



TRACI PARK

LOS ANGELES COUNCILWOMAN ★ 11TH DISTRICT

May 1, 2025

Honorable Katy Yaroslavsky
Chair, Budget and Finance Committee
200 N Spring Street, Room 440
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Mayor's Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26

Dear Honorable Members of the Budget & Finance Committee,

As the Councilmember representing the Westside of Los Angeles, I appreciate the tremendous responsibility before the Budget and Finance Committee in reviewing and refining the Mayor's Proposed Fiscal Year 2025–26 Budget.

The January wildfires, which devastated the Pacific Palisades, have fundamentally reshaped our City's priorities. I am thankful that the proposed budget prioritizes recovery by setting aside funding for hillside erosion, debris removal and traffic signals. This will be a multi-year effort, requiring significant resources in future fiscal years and a concerted effort with our state and federal partners to address long-term community needs.

In spite of this, I write today to express my deep concerns with the budget, particularly the reductions in funding to key departments responsible for delivering the basic, frontline services Angelenos expect from their city government and whose functions are essential to the health, safety, and daily quality of life of our constituents.

I want to commend you for your quick and decisive action to restore funding for the Animal Services Department and ensure all City animal shelters can remain open. This must be only the beginning of our work to improve the conditions and outcomes of our City's shelters and I look forward to working with you and the rest of our colleagues to make this a reality.

The concerns outlined below are not about optional services. They concern the City's most basic obligations to its residents: clean streets, safe public spaces, functioning infrastructure, and orderly neighborhoods. The proposed cuts threaten to erode the quality of life in every community and reduce our ability to enforce the most basic standards that residents in every corner of Los Angeles demand.

1. Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD)

The proposed budget will significantly undermine the LAPD's ability to protect and serve the people of Los Angeles. Chief among them is the planned elimination of over 400 civilian positions, roles that are essential to the department's daily operations. These professionals, including forensic specialists, photographers, mechanics, and lab technicians, are the backbone of the support infrastructure that allows officers to do their jobs effectively.

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Cutting these positions will force many officers off the streets and into administrative roles. This shift erodes public safety, delays investigations, and risks vital functions such as evidence processing and vehicle maintenance. These roles take years to train for and require significant investment, resources that will be even more costly to recover in the future. Compounding the issue, the proposed budget fails to allocate sufficient funds to recruit enough sworn officers to offset expected attrition. The LAPD is already stretched too thin, and in a city as large and complex as Los Angeles, further weakening our public safety infrastructure is simply untenable.

Now more than ever, the department needs our support. I urge you to reverse the decision to eliminate these crucial civilian roles and to increase recruitment funding so we can strengthen, not shrink, our police force.

2. Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD)

I strongly urge this committee to increase investment in the Los Angeles Fire Department. LAFD is facing unprecedented call volumes, especially for EMS, while also dealing with staffing shortages, aging infrastructure, and critical equipment needs. Our firefighters and paramedics are doing everything they can, but without proper support, they're being stretched too thin to meet the growing needs of our City. We must prioritize funding to expand our sworn ranks, invest in fire stations, fleet maintenance, and equipment, and bring on nine much needed administrative operations staff to help resolve the persistent payroll and support issues hampering the department from within.

At the beginning of this year, we saw LAFD's bravery and professionalism on full display as they battled the Palisades Fire under extremely dangerous conditions. Their response reminds us all that we must ensure they have the resources and staffing they need to respond to a major crisis. Angelenos deserve a fire department that not only meets the moment but leads the way in emergency response.

I also want to recognize and thank Mayor Bass for the investments she has proposed in key LAFD programs, including the LAWA Cycle Teams, an Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Mechanic, Airport Fire Inspectors, and the Homeless Fire Protection and Street Medicine Program, as well as her continued support for the innovative Advanced Provider Response Unit. These programs are making a real difference, but they must be built on a strong foundation. Now is the time for us to act to invest in the safety of Angelenos and give LAFD the tools they need for their vital work.

3. Emergency Management Department (EMD)

I urge you to prioritize funding for the Los Angeles Emergency Management Department (EMD), which has long been underfunded and stretched thin. They are a critical piece of our wildfire recovery, in addition to playing a critical role in disaster preparedness. Unfortunately, the department has not been provided the resources it needs to meet these essential responsibilities, and this lack of investment has hindered their ability to perform the full scope of work required to keep Angelenos safe.

With the proper resources, EMD has the potential to do so much more for our City, from improving community outreach and disaster preparedness programs to increasing coordination during both large-scale disasters and the growing number of high-profile events Los Angeles will host in the coming years. EMD should be leading the charge in building a more resilient City, one that's better equipped to handle everything from wildfires to earthquakes, to the daily emergencies that affect residents across our neighborhoods. But to do this, we need to ensure they have the staffing, technology, and financial flexibility to do their jobs effectively.

The department's requests are not just about addressing current shortcomings, they are about giving EMD the tools needed to properly prepare and protect our City. I strongly support their request for \$1.1 million for additional staffing to support the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and ongoing recovery efforts from the Palisades Fire. The scope and scale of devastation is staggering, and their work is absolutely critical to the recovery and rebuilding process. Already, the staffing concerns and lack of resources are hindering timelines and progress, which must be remedied immediately.

Additionally, I urge you to approve \$209,000 for the replacement of the EOC Facility Security Video Management System, which is critical to maintaining the safety and security of all operations during disaster events. Lastly, the requested \$1 million to replenish the Contingency Revolving Fund is vital for providing the financial flexibility required to respond quickly to urgent needs, such as supplying emergency materials for disaster survivors.

