



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE ISSUED: May 4, 2006 REPORT NO.: 06-054

ATTENTION: Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee
Agenda of May 10, 2006

SUBJECT: Mid-City Crime Reduction Initiative – Surveillance Cameras at
City Heights Park

REFERENCE N/A

SUMMARY

This is an information item only. No action is required on the part of the Committee.

BACKGROUND

The City of San Diego Park and Receptions Department, in partnership with the Police Department's Mid-City Division, will install two surveillance cameras at the City Heights Community Park and Recreation Center. Price Charities through the San Diego Police Foundation donated the cameras and equipment.

The City Heights Community Park and Recreation Center is a primary recreation zone in the City Heights community. The ball fields, pool, children's playground, picnic area and library are in constant use. Street robberies, assaults, graffiti and gang activity are a constant nuisance to citizens using the park and to Park and Recreation Department Employees. Radio calls and other priorities in the Division do not allow an officer to constantly patrol the park. Surveillance cameras will provide a mechanism to consistently monitor and address illegal activity in the park.

DISCUSSION

Select police departments throughout the United States have substantially reduced crime and provided a safe environment through the use of surveillance cameras. A recent program occurred in the City of Los Angeles. MacArthur Park, located in Rampart Division suffered from neglect and out of control violent crime. In January 2004, the police department entered a collaborative with local businesses and installed surveillance cameras in an attempt to control and eventually eliminate crime. After installing the

cameras, homicides were reduced from 160 per year to 27. Violent crime was reduced by 63%. The cameras assisted officers in the arrest and prosecution of 400 subjects. All subjects plead guilty after viewing the video evidence.

Price Charities, with the assistance of the San Diego Police Foundation, provided \$50,000 to purchase and install two wireless video surveillance cameras and associated equipment. San Diego City Council Policy 100-02 authorizes this donation of equipment. It is a restricted donation of personal property for the specific purpose of security in the Urban Village City Park. Receipt of this donation does not require approval of the City Council because the donation does not (1) create an immediate or initial City expenditure of \$5,000 or more which has not been included in the approved City budget; (2) create an annual City maintenance obligation of \$5,000 or more which has not been included in the approved City budget; or (3) materially affects or changes any aspect of City operations. A maintenance program is included in the purchase of the two cameras and the associated system. The maintenance program does not include damage caused by vandalism. The donation also does not include the minor electrical costs, (approximately \$10.00 per month) to operate the cameras. The San Diego Police Department will assume responsibility for costs associated with vandalism while the Park and Recreation Department will pay the monthly electric bill.

The cameras are to be installed on two light poles within the park. The cameras will be controlled and monitored by police personnel at the Mid-City Police Station. Officers will be able to control the cameras with the assistance of a computer. Other features include the ability to cover a 340-degree area, zoom and zero perceptible latency (real-time information). The monitoring area will also include a video recorder and storage. Images with evidentiary value will be stored per procedures established by both the City and District Attorney Offices. All other images will be removed from the system.

Policies and Procedures are in place to address community concerns regarding privacy issues. To prevent any misuse of the cameras, all Officers using the system will attend a training class that will discuss privacy and security issues. The program will be monitored by a Police Supervisor and a City Attorney assigned to Mid-City Division. To maintain the trust of the community, Mid-City Division will conduct a public awareness campaign outlining the use of the cameras. The area in the park will be posted with signs announcing the presence of the cameras.

It is the intention of the San Diego Police Department to evaluate the effectiveness of the cameras to determine further uses throughout the city of San Diego. Areas of interest include El Cajon Boulevard, University Avenue, the Downtown Gaslamp area and Pacific Beach. The success of surveillance cameras to deter crime has been proven in cities across the country. They provide additional eyes in areas hardest hit by crime. In

addition, in the event of a crime, the cameras provide the needed evidence to successfully prosecute those involved in the illegal behavior.

Respectfully submitted,

William Lansdowne
Chief of Police

Jill Olen, Deputy Chief- Public Safety

*Note: The attachment is not available in electronic format. A copy is available for review in the Office of the City Clerk.

Attachment: Wireless Video Surveillance Project