**Review of the**

**Aberdeen Police Department**

**Submitted by**

**Powhatan Group**

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**Review of the Aberdeen Police Department**

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**Review of the**

**Aberdeen Police Department**

**1. Introduction**

Powhatan Group is pleased to present this report on the Review of the Aberdeen Police Department (APD) to the City of Aberdeen. Powhatan Group began the review of the Aberdeen Police Department in March 2018 at the request of the City Manager.

Powhatan group is client-centered consulting firm that provides a wide range of services and an expansive network of experts and academicians to meet an array of public safety needs. Powhatan Group is committed to developing and advancing communities through the effective delivery of public safety services. Members of Powhatan Group are among the nation’s most recognized and experienced local, state, and federal law enforcement executives, security experts, researchers, and organizational specialists. Powhatan Group is intimately familiar with the demands, processes, and constraints associated with law enforcement leadership, management, operations, and community engagement. Powhatan Group is committed to community safety and well-being and advancing the role of government and other sectors in supporting the viability and sustainability of people and neighborhoods.

The City of Aberdeen contracted with Powhatan Group to conduct a limited review of the APD to provide information on the agency’s current efforts, future direction, and the structure and quality of police operations. Agreed upon tasks included:

1. Review the Aberdeen PD organizational structure.
2. Review the Aberdeen PD strategic plan or, in its absence, the Police Department’s strategy toward prevention, enforcement, and community building.
3. A general overview of policies and procedures and how they are conveyed to frontline personnel and monitored (not a complete assessment of the policy and procedures manual).
4. An overview of Aberdeen Police Department outreach efforts and community relations.
5. Review internal communication practices.
6. Review current metrics used to measure police agency performance.
7. Identify Police Department successes, how they evolved, and how they may be enhanced and extended.
8. Identify obstacles to progress.
9. Provide a report on processes, findings, and recommendations to advance police services to the Aberdeen community.

Because of the limited nature of this review, a number of tasks could not be included although some were addressed generally. The following includes some of the tasks that could not be detailed in this review.

* Resource allocation study
* Beat alignment study
* Work schedule review
* Salary/benefits comparison
* Overtime study
* In-depth interviews with community, political, nonprofit, and other leaders
* In-depth ride-alongs with officers
* Review of technology
* Fleet operations

As the review evolved, additional questions and tasks were posed to the Powhatan Group team. Efforts were made to address all of them.

To accomplish this review, Powhatan Group established a team with experience in law enforcement, law, public health, and business. All members of the team spent time on site. Among the Powhatan Group team members were:

* Charles DeVita – Managing Director, Powhatan Group; Assistant Director, U.S. Secret Service (retired); former Director, Corporate Security, MBNA/America Bank; former Vice President for Global Safety and Security, American Red Cross
* Sheldon Greenberg – Professor, Johns Hopkins University, School of Education, Division of Public Safety Leadership; Deputy Director, National Criminal Justice Technology Research, Test & Evaluation Center; former Associate Director, Police Executive Research Forum
* Darrel Stephens – Executive Director, Major Cities Chiefs Association (retired); Chief of Police, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (retired); Former Chief of Police, St. Petersburg (FL) Police Department; Former Executive Director, Police Executive Research Forum
* Richard Lisko – Special Agent in Charge, Office of the Inspector General, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority; former Program Manager, International Association of Chiefs of Police; Lieutenant, Baltimore County Police Department (retired)
* Robin Dewberry – Project Associate, International Association of Chiefs of Police; former Investigator, Maryland Racing Commission; Major, Baltimore County Police Department (retired)
* Steven Teret – Professor, Johns Hopkins University, Bloomberg School of Public Health, Department of Health Policy and Management; Co-Director, Center for Law and the Public’s Health
* Phillip Nichols – Chief Judge, Maryland’s Seventh Judicial Circuit (retired); Captain, U.S. Naval Reserve, member U.S. Navy-Marine Corps Court of Criminal Appeals (retired)
* Stuart Brooks – Executive Manager, Bob Bell Automotive Group; President, Mast Corporation; Board Member, Signal 13 Association, Baltimore Police Department; Former Board Member, Baltimore Chamber of Commerce

**1. A. Acknowledgements**

Powhatan Group extends appreciation to the employees of the Aberdeen Police Department and City of Aberdeen for the support they provided throughout this review. Cooperation was exceptional as people provided their time, access to data, and perceptions. Through all of the meetings, interviews, and information gathering efforts, people’s commitment to the well-being of the City and the future of the APD was apparent

Special appreciation is extended to the Mayor, City Council, City Manager, Chief of Police and members of the APD command staff, and many others who supported this effort.

**1. B. Organization of the Report**

The information in this report is grouped primarily according to type of function. The categories are:

1. Introduction and overview
2. Organization structure
3. Field operations
4. Investigations
5. Administrative and technical support
6. Other
7. Brief response to questions posed to the review team

The report is not organized by division of the APD (although the above categories are similar to those in the APD organizational chart). Within the APD, functions that are administrative are assigned to operations and investigations, and some operations fall within the administrative unit. Responses to some of the questions posed to the review team are placed in the “other” section of this report.

This report provides considerations (recommendations) at the end of the sections. For those who want to view only the considerations, a complete list is provided at the end of the report.

**1. C. Introductory Statement**

The Aberdeen Police Department has progressed significantly in recent years and all indications suggest it will continue to progress in the years ahead. While some people want change to occur faster, the APD has changed in many areas at a productive and manageable pace. With few exceptions, civilian employees and officers in the APD, employees in other City agencies, community leaders, and others acknowledged the positive changes and are committed to building on recent successes to better police services to the people of Aberdeen.

The APD has overcome obstacles including vacancies, fiscal constraint, and loss of experienced personnel. It must continue to meet challenges in the future such as increased demands for service, increased scrutiny (a national trend), attrition, changing technologies, and continued fiscal accountability. The APD will be required to do more with the resources currently available. All indications based on this review show that the APD is well-positioned to meet these challenges and more.

The APD has embraced modern concepts in many areas of policing and has met challenges in the community and internally. The commitment to community policing, while evolving, is important to the agency’s future. Recent advances in APD technology and training have been significant and should continue.

At the same time that advances are being made, there are areas in which tradition and culture slow progress. Areas such as patrol allocation, permanent shifts, and beat alignment need change, but require more in-depth study than could be provided in this review. Many current initiatives such as planned expansion of the communications facility, advancing crime analysis, increasing police presence at the train station, and expanding community relations are worthwhile and should continue. As new positions are filled and the newly assigned and newly hired personnel gain experience, more members of the agency should engage in neighborhood outreach and community problem solving. The APD’s focus on expanding interaction with and service to the City’s minority and most vulnerable populations should continue as a priority.

The discussion and considerations put forth in this report are intended to aid the City of Aberdeen and people in the community in building on accomplishments, filling gaps, overcoming obstacles, and expanding the efficiency and effectiveness of police service.

**1. D. City of Aberdeen**

Aberdeen is the 18th largest city in the State of Maryland and the largest city in Harford County. The 2010 census showed 14,959 people, 5,801 households, and 3,897 families residing in the city. By 2013, the population grew to 15,120 or an increase of one percent. The [population density](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Population_density) in Aberdeen is approximately 2,200 inhabitants per square mile.

Aberdeen is a diverse city with a population that is 58.9% [White](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_%28U.S._Census%29), 30.5% [African-American](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_American_%28U.S._Census%29), 0.4% [Native American](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Native_American_%28U.S._Census%29), 2.9% [Asian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_%28U.S._Census%29), 0.3% [Pacific Islander](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_%28U.S._Census%29), 1.6% from [other races](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_%28U.S._Census%29), and 5.3% from two or more races. [Hispanic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hispanic_%28U.S._Census%29) or [Latino](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latino_%28U.S._Census%29) people of all races make up 5.4% of the population.

The median age in Aberdeen is 38 years. Approximately 34% of the City’s households have children under the age of 18. Approximately 12.5% of the population is 65 years of age or older. The gender makeup of the City is 47.8% male and 52.2% female.

In 2018, Aberdeen was named the fourth safest city in Maryland according to the National Council for Home Safety and Security, a trade organization for the security alarm industry. In 2017, Aberdeen was ranked as the 15th safest city in the State.

The Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) is the largest employer in Harford County. The City and APD maintain a positive relationship with APG, which has its own police department. The APD works in conjunction with the APG police, but does not provide routine patrols or other activities on APG property.

Based on prior local discussions on master planning and in related planning documents, the City views the train station as among its valuable assets. Service on Amtrak and the MARC commuter rail connects Aberdeen to Baltimore, Washington DC, and the larger Northeast Corridor. The station is close to the APG and is a hub of commuting for APG employees. City planning efforts have focused on improving the area around the station and providing users with a safe and comfortable environment when using the facility. APD has made the MARC train station a point of focus and has initiated a number of efforts to provide crime prevention and safety services to the facility and the surrounding area. In 2010, the Aberdeen facility was one of 14 station areas officially designated for transit-oriented development in Maryland.

