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POLICE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
100 WEST FIRST STREET, SUITE 134
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-4112

(213) 236-1400 PHONE
(213) 236-1410 FAX
(213) 236-1440 TDD

November 21, 2025

BPC #25-325

The Honorable City Council
City of Los Angeles, Room 395
c/o City Clerk's Office
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Honorable Members:

RE: REPOSE TO CITY COUNCIL ON REVIEW OF AIR SUPPORT DIVISION'S
DEPLOYMENT MODEL.

At the regular meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners held on Tuesday, November 18, 2025, the Board APPROVED the Department's report regarding the above-referenced matter.

Accordingly, this report is respectfully submitted for your consideration.

Respectfully,

BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS


REBECCA MUNOZ

Commission Executive Assistant

Attachment

c: Chief of Police

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

DS 11/13/25
25-325

October 15, 2025
1.1

TO: The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT’S REPORT TO THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE – REVIEW OF AIR SUPPORT DIVISION’S DEPLOYMENT MODEL

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. That the Board of Police Commissioners (Board) REVIEW and APPROVE the Los Angeles Police Department’s (Department) report to the Public Safety Committee.
2. That the Board TRANSMIT to the Los Angeles City Council the attached response.

DISCUSSION

During consideration of the Mayor’s Proposed Budget for 2025-26, the Los Angeles City Council instructed the Los Angeles Police Department to conduct a review of Air Support Division’s deployment model and report back to the Public Safety Committee. The Department’s response is outlined in the attached fact sheet.

If you have questions regarding this matter, please contact Deputy Chief David J. Kowalski, Commanding Officer, Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau, at (213) 486-8780.

Respectfully,



JIM McDONNELL
Chief of Police

**BOARD OF
POLICE COMMISSIONERS**
Approved *November 18, 2025*
Secretary *Rebecca Mung*

Attachments

FACT SHEET
REPORT TO THE BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
AIR SUPPORT DIVISION DEPLOYMENT MODEL

Background. During consideration of the Mayor's Proposed Budget for 2025-26, the Los Angeles City Council instructed the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) to conduct a review of Air Support Division's (ASD) deployment model. The Budget and Finance Committee directed the LAPD to report back on the following:

1. The use of its helicopters, and what, if any changes should be made to the overall deployment.
2. The helicopter fleet size, potential efficiencies that could be implemented, and a review of new, alternative technologies.

Investigation. Pursuant to this direction, Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau conducted an analysis of historical practices and considerations of new technologies for potential cost savings and efficiencies with regard to ASD's air operations.

Air Support Division's sole responsibility is to provide essential airborne law enforcement services for the LAPD and the City of Los Angeles (City). These services include supporting patrol and surveillance operations, tactical support, training, and providing specialized flight missions. The minimum number of deployable helicopters was established in consultation with the Department of General Services (GSD), and in consideration of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) air-worthiness compliance mandates. The GSD is tasked with repairing and maintaining the City's helicopter fleet, including the fleets used by the Department of Water and Power and the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD).

The LAPD currently has 15 single-engine helicopters, one dual-engine helicopter, and one fixed-wing aircraft (i.e., plane). Of the 16 helicopters, 11 are within the 15,000 flight hours that has been evaluated to minimize liability and cost, as well as maximize the resale value of salvaged helicopters. The GSD is responsible for overseeing the inventory and maintenance of the City's air fleet, coordinating all helicopter purchases, and determining when helicopters should be replaced and sent to salvage for resale.

Note: In May of 2025, the City Administrative Officer, in conjunction with the LAPD, reported to the Budget and Finance Committee regarding the funding of LAPD helicopters (see attachments). The reports indicated that LAPD helicopters are funded entirely through Municipal Improvement Corporation of Los Angeles (MICLA) funds which minimizes General Fund pressure and provides a fiscal hedge against future inflation. The estimated value/resale of a salvaged helicopter is approximately \$300,000, with the proceeds credited to the General Fund.

Air Support Division responsibilities

- Provide air assets to support the City's Emergency Air Transportation Plan. The City has delegated the LAPD and LAFD the responsibility of transporting identified "Essential City Personnel" in an effort to reconstitute City government in the event of a major catastrophe (e.g., natural disaster, terrorist attack, etc.) where normal modes of transportation are impractical or unsafe. In this instance, there must be five available helicopters to provide simultaneous transportation from each the five designated

FACT SHEET
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rendezvous locations. This requirement runs parallel to other air operations underway due to the catastrophe (e.g., search and rescue, etc.).

