

# **Final Report and Recommendations of the City of Alameda's Subcommittee on Unbundling Services Currently Delivered by the Police Department**

## **Summary**

The Subcommittee on Unbundling Services Currently Delivered by the Police Department (the "Unbundling Subcommittee") recommends that the City of Alameda forthwith move forward with a process of taking responsibility away from the Alameda Police Department ("APD") for non-criminal matters. In particular, the Unbundling Subcommittee recommends that responsibility for responding to mental health crises be shifted to a non-police city department or outside provider staffed with mental health professionals. Similarly, other non-criminal matters and incidents (*e.g.*, parking enforcement) should be shifted from APD to non-police departments. The Unbundling Subcommittee further recommends that the City restructure the police department so that it can be more focused on criminal activity and more effective in preventing and investigating crime. These changes should include ongoing and regular assessments of community needs and how resources are allocated to meet those needs.

These recommendations are designed to lead to a safer and more equitable Alameda.

## **Introduction**

As anyone who has hired an electrician to do plumbing work knows, individuals are best served when a professional with the proper training and credentials is providing the services needed. For city services, there is no greater truth to this principle than the need to have a mental health professional, rather than a police officer or a firefighter, be the primary responder to a person having a mental health crisis. Moreover, when police officers respond to calls that could be handled by a different professional, the police officers are pulled away from their primary responsibility of responding to and investigating criminal activity.

The mission of the Unbundling Subcommittee is to support the City of Alameda in (1) identifying the most appropriate community and governmental agencies to provide core services, thus creating a healthier and more safe Alameda for everyone, (2) eliminating the inequitable and unjust police interactions that disproportionately impact—and put at greater risk—people of color and other marginalized members of our community, and (3) striving for the best possible outcomes and most positive interactions with service providers.

An individual in need of mental health treatment does not need a police officer; they need the help of a mental health professional. An unhoused person does not need a police officer; they need shelter, food, and perhaps a social worker able to direct them to social services agencies. A person dancing or exercising in the street does not need a police officer; they need to be left alone. Nevertheless, in Alameda, we have few alternatives to calling the police in response to a

perceived or real need for help and it is the police department that currently responds to almost all calls for service.

The disconnect between community needs and the training and expertise of police officers has severe negative implications (discussed below), leading to our overarching recommendation that the City of Alameda rebuild the Alameda Police Department, creating an agency assigned to do what police officers are supposed to do: respond to calls regarding crimes and investigate those crimes. As we will detail, other services currently performed by the police department that are not crime-related or which involve minor code violations—particularly those related to survival—should be the responsibility of city agencies or non-profit contractors that have the expertise and the primary responsibility for delivery of services that do not require a police officer.

Outcomes will be improved when the service provider with the right training and skills responds to the needs of individuals. The expertise, for instance, of a social worker (as compared to a police officer) responding to a mental health crisis would improve the assessment, any needed treatment, and referrals the individual needs. Due to implicit bias and historic racism, the disconnect between the skills of the service provider and needs of the individual have had a disproportionate impact on Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, and people with disabilities. As recent research by Human Rights Watch has shown, police violence, “is inextricably linked to deep and persisting racial inequities and economic class divisions.”<sup>1</sup> This culture and history also cause great distrust and fear, causing some members of our community to forgo help they need.

We acknowledge the work of our predecessors who highlighted the need for reform within the police department, such as the Committee on Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee which was formed in 1991 as a result of the MDT scandal, as well as the current city council members who have sought reform.

Below, we will describe our process, the assessment of community needs, the negative implications of the over-reliance on the Alameda Police Department for delivery of services, recommendations for unbundling of police services, and recommendations regarding next steps for making Alameda safer for all and for reimagining public safety.

## **Process**

The Unbundling Subcommittee has met nearly weekly (more than 20 times) since September 15, 2020. Our members have also participated in meetings of the full Police Reform Committee, consisting of the Steering Committee and all of the subcommittees. Our Chair, Debra Lewis Mendoza, met regularly with the Steering Committee, and beginning in January 2021 subcommittee member Erin Fraser became co-chair of the Unbundling Subcommittee.

The subcommittee sought and obtained data and information regarding APD service calls, traffic citations, domestic violence arrests, overdoses and people detained for psychiatric evaluation,

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Watch, [A Roadmap for Re-imagining Public Safety in the United States](#) (Aug. 12, 2020).

Alameda Fire Department (AFD) information regarding overdoses and people detained for psychiatric evaluation, Community Development Department (CDD) information regarding social service agreements, and other relevant reports prepared by or provided to the City. The data received is contained in Appendix A. (The two appendices to this document are contained in a separate PDF.)

