TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT: POLICE

DATE: JANUARY 7, 2008 CMR:102:08

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON POLICE COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC DATA FROM THE THIRD AND FOURTH QUARTERS OF FISCAL YEAR 2006-07

This is an informational report. No Council action is required.

BACKGROUND

Since July 1, 2000, the Police Department has been proactively collecting demographic data on all enforcement contacts. On September 10, 2001, the Police Department submitted its first quarterly report on this data to Council (CMR:350:01). Since then, 14 additional informational reports have been submitted. Since 2000, the Department has continued to evolve and refine the collection and reporting of this information, changes include the types of information captured, when demographic information is captured, the manner with which the data is recorded and how it evaluates and reports this information. The overarching goal is to provide more meaningful information to the City Council and public. To ensure this goal is met, during this past year the Department has collaborated with the City Auditor to review the data that is being presented in this report. This past quarter, the Department also had a group of Stanford University students, who are majoring in Public Policy, review and analyze previous demographic reports.

The collection of demographic data is just one part of a comprehensive approach that the City of Palo Alto Police Department has undertaken to enhance police-community relations and ensure policing activities are conducted without racial bias.

DISCUSSION

Update on Department’s Activities Improving Community Relations

Community Access Line - Since implementing the Community Access Line in 2004, the Department has had little activity. Since 2004, only 12 calls have been received. During the past year, there were no phone calls received on this telephone line. The line continues to be accessible, is marketed on the Department’s website and is translated into Spanish. Staff continues to inform the community of the
existence of this telephone line and encourages members of the public to share concerns and commendations regarding interactions with the Palo Alto Police Department.

Community Outreach

Parent Project – Police officers kicked off the first Parent Project class on September 20, 2007. This nationally certified program provides guidance and assistance for parents of strong-willed or out of control adolescents. During the 13 week course, parents are provided parenting strategies that correct destructive behaviors in children. The next class is scheduled for February 2008 and there is a waiting list for parents who wish to participate. Palo Alto instructors have also made presentations at Gunn High School, and there are presentations pending with Palo Alto High School and the Mountain View/Los Altos Challenge Team, which consists of 60 school administrators, teachers, police officials and community group leaders.

School Resource Officers (SROs) – During the third and fourth quarters, SROs initiated an “Amber Alert” contest that included providing Amber Alert education at the elementary schools along with an accompanying poster contest that the winning school had posted at City Hall. In addition, two Code Red Training Drills were conducted at Terman, Jordan and JLS Middle Schools. Code Red drills were developed by law enforcement following the Columbine School shooting and simulates an out-of-control incident that is in progress. This could include a fight, an intruder present, or a weapon in the school that has not been located. Officers also participated in the Special Olympics Tip a Cop and Torch Run.

Community Meetings and Presentations – During the third quarter, officers handled 13 requests from public schools, nursery schools, a hotel, and Community Association for Rehabilitation. Presentations included information about police officers as community helpers, the dangers of strangers, policing as a career, the Neighborhood Watch Program and participation in “Read Across America.” During the fourth quarter, there were 19 similar presentations.

Citizens Police Academy - The last session of the Citizens Police Academy ran March 7 – April 25, 2007 and was attended by 20 members of the community.

Palo Alto Police Student Police Academy – In May 2007, the Police Department launched a new Palo Alto Student Police Academy. The purpose of the Academy is to acquaint high-school age citizens with the roles and objectives of police in the community and to provide an opportunity for students to gain knowledge regarding the law enforcement profession. In doing so, the Palo Alto Police Department believes that these students will become life long, active allies in the effort to enhance the safety and quality of their neighborhoods. The program was initiated by several officers who regularly interacted with Palo Alto teens and believed that a program of this type would help build a partnership between the police and youth of the community. The 13-week program exposed Academy students to an overview of critical elements of personal and community safety. Students learn self-defense techniques, how traffic investigations are conducted, and the importance of Neighborhood Watch and disaster planning. Once the students complete the Academy and turn 18, they are eligible
to volunteer with the Palo Alto Police Department, thereby continuing their partnership with the Police Department and their sense of service to the community in which they reside. The Academy has received funding and support from the public. Palo Alto Police officers who were committed to the Academy concept donated money and time towards getting this program started. Upon learning of plans for a Student Academy, the family of Palo Alto Police Officer Gene Clifton who died in 1971 in the line of duty donated additional funds to cover the cost of uniforms for the students. Local schools and community members excited about what the youth could do to help their community have also assisted with getting the program started.

