

COUNCIL MEETING
November 24, 2009

Honorable Mayor and Members
of the Torrance City Council
City Hall
Torrance, California

Members of the Council:

SUBJECT: Police - Appropriate and allocate asset forfeiture funds for the planning and design of a forensics lab and field equipment storage. Expenditure: \$50,000.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation of the Police Chief that City Council appropriate and allocate \$50,000 of asset forfeiture funds for the planning and design of two capital improvements to the Police facility:

1. Reallocation and renovation of existing space to update the aging crime lab into a modern police forensics lab. Expenditure: \$35,000.; and
2. Addition of a structure within the Police compound for field equipment storage. Expenditure: \$15,000.

Funding

Funding is available in the U.S. Department of Justice Unappropriated Asset Forfeiture account.

BACKGROUND

The Torrance Police Department has received approval from the Department of Justice to use asset forfeiture funds for the planning and design of a forensics lab and an equipment storage facility. The cost for planning and design is estimated to be \$50,000 for both projects, for a total proposed use of \$50,000 of asset forfeiture funds.

ANALYSIS

The Police Department's existing crime lab is housed in one small room that has not been updated in almost thirty years. The lab must be expanded and refurbished to accommodate a professional forensic staff and to support modern evidence processing. The Police Department has identified approximately 2,500 square feet of existing space within the Police facility for renovation. The space to be reconfigured currently houses a training office, storage for field officers' equipment, and a computer

forensics lab, all of which must be relocated. The training office and computer forensics lab will be relocated within the existing space. This project will involve reconfiguration of existing work areas to provide a larger, contiguous space for the new forensics lab and secure cold storage for evidence. Cold storage is needed for retaining forensic evidence processed in Torrance, as well as to retain evidence analyzed by the County of Los Angeles. Due to budget constraints, the County Coroner and County Crime Lab will no longer store forensic evidence for Torrance cases; this increases the volume of space we need for cold storage. The cost to plan and design the forensic lab renovation project, including evidence storage, is estimated at \$35,000.

Approximately 1,500 square feet of new, additional space is needed for storing field officers' equipment, including vests, helmets, radios, Tasers, SWAT gear, and other items. The equipment will be moved to a free-standing storage shelter that will be constructed adjacent to the Police facility, within the Department's enclosed compound. This new storage space will give officers rapid access to field equipment, allow electronic equipment to recharge while stored, and facilitate accurate inventory control of field equipment and supplies. The cost to plan and design the storage shelter project is estimated at \$15,000.

The proposed activities of planning and designing a forensic lab and an equipment storage facility are congruous with DOJ Asset Forfeiture priorities. After completing the planning and design stage, the Department will be able to pursue emerging funding opportunities for these "shovel-ready" projects. These projects ultimately will lead to police service enhancements and the improvement of police facilities.

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN J. NEU
CHIEF OF POLICE



By Lt. Ross Bartlett
Services Division Commander

CONCUR:



John J. Neu
Chief of Police



LeRoy J. Jackson
City Manager