

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
CALIFORNIA

Laura Rubio-Cornejo
GENERAL MANAGER



KAREN BASS
MAYOR

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

100 South Main Street, 10th Floor
Los Angeles, California 90012
(213) 972-8470
FAX (213) 972-8410

April 23, 2024

Honorable Bob Blumenfield, Chair
Budget and Finance Committee
Attention: Luigi Verano, Office of the City Clerk
200 North Spring Street, Room 395, City Hall
Los Angeles, California 90012

SUBJECT: LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2024-25

Dear Honorable Chair Blumenfield:

The Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) appreciates the opportunity to provide you with our comments on the Mayor's Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 Proposed Budget.

LADOT remains committed to providing outstanding City services, and accelerating project delivery to advance a safe, equitable, and sustainable transportation system that gives Angelenos more access to opportunity. Already, I have seen firsthand the hard work and dedication the women and men of LADOT bring to work everyday to make this vision a reality, and I am proud to continue their efforts to find new ways to meet the changing transportation demands of the communities we serve.

LADOT had a busy 2023, advancing key safety projects, delivering essential services, and expanding mobility options for all Angelenos. We improved safety for children and their caretakers at more than 200 schools across the city with reduced speed limits, new crosswalks and curb extensions, new speed humps, and more hired crossing guards than ever before. To prioritize hiring and expand capacity for the Department's Vision Zero and Active Transportation divisions, we partnered with Personnel to fill 106 full-time positions including maintenance crews, engineers, electricians, planners, and traffic officers. That allowed LADOT to install over 550 safety treatments like signal improvements, new stop signs, traffic circles, speed humps, and other treatments proven to calm traffic and reduce collisions. We delivered 26 miles of new and improved bike facilities, and in partnership with Metro we continued to improve service for bus riders with nearly 15 new miles of dedicated bus lanes, including the first 24-hour lanes outside Downtown and first ever lanes in the valley. Just last week we launched the City's first e-bike library in SouthLA, providing long term rentals to low-income residents as part of LADOT's Universal Basic Mobility pilot, which serves as a model for delivering transportation options and breaking down financial obstacles.

At LADOT, we know that transportation can lift people out of poverty and that a resilient transportation system ensures access to opportunities through floods, pandemics, earthquakes, fires, and even Beyonce or Taylor Swift concerts. Last year, LADOT supported the City's Inside Safe initiative with 2,000 hours of transit service and traffic control. We processed 60 affordable housing permits in one to two business days, and transitioned nearly 7,000 individual dining locations into the permanent Al Fresco Program. Our traffic officers managed more than 4,500 special events and dedicated nearly 5,000 service hours to emergency response across three activations that spanned 15 days.

In my first budget cycle as the General Manager at LADOT, it was my top priority to develop a comprehensive budget request that builds on these successes, with a focus on improving and accelerating project delivery, providing excellent service, and ensuring we are prepared for major events both planned and unexpected. Our budget request was developed with equity as a core principle to both filter and prioritize all proposals to focus our services in the communities that need them the most. Safe, convenient, reliable transportation options create access to jobs, schools, and healthcare. It connects us to friends and family and can be the deciding factor in our quality of life. With the severity of the fiscal crisis our City faces in mind, I asked my staff to limit their proposals to the essential resources we need to deliver on that promise for all Angelenos.

The Mayor's FY 2024-2025 Proposed Budget will allow LADOT to continue many of these efforts under the City's current financial conditions with limited reduction in services. With this Proposed Budget the Department can:

- deliver an annual residential speed hump program with \$750,000 and maintained staffing;
- reduce speed limits in an additional 250 eligible school zones across the city with continued funding;
- maintain the pace of transformative street design projects with continued Vision Zero project delivery funding;
- create and launch a public portal that provides transparent project delivery information to the public as required through the recently adopted HLA ballot measure, with two dedicated positions;
- upgrade several Commuter Express buses as we continue to work toward a fully electric transit fleet.

To build on these efforts and to continue to deliver excellent City services, LADOT respectfully requests restoration of some staffing and additional resources as outlined below. These minimal requests will allow the Department to fully realize the potential of the Mayor's Proposed Budget, and to deliver on the policy goals of the Mayor and Council. LADOT is aware of the financial constraints facing the City, and is assessing potential offsets for each of these critical requests.

City workers and core services

In light of the City's financial constraints, the Mayor's Proposed Budget eliminates 137 LADOT positions. Many of these positions are needed to support the increased demands on many of our core services such as parking enforcement, field operations, stakeholder engagement, and project delivery. With 17 new positions proposed Department-wide, LADOT faces a net loss of 120 total positions in FY 24-25, some of which are public safety and/or revenue generating. These include 57 Traffic Officer positions that provide critical public safety services and support the General Fund, and seven Parking Meter Technician positions to support parking meter maintenance and revenue collection.

Among the 120 positions recommended for elimination in the Mayor's Proposed Budget, 26 are currently filled by City employees, and we are currently confirming if there are available vacancies to absorb these employees if positions are deleted. However, without sufficient vacancies these eliminations will have a direct impact on services including traffic signal maintenance, operations, and project planning. These filled positions include:

- Field services
 - Signal Systems Electricians (10)
 - Maintenance Laborer (1)
 - Equipment Specialist (1)
 - Electrical Craft Helper (1)
- Project planning, design, and engagement
 - Assistant General Manager (1)
 - Supervising Transportation Planner (1)
 - Transportation Planning Associates (5)
 - Transportation Engineering Associates (3)
 - Civil Engineering Drafting Technician (1)
- Parking operations
 - Management Analyst (1)
 - Senior Management Analyst (1)

LADOT respectfully requests restoring these 26 staffed positions, as well as the 57 traffic officers and other revenue generating positions that are critical to public safety. The Department also respectfully requests to swap some positions proposed for elimination with other vacant positions in order to retain some critical core support for our accounting, engineering, GIS planning, and parking operations teams.

