

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

Date: June 17, 2026

To: The City Council

From: Matthew W. Szabo, City Administrative Officer



Subject: **SALARY FOR THE PERMANENT CITY ENGINEER – CRYSTAL LEE**

**RECOMMENDATION**

In accordance with Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 4.322(b), the City Administrative Officer (CAO) is forwarding to the City Council for consideration the Mayor’s salary recommendation for the permanent appointment of Crystal Lee to the position of City Engineer. As displayed in the table below, the salary recommendation is within the general manager M-11 salary range and would be effective upon City Council confirmation of the permanent appointment.

<b>Recommended Salary for Permanent Appointment of Crystal Lee to the Position of City Engineer</b>			
<b>Salary Range M-11</b>	<b>Hourly</b>	<b>Biweekly</b>	<b>Yearly</b>
\$274,822 - \$487,276	\$214.09	\$17,127.20	\$447,019.92

**SUMMARY**

On June 4, 2026, the Mayor appointed Crystal Lee to the permanent position of City Engineer (Council File No. [26-0839](#)). The Mayor’s proposed salary will be effective upon confirmation of the Mayor’s appointment by the City Council.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The proposed salary will have no impact on the General Fund. The Bureau of Engineering will absorb any additional costs within budgeted funds for the FY2026-27 Adopted Budget.

MWS:PAG:SAO:0726514

Attachment



KAREN BASS  
MAYOR

June 4, 2026

Matt Szabo, City Administrative Officer  
Attn: Employee Relations Section  
Room 1500, City Hall East

**Re: Salary for Permanent City Engineer**

In my separate letter attached I have appointed Ms. Crystal Lee as the City Engineer, effective upon Council confirmation.

I am recommending a salary in the amount of \$447,019.92 annually.

Your prompt consideration of this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Karen Bass'.

KAREN BASS  
Mayor

KB:ta

Attachment:  
Crystal Lee Appointment Letter



KAREN BASS  
MAYOR

June 4, 2026

Honorable Members of the City Council  
c/o City Clerk  
Room 395, City Hall

Re: Appointment of Permanent City Engineer: Ms. Crystal Lee

Honorable Members:

Pursuant to Charter §508(b), I hereby appoint Ms. Crystal Lee as the permanent City Engineer, effective as of the date of your confirmation of her appointment.

I certify that in my opinion Ms. Lee is especially qualified by reason of training and experience for the work which shall devolve upon her, and that I make the appointment solely in the interest of the City. Attached please find a copy of Ms. Lee's resume, which provides greater detail about her experience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Karen Bass'.

KAREN BASS  
Mayor

KB:ta

Attachment

cc: The Honorable Eunisses Hernandez, Chair, Public Works Committee  
Matt Szabo, City Administrative Officer Patrice Lattimore, City Clerk  
Sharon Tso, Chief Legislative Analyst Malaika Billups, Personnel Department  
Heather Holt, Ethics Commission Nicole Enriquez, Ethics Commission  
General Managers' Association

# Crystal M. Lee, P.E., ENV-SP, M.S.C.E.

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## Overview

Senior public works and municipal engineering executive with over 20 years of progressively responsible leadership experience delivering major infrastructure, development services, environmental, sustainability, and capital improvement programs for the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles World Airports, and the Harbor Department (Port of Los Angeles). Proven ability to lead large, multidisciplinary organizations; oversee deputy and division-level leadership teams; direct complex, multi-agency initiatives; and align engineering operations with long-range strategic priorities, fiscal stewardship, and public accountability. Recognized for building high-performing teams, improving systems and service delivery, strengthening interdepartmental partnerships, and communicating effectively with elected officials, executive leadership, boards, commissioners, community stakeholders, and the public.

## Key Qualifications

- Executive leadership of large public-sector engineering and operations teams, including oversight of more than 300 City and consultant professionals across infrastructure, sustainability, environmental compliance, project delivery, contract administration, construction logistics, and inspection.
- Make key executive decisions about process, governance and delivery for a \$32 billion Capital Improvement Program.
- Extensive experience organizing and directing diverse groups of engineers, technicians, inspectors, and administrative staff across district offices, development services, technology, and capital delivery functions.
- Demonstrated success leading complex, multi-entity initiatives involving City departments, airports, ports, utilities, regulatory agencies, and community stakeholders.
- Strong strategic planning and visioning experience, including long-range infrastructure planning, succession planning, technology modernization, resiliency, sustainability, and annual budget development and justification.
- Track record of delivering high-profile public works programs and major capital projects on schedule and within budget while balancing operational, regulatory, and community priorities.

