# City of Bellflower Community Policing Plan

**December 5, 2022**

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1. **Mission Statements.** The following are the mission statements adopted by the city of Bellflower, its Public Safety Department and the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department:

- The mission of the city of Bellflower is to protect and enrich the quality of life to make Bellflower an excellent place to live, work and play.

- The mission of the Public Safety Department of the city of Bellflower is to protect and serve the Bellflower community by providing timely, efficient and effective law enforcement and law enforcement support services.

- The mission of the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department is to enforce the law fairly and within constitutional authority; to be proactive in our approach to crime prevention; to enhance public trust through accountability; to maintain a constitutionally sound and rehabilitative approach to incarceration; to provide a safe and secure court system; to maintain peace and order; and to work in partnership with the communities we served to ensure the highest possible quality of life.

2. **Background.** The Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department has served the people of Los Angeles County for more than 150 years. Since the incorporation of the city of Bellflower in 1957, the City has contracted with the Sheriff’s Department for law enforcement services. Historically, these services were provided with little or no participation by the City in the determination of the manner, means, quantity or quality of the service. During the past 35 years, the City changed in many significant ways: a dramatic increase in multi-family and tenant-occupied housing, a significant decrease in the number and size of retail and other commercial businesses, dramatically increased population and the shift of a predominantly white population to one that reflects the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual population of Southern California and Los Angeles County. Accompanying these changes was a sharp increase in crime. From 1984 to 1993, the Part 1 Crime Rate (the index of the most serious crimes against persons and property) increased by more than 35%. From 1986 to 1987 alone, the crime rate increased by 29%.

In 1991, a local resident and his fiancée were driving home at midnight when their car was hit by rocks being thrown by a group of young people. The driver, a lifelong Bellflower resident, got out of his car to confront the rock throwers and was shot and killed. The 29-year-old victim, a respected member of our community, had no history of criminal activity or gang involvement. The subsequent investigation identified two individuals, both active gang members, with criminal records, as the probable killers. Due to a lack of sufficient evidence, they escaped prosecution. This random act of violence became the catalyst that brought the community, its government and its Sheriff’s Department together to redefine our approach to crime and crime prevention.

In 1993, the City and Sheriff’s Department began our transition to a community policing approach to public safety. Significant additional resources were committed and the City assumed an active role in our partnership with the Sheriff’s Department. From the 1992-93 fiscal year to 1993-94, the City’s budget for public safety and community policing increased by 33%. In the following years the City and Sheriff’s Department commitment to community policing and the safety and welfare of our community has continued to grow.

3. **Introduction to Community Policing.** Community policing is the foundation of Bellflower’s entire public safety program. Research over the past 25 years has shown the need to look for
long term solutions in resolving persistent and recurring community problems. Studies indicate that in many communities, 30% of the calls for service emanate from 10% of the locations in the City. Because a good portion of a deputy's time is spent responding to the same locations repeatedly, a problem-oriented approach is necessary.

Using this approach, deputies assigned to the city of Bellflower look beyond the individual call for service and address the underlying problems that create them. For example, a particular location may be experiencing a narcotics use problem, but the underlying cause is that the building has been allowed to fall into disrepair, inviting criminal activity. Once the underlying cause is identified, deputies are expected to look for and apply tailor-made solutions to the problem. At times the solution to a problem may not be found in the realm of the criminal justice system. Because of this, they are not only encouraged to utilize the wide range of City resources available, but also those found throughout the community. These community resources include schools, churches, service clubs, non-profit organizations, and local businesses.

Community policing is based on the cooperative resolution of community safety problems, when the root cause has been identified. Citizens and deputies will participate in, and be responsible for, strategy design and problem solving that emphasizes comprehensive responses to public safety issues. The key to problem solving is a joint effort by deputies and citizens using both public and private resources. These resources are dictated by the uniqueness of the problem and its most effective resolution. Essential to this process are deputies with good interpersonal skills who take a sincere interest in, and are sensitive to the needs of the citizens of the city of Bellflower.

