



Date: August 1, 2025

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

From: Eric Lopez, Director of Public Works 

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **City of Long Beach Updated Pavement Condition Index (PCI) Score**

The Department of Public Works is pleased to report that the City of Long Beach (City) Pavement Condition Index (PCI) has improved from an average of 56 in 2023 to 61 in 2025, surpassing the City's target PCI of 60. This significant progress reflects the Department's aggressive implementation of the Elevate '28 Infrastructure Investment Plan, in-house crack and slurry seal program, and historic funding allocations for street improvements over the past several years. While this improvement is commendable and represents a clear return on recent investments, further sustained and increased funding will be required to continue improving our street network, prevent future decline, and address the City's persistent backlog of streets in poor condition.

Since 2006, the City has utilized a comprehensive Pavement Management Program (PMP) to assess pavement conditions, guide funding strategies, and prioritize street rehabilitation projects. The PCI, ranging from 0 (failed) to 100 (excellent), is determined through field evaluation of surface distresses, ride quality, and structural integrity for every block in the City's road network. In 2014, the City transitioned to automated data collection to improve accuracy and consistency of assessments. The City's PCI was last updated in 2023 to reflect updated deterioration since the prior, physical indexing in 2020. The 2023 updated PCI score was an average of 56. The City's goal is currently a PCI of 60 or greater. Earlier this year, every City street was re-evaluated via physical inspections.

As of the latest update:

- The street network average PCI is **61**, which is **up 9%** from the previous 2023 score of 56 and **exceeds the target PCI rating of 60**. This marks the highest overall network rating since the City adopted automated pavement condition assessments in 2014, reflecting the positive impact of recent strategic investments and infrastructure planning.
- **15% is in excellent condition**, requiring only routine maintenance.
- **38% is in good to very good condition** (PCI of 60 to 85) and benefit the most from preventive maintenance such as crack seal and slurry seal.
- **26% is in the marginal to fair range** (PCI of 40 to 60) and in need of resurfacing.

- **20% is in poor or very poor condition** (PCI rating below 40) and in need of partial or full reconstruction. This represents a **13 point improvement** from 2023 scoring, which indicated 33% of the City's streets were in poor or very poor condition.
- Major Streets (Arterials) overall PCI rating is 66, which is up 8% from the previous 2023 score of 61 and exceeds the target PCI rating of 60.
- Minor Streets (Residentials) overall PCI rating is 60, which is up 11% from the previous 2023 score of 54 and meets the target PCI rating of 60.
- Alleys overall PCI rating is 41, which is down 18% from the previous 2023 score of 50. This decrease is primarily attributed to accelerated degradation caused by recent historic storm seasons, compounded by long-standing underinvestment in alley infrastructure. While the Department has made notable progress, investing \$4.2 million in alley improvements from FY 2023 through FY 2025 and completing nearly 23 lane miles of rehabilitation, additional funding is essential to meaningfully improve the overall condition of the City's alley network. It is worth noting that, as of early 2025, all remaining dirt alleys in the City have been paved, representing a major milestone in improving basic access and infrastructure equity.

Although overall PCI has improved significantly, one in five streets still require full reconstruction, down slightly from 2023, highlighting the scale of long-term deferred maintenance. The Department estimates a total investment need of \$1.4 billion over five years (or \$280 million annually) to address all major and minor street deficiencies citywide. The Department is also developing additional scenarios to help develop alternative strategies to improve the City's street network.

While the City has made historic investments, averaging \$63 million annually between FY 23 and FY 25, this level represents only 22% of the total need. As an example, in FY 23, the Residential Streets Program received \$28.3 million, its highest-ever allocation, yet still fell short of the \$44–72 million annual target range recommended in the City's recent Street CIP audit. Additionally, insufficient investments in the City's streets 30 years ago require significant investments today to bring the City's Pavement Condition Index (PCI) up to a 'good' rating.

As an example, FY 23 – 25 infrastructure investments in Residential Streets were 1396% higher than FY 93 – 95 allocations in the same CIP Program, when adjusted for inflation. This significant increase in funding is directly attributed to the historic funding offered in the Elevate '28 Infrastructure Investment Plan, which enabled the Department to establish a comprehensive five-year infrastructure plan and includes an influx of Measure A bond funding.