- Skilled in establishing performance metrics, strengthening accountability, and improving service delivery through process redesign, data-informed decision-making, and technology implementation.
- Trusted advisor to executive leadership, elected officials, boards, and commissions with experience preparing briefings, presenting in public forums, and coordinating sensitive, high-visibility initiatives.
- Deep knowledge of public works engineering, permitting, design, construction support, contract execution, code enforcement, environmental compliance, and long-range municipal planning.
- Committed people leader with experience attracting, mentoring, developing, and retaining talent while fostering cross-training, employee growth, and organizational resilience.
- Demonstrated leadership in initiatives related to technology, sustainability, equity, customer service, and organizational innovation to improve efficiency, transparency, and public trust.

## Professional Experience

### **Los Angeles World Airports – Airport Development Group**

#### **Deputy Executive Director | Oct 2023-Present**

- Lead a multidisciplinary organization of more than 300 City and consultant professionals across sustainability, energy, environmental compliance, infrastructure resiliency, project delivery, construction safety, contract administration, logistics, and inspection.
- Provide executive direction for airport infrastructure and operational initiatives requiring coordination with multiple Council Districts, external stakeholders, and cross-functional leadership teams.
- Oversee CEQA, NEPA, mitigation monitoring, and environmental compliance programs across multiple campuses while aligning delivery with operational needs and regulatory obligations.
- Drive long-range planning for infrastructure, revenue generation, bonding strategy, energy management, sustainability, and resiliency to support future airport operations and capital investment.
- Develop and implement workforce succession and retention strategies in response to significant retirement eligibility, with emphasis on talent development, continuity of operations, and leadership readiness.

**Public Works - Bureau of Engineering, Development Services and Permits Program**

**Deputy City Engineer | Nov 2022-Oct 2023**

- Directed a program of more than 250 employees across seven divisions, including four district offices, development services operations, geospatial information systems, programming, and bureau-wide systems and technology support.
- Led citywide coordination for development services modernization, including software strategy to unify permit tracking through BuildLA across 12 City departments and improve consistency, transparency, and customer service.
- Provided strategic leadership for succession planning, workforce development, training, retention, and operational efficiency initiatives under the Bureau's strategic plan.
- Partnered with City departments, the Mayor's Office, City Council offices, and the Board of Public Works to advance policy improvements, public works priorities, and high-visibility service initiatives.
- Directed the Bureau's response to emergency orders and executive directives supporting the Mayor's affordable housing initiatives, helping deliver more than 600 concurrent projects through a coordinated multi-department effort.
- Managed budget programming, position justifications, and performance reporting for the Development Services Program, using metrics to strengthen accountability for permit issuance, accounts receivable, staffing, and service delivery.
- Led executive steering discussions and interagency coordination for the \$32.2 billion Airfield Terminal Modernization Program, including work process development and Basis of Design coordination.
- Oversaw prioritization and rollout of software solutions supporting more than 110 bureau-wide applications, including cybersecurity, systems modernization, and innovation governance.
- Mentored staff and leadership personnel through career mapping, cross-training, and targeted skill development to strengthen employee growth, continuity, and organizational readiness.

**Public Works - Bureau of Engineering, Landside Access Modernization Program  
Division and Harbor District**

**Principal Civil Engineer | Nov 2020-Nov 2022**

- Managed two district offices with responsibility for staffing, budget, schedules, technology, security, and day-to-day operations supporting development services and major capital delivery.

- Directed coordination with authorities having jurisdiction for the \$5.5 billion Landside Access Modernization Program, including public right-of-way permits, standards compliance, and technical review.
- Led interagency partnership with the Harbor Department to support delivery of major facilities and infrastructure projects at the Port of Los Angeles.
- Coordinated with executive leadership, Council District offices, the Board of Public Works, and multiple City agencies on tract maps, street closures, permit approvals, vacations, dedications, and construction activities.
- Developed phased permit review processes and cross-training programs that expanded staff versatility, improved coverage, and strengthened succession readiness across offices.
- Advanced bureau-wide knowledge-sharing and modernization through department tour exchanges, cloud storage implementation, staff training, and strategic plan initiatives focused on training and workforce continuity.

**Public Works - Bureau of Engineering, Harbor District**

**Senior Civil Engineer, Harbor District Engineer | Dec 2018-Nov 2020**

- Managed public permit counter and capital improvement functions, overseeing staff, workload allocation, public service operations, and technical decision-making on complex permit matters on behalf of the City Engineer.
- Built strong working relationships with community stakeholders, Council Districts, City departments, and outside agencies to improve coordination and service outcomes.
- Standardized development services procedures and advanced policy improvements to create more consistent, equitable, and efficient public-facing processes.
- Established a three-step division-wide training program to maintain service continuity during furloughs, vacancies, and budget constraints, while strengthening staff readiness and growth.
- Supported recruitment, staff development, and retention efforts; trained staff in communication and de-escalation techniques; and served on multiple bureau committees focused on strategic planning, telecommuting, standardization, permit manuals, and digital modernization.

