


Agenda Item #: _____




Staff Report

City of Manhattan Beach

TO: Honorable Mayor Cohen and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: Geoff Dolan, City Manager 

FROM: Rod Uyeda, Chief of Police 
Andrew Harrod, Lieutenant

DATE: May 5, 2009

SUBJECT: Discussion of Police Department enforcement and education of state law requiring parked cars to curb their wheels

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council RECEIVE and FILE this update of the Police Department's enforcement and education of state law requiring parked cars to curb their wheels.

FISCAL IMPLICATION:

There are no fiscal implications associated with the recommended action.

BACKGROUND:

On May 2, 2006, the Police Department presented to the City Council a staff report updating a City Council Work Plan Item Regarding Traffic and Bicycle Safety Awareness (Attachment A). During that discussion, the City Council was informed that the Police Department has noticed a high number of vehicles were not curbing their tires on many of our steeply inclined streets presenting a serious danger to the community. A public awareness campaign regarding this issue started shortly thereafter, including press releases and warning notices, followed by regular enforcement. An increased number of inquires about this issue to City officials has prompted the Police Department to bring this issue back to City Council to discuss the law and the danger posed to the community if left unchecked.

DISCUSSION:

Many streets in the City of Manhattan Beach are steeply inclined. Of particular note are the downtown area and the streets west of Highland in the north part of the City. These streets are densely populated with parked cars and are in close proximity of our beaches and the Strand. Recent observations by the Police Department indicate that there are still a significant number of vehicles parked on these streets without wheels being curbed. The expected influx of visitors to the City as the summer months approach necessitates the need to continue the Police Department's efforts to prevent the dangerous occurrence of rollaway vehicles.

Section 22509 of the California Vehicle Code governs parking on hills and reads as follows:

Local authorities within the reasonable exercise of their police powers may adopt rules and regulations by ordinance or resolution providing that no person driving, or in control of, or in charge of, a motor vehicle shall permit it to stand on any highway unattended when upon any grade exceeding 3 percent within any business or residence district without blocking the wheels of the vehicle by turning them against the curb or by other means.

The City of Manhattan Beach, by way of a local ordinance, does regulate parking on hills. Section 14.36.120 reads as follows:

No person shall park or leave standing any vehicle unattended on a highway when upon any grade exceeding three (3%) percent (within any business or residence district) without blocking the wheels of said vehicle by turning them against the curb or by other means.

The California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Handbook includes a section on Parking on Hills, describing the proper way to park and showing illustrations (Attachment B). According to a DMV spokesperson, 20% of all DMV Driver License exams contain a question about the legal way to park on a hill.

This is a very important safety issue that both the State and the City addresses because failure to properly curb the wheels when parking on a hill can contribute to “rollaway” vehicles. Other contributing factors are brake/transmission failure and neglecting to apply the emergency brake. Although motorists may believe that leaving their vehicle in “park” (automatic transmissions) or in “gear” (manual transmission) and applying the emergency brake are sufficient to safeguard against rollaway vehicles - this is not necessarily the case as anything mechanical is subject to possible failure. Also when a vehicle is placed in “Park” or “in gear”, a small steel pin that engages the driveshaft can slip out or even shear off causing the vehicle to roll down a hill with catastrophic results.

Over the course of a four-year (2005-09) study analyzing accidents involving rollaway vehicles in the City of Manhattan Beach, research indicated that five such instances occurred in 2005. This marked a period in time when the Police Department was not as active in its education or enforcement efforts. In 2006 there were two accidents; 2006 marks the year when the Department began a concerted educational outreach to inform the public about the need to curb wheels. There was only one such accident in 2008. The declining numbers suggest a trend that education and enforcement have been successful in reducing the number of rollaway vehicles.