The Unbundling Subcommittee also sought input and information from other individuals:

- Melissa Martin-Mollard, a social worker and researcher with Alameda Family Services, who examined and presented on non-police crisis-intervention programs and models (October 29, 2020)
- Alison DeJung, Executive Director of Eden I & R, which runs the 211 system in Alameda County (November 3, 2020)
- Alameda Police Department Captain Matthew McMullen who commands the Bureau of Operations and Theresa De La Cruz who is an Alameda Police Department dispatch supervisor. Captain McMullen and Ms. De La Cruz provided great insight into service-call data and dispatch processes. (November 4, 2020)
- Several Unbundling Subcommittee members toured Alameda Point Collaborative (December 1, 2020) and attended an APC town hall meeting (December 4, 2020)
- Members attended or watched the three-night Alameda Police Department Speaker Series held in November 2020
- Members attended or watched the January 22, 2021, and February 13, 2021, Community Forums on Police Reform and Racial Equity in Alameda

We have also contacted the following local organizations and service providers in order to obtain more information about services offered and their clients' needs: Alameda Point Collaborative, Alameda Food Bank, Mastick Senior Center, Meals on Wheels, Girls Inc. of the Island City, Alameda Boys & Girls Club, First Five Alameda, Black Achievers Alliance, Alameda Renters Coalition, Youth Activist of Alameda, and Alameda Education Foundation.

Representative subcommittee members also attended and addressed several city boards and commissions, including:

- Alameda Collaborative for Children, Youth, and their Families (ACCYF)
- Commission on Persons with Disabilities
- Social Service and Human Relations Board (SSHRB)
- Transportation Commission
- Open Government Commission \*
- Vision Zero Task Force \*

*\*Meetings scheduled to occur following submission of this report.*

The subcommittee also reviewed the preliminary results of the community survey conducted on the City's website, reviewing each comment specifically related to our subcommittee, as well as grouping the comments into common categories, themes and concerns. In particular we noted many concerns about the "hiring freeze" mentioned in our draft recommendations (later clarified to use language consistent with the June 17, 2020, City Council direction to keep Alameda

Police Department vacancies open), or concerns that the unbundling process would lead to an increase in crime. In our analysis, if the City were to reallocate non-criminal matters and duties to a non-police city department or outside provider, Alameda Police Department officers would be better able to devote their time and attention primarily to responding to crime (see below for a discussion of the percentage of calls for service which are non-criminal in nature).

## Assessing Community Needs

A starting place in designing a police department and other service delivery modes is to assess community needs. The Unbundling Subcommittee first began our analysis by assessing calls for service and other data provided by APD.

Attachment 1 to Appendix A is the table of call-for-service data received from Alameda Police Department for 2018, 2019, and through September of 2020. Captain McMullen and dispatch supervisor De La Cruz explained to the subcommittee, many calls—coded in the data as “911 hangup” calls and “911C cell phone” calls—do not result in any activity by police officers.<sup>2</sup> Our analysis excludes those calls because, while they may be relevant to staffing needs for dispatch, they are not generating work for APD officers.

The Unbundling Subcommittee also learned from Captain McMullen and dispatch supervisor De La Cruz that each telephone call in the call-for-service data is represented once and only once. If multiple callers report the same incident, each call is reflected in the call-for-service data (they are *not* aggregated). McMullen and De La Cruz also explained that the final disposition of a call governs how it is reported in the call-for-service data. For example, if a caller reports a suspicious person, but when officers respond they determine there was a violent crime, the call is reported as a violent crime, rather than as a suspicious person. Thus, all of the calls reported in the data as suspicious persons calls were *only* a report of a suspicious person (with either no known crime involved, or in some cases representing a duplicate call).

Table 1 below excludes the 911 hangup calls and the 911C calls, leaving the calls that required some service or action taken in Alameda. The “Case Type” (first column) and the raw numbers (second-fourth columns) for the three years were provided by Alameda Police Department. The Unbundling Subcommittee added the columns showing the cumulative totals, whether the line item is criminal or non-criminal, and labeling each with a category.

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<sup>2</sup> APD dispatch transfers calls from local-to-Alameda cell phones to another agency if the caller needs assistance outside of Alameda. These calls are listed on the report as “911C (Cell Calls)”.

**Table 1: Alameda Police Department Calls for Service, 2018 - September 2020**

<b>Call Type</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020 - Sept</b>	<b>33-Month Total</b>	<b>Part 1 Crime?</b>	<b>Criminal in Nature?</b>	<b>Umbrella Category</b>
947 AFD Assist	151	170	117	438	No	No	Fire Department Assist
Abandoned Veh	2,055	2,293	567	4,915	No	No	Parking & Traffic
Accident	1,042	1,048	514	2,604	No	No	Accidents
Alarms	2,565	2,679	1556	6,800	No	Potential to escalate	Property Damage / Trespassing
All others	432	883	690	2,005	No	No	Misc
Animal	2607	2,085	1438	6,130	No	No	Animal Services
Annoying Phone Calls	89	86	52	227	No	No	Fraud and Cons
Arson	24	32	18	74	Yes	Yes	Property Damage / Trespassing
Assault/Battery	651	640	420	1,711	Yes	Yes	Violent Crime
Auto Theft	516	595	459	1,570	Yes	Yes	Theft
BOAT	65	90	12	167	No	No	Parking & Traffic
Brandishing/Threat	68	94	64	226	Potential to escalate	Yes	Violent Crime
Burglary	299	316	213	828	Yes	Yes	Theft
Burglary Tools	12	16	4	32	No	Yes	Theft
Carjacking	2	7	3	12	Yes	Yes	Theft
Casualty	90	73	53	216	No	Yes	Accidents
Child Abuse/Concealment	106	115	101	322	Yes	Yes	Children & Families
City Response	220	389	323	932	No	No	Administrative
Civil Standby	292	251	193	736	No	No	Administrative
Disturbance	6,605	5,762	4,149	16,516	Potential to escalate	Potential to escalate	Disturbance
DOA	109	118	93	320	No	No	Accidents
Drunk in Public	458	477	218	1153	No	Yes	Narcotics/Alcohol

DUI	268	235	117	620	No	Yes	Parking & Traffic
Elderly Abuse	25	24	14	63	No	Yes	Children & Families
<b>Call Type</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020 - Sept</b>	<b>33-Month Total</b>	<b>Part 1 Crime?</b>	<b>Criminal in Nature?</b>	<b>Umbrella Category</b>
Felony	31	30	18	79	Yes	Yes	Administrative
Fire Call	5,835	6,149	4,286	16,270	No	No	Fire Department Assist
Fireworks	154	155	325	634	No	No	Nuisance
Found Property	564	595	370	1,529	No	No	Administrative
Fraud/Forgery/ Embezzlement	373	387	252	1,012	No	Yes	Fraud and Cons
Hit/Run	643	646	305	1594	Yes	Yes	Parking & Traffic
Homeless Liaison	1,305	1,378	1,068	3,751	No	No	Welfare and Social Services
Indecent Exposure	21	58	52	131	No	Yes	Disturbance
Insanity	858	727	388	1973	No	No	Welfare and Social Services
Littering	39	43	36	118	No	No	Nuisance
Lost Property	97	109	36	242	No	No	Administrative
LPR	198	172	84	454	No	No	Administrative
Miscellaneous	1,224	1411	945	3,580	No	No	Administrative
Misdemeanor	99	98	34	231	No	Yes	Nuisance
Missing Person	236	221	133	590	No	No	Welfare and Social Services
Narcotics	240	218	91	549	No	Yes	Narcotics/Alcohol
Outside Assist	164	209	120	493	No	Yes	Administrative
Parking	3,664	3,829	1231	8,724	No	No	Parking & Traffic
Rape	16	12	9	37	Yes	Yes	Violent Crime
Reckless Driving	709	692	566	1,967	No	Yes	Parking & Traffic
Recovered Vehicle	166	134	114	414	No	Yes	Parking & Traffic
Recycling	70	86	32	188	No	No	Nuisance
Repossession	186	153	97	436	No	No	Administrative
Resist Arrest	30	44	17	91	No	Yes	Nuisance

Road Closure	61	63	18	142	No	No	Parking & Traffic
Robbery	97	101	89	287	Yes	Yes	Theft
<b>Call Type</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020 - Sept</b>	<b>33-Month Total</b>	<b>Part 1 Crime?</b>	<b>Criminal in Nature?</b>	<b>Umbrella Category</b>
Runaways	220	214	123	557	No	No	Children & Families
Sexual Offenses	26	16	23	65	Yes	Yes	Violent Crime
Shelter in Place	0	0	504	504	No	No	Welfare and Social Services
Smoking Ordinance	58	59	29	146	No	No	Nuisance
Supplement	351	385	205	941	No	No	Administrative
Suspicious Circ	2,188	2,128	1696	6,012	Potential to escalate	Potential to escalate	Suspicion
Suspicious Person	1,976	2,001	1307	5,284	Potential to escalate	Potential to escalate	Suspicion
Suspicious Vehicle	1,319	1,362	696	3,377	Potential to escalate	Potential to escalate	Suspicion
Thefts	2,110	2,406	1,255	5,771	Yes	Yes	Theft
Ticket Sign Off	848	904	310	2,062	No	No	Parking & Traffic
Tow	994	1,047	472	2513	No	No	Parking & Traffic
Traffic Hazard	450	415	109	974	No	No	Parking & Traffic
Traffic Stop	6,192	6,069	2,596	14,857	Potential to escalate	Potential to escalate	Parking & Traffic
Trespass	300	236	249	785	No	Yes	Property Damage / Trespassing
Vandalism	401	427	314	1,142	No	Yes	Property Damage / Trespassing
Violate Court Order	202	192	143	537	No	Yes	Administrative
Walk and Talk / Subject Stop	3,467	3,594	3,793	10,854	Potential to escalate	Potential to escalate	Suspicion
Warrant	298	287	98	683	No	Yes	Administrative
Water response	27	25	27	79	No	No	Administrative
Welfare	503	603	400	1,506	No	No	Welfare and Social Services

The most common calls for service are traffic and parking related, followed by emergency calls and reports of “suspicious activities,” including suspicious vehicles, individuals, etc. These two categories account for around 40 percent of all calls for service, as shown in **Table 2**, in which we have aggregated the calls into more general categories.

**Table 2: 2018 - Sept 2020 (33-month Total) Calls for Service by Umbrella Category**

<i><b>Umbrella Category</b></i>	<b>Total Calls</b>	<b>Percentage of Calls</b>
Parking & Traffic	38,949	25.5%
Suspicious Person/Car/Circumstances	25,527	16.7%
Fire Department Assist	16,708	10.9%
Disturbance	16,647	10.9%
Administrative / Internal	10,721	7.0%
Property Damage / Trespassing	8,801	5.8%
Theft	8,500	5.6%
Welfare and Social Services	8,324	5.4%
Animal Services	6,130	4.0%
Accidents	3,140	2.1%
Violent Crime	2,039	1.3%
Misc	2,005	1.3%
Narcotics/Alcohol	1,702	1.1%
Nuisance Behaviors	1,408	0.9%
Fraud / White Collar	1,239	0.8%
Children & Families	942	0.6%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>152,782</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 3**, in turn, shows a summary of calls for service (again excluding 911 hangup calls and 911C calls), showing the percentage that were criminal, non-criminal or potentially criminal.. Definitions of whether a call is expected to relate to crime are shown in Table 1. Note that we have labeled as non-criminal some incidents that may technically be crimes in that they may be infractions (e.g., parking violations) or code violations (e.g., smoking ordinance). This was in order to most accurately account for which incidents require a police officer response. In addition, calls which could potentially involve a crime, such as reports of suspicious individuals, disturbances, etc. are classified as potentially criminal. Generally, categories that seem to call for police involvement include responding to calls about criminal activity as well as calls about situations with the potential to escalate to violence. These categories represent around 56 percent of all calls for service (again, excluding hangup calls and 911C calls) over the past three years. By including potentially criminal calls (which include calls for: suspicious circumstances, suspicious persons, suspicious vehicles, traffic stops, and walk and talk / subject stops), we have erred on the side of caution because many of these calls are not criminal in nature and do not require an armed officer to respond.



Even when including the potentially criminal activity along with criminal activity, the calls for service data highlight that at least 44% of the calls that are handled by APD (*i.e.*, not including hangups and 911C calls) during this 33 month period do not necessarily require an armed police officer. These percentages have been updated from our draft recommendations, to include more recent data received from APD. The data are dynamic and change over time, hence, we suggest that budgeting and ongoing needs assessment operate in concert.

**Table 3: Summary of Calls for Service by Criminality**

<i>Criminal in Nature?</i>	Share of all Calls for Service
non-criminal	43.5%
potentially criminal	41.7%
criminal	14.9%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 4 shows, for the same time period, the police reports submitted for crimes.

**Table 4: Police Reports by Part 1 and Part 2 Crimes**

	2018	2019	2020 - Sept 20	Percent of total criminal
<b>PART 1</b>				
MURDER/MANS	1	0	2	0.02%
RAPE	13	8	7	0.2%
ROBBERY	75	94	76	1.9%
ASSAULT	95	62	40	1.5%
BURGLARY	197	217	142	4.2%
THEFT +\$400	614	824	552	15.1%
THEFT 200-400	234	278	183	5.3%
THEFT -\$200	730	862	597	16.6%
AUTO THEFT	351	404	334	8.3%
ARSON	19	29	23	0.5%
<b>TOTAL PART 1</b>	<b>2,329</b>	<b>2,778</b>	<b>1,956</b>	<b>53.7%</b>
<b>PART 2</b>				
SIMPLE ASSLT	305	346	251	6.9%
FORGERY/CNTFEIT	106	30	40	1.3%
EMB/FRAUD	253	264	191	5.4%
VANDALISM	302	354	298	7.3%
WEAPONS OFF	50	62	31	1.1%
SEX OFFENSE	31	37	25	0.7%
FAMILY/CHILD	43	22	15	0.6%
NARCOTICS	192	213	80	3.7%
DUI	104	129	59	2.2%
LIQUOR LAWS	0	1	0	0.0%
DRUNK	156	191	64	3.13%
DISTURB PEACE	14	16	13	0.3%
VICE/GAMBLE	21	0	0	0.2%
JUV (601 W&I)	27	29	16	0.5%
TRESPASS	12	0	5	0.1%
ALL OTHER *	704	582	405	12.9%
<b>TOTAL PART 2</b>	<b>2,320</b>	<b>2,276</b>	<b>1,493</b>	<b>46.3%</b>
<b>TOTAL CRIMINAL</b>	<b>4,649</b>	<b>5,054</b>	<b>3,449</b>	<b>13,152</b>
<b>NON CRIMINAL **</b>	<b>3,118</b>	<b>2,815</b>	<b>1,390</b>	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>7,767</b>	<b>7,869</b>	<b>4,839</b>	

We have used calls for service as a proxy for community needs. But this is imperfect. Calls for service data do not reflect needs of individuals who for a variety of reasons (such as fear of racial bias in policing) do not call for help when they need it. This data also does not reflect which type of staff within the police department respond to calls, or if calls result in (or generate) a police report. For instance, for parking and traffic calls, the data does not indicate whether calls were handled by an officer or a parking enforcement officer (PEO), and there may be some calls that are not responded to immediately or in person.

In addition, calls for service do not necessarily correlate with the number of police reports; **Table 4** shows police reports by classification into Part 1 and Part 2 crimes for the same period from 2018 through September 2020. While APD fielded 150,000 calls for service in that time period, those calls (along with routine patrolling and investigation) resulted in 13,152 reports of crime. When compared to the total calls for service, it appears that 9 percent of calls resulted in the

filing of a police report of criminal activity, (Part 1 or 2) with 5 percent of calls resulting in filing of a report of a Part 1 crime.

Accordingly, further study is needed to identify the police officer staffing level necessary to respond to and investigate criminal activity in Alameda. But, at a minimum, the calls for service show that a high percentage of community needs currently being handled by APD are not criminal in nature, and do not necessarily need to be handled within the police department.

