

ISSUES AND SERVICES FOR FY 2009

The Department received initial national accreditation in November of 2006 through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc (CALEA). The voluntary program is a joint effort between CALEA, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), the National Sheriffs' Association and the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF). CALEA mandated that in 2007 accredited agencies comply with over three hundred new standards as set forth by their 5th Edition of Standards for Law Enforcement Agencies. The Department achieved that goal in October. Reaccreditation will be sought in the fall of 2009.

The Department received high praise for the services provided to the community during the initial accreditation process. One weakness was noted, the lack of a computer aided dispatching (CAD) capability in Communications. Site visits have been made to various police agencies to observe communications devices and to seek guidance with the selection of a product for Greenbelt. Based on the information garnered from the site visits, a Request for Proposal (RFP) was developed and jointly published with Hyattsville to obtain proposals from police information technology vendors. Once a suitable vendor is selected, financing options will be researched to acquire the equipment.

A compatible records management system (RMS) is required to make full use of the CAD system. It is unknown as of this writing if the current RMS in use will need to be replaced. An assessment will be made during the selection process for the CAD.

For several years planning and research has been underway to form a joint Law Enforcement Regional Communications and Data Center with the jurisdictions of Hyattsville, Riverdale Park, Mount Rainier, Bladensburg and Greenbelt. The purpose of the center is to develop police radio interoperability between the agencies. These agencies are independent from the county police radio system that provides communications to other municipalities within the county. The rationale for having a central data center is to share the cost of purchasing and staffing – that it would be more efficient to run one system for the five municipalities than for each one to bear the cost of individual systems.

The work plan for the center began with the identification and procurement of a records management system, or in some cases an interface between systems, which is in operation between all five agencies. One major area of concern during the selection of the CAD will be the effect of migrating from the current RMS due to cost, efficiency, or compatibility issues with the CAD. This is a matter of priority in the selection process.

Relating to the overall communications aspect, the Department is in the process of replacing the first generation of mobile data computers in patrol cars with an industry standard product that is proving far more durable than the predecessors. Funding is being sought to complete the transition; between \$140,000 and \$210,000 is needed.

With the advent of collective bargaining, recruiting and selection for police officers has been less a problem than in previous years. Although competition between law enforcement organizations remains fierce, staffing is nearly 100% given the salary and benefit package now being offered. The Department has been able to attract seasoned certified officers from other departments thereby bringing a more experienced person into the ranks at a lesser overall cost compared to a new recruit. A new recruit's salary, benefits and training costs are encumbered by the City for approximately one year before the officer is prepared for assignment.

Conversely, recruitment efforts for Communications Specialists and Cadets are not producing the qualified applicants we would like to see. This is puzzling given the salary range offered for Communications Specialists and the success of the Cadet program in the past. Emphasis will be placed on filling these critical positions by reassessing recruitment strategies.

The Department has enjoyed a re-invigoration of citizen partnership in addressing quality of life issues in all areas of the City. Crime Watch groups and individual citizens have joined in addressing not only incidents of crime but also the fear of crime in areas around the Spellman Overpass, the Roosevelt Center, the neighborhoods surrounding Eleanor Roosevelt High School and the Springhill Lake community. The Department will build upon this activity to help engender even more discussion and involvement by continuing to attend meetings with homeowners associations, fraternal organizations and business contacts.

Since the Police Station was occupied in 1990, the department has evolved as many specialized units (SRO, Bike Unit, Accreditation, ERU, and Homeland Security) have been created and new demands on space at the station have developed. In addition, records storage has also increased, with department paper records created since 1990 being quadruple the volume of files created in the first 50 years of the Police Department.

This combination of factors has resulted in a significant space shortage. The Greenbelt Station Development Agreement includes a provision that the developer contribute \$500,000 for construction of a new police facility, or improvements to the existing police facility. Due to the cost of new construction, which ranges from \$250 - \$350 per square foot, if this developer contribution were used for facility expansion, no more than a 2000 square foot addition could be funded. This will not alleviate the space needs for the department.

A space study of the Police Station indicates that a majority of the existing space needs can be addressed if the existing space in the station is used more efficiently. This will require that storage areas be redesigned to make maximum use of the available volume of the room. Offices which have been taken over by storage need to be returned to office use. Storage of non-critical materials, such as historic records, should be moved off-site to a commercial storage facility. Modular furniture systems which allow for partitioning of larger rooms will result in greater use of available space. The space study which is underway will make recommendations to utilize the Greenbelt Station contribution to implement these recommendations, as well as funding site improvements and building upgrades. Recommendations arising from the space study should be ready for action at the end of the current fiscal year and into the next fiscal year.