



MEMORANDUM

Date: December 20, 2022
To: Tracy City Council via Sekou Millington, Chief of Police
From: Ricardo Hernandez, Lieutenant
Re: City of Tracy Sideshow activity on 12/4/2022

During the City Council Meeting of December 13, 2022, Council Member Davis requested information on Tracy Police Department's response to sideshow event that occurred on December 4th. The following information is provided in response to the request.

A sideshow is an informal demonstration of automotive stunts now often held in vacant parking lots and public intersections. Common activities at sideshows include doughnuts, burnouts, and reckless driving. They often involve spectators participating by running in between moving cars.

Sideshows result in the blockage of public roads, highways, and intersections. In this regard, they can have significant traffic impacts, including the blockage of police, fire, or ambulance vehicles responding to calls for service. Sideshows can also result in adverse impacts to public and private property. They can cause damage to city roads, sidewalks, and other utilities. They can also result in damage to private property on which events occur, usually without the knowledge of the property owner.

Governor Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill (AB) 2000, which will prohibit street racing and sideshows from occurring in parking lots across the state. The bipartisan measure, authored by Assembly member Jesse Gabriel (D - Woodland Hills), aims to crack down on dangerous driving—including street racing, "sideshows," and street takeovers—which continue to cause injuries and fatalities across California. The Bill currently sits in the State Senate after passing the state assembly in a 69-0 vote.

On December 4, 2022, at approximately 6 P.M. Tracy Police officers assigned to patrol were dispatched to a call for service regarding reckless drivers having a "sideshow" in the area of Promontory Parkway and Hansen Road. The caller advised Tracy PD dispatch that approximately 50 vehicles were on scene along with spectators.

The on-duty Watch Commander responded to the call along with all available units on duty. There was a total of 5 patrol officers, one Sergeant, and one Lieutenant working at the time of the call for service was broadcasted. Due to other priority calls for service, 4 officers responded to the first sideshow incident at the above location.

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The Watch Commander was the second unit on scene after Officer's advised they did in fact confirm that a sideshow was occurring. Officers made these observations from a safe distance due to being significantly outnumbered by bystanders. Once a plan was made all responding officers activated their emergency lights hoping the crowd would disperse but the participants ignored the marked patrol vehicle presence. The entire intersection was blocked obstructing vehicular traffic in all directions.

Additional resources were called to the scene to assist due to the large number of vehicles. The Watch Commander requested that our Unmanned Aerial System (commonly known as a Drone) be deployed to gather intelligence and possibly identify the vehicle(s) who were actively participating in the sideshow. In an effort to enforce traffic violations, officers parked their patrol vehicles in the westbound lanes of Promontory Parkway to block in sideshow participants, but some vehicles just drove around his patrol vehicle as they left the area. The vast majority of the vehicles left the area in a northbound direction on Hansen Road towards Von Sosten Road in the Sheriff's Office jurisdiction. TPD officers followed the vehicles believing they had dispersed and left the area.

A short time later dispatch began receiving new calls of vehicles racing on W. Grant Line Road, and reports that two vehicles may have possibly collided. Officers responded to the scene to find that eastbound traffic was stopped at Joe Pombo Parkway. Due to the backup patrol vehicles could not drive eastbound. Patrol units had to drive eastbound in the westbound lane to observe what was occurring and to clear the roadway. Units observed vehicles doing "burnouts" in the intersection and a crowd of approximately 80 vehicles. The entire intersection had been taken over by the sideshow and the spectators and traffic was blocked in all directions. Again, we deployed UAS to identify specific offenders of the law, simultaneously dispatch received calls of "shots fired" in the same area of the sideshow. Officers witnessed fireworks being set off in the area of the intersection.

Based on various training, experience, and shared intelligence, it is known that participants and spectators of sideshows have a history of violence and gun possession. Officers were aware of the officer safety aspect that this sideshow could present; therefore, the on-scene Sergeant and Watch commander elected to gather intelligence utilizing the UAS and focus on the main participants. It is unsafe for a small number of officers to try and apprehend a suspect(s) in a blocked intersection.

As additional officers from our swing shift responded to the scene, details were being relayed from our UAS, describing the primary vehicle as white Camaro with a passenger hanging out of the passenger window. Based on the vehicles' fast pace, officers could not obtain a license plate for the vehicle. Our UAS did keep a constant visual on the vehicle and as it left the intersection, information was relayed to officers standing by that the Camaro had pulled in the southeast shopping center of the intersection. (It was later found that most vehicles at the sideshow covered their license plates or use novelty license plates). An enforcement stop was conducted on the white Camaro. Based on the calls regarding shots fired a high-risk enforcement stop was utilized on the Camaro. The driver was ultimately arrested for reckless driving and his vehicle was towed and stored for 30 days. The rest of the participants of the sideshow immediately left the area. We had no other calls for service regarding the illegal sideshow. The areas were checked for shell casings, but none were located.

As mentioned earlier, calls regarding the illegal sideshow came in without warning. We did not have any prior intelligence or warning that the sideshow was going to occur in our city limits. The original call at Promontory Parkway at Hansen Road came in at 6:05 PM and the vehicles left at 6:23 P.M. (18 minutes). During this time, we had requested the assistance from CHP but due to the short time it occurred they did not show up to assist. The second call at Corral Hollow Road and Grant Line was at 6:28 P.M. and from the time units were on scene to the high-risk vehicle stop of the white Camaro which occurred at 6:52 P.M. (14 minutes). During this time CHP and the Sheriff's Office was requested but they were unable to assist us in time to coordinate any enforcement efforts.

Tracy PD participates in the county-wide San Joaquin County sideshow Task Force but no intelligence was shared by neighboring agencies regarding a sideshow on this date. Historically the Tracy PD crime analyst position monitors known sideshow posts and events. This open-source monitoring of events still occurs. Since this incident, several Tracy PD officers were tasked with attending free online training hosted by the San Jose Police Department regarding sideshows, their tactics, and enforcement ideas that may be utilized by officers.

The general staffing model for a known sideshow event is roughly 20 officers to monitor and conduct enforcement actions due to the large number of participants. On the date of this incident TPD had no prior warning and did not have spare units to deploy, hence the request for mutual aid from CHP and the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office.

As a result of this incident one Officer has been assigned to gather additional intelligence regarding violators. It was learned through open source that the same group that converged in Tracy had shut down the San Francisco Bay Bridge for a sideshow and vandalized the bridge with graffiti. Currently, it is not a violation to be a spectator of a sideshow event in the City of Tracy. This is an open ongoing investigation to identify other violators and vehicles involved in the sideshow.

Respectfully,

Sekou Millington

Sekou Millington
Chief of Police