



Legislation Text

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Recommendation to direct City Manager to work with the Long Beach Police Chief to identify options to retain existing police officers and hire additional police officers to staff the Traffic Enforcement Unit in the City of Long Beach; and

Request for an update to the City Council on the current status of the Long Beach Police Department Traffic Enforcement team.

The request to augment the LBPd traffic enforcement division has been discussed by the City Council and by the Public Safety Committee for over seven years however, no meaningful progress has been made in adding to this important unit. In fact, over the years, the LBPd Traffic Enforcement Team has been reduced consistently, resulting in a team that is unequivocally unable to meet the demands of a city of our size.

Traffic related concerns, including speeding, loud pipes, street takeovers, running red lights, high collision corridors, and impaired driving are issues that impact Long Beach residents every day. These incidents are the subject of numerous calls for service and calls to council offices from those looking for help from the Long Beach Police Department. We have been largely unable to meet the demand in calls for service in terms of traffic enforcement. This is unacceptable for our residents.

As an example, in the last year, we have seen the number of impaired driving incidents increase. The best way to deter these types of crimes and remain proactive is through directed enforcement efforts designed to educate the public and identify impaired drivers. The city does not currently have enough Drug Recognition Experts (DREs) on the LBPd staff to address the increase in impaired driving incidents.

Residents have also identified many corridors where speeding is a significant issue. While we have implemented several speed mitigation measures, like roundabouts, speed cushions, and crosswalks, consistent traffic enforcement has not been possible. This is due to our lack of staffing.

LBPd currently has multiple vacancies in the Traffic Division and should aim to recruit more officers for this division specifically. The city should consider offering hiring bonuses and a DRE stipend to attract qualified traffic safety officers to the city.

This should be a priority for the FY 23 budget and the City Manager should work with the Police Chief to articulate a plan designed to staff up our Traffic Safety Division.

STATEMENT OF URGENCY:

As traffic safety issues continue to impact the City of Long Beach urgent action is needed.

Because of the urgency of this item, a fiscal review was not able to be performed.

Approve recommendation.

SUZIE PRICE COUNCILWOMAN,
THIRD DISTRICT