



Office of the City Manager

SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA MATERIAL for Supplemental Packet 1

Meeting Date: October 13, 2020

Item Number: 19

Item Description: 2019 Crime Report and Five Year Use of Force Report

The attached supplemental material from Councilmember Hahn was originally published in the Supplemental Communications Packet 2 for the September 22, 2020 regular City Council meeting. This material was unintentionally omitted from the October 13, 2020 agenda packet, and is being re-printed for Council's consideration and inclusion in the record.



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ACTION CALENDAR
September 22, 2020

SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA MATERIAL for Supplemental Packet 2

Meeting Date: September 22, 2020
Item Number: 15
Item Description: 2019 Crime Report and Five Year Use of Force Report
Submitted by: Vice Mayor Sophie Hahn

Requests additional data and analysis to be added to future reports.



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ACTION CALENDAR
September 22, 2020

To: Honorable Members of the City Council
From: Vice Mayor Sophie Hahn (Author)
Subject: 2019 Crime Report and Five Year Use of Force Report

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the 2019 Crime Report and Five Year Use of Force Report and request that future iterations include the following:

- Provide peak and other historical crime rate data so that the most recent data is contextualized more broadly
- Provide a reference point of other jurisdictions that are similar (e.g., Oakland, San Francisco, San Leandro), for comparison
- Refer to data as “reported crimes” and not “crimes” since they can be strongly influenced by changes in reporting and recording practices
- Include basic information about the approximately 30 incidents per year where force is used, including the type of incident and level of force, and the race, gender, and age of the person against whom force was used.

BACKGROUND

Violent and property crime rates have fluctuated in recent years, but they remain low by historical measures. Nationally, violent crime has fallen sharply since the 1970s, and property crime has declined significantly over the long term.¹ In California, both violent and property crime rates remain historically low.² The 2019 Crime Report helpfully provides five-year trends for violent and property crimes in Berkeley. However, the picture is not complete without additional context. For future reports, the City Manager is requested to provide peak and other historical crime rate and trend data so that the most recent data is contextualized more broadly. At a minimum, a chart with 30 year crime rate trends should be included, in addition to information about peak and trough years if they fall beyond the 30 year window.

In addition, geographic context is required to help us understand crime in Berkeley compared to similarly situated jurisdictions. Crime rates can vary dramatically by region and by category.³ Without information on crime in neighboring jurisdictions and comparable cities in California, It’s difficult to interpret local crime rates and to formulate effective solutions. For future reports, the City Manager is requested to provide a reference point of a few other jurisdictions that are simi-

¹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/10/17/facts-about-crime-in-the-u-s/>

² <https://www.ppic.org/publication/crime-trends-in-california/>

³ <https://www.ppic.org/publication/crime-trends-in-california/>

lar, for comparison. Those jurisdictions should be urban and diverse both economically and racially to provide the best context; Oakland, San Leandro, Hayward, Richmond, and San Francisco are possible comparables.

Changes in reporting of crimes occur if people in the community under-report to the police - and some crime statistics can go up when the culture changes about reporting. For example, women (and other victims) for a long time did not report domestic violence because they were poorly received by the police. When police changed their practices for handling domestic violence cases, reports increased. Of course, the incidence likely didn't change - rising statistics more likely represented a rise in reporting of these crimes. The City's reports and data presented should be referred to as "reported crimes" and not "crimes" since the numbers can be strongly influenced by changes in reporting and recording practices.

According to the Report, Berkeley Police officers responded to an average of 76,896 calls for service per year over the five year period of 2015-2019. During the same period, officers made an average of 3,017 arrests per year, and issued thousands of citations. Thankfully, officers were able to accomplish their work without the use of force in more than 99% of all incidents. To better understand the relatively few incidents that required the use of force, the City Manager is requested to include in these reports basic information regarding the incidents that involved use of force (approximately 30 per year) and the breakdown by a variety of categories, including the type of incident and level of force, and the race, gender, and age of the person against whom force was used.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff time.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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