



Legislation Text

File #: 24-262, **Version:** 1

Adopt a Resolution Approving and Authorizing the City Manager to Negotiate and Execute a Non-Professional-Services Agreement With Block by Block California in an Amount Not-to-Exceed \$400,000 for the Greenhouse Marketplace Area Safety Ambassador Pilot Program

COUNCIL PRIORITY

- Housing and Homelessness
- Public Safety

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

In May 2023, staff presented the Housing and Homelessness Work Plan to the City Council. Within this Work Plan are three priority areas: 1) Homeless Navigation Center, 2) Increasing Housing Supply, and 3) Addressing and Preventing Homelessness. One of the projects to support the Addressing and Preventing Homelessness priority area is launching a non-sworn Safety Ambassador program.

Staff recommends the Council approve and authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute an agreement with Block by Block California in an amount not-to-exceed \$400,000 for the Greenhouse Marketplace Area Safety Ambassador Pilot Program.

BACKGROUND

In May 2023, staff presented the Housing and Homelessness Work Plan to the City Council. Within this work plan are three priority areas: 1) Homeless Navigation Center, 2) Increasing Housing Supply, and 3) Addressing and Preventing Homelessness. One of the projects to support the Addressing and Preventing Homelessness priority area is launching a non-sworn Safety Ambassador program.

Block by Block California is a leading provider of security, cleaning, and customer service personnel that has successfully operated a Safety Ambassador program in Downtown San Leandro since 2020. Block by Block California's Safety Ambassadors are trained in addressing non-emergency situations using de-escalation strategies, will report suspicious behavior or vehicles, and will observe and report criminal activities to the San Leandro Police Department (SLPD).

The goals of the program are to provide an additional resource in the Greenhouse Marketplace area, offer a welcoming presence that deters unwanted behavior, assist merchants and residents, and provide a non-police response to "quality of life" issues. Safety Ambassadors will help deter unwanted behavior and activity while interacting with unsheltered people, merchants, residents, and visitors. In addition, they will address unwanted activities such as disruptive behavior, loitering, smoking, and drinking in public spaces as well as conduct wellness checks on unsheltered neighbors and make referrals when appropriate. They will engage with merchants to build positive relationships and improve quality of life in the shopping center and be a resource to residents, visitors, and unsheltered people.

The initiation of a Safety Ambassador Program at the Greenhouse Marketplace area is underscored by outreach conducted by City staff, who engaged directly with the property owner to understand their specific safety concerns and needs. This approach ensures that the program's design is responsive to the unique challenges and expectations of the community it aims to serve. Moreover, the City has had a positive experience with a similar Safety Ambassador Program in the Downtown area, which has been successfully managed by Block by Block California. Staff recommends that the Downtown model should be replicated with some program adjustments to meet the needs of this unique area of the City.

Analysis

City staff recognized an opportunity to address a critical community need by implementing a proven and effective program, thus enhancing safety and security in another key area of the City.

The decision to choose Block by Block California stems from their proven track record in successfully managing similar safety ambassador programs in other areas of the City, most notably the Downtown area. Their expertise in delivering tangible safety improvements and experience in San Leandro have positioned them to be uniquely qualified for expanding this initiative.

The proposed contract is designed to cover all necessary services to effectively implement and monitor the program, ensuring that it meets the specific needs and safety concerns identified during the outreach with local merchants and the property owner.

- The program will include 140 hours per week of Safety Ambassador patrols on foot and bicycle.
- Safety Ambassador deployment will consist of one 10-hour shift per day, seven days per week, from 12:20 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.
- The program will include a full-time Operations Manager on site Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 12:20 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. The Operations Manager will be an active part of the daily patrols and will also be responsible for administrative duties. There will be days when a Safety Ambassador may be on their own for 1-2 hours during the daytime/early hours of the shift, possibly longer depending on the situation.
- Staffing for the program will include 2.5 FTE Safety Ambassadors and 1 FTE Operations Manager (total of 3.5 FTEs).

The cost of the proposed scope is approximately \$320,000. However, as a pilot program, the scope may need to be adjusted after an initial service period if additional staff or hours are needed to adequately service and create an impact on the area. As such, City staff recommends that \$400,000 should be approved with the ability to amend the scope over time as needed.

Other areas of the City were also considered for the Safety Ambassador Program; however, the Greenhouse Marketplace area was chosen due to a higher need for safety services and a higher frequency of incidents. Moreover, the services provided by Block by Block California are particularly well-suited to address the issues most prevalent in this area, making it the optimal location for implementing the pilot program and achieving the most effective outcomes.

Previous Actions

City Council adopted Resolution No. 2024-025 on March 18, 2024, approving a Budget Amendment

for the one-time appropriation of unspent Fiscal 2022-2023 General Fund monies for a variety of programs, including funding for the Safety Ambassador Expansion program.

Committee Review and Actions

On February 28, 2024, the proposed Budget Adjustment was presented to the City Council Finance Committee where the Committee provided approval of Staff’s recommendation to allocate unspent General Fund monies for a variety of programs, including a Safety Ambassador Program.

Applicable General Plan Policies

- Action CSF-1.2.B: Community Safety Programs Implement community-oriented programs such as National Night Out, surveillance camera registration, the multi-family apartment safety program, the Safety Summit, the Citizen Police Academy, the Chief’s Advisory Board, and social media apps to support a safer community.
- Policy ED-5.1 Key Amenities. Support amenities that attract businesses and employees to the city, including a more vibrant downtown, walkable neighborhoods, better dining and entertainment options, quality education and public safety, and more diverse housing choices.
- Policy ED-5.4 Public Safety. Continue efforts to reduce crime, maintain neighborhood safety, and promptly address blight and nuisances in the city.

Summary of Public Outreach Efforts

City staff has received input and coordinated with the shopping center property owner as well as the San Leandro Improvement Association and they are supportive of this program.

Legal Analysis

The City Attorney has reviewed the documents and agreements and approved them as to form.

Financial Impacts

Sufficient funds are included in the amended Fiscal Year 2024 budget for Human Services Department budget.

010-63-014-5120:	\$150,000
<u>190-63-816:</u>	<u>\$250,000</u>
Total	\$400,000

This item will not impact overall fund balance as the funds have already been allocated to Human Services. Funds allocated to this agreement will extend and be carried through Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Resolution Approving and Authorizing the City Manager to Negotiate and Execute a Non-Professional Services Agreement With Block by Block California In An Amount Not To Exceed \$400,000 For The Greenhouse Marketplace Area Safety Ambassador Pilot Program

Attachment B: Block by Block California Scope of Work

Attachment C: Greenhouse Marketplace Area Safety Ambassador Program Goals and Metrics

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