

Date: January 12, 2021

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

Subject: **Report on New Year's Eve Police Activity and Fireworks Enforcement**

This memorandum provides a summary of Police Department and City Prosecutor activity prior to, and on, New Year's Eve.

Leading up to and on New Year's Eve, the Police Department, in coordination with the City Communications Team, provided proactive messaging to the community regarding impaired driving, fireworks enforcement, and negligent discharge of firearms, through social media and interviews with local news organizations. Additionally, in the weeks leading up to the New Year, the Police Department was involved in the seizure of nearly 12,000 pounds of fireworks in, and around, Long Beach.

On New Year's Eve, the Police Department deployed additional officers, 53 percent over its regular deployment, to focus on preventing shootings, impacting impaired driving, fireworks prevention and enforcement, supporting City Health Order efforts, and routine calls for service. An additional team of officers was deployed to focus solely on fireworks. As a result of this planning and deployment, no significant events or injuries were reported. Due to the Health Order, traditional New Year's Eve events at bars and restaurants were prohibited. Furthermore, no permitted special events were held. Compared to years past, there was limited activity in the City's entertainment districts with few pedestrians and relatively light vehicle traffic in those areas throughout the evening.

This year, fireworks continued to be seen and heard throughout Long Beach, especially around midnight. The Police Department issued three citations for fireworks violations. From 5:00 p.m. on December 31 to 6:00 a.m. on January 1, the Emergency Communications Center received 152 fireworks-related calls, including reports of gunshots (81 Dispatched, 71 Aired and Cleared). These calls were part of the total 1,145 dispatched calls for service, which incorporates all calls over the 24-hour period.

The City Prosecutor's Fireworks Reporting Portal has been operating continuously since the summer. Three reports were received between midnight on December 25, 2020 through 6:00 p.m. on December 30, 2020. On New Year's Eve, from 7:00 p.m. until 3:30 a.m. the following day, an additional three reports were received. Each reporting person was contacted by a City Prosecutor Investigator within one business day of the report to determine if sufficient evidence was available to support filing a criminal case. If sufficient evidence is found, a criminal case will be filed in court. When a specific address can be identified as the source of a fireworks discharge based on a portal report, the property owner is notified in writing that such action constitutes a public nuisance. If fireworks are discharged after such notice, the property owner can also be criminally prosecuted for permitting a nuisance on his or her property.

Fireworks Committee Progress Update and Preparations for New Year's Eve

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The City's interdepartmental Fireworks Working Group will continue to meet and monitor fireworks activity that is reported to the EOC and on the City Prosecutor's portal. As requested by the City Council, this group will prepare a report that summarizes its key actions over the past 12 months in the areas of legislation to prohibit fireworks; enhanced penalties and enforcement; community outreach and education; confiscation of fireworks before sale; and, efforts to collaborate with other jurisdictions and governmental agencies to identify best practices that can be implemented to address illegal fireworks. Staff anticipates this report will be completed by early June 2021.

If you have any questions, please contact Assistant City Manager Linda F. Tatum at (562) 570-6916 or Linda.Tatum@longbeach.gov.

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