**Public Works - Bureau of Engineering, Environmental Engineering Division**

**Civil Engineer, Project Manager | Jun 2016-Dec 2018**

- Managed more than 70 active projects with budgets ranging from \$40,000 to \$30 million, balancing scope, schedule, budget, and regulatory requirements.

- Supervised project management staff, assigned resources, tracked project metrics, and mentored employees to support consistent delivery and professional growth.
- Initiated internal master planning coordination and project delivery efforts for approximately \$200 million in capital improvement programs.
- Prepared and presented board reports, contract and procurement documents, business cases, technical memoranda, workshop materials, and project reviews for executive, board, and community audiences.
- Provided construction support including contractor coordination, submittal review, design revisions, change order negotiation, and issue resolution.

## **Port of Los Angeles - Harbor Department**

### **Civil Engineering Associate | Feb 2008-Jun 2016**

- Managed planning and design for the \$20 million Fiber Optic Network Program, including specifications, cost estimating, permitting, schedule development, utility coordination, and construction support.
- Helped streamline delivery of security capital improvement projects by coordinating across port operations, Coast Guard, LAPD, LA Port Police, and other stakeholders.
- Presented project information to City Council representatives, executive leadership, grant stakeholders, project committees, outside agencies, and media outlets.
- Performed design and field engineering work involving grading, paving, utility relocation, structural coordination, and technical problem-solving.
- Supported grant funding strategy, application development, grant execution, and reporting for capital initiatives.

**Earlier Experience:** Student Engineer, Port of Los Angeles - Specifications and Special Projects Section (2006-2008); Engineering Intern, Psomas, Inc. - Transportation Section (2004-2006)

## **Licenses & Certifications**

- Professional Civil Engineer, State of California (#79149)
- Envision Sustainability Professional (ENV-SP)
- Loyola Marymount University - Environmental Engineering Sustainability Certificate
- UCLA Project Management Program Certificate
- Public Works, Bureau of Engineering Project Delivery Management Certificate
- International Code Council Certificate
- Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM)

## Education

Bachelors of Science in Civil Engineering (UCI, CSULB) - 2007

Master of Science in Civil Engineering (M.S.C.E.) + Environmental emphasis (LMU) 2021

## Professional Memberships

- American Public Works Association
- American Association of Architects and Engineers, Board of Directors
- Women's Transportation Seminar (Los Angeles Chapter Board)
- American Society of Civil Engineers - Coastal, Oceans, Ports, and Rivers Institute (COPRI)
- American Society of Civil Engineers – Airport Transportation Technical Group
- Project Management Institute
- Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure (ENV-SP)
- WaterReuse Los Angeles Chapter
- International Code Council
- Society for Human Resources Management
- Heal the Bay Volunteer
- Airports Council International (Planning Committee)
- American Association of Airport Executives
- Asian American Architects and Engineers Association (National Board)
- InfrastructureLA – Transportation Committee
- Construction Managers Association of America (CMAA)
- Airport Minorities Advisory Council (AMAC)

## Technical Skills

Microsoft Office 365 (including Power BI, OneNote, Sharepoint and OneDrive), ArcGIS Pro, AEGIS, Civil 3D/AutoCAD, Bluebeam, Adobe Acrobat, Box, Google Workspace, Asana, development services permit applications, video conferencing platforms, digital documentation/manual systems, PMweb, Co-Pilots AI, Claude, ChatGPT

## Executive Portfolio Summary

Experience in executive decision-making, demonstrating leadership of major public works, aviation capital delivery, budgeting, creative contract execution, sustainability, workforce development, innovation, and interagency coordination.

