Public Safety in Bondurant

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Bondurant
Life Connecting

In partnership with:

IOWA | **Initiative for Sustainable Communities**

IOWA | **School of Planning and Public Affairs**

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Introduction

Project Team Members

The Project Team consists of Master of Public Affairs candidates Armando Bryson, Josh Reynolds, and Lisa Truong. Under the guidance of faculty advisors Dr. Sam Zuhlke and Professor Travis Kraus, we aim to assess Bondurant's public safety needs and provide actionable recommendations.

The project is administered by the School of Planning and Public Affairs (SPPA) at the University of Iowa as part of the partnership between the University of Iowa's Initiative for Sustainable Communities (IISC) and the City of Bondurant. IISC, established in 2009, is dedicated to involving students in practical projects within local Iowa communities. These initiatives strive to enhance sustainability, facilitate connections among students, faculty, and community leaders, and cultivate a spirit of fellowship and collaboration in Iowa.

The team would also like to acknowledge our project partner Jené Jess, Finance & Employee Services Director for the City of Bondurant, for her valuable insight and aid that helped make this project possible.

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Executive Summary

A team of graduate students from the University of Iowa School of Planning and Public Affairs collaborated with the City of Bondurant to evaluate current public safety provision and decision-making around public safety solutions in Bondurant, Iowa. More specifically, the City of Bondurant requested an assessment regarding the feasibility and consequences of transitioning from contracted law enforcement services with the Polk County Sheriff's Office to establishing an independent municipal police department, given the city's projected future population growth. This study aims to understand current community public safety needs and recommend actions regarding future law enforcement services in Bondurant.

The team began their study by conducting in-depth research consisting of academic literature reviews and policy expert interviews and creating a base of knowledge ultimately contributing towards the recommendation. They then analyzed Polk County Sheriff's Department call data, focusing on calls initiated for the city of Bondurant, dividing them into different categories of call types. Next, they performed a cost-benefit analysis comparing contracted services to the policy alternative of establishing an independent police department within Bondurant. Lastly, the report provides a decision-making toolkit that Bondurant can utilize in the future to revisit this question. Likewise, the toolkit can be useful to other municipalities facing the same complex decision Bondurant faces today.

Research and analysis suggest, given current conditions, that the City continue the contracted law enforcement services with Polk County Sheriff Department. As the city grows and circumstances change, the report recommends that the City revise its current contracting structure such that this contract can be evaluated every 3 years, following a decision-making process similar to the approach outlined in this study.

Issue Statement

Amidst the evolving political and social landscape and extreme population growth in Bondurant, Iowa, the City faces critical decisions regarding the delivery of public safety services. Currently, the City has a contractual arrangement with the Polk County Sheriff's Office to provide Bondurant residents with law enforcement services. To date, this practice has presented a cost-effective means of public safety provision, yet the impending surge in Bondurant's population is prompting the City to reassess its long-term public safety strategy. With Bondurant's population projected to quadruple by 2050 to an estimated 32,000 residents, a comprehensive understanding of evolving community needs is essential to ensure effective and sustainable law enforcement service delivery.

To address these challenges, the collaborative effort between Bondurant and the University of Iowa's Initiative for Sustainable Communities (IISC) aims to conduct a thorough study to evaluate the viability and potential consequences of establishing a new police department. This

study is crucial for informed decision-making and considers factors such as city staff/ council demands, the perspectives and options of residents, and the administrative/ economic pressures as it pertains to the demand for services.

The heart of this initiative lies in proactively responding to Bondurant's changing demographic landscape and anticipating stresses created by its future population growth. By investigating the community's public safety needs, drawing upon research and best practices, this project seeks to provide data-driven recommendations for optimizing the delivery of public safety services. Furthermore, the project seeks to provide a decision-making toolkit for Bondurant if they need to reconsider this question in the future.

Framework: The 4 Es of Public Administration

Applying the theory of the 4 Es — effectiveness, efficiency, economy, and equity — provides a structured framework for evaluating the performance and impact of law enforcement services. Efficiency involves achieving goals with minimal waste, emphasizing optimization of resources. Economy focuses on prudent resource management, ensuring resources are used judiciously. Effectiveness evaluates the extent to which objectives are met, emphasizing the successful outcomes of public programs and policies. Equity underscores fairness and justice, striving for impartial treatment and equal access to services for all. As defined, the 4 Es of public administration serve as a framework for public administrative policy evaluation. Each E - effectiveness, efficiency, economy, and equity – serves to analyze policy outcomes breaking it down into four distinct buckets.

These principles serve as guiding pillars throughout this report. The 4 Es help generate key research questions that the team will answer to inform our final recommendations to Bondurant. For example:

- Does Polk County Sheriff's Office adequately address Bondurant's demand of service?
- Is Polk County Sheriff's Office efficient in providing for demand of service?
- Do the economic benefits of establishing a police force outweigh the costs?
- Is Polk County's Sheriff's Office equitably serving Bondurant?

By reviewing current literature on law enforcement, interviewing policy experts, analyzing call data and service quality metrics, and conducting a cost benefit analysis through the lens of the 4 Es, policymakers can identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement in policy delivery and management. This approach facilitates evidence-based decision-making, fosters transparency and accountability, and ultimately enhances the effectiveness and responsiveness of law enforcement in meeting the needs of the community they serve.

Equitable Access to Public Safety Services

This project analyzes public service provision through the possible creation of an independent municipal police department. One goal of any public safety approach is that all residents in Bondurant have equitable access to services.[1] The American Society for Public Administration defines equity as "the fair, just equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract. The fair and equitable distribution of public services, and the implementation of public policy; and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy"[2].

The consideration of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) in the decision to establish an independent city police force is crucial for three core reasons. A representative police force reflects the community it serves, fostering trust and understanding among residents. Secondly, an equitable approach ensures fair treatment and protection for all individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, or socio-economic status. Lastly, inclusion ensures that marginalized voices are heard and represented in law enforcement policies and practices, leading to greater accountability and responsiveness to community needs.

It is imperative to note that in various communities around the United States, equity within public safety and law enforcement has been scrutinized. In recent years, as stories about police-related deaths have gained national attention, overall trust in the criminal justice system has declined.[3] A large part of this discussion centers around equity among vulnerable and historically marginalized groups.

While acknowledging this reality, this project serves to highlight effectiveness, efficiency, and economic viability of the current structure while considering equity relative to the current community context in Bondurant. The project team recognizes the immense value of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice in local governance and public safety, and also acknowledges that the policing issues and controversies facing other communities may not reflect conditions in Bondurant. By incorporating DEIJ considerations into decision-making, the City of Bondurant can foster a just, inclusive, and responsive public safety system that meets the needs of its increasingly diverse population.

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[1] *International Association of Chiefs of Police. "Law Enforcement Code of Ethics." Theiacp.org, www.theiacp.org/resources/law-enforcement-code-of-ethics.*

[2] *Norman-Major, Kristen. "Balancing the Four Es; or Can We Achieve Equity for Social Equity in Public Administration?" Journal of Public Affairs Education, vol. 17, no. 2, June 2011, p. 237, https://doi.org/10.1080/15236803.2011.1200164*

[3] *https://www.forbes.com/sites/emilywashburn/2023/02/03/america-less-confident-in-police-than-ever-before-a-look-at-the-numbers/?sh=221342006afb*

Background

The project team conducted background research on contemporary best practices within law enforcement agencies, their relationship to city budgets, and the structural frameworks of law enforcement entities across various cities. The overarching goal was to cultivate a comprehensive understanding of how cities are delivering public safety services in 2024.

Not surprisingly, the research revealed that there is no singular approach or definitive best practice when it comes to law enforcement. Each community tailors its law enforcement strategies based on its unique budgetary constraints and specific needs. Communities employ a diverse array of approaches to public safety, some opting to have their own municipal police departments and others contracting for services with county agencies, as is currently the case in Bondurant. Contracting with external agencies is not unique to rural small towns, larger municipalities like those in Los Angeles County, California, or Broome County, New York have adopted this approach as well. Additionally, some communities have transitioned away from municipal police departments into contracted services and vice versa, further illustrating the varied landscape of law enforcement practices.

City Profile

Over the past decade, the city of Bondurant has had a 90 percent increase in population, marking a significant leap from 3,860 residents in 2010 to 7,365 in 2020 seen in Figure 1. According to the latest 2024 census data, the city's population is 8,035 residents, with a continued growth rate of approximately 9 percent per year. This recent upsurge in population is predominantly attributed to an influx of single families moving to Bondurant and the growing Des Moines metropolitan area.
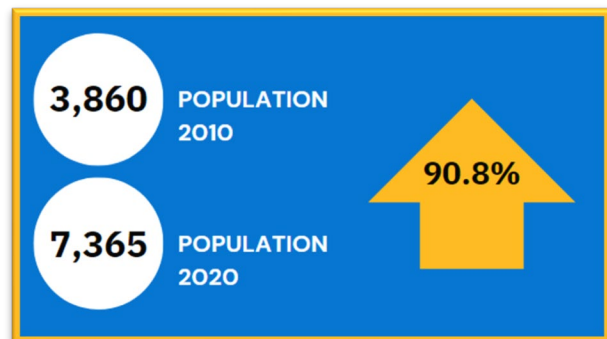

Figure 1: Population Growth in Bondurant

As illustrated in Figure 2, Bondurant residents tend to have higher wealth levels than the state average, translating into elevated home values. Bondurant's median household income of $120,588 is significantly higher than the state of Iowa at $70,571. Similarly, Bondurant has a relatively high median home value of $274,800, compared to the state at $221,200.
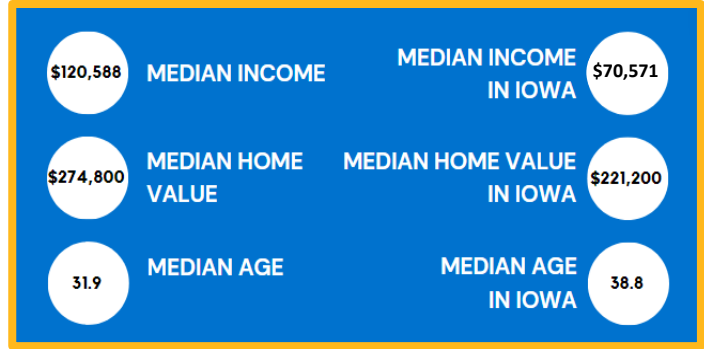
Figure 2: Bondurant and Iowa Sociodemographic Indicators (ACS 5-year estimates)

From a racial and ethnic demographic perspective, Bondurant aligns closely with the broader demographics of Iowa. As illustrated in Figure 3,[4] approximately 88 percent of the city's residential population identifies as White, with 6 percent identifying as Black, and 3.5 percent as Latinx. These figures closely mirror the demographic composition of Iowa.

