



AGENDA ITEM: 3b

November 17, 2022

DISCUSSION ITEM TITLE:

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Management Street Takeovers

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Los Angeles County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission (Commission) routinely hears from the public regarding public safety concerns that involve the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD). Recently, several community members contacted the Commission to voice their concern regarding hordes of people gathering at intersections throughout Los Angeles county to participate in reckless "Street Takeovers" that significantly impacts the public's safety. Some street takeovers have resulted in people dying. Recently, there has been a great number of media coverage regarding street takeovers, prompting the Commission to take action. Commission staff recommends that LASD, in collaboration with appropriate departments and agencies, develop a Street Takeover Management Plan and publish written quarterly reports. Also, both houses of the state legislature have commenced addressing street takeovers. Commission staff further recommends that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) send letters in support of AB2546 and SB1472, which address reckless driving and sideshows.

BACKGROUND:

The gathering of people to illegally street race vehicles on public highways and similar settings dates back to the 1960s.¹ Since that time, individuals have modified various types of vehicles to increase the speed or performance of the vehicle's engine.² Street racers use modified and sometimes standard vehicles to conduct "street takeovers." People involved with street takeovers typically use social media and cellphone technology to setup³ a "flash mob" of hundreds of spectators at specific intersections, preventing the flow of traffic, to witness people drive at

¹ Urban Dictionary. (2009). Street Racing. Retrieved from <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Street%20racing>

² California Highway Patrol. (2022). Asian Pacific Islander Community Outreach-Illegal Street Racing. Retrieved from <https://www.chp.ca.gov/programs-services/programs/asian-pacific-islander-outreach-program/asian-pacific-islander-community-outreach-illegal-street-racing>

³ KGET. (2022). What is a street takeover and how is social media fueling the illegal activity? Retrieved from <https://www.kget.com/news/state-news/what-is-a-street-takeover-and-how-is-social-media-fueling-the-illegal-activity/>

dangerously high speeds, do donuts and/or perform stunts like drifting.⁴ Street takeovers have become a critical issue in Los Angeles County, which has resulted in property damage, bodily injury and loss of life.

Street Takeover Prevalence in Los Angeles County

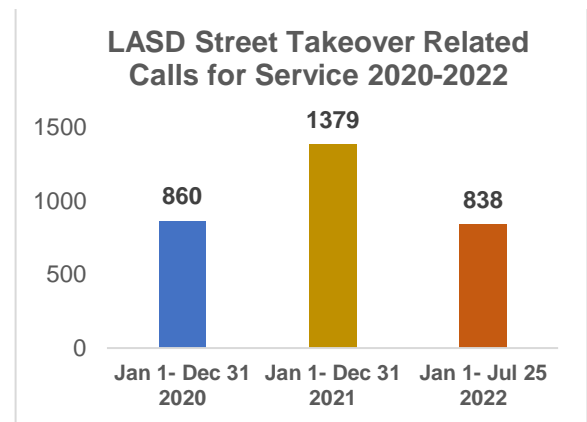
There are more than 6.3 million registered vehicles⁵ in Los Angeles County. In 2005, the Board adopted Los Angeles County Code Chapter 13.82-Street Racing-Motor Vehicle Seizure and Forfeiture⁶ in response to residents complaining about the nuisance and danger created by vehicles with modified exhaust systems in speeding contests in their neighborhoods. These events were so widely attended by spectators that the Board also adopted Chapter 13.46-Spectators at Illegal Motor Vehicle Speed Contests and Exhibitions of Speed,⁷ making it unlawful to knowingly be present as a spectator or where preparations are being made at 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.

From January 1, 2020, to July 25, 2022, LASD reported receiving close to 3,100 calls for service that pertain to or reference activity that disrupts, impedes or prevents the normal use of public roadways, intersections and/or streets, which are also referred to as “Street Takeovers” (Table 1).

Between 2020 and 2021, LASD data shows that there has been more than a 60% increase in calls for service pertaining to street takeover related activities.

This increase appears to be consistent with the media’s coverage of street racers dangerously drifting close to spectators at intersections while they watch and cheer.

