

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT relative to the feasibility of implementing a Medina Alert system in Los Angeles to issue alerts when a severe or fatal hit and run crime occurs.

Recommendations for Council action, as initiated by Motion (Englander – Bonin):

1. DIRECT the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) to develop hit and run crime notification criteria.
2. DIRECT the Emergency Management Department (EMD) and LAPD to incorporate hit and run crime notification into the NOTIFY LA mass notification system (NIXLE) and Twitter, Facebook, and other social media platforms.
3. DIRECT the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) to work with taxi drivers, Metro, UBER, LIFT, and other transit service-providers to include hit and run crime notification functionality in their dispatch systems.
4. DIRECT EMD to:
 - a. Include all City departments, including proprietaries, through the Early Warning Notification Annex of the proposed hit and run crime notification system.
 - b. In conjunction with the LAPD, develop outreach strategy for this program.
5. DIRECT the LAPD, EMD, and LADOT to report in 90 days with the implementation status of the above recommended actions, and with guidelines for a pilot program.

Fiscal Impact Statement: None submitted by the LAPD. Neither the City Administrative Officer nor the Chief Legislative Analyst has completed a financial analysis of this report.

Community Impact Statement: None submitted.

SUMMARY

On April 9, 2014, Council considered Motion (Englander – Bonin) relative to implementing a Medina Alert system in Los Angeles to issue alerts when a severe or fatal hit and run crime occurs. Motion states hit and run collisions involving pedestrians and bicyclists are a significant issue in the City of Los Angeles, with an annual average of 22 severe or fatal hit and run collisions involving bicycles and 92 involving pedestrians occurring between 2007 and 2011. Over the same time period, LAPD reports that it was only able to clear approximately 20% of hit and run collisions. This is because these crimes are especially difficult to solve, as there is often little or no evidence and no witnesses. While the difficulty of solving hit and runs is understandable, Motion movers believes that new and innovative tools should be considered to assist the police solve these crimes.

Motion movers go on to state that Medina Alert systems for the reporting of hit and run crime have been established in Colorado. Medina Alerts enable authorities to quickly broadcast information about a hit and run collision to the public on highway signs and through the media. In Denver, the city has also partnered with cab drivers and others who spend their working

hours on the road, alerting them when a collision occurs. Denver has issued 17 Medina Alerts since enacting its program; 13 of these cases have been solved.

According to Motion movers, a Medina Alert system similar to the one in Colorado would be an efficient and innovative way of disseminating vital information to the public, and could help police apprehend those responsible for severe and fatal hit and run collisions in Los Angeles. Motion movers recommend that LAPD study the feasibility of implementing such a system. Council referred Motion to the Public Safety Committee for consideration.

In a report to the Board of Police Commissioners dated August 22, 2014, LAPD discusses establishing a hit and run crime Medina Alert notification system. LAPD reports that the investigation of hit and run crime is hindered by the lack of evidence, witnesses, or delays in alerting the public of the suspect and/or vehicle that fled the traffic collision. The Department is committed to finding new and innovative ways to aggressively apprehend and prosecute those who would seek to evade responsibility for their actions.

LAPD goes on to report that the creation of a California Medina Alert system would require State legislation. Criteria is needed for activating a Medina Alert such as a hit and run involving a fatality or severe injury. The proposed legislation would need to authorize law enforcement agencies access to freeway message boards to ensure information is immediately distributed.

LAPD further reports that once the legislation is approved, the Department will develop procedures to enable officers in the field to immediately initiate a Medina Alert to notify and seek the assistance of the public. LAPD identifies other public and private community stakeholders that can partner in this program. LAPD believes that once the Medina Alert system and a hit and run reward program are approved, the Department's ability to apprehend and solve hit and run crimes will dramatically improve thereby encouraging parties involved in a traffic collision not to flee. On August 26, 2014, the Board of Police Commissioners approved LAPD's report.

At its meeting held January 23, 2015, the Public Safety Committee discussed this matter with representatives of LAPD and LADOT. LAPD said the proposed Medina Alert hit and run crime notification system is feasible and can be quickly implemented. It was suggested that program outreach include communication with Metro, area body shops, and tow companies. The Department is waiting for the passage of enacting State legislation. The LADOT representative stated that the City's permitted taxi cab companies are ready to participate. Taxis are equipped with mobile data terminals which allow taxi drivers to receive and report hit and run crime information.

The Public Safety Committee expressed support for the proposed program and recommended that Council approve the actions listed above.

Respectfully Submitted,

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

MEMBER VOTE
ENGLANDER: YES

BUSCAINO:	YES
BONIN:	ABSENT
O'FARRELL:	YES
MARTINEZ:	ABSENT

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-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-