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## **East Palo Alto Police Department**

### **Issue**

Are the recommendations of the 2003-2004 Grand Jury being effectively implemented?

### **Summary**

The 2003-2004 Grand Jury investigated the East Palo Alto Police Department based on a report on that department by Joseph Brann & Associates (formerly PSComm), a police management consulting firm. In July 2000, the City of East Palo Alto engaged the firm to study the Police Department and make recommendations to improve its performance. The Brann report contained 71 specific recommendations. Following the investigation and report by the 2003-2004 Grand Jury, the Chief of Police retired. East Palo Alto then hired an interim Chief of Police.

The current Grand Jury authorized an investigation to determine whether the City Council of East Palo Alto was implementing the recommendations of the prior Grand Jury. The Grand Jury interviewed members of the East Palo Alto Police Department and the Sheriff's Department. A report by the City Council on the current status of the Grand Jury recommendations was due by August 1, 2004, but was delayed until December 2, 2004. That report claimed that 90% of the recommendations would be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2005.

The City Council hired a permanent Chief of Police on May 16, 2005. A twenty-eight page update dated May 19 reported that most of the 2003-2004 Grand Jury recommendations had been accomplished to one degree or another. For the most part, the areas of recommendations not addressed in this recent report are not under the control of the Police Department, and are influenced greatly by the financial health of the city.

Although a great amount of county time and effort has been expended on attempts to resolve the crime problems in East Palo Alto, recent news articles indicate that the level of criminal activity in East Palo Alto has not decreased. The Police Department has nine patrol officer positions unfilled or unavailable for duty out of a budgeted force of thirty-seven patrol officers. Temporary assistance has been made available by assigning two officers from other duties and from Sheriff's deputies. East Palo Alto could buy temporary relief by borrowing four detectives from the County Sheriff's Department at a cost of \$700,000 per year.

Although one of the smaller cities in San Mateo County with an area of 2.5 square miles, East Palo Alto has the highest number of violent crimes per 100,000 residents. Crime continues to be a serious problem in East Palo Alto, a situation that requires strong, effective leadership and prompt action.

## **Recommendation**

1. The East Palo Alto City Council should implement fully recommendation 5.12 of the 2003-2004 Grand Jury to ensure that adequate funding is provided to the Police Department. This includes providing for temporary filling of the patrol police officer shortage.



**CITY OF EAST PALO ALTO  
OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER**

September 23, 2005

Honorable Norman J. Gatzert  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Dear Judge Gatzert:

Attached is the City of East Palo Alto's response to the 2004-2005 Grand Jury dated June 23, 2005, which contained one finding and recommendation regarding the East Palo Alto Police Department. In accordance with the instructions of that report, the Chief of Police has completed his response and it is being transmitted together with this letter for your consideration.

If I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Respectfully submitted,

Alvin D. James  
City Manager



# CITY OF EAST PALO ALTO OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE



*Ronald L. Davis, Chief of Police*

## RESPONSE TO THE GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CITY OF EAST PALO ALTO AND THE EAST PALO ALTO POLICE DEPARTMENT

### **Recommendation**

1. The East Palo Alto City Council should implement fully recommendation 5.12 of the 2003-2004 Grand Jury to ensure that adequate funding is provided to the Police Department. This includes providing for temporary filling of the patrol police officer shortage.

#### **Recommendation 5.12 states:**

The City Council should ensure that adequate financial services and staff are allocated to enable the East Palo Alto Police Department to fully implement the recommendations of the organizational assessment provided by PSComm, LLC/Joseph Brann and Associates, LLC.

### **Response**

The East Palo Alto City Council has made public safety its top priority. The Police Department's amended budget in 2004 -05 was \$6.1 million, which represented approximately 44% of the City's general fund budget. The City Council increased the Police Department's budget in 2005 - 06 to \$8.6 million, an increase of approximately \$2.5 million representing 61% of the City's general fund. Additionally, the City Council approved Measure K to be placed on the November ballot. Measure K is a public safety measure that asks the electorate to impose a parcel tax to increase police and social services and enhance public safety. If passed, Measure K will generate approximately \$1.3 to 1.7 million of which 50% of the funds are designated for the Police Department.

