

Subject: Enforcement on Melrose
From: Shannon Paulson <30253@lapd.online>
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To: Wilshire CRO <wilshirecro@lapd.online>

Good morning Wilshire Community,

This past weekend I had an opportunity to conduct a foot beat for several hours up on Melrose with some of my personnel. In light of some observations and experiences there, I wanted to reach out and make sure there is a full understanding of our police presence and activity there.

As many of you are aware, we are concerned the recent spike in criminal activity, which has included acts of extreme violence. We have also grown aware of other lesser crime and nuisance behavior which is growing more prevalent there. Our experience in other parts of the City, is that some of this nuisance behavior can attract, or even help to conceal, the larger criminal issues. The growing illegal vending issue, for instance, has in many areas of the City attracted persons who will use some of those vendors to hide drug sales, or will outright extort them (essentially charge them “protection” or “rent” for their portion of the sidewalk). We have found that additional inappropriate and illegal activity is occurring around illegally parked vehicles, both on Melrose and on the side streets surrounding Melrose.

Many of your neighboring business owners have a valid concern regarding their own status as they pay all the legitimate fees and taxes to operate their businesses, and now are competing with, or finding their business further negatively impacted, by persons taking over the sidewalk or selling from the trunks of their cars.

Finally, lets be frank, simple human nature dictates that if these issues go unaddressed, they will only multiply and the problem will grow in magnitude. As I stated before, any of my more tenured officers can attest to our experience that simple “nuisance” issues of this nature will at some point (if it hasn’t already) attract the far greater criminal behaviors and place the surrounding community at greater risk. This is not always directly because of those currently involved in the vending themselves, but simply because of the opportunity their presence presents to other more nefarious elements of our society.

You will find my officers, and the additional resources such as the Mounted unit and traffic officers, will be addressing many of these issues with a high level of enforcement attention at the same time they are obviously making every effort to address and prevent the serious crime issues. To that end, please understand we have no choice but to apply the laws universally. For instance, if we are enforcing vehicle and parking violations, we must do so for all vehicles we see in violation. My officers cannot, and will not, be free to make a distinction between a resident, a business owner, a “legitimate” visitor to the region, and someone who is (by some unknown definition) “less” legitimate.

My personnel and I are currently compiling a plan to specifically address the illegal vending. They are engaged in illegal activity and are creating an environment that puts themselves at risk and adds to an appearance of lawlessness which invites other unwelcome behaviors. That being said, I fully acknowledge that a large number of the vendors on Melrose are largely honest individuals who are likely trying to make an income during these challenging

times. So, our plan will first involve education, warnings and attempts to gain voluntary compliance. We will engage in this warning campaign for a couple of weeks before taking more aggressive enforcement action.

Captain Shannon K. Paulson
Commanding Officer
Wilshire Area
Los Angeles Police Department