

Pacific Palisades Community Council Infrastructure Committee

June 3, 2026 (Version 5)

Response to AECOM Long-Term Recovery Plan

The PPCC Infrastructure Committee thanks AECOM for its work on the May 2026 Draft of the Pacific Palisades Long-Term Recovery Plan (LTRP). The plan represents a significant collaborative effort across all levels of government to address the devastation of the 2025 Palisades Fire. The "whole-community" approach is commendable. Several critical infrastructure gaps remain, and these require urgent attention before the plan is finalized.

The following feedback focuses on the Infrastructure Recovery Support Function (RSF 5) and the priorities expressed by our community.

I. **Water Security: Reservoirs, Hydrants, and Pressure**

- **Reservoirs:** The LTRP identifies the Santa Ynez and Pacific Palisades Reservoirs as long-term projects with only "Partial" funding. The Pacific Palisades Reservoir has remained out of service since 2014. Restoring this local storage is vital for wildfire resilience. We see no reason to keep both fully drained while the community faces a real ongoing threat - waiting for funding and repair planning, and construction material gathering.
 - **The Palisades Reservoir must be made a priority as a firefighting resource within the next 12 months.**
- **Fire Hydrants:** The community has prioritized a "secure water supply for firefighting, including properly maintained hydrants".
 - Phase 1 of the "Water Main Betterment Projects" is active. The plan gives no clear explanation of how this will make the hydrant network perform better. The program includes the Rustic Canyon and Rivera area, which fell outside the fire disaster area. Resources should be allocated to the affected areas first OR please provide an explanation why these areas are included in the list of projects.

- Phase 2 remains "Proposed". Every hydrant replacement should be treated as a critical-path item rather than being subject to partial funding.
- Why are there no direct projects making sure that all hydrants will be in working order? Why are there no direct projects to add hydrants to areas that need new installations?
 - **Example 1:** Parts of the Via Bluffs are missing hydrants. These were discovered as applicants applied for building permits.
 - **Example 2:** Palisades Drive has hydrants on only one side of the street where if water lines are pulled across the street, no one can evacuate.
- **Water Pressure:** Upsizing water mains is a necessary step to ensure hydraulic capacity during emergencies.
 - The plan must clarify how pressure will be maintained when multiple hydrants run simultaneously during a future event. An LADWP deployment plan to deploy LADWP water trucks is critical in the event of issues.
 - How many water trucks does LADWP have to deploy in emergency situations?
- **New Water Meters:** A plan must be included to credit to all eligible families rebuilding with the cost of upgrading their LADWP water meters.

II. Undergrounding: Power and Telecom Lines

- **Electric Power:** Transitioning 45 miles of 4.8kV overhead lines to 12.47kV underground facilities is essential for reducing wildfire risk. The 2031 completion date is dangerously distant for a community in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. We urge the LADWP to accelerate this timeline.
 - This plan offers no discussion of process and procedure for the transition with every homeowner.
 - No decision of how electrical lines will be turned off in an emergency to prevent future fires.
 - Additionally, fire crews must keep clear of energized downed conductors, which can delay direct suppression until affected line segments are confirmed de-energized. The plan must include rapid,

verifiable segment-level de-energization capabilities and coordinated LADWP–LAFD procedures.

- **Telecommunications:** The Mayor and Councilmember have requested the CPUC mandate concurrent undergrounding for telecom providers. This is not yet a secured commitment.
 - Without a formal project lead and dedicated commitment for telecom undergrounding, we risk "rework" - streets dug up multiple times - or worse, vulnerable fiber cables above ground while power lines are buried.
 - Telecom company's agreeing to underground is a critical path item and should receive funding for the process, not the undergrounding, if required. Telecom companies should finance the undergrounding themselves and not receive City or State emergency funds which are needed for other programs.

III. Street Lights and Wireless Connectivity

- **Cell Towers in Street Lights:** The plan proposes replacing 550 damaged street light poles, which will include "remote monitoring nodes". Macro cell sites were destroyed in the fire, and signal strength was identified as a major weakness, these nodes should be explicitly designed to support "small cell" wireless technology providing reliable emergency communication. The City designing poles to support small cells is reasonable and cheap — it means specifying conduit, power capacity, and mounting room now so carriers can attach later.
- **Funding Gaps:** Only 26 of the 550 poles are funded. Safe streets require uniform lighting. Leaving 95% of the replacement unfunded is a significant safety risk.