Over the past five years, 17,002 citations have been written for not curbing wheels on hills. The enforcement data for each of the five years are as follows:

- 2005 = 1938
- 2006 = 2340
- 2007 = 4205
- 2008 = 6317
- 2009 = 2202

In all of the rollaway collisions mentioned in this Staff Report, not “curbing” the front wheels of the vehicle was the cause of the rollaway. These types of accidents can cause serious injury (Attachment C) to unsuspecting pedestrians and/or damage to personal property. As discussed at the City Council meeting on May 2, 2006 and since that time, the following actions have/are being used to address this problem:

- In 2006, the Manhattan Beach Police Department began an education campaign placing yellow warning cards (Attachment D) on car windows that contain the relevant California Vehicle and Manhattan Beach Municipal Codes regulating Curbing Wheels on a hill. These cards include diagrams showing the proper way/direction to curb wheels.
- A press release was issued regarding the Manhattan Beach Police Departments increased efforts to address this safety issue to avoid tragic consequences.
- From mid-year 2006 to the present, officers have issued citations when motorists failed to properly curb the wheels of their vehicle.
- Although many of the streets in Manhattan Beach are steeply inclined, officers will focus enforcement efforts on the steepest streets, where the danger of mechanical failure is the highest, such as the streets west of Highland, east of Highland on the North end of our City, streets immediately east of Ardmore (Hill District), and steeply inclined streets around schools and parks.
- This year Message Boards have been deployed in strategic and dense parking locations including westbound Manhattan Beach Blvd. just west of Valley/Ardmore and the westbound 400 block of Rosecrans Ave.
- In May 2009, the Police Department will partner with Community Development to place labels on meters and other City signage that will remind residents and visitors to curb wheels on steeply inclined streets.
- The Police Department will issue another Press Release informing the public of the need to curb wheels when parking on a hill and of their continued enforcement efforts.

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- Attachments:
- A. Staff Report Dated May 2, 2006, regarding an Update of City Council Work Plan Items Regarding Traffic and Bicycle Safety Awareness.
 - B. California Driver's License Handbook – Parking on a Hill
 - C. News Article "How I Put the Brakes on my Uncurbed Wheels"
 - D. Warning/Education Card "Curbing Wheels"



Agenda Item #: _____

Staff Report

City of Manhattan Beach

TO: Honorable Mayor Ward and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: Geoff Dolan, City Manager

FROM: Rod Uyeda, Chief of Police
Derrick Abell, Lieutenant

DATE: May 2, 2006

SUBJECT: Update of City Council Work Plan Items Regarding Traffic and Bicycle Safety Awareness.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council RECEIVE AND FILE this update of the Police Department's progress on City Council Work Plan items regarding Traffic and Bicycle Safety Awareness.

FISCAL IMPLICATION:

There are no fiscal implications associated with staff's recommendations.

BACKGROUND:

In June 2005, the City Council decided on 28 items to focus on during the fiscal years of 2005 – 2007. Two of these items, Traffic and Bicycle Safety Awareness, were programs that the police department was asked to address. As the police department has been under new leadership since January 9, 2006, staff felt it timely to inform the City Council of the direction the police department will be taking on these two items.

DISCUSSION:

Residents of Manhattan Beach completed a City-wide survey and "traffic issues" were identified as the #1 concern. As part of the City Council Work Plan, staff was asked to present information on the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) "toolbox," the limited use of speed humps in school areas and photo red light technology. In September 2005, the City Council reviewed the NTMP "toolbox" and decided against the use of speed humps. In March 2006, the City Council reviewed information presented on photo red light technology and decided against the use of this technology to mitigate traffic problems.

The remaining Work Plan item was to enhance neighborhood traffic enforcement and to look for opportunities to expand outreach and public awareness of the NTMP "toolbox." The following are steps the police department will be taking to address this Work Plan item.

