



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City Officials Taking Action to Target Illegal Street Racing and Hold Offenders Accountable

Announce plan to ramp up enforcement and prosecution of street racing in effort similar to last year's successful Operation Wheels Down, which targeted illegal use of dirt bikes and ATVs on city streets

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus Mayor Andrew J. Ginther, City Attorney Zach Klein and Division of Police Chief Elaine Bryant today announced steps the City is taking to target illegal drag racing, reckless operation on city roadways, and to hold offenders accountable for endangering public safety. City officials have received complaints from residents and business owners about street racing in multiple neighborhoods across the city, and are taking action as this dangerous activity ramps up in the spring and summer months.

“Anyone who is using our streets as the backdrop for illegal and reckless behavior will be captured and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law,” said City of Columbus Mayor Andrew J. Ginther. **“This type of behavior is unacceptable, plain and simple, and it won’t be tolerated. We’ll continue to coordinate with law enforcement and prosecutors to go after these criminals and keep our neighborhoods safe.”**

On April 29, CPD responded to reports of street racing on the 4100 block of Indianola Ave. in Clintonville. Several spectators were also observed vandalizing vehicles in the area. When police arrived to disperse the scene, several gunshots were fired in the direction of the officers.

“These street racing and take over events are dangerous and are done in complete disregard for the safety of others,” said Columbus Division of Police Chief Elaine Bryant. **“We want the message to be clear. You race, you lose. It is that simple. If you race, we will find you and arrest you, and impound your vehicle.”**

Earlier in April, one individual was killed in a crash believed to be connected to street racing in south Columbus. CPD is holding extensive planning and strategizing meetings with their officers to find additional ways to hold people accountable for their actions.

“Street racing is a real and immediate threat to public safety, and the City is responding in kind. We’re sending a message to anyone getting behind the wheel in Columbus: if you operate a vehicle recklessly, we will prosecute you,” said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein. **“During Operation Wheels Down, we impounded**

vehicles and aggressively prosecuted offenders. We're going to do the same for drag racing—and make our streets safer in the process.”

Enforcement and prosecution of reckless driving offenses have been a top priority for city leaders in recent years, with Columbus City Council passing an ordinance in 2021 enhancing penalties for illegal, reckless operation of certain vehicles on city streets.

In 2022, City Attorney Klein and Chief Bryant joined Columbus Mayor Andrew Ginther in unveiling Operation Wheels Down, a coordinated effort to step up enforcement and prosecution of individuals illegally and recklessly operating vehicles like dirt bikes and ATVs on city streets.

In the initial months of enforcement in 2022, Operation Wheels Down led to dozens of arrests and charges filed as well as the recovery of a number of stolen guns and vehicles. The City also impounded vehicles as evidence in many of these cases.

Wednesday's joint announcement builds on the framework created under Operation Wheels Down as law enforcement and prosecutors work together to disrupt drag racing networks and events throughout the peak spring and summer months, impound offenders' vehicles, and offer plea bargains only if there is an evidentiary issue that requires it.

The City will also aggressively prosecute any other activity related to street racing such as weapon offenses, rioting, and property damage. Whenever legally permissible, the City will seize vehicles used to facilitate this conduct to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Wednesday marks the [one-year anniversary of the announcement](#) of Operation Wheels Down.

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