

MINUTES
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YUMA, ARIZONA
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, YUMA CITY HALL
ONE CITY PLAZA, YUMA, ARIZONA
MARCH 19, 2025
5:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Nicholls called the City Council meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE

Pastor Tom Sawyer, Grace Bible Fellowship, gave the invocation. **Cynthia Blot**, Assistant Director of Neighborhood Services, led the City Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

FINAL CALL

Mayor Nicholls made a final call for the submission of Speaker Request Forms for agenda related items from members of the audience.

ROLL CALL

Councilmembers Present:	Martinez, Morris, McClendon, Smith, Morales, Watts, and Mayor Nicholls
Councilmembers Absent:	None
Staffmembers Present:	Acting City Administrator, John D. Simonton Chief of Police, Thomas Garrity Police Lieutenant, Robert Wright Various Department Heads or their representative City Attorney, Richard W. Files City Clerk, Lynda L. Bushong

National Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) Proclamation

Mayor Nicholls read a proclamation declaring March 19, 2025, National Small Business Development Center Day, and urged residents of this community and communities across the country to support and recognize SBDC's invaluable contributions made nationwide.

Hot Spot Policing Presentation

Garrity stated that through investments from the City, grants, and the support of City Council, the Yuma Police Department (YPD) was able to start an Intelligence Unit to help reduce crime within the City. In years 2022 and 2023 gun violence in Yuma was on the rise, so it was decided that the goal of the Intelligence Unit would be "To Reduce Gun Violence". The YPD added disorderly conduct and domestic violence to the text definition of Gun Violence for a more robust meaning. Through the investments and grants, YPD secured software that will be utilized by the Intelligence Unit to help better deploy resources and help use these limited resources to reduce crime. **Garrity** concluded by stating the first year of the program has ended and YPD wanted to present an update of where they are with this project and what they plan in the future.

Wright presented the following:

- Research, Plan, Act, Assess
 - The definition of Gun Violence is any call for service in which a gun was used to commit the crime, and there was a victim or evidence to prove a gun was used in the commission of the crime. This includes BB Guns used to simulate a real gun.
 - YPD added disorderly conduct and domestic violence
 - Data research included:
 - Historical Data
 - Data from 2022 and 2023
 - What did gun violence look like for Yuma?
 - Data was put on a map to look for a pattern of gun violence in the City
 - Two hot spots were identified
 - ❖ Carver Park area
 - ❖ Arthur Tongelan/Westridge Subdivisions
 - ✓ 24th Street to 28th Street and Virginia Drive to 8th Avenue
 - What is a hot spot?
 - A hot spot is defined as a high concentration of crime in a small geographic area
 - Typically, smaller than a City block; 1 square mile,
 - Can be as small as a specific address
 - Crime Analysis is used to identify areas of high crime
 - A large portion of overall crime is coming from these small areas
 - Research has shown that hot spots remain constant over time
 - Another perspective to hot spot policing is fishing. Think of the City of Yuma as a lake, the intel as a fish finder, and hot spot policing as the type of lure to use when fishing in the area.
 - The crime analyst is our fish finder who locates the highest concentration of crime (also known as fish)
 - Now that it is known where the most fish are, the best bait needs to be used (YPD policing method)
 - Being highly visible, patrolling for short durations (15 minutes) and at random times is the best bait
 - Which Spot?
 - Focus on the hottest spot first for the greatest chance of success in reducing violence in the area
 - Arthur Tongeland and Westridge subdivision is the hottest spot of the two spots identified
 - Adjust tactics as necessary before reassessing and addressing the next hottest spot
 - Historical Data from 2023
 - Year to date in 2023 there were 107 cases of gun violence
 - 10 cases have been in the Hot Spot
 - Arthur Tongelan and Westridge subdivisions were hottest
 - 9.35% of all 2023 gun violence cases have occurred in the Hot Spot

