

REPORT FROM

## OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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Date: May 8, 2008  
To: The City Council  
From: Karen L. Sisson, City Administrative Officer *KLS*  
Reference: Police Commission Transmittal dated August 2, 2007  
Subject: **POLICE DEPARTMENT PROPOSAL FOR PURCHASE AND DISTRIBUTION OF TASERS FOR FIELD USE**

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### SUMMARY

The 2007-08 Adopted Budget allocated \$1,272,500 in the Unappropriated Balance for purchase of tasers for the Police Department. The Department was requested to report back on their deployment plan for the tasers prior to receiving authority to purchase.

The Police Department submitted to the Council a report summarizing their deployment plan for the 1,250 TASERS funded in the 2007-08 Adopted Budget earlier this fiscal year. In short, the Commanding Officer of each Geographic Area will be tasked with the determining which officers will receive the new units once they are available for deployment.

Subsequent to the Department's report, this Office transmitted a number of follow-up questions to the Department concerning contractual issues, training, costs and maintenance, and deployment and usage policies. The Department responded to the questions, and it is now recommended that the Department be authorized to purchase the TASERS.

### BACKGROUND

In August, 2006, the Board of Police Commissioners submitted an interim budget request for \$6.97 million to purchase 6,780 X-26 TASERS for the Department. Due to the cost, and questions regarding deployment, no action was taken. The issue arose again during deliberations on the 2007-08 Adopted Budget. At that time, the Council allocated \$1.27 million in the Forfeited Assets Trust Fund for purchase of 1,250 X-26 TASERS. The Department was also requested to provide the report referenced above.

The Police Department currently deploys approximately 750 M-26 TASERS for field and jail use. Because of the limited supply, the TASERS deployed in the field are kept in the kit rooms at the Area

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stations until an immediate need for the unit has been identified. Though this makes use of the M-26 somewhat inconvenient, there have still been more than 600 TASER incidents over the past three years.

The newer X-26 TASER is 60 percent smaller than the M-26, uses a lithium energy cell rather than the eight AA batteries used by the M-26, and includes a low illumination light to facilitate use in low light. Due to the smaller size and weight, the X-26 can be worn on the standard issue belt as regular uniform equipment. This is anticipated to increase the usage of the TASER as a less-lethal weapon, rather than the firearm.

The Department has stated that deployment of the TASERS in the field will be largely up to the discretion of the Area Captains. Each area will be assigned a number of TASERS proportional to the number of officers assigned to the area. From there, the Area Captain will determine which officers under their command will be assigned the new TASERS.

The Department's TASER usage policy is not expected to change due to the deployment of the new TASER units. However, with the expected increased usage, the Department will be able to reevaluate the policy based on experience with the new units once they are in use.

Purchase of the X-26 TASER includes a standard one-year warranty. After the warranty has expired, units which need repair can be repaired by the vendor for a \$150 repair fee. While there are some additional small ongoing costs due to consumables such as the power source and the air cartridges, it is anticipated that the Department will be able to absorb these costs within their existing budgeted accounts.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Council authorize the Police Department to purchase 1,250 TASERS.

## **FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

Funding for purchase of TASERS was provided in the Forfeited Assets Trust Fund of the Police Department in the 2007-08 Adopted Budget. There is no impact on the General Fund.