



Memorandum

TO: PUBLIC SAFETY, FINANCE &
STRATEGIC SUPPORT
COMMITTEE

FROM: Edgardo Garcia

**SUBJECT: DOWNTOWN FOOT PATROL
STATUS REPORT**

DATE: November 30, 2020

Approved

Date

12/3/20

RECOMMENDATION

Accept a status report on the Downtown Foot Patrol program, including outcomes of prior year spending and plans to deploy more police officers on walking beats in the Downtown area.

BACKGROUND

In 2014, the Downtown Foot Patrol Program was implemented to enhance Downtown safety and security, support ongoing surveillance and apprehension projects, and allow specialized units such as the Downtown Services Unit to focus on high crime activity. In the 2019-2020 Adopted Budget, a total of \$1.35 million was allocated for additional foot patrol activity, including \$600,000 for Downtown and \$750,000 for High Need Neighborhoods.

With its approval of the Mayor's March Budget Message for Fiscal Year 2020-2021, the City Council provided the City Manager with the following direction related to the Downtown Foot Patrol Program:

- Fund the \$600,000 Downtown Foot Patrol Program with ongoing dollars, but only upon the addition of this beat as a routinely assigned, non-voluntary shift.
- Engage in discussion with the County Sheriff, under contract with the VTA, to offer a visible presence for the benefit of transit riders along the light rail and Santa Clara Street bus corridors.
- Report to the PSFSS Committee outcomes of prior years' spending on Downtown Foot Patrol, and to discuss plans to get officers on walking beats Downtown.

Due to the budget shortfall that resulted from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020-2021 Proposed Operating Budget did not initially include funding for foot patrols Downtown or in High Need Neighborhoods; however, the Administration proposed adding back foot patrol funding with Manager's Budget Addendum #3 (MBA #3), which recognized reimbursements of General Fund response costs for COVID-19 and allocated this funding to restore cuts in the 2020-2021 Proposed Operating Budget and address critical needs. MBA #3 proposed a total of \$1 million in one-time overtime funding for foot patrols, including \$250,00 for Downtown and \$750,000 for High Need Neighborhoods.

This recommendation, which was approved by the City Council as part of the 2020-2021 Adopted Operating Budget, differs from the original direction in the March Budget Message in that it does not fund Downtown foot patrols on an ongoing basis, continues the assignment as voluntary overtime, and funds Downtown foot patrols in the amount of \$250,000 instead of \$600,000. Even so, this funding has allowed Downtown foot patrols to continue in the current fiscal year. This report provides an update on the outcome of the Downtown Foot Patrol program in the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year and on efforts in the current fiscal year.

ANALYSIS

Staffing

In years past, the Downtown Foot Patrol Program was staffed, on a voluntary basis, with one sergeant and four officers, five hours per day, five days per week. Currently, the Downtown Foot Patrol Program is staffed, on a voluntary basis, with one Sergeant and two officers working Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. They work five hours per day, from 9:30 am to 2:30 pm. The working hours are based on the business owners' requests to have a visible presence downtown during normal business hours. The work days are based on the availability of officers willing to volunteer for the assignments. At this time, there are no personnel in the cadre of officers volunteering for the program that are able to work on Tuesdays. Reduced staffing for Downtown foot patrol in the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year is due to the decrease in the budget from \$600,000 in 2019-2020 to \$250,000 in 2020-2021.

Because this program is voluntary, desirability is a factor in filling the available assignments. Most of the officers working this program do so before their regularly assigned second watch schedule, as a matter of convenience. The Department considered alternate work hours, for example 12:00 pm to 5:00 pm. However, these hours were both unattractive and impractical for Department personnel. First watch and second watch personnel would be unable to work the assignment, and it would not be during normal waking hours for third watch personnel. Under those alternative hours, the assignments would only be able to be filled by personnel on their day off.

Program Model and Statistics

The original implementation of the Downtown Foot Patrol Program occurred during the 2013-2014 Mid-Year Budget Review. At that time, \$200,000 was appropriated to cover February 2014 through June 2014. The following table shows the budgets allotted to the program since its inception and the corresponding expenditures.

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Allocation</i>	<i>Expenses</i>
2013-2014	\$ 200,000	\$ 147,328
2014-2015	\$ 525,000	\$ 456,790
2015-2016	\$ 560,000	\$ 421,297
2016-2017	\$ 580,000	\$ 570,071
2017-2018	\$ 500,000	\$ 533,625
2018-2019	\$ 600,000	\$ 566,250

2019-2020	\$ 600,000	\$ 508,315
2020-2021	\$ 250,000	\$ 89,578

The following table illustrates the two primary statistics gathered by the Downtown Foot Patrol Program.

