



PO Box 49427 ■ Los Angeles, California 90049 ■ (424) BHA-8765 ■ info@brentwoodhomeowners.org

May 15, 2025

Los Angeles City Council Budget and Finance Committee
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Chair Yaroslavsky and Honorable Members,

The primary role of government is public safety. The proposed budget cuts to the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), as discussed during recent Budget and Finance Committee meetings, pose a direct and unacceptable threat to the safety and well-being of the residents of Los Angeles.

Brentwood: A Community at Risk

Established in 1946, the Brentwood Homeowners Association¹ (BHA) is the largest homeowner association in the 90049 zip code. **A significant portion of our membership lives in a designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ)** and has been forced to evacuate multiple times due to wildfires.

At our most recent annual meeting, a show of hands revealed that **half of our members have been victims of crime**—a figure later confirmed by our 2024 community survey. These are not statistics. These are real families facing real threats to their safety.

City government has many responsibilities, but none is more critical than ensuring public safety. For nearly 80 years, BHA has worked in partnership with the City to uphold this shared commitment. However, the looming budget deficit and potential cuts to essential services now threaten that partnership—and more importantly, the safety of our community.

Undermining Fire Protection in VHFHSZs

We applaud Councilmembers Yaroslavsky and Raman for recognizing the need for better **wildfire protection through their motion (Council File 25-0006-S35)**, which highlights the growing intensity and year-round nature of fire season in Los Angeles.

Yet the proposed budget cuts directly contradict the motion's intent by reducing LAFD staffing, delaying equipment maintenance, and limiting emergency response capabilities—especially in areas like ours, where fires sparked by homeless encampments have forced evacuations.

¹ BHA represents approximately 4,500 homeowners and condominium residents living west of the 405 Freeway, north of San Vicente Boulevard, and east of Canyon View Drive.

The motion specifically calls for:

- Enhanced deployment of resources during Red Flag conditions
- Improved safety protocols in VHFHSZs
- Better resident notification systems
- Proactive, cross-agency emergency coordination
- Expanded public education on fire risks

Reducing LAFD funding undermines all of these goals and puts our most vulnerable residents in danger.

Police Staffing and Rising Crime in Brentwood

Former Councilmember Mike Bonin, in his 2017 "Back to Basic Car" white paper, wrote:

"Too often, I hear from constituents that they rarely see a patrol car in their neighborhood, or that it takes LAPD too long to respond to an emergency call. Our neighborhoods deserve better. **We need more patrol officers.**"

Those words ring truer today than ever. Brentwood is served by the West LA Community Police Station, which covers 65.14 square miles and 784 street miles, the largest area of any LAPD station. Our resources are stretched thin, and the consequences are clear:

- In 2024, burglaries rose 45% over the previous year.
- In the first quarter of 2025, burglaries rose again over the prior year.
- Just last week, two residents were robbed at gunpoint at 4:00 PM on a residential street.

Cutting sworn officer positions—and eliminating critical civilian roles in the LAPD—would weaken patrol and investigative capacity at a time when we need more support, not less. Our fears are compounded by the fact that Los Angeles is preparing to host the World Cup (2026), Super Bowl (2027), and Olympic Games (2028). Public safety must be reinforced—not diminished—in anticipation of these global events.

Broader Impacts of Proposed Cuts on Brentwood

- **LADOT:** A 22% cut in enforcement will worsen traffic and parking conditions. Brentwood already suffers from congestion, and the post-Palisades Fire recovery effort has led to thousands of additional vehicle trips through the Sunset and 405 corridors.
- **Public Works:** Cuts to tree trimming, sanitation, and street repair will lead to longer delays and higher service fees. During last year's storms, a neglected tree fell and blocked Bundy Drive for two days, isolating residents without alternative access.
- **Rec and Parks:** Budget reductions will keep Barrington Park and Crestwood Hills Park in a state of disrepair. These are critical recreational areas for our families and seniors, yet they already suffer from inadequate upkeep.

Budget and Finance Committee

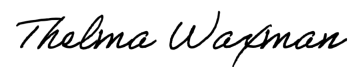
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We recognize the difficult fiscal decisions ahead. But balancing the budget should not come at the expense of the safety, health, and quality of life of the people you represent.

We urge you to preserve funding for LAFD, LAPD, LADOT, Public Works, and Recreation and Parks. Public safety is not discretionary—it is foundational.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thelma Waxman".

Thelma Waxman
President

cc: Traci Park, Councilmember, Council District 11