Table 1: Source LASD Response to Commission Street Takeover Questions



⁴ KTLA. (2022). What is a street takeover and how is social media fueling the illegal activity? Retrieved from <https://ktla.com/news/local-news/what-is-a-street-takeover-and-how-is-social-media-fueling-the-illegal-activity/>

⁵ Los Angeles Almanac. (2022). Motor Vehicles Registrations Los Angeles. Retrieved from <http://www.laalmanac.com/transport/tr02.php>

⁶ Los Angeles County Municipal Code. (2022). Chapter 13.82-Street Racing-Motor Vehicle Seizure and Forfeiture. Retrieved from https://library.municode.com/ca/los_angeles_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT13PUPEMOWE_DIV10MOVESEFO_CH13.82STRAOTVESEFO

⁷ Los Angeles County Municipal Code. (2022). Chapter 13.46-Spectators At Illegal Motor Vehicle Speed Contests and Exhibits of Speed. Retrieved from

https://library.municode.com/ca/los_angeles_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT13PUPEMOWE_DIV40FAGPUPE_CH13.46SPILMOVESPCOEXSP_13.46.010PR

The frequent occurrence of street takeovers has impacted resident's lives in many ways. On June 14, 2022, the Board approved a reward for information leading to the capture and conviction of the person(s) who murdered Javier Carachure Menchaca and Juan Antonio Orozco⁸ at a street takeover in the City of Compton. A month later, on July 9, 2022, thousands of people turned out for the grand opening of the Sixth Street Viaduct, which includes pedestrian and bike lanes, and was built to replace the old bridge that was closed after being deemed unable to resist earthquakes.⁹ By July 18, 2022, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) responded to a three-car crash on the Sixth Street Viaduct that was a result of an illegal street takeover.¹⁰ The following month on August 15, 2022, street racers and spectators took over the intersection of West El Segundo Boulevard and South Figueroa Street in South Los Angeles, and a large "flash mob" of people ransacked and looted the nearby 7-Eleven convenience store.¹¹

Individuals who participate in street takeovers say they are not hurting anyone and believe they are merely having fun. However, at least six people have died during street takeovers in Los Angeles County since February 2022¹² and street racers usually try to elude law enforcement, thus amplifying the potential for more property damage or bodily injury as they try to evade.

These are only a few examples of illegal street takeover incidents that have impacted public safety and have become more prevalent.

LASD Attempts to Mitigate and Eliminate Street Takeovers

The LASD Risk Management Bureau Traffic Services Detail (TSD) unit and the California Highway Patrol (CHP) are responsible for providing recommendations to LASD patrol personnel responding to calls for service involving street takeovers. Some of the action that the LASD TSD unit takes to eliminate street takeovers include, but are not limited to:

- a. Depending on the number of participants and/or spectators, wait for sufficient units to respond prior to engaging the crowd in order to employ a coordinated response to efficiently stop the illegal activity and disperse the crowd;

⁸ Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Statement of Proceedings & Minutes. (2022). Motion: Establish the Reward Offer in the Murder of Javier Carachure Menchaca and Juan Antonio Orozco. Retrieved from [169761.pdf \(lacounty.gov\)](#)

⁹ Los Angeles Daily News. (2022). L.A.'s Sixth Street Viaduct opens to a crowd of thousands, connecting Downtown and Boyle Heights. Retrieved from <https://www.dailynews.com/2022/07/09/l-a-s-sixth-street-viaduct-opens-to-a-crowd-of-thousands-connecting-downtown-and-boyle-heights/>

¹⁰ FOX11 Los Angeles. (2022). 3-car crash reportedly caused by illegal street takeover on Sixth Street bridge. Retrieved from <https://www.foxla.com/news/sixth-street-bridge-becoming-a-hot-spot-for-illegal-street-takeovers>

¹¹ LA Weekly. (2022). Video: 7-Eleven Hit By Destructive 'Flash Mob' After Street Takeover. Retrieved from <https://www.laweekly.com/video-7-eleven-hit-by-destructive-flash-mob-after-street-takeover/>

¹² Yahoo!News. (2022). Inside L.A.'s deadly street takeover scene: 'A scene of lawlessness'. Retrieved from <https://news.yahoo.com/inside-l-deadly-street-takeover-120002964.html>

- b. Absent other circumstances, LASD is not authorized to pursue vehicles involved in street takeovers for traffic violations alone;
- c. Assist stations with investigations of all traffic related fatal collisions; and
- d. Presenting all formal traffic-related training, develops traffic-related policies and procedures, collects, and disseminates LASD's traffic statistics and maintains liaison with other traffic agencies.

