



Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council

Certified May 27, 2003

P.O. Box 635 • Tujunga, CA 91043-0635 • 818-951-7411 • Website: stnc.org

March 11, 2024

To Los Angeles Interim Police Chief Dominic Choi and Mayor Karen Bass,
L.A. City Councilmembers Monica Rodriguez, Hugo Soto Martinez and Eunisses Hernandez:

PROPOSAL TO REALLOCATE TRAFFIC / PATROL OFFICERS TO COUNCIL DISTRICT 7, CITY OF LOS ANGELES FULFILLS THREE CITY OFFICIALS' CAMPAIGN PROMISES

The community of Sunland-Tujunga has experienced one of the highest rates of motor vehicle related deaths and severe injuries on our main corridor of Foothill Boulevard over the past five years now, and something needs to be done about it. This letter suggests a way to address this without it costing the City of Los Angeles or our Council District 7 any money, and would thereby address our community's Number One priority of Traffic Safety.

According to LADOT, between January 2018 and Sept. 2023, there were 13 fatal crashes on Foothill Boulevard in Sunland-Tujunga and four more on Sunland Boulevard in adjacent Shadow Hills. Sadly, three more people died since that time in our community, bringing that total to 20 deaths in just over five years.

Prior to that, according to the TIMS study, between 2010 and 2017, the pattern emerged showing an extremely dangerous trend as you can see here in the attached SWITRS GIS Map shows where the severe accidents with injuries and fatalities occurred.

More recently, in January 2024, a study by the Los Angeles Police Department showed fatal traffic crashes increasing across the City with the highest percentage occurring in our own Valley Division where over one-third of the 364 fatal crashes took place. To break it down further, within the Valley Division, the highest percentage of those fatalities occurred in Council District 7's Sunland-Tujunga/Shadow Hills neighborhoods, primarily on Foothill Boulevard and Sunland Boulevard.

The Sunland Tujunga Neighborhood Council's Safe Traffic and Transportation (STAT) Committee surveyed our community in 2018 asking for our stakeholders' Number One priority and concern. Of the 262 stakeholders who answered our survey, 100% listed it Traffic to be their safety priority. Of those, 94% requested more police enforcement while another 4% added driver education along with police enforcement, together.

We have sent two STNC approved motions to our Councilmember, Monica Rodriguez (in 2019 and 2022), asking her to allocate \$100,000 from her discretionary funds for an additional LAPD Motorcycle Traffic Officer for our main corridor of Foothill Boulevard. We presently only have one LAPD Traffic Officer, Sal Venegas, who replaced LAPD Traffic Officer Joel Flores last year.

However, no action was taken by our Councilmember to address our concerns for Traffic Safety.

We additionally sought help from California State Senator Anthony Portantino, who did respond to our concerns. In fact, he offered to work with Councilmember Rodriguez to attain that funding by submitting a budget line item for Public Safety Funds to finance another Traffic Safety Officer for our community. However, our Councilmember did not move forward on the Senator's offer for state funding to respond to our stakeholders who have repeatedly requested more Traffic enforcement by LAPD.



Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council

Certified May 27, 2003

P.O. Box 635 • Tujunga, CA 91043-0635 • 818-951-7411 • Website: stnc.org

We now are asking for Mayor Karen Bass and Interim Police Chief Choi's help to move forward on this proposal which would allow at least one additional full-time Traffic Officer and if possible, another patrol officer to be assigned to Council District 7.

At our Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council board meeting in January 2024, the following motion was approved in a vote of 17 in favor, no opposed and one abstention:

"That our Sunland-Tujunga community be assigned at least one more full-time LAPD Traffic Officer and if possible, another patrol officer in the early part of 2024. We propose this be done by the City, LAPD and the Mayor's Office agreeing to reallocate police resources from Eunisses Hernandez's Council District 1 and Hugo Soto Martinez's Council District 13, whose councilmembers campaigned on having less of a police presence and were elected by their stakeholders on that promise."

By the reallocation of LAPD officers to our Sunland-Tujunga area, our stakeholders would receive additional protection by having a more continuous police presence, while the stakeholders in Council Districts 1 and 13 would benefit from the campaign promises made by Councilmembers Hernandez and Martinez to provide "less" of a police presence on their streets. **Additionally, this would help fulfill the promise made by Mayor Karen Bass: that communities wanting more police presence would receive them.**

Our community lies the farthest distance away from the Foothill District police headquarters which makes it difficult to get a fast response to any traffic- or crime-related issue. Since 2024 began, we have seen an acceleration of crime with several pharmacies and restaurants broken into and looted. These small businesses make up the heart of our community as we do not have any "Big Box" chain restaurants and we rely on them for our local needs

As previously mentioned, we have had three more fatalities in the past four months. Clearly, crime is on the rise and we don't feel we have adequate resources from LAPD due to early retirements, reallocation of police resources and a loss of officers across the entire department in recent years owing greatly to earlier defunding of LAPD.

Please help us get the enforcement we so desperately need and have repeatedly asked for. We are sending this letter to you, Mayor Bass, to you, Interim Chief Choi, and to our own Councilmember Monica Rodriguez — as well as Councilmembers Hernandez and Martinez — asking you for full cooperation with this proposal. It will not cost the City any more money to reallocate these officers — and our community within CD7 wants and needs them right now.

Sincerely,

Pat Kramer, chair of the Safe Traffic & Transportation Committee of STNC

Jon von Gunten, co-chair of the Safe Traffic & Transportation Committee of STNC

Lydia Grant, president of the Sunland Tujunga Neighborhood Council (STNC)