From a political standpoint, the city of Bondurant leans more conservative in terms of policy, political ideology, and presidential party support.[5] Over 56% of all Bondurant community members voted in the last local election.[4] This is a higher level of civic engagement compared to nearby Des Moines, where 49% of the population voted in the city's 2023 elections.[6] Polk County, where Bondurant is located, leans more liberal and has seen higher support for Democratic candidates in the past five presidential elections. The majority of Bondurant voters have consistently favored Republican presidential candidates, having voted for only one Democratic candidate in the past five elections.[4]

Figure 3: Bondurant race and ethnicity

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[4] U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Bondurant City, Iowa. www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/bondurantcityiowa/PST045223.

[5] "Bondurant, IA Politics & Voting." BestPlaces, www.bestplaces.net/voting/city/iowa/bondurant. Accessed 16 Apr. 2024.

[6] https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/pdf/2022/general/countystats.pdf

Topic and Significance

What is Public Safety?

Public safety encompasses measures and initiatives undertaken by law enforcement agencies and community stakeholders to ensure the protection, security, and well-being of individuals within society. It encompasses a wide range of strategies, including crime prevention, emergency response, disaster preparedness, and public health interventions, aimed at mitigating risks and enhancing resilience. Public safety initiatives are grounded in the principle of safeguarding individuals from harm and maintaining social order, thereby fostering environments conducive to the physical, mental, and social welfare of citizens. These efforts involve collaboration among law enforcement agencies, government agencies, community organizations, and the public to address diverse threats and hazards, ranging from criminal activities to natural disasters and public health crises.

This study considers public safety as it relates to policing and law enforcement, focusing more on crime prevention versus crime deterrence in the research methods. It is essential to recognize that while deterrence aims to dissuade individuals from committing crimes through the threat of punishment, crime prevention focuses on addressing underlying factors that contribute to criminal behavior, such as poverty, lack of education, and social inequality. Moreover, traditional approaches to crime prevention often rely heavily on law enforcement interventions, such as increased police presence and surveillance. Alternative providers to crime prevention in cities, such as community-based organizations, social services, and educational programs, offer alternative approaches that empower communities to create safer environments through education, social support, and resource allocation. The research aims to consider various strategies that effectively reduce crime rates while promoting community well-being.

What is Crime?

Public safety, as noted prior, embodies the collective measures undertaken by authorities and communities to foster an environment conducive to the security, well-being, and quality of life of individuals. It includes a broad spectrum of initiatives, ranging from crime prevention strategies and law enforcement efforts to emergency response protocols and public health interventions. The overarching goal of public safety initiatives is to mitigate risks, enhance resilience, and promote social cohesion within society.[7]

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[7] John P (2023) Public Safety: Ensuring Society's Security and Well-Being. J Pol Sci Pub Aff.

In contrast, crime refers to behaviors or actions that transgress established laws and regulations, posing a threat to public safety and order. These behaviors can manifest in various forms, including property crimes, violent offenses, white-collar crimes, and cybercrimes, among others. Crime should not be considered synonymous with violence. The perpetration of crime often stems from complex socio-economic, psychological, and situational factors, with perpetrators motivated by diverse intentions such as financial gain, personal vendettas, or ideological beliefs.[8]

By understanding the distinction between public safety and crime, policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and community stakeholders can devise holistic strategies that address the root causes of criminal behavior while simultaneously fostering environments that promote safety, well-being, and resilience for all members of society.

Public Law Enforcement in Iowa

In Iowa, the landscape of law enforcement is characterized by significant fragmentation, with 395 agencies spread across the state, accounting for 2% of the nation's total agencies despite Iowa's population representing less than 1% of the national population. These agencies employ thousands of sworn officers tasked with patrolling communities, investigating crimes, and ensuring compliance with state laws and regulations. According to the Iowa Department of Public Safety, the overall crime rate in the state decreased by 3.4% from 2019 to 2020 and continues to decrease year after year. However, specific types of crimes, such as burglary and motor vehicle theft, saw increases during the same period. Considering this dynamic, it is reasonable to consider innovative solutions to consolidate resources, foster collaboration, and enhance the effectiveness of law enforcement services statewide.

Current Law Enforcement in Bondurant

The City of Bondurant is currently in its fourth year of a decade-long agreement with the Polk County Sheriff's Office for law enforcement services. The Polk County Sheriff is publicly elected and serves a four-year term. Initiated in May 2020 and set to expire in June 2030, the contract reflects Bondurant's expectations of increased challenges posed by population growth and escalating law enforcement costs. Under the terms of the contract, the Polk County Sheriff's Office provides a comprehensive suite of law enforcement services to the City of Bondurant, including routine patrols, criminal investigations, animal control, and community policing initiatives[9], with staffing levels increasing incrementally over the contract period.

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[8] Onyeneke, C.C.; Karam, A.H. An Exploratory Study of Crime: Examining Lived Experiences of Crime through Socioeconomic, Demographic, and Physical Characteristics. Urban Sci. 2022, 6, 43. https://doi.org/10.3390/urbansci6030043

[9] Schneider, Kevin J. Overview Of Base Law Enforcement Services For Bondurant. Polk County Sheriff's Office, 2022.

While the Sheriff's Office primarily manages law enforcement decisions, Bondurant has access to incident data, ensuring transparency and accountability. Financially, the contract is structured to accommodate Bondurant's budgetary constraints, with escalating annual payments projected to reach $1,251,593 in the final year, covering various expenses associated with law enforcement provision.

As the city navigates rapid population growth, local leaders seek to learn more about alternatives to its existing policy to best plan for future needs. Discussions within the city council primarily center on the cost-effectiveness of the contract versus starting a municipal police department.

As Table 1 shows, the cost in the first year of the contract was $656,651 and will nearly double to $1,251,593 by the final year of the contract.

Fiscal Year	Contract Cost
2020-2021	$656,651
2021-2022	$689,199
2022-2023	$723,214
2023-2024	$940,991
2024-2025	$987,098
2025-2026	$1,035,326
2026-2027	$1,085,772
2027-2028	$1,138,551
2028-2029	$1,193,781
2029-2030	$1,251,593

Table 1: Contract Costs with the Polk County Sheriff's Office

Other Public Safety Expenditures

Public safety of Bondurant's residents is a significant component of the overall city budget. In 2024 budget, the City allocated $3,439,887 for public safety expenditures. This commitment to public safety extends beyond law enforcement, with a $53,350 budget for health and social services and $5,238 for animal control (some of which is also handled through the Polk Conty Sheriff's Office).

Bondurant's independent public safety services, comprised of both Fire and EMS, play a large role in public safety services and budgeting. This collaborative team of Fire and EMS personnel, led by Fire Director Aaron Kreuder, is staffed with 36 full-time employees. The City of Bondurant Emergency Medical Services team serves at the center of public safety, health, and care. They work in conjunction with the Fire Department and function under the same $1.4 million budget. As a collective, both departments have continued to elevate as a cohesive body, upgrading their service rating from 6 to 5 over the past five years (Service ratings range from 10 to 1; having 1 the best of service ratings). Both the City of Bondurant Fire Department and EMS have responded to over 900 calls in the year 2022 (Figure 5), increasing exponentially as time progresses.

As part of internally provided city services, the City of Bondurant offers various types of insurance coverage through its contractual agreements. One key insurance type is Accidental Injury Insurance, which covers the city against liability for worker's compensation and statutory

liability for the costs of hospitalization, nursing, and medical attention for members injured while performing their duties, whether within or outside the city limits. This coverage extends to all members under the contract.

Another crucial insurance category is Liability Insurance, wherein the Council contracts to insure against the cities or members of the Bondurant Emergency Services' liability for injuries, death, or property damage resulting from the performance of duties within or outside the city limits.
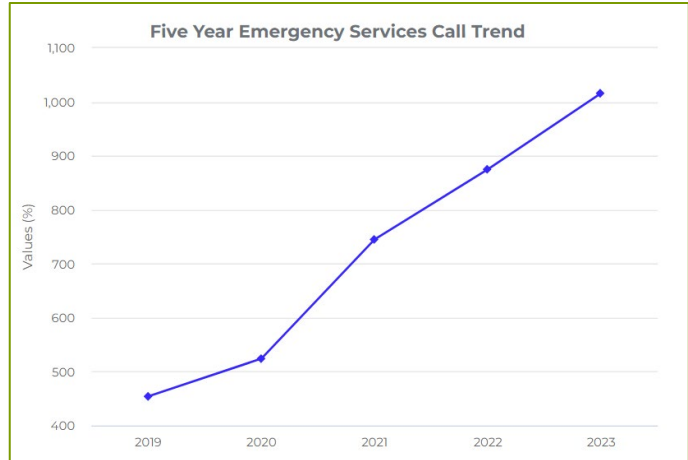

Figure 4: Emergency Services Call Trends from EMS

Methods

Measuring public safety in Bondurant is a multifaceted endeavor that requires a comprehensive understanding of key challenges and current efforts. To evaluate the Bondurant's public safety against the framework of the 4 Es, the project team conducted data collection of policy expert interviews, call data, financial estimates, and literature reviews. These data collection methods serve to identify existing programs, policies, and best practices, laying the groundwork for evidence-based policy recommendations.

