

Supplemental Information Packet

**Public Communications and Agenda Related Items
Received before 4:00 p.m. for
February 9, 2021.**

Meeting of February 9, 2021

Supplemental Information:

Any agenda related public documents received and distributed to a majority of the City Council after the Agenda Packet is printed are included in Supplemental Packets. Supplemental Packets are produced as needed. The Supplemental Packet is available in the City Clerk's Office, 501 Poli Street, Room 204, Ventura, during normal business hours as well as on the City's Website – www.cityofventura.ca.gov
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Measure O Citizens Oversight Committee Agenda November 5, 2020

Item 7 – Consider Council Policy Request for Sidewalk Reimbursement Program

Dear Members of the Measure O Citizens Oversight Committee,

In November of 2020, the Public Works Director Phil Nelson presented a proposal for a first come first serve cost-sharing sidewalk improvement program that could possibly be funded by Measure O. The committee listened to the proposal and asked some really good questions. From my perspective, it seemed that the members were not yet satisfied with the amount of information they received but were open to approving the proposal. This information was brought to the Ventura City Council where, I believe, the spirit of the committee's discussion was not accurately portrayed and Ventura City Council members mistakenly believed that you had uncritically endorsed the proposal.

I believe there are some serious concerns with the proposal and I hope you will send a clearer message to the Ventura City Council that issues remain and that this may not be the best use of taxpayer funds. I have outlined some of my concerns below:

1. **The proposed cost-sharing initiative for sidewalk improvement moves us further away from an objective and systematic approach to addressing pedestrian traffic safety concerns.** Public Works has stated that they prioritize their sidewalk improvement spending based on pedestrian traffic. Yet, the Director of Public works stated in a December 10th email to me that they do not do pedestrian traffic counts but simply “judge this by location meaning there is higher traffic around schools, medical areas, shopping areas, etc.” Meanwhile, many of the most high pedestrian traffic areas of the city such as Montalvo and the Westside have areas with no sidewalks or many sidewalks that predate ADA requirements. Hence, it is a regular occurrence to see children in strollers and wheelchair-bound residents forced to travel on high traffic streets since they cannot fit on the sidewalks. Public Works has confirmed that there is currently no plan to address this and the lack of an objective and systematic approach to assessing our city's pedestrian needs will continue to put residents' lives in harm. I believe this proposed initiative actually moves us further away from resolving this very real concern.
2. **The proposed \$350,000 annual budget for the cost-sharing program equates to between 40 and 70 percent of the annual Measure O funds that were allotted sidewalk improvement in the fiscal years of 2018/2019 and 2019/20.** Such a substantial amount would surely affect the ability for the city to address its myriad of pedestrian traffic concerns.

Category	FY18/19	FY19/20	FY20/21 Through Nov
Capital Projects	\$813,910	\$344,112	\$348,373
Maint & Repair	\$0	\$168,205	\$95,507
TOTAL	\$813,910	\$512,317	\$443,880

*Data provided by Public Works Directed Phil Nelson

3. **A program based on *first come first serve* is a far cry from responsible financial stewardship of taxpayer funds.** Moving further away from objective and systematic methods to determine priorities in infrastructure funding, this project would allocate hundreds of thousands of dollars of Measure O funds toward a program that is currently being proposed as *first come first first serve*. There are currently no standards to what would be determined as a worthy project for Measure O subsidies in this proposal other than applicants' order of soliciting the subsidy. This seems very irresponsible to me.

4. **This project is unaffordable and inaccessible to poor and moderate income Venturans.** The proposed discount for families earning less than the median income of \$65,000 dollars a year would still leave these families with a bill of \$1250 dollars. A figure that would likely leave the program inaccessible to many lower income Ventura homeowners. Further, when asked if a lower cost affordable program, such as this, has been used in other municipalities, Public Works stated they had no evidence of a similar affordable option succeeding in other municipalities. Additionally, the referenced CDBG grant funding that could possibly cover 100 percent of the costs is not certain, and it's an open question if this is the best use of CDBG funding.

5. **There are equity issues with the potential unspent funds district funds.** If a particular district does not spend its proposed \$50,000 of allocated subsidies, there is nothing saying that this money will be spent on other sidewalk or infrastructure plans within a particular district that has funds remaining. The proposal stands now to simply return the money back to the general Measure O account. It is very plausible that we will see subsidies used in more affluent districts and see historically neglected districts not benefit from the proposed district-based funding allocation.

I appreciate your time and consideration of my concerns. Feel free to contact me at

████████████████████ or on my personal cell phone number at ██████████

Best Regards,

Mr. Matthew Bello
Ventura Resident

