



COUNCILWOMAN MONICA RODRIGUEZ
SEVENTH DISTRICT

April 29, 2026

Chair Katy Yaroslavsky
Budget and Finance Committee
City Hall
200 N. Spring Street, Suite 440
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget Priorities (CF: 26-0600)

Dear Chair Yaroslavsky,

Thank you for your leadership as the Budget and Finance Committee begins departmental hearings and deliberations on the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2026-27 Proposed Budget. This stage of the budget process is among the most critical, as it provides the Committee and Council with the opportunity to carefully evaluate departmental requests, operational priorities, and proposed expenditures to ensure the final adopted budget reflects both fiscal discipline and the core needs of Angelenos.

As the Committee reviews testimony from City departments and considers modifications to the Mayor's proposal, I urge a focus on programs and investments that have demonstrated measurable success, address longstanding service gaps, strengthen public safety, and preserve neighborhood vibrancy. Departmental deliberations should prioritize practical and results-driven investments while exercising caution toward proposals that may create additional fiscal uncertainty or undermine broader City priorities.

In advance of these hearings, I submit the following requests, priorities and concerns for the Committee's consideration as it develops its recommendations for the City Council's final adopted budget.

Budget Requests

- **Regulating Data Centers (\$226,776)**
Funding for two City Planners to prepare a data center ordinance is a prudent investment that will help regulate a rapidly expanding industry currently treated on an ad hoc basis. As demand for AI and digital infrastructure grows, Los Angeles must establish clear zoning, operational standards, and community protections to address

impacts related to energy use, water consumption, environmental concerns, and neighborhood compatibility.

- **Roger Jessup Park Daycare Center (\$2 Million)**

Gap funding allocated to the Department of Recreation and Parks for the Roger Jessup Park Daycare Center is a critical investment that will help complete a long-needed community resource for working families. With approximately \$7.5 million in Proposition K funding already secured, this additional support will help deliver essential childcare infrastructure and expand access to early childhood services in an underserved area.

- **Sunland Dog Park (\$1.1 Million)**

Gap funding allocated to the Department of Recreation and Parks for the Sunland Dog Park will help advance the construction of an important community amenity that expands recreational opportunities for residents and their pets. With \$240,000 in design funding already secured, this investment will help complete a valuable neighborhood project that enhances public space access.

Budget Priorities to Advance

- **Citywide Expansion of RV-to-Home Program (\$1.6 Million)**

The RV-to-Home model pioneered in Council District 7 has demonstrated measurable success, housing nearly 350 individuals and permanently removing approximately 165 recreational vehicles from City streets. This compassionate, coordinated model combines outreach, case management, housing navigation, and vehicle disposal into a single strategy that addresses both homelessness and neighborhood stabilization.

The expansion of this program citywide represents a cost-effective and proven approach that moves individuals from unsafe living conditions into stable housing while restoring public health and safety. Funding this expansion ensures that communities across Los Angeles can replicate a model with demonstrated success and accountability and builds on the Council's work on Council File 22-1313.

- **Los Angeles Fire Department Wildland Hand Crew Program (\$3.29 Million)**

As climate conditions intensify wildfire threats, Los Angeles must proactively strengthen its wildfire suppression and prevention capabilities. Continued funding and additional positions supporting the LAFD Wildland Hand Crew Program are an essential investment in regional preparedness.

These crews provide critical firefighting capacity in difficult terrain, create defensible space in high fire severity zones, and improve the City's emergency readiness. Communities in Council District 7 and hillsides throughout Los Angeles have repeatedly experienced the devastating effects of wildfires, and this investment is necessary to protect lives, property, and infrastructure.

- **Sylmar Fire Station Project Financing Analysis**

Public safety infrastructure must remain a top priority, particularly in underserved high-risk communities. Directing the City Administrative Officer to evaluate whether the Sylmar Fire Station project qualifies for MICA financing, and whether future voter-approved fire and emergency preparedness resources could support associated debt, is a prudent and responsible step.

This analysis is necessary to ensure the City strategically advances critical infrastructure projects while responsibly leveraging financing tools available for long-term public safety improvements.

- **Children’s Savings Account Program (\$315,190)**

Investments in youth opportunity and long-term economic mobility are essential. Continued support for the Children’s Savings Account Program ensures thousands of Los Angeles students gain early access to financial empowerment tools that can improve educational and economic outcomes.

This program has demonstrated meaningful potential in fostering generational wealth-building and expanding opportunity for working families. Supporting this initiative reflects the City’s commitment to proactive economic inclusion.

- **Bureau of Street Services Pavement Preservation Access Ramp Program (\$6.8 Million)**

Investing in sidewalks, access ramps, and street preservation directly improves neighborhood safety, accessibility, and walkability. This funding will help address longstanding infrastructure deficiencies while ensuring compliance with accessibility standards.

For communities that have historically experienced underinvestment, these improvements are vital to ensuring equitable infrastructure delivery and safe public spaces.

- **Los Angeles Police Department Hiring Plan (510 Officers)**

Public safety remains the City’s most essential responsibility. Funding the hiring necessary to offset projected attrition and maintain 8,555 sworn officers is critical to sustaining service levels, emergency response capacity, and neighborhood safety.

