

INDIAN WELLS CITY COUNCIL

July 2, 2025



To: City Council
From: City Manager Department
Prepared by: Kristen Nelson, Administrative Services Manager
Subject: **Amendment to Sheriff Services Agreement and Supplemental Appropriation for Motorcycle Purchases**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Council **APPROVES** an Amendment to the Sheriff Services Agreement with Riverside County; and

AUTHORIZES the City Manager to execute the same; and

AUTHORIZES staff to develop an agreement with the City of Rancho Mirage to share public safety services and for the City Manager to execute; and

APPROVES a \$100,000 Supplemental Appropriation for costs associated with the purchase of two (2) new, fully equipped motorcycles; and

FINDS the action exempt from CEQA review under CEQA Guidelines section 15061(b)(3).

DISCUSSION:

At the June 10, 2025, Special City Council Meeting, the Council approved a new, three-year Service Agreement with Riverside County Sheriff's Department (RSD) to provide municipal police protection and enforcement services for the City of Indian Wells from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2028. This contract provides for patrol, traffic enforcement, investigative teams, and access to all RSD resources (e.g., K-9, narcotics, aerial patrol, racing enforcement, etc.). This contract can be amended to address the needs of the community.

In addition to 24-hour a day patrol force coverage, the City's contract with RSD includes, two Deputy Sheriff positions for burglary suppression ("SET Team"), one Deputy Sheriff position for motorcycle traffic enforcement ("Motor Officer"), four Community Service Officer II ("CSO") positions for various support activities, one Forensic Technician II position that provides investigative and analytical support, and one Sheriff Lieutenant position to act as the Indian Wells Police Chief. Additionally, the City shares the cost of

a Crime Analyst and Forensic Technician who assist in conducting intelligence-led policing, analytical research, and investigation for both Indian Wells and Rancho Mirage.

During the City Council Strategic Planning Session held on April 17, 2025, the City Council instructed Staff, in collaboration with the Public Safety Committee, to review the Police Department deployment model for efficiency and effectiveness. The intent was to examine opportunities to expand our existing partnership with the Cove Communities (Rancho Mirage and/or Palm Desert) to provide enhanced public safety services while maintaining low crime rates and ensuring community safety. The Council also wanted to examine adding an additional motor officer to address traffic enforcement in the community, which has been a resident request for the past several months.

Public Safety Committee Discussion

At the June 10, 2025, Public Safety Committee, RSD and staff presented a reconfiguration of RSD resources that significantly increases traffic enforcement efforts, while maintaining patrol and specialized deputy coverage throughout the day to handle 911 calls for service. The proposal shifts a portion of the late evening/early morning patrol to traffic enforcement and added RSD supervision. It is important to note that this shift does not change SET deputy coverage of the City, which occurs both day and night to address and deter burglaries and other criminal efforts, or patrol coverage from neighboring RSD communities (La Quinta and Palm Desert), who respond into Indian Wells to assist RSD as needed.

Currently, the City's one motor officer provides four (4) days of coverage in the City. At times this can be less due to vacation, court appearances, or training. Under the proposed reconfiguration, the City will add another full-time motor officer, doubling the City's traffic enforcement capabilities throughout the day and week. This change requires the addition of a supervising motor sergeant position, which will be shared equally with Rancho Mirage. This motor sergeant will also be provided a motorcycle to support traffic enforcement efforts in both Indian Wells and Rancho Mirage.

In addition, RSD requires SET deputies to be supervised by a sergeant. The proposed reconfiguration accounts for this need through a proposed partnership with Rancho Mirage to share a SET sergeant, rather than funding the position alone. This will generate savings for the City, while also meeting the needs of RSD. It is important to note that the SET sergeant will be deployed into Indian Wells and Rancho Mirage to assist in SET operations and patrol within the community.

At the Public Safety Committee meeting, RSD Lt. Frank Schiavone, Indian Wells Police Chief, endorsed this program as aligns with the City's pressing concerns about traffic safety and is strongly supported by five years of data on calls for service, crime, and incident priorities. "The proposal leverages the full capabilities of our motor units, which are trained to handle all calls as effectively as patrol deputies, with equal or faster

response times, and relies on the Sheriff's obligation to ensure public safety utilizing deputies from the surrounding cities to respond if needed."