In order for the needs of the City to be met effectively, communication between City and Sheriff's personnel and members of the community is essential. Through their combined efforts, it is expected that crime within the City will decrease. This can only be achieved by having dedicated and efficient personnel working toward the same goals. It is very important that the deputies feel that this is their City, and in return the citizens must feel as if the Sheriff's personnel are in fact the City's police department.

4. **Statement of Purpose.** Beginning in 1994, the city of Bellflower and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department transitioned to a Community Policing Plan. Community policing is a strengthening of the partnership between the citizen, the City's law enforcement, and government. The plan encourages citizen participation in crime reduction and allows greater coordination with City government to address public safety issues. As members of the community, deputies will act as catalysts to coordinate the necessary resources to eliminate specific community safety problems.

As additional resources were put into place, it became apparent that we needed a well developed and documented policing plan to give all personnel a defined set of goals and objectives. The first edition of the City's Community Policing Plan was published in 1995. That plan formalized the new working relationship between the City and Sheriff's Department and laid out our mutual commitment to the community to improve the quality of their lives through the wise and prudent application of the additional resources given us to combat crime.

The policing plan delineates specific programs including the Special Assignment Team, patrol deputies, community service officers, and various citizen volunteer programs. Each segment is
important to the overall success of the policing plan and interacts accordingly. Each program will be continually evaluated for effectiveness in addressing the immediate needs of the community, with specific duties, deployment, and responsibilities modified when appropriate.

The Community Policing Plan seeks to create a true partnership between the city of Bellflower, the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department and members of our community. It emphasizes long term solutions to problems affecting the community, while at the same time addressing more urgent needs.

The team concept to planning will provide a comprehensive approach to public safety issues. It will ensure that all resources available are utilized effectively to deal with the needs and priorities of the community. Increased coordination among the citizens of the city of Bellflower and their law enforcement personnel will foster the feeling that they are indeed a community-based team working together to resolve public safety issues.

5. **City Management Team.**

   a. **City Manager.** Section 2.08.010 of the Bellflower Municipal Code creates the Office of City Manager. Under the direction and control of the City Council, he is responsible for the efficient administration of all the affairs of the City that are under his control. As administrative head of the city government, his duties and powers include control over the Public Safety Department. Acting through the director of public safety, the city manager establishes policies, sets priorities, and provides overall direction to accomplish the objectives set by the City Council.

   b. **Director of Public Safety.** Under the general direction of the city manager, the director of public safety is the head of the Public Safety Department. His duties include:

      o Directing the day-to-day activities of the Public Safety Department, including the supervision of department employees which includes Code Enforcement and operation of the Bellflower Sheriff’s Substation.
      o Preparing the Public Safety Department’s budget and presentation of the proposed budget to the City Council and Public Safety Commission.
      o Providing day-to-day management oversight for contract law enforcement, animal control, and crossing guard services.
      o Supervising the City’s public safety and community policing programs, including Neighborhood Watch.
      o Preparing and presenting staff reports for consideration by the City Council, Public Safety Commission, and community groups.
      o Coordinating the activities of the Public Safety Department and Sheriff’s Department with other City departments.
      o Managing the City’s law enforcement grant programs.
      o As assistant director of emergency services, this person is responsible for emergency management and preparedness programs, including training of all City staff.

   c. **Public Safety Manager.** Under the general direction of the director of public safety, this person provides law enforcement support services to the Sheriff’s Department and the Bellflower community. The duties of the public safety manager include:
Supervising day-to-day operations of the Bellflower Sheriff’s Substation and assigned personnel in the office and field, including Code Enforcement.

- Providing information and services to the public and takes reports of criminal and other incidents.
- Coordinating support services with deputies and other personnel working at the Substation.
- Coordinating field support requirements with the station watch commander, field supervisors, and SAO Sergeant.
- Supervising parking enforcement and crossing guard operations.
- Assisting in the management of various public safety and community policing programs, including Neighborhood Watch and emergency management and preparedness.
- Assisting in collection efforts relative to “false alarms,” “dumpster diving” and “fireworks” violations.
- Representing the City in the filing of small claims actions and restitution hearings.

