



COUNCILMEMBER VIVIAN MORENO
City of San Diego
Eighth District
MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 12, 2019
TO: Chief David Nisleit, San Diego Police Department
FROM: Councilmember Vivian Moreno
SUBJECT: June 27, 2019 Police Incident in Chicano Park

Chicano Park, located in San Diego's historic neighborhood of Barrio Logan, has long been a symbol of the U.S. Chicano movement, and a testament to the success of nonviolent protests. The park was established in 1970, amid heightening tensions between the community and public agencies which sought to disenfranchise residents from decision-making processes. Many of the same struggles that the founders of the park faced 50 years ago persist today, and the community-based leadership of Chicano Park continues to work hard to ensure positive progress on these issues.

On Thursday, June 27, 2019, a vehicle was pulled over by San Diego Police Department (SDPD) Officers in Chicano Park. What should have been a routine traffic stop turned into a verbal and physical altercation, and two community members were arrested while filming the incident. One of them, Chicano Park Steering Committee member Eddie Alvarez, was struck nine times by an officer attempting to handcuff him.

This incident is yet another in a growing list of violent altercations that have occurred in Chicano Park, which is alarming. In fact, in the cell phone footage that has now gone viral, children can be seen playing in the park while Mr. Alvarez was being struck by a police officer. This behavior is unacceptable, and as Councilmember of the community of Barrio Logan, I call for an end to violence, as well as the start of a peace-building and healing process.

After reviewing footage of this incident, it is clear that greater transparency is needed. In order to ascertain the facts and prevent future incidents, I request the following actions from SDPD:

1. SDPD formally respond to the attached statement from the Chicano Park Steering Committee, and provide answers to the questions they posed;
2. In compliance with Assembly Bill 748, that SDPD release the body camera footage of all officers involved in this traffic stop within 45 days;

3. SDPD present a report on how de-escalation and cultural sensitivity training will be implemented within the Police Department at the Public Safety and Livable Neighborhoods Committee within the next 90 days.

Thank you in advance for your prompt response and your assistance with this matter.

CC:

Honorable Council President Georgette Gomez

Honorable Councilmember Monica Montgomery, Chair, Public Safety & Livable
Neighborhoods Committee

Honorable Mayor Kevin Faulconer

CHICANO PARK STEERING COMMITTEE
STEWARDS OF CHICANO PARK

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RE: Police Brutality in Chicano Park

To Whom It May Concern:

As the Stewards of Chicano Park we feel it is necessary to address the unwarranted use of force by the San Diego Police Department in Chicano Park on Thursday June 27th, 2019 towards Steering Committee member and Brown Beret Eddie Alvarez. We condemn the actions taken by the Officer who assaulted Eddie, the three others who held him down, as well as the Officers who stood by and watched their fellow Officer carry out this attack. These tactics are not new and unfortunately, this is a continuation of the ongoing violence and oppression our community has been subjected to before and after Chicano Park's inception nearly 50 years ago. These continued actions by the SDPD heighten the community's distrust of law enforcement that is why some feel it is necessary to step in and record the police during routine stops, which is well within their rights. Georgina Mercado and Eddie Alvarez both felt it necessary to record the police's actions and were subsequently arrested.

Chicano Park is a public park for the community to enjoy and the families and children who frequent the park should not have to witness police assault their fellow community members nor should they have to witness the police come in full force to disrupt a community event such as the one held on Saturday June 22. These actions leave a lasting imprint on the younger generations who witness the police's violent actions, especially when they have to witness their mother being arrested for acting within their rights, such as Georgina's children had to witness on June 27th.

Chicano Park has always been an open and inclusive community space and we do not condone violent or inappropriate behavior from community members, nor public servants who are supposed to be public role models held to a higher moral standard. Community members need to continue to hold police accountable within their communities and we are appreciative of those who do so in Chicano Park. We demand that the SDPD drop all charges against Eddie and Georgina, explain why they felt it was necessary to punch a man 9 times while he was already held on the ground, and why they continue to harass the community who regularly frequent the park. Lastly regarding June 22nd, why was the Steering Committee not informed about this training that occurred within the park? We demand answers to these questions. The Blue Wall needs to be broken down if community relations are ever to be built.

Respectfully,
The Chicano Park Steering Committee