



Office of the City Manager

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL for Supplemental Packet 2

Meeting Date: October 28, 2025

Item Number: 18

Item Description: Authorization to Encrypt Berkeley Police Department Primary Radio Channels

Submitted by: Jen Louis, Chief of Police

This supplemental adds a provision for a near real-time Police Call Log on the BPD Transparency Hub. The log will display the general type, location, and time of calls for service with a brief delay for privacy and safety.

October 28, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager
Submitted by: Jennifer Louis, Chief of Police, Police Department
Subject: Supplemental - Public Transparency Commitments Related to Police Radio Encryption

OVERVIEW

The City of Berkeley and the Berkeley Police Department (BPD) share the community's values of openness and accountability and affirm that even as encryption advances privacy and safety, our commitment to transparency remains strong. In response to concerns that have been raised since the publication of the staff report, this supplemental material proposes an approach that, if adopted by the City Council, will enhance the level of transparency involving the Department's response to calls for service.

BPD can provide a Call Log that updates throughout the day. The Call Log will appear on the BPD Transparency Hub¹ and will display near real-time information about police calls for service. The Call Log bridges the gap between when the call occurs and the existing publicly shared Calls for Service dataset² that is refreshed daily.

The Call Log will include the general type of call (i.e., Robbery, Disturbance, Collision) that the Department received, the nearest intersection or block-level address of the call for service, and the time that the call was received. Information will appear with a brief delay to protect individual privacy and ensure operational security, while still giving the public a current and accurate view of police activity citywide.

Should the City Council approve both the original item and this supplemental material, an updated resolution reflecting these provisions is attached.

¹ <https://bpd-transparency-initiative-berkeleypd.hub.arcgis.com/>.

² <https://bpd-transparency-initiative-berkeleypd.hub.arcgis.com/pages/cfs-stats>

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###N.S.

RESCINDING THE CITY COUNCIL'S POLICY REGARDING UNENCRYPTED PUBLIC SAFETY RADIO CHANNELS AND AUTHORIZING THE ENCRYPTION OF BERKELEY POLICE DEPARTMENT PRIMARY RADIO CHANNELS

WHEREAS, the California Department of Justice issued Information Bulletin 20-09-CJIS (October 12, 2020) requiring encryption of all Criminal Justice Information (CJI) and Personally Identifiable Information (PII) transmitted over radio systems, consistent with the FBI CJIS Security Policy; and

WHEREAS, in September 2021 the City Council adopted a policy that most City public safety radio transmissions remain unencrypted, except for Special Response Team operations and transmissions of CJI/PII; and

WHEREAS, the Berkeley Police Department has documented numerous incidents in which suspects used unencrypted radio traffic to coordinate crimes, evade capture, and endanger officers and community members; and

WHEREAS, advance notice of officer presence or activity creates a tactical disadvantage and increases the risk of violent confrontation or ambush; and

WHEREAS, failure to encrypt would leave Berkeley as the only unencrypted agency in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, creating a unique public safety risk, undermining regional consistency, and exposing the City to liability; and

WHEREAS, the East Bay Regional Communications System Authority (EBRCSA) has scheduled encryption for Contra Costa agencies on October 7, 2025, and Alameda County agencies, including Berkeley, on October 15, 2025, which is the earliest date BPD could transition; however, actual implementation will occur as soon as practicable following Council authorization and administrative preparation; and

WHEREAS, at the direction of the City Manager, the Berkeley Police Department will provide a Call Log on the BPD Transparency Hub, updated frequently throughout the day, to maintain timely public visibility into calls for service and bridge the gap between when calls occur and when the existing publicly shared Calls for Service dataset is refreshed; and

WHEREAS, this Call Log will include the general type of call, the nearest intersection or block level address of the call for service, and the time that the call was received, with a brief delay to protect privacy and operational safety, reinforcing the City's ongoing commitment to transparency and public access to information.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the policy adopted on September 28, 2021, of transmitting unencrypted information on primary channels is hereby rescinded.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council authorizes the City Manager to approve the encryption of all primary Berkeley Police Department radio channels, to be

implemented promptly after Council approval and required administrative steps are completed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council affirms its commitment to transparency by directing that the near real-time Call Log described herein be made publicly available on the BPD Transparency Hub concurrent with the Police Department's transition to encrypted radio channels.