Additionally, the Public Works Grants Administration Division has played a critical role in advancing the Department's infrastructure investment strategy by securing external funding to support capital priorities. To date, the Division has successfully secured more than \$88 million specifically dedicated to Mobility and Safety projects. These awards support a broad range of improvements, including corridor enhancements, pedestrian and cyclist safety upgrades, signal modernization, and infrastructure investments aligned with the Elevate '28 Infrastructure Investment Plan.

These achievements reflect only a portion of the Department's broader grant coordination efforts. In addition to competitive funding pursued directly by Public Works, the City continues to pursue large-scale State and Federal allocations in partnership with the City Manager's Office. These collaborative efforts have resulted in successful leveraging of regional and federal funding streams that supplement local capital funds and help advance long-range project delivery.

As external funding opportunities remain a vital complement to the City's limited local revenue sources, the Department is committed to expanding its grant pipeline, strengthening interdepartmental coordination, and maintaining readiness to pursue high-impact opportunities that align with Long Beach's infrastructure and mobility goals.

These increased investments have played a critical role in stabilizing the City's street network; however, ongoing structural funding shortfalls pose a significant risk to maintaining current PCI levels and making meaningful progress in reducing the backlog of deferred street repairs.

Street CIP Methodology

The City's current Street CIP funding methodology is deliberately structured to strike a balance between two essential priorities: the rehabilitation of streets in very poor to poor condition, and the preservation of streets in fair to good condition. This dual-track approach is grounded in nationally recognized best practices in pavement management and reflects a long-term asset stewardship strategy designed to maximize the effectiveness of every infrastructure dollar.

Preserving streets while they are still in serviceable condition is one of the most fiscally responsible actions a municipality can take. Preventive maintenance treatments, such as crack and slurry sealing, can extend a street's life by five to seven years at a relatively low cost. For context, **slurry seal costs approximately \$2 per square foot**, while **full reconstruction can exceed \$30 per square foot**. Investing in preservation not only reduces the frequency and severity of major failures but also delays the need for capital-intensive rehabilitation projects.

Conversely, if the City were to focus exclusively on reconstructing failed streets, the high cost of those projects would severely limit the total number of streets that could be addressed annually. This approach would come at the expense of preserving recoverable assets, ultimately expanding the backlog and compounding long-term infrastructure liabilities. Moreover, deferring maintenance on fair-to-good condition streets accelerates their decline, pushing them into a much more expensive state of disrepair and placing additional strain on future budgets.

By maintaining a balanced approach, the City is able to:

- Extend the useful life of streets already in decent condition,
- Reduce lifecycle costs and protect past investments,
- Allocate limited resources across a broader portion of the network, and
- Avoid a growing backlog of streets requiring high-cost reconstruction.

As the City continues to refine its pavement management strategy, the preservation of assets through timely, low-cost maintenance must remain a central pillar. This methodology is not only cost-effective, but also essential to achieving a resilient, sustainable, and equitable street network.

In-House Street Maintenance

The Department's in-house Crack & Slurry Seal Team has played a critical role in advancing the City's pavement preservation strategy through the application of low-cost, high-impact treatments. Since FY 2023, the team has successfully applied over 16 million square feet of slurry seal across residential streets, extending pavement life by an estimated five to seven years per segment. This preventative approach not only improves roadway safety and aesthetics for residents, but also represents a fiscally responsible use of limited capital funds, preserving assets in good condition at a fraction of the cost of full rehabilitation or reconstruction. The citywide PCI for residential streets improved from 54 in 2023 to 60 in 2025, marking a significant advancement in pavement condition. This improvement is directly attributable to the effectiveness of the City's pavement preservation strategy, particularly the targeted efforts of the in-house Crack & Slurry Seal Program and the increased investment in residential street rehabilitation.

