

Meeting Date: 4/18/2013

Report Type: Staff/Discussion

Report ID: 2013-00321

Title: Update: Neighborhood Watch Program

Location: Citywide

Issue: The City Council has requested an update on the Neighborhood Watch program.

Recommendation: Receive and file.

Contact: Dana Matthes, Deputy Chief, (916) 808-0800, Police Department

Presenter: None

Department: Police

Division: Operational Services Admin

Dept ID: 11001311

Attachments:

1-Description/Analysis

City Attorney Review

Approved as to Form

David Womack

4/8/2013 4:58:48 PM

City Treasurer Review

Reviewed for Impact on Cash and Debt

Russell Fehr

3/28/2013 10:26:56 AM

Approvals/Acknowledgements

Department Director or Designee: Sam Somer - 4/4/2013 9:16:46 AM

Description/Analysis

Issue: Neighborhood Watch is one of the oldest and most effective crime prevention programs in the country. Based on the concept of cooperation, neighborhood watch programs bring law enforcement, city officials and residents together to deter crime and make their communities safer.

Neighborhood Watch has existed in Sacramento for well over thirty years. Supported by the Sacramento Police Department (SPD) and Neighborhood Services, this program continues to benefit the community with over 300 active Neighborhood Watch groups. The objective of this program is to organize and train groups of neighbors to actively engage in crime prevention strategies to reduce neighborhood crime. The basic premise encourages neighbors to get to know each other, to become informed, and get involved so they can more effectively watch over their neighborhood. Prevention strategies as well as appropriate actions for in-progress events are reviewed by law enforcement.

For years, the SPD had dedicated four Community Service Officers (CSO) to work with residents and business owners on the formation and development of Neighborhood Watch and Business Watch groups. These CSOs were responsible for helping neighbors organize and for providing necessary training for new groups along with advanced training to existing groups. The CSO positions were eliminated with the Fiscal Year (FY) 2011/12 budget reductions which created a gap in the SPD's ability to support this program.

Recognizing the need to continue supporting these efforts, the SPD solicited assistance from our Volunteers In Policing (VIP) program. Volunteer Barbara Falcon, who was already very active in coordinating Neighborhood Watch groups in south Sacramento, was asked to be the lead coordinator. For the last year, she has done a tremendous job in providing workshops, training sessions, and materials for new and existing groups. While the program itself remains the same, slight modifications have been made to ensure success with this new model. The majority of the training is now provided at SPD facilities instead of in the neighborhoods and is scheduled on a monthly basis as opposed to several times a week.

Research is currently underway on potential technology that may further enhance these efforts. New smart phone applications allow for timely communication in the form of neighborhood alerts sent out to specific Neighborhood Watch groups by its members as well as the

dissemination of information to these groups by police. Conversely, some application features allow citizens to report incidents directly to Law Enforcement. Once the application that best meets the needs of the program is identified, work will begin to integrate it into our existing systems.

Policy Considerations: The Neighborhood Watch program directly supports City Council policies of establishing and strengthening community partnerships.

Economic Impact: None.

Environmental Considerations: Not applicable.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): This report concerns administrative activities that will not have a significant effect on the environment, and does not constitute a “project” as defined by the California Environment Quality Act (CEQA) [CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061 (b) (3); 15378 (b) (2)].

Sustainability Considerations: Not applicable.

Commission/Committee Action: Not applicable.

Rationale for Recommendation: This is an informational report only. No action is required.

Financial Considerations: Not applicable.

Emerging Small Business Development (ESBD): Not applicable.