



MEMORANDUM

City Manager's Office and Police Department

DATE: June 24, 2021

TO: Public Safety Advisory Board

FROM: Michael Canfield, Police Captain
Melvin E. Gaines, Principal Management Analyst
Audrey Seymour Ramberg, Assistant City Manager/Chief Operating Officer

SUBJECT: Youth Services Unit/School Resource Officer Overview

PURPOSE

In recent months, community members have questioned the presence of School Resource Officers (SROs) on school campuses and called for the City to no longer operate SRO programs at schools. At the May 25, 2021 City Council meeting, the Council discussed approaches to better understand community concerns around the Mountain View Police Department (MVPD) SRO program and consider potential changes to the program. The Council determined that it would like to hold a Study Session to explore the SRO program, but would first like the Public Safety Advisory Board (PSAB) to review the program, seek input from the community and provide feedback to the City Council. As part of its learning about the SRO program, the City Council is interested in the PSAB conducting extensive community outreach to students, parents, and school district officials who have experiences with the MVPD SRO program.

At its May 27, 2021 meeting, the PSAB discussed adding an item to examine the MVPD SRO program to its Fiscal Year 2021-22 Work Plan. This memo provides an overview of the MVPD SRO program and recommends next steps.

BACKGROUND

Youth Services Unit/School Resource Officers Background

The City's dedication of MVPD staff to work with youth and address youth-related public safety issues began in the early 1960's. At that time, there were many burglaries being committed by youth in Mountain View. As a response, MVPD created a Juvenile

Diversion Officer position and formed what is now the Youth Services Unit (YSU). These positions were designed to have officers dedicated to working in partnership with the school districts specifically to guide youth away from crime and help better meet youth needs. In the 1980's, the unit consisted of one dedicated Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) Officer and a newly renamed School Resource Officer (SRO). Over time, the unit evolved to its current model which provides programs focused on youth development and crime prevention as well as establishing deeper partnerships between the MVPD and youth, parents, and school staff.

The current YSU is focused on providing positive interactions with youth, developing mentoring relationships, and being a resource to youth and families both on and off campus. The YSU does this through informal visits to schools, participating in school events, providing educational presentations, making home visits and coordinating after-school and summer enrichment programs. The goal of these efforts is to support positive youth development, ensure school safety, deter youth involvement in gangs, and to prevent bullying, fighting, and truancy.

Youth Services Unit Staffing Structure

The YSU is staffed by a sergeant, three SRO police officers and one part-time youth program coordinator. The SRO assignment is a two-year term with the option to extend an additional two years. A core value of the unit is to assign officers with a passion and dedication for youth mentorship and engagement. Police officers who are selected as SROs must complete SRO specific trainings that include juvenile laws, teaching techniques, and mentoring techniques.

Youth Services Unit Jurisdiction

The YSU serves all of the elementary, middle, and high schools in Mountain View, including private and charter schools (16 schools in total). The City has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Mountain View Los Altos Union High School District (MVLA) and Mountain View Whisman School District (MVWSD) which guide the terms of SROs responsibilities on each district's school campuses. SROs are not assigned to schools located in Los Altos, however, when the Los Altos Police Department (LAPD) SRO program was active, MVPD SROs supported LAPD SRO outreach efforts to Los Altos students who are Mountain View residents.

The basic agreement terms between City of Mountain View/MVPD and the school districts regarding SRO presence on campuses include the following:

- SROs will be provided space to work on campus
- District and Police Department will work collaboratively and make adjustments to the SRO program throughout the school year
- SROs will address staff, administrators and students about program goals and objectives
- Principals will work with SROs on matters related to weapons and drugs
- SROs will follow State law and MVPD policy related to citations and arrests
- Student record confidentiality will be maintained

School Resource Officer Duties

SRO duties include teaching classes and making presentations to students on topics such as bullying prevention, bicycle safety, and tobacco, drug and alcohol education; assisting with the coordination of Police Activities League (PAL) activities, mentoring youth, reaching out to families, providing information and referral services to address youth and family needs, implementing youth-oriented programs through the police department and/or schools, conducting school related investigations and other related tasks. The general duties and the associated time commitment for SROs is shown below:

- ~60% - School/campus/family engagement and running youth programs
- ~25% - Answering school related calls for service or calls related to youth
- ~15% - During the course of their shift, officers assigned to YSU can support patrol officers when calls for service require additional staffing

While on campus, SROs intervene if they observe or become aware of criminal acts either by students or unauthorized persons who are on campus. While SRO duties includes enforcing laws, up to and including making arrests, this represents a small amount of the time SROs spend on school campuses. MVPD SROs are not on campus to provide security and are not on campus to proactively look for law violations. They spend time at school sites to build relationships with and provide presentations to students and school staff members.