**1. E. Aberdeen Police Department**

The Aberdeen Police Department is a full service law enforcement agency. It is the primary police agency serving the City and one of five law enforcement agencies located in Harford County. The others are the Harford County Sheriff’s Office, Bel Air Police Department, Havre de Grace Police Department, and Maryland State Police.

At the time of this review, the Aberdeen Police Department was staffed by 42 sworn officers (all ranks), 10 civilian employees, and six crossing guards (part-time employees). Additional personnel were in the process of being added to the agency.

In 2017, the APD reported a drop in Part I or serious offenses, from 437 in 2016 to 353 in 2017 – a decline of over 19%. (Part I and Part II offenses are classifications of the federal uniformed crime reporting system.) This is a significant drop from 2012, when the APD handled 629 serious offenses. The City experienced an additional drop in Part II (less serious) offenses. In 2017, the APD reported 519 Part II offenses, down from 587 or 11.6% from 2016. The decline in Part II offenses is particularly important because members of the community generally sense more frustration and fear and express more dissatisfaction with their police as a result of repeated “less-serious” offenses such as vandalism, drug abuse, disorderly conduct, weapons violations, and public disorder.

**2. Organization and Strategy**

The Powhatan Group review team was tasked to focus on the Police Department’s organization structure. The APD is organized in a standard structure consisting of three primary units – the Office of the Deputy Chief of Police (which includes Field Operations/Patrol), Criminal Investigations, and Administrative Division – and the Office of the Chief of Police, which includes the accreditation process and crime analysis.

 Chief of Police

 Deputy Chief of Police

 Criminal Investigations Division Administrative Division Patrol Shifts

The APD’s published organizational chart is awkward because it combines personnel with function. For example, the organizational chart shows patrol sergeants at the same level as the Administrative and Criminal Investigative Divisions.

Patrol is the largest unit in the APD. It is divided primarily into three shifts, each led by a sergeant. Each shift is assigned a corporal. Each shift consists of six patrol officers. One shift shows eight officers, but this includes the APD’s two School Resource Officers (SROs).

The APD is large enough to provide a wide array of services to the City’s residents and visitors. Providing these services requires that individual members and units within the agency “wear many hats.” Each of the primary units consists of functions that are not directly related to the title of the unit. For example, report review is a responsibility of the commander of Criminal Investigations. Training is also a function of Criminal Investigations. Crossing guards report to the commander of the Administrative Division. This multi-tasked, cross-discipline structure is confusing, but is not uncommon among comparably-sized agencies.

There is no ideal organizational or command structure for a police department the size of the APD. Some agencies of comparable size function with two bureaus – operations and administration. Others function with four or more. The current three-division structure of the APD is adequate to its purpose.

Rank structure and staffing levels are separate issues that may or may not be influenced by the organizational structure. The APD senior staff consists of the Chief of Police, a captain (Deputy Chief of Police) and two lieutenants. There is also an administrative supervisor who oversees records and information systems and communications. The captain and lieutenants head the primary units. The command rank structure is also common among similar-sized agencies. Rank structure at other levels – sergeant and corporal – and use of front line sworn and civilian personnel resources are discussed in the following sections of this report.

The review team determined that there is a need to reorganize the APD as means to improve efficiency and make better use of command resources. While the core division structure of the agency is sound, units and functions within the divisions seem misplaced. This may be due to employees’ skills, desire by some to assume a certain type of work, or a lack of resources. As stated, there are operational functions in the administrative division and administrative functions in both investigations and operations. Assigning functions to the people who have the skills and desire to do the work has merit. At the same time, it has led to a structure that is difficult for someone outside of the agency to understand.

***Consideration*** *1* – The APD should develop a new organizational chart that lists only units and functions. The divisions on the chart should show the Field Operations or Patrol Division, Criminal Investigations Division and Administrative Division. All functions, other than those reporting to the Office of the Chief of Police, should be listed under the three divisions. A separate personnel assignment chart should be developed.

***Consideration 2*** – The assignment of all units to the Deputy Chief of Police on the organizational chart is awkward for an agency the size of the APD. The chart should reflect that all division heads report directly to the Chief of Police. The chart should show that the head of the Field Operations or Patrol Division is also the Deputy Chief of Police.

***Consideration 3*** – Efforts should be made to place like assignments in the appropriate division – operations within operations, administrative functions within the administrative division, etc. Some of these changes may have to occur over time, as experience is gained and resources allow.

 Chief of Police

 Criminal Investigations Field Operations Administrative

 Division Division Division

**2. A. Strategic Plan – Strategic Initiatives**

The APD does not have a formal strategic plan. There is no formal document that sets forth short-, mid-, or long-range plans for the agency. The APD’s current strategic initiatives are based on a commitment to community policing, rapid and efficient response to community needs, and crime prevention.

Community policing is discussed here rather than later in this report because it is the foundation of the APD’s current strategy. The following community policing objectives appear on the department’s website:

1. To interact with citizens of the community
2. To interact with business owners and employees of the community
3. To identify the concerns of the community and businesses
4. To implement preventive actions and community activities to address and solve identified community concerns

The APD set forth an expectation that officers “build relationships on every call.” The Chief of Police has called for officers to go beyond the basic handling of calls for service to seek opportunities to provide greater assistance to the caller. Further, all members of the APD are supposed to focus on building the department’s brand, reducing crime, and improving the internal work environment.

As part of the APD’s strategy, all officers are expected to engage in problem solving or problem-oriented policing every day. This strategy has not yet become a structured expectation for officers. It has not been set forth in terms of specific requirements or operational “how to’s” related to handling calls and self-initiating police engagement. Currently, the APD’s focus on problem solving evolves when a persistent problem arises that captures the attention of a commander, supervisor, code enforcement officer, or City official in another agency. Two examples of approaches to identified problems follow:

* A series of complaints was received from the West Bel Air Avenue area. There were concerns with the atmosphere in the area because of the methadone clinic and a parole/probation office located on West Bel Air Avenue. APD personnel examined the issues, reviewed the data, and held a meeting with the business owners/managers on the street. Discussion focused on their concerns and how the APD was policing the region. The APD increased patrol presence in the area and conducted routine visits to the businesses. A follow up meeting conducted several months later showed that most of the community’s concerns were resolved.
* The APD engaged in a similar effort several years ago, focusing on resolving persistent problems at several apartment complexes. This involved bringing the managers together for several meetings to discuss steps that they and the police could take in a partnership to address the problems. A key step taken by the complex managers was to improve tenant screening. The APD increased police presence and interaction with apartment managers and residents. After several months conditions improved significantly.

The Deputy Chief of Police, who is the Patrol commander, indicated that high-visibility presence is a cornerstone of the community policing effort. The APD’s community policing strategy requires that officers be visible and approachable, regularly go into businesses, and engage in bicycle patrols whenever they can.

The APD personnel interviewed during this review associate community policing to the community events the department routinely participates in or sponsors. A major initiative is the four neighborhood events the department sponsors each year. These events are held in different neighborhoods in the City and involve a significant presence of police officers along with displays of various types. The APD’s mobile command center is on display at these events. Officers grill hot dogs and hamburgers to help attract children from within the area. Generally, the events are well attended. The community policing concept is to use these events for officers to develop relationships and discuss neighborhood concerns and needs with the people who attend.

The APD is engaged with the Maryland Special Olympics program, participates in the National Night Out initiative and Earth Day. The APD has a strong relationship with Harford Family House, the largest provider of transitional housing for homeless families with children and unaccompanied adults ages 18-24 in Harford County, and supports its efforts in various ways. Harford Family House planned to present the APD with an award in recognition of this partnership.

A challenge for the APD is developing relationships in neighborhoods and apartment developments where there are few neighborhood associations or community leaders. Efforts to organize neighborhood watch programs in these communities have not been successful.

APD personnel identified three current areas of concern – the Walmart store, the Amtrak Station and the homeless or street community. The Walmart store generates a significant number of calls for service, primarily shoplifting complaints. The Amtrak station generates complaints about panhandling and concern about a pedestrian tunnel that lacks attention and often smells of urine. Concerns related to homeless and street people have declined, but the homeless and street population presents ongoing challenges such as camping in wooded areas. This is a particular concern in the warm weather months.

**2. B. Advancing the Community Policing Strategy**

Officers are engaged in solving readily-apparent problems as they handle their calls for service and perform other activities. But this type of problem solving is basic and does not achieve the more in-depth police problem solving that began in the mid-1980s when Herman Goldstein coined the phrase Problem Oriented Policing. Problem-oriented policing, as a core element of community policing, places an expectation on the department and individual officers to scan for problems as they go about their daily activities and think about problems as a collection of incidents with common elements rather than resolving a single call for service or situation. Moving toward a more comprehensive approach to problem-oriented policing could dramatically increase the APD’s community policing efforts. The environment, officer workload, commitment by the Chief of Police, and other factors make advancing problem-oriented policing feasible. Currently, APD officers receive no formal training in problem solving, which includes approaches such as the SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment) method (developed by Herman Goldstein in the text *Problem Oriented Policing*.)