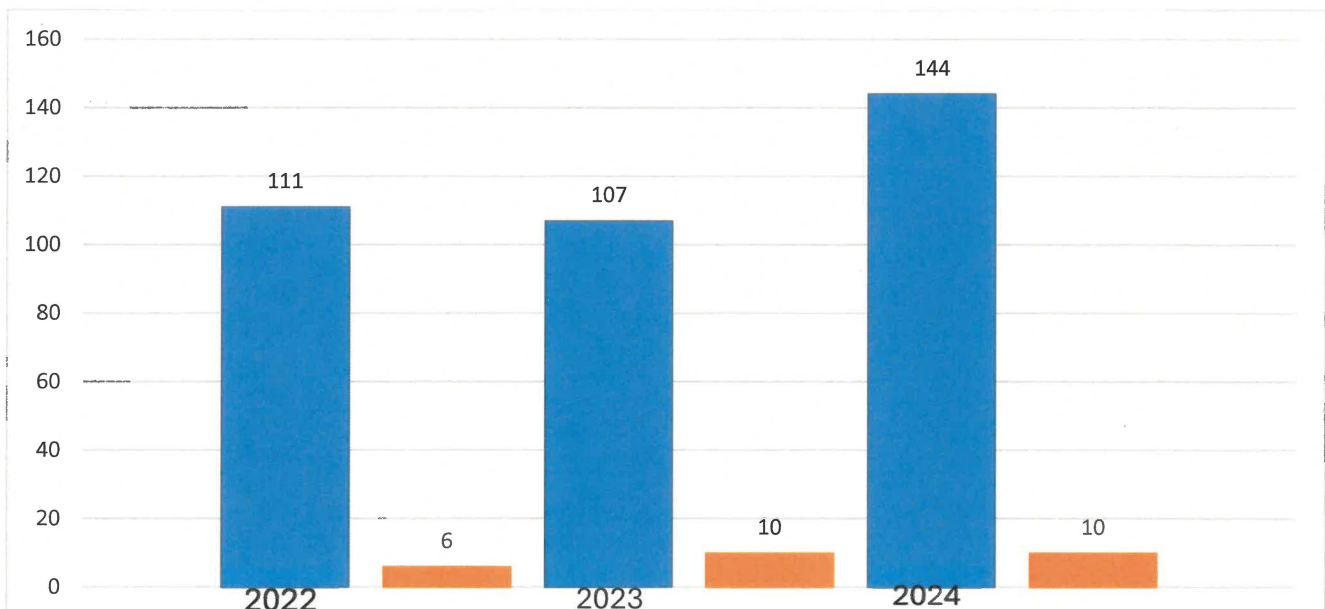
■ 2023 Gun Violence Mapping:



- The heat rings on the map show what hot spots look like
 - The dark purple ring identifies the prominent hot spot area for Gun Violence; 24th Street to 28th Street, Virginia Drive to 8th Avenue
- The legend on the map will show what types of calls have been received in the area
- 107 gun violence cases had physical evidence of a gun being used; this information was used to create the map
- How to Police Hot Spots
 - High Dosage (15-minute goal)
 - 15 minutes is scientifically and statistically proven to be the ideal patrol time, anything less than 10 minutes does not have an impact on the deterrence of crime
 - Randomly Delivered (Every 2 hours)
 - 15 minutes of hot spot policing every two hours, that is three hours every physical 24 hours
 - High Police Visibility
 - Use rear Deck lights when parking car
 - Get out and walk, openly engage with people
 - Use alley lights at night when driving through
 - Take enforcement action on crimes
 - Document your actions/contacts (even if you don't have a crime, you're investigating Field Interview card/call notes)
 - Engage with the community and get to know local business owners
 - ❖ To get a better understanding of what's really going on in the community
 - ❖ Explain what YPD is doing in the area