Terminology

When discussing law enforcement and public safety, distinguishing between incidents, calls, call types, crime, and crime rates helps provide accurate understanding of terminology and effective policy implementation.

› *Incidents* constitute a broader category, encapsulating a diverse array of events such as accidents, disturbances, or public safety issues, regardless of criminal intent.
› *Calls* pertain to notifications or requests for police intervention. Calls act as a measure of demand encompassing a spectrum of urgencies and concerns reported by individuals or entities within a community.
› *Call types* are the label used to categorize the calls in the record system.
› *Crime* denotes any act deemed unlawful and punishable by law, ranging from minor infractions to severe felonies, meticulously documented through police reports and investigative procedures. As referenced prior, crime is not inherently violent.
› *Crime rates* represent the frequency or prevalence of criminal activity within a given population over a specific period. These rates are typically expressed as the number of crimes per capita or per 100,000 residents, allowing for standardized comparisons across different regions or time periods. Clarity in defining these terms is imperative for accurate data analysis, strategic resource allocation, and informed decision-making within the realm of law enforcement and public safety.

Categorizing Crime

In the context of evaluating and analyzing crime data, the adoption of a standardized approach provides not only a structured framework but also clear metrics for organization. This becomes particularly crucial in areas like Bondurant, where an array of call types exist. Through categorization, crimes can be grouped, facilitating a more streamlined understanding of their severity and potential impact on the community. This approach not only enhances the efficiency of identifying solutions but also aids in prioritizing responses based on the urgency and gravity of each situation, ultimately contributing to more effective crime management and community safety initiatives. For this project, the categorization of call types was done using the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS).

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The National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) serves as a comprehensive framework for categorizing various offenses, providing a nuanced understanding of crime dynamics. Developed in the 1980s to supplant the Summary Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) method, NIBRS became the national standard on January 1, 2021. As of June 2022, all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia are certified to report crime data to NIBRS.

› *Group A Offenses* encompass Crimes Against Persons, Crimes Against Property, and Crimes Against Society. Crimes Against Persons include offenses such as aggravated assault, kidnapping/abduction, forcible rape, and murder. Crimes Against Property encompass offenses aimed at obtaining money, property, or other benefits, such as burglary, larceny/theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. Crimes Against Society consists of victimless crimes or activities prohibited by society, including drug/narcotic violations, prostitution, gambling offenses, and weapon law violations.

› *Group B Offenses* comprise offenses resulting in arrests, such as driving under the influence, disorderly conduct, liquor law violations, and curfew/loitering/vagrancy violations. Based on this, it is arguable that Group A offenses are more violent and harmful to public safety than Group B.

Using the FBI's guidelines for categorizing crime, outlined in Figure 6, the project team categorized the list of all the call types creating a basis for analysis. The outlined criteria for determining Group A offenses, covering seriousness, frequency, national prevalence, law enforcement attention, data burden, and statistical validity, offer a systematic method for resource prioritization, trend identification, and assessing crime prevention effectiveness.

Furthermore, crime rates are derived from NIBRS data through a systematic process involving the collection, classification, and population adjustment of reported incidents. Law enforcement agencies utilize the NIBRS framework to categorize incidents into specific crime categories or groupings, such as Crimes Against Persons, Crimes Against Property, and Crimes Against Society. Once incidents are classified, the total number of reported offenses for each category is divided by the population of the area being analyzed to adjust for differences in population size. This population-adjusted figure yields the crime rate, expressed as the number of offenses per 1,000 or 100,000 individuals. Crime rates serve as standardized metrics for assessing the prevalence of criminal activity within communities and enable comparisons across different geographic areas and population groups. They play a key role in informing strategic decision-making processes related to law enforcement resource allocation, policy formulation, and crime prevention efforts, ultimately contributing to efforts aimed at enhancing public safety and well-being.

Group "A" Offenses

NIBRS OFFENSES	NIBRS CODES	NIBRS OFFENSES	NIBRS CODES
Arson	200	Human Trafficking	
		-Commercial Sex Acts	64A
Assault Offenses		-Involuntary Servitude	64B
-Aggravated Assault	13A	Kidnapping/Abduction	100
-Simple Assault	13B		
-Intimidation	13C	Larceny/Theft Offenses	
Bribery	510	-Pocket Picking	23A
		-Purse Snatching	23B
Burglary/B&E	220	-Shoplifting	23C
		-Theft from Building	23D
Counterfeiting/Forgery	250	-Theft from Coin-Operated Machine or Device	23E
		-Theft from Motor Vehicle	23F
Destruction/Damage/Vandalism of Property	290	-Theft of Motor Vehicle Parts or Accessories	23G
		-All Other Larceny	23H
Drug/Narcotic Offenses			
-Drug/Narcotic Violations	35A	Motor Vehicle Theft	240
-Drug/Narcotic Equip. Violations	35B		
		Pornography/Obscene Material	370
Embezzlement	270		
		Prostitution Offenses	
Extortion/Blackmail	210	-Prostitution	40A
		-Assisting or Promoting Prostitution	40B
Fraud Offenses		-Purchasing Prostitution	40C
-False Pretenses/Swindle/ Confidence Games	26A		
-Credit Card/Automatic Teller Machine Fraud	26B	Robbery	120
-Impersonation	26C		
-Welfare Fraud	26D	Sex Offenses (Forcible)	
-Wire Fraud	26E	-Forcible Rape	11A
		-Forcible Sodomy	11B
		-Sexual Assault with An Object	11C
Gambling Offenses		-Forcible Fondling	11D
-Betting/Wagering	39A	Sex Offenses (Non-Forcible)	
-Operating/Promoting/ Assisting Gambling	39B	-Incest	36A
-Gambling Equip. Violations	39C	-Statutory Rape	36B
-Sports Tampering	39D		
		Stolen Property Offenses	280
Homicide Offenses			
-Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter	09A	Weapon Law Violations	520
-Negligent Manslaughter	09B		
-Justifiable Homicide	09C		

Group "B" Offenses
Group B's MUST have an arrest to be NIBRS Reportable

NIBRS OFFENSES	NIBRS CODES	NIBRS OFFENSES	NIBRS CODES
Bad Checks	90A	Family Offenses, Non-Violent	90F
Curfew/Loitering/Vagrancy Violations	90B	Liquor Law Violations	90G
Disorderly Conduct	90C	Peeping Tom	90H
Driving Under the Influence	90D	Trespassing	90J
Drunkenness	90E	All Other Offenses	90Z

Source: Association of State Uniform Crime Reporting Programs (ASUCRP). Accessed on June 6, 2014.

Figure 5: Group A and B Categorization of Offenses

Call Set Data

To better understand and evaluate public safety in Bondurant, the project team obtained Bondurant call data from the Polk County Sheriff's Office. The call data set ranged from January of 2019 until December of 2023 and contained a total of 33,438 calls. The data set contained variables including the date, time, location, and call types. For the purposes of this project, the following variables were included in the analysis: number of calls, call types, and call time stamps as a means of quantifying calls and track crime occurring in Bondurant.

Due to challenges in obtaining a guide or codebook for the dataset, universal definitions on crime outlined by the FBI were used. Additionally, data gaps and errors further limited the analysis. Considering the absence of formal documentation and data inconsistencies, interpretations of specific variables within the dataset were informed by comprehensive literature reviews and interviews with experts representing various disciplinary perspectives.

Policy Expert Interviews

To gain insights into the law enforcement landscape of Iowa, the project team conducted interviews with twelve policy experts from surrounding areas regarding public administration, public safety practices, and innovative approaches. Those interviewed included individuals from cities across Iowa, selected in conjunction with the community partner, based on their roles in comparable communities. Comparable communities share commonality with Bondurant in community issues, size, or potential service structure. A comprehensive list of all interview participants, cities, and contributions to the report can be found in Appendix A.

These interviews were conducted over Zoom in February 2024. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and followed a common set of questions regarding various aspects of law enforcement, public safety services, as well as community priorities. These interviews served the purpose of gathering perspectives on starting a police force, the challenges and benefits of operating a local police department, potential unexpected costs, and resource requirements for managing a police department.

Interview Questions

1. How would you describe your community's current approach to law enforcement and public safety services? Has it always been set up this way?
2. What additional service providers and key partnerships do you value when reflecting on your community's approach to public safety?
3. What would you change about how law enforcement is provided or managed in your community?
4. What are the challenges you would expect a city starting their own police force to experience, and what guidance would you provide someone navigating this decision?
5. What do you see as the benefits to a municipality maintaining its own police force as opposed to contracting out this service?
6. In a fictional universe, you are the single decision-maker for a community of 8,000 people. What are your priorities when it comes to public safety? How does that change if you are a community of 30,000+?
7. What is the most important budgetary consideration when it comes to public safety?
8. Is there anything else you feel that it's important for us to know about policing and public safety? Something that we didn't ask about, but we should have?

*Figure 6: Policy Expert Interview Questions*

Findings and Analysis

Crime Rates in Bondurant

Crime rates typically reflect the prevalence of violent crimes within a community; however, they can capture a broader spectrum of criminal activities, both violent and non-violent. As mentioned above, law enforcement agencies utilize the NIBRS framework to categorize incidents into specific crime categories or groupings, such as Crimes Against Persons, Crimes Against Property, and Crimes Against Society. A city's crime rate is calculated by utilizing the NIBHS framework for crime and crime rates. In this project the calls were divided into Group A and Group B as seen in Figure 10. Group A offenses tend to be more violent and harmful to public safety and is the oft-used metric for determining crime rates. With the categorized offenses, the total number of reported offenses for each category is divided by the population of the area being analyzed to adjust for differences in population size.

Bondurant's annual crime rate averages around 0.06 cases per 1000 residents. Compared to the national and Iowa 2022 crime rate averages, Bondurant's crime rate is significantly lower.

While Group A data is pivotal for calculating crime rates, it represents only a fraction of the dataset, 7.6% of all crime. Despite its significance, this subset reveals that incidents in Bondurant tend to be non-violent and pose minimal direct harm to the community. Frequently calculating the crime rates will help identify the changes in crime presences and the potential to consider additional or alternative methods of maintaining public safety.

USA Crime Rate	Iowa Crime Rate	Bondurant Crime Rate
3.80/1000 residents	2.87/1000 residents	0.06/1000 residents
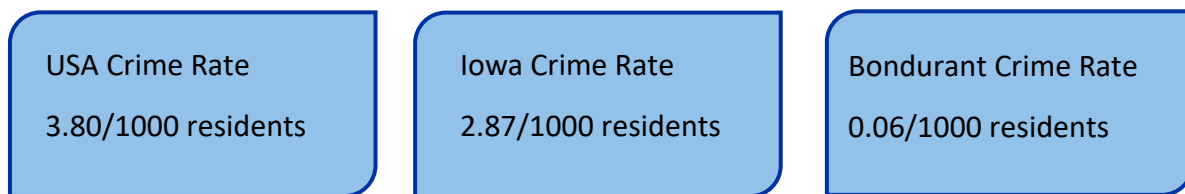
Figure 7: Comparative Crime Rates
Source: FBI

Examination of crime rate trends provide insights into the effectiveness of law enforcement efforts in crime prevention and reduction over time.

Figure 9 illustrates that while there may be slight fluctuations, the overall trend of crime rate in Bondurant remains relatively low and consistent from 2019-2023. Despite this consistency, there is room for further improvement. By implementing targeted strategies aimed at continual crime reduction, law enforcement agencies can build upon their existing successes and strive for even safer communities.
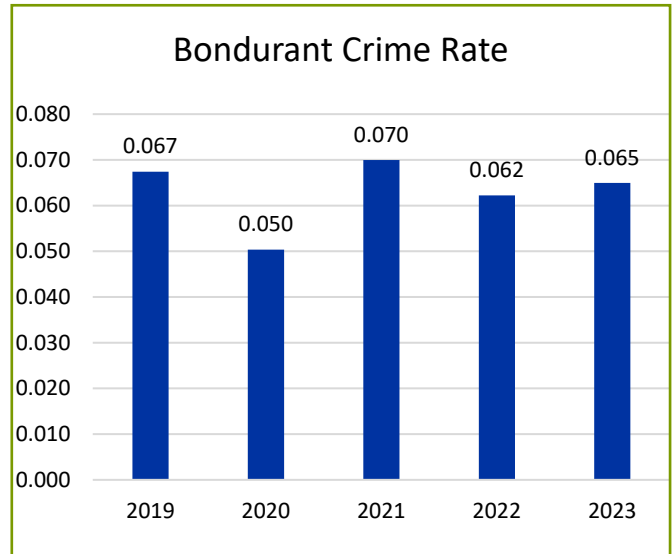
Bondurant Crime Rate

Year	Crime Rate
2019	0.067
2020	0.050
2021	0.070
2022	0.062
2023	0.065

Figure 8: Crime Rates in Bondurant

Group A	Group B	
ACCIDENT	ABANDONED VEHICLE	INVESTIGATION ASSIGNMENT
ASSAULT	ALARM SILENT	MENTAL PROBLEM
BOMB THREAT	ANIMAL CALL	MESSAGE
BURGLARY	ASSIST OFFICER/AGENCY	MISCELLANEOUS TRIP
CHASE OR PURSUIT	ATTEMPT TO LOCATE	MISSING PERSON
DISPUTE/DISAGREEMENT	AUDIBLE ALARM	OPEN DOOR
DOMESTIC	BAR CHECK	OWI
DRIVEBY SHOOTING	BROADCAST	PROWLER
FIGHT	BUILDING CHECK	PUBLIC ASSIST (POLICE)
FRAUD	CARE	PUBLIC WORKS INFORMATION
GUNSHOTS	CHILD IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE	RADAR SETUP
HIT & RUN	(CHINA)	RECKLESS DRIVER(S)
ILLEGAL POSSESSION	CIVIL CASE	RECOVERED/FOUND PROPERTY
LARCENY MOTOR VEHICLE	COMMERCIAL FIRE	RESCUE - CHOOSE SUB TYPE
LOST PROPERTY	CONTROLLED BURN	RESIDENTAL FIRE
NARCOTIC ACTIVITY	DEBRIS IN ROADWAY	ROADS HAZARDOUS/BLOCKED
ROBBERY	DPQ	RUNAWAY
SEXUAL ASSAULT	ENFORCEMENT CHECK	SCHOOL BUS VIOLATION
SHOOTING	ESCORT	SEARCH WARRANT
SHOPLIFTER	FOLLOW UP	SEIZED PROPERTY
STABBING	HARASSMENT	SPECIAL WATCH
THEFT	HAZMAT - CHOOSE SUB TYPE	STALLED VEHICLE
THREATS	HOME VISIT	STILL ALARM - CHOOSE SUB TYPE
VANDALISM	ILLEGAL HUNTERS	SUICIDE
	ILLEGAL PARKING	SUSPICIOUS
	INCOMPLETE 911 CALL	TEST EVENT
	INDECENT EXPOSURE	TRAFFIC SIGNAL PROBLEM
	INFORMATION	TRAFFIC STOP
	INTOXICATED PERSON	

Figure 9: Call Type Categorization

Call Data Analysis

An important aspect of the data is the increase in the number of calls received over the specified timeframe. Here, a call refers to a notification or request for police intervention.

As shown in Figure 11, Bondurant has experienced a gradual rise in call volume from the years 2019-2023. This slight upward trajectory suggests a possible increased demand for more support services, especially considering the expanding population of Bondurant. Ongoing monitoring of call rates throughout the year can provide valuable insights into when policy adjustments might be necessary to adequately address evolving demands.

Furthermore, it's crucial to distinguish between crime and violence. Research conducted by the Vera Institute of Justice on 911 calls nationwide reveals that less than 3 percent of these calls pertain to situations involving violent crimes.[10] According to Figure 12, this low rate of violent crime applies to the city of Bondurant as well. Most calls made from 2019-2023 do not involve violent offenses- 56% of all calls pertain to traffic stops and building checks. This pattern is consistent when each individual year is analyzed. Individual charts for each year of data are available in the Appendix C.
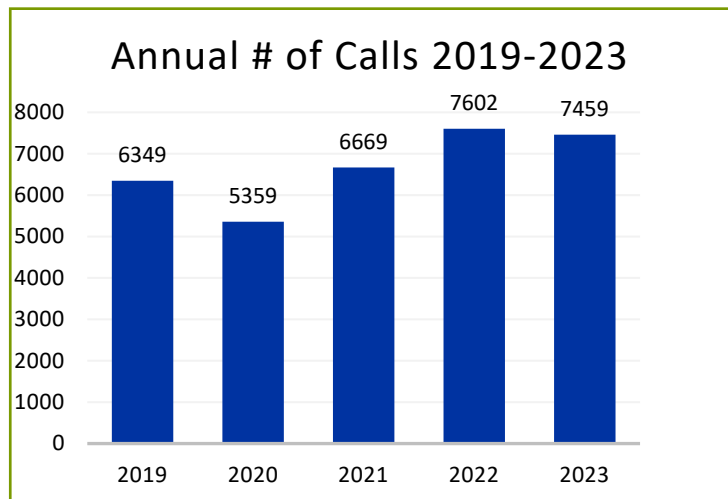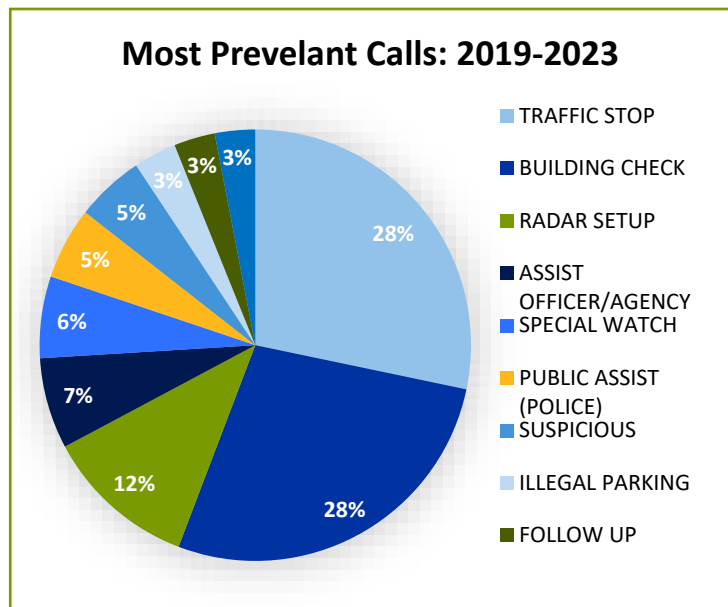

Figure 10: Calls Trends

Figure 11: Most Prevalent Calls from 2019-2023

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[10] https://www.vera.org/downloads/publications/911-analysis-we-can-rely-less-on-police.pdf

Response Times

Response times are a standard indicator of law enforcement efficiency. Response time standards vary depending on where you are and the type of incident. For emergencies, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) suggests aiming for a 5-minute response time, while the National Sheriff's Association (NSA) recommends a 15 to 30-minute window for non-emergencies.[11,12] Comparing response times form the data to these metrics offers valuable insights into the efficiency of the Polk County Sheriff's department in serving Bondurant.

To calculate response time within the Polk County data, the analysis measures the time between the time stamp of when the call was initiated and the time stamp when law enforcement arrived. Then, this data is used to calculate average response times.

Notably, the Polk County data includes a significant number of cases where response time is zero (e.g., 0:00). Only 25% of calls within the data set had a response time greater than 0:00. A response with no time could indicate different scenarios such as reporting issues or instant service from an officer. Given this dual data generating process and the lack of a formal codebook, it is difficult to decipher the true reasoning for the large case of 0:00 calls in Bondurant.