Future plans for students participating in this program include working as decoys to assist police with locating establishments that furnish alcohol to minors and assisting officers with traffic and crowd control at major community events and Stanford University games.

**Human Relations Commission**

The Police Department continues to meet with the Human Relations Commission (HRC) on a variety of law enforcement issues, including demographic data collection. At the November HRC meeting, the concept of reducing the collection and reporting of demographic data was agendized by an HRC member. Following the discussion, it was determined that there would be no change at this time in the amount of information that is gathered from officers during self-initiated contacts. However, in an effort to streamline the amount of information that is reported, the HRC has asked the Police Department to compile a ‘statistically valid sampling of data’ from the FY2006-07 timeframe and report back on what these reports might show and whether or not there is any change as a result of this new format.

As a follow-up to the meeting, Police staff met with the City Auditor to discuss sampling options and criteria. It was the Auditor’s suggestion that, based on the type and amount of sampling data, it would actually be more complex and difficult to come up with valid sampling. Instead, the Auditor recommended the Department post the figures on its website quarterly, and then provide a brief annual narrative to the HRC and Council outlining some of the compelling and notable data elements. This alternative will be presented back to the HRC at its January 2008 meeting, along with a presentation on the data from this report. Any recommended change in demographic data reporting would be brought back to the full Council for its consideration prior to any permanent change being implemented.

**Demographic Data**

Demographic information is captured on all self-initiated enforcement vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle stops. The Department’s Police Records Management System (RMS) captures the following information:

- race
- age
An officer must make a reasonable determination of the individual’s race during the contact in lieu of asking the person. The following race categories being used for data collection purposes are consistent with those used by other law enforcement agencies.

- White
- African American / Black
- Hispanic
- Asian (Includes other Asian, Chinese, Cambodian, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, and Vietnamese)
- Other (Includes Guamanian, American Indian, Mid-Eastern, Pacific Islander, Samoan, Hawaiian and Unknown)

A total of 4,068-initiated contacts related to vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle stops were made by officers during the third quarter. During the fourth quarter, officers made 3,856 self-initiated contacts. Of the contacts in both quarters, the Department is reporting demographic information for approximately 95 percent in the third quarter and 88 percent of the contacts in the fourth quarter. Of note, there was a reduction in the percentage of contacts reported on by officers as a result of a software problem that compromised the data during the fourth quarter. Rather than have officers try to estimate the information, the Department opted to report a lower percentage rate during the quarter.

Attachment A summarizes the demographic data tables. In addition, the same information is shown by time of day and provided in Attachment B.

RACE – Table 1 provides the summary by race for each of the contacts made during the third and fourth quarter.

GENDER – Of the 4,068 contacts made during the third quarter, 31 percent (1,286 contacts) were female and 68 percent (2,774 contacts) were male. There were eight contacts during the third quarter where the gender was not specified. During the fourth quarter, of the 3,856 contacts 29 percent (1,111 contacts) were female and 71 percent (2,740 contacts) were male. There were five contacts during the fourth quarter where the gender was not specified.
AGE – Of the 4,068 contacts during the third quarter, a little over half of the contacts (51 percent) were with individuals between the ages of 21 and 40. The fourth quarter had a similar percentage of ages 21 to 40 year old individuals (50 percent) of the 3,856 contacts made (Table 2).

CONTACTS DURING NIGHTTIME AND DAYTIME HOURS – Officers typically do not know the race, gender, etc., of drivers when they stop an individual for a vehicle code or other violations. This is especially at night. To show the demographic information from an alternative perspective, during the third and fourth quarters, the Department broke down several categories of demographic information by time of day (Table 3).

During the third quarter, of the total number of contacts made by officers (4,068 contacts), 50 percent (2,059 contacts) were made during nighttime hours (between 5:01 PM and 6:59 AM) and 49 percent (2,009 contacts) were made during the daytime. For the fourth quarter, nighttime contacts were slightly lower with 47 percent (1,811 contacts) during nighttime hours compared to 53 percent (2,045 contacts) which were made during the daytime.

Table 4 provides summary percentages of each race taken from the 2000 census data for the four Bay Area counties compared to percentage of enforcement contacts during the third quarter. It is important to recognize that the census data is now over six years old and many changes have occurred in the interim. This table represents updated calculations from prior Council reports (CMR 395:06). These formulas utilize the same methodology used by the City Auditor in the Service Efforts and Accomplishments (SEA) Report. As highlighted in the following sections of the report, there are a number of factors that contribute to why an officer makes contact with an individual.

RESIDENCE OF INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED – Palo Alto serves as a destination point for many individuals traveling into/through the City to work, study (Stanford University) and for leisure activities. This has been verified by the information provided in Table 5. Any comparison to demographic census data should be done with the information from at least the four adjacent counties. However, even that comparison does not represent a valid benchmark.

To help account for the diversity in its contacts, the Department recorded the city of residence of the people arrested or cited in Palo Alto as part of its demographic collection process. Table 5 provides a summary of those persons contacted who reside in Palo Alto, as well as other adjacent communities within Santa Clara County (Mountain View, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills and Stanford) and San Mateo County (East Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Redwood City). Because the Department does not keep track of contacts by name of individuals, it is impossible to determine whether some individuals were contacted on more than one occasion during the quarter.

REASON FOR CONTACTS – In addition to pre-existing information, other reasons officers make contact with subjects include Penal Code violations, equipment or other non-hazardous violations, moving violations or other traffic related hazards, and other Municipal Code violations. All violations were observed by the officers. It is not surprising that well more than half the contacts (55 percent) are related to moving violations or other traffic-related hazards since traffic has been one of the Council’s
priorities for several years. Table 6 includes a breakdown by the reason for the contact by race and the associated percentages. In the first table showing percentages, the numbers reflect those percentages by the reason for contact with officers.

The second chart in Table 6 shows the percentage breakdown for each racial group for both the third and fourth quarters. For the fourth quarter, moving hazards represented the largest number of reason for contacts by police officers (56 percent).

Table 6 also shows that, pre-existing knowledge was the reason for six percent of all contacts during the third quarter and four percent of all contacts in the fourth quarter. Of those, in the third quarter, 17 percent were African-American and 42 percent White, and during the fourth quarter, 27 percent were African-American and 35 percent White. Pre-existing information includes suspect description from crime reports, as well as other all-points bulletins on subjects being sought by other law enforcement agencies or other crime trend information received from law enforcement or court agencies.

**SUSPECT DESCRIPTION** – Officers make contact to match a suspect description in prior or recently reported crimes. Information on suspects is captured in the Department’s Records Management System (RMS). During the third quarter, citizens reported 259 suspects. Of those, 233 included descriptions of the perceived race of the individual. During the fourth quarter, citizens reported 245 suspects. Of those, 168 included descriptions of the perceived race of the individual. Table 8 outlines the comparison of description for suspects by race obtained during both the third and fourth quarter offense reports. In the third quarter, out of the 233 incidents with suspect description including race, the largest majority was 42 percent reported as being White. In the fourth quarter, of the 168 reported suspects with perceived race, 29 percent were Hispanic. An important caveat is these numbers may reflect the same suspect for multiple offenses. However, without the actual identity of suspects, it is impossible to determine. The Department continues to attempt to gather additional suspect description data from other area law enforcement agencies as contacts occur as a result of pre-existing information from local area bulletins or crime reports from outside agencies; however, there were not enough other departments with consistent, reliable data to provide a meaningful comparison.

