

## Myths and Facts on Contracting for Police Services

We have had persistent problems in managing our police and we are experiencing unsustainable growth for our police salaries, operations, pension, retiree benefits, and related legal expenses. Several small communities have found that contracting for police services has provided better service and cost containment compared to managing their own police department. Five agencies are willing to provide policing services to Kensington: Albany, El Cerrito, Richmond, UC Berkeley, and the Contra Costa Sheriff.

*Myth: We will lose control over the police*

Fact: We would continue to have control over the police through our contract as we do with our firefighters. We would also be able to rotate out officers who don't work well in our beloved community. Also, for seven hours each day, our police officer on duty has no supervisor which is not good practice

*Myth: The police would not be located in Kensington*

Fact: The police could still be located in Kensington and wear Kensington police uniforms

*Myth: Our dedicated police keep our crime rate low*

Fact: Kensington is buffered from higher crime areas by Albany, Berkeley, and El Cerrito. Our narrow, contorted, and dead end streets deter and impeded potential criminals – even residents have a hard time getting around. Our contracted police would be dedicated to Kensington and have more training and advancement opportunities in a larger department.

*Myth: We would not have as many officers on patrol.*

Fact: Officers spend only a portion of their time on duty patrolling. Unless you live on a major thoroughfare, a patrolling officer would likely be spending only a few seconds a day on a patrol past your house. Currently, when officers are on disability or vacation, other officers must fill-in with overtime leading to tired and more stressed officers and higher expenses. Under a contract, we would be guaranteed full staffing and would eliminate the need for overtime coverage.

*Myth: We would have no control over the contract price and it could go up*

Fact: Costs will go up whether we contract for police services or not. At present, our police salaries, pension, retiree health benefits, and operating expenses are rising and are not sustainable. Contracting offers a way to better contain costs by the economies of scale of sharing costs with a larger department for services such as recruiting, training, and human resources. We would also have access to more services at a reduced cost to assist in solving crimes. In addition, we could use non-sworn officers for services such as parking and records management at a far lower cost than our current use of sworn officers for these services.

*Myth: Kensington can best manage our police officers*

Fact: Attempts by our elected board to manage the police has proven inept and resulted in significant legal fees. Contracting for police would provide our community with higher standards of professional management of the police and more sophisticated negotiators to deal with the police union.