



**CITY OF**

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# **NEWPORT BEACH**

## **City Council Staff Report**

June 24, 2025  
Agenda Item No. 4

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** David Miner, Chief of Police - 949-644-3701, dminer@nbpd.org

**PREPARED BY:** David Spenser, Sergeant - 949-644-3744, dspenser@nbpd.org

**TITLE:** Ordinance 2025-9: Adding Chapter 12.70 (Prohibition on Attending Street Races and Reckless Driving Exhibitions) to Title 12 (Vehicles and Traffic) of the Newport Beach Municipal Code, to prohibit spectators from being present at street races and reckless driving exhibitions in Newport Beach

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### **ABSTRACT:**

For the City Council's consideration is the introduction of an ordinance to amend the Newport Beach Municipal Code (NBMC), Title 12 (Vehicles and Traffic), to add Chapter 12.70 (Prohibition on Attending Street Races and Reckless Driving Exhibitions) to prohibit spectators from being present at street races and reckless driving exhibitions conducted on a public street, road or highway or in an off-street parking facility in Newport Beach.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- a) Determine this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because this action will not result in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
- b) Conduct second reading and adopt Ordinance No. 2025-9: *An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Newport Beach, California, Adding Chapter 12.70 (Prohibition on Attending Street Races and Reckless Driving Exhibitions) to Title 12 (Vehicles and Traffic) of the Newport Beach Municipal Code.*

### **DISCUSSION:**

At its June 10, 2025 meeting, the City Council introduced and passed to second reading Ordinance No. 2025-9. The ordinance would prohibit spectators from being present at street races and reckless driving exhibitions within the City of Newport Beach. If adopted, the ordinance would become effective July 24, 2025.

Over the past several years, streets and off-street parking areas in Newport Beach have increasingly become hotspots for illegal street racing, "sideshows" (taking over intersections or parking lots for high-speed burnouts and racing), and motorcycle stunts. These activities have led to a surge in complaints to the Newport Beach Police Department.

Rapidly organized and promoted through social media, these events attract crowds ranging from dozens to hundreds of spectators, creating serious traffic safety hazards and diminishing the community's quality of life. In addition to posing immediate risks to public health and safety, these gatherings frequently cause extensive damage (often totaling thousands of dollars) to public roadways and both public and private parking facilities.

To enhance roadway safety, the Newport Beach Police Department Traffic Division has conducted numerous targeted enforcement operations focused on modified vehicles involved in illegal speed contests and organized street takeovers or sideshows. These events frequently attract large crowds of spectators who, while not directly participating in the illegal activities defined by the California Vehicle Code (CVC), still contribute to the hazardous environment. Spectators often flood into the streets, blocking roadways to facilitate the dangerous driving, and/or creating significant risks for uninvolved motorists. Their presence can delay police response and many spectators film the activities for social media or use police scanners and electronic communication to help drivers evade arrest.

While the CVC criminalizes both reckless driving and participating in speed contests, it does not currently prohibit spectators at these events. To address this gap, a new municipal code chapter is proposed to ban spectator attendance at illegal street races and reckless driving exhibitions. The Newport Beach Police Department recommends amending NBMC Title 12 (Vehicles and Traffic) by adding Chapter 12.70 (Prohibition on Attending Street Races and Reckless Driving Exhibitions) to formally define and prohibit spectators at these events within city limits. Once enacted, this ordinance would allow officers to issue citations to spectators, either as misdemeanor or administrative (civil) fines, providing an additional tool to proactively protect public safety and reduce community disruption.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact related to this item.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

Staff recommends the City Council find this action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly.

#### **NOTICING:**

The agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the City Council considers the item).

**ATTACHMENT:**

Attachment A – Ordinance No. 2025-9 An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Newport Beach, California, Adding Chapter 12.70 (Prohibition on Attending Street Races and Reckless Driving Exhibitions) to Title 12 (Vehicles and Traffic) of the Newport Beach Municipal Code.