

City of Piedmont
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: April 15, 2024
TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: Rosanna Bayon Moore, City Administrator
SUBJECT: Crime Response Plan Update and 2023 Annual Report

RECOMMENDATION

This report is submitted for information purposes only.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is provided as an informational item to the City Council and community as an update on the Department's efforts to execute a previously developed crime response plan and provide the 2023 Annual Report.

BACKGROUND

The City of Piedmont experienced an increase in reported violent crime, and other types of crime, during the 3rd quarter of 2023. The City was not alone in this experience as other cities throughout the country and region also saw increases in reported crime.

The Piedmont Police Department developed a multi-point plan to address the crime issues within the time period and communicated the plan at City Council meetings and as part of various community presentations. The plan encompassed the following approach and action:

- **Full court press to maintain fully staffed, well-trained Department**
- **Enhance critical dispatch function thru staffing increase and facility upgrade**
- **Further integrate modern equipment into operations with Public Safety Camera Program**
- **Restructure non-sworn roles to support full time Community Service Officer staffing and free up Officers to address criminal matters**
- **Deploy crime suppression cars with uniformed officers during known peak periods**
- **Expand officer training and deploy plain-clothed officers as new response method for ALPR & other criminal activities**
- **Identify additional ALPR/camera locations for City interior to aid officer response**
- **Examine and evaluate staffing model to best configure future police services**

PLAN UPDATE

Full court press to maintain fully staffed, well-trained Department:

The Department recruited, hired, and sent a Police Recruit to the police academy in anticipation of a sworn retirement in early 2024. This approach has resulted in the Department's sworn ranks being fully staffed. At the time of this report being drafted, the Department is in the process of hiring for one vacant Community Service Officer position and finalizing a new dispatch supervisor position. Department administration will continue to work with City administration and human resources to minimize the impact of vacancies by anticipating and planning in advance for staffing changes when feasible.

Enhance critical dispatch function thru staffing increase and facility upgrade:

Piedmont voters approved Measure F in March of 2024 to increase funding for essential police, fire, and paramedic services, maintain parks, greenspaces, and public areas, and preserve recreation, public works and community services. The approval of Measure F provides long-term funding for two new dispatch positions which is essential to moving the Department to the goal of staffing the City's Public Safety Dispatch Center with two dispatchers during most of the time in a 24-hour period to deploy critical public safety resources.

Further integrate modern equipment into operations with Public Safety Camera Program

The Department finalized the Public Safety Camera installation at six locations throughout the City in March of 2024. The camera views were also integrated into the same operating system that the Department uses for its automated license plate reader (ALPR) cameras, thereby providing staff with enhanced access to both types of cameras during operations.

Restructure non-sworn roles to support full time Community Service Officer staffing and free up Officers to address criminal matters

The City Council approved the classification of the Community Service Officer (CSO) position at the February 17, 2024, City Council Meeting. The two budgeted Community Service Officer positions will provide several services, including responding to quality-of-life calls, and assisting in other law enforcement areas not requiring a sworn police officer, freeing up police officers to focus on crime reduction tasks when the CSO's are on duty.

Deploy crime suppression cars with uniformed officers during known peak periods

The Department initiated the deployment of Piedmont Police Officers on overtime to serve as crime suppression cars in September of 2023. The goal of this activity was to increase the number of uniformed officers out on patrol in the City as a visual deterrent, and for those officers to also engage in proactive patrols to identify and interrupt criminal activity, particularly in areas that experienced an increase in violent crime. Suppression activity included patrol checks, investigative traffic and pedestrian stops, and response to alerts from ALPR cameras.

Expand officer training and deploy plain-clothed officers as new response method for ALPR & other criminal activities

The Department explored this alternative deployment model and suspended efforts in its implementation due to the increase and prioritization of the overtime uniform presence through the use of suppression cars. This approach may be revisited in the future dependent on crime related circumstances and as resources allow.

Identify additional ALPR/camera locations for City interior to aid officer response

Department staff, in coordination with the Automated License Plate Reader vendor, identified 9 new locations throughout the City to install cameras. Site evaluations have been concluded and camera installation is estimated to be completed by May of 2024. These new license plate reader cameras will enhance the efficient response of Patrol Officers to wanted vehicles and offenders. The additional cameras will also aid the Department's investigators and ultimately have the capability to provide essential evidence for successful prosecutions of criminal offenses.

Examine and evaluate staffing model to best configure future police services

The Department engaged the professional services of Matrix Consulting to perform a staffing study. Work has already begun in the form of staff interviews, the development of the agency profile, and data analysis efforts. The project is expected to be completed during the summer of this year. The final report will be presented to the City Council and Public Safety Committee, and will also be made available to the public.

The effectiveness of the response plan is key and data is the ultimate determination of its success. A review and comparison of reported crime data, which can be found in the Department's 2023 Annual Report, showed a reduction in several categories including robbery, larceny theft, burglary, and motor vehicle theft between the 3rd and 4th quarters of 2023. The Annual Report includes Departmental community engagement efforts, crime reporting data, other pertinent information, and is available to the public on the Department's webpage.

While there are many factors that contribute to crime statistics, the Piedmont Police Department's implementation of the response plan, and ongoing efforts to maintain a high level of public safety for those who live, work, and visit Piedmont are significant factors. The Department's partnership with the community will continue to be critical in the shared responsibility of public safety. Several areas of the response plan going forward will simply become a part of the Department's everyday operations. The Department will continue to assess crime trends, and perceptions of safety and apply effective policing approaches in a constitutional, equitable, and just manner.

By: Jeremy Bowers, Chief of Police