

Press Releases

06/18/2008 | City Auditor Laura Doud Releases Long Beach Streets Review New Management Making Improvements - However Still More Work to be Done

Long Beach City Auditor Laura Doud released the results of the Long Beach Streets Review today. The review, which began in May 2007, is comprised of two phases.

Phase I is a review of the Long Beach Capital Improvement Program with the objective of providing recommendations on improving budget accountability, reducing street repair backlog, and providing strategies for meeting staffing needs.

Phase II builds on the Phase I review and focuses on an assessment of Long Beach's street conditions. This review includes a comparison of street conditions and maintenance with other cities, a review of contracting practices, and a comparison of The Department of Public Works' (DPW) costs relative to other cities.

"We have been working with the Department of Public Works for over a year, and we are happy that some of the recommendations, most notably the development of a multi-year capital plan, are being implemented," commented City Auditor Laura Doud. "We will continue to work with management on the other recommendations of the report, and hope this review helps provide City decision makers with the facts they need in order to make sound decisions on behalf of the City."

The Phase I review includes the following Findings and Recommendations for the Department of Public Works:

Record all dates at the initiation of each project and keep track of milestones during the project, all the way to completion. This will help management effectively plan staffing and resource needs for each project the department undertakes.

Maintain a Multi-year Capital Improvement Plan and update it annually. For cities the size of Long Beach, it is customary and a best management practice to have such a plan. Based on this recommendation DPW initiated a multi-year plan for FY 2008 and while it is not a complete multi-year plan, it is a good start.

Address fund balances to determine if those monies can be used more effectively and efficiently on projects that may not be currently funded. Currently, balances in some capital accounts may be higher than necessary and could potentially be used in a more timely manner on projects.

Find a way to fill key positions quickly or increase contracting to keep projects moving. Significant vacancies in key DPW positions hamper the department's ability to move projects forward effectively.

Provide regular reports to the City Council and City Management on the progress of the Capital Improvement Program. This review recommends this should be part of the Multi-year Capital Plan and institutionalized as part of the regular budget process.

The Phase II review includes the following Findings and Recommendations:

Although the data is imperfect, it appears that Long Beach streets appear to be in the worst condition of nine comparable cities in California.

Initiate early repair projects on streets before they significantly deteriorate. Over time, this approach will be less expensive and will require less extensive construction thereby reducing construction related traffic congestion.

The cost of selected sidewalk and streets work in Long Beach is comparable to that of other cities. The review recommends that DPW work with other cities to compare prices to ensure the Long Beach is receiving the best value.

“The condition of our streets and sidewalks is a top priority for the residents of Long Beach. We must do all we can to ensure that our tax dollars are being spent in the most effective manner,” concludes City Auditor Doud.