LASD's success in eliminating street takeovers relies on the availability of patrol deputies' response from the 23 LASD Patrol Stations,¹³ that's in addition to responding to other routine calls for service. On August 27, 2022, LASD's street takeover task force was out in the City of Compton strictly enforcing Vehicle Code Laws and towing vehicles for violations such as speeding and having illegal modifications.¹⁴ Two months later on October 27, 2022, LASD deputies broke up another street takeover in Santa Fe Springs where there were lasers and numerous cheering spectators one of which was seen firing a blowtorch into the air.¹⁵ Despite having a street takeover task force, LASD's response to street takeover relies on deputies from nearby LASD patrol stations being available unlike with CHP and the LAPD, which maintain small units specifically dedicated to street racing and street takeovers.

Overview of Other Entities Efforts to Address Street Takeovers

Street racers and spectators are showing up throughout the nation in vast numbers taking over streets and wreaking havoc in communities. Local entities have attempted to address street takeovers in various forms.

CHP is aware of the aggressive driving and excessive speeds used by street racers during street takeovers and shares the community's concern. On October 8, 2019, CHP issued a press release advising that they had received a \$1.5 million federally funded grant for the *Regulate Aggressive Driving and Reduce Speed (RADARS) VI program* and that the goal of RADARS VI

¹³ LASD. (2022). Patrol Stations. Retrieved from <https://lasd.org/stations/>

¹⁴ 2Urban Girls. (2022). Compton deputies continue to address street takeovers causing havoc for residents. Retrieved from <https://2urbangirls.com/2022-08-compton-deputies-continue-to-address-street-takeovers-causing-havoc-for-residents/>

¹⁵ KTLA. (2022). Police break up 3 street takeovers in L.A. area, including one involving a blowtorch. Retrieved from <https://ktla.com/news/local-news/spectator-fires-torch-as-sideshow-drivers-takeover-intersection-in-santa-fe-springs/>

in part would focus on street racing and sideshow activities.¹⁶ On October 11, 2021, CHP issued another press release advising that the RADARS grant funds were used to conduct enhanced speed enforcement operations and collaborate with local law enforcement agencies to create street racing and sideshow task forces, and conduct social media campaigns to educate the public about street racing.¹⁷

In February 2021, the City of Anaheim Police Department recommended that the City Council adopt an Ordinance prohibiting participating in or being a spectator at street racing or reckless exhibition events as the number of calls for service were trending upward and other agencies were reporting that such ordinance changes were providing an effective tool to combat dangerous activities and limiting spectator involvement.¹⁸

The reckless driving behaviors of street racers and spectators led community members in the City of Compton to submit the idea of using Botts' Dots (raised pavement markers named after Caltrans engineer Elbert Dysart Botts) in street intersections in early August 2022, to stop the street racers tires from spinning (burning rubber) and reducing the likelihood of their ability to do donuts and tear up streets and nearby property.¹⁹ Despite the City of Compton spending over \$4,000 for the installation²⁰ of Botts' Dots in intersections and the community members innovative approach at attempting to eliminate street takeover activities, the street racers evaded their preventive measures and conducted another street takeover on August 21, 2022.²¹

Angelino Heights was one of the first suburbs in Los Angeles²² and has impressive Victorian landmarks that get the attention of many individuals including that of people in the film industry. In 2001, the Fast and Furious franchise introduced people to a character who became

¹⁶ California Highway Patrol. (2019). Grant Will Help CHP Address Speed, Aggressive Driving, And Street Racing. Retrieved from <https://www.chp.ca.gov/PressReleases/Pages/GRANT-WILL-HELP-CHP-ADDRESS-SPEED-.aspx>

