

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT



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October 25, 2022

The Honorable Public Safety Committee
Office of the City Clerk
200 N. Spring St. Room 360,
Los Angeles, California 90012

Honorable Committee Members:

The Public Safety Committee requested that pursuant to the adoption of the Mayor's 2022/2023 Budget, the Department be instructed to report on inconsistencies in the use of the Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment (SARA) model for solving community problems, and how utilization of the SARA model can help address homelessness.

The SARA model, which is generally initiated by a Senior Lead Officer (SLO), allows Department entities and the community to identify areas of the City experiencing ongoing violent crime, property crime, and or quality of life issues. The root causes are determined by analyzing the problem area and engaging with the community for input. One of the precepts of the SARA model is to increase trust between the police and the public by demonstrating a concerted effort to assist an afflicted community. This allows for a tailored collaborative response, inclusive of City and community organizations. Additionally, the Department continuously assesses the progress and goals of the SARA project until the originating issue has been resolved. To that end, the Department tracks its efforts towards a successful resolution in 30-day increments.

Upon review, the inconsistencies that have arisen are not with the model itself but with the interpretation and application. In addition to SARA, the Department has another problem-solving model that is used; Clients, Acquiring & Analyzing Information, Partnerships, Response, and Assessment (CAPRA). The CAPRA model is intended for use by officers while working in a patrol function and responding to radio calls. There was a misconception at a few of the geographical Areas that the CAPRA model replaced the SARA model. The Department is rectifying this by having the Area Crime and Community Intelligence Centers (ACCIC) conduct training with Area SLOs. The ACCICs are comprised of police and civilian analysts responsible for using data to determine crime trends, inform Area commanding officers of locations to focus resources, and recommend ways to reduce victimization through targeted prevention efforts. The ACCIC also serves as a resource at the Area level for information regarding the SARA process.

Whereas calls for service are generally addressed via an investigative report, citation, or custodial arrest, for larger, long term, or more complicated issues, officers can use the SARA model as a unique problem-solving tool for those issues afflicting a specific neighborhood or community of the City. To ensure that Department entities understand what comprises a SARA project, the “Data-Informed, Community-Focused Policing Daily Operations Guide” serves as a resource. A section of this guide lists the requirements for initiating a SARA project and stipulates that issues involving persons experiencing homelessness (PEH), absent of crime or criminal activity, do not meet the criteria for initiating a SARA project.

Any relation to homelessness within a SARA project is generally confined to addressing the issues that arise from homelessness, such as an influx of crime in the area of a homeless encampment, and not to address the problem of homelessness itself. The breakdown of SARA projects that involve PEH components are as follows:

BUREAU	COUNT OF SARA PROJECTS
Operations-Central Bureau	27
Operations-South Bureau	9
Operations-West Bureau	17
Operations-Valley Bureau	21

The Department Homeless Coordinator’s Office conducted an assessment of how utilization of the SARA model can help address homelessness and be applied to PEH-related issues. Their findings indicated that relative to homelessness, the SARA model is best utilized to address incidents involving an increase in crime in the area of encampments and vehicles used as dwellings, which is consistent with the SARA model. Anything beyond the scope of such a SARA project would generally require documentation of an outreach period prior to enforcement, comparable to Los Angeles Municipal Code 41.18(c)(4) and the Cleaning and Rapid Engagement (CARE)/CARE+ operations.

An additional advantage of the SARA model is that through tracking the projects the Department is able to memorialize the collective efforts, resolved issues, and lasting impact of all City resources and the community. The number of completed projects serves as a measure of the Department’s success and the tracking notes may be used as a resource for future projects. If a community is dealing with a difficult issue that is rectified through a SARA project, there may be another part of the City that can benefit from a similar solution.

Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment projects are initiated to address multifaceted issues that necessitate a more expansive effort than the general application of policing. Those experiencing homelessness may be a contributing factor; however, their mere presence in a given area, absent of crime, is not cause to initiate a SARA project. Finally, if an issue can be rectified by police response and does not reflect an ongoing problem specific to the location, then the prerequisites for a SARA project are not met.

During the Third Quarter of 2022, it was discovered that there was a discrepancy between the number of SARA projects that were reported as open projects and what was actually entered into the Department's tracking system. A Department Notice directing personnel to utilize the tracking system to initiate, track, and close out all SARA projects was distributed in July 2022. The Notice, coupled with the current initiative requiring all Senior Lead Officers to initiate an active SARA project, has resulted in a 43 percent increase in SARA projects Citywide. In addition, SARA projects have been added to the weekly inspection of crime analysis and crime reduction strategies of the Areas. Command Staff Officers query Area Commanding Officers about the projects and measures of success. Geographic Areas are held accountable for their SARA projects at each COMPSTAT meeting. The Department's multifaceted approach to SARA projects has conveyed the importance, need, and proper usage of the SARA model.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Department Homeless Coordinator, Commander Billy Brockway, at (213) 486-6633.

Respectfully,



MICHEL R. MOORE
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