

## [Suggested questions for the 3/17/2021 City Council meeting](#)

### [Basic info on COPPSC](#)

### [Key concerns](#)

### [Trends from past Olympic and Super Bowl host cities](#)

#### **What are the questions we would like asked at Wednesday's City Council meeting?**

- Is it possible to host the Olympics without either an expansion of standing police forces in Los Angeles or a significant incursion of federal policing forces?
  - How is such an expansion of policing in LA compatible with our ongoing efforts to reimagine public safety, and to explore opportunities for investing less in policing and more in basic services like housing and education?
- The LA28 Bid Book from 2017 says Customs and Border Protection will be one of the key forces used for policing Olympic venues. In 2019 this Council declared LA a 'Sanctuary City' on the basis that collaboration with US Customs and Immigration Enforcement puts our undocumented communities at risk. Does COPPSC allow Los Angeles any authority to deny federal authorities like ICE and CBP access to our city?
- The speed at which this is moving relative to the importance of this decision and the other priorities of Council is not giving the body the time to analyze the impacts of COPPSC on its larger goals around reimagining public safety. Why, when we're delaying the Games Agreement for six months and we just got the CAO report on this structure of COPPSC which is scant on details aside from ones that potentially conflict with the demands of orgs like BLM, and the deadline on this is December, are we not also giving ourselves more time to consider the implications of this Command?
- In a [2018 email](#), Steve Soboroff sent Casey Wasserman an [article](#) entitled "LA 'sterilized' its streets for the '84 Olympics—how will it treat the homeless in 2028?", and admitted the questions posed were valid. Some of those questions included: "Can the police operations look less like an occupying force?" and "Will officials learn from the missteps of 1984 to ensure the health and safety of its most vulnerable residents?"
  - Almost 3 years later, we don't have answers to these questions. What are the answers to these questions and how can we assume this massive security apparatus don't do the same without at least getting those answers?

**What is COPPSC:**

California Olympic and Paralympic Public Safety Command. This is the body that will coordinate local, county and state law enforcement in preparation for the execution of the National Special Security Event (NSSE) designation for the Olympic Games which will facilitate federal coordination with policing in the Los Angeles area in preparation for the Games.

**How long will COPPSC last for:**

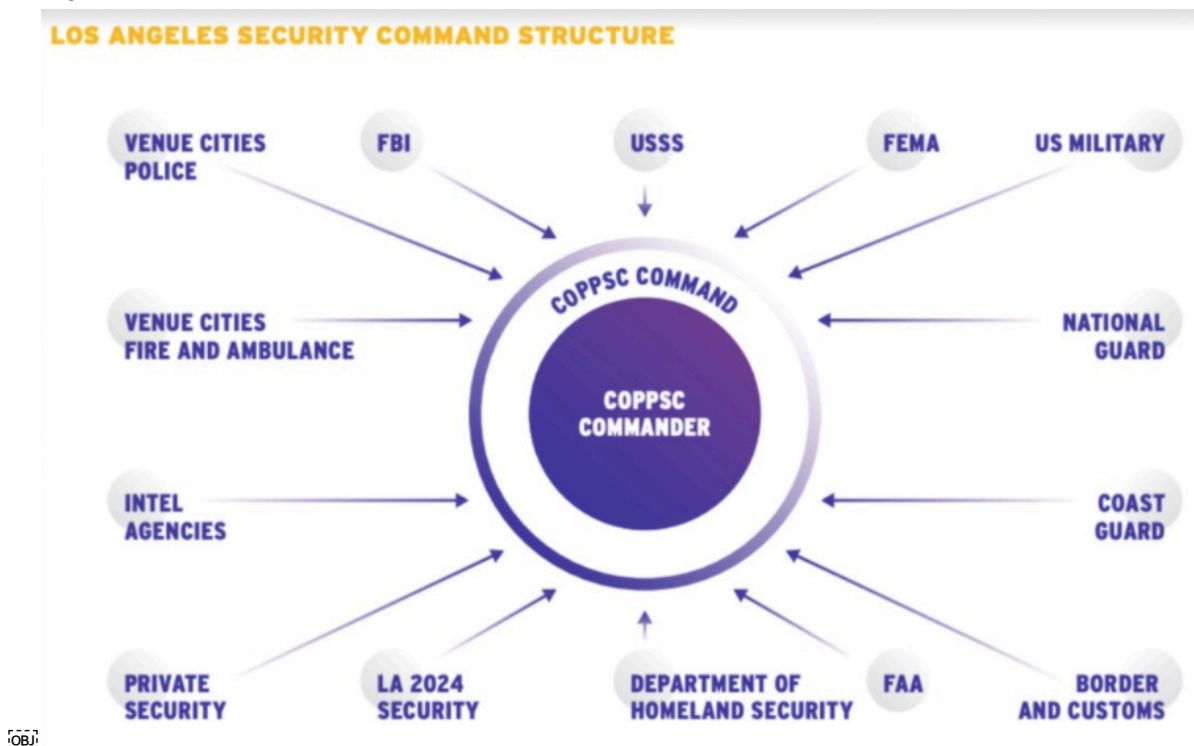
COPPSC, first mentioned in the bid book for the LA Olympics, is a state program that is the outcome of a bill passed in 2019. It needs to be up and running by the end of 2021 and will run into 2029.