¹⁷ California Highway Patrol. (2021). Grant Helps CHP Focus On Aggressive Driving Behaviors. Retrieved from <https://www.chp.ca.gov/PressReleases/Pages/GRANT-HELPS-CHP-FOCUS-ON-AGGRESSIVE-DRIVING-BEHAVIORS.aspx>

¹⁸ City of Anaheim. (2021). City Council Agenda Report: Ordinance Prohibiting Participating In, or Being A Spectator At, A Street Race Or Reckless Driving Exhibition (Second Reading). Retrieved from https://local.anaheim.net/docs_agend/questys_pub/29095/29125/29126/29274/29278/Staff%20Report29278.pdf

¹⁹ ABC7. (2022). Compton installs city's first set of Botts' Dots in hopes of deterring street takeovers. Retrieved from <https://abc7.com/compton-botts-dots-street-takeovers-sideshow/12131018/#:~:text=Botts%27%20Dots%20pavement%20markers%20are%20named%20for%20Elbert.installing%20the%20Botts%27%20Dots%20about%20a%20week%20ago>

²⁰ KTLA 5. (2022). Compton hoping 'Botts' Dots' will stop street takeovers. Retrieved from <https://ktla.com/news/local-news/compton-hoping-botts-dots-will- curb-street-takeovers/>

²¹ ABC 7. (2022). Street takeovers continue in Compton despite Botts' Dots meant to prevent them. Retrieved from <https://abc7.com/compton-street-takeovers-botts-dots-caught-on-video/12153290/>

²² Echo Park Historical Society. (2022). Angelino Heights. Retrieved from <http://historicechopark.org/history-landmarks/places-landmarks/angelino-heights/>

enamored with the street racing world he was sent to abolish.²³ The Fast and Furious franchise has continued making street racing films and is currently filming their 10th movie that is scheduled for release in 2023.²⁴ On August 26, 2022, residents of Angelino Heights gathered to protest against the filming of the newest “Fast & Furious” movie in their community as they believe it has increased the street racing and related dangers in their neighborhood.^{25,26} Residents say the street racers conduct illegal antics at all hours of the day and night, endangering lives and leaving circular skid marks from doing donuts and swinging in the intersection.²⁷ The Angelino Heights community protests of the entertainment industry filming a street racing movie with modified vehicles in their neighborhood reflects residents innovative approach at mitigating street takeovers.

In August 2022, the LAPD conducted a two-day operation to crack down on illegal street takeovers and made 40 arrests, impounded 34 cars, issued 82 citations, and shut down numerous street takeovers before they started.²⁸

Legislative Efforts to Address Street Takeovers

California legislators often become aware of issues such as street takeovers from impacted individuals and concerned residents. In the State of California, legislation starts as a concept and transitions through the legislative process on its way to potentially becoming law.²⁹ A number of legislators have taken steps to author and draft bills related to street racing and/or street takeovers that recently made their way through the California legislative process. Below you will find a quick overview of several recent State of California street takeover related bills:

- Assembly Bill 2546 (AB2546), Introduced by Assembly Member Adrin Nazarian is associated with motor vehicle speed contest on highway or exhibition of speed on a highway existing law and seeks to expand the definition of a sideshow to include other public places open to vehicle traffic.

²³ IMDb. (2022). The Fast and the Furious. Retrieved from https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0232500/?ref=ttls_li_tt

²⁴ Yahoo! Entertainment. (2022). How many ‘Fast and Furious’ movies are there? Here’s the full list of film franchise. Retrieved from <https://www.yahoo.com/entertainment/many-fast-furious-movies-heres-100119857.html>

²⁵ MSN. (2022). Residents fed up with street takeovers protest “Fast & Furious” filming in Angelino Heights. Retrieved from <https://www.msn.com/en-us/movies/news/residents-fed-up-with-street-takeovers-set-to-protest-fast-26-furious-filming-in-angelino-heights/ar-AA118U0u>

