

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT relative to copper wire theft and streetlight vandalism.

Recommendations for Council action, as initiated by Motion (De Leon – Park – Lee):

1. INSTRUCT the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), with the assistance of the City Attorney, Bureau of Street Lighting, and City Clerk, to report with recommendations to establish a standing reward offer for information resulting in the identification, apprehension and conviction for copper wire theft and streetlight vandalism crimes and thefts of bronze plaques and statues that occur within the City, including how the reward program will be administered and potential fiscal impacts.
2. INSTRUCT the LAPD, with the assistance of any necessary Departments, to report with recommendations for the implementation of a public service announcement campaign informing residents of a standing reward offer for information on copper wire theft and streetlight vandalism crimes and thefts of bronze plaques and statues.

Fiscal Impact Statement: Neither the City Administrative Officer nor the Chief Legislative Analyst has completed a financial analysis of this report.

Community Impact Statement: Yes

For:
Westside Neighborhood Council

Summary:

On February 13, 2024, your Committee considered a Motion (DeLeon – Park - Lee) relative to copper wire theft and streetlight vandalism. According to the Motion, over the past decade, the City has seen a troubling rise in the vandalism and theft of copper wiring from City streetlights. Not only are these incidents costly for the City to repair critical infrastructure, it creates a broader 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.

While the BSL has been aggressive in tackling the backlog of repairs due to the damage caused by copper wire theft and streetlight vandalism, it has also invested in preventative measures to protect streetlighting infrastructure. However, despite significant investments in repairs and prevention by the City, copper wire theft and streetlight vandalism has still resulted in extended repair times, forcing impacted residents to go weeks without adequate streetlighting while repair crews are responding to outages all across the City.

In the past, the City has established monetary reward programs for information that leads to arrests and convictions for a wide array of crimes that affect the public welfare. While the Council may currently authorize rewards for information leading to arrests for specific incidents of copper wire theft and streetlight vandalism on a case-by-case basis, the implementation of a standing reward program will allow for law enforcement to more efficiently solicit the public's help in addressing this public safety issue.

As part of a new standing reward program, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) should ensure that information may be reported through Los Angeles Regional Crime Stoppers and the LAPD should set up a dedicated email address to receive information from the public. Additionally, the LAPD should initiate a public service announcement campaign to inform residents of the new standing reward program in order to advertise rewards and better solicit information from the public. After consideration and having provided an opportunity for public comment, the Committee moved to recommend approval of the Motion, as amended. 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
2/13/24

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