**Who is in charge of COPPSC:**

It will be jointly managed by LAPD Chief Michel Moore (and if he steps down in the next 8 years, by his successor), LA28 representative Doug Arnot, and the Director of Homeland Security at the California State office of emergency services. Doug Arnot has managed security for past Olympics including Rio 2016, Sochi 2014, London 2012, and Beijing 2008. He was also a managing director at the last two American Olympics, Salt Lake City in 2002 and Atlanta in 1996.

**What will COPPSC's jurisdictional structure look like:**

There are not a lot of details in terms of the specific jurisdictional authority yet, but here is a graphic from the 2017 Olympic Bid that gives a sense of how the LA28 committee is thinking of this organ:



### **What is the key issue at play:**

The Olympics and similar events are consistently used as a pretext for police expansion and militarization. They are also used to justify the expansion of an invasive surveillance operation in the name of counter-terrorism<sup>1</sup>. Further, the Games themselves are notorious for leading to the violent overpolicing of vulnerable populations, specifically communities of color in Games hosted in the Americas<sup>2</sup>, and undocumented populations, unhoused populations or populations living in informal settlements globally.

The proposed structure of COPPSC suggests LA's Olympics will not differ from past Games in terms of how they use security. LA28's representative on COPPSC has led Olympic security efforts for the past 20 years, including at the London and Beijing Games which notoriously left those cities with a legacy of unparalleled invasive surveillance equipment, the Rio and Atlanta Games with their legacies of criminalizing those who lived in informal settlements or were unhoused in the name of security, and the Salt Lake City Games, which invented the NSSE paradigm of federal policing coordination and was a laboratory for mass federal surveillance.<sup>3</sup>

COPPSC essentially offers the City a seat at the head of the Olympics security table, but this table offers only a double bind for residents who do not want the criminalization of our immigrant population or a massive expansion in our standing police force. London 2012 deployed 40,000 officers while Rio 2016 deployed 80,000. It will soon be presented that the City has to hire more sworn police officers to provide security itself, or it will have to rely heavily on federal forces (including ICE and CBP) to provide security for the Games.

### **The problem with expanding LA policing**

It is clear based on the past 12 months that the people of Los Angeles want LAPD to be smaller and do less; COPPSC stands to undo any progress made towards reimagining public safety. As Black Lives Matter-LA and the Stop LAPD Spying coalition have continually emphasized,<sup>4</sup> an expanded police force means more violence against and criminalization of Black, brown, poor, and unhoused communities. This was true in 1984, when police expansion ahead of the Games resulted in violent mass sweeps of unhoused folks<sup>5</sup> and mass arrests of Black and Latinx youth, and laying the groundwork for Operation Hammer and the 'war on drugs'.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2012/mar/12/london-olympics-security-lockdown-london>;  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/aug/02/china.olympicgames2008>;  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2002/01/10/us/nation-challenged-salt-lake-city-security-new-look-for-olympics-warplanes-troop.html>

<sup>2</sup>

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/aug/03/rio-police-violent-killing-olympics-torture>

<sup>3</sup> <https://olympics.nbcsports.com/2017/06/03/salt-lake-city-olympics-nsa-surveillance-spy/>

<sup>4</sup>

<https://nolympicsla.com/2020/10/27/you-cannot-support-both-the-olympics-and-the-movement-for-black-lives/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://la.curbed.com/2018/7/12/17454676/los-angeles-olympics-homeless-police-militarization-security>

<sup>6</sup>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2017/08/06/the-1984-olympics-fueled-l-a-s-war-on-crime-will-the-2028-games-do-the-same/>

During and after the 1984 Olympics, incidents of police brutality were on the rise. In the 1980s, [the L.A. County District Attorney's Office stopped investigating complaints against LAPD officers](#), providing cover for police to use violence against poor people and people of color. During the “Olympic Gang Sweeps,” Police Chief Daryl Gates arrested and incarcerated thousands of Angelenos of color on phony gang suspicion charges. These Olympic Sweeps were the beginning of fascist “special divisions” within LAPD — Operation Hammer and C.R.A.S.H. (“Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums,” responsible for the notorious [Rampart scandal](#)) are two of the most infamous. Criminalization of the unhoused was also ramped up. The city’s [anti-homeless laws](#) were passed in 1982 in preparation for the games; These often unconstitutional statutes are still used to harass and over-police the city’s unhoused population.