State of good repair and emergency preparedness

To achieve the objectives of Mayor Bass' Executive Directive 5, LADOT requests resources to maintain a state of good repair across specific service lines impacted by increased demand and rising inflation.

The Mayor's Proposed Budget includes funding for radio replacement for Parking Enforcement and Special Traffic Operations teams, upgrading our asset management system, and maintaining our traffic signal program. It does not, however, provide much needed one-time funding to upgrade radios for field crews. New radios will ensure that LADOT staff can communicate in the field, especially during emergencies such as Hurricane Hilary and the I-10 closure earlier this year.

The 2024-25 Proposed Budget also reduces funding for paint and sign maintenance by \$2.5 million, with no additional funding for security services, which will reduce LADOT's ability to maintain paint and sign operations at current service levels and reduce safety in LADOT facilities.

Funding is needed for upgraded engineering software and critical systems equipment, the increased costs of paint and sign maintenance on City streets, and the rising costs of security services to keep customers, LADOT staff, and equipment safe and secure in City facilities.

Project delivery

As an extension of outstanding service delivery, LADOT remains committed to implementing transportation projects in a timely manner. Accelerating project delivery across the City, especially in communities that lack access to mobility options, is a core priority for me as General Manager. To this end, the Department requested seven Special Funded-staffing to provide dedicated project development, community engagement, and First/Last Mile project delivery in compliance with the City's Measure M three percent obligations. The Department further requested reimbursable positions to expand its partnership with LA Metro to deliver projects that improve the speed and reliability of the City's bus transit that provides daily service to transit dependent Angelenos. The Mayor's Proposed Budget supports LADOT's request for Metro-reimbursed positions to advance the City's bus speed and reliability goals, but provides just three of the seven positions needed to deliver on our first-last mile obligations. These three new engineering positions are key to project implementation, but without the planning and analyst positions needed for project development and engagement, maximizing opportunities for FLM project delivery will be challenging.

As the City prepares to co-host the 2028 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games, LADOT is also a critical partner to LA28 and the Games Mobility Executives to plan and execute a car-free games event. Current transportation planning, special traffic operations, and community engagement staff cannot absorb the work needed over the next few years to implement Olympic legacy projects that advance equity, safety, and access to opportunities for Angelenos. The Proposed Budget makes modest increases in advanced planning and special traffic operations, but provides just three of the 10 positions needed to be prepared by 2028 and does not provide any staff increases for community engagement. These are all key positions given the opportunity to deliver on much needed infrastructure that will ensure a safe and accessible games experience. It is imperative that LADOT increase not only engineering capacity, but also planning and engagement staff capacity in FY 2024-25 to ensure that Olympics investments in transit, active transportation, mobility hubs, and other multi-modal projects benefits go beyond the Olympic and Paralympic Games , but also provide mobility infrastructure for underserved communities and increase access to opportunities for generations to come.

Additional positions needed for project planning and community engagement across the Department will ensure LADOT can both deliver the City's first-last mile obligations and prepare for the 2028 Olympic Games without sacrificing other work that addresses the City's critical safety and mobility goals, including work on the City's High Injury Network, projects that create a comprehensive bicycle network, open streets events, and our work to center disenfranchised communities and address racial inequity. These positions are also integral to LADOT's work to deliver projects that comply with the recently passed HLA ballot measure.

Equitable customer service

The 2019-2022 Strategic Plan formalized equity as a foundational pillar that underpins all programmatic work and established LADOT's Community-First Engagement model. The Mayor's Proposed Budget includes continued funding for Community-First Engagement, but does not expand funding or staff resources to include projects and programs outside our Vision Zero work. It also does not provide minimal funding to allow the Department to develop and launch an updated Strategic Plan. This work is increasingly critical as we continue to address the growing public health crisis of traffic fatalities on our streets, prepare for 2028 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games, and deliver projects in compliance with HLA. It is fundamental to have a well thought out plan of action that clearly lays out departmental

goals and priorities that align with the Mayoral and Council vision, particularly during challenging financial times.

In an effort to operationalize equity into our services, LADOT aims to grow its Parking Enforcement and Traffic Control capacity to expand their presence and improve safety and quality of life in underserved neighborhoods. By adding an additional 25 revenue-generating positions, the Department can address existing service issues in both SouthLA and the Valley.

LADOT requests sufficient resources to institutionalize and execute equity principles within our workforce and throughout our programs and services, including funding to launch an updated Strategic Plan, staff to execute Community-First Engagement models, and additional traffic officers to be deployed in communities experiencing the most significant service issues.

LADOT is proud to support the Mayor and Council's goals to deliver a safe, equitable, reliable, and sustainable transportation system that meets the needs of all Angelenos. I look forward to further discussions regarding how LADOT will be your successful partner in these endeavors. As always, my staff and I are available to respond to any additional questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laura Rubio-Cornejo', with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Laura Rubio-Cornejo
General Manager

c: Randall Winston, Office of the Mayor
 Matt Hale, Office of the Mayor
 Sharon Tso, Chief Legislative Analyst
 Matt Szabo, City Administrative Officer