- Provide airborne services to the Los Angeles Harbor Department as delineated in Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) No. 22-9853. The LAPD supports the Los Angeles Port Police via the MOA for tasking including, but not limited to, screening vessels in the outer harbor for radiological/nuclear sources prior to entering the Port, responding to mitigate identified threats, and supporting the Port Police with Hazardous Materials operations by assisting in the locating, identifying, and investigating oil slicks or other toxic materials polluting the waterways. This MOA is specific to the dual-engine helicopter, as single-engine helicopters are restricted to flying over open water due to FAA restrictions and safety protocols. The Los Angeles Harbor Department reimburses the LAPD for airborne services up to \$405,000.
- Support the Southern California Public Safety Plan by hosting the annual Public Safety Aviation Disaster Preparedness Exercise in conjunction with regional airborne public safety agencies and the FAA. This exercise serves to solidify and enhance relationships, as well as foster cooperation and interoperability amongst other agencies that would respond to a critical regional disaster.
- Provide Air Support To Regular Operations (ASTRO) for LAPD's daily aerial patrols throughout the City from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 a.m. The 20 hours per day air operations are divided into four watches within each 24-hour period. The air crews respond to patrol-related calls Citywide to enhance officer safety and provide critical support to ground units. Each watch is staffed by four personnel that consists of two pilots and two Tactical Flight Officers.
- Support Special Flights Section (SFS) missions for high-priority investigative support, to include surveillance. Recent examples of SFS missions have been the high-altitude tracking of suspects involved in follow-home robberies and burglary crews that commit high-priority crimes. Year-to-Date (2025), the SFS has flown over 618 hours with their operations resulting in 47 arrests (four murders, 15 assaults with a deadly weapon, and 12 robbery and/or carjacking cases). Operations utilizing SFS resources have resulted in the seizure of over \$6,000 in currency. Additionally, over \$35 million worth of narcotics and 68 firearms were seized.
- Support the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) personnel during natural disasters by providing rapid and reliable air transportation. The dual-engine helicopter provides a larger capacity and versatility option for the expedited movement of FEMA teams into affected areas that may be inaccessible by ground due to flooding, debris, or damaged infrastructure. In addition to personnel transport, the aircraft is also capable of delivering critical emergency supplies such as food, water, medical equipment, and can efficiently assess damage to assist in the coordination of rescue efforts of stranded individuals, and other lifesaving resources to impacted communities.

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AIR SUPPORT DIVISION DEPLOYMENT MODEL

This capability ensures a faster response time, reduced logistical challenges, and the ability for FEMA and local first responders to stabilize situations more effectively.

Statistical Information

ASD Activity by Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Responses	36,445	33,068	34,706	33,620	32,543	31,352	34,342
First at Scene	6,588	6,001	7,984	6,800	6,787	6,369	6,445
Perimeters	1,281	1,242	1,353	1,270	1,354	1,473	1,590
Felony Arrests - Initiated by Aircrew	1,350	1,235	1,609	1,482	1,167	1,159	1,178
Felony Arrests - Assisted by Aircrew	7,407	7,358	9,883	8,170	7,275	7,632	8,653
Pursuits - Assisted LAPD	354	344	427	482	434	395	477
Assisted at Foot Pursuit	817	788	743	823	759	857	880
Suspect Vehicle Following	1,246	1,074	1,185	1,251	1,093	956	1,170
Pursuits - Assisted Outside Agency	37	24	16	23	19	18	14
Firearms - Assisted with Recovery	259	262	316	604	473	584	584
Fires – Observed/Initiated FD Response	25	28	40	48	42	26	23

Pursuits – Suspect Apprehension Rate	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
With Airship Overhead	84.87%	89.54%	84.40%	83.11%	83.42%	80.69%	76.03%
No Airship	68.15%	61.65%	64.02%	61.37%	42.23%	53.16%	45.88%

Pursuits Involving Traffic Collisions	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
With Tracking Engaged	17.50%	19.00%	20.00%	19.00%	22.00%	20.30%	22.31%
No Tracking	82.50%	81.00%	80.00%	81.00%	78.00%	79.70%	77.69%

In July of 2025, the LAPD’s Office of Operations (e.g., neighborhood patrol operations) launched a Drone as a First Responder (DFR) Pilot Program. Currently, the DFR Program is operating in all four geographic bureaus. Extensive efforts have taken place between personnel assigned to the DFR Program and ASD to establish safety deconfliction of airspace protocols.

