

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: April 12, 1999

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: CONTROLLING VEHICULAR CRUISING

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance of the City of Pasadena adding chapter 10.38 to the Pasadena Municipal Code controlling vehicular cruising.

BACKGROUND

Since the summer of 1998, "cruiser" traffic has built up to the point that Colorado Boulevard is gridlocked for several hours on weekend nights. That congestion prevents potential customers of Old Pasadena businesses from reaching their intended destination. Traffic has been so heavy that several retail shops have modified their hours to close earlier because customers simply cannot reach them. Cruisers do not park their cars to shop or dine; instead, they drive up and down the streets to make social connections or simply to be seen. Interviews by police officers with cruisers indicate that they have come to Pasadena from out of town or out of the county because cruising controls have been established on the previous cruising havens of Whittier Boulevard and Hollywood Boulevard. The cities of Los Angeles, Newport Beach, Pico Rivera, Huntington Beach, Anaheim, Orange, Salinas, and National City have enacted cruising ordinances in response to conditions similar to those in Old Pasadena, and the proposed ordinance would be crafted from language adapted from those ordinances.

The proposed ordinance is intended to reduce the traffic gridlock in Old Pasadena which results from persons continually driving or "cruising" on the streets of Old Pasadena. The proposed ordinance would define cruising as passing a traffic checkpoint a third or subsequent time within any five hour period. On the second pass through the checkpoint, the vehicle's occupants will receive a warning that the vehicle's occupants will be cited for cruising the next time the vehicle passes the checkpoint. In this manner, persons legitimately shopping, parking or dining may pass the checkpoint once or even twice without being cited.

The Police Department will be primarily responsible for the enforcement of the cruising control program. The Police Department has proposed this legislation after discussing the problems associated with cruising with the merchants of Old Pasadena and the Old Pasadena Business and Professional Association who have encouraged the Department to seek enactment of cruising controls as rapidly as possible and enthusiastically support controls on cruising.

The traffic checkpoint will operate by entering the license plate numbers of all vehicles passing the checkpoint into a laptop computer. Because a checkpoint may be established only where traffic is already congested, traffic need not be stopped or slowed for the input process. If a vehicle license plate number is input a second time, the program will notify the computer operator that the vehicle is on its second pass through the checkpoint. At that point, police officers at the checkpoint will hand warning notices to the vehicle occupants, or place such a warning on the vehicle, advising the occupants of the vehicle that they will be cited for cruising if they pass the checkpoint again within a five hour period. If the vehicle then returns, the computer will indicate that a citation may be issued. The computer will automatically record the date and time of each entry for use as evidence.

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on the foregoing method of operation, a checkpoint will require 5 hours' overtime each for four police officers and one technical specialist to operate the computer. The cost will be approximately \$1050 per 5 hours of enforcement. In addition, there will be one-time costs of \$3,000 for a computer and appropriate programming and \$750 for signage. Sufficient funds exist within the budget of the Police Department to pay these costs.

Respectfully submitted,



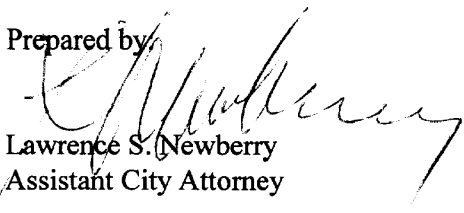
CYNTHIA J. KURTZ
City Manager

Approved by:



Bernard Melekian
Police Chief

Prepared by:



Lawrence S. Newberry
Assistant City Attorney