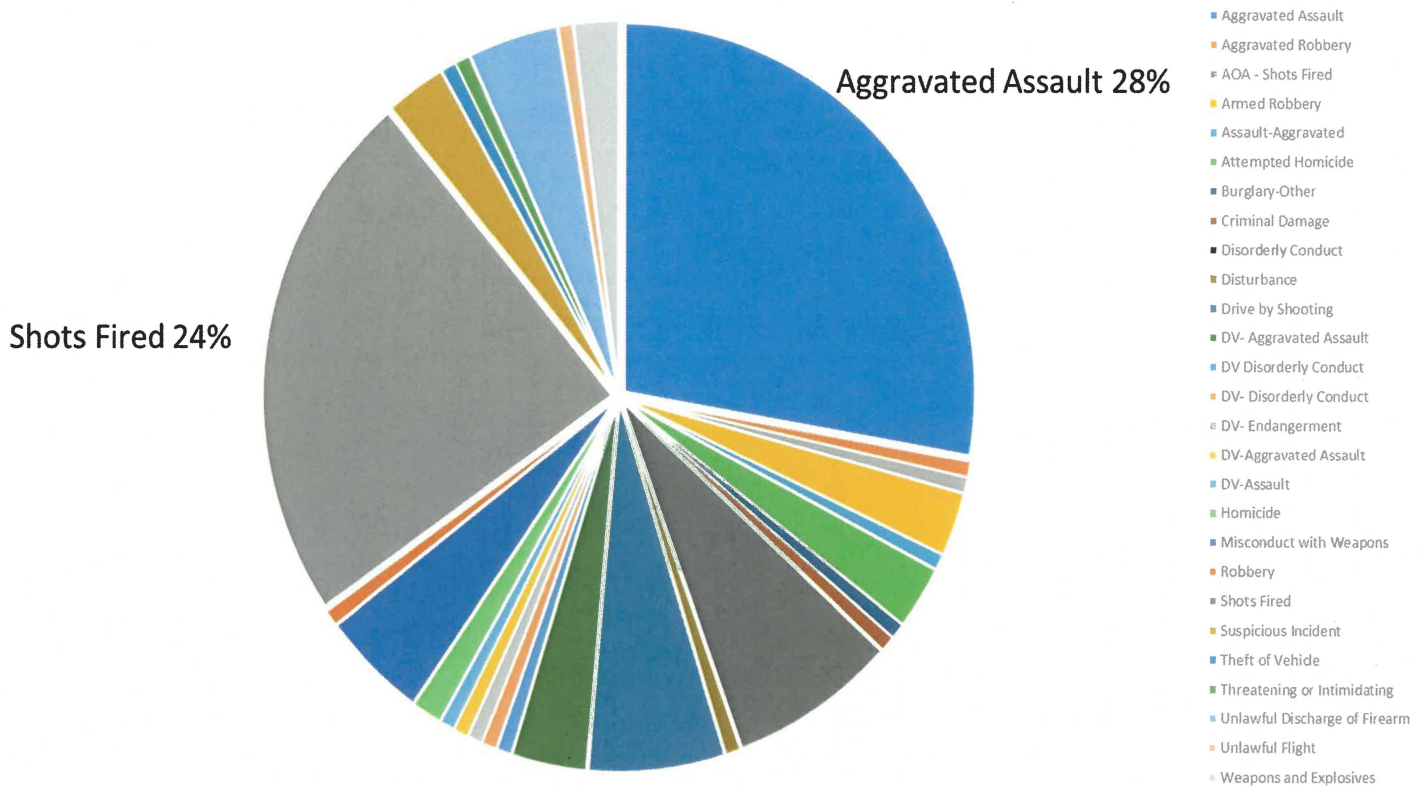
- ❖ Build relationships between the community and YPD
 - This method allows YPD to efficiently remain highly visible within the hot spot and efficiently patrol the area without creating a huge impact on regular services provided to the rest of the community
- Additional Technology
 - Covert and overt cameras in public spaces
 - Automated license plate readers (LPR)
 - There has already been success using these technologies while working on a homicide case
 - Cameras do not look into private properties
 - They provide additional sources of evidence
 - Used to more quickly identify suspects
- How did YPD do in 2024?
 - Data from 2024
 - In 2024 there were 114 cases of gun violence
 - 10 were in the hot spots
 - Arthur Tongeland and Westridge subdivisions were hottest
 - This equates to 6.94% of the 2024 gun violence cases
 - Which is a 2.41% decrease in gun violence from 2023

Gun Violence Cases in City and Hot Spot



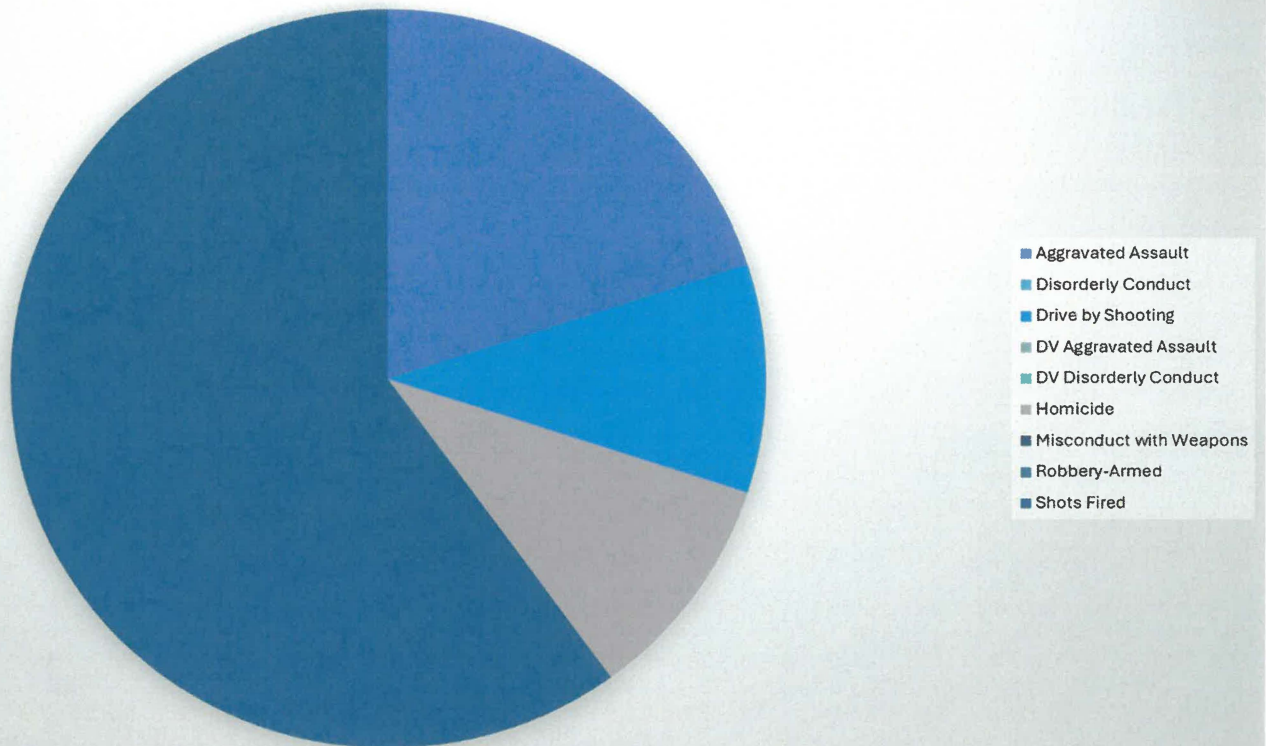
- The blue bar in the graph shows gun violence cases for the City as a whole
 - Gun violence as a whole increased from 107 in 2023 to 144 in 2024
- The orange bar in the graph shows gun violence cases within the hot spot
 - Gun violence in the hot spot did not change from 2023 to 2024 and it is attributed to the hot spot policing

