

Los Angeles Police Department
C-PAB West Los Angeles Community Police Advisory Board
A Partnership Between the Community and the LAPD

West Los Angeles Community Police Advisory Board (C-PAB)
West Los Angeles Community Police Station
1663 Butler Avenue Los Angeles, CA 90025

Rough Draft Minutes

West LAPD Community Update

Zoom Video Meeting Wednesday, June 15, 2022 at 5:00pm

1. Co-Chair Robert A. Ringler called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM and asked for approval of the minutes.
2. Motion to approve May 24th Draft Minutes passed as moved by Schlesinger and Levinson.
3. Guest Speaker: Sergeant Dwayne Wilson from West Traffic Division (WTD) Street Racing Task Force, Introduced by Sergeant Scott Alpert

Sgt. Alpert 36921@lapd.online gave a brief crime report, noting that violent Crime is up 15.1% due to robberies and aggravated assaults, e.g., domestic violence and unhoused; a pattern across all of West Bureau, and as to property crime, that has been consistently rising across all of LA. There is a correlation to the unhoused as well. **crime** is only up 5%, not a major rise.

Sgt. Alpert noted that due to the rise in street takeovers and street racing, we have Sgt. Dwayne Wilson this evening.

Sgt. Wilson noted that West Traffic Division covers WLA, Pacific Area, Hollywood, Wilshire and Olympic for West Bureau; however, the Street Racing Task Force Unit may have to assist other agencies countywide involving street racing and takeovers, etc., in a Joint Task Force throughout the County with different agencies. Specifically, West Traffic includes himself, Sgt., four Motor Officers, Three Officers and B&W. They work Sun to Wed 3:30 pm to 1:00 or 3:00 a.m. If specific needs Thursday, Friday and Saturday, they'll come to those. They target known locations where they normally occur, monitor their social media accounts and try to get to those locations before they come to set them up. They aim to get the causes of these events, try to cite them, impound vehicles, and arrest if guns or speeding, reckless driving and blocking the roadway.

Sgt. Wilson opened the floor to general or specific questions.

Captain Tom asked of the residents videotape the street takeovers and send those to West Traffic, can the videotape be used for any purpose by Law Enforcement, to which Sgt. Wilson responded that it is a useful tool used to identify the vehicles and main players, and when they identify those, they try to do a judicious seizure, which often the judge will sign off on for 30 days, and in order to get their car back they have to speak to the judge. So those videos are very instrumental, especially if you can get a license plate.

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Amy Jo Smith asked if someone hears this happening, what to do at that moment, to which the Sergeant recommended calling "Communication" **877-275-5273** because if you email and they're in the field, they won't get those emails; so, call 911 only if an emergency and if not an emergency, call **877-asklapd**.

Captain Tom noted that either way, the dispatcher will put their own priority or non-priority on it. Generally speaking, they want to keep 911 limited to real emergencies. Captain Tom noted that these are happening all over.

Sgt. Wilson noted if you see or hear them at a given time, give them a call because they'll leapfrog up from one location to the next, and may be able to meet them at the next location.

Maureen Levinson asked if it would be helpful to provide a list of frequently used intersections and if we should put up a camera. Sgt. Wilson reiterated that video is always helpful for bringing people to the judges and for prosecution. But he doesn't want you to put up a camera if they only use that location one time. They do have a list of streets that are normally used but most of the time they hear cars driving fast down a location. If you call that in, **by the time _____**. **She noted that they have rocket-_____**. _____ noted that the State referee goes through the entire car, check the engine, exhaust and tires for any violations. Those vehicles can't be on the street until those violations are corrected.

Karen asked if they have had success, to which he noted yes, they have, but can't say if it is growing because it is a large problem. He has been on this detail for a year and doesn't see growth in it but the problem is not just Central to LA or CA, but nationwide. They communicate with other departments around the country to find solutions.

Karen noted that in the Pacific Palisades they hear motorcycles in clusters on Sunset on Wednesday nights starting around 10:00pm and asked what can be or has been done about that. Robert Ringler noted that CPAB has been aware of this and task forces have been involved in this; it is not street racing per sé but it may be that they can revisit this, which has been visited before. Asked about buying cameras to catch these in areas such as Sylmar View Park in the Palisades' bluffs, Sgt. Alpert recommended contacting the neighbors; send him an email and he'll connect her with community members. Captain Tom noted that Moraga has a flock camera and Amy Jo will provide number in chat.

