



# Information Item

**Date:** June 21, 2016

**To:** Mayor and City Council  
**From:** Jacqueline A. Seabrooks, Chief of Police  
**Subject:** Police Department Traffic Safety and Enforcement

## **Introduction**

The City of Santa Monica is a dense and changing urban environment where light rail train service, cars, trucks, buses, bicyclists, and pedestrians all share the roadway. Existing roadways are being further taxed as mobile traffic applications, such as Waze, route traffic through areas previously unaccustomed to more than local through traffic. The challenges associated with facilitating safe traffic circulation during this era of increasing traffic volume and increasingly diverse multi-modal transportation will continue as the City's landscape changes and the number of visitors continues to increase. The opening of the Expo Line has increased the amount of pedestrian activity within the City's Downtown area. Accordingly, the Police Department's traffic safety and enforcement efforts have been and will continue to play an important role in facilitating safe mobility throughout Santa Monica.

## **Background**

The Police Department's Traffic Services Section is primarily responsible for promoting traffic safety through a combination of safety education and enforcement. The Traffic Services Section is divided into three units, each having specific roles and responsibilities. The Section is composed of the Traffic Enforcement Unit; Traffic Services Unit; and Crossing Guard Unit.

- The Traffic Enforcement Unit is comprised of sworn police officers who enforce the provisions of the California Vehicle Code and the Santa Monica Municipal

Code; conduct Driving Under the Influence (DUI) checkpoints and saturation patrols; develop traffic safety education campaigns; investigate traffic collisions; conduct directed enforcement involving oversize vehicles; and otherwise assist with traffic circulation.

- The Traffic Services Unit is comprised of civilian personnel who facilitate traffic circulation efforts by directing and controlling traffic movements; the personnel in this unit also issue parking citations.
- The Crossing Guard Unit provides safe street crossings to students at intersections within the geographic areas around elementary and middle schools.

The primary responsibility of the personnel assigned in the Traffic Services Section is to enhance community safety by engaging in those activities which prevent traffic collisions and promote pedestrian and traffic safety. Staffing for the Traffic Services Section, which is housed in the Department's Strategic Services Division, includes a police lieutenant; a police sergeant; ten police officers, eight of whom patrol the City via motorcycles, one of whom engages in the specialized enforcement of heavy/oversized commercial vehicles, and one who conducts traffic-related investigations; three Traffic Services Supervisors, two Lead Traffic Services Officers, 34 Traffic Services Officers, nine part-time Traffic Control Officers, a civilian Parking Citation Review Officer, and one Staff Assistant III; one Crossing Guard Supervisor, a Lead Crossing Guard, and 38 part-time Crossing Guards.

### **Discussion**

The Police Department utilizes traffic collision data, enforcement data, officer observations, information received from concerned community members, and information received as a result of collaborative efforts with the City's Transportation Management staff to focus its enforcement efforts. The Section uses this information to collaborate with personnel from throughout the Police Department to coordinate strategic enforcement operations designed to address specific traffic safety issues. The Department's traffic safety enhancement measures include general enforcement, directed enforcement, deterrence strategies, checkpoints, and community education.

Many of these safety measures are funded by grants provided by California's Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) and include collaboration from other City departments and staff from throughout the Police Department.

From 2010 through the present, the Police Department has been awarded \$1,244,000 in grant funding from the California Office of Traffic Safety. These grant awards have been used for supplemental enforcement operations, traffic safety equipment, community outreach and educational programs, and enhanced officer training. Grant awards, shown below, have been used for the following items:

2010 – 2011 Grant Award \$159,000

- 6 DUI checkpoints
- 10 DUI saturation operations (patrols specifically for DUI enforcement)
- 17 Red Light intersection operations
- 2 Motorcycle Safety operations
- 4 Seatbelt "Click It or Ticket" enforcement operations
- 12 Adult-focused presentations regarding pedestrian safety and elderly driving
- 3 Impaired Driving presentations at local high schools
- 1 Community Academy presentation on DUI
- 1 DUI enforcement seminar for law enforcement

2011 – 2012 Grant Award \$158,000

- 5 DUI checkpoints
- 20 DUI saturation operations
- 41 Red Light intersection operations
- 10 Motorcycle Safety operations
- 12 Adult-focused presentations regarding pedestrian safety and elderly driving
- 3 Impaired Driving presentations at local high schools
- 1 Community Academy presentation on DUI

2012 – 2013 Grant Award \$100,000

- 4 DUI checkpoints
- 10 DUI saturation operations
- 37 Traffic safety enforcement operations
- 4 Motorcycle Safety operations
- 4 Distracted driving operations

- 12 Adult-focused presentations regarding pedestrian safety and elderly driving
- 3 Impaired driving presentations at local high schools
- 1 Community Academy presentation on DUI