As an emerging technology, public safety drone use is preliminarily a strong compliment to traditional manned aviation. The City’s approximately 500 square miles of jurisdiction have proven—at times—challenging to ASD’s ability to provide situational awareness during simultaneous critical incidents.

Even so, leading public safety drones are generally limited to speeds of approximately 50 mph during daylight hours and approximately 20 mph during nighttime flights, when a collision-avoidance system is activated. These speeds are not yet sufficient to match the liability-reducing pursuit tracking incidents.

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AIR SUPPORT DIVISION DEPLOYMENT MODEL

Additionally, the leading public safety drones generally have flight times of approximately 40 minutes. When accounting for the need to respond and return from scene, the available at-scene time is conservatively 15 to 25 minutes. The LAPD's helicopters can provide at-scene time in excess of 2 hours. This extended flight duration provides the necessary aerial perspective to safely resolve tactical incidents throughout their duration.

Helicopters and drones are complimentary public safety assets, and drones are not intended to replace helicopters. Public safety drone use adds additional capabilities to aerial support, including faster response times to calls for service, more ability to navigate between buildings, and the ability to broadcast live streaming to responding officers for greater situational awareness. Meanwhile, helicopters continue to serve as the backbone of airborne policing, offering flight time endurance, pursuit management and tracking assistance, tactical flexibility, and wide-area presence.

The LAPD is scheduled to report to the Board of Police Commissioners on the initial findings of the DFR Pilot Program in early 2026.

Findings. The LAPD's helicopter program reduces citywide response times, improves coordination of field units, and deters crime. A reduction in the LAPD's helicopter fleet or staffing levels would have immediate and negative consequences such as increased response times to critical incidents. Without robust aerial coverage, ground officers lose a resource that extends their reach and effectiveness.

For a city the size of—and as complex as—Los Angeles, air support is an integral part of the continued investment in preserving public safety, officer effectiveness, and the security of the millions who live, work, and visit this City every day.

In December of 2023, the City Controller's Office conducted an audit of ASD over a five-year period (2018 to 2022). In response, an internal comprehensive assessment was conducted on ASD's air operations, that included an assessment by an independent aviation company, and an analysis was conducted specifically for cost savings and methods of efficiency. The report back was presented to the Board of Police Commissioners in February of 2024. As indicated on the tables above, LAPD helicopters responded annually to an average of approximately 34,000 calls for service and self-initiated activities.

Recommendation. Given the statistical data, vast geographical area the City encompasses, and benefit to the City, the current ASD operating hours, helicopter deployment and replacement schedule is appropriate.

Conclusion. The LAPD helicopter program has been subjected to critical, appropriate, and ongoing assessments, which have repeatedly validated it as an essential investment. Statistics show the program assists in preventing or mitigating deadly encounters, contributes to reduction in response times, and reduces deployment requirements for ground officers, all of which provide immeasurable cost savings. The most significant impact is that LAPD's helicopter program has a proven history of life saving and public safety contributions. Analysis of the program has shown that any reduction in these capabilities will compromise the LAPD's ability to maintain current levels of public service and safety.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Memo No. 3

Date: May 06, 2025

To: Budget and Finance Committee

From: Matthew W. Szabo, City Administrative Officer Subject: **POLICE – MICLA FUNDED HELICOPTERS****APPLICABLE BUDGET THEMES:**

- Fulfills legal obligations
- Improves accessibility requirements
- Supports public safety
- Relates to proposed position or expense account eliminations
- Above themes do not apply

RECOMMENDATION

This Office recommends that this report be noted and filed as it is for informational purposes.

DISCUSSION

The Budget and Finance Committee requested the Police Department (LAPD) to report on the proposed Municipal Improvement Corporation of Los Angeles (MICLA) funding for police helicopters, any additional costs to support LAPD air operations, and the operational needs for a helicopter fleet.

The Department's response (Attachment) explains that LAPD helicopters are purchased with MICLA funds and that this allows the City to repay these costs over time and avoids price inflation of 10-14 percent from delaying helicopter purchases. The response also provided details on excess maintenance costs to maintain helicopters exceeding the 15,000 flight hour/10-year replacement cycle: Such helicopters cost \$820 per flight-hour in maintenance costs versus \$415 per flight-hour for newer helicopters. Additionally, at 12 years of operation, helicopters must undergo a \$500,000 12-year overhaul, which removes the aircraft from service for 12 months. LAPD also noted challenges in finding parts for its oldest helicopters.

