



# STAFF REPORT

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October 11, 2023  
File Number 0480-70

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## **SUBJECT**

**FY 2023-24 STATE OF CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF TRAFFIC SAFETY SELECTIVE TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM (STEP) GRANT AND BUDGET ADJUSTMENT**

## **DEPARTMENT**

Police Department

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Request the City Council Adopt Resolution No. 2023-133 authorizing the Escondido Police Department to accept a FY 2023-24 California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) Selective Traffic Enforcement Program ("STEP") Grant in the amount of \$495,000; authorize the Chief of Police or his designee to execute grant documents on behalf of the City; and approve budget adjustments needed to spend grant funds. The Police Department will use grant funds to pay salary and benefits for one full-time DUI traffic enforcement officer, traffic safety supplies, DUI checkpoints, saturation patrols, and traffic safety enforcement details.

Staff Recommendation: Approval (Police Department: Edward Varso, Chief of Police)

Presenter: Edward Varso, Chief of Police

## **FISCAL ANALYSIS**

This action will have no impact on the FY 2023-24 General Fund Budget. Grant funds will be used for salary and benefits for one full-time DUI traffic enforcement officer. The grant will also fund expenses related to traffic safety enforcement activities and traffic safety supplies. Funding will cover expenses from October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024.

## **PREVIOUS ACTION**

The City Council authorized the Escondido Police Department to accept a FY 2022-23 California OTS Selective Traffic Enforcement Grant in the amount of \$485,000 on October 12, 2022. Grant funds covered salary and benefits for one full-time DUI traffic enforcement officer, traffic safety supplies, DUI checkpoints, saturation patrols, and traffic safety enforcement details.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Escondido Police Department received a FY 2023-24 California OTS STEP Grant in the amount of \$495,000. Grant funds will enhance traffic safety programs during the operational period of October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024.



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The Police Department will use grant funds to improve community safety by focusing on the following traffic issues: drunk driving, distracted driving, excessive speed, pedestrian safety, bicycle safety motorcycle safety, and general traffic safety.

### Escondido's Need for Traffic Safety Funding

Compared to similar sized cities, Escondido ranks amongst the worst in the state for victims killed and injured in crashes. Alcohol related collisions were a specific problem for Escondido. The OTS Rankings were developed so similar sized cities can compare traffic safety statistics. OTS ranks cities from highest or worst to best, with "1" being the worst. For example, a ranking of 1/61 is the highest or worst, 29/61 is average, and 61/61 is the lowest or best. Escondido ranks in the top ten worst in several categories, including fatalities, injuries, and alcohol related crashes.

The most current OTS rankings are based on data from 2020. According to the 2020 composite traffic safety statistics, Escondido ranked 15th worst out of 61 California cities of similar size, which is an improvement from 14th worst in 2019. Slight improvements from 2019 to 2020 are encouraging. This grant funding will allow focused efforts to continue addressing Escondido's traffic safety issues.

| Ranking Description   | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|---|------|------|------|
| Worst for fatal and injury traffic collisions                   | 9th  | 11th | 8th  |
| Worst for alcohol related fatal and injury collisions           | 8th  | 13th | 7th  |
| Worst for under 21-year-old driver had been drinking collisions | 3rd  | 40th | 35th |
| Worst for 21-34-year old driver had been drinking collisions    | 8th  | 19th | 7th  |
| Worst for collisions involving a motorcycle                     | 6th  | 15th | 8th  |

### Escondido's Most Current OTS Crash Rankings (2020)

| TYPE OF CRASH                    | 2018 VICTIMS KILLED & INJURED | 2018 OTS RANKING | 2019 VICTIMS KILLED & INJURED | 2019 OTS RANKING | 2020 VICTIMS KILLED & INJURED | 2020 OTS RANKING |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Total Fatal and Injury           | 972                           | 9/59             | 936                           | 11/59            | 779                           | 8/61             |
| Alcohol Involved                 | 112                           | 8/59             | 103                           | 13/59            | 91                            | 7/61             |
| Had Been Drinking Driver < 21    | 7                             | 3/59             | 1                             | 40/59            | 2                             | 35/61            |
| Had Been Drinking Driver 21 - 34 | 37                            | 8/59             | 16                            | 19/59            | 32                            | 7/61             |
| Motorcycles                      | 53                            | 6/59             | 31                            | 15/59            | 41                            | 8/61             |
| Pedestrians                      | 70                            | 12/59            | 40                            | 33/59            | 45                            | 15/61            |
| Pedestrians < 15                 | 7                             | 18/59            | 5                             | 25/59            | 6                             | 6/61             |
| Pedestrians 65+                  | 8                             | 18/59            | 8                             | 18/59            | 3                             | 44/61            |
| Bicyclists                       | 41                            | 32/59            | 45                            | 14/59            | 36                            | 15/61            |
| Bicyclists < 15                  | 4                             | 29/59            | 3                             | 30/59            | 3                             | 22/61            |
| Composite*                       | 435                           | 10/59            | 428                           | 14/59            | 321                           | 15/61            |

\*Composite figures which show rankings only, are an aggregate of several of the other rankings (Had been drinking under 21, alcohol involved, hit & run, nighttime and speed crashes). These figures are a means to give an indication of overall traffic safety



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Historical data shows Escondido’s traffic safety rankings over the past several years.

