

# LOS ANGELES POLICE COMMISSION

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POLICE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
100 WEST FIRST STREET, SUITE 134  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-4112

(213) 236-1400 PHONE  
(213) 236-1410 FAX  
(213) 236-1440 TDD

December 9, 2014

BPC #14-0441

The Honorable Public Safety Committee  
City of Los Angeles  
c/o City Clerk's Office  
City Hall, Room 395  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attention John White:

Dear Honorable Members:

RE: HIT AND RUN TRAFFIC COLLISIONS REWARD SYSTEM (CITY COUNCIL  
FILE NO. 13-0025-SI)

At the regular meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners held Tuesday, December 9, 2014, the Board APPROVED the Department's report relative to the above matter.

This matter is being forwarded to you for approval.

Respectfully,

BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maria Silva".

MARIA SILVA  
Commission Executive Assistant II

Attachment

c: Chief of Police

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

BPC # 14-0441

85

December 5, 2014  
16.2

RECEIVED

DEC 04 2014

TO: The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

REVIEWED POLICE COMMISSION

FROM: Chief of Police

*Richard M. Tefank*  
RICHARD M. TEFANK  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
12/4/14  
DATE

SUBJECT: HIT AND RUN TRAFFIC COLLISIONS REWARD SYSTEM  
(CITY COUNCIL FILE NO. 13-0025-S1)

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. That the Board of Police Commissioners (Board) REVIEW and APPROVE this report; and,
2. That the Board TRANSMIT this report to the Public Safety Committee.

BACKGROUND

On September 27, 2013, Councilmember Joe Buscaino introduced a motion in City Council instructing the Los Angeles Police Department (Department) and the City Attorney (CA), with the assistance of the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA) and the City Administrative Officer (CAO) to report with recommendations to establish a standing reward offer for hit and run crimes that occur in the City of Los Angeles, including how the reward process would be administered and the potential fiscal impact. A committee of representatives from the Department, CLA, CAO and CA's offices met on several occasions to discuss the various issues associated with implementation of the reward program. The committee developed a preliminary proposal of a program that would offer standing rewards according to injury classification. Rewards would be given for information leading to the apprehension and conviction of hit and run offenders, including cases adjudicated by the Juvenile Court or settled as a civil compromise, upon recommendation from the Department and approval by the City Council. It is estimated that the total rewards will not exceed \$6 million per year.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this correspondence, please have a member of your staff contact Captain Philip S. Fontanetta, Commanding Officer, Emergency Operations Division, at (213) 486-0680.

Respectfully,



CHARLIE BECK  
Chief of Police

BOARD OF  
POLICE COMMISSIONERS  
Approved *December 9, 2014*  
Secretary *Mara Silva*

Attachment

## FACT SHEET

### **HIT AND RUN TRAFFIC COLLISIONS REWARD SYSTEM (CITY COUNCIL FILE NO. 13-0025-S1)**

November 1, 2014

#### **BACKGROUND**

On May 17, 2013, the Los Angeles Police Department (Department) completed an *Analysis of Traffic Collisions Over the Last Five Years* that compared hit and run traffic collision statistics from 2008 to 2012 with several other metropolitan cities throughout the United States. The report was submitted to the Board of Police Commissioners and forwarded to the Public Safety Committee. It was reported that the City experiences approximately 20,000 hit and run traffic collisions a year with the majority involving property damage only. Although the comparison analysis revealed that the City's collision rate was comparable to other large metropolitan areas, the Department considered these rates to be unacceptable.

The hit and run problem represents a significant traffic safety challenge to the Department and the City of Los Angeles. The report discussed the enforcement, engineering and education efforts currently being devoted to reduce hit and run crimes and proposed additional strategies to address this ongoing problem. It was further reported that successful hit and run investigations depend greatly on the cooperation and testimony of community members, whether they are witnesses or have information about the crime. Unfortunately, these community members are often hesitant to come forward or cooperate with law enforcement.