School Resource Officers have relationships with many school staff members. Any school staff member can request a SRO's presence on the campus for a variety of reasons. Often times, a SRO is requested on campus to mentor or counsel a student for general violations of the education code or the penal code. SRO's are not involved in determining education code disciplinary actions. The protocol when a crime has occurred on campus is for the Principal or their designees to notify an SRO who would then conduct an investigation. Once an investigation is completed the SRO confers with school administrators, the student's parents and the student to determine what action will be taken.

SROs also work collaboratively with school staff to identify students in need of individual assistance. In some instances, school staff and/or a student's guardian identify issues concerning a student such as chronic truancy or behavioral changes. They may request that an SRO conduct a home visit with the student and their family, which the SRO coordinates as appropriate. Home visits consist of a check-in with the guardians and student to determine areas in which a student might be struggling or in need of support. This provides an opportunity for students, parents/guardians and SROs to collectively identify ways that SROs can support students to avoid getting into legal trouble and to better help students make life choices resulting in better outcomes.

Examples of Daily SRO Activities

Prior to the pandemic, examples of SRO's daily activities included:

- Working collaboratively with school staff to provide education on various topics (e.g. bullying, drugs/alcohol, vaping) to school staff and student groups.
- Acting as a liaison between the school districts and parents, often taking calls and responding to emails from parents and school staff during and after school hours.
- Supporting after school programs such as Police Athletic League (PAL) Boxing, scheduled presentations, field trips, community events, meetings with the PTA, Teen Council and community groups like Cafecito, events at the Teen Center, etc.
- Responding to issues after school hours.

During the pandemic, SROs continued to respond to referrals from schools on issues such as truancy. Throughout the year, the YSU has worked to stay in contact with students including distributing backpacks and helping schools with materials distribution. The

SROs conducted home visits with students, including referrals from schools, requests from parents, and follow-up from patrol cases involving youth. Following up with parents has been an important part of connecting students with services during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has disrupted other connections to services.

YSU has shifted all programs to be conducted safely, through strict COVID-19 safety protocols. For the past year, the PAL Mentoring Program has been conducted online on a weekly basis and the Police Explorer Program has convened online twice per month. This year, the Youth Services Unit implemented strict COVID-19 protocols and conducted their annual Dreams and Futures summer program hosting 83 youth, between 4th and 8th grade, over the course of four summer weeks.

YSU Programs

School Resource Officers coordinate various youth programs on and off of school campuses. Descriptions of YSU programs are below.

Dreams and Futures - In the summer of 1996, the YSU initiated a pilot program, "To the Hill and Beyond," after seeing a need for summer programs that could help bridge the gap with summer learning loss and provide a positive environment free from gang influence. The program had three main components: academics, athletics, and enrichment. The initial two-week program was held Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and served 45 youth. In the summer of 1997, the program was renamed, "Dreams and Futures," and was coordinated collaboratively with the MVWSD.

Originally created as a gang prevention program, Dreams and Futures has evolved to provide services to underserved youth as well as youth at risk for gang involvement. Today, Dreams and Futures serves 100 4th - 8th grade students every summer for two, 2-week sessions, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The goal of the program is to build confidence and self-esteem through mentorship and youth programming. Through positive support and encouragement, these students have more confidence to make positive peer choices and disassociate themselves from negative activity or gang involvement. MVWSD supports the program with daily transportation and free breakfast and lunch for all participants. Mountain View High School provides classrooms and access to the school campus.

Cops that Care - In 2002, "Cops That Care" was created to bring holiday joy to youth in Mountain View. Cops That Care is a winter gift giveaway that provides toys as well as school and hygiene supplies to students who otherwise might not be able to receive as many gifts during the holiday season. Cops That Care helps build trust and relationships with Mountain View youth and their families and often opens the door to future positive interactions with families. SROs work with school staff to identify youth most in need and to invite them to participate in the program. Originally serving 50 kids, Cops That Care has grown to serving over 2,000 kids in Mountain View each year.

Explorer Program - SROs serve as advisors and coordinate the MVPD Explorer Program. Youth who may have an interest in public safety careers are encouraged to join the MVPD Explorer Program. While receiving training in law enforcement procedures, community policing, teamwork, and leadership, Police Explorers volunteer alongside police officers and other police professionals to assist the department in its mission and service delivery. Explorers are between the ages of 14 and 21 and must be either Mountain View residents or enrolled in a Mountain View high school. As a branch of Boy Scouts of America, Police Exploring provides valuable life skills while educating participants about potential careers in law enforcement. Explorers have gone on to pursue law enforcement careers (with many working in various roles at MVPD). The Police Department typically has between 10 and 20 Explorers at any one time and currently has 20 Explorers in the program.

