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June 9, 2023

BPC #23-108

The Honorable City Council
Personnel, Audits, and Hiring Committee
c/o City Clerk's Office
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Honorable Members:

RE: LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO CITY COUNCIL,
PERSONNEL, AUDITS, AND HIRING COMMITTEE (COUNCIL FILE NO. 23-0154)
RELATIVE TO THE PARK GATE CLOSURE PROGRAM

At the regular meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners held Tuesday, June 6, 2023, the Board APPROVED the Department's report relative to the above matter.

Respectfully,

BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rebecca Munoz".

REBECCA MUNOZ
Commission Executive Assistant

Attachment

c: Chief of Police

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

2/13
5/31/23
RICHARD M. TEFANI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
23-108
DATE

May 16, 2023
1.1

TO: The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO CITY COUNCIL,
PERSONNEL, AUDITS, AND HIRING COMMITTEE (COUNCIL FILE
NO. 23-0154)

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. That the Board of Police Commissioners (Board) REVIEW and APPROVE the Los Angeles Police Department's (LAPD) response to the Personnel, Audits, and Hiring Committee.
2. That the Board TRANSMIT to the Personnel, Audits, and Hiring Committee the attached response.

DISCUSSION

The Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP), Park Ranger Division, is the primary method of service for addressing safety and security issues within the City park system. Because of this, they currently serve as the conduit of information between RAP and the LAPD on park closure requests and concerns. The Park Ranger Division learns of concerns, changes, or additional requests regarding the Park Gate Closure Program prior to transmitting them to the LAPD, and specifically to Security Services Division, for action. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that both RAP and the visiting public would be provided with more responsive services if the majority of park-related (non-emergency) duties were transferred back to the Park Ranger Division.

Should you have additional questions, please contact Deputy Chief David J. Kowalski, Commanding Officer, Counter -Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau, at (213) 486-8780.

Respectfully,


MICHEL R. MOORE
Chief of Police

BOARD OF
POLICE COMMISSIONERS
Approved June 6, 2023
Secretary Rebecca Muñoz

Attachment

**RESPONSE TO THE PERSONNEL, AUDITS AND HIRING COMMITTEE REPORT
PARK GATE CLOSURE PROGRAM
MAY 16, 2023**

Background. On March 3, 2023, the Los Angeles City Council adopted the Personnel, Audits, and Hiring Committee (Committee) report related to the Park Gate Closure Program (PGCP). The Committee directed the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) to report back on the following:

1. Report with an overview of the hiring process related to the Park Gate Closure Program to include any barriers to hiring and recommendations to expedite hiring.
2. Report potential alternatives to the Park Gate Closure Program in lieu of deploying security officers.

Investigation. Pursuant to this request, Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau (CTSOB), in conjunction with Personnel Division, conducted an analysis of security officer hiring processes as it applies to the PGCP, as well as recommendations for alternative measures or potential improvements for the program.

Findings. As directed, CTSOB reviewed and addressed the two specific areas and specifically reviewed the current and historical practices which impact the program and its capabilities.

Overview of Security Officer Hiring Processes

Security Officers (SO) assigned to the PGCP are selected from within the ranks of the LAPD SO classification, all of which are assigned to Security Services Division (SECSO). Thus, staffing of the PGCP will be impacted by the same recruiting, hiring and retention issues currently facing the LAPD for overall SO positions.

The Personnel Department received a high number of applications for the most recent city-wide SO examination. However, due to higher pay, bonuses, and free parking, most candidates responded to the advertised positions at the Los Angeles World Airports and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. These competitive differences, as well as other barriers, have made it difficult for the LAPD to meet the current SO service level expectations which also impacted the PGCP.

On May 1, 2023, the LAPD had 40 SO vacancies and 426 candidates on the SO eligibility list. On the last requisition the LAPD requested, there were 138 candidates. Of the 138 candidates notified, only 32 responded as available for hire and 20 were interviewed. Sixteen were ultimately given conditional job offers only to have seven of those decline. Currently, two of those remaining candidates have been hired and six are pending the completion of their background investigation and medical screening.

All SO candidates given a conditional job offer are subject to a LAPD background investigation, which includes:

- An interview with an assigned background investigator;
- A criminal history check;

RESPONSE TO THE PERSONNEL, AUDITS AND HIRING COMMITTEE REPORT
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MAY 16, 2023

- An employment verification; and,
- Live-scan fingerprinting.

