

CITY OF OAKLAND
AGENDA REPORT

To: Office of the City Administrator
Attn: Deborah Edgerly
From: Police Department
Date: January 9, 2007

01/09/07 11:54

**Re: Status Report and Recommendation from the Chief of Police on the
Special Traffic Offender Program (STOP)**

SUMMARY

This report outlines the status of the Special Traffic Offender Program (STOP), which is administered by the Police Department's Strategic Area Command Traffic Section. This report covers the period from September 2005 to September 2006.

The STOP program was re-established in April 2005, to address public safety problems resulting from reckless driving and exhibitions of speed, as well as unlicensed and impaired motor vehicle operation. Many of the issues are tied to the problem commonly referred to as the *Sideshow*.

FISCAL IMPACT

Since this report is informational only, there are no fiscal impacts associated with acceptance of this report. However, a financial summary of the STOP from September 2005 to September 2006 is provided in this section.

Funding for the STOP program is derived from an increase in administrative release fees received for vehicles towed under authority of the program. Ordinance number 12649 C.M.S., adopted March 1, 2005, authorized an increase in the release fee for impounded vehicles from \$175 to \$250. The program mandates that fees collected are returned to the Police Department to fund overtime STOP operations. The majority of the funds are used to offset overtime costs associated with the Department's effort to address reckless driving, exhibitions of speed, unlicensed and impaired vehicle operations, such as the *Sideshow*. One aim of the program is to be cost neutral.

Between September 2005 and September 2006, 1,281 cars were towed. The revenue collected during this period is \$414,829. This collection rate is higher than the 50% release rate predicted in the resolution. The Department spent \$351,206.64 conducting overtime operations using funds collected from the increased fee revenue. The Department spent \$295,424.30 from September 2005 to June 2006, and \$55,782.34 from June 2006 through September 2006.

Forty thousand dollars (\$40,000) has been allocated to improve the Police Department's ability to collect and analyze data related to prohibitions against racial bias and racial profiling, by

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contracting with Soft File Data Management for the input and reporting of data collected from the Department's STOP-Data Collection Program.

BACKGROUND

In 1994, the Police Department implemented the STOP program as a means to address reckless and unlicensed/suspended driving in all parts of the City. This overtime-based program was initially funded by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety.

By 2002, STOP enforcement resulted in the towing of 3,163 vehicles. Unlicensed and suspended drivers were operating over 90% of those vehicles. Approximately 50% of the vehicles impounded were returned to their owners after the payment of fees. In 2003, operations were suspended; that same year the City's hit and run accident rate climbed to 40% of all collisions. STOP operations resumed in April 2005, and since that time 2,120 vehicles have been towed.

Dedicated traffic enforcement and attention to traffic issues are frequent requests of Oakland residents. As the Department devotes more of its personnel and fiscal resources to combat violent crime, dedicated traffic enforcement and traffic safety programs have been reduced. STOP operations provide the Department with the resources to strategically address traffic safety complaints.

KEY ISSUES AND IMPACTS

Hit and run accidents currently account for 42% (a 2% increase from the last reporting period) of all collisions Citywide. Reckless driving, hit and run, and individuals who operate motor vehicles when unlicensed or with a suspended/revoked driver's license continue to be a problem in Oakland. Impaired driving is an increasing problem. It is important to the safety of all Oakland residents, vehicle operators and pedestrians, that the Department and the City find ways to fund dedicated traffic enforcement and education projects such as STOP.

Stop Data collection

Department policy and Section VI.B of the Negotiated Settlement Agreement require OPD to collect and maintain data in an effort to "promote cooperative strategies to prevent racial profiling." This data must be entered into a database that can be summarized, searched, queried, and reported by personnel authorized by OPD. The Department lacks both staff and available funds to accomplish this task. Because the STOP program is responsible for the generation of a significant portion of the data, funds are used from this program to support the outsourcing of the work to a vendor (Soft File) that is capable of loading and maintaining the database. This data is also useful for purposes of evaluating the program's impact on specific areas of the community.

Evaluation

The cost of STOP operations is absorbed by the payment of fees required by traffic violators. As a result, the financial responsibility for enforcement costs rests with those responsible for creating the need to continue STOP operations. The program has resulted in the predicted deterrent effect.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic

The STOP program is funded through fees received as a result of vehicle violations identified during STOP operations, and is therefore an asset to City the Oakland.

Environmental

Many of the vehicles driven by unlicensed/suspended drivers do not have current registration, and therefore may not meet current smog regulations which could have a negative impact on the environment and air quality. This program has traditionally eliminated a number of vehicles classified as *significant polluters* from our City streets.

Social Equity

STOP is designed to address reckless, unlicensed and suspended drivers. By impounding vehicles whose drivers are in violation of these offences, hit and run collisions may be reduced, and insurance premiums may be offered at a lower rate to the rest of Oakland's driving constituency.


Disability and Senior Access

There are no ADA or senior citizen access issues identified in this report

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends acceptance of this report and requests that the STOP Program status report be conducted annually.

Respectfully submitted,



Wayne G. Tucker
Chief of Police

APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO
THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE:



Office of the City Administrator

Prepared by:
Lieutenant A. Banks, Sr.
Strategic Area Command
Traffic Operations Section

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