For too long, EMD has operated underfunded and under-resourced. With the right investments now, EMD will be able to support not only the immediate needs of disaster response but also long-term planning and preparedness for the City's future. Our public safety departments - EMD, LAFD, LAPD, and others, depend on infrastructure and support from this fund to ensure the safety of our City. It's time for us to make sure that EMD is equipped to fulfill its full potential and adequately protect Los Angeles in times of crisis.

4. Homelessness Budget

With LA County's withdrawal from LAHSA and our own City's potential restructuring regarding our own homelessness efforts, there is tremendous uncertainty with how we as an entire region approach homelessness. Rather than allocating resources to LAHSA - which we may soon exit - or programs that are currently, or may soon be, duplicating efforts, most funds for LAHSA should be placed into the Unappropriated Balance until key decisions are made.

Despite the billions of dollars invested in addressing homelessness over the years, we have seen only modest reductions in homelessness. Thousands of individuals who are dealing with severe mental illness and drug addiction continue to live on our streets, contributing to rising concerns about safety in neighborhoods across Los Angeles for both residents and visitors. Rather than continuing to reinvest in the same programs, providers, and strategies that have failed to deliver, I strongly urge this Committee and the full Council to prioritize pathways to treatment for mental illness and addiction with robust oversight and a clear commitment to measurable, results-driven outcomes. Further, the needs of people experiencing homelessness can vary dramatically by neighborhood - places like Venice that have a long history of itinerant people coming to live there may benefit from a different approach than individuals living in their vehicles in Playa del Rey, for example. Individual council offices must retain their ability to tailor these approaches to the diverse populations living on the streets or in vehicles within their districts.

5. Department of Transportation (LADOT)

The proposed 22% reduction in LADOT enforcement staff, both in the field and the communications center, is deeply troubling. On the Westside, residents and businesses continue to express concern over unchecked parking violations, abandoned vehicles, and unsafe driving behavior. The reduction in traffic and parking enforcement will erode neighborhood quality of life, increase hazards near schools and pedestrian crossings, and reduce accountability for behavior that puts Angelenos at risk. These positions are essential to public safety and quality of life in our City, so I strongly urge this Committee to reverse these cuts.

6. Public Works

Cuts to essential street maintenance and repair roles, tree trimming crews, and sanitation services threaten to severely degrade the condition of our neighborhoods. Without these frontline workers, our sidewalks and public spaces will become increasingly overwhelmed by trash, debris, and neglect.

Trash from across the region flows through our storm drains and waterways, ultimately ending up in the ocean where our already fragile marine ecosystem is currently in crisis. The Santa Monica Bay is facing a devastating combination of threats: a domoic acid outbreak, toxic runoff from the Palisades fire, and now a surge in pollution. Lifeguards are being forced to euthanize dolphins daily, and the Marine Mammal Care Center is overwhelmed with sick and dying sea lions and seals. Whales, pelicans, and other marine wildlife are washing ashore in alarming numbers. Slashing positions and funding for sanitation services at this critical moment is a death sentence for marine life in our beloved Santa Monica Bay and its tributaries.

Residents already experience excessive delays for basic services. The proposed reductions will only worsen urban blight, impair mobility, and heighten public safety risks. The near-total elimination of StreetsLA's Investigation and Enforcement workforce, along with essential Risk Management positions, opens the City to long-term legal and financial liabilities that we cannot afford – the same liability conditions that brought us to this fiscal crisis. At a time when Los Angeles is still grappling with a homelessness crisis, the loss of dozens of Livability Services positions and the scaling back of CARE and CARE+ operations will only deepen the challenges we face on our streets every day. These cuts strike at the core of what residents expect from their City government: clean, safe, and well-maintained neighborhoods.

7. Department of Recreation and Parks

The proposed cuts to the City's Park Ranger program are deeply concerning. Park Rangers provide essential on-the-ground public safety services and are uniquely trained to address the needs of park environments with a balance of enforcement and community engagement.

This is especially true for high-use and high-need areas like Venice Beach, where their absence will leave a noticeable gap in safety oversight. The elimination of maintenance positions for Venice Beach will make the task of keeping Oceanfront Walk, our City's top tourist destination, clean and accessible even more challenging, which is especially concerning with the World Cup, Super Bowl, and Olympics on the horizon. More broadly, cuts to maintenance staffing across the City will accelerate the decline of conditions at parks and recreation centers including Stoner, Westchester, Rustic Canyon, Penmar, Oakwood and Mar Vista Parks and Recreation Centers. These facilities are already under strain and cannot sustain further reductions without real consequences for the communities that rely on them.

As you deliberate on the budget, I urge the Committee to continue to prioritize the preservation of core City functions. While fiscal constraints require difficult choices, we must prioritize protecting basic neighborhood services and ensuring that our parks, streets, and public infrastructure remain safe, functional, and accessible. Thank you for your attention and your continued commitment to a fair and balanced budget process. I look forward to working collaboratively with you to preserve the core services Angelenos rely on every day.

With kind regards,



TRACI PARK

Councilwoman, 11th District
City of Los Angeles

CC: Honorable Tim McOsker, Member
Honorable Heather Hutt, Member
Honorable Bob Blumenfield, Member
Honorable Eunisses Hernandez, Member

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