- In 2012, Escondido ranked the worst overall, receiving the number one spot (1/56)
- In 2015, Escondido ranked second worst overall (2/57)
- In 2017, Escondido ranked fifth worst (5/58)
- In 2018, Escondido ranked tenth worst (10/59)
- In 2019, Escondido ranked fourteenth worst (14/59)
- In 2020, Escondido ranked fifteenth worst (15/19)

Since 2005, Escondido’s traffic safety has gradually improved. The OTS STEP Grant will allow education and proactive enforcement to continue this trend.

Escondido consistently maintains high DUI arrest rates. DUI arrests are a major factor in reducing alcohol related collisions. High DUI arrests are often a result of OTS grant funded operations.

Below are the historical OTS Rankings of the City of Escondido:

| Historical OTS Rankings and Data     |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Description                          | 2005  | 2006  | 2007  | 2008  | 2009  | 2010  | 2011  | 2012  | 2013  | 2014  | 2015  | 2016  | 2017  | 2018  | 2019  | 2020  |
| <b>Total Fatal/Injuries</b>          | 1,268 | 1,238 | 1,095 | 988   | 844   | 888   | 890   | 959   | 832   | 1,215 | 1,131 | 1,088 | 1,010 | 972   | 936   | 779   |
| <b>OTS Ranking</b>                   | 6/50  | 5/50  | 6/52  | 6/55  | 13/56 | 8/53  | 7/55  | 6/56  | 10/56 | 4/57  | 4/57  | 11/58 | 8/58  | 9/59  | 11/59 | 8/61  |
| <b>Alcohol Related Fatal/Injured</b> | 182   | 143   | 128   | 138   | 99    | 106   | 92    | 102   | 78    | 113   | 169   | 126   | 121   | 112   | 103   | 91    |
| <b>OTS Ranking</b>                   | 1/50  | 3/50  | 3/52  | 3/55  | 7/56  | 3/53  | 7/55  | 3/56  | 17/56 | 10/57 | 2/57  | 10/58 | 3/58  | 8/59  | 13/59 | 7/61  |
| <b>Pedestrian Injured/Killed</b>     | 45    | 59    | 76    | 57    | 53    | 57    | 55    | 70    | 54    | 68    | 76    | 77    | 62    | 70    | 40    | 45    |
| <b>OTS Ranking</b>                   | 26/50 | 12/50 | 5/52  | 13/55 | 18/56 | 8/53  | 14/55 | 7/56  | 12/56 | 10/57 | 11/57 | 16/58 | 18/58 | 12/59 | 33/59 | 15/61 |
| <b>Fatal/Injury Hit &amp; Runs</b>   | 103   | 104   | 100   | 80    | 68    | 72    | 75    | 74    | 62    | 97    | 97    | 69    | 63    | 60    | 73    | 54    |
| <b>OTS Ranking</b>                   | 3/50  | 2/50  | 2/52  | 3/55  | 4/56  | 2/53  | 3/55  | 2/56  | 8/56  | 3/57  | 7/57  | 19/58 | 23/58 | 25/59 | 14/59 | 17/61 |
| <b>DUI Arrests</b>                   | 1,030 | 1,066 | 911   | 828   | 861   | 841   | 607   | 545   | 377   | 399   | 412   | 415   | 498   | N/A   | 493   | 517   |
| <b>OTS Ranking</b>                   | 49/49 | 48/50 | 47/52 | 49/55 | 50/56 | 49/53 | 47/55 | 45/56 | 36/56 | 42/57 | 42/57 | N/A   | 54/58 | N/A   | 50/59 | 60/61 |
| <b>Composite OTS Ranking</b>         | 3/50  | 4/50  | 4/52  | 6/55  | 6/56  | 4/53  | 9/55  | 1/56  | 8/56  | 3/57  | 2/57  | 10/58 | 5/58  | 10/59 | 14/59 | 15/61 |

### Traffic Collisions in Escondido

In 2022, there were approximately 2,784 calls for service of reported traffic collisions in Escondido.

The statistical breakdown of the 2022 collisions:

- 966 of the 2,784 reported collisions involved injuries, fatalities and hit & runs.
  - 247 of the 2,784 collisions in Escondido involved alcohol, a slight increase from last year.



