

NOV 18 2008

MOTION

TRANSPORTATION

As a result of the current economic crisis, families and individuals are falling upon hard times and are too often faced with stark and unpleasant choices. Many people have lost their jobs, their homes, and their support network. Many people cling to stability by their fingernails, living in their vehicles as they try to get back on their feet, or as a last-ditch effort to avoid sleeping on the streets.

Current city law, however, effectively criminalizes living in one's vehicle on a publicly owned street. L.A.M.C. Section 85.02 states: "No person shall use a vehicle parked or standing upon any City street or upon any parking lot owned by the City of Los Angeles or under control of the Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors as living quarters either overnight, day-by-day, or otherwise." (Title and Section Amended by Ord. No.158,219, Eff. 9/19/83.)


In an effort to balance the quality of life of residents with social justice, other cities have crafted more nuanced ordinances, still forbidding camping in vehicles on city streets, but creating special zones where people can sleep safely in their vehicles. They have done so without impacting the quality of life in residential neighborhoods. Communities practicing such a balanced approach include Eugene, Oregon, and the County of Santa Barbara.

As the economy worsens and more and more people face poverty or homelessness, the time has come for the City of Los Angeles to pursue such a balanced approach. The current ordinance should be amended, creating a process that allows each councilmember to designate zones in his or her district where people can sleep in their vehicles. These zones could include municipal properties, parking lots of churches or community-based organizations, industrial areas, and other areas that would have minimal impact on residential communities.

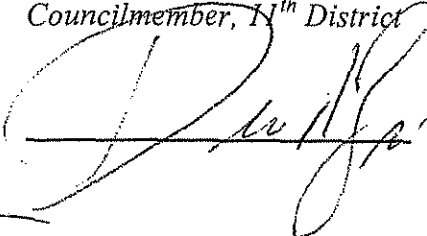
I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council request that the City Attorney, in collaboration with the Chief Legislative Analyst, draft an amendment to LAMC Section 85.02, modeled after the Santa Barbara and Eugene initiatives, creating a provision for councilmembers to designate discrete and distinct areas of their council districts where people would be allowed to park and sleep overnight.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Chief Legislative Analyst explore funding opportunities that would allow such specially designated areas to be matched with staffing, security, and social services, as is done in Santa Barbara County.

PRESENTED BY:

  
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SECONDED BY:



08-3125

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