



# CITY OF COSTA MESA

77 Fair Drive  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

## Agenda Report

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**File #:** 23-1407

**Meeting Date:** 10/17/2023

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**TITLE:**

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE ORGANIZED RETAIL THEFT PREVENTION GRANT FOR THE COSTA MESA POLICE DEPARTMENT OF \$3.5 MILLION**

**DEPARTMENT:** POLICE DEPARTMENT

**PRESENTED BY:** BRYAN WADKINS, CAPTAIN

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** BRYAN WADKINS, CAPTAIN, (714) 754-5672

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the City Council:

1. Approve the proposed resolution 2023-XX authorizing participation in the Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Prevention Grant Program and the City Manager, or designee, to execute the ORT Standard Agreement.
2. Approve revenue and expense appropriations in the amount of \$3,518,133, respectively, for the Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Prevention Grant.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Prevention Grant Program was established under the Budget Act of 2022. This state-funded program, as mandated by Senate Bill 154, is designed to provide competitive grants to city police departments, county sheriffs' departments, and probation departments to support local law enforcement agencies in preventing and responding to organized retail theft, motor vehicle or motor vehicle accessory theft, or cargo theft. A total of \$242,250,000 was made available through a competitive process for projects that addressed the Program Purpose Areas.

The Costa Mesa Police Department (CMPD) has been proactively addressing the escalating issue of organized retail theft within our community that has been experienced in other jurisdictions throughout our region and state. To bolster the CMPD's efforts in tackling organized retail theft, the department pursued funding opportunities that could provide the necessary resources to enhance its strategies. CMPD submitted a comprehensive grant application to the Organized Retail Theft Prevention Grant Program in July 2023. This application outlined the specific challenges facing our community, proposed strategies for mitigating these issues, and articulated the budgetary requirements necessary for effective implementation.

**ANALYSIS:**

In September of 2023, CMPD was one of only 37 out of 114 applicants in California selected as a recipient of the ORT Grant in the amount of \$3,518,133. Accepting the ORT Grant will be a significant step towards strengthening the Costa Mesa Police Department's ability to combat and address organized retail theft within our community.

The utilization of the BSCC grant funds will be allocated for various initiatives designed to combat organized retail theft, vehicle theft, and accessory theft. Key components include expanding the license plate reader (LPR) program, implementing GPS bait tag operations to gather intelligence on theft patterns, providing supplemental staffing and high-visibility patrols at South Coast Plaza or other retail centers, conducting retailer training programs, sending personnel to specialized training, procuring modern data analytics software to enhance information sharing, employing investigative technologies and software as investigative tools, and obtaining a cellular phone digital forensics system to access and analyze phone data used by criminals.

These initiatives aim to reduce organized retail theft incidents, increase awareness of theft among retail employees and the public through training and education programs and improve investigative capabilities to increase apprehension rates for targeted crimes.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

The City Council may elect to not accept the grant; however, the Department would not be able to pursue the specific goals outlined in the report.

**FISCAL REVIEW:**

Upon acceptance of the Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Prevention Grant, revenue and expense appropriations in the amount of \$3,518,133 will be established for the grant. The grant period is from October 1, 2023, to June 1, 2027.

**LEGAL REVIEW:**

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed the Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Prevention Grant Agreement, proposed resolution, and this report, and has approved them as to form.

**CITY COUNCIL GOALS AND PRIORITIES:**

This item supports the following City Council Goal:

- Strengthen Public Safety and Improve the Quality of Life

**CONCLUSION:**

Staff recommends the City Council:

1. Approve the proposed resolution 2023-XX authorizing the participation in the Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Prevention Grant Program and the City Manager, or designee, to execute the ORT Standard Agreement.
2. Approve revenue and expense appropriations in the amount of \$3,518,133, respectively, for the Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Prevention Grant.