ATTACHMENT A
PAGE 1 OF 4

Neighborhood Traffic Enforcement

1. The entire police department is being reminded that traffic is the #1 concern to residents. Historically, the emphasis on traffic enforcement has rested primarily with the Traffic Bureau and Patrol's traffic enforcement has not been critically monitored. Increased scrutiny of Patrol's efforts in the area of traffic enforcement will increase the police department's awareness of the importance of traffic enforcement to our residents.
2. The two Patrol lieutenants have been designated as Service Area Commanders and are responsible for solving problems in their areas. Lieutenant Andy Harrod has been assigned the area east of Sepulveda and Lieutenant Tony DiGenova has been assigned the area west of Sepulveda. These two lieutenants will work with Traffic Lieutenant Derrick Abell to ensure reported and known traffic problems in neighborhoods are being addressed through directed enforcement efforts.
3. The Area Traffic Officer program will be rejuvenated. In 2000, the Area Traffic Officer program was established to create an on-going working relationship between the Department's Traffic Team and the residents in an effort to solve traffic-related issues. In the past few years, the number of calls to the Area Traffic Officers has drastically diminished to the point of being non-existent. Through the Neighborhood Watch program and media, residents will be reminded of the program so that current traffic problems can be dealt with in a timely manner.
4. Implementation of Traffic Citation Warnings: Instead of officers just verbally warning drivers of a traffic violation, officers will have the discretion to issue a warning citation in hopes of strengthening driver awareness of the law. Warning citations shall be tracked in the police department's Records Management System and can be queried for drivers who have received a warning citation. Officers will be encouraged to issue real traffic citations to persons who have already been issued a warning citation.
5. Enhanced Radar Enforcement: More Patrol officers will be trained in the use of radar. Catching speeders is one of the more difficult things for officers to successfully complete due to the amount of time it takes to "pace" a potential speeder. This is even more difficult on residential streets. By having more radar-trained officers and issuing more speed-related citations, it is hopeful that speed problems in neighborhoods will diminish.
6. Increase the Number of Enforcement Checkpoints: There will be additional traffic checkpoints to target seatbelt use, baby and child car seat use, driver's license compliance and drunken driving detection. Checkpoints add to the awareness of these issues and have a strong effect on ensuring compliance with the law.
7. Increase the involvement of police department volunteers to monitor traffic problems: Volunteers can covertly monitor reported traffic problems to ensure police department resources are being utilized at critical spots. It often takes hours to monitor an area for a suspected speeding problem or drivers failing to stop for stop signs. By utilizing citizen volunteers, an officer can concentrate on a known problem area while another reported problem area is being measured.

8. Increase Radar Speed Trailer and Message Board Deployment: The use of these items will increase, at the discretion of the Service Area Commanders and Traffic Lieutenant, when direct enforcement is not available or desirable. These items bring added awareness to traffic problems occurring in the area and will often be followed by direct enforcement should measuring devices indicate a traffic problem.
9. Address the Failure of Parked Vehicles Curbing Their Tires: Many streets in Manhattan Beach are steeply inclined. The police department has noticed that an increasing number of parked vehicles do not have their wheels curbed, which is against the law and a serious danger to the community. In the past five years, there were over a dozen documented collisions caused by "roll away" vehicles due to brake failure, transmission failure or neglecting to apply the emergency brake. The potential for serious injury from these types of collisions, especially near the beach and in neighborhoods, is too high to ignore. A public awareness campaign regarding this issue will be implemented, along with a warning period before parking citations will be issued for this violation.

The other Work Plan item that the police department was asked to address was Bicycle Safety Awareness. Also a part of this item was for City staff to consider the creation of a Safety Awareness Campaign targeted at pedestrians, skateboarders and rollerbladers. The police department was also directed to consider grant opportunities. In December 2005, the City Council was advised that there were no current grant opportunities available. Subsequent to that report, an Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) grant was received by the Manhattan Beach Unified School District and some of the funds were directed towards bicycle safety.

The following are steps that will be taken to address this Work Plan item:

Bicycle Safety Awareness

The Police Department Traffic Bureau is working in cooperation with the Manhattan Beach Unified School District to promote bicycle safety for children. The police department has identified a bicycle safety program vendor (Safe Moves) to present a bicycle rodeo for Manhattan Beach school children (grades three through five). The bicycle rodeo is scheduled for Saturday, May 13, 2006, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Grandview Elementary School. The bicycle rodeo will provide children with the necessary skills to make good decisions when riding a bicycle. A bicycle information flyer has also been developed that will be distributed to all of the Manhattan Beach elementary schools. The flyer includes information about when and where the event will take place and also includes information about the laws that apply to bicyclists. The bicycle rodeo will be funded with grant money from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) through the Manhattan Beach Unified School District.

In addition, an educational pamphlet is also being developed to educate bicyclists about local and state laws and also to remind them of the dangers associated with bicycle riding near pedestrians who are walking or running. Bicyclists will also be reminded to walk their bicycles on the bike path in front of the Manhattan Beach Pier during the busy summer months.

