



Staff Report

REPORT TO UPDATE THE CITY COUNCIL ON THE EMERGING PROBLEM OF GANG ACTIVITY IN SAN MATEO COUNTY

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

Summary

San Mateo County is facing a serious problem with gang violence. During the last eighteen months, there has been an increase in gang-related shootings, assaults and other acts of violence.

Background

The gang problem started to affect San Mateo County in the late 80's and early 90's. Probation Officer Ken Hiraki completed the first San Mateo County Gang Report in 1992, which identified approximately 1,350 San Mateo County gang members. Twelve years later, the numbers have escalated to 3,084. Currently it is estimated that there is about 2,107-2,422 gang members representing about 50 gangs within San Mateo County. Trying to track and get the exact number of gangs and gang members is very difficult and numbers fluctuate.

Discussion

The gang problem in San Mateo County does not belong to one particular community within the County, but belongs to every community. Gangs and their members are mobile and transit through everyone's city. The gang problem needs to be recognized as a countywide problem that at any time could affect community members. The only way to treat this problem is through a pro-active enforcement program, coupled with educating parents and students with effective resistance strategies.

Tonight, Chief Probation Officer Loren Buddress and Probation Services Manager Tim Gatto from the San Mateo County Probation Department will give you an overview of the gang problem in the County. Probation Services Manager Gatto has spent many years dealing with gang members and their families. He will present you with an insight to who gang members are, the types of crimes they are involved in and why there has been this increase in violent gang confrontations.

In order to deal with the gang issues within the County, the San Mateo County Police Chiefs and Sheriff's Association has discussed several strategies to combat the problem. The Council will be provided this information within the next month.

Fiscal Impact

There will be some potential impact on the Police overtime budget. It is unknown what the actual amount will be at this time.

Public Contact

Contact has been made with the Superintendents of both school districts in the community. Principals have been provided with relevant information on a confidential basis pertaining to students or the possibility of gang-related activity. The gang problem has also been discussed at the Belmont Safe Schools meeting.

Recommendation

Staff is providing this information tonight to update you on gangs and the challenges law enforcement faces in dealing with this issue.

Alternatives

N/A

Attachments

N/A

Respectfully submitted,

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Police Chief

Jack R. Crist
Interim City Manager