

May 7th, 2024

The Honorable Chair Bob Blumenfield, Councilmember, 3rd District

The Honorable Vice Chair Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Councilmember, 8th District

The Honorable Katy Yaroslavsky, Councilmember, 5th District

The Honorable Tim McOsler, Councilmember, 15th District

The Honorable Monica Rodriguez, Councilmember, 7th District

**RE: Budget Priorities for the City of LA and Council District 1 for FY 24/25**

Honorable Members of the Budget, Finance, and Innovation Committee:

As we approach the upcoming fiscal year, your committee is facing an incredibly difficult and important task, one which will have lasting impacts on Angelenos and the City family. As you continue to hear the departmental and non-departmental budget requests for the City of Los Angeles, I hope you will take the following into consideration.

- *The decisions we make today will have lasting impacts for our most vulnerable Angelenos for years to come.* Cuts to our already under-funded safety net programs undermine our ability to keep our community members housed in habitable dwelling units, provide workforce programs that set youth and families up for economic independence, or provide meals for our elders, resulting in long-term impacts on the quality of life for Angelenos who rely on these essential services. We must ensure our communities have the adequate resources to live and thrive in the City.
- *We must break away from budgeting culture that has left our city in disarray.* For years we have deferred maintenance on City-owned and operated facilities. Prolonging these necessary updates only makes them more costly down the line, manufacturing avoidable crises where light poles fall on cars and people, or roofs fall apart at libraries, recreation centers, and even City Hall. Investing in critical upgrades to our infrastructure now not only saves us costs in the long run, but ensures that we do not put our City employees or residents in harm's way by letting it fail.
- *This is a crisis of our own making.* Our current budgeting process has failed to right size the City's spending year over year, and instead has led us to a place where we are unable to adequately fund Departments with the resources they need to serve our communities without

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asking our City family to do more with less. We have an opportunity to adjust that process and think more holistically about the needs of our City and our most vulnerable communities.

- *Investing in services for our most vulnerable is the work of prevention.* The Council often talks about investing in prevention for situations such as theft or violence. Now is the moment for us to prioritize our constituents and take actionable steps to invest in comprehensive prevention strategies that will create measurable impacts and long-term cost savings for our future budgets. Investing in people and ensuring that communities have the resources they need in a city as expensive as Los Angeles is a proven method to prevent vulnerable people from turning to crime to survive. Most importantly, it will allow Angelenos to live dignified lives and reduce the financial burden on all of our systems, including economic and workforce development, police, and fire departments.

We have an important opportunity to course correct in a way that will help all boats rise without sacrificing the resources that assist the most vulnerable Angelenos. With this in mind, I urgently request that you consider the following budget requests for the City and for Council District 1.

#### **Citywide**

- Add \$6,230,809 to Community Investment for Families for Survivor Services. This is to absorb the Victims of Crime Act funding that will be cut from the City due to changes at the State;
- Add \$6,500,000 to Community Investment for Families for survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking. This funding will be utilized to support the thousands of domestic violence survivors across the City. In the last year, CIFD had to turn away 9,000 survivors seeking support;
- Restore Position Authority and Funding for Animal Services for two Veterinary Technicians, one Administrative Clerk in support of the Volunteer Support Program, and one Administrative Clerk for the Licensing Unit;
- Add \$4,222,735 for Animal Services in service of the updated spay and neuter voucher amounts to be distributed by LAAS and assist with the overpopulation of stray dogs, cats, and rabbits across the City;
- Restore Position Authority and Funding to Recreation and Parks for the 85 position authorities listed in their budget letter. Ensuring that land and park maintenance and needed updates are

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maintained is of the utmost importance, otherwise the City will be paying for necessary improvements at a greater cost later down the line;

- Restore \$1,000,000 from the General City Purposes for LA's Best Afterschool Enrichment. This will support in providing after school care and services to students across 200 elementary schools;
- Restore Position Authority and Funding to the Bureau of Street Services for 23 positions in service of the Sidewalk Repair Program and transfer this funding to the Pavement Preservation Program Access Ramp Construction. This funding will assist in moving forward our legally mandated requirements to meet the Willits settlement;
- Restore Position Authority and Funding to the Housing Department for 48 deleted vacant positions - 34 of which are entirely special or fee funded with no General Fund impact. These positions are crucial to maintaining existing services while also absorbing the expanded responsibilities due to new housing stock and policies passed that require staffing for proper implementation. At a minimum, the budget should fund the 41 of 48 positions proposed by LAHD, including the positions for the Accessible Housing Program (AcHP) which are funded by the General Fund, but offset by changes proposed by LAHD and are necessary for our legal obligations to provide safe and accessible units; and,
- Restore Position Authority and Funding to the Economic and Workforce Development Department for two management analysts for the new Citywide Garment and Fashion Industry Economic Development Program.

#### **Council District 1**

- \$3.7 million for the Street Lighting Improvement Plan for the area surrounding Mayfair to ensure the safety of the surrounding neighborhood;
- \$3 million from the Opioid Settlement Funds for the development and programming of a respite center at MacArthur Park;
- \$2 million for funding of eight DOT identified and recommended locations for Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons;
- \$500,000 for funding of two DOT identified and recommended locations for Speed Tables;
- \$1 million for funding to close the gap for Maya Corridor to complete the original design; and,

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- \$1.9 million to remove the hazardous storage tanks at the Lincoln Heights Jail and \$100,000 for community engagement efforts for the redevelopment of the site.

### **Funding Offsets**

I understand that we are in a difficult budget year and any ask must come with offsets that will keep us in the same overall budget position or with a net negative from the Mayor's Proposed Budget. Considering the size of certain department budgets, there are opportunities to streamline their costs, while ensuring their work is not negatively impacted.

- Reduce funding in the General Fund for Black and Whites for LAPD from \$21,986,170 to \$10,000,000. This will provide funding for the cars that are in dire need of replacement or upgrades, while also freeing up needed money for other necessary programs across the City.
- Move hiring funds for 574 funded LAPD officers into the Unappropriated Balance to be then moved over to LAPD salaries general once enrollment for each class has been verified. This will ensure that monies not utilized will be available for the other needs of the City.

The Budget, Finance, and Innovation Committee's commitment to serving the nearly 4 million Angelenos with the best service the City can provide, while also balancing the precarious budget situation we are in right now has been readily apparent in all of the budget hearings thus far. We have an opportunity to lead this city in the right direction while maintaining our support of the most vulnerable Angelenos.

Sincerely,



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Councilmember, 1st District

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