



MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCILMEMBER
— DISTRICT 10 —

April 23, 2021

The Honorable Paul Krekorian
Chair, Budget & Finance Committee
City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

RE: Priorities for the City of Los Angeles' Fiscal Year 2021-22 Proposed Budget

Dear Chair Krekorian:

I am encouraged by the investments in Mayor Garcetti's proposed Fiscal Year 2021-2022 budget to address the most pressing issues facing the City of Los Angeles, namely the need to address the homelessness and housing crisis, reimagine public safety and alleviate poverty, and fully recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. As we move forward with reopening our economy in the face of increased homelessness and inequality, it is the City Council's responsibility to adopt a budget that reflects our values and ensures there is a profound and ongoing commitment to a scaled-up response in each of these areas, as I further detail below.

Establishing the Pillars of a Right to Housing

Improve our Crisis Response with a Strong Leadership Model

Unequivocally, increased resources are fundamental to addressing this crisis at the scale needed across our City. In addition, we need a strategy and leadership structure that promotes efficiency and accountability. This would be best done by consolidating housing and homelessness activities under the newly proposed Los Angeles Housing Department (LAHD). A centralized leader responsible for overseeing the City's homelessness efforts is critical to achieving better coordination – and helping more people off the streets with unprecedented urgency.

Commit Robust Capital Funds to Develop More Housing

Furthermore, the entitlement and development of many more affordable and supportive housing units is essential to addressing our homelessness crisis. The City must identify significant resources to increase the pipeline and pace of this much-needed housing.

Ensure Adequate Staffing

In addition to doubling down on the capital resources necessary to achieve this, I urge the City to take the following specific actions:

- Create an Assistant General Manager position to direct the LAHD's work on homelessness policies and programs, along with a Senior Management Analyst II and Management Analyst; and
- Create three dedicated City Planner positions to support the expedited review of affordable housing projects citywide within the Department of City Planning.

Reimagining a More Equitable Los Angeles

As we continue efforts to reimagine a more equitable and just City, I applaud the efforts to develop a Therapeutic Van Program in partnership with the Los Angeles Fire Department and the County of Los Angeles (County) Department of Mental Health, as well as to advance the solicitation of a comprehensive unarmed response to address non-violent emergencies, while at the same time creating workforce opportunities for those with lived experience of justice involvement and homelessness. Following the identification of a suitable partner, this effort should be operationalized in coordination with appropriate County health and social service departments, with sufficient funding to facilitate a meaningful response across the City.

Advancing an equity agenda also fundamentally means investing in the public infrastructure and community assets needed to ensure black and brown communities thrive. Leimert Park Village, considered the epicenter of Afrocentric cultural and commerce across Los Angeles and the nation, is in need of substantial investment to ensure that the City's infrastructure, including the public streets, parking lots and the Vision Theater can all contribute to a thriving center for culture and commerce.

Thank you for your consideration of these critical components which I believe are fundamental in advancing a budget that truly bends the arc towards justice. I look forward to working with you and our colleagues to fully vet and adopt a balanced and equitable budget in the month to come.

With hope, .



MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
Councilmember, 10th District

c: Members of the Budget and Finance Committee
Sharon Tso, Chief Legislative Analyst
Richard Llewellyn, Chief Administrative Officer
Holly Wolcott, City Clerk