Moreover, assessing community needs must be an on-going process. Whether it's through an enhancement of the Social Service Human Relations Board (SSHRB) periodic needs assessments, or through a new mechanism, there must be rigorous (sound research methods that can produce statistically significant data) and regular assessment of community needs. This is necessary to ensure that all agencies are adequately staffed, whether it is a new City agency providing social service and mental health support, or outside contractors doing the same. Whereas the community often turns to the police for situations that have escalated out of control, a robust needs assessment can identify and address problems before they escalate. The intent is to reduce the factors that contribute to crime rather than act reactively after crime has occurred. For example, providing shelter and basic provisions to persons experiencing homelessness, may help such persons avoid the stresses and desperation that lead to conflict and minor law violations. Similarly, addiction and mental health treatment can reduce and mitigate incidents stemming from intoxication, withdrawal, or mental health crises. To be successful, the assessment of community needs must be comprehensive and precise, flexible and ongoing. It should be conducted with an emphasis on close and ongoing contact with marginalized communities and communities most at risk, rather than communities with existing access to make their voices heard through political means or social media.

## **Over-Reliance on Police Officers and the Lack of Frontline Mental Health Responders Has Negative Implications for the Community**

Over the years, police departments have evolved into the default agencies people call whenever they need assistance, regardless of whether the situation is criminal in nature. Officers are often called to provide routine, non-emergency services such as dealing with noise complaints, neighborhood disputes, minor disturbances, and people behaving (in the caller's eyes) oddly.

Police officers are trained to respond to and investigate criminal activity. They are not trained as, and cannot be expected to be trained as, social workers, health care providers, therapists, or animal control experts, among other things. Over-reliance on police creates a disconnect between service needs and the service provider. At best, this is inefficient; at worst, this disconnect can be catastrophic.

First, on a fundamental level it makes no sense, for example, for a police officer (or even a firefighter) to be the primary and often sole responder to a call for help regarding a mental

health crisis. The responder should be someone with the expertise to assist the individual in crisis. A social worker or counselor trained in identifying mental health needs, providing treatment, and identifying the resources needed by the individual should be responding, not a police officer trained in investigating criminal activity. This is not controversial.

As former Chief of Police Paul Rolleri said last year,

***“I don’t think that there’s a police officer in Alameda or anywhere else that wouldn’t be happy to have mental health professionals be the primary responders to mental health calls.”<sup>3</sup>***

As Chief Rolleri noted, the same can be said about calls for service regarding the unhoused. Indeed, where a different professional has more appropriate training for the situation, that professional—not a police officer—should be responding in order to obtain the best result for the individual in need.

Second, when police officers respond to calls that could be handled by a different professional, the police officers are pulled away from their primary responsibility of responding to and investigating criminal activity.

Third, police officers are expensive and difficult to recruit. We are paying a premium to send police officers to respond to mental health crises, despite their lack of expertise in psychiatric care. We know that per person-hour, a police officer is much more expensive than social workers or other professionals. A single full-time police officer may cost our city from \$200,000 to \$300,000 per year.<sup>4</sup>

Fourth, a police officer responding adds to the potential for incidents of racial bias and use of excessive force. While no person is immune from implicit bias, the culture and history of policing in the United States is one imbued with racial animus and use of excessive force against people of color, particularly Black men<sup>5</sup>. When that culture is coupled with the guns and other weapons carried by officers and with their inherent authority to take someone into custody, the situation can be disastrous. When a police officer is not needed—*i.e.*, when there is no criminal activity—a police officer should not respond. Further, we must note that what constitutes criminal activity is also steeped in centuries of racial and socio-economic bias; we defer to our sister Subcommittee on Laws that Criminalize Survival, whose recommendations address this at more length.

Tragic Alameda stories teach that the lack of mental health professionals available to respond can be catastrophic. In June of 2011, Raymond Zack drowned off of Robert Crown State Memorial Beach while APD and AFD watched from the shore, citing the lack of training for water

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pY8exjcxETU&feature=youtu.be&t=3464>

<sup>4</sup> <https://transparentcalifornia.com/salaries/search/?a=alameda&q=police+officer&y=2019>

<sup>5</sup> California Department of Justice statistics show, for instance, that people of color (especially African Americans) are much more likely to be subject to severe force than white suspects. (Compare <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/exploration/use-of-force> (use of severe force by race) with <https://www.ppic.org/publication/californias-population/> (Cal. Population).)

rescues (APD) and the elimination of a water-rescue program (AFD). Mr. Zack was in chest deep water and suicidal. No one helped him and he drowned.

In July of 2012, an Alameda Police Department officer pursued Jeffrey Navaro (known to APD as a person who is schizophrenic) who was riding a bicycle and suspected of a phone charger theft. The officer—using his baton—knocked Mr. Navaro off this bike and beat him so severely he was hospitalized for months and left permanently disabled.

In December of 2018, Shelby Gattenby called Alameda Police Department several times because he believed he could hear people following him. During APD's response, Mr. Gattenby made his way into the front of a patrol car and officers reported seeing him try to remove the patrol rifle. One officer was instructed to use his body weight to subdue Mr. Gattenby while he lay face down in order to cuff him. At the same point other officers repeatedly tased him. Mr. Gattenby became unresponsive at the scene and an ambulance was called. Mr. Gattenby went into cardiac arrest and died eight days later.

