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# CITY OF POMONA COUNCIL REPORT

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July 7, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Anita D. Scott, City Manager

Submitted By: Sonia Carvalho, City Attorney  
Michael Ellis, Chief of Police  
Betty Donovanik, Development Services Director

**SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION FOR CITY ATTORNEY TO FILE NUISANCE ABATEMENT ACTIONS AGAINST PROPERTY AND BUSINESS OWNERS OF 1) PALA MOTEL (987 E. HOLT AVE.); 2) DELUXE MOTEL (915 W. HOLT AVE.); AND 3) SUPER INN (975 W. HOLT AVE.)**

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## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council authorize the City Attorney to file nuisance abatement actions in Los Angeles Superior Court against the property and business owners of the Pala Motel located at 987 E. Holt Ave., the Deluxe Motel located at 915 W. Holt Ave., and the Super Inn located at 975 W. Holt Ave (“Properties”).

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Properties listed above are the source of numerous calls for law enforcement services from the Pomona Police Department. The properties are also known to be frequented by individuals engaged in sex trade work and drug transactions. Serious crimes of aggravated assault and murder have also occurred at these properties. The Properties are known to be owned and operated by various individuals and companies. The City of Pomona (“City”) has engaged in a number of actions to address nuisance conditions in order to improve neighborhoods. The properties along Holt Avenue have been the source of long-standing problems negatively affecting the quality of life of residents and businesses and effective enforcement will lead to improved conditions such as those experienced after the successful legal action taken against the property and business owners of the Passport Inn (130 E. Holt Ave.).

**SB1439/GOVERNMENT CODE §84308 APPLICABILITY:**

☒ When this box is checked, it indicates the agenda item is subject to the Levine Act SB1439 requirements. Councilmembers are reminded to check their campaign contributions and determine whether they have received a campaign contribution of \$500 or more that would require disclosure and/or recusal from discussing or acting on this agenda item. Campaign contributions of \$500 or more made 1) by any person or entity who is identified in the agenda report as the applicant or proposer or 2) on behalf of the applicant or participant, including a parent, subsidiary or otherwise related business entity, or 3) by any person who has a financial interest in the agenda item requires a councilmember to comply with SB1439.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The legal and staff costs associated with these enforcement actions will range between \$150,000 to \$250,000 per property and are recoverable from the property owners. While cost recovery cannot be guaranteed, it is anticipated. In the last enforcement action involving the Passport Inn (located at 130 E. Holt Ave.) the City recovered over \$150,000. The enforcement costs will come from a dedicated holding account from attorney fees collected from prior enforcement and will mitigate future legal costs as they come up, in addition to the annual budgeted costs for City Attorney legal services (101-0101-52945-00000).

**DISCUSSION:**

***Background***

Prostitution, drug sales, and nuisance conditions have been persistent historical problems along Holt Avenue. Over the years, law enforcement has engaged in numerous task force enforcement operations, but currently faces greater challenges to enforcement in the wake of SB357, which in 2021 decriminalized loitering for the purpose of engaging in prostitution. As a result of this law, sex workers on Holt Avenue more freely walk around in indecent attire and are more casual and open about the illegal activity in which they aim to engage.

In a recent incident there was a murder at one of the properties where a “pimp” engaged in a dispute with a customer and the pimp shot and killed the customer of the sex worker. After the shooting, many people ran from the motel rooms in various stages of undress while the customers followed them out of the rooms.

The conditions inside these motel rooms are also deplorable, with one news outlet reporting rooms with torn furniture, graffiti, fluid stains on mattresses, cigarette burns on walls, and bugs crawling around. The owners and operators of these properties are aware of the conditions and the illegal activity occurring on the properties, but allow the nuisance conditions to continue without any regard for residents and the impacts on the community.

### ***Nuisances Documented***

Below are summaries of nuisances and illegal activity, including narcotics activity, prostitution, and homicides that have been observed at each of the motels for the past few years. Please see Attachment No. 1 for photographs of the illegal activity.

#### ***Pala Motel – 987 E. Holt Ave.***

In a recent incident at the location, two males became engaged in a physical altercation related to prostitution activity. As the fight ended, the suspect retrieved a firearm from a female accomplice, a known prostitute, and then shot and killed the victim. After the two suspects fled the scene, several prostitutes exited the neighboring rooms to see what had happened. During the review of several hours of surveillance footage, Investigators observed hours of prostitution related activity occurring at the motel.

The Pala Motel is a constant source of prostitution related activity. Suspected prostitutes can be seen at all hours of the day and night, as they walk to and from the location in various stages of undress.

#### ***Deluxe Motel – 915 W. Holt Ave.***

In 2024, a homicide occurred at the Deluxe Motel. During the investigation, Investigators reviewed hours of surveillance video. It was apparent in the video footage that narcotic use contributed to an altercation that ultimately resulted in homicide. Video surveillance depicts activity consistent with narcotic transactions, where multiple narcotic users go to and from the location.