Initially, the team took the entire set of calls with response time resulting in an average response time of **1 minute and 52 seconds**. However, to gain a better understanding of efficiency, the following calculation was done without any calls with response times of 0:00. When removing calls where response time equals 0:00, the average response time increases to **6 minutes and 54 seconds**.

When analyzing both data points, it can be argued that the Polk County Sheriff's Office currently operates within an efficient framework. As previously mentioned, the lack of context or guidance to interpret variables hindered the understanding of the rationale behind the high number of calls with response times of 0:00. This ambiguity may potentially impact the accuracy and reliability of the results. Clarifying the circumstances and having complete data content surrounding these instances would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the department's performance and aid in making informed decisions regarding service optimization.

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[11] *International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). "Policy Center: Emergency Response Time." Retrieved from* *https://www.theiacp.org/policy-center/policy-center-emergency-response-time*

[12] *National Sheriff's Association (NSA). "Standards for Law Enforcement Agencies." Retrieved from* *https://www.sheriffs.org/sites/default/files/uploads/NSA%20Standards%20for%20Law%20Enforcement%20Agencies%20November%202020.pdf*

Interview Key Themes

Throughout the interviews, key themes emerged regarding community approaches to law enforcement, the importance of partnerships and collaboration, challenges faced by cities starting their own police force, and budgetary considerations for public safety. The experts provided valuable perspectives on the benefits of maintaining a local police force versus contracting out services and recommendations for enhancing public safety initiatives. Furthermore, the interviews highlighted the significance of communication and community engagement in law enforcement strategies. Themes across all interviews are described below.

Staffing Challenges and Retention Practices
Across all interviews, staffing remained a critical concern in law enforcement, with retention and hiring practices emerging as pivotal factors for success. City Administrators, Managers and Chief of Police from Iowa shared the precarious nature of personnel retention, observing that they struggled to retain officers in smaller municipalities. For example, an interviewee from University Heights noted that the city pays for the officers to receive extensive training through the police academy, often significantly investing in training only for the officer to depart for larger police forces capable of paying more after a few years.

Bondurant may face similar challenges if they started an independent police force, as they are close to many competing law enforcement agencies that are also looking to fill multiple positions.

Collaboration with External Agencies
Many interviewees highlighted that collaboration with other law enforcement agencies is inherent to the fabric of effective law enforcement. Law enforcement agencies, by their very nature, operate within an interconnected network aimed at safeguarding communities. Collaborative efforts among agencies enhance resource utilization and operational efficiency, and foster unity and collective responsibility in addressing public safety challenges. In the context of the city of Bondurant, forging partnerships with external agencies is not merely advantageous but essential for comprehensive safety solutions. By embracing collaboration, Bondurant can leverage the collective expertise and resources of various stakeholders to create a safer and more secure environment for all residents.

Technological Advancements
Leveraging technological advancements also emerged as a key strategy in enhancing operational efficiency and effectiveness. Equipping officers with state-of-the-art technology to perform tasks and administrative duties remotely minimizes administrative burdens and maximizes time spent engaging with the community. Integrating technology into daily operations enhances efficiency and improves overall service delivery but comes at a cost. As Polk County Sheriff's Department is one of Iowa's largest agencies, they may be better

positioned to shoulder the upfront cost compared to a smaller, newly established law enforcement agency.

Community Development and Trust-Building

According to common literature and local policy experts, community engagement and trust-building initiatives play a pivotal role in strengthening public safety outcomes. The interviews underscored the importance and benefits of programs such as "Shop with a Cop", "Safety Town" which provides education for kindergarten students," and community events like food drives, blood drives, and parades. These initiatives foster positive relationships between law enforcement and the community, laying the foundation needed to enhance public safety. Polk County Sheriff's Office participates often in local events, helping establish trust in their partnering communities. A Bondurant-branded municipal police department could similarly build goodwill and support community-building efforts to strengthen connections with residents.

Efficiency and Operational Structure

The interviews revealed potential strengths and inefficiencies inherent in how each city provides public safety services. It is imperative to acknowledge these potential strengths and inefficiencies as cities assess the effectiveness of their current services and compare alternatives. To do this for Bondurant, we take a deeper look at three communities offering law enforcement services in three different formats below in the case study section.

Case Studies

North Liberty

Situated approximately 100 miles east of Bondurant, North Liberty found itself navigating the same rapid growth just 25 years ago that Bondurant faces today. In 1999, with 5,000 residents and viewed as a bedroom community for the Iowa City area, North Liberty, made a pivotal decision to establish its own police force. When the department first started, they didn't offer 24/7 services to residents. However, as the city grew, so did the police force. Today, their police department provides two important takeaways for Bondurant and other communities weighing their options- the importance of hiring and retaining high quality officers and ensuring these officers have the same vision of public safety as the city.

Back in 1999, North Liberty hired its first patrol officer, Diane Venenga. Now as acting Chief, Diane Venenga and the city of North Liberty prioritize on community engagement. The careful selection and training of officers has been crucial in maintaining this priority.

Additionally, with a current population of 21,000 and a focus on community engagement, North Liberty has embraced innovative initiatives to enhance public safety beyond a police department. For example, they employ a communication team that partners with volunteer Neighborhood Ambassadors [13]. This program serves as a conduit for disseminating city news, alerts, and announcements through tailored communication channels aligned with the preferences of each neighborhood. Beyond mere communication, these Ambassadors catalyze neighborhood cohesion by organizing gatherings, orchestrating community-driven projects such as library visits and storm drain painting, and even establishing welcoming committees. In essence, North Liberty's emphasis on community policing and proactive outreach underscores its commitment to not just policing, but also nurturing vibrant and connected neighborhoods.

Grimes

As a suburb of Des Moines, Grimes shares many similarities with Bondurant. They have a slightly larger population than Bondurant at 16,000 residents but are in a similar period of growth. While both cities currently contract with Polk County Sheriff's Office and experience roughly the same level of service, Grimes frequently revisits the topic of starting their own Police Department. However, City Administrator, Jake Anderson, has opted to continue to contract with the Polk County Sheriff's Office underscoring the city's commitment to provide public services efficiently.

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[13] "Neighborhood Ambassador Application." City of North Liberty, northlibertyiowa.org/residents/great-neighborhoods/neighborhood-ambassador-application/.

Grimes works closely with the Polk County Sheriff's Office, prioritizing branding and building community good will that cultivates a strong sense of identity and trust within the community. Not only do they host monthly meetings where the Sheriff's Office reports data at city meetings, but police cruisers are branded as "Grimes Patrol". This serves as a visible symbol of law enforcement presence and community pride and highlights the importance of community engagement and transparency in building trust between law enforcement agencies and residents.

It is important to note that while Grimes' agreement includes two officers providing 24/7 services, the city assumes the additional costs of branding and trust-building initiatives. Nevertheless, these investments are seen as essential for fostering a sense of security and connection within the community. Bondurant may benefit from considering similar strategies as it continues to grow and evolve.

Harlan

Harlan, home to a population of 5,000 residents, stands apart from the communities previously discussed due to its unique circumstances. Unlike those experiencing rapid urbanization, Harlan grapples with distinct challenges maintaining a municipal police department in rural Iowa.

Faced with retirements and turnover in key city positions, including that of the Chief of Police, Harlan encountered challenges in hiring and retaining officers, compounded by resource constraints. As a result, led by City Administrator Gene Gettys, Harlan opted to undergo a significant transition from maintaining an independent police force to contracting law enforcement services through the Shelby County Sheriff's Office. This strategic decision stemmed from the city's recognition of the fiscal and logistical hurdles tied to sustaining an independent police force, as well as the imperative of efficiency in managing limited resources.

Bondurant and its counterparts can learn from Harlan's experience, emphasizing that despite the significant difference in demographics, contracted services provide a workable alternative in ensuring effective law enforcement services.

Cost-Benefit Analysis

To further assess the efficiency and economy of contracted services, the project team conducted a cost-benefit analysis that considered various financial aspects to evaluate the economic feasibility of the two different law enforcement service models: contracted services and a locally run police department. More specifically, the team undertook a net present value analysis (NPV) to compare these policy alternatives. NPV is a form of cost-benefit analysis that allows for comparison between costs and benefits while accounting for the changing value of money overtime. In short, NPV allows us to evaluate whether a decision made today will result in a favorable cost to benefit return in the future.

The identification of costs includes personnel expenses, equipment and technology investments, infrastructure development, administrative overhead, and ongoing operational needs. These expenses, ranging from officer salaries and benefits to facilities and equipment, amount to millions of dollars annually. However, the benefits of a dedicated police force cannot be overlooked. Improved response times enhance public safety, increase community trust, and provide the city with greater control over law enforcement strategies, which can lead to a more tailored approach to address the unique needs and priorities of Bondurant. Furthermore, the presence of a locally run police department signals stability, security, and a commitment to public safety, potentially creating jobs and potentially increasing property values in Bondurant.

However, these benefits are hard to measure. Because of this, the cost-benefit analysis requires the analyst to make a variety of assumptions to simplify real-world factors that can't easily be accounted for. While making these assumptions, the analysis leans toward conservative financial estimates (i.e. airing on the side of low expenses). This approach assumes a low cost option and a large fiscal benefit. The timeline of the analysis is short to minimize the impact of assumptions. Specifically, the analysis assumes:

1. The City of Bondurant will move forward with the same number of FTEs as requested by the city from Polk County Sheriff's department.
2. All upfront equipment costs would be covered by DOJ COPS grants.
3. Basic cost of living increases that include a salary increase of 2.5% annually, an increase in insurance of 6% annually, and an IPERS employer contribution of 9.51%. These were established using the current estimated percentages that Polk County uses while developing contracts with local municipalities.
4. Hiring a new police officer often requires an estimated $40,000 in training and testing, with the police academy typically taking up the bulk of this cost. Across Iowa, law enforcement agencies are paying for this training as a recruitment piece. However, the analysis assumes that all hired police officers were previously trained.
5. The Bondurant Police Department would be housed at no additional expense in the emergency services building. While this may work for an initial short-term solution, the

construction of facilities that can handle significant growth could be necessary. This scenario would add an estimated cost of $5 million based on similar police department buildings constructed in Iowa.