It’s true today too. Olympics organizers will strive to force unhoused Angelenos out of tourist areas, as they did in Rio, London, Vancouver, and Atlanta.

### **The problem with an incursion of federal forces**

The people of LA want the city to be safe for its immigrant population, the largest in the country. COPPSC becomes a body that allows coordination with DHS and the federal government for an NSSE that will go into effect as early as 2026 and will run through 2029. We don’t know what type of federal government we’ll have then, but it is very reasonable to fear that it will be one hostile to immigrants. Moreover, recent host cities and countries have consistently used the Olympics as an excuse to pass new anti-terrorism laws that serve to restrict civil liberties, expand surveillance, and criminalize protests.<sup>7</sup>

This federal incursion also opens up questions about LA’s dubious distinction as a “city of sanctuary”. At the Ad Hoc meeting, unofficial assurances were made that federal law enforcement will not override local policy, but we understand that an NSSE gives DHS the full authority to detain and deport and renders whatever soft version of sanctuary we have in the years leading up to 2028 as essentially meaningless. LA is home to the largest immigrant and largest undocumented populations in the country, of course.

Of course, a reasonable expectation is that both local police expansion and heavy federal incursion will happen. This rhetoric was clear at Tuesday’s committee meeting where CM Koretz spoke of the tension between efforts to reduce LAPD and the Olympics ‘needs’ for an expanded force, and CM Buscaino spoke at length about terrorism at the Games (including Mexico City’s police massacre of protesters in 1968 as a “non-terrorist” inclusion, in a very unsettling moment).

### **Information on Rio 2016 policing (violent racist policing, evictions, protest crackdowns):**

The Rio 2016 Games are perhaps the most stark case of how Olympics militarization violates the rights and lives of Black people. In the years Rio prepared to hold the Olympics (2009-2016), police officers killed over 2,500 people in the host city, with a disproportionate number of Black youths from favelas among those killed. These murders took place amid a multi-billion dollar 'security' initiative that placed permanent occupying police forces in favelas.

In the same time period, police helped the City evict more than 77,000 people, violently repress protests, and preemptively arrest activists ahead of the 2014 World Cup.

Read more:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/07/rio-2016-has-brazil-lost-even-before-the-olympics-have-begun/#:~:text=With%20just%20over%20a%20month,bid%20to%20host%20the%20Games>.

<https://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=25747>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-23418063>

<https://sports.usatoday.com/2014/07/12/with-threat-of-protest-police-arrest-activists-on-eve-of-world-cup-final/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/aug/03/rio-police-violent-killing-olympics-torture>

<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/08/police-violence-rio-de-janeiro-brazil-olympics-hrw/494018/>

### **Information on Beijing 2008 policing (ethnically driven persecution, surveillance expansion):**

2008 marked a key ramping up in the persecution of the Uighur people in China, as they were characterized as threats - "separatist insurgents." Many were killed in raids in Xinjiang in the lead up to the games, and thousands more detained without any evidence against the accused being provided. Over 300,000 cameras were used to surveil the 2008 Olympics, an unprecedented roll-out of surveillance material that persists in the city to this day.

Read more:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249030595\\_Governing\\_Security\\_at\\_the\\_2008\\_Beijing\\_Olympics](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249030595_Governing_Security_at_the_2008_Beijing_Olympics)

<https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2008/07/olymp-j22.html>

<https://internationallyprone.wordpress.com/2008/08/11/beijing-2008-big-brother-is-watching/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/aug/02/china.olympicgames2008>

### **Information on London 2012 policing (militarization, surveillance expansion):**

The London Olympics created the largest peacetime security and military force since the end of the second World War. London became the most surveilled city in the world outside of China,

and Olympic organizers made sure to add extra CCTV and to spend £80 million on an 11-mile long electric fence. Security company G4S - a company which also provides jail security support locally in Garden Grove - was granted a £330 million contract to police the Olympics. London even got the army involved, installing missile batteries on several residential sites.

