

Date: February 23, 2023

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager



From: Wally Hebeish, Chief of Police



For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Police Officer Retention and Plan to Impact Traffic Collisions**

On July 5, 2022, the City Council directed the City Manager to work with the Police Department to identify options to retain existing police officers and hire additional police officers to staff the Traffic Enforcement Unit.

Police Officer Retention

Like many police agencies across the nation, the Police Department (PD) is currently experiencing a significant staffing shortage. As a result, officers assigned to patrol field duties were being repeatedly forced to work extended shifts. To mitigate the impact of this shortage and alleviate patrol officers from being forced to work extended shifts, the PD has activated a mandatory overtime program where all sworn employees throughout the PD will be assigned to work a monthly overtime shift, providing much needed relief in the field. The PD has also implemented several initiatives to support the retention of existing police officers, many of which include wellness. We are actively recruiting and training police recruits and have expanded our recruitment and retention efforts by establishing a recruitment task force. In addition, recruitment, lateral, and retention bonuses are currently being offered. Other wellness initiatives include facility improvements, enhanced departmentwide communication, and Wellness Wednesday which is a new initiative that focuses on education and resource awareness and a Peer Support Program.

Traffic Enforcement

During the 2022 calendar year there were 45 fatal traffic collisions in Long Beach. Between January – November 2022 there were 5,597 total reported traffic collisions.

Traffic fatalities and collisions present a significant challenge in the City of Long Beach (City) and enforcement is priority. The PD has developed the following plan to impact the number of traffic collisions primarily through enforcement. These enforcement efforts will compliment efforts by other City Departments including Public Works and Health and Human Services, which include community education and traffic engineering controls.

The Traffic Enforcement Unit is being utilized to target specific locations identified through ongoing traffic analysis. Officers focus on high visibility and increased enforcement in these target specific areas. Enforcement focuses on, but is not be limited to, specific moving violations (i.e. speed, turning, red light, stop sign and pedestrian violations), distracted driving (i.e. cellphone violations) and driving under the influence (DUI) violations.

Police Officer Retention and Plan to Impact Traffic Collisions

February 23, 2023

Page 2

The PD utilizes day and evening shift Motor Officers (Motors) to focus on specific intersection and/or stretches of roadway during their respective shifts. The focus is proactive enforcement at these pre-identified locations. To allow Motors to focus as much time as possible during their shifts on these problem locations, they will no longer respond to calls for service related to traffic collisions (i.e. 901T, 20001, 902T, 20002 reports). Non-fatal collisions will be handled by Patrol Officers. Motors will continue to be utilized for fatalities and DUI investigations. When a fatality occurs, all on-duty Motors will respond and assist Collision Investigation Detectives, thereby allowing Patrol units to return to calls for service. When Patrol encounters a suspected DUI driver, they will request a Motor handle the DUI investigation and the Patrol Officer will assume responsibility for any collision related to the DUI investigation.

Identifying target specific locations is done in conjunction with a Crime Analyst providing data of repeat traffic collision locations. The PD will develop a traffic complaint form/link that the public can fill out to report known traffic problem locations. Additionally, the department will develop a central email address that the traffic section will be responsible for monitoring to track traffic complaints (PDtrafficcomplaints@longbeach.gov). This will allow residents, City employees, Council field offices and PD employees a singular place to report traffic complaints in the same format that is easily tracked and acted upon.

The information gathered through analysis and community complaints will be shared with the respective Patrol divisions. Each Patrol Commander will stress the importance of traffic enforcement within their respective division and implement a plan at the identified locations within their areas of responsibility.

As staffing and department operational needs allow, expansion of the traffic enforcement teams will be prioritized accordingly. An analysis will be conducted to determine the appropriate size and capability of a Traffic Enforcement Unit for the City. This analysis will take into account geographic size, population and average number of vehicle miles driven per day within the City limits.

If you have any questions, please contact me or my Chief of Staff, Commander Michael Solomita, at (562) 570-7301.

CC: DAWN MCINTOSH, CITY ATTORNEY
DOUGLAS P. HAUBERT, CITY PROSECUTOR
LAURA L. DOUD, CITY AUDITOR
LINDA F. TATUM, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
TERESA CHANDLER, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
KATY NOMURA, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
APRIL WALKER, ADMINISTRATIVE DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
KEVIN LEE, CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
MONIQUE DE LA GARZA, CITY CLERK (FILE #[22-0764](#))
DEPARTMENT HEADS