2013 – 2014 Grant Award \$140,000

- 4 DUI checkpoints
- 15 DUI saturation operations
- 29 Traffic Safety enforcement operations
- 5 Motorcycle Safety operations
- 20 Distracted driving operations
- 12 Adult-focused presentations regarding pedestrian safety and elderly driving
- 3 Impaired Driving presentations at local high schools
- 1 DUI Enforcement seminar for law enforcement

2014 – 2015 Grant Award \$330,000

- 6 DUI checkpoints
- 16 DUI saturation operations
- 49 Traffic Safety enforcement operations
- 8 Motorcycle Safety operations
- 16 Distracted Driving operations
- 2 DUI warrant operations
- 50 Bicycle and pedestrian safety operations
- 12 Adult-focused presentations regarding pedestrian safety and elderly driving
- 3 Impaired Driving presentations at local high schools
- 1 DUI enforcement seminar for law enforcement
- 2 Junior Police-Community Academy presentations (topics included pedestrian safety, bicycle safety and DUI enforcement)
- 1 Community Academy presentation on DUI

2015 – 2016 Grant Award \$300,000

- 6 DUI checkpoints
- 14 DUI saturation operations
- 8 Traffic Safety enforcement operations
- 4 Motorcycle Safety operations
- 2 Distracted Driving operations
- 2 DUI warrant operations
- 20 Bicycle and Pedestrian safety operations
- 12 Adult-focused presentations regarding pedestrian safety and elderly driving
- 3 Impaired driving presentations at local high schools
- 1 DUI enforcement seminar for law enforcement
- 1 Community Academy presentation on DUI
- 2 Seatbelt Presentations at local preschools

2015 – 2016 Grant Award \$57,000

- Joint grant effort with City TV
- 22 Public service announcements for airing on City TV and social media
  - An example can be seen using this [link](#) or at the following URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1djsuDQ0IWU>.
- Four Public Information advertisements with the education campaign tag line #MoveSafeSM for posting in Downtown parking structures
- 10 Public Information advertisements on City refuse collection trucks
- 10 Public information advertisements on Big Blue Buses
- 100,000 Public Information advertisements on beverage coasters for local drinking establishments and restaurants
- 10 Public Information slides to display on hotel graphic bulletin boards

The Police Department also received supplemental funding to address incursions of vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians along the Expo Light Rail Line. Beginning in October 2015, the Traffic Services Section conducted high visibility enforcement operations in these areas; as a result, more than 3,000 traffic citations were issued. The Police Department and the Los Angeles County Sheriff Department work together to promote safety along the City's stretch of the Expo Line.

The Police Department's enforcement efforts are not limited to the Traffic Services Section. The Operations (Patrol) Division's officers as well as officers who are assigned to specialized assignments are also responsible for engaging in enforcement in

accordance with the Police Department's Goals and Objectives. Patrol officers focus on vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian related violations during the course of their daily duties. In the last five years, the Department's officers have issued 81,407 citations. These citations are classified as either hazardous or non-hazardous. Hazardous violations have the clear potential to cause injury or death. Non-hazardous violations are those which primarily involve faulty, improperly used, or unsafe equipment; these violations do not have the direct potential to cause collisions involving injury or death. Over the past five years, officers issued 51,816 citations for hazardous violations; the most common offenses included disobeying a traffic control sign or signal; violating the basic speed law; failing to stop for a stop sign; and making a U-turn in a business district. During the same time, officers issued 29,591 citations for non-hazardous violations; the most common violations were for distracted driving (i.e. using a cell phone); expired vehicle registration; various equipment violations; and failure to wear seatbelt or use a child car seat.

In addition to enforcement efforts, the Police Department supports public outreach and education as important methods for proactively addressing traffic safety. In keeping with the Police Department's goal of enhancing bicycle, pedestrian, and motorist safety, the Department's Traffic Services Section and its Community Affairs Unit issue press releases to local media emphasizing a specific safety message. The Department supplements these traditional media notifications by utilizing various social media platforms, to include Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, in order to provide education and information about the Police Department's traffic safety efforts. Police personnel also work closely with staff from the City's Transportation Management Division and various community partners on safe traffic circulation enhancements.

As bicycling has increasingly become a preferred mode of transportation throughout the City, the Police Department has a designated police officer who serves as the Department's Bicycle Liaison Officer. This officer works with bicycle advocates from the cycling community to promote safe cycling by focusing on bicycle safety and the rules of

the road. The Bicycle Liaison Officer also performs safety outreach with our community's youth by conducting presentations on bicycle and skateboard safety at area schools.

**Conclusion**

The Santa Monica Police Department is committed to addressing the array of challenges associated with safely managing the movement of increased multi-modal traffic taking place on the City's roads. The men and women of the Department are dedicated to creating a safer more enjoyable traffic experience for all who live, work, and visit Santa Monica. The Department will continue to utilize a variety of strategies such as education, enforcement and collaboration with our City and community partners to encourage safe mobility throughout our community.

**Prepared By:** Chief Jacqueline A. Seabrooks and Captain Clinton Muir