



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: October 28, 2014

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Frank Mannix, Santa Barbara Police Department

SUBJECT: Enhanced Safety Presence Options For The Downtown Corridor

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council provide direction to staff as to what Safety Presence option should be implemented in the downtown corridor.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The downtown corridor is impacted by the effects of homeless activity and the Police Department has implemented several strategies to address this issue: Tactical Patrol Force (TPF), Restorative Policing, Nightlife Enforcement Team, and Community Service Liaisons (Yellow Shirts). City Council has appropriated \$150,000 in the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget to enhance the security presence in the downtown corridor.

Staff previously presented a "Safety Guides" model of contracted security guards to the City Council and Council requested staff to return with additional options to consider to determine the most efficient use of these funds. In addition to the Safety Guides, this report provides more options for creating a security presence, including additional Community Service Liaisons, hiring an additional police officer, paying for police officer overtime, or creating a new Community Services Officer (CSO) position.

DISCUSSION:

City Council authorized \$150,000 in the Fiscal Year 2015 budget for an enhanced security presence in the lower downtown corridor. On September 9, 2014, City Staff gave a presentation to Council regarding a "Safety Guides" program based upon models in Long Beach, Santa Monica, and other business districts in Southern California. The City Council requested more information about this approach and ultimately directed the Police Department to present a list of options utilizing these funds to provide an enhanced safety presence in the downtown corridor.

Scope of Problem

City Council, downtown merchants and property owners, and members of the public have expressed concerns about unlawful behavior from homeless transients, young “urban travelers”, and other Municipal Code violators, especially in the downtown corridor. There is also a concern that generalized homeless behavior detracts from the business environment, even if the behavior is not technically violating the law.

Current Police Presence

The Santa Barbara Police Department has a long history of deploying specialized police services to address the unique problems associated with the downtown corridor. These services include:

- **Tactical Patrol Force (TPF) (Bicycle Officers and Foot Beat Officers)**
The TPF Unit consists of one sergeant and six officers who enforce street crime violations commonly associated with homeless activity in the downtown, Milpas Street, and beachfront corridors. Two of these officers are dedicated to full-time foot beat patrol in the downtown corridor, providing seven-day-a-week coverage. The remaining four TPF officers ride bicycles in their targeted areas and also enforce street crime violations. The City Council added an officer to this work unit in August 2014 as part of the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget focused on the downtown corridor. There are also six, authorized part-time Community Services Liaisons who assist the TPF unit by serving as the eyes and ears of the Police Department while interacting with the business community and the homeless population.
- **Restorative Police Officers**
There are two Restorative Police Officers who are assigned to work with the mentally ill homeless, who usually suffer from a dual diagnosis of drug/alcohol addiction and mental illness. The primary mission of the Restorative Policing Unit is to move the dual diagnosed mentally ill homeless out of the criminal justice venue and into a mental health venue, where treatment and long-term recovery is a realistic option. The Police Department also has two part-time Outreach Specialists (Blue Shirts) who assist the Restorative Policing Officers in their contacts with their service population.
- **Nightlife Enforcement Team (NET)**
This unit works closely with the local bars and nightclubs to ensure compliance with Alcohol Beverage Control laws and regulations. Through partnership and teamwork with local businesses, two Nightlife Enforcement Team officers are able to promote responsible practices of alcohol beverage serving.

Safety Presence Enhancement Options

While staff feels the current resources are effective for public safety in the downtown corridor, there is an interest in a more visible security presence and the Police Department has developed a range of options for Council to consider.

Additional Community Service Liaisons (Yellow Shirts)

The Community Services Liaisons (CSL) are a relatively new concept designed to give a highly visible presence in the downtown, beachfront, and Milpas Street corridors. The mission of the current team of six Liaisons is to serve as the “eyes and ears” of the Police Department and report misconduct requiring a police officer response. While they may contact low level violators, they have no citation authority. As a result, their contacts become impractical when confronting most Municipal Code violators. While distinctly dressed in bright yellow shirts, they have not achieved the “highly visible” presence that had been hoped. An additional \$150,000 towards this option would support an additional **9,375 hours** of CSL Yellow Shirt presence in the downtown corridor.

Contract Security Guard (Safety Guide)

This option was presented at the September 9, 2014 City Council meeting. This option would require the Downtown Parking staff to contract with a security firm to deploy two shifts (8 hr. each) of security guards (Safety Guides), 365 days a year, to serve as a visible deterrence to low level criminal behavior in the downtown corridor. The mission of the Safety Guides would be largely identical to the CSL Yellow Shirts, although they would be deployed in a more conspicuous and visible manner. This would include a slightly more official and authoritative uniform. They would not be able to take official enforcement actions of issuing citations for low level criminal behavior. They would largely perform a role of “observe and report” to the Police Department. Staff has gathered information on how the cities of Long Beach and Santa Monica use contract security staffing (see Attachment). It is projected that this option would produce approximately **5,840 hours** of deployment.