Regarding the operational necessity for the helicopter fleet, the response discusses in some detail various relevant factors, including, but not limited to: The City's geography/topography, force-multiplying effects, overtime reduction for ground-forces, response time improvements, and air mission types (e.g., surveillance, incident management, pursuits, and search-and-rescue efforts).

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The recommendation to note and file this Memorandum has no fiscal impact.

FINANCIAL POLICY COMPLIANCE

The recommendation in this report complies with the City's Financial Policies.

MWS:TJM:04250129

Question No. 103

Attachment

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT

JIM McDONNELL
Chief of Police



KAREN BASS
Mayor

P.O. Box 30158
Los Angeles, CA 90030
Telephone: (213) 486-8590
TTY: (877) 275-5273
Ref #: 3.5

May 2, 2025

The Honorable Budget and Finance Committee
Office of the City Clerk
200 North Spring Street, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Subject: Budget and Finance Committee Question No. 103 – MICLA-Funded Helicopters

Honorable Members:

In conjunction with the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget, your Committee requested a report on the proposed Municipal Improvement Corporation of Los Angeles (MICLA) funding for the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD/Department) helicopters, along with a discussion of the overall need for these helicopters, including details on additional costs in the General Fund or other accounts to support LAPD air operations.

Department helicopters are funded entirely through MICLA. The MICLA financing allows the City to spread the cost over time, minimizing immediate General Fund pressure. While the Department understands the seriousness of the City's fiscal situation, air fleet reliability is essential to safe and timely public service. This dedicated funding source allows for the procurement of critical aviation assets necessary for public safety operations while preserving other budgetary resources. Further, Airbus imposes a 10 to 14 percent price increase if orders are skipped; locking the MICLA purchases this year avoids that surcharge.

Regarding the overall need for replacement, it should be noted that six helicopters (B-2 airframes) are six years past the 15,000 flight hour/10-year replacement cycle, driving reliability and safety risk. Older B-2s cost \$820 per flight-hour in maintenance versus \$415 for newer H-125s (B-3), almost double the General Fund maintenance costs. Each B-2 now undergoes a second 12-year overhaul (teardown) costing approximately \$500,000 and removing the aircraft from service for eight to 12 months. The Department's helicopter fleet is maintained by the City's General Services Department (GSD). In 2024, GSD spent approximately 1,100 hours of overtime to maintain the fleet to ensure they are mission ready. The LAPD's Air Support Division (ASD) has been warned that several B-2 structural and avionics parts will become "no-longer-supported" after 2025, extending downtimes and forcing cannibalization of parts that

are becoming increasingly obsolete. Regarding the overall need for the helicopters themselves, Los Angeles' 470 square mile size and varied topography require continuous aerial coverage; without reliable airframes, response times rise and ground-unit overtime increases.

The Air Support Division is an important element of the City's crime-fighting and public safety infrastructure. With a long-standing record of effectiveness, the air units serve as a force multiplier for ground operations, enabling LAPD to respond rapidly and effectively to evolving threats across a sprawling and densely populated urban environment. Each year, air units respond to over 30,000 high-priority calls for service, providing aerial support that helps officers on the ground manage dangerous incidents ranging from pursuits, civil unrest, missing persons and armed suspects, to search-and-rescue missions. In addition, ASD units are first at scene over 6,000 calls annually, offering visible deterrence to criminal activity. This constant presence in the skies helps disrupt and displace criminal behavior, significantly contributing to reduced crime rates across Los Angeles.

A Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) study found that LAPD's helicopter deployment reduced response times, improved coordination of field units, and deterred crime, particularly in high-crime neighborhoods, while enhancing officer safety. Additionally, air units are a component of the "Ideal Basic Car Plan," which integrates patrol officers, supervisors, and specialized resources, such as air support, into a coordinated, community-based policing model. The visibility and responsiveness of air units are vital to maintaining this model's effectiveness and helps ensure that LAPD can rapidly scale up to meet demand during emergencies, large-scale incidents, or spikes in violent crime.

A reduction in air support would have immediate negative consequences. Without aerial coverage, ground officers lose a resource that extends their reach and effectiveness. To compensate, the Department would require a significant increase in ground personnel which would come at a higher cost for salaries, training, deployment logistics, and potential officer exposure to dangerous situations. It would also result in slower response times and higher crime rates.

Reducing air support would limit the Department's ability to respond rapidly to critical incidents, diminish a proven deterrent to violent crime, and shift operational strain onto ground units and overtime. For a city the size of, and as complex as, Los Angeles, air support is an important part of the continued investment in preserving public safety, officer effectiveness, and the security of the millions who live, work, and visit this city every day.

