



City of Rialto

Legislation Text

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For City Council Meeting [July 27, 2021]

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

APPROVAL: Marcus Fuller, City Manager

FROM: Mark Kling, Police Chief

Sean Grayson, Fire Chief

Request City Council to Receive the 2021 Annual Firework After Action Report and Consider any Other Measures for Reducing the Significant Adverse Effects of all Fireworks on our Community.

(ACTION)

BACKGROUND

In July 2020, the City Council approved the creation of an ad hoc committee to research and make recommendations related to the ever-increasing use of illegal fireworks in the City. The committee worked with the combined staff from the Rialto Police and Fire Departments to assist in the development of a comprehensive, long-range plan to stop the significant adverse effects of all fireworks on our community. The recommendations of the committee were presented to City Council in January and May of 2021. The Rialto Police and Fire Departments integrated the recommendations of the committee into the Incident Action Plan for fireworks education, engagement/encouragement, engineering, and enforcement which was deployed in June and through the 4th of July holiday.

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION

The activities recommended by the committee and implemented by staff in 2021 were as follows:

Education/Engagement/Encouragement:

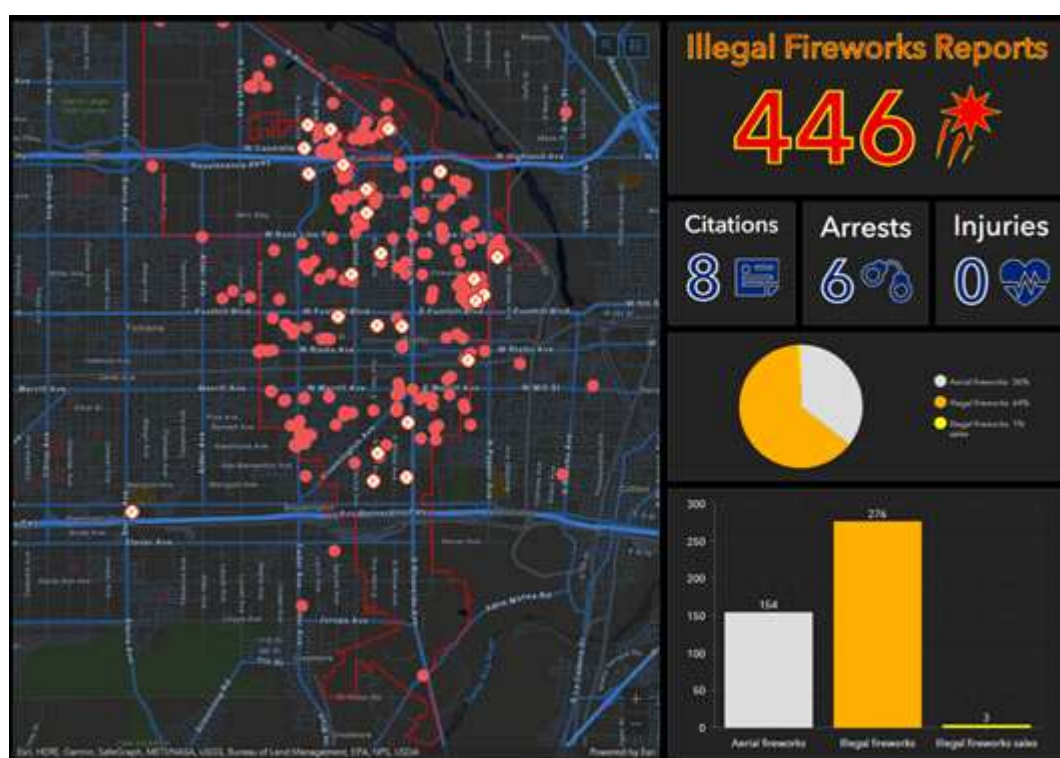
- Materials for education and community engagement were developed in English and Spanish and distributed by staff and committee members at various events and in partnership with local businesses.
- The City Clerk's Office created a fireworks page with information on how to report illegal fireworks, access to the fireworks application, the City's 4th of July Event and safety for community members and pets.
- Digital signage and billboard throughout the community were used to display educational materials specific to the City of Rialto with additional safety information posted in cooperation with CalFire.
- Social media was used extensively to share the collective message including various platforms from departments in the City and from community partners.
- Educational information was distributed by the Rialto Unified School District in support of safe 4th of July activities.
- Three-thousand Red, White, and Blue glow sticks to support safe 4th of July activities were

obtained through a fire prevention grant and distributed by police and fire personnel.

- Specific events were attended by staff and committee members to distribute materials.