The Police Department has been authorized the fill the existing four police officer vacancies, in addition to the crime analyst and police captain positions. The City has initiated the hiring process for police officers and to date processed over 130 applicants and conducted oral boards for lateral and academy graduate applicants. An eligibility list has been created and certified by the City Manager. This list is currently under review by the Chief of Police. Candidates approved by the Chief will proceed to the background investigation phase. The Chief of Police has started recruitment to fill the Captain's vacancy and expects this position to be filled by December. The Crime Analyst position has not yet been filled, however, the City has received assistance from the California Department of Justice to conduct a five year analysis of violence in East Palo Alto.

The Police Department is also working closely with the Community Development Institute (CDI) to conduct crime analysis and mapping. The Palo Alto Police Department has agreed to allow the Police Department use of one of its crime analyst for the next few months to work with the Department and CDI, and assist the Police Department to build its internal capacity. Over the past three months, the Department has dramatically enhanced its ability to track and analyze crime, and now uses this information as a key part of the Department's crime reduction strategy.

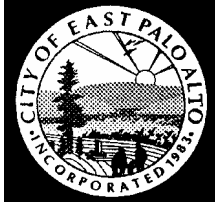
The City chose not to purchase \$700,000 in additional services as proposed by the Sheriff's Department. Instead, the Department added two additional police officers to the Regional Investigations Bureau (RIB) and two additional officers to the newly formed Metro unit, which was formed to address increasing violence in the City. In July, two officers on extended leave returned to the Police Department and the two School Resource Officers became available during the summer break. This allowed the Police Department to reassign two officers to RIB and two to the Metro Unit.

The Police Department also obtained assistance from the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office and the California Highway Patrol (CHP). In August, the DEA task force arrested 44 persons for various narcotics and weapons offenses – the largest narcotics operations in East Palo Alto in over 15 years. Since June, the newly formed Metro team has made over 170 felony arrests and conducted over 400 probation and parole searches. In August, the CHP has assigned one sergeant and six officers to work in the City through October – they have since conducted over 100 stops and made over 25 arrests.

Additionally, the Police Department has received assistance from the United States Marshal to capture East Palo Alto's Most Wanted and will be working with the Federal Bureau of Investigations to enhance our enforcement efforts. The assistance from the aforementioned agencies has greatly assisted the Police Department, especially during the summer months, and it did not increase the City's cost or require the purchase of additional services. Moreover, the temporary purchase of additional staff from the Sheriff fails to advance the Department, build internal capacity, and address long-term staff development issues identified in the Joseph Brann organizational assessment and the Grand Jury Report. By assigning two additional police officers to the RIB, the Department has developed two officers and increased their level of training and expertise – expertise that increases the Departments internal capacity and can be used to develop additional staff.

As part of the Police Department's community policing plan, the Department will assume responsibility for criminal investigations in January 2006. This transition is also critical to the Department's reform efforts and will serve to develop staff, increase opportunities within the Department, increase recruitment and retention, and increase the Police Department's accountability to the community (see Attachment #1). On September 20, 2005, the Police Department outlined its Community Policing and Violence Reduction Plan to the East Palo Alto City Council (see Attachment #2). The plan focuses on three components: Education, Prevention and Enforcement, and adopts community policing principals and problem-solving practices. We are confident that our short and long-term efforts will have a dramatic effect on violence in the City and an equal affect on the Department's reform efforts.

ATTACHMENT #1



**CITY OF EAST PALO ALTO  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE**

**To:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
**From:** Ronald L. Davis, Chief of Police  
**Via:** Alvin James, City Manager  
**Date:** September 20, 2005  
**Re:** Community Policing and Violence Reduction Plan

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**RECOMMENDATION**

Accept this as an informational report only. No policy action is requested at this time.

**BACKGROUND**

Like most communities across the United States, the City of East Palo is faced with the challenge of increasing crime and violence. So far this year, there have been thirteen homicides compared to a total of seven in all of 2004. Over the past five years there have been 40 homicides for an annual average of eight.

