



April 28, 2025

Councilmember and Chair Katy Young Yaroslavsky
Councilmember and Vice-Chair Bob Blumenfield
Councilmember Eunisses Hernandez
Councilmember Heather Hutt
Councilmember Tim McOsker

Subject: **EAA Response to the FY 26 Budget Proposal of 1,650 Layoffs**

Dear Budget and Finance Committee Members,

We write to express deep concerns over the Mayor's proposed FY26 Budget. The Engineers and Architects Association (EAA Union) represents over 6,100 personnel in civil service classifications that work across 40 City departments in the City of Los Angeles. While EAA Union represents 20 percent of the City's workforce, more than 33 percent of the 1,650 layoffs directed by the Mayor's proposed FY 26 Budget are EAA represented positions. We find this to be a costly, misguided, and risky approach to solving the City's fiscal crisis.

The focus of the cuts are in stark contrast to the Mayor's own direction to the City Administrative Officer (CAO) on March 19th to develop comprehensive cost savings proposals that would reduce liability costs, reduce departmental contract expenses, and create structural reforms to enable ongoing budget balance in future fiscal years. The proposed targeted layoffs and elimination of vacancies do the opposite since many of the positions targeted for cuts perform the tasks needed to advance voter-approved housing, transportation, and economic initiatives, and work to prevent the large legal settlements, which contributes \$320 million in the FY 26 Budget.

Leading to last year's budget proposal, the Mayor directed the CAO to move away from "flawed budgeting that does not reflect how departments should actually operate to deliver basic services." However, the current proposal eliminates the positions that perform the needed work critical to delivering vital services and preventing overspending and legal liabilities.

Budget Priorities

In her direction, the Mayor says "no program or department [is] too precious to consider for reductions or reorganization". However, the CAO seems to show a pattern of turning a blind eye to the overspending and liabilities from the Police Department (LAPD). Instead, focus has been redirected to eliminations in

the housing and transportation programs that voters have continued to prioritize in ballot initiatives (e.g. Measure A, Healthy Streets LA (HLA), Measure United to House LA, Measure R, and Measure M, etc.). The LAPD budget contributed to an estimated \$39M in overspending, yet their budget is 47 percent of the unrestricted revenues, and the payroll for sworn personnel increased by \$18.6 million while payroll for non-sworn in LAPD decreased by \$17.1 million. Additionally, payroll for departments that maintain quality of life saw significant declines including Transportation (-\$18.6 million), Street Services (-\$15.7 million), and City Planning (-\$13.6 million). Each of these departments is responsible for ensuring the success of voter-funded transportation and housing initiatives.

If City Council accepts the proposed FY26 budget as-is, there is a risk of appearing to obstruct voter intent that can only be corrected at the ballot box. If the CAO and Mayor intending to continue to allocate half of the General Fund to public safety, then an alternative approach could be to ask the voters to support a special property tax to fund public safety so that budget allocations better align with voter intent.

Management Analysts

The current proposed budget calls to eliminate 193 filled positions, and 260 total position sweeps, in the Management Analyst class series. Management Analysts are the invaluable foundation of every department who navigate the City's complex regulations around contracting and interface with project managers, attorneys, and fiscal managers so they can execute contracts. Inadequate execution of contracts leads to loss of funding, consequential service gaps, and legal settlements from aggrieved parties that are vigilantly looking for missteps in the competitive bidding process. It may be easy to point to our hard working members as the cause of "sluggish" processes, however, the process remains the same with or without the workers, leaving overburdened project managers, under pressure to meet their deadlines, vulnerable to missteps that can land the City in court facing legal challenges. The Management Analyst and the Accountant class series also provide monetary oversight and financial controls ensuring the City is not overspending on contracted services. If the Mayor and Council are serious about reforming a system that fails to meet your priorities, EAA would be available to draw on our members' extensive experience to assist with reforming the process in the Administrative Code and Executive Orders rather than eliminating the workers needed to manage the complex contracting systems.

