

Bellingham Police Department



2026-2036 Strategic Plan

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I. Executive Summary

Chief's Message

As we look ahead to the next decade, the Bellingham Police Department stands at a pivotal moment—one defined by both opportunity and responsibility. Our strategic plan is not just a framework for operational goals; it is a declaration of our enduring commitment to the people of Bellingham and to the evolving ideals of modern policing.

We are embracing a future shaped by innovation, transparency, and a deep respect for the communities we serve. Our focus is clear: to lead with integrity, to adapt with purpose, and to serve with unwavering dedication. This plan reflects our belief that public safety is not achieved through enforcement alone, but through trust, collaboration, and a shared vision of justice. Over the next ten years, we will invest in the professional development of our people, expand our use of data and technology to inform decision-making, and strengthen our partnerships across sectors. We will champion procedural justice—not just as a concept, but as a daily practice—ensuring that every interaction reflects fairness, dignity, and respect.

The profession of policing is noble. It demands courage, compassion, and accountability. Earning public trust is not a one-time achievement—it is a continuous responsibility, upheld through our conduct, our humility, and our commitment to growth. This strategic plan is our blueprint for doing just that.

Together—with our officers, our staff, and our community—we will shape a department that not only meets the challenges of today, but leads with vision into tomorrow.

Purpose

Zig Ziglar once said, “if you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time.” This is true for any organization, including police departments. We need to be planful and intentional about the growth and focus of the department with the resources that are entrusted to our organization from the public. There are three purposes of the following strategic plan:

1. Set a Clear Vision and Direction
 - a. Provide a blueprint for the allocation of resources.
 - b. Project needed growth and development of new departmental structures to address the needs of the community.
 - c. Establish both short-term and long-term goals that are in line with our mission, vision and values.
2. Aligning Resources with Priorities
 - a. Identifying current and future challenges that face our community and allocate our resources to address those challenges.
3. Enhancing Operational Effectiveness
 - a. Identifying areas of improvement in recruitment, retention, training, technology, and infrastructure.
 - b. Ensuring that we are staying current with best practices.

Scope

1. Timeframe
 - a. This strategic plan addresses the next 10 years (2026-2036) with specific benchmarks along the way.
2. Organizational Coverage
 - a. Entire organization to include commissioned and non-commissioned personnel.
3. Demographic considerations
 - a. City size, growth, crime statistics, and community needs.
4. Strategic Focus
 - a. Staffing and resources allocation.
 - b. Specific goals to enhance public safety.
 - c. Infrastructure and facilities.
 - d. Fiscal analysis and allocation.
5. Implementation
 - a. Specific projects and benchmarks that support our stated goals with timelines and responsible parties.
 - b. Develop a tracking system to ensure responsibility and progress of stated goals.

II. Organizational Overview

Mission

Our mission: To ensure Bellingham is a safe city to live, work, play and visit.

We achieve this mission through:

- Our commitment to the community through proactive and reactive policing that serves to protect the vulnerable from harm.
- Building strong partnerships that ensure public trust.
- Providing education to both the community and our employees to ensure the highest level of professionalism.

Vision Statement

To be a leader in public safety through professional policing, championing procedural justice and optimizing modern concepts and technology.

Core Values

Respect: Value the people we serve, our fellow employees and the importance of law.

Compassion: Make decisions and take actions with empathy and consideration.

Collaboration: Consider the views of all stakeholders when working together to achieve the shared goals of our community.

Integrity: Act with courage, honor, and truthfulness to uphold the trust of our community members.

Innovation: Apply creative solutions in order to provide effective services.

Accountability: Demonstrate responsibility through our communications and actions.

Current Conditions

There are approximately 97,000 community members and 44,000 housing units within the City of Bellingham. Based on historical growth and the city of Bellingham long range division manager, the city's projected growth is approximately 1,378 individuals per year and approximately 846 housing units per year. Additionally, Western Washington University (WWU) is located within our community and increases our population by approximately 14,000 individuals when in session. Approximately 9,500 of those 14,000 leave Bellingham during the summer months.

UGA	Pop. 2013	Pop. 2023	Growth 2013 to 2023	Average Annual % Growth	Share of County Population 2023	Share of 10-yr. County Growth
Bellingham	92,915	105,529	12,614	1.3%	44.8%	42.4%
Birch Bay	7,698	8,908	1,210	1.5%	3.8%	4.1%
Blaine	5,277	6,728	1,451	2.5%	2.9%	4.9%
Cherry Point	35	61	26	5.7%	0.0%	0.1%
Columbia Valley	3,060	3,577	517	1.6%	1.5%	1.7%
Everson	2,683	3,171	488	1.7%	1.3%	1.6%
Ferndale	12,962	16,762	3,800	2.6%	7.1%	12.8%
Lynden	13,208	16,696	3,487	2.4%	7.1%	11.7%
Nooksack	1,389	1,573	184	1.3%	0.7%	0.6%
Sumas	1,445	1,810	365	2.3%	0.8%	1.2%
Areas outside UGAs	65,349	70,985	5,637	0.8%	30.1%	18.9%
Total	206,021	235,800	29,779	1.3%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: OFM – Small Area Estimate Program (SAEP), December 2023; and Leland Consulting Group

* The above population (105,529) also includes unincorporated Bellingham.

To serve our community, the Bellingham Police Department is responsible for both commissioned and non-commissioned personnel. Within this responsibility is What-COMM (dispatch center) that services 11 agencies within Whatcom County. The police department is currently allotted the following full-time employees for each section:

- 130 full-time commissioned personnel (3 frozen)
- 44 What-COMM employees (to include IT, GIS, and accounting technician)
- 19 Records personnel (1 frozen)
- 3 IT Personnel
- 4 Community Service Officers
- 1 Crime Intel Analyst (frozen)
- 1 Public Information Officer (frozen)
- 2 Warrant Officers
- 1 Code Enforcement Officer
- 1 Accounting Technician
- 1 Administrative Coordinator

Commissioned Personnel Hiring and Training

Commissioned personnel present a unique challenge when filling positions. There is an extensive hiring process that involves a testing process, interview, polygraph, background investigation, psychological assessment, and a medical exam. This entire process takes approximately three to five months.

The position may be filled, but not in an operational capacity. From the time that an individual is hired to when they are operational is approximately nine months to a year. The new employee must first attend the Criminal Justice Training Commission Basic (CJTC) Law Enforcement Academy. It takes approximately nine months to a year to train an individual to the point that they are a fully operational officer. During that time, these employees are in various stages of their training process, to include pre-academy, academy, post-academy, and field training.

This timeline has been extended due the Criminal Justice Training Commission's (CJTC) opening of the north-end academy in Arlington. This new academy is physically closer to Bellingham, which is a geographic benefit to employees. However, CJTC is only holding two academies a year at this location and is not allowing our employees to attend the Burien CJTC campus. This can and has caused a greater delay in getting newly hired employees to the academy. This delay causes a longer extended period before an employee is fully operational. It also causes a greater strain on our field training program as newly hired employees come back from the academy in larger groups.

Not all 130 allocated FTEs are currently operational. We anticipate having five officers operational by the end of 2025. The operational projections of personnel in 2026 are the following:

Mid-January 2026 – 3

May 2026 – 6

October 2026 – 3

These projections are based on a standard timeline of training (approximately five months for the academy, six weeks of post-academy training, and 14 weeks of field training). This does not take into account possible extension and/or failures to complete field training.

This delay creates a challenge for our organization when allocating FTE resources because we may have positions filled, but they may not be operational for a year after being hired. We are currently unable to fill projected retirements until those individuals submit paperwork with their intention and date of retirement. By keeping positions frozen, we only further delay the ability to get personnel fully operational so that we can allocate them in a different way to meet the needs of our city

Projected Retirements

By the end of 2026, there will be 18 commissioned personnel who are of retirement age (53 or older). We are aware of at least three individuals who have made their intent to retire in 2026, two of which in the first half of the year.

Non-Commissioned Personnel Hiring and Training

The hiring requirements for non-commissioned personnel are also extensive, involving an interview, polygraph, and background investigation.

What-Comm Training

The training to become a fully operational What-Comm telecommunicator is also extensive. After completing the hiring process, the new team member enters a period of classroom work and can act as a call receiver on their own in approximately five to six months. They become a fully certified telecommunicator on their own approximately 11-12 months after being hired.

Records

The training to become a fully operational Records Specialist is approximately six months.

Similar to commissioned officers, there is a significant delay from the point of hiring a non-commissioned employee to when they are operational and count toward staffing. The freezing of positions only extends the ability of those divisions to become fully operational.

Facilities

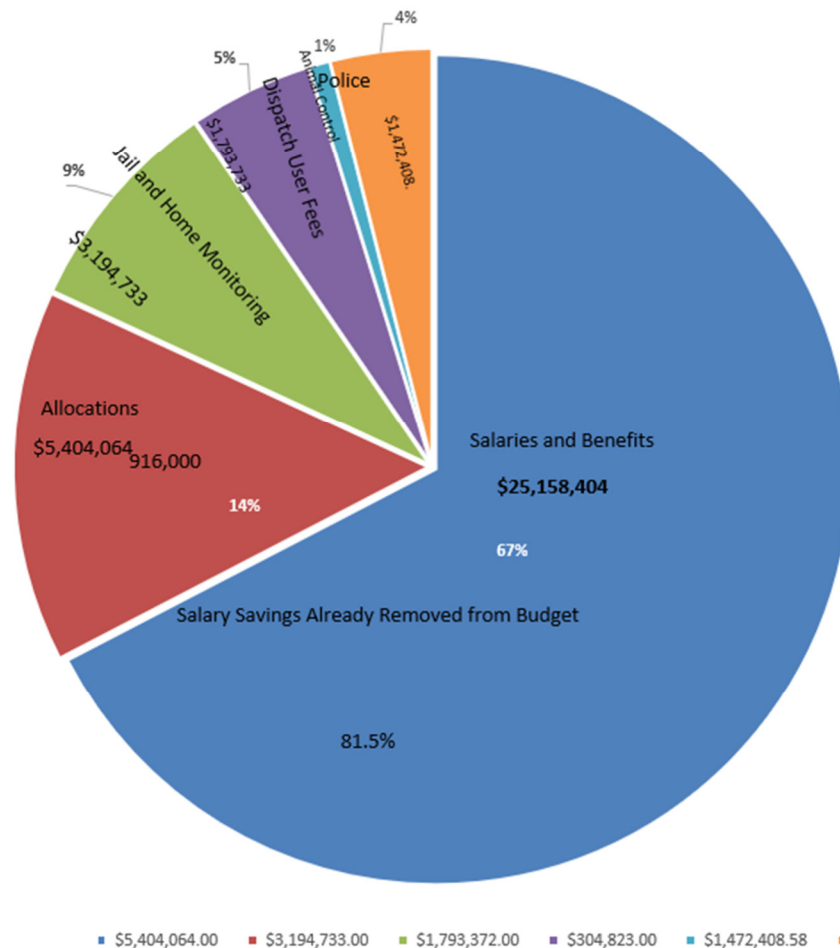
The police department's station was built in 1992 and houses all employees, except for those at What-Comm and two commissioned personnel assigned to the task force. It lacks space for multiple needs within the department. This requires that the department rent space to house evidence and specialty equipment. In addition, the facility is not equipped with a gun range which requires the rental costs of using outside facilities.

What-Comm is in the process of building a new facility to house the dispatch center. The new building is projected to be completed in early 2027. The new What-Comm facility will be more resilient to natural disasters and continuity of operations. It also provides ample room for employee wellness (gym, quiet space and lactation room) and organizational growth.

Current Budget

The police department 2025 budget is \$38,167,220.05. The majority of that budget is salaries and benefits for current employees. The fiscal constraints of the City of Bellingham’s General Fund have created the need for several police department positions to be frozen; to include three officers, one records specialist, one crime analyst, and one public information officer. This reduced workforce has caused a greater strain on personnel and limits the services that the department would like to provide. The budgetary forecasts for 2026 are similar to those in 2025.

2025 POLICE BUDGET \$38,167,220



2025 Budget Continued

Vehicle Fuel	\$	95,000.00
Training and Tuition	\$	80,000.00
Recruitment/Testing/Background	\$	20,000.00
Triage Center	\$	65,000.00
Body Camera Contract	\$	160,000.00
Overtime & State Mandated Training	\$	756,054.00
Clothing and Gear	\$	170,292.00
Officer Wellness	\$	160,000.00
Small Tools	\$	10,000.00
RMS Maintenance	\$	100,000.00
Minor Equipment	\$	28,755.00
Storage Leases for Evidence	\$	80,000.00
Vehicle Tow Charges	\$	13,515.96
Cell Phones	\$	<u>120,000.00</u>
Total Budget for Day to Day	\$	1,858,616.96
Amt after fixed costs	\$	1,472,408.58
Total Budget	\$	37,327,804.59
Salaries & Benefits	\$	24,242,404.00
Allocations & Contracts	\$	<u>10,696,992.00</u>
Police Day to Day Budget	\$	2,388,408.59

Workload Assessment

A recent workload assessment was conducted using a nationally recognized staffing model developed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). This model helps determine how many officers are needed to effectively meet the demands of the community.

To begin, the model calculates how many hours a single officer is available to work in a year. For example, patrol officers typically work 10.7-hour shifts. From this total, we subtract time off for things like regular days off, vacation, holidays, and sick leave. We used a sample of officers from each division to estimate average time off, which gives us a more accurate picture of actual working hours.

This process results in a number called the “relief factor,” which accounts for how much coverage is needed to ensure that staffing levels remain consistent even when officers are off duty.

Next, the model looks at how many calls for service the department receives and how long, on average, officers spend on each call. These figures, along with other operational factors, are used to calculate how many officers are needed to handle the workload. See Appendix II for full staffing allocation report.

Based on this assessment:

- **Patrol Division:** The analysis showed that the patrol division should be increased by 11 officers, bringing the total to 77 officers. This includes sergeants, corporals, traffic officers, and crime scene investigators.
- **Investigations Division:** The model recommended an increase of 8.5 detectives, for a total of 19 detectives (not including supervisory staff). In 2025, we took a step toward this goal by adding 2 full-time detectives to the division.

The current staffing organizational chart is as follows:

Current Organization Allocation	
Chief	1
Deputy Chief	2
Patrol Lt	2
Investigation Lt	1
Special Operations Lt	1
Services Lt	1
Officer of Professional Responsibility Lt	1
Patrol Sergeant	8
Patrol Corporal	8
CSI	4

Traffic Officer	2
Patrol Officer	43
Detective Sergeant	2
Detectives	12
Digital/Video Forensic	4
HUD Detective	1
Bike Sergeant	1
Bike Officer	4
Task Force Sergeant	1
Task Force Officer	1
K9 Officers	4
Training Sergeant	1
Training Officer	1
Range Officer	1
Evidence/ID Supervisor	1
Community Engagement Officer	1
Non-Operational*	11
Vacant Positions	4
Frozen Positions	3
Total	130

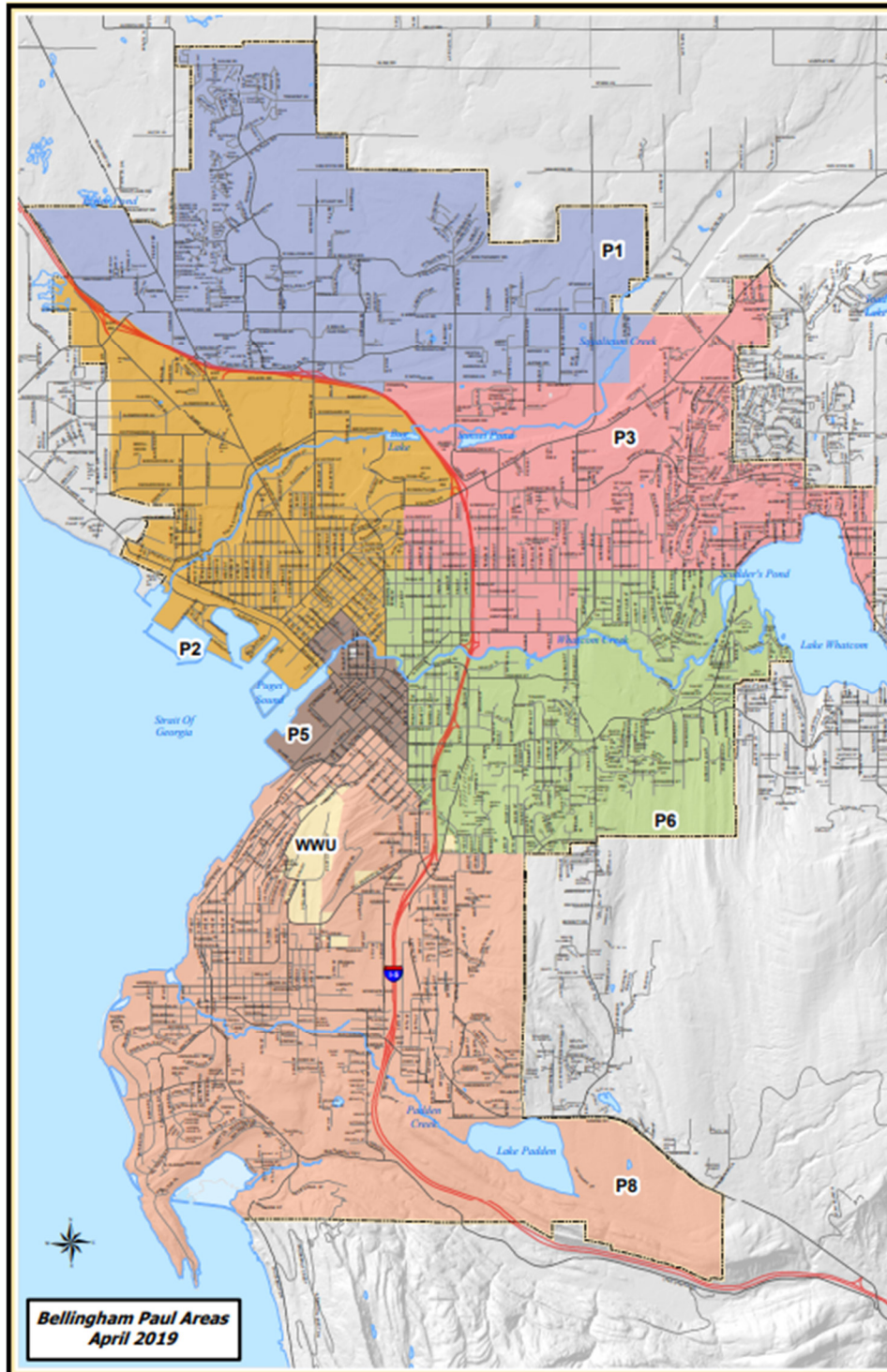
* Non-operational are defined as hired employees who are either pre-academy, in the academy, post-academy, in field training officer, and/or military leave.

Assignment of Cases

Criminal cases are reviewed and assigned by detective sergeants depending on the severity of the crime and staffing availability. Between 01/01/25 and 09/11/25, there were approximately 1,468 cases that involved a criminal element, which were not assigned to an officer nor a detective. The majority of these cases pertain to property-related crimes, including theft, malicious mischief, burglaries, forgeries, and fraud investigations.

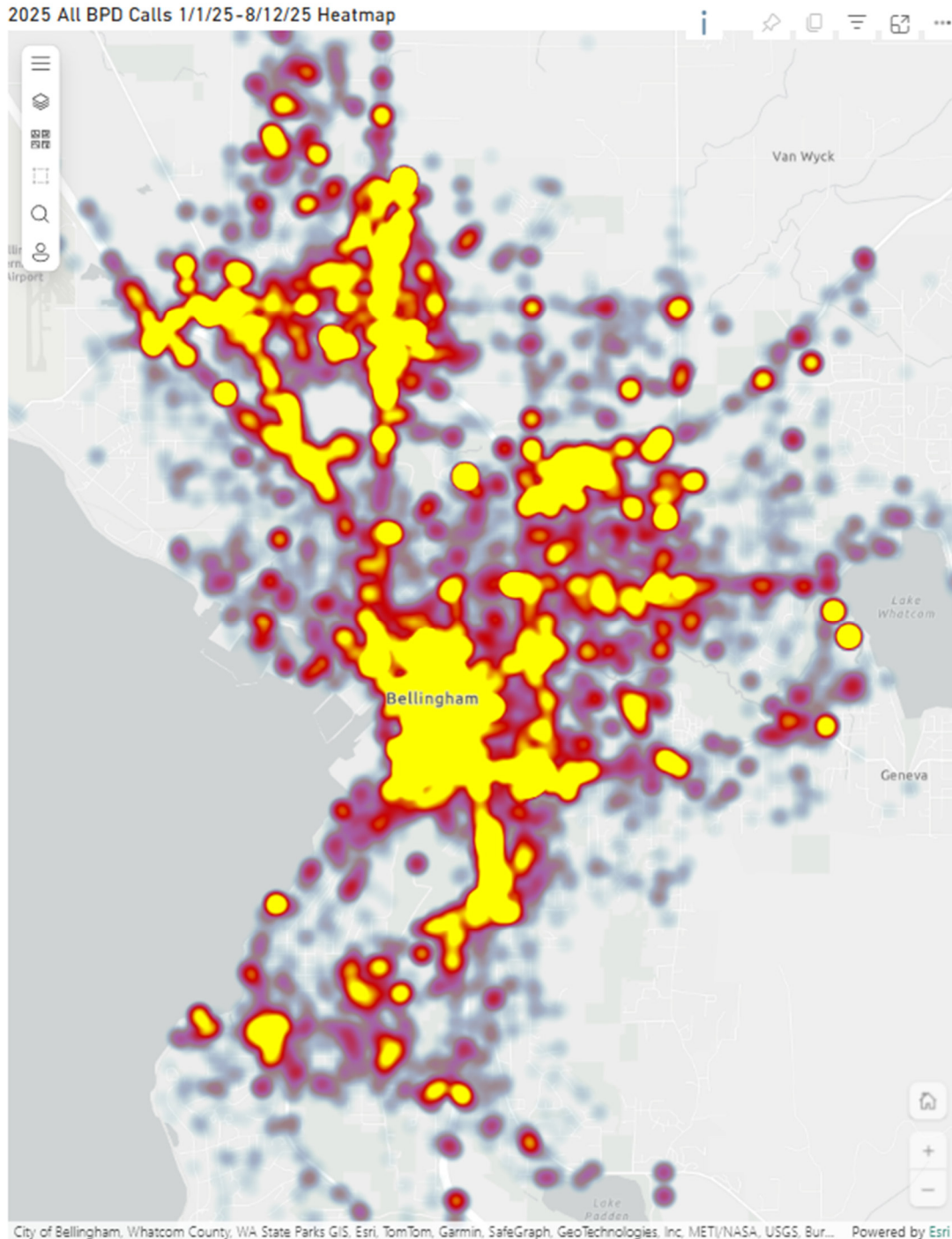
Patrol Area Map

Our department has divided the city limits into six sectors that are designated as patrol areas. Patrol officers are responsible for responding to calls for service and patrolling their assigned area. The following is a map of those areas.



911 Call Volume

In 2024, officers responded to 53,267 calls for service. This number does not factor in the complexity between calls for service. Many of these calls for service require additional follow-up. The below heat map shows the concentration of calls in 2025 as of 08/12/25. The concentration of calls is highest in the downtown corridor and along major arterial roads where there is higher concentration of businesses:



Call Response Times

911 calls for service are triaged and prioritized by dispatchers using a numerical system as described below. While response times alone are not a suitable metric for determining staffing levels, they do offer valuable insight into resource allocation and call volume trends.

In 2024, the following were the average response times by our officers from the time the 911 call was received by dispatch to when the officer(s) arrived on scene.

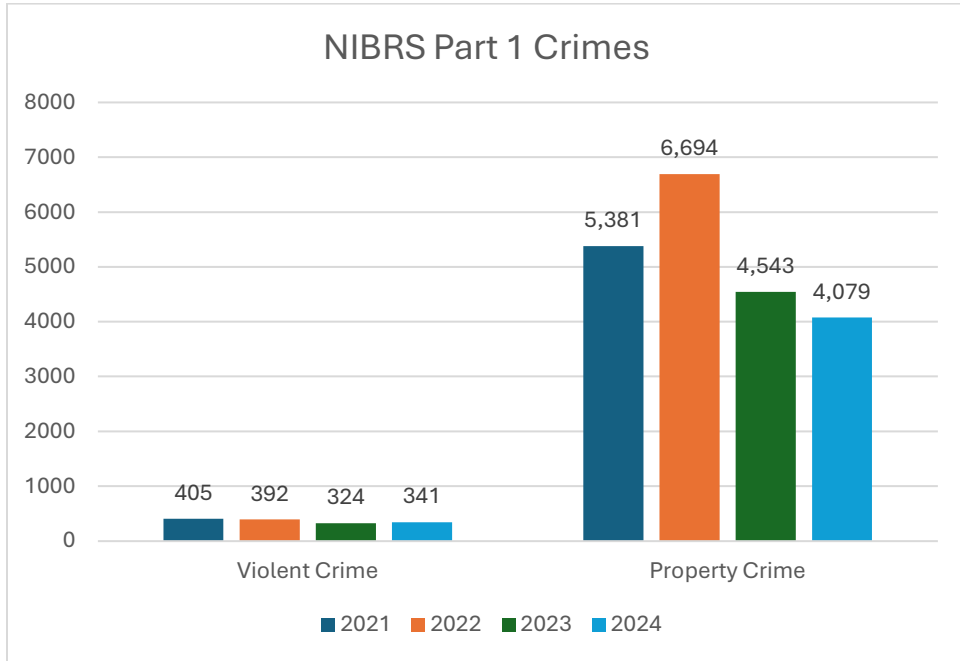
Call Priority	Definition	Examples	Average Response Time
1	Life-Safety Emergency or High-Risk Officer Safety Incident	Physical Domestic Violence, In-Progress Burglary, and Injury Traffic Collisions	7:08
2	In-Progress Emergency (Moderate life-safety factors)	Verbal Domestic Dispute, Neighborhood Dispute, and Theft	8:32
3	In-Progress Incident (No immediate life-safety factor)	Non-Injury and Non-Blocking Traffic Collisions, Drug Complaints, and Bicycle Theft	17:38
4	In-Progress Nuisance Incidents or Cold Incidents with Potential Evidentiary Value	Noise Ordinance Reports, Property Recovered Reports, and Surrender of Weapons	33:27
5	Cold Incidents (No suspect present and incident occurred more than 15 minutes ago)	Routine Cold Reports of Law Enforcement Incidents	34:41

Call Type Reported

The Bellingham Police Department provides crime statistics to the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) in the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) as part of the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program. The crimes are separated into two categories, violent crime and property crime.

The violent crime category includes murder/non-negligent manslaughter, negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. The non-violent crime category includes burglary, arson, motor vehicle theft, pocket picking larceny theft, purse snatching, theft

from building, theft of motor vehicle parts, theft from motor vehicle, theft from coin operated machine, all other larceny, and shoplifting.



II. Situational Analysis

Internal Employee Engagement

The City of Bellingham hired Triangle Associates to engage police department employees to determine the department's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Key themes were brought forth, some of which are helpful to the strategic planning process. They can assist in guiding decision making for future planning.

Strengths

- Quality team members

The department prides itself on maintaining very high hiring standards to include an educational requirement. This hiring standard provides the best opportunity to hire the most qualified candidates who will uphold the values of the department.

During the engagement sessions, team members expressed strong trust and camaraderie with their co-workers. They also recognized the competency and effectiveness of our first-line supervisors.

- Training programs and professional development

The department's unique patrol schedule provides for one full day of in-house training every month, which far exceeds the 24 hours a year required by the state. This ensures that our officers are provided with both classroom and hands-on training in a multitude of disciplines.

The Field Training Program was recognized for maintaining high standards and organization.

- Technology and equipment

Team members are provided with modern resources to help with doing their jobs safely. The department demonstrates a desire to adopt new technologies.

- Wellness programming

Team members identified that wellness programming and Peer Support help to facilitate organizational health.

Weaknesses

- The need for a stronger strategic direction

While we recognize that our strategic plan has not been updated since 2018, we have maintained yearly goals ensuring that our agency is in alignment with

accreditation standards. This document serves to provide a step toward improvement in this identified weakness.

- Inexperienced workforce

A large portion of our commissioned team members have less than five years of experience. First line supervisors are being promoted earlier in their careers and a large portion have less than two years of experience in their role. There is a recognition that there is a need to create more robust professional development programs.

- Insufficient staffing

As shown by the workload assessment contained within this document and considering that most calls for service require two officers to enhance safety, current staffing levels are not sufficient to meet the needs of the ever-growing community. This sentiment was echoed by our team members.

- Training and professional development

Training and professional development opportunities were reported as both a strength and a weakness by our team members. This is likely due to the focus of the training more than the amount of training. There is an identified need to provide more training to supervisors, along with providing more professional development and mentoring opportunities.

Opportunities

- Pursuing additional funding sources (such as grants or federal funding)

Grants and federal funding are opportunities to help support the existing police department budget with new equipment and emerging technologies. Team members recommended that the department hire a full-time grant writer to assist in these efforts.

- Investing in training and professional development

Provide more leadership training opportunities for those in leadership roles and those aspiring to be a leader who are actively seeking promotion.

- Investment into technologies to increase efficiency and effectiveness

There are several existing and emerging technologies that could make departmental efforts more efficient and effective. These would take capital investment to implement.

- Increase community engagement and public education efforts

Build more trust and support from our community through more community engagement opportunities. Examples include engaging with neighborhoods, businesses and increasing our social media presence.

Threats

- Retaining team members

There are several factors that affect the retention of employees, including but not limited to a lack of advancement outside of the patrol division, staffing levels, and compensation when compared to cost-of-living.

- City budget and priorities

Team members expressed concern that current budget allocations may impact the department's ability to operate at full capacity and adequately meet the evolving needs of the community.

- Jail booking restrictions and judicial follow-through

Booking restrictions placed on law enforcement by the jail's lack of capacity reduces the effectiveness of law enforcement to enhance public safety. Staff members reported a lack of judicial follow-through (charging crimes, release of individuals, etc.) that also reduce the effectiveness of law enforcement to enhance public safety.

- Inadequate resources to effectively address the issues surrounding homelessness, drug addiction, and mental health

There are inadequate and/or ineffective resources to address homelessness, drug addiction, and mental health issues. With a lack of adequate resources, law enforcement is left as the main resource available to address these issues.

Project Budget and Funding Sources

The near-term projections for city finances show that expenses (salaries, equipment, etc.) and inflation continue to rise, while revenue remains consistent. Salaries are the largest expense of both the city's general budget and the police department's budget. Cost savings are required to balance the budget.

It is projected that the police department's 2026 budget will remain consistent with the 2025 budget. The city council did pass a 0.1% sales tax associated with House Bill 2015 to help support public safety. This is projected to collect approximately four million dollars a year.

Along with the sales tax, House Bill 2015 established a \$100 million grant program that our department intends on applying for. Additional grant funding will be sought to offset the operating costs of equipment.

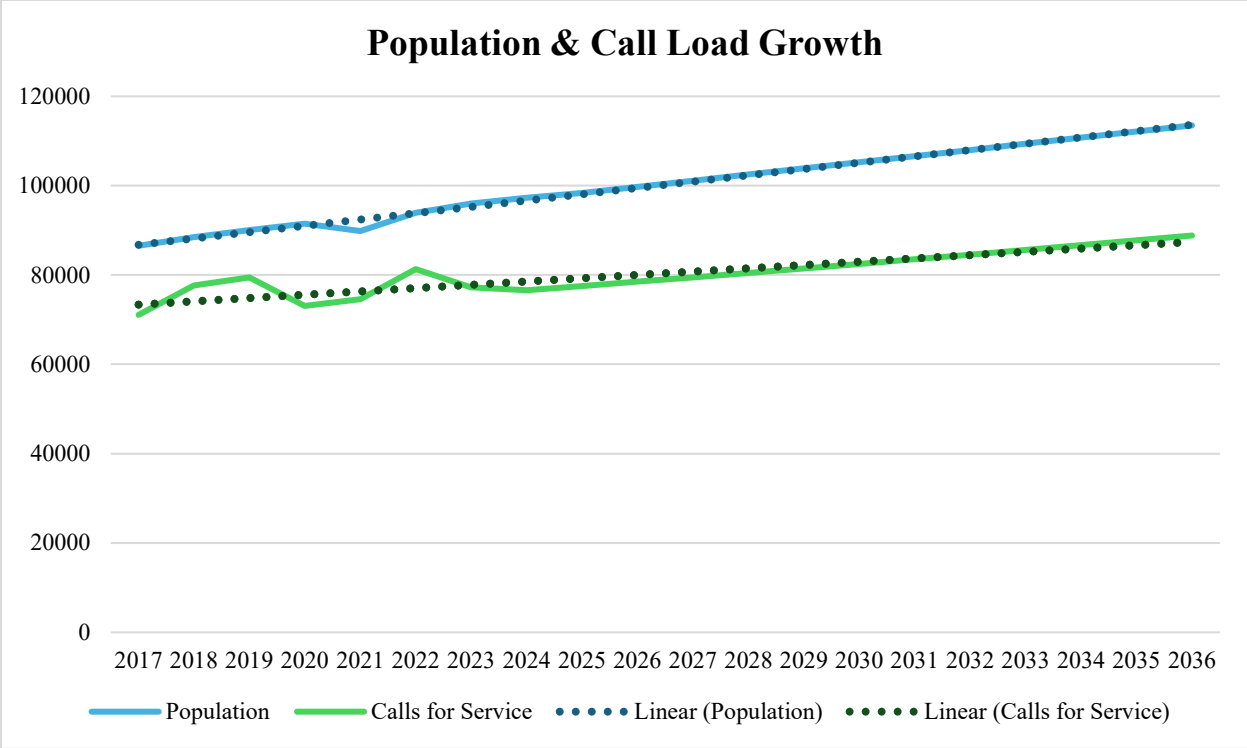
There will be a need to continue to evaluate ways to increase revenue dedicated to public safety.