6. Sheriff’s Department Management Team.

   a. Station Commander. The commander of the Lakewood Regional Sheriff’s Station (captain) is the de facto chief of police for the city of Bellflower. He is ultimately responsible for the deployment of both the city of Bellflower’s dedicated service units and regional forces. The captain must have continual interaction with the city manager and director of public safety. With a competent Bellflower Policing Team providing pertinent, sound information, the captain will be able to provide the most effective and efficient law enforcement services to the City.

   The captain and the city manager are the primary administrators in the command structure within the Community Policing Plan. Because of this, it is essential that both their staffs communicate essential information and work toward common goals. The captain of the Regional Sheriff's Station will assume the following duties within the Community Policing Plan:

   - Act as “chief of police” for the city of Bellflower.
   - Ensure that activities are conducted in conformance with the law, sound police practices, and departmental policies.
   - Attend City Council meetings and City functions as needed or requested.
   - Maintain ongoing dialogue with city manager and staff relative to community safety issues.
   - Interact with community groups to provide community safety information.

   b. Special Assignment Sergeant. The special assignment sergeant is the first line supervisor for all deputies assigned to the City. The sergeant is essential in assisting the City's department heads in the planning of various public safety activities. The sergeant is important as a direct contact between City staff and the City's law enforcement line personnel. The continued interaction between City staff and the special assignment sergeant allow the City's law enforcement needs and desires to be known, and carried out. The sergeant is responsible for ensuring that the City's law enforcement resources are utilized in a manner that is both effective and prudent. The sergeant has the following responsibilities:

   - Supervise the Bellflower Special Assignment Team and patrol personnel.
   - Conduct both training and orientation for newly assigned deputies.
   - Plan and execute special operations in coordination with specialized Sheriff’s Department units and with outside federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies.
c. **Detective Sergeant.** The detective sergeant is the immediate supervisor for the deputies assigned to the City as investigative detectives. This position is crucial in ensuring that active and workable cases are investigated thoroughly and filed with the appropriate court once the investigation is concluded. The detective sergeant is responsible for making necessary notifications to public safety administrators as to the progress of highly sensitive criminal investigations to the extent of legal restrictions and in such a manner as to not hamper the integrity of the case being worked. Some of the other duties and responsibilities of the detective sergeant include:

- Read and assign complaint reports to detective personnel for investigative follow-up.
- Monitor the progress of the investigations and approve written supplemental reports and findings.
- Liaison with specialized investigative units of the Sheriff’s Department and with outside federal, state, and local investigative agencies.
- Prepare written statistical reports concerning number of cases handled, arrests having been made (both adult and juvenile), cases filed, cases solved, and ultimate disposition of court.
- Monitor crime analysis products for indications of crime trends and other circumstances warranting the attention of the local management team.

d. **Station Watch Commander.** The regional station watch commander is the station commander’s representative and is responsible for management and supervision of station and field operations occurring during his/her watch. As an extended member of Bellflower’s Community Policing Team, the watch commander’s additional responsibilities include:

- Be familiar with local concerns and priorities, and knowledgeable about City and community resources available to assist the Sheriff’s Department and members of the community.
- Recognize by name City Council Members, Public Safety Commissioners, city manager, director of public safety, other key staff, and other high-profile members of our community.
- Make notifications of events occurring in or affecting the City during his watch to designated City staff when he/she receives telephone notification, and in serious criminal or non-criminal incidents involving city council members or their families, or City employees.

e. **Field Sergeant/Supervisor.** Under the direction of the watch commander, one or more sergeants are assigned to oversee field operations through the area served by the regional station. As an extended member of Bellflower’s Community Policing Team, the field sergeants’ additional responsibilities include:

- Be familiar with local concerns and priorities, and knowledgeable about City and community resources available to assist the Sheriff’s Department and members of the community.
- Maintain a dialogue with the special assignment sergeant and director of public safety about crime trends, unusual occurrences and other operational issues affecting service delivery or quality of life, or requiring the attention or action by the Special Assignment Team or other local resources.
7. **Probation Support.** Although no longer contracted with the City, the Substation serves as a field office for a Los Angeles County deputy probation officer. This deputy probation officer has been an enormous asset to the deputies and detectives assigned to the City. The deputy probation officer is available to confirm the probation status of any suspected probationer, and issue immediate custody hold for those found in violation.