Candidates that pass the background are sent to Medical Services Division for a medical screening, consistent with City policy.

The LAPD is currently working on a hiring incentive program designed to encourage potential candidates to seek employment and maintain a career as an SO with the LAPD. Offering a bonus will assist in addressing the barriers to SO staffing needs in general. To further increase interest, the LAPD, in conjunction with Personnel Department, has also invested in digital advertisements for the months of August through November of 2022, and March through June of 2023.

Assessment of Historical Staffing & Oversight of Park Closure Program

The responsibility of the PGCP was originally embedded within the Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP), Park Ranger Division. In 2006, the Park Ranger Division was identified for elimination. The duties, along with a significant portion of personnel, were transferred to the Department of General Services – Office of Public Safety (GSD-OPS). A small number of Park Rangers (who were not assuming law enforcement duties) remained with RAP as “Resources Management/Naturalist Rangers,” fulfilling duties related primarily to tours and educational programs, with even those positions scheduled to gradually attrite out with retirements. At the time of the 2006 transfer of park closure duties from RAP to GSD-OPS, the PGCP utilized two full-time and 58 part-time SOs.

The PGCP was transitioned to the LAPD after it absorbed GSD-OPS in 2012, creating SECSD. At the time of the 2012 absorption, the staffing for the PGCP had already been reduced to two full-time and 14 part-time SOs. Due to subsequent City and LAPD staffing shortages, complicated by budget restrictions, recruiting and retention difficulties, the staffing has further been reduced to its current level of two full-time and seven part-time SOs. As a result, SECSD has been unable to meet the intended goals of the PGCP originally established and consistently requested.

In contrast, over the last several years, the RAP, Park Ranger Division, has been reconstituted and is currently staffed with over 40 sworn rangers (almost equivalent to their 2005 pre-transition staffing numbers). More important to note, the Park Ranger Division is authorized for 90 exempt SOs and is currently staffed with 67.

Recommendations. Based on functional responsibilities, organization, and staffing, as well as current technological capabilities, the LAPD has two primary recommended options for addressing the ongoing difficulties within the PGCP, neither of which is mutually exclusive. It is the LAPD’s belief that either, or both, of these options would provide improvements to the completion rate and overall satisfaction with the PGCP and its responsiveness to the concerns posed by the Personnel, Audits and Hiring Committee, RAP, and the community.

**RESPONSE TO THE PERSONNEL, AUDITS AND HIRING COMMITTEE REPORT
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Reassignment of Park Closure Functions to RAP, Park Ranger Division

The Park Ranger Division is the primary method of service for addressing safety and security issues within the City park system. Because of this, they currently serve as the conduit of information between RAP and the LAPD on park closure requests and concerns. The Park Ranger Division learns of concerns, changes, or additional requests regarding the PGCP prior to transmitting them to the LAPD, and specifically SECSO, for action. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that both RAP and the park visiting public would be provided with more responsive services if the majority of park-related (non-emergency) duties were transferred back to the Park Ranger Division.

The PGCP was originally designed to be a function of RAP due to their status as the primary entity responsible for safety and security within the park system. The transition back to RAP, Park Ranger Division would place the PGCP in a position of greater focus with an agency not forced to balance a large number of competing public safety priorities. In support of this, an examination would be required to determine what authorized and funded positions, budget and equipment may be transferred in support of that.

Leveraging Technology to Facilitate Timely Park Closures

Moving forward, the leveraging of current technology could prove an appropriate investment and ultimately result in cost savings. The installation of electric gates, with timed locking/unlocking or opening/closing hours, would eliminate the required staffing for manual closures at many of the park locations. While this may require an upfront expenditure, it would provide large cost savings over time. This investment could be made incrementally and factored into annual budgets, with parks gradually becoming automated over a series of years based on priority and other assessment factors.

Conclusion. The staffing of adequate security personnel within the LAPD is an ongoing assessment of prioritized needs balanced against available budget, the staffing, capabilities, and capacity of the City and the LAPD's hiring system. Security Services Division, is the LAPD's sole employer of SOs, operates consistently and tenaciously within the established processes. In regard to the PGCP specifically, it is the LAPD's belief that either, or both, of the above noted recommendations would provide improvements to the completion rate and overall satisfaction with the PGCP and its responsiveness to the concerns posed by the Personnel, Audits and Hiring Committee, RAP, and the community.