IV. Roadway Resurfacing and Coordination

- **Unfunded Resurfacing:** Perhaps the most glaring gap is the "StreetsLA Capital Improvement Projects," which include roadway resurfacing for charred streets. This project is currently listed as "**Unfunded**" and "**Proposed**".
- **Strategic Risk:** Resurfacing must follow undergrounding street by street. If streets are paved first, then torn up to trench utilities, and then repaved funds are wasted due to lack of planning across departments effectively paying twice for the same result. An unfunded, unscheduled resurfacing project cannot be sequenced this

way, so the default outcome is either wasted repaving or a decade of patched, degraded roads while utilities go in piecemeal.

V. Green Infrastructure: Restoring the Canopy and Urban Forestry

- **Tree Planting and Species Selection:** The LTRP rightly identifies the need to replace the hundreds of street trees lost in the 2025 fire. The plan must mandate a **"Right Tree, Right Place"** policy. Fire risk demands a clear commitment to planting fire-resistant, drought-tolerant species - trees offering significant shade without adding to the fuel load near structures.
 - The plan offloads species and siting decisions onto "the community" while committing no published species list, no neighborhood review step, and no named responsible city agencies, such as the Urban Forestry Division of both Streets LA and Recreation and Parks, as well as LADWP's funded City Plants.
 - This is delegation without resourcing. The City of LA cannot assign the work and withhold the means to do it, then call the result community-driven. Name a process, a budget, and an accountable office, or the canopy will not be replanted.
 - The PPCC, the PPCC Infrastructure Committee, the Palisades Forestry Committee (PFC) must be consulted prior to any final decision making.
 - The plan needs to include city and community collaboration on a Pacific Palisades Urban Forest Master Plan.
 - The Palisades Forestry Committee has organized a team of landscape architects (experienced in developing urban forest master plans), and arborists and community members, to create an Urban Forest Master Plan (PPUFMP) that will collect and survey the Palisades community.
- **Tree-Utility Interface Standards:** We need to ensure this is listed as a critical item and is funded right away to protect our green infrastructure.
- **Watering and Establishment:** Planting trees is half the work. The current draft lacks a detailed "Watering and Maintenance Plan" for the first three to five years of growth. Without a dedicated budget for watering trucks or restored automated

irrigation systems—integrated with our water infrastructure repairs—newly planted trees are unlikely to survive.

- The City of LA should explore public-private partnerships or "adopt-a-tree" programs to help these trees survive their first years.
- **Uniform Restoration Across the Burn Area:** Green infrastructure must extend beyond the primary corridors into the neighborhoods most denuded by the fire, so the entire community benefits from the cooling effects of a restored urban forest.

VI. Missing from LTRP:

- **SoCal Should Be Required to Upgrade Infrastructure**
 - **Master Shut-Off Values for Pacific Palisades:** The LTRP has an egregious oversight when the report mentions working with SoCal Gas as a service provider but fails to recognize issues in their current infrastructure.
 - Currently the mainline shut off is located in Malibu. This should be required to change for the safety of the community.
- **Public Works Should Create Septic to Sewer Program**
 - Many homeowners face hardships to rebuild because before the fire they were on a septic system but the City requires them to connect to the main sewer line which can cost over \$100,000.00 per home.
 - The LTRP should include a program that identifies the need for the City to collectively help these fire victims rebuild and avoid the costly obstacle of connecting to the City sewer system individually.

VII. Our Infrastructure Conclusion:

The LTRP provides the start of a roadmap. The "Proposed" and "Unfunded" status of core infrastructure projects — street resurfacing, reservoir restoration with fire hydrant support, and the planting and long-term maintenance of the urban forest — leaves the plan incomplete as a recovery instrument.

A document cannot be called a "Recovery Plan" while the physical foundations remain in partial completion. We ask that the Final LTRP do three things for each gap identified above:

1. Assign a funding source or a committed timeline to secure one;

2. Name an accountable City office or department;
3. Define a closure milestone against which progress can be tracked.

A list of Unfunded and Proposed line items with no owner and no date is not a plan. It is a statement of intentions.

We submit these comments for the record and request a written response addressing each point before the plan is finalized. We look forward to a Final LTRP rebuilding the community stronger, greener, more secure, and more resilient than before.