



## NEWS RELEASE CITY OF LAGUNA HILLS

July 26, 2022

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **LAGUNA HILLS CITY COUNCIL PASSES SERIES OF ENHANCEMENTS TO PUBLIC SAFETY PROGRAMS IN LAGUNA HILLS.**

**LAGUNA HILLS** – While crime rates in Laguna Hills remain low compared to most nearby communities, improving community safety remains a top priority for the City. The City Council has said they want to do all they can at the local level to protect residents’ property and enhance the feeling of safety in Laguna Hills.

**The Neighborhood Safety Enhancement Plan passed by the City Council includes:**

- **Increased Orange County Deputy Sheriff’s Staffing Levels**

Laguna Hills’ Fiscal Year 2022/23 Budget adds one Deputy Sheriff Patrol position, and the City is exploring options to add additional deputies and community service officers.

The City has also added a Crime Prevention Specialist position. This position develops, and participates in crime prevention programs (Neighborhood/Business Watch) and community relations activities for the Sheriff’s Department.

- **Increased Deputy Sheriff Patrols through Overtime Deployment and Mutual Aid.** (Various positions will be filled on an overtime basis to supplement existing patrols.)

- **Two Patrol Deputies** to provide high visibility enforcement.
- **Two Motor Deputies** to provide high visibility traffic enforcement.
- **Two Community Services Officers** to provide high visibility parking enforcement and traffic collision investigation.
- **Mounted Deputies** to provide high visibility enforcement on the City’s multi use trails.
- **Search and Rescue Deputies** to provide high visibility enforcement on the City’s multi use trails in marked all-terrain vehicles.

- **Bike Patrol Deputies** to provide high visibility enforcement on bike trails throughout the City.
- **Laguna Hills will hire private Security Guards to also patrol neighborhoods at night, working in collaboration with Laguna Hills Police Services.**
  - Private security guards will enable Laguna Hills to increase the number of patrol vehicles during the critical overnight hours, with the goal of nearly doubling the number of patrol cars normally on Laguna Hills streets overnight.
  - The security guards will not carry out law enforcement actions, but will observe and report suspicious activity to Sheriff's dispatch for fast response. They will also provide a highly visible nighttime presence driving through Laguna Hills residential neighborhoods, shopping centers, and public facilities.
  - The security guards will be hired on a two-month contract, and their effectiveness will be evaluated over that time period before a decision is made on continuing their services.
- **Expanding the number of Automatic License Plate Reading (ALPR) cameras in Laguna Hills.**
  - The ALPR cameras, part of the City's Advanced Surveillance and Protection System, alert the Deputy Sheriffs when a wanted vehicle has passed the cameras, enabling Deputy Sheriffs to find suspects wanted for criminal activity.
  - The City of Laguna Hills' investment in this high-tech video system is above and beyond what most cities do for public safety and has paid off with the arrest of several dozen suspects since its installation, catching suspects before they can commit crimes in Laguna Hills and tracking down those who have.
  - The City currently has 20 ALPRs strategically placed around the City, and is exploring options and funding sources to deploy more.
- **Other steps in the plan include:**
  - **Laguna Hills Community Center and Sports Complex Security Improvements:** Staff and Sheriff personnel have assessed the outdoor areas of the Community Center and Sports Complex to identify blind spot areas for the placement of additional security cameras and lighting. The final security camera and lighting plan will be presented to the City Council for its approval on August 23, 2022. In addition, signs have been installed throughout the sports complex facility to inform the public that the area is under surveillance and provides instructions on how to report suspicious activity.
  - **Home Security Checks:** A Crime Prevention Specialist will perform a detailed security analysis of the interior and exterior of your home and personal safety habits. You will be provided with a list of suggestions for improving the vulnerable areas in and around your home. This service is free of charge.
  - **Vacation Patrol Checks:** Deputies will provide patrol checks of your home while you are away on vacation or business. This service is free of charge.
  - Email [CrimePrevention@LagunaHillsCA.gov](mailto:CrimePrevention@LagunaHillsCA.gov) to schedule your Home Security or Vacation Patrol Check.

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The City is also drafting an ordinance making it a violation of the Laguna Hills Municipal Code to possess uninstalled catalytic converters without proper receipts. This step gives law enforcement greater tools to arrest and prosecute thieves in possession of stolen devices.

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