

# San Jose wants to stop bad police behavior before it happens



San Jose is spending half a million dollars to identify potentially problematic police officer behavior sooner—and work to swiftly correct it.

The San Jose City Council on Tuesday unanimously approved a three-year, \$479,000 contract with Chicago-based Benchmark Analytics for its Police Early Intervention Solution system. Councilmembers also approved a \$50,000 contingency for any possible change orders, bringing the maximum contract value to \$529,000.

City officials say the early warning system could help spot

troublesome trends or outliers among San Jose Police Department officers, and identify those who might be at risk of an “adverse event.” Command staff can then intervene with more training or support to “preemptively guide personnel behavior to avoid the issues,” with an aim of increasing accountability and improving policing, city reports said.

“It’s about optimizing the way we do policing,” Mayor Matt Mahan told San José Spotlight. “Like any large institution, you’re going to have variance in performance. Not everyone is going to make a great officer.”

While most San Jose officers do a “tremendous job,” Mahan said, some make mistakes more than others—meaning they may need more training—and some might never have the temperament necessary for policing.

Benchmark’s early intervention system will reportedly evaluate millions of data points generated by police actions, such as stops, arrests, pursuits, use of force and [complaints](#).

Greg Woods, a senior lecturer in San Jose State University’s Department of Justice Studies, told San José Spotlight this effort fits into a range of legislative constraints brought to the fore after the police murder of George Floyd in 2020, and [police violence](#) during subsequent protests.

Woods is hopeful the future system could help head off police violence and other bad interactions.

"Wouldn't it be great to be made aware of something that is bad before it truly destroys us?" Woods said. "We hope to hold those problematic officers accountable with the hope that we won't have to pay settlements and that we won't have to seek disciplinary measures."

### **Welcomed by police union**

Tom Saggau, a spokesperson for the San Jose Police Officers' Association representing rank and file cops, said the organization has been calling for an early intervention system since 2020.

"We think it's a very effective approach," Saggau told San José Spotlight. "It kind of falls in line with what we believe about continuous training and strong, robust supervision."

Saggau said similar systems, like one in use at the Los Angeles Police Department, have worked well. He noted just because an officer is flagged for something, such as having more car pursuits than others, it doesn't always mean there is a problem that needs remedying.

"It doesn't mean that any of those things are out of bounds. It provides a supervisor with real-time data to say, 'Maybe I'm going to have a conversation with that officer, maybe I'll

do a check in to see if there's anything here,'" Saggau said.

Oftentimes there will be "nothing to see" after a flag, Saggau said—but if there is, catching it early is critical. He said SJPD has an existing intervention system, but it's "archaic."

Sgt. Jorge Garibay, a police department spokesperson, told San José Spotlight the current system only tracks "officers with significant complaint histories for the purpose of identifying potential problems and providing guidance." Officers identified in the current system are given "informal counseling."

The department conducted a pilot program with Benchmark in August 2020 to assess the system's functionality and accuracy.

"As a result of the pilot program, SJPD learned that the system would help identify possible problematic behavior as well as support officers through any necessary corrective actions to prevent officers from committing misconduct," Garibay said.

The new contract will begin Nov. 10 and last through Nov. 9, 2026. The contract includes four, one-year options for the city to potentially extend the agreement through 2030.

Raj Jayadev, a vocal police critic and founder of community organizing group Silicon Valley De-Bug, said SJPD has

talked about a system like this since the era of former Police Chief Chris Moore, who retired in 2013.

"Given what we have seen from SJPd—in terms of cops making headlines in the past couple years for killings, others unnecessary use of force cases, weird stalking stuff and more—to me it seems they have a culture that condones the very actions that would be flagged by an early warning system," Jayadev told San José Spotlight.

It's unclear at this time if SJPd will report any information to the public on the efficacy of the program at this time.

But Mahan said he would expect the department to bring some sort of aggregated, anonymized data about the use of the system and its efficacy to the council for review. He emphasized the goal of the program is not to be punitive, but to help officers improve.

"You've got to create a learning environment where people feel safe and can have a growth mindset," he said, "and can acknowledge they may have gaps."

*Contact Joseph Geha*

*at [joseph@sanjosespotlight.com](mailto:joseph@sanjosespotlight.com) or [@josephgeha16](https://twitter.com/josephgeha16) on X, formerly known as Twitter.*