It is important to note that citizens, not police officers, typically generate a suspect description. The racial distribution of suspects presented in this report is compiled from these citizen-provided descriptions in police reports.

**LOCATION OF CONTACT** – Since the fourth quarter of 2005-06, the City has been using its Geographical Information System (GIS) to break down contacts in four quadrants (Beat 1 through Beat 4). The boundaries for each of the four beat areas are provided on a map in Table 9. Of the 4,068 contacts for the third quarter, the Department was able to plot 3,806 of the contacts on a map. The remaining 262 contacts could not be plotted because they were geographically outside the city limits or the location had some other anomaly (e.g., an incomplete or unrecognizable address) that made it impossible to map. During the fourth quarter, the Department was able to plot 3,649 of the contacts on a map by beat.
Beat 2 continues to show the largest numbers of contacts. This is consistent with the overall higher police activity levels in the Downtown and Beat 2 area. A map for each Beat (1 through 4) broken down by race is provided in Attachment C.

**Disposition of the Contact** – Table 10 provides the disposition for each contact where demographic information was captured during the third and fourth quarters. Citations issued continue to represent the highest percentage of final action taken by officers. Of the 4,068 contacts during the third quarter, 1,828 stops (45 percent) resulted in citations being issued by police officers. Arrests are the roughly the same when compared to the last quarter, five percent in the second quarter FY 06-07 to four percent during the third quarter and five percent in the fourth quarter.

Table 10 also shows that a majority of contacts (67 percent) resulted in citations being issued during the daytime hours (1,341 citations) during the third quarter. The disposition table goes on to show that, of the citations issued during the third quarter, White drivers represented the highest percentage of citations issued (47 percent) and, of White individuals contacted by officers, 33 percent received a citation.

Table 11 details the changes in disposition of contacts and the corresponding percentages between the third and fourth quarters.

**Searches**

Of the 4,068 contacts during the third quarter, approximately eight percent resulted in a search being conducted (314 searches). For the fourth quarter, the number remained roughly the same at seven percent. Table 12 provides a summary of search information for the third and fourth quarters, and corresponding percentages.

Table 12 shows that, of the 314 searches that were conducted in the third quarter, 48 percent were required by Department policy as a result of either an officer making an arrest (30 percent) or vehicle impound inventory (18 percent). Probation/parole situations resulted in 23 percent of all searches.
SEARCHES RELATED TO PROBATION/PAROLE – During the third quarter, 73 searches (23 percent) were the result of conditions of parole/probation for the individuals contacted. In the fourth quarter, 92 individuals (32 percent) were subjects searched as a result of conditions of their probation or parole.

CONSENT AND PROBABLE CAUSE SEARCHES – Probable cause searches are the result of reasonable suspicion, officer safety, or plain view of possible contraband. These searches differ from the consent searches because the officers had legal justification to conduct the search even without the consent of the subject. Tables 13 and 14 show the results of searches conducted with consent or for probable cause during the third and fourth quarters. Beginning with the last quarter, staff began providing summary tables that denote the nature of the contact.

RESOURCE IMPACT

Although the process has been streamlined, demographic data collection continues to be labor intensive. Approximately 100 hours of administrative staff time at an approximate cost of $5,000 is spent reconciling the data and preparing analysis of the statistical information, and reviewing the demographic data cards, citations and arrest reports. Staff continues to hope the workload will decrease in the future as processes are automated, benchmark criteria are standardized and workload reallocations are considered.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Demographic Data Tables
Attachment B – Demographic Data Tables by Time of Day
Attachment C – Demographic Data on Beat Maps

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