Read more:

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-olympics-britain-missiles-idUSBRE83S00120120429>

<https://netpol.files.wordpress.com/2013/12/monitoring-the-security-games-final-report.pdf>

<https://www.latimes.com/socal/daily-pilot/entertainment/story/2020-09-24/garden-grove-approve-s-1-8m-contract-outsourcing-jail-security-service-to-g4s>

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/olympics/news/9388584/London-2012-retired-police-called-in-to-guard-Olympic-Games.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2012/mar/12/london-olympics-security-lockdown-london>

### **Information on Sochi 2014 policing (state influenced homophobia, protest crackdown):**

In 2013, ahead of the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, Russia passed a law which banned "propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations." Russian public polling shows a drastic increase of homophobia from 2012 to 2014. Pussy Riot's 2014 Sochi arrest (along with seven other activists) was heavily publicized. There were 40,000 policemen and 400 Cossacks policing Sochi during the Olympics.

Read more:

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/06/11/russian-gay/2411939/>

<https://www.equaldex.com/region/russia>

<https://gcn.viralbamboo.com/pussy-riot-members-arrested-sochi/>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20131210021753/http://en.ria.ru/sochi2014/20131030/184432800.html>

### **Select examples from U.S Super Bowls**

Super Bowls receive either NSSE or SEAR-1 security designations. Like the Olympics, as NSSEs Super Bowls fall under the command of the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, and the United States Secret Service.

NSSE/SEAR-1 events create environments of intense surveillance and overpolicing. At Super Bowl LII (2018) in Minneapolis, the NSSE/SEAR-1 designation was used to temporarily displace 60 residents from a homeless shelter because the existing shelter was located inside the "security perimeter" where people would be subject to "subject to airport-style security and intense surveillance."<sup>8</sup> Changes and restrictions to transit routes, as well as intensified policing of public spaces, made it hard for unhoused residents to follow their customary routines, a

potentially dangerous disruption in Minnesota's cold winter.<sup>9</sup> Multiple media reports from the days before the 2016 Super Bowl in the Bay Area documented how unhoused residents were being cleared out from areas of San Francisco that would host games-related activities.<sup>10</sup> For the same Super Bowl, spectators *and* others who were simply in the vicinity of the Santa Clara stadium were "surveilled hard" by an array of technologies wielded by security forces with little transparency.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile the city of San Jose tracked hundreds of thousands of cellphones under the auspices of "giv[ing] the city a clear idea of where fans stayed or visited for their week in the Bay Area."<sup>12</sup> These particular examples are by no means exhaustive but are representative of the risks and threats posed to local communities by the NSSE structure for sports events. As LA-based organizations from Stop LAPD Spying<sup>13</sup> to NDLO<sup>14</sup> have argued, enhanced surveillance inevitably puts the most vulnerable populations, like immigrants, unhoused and poor people, and people of color, at risk of harm.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2018/02/04/super-bowl-homelessness-mpls>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2016/jan/28/super-bowl-50-san-francisco-homeless-city-shelter>; [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/san-francisco-homeless-protests-super-bowl-50\\_n\\_56b625c6e4b01d80b2468235](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/san-francisco-homeless-protests-super-bowl-50_n_56b625c6e4b01d80b2468235); <https://www.nbcboston.com/local/super-bowl-city-displacing-homeless-in-san-francisco/81103/>.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.wired.com/2016/01/govs-plan-keep-super-bowl-safe-massive-surveillance/>

<sup>12</sup>

<https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2016/01/20/san-jose-will-track-hundreds-of-thousands-of-cellphones-during-super-bowl-50-week/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://stoplapdspying.org/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://uncoverthetruth.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/7-6-11-Scomm-NGI-Fact-Sheet.pdf>



## Steve Soboroff email on policing concerns:

News to me, will check.

-cw

On Jul 15, 2018, at 6:57 AM, Steve Soboroff <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Your guys are trying to reschedule Anytime after 8/6 works for me except Tuesdays

On Jul 15, 2018, at 9:44 AM, Casey Wasserman <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Looking forward to it as well.

-cw

On Jul 15, 2018, at 3:05 AM, Steve Soboroff  
<[REDACTED]> wrote:

It's a different LAPD than 1984, but the questions are valid. Looking forward to our get together!

Begin forwarded message:

**Subject: LA Olympics 2028: How  
will the city treat its homeless? -  
Curbed LA**

[https://la.curbed.com/platform/amp/2018/7/12/17454676/los-angeles-olympics-homelessness-police-militarization-security?\\_twitter\\_impression=true](https://la.curbed.com/platform/amp/2018/7/12/17454676/los-angeles-olympics-homelessness-police-militarization-security?_twitter_impression=true)



Church bells rang out across Los Angeles, John Williams's [now-familiar](#) Olympic theme blared triumphantly from 150 trumpets, and a [man](#) with an actual jetpack [propelled](#) across the Memorial Coliseum on July 28, 1984.