



# CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH

---

## City Council Meeting – Council Member Items Report

To: CITY COUNCIL  
From: BUTCH TWINING, COUNCILMAN  
ANDREW GRUEL, COUNCILMAN  
Date: JUNE 3, 2025  
Subject: **EXPLORATION INTO DNA AND COMPUTER FORENSICS FOR THE  
HUNTINGTON BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT**

### ISSUE STATEMENT

Huntington Beach should consider the strategic initiative to establish a DNA and Computer Forensics Laboratory for the HBPD. Considering this as an in-house operation comes with high, value potential. Viability depends on numerous factors including financial, operational, and legal considerations.

1. Faster case resolution. In-house DNA analysis dramatically reduces turnaround times compared to weeks or months utilizing the Orange County Sheriff's Office DNA Laboratory.
2. Rapid Action. Leads to faster arrests and case closures, especially sexual assaults, homicides, burglaries, and property crimes.
3. Centralization. Increased control over evidence processing, enhanced chain of custody integrity, and evidence security.
4. Improved Cold Case Capabilities. HBPD could revive cold cases with newly available, forensic technologies (touch DNA, low copy number samples).
5. Regional Leadership and collaboration. Huntington Beach could become a regional forensic hub, supporting smaller cities nearby (and far away) or partnering with Orange County Sheriff's Department for shared access and cost sharing agreements with other agencies.
6. Grant and Federal Funding. Department of Justice and National Institute of Justice offer significant funding through programs like "DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Program" and "Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants."

At this time, all HBPD DNA evidence is processed through the Orange County Sheriff's Department and there is a minimum 6 month waiting period for most cases.

### RECOMMENDED ACTION

Direct the City Manager to report back to City Council within 90 days on the feasibility of developing a DNA processing laboratory along with increasing the size and scope of the HBPD's computer forensic laboratory. The study should include start-up costs for equipment and personnel, possible funding sources, legacy costs for additional personnel, equipment maintenance, and the potential positive effects on criminal investigations.

### STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

Non Applicable - Administrative Item