Crime Composition for ALL gun violence in City 2024



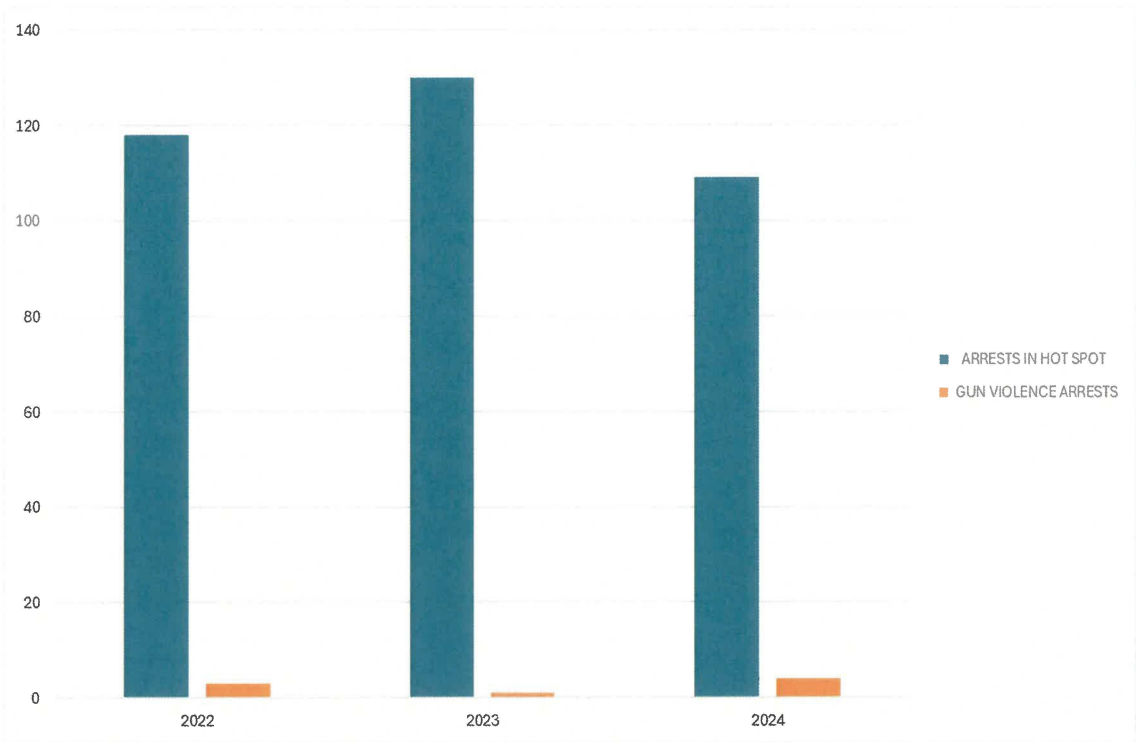
- The chart shows the breakdown composition of all gun crimes committed within the City
- Out of the 144 reported gun violence incidents, 28 % were aggravated assault and 24% were shots fired
- The other two predominant categories were disorderly conduct and drive by shootings

GUN VIOLENCE IN HOT SPOT 2023



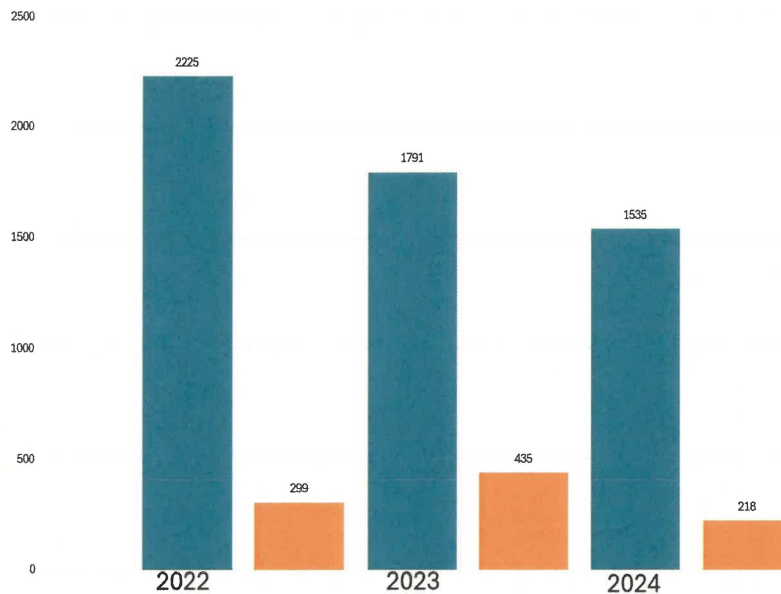
- This chart depicts the crime composition within the hot spot for 2023
- In 2023 the two biggest categories were shots fired and aggravated assault
 - There were six shots fired within the hot spot
 - There were two aggravated assaults within the hot spot
- In 2024 shots fired was reduced to four shots in the hot spot resulting in a 33% reduction from 2023
- Drive by shootings in the hot spot were reduced to two in 2024
- Aggravated assaults were reduced by 100% from 2023 to 2024 in the hot spot

ARRESTS IN HOT SPOT



	ARRESTS IN HOT SPOT	GUN VIOLENCE ARRESTS
2022	118	3
2023	130	1
2024	109	4

- The bars in blue indicate the total arrests made within the hot spot
- The bars in orange show arrests for gun violence within the hot spot
- There was a decrease in arrests between 2023 and 2024, attributed to police presence and hot spot policing
- There was an increase of gun violence arrests from 2023 to 2024, shows YPD has been out actively looking and taking a zero-tolerance approach to crime



Calls for Service and Reports Taken in Hot Spot

- Bars in blue indicate calls for service
 - From 2023 to 2024 there was a 14.29% reduction in service calls within the hot spot
- Bars in orange indicate reports taken
 - From 2023 to 2024 reports taken within the hot spot were reduced by 49.89%
- Hot spot policing has had a positive impact and has helped to reduce crime, and service calls in the area; the program is working.
- Looking forward
 - Hot spot policing is not a long-term solution for addressing high crime areas, it is basically Phase I of a two phase project
 - Phase II should incorporate other City Departments, non-government organizations such as churches and mental health organizations
 - Work to identify needs of local community
 - Strengthen local community allowing police to focus on the next hotspot

Discussion

- YPD must report crimes to the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), which defines crimes nationwide. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) will not report a crime involving a BB gun as a gun crime. YPD would consider the use of a BB gun in an incident a gun crime, and for that reason the data for this project will be used for informational purposes by the City of Yuma and YPD only. **(Mayor Nicholls/Garrity)**
- When internal information is shared with the public, that information can be turned into public information, in turn misinterpreting data. It is reassuring the data for this project was not compared to communities defining their crimes by NIBRS. **(Mayor Nicholls/Garrity)**
- Another significant incident reported as a gun crime by YPD, are calls received of shots fired. The majority of those calls were people out in the desert firing weapons, not aware that they were inside City limits. It was decided to educate the community by posting signs. Again, NIBRS would not define the incidents as gun crimes. **(Mayor Nicholls/Garrity)**

- Only incidents with evidence of use of a firearm were counted as gun crimes, for example a bullet casing, a bullet hole, or a gun left on scene would indicate a gun crime was committed. Without evidence one may mistake fireworks, a car backfiring or something similar to gun fire. **(Mayor Nicholls/Garrity)**
- Although it has been challenging to incorporate what the community would interpret as gun violence versus the common definition, the definition has remained the same for YPD since the program started in 2022. **(Smith/Wright)**
- Feedback received from the community regarding the program has been supportive. Local businesses are glad to see officers patrolling and engaging with the community. They are also impressed with the 14% reduction of service calls in the area. **(Smith/Wright)**
- Arizona is a highly favored Second Amendment state where guns do not need to be registered, making it difficult for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) to trace and learn if an individual is in legal possession of a firearm in the state. Additionally, when an officer answers a domestic call where a prohibited possessor is present, the incident is not counted as an illegal possession of a firearm since the ATF can notify the department months later to let them know that the individual was in fact legally allowed to possess a gun. Therefore, there is no percentage to show legal versus illegal ownership of firearms. **(Morris/Garrity)**
- Although the new intel can help predict where in the hot spot crime might happen, officers on the street rely mostly on instinct. Policing randomly every two hours helps keep policing schedules unpredictable to offenders. **(Morris/Garrity)**
- Although two areas were identified as hot spots, the Arthur Tongelan hot spot is the only one being actively patrolled by YPD. Information of commonalities between the two hot spots is currently unavailable. Once phase two of the project is implemented feedback will be collected. **(Morris/Wright)**
- The most recent data has shown the Kennedy Park area warming up to possibly be the next hot spot. It may be thought crime is being displaced from the Arthur Tongelan over to Kennedy Park, but statistically hot spot policing does not displace crime. It will be a different environment of crime in the new area, and it will be addressed with a different policing philosophy. **(Morris/Wright)**
- The license plate readers have recently helped in a homicide case committed outside of the hot spot. The footage of the vehicle used in the crime was obtained, reviewed, and used as evidence, something that could not be done before LPR's. It is important to disclose that the cameras are facing public streets and public spaces only, and do not look into private properties. **(Morris/Garrity)**
- This project is a brand-new concept to YPD, therefore the longevity of the program has not been determined. Meanwhile hot spot policing will continue while identifying the needs of the community and create short term and long-term goals to assess with the information received. **(Morales/Wright)**
- Over policing is a big fear of neighborhoods, hot spot policing is to ensure that does not happen and instead have officers engage with the community. Along with some church organizations reaching out to offer help with the project, contact has been made with the Neighborhood Services Department to facilitate a meeting with YPD and the community to begin the transfer of the community back to community leaders, while YPD moves to a new hot spot. It is important to note that officers who are involved in the project are not taken away from their normal patrol activities. There are about six or seven beat areas that are small, and all officers are involved in patrolling, this will continue when moving to a new hot spot. **(Morales/Garrity)**
- Overtime hours are not used for hot spot policing, this is done within the officer's ten-hour shift. **(Morales/Garrity)**

