



CITY OF
VENTURA

City Council

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VENTURA COUNTY
GRAND JURY

June 14, 2007

The Honorable Colleen Toy White, Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California, Ventura County
P. O. Box 5489
Ventura, CA 93006

Dear Judge White:

This is the Ventura Police Department's response to findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Ventura County Grand Jury 2006-2007 "Port Safety: Ventura Port District" request.

F-13: Reduced staffing levels of the VPD have negatively impacted the delivery of certain services throughout the City, including the District, such as responses to alarms and non-injury traffic accidents.

Response F-13: Concur in part - A more accurate finding would indicate the lack of funding for additional sworn officers to match City growth, not "reduced staffing levels." In 2007, the Ventura Police Department has the same number of sworn officers as in 1992. The City Council has provided funding for six additional officers during fiscal year 2007-2008. These officers will be assigned to provide targeted patrol to identified problem areas and increase gang enforcement.

F-14: Response to District owned properties by VPD may often take 20-25 minutes because of the unique geographic location of the properties within the City.

Response F-14: Concur in part - The Ventura Police Department responds to "Priority One" (emergency) calls for service within five minutes approximately 60 percent of the time. Non-emergency calls for service response may take upwards of 20-25 minutes based upon call volume as with other parts of the city. All calls for service within the district are handled with the same response criteria as calls for service throughout the rest of the city.

F-15: There is no VPD sub-station serving the properties owned by the district. There is also no designated beat officer from VPD serving as a waterfront beat liaison to the Harbor Patrol.

Response F-15: Concur - The Ventura Police Department currently operates across the City on a four beat system. Patrol officers are assigned to specific beats for a period of one year. The Harbor district area is located within the boundaries of beat two. During the period of 1995-2000, the Ventura Port District provided funding for a police officer to provide direct patrol services to the district and serve as a liaison to the harbor patrol. The district also provided space in the retail area of Harbor Village, which was used as a police storefront. The position and storefront was eliminated after the Port District discontinued funding.

C-04: The VPD is not contractually obligated to provide the District with additional patrol and services to its properties.

C-05: Inadequate staffing levels of the VPD have affected delivery of some basic services to the residents of Ventura. Responses through out the City, including those to District properties, are often delayed.

C-06: The Harbor Patrol usually acts as first responders to public safety incidents occurring on District properties. Harbor Patrol Officers occasionally act as first responders for incidents nearby but outside District properties.

R—02: The district should execute formal agreements with VPD and the VCSD defining their operational and jurisdictional interface between the Harbor Patrol and those agencies.

Responses: C-4-6 & R-2: Concur in part - Although no formal MOU is currently known to exist between the Ventura Port District and the Ventura Police Department, the following summarizes the operational practices that have existed for decades between the two agencies:

The City of Ventura Police Department is responsible for general law enforcement duties throughout the territorial limits of the City, which includes the Ventura Port District. Therefore, Ventura Police has jurisdiction concurrent with Port District officials.

The Ventura Harbormaster assumes primary responsibility for enforcement of all water-oriented requirements of the Harbor and Navigation Code as well as other codes dealing with boating and harbor operations. The Port District also provides general patrol of land areas within the District, as well as limited traffic enforcement based on District Ordinances. The harbormaster provides, within limits, assistance to police in situations requiring a water approach. The harbormaster shall assume primary responsibility for rendering aid and assistance to any boats in the Ventura Harbor.

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Occasionally, a citizen will report a public safety incident directly to the harbor patrol either by phone or marine band radio. However, all 9-1-1 calls from within the district are routed directly to the Ventura Police Department. If a response is needed, the police department will dispatch their officers or request the services of the Ventura Fire Department in the cases of fire or medical issues. Harbor Patrol is not routinely requested to respond to an incident by the Ventura Police Department.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Carl E. Morehouse".

Carl E. Morehouse, AICP
Mayor