8. **Los Angeles County Fire Department.** The Los Angeles County Fire Department serves as the city of Bellflower’s municipal fire department. The Division IV assistant fire chief, headquartered in Cerritos, functions as the City’s de facto fire chief. Due to the wide range of emergency and fire prevention services provided, the Fire Department is possessed of a unique view of the community policing issues facing the Bellflower community. The Fire Department maintains, at the operational level as well as the management level, close contact with City staff and the Sheriff’s Department to facilitate mutual support and the two-way exchange of information.

9. **Field Team.** Bellflower’s field team consists of all the elements of our community policing team, sworn and non-sworn, full and part-time, and volunteers, assigned to field operations and support of field operations.

   a. **Special Assignment Officers (SAOs).** The special assignment officers (i.e. deputies) are an integral part of the policing plan. Once a patrol deputy becomes unable to resolve a particular problem because of limited time or available resources, the special assignment officers becomes responsible for addressing this public safety issue.

   Special assignment officers are most often the final resource for citizens, who have a continuing neighborhood problem. By the time the citizen contacts the special assignment officers, the problem has usually been ongoing for a substantial period of time. This can lead to the citizen being very frustrated and expecting a quick resolution. The special assignment officers must assure the citizen that the problem will be properly addressed. They also must explain that the actions necessary to resolve the problem may take time, during which frequent contact with the citizen will be maintained.

   The special assignment officers are also a vital link for the Neighborhood Watch program.

   Many of the special assignment officer's responsibilities are too broad to specifically list, however some of their duties are to:

   o Assist with BMC quality of life enforcement (e.g. illegal camping).
   o Participate in district programs.
   o Participate in special enforcement operations (e.g. DUI checkpoints, saturation patrols, narcotics surveillance).
   o Participate in probation sweep operations.
   o Assist patrol deputies with problems that require additional time or resources.
   o Provide assistance to detectives in locating suspects.
   o Handle any problems that are brought to the city manager's attention.
   o Attend Neighborhood Watch meetings.
   o Develop and maintain a working relationship with the Neighborhood Watch captains.
   o Utilize City and community resources to solve community problems.
b. Patrol Deputies - General Law and Traffic. Patrol deputies are probably the most crucial position in the overall policing plan. They alone can assure the success of this program. The patrol deputy makes numerous daily contacts with citizens of the community, many of whom have just been the victim of a crime. Other citizens they encounter are attempting to resolve a persistent neighborhood problem. The patrol deputy is often their first contact after they have become frustrated by the problem. If he cannot resolve the problem, the patrol deputy must be aware of the resources that are available throughout the community to handle the problem. He must either make the appropriate notifications or aid the citizen in contacting the necessary resources to bring resolution. In short, the patrol deputy must become a "problem solver". The patrol deputy's responsibilities shall include the following:

- Provide the most professional and quality law enforcement possible.
- Become a part of the community by creating genuine bonds with business owners and residents.
- Assist citizens with their day to day problems, even though they may not be specific "law enforcement" problems.
- Handle all calls for service in a professional manner, realizing that enforcing the letter of the law may not always be the most effective manner to resolve the problem.
- Assure that all calls for service are responded to in a timely manner.
- Convey all pertinent information to the Special Assignment team.
- Be knowledgeable about City and community resources available to help resolve problems even though they may not be a "law enforcement" issue.

