



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: Report on the City's COVID-19 Public Safety Engagement Efforts (City Manager Moe).
DISCUSS AND PROVIDE DIRECTION
Sponsors:
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Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
4/20/2021	1	City Council Regular Meeting		

TO:
Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THROUGH:
Bruce Moe, City Manager

FROM:
George Gabriel, Senior Management Analyst

SUBJECT:
Report on the City's COVID-19 Public Safety Engagement Efforts (City Manager Moe).
DISCUSS AND PROVIDE DIRECTION

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council discuss and provide direction regarding the City's COVID-19 public safety engagement efforts.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

Depending on City Council direction, fiscal implications may vary. Since COVID-19 public safety engagement efforts began, the City has expended approximately \$433,000 toward contractors utilized for the ambassador program (\$330,000) and the face covering enforcement program (\$103,000). The City continues to finalize invoices related to these programs and the total may not include expenses from the last two months.

Consistent with City Council direction, staff's face covering enforcement program priorities have changed and expenses are no longer being incurred. Should the City Council provide direction regarding the ambassador program, there may be fiscal implications associated with the direction. As noted in the report, City expects to be reimbursed by the federal government for most, if not all costs.

BACKGROUND:

At the April 6, 2021, meeting, City Council received a report on the City's COVID-19 response. As part of the report, Council inquired about the City's COVID-19 safety initiatives, specifically the face covering enforcement program and whether it should continue in the future. Following discussion, the City Council directed staff to redirect enforcement efforts toward continuing to advise the public on the importance of face coverings, and offering face coverings in dense public areas.

As part of the discussion, the City Manager informed the City Council that a comprehensive discussion should be held for the City Council with additional information related to all of the City's COVID-19 safety initiatives. Staff has prepared the report below to summarize the City's efforts.

DISCUSSION:

The City's response to the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020 through a variety of City Council actions and Emergency Orders issued by the City Manager. In the following months, many regulations were introduced by the State, County and City to reduce the spread of COVID-19. These regulations included but were not limited to: closures of public areas, face covering requirements, and social distancing guidelines.

In the midst of these new regulations, the City prioritized enforcement officers in the Police Department and Code Enforcement division toward emergency response and construction activity, respectively. Additionally, City leadership sought to protect employee exposure to COVID-19 by limiting potential interactions where possible, without compromising the public health concerns of the community.

To accomplish these goals, the City has utilized two different programs to limit the spread of COVID-19 in areas of the City with higher density and potential crowding opportunities. These areas included but were not limited to: Downtown Manhattan Beach, North End (i.e. El Porto), Pier, Parks, Greenbelt, Strand, parking lots, and the beach.

Ambassadors Program

In spring of 2020, the City deployed contract private security officers from the contractor, "Contemporary Services Corporation" (CSC). This program is called the "Ambassadors Program."

The City has a longstanding relationship with CSC as they have assisted the City with security for annual special events such as the Hometown Fair, Six Man Volleyball Tournament and more. CSC deployment was managed at the discretion of the Manhattan Beach Police Department and the number of people deployed depended largely on weather conditions. Generally, staffing ranged from 2-8 individuals (\$26-29 hourly rate). CSC was tasked with a variety of responsibilities that included: crowd control, face covering handouts, parking management, patrol assistance, and business and visitor assistance.

The City's Police Department continues to utilize CSC for the Ambassadors Program. Since May 2020, the City has expended approximately \$2,000 - \$12,000 per week for CSC's services, depending on the City's deployment directives. While the program comes at a significant cost, the City has received generally positive reviews from the community for the focus on protecting public health through face covering education and enforcement program.

During a period where the City saw heightened concerns regarding COVID-19 transmission, public protests, civil unrest, the bioluminescence phenomenon, shifting vehicular/pedestrian

traffic patterns, property crimes, and bicycle/vehicle safety, the Ambassador Program offered greater staffing resources to assist the Police Department's response and reassure the community. Additionally, the ambassador program provided businesses with a quick resource to report crimes, or in some instances, offer business employees assistance to their vehicles late at night.

Face Covering Enforcement Team

On March 16, 2020, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health issued the Safer at Home Order for Control of COVID-19, which was subsequently amended and revised to require all persons to wear a cloth face covering over both the nose and mouth whenever they leave their place of residence and are, or may be in contact with or walking near or past others who are non-household members, in both public and private places, whether indoors or outdoors.

Despite the face covering requirement, many persons were failing to wear a face covering, which increased the risk of COVID-19 transmission to others in the community. On July 15, 2020, the City Manager issued Emergency Order No. 13 (subsequently amended) reiterating the face covering requirement and authorizing the deputation of additional persons to enforce the requirement. Additionally, the Emergency Order expanded upon the State and County orders by requiring everyone who is in public to wear a face covering at all times.

The Order also authorized the City to issue an administrative citation for each violation and assess a fine of \$100 for the first violation, \$200 for the second violation, and \$350 for each subsequent violation.

On July 17, 2020, the City executed a contract with Wildan Engineering to provide staffing (\$65 hourly rate) with the necessary citation authority needed to enforce face covering requirements.

Face covering enforcement deployment was managed at the discretion of the Manhattan Beach Police Department, and the number of people deployed depended largely on weather conditions and public areas in the City experiencing crowding opportunities. Additionally, targeted enforcement occurred based on reports of areas with less compliance. Generally, staffing ranged from 2-4 individuals a week.

From July 2020 - April 2021, the face covering enforcement team issued 1,629 citations, warned 12,778 individuals not wearing their face covering properly and had 17,007 interactions with the community to inform various individuals of the City's face covering requirement. The face covering enforcement program also consistently noted 90-95% compliance with the City's face covering requirement. Positive feedback was received throughout the program's implementation as it offered a deterrent to those intentionally not complying with the face covering requirement.

In the time period the City deployed the face covering enforcement team, the City expended, on average, about \$15,000 a month for enforcement purposes. While this program also came at a significant cost, the City expects to be reimbursed by the federal government for most, if not all costs.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends that the City Council discuss and provide direction regarding the City's COVID-19 public safety engagement efforts.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney has reviewed this report and determined that no additional legal analysis is necessary.