The success of this program underscores the value of continued and expanded investment. With additional funding, the Department could scale this in-house capacity to include eligible Arterial Streets, many of which are currently excluded from treatment due to resource limitations. Expanding the Crack & Slurry Seal program to arterial corridors would allow the City to proactively maintain higher-traffic roadways that are still in good condition, reducing long-term capital liabilities and delaying the need for costly reconstructions. This targeted investment would enhance overall network durability, increase operational efficiency, and support the City's long-term pavement management objectives.

Pavement Management Plan (PMP) Update and Next Steps

With the completion of the 2025 citywide Pavement Condition Index (PCI) update, the Department of Public Works is beginning development of the next Five-Year Pavement Management Plan (PMP), covering Fiscal Years 2028 through 2032. This plan will succeed the current FY 2023 – 2027 PMP, which is incorporated within the Elevate '28 Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP).

The updated PMP will use the most recent PCI data to reassess and prioritize streets based on condition, backlog, and geographic distribution. Any streets identified in the current Elevate '28 plan that are not completed by FY 2027 will be prioritized for completion in the next five-year plan.

In developing the next PMP, the City Engineer and supporting Public Works staff will rely heavily on the updated 2025 PCI data to ensure that the next set of investment decisions reflects the most current and accurate understanding of pavement conditions at the individual street segment level. The planning process will also incorporate geospatial analysis, life-cycle cost modeling, and scenario forecasting to evaluate how different funding levels will impact the City's ability to maintain or improve its average PCI and reduce the reconstruction backlog.

Staff are currently developing and modeling multiple funding scenarios, ranging from baseline to aspirational, each tied to specific outcomes in terms of street miles improved, backlog reduction, and changes to average PCI. These scenarios will factor in inflationary trends, construction market volatility, labor availability, and the continued critical role of in-house preservation crews such as the Crack and Slurry Seal Team.

The scale, scope, and effectiveness of the 2028–2032 PMP will depend entirely on the level of capital funding allocated to street infrastructure over the next several fiscal years. If funding levels remain near the current FY 23 – FY 27 average of \$63 million per year, it is expected that the City will be able to maintain a relatively stable network PCI, though only limited progress will be made in addressing the 20% of streets currently in poor or very poor condition. However, maintaining the current funding levels will be difficult, as a significant amount of that increased funding is due to one-time Measure A Bond funding included in the Elevate '28 IIP. Conversely, increasing funding to levels closer to the \$280 million per year identified in the PMP as necessary to fully address major and minor street deficiencies would result in transformative improvements across all neighborhoods and a historic reduction in future capital liabilities.

Key policy decisions will be required regarding how to balance the rehabilitation of failed streets with the preservation of streets in fair-to-good condition. These decisions must also consider the limitations of various funding sources, many of which are restricted in their use (e.g., grant funds eligible only for arterial corridors or active transportation improvements).

Over the next year, the Department will engage in extensive coordination with City Council offices, the City Manager's Office, Financial Management, and other departments to inform the next PMP. These discussions will focus on available and potentially new funding mechanisms, opportunities for interagency coordination, and the identification of high-priority corridors based on constituent feedback, operational needs, and strategic planning objectives.

In Fiscal Year 2026, the Department anticipates presenting a City Council Study Session to formally introduce different scenarios for the City's FY 2028 – 2032 Pavement Management Plan. This presentation will include:

- A summary of updated PCI findings and current network conditions
- A preview of proposed projects and geographic distribution
- Modeling of multiple investment scenarios and their outcomes
- A discussion of funding strategies, program delivery models, and potential trade-offs

The goal of this session will be to equip Council with the data and policy options needed to make informed decisions regarding future infrastructure funding priorities, while aligning expectations about what can realistically be delivered under varying fiscal conditions.

As stewards of one of the City's most valuable physical assets, the Department of Public Works remains committed to implementing a pavement management strategy that is transparent, data-driven, and fiscally responsible. The next five-year plan will aim to preserve recent gains in pavement condition, avoid costly deferred maintenance, and ensure that all Long Beach

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residents benefit equitably from street infrastructure investments. Public Works is prepared to lead this effort in close partnership with the Mayor, City Council, City Manager, and community stakeholders.

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