

City of San Antonio Minutes



Public Safety Committee

2023 – 2025 Council Members

Melissa Cabello Havrda, Dist. 6, Chair
Dr. Sukh Kaur, Dist. 1 | Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Dist. 2 Marina
Alderete Gavito, Dist. 7 | Marc Whyte, Dist. 10

Tuesday, April 15, 2025

9:00 AM

Council Briefing Room

Members Present: Melissa Cabello Havrda, *Chair*
Dr. Sukh Kaur, *Member*
Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, *Member*
Marina Alderete Gavito, *Member*
Marc Whyte, *Member*

Members Absent: None

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of minutes from the March 17, 2025 Public Safety Committee Meeting

Councilmember Whyte moved to Approve the minutes of the March 17, 2025, Public Safety Committee meeting. Councilmember Alderete Gavito seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Cabello Havrda, Alderete Gavito, Whyte

Consent Agenda

2. Briefing and possible action on a San Antonio Police Department Grant award in an amount up to \$349,576.00 from the U.S. Department of Justice Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program to support the Child Welfare Strategic Alliance Program and authorizing an interlocal agreement with Bexar County regarding the distribution of grant funds and the designation of Bexar County as the grant fiscal agent for the period of October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2027. [María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; William P. McManus, Chief of Police]

Councilmember Alderete Gavito moved to Approve on the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Kaur seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Kaur, Cabello Havrda, Alderete Gavito, Whyte

3. Briefing and possible action on a San Antonio Police Department grant in an amount not to exceed \$1,750,000.00 for the Comprehensive Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) Grant from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) for the period of October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026. [María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; William P. McManus, Chief of Police]

Councilmember Alderete Gavito moved to Approve on the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Kaur seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Kaur, Cabello Havrda, Alderete Gavito, Whyte

4. Briefing and possible action on a San Antonio Police Department grant application to the Motor Vehicle Crime Prevention Authority (MVCPA) for funds from the Regional Auto Crimes Taskforce Project to fund innovative enforcement and theft prevention techniques in the amount of \$1,369,198. [María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; William P. McManus, Chief of Police]

Councilmember Alderete Gavito moved to Approve on the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Kaur seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Kaur, Cabello Havrda, Alderete Gavito, Whyte

Briefing and Possible Action on:

5. **Council Consideration Request by Councilmember Marina Alderete Gavito (District 7) on a Bird Sanctuary Designation.** [David W. McCary, Assistant City Manager; Jon Gary, Director, Animal Care Services]

John Gary, Animal Care Services Director, gave a presentation regarding the Peafowl Population Management which resulted from a Council Consideration Request (CCR 2024-0007) by Councilmember Alderete Gavito to establishing a policy allowing Animal Care Services (ACS) to humanely capture, remove and relocate Peafowl or other exotic birds. He noted that ACS created an Ordinance to only allow licensed permitted handlers to remove and relocate Peafowl or other exotic birds. He indicated that ACS updated the language on their website indicating what was lawful but not encouraged regarding Peafowl.

Gary explained that ACS responded to approximately 12 – 15 calls per year regarding injuries, bites, and cruelty. He stated that on February 25, 2025, ACS held a townhall where the main concern was the population growth. He noted that the Advisory Board reported that the area impacted was very small and felt that it should not take ACS away from critical call responses or other core duties.

Gary explained that the goal was to create a managed co-existence with Peafowl in impacted neighborhoods and stabilize the Peafowl population. He stated that the plan was to establish an education campaign, census monitoring, stabilizing the population, and human trapping. He stated that ACS wanted to update Chapter 5 to prohibit releasing Peafowl within the City limits.

He mentioned that the residents loved the Peafowl and felt that the plan would keep the birds safe and the residents happy.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito stated that she was excited about the changes to ensure that only licensed people could come and take the birds out of the City. She stated that the community was very attached to the Peafowl but realized that an education campaign was needed. She added that letters were being sent to residents regarding the proposed changes.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito moved to Approve. Councilmember Kaur seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Cabello Havrda, Kaur, McKee-Rodriguez, Alderete Gavito, Whyte

6. Status of the Good Neighbor Program. [María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; Maria Vargas, Director, Integrated Community Safety Office]

Maria Vargas, Director of Integrated Community Service Office (ICSO), provided an update on the Good Neighbor Program background, Program process, progress report, and the next steps. Vargas stated that the purpose of the Program was to address chronic nuisance residential properties that exerted high demand on the City's first responder resources, crossed the boundaries of City's Departments' responsibility, conduct enhanced enforcement when appropriate, refer properties to appropriate resources, and engage with neighborhoods to identify and resolve community concerns around specific properties and chronic issues.

Vargas stated that the scope was a six-month iteration where properties had to have 12 or more calls for service in each of the previous two quarters within the six-month period. She noted that the Program was developed in April 2023 and was a coordinated effort between City Departments to address problems at single family nuisance properties. She stated that an informal stakeholder group worked to explore properties with high call volumes and refine the scope of properties. She reported that all 9-1-1 non-emergency calls were analyzed. Vargas stated that the scope began with residential properties with up to four units that called three or more times during a three-month period.

