



Date: November 1, 2022

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

From: Wally Hebeish, Chief of Police 

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Long Beach Boulevard Safety Initiatives**

On May 10, 2022, the City Council directed the City Manager to work with the City Attorney and Development Services Department to provide an update to City Council on the City's Nuisance Motel Regulation and Alcohol Nuisance Abatement Ordinance, including options to strengthen the Ordinances, within 90 days. The City Council also directed the City Manager to work with the Long Beach Police Department to identify resources to support efforts to address the issue of human trafficking along the Long Beach Boulevard corridor (specifically, Long Beach Blvd north of the 710 freeway to the north city limits and the surrounding neighborhood) in coordination with the City of Compton. Lastly, the City Council directed the City Manager and Health Department to coordinate outreach and education pipelines through the Long Beach "My Sister's Keeper Initiative," for individuals impacted by human trafficking along the Long Beach Boulevard corridor. An update on each of these programs is discussed below including the efforts to be taken to enhance collaboration and coordination between the Long Beach Police Department and multiple City of Long Beach (City) departments to ensure an enhanced response to the community concerns expressed regarding quality of life along this corridor.

Human Trafficking

Hotels and motels are used by human traffickers due to easy access, willingness to accept cash and relative anonymity. The Long Beach Boulevard and PCH corridors are concentrated with motels, and various other nuisance activities that make it conducive for human trafficking and other criminal activity. Since 2020, the Police Department has investigated 25 cases of human trafficking citywide, and of those cases, 18 involved minors. Past efforts to curb this activity have included enforcement, connecting victims with services and diversion programs coordinated with the "My Sister's Keeper Initiative," implemented by the Health and Human Services Department.

Other programs that have supported and complemented human trafficking enforcement efforts include the City Council's adoption of a Nuisance Motel Ordinance and implementation of the Alcohol Nuisance Abatement Ordinance (ANAO) by the Development Services Department, both of which have been on hold since the COVID-19 pandemic. Both programs are designed to improve the appearance and operations of businesses that generate high volumes of calls for service to emergency services or affecting the quality of life of the surrounding community. Both programs rely on the collaboration and coordination of multiple City departments working in partnership with the business owners to ensure code compliance and that other improvements are implemented.

My Sister's Keeper

The goal of My Sister's Keeper is to reduce victimization and commercial sexual exploitation through serving at-risk individuals within Long Beach. It has changed the system from viewing trafficked individuals as those engaged in criminal behaviors to viewing them as victims and provides support to them to regain a sense of self determination and to emerge back into healthy homes, relationships, and communities. In partnership with the City Prosecutor's Office, Long Beach Police Department, and service providers, human trafficking victims are diverted from the court system to a service system. Services include case management, peer advocacy, trauma and mental health counseling, tattoo removal, employment and education assistance and misdemeanor case expungement. The program also provides human trafficking awareness trainings and presentations. With funding from the Department of Justice the program has served 58 individuals since 2019.

Nuisance Motel Ordinance

The Nuisance Motel Pilot Program began in 2018 as a multi-departmental coordinated effort to reduce calls for service and nuisance activity at motels throughout the City. Under the program a team visited motels to address Long Beach Municipal Code (LBMC) and quality of life issues with the operator. The motels with the highest calls for service were prioritized under the program and saw consistent reductions in criminal activity and improvements to their operation. The pilot program was formalized by Ordinance in January of 2020 with a set of performance standards for all motels within the City. Just after that action however the various Departments participating in the program shifted resources with the outbreak of COVID-19.

The program was reactivated by Development Services, in October of this year. The program will continue to use calls for service as a screening criterion and will now be more geographically targeted to focus on the same geographic area as the ANAO ordinance efforts described below so the two programs work in concert for a greater neighborhood-level improvement.

Alcohol Nuisance Abatement Ordinance (ANAO)

Early efforts to address the impact of small liquor stores on surrounding communities began with a pilot program in 2012 and was followed by the City Council-adopted Alcohol Nuisance Abatement Ordinance (ANAO) in 2013. Under the program, City staff from Development Services, Health Department and other members of the multi-departmental team visit liquor stores to assure compliance with standards such as transparent windows, limited signage, and security controls. The program assists liquor store owners in bringing properties into compliance and operating with due consideration for the surrounding community. By early 2020 the program had visited roughly half of the 173 liquor stores in the City. The program was paused in late 2019 due to staffing challenges and did not resume during COVID-19. The program was resumed in October of this year and will start re-inspecting liquor stores in North Long Beach in coordination with the work being done on nuisance motels.

Strategic Interdepartmental Coordination

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic the Nuisance Motel and ANAO programs operated independently of each other and were able to address 5-10 problem facilities per year. Safety, staffing and other challenges during the preceding two years caused a pause in both programs. This work resumed in October of this year utilizing a refined approach. Instead of operating independently, staff working on the nuisance motel program and the ANAO program will collaboratively identify problem business operations that are proximate to each other resulting in a greater overall impact on adjacent neighborhoods. The Long Beach Boulevard corridor will be an early application of this new approach to administering the two programs.

Collaboration between City departments, non-profits and other community partners is our best chance for short and long-term success in addressing the safety issues on North Long Beach Boulevard. An interdepartmental team lead by the Police Department can take a multi-pronged approach to public safety beyond just enforcement efforts, utilizing crime prevention through environmental design strategies. The team will include representatives from the Police, Development Services, Public Works, Disaster Preparedness, and Health and Human Services departments, and the City Attorney and City Prosecutor's Offices. The team will meet monthly for communication, collaboration, brainstorming, planning, and identifying action items. An Event Action Plan managed by the Police Department will be the means for documentation, organization, and tracking performance metrics of the operation.

The time frame for this targeted North Long Beach Boulevard operation will be a period of one year, at which time the team can report on the progress and success of the operation, with the ability to extend the time frame if needed. Metrics utilized to track the success of the operation will include, but are not limited to:

- Comparisons of the number of calls for service generated to emergency services
- Tracking crime trends and statistics
- Photos and multimedia components documenting before, during and after the operation
- Success stories of connecting victims to services and/or diversion programs
- Number of referrals to services
- Input and feedback from community members and leaders within the target area

Summary

The Police Department has increased efforts in the target area through high visibility, enforcement, community engagement and partnerships with the City Prosecutor's Office. The Vice Investigations Detail works collaboratively with the North Patrol Division to ensure criminal investigations are handled with specific expertise, integrity, and care for rescued victims of sex trafficking and commercial sex workers. These enforcement efforts have resulted in a multitude of citations and arrests for prostitution and pimping, and juveniles rescued from commercial sexual exploitation. Officers and Detectives coordinate with the Health and Human Services

Department, the Department of Child and Family Services, and Non-Governmental Organizations to provide services and assistance to trafficked victims and commercial sex workers.

The effects of this activity on the surrounding community, neighborhoods and schools are significant. The mental, physical wellness and health of the communities along the Long Beach Boulevard corridor would be significantly improved by implementing short and long-term solutions while supporting the City's equity goals to make Long Beach a healthy, safe, and thriving community for all.

If you have any questions, please contact Commander Mike Solomita at (562) 570-6424 or michael.solomita@longbeach.gov.

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