Projected Growth

As stated previously, the population of the City of Bellingham is projected to grow approximately 1,378 individuals and 846 housing units per year. Should this number stay consistent, the city will have grown to a population of approximately 112,158 people and 53,306 housing units in 2036.

In 2024, our agency generated 76,552 Computer Automated Dispatch (CAD) case numbers. As of 12/09/25, there had been generated 72,375 CAD numbers by our agency. We project that by the total CAD numbers in 2025 will be approximately 76,806. CAD numbers represent both 911 calls for service and self-initiated activity by the officer. It should be noted that officers did not respond to everyone one of those CAD numbers. These calls are of varying degrees of complexity that require a different number of staff to respond depending on the call for service. Most calls for service require at least two officers to respond to enhance officer safety.

An analysis of Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) data from 2014 through 2024 indicates an average annual growth rate of approximately 1.25% in calls for service. Applying this historical trend as a projection model suggests that call volume will continue to increase at a similar rate. Based on this assumption, calls for service are expected to reach approximately 88,869 by the year 2036. This forecast is illustrated in the graph below.



The increase in population and inevitable increase in call volume will require the police department to grow to meet those additional needs. However, the trendline may not be as linear as projected above based on the projected increase in population density.

Population Density Considerations

According to the City of Bellingham Planning Department, the projected growth in the next 10 years will be a higher density with the focus on multi-unit and middle housing infill properties (such as apartments, duplexes, and Accessory Dwelling Units) opposed to single-detached homes. This is the focus for three reasons:

1. Lack of land supply to build new single-detached homes
2. Infrastructure efficiency (i.e. water pipes, sewer, etc.)
3. Reduce climate impact

It is projected that Bellingham will have an annual growth of 300-400 multi-unit properties (apartments, condos, duplexes, etc.), 150-200 infill properties (i.e. ADUs, subdividing an existing plot into two, etc.) and 40-50 single-detached homes. This change in growth strategy creates a challenge in projecting call load volume in the future.

As Bellingham experiences growth through the development of multi-unit and infill properties, it anticipated that there will be an increase in demand for police services. As seen in the projected growth graph, call load growth can be illustrated in a relative linear increase. However, the

development of multi-unit housing is expected to generate a disproportionately higher call volume due to population density and shared spaces that create a higher potential for interpersonal conflict.

To illustrate this point, call volume was compared between two different areas of the city that were of similar geographic size, but different in the type of housing properties (i.e. single-detached properties and multi-unit properties). The total number of incidents within those geographic boundaries was pulled between the dates of 10/20/24 and 10/19/25. Two sample comparisons were chosen, and both demonstrated a higher call volume in the areas with more multi-unit properties.

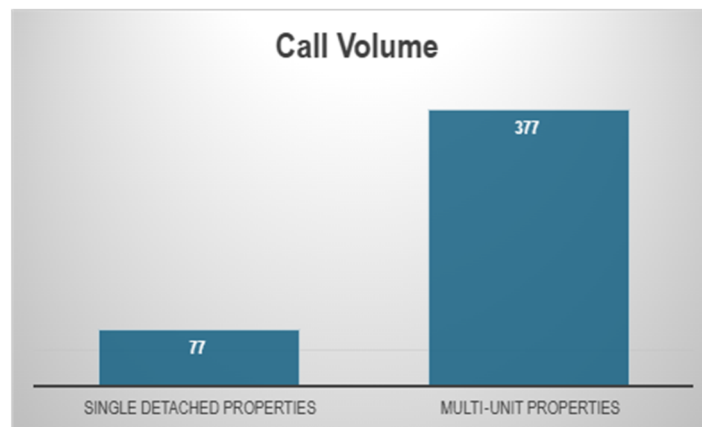
Comparison 1:

Multi-Unit Zone 1

This geographic space contains 412 housing units with an estimated population of 720 residents. 281 of those units were condominiums and 131 were rental units

Single-Detached Unit Zone 1

This geographic space contains 344 housing units with an estimated population of 723 residents. 180 of those units were individual lots and 164 were condominiums



As demonstrated in the graph, there were nearly five times (4.9) as many incidents in the multi-unit geographic area in the same time period when compared to single detached properties. This disproportionate call volume takes into account that the population size was nearly identical in both samples.

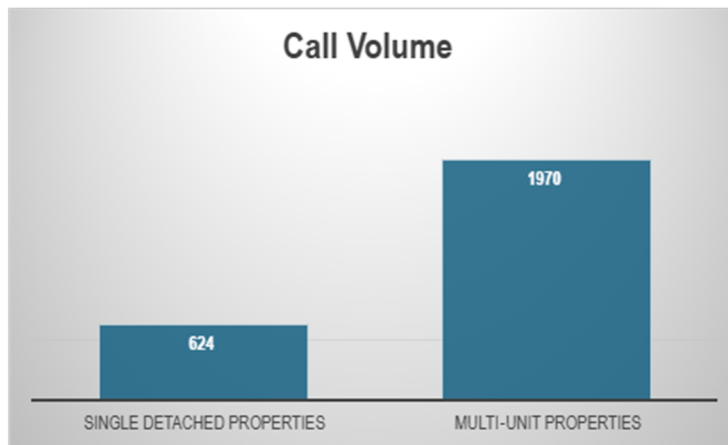
Comparison 2

Multi-Unit Zone 2

This geographic space contains 1,331 housing units with an estimated population of 2,470 residents. 1,123 of those units were rental units and 198 were individual lots.

Single-Detached Unit Zone 2

This geographic space contains 885 housing units with an estimated population of 2,053 residents. 738 of those units were individual lots and 146 were rental units.



As the above graph demonstrates, there were over three times (3.2) as many incidents in the multi-unit geographic area when compared to single detached properties in the same time period. The population was slightly higher (approximately 417 residents) in the multi-unit geographic boundary, but not significantly enough to explain that the call volume was three times higher.

To further illustrate this point, Whatcom County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) call volume is lower than that of Bellingham Police Department. In 2024, the WCSO responded to approximately 37,240 calls where a deputy was assigned, compared to BPD who responded to approximately 53,267. The population of our two agencies are similar (approximately 85,000-90,000 unincorporated Whatcom County and approximately 97,000 in Bellingham), but the density per square mile is significantly different.

These examples demonstrate that a higher population density creates a disproportionately higher call volume. This is due to numerous factors such as proximity to others (i.e. hearing a domestic dispute in an apartment opposed to being five acres apart), socio-economic factors, more individuals present to be witnesses and more vehicles.

Any future staffing analysis of the police department's growth will need to consider how population density affects call volume. To appropriately staff the police department, we will need to grow at a higher rate than the population and call load graph demonstrates to meet the future increase in population density of the city.

Key Community Partnerships and Call Volume

Several key partnerships with other organizations help to alleviate some of the call load burden that is on the police department. These partners include but are not limited to the Alternative Response Team (ART) and Ground-Level Response and Coordinated Engagement (GRACE) program.

ART is designed to respond to specific non-violent behavioral health 911 calls. ART is currently staffed Monday through Friday, 0830-1730. One of their staff members is located at What-Comm to help determine which 911 calls can be diverted to ART. Of the 911 calls for service between 10/28/24 and 10/29/25, there were 1,502 diverted from BPD to ART.

The continued expansion of ART would have a positive impact on the workload of the police department. ART helps to support the community and police department's desire to divert non-law enforcement calls away from the need for a response by an officer. This would allow for more police department resources to be devoted to calls and follow-up that are criminal in nature. ART also provides a crucial service to What-Comm staff, offering the ability to confer directly with ART staff on incidents as they occur. This in-person relationship is invaluable to What-Comm's staff, and any expansion of ART will directly benefit our Public Safety Telecommunicators.

GRACE provides intensive, coordinated services to those that are high utilizers of the emergency and criminal justice systems. GRACE case managers work with clients to provide services in an effort to reduce the utilization of emergency services by their clients. According to statistics gathered by the GRACE program, those enrolled in the program have a reduced number of jail bookings. GRACE also helps to reduce the number of non-law enforcement calls for service through the work that they do.

III. Strategic Priorities and Goals

1. Departmental Goals and Focus

When casting a vision for the future of the department, one must not only consider the areas for improvement and growth but also the areas where the department performs well both in staffing allocation and focus. The department must maintain consistency in those areas that are strengths, such as:

1. Maintaining our high hiring standard to ensure that the most qualified candidates are selected.
2. A continued focus on applicable training through both in-service and outside training, within budgetary parameters, to ensure that our officers are at the forefront of best practices.
3. Continue to support the efforts of enhancing public safety in the Central Business District through the bicycle unit and participation in the drug task force.
4. Ensuring that emerging technologies are explored and implemented when feasible.
5. Ensuring that the wellness and safety of our team members is a priority through the support of programming.
6. Maintaining our status as an accredited agency.

It is crucial to set goals for our agency to provide organizational focus. These goals will allow us to maintain successful existing programs and achieve new initiatives. The following goals are in line with the mission of ensuring that Bellingham is a safe place to live, work, play and visit:

1. Increase community engagement by our team members.
2. Increase traffic safety in the community.
3. Increase the sense of safety in the Central Business District.
4. Increase investigation capacity to ensure that there is support for victims and accountability of suspects.
5. Increase professional development for police department employees to ensure that the organization is innovative in our approach and adhering to best practices.

These goals are reflected in both the short-term and long-term plan for the department's structure and initiatives. Officer safety must remain a foundational priority in all future strategic planning efforts. It should be a guiding principle when evaluating and determining appropriate staffing allocations, ensuring that operational decisions consistently support the well-being and security of personnel. This plan will provide a roadmap of how the department intends on achieving these goals through both programming and staffing allocation. More detailed explanation of each goal can be found in Appendix B.

Increase Community Engagement

Public trust is essential to the effectiveness of the police department. It is built through professionalism and engagement. We desire that our team members engage with the community in ways beyond responding to 911 calls for service. Engagement in multiple settings will create a space for team members to garner a better understanding of community needs and provide for positive interactions with community members. The following programs and areas of focus will increase the engagement with the community. They are not placed in a ranking order of importance, and the timeline of implementation differs for each.

1. Increase Staffing Levels
 - a. As staffing levels increase, officers are afforded more time and opportunity to engage with the community outside of 911 calls for service. It also provides more opportunities to create new specialty units that are uniquely focused on community outreach (i.e. outreach officers, school resource officers, etc.).
2. Community Oriented Policing (COP) Neighborhood Responsibility
 - a. Officers take responsibility for one neighborhood within the city where they participate in community meetings and engage with businesses.
3. Outreach to Immigrant and Underrepresented Communities
 - a. Officers will proactively engage communities and housing properties that serve immigrant and underrepresented communities.
4. Adopt a School Program
 - a. Officers will adopt a school within the community where they are provided with time in their workday to engage with the youth in our community in a positive way.
5. Yearly Day of Service
 - a. Team members would be provided with the opportunity to spend one day a year where they can volunteer their time with a local organization. This day is either on a scheduled workday or traded for another regularly scheduled workday.
6. BPD Book Initiative
 - a. Books were obtained through grant funding to address literacy rates. This allows officers to provide free books to the youth of our community.
7. BPD Stickers and Trading Cards
 - a. Purchase stickers and trading cards for officers to give away to youth in our community, thus creating the opportunity for a positive interaction.
8. Continue to Build Relationships with the Multi-Disciplinary Team
 - a. Creating a monthly calendar to engage with community agencies (such as Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Services, Bridget Collins, etc.).
9. Open Front Desk Reception Full Time
 - a. Having the front desk open full time provides more of an opportunity to serve community members in person with police related concerns.

10. Expand the Safe Place Program

- a. Continue to expand the number of businesses within the community that are included in the Safe Place Program.

Increase Traffic Safety

An increased focus on traffic safety by the police department continues to be a need within our community. In 2024, the department responded to a total of 1,143 collisions. One of which was a fatality incident. Injuries were reported in 393 of those collisions. The total number of injuries increased 15% from 2023 (1,090 crashes report that included 341 injuries). We believe that the following would serve to increase traffic safety:

1. Increase Staffing Levels
 - a. As staffing levels increase, current traffic officers can be allocated more time to primarily function as a traffic officer opposed to responding to other 911 calls for service. Increasing staffing levels would also provide patrol officers with more time to focus on traffic enforcement.
 - b. A stand-alone traffic unit will be created once staffing levels rise to level that the unit could be supported.
 - c. As increased proactive traffic enforcement occurs, What-Comm's workload will also increase. What-Comm's leadership should ensure staffing levels and equipment meet the needs of our Public Safety Telecommunicators.
2. Utilization of Current Personnel
 - a. Focus more attention on school zone violations during commute times before and after school.
 - b. Continue to proactively investigate driving under the influence investigations.
3. Purchase Effective Traffic Safety Technology and Equipment
 - a. Outfit patrol vehicles with moving radar units. Moving radar is an effective strategy to enforce unsafe speeds, which is a major cause of collisions.
 - b. Grappler: reduce the risk of suspects fleeing in a vehicle.
 - c. Outfit patrol vehicles with dash cameras.
4. Provide Traffic Related Professional Development
5. Develop and Implement Traffic Training Succession Plan
 - a. Serious traffic collisions require specialized training that includes a large fiscal and time commitment. There is a need within the community to have officers who are properly trained to investigate serious collisions. It is recognized that there is a need to develop a succession plan to identify officers who have an interest in these investigations and provide those officers with the appropriate training.

Increase Safety of Downtown

Downtown safety remains a priority for the city as detailed in the Mayor's Executive Order #2024-01. The police department has a unique role in addressing the safety of the Central Business District. To effectively support this executive order, it requires that the police department is adequately staffed to ensure that there is the ability to staff a proactive element to address the common quality of life concerns in the downtown corridor. The following would help to support the goal of increasing safety in the Central Business District:

1. Increase Staffing Levels
 - a. Allows for the continuation of staffing in both the Bicycle Unit and Drug Task Force.
 - b. Create a nighttime Bicycle Unit when staffing levels are sufficient for implementation.
 - c. Ensure that there is an area car assigned to downtown corridor.
2. Special Emphasis Programs
 - a. Create and implement a plan to address criminal behavior that occurs outside of the downtown bicycle unit hours with extra patrol/special emphasis programs.
 - b. Ensure that What-Comm is adequately informed of emphasis patrols, and that What-Comm's staffing matches the increased need for communications.
3. Engage Businesses
 - a. Continue to engage businesses with a desire for them to have an active participation in increasing safety downtown. This would include participating in environmental changes and programs that enhance law enforcement abilities (ex. having a trespass authorization on file).

Increase Investigation Capacity

We desire to be an agency that has investigative capacity beyond responding to 911 calls for service and writing a report. Victims deserve thorough follow-up to their cases when it is feasible. This level of service provides better justice for the victim, accountability for offenders and a sense of job satisfaction for the officers. The following are ways in which we believe we can more effectively investigate crimes moving forward:

1. Increase Staffing Levels
 - a. Increasing patrol staffing will allow for more time for officers to follow-up on cases that are not assigned to a detective.
 - b. Increasing detective staffing will allow for an expansion of case assignments.
2. Transition of Crime Scene Investigators (CSIs) to a Stand-Alone Unit

- a. Investigations have become more complex requiring more specialized skills. Having CSIs as a stand-alone unit would position them better to help support both the patrol and investigations divisions.
3. Expand Case Management to the Patrol Division
 - a. Assign every criminal case to an officer (either the primary patrol officer or a detective) thus providing metrics for investigational capacity and accountability.
4. Integrate CAD with Reporting System
 - a. Creating more efficient reporting will allow officers more time to thoroughly investigate cases through follow-up.
5. Explore and Implement Different Software Upgrades and Tools
 - a. There are several existing and emerging technologies and tools that would help to support the investigation of incidents.
6. Remove Warrant Officers from Court Duties
 - a. Having warrant officers available to assist patrol officers with the transportation of arrestees, provides more time for officers to conduct follow-up.
7. Incorporate new technologies into What-Comm's call processing.
 - a. Several emerging technologies can increase Public Safety Telecommunicator (PST) productivity and decrease their need to deal with non-emergency phone calls. The resulting additional bandwidth will enable PSTs to provide more attentive service to in-progress incidents where additional documentation and questioning can yield productive investigative results.

Increase Professional Development

Investing in the development of our team members is foundational for the success of our goals. Our agency has experienced a stage of transition where an exceptional number of retirements have occurred. We have lost and will continue to lose institutional knowledge and experience due to attrition. We must be proactive in how we develop our new personnel and new leaders. The following programs and areas of focus will increase the professional development of our team members.