***Consideration 4*** – The APD should develop a strategic plan that coincides with the City’s future initiatives and is practical, conveyed in action steps for sworn and civilian personnel, and focused on the sustained well-being of residents and neighborhoods. Development of the strategic plan should involve diverse players from within the APD, other City government agencies, neighborhood and community organizations, APG, and local schools. The APD’s annual objectives and other planning and operational activities should stem from the strategic plan. The strategic plan should be reviewed informally each year and formally every three or four years. The APD strategic plan should be shared on the APD website.

***Consideration 5*** - The APD should prepare a monthly list of the repeat call locations in the city. For example, a list should be prepared that shows all locations in Aberdeen that generate five or more calls. This list should be shared with patrol officers and supervisors with the expectation that they identify the underlying causes of the repeat calls. They should develop an approach or solution to resolve the underlying cause(s) of the problem. They should present the solution to the Patrol Commander and proceed to implement the problem solving steps. They should participate in the review process to determine what worked and what other steps may be needed.

A key aspect of community policing is geographic accountability or “beat ownership.” This requires that officers work the same patrol beat over a period of time – 18 to 24 months – to allow for the opportunity to become thoroughly familiar with a defined area and develop relationships with residents and businesses in that area. Patrol officers in the APD rotate between the three sector assignments frequently. The rotation policy is based on the idea that officers will have familiarity with the problems of the entire City rather than one-third. While this concept has validity, it works against the opportunity for officers to engage in problem solving, develop community relationships, and have an in-depth understanding of a patrol beat. It also inhibits the ability of the APD to hold officers accountable for problem identification and resolution in a specific area of the City.

***Consideration 6*** – The APD should assign patrol officers to permanent beats for a period of at least one-to-two years before rotating them to another area of the City. The officers should be provided with a “beat book,” summarizing all aspects of the area (active and potential residential and commercial development, small businesses, community organizations, community leaders, demographics, background on schools, etc.). “Beat books” should be updated frequently.

APD officers have the opportunity to devote more time to in-depth problem solving. In 2017 there were 31,470 computer-aided dispatch (CAD) events reported in the annual statistical summary – an increase of 10% over the previous year. A significant portion of those events were initiated by officers (not direct calls from the community). Between patrol checks (14,844), traffic stops (2925), bike patrols (110), and the “Take 30” traffic program (120), a program in which officers devote specific time to traffic enforcement – 17,999 or 57% of the CAD events were pro-active officer-initiated events. The 57% figure could be low. There were 882 details in 2017 – but it is not clear whether officers or other officials initiated the details. Although officers’ self-initiated activities have value, the APD should explore whether it would be of greater value to have officers spend some of this time in focused problem solving activities aimed at the persistent community issues.

***Consideration 7*** - The APD should undertake a review of the time spent on officer self-initiated activities, looking beyond the raw totals (percent of total calls for service). The APD should then set an expectation on the amount of time officers should devote to problem identification and resolution (for example, approximately 20% of total time on day shift, 10% on evening shift, and 30% on night shift could be committed to resolving the identified persistent neighborhood and community concerns.)

***Consideration 8*** – The APD should provide patrol officers with advanced training on problem-oriented policing (POP), which increases their focus on identifying and resolving the underlying issues or causal factors that drive recurring calls for service and other concerns within the City. The POP training should provide officers with specific examples of how patrol prevented escalation, intervened, and solved problems. (Examples and training guides are readily available from the website of the Center for Problem Oriented Policing at the University of Albany.)

**2. C. Community Relations and Outreach**

Overall perception is that police/community relations in Aberdeen have improved in recent years. It is the perspective of the review team that police/community relations in Aberdeen surpasses that of many other agencies. In an interview with the review team, the president of the Harford County NAACP praised the Chief of Police and Aberdeen PD for recent advances in community relations and matters of mutual importance to the two organizations. She graded the Chief and the APD an “A+” for these advances.

Police/community relations and police/race/minority relations are areas in which improvement is a continuous process. Police presence within the community, people’s access to police command, regular contact with community leaders, response to citizen complaints and concerns, and outreach activities by members of the APD have contributed to improvement. As with law enforcement agencies nationwide, the APD suffers to some degree from the current national negative focus on and criticism of police agencies and officers.

There are some issues that inhibit advancement of community relations. Among them are recurring perceptions of concerns related to the train station (which is used by employees of the APG), visibility and engagement of officers in the minority community (the call for increased police visibility and engagement is common in jurisdictions nationwide), people’s lack of awareness of the purpose of some APD initiatives, and people’s lack of awareness of APD’s accomplishments.

The Police Department is involved in a wide array of community relations and outreach activities and considers them an important part of its community policing effort. Among the activities are:

* Christmas on Patrol
* No Shave November
* Harford Family House Renovation Projects
* Earth Day
* Toy and Food Drive
* Badges for Baseball
* Big Truck Day
* K9 Demonstrations
* Touch a Truck
* Shop with a Cop
* Operation Chill
* ALICE Training
* Police Unity Tour
* PACK (Police Assisting Community Kids)
* Community Fun Day Events
* Maryland Special Olympics - Polar Bear Plunge
* Maryland Special Olympics - Maryland Torch Run

The APD provides information on its website and through brochures on initiatives such as residential crime prevention, workplace safety, bullying, and cyber safety for young people.

In addition, the Chief of Police and other members of the APD attend an array of community meetings and provide presentations on various topics upon request. They also initiate community meetings and other opportunities for outreach.

APD initiated a community survey to obtain feedback on services and community members’ perceptions about safety. The survey contains 10 questions and is available online on the APD website. The department uses the Survey Monkey software tool to collect responses. The community survey is a commendable effort and one that should be continued and enhanced. While the survey is important, the number of people who complete it is relatively small. The survey needs greater dissemination/visibility in the community. The survey is not prominent on the website – the link is in the lower third of a list of items titled “Information.” When people click on the link the survey comes up but there is no introduction or explanation of the purpose of the survey.

At the time of this review, there was no formal APD volunteer program. Reference was made to a volunteer auxiliary police program that was disbanded. Members of the community assist with some of the programs that APD sponsors, but this is different from a structured program in which volunteers commit to a defined schedule and assist in areas of need. Police departments have used volunteers (who undergo background checks) to assist with functions such as records, telephone follow up to calls for service, staffing community centers, grant development, supporting special events, and community problem solving. A volunteer program can draw on the services of retired police and military personnel who have expertise to assist in cold case follow up, crime analysis, and more.

The APD plays an important role in enhancing use of the Aberdeen Train Station and people’s comfort travelling to and from the facility and in taking advantage of community resources (business, recreation, and government services) in the surrounding area. High visibility patrol presence during rush hour periods, continuous patrol checks of parking areas, concentrated patrols in surrounding neighborhoods, foot patrols, and use of plain clothes officers are among the services the APD has applied.

At the time of this review, the APD was planning to hire a civilian employee to provide high-visibility presence at the train station. The civilian would work in uniform (different from the uniform worn by officers) and would be assigned to the train station as his or her primary duty. The planned concept is commendable and parallels that of the Community Services Officer (CSO) program used by agencies throughout the nation in which a uniformed civilian (usually 18-21 years of age) provides outreach, builds community relations, and handles minor calls for service.

***Consideration 9*** – The APD should establish several ongoing advisory panels. The panels provide opportunities for citizen input to the APD and foster a different type of interaction between community members and police officers. The APD could, over time, establish separate advisory panels on police/community relations, education and training, and school safety. The APD may determine other topics that could be served by advisory panels. Each panel should include members of the community, members of police command, and frontline officers and civilian personnel. The advisory panels should meet twice annually or more often if needed. Member may be appointed by the Mayor, Council, City Manager, or Chief of Police. Policies and procedures should be developed on coordination of advisory panels.

***Consideration 10*** – The following considerations are offered to increase the value of the community survey:

* The survey should be placed in a more prominent location on the webpage.
* The survey should include an introductory statement at the beginning of the survey.
* Consideration should be given to having a survey link on the City’s webpage.
* The APD should print cards with the survey link for officers and civilian employees to distribute.
* The APD publishes a “Compliments and Complaints” brochure. The survey link should be included.
* There is a link on the APD website to Facebook. The Facebook page has a place for people to tell the APD what they think, but there is no link to the community survey. The APD should link the “tell us what you think” section to the survey.
* The APD should also consider using its Twitter feed periodically as a way to provide feedback on the community survey.
* The APD should explore the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Platform (administered by the Police Foundation) that provides community and internal surveys at no cost to police agencies.

***Consideration 11 –*** The APD should establish a structured volunteer program. An advisory group should be established to assist. Policies and procedures should define the initial tasks, required minimum hours, parameters for background screening, and recognition. Efforts should include working with the high school and Harford Community College to provide APD volunteer opportunities to young people.

***Consideration 12*** – The APD should continue directed patrol efforts in the immediate and nearby areas of the station. The APD should move forward with plans to establish a uniformed civilian presence at the station. (Members of the Powhatan Group review team have experience in establishing such an initiative and are prepared to assist the APD in moving forward with the concept of using uniformed civilians.)

