From: Pauline Block
To: City Council Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on Item 4.1
Date: Thursday, April 10, 2025 1:17:42 PM
Attachments: public comment re public safety budget cuts.pdf

Please see attached comment for Budget Reductions Study Session 4/15. Thank you!

PAULINE BLOCK
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CORNERSTONE Downtown

707-526-4799
1435 N. McDowell Blvd, Suite 110
Petaluma, CA 94954

April 10, 2025

To: cc-comment@srcity.org
Re: Comment on Item 4.1

Mayor Stapp, Vice Mayor Alvarez, and Members of Council:

I'm reaching out today with the understanding that the upcoming budget decisions are incredibly difficult and impactful—but to express strong concern over proposed reductions to public safety funding, particularly to our police and fire departments.

The increased staffing of the Downtown Enforcement Team (DET) over the past two years has led to noticeable and measurable improvements in the downtown core. As a business committed to development and long-term investment in this area, we've seen firsthand how increased security presence has helped attract and retain businesses, renters, and residents. It has also improved the sense of safety for the broader community and enhanced responsiveness to calls and issues.

Reducing public safety staffing at this point would not only reverse that progress but could lead to very real and immediate consequences. These include the loss of businesses who may no longer feel secure investing here, residents moving to other areas, and a stall—or even regression—in downtown's transformation into a vibrant, active destination. Additionally, developers may be less inclined to invest in projects here without the assurances of a safe and responsive urban environment.

Public safety is not just a line item—it's the foundation for economic development, housing retention, and overall quality of life. Now is the time to maintain, if not grow, that investment—not scale it back.

I'd also like to voice concern regarding proposed cuts to our fire department. As a community all too familiar with the devastating effects of wildfires, scaling back fire services now would increase anxiety among residents and could delay critical response times, especially under "browned out" schedules. It is essential that we ensure they are fully staffed and resourced to serve our growing and fire-prone community.

These budget cuts may be necessary—but they should not come at the expense of public safety, which is central to everything we are trying to achieve in Downtown and across the city.

Thank you for your time and your leadership during these challenging decisions.
Sincerely,
Pauline Block
Director of Development and Marketing, Cornerstone

From: California Luggage
To: City Council Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on Item 4.1
Date: Thursday, April 10, 2025 3:30:49 PM

Mayor Stapp, Vice Mayor Alvarez and Members of Council:

My name is Nicole Gaddis, I own California Luggage on 4th Street.

I know the city is facing a budget deficit and that decisions have to be made about where to spend and where to save money. I'm reaching out to you today to encourage you to maintain as much funding for SRPD officers as possible.

Since the DET has increased staffing, the streets are quiet when I get to my store between 8-9 each day. Their physical presence walking the streets and the cars parked in the square have limited the number of disturbances in the square. They are visible and present which makes people visiting downtown feel safer. While they are not responsible for trash and graffiti, anecdotally there seems to be less.

I am concerned that any reduction in SRPD staff will affect Downtown's overall economic growth. We are just starting to see a bit more foot traffic and hope that with housing and hotels downtown that will continue to grow. People will come downtown and spend money if they feel safe. More money spent downtown means more tax revenue and dollars for the city.

My customers and many locals have safety concerns when coming downtown. Before the additional DET members were added, there were daily disturbances of the unsheltered population. I rarely hear someone yelling or having a terribly hard time now.

We have been working for years to shift the negative perception many Santa Rosa residents have of Downtown. That is starting to happen. The DET has had a direct effect on that. We need to maintain a positive momentum that will drive new businesses and residents to the Downtown core.

I ask that you support of Downtown community by keeping as much funding as possible for SRPD officers.
Thank you for your time and consideration in this important matter.

Nicole Gaddis
California Luggage

From: Santa Rosa POA
To: _CityCouncilListPublic; Smith, Maraskeshia
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Letter from Unit 5
Date: Sunday, April 13, 2025 11:21:00 AM
Attachments: Letter to council.pdf
Police Historical Staffing.pdf

City Council Members and City Manager Smith,

Please see the attached letter authored by the POA Board. The letter is regarding the budget topic which will be discussed at the upcoming council meeting on Tuesday the 15th. We have also attached a historical staffing spreadsheet, which is referenced in the letter.

Respectfully,

The SRPOA Board

SANTA ROSA
POLICE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION
SUPPORTING THE HEROES WHO PROTECT SANTA ROSA

SANTA ROSA POLICE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION | 3345 INDUSTRIAL DR STE 11, SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

City council members,

We write to you today on behalf of the one hundred and forty-eight members of the Santa Rosa Police Officers' Association, which represents the sworn peace officers of the city of Santa Rosa. We believe this message echoes what all members of the Santa Rosa Police Department, sworn and civilian alike, all hope to convey to the city leadership in these dire times. We would like to address the budget reduction proposals currently being discussed city-wide. Our message below is meant to show our commitment in remaining an ally with the city leadership, as well as the community which we so proudly serve.

The SRPOA is not naive in understanding the current financial woes facing Americans nationwide. These financial pains are being felt across the private sector as well as all levels of the federal, state, and local governments. Businesses and government entities are being forced to make impossible decisions to slash their budgets like never before. The city of Santa Rosa is not exempt to these challenging times and the SRPOA recognizes the deficits of the long-range financial forecast facing the city.

We would like to first address these issues by discussing the historical staffing levels in comparison with the growth of this city. In 1990, the city population was 120,644. At that time the police department was staffed with 211 employees, 143 sworn and 68 civilians, resulting in 1.19 officers per thousand residents. In 2008, just before the housing market crash, the city population was 156,841. At that time the police department was staffed with 275 employees, 189 sworn and 86 civilians, resulting in 1.21 officers per thousand residents. In 2025, the city population is 175,845. We currently are staffed with 262 employees, 184 sworn and 78 civilians, resulting in 1.05 officers per thousand residents. In comparison with 1990, the city has reduced the amount of officers per thousand residents by 12.5 percent. Additionally, in that time period the number of civilian employees has been reduced by a staggering 21 percent.

Unfortunately what those statistics fail to capture is the fact that Santa Rosa is the county seat and the city experiences population swell every day from commerce and people traveling to our city. That population swell is a testament to our thriving and bustling city and highlights just how alive our city is for business and leisure alike. However, this daily increase in population inevitably strains our current police resources. Additionally, anyone who has taken a drive around our city lately will see the unbelievable amount of construction going on, most of which is the expansion of housing. Much of the new housing being built is high-density housing, which is

great for our city but it also means our population will continue to grow with no end in sight. Simply put, the city is growing and our police department is shrinking.

If population growth wasn't enough to grapple with, another reality is how complex 21st century policing has become. Our calls for service have increased and require more time to handle and resolve. This is in part due to an increase in the amount of paperwork and mandated forms required for certain calls for service, such as when an officer goes to a domestic violence call or completes a DUI investigation. This increase in paperwork and work load is not a bad thing and our citizens, especially the victims, are receiving a higher level of service than ever before.

The goal for most cities is to have officers out on the street handling calls for service for fifty percent of their shift. The other half is expected for reporting writing, completing paperwork, booking evidence, completing DA follow up from past investigations, preparing for court testimony, or completing many of the minute tasks our profession now requires. These tasks increase the daily workload of an officer and make it difficult to accomplish that fifty percent goal of being available to handle calls for service.

In addition to the day to day tasks, the number of mandated training hours for officers have increased exponentially. When officers have to go to these trainings we often go below minimum staffing on patrol because we don't have the ability to fully staff the patrol teams without spending overtime. Training and staying up with the times is crucial and is the reason law enforcement in California, especially in the Bay Area, is the pinnacle of law enforcement nationwide. Officers are more trained and advanced in their capabilities and decision making. These 21st century policing standards and training requirements are inevitably better for the communities we serve, but it is another example of the strain it creates when a police department doesn't grow with the times.

In addition to the increased workload for our officers on the street, our detectives have seen a staggering increase in what is required to complete their investigations. The criminals are smarter and more advanced due to technology, and keeping up with them requires more time and resources. Authoring search warrants and forensically reviewing electronic devices often engulfs our detectives. Sifting through gigabytes upon gigabytes of electronic data is vital in almost every investigation completed by our detectives. We are fortunate enough to have some of the greatest detectives and a department that provides us with the advanced technology and tools needed to complete those investigations. However, our staffing levels amongst our detective units has not increased to help offset the amount of time required to complete their investigations. Technology has been one of the greatest blessings yet sometimes the ultimate curse for law enforcement, our agency included. We can have the most advanced tools and the smartest detectives in the world, but what we often lack is time. Unless we grow our detective numbers, we will always be playing catch up.

The lack of growth amongst our patrol and detective units has equated to an overworked workforce that struggles just to get by on a daily basis. On patrol we are often only able to handle the priority 1 calls while the priority 2 and 3 calls pend sometimes for hours. That is unsustainable and it leads to quality of life issues for the residents of our city. When case loads

amongst our detectives go up, they too have to prioritize which cases get handled. There are countless cases stacked up right now that our detectives will never have the ability to investigate. These backlogs on patrol and amongst the detective units equates to a lack of prosecution and an increase in crime. When crimes go up, our residents quality of life diminishes and businesses will move on to a city where the grass is greener. Furthermore, when residents or businesses move away or choose another city to live or do business in, this means less of a tax base for our city, which further exacerbates the problem.

We have seen what happens when our department staffing lowers to an unmanageable level, which occurred in 2019 and 2020. We lost our Gang Enforcement Team and our School Resource Officers. When we lost our Gang unit, we saw the aftermath and the effect it had on our city, especially the most vulnerable lower income areas. We saw a record number of homicides and sadly broke our own city record for the most homicides in one year. It was not until the creation of our Special Enforcement Team and the revamp of our Gang unit that we have finally seen a decrease in crime and homicides per year. Unfortunately that took several years to reverse and anyone who follows our social media and press releases knows the staggering amount of illegal gun possession arrests we made, and continue to make to this day. Our local school campuses also still feel the impacts of losing the SRO program. Never before have we seen so many students possessing weapons, including bringing firearms to school. Sadly we even saw the loss of an innocent life which took place at one of our campuses.

Luckily things did turn around and staffing reached full capacity last year. We finally saw the positive impacts of hitting the streets with full patrol teams, and our detective units almost reached their staffing capacities that haven't been seen since the early 2000's. Unfortunately while we took a step forward, 21st century policing and our population growth leapt past us. Our agency has hit a ceiling that we cannot break past unless we see an increase in our numbers in both sworn and civilian personnel. For those of us who have been around long enough to see this swing of events, we are grateful for coming out of those dark times, but now more than ever we realize we still have so far to go. Just as it seemed we were getting our stride back and making headway, we are now faced with the slashing of our budget, which will inevitably cripple our agency and diminish the quality of life for the community we protect and serve.

We write to you today on behalf of our membership, however the SRPOA doesn't want to see a reduction to any of the other city services. We know the importance and value of our coworkers citywide that are vital to the infrastructure and advancement of this city as a whole. We will always protect and serve our community to the fullest extent possible but we do not want to see our parks, our roads, our fleet services, our utility systems, and our transit systems diminished either. The citizens of Santa Rosa deserve to live and work in a city that provides adequate services that are core to the fundamental functions of government.

