

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

DATE: October 17, 2025

TO: Honorable Members of the City Council

FROM: Sharon M. Tso 
Chief Legislative Analyst

Council File No.: 25-0172
Assignment No.: 25-08-0625

SUBJECT: Maintenance of the City's fire hydrant network

SUMMARY

This report is presented in response to two Motions (Park-Lee and Nazarian-Lee) and a related report from the Energy and Environment Committee adopted by the Council on April 23, 2025 (Council File 25-0172). The Council action instructed the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA), in coordination with the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) and the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD), to report back with an analysis of the maintenance of the City's fire hydrant network. CLA staff met with staff from LAFD and LADWP to gather the requested information.

The following are the key findings of this report:

- The LAFD is responsible for inspecting all hydrants in the City and performs inspections annually.
- More than 90% of hydrants in the City are maintained by LADWP, which is responsible for addressing any maintenance issues identified by LAFD for those hydrants.¹
- In 2025, LAFD and LADWP have taken steps to strengthen communication by moving to weekly reports from LAFD to LADWP and including a new step in which LADWP reports back to LAFD to confirm that repairs have been made.
- The LADWP Information Technology staff are exploring the possibility of integrating the LAFD Fire Inspection Management System (FIMS) with LADWP's GIS Ecosystem to eventually enable real time exchange of data.

¹ There are approximately 5,000 hydrants in the City (roughly 8% of the City's hydrants) that are not maintained by LADWP and are the responsibility either of Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) or private property owners. A typical example of hydrants maintained by a private property owner would be hydrants that serve a large private parcel such as a shopping mall or a mobile home park. There are 35 private hydrants in the Pacific Palisades.

- For 2025, LAFD has completed its annual inspection of all City hydrants and LADWP has made needed repairs to all hydrants for which it is responsible.
- Although theft of fire hydrants has not been an issue within the City, theft of brass parts used to support water connection in large buildings is an issue. LAFD is currently developing training for Fire Department staff. Once staff are trained, LAFD will be making locking covers available for installation by property owners. The covers are expected to become available later this fall.

Table 1, below, summarizes the responses to the specific questions included in the Council’s instructions.

Table 1. Summary 2025 City of Los Angeles Fire Hydrant Information

| Ref. | Information Requested | Answer |
|-------------|--|--|
| a1. | # of hydrants inspected annually | All hydrants—in 2025, there were 65,996 hydrants in the City. ² |
| a2. | How often LAFD inspects hydrants | Annually. |
| b. | # of hydrants repaired annually by LADWP | LADWP repairs all hydrants identified by the LAFD’s inspections annually. 1,407 hydrants were repaired by LADWP in 2025. ³ |
| c. | # of hydrants offline due to maintenance, repair, or other issues | All hydrants identified in the annual 2025 inspection have been repaired. Some hydrants may be offline on a short-term basis due to LADWP water system maintenance work. |
| d. | # of fire hydrants inspected and still in need of repair or maintenance | Zero as of the date of this report. ⁴ |
| e. | Solutions to address issues related to LAFD Connection and hydrant theft and vandalism | LAFD will be making a locking cap available to protect Connection hardware. |
| f. | Identification of inaccessible City fire hydrants and recommendations to make them available | No permanently inaccessible hydrants identified. |

² This number includes approximately 5,000 hydrants that are not the responsibility of LADWP (either private hydrants, or hydrants serving LAWA).

³ This number does not include any hydrants repaired by LAWA or private owners.

⁴ LADWP-maintained hydrants only.

RECOMMENDATION

NOTE and FILE this report.

DISCUSSION

LAFD and LADWP share responsibility for the vast majority of the City's fire hydrants, with the LAFD being responsible for inspecting all hydrants in the City and the LADWP having the primary responsibility for maintenance and repairs. LAFD inspects every hydrant in the City annually, tracking the results of their inspections in the LAFD Fire Inspection Management System (FIMS) and recording any required maintenance, ranging from repairing nearby street reflectors to repairing the hydrants themselves, in the FIMS. The LAFD begins the annual round of inspections early in each calendar year and typically completes annual inspections by about the end of March. The LAFD has in the past communicated the results of their inspections annually once all the inspections were complete to the LADWP in the form of an Excel spreadsheet. The LADWP would then track the data in their own GIS software and make the necessary repairs.

In the wake of the January 2025 fires, the LAFD and the LADWP have begun sharing data on a weekly basis and include a confirmation step in which LADWP notifies LAFD of completed repairs. In addition, a May 21, 2025, report submitted by the LADWP in response to this Council File (25-0172) indicated it was investigating the possibility of creating a single application for shared use in tracking hydrant maintenance needs and completed repairs. As an update since that report was completed, the idea of an entirely new shared application has been set aside in favor of preserving the LAFD FIMS system. Rather than building an entirely new system, the LADWP is currently pursuing integrating the LAFD FIMS system with LADWP's GIS Ecosystem to eventually enable real time exchange of data.

Completion of 2025 inspections was somewhat delayed by the January 2025 fires, but inspections were completed by the end of June 2025. The results were communicated to LADWP on an ongoing weekly basis, and LADWP has confirmed that they have made all of the indicated repairs.

In addition to the question of whether the hydrants themselves require maintenance, another problem that can also impact the ability of LAFD to effectively fight fires is theft and/or vandalism of hydrants and/or other system components. LAFD has not experienced issues with theft or vandalism of fire hydrants, but LAFD has experienced issues related to theft of valuable brass components from the LAFD connections hardware that pressurizes water to support firefighting in larger buildings. Building owners currently have the option to keep these components in locked cages, using locks that the LAFD has the ability to remove when needed. In addition, LAFD is working to make locking covers available for installation and plans to make this option available to property owners once staff is trained and the necessary equipment to unlock the covers is distributed to all fire stations. Installation of these covers will be optional and will be at the expense of the building owners. The LAFD anticipates completing training and making the covers available later this fall.

The following items address the specific questions identified in the Committee instructions:

- a. The number of hydrants inspected annually, and the regularity of inspections by the LAFD.** 65,996 hydrants were inspected by the LAFD in 2025 (all the hydrants in

the City). Of these, approximately 5,000 were hydrants not supported by LADWP (either private hydrants, or hydrants serving LAWA). LAFD inspects all fire hydrants annually. For these 5,000 private hydrants, if any needed repairs are identified, a notice is sent to the properly owner, who is required to complete repairs using an LAFD-certified repair company. Completed repairs are reported to the Fire Department through an internet portal that only LAFD-certified repair companies can access. Hydrants are re-inspected in the next annual cycle.

- b. The number of fire hydrants repaired annually by the LADWP.** This year, the LAFD identified 1,407 LADWP-maintained hydrants requiring some kind of repair or maintenance (which can include maintaining nearby reflectors and/or addressing overgrown vegetation, as well as issues affecting the hydrants directly). LADWP reports that all hydrants identified by LAFD as needing repair have been repaired.
- c. The number of fire hydrants that are offline due to maintenance, repair, or other issues.** In addition to the repair issues identified annually by the LAFD, which for this year have been fully addressed by the LADWP, LADWP takes fire hydrants offline temporarily when required in relation to other work maintaining the water system. LADWP informs LAFD when hydrants are shut down as part of overall system maintenance work, and such shutdowns are typically resolved within a day. The recent Porter Ranch water tank repair created an unusual situation in which significant numbers of hydrants (100 or more) were offline for multiple days, but this situation is not typical.
- d. The number of fire hydrants that have been inspected but are still in need of repair or maintenance.** LADWP reports that this number is zero.
- e. Solutions to address issues related to LAFD connection and hydrant theft and vandalism.** LAFD reports that hydrant theft and vandalism has not to date been a significant issue in the City. There are, however, some problems related to theft of components from the LAFD “Fire Department Connections,” which Engine Companies connect to with their own hoses to provide pressurized water to support firefighting in larger buildings and which include valuable brass components. Building owners are responsible for ensuring these connections are maintained and usable and bear the cost of repairs when this equipment is vandalized. Some building owners install cages around this equipment to protect it, which must be locked only with locks that can be removed by the LAFD. In addition, the LAFD is working to make locking covers available for installation. They are currently training their staff on how to remove the covers, and will make this option available once staff is trained and the necessary equipment to unlock the covers is distributed to all fire stations. Installation of these covers will be optional. The covers are expected to be made available later this fall.

- f. **The identification of inaccessible City fire hydrants and recommendations to make them available.** LAFD is not aware of any City fire hydrants that are permanently inaccessible. Hydrants may become temporarily inaccessible due to vehicles parking in front of them. The LAFD addresses these cases by working with the City's Department of Transportation to ticket and/or remove cars.