**3. Field Operations**

**3. A. Patrol**

Patrol Operations is the largest unit in the APD. It is commanded by the Deputy Chief of Police. A lieutenant previously performed this function. A recent departmental reorganization eliminated this position. No information was available on plans to reinstate the lieutenant’s position.

Patrol areas in the APD are divided into three geographic sectors; East, Central and West. The Eastern and Western sectors are primarily residential. The Central sector encompasses much of the City’s business district.

The Eastern post includes three public housing complexes; Affinity Old Post Apartments, Highland Commons, and Magnolia Farms. It also includes HUD townhomes, three privately-owned mobile home communities, and an apartment building owned by the Harford Family House charity.  Harford Family House provides homes for homeless families and helps them get back on their feet. Residents are permitted to live there for one calendar year.

The Central post includes a mix of residential homes and businesses. The Central post also includes a Walmart store which is the source for numerous calls for service to the APD, primarily for Part II or less-serious offenses such as shoplifting.

The Western post has the bulk of the businesses in the City and includes Ripken Stadium.  It also includes two public housing complexes, an apartment complex that serves people who have mental health issues and the elderly, and Aberdeen Senior Housing, a low-income housing community for senior citizens.

Patrol is divided into three permanent eight-hour shifts, identified as days (0800-1600), evenings 1600-2400), and nights (2400-0800). Patrol personnel work a four-on, two-off schedule which results in different days off each week. This configuration has been in place for many years and has varying degrees of acceptance/popularity among patrol officers.

A minimum staffing level of three officers for each shift has been established for the day and evening shifts. The midnight shift has a minimum staffing level of two officers. Each shift is supervised by a sergeant, who is assisted by a corporal. Overtime is used to supplement staffing when needed.

**Patrol Staffing**

Thirty-one personnel are assigned to patrol operations including supervisors, a K9 officer, one Traffic Corporal, and two School Resource Officers. Total staffing assigned to patrol accounts for approximately 74 percent of the APD workforce. A breakdown of staffing assigned to patrol is displayed in the table below.

|  |
| --- |
| **APD Patrol Staffing** |
| Sergeant | 3 |
| Corporal | 3 |
| Officer | 21 |
| Traffic Corporal | 1 |
| K9 Officer | 1 |
| School Resource Officer | 2 |
| Total | 31 |

 \*Source – APD Chief’s Office

**Experience Profile - Patrol**

A review of the experience profile of the APD revealed interesting results. Overwhelmingly, senior officers are assigned to the midnight shift while newer and less-experienced officers are assigned to the evening shift. The exception to this assignment is one officer on the evening shift with more than 24 years of service. The following table displays the assignment of officers by experience level.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **SWORN OFFICERS**  | **YEARS OF SERVICE** | **SHIFT** |
| PATROL SUPERVISORS |   |   |
| Sergeant Patrol | 17.6 | 12-8 |
| Corporal Patrol | 7.1 | 12-8 |
| Sergeant Patrol | 19.6 | 8-4 |
| Corporal Patrol | 11.2 | 8-4 |
| Sergeant Patrol | 10.4 | 4-12 |
| Sergeant Patrol | 5.5 | 4-12 |
| Corporal Patrol | 12.4 | 4-12 |
| PATROL OFFICERS |   |   |
| Patrol Officer | 18.1 | 12-8 |
| Patrol Officer | 17.8 | 12-8 |
| Patrol Officer | 15.8 | 12-8 |
| Patrol Officer | 2.6 | 12-8 |
| Patrol Officer | 1.8 | 12-8 |
| Patrol Officer | 0.4 | 12-8 |
| Patrol Officer | 10.8 | 8-4 |
| Patrol Officer | 3.2 | 8-4 |
| Patrol Officer | 2.6 | 8-4 |
| Patrol Officer | 1.8 | 8-4 |
| Patrol Officer | 1.6 | 8-4 |
| Patrol Officer | 0.9 | 8-4 |
| Patrol Officer | 0.9 | 8-4 |
| Patrol Officer | 24.7 | 4-12 |
| Patrol Officer | 9.7 | LTL\* |
| Patrol Officer | 5.3 | 4-12 |
| Patrol Officer | 1.8 | SOU |
| Patrol Officer | 1.2 | SOU |
| Patrol Officer | 1.2 | 4-12 |
| Patrol Officer | 0.4 | 4-12 |
| Patrol Officer | 0.3 | 4-12 |
| K9 |   |   |
| K9 Officer | 6.5 | 4-12 |
| TRAFFIC |   |   |
| Corporal  | 10.7 |   |
| School Resource Officer |   |   |
| School Resource Officer | 37.6 |   |
| School Resource Officer | 15.9 |   |
| \*Long Term Leave |   |   |

\*Source – APD Chief’s Office

**Patrol Equipment and Technology**

Generally, APD officers are outfitted with modern equipment which includes:

* Glock semi-automatic pistol - .45 caliber
* Taser model X2
* O.C. Spray
* ASP baton
* Flashlight – Stinger brand
* Body armor
* Patrol Rifles – not all officers are equipped with rifles. The APD allows officers to use their own weapon with certain restrictions.

APD officers are also equipped with Narcan for use in overdose cases.

**Calls for Service**

Calls for Service (CFS) represent the greatest workload for the APD. A review of CFS for the past three years reveals a fluctuating pattern. CFS decreased between 2015 and 2016 by more than 5,000 incidents, a 15 percent decrease, but increased between 2016 and 2017 by slightly more than 2,700 incidents, a 9.5 percent increase.

A review of citizen initiated CFS vs officer-initiated CFS revealed a similar pattern. Citizen initiated CFS declined between 2015 and 2016 by 563 incidents, a 2.6 percent decrease. However, citizen initiated CFS increased between 2016 and 2017 by 2,620 incidents, a 12.5 percent increase. A summary of all CFS is provided in the following table.

|  |
| --- |
| **APD Calls for Service\*** |
|   | Citizen Initiated  | All CFS |
| 2017 | 23553 | 31470 |
| 2016 | 20933 | 28744 |
| 2015 | 21494 | 33796 |

 \*Source – APD Records Department

**Calls for Service by Incident**

CFS for 2017 and 2016 were examined by incident type to determine frequently reported incidents. The review was limited to CFS that were consistent with citizen-generated activity as opposed to all CFS. A consistent pattern was apparent. Incidents involving suspicious activity, traffic hazards, and alarms dominated the results for both 2017 and 2016. There was a decline in activity in 2017 compared to 2016, as seen in the following table.

|  |
| --- |
| **Calls for Service 2017 -2016\*** |
| Call Type  | 2017 | 2016 |
| Alarms | 838 | 866 |
| Animal Complaint | 193 | 190 |
| Assault | 243 | 224 |
| Assist Sick & Injured | 293 | 200 |
| Assist Other Agency | 243 | 254 |
| Domestic | 482 | 466 |
| 911 Hang Up | 635 | 561 |
| Juvenile Complaint | 204 | 468 |
| M/V Acc Prop Dam | 686 | 793 |
| Noise Complaint | 174 | 201 |
| Parking Complaint | 270 | 347 |
| Suspicious | 2078 | 2414 |
| Theft | 533 | 503 |
| Traffic Hazard | 1055 | 1142 |

 \* Source – APD Annual Reports

**Civilian Personnel in Patrol**

There are no civilian personnel or volunteers assigned to support uniformed patrol. The Auxiliary Police Unit that was established to support patrol officers was disbanded. There is no structured system for assigning civilian personnel or soliciting and coordinating volunteers to assist with special events.

**Patrol Workload Analysis**

In regard to analyzing patrol workload, the APD has the data to conduct a thorough analysis. It possesses an abundance of data regarding CFS activity, but no one has been designated or trained to conduct ongoing workload study. As such, APD is not benefitting fully from its data. Workload analysis may show that the current patrol shifts, which have remained constant for years, are sound or should change. APD Policy 21-02 requires a workload analysis of CFS be conducted annually by the Patrol Lieutenant (although Patrol is commanded by the Captain/Deputy Chief of Police). Support in analyzing the data can be provided by an outside organization and/or ADP employees can be trained in conducting detailed workload analysis.

***Consideration 13*** *–* The APD should conduct a workload analysis to determine the minimum number of officers required to meet patrol needs and expectations (total and by shift). The analysis should consider citizen-generated CFS, officer-initiated activity, administrative duties (court, training), officer leave, overtime use, and special and geographic requirements. This analysis will assist the APD in maximizing its current resources and determining future staffing needs. The analysis can be done by a third party (contractor) in conjunction with APD personnel.

***Consideration 14*** – Until a full workload analysis study is completed, the APD should reallocate resources to a structured “power shift.” When sufficient officers are on the evening or night shift, one or two should be assigned to an overlap schedule (such as 7pm-3am) to provide maximum patrol coverage during periods of peak need. The overlap shift may be a rotating or permanent role. It should occur on days when data shows the need exists, such as Friday and Saturday evenings. This may have been done in the past, but the overlap shift should be formalized as part of the schedule.

