

# CITY OF OAKLAND

## AGENDA REPORT

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OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
OAKLAND

**To:** Office of the City Administrator  
**Attn:** Deborah Edgerly  
**From:** Police Department  
**Date:** April 26, 2005

2005 APR 13 PM 6:23

**Re: Semi-Annual Information Report from the Chief of Police on Sideshow Activities and Police Department Efforts to Reduce Sideshow Related Incidents**

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### SUMMARY

Since November 1997, the Police Department has prepared periodic reports on enforcement efforts to reduce cruising<sup>1</sup> activities in Oakland. This report covers the Department's efforts between May 1, 2004 and February 22, 2005. During the summer months covered in this report, the Police Department conducted twelve moderate sized operations specifically targeting "Sideshow" activity (25-30 officers) and seven major response operations (100-150 officers) to address wide ranging crime, traffic, and crowd control problems associated with major holiday weekends and special events. Citywide cruising abatement activities were under the command and direction of the Special Operation Division's Traffic Section until January 22, 2005, when overall command responsibility for cruising abatement and the "Sideshow" was transferred to the Patrol Division's First Watch.

### FISCAL IMPACT

Sworn and civilian personnel working on an overtime basis have been the Department's primary Sideshow enforcement operation staff, though officers working in their normal shift assignments and on routine patrol, at their regular rate of pay, are frequently tasked to address problems at Sideshow events. The addition of officers working on the problem at a regular rate of pay helps minimize overtime expenditures. The City has also received a tremendous amount of assistance from the California Highway Patrol. The hundreds of officer hours worked by the CHP have contributed to addressing the problem while minimizing direct cost to the City.

A joint grant with the California Highway Patrol provides \$30,000 in overtime funding to support cruising abatement efforts (Resolution No. 78984 C.M.S., December 21, 2004). During the reporting period, approximately \$727,000 in general fund monies were expended to fund overtime for both the moderate and major response operations. Operations tied to City sponsored events such as Carijama and the Cinco de Mayo street festival received some reimbursement of overtime expenditures.

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<sup>1</sup> For purposes of this report, the terms cruising and "Sideshow" are interchangeable and include such problems as vehicle noise, loud car stereos, public drunkenness, reckless driving, the spinning of "donuts," and racing in Oakland.

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The following overtime funds were expended to conduct Sideshow operations and Major Response Operations (MRO) during holiday events during the reporting period:

- \$237,000 – 12 sideshow operations conducted from May 1, 2004 to August 28, 2004.
- \$490,000 - 7 Major Response Operations  
\$727,000

## **BACKGROUND**

Since 1988, late-night cruising activities have been broadly referred to as the “Sideshow.” Over the past few years the number of sideshow participants has significantly decreased in size. However, the reckless driving and exhibitions of speed that typify these events continue on a more random basis. Though these incidents do not have the large crowds of spectators and do not occupy locations for extended periods of time, they continue to generate complaints to the Police Department of “Sideshow activity.” The incidents also result in collisions, often with serious injury.

The demographics of Sideshow participants during this report period remain consistent:

- Both men and women
- Average 25 years in age
- Employed
- 38% of participants are not Oakland residents

At a minimum, problems associated with the Sideshow include noise, litter, and the defacement of city streets and off-street parking areas from black tire skid marks. Neighborhood residents also complain of disorderly conduct, vandalism, public intoxication, and public urination.

Stolen vehicles, firearms, and illegal drugs are routinely recovered during Sideshow activity and vehicle pursuits of serious offenders do occur. A key measure of the success of this program is that the major Sideshow gatherings of the past have become very rare. However, a maintenance plan is required in order to sustain and build upon the success of the program.

A new aspect of the City’s cruising problem that has come to light is the increasing use by participants of “club drugs” such as ecstasy and an increase in serious violent crime such as homicide and sexual assaults. Sideshow participants have told homicide investigators about the ties between the drug use, referred to as “stunners,” and the increase in violent crime. Commercially available videos that glamorize Sideshow events also contribute to the continued allure these activities have for young adults.

The City of Oakland continues to work diligently in addressing problems associated with late-night cruising by focusing in three general categories:

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- Community Involvement
- Local Legislation
- Law Enforcement

The efforts of those involved in finding solutions to these problems have not been made in any one area to the exclusion of the others. Collaboration and compromise continue to play a part in addressing the problems associated with this troublesome activity.

## KEY ISSUES AND IMPACTS

### *Sideshow Operations*

From May 1, 2004 to August 28, 2005, twelve separate traffic enforcement operations were conducted. The mission was to strictly enforce vehicle code regulations in targeted areas where Sideshow activity usually occurs. During these operations, it was revealed that 67% of the drivers contacted were unlicensed, 38% of all drivers were not from Oakland and the average age of individuals stopped was 24.8 years of age. The operations were very effective in mitigating Sideshow activity and yielded the following enforcement results:

Enforcement Actions	Totals
Citations	1,157
Tows	388
Arrests	124
DUI	19
Firearms Recovered	10
Stolen Vehicles Recovered	12

These sideshow teams typically consisted of the following personnel, at a cost of approximately \$19,800 in overtime expenditures per operation:

- 1 Lieutenant of Police
- 3 Sergeants of Police
- 30 Police Officers
- 6 Police Service Technicians

At this time, the Oakland Police Department has no plans to conduct this type of operation during the summer months of 2005. In its place, a Patrol Division Unit will be assigned on a full-time basis to specifically address Sideshow activities. Details on this Patrol Unit are discussed in the "Late Tac Operations" section of this report.

### **Major Response Operations**

In addition to Sideshow Operations, seven (7) Major Response Operations were conducted during this reporting period for the following holiday events:

- Cinco de Mayo weekend (one day)
- Memorial Day Weekend (two days)
- 4<sup>th</sup> of July (one day)
- Labor Day (two days)
- New Year's Eve (one day)

The major holidays identified above have traditionally required a major response from the Bureau of Field Operations (BFO) and the formation of Mobile Field Forces (MFF) in order to ensure the safety and security of holiday revelers during and after scheduled festivities. Holiday deployments consist of the following personnel, at a cost of approximately \$70,000 in overtime expenditures per operation:

- 1 Captain of Police
- 2 Lieutenants of Police
- 10 Sergeants of Police
- 150 Police Officers
- 10 Police Service Technicians

Strict vehicle code violation enforcement and officer saturation was extremely effective in maintaining safety and security at these holiday events. Over the Labor Day weekend officers wrote approximately 1,400 citations and towed 312 vehicles. This enforcement activity had a direct impact in significantly reducing the Sideshow activity that usually accompanies these holidays. The Oakland Police Department plans to conduct the same type of holiday operations for these special events in 2005.

### **Late Tac Operations**

The Bureau of Field Operations has adopted a new strategy to help resolve the Sideshow problem. A new unit within the Patrol Division has been created to address Sideshow activity on a full time basis. This Unit is comprised of sixteen officers and two Sergeants of Police. The Unit has been tasked with conducting strict vehicle code enforcement within target locations where Sideshow activity occurs. The Unit has been designated as the "Late Tac" squad, since their duties encompass tactical vehicle enforcement operations during the early morning hours. These officers work 12 hour shifts, from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. To make up for the remaining four hours per week, the Late Tac personnel shall work an 8 hour shift every other Thursday from 6:00 p.m. to 2:00 o'clock in the morning.

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The Late Tac Unit began operations on January 22, 2005 and works out of the Eastmont Substation. Since its inception, Unit personnel have worked a total of eight days of Sideshow activity and have yielded the following results:

<b>Enforcement Actions</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Citations	431
Tows	167
Arrests	72
DUI Arrests	3
Firearms Recovered	1

In addition to the Late Tac Unit, the Patrol Division often incorporates Third Platoon (2:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.) officers willing to work an extension of shift. These teams usually consist of two sergeants and 8 - 14 officers. This team usually starts at 11:00 p.m. and conducts vehicle enforcement and crowd control at downtown entertainment establishments. Once the downtown area clubs have closed, the officers move to target locations in East Oakland to assist the Late Tac Officers. These extension-of-shift teams are usually released from their assignments between 3:00 and 4:00 a.m.. The teams operate on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights at an overtime cost of approximately \$1,500 to \$2,500 per night, depending on the number of officers who sign up.

### **Joint Agency Operations**

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) and the Oakland Police Department have agreed to conduct several joint agency operations. There are 14 separate operation dates when the CHP will assign 16 officers to work on sideshow activity from 7:00 p.m. to 3:30 a.m.. The CHP officers will augment the Late Tac Unit by conducting strict vehicle code enforcement in Sideshow target locations. These joint operations will begin on February 19, 2005 and end on June 25, 2005.

OPD is currently negotiating to obtain additional assistance from the Alameda County Sheriff's Office (ACSO). The ACSO has tentatively offered the use of their mobile booking station, four (4) deputies, working side-by-side with Oakland Officers, and nine (9) DUI enforcement officers.

### **Media Attention**

The media has been drawn to negative Sideshow events. Most notable are those events involving violence and severe injury. The following events occurred during this reporting period and garnered significant media attention:

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- July 10, 2004 - Seven people were injured when a stolen Jaguar crashed into another vehicle in the 5700 block of International Boulevard. The vehicle was seen earlier by officers racing around in the Sideshow area.
- October 9, 2004 - Three people were injured when a vehicle racing with another vehicle crashed into a wall in the 8300 block of International Boulevard. The vehicle caught fire and responding officers rescued the occupants.
- October 31, 2004 - Mr. Charles Lee Cerda was shot and killed in the intersection of Seminary Avenue and Foothill Boulevard.
- December 4, 2004 - Terrance Hegler and Kali Davis were shot and killed in the 4200 block of Foothill Boulevard.
- January 23, 2005 - Mr. Jamar Strong was shot and killed in the 2200 block of 104<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- February 5, 2005 - Eric Baeza was shot and killed in the intersection of Havenscourt Avenue and Foothill Boulevard.

## **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Economic**

Occurrences of Sideshow activity in the area of MacArthur and Foothill Boulevards negatively impact traffic in and out of the East Oakland Area. It also has a negative impact on area businesses, some of which have been victimized by looting or find it necessary to close early because of the cruising activity. Efforts to reduce the Sideshow and its associated criminal activities will strengthen other City efforts to revitalize Oakland and improve local area economic opportunities.

The safe enjoyment of Oakland's holiday and festival activities bring additional dollars to the local economy.

### **Environmental**

A reduction in cruising activity would reduce the number of cars on City streets, thereby reducing exhaust emissions and the consumption of gasoline. Reduced cruising would have a positive impact on the amount of litter on Oakland's streets, which accumulates when trash is thrown from vehicles and by observing pedestrians.

### **Social Equity**

The City's efforts to reduce the crime, grime, and the noise associated with the Sideshow are done with the ultimate desire to return order to the streets in the affected areas, which will bring an immediate improvement to the neighborhood's quality of life.

Festivities in celebration of cultural events and holidays should be safe and sane for all.

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**DISABILITY AND SENIOR CITIZEN ACCESS**

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

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Police Department recommends acceptance of this report.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Wayne G. Tucker  
Chief of Police

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Bureau of Field Operations  
Patrol Division, First Platoon

APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO  
THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE:

  
Office of the City Administrator