



Agenda Report

20-588

Agenda Date: 6/23/2020

REPORT TO COUNCIL

SUBJECT

Informational Report on the Police Department's Community Engagement Efforts [Council Pillar: Deliver and Enhance High Quality Efficient Services and Infrastructure]

BACKGROUND

In 2017, the Police Department secured a \$30,000 grant from the Silicon Valley Community Foundation to hire My90 and facilitate a year-long projects to engage residents regarding their view of police, community trust, perceptions of public safety (e.g. crime trends and statistics) and satisfaction with local community policing initiatives.

My90 is an independent service provider for law enforcement agencies specializing in collecting community feedback, analyzing data and communicating results to both the Department and broader community.

On July 10, 2018, My90 presented the results from this year-long initiative to City Council (RTC 18-154). The presentation highlighted three major components:

- A citywide survey available to all Santa Clara residents in September 2017;
- A community panel of 20 local leaders who provided ongoing feedback from July, 2017-March, 2018 in a series of in-depth questionnaires; and,
- Three specialized focus groups open to the public from January to March 2018.

All components of the initiative were widely promoted throughout Santa Clara, including social media, flyers, citywide events, city publications, community organizations, and local leaders. In addition, Santa Clara police officers voluntarily handed out cards soliciting feedback from people they came into contact with.

Community feedback was shared directly with My90, which aggregated the anonymous information, which was analyzed and shared with the Police Department, City Council and broader community. Full results are available at www.textmy90.com/santaclara.

The highlights of the initiative included:

- High levels of overall trust and satisfaction. Of residents who had recently interacted with a Santa Clara police officer, 87.3% reported that they were "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with the service they received. In addition, 92.4% of city survey respondents considered the Santa Clara Police Department "very trustworthy" or "somewhat trustworthy."
- Minimal negative feedback was shared. The feedback was provided by young people of color, suggesting a need for ongoing outreach by the Department to those who were

underrepresented in the survey results despite efforts to collect a wide range of feedback.

- Residents reported that their top local safety concerns were property crime (33.0%), traffic enforcement (24.5%), and homelessness (12.2%).
- Both positive and negative comments provided offered specific suggestions to Santa Clara Police Department on how to improve. Specifically, residents emphasized the importance of the day-to-day interactions officers have with residents, saying in one instance “Spend a little more one-on-one time with the residents in their beat, even if it’s just to stop and say hello.”

Following the City Council meeting, My90 presented the in-depth findings from this report to Santa Clara Police Department employees, sworn and civilian, as a part of their on-going training.

At the same Council meeting where My90 shared the results, retired Chief of Police Michael J. Sellers explained the next steps include creating a Chief’s Advisory Committee (CAC) to provide insight on policies, practices and ways to enhance community-police relations.

DISCUSSION

It has been two years since this collaboration between My90 and the Police Department.

Strong relationships of mutual trust between our Department and the public are critical to maintaining public safety and effective policing. Law enforcement relies on the cooperation of community members to provide information about crime in their neighborhoods, and to work with the police to devise solutions to crime and disorder problems. Similarly, community members’ willingness to trust the police depends on whether they believe that police actions reflect community values.

Personal interactions between police officers and community members do more than build mutual trust. Some programming promotes leadership, character and skill development. Other activities serve as an antidote for smoking, substance abuse, suicide, depression or a criminal lifestyle. All police programming is intended to address needs, strengthen community relationships and build trust. Developing and maintaining trusting relationships are the foundation of community policing and are essential to preventing crime, terrorism, and targeted violence.

Programs and initiatives to engage the community and foster these interactions include:

Communications Platforms

The Police Department has utilizes its’ website, cable channel 15, Inside Santa Clara, Mission City Scenes, eNotify, Facebook, Nextdoor, Nixle and Twitter to communicate to residents and businesses.

The primary functions of the communication include:

- Build trust between law enforcement and the community we protect and serve
- Convey timely items and seek the public’s assistance (e.g. Silver/Blue/Amber alert, missing person, crime tips, etc.)
- Share traffic advisories and details related to active police incidents
- Communicate community resources (e.g. crisis text line, HAWK), changes in laws (e.g. carpool lane), emergency preparedness (e.g. AlertSCC) and scams (e.g. IRS)
- Create awareness around program (e.g. Neighborhood Watch, D.A.R.E), service (e.g. MedicAlert, MeetUp) and event (e.g. Open House) information

- Educate the community on crime prevention, trends, statistics, ways to report information or gain details connected with police incidents
- Gain community feedback (e.g. alarm permit) and/or share new policies (e.g. unmanned aircraft system)
- Highlight grant related requirements (e.g. Click It or Ticket, DUI Checkpoint, Tobacco, fireworks, etc.) and multi-agency operations (e.g. gun buy-back, traffic enforcement, distracted driving, etc.)
- Bring attention to seasonal topics (e.g. Halloween safety tips, kids/pets in hot cars, law enforcement appreciation day, etc.)
- Share employment opportunities, volunteer recruitment and Career Fair information
- Publicize partnerships (e.g. Special Olympics, Sean's K-9's)
- Feature Department personnel, awards and accomplishments

Approximately seven years ago, the responsibilities associated with the communications platforms transitioned to the Chief of Police's Office. Doing so allowed for increased platform security, access to the necessary information, a consistent voice to representing a variety of global topics and staff consistency necessary to continue to develop these platforms. The Department's communications initiatives have been performed exclusively by the Management Analyst, in addition to their on-going responsibilities.

