

MOTION

Tens of thousands of people, without opportunity for housing and shelter, fend for themselves in a growing number of makeshift encampments on our sidewalks. Our highest and greatest priority must be to provide a genuine alternative to sidewalk encampments -- appropriate housing. In the meantime, in the middle of a public health crisis, City policy regarding encampments should be guided by the words of the physician's Hippocratic oath: "First, do no harm."

Existing City policy does not follow that precept. The City of Los Angeles continues to ignore guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control regarding how to keep homeless encampments clean, safe and sanitary. CDC guidance states that *"If individual housing options are not available, allow people who are living unsheltered or in encampments to remain where they are. Clearing encampments can cause people to disperse throughout the community and break connections with service providers. This increases the potential for infectious disease spread."*

At the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, the City followed these dictates, but took steps to reverse course in July, and then again in December of last year when it reinstated CARE+ cleanups, which force unhoused residents to take down their tents, move all their belongings and relocate as crews power wash the sidewalks and remove trash. In reinstating an involuntary program, the City seemed to accept the premise that sanitary conditions could not be maintained at encampments without an involuntary sanitation program which confiscated people's materials if they failed to comply. It does not need to be that way.

There is an alternative way to maintain public health and keep conditions sanitary - a voluntary program that offers and provides services to remove trash and hazardous waste, and provide cleaning, without the threat of confiscation. Such an approach, compliant with CDC guidelines, has been advocated by the Services Not Sweeps Coalition, was promised and then promptly abandoned in the rollout of the CARE+ program, and has been piloted in recent months in portions of Council District 11.

In the pilot program, which continues to evolve and improve, LASAN keeps a regular and predictable schedule and provides a voluntary service, much like it does to residential customers. Community ambassadors conduct outreach and seek cooperation ahead of time, allow people to leave their trash and waste in designated areas for easy pick-up, and invite encampment residents to move their tents if they desire a more thorough cleaning. Outreach teams also seek compliance with ingress-egress and ADA requirements, as well as provide services like food distribution, toilet services, showers, and tent distribution or exchange. This is accomplished without any involvement from the Los Angeles Police Department.

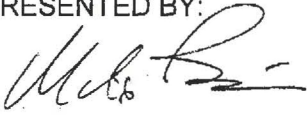
The City's initial suspension of involuntary clean-ups, known to many as sweeps, was part of a suite of policies that kept COVID cases low among the unhoused population in LA; COVID rates in encampments were lower than rates in congregate shelters and bridge housing. In recent

weeks, infection rates have soared, tracking with the increase in the general population. After averaging about 60 new cases each week through the fall, infections among the unhoused doubled in the week after Thanksgiving and have since continued to climb. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health showed 4,578 total cases among people experiencing homelessness as of January 4, 2021.

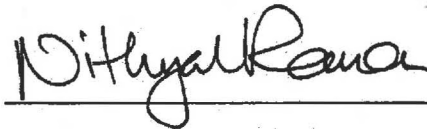
I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council direct LA Sanitation to develop voluntary, service-based protocols for CARE+ operations citywide. The protocols should include:

- Compliance with CDC guidelines regarding public health and encampments
- Regular, scheduled and well-publicized cleanings
- Offers by LASAN of services such as trash pick-up, bulky item pick-up, etc.
- Designation of areas where trash and waste can be placed for disposal and removal
- Use of community partners and ambassadors to conduct outreach and facilitation
- Provision of easy-ups or shade structures so people can temporarily relocate with their belongings during a cleaning
- Provision, through LASAN or partner agencies, of mobile showers, bathrooms, COVID-testing, tent exchange and distribution, food and water
- Hiring of unhoused residents to keep areas tidy between LASAN cleanings
- Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities.
- No use of law enforcement personnel

PRESENTED BY:



MIKE BONIN
Councilmember, 11th District



NITHYA RAMAN
Councilmember, 4th District

SECONDED BY:

