



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number: 15-4794

Agenda Item Number: 2.

Agenda Date: 9/2/2015

In Control: Criminal Justice, Public Safety and Services Committee

DEPARTMENT: San Antonio Police Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Anthony Trevino, Interim Police Chief

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City-wide

SUBJECT:

Councilman Gallagher's Council Consideration Request (CCR) on the Creation of Safe Exchange Zones at Police Substations

SUMMARY:

On March 12, 2015, Councilman Mike Gallagher submitted a City Council Consideration Request (CCR) to consider the creation of "Safe Exchange Zones at Police Substations to help citizens safely broker transactions with strangers."

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The CCR states that the "exchange of commerce of legitimate items among individuals has evolved over the years. With the rising popularity of internet commerce, individuals are often put in a position of selling their items or purchasing their items from strangers who may or may not have good intentions."

The direct commercial exchanges between private individuals have become common place due to the popularity of online website such as Craigslist.com. While the vast majority of these exchanges are legitimate and safe, some individuals have used online exchange websites and mobile applications to victimize potential buyers and/or sellers. In order to provide a safe atmosphere in which to make these exchanges, several police departments across the nation have allowed buyers and sellers to meet in the parking lot and/or lobby of their police stations to carry out the exchange. Although no major Texas cities actively promote safe zones for commercial exchanges most do allow the practice.

The SAPD has six substations across the City, open 24 hours, 7 days a week. The parking lot and the lobby of each substation are covered by video surveillance. Currently, the public is allowed access to the parking lot and the lobby and safe child exchanges are regularly carried out here. By utilizing instructional outreach and safety information as well as training for SAPD officers and service agents, residents will be encouraged to conduct exchanges in safe locations such as police substation lobbies and parking lots. Also, the department will utilize social media to provide safety tips when conducting these types of transactions. Safety tips will include such things as insisting that an individual meet at a public place, such as one of the SAPD safe exchange zones at every substation, don't go alone, trust your instincts, do not meet in a secluded area, and do not invite strangers into your home, and do not go to theirs.

ISSUE:

In the interest of public safety, creating a safe exchange zones will allow the residents of San Antonio to feel there is a safe place to conduct exchanges without fear of any harm to the sellers or buyers.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the creation of Safe Exchange Zones.

RECOMMENDATION:

SAPD recommends forwarding the creation of Safe Exchange Zones to the full City Council for approval in October 2015.