In response to the increased level of violence, the City has made public safety its primary concern and diverted resources from other city departments to the police department. With the additional resources, the police have taken aggressive enforcement steps to turn the tide on crime and violence. However, these efforts constitute a short-term reactive response not a long-term proactive strategy. In order to achieve lasting crime and violence reduction, the concept of public safety must extend beyond the police and include all city departments and the community. That, in essence, is community-oriented policing, which is the foundation of this proposed crime and violence reduction plan.

The City has successfully demonstrated the effectiveness of community policing in the 1990s when faced with historic levels of violence. For example, there were a total of 42 homicides in 1992, which was the highest per capita murder rate in the United States at that time. The City utilized community-oriented policing and problem-solving techniques to mobilize the community and local, state and federal law enforcement agencies to implement a comprehensive, coordinated strategy that extended beyond enforcement. The approach proved extremely successful and now serves as a model for communities across the United States.

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The principals that worked in the '90s are the same principals that will work today and in the future. The Community Policing and Violence Reduction Plan ("Plan") is based on these principals and constitutes a citywide plan that involves all city departments and the community. The plan is comprehensive in that it outlines both immediate and long-term strategies and encompasses the three basic tenants to community policing: Education, Prevention and Enforcement.

### ANALYSIS

As part of our short-term strategy, the Department has re-deployed its resources to respond to the increase in violence. To date, the Department has conducted the following activities:

- Expanded the "Metro" Team to one sergeant and four officers to enhance enforcement efforts. Since June, the Metro Team has made over 170 felony arrests and conducted over 400 probation and parole searches.
- Obtained assistance from the Drug Enforcement Agency to conduct mid-level narcotics investigations. As a result, 44 individuals were indicted on felony drug charges in September 2005: 27 were charged in federal court and the remaining in state court. Over \$500,000 in drugs were seized in addition to 12 guns and 2 assault rifles.
- Obtained assistance from the California Highway Patrol (CHP) to implement "Operation Impact". The CHP assigned one sergeant and six officers to patrol the City. Since August 17, 2005, the CHP has conducted over 100 stops and made over 25 arrests.
- Initiated "Operation GRIP" – Gang Reduction & Intervention Program. This program focuses on gang intelligence, gang-graffiti abatement and continued enforcement efforts. Two investigators are gathering as much information available about gangs in East Palo Alto and San Mateo County. The investigators have conducted debriefings of detained persons, interviews with allied agencies, visits to juvenile detention facilities and will in the near future visit prisons to gather even more intelligence.
- Obtained assistance from the California Department of Justice to conduct a five-year comprehensive violent crime analysis. Future staff deployment and programs will be based, in large part, on this report.
- Assigned two additional investigators to the Regional Investigations Bureau (RIB) to reduce caseload and increase case clearance rates.
- Initiated the "East Palo Alto's Most Wanted" program and obtained assistance from the United States Marshal Service to serve warrants. The Department has identified key wanted criminals we believe are involved in on-going violence in

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the City. The United States Marshal will focus on these individuals using equipment and resources not available to the Department.

- Enhanced code enforcement efforts to include a street-by-street identification of all gang “tagging” and graffiti. The Department is coordinating with the Public Works Department, PG&E, Pacific Bell, and community-based organizations and businesses to remove graffiti. The program has already removed graffiti from at least five properties and staff has initiated contact and removal efforts for an additional five locations.
- Created the Department’s “Violence Reduction Strategy Room” at 1960 Tate. This room provides meeting space and is equipped with work stations for supervisors and investigators, as well as maps and charts that track crime and graffiti in the City.
- The Department is working with San Mateo County Police Chiefs Association to initiate a countywide anti-gang initiative in September.
- Conducted 64 compliance checks of all Sex Offender Registrants (290 PC) in East Palo Alto. 13 out of the 64 have been deemed noncompliant. The Department is coordinating with the District Attorney and United States Marshal to apprehend and prosecute the violators.
- Partnered with Probation Department to enhance supervision of probationers. A probation officer works directly with the Metro team at least one day a week. The Department is also working with Probation to initiate the Risk Management program in the Ravenswood School District. As part of this program, a probation officer will be assigned to various schools in Ravenswood and work with at-risk youth and first-time offenders. The probation officers will also work closely with the Department’s school resource officers.
- Partnered with Parole to increase supervision and monitoring over the 250 parolees in East Palo Alto. A lieutenant will now attend at Police and Correction (PAC) Team meetings to contact person recently released from prison into our community.
- Obtained assistance from the San Mateo County Crime Suppression Team to increase their enforcement efforts in the City.
- Met with the United States Attorney to garner support for federal prosecutions of Gang members.
- Collaborated with the East Palo Alto Crime Reduction Task Force (spearheaded by San Mateo County Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson) and One East Palo Alto to implement prevention programs, such as summer job programs for youth, job training and at-risk youth mentoring.



