

**State of Texas
County of Bexar
City of San Antonio**



**Meeting Minutes
City Council B Session**
City Hall Complex
San Antonio, Texas 78205

2021 – 2023 Council Members

Mayor Ron Nirenberg

Mario Bravo, Dist. 1 | Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Dist. 2
Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3 | Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4
Teri Castillo, Dist. 5 | Melissa Cabello Havrda, Dist. 6
Rosie Castro, Dist. 7 | Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8
John Courage, Dist. 9 | Clayton Perry, Dist. 10

Wednesday, May 31, 2023

2:00 PM

City Hall Complex

The City Council convened a regular meeting in the Council Briefing Room beginning at 2:03 PM. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Council Members present:

PRESENT: 10 – Nirenberg, Bravo, McKee-Rodriguez, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Cabello Havrda, Pelaez, Courage, Perry

ABSENT: 1 - Castro

ITEMS

1. Briefing on the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) Violent Crime Reduction Plan in partnership with the University of Texas San Antonio (UTSA). [Maria Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; William P. McManus, Chief of Police]

City Manager Erik Walsh provided an overview of the Item and introduced San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) Chief William McManus and Dr. Michael Smith, University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) Director of Criminology, who provided an update on the Plan.

McManus presented an overview of the January through April 2023 crime statistics which indicated that overall violent crime decreased 16.5%, however, crimes against property had

increased 3.2% overall mostly due to the increase in motor vehicle theft.

McManus provided background information on the partnership with UTSA to focus on addressing violent street crime (not domestic violence) using a data driven approach. Smith provided statistics on violent street crime from October 2019, year over year for three years. He reported that the Plan focused on hot spot policing using 100-meter grid areas where crime was high. He noted that the mitigation included increased police visibility to deter crime, focus on violent places using a problem-oriented place based approach (POPBP), and a longer term offender based strategy that would utilize focused deterrence to help break the cycle of violence among the small number of repeat and high-risk offenders.

Smith reported that after the first 120 days of the Plan, the near-term hot spot policing strategy was the only one that had been deployed. He stated that analysis were performed every 60 days focusing on micro-locations. Smith compared the treated hot spots to the City as a whole and determined if the treatment was effective in displacing crime, while controlling for overall reduction in violent crime rates as reported by McManus.

Smith introduced his colleague Rob Tillyer who provided maps of treated hot spots during the period. Tillyer noted that the average incidents per month decreased by 40% in the treatment areas as compared to the previous year period and noted that there was no evidence that crime was simply moving out of the treated areas. Tillyer split the treatment into two 60-day periods and noted a larger improvement in the second 60-day period. Tillyer noted that more areas were treated in the second period.

Smith concluded that violent crime was down City-wide as compared to the previous year, compared to the same time last year, a 13.7% reduction and a 3.7% reduction in average monthly violent crime incidents in Period 1 and 2 respectively. He noted that compared to the same time last year, in the treatment area, there was a 40.7% reduction and a 3.7% reduction in average monthly violent crime incidents in Period 1 and 2 respectively.

Smith noted that there was an increase in the number of juvenile murders which followed a national trend. Smith cautioned that more police presence was considered a deterrence but not really a long-term strategy to affect the cause of violent crime and recommended moving into the Mid-Term Strategy of POPBP which would begin with identification of potential sites in August 2023, training of staff in September/October 2023, analysis of the problems/development of cross-disciplinary solutions in November/December 2023 with the solutions beginning implementation in January 2024. He added that the cross-disciplinary team would consist of representatives from SAPD, City Attorney's Office, Code Enforcement Homeless Services, Parks & Recreation, and other departments.

Chief McManus closed the presentation by stating that he was cautiously optimistic as crime rates had been decreasing. City Manager Walsh added that the Good Neighbor Program multi-disciplinary team was launching tomorrow to focus on prevention of violence by domestic animals. City Manager Walsh noted this was one of the many steps to deal with not only violent crime but also other areas of need in the community.

DISCUSSION:

Mayor Nirenberg recommended incorporating community input into the Plan moving forward. Smith stated that the need for community input would be determined by the multi-departmental team. City Manager Walsh agreed that serious community input was valuable. Mayor Nirenberg expressed interest in the City and UTSA team's analysis of data. Smith stated that his team would advise the City as they brought forward their own data and shared that data among stakeholders. Smith added that his team would analyze the implementation and impact.

