



LOS ANGELES POLICE COMMISSION

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POLICE COMMISSION PRESIDENT MATTHEW JOHNSON OUTLINES HIS VISION AND GOALS FOR THE LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT

Los Angeles – On Tuesday, November 10, 2015, Police Commission President Matthew Johnson stated the following:

“Nearly two months ago I took this chair for the first time and offered my thoughts on taking this very important position. At that time, I promised I would return to you with the initiatives I would like the Commission to support as we move forward. In that short time, I have dedicated myself to hearing the concerns of as many of our City’s residents as possible. I have spoken with community leaders, clergy, elected officials and everyday Angelinos. I have listened to those who have raised their concerns in our commission meetings. I have met with many members of the LAPD, from Command Staff to the rank and file. Today I am setting forth my agenda as Police Commission President. I am also requesting a series of audits and reports from both the Department and the Inspector General to achieve these goals.

The LAPD has had a challenging history which contributed to two riots and ultimately led to a Consent Decree. Under the Consent Decree, the Department was required to make major reforms that led to a positive institutional transformation of the LAPD. We must ensure that the Department remains committed to those tenets of reform and uses them as a foundation to continuously build upon and improve. We must remain focused on the Department’s commitment to constitutional, fair, respectful and unbiased policing of our extremely diverse city, particularly the African-American, Latino, LGBTQ and immigrant communities.

Despite the progress the LAPD has made, we are living in challenging times. The LAPD, like police departments across our country, is facing a crisis of confidence with minority communities, particularly African- Americans. As a result of both real and perceived racial disparities in policing, there are deepening wounds in Los Angeles and cities across our country. In addition, homicides, violent crimes, and property crimes are all rising.

My goal is to use these challenges as turning points, and make the LAPD the model for the entire nation. As President of the Police Commission, my vision is for Los Angeles to simultaneously enjoy both effective and constitutional policing. For this to occur, we need strong police leadership coupled with strong, effective oversight by the Police Commission. To that end, the Commission relies heavily upon to Office of the Inspector General's robust and independent investigations and audits of the Department. The Commission, with the help of the Office of the Inspector General, must continue to vigilantly monitor these reforms as well as devise new and improved ways to oversee the Department's operations.

I intend to focus on two important, measurable goals. First, we must reduce the crime rate. The single most important function of any government is keeping its citizens safe. After many years of consecutive yearly reductions in the crime rate, Los Angeles, like so many other cities in our nation, is seeing a significant uptick in essentially every category of crime. Through November 7, 2015, homicides are up 11.7%, violent crimes are up 21% and property crimes are up 10.8% for an overall 12.8% increase in Part I crime when compared to 2014. In August alone we saw 39 homicides, making it the deadliest month since August, 2007.

Second, we must fully commit to minimizing the number of use of force incidents. The LAPD Use of Force Policy specifically states that "The Department's guiding value when using force shall be reverence for human life." With that as our guiding principle, I am confident we can significantly reduce the number of use of force incidents while continuing to ensure the safety of our officers.

If successful, we will not only reduce the incidents of physical harm to both our residents and our Officers, we will also increase the level of trust and respect between the police and our community members. This will also reduce financial harm to the City and reduce the amount of organizational harm that invariably follows use of force incidents.

The Department has an impressive ability to use metrics to identify crime trends, shift resources, adapt to situations as they occur, and utilize the CompStat and Predictive Policing models to skillfully improve the policing of our City with its available resources. I have confidence in the Department's ability to respond to these increasing crime statistics in a smart and effective manner. The vast majority of officers I have met are genuinely committed to effectively reducing crime, keeping our citizens safe and respecting people's rights. As a Police Commission, we must ensure that the Police response is not only effective and efficient, but most importantly, constitutional. Our policing must respect our diverse communities and be carried out in a fair and impartial manner that respects the rights of all our residents -- while simultaneously respecting and caring for the safety of our officers.

While there is a place for crime suppression tactics, we must continue to focus on our successful Community Oriented Policing strategy and the Department's newly launched strategy of Relationship Based Policing. From officers assigned to a foot beat or in a black and white patrol car, up to the Chief of Police, the Los Angeles Police Department must work to build genuine relationships with

community members. These initiatives are essential in enabling our officers to connect with every community, build on our existing partnerships and develop new ones. Through those partnerships we will improve relationships one by one and work together to reduce crime.

As an example, the Department has shown great success in the Community Safety Partnership with the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA). By having dedicated officers in our public housing developments, the program has built meaningful relationships between officers and community members and has helped residents solve every day problems. The program has also resulted in a crime reduction of 21% since its inception in 2011. We clearly need to expand this program, and we will.

Further, the LAPD's partnership with the Mayor's Gang Reduction Youth Development (GRYD) program in conjunction with other Department efforts has reduced gang violence by 40% since its inception. The Summer Night Lights Program, which Mayor Garcetti has expanded to Friday Nights, has greatly assisted these efforts as well. Through these public/private partnerships, the City has shown us how these relationships improve the lives of residents and reduce crime. As a Commission, we need to support and foster these initiatives and make sure that the Department has the resources it needs to continue to grow and expand these efforts.

We can all agree that any use of force incident is one too many. However, it is important to note that while there were 128,366 arrests by Los Angeles Police Officers in 2014, a use of force occurred in only 1,898 of those arrests, a rate of 1.5%. Of that number, an Officer Involved Shooting occurred in 30 of those use of force incidents. It is also important to note however, that in year to date in comparison to 2014, Officer Involved Shootings have nearly doubled, increasing from 23 to 45. This is an alarming development. I believe we can work towards vastly reducing the number of use of force incidents through extensive training and modifying our tactics.

