

**TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL**

**FROM: CITY MANAGER**

**DEPARTMENT: POLICE**

**DATE: DECEMBER 15, 2008**

**CMR:474:08**

**SUBJECT: Discussion of Police Department Action Plan for Outreach to Diverse Communities**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report provides a detailed action plan developed by the Police Chief and command staff to improve relations between the Police Department and members of diverse communities. This plan was prepared after meetings with representatives of the faith community, Stanford African-American students, the Executive Director of the San Jose NAACP, and other members of the community. The plan calls for the Police Department to make enhancements to various facets of police training, enhance communications through various community meetings, the formation of a Chief's Advisory Committee, and work with the Independent Police Auditor to review current policies and procedures and to make adjustments as necessary.

### **DISCUSSION**

To adequately engage the community, the Police Department will initiate a number of community activities both within the city of Palo Alto, as well as in neighboring cities. The plan calls for enhanced communications with the schools, the community and faith-based organizations. It should be noted that engaging in community outreach and policing beyond the city is unusual but staff is confident that it is the right thing to do and will enhance relations with the wider community and our neighbors.

For this plan to have meaningful results it will require all parties to have a total commitment to effective police-community relations and to participate in the open dialogue. Staff envisions this plan to be long-term and to be based upon the premise of building lasting relationships.

The qualitative analysis of the success of the program may be difficult to determine; however staff will continue to work towards finding meaningful metrics to reflect the plan's effectiveness.

Staff will include this plan as an element within the Police Department Strategic Plan and report to the City Manager semi-annually. The City Manager will provide a report to Council. Staff may make adjustments to the plan based upon interest levels, meeting attendance and successes. The elements of the plan are as follows:

**Monthly Meetings with the Chief:** Each month the Police Department will schedule a meeting open to the public that will give the community an opportunity to discuss current issues and police practices and express concerns. Police personnel will also have an opportunity to present crime prevention tips, review crime trends and answer any questions. The Menlo Park and East Palo Alto Police Department Police Chiefs will be invited to participate at some of these meetings. These meetings will take place at various locations including churches, community centers and businesses. The Police Department will publicize the dates and locations well in advance to encourage attendance.

**Community Advisory Committee:** A diverse cross-section of the community will be selected to meet with the Police Chief and command staff on a regular basis. Representatives from the faith community, NAACP, youth organizations, residents of East Palo Alto and Palo Alto, will be among the members of the committee. It is anticipated that this group will consist of eight to twelve individuals. The group's role will be to advise the Chief on police practices and race relations in order to strengthen police-community trust and to report back to constituents about activities in which the Police Department is involved. The selection process will include public posting for persons who may be interested in serving on this committee. Selection criteria will be developed with the assistance of the City's Human Relations Commission (HRC). Actual selection will be made after an interview process. Members of the HRC will assist in the interviews and selection.

**U.S. Department of Justice Mediation Program:** The Police Department will explore enlisting the services of the United States Department of Justice (US DOJ) Community Relations Service and the Santa Clara County Office of Human Relations (SSCOHR) to engage with the community in Palo Alto and throughout the Peninsula in order to develop trust and to create meaningful dialogue on matters of race and police practice. Meetings will be facilitated by personnel from US DOJ and SSCOHR and would include community members and police personnel. Meetings will focus on specific issues associated with race relations and include breakout groups that will develop strategies for improvement.

**Tools for Tolerance Executive Leadership Course:** All Police Department command staff will attend the Tools for Tolerance Executive Leadership Course at the Simon Wiesenthal Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. This two-day, POST reimbursable course examines the dimensions of diversity and leadership focusing on the unique challenges in an increasingly democratic and diverse society.

**Briefing Training:** The Police Department will implement a state-of-the-art Daily Training regimen that will focus on Constitutional issues, case law decisions and Department policy. This program will ensure that all patrol personnel will receive a new block of training each day that they are assigned to work. This training will include a lecture, examples and a test ensuring that the officers understand the curriculum. Records of subjects and test results will be maintained in the Personnel and Training Division Training Management System computer.

**Field Training Officer Training:** The Police Department will enhance training in the Field Training Officer Program (FTO), in-house training for dispatchers and officers, in the area of

race relations, crisis communications and cultural issues. This training will include lecture, role playing and case studies reviewed by command staff designed to ensure that officers and dispatchers understand organizational expectations.

**Continued Professional Training:** Each year the Police Department puts on approximately 55 hours of training for their personnel. The Police Department will enhance in-service training for sworn, dispatchers, and records personnel on topics that include Constitutional issues, cultural issues and unconscious biases. This training will be presented by both Department personnel and external subject matter experts.

**Independent Police Auditor:** Command staff will work closely with the Independent Police Auditor to review current practices, policies and procedures to ensure that the Department is in compliance and also to determine if any policies should be updated or otherwise modified. Command staff will work with the Independent Auditor to ensure that they have access to all necessary material and understand Department protocols so that they can provide the Council an accurate evaluation of current systems. Upon completion of the Auditor's report, command staff will review and implement recommended improvements.

The Independent Auditor will also review and analyze the demographic data collection process and the data that has been compiled. Additional efforts will be made to obtain analysis of the data by external experts in demographic data collection.

**Meetings with Students:** The Police Department will continue meeting with Stanford University groups to discuss issues pertaining to race and police practices. Additionally, staff will work with PAUSD staff to engage Gunn and Palo Alto High School students to engage in a similar dialogue. Staff will also attempt to encourage high schools in neighboring communities to join the discussion.

**Meetings with the Faith-Based Community:** Department staff will continue to meet with local (within the City and beyond) churches and clergy to discuss police practices and community issues. Staff will also investigate the feasibility of implementing a Police Chaplaincy Program where clergy from a variety of faiths would assist the Police Department in the following manner:

- 1.) Serve as liaison with the faith-based organizations of East Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Palo Alto.
- 2.) Assist the Department and other agencies in dealing with at-risk youth and their families.
- 3.) Upon request, provide support to Police Department employees and/or their families during crisis situations.
- 4.) Assist in providing support to victims and victims' families.

Staff believes that this action plan, together with the variety of other activities already undertaken by the Police Department (See Attachment A) will enhance relations and rebuild trust between the Department and members of diverse communities.

**RESOURCE IMPACT**

This is an ambitious and comprehensive outreach plan. Staff believes that the majority of items in the action plan can be absorbed within the Police Department's existing budget. There probably will be some costs associated with the initiation of a Chaplaincy Program. Staff will inform Council of these costs when a program overview and analysis has been completed.

**ATTACHMENT**

Attachment A: CMR:324:08 – List of Police Department Community Outreach Activities

PREPARED BY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
DENNIS BURNS  
Assistant Police Chief

DEPARTMENT HEAD:

\_\_\_\_\_  
LYNNE JOHNSON  
Police Chief

CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:

\_\_\_\_\_  
JAMES KEENE  
City Manager