

## INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

March 13, 2025  
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**TO:** The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

**FROM:** Chief of Police

**SUBJECT:** OVERVIEW OF THE VIRTUAL REALITY TRAINING PROGRAM  
IMPACTS AND ANALYSIS

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. That the Board of Police Commissioners (Board) REVIEW and APPROVE the attached Government Operations Committee Report (Report) and Fact Sheet.
2. That the Board TRANSMIT the attached Report and Fact Sheet to the Los Angeles City Council (Council) for review and approval.

### DISCUSSION

On January 14, 2025, the Council adopted the attached Report (File No. 24-1430) relative to the proposed no-cost license agreement with the Los Angeles Police Revolver and Athletic Club (LAPRAAC) to use a portion of the Elysian Park (EP) Academy's gymnasium for the Los Angeles Police Department's (Department) Virtual Reality Training Program (VRTP). The Department's Training Division was asked to provide an overview of the VRTP, including an analysis of the impact of the program in its first three years of operation.

The arena-scale virtual reality training system was installed in the gymnasium at the EP Academy in October 2022. The system allows up to ten simultaneous participants to experience a high-definition VR experience, where instructors can role-play with their students and which allows for an overall rich and elevated level of training. Training Division's Virtual Reality Training Unit (VRTU) currently administers six types of training using the VR system and are tasked with developing, curating, and administering the curriculum.

An evaluation of the effectiveness of the VRTP over the past three years is difficult to quantify as there are many mitigating factors that need to be considered. However, a basic assessment of the eight-hour use of force program, with 775 class critiques, reveals that 98 percent of students felt it was a valuable addition to their training and 99 percent of students state that the class was "Excellent" or "Good." In addition, experts from the Critical Incident Review Division (CIRD), the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), and members of the Board have experienced all or parts of a VR session and have given it very high marks. In addition, Captains who attended a

The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

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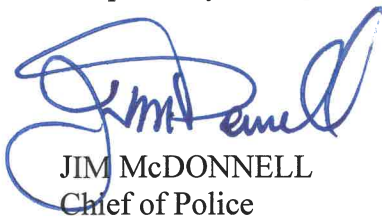
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command development VR session have been actively assigning their personnel to the course because of the value they see for their officers.

The practice of using VR on a large-scale is entirely new, but the Department is quickly becoming recognized as national experts in this field, as many agencies worldwide are now seeking the VRTU's insight in leveraging this new technology. The VRTU continues to invite participants to see firsthand what is possible with VR and to showcase the effectiveness and impact of its program for law enforcement training.

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Captain III Nicole Aufdemberg, Commanding Officer, Training Division, at (424) 393-4600.

Respectfully,



JIM McDONNELL  
Chief of Police

Attachments

**Fact Sheet**  
**Virtual Reality Training Program**  
**March 13, 2025**

**BACKGROUND**

In October of 2022, the Department completed the installation of the V-Armed virtual reality (VR) training system in the Los Angeles Police Revolver and Athletic Club's (LAPRAAC) gymnasium located at the Elysian Park Police Academy. The arena-scale VR training system allows up to ten simultaneous participants to experience a high-fidelity VR experience. Unique to the V-Armed system, instructors can role-play within the scenarios as victims, witnesses, suspects, or even other officers, allowing for a rich dialogue with the students and elevating the training far above a simple "shoot or don't shoot" decision-making training. In essence, critical thinking enhancement training. This training enables the Department to train in virtual replications of actual city locations and elevates training to utilize time, distance, and cover. In addition to the tactical benefits, the real-life civic environments transform scenarios from "training" to experiences officers remember.

The V-Armed VR training system is a tool used to conduct training and is utilized to create curated training sessions in a VR environment. Training Division's Virtual Reality Training Unit (VRTU) runs the V-Armed system and are tasked with developing, curating, and administering training using the V-Armed system and developing the curriculum. The VRTU consists of one supervisor (sergeant), four instructors (police officers), and one vendor technician.

**ANALYSIS**

The system utilizes different courses to enhance an enrich curriculums with a high-definition, captivating training that highlights critically important learning objectives. It is not just VR training; rather a tool to enhance and amplify Department training. Below is a list of courses, approximate number of training sessions per year, and the benefits that the VR system provides:

**1) Mental Health Intervention Training (MHIT): 26 courses per year**

This course is created by experts from the Department's Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU) training unit. The week-long course provides in-depth instruction regarding mental illness and developmental disabilities. Students can hear from multiple experts and receive a variety of experiences to enhance their understanding of mental health issues and how to interact with persons experiencing a mental health crisis. The week culminates with the students engaging in VR scenarios involving subjects who have multiple mental health conditions, allowing the students to gain a better understanding of these conditions from the perspective of the those who have experienced a mental crisis. This class meets State and Federal mandates for mental health training.

**2) Police Science and Leadership (PSL): 13 courses per year**

The PSL unit presents this course to probationary police officers, approximately ten months into their field experience, and covers a variety of topics. The VRTU presents a

training module where students experience a high-stress field experience where multiple critical decisions must be made in real-time. The scenarios are built to highlight any potential deficiencies of the participants and illustrate why tactical principles are in place, with an emphasis on making decisions that put the highest value on the reverence for human life.

**3) Eight-hour VR Use of Force: 72 courses per year**

This self-contained VRTU course is certified by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) and satisfies all POST requirements in Senate Bill 230 for use of force perishable skills training. This course utilizes VR to place officers in many potential use-of-force situations, requiring officers to make decisions in real-time. An after-action debrief is conducted which allows the students the opportunity to articulate why they made their decisions. The course itself delves into Department policy, State law, and Federal court decisions. There is a focus on the changes brought by Assembly Bill 392, which allows officers to make critical decisions to mitigate the need for higher levels of force and, when lethal force is necessary, take actions that maximize public safety and account for dynamic background assessment training.