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### Grant Funding Making a Difference

OTS STEP Grant funding keeps drunk drivers off our community's streets. From October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023, OTS STEP grant funding resulted in the following accomplishments:

- 196 DUI arrests, which is more than half of the Department's total DUI arrests
- 1,779 citations of traffic offenses issued

The current OTS STEP Grant proposal funds similar activities and operations.

### Grant Provider and Funding Intention

OTS takes a leadership role in efforts to make California roadways safe for all users. OTS provides an effective means of eliminating fatalities, injuries, and economic losses resulting from crashes. Through grant funding made available to California by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), OTS annually funds over \$80 million dollars in innovative, evidence-based education and enforcement programs and technologies designed to make California's roadways safer. OTS is determined to identify and overcome new traffic safety issues as travel habits change and transportation technologies emerge.

### Escondido's Grant Description

The purpose of the STEP Grant is to reduce the number of persons killed and injured in crashes involving alcohol and other primary collision factors in Escondido. Evidence-based strategies, including education and traffic safety enforcement, will be the primary focus of this project. The funded strategies will include impaired driving enforcement, enforcement operations focusing on primary collision factors, distracted driving, special enforcement operations encouraging motorcycle safety, enforcement and public awareness in areas with a high number of bicycle and pedestrian crashes, and educational programs. These strategies are designed to earn media attention, which will help the community focus on traffic safety.

### Project Details and Investment

#### DUI Officer

- Personnel Costs: DUI Officer: \$109,616 salary and \$59,226 benefits
  - One officer assigned full-time to the Traffic Division will focus on DUI prevention; community engagement, education and awareness; and DUI enforcement
  - Salary and the following benefits are covered by the grant: Medicare, Dental, Life Insurance, State Unemployment Insurance, Benefits Admin Costs, PERS, Medical, and Workers Comp



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### Deliverables and Operations

In accordance with non-supplanting rules, the following grant funded operations must be worked as overtime events. Non-supplanting rules require grant funds to augment, not replace, general fund monies.

- DUI Saturation Patrols: \$116,090
  - Operation Intent: Prevent alcohol related collisions and DUIs
    - Operations include officers patrolling the city with the sole purpose of spotting and stopping drunk drivers; officers working these operations do not respond to routine calls and augment standard patrol efforts
    - Operations usually include five to six officers focusing on locating DUI suspects
    - Operational period lasts up to 10 hours, mostly during weekends, holidays and major events
    - Operations are data driven, focusing on areas and times that frequently experience alcohol related traffic problems
  
- DUI Checkpoints: \$63,870
  - Operation Intent: Public awareness and DUI deterrence
    - OTS requires six operations during the grant period
    - Operations are carefully planned to ensure community and officer safety
    - Drivers are randomly selected to enter the checkpoint area
      - Selection process involves using a neutral formula, for example 10 officers are working at the checkpoint entrance, so 10 vehicles are selected to proceed to the screening area, while remaining vehicles pass through without officer interaction
      - Officers engage in polite conversation including educational explanation of checkpoint and questions about alcohol consumption
      - Drivers that do not show signs of impairment nor pose a risk to traffic safety receive educational material and are then directed out of the checkpoint area
    - Officers must adhere to a set of procedures
    - Standard operating procedures and reports are required for each checkpoint
    - Checkpoints are publicized 48 hours in advance through media outlets, Nixle, Twitter, Facebook, and the Police Department's website
    - Checkpoints are data driven based on times, locations, and dates that are high risk for alcohol related problems, such as holidays, Super Bowl Sunday, and major local events
    - Educational pamphlets, in English and Spanish, are provided to drivers that pass through the checkpoint



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- Traffic Enforcement Operations: \$36,600
  - Operation Intent: Community safety through reduction of traffic collisions related to excessive speed and violations identified as primary collision factors
    - Operations include officers patrolling the city with the sole purpose of stopping drivers committing traffic safety violations; officers working these operations do not respond to calls and augment standard patrol efforts
    - Operations usually include five to six officers
    - Operational period lasts up to 10 hours
    - Operations are data driven, focusing on areas and times that have experienced an increase in traffic collisions
- Distracted Driving Operations: \$24,400
  - Operation Intent: Improve community safety by decreasing phone use while driving
    - Operations include officers patrolling the city with the sole purpose of stopping drivers distracted by their phones; officers working these operations do not respond to calls and augment standard patrol efforts
    - Operations usually include several officers
    - Operational period lasts several hours
    - Operations are conducted throughout the City
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Enforcement: \$24,400
  - Operation Intent: Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety
    - Operations include officers patrolling the city focusing on crosswalks, jaywalkers, bicycle lanes, and vehicles endangering pedestrians or bicycle riders; officers working these operations do not respond to calls and augment standard patrol efforts
    - Operations usually include several officers
    - Operational period lasts several hours
    - Operations are conducted throughout the City
- Motorcycle Safety Enforcement: \$9,600
  - Operation Intent: Improve motorcycle safety
    - Operations include officers patrolling the city focusing on motorcycle traffic violations and vehicles endangering motorcycle riders; officers working these operations do not respond to calls and augment standard patrol efforts
    - Operations usually include three to four officers
    - Operational period lasts up to 10 hours
    - Operations are conducted throughout the City



