

Washougal Police Department Strategic Plan

2024-2026



Chief's Message

I am pleased to present the Washougal Police Department's (WPD) Three-Year Strategic Plan. Our plan serves as a roadmap that directs the work of WPD over the next three years. It provides a framework for operations, work performance, and focus for each WPD employee, both sworn and professional staff. It also aligns with the City's Strategic Plan to ensure we continue towards our goal of the City of Washougal as a safe and vibrant community.



WPD's Strategic Plan details the department's primary goals and key performance indicators (KPI) for 2024 through 2026. These primary goals include (Table 1):

1. Prepare for growth program.
2. Recruit, develop, and retain a qualified workforce.
3. Foster and strengthen community partnerships and relationships.
4. Ensure the health and wellness of our employees, emotionally and physically.
5. Provide high-quality training for our employees.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Wendi Steinbronn', positioned above the printed name.

Wendi Steinbronn
Chief, Washougal Police Department



Achievements since the last strategic plan...

Under former Chief Ron Mitchell, the Washougal Police Department engaged the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) to review the department's organizational structure in 2019. The review served as a roadmap for Chief Wendi Steinbronn to work towards completing WASPC accreditation.

Over the last four years, WPD has had several notable achievements. The department launched a drone and unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) program, was awarded accreditation status through WASPC, instituted a body-worn camera program, participated in a staffing and operations assessment, and trained in new legal requirements and technology to keep pace.

Additionally, WPD has hired high-performing individuals and promoted several senior officers to accommodate retirements. We look forward to building our team for future growth. Our department has dedicated members committed to making Washougal an excellent place to live and work.

Mission, Vision & Values

OUR MISSION

Maintain the trust and confidence of our community while delivering the highest level of service possible, enforcing the law without bias, and providing a safe environment for all.

OUR VISION

We are a professional, proactive, and personable police department focused on safety and community.

OUR VALUES

HONESTY: We are committed to the highest standards of honesty and ethical conduct, which are the cornerstones of our profession.

RESPECT: We recognize our authority and treat others with dignity and respect.

CHARACTER: We strive to achieve the highest standards of personal and organizational excellence.



Strategic Priorities



Table 1
Strategic Priorities

1

Prepare for growth program

2

Recruit, develop, and retain a highly qualified workforce

3

Foster and strengthen community partnerships and relationships

4

Ensure the health and wellness of our employees, emotionally and physically

5

Provide high-quality training for employees

Priority 1: Prepare for Growth Program

According to U.S Census data, the City of Washougal has grown 20.9% since 2010. The City of Washougal has grown 8.1% in five years with an average growth rate of 1.70%. Calls for service have averaged 11,416 over the last five years and are expected to begin increasing post-pandemic due to increased community development (Table 2).

Table 2
Calls for Service – Five-Year Comparison

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total Calls	11,914	12,544	11,106	10,056	10,574
Population	16,020	16,500	16,680	17,200	17,390

The Ninebark project added 246 Multiple-family Residential (MFR) units in 2023. Single-family residential (SFR) units are expected to grow by 75 in 2023-24. Beginning in 2024, the Port of Camas-Washougal has begun its Waterfront Revitalization project, which includes Hyas Point. This project will add 276 multi-family units and 74,545 square feet of retail and office space at full buildout.

The waterfront revitalization will increase the population density in the Port, increasing calls for service. The predicted increase in calls for service is expected to result in approximately 300 additional calls for service per year over the next three years. Our objective will be to maintain our current call response times with this growth. The average call per patrol officer has steadily increased over the past five years. The



department currently has a two-officer minimum staffing per shift.

In preparation for this growth, WPD engaged the services of BerryDunn to conduct a key staffing and operations review process to assist the department in determining optimal staffing and identify any gaps in practice that might benefit from adjustment. BerryDunn’s review considered historical call load, housing starts, population growth, and patrol schedules. The full results of this operational review are available on the City’s website as a separate document and are discussed throughout this plan.

The department is currently authorized for 22 sworn officers. The current and projected call load and population growth suggest that no new officers will need to be added over the next

three years. However, authorized hiring levels at the WPD do not account for attrition rates. The anticipated attrition rate throughout this strategic plan is one (1) full-time equivalent sworn position per year. Due to the time required to conduct the background process and academy training, the recommendation is to start the process earlier to stay ahead of projected attrition.

WPD and the Washougal School District agree to staff a school resource officer position (SRO) when fully staffed. This partnership is important to the department, the school district, and the community. The department will fill the vacant SRO position within three years at full staffing levels.

The investigations unit (detectives) is currently staffed with a detective sergeant and one detective. This arrangement allows 1.5 personnel to carry a caseload because the supervisor has other duties besides casework. Over the next plan period, the department will fill the detective vacancy to accommodate the anticipated increase in cases due to growth.

The detective sergeant has a detached assignment as the department's K-9 officer. Canine units are typically a patrol function. The plan for the future will be to shift that position back to patrol. The department is considering other scheduling and position adjustments to ensure complete coverage for investigations and patrol at peak call times.

Priority 1: **Objectives** **& KPIs**

Objectives

1. Use the anticipated rate of attrition to fill vacancies.
2. Fill the vacant SRO position.
3. Maintain current call response times.

Key Performance Indicators

1. Job offer to academy graduation < 7 months.
2. Call response < 5 minutes for priority one and two calls.
3. Call response < 7 minutes for lower priority calls (three through five).

Priority 2:

Recruit,

Develop, and

Retain a Highly

Qualified

Workforce

The Washougal Police Department, like many law enforcement agencies nationwide, has struggled with recruitment and retention. The department lost its chief, commander, one officer, and one limited commission employee through retirements and attrition in 2019. In 2020 and 2021, the department lost four additional employees through retirement and attrition; in 2022, it carried three vacancies for a good portion of the year. In 2023, despite a robust hiring list, the department added just two qualified candidates before the end of the year. The forecast for the next three years shows up to three retirements. The recruitment and retention of quality employees is essential now more than ever.

Succession planning is underway, with several employees working towards undergraduate and graduate degrees. A new detective will begin in 2024. Two candidates have been identified as future supervisors and began pre-supervisor training in late 2023, with a promotional process to be held in mid to late 2024. New recruitment for entry-level and lateral officers began in late 2023.

The department has worked hard to train and develop professional staff. A new animal control

officer joined the team in 2022 and has completed the academy for limited commission officers. One administrative assistant is retiring early next year; recruitment to fill this position and an additional administrative support specialist is in progress. The department has two candidates in background to fill current vacancies and is conducting another round of oral boards before the end of 2023.

Priority 2:

Objectives

& KPIs

Objectives

1. Use the anticipated rate of attrition to fill vacancies.
2. Conduct a successful promotional process for the rank of sergeant.

Key Performance Indicators

1. Increase the number of oral boards from once to twice yearly.
2. Increase recruiting efforts on social media to four times per year.

Priority 3:

Foster and

Strengthen

Community

Relationships

and

Partnerships

Community Engagement: The WPD is committed to continued engagement with the community and has partnered with the city's community engagement manager to participate in pre-planned events throughout the year.

- Hello Spring! Community Fair (April)
- National Night Out (August)
- Kindness 911 (year-round)
- Pumpkin Harvest Festival (October)
- Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting (December)

WPD also participates in two drug take-back events (April and October) in partnership with Unite! Washougal. Every October, WPD partners with the Camas Police Department and a local coffee shop for Coffee with a Cop.

Priority 3:

Objectives

& KPIs

Objectives

1. Develop and implement outreach specific to those in the community who are non-English speaking or speak English as a second language.
2. Enhance our social media presence.
3. Reinstate our School Resource Officer (SRO) Program to better engage youth positively.

Key Performance Indicators

1. In partnership with the Washougal School District, increase officer attendance at Multicultural Family Night to three times yearly.
2. Increase social media posts to twice per month.
3. Certify at least one additional officer as a National Association of School Resource Officers (NASPRO) member.
4. Increase the number of Kindness 911 citations issued by 10%.

