

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

Tuesday, January 16, 2024

9:30 AM

**Council Briefing Room at
City Hall Complex**

The Public Safety Committee convened a regular meeting in the City Hall Council Briefing Room beginning at 9:33 PM. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

Members Present: Melissa Cabello Havrda, *Chair*
Dr. Sukh Kaur, *Member*
Marina Alderete Gavito, *Member*

Members Absent: Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, *Member*

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of minutes from the November 27, 2023 Public Safety Committee Meeting

Councilmember Kaur moved to Approve the minutes of the November 27, 2023 Public Safety Committee meeting. Councilmember Alderete Gavito seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Briefing and Possible Action on

2. Briefing on the San Antonio Police Department Crime Data for Calendar Year 2023. [María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; William P. McManus, Chief of Police]

Chief of the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD), William McManus, provided a report on crime statistics including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBERS) Report which classified offenses in two groups. He stated that Group A were the most serious crimes and were divided in three crime classifications: against persons, against society and against property. McManus noted that Group A included 24 categories and over 50 offense types. Group B only included crimes resulting in arrests in 10 different categories.

McManus reported that SAPD received over 2.4 million calls in 2023 with an average response time of 6 minutes, 19 seconds for emergency calls and 20 minutes 20 seconds for non-emergency calls. McManus reported that violent crime against persons was down 9.6%, crimes against society were down 2.2% due to a decrease in offenses related to gambling, pornography and prostitution, however, property crime had increased 6.6% due to increases in motor vehicle thefts which were affected by the Tik Tok social media challenge which provided instructions on stealing Hyundai and Kia vehicles easily. He reported that most homicides were related to arguments or family/intimate partner and added that crimes against society had decreased 2.2%.

McManus stated that in an effort to combat property crime, SAPD met regularly with residents and businesses to share prevention strategies. He reported that the Holiday Crime Reduction Taskforce operated from November 2023 through January 5, 2024 and the Property Crime Task Force had 5,830 cases and had recovered over \$1.3 million in stolen property.

McManus stated that SAPD partnered with the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice for development of a Violent Crime Reduction Plan. McManus noted that the Plan's Hot Spot Policing Strategy reduced crime and SAPD would move into the Problem Oriented Place Based Policing (POPBP) Phase of the strategy. He noted that the goals of the Plan were to decrease violent crime, increase reporting through increased trust with the police, reduce the number of victims and to improve place based conditions that contributed to violence.

In closing, McManus reported that SAPD was collaborating with Metro Health to develop a Violence Prevention Plan which focused on strategies to enhance the City's response to youth violence, gun violence, sexual violence and domestic violence. He added that the departments were expected to present the Violence Prevention Plan at a future City Council B Session.

DISCUSSION:

Chair Cabello Havrda commented that while violent crime statistics were down, it was important to continue the Violent Crime Reduction Plan, particularly the increased reporting and community trust in SAPD. She added that this would also be critical for the Violence Prevention Plan. Chair Cabello Havrda supported continued innovation in reducing crime; noting that property crime needed more focus and asked how place based conditions might impact crime. McManus noted that abandoned buildings and cars, as well as unkept areas drew criminals to the area.

Deputy City Manager Maria Villagomez mentioned that funding had been included in the FY 2024 Budget to address these issues and gather information and analyze data across platforms

and sources such as Code Enforcement and Animal Care Services calls overlaid with SAPD calls. Chair Cabello Havrda recommended a dashboard to allow residents to see the calls in their neighborhood. McManus stressed that follow up on complaints was the most important effort that could help increase trust and confidence.

Chair Cabello Havrda noted that animal cruelty and pornography were not victimless crimes and recommended not using that language; instead crimes against society was more appropriate.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito requested comparison of call response times to other cities. McManus stated that SAPD response times were good compared to other cities but he hesitated to compare them because every situation was different. Councilmember Alderete Gavito noted the increase in kidnapping and asked what SAPD was doing about that. McManus stressed that people needed to be aware of their surroundings, however, most kidnapping reports were for non-custodial parents taking their children.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito asked what types of crime might fall into the unknown category. McManus stated that the crime could be any of the factors but they did not know the motive so they could not classify them. Councilmember Alderete Gavito requested a dashboard and heat map of crime that could be posted on the internet.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito recommended that SAPD coordinate animal cruelty cases with the Animal Care Services (ACS) Department and noted that often persons who were violent against animals, were also violent against people. McManus stated that SAPD assisted in investigations if ACS requested it. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that the Good Neighbor Program, which tracked households with numerous calls across types, were proactively working on the issue.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito asked what might be done about mail theft at the cluster mailboxes. Chief McManus commented that the penalty for mail theft was not a deterrent and he recommended fortifying the housing surrounding the boxes. Councilmember Alderete Gavito requested the number of weapons stolen annually and the amount recovered. McManus stated that 2,400 guns were reported stolen last year.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito asked who would take the lead on the POPBP. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that SAPD, the Development Services Department, Metro Health, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, the Planning Department and the City Attorney's Office would use data from UTSA to identify the locations to receive the POPBP strategies.

Chair Cabello Havrda noted that there was concern about who was responsible for the neighborhood mailboxes.

Councilmember Kaur asked if SAPD used any other crime report besides NIBERS. McManus stated that NIBERS was sent to the FBI for analysis and the investigative units delved deeper into the data but there was not another, more comprehensive report provided to the public. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that specific crime data requests from Councilmembers would be completed by SAPD but a comprehensive quarterly dashboard was being developed.

Councilmember Kaur suggested a breakdown of locations and demographics of persons in the

different categories which would be helpful to develop a prevention plan. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that more demographic data had been requested previously about the victims of crimes so that is why the presentation included that data. Councilmember Kaur suggested other factors such as age or education level might be important to track as well as race and gender.

Councilmember Kaur recommended a deeper analysis of the data to develop strategies. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that the information was analyzed every 60 days by UTSA and was used to develop the approaches such as Hot Spot Policing and POPBP as well as the locations targeted. Councilmember Kaur suggested that while many departments were partnering in the Plan, she recommended more analysis to be completed within SAPD.

Chair Cabello Havrda suggested that SAPD coordinate with local independent school districts who have closed campuses to help keep those buildings from contributing to crime.

3. Briefing on the status of the San Antonio Police Department's e-Citation technology.

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

Assistant Chief San Antonio Police Department (SAPD), Robert Blanton, provided a briefing on the planned implementation of e-citation ticket writing technology to reduce the time needed to issue a citation to a violator which improved Officer safety. He noted that the E-citation System would instantly transfer the data to Municipal Court. Blanton reported that 99,921 citations were issued in calendar year 2023 with 65.3% from the SAPD Traffic Enforcement Division and the remainder from the Patrol Division. He stated that in addition, the Center City and Downtown Operations (CCDO) Department's Parking Enforcement Division issued 58,200 citations in 2023.

Chief Information Officer Craig Hopkins explained the process and evaluation of equipment and software through a Request for Offer (RFO) that was issued to two vendors. He stated that the RFO was anticipated to result in a \$373,548 annual contract that would be ready for City Council consideration in March 2024. Blanton noted that Traffic Officers' vehicles would have this equipment and staff was evaluating the pros and cons of adding the equipment to patrol vehicles and whether printing of a ticket was required because placing the printers in each traffic/patrol vehicle could be a challenge and was expensive.

DISCUSSION:

Chair Cabello Havrda asked how privacy and security was managed and whether data was shared with other law enforcement entities. Hopkins stated that within the vehicle the device was directly connected to the laptop but outside the vehicle a remote connection would be used. Blanton stated that the Officers were looking forward to the new technology but noted that it was not compatible with other agencies.

Chair Cabello Havrda asked if there would be a cost savings. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that it saved the Officers' and Municipal Court's time and she would share the business case with the Committee. Hopkins stated that the Information Technology Services Department (ITSD) and a small group of Traffic Officers tested the new equipment but all would be trained. Chair Cabello Havrda suggested that some people would probably need a printed copy of their ticket.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito commented that speeding was a major concern of the community and wondered why it was not included in the crime report. Blanton stated that traffic violations were not a crime that the FBI wanted reported through NIBERS. Deputy City Manager Villagomez offered to provide a separate presentation on traffic enforcement noting that almost 100,000 tickets were issued SAPD-wide and the previously reported numbers were for the Traffic Division and CCDO parking. Blanton noted that if Patrol Officers spent time enforcing traffic, they were not available for other calls.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito recommended tracking of the speeding tickets versus fines paid and/or dismissed suggesting that people speed in San Antonio because they know nothing will happen to them versus in the smaller cities inside and around San Antonio, they knew they would have to pay a large fine. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that she would include Municipal Court Judge Carla Obledo in the traffic presentation to the Committee.

Councilmember Kaur suggested a review of the potential increase in revenue if more Traffic Officers were added and requested a business case regarding traffic enforcement.

Councilmember

Kaur requested comparison of the two options for equipment. Hopkins stated that the main difference was the vendor and their experience. Kaur recommended that new system user testing be conducted in the field. Councilmember Kaur requested more testing on paper versus digital tickets.

Executive Session

There was no Executive Session held.

Consideration of items for future meetings

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 10:48 a.m.

Approved

Melissa Cabello Havrda, Chair

Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk