

**CITY OF LOS ANGELES**  
**INTER-DEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM**

Date: November 12, 2024

To: The Honorable City Council  
c/o City Clerk, Room 395  
Honorable Heather Hutt, Chair, Transportation Committee

From: Laura Rubio-Cornejo, General Manager   
Department of Transportation

Subject: **UPDATED CROSSING GUARD METHODOLOGY AND STAFFING IMPACT**

**SUMMARY**

In response to Council File (CF) 23-0304, this report outlines the methodology the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) applies to prioritize crossing guard deployment with available resources. The report also outlines the impacts of a projected \$3,300,000 year-end budget shortfall and potential service reductions effective January 1, 2025.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the City Council:

1. DIRECT LADOT to report back on recommendations for the adoption of an updated crossing guard deployment methodology.
2. DIRECT LADOT to establish a policy detailing the appeal process for the Department's crossing guard assignment determinations.

**BACKGROUND**

The Los Angeles Administrative Code (LAAC) tasks the Los Angeles Department of Transportation with the supervision of crossing guards Citywide to assist children traveling to and from school and grants the General Manager of LADOT the authority to designate elementary school crossings where crossing guards shall be assigned and shall assign crossing guards to such places. School Principals may request specific locations, subject to the review and determination of the General Manager and the availability of sufficient resources.

Prior to 2020, LADOT used a 1998 City Council-adopted methodology which included supplemental warrants to approve or deny requests for crossing guards. The methodology relied on a point-scoring system based on the number of children crossing and vehicle volumes at the requested locations. For locations that did not qualify for crossing guards using the original point-scoring system, the supplemental warrants provided an expanded set of criteria based on vehicle and pedestrian volumes, crash history, roadway width, critical speed, and sight distance, which resulted in many more locations recommended for crossing guards. LADOT used different scoring scales depending on whether the

crosswalk was uncontrolled, stop sign-controlled, or signal-controlled. With this expanded criteria, LADOT approved an increased number of locations meeting the criteria for crossing guards but, given the provided resources, was unable to place crossing guards at each location.

In 2020, due to the increasing demand for crossing guards, which outpaced available resources, and the roadway safety conditions that shifted during the COVID pandemic, LADOT developed a new methodology. In September 2023, the City Council directed LADOT to report on the methodology used for prioritizing requests and identifying requests and locations for the deployment of crossing guards.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-2024, the City hired a record number of crossing guards to meet the increased demand for services. As a result, LADOT currently employs more than 500 guards. The City's FY 2024-25 Adopted Budget maintained previous crossing guard funding, but the wages and bonuses for crossing guards, as outlined in MOU 34, increased substantially over the years. As a result, the crossing guard funding is projected to be fully spent by March 2025.

## **DISCUSSION**

Every day in Los Angeles, thousands of children walk, bike, and ride to school. LADOT is dedicated to ensuring these students reach their destinations safely, no matter how they choose to travel. A key component of this effort is the LADOT-managed City Crossing Guard Program. Crossing guards protect and guide young children on their way to school and are there to ensure that drivers are aware of children and that each student makes it to class safely.

### Current program

The City's Adopted Budget provides funding for LADOT to hire crossing guards. Each year, LADOT can hire a limited number of crossing guards based on allocated funding. LADOT currently employs 518 crossing guards who are deployed at approximately 432 locations. Presently, the Department received requests for crossing guards at 711 locations, which leaves 279 locations unstaffed. To manage limited resources, LADOT employs a safety-driven methodology to prioritize locations for crossing guard assignments.

The 2020 methodology, detailed in Attachment "A," employs a tiered system primarily based on the type of traffic control for each crosswalk and other roadway factors used in previous evaluations, including the number of lanes, vehicle and pedestrian volumes, and speed limit. LADOT set up the hierarchy of crossing guard needs as follows:

1. Uncontrolled marked crosswalks
2. Traffic signal control or crosswalks across uncontrolled turning paths
3. All-way Stop Sign control, partial Stop Sign control, or locations with "Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons"
4. Railroad crossings
5. Pedestrian Tunnels

Using this methodology, LADOT prioritizes crossing guard deployment at locations where there is a higher risk of a collision with a driver and where the severity of such collisions may be higher. LADOT's new methodology takes into account the number of school children crossing the street, but this is not a primary factor in determining the ranking.

LADOT receives crossing guard location requests throughout the school year and conducts crossing guard studies to adjust Citywide rankings. During the summer, the LADOT Parking Enforcement and Traffic Control staff review the updated rankings and modify the crossing guard deployment for the upcoming school year, taking into account how many crossing guards are available and assigning those crossing guards at the schools with the highest rankings. Where available resources do not allow LADOT to assign a guard at a requested location, the location is assessed for potential engineering treatments that could improve safety without the presence of a crossing guard.