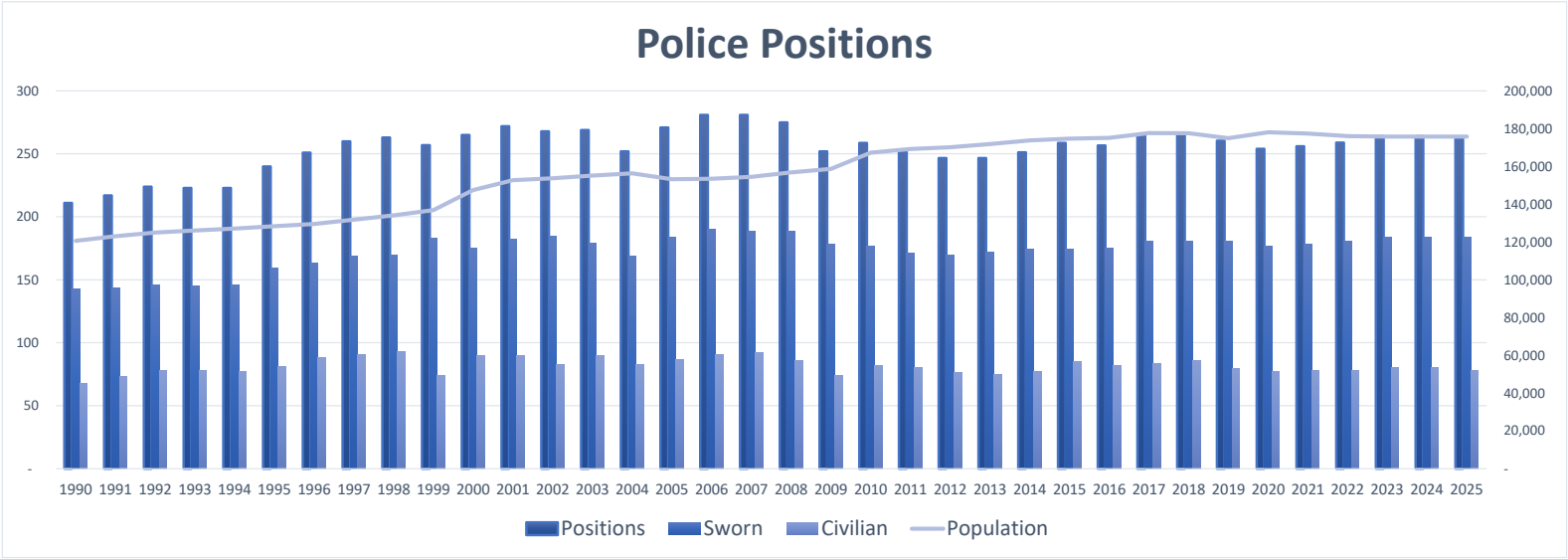
As we mentioned in our opening remarks, we hold steadfast in our commitment to being an ally in these tough times. We do not believe our department can have its budget reduced, however if it must, we would like to provide a meaningful proposal. That proposed reduction would be the freezing of two sworn officer positions, one sergeant, one Community Service Officer (CSO), and one Field Evidence Technician (FET). This proposal equates to a one million dollar salary

and benefits savings annually. We are willing to share some of the pain the rest of the city units will ultimately be facing as well. We believe this proposal is manageable for the time being until the city can recalibrate its finances. However, if you should choose to adopt our proposal, you must know that our department will never be able to staff an SRO program. As highlighted above, we can hardly stay afloat as is and we simply don't have the manpower to expand any farther. That is a tough pill to swallow and it's painful to know that such a large trade off must be decided.

We stand committed in working together and to uphold our oath we swore to our community. In order to do that we as the police department cannot go backwards.

