

# 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, May 21, 2024**

**9:30 AM**

**Council Briefing Room**

The Public Safety Committee convened a regular meeting in the City Hall Council Briefing Room beginning at 9:33AM. Deputy City Clerk Aurora Perkins took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

**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 April 16, 2024 Public Safety Committee meeting.

Councilmember Kaur moved to Approve the minutes of the April 16, 2024 Public Safety Committee meeting. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

### Briefing and Possible Action on

#### 2. Briefing on CoSA / ISD School Mass Shooting Prevention and Response Program [María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; William P McManus, Chief of Police]

Deputy City Manager Maria Villagomez introduced the Item and Chief William McManus who provided an update to the Council Consideration Request (CCR) submitted by Councilmember Pelaez requesting the adoption of a meaningful fund for an evidence-based and an expert-guided mass shooting prevention and response program for local schools. He added that the CCR would address the root causes of school shootings and that the Metro Health SA Forward Plan should inform the proposed prevention, crisis response, and damage reduction plans. He added that using the SA Forward Plan as a guide, ISD staff, students, parents, and the community, as well as City staff, should coordinate efforts to improve mental health resources available for families and tracking of individuals known to engage in red flag behavior, trauma-informed care services, and early education aimed at violence prevention.

McManus reviewed the established shared responsibility approach for school mass shootings with the Texas Education Agency (Region 20), the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD), Independent School District (ISD) police departments, and the Metro Health Department. He stated that under Texas House Bill 3 (Texas Education Code 37.1083) there were Texas statutory requirements that included the establishment of the Office of School Safety and Security, coordination with the Texas School Safety Center at Texas State University, and conducting vulnerability assessments of school districts. He added that HB3 required armed security for each campus during regular school hours and those officers must protect the safety and welfare of persons and property within the school district's jurisdiction.

McManus stated that under the Texas Commission of Law Enforcement (TCOLE) there were requirements specified under State Bill 1852 which included ALERRT Level 1 Response Training which required all Texas Peace Officers to complete 16 hours of Active Threat Training every two years. He noted that the training curriculum emphasized the priority of life, stop threat and treat wounded in a coordinated multi-agency response.

McManus reviewed the SAPD threat assessment resources which included the establishment of the Fusion Center which encompassed a 42-county area of responsibility and was comprised of the Public Safety Threat Assessment Group (PSTAG) which was a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary group tasked with developing threat mitigation strategies and addressing targeted violence.

McManus reviewed the Behavioral Threat Assessment Group (BTAG) design which was to assess threats, implement prevention strategies, manage acute threat situations, and provide rapid awareness and action. He added that resources also included mental health support services.

McManus noted that SAPD threat behavior assessment efforts included collaboration with the Fusion Center, organizations, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF). He noted that this collaboration included the utilization of the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) which followed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022 to research derogatory behavior that could disqualify individuals between the ages of 18-21 from purchasing firearms. McManus stated that in 2023, SAPD had hired an analyst to research

firearm purchase requests for individuals between the ages of 18-21, individuals purchasing multiple firearms, individuals requesting a Federal Firearm License (FFL), transfer of firearm registrations requests, and National Firearm Act (NFA) requests for suppressive devices.

McManus reviewed the SAPD threat behavior assessment process which worked with the NICS review process and ATF. He spoke to the number of requests that were reviewed by SAPD. McManus stated that SAPD currently collaborated with 92 Fusion Liaison Officers, which was growing quarterly, with direct contact with 24 ISDs in the San Antonio area, eight universities/colleges, and 12 charter schools. He stated that SAPD participated in student events and activities, outreach services, staff training, and assessments, and conducted annual meetings with area superintendents and Police Chiefs.

McManus noted that the SAPD Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team provided training to all the partner organizations and also conducted training internally with City staff scenarios. He stated that the City and over 70+ schools and organizations utilized the LifeSpot application to provide immediate notification of an active threat situation to SAPD, SAFD, and Metro Health.

McManus spoke to the Metro Health partnership under the SA Forward Plan which provided mental health and community resilience efforts and gun violence intervention among the youth population. He reviewed the Violence Prevention Strategic Plan efforts and spoke to the collaboration efforts between Metro Health and SAPD on youth and gun violence.

McManus stated that SAPD was continuously training and collaborating with community partners and organizations to address these situations and asked the Committee for any suggestions for training opportunities.