Priority 4: Ensure the Health and Wellness of Our Employees, Mentally and Physically

The City of Washougal has a city-wide Wellness Program and Wellness Committee that meets regularly. The Human Resources Director sponsors a quarterly wellness challenge. The department currently has two members trained in peer support, and all employees participated in a wellness and resiliency training series in 2023. In partnership with the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC), the department has launched a wellness app that puts each member's confidential wellness resources within reach via mobile phone. These programs are part of the Washington State Department of Health, and the President's Final Report on 21st Century Policing focuses on officer wellness.

The department is currently the recipient of a grant from the WA State Criminal Justice Training Commission through 2024 for officer wellness programs. The department has used this grant to fund its employees' gym memberships, equipment, yoga, and resiliency classes. Members can take a wellness break to participate in these activities to reduce stress, promote physical fitness, and improve mental health.



Priority 4: Objectives & KPIs

Objectives

1. Improve and maintain the physical and mental health of all employees.
2. Train at least two additional officers in peer support.
3. Reapply for the wellness grant to extend the program.

Key Performance Indicators

1. Reduce on-the-job injuries by 20%
2. Reduce time loss from on-the-job related incidents by 10%.
3. Reduce sick leave by 10%.

Priority 5: Provide High-Quality Training for Our Employees

The Law Enforcement Training and Community Safety Act (LETCSA) mandates that all Washington state-certified law enforcement officers undergo 40 hours of training related to violence, de-escalation, and mental health. Eight hours of Critical Incident Training (CIT) is required each year. The Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) offers in-person and virtual training to meet this requirement.

All Washougal police officers must complete 24 hours of in-person patrol tactics training in person every three years. The department sent two members to become certified patrol tactics instructors to provide this training in-house. All members completed this initial block of training in 2021 and 2022.

Members are currently completing the remaining 16 hours online with the following blocks of classes:

- Effective Communication
- Law Enforcement and Society: Lessons of the Holocaust
- LGBTQ+ Core Competency
- The United States Criminal Legal System: Structural Inequalities, Monetary Sanctions, Policy, and Reform

Training is ongoing. New legal requirements around using force, pursuit policy, Independent Investigation Teams (IIT), and police certification continue to evolve. Members have been trained on the changes and reviewed all new legislative and policy guidelines. The department will continue to develop in-house instructors to provide this training locally when possible.

Priority 5: Objectives & KPIs

Objectives

1. Ensure all members have completed the 16 hours of online training LETCSA and meet or exceed the required 24 hours of in-service training each year.

Key Performance Indicators

1. 100% compliance with the CJTC audit by December 29th of each year.

Summary

The Washougal Police Department distributed an employee survey in August 2022 to identify its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Table 3). The recent challenging legislative changes have affected employee morale. The department is also faced with a nationwide shortage of law enforcement employees. Surrounding agencies offer high recruitment bonuses to attract lateral candidates. The department must focus on its unique relationship with the community and make the agency the best place to work in the County.

Police nationwide are experiencing recruiting and retention issues, increased scrutiny, and technological advancements that outpace resources. For the next three years, the department will focus on its relationship with the community and the recruitment, development, and retention of employees. WPD’s Strategic Plan for 2024-2026 is an operational plan in conjunction with the City of Washougal’s Strategic Plan.

Table 3
SWOT Analysis

S Strengths	W Weaknesses	O Opportunities	T Threats
Relationship with community Team culture	Staffing Resources	Retention & Recruitment Succession Planning Growth	Attrition Challenging legislative changes
			

Acknowledgments

The Washougal Police Department would like to thank everyone who participated in this process.

Interviews

David Scott, City Manager
Chief Wendi Steinbronn
Captain Zane Freschette
Kelly Clark, Sr. Administrative Assistant
Detective Sergeant Kyle Day
Sergeant Thad Eakins
Detective Tyson Ferguson
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Officer Greg Sulzinger
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