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- Partnered with the Silicon Valley “Crime Stoppers” to provide rewards for information leading to the arrests of criminals. Crime Stoppers is a not-for-profit that provides rewards based on donations. There is no cost to the Department.
- Created a “Gun Suppression” program that provides up to \$500 for information leading to the arrest of gang member or ex-felon in possession of a firearm and \$1000 for a gang member or ex-felon in possession of an assault rifle.
- Applied for the Project Safe Neighborhood Grant (\$200,000). This is an anti-gun violence grant that focuses on federal prosecution and community collaboration and education.
- Submitted a “Letter of Interest” to apply for the “Weed and Seed” grant offered by the United States Department of Justice. This grant can provided up to \$200,000 a year for two to three years. The grant coincides with the “Plan” as it focuses on enforcement as part of the “weeding” component and education and prevention as part of the “seeding” component.
- Launched the Police Chaplain Program. The Chaplains will host a Bay Area summit on the role of the faith community in reducing violence in October.

### **Long-Term Strategy**

The aforementioned efforts are noteworthy, but as stated earlier, they alone will not reduce crime and violence. The City must adopt a long-term strategy that extends beyond enforcement and includes education and enforcement. Below is a list of activities, the Department plans to conduct as part of each of the components.

#### **Enforcement**

- Continue the aggressive enforcement campaign outlined in this report and target gang members, parolees, probationers and those identified as being involved in violence.
- Create an internal criminal investigation function to increase case clearance rates. Currently, only 2 out of the 13 homicides this year have been solved. Over the past year, less than 30% of the homicides have been solved, which is drastically lower than the national average of 60%. East Palo Alto officers have a more intimate knowledge of the community and criminal element and are thus better able to identify offenders, garner community support and information. Effective January 1, 2005, the East Palo Alto police department will take over all criminal investigation functions.
- Develop permanent crime analysis capacity within the Department. The Department is currently receiving assistance from the California Department of Justice and the Community Development Institute (CDI). Until the Crime

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Analyst position is filled, the Department is examining the possibility of a contract with CDI to provide this service.

- Continue to work with the District Attorney to develop sentencing alternatives that promote community services and referrals to rehabilitation, education and job training programs.
- Fill the vacant Captain, Police Officers and Crime Analyst positions. Recruitment has been initiated, however, the market is extremely competitive. The City must evaluate current and salaries and benefits, and create additional incentives to recruit qualified candidates.
- Increase nuisance abatement and code enforcement to identify houses, apartments and business that generate inordinate calls for services, excessive police activity or locations known to be involved in gang and narcotics activity. Through the enforcement of existing codes, civil actions and crime prevention through environment design – also known as CPTED – this strategy will get to the root cause of crime.
- Participate in “Project Safe Neighborhoods”. A gun and violence-reduction grant from the United States Attorney’s Office. The grant promotes a strong anti-gun and violence media campaign and requires local, county, state and federal law enforcement agencies to partner with the community and prosecutors to reduce gun violence.
- Form a “Cold Case” project-team to focus on open homicide cases over the past five years. Information obtained in field suggests that there are a small number of persons responsible for inordinate levels of violence in our community. To the extent that the Department can arrest and imprison these individual, violence will be drastically decreased. The Department is scheduled to meet with the Special Agent in Charge of the FBI to discuss a partnership for this purpose.
- Enforce the existing Curfew Ordinance for persons under the age of 18. This ordinance will provide officers the legal ability to contact juveniles that are loitering in public places after 10:00 p.m. and reduce the risk of violence to our youth and increase the likelihood of their attendance in school.
- Implement a “call-reduction” plan to reduce the number of calls for service and increase the availability of patrol officers to engage in problem-solving and enforcement programs.

### **Education & Prevention**

- Continue the “Chat with the Chief” series that provides a venue for the community to share information to the police chief, and for the Department to provide information (education and prevention tips) to the community. The chat

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also serves to strengthen the relationship between the police and community which further enhance our crime-reduction efforts.

- Participate in the Gang Resistance Education (GREAT) program offered by the United States Department of Justice. The Department has partnered with Ravenswood School District to provide the GREAT curriculum. The two School Resource Officers (SROs) received the required training in August and are now certified to provide the training. The SROs will begin providing this curriculum in October.
- Strengthen the Department's partnership with One East Palo Alto and the East Palo Alto Crime Reduction Task Force formed by County Supervisor Rose Jacobs-Gibson. The task force has developed the more critical pieces of the Violence Reduction Plan, to include: Education, Prevention, Intervention, and Community Engagement.
- Partner with organizations such as OICW, For Youth By Youth and other not-for-profit organizations that reach out to our youth and provide education and training services.
- Develop a truancy-reduction plan in coordination with the Ravenswood School District. The plan must include both student and parent accountability and provide a facility to house truants, and not simply release them to their parents. The Department will seek sanction through the District Attorneys' Office if parents fail to take corrective actions, and allow their children to continue to violate either the truant laws or the curfew ordinance.
- Increase the number of block clubs, which will enhance police and community engagement at the grass-root level and allow the Department to engage in effective problem-solving.
- Develop Police Department Youth Mentoring Plan.
- Develop a Youth Police Academy to improve the relationship between the youth and the police and provide youth tools to reduce the temptations of gangs and violence, and potentially develop future East Palo Alto police officers.
- Re-institute the Police Activities League (PAL) to provide after-school programs that instill discipline and develop youth into responsible adults.

### **Community Policing Plan**

The key to the proposed plan lies with its implementation and evaluation. As part of the plan, the City has been divided into four police beats. A police sergeant has been

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assigned 24-hour responsibility for each of the beat. Four officers are also assigned to each Beat.

The sergeants' duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Collaborate with community and organize block groups.
- Host monthly meetings with the community.
- Collaborate with the community to identify and prioritize crime issues on the Beat.
- Identify beat projects for selected crime issues and develop work-plans.
- Coordinate with other City Departments and allied agencies.
- Identify "Most Wanted" on each Beat.
- Identify all "Parolees & Probationers" on the Beat.
- Identify all sex offenders (290 Registrants) on the Beat.
- Prepare Monthly Beat-Report that contains:
  - Crime Statistics
  - Beat-Project Summary
  - Summary of Enforcement, Education and Prevention Efforts
- Develop & Maintain Beat-Webpage:
  - Crime Statistics
  - Community Meeting Information
  - Crime Reduction Efforts
  - Most Wanted – Crime Stoppers
  - Public Notices & General Information
  - Contact Numbers

Each sergeant will also form and chair a Community Policing Team (CPT) for their beats. The CPT will be comprised of representatives of each of the following groups:

- Community
- Patrol Beat Officers
- School Resource Officers
- Code Enforcement
- Metro Enforcement Team
- Traffic Unit
- Community Services Department
- Detectives

The CPT will be responsible for identifying and prioritizing crime and violence, and identify those problems that contribute to crime; such as blight, code violations, environmental-design flaws, lack of economic development and employment. The CPT will have access to all city departments and be responsible to develop plans of actions to address these problems that identify the role each team member and develop performance measures to ensure success.

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The CPT will meet each month to discuss crime patterns and trends and evaluate the type and level of response needed to further reduce crime and violence. To support the CPT, the Crime Analyst (currently CDI) will provide each team monthly crime analysis updates.

