

Senior Escort Service (Approved June 7, 1996)

Summary

The original Report on the San Francisco Police Department's Senior Escort Program (SEP) was made by the 1993-1994 Grand Jury. It recommended that this program be contracted out to the California Minority Aging Coalition (CMAC).

Background

The SEP is a civilian-staffed crime prevention program, operating under the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD), aimed at stopping victimization of the elderly. The methods used include, but are not limited to, escorting walking seniors (over 60 years old), patrolling high crime neighborhoods, escorting by taxi and bus to medical and other appointments, and group escorting of seniors via a van fleet. In addition, the program provides crime prevention information and education.

The current ethnic diversity of the clients is 70% Asian-American, 15% African-American, 10% Caucasian-American, and 5% Latin-American. 95% are female and 5% are male.

In 1994, SEP's annual budget was \$1,800,000.

The 1993-1994 Civil Grand Jury made two recommendations:

- The Board of Supervisors should substitute a more cost-effective program for the Senior Escort Program (SEP). Other non-governmental agencies, including the California Minority Aging Coalition (CMAC), should be allowed to bid on providing escort and transportation services to the senior citizens throughout the City and County of San Francisco.
- Such crime prevention work as is now performed by SEP should be transferred to the existing unit of the Police Department's SAFE program.

Findings - by the 1995-1996 Civil Grand Jury

The proposal submitted by the CMAC would have reduced the budget by \$910,000, increased the number of available vans from 6 to 11, increased service locations from 4 to 7, increased the units of service by 360%. This would have reduced the cost per unit of service from \$38.37 to \$5.28, increased the percent of the City services from 33% to 100%, and have made lift vans available.

CMAC would have accomplished this by utilizing an extensive volunteer base and through greater efficiencies in operation. The Police Department agreed that the program would best function under "an affiliation with an existing public service or social service agency (where) SEP would be better able to serve the growing senior population, and to expand and improve the range of SEP services."

After extensive lobbying by the union representing the workers at SEP, and bus loads of senior citizens who appeared at the hearings, the Board of Supervisors rejected the CMAC proposal. SEP continues to operate under the supervision of the SFPD.

Since 1994 the SEP has revamped their operation, so that they are now closer in costs to the CMAC model (see Appendix A). However, their statistics still do not match the original CMAC proposal, because CMAC uses mostly volunteers.

APPENDIX A