## DISCUSSION

Chair Cabello Havrda stated that she had full confidence in the capability of SAPD to address these types of threats. Chair Cabello Havrda asked for clarification on the training and collaboration on threat situations. McManus stated that after the Uvalde incident, he met with Region 20 to discuss. He stated that SAPD would be the lead at all incidents even when ISD police departments would be the first on the scene, which was not always the case. Chair Cabello Havrda stated that ISD's had incorporated safety procedures at each campus.

Chair Cabello Havrda asked for clarification on the LifeSpot application's immediate notification process. McManus stated that the LifeSpot application was a much quicker response than calling 9-1-1 and provided notifications to all users within the geofence area. Assistant City Manager Villagomez stated that staff would look to see who at the ISDs had access to the LifeSpot application and how it was used.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito thanked Councilmember Pelaez for submitting the CCR. She asked what could be done to educate for intervention and prevention of mass shootings. She asked what training was performed to try and prevent these types of situations. McManus stated that the PSAG and VTAG were tools that were continuously used to assess potential situations or individuals that might pose a threat including those that occurred on social media.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito asked if teachers were able to provide feedback or address concerns. McManus stated that he could not speak to training held at schools. Councilmember Alderete Gavito stated that she would support teacher input being put into BTAG or PTAG so that all were aware of potential situations. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that Metro

Health staff would assist in adding data to the system and addressing preventative actions. Councilmember Alderete Gavito stated that it was important to include Charter Schools.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez expressed concern about State Legislation that hindered public safety. He stated that it was important to address preventative actions and not just have a police response program. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez stressed that it was important to not just have a policing policy and asked if anything had changed in policy since the filing of the CCR. McManus stated that the CCR did not change or add programs to address these situations but more so the Uvalde incident which moved to meet with Region 20 and area superintendents. He stated that these discussions included standardized security processes and collaborations with ISD police departments and allowed for closer working relationships.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked for consideration for review of outside organizations to review the Program and process to address active shooter incidents, and he acknowledged that SAPD could already have experts who had reviewed it. He also spoke to concerns on challenges of campus layouts or maneuvering in instances of an active shooter or other threats. McManus stressed that physical security standards were crucial to address safety considerations for inside and outside of the schools and identification of individuals who were threats.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked if the hired analyst position processed all data coming in or was the volume of incidents and information causing issues for tracking. McManus confirmed that all data was being processed. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked if the number of firearm requests was being tracked and how many had been received. McManus confirmed that the received data was all processed. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked if staff tracked all potential firearm purchases with issues. McManus confirmed that they were being tracked and he could provide data to the Committee.

Councilmember Kaur stressed that it was important to make sure there were policies to address prevention measures. She expressed concern about the waiting list of individuals to receive training or counseling for mental health issues. Jessie Higgins stated that under ARPA, funding was being utilized for school-based services and he spoke to the high level of capacity that was being worked. Councilmember Kaur requested data on the number of students and mental health cases addressed by staff.

Councilmember Kaur asked how the City could support ISD Officers with mental health counseling. McManus stated that he was not aware of programs to address mental health issues but added that ISD police departments had not requested a need for this. Councilmember Kaur stressed that it was important to continue to collaborate with ISDs and Charter Schools to provide training. Councilmember Kaur asked if virtual counseling was available. Higgins confirmed that virtual counseling was available.

Councilmember Whyte asked for clarification on SAPD analyst data collection and asked what is being done with the data once gathered. McManus stated that data was collected and provided to ATF but that there had not been any substantial identification of purchase patterns.

Councilmember Whyte asked if all schools utilized the LifeSpot application. McManus stated that not all schools used the program since there was a cost associated with application usage but he

confirmed that over 70 schools did use the application.

Councilmember Whyte stated that he was supportive of what had been established by SAPD and partner organizations. He stressed the importance of coordination at the City, County, ISDs and other organizations to address the strongest solutions for safety and prevention of threats. McManus stated that budgetary costs played a part in meeting State requirements for security at campuses. Councilmember Whyte stated that it was important to address budgetary implications and identify possible funding to get armed security and other security measures. McManus reiterated that when identification of individuals, who may be suspected of a clear threat to safety, SAPD would arrest those identified and took these matters very seriously to ensure safety.

Councilmember Whyte asked if the City could provide funding to schools for armed guards. First Assistant City Attorney Liz Provencio stated that staff had to look at legal requirements on double taxation restrictions and usage of City and school taxes for the same purpose.

