



BAKERSFIELD POLICE MEMORANDUM



DATE: January 16, 2020

TO: Jacqui Kitchen, Assistant City Manager

FROM: Greg Terry, Interim Chief of Police

SUBJECT: **Assessment of opportunity for an Eastside Police Substation at Calcot Facility**

BACKGROUND

At the November 6, 2019 City Council meeting Vice-Mayor Parlier requested an assessment of the need for an Eastside Police Substation potentially in connection with the proposed homeless shelter at the Calcot Facility.

In FY 2019-20 \$300,000 was allocated to hire a consultant to perform a comprehensive needs assessment and strategically plan for the growth of the Bakersfield Police Department. Discussions concerning this are underway.

This memorandum is a reflection of how the Bakersfield Police Department would use the opportunity for a police substation at this specific location to enhance the public safety services provided to our community.

The Bakersfield Police Department has established four specific objectives in connection with the Public Safety and Vital Services Measure in order to:

1. **Improve response times**; to all calls including assaults, robberies, residential burglaries, auto thefts, gang violence and quality of life issues.
2. **Increase high visibility and proactive patrols**; to prevent opportunistic types of crimes such as thefts and burglaries; and enhance perception of public safety in neighborhoods, recreational areas and business districts.
3. **Increase capacity to prevent and disrupt serial offenses**; enable focused deployment of detectives to disrupt identified crime trends; particularly those that are of a serial nature like auto thefts, and burglary.
4. **Increase in community engagement**; increasing community policing efforts to reduce crime and improve quality of life.

DISCUSSION

Staff reviewed the following data to conduct an analysis of the usefulness of an Eastside Police Substation.

- City population and projected growth trends,
- Calls for service,
- Response times,
- Part 1 crime trends,
- Projected police staffing growth,
- Current and future police facility needs

ANALYSIS

Population and growth trends

The City of Bakersfield is a growing community. The current population is estimated to be 389,211 (Ca. Department of Finance; 2019). According to the Kern Council of Government (2018), the average annual population growth rate is forecasted to be 2.5% or approximately 13,721 persons per year.

Community Service Needs and Expectations

The Bakersfield Police Department Operations – Patrol Division has six (6) patrol zones within the City of Bakersfield. (See appendix A for a detailed map of the zones). The zones are divided east/west by Hwy 99 with other boundaries separating the six zones. The East Zones are Hill, Metro, and Valley. The West Zones are North, Central and South. The proposed location of the Eastside Substation at Calcot would place it at the south end of the Metro Zone, near the Valley Zone.

Review of priority 1 and 2 calls for service (calls for a crime in progress or about to occur) by police zone for 2018 and 2019 shows that the East Zones (Metro, Hill, and Valley) accounted for three of the top four zones by number of urgent calls for service.

A review of priority 1 and 2 response times by police zone for 2018 and 2019 revealed that the East Zones of Hill and Valley consistently experience some of the highest response times. While the Metro Zone does have one of the shorter response times in the City, it should be noted that Metro is intentionally the smallest zone geographically in order to reduce drive time.

Response time to calls is particularly important when we note that the East Zones of Hill, Metro, and Valley regularly experience a high level of gun violence including homicides. The majority of the city's shootings occur east of Hwy 99, with a high concentration in the Union Avenue corridor between Brundage Lane and California Avenue. Experience has shown that most shootings are spontaneous, with little opportunity to stop the crime before damage is done. While ShotSpotter and other strategies are helpful in responding to gun violence, the best tool to prevent gun violence is the high-profile presence of police patrol officers. An Eastside Substation, at this location, would increase the Police Department's capacity for high visibility and proactive patrols by police officers, Special Enforcement Unit officers, and Impact officers who could deploy from the substation.

The Bakersfield Police Department is a community oriented policing agency dedicated to activities that promote community safety, security, and public trust. A police station serves as the face of law enforcement for a community but it can be much more than that. It can be a place to report crime, register

a bicycle, obtain an accident report, or attend a neighborhood meeting. It can also be a place for community members to interact with police officers outside of a traditional setting or obtain community services beyond what is typical for a police station. The space provided by the Calcot facility would, conceptually, provide space for a community room. This could be a space for our community partners to provide training programs, a place for various city departments to use to serve residents, and a community amenity that could be used by area residents for events important to them.

Finally, it is an axiom of modern policing that the areas of our community who need us the most frequently trust us the least. A number of complex factors over decades have led to a strained relationship between the Bakersfield Police Department and the southeast Bakersfield community. Recent efforts in changing Department values and service expectations have been helpful in addressing this issue, but it remains that community members have long stated their desire for a permanent, staffed police station in the suggested area. A police station with sufficient community-friendly facilities could be a key part of forging long-term community bonds.

Projected Police staffing growth and facility needs

The Bakersfield Police Department provides service to the public primarily through field deployment of police officers, but also depends on its facilities for housing investigators, support staff, and administrative functions such as filing and obtaining reports, fingerprinting and registration, property and evidence storage, and fleet services.

The Department Headquarters building (1601 Truxtun) was established in 1976, when the Department numbered about 100 sworn officers and 30 support staff. A new wing was added to the building in 1992, and the West Substation opened in 2002. The Department now numbers over 450 officers and over 140 support and specialist personnel. While some support functions are located elsewhere, deployment of police patrol officers is limited to the Headquarters and Westside Substation buildings.

Beginning in FY19/20, the Bakersfield Police Department, in order to address the public safety priorities identified above, began the process of hiring an additional 100 police officers over the next three years. While this increase in staffing alone will significantly increase the need for additional facilities, we must also consider that the Department has grown substantially since its last facilities expansion and must continue to grow as the City of Bakersfield does.

Additionally, a fully functioning Eastside Substation of the size and scope possible at the Calcot facility could provide the Bakersfield Police Department with an additional emergency staging area in the event of a large scale disaster or community catastrophic event. It could provide adequate communication services and space for the staging and deployment of local, state, and federal emergency response personnel.

In addition to the improvement of the quality of services we provide, establishment of a police substation, at this location, could better position police resources to reduce response times to crimes of violence, increase police visibility, increase community engagement and begin to meet the needs of this growing agency.

CONCLUSION

This assessment is specific to the Calcot location only. It is not an assessment of the need for another Bakersfield Police Department substation and where it should be within the City of Bakersfield. It is a reflection of how the Bakersfield Police Department would use a police substation at this location to further the Department's mission and pursue the four objectives identified above.