

May 3, 2022

Sent via email

RE: Public Comment, Agenda Item 13, Ordinance Adopting a Policy for Military Equipment by South Pasadena Police Department

Dear City Council:

We make these public comments to help the City's implementation of California law (AB 481). That law states the following:

The acquisition of military equipment and its deployment in our communities adversely impacts the public's safety and welfare, including increased risk of civilian deaths, significant risks to civil rights, civil liberties, and physical and psychological well-being, and incurment of significant financial costs.

The public has a right to know about any funding, acquisition, or use of military equipment by state or local government officials, as well as a right to participate in any government agency's decision to fund, acquire, or use such equipment.

Legally enforceable safeguards, including transparency, oversight, and accountability measures, must be in place to protect the public's welfare, safety, civil rights, and civil liberties before military equipment is funded, acquired, or used.

After reviewing the proposed South Pasadena Police Department Military Equipment Policy, we have strong concerns about the acquisition of any military equipment and use in our community. Toward that end, we request that the City Council fully address the following questions as part of its compliance with AB 481:

1. How is the decision made about when to use these weapons? Who makes that decision?
2. What less lethal methods are available for dealing with these situations?
3. What are the different options available for how SPPD could access military equipment, e.g., sharing some of these weapons with nearby police departments similar to the way fire departments share some equipment?
4. How has SPPD used these weapons in the past? What were the circumstances and outcomes?
5. AB 481 requires that legally enforceable accountability measures must be in place to protect the public's welfare before military equipment is funded, acquired or used.
 - a. Please describe in detail how the city plans to hold SPPD accountable for use of these weapons.
 - b. In compliance with AB 481, what measures will the city and/or SPPD have in place to notify the public when they have used one of these weapons, and provide information about the circumstances and outcomes?
6. How will the public be notified in the future when the city is proposing to acquire military equipment?
7. How will the city decide whether to acquire such equipment?
8. What are the costs to the city related to the acquisition, storage, safety protocols, and insurance of military equipment?

Sincerely,

Care First South Pasadena

Care First South Pasadena is a coalition of residents working to reimagine public safety and reallocate city dollars to reflect our community's priorities.

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