Chair Cabello Havrda stated that it was important to standardize security at all the schools to include the locking of doors. McManus stated that since the Uvalde incident, schools had established security processes for proactive threat analysis, threat event procedures, and mental health support after events.

Deputy City Manager Villagomez asked Metro Health to provide updates on mental health strategies under this initiative. Erica Haller-Stephenson, Public Health Administrator, spoke to established services for identification, prevention, and addressing the aftermath of incidents. She stressed that counseling services for students, teachers, and parents were key and noted that identification of funding was continuously challenging. She stressed that it was important to address all levels.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito asked what was the disconnect between using ARPA funding and the delivery of services to students, teachers, and parents. Higgins stated that much of the funding was used for blanket programs but that information was not always dispersed to all levels of schools. Councilmember Alderete Gavito stated that she was fully aware of ARPA funding limited access and it was important to address how programs would be used once that funding was exhausted. Deputy City Manager Villagomez clarified that ARPA funding had been allocated and slotted for usage even though it had not been used yet. Higgins stated that some funding had not been used yet due to the workforce shortage impacting the deployment of funding. Higgins also clarified that not all the programs were funded by ARPA or provided at schools but could be used at youth centers and other non-profits. Councilmember Alderete Gavito acknowledged those programs and stressed collaboration for the effectiveness of deployment of services and funding.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez acknowledged that ARPA funding was allocated but it was important to review if funding would be reallocated. Higgins stated that many non-profits were used to provide services such as Communities in Schools, Children's Bereavement Center, and other organizations that provided school-based programs, and added that these programs were funded by the City and ARPA funding. She added that under collaborations with the County, it was agreed that City ARPA funding was used for community programs and Bexar County programs were used for school-based programs. She added that there could always be more

funding since not all programs were being addressed. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked if school closures had been looked at to establish health services facilities and asked if city funding could be considered.

This item was for briefing purposes only and no action was taken.

**3. Briefing and possible action on the Residential Streetlight Gap program.** [John Peterek, Interim Assistant City Manager; Michael Shannon, Director, Development Services]

Deputy City Manager Villagomez introduced the Item and noted that the Item addressed a Council Consideration Request (CCR) submitted by Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez to address residential streetlight gaps. Development Services Director Michael Shannon provided an overview of the street light illumination gap assessment especially in older areas that were built before current City Code requirements. He noted that the Residential Streetlight Gap Program was created in FY 2022.

Shannon stated that staff had analyzed 3,292 miles of residential streets and had identified 4,276 warranted lights based on UDC requirements. He noted that \$5.8 million in funding had been approved to address lighting gaps and that \$5.3 million remained in the Program. He stated that the goal was for 200-400 lights to be installed annually and that to date 246 lights had been installed with an additional 929 installations authorized. He added that not all areas authorized the installation of lighting for several reasons including not wanting additional lighting due to esthetics of the neighborhood or feeling that enough light was in place.

Shannon reviewed data on streetlight installations by council district and noted that staff worked closely with CPS Energy to identify lighting gaps and the status of installations including permitting, installation, and completion of lighting.

Shannon spoke to the Solar Streetlight Pilot Program status which was created in partnership with CPS Energy. He stated that the Program was much more cost-effective and quicker to install than traditional lighting. He reviewed the four pilot areas where the solar lighting had been installed which were in Council Districts 1, 2, and 4. He noted that CPS Energy would verify field test results to ensure that minimum standards were met and would provide feedback for future sites.

Shannon stated that the normal process for street light installation took about 13 months which included reviewing, approval, permitting, and installations. He spoke to the next steps in the Residential Streetlight Gap Program which included working closely with CPS Energy and their third party contractor Dalkia, to continue installation at authorized locations. He stated that the \$5.8 million would address about 1/3 of the gap identified areas and additional funding would need to be identified to address remaining gap areas.

**DISCUSSION**

Chair Cabello Havrda expressed her support of the Program and asked how many lights had been installed. Shannon stated that 177 had been installed in the past year for a total of 247 lights having been installed. Shannon noted that "low-hanging fruit" sites were addressed immediately due to existing infrastructure or access. Chair Cabello Havrda asked of the process for gap area lighting

installations.

Chair Cabello Havrda asked for clarification on how to request streetlight installation. Shannon spoke to the 3-1-1 request process and review by DSD. Shannon stated that the importance of the Program was to be proactive in the installation of the lighting to address safety and security. He added that priority was set for areas around schools and similar authorized areas.