Missing from these interactions were mental health professionals. Even if a police officer is initially needed (Mr. Gattenby reported to police that he was being followed; responding to stalking or harassment may indeed require police response), mental health professionals would bring the skills and training that would meet the individual with an approach that could bring them help or deescalate the situation, rather than the potential to react with aggression and violence.

## **Mental Health Professionals Should Provide Mental Health Services**

As a society, we have failed to adequately provide people with mental health needs the services they deserve. Instead, we have tasked the police with being mental health service providers and thus treated those experiencing mental illness as suspects or criminals. This approach has not benefited people with mental health issues, police departments, or the community. The problem was compounded when we deinstitutionalized, shutting down the majority of our psychiatric institutions, without providing adequate community based services. The results are a prison population where over a third of the people incarcerated are suffering from mental illness.<sup>6</sup> Nationally, the annual suicide rate is about two and a half times higher than the annual homicide rate.<sup>7</sup> Alameda is not immune to the effects of this societal failure: a 2017-2018 Behavioral Needs Assessment conducted by the Alameda Unified School District found that 14% of 9th

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<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Statistics, (2017) Special Report [Indicators of Mental Health Problems Reported by Prisoners and Jail Inmates, 2011-2012](#), Figure 1.

<sup>7</sup> Center for Disease Control Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics, compare [Suicide and Self-Harm FastStats](#) (47,511 suicide deaths in 2019) with [Assault or Homicide FastStats](#) (19,141 homicides in 2019).

graders and 21% of students at the continuation high school had seriously considered attempting suicide<sup>8</sup>.

Other cities have developed alternative models that unbundle social services functions from their police departments. (See Appendix B.) Of utmost consideration are the models that have separated mental health services from police services. In some of these communities, mental health providers respond alongside police officers. In the CAHOOTS model in Eugene, Oregon, however, a mobile unit staffed with a medic and a mental health professional responds to mental health calls. It is this model that might best fit Alameda.

The Alameda calls for service data shows that in each of 2018 and 2019 there were over 3,100 calls for which the first level of response could have been a social worker or other mental health professional. This comes to an average of 8 to 9 calls per day. In addition, discussions with APD indicate that many calls coded as “disturbance” or “suspicious person” may involve individuals requiring social services intervention; as such, the table below underestimates the number of calls that could benefit from the involvement of a mental health professional or team.

**Table 5: Calls for Service with Potential for Mental Health / Social Worker Response**

<b>Call Type</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
Homeless Liaison	1,305	1,378
Insanity	858	727
Missing Person	236	221
Runaways	220	214
Welfare	503	603
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,122</b>	<b>3,143</b>

[According to the White Bird Clinic](#), which runs the CAHOOTS program, two-person teams—a medic and a crisis worker—respond to Eugene area mental health crises:

The program mobilizes two-person teams consisting of a medic (a nurse, paramedic, or EMT) and a crisis worker who has substantial training and experience in the mental health field. The CAHOOTS teams deal with a wide range of mental health-related crises, including conflict resolution, welfare checks, substance abuse, suicide threats, and more, relying on trauma-informed de-escalation and harm reduction techniques. CAHOOTS staff are not law enforcement officers and do not carry weapons; their training and experience are the tools they use to ensure a non-violent resolution of crisis situations. They also handle non-emergent medical issues, avoiding costly ambulance transport and emergency room treatment.

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<sup>8</sup> Alameda Unified School District, [Behavioral Needs Assessment Overview](#) presented to Alameda City Council 4/16/2019.

The benefits are tremendous. First, encounters are safer. As the White Bird Clinic reports, “A November 2016 study published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine estimated that 20% to 50% of fatal encounters with law enforcement involved an individual with a mental illness. The CAHOOTS model demonstrates that these fatal encounters are not inevitable. Last year, out of a total of roughly 24,000 CAHOOTS calls, police backup was requested only 150 times.” This case study, showing that only 0.6% of the 24,000 CAHOOTS calls required police, illustrates that mental health services can be provided separately from police departments the majority of the time. Second, the CAHOOTS program also saved substantial money: “In 2017, the CAHOOTS teams answered 17% of the Eugene Police Department’s overall call volume. The program saves the city of Eugene an estimated \$8.5 million in public safety spending annually.”

There are three findings that are key to CAHOOTS success and that we recommend be incorporated into an Alameda mental health response program:

1. *Authorization to Place People on Holds:* A CAHOOTS two-person team has the ability to place individuals who meet certain criteria on a 72-hour psychiatric hold. In California this type of 72-hour hold is called a 5150<sup>9</sup>. Section 5150(a) lists, “designated members of a mobile crisis team, or professional person designated by the county” as individuals who can place a person on a 72-hour hold. It is crucial that any Alameda mental health response have at least one team member with the authority to place 5150 holds. Without the authority to place the 5150 hold a mental health response team would have to call in APD and/or AFD to place the hold (as discussed elsewhere in these recommendations, the Unbundling Committee does not believe relying on either APD or AFD for every call is advisable).
2. *Transport:* CAHOOTS teams have the ability to transport an individual placed on a 72-hour hold. This enables CAHOOTS to transport most individuals to the psychiatric emergency facility without having to call for the assistance of the police or fire departments. If a person placed on a 5150 hold is unwilling to be transported to the psychiatric emergency facility then police assistance is required because police officers are authorized to lay hands on individuals in these circumstances. However, interactions between mental health professionals and people in need of treatment almost invariably result in the person agreeing to be transported to a psychiatric emergency facility. As noted above only 0.6% of CAHOOTS calls require police assistance.
3. *Connecting to Services:* CAHOOTS is able to connect people with services they need. CAHOOTS is part of the White Bird Clinic which provides services including substance abuse treatment, counseling, crisis response, benefits coordination, housing, schools/teen programs, and medical care. A mental health response team would need to have a working relationship with the various community based organizations that currently provide services in these areas. In some cases Alameda may need to increase and expand the services currently available in order to ensure access to those in need.

