City of San Antonio

Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	21-4516
Type:	Staff Briefing - Without Ordinance
In control:	Public Safety Committee
On agenda:	6/23/2021
Title:	Briefing and possible action on the Update of the Police Services Review Project [Maria Villagomez, Deputy City Manager]
Sponsors:	
Indexes:	
Code sections:	
Attachments:	1. UTSA-Report-20201-04, 2. Community Input Report June 23 2021, 3. Police Recommendations from Community Health & Equity Committee, 4. June 23 Police Services Update PSC

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result

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:

The Public Safety Committee will receive an update on the Police Services Review Project including:

- Overall Status of the Project and Timeline
- Recommendations from Community Health and Equity Committee
- Results of Community Engagement
- Framework of Recommendations

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.

On May 5, 2021, City Council was briefed on the results of the community survey and the findings of the UTSA Review of Police Services Calls. In addition, the briefing outlined the community input process and the schedule for presenting this information to the Public Safety Committee and City Council.

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 May 5th on the City's priorities for the collective bargaining negotiations.

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.

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.

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 served as the foundation for continued community dialogue during the 27 virtual community town hall meetings conducted throughout the city in April and May 2021, which provided residents the opportunity to offer 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 be presented to the Public Safety Committee and will help inform the development of recommendations presented to the Public Safety Committee and ultimately the City Council.

SAPD Officer Focus Group

On June 14, 2021, an SAPD focus group, comprised of 60 patrol officers representing every service area, met with the City Manager's Office to provide feedback on the results of the community survey and to offer their perspective on the ongoing police services review.

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 was presented to the Community Health and Equity Committee on June 11, 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.

Recommendations from Community Health and Equity Committee
Recommendations from the Community Health and Equity Committee regarding the June 2020 Charge from the Mayor regarding: Evaluation of best policing practices to help promote race and gender equity in our community and review mental health de-escalation measures will be presented.

Timeline:
At the June 23rd Public Safety Committee Meeting, the Public Safety Committee will be provided with a framework for potential recommendations for this project that incorporates community and police officers' feedback for the Committee's input. The next steps in the project are:

- June 25th - Budget Goal Setting Session. City Council will be provided with an updated on the Police Services Project
- July - City Staff will prepare recommendations incorporating feedback from the Community, Public Safety Committee, and Police Officers.
- August 2nd - Public Safety Committee. Final report from Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute and Proposed Recommendations for the Police Services Review Project.
- August 12th- City Manager proposes the FY 2022 Proposed Budget that will incorporate the Police Services Review Project Recommendations.
- August - September: Community Input on the Proposed Budget
- September 16 - Budget Adoption

ISSUE:
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ALTERNATIVES:
This is a briefing item only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This is a briefing item only.

RECOMMENDATION:
This is a briefing item only.