- Information YPD has received, has not narrowed down to a specific address where crime or criminals are harboring. The slide pertaining to identifying hot spots had a residential home shown as an example of how small hot spots can be. **(Morales/Wright)**
- Ghost guns or three-dimensional guns are not currently an issue within the City. **(Morales/Garrity)**
- The YPD cell phone application (app) is available for download on both Apple and Android phones. This app is a great form of communication between the community and the City. **(Morales/Garrity)**
- This program will be used as a tool by YPD as needed, to help reduce crime in the community. **(Mayor Nicholls/Garrity)**

I. MOTION CONSENT AGENDA

Motion (Morales/Smith): To approve the Motion Consent Agenda as recommended. Voice vote: **approved** 7-0.

A. Approval of minutes of the following City Council meeting(s):

Special Worksession/Joint Meeting Minutes	February 4, 2025
Regular Council Worksession Minutes	February 18, 2025
Special Council Meeting Minutes	March 11, 2025

B. Executive Session

Executive Sessions may be held at the next regularly scheduled Special Worksession, Regular Worksession and City Council Meeting for personnel, legal, litigation and real estate matters pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03 Section A (1), (3), (4), and (7). (City Atty)

C. Approval of Staff Recommendations

1. Approve a Series #06: Bar Liquor License application submitted by Susan Hwang, agent for Boots & Buckles located at 4104 E. 32nd Street. (LL22-04) (Admin/Cty Clk)
2. Authorize the purchase and installation of a Stainless-Steel Cooling Tower to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, Polar Cooling, LLC, Yuma, Arizona, for a total cost of \$221,822.00. (RFB-24-307/RFB-25-262) (Fclt/Purch)
3. Authorize the purchase and delivery of traffic signal equipment to upgrade an additional seven intersections throughout the City to communicate with the City's Intelligent Transportation System, utilizing Maricopa County contract to Econolite, Anaheim, California for an expenditure of \$214,758.10 (CPA-25-289) (Eng/Purch)
4. Approve the final plat for the Villa Serena Unit No. 2 Subdivision, located at the northwest corner of Avenue 6E and 48th Street. (SUBD-43694-2025) (Cmtly Plng)

II. RESOLUTION CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution R2025-025 – Intergovernmental Agreement: Arizona SMART Funding – Yuma Multi-Modal Transportation Center (authorize the city to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with ADOT accepting \$3,537,057 of Arizona SMART funding for 100% of the Yuma Multi-Modal Transportation Center RAISE grant match) (Eng)

Mayor Nicholls declared a conflict of interest on Resolution R2025-025 due to his firm's involvement and left the dais

Motion (Morris/Watts): To adopt Resolution R2025-025 as recommended.

Bushong displayed the following title(s):

Resolution R2025-025

A resolution of the City Council of the City of Yuma, Arizona, authorizing and approving an Intergovernmental Agreement with the State of Arizona for the Yuma Multi-Modal Transportation Center Development (for the improvement of the efficiency, reliability, and safety of the traveling public) (Eng)

Roll call vote: **adopted** 6-0-1, **Mayor Nicholls** abstaining due to conflict of interest

Mayor Nicholls returned to the dais.

Motion (Smith/McClendon): To adopt the Resolution R2025-024 as recommended.

Bushong displayed the following title(s):

Resolution R2025-024

A resolution of the City Council of the City of Yuma, Arizona, authorizing and approving the execution of a Preannexation Development Agreement with Nextgen Properties, LLC for assessor parcel number 664-09-040 located on Palm Avenue, North of 12th Street (to connect to City of Yuma services) (Plng & Nbhd Svcs/Cmty Plng)

Roll call vote: **adopted** 7-0.

III. ADOPTION: ORDINANCE NO. O2025-008

Motion (Smith/Watts): To adopt Ordinance O2025-008 as recommended.

