COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

DONALD L. WOLFE, Director

900 SOUTH FREMONT AVENUE
ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91803-1331
Telephone: (626) 458-5100
www.ladpw.org

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:
P.O. BOX 1460
ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91802-1460

IN REPLY PLEASE
REFER TO FILE: T-3
A2123F

September 5, 2006

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Donald L. Wolfe
Director of Public Works

ADULT CROSSING GUARD PROTOCOL PLAN
BOARD MOTION OF AUGUST 29, 2006 (AGENDA ITEM 79-C)

This is in response to the August 29, 2006, Board motion, and the amendment to the motion, (copy attached) directing Public Works and the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) to report back to the Board regarding absent crossing guards along with a recommendation to prevent future occurrences. The factors that resulted in absent crossing guards at four locations in the unincorporated area of the Santa Clarita Valley are described in the attached report from LACOE. It is our understanding that the contract between LACOE and International Services, Inc., the current crossing guard vendor, expires in November 2006.

On June 27, 1995, your Board adopted a policy that included the criteria to be used for assigning adult crossing guards throughout unincorporated areas. This policy specifies that the assignment of crossing guards is a supplemental technique, and not an official traffic control device as defined in the California Vehicle Code (CVC). The warrants contained in the policy are less stringent than the current State of California criteria, which are detailed in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Public Works' role in carrying out the Adult Crossing Guard Program is to ensure that a specific location meets the Board-adopted criteria. Additionally, if there is disagreement with a school regarding one of our findings, your Board, in May 1999, stipulated that the Highway Safety Commission can oversee an appeal process.

As stipulated in the CVC Section 42201(e) "...the Board of Supervisors may specify that a designated County officer, employee, or commissioner is to hire school crossing guards, or in the alternative, the Board may specify that any school district crossing guard program in unincorporated areas shall be maintained by the school districts

desiring the program." Effective January 1, 1980, your Board designated the Superintendent of Schools to employ crossing guards. This action was in response to State Legislation that enacted the aforementioned CVC Section. Prior to January 1, 1980, the California Highway Patrol was responsible for employing crossing guards.

On September 1, 2006, my staff met with representatives of the Santa Clarita Valley School Districts, LACOE, and Fifth District staff. The school districts declined a proposal that they employ crossing guards for their schools. Additionally, they declined a suggestion that they identify emergency fill-in crossing guards. Consequently, the LACOE report provides their recommended protocol for providing crossing guard coverage, as well as enhancing communication with all school districts in the unincorporated areas, to ensure that fill-in crossing guards are deployed in a timely manner. Given the daily interaction that LACOE has with the school districts, and their more than 25 years of experience with the protocol in hiring crossing guards, we support the continuation of LACOEs lead role in employing crossing guards.

If you have any questions, please call me or your staff may contact Bill Higley at (626) 458-4016.

JQM:rj
P:\tlpub\WPFILES\FILES\amemos\A2113F.doc

Attach.

cc: Chief Administrative Office
Executive Office

Los Angeles County Office of Education
Division of Business Operations

Response to Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Motion
By Mayor Michael D. Antonovich

Background Information

In the 1970's, the Board of Supervisors requested the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) administer and provide adult crossing guards in unincorporated areas of the County. The funding for this service is provided to LACOE from Los Angeles County. In order to meet this service, LACOE contracts with a private firm. The current contractor, International Services, is in the last year of a five (5) year contract with LACOE as contract administrator. The Department of Public Works establishes the number and placement of crossing guards. Currently there are 213 crossing guard locations.

Current Problems/Responses

With the start of the 2006-07 regular school year, crossing guards were absent at various sites in Castaic Union School District, Newhall School District, and the Saugus Union School District. The contractor is having difficulty both obtaining and retaining crossing guards in the area.

Contributing Factors

1. Competition from local municipalities; on-site recruitment of contractor staff.

2. Less than competitive pay; i.e. lower than other agency pay rate.

3. Recent increases in gas prices adversely impacting crossing guards that previously would have to drive to cover the stations.

LACOE's Protocol for Crossing Guard Coverage

In the interest of safety and the well being of children, it is important that crossing guard stations be manned during designated hours. In the event of an unmanned station due to the absence of an assigned crossing guard, in coordination with the affected districts the first personnel at the school site with knowledge of the unmanned guard post is expected to take positive action and contact LACOE (three numbers have been provided – one land line and two cellular telephone numbers).

1. LACOE receives a call from parent or school personnel reporting absence and collects:
   a. Contact name and telephone number.
   b. School name, district and crossing guard location.
   c. Absence dates, and other informational notes regarding the site (if report is received from a parent or citizen, notify the school).

2. Notification is immediately made by telephone and followed up via email with the above information to:
   a. Contractor – International Services Management must take immediate action to correct the problem.
   b. Los Angeles Department of Public Works is notified of the absence.
   c. Other LACOE management is notified; Director of Division of Business Operations contacts the appropriate school district official.

3. International Services' Data Entry Scheduler contacts Area Supervisor of the reported location(s); International Services' Area Supervisor contacts crossing guard.
   a. If employee is in fact absent, Area Supervisor arranges for an alternate crossing guard to cover the intersection
   b. If an alternate cannot be arranged, Area Supervisor covers the intersection
   c. If Area Supervisor can not cover the intersection, Area Supervisor contacts Transportation Services at the Los Angeles County Office of Education

5. LACOE's Transportation Officer also makes contact with an alternate vendor, All City Management, to arrange back-up coverage. The above steps takes place in real-time with coverage being provided as soon as practical.

Additional Actions Taken by LACOE

Measures taken to provide rapid response for recent crossing guard no-shows include (as referenced in #5):

1. A secondary crossing guard company, All City Management, has been retained to manage hot spot in the Santa Clarita Valley. This provider will remain in place until a new bid is awarded.

2. LACOE has regularized a standing daily communication process between each school district and LACOE. The Director of Business Operations is in direct contact with each school district every morning to verify coverage.

3. As an additional alternative for providing crossing guards, LACOE is negotiating the use of LACOE's contracted security company as crossing guards.

4. A review of crossing guard pay rate is underway. Emphasis is being placed on assistance to crossing guards that must drive in to provide coverage.

5. Additional "floating" crossing guards are being placed in problem areas; they will be available to immediately cover unmanned stations.

6. LACOE will assist the affected contractor with advertising and recruitment.

Long-term Steps

Based on a meeting with Santa Clarita Valley school district superintendents, representative of Supervisor Antonovich's Office, Department of Public Works and the city of Santa Clarita, discussion and plans to improve communication and to develop comprehensive solutions were brainstormed. It was agreed that an on-going working committee be established to maintain communications and assist in problem solving, including working with cities that are meeting their own crossing guard requirement.

A key concept was that regionalized working committees with all appropriate parties represented and throughout Los Angeles County's unincorporated areas would be established to address a solution process and responsibilities. In the meantime, Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Darline Robles, has communicated to all Los Angeles district superintendents regarding unincorporated areas the potential for uncovered crossing guard station. This communication gave detail and specific information for points of contact and LACOE's Division of Business Operations protocol, and requested that LACOE be notified if the contractor did not cover a designated crossing site.

Upon completion of the work of these regional committees, recommendations will be developed for the Board of Supervisors to consider that will include the best processes for ensuring no future repeats of uncovered crossing guard stations and the appropriate assignment of organization responsibility this service.

Prepared By: Business Services
Los Angeles County Office Of Education