



COUNCIL AGENDA: 03/30/2021
FILE: 21-580
ITEM: 4.1

Memorandum

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember Sylvia Arenas
District 8

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: March 30, 2021

Approved

Date

Sylvia Arenas

03/30/2021

SUBJECT: ILLEGAL STREET RACING

RECOMMENDATION

1. Approve the February 25, 2021 memo from Councilmember Esparza and Davis to direct the City Attorney to draft an ordinance targeting promoters of illegal street racing and sideshows.
2. Direct the City Attorney to draft the ordinance, without creating a criminal history for youth, and explore a tiered approach to fine repeat violators for vandalizing and damaging city roads (damage from donuts, drifting, burnouts, etc.) and using these funds to invest in the City's Vision Zero Initiative and the implementation of traffic calming measures.
3. Direct the City Manager to include an equity lens in the proposed process for the selection of the five initial locations for physical deterrents to street racing to include at least one location in Foothill Division and one in Southern Division.
4. Direct the City Manager to explore private/public partnerships to strategically install Automated License Plate Reader stationary/trailers at known gathering locations and retail plazas for illegal street racing, including but not limited to Capitol Expressway & Tully Road, Aborn Square on Capitol Expressway, and Aborn Road & Aborn Court.

BACKGROUND

Thank you to Councilmembers Esparza and Davis for bringing the Council's attention to the issue of illegal street racing that has been a rising concern citywide and particularly in District 8 where we have more open space, wider intersections, and empty parking lots. The City of San Jose has a long history of reckless driving exhibitions, also known as donuts and illegal street racing and sideshows, which has resulted in unsafe road conditions and traffic fatalities.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the amount of public safety concerns regarding street racing and reckless driving exhibitions have drastically increased. From January to October 2020, SJPD's Foothill Division reported there to be over twenty cases of reckless driving, speeding, and illegal sideshow activities. In just the intersection of S. White Road & Tully Road alone, there have been at least three separate cases of reckless driving, one case of illegal speed racing, and one case of speeding. Intersections in the Foothill Division with the highest amount of reports of illegal street racing and sideshow activities include, but are not limited to, S. White Road & Tully Road, Tully Road & Ruby Avenue, Aborn Road & Ruby Avenue, and more – with sometimes over one hundred spectators in attendance.

Illegal street racing and sideshows have resulted in rising concerns for public safety for children and families. This has prompted my partnership with DOT to find immediate solutions for our residents in District 8 by piloting the quick build physical deterrent at Tully Road & Ruby Avenue. I encourage the partnership with DOT and SJPD to include equity in the selection of the five initial locations for physical deterrents to street racing to include other locations in District 8 and the Foothill Division without compromising the current significant work underway by DOT.

Similar to the City of San Jose – the City and County of San Francisco and the City of Santa Ana have experienced an increase in sideshows activity during the pandemic. In September 2020, San Francisco proposed an ordinance permitting the impoundment of any vehicle involved in illegal sideshow races and installing traffic cameras in high interest intersections to hold violators accountable. The City of Santa Ana recently launched their “STEARRRED” Program (Selective Traffic Enforcement Against Racing and Reckless Driving) in September to address illegal street races, where they are exploring fining violators for vandalizing, damaging city roads, and considering narrowing streets by using existing infrastructure plans (pavement plans, bike plans, etc.).

We should also explore a tiered approach to fine repeat violators for vandalizing and damaging city roads (damage from donuts, drifting, burnouts, etc.), similar to our tiered approach to fine illegal firework violations. Fines collected from repeat violators may also be used to invest in the City's Vision Zero Initiative and the implementation of traffic calming measures including but not limited to physical deterrent quick build pilots, speed bumps, narrowing streets, and edge lines to counter donuts and sideshows activity. By investing in enforcement and infrastructure, we are also investing in the public safety of our community and ensuring that we restore peace of mind, neighborhood pedestrian walkability, and quality of life to our residents.