Respectfully,

SRPOA



Year	Positions	Sworn	Civilian	Population
1990	211	143	68	120,644
1991	217	144	73	123,052
1992	224	146	78	124,975
1993	223	145	78	126,112
1994	223	146	77	127,141
1995	240	159	81	128,377
1996	251	163	88	129,569
1997	260	169	91	131,827
1998	263	170	93	134,111
1999	257	183	74	136,898
2000	265	175	90	147,532
2001	272	182	90	152,749
2002	268	185	83	153,774
2003	269	179	90	155,184
2004	252	169	83	156,304
2005	271	184	87	153,257
2006	281	190	91	153,506
2007	281	189	92	154,473

Year	Positions	Sworn	Civilian	Population
2008	275	189	86	156,841
2009	252	178	74	158,727
2010	258.75	177	81.75	167,302
2011	251.75	171	80.75	169,212
2012	246.75	170	76.75	170,197
2013	246.75	172	74.75	171,820
2014	251.25	174	77.25	173,773
2015	258.75	174	84.75	174,727
2016	256.75	175	81.75	175,155
2017	264.5	181	83.5	177,684
2018	266.5	181	85.5	177,586
2019	260.5	181	79.5	174,972
2020	254	177	77	178,134
2021	256	178	78	177,412
2022	259	181	78	176,078
2023	264	184	80	175,845
2024	264	184	80	175,845
2025	262	184	78	175,845

From: Evan Adams
To: _CityCouncilListPublic
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Dispatch Supervisor Position Cut
Date: Monday, April 14, 2025 4:41:30 PM

Good afternoon,

I am a Dispatch Supervisor for the City, and I want to address the critical issue of cutting the number of dispatch supervisors in the 9-1-1 dispatch center from three to two. This proposed cut would eliminate a budgeted supervisor position, which constitutes 33% of our staff. I strongly urge you to reconsider this decision for several reasons.

Firstly, our current staffing levels are already stretched thin. With three supervisors, we aren't able to achieve 24/7 supervision, and cutting to two supervisors, we can only adequately supervise 80 of the needed 168 hours in a 24/7 workweek, roughly 48% of operational hours. The department needs four dispatch supervisors, not two. The proposed cut would also result in a supervision ratio of 14 to 1, which is far from ideal for maintaining efficiency and safety. There are dispatchers who will receive virtually no real-time supervision. This is alarming for a bureau with such risk for liability.

Additionally, each supervisor will be on call every other week. When one supervisor is on leave, the remaining supervisor is left alone to manage the entire communications center of 24 full-time and four part-time dispatchers.

Comparatively, the sheriff's office, who has fewer dispatchers, has four supervisors and a manager. This disparity highlights the already significant cuts we have endured to civilian staff. Further reductions would exacerbate the strain on our operations.

Dispatch supervisors play a vital role in emergency management. There are only five individuals in Santa Rosa with access to the Code Red system which is used to send out emergency messages including WEAs - emergency alerts sent to cell phones based on location. Two of those five people are dispatch supervisors. We are responsible for guiding dispatch operations and ensuring staffing during wildfires and other critical incidents such as active shooters and officer involved shootings, and for ensuring minimum staffing levels to ensure the city has enough staff to answer 9-1-1 calls and to manage critical radio channels.

During the Glass Fire, it was a Dispatch Supervisor who first realized the fire was heading from Calistoga toward Santa Rosa. This was because there was an on-duty supervisor on a Sunday night monitoring calls for service, a timeframe that will remain vacant if cut. This quick action set in process the first steps in the emergency response and initiating the first evacuations. This was pivotal in saving property and lives.

Supervisors also fill and work vacancies for sick calls and assign overtime to maintain operations while ensuring dispatchers get required rest periods. They ensure dispatchers receive necessary training hours and meet minimum state mandated standards to limit liability and to maintain a high functioning staff. Additionally, they manage equipment failures 24/7 and ensure the safekeeping of confidential information.

By reducing the number of supervisors from three to two, the city is opening itself up to increased liability. This cut would mean inadequate supervision of our 24/7 9-1-1 center that serves 175,000 residents. This would jeopardize the safety and efficiency of our emergency response system.

Maintaining our current number of dispatch supervisors is essential for the effective operation of our communications center. I urge you to reconsider this proposed cut to prioritize the safety and well-being of our community.

Thank you,

Evan