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June 13, 2024

BPC #24-103

The Honorable City Council
City of Los Angeles, Room 395
c/o City Clerk's Office
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Honorable Members:

RE: CITY COUNCIL FILE NO. 22-0156-S2, COPPER WIRE THEFT AND STREETLIGHT
VANDALISM – STANDING REWARD.

At the regular meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners held Tuesday, June 11, 2024, 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", is written over the printed name.

REBECCA MUNOZ
Commission Executive Assistant

Attachment

c: Chief of Police

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

24-103

RECEIVED

JUN 05 2024

POLICE COMMISSION

June 5, 2024
11.2

TO: The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

Reviewed:

FROM: Chief of Police

Executive Director

Date

SUBJECT: COPPER WIRE THEFT AND STREETLIGHT VANDALISM – STANDING REWARD

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. That the Board of Police Commissioners REVIEW and APPROVE the Los Angeles Police Department's (Department) response to the City Council.
2. That the Board of Police Commissioners TRANSMIT to the City Council this response.

DISCUSSION

In reference to Council File No. 22-0156-S2, the Public Safety Committee requested the establishment of a new standing reward offer for information resulting in the identification, apprehension, and conviction of copper wire theft and streetlight vandalism. The Department has utilized the deployment of the Heavy Metal Task Force (HMTF) to the Operations-Central Bureau, encompassing affected areas by theft of copper wire, including theft of City plaques, tombstones, statues, light standards, and copper wire linked to the Sixth Street Bridge.

The achievement of the Department's HMTF is measured by the apprehension of dozens of suspects (29 total arrests: 20 felonies and 9 misdemeanors) and the confiscation of several firearms. The HMTF has assumed all follow-up investigations for any incident involving copper theft throughout Council District 14, including City departments such as the Bureau of Street Lighting (BSL) sites.

In addition to the HMTF, the Department has also expanded and streamlined the use of the Community Online Reporting Service, specifically designed for BSL personnel to file reports online.

The implementation of a new standing reward program would greatly incentivize community members and confidential informants to provide information to the Department that may lead to the arrest and prosecution of involved persons.

CONCLUSION

It is recommended the City Council approve the implementation of a new standing reward program to help curtail the theft of copper wire and streetlight vandalism affecting the City's streetlight infrastructure. The Department's commitment to providing quality service and maintaining a positive relationship with the community is evident by providing an incentive to

the community to report persons involved in copper wire/precious metal theft. The Department will continue to monitor and evaluate the personnel assigned to the HMTF ensuring adequate resources are deployed to meet the needs of the community.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Deputy Chief Blake Chow, Director, Office of Special Operations, at (213) 486-8440.

Respectfully,



DOMINIC H. CHOI
Chief of Police

**BOARD OF
POLICE COMMISSIONERS**
Approved *June 11, 2024*
Secretary *Rebecca Munoz*

Attachment

FACT SHEET
Copper Wire Theft and Streetlight Vandalism – Standing Reward
June 5, 2024

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Fact Sheet is to describe the Los Angeles Police Department's (Department) efforts to coordinate with various City entities to establish recommendations for a standing reward for information leading to the arrest and prosecution of individuals involved in copper theft and streetlight vandalism.

BACKGROUND

On February 13, 2024, the Public Safety Committee considered a motion by Councilmembers Kevin De Leon and Traci Park to create a new standing reward offer relative to copper wire theft and streetlight vandalism (Council File No. 22-0156-S2). According to the motion, over the past decade, the City has seen a rise in vandalism and copper wire theft from City streetlights. Not only are these incidents costly for the City to repair critical infrastructure, but they also create a broad public safety issue as areas of the City lose their public lighting for interim periods. The Bureau of Street Lighting (BSL) manages the City's streetlight network which includes an estimated 223,000 streetlights. On February 14, 2024, the City Council instructed the Department to explore the creation of a standing reward offer regarding copper wire theft and streetlight vandalism, in collaboration with City partners including the Office of the City Clerk, the City Attorney's Office, and the BSL.

Although the City has continued to see an increase in copper wire theft and vandalism, the Department's implementation of the Heavy Metal Task Force (HMTF) assigned to Council District 14 has proven effective. Since its inception, the HMTF has arrested dozens of suspects (29 total arrests: 20 felonies and 9 misdemeanors) and confiscated several firearms. Most recently, the BSL has been the victim of copper wire theft City-wide. In addition to the HMTF, the Department has also expanded and streamlined the use of the Community Online Reporting Service, specifically for BSL personnel to file online reports. The establishment of a new standing reward program would greatly increase the probability of critical information leading to the identification, apprehension, and conviction of the person(s) responsible for these crimes.

The Los Angeles City Charter, Section 19.123, empowers the City Council, as the result of the happening of a particular event or series of events in the community and upon adoption of an appropriate resolution, motion, or Committee report, to offer a reward. The City Council previously enacted a reward program in 2012-2013 for information leading to the identification, apprehension, and conviction of the person(s) responsible for the series of copper wire thefts from City-owned property in various Council Districts. A standing reward program would eliminate the need to continuously seek reward motions on a case-by-case basis.

FINDINGS

Copper wire theft from streetlights and other sites is not readily identifiable; however, according to the HMTF, the copper wire linked to the Sixth Street Bridge theft is identifiable. Additional identifiable metals include plaques, tombstones, statues, and light standards. A standing reward program for crimes involving these specific metal thefts would significantly improve and

FACT SHEET
Copper Wire Theft and Streetlight Vandalism – Standing Reward
June 5, 2024

incentivize the community's reporting of information, which would assist the HMTF in its investigations.