Mayor Nirenberg expressed optimism with the trends and the Plan and requested Smith's advice on reading the analysis to ensure that there was not any misinterpretation. Smith noted that while violent crime was down City-wide, the treatment areas were down even more and he was encouraged by the early positive results of the initial short-term hot-spot strategy. Mayor Nirenberg recommended adding Metro Health into the department team.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda, Chair of the Public Safety Committee, reminded everyone that we were recovering from the pandemic and suggested a pre-pandemic analysis beginning in 2019, however, she was hopeful that the numbers went down even though our population increased. Councilmember Cabello Havrda requested before and after data results in the hot spots and a survey of the community as to whether they felt safer. City Manager Walsh stated that staff would develop a plan to collect the requested information.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked whether the Chief thought that property crimes would be impacted. McManus stated that all types of crime would be reviewed even though the focus was on violent crime. Councilmember Cabello Havrda suggested that the Plan was currently in the initial stages and recommended expansion as the Plan continued, to include more than just policing strategies such as lighting, animal care, etc.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda requested clarification on what Smith meant by catchment areas. Smith stated that catchment areas were in proximity to the hot spots and they naturally looked to see whether the crime was simply moving to other nearby areas (displacement). Smith noted that they found no consistent evidence that crime was being displaced, adding that the literature generally found improvements in the hot spots but not consistent displacement. Councilmember Cabello Havrda recommended a long-term analysis of the treated hot spots and catchment areas.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia noted that crime was down 3.4% City-wide and asked if period 1 and period 2 had repeat locations where the hot spots were treated. Smith confirmed that some were repeated, and some were not depending on the analysis. Councilmember Rocha Garcia stated that she hoped the patrol, street Officers, and SAFFE Officers were supportive of the program. City Manager Walsh noted that the Officers had been responsive to the program unless they were on another call. McManus assured Councilmember Rocha Garcia that SAFFE Officers were not being removed from their regular duties.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if the treatment areas had similar populations and requested data on density in the hot spots as well as whether there was simply a correlation or a cause. Smith stated that the program was only reporting over the past 120 days, so it was difficult to determine

cause at this stage, but the report compared the same period one year earlier to account for seasonal effects on crime. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if there was a program for formerly incarcerated individuals that could help with this program. Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested data on arrests in the treatment areas, response times, and times that calls came in from the catchment area to see if there was an increase recently after the treatment.

Councilmember Bravo expressed support for connecting the Plan with the Good Neighbor Program and noted that he was also cautiously optimistic. Councilmember Bravo remarked that this year was cooler than last year temperature-wise and noted that sometimes crime can be affected by high heat in the summer.

Councilmember Courage noted that the reports were presented in percentages but felt that real numbers represented real people. Smith stated that data tables often confused people so he was pleased to show the data in the six-month and 12-month report in the future and acknowledged that small samples can skew the numbers and they would put a caveat in the report when they thought the numbers were small.

Councilmember Courage requested clarification on the treatment area, catchment area, and City-wide numbers in the chart shown. Councilmember Courage recommended community input and feedback on the treatment and Plan.

Councilmember Castillo noted that too many communities that were traditionally underserved and economically disadvantaged experienced higher crime rates. She noted that Council District 5 had the highest concentration of formerly incarcerated individuals, and added that mental health was also a potential issue.

Councilmember Castillo recommended highlighting the density of the area versus noting that apartment complexes were more often hot spots because it caused many residents to oppose multi-family housing. Councilmember Castillo suggested that Officers be provided an opportunity to provide feedback on what they saw in the hot spot areas. McManus stated that Officers shared with their supervisors who then spoke with the researchers. Councilmember Castillo wanted to ensure that the Officer's specific recommendations were considered in developing the strategies and reporting to the researchers.

Councilmember Castillo asked whether State Law had impacted the use of weapons, had resulted in an increase in crime and suggested investment in other programs such as health to help reach the cause of crime. City Manager Walsh stated that many departments including Metro Health and others needed to evaluate the areas to develop individualized plans. Councilmember Castillo requested clarification on the average times on scene versus the number of violent crimes. Smith noted that the fidelity analysis was to determine whether the Officers were deploying within the planned 15-minute intervals in the treatment area as scheduled by the supervisors but there was no correlation with the crime rate. Councilmember Castillo noted that some of the hot spots with the highest times on scene experienced an increase in crime for the substation. Smith stated that there was no correlation between the two.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez commented that unmitigated access to firearms as a result of

State Laws was increasing crime. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez requested the comparison methodology and requested information and data on the number of calls for services, number of citations and arrests compared within the areas and the period. Smith stated that the next report would include more detail regarding the six-month period and would be reported at the substation level, however, individual changes in individual hot spots was an onerous task and would require a larger team to analyze.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez noted that there were repeated hot spots that were plagued by a number of issues so he recommended earlier implementation into the second phase of the Plan to help address the cause of crime. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez suggested that this would not be a short project and many areas would need years of monitoring and intervention to ensure positive impacts. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez requested a status on the creation of an Office of Crime and Recidivism Prevention. Deputy City Manager Maria Villagomez noted that the new Office would be leading the multi-department team in developing the Plan and she reiterated the timeline.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez suggested that there could be grant money available to tackle the problem, but a staff was needed to begin searching for the funding. Deputy City Manager Villagomez commented that there was seed money in the budget available to start right away and they would look for additional funding.

Mayor Nirenberg clarified that the report was a snapshot of the entire community and crime and the only thing that had been done was increased police presence in a few hot spots. He noted that in the next phase, inequities and social vulnerabilities would be identified that could help develop strategies to achieve long-term goals in reducing crime.

Councilmember Viagran requested clarification on the fidelity results graph and suggested that there could be a staffing issue at the North and Prue Substations because they were able to spend more time on the hot spots than those on the South side of town. Councilmember Viagran recommended addressing other issues such as street takeovers and racing as they would eventually lead to violent crimes and shootings. McManus stated that the Southwest Texas Fusion Center (SWTFC) was tracking the street takeovers.

Councilmember Viagran commented on the hotels on Roosevelt Avenue that were identified recently for prostitution but were areas of human trafficking that also led to violent criminal activity. She added that many locations were self-identifying as hot spots and requested more communication between the community and SAPD about the program. Councilmember Viagran requested a breakdown of the degree of felonies within the next report and suggested there was an element or group running certain criminal activities and creating repeat offenses.

Councilmember Perry requested more categorical breakdown of criminal activity in the annual trend analysis over time starting when National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) began in 2021. Councilmember Perry expressed concern with the overlap between the Dangerous Assessment Response Team (DART) and Good Neighbor Programs. Deputy City Manager Villagomez explained that while the programs overlapped between departments, the Good Neighbor Program was an analysis of calls from specific residences which typically were mental health related, but DART was primarily focused on criminal activity. City Attorney Andy Segovia

stated that there were different legal criteria for the two programs.

Councilmember Perry commented that he had heard from the community that they were not reporting crimes because they felt nothing would be done. McManus stated that he did not have that data but would talk individually with the Councilman regarding his concerns. Councilmember Perry requested return on investment numbers related to the increased number of Officers related to crime rates and response times. Councilmember Perry supported including the raw numbers in the report in addition to the percentages.

Councilmember Pelaez noted that this was the beginning of a large undertaking and we were moving in the right direction. Councilmember Pelaez asked if the time on the hot spot for Prue Road Substation also meant there was a staffing issue. City Manager Walsh stated that Officers could be spending their time filling out reports but stated that he was not concerned about the additional time unless there was a bigger issue. Councilmember Pelaez asked how often SAPD analyzed the number of Officers per substation. Deputy Chief Robert Blanton stated that the department reviewed a dashboard of staffing with every transfer. Councilmember Pelaez commented that there was a bar in Council District 8 that was a hot spot and also a DART area which hopefully would reduce the crime in that area, adding that there were some other bars that needed review and requested a map of the bars superimposed on the hot spots to see if there was a correlation.

Councilmember Pelaez agreed that some people did not report crimes, but overall SAPD was doing a great job.

Councilmember Castillo asked how many analysts were working on the project. Smith stated that there were two primary data analysts on the project but there were six on the total staff. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that the contract was for \$120,000 and the data was being provided by the City. Councilmember Castillo expressed concern that the analysis was not as thorough as it should have been and suggested the professors review some additional literature related to The City of Inmates by Kelly.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested the number of hot spots per council district along with a map. Councilmember Rocha Garcia agreed that some people did not report crimes.

Councilmember Viagran recommended a review of the Status of Women and Status of Girls Report as well as Metro Health data for the next phase of the Plan to help address prevention. City Manager Walsh suggested that the next phase was more problem solving rather than prevention based noting that the Good Neighbor Program was more about connection to resources rather than enforcement and there would be lessons learned. Councilmember Viagran recommended more connectivity with the Bexar County District Attorney for assistance with enforcement, meanwhile, she asserted that the City needed to work on prevention.

Mayor Nirenberg thanked the team for their work and looked forward to continuing into the future phases of the plan with the partners and the community.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session was not held.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

Approved

**Ron Nirenberg
Mayor**

**Debbie Racca-Sittre
City Clerk**