


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

Date: November 3, 2025

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

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

Subject: **LADOT CROSSING GUARD PROGRAM AND OPTIONS**

**SUMMARY**

As directed by Council File (CF) 25-0600, this report provides an overview of the current crossing guard program including funding, costs, and staffing deployment, and options to alter or expand service in the future.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the City Council NOTE and FILE this report.

**BACKGROUND**

The California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD) Section 7D defines three types of school crossing guard services and sets specific requirements to carry out these services. The three types of crossing guard services include:

1. Adult control of pedestrians and vehicles by adult crossing guards
2. Adult control of pedestrians and vehicles by uniformed law enforcement officer
3. Student and/or parent control of only pedestrians with student and/or parent patrols

The CA MUTCD further authorizes cities, counties, or school governing boards to recruit and assign adult crossing guards to intersections that meet approved guidelines. These assigned guards are not authorized to direct traffic, but are trained to identify opportune gaps in traffic to stand in the roadway, indicate pedestrian crossings, and stop oncoming vehicular traffic with a handheld stop sign paddle. California Vehicle Code (CVC) Section 2815 makes it unlawful to disobey a crossing guard appointed by a city, county, or governing school board.

The Los Angeles Administrative Code (LAAC) Article 6 Section 22.485 authorizes LADOT to control and direct elementary school children crossing streets at designated crossings and at designated times; to assist children traveling to and from school; to cooperate with school officials in enforcing school rules and regulations relating to the crossing of streets; and in instructing school children in elements of traffic safety. It authorizes the General Manager to identify school crossings and make crossing guard assignments based on approved criteria and available resources, and to consider requests made by elementary school principals for crossing guard assignments at specific locations.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) #34 stipulates the employment terms for crossing guards in the City of Los Angeles (City), as represented by the California Teamsters Local 911. MOU 34 was established in 1995, and most recently updated in April 2024.

CF 23-0304 outlines current staffing levels as well as LADOT's approach to identifying priority school locations to deploy crossing guard services for the 2025-2026 school year. At the start of the 2025-2026 school year, 427 guards were deployed to 383 intersections at 297 elementary schools, including 18 private schools. As LADOT continues to apply the new Council-adopted methodology, some reassignments may be made following the winter school break.

In the FY25-26 budget, Council directed LADOT to report back with options for the Crossing Guard program in future years. This report outlines the funding, staffing, and training options to continue to support safe student crossings citywide.

## **DISCUSSION**

In FY 23-24 LADOT's budget included \$10,168,624 for the crossing guard program, and LADOT was able to expand recruitment to employ more than 500 guards. In FY 24-25, funding for the program was kept even, but changes to MOU #34 including higher wages and shift bonuses increased the costs to hire and deploy guards, increasing the required funding to maintain service levels by approximately \$3,000,000. The FY 25-26 budget reflects this increase with a total budget allocation of \$13,313,135. While some attrition has impacted the number of guards currently employed, LADOT deployed 427 guards to 383 intersections at 297 elementary schools at the start of the 2025-2026 school year. Given rising costs and limited budget, LADOT is not currently hiring additional crossing guards.

During the FY 25-26 budget process, the Crossing Guard program was identified as a potential offset to restore full-time positions identified for elimination, in particular 97 filled and 52 vacant traffic officer positions. The Adopted Budget maintained funding levels for the program while preserving all filled positions. However, 52 vacant traffic officer positions were eliminated, bringing the two-year reduction in traffic officer positions to 109.

As directed by Council, this report describes the current program structure, outlines the costs to operate the current program, and opportunities to augment the program with additional funding and/or outside services.

### **LADOT Crossing Guard Program**

Crossing guard programs in California can be operated by law enforcement agencies, transportation departments, or school districts. According to CF 95-2424, the County of Los Angeles and the Works Progress Administration administered a crossing guard program from 1932 through the 1940s. The first use of City employees for crossing guard services began in 1951, and was administered by the Police Department (LAPD) which made assignments based on a warrants system approved by the Board of Police Commissioners. Under the warrants system, school principals requested locations and LAPD conducted vehicular and pedestrian counts at those locations to determine whether or not a crossing guard was warranted. Locations that did not meet stated volume criteria were denied.

In 1985, the Police Commission and CAO determined that the program could be operated at a lower cost through contractual services, and the City executed a contractual agreement with All City Management who performed crossing guard services for the City of Los Angeles until 1988.

In FY 88-89, the City reestablished a crossing guard program in the budget, the program responsibilities were assigned to LADOT, and LADOT continued applying the warrants system. Until 1995 the program was able to provide guards at all requested locations. By 1995, program demand exceeded the \$4,000,000 allocated budget that allowed for approximately 466 guards to be assigned at 274 elementary schools. Program demand continued to exceed capacity and resources and, in 1998, LADOT revised the warrants system to better prioritize requested school intersections.

As outlined in CF 23-0304, in 2020, requested locations far exceeded the City's capacity and LADOT applied a new methodology to assign its limited crossing guards. The new methodology assessed intersections for safety criteria to prioritize all requested locations, rather than relying on traffic and pedestrian counts to approve or deny requests. Locations that rank below the number of available guards are further evaluated for any potential design or engineering treatments that can be implemented to improve safety.

By November 2024, LADOT employed 518 crossing guards that were deployed to 432 of the 711 requested intersections at public and private elementary schools. Facing a growing number of unstaffed requested locations, and recognizing the potential for inequitable distribution of resources inherent in the request based system, Council directed LADOT to apply this methodology to all elementary schools during the 2025-2026 school year rather than limiting deployment to requested locations only.

#### *Program Administration*

LADOT is responsible for the overall management and staffing for the Crossing Guard program, including all data analysis, deployment, and administrative functions. The Crossing Guard program suffers from a lack of staff resources to manage these responsibilities. LADOT is not funded for any administrative clerks or management analysts to help with overall program management, including hiring support, location assessment, assignments, Workday administration, or daily correspondence. These tasks have been undertaken by two (2) part-time Community Admin Support Workers and the Senior Traffic Supervisors assigned to the program. District Engineers also assess unstaffed locations for potential safety treatments.

#### *Program Costs & Funding*

Crossing guards work an a.m. and p.m. shift, averaging 3-4 hours per school day. Hourly wages as of June 29, 2025 are \$25.00, with annual increases until June 2027, and biannual increases until June 2028. Any guard that works more than fifty percent (50%) of a shift between the hours of 12:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. is paid (3) premium levels (8.25%) above the rate currently received by the employee, which increases the hourly wage for the majority of guards who begin their am shifts well before 8:00 a.m. Guards receive health and pension benefits, as well as vacation, sick, and other leave, and paid holidays for all LAUSD holidays. The City provides necessary safety equipment and rain gear to all guards, and cellular phones to all lead guards.

With the \$13,313,135 of General Fund allocated to the crossing guard program in the FY 25-26 budget, LADOT anticipates it can continue to employ approximately 400 guards throughout the school year, depending on attrition rates. Given current funding, salary savings, and staffing at both LADOT and Department of Personnel, LADOT will not be able to recruit, train, and onboard new crossing guard cohorts this year.

The CAMUTCD outlines various methods for funding a school adult crossing guard program, including through the use of fines and forfeitures received under the Penal Code, as defined in CVC Sections 42200 and 42201. According to the CAMUTCD, fines and forfeitures received by cities and deposited into a "Traffic Safety Fund" may be used to pay the compensation of school crossing guards who are not regular full-time members of the police department of the city. The CAMUTCD does not refer to external funding sources for crossing guard programs, but neither the CAMUTCD nor the CVC expressly prohibit outside funding.

While the City does use a Traffic Safety Fund to support crossing guard services, costs for the program typically exceed available funding and the program is primarily paid for out of the City's General Fund. The General Fund has been the primary funding source since 2020-21, as Traffic Safety Fund revenues from municipal court fines have significantly decreased in that same time period. In FY 20-21 the City projected \$4,100,000 in Traffic Safety Funds for the crossing guard program, but received only \$950,000. The FY 25-26 budget allocates \$1,300,000 in traffic safety funds toward the budget for the crossing guard program. A review of the Council File Management System (CFMS) shows that securing adequate funding for the program has been an ongoing issue since at least 1995, with demand for services far outpacing available resources.

In 1995, the City Council directed LADOT to pursue a sponsorship program to augment crossing guard funding (CF 95-2424) through corporate donations. Under the proposed program, any outside funding received would be used to support the overall priorities of the program and staff a guard at an eligible location that was not currently assigned a guard. The sponsorships would not be used to fund a crossing guard at a specific location, but if a sponsor wished to be recognized in a specific area, despite the actual guard assignment, LADOT would erect a sign. From 1995 until 2001 LADOT found little to no interest from the private sector and did not receive any outside funding. The program is no longer in operation and no other external funding sources have been identified. Other cost sharing opportunities, including a partnership with LAUSD, were not explored at that time.

#### *Volunteer Crossing Guards*

LADOT cannot administer its own volunteer program due to existing MOU #34 language that prohibits providing free service that would otherwise be carried out by an employed, represented employee. However, given ongoing funding challenges and a lack of participation in the crossing guard sponsorship program in 1998, the Council directed LAPD to work with LAUSD and the City's Volunteer Bureau to expand its volunteer program to elementary schools that did not qualify for LADOT crossing guards. Under the Safe Crossing program, volunteers were placed only at locations that did not warrant assignment of a paid crossing guard, and that were immediately adjacent to an elementary school.

As described in CF 98-0600-S13, school principals first submitted location requests to be evaluated for paid crossing guards through LADOT's crossing guard program. LADOT evaluated the location based on the existing warrants system and determined whether or not the location was eligible based on the existing warrants system. If the location was eligible and there was available staff, LADOT deployed a

guard. If the location met the warrants but no guard was available, LADOT would deny the request or seek additional funding and personnel. If the location did not meet the warrants requirements for a paid guard, LADOT would direct the school principal to the LAPD-administered volunteer program. If the school identified and committed to managing volunteers, LAPD provided the necessary training, the Mayor's Office Volunteer Bureau provided insurance, and LAUSD supplied the necessary equipment. Once trained, volunteers were supervised directly by individual schools.