The LAPD rightfully takes pride in its role as the national leader in the development of police training and tactics in the law enforcement community. But with that desire to lead comes responsibility. The Department must continue to review, improve, and evolve our training and tactics from the first days of the police academy throughout our officer's careers, even for the most experienced police officers. The Commission received an extensive briefing from the Department during our September 22nd meeting on the revised training program to even better prepare our police officers.

This training includes four components:

- Public Trust and Preservation of Life
- Constitutional Policing
- Handling persons suspected of being mentally ill
- Use of Force De-escalation Techniques

In particular, the Department's focus on use of force de-escalation techniques and training in dealing with people suspected of being mentally ill are critical

components in minimizing encounters that result in use of force. We need to ensure that this training is effective and that there is enthusiastic acceptance from the Command Staff through every level of the Department. The initial Stand Down training conducted over the past several months plus the new training to be launched later this month is an encouraging start. It clearly puts us at the forefront of these efforts nationwide. But, culture and habits do not change overnight. To accomplish these necessary changes we will need continual training and reinforcement of the new expectations. We will have to reward excellence and hold accountable those who do not comply. We cannot expect to change behavior if there are not real consequences for those found to be out of policy.

In addition to supporting community and relationship based policing initiatives and increased training, we must also ensure that our officers have the best equipment to support our efforts to reduce incidents of deadly use of force while continuing to keep our officers safe. Thanks in large part to Commissioner Soboroff's efforts and Mayor Garcetti's leadership, Los Angeles will soon be the largest city in America to put Body Worn Cameras on every officer on the street. I believe that the widespread deployment of Body Worn Cameras and Digital In-Car Video System cameras will be transformative for policing by reducing both use of force and biased policing.

Early research supports that officers wearing cameras have significantly fewer use of force incidents and complaints than officers not wearing the cameras. Body Worn Cameras will benefit both community members and the police officers who wear them. Overall, the research found that when police officers are aware that their behavior is being monitored through on-body cameras and when residents are aware they are being recorded, everyone behaves better.

Thanks to a recent directive by Chief Beck, soon all police officers in the field will be equipped with and required to carry a Taser device -- allowing less than lethal use of force when called for. I would also like to see bean bag shot guns more widely deployed. These resources can save lives by preventing a deadly use of force from occurring. Our training and tactics must use less than lethal options in a manner that maximizes their effectiveness and minimizes the use of deadly force.

I am confident that the combination of these initiatives -- a commitment to providing the most current Training and Tactics, doubling down on Community Oriented and Relationship Based Policing, the full deployment of Body Worn Cameras, the Digital In-Car Video system cameras, and ensuring that our officers have the best equipment available including Tasers and bean bag shotguns -- will simultaneously help us reduce crime, decrease use of force incidents, and increase the level of trust between our communities and the Police Department that serves them.

But we must recognize that it is not just about crime and statistics. This work requires everyone in Los Angeles to accept more responsibility. Respect is a two-way street, and communities and police in Los Angeles must work together. Though much work lies ahead, the changes we make in our city will serve as an

example to other cities facing the same issues. As we begin to see the transformative results in our city, we will all have helped create a greater Los Angeles for our future generations as well as a model for police departments around the world to follow.

In conclusion, I request concurrence from my fellow Commissioners with the following:

1. That the office of the Inspector General analyze the Department's Categorical use of force over the last decade. The report should break down the various types of force used over that time period, and detail the changes in training and policies that have occurred over that same period. This report will include the office of the Inspector General identifying the rates of injury to community members and officers associated with uses of force, and the adjudicated outcomes for those cases that have occurred.
2. That the office of the Inspector General prepare a report comparing deadly use of force by the LAPD to other large agencies in our country. This report should provide the basis for an informed discussion on the rate and manner of the Department's uses of force.
3. Building on the comments of Chief Beck last week, that the Department work with the Inspector General and the Commission's Use of Force sub-committee, consisting of Commissioner Saltzman, and myself to develop an annual categorical use of force report format, with the emphasis on breaking down uses of force in a manner that is useful to the Police commission in its oversight and policy-making role, the Department, and the public. A final draft of the format should be completed for review and approval by the Commission within 30 days, to be implemented by the Department 60 days from Commission approval.
4. That the office of the Inspector General review the Department's use of what is commonly called "less than lethal force" to examine how the Department can improve the use of Tasers, Bean Bag Shotguns and other less than lethal options, particularly in the handling of persons suspected of being mentally ill and the handling of persons with knives or weapons other than firearms, in an effort to reduce incidents of Officer involved Shootings.
5. That the office of the Inspector General monitor and attend the new training initiatives and issue a report evaluating their effectiveness once completed.
6. That the Department, in concert with the office of the Inspector General, develop a comprehensive audit and inspection plan related to Body Worn Cameras that reviews the usage of these cameras to identify training issues, concerns with existing policies, and constitutional policing issues. The office of the Inspector General is further asked to design its own plans to monitor the use of these videos.

It is important to note that these audits and reports are not ends in and of themselves. They will be tools to guide us how and where we can improve the

Department. Once we have this information, it will be our collective responsibility -- the Department, this Commission, and the Community -- to use it to continue the reform efforts that began with the Consent Decree and to build the LAPD into the best trained, best equipped, most professional and most respected police organization in America. Together, we will make our City the safest big city in America, and become a model for constitutional policing for the nation.

Thank you.”