c. No Calls Motorcycle Traffic Deputy. Beyond the traditional patrol/traffic force, the city of Bellflower contracts for one additional motorcycle traffic unit to meet the majority of the community’s traffic enforcement demands. This unit is not given calls for service (e.g., traffic collisions) during their daily deployment, so they are best suited to concentrate efforts on “modifying the behavior of motorists who make poor driving decisions.” Furthermore, when complaints come into the substation regarding excessive speeding, reckless driving around elementary schools, etc., most often the complaints are given to the unit for handling.

d. Detectives. The detectives are responsible for all follow-up investigation of complaint reports written by field personnel. Bellflower detectives determine if a case has workable information, interview all percipient victims, witnesses and suspects, evaluate any physical evidence collected and determine the proper course of action for filing the case through the District Attorney's Office. They also work closely with the Substation staff to assure that the appropriate information is properly entered into the crime analysis system. In addition, Bellflower detectives are responsible to:

- Handle criminal cases that occur within the city of Bellflower, actively investigating all leads, evidence and statements made relative to a criminal incident and conduct follow-up investigations as necessary.
- Prepare investigative supplemental reports as to findings and recommendations for filing purposes.
- Work closely with outside agencies in cases where other policing areas may have similar crimes involving the same suspects.
- Conduct surveillance, prepare and serve search and "Ramey" warrants as situations dictate.
o File cases through the District Attorney’s Office in the court having legal jurisdiction.
  o Appear in court as the "investigating officer" and assist the District Attorney in active prosecution of the cases.
  o Close active cases through presentation to the District Attorney’s Office.
  o Be available at the Bellflower Substation on a daily basis for the citizens of the community.
  o Work closely with Substation staff to assure that crime analysis information is properly interpreted for entry into and retrieval from the computer system.
  o Work closely with Substation staff to detect developing trends.

e. **Community Services Officers.** Under the general direction of the director of public safety, and the immediate direction of the public safety manager, community services officers work without direct supervision to provide law enforcement support services to the Sheriff’s Department and the Bellflower community. They are valuable resources to the policing plan, able to assist citizens in accessing the resources necessary to resolve their particular public safety problem. The community services officer is also utilized to keep the deputies up-to-date with information they receive at the Substation, either via telephone or in person. Each community services officer may be assigned specific additional collateral responsibilities as needed. Their duties include:

  o Perform parking enforcement duties ranging from ticketing to towing vehicles.
  o Work with SAOs to address illegal camping violations.
  o Respond to and handle “non-workable” calls for service as dispatched by Lakewood Station.
  o Direct customers to City and other public services affording non-law enforcement solutions to their problems.
  o Assist in the training and supervision of other employees and volunteers, as assigned.
  o Lift latent fingerprints from property crime scenes.
  o Perform such additional collateral duties as may be assigned.

f. **Crossing Guards.** Foremost, crossing guards are responsible for the safety of elementary school children crossing the street at their assigned intersections. Their high-profile activity serves to alert oncoming traffic to the presence of children. By their example and direction, they teach children how to cross streets safely. They also serve as additional eyes and ears for law enforcement personnel, keeping especially alert for unsafe drivers who put children at-risk and for suspicious individuals loitering near schools, school routes, and near children.

g. **Volunteers.** Volunteers from both City and Sheriff’s Department programs are available to support the City’s Community Policing Plan.

1. **Volunteers on Patrol (VOPs).** The VOPs are local residents who have received limited training and are used to augment administrative, clerical and patrol resources of the Sheriff’s Department. Under the direction of the station commander, VOPs assist with desk operations, patrol functions, and community outreach programs. The latter include kid-print, vacation checks, park patrols, and crowd and traffic control for special events.

