



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: SEPTEMBER 5, 2023

FROM: RIVERSIDE POLICE DEPARTMENT WARDS: ALL
COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: DISCONTINUE THE CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM AND PURSUE AMENDMENTS TO REMOVE REFERENCES FROM TITLES 1 AND 19 OF THE RIVERSIDE MUNICIPAL CODE; CONTINUE TO SUPPORT MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING OPERATORS, AND TENANTS THROUGH THE NEIGHBORHOOD POLICING CENTERS MODEL, NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM, AND GENERAL SAFETY/EDUCATION PRESENTATIONS

ISSUES:

Approve discontinuation of the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program and continuing to support multi-family housing operations and tenants through the Neighborhood Policing Centers Model, Neighborhood Watch Program, and general safety/education presentations. Direct staff to pursue necessary amendments to remove references to the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program from Title 1 (General Provisions) and 19 (Zoning) of the Riverside Municipal Code.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Approve discontinuation of the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program and continue to support multi-family housing operations and tenants through the Neighborhood Policing Centers Model, Neighborhood Watch Program, and general safety/education presentations; and
2. Direct Staff to pursue the necessary amendments to remove references to the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program from Titles 1 (General Provisions) and 19 (Zoning) of the Riverside Municipal Code.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Housing and Homelessness Committee met on February 27, 2023, with Chair Edwards, Vice Chair Plascencia, and Member Cervantes present, to consider the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program Update and proposed Multi-Family Watch program. Following discussion, the Committee unanimously voted to recommend discontinuation of the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program by the Riverside Police Department.

BACKGROUND:

The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program (Program) is a crime prevention program designed to reduce crime, drugs, and gangs on apartment properties. The Program was first developed at the Mesa, Arizona Police Department in 1992. The International Crime Free Multi-Housing program has spread to nearly 2,000 cities in 48 U.S. States, 5 Canadian Provinces, England, Nigeria, and Puerto Rico.

The program is sponsored by the International Crime Free Association (Association). The Association sets the standards for Crime Free Multi-Housing and provides training, certification, and other assistance to local agencies in the administration of their programs.

In the City of Riverside, there are approximately 120 properties involved in the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program (Attachment 1). The Program is required for any multi-family housing project. Each year, the Riverside Police Department holds the training at the Magnolia Police Station. Property Managers are required to attend Program training annually to remain certified. Property inspections are also conducted annually by the Crime Free Multi-Housing Coordinator.

The Program includes three phases that are completed under the supervision of the local police department. The property becomes certified upon successful completion of all three phases of the Program. Property managers can individually certify after completing training in each phase. A summary of the three Phases includes:

- Phase 1 – Management Training
- Phase 2 – Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Survey
- Phase 3 – Community Awareness Training

Benefits of the Program generally include keeping crime out of rental properties and providing tenants with a safe living environment. In Riverside, the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program benefits have included a stable, satisfied tenant base, lower maintenance and repair costs, and increased safety for tenants, landlords, managers, and the surrounding community.

There are several references to the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program in the Riverside Municipal Code (RMC) in both Title 1 (General Provisions) and Title 19 (Zoning).

DISCUSSION:

The Riverside Police Department assigned a new Crime Free Coordinator for the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program. Program Coordinators are required by the Association to receive 24-hours of intensive training in order to become certified as an instructor in the program. During the training, it was discovered that the City of Riverside Program was not meeting all Association standards. The Association requires background checks on potential tenants and the enforcement of a Crime-Free lease addendum. However, the City Program does not currently monitor this activity and in the event that the City were to face litigation, the Association would not provide assistance.

Additionally, the Riverside Police Department has been involved in conversations with various City departments about the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program and its potentially negative impact on the re-entry into society of formerly incarcerated persons.

Therefore, the Riverside Police Department is proposing that the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program be discontinued, and references be removed from Title 1 (General Provisions) and Title 19 (Zoning) of the RMC.

The Riverside Police Department will continue to support residents and operators of multi-housing units with resources currently provided through the Neighborhood Policing Centers model, Neighborhood Watch program, and general safety/education presentations upon request. This includes providing direct access to their designated Area Commander and assistance from the department's Community Service Officers to facilitate meetings and provide contact information for concerns requiring response from specialized Police Department units (POP officers, PSET, etc.).

Should the City Council direct staff to do so, removing references to the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program from Titles 1 and 19 will require preparation, introduction, and adoption of Ordinances to amend the RMC. Amendments to Title 19 will require review and a recommendation from the City Planning Commission prior to City Council adoption.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This item contributes to **Strategic Priority 2 - Community Well-Being**, and **Goal 2.2** - collaborate with partner agencies to improve household resiliency and reduce the incidence and duration of homelessness.

The item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:


1. **Community Trust** — The Riverside Police Department will continue to build community trust through the Neighborhood Policing Centers Model, Neighborhood Watch Program, and general safety/education presentations.
2. **Equity** — Multi-family housing operations and tenants receive equitable access to the Neighborhood Policing Centers Model, Neighborhood Watch Program, and general safety/education presentations.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** — No additional funding is needed to operate the Neighborhood Policing Centers Model, Neighborhood Watch Program, and general safety/education presentations.
4. **Innovation** — The Riverside Police Department must constantly change and adapt to meet the community's changing needs and prepare for the future. The Department continually develops collaborative partnerships and adaptive processes.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** — Regularly assessing the Riverside Police Department's services, making changes as needed and utilizing valuable partnerships with other agencies allows the Department to meet the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future and ensures the City's capacity to preserves, adapt and grow.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by: Larry Gonzalez, Chief of Police
Certified as to availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Assistant City Manager/Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer
Approved by: Mike Futrell, City Manager
Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Concurs with;



Erin Edwards, Chair
Housing and Homelessness Committee

Attachments:

1. Crime Free Multi-Housing Program Participating Properties
2. Crime Free Multi-Housing Program in the RMC