The City’s Community Development Department or an outside provider could be staffed to respond to calls for assistance related to individuals when a crime has not been committed,

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<sup>9</sup> [Welfare and Institutions Code section 5150](#).

such as mental health and welfare checks (initial investigation of domestic disputes, missing persons, runaways) and unhoused persons.

## **Unbundling Other Services**

The review of service calls shows there are many other non-criminal community needs and activities currently being responded to by the Alameda Police Department. Some of these needs and activities, such as animal control, are entirely disconnected from law enforcement. Other activities—such as parking violations, littering, or smoking ordinance violations—might be infractions, but don't require a sworn police officer as a first level of response.

Police officers and non-officers supervised by the police department need not be the first line of response to non-criminal conflicts in our community, whether they are between family members, neighbors, or students. Just as AUSD is eliminating the School Resource Officer program, other models of conflict resolution (such as restorative justice) can be implemented for community conflict.<sup>10</sup>

Likewise, the Public Works Department could address parking enforcement, traffic hazards, directing traffic, abandoned vehicles, lost and found property, and littering. We suspect that Public Works staff could do these things less expensively than Alameda Police Department and this would also allow the police department to focus their resources on criminal activity.

The Community Development Department could be reimagined to address public nuisances (annoying phone calls, public intoxication, fireworks, smoking ordinance violations, etc), provide safety-related services to individuals, such as car seat inspections and bicycle safety training, and fingerprinting services not related to a crime, such as for licensing, work or volunteer requirements. As we rebuild the police department, the City should also consider restructuring other departments, to achieve city-wide efficiency and optimal use of services.

Similarly, a “Central Services Department” could be established for all non-911 calls, which could direct the calls to the appropriate department, thereby limiting APD response to only crime-related calls. Furthermore, [211 services](#) could be bolstered and promoted to provide a clear alternative for calls that do not require police intervention.

## **Alameda Police Department and Alameda Fire Department Would Remain Available As Needed**

As in the CAHOOTS model, the Unbundling Subcommittee recommends police and fire backup remain available as needed. As noted above, last year such backup was needed for only 150 out of 24,000 CAHOOTS calls in Eugene, Oregon. Preserving the safety of front-line workers would remain a priority. Hence, for example, a mobile mental health team encountering an individual with a weapon could call for police backup. Similarly, a parking enforcement officer

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<sup>10</sup> See [Minutes of the Alameda City Council Meeting of June 17, 2020](#), at 12 (clarifying action taken by the City Council on June 16, 2020, regarding school resource officers).



being threatened could call for Alameda Police Department backup. And a crisis worker recognizing a homeless person as the victim of an assault could call for APD backup to report the crime.

## **Staffing of Alameda Police Department**

The question of what staffing level is appropriate for APD can and should be separated from the question of whether to shift certain services—such as responding to mental health calls—to a different department or agency. The Unbundling Subcommittee recommends that the City—while it moves forward with developing a mental health crisis team—simultaneously contract with outside and independent experts (with no ties to law enforcement) to conduct an assessment of Alameda Police Department staffing and organizational structure.

That assessment would examine Alameda’s size, geography, and crime rates, and make a recommendation to the City regarding what levels of staffing are appropriate for patrol, investigations, management, operations, technical services, and administrative services. While it might be expected that shifting responsibility for responding to non-criminal matters outside of Alameda Police Department will mean Alameda Police Department’s staff can be reduced, that may not necessarily be the case. Only an independent assessment can help answer that question.

We note that in our preliminary report we included a recommendation to “Continue Hiring freeze in the Alameda Police Department.” We apologize for an error in our wording. Last summer, the City Council directed that APD not increase its staffing beyond its then-current level.<sup>11</sup> This would be better characterized as a “cap” rather than a “freeze,” because APD was still able to fill any new vacancies (resulting from retirements, resignations, etc.). Moreover, we also urged forgoing new commitments in the budgeting and collective bargaining process. We do not suggest there should be no collective bargaining with any units in APD. We only note that the collective bargaining may commence prior to the City having conducted or contracted for an independent review of the staffing needs for a re-imagined APD focused only on crime. Both parties to such negotiations (the City and the union) will have to weigh the prospect of a different-sized or restructured APD. We encourage the city to negotiate adequate flexibility into any new contract so that it has the ability to redesign the department once an independent assessment of the APD staffing and organizational structure is complete.

## **CONCLUSION**

Below, the Unbundling Subcommittee first provides final primary recommendations, followed by additional recommendations for the implementation phase, and a final note urging a holistic approach. The subcommittee appreciates having had this opportunity to examine community needs and to make these recommendations in conjunction with the other subcommittees and

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<sup>11</sup> See [Minutes of the Alameda City Council Meeting of June 17, 2020](#), at 12 (clarifying action taken by the City Council on June 16, 2020, regarding staffing levels at APD).

city staff. Much work remains and we understand there are a multiplicity of views within the community. We urge continuing and robust community input as this dialogue continues.

## **Final Primary Recommendations**

In view of the information we have reviewed and the principles just described, in order to unbundle the services provided by the Alameda Police Department, the Unbundling Subcommittee recommends that the City Council direct city staff to:

1. Immediately begin the process—through RFPs and/or restructuring of current non-police city agencies—of creating a mental health response team;
2. Begin the process of similarly moving responsibility for other non-crime functions to other city agencies or contractors;
3. Develop an RFP for an outside contractor law enforcement expert without law enforcement ties to assess Alameda’s police patrol, investigations, management, operations, technical, and administrative staffing needs, given Alameda’s size, geographic, demographics, and crime rates; and,
4. Advance a dynamic, ongoing, and robust annual assessment of community needs, conducted by assessment experts, using service call data, police dispatch and outcome data, surveys of Alameda residents and visitors, and other community outreach modes.

The preceding four recommendations represent those that the Unbundling Subcommittee believes to be most urgent. In particular, the need to create and separate out mental health response from the police department is the subcommittee’s strongest single recommendation; we feel that such an action best reflects Alameda’s values and desire to create a safe and welcoming island for all who live, work, and visit here.

## **Additional Recommendations for Implementation Phase**

In addition to the above recommendations, the Unbundling Subcommittee believes there are several additional avenues of action that the City can take to reduce the number of non-criminal calls for service that sworn officers spend time responding to. Key recommendations for further study, or implementation following the community needs assessment, include:

1. Retain flexibility by avoiding, when possible, any new or further long-term commitments in policing until after the police reform process is complete.
2. Establish a “Central Services Department” for all non-911 calls, which can direct the call to the appropriate department, thereby limiting APD response to only crime-related calls. And help bolster and promote 211 services to provide a clear alternative for calls that do not require police intervention.
3. Examine means of reducing the number of discretionary traffic stops made by police, while simultaneously improving traffic safety. Strategies to achieve this goal may include:
  - a. Monitoring, and perhaps emulating, such models as those under development by the City of Berkeley and City of Los Angeles to enforce traffic laws (including

moving violations) through a separate department employing unarmed civilian staff.<sup>12</sup> Consistent with the recommendations regarding mental health teams, unarmed traffic safety personnel could call police officers for backup, if necessary.

- b. Continue the City's Vision Zero work implementing appropriate design changes and traffic calming interventions to reduce the harm caused by speeding, reckless driving, or other moving violations, and thereby reducing the need for city personnel engaged in traffic enforcement;
  - c. Consider technological solutions (e.g., cameras), if they can be implemented in compliance with state law and in a fair and equitable way. Systems that do not accurately identify the driver would be problematic, as recognized by the City's 2019 ban on use of facial recognition technology<sup>13</sup>).
4. Forego any reinstating of the School Resource Officer program, and continue to develop and expand youth mental health programs and/or restorative justice programs for children and youth, to complement any such programs in place or contemplated by AUSD.
  5. Reallocate resources to other City departments to address issues which are compatible with, or a natural extension of, that department's function: e.g., parking enforcement and abandoned vehicles would be addressed by Public Works, which currently manages the paid parking program and is responsible for street maintenance.
  6. If reassigning responsibilities to another City department is not feasible, the City should contract with non-profit or external governmental organization(s) to respond to non-criminal calls for service, such as those related to individuals in crisis (including those with acute or ongoing mental health needs), unhoused individuals, welfare checks, and substance use, and utilize the services provided by 211 as much as possible.

## Holistic Solutions

The charge of the unbundling subcommittee was to examine whether and how certain services currently assigned to the Alameda Police Department could be redirected to, and better served by, non-police service providers. Eliminating bias in policing cannot be achieved solely through such a restructuring. Accordingly, the recommendations herein must be viewed in conjunction with the recommendations of the other subcommittees and the necessity of addressing societal ills that disproportionately impact people/youth of color, including systemic racism throughout our society, poverty, housing insecurity, displacement, ableist, anti-LGBTQ+ sentiments, and many others. In particular, we urge the City to continue in its pursuit of solutions to the housing crisis, supportive services for the homeless and poor, and marginalized youth.

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<sup>12</sup> See Sam Levin, [California City Moves to Replace Police With Unarmed Civilians for Traffic Stops](#), The Guardian (July 15, 2020).

<sup>13</sup> Alex Najibi, [Racial Discrimination in Face Recognition Technology - Science in the News](#) (October 24, 2020); see also Alameda City Council, [Minutes of Meeting of December 17, 2019](#) and [Resolution Establishing a Privacy Policy, Data Management Policy, and Prohibiting the Use of Facial Recognition Technology](#).

Specific to police reform, but consistent with the recommendations of other Subcommittees, the Unbundling Subcommittee urges the City to hire a police chief committed to reform and, in particular, to rooting out bias (implicit or explicit) and use of excessive force in policing, and committed to creating a department characterized in its policies and culture by diversity, equity, and inclusion. Special attention should be paid to candidates traditionally underrepresented in police chief positions.