1. Flexible Resource Days (FRDs)
 - a. Continue to identify valuable training topics and publish an annual schedule of training.
2. Internal Supervisor Training
 - a. Provide consistent training for first line supervisors during FRDs on a variety of topics.
3. Maintain the Supervisor On-Boarding Program
 - a. As new supervisors are promoted, ensure that they complete the supervisor on-boarding program and are equipped to be an effective leader.

4. Keep Washington Working Act Training
 - a. Ensure consistent training to remain in compliance with the Keep Washington Working Act
5. Consistent Sergeant Meetings
 - a. Create a yearly sergeant's meeting schedule to ensure consistent development of first line supervisors.
6. Field Training Officer (FTO) Training
 - a. Improve consistency of evaluations of student officers through periodic internal training for the FTO cadre.
7. Law Enforcement Mutual Agreement Response Team Training
 - a. Provide quarterly training for detective, crime scene investigators, and supervisors on the proper response to an officer involved shooting.
8. Employee Wellness and Safety
 - a. Ensure that there is a focus during training on officer safety best practices.
 - b. Continuing and expanding training related to officer wellness and healthy habits.
 - c. Continuing and expanding training regarding the safe operation of vehicles.
9. External Trainings
 - a. Within budgetary constraints, seek meaningful training opportunities provided by outside vendors and/or agencies.

Emerging Technology Considerations

There are several areas of emerging technologies that need to be considered when developing a plan that spans a 10-year period. It is difficult to predict how some of these technologies will continue to evolve and how they will affect workload, staffing needs, and operational priorities.

Drones as First Responder (DFR) technology is one that is of high interest to the department. This technology allows for the deployment of unmanned aerial systems (UAS) to 911 calls for service. In many cases, this enables a more rapid response and provides real-time situational awareness to responding officers. It also has the potential to reduce the number of calls requiring a physical officer response. DFR in combination with a real-time crime center have the ability to make law enforcement responses more effective.

However, DFR technology is rapidly evolving. It is anticipated that future iterations may not require a human pilot or commissioned personnel to operate. These advancements introduce uncertainty in terms of implementation timelines and staffing implications. Although the DFR program is not currently reflected in the staffing models below, it remains a high-priority initiative. Flexibility within the models is essential to accommodate its potential integration.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is another rapidly advancing area. There is no doubt that AI will play a significant role in the future of law enforcement. However, the extent of its impact on workload and operations is still emerging. For example, AI-powered tools may significantly

reduce report writing time, automate transcription, or assist in summarizing interviews. At the same time, these tools may introduce legal and evidentiary challenges, particularly in court settings. As AI capabilities mature, the department's strategic plan can be adapted to reflect any resulting efficiencies or new requirements.

Investigative Software and Search Capabilities are also expected to transform how law enforcement agencies conduct investigations and manage information. Advanced analytics platforms, link analysis tools, and integrated case management systems can enhance the speed and accuracy of investigations. These tools can automate the aggregation and analysis of data from multiple sources such as body-worn cameras, license plate readers, social media, and public records, providing investigators with actionable intelligence more quickly.

Additionally, next-generation search capabilities powered by AI and natural language processing will allow personnel to query large volumes of structured and unstructured data more intuitively. This could reduce the time spent on manual data review and improve the quality of investigative leads. As these technologies become more accessible and integrated, they may reduce the need for certain administrative tasks while increasing the demand for personnel skilled in digital forensics and data analysis

2. Staffing Allocation

Framework for Staffing Allocation

The allocation of staffing resources must be guided by our mission – *to ensure that Bellingham is a safe city to live, work, play, and visit* – and our vision – *to be a leader in public safety through professional policing, championing procedural justice and optimizing modern concepts and technology*.

To that end, resource allocation decisions must be responsive to the evolving needs and unique challenges of our community. These challenges may be addressed either through enhancing existing units or the development of new, specialized units. Thoughtful consideration is necessary when determining how to address the challenges our city faces now and in the future.

Equally important is the prioritization of the safety and wellness of our team members. This includes appropriately staffing already existing units prior to initiating new ones and ensuring that existing units are equipped with the tools, training, and technology necessary to effectively operate.

The staffing models outlined below serve as a foundational framework for current operations; however, they are intentionally designed to remain adaptable. Unforeseen community needs, emerging public safety challenges, or innovative ideas from within the organization may necessitate adjustments to existing roles or the creation of new positions or units. Our team

members are uniquely positioned to identify evolving issues and propose solutions that enhance service delivery. As such, this plan emphasizes the importance of flexibility, ensuring the department can respond proactively and effectively to both internal insights and external demands.

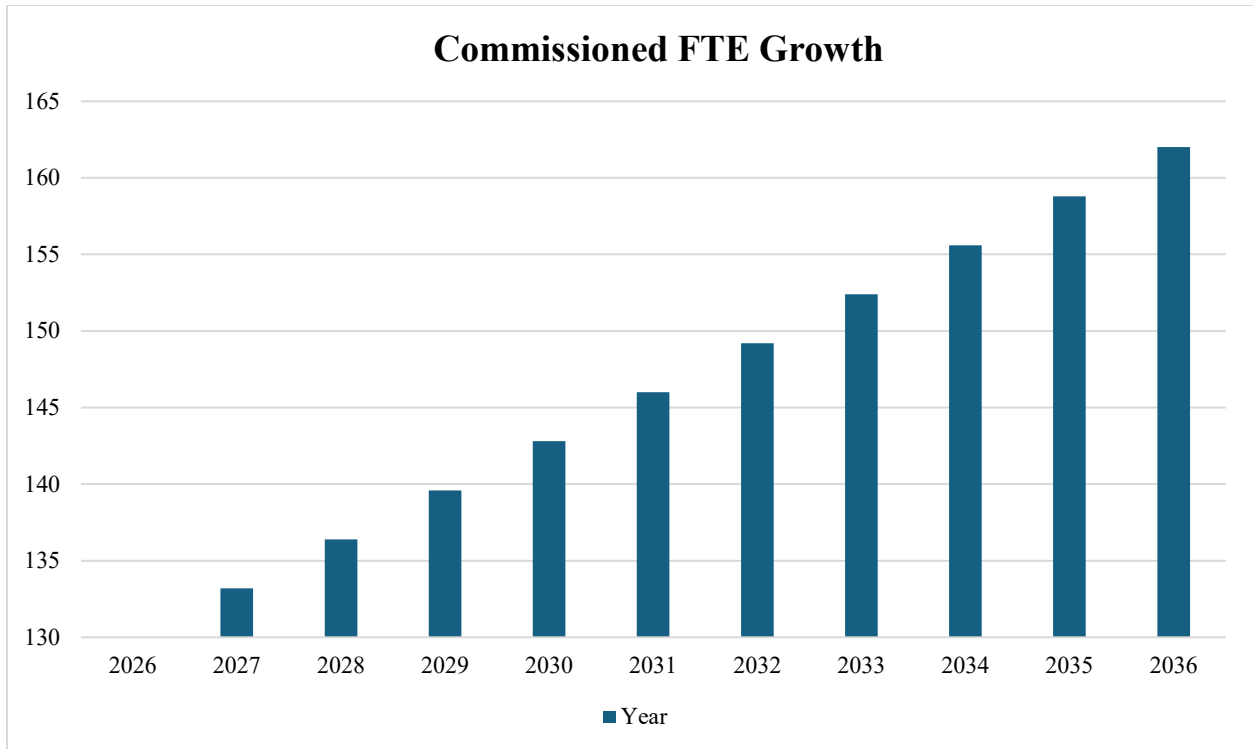
Staffing Allocation Models

Based on the workload assessment in Section I, we start with the premise that our current staffing levels are inadequate to meet the needs of the city. As stated previously, our patrol division is divided into two teams. Each team has four shifts with staggered start times to maximize the overlap during the busiest parts of the day. The following is the minimum staffing for patrol based on the hours throughout the day:

- 0300-1020 – Five officers (to include a supervisor)
- 1020-0300 – Ten officers (to include two supervisors)

This minimum staffing level is not sustainable as our city continues to grow. When we look toward our ideal organization, we believe that adequate staffing would include each of the six patrol areas being staffed on every shift. This would allow for adequate coverage and distribution of officers across the city thus reducing call response times. When there are gaps in the coverage of patrol areas, officers are required to respond from different sectors of the city. Having each area covered would provide more opportunity for community outreach as officers would spend more time in their assigned area. This level of staffing would provide for more time to conduct proactive police work (such investigative follow-ups, extra patrols, traffic enforcement, etc.).

The above goals can all be supported more robustly with an increase in staffing. The realistic, desired future organization would be an increase of 32 officers in the next 10 years, to 162 commissioned personnel. This is a growth of 3.2 FTE per year as demonstrated by the chart below:



There is recognition that there is an inherent challenge in forecasting the City’s General Fund and/or additional funding sources to supplement the police department’s budget over the next 10 years. Thus, this plan provides three staffing models per milestone year for commissioned personnel.

Comprehensive Impact Model

This model represents the ideal organizational structure assuming dedicated and sustained funding. It projects an annual growth of 3.2 commissioned personnel over the next decade for a total of 162 commissioned personnel in 2036. This model provides the highest level of services to enhance public safety.

Strategic Progress Model

This model projects a more moderate budgetary forecast, which would require a reduction in services when compared to the Comprehensive Impact Model. It projects annual growth of 2.3 commissioned personnel over the next decade for a total of 153 commissioned personnel in 2036. The specific reduction in services and operational impacts are detailed in the section below.

Foundational Readiness Model

This model represents a constrained fiscal environment in which services are only minimally increased over the next decade for a total of 143 commissioned personnel in 2036. It projects an annual growth of 1.3 commissioned personnel over the next

decade. The specific reduction in services and operational impacts are detailed in the section below.

** Note for the reader: These models represent additions to FTEs with the assumption that all 130 allotted FTEs are fully operational, which they are currently not. The growth will be phased in as allotted FTEs become operational with the focus on increasing patrol staffing. The growth is in ranking order of priority.*

Each year's model is compared against the previous year's model in the same classification (i.e. 2028 Model A is compared against 2027 Model A). This presumes that the growth that occurred in the previous year(s) has occurred.

Non-commissioned personnel are represented with a single model based on Model A and will need to be adaptable depending on actualized commissioned personnel growth.

2027 Comprehensive Impact Model (commissioned personnel)

The Comprehensive Impact model for 2027 is an annual growth of 3 FTEs for a total of 133 FTEs. The growth would allow for the implementation of the following:

- Increase the CSI division from **four to six**
- Increase in patrol staffing from **65 to 75 (two assigned as traffic officers)**
- Increase in detective division staffing from **12 to 14 detectives**

2027 Strategic Progression Model (commissioned personnel)

The Strategic Progression Model represents moderate growth in the budgetary forecast. This model represents an annual growth of two officers for a total of 132 commissioned FTEs. The moderate growth would allow for the implementation of the following:

- Increase the CSI division from **four to six**
- Increase in patrol staffing from **65 to 74 (two assigned as traffic officers)**
- Increase in detective division staffing from **12 to 14 detectives**

2027 Foundational Readiness Model (commissioned personnel)

The Foundational Readiness Model represents the most constrained budgetary scenario. This model represents an annual growth of one officer for increase to 131 commissioned FTEs. This minimal growth would only allow for the implementation of the following:

- Increase the CSI division from **four to six**
- Increase in patrol staffing from **65 to 73 (two assigned as traffic officers)**
- Increase in detective division staffing from **12 to 14 detectives**

2027 Commissioned Personnel			
	Comprehensive Impact	Strategic Progression	Foundational Readiness
Chief	1	1	1
Deputy Chief	2	2	2
Patrol LT	1	1	1
Patrol Lt	1	1	1
Investigation Lt	1	1	1
Spec Ops Lt	1	1	1
Services Lt	1	1	1
OPR Lt	1	1	1
Patrol Sgt	8	8	8
Patrol Cpl	8	8	8
Patrol Ofc	59	58	57
MCU Sgt	1	1	1
MCU Det	7	7	7
HUD Det	1	1	1
SVU Sgt	1	1	1
SVU Det	7	7	7
Forensic Det	4	4	4
EVID/ID Sup	1	1	1
EVID/ID Ofc	1	1	1
CSI	6	6	6
Traffic Ofc	4	4	4
K9 Supervisor	1	1	1
K9 Ofc	3	3	3
Bike Sgt	1	1	1
Bike Ofc	4	4	4
Task Force	2	2	2
Training Sgt	1	1	1
Training Ofc	1	1	1
Range Ofc	1	1	1
ROC	1	1	1
Outreach Ofc	1	1	1
	133	132	131

2027 Comprehensive Impact Model - What-Comm

What-Comm has spent the last five years catching up from an outdated number of Public Safety Telecommunicators (PST). This increase in PSTs working at all hours, coupled with the recognized importance of routine PST supervision in nationwide best practices, necessitates sufficient supervisors to ensure 24/7 What-Comm supervision.

What-Comm currently has four Dispatch Supervisors. Six Dispatch Supervisors are required to ensure 24/7 supervision of What-Comm's operations. One supervisor will remain the Training Supervisor. The following is the ideal growth of What-Comm in 2027:

- Increase Dispatch Supervisors from five to seven

2027 Comprehensive Impact Model – Records Division

When the commissioned personnel positions grow, there will be a need for the support staff to grow as well. The following is the idea growth of the Records Division in 2027:

- Increase Records Specialists from **12 to 15**
- Increase Records Supervisors from **three to four**

2027 Comprehensive Impact Model - Technology Division

Technology is an integral aspect of supporting the police department's mission. This is both in technology upgrades and technology personnel. There has been an identified need for crime analysts. The following is the ideal growth of the Technology Division in 2027:

- Implement Tactical Crime Analyst

2028 Comprehensive Impact Model (commissioned personnel)

The Comprehensive Impact Model for 2028 is an annual growth of 3 FTEs for a total of 136 FTEs. One should note that there is a strategic decision to reduce the patrol staffing level from the 2027 model. This is to allow for the implementation of other needed positions. The following would be implemented as a result of the growth:

- Implement a **Forensic Sergeant**
- Implement an **Administrative Sergeant**
- Decrease patrol staffing from **75 to 74**
- Increase in detective division staffing from **14 to 16 detectives**

2028 Strategic Progression Model (commissioned personnel)

The Strategic Progression Model represents moderate growth in the budgetary forecast. This model represents an annual growth of two officers for a total of 134 commissioned FTEs. The following would be implemented in this model:

- Implement a **Forensic Sergeant**
- Implement an **Administrative Sergeant**

2028 Foundational Readiness Model (commissioned personnel)

The Foundational Readiness Model represents the most constrained budgetary scenario. This model represents an annual growth of one officer per year for a total of 132 commissioned FTEs. The following would be implemented in this model:

- Implement a **Forensic Sergeant**
- Implement an **Administrative Sergeant**
- Reducing patrol staffing from **73 to 72**

2028 Commissioned Personnel			
	Comprehensive Impact	Strategic Progression	Foundational Readiness
Chief	1	1	1
Deputy Chief	2	2	2
Patrol LT	1	1	1
Patrol Lt	1	1	1
Investigation Lt	1	1	1
Spec Ops Lt	1	1	1
Services Lt	1	1	1
OPR Lt	1	1	1
Patrol Sgt	8	8	8
Patrol Cpl	8	8	8
Patrol Ofc	58	58	56
MCU Sgt	1	1	1
MCU Det	8	7	7
HUD Det	1	1	1
SVU Sgt	1	1	1
SVU Det	8	7	7
Forensic Sgt	1	1	1
Forensic Det	4	4	4
EVID/ID Sup	1	1	1
EVID/ID Ofc	1	1	1

CSI	6	6	6
Admin Sgt	1	1	1
Traffic Ofc	4	4	4
K9 Supervisor	1	1	1
K9 Ofc	3	3	3
Bike Sgt	1	1	1
Bike Ofc	4	4	4
Task Force	2	2	2
Training Sgt	1	1	1
Training Ofc	1	1	1
Range Ofc	1	1	1
ROC	1	1	1
Outreach Ofc	1	1	1
	136	134	132

2028 Comprehensive Impact Model - What-Comm

Continuing with the vision in 2027’s ideal What-Comm, the increase in Dispatch Supervisors will necessitate a long-overdue adjustment to What-Comm’s leadership. The Deputy Director has handled all administrative matters, and the workload is neither sustainable nor advisable from a standpoint of span of control or continuity of operations.

We will create two manager-level positions: one to oversee day-to-day operations and another to oversee training, compliance, and administration. This will better align with our current organizational structure, which currently contains one manager overseeing Information Technology.