***Consideration 15*** – Regardless of when or if a workload study is conducted, the APD should reconsider the permanent shift assignment. (The Chief of Police and command staff is already focusing on this and have solicited input from officers.) Permanent shifts as they currently exist should be phased out and, ultimately, eliminated. Alternative approaches exist.

* Announce the end of permanent shifts at some point in the near future, moving to total rotation.
* Maintain some positions on each shift as permanent assignments, with others rotating. (This presents a challenge because officers will work for different supervisors.)
* Maintain permanent shifts, but with a declared rotation date (permanent shifts rotate every one, two, or three years).

**3. B. Traffic Enforcement**

Enforcement of traffic laws rests primarily with patrol officers. Radar units are installed in many patrol vehicles for speed enforcement. Portable radar units are available for use by officers that do not have radar units installed in their vehicles. A limited number of laser speed enforcement devices are also available. Additional equipment available for traffic enforcement includes license plate readers, speed trailers, and a Lojack equipped patrol vehicle. Two new speed trailer units have recently been ordered to supplement existing equipment.

The APD recently deployed a traffic enforcement program entitled “Take 30” to encourage patrol officers to conduct 30 minutes of traffic enforcement activities in the Central and Western patrol areas. The effectiveness of this program has not been evaluated.

One corporal is assigned to the Traffic Unit. The corporal’s duties consist of responding to fatal crashes, conducting administrative tasks related to grant funded activities (scheduling of enforcement activity, tracking enforcement, etc.), and providing enforcement activities in the City as time permits. The corporal is an experienced officer with advanced training in accident reconstruction. At the time of this review, the corporal was temporarily assigned to patrol due to personnel shortages.

A review of reported traffic crashes for the previous three years indicates a slight increase in property damage collisions. Personal Injury crashes decreased while fatalities remained rare. The following table provides traffic crash data by category.

|  |
| --- |
| **APD Traffic Crashes 2017- 2015\*** |
| Reportable Crashes | 2017 | 2016 | 2015 |
| Property Damage | 114 | 125 | 99 |
| Injury | 68 | 67 | 79 |
| Fatal | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 183 | 192 | 192 |

 \* Source – APD Annual Reports

**Consideration 16** – Conduct an analysis of the “Take 30” traffic initiative to determine its effectiveness. The assessment should determine if traffic enforcement mandate is causing officers to engage in “fishing hole” enforcement (targeting areas to easily make a large number of stops) or is focusing officer activity on more in-depth crash prevention and traffic-related problem solving. The assessment should determine if alternatives or additional approaches to traffic safety and enforcement would be beneficial, such as identifying the 10 or 15 roadways of highest crash frequency and requiring officers to conduct high visibility patrols and enforcement activity on those roadways during the periods when crashes occur. The assessment should also include how the program could increase police officers’ engagement in identifying traffic-related concerns that may be due to roadway design or ill-placed or lack of traffic control devices.

**3. C. Code Enforcement**

Code Enforcement is a relatively new function within the Police Department, assigned to the agency since January 2017. The APD has one code enforcement officer (a civilian employee) who was hired in June, 2017, approximately six months after the unit was assigned to the agency. The Code Enforcement function is responsible for enforcing compliance with the City Code primarily as it relates to property management.

Primary areas of code enforcement include abandoned vehicles, property management, debris, mobile home park inspection, vegetation which includes right-of-way clearance and sight distance, rodent and insect control, and more. Code enforcement applies to residences, commercial establishments, and property.

Moving Code Enforcement to the Police Department resulted in significant improvement to the operation including more detailed reporting. Statistics on Code Enforcement activity since the Code Enforcement officer was hired in 2017 are as follows:

* 319 Reports
* 147 Referrals
* 25 Investigations
* 278 Follow-ups
* 317 Certified Letters
* 238 Compliances
* 140 Civil Citations Issued
* 5 Parking Citations: 4

From December 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018 Code Enforcement investigated 90 complaints resulting in reports being filed. Additional cases were reviewed that were unfounded or were referred to another Police Department or City unit. Complaints related to Code Enforcement are made to the Police Department or are referred to the APD by other City agencies. When a complaint is made, the code enforcement officer goes on site, takes photographs of the immediate and surrounding areas, looks up information on the property, and determines the course of action. In some cases, the code enforcement officer will identify additional violations while on site.

In almost every case, the process begins informally. The code enforcement officer instructs players through the entire process and attempts to seek resolution to prevent further action. When action is agreed-upon informally, the code enforcement officer follows up to ensure that the action was taken.

The formal process begins with a warning letter that informs those involved of the Code violation and the action needed to resolve the complaint. If not resolved, a second letter is sent through registered mail, requiring recognition that the letter was received. Refusal to resolve the violation after the second letter results in a citation. Failure to respond to the citation or disputing the charge in the citation results in appearance in court. At the time of this review, there were nine code enforcement cases pending in District Court.

Issuing citations is rare because most cases are resolved through prior action. Of the 278 investigations conducted by the Code Enforcement officer since June, 2017, 238 resulted in sending certified letters and only five resulted in the issuance of citations.

A “courtesy notice” is an informal process used to make people aware of some violations. It consists of a card that is left on a property or vehicle making people aware of a complaint or an observed violation. It lists the violation and requests that the person who receives it contact the code enforcement officer to discuss resolution.

The code enforcement officer considers people’s situations and the causes of the violation(s), and works to solve problems informally whenever possible. In this regard, the current code enforcement operation embraces and practices community policing.

The code enforcement officer maintains records on all cases and sends duplicate reports to the Police Department and City. A monthly log is maintained and shared. Code enforcement recordkeeping is independent of the Police Department’s incident reporting system.

The code enforcement officer handles almost all investigations and site visits alone. On occasion, police officers may accompany the code enforcement officer on a site visit.

Code Enforcement is managed well and prevents many violations from rising to the level of citation, court, or police officer intervention. While the Code Enforcement officer has been in position for less than a year, the function has advanced considerably. Due to the recent employment of the code enforcement officer and the progress that has been made in a relatively short period of time, the review team has no recommendations or considerations for Code Enforcement.

**3. D. School Resource Officer Program**

The School Resource Officer (SRO) Program in the Aberdeen Police Department began over 10 years ago. The APD assigns a full-time police officer to Aberdeen High School and a full-time police officer to Aberdeen Middle School. The elementary schools do not have SRO’s assigned, but receive visits by patrol officers. SROs also make regular visits to other schools.

The SRO program is funded by the City. At the time of this review, there were no grants supporting the SRO initiative. The SRO program had grant funding at one time.

Both of the SROs are experienced. One has been in the SRO position since 2005. The other has been assigned to a school since 2015.

When the SRO’s are away from their schools due to leave, court, training, or other cause, the Patrol supervisor is notified. Officers are expected to make more frequent patrols at the high school and middle school.

When schools are not in session during the summer months, the SROs are assigned to Patrol and assume all related duties. This assignment explains the confusing SROs’ activity reports.

The activity report for the SROs reflects an inordinately high number of arrests, traffic enforcement, and other outcomes. For example, the 2017 activity report for the SRO at the Aberdeen Middle School shows 56 arrests and 81 traffic enforcements. The activity report for the SRO at Aberdeen High School shows 64 arrests. The impression given by the report is that there are major problems in the schools. More accurate reporting is needed.

***Consideration 17*** – Reports on the SROs’ activity should separate their work in patrol from their work in schools. Their work in patrol should be incorporated in overall patrol activity to avoid duplication and misperception of data.

***Consideration 18*** – Reports on SRO activity should reflect a qualitative summary and assessment of their activity in the schools. Other than establishing a presence of police in schools, the APD should justify return on investment for the assignment of almost 5 percent of its sworn officer workforce to schools. A qualitative summary should also show how the APD SROs support students, teachers, and staff. It also should show how APD’s SROs avoid exacerbating the ‘school to jail” pipeline.

***Consideration 19*** – Patrol officers, particularly those on day shift and evening shift (focusing on after-school activities and events) should be provided with guidelines on patrolling schools within their assigned work area. If time permits, this topic should be included in in-service training.

***Consideration 20*** – The APD should plan ahead and begin developing proposal information in anticipation of new State and federal funding to support SROs. General information on rationale, duties, outcomes, and budget could be developed and modified later to meet the requirements of grant solicitations.

**4. Investigations**

**4. A. Criminal Investigations Division**

Criminal investigations are a shared function in the APD. Patrol officers conduct preliminary and many follow-up investigations. The Criminal Investigations Division (CID) is headed by a lieutenant. The lieutenant reviews all reports generated by Patrol, both criminal and non-criminal in nature. The lieutenant screens all initial incident reports. Emphasis is placed on review of Part I Offenses. During report review, the CID lieutenant identifies investigations that have high solvability potential. He will then either assign the investigation to a CID detective or return the investigation to Patrol for follow-up. The case screening system used to make case assignment decisions is informal. The lieutenant makes the decision to suspend investigations based on issues such as lack of leads or cooperation from the victim(s), or if the State’s Attorney for Harford County declines to pursue prosecution.