On September 27, 2013, Councilmember Joe Buscaino introduced a motion at City Council instructing the Department (Department) and the Office of the City Attorney (CA), with the assistance of the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA) and the City Administrative Officer (CAO) to report back with recommendations to establish a standing reward offer for hit and run traffic crimes that occur in the City of Los Angeles, including how the reward process would be administered and the potential fiscal impact.

#### **SUMMARY**

A committee of representatives from the Department, CLA, CAO and CA's offices was established and met on several occasions to discuss the various issues associated with implementation of the reward program. It was determined that a Hit and Run Traffic Collision Reward System is a feasible program and could be beneficial. A reward system was developed encompassing various elements from other City reward programs such as the City's Graffiti Rewards Program and existing City Council rewards programs.

#### **PROPOSAL**

The City of Los Angeles has existing reward programs that authorize the payment of financial compensation through the City's General Fund for information resulting in the identification, apprehension and conviction for various crimes such as hit and run traffic collisions. Under the current reward system, the City Council must pass a motion for each individual hit and run case in order to offer a reward. The City issues between \$200,000 and \$400,000 worth in rewards



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each year under this program. Councilmember Busciano's proposal would establish a standing reward system for all hit and run crimes and would eliminate the necessity for seeking a motion in each case. The proposed reward system would fund rewards for all hit and run crimes as defined by Sections 20001 through 20004 of the California Vehicle Code. The following is an outline of the proposal that was the result of the committee's collaboration.

#### **Reward Tiers**

The committee recommends that the City offer standing rewards for the various types of hit and run crimes. When a hit and run crime involves an injury, the determination of the injury classification would be based on medical documentation. The following list is the various hit and run crimes and the amounts that would be offered:

- \$50,000      Fatal Injury
- \$25,000      Permanent, Serious Injury as defined in 20001(d) of the Vehicle Code.
- \$5,000        Injury Other than a "Permanent, Serious Injury."
- \$1,000        No Injuries (Property Damage Only)

#### **Reward Application**

Community members that provide information as to the identity of a person or persons who has or have committed a hit and run traffic collision and desire to be considered for a reward shall complete a *City of Los Angeles Application for Reward Payment* form available from the Office of the City Clerk or the Department. The form may be completed electronically or a hard-copy of the form may be completed and submitted. In the event the applicant is under 18 years of age, the applicant's parent or legal guardian must sign the form indicating their consent to the submission of the application. Upon completion, the applicant shall ensure that the form is forwarded to the relevant investigating agency of the Department. The information provided must result in a conviction or final adjudication of the case. The Department will make a determination as to whether such information has resulted in a conviction or final adjudication and make a recommendation with the approval of the Board of Police Commissioners to City Council. All applications must be submitted prior to the expiration of the statute of limitations for the prosecution of the crime to which it pertains. The current statute of limitations for hit and run varies from one year to six years depending on the circumstances and extent of the injury.

#### **Public Point of Contact**

Community members who wish to provide crime information may telephonically contact the Department directly and will be forwarded to the concerned traffic division. Community members may also provide information through Los Angeles (LA) Crimestoppers via telephone, text or electronically. Los Angeles Crimestoppers is an independent, privately funded program that offers a \$1,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of criminal offenders. The LA

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Crimestoppers program does not require that a conviction be obtained and the identity of tipsters is anonymous.

The Department has a dedicated police officer liaison assigned to the LA Crimestoppers program, who is assigned to the Real Time Analysis and Critical Response Division (RACR). For optimum synergy, the proposed City's Hit and Run Reward System would partner with LA Crimestoppers and utilize the 24-hour hotline. The LA Crimestoppers program would operate in parallel to the City's Hit and Run Reward System.

Consequently, those community members who desire to pursue the additional reward through the City's program will be directed to the concerned division by the Department's LA Crimestoppers liaison. However, the Department would advise the person reporting that the City's reward program cannot guarantee confidentiality. The Department will advertise and announce the City's Hit and Run Reward System alongside the LA Crimestoppers hotline.

#### **Determination of Reward**

The Department will determine whether the information provided by a community member led to the arrest or adjudication of a hit and run crime, and make a recommendation through the Board of Police Commissioners to City Council. In determining whether the information was useful, the Department will consult with the CA or the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office as to whether the information resulted in the identification, apprehension and conviction, or a final adjudication by the court.