Mountain View Police Activities League (PAL) - The Mountain View Police Activities League (PAL) is a program of the Mountain View Public Safety Foundation, which oversees and handles the fiduciary aspects of PAL. SROs assist with the creation, coordination and implementation of PAL activities. Mountain View PAL was formed to help provide youth with the constructive influence of responsible adult role models, including police officers, through a variety of sports, educational, and recreational activities. The goal of the program is to serve as an effective and powerful antidote to juvenile delinquency and provide positive mentorship between police officers and youth. Active participation helps enhance educational, social and personal values; development of a positive self-image; learning of successful interpersonal skills and other life skills.

Youth Services Unit Budget

The total annual budget for the YSU is \$1,298,217. With the exception of the bus transportation and meals provided by MVWSD in the Dream and Futures program, all programs run by YSU are funded completely by the City of Mountain View General Fund. Some grants and donations are provided by community partners, including:

- El Camino Hospital's Community Benefit Grant: \$25,000
- Kiwanis Club: \$7,000
- Quota International Mountain View Branch: \$700
- Challenge Team: \$500

The school districts in Mountain View do not contribute financially towards officer salaries or programs offered by the unit.

Staffing costs are reflected in the table below.

Table 1: Youth Services Unit Budget

YSU Sergeant	\$351,400
School Resource Officer	\$297,300
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Program Coordinator (part-time)	\$35,000
Non-personnel: budget for expenses	\$13,293
Total	\$1,298,217

Youth Services Unit/School Resource Officer Program Feedback

Most feedback that MVPD has received about the YSU has been positive. Parents express great appreciation for SROs coming to their homes and helping to support their children. Former participants have shared about the benefits of being involved in the program and how it has positively impacted their ability to set goals and look beyond life after middle or high school. Many themes often emerge about changing the youths' life's path and making positive choices in life. Some youth who were involved in gangs in Mountain View credit the mentoring of SROs they met in the YSU programs as keys to staying out

of trouble and being motivated to finish school and pursue a career. To this day, many former participants still keep in touch with former and current members of YSU.

In the past couple months, YSU has presented to the MVWSD Board, MVLA Board, and the Challenge Team about YSU programs. In these meetings, trustees and members voiced their appreciation and support for the longstanding investment in youth by the MVPD and the opportunity to work in partnership for the benefit of Mountain View youth. Many school administrators and staff have direct access to YSU members through personal cellphone numbers, and in the course of an academic year are frequently in contact with each other to help youth get connected to counseling or resources to help with other needs.

Since summer 2020, the City has received input from community members during City Council and subcommittee meetings questioning whether SROs should be on campuses and calling for an end to on campus programs. The Human Relations Commission (HRC) hosted four two-hour listening forums on Local Policing via Zoom video conferencing from August 31 through September 24, 2020. The forums were designed to create space for different constituent groups: with one focused on youth (ages 15-24), one led in Spanish, one led in Mandarin, and one led in English for general participation. These gatherings aimed to provide a comfortable, informal environment where community members could speak from their own experience on local policing in the City of Mountain View.

During these forums, both positive and negative comments on SROs were provided. Positive comments were provided by parents who felt good that the police were present at their children's schools and interacting with students. Negative comments questioned whether police are the appropriate personnel to address at-risk youth and youth behavioral issues. It is not clear whether these comments are based on experiences with the MVPD SRO program specifically. MVPD has not directly received claims or complaints from parents, students or school staff regarding the SRO program. There have been no YSU incidents or claims against the City in recent history.

DISCUSSION

The City Council would like the PSAB to review the MVPD SRO program, seek community input, and provide feedback on the SRO program to the City Council. The

above overview of the Youth Services Unit/School Resource Officers provides insight into the SRO program. The PSAB should discuss areas they would like to further explore and identify potential ways to conduct this exploration with staff support.

A few potential areas the PSAB may wish to further explore include student, parent and school feedback on the SRO program, alternative approaches to providing the services of school resource officers, and ways to enhance the SRO program. Such exploration would help inform the PSAB's input to the City Council. The PSAB could form a subcommittee of no more than three members who can lead whichever efforts are identified.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the PSAB discuss areas related to SROs that they would like to further explore. Staff also recommends that the PSAB form a three-member subcommittee to lead any efforts identified by the PSAB with staff support.

Attachments: 1. HRC Community Listening Forum Report