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Arrests/Citations</i>	<i>Business Contacts</i>
2015-2016	601	972
2016-2017	435	1,363
2017-2018	388	1,402
2018-2019	723	1,597
2019-2020	490	1,245

The program was suspended on April 7, 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was reinstated on August 24, 2020. Since that date, through October 31, 2020, Downtown Foot Patrol Program officers have made 30 arrests/citations and 304 business contacts.

Since its inception, the Downtown Foot Patrol Program model emphasized a three-prong approach of high-visibility foot patrol, proactive enforcement, and positive non-enforcement contacts at Downtown businesses. However, upon review it was discovered the proactive enforcement would often force officers out of the area to book subjects at jail. In the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year, the Downtown Foot Patrol Program model pivoted to continue the three-prong approach, but to emphasize high-visibility foot patrol and positive non-enforcement contacts at businesses. In doing so it keeps the officers in the Downtown area and continues to provide the intended enhancement to safety and security. In addition to the above, the Downtown Foot Patrol Program officers work with patrol, the METRO Unit, the Street Crimes Unit, and the Downtown Services Unit to conduct narcotics and other downtown enforcement operations.

In the original direction from the March Budget Message, it was requested the Department engage in discussion with the County Sheriff regarding an increased visible presence for transit riders. As of this report, the new Central Police Captain has reached out to VTA, and will engage in communications regarding the two entities having a collaborative approach offering a visible presence to deter crime in the downtown corridors.

High Need Neighborhood Foot Patrols

While an update on foot patrols in High Need Neighborhoods was not specifically directed as part of this referral, a brief status update is included here given the similarity of the two programs.

Each Divisional Police Captain determines the location of their High Need Neighborhood Foot Patrols based on numerous factors, including call volume, crime rates, gang activity, community input, and divisional goals. In addition, each Captain determines the number of participating officers, times, and frequency of these patrols. For example, the Southern Division Captain deploys her Neighborhood Foot Patrols in the Seven Trees area in the evenings. The location was determined based on the above criteria. The deployment hours provide the most effective times to increase community contact and quell gang violence.

Conversely, the Western Division Captain deploys his Foot Patrols in both fixed locations and variable locations. The Western Division Captain assigned stationary foot patrols to the Santee neighborhood on Sunday evenings and Little Saigon shopping center on Mondays during the day. These locations, times, and days were designed to have the most impact on the crimes occurring in those areas. The Captain also deploys rotating foot patrols to the Willow Glen, Burbank, Alameda, Cadillac/Winchester, and Guadalupe/Washington areas. The Foothill Division Captain has deployed his Foot Patrols in the areas of Poco Way, Alum Rock Avenue, and Foxdale Loop in response to recent crime trends.

The Neighborhood Foot Patrols were reduced and beat officers were utilized to mobilize in High Needs Neighborhoods during the months the COVID-19 Pandemic spiked, to mitigate any potential exposure and spread of the Pandemic among officers. With the City currently operating in the Purple Tier, the Department will continue to explore effective ways to keep our officers safe and ensure the resources are pushed to the High Needs Neighborhoods. The following table shows the budget expenditure for the High Need Neighborhood Foot Patrols in the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year as of October 31, 2020.

<i>Division</i>	<i>Allocation</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>
<i>Central</i>		\$ 0
<i>Western</i>		\$ 69,798
<i>Southern</i>		\$ 43,228
<i>Foothill</i>		\$ 54,976
<i>Totals</i>	\$ 750,000	\$ 168,001

It should be noted the Central Division expenditure is zero because the funding for the Downtown Foot Patrol Program is separate from the High Need Neighborhood Foot Patrols. At the time of this report, no locations were identified for the High Need Neighborhood Foot Patrols in Central Division. However, the new Central Captain is working with his staff and the Department's Crime Analysis Unit to identify potential locations and establish deployment plans for these areas.

CONCLUSION

The Department recognizes the value of the Downtown Foot Patrol Program and the positive impact it has on the Downtown community. The Department also recognizes the Mayor and City Council's desire to staff the Downtown Foot Patrol positions as routinely assigned, non-voluntary shifts. While sufficient street-ready positions are not currently available to make foot patrols a routinely assigned function, the Department will continue to assess whether it can be converted to a routine function as the Hire Ahead Program is implemented and vacancies are filled in the Patrol Division. In making this assessment, the Department will evaluate where patrol resources can be allocated to best meet the community's safety needs.

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COORDINATION

This memorandum was coordinated with the City Attorney's Office and the City Manager's Budget Office.

/s/

EDGARDO GARCIA

Chief of Police

For questions, please contact Captain Stanley McFadden at (408) 277-4631.