After this, What-Comm will have three manager positions: Operations, Training, and Information Technology. The three managers will report to the Deputy Director, whose job classification shall change to Director. The following is the ideal growth of What-Comm for 2028:

- Increase the Manager position from one to three
- Increase Public Records Specialist from .05 to 1
- Re-Classify the Deputy Director to Director

2028 Comprehensive Impact Model - Records Division

When the commissioned personnel positions grow, there is a need for the support staff to grow as well. The following is the idea growth of the Records Division in 2028:

- Increase Support Services Specialists from **15 to 17**
- Increase Records Supervisors from **four to five**

2028 Comprehensive Impact Model - Technology Division

Technology is an integral aspect of supporting the police department’s mission. This is both in technology upgrades and technology personnel. There has been an identified need for crime analysts. The following is the ideal growth of the Technology Division in 2028.

- Implement the Intel Crime Analyst

2031 Comprehensive Impact Model (commissioned personnel)

To effectively progress toward our envisioned organizational structure in 2036, it is essential to establish clear benchmarks and prioritize key staffing milestones along the way. Based on the commissioned growth chart, we have identified an increase in FTEs to 145 by the year 2031 as a critical midpoint toward achieving our long-term goals.

Most notably there is a structural change in the leadership of our organization through the implementation of Captain positions. This structural change will allow the Chief to be more outward facing and the Deputy Chief to be more operational. One of the current Deputy Chief positions would be converted to a Captain position to allow for the implementation of three Captain positions. Each Captain would oversee one of three divisions – patrol, investigations and services.

This growth will be strategically phased after achieving our goals in the 2028 model, with resource allocation guided by the following priorities:

- Implementation of the **Captain** positions (add two Captains and convert one Deputy Chief position)
- Increasing the patrol division from **74 to 79**
- Increase Forensic Detective positions from **four to five**
- Increase of Detective positions to from **16 to 17**

2031 Strategic Progression Model (commissioned personnel)

The Strategic Progression Model represents moderate growth in the budgetary forecast. This model represents an annual growth of two officers for the next five years for a total of 140 commissioned FTEs. The following would be implemented:

- Implementation of the **Captain** positions
- Increase the patrol division from **74 to 76**
- Increase Forensic Detective Position from **four to five**

- Increase detective division from **14 to 15**

2031 Foundational Readiness Model (commissioned personnel)

The Foundational Readiness Model represents the most constrained budgetary scenario. This model represents an annual growth of one officer for the five years for a total of 135 commissioned FTEs. The following would be implemented:

- Implementation of the **Captain** Position
- Increase the patrol division from **72 to 73**

2031 Commissioned Personnel			
	Comprehensive Impact	Strategic Progression	Foundational Readiness
Chief	1	1	1
Deputy Chief	1	1	1
Captains	3	3	3
Patrol LT	1	1	1
Patrol Lt	1	1	1
Investigation Lt	1	1	1
Spec Ops Lt	1	1	1
Services Lt	1	1	1
OPR Lt	1	1	1
Patrol Sgt	8	8	8
Patrol Cpl	8	8	8
Patrol Ofc	63	60	57
MCU Sgt	1	1	1
MCU Det	8	7	7
HUD Det	1	1	1
SVU Sgt	1	1	1
SVU Det	9	8	7
Forensic Sgt	1	1	1
Forensic Det	5	4	4
EVID/ID Sup	1	1	1
EVID/ID Ofc	1	1	1
CSI	6	6	6
Traffic Ofc	4	4	4
K9 Supervisor	1	1	1
K9 Ofc	3	3	3
Admin Sgt	1	1	1
Bike Sgt	1	4	4

Bike Ofc	4	1	1
Task Force	2	2	2
Training Sgt	1	1	1
Training Ofc	1	1	1
Range Ofc	1	1	1
ROC	1	1	1
Outreach	1	1	1
	145	139	135

2031 Comprehensive Impact Model - What-Comm

With the increase in commissioned personnel, both at BPD and throughout Whatcom County, a fourth 24/7 radio frequency will be required to maintain appropriate, safe, and sustainable workloads for What-Comm staff. Staffing a radio frequency 24/7 requires six personnel. It also requires additional support personnel. The following is the ideal growth of What-Comm in 2031:

- Increase Public Safety Telecommunicators from **31 to 37**
- Implement a What-Comm Systems Analyst

2031 Comprehensive Impact Model - Records Division

When the commissioned personnel positions grow, there is a need for the support staff to grow as well. The following is the idea growth of the Records Division in 2031:

- Increase Support Services Specialists from **17 to 20**
- Increase Records Supervisors from **five to six**

2031 Comprehensive Impact Model - Technology Division

One should note that the Technology Division model for 2031 also has a structural change to their leadership and positions. The following is the ideal growth and structure of the Technology Division in 2031:

- Implement a Forensic Crime Analyst
- Implement a Technical Support Specialist
- Re-organize the System Analyst to a Technology Supervisor

2036 Comprehensive Impact Model (commissioned personnel)

The Comprehensive Impact Model represents the realization of optimal growth for 10 years. This would allow for the implementation and expansion of several units to meet the needs of our city. One will note a decrease in our patrol division to allow for the implementation of units. Those units will reduce the workload of patrol, allowing for the reduction of patrol staffing. In this model, commissioned positions will have grown to 162 and the additional FTEs will be implemented in the following way:

- Implementation of a traffic unit (a sergeant and six officers)
- Implementation of a night Bicycle Unit (a sergeant and four officers)
- Implementation of an Anti-Crime Team (a sergeant and four officers)
- Implementation of an Outreach Division (a lieutenant, sergeant, and three school resource officers)
- Increase in Forensic Detectives from **five to six**
- Increase Training Officers from **one to two**
- Decrease of the Patrol Division from 79 to 78
- Elimination of Administrative Sergeant (position converted to one of the above units)

2036 Strategic Progression Model (commissioned personnel)

The Strategic Progression Model represents moderate growth in the budgetary forecast and growth of 2.3 FTEs annually for a total of 153 commissioned personnel. One will note the decrease in patrol staffing when compared to 2031 Strategic Progression Model. This was a strategic decision to implement new units that will help to reduce the call load of patrol. The following would be implemented in this model:

- Implementation of a traffic unit (adding a sergeant and removed from patrol)
- Implementation of a night Bicycle Unit (a sergeant and four officers)
- Implementation of an Anti-Crime Team (a sergeant and four officers)
- Implementation of an Outreach Division (a lieutenant, sergeant, and three school resource officers)
- Increase Forensic Detectives from **five to six**
- Increase the Detective Division from **15 to 16**
- Decrease of the Patrol Division from **76 to 74**
- Elimination of Administrative Sergeant (position converted to one of the above units)
- Conversion of Outreach Officer to Outreach Sergeant

2036 Foundational Readiness Model (commissioned personnel)

The Foundational Readiness Model represents the most restrained budgetary scenario with a growth of 13 officers in the next decade. This model does not allow for the implementation of several specialty units that would provide a more focused attention to community needs.

It is of note that some units may be higher in the Foundational Readiness Model when compared to Strategic Progression Model (traffic officers and patrol officers). This was a strategic choice to increase those units prior to implementing any new units based on the limited resources provided in Foundational Readiness Model.

- Implementation of a Traffic Unit (adding a sergeant and removed from patrol)
- Increase Forensic Detectives from **four to five**
- Increase the Patrol Division from **73 to 76**
- Increase the Detective Division from **14 to 16**

2036 Commissioned Personnel			
	Comprehensive Impact	Strategic Progression	Foundational Readiness
Chief	1	1	1
Deputy Chief	1	1	1
Captains	3	3	3
Patrol LT	1	1	1
Patrol Lt	1	1	1
Investigation Lt	1	1	1
Spec Ops Lt	1	1	1
Outreach Lt	1	1	0
Services Lt	1	1	1
OPR Lt	1	1	1
Patrol Sgt	8	8	8
Patrol Cpl	8	8	8
Patrol Ofc	62	58	60
MCU Sgt	1	1	1
MCU Det	8	8	8
HUD Det	1	1	1
SVU Sgt	1	1	1
SVU Det	9	8	8
Forensic Sgt	1	1	1
Forensic Det	6	5	5
EVID/ID Sup	1	1	1
EVID/ID Ofc	1	1	1

CSI	6	6	6
ACT Sgt	1	1	0
ACT Ofc	4	4	0
Traffic Sgt	1	1	1
Traffic Ofc	6	4	6
K9 Supervisor	1	1	1
K9 Ofc	3	3	3
Bike Sgt	2	2	1
Bike Ofc	8	8	4
Task Force	2	2	2
Outreach Ofc	1	1	1
ROC	1	1	1
SRO	3	3	0
Training Sgt	1	1	1
Training Ofc	2	1	1
Range Ofc	1	1	1
	162	153	143

2036 Comprehensive Impact Model - What-Comm

With the increase in commissioned personnel, both at BPD and throughout Whatcom County, and the expected population increases, additional Public Safety Telecommunicators will be required to support the increased workload, especially during What-Comm’s peak hours. The following is the ideal growth of What-Comm in 2036:

- Increase Public Safety Telecommunicators from **37 to 40**

2036 Comprehensive Impact Model - Records Division

When the commissioned personnel positions grow, there is a need for the support staff to grow as well. The following is the idea growth of the Records Division in 2036:

- Increase Support Services Specialists from **20 to 22**
- Increase Records Supervisors from **six to seven**

2036 Comprehensive Impact Model - Technology Division

The technology division believes that it can remain consistent with its staffing from 2031 to 2036.

Cost Estimate

The table below provides an estimated annual cost of increased commissioned officers over a ten-year period. It does not differentiate the roles described in the narrative which would have incremental impact on costs.

	Comprehensive Impact	Strategic Progression	Foundational Readiness
2027	\$525,000	\$403,000	\$228,000
2028	\$1,118,000	\$830,000	\$469,000
2029	\$1,746,000	\$1,282,000	\$724,000
2030	\$2,411,000	\$1,760,000	\$995,000
2031	\$3,114,000	\$2,266,000	\$1,281,000
2032	\$3,857,000	\$2,801,000	\$1,583,000
2033	\$4,642,000	\$3,366,000	\$1,903,000
2034	\$5,470,000	\$3,962,000	\$2,240,000
2035	\$6,344,000	\$4,591,000	\$2,595,000
2036	\$7,265,000	\$5,225,000	\$2,970,000

In addition, the Comprehensive Impact Model includes significant increases in non-commissioned staff.

	2027	2028	2031
Non-Commissioned Staff	\$714,000	\$1,627,000	\$3,527,000

Community Service Officers

The department currently employs four Community Service Officers (CSOs) who provide essential support to the patrol, technology, and records divisions. Three of these CSOs are assigned to the patrol division, where they serve as non-commissioned personnel assisting in a variety of operational tasks. Their responsibilities include reviewing and approving online police reports, impounding property, and responding to certain calls for service routed through 911. These contributions help alleviate the workload of commissioned patrol officers and enhance overall service delivery.

While the CSO program is not currently integrated into formal staffing models, it remains a valuable component of departmental operations. As demands on commissioned personnel increase and call volumes evolve, there is potential for the CSO program to grow. The existing job classification includes a CSO II designation, which would allow for expanded responsibilities, including greater support for investigative functions. This presents an opportunity to extend CSO support to the investigations division, where they could assist detectives with case management and administrative tasks.

The future trajectory of the CSO program is intentionally left flexible to accommodate changing departmental needs and priorities. Expansion will be considered as part of broader strategic discussions around workload management and resource allocation. Regardless of its size or structure, the CSO unit will continue to be recognized as a vital support function, and its members will be valued for their contributions to the department's mission.

3. Facilities

The police department's current facility, constructed in 1992, no longer adequately supports the operational and spatial needs of a modern and growing law enforcement agency. Over the past three decades, the department has expanded significantly, resulting in limited capacity for functional workspaces and constrained infrastructure to support future growth.

While the existing facility was engineered with the potential for expansion, both in physical footprint and second-floor office space, there are increasing demands that exceed its current capabilities. In particular, the secure parking area must be expanded to accommodate a growing fleet aligned with projected increases in full-time staffing.

To proactively address these challenges, the department will establish a dedicated work group tasked with evaluating long-term facility needs. This group will assess the feasibility, costs, and operational impacts of either upgrading the current facility or constructing a new one. The goal is to ensure that the department remains positioned to meet future service demands while supporting a safe, efficient, and professional working environment.

V. Implementation

Plan Implementation

The development of this document is only the foundational step in the realization of its intent. It is crucial that this document acts as a guide in future planning processes and is revisited on a regular basis.

To assist in this, a strategic planning manager has been identified and is responsible for organizing quarterly meetings with staff members. The quarterly meetings will assess the progress and implementation of the aforementioned initiatives. A quarterly report including project updates and required changes to the plan will be communicated to all employees.

As part of managing the strategic plan, each initiative has or will be assigned to a responsible party (see Appendix I). A project management software system will be utilized to track the progress of each initiative. The strategic planning manager will track progress and engage with responsible parties.

This is a living document that can and will be adapted as we progress through the process of implementation.

Appendix I

Increase Community Engagement

Division: Patrol

Project Description: Community Oriented Policing Neighborhood

Officers previously had the responsibility of having one neighborhood for which they were responsible for. This practice stopped with the implementation of Neighborhood Police Officers (NPOs). Unfortunately, police staffing levels have not allowed NPOs to continue as a stand-alone position.

It is the desire for the police department to be engaged with the community in settings that are outside law enforcement related contacts. This program provides an opportunity for officers to engage with community members and hear their concerns, which will help to continue to build trust with the community.

A list of neighborhoods and community contacts will be developed and distributed to the patrol division. A member of the Gold and Blue Team will each share the responsibility of a neighborhood to ensure that there is coverage for community meetings. Each officer will be responsible for choosing a project for the betterment of that neighborhood. This can be anything that enhances public safety and increases community engagement.

Desired Outcomes:

Increased engagement with the community. Provide officers with the opportunity to further develop and increase job satisfaction.

Costs:

Possible minimal overtime costs

Timeline:

2026

Project Lead:

Patrol Lieutenants / ROC

Division: Administrative Services

Project Description: Outreach (KWW partnerships)

Build on the existing community partners and develop new relationships with underserved community member groups.

Desired Outcomes:

Increase community engagement with KWW partners.

Costs:

None

Timeline:

2026

Project Lead:

ROC

Division: Patrol Division

Project Description: Adopt a School Program

Officers identify and adopt a school that is in their patrol beat. They would be provided with time to spend at the school in a variety of forums (classes, recess, lunch, etc.).

Desired Outcomes:

Positive interactions with the youth of our community.

Costs:

None / Possible Overtime

Timeline:

2026

Project Lead:

TBD

Division: All

Project Description: Yearly Day of Service

Employees would be encouraged to identify a community service project within the Bellingham community. This project would be presented and approved by their lieutenants or division leader through their chain of command. The employees would be provided time during their workday to serve within the capacity of the service project.

This project requires further discussion and planning with bargaining units.

Desired Outcomes:

Provide team members with a way to serve the community in a unique way and interact with comembers members in non-law enforcement setting.

Costs:

None

Timeline:

2026

Project Lead:

TBD

Division: Patrol

Project Description: BPD Book Initiative

The department developed a partnership with the public library for the purchase of books for children between the ages of birth to five. The goal of the project is to ensure that there are books in each patrol vehicle that can be handed out to children when encountered during calls for service to increase literacy.

In addition to having books in patrol vehicles, dates for special events at specific complexes will be identified. Officers will be given the opportunity to read to children and give out books.

All the books were previously purchased through grant funding.

Desired Outcomes:

Increase crime prevention through literacy and community engagement.

Costs:

None

Timeline:

2026

Project Lead:

Lt. Nelson

Division: Patrol

Project Description: Stickers

Purchase enough badge stickers to be placed in all the patrol vehicles. These stickers are often requested by children and are a great way to have a positive interaction with the youth of our community.

Desired Outcomes:

Create more opportunities to have positive interactions with children in our community.

Costs:

TBD

Timeline:

Q1 2026

Project Lead:

Patrol Lieutenants

Division: Patrol

Project Description: Update Trading Card

Update and purchase new trading cards for officers. Some of the items that need to be completed are:

- Identify a funding source
- Identify a photographer
- Create a calendar for photographs to be taken

Desired Outcomes:

Positive interactions with the youth of our community.

Costs:

TBD

Timeline:

End of Q2 of 2026

Project Lead:

TBD

Division: Investigations

Project Description: Continue to build relationships with the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT)

Create a monthly calendar of events/trainings/meetings put on by the MDT and other community agencies. The incorporated MDT includes, but is not limited to, Brigid Collins, DVSAS, DCYF, Lummi Victims of Crime, DV Commission, SART and Bellingham School District.

Desired Outcomes:

This would allow greater visibility for the Investigations Unit to create, maintain and improve relationships with the MDTs and other local agencies.

Costs:

Zero

Timeline:

2026

Project Lead:

SVU Sergeant

Division: Records

Project Description: Open Front Desk Lobby Full Time

There is a desire to serve our community in more front facing fashion. Opening the front desk full time would be an effective way to assist community members.

Desired Outcomes:

Serving the community by providing more options for them to receive in-person service by the police department.

Costs:

Salaries and benefits associated with the needed increase in staffing to the Records Division.