6. No increase in insurance or legal expenses were included in the calculation as they are based on need. However, significant annual increases for cities that transition from no police on staff to a police force on staff could be expected.

These assumptions resulted in defining the cost of ownership by averaging the budget of ten Iowa Police forces that ranged from 6 patrol officers to 10 patrol officers (Appendix D). This resulted in the finding of an annual cost of $1.9 million.

Next, the annual cost is multiplied by the average annual increase of the current Bondurant and Polk County Sheriff's Office agreement at 7.7%, resulting in the estimated cost of ownership shown in Figure 13. With the total cost of ownership estimated over the next 5 years, the analysis considers the cost savings of no longer contracting police services as a benefit and is used to calculate the net present value.

	Present	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
	FY 24/25	FY 25/26	FY 26/27	FY 27/28	FY 28/29	FY 29/30
	1,940,000.00	1,941,505.97	1,943,013.12	1,944,521.43	1,946,030.91	1,947,541.57
	(1,096,733.00)	(1,058,110.97)	(840,663.12)	(790,059.43)	(737,161.91)	(681,837.57)
		5 Year NPV Analysis				
	5%	($4,690,149.51)				
	FY 24/25	FY 25/26	FY 26/27	FY 27/28	FY 28/29	FY 29/30
Estimated Benefits	843,267.00	883,395.00	1,102,350.00	1,154,462.00	1,208,869.00	1,265,704.00
Estimated Cost for Ownership	1,940,000.00	1,941,505.97	1,943,013.12	1,944,521.43	1,946,030.91	1,947,541.57
Net Benefit	(1,096,733.00)	(1,058,110.97)	(840,663.12)	(790,059.43)	(737,161.91)	(681,837.57)

Figure 12: Cost-Benefit Analysis

The net present value analysis over 5 years found that if a police force were started today, the cost outweighs the benefits by $4.7 million. Further, expanding the analysis over 51 years, we continued to find that the cost outweighed the benefits by millions of dollars.

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Based on our findings, the project team concludes that it is not currently advisable to transition from county contracted services to a city police department at this time. This recommendation is based on an analysis grounded in the 4 Es framework. The analysis suggests that the Polk County Sheriff's Office currently provides public safety services to Bondurant that are effective, efficient, and economical. As for equity, we outlined above the difficult task of measurement. During our analysis, we did not discover evidence of inequalities with respect to specific demographic subsets of Bondurant, or by mapping out calls and reviewing frequency of responses in areas across Bondurant. As a result, we recommend that the city continues its already-in-place contracted law enforcement services with Polk County Sherrif Department, but that it also performs a similar analysis of crime rates, response times, costs and benefits every three years.

Further, we found that it is standard for cities to concurrently be served by at a minimum two law enforcement agencies (local, county, state). Pooling resources at these higher levels via a contract provides an effective and efficient way to offer the residents of Bondurant and other similar communities law enforcement services at a much lower cost than a city managed police force can. These cost savings also allow a community like Bondurant to explore providing additional services to their community with a focus on equity.

However, we acknowledge that the decision-making process involves political dimensions, and that every county and state offers a different quality of services than what is available to Bondurant via the Polk County Sheriff's Office. If the quality-of-service lowers or the community residents desire a local police department, the creation of a local police force could be justified. Our recommendations for Bondurant are two-fold, actions that can be taken now and actions to consider if the political pressure or quality-of-service demands that Bondurant starts its own police force.

Our recommendations center around 3 key themes: evaluation and contract recommendations that we believe should be worked on now regardless of expanding and specializing which have a greater cost associated with them but provide opportunities to improve services in Bondurant and a focus on collaboration and sharing resources.

Evaluation and Contract Recommendations

1. **Conduct Regular Public Satisfaction Surveys.** Public satisfaction surveys gauge residents' perceptions of safety and security. These surveys will serve as indicators of service effectiveness and community satisfaction and provide an opportunity for the community to provide anonymous feedback.

2. **Establish a review process every three years to assess crime data and satisfaction survey results.** This allows for local leaders to have the most up-to-date data to inform decision-making regarding investments in public safety, whether it be to evaluate services from Polk County Sherrif's Office or to consider funding for other service agencies.

3. **Engage in shorter law enforcement service contract cycles, favoring a five-year term with a mid-term review to assess service efficiency.** Building off the three-year review process, this allows for evaluation of contracted services while also ensuring adequate time for establishing a municipal police department, if that were ever to be the community preference. Appendix E includes a toolkit for starting a municipal police department, recommending at least two years of planning and work to get started.

Expand and Specialize

Amidst the ongoing national dialogue surrounding policing, this report focuses on Bondurant's approach to law enforcement and public safety. While we recommend maintaining a partnership with Polk County for law enforcement services, there is an opportunity to expand and specialize in services offered to the residents of Bondurant. By considering the alternatives below Bondurant can enhance its capacity to address a wide range of safety concerns. Diversifying service offerings not only increases community resilience but also promotes holistic safety solutions that encompass various aspects of well-being.

- The Polk County Crisis Negotiation Team serves dual purposes for mental health and SWAT services. Hiring a social worker and implementing a co-response model which pairs police officers with mental health professionals or social workers has been shown to effectively address complex situations involving mental health crises.

- Introducing specialized units into the emergency services department such as Community Outreach Officer that will allow for the community to become more engaged in activities and events. By fostering positive relationships between law enforcement and residents a tighter bond is created. Performing activities like passing out stickers and bike helmets aid efforts to create a more cohesive community.

- Establish dedicated traffic enforcement officers who focus on addressing road safety issues, reducing traffic violations, and improving overall traffic management within the city. Roughly 43% of all calls initiated or dispatched during 2019- 2023 by Polk County Sheriff's Office were related to this work, which could be accomplished by a traffic enforcement officer at a lower cost to the city.

- Establish or enhance animal control services to address issues related to stray animals, animal welfare, and public health concerns. Animal control officers can play a vital role

in responding to animal-related emergencies, enforcing animal control ordinances, and educating the community on responsible pet ownership. Animal calls make up 3% of calls in 2019-2023. The city paid an additional animal control service fee of $7,902.

- Create a program that empowers community members to act as neighborhood ambassadors, thus fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity within neighborhoods and providing an avenue for improving communication.

- Ensuring that dispatch staff are adequately trained to recognize appropriate responses. While emergency calls often default to 911, communities must train dispatch personnel to identify situations where alternatives like 988 (the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) and mobile crisis teams are more appropriate. Bondurant has a well-established Emergency Services team. An expansion of this team would provide strong benefits. Polk County Dispatch staff training is necessary to make them aware of Bondurant Emergency Services' capabilities. Supplementing dispatch with a liaison that can efficiently transfer calls to Bondurant's specialized services should be considered to optime response times and ensure the most appropriate assistance is provided.

- In expanding service offerings, directing non-emergency calls away from the sheriff's offices and towards specialized services allows for renegotiation of contracts to focus on the more resource-intensive aspects of policing.

Collaboration and Resource Sharing

Emphasizing collaboration with external agencies is paramount to optimizing resource utilization and service delivery. By leveraging partnerships, unity can be fostered to enhance operational effectiveness and improve overall public safety. Bondurant should continue to benefit from utilizing the Polk County Dispatch, K9 units, School Resource Officers, investigative services, and Crisis Negotiation teams, which contribute valuable expertise and resources to community safety efforts. Furthermore, establishing relationships with Polk County Public Health for addressing issues like hoarding and homelessness complements traditional law enforcement functions.

In addition to governmental agencies, collaboration with area non-profits is vital for addressing various community needs. Examples listed here are from the greater Des Moines area but provide an opportunity for improving public safety in Bondurant:

- Animal Control services via Animal Rescue League of Iowa.
- Homeless outreach and support via Central Iowa Shelter and Services & The Beacon.
- The Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence, The Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Planned Parenthood of Greater Iowa for victim support services.
- Proteus, Inc. and Refugee Cooperative Services for migrant services.

By fostering collaborative relationships with both governmental and non-profit entities, Bondurant can leverage a diverse array of resources and expertise to better serve its community and promote holistic safety solutions.

This concludes our report, but during our research and analysis we gathered valuable information. This is included in Appendix D and E, the decision-making roadmap, and toolkit. These sections consist of two resources that we hope Bondurant or any city in a similar position will review should they evaluate alternatives for public safety and law enforcement.

Appendices

Appendix A: Policy Expert Interviewees

Name	Title	City
Laura Bergus	City Councilwomen	Iowa City, IA
Ryan Heiar	City Administrator	North Liberty, IA
Brad Deets	City Administrator	Waukee, IA
Geoff Fruin	City Manager	Iowa City, IA
Redmond Jones	Deputy City Manager	Iowa City, IA
Jake Anderson	City Administrator	Grimes, IA
Ben Champ	City Manager	Pleasant Hill, IA
Diane Venenga	Chief of Police	North Liberty, IA
Chad McCluskey	Chief of Police	Waukee, IA
Troy Kelsay	Chief of Police	University Heights, IA
Greg Staples	Chief of Police	Norwalk, IA

Policy Expert Interviews
Appendix B

Laura Bergus
Iowa City
Councilwomen

Geoff Fruin
Iowa City Manager

Redmond Jones
Deputy City Manager

Troy Kelsay
University Heights
Chief of Police

Chad McCluske
Waukee Chief of Police

Brad Deets
Waukee City
Administrator

Chad McCluskey, Waukee Chief of Police, and Brad Deets, Waukee City Administrator, represented a community that has experienced rapid growth over the past two decades similar to that of the City of Bondurant.

Diane Venenga, North Liberty Chief of Police, and Ryan Heiar, City Administrator, shared insights from North Liberty.