Upon the completion of an investigation, the concerned traffic division will transmit a completed *City of Los Angeles Application for Reward Payment* form to Emergency Operations Division (EOD) for tracking and processing purposes. At which time, EOD will forward the application through the chain of command to the Board of Police Commissioners for approval. The Board of Police Commissioners will then forward the application to the City Council setting forth the information received, the name of the person providing such information, and recommending payment of a reward and the appropriate reward tier. In the event the information resulted in a final adjudication, the Department will be guided by any confidentiality laws, particularly those pertaining to juveniles.

When information does not result in a conviction or final adjudication, the community member will be notified in writing of the outcome of the investigation. If the community member disagrees with the determination, an appeal may be submitted in writing to the Council within 60 days.

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#### **Approval of Reward**

The City Council will review all reports and appeals as well as any supportive documentation it deems relevant to determine the appropriate reward amount. If the City Council by adoption of a motion, resolution or committee report approve a reward, it shall approve the payment of a reward in the aggregate to the community member(s) identified as having submitted information and instruct the City Clerk to file the necessary report with the City Controller to cause the reward to be paid, as directed by Council, from the General Fund.

The determination of whether a reward shall be paid is the sole discretion of the City Council, and neither the provision of the Administrative Code (Section 19.129.3) with respect to a reward payment nor the furnishing of information in response thereto shall create any legal right or claim to the payment of a reward.

In the event more than one community member provides information and are entitled to a reward, the money shall be apportioned equally among the claimants unless the Council, for good cause, determines otherwise. Rewards shall not be issued to the following:

- Any corporation, business, club or other organization either directly or by virtue of any waiver or assignment on the part of a community member who is the recipient of a reward;
- Any public officer or employee whose employment includes duties of law enforcement. Verification of eligibility shall be provided by Los Angeles Police Department;
- Any community member who has already been or will be compensated by their employer or paid in some other manner for engaging in the actions which form the basis for claiming the reward. Verification of eligibility shall be provided by Los Angeles Police Department;
- Any community member(s) who committed or were involved in any of the acts of hit and run under consideration; and,
- Any victim of the reward in question. Victims may seek restitution through the court system or other compensation program.

It is the responsibility of the community member seeking the reward to show that they are eligible. The concerned traffic division will conduct a reasonable inquiry to determine whether an individual is eligible and to ensure an individual does not fall under any of the aforementioned exclusionary criteria. The investigating officer will forward any findings along with the recommendation to EOD for tracking and processing purposes. The application will then be forwarded to the City Council via the Board of Police Commissioners.

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**HIT AND RUN TRAFFIC COLLISIONS REWARD SYSTEM  
(CITY COUNCIL FILE NO. 13-0025-S1)**

November 1, 2014

**Annual Activity Report**

The City Clerk, as required by the Administrative Code, will include rewards paid through this program in its annual reward payment report to the City Council. The report will cover the fiscal year and be submitted within 60 days after the end of the City's fiscal year.

**POTENTIAL FISCAL IMPACT**

The City's fiscal impact of the Hit and Run Reward System will depend on the degree to which potential witnesses come forward and assist with the investigation and successful prosecution, which is impossible to predict with certainty. If the reward program results in a 15 percent increase in filed cases, the program would be considered successful.<sup>1</sup>

The below table shows the number of hit and run cases filed in 2013 by injury classification as reported on the January 11, 2014 Department's COMPSTAT report and supplemented by information from the Department's four bureau traffic divisions. The table assumes a reward payment in all filed cases as well as an additional 15% increase, which would result in a total fiscal impact of approximately \$5.5 million. This should be considered the upper limit.

