



Kriss Worthington

Councilmember, City of Berkeley, District 7

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CONSENT CALENDAR

December 18, 2007

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington

Subject: Budget Referral: Violence Prevention and Response Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

Refer the Violence Prevention and Response Plan to the mid-year budget process.

BACKGROUND:

Recently there has been an increase violent crime throughout the city, including in the south campus neighborhoods. This has created fear and concern regarding the overall level of safety and has led to suggestions that the city take more proactive action to promote violence prevention.

Some individuals who have read the recent City Annual Report interpreted the reference to a November 2008 ballot measure for public safety as an indication that the City would wait until then to deal with these problems. Given the uncertainty of taxpayer support for new measures and the long time before a new measure would translate into actual implementation, it is important that the City send a loud and clear message that it will seek solutions expeditiously.

It is important that the Council refer the Violence Prevention and Response Plan to the mid-year budget process. Such a plan would look at restructuring resources and considering what surrounding jurisdictions are attempting or are currently doing, including the possibility of cooperation with or copying of other successful efforts.

It would also include:

- Consideration of micro-grants for low-income neighborhoods to provide newsletters and help initiate organization of neighborhood watch groups.
- Consideration of moving towards a community involved policing focus, including having police officers walking the beats in commercial districts and communicating directly with businesses and residents.

- Evaluation of a dedicated, direct, rapid response contact number for direct communication with the beat officer.
- Conduct a well-advertised community meeting, to invite all members of the community to share their experiences and to offer their suggestions.
- Consideration of what targeted increase in youth programs or job programs could most help prevent the city's prevention efforts.
- The possibility of an increase of 2 additional police officers to be funded within 6 months. An additional 2 officers to be funded within one year if the City does not have in place community health and safety teams or a welcoming presence working on the street.

Given the community's concerns about violence, as well as the increasing demands on existing resources to promote violence prevention and response efforts, it is important that this item be considered as part of the mid-year budget process.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Unknown.

CONTACT PERSON:

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