



June 1, 2020

Mayor Eric Garcetti  
Los Angeles City Hall  
200 North Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mayor Garcetti,

Abundant Housing LA is a pro-housing education and advocacy organization working to help solve Southern California's housing crisis. We are writing to express our organization's opposition to the City's proposed budget for fiscal year 2020-21, and to urge the City Council to recommend major revisions in light of recent events.

Budgets are priorities in numbers. [In a recent poll](#), 95% of Los Angeles voters cited homelessness and 85% cited housing affordability as serious problems facing the region -- and this was **before** the COVID-19 health and economic crisis, which are badly exacerbating these longstanding problems. The voters are telling us exactly what their priorities are, and our city's leaders should be concentrating public resources on an effective response to these critical issues. They must ensure that Los Angeles' severe homelessness and housing affordability problems do not worsen as a result of the economic downturn.

That is why we are disappointed that the proposed budget would cut funding for Housing and Community Investment by 9%, and would cut funding for efforts to reduce homelessness by 6%. We understand that the economic situation is reducing the city's ability to raise revenue, but the economic situation is also creating a greater need for a robust response to housing affordability and homelessness. It would be fiscally irresponsible **not** to shore up our city's investments in these critical areas. Additionally, increased investment in housing paves the way for a strong economic recovery post-pandemic.

Furthermore, we firmly oppose the proposal to increase police spending by 7%. The Los Angeles Police Department already receives over \$3 billion in annual funding (over 50% of the city's discretionary budget), and much of the proposed increase is due to a previous agreement to increase officer pay by 4.75% over the coming year. If police compensation were instead held steady in 2020-21, the city would save \$144 million, which could restore two-thirds of the proposed budget cuts in other areas.

Finally, we must note that the past week's events in Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and around the United States have called long-overdue attention to police brutality, unacceptable police behavior towards our Black and Latino communities, and the proper role of the police in American society. Los Angeles suffers from deep inequality and institutionalized racism, and our leaders must respond to Angelenos' justified outrage by rethinking the mission of the LAPD and reimagining how public safety is maintained. Our shameful history of segregation and economic disenfranchisement has created a city whose communities of color still face

the deepest inequities. We must reform policing practices that have fallen unfairly on these communities. There is no better time to start than right now.

Since the Budget and Finance Committee failed to meet prior to June 1, it now falls to the entire City Council to consider budget revisions. We urge you and the City Council to:

- Fund housing affordability and homelessness response efforts **above** the spending levels in the 2019-20 budget, given the greater need due to COVID-19
- Renegotiate labor agreements with the LAPD in order to achieve the savings necessary to prioritize housing affordability and homelessness response efforts
- Pledge to allocate future federal and state aid towards efforts to improve housing stability and reduce homelessness
- Immediately pass the proposed [permanent Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance](#), which would require no new spending from the City's General Fund
- Develop a far-reaching strategy for police reform, including a community-led safety model focused on mental health investments, harm reduction approaches, and fewer police interventions
- Redefine what safety and wellbeing mean in Los Angeles in terms of equitable access to affordable housing, clean air, safe streets, and racial and economic justice.

Abundant Housing LA stands ready to assist in efforts to build a more equitable Los Angeles, where **all** its citizens are treated with respect by the public authorities. These efforts begin with a better budget.

Sincerely,

Leonora Camner  
Managing Director  
Abundant Housing LA

Anthony Dedousis  
Director of Policy and Research  
Abundant Housing LA