



Kate Harrison
Councilmember District 4

CONSENT CALENDAR
November 12, 2019

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember Kate Harrison
Subject: Request for Information: Police Dispatch

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the City Manager a request for information clarifying:

- 1) when non-emergency phone calls to the police are directed to the Berkeley Police Department and when to the California Highway Patrol or other outside agencies, and
- 2) what staffing or technological changes would be needed to direct more calls to Berkeley dispatch.

BACKGROUND

Berkeley's police dispatch is staffed by 23.5 FTE highly trained civilian dispatchers, who receive both emergency and non-emergency calls.¹ Unfortunately, not all non-emergency calls to the police in Berkeley go to the BPD Communications Center. Based on experience and confirmed by the Chief of Police, some calls made from some cell phones to the non-emergency number are routed to the California Highway Patrol (CHP) dispatch center. Berkeley residents deserve some clarification about to whom they are speaking.

Anecdotally, the CHP dispatch are less effective than BPD dispatch. In one instance from a District 4 constituent, CHP dispatch said that they could not locate her home address in their database and thus could not send anyone. Other constituents report less than polite service. When Berkeley residents call dispatch and have an unpleasant experience, they are less likely to call in the future. BPD dispatch are well trained and talented and under the jurisdiction of the City. It is in the interest of public safety to have as many calls as possible go to BPD. In the meantime, we need some clarity on where calls go, so that the public can better understand the system.

¹ Item 28, "911 Dispatchers: Understaffing Leads to Excessive Overtime and Low Morale", May 14th 2019 City Council Meeting. The Communications Center is understaffed, as the approved staffing level for 33 FTEs. Many shifts are filled through mandatory overtime.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Some staff time necessary to determine how these calls are forwarded.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

No impact.

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Kate Harrison, Council District 4, (510) 981-7140