

Your Community Impact Statement has been successfully submitted to City Council and Committees.

If you have questions and/or concerns, please contact the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment at NCsupport@lacity.org.

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The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(11) Nay(1) Abstain(2) Ineligible(0) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 06/30/2020

Type of NC Board Action: Against

Impact Information

Date: 07/01/2020

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 20-0600

Agenda Date:

Item Number:

Summary:

June 30, 2020

Council File: 20-0600

Position: Opposed (Unless Amended)

Summary:

The Wilshire Center Koreatown Neighborhood Council commends the Honorable City Council members on their decision to reject the Mayor's proposed budget for the FY 2020-2021, which would increase funding for the Los Angeles Police Department and debilitate services needed by the most vulnerable populations of our city.

While the Council's recommended cuts of \$100-150 million from LAPD's budget are a step in the right direction, they are not nearly enough to meet the demands of the 100,000 protestors mobilized on June 7, 2020, nor the calls to reimagine public safety made by leaders of Black Lives Matter-LA upon presenting the People's Budget on June 15, 2020. **At this critical time of converging health, economic, and racial justice crises, our city budget should be increasing funding for vital social services in the communities most impacted by poverty and police violence, especially those with dense populations such as ours.**

The truth is that these reductions would bring no significant changes to LAPD's operational structures. For example, one recommendation made by the Chief Legislative Analyst in order to achieve the reductions is for LAPD to decrease recruiting numbers from 503 to 251 new officers, which would save \$25 million. If our city budget is to reflect the priorities of the community, any increase in the police force would work against that and would only exacerbate the same problems that our communities are protesting.

Our city's reliance on policing has led to appalling outcomes in Black and Brown communities. As reported in the Los Angeles Times, the LAPD has killed almost 900 people in the last 20 years, 80% of whom were Black or Latino. And just this month, police killed one of our own Koreatown neighbors, 18-year-old Andres Guardado. The resulting legal battles that range from police brutality to wrongful imprisonment cost the city \$190 million in payouts from 2005 to 2018. At a time when cuts are inevitable due to the economic downturn brought on by COVID-19, we need to be strategic about where our money is going.

Even before COVID-19, roughly one in three renters in Los Angeles spent more than half their income on housing, and there were over 36,000 unhoused people in our City. The pandemic will only make matters worse. Many Angelenos are now unemployed following the massive job losses stemming from COVID-19. And economists predict that many of the recent layoffs will be permanent. Without bold action from the City, more Angelenos will become severely rent-burdened or fall into homelessness.

The Council's recommended reduction is only a fraction of the LAPD budget, and it would still put the department's share of city funding at 50%. Meanwhile, this budget cuts \$230 million in services, weakening vital programs that many Angelenos rely on and furloughing nearly 16,000 city workers. It cuts housing programs by 9.4%, job programs by 8.9%, and homelessness programs by 6%. The Department of Aging has reported that furloughs and office closures will directly affect seniors trying to enroll in meal services, many of whom do not have internet access and rely on staff to help them enroll in city programs via telephone. The Department of Economic Development anticipates that its cuts will cause delays in economic relief and related assistance to the thousands of workers and businesses impacted by the COVID-19 emergency. The Department of Housing and Community Investment predicts that furloughs will reduce its ability to provide services to tenants, prevent poverty, and homelessness, and create affordable housing.

It is time to recognize that investments in housing and job security, mental health care, and after-school programs ARE investments in public safety—and are also cheaper and safer than police spending.

The People's Budget LA presents a more humanistic approach to public safety and captures the priorities of more than 24,000 Angelenos seeking racial and economic justice. In contrast to the proposed city budgets, the People's Budget allocates only 1.64% of city funds to law enforcement and policing, reinvesting the remaining funds for proactive forms of community care and public safety. While the budget may not provide line-by-line recommendations that align with current city budget categories, that should not stop the Honorable City Council members from recognizing the possibilities in a budget that prioritizes community wellness.

WCKNC realizes that it will be a long and complicated process to transition from current models of public safety while also preventing massive unemployment among current officers. In the meantime, it is important to recognize the role of existing community structures that aim to bring power back to the people. One such structure is the Neighborhood Council system, a hyper-local governing model that allows funding to be funneled to communities through Neighborhood Purpose Grants and Community Improvement projects. Increasing the neighborhood council budget to \$100,000 in communities that have been disproportionately affected by police violence and that serve the densest parts of the city would amount to less than 0.1% of the overall proposed budget, but would provide targeted funding for food pantries, youth literacy, mental health services, local park activities, and other community-driven initiatives.

At a time when our city is demanding systemic changes, it is critical that the LA City Council respond with more than small, conciliatory, incremental reforms. WCKNC thus urges the Honorable City Council members to divert LAPD funding and to reinvest it in community programs, such as the Neighborhood Council system, in order to achieve a budget that reflects the priorities set forth by the People's Budget LA.