In 1999, the City's crossing guard program employed 420 guards deployed to 366 warranted intersections at 262 schools, and the Safe Crossings program assigned 140 volunteers to 12 schools that were not eligible for the City's funded crossing guard program. That year LAUSD conducted a survey of individual schools and found that approximately 40% would be interested in managing their own volunteer crossing guards. LADOT was unable to find any additional background on this program after 1999.

In 2014, facing ongoing budgetary issues and a 37% decline in the number of guards hired, Council directed LADOT to report with actions needed to allow for the use of volunteer crossing guards (CF 14-1121) and necessary resources to assign guards at all elementary schools in the City. No further action was taken at that time.

### School Safety Treatments

LADOT's approach to school safety is comprehensive and includes many engineering treatments in addition to crossing guard services. LADOT prioritizes schools and identifies eligible locations for speed humps and speed tables, quick build projects, right turn on red restrictions, and reduced speed limits and implements these treatments with available City funding. While schools are prioritized by a shared methodology, each treatment has distinct eligibility criteria and addresses a specific safety issue. LADOT also constructs comprehensive projects at identified schools through grant funded Safe Routes to Schools projects.

LADOT's school speed hump program is currently funded at \$1,200,000, allowing for speed hump construction at approximately 30 schools each year. The school speed limit program is allocated \$750,000, and LADOT has been able to reduce speed limits at more than 400 schools since that funding became available in FY 23-24. LADOT used existing funding from its Vision Zero program to pilot right turn restrictions at 20 locations this school year, and will expand that program based on an evaluation and available funding in future fiscal years. LADOT will also launch a new speed safety camera pilot in FY 26-27 that will implement proven speed reduction tools at additional schools, pending Council approval.

The chart below compares each of the school focused treatments, allocated FY26 funding, and number of schools served.

PROGRAM	FY 25-26 FUNDING	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF SCHOOLS SERVED
School speed humps	\$1,200,000	30-50
School speed limits	\$750,000	200
Right turn on red restrictions	\$150,000	20
Crossing guards	\$13,000,000	300

### Traffic Control Services

In addition to managing the City's school safety programs, LADOT provides traffic control services during emergencies and special events. LADOT does not currently deploy traffic officers to school locations for either the a.m. or p.m. periods, as school pickup and dropoff is a daily occurrence and neither an emergency nor a special event, and current staffing levels limit LADOT's ability to support special events throughout the city. However, one option to expand school safety, described in budget memo 109 during the FY 25-26 budget process, could include deploying Traffic Officers for a limited portion of their daily shift to manage major intersections near specific schools. Whereas crossing guards halt traffic once an adequate gap in traffic has been identified, Traffic Officers have full authority to direct traffic, including vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians, in all directions. Rather than escorting school children across identified intersections, officers would create safer, more predictable intersections for all road users and ensure children and their caretakers can safely navigate the intersection.

Over the last two fiscal years, more than 100 traffic officer positions have been eliminated from LADOT's budget. With this significant reduction in the workforce, officers are currently focused on parking enforcement and providing traffic control services for emergencies and other major City initiatives. Balancing this workload across a reduced workforce has shifted the amount of time officers can spend on revenue generating activity, and does not allow for any additional non-reimbursable traffic control services.

With adequate staffing, LADOT could adjust officer deployment schedules to maximize deployment to as many priority school locations as possible, while maintaining existing critical parking enforcement services. This would require restoring the 109 Traffic officer positions eliminated over the FY 24-25 and FY 25-26 budget cycles, and shifting some officers from evening and overnight schedules to day and midday shifts. Providing support in the am and pm shift would occupy approximately 33% of an officer's eight hour shift, ensuring availability for parking enforcement needs and other service demands. LADOT can also create rotational shifts so officers alternate between school safety and enforcement responsibilities, or consider overlapping shifts to ensure there is adequate coverage across peak school arrival and dismissal hours. With the daily deployment of additional officers, more support will also be required from the Department's Communications Information Representatives (CIRs). CIRs provide a vital lifeline of radio communications to officers in the field. They conduct the dispatch of service requests from our public safety partners and constituents, help ensure officer safety, and record important information related to many of the officers' enforcement actions. The FY 25-26 budget eliminated 10 CIR

positions, or approximately 30% of the total CIR workforce, that would be required for restoration in order to augment school safety with traffic control services.

With these positions restored, LADOT could accommodate school safety at approximately 250 intersections while also providing parking enforcement and other traffic control services. Officers would be prioritized at signalized intersections that are best suited to the specific services provided, and based on safety criteria and existing infrastructure. This new program would also include annual school engagement to educate students on safe crossings, and introduce them to LADOT traffic control officers.

Based on average salaries and bonuses, the direct cost to restore these positions 109 is approximately \$9,400,000 that would be offset through parking citation revenue. By effectively embedding school safety work into a parking enforcement shift, LADOT can improve school safety at key intersections while ensuring the traffic officers continue to be fully cost recoverable and do not impact the City's General Fund.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

There is no financial impact from this informational report.

LRC:MR:TC:BH