According to Lt. Schiavone, RSD does not have any reservations for reallocating resources to provide additional day coverage and address traffic enforcement. According to his presentation, the change makes sense for the following reasons:

- The Community has voiced significant concerns about traffic safety, likely driven by Indian Wells' status as a resort destination with heavy daytime traffic from tourism, events, business activity, and commuters. Adding a second motor officer during the day directly addresses this priority. Motor units specialize in traffic enforcement that focus on issuing citations and DUI arrests, reducing collisions, and improving safety metrics. With additional traffic enforcement during the day, they can proactively target hazardous violations during peak traffic hours, aligning with the city's goal to enhance public safety.
- Traffic enforcement is a legitimate concern. For the period of May 2023 to May 2024, a total of 1,199 traffic citations were issued. Since our newest Motor Officer started in Indian Wells in May 2024, he has single-handedly written over 2,400 citations.
- The five-year data of all calls for service illustrates that a majority of calls for service occur during the daytime (50.7% or 7,076 calls), when compared to evening hours (49.3% or 6,891 calls). This data does not reflect the growing community concern for traffic enforcement.
- While calls for service during the day and night are similar, priority incidents are significantly higher during the day, with life-threatening, most urgent, and non-urgent calls happening during daytime hours.

Law enforcement utilizes a priority scale to determine the level of urgency of a call: Priority 1 (life-threatening), Priority 2 (urgent), and Priority 3 (non-urgent). In 2024/2025, the day shift handled 1,016 priority incidents (24 Priority 1, 563 Priority 2, 429 Priority 3), or 63.5% of the total 1,599 incidents, compared to 583 (36.5%) at night (19 Priority 1, 384 Priority 2, 180 Priority 3). Notably, 70.4% of Priority 3 incidents (429 of 609) and 59.5% of Priority 2 incidents (563 of 947) occur during the day, reflecting a higher demand for non-emergency and urgent responses. Even Priority 1 incidents, though fewer, lean slightly toward the day (24 vs. 19, or 55.8%). The 2023/2024 data mirrors this, with 65.1% of Priority 1, 64.1% of Priority 2, and 69.9% of Priority 3 incidents during the day. This consistent pattern over two years underscores the need for robust daytime staffing.

- Motor officers are trained to handle all calls for service (life-threatening, urgent, non-urgent, and serious crimes) with response times equal to or faster than patrol deputies. With a higher daytime priority incident load, the City will be well covered to ensure no gaps in emergency response.
- Evening patrol, SET deputies, and mandatory coverage by RSD deputies in La Quinta and Palm Desert covers the Indian Wells evening incident load.

One of the roles of the Public Safety Committee is to monitor public safety trends and data to address changing needs within the community, as recommended by both RSD and CalFire. If the reallocation of resources is approved, RSD and staff will monitor the effectiveness of the changes and report back to the Public Safety Committee.

Staff will also coordinate a contract amendment with RSD for Fiscal Years 2025-2028 and a shared service agreement with the City of Rancho Mirage for the two sergeant positions.

Public Safety Committee Recommendation:

At the June 10, 2025, Public Safety Committee, the Committee unanimously approved RSD's proposal to reallocate resources to significantly increase traffic enforcement efforts in the community, while maintaining patrol and specialized deputy coverage throughout the day and night to handle 911 calls for service. This reallocation includes the addition of a dedicated motor officer and two shared sergeants. The approval included the understanding that additional motorcycles would need to be purchased.

OPTIONS:

The City Council has the following options:

1. Approve the Public Safety Committee Recommendation to reallocate resources;
2. Deny the Public Safety Committee Recommendation to reallocate resources; or
3. Provide alternative direction.

FISCAL IMPACT:

A reallocation of resources will not only facilitate increased traffic enforcement and sergeant coverage within the community but will also yield cost savings for the City. For Fiscal Year 2025-2026, the RSD contract is budgeted at \$6,246,908. According to the proposed modifications, RSD has estimated that the City of Indian Wells will realize an approximate savings of \$338,708 in the initial year of the new agreement.

To facilitate the acquisition of two motorcycles, a Supplemental Appropriation of \$100,000 is required, along with the inclusion of this purchase in the City's Capital Improvement Project list for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. Sufficient operational cost savings resulting from

the RSD contract amendment are available to offset this expenditure. Furthermore, the City of Rancho Mirage will reimburse the City of Indian Wells for its respective share of one of the motorcycles.

CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC GOAL:

Approval of this project is consistent with the two City Council strategic goal initiatives: A review of the City' public safety deployment model; and fiscal responsibility and sustainability by expanding partnerships with other communities that improve the City's fiscal efficiency.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA):

The action is not a project within the meaning of Section 15378 of the State of California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") Guidelines, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change in the environment, directly or indirectly; and that the action is nonetheless exempt from the requirements of CEQA in that the activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. (15061(b)(3).)