



City of San Antonio

Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: Update on Police Services Review [Maria Villagomez, Deputy City Manager]
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Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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DEPARTMENT: City Manager’s Office

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Maria Villagomez, Deputy City Manager

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City Wide

SUBJECT: Update on Police Services Review Project

SUMMARY:

Mayor and City Council will receive an update on the Police Services Review Project.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

A framework for a review of Police Services was presented by the City Manager to the Mayor and City Council as part of the FY 2021 Budget process. This framework centered around addressing foundational issues, community expectations of the police department, community input and service alternatives.

On December 11, 2020 the City Manager provided a plan to review and analyze police service response over the next several months to the Mayor and City Council. The goal of this review is to distinguish between calls that require a traditional police response from those calls that may be better handled by another City department or combination of police and other service provider.

Foundational Issues

As part of the foundational issues that will be addressed, accountability and discipline are top priorities. These priorities are being addressed as part of the ongoing collective bargaining negotiations with the San Antonio Police Officers Association (SAPOA). The City Council was briefed on January 20th on the City’s priorities for the collective bargaining negotiations. The City of San Antonio’s negotiating team met with SAPOA 11 times since

February. Both parties agreed at the start of the negotiations to meet and negotiate through April 19, 2021. The City and (SAPOA) agreed to extend collective bargaining negotiations through a 15-day extension through May 12, 2021.

Community Expectations of the Police Department

Part of this project focuses on understanding the community expectations of police services and develop response alternative recommendations to ensure police officers are placed in encounters that need a law enforcement response.

- *Police Services Survey:*

To begin to understand the community expectations of police services, the City engaged the ETC Institute to perform a scientific survey. ETC has extensive experience in local government including conducting community surveys for the City of San Antonio. The Survey was conducted in February and March 2021.

The survey results serve as the foundation for continued community dialogue during the ongoing virtual community town hall meetings, which will gather qualitative feedback on the community's expectations of encounters with SAPD and potential response alternatives to certain 911 calls. Data and information gathered from this process will help inform the development of recommendations to the Public Safety Committee and ultimately the City Council.

The results of the survey were transmitted to the Public Safety Committee via email and made available to the public on Monday, April 5th at the website www.sanantonio.gov/sapdandme, which also contains information about the entire Police Services Review project and lists all past and upcoming meetings related to this effort. The results of the Survey were presented to the Public Safety Committee on April 20th and the survey reports are attached to this memorandum.

- *Review of Police Services Calls by UTSA*

In September 2020, the City partnered with the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) to perform an analysis of 911 calls.

The analysis performed by UTSA focuses on requests received by the City's 911 system that frequently result in or require police response. The work done by UTSA will help inform recommendations to the Public Safety Committee and ultimately City Council on types or categories of calls that potentially could be handled by non-sworn police personnel or which might be amenable to a co-response between police and other City agencies.

The UTSA research team is comprised of Dr. Michael Smith and Dr. Rob Tillyer, both professors of criminology and criminal justice in the College for Health, Community, and Policy at UTSA. The UTSA research team presented the results of their analysis to the Public Safety Committee on April 20th and their report is attached to this memorandum.

Community Input

This effort gives the community an opportunity to provide input on what encounters they want to have with police and work with partners to develop response additions or alternatives. The City is also looking for feedback to improve the San Antonio Police Department Website in order to continue to enhance transparency of data. On January 29, 2021 the Department of Government and Public Affairs presented a community engagement plan to

the Public Safety Committee. Community Input is being gathered through a series of outreach efforts:

- Scientific Community Survey (February/March)
- Meetings with Neighborhood Association Presidents in all City Council Districts (March to May)
- City-wide Community Conversations (April to May)
- Plática con nuestra Comunidad (May)
- Tele-Town Halls (May)
- Meetings with Stakeholder Groups (May/June)

Due to the uncertainty of the pandemic, outreach efforts are being conducted virtually.

The results of the community engagement process will be presented to the Public Safety Committee in June 2021.

Service Alternatives:

The framework presented by the City Manager identified three key areas to focus and strengthen the city response to Mental Health Calls, Domestic Violence, and Homelessness.

In January 2021, the City amended its interlocal agreement with Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council (STRAC) to support a mental health coordination study from the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute. This study will identify improvements to the City of San Antonio's first response system, informed by existing data on mental health response and integrated response best practices. These system improvements will ensure that in an incident involving an individual in mental health crisis, first responders will have appropriate support to connect the individual and family members to clinical care as quickly as possible to ensure the safety and security of the individual and the community. This agreement will also develop a strategy and initial work plan to support the City of San Antonio in its efforts to implement prioritized improvements for the City's first response system.

A draft report will be presented to the Community Health and Equity Committee in June 2021 and a final report will be presented to the Public Safety Committee in early August 2021.

The work by the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute will serve as a foundation to inform alternative ways to response to calls that involve individuals with mental health and substance abuse issues who may also be facing homelessness.

ISSUE:

Staff will provide an update to the City Council on the Police Services Review Project.

ALTERNATIVES:

This is a briefing item only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This is a briefing item only.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is a briefing item only.