



PUBLIC COMMENT – Budget Hearing, May 20, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

1 message

jonathan portela <jonathanportela716@outlook.com>
To: "Clerk.CPS@lacity.org" <Clerk.CPS@lacity.org>

Wed, May 20, 2026 at 12:08 PM

Jonathan M. Portela
jonathanportela716@outlook.com
c/o General Delivery, Los Angeles, CA
May 20, 2026

PUBLIC COMMENT – Budget Hearing, May 20, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

Councilmembers,

I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this budget hearing. Over the past two years, I have dedicated significant time to studying the systems that shape homelessness and public safety in Los Angeles. My goal is not to criticize, but to share information that may help the Council make the most effective use of public resources.

I want to highlight several data points that are directly relevant to the budget decisions before you, with the hope that they might inform a more cost-effective approach.

YESTERDAY'S VOTE AND PROGRAM COST-EFFECTIVENESS

The City Administrative Officer's audit of Section 41.18 enforcement found that over three years, the program cost approximately 3 million dollars and resulted in two permanent housing placements. That works out to about 1.5 million dollars per housing outcome. Any organization, public or private, would benefit from reviewing a program with that cost profile to identify efficiencies. I respectfully suggest that those 3 million dollars might achieve far more housing outcomes if redirected to direct shelter creation or rental assistance. The evidence from the audit offers a clear path to greater impact per dollar.

THE LA ALLIANCE SETTLEMENT AND BED TARGETS

The LA Alliance for Human Rights settlement requires nearly 13,000 shelter beds by June 2027. The court has expressed concern about the pace of progress. The quarterly status report filed with the Housing Committee contains the specific metrics. As the Council finalizes the budget, cross-referencing the shelter bed requirements with the proposed allocations could ensure that the funding matches the legal commitment. I believe this is an area where targeted investment now could prevent costlier court intervention later.

ALGORITHMIC TOOLS AND FAIRNESS

The VI-SPDAT vulnerability assessment used to determine shelter eligibility has been found to exhibit racial disparities in its scoring. LAHSA is transitioning to a replacement, but the current tool remains in use during the transition. A temporary pause on algorithmic eligibility determinations, pending an independent civil rights review, would protect both the unhoused population and the city from potential liability. It would also align with the city's equity goals.

METRO TRANSPARENCY AND BUDGET OVERSIGHT

In my research, I have reviewed Metro's FY25 Audited Financials, which show a 524.5 million dollar line for Professional and Technical Services, un-itemized, along with a 150 million dollar litigation settlement approved in September 2025. Because the LAPD contract with Metro is funded in part through this budget, I believe the Council would benefit from requesting an itemized breakdown of that line and a full public disclosure of the settlement. Greater visibility into these expenditures would support more informed budgeting by the Council.

SCAG DATA AND REGIONAL TRENDS

The Southern California Association of Governments published its Transportation Trends Report in March 2026, reviewing data across 27 transit agencies. The report documents that ridership recovery remains incomplete. With Metro's public safety budget growing to 430 million dollars while fare assistance remains flat, aligning spending with the ridership data could yield better service outcomes. I encourage the Council to instruct its SCAG representatives to advocate for that alignment.

LIBRARY ACCESS

Public libraries are where I and many others conduct essential research and prepare civic participation. Ensuring these spaces remain accessible and free of disruption supports the democratic process. I respectfully ask the Council to reaffirm that library access is protected for all Angelenos.

IN CLOSING

I have shared this information in the spirit of collaboration. I am not here to assign blame but to contribute facts that may help you optimize the use of public funds. Redirecting enforcement savings to shelter, pausing algorithmic eligibility tools for review, and requesting greater transparency from Metro are practical steps that I believe can move the city closer to its housing and equity goals.

I appreciate your time and remain available to provide any additional documentation that might be helpful.

Respectfully,

Jonathan M. Portela