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## **Transportation Advocacy Groups Urge Mayor Garcetti to Keep Measure M Promise and Fund Vision Zero with Local Return Funding**

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To Members of the Los Angeles City Council:

Nearly two years ago, the City of Los Angeles, led by Mayor Eric Garcetti, made a policy commitment to eliminate traffic fatalities in Los Angeles under the banner of Vision Zero. In Executive Directive #10, Mayor Garcetti established an ambitious goal of reducing traffic deaths by 20% by 2017 and eliminating traffic deaths in Los Angeles by 2025. A wide range of City leaders, from elected officials to Transportation, Public Works, Police, and Fire Department staff joined members of the Los Angeles community and the LA Vision Zero Alliance to celebrate this bold commitment and to celebrate the launch of an important, long overdue initiative.

Mayor Eric Garcetti followed his public commitment to Vision Zero with a successful campaign to pass Measure M. He tirelessly championed the passage of a 2016 ballot measure that promised voters an investment in all modes of transportation, and a safer, more connected Los Angeles. With a wide coalition of support including the American Heart Association, AARP, and others, proponents sold Measure M as the ballot measure that would secure a future of safe mobility transportation options for everyone in LA, no matter your mode.

**Unfortunately, since these landmark achievements — the commitment to end traffic fatalities and the passage of Measure M — we are now concerned that our City leaders are backpedaling, and are taking Los Angeles in the wrong direction.**

Mayor Garcetti's recent actions convey that his vision of a safer, multimodal city was an empty promise — a political pledge with no financial backing. In the deadliest city in the United States for traffic crashes, this is not just disappointing, it is unacceptable. "A City's true commitment to

policy priorities is best measured by how it allocates public funds within each budget proposal. With its recent budget action, the City has shown it is not actually committed to saving lives on our streets and sidewalks — this at a time when pedestrian fatalities rose by 58% in LA last year,” says Emilia Crotty, Policy and Programs Manager at Los Angeles Walks.

What action are we referring to? At the most recent Budget and Finance Committee, held on Friday May 12th, Committee members Mike Bonin and Nury Martinez were visibly surprised when Committee Chair Paul Krekorian introduced a motion dedicating half of all Measure M local return funding solely to resurfacing streets and improving pavement conditions. Councilmember Krekorian’s motion ignored the pending [proposal](#) the Transportation Committee put forth in late March, which proposed investing approximately \$30 million of local return per year into Mayor Garcetti’s Vision Zero initiative, an initiative in line with the promise of Measure M: a future of safe, multimodal mobility.

The Transportation Committee’s March proposal was to be taken up later in May, likely in a joint meeting with the Gang Reduction and Public Works committee with presentations from all the City departments that work on our streets and sidewalks (Bureau of Engineering, Bureau of Streets Services, Department of Transportation), allowing for a robust policy discussion on how to best invest the City’s Measure M local return dollars. To see this sudden motion from Committee Chair Paul Krekorian (who, in the past, has been a huge safety champion, especially for sidewalks) caught everyone off guard. During last Friday’s Budget & Finance Committee discussion, it became clear that this new motion was one supported, if not directly from the Mayor’s Deputy Chief of Staff, Matt Szabo.

Not only are Councilmembers Bonin and Martinez surprised by this action, so are we. The proposal to spend 50% of Measure M local return funds on street repaving goes directly against the vision that voters and organizations who mobilized around Measure M got behind - improved transit and safe ways to access transit.

And, if the decisions made at the Budget & Finance Committee stands, only about \$3 million will be dedicated in the 2017-2018 budget for Vision Zero. With half of those Vision Zero investments in Los Angeles allocated to the Police Department, which is set to receive \$1.5 million from the general fund. **This flies in the face of Vision Zero best practices from across the country, which clearly advise cities to lead with engineering, not enforcement. National and local experts and advocates state that a Vision Zero policy that leads with law enforcement will *not* result in safer streets, all lives being valued and saved, or the cultural shift needed for a successful Vision Zero campaign.**

“The current proposed City Budget does not prioritize the safety and well-being of Angelenos who use multiple modes of transportation. Most notably, by failing to invest in Vision Zero, the budget fails to invest in low-income communities and communities of color who are disproportionately impacted by serious traffic injuries and deaths—and the unintended

consequences in street improvements, like displacement. Instead of investing in infrastructure and education in communities that need it most, the City has decided to spend much of its limited Vision Zero allocation on the Police Department and increased enforcement. The Department of Transportation has shown a genuine willingness to engage the community, respond to feedback, and come up with a concrete plan to implement Vision Zero in a manner that will save lives. When faced with a decision about priorities, it's been made clear that the City prefers police and potholes over people's lives," says Tamika Butler, Executive Director of the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition.

In making these budget priorities, the City is ignoring one of its biggest public health crisis, one that is disproportionately impacting neighborhoods with greater percentages of children, seniors, people of color immigrants, individuals with disabilities, and low income households. For example, Council District 9, in South Los Angeles, has no roads that will qualify for road repair under the currently proposed metrics, but has a large portion of traffic fatalities and dangerous infrastructure.

"The data shows that most of the corridors in the High Injury Network (HIN) have higher percentages of low-income communities of color. These are the same neighborhoods impacted by historic divestment in community design and over-policing. It's unreasonable to expect people to change how they move around their communities without investing in the infrastructure to support safer and more accessible streets and sidewalks. The prioritization of enforcement over design fosters a culture of 'broken window' policing and the criminalization of low-income communities. We ask the City of Los Angeles to look at its own Department of Transportation projections and consider its wise guidance on how we invest in design and infrastructure to reach our shared goal of reducing lives lost on our city's streets to zero," states Megan McClaire, Director of Health Equity at Advancement Project California.

Each year since August 2015, City leaders have set aside small dollar amounts directly for Vision Zero. In the \$8.5 billion FY16 City of Los Angeles budget, less than \$650,000 was directed to support Vision Zero, primarily focused on new staff positions. In the \$8.76 billion FY17 City of Los Angeles budget, approximately \$3 million is directed to support Vision Zero, including a modest increase in new infrastructure. The budget proposal voted on last week allocates only \$1.5 million towards implementing Vision Zero Action Plan engineering solutions, including bus stop lighting, concrete street improvements, and pedestrian lighting from transportation dollars (Measure M and SB 1) and \$1.5 million for LAPD vision zero enforcement from the General Fund. This does not amount to a concrete investment, literally or figuratively, and shows that the City of Los Angeles is not leveraging Measure M funds to provide safe transportation options for all, as over \$45 million in Measure M local return funds are allocated to the City in fiscal year 2017-2018.

"The Mayor's Vision Zero Executive Directive, when declared in 2015, was incredibly inspiring, as was the future promised by Measure M, which voters overwhelmingly supported. Over 70% of

the electorate said “yes” to investing in transit, complete streets, and walkable and bikeable communities - trusting that investments would really do this,” says Jessica Meaney, Executive Director at Investing in Place.

Leaders and community groups working in the City of Los Angeles are deeply concerned to see Mayor Eric Garcetti's first implementation of Measure M funds focused on pavement quality not the vision of Measure M or saving lives through Vision Zero.