### Challenges and recommendations

While the currently employed methodology allows us to respond to crossing guard requests with a data-driven approach, placement is based on a request-based system in which LAUSD identifies and submits new locations to LADOT for evaluation. This inherently limits deployment to those locations that are requested, and may not address safety concerns at locations that have not been requested, and therefore not assessed.

In order to further the safety and equity goals, LADOT recommends establishing a revised methodology that maintains the criteria used to prioritize locations, but that assesses school crossings Citywide, not just where they are requested. LADOT will report with this new approach to the Transportation Commission, which is assigned advisory authority over LADOT's school crossing guard policy, as well as the policy for handling appeals to decisions from that policy. Once approved by the Commission, LADOT will report back to Council with its recommendations both for updating the crossing guard methodology and appeals process with the Board of Transportation Commissioners.

Additionally, the program will be further restricted by funding challenges for the remainder of FY 2024-25, and potentially in future fiscal years. While the FY 2024-25 budget maintained funding for the City's Crossing Guard budget, both wages and bonuses for MOU 34, which sets employee agreements for all guards, increased. Based on existing resources and staffing levels, LADOT paused additional crossing guard hiring at the beginning of the fiscal year. However, current resources are no longer sufficient to maintain existing staffing levels, even without additional hiring.

In order to maintain the current crossing guard workforce and continue to staff locations in both the AM and PM shifts, the program requires an estimated additional \$3,300,000. Due to the current projected funding shortfall, LADOT identified the following refined Crossing Guard deployments. All of these options will result either in layoffs or reduced hours for current employees.

- 1) Reduce the number of guards deployed starting in January 2025, allowing minimal staffing through the end of the school calendar year;
- 2) Retain current staffing levels, ending all deployment by March 2025, or
- 3) Adjust deployment hours by the equivalent amount.

With 518 guards employed, approximately 480 are available on average for daily assignments and provide service at approximately 432 locations. Many locations require two guards, based on roadway width or other intersection characteristics. In order to continue some level of crossing guard service for the remainder of the school year within the existing FY 2024-25 budget, LADOT will need to reduce crossing guard deployment by an estimated 261 guards. With approximately 219 remaining guards

deployed each day, the number of staffed assignments will be reduced to 189 locations. This change would become effective January 1, 2025, as children return from winter break.

Alternatively, LADOT estimates it can continue to deploy the full 480 guards for an additional two to three months in calendar year 2025, ending all crossing guard deployment no later than April 1st. This would result in all 432 currently staffed locations losing crossing guard services for the remainder of the 2024-25 school year. LADOT also considered reducing crossing guard deployment to only the AM or only the PM shift at all locations for the remainder of the school year. However, this option would reduce hours worked to no more than 3 hours per day, and would likely result in substantial attrition. It is also the most difficult alternative to implement administratively and logistically.

In order to avoid these impacts to LADOT's crossing guard program, and to continue current service levels to help children get to and from school safely, LADOT requires an interim funding allocation of \$3,300,000 for FY 2024-25. Additional funding was requested in the Department's First Financial Status Report (FSR) but was not recommended in the City Administrative Officer's report; additional funding is being requested again as part of the Department's Second FSR, which is expected to go before Council in December 2024. Increased funding would also be needed in future fiscal years to maintain crossing guard service levels.

#### Timing and Next Steps

LADOT communicated the potential impacts to the Crossing Guard Program to the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Council direction is needed in order to confirm impacts to the Crossing Guard Program, provide sufficient time to notify impacted schools and engage the Crossing Guard union. Notifications will need to be issued before the LAUSD scheduled holiday break with the new staffing plan in place by January 2025.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no impact on the City's General Fund.

LRC:DM:bg  
Attachments

### **Attachment A: Crossing Guard Ranking Methodology**

#### Tier 1: Uncontrolled Crosswalks

- Highest number of approach lanes entering the crosswalk
- Highest speed limit
- Highest volume of school-age pedestrians using the crosswalk

#### Tier 2: Signal Controlled Crosswalks or Partial Stop Control/Uncontrolled Right Turn Lanes

- Locations with unprotected left turns through the crosswalk
  - Highest number of opposing through lanes for the left turn into the crosswalk
  - Highest speed limit for opposing traffic, parallel street, or street making a left turn through the crosswalk
  - Highest volume of school-age pedestrians using the crosswalk
- Locations without unprotected left turns through the crosswalk
  - Highest volume of school-age pedestrians using the crosswalk

#### Tier 3: All-Way Stop Control or Partial Stop Control or Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (HAWK)

- Highest number of approach lanes entering the crosswalk
- Highest volume of school-age pedestrians using the crosswalk

#### Tier 4: Railroad crossing

- Highest volume of school-age pedestrians crossing the tracks

#### Tier 5: Pedestrian Tunnel

- Highest volume of school-age pedestrians using the tunnel