Legislation Text

File #: 2022-0579, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): Sheriff's Office, District Attorney's Office, Probation Department
Staff Name and Phone Number: Connie Newton, 565-8884
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

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 for the period July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2027.

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, 2027.

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 FY 19-20, the District Attorney's Office was responsible for the administrative and fiscal functions. The Board

authorized the transfer of administrative and fiscal functions from the District Attorney's Office to the Sheriff's Office on March 24, 2020.

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.

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 California Highway Patrol, Santa Rosa Police Department, the Sonoma County Probation Department, the Sonoma County District Attorney's Office, and the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office. Effective FY 21-22, the MOU allows for an annual budget to be adopted by the Council. The prior MOU outlined line item budget details in the MOU, to last for the duration of the MOU's term. Due to participating agency staffing challenges, there have been significant variances in the budget and actual expenditures. An annual budget adoption process will provide for flexibility and better use of the funds based on current resource availability. The vehicle code requires that the Council submit the annual budget to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors for final approval. The Council adopted the FY 22-23 budget based on a 5-year forecast with the goal to reduce fund balance and maintain a continuity of services to the citizens of Sonoma County.

For FY 22-23, the Sheriff's Office will receive funds for one full time detective to be assigned to the Task Force and up to $60,000 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 Senior Legal Processor and one District Attorney Investigator solely dedicated to the Task Force. The budget also allows for overtime reimbursements for Task Force members and other special operations requiring non-Task Force personnel. Funds are normally allocated to the Santa Rosa Police Department for a half-time Detective ($100,000); however, due to staffing challenges, Santa Rosa does not anticipate being able to fill their allocation in FY 22-23. Santa Rosa also receives funding for Field Evidence Technician services ($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, but is entitled to certain overtime reimbursements.

Also unchanged from the prior MOU, 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. All SONCATT contracts follow the County's purchasing and contracting policies and procedures and are reviewed by County Counsel.

Total FY 22-23 revenues are projected at $1,010,000 with expenditures totaling $1,408,631, leaving a projected ending fund balance of approximately $1,000,000.

powered by Legistar™

Strategic Plan:
N/A

Prior Board Actions:
On March 24, 2020, the Board authorized 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 and transferred administrative and fiscal functions from the District Attorney's Office to the Sheriff's Office.

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.

Between FY 98-99 and FY 19-20, 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 22-23 Adopted**	**FY23-24 Projected**	**FY 24-25 Projected**
Budgeted Expenses	$1,408,631		
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	**$1,408,631**		
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal	$1,010,000		
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance	$398,631		
Contingencies			
Total Sources	**$1,408,631**		

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:
Funding provided by SONCATT offsets approved salary and benefits costs associated with positions described above and an associated operating budget for services and supplies. The Sheriff's Office, District Attorney's Office, and Probation include these expenses and offsetting reimbursements from the SONCATT vehicle code fund in their operating budgets. In FY 22-23, the budget is expected to draw down nearly $400,000 of fund balance. If all funds are used and no staffing changes are made, the fund balance is expected to be depleted in FY 25-26. However, the SONCATT council approves an annual budget and will insure expenditures do not

exceed revenues as the fund balance decreases. As part of its annual budget adoption, the Board of Supervisors will have the opportunity to review and approve the annual, proposed SONCATT budget as part of the Sheriff's Office annual budget.

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