Vargas reported that the scope shifted to single family residences with 12 or more calls due to the large number of addresses that were returned in the initial scope. Vargas indicated that the group discovered 707 single family residential addresses with 15,888 combined calls with the top 100 addresses contributing 6,418 calls. She noted that within the top 100, 32 were active mental health consumers and eight were Dangerous Assessment Response Team (DART) properties. She added that the top 20 properties were discovered to be primarily mental health consumers and steps were taken to connect residents to services.

Vargas explained that when examining the top 100 addresses, they discovered that the majority were for mental health consumers suggesting the need for more robust staffing and analytics to review the call data. She stated that the Program was paused to develop dedicated staffing and the FY 2024 Adopted Budget added more positions for the Program. Vargas noted that they were currently in a six-month evaluation period where staff would be seeking feedback specifically around survey tools, communication, data reporting, and service connection.

Vargas explained the candidate identification process where the Integrated Community Safety Office (ICSO) pulled calls for service from 9-1-1 and 3-1-1 for the past six months, and the potential candidates were screened based on Program standards and properties were prioritized based on the Good Neighbor Index. She explained that the Good Neighbor Index was developed to address imbalance created when solely relying on call volume, algorithm that evaluated the call behavior of each residence, unique call patterns, call volume, initial intensity number, which was scaled to become the Index and emphasis was applied to match Program objectives.

Vargas stated that the top 25 candidates based on the Index were assessed by San Antonio Fear Free Environment (SAFFE) officers, ICSO reviewed assessments and deferred properties as appropriate, that working groups developed action plans, departments executed actions monitored by ICSO. She added that and as the situations at properties developed, action plans were adjusted accordingly, departments executed actions monitored by ICSO and as the situation at properties developed, action plans would be adjusted. Vargas stated that upon conclusion of the 6-month evaluation, ICSO would analyze and summarize the action plan execution and working groups would review and update property statuses.

Vargas reported that from January to March 2025, department executives and working group meetings were held, and a completed property assessment and action plan was developed. She stated that from April to July 2025, the plan would address outstanding action plan items, produce and distribute Good Neighbor communications materials, conduct outreach to residents, neighborhood associations, and council district offices. Vargas indicated that ICSO was also partnering with Metro Health, Human Services, and the Neighborhood and Housing Services Department to deliver service connections to those who needed it.

Vargas explained that the next steps were to create collateral to educate on available City services, develop an inventory of services available to assist residents, and to create and deepen partnerships within the City and external partners. She added that the ICSO would report on the progress to the Public Safety Committee in September 2025.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked what happened after the six months if there was still no compliance. Vargas stated that they would continue to retain active property status because some were complex. She stated that they did not want to put a deadline on some of the problems so to educate before issuing citations. Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked what happened when they were not in compliance and what the recourse was. Vargas stated that there was a scale of enforcement and DART was an avenue and they could move away from warning and into enforcement.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda stated that some properties were in DART for years and would like to know how they could become stricter on the properties. Vargas stated that the six month was more to benchmark and get some fresh call data. Councilmember Cabello Havrda stated that she would like to see the Program be stricter and hold them to the standards.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked for confirmation that the Good Neighbor Program did not replace any of the existing programs or processes. He felt that this was an opportunity to use these properties to address the root problems causing the recurring nuisances.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked when the City would move beyond the 25 addresses.

Vargas stated that was something they were continuing to evaluate the resource availabilities and how many properties they could effectively address. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked if the Program would evolve after the six months based on the data and improvements made. Vargas stated that was the plan.

Councilmember Kaur asked in instances where calls received regarding properties with those issues, if callers were advised to call multiple times at each quarter. Vargas stated that they would need to leverage the existing reporting tools such as 3-1-1 or the non-emergency number because it was the official reporting tool of record, and staff needed residents to keep calling on those issues. Councilmember Kaur asked if there was a way that they could recommend properties for the Good Neighbor Program. Vargas stated that it was something they could explore as they continued to evaluate and update the Program. Deputy City Manager Maria Villagomez stated that the Program would evolve as the initiatives were implemented.

Villagomez referred to the examples of the index application and asked that if there were specific areas of concern to please let staff know and they could figure out a way to incorporate those. Councilmember Kaur requested a conversation with each of the council district offices to address the properties in their council districts.

Councilmember Kaur asked what was needed to enhance the Program. Vargas stated that they would need to be able to engage with council district offices and neighborhood associations to get input to connect the residents to services.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito asked if the response had changed at all. Vargas stated that the department responses to the calls for services were appropriate. however, some of the issues were underlying problems beyond the scope of the departments. Councilmember Alderete Gavito asked how the timeline could be shortened for the neighbors and if the addresses could be shared with the council district offices. Villagomez stated that they could share the address with the council district offices.

