



## **Willowbrook Development Policing Report**

### **Introduction**

Chief Zachary Hessing of the Star Police Department contacted the Ada County Center for Data Analytics & Intelligence, Crime Analysis Unit, to complete an analysis and forecast potential policing impacts resulting from the Willowbrook Development. In particular, we were asked to focus our analysis on the following areas:

1. Population Growth
2. Calls for Service
3. Response Times
4. Crime Rate

The following is a culmination of this analysis along with our recommendations for policing services for the City of Star.

### **Development Characteristics**

The Willowbrook Development is a large multi-use development in the northern foothills of the Treasure Valley which straddles Ada and Canyon Counties (City of Star, 2021). At full build out, the developer has outlined the following land uses:

- 4,069 single-family homes;
- 593 townhomes/patio-homes;
- 114,500 square-feet of commercial/retail space; and
- A public 18-hole golf course

The location of the development is loosely bounded on the east by state highway 16, on the north by Chaparral Road, on the west by Lansing Lane and on the south by Foothill Road/New Hope Road. The analysis performed will account for the projected full build-out of the project and the anticipated impacts to policing in the City of Star.

The developer notes that the lengthy build out time required to complete the project suggests the use of a phased approach beginning with the following to be completed by 2030:

- 18-hole public golf course;
- 261 single family homes; and
- 178 townhomes/patio-homes



For the purposes of this analysis, we will focus on the projected development encompassed within Phase I.

### **Population Growth**

Since 2010, the City of Star has seen an average year over year population growth rate of 8%. If this pace continues, the population of the City of Star will surpass 26,000 residents by 2030.

According to the Historic Population Estimates by City Limits (COMPASS, 2021), the population of the City of Star in 2021 was 13,400. In order to project total population growth resulting from the Willowbrook Development, the average household size of 2.7, as referenced in the American Community Survey (2020) for the City of Star.

With the phased approach referenced in the agency transmittal documents, our impact analysis will focus primarily on the phase 1 build out of the 18-hole golf course, 261 single family homes and 178 townhomes/patio-homes. With a combined 439 homes, phase I of the project is projected to add 1,185 residents to the City of Star by 2030.

The overall projected increase in residents to the City of Star of 1,185 from the Willowbrook Development will be considered as inclusive to the overall population increase projected by 2030.

### **Calls for Service**

A call for service is defined as a citizen placing a call, via either 911 or the non-emergency line, and requesting assistance from a first responding agency. In Ada County, all citizen calls for service are handled by the Ada County Dispatch Center. This measure is widely utilized by all first responding entities including law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services as a way of measuring workload and system utilization. As population increases, an increase in calls for service is generally expected. The increase of population, however, has historically outpaced increases in calls for service.

For the Star Police Department, citizen calls for services have steadily increased along with the city's population. In 2021, Star Police responded to 7,934 calls for service, an increase of 16.57% from the 6,806 calls responded to in 2018. During that same period, the population of the City of Star increased by 29.97%. Since a disparity exists between the increases in these two measures, a ratio of calls per citizen is often utilized to better predict the rate of increase. In 2018, the City of Star had a call per citizen measure of .66. In 2021, this measure dropped 10.6% to .59 calls per citizen. For comparison, this measure for the City of Eagle in 2021 was .54 and for the City of Kuna was .88.



The previous section discussed the projected population of the City of Star to be surpass 26,000 residents by 2030. Using the .59 calls per citizen metric seen in the most recent year of record, we would project a total of 15,803 calls for service to the Star Police Department by 2030, an increase of 99% from 2021 numbers.

### **Response Times**

Response time is calculated by measuring the time it takes an officer to arrive on scene after he/she is assigned the call. The target established for the Star Police is less than 5 minutes. Since 2013, the average response time for the Star Police department on Code 3 emergency calls has been 3 minutes and 20 seconds (Appendix A). This is due in large part to the following factors:

- Small geographic area
- Concentrated call volumes
- Staffing increases to keep up with population growth

Appendix B shows a map of all 7,934 calls for service from 2021. On the map you can clearly see the areas of the city where call volume is the highest, namely the downtown corridor, Star Middle School, the intersection of state highways 16 and 44 and Star Elementary School. As the City of Star continues to expand outward away from the city center, the time it takes for an officer to arrive on scene will likely increase. Officers will naturally spend the majority of their time in the areas of a jurisdiction where call volume is the highest. The Willowbrook Development expands the call area for the City of Star beyond its current northern boundary. Responding from the city's central corridor to the Willowbrook Development will add anywhere from 1 – 2 miles of additional travel resulting in an increased response time of 1.5 – 4 minutes. Appendix C illustrates how this phenomenon has the potential of dramatically increasing response times. Additional staffing would allow for officers to disperse more evenly within the city's boundaries subsequently minimizing any increase in response times due to population growth and greater geographic spread.

### **Crime Rate**

The City of Star utilizes the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) to measure crime within the city. This system provides a national standard for how crimes are counted and allows a fair comparison to be drawn between jurisdictions. The City of Star has one of the lowest crime rates in the Treasure Valley. The report to our citizens shows a steady decrease in the crime rate beginning in 2017 and stabilizing in 2020. We are projecting a similar crime rate for 2021 for the City of Star.



One of the best ways to maintain low crime rates is through the use of proactive policing. Proactive policing is defined as police work initiated by law enforcement that is intended to deter crime, reduce disorder, reduce citizen's fear of crime or remedy other specific concerns (National Academies, 2018). Proactive policing can only be done when an officer is not responding to a citizen call for service. In 2017, the ratio of proactive policing calls to citizen calls for service in the City of Star was 5.38 to 1. In 2021, this ratio dropped to 2.59 to 1 (Appendix D). Over time, a decrease in law enforcement proactivity has been attributed to rising crime rate.

Proactive policing has the greatest effect on deterring property crime. In growing communities, like the City of Star, this is concentrated in newer developments where construction site theft is common. The Willowbrook Development will require routine proactive checks by law enforcement to reduce the impact of this type of crime.

### **Conclusion**

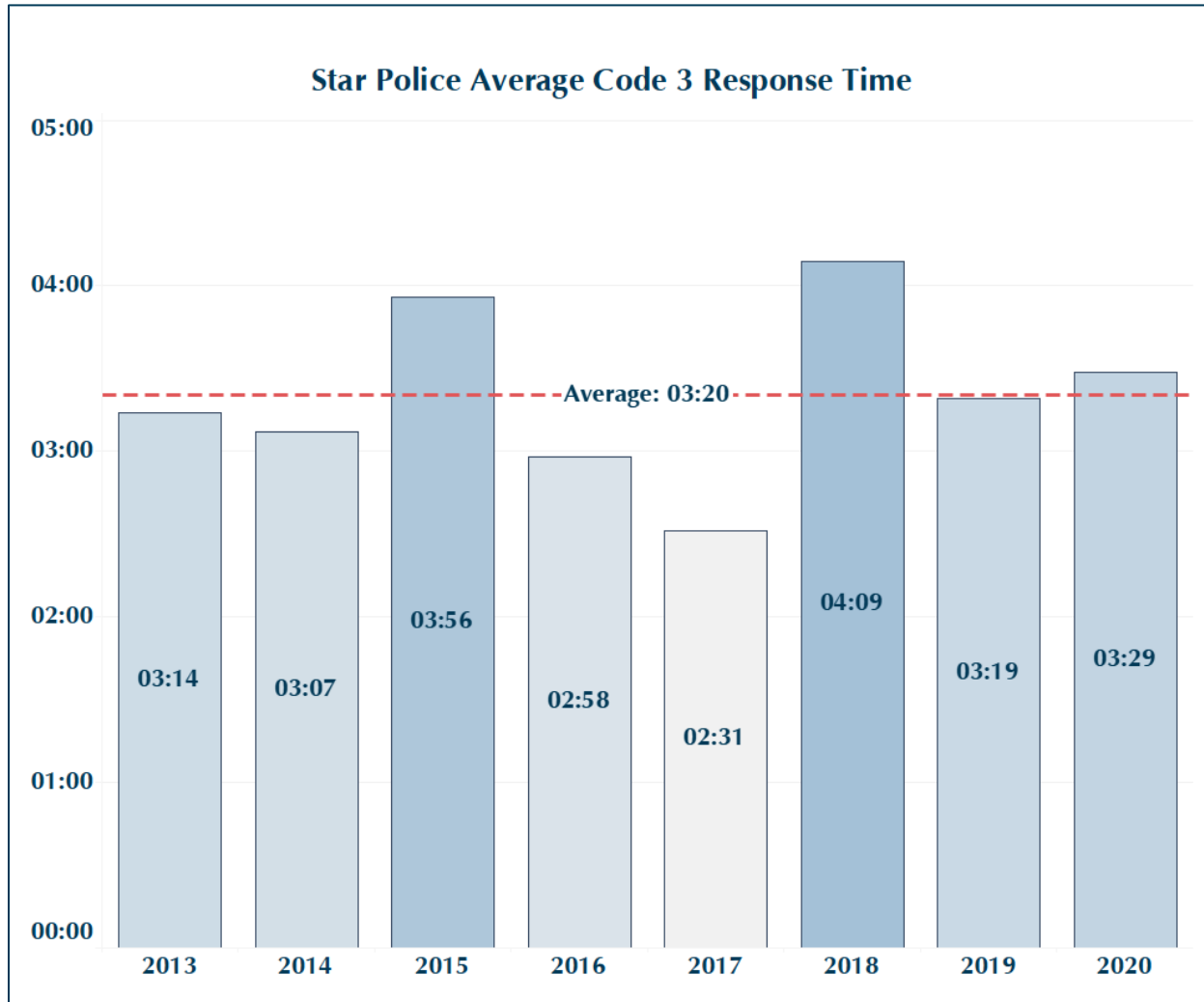
Growth is happening all around us in the Treasure Valley. As the population continues to increase, so must the services available to our citizens if we desire to maintain the quality of life that has attributed to this record growth. Among those services is the need for law enforcement.

By 2030, the City of Star is expected to eclipse 26,000 citizens by all available estimates. This is nearly double the current population of 13,400. It is logical to anticipate that the police personnel will need to increase as well.

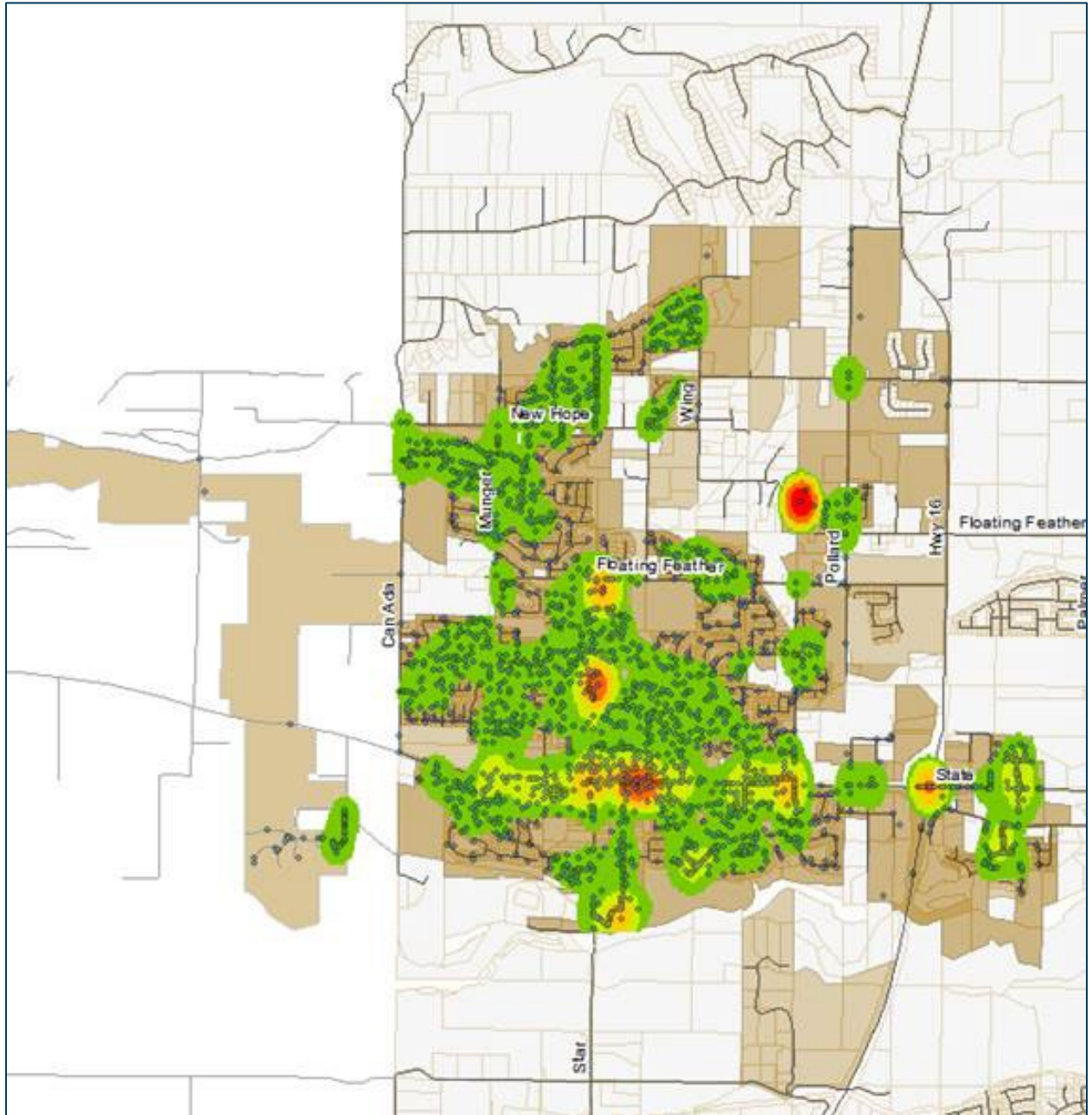
If the City of Star desires to maintain its low crime rate, code 3 response times at or near the current average of 3 minutes and 20 seconds and return to a 4 to 1 ratio of proactivity to calls for service, the following personnel will need to be added by 2030:

- 8 patrol officers/deputies
- 2 sergeants (provides additional workload support in addition to managing span of control for supervision and leadership)

**Appendix A**

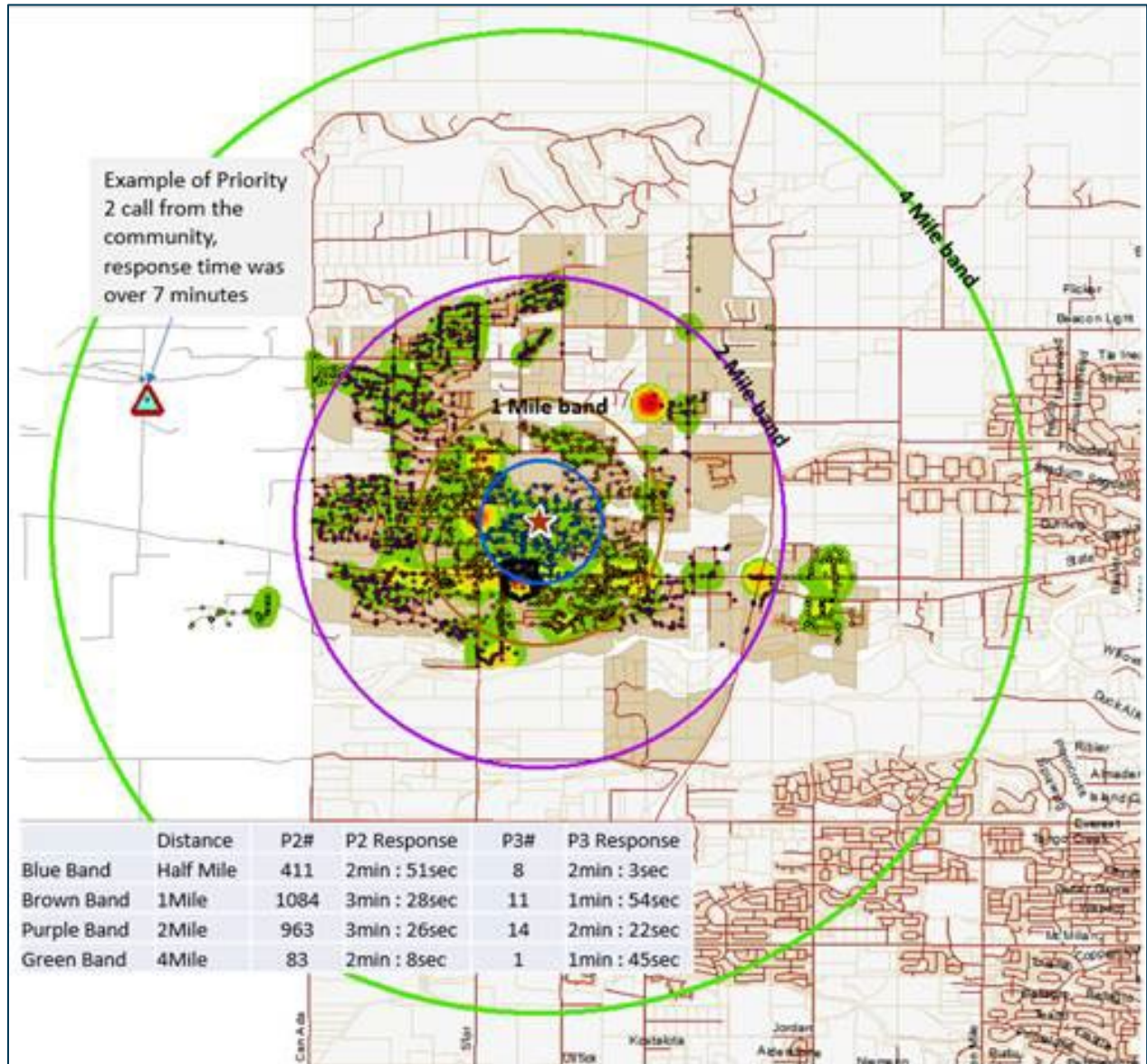


**Appendix B**

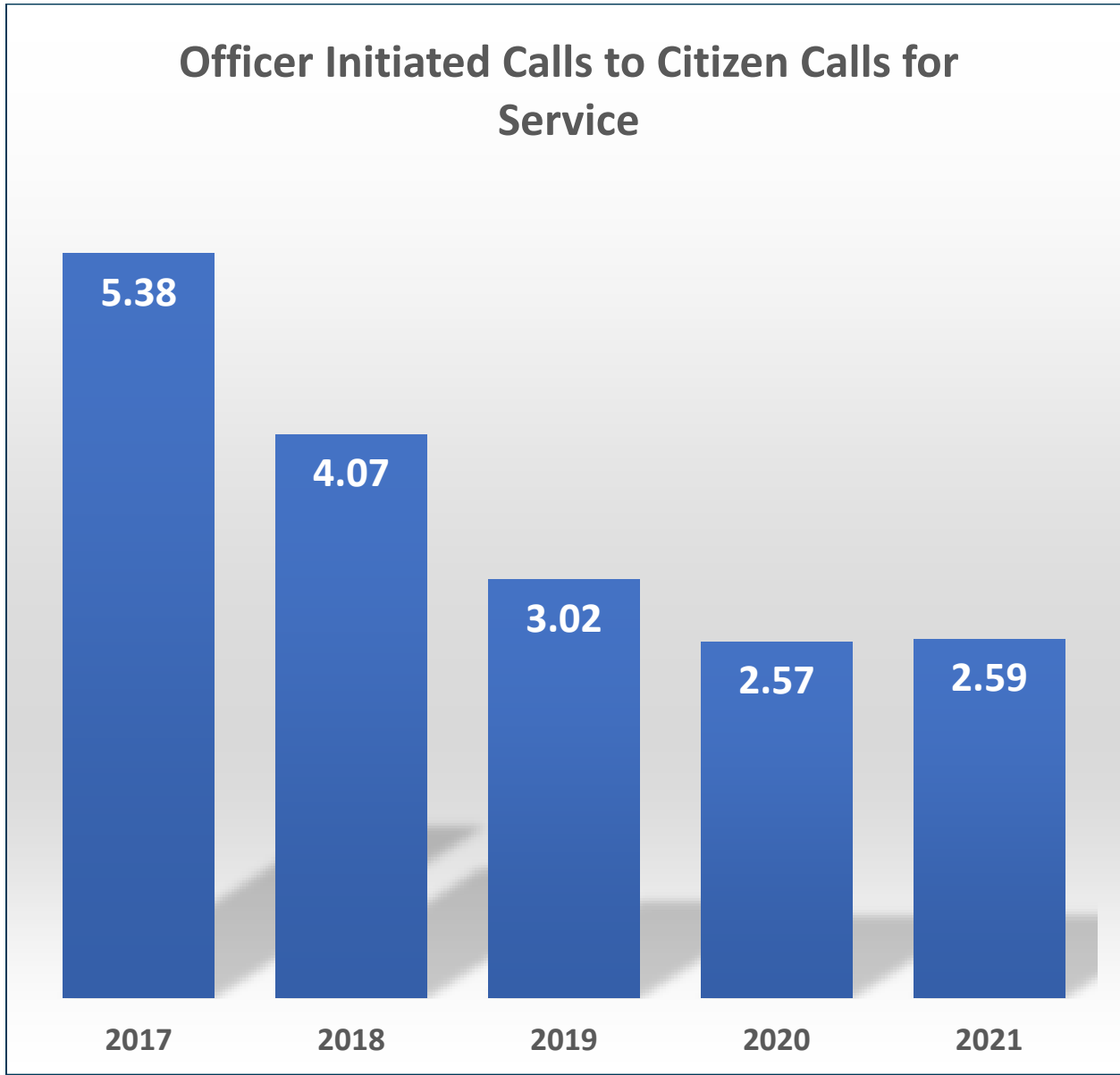




**Appendix C**



**Appendix D**







### **References**

City of Star: Notice of Public Hearing. (2021). Willowbrook Master Planned Development: Agency Transmittal.

Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho. (2021). *Historic Population Estimates by City Limits: Ada County*.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. (2018). *Proactive Policing: Effects on Crime and Communities*. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press.  
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