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Greig Smith Council District 12



LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCILMAN GREIG SMITH

Councilman Smith Reveals LAUSD's \$109 million Burden to City, Taxpayers

Los Angeles – Councilman Greig Smith released a report Friday, June 30, showing that the City provides \$52.3 million in unreimbursed support services to the Los Angeles Unified School District, which claims it doesn't have enough funds to pay for measures to mitigate the impacts of the 150 new schools it is building with its \$20 billion construction bond.

The report shows that the City provided more than \$109 million in services last year to LAUSD, \$37.6 million of it from the General Fund, and only received \$56.7 million in reimbursement. The greatest burden to City taxpayer money comes from \$14 million in Department of Transportation services, \$15 million in Community Development Department services, and \$7 million in police services. The actual costs are considerably higher, because the Department of Recreation and Parks has not yet submitted its report.

“The motion and the report were meant to underscore the need for the LAUSD to fund measures to address community concerns and mitigate the traffic, parking, public safety and other impacts that residents undergo when LAUSD builds new schools in our neighborhoods,” Councilman Smith said. “The LAUSD consistently claims it doesn't have enough funds to pay for measures to reduce the impact of new schools built in our communities.”

The report was the result of Councilman Smith's motion introduced to City Council in September 2005 asking City departments to report on the financial burden to the City and its taxpayers, of subsidizing the LAUSD and on its reimbursement to the City for the services. The departments asked to report were Bureau of Engineering, Transportation, Planning, Community Development, Recreation and Parks, Police, Water and Power, and the Human Relations Commission.

Councilman Smith emphasized that his motion and the subsequent report are not intended to take away funds from classrooms needed for our children's education. He also acknowledged that the City and LAUSD have many overlapping missions in serving the public, so it is appropriate for the City to fund some services.

The motion stated that the City provides services to the LAUSD without seeking reimbursement for most of them. That policy should be revisited because LAUSD is building 150 new schools in our communities that have tremendous impacts on public safety, traffic, parking and other areas. The funds to mitigate

these impacts should come from the \$20 billion bond approved by voters to construct schools. That would not diminish classroom resources because the bond money is not allowed to be spent in classrooms.

The costs will also go up exponentially as each new school is built. An example is LAUSD's Valley High School #4 in Granada Hills. The LAUSD proposed building the school without adequate parking so that the 1,200 students would have to park on the streets of the residential neighborhood, despite the community's loud objections. The location is also at the crossroads of two state highways, including Balboa Boulevard, so it would exacerbate one of the most congested roads in the Valley, and none of the traffic improvements that Smith had demanded were planned.

In its Draft Environmental Impact Report for the school, the LAUSD stated publicly that it did not have enough funds to mitigate the serious parking and traffic impacts to the neighborhood, and that such measures were the responsibility of the City, not the LAUSD. That is only one school out of the 150 planned by the LAUSD.

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