AGN NO. [ ]

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL September 12, 2023

Addressing Illegal Street Takeovers and Racing in Unincorporated Los Angeles County

On February 19, 2023, Raymond Olivares and his fiancé were crossing Avalon Boulevard between 135th and 132nd Street in the unincorporated community of West Rancho Dominguez, when they were violently struck by vehicles that were leaving a nearby illegal street takeover. As a result, Mr. Olivares tragically lost his life, and his fiancé was left severely injured. Mr. Olivares was an engineer for the City of Los Angeles and a graduate of California State University, Los Angeles. This tragic incident is only one of the many incidents of street racing and takeovers in Los Angeles County (County) that have been caused by reckless and illegal behavior.

In 2005, the County Board of Supervisors (Board)[1] adopted County Code Chapter 13.82 - Street Racing Motor Vehicle Seizure and Forfeiture, in response to safety concerns created by vehicles with modified exhaust systems in illegal speeding contests in various neighborhoods. Those events were often attended by hundreds of spectators, which prompted the Board to also adopt Chapter 13.46 - Spectators at Illegal Motor

[1] MOTION BY SUPERVISOR ZEV YAROSLAVSKY – April 19, 2005

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MOTION

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Vehicle Speed Contests and Exhibitions of Speed, making it unlawful to knowingly be present as a spectator, or where preparations are being made, for such events. The penalties for violations of this ordinance constitute a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine not to exceed $500, or imprisonment not to exceed six months in jail, or both. This is one of several County ordinances intended to address street racing and spectators at these illegal events; however, the scope of issues related to street takeovers and street racing have expanded dramatically since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recent incidents, such as the tragic one that took Mr. Olivares' life, have ended in massive property damage, deadly shootings, and fatal car crashes. In County unincorporated areas, residents rely on the California Highway Patrol to enforce speed limits, the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department to break up mass gatherings, and the County Department of Public Works to deploy infrastructure solutions. And while the County has also worked to advocate for changes in State legislation to increase the tools in the County's toolbox to address street takeovers, sideshows, and racing, the County's ability to effectively address the issue is currently limited.

On September 7, 2022, the County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission (COC) held a virtual conference where they gathered a panel of law enforcement, local experts, and leadership from nonprofit organizations focused on bringing awareness to the dangers of illegal street racing and reckless driving. The COC took oral and written public comment[2] on the matter and later prepared a report, which included a recommendation to develop a Street Takeover Management Plan. This recommendation was not adopted by the COC but speaks to the need for a comprehensive, collaborative plan to address this complex Countywide problem. It requires an approach that includes education, alternatives, infrastructure upgrades and deterrences, penalties, and legislative advocacy that advance our County values and priorities. As such, this motion aims to take a comprehensive approach to address street takeovers beyond one that is exclusively punitive.

[2] http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/WrittenPublicCommentsforStreetTakeoversConference9.7.22.pdf

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Direct the Director of the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Director of the Department of Public Works (DPW) in coordination with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Director of the Department of Regional Planning (DRP), the Office of Violence Prevention (OVP), County Counsel, the Sheriff's Department (LASD), the California Highway Patrol, the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission (COC), Public Defender (PD), and the District Attorney's Office (DA) to host a community street takeover symposium (Symposium) by February 28, 2024 in close partnership with community-based organizations. The goal of the Symposium is to build consensus on strategies to reduce the impact of street takeovers across Los Angeles County (County) unincorporated communities.
2. Instruct the CEO, in coordination with the Directors of DPH, OVP, LASD, DPW, PD, DA, DRP, COC, and County Counsel, and in consultation with the California Highway Patrol and street safety and street racing prevention community-based organizations, to report back to the Board in writing within 60 days, following the Symposium, with a comprehensive plan to address street takeovers and racing in County unincorporated communities. The plan should include, without limitation:
    a. Analysis of:
        i. The incidents of street racing and takeovers in unincorporated County communities;
        ii. County-led efforts, including education, infrastructure investments, advocacy, and enforcement previously employed to curb street takeovers and street racing by County departments over the last 10 years;
        iii. Efforts in similar and neighboring jurisdictions, like the cities of Compton, Oakland, and Los Angeles, to curb street racing and takeovers, including case studies and analyses that have been conducted to measure the effectiveness of those efforts; and

iv. Economic and behavioral incentives of street racing and takeover events, including how events and vehicle enhancements are funded and promoted.

b. Recommendations to address street racing, including:
   i. Opportunities to discourage participants from posting and profiting from street racing and takeover events on social media, including working with social media partners to remove posts that include illegal activity from their platforms;
   ii. Implementation of automated speed enforcement technology through legislative changes that expand State authority following new pilot programs in California;
   iii. Recommended State legislative changes needed to curb street racing and takeover events, including diversion strategies that require driver's education training that discourages street racing and takeovers;
   iv. A toolkit of infrastructure improvements to curb street takeovers, including how to prioritize infrastructure investments based on equitable need and street typologies where street racing and takeover events are most common. This analysis should also include whether land uses play a role in encouraging street takeovers; and
   v. The feasibility of securing a permanent closed track for street performance activities, separate from public streets, in communities most impacted by street takeovers and racing.
c. Feedback from community-based organizations that are working to address street racing and takeover prevention, and feedback from auto clubs that participate in street takeovers, as well as cruising clubs, on a draft version of the plan.

3. Direct County Counsel, the Directors of DPW, DRP, and OVP in coordination with LASD, DA, California Highway Patrol, and COC, to report back to the Board in writing within 60 days after the Symposium on methods of enhancing

County Ordinance 2002-0017 § 22002 (13.46.030), that are in alignment with the County's Care First, Jails Last vision. The report back should include:

a. An analysis of how the existing ordinance is currently applied and how the ordinance, as written, helps communities to address the adverse health and safety outcomes caused by street racing and takeover events.
b. Recommendations on amendments to the existing ordinance, inclusive of a penalty structure that increases the existing fine for spectators of illegal motor vehicle speed contests or exhibition of speed in the County, and opportunities for diversion to decrease pipelines into the criminal justice system. This should include whether the County can issue penalties for spectators who post on social media.
c. Recommendations on amendments to the existing ordinance that include penalties to organizers of illegal motor vehicle speed contests or exhibitions of speed in the County.
    i. Include methods by which the County may issue cease and desist notices to organizers of illegal street racing and takeovers and social media companies allowing the content.
    ii. Include a strategy on how the County may petition social media companies to remove content related to illegal street racing and takeovers in the County.

4. Direct the CEO to report back to the Board in writing 30 days after the completion of both the reports in directives #2 and #3 on a multi-year funding strategy, starting in Fiscal Year 2024-25, to address illegal street racing and takeover events. This report should include recommendations on how the funding generated by enforcement programs or other related fines and fees may be directed to street safety projects and infrastructure upgrades that address the impact of illegal street racing and takeovers. This report also should address the potential use of State and federal grants and other funding for these purposes, as well as funding for both a full and phased-in implementation.

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(NR/LO)