



ERIC GARCETTI
MAYOR

December 21, 2020

Honorable Members of the City Council
c/o City Clerk
200 North Spring Street, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: CF 20-0600-S83 Fiscal Year 2020-21 Budget / Los Angeles Police Department /
Reinvest Funds for Impacted Communities

Honorable Members,

Today, I have vetoed CF 20-0600-S83.

When the people of Los Angeles flooded the streets of our city last summer, the movement for racial justice challenged us to think past the boundaries of the present day: to reimagine public safety, take bold steps toward healing the wounds of history, and make strides against the bigotry and inequality that lead to so much misery and division.

I wholeheartedly support the equity formula applied to the proposed spending plan for reinvesting public safety dollars.

Beneath that formula, however, far too many of the proposed expenditures do not meet the demands of the moment or the call of history. Particularly at a time of extraordinary peril for our budget, we face the prospect of compounding the pain with City workforce layoffs that would likely have a disproportionate effect on Black and Brown employees — many of whom came into the City family through Targeted Local Hire.

During public meetings held to receive feedback on these new investments, we heard that Angelenos wanted a voice in the decision-making — with a focus on reimagining public safety and pressing matters of racial justice, equality, and opportunity. Our constituents are thinking about how those values will look in our city tomorrow, and they expect a powerful demonstration of our commitment to exploring fundamental change.

I would be pleased to sign a spending plan into law if it was revised to emphasize and secure the following principles:

- Ensuring and reinforcing community engagement — by setting aside funding to pursue pilots with local organizations and other partners to address issues of racial justice and income inequality, along with community safety, equity, and reconciliation.
- Protecting jobs for the most vulnerable City employees faced with layoffs, particularly the beneficiaries of Targeted Local Hire — overwhelmingly workers of color, who fought hard through a history of institutional and structural barriers to seize new opportunities created by this program.
- Taking strong action to restore peace in neighborhoods that are weathering increases in violence, by accelerating and expanding intervention and prevention work.
- Piloting new, more immediately actionable ideas to reimagine policing and public safety — beginning with the funding of a 24-hour, unarmed crisis response program to dispatch mental health workers to certain nonviolent 911 calls that is moving forward next month.

Los Angeles should be leading America by piloting bold ideas like exploring a guaranteed basic income, confronting the stark Black-White disparity among people experiencing homelessness, driving racial reconciliation, protecting jobs held by people of color with new opportunities in the City workforce, and working in closer collaboration with our communities on allocation decisions. Instead, this plan in too many places elevates what should be routine over what could be revolutionary. Where we could fund a pilot to finally begin separating police and mental health work in L.A., we are instead looking at a plan that funds more business-as-usual when Angelenos are clearly anxious and ready for fundamental change.

I served proudly on the City Council for 12 years, and deeply understand the vital need for excellence and consistency in everyday services for the neighborhoods we represent. Historically underserved communities deserve quality services and public works projects most urgently — and Angelenos rightfully expect us to meet that serious challenge in the budget process and throughout the year.

But when we took up the mantle of reinvesting public safety dollars to lift up historically disenfranchised communities of color, it was on the idea that we would set our sights much higher than we ever have in the past — beyond the ordinary considerations of the day, and with a progressive vision for the future.

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I look forward to working with the Council to reconsider these appropriations. We can and must work together to respond with the ingenuity and partnership needed to match the magnitude of the movement. If we do, Los Angeles can lead this country into a bold new direction defined by a commitment to righting the wrongs of the past while building the city of the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Garcetti", with a horizontal line extending to the right and a small mark at the end.

ERIC GARCETTI
Mayor