



# Bellevue Police Department

## MEMORANDUM

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### **Investments in Public Safety - Police**

The mission of the Bellevue Police Department is to provide a safe place to live, work, and visit through quality law enforcement practices delivered by dedicated professionals. We focus our efforts and resources to *Reduce Crime, Reduce the Fear of Crime, and Enhance the Quality of Life for all that call Bellevue home.*

One of the key elements in mission success are the talented men and women that respond to calls 24/7/365. Like many agencies across the United States, BPD has been challenged in the effort to maintain stable staffing levels. Many factors contribute to this including retirements, lack of interest in policing as a vocation/career, and a strong economy that lures potential candidates – and existing police officers – to the private sector. As outlined below, the new FTE positions will provide additional manpower to our Patrol Officers on the street by “civilianizing” existing police positions and through the addition of support personnel. As we continue our vigorous recruiting efforts these new positions will give our officers more discretionary time throughout their work day to improve efforts on reducing crime and fear through community policing and relationship building.

### **Overview**

The 2019-2020 Preliminary Budget proposes three staff investments for the Bellevue Police Department (BPD). The investments are to reassign three sworn officers and hire civilian staff to fill their current positions, add four Police Support Officers, and to add a three-year LTE as a Homelessness Outreach Coordinator. The enhancements improve public safety by increasing patrol officers’ time in the community, provide administrative services at a lower cost, and have a single point of contact for a Homelessness Outreach program.

### **Discussion**

#### *Hire Three Civilian Staff and Reassign Sworn Officers*

The preliminary budget includes the authority to hire non-sworn personnel to fill the positions of Public Information Officer, Crime Prevention Officer, and the Court Liaison Officer that are currently staffed by sworn personnel. The officers currently serving in these roles would be reassigned to the Operations Division. Civilian personnel costs are lower than a police officer filling the same position thereby making this strategy more fiscally sustainable. Hiring civilian personnel allows BPD to hire specifically for these skills and recruiting civilian positions is a much faster process. Reassigning the sworn officers to community policing will help BPD reduce crime, reduce the fear of crime, and enhance Bellevue’s quality of life.

#### *Four Police Support Officers*

The proposal is to add four non-sworn Police Support Officers. Sworn police officers are tasked with many administrative and time consuming duties that may be handled by non-commissioned

personnel. Examples include parking enforcement and prisoner transport. By moving the responsibility for these administrative duties to non-sworn personnel, sworn officers will redirect the time savings towards neighborhood patrols, problem solving, and community building.

#### *Homelessness Outreach Coordinator*

Bellevue's transition to a more urban environment has made homelessness a more visible issue. The BPD is proposing to add a new Homelessness Outreach Coordinator to provide a more proactive and comprehensive approach to individuals experiencing homelessness. This position would provide a more direct and timely response to homeless issues, and work collaboratively with our regional partners in developing a comprehensive Eastside solution to those experiencing homelessness. Ensuring a one-city approach for services needed by unhoused individuals in the community, delivering the needed support, and connecting individuals to available professional services would all be encompassed in the position. Staffing this position would result in more connections for service, reduction in homelessness issues, and a safer community. The Homelessness Outreach position will be as a three-year LTE and part of a pilot program.