### **Accountability**

Without accountability, a plan is nothing more than empty words on paper. To ensure the plan is implemented and all are held accountable to conduct the activities outlined by the CPT, the City will form an executive oversight committee comprised of the Chief of Police, City Manager and City Department heads. The executive committee will meet each quarter to review the progress of each CPT and provide additional guidance and direction as needed. This meeting will be similar to the CompStat meeting developed by Los Angeles Police Chief William Bratton, but differ in that it will not be limited to the police.

As part of this meeting, the executive committee will be provided crime analysis to identify crime patterns and trends, and each CPT will identify how they responded to these trends and what steps are planned to achieve even greater reductions.

### **Next Steps**

- Form Community Policing Team (CPT) for each Police Beat – 4 Sergeants
- Identify Duties and Responsibilities for CPT.
- Conduct Community Forum in each Beat.
- Identify Top Priorities for each Beat.
- Develop Plan of Action for Each Priority.
- Establish Performance-Measures.
- Establish CPT Executive Committee to Provide Oversight.
- Schedule Quarterly CPT Meeting (using staff management meeting).
- Provide CPT Continual Training and Guidance.
- Implement the police Management Assessment Program (MAP) to Evaluate Effectiveness.

### **Proposed Ballot Measure K**

It is anticipated that Measure K will generated approximately \$1.5 Million in revenue. Under Measure K, 50% of the revenue is earmarked for police services and 50% for social violence-reduction programs. If Measure K is passed by the electorate in November, the funds will further enhance the Community Policing and Violence Reduction Plan. The Department will use the funds to:

- Add an additional Community Services Officer to help organize block groups and facilitate community meetings.
- Add two detectives to create a permanent Gang Unit to gather intelligence and investigate narcotics and gang-related crimes.

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- Add additional administrative staff to reduce the amount of administrative “down-time” for field officers and supervisors, and efficiently collect and enter the necessary data to ensure timely crime analysis.
- Increase police-recruitment incentives to fill existing vacancies and encourage staff retention.
- Purchase equipment and technology (such as computers, PDAs, statistical software, and data processing and tracking software) to increase efficiency and decrease down-time, which allows officers to focus more on field duties and problem-solving projects.

The remaining 50% of the funds will be used to both support existing education and prevention programs and create new programs designed to reduce the cycle of violence and recidivism among offenders, as well as provide services to at-risk youth. These programs will strengthen the education and enforcement components of the Community Policing and Violence Reduction Plan and further the City’s efforts to drastically reduce violence.

### **Conclusion**

This proposed plan is not a panacea or a “magic bullet”. The plan is basic in concept, but complex in its implementation. Only through continued accountability and persistence will the plan be fully implemented and will the City enjoy significant crime and violence reductions.

Of equal importance, however, is the fact that this plan increases police and community interaction, and police accountability. In that respect, the proposed plan also serves as a foundation for reform in the police department and a critical step in improving police and community relations.

### **Fiscal Impact**

This is an informational report there are no fiscal impacts at this time. However, implementation of the Plan will have a fiscal impact, but it should be implemented within the approved 2005 – 2006 budget.

## ATTACHMENT #2



# CITY OF EAST PALO ALTO OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE



*Ronald L. Davis, Chief of Police*

### ***“Police Department to Form Criminal Investigations Division (CID)”***

Starting in January 2006, the East Palo Alto Police Department (“Department”) will assume responsibility for criminal investigations in the City. This change marks a historic moment in the Department’s history and signals the start of a comprehensive reform process designed to enhance the professionalism, competency, effectiveness, and responsiveness of the Police Department.

As the new chief of police, I believe this change is absolutely critical to reduce crime and violence in our community, and equally important to the Department’s reform efforts. Criminal investigations are a basic core function of policing that must be accountable to the community. If we are to reduce crime and violence, we must increase the rate in which we solve crimes and prosecute offenders. Out of the 13 homicides committed this year only 2 (15%) have been solved. Only 10 (22%) out of the 45 homicides committed since 2000 have been cleared as defined by the California Uniform Crime Report index. This rate is much lower than the national solve-rate (also known as clearance rates) of approximately 50%.