Sgt. Wilson came back on and was asked again about the racing motorcycles on Sunset on Wednesdays, to which he noted that they are aware of it, and try to go to Sunset on Wednesdays, but if there is no other violation, there is nothing more that they can do. They are there and try to monitor their activities, but if they are not violating other laws, nothing much can be done about that; however, they do monitor that routinely.

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Nickie Miner thinks impounding the cars of these individuals is a good idea, noting that this has been worse during the pandemic and wondered if there have been arrests, mentioning two girls leaning out their windows who got killed. She asked what other discouragement is used besides impounding cars, to which Sgt. Wilson agreed that this activity has gone up during the pandemic due to fewer cars on the roads; the arrests are hard to make because some of the participants around the area will block them off and prevent them from getting the donuts and reckless drivers per sé. That's why the video cameras are instrumental.

Jonroot asked about the new traffic stop policy, which gets to the noise issue. He is at National and Tilden, with folks racing up the streets, though not as much now, but there are takeovers at Sawtelle. He asked what the nexus would be, not just the noise, as it is a quality of life issue. He also wondered if this policy would extend to addressing obnoxious neighbors who are loud late at night.

Captain Tom noted that the policy is specific to traffic stops; the Police Commissioner changed the policy as to when they can stop vehicles. If they are going to conduct any type of traffic enforcement, they have to have a nexus to public safety. Previously, probable cause was violations of municipal code; currently the officer is supposed to narrate, on the body-worn camera, that he is doing what he is doing because it is a danger to the public. This is a new standard they have to abide by. They can use a municipal code that is a pretext stop, if we are led to believe a crime may be occurring and we can use that pretext of say the expired registration to stop the vehicle to further the investigation. We can no longer stop cars just because; it has to be specifically articulated that there is a public nexus next to a traffic stop. *(This does not apply to loud neighbors.)* The Captain noted that LAPD policies can be discussed at Commission meetings.

Maureen Levinson asked how effective the LAPD Air Support is in capturing these perpetrators, to which Sgt. Wilson noted that we don't use air support as a tool specifically for takeovers unless it is a crowd, that is more than just a traffic concern. They do use them if they do a specific task force and the air unit will identify the car. As they are driving away from a location, the air unit will give them the ID of the car, even a mile away. In those instances, air support is useful. Robert opined that the Commission is wrestling with the issue of resources.

Pamela Brown asked when they stopped enforcing tinted windows, noting that she sees more of these now than ever. Sgt. Wilson related that we can stop cars with tinted windows if it is a public safety hazard, yes, but if that articulation isn't there, enforcement probably won't. Captain Tom noted that they can stop vehicles with tinted windows, but they would have to articulate in what way the windows were a safety hazard. He noted that there have been a lot of changes and that traffic stops are down across the city.

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Judie Hulett asked if LAPD is still interfacing with the Citizen app, and how valid their posts are. Captain Tom reiterated what he had said in the past that they have people who are monitoring the publically-available airways, where they generate incidents, but we do not have any way knowing what the outcome of that was; other committee members will chime in but there is no mechanism for the LAPD to monitor that stuff and respond. He advised us that when we get a report of something and want to know what happened, email him or your SLO; generally speaking, email your SLO. If they don't get back to you, Sgt. Alpert or he will get back to you. They are finding that often what was described didn't actually occur!

David Corio, Regional Vice President with ACS Security, noted that they offer various solutions with camera applications. He encouraged cameras and offers cameras and assistance on setting up a flock. Those interested should contact him (info is in the chat).

Jane noted that there are two flock cameras in Westwood Hills and people are happy with them; the problem is on the other side where they didn't have a flock. She wanted to note as regards noise, she upgraded her alarm system and found out that she no longer has an alarm outside.

Captain Tom thanked Sgt. Wilson for coming by this evening, Robert and Nickie shared their appreciation on behalf of us all.

Jane noted that there is no specific ordinance that says a citizen cannot have a siren outside her home. She feels she cannot tell people that they cannot have one due to it being a safety issue. Captain Tom noted that WLA has nothing to do with that and is not aware of any ordinance about that, recalling that most everyone had an audible alarm from the outside, but recommends the Commission Investigation 213-996-1210, the regulatory arm of the Police Commission, which issues alarm permits. Jane recalled that we have to pay every year for an alarm. Captain Tom noted that the alarm is connected to the alarm company **who contacts 911 who generates a ...** David Corio confirmed this and noted that the length of time it rings is the problem; though you can set it for a different time, e.g., four minutes; it resets itself to not disturb the neighborhood.

An iPhone caller noted there have been instances where people have gotten killed after smash and grab and asked if these continue to happen. She is with Bel Air Association (BAA) and asked what the situation is. Captain Tom noted, as to burglaries, they have 491 burglaries this year, and last year had 488 last year, which is a negligible increase; and quite a few less than other divisions. He noted that we have heard these scary stories, and what can you do? He noted that there is a lot of general burglary prevention techniques, e.g., lights, motion lights, and security cameras; good quality ones, so that especially at night you can see faces and license plates, as well as cutting back shrubbery around the house. Leave lights on in all parts of your house. He cited a case where one

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part of the house was dark which was hit. He noted that suspects normally run away when they've been discovered. Perhaps leave a radio on; turn on lights remotely if you have the app, which costs around \$20.00.

He puts wooden poles in the tracks of the windows and sliding doors of the house. He purchased a \$30 door jamb thing, a rod under the handle of the front door. On the bottom it has a weight, to help prevent people from kicking the door.

Call 911 if you see something and they have not come into your house yet, haven't hopped the fence; once they have hopped a fence, they are manifesting criminal intent.

Make sure everything is secured, do not leave gates opened or unlocked. Report the crime if a crime is being committed. We get more officers if more are reported.

Captain Tom continued that if it takes 45 minutes to get through to the nonemergency line (the City takes a million calls for service every year, and sometimes operators are shifted over from nonemergency to emergency calls) it is important to make that call. Call the nonemergency line, put it on a speaker and wait. If you don't report it, if there is no incident number; almost like it didn't happen.

Robert noted that this meeting is scheduled to end now. Captain Tom noted that if anyone needs to jump off the call, he'll understand.

4. Captain Jonathan Tom WLA Area Division and available SLO's will be updating us on current events in WLA.

SLO Ricardo (Rick) Ballesteros 33652@lapd.online Basic Car Area 35, had a tip regarding residential burglaries, noticing that a lot of the property removed from these homes is jewelry and cash, and that it may be of benefit to have a small safe in the ground or in the closet for important things that you cherish, as well as passports, etc. As to commercial burglaries on Westwood, Pico, Little Santa Monica, a good practice for closing the business for the day is to empty the cash drawer, leave the drawer open and remove the cash drawer from inside, prop it on top, so it faces the front window so if anyone is looking in they'll go elsewhere.

SLO James (Jim) Lavenson 30627@lapd.online A53 noted with summer coming, talk to your neighbors, let them know you're leaving town; have them keep an eye on your property; don't let papers accumulate. Make it look like your property is lived in. Do not announce to the world that you are going to France on FB and Instagram, etc. Vacation time is upon us and thinks this may be a great time to start a Neighborhood Watch.

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Captain Tom recommended using the US Postal Service “hold mail” function when you leave town. Schedule a week in advance of leaving town and they’ll deliver it later! Judie recommended telling your carrier personally if you want that to work. An officer suggested Amazon drop boxes for packages.

SLO Pete Ojeda, 36393@lapd.online A59, piggybacked on burglaries and prevention as discussed above. He recommended to be on the lookout, be cognizant in your neighborhoods, if you see someone driving slowly, doing recon targeting locations, if you see a suspicious car or people walking around, get a picture of them, the license plate, the car, etc. Email the info to your SLO. They’ll forward it to the detectives involved.

Officer Ojeda mentioned that the 4th of July is coming up and to be very cognizant as fires could happen everywhere. Also, if you have weapons in your house, make sure they are safely stored with trigger locks, especially if you have children or others who do not know how to use them. Weapons are taken and are often sold and then used in crimes.

SLO Chris Baker 39796@lapd.online Car A95 noted that there was a home invasion robbery on Patricia on Monday. He noted that one tip from that is to make sure your home video system is in working order. 2) This is vacation time; if you’ll be picked up from Uber or other driving services, have them pick you up at another location, e.g., the corner, the mall, and send emails to SLOs if you are going out of town and they’ll keep an eye out.

Veronica De La Cruz was present to listen and answer questions if any.

Captain Tom noted that he is always available; he’ll refer you to the SLO. He concluded that he is proud of his son, a First-Class Boy Scout, (now BSA) who is in a coed troop and praised the experience for boys and girls. The Scouts let the kids and grandkids get out, join nature and learn to be respectful.

Karen Ridgely raised three Eagle Scouts. Tell everybody who is a young person how meaningful it is on their resume when they are applying for jobs. Robert Ringler noted team sports is another way to build character.

Robert noted that we had more people than ever on this call. Captain Tom shared his appreciation of us, and expressed a positive and poetic view of life, that the sun will eventually poke through any dark clouds. Sgt. Alpert also thanked everyone for being here.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.