



# City of San Antonio

## Legislation Details (With Text)

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**Title:** Briefing on the San Antonio Police Department's Community Policing Efforts and Programs [Presented by William McManus, Chief of Police]

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### SUMMARY:

This memo provides an overview of the various citizen participation and community policing units employed by the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD).

### BACKGROUND:

Community engagement is the core of SAPD’s philosophy on community policing. Fostering a close working relationship with the community is vital to providing effective police services and maintaining a safe and fear free environment. The Department is committed to this effort and is always accessing its methods to improve the impact of community oriented policing.

The following is a summary of each of the programs SAPD utilizes for community policing. These programs allow the department to be effective in the community, as well as provide a safe environment.

*San Antonio Fear Free Environment (SAFFE)* units are located at each of SAPD’s six substations. Each unit consists of two sergeants and approximately fifteen officers who focus on identifying, evaluating and resolving community crime issues in cooperation and participation with residents.

SAFFE officers are assigned to specific areas within the city and work closely with both residents and patrol officers also assigned to those areas. SAFFE officers establish and maintain day-to-day interaction with residents and businesses, in order to prevent crimes before they happen. SAFFE officers act as liaisons with other City agencies, work closely with schools and youth programs, coordinate graffiti-removal activities, and serve as resources to residents.

*Problem Oriented Policing (POP)* unit is not assigned to any one substation. Instead, they are deployed throughout the City based on priority as determined by police intelligence, crime data, and other factors. The Unit consists of one lieutenant, three sergeants, and a number of detectives and officers who assist with “POP projects.”

These POP projects are short term (generally two to six weeks) deployments of POP personnel to investigate “hot spot” issues such as increased drug activity or prostitution in a specific area. The Unit works with community stakeholders, applicable City departments, and other service agencies to identify specific problems and develop a plan of attack. Ultimately, the POP Unit aims to help engage stakeholders in such a way that efforts to resolve issues are maintained after they have moved on to address projects in other areas.

At the community level, SAPD has several programs that allow the community to get involved, as well as learn what the Department does in San Antonio. *Citizens on Patrol (COP)* Program is designed to prepare residents to be the "eyes and ears" for the police and to promote closer cooperation between residents and other City agencies that exist to serve them. Neighborhood residents patrol their streets, using cell phones to report crimes. Training and police ride-alongs take place at the various SAPD substations and is open to all residents within San Antonio.

*Citizen Police Academy* is an 11-week course designed to inform and educate residents about the SAPD and police work in San Antonio. The course is held at the SAPD Training Academy. Currently, there are three scheduled classes for this year, the first of which will graduate April 1st.

SAPD also manages a number of other programs intended to engage the community and reduce crime and the fear of crime by other means as well. These programs include the Police Athletic League, the Police Explorers program, the citywide Bicycle Rodeo Event, and the annual School Safety Patrol Rally.

In addition to these Department sponsored programs, SAPD provides support to many community run programs and events such as Neighborhood Watch programs and National Night Out events.

CONCLUSION:

Community engagement is a necessary part of SAPD's philosophy on policing. Accordingly, the Department works closely with the community to provide a safe environment for residents of San Antonio. The Department is committed to community policing and is always looking for better ways to improve community oriented policing.