

City of Flint Public Safety Plan

May, 2012

Introduction

As Governor Rick Snyder expressed in his recent visit to Flint wherein he presented his public safety plan for Michigan: “People deserve to feel safe in their homes, to be able to walk to the grocery store or send their kids to school without fear.” Flint residents do not feel safe and the crime rate continues to grow.

This document is intended to establish a vision for Flint and its Public Safety Departments as the community works together to once again become a city where people can live, work and visit free from a high crime rate and the fear of crime.

Background

In November 2011 Governor Snyder placed Flint in receivership and appointed an Emergency Manager (EM) Michael Brown, to address Flint’s financial emergency. The EM identified three primary functional areas of focus for city government: finance/administration, infrastructure and public safety (police, fire and 9-1-1 operations). Several conditions developed over a period of decades to place the City of Flint in the situation of chronic fiscal stress which necessitated appointment of an EM.

The major employer, General Motors (GM), massively reduced operations in Flint (in 1978 GM employed over 80,000 people here, but by 2006 employment totaled 8,000). The population declined from its 200,000 peak in the 1960s to 102,434 per the 2010 census. Owner occupied housing decreased from a high of 73.1 percent in 1960 to a 2010 low of 44.7 percent. The jobless rate for the 2011 annual reporting period was 19.9 percent. State Shared Revenue, which accounts for 31 percent of the General Fund, decreased 13 percent over the past five years. In addition the City’s two other primary sources of revenue, property tax and income tax, have both suffered major reductions.

The City’s fiscal/financial decline has had a mirror impact on conditions within the Flint Police Department (FPD). At its prime, the Department was known as a front runner for community policing and active foot patrols and strong citizen support. Morale was high, staffing was plentiful, and officers were the second highest paid officers in the state. The agency that remains today is much smaller than years prior with fewer services to the community, less citizen support and decreased funding. For the last five years Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) statistics have ranked Flint in the top five most dangerous cities in the United States and in 2011 it was ranked the second most violent city per capita.

Goals

Flint's Emergency Manager identified several goals in his January 15, 2012 Financial and Operating Plan. His overall goals for the City included: *to provide public safety services, focusing on reducing violent crime, commensurate with cities of comparable size and resources.*

The overall goals for Flint public safety are:

1. Re-establish Flint as one of the safest cities in Michigan – both in reality and perception.
2. Continue and develop additional partnerships with Michigan State Police (MSP) and other law enforcement agencies.
3. Re-develop and stabilize the foundation of the Flint Police Department (FPD) as necessary to support a data-driven community policing style of service delivery.
4. Build Flint Police Department's capacity for data-driven decision making.
5. Enhance existing community partnerships and develop new collaborative partnerships with individual stakeholders and organizations to support problem solving and a shared responsibility in public safety.
6. Stabilize and enhance annual revenue for public safety in Flint.

Strategies and Objectives

Development and implementation of plans for improving public safety, of course, is a continual process. The recent implementation of cost reducing collective bargaining agreements, for instance, enables us to limit budgeted reductions in public safety personnel. We are currently focusing on the following principal broad actions:

- *Partnerships with the Michigan State Police and other law enforcement agencies.*
An agreement with MSP currently has the Flint MSP Post assigning two squads to patrol inside the City. Additional support resources may be available from MSP in coordination with other revisions to policing strategy in the FPD.

FPD works cooperatively with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the U.S. Marshalls Service and the U.S. Attorney, and has done so for many years. These partnerships will continue. We also will seek new partnerships with these and other law enforcement agencies.

We will continue to utilize the resources available through the Michigan State University (MSU) School of Criminal Justice Training & Technical Assistance Team which currently funded through the C.S. Mott Foundation

- *Opening the Flint City Lockup*
A portion of the FPD headquarters includes a 110 bed capacity 72-hour lockup facility that has been closed since 2008. Governor Snyder, EM Brown, Flint Public Safety Administrator Barnett Jones and FPD Chief of Police/Public Safety Director Alvern Lock have all made re-opening the lockup a key component of the Public Safety Plan. The Governor and the State Legislature recently approved an appropriation of approximately \$3 million for public safety initiatives in Flint. The City, the Genesee County Prosecuting Attorney's Office and the Genesee County Jail are all intended to receive a portion of this money.

When the lockup was last open (May 2007-July 2008) 6,000 suspects were lodged for over 16,000 charges. Homicides were down 17%, aggravated assaults were down 20% and robberies down 22% from the previous year. Bonds posted increased from \$18,000 between May and December of 2007 to \$252,000 for the same period in 2008. A Flint millage measure to authorize funding to reopen the lockup was defeated in 2011.

- *Transitions to 800 MHz Communications System*
The entire county (exclusive of Flint) and MSP operate on an 800 MHz communications system. The city uses old analog technology which will not be allowed by the Federal Communications Commission after December 31, 2012. The City is actively completing the steps necessary to change over to the 800 MHz system by summer 2012.

- *9-1-1 Reconsolidation*

The City continues to operate its own 9-1-1 system, separate from the Genesee County 9-1-1 Consortium. Flint's 9-1-1 Center is responsible for all dispatching functions for the Flint Police and Fire Departments and is typically the first point of contact for citizens when they are in need of police or fire services.

At one time Flint was part of the 9-1-1 Consortium. The City split from that system in the early 1990s. The Governor's Public Safety Plan has made it very clear that financial assistance from the State will be tied to increased collaborative efforts in delivering public safety to Michigan's communities. His Economic Vitality Incentive Program (EVIP) promotes service consolidation and innovation among communities. Flint plans to utilize the capabilities of the EVIP program to assist in the reintegration of the two 9-1-1 systems in the near future.

- *Data-Driven Information and Application*

A policing approach initiated by MSP in Flint is Data-Driven Approaches to Crime and Traffic (DDACTS). DDACTS is a law enforcement model that integrates location-based crime and traffic crash data to determine the most effective methods for deploying law enforcement and other resources.

By utilizing both crime reports and arrest data supervisors can be held accountable for activity and results within their district.

- *Technology Applications*

The MSU Training and Technical Assistance Team has been asked to conduct a technology audit of currently available systems and equipment in the Flint Public Safety Departments. These departments will then use the audit to prioritize a list of technology upgrades to be performed, and target desired outcomes once the technology is fully implemented.

Train all officers and firefighters on the proper use of the technologies once they are implemented, ensuring that officers and firefighters are taking maximum advantage of the tools that have already been given to them.

For example: the FPD has begun to transition some calls away from sending an officer to taking information over the telephone and using technology to report some crimes on-line.

- *Criminal Justice System Advisory Council*

An arrest merely begins the Criminal Justice System (CJS) process. An effective ultimate outcome requires adequate resources and cooperation among prosecutorial agencies, courts, detention agencies, and alternative rehabilitation and support services. Changes in one component of the CJS can be ineffective or even counterproductive if the impact of those changes on other CJS components is not considered and adequate preparation for the changes is not made.

A Genesee County CJS Advisory Council will be established. The Council will consist of representation from public safety CJS professionals and agencies (police, prosecutors, courts, corrections, programs providing alternatives to incarceration, and 9-1-1) and local government unit political leadership (Flint, Genesee County, and townships, small cities, and villages). The Council also will include representation from the Federal Government (U. S. Attorney, FBI, ATF, DEA and U. S. Marshalls), and State Government (Governor's Office and MSP). The Council will assist improved CJS operation through information sharing and making recommendations regarding possible CJS changes.

Genesee County Circuit Judge Richard B. Yuille has agreed to serve as the Chairperson of the Advisory Council. Judge Yuille is Chief Judge of the Genesee County Circuit and Probate Courts and the 67th and 68th District Courts. Ward Chapman, Special Assistant Flint City Attorney, will serve as Coordinator for the Council. Mr. Chapman is the former Genesee County Corporation Counsel and also served for 11 years as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney. Key CJS staff, such as the County Board and Criminal Justice Coordinator and the Court Administrators for the four State Courts within the County, will provide additional staff assistance to the Council. Technical assistance also will be provided by the MSU School of Criminal Justice Training and Technical Assistance Team.

- *Patrol Districts and 12 hour Shift Assignments*

The District Plan will divide the city into four assignment districts. Two patrol cars per 12 hour shift will be assigned in each district. One floater car will be available per shift and will concentrate in an identified "hot spot" area. There will also be four sergeants assigned per shift. Three will be assigned on patrol and one will remain at the Headquarters Police Station.

The 12-hour shift assignment is a better utilization of personnel, and it also allows the ability to balance assignments during the hours of highest call and/or criminal activity.

- *Fire Department Re-organization (after SAFER)*

The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant Program (SAFER) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides for the wages and benefits for 39 firefighters. The current grant is expiring in June 2012 and a new grant application was submitted in February 2012. We expect to receive a funding determination before July. In a reduced manpower condition the public safety plan is to keep the main station and two other stations open on a regular basis. Consideration is being given to maintaining reduced staffing and equipment at two other stations. This plan will require changes to the current 24 hour staffing schedule.

- *Community Engagement*

The FPD has a long history of utilizing citizen volunteers to supplement police resources in the operation of mini-stations and in traffic and crowd control during major events. The Blue Badge program has approximately 100 new volunteers who have received six weeks of training.

The City of Flint is working collaboratively with the Building Neighborhood Power (BNP) organization to establish and strengthen neighborhood block clubs, other neighborhood organizations, including crime watch programs to enhance residents' crime prevention efforts.

Public Safety works with many other organizations which help strengthen community ties and provide safe, alternative programming include Flint LifeLines, the Boys and Girls Club, Police Athletic League (PAL) youth programs and many others.

- *Revenue Stability for Public Safety*

The City of Flint has had a Foot Patrol millage which originated in the 1980's. That was revised to a general police millage, which today is set at 2 mills. In the November, 2011 election a millage for the operation of the lockup was rejected by the voters. There are currently over 40 officers funded by grants or other sources which may or may not continue year to year. The City's General Fund can currently support approximately 59 officers.

The City will need an annually designated source of funds to remove the uncertainty surrounding the lockup and will give officers a much needed enforcement tool. Also, longer term, the lockup could be made available to surrounding communities to house offenders for short periods of time. This could bring additional funding to the City.

The City recognizes that a longer term, more stable source of revenue is required. Several options for revenue enhancement are under consideration. The EM believes that it is necessary to first engage the community, labor organizations, business community and other stakeholders in these considerations and then make a proposal. At this point, it is too early to have a detailed plan of action.

Conclusion

This Public Safety Plan is considered a working document. We expect that plans will be enhanced and revised as we receive more input from our partnering agencies, the residents of Flint, Labor, business community, and other stakeholders.

Public Safety improvement is a necessary component of Flint's stabilization and future growth.