Engineering:

City Staff worked with the City of Rialto ESRI consultant to create a firework reporting application (app). This reporting app brought in new technology that provided residents an alternative to report from their phone or computer. The reporting app reduced the impact on the 911 system, which allowed for more accurate reporting, and provided instant, precise information to the officers and fire investigators to catch violators in the act. Police and Fire personnel involved in enforcement utilized the app to receive reports and complaints and to document actions and resolution to the complaints. There were 446 uses of the app to report aerial fireworks, illegal fireworks and illegal fireworks sales. The information was collected and displayed in real-time to enforcement personnel as a map overlay.



Firework Enforcement Plan:

The Rialto Police Department (RPD) worked in close collaboration with the Rialto Fire Department (RFD) to a comprehensive and effective firework enforcement plan for the 2021 firework season. The following is a summary of the enforcement plan that was conducted:

- Enforcement started on June pairing RPD officers with RFD arson investigators.
- From June 30th through July 5th additional resources were deployed from both departments.
- Enforcement targeted geographical areas based on past trends as well as data collected in real time from calls for service and the newly created fireworks reporting application.

Firework Enforcement Results:

There was an overall decrease in fireworks related calls for services and 911 calls during the 4th of

July holiday and the fireworks reporting application was used at a significant level given its first year of use.

Calls for Service: 6/1 - 7/5	2020	2021	% Change
All Calls for Service - PD	11,099	11,652	up 4.98%
Fireworks Calls for Service - PD	825	383	down 53.58%
All Calls for Service - FD	938	1024	up 9.17%
Fireworks Calls for Service - FD	174	82	down 52.87%
Fires Caused by Fireworks	24	24	0.00%

Calls for Service: 7/4 only	2020	2021	% Change
All Calls for Service - PD	556	544	down 2.16%
Fireworks Calls for Service - PD	159	152	down 4.40%
All Calls for Service - FD	90	46	down 48.89%
Fireworks Calls for Service - FD	48	24	down 50%

Results	2020	2021	% Change
Confiscations	6,600	3,000	down 54.55%
Citations Issued	11	16	up 45.45%
Arrests	13	6	down 53.85%
Use of Online Anonymous "App"	N/A	446	N/A
Firework Booths Identified	23	25	up 8.70%

Significant Incidents:

On July 4, 2021, at approximately 9:16 P.M., the Rialto Police Department received numerous 9-1-1 calls in reference to an explosion at a residence in the 1300 block of N. Chestnut Avenue. Officers responded to the scene and found evidence of an explosion in the backyard of the residence. Officers located numerous pyrotechnic platforms and evidence of large amounts of illegal fireworks in the backyard of the home. The explosion caused structural damage, including multiple neighbors who reported their home windows being damaged due to the blast. Rialto detectives completed a follow up investigation and determined the homeowner and a second person performed the illegal fireworks show. Detectives located the second person in the City of Rancho Cucamonga a few days after the blast. The suspect, sustained serious burn injuries, and was charged with several felony crimes. Additionally, the Rialto police department is working with various city departments, including the city attorney, in assessing damage, and City costs that can be levied against the homeowner for allowing this event to occur. Felony charges for possession of explosive devices will be charged against the homeowner.

Future Recommendations from the Committee and Staff:

The fireworks ad hoc committee met to evaluate the results of its recommendations and provide recommendations for further action on July 14, 2021:

- Continue with all initiatives from 2021.
- Insert flyers/or a printed message to all city vendors to promote reporting app and other efforts, in all correspondence: invoices, checks, etc.
- Target electronic billboards earlier.
- Maintain website resources; especially resources for pets.
- Increase in-classroom educational outreach.
- Use Ontario, Los Angeles City, and Rialto fireworks incidents for educational purposes.
- Increase use of social media.
- Create community risk reduction work group to continue the volunteer work of community members.
- Make fireworks engagement a year-round activity.
- Engage community members (including committee members) to serve as fireworks education ambassadors at City events.
- Begin enforcement earlier in May.
- Expand the use of the application and make available for year-round data gathering.
- In community patrol by city staff for presence and visibility in areas of concern.
- Additional units and personnel available for fireworks enforcement.
- Make municipal code changes supportive of higher fines and deterrent strategies to combat the impacts of fireworks on the community.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The request is not a Project as defined by Section 15378 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. A “Project” means the whole of an action, which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. By definition, a Project does not include: The creation of government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment according to Section 15378 (b)(4) of the CEQA Guidelines.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

The City of Rialto General Plan establishes various guiding principles, goals, and objectives through which the City looks to improve the community and protect the quality of life for our residents. The proposed item supports the General Plan in the following areas:

Goal 5-3: To Increase the City’s fire protection capabilities and implement fire prevention regulations and standards that minimize potential fire hazards and fire losses.

LEGAL REVIEW

The City Attorney has reviewed and supports this staff report.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Operating Budget Impact

There is no operating budget impact.

Capital Improvement Budget Impact

There will be no impact to the Capital Improvement Budget impact.

Licensing

This action does not require a business license.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council receive the 2021 Annual Firework After Action Report and consider any other measures for reducing the significant adverse effects of all fireworks on our community.