



CITY OF COMMERCE AGENDA REPORT

TO: Honorable City Council

FROM: City Manager

SUBJECT: Review of the Structure and Operations of the Public Safety Division

MEETING DATE: June 10, 2025

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Review the structure and operations of the Public Safety Division and provide directions as appropriate;
2. Authorize the City Manager to take all necessary and reasonable steps to execute the direction provided by the City Council.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Commerce is uniquely protected through a combination of its own Public Safety Division and contracted services from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD).

The City has a residential population of approximately 13,000 residents, which leaps to over 100,000 during the day due to an influx of workers, shoppers, and visitors. As a result, the demands for public safety services extends beyond the needs of the residential community, requiring strategic planning and adequate staffing to ensure safety and security throughout the day. The City's population and business community mandates a strong, well-coordinated Public Safety Division and a close partnership with LASD.

DISCUSSION:

The City's Public Safety Division currently operates in the field Monday through Friday, 4:00 AM to 10:30 PM, with variations in coverage on weekends and City special events. Currently there are six (5) Community Safety Officers (CSO), one (1) Community Safety Specialist (CSS), one (1) Animal Control Officer (ACO), and one (1) Office Specialist III. Several CSO positions are currently vacant, and one (1) Part-Time ACO recruitment is in progress. As a result, the existing staff frequently work overtime to maintain coverage.

Despite being understaffed, the Public Safety Division continues to provide excellent service and maintains a strong, positive image within the community. The CSOs and CSS are responsible for a range of duties, including:

- Patrolling the City by regularly monitoring neighborhoods and business districts to ensure public safety
- Directing traffic and assist during Special Events
- Enforcing parking regulations including overnight parking violations and street sweeping
- Reporting suspicious activity and ongoing crime
- Conducting security evaluations at homes and businesses
- Providing vacation watch services for residents
- Assisting stranded motorists
- Taking criminal reports

However, several areas have been identified where improvements can be made to the CSS and CSO roles:

- CSO field coverage and responsibilities need to be clearly defined
- CSOs do not play an active or consistent role with regards to the Senior Center or have regular contact with the Recreation Department
- CSOs need to improve communication and teamwork
- CSOs need to improve on recording success or statistics other than parking citations
- Newly appointed CSOs do not receive sufficient training during the initial months of employment to ensure they can perform their duties safely and effectively
- Although the CSS and CSOs do a very good job of supporting deputies in the field, there is a disconnect with the everyday responsibilities of the position
- Both CSS and CSO positions appear to play a minimal role in supporting Neighborhood and Business Watch efforts
- Both CSS and CSO positions appear to have little engagement with external code enforcement and business regulatory activities
- Due to insufficient training, field personnel often overlook clear violations of basic City regulations

The ACOs are responsible for enforcing all state, county, and City laws related to the care and control of domestic animals. Also, to ensure continuous public safety and service, the Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control is on standby to respond to animal-related calls during hours when ACOs are not on duty.

The Official Specialist III assists with the City's parking enforcement dispatching, security alarm permit and camera rebate program.

Additionally, the City contracts with LASD for law enforcement; traditional police services. LASD provides deputies to support City operations. This includes one (1) Sergeant who acts as the liaison between the City and the East Los Angeles Sheriff Station; six (6) deputies assigned to special City tasks, one (1) motor officer; and eleven (11) deputy sheriffs who provide coverage across three shifts utilizing the County community policing model.

Furthermore, to support the City and LASD in crime investigations, the City installed twenty (20) license plate readers (LPRs) throughout the City in April 2023. The City currently holds a contract with Flock Safety for this technology. These LPRs assist law enforcement by:

- Providing real-time information on suspect vehicles in the area, helping to solve crimes more quickly and potentially prevent them
- Monitoring for stolen vehicles
- Search for individuals with outstanding warrants or missing persons

The contract with Flock Safety is set to expire on August 5, 2025. City staff bring forward item recommending that the City Council extend the existing contract to ensure it continues to meet the needs and priorities of the Public Safety Division and LASD. The review could also consider potential enhancements or new technologies, such as drones, integrated audio and gunshot detection systems, and live video integration depending on City Council direction at upcoming study session.

Overall, the CSO program and LASD have earned a strong reputation among residents for their service levels, response times, and customer service. However, City staff respectfully recommend that the City Council review the current structure and operations of the Public Safety Division, including the use of technology and identification of potential areas for enhancements. Suggested initiatives include:

- Filling existing vacancies within the Division, such as CSOs and CSO Manager
- Establishing clear standards and expectations for when and how the City Manager and City Council should be notified of incidents occurring throughout the City
- Developing a Public Safety Campaign and Outreach to educate the community on when and why to contact CSOs for service
- Implementing routine check-ins by CSOs with City employees, parks, and facilities to address problem locations and ongoing concerns along with a customer service request log or process
- Logging all case workload and proactive activities into an electronic database and providing a monthly report to City Council and City Manager
- Schedule quarterly meetings between the LASD Sergeant and the Senior Center to review best practices, particularly concerning senior-targeted scams and related issues

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommend that the City Council review the structure and operations of the Public Safety Division and offer recommendations based on the information presented.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact at this time.

Prepared by: Natalie Hernandez, Senior Management Analyst
 Respectfully submitted: Ernie Hernandez, City Manager
 Approved as to form: Noel Tapia, City Attorney