Currently, the City Form – *Application for Special Reward Payment* can be found on the City Clerk's web page for Traffic-related incidents (see attached). Similarly, the same form can be utilized for copper theft-related incidents. This form can be submitted by community members and confidential informants to apply for a reward.

Should the City Council adopt a standing reward for information resulting in the identification, apprehension and conviction for the theft of City plaques, tombstones, statues, light standards, and copper wire linked to the Sixth Street Bridge, as recommended in this report, investigating officers would follow similar Department procedures in place for existing homicide and hit and run traffic crash rewards. For example, when investigating officers receive information which may lead to a reward claim, they would inform the claimant that a claim will be processed when the case is adjudicated or otherwise concluded and advise the claimant that an Application for Special Reward Payment is available from the Office of the City Clerk. When a case involving a reward offer has been adjudicated or otherwise concluded and a claim for the reward has been made, the assigned investigating officer will evaluate whether the claimant is eligible to receive payment, complete the necessary Department forms, and submit the claim up their Chain of Command. The Application for Special Reward would ultimately be transmitted to the Board of Police Commissioners with recommendations regarding payment and transmittal to the Mayor and City Council for review and approval.

To coordinate and evaluate the efficacy of the reward program, the Department would designate a Department metal theft reward coordinator. This metal theft reward coordinator would coordinate with the involved Area or specialized detective division to determine if reward claims have been made and/or submitted, maintain a metal theft reward offer master log, assist with notifying the investigating officers when payments for a reward offer have been made, and provide periodic reports from the Chief of Police to the Board of Police Commissioners upon request.

The City's fiscal impact of the metal theft reward program will depend on the degree to which potential witnesses come forward and assist with the investigation and successful prosecution, which is impossible to predict with certainty.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the City Council request that the City Attorney prepare and present an ordinance to establish a tiered reward offer program for crimes involving the theft of City plaques, tombstones, statues, light standards, and copper wire linked to the Sixth Street Bridge.

The Department suggests the following tiered reward amounts:

- \$5,000 = Grand Theft (Felony)
- \$1,000 = Theft (Misdemeanor)

FACT SHEET
Copper Wire Theft and Streetlight Vandalism – Standing Reward
June 5, 2024

The aforementioned rewards will be given to community members who provide information leading to the identification, apprehension, and conviction of the person(s) responsible for the City plaques, tombstones, statues, light standards, and copper wire linked to the Sixth Street Bridge.

It is recommended that as part of a new standing reward program, the Department ensures that information may be reported to the Los Angeles Regional Crime Stoppers. The Department will further establish an email that the public may utilize to report information.

It is recommended the Department schedule a press release through the Media Relation Division to campaign and promote the new standing reward program to better solicit information from the public.

It further is recommended that the City develop an advertising campaign to promote the standing reward program. This will ensure maximum awareness and increase the effectiveness for the Program. At a minimum, advertisements could be promoted on various public messaging medians such as the City and Department websites, billboards, transit shelters and other social media websites.

CONCLUSION

The Department is committed to reducing and solving the metal thefts that have been plaguing the City. With limited investigative resources available, the establishment of a new standing reward program will greatly assist the Department in deterring these incidents and holding those responsible for these crimes accountable.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL REWARD PAYMENT

DISTRIBUTION

ORIG -- LAPD Mail to: Traffic Coordination Section, 100 W. First St, Room #469, Los Angeles, CA 90012
DUPE -- City Clerk
DUPE -- Claimant

Neither the filing nor submitting of information, nor the receipt or consideration thereof by the City, shall establish legal claim to, or right of recovery of, any reward offered. The provision of payment shall be governed by Chapter 12, Division 19 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code.

1. PRINT NAME OF APPLICANT:	First,	Middle
Last,		
<hr/>		
2. ADDRESS: (Street)	(City)	(State - Zip)
Daytime Phone & Contact Person		
<hr/>		
3. TODAY'S DATE:	4. OCCUPATION:	
<hr/>		
5. DRIVER'S LICENSE # or CALIF ID #:	6. SOCIAL SECURITY #:	
	(For payment purposes)	

DESCRIPTION OF CIRCUMSTANCES: (Fill in or mark ALL that apply)

NOTE: The applicant is responsible for providing ALL of the following required information. A claim that does not provide the following required information may be disapproved for insufficient information.

7. DATE OF INCIDENT: _____	8. TIME OF INCIDENT: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM <input type="checkbox"/> NOON <input type="checkbox"/> MIDNIGHT
LOCATION OF INCIDENT: _____		
TYPE OF CRIME/INVESTIGATION: _____		
9. DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT: _____		
<hr/>		
12. <u>X</u> _____	13. <u>X</u> _____	
APPLICANT SIGNATURE	PARENT OR GUARDIAN SIGNATURE (under 18 years)	

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

INVESTIGATING OFFICER:	Name	Serial #	Agency
	Phone #		

NAME OF VICTIM OR CASE: _____

RECOMMENDATION:	<input type="checkbox"/> APPROVAL	<input type="checkbox"/> DISAPPROVAL	INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST ATTACHED: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> INSUFFICIENT INVOLVEMENT	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION	

BRIEF EXPLANATION OR COMMENTS: _____

REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY: _____