Louisa Lund

Louisa Lund
Analyst

Attachments: 1. Motion (Park – Lee)
 2. Energy and Environment Committee Report, CF #25-0172
 3. Motion (Nazarian – Lee)

SMT:MF:RP:LL

MOTION

The January 2025 wildfires that devastated Los Angeles reinforced the fundamental obligation to invest-in and properly maintain city infrastructure that is foundational to the preservation of life and safety. This includes the City's network of more than 50,000 fire hydrants, which are inspected by the Los Angeles Fire Department but maintained by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

Recent reporting in the media has suggested that thousands of fire hydrants across the City, including in the Pacific Palisades and other High Fire Severity Zones may be in need of maintenance, repair or further inspection. The City must immediately understand the state of its fire hydrant network.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the Chief Legislative Analyst, in coordination with the Fire Department and Department of Water and Power (DWP), to report in 30 days with a comprehensive analysis of the Fire Department and DWP's workflow for inspecting and repairing the City's network of fire hydrants. The report should include but not be limited to the following:



- The number of fire hydrants inspected annually, in addition to the regularity of inspections, by the Fire Department.
- The number of fire hydrants repaired annually by the Department of Water and Power.
- The number of fire hydrants that are offline due to maintenance, repair or other issues.
- The number of fire hydrants that have been inspected but are still in need of repair or maintenance.
- Solutions to address issues related to Fire Department Connection and hydrant theft and vandalism.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Council request the Department of Water to present a work plan to repair any fire hydrants that are found to be in need of repair or further maintenance based on the above analysis and complete any required work within 30 days of presentation.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Council instruct the City Administrative Officer, in coordination with the Fire Department and the Department of Water and Power, to report on the cost of replacing the City's stock of 2.5-inch outlet fire hydrants with 4-inch outlet fire hydrants.

PRESENTED BY:

SECONDED BY:


TRACI PARK
Councilwoman, 11th District




FEB 14 2025

ORIGINAL

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT relative to requesting a comprehensive analysis of the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) workflow for inspecting and repairing the City's network of fire hydrants and a work plan to repair fire hydrants in need of maintenance.

Recommendations for Council action, as initiated by Motion (Park - Lee):

1. INSTRUCT the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA), in coordination with the LAFD and LADWP, to report in 30 days with a comprehensive analysis of the LAFD and LADWP workflow for inspecting and repairing the City network of fire hydrants. The report should include but not be limited to the following:
 - a. The number of fire hydrants inspected annually, in addition to the regularity of inspections, by the LAFD.
 - b. The number of fire hydrants repaired annually by the LADWP.
 - c. The number of fire hydrants that are offline due to maintenance, repair or other issues.
 - d. The number of fire hydrants that have been inspected but are still in need of repair or maintenance.
 - e. Solutions to address issues related to LAFD Connection and hydrant theft and vandalism.
 - f. The identification of inaccessible City fire hydrants and recommendations to make them available.
2. REQUEST the LADWP to present a work plan to repair any fire hydrants that are found to be in need of repair or further maintenance based on the above analysis and complete any required work within 30 days of presentation.
3. INSTRUCT the City Administrative Officer (CAO), in coordination with the LAFD and LADWP, to report on the cost of replacing the City's stock of 2.5-inch outlet fire hydrants with 4-inch outlet fire hydrants.

Fiscal Impact Statement: Neither the CAO nor the CLA has completed a financial analysis of this report.

Community Impact Statement: None submitted

SUMMARY

At the meeting held on April 1, 2025, your Energy and Environment Committee considered a Motion (Park - Lee) relative to requesting a comprehensive analysis of the LAFD and LADWP workflow for inspecting and repairing the City's network of fire hydrants and a work plan to repair fire hydrants in need of maintenance.

After an opportunity for public comment was held, the Committee moved to approve the recommendations contained in the Motion as amended, as detailed above. This matter is now forwarded to the Council for its consideration.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

| <u>MEMBER</u> | <u>VOTE</u> |
|---------------|-------------|
| NAZARIAN | YES |
| YAROSLAVSKY | ABSENT |
| JURADO | ABSENT |
| RAMAN | YES |
| PADILLA | YES |
| ME | |

-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-

MOTION

I HEREBY MOVE that Council ADOPT the ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT relative to requesting a comprehensive analysis of the Los Angeles Fire Department and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power workflow for inspecting and repairing the City's network of fire hydrants and a work plan to repair fire hydrants in need of maintenance; Item 17 on today's Council Agenda (Council file No. 25-0172).

PRESENTED BY _____
ADRIN NAZARIAN
Councilmember, 2nd District

SECONDED BY _____
JOHN S. LEE
Councilmember, 12th District

April 23, 2025

CF 25-0172