

Date: December 23, 2020

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager



Subject: **Fireworks Committee Progress Update and Preparations for New Year's Eve**

At its June 23, 2020 meeting, the City Council adopted [recommendations for an Illegal Explosives and Fireworks Action Plan](#) to address the illegal use of fireworks and explosives in Long Beach. To facilitate the implementation of these recommendations, the City Manager formed a Fireworks Committee (Committee) comprised of City staff, including the Assistant City Manager (Chair), Police Chief, Fire Chief, City Prosecutor, and two Deputy City Attorneys. The Committee, which meets monthly, held its first meeting on July 21st. This memorandum provides an update of the Committee's actions since its [August 24, 2020 report](#) to the City Council, as well as a summary of the City's plans for New Year's Eve enforcement.

City of Sacramento Information

The Committee has obtained a copy of the presentation made by the City of Sacramento's Fire Marshal to the City Council regarding the steps staff will be taking to curtail the use of illegal fireworks. More importantly, the Committee recently obtained the data the City of Sacramento collected through a survey of other municipalities and counties throughout the State regarding their respective fireworks enforcement and curtailment efforts. It is interesting to note that Sacramento is in an almost identical position as the City of Long Beach and is planning similar actions in similar focus areas (e.g., community outreach, supply chain).

Third District Fireworks Committee

On November 9th, several members of the Committee met with the Third District Fireworks Committee, per the request of Councilmember Price. The meeting provided an opportunity to share information and ideas. One such idea was the deployment of lawn signs at the homes of combat veterans requesting that neighbors be considerate of potential impacts before using fireworks.

Statewide Fireworks Task Force

Cal Fire is in the process of forming a statewide fireworks task force/committee to address illegal fireworks. Long Beach will have representation on this committee when it is established.

Fireworks Activity Mapping

The Committee continues to work with the Technology and Innovation Department to create a live heat map of illegal fireworks activity through the Go Long Beach app. The application will allow residents to "drop a pin" on a map to identify the areas where illegal fireworks are being ignited. The information will be used for future education and enforcement efforts. The heat map is expected to be ready prior to the next Fourth of July. Formal complaints will still be handled through the Police Department and City Prosecutor's Office.

Preparations for New Year's Eve

City staff are working to create an environment where residents, visitors, and businesses can celebrate New Year's Eve without the presence of illegal fireworks. In preparation for New Year's Eve, the City will reiterate to our community, through our ongoing Celebrate Safely campaign, that fireworks activity is illegal in Long Beach. Social media posts with holiday themed Celebrate Safely graphics will be shared across platforms, including Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. A graphic with messaging will be placed on the City's website on the homepage carousel, and messaging will also be placed on the freeway billboard and digital message boards deployed throughout the city. A press release will also be issued that provides the community with: information about the illegality of fireworks; the repercussions of using them; how to provide the Police Department and the City Prosecutor's Office with information and evidence of people illegally using fireworks; and, ideas on how to Celebrate Safely.

The Police Department will dedicate additional police officers to fireworks prevention and response activities during the week leading up to and on New Year's Eve. The additional officers will conduct proactive enforcement, while providing high-visibility patrols. This enhanced posture will be data driven, focused in areas previously identified as having high fireworks activity, and strategically deployed. Enforcement operations focused on vendors who illegally sell fireworks will also be conducted leading up to the new year. On December 11th, LBPD detectives located and seized over 5,000 pounds of illegal fireworks, as well as illegal firearms while serving a search warrant. The Press-Telegram article about the arrest and seizure can be found [here](#). It is believed that press coverage of such seizures helps to curtail similar criminal activity.

Reporting Illegal Fireworks

The City Prosecutors' [fireworks portal](#) is operational year-round, allowing residents to directly report illegal fireworks, as well as upload video or photographic evidence of the discharge of fireworks. Residents may also call the Police Department to file an official complaint.

If you have questions, please contact Linda F. Tatum, Assistant City Manager, at (562) 570-6916, or via email at linda.tatum@longbeach.gov.

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