**4) Supervisor School: 8-10 courses per year**

The VRTU provides an eight-hour session that provides an opportunity for new supervisors to practice command and control concepts in a controlled environment and further allows supervisors to investigate a use of force that occurred. This course enhances a supervisor's ability to assist officers in the field in making critical, and potentially, life-saving decisions.

**5) LAPD Leadership School: 4 courses per year**

This school provides an opportunity for new police lieutenants to experience VR training and who may become a contact point for enrichment training for the officers they will be leading.

**6) Open VR session:**

This open session allows subject matter experts (SMEs) in various Department units, such as Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT), Gang and Narcotics Division (GND), FBI Task Force, Mental Evaluation Unit Detectives, and many others, to utilize VR for their unit's specific tasks. The SME is responsible for creating a lesson plan and providing instruction, with the VRTU facilitating the creation of scenarios and the running of the VR system to allow the instructors to focus on their area of expertise. This session can also include community groups and/or foreign delegations that are able to experience police work in Los Angeles in a way that was not feasible to do in the past.

Due to the V-Armed virtual reality training system being used for a large variety of topics, an objective analysis is a much more complicated question. To evaluate the effectiveness of each course, an assessment of the value of VR would be needed for each independent program or session.

However, if the focus is restricted to the eight-hour use of force program, a POST certified course instructed entirely by the VRTU, a general idea of effectiveness can be gauged but it is not a fully comprehensive measurement. Anecdotally, it is incredibly successful, with 98% of students saying that it was a valuable addition to their training and 99% of students saying that the class was “Excellent” or “Good”. Out of 775 class critiques, none have stated that the experience was negative.

Experts from the Critical Incident Review Division (CIRD), the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), and members of the Board of Police Commissioners have all experienced all or parts of the curriculum and have held the training in high regards. Captains who have attended a command development session of the eight-hour course have all been actively assigning their personnel to the course because of the value they see for their officers.

<b>Number of Personnel Trained</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Participants</b>
2022	163
2023	1551
2024	1852
2025	186 as of 3/4/2025

**CONCLUSION**

The Department has applied for two separate Department of Justice (DOJ) grants in the past two years. These grants sought funding and partnership with local universities to develop an objective quantitative study to evaluate the effects of VR training and impacts on risk management events such as use of force, complaints, pursuits, litigation, and receipt of commendations. In one case the Department was not selected and the other the DOJ cancelled the request for proposals. We are currently in discussions with the RAND corporation and the University of Southern California to identify funding to embark on an in-depth study with academic rigor of VR training efficacy.

In summary, the VRTU and the V-Armed training system provide far more than just a single training program and has been used for multiple aspects of police training and community engagement. In 2024 alone, the VRTU provided experiences to over 1,800 students in various topics, supported by subject matter experts. The practice of using VR on a large-scale is entirely new and can be challenging to quantify, but the VRTU have been very conscientious of this fact when building best practices and are becoming recognized as national experts in this field as many agencies worldwide are now seeking their insight in leveraging this new technology. The VRTU continues to invite participants to come to the Elysian Park Academy to see firsthand what is possible in VR and is proactively taking measures to prove its effectiveness overall.

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT relative to proposed no-cost license agreement with the Los Angeles Police Revolver Athletic Club (LAPRAAC) to use a portion of the Elysian Park gymnasium, located in Council District 1, for the Los Angeles Police Department's (LAPD) Virtual Reality Training Program.

Recommendations for Council action:

1. AUTHORIZE the Department of General Services to negotiate and execute a new license agreement with the LAPRAAC for a portion of the Elysian Park gym located at 1880 North Academy Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90012 under the terms and conditions substantially outlined in November 15, 2024 Municipal Facilities Committee (MFC) report, attached to the Council File.
2. INSTRUCT the Los Angeles Police Department to report in regard to the Virtual Reality Training Program to include an analysis of the impact of the Program for the Program's first three years of operation.

Fiscal Impact Statement: The MFC reports that there is no General Fund impact as this is a no-cost license agreement. The LAPRAAC will be responsible for the utilities and custodial costs.

Community Impact Statement: None submitted.

Summary:

On December 10, 2024, your Committee considered a November 15, 2024 MFC report relative to a proposed no-cost license agreement with LAPRAAC to use a portion of the Elysian Park gymnasium for the LAPD's Virtual Reality Training Program. According to the MFC, LAPRAAC operates under a City ground lease at the Los Angeles Police Academy in Elysian Park. This lease allows LAPRAAC to manage and maintain key facilities, including the gym, pool, shooting range, and other recreational and athletic resources utilized by LAPD personnel. In 2019, California Senate Bill 230 (SB230) was enacted, requiring law enforcement agencies throughout the state to provide mandatory use-of-force and de-escalation training. In response, a three-year, no-cost license agreement (Contract No. C-139938) was executed with LAPRAAC, granting LAPD access to the gym at the Police Academy to facilitate the necessary Virtual Reality Training Program. This agreement expires on February 24, 2025. Simultaneously, the LAPD, in collaboration with the Los Angeles Police Foundation, is exploring the feasibility of constructing a new facility dedicated to the department's Virtual Reality Training Program. After consideration and having provided an opportunity for public comment, the Committee moved to recommend approval of the license agreement as detailed in the MFC report, as amended. This matter is now submitted to Council for its consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

## Government Operations Committee

### **COUNCILMEMBER VOTE**

PADILLA: YES

HERNANDEZ: YES

HUTT: YES

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12/10/24

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**-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-**