

## **SAFE STREETS FUNDING REMAINING IN CONTRACTED SERVICES**

### **PURPOSE**

For more than 20 years, the Topeka Police Department has successfully partnered with Safe Streets to reduce crime and empower Topeka residents to mobilize together to take a stance against crime. It is the recommendation of the Topeka Police Department to the City Council's Economic Community Development Committee that the services Safe Streets provides are essential and should remain in the contracted services funding.

### **DISCUSSION**

Safe Streets services are essential to the safety/development of the community as well as to the success of law enforcement. The activities of this group are unique in that they help to connect the community and support the efforts and mission of law enforcement.

#### **Neighborhood Activities -**

- Safe Streets is a recognized community resource that has an established rapport with the community. It provides services to more than 100 neighborhood groups as well as to individuals seeking assistance.
  - Services include attending/leading meetings (depending upon the group), arranging for presenters and community officers to attend, developing flyers for meetings, providing crime updates (if law enforcement are not present), creating and maintaining phone trees and membership listings, mediation, assisting with identification of neighborhood problems, needs and working to find solutions. Bilingual services are offered.
- Additionally, an extension of neighborhood watch is the annual National Night Out event. While it is a one-day event, it engages city/county organizations and requires coordination and planning for more than 6 months. We are currently ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in the nation for our NNO event.
- Safe Streets performs target outreach to particular groups within the community – including loss prevention (to assist with shoplifting and financial crimes), landlords and realtors. They also customize initiatives, presentations and trainings depending upon needs of the community.
- Within the last year, Safe Streets has developed programming to reach the Latino population of our community with crime prevention and neighborhood mobilization information. This is a hard demographic for law enforcement to reach due to cultural barriers.

All of these are services that, if not performed by Safe Streets, would require additional financial and personnel resources of the Topeka Police Department and cause a decline in community engagement.

## **Resource Generator**

- Through the Safe Streets Coalition, other initiatives have emerged, including an Underage Drinking Task Force (now known as Substance Abuse Task Force) which has been responsible for bringing more than \$2 million in federal money into the community over the last 10 years.
- These funds continue to support many activities in the community, including school programs and education campaigns. They also assist the Topeka Police Department's underage drinking enforcement and social hosting efforts. The efforts have worked – underage drinking as measured by the Communities That Care data has reduced from 30% of youth using in 2005 to 19% in 2015.

## **SUMMARY**

Safe Streets is an invaluable partner to the Topeka Police Department. It helps keep our community engaged and safe. It is critical to the success of our organization that they maintain as a contracted service.