



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Date: 4/20/2021

In Control: Public Safety Committee

DEPARTMENT: Government and Public Affairs

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Jeff Coyle

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City Wide

SUBJECT: Police Services Scientific Survey Results

SUMMARY:

The Public Safety Committee will be briefed on the results of the Police Services Scientific Survey conducted in February and March 2021.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

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.

Part of this plan 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. This effort will give 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.

On January 29, the Public Safety Committee was presented with a community engagement plan for this project that included the administration of a scientific survey as the first step of the process. The Community Survey was conducted by ETC Institute, a national research firm, during February and March.

ETC Institute mailed 5,650 survey packets to a random sample of households in the City of San Antonio. Each survey packet contained a cover letter, signed by the City Manager, and a copy of the survey in both English and Spanish. Residents who received the survey were given the option of completing the survey by mail, phone, or online. The actual number of surveys completed totaled 1,150 with roughly 100 per Council District. The overall results for the survey have a precision of at least +/- 2.8% at the 95% level of confidence.

The survey results will 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.

ETC Institute also administered the survey to a random sample of at least 100 residents in each of the five large cities in Texas that have populations of 500,000 or more to provide an average for "large Texas cities" to which San Antonio's results could be compared. These cities included Houston, Dallas, Austin, Fort Worth and El Paso.

KEY FINDINGS

Satisfaction with the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) is high:

- 71.6% of the residents surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied with the work of SAPD; only 8.2% were dissatisfied.
- Among the largest cities in Texas, San Antonio tied with Fort Worth for having the highest percentage of residents who were satisfied with their city's police department.

Most San Antonio Residents feel safe in their neighborhoods:

- 79.3% of San Antonio residents feel very safe or safe in their neighborhoods during the day
- Among the largest cities in Texas, San Antonio had the highest percentage of residents who reported feeling very safe or safe during the day and the second highest percentage of resident who reported feeling very safe or safe at night.

The majority of San Antonio Residents think the visibility of police in neighborhoods should be increased.

- 56.5% of the residents surveyed thought the visibility of police in neighborhoods should be increased.

A majority of residents are willing to have SAPD share some of its current responsibilities with other City departments/agencies:

- More than 50% of those surveyed thought SAPD should have a "shared" or "back-up" role for 13 of the 16 types of 911 calls that were assessed on the survey.
- The 911 calls for which residents were least likely to think SAPD should have "primary" responsibility were:
 - animal-related issues
 - mental health/substance abuse issues not involving a weapon
 - enforcement of public health orders
 - graffiti
 - parking violations
 - fireworks

The full 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.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes.