




**COUNCILMEMBER CHRIS CATE
CITY OF SAN DIEGO
SIXTH DISTRICT**

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: January 15, 2016

TO: Council President Pro Tem Marti Emerald, Chair, Committee on Public Safety and Livable Neighborhoods

FROM: Councilmember Chris Cate 

SUBJECT: Public Safety and Livable Neighborhoods Priority Memo

I appreciate the opportunity to share my 2016 priorities for the Committee on Public Safety and Livable Neighborhoods. I look forward to partnering with the committee to address the paramount matters that face our City.

Update on the Implementation of the Police Department's Five-Year Plan and Police Officer Recruitment and Retention Plan

In order for the San Diego Police Department (SDPD) to reach their sworn staffing goal of 2,128 officers by Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18), as outlined in the Five-Year Plan, SDPD must hire more officers than it loses to attrition each year. In March 2015, the City Council approved a new contract for San Diego Police officers. The terms of the contract increased pay and offered additional benefits to officers in order to help reduce attrition rates as well as increase the recruitment of officers. In the first seven months of FY16, data shows that we are losing officers at a rate of 13 per month, which is the same attrition rate in FY15 prior to the implementation of the new contract. These numbers indicate that more needs to be done to ensure that we continue to increase the recruitment and retention of police officers. The Committee should receive an updated report on the attrition rates and request that further evaluation be done to identify additional ways to address officer staffing issues. In addition, with many members of the police force at or approaching retirement age, the City should evaluate how we can better recruit experienced police officers from other departments to make sure we avoid an experience gap.

Expand the City's Efforts to End Homelessness

The City of San Diego has made significant and meaningful progress in connecting the city's homeless population with essential social services and resources. Last year, the City Council unanimously approved a year-round indoor housing program that will provide housing and social service connections to three times as many people than in prior years. As such, the City continues to demonstrate its commitment to ending homelessness. Ending homelessness should continue to be a top priority for the City of San Diego as it remains a city-wide issue. Many individuals find themselves seeking shelter in

the Tecolote and Los Peñasquitos canyons of Council District 6. These transient camps present a variety of public safety and quality of life concerns. The City should increase its efforts in identifying opportunities for collaboration between Parks and Recreation, the San Diego Housing Commission, the San Diego Police Department and other service non-profits to connect homeless individuals with housing, medical and vocational services. The City should also look into expanding and providing additional resources to the Homeless Outreach Team which has been effective in connecting individuals with much-needed services and shelter throughout the City.

Increase City Partnership with Neighborhood Watch Programs

Neighborhood Watch (NW) programs are one of the most effective tools in preventing crime and bringing communities together through police-citizen partnerships. Through a close partnership between our office, the San Diego Police Department, and the community, we were able to help successfully revitalize a robust NW program in the neighborhood of Clairemont, with efforts to do the same in Mira Mesa currently underway. The success of the NW programs in these communities demonstrates its effectiveness as well as a significant community interest in partnering with law enforcement and their neighbors to keep communities safe. Committee staff should continue to work with the San Diego Police Department to identify the best practices of successful NW programs and explore options for implementation and citywide expansion. The City should also allocate funding within the San Diego Police Department budget for Neighborhood Watch signs. These funds can be utilized by the department to purchase new or replacement NW signs for communities that have active NW programs.

Increase the Number of Police Investigative Service Officers (PISO)

Police Investigative Service Officers (PISO) play an essential role in performing critical services that support and assist in the public safety work of sworn police officers. PISO's handle a large variety of non-emergency public safety issues, such as taking police reports, assisting with investigations and helping police officers in identifying and evaluating public safety concerns. They also issue citations for non-moving vehicle violations such as illegal parking and oversized vehicle ordinance violations. While the supportive services they provide are many, there are not enough PISO's currently on staff, with just fourteen PISO's presently working within SDPD. This leaves several police divisions without a PISO specifically assigned to them and other divisions that would significantly benefit from additional PISO officers. The City should prioritize funding to hire additional PISO officers and ensure that each SDPD division is assigned at least one PISO. This will provide much needed additional support for our sworn police officers and help ensure a high quality of life is maintained in our neighborhoods.

Increase the Number of Dispatchers for the SDPD Non-Emergency Line to Reduce Wait Times

The San Diego Police Department Non-Emergency Line is an essential resource for residents to call and report non-emergency crimes and public safety concerns. It is also where residents call to report quality of life issues and violations, such as noise complaints, vehicle parking violations including oversized vehicle parking violations, and many others. However, residents throughout San Diego have been experiencing extremely long wait times just to speak with a dispatcher, with reports of wait times upward of 30-40 minutes. Such long wait times discourage individuals from reporting crimes, impinging on the police department's ability to address and investigate concerns as well as affecting the accuracy of crime data and statistics. The San Diego Police Department is requesting 74 dispatchers in the FY17 budget to help address this issue. The City should prioritize funding and recruitment efforts to increase the number of dispatchers for the non-emergency line.

Expand the City's Traffic Signal Optimization Program

As San Diego's population continues to expand in dense neighborhoods, traffic congestion and commuting times will continue to be heavily impacted. Traversing through key transit corridors in Council District 6 has proven to be difficult, especially during peak hours. Through a public-private partnership with QUALCOMM, the City has completed a pilot traffic signal optimization program on Lusk Boulevard. The success of the program has led to approved plans to expand optimization to the western part of Mira Mesa Boulevard. Some of the areas in Council District 6 that should be prioritized for signal optimization include the entirety of Mira Mesa Boulevard, Miramar Road, Kearny Villa Road, and Balboa Avenue. The City should begin the process of creating detailed plans for signal optimization for these areas.

Prioritizing San Diego's Community Policing Programs

The City of San Diego was recognized in the 1990's as the nation's leader in utilizing the principles of community policing. Last year, SDPD reiterated their commitment to prioritize further implementation of community policing based programs. The City has made progress this year by adding community resource officers as well as implementing a new department training program focused on community relations and engagement. The City should continue to play a strategic role in assembling various resources at its disposal, including the non-profit and faith communities, cultural organizations, youth programs, and regional public agencies. The Committee should receive a presentation from SDPD with an update on community policing programs and then discuss and evaluate how we can continue to create and expand additional programs to emphasize community policing.

Prioritize Funding for Street Lights

Well-lit streets play a critical role in promoting safe and livable neighborhoods as well as in helping deter crime. Currently, there is a long list of locations throughout the City, including several in Council District 6 identified by the Transportation and Storm Water Department as candidates for street light installation. Given many of these locations have been identified by police as high-crime areas, the City should prioritize additional funding for the installation of these street lights to promote public safety and livable neighborhoods.

Prioritize Funding for V-Calm Signs

One of the most frequent requests received from residents throughout San Diego is for traffic calming measures to help address neighborhood speeding issues. Streets that are prone to excessive vehicular speeding pose a significant public safety issue and negative effect to the quality of life of our neighborhoods. V-Calm signs are common tools frequently recommended by the City's Traffic Engineering Division as a traffic calming solution. As such, the City should prioritize additional funding in order to install V-Calm signs for streets and neighborhoods identified as candidates for traffic calming.

CC:ay

cc: Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer
Honorable Councilmembers