



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 18, 2024

Statement from LA City Controller Kenneth Mejia on the LAPD's 2024 AB 481 Report

The LAPD still is not fully complying with AB 481, and City Council should reject the next LAPD Military Equipment Policy until the LAPD fully complies

LOS ANGELES – Los Angeles City Controller Kenneth Mejia issued the following statement after the LAPD released their 2024 AB 481 report:

“Earlier this year, the civil service Audit Services Division of the Controller’s Office audited LAPD’s compliance with AB 481, California’s military equipment law for law enforcement agencies.

“While AB 481 contains the legal minimums that a law enforcement agency must meet regarding military equipment, these minimums do not and should not foreclose the higher level of transparency and accountability the City of Los Angeles deserves. The law enshrines this principle by noting “these provisions do not preclude a county or local municipality from implementing additional requirements and standards related to the purchase, use and reporting of military equipment by local law enforcement agencies.”

“Our findings strongly suggested that the LAPD’s previous annual AB 481 report failed to fully comply with AB 481’s specific requirements. We made recommendations to the LAPD, and we urged the LA City Council to reject the next LAPD Military Equipment Policy (meaning the LAPD would be prohibited from using military equipment) until the LAPD fully complies.

“Recently, the LAPD released their latest annual AB 481 military equipment report. We reviewed the new report to determine whether or not the LAPD has followed our audit’s recommendations and has begun to fully comply with the law. We found that, while the LAPD has made some progress implementing the recommendations in our audit report, the department still does not fully comply with AB481, and still needs to take steps to improve both transparency and the quality of the military equipment information it reports.

“Of our audit’s 13 recommendations, 4 were not met, 3 were met, 2 were partially met, and the status of 4 are unknown.

“One recommendation that was **not met** was our recommendation to **create a dedicated AB 481 webpage**. The LAPD has not created such a resource. Another unmet recommendation was our recommendation to **establish a dedicated AB 481 communication line specific to**

AB 481. This has not been established. One recommendation that was met still **fell short of the law:** Although the LAPD met our recommendation to **hold a public community engagement meeting**, the meeting was announced with only two days' notice and lacked promotion on social media channels outside of Facebook. **AB 481 requires these meetings to be “well publicized,” and the publicity for this meeting was hardly that.** Ultimately, our audit's previous chief concerns remain noteworthy: the AB 481 report is still difficult for the general public to locate, and the LAPD's outreach and education efforts around it are still limited.

Recommendations that were **not met:**

- **Include product descriptions from the manufacturer in the department's annual military equipment reports.**
- **Develop additional guidance for LAPD entities which clarify standards for identifying and reporting military equipment quantities.**
- **Create a dedicated AB 481 webpage that includes the military equipment use policy, military equipment reports, and other relevant information.**
- **Establish a formal 2-way public communication procedure specific to AB 481.**

Recommendations that were **met:**

- **Provide acquisition costs for equipment the department anticipates acquiring during the upcoming year.**
- **Develop additional guidance for reporting cost information and developing cost estimates.**
- **Hold one or more community engagement sessions, annually after the publication of the military equipment report, with the purpose of engaging the community and allowing the public to ask questions, provide comments, and receive answers from the LAPD on military equipment issues. The community engagement session should be open to the public and separate from regular BOPC or City Council meetings.**

Recommendations that were **partially met:**

- **Break out cost information for each item of existing military equipment over a specified dollar value, specifically showing acquisition and maintenance costs.** (Note: LAPD is updating the form they use to collect inventory information, and we expect this recommendation will be met in future reports.)
- **Provide detailed information on the number of use instances for each type of military equipment.**

Recommendations whose met/unmet status is **unknown** (These did not appear to be met, but we could not make a determination based solely on the information reported to Board of Police Commissioners):

- **Develop a procedure to conduct limited verifications of, or quality control reviews of, inventory and cost information reported by LAPD entities.**
- **Require entities to maintain an inventory record for any equipment types that are reportable under AB 481.**

- **Develop a formal definition for military equipment use for the complaint intake, review, and reporting process.**
- **Develop additional guidance clarifying roles, responsibilities, and expectations when responding to questions and general inquiries from the public.**

“The Controller’s Office originally audited the LAPD’s compliance with AB 481 in order to empower members of the public and policymakers to demand the public oversight and transparency required by law and by our City’s values.

“While we are encouraged that the LAPD has begun to implement the recommendations in our audit, they have not implemented enough to satisfy the requirements of AB 481. **Because the LAPD’s latest annual AB 481 report again fails to fully comply with AB 481’s specific requirements, we continue to urge the LA City Council to reject the next LAPD Military Equipment Policy until the LAPD fully complies.**”