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- Collaborative DUI Enforcement: \$5,050
  - Operation Intent: Improve regional collaboration and reduce DUI collisions
    - Operations include regional collaborative efforts to stop DUI drivers
    - Operations usually include several officers and regional assistance
    - Operational period lasts up to 10 hours
    - Operations occur throughout the County as collaborative efforts to experience regional traffic safety practices
  
- Know Your Limit Operations: \$5,050
  - Operation Intent: Community engagement and education
    - Officers attend community events such as “Cruisin’ Grand” and local St. Patrick’s Day events
    - Officers talk with community members and discuss drinking and driving
    - Citizens have the opportunity to voluntarily use a breathalyzer to learn how alcohol consumption relates to their blood alcohol level and impairment
    - These encounters do not result in citations or any repercussions and have been well received by community members
  
- Collaborative Traffic Enforcement: \$3,000
  - Operation Intent: Improve regional collaboration and traffic safety
    - Operations include regional collaborative efforts to improve traffic safety
    - Operations usually include several officers and regional assistance
    - Operational period lasts up to 10 hours
    - Operations occur throughout the County as collaborative efforts to experience regional traffic safety practices
  
- Stakeouts: \$10,200
  - Operation Intent: Improve traffic safety
    - Operations include officers locating repeat DUI offender probationers with suspended or revoked drivers’ licenses.
  
- Traffic Safety Education: \$1,340
  - Operation Intent: Improve traffic safety
    - Operations include officers conducting educational presentation(s) with an effort to reach community members.
    - Presentation topics to include distracted driving, DUI, speed, bicycle and pedestrian safety, seat belt usage, and child passenger safety.



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### Education, Equipment, and Supplies

- DUI Supplies: \$5,348  
Costs may include 28" traffic cones, Manual on Uniform Traffic Controlled Devices (MUTCD) compliant traffic signs, MUTCD compliant high visibility vests (maximum of 10), traffic counters (maximum of 2), generator, gas for generators, lighting, reflective banners, electronic flares, PAS device supplies, heater, propane for heaters, fan, anti-fatigue mats, and canopies.
- Red Light Notification Devices: \$3,225
- Lidar Devices: \$12,000
- Preliminary Alcohol Screening (PAS) Device: \$550
- Collaborative Meetings: \$2,000
  - Collaborative quarterly meetings with OTS partners around the county to discuss strategies, challenges, and successes to further enhance the benefits of the OTS grant funding.
- Training: \$3,435  
In State Travel - Costs are included for appropriate staff to attend conferences and training events supporting the grant goals and traffic safety.

### STEP Grant Goals

The OTS STEP grant funding allows the Escondido Police Department to focus on education and traffic safety in the community. Based on current data the following grant goals were established based on current traffic safety issues in Escondido:

1. Reduce the number of persons killed in traffic crashes.
2. Reduce the number of persons injured in traffic crashes.
3. Reduce the number of pedestrians killed in traffic crashes.
4. Reduce the number of pedestrians injured in traffic crashes.
5. Reduce the number of bicyclists killed in traffic crashes.
6. Reduce the number of bicyclists injured in traffic crashes.
7. Reduce the number of persons killed in alcohol-involved crashes.
8. Reduce the number of persons injured in alcohol-involved crashes.
9. Reduce the number of persons killed in drug-involved crashes.
10. Reduce the number of persons injured in drug-involved crashes.
11. Reduce the number of persons killed in alcohol/drug combo-involved crashes.
12. Reduce the number of persons injured in alcohol/drug combo-involved crashes.
13. Reduce the number of motorcyclists killed in traffic crashes.





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14. Reduce the number of motorcyclists injured in traffic crashes.
15. Reduce hit & run fatal crashes.
16. Reduce hit & run injury crashes.
17. Reduce nighttime (2100-0259 hours) fatal crashes.
18. Reduce nighttime (2100-0259 hours) injury crashes.

The Police Department is committed to improving traffic safety in Escondido. Funding provided by the OTS STEP Grant will support proactive enforcement operations that can help reduce the number of persons killed and injured in crashes in Escondido.

### **RESOLUTIONS**

- a. Resolution No. 2023-133

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- a. Budget Adjustment