



Legislation Text

File #: 2020-0178, **Version:** 1

To: County of Sonoma Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Sheriff's Office, District Attorney's Office, Probation Department

Staff Name and Phone Number: Melissa MacDonald, x3922; Renate Amantite, X3150; Deputy Chief Matt Perry, x3192

Vote Requirement: 4/5th

Supervisorial District(s): All Districts

Title:

Sonoma County Auto Theft Task Force Memorandum of Understanding

Recommended Action:

Authorize the Sheriff's Office, District Attorney's Office, and Probation Department to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding for participation in the Sonoma County Auto Theft Task Force through fiscal year 21-22. (4/5th Vote Required)

Executive Summary:

The Sheriff's Office, the District Attorney's Office, and the Probation Department, along with the California Highway Patrol and Santa Rosa Police Department, intend to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding for continued participation in the Sonoma County Auto Theft Task Force (SONCATT). Since 1998, SONCATT has worked to deter, investigate, and prosecute vehicle theft crimes. The proposed MOU will authorize continued participation through June 30, 2022.

Discussion:

In 1991, The California State Legislature passed SB 2139, later codified as California Vehicle Code, section 9250.14: Fee: Vehicle Theft Deterrence, Investigation, and Prosecution. This Vehicle Code section established a process to collect money from vehicle registration fees in order to fund programs which enhance the capacity of local police and prosecutors to deter, investigate, and prosecute vehicle theft crimes. Funding is generated from a two-dollar assessment on vehicle license fees and a four-dollar assessment on commercial vehicle license fees.

In 1998, the Sonoma County District Attorney and the California Highway Patrol (CHP) established a Sonoma County Auto Theft Task Force (SONCATT) as a collaborative multi-agency effort to reduce the incidence of vehicle theft-related crimes in Sonoma County. Funding for the County's share of costs is allocated from the revenues generated by the vehicle license fees authorized by Section 9250.14 of the Vehicle Code, and adopted by the Board of Supervisors Resolution 92-1040 on June 23, 1992. These fees are to be used only for county-wide auto theft investigation and prosecution.

SONCATT is governed by a Task Force Council consisting of representatives from each participating agency. The CHP is the lead agency, with the Sheriff's Office assuming the responsibility for coordinating and managing the Task Force administrative and fiscal functions. Prior to this MOU, the District Attorney's Office has been

responsible for the administrative and fiscal functions. With this new MOU, that role has shifted to the Sheriff's Office.

Since the inception of the Task Force, SONCATT has provided dedicated services in the prevention, investigation, and recovery of stolen vehicles. Despite combined efforts of the Task Force resulting in an overall reduction of auto theft crimes over the last several years, auto theft continues to be a significant issue in Sonoma County. In FY 19-20 so far, the County has seen 649 auto theft cases that include thefts of personal vehicles, company owned vehicles, construction equipment, and implements of husbandry. These thefts are often accompanied by the loss of personal property, company-owned tools and equipment, and have significant financial impacts to the citizens of Sonoma County and the businesses that operate here. Fortunately, due to the aggressive enforcement and prosecution of these crimes, Sonoma County has seen a reduction of auto theft cases by a margin of 11.8% in 2019, as compared to a 7.2% reduction statewide.

SONCATT operates as a 24-hour a day, 7-day a week resource that supports allied law enforcement partners through assisting with follow-up investigations, conducting anti-auto theft operations, providing extensive investigative support, and initiating specialized or complex auto theft investigations.

The SONCATT MOU outlines specific responsibilities of each agency, and provides for the distribution of funds to the Santa Rosa Police Department, the Sonoma County Probation Department, the Sonoma County District Attorney's Office, and the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office. For FY 19-20, the Sheriff's Office will receive \$100,000 for half-time Task Force participation by a Detective and up to \$50,000 for administrative and fiscal support (including accounting, purchasing, and meeting state reporting requirements). The Probation Department will receive \$100,000 for full-time participation by a Probation Officer. The District Attorney's Office will receive \$200,000 for costs incurred in conducting Task Force related prosecution work, and reimbursement for the full cost of a 1.0 FTE Senior Legal Processor solely dedicated to the Task Force. Additionally, each agency is eligible to receive up to \$1,200 per month in overtime reimbursements.

Funds are also allocated to the Santa Rosa Police Department for a half-time Detective (\$100,000) and for a Field Evidence Technician (\$37,500). These funding amounts are unchanged from previous years. The CHP does not receive funding for the Sergeant and two Detectives assigned to SONCATT.

As part of the MOU, the participating agencies delegate authority to the Sheriff's Office to execute contracts for services to be provided to SONCATT. The Task Force Council shall approve any such contracts, by majority vote, prior to execution. The Sheriff's Office, or assigned delegate, shall be responsible for managing the contracts and shall provide an accounting to the Task Force Council every fiscal year.

Total FY19-20 revenues and expenses are projected at \$912,270. The SONCATT special revenue fund, account 11130, has a current fund balance of \$1,451,082.

Prior Board Actions:

On January 7, 2014, the Board of Supervisors adopted a Resolution, authorizing the County to increase the fees collected to two dollars from every standard vehicle registration and four dollars from commercial vehicle registration. This fee increase was authorized by CVC 9250.14 as of July 1, 2014.

Since FY 98-99, the District Attorney's annual Adopted Budget has included funds for agreements with Santa

Rosa and Petaluma Police Departments for staffing the Sonoma County Auto Theft Task Force.

On June 23, 1992, the Board of Supervisors adopted a Resolution approving the implementation of CVC 9250.14, allowing the County to collect a fee from every vehicle registration in order to fund eligible programs that enhance the capacity to investigate and prosecute vehicle theft crimes.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 19-20 Adopted	FY20-21 Projected	FY 21-22 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$912,270	\$1,009,858	\$1,103,476
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$912,270	\$1,009,858	\$1,103,476
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other	\$912,270	\$963,500	\$950,000
Use of Fund Balance		\$46,358	\$153,476
Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$912,270	\$1,009,858	\$1,103,476

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Funding provided by SONCATT offsets a portion of the salary and benefits costs associated with the part-time participation by a Sheriff’s Office detective. When not working on SONCATT efforts, the participating detective will be providing property crimes investigative services for the Sheriff’s Office. The Sheriff’s Office will return to the Board of Supervisors during FY 19-20 Q3 Consolidated Budget Adjustments to make any necessary adjustments to appropriately transfer funds and appropriations from the District Attorney’s Office special fund to a newly created Sheriff’s Office special fund as well as appropriate revenue to the Sheriff’s operating budget.

As a continuation of an established program, the funding provided to the District Attorney’s Office and the Probation Department are already factored into the respective departments’ approved FY 19-20 budgets. FY 20-21 SONCATT funding amounts will be included in the participating agencies’ FY 20-21 budget requests. The current fund balance is sufficient to cover the projected draw downs in FY 20-21 and FY 21-22. In addition to the FY 20-21 proposed budget and the anticipated FY 21-22 budget, SONCATT is developing a plan to spend the remainder of the fund balance on hardware and software products that will further auto theft investigations in Sonoma County. As those plans are finalized and approved by the SONCATT Council, the Sheriff’s Office will return to the Board of Supervisors to seek appropriate Board approval and make any corresponding budget adjustments. Additionally, as part of its annual budget adoption, the Board of Supervisors will have the opportunity to review and provide direction on planned SONCATT expenditures. The Sheriff’s Office will develop future budgets that ensure alignment between operational expenditures and projected revenues.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

There are no staff impacts.

Attachments:

Sonoma County Auto Theft Task Force Memorandum of Understanding

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

N/A