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The Eagle Rock Association



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MOBILITY FOR ALL



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FASTLinkDTLA



**NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
SUSTAINABILITY
ALLIANCE**



Mayor Karen Bass
Council President Harris-Dawson
Councilmember Katy Yaroslavsky, Chair, Budget & Finance Committee

Re: 2025-2026 Budget

Dear Mayor Bass, Council President Harris-Dawson, and Councilmember Yaroslavsky:

The above organizations ask for your assistance in prioritizing the following items in this year's budget process.

We know that in Fiscal Year 2025-26, the City of Los Angeles will continue to face difficult budget challenges. We trust that the City will rise to that challenge, and will do so in a manner that meets its legal and moral obligation to maintain and improve safe and accessible streets and sidewalks. The City's legal obligation arises under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and local voter-approved Measure HLA, among others. The City's moral obligations arise from the fact that walking or bicycling in Los Angeles is unnecessarily dangerous, as evidenced by the fact that every year approximately 300 people are killed and thousands more are injured in traffic collisions.

FY25-26 will be the first full budget preparation cycle since the federal government adopted PROWAG and voters approved Measure HLA, and the first opportunity the City has to realign its resources to comprehensively meet its legal obligations. At their core, the ADA and HLA require the City's resurfacing projects to include both curb ramps and mobility improvements to build out the networks included in Mobility Plan 2035 (MP2035).

Several budget-neutral opportunities exist to ensure that, moving forward, the City is fully prepared to comply with the ADA and HLA, deliver HLA-compliant infrastructure projects, and mitigate liability risks:

1. Improve coordination between the Bureau of Street Services (StreetsLA) and Department of Transportation (LADOT) so that the pavement preservation program prioritizes MP2035 projects, especially those that close gaps in active transportation networks.
2. Realign the City's pavement preservation and access ramp funding allocations to ensure that the resurfacing program is driven by pavement condition and mobility needs, rather than limited to streets that do not require curb ramp work.
3. Ensure that the Prioritized Critical Hiring process (PCH) does not impede departments from filling and refilling authorized and funded positions that support the resurfacing program (including curb ramps) and MP2035 implementation.

However, additional resources are needed to ensure the City is both fully compliant and also advancing its safety and mobility goals.

LADOT

LADOT faced significant cuts in the FY25 budget, and in light of fiscal constraints has submitted a modest budget proposal for FY26 that restores critical services and mitigates financial risks. In light of the minimal impact this budget has on the City's General Fund, and the streamlined priorities reflected in the Department's proposal, we hope that these requests will be fully funded.

At LADOT, we ask for:

1. Restoration of \$1.5m to Paint & Sign budget to support both HLA compliant project delivery and district-specific requests (pg 47 request #5&6, narrative starting pg 267 & 271). Failure to maintain existing striping and signage, or to install long-approved safety improvements, exposes the City to significant liability risks.
2. Two new Chief Planner positions in advanced planning & project delivery (pg 47 #2, narrative on page 142)
 - a. This is a new classification that not only provides much needed senior management capacity but also improves retention for STP2s who have no further ladder at LADOT.

3. One new PR Specialist position to execute a safety education and awareness campaign (and support on overall strategic communications)
 - a. Communications & Media Relations bureau currently comprises 1 PIO and 1 Graphic designer, with support from part-time staff. That means we have only 1 staff member with comms expertise dedicated to working with the press and executing mayoral and council requested press events.

Streets LA

Although the Proposed FY24-25 Budget included a stated intention to avoid layoffs, it inadvertently omitted funding for more than 100 filled positions in StreetsLA, and did not include funding for ADA-mandated curb cuts. For that reason, the Council's modifications to StreetsLA's budget were almost entirely focused on restoring funding for filled positions and providing limited funding for legally-mandated curb ramp work.

