

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT relative to the current process for towing vehicles in violation of posted signs.

Recommendations for Council action:

1. APPROVE the Los Angeles Department of Transportation's (LADOT) criteria, as detailed in the February 23, 2022 LADOT report, attached to the Council File, for:
  - a. Distinguishing between abandoned vehicles suitable for towing and vehicles used as dwellings that warrant additional engagement.
  - b. Prioritizing among oversized vehicles that are eligible for towing.
2. DIRECT the City Administrative Officer (CAO) Homelessness Coordinator to develop within 30 days a process for officers from LADOT and Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) to communicate referrals of outreach services for persons experiencing homelessness.
3. DIRECT the LADOT to identify LADOT parking lots suitable for storage of oversized vehicles.
4. DIRECT the Department of General Services, with the assistance of the LADOT and LAPD, to identify other City-owned parcels suitable for storage of oversized vehicles.
5. DIRECT the Port of Los Angeles, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, and Los Angeles World Airports, with the assistance of LADOT and LAPD, to identify parcels owned by proprietary departments suitable for storage of oversized vehicles.
6. DIRECT the Bureau of Sanitation to report with criteria to define public health or environmental hazard for the purposes of requiring an immediate tow.
7. RECEIVE and FILE the February 18, 2022 Board of Police Commissioners report, inasmuch as this report is for information only and no Council action is required.

Fiscal Impact Statement: The LADOT reports that there is no financial impact from this report.

Community Impact Statement: Yes

For:  
Studio City Neighborhood Council

Summary:

On March 1, 2022, your Committee considered February 23, 2022 LADOT and February 18, 2022 Board of Police Commissioners reports relative to the current process for towing oversized vehicles in violation of posted signs. According to the LADOT, in March 2020, in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and effort to maintain public safety, the City declared a local emergency that included relaxed enforcement for parking violations. In October 2020, as residents returned to the workplace, the LADOT resumed enforcement for all parking violations with the exception of towing vehicle dwellings as directed.

Pursuant to Council direction, LADOT traffic officers suspended towing vehicles identified as vehicle dwellings. LADOT currently determines a “vehicle dwelling” based on an officer’s observation of person(s) sleeping inside a vehicle, or items contained inside or on the vehicle that are not typically associated with ordinary vehicle use, such as a sleeping bag, bedroll, blanket, sheet, pillow, kitchen utensils, cookware, or cooking equipment. This inclusive definition was helpful during the early stages of the pandemic to ensure vehicles used as dwellings were exempt from impound and the unhoused did not meet additional burdens during a health crisis.

Over time, however, officers note that the definition is so broad that it captures vehicles that are clearly abandoned which have become a source of frustration and potential health hazards for people nearby. To address this issue, the LADOT recommends revised citation and towing criteria that can better identify vehicles used as dwellings that warrant additional engagement and distinguish them from abandoned vehicles based on evidence of active living.

To identify evidence of active living, an officer will observe a vehicle and note its condition and interior contents on multiple days to reveal whether there has been any change in the vehicle’s appearance, such as whether the vehicle’s location, exterior, or contents have changed. A minimum of three visits and assessment of the vehicle must take place to determine whether the vehicle is being actively used as a dwelling. The officer’s notes and photos taken during these visits will be part of the evidence package prior to any enforcement. Movement of the vehicle from its original location would negate any enforcement action, consistent with LADOT’s current enforcement policy. If an officer observes any vehicle occupants, he or she will report to the Unified Homelessness Response Center (UHRC) or Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) requesting engagement with the vehicle occupants. If, during multiple visits, an officer does not observe any vehicle occupant; if the vehicle does not move from its original location; and if there is no evidence of active living, the officer will place a notice on the vehicle notifying the owner that failure to move their vehicle within 24 hours will result in citation and towing of the vehicle. This notice will also include information about service providers and resources available to persons experiencing homelessness.

The LADOT is committed to ensuring the health and safety of our public streets and roadways while connecting unhoused Angelinos with critical support services. Vehicles that create traffic hazards, environmental or public health hazards, obstruct City services, and/or are inoperable or unregistered will be subject to citation and tow. If a vehicle that

shows evidence of active living meets any of these criteria, LADOT traffic officers will first seek willing compliance with the posted regulations and all applicable City ordinances. If an officer encounters an illegally-parked, occupied vehicle clearly used as a dwelling, he or she will first request that the vehicle occupant(s) move their vehicle and direct people to move to a location where they may legally park. If the motorist refuses to move their vehicle, the officer will provide a report to UHRC and LAHSA staff.

These homeless services partners will work with other relevant City Departments, such as the Bureau of Sanitation (BOS), and other homeless services agencies to respond to the location and offer supportive services. If an officer cannot achieve compliance and notifies UHRC or LAHSA, LADOT will consider vehicles outlined below eligible for citation, relocation, or removal. Prioritizing these locations will help inform outreach to the unhoused community. After further consideration and having provided an opportunity for public comment, the Committee moved to recommend approval of the recommendations contained in the LADOT report, as amended, and detailed in the above recommendations. This matter is now submitted to Council for its consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Transportation Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Bonin".

**COUNCILMEMBER VOTE**

BONIN:	YES
KORETZ:	ABSENT
BUSCAINO:	YES

ARL  
3/1/22

**-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-**