Chair Cabello Havrda asked of the plan for the installation of streetlights beyond the initial target areas. Shannon stated that it was important to allocate the existing funds since only about one-tenth of the funds had been used so far. He noted that the initial analysis conducted to identify gap areas was crucial and would allow for quicker installation of lighting in gap areas. He added that staff would work through the City's Budget process to identify additional funding.

Chair Cabello Havrda recognized the work of former Councilmember Shirley Gonzales to address gap lighting needs in Council District 5. She acknowledged that Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez had picked up the mission of addressing gap streetlighting needs and that the Program would help all areas of the City.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez stated that his priorities when coming into office were the development of an Office of Recidivism and a streetlight gap program. He stated that he was proud of the establishment of the Program and the proactive approach to address streetlight needs.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez spoke to the associated costs for the installation of lights and the speed of installation. Shannon stated that hardwired and solar lights were similar in cost which was about \$8,000-\$9,000 per light. He noted that solar lighting was much quicker to install due to the infrastructure needed for hard-wired lighting. Shannon stated that the solar lighting was more sustainable and that staff recommendations included proceeding with large-scale solar lighting installations. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked if the solar lights had a maintenance program associated with them. Shannon stated that he would gather that data and provide it to the Committee.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked why it took over a month to get authorization by residents to install lights. Shannon stated that it was due to back and forth between residents and staff on the placement of lighting. McKee-Rodriguez asked if there was educational materials to provide to residents so that they could be more aware of the benefits of lighting.

Councilmember Kaur stated that lighting was a topic that was continuously brought to her attention. She expressed concern about it taking 13 months for the approval and installation of lighting and the need for quickly addressing lighting gaps. Shannon noted that staff worked closely with CPS Energy to install lighting but that there were still capacity challenges due to maintenance of current lighting emergencies. Shannon stated that solar lighting installation would drastically bring down the time for installation and capacity.

Councilmember Kaur asked if the approved funding was used for just infrastructure or also capacity. Shannon stated that funding was just for infrastructure but that a discussion could be had to address expanded capacity for quicker installation of lighting. Councilmember Kaur stressed the

good work already performed by staff but additional funding to CPS Energy for installation capacity should be considered. Shannon stated that staff would conduct additional analysis and could provide findings during the Budget process to address capacity expansion.

Councilmember Kaur noted that there were some concerns from residents that LED/solar lighting was not as bright as traditional lighting but was much better for the environment. She requested that education be provided on the benefits of LED/solar lighting to the public.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito stressed that lighting was a public safety issue. She stated that there was confusion about the literature received by residents on lighting authorization and she asked for a sample of materials. DSD Assistant Director Melissa Ramirez stated that materials were provided in English and Spanish and noted that staff was available to address concerns or questions and that a Frequently Asked Questions document had been developed.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito stated that lighting at parks was also an issue and asked for prioritization of lighting at parks due to safety concerns. She requested an offline discussion on the issue.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito requested data on the impact of lights on bird populations and if educational material could be developed to address questions surrounding bird migration and impact. Shannon stated that this issue had been requested by residents and that staff would provide materials to the Committee. He confirmed that the installation met all bird migration criteria requirements.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito asked if alleyways were included in the Program. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that under the Program alleyways were not included in this phase but could be discussed in the upcoming Budget process.

Chair Cabello Havrda asked if any “Dark Sky” groups had provided input to the Program. Shannon confirmed that continuous conversations were held to discuss military installation concerns and that lighting addressed lighting streets and not the sky.

No action was taken on this briefed item.

- 4. Briefing on an update of the San Antonio Community Outreach and Resiliency Effort (SA-CORE).** [Maria Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; Claude A. Jacob, Director, Health]

Due to time constraints, Item 5 was tabled to the June meeting of the Public Safety Committee.

## **Consent**

- 5. Briefing and possible action on a San Antonio Police Department grant application for funds from the Motor Vehicle Crime Prevention Authority (MVCPA) for the Regional Auto Crimes Taskforce Project to fund innovative enforcement and theft prevention techniques in the amount of \$1,411,929.** [Maria Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; William P. McManus, Chief of Police]

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

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

**Executive Session**

No executive session was held.

**Consideration of items for future meetings**

**Adjournment**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

**Approved**

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*Melissa Cabello Havrda, Chair*

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*Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk*