

MOTION

The City of Los Angeles is responsible for providing core services to its residents, including public safety, fire prevention and medical response, safe and well-maintained streets, parks, libraries and more. All of these are critical to the well-being of those who call Los Angeles home. Because the City – unlike the federal government – has a legal obligation to have a balanced budget each year, the core function of the Mayor and the City Council is to determine how to balance the various needs for public services within the City’s budgetary constraints. This work is especially challenging because California voters have placed severe restraints on local officials’ ability to raise revenue.

For the 2026-27 Fiscal Year that starts July 1, 2026, the City projects nearly \$15 billion in revenue. More than half of that – or nearly \$8 billion – is “restricted” revenue that must be spent for specific services. Less than half – or under \$7 billion – is “unrestricted” revenue that the Mayor and Council may spend on any of the City’s needs.

A majority of the City Council has voted to place a measure on the November 2026 ballot that would double the share of City revenue that is guaranteed to the Recreation and Parks Department, under the rationale that parks are both vitally important and underfunded. Those who oppose ballot-box budgeting are accused of not supporting parks.

To be consistent, the City Council should take the same approach to several other vital public services.

To its credit, to address chronic underfunding of the Fire Department, UFLAC has qualified a measure for the November 3, 2026 ballot asking Los Angeles voters to impose a one-half percent sales tax to provide additional funding for the Fire Department, and fix the Fire Department’s share of the City’s discretionary budget funding for at least ten years. The Fire Department is responsible not only for fire suppression, such as the Palisades Fire and recent Boyle Heights warehouse fire, but also for fire prevention and emergency medical response to ensure that people receive life-saving treatment and transport as quickly as possible. Whether or not the sales tax measure passes, the City Charter should be amended to guarantee that the Fire Department receives at least 16% of the General City Budget, an increase from the approximately 10% in the FY26-27 Budget. Anyone who opposes this measure clearly believes that it is unimportant to protect Los Angeles residents from catastrophic fires, earthquakes and other natural disasters, and that people experiencing medical emergencies should be allowed to suffer unnecessarily.

The Americans with Disabilities Act, or ADA, is an important federal civil rights law that requires the City to improve curb ramps when it resurfaces streets with sidewalks. This is essential to allow persons with mobility and visual impairments to fully participate in all life activities. For many years, the City has ignored this obligation. Currently, the City goes through contortions to avoid installing curb cuts: resurfacing only streets without sidewalks, and calling work on major streets “large asphalt repairs.” The City has estimated the annual cost of complying with the ADA curb ramp requirement at \$100 million


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per year for the next 20 years. The City Charter should be amended to guarantee this funding. Anyone who opposes such a measure clearly believes that the City's elected officials (and by extension any elected official) should be free to ignore civil rights laws with impunity, and that disabled people are not entitled to full participation in civic life.

Public Safety is the City's top budgetary priority. As other demands for City services grow, it has become increasingly challenging to maintain a police force that is necessary for a City that covers 469 square miles and is home to 4 million people. For this reason, the City Charter should be amended to ensure that the Police Department is funded at a level to ensure that Los Angeles has at least as many police officers as the average number of officers per capita as the United States' ten largest cities. Anyone who opposes such a measure clearly believes that public safety is unimportant, and that no Angeleno is entitled to feel safe from crime.

Public Safety is not limited to traditional law enforcement. In recent years, the City has made strides to stand up unarmed response programs that can respond to calls where a police officer with a gun is not needed and, in some instances, can make the situation worse. The City has estimated that it would cost \$40 million per year to expand unarmed crisis response to all neighborhoods. For this reason, the City Charter should be amended to ensure that unarmed crisis response programs receive at least \$40 million per year. Anyone who opposes such a measure clearly believes that unarmed crisis response is unimportant and that we should continue to send armed police officers to respond to all types of calls for service.

Over the past few years, the City of Los Angeles has suffered approximately 300 traffic deaths per year. Most of those are people who are walking and bicycling. Experts agree that it is essential to increase levels of active transportation to address climate change and increase public health. Moreover, many people who walk and bike do so because they cannot afford a car. In response to the shocking level of traffic violence, Los Angeles voters overwhelmingly enacted Measure HLA, the Healthy Streets Initiative, which requires the City to install safety improvements called out in the Council-adopted Mobility Plan 2035, when it makes street improvements. The City's response thus far has been to stop improving streets in order to avoid the obligation to make our streets safer. There has also been an effort to reduce police involvement in traffic enforcement due to consequences for people of color. The City Administrative Officer estimated that the cost of implementing Measure HLA would be \$3.1 billion over 10 years, or \$300 million per year. While a ten-year horizon is not feasible, the City certainly should implement traffic safety measures over a twenty-year period. For that reason, the City Charter should be amended to ensure that HLA implementation is funded at a level of \$150 million per year. Anyone who opposes such a measure clearly does not believe that people should be able to walk and bicycle safely; support efforts to address climate change and improve public health, the needs of low-income people who cannot afford cars, or reduce police involvement in traffic stops; and has disdain for the express will of the voters in adopting Measure HLA.

The City's sidewalks are in terrible condition. The City faces significant liabilities every year from trip and fall incidents. Many of our sidewalks are impassable for people with mobility or visual impairments,

especially senior citizens. The FY 2026-27 Budget provides funding for a Citywide sidewalk assessment, but the need to fix our sidewalks cannot wait. The cost of repairing sidewalks Citywide is estimated at over \$2 billion, and that does not even take into account the desire to expand our sidewalk network to include streets that will see additional development to meet our critical housing shortage. For that reason, the City Charter should be amended to ensure that the City allocates at least \$100 million per year for sidewalk improvements. Anyone who opposes such a measure clearly does not believe that senior citizens and disabled persons should be able to safely travel on the City's sidewalks, or that the City's liability costs are a serious problem.

Streetlights are an essential City service, helping to deter crime and encourage active transportation and physical activity. The City knows that it needs about \$125 million per year to maintain and operate the existing street lighting system, which does not even take into account the desire to install streetlights on streets that will see additional development to meet our critical housing shortage. For that reason, the City Charter should be amended to provide \$125 million per year for the Bureau of Street Lighting. Anyone who opposes such a measure clearly does not support public safety, access for seniors and disabled persons, or addressing our housing shortage.


LANE
A healthy, well-maintained urban forest is important for quality of life, improving air quality, reducing the urban heat island effect, and addressing historic inequity in tree canopy coverage. The City's failure to maintain street trees is a significant contributor to the poor condition of our sidewalks and ensuing liability costs. The City is currently on a 17-year tree trimming cycle, when best practice calls for a 5- to 6-year trimming cycle. That would require tripling the Urban Forestry budget. For that reason, the City Charter should be amended to require that Urban Forestry be funded for a 5- to 6-year trimming cycle. Anyone who opposes such a measure clearly does not care about air quality, the urban heat island effect, or historic inequities in tree canopy coverage in low-resource communities.


I THEREFORE MOVE that the following ballot titles and questions be placed on the November 3, 2026 ballot:

1. Shall the City Charter be amended to provide the Fire Department with an annual budget allocation of at least sixteen percent (16%) of the General City Budget?
2. Shall the City Charter be amended to provide a budget allocation of at least \$100 million per year, adjusted for inflation, to install and improve curb ramps to address the City's past failure to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act? **ANIMAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**
3. Shall the City Charter be amended to provide the ~~Police Department~~ **ANIMAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT** with an annual budget allocation sufficient to ensure that the City of Los Angeles has at least the number of officers per capita as the mean of the ten largest cities in the United States?
4. Shall the City Charter be amended to provide a budget allocation of at least \$ 40 million per year, adjusted for inflation, for unarmed crisis response programs?

(*) AMENDING MOTION (HERNANDEZ - PARK)

5. Shall the City Charter be amended to provide a budget allocation of at least \$150 million per year, adjusted for inflation, for the installation of mobility improvements included in the mobility element of the City's General Plan?
6. Shall the City Charter be amended to provide a budget allocation of at least \$100 million per year, adjusted for inflation, for as long as necessary until the City's sidewalks are in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); and thereafter adjusted to ensure that the City's sidewalks remain ADA-compliant?
7. Shall the City Charter be amended to provide an allocation of at least \$125 million per year, adjusted for inflation, to operate and maintain the City's street lighting system?
8. Shall the City Charter be amended to require an annual budget allocation to ensure that the City's street trees are trimmed on a cycle that conforms with recommended best practices?

PRESENTED BY: 
BOB BLUMENFELD
Councilmember, 3rd District

SECONDED BY: 

ORIGINAL