Diane Venenga
North Liberty Chief of Police

Ryan Heiar
North Liberty
City Administrator

Jake Anderson
Grimes City Administrator

Gene Gettys
Harlan
City Administrator

Jake Anderson, the City Administrator of Grimes, which continues to rely on contracted services, and Gene Gettys, City Administrator of Harlan, which shifted from having its own police force to contracting services through the Shelby County Sheriff's Office.
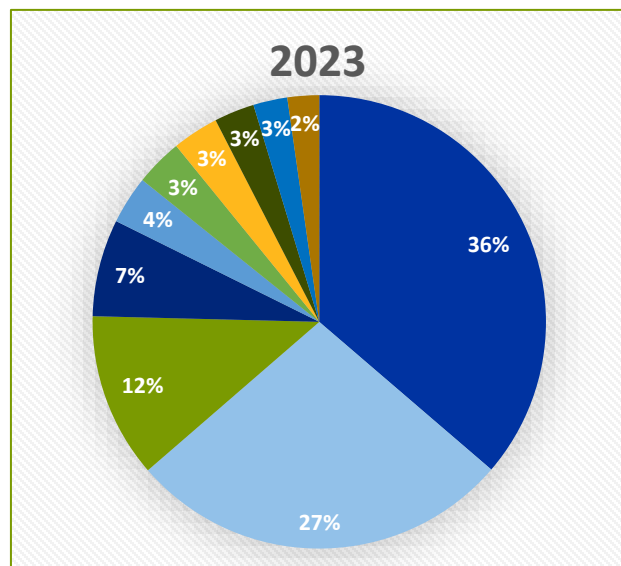
Norwalk Chief of Police Greg Staples was previously hired by the current City Administrator of Bondurant and Ben Champ, the City Manager of Pleasant Hill
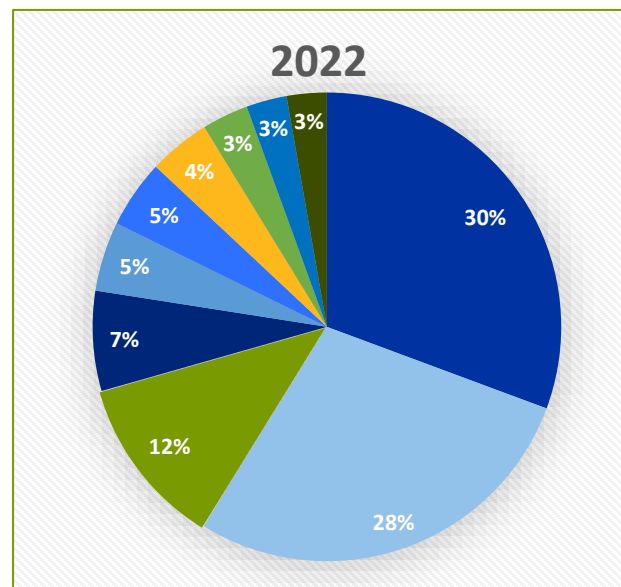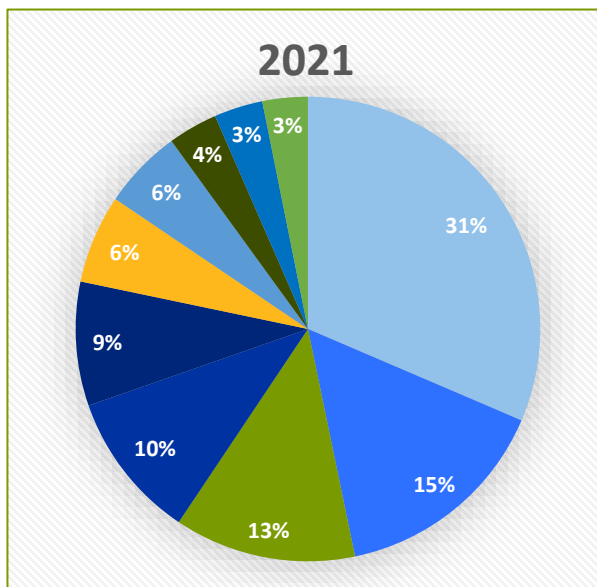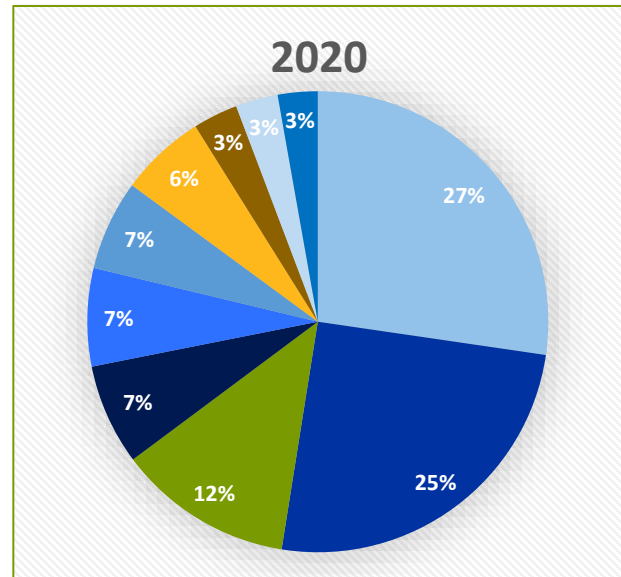
Greg Staples
Norwalk Chief of Police

Ben Champ
Pleasant Hill
City Manager

Appendix B: Annual Crime Types

2019

BUILDING CHECK	32%
TRAFFIC STOP	26%
	8%
	8%
	6%
	5%
	4%
	4%
	3%
	2% 2%

2020

TRAFFIC STOP	27%
BUILDING CHECK	25%
	12%
	7%
	7%
	7%
	6%
	3%
	3% 3%

2021

TRAFFIC STOP	31%
	15%
	13%
	10%
	9%
	6%
	6%
	4%
	3% 3%

2022

BUILDING CHECK	30%
TRAFFIC STOP	28%
	12%
	7%
	5%
	5%
	4%
	3% 3% 3%

Legend

- BUILDING CHECK
- TRAFFIC STOP
- SUSPICIOUS
- ILLEGAL PARKING
- FOLLOW UP
- DPQ
- RADAR SETUP
- PUBLIC ASSIST (POLICE)
- ASSIST OFFICER/AGENCY
- ANIMAL CALL
- STALLED VEHICLE
- SPECIAL WATCH

2023

BUILDING CHECK	36%
TRAFFIC STOP	27%
	12%
	7%
	4%
	3%
	3% 3% 2%

Appendix C: Comparison of Municipal Police Departments in Iowa

City	# of Personnel	2021 Expenses (in Millions)
Decorah	7	2
Grinnell	9.5	1.5
Pella	6	3.1
Carroll	10	1.9
Pleasant Hill	9	2.5
Nevada	6	1.2
Washington	7	1.5
Denison	10	1.7
Oskaloosa	7	1.9
Waverly	9	2.1
Average	**8.05**	**1.94**

Appendix D: Decision-Making Roadmap

In the decision-making process, we created and utilized a comprehensive road map that asked the question "What's next?" The image below serves as a roadmap presenting the potential steps and specific data points to gather, guiding the team in making informed and optimal recommendations. By visually outlining the necessary components and sequential process, it provides a framework for conducting thorough analyses and formulating conclusions. We utilized this road map in our analysis as it offers a visual aid for policy makers when reviewing what would be the most advantageous steps to take for their community regarding public safety administration.
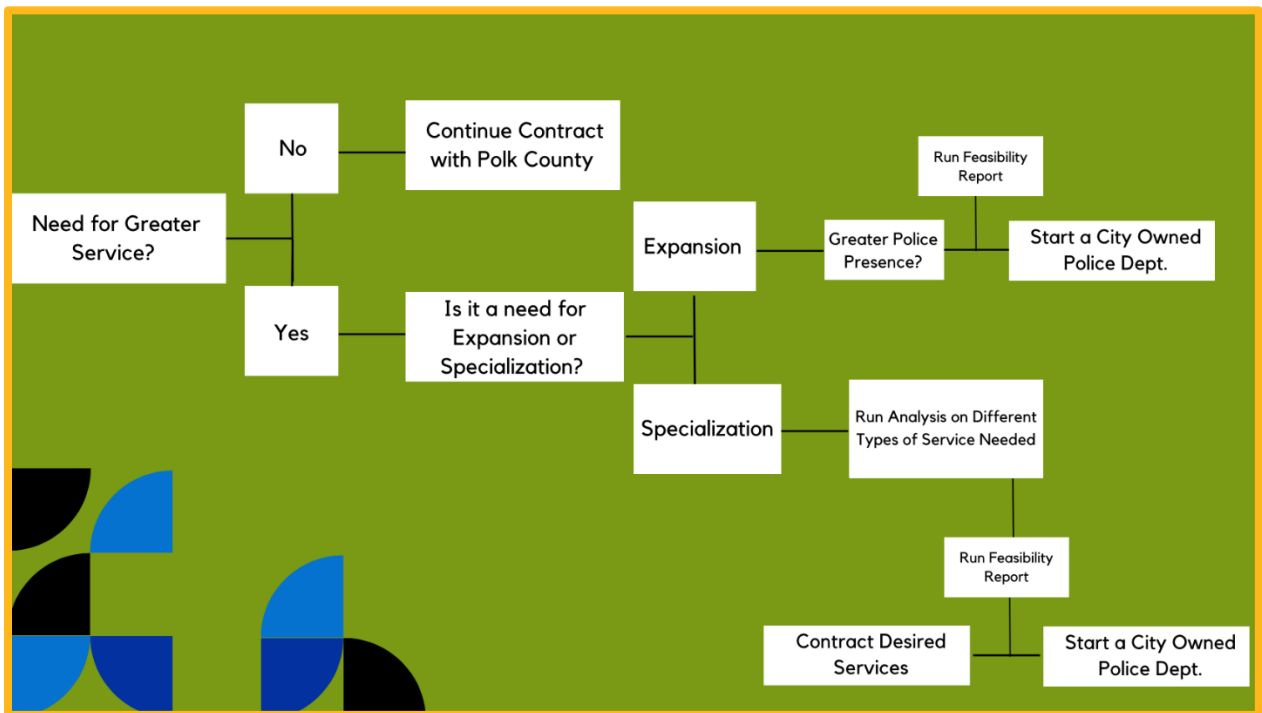
As you progress through the visualization, reflecting on the current level of service received by your residents and deciding if there is a need for greater service, you will need to determine if you are going to expand or specialize. Either way, you will eventually need to run a feasibility report. At that time, we suggest reviewing the methods section of this report, rerun the crime and response analysis, and the cost-benefit analysis of your current solution, to come to a conclusion. If it is time to expand and add to your police force or contracted service, your crime and response times will be important factors. Compare your crime rate and response rate to current national averages, open conversations with your community about the quality of service and if there is a need for a larger police presence, expand, or if different types of needs are unmet, consider specializing.

