



Memorandum

TO: RULES AND OPEN GOVERNMENT
COMMITTEE

FROM: Councilmember Raul Peralez
Councilmember Dev Davis

SUBJECT: POLICE DEPARTMENT
REDISTRICTING

DATE: February 11, 2021

Approved:

Date: 02/11/21

RECOMMENDATION

Direct the City Manager to identify the funding for redistricting the patrol beats within the San José Police Department (SJPD) and include establishing permanent foot patrol beats in this work.

BACKGROUND

As the third largest city in California, San José continues to be the most thinly staffed city per capita, including our Police Department¹. Our city will soon start the process in re-imagining community public safety, therefore, making it appropriate to also reevaluate how our police department distributes their limited resources equitably.

Last fiscal year, prior to knowing the impacts of the current pandemic, SJPD was originally going to fund the process of redistricting their patrol beats. However, as the realization of the many budget impacts were being considered, the budget for patrol redistricting was eliminated, recalibrating the focus on battling the pandemic and supporting our residents in weathering this challenging time. Yet, with the pandemic causing unprecedented closures of our local small businesses, there has been an increase in vandalism and petty crime throughout our city. Not only have our businesses been affected, but our residents have long been frustrated and feeling less safe within their neighborhoods.

During this redistricting process, it is important to see how we can equitably establish dedicated walking foot patrols in areas of our city that see a high volume of foot traffic and/or an increase of calls for service, such as our Downtown core and surrounding areas such as Japantown, East Santa Clara, the Alameda, and the Story and Keyes Business Corridor. For the last several years, downtown has had overtime resources dedicated for a geographically small walking beat, covering only a few days a week. There are also the Property Based Improvement District (PBID) officers that are funded privately utilizing SJPD Secondary Employment. Both of these

¹ <https://www.mercurynews.com/2017/11/13/san-jose-police-academies-top-100-a-year-after-fielding-seven-recruits/>

roles are often understaffed and sometimes unfulfilled as they require officers willing to sign up to do an overtime shift. This is not only inconsistent, but also unsustainable and lacks accountability.

Establishing dedicated walking beats with foot patrols is also a way to reestablish better community policing. Under President Obama’s Task Force for 21st Century Policing “community oriented policing...[is] a potential tool for improving community relations” and “encourages the formation of cooperative relationships...”² During a time of high tensions between our community and police department, it is important for trust to be built. This cannot be accomplished unless we establish the opportunities for building relationships between our police department and our communities. Additionally, according to Community Oriented Policing of the US Department of Justice, in Arlington, Texas, the walking beats create the opportunity for officers “to be proactive and creative not only in addressing, but in preventing, problems.”³

² <https://www.pnas.org/content/116/40/19894>

³ https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/05-2018/walking_a_beat.html