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Economy & Efficiency Commission Presentation

Editorial Note: Although every effort has been made to insure the accuracy of the material in this presentation, the scope of the material covered and the discussions undertaken lends itself to the possibility of minor transcription misinterpretations.

**PRESENTATIONS BY
Chief Jim McDonnell
Chief Assistant, Chief of Staff
Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD)**

***Topic: LAPD Management and Operations
November 2, 2006***

Chair Hill welcomed Chief Jim McDonnell to the Commission.

Law Enforcement Comparisons

Chief McDonnell opened by thanking the Commission for giving him the opportunity to speak to a body that can streamline procedures for the County in the long term. He began by noting that the population of the city of Los Angeles is approximately 4,000,000, within the 4,000 square mile area of the County. To police this area the LAPD has half the ratio of officers to population as compared to other major US cities. For example, the number of officers in New York City compared to those in the City of Los Angeles is, 40,000 (NYC) to 9,000 (LA). New York City encompasses 280 squares miles, whereas the City of Los Angeles has 475 square miles.

Challenges within the City of Los Angeles

There are over 100 languages/dialects spoken in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). This diversity presents challenges to the department as they reach out to the community. Chief McDonnell said that since Los Angeles is a social incubator for the rest of the country, the problems facing Los Angeles today would migrate to other major cities within a 2-10 year time frame. Chief McDonnell feels that social impacts are compounded by the currently documented 39,000 gang members and roughly 416 gangs within the City. During his tenure, there have been 15,000 deaths because of gang violence, with the vast majority of the deaths being young people.

On the terrorism front, Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) is a high priority target, along with other critical infrastructure targets that are within the county and the region. A thwarted attempt in 2000 by a customs agent on the Canadian border gives credence to this assertion. Chief McDonnell contended that nuisance crimes such as bootlegging and selling counterfeit goods contribute funds to overseas terrorism.

Other issues that Chief McDonnell raised included the history of the relationship of LAPD with the community. With 9,000 police officers in Los Angeles, the department cannot handle all of the problems

arising from social issue and their fallout. The reality is that a solution will require the cooperation of governmental agencies, the business community and the residents of Los Angeles. The events of 9/11 highlighted the need for departments to deal more effectively with all law enforcement branches. Over the past 4 years, the LAPD has developed law enforcement relationships that have now become the model for policing in America. With the strain on law enforcement in dealing with terrorism, Chief McDonnell emphasized the need to work effectively with others.

Chief McDonnell raised the question of how to deal with suicide bombers in the future. The question impacts Use of Force policy relative to what you have to see in order to engage, what are you willing to engage a person for, and how close can you get to an individual. In Israel, the police operate similar to the military with very few questions asked. The United States is not ready to go these levels, thus the first officers who come across this situation will likely lack the proper training - both in what to look for and how these people are going to deploy.

Prison Demographics

As a result of the work done and the strategies employed, there are 176,000 people in jail or prison in California - more than any other state. Los Angeles alone has 20,000 people in County jail with about 85% of these individuals having drug abuse problems and 30% with mental health problems. The average age for males in state prison is 36 and 37 for females. This trend toward an older population is due to the three strikes law. Recidivism rates for crime after release are currently 70%-80%, largely because these people return to their environment. Rehabilitation efforts require improvement to ensure that these people integrate into society in a different manner.

Corporate Impacts

Chief McDonnell stated that the entertainment industry has glamorized and glorified violence without taking responsibility for the results and the burdens, which generally falls on the lower income neighborhoods. Corporate ownership by the way of adopting a neighborhood with a mentoring approach would facilitate the necessary change. This scale of intervention can help alleviate some of the current problems. The department has observed generation after generation that fall into the same traps of not being able to attend school or the need to join a gang for safe passage to school.

LAPD Challenges

Recruiting for the LAPD is problematic because there is no plan to deal with the attrition and the phase in of new people. The introduction of new recruits for the academy is not necessarily consistent with the needs of the department. This creates predictable results when unqualified recruits take the entry exam and come into the program, who under normal circumstances would not pass the minimum requirements. Currently it takes 14 candidates who take the test to place 1 in the academy. Chief McDonnell commented that the perception of police work has changed over time; it is no longer viewed as an honorable profession.

We as a society condone the level of violence in our cities because the bulk of it takes place in our poorest neighborhoods. The attitude of those who can affect the problem, the influential, the rich and the decision makers, is that as long as the violence is contained to a certain part of the city it is acceptable. This philosophy is prevalent not only in Los Angeles but in every major city in America. Chief McDonnell feels this problem will not stay contained in those communities and should not be tolerated or condoned in any neighborhood.

Chief McDonnell said that accountability has to come to the forefront of this issue. It is necessary for parents, schools, industry and the average citizen to define what acceptable behavior is. Another key step is the willingness to look at how the department operates and to figure out new solutions to endemic problems combined with sharing of vital information between agencies to enhance the LAPD's ability to police communities.

Currently the LAPD has a Smart Car initiative to place cameras with facial recognition capabilities and with

license plate readers in the vehicles. During an 8-hour shift, the officers can automatically run 3000 cars through the computer for warrants and other programmable features. It will access the Stolen Vehicles System and Amber Alerts. Chief McDonnell said, at optimum capacity an officer can generate 80-100 checks during a watch. Chief McDonnell stated that the goal for technology within the department allows for improved partnerships, improved service, and to help facilitate overall crime reduction and terrorism interdiction capabilities. The community can directly affect many of these issues as the critical link for success.

Crime Statistics

Statistics from the department over a ten-year comparative period show the closeout numbers for homicide in 1996 as 707 to 2005 as 488, a 31% decrease that translates into 219 people being saved. Rapes are down 35%, which translates into 509 fewer rapes a year just in the city of Los Angeles. Aggravated assaults, which include shootings, are down 56%; this means 20,000 fewer victims of this crime. Robberies are down 46%, or 12,000 fewer victims. Burglaries are down almost 40% or 14,000 fewer victims. Larceny (theft) is down 32.7% or 31,000 fewer crimes per year, Vehicle theft, which is critical in Los Angeles, is down 37.2%, which translates into 17,000 fewer auto thefts per year.

A cumulative total over a ten-year period yields an overall reduction in crime by 39.5%, which are annually approximately 94,000 fewer victims of crime in Los Angeles. As an example of the costs involved, the estimated economic cost per murder is \$1,000,000 including medical care, investigation, the response from police and any other organizations. The opportunity cost is also pertinent as it lends to what that individual would have contributed for the remainder of his/her life. The annual cost is approximately \$219,000,000 for homicides alone. The impact on tourism, business development, new housing and so on is staggering. Even so, the last time this city was as safe as it is, adjusted for population differences comparing crimes per thousand people, was in 1956.

Questions and Comments

Commissioner Parks asked if the department has any information on why the terrorist chose the 9/11 date as a time for their attack. Chief McDonnell said that there has been research into this issue that has produced a number of theories. The bottom line is that the plan happened to fall into place on that day.

Commissioner Cole asked how soon a car is able to retrieve information on scanned vehicles. Chief McDonnell replied in a matter of seconds depending on speed. The volume of cars on the road plays a factor in that the Smart Car runs a plate, but the officer may not necessarily know what direction the vehicle is heading. Chief McDonnell said the Smart Car is an indicator for an officer that will provide the make, model, color and the year of the car. The challenge comes in the form of the analysis of the massive amounts of data and volume intelligence that is gathered. A question posed by experts is in a major event scenario, what is the culpability with all this information was available, but without the capability for analysis. A need for greater analytical tools goes hand in hand with emerging technology.

Commissioner Parks commented on the 12-hour 3 day staffing implementation for the LAPD. Chief McDonnell said the 3/12 (3 day workweek with 12 hour days), which management was adamantly opposed to, is problematic. There are periods throughout the day that are very busy and this program changes the business model for LAPD. Chief McDonnell said they want "to put the cops on the dots"; in other words put the cops where the crimes are during the days of the week and times of day that these crimes occur. This permits maximum impact for the limited resources currently available. The longer shifts inhibit personnel deployment during heavy crime periods. The LAPD has found they were losing officers to other agencies who paid more money and had more time off. A recent three-year contract exists with the union concerning the 3/12 and it is not within the best interest for the City to reopen the contract. The department is currently on track to lose 300 of their senior people in May of 2007 due to the lack of a long-term plan.

Chair Emeritus Philibosian asked if the new Superintendent of Schools made his rounds to the LAPD. Chief McDonnell said that he had not. If the Superintendent does not come to them, the LAPD will approach him to discuss the current relationship with the school. Chair Emeritus Philibosian asked if they are going to take

it further than police department to police department, considering the existing interaction between the students, parents and the schools. Chief McDonnell said the department would like to be more involved than they are but face limitations in the number of available officers.

Chief McDonnell commented that the Explorer programs and Magnet school programs make a considerable difference on the overall performance of the students. The LAUSD graduation rate is around 50%, whereas the kids who get into the Magnet school programs, specifically the Law Enforcement Magnet programs, that is in five schools around the city; the graduation rate is about 95%. At some self-selection, you get kids with a vision and focus of where they want to be and have the structure and discipline to affect change.

Chair Emeritus Philibosian suggested the Superintendent would benefit from spending time with LAPD in a tutorial program including ride-a-longs since he is unfamiliar with Los Angeles. Chief McDonnell said they would be happy to work with him.

Commissioner Balderrama asked what the starting salary is for a patrol officer. Chief McDonnell replied a little over \$50,000; with a college education, there is a better compensation package. Commissioner Balderrama asked what the LAPD is doing for Asian recruitment. Chief McDonnell said the LAPD has reached out through commercials and recruitment fairs to the Asian community. Commissioner Balderrama asked about the toughest minority group for recruiting. Chief McDonnell replied that African American females tend to be the hardest to recruit.

Commissioner Barcelona asked for more information on the Elite and Role Model Metro Division. Chief McDonnell stated the metropolitan division contains three crime suppression platoons, the mounted unit, the K-9 unit and S.W.A.T. A unique ability of this department is the deployment of these specialized units that may take place citywide in an overnight timeframe. Chief McDonnell added that most of the LAPD officer assignments are to a particular area and that is not the case for the Metro division that's moved around on a day-to-day basis. With the limited resources of the department, the ability to deploy specialized units is critical.

Chair Hill thanked Chief McDonnell for his informative and though provoking presentation.

[Return to Top of Presentation](#)

[Return to Agenda](#)



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