

LOS ANGELES BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

FACT SHEET

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COMMISSIONER
DENNIS N. NISHIKAWA

The Department of Public Works of the City of Los Angeles was created by a vote of the people in 1905, initially under the management of a three-member Board of Commissioners known as the Board of Public Works. A 1925 charter amendment increased Board membership to its current five Commissioners, each appointed by the Mayor of Los Angeles, and confirmed by the City Council, to five year terms.

The full-time, five-member Board of Public Works meets in public session three times a week on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 9:30 A.M in the Public Works Board Room, #350 City Hall.

Board of Public Works Commissioners are the chief administrators of a department of more than 6,000 employees who design and execute public projects from sidewalks and bridges to wastewater treatment plants and libraries. In its 85 year history, the Department of Public Works has been responsible for construction, renovation and improvement programs involving such projects as the Los Angeles International Airport, City Hall, Hyperion and Tillman Treatment Plants, Hyperion and North Spring Street Bridges, plus hundreds of major public facilities and systems throughout the City of Los Angeles.

Unlike other City Departments, Public Works is composed of seven (7) bureaus and the Board Office, each listed separately in the City budget. The seven bureaus are: Sanitation, Street Maintenance, Engineering, Accounting, Street Lighting, Contract Administration, and Management-Employee Services.

The Department of Public Works builds the City streets, installs its sewers, constructs storm drains as well as public buildings and service facilities. Public Works cleans, repairs, and maintains approximately 6,400 miles of sewers, 1,100 miles of storm drains, and operates and maintains four wastewater treatment plants. The Board is responsible for managing the installation and repair of the City's 200,000 street lights, the collection and disposal of more than 1.4 million tons of refuse and 165 billion gallons of sewage a year. The Department's Street Maintenance Bureau annually cleans 7,600 miles of streets and alleys, resurfaces 150 miles of streets, operates two asphalt plants, and combined with purchases from private sources, utilizes more than 800,000 tons (including recycling one fourth of a million tons), trims 130,000 of the City's 680,000 trees, and cleans some five thousand public and private vacant lots. The Departments Bureau of Contract Administration is responsible for the inspection of the many hundreds of projects built for the City under contract. The Board advertises for and receives bids, and lets contracts for public improvements.

Expediting and coordinating permits for commercial and industrial construction projects, the Board also receives, hears and resolves complaints relating to a wide variety of assessments.

Eighty five years ago the major problems facing the new Board of Public Works were collecting garbage and constructing a new outfall sewer. Today, collecting the garbage is less of a problem than disposing of it. Graffiti removal now requires full-time expertise. Reclaiming our water has become as important an environmental issue as treating it. In addition, the need to generate changes in the industrial processes, substitution of raw materials, and operating and procedural improvements, are all issues that have become as important as methods used to dispose of hazardous waste.

MAJOR PROJECTS

Street Maintenance

1. Asphalt Recycling:

Combines old asphalt with virgin mix at city plants. Utilizes a contract micro-wave process with rejuvenating additive for 100% recycled material. Processes result in some \$600,000 annual cost savings, and by eliminating disposals in landfills of old asphalt, helps preserve the environment.

2. Street Tree Management:

A three-year old program to inventory all City street trees as to size, condition, location and type. Program will facilitate management of trees as to species requirements, allow for precise location of trees and define best service and preventive maintenance cycles. Program has support of local tree groups and environmentalists.

Street Lighting

1. Maintenance Consolidation:

Maintenance activities currently shared with the Department of Water and Power are being analyzed to determine if consolidating activities will

result in better service and lower costs of operation.

2. Circuit Conversions:

Initiated program to replace less reliable and generally older high voltage circuits with low voltage circuits. Will result in lower operating costs.

3. Operation Bright Lights:

A twice a year program to promote reporting of street lights in need of repair.

Engineering

1. Storm Water Management:

To facilitate the Bureau of Engineering's compliance with pending Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulation on stormwater management resulting from the Clean Water Act Amendments of 1987, the Stormwater Management Program has been created to deal with pollution coming from the City's storm drain system.

The Stormwater Program will involve inventorying numerous stormwater facilities, monitoring and identifying pollution sources, and developing programs that will reduce pollutants to stormwater systems. These measures should enhance the quality of water that primarily flows into Santa Monica Bay and Long Beach Harbor, thus making beaches environmentally safer and cleaner.