The APD Criminal Investigation Division is staffed as follows:

* One lieutenant
* One detective sergeant
* Two detectives assigned to handle APD investigations
* One detective assigned to the Harford County Narcotics Task Force
* Two detectives assigned to the APD Special Operations Unit (SOU)
* One detective assigned as a Crime Scene Technician

Due to a shortage of personnel in Patrol for several months prior to this review, the detective sergeant and two SOU investigator positions were detailed to Patrol to provide adequate staffing to the three patrol areas. The three positions were scheduled to be returned to CID in April, 2018.

Two investigators are assigned to the general case load in CID. There were 85 cases assigned to the investigators in 2016, with 99 cases assigned in 2017, for a two-year total of 184 cases or an average of 1.77 cases assigned to CID weekly. In the first three months of 2018, CID was assigned 24 cases or an average of 1.86 cases assigned per week.

The primary categories of investigations assigned to CID are burglary, robbery and assault. If a Patrol supervisor on a scene of any type of case requests CID response, an investigator usually responds. Current work hours for investigators are Monday through Friday, 8 am to 4 pm, with the intent to move one to the evening shift once CID is fully staffed. Investigators share on-call status on alternating weeks. They average one or two call-outs per week, with a slight increase during the summer months.

 Criminal investigators have take-home vehicles. It should be noted that one of the detectives is also a member of the APD’s regional SWAT Team. As a SWAT Team member, he attends two SWAT training days per month and participates in SWAT call-outs.

Criminal investigators are assigned primarily to Part I or serious crimes as well as incidents of missing persons and child abuse. The APD does not refer investigations to other agencies, investigating all crimes from larceny to homicide. Since the number of Part I offenses has declined, the investigative case load in CID has remained static (accounting for the fewer number of investigators). Over the past two years, CID closed 76% of the cases assigned. (Comparing this closure rate to other police agencies is difficult because of variances in the types of cases assigned to criminal investigations, number of investigators, patrol officer role in conducting preliminary investigations, and other factors.) Case closure is determined by the CID lieutenant based on factors set forth in Chapter 27-01 of the Policies and Procedures Manual – Criminal Investigations. The CID lieutenant balances the number of investigations assigned to each investigator.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Criminal Investigative Division** | New Cases  | Closed Cases |
| 2016 | 85 | 73 |
| 2017 | 99 | 67 |

Currently, one detective has been assigned to CID for 10 years. The other detective has been assigned for four months. Some investigations are assigned based on previous investigative experience.

A third CID investigator is assigned to the Harford County Narcotics Task Force (HCNTF). This Task Force is made up of members from law enforcement agencies within Harford County. The investigator assigned to HCNTF contacts the CID lieutenant on a weekly basis and submits a monthly activity report.

One sergeant and two officers’ positions have been returned to CID to fill vacancies within the Special Operations Unit (SOU). Per Chapter 42-01 of the APD Policies & Procedures Manual – Special Operations, the SOU is responsible for investigation of criminal activities such as organized crime, narcotics, public corruption, fencing networks, and prostitution. The two officers being assigned to the SOU have less than two years’ experience with the APD.

The SOU sergeant will supervise CID investigators.

SOU investigations are proactive and reactive. It is anticipated that the SOU will use confidential informants. The APD has a one-page Confidential Informant History Form (APD Form 70) and a one-page Confidential Informant Contact Report (APD Form 150).

There is no equipment in the APD used for gathering evidence and the safety of officer/informant interaction. Such equipment includes body-wires, and other authorized audio and vision equipment. CID does possess several GPS tracking units, but the review team was told that these units often malfunction.

The APD is implementing a three-year rotation policy for CID. The first rotation is scheduled for July, 2019. The crime scene technician position will not be subject to rotation.

All CID personnel are subject to an annual performance evaluation. The evaluation covers six topics, each with a numerical measurement from 1 (unsatisfactory) to 5 (exceptional). Investigators newly assigned to CID are on a one-year probation. There is no monthly or quarterly performance evaluation for those on probation. The lieutenant and experienced investigators monitor probationary personnel and recognize positive performance and address deficiencies.

***Consideration 21*** – General investigations (Part I and other offenses) should occasionally be assigned to the investigators assigned to SOU and the Crime Scene Technician. In this way, they can be kept abreast of investigative techniques and skills across a wide range of crimes in the event they must fill in for other investigators who may be on leave or who are engaged in a major case. They will also be better prepared to assist in a major case investigation requiring multiple investigators.

***Consideration 22*** *–* After the pending implementation of rotation and the likelihood that the most experienced investigator will rotate, the senior investigator will have less than two years’ CID experience. Rotating every three years means losing investigative experience shortly after it is developed. APD should consider a longer rotation or a multi-tiered rotation in which one or more slots rotate every five years, every four years, and every three years. This would allow for new opportunities for officers while maintaining a heightened degree of experience.

***Consideration 23*** – The exception to the above consideration would be the investigator detailed to the Harford County Narcotic’s Task Force. That position should remain on its current three-year rotation.

***Consideration 24*** *–* The name of the Special Operations Unit should be changed to Special Investigations Unit, Narcotics Enforcement Unit, or a similar name to reflect the nature of the work. With the change of title, the community understands that the APD recognizes the need and is proactively addressing narcotics and other high-profile types of crimes. Special Operations Unit is a generic name that in many agencies refers to tactical patrol or SWAT units.

***Consideration 25*** *–* Certain equipment is necessary to support officers involved in covert or high-risk investigations, particularly when dealing with informants. The APD should consider purchase of additional equipment to support these and related tasks. Equipment such as body-wires, and other audio and vision equipment should be considered. Such equipment should be registered with Maryland State Police. The Crime Scene Technician should be assigned to maintain the equipment and should be provided with the required training to do so.

***Consideration 26*** – As an alternative to the above consideration, the APD may enter into a formal agreement with the Harford County Sheriff’s Office and/or Maryland State Police to gain access to such equipment when needed. Reimbursement to the Sheriff’s Office or State Police may be required.

***Consideration 27*** *–* APD should revise forms on confidential informants. The APD Form 70, Confidential Informant History, revision should include a block to document in detail why the informant is cooperating so there is no misunderstanding as to the informant’s purpose and intent. In addition to a block for the Originating Officer, there should be a block on the form listing a Secondary Officer. Signature blocks should be placed on the form to be signed by the sergeant and lieutenant indicating that they reviewed and approved the use of the confidential informant. (The current method of a supervisor initialing the bottom of the form is not sufficient.) It should be noted that a confidential informant is different from a “street contact” developed by a patrol officer or investigator to gain information.

***Consideration 28*** *–* APD should implement a form to be presented for the confidential informant to sign listing rules and prohibitions while serving as a documented informant with the APD. The form should state that the confidential informant is not an agent of the APD and is not to engage in any illegal activities while serving an informant with the agency. It should also state that the informant must not disclose to anyone the fact that he or she is a documented confidential informant. This form should be signed by the confidential informant and interacting officers.

***Consideration 29*** – Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) should be developed for aspects of criminal investigations not currently addressed in the APD manual. For example, SOPs should be developed on expectations and guidelines for case management and investigator performance.

 **4. B. Crime Scene Technician**

The Crime Scene Technician (CST) works out of the same office as the investigators. CST duties include processing crime scenes and processing evidence. Additionally, the CST is the custodian of the Evidence and Property Room as well as the Controlled Dangerous Substance (CDS) Evidence Room. The sergeant scheduled to be assigned to CID will be the immediate supervisor of the Crime Scene Technician.

The CST averages approximately one crime scene process per week and is on call during off hours. As custodian of the Evidence and Property Room and CDS Evidence Room, the CST assures that all evidence and CDS are properly documented and stored. The CST participates in periodic audits. The CST and the CID lieutenant are the only two members of the APD with access to the Evidence and Property Room and CDS Evidence Room.

APD enhanced procedures for securing and accessing the Evidence and Property Room and CDS Evidence Room. This enhancement followed a negative situation in 2017 involving access to the evidence room. APD acted quickly and appropriately to increase security. Today, entry to the rooms requires the use of a scan card and key. Entry to the rooms is monitored by additional video cameras.

The APD does not have the ability to perform CDS analysis. CDS evidence requiring analysis is sent to Maryland State Police (MSP) Forensics. The CST delivers the CDS to MSP one or two times a month. Fingerprints are forwarded to the Harford County Sheriff’s Office for analysis and submission into databases. The CST has a secure laboratory room used for the examination and processing of evidence as well as a refrigerator for certain evidence storage. This processing room is also secured with access available only to the CST and CID Lieutenant. The CST also fills in for the Havre de Grace Police Department’s CST when needed. When the APD CST is unavailable, the APD contacts the Havre de Grace PD or the Harford County Sheriff’s Office for assistance. APD Policies and Procedures Manual Chapter 30 – Evidence and Property – addresses proper evidence handling and collection.