While civilianization and alternative response models remain important, maintaining baseline sworn staffing is necessary to ensure the LAPD can meet constitutional policing obligations, respond to violent crime, and support specialized operations. Recognizing this as another difficult fiscal year, we must maintain current staffing levels but also build flexibility into the budget that allows for the hiring of additional sworn personnel if the fiscal outlook improves due to savings or increased revenues.

- **RepresentLA Immigrant Legal Services (\$1 Million)**

Los Angeles must continue supporting vulnerable immigrant communities through legal services and access to representation. Funding for RepresentLA ensures families facing immigration-related legal challenges have access to critical support.

In last year's Mayor's Proposed Budget, funding for this program was eliminated; however, the City Council ultimately restored support after recognizing its essential role for immigrant families across Los Angeles. I appreciate the inclusion of \$1 million in the current proposed budget, which will help sustain this important work during a period of heightened uncertainty.

I also strongly encourage dedicating \$250,000 within this funding specifically for deported veterans who have honorably served our country, ensuring they receive the legal representation and protections they deserve. While this allocation is an important step, future budget cycles should continue exploring opportunities to expand support as demand grows.

- **Business Corridor Safety Deployment (\$5.3 Million)**

When I was a member of the Budget and Finance Committee, I helped initiate this effort in recognition of the urgent need to provide additional public safety resources to business corridors across Los Angeles. This investment was designed to support local businesses, commercial districts, and neighborhood economic centers facing increased crime, safety concerns, and quality-of-life challenges.

The continued allocation of \$5.3 million for sworn overtime deployment in business corridors reflects the importance of maintaining strong support for our small businesses and local economies.

Budget Priorities of Concern

- **Expansion of Vacation Rental Policies**

I remain opposed to any proposal to expand vacation rental allowances or create additional short-term rental frameworks. Los Angeles continues to face a severe housing affordability crisis, and policy decisions that may accelerate the conversion of housing stock into short-term accommodations warrant caution.

Rather than broadening vacation rental opportunities, the City should prioritize preserving housing availability, protecting neighborhoods, and strengthening enforcement of current home-sharing regulations. Expanding short-term rentals, even if just for the LA 28 Olympics, is a risky financial decision, and we cannot rely on phantom taxes to balance our budget.

- **Enforcement Framework Expansion**

Enforcement of existing rentals is a practical approach that should fund itself if done correctly.

- **Pre-Payment of Hotel Tax for Olympic Infrastructure**

Although infrastructure investments ahead of the 2028 Olympic Games are necessary, allowing advance pre-payment of Transient Occupancy Tax revenues, specifically from short-term rentals, raises concerns regarding long-term fiscal sustainability, revenue forecasting, and budget flexibility.

The City must carefully evaluate whether leveraging future tax revenues in this manner could create unintended fiscal vulnerabilities or constrain future budgetary options. Major infrastructure investments should be pursued through transparent, sustainable funding strategies that do not compromise future revenues.

- **Gang Reduction and Youth Development Office (\$38.4M)**

The Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) plays an important role in supporting violence prevention, intervention, re-entry services, and family resiliency in communities disproportionately impacted by crime.

However, given the significant \$38.4 million allocation, it is appropriate for the City Council to closely review GRYD's programming structure, service delivery outcomes, and overall expenditure framework during budget deliberations. A comprehensive evaluation of program effectiveness, fiscal accountability, and measurable community impact is necessary to ensure these substantial public investments are being deployed efficiently and producing intended results. Including standardizing training for all interventionists, similar to the work I advocated for in 2023 with Project TURN (Therapeutic Unarmed Response for Neighborhoods). Strengthening oversight of GRYD expenditures will help ensure resources are strategically aligned with the City's broader violence prevention and youth development goals. I ask for this funding to be moved into the Unappropriated Balance to maintain Council oversight.

- **Homelessness Inside Safe Program (\$98.7M, 62% Increase from FY 25/26)**

Since the creation of the Inside Safe program, I have raised concerns of the ongoing cost associated with the program. In years when the City Budget is causing us to look closely at all programs, Inside Safe must be included. I recognize that we can not flip a switch and end the program; however, we need to ensure we are being smart with every dollar, especially as we work to comply with the LA Alliance Settlement. I encourage the Budget and Finance Committee to move the funding for this program into the Unappropriated Balance. This will allow the program to continue and allow the Council to maintain oversight and deliver efficiencies.

As the Budget and Finance Committee undertakes its review of departmental budget requests and develops recommendations for the final Fiscal Year 2026-27 Adopted Budget, it is imperative that our decisions remain grounded in measurable outcomes, responsible governance, and equitable service delivery.

Departmental hearings provide an essential opportunity to strengthen investments in proven programs such as RV-to-Home, wildfire preparedness, youth economic opportunity, infrastructure modernization, public safety, immigrant legal support, business corridor safety, and critical community projects, while also carefully scrutinizing proposals that may create housing instability, rely on uncertain fiscal mechanisms, or lack sufficient oversight of substantial public expenditures.

I appreciate your leadership throughout this process and look forward to working collaboratively with the Committee to ensure the final adopted budget reflects strategic, responsible, and community-centered investments for neighborhoods across Los Angeles.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monica Rodriguez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping tail.

Monica Rodriguez
Councilwoman, Seventh District

Cc:
Mayor Karen Bass
City Administrative Officer, Matt Szabo
Chief Legislative Analyst, Sharon Tso