Community Service Officer (CSO)

Community Service Officers (CSO) have been used for many years by police departments across the country. While their missions vary from department to department, they all provide a non-sworn level of police service to the community at a rate of pay substantially below that of a police officer. This option would use officially uniformed personnel to work foot beats in the downtown corridor to enforce low level criminal behavior through the issuance of Municipal Code citations. The vast majority of citations issued in the downtown corridor are for Municipal Code violations, and the Community Service Officer would be equipped to handle all of these violations. Should any situation exceed their training or capability, the Community Services Officers would

use a police issued portable radio to call for police officer assistance. A variant of this position is our current Animal Control Officer, who is conspicuously uniformed and has the authority to issue citations for Municipal Code violations involving animals. In addition, the CSO would be expected to interact with the business community in a manner similar to the Community Services Liaison (Yellow Shirts). In essence, the CSO would carry out all of the same functions of the CSL (Yellow Shirts), with the additional responsibility and authority to stop, confront, and cite Municipal Code violators. The CSO would also wear an official uniform to project the authority necessary to issue citations (i.e. similar to our Animal Control Officers). This proposal would require the police department to hire, train, and supervise part-time personnel to carry out this mission. It is estimated that this option would support **7,500 hours** of CSO deployment in the downtown corridor.

Additional Police Officer

A uniformed police officer is by far the most visible symbol of authority that can be deployed in the downtown corridor. It has the highest projection of safety but also the highest deployment cost. This officer would be assigned to the TPF unit, either on foot beat or bicycle patrol in the downtown corridor. It is projected that one additional officer would consume virtually the entire \$150,000 and would yield approximately **1,800 hours** of deployment.

Police Officer Overtime

The Police Department has successfully used overtime banks to fund specialty deployment strategies in the past. Officers would be deployed at an overtime rate (approximately \$72 hour) to work foot patrol or bicycle patrol in the downtown corridor and would yield approximately **2,080 hours** of deployment. A challenge with this proposal is to continually find staff willing to work overtime assignments.

The following chart depicts the five options, hourly rate of deployment, and the total in-field deployment time associated with each position.

Funding Target		
\$150,000		
Option (Position)	Hourly Rate	Total Hours
Community Service Liaison (Yellow Shirts)	\$16	9,375
Community Services Officer	\$20	7,500
Contract Security Guard/Safety Host	\$25	5,840
Police Officer Overtime	\$72	2,083
*Police Officer New Hire (\$150,000)	\$72	1,800

*Includes benefits

“Total Deployment Hours” are the maximum number of hours that all personnel hired under each option category that may be achieved through the \$150,000 funding target. The actual deployment shift (i.e. 8 hr. shift, 6 hr. shift, etc.) may vary depending upon seasonal variances or other operational needs.

While implementing any of the options described will enhance the current police staff presence in the downtown corridor, staff recommends pursuing the Community Service Officer option based on the Council discussion to date.

New Community Service Officers will build upon the role of the Community Service Liaisons (Yellow Shirts) but have the added benefit of addressing municipal code violations. The cost structure of part-time personnel compared to an additional police officer or police officer overtime would allow for more hours of visible presence on State Street.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

No budgetary impact is anticipated, as the funding for these options is already in the approved Fiscal Year 2015 budget.

ATTACHMENT: Overview of Downtown Security Programs

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SUBMITTED BY: Camerino Sanchez, Chief of Police

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office

Overview of Downtown Security Programs

The following summarizes the essential elements of the Security/Ambassador programs managed by the Business Improvement Districts in the Cities of Long Beach and Santa Monica.

Funding for the two programs is generated through assessments of property owners in the business districts. At this time, both cities contract with a security firm, Block by Block.

Block by Block was awarded contracts with the Downtown Long Beach Associates (DLBA), and, Downtown Santa Monica (DSM) after a competitive Request for Proposals process.

In both districts, Block by Block provides: qualified personnel, extensive training and equipment. They work closely with the Police Departments, meeting weekly and monthly to review any issues. Block by Block personnel and supervisors report directly to DLBA and DSM management, providing them with regular reports.

As specified in Block by Block's contracts, their services include providing highly trained personnel, well-versed in applicable laws that are a highly visible presence in the downtown. Although not a typical security operation, whenever possible, they prevent unlawful or undesirable activities by their mere presence and highly visible patrols. They are trained to provide remedial intervention when safe and to defer to the Police when intervention may be unsafe to the Guide or a third party. In addition, Block by Block is required to become involved in community activities, including meeting with community leaders, attending community meetings, job fairs, etc.

Long Beach's Safety Guides program focuses more on security, while Santa Monica's Ambassador program focuses more on the concierge aspects.

On July 22, 2014, representatives from the City of Santa Barbara's Police Department and Downtown Parking Program, along with the Executive Director of the Downtown Organization met with Block by Block's management teams in Long Beach and Santa Monica and members of their respective Police Departments. Representatives from both Police Departments expressed strong support for the programs. Block by Block's Lead and/or Supervisory personnel are the only ones that communicate with the Police. According to the respective police representatives contacted, because of the training and supervision provided by Block by Block, the Guide and Ambassador programs have not created additional or unnecessary calls for service.

Recently, the cities of Ventura and Oxnard have hired Block by Block to provide similar services in their downtown areas.

Long Beach – "Safety Guides Program"

Funded by: the Downtown Long Beach Associates, Inc

Annual Budget - \$550,000

Provide "Safety Guide" services over an 85 block area

Hours of Service:

Monday – Thursday 9:30am – Midnight

Friday – Saturday 9:30am – 2:30am

Sunday 11:00am - Midnight

Santa Monica - "Ambassador Program"

Funded by Downtown Santa Monica, Inc

Annual budget - \$1.2 million

Provides "Ambassador" services over a 30 block area

Hours of Service:

Sunday – Thursday 10:00am – 12:30am

Friday – Saturday 10:00am – 2:30am