

Communication from Public

Name: BLACK PROFESSIONALS OF LOS ANGELES CITY PLANNING

Date Submitted: 01/18/2023 05:37 PM

Council File No: 23-0036

Comments for Public Posting: As the Black Professionals of Los Angeles City Planning (BPLA) reflect on the recent Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, these words made by the late Reverend in 1967 deeply resonate with the challenges faced by the City of Los Angeles today: “A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.” As such, BPLA respectfully demands that Los Angeles City Planning (LACP) and other City Departments engaged in regular community outreach and engagement cease any further requests for armed security and/or sworn officers through Los Angeles Police Department’s (LAPD) security services. Full Letter attached.



BLACK PROFESSIONALS OF LOS ANGELES CITY PLANNING*

** opinions expressed herein do not represent the official position of the Los Angeles City Planning Department*

January 18, 2023

Vince Bertoni
Director of Planning
Los Angeles City Planning
200 North Spring Street, 5th Floor
Los Angeles, California 90012
Mail Stop 395

Dear Director Bertoni,

As the Black Professionals of Los Angeles City Planning (BPLA) reflect on the recent Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, [these words](#) made by the late Reverend in 1967 deeply resonate with the challenges faced by the City of Los Angeles today: “*A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.*” As such, BPLA respectfully demands that Los Angeles City Planning (LACP) and other City Departments engaged in regular community outreach and engagement cease any further requests for armed security and/or sworn officers through Los Angeles Police Department’s (LAPD) security services.

The [Los Angeles Times recently reported](#) that at least 991 people have been killed by law enforcement in Los Angeles County since 2000. In the first week of 2023, three Angelenos by the names of Keenan Anderson, Oscar Sanchez, and Takar Smith were taken from us through excessive police violence that continues to disproportionately target Black and Latino citizens throughout the City. The continued use of excessive force without consequence by the LAPD contributes to an entrenched distrust of our City processes. This disturbing pattern requires the City to engage in impactful, systemic public safety reform that results in alternatives to potentially lethal interactions with law enforcement and promotes social investment.

In the wake of the murder of George Floyd in 2020, BPLA created a “[Framework and Action Plan for Transformative Planning in the City of Los Angeles](#).” The action plan is intended to serve as a living, grassroots document that reflects the values and principles of local, Black professionals in the field of urban planning. A key goal of this action plan is to strengthen connections with Black communities by creating trusting relationships with the Department.

In order to advance this goal, we respectfully demand that contracted security and/or sworn officers provided by LAPD - armed with either lethal and “less-than-lethal” weapons - are no longer present at future outreach events hosted by LACP or at public hearings that take place at various City venues; including convenings of the Area Planning Commissions, Cultural Heritage Commission, City Planning Commission, and City Council. Until LAPD restores faith in our communities, a visible presence at

public meetings must not be encouraged. Furthermore, we offer our strong support of legislation introduced by Councilmember Eunisses Hernandez ([Council File: 23-0036](#)) to assist in achieving this goal.

LACP is set to embark on an unprecedented update of our City's zoning code regulations, Community Plans, and General Plan in order to address our burgeoning housing and homelessness crisis. These updates will require active participation from Angelenos across the City, specifically those who live in communities victimized by Los Angeles' unjust land use policies of the past. These communities happen to also be targeted by a long history of over-policing and a lack of public investments that would encourage safer, healthier environments. It is our responsibility as civil servants to create safe, nonthreatening spaces to uplift the voices of these communities.

We deeply appreciate your efforts to honor this request in order to reduce barriers to outreach during this extraordinary time and to cultivate trusting, productive relationships with our most impacted communities.

Thank you for your continued support. For further inquiries, please contact lacp.bpla@gmail.com.

In Power,

The Black Professionals of Los Angeles City Planning

cc: Hon. Karen Bass, Mayor of the City of Los Angeles
Hon. Paul Krekorian, Los Angeles City Council President
Hon. Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Planning and Land Use Management Committee Chair
Hon. Eunisses Hernandez, Councilmember of Los Angeles Council District 1
Samantha Millman, President of the City Planning Commission
Barry Milofsky, President of the Cultural Heritage Commission
Eric Nam, President of the North Valley Area Planning Commission
Mark Dierking, President of the South Valley Area Planning Commission
Lisa Waltz Morocco, Vice-President of the West LA Area Planning Commission
Ilissa Gold, President of the Central LA Area Planning Commission
Jacob Stevens, President of the East LA Area Planning Commission
Jaqueline Orozco, President of the South LA Area Planning Commission
Esther Hatch, President of the Harbor Area Planning Commission
Brenda Shockley, Transition Deputy Mayor for Economic Opportunity and Chief Equity Officer
Kevin Keller, Transition Deputy Mayor for Economic Development
Capri Maddox, Executive Director of Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department
Faisal Robles, Chief Equity Officer for Los Angeles City Planning
Arthi Varma, Deputy Director of Los Angeles City Planning
Lisa Webber, Deputy Director of Los Angeles City Planning
Shana Bonstin, Deputy Director of Los Angeles City Planning