



June 9, 2015

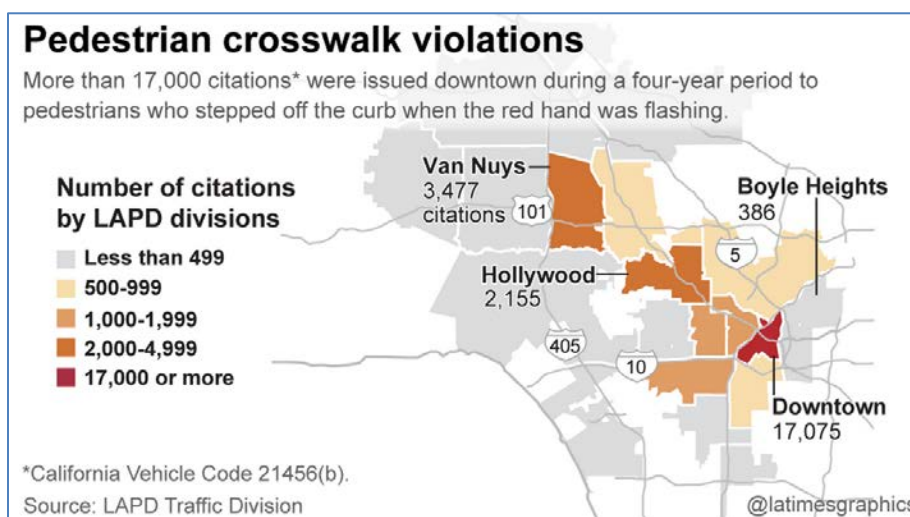
VIA EMAIL (councilmember.huizar@lacity.org)

Councilmember Jose Huizar
 Los Angeles City Council
 200 North Spring Street, Room 465
 Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Councilmember Huizar,

The Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council has received numerous complaints from its stakeholders regarding the Los Angeles Police Department’s (“LAPD”) practice of issuing jaywalking citations to pedestrians who enter a crosswalk during countdown of the pedestrian signal.¹ Despite repeated requests from stakeholders requesting that the LAPD cease such activity, the LAPD continues to issue jaywalking citations, which may require fines of up to \$250 – a fine that exceeds the fine for failing to stop at a stop sign and approaches the fine for running a red light.²

Based on recent reports, it also appears that the LAPD has been grossly disproportionately targeting Downtown Los Angeles pedestrians, as evidenced by the issuance of over **17,000** citations within a four-year period (representing the highest number of jay walking citations issued by the LAPD by roughly five-times more than the next highest neighborhood):³



¹ See http://www.ladowntownnews.com/news/community-police-still-divided-over-jaywalking-tickets/article_4b3b186c-854e-11e3-bb02-0019bb2963f4.html.

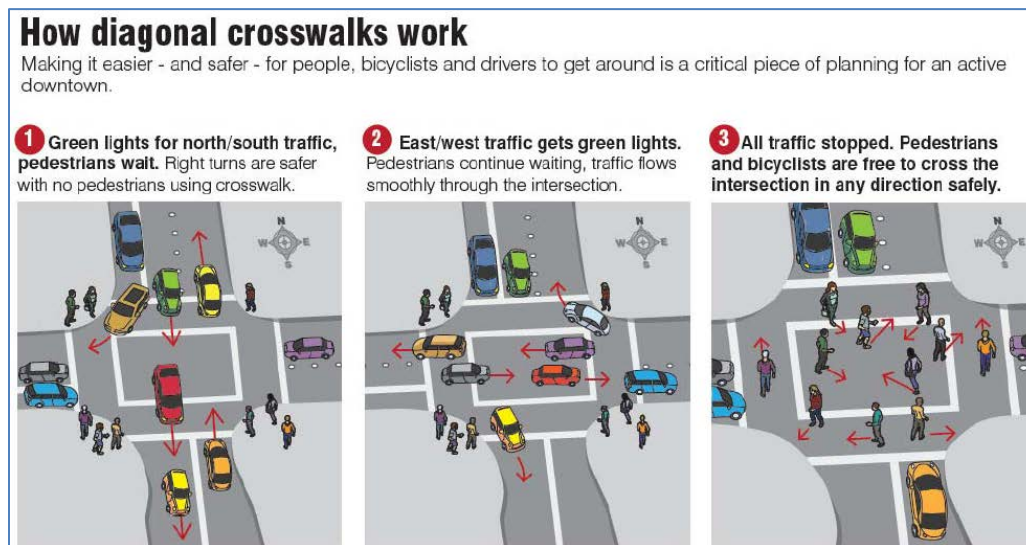
² See <http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2013/09/26/fees-penalties-nearly-quadruple-traffic-ticket-costs-for-calif-drivers/>.

³ See <http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-walkability-downtown-20150412-story.html#page=1>.

The City has indicated that improving pedestrian activity and walkability is a priority. For example, Mayor Garcetti's Great Streets initiative acknowledges that improving pedestrian activity is critical in making streets "Great."⁴ Further, the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation's Strategic Plan, titled "Great Streets for Los Angeles," recognizes that "[p]edestrian-centered activity is shown to foster a greater sense of community, and local businesses benefit as more pedestrians frequent neighborhoods that accommodate them."

Despite the City's significant effort in making Los Angeles more walkable, the LAPD's policy of engaging in jaywalking crackdowns has the potential to thwart and negate gains made in Downtown Los Angeles. When questioned about the rationale behind LAPD's crackdown on pedestrians, the LAPD points to pedestrian injuries and deaths as a basis for justifying its actions.⁵ If safety is indeed LAPD's primary goal behind its jaywalking policy, then DLANC proposes that the City install "scramble" crosswalks to reduce the number of pedestrian and vehicle conflicts.

Scramble crosswalks, also referred to as crisscross, diagonal, or Barnes crosswalks, require all vehicles to stop so that pedestrians can move freely from corner to corner, including through the middle of an intersection.



⁴ In regard to North Figueroa St between Avenue 50 & Avenue 60: "**Improving pedestrian amenities** and strengthening connections with the Highland Park Gold Line station will be a key part of the Great Streets plan for North Figueroa." In regard to Sherman Way between Wilbur & Lindley: "Great Streets seeks to make this corridor more **pedestrian-friendly and accessible** to local communities." In regard to Western Ave between Melrose & 3rd St: "Great Streets seeks to improve the streetscape on Western, **making a more pleasant experience for pedestrians.**" In regard to Venice Blvd between Beethoven & Inglewood: "The Great Streets initiative on Venice Boulevard will enhance the community's infrastructure and help create an even **more accessible pedestrian** and bicycle environment, making this friendly street even friendlier." In regard to Cesar Chavez Ave between Evergreen & St. Louis: "Great Streets seeks to strengthen the linkages between Cesar Chavez and the nearby Gold Line while **improving the pedestrian** and bicycle facilities in the area, proving residents better options for getting to and from the corridor." <http://www.lamayor.org/greatstreets>.

⁵ See http://www.ladowntownnews.com/news/lapd-video-explains-jaywalking-citations/article_4cb31e80-ccb9-11e3-b252-0019bb2963f4.html.

Studies show that scramble crosswalks are safer for pedestrians because they prevent pedestrians and vehicles from entering an intersection at the same time. Indeed, the safety benefits of scramble crosswalks are well-documented. For example, studies in Beverly Hills and Oakland found that potential collisions between pedestrians and vehicles dropped by roughly half after scramble crosswalks were installed.

Installation of scramble crosswalks would also free up LAPD officers, as there would be no need to engage in jaywalking crackdowns. With a cost of approximately \$7,000 for installing a scramble crosswalk and reprogramming signals, the savings in LAPD personnel is significant.

Scramble crosswalks should be installed at intersections of main arteries. In Downtown Los Angeles, those intersections may be:

- Intersection of Seventh Street and Figueroa Street: This intersection includes a Metro Red, Purple, Blue, and Expo Line station, and will be the future home of the Wilshire Grand Center – which will feature the tallest building West of the Mississippi River.
- Intersection of Olympic Boulevard and Figueroa Street: This intersection includes L.A. Live and the Staples Center.
- Intersection of Fifth Street and Broadway Street: Fifth Street is a major thoroughfare for Metro buses and this intersection is near Pershing Square and a Metro Red Line station.
- Intersection of Seventh Street and Broadway Street: Seventh Street includes numerous eateries and Broadway Street is a shopping thoroughfare.
- Intersection of Sixth Street and Spring Street: This intersection is at the entertainment and business center of the Historic Core.



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Accordingly, DLANC respectfully requests that the City Council consider installation of scramble crosswalks in Downtown Los Angeles to reduce pedestrian and vehicle conflicts, increase safety, and quell the LAPD's stated rationale behind its pedestrian "crackdowns."

Sincerely,



Patricia Berman
DLANC President

Sincerely,



Eric R. Garcia
DLANC Community Impact Committee Chair

CC: Councilmember Mike Bonin (councilmember.bonin@lacity.org)
Tanner Blackman (Tanner.Blackman@lacity.org)