10. **Neighborhood Watch Program.** Based on the concept of “neighbors helping neighbors” Bellflower’s Neighborhood Watch program serves our community by working with the Public Safety Department and Sheriff’s Department to reduce crime. Neighborhood Watch members
serve as additional eyes and ears for the Sheriff’s Department, reporting criminal or other unusual activities in their neighborhoods.

a. Neighborhood Watch District Representatives. The City is divided into six Neighborhood Watch districts that correspond to the six original reporting districts created by the Sheriff’s Department to better keep track of crime and service statistics and police reports (a seventh reporting district was subsequently created by dividing district three into two reporting districts, but the number of Neighborhood Watch districts was not increased).

The Neighborhood Watch captains in each district select one of their members to represent the district. The term of office for district representatives is two years, expiring concurrently with the next municipal general election and after they are re-appointed or their successor is appointed and qualified. The duties of the district representative include:

- Chair meetings of the Neighborhood Watch captains in their district.
- Meet or speak with the Neighborhood Watch coordinator, or other Public Safety staff.
- Work independently, in concert with their district’s captains, and with City and Sheriff’s Department staff, to promote new members to join existing Neighborhood Watch groups and help to form new Neighborhood Watch groups.

b. Neighborhood Watch Captains. The Neighborhood Watch captain is one of the important positions in the Community Policing Plan. Without their extra eyes and ears in the community, the Sheriff's Department and City government's effectiveness would be greatly diminished. These volunteers are the best source of information within the City. They live, and often work within the City and are often aware of invaluable public safety information.

The Neighborhood Watch captains are very useful in dispensing information from the city of Bellflower and the Sheriff's Department to members of the community. This can make community members more aware of public safety issues, which can stop criminals before they have a chance to commit further crimes. The Neighborhood Watch captains’ duties include:

- Maintain a communications system so that important public safety information can be quickly disseminated throughout the community.
- Be available to members of their block, so they can gather information to be passed on to special assignment officers for follow-up.
- Work closely with the City and Sheriff’s Department to keep their block watch active and running efficiently.
- Serve as the block’s public safety representative.
- Host periodic Neighborhood Watch block meetings.
- Look after neighbors' homes when they are away.
- Report all unusual activity to the Sheriff's station immediately.
- Inform new residents of the program and assist them in becoming involved.

c. Neighborhood Watch Coordinator. The Neighborhood Watch coordinator is a Public Safety staff member assigned this collateral duty in addition to his normal duties. The duties of the Neighborhood Watch coordinator include:

- Act as a point of first contact for residents seeking information on the program, or to join or
start a Neighborhood Watch group.
- Work with residents to plan meetings for new and existing groups, and attend as appropriate.
- Represent the City at initial and other meetings.
- Assist and advise district representatives and Neighborhood Watch captains.
- Maintain and regularly update the roster of active Neighborhood Watch captains.
- Maintain and distribute supplies of materials specific to the program.
- Assist in the development of strategies aimed at expanding the program.

11. **Bellflower Substation.** The Bellflower Substation is essential to providing the citizens of Bellflower with direct access to law enforcement services. It is a focal point for community pride, and serves to foster the feeling that the Sheriff’s Department is their "police department."

The Substation houses the City’s Public Safety Department, including the director of public safety, public safety manager, code enforcement supervisor, Code Enforcement personnel, and other City public safety staff. It also houses the Sheriff’s Department’s special assignment sergeant, detective sergeant, detectives, special assignment officers, and provides work space for patrol deputies. It also serves as the field office for one deputy probation officer.

The Substation is not a full service “police station”. Many of the essential functions associated with a police station are housed in the Regional Sheriff’s Station, including: watch commanders, dispatchers, 911 operators, jail, property room, armory and motor pool. Unlike the regional station, which functions daily, 24-hours a day, the Substation is open Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. with every other Friday from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and closed on Sundays and holidays. Bellflower deputies are afforded 24-hour a day access to the Substation.

Bellflower detectives also are assigned directly to the Substation. This allows the citizens to have access to their Detectives within their City. Bellflower patrol deputies have 24-hour access to the Substation, which brings them completely into the program and gives them better access to the resources provided by the city of Bellflower. It also allows for information to be passed between all members of the Policing Team, to ensure that the community receives the best possible law enforcement services.