



MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCILMEMBER
— DISTRICT 10 —

August 10, 2021

Yolanda Davis-Overstreet
Vice President and Chair of Public Safety Committee
West Adams Neighborhood Council
P.O. Box 78474
Los Angeles, CA 90016

Re: CF-20-1376 – Response to West Adams Neighborhood Council Community Impact Statement

Dear Ms. Davis-Overstreet:

This letter responds to the Community Impact Statement issued by the West Adams Neighborhood Council (the “Neighborhood Council”) on July 13, 2021 relative to CF-20-1376 (“Council Action”). As an initial matter, I want to express my appreciation for the concern raised by the Neighborhood Council regarding the homelessness crisis in Los Angeles. I share this urgency, and it is precisely such urgency that compelled me to return to the City Council last year. I also appreciate that the recently passed amendment to LAMC section 41.18, in isolation, will not solve the homelessness crisis. But let me be clear, such is not a complete and accurate characterization of what the Council Action does.

Conspicuously absent from the Community Impact Statement is any reference to the first installment of the CAO’s [Citywide Street Engagement Strategy](#)—the first of its kind in Los Angeles—which, following my June 29th, 2021 amending motion, adopted by full Council, is now a necessary predicate to any enforcement action taken under section 41.18. So, I would like to take this opportunity to discuss how this policy will make a real impact in the work to solve homelessness.

This policy will ensure standardized assessment of encampments, an adequate period of dedicated street engagement at all sites where unsheltered people reside, and a transparent and accountable process by which street engagement teams work collaboratively to help unsheltered individuals transition indoors to more appropriate and dignified housing options with services attached.

This policy has been painstakingly informed by key lessons learned and best practices shared by street outreach teams and council offices, including:

- The allowance of ample time for comprehensive engagement.
- Understanding the population at the site and their needs (number of men, women, children, people with disabilities, pets, transition age youth, number of people living in cars).

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- Documenting outreach consistently to assess needs and interests in housing and/or services.
- Understanding the laws/regulations in the area (streets, sidewalks, parks, private property, and other public land).
- Identifying resources that can be offered, housing, storage, trash disposal, transportation, hygiene trailers, safe need drops, COVID testing and vaccinations.
- Understanding the community's (members of the encampment) informal leadership to facilitate buy-in on housing options.
- Identifying members of the community that want to stay together (i.e. shared housing, 2-4 bedroom apartments).
- Commencement of identifying the housing options available before the engagement begins.
- Recognizing that, once a site is cleared, outreach teams should conduct regular checks and outreach to anyone who has settled in the previously cleared site.
- Ensuring that an after-action report is written that provides data on overall housing placements, service offered, other accomplishments, effective best practices used, and lessons learned.

Through these efforts, we will move toward our goal of ending homelessness in Los Angeles. But make no mistake, we must continue to make significant investments in the creation of additional housing options. That is why, on July 30, 2021, I introduced a motion to expand housing options to help more people experiencing homelessness transition from the streets through a Housing Now Fund, and I welcome your partnership as we push that forward.

The CAO's Street Engagement Strategy will be discussed at the August 12th Homelessness and Poverty Committee. The intent is to refine the deployment of street engagement teams across the City and expand housing and services resources. This is why the establishment of a Right to Housing in the City of Los Angeles would obligate government to step up and provide the housing needed to effectuate the best outcomes for our unhoused neighbors. I agree with our new HUD Secretary Marcia Fudge that housing should be a guarantee not a privilege.

Once again, thank you for your engagement on this critical issue, and I look forward to working with you to address our City's homelessness crisis.

With hope,



MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
Councilmember, Tenth District