Appendix E: Toolkit – Starting a Municipal Police Department

This toolkit further investigates the multifaceted process of creating a law enforcement agency and the implications for community safety and efficiency. The decision to establish a municipal police force marks a significant endeavor for any city, requiring meticulous planning, strategic hiring, and a commitment to quality standards. It is our intention that this toolkit can be used by any municipality considering the same questions Bondurant is considering today. Before utilizing this toolkit, please ensure that you revisit recommendations previously mentioned that outline when and why this toolkit should be initialized.

Planning Phase

At its core, the journey towards establishing a municipal police force is a journey of foresight and preparation. It begins with a careful examination of community needs and a strategic timeline that ideally starts two years prior to opening. During these two years, cities should focus on shaping the identity of their future police department through branding efforts that reflect the values and priorities of the community. This branding exercise serves as a foundational step, laying the groundwork for subsequent policy development.

At this point, we recommend working with an outside firm on the development of the brand as well as joining the Iowa Chief of Police listserv. It can be used to stay up to date on current events, best practices, and regulations, and provide important networking and policy examples.

Policy Development

Next is the crucial phase of Policy Development, a collaborative effort between the City Council and the City Administrator. Together, they articulate the department's purpose, priorities, and budget, providing a blueprint for its operations and guiding principles. We recommend utilizing the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) to gain insights on current policy templates and needs.

Community Engagement

Transparent communication with the community about the establishment process is equally crucial for fostering trust and collaboration. Managing expectations and addressing concerns promptly lay the foundation for a successful partnership between law enforcement and the community. It is important to consider all stakeholders, including the local law enforcement offices that might currently provide services.

Hiring Phase

Up to this point, no additional staff has been required. Everything performed in the planning phase can and should be done with current city staff or contracted experts. Now, however, the focus shifts from planning to implementation, marking a crucial juncture in establishing a

municipal police force. The first step is recruiting a Chief of Police (COP) who aligns with the community's values and vision. The COP's leadership is instrumental in shaping departmental culture, establishing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and spearheading community engagement efforts.

During the hiring phase, explore the option of retaining experienced personnel from the contracted department to facilitate a smooth transition and preserve valuable local expertise. Maintaining a positive relationship with the contracted company is essential to ensure their continued collaboration within the community. It is likely that these officers were hired and funded because of your ending contract. To ensure that the contracted company faces no further burdens because of this change, it is key to offer to take on any expected FTE loss in order to maintain a good relationship as they continue to serve your community.

Additionally, consider starting with flexible staffing arrangements, such as employing officers for specific daytime shifts or events while contracting out less public shifts that occur overnight. This not only optimizes resource allocation and cost-effectiveness but begins to build goodwill with the community.

Furthermore, we recommend adopting a formulaic approach to staffing, informed by data on population size, crime rates, and community needs, to ensure efficient resource allocation. We also recommend using the national average of 1,500 hours for a full-time patrol officer to calculate and hire the desired number of FTEs required to meet your community's patrol coverage. This average takes into consideration leave and non-patrol related duties. This formulaic approach can provide guidance as you transition from contracted to managed law enforcement services. Additionally, we recommend referencing the FBI guidance to determine the appropriate size of a police force. While this will not be relevant during the transition phase, it is a useful tool to put department size into perspective.

Supplemental Staff and Contracts
In addition to patrol officer staffing considerations, the establishment of a municipal police force could necessitate additional Human Resources staff to handle recruitment, personnel management, and employee relations. A Public Information Officer may be required to manage data, maintain transparency, and facilitate communication with the public and media outlets. A Records Manager oversees the organization and maintenance of police records, ensuring compliance with legal requirements and facilitating access to information. IT professionals may be needed to support the implementation and maintenance of digital systems, including record-keeping databases, communication networks, and surveillance technologies. Additionally, a significant increase in the city's liability insurance and the need for an external legal counsel on retainer should be expected.

Training

Prioritizing community-centric hiring ensures that the department reflects the diversity and needs of the community it serves. Training programs, in collaboration with county agencies, equip officers with the skills and relationships needed to address emerging challenges.

We recommend you continue to use the county for the following services: dispatch, SWAT, and co-response to mental health crisis calls.

Quality Standards

In addition to focusing on staffing and operational logistics, establishing a municipal police force committed to quality standards and professionalism is key. Accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) is considered the Gold Standard of Public Safety. Currently, only 12 of Iowa's 395 law enforcement agencies have achieved the Total Agency accreditation.

We recommend setting CALEA accreditation as a goal from day one. Ensure that the police force meets nationally recognized standards for law enforcement agencies and pursue accreditation from the CALEA.

Ongoing Collaboration Phase

Law enforcement agencies have an innate nature of collaboration already instilled as part of the culture. Every agency, including your city's soon-to-be-established agency, will work together on major calls. It is important to maintain positive relationships throughout this process.

We recommend working in partnership with nearby neighbor forces from all levels (city, county, state) and area nonprofits. A diverse service offering is required to meet the needs of a growing population. By fostering collaboration and resource-sharing, participating communities can access a broader range of expertise, specialized services, and innovative strategies to address evolving public safety challenges. Enhanced law enforcement services contribute to a safer and more attractive environment for businesses and investors, thereby promoting economic development and prosperity. Communities with effective law enforcement services are more likely to thrive economically, attract new residents and businesses, and create opportunities for growth and advancement.

Appendix F: Funding Alternatives and Financial Recommendations

In the event Bondurant decides to implement a city-run police department, generating a reoccurring revenue source will be challenging. Below are alternatives that can be considered.

In January 2020, Bondurant implemented a one-cent Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) following an 80% yes vote from the city legislature. Revenue acquired from LOST, of which the city estimates 33% will be collected from visitors, will be allocated with 60% earmarked for property tax relief and 40% for capital needs. With the property tax levy rate reduced to $1.95 initially, decreasing by $0.05 each subsequent year, the city is poised to establish a recurring revenue source for funding a city-run police department.

Utilization of LOST Revenue
The FY 24 LOST revenue is estimated at $1,194,889, and the Property Tax Revenue estimate stands at $3,413,050. Given this, Bondurant can redirect a portion of the 40% allocated for capital needs to support the establishment of a police department. This may entail reducing the percentage allocated for property tax relief from 60% to the state minimum of 50% or reestablishing the original property tax levy. Any decision regarding this reallocation should be integrated into the city's 5-year capital plan at an early stage and would require another majority vote as a display of the community's support for funding a city-run police department.

Exploration of Hotel Motel Tax Revenue
As Bondurant considers downtown redevelopment and potential hotel construction, revenue from hotel motel taxes becomes a core funding source. While 5% of each room rental is remitted back to the state, the city can collect up to an additional 7% of room rental revenue. The revenue must be allocated mainly for tourism-related activities, economic development, and community enhancement. Although direct funding for law enforcement services may not be permissible, revenue generated from hotel motel taxes can support general public safety programs, contributing, indirectly, to law enforcement efforts.

Pursuit of Grant Opportunities
Bondurant can explore grant opportunities offered by various providers, such as the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grants and Department of Justice (DOJ) grants. These grants offer financial assistance for hiring and training personnel and acquiring equipment and technology to enhance the police department's effectiveness. Securing such grants can augment the city's resources for establishing and operating its police force.

Establishment of a Capital Improvement Levy
Consideration may be given to establishing a capital improvement levy specifically designated for building and equipping the Bondurant Police Department. This levy, capable of generating

up to 6 cents per $1,000, can play a pivotal role in funding infrastructure development and equipment acquisition essential for law enforcement purposes.

Bondurant has access to multiple funding avenues that can support the establishment and operation of its own local police department. By strategically leveraging LOST revenue, hotel motel tax revenue, grant opportunities, and the establishment of a capital improvement levy, Bondurant can ensure the provision of effective and efficient law enforcement services to its growing community. These funding recommendations should be integrated into the city's long-term financial planning to ensure sustainable support for public safety initiatives.

Automated Traffic Enforcement

Investigate the viability of automated traffic enforcement systems to supplement revenue streams and alleviate policing burdens. These systems enhance road safety and generate additional funding for public safety initiatives. A typical setup results in the city partnering with a vendor, receiving free cameras from the vendor and collecting up to 75% of the issued penalty with 25% going to the vendor [14, 15]. In one instance, another Iowa community has earned enough revenue to fund 33 officer full-time equivalent positions with revenue from these systems and utilized it to pay 7.3 million in officer salaries. In Bondurant over the five years of reviewed data, traffic enforcement accounted for 43% of all logged calls (28% traffic stops, 12% radar set up, 3% illegal parking.)

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[14] *Opsahl, Robin. "Lawmakers Say Bill Addresses Speed Camera Use as "Revenue Generators" • Iowa Capital Dispatch." Iowa Capital Dispatch, 24 Apr. 2023, iowacapitaldispatch.com/2023/04/24/lawmakers-say-bill-addresses-speed-camera-use-as-revenue-generators/#:~:text=LSA%20reported%20these%20technologies%20generated. Accessed 9 Apr. 2024*

[15] *"Automated Traffic Enforcement." www.cedar rapids.org/local_government/departments_q_-v/police/automated_traffic_enforcement.php#:~:text=Revenue%20from%20the%20Automated%20Traffic. Accessed 9 Apr. 2024.*