Timeline:

2026

Project Lead:

Records Manager

Division: Patrol

Project Description: Safe Place Sticker Outreach

The police department initiated the Safe Place Sticker Program in 2025. This program is a partnership between the department and businesses where businesses agree that they are a safe place for victims of hate crimes to report a crime.

We desire for the program to be expanded to more businesses.

Desired Outcomes:

Increase the number of businesses that participate in the program.

Costs:

No additional funding is needed at this time.

Timeline:

2026

Project Lead:

Lt. Murphy

Increase Traffic Safety

Division: Patrol Division

Project Description: Moving Radar

It was necessary to return the stand-alone traffic unit resources to the patrol division due to staffing. This reduced the number of officers who are dedicated to traffic enforcement. There are currently two traffic officers who are assigned to patrol shifts. When staffing allows, these officers can be dedicated to traffic enforcement.

Traffic enforcement is now a function / responsibility of the patrol division. It has been shown that traffic safety can be positively influenced through enforcement, education, and environmental changes.

The utilization of moving radar is a more effective strategy to provide enforcement and education opportunities, thus increasing traffic safety.

Desired Outcomes:

Increase traffic safety through enforcement and education.

Costs:

Unknown at this time.

Timeline:

Upfit four patrol vehicles before the end of Q2 2026.

Continue to upfit four patrol vehicles per year until the fleet is fully outfitted.

Project Lead:

Patrol Lieutenants

Division: Patrol

Project Description: Grappler

The Grappler is a tool that is used to safely stop fleeing vehicles. Currently the most common way to stop a fleeing vehicle is through spike strips and/or a Pursuit Intervention Technique (PIT) maneuver. The PIT maneuver often leads to damage to both the suspect's vehicle and the police vehicle. The cost of repairs to a police vehicle is often high.

The Grappler can be added to the existing fleet of vehicles. It provides another option to stop fleeing vehicles without damaging patrol vehicles.

The intent of this goal is to research the cost of purchasing and outfitting a patrol vehicle. Identify potential funding sources and determine how many patrol vehicles it is feasible to outfit.

Desired Outcomes:

Provide another option to stop fleeing vehicles without damaged patrol vehicles.

Costs:

TBD

Timeline:

Cost and funding sources identified in 2026.

Project Lead:

TBD

Division: Patrol

Project Description: Patrol Vehicle Dash Cameras

Body worn cameras have limitations while an officer is driving. This is particularly true of incidents involving impaired drivers and vehicle pursuits. To mitigate this, patrol vehicles could be equipped with dash cameras.

Explore the costs associated with adding dash cameras to patrol vehicles and storage of the videos in evidence.com. If feasible with existing funding, develop a plan for implementation. If not, explore outside funding sources such as grants.

Desired Outcomes:

More comprehensive video of criminal incidents.

Costs:

Unknown at this time.

Timeline:

2026 (completion of proposal)

Project Lead:

Patrol Lieutenants

Division: Patrol

Project Description: Provide Traffic Related Professional Development and Develop a Succession Plan

The investigation of serious collisions requires specialized certifications that are time intensive and expensive to receive. This role was previously held by those within the traffic unit. Due to staffing, that unit had to be disbanded and there only remains two traffic officers.

There is a need to develop a succession plan for those that are interested in traffic collision investigations. This would include determining the number of officers who are provided with the opportunity for the training, the selection of individuals and the application of their skills.

Desired Outcomes:

Effective succession planning for an upcoming need.

Costs:

Costs dependent on number selected and training required.

Timeline:

2026

Project Lead:

Patrol Lieutenants

Increase Safety of Downtown

Division: Patrol

Project Description: Special Emphasis Programs

There are several community concerns that are more effectively addressed through special emphasis programs. These include downtown drug activity, retail theft, driving under the influence (DUI) enforcement, bicycle theft, and extra patrols. However, there are limited specialized units to address these due to current staffing levels.

Patrol staffing is affected by several factors – training, sick leave, vacation, etc. However, there are days throughout the year where staffing is adequate to assign officers to special emphasis programs.

Patrol sergeants will be asked to identify dates throughout the year and submit proposals to implement special emphasis programs to the patrol lieutenants.

Desired Outcomes:

Effectively address community specific issues and provide unique opportunities for the development of officers.

Costs:

None

Timeline:

2026

Project Lead:

Patrol Sergeants

Increase Investigation Capacity

Division: Patrol and Investigations

Project Description: Case Management Utilization

The case management tool in Longarm has been primarily utilized by the investigation division to assign cases to detectives. Case assignments have been the responsibility of the detective sergeants. The detective division has limited resources and case assignment choices leave many criminal cases without a responsible party to conduct follow-up.

Through the implementation of this project, we would assign all criminal cases. Detective sergeants would still be responsible for the case assignment, but the cases that have traditionally not been assigned to the detective division would be assigned to the original primary officer.

In addition to assigning all criminal cases, new fields would be added to Longarm for different ways to close the cases if there is no actionable follow-up or a lack of resources to investigate the incident.

Training will be developed to provide officers with information on how to navigate the case management section of Longarm.

Desired Outcomes:

1. Provide greater ownership and follow-through on cases that have traditionally gone unassigned in the detective division.
2. Increase case closure by arrest.
3. Increase accountability for those that victimize others in our community.
4. Increase tracking of cases that were closed due to a lack of resources.
5. Provide another metric to determine the effectiveness of officer's work product.
6. Increase officer work satisfaction by bringing more cases to a close.

Costs:

None

Timeline:

Q1 2026

Project Lead:

Patrol and Investigations Lieutenants

Division: Patrol / IT

Project Description: Integration of CAD and Longarm

Continue to explore how to integrate CAD with Longarm to allow for information to be pulled from CAD and automatically uploaded into Longarm. This would reduce the amount of time required for writing reports/data entry by officers.

Desired Outcomes:

Create greater efficiencies for report writing.

Costs:

Unknown at this time

Timeline:

Unknown at this time

Project Lead:

IT

Division: Investigations

Project Description: Remove Court Security as a Warrant Officer Duty

Warrant Officers spend the majority of their day in Municipal Court as a de facto bailiff. This is not a duty that should be part of their job description. There are many other things that they could be doing that would provide a much higher return on our investment into them. The Police Budget fully funds both positions so they should be dedicated resources for the PD. Municipal court could pay for their own security and then call for a transport if one is needed.

Desired Outcomes:

The Warrant Officers should be able to focus on servicing warrants, facilitating the surrender of weapons, assist Officers with transports to the jails, validate SORs, and many other potential jobs that could alleviate some work for patrol and investigations.

Costs:

None

Timeline:

Q1 2026

Project Lead:

Investigations Lieutenant

Division: Technology

Project Description: Deploy a centralized, cloud-based platform to unify law enforcement applications, reduce system silos, and improve operational efficiency.

Phases & Integrations:

Phase 1:

- Integrate Longarm, CAD, and Evidence.com

Phase 2:

- Integrate Karpel (eliminating Citrix and \$30K annual maintenance)
- Integrate Workday (link payroll to case data for officer wellness tracking)
- Integrate Flock Cameras and City Cameras

Desired Outcomes:

- Streamlined workflows across departments
- Reduced IT overhead and licensing costs
- Improved data accessibility and inter-system communication
- Enhanced officer wellness monitoring and accountability
- Scalable infrastructure for future technology growth

Costs:

\$80,000

Timeline:

2026-2028

Project Lead:

Technology & Investigations

Division: Technology

Project Description: Gladiator Forensics Platform

Establish a shared forensic analysis environment with Skagit County to support regional collaboration and digital evidence processing.

Desired Outcomes:

- Strengthened regional partnerships
- Expanded forensic capabilities without duplicating infrastructure
- Faster turnaround on digital evidence analysis
- Cost-sharing opportunities for long-term sustainability

Costs:

TBD

Timeline:

2026-2028

Project Lead:

Technology & Forensics

Increase Professional Development

Division: Administrative Services

Project Description: Flexible Resource Days Schedule

Identify and communicate department training topics and needs. Design and implement the training schedule for the various FRDs throughout the year.

We are looking at moving to more of a seminar type training day to provide personnel with the opportunity to provide more opportunities and options for training.

Desired Outcomes:

Focus on the mandatory training required for our agency as well as the needs/wants training requested by various department members.

Costs:

None

Timeline:

January 2026

Project Lead:

Administrative Services Sergeant, Training Officer, and the Range Officer

Division: Patrol / Services

Project Description: FRD Supervisor Training

Nearly one half of the first line supervisors in the agency have less than two years of experience in their position. There is a need to provide on-going professional development to our first line supervisors to enhance capabilities and consistency.

The department's patrol schedule allows each team to receive one training day per month. This provides a unique opportunity to provide consistent training to supervisors on a variety of topics.

Desired Outcomes:

Improve professional development of our first line supervisors.

Costs:

None

Timeline:

2026

Project Lead:

Patrol Lieutenant / Training Sergeant

Division: Patrol

Project Description: Sergeant Meeting Schedule

At the beginning of each year, Patrol Lieutenants will identify and communicate annual schedule for supervisor/sergeant's meeting.

Desired Outcomes:

More consistent meetings that provide an opportunity for career development.

Costs:

Overtime dependent on meeting schedule and structure.

Timeline:

January 2026

Project Lead:

Patrol Lieutenants

Division: Administrative Services

Project Description: Keep Washington Working Act

Ensure departmental training complies with policy, the law, and accreditation. Ongoing training will be provided to ensure understanding of the Keep Washington Working Act.

Desired Outcomes:

1. Provide an understanding of how the law affects members of the community.
2. Increase agency transparency with affected communities.
3. Ensure crimes are reported and victims feel heard.
4. Increase accountability for those that victimize others in our community.

Costs:

None

Timeline:

Q1 2026

Project Lead:

Administrative Services Lieutenant and Sergeant

Division: Administrative Services

Project Description: FTO Training

Hold periodic training and discussions for the FTO cadre.

Desired Outcomes:

Improve and move towards more consistent evaluations of student officers across the different Field Training Officers.

Costs:

Some overtime

Timeline:

2026

Project Lead:

Administrative Services Lieutenant and Sergeant

Division: Investigations

Project Description: LEMART Training

Specified training is critical for a well-functioning IIT. There needs to be in class, hands on and scenario-based training to provide a proper foundation for future investigations.

Desired Outcomes:

Provide quarterly training so that detectives, CSIs and Supervisors are properly positioned to handle an OIS or related event.

Costs:

Possibly overtime

Timeline:

January 2026

Project Lead:

Investigations Lieutenants

Additional Projects

Division: Administrative Services and OPR

Project Description: Accreditation Compliance

A new position was created within the Services Chain of Command to focus efforts on ongoing accreditation monitoring and compliance. The position was named the ROC (Recruiting, Outreach and Compliance). Our agency applies for re-accreditation every four years. One of the jobs of the ROC Officer is to provide ongoing tracking and monitoring of accreditation standards.

Desired Outcomes:

Effectively monitor and assess accreditation standard compliance year-round. Make adjustments and fixes where necessary to address problem areas.

Costs:

None

Timeline:

January 2026

Project Lead:

Administrative Services and OPR Lieutenant

Division: Administrative Services

Project Description: Recruiting and Hiring

Hire for open positions across the Department. These include Law Enforcement, Telecommunicators, and Support Services positions.

Desired Outcomes:

To fill open positions quickly and efficiently with qualified candidates.

Costs:

Costs will vary depending on the number of positions that need to be filled.

Timeline:

As vacancies occur and are approved by the Mayor's Office.

Project Lead:

Administrative Services Lieutenant

Division: Administrative Services

Project Description: Recruiting

Host events and tests at BPD for Law Enforcement positions and What-Comm Telecommunicator positions.

Attend local events and career fairs to increase knowledge of positions within our agency.

Desired Outcomes:

Increased awareness of open positions within our agencies. Increase quality of applicant pools.

Costs:

TBD

Timeline:

Ongoing

Project Lead:

Administrative Services Lieutenant and ROC Officer

Division: Patrol

Project Description: Extra Patrol Events

There are several holidays, events, and changes in seasons that have traditionally required more police resources. As an example, the beginning of the summer season often brings criminal activity (such as fighting) to Bloedel Donovan park. These types of issues can be mitigated by identifying and providing voluntary overtime to address them.

It will be the responsibility of the patrol lieutenants to identify these types of needs at the beginning of the year and address them through appropriate staffing.

Desired Outcomes:

Ensure that there is adequate staffing to address predictable problematic dates.

Costs:

Overtime costs dependent on number of days.

Timeline:

January 2026

Project Lead:

Patrol Lieutenants

Division: Patrol / Technology

Project Description: Taser 11

Taser has developed and unveiled a new version of the Taser, which enhances its effectiveness. This project will determine the cost to outfit all officers with the Taser 11 and determine the funding source. It will further explore how the cost would be affected by a new contract with Taser as a bundle.

Desired Outcomes:

Provide officers with a more effective less-lethal tool.

Costs:

Unknown that this time.

Timeline:

2026

Project Lead:

Patrol Lieutenants / Technology

Division: Patrol

Project Description: Briefing Room Chairs

The briefing room is utilized by all four shifts every single day. This is the central hub of our patrol division. The chairs in the briefing room have not been upgraded in over two decades.

Desired Outcomes:

Update and upgrade the aesthetics of the briefing room.

Costs:

TBD

Timeline:

2026

Project Lead:

Patrol Lieutenant

Division: Administrative Services (Training Division)

Project Description: Software upgrades

Explore software programs for better management of issued equipment. Explore options for upgrading software programs to better track training records, equipment requests, and equipment distribution.

Desired Outcomes:

Create better record keeping of equipment issued to individual users and to track individual training records.

Costs:

Unknown at this time

Timeline:

TBD

Project Lead:

Administrative Services Lieutenant and Sergeant

Division: Administrative Services (Evidence & ID)

Project Description: Acquire new technologies

Support the work being done by our Evidence and ID Supervisor and Crime Scene Investigator cadre. Assist in developing plans for acquisition and implementation of any new and emerging technologies we are able to acquire through in-house funding or grants.

Desired Outcomes:

Be as innovative as possible by staying up on the latest crime scene technologies available.

Costs:

Unknown at this time.

Timeline:

Ongoing

Project Lead:

Evidence & ID Supervisor, Evidence and ID Officer, and Administrative Services Lieutenant

Division: Administrative Services

Project Description: Promotional and Hiring Processes

Facilitate the upcoming promotional processes: Lieutenant, Evidence & ID Supervisor, Evidence & ID Officer, Crime Scene Investigator, and Corporal.

Currently on-hold are PIO, Crime Analyst

Desired Outcomes:

Provide quality testing and evaluation processes for all open positions or promotional processes.

Costs:

Will depend on resources used – up to \$15,000.

Timeline:

As needed

Project Lead:

Administrative Services Lieutenant

Division: Administrative Services (Training Division)

Project Description: Regional Training Center

There has been talk about the creation of a Regional Training Center here in Whatcom County. The project itself is not under the umbrella of Bellingham PD. Our goal would be to provide support in any way possible to achieve such a goal.

It would be a great benefit to all LE agencies in the county to have a regional facility with a mat room, an indoor and outdoor range, and a mock city.

Desired Outcomes:

Provide any assistance needed in achieving this goal. We would gladly be part of any steering committee or planning committee. We would also commit to assisting with the training that would take place at this facility for our agency as well as the region.

Costs:

Maybe some overtime

Timeline:

Unknown (potentially 2028)

Project Lead:

Administrative Services Lieutenant, Administrative Services Sergeant, Training Officer, and Range Officer

Division: Investigations

Project Description: Utilize ICAC Taskforce funding

Pursue equipment and training opportunities through consistent reporting of ICAC statistics to the Seattle ICAC Taskforce.

Desired Outcomes:

Reporting accurate ICAC statistics can lead to funding opportunities for training and equipment.

Costs:

Zero

Timeline:

2026

Project Lead:

SVU Sergeant and DFEs

Division: Investigations

Project Description: Move the Digital Forensic Examiners to a large open room

Move the Digital Forensic Examiners (Kennedy, Courtney, Urbany) into large open room. The “Laser Shot Room” has been identified as a potential room that would meet the needs of the unit.

Desired Outcomes:

This would allow for a space with multiple workstations enabling the DFEs to be more efficient and productive in their role. This would also allow for more collaborative work efforts as they would be in the same room for purposes of communication and sharing workstations/software. This would also allow for better heat ventilation and be a more comfortable work environment than the current cramped and hot offices that are currently occupied.

Costs:

TBD

Timeline:

2026

Project Lead:

Investigations Lieutenant

Division: Technology

Project Description: RMS Replacement

Begin strategic planning for the replacement of the Records Management System (RMS), with a focus on AI-readiness, scalability, and long-term sustainability.

Key Questions:

How will AI and automation impact RMS functionality?

What features are essential for future scalability and compliance?

