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December 18, 2023

BPC #23-243

The Honorable City Council
City of Los Angeles, Room 395
c/o City Clerk's Office

Dear Honorable Members:

RE: FIREWORKS BUY-BACK PROGRAM FUNDING.

At the regular meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners held Tuesday, December 12, 2023, the Board APPROVED the Department's report relative to the above matter.

Respectfully,

BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Munoz".

REBECCA MUNOZ
Commission Executive Assistant

Attachment

c: Chief of Police

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

BPC 23-243
BPC RECEIVED

DEC 09 2023

POLICE COMMISSION

November 30, 2023
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TO: The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief of Police

Richard M. TeFank
12/7/23
DATE
RICHARD M. TE FANK
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: FIREWORKS BUY-BACK PROGRAM FUNDING

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. That the Board of Police Commissioners (Board) REVIEW and APPROVE the attached report responding to the Los Angeles City Council's request regarding the Fireworks Buy-back Program Funding.
2. That the Board TRANSMITS this report to the Los Angeles City Council.

DISCUSSION

Attached is the Los Angeles Police Department's analysis of resources allocated to the Fireworks Buy-back Program. The Department does not provide or coordinate funding for this program but does provide resources. Allocated resources in the past have included Area Senior Lead Officers, and the Emergency Services Division, Explosives Unit (Bomb Squad).

If you have questions regarding this matter, please contact Assistant Chief Robert E. Marino, Director, Office of Operations, at (213) 486-0111.

Respectfully,



MICHEL R. MOORE
Chief of Police

**BOARD OF
POLICE COMMISSIONERS**
Approved *December 12, 2023*
Secretary *Rebecca Munoz*

Attachment

FACT SHEET
FIREWORKS BUY-BACK PROGRAM

November 30, 2023

Purpose. The purpose of this Fact Sheet is to provide a response to the Public Safety Committee. On September 26, 2023, the City Council adopted the Public Safety Committee report (Council File No. 23-0867). The Committee tasked the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) with providing an analysis of the resources needed and potential funding sources required to operate the Fireworks Buy-back Program across all four bureaus of the Department for the Fourth of July holiday. Additionally, the Committee has requested a plan to expand the program to include more locations and other holidays with high usage of fireworks.

Background. The Fireworks Buy-back Program began in 2021 in response to community concerns about the use of fireworks in the City on and around the Fourth of July holiday. The inherent danger to the public of storing or igniting illegal fireworks, coupled with the persistent loud sounds during June and July, is a disturbance to some military veterans, pets, and others in the community. Council District Seven was able to fundraise \$3,140 worth of gift cards and 140 baseball tickets to Los Angeles Dodgers games to provide as incentives to the public to trade in fireworks. This was done in the hope of reducing community concerns and the calls for service to the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD).

This Fact Sheet was drafted after contacting and gathering information from the following entities:

- Los Angeles Police Department's Emergency Services Division, Explosives Unit (Bomb Squad);
- Los Angeles Fire Department;
- MySafeLA;
- Council District Seven Office;
- Office of the Chief Legislative Analyst; and,
- Office of the City Administrative Officer.

The Department does not provide or coordinate funding for this program but does provide resources. Allocated resources in the past have included Area Senior Lead Officers and the Bomb Squad.

LAPD Bomb Squad

The program has been conducted in Mission Division for the last three years and recently took place on July 1, 2023, in the parking lot at Brand Park. The parking lot is far from any other areas in the park where people may congregate and allows for easy ingress and egress of the participating citizens. The minimum number of bomb technicians required to assist in these events safely is one Bomb Squad supervisor and four bomb technicians. Two bomb technicians are utilized to retrieve the fireworks from the trunk of the driver/participant and weigh the contents on scales. The other two bomb technicians help with sorting the fireworks by type, loading them into boxes, and ultimately into a box truck for transport. The Bomb Squad advised on the totals for fireworks recovered through this program for the last three years:

- 2021 - 300 lbs.
- 2022 - 673 lbs.

FACT SHEET
FIREWORKS BUY-BACK PROGRAM

November 30, 2023

- 2023 - 300 lbs.

So far in 2023, the Bomb Squad has seized approximately 41,000 lbs. of fireworks, not including the 300 lbs. from the buy-back event. Most of their seizures are through search warrants, investigations by LAPD's geographic Areas, or other agencies that lead to the discovery of fireworks, in addition to what is confiscated during the Fourth of July holiday.

Looking forward, the expansion of the program to all four bureaus of the Department would need to ensure four separate days of operation. This would allow the Bomb Squad to provide the necessary components for the event while retaining sufficient resources to respond to incidents.

Due to numerous safety factors, the Bomb Squad would need to be involved in the planning process, just as they were for Valley Bureau, prior to any decision to hold a firework buy-back. This is to ensure that the location chosen works logistically and allows for proper safety parameters to be in place. If someone were to bring in an improvised explosive device or dangerous item, the Bomb Squad requires the ability to secure the area quickly. The immediate area where the operation occurs is cordoned off with tape to keep any pedestrians or other citizens out of the area of concern.

Area Senior Lead Officers

The Mission Area Senior Lead Officers have assisted with the program by advising the public of the upcoming event through the use of flyers or public engagement and providing traffic control and support as needed. Based on the locations decided upon by the City Council for additional events, the Area senior lead officers can be notified and provide the same service.

Los Angeles Fire Department

The LAFD has not had to stand by on location, due to the fact that the fire station is directly across the street from the park where the operation has taken place. They were initially requested but it was agreed that the station's proximity to the event was sufficient and therefore did not warrant a stand-by component.

Los Angeles Fire Department Assistant Chief Robert Nelson advised that LAFD resources would be made available upon request. This would need to include the date, time, location, and time frame of the buy-back. The LAFD could then advise the local station and battalion commander to provide support.

LAPD Calls for Service Data

The two tables below contain the numbers of fireworks calls generated through LAPD's Communications Division, for the bureaus that do not currently have a buy-back, between June 1st and July 10th for the last two years. This information may provide guidance when determining locations to hold additional buy-back events in each bureau prior to the Fourth of July holiday.

FACT SHEET
FIREWORKS BUY-BACK PROGRAM
November 30, 2023

LAPD Fireworks Calls for Service June 1, 2022 - July 10, 2022					
Central Bureau	1022	South Bureau	1009	West Bureau	765
Central	115	Southwest	314	Hollywood	141
Rampart	220	Harbor	334	Wilshire	130
Hollenbeck	289	77 Th	238	West LA	93
Northeast	283	Southeast	123	Pacific	202
Newton	115			Olympic	199

LAPD Fireworks Calls for Service June 1, 2023 - July 10, 2023					
Central Bureau	1153	South Bureau	1029	West Bureau	799
Central	181	Southwest	334	Hollywood	106
Rampart	224	Harbor	404	Wilshire	131
Hollenbeck	285	77 Th	171	West LA	128
Northeast	368	Southeast	120	Pacific	255
Newton	95			Olympic	179

In anticipation of expanding the program to other fireworks-heavy holidays, a date before New Year's Eve would likely yield a large number of participants. The following two tables contain the numbers of calls generated through LAPD's Communications Division between December 1st and midnight on January 1st for the last two years. This information may provide guidance when determining locations to hold an additional buy-back event.

LAPD Fireworks Calls for Service December 1, 2021 - January 1, 2022							
Central Bureau	91	South Bureau	92	West Bureau	150	Valley Bureau	187
Central	4	Southwest	50	Hollywood	53	Van Nuys	28
Rampart	36	Harbor	17	Wilshire	19	West Valley	26
Hollenbeck	24	77 Th	19	West LA	8	North Hollywood	23
Northeast	19	Southeast	6	Pacific	15	Foothill	28
Newton	8			Olympic	55	Devonshire	28
						Mission	21
						Topanga	33

November 30, 2023

November 30, 2023

LAPD Fireworks Calls for Service June 1, 2023 - July 10, 2023									
Central Bureau	91	South Bureau	97	West Bureau	153	Valley Bureau	235		
Central	10	Southwest	46	Hollywood	44	Van Nuys	19		
Rampart	25	Harbor	15	Wilshire	28	West Valley	42		
Hollenbeck	18	77 Th	24	West LA	15	North Hollywood	63		
Northeast	31	Southeast	12	Pacific	14	Foothill	28		
Newton	7			Olympic	52	Devonshire	28		
						Mission	23		
						Topanga	32		

Conclusion

The funding for the past events has come from fundraising by Council District Seven. The Council District that services the area or location of interest for the event could follow this model. This would be the most ideal way to continue the program moving forward.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Evaluation and Administration Unit, Office of Operations, at (213) 486-6050.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT relative to operating the Fireworks Buyback Program in every Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Bureau for the 4th of July holiday, as well as with a plan to expand the Program to include more locations and other firework heavy holidays.

Recommendation for Council action, pursuant to Motion (Rodriguez - Harris-Dawson):

INSTRUCT the LAPD, with the assistance of the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD), City Administrative Officer (CAO), and the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA) report on resources required and potential funding sources for operating the Fireworks Buy-back Program in every LAPD Bureau for the 4th of July holiday, as well as with a plan to expand the Program to include more locations and other firework heavy holidays.

Fiscal Impact Statement: Neither the CAO nor the CLA has completed a financial analysis of this report.

Community Impact Statement: None submitted.

Summary:

On September 12, 2023, your Committee considered a Motion (Rodriguez – Harris-Dawson) relative to operating the Fireworks Buyback Program in every LAPD Bureau for the 4th of July holiday, as well as with a plan to expand the Program to include more locations and other firework heavy holidays. According to the Motion, in 2021, while speaking with the Mission Division Quality of Life Community-Police Advisory Board, the idea of holding a City of Los Angeles Anonymous Fireworks Buyback Program (Program) was put forward. In 2021, the first buyback event was held and it was a success. A quarter of a ton of illegal fireworks were collected in exchange for gift cards, and Dodger tickets.

Every year, the period around the 4th of July is the busiest call volume for the LAFD. The loud and persistent sounds caused by unpermitted firework demonstrations across the City bring stress and anxiety to animals, both large and small, as well as to some military veterans. Expanding the Council District 7 Fireworks Buyback Program Citywide would help reduce the stress felt by military veterans and animals, as well as reduce the fire risk and calls for service to the LAFD. In addition to expanding the Program Citywide, the City should offer buyback events on other holidays that experience widespread use of fireworks, such as New Year's Eve. After consideration and having provided an opportunity for public comment, the Committee moved to recommend approval of the Motion. This matter is now submitted to Council for its consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,
Public Safety Committee

COUNCILMEMBER	VOTE
RODRIGUEZ:	YES
LEE:	YES
McOSKER:	YES
PARK:	YES
SOTO-MARTINEZ:	YES

ARL
9/12/23

-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-