In a recent incident at the Deluxe Motel, there was an assault in a motel room that resulted in murder. During the investigation, it was determined that the incident stemmed from narcotic use and domestic violence. Through the investigation, it was apparent that the individuals who frequent the establishment are involved in the use of narcotics, alcohol, and prostitution.

In January 2025, the Major Crimes Task Force (MCTF) contacted multiple gang members at the Deluxe Motel. During the contact, a search of a motel room was conducted, and several firearms were recovered. One of the firearms was found hidden in one of the walls of the motel room.

Also in January of 2025, Officers contacted a subject at the Deluxe Motel. He was found to be in possession of methamphetamine and drug paraphernalia.

#### ***Super Inn – 975 W. Holt Ave.***

In 2023, members of the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) conducted a traffic stop of a stolen vehicle at the Super Inn. During the investigation, officers located suspected narcotics and drug paraphernalia.

In 2023, members of the Major Crimes Task Force (MCTF) observed a wanted subject enter a room at the Super Inn. As officers were attempting to detain him, a firearm was discarded out of the motel room window.

In 2024, a documented gang member who was recently released on parole engaged in a fight with a known transient at the Super Inn Motel. During the fight, the girlfriend of the gang member retrieved a firearm from their motel room and gave it to him. He then shot the victim, who ultimately died of his injuries.

In May 2025, a male victim was walking westbound on the south side of Holt Avenue when several known gang members approached him from the Super Inn. The suspects fired numerous rounds at the victim, striking him once and causing serious injuries. As Investigators reviewed video surveillance, they were able to determine that the gang members had rented a room at the Super Inn and had been engaged in drug sales at the location for several weeks. During this period, there was at least one reported incident of a subject overdosing in the motel's parking lot. Additionally, the suspects were responsible for extensive gang-related graffiti vandalism along the 900 block of W. Holt Avenue.

### ***Legal Authority to File Actions***

The City Attorney may maintain an action to abate and prevent a nuisance under a variety of ordinances and statutes, depending on the outstanding violations related to the property. For general nuisance activity, the City may maintain a civil action pursuant Civil Code Sections 3479-3480 and Pomona Municipal Code Sections 74-171, 18-31, and 18-222. Any violation of any statute or municipal code, or any violation that affects an entire community, is declared a public nuisance. Pomona Municipal Code Section 18-222(HH) and (II) declares a public nuisance for any building, use or structure where one or more person engage, or have engaged, in acts which are prohibited pursuant to the laws of the state, or city ordinances, including, but not limited to, unlawful possession or use of controlled substances; unpermitted cannabis related activity; prostitution; and solicitation for any unlawful conduct; disturbances of the peace; theft, assault, battery, or vandalism; lewd and/or lascivious conduct; and/or excessive responses by the Police Department or other law enforcement personnel.

Where illegal drugs are sold, the City may maintain a civil action pursuant to the Drug Abatement Act, state law and local ordinance. Every building/place used for the purpose of unlawfully selling, serving, storing, keeping, manufacturing, or giving away any controlled substance...and any building/place where these acts take place, is a nuisance which shall be enjoined, abated, and prevented, and for which damages may be recovered. (Health & Safety Code §§11570). The Court may issue a temporary restraining order or injunction to abate and prevent the continuance of the nuisance.

Where prostitution and human trafficking are taking place, the City may maintain a civil action pursuant to the Redlight Abatement Act, state law, and local ordinance. Penal Code Section 11225-11235 states that any property causing, maintaining, or permitting lewdness, prostitution, solicitation, or human trafficking, the City may obtain an injunction to abate and prevent the continuance of the nuisance activity. Similar to the Drug Abatement Act, the City may recover its fees and costs related to enforcement.

***Authorization to File Nuisance Actions***

In order to preserve public safety and protect its residents from the dangerous narcotics, prostitution, and nuisance activity maintained at these Properties, the City Attorney is seeking authority to bring an action against the property owners and business owners seeking remedies that include, but are not limited to:

- Temporary Restraining Order (Preliminary/Permanent Injunction) to abate the nuisance (Civil Code 3480; Pomona Municipal Code 18-31, 18-222, Penal Code 11225, and H&S §11573(a));
- Closure (Board up and shut down) order for up to one year. (Penal Code 11230 and H&S §11573.5(b));
- Civil penalties up to \$25,000 per defendant (Penal Code section 11230(4)(b) and H&S Code §11581(b)(2));
- Appointment of a receiver to take control of the property and possibly sell the property to a responsible owner (C.C.P. §568.5);
- Attorney's fees and enforcement costs (Government Code section 38773.5, Pomona Municipal Code .6001(A)(4), Penal Code 11231 and C.C.P. §3496; City of Oakland v. McCullough (1996) 46 Cal.App.4th 1, 6); and
- Potential contempt if an Order for Abatement is violated (Penal Code 11230 and H&S §11580)

Staff recommends that the City Council authorize the City Attorney to file nuisance abatement actions in Los Angeles Superior Court against the property and business owners of the Pala Motel, the Deluxe Motel, and the Super Inn.

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

Attachment No. 1: Photos of illegal activities at the Properties.