



Pacific Palisades Community Council

November 26, 2023

Fernando Navarrete

LADOT Western District, Legislative Coordinator in Government Affairs
100 S. Main Street, 10th floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Sent Via email: ladot.westerndistrict@lacity.org, Fernando.navarrete@lacity.org

Cc: Hon. Councilwoman Traci Park, District Director Gabriela Medina, Field Deputy Michael Amster
PPCC board members: Vice President, Sue Kohl, Education Representative, Alisa Rodman, Area Representative, Julie Silliman, At-Large Representative, Chris Spitz, Education Advisor and LAUSD D4 District Director, Allison Holdorff Polhill.

Re: The hiring of a willing Crossing Guard at Canyon School

Dear LADOT and Mr. Navarrete:

Pacific Palisades Community Council (PPCC) has been the voice of the community and the most broad-based organization in Pacific Palisades, since 1973. The Palisades is the western most community along the coast in the City of LA, and as such, is a coastal mountain community that is difficult to access – *historically posing a challenge to our school administrators who seek to fill open positions on campuses that are hard to access for those who do not live in or near the community.*

It has been brought to our attention that a qualified individual, who is familiar with Canyon Elementary School, situated in Pacific Palisades, has applied for a Crossing Guard position at the school. Canyon School is located on East Channel Road, which is one of the most travelled roadways in our community. The road begins from Pacific Coast Highway, where a four-way intersection accommodates tens of thousands of cars which use Chautauqua and Channel Rd. (East and West) as major arteries in and out of Pacific Palisades and the coast, to the inland communities of Brentwood and West LA, as well as Santa Monica. The road is heavily travelled (as some of your own records will show, since residents have asked for crosswalks and speed bumps in the last few years) and has been the site of recent collisions involving pedestrians/students and

vehicles. The determination that Canyon School is not situated at a high need location for a crossing guard is misguided.

The decision by Canyon School to request a crossing guard was not taken lightly. The families and administrators at the school are aware of the accidents that have occurred near the school's multiple gates due to high traffic at certain times during the day. Similarly, the community is mindful of the challenges posed by the ever-increasing influx of cars travelling the road that runs alongside the school. The main entrance of the school is located at yet another complex four-way traffic light and the school's playground fence is adjacent to a hectic crosswalk which lies at the foot of a nearby set of stairs that lead to Adelaide Dr., situated above west Channel, and serves as a focal point for exercise enthusiasts who use the spot as a workout location.

Mrs. Rodman (cc'd), who serves as the Primary Education Representative on the board of PPCC, brought this matter to our attention months ago and asked for the community's help securing a crossing guard who is specifically willing to work at Canyon Elementary School. Our board unanimously agreed that the crossing guard would be necessary for the safety of students at Canyon School, and expressed our position to the office of LAUSD School Board member, Nick Melvoin, as well as the office of Councilwoman Traci Park as they advocated for the hiring of this willing crossing guard, for this particular school.

Since then, Canyon School has seen three lockdowns following a series of threatening phone calls that were received in quick succession during the week leading up to the Thanksgiving holiday. Students, families, educators and administrators at Canyon School have a renewed sense of vulnerability as they return to school this week, and have requested additional LAPD support as they look ahead to remainder to the school semester. The need for a crossing guard has become even more acute today, as families look to the district for support surrounding school safety and the wellbeing of all students.

As such, on behalf of the community, PPCC renews the call for the hiring of Greg Herd to serve as Crossing Guard for Canyon Elementary School, and we ask that while LADOT does not have an existing protocol for the hiring of crossing guard applicants requesting specific locations, *that an exception be made in these circumstances for Canyon Elementary School, so they can have the support they need to accommodate student and public safety in these times of heightened vulnerability and ever-increasing use of the roadway upon which they are situated.*

We further urge Councilwoman Park and her staff to work closely with LADOT to revisit this issue, secure the requested hiring, and perhaps begin to craft a policy that would allow LADOT to hire specific people in circumstances like these, where an exception to general hiring rules may be warranted.

Thank you for your consideration and best,
Maryam Zar
PPCC President