Budget and Finance Committee

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3.5

If you have any questions, please contact Captain James Lopez, Commanding Officer, Air Support Division at (213) 610-4201.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim McDonnell". The signature is stylized and cursive.

JIM McDONNELL
Chief of Police

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Memo No. 6

Date: May 06, 2025

To: Budget and Finance Committee

From: Matthew W. Szabo, City Administrative Officer



Subject: **MICLA - IMPACT OF DELAYING HELICOPTER PURCHASE**

APPLICABLE BUDGET THEMES:

- Fulfills legal obligations
- Improves accessibility requirements
- Supports public safety
- Relates to proposed position or expense account eliminations
- Above themes do not apply

RECOMMENDATION

This Office recommends that this report be noted and filed as it is for informational purposes.

DISCUSSION

The Budget and Finance Committee requested the Police Department (LAPD) to report on the impacts of delaying one or two Police helicopter purchases until next year, including any maintenance or General Fund cost savings.

The Department’s response (Attachment) discusses in detail the negative operational, safety, maintenance, and budgetary impacts from operating helicopters exceeding the planned replacement schedule of 15,000 flight hours and/or 10 years of service. The Department indicates that there are currently six helicopters exceeding these replacement criteria. No helicopter replacements were funded in 2024-25. The Proposed Budget includes \$18,064,612 to replace two of the six helicopters exceeding the replacement criteria.

Fiscal Impact of Delaying Helicopter Replacements

Delaying the replacement of Police helicopters results in a number of increased costs:

- Maintenance costs nearly double for helicopters exceeding ten years/15,000 flight hours compared to helicopters within the planned replacement schedule (\$820 per flight hour compared to \$415);
- The Department indicates these helicopters incur \$600,000 in unscheduled maintenance costs and \$400,000 in pilot/maintenance overtime;

- The older helicopters also use more fuel to operate, costing an additional \$150,000;
- When such helicopters exceed 12 years of age, they also must undergo a 12-year overhaul, an eight to 12-month process costing approximately \$500,000. For reference, the estimated salvage value of such helicopters is approximately \$300,000. These overhauls also result in newer helicopters being flown more hours to make up for the older helicopters being out-of-service during the 12-year overhaul;
- Each year, the helicopter manufacturer, Airbus, typically increases the cost of new helicopters at or above the inflation rate, making subsequently delayed purchases more expensive; and,
- In 2024, 68-percent of precautionary landings due to aircraft maintenance concerns occurred in helicopters exceeding the standard replacement criteria, despite these helicopters representing 35-percent of the fleet. This factor indicates the City is increasing its risk exposure by not replacing these aircraft.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The recommendation to note and file this Memorandum has no fiscal impact. Should the Council modify the Proposed Budget by reducing the number of helicopters being replaced in 2025-26, the per flight-hour maintenance costs for six helicopters exceeding the standard replacement criteria of 10-years and/or 15,000 flight hours will be approximately \$820 versus \$415 for a replacement helicopter.

FINANCIAL POLICY COMPLIANCE

The recommendation in this memo complies with the City's Financial Policies.

MWS:TJM:04250131

Question No. 107

Attachment

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT

JIM McDONNELL
Chief of Police



KAREN BASS
Mayor

P.O. Box 30158
Los Angeles, CA 90030
Telephone: (213) 486-8590
TTY: (877) 275-5273
Ref #: 3.5

May 2, 2025

The Honorable Budget and Finance Committee
Office of the City Clerk
200 North Spring Street, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Subject: Budget and Finance Committee Question No. 107 – Impact of Delaying Police Helicopter Purchase

Honorable Members:

In conjunction with the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025/2026 Budget, your Committee requested a report on the impact of delaying one or two Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD/Department) helicopter purchases until next year, including any maintenance or General Fund cost savings.

Helicopters are scheduled for replacement after 15,000 flight hours or 10 years of service. The Department of General Services (GSD) oversees the management of the City's fleet of 17 helicopters, comprised of 16 patrol aircraft used for daily operations and one medium-lift helicopter used for specialized missions. The GSD is responsible for coordinating all helicopter acquisitions.

The LAPD's Air Support Division (ASD) is six years overdue on the City's helicopter-replacement cycle, leaving six aircraft well past their service life and prone to frequent maintenance repairs. With these older airframes often grounded, the newer helicopters must fly more missions, accelerating their wear and shortening the fleet's overall lifespan.