## Portfolio / Project Highlights

### Selected Leadership and Capital Program Highlights

- **Major Capital Program Delivery Support, LAWA** - Provided delivery support for a portfolio of major aviation capital initiatives, including the \$2.7 billion Terminal Development Program, \$10 billion Airfield Development Program, and the \$1 billion Infrastructure Critical Program. Work through construction challenges, payment applications, and alternative delivery processes. Helped advance these complex, high-visibility efforts through executive coordination, cross-functional leadership, interagency collaboration, and alignment of program delivery with operational, communication strategies, regulatory, and stakeholder priorities.
- **Airfield Terminal Modernization Program** - Led executive coordination and process development for public works components and Multi-Departmental MOU of the \$32.2 billion program, including interagency collaboration, work process alignment, entitlements, mitigation monitoring capital reporting, and design review process.
- **Landside Access Modernization Program** – Collaborated through authority-having-jurisdiction coordination and permit oversight for the \$5.5 billion airport access modernization effort, balancing right-of-way requirements, engineering standards compliance, permit processing and multi-agency coordination.
- **Airport Sustainability, Resiliency, and Environmental Compliance** - Oversee sustainability, energy, resiliency, and environmental compliance functions across multiple airport campuses, integrating long-range planning with operational and regulatory priorities.
- **Energy Systems Strategic Planning and Alternative Energy Roadmap, LAWA** – Leading long-range planning for airport energy systems and utility strategy, coordinating internal studies and executive briefings on electrification, resiliency, hydrogen, solar, fuel cell, and future aircraft energy needs. Helped shape a forward-looking framework for campus-wide energy planning by aligning technical analysis, funding strategy, and stakeholder coordination, including collaboration tied to National (Energy) Lab of the Rockies and aviation emerging technologies.

- **Sustainability Action Plan Refresh and Execution Roadmap, LAWA** - Led efforts to refresh the sustainability agenda and strengthen implementation planning by aligning sustainability priorities with policy, operations, infrastructure, and long-term capital investment. Helped advance the execution roadmap for the Sustainability Action Plan through emphasis on metrics, internal coordination, stakeholder engagement, and integration with electrification, sustainable design, environmental programs, and broader airport resiliency goals.
- **SEEDS Strategic Planning, LAWA Airport Development Group** - Led development and execution of the Airport Development Group's strategic planning framework, establishing clear focus areas for stakeholder engagement and relationships, technical skills and competencies, leadership development, and positive cultural change. Used recurring leadership forums, team trackers, and structured follow-up to translate strategic priorities into actionable workstreams, strengthen cross-division alignment, and reinforce a high-performing, collaborative leadership culture.
- **MATOC Process Innovation, Governance, and Inclusive Delivery, LAWA** - Led the establishment and execution of new, more creative Multiple Award Task Order Contract (MATOC) processes to improve delivery speed, accountability, and clarity across complex capital and program support work. Developed governance structures, defined roles and responsibilities, strengthened task order coordination, and advanced tools and reporting to support consistent execution and leadership visibility. Also championed inclusion requirements for XBE participation—meaning firms that qualify as certified small, local, and historically underrepresented businesses in public contracting—helping embed more equitable contracting opportunities into program delivery while maintaining procurement discipline and operational performance.
- **Succession Planning, Talent Development, and Organizational Readiness, LAWA Airport Development Group** - Championed a leadership-focused succession planning program to strengthen continuity, talent retention, and workforce readiness across the Airport Development Group. Advanced the use of position manuals, skills assessments, targeted hiring strategies, outreach, created a mentorship program, leadership development, and “Coffee Moments” to build institutional knowledge, improve employee engagement, and create a stronger leadership pipeline. This work also reinforced a culture of accountability, positive cultural change, and proactive workforce planning.
- **Capital Program Communications Strategy and Public Engagement, LAWA** - Provided leadership in developing a communications strategy for the capital program to strengthen public understanding, stakeholder coordination, and

community trust. Helped shape outreach and education efforts across multiple platforms, including community engagement, public-facing educational messaging, airwaves updates, social media coordination, construction communications, and press release support, ensuring that major capital initiatives were communicated clearly, proactively, and in a manner aligned with executive priorities and community needs.

- **Development Services Modernization, Bureau of Engineering** - Directed citywide coordination to advance a unified permit tracking strategy through BuildLA across 12 City departments, improving transparency, consistency, and customer service for development services operations.
- **Affordable Housing Emergency Delivery Initiative** - Led Bureau participation in the Mayor's emergency order and executive directive response (ED4), coordinating delivery efforts for more than 600 concurrent projects in support of affordable housing priorities.
- **Harbor Infrastructure and Development Services Leadership** - Managed Harbor District development services, public permit counter, and capital improvement functions while coordinating with the Harbor Department, Council District offices, community stakeholders, and partner agencies.
- **Capital Improvement Program Delivery** - Managed more than 70 active projects and supported approximately \$200 million in capital improvement planning and delivery through project management, staff supervision, reporting, procurement, and construction support.
- **Fiber Optic Network Program, Port of Los Angeles** – Project manager for a \$23 million Port-wide communications infrastructure program involving specifications, cost estimating, permitting, utility coordination, and field implementation support.
- **Workforce Development and Succession Planning** - Designed and implemented cross-training, career mapping, retention, and succession planning initiatives to strengthen organizational resilience, improve staff readiness, and support continuity of operations.
- **Technology and Process Innovation** - Led bureau-wide modernization initiatives including cloud storage adoption, systems governance, cybersecurity coordination, and rollout prioritization for more than 110 applications supporting engineering operations and public service delivery.