

M O T I O N

Street harassment is defined as unwanted, disrespectful, or threatening interactions in a public space, often consisting of comments, gestures, exposure, following, and taking photos or videos of a person without their consent. It typically takes the form of verbal and non-verbal harassment, but can and often does lead to physical violence. Street harassment causes many of its victims to feel uncomfortable, angry, frightened, violated and unsafe in public spaces. Though significantly under-reported, it is considered by most standards to be a human rights violation and is a pervasive issue across the world, particularly in dense cities such as Los Angeles.

Street harassment is typically directed at a person due to actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and religion. It therefore disproportionately affects already vulnerable populations, including people of color, women, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+, seniors, and adolescents. The age in which individuals begin to experience street harassment is between 10 and 18 years old, the same age range for which street harassment is most common. The most frequently listed location for harassment for all populations is a public space.

There has been a recent surge in hateful, inappropriate, xenophobic, sexist, and racist language throughout our nation. Specifically, since the onset of the pandemic, there's been a major spike in verbal and physical harassment against Asian Americans. Hate crimes targeted at Asian Americans have increased by 150% since last year in our nation's most populous cities. Los Angeles is the second city with the highest increase in reported crimes against Asian Americans, preceded only by New York City.

Historically, women and girls are the most frequent victims of street harassment, most commonly in the form of sexual harassment. A 2019 study conducted by the national non-profit Stop Street Harassment found that nearly 80% of women experienced verbal or non-verbal harassment in their lifetime and over one-third of women under the age of 24 had experienced street harassment in the past six months.

Street harassment is a pressing public safety issue because, beyond the serious psychological effects of repeated verbal and non-verbal harassment, incidents can and do lead to physical harassment and violence. In a 2014 report entitled, "*Unsafe and Harassed in Public Spaces*," roughly 70% of women and 50% of men who had experienced street harassment said they had been seriously concerned that the incident would escalate into something worse. A victim cannot know the intent of their harasser, and it is too risky to assume that it ends with a comment or gesture.

The prevalence of street harassment forces individuals within these vulnerable populations to alter their behaviors, including less convenient but safer routes of travel, avoiding travel at certain times, traveling with self-defense products, abandoning any unnecessary trips outdoors, and even blacklisting transit options in public spaces altogether. As the City continues to invest millions of dollars each year in infrastructure improvements to enhance pedestrian safety, the issue of street harassment and personal safety must also be a top priority, or else vulnerable populations will continue to use other travel options available to them, despite large capital investments in crosswalks, bikes lanes, and related.

Most major cities in the United States and around the globe have taken some degree of action to mitigate the extraordinarily prevalent issue of street harassment, for example Washington, D.C.'s "*Street Harassment Prevention Act of 2017*." There are many examples of successful **soft**

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approaches, such as **bystander training programs**, **educational campaigns**, **mandatory government personnel training**, **accessible and simple reporting systems**, and much more. As the second most populous city in the nation, the City of Los Angeles has a responsibility to protect its most vulnerable residents from harassment in public spaces.

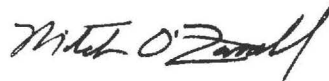
I THEREFORE MOVE that the Chief Legislative Analyst, with the assistance of the Civil, Human Rights and Equity Department, Department of Transportation, Bureau of Street Services, Department of Recreation and Parks, Personnel Department, and any other departments, as needed, be DIRECTED to report with recommendations including all soft approaches available to the City to strengthen the oversight, mitigation, and response to street harassment occurring in Los Angeles' public spaces and on City-administered transit systems, drawing from other cities' successful models from around the world.

I FURTHER MOVE that Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority be REQUESTED to report with past and upcoming efforts to curtail the issue of harassment on trains, buses, and transportation stops, including the "It's Off Limits" campaign and the recently-formed Public Safety Advisory Committee.

PRESENTED BY:



JOE BUSCAINO
Councilmember, 15th District



MITCH O'FARRELL
Councilmember, 13th District



NURY MARTINEZ
Councilmember, 6th District



JOHN LEE
Councilmember, 12th District




MONICA RODRIGUEZ
Councilmember, 7th District



NITHYA RAMAN
Councilmember, 4th District

SECONDED BY:



CURREN PRICE
Councilmember, 9th District