Skateboarders/Rollerbladers Safety Awareness

The number of skateboarders and rollerbladers in Manhattan Beach has increased over the years. Skateboarders and rollerbladers often ride on or across City benches, hand rails in front of businesses, and in parking structures and other public areas. In an effort to reduce injuries and damage to City and business property, a press release was disseminated to the public on February 10, 2006. A period of enforcement followed, and instances of illegal skateboarding diminished in the downtown area. An educational flyer is also being developed that will include information about local/state laws and safety equipment, which includes helmet requirements for juveniles on bicycles, scooters, skateboards and roller skates. It is scheduled to be distributed during spring 2006.

Pedestrian Safety Awareness

The Police Department Traffic Bureau has identified a number of crosswalks around the City where enforcement is required to reduce traffic collisions involving pedestrians. Pedestrian "Sting" operations have been implemented to enforce laws that require motorists to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks. Motorists that do not stop for pedestrians are cited. This contact provides an opportunity to educate motorists about the laws regarding pedestrians and the importance of yielding to pedestrians in a crosswalk. In March 2006, a "Sting" operation resulted in 19 motorists being cited in various parts of the city.

Pedestrians are also required to cross at crosswalks or signal-controlled intersections. Traffic officers have also directed Patrol programs that focused on pedestrians failing to yield to on-coming traffic outside of crosswalks and walking against a "no walk" sign at a signal-controlled intersection. In the past 18 months, "Sting" operations resulted in 46 pedestrians being cited for these violations.

CONCLUSION:

The police department will continue to focus on traffic issues in the City and be very responsive to residents and businesses who report traffic problems. The police department will also continue to work with City staff to evaluate traffic mitigation tools to ensure that our community is safe and receiving the best service possible.

Attachments: (not available electronically)

designed to reduce the deaths of police officers, tow truck drivers, paramedics, and other emergency personnel who are aiding stranded or injured motorists. Use caution if lane changes are required.

VEHICLES WITH HAZARDOUS LOADS

Hazardous Loads Placards



Diamond-shaped signs mean that the load on the truck is potentially dangerous (gas, explosives, etc.). California Highway Patrol (CHP) or fire department officers know what to do if the load is accidentally spilled. Vehicles which display these signs are required to stop before crossing railroad tracks.

PARKING

PARKING ON A HILL

When you park:

- On a sloping driveway, turn the wheels so the car will not roll into the street if the brakes fail.
- Headed downhill, turn your front wheels into the curb or toward the side of the road. Set the parking brake.
- Headed uphill, turn your front wheels away from the curb and let your vehicle roll back a few inches. The wheel should gently touch the curb. Set the parking brake.

- Headed either uphill or downhill and there is no curb, turn the wheels so the car will roll away from the center of the road if the brakes fail.

Always set your parking brake and leave the vehicle in gear or the “park” position.



down hill up hill no curb-up hill
or down hill

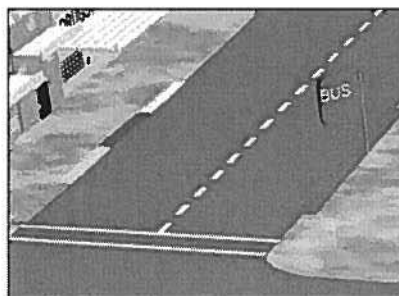
PARKING AT COLORED CURBS

Painted colored curbs have the following special parking rules:

White: Stop only long enough to pick up or drop off passengers or mail.

Green: Park for a limited time. Look for a sign next to the green zone or for the time painted on the curb.

Yellow: Stop no longer than the time posted to load or unload passengers or freight. Drivers of noncommercial vehicles are usually required to stay with the vehicle.



Andrew Harrod

From: Derrick Abell
Sent: Tuesday, April 21, 2009 3:25 PM
To: Andrew Harrod
Subject: Emailing: How I Put the Brakes on My Uncurbed Wheels.htm



February 1998
RETURN TO HOME PAGE
FEEDBACK

How I Put the Brakes on My Uncurbed Wheels

By Erin O'Briant

When I first started driving in San Francisco, I never curbed my wheels. Natives of the city warned me that I'd get a parking ticket, but I'd never heard of curbing your wheels and I didn't feel like doing it. Besides, the car was in park and the emergency brake was on, so what could go wrong?

Of course, eventually I had to break down and get a California driver's license (my original license was from Georgia, a state where you could get a license just by holding the wheel and stepping on the gas at the same time). When I went to the DMV, I was surprised to see a whole section of the *California Driver Handbook* devoted to parking on a hill. And sure enough, it said I had to curb my wheels.

So I started curbing them. And when I heard about the terrible thing that happened to a pedestrian on the Sanchez Street Hill a couple of months ago, I was really glad I did.

On the morning of Nov. 3, a man walking down the sidewalk on Sanchez near 21st Street was struck by a runaway van. According to the Channel 2 news and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, prior to the accident the van was parked on Sanchez Street but was resting against a car parked in front of it.

When the driver of the car pulled out of her space, the van broke free, rolled onto the sidewalk, and hit the pedestrian. The victim, a 53-year-old man who lived in the Upper Market area, underwent sur-gery at San Francisco General Hospital that night. But he later died from his injuries.

To get to my point: There's a good chance the van took off because it didn't have its wheels curbed properly. And if the van had been parked correctly, that man who was walking along Sanchez at just the wrong moment might still be alive.

Community Police Officer Lois Perillo checked the books for me and says it is illegal to park on a grade of more than 3% without setting the brake and blocking the wheels by turning them against the curb. Most San Francisco drivers don't know the exact law, though, because the *California Driver Handbook* fails to specify that cars parked downhill must have the front tire touching the curb. (It also does not mention the 3% grade.) However, the manual gives the following tips:

First, to park your vehicle properly on an incline, be sure to park in gear. For automatics, use the "park" position. Every parked vehicle should have the emergency brake set, the guide says.

When you park headed uphill, turn your front wheels away from the curb and let your vehicle roll back a bit until the rear of one front tire touches the curb.

For downhill parking, turn your front wheels into the curb and roll forward until one front tire touches the curb.

Officer Perillo points out that when the wheels actually touch the curb, the car has less chance to build up the momentum that could cause it to roll out of control.

"In curbing your wheels, what you're really doing is showing concern for the safety of your neighbors," Perillo says. From her experience, most people in Noe Valley routinely curb their wheels.

Considering the amount of damage a runaway vehicle can do, Perillo thinks the parking ticket for uncurbed wheels, \$23, is surprisingly low. Now I guess I do too.

Until I started investigating this story, I didn't know my wheels were supposed to actually touch the curb, and I certainly didn't know about parking on a 3% grade. I also had no idea how much my curbside manners could affect others.

From now on -- remembering that a man in our neighborhood lost his life, possibly due to someone's carelessness-- I'm not getting out of my car until my wheels are properly curbed.

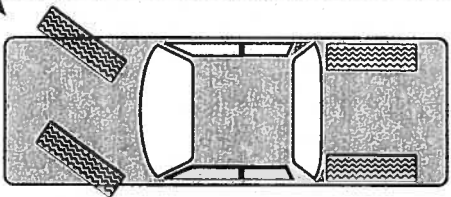
MANHATTAN BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

Parking Enforcement

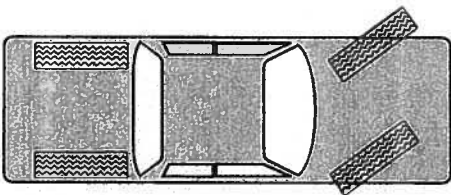
This is NOT a citation

This is a courtesy notice to inform you this vehicle is parked on a grade exceeding 3 percent and its wheels are not curbed properly.

DOWNHILL PARKING



When parking downhill, be sure to turn your front wheels into the curb.



UPHILL PARKING

When parking uphill, be sure to turn your front wheels away from the curb.

State and Local laws demand all vehicles parked on grades exceeding 3 percent **MUST** have their wheels curbed properly.