LAPD Civilian Impacts

This budget proposes eliminating 403 filled non-sworn positions in the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), nearly 25 percent of all proposed layoffs. The layoffs include Management Analysts, Systems Analysts, Clerks, Performance Auditors, Forensic Print Specialists, and the Photographer class series represented by EAA Union. EAA are proud of our members' work in public safety who collaborate with our sworn brothers and sisters, though we know just as well as LAPD does that our members perform tasks at much lower cost than the sworn officers. If civilian positions are eliminated, sworn officers will inevitably need to backfill them, and require more overtime. Cutting civilian positions will cost the City more money.

LADOT Impacts

The proposed budget eliminates 271 filled positions in the Department of Transportation (LADOT), a 15 percent reduction in of the department's positions, not including vacancies to be eliminated. Positions targeted include the Transportation Planning, Management Analyst, Systems Analyst, and Accountant class series. Some of the positions eliminated are revenue generating, such as Parking Enforcement, while others are essential for the City to implement voter-funded initiatives, such as Measure HLA since it falls on the planners in LADOT and City Planning to determine how the City meets compliance with the Mobility Plan when resurfacing streets. Absent HLA compliance checks could result in legal settlements, capital project delays, or simply lead to deferred street maintenance. Deferring street maintenance could contribute to higher costs long term in street reconstruction, increased response times, and higher maintenance costs of fleet vehicles.

LA City Planning Impacts

The proposed budget eliminates 115 filled positions in the Department of City Planning, 35 percent of the department's positions. As noted in the Department's communication to this committee, City Planning represents 1.6% of the City's workforce, but makes up 7.2% of the proposed layoffs and is amongst the hardest hit of all of the City departments. Most of these positions are in the City Planning and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Class Series that support advanced planning and development services. The proposed position cuts come at a time when the Mayor has proposed waiving fees for the Palisades wildfire rebuilding efforts without identifying a funding source to support the work of the staff positions in the department.

The Department of City Planning staff develops land use policies and zoning that directly manage the growth and development of the largest and most economically significant city in California and the Country's Western region. City Planning staff are specialists tasked with continuously navigating and mediating between the varying and often competing interests of developers, homeowners, renters, neighborhood councils, business groups, the transportation of goods, and community and environmental organizations, all while striving to make decisions that serve the immediate and long-term public good. The City requires a skilled, dedicated, and well-staffed Planning Department. The proposed budget's cuts to this department endangers the futures of the City's residents, businesses, infrastructure, earthquake and natural disaster preparedness and recovery ability, economic growth, and social stability.

Further, these positions are needed on the job so we can plan and build in a more climate friendly way that prevents the next catastrophic fires. Until sufficient global action is taken to eliminate the emission of heat trapping gases in the Earth's atmosphere, we will continue to see the extreme climate-related events overwhelm the abilities of our first responder system to respond. We need a budget that honors the first responders by preventing crises rather than leaving them as the last ones standing to face it.

LA Sanitation Impacts

This budget proposes eliminating 159 filled positions in the Bureau of Sanitation. This includes the Environmental Compliance Inspector (ECI), Management Analyst, GIS class services. The Prospeed FY 26 Budget targets 20 filled ECI positions, many are in the Livability Services Division who serve along public safety in managing the unhoused crises by safely dismantling settlements and safely disposing of toxic materials. The Mobile Hygiene Unit is proposed for elimination, who directly serve the unhoused sanitation needs and make our neighborhoods cleaner. Absent access to public restrooms and showers would increase exposure to public health incidents given little other option to use a public bathroom.

Solutions

We ask that the Budget and Finance Committee re-evaluate the positions proposed to be eliminated in light of your priorities and work with labor to address the fiscal crises in a way that supports our members sound management of operations that focus on protecting the City's fiscal health, advance voter supported initiatives, protect Los Angeles from the worst impacts of climate change, advance the quality of life of City residents, and help prepare for the 2028 Olympic Games. We have identified several measures that could advance this goal including streamline contracting processes and proposing special property tax for public safety. EAA Union remains committed to working with the Mayor and City Council to find equitable, fiscally responsible alternatives to layoffs in a way that achieves your policy objectives.

Sincerely,



Marleen Fonseca
Executive Director

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