These low percentages do not reflect on the quality of investigations conducted by the San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office (“Sheriff”). To the contrary, the Sheriff detectives have served this community well for over ten years and I consider them top-notch professionals. These percentages do, however, reflect a need to localize the criminal investigation function and strengthen the Department’s overall ability to respond to crime and violence. Many of the key factors that contribute to low clearance rates are local-based and best obtained by a local Department possessing a criminal investigation function. These factors include, but are not limited to:

- Intimate knowledge of the community as well as those persons involved in criminal activity. This knowledge is best obtained by working closely with the community daily. As part of our community policing plan, patrol officers are assigned to one of four beats in the City. They are expected to become experts of their beats and interact with block groups, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, businesses and schools, to develop contacts and information crucial in criminal investigations.
- The willingness of the community to provide information to the police. The community and police must have a relationship based on trust and confidence before the crime occurs, not after. Otherwise, a detective, especially one from another department and outside the community, asking questions about who did what is often perceived as a stranger not to be trusted.
- The Department's internal capacity to conduct thorough preliminary investigations and control and protect crime-scenes and evidence. The quality of preliminary investigations contributes greatly to the clearance rates. East Palo Alto police officers have been primarily assigned to field duties with little exposure to criminal investigations. This not only stifles their development, it limits their understanding of criminal investigations and

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- what role preliminary investigations play in solving crime. We must invest in our staff so that we build internal capacity and increase our competency, not invest our scarce resources to develop outside staff who will take their knowledge and experiences away from the Department once they transfer out of the City.
- Coordination between patrol officers and detectives. The Sheriff's Office and the Police Department enjoy a good relationship, however, the level of interaction is limited because of logistics. Homicide investigators are based in Redwood City. This disconnect contributes to slow communication and even the failure to share valuable information.
- Increased Accountability. The Sheriff deputies are not city employees; therefore, as the police chief, I do not have the authority to select or remove detectives assigned to the investigations unit; change their work hours or days off if needed, or administer discipline if warranted. Such actions must be approved by the Sheriff.

Localizing the investigation function offers other benefits to the Department and City, such as:

- Single point of accountability. Residents will no longer have to figure out whom to contact -- the police department or the sheriff's office -- to follow-up on an investigation.
- Reduced costs. It will be less expensive for the Department to operate an investigation function rather than contract with the Sheriff. Currently, the City leaves vacant six police officer positions to pay for the Sheriff's contract. Even at the subsidized rate, the costs of Sheriff deputies have exceeded the funds generated from the vacant positions. The City has increased the Department's budget in 2005 – 06 to make up the difference, however the subsidy is scheduled to end in two years, which means the cost of the contract will increase even more – about 40%.
- Professional Development. The department has lacked much opportunity for professional advancement for its patrol officers or incentives to attract new recruits. Now an ambitious officer can look forward to trying to become a detective. Detectives transferring out of the East Palo Alto investigations unit remain in the Department and share their knowledge and experience to less experienced officers. This will create a more experienced core of officers and prepare the future leadership of the Department.
- Increased Officer Recruitment and Retention. As we compete with other agencies to recruit qualified police officer candidates, we are limited by the growth and development we offer police officers. Without opportunities to learn and advance within the organization, many candidates look elsewhere. The newly formed investigations unit will provide lateral movement within the organization.
- Increased grant opportunities. Because the City has not conducted criminal investigations over the past ten years, many grants designated to reduce crime and violence and increase clearance rates have not been available to the City. The Department will now seek grant opportunities and funding alternatives.
- Increased pride and morale. An important part of reform is creating an environment conducive to high morale and pride. Officers must take pride in their Department and their community. Contracting with the Sheriff for investigations has diminished organizational pride, albeit not intentional, as it suggests that EPA officers are not good enough to conduct a basic function in policing. This serves as a source of tension for officers and has created what I can only describe as low organizational-esteem. If you set low standards and expectations, people will aim low. If you set high standards and expectations, people strive to those heights. This change has already created a level of excitement and synergy within the Department and increased organizational pride.



## **ATTACHMENT #2**

We face many challenges ahead and face even more skeptics. I am confident that working together we can and will form a Department that is effective and one we can and will be proud of.

Respectfully,

Chief Ronald Davis