2. Solids Technology and Resource Recovery (STRR):

As a result of the STRR Group's investigative and planning efforts, the Hyperion Solids Handling (HSH) category of the Wastewater Capital Improvement Program was formed. Because of the critical nature and timing of HSH projects, STRR has been assigned Division status. Its mission is to plan, design, construct, and assist in the start up of a diversified flexible and cost effective wastewater solids handling system at the Hyperion Treatment Plant.

3. Central Library

Interior demolition, asbestos removal, artifacts removal and storage was 99 percent completed as of March 1989. The remaining work involved the cleaning of smoke damage to the second level and other areas.

4. Metro Rail

During fiscal year 1988-89, 650 permits were reviewed for the Metro Rail Project. The permits yielded approximately \$200,000 in traffic lane use fees for the Light Rail and Metro Rail impacted areas.

Sanitation

1. "Le Mer" Research Vessel:

Assigned to the Environmental Monitoring Division, Bureau of Sanitation, "Le Mer" represents the latest technological advancements in marine research vessels. Replacing the smaller, older "Marine Surveyor," "Le Mer" will be equipped with two computer systems. One computer will monitor and manage maintenance, while another portable computer will connect with the ships water quality sensor systems in order to examine structure of water levels.

At a cost of some \$4.5 million, "Le Mer" will facilitate the Environmental Monitoring Division's ability to determine characteristics of water quality and acquire water samples during the vessel's daily 15 square miles monitoring of Santa Monica Bay. By covering more area in less time, and through the analysis of more precise data simultaneously during operations, "Le Mer" will be able to provide the most advanced collection of environment data available to pollution control agencies.

2. Citywide Curbside Recycling Program

In December 1989, the Mayor and City Council directed the Bureau of Sanitation to expand curbside recycling citywide, with a goal of 50%. The Recycling and Waste Reduction Division was created for this purpose. Ninety-five thousand households currently participate in pilot curbside recycling, and the program is scheduled to service approximately 800,000 households by the end of 1992. The Division also provides educational materials on waste reduction and recycling, assists in formulating city recycling

policies, and develops markets for recyclable materials.

Board of Public Works

1. Operation Clean Sweep:

Created in 1987, Operation Clean Sweep (OCS) coordinates City-wide anti-litter and anti-graffiti programs designed to promote and encourage the maintenance and beautification of the City's neighborhoods. OCS has worked with more than 20,000 volunteers involved in the cleaning of alleys, vacant lots, streets; eradicating graffiti; and planting trees. It contracts with twelve community based, non-profit organizations who remove graffiti in response to hotline requests, and sponsors such programs as "Adopt-A-Median" (beautification of unsightly community areas) and "Adopt-A-Basket" (adoption and maintenance of litter baskets in various communities.)

2. Office of Water Reclamation

Jointly funded by the Department of Public Works and the Department of Water and Power, the Office is involved in long-range planning, supporting legislation that promotes water reclamation, and developing new projects and markets for reclaimed water. A major goal for the new program is to increase the use of the City's existing reclaimed water so that domestic water supplies can be reallocated to meet projected future deficits. By the year 2010, the Office of Water Reclamation's goals are to reclaim forty (40) percent of the City's wastewater flow.

To attain this ambitious target, large capital investments in treatment and transport facilities will be required. The Office of Water Reclamation is investigating methods of financing these facilities.

3. Hazardous and Toxic Materials Project (HTM):

Established on July 1, 1988, the Project is designed to ensure that the City conforms to and promotes the National Hazardous Waste Minimization Policy. To achieve this goal HTM will provide direct regulatory and waste

minimization assistance to City departments, industry and businesses that use hazardous materials and generate hazardous wastes. To date (40) City of Los Angeles sites have been inspected and evaluated for current hazardous waste management practices. More than 400 City employees have been trained in proper hazardous waste management methods.

4. Integrated Solid Waste Management (ISWM):

Providing technical information on recycling and assisting large producers of waste in setting up their own recycling programs, is a major charge of ISWM, but it is also responsible for: (1) creating public education campaigns for source reduction, recycling and purchase of recycled products, (2) developing markets for recycled materials, and (3) coordinating preparation of the City of Los Angeles plan to be submitted under State Law which will demonstrate how the City intends to achieve a 50% reduction and recycling goal.

Contract Administration

1. To encourage and facilitate the use of minority and women business enterprises (M/WBE) as subcontractors on construction projects in the City of Los Angeles, the City has recently centralized the certification of M/WBE's within the Bureau of Contract Administration. This will result in both faster and more efficient certification of minority and women owned and operated businesses. Prime contractors will have access to a uniform city-wide list of certified sub-contractors, and sham operations will be more effectively weeded out to assure the integrity of this important program.

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