²⁶ Reddit. (2022). Flyer: Angelino Heights Street Racing Protest. Retrieved from https://www.reddit.com/r/LosAngeles/comments/wvylfp/live_in_angelino_heights_and_came_home_to_this_in/

²⁷ CNN. (2022). From burning rubber to street racing, residents are ‘Furious’ about the influences of a movie franchise on the safety of their Los Angeles neighborhood. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/03/us/los-angeles-street-racing-elam/index.html>

²⁸ FOX11 Los Angeles. (2022). 40 arrests made in LA street takeover crackdown: LAPD. Retrieved from <https://www.foxla.com/news/lapd-la-street-takeover-crackdown-arrests>

²⁹ California Legislative Information. (2016). Legislative Process. Retrieved from <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/bil2lawx.html>

- Senate Bill 1472 (SB1472), Introduced by Senator Henry Stern is associated with driving a vehicle upon a highway or in an off-street parking facility in willful or wanton disregard for the safety of persons or property is guilty of reckless driving existing law and seeks to specify a list of circumstances that may be based on the totality of the circumstances constitute various conditions when a person has participated in a sideshow.

RECOMMENDATION/CONCLUSION:

On September 7, 2022, the Commission hosted the Street Takeovers: Impacting Public Safety conference. The panel of subject matter experts included California Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian, LASD Sergeant Michael Downing, CHP (CHP) Officer Chris Baldonado, and a community member impacted by street takeovers from Street Racing Kills (SRK) Executive Director Lili Trujillo. The panel discussed measures to monitor and eliminate public safety concerns associated with street takeovers. The Commission accepted written public comments prior to and during the conference and took live calls. On September 22, 2022, LASD joined representatives from the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, CHP, LAPD and community representatives from SRK at Irwindale Speedway to urge street racers to end the dangerous and tragic illegal activities while advising of venue alternatives for just \$20 at the Irwindale Speedway, Auto Club Speedway or Apple Valley Speedway, whereas it could cost upwards of \$3,000 if their car is impounded and they receive a citation.^{30,31,32} LASD later released a YouTube Public Service Announcement video on *Street Racing*, which advised drivers use the safe and legal racing venue alternatives such as Irwindale Speedway.³³ After reviewing and analyzing data and documents used to create this staff report, and for the reasons listed throughout the staff report, the Commission should:

1. LASD develop a Street Takeover Management Plan in collaboration with the Office of Inspector General, District Attorney's Office, Department of Public Health's Office of Violence Prevention, Department of Public Works, California Highway Patrol, Los Angeles Police Department, Los Angeles County Highway Safety Commission, Los

³⁰ LASD. (2022). Street Racing. Retrieved from <https://lasd.org/street-racing/>

³¹ ABC. (2022). In efforts to curb street takeovers and racing, LA County law enforcement offer safe alternative. Retrieved from <https://abc7.com/street-takeovers-los-angeles-county-alternatives-irwindale-speedway/12252081/>

³² Whittier Daily News. (2022). LA Sheriff, District Attorney, CHP and LAPD urge drivers to end street racing. Retrieved from <https://www.whittierdailynews.com/2022/09/22/la-sheriff-district-attorney-chp-and-lapd-urge-drivers-to-end-tragedy-haunted-street-racing/>

³³ YouTube. (2022). LASD Street Racing-Keep it safe. Keep it legal. Keep it on the track. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-O5g81mWcU>

Angeles County Youth Commission, and a representative from a Street Racing Prevention community-based organization and provide a written report back to the Commission within 90 days;

2. LASD submit a written quarterly report to the Commission on street takeovers related public safety activities that includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Street takeover traffic statistics
 - b. Brief overview of street takeover related crimes
 - c. Liaison efforts with other traffic agencies
 - d. Brief overview of street takeover mitigation measures employed

3. LASD develop a Street Takeover County-sponsored Legislative Proposal in collaboration with the Chief Executive Office, District Attorney's Office and Office of Inspector General and provide a written report back to the Commission within 90 days.

GUEST SPEAKERS:

- Michael Downing, Sergeant, LASD
- Lili Trujillo Puckett, Executive Director, Street Racing Kills

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