**Projected Fiscal Impact of Hit and Run Reward Program**

<i>Cases Filed in 2013</i>	<i>Actual Filed Cases</i>	<i>15% Increase in Filed Cases</i>	<i>Reward Amount per Case</i>	<i>Total Potential Reward of Filed Cases</i>
Fatal Injury	19	22	\$50,000	\$1,100,000
Severe Injury	72	83	\$25,000	\$2,075,000
Other Injury	232	266	\$5,000	\$1,330,000
Property Damage	901	1036	\$1,000	\$1,036,000
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$5,541,000</b>

**Public Awareness**

It is recommended that the City develop an advertising campaign to promote the Hit and Run Reward System. This will ensure maximum awareness and increase the effectiveness for the program. At a minimum, advertisements should be promoted on various public messaging medians such as the City and Department websites, billboards, transit shelters and other social media websites.

<sup>1</sup> Felony hit and runs currently have a filing rate of 78 percent and misdemeanor hit and runs have a filing rate of 66 percent.

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**HIT AND RUN TRAFFIC COLLISIONS REWARD SYSTEM  
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**CONCLUSION**

The Department and the City of Los Angeles are committed to reducing and solving the number of hit and run traffic collisions. Although the investigative challenges of these crimes are heightened by the lack of physical evidence and the lack of community involvement, the Hit and Run Reward System will hopefully eliminate the hesitancy and fear that many community members with reporting crimes in their community. The proposed program hopefully will reduce the occurrence of these crimes.

Prepared by:  
Traffic Coordination Section,  
Emergency Operations Division



13-0025-S1

MOTION

PUBLIC SAFETY

~~PUBLIC~~ BUDGET

On July 26, 2013, the Los Angeles Police Department presented a report to the Public Safety Committee, in response to Motion (Buscaino - Englander: CF 13-0025) on efforts taken by the Department to curtail hit-and-run crime incidents. Representatives from the LAPD reported that a significant problem in solving hit-and-run crimes is the lack of evidence or testimony from witnesses.

The City Council has established a procedure for offering monetary rewards for information that leads to arrests and convictions for both property crimes and violent crimes. However, violent crimes, such as murder or manslaughter, require The City Council authorize the reward for each individual incident through a separate motion and council action, versus certain property crimes like graffiti and vandalism, where a standing reward remains in place for all incidents that occur.

As part of a comprehensive program to increase public awareness of the seriousness of hit-and-run crimes, and to help facilitate police investigations by providing an extra incentive for cooperation of witnesses who otherwise would be reluctant to come forward, the City Council should establish a program offering standing rewards for tips that lead to successful hit-and-run crime arrests and convictions, similar to standing reward programs for graffiti, vandalism and illegal dumping.

The components of the standing reward program for hit-and-run crimes would include:

1. Offering rewards in an amount not to exceed \$1,000 for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of individuals that leave the scene of a traffic collision resulting in damage to public and/or private property.
2. Offering rewards in an amount not to exceed \$25,000 for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of individuals that leave the scene of a traffic collision resulting in bodily injury.
3. Offering rewards in an amount not to exceed \$50,000 for tips that lead to the successful arrest and conviction of individuals that leave the scene of a traffic collision resulting in a fatality.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Police Department and City Attorney, with the assistance of the Chief Legislative Analyst and City Clerk, be instructed to report with recommendations to establish a standing reward offer for hit-and-run crimes that occur in the City of Los Angeles, including how the reward process would be administered and the potential fiscal impact.

PRESENTED BY

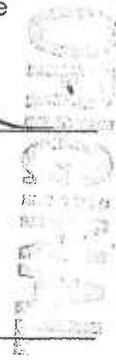
Joe Buscaino  
JOE BUSCAINO

Councilmember, 15<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY

M. Eng

SEP 27 2013



Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: Glassell Park Neighborhood Council

Name: Bradley

Phone Number: 323.806.7-477

Email: bradley@ebeassociates.com

Date of NC Board Action: 01/21/2014

Type of NC Board Action: For Proposal

Impact Information

Date: 01/26/2014

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 13-0025-S1

Agenda Date:

Item Number:

Brief Summary: Request

to Council to instruct that the Police Department and City Attorney, with the assistance of the Chief Legislative

Analyst and City Clerk, be instructed to report with recommendations to establish a standing reward offer for

hit-and-run crimes that occur in the City of Los Angeles, including how the reward process would be

administered and the potential fiscal impact)

Additional Information: