



Date: July 5, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor Robert Garcia and Members of the City Council

From: Vice Mayor Rex Richardson, 9th District
Councilmember Cindy Allen, 2nd District
Councilmember Suely Saro, 6th District

Subject: Investing in Community Policing Expansions FY23 Budget

RECOMMENDATION:

Direct the City Manager to invest in Community Policing by working with Long Beach Police Department to provide options in the FY23 budget for structural funding of the Neighborhood Walks program, and;

Direct the City Manager to work with Long Beach Police Department to provide options in the FY 23 budget for an expansion of LBPD's "Bicycle Beats" program, including assigning at least 25 more officers to the program.

Discussion

The US Department of Justice defines community policing as "a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime."¹

Community Policing represents a step back from the policing tactics of old that have caused rifts between communities and their police departments, focusing instead on regular beat-walking and the visibility of officers in the communities they serve. This strategy places more emphasis on engagement with local community members and organizations, investing upstream crime prevention rather than purely responding to calls, and allowing community input on prioritization of open cases.

In March of 2021, in response to an increase in shootings in early 2021, LBPD launched its most successful community policing initiative to date, the Neighborhood Walks

¹ "Community Policing Defined" 2014. US Department of Justice, Community Oriented Policing Services Bureau. <https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/Publications/cops-p157-pub.pdf>



program². The program, which saw first use in the Washington Neighborhood, involved the city providing overtime hours to allow officers to simply walk around in a given relatively high-crime area of the city, rather than responding to calls to service.

The program's impact on the Washington neighborhood was immediate and strongly positive – reported shootings dropped 40% during the program's lifespan, from March to April 2021³. From there, it expanded to North Long Beach from June - August, where the program resulted in an 20% decrease in shootings from the previous summer and a 15% reduction in major crimes.⁴

Since then, the program has had successful tours in the Rotary Park and Anaheim Street business corridor area in late 2021, as well as a Downtown tour in March and April of this year.

Currently, the program is dormant due to a lack of ongoing funding. Because of the Neighborhood Walks program's obvious community benefits, particularly in reduction of violent crime but also in its ability to repair LBPD's relationships with the communities they serve, funding should be identified in the FY 23 budget to support this program.

In the same spirit, LBPD's Bicycle Beats program is also currently underutilized, but has potential to make a real difference. The use of vehicles less threatening, expensive to maintain, or damaging to the environment than police cars provides an opportunity to make just a small allocation of funds that will make a large impact by not only amplifying community policing tactics but also improving local air quality.

Equity Statement

The Framework for Reconciliation calls on the city, under Goal 2 (Design and invest in community safety and violence prevention), Strategy 1 (Explore and increase investments in the broader continuum of public safety, such as community-based violence prevention and interventions, and civilianization of services that can be performed by civilian staff rather than the Police), Potential Action E, to “Review all City programs related to violence prevention, family building/development, and youth development to identify which programs work and which do not work. Build on programs that are working and improve/invest in programs that are not working.”

² “Data: gun violence across Long Beach has spiked, reaching its worst level in years” Feb. 2021, Long Beach Post. <https://lbpost.com/news/crime/shootings-increased-long-beach-worst-years-data>

³ “Shootings are down in North Long Beach neighborhood where police continue walking program” Sept. 2021. Long Beach Press-Telegram. <https://www.presstelegram.com/2021/09/01/shootings-down-in-north-long-beach-neighborhood-where-police-continue-walking-program/>

⁴ Ibid.



This item requests a review of LBPD's Neighborhood Walks and Bike Beats programs and to identify opportunities available to make structural investments in the program, which will allow the City to build on the program and extend it on a permanent basis.

This matter has been reviewed by Budget Manager Grace H. Yoon on June 29, 2022.

Fiscal Impact

This recommendation requests the City Manager to work with the Long Beach Police Department to provide options in the FY 23 budget to expand Police Department services. The requested action to develop options is anticipated to have a minimal impact on staff hours beyond the budgeted scope of duties and is expected to have a minimal impact on existing City Council priorities. Any actual enhancement of the Police Department services, including the addition of up to 25 positions, would have a significant fiscal impact and will need to be reviewed and evaluated as part of the FY 23 Budget development process.

Suggested Action

Approve recommendation.