At StreetsLA, we ask for :

1. Increased funding for curb ramps. The FY24-25 budget provides funding for approximately 200 new curb ramps per year, which is far short of the actual need. As a consequence, the City's resurfacing program is increasingly determined by streets that do not need curb ramp work, rather than improving mobility and safety, or even maintaining PCI. The FY24-25 Budget should fund curb ramp work at a level necessary to maintain or increase the number of lane miles resurfaced.
2. Increased funding for implementation of grant-funded projects. StreetsLA has a portfolio of \$330 million in Active Transportation Program projects, which are focused in disadvantaged communities. StreetsLA is not funded or staffed to complete these projects in accordance with grant deadlines, which increases project costs, jeopardizes grant funding, impedes the City's ability to obtain new grants, and – most importantly – delays needed safety and mobility improvements in the communities that need them most.
3. Approval of the CTIEP request for Mobility Plan 2035 corridors and HLA implementation. *Approving this request now is critical for having the needed first/last mile facilities ready by the Olympics.*

The City's PCH process has also presented significant challenges:

1. Last year LADOT lost 129 vacant positions, and gained 12 new positions.
 - a. Of the 12, 6 meet the description of special fund eligibility and 6 are fully reimbursable by Metro
 - b. Of the 12, only **3** have been approved for hire through PCH and filled; *LADOT (and other departments) are not being approved to fill previously approved positions in the budget.*
2. Positions approved after the FY25 budget that right-sized departments to meet fiscal challenges should not be subject to PCH.
3. Positions that do not have a General Fund impact should not be subject to PCH.

4. Positions becoming vacant due to people retiring or leaving departments should not be subject to PCH.
5. Council should consider getting rid of the PCH process altogether.

Lastly, we believe there is significant funding dedicated to transportation that is not being used as the voters intended.

1. The CAO eliminated Measure R's 5% reserve for bike and ped planning, which goes against longstanding Council policy. ***This should be restored in the FY25-26 budget.***
2. There is significant money flowing to the city from Propositions A and C, and Measures M and R, a good portion of which are intended to make our streets safer, improve access to transit, and in general support LADOT's core missions. However, LADOT only receives a fraction of the money voters intended, and this further degrades LADOT's ability to deliver projects. ***LADOT should receive a significantly higher portion of these dedicated transportation dollars, and they should not be used to backfill other departments' needs.***
3. Any grants the city has won from County, State, or Federal sources require teams to effectuate project delivery. The City received nearly \$500M in ATP awards over the last five years, and at the current pace it will take the city a decade or more to deliver the projects, putting future ATP funding at risk. ***Allowing LADOT and StreetsLA to use grant funding to fund staff positions dedicated to delivering grant funded projects would save the City money and significantly speed up project delivery.***

We are at a point in time when Los Angeles streets are more dangerous than ever, with a pedestrian injured every five hours and killed every two days. We must do everything in our power to put an end to the carnage in our streets, and implement projects that help our city become more multimodal and increase road safety. Last year's budget cut promised no cut to core city services, but core city services are being impacted. We must act with urgency to reverse this trend.

The Olympics will not wait for Los Angeles to get its act together when it comes to infrastructure, and if we hope to achieve a "car free" Olympics, as well as serve Angelenos that use our City's infrastructure on a daily basis, it's imperative we fund the planning work that we must do now, in order to get projects in the ground prior to the games.

Each day that our streets remain as they are, Angelenos are unnecessarily injured and killed due to traffic violence. We have the power and tools to prevent this and make our streets safer. Together, we can make real progress towards building a safer and more functional city.

Michael Schneider, CEO, Streets For All

Morgan Goodwin, Sierra Club Angeles Chapter Director

Tracy Hernandez, BizFed Founding CEO

Carter Rubin, Director, State Transportation Advocacy, Climate & Energy

Yolanda Davis-Overstreet, Director, Biking While Black

Joe Lyou, Coalition for Clean Air

Michael MacDonald, President, The Eagle Rock Association (TERA)

Damian Kevitt, Executive Director, Streets Are For Everyone

Lindsay Sturman, Co-Founder, Livable Communities Initiative

Eli Lipmen, Executive Director, Move LA

Bryn Moncelsi, Deputy Director, Climate Resolve

Hilary Norton, Executive Director, FASTLinkDTLA and DTLA Mobility For All

Siobhan Burke, Chair, Hyperion Street Safety Coalition + Executive Director, 99 Neighborhoods Network

Lisa Hart, Executive Director, Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance

David Levitus, Founder & Executive Director, LA Forward