Councilmember Whyte asked if the Program was helping reduce calls for service. Vargas stated at the end of the six months that data would be evaluated. Councilmember Whyte asked what the process was for escalating repeated violations. Vargas stated that staff had not evaluated the effect of sentencing on the calls but had partnered with offices and could evaluate the outcome at the end of the period. Councilmember Whyte stated that he felt that the next step was determining what could be done to better manage the properties to reduce the properties that existed.

Councilmember McKee Rodriguez asked about the effectiveness of fines for reoccurring issues and requested data at the next meeting.

7. San Antonio Police Department Crime Data for January 2025 through March 2025.

[María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; William P. McManus, Chief of Police]

Chief McManus, SAPD Chief of Police, provided an overview of the FBI reporting requirement and the 2025 Quarterly Crime Statistics. He stated that the FBI required reporting using the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). McManus reported that NIBERS recorded each offense occurring within an incident, classified offenses in two group, with Group A being the more serious crimes and Group B, which was only reported if an arrest was made. McManus

reported that crimes against persons and crimes against property were down but that crime against society was up. He stated that overall, the drop in crime for the quarter was 19.3%. He stated that there was a double digit decrease across the board in violent crimes against persons categories except for nonforcible sex offenses which remained flat for the quarter. He added that this was a 12.8% decrease in violent crimes.

McManus reported a double digit decrease across the board in categories except for burglaries for a 24.5% reduction in property crimes. McManus reported an increase of 8.9% for crimes against society. He stated that this was probably due to lack of reporting. McManus mentioned that the increase in drugs/narcotics were due to arrests made during the time period.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked about the comparison beyond 2024 and stated that she would like to see it. She asked if there were conversations with the community that crime was going down. McManus stated that he reported the numbers in his crime reports at community meetings.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda stated that she was hearing more and more about auto theft and asked if there was anything being done specifically about auto theft. McManus stated that there was an auto theft unit addressing the issue.

Councilmember Whyte stated that in the next Budget he was proposing funding an additional 100 police officers and another 100 the following year.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito thanked SAPD for their help during the public safety townhall. She stated that hot spot policing was working and echoed Councilmember Whyte's proposal for 100 police officers.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez stated that it was important to remain informed by data and concluded that when resources were strategically invested including police officers was when you gained the most benefit, and not a police officer on every street. He stated that he hoped that the police were taking this as a win and that they would continue to do better.

Councilmember Kaur asked if the calls for services were up or down for the same category of crimes occurring. McManus stated that he would provide the information by category but believed that calls for services were up. Councilmember Kaur stated that a solution needed to be found to help the small businesses with property crimes that were reoccurring. She noted that crime was down but that was not the perception and asked how the message was being shared that the City was safer now. McManus stated that most of the concerns were order maintenance type crimes not about violent crimes. He indicated that at the community meetings he explained that the perceptions were mainly from the news media because most people go about their days and do not feel threatened but when watching the news there was a different perception due to violent crimes being reported on. Councilmember Kaur stated that her goal for the upcoming Budget was to see more targeted solutions versus generic solutions.

McManus stated that the purpose for the new officers was to reverse the 60/40 ratio and they were starting to see that. Councilmember Kaur noted that she understood but that her push was to truly address property crimes and she did not think there was a plan to truly address it.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda stated that the UTSA Plan was focused on violent crimes and she felt that violent crimes had to take the front seat. She stated that with the 60/40 ratio, the patrol office could also act as SAFFE officers because of their connection with the neighborhoods. She asked if a discussion had been held with UTSA on a specific plan for property crimes. McManus stated that was mentioned briefly but a discussion had been held.

Councilmember Whyte stated that the more officers on patrol and not taking calls the more they were visible and deterring crimes. He indicated that \$3.5 million needed to be found to fund 100 officers because if more officers were visible, property crimes would also go down. He requested that he would like to see data from 10 years ago on calls received and how many officers there were vs this year's numbers.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez stated that there was no data that showed that an increased number of officers decreased crime. He expressed his concern that policing every corner could create something that was unintended.

McManus stated that when crime became an issue it was pointed at police but that the criminal justice system needed to work in sync.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda stated that most communities felt safer with visible police officers.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito stated that when police presence existed, the overall feedback from residents was that they did feel safe and agreed that the whole criminal justice system needed to work to get criminals off the street. She reiterated that gunshots made no one safe and that more gunshots equaled more guns.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez stated that there were several things that had to happen for that system to work. He noted that there would have to be some sort of changes to happen to build better relationships with those who were creating a less cohesive criminal justice system.

Councilmember Whyte stated there were a lot of things to make everyone safe but one thing that could be tangible was funding more officers and getting them on the street quicker. He added that he felt that the data was clear that more officers on the street deterred crimes.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda stated that she worked hard to get a grocery type store in her council district and that lasted a year because of shop lifting and that had a huge impact on that community. She stated that the officers on the streets were executing all the things being talked about today and thanked them for their work.

Consent

Executive Session

Executive Session was not held.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 10:44 a.m.

Melissa Cabello Havrda, Chair

Debbie Racca-Sittre
City Clerk

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