As part of the Fiscal Year 2019/20 budget process, the Police Department requested to a budget increase to transition a vacant Staff Aide position (\$6,464-\$8,237) to that of Communications Coordinator (\$7,842-\$10,030). If approved, the Communications Coordinator would work in collaboration with the Department's Management Analyst to develop and manage the presence across a variety of digital platforms, respond to citizen inquiries and suggestions, attend and represent the Department at meetings and events, track effectiveness of communication strategies and monitor trends in public sentiment and other critical matters. The Communications Coordinator position was denied. As a result, there are limitations to the Department's future growth in this area.

On-going Programming and Services

The Department has a long history of providing a variety of programs and services, each that help fulfill our community policing goals, meet resident needs and attempt to build trust. As resident needs change, so has the Department's response.

For example, our partnership with local public and private schools used to have a focus on Drug Awareness Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) and juvenile crime issues. In recent years, the Department has developed programming to address the safety and security of our students and school personnel to include Run, Hide, Fight workshops and corresponding lock down drills. Small groups and school assemblies address topics facing today's youth (e.g. cyberbullying, healthy relationships and consent, sexting, exam cheating, etc.) and the long-term consequences of their actions. Meanwhile, educational sessions (e.g. current trends in substance abuse and vaping) with school administrators or parents provide real-time information about local juvenile crime trends. At the high schools, Every 15 Minutes has become a staple to address distracted driving and drinking and driving. The Department participates in many school activities (e.g. Career Fair, Safe Routes to School, Red Ribbon Week, Read Across America Day, Best Buddy Program, etc.) and opens its' facility for tours (e.g. Boy Scouts, Sister City, Take Your Kids to Work Day).

Similarly, content is developed for Santa Clara University (e.g. alcohol/substance use, dating safety) and for the OSHER program.

The Department has developed collaborations with the Senior Center (e.g. HAWK lights, MedicAlert, identity protection, scams) local businesses (e.g. Active Shooter Prevention and Preparedness), places of worship and non-profit organizations to serve their unique needs. Staff also has a history of participating in community functions (e.g. Relay for Life, Tip A Cop, Sean M. Walsh Foundation, First Responder Night at local sporting events, etc.) benefitting the local community.

While some Department programming (e.g. Citizens' Police Academy, Leadership Santa Clara, National Night Out) has a long history, following community input provided through the My90 initiative, the curriculum was adjusted to incorporate more high-touch aspects. Newer programming (e.g. Chat with the Chief, Coffee with a Cop, Talk and Tour, OSHER program, Open House, etc.) was developed with an emphasis on transparency.

The Department offers community presentations (e.g. holiday shopping safety tips, bicycle safety, etc.) throughout the City, which are generally well-received. Meanwhile, community outreach presentations (e.g. Neighborhood University Relations Committee, creek trail, stadium, alarm permit), have allowed staff to communicate important information and gather valuable feedback on designated topics.

City-wide special events (e.g. Eggstravagnza, Arbor/Earth Day, Health and Wellness Fair, Silicon Valley BBQ Championship, All City Picnic and Fireworks Extravaganza, Art and Wine Festival, Holiday Tree Lighting) provide a setting where residents don't generally anticipate having contact with law enforcement. As a result, these contacts provide the Department to reach individuals who may not seek out Police Department programming.

Residents can visit the Police Building or Northside Substation, to take advantage of valuable community services (e.g. MeetUp, MedicAlert, free gun locks, prescription disposal).

Police Activities League

The programming offered by P.A.L. (e.g. Explorer Program, fishing, soccer, softball, wrestling, flag football, BMX, judo) touches thousands of youth and their families. The annual outreach programs (e.g. Shop with a PAL, holiday meal/gift delivery) serves a community need and involves multiple partner agencies.

Chief's Advisory Committee

The Department received 33 solid applications and conducted interviews with each of the candidates. The inaugural 15-member committee held its' first quarterly meeting in October, 2018. To date, the CAC has provided feedback on a Crisis Communication Plan, new laws impacting law enforcement (AB748 and SB1421), Smoking Ordinance, Unmanned Aircraft System policy, mental illness and law enforcements role, recreation vehicle parking, property crimes (particularly thefts from automobiles) and street racing and sideshow activity. CAC members also provided feedback to the Police Department about the beta website, prior to the launch of the new City website.

Due to COVID-19 and the transition to the new Chief of Police, all of the members have agreed to service through October, 2021. At that time, half of the members will cycle off CAC and new community members will be sought.

Grant Initiatives and Law Enforcement Partnerships

The Department seeks out grant funding (e.g. Alcoholic Beverage Control, Office of Traffic Safety, Tobacco Program), and participates in allied programs (e.g. Allied Agency Traffic Enforcement, Gun Buyback). Each of these opportunities provides our staff with the opportunity to make contact with residents to distribute materials (e.g. children's helmets), answer questions, provide education and build relationships.

Administration

Department administration participates in the Santa Clara Unified School District's Challenge Team meeting. This allows for collaboration between a variety of service providers to our youth.

The Police Department continues to seek new ways to engage with our residents and business owners based on their interests and needs, as well as City priorities and Department resources.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The action being considered does not constitute a "project" within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(5) in that it is a governmental organizational or administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect changes in the environment.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

COORDINATION

This report was prepared by the Police Department.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Council agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall Council Chambers. A complete agenda packet is available on the City's website and in the City Clerk's Office at least 72 hours prior to a Regular Meeting and 24 hours prior to a Special Meeting. A hard copy of any agenda report may be requested by contacting the City Clerk's Office at (408) 615-2220, email clerk@santaclaraca.gov <<mailto:clerk@santaclaraca.gov>>.

RECOMMENDATION

Note and file the Informational Report on the Police Department's Community Engagement Efforts.

Reviewed by: Patrick Nikolai, Chief of Police

Approved by: Deanna J. Santana, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. My90 Final Report