In 2023, ASD recorded 39 precautionary landings due to aircraft maintenance concerns. That number increased in 2024, with 44 precautionary landings reported. Notably, 30 of those 44 incidents (approximately 68 percent) involved the older B2 helicopters, despite the fact that B2s make up only six of the 17 aircraft in the fleet. This disproportionate rate highlights the growing reliability issues associated with the aging B2 models and underscores the urgency of fleet modernization.

Further, in 2024, the six older B2 helicopters incurred an average maintenance cost of \$819.50 per flight hour, nearly double that of the newer B3 models which cost \$414.50 per flight hour.

This contrast emphasizes the financial inefficiency of operating outdated aircraft and the long-term cost benefits of fleet modernization.

Aircraft Past Replacement Schedule

Make	Model	Tail Number	Flight Hours/Years
Airbus	AS-350 B2	N228LA	16,531 10/2000 (25 yrs)
Airbus	AS-350 B2	N229LA	16,899 1/2001 (24 yrs)
Airbus	AS-350 B2	N913WB	15,803 7/2010 (15 yrs)
Airbus	AS-350 B2	N668PD	15,756 3/2011 (14 yrs)
Airbus	AS-350 B2	N665PD	15,744 7/2011 (14 yrs)
Bell	412EP	N21884	4,551 1998 (27 yrs)

The Department has two helicopters (N228 LA and N229LA) undergoing their second 12-year inspection, a rare occurrence that falls outside standard industry practices. These extended service intervals suggest the aircraft have remained in operation well beyond their recommended lifecycle, posing operational and financial challenges. A 12-year inspection involves the disassembly and examination of every component, making it one of the most intensive and costly maintenance procedures. Each inspection costs a minimum of \$500,000, excluding upgrades and repairs, results in prolonged downtime, and is a process that takes between eight months and one year to complete. This extended absence from service reduces the number of aircraft available for daily operations and places additional strain on fleet readiness and mission capability.

Regarding the impact of delaying each replacement, while deferring one replacement avoids approximately \$9 million in FY 2025/2026 MICLA outlay, it adds \$600,000 in unscheduled maintenance (extra B-2 hours), \$150,000 in fuel (since older airframe burn approximately six more gallons of fuel per hour), and \$400,000 more in pilot/maintenance overtime for extended downtimes. This adds up to a net FY cost of approximately \$1.21 million as safety and liability risks rise.

In addition to being part of LAPD's crime-fighting strategy, ASD's operational readiness hinges on the reliability and sustainability of its aircraft fleet. Currently, the Department is facing a decision point; if older helicopters are not replaced in a timely manner, the remaining aircraft will be forced to absorb an estimated 6,000 additional flight hours across the fleet, placing an unsustainable burden on aging airframes. This impact is in addition to increasing maintenance costs of the older airframes which are currently double that of the newer models. This increased flight time will accelerate wear and tear and lead to more frequent and intensive maintenance cycles. The result will be increased maintenance costs and extended aircraft downtime, directly reducing the number of operational aircraft available for daily deployment. In some cases, these delays can take weeks or months, depending on parts availability and labor, further shrinking LAPD's ability to respond to critical incidents.

As aircraft age, their maintenance demands increase while their reliability decreases. This results in unpredictable outages, limits training capacity, and reduces the number of aircraft that can be

safely deployed at any given time. With each aircraft temporarily grounded, LAPD's ability to provide consistent Citywide aerial coverage is compromised, which increases risks for ground officers and weakens crime deterrence across high-need areas.

From a fiscal standpoint, the decision to defer fleet replacement is uneconomical. The escalating maintenance costs, combined with the operational impact of decreased air availability will ultimately outstrip the investment required to procure newer, more efficient aircraft. Moreover, newer helicopters come with improved safety features, reduced emissions, and lower lifecycle maintenance costs, making them a smarter, future-focused investment.

Ensuring the continuity and readiness of ASD's aerial fleet is not just about maintaining equipment, it is about preserving the integrity and effectiveness of public safety operations across Los Angeles.

It should also be noted that parts obsolescence means groundings grow longer each year; a one-year deferral risks an additional four to six weeks downtime per airship while parts are fabricated or sourced. Further, the medium-lift Bell 412EP will be 30 years old at the 2028 Olympics, and deferring its replacement jeopardizes specialized mission capability to perform Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) and firefighting responses.

If you have any questions, please contact Captain II James Lopez, Commanding Officer, Air Support Division at (213) 610-4201.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim McDonnell". The signature is stylized and cursive.

JIM McDONNELL
Chief of Police