

2022 City Council Candidate Briefing

POLICE DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

The Burlingame Police Department (BPD) is a municipal, full-service, community-oriented department offering investigative, preventative, and community policing programs designed to protect and serve Burlingame's residents and visitors. BPD currently consists of 40 full-time sworn police officers (1 Chief, 1 Captain, 2 Lieutenants, 6 Sergeants, and 30 Officers); 19 full-time, non-sworn professional staff; and approximately 10 part-time, non-sworn professional staff.

BPD is comprised of three divisions: the Operations Division, which includes uniformed patrol and the Traffic and Parking Bureau; the Investigations Division, which includes inspectors, the school resource officer, and the Community Response Team; and the Support Services/Administration Division, which includes the Records Bureau, the Communications Bureau (Dispatch), and training.

BPD also collaborates with other law enforcement agencies within San Mateo County on a variety of police and safety-related efforts, such as the North Central Regional SWAT Team, a virtual dispatch center with the San Bruno Police Department, the Saturation Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP), and the Major Accident Investigation Team (MAIT).

MAJOR DEPARTMENT INITIATIVES

School Resource Officer (SRO): The successful SRO program was implemented within the Burlingame schools in 1994. The goal of the program is to provide police services to all Burlingame schools in order to prevent juvenile crimes through personal police interaction with students; establish and maintain a close relationship with school administrators; and develop and implement classes to educate students, teachers, and parents about contemporary issues facing students.

Community Response Team (CRT): The BPD's CRT is a relatively new unit, created in 2017. CRT completes targeted patrol, aimed at street crimes and thefts, as well as quality of life issues and smaller problems that sometimes get overlooked. CRT also conducts park checks and foot patrols, bicycle patrols, homeless outreach and social services, human trafficking rescue operations and stings, burglary and general crime suppression details, electronic surveillance operations dealing with various types of thefts, arrest and bench warrant service, neighborhood and community presentations, and municipal code enforcement.

North Central Regional (NCR) SWAT Team: BPD is part of a combined regional SWAT Team within San Mateo County. NCR SWAT consists of officers from Burlingame, San Mateo, Foster City, Hillsborough, San Bruno, South San Francisco, and Brisbane. BPD assigns three Officers/Sergeants to the team and one administrator. In addition to their normal police duties, members of the team train once a month and are available on an “on-call” basis to respond to critical incidents all over the county. Critical incidents include active shooters, barricaded subjects, hostage situations, high-risk arrests or search warrants, civil unrest, and dignitary protection.

Virtual Dispatch Center: In 2013, BPD established a virtual dispatch center partnership with the San Bruno Police Department. The virtual dispatch center creates redundancy for both agencies. The configuration of a shared Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), phone system, and police radio gives BPD and SBPD the ability to continue operations during an emergency, with no interruption of service.

Saturation Traffic Enforcement Program (S.T.E.P.): BPD spearheaded the San Mateo County Saturation Traffic Enforcement Program (S.T.E.P.), a collaborative effort consisting of traffic officers from all law enforcement agencies throughout San Mateo County. The mission of this program is to increase traffic safety through saturated enforcement in problem areas and intersections on the Peninsula by using the combined resources of all the motor units assigned to the STEP team. Participating officers are assigned to problem locations in San Mateo County based on collision data, community complaints, and officer opinions. All participating agencies liaise with BPD to coordinate the various police departments’ resources and to identify traffic problems present in San Mateo County communities.

Regional Major Accident Investigation Team (MAIT): The Major Accident Investigation Team (MAIT) consists of police officers, community service officers/police service officers, and supervisors from the Burlingame, San Bruno, Hillsborough, and South San Francisco Police Departments. This team of investigators is capable of effectively utilizing the Total Station equipment and EdgeFX diagramming software for forensic scene mapping at major traffic accidents.

POLICE REFORM MEASURES

The tragic death of George Floyd in May of 2020 led police departments across the country to take a closer look at their relationships with their communities, as well as their policies and procedures, particularly in regards to use of force. BPD took all of the following measures regarding its community relations and use of force policies.

Town Halls/Listening Sessions: BPD has held two town halls/listening sessions in the past two years. These were forums that gave the public a chance to ask questions and express their feelings and concerns about policing in Burlingame. It also afforded BPD a chance to address those questions and concerns. BPD and the community discussed use of force, hiring practices, community relations, etc.

Use of Force: BPD implemented suggestions from the “8 Can’t Wait” campaign. The campaign asked police departments to make 8 immediate changes to their use of force policies, such as banning chokeholds, requiring officer intervention during excessive force situations, and requiring management reviews. BPD already had most of these suggestions in place, including a very stringent use of force reporting and review process.

Racial and Identity Profiling Act (RIPA): In an effort to stop racial profiling by police, the Legislature passed RIPA, which requires that all law enforcement agencies collect and report data from all stops to the Department of Justice. BPD is not only in compliance with RIPA, it helped beta test collection software and began collecting stop data earlier than required by law.

Transparency: In response to the transparency requirements of new legislation, such as SB 978 and AB 481, BPD posts many items on its website in an attempt to increase transparency. Some of the information posted includes BPD’s policy manual, trainings attended by officers, the “military-style” equipment the department possesses, and crime information.

Mental Health Response: Recently, there has been concern regarding the potential for responses to calls involving subjects in crisis to turn violent. BPD mitigates the potential for these calls to turn violent by using the following techniques: specialized training of all officers in the areas of crisis intervention, tactical communication, and force options; utilizing the San Mateo County Mental Health Assessment and Referral Team (SMART) to assist with response; and partnering with the non-profits LifeMoves, Star Vista, Telecare, and Caminar for homeless outreach, as many homeless individuals also struggle with mental health issues.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information regarding the Burlingame Police Department, please contact Mike Matteucci, Chief of Police, at 650-777-4123 or matteucci@burlingamepolice.org.