In 2017, the Crime Scene Technician processed or was involved in 38 cases, as follows.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CRIMES | NUMBER OF CASES PROCESSED |
| Burglary | 11 |
| Aggravated Assaults | 8 |
| Robbery | 5 |
| Rape | 1 |
| Attempt Rape | 1 |
| Hit & Run | 1 |
| Raids | 11 |
| TOTAL | 38 |

***Consideration 30***– The newly assigned sergeant who supervises the Crime Scene Technician should be given access to inspect the property/evidence room and CDS vault. If the APD does not grant access to the sergeant, supervision of the Crime Scene Technician should remain with the CID lieutenant.

***Consideration 31* –** The title given to the officer assigned to the function is misleading. In many agencies, a crime scene technician is a civilian position whose sole job is crime scene processing, evidence collection, and evidence control. The officer assigned to the task fills other roles including quartermaster.

***Consideration 32*** – The Crime Scene Technician should occasionally be assigned cases as the lead investigator. The CST should fill in when other investigators who are on leave or administrative assignment (court, training) and provide back up to other investigators in major cases.

**5. Administrative and Technical Services**

**5. A. Training**

Education and training is an essential component of every police department. Throughout the United States, standards for education and training are established by state commissions or boards. In Maryland, police training standards, objectives, and requirements are established and overseen by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission. The Commission sets standards for recruit, in-service, and supervisory training, which includes course objectives and the minimum number of hours required. The Commission establishes mandatory training and suggested training and provides courses at its facilities. The Commission authorizes establishment of police academies and certifies instructors.

The APD should be commended for recent improvements in its training initiatives. The development of in-house instructors, improved in-service training, and increased opportunities for specialized training are just a few of the efforts that are notable and reflect well on the agency’s commitment to quality improvement. The training opportunities provided to APD employees positively influences retention. A sample of the specialized programs/schools attended by sworn and civilian APD personnel includes:

* Interview and interrogation
* Foundations of leadership
* Blood splatter
* Homicide
* Taser instructor
* Crime prevention
* Law Enforcement Officers Bill of Rights
* Defensive Tactics instructor
* Public Information Act
* Advanced call taking
* Supervisory liabilities
* Narcotics investigator
* Forensic firearms investigations
* Sex offender interview
* Drug identification

Due to its size, the APD does not have its own police academy. It provides in-service training in-house and takes advantage of training opportunities provided by area police academies, the State training commission, and other sources.

Training quality and consistency has improved significantly in the APD. Opportunities for officers and others to participate in specialized training opportunities have also improved. Coordinating training is the responsibility of the Lieutenant in Criminal Investigations.

Hiring new officers falls into several categories. Recruits are new employees that have no police experience. They are required to go through a complete basic police academy curriculum. New employees with prior police experience but who allowed their certification to laps are also required to attend a full basic academy. This group usually consists of people who left law enforcement for a lengthy period of time and decided to return. Police officers who want to join the APD and have active certification go through a lateral-entry program which consists of orientation and field training but does not require attending a full police academy program. Most of the applicants for lateral entry positions come from within Maryland and possess current or very recent (renewable) police officer certification.

The basic full police academy curriculum for new officers can range up to 24 weeks in length. APD recruits are assigned primarily to the Harford County Sheriff’s Office and Baltimore County Police academies. Both academies offer a comprehensive curriculum and are respected.

Recruits participate in their Field Training Officer (FTO) program in Aberdeen. The FTO program is on-the-job orientation under the guidance of a certified, experienced police officer – an apprentice/journeyman concept. Recruits rotate to a new FTO and shift every three weeks to provide them with the broadest possible exposure to the City and experienced officers’ work style. Recruit officers are assigned to their original FTO at the end of the program for final evaluation. Lateral-entry officers are assigned to FTOs for 80 hours.

In-service training is complex for police agencies the size of the APD. Assigning current officers to mandated and advanced training opportunities often requires rescheduling that disrupts patrol and investigative staffing. At times, overtime pay is needed to ensure that minimum patrol staffing levels are met while officers are in training.

In the past, assignment of officers to in-service training was sporadic. Recently, the APD established a five-day in-service training plan in which two officers from each shift attend training for an entire week. The five-day program allows officers and supervisors to plan ahead. It minimizes disruption to the schedule. The current APD work schedule allows most officers to participate in in-service training without APD having to pay considerable overtime, which is commendable.

The APD uses in-house classroom facilities, its own firing range for weapons qualification, the Firearms Training Simulator (FATS) at the Bel Air Police Department, and other resources to support in-service training. Recent in-service classroom instruction has included presentations on child sex abuse, DUI enforcement, street crimes, trauma first-aid, and the classroom component of active shooter training.

Firearms training involves a standard refresher/requalification course. It also includes a 30-round course of tactical, moving, and vehicle firing. Officers participate in semi-annual rifle and shotgun training.

Corporals, sergeants, and lieutenants participate in a three-day leadership institute program which includes two days of instruction provided in conjunction with Harford Community College and one day participation in the Gettysburg Battlefield “Staff Ride” leadership program.

The number of APD certified instructors has increased. All APD instructors assume teaching duties in addition to their regular assignments. Currently, the APD has four range instructors, two defensive tactics instructors, nine classroom instructors, and two emergency vehicle operations course (EVOC) instructors.

The APD does not offer a Citizens Academy or Youth Academy. These programs provide people in the community with an extensive orientation to the police department and a brief exposure to the type of training provided to police officers. In addition to offering the programs to the general public, some agencies offer Citizens Academy programs to select groups such as business people and teachers.

***Consideration 33*** – Training records should be maintained in the City Human Resources Office. This does not preclude the APD from maintaining a duplicate record.

***Consideration 34*** – The APD should draw on the talent of its in-house instructors, other City of Aberdeen employees, and external resources to conduct a Citizens Academy at least once each year. It may also consider a separate Citizens Academy tailored for business leaders, teachers, and other cohorts.

***Consideration 35*** – The APD should establish an in-service training program for all personnel (sworn and civilian) that addresses community policing and problem-oriented policing to expand current skills and imbed the concepts in day-to-day operations on a grander scale. Community policing and problem-solving should be a component of all activities, from initial point-of-entry contact in a call for service or officer on-view activity to resolution. Such training will advance the quality of service delivery and police/community relations.

**5. B. Technology**

The APD is a primary technology user among City agencies. Compared to agencies of similar size, the Aberdeen Police Department has done well in keeping up with technological advances. Laptop computers (referred to as mobile-digital terminals in the APD), office computers, weaponry, vehicles, cameras, forensic equipment, and more are adequate and, in some areas, surpass the technology that exists in other jurisdictions.

As police departments, including APD, become more technology-dependent, maintenance and related support services (training, parts availability), become increasingly essential to daily functioning. APD has not done well in maintaining its technology. Technology support service – or lack of such support – was a concern expressed throughout this review. Delays in technology support, including the availability of needed parts and equipment, affected computers and vehicles.

The APD relies on contractual maintenance support. At the time of this review, there was no in-house support provided by City employees. The contractual technician who provides part-time service was praised for his commitment and capabilities. However, reliance on part-time support scheduled by a vendor is inadequate for the size and needs of the agency.

***Consideration 36*** – The City should ensure that there is rapid response to technology needs within the APD, particularly when these needs involve frontline operations such as radio communications, laptops, and vehicles.

***Consideration 37*** – The City and APD should budget for a full-time technology support person (or the equivalent in part-time support) for the APD. During periods of low activity in the APD, the support person can assist other City agencies.

**5. C. Fleet**

As stated, this review did not include a comprehensive study of the APD fleet. Such a review requires more time and resources than were available. An in-depth review would consider issues such as cost-per-mile of vehicle operation, standards for vehicle turnover, time required to tend to vehicle maintenance, efficiency and quality of preventive maintenance, adherence to preventive maintenance guidelines, in-house versus vendor-provided maintenance, appropriateness and maintenance of vehicle-based technology, and more.

The APD maintains a full-service fleet consisting of cars, SUVs, vans, and a mobile command post. (The mobile command post is discussed later in this report in the section entitled*Brief Response to Questions Posed to the Review Team*). APD vehicles are modern and well-equipped. Officers informed the review team that significant improvement to the fleet has occurred in recent years.

 A list of all vehicles in the fleet and their assignment and status was provided to the review team. There were 56 vehicles on the list, which included spares and vehicles identified for disposal.

APD officers are assigned take-home vehicles. Take-home cars are provided to officers once they complete their FTO program. APD personnel are authorized to take their assigned vehicle outside of the Aberdeen City limits within a 25-mile radius. This is a substantial benefit to APD personnel and a significant recruiting incentive.

Patrol vehicles are outfitted with modern technologies that include:

* In-car cameras
* Radar units (available in some vehicles)
* Mobile Data terminals that provide access to multiple platforms
	+ CFS – current and historical data
	+ E-ticket (Traffic citations)
	+ Field Based Reporting software
	+ NCIC

APD replaces patrol vehicles every five years. Interviews with patrol personnel and others indicated that the time required to install electronic equipment (MDT, lights, gun locks, etc.) often takes months due a shortage of IT staff. During this review, numerous APD vehicles were parked, awaiting the installation of electronic equipment. In addition to a lack of IT staff to work on vehicle transition, delays were due to the wrong equipment being provided by a vendor.

