

Source:

TO: City Council
FROM: City Manager and Staff



Police

DATE: March 6, 2008
RE: Council Report – Violent Crimes Task Force

SUMMARY:

This report was requested by Council Project #1838.

In December of 2007, a surge in violent crimes precipitated the need for the formation of a Violent Crimes Task Force (VCTF). In one month, this unit made over 40 arrests, seized three firearms and cleared several high profile violent crimes. With the assistance of our local law enforcement partners, the primary success of this operation can be attributed to arresting violent criminals before they can victimize again

This temporary task force had to disband in order for the members to return to their respective agencies and units. The task force consisted of 12 officers from four agencies. These agencies included the Boone County Sheriffs' Department, University of Missouri Police Department, The FBI, and the Columbia Police Department. These agencies, including the Columbia Police Department, do not have the necessary resources to replace those officers who had been assigned to the task force.

It has been suggested that the VCTF could be re-formed on a scheduled basis or as the need arises. While our local law enforcement partners always help when asked, we must make sure this a fairly rare occurrence. There is a limit as to how often they can pull resources from their regular assignments.

A possible solution is to form a full time Street Crimes Unit. This Street Crimes Unit would perform similar functions as that of the VCTF. The primary task of this unit will be simply to prevent crimes before they happen by incarcerating violent criminals. These officers will identify the most prolific violent criminals operating in Columbia and use every means at their disposal to develop criminal cases on these individuals.

Our experience in law enforcement has demonstrated that a majority of violent crime is drug related in some manner. The suspect is committing robberies or burglaries in order to obtain money to purchase drugs or is committing home invasion robberies in order to rip-off a fellow drug dealer. These individuals are predominantly street level criminals who are well known to our officers. Home invasion robberies and commercial and street robberies are what seem to cause the most angst with Columbia's citizens and the media.

We would recommend this unit be staffed by four officers and that they be assigned to the Narcotics Unit Supervisor. Nationwide, the majority of Street Crime Units are assigned to investigative units. The cost for the formation of this unit is as follows:

- Two black and white patrol vehicles including equipment added to the fleet cost \$44,880 each.
- Officer salary at \$64,030 (including benefits) each.
- The total first year cost would be \$347,820.

The activities assigned to the Street Crimes Unit would be:

- Combating street level "open air" drug dealing.
- Respond to emerging crime trends such as robberies, burglaries or home invasions.
- Assist Major Crimes Unit and Narcotics Unit investigators in locating and apprehending felony suspects.
- Assist Narcotics Unit in operations requiring a uniform presence, including "knock & talks," and "buy-busts."
- Assist Major Crime Unit in homicide investigations and other violent crime investigations.

Proposed

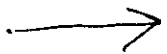
Fiscal Impact

YES

NO

Other Info.

*WE GENERALLY
HAVE TRIED
TO ADD ABOUT
3 OFFICERS
PER YEAR TO
THE DEPT.*



*SUGGEST THIS
BE CONSIDERED
AS AN OF
BUDGET
PRIORITY*

We believe a Street Crimes Unit would have a definite impact on both the public perception in regards to crime and our response to the increased violent crime in Columbia. Many communities have experience success with the creation of these units.

We anticipate including this request in our FY-09 budget.

SUGGESTED COUNCIL ACTION:

Staff recommends Council accept this report.