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OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
OAKLAND

CITY OF OAKLAND

AGENDA REPORT

2011 FEB 21 AM 10:37
Office of the City Administrator
Attn: Dan Lindheim
From: Police Department
Date: March 8, 2011

Re: A Report from the Police Department Detailing the Current Status of Problem Solving Officer Deployment and the continued implementation of the Violence Prevention and Public Safety Act of 2004 (Measure Y)

SUMMARY

This informational report provides an update and summary on the implementation of the Violence Prevention and Public Safety Act of 2004 (Measure Y) and Measure BB, including the deployment of Problem Solving Officers (PSO). The Police Department is committed to implementing and expanding community policing as envisioned by the Measure Y initiative.

As a result of staffing shortages, the Department continues to experience challenges to the implementation and deployment of Problem Solving (PSO) and Crime Reduction Team (CRT) officers; however, problem-oriented policing in conjunction with intelligence led "Hot Spot" policing appears to be the most effective use of personnel resources and the best method to achieve long-term sustainable solutions to crime, the fear of crime, and quality of life issues within the City of Oakland.

The PSO program is recognized as an integral part of the Department's crime fighting strategy, and continues to receive substantial support and resources in staffing, training and equipment. Citizens have expressed their pleasure in having the PSOs reassigned to the community policing beats and it is anticipated that this program will continually improve and refine throughout the year. Focusing on fully engaging the community will assist in building the relationships necessary for real, measurable gains. This work will continue to make a positive difference in the areas of crime, the fear of crime, and quality of life issues in Oakland, over time.

FISCAL IMPACT

As of January 8, 2011 there are a total of 63 officers assigned to Measure Y positions in the Bureau of Field Operations. In addition, there are 13 supervisory and command staff positions assigned to oversee the work being conducted by these officers. The 63 officers include 57 PSOs and six CRT officers, all of which are funded through Measure Y. The supervisory and command staff personnel are funded by the general fund. Measure Y does not fully fund the positions it requires, or the required supervisory and command staff positions. Staffing these positions requires the use of existing resources.

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The 63 Problem Solving Officers are not routinely used for non- Measure Y activities; however, when used for holiday, major response operations, protests, or special events, overtime, i.e., when working at the Coliseum, their salaries are funded through the general fund; Measure Y funds are used to pay their salaries while on vacation, in court, or using other leaves such as training.

BACKGROUND

Measure Y was passed in 2004 and requires that the Department dedicate a total of 63 officers to community policing duties, and provides flexibility in how the officer positions are staffed. These positions must include at least 6 CRT officers and at a minimum one neighborhood beat officer (PSO) per community policing beat. These 63 positions may also be staffed as school safety, domestic violence, and child abuse intervention officers.

Measure Y does not include language as to the size or number of community policing beats or how the 63 officers are deployed, other than six CRT officers and one neighborhood officer assigned per community policing beat.

Measure Y language states that, “Each community policing beat shall have at least one neighborhood officer assigned solely to serve the residents of that beat to provide consistent contact and familiarity between residents and officers, continuity in problem solving and basic availability of police response in each neighborhood.” It further states that the CRT, “investigate and respond to illegal narcotic transactions and commission of violent crimes in identified violence hot spots.”

Measure Y required that 739 officers were minimally budgeted for the Department from the general fund. The Measure Y funded positions would be in addition to the 739 general funded positions providing a minimum staffing level of 803 officers.

Measure BB specifically removed the 739 officer minimum requirement; the Department is currently staffed at 653 officers, including those assigned to Measure Y positions, for a net difference of 150 officers. Prior to the passage of BB, the Department did not fully staff the PSO positions until the 739 general fund positions were staffed. This was due to the difficulty and problems associated with utilizing existing staff to fill positions that were limited in their ability to assist in the day to day operation of responding to both emergency and non emergency calls for service.

KEY ISSUES AND IMPACTS

The deployment of Measure Y officers cannot be the same when the Department is staffed with approximately 653 officers instead of the previous staffing level of at least 803 officers. The approximately 150 officer reduction in force, along with the required staffing of Measure Y

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positions has significantly impacted our Criminal Investigations and Patrol Divisions. Many units that formerly assisted the PSOs, have been eliminated or reduced since the Measure Y positions were staffed last year, including:

- 2 Traffic Enforcement squads of 8 officers each, reduced to 1 squad of 6 officers
- Alcohol Beverage Abatement and Special Events reduced and combined
- Reduction in NSC staffing
- Foot Patrol reduced by approximately 60%
- 2 Criminal investigative squads eliminated
- Criminal Investigation Division reduced by approximately 20 positions
- Patrol Division reduced from over 330 officers to our current of approximately 275

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Problem Solving Officers are responsible for the coordination of problem solving activities on their beats. This includes documenting and tracking progress on Neighborhood Councils priorities, crime and blight problems identified by the area command staff and projects the PSO determines to be in the best interest of the community based upon many sources of community input and crime data.

PSOs are best utilized as project managers working with the community in these problem solving efforts using additional resources to address and solve the problems. The elimination of and significant reduction in support units requires that PSOs become more self sufficient and have more deployment flexibility in addressing these issues.

The Department's goal has been to have a beat structure that includes matching patrol and community policing beats. This would facilitate the exchange of information and the continuity of problem solving between the PSOs and the patrol officers. The goal in late 2009 and early 2010 was to increase patrol beats from 35 to 57 to accomplish the matching of beats; however, it became apparent as the year proceeded that staffing this would not be possible.

The community policing beats were reduced from 57 to 35 to match the patrol beat structure as it became apparent that it was not feasible to operate the PSO program with 57 beats and limited support staff. The transition to 35 community policing beats allows greater efficiency, flexibility, and increases the PSO's ability to work together on solving problems, while allowing the Department to staff areas of the City that have higher stressor beats and violence - clear goals of Measure Y. These areas require the use of multiple officers to address significant violent crime problems and problem solving, as well as addressing officer safety concerns.

Each community policing beat has at least one PSO assigned; the additional PSOs were assigned based upon identified high stress beats, in conjunction with the knowledge of the area commanders and need for staffing of additional resources. It is important to note that even though the community policing beats were reduced, every Neighborhood Council still has an

assigned PSO. This deployment method provides for some Neighborhood Councils to share a PSO while others may have two.

The Department provided oral briefings to the Community Policing Advisory Board and the Measure Y Subcommittee prior to PSO and CRT deployment and has subsequently provided each with a written memorandum describing the same.

CONCLUSION

As of the date of this report, the Department has scheduled a PSO training course in February 2011, in which the Measure Y Subcommittee Chairperson, and the Community Policing Advisory Board Chairperson, and the Measure Y Evaluator Brightstar Ohlson have been invited to attend. The draft agenda for the training has already been forwarded to both subcommittees. In addition, the Department has scheduled regular monthly meetings, with a small group of community members (including both Committee Chairs) where we can discuss community policing efforts. The Department has also contacted the Measure Y Subcommittee and the Community Policing Advisory Board to request a forum twice a year where the two Committees and the Department can meet to discuss the status and progress of our community policing efforts.

Although staffing has played a role in reducing the number of community policing beats, the continuity between Patrol and Problem Solving Officers, flexibility in deployment and staffing of additional Problem Solving Officers in high stress and violence prone areas will increase efficiency. This will place the Department in a better position to reduce the violence as envisioned by Measure Y.

Additionally, the Department is continuing its efforts to draft a Community Policing Manual (scheduled for completion March 2011), and has finalized a Bureau policy on the roles and responsibilities of the Problem Solving Officers; we have sought input from the community on both policies. The Department is a firm believer in the benefits of problem solving and partnering with the Community and will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the Problem Solving and Crime Reduction Officers and make adjustments as necessary.

The Chief is committed to working with all stakeholders in an effort to fully implement community policing in Oakland and has made it a clear directive of the Departmental strategic plan.

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SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: Crime prevention and reduction activities will make an environment where the City of Oakland's commercial and residential areas can thrive.

Environmental: Many of the quality of life problems that the PSOs address involve environmental issues such as blighted properties, illegal dumping and illegal encampments. Through coordination with City and County agencies, these situations are improved.

Social Equity: By deploying PSOs throughout the City in greater numbers in areas with the greatest crime and social inequity will improve the Departments' ability to respond to the concerns of individuals who have been unwilling or unable to participate in the more organized community policing process. A desirable outcome would be to involve those disenfranchised residents in the solution to the problems facing them and their communities.

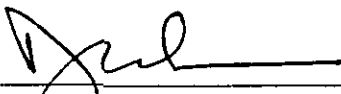
DISABILITY AND SENIOR ACCESS

There are no American with Disabilities Act (ADA) or senior citizen access issues identified in this report.

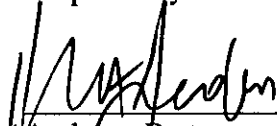
RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council accept this informational report and support the Chief's community policing efforts as outlined and demonstrated by the staffing of these 63 positions.

APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO
THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE:


Office of the City Administrator

Respectfully submitted,


FOR Anthony Batts
Chief of Police

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Bureau of Field Operations
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Reviewed by:
Ms. Cynthia Perkins
Legislative Analyst
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