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CONTACT: SDPD Media Relations Unit at MediaInquiry@pd.sandiego.gov

San Diego Police Ramp Up Enforcement to Restore Order in Gaslamp Quarter

HIGH-VISIBILITY OPERATION TO LAUNCH THIS WEEKEND

San Diego — Beginning this weekend, the San Diego Police Department (SDPD) will launch a high-visibility enforcement operation in the Gaslamp Quarter centered on the intersection of 5th Ave. and F St.

The Gaslamp Quarter is the heart of downtown San Diego, where residents and visitors alike come to enjoy some of the best the City has to offer. But increasingly, assaults, disorderly conduct, and other unlawful behavior are impacting the experience for everyone.

“Operation Last Call” aims to restore order and address problems before they escalate into violence.

“The Gaslamp Quarter is an iconic part of San Diego where people should be able to enjoy themselves, businesses should be able to succeed, and our police officers should be able to do their jobs safely,” Mayor Todd Gloria said. “I support Chief Wahl and the San Diego Police Department’s efforts to address illegal and dangerous behavior by those who put others at risk in this important commercial and tourist district. We’re also working across the City to improve conditions in the Gaslamp because keeping Downtown safe, clean and vibrant requires all of us to do our part.”

Last year alone, the Gaslamp Quarter recorded three times the number of disorderly conduct cases of Pacific Beach, one of San Diego’s other nightlife hubs. Officers routinely respond to rowdy crowds, extreme levels of intoxication, and physical fights. Assaults on SDPD officers operating in the Gaslamp have also increased by 172% over the past two years.

“We want everyone coming to the Gaslamp to have a great time and enjoy the best of what San Diego has to offer. Unfortunately, we have seen an increase in violence and lawlessness that threatens our residents and our officers. Enough is enough,” Police Chief Scott Wahl said. “Our focus is to ensure the Gaslamp remains a safe, vibrant place for residents and visitors. We will be adding the staffing and resources necessary to ensure that happens.”

Operation Last Call will feature increased foot patrols, dedicated tactical units, strict enforcement of public consumption and disorderly conduct laws, and immediate intervention in active disputes. There will be a **zero-tolerance posture** toward unlawful activity.

“The recent violent incidents in the Gaslamp are completely unacceptable. Downtown should be a place where San Diegans and visitors can feel safe to enjoy an evening out and it's critical that SDPD has the resources to deliver that,” said San Diego City Councilmember Marni von Wilpert, Chair of the Public Safety Committee. **“Let us all do our part to bring civility and the values of our community to everything we do, and keep public safety our highest priority.”**

“More and more people are coming downtown - to live, work, visit, and have fun,” said Councilmember Stephen Whitburn, who represents the area. **“We must keep downtown safe, and I thank Mayor Gloria and Chief Wahl for acting quickly to address these recent incidents with Operation Last Call.”**

This increased police presence will continue until there is a notable reduction in violence and illegal behavior in the Gaslamp.

“Downtown is the epicenter of our region’s cultural economy, and the Gaslamp Quarter should be its crown jewel,” said Betsy Brennan, President & CEO of the Downtown San Diego Partnership. **“Downtown deserves to feel safe and welcoming at all hours of the day and night. The Partnership is focused on growing the activations and activities that help bring Downtown to life, support our neighborhoods and businesses, and create more reasons for people to spend time here. Our safety ambassadors will continue to provide a visible presence throughout the community, and our staff and Board will continue working alongside the City and our public safety partners on the immediate and sustained action necessary to keep the Gaslamp and all of Downtown safe, welcoming and vibrant.”**

In addition to SDPD’s increased presence, the City of San Diego is taking a coordinated approach to improving conditions in the Gaslamp Quarter, with work underway focused on infrastructure, cleanliness, the public right-of-way and the overall visitor experience. City departments are working alongside businesses and downtown stakeholders to support a Gaslamp that is safe, clean, welcoming and vibrant.

“Our firefighters and paramedics respond throughout downtown to medical emergencies and other calls for help. To reach patients quickly and work safely, our crews need clear access and enough room to do their jobs,” said San Diego Fire-Rescue Chief Robert Logan. **“Crowding around an emergency scene, blocked access and violent behavior can delay emergency care and place both the person needing help and first responders at greater risk. We fully support our partners at the San Diego Police Department as they work to address the recent increase in violence and unsafe behavior in the Gaslamp Quarter.”**

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