DRAFT OCTOBER 8, 2004, PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE RETREAT SUMMARY

Chair Padilla (South County) welcomed the members of the Public Safety Committee (PSC) to the retreat and thanked them for their continued interest and participation. Noting its unique composition of elected policy makers and law enforcement officials, he described the potential role for the PSC to be clearly viewed as a benefit to public safety in the region, while respecting the roles and responsibilities of other county organizations. Chair Padilla noted that the Committee should establish goals it can accomplish in the short term and that will benefit our member jurisdictions and law enforcement agencies.

Julie Wiley (Deputy General Counsel) provided an overview of the authority and responsibilities of the PSC. In addition to its role as a SANDAG policy committee, the PSC also serves as the governing Board of ARJIS, which through its Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) is a legal entity apart from SANDAG. While SANDAG exercises substantial control over ARJIS, ARJIS potentially has the authority to act independently of the SANDAG Board. For example, the PSC could take a position on legislation that affects ARJIS without going to the SANDAG Board for approval. Clarification regarding situations when the Committee can take independent action will be addressed on a case-by-case basis to ensure the program and goals of ARJIS and SANDAG are not in conflict.

The issue of Committee membership was briefly discussed. Julie Wiley noted that modifications to associate voting members and advisory non-voting members only require changes to SANDAG Board policy, but that any changes to the Public Agency voting members will require changing the JPA and obtaining approval from at least two-thirds of member agencies. Pam Scanlon (Director of ARJIS) noted that she has received information from the Courts that they are unable to appoint advisory members to the PSC because of the potential for conflict of interest.

Chief Jim Davis (Chiefs'/Sheriff’s Association) noted that local law enforcement officials recently held a retreat and outlined a number of goals they envisioned for the region. These included (1) improved regional training (including crime analysts and first responders); (2) addressing issues related to interoperability of communication; (3) a regional information center where crime data could be analyzed in one place; and (4) a regional public safety center for research and communication.

The Committee discussed these goals and how they fit with the vision they had for the PSC. Members agreed that pooling resources was essential to maximize what was available to each individual jurisdiction. Having a regional training center that was POST (Police Officer Standards and Training)-certified could meet the needs of local law enforcement agencies, as well as other first responders in San Diego County and law enforcement personnel from other parts of the State.
The Committee discussed that an appropriate next step in determining the PSC's vision would be to conduct a regional needs assessment that would identify short- and long-term goals. While individual public safety agencies and departments have undertaken such efforts, they have not been regional in scope. A regional needs assessment would identify opportunities for enhanced collaboration and sharing of resources, and would help establish a consensus on the priorities for regional public safety initiatives. In addition, this study would help highlight a legislative focus for the PSC. The Committee also agreed that a needs assessment would put the region at a competitive advantage and be very useful to help securing funds for public safety initiatives.

Vice Chair Guerin (North County Inland) suggested that a presentation on the Public Safety Committee and the usefulness of a needs assessment be presented to the SANDAG Board at their 2005 annual retreat (currently scheduled for February 9-11).

Staff was directed to begin to research the steps necessary to complete this needs assessment, including verifying what information has already been collected, and developing a concise statement of work followed by an adequately-resourced work plan for carrying out this effort.

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