FUTURE VIOLATIONS MAY RESULT IN A CITATION

CALIFORNIA VEHICLE CODE Sec. 22509
MANHATTAN BEACH MUNICIPAL CODE Sec. 14.36.120

MANHATTAN BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT (310) 802-5140

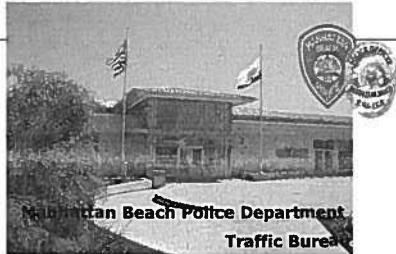
PUBLIC PARKING LOT LOCATIONS:

- LOT # 1: Between 9th Place and 11th Street on Bayview Drive
2-Hour time limit meters
- LOT # 2: Between Center Place and 12th Place on Bayview Drive
2-Hour time limit meters
- LOT # 3: 300 Block of 12th Street (near Morningside Drive)
1st level 2-Hour time limit meters, 2nd level 8-Hour time limit meters, and 3rd level merchant parking
- LOT # 4: Highland Avenue at Rosecrans Avenue
2-Hour time limit meters
- LOT # 6: Highland at 14th Street (next to Uncle Bill's)
2-Hour time limit
- LOT # 7: Valley Drive South of Manhattan Beach Blvd.
10-Hour time limit meters. No parking 3AM-5AM
- LOT # 8: Ardmore Drive North of Manhattan Beach Blvd.
10-Hour time limit with no meters
- LOT 65-A: Pier Lots at 00 Block of Manhattan Beach Blvd.
(Lower lots) 5-Hour limit Dispensers
LOT CLOSES AT 9:30PM
(Upper lots) 5-Hour time limit meters
enforced 24-Hours
- LOT 65-B: 100 Block of 26th Street
5-Hour time limit meters
LOT CLOSES AT 8PM
- LOT 65-C: 45th Street and Ocean Drive
(Enter from Highland Avenue only)
5-Hour time limit meters
LOT CLOSES AT 8PM

Dissemination

A

Drivers' Safety and Education: Parking on Hills / Curbing Wheels



Hills in Manhattan Beach

- Many streets in Manhattan Beach are steeply inclined, including 12th Street in downtown (picture below) and 45th Street in El Porto, east of Highland (upper right) and 14th Street off of Ardmore (lower right)
- Streets west of Highland Ave are typically the steepest, although hills are found throughout the City



Grade Percentage of Local Streets



200 Block of 12th Street = 7.6%



100 Block of Rosecrans = 7.3%



200 Block of 1st Street = 10.6%



1200 Block of Peck Ave = 6.4%

Rules Governing Parking on Hills

The California DMV Drivers' Handbook includes a section on the proper way to park on a hill (from the 2009 edition).

When you park:
•On a sloping driveway, turn the wheels so the car will not roll into the street if the brakes fail.

•Headed downhill, turn your front wheels into the curb or toward the side of the road. Set the parking brake.

•Headed uphill, turn your front wheels away from the curb and let your vehicle roll back a few inches. The wheel should gently touch the curb. Set the parking brake.

•Headed either uphill or downhill and there is no curb, turn the wheels so the car will roll away from the center of the road if the brakes fail.

•Always set your parking brake and leave the vehicle in gear or the "park" position.



20% of the Driver License exams include a question from this section.

Compliance and Violations

- California Vehicle Code Section 22509 and Manhattan Beach Municipal Code Section 14.36.120 are the relevant laws governing parking on hills.
- Vehicles that park on a hill with a grade of at least 3% are subject to enforcement actions.



The vehicle in front has its wheels properly curbed, the vehicle to the rear is in violation of not curbing its wheels.



These vehicles are both parked properly.

Rollaway Vehicles

- Depicted to the right is the worst-case scenario: a rollaway vehicle, in this case a three-axle crane.
- The vehicle was parked on 21st Street, just west of Highland at the top of a steep grade.
- The operator failed to curb the wheels and the crane's transmission and brakes failed.
- Fortunately no one was hurt and no major property damage occurred, although the crane was a total loss.



The vehicle crossed Ocean Ave and the Strand; the crane's boom landed across the bike path.



21st Street looking west.

Driver's Education

- The Police Department will continue its commitment to a strategy of education and enforcement.

- The Department will issue a Press Release before summer reminding the public about the need to curb wheels.

- Deploying message boards in key locations will inform the public.

- Labels affixed to meters will remind motorists to curb the wheels when they park their vehicles.



Continued efforts are needed to ensure vehicles park safely, reducing a potential threat. If this vehicle rolls, it will likely strike a residence and possibly other vehicles or pedestrians.

