



City of Gilroy

STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item Title: Quality-of-Life Police Officer Program

Meeting Date: April 21, 2025

From: Jimmy Forbis, City Administrator

Department: Police

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STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Ensure Neighborhood Equity from City Services

RECOMMENDATION

Council receive the 2024 Annual Quality-of-Life (QOL) Police Officer Program Report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November 2021, the City Council authorized the QOL Police Officer Pilot Program to address quality-of-life concerns and homelessness-related issues in Gilroy. In 2022, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling in *Grants Pass v. Johnson* established new limitations on enforcing anti-camping laws. In 2023, the City Council adopted a new camping ordinance (Chapter 5 of the City Code) to regulate camping in designated public spaces. Due to the program's success, in March of 2024, the City Council permanently approved the QOL Police Officer Program. Additionally, in June 2024, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the Ninth Circuit's *Grants Pass* ruling. This report provides an analysis of these updates, including statistical comparisons of program activities from 2022 through 2024.

BACKGROUND

The QOL Police Officer Program was initially launched as a pilot initiative in 2021 to proactively address quality-of-life concerns, particularly among the unhoused population. Officers in this program focus on outreach, enforcement, and collaboration with service providers to help individuals transition into stable living conditions. The program also aims to reduce crime and disorder related to homelessness while

ensuring fair and compassionate treatment.

Based on the program's effectiveness and positive community impact, the City Council approved the permanent adoption of the QOL Police Officer Program in 2024. Officers continue to assist the unhoused community by providing referrals to social services, coordinating encampment cleanups, and enforcing city codes related to public safety and order.

ANALYSIS

The QOL Police Officer Pilot Program was introduced in 2021 as a proactive initiative to address homelessness-related quality-of-life concerns. The program assigned dedicated officers to work closely with the unhoused population, social service providers, and local organizations to offer outreach, resources, and enforcement where necessary. These officers focused on building relationships, assisting individuals in obtaining housing and mental health services, and addressing public safety concerns, such as encampments in prohibited areas.

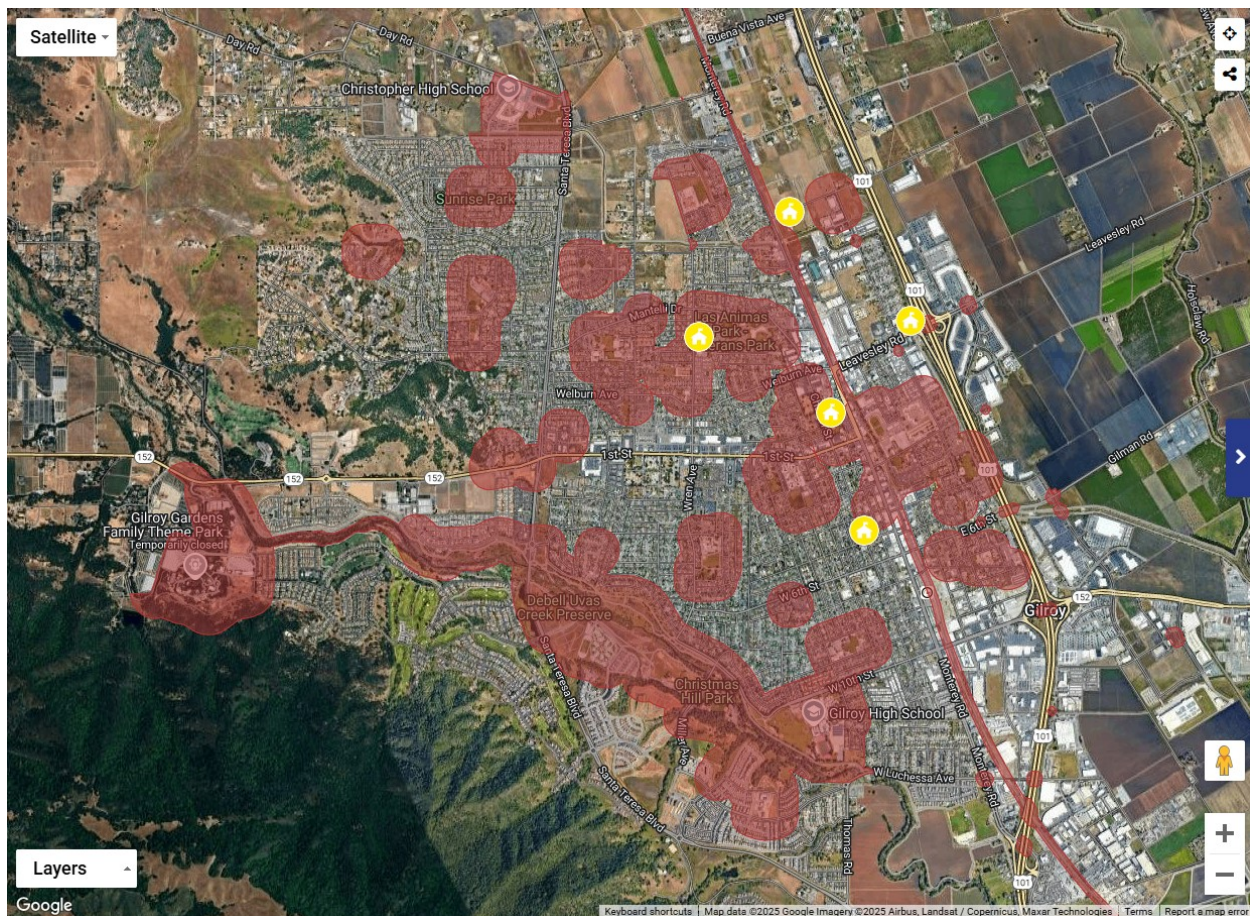
In 2022, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling in *Grants Pass v. Johnson* established new limitations on enforcing anti-camping laws. The ruling prohibited cities from penalizing individuals for sleeping in public spaces without shelter beds. This decision affected how the City of Gilroy enforced its camping ordinance and required adjustments to ensure compliance with federal law while maintaining public safety.

