



October 5, 2021

Sent via email ccpubliccomment@southpasadenaca.gov

RE: Public Comment, Agenda Item No. 22, Receive and File Report on Unarmed Traffic Enforcement Officers

Dear City Council:

As the City Council prepares to receive and file the report on unarmed traffic enforcement prepared by the Public Safety Commission, we request that the city strike the Commission's recommendation to "not move forward with the implementation of an unarmed traffic enforcement program." (Agenda Report, p. 1.) Unarmed traffic enforcement cannot be implemented in the immediate term because of prevailing state law but this can change if it is amended by the state legislature. South Pasadena can take an active role in asking the state legislature to act, as it has done successfully with various initiatives in the past, most recently with the passage of SB 381 (Portantino) to allow the city to purchase Cal Trans properties. In this instance, the City Council can adopt a resolution requesting our state representatives enact legislation to give municipalities greater flexibility in traffic enforcement, as the city of Berkeley has done. (Agenda Report, p. 2.)

While we appreciate the extensive research that the Commission completed in preparing this report, we are concerned about the haste in which these recommendations passed through the Commission and are now in front of this Council. Care First South Pasadena approached the Commission earlier this year to consider the possibility of implementing unarmed traffic enforcement. We provided initial research and had hoped this would be a more extensive dialogue with thoughtful consideration of available policy approaches. For example, the City could accelerate the reporting requirements of race and ethnicity in traffic stops ahead of the 2023 schedule, but the report does not consider this possibility. The City could also sample prior arrests for the existence of racial disparities, but, again, the report does not consider this possibility. Further, the report is ripe with unsubstantiated, conclusory findings: for example, that officer training is in fact effective in reducing racial bias in traffic enforcement stops; and that pursuing an ordinance to prevent officers from enforcing minor traffic infractions would subject the city to class action litigation. On what grounds?

We would like unarmed traffic enforcement to remain an ongoing agenda item for the Commission and for the Commission to conduct more affirmative outreach to stakeholders—other than online posting of the Commission's meeting agendas. The report is premature to receive and file at this point, and should be returned to the Commission to incorporate community feedback, with additional research as needed.

Sincerely,

Care First South Pasadena