



MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCILMEMBER
— DISTRICT 10 —

PRESS RELEASE

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LA City Councilmembers Move Forward with Effort to Keep Public Rights of Way Clean, Safe and Accessible, Predicated on the Adoption of Street Engagement Strategy and Enforcement that is Non-Criminalizing

Following Tuesday's [vote to advance an effort to address homelessness on our streets](#), the Los Angeles City Council took steps to adopt an ordinance that would [engage unhoused](#) homeless individuals and connect them to housing and services, while promoting public health, safety and access to the public right of way.

"I fundamentally believe that in order to address homelessness – and particularly street homelessness – we must lead with a trauma-informed perspective. Trained outreach workers from experienced community-based nonprofits must take the lead in engaging our unhoused individuals. Bringing people indoors can take time, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution for individuals that have lost everything," said Councilmember Ridley-Thomas. "But we must also recognize that there are public health, safety and access issues created by the conditions on the streets that impact the quality of life of Angelenos. We are seeing an unprecedented level of fires involving homeless encampments, and far

too many unhoused individuals are killed by vehicle incidents each year. Not every space is a safe space for those who are forced to sleep outside. It is our responsibility to lead with compassionate compliance to address this.”

The ordinance approved by the City Council would provide the City with authority to maintain the public right of way, in a manner that is consistent with ADA requirements and addresses any imminent public safety issues.

It would also allow the City, only after a resolution is passed by the City Council, location by location, and a 14 day public notice is posted, to prohibit encampments around schools, preschools and day care facilities, as well as in areas where there has been a threat to public safety due to fires, violent crimes or other hazardous conditions.

“We have built in a significant level of transparency and accountability here. It will be our responsibility to ensure that for each and every location considered for restrictions, there is not only ample public notice and deliberation by City Council, but that our outreach workers have thoughtfully offered suitable housing alternatives,” said Councilmember Ridley-Thomas. “It is now incumbent on this Council to ensure that we lead with more resources dedicated to this critical street engagement work. Ordinances won’t solve the homeless crisis - only a bold investment in trained outreach workers that can link the unhoused to affordable and supportive housing will. This is the work I intend to focus on scaling up with urgency.”

Today, Councilmember Ridley-Thomas also introduced an amendment to ensure that the final ordinance does not contain language that compounds the plight of the unhoused by subjecting them to the criminal justice system. The modification would make sure that any violation resulting from individuals refusing to comply be enforceable only as infractions.

“The bottom line is that we seek not to marginalize or stigmatize people experiencing homelessness. The changes we offered to the ordinance will ensure that no one will go to jail simply due to the fact that they have been sleeping on the street,” said Councilmember Ridley-Thomas.

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Councilmember Ridley-Thomas is Chair of the City of Los Angeles Homelessness and Poverty Committee