Key impacts of the *Grants Pass* ruling include:

- Officers must verify the availability of shelter space before enforcing anti-camping ordinances.
- Increased focus on offering services and alternatives to enforcement.
- Adjustments to local policies to balance legal compliance with community concerns.

The City of Gilroy implemented Chapter 5 of the City Code in 2023 to regulate unsanctioned encampments. This ordinance:

- Prohibits camping in sensitive public areas such as parks, schools, and pathways.
- Establishes guidelines for enforcement, requiring officers to engage in outreach before taking action.
- Requires officers to coordinate with social service agencies to offer alternative housing options before displacement.
- Ensures compliance with legal precedents while addressing public safety concerns.



The red highlighted areas on the attached map identify locations within the City where camping is prohibited.

Due to the QOL Police Officer Program's positive impact, the City Council officially made the QOL Police Officer Program permanent in March 2024.

In June 2024, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the *Grants Pass* ruling, which eliminated the above requirements from the 9th Circuit's ruling. However, due to the QOL Police Officer Pilot Program's positive impact while working under the 2022 *Grants Pass* ruling, the unit continues to work with community groups to find alternatives to enforcement action. Officers continue to focus on connecting individuals with services, addressing criminal activity, and coordinating with local agencies. This includes:

- Continued collaboration with property owners and community organizations to facilitate cleanups and prevent encampment re-establishment.
- Prohibiting camping in sensitive public areas.
- Providing enforcement guidelines emphasizing outreach and alternative housing solutions.
- Coordination with social service agencies for long-term solutions.

- Required adjustments to Gilroy's enforcement policies to ensure compliance with federal law.
- Emphasis on service-based solutions and alternatives to criminal enforcement.

Below is a comparison of key metrics from the QOL Police Officer Program.

Services Offered/Enforcement Statistics

Year	Total PD CFS	QOL Officer CFS	Referrals	Warnings	Reports	Arrests	Tows
2022	62,286	400	60	60	47	19	3
2023	67,601	768	198	165	22	12	10
2024	65,993	1166	80	99	86	42	15

Cleanup Efforts

Year	Valley Water District	Union Pacific	City of Gilroy	Private Property	Total
2022	6	1	2	2	11
2023	7	3	7	4	21
2024	15	6	15	5	41

The QOL Police Officer Program continues to be vital to the City's approach to addressing homelessness and quality-of-life concerns. The program's permanent approval, the implementation of Chapter 5 of the City Code, and the adjustments required by the *Grants Pass* ruling demonstrate the City's commitment to a balanced approach of enforcement and outreach.

ALTERNATIVES

None, this is an informational item.

FISCAL IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCE

There are no new financial considerations for the existing QOL Police Officer Program during this reporting period.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The Police Department remains committed to ongoing public outreach to strengthen community relationships and enhance transparency. QOL Officers will continue to engage with local service providers, neighborhood associations, and community groups to share program updates and gather feedback. Various networks will be used to inform residents about available resources and enforcement efforts, ensuring that the program remains responsive to the community's needs.

NEXT STEPS

The Police Department will continue to evaluate the Quality-of-Life Officer Program's effectiveness and remains open to feedback and suggestions from the City Council, community members, and partner organizations. Any recommended modifications or enhancements will be carefully considered to ensure the program remains responsive to the community's needs and aligned with legal requirements.