



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:15-4796

Agenda Item Number: 3.

Agenda Date: 9/2/2015

In Control: Criminal Justice, Public Safety and Services Committee

DEPARTMENT: San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) Transportation and Capital Improvements (TCI)

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Anthony Trevino and Terry Bellamy

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City-wide

SUBJECT:

Briefing on effort to install signs at City entry points alerting the public to the recently approved ordinance prohibiting the use of a hand-held mobile communication device while operating a motor vehicle.

SUMMARY:

This item will provide a briefing and staff's recommendation on the installation of signs at the City's entry points alerting the public to the ordinance prohibiting the use of a hand-held mobile communication device while operating a mother vehicle that went into effect January 1, 2015.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On November 6, 2014, City Council approved a "Hands Free" Ordinance prohibiting the use of a hand-held mobile communication device while operating a motor vehicle. The Ordinance took effect on January 1, 2015 with a 30-day grace period. Only warning citations were issued during the first 30 days following the effective date of the Ordinance to allow the City of San Antonio to inform the public about the importance and requirements of the new Ordinance. Regulations pertaining to the use of hand-held mobile communication devices while operating a motor vehicle can be found in Section 19-255 of the City Ordinance. An offense under this section is subject to a fine of not more than \$200. San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) has issued approximately 6,000 citations for hands-free ordinance violations in the first five months of 2015.

In efforts of informing the public of the new "Hands Free" ordinance, the SAPD PIO Office began a public education effort. In early December, SAPD produced two Public Service Announcements (PSA's) to encourage San Antonio Drivers to "Keep 'Em on The Wheel". The PSA's were produced to appeal to a wide range of demographics, but with the same consistent message. The PSA's notified the public of the hazards of phone use

while driving, the passage of the new ordinance, the January 1, 2015 grace period, and the February 1, 2015 enforcement period. The PSA's and accompanying graphics content were given to all local media outlets, shared with other city departments, prominently posted on SAPD's website, and pushed out on heavy rotation via SAPD's various social media platforms. Additionally, SAPD PIO worked with TxDOT to craft a message for Transguide signage on all local expressways with the idea of informing as many daily motorists about the ordinance as possible.

ISSUE:

During the August 5, 2015 Public Safety Council Committee discussion on the "Hands Free" ordinance, Councilman Gallagher requested Transportation & Capital Improvements assess the option of installing signs at the City's entry points alerting the public to the recently approved ordinance. TCI is working closely with the Texas Department of Public Transportation (TxDOT) regarding sign requirements and alternatives.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is for briefing purposes. TCI continues to assess the number of necessary signs and associated costs and funding that will pay for this effort.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.