Bushong displayed the following title(s):

Ordinance O2025-008

An ordinance of the City Council of the City of Yuma, Arizona, authorizing and approving the acceptance of title to certain real property and improvements, the execution of government property land and improvement Lease for a term of eight years with Spencrazi, L.L.C. as the prime lessee, the reconveyance of Title to the Real Property and Improvements at the conclusion of the described lease, and approving the abatement of the Government Property Lease Excise Tax during the term of the eight year lease (redevelopment project at the southwest corner of 16th Street and 4th Avenue) (Atty)

Roll call vote: **adopted** 7-0.

IV. ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES CONSENT AGENDA

Motion (Morris/McClendon): To adopt the Ordinances Consent Agenda as recommended.

Bushong displayed the following title(s):

Ordinance O2025-007

An ordinance of the City Council of the City of Yuma, Arizona, amending Title 3, Chapter 32 of the Yuma City Code regulating civilian accident investigators (current ordinance related to Civilian Accident Investigators needs updating for clarity and compliance with current state law) (YPD)

Roll call vote: **adopted** 7-0.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SCHEDULING

Announcements

Smith, Morales, Watts, Martinez and Mayor Nicholls reported on the following meetings attended and upcoming events:

- Meeting to discuss Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) classes in the Community
- Yuma Water Safety Alliance Meeting
- Chamber of Commerce Good Morning Yuma Breakfast
- Western Arizona Council of Government (WACOG) Meeting
- Yuma Coalition to End Homelessness Meeting
- Yuma County Anti-Drug Coalition
- Meeting with Border Patrol Chief, Michael Banks
- Meeting with Gerardo Valenzuela, Government Official of the State of Sonora
- Yuma County Center of Excellence for Desert Agriculture Meeting
- Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Board Meeting
- Marine Corp. Air Station (MCAS) Yuma Air Show

McClendon requested the Yuma Fire Department (YFD) provide an update of what has been done regarding the letter they received from the Department of Health Services. **Simonton** confirmed the information requested will be available at the next City Council Meeting.

Morales requested the dates of this year's budget meeting to schedule meetings with each department before then. **Mayor Nicholls** reminded Morales about the upcoming Council Retreat where they will speak about the budget.

Scheduling – No meetings scheduled

VI. SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS

Simonton reported the following events:

- March 22nd – Military Appreciation Event
- Ongoing - Neighborhood Cleanup close to completion
- Starting March 24th - Pavement Preservation

VII. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

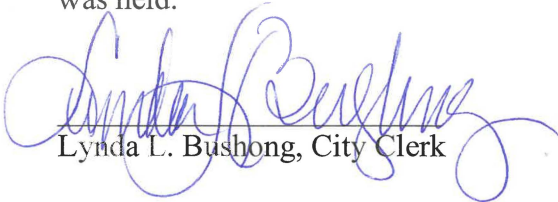
Roxanne Barley, nonresident, spoke about the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) movement and wanted to know how the City of Yuma stands on this issue. **Barley** would like to collaborate with different City departments to bring awareness to the community about MMIW.

Conan Nierenhausen, nonresident, also spoke about the MMIW movement and wanted to bring awareness to the community about the crisis. Nirenehausen wanted to know how the City is handling MMIW cold cases in Yuma, and how are group homes that house Native American children being monitored to keep them safe.

Jeff Brand, President of the Yuma Region Bicycle Coalition, nonresident, talked about a proposal done by the City to narrow streets as part of a comprehensive plan to increase housing opportunities in Yuma, and the impact this would have on the cycling community. Yuma Region Bicycle Coalition reviewed some studies, and it was found that simply narrowing the streets will not increase bicycles versus car fatalities, studies showed speed is the factor. **Brand** on behalf of the Yuma Region Bicycle Coalition asked if the City moves forward with narrowing the streets to please reduce the speed limit to the lowest possible level for any given category of streets. If shoulders will be created as a result of narrowing the streets **Brand** suggested to use the shoulders as bike lanes. Reducing speed and increasing bike lanes, can protect cyclist, pedestrians, skateboarders and people in the community who often use the road rather than the sidewalks.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, **Mayor Nicholls** adjourned the meeting at 6:46 p.m. No Executive Session was held.



Lynda L. Bushong, City Clerk

APPROVED:



Douglas J. Nicholls, Mayor

Approved at the City Council Meeting of:
may 21, 2025
City Clerk: 