Action:

Begin building a reserve fund of \$3–5 million

Desired Outcomes:

- Financial readiness for a major system transition
- Strategic alignment with future policing needs
- Improved data management and reporting

Costs:

TBD

Timeline:

2031

Project Lead:

Technology & Records

Division: Records

Project Description: Scanning hard copy archived reports to Longarm

Dedicate 5 hours per week to scanning archived files to Longarm

Desired Outcomes:

1. Consolidates all records in a digital format
2. Makes search/review/release through PDR more efficient, cutting down redaction/release times for PDR
3. Creates consistency in all records to allow for ease of searching and purging in accordance with records retention schedules.

Costs:

None other than work hours for PSSS

Timeline:

Q4 2026

Project Lead:

Records Manager/Police Records Supervisors

Division: Records

Project Description: Police Support Services Specialists Specialties

Create specialty fields for Police Support Services Specialists to become proficient in, in addition to daily tasks. Example: Disclosure Unit, Investigative assistance Unit and Retention/Deletion of records/Quality Control Unit

Designate two Police Support Services Specialists per area of specialty

Desired Outcomes:

1. Provides the ability for Specialists to become subject matter experts in areas of interest.
2. Provides assistance to Investigative Unit. Civilian personnel can do searches, case assembly and organization, and monitor case flow to free Investigations to focus on investigating crimes.
3. Move to a Quarterly destruction model for all records. Regular purging of records we do not need to keep will free up digital space and make records easier to search and identify.

Costs:

None other than work hours

Timeline:

2027 to 2028 – depending on staffing levels

Project Lead:

Records Manager/Records Supervisors

Apendix II

**BELLINGHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT
STAFFING ALLOCATION REPORT
“Patrol Section”
2025**

CURRENT WORK DAYS/OFF DAYS SCHEDULE: 1040 schedule					5 ON/4 OFF 5 ON/5 OFF 5 ON/4 OFF
DAYS WORKED PER YEAR: <i>(15 DAYS WORKED IN 28 DAY MONTH; 15 MULTIPLIED BY 13 (28 DAYS SEGMENTS))</i>					195
DAYS OFF PER YEAR: <i>(28 DAYS MINUS 15 = 13 MULTIPLIED BY 13 = OFF)</i>					169
		SHIFT	HOURS	PERCENTAGE	HOURS
	DAYS/YEAR	HOURS	YEARLY	AVAILABLE	REMAINING
BASE	365	10.67	3894.55	100%	3894.55
DAYS OFF	169	10.67	1803.23	53.70%	2091.32
VACATION	22.42	10.67	239.20	47.56%	1852.12
HOLIDAY	9.37	10.67	100.00	44.99%	1752.12
COMP	6.64	10.67	70.87	43.17%	1681.25
SICK	9.57	10.67	102.13	40.55%	1579.12
INJURY	6.51	10.67	69.47	38.76%	1509.65
MILITARY	2.74	10.67	29.27	38.01%	1480.38
ADMIN LEAVE	1.18	10.67	12.62	37.69%	1467.76
DENTAL	0.13	10.67	1.43	37.65%	1466.33
TRAINING	32.28	10.67	344.41	28.81%	1121.92
DISCIPLINE	N/A	N/A	N/A	28.81%	1121.92
PREDICTED YEARLY HOURS OF AVAILABILITY FOR PATROL:					1121.92
PREDICTED YEARLY SHIFTS –1121.92/10.67					105.15
* = ONE STAFFING UNIT (SU)					3894.55
RELIEF FACTOR:		$3894.55/1121.92 =$		3.47	

# Calls for Service (CFS):	(2024) 53,267 Adjusted CFS		
Add 30% for calls requiring backup officer	15,980.10 equals 69,247.1		
Multiplied by .75 The national average for handling calls is 45 minutes which equals .75	51,935.33		
Multiplied by 1.5 ➤ 2/3 time for calls for service, report writing ➤ 1/3 for patrolling and officer initiated activities and breaks	77,903		
Divided by 3894.55 (yearly base hours)	20.00 SU's for BPD		
Multiplied by Relief Factor (3.47)	<i>69.4 or 70</i>		
TOTALS.	CURRENT STAFFING	ALOCATION RESULTS	<i>DIFFERENCE</i> + / -
	56 Excludes Sergeants and Lieutenants	69 Excludes Sergeants and Lieutenants	<i>13 Officers Required</i>

Summary of Current Allocations

The current composition of the Bellingham Police Department Patrol Section is 2 Lieutenants, 8 Sergeants, and 56 combined Officers, Corporals, Crime Scene Investigators, and Traffic Officers. This is a total of 66 personnel, 10 of which are full-time supervisors.

The 2 Lieutenants provide administrative function only and do not assist in the response to or take direct leadership responsibility for response to calls for service.

The Sergeants are each assigned one of the 8 shifts to lead and perform the administrative and leadership functions, including report review, scheduling, use of force review, and on-scene response when a supervisor is requested or when the sergeant deems appropriate.

This leaves the 56 personnel with the primary responsibility of responding and handling the calls for service for the Patrol Section.

Workload Assessment and Staffing Allocation Report

The purpose of this staffing allocation, which was initiated in April 2025, is to compare the current workload received by the Bellingham Police Department Patrol Section versus the amount of personnel available for deployment to adequately respond to the public needs and allow for the desired time for non-dedicated patrol time and officer initiated activity.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (I.A.C.P.) scientific method of staffing allocation was utilized to determine the required number of patrol officers to handle existing workloads. This method is being taught at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center (G.P.S.T.C) and the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) currently utilizes this assessment in training courses across the country.

A breakdown of findings will explain the data sources utilized and the mathematical formula utilized to reach a legitimate yet conservative outcome. During the entire project, the team used a conservative approach to data collection and computations in an effort not to exaggerate the findings. Data utilized during this project was collected based on 2024 calendar statistics.

The first portion of the project as outlined on Page #1 of this project required data to be collected for the Staffing Allocation Report, which led to the computation of the Staffing Unit (SU) and the Relief Factor, both of which are essential to the remaining portion of the project. Each of these figures is agency specific and considers personnel, leave, vacation, work schedule, training, and calls for service. In an attempt to find a figure accurate for Bellingham Police Department Patrol Section Personnel, twenty (20) officers who were assigned to the Patrol Section for the entirety of the 2024 calendar year were chosen. A concerted effort was made to select personnel

of varying time on the job and shift assignment to find an average as close to possible that represented the average of one officer.

The **Base Figure** is provided from the total hours worked per year by a particular shift schedule, based on a 365 calendar year and the current patrol shift schedule of 10.67 hour shifts. When you multiply 365 by 10.67, the result is 3,894.55 hours per year available to one officer.

The **Days Off Figure** is derived from the fact that the Bellingham Police Department Patrol Section operates in an 10.67 hour (commonly referred to as 1040) schedule. This schedule is a work/off day rotation of 5-On/4-Off and 5-On/5-Off and 5-On/4-Off. This equates to 15 days worked in a 28 day period and as a result, because there are 13 (28 day periods) in one year, an officer works 195 days and thus is off 169 days. Therefore, this equates to 1,803.23 hours off per officer, per year with 2,091.32 hours remaining available for that officer to provide patrol activities.

The **Vacation Figure** was derived from the fact that for the calendar year 2024, the twenty officers whose time was calculated for this assessment used vacation leave an average of 239.20 hours per year, which averages to 22.42 shifts. As a result, the average of 239.20 hours is subtracted from the total available hours of 2,091.32 per year, which leaves 1,852.12 hours remaining available for that officer to provide patrol activities.

The **Holiday Figure** was derived from the fact that on average, personnel accrue and can use 100 hours of holiday time each year, which averages 9.37 shifts. As a result, the average of 100 hours is subtracted from the total available hours of 1,852.12 hours per year, which leaves 1,752.12 hours remaining available for that officer to provide patrol activities.

The **Comp Time Figure** was derived from the fact that for the calendar year 2024, the twenty officers whose time was calculated for this assessment used an average of 70.87 comp hours per year, which averages 6.64 shifts. As a result, the average of 70.87 hours was subtracted from the total available hours of 1,752.12 hours per year, which leaves 1,681.25 hours remaining for that officer to provide patrol activities.

The **Sick Figure** was derived from the fact that for the calendar year 2024, the twenty officers whose time was calculated for this assessment used an average of 102.13 sick hours per year, which averages 9.57 shifts. As a result, the average of 102.13 hours was subtracted from the total available hours of 1,681.25 hours per year, which leaves 1,579.12 hours remaining for that officer to provide patrol activities.

The **Injury Figure** was derived from the fact that for the calendar year 2024, the twenty officers whose time was calculated for this assessment used an average of 69.47 injury hours per year, which averages 6.51 shifts. As a result, the average of 69.47 hours was subtracted from the total available hours of 1,579.12 hours per year, which leaves 1,509.65 hours remaining for that officer to provide patrol activities.

The **Military Figure** was derived from the fact that for the calendar year 2024, the twenty officers whose time was calculated for this assessment used an average of 29.27 military hours

per year, which averages 2.74 shifts. As a result, the average of 29.27 hours was subtracted from the total available hours of 1,509.65 hours per year, which leaves 1,480.38 hours remaining for that officer to provide patrol activities.

The ***Admin Leave Figure*** was derived from the fact that for the calendar year 2024, the twenty officers whose time was calculated for this assessment used an average of 12.62 admin leave hours per year, which averages 1.18 shifts. As a result, the average of 12.62 hours was subtracted from the total available hours of 1,480.38 hours per year, which leaves 1,467.76 hours remaining for that officer to provide patrol activities.

The ***Dental Figure*** was derived from the fact that for the calendar year 2024, the twenty officers whose time was calculated for this assessment used an average of 1.43 dental hours per year, which averages 0.13 shifts. As a result, the average of 1.43 hours was subtracted from the total available hours of 1,467.76 hours per year, which leaves 1,466.33 hours remaining for that officer to provide patrol activities.

The ***Training Figure*** was derived from the fact that for the calendar year 2024, the twenty officers whose time was calculated for this assessment used an average of 344.41 training hours per year, which averages 32.28 shifts. This average was determined after removing the highest and lowest training hours figures and averaging the remaining 18 training hours figures. This step was taken to deviate from the other calculations because one of the personnel used for data had a training hours number that was so far beyond a normal number that it would have skewed the training figure well outside of the stated goal of a conservative calculation and report. As a result, the average of 344.41 hours was subtracted from the total available hours of 1,466.33 hours per year, which leaves 1,121.92 hours remaining for that officer to provide patrol activities.

The ***Discipline Figure*** was gathered but there were no hours lost to discipline within the personnel used for this assessment. Therefore the total available hours remaining for that officer to provide patrol activities remained at 1,121.92.

After factoring in Days Off, Vacation, Holiday Time, Comp Time, Sick Leave, Injury Leave, Military Leave, Admin Leave, Dental Time, Training Hours, and Discipline Hours, the predicted remaining availability time for one officer to provide patrol activities per year is 1,121.92 hours. This figure is then divided by the shift hours of 10.67 to equate to 105.15 shifts per officer for a calendar year.

A Relief Factor is required in any staffing allocation to ensure adequate personnel are available for relief when personnel utilize days off, vacation leave, holiday time, comp time, sick leave, injury leave, military leave, admin leave, dental hours, training time, and for time missed for discipline. As required by the mathematical formula of the I.A.C.P. method, a Relief Factor was

calculated by dividing the Staffing Unit (SU) of 3,894.55 with the remaining available time for patrol activities of 1,121.92, which equates to 3.47.

The second portion of the project as outlined on Page #2 required the calculation of total number of calls for service, average time on calls, and the use of the Relief Factor to determine the number of officers needed to adequately respond to patrol activities to include response and handling of call, including report writing, and time for breaks, administrative time, and officer initiated activity and patrols.

The total calls for service (CFS) is derived from data received from Whatcom Dispatch, who receives and dispatches all emergency and non-emergency calls for the Bellingham Police Department. This data includes all calls for service activities for the calendar year of 2024. For the calendar year 2024, the total calls for service were 76,548. A full breakdown of calls for service categories was reviewed and calls for service that did not meet the metric for this assessment were removed, leaving a total of 53,267 calls for service. Examples of calls for service that were subtracted were Traffic Stops, Follow-Up, Watch For, Refer to Community Services, Private Impound, Refer to WSP (Washington State Patrol), Extra Patrol, Whatcom Record, Serve Paper (a function of Warrant Officers), Refer to Humane Society, Case Number (case number pulled for miscellaneous reason), Parking Problem (generally now handled by a separate parking division at public works), Security Check, Info Only, Sex Offender Registration Checks (currently not a patrol function), Test Call, and Hulk Vehicle.

While Traffic Stops, Follow-Ups, Extra Patrols, and Security Checks are the function of patrol, there is a separate metric in the calculation to account for these activities and leaving them in would artificially inflate the total number of officers required. This would not be in line with the stated goal of a conservative assessment and report.

Because this data consists of number of calls, it does not include total officers utilized per call. A conservative factor of 30% was added to the totals calls to record activities of backup officers, as many calls for service require the response of more than one officer. As a result, the calls for service number increased to 69,247.1 after factoring backup officer activities.

The average time spent on calls is established from the national 45-minute average for a law enforcement officer to handle one call for service.

The average time-on-call of 45 minutes is then divided by 60 (60 minutes), which equates to a figure of .75. The figure of .75 was then multiplied by the total calls for service figure of 69,247.1 which equates to 51,935.33. This figure is then multiplied by 1.5 because the formula requires that an average police shift is divided into separate categories as follows:

- Time for Calls for Service, including time on call and report writing – 2/3
- Patrolling activities to include officer initiated activity and breaks – 1/3

After multiplying the figure of 51,935.22 by 1.5, a figure of 77,903 was calculated.

The figure of 77,903 was divided by the Overall Staffing Unit (SU) of 3894.55 which equates to 20.00 Staffing Units. This figure must then be multiplied by the Relief Factor of 3.47 which equates to 69.4 or 69.

As a result, the Bellingham Police Department Patrol Section, under existing workload, should have available 69.4 or 69 officers to adequately respond to such a workload.

To finalize the project, roles and responsibilities of the rank and file of the current staffing of 66 personnel in the Patrol Section must be examined. The Section currently has two Lieutenants, and eight Sergeants. Any personnel who do not normally answer calls for service must be subtracted from the total personnel available to provide patrol activities. This leaves 56 personnel currently assigned to the Patrol Section who are responsible for the workload. This leaves the Bellingham Police Department Patrol Section with a deficiency of 13 patrol officers.

CONCLUSION OF PROJECT FINDINGS

Based on interviews with personnel assigned in the Bellingham Patrol Section, it appears there is a consensus that morale often suffers because of heavy and increased workloads. Specifically, supervisors and officers in the bureau have routinely complained because they are responding from call to call with little time for thorough investigation of their calls for service and little or no time for self-initiated activities. The term “Hit and Run Policing” is commonly used, referring to the parallel with a hit and run crash of being there and leaving without completion of the event.

There is a large burden of calls for service placed on the Patrol Section of requests for response that do not fall within the standard responsibility of a police officer or patrol section. An example of this is the “Check Welfare” call for service, of which there were 4,803 in 2024. This one call for service alone accounted for 6.27% of the total calls for service for the year. It is my recommendation that a review be completed of what calls for service can be eliminated to reduce the burden on the Patrol Section, and allow greater time for priority call for service, complete and thorough investigations, and officer-initiated activities.

It is my recommendation, from the findings of this staffing allocation, that the current staff of the Patrol Section be increased with a minimum of 13 personnel.

It is my recommendation that the command structure of the Patrol Section be evaluated, specifically that the lieutenants in the section increase their contribution to the daily operations by functioning in a “Watch Commander” or similar role. This would allow them to respond to scenes and provide incident command and support, thus allowing the sergeants of each unit to focus on their role of leading their shifts, which have become increasingly less experienced, and that trend will continue for the foreseeable future.

It is my recommendation that the feasibility of removing the Crime Scene Investigators from a primary patrol assignment and placed in their own standalone unit be considered. This would

provide that work group with the opportunity to focus on their special skills and would provide the Patrol Section with personnel whose sole focus is the handling of calls for service.

As stated throughout this project, a focused conservative approach was utilized in an effort not to exaggerate numbers and magnify the issue of needed staffing. However, data collected supports the general consensus of personnel in the section and the agency, which is the existing authorized personnel does not match the workload received.

BELLINGHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT
STAFFING ALLOCATION REPORT
“Investigations Unit”
2025
CURRENT ALLOCATION

WORK SCHEDULE:					
CURRENT WORKDAYS/OFF DAYS SCHEDULE: <i>(10 HOURS SHIFTS WITH ONE PAID LUNCH HOUR=9 WORK HOURS)</i>					4 ON/3 OFF
DAYS WORKED PER YEAR: <i>(4 DAYS WORKED PER WEEK; 4 MULTIPLIED BY 52 (WEEKS PER YEAR))</i>					208
DAYS OFF PER YEAR: <i>(3 DAYS OFF PER WEEK = 3 MULTIPLIED BY 52 = 156 OFF)</i>					156
TOTAL AVAILABLE DAYS FOR WORK <i>(DAYS WORKED PER YEAR)</i>					208
		SHIFT	HOURS	PERCENTAGE	HOURS
	DAYS/YEAR	HOURS	YEARLY	AVAILABLE	REMAINING
BASE	365	9.00	2555	100%	3285.00
DAYS OFF	156	9.00	1404	57.26%	1881.00
VACATION	17.25	10.00	172.47	52.01%	1708.53
SICK	3.58	10.00	35.82	50.92%	1672.71
BEREAVEMENT	.48	10.00	4.79	50.77%	1667.92
HOLIDAY	10.03	10.00	100.36	47.71%	1567.56
ADMIN LEAVE	4	10.00	40.00	46.50%	1527.56
DISCIPLINE	N/A	N/A	N/A	46.50%	1527.56
INJURY	2.46	10.00	24.55	45.75%	1503.01
TRAINING	12	10.00	120	42.10%	1383.01
COMP	3.26	10.00	32.61	41.11%	1350.40
FLEX	5	10.00	50	39.59%	1300.40
DENTAL	.11	10.00	1.09	39.55%	1299.31
MILITARY	N/A	N/A	N/A	39.55%	1299.31
INSTRUCTOR/PRESENTER SECONDARY ASSIGNMENT	5	10.00	50	38.03%	1249.31
MEETINGS AND COURT ATTENDANCE	5	10.00	50	36.51%	1199.31
PREDICTED YEARLY HOURS OF AVAILABILITY FOR INVESTIGATIONS:					1199.31
PREDICTED YEARLY SHIFTS –1199.31/10					119.93

	<i>* = ONE STAFFING UNIT (SU)</i>		3285
RELIEF FACTOR:	3285/1199.31=		2.74
Total Cases for 2024 (12 Months) January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024 (Includes cases investigated by the Major Crimes Unit (MCU) and Special Victims Unit (SVU))	(2024) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cases Investigated: 572 (Includes only primary assigned cases and documents no assistance to patrol on their primary cases) 		
Formula for hours per case from EVAWI used while conservatively substituting the average	14,058.24		
62.5 % of a detective’s time is spent on actual case work, while 37.5% is spent on administrative duties.	22,493.18		
Divided by 3285 (yearly base hours)	18.77 SU’s for BPD		
Multiplied by Relief Factor (2.74)	<i>TOTAL Detectives (whole number) = 19</i>		
TOTALS	CURRENT SWORN STAFFING	ALOCATION RESULTS TO MANAGE CURRENT WORKLOAD	DIFFERENCE +/-
	10.5	19	8.5
	4.5 MCU (Hauri .5 Intel), 6 SVU (2 of which are ICAC)	Detectives Needed	<i>Personnel Required</i>

Summary of Current Personnel Allocation

The current staffing of the Bellingham Police Department Detective Unit is 10.5 detectives. One detective has a 50/50 split of their tasks and time between Intelligence and Investigations. They count for 0.5 full time detectives. There are ten full-time detectives, bringing the total to 10.5.

There are two sergeants assigned to the Bellingham Police Department Detective Unit and they report to one lieutenant.

Summary of Report and Recommendations

The purpose of this staffing allocation is to compare the current workload received by the Bellingham Police Department Detective Unit versus the amount of personnel available for deployment to adequately respond to the needs of the public and other judicial organizations, while fully investigating and preparing criminal cases for prosecution.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (I.A.C.P.) scientific method of staffing allocation was utilized to determine the required number of detectives to handle existing workloads. This method is being taught at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center (G.P.S.T.C) and the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) currently utilizes this workload assessment in training courses across the country.

A breakdown of the findings will explain the data sources utilized and the mathematical formula used to reach a legitimate yet conservative outcome. During the entire project, I used a conservative approach to data collection and computations in an effort not to exaggerate the findings. Data utilized during this project was collected based on 2024 calendar year statistics.

The first portion of the project as outlined on Page #1 of this project required data to be collected for the Staffing Allocation Report, which led to the computation of the Staffing Unit (SU) and the Relief Factor, both of which are essential to the remaining portion of the project. Each of these figures is agency specific and considers personnel, leave, vacation, work schedule, training, and cases investigated/handled. For this calculation, I excluded the unit supervisors and only evaluated the detectives' work hours and time off. This is the most accurate way to calculate the SU and Relief Factor as the detectives are the personnel responsible for the investigative workload. The number of supervisors and structure of the unit should be evaluated based on objective leadership span of control standards.

The **Base Figure** is provided from the total hours worked per year by a particular shift schedule, based on a 365-day calendar year and the current detective shift schedule of 10.0 hour shifts which includes 1 paid lunch hour. It should be noted that detective personnel are mandated by policy to remain in an on-call status during the paid lunch hour but because they normally do not work during this timeframe, the hour was not counted as available time. When you multiply 365 by 9.0 (minus the paid lunch hour), the result is 3,285 hours per year available to one detective.

The **Days Off Figure** is derived from the fact that the Bellingham Police Department Investigations Unit typically operates on a 10.0 hour schedule with a work/off day rotation of 4-On/3-Off, either Monday to Thursday, or Tuesday to Friday, with weekends normally off. This equates to 3 days off for each 52 weeks, which equals 156 regular days multiplied by 9.0 available work hours each day which equals 1,404 normal hours off per year. This leaves 1,881 hours remaining which is available for that detective to provide investigative services.

The **Vacation Figure** is derived from the fact that 1897.18 hours of vacation time was taken by detectives in 2024. The total was divided by the number of detectives to determine an average for one detective, 172.47 hours of vacation leave (this rate may be higher in the future based on vacation accrual rates of detectives). 172.47 is subtracted from the total available hours of 1,881.00 per year. This leaves 1,708.53 hours remaining available for that detective to provide investigative services.

The **Sick Figure** is derived from the fact that 394.05 hours of sick leave was taken by detectives in 2024. The total was divided by the number of detectives to determine the average for one detective, 35.82 hours of sick leave. 35.82 hours is subtracted from the total available hours of 1,708.53 per year. This leaves 1,672.71 hours remaining available for that detective to provide investigative services.

The **Bereavement Figure** is derived from the fact that 52.67 hours of bereavement leave were taken by detectives in 2024. The total was divided by the number of detectives to determine the average for one detective, 4.79. 4.79 is subtracted from the total available hours of 1,672.71 per year. This leaves 1,667.92 hours remaining available for that detective to provide investigative services.

The **Holiday Figure** is derived from the fact that 1103.98 hours of holiday leave was taken by detectives in 2024. The total was divided by the number of detectives to determine an average for one detective, 100.36 hours. This is a deviation from the annual accrual of 104 hours holiday leave for each detective. Holiday leave cannot be carried over and therefore is consistently used in its entirety each calendar year. For this evaluation, the 100.36 hours is subtracted from the total available hours of 1,667.92. This leaves 1,567.56 hours remaining available for that detective to provide investigative services.

The **Administrative Leave Figure** is derived from the fact that 440 hours of administrative leave was attributed to detectives in 2024. The total was divided by the number of detectives to determine an average for one detective, 40.00. 40.00 is subtracted from the total available hours of 1,567.56 hours. This leaves 1,527.56 hours remaining available for that detective to provide investigative services.

The **Discipline Figure** is not factored into the calculation. There were no suspensions of detective personnel in 2024 and therefore no hours were attributed to discipline. This leaves 1,527.56 hours remaining available for that detective to provide investigative services.

The ***Injury Figure*** is derived from the fact that 270 hours of injury/FMLA was used by detectives in 2024. This total was divided by the number of detectives to determine an average for one detective, 24.55. 24.55 is subtracted from the total available hours of 1,567.56. This leaves 1,503.01 hours remaining available for that detective to provide investigative services.

The ***Training Figure*** is derived from training requirements of the police department on an annual basis and the requirements for skill specific training for detectives. The training requirements for detectives include standard department training (FRD – Flexible Resource Day), achieving and/or maintaining LEMART certification, homicide investigations training and conferences, sexual assault investigation specific training, as well as individual career development training. A conservative number of 120 hours was attributed as an average for annual training for one detective. 120 hours is subtracted from the total available hours of 1,503.01. This leaves 1,383.01 hours remaining available for that detective to provide investigative services.

The ***Comp-Time Figure*** is derived from the fact that 358.72 hours of comp-time were taken by detectives in 2024. This total was divided by the number of detectives to determine an average for one detective, 32.61. 32.61 is subtracted from the total available hours of 1,383.01. This leaves 1,350.40 hours remaining available for that detective to provide investigative services.

The ***Flex-Time Figure*** is derived from a conservative estimate from detective supervisors that on average, each detective earns and therefore uses 50 hours of flex time each year, including the calendar year of 2024. Because the police department does not normally pay overtime to detectives for their routine or daily workloads, detectives are issued flex time when working beyond their regularly scheduled shift. Because the workload exceeds the number of detectives necessary to adequately handle the caseload within 40 hours, a natural result is either overtime, comp time, or flex time. As a result, the average of 50 hours of flex time per detective, per year, is a conservative calculation. The 50 hours of flex time is subtracted from the total available hours of 1,350.40. This leaves 1,300.40 hours remaining available for that detective to provide investigative services.

The ***Dental Figure*** is derived from the fact that 12 hours of dental time was taken by detectives in 2024. The total was divided by the number of detectives to determine an average for one detective, 1.09. 1.09 is subtracted from the total available hours of 1,300.40. This leaves 1,299.31 hours remaining available for that detective to provide investigative services.

The ***Military Figure*** was excluded from the calculation. There are currently no detectives with US Military obligations and any projection of future detectives with those obligations would be inconsistent with the goal to provide a conservative and accurate assessment. This leaves 1,299.31 hours remaining available for that detective to provide investigative services.

The ***Instructor/Presenter/Secondary Assignment Figure*** is derived from a conservative estimation of the time detectives provide instruction or presentation or is called into service for secondary agency roles. This includes, but is not limited to, in-house instruction and presentation, instruction and presentation for outside agencies. It also includes time detectives spend away from their primary assignment to fulfill secondary duties. For the year 2024,

detectives had secondary assignments including Crisis Negotiations Team (CNT), Range Instructor, and Defensive Tactics Instructor. The figure of 50 annual hours was assigned to this category. This figure is very conservative, but that aligns with the consistent goal of providing a statistical conclusion that was not exaggerated. 50 is subtracted from the total available hours of 1,299.31. This leaves 1,249.31 hours remaining available for that detective to provide investigative services.

The ***Meetings and Court*** Figure is derived from the evaluation of responsibilities for detectives to attend court and meetings, both within BPD and in the community with partners and stakeholders. Court time for testimony is based on cases being adjudicated within that calendar year and can vary. Detectives also spend time in court for civil/protective order hearings and other case related events. This category also encompasses time spent with defense interviews and preparation with the prosecutor's office for trial. In addition to the time obligations of court, detectives also attend assignment specific meetings. This includes internal weekly unit meetings, Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings with non-police staff involved in criminal investigations like hospital staff, Brigid Collins interviewers, and local advocacy groups. Detectives also have meetings with detectives from local agencies. The estimate applied to this category was 50 hours per year. This is conservative estimate to continue the integrity of an evaluation with conservative factors. 50 is subtracted from the total available hours of 1,249.31. This leaves 1,199.31 hours remaining available for that detective to provide investigative services.

After factoring in Days Off, Vacation, Sick Leave, Bereavement, Holiday Time, Administrative Leave, Disciplinary Time, Injury, Training, Comp Time, Flex Time, Dental Leave, Military Leave, Instructor/Presenter/Secondary Assignment responsibilities, and attendance in Court and Meetings, the predicted remaining availability time for one detective to provide investigative activities per year is 1,199.31 hours. This figure is then divided by the shift hours of 10.0 to equate to 119.93 shifts per detective for a calendar year.

A Relief Factor is required in any staffing allocation to ensure adequate personnel are available for relief when personnel utilize days off, vacation leave, sick leave, funeral leave, discipline time, training, and other instances of absenteeism. As required by the mathematical formula of the I.A.C.P. method, a Relief Factor was calculated by dividing the Staffing Unit of 3285 with the remaining available time for investigative activities of 1,199.31, which equates to 2.74.

The second portion of the project as outlined on Page #2 required the calculation of total number of cases investigated/handled, time necessary for those cases, and the use of the Relief Factor to determine the number of detectives needed to adequately respond to investigative activities to include investigation and administration time.

The total cases investigated/handled is derived from data obtained from the department case management and records management system regarding all activity for a 12-month period from January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024. For that period, the total cases investigated/handled by BPD Detectives was 572. Of note, there were 20 death investigations, including 5 homicides, investigated by the unit in 2024. Additionally, 27 rapes, 91 assaults, 9 child abuse cases, 5

witness intimidations, 13 robberies, 11 burglaries, 2 arsons, 1 kidnapping, 18 frauds, and 5 primary BPD ICAC cases were investigated by BPD Detectives.

As the leading law enforcement agency in northwest Washington State, BPD conducts joint ICAC investigations with both federal and local partner agencies. Those cases necessitate a large amount of staffing and hours but do not get documented as BPD Primary ICAC cases. In keeping with the goal of a conservative analysis of the workload and appropriate staffing allocation, those ICAC cases were left with the remaining group of non-specified felony investigations, even though the workload and required hours will be objectively under reported.

In evaluating the hours required for the cases assigned to BPD Detectives in 2024, the research of William Prummell titled Allocation of Personnel: Investigations was consulted. This research is promoted by End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI) and available on their website. This evaluation of personnel allocation was completed almost 20 years ago and due to the increased scrutiny of law enforcement cases, advances in technology and the required inclusion of that technology in investigations, and general raised expectation of high-level police investigations, the figures presented are very likely lower than 2025 standards. However, these hourly figures were used because they are documented research and with the stated goal of providing a conservative evaluation and report, the lower hour figures are in keeping with that goal.

For the cases listed above that have specifically defined hours per case, those were the numbers used to determine how many detective staffing hours were needed. For the cases that were not specifically defined by the study, an average of those hours was calculated to be 26.66 hours per case, based on the hours provided for the cases BPD investigates. In keeping with the goal of a conservative evaluation, homicide investigations were removed from that calculation and the resulting hours per case figure for the remaining cases fell to 23.50. The 23.50 hours per case figure was then used for the remaining cases assigned for investigation to the BPD Detective Unit in 2024. The result was 14,058.24 total hours to complete the 2024 workload. This number is intentionally the lowest end of calculation to provide the desired conservative conclusion.

The Allocation of Personnel: Investigations formula outlines that 62.5% of a detective's work hours are spent on actual case work, while 37.5 percent is spent on administrative tasks for their cases. To account for that 62.5%, the total hours of 14,058.24 hours was divided by .625. This provided a final total of work hours of 22,493.18. This accurately reflects how many total hours would be required to complete the investigations assigned to the BPD Detective Unit based on the 2024 case load.

The last step in this process is to calculate how many STAFFING UNIT's, or in this case detectives, BPD requires to adequately staff the detective unit and provide the service expected from the residents and visitors of Bellingham. To determine the number of detectives required, the total hours required to complete the investigative work (22,493.18) is first divided by the predetermined value of one STAFFING UNIT (3,285). This results in a figure of 6.85. 6.85 is then multiplied by the Relief Factor of 2.74, which was determined in Step 1 of this evaluation.

As a result, the Bellingham Police Department Detective Unit, under existing workload, should have available 18.77, rounded up to 19, detectives to adequately respond to existing workloads.

This evaluation was to find the proper staffing allocation (detectives) to complete the 2024 cases assigned for investigation. This does not include auxiliary duties, most notably sex offender registration checks, that do not require the skills of a detective but have been tasked to the detective unit.

CONCLUSION OF PROJECT FINDINGS

Based on interviews with personnel assigned in the Bellingham Police Department Detective Unit, it appears there is a consensus that morale often suffers because of heavy and increased workloads. Specifically, detectives in the unit have routinely and increasingly been tasked to handle a heavy workload, which results in delays in presenting cases for prosecution and delays in providing closure to victims.

Because the City of Bellingham continues to grow, a natural result should be increased burdens and requests for service on public safety. The question that must be answered is what type of law enforcement service do we want to provide?

It is my recommendation, from the findings of this staffing allocation, that the current staff of the Bellingham Police Department Detective Unit be increased to from 10.5 to 19 to respond to the deficiency outlined in this assessment or significant reduction in services must occur. To provide for adequate supervision, 1 sergeant should be added to the Bellingham Police Department Detective Unit as the personnel allocation increases.

As stated throughout this project, an intentionally conservative approach was utilized in an effort not to exaggerate numbers and magnify the issue of needed staffing. However, data collected supports the consensus of personnel in the unit, which is the existing assigned personnel does not match the workload received and expected.

Additional considerations that I would ask the administration to consider are the removal of the sex offender registration responsibility from the detective unit. I would also ask that the physical space where detectives are assigned, and the availability of unmarked police department vehicles be considered. The proposed increase in detectives will create a necessity for both desk/office space and detective vehicles.