballpark" estimates, staff considers them to be realistic.

The City's future choice of sidewalk maintenance strategies must be carefully chosen, keeping in mind both present and future impacts on the overall welfare of citizens of Sacramento.

**FINANCIAL DATA**

The price of sidewalk repair varies from \$3.50 to \$5.55 per square foot (depending upon the total square footage repaired), and the amount repaired also varies from a few linear feet to over 60 feet. Basically the contractor's cost is based upon a quantity discount and, thus, the cost per square foot becomes less as the amount repaired becomes greater. Therefore, it is difficult to identify a "typical" residential sidewalk repair cost. However, assuming that the average City lot has 60 linear feet of frontage, and is four and one-half feet wide, the range of repair costs can be projected as follows:

| <u>Percentage of Sidewalk Needing Repair</u>  | <u>Projected Cost</u> |
|---|-----------------------|
| 25% = (15'l x 4.5'd = 67.5 sq. ft. x \$5.55)  | \$374.63              |
| 50% = (30'l x 4.5'd = 135 sq. ft. x \$4.91)   | 662.85                |
| 75% = (45'l x 4.5'd = 202.5 sq. ft. x \$4.39) | 888.98                |
| 100% = (60'l x 4.5'd = 270 sq. ft. x \$3.50)  | 945.00                |

**POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

Changes in present policy, if desired by the Council, will require a revision to the City Code and identification of a funding source.

**MBE/WBE EFFORTS**

Not applicable.

**RECOMMENDATION**

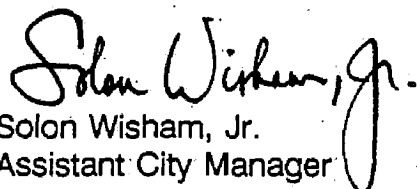
This report is for Committee information. Staff recommends that the current sidewalk repair policy be retained. If, however, the Committee decides to consider changes in the sidewalk policy, staff recommends that this take place in connection with the FY 1990-91 budget process.

Respectfully submitted,



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Director of Public Works

Approved for Committee Information:



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Assistant City Manager

February 13, 1990  
All Districts

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