***Consideration 38*** – The APD and City Manager’s Office should undertake a review to determine the reason for the wrong equipment being provided to ready new vehicles for operation. Based on the findings of the review, new assurances should be built into the vendor contract or a new vendor should be sought. It is important to determine what checks and balances are in place to avoid recurrence of the recent problem with vehicle equipment.

***Consideration 39*** – The APD City Manager’s Office should undertake a review to determine if current maintenance processes are the most efficient and cost-effective for the City. Arrangements/contracts with local external providers may save time and money in providing routine preventive maintenance to police vehicles.

**5. D. Communications**

The Aberdeen Police Department conducts its own communications function. While called the “Communications Unit,” personnel assigned to the function assume many more duties than those related to call taking and dispatch.

The APD uses the same computer-aided-dispatch (CAD) technology and systems as other public safety agencies in Harford County. APD Communications Center equipment and software is provided and maintained by the County to ensure consistency. (Harford County does not provide or maintain APD vehicle radios.)

The Countywide communications equipment/system is provided and coordinated by the Harford County Department of Emergency Services. The County operates a modern 911 Communications and Dispatch Center which monitors and supports the three municipalities and manages all fire/EMS/rescue calls. Non-serious and 911 police calls for service received by the Center are forwarded to APD Communications.

APD Communications is staffed by seven police communications officers (PCOs). Until recently, the unit was staffed by five PCOs. Two additional positions were recently allocated. At the time of this review, two new PCOs were in on-the-job training. (APD assumes all responsibility for PCO training.) A PCO-I is elevated to PCO-II after two years of service.

Generally, there is one PCO on duty on each shift. When there is a vacancy in Communications or a PCO is on leave, the position is filled by the Administrative Supervisor or Records Clerk. When a PCO needs a break a patrol officer or police supervisor in the area provides relief.

PCOs work rotating shifts. Currently, their schedule requires two-month assignments to the day, evening, and night shifts. Shift hours are 7-3, 3-11, and 11-7. PCOs receive a minimal shift differential.

PCOs have demonstrated repeatedly their willingness to do whatever may be needed to ensure that Communications is adequately staffed. In the summer of 2017, when staffing was down to four PCO positions, personnel assumed 12-hour shifts.

The APD Communications Center is located on the first floor of the City Hall/Police Department building. Communications Center personnel provide a wide array of services. Services include, but are not limited to:

* Receiving off-hour calls for all City agencies
* Prisoner monitoring
* 24/7 lobby services
* Managing release of impounded vehicles
* Building access and monitoring during off hours
* Monitoring cameras
* Signing out keys for the Senior Center
* Signing out restroom keys for Festival Park

Consolidation with the County 911 Communications and Dispatch Center has merit and should be reconsidered in the future. Some of the ancillary/support services could be managed off-site (at the County 911 Center) through technology (such as relocating camera monitoring). Other services provided by PCOs make consolidation difficult due to cost of providing these services through other means at the City Hall facility.

The APD Communications Center facility is cramped. Expansion of the facility is being considered. The potential exists to expand into space currently occupied by APD Records. A feasibility study is planned.

Recent efforts by the City of Aberdeen to consolidate the three cities into a joint County-wide communications system did not materialize. The effort to consider consolidation included a trial effort that involved assigning APD PCOs to the County Center for six weeks. Havre de Grace and Bel Air declined participation. The three cities would have to find other ways to provide the services (lobby, support to other agencies during night hours, etc.) that their communications personnel currently handle.

***Consideration 40*** – The City should advance the feasibility study to determine if space for the Communications Center can be expanded. If expansion is feasible, the City should give priority to the needed construction/build out.

***Consideration 41*** – The APD should provide two PCOs on duty on evening shift. Relying on support from Records personnel and field patrol officers and supervisors may not be feasible due to workload and other demands. Staffing the evening shift with two PCOs is particularly important in the warm weather months when demand is high and potential support from officers on patrol is least likely. Additional personnel may be needed to implement evening shift staffing. Staffing of the evening shift should be based on scheduled assignments and PCO rotation rather than overtime.

**5. E. Records and Information Management (Records Management System)**

The records management system (RMS) in the APD is supported by one full-time records clerk who is supported by the Administrative Supervisor who devotes considerable time to the process.

The APD handled 31,470 calls for service in 2017, an increase over the 28,744 in 2016. All APD CFS and officer-initiated activities are documented. The two primary reporting systems are through incident reporting (forms) completed by officers and CAD in which information is captured through the Communications center.

The APD uses paperless systems and relies on a field-based reporting system in which officers complete and submit their reports digitally. The reporting system parallels those in use on other law enforcement agencies in Harford County. The primary reports that are completed manually are the property/evidence forms and statement of charges. Once completed, the manual reports are scanned and attached to the digital report file.

Working files relevant to specific unit activities are maintained in those units. These include criminal investigations and special operations. Investigative supplement reports are filed in the records management system.

Officers may directly access reports through the RMS for court. The Office of the Harford County State’s Attorney also has access to the RMS for case review and prosecutorial purposes.

**Report Review**

Officers complete their reports on laptop computers. The reports are forwarded to first-line supervisors for review. Once approved, the reports are sent to the Lieutenant in Criminal Investigations for further review. The Lieutenant reviews all reports and, if needed, returns them to officers for correction and/or follow up.

Once the operations review is completed, reports are forwarded to records for final review by the Administrative Supervisor. If reports need to be reclassified, they are returned to the originating officer for correction.

Records personnel also review traffic reports and compile crash data. The traffic crash data goes to the Chief of Police and Traffic Unit in support of the APD’s “Take 30” prevention and enforcement program. In addition, traffic analysis data is forwarded by Records personnel to Washington College in Chestertown which is responsible for compiling State crime and traffic report data.

The report review system works well and officials acknowledge that there has been continuous improvement in the quality of reports.

**Uniformed Crime Report and Audits**

Reports are entered into a system that is shared with other police agencies in Harford County. The Harford County Sheriff’s Office provides software and other technical and training support to ensure consistency in records management systems among the jurisdictions.

When the review process is complete, the Administrative Supervisor prepares the Uniformed Crime Report, required of all police agencies by the Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. The APD Uniformed Crime Report is submitted to the Harford County Sheriff’s Office which forwards it to Maryland State Police. Maryland State Police files the report to the FBI on behalf of all Maryland police agencies.

The RMS is subject to various audits. In addition to internal checks and balances which are constant, records fall under review against standards established by the Uniformed Crime Report system and the State of Maryland. In addition, the CALEA accreditation process imposes standards on the RMS. Records personnel routinely provide data in support of the CALEA accreditation process.

Records personnel also provide data to the Administrative Assistant to the Chief of Police for preparation of summary reports (such as the annual report). The Administrative Assistant also coordinates the APD’s new crime analysis function.

**Inconsistencies and Lack of Clarity in Data**

There were some inconsistencies in CAD data and data in the annual report. The CAD event report indicated that officers made 2925 traffic stops during 2017. The annual report indicated that there were 2349 citations issued and 7049 warnings. While officers may issue more than one citation or warning on a stop or when investigating a crash, the difference in the data warrants explanation in the report documents. The data gives the impression that some stops resulting in citations or warnings are not being captured in the CAD system.

There is also a discrepancy between the CAD event report and the Annual Report on vehicle crashes. The CAD event report shows 784 motor vehicle crashes and the annual report shows 183 “reportable” crashes. Some of the variance might be caused by private property crashes. The data may be accurate, but explanation is needed.

In the report on the number of cases processed by the Crime Scene Technician, there are 11 raids cited. It gives the impression that all of these raid scenes were processed for evidence. This may be accurate, but more information is needed. The report raises questions about which raid scenes are processed and why. It may be that the CST plays a different role in supporting raid teams.

***Consideration 42***– There are many people in the APD involved in preparing and disseminating information and preparing reports. The APD should implement a structured system of review (checks and balances) to ensure consistency in numbers and accuracy of information before any data are shared internally or released to the public. Where variances exist in data, explanation should be included in the report.

***Consideration 43*** – Patrol supervisors should ensure that all traffic stops are reported to communications for entry into the CAD data. More importantly, notifying communications about stops enhances officer safety. (Such reporting may be occurring. If it is, other explanation for the variance in data is needed.)

***Consideration 44*** – If raid scenes are processed, the data should be recorded in the CST report according to the type(s) of offense (narcotics, weapons violations, etc.) along with a corresponding note indicating that the crime scene investigation was subsequent to a “raid.”

**5. F. Crime Analysis**

Crime analysis is a function within the Office of the Chief of Police. The function is relatively new and is the responsibility of the Executive Assistant to the Chief of Police. The Executive Assistant, who has other duties and deals with crime analysis as an add-on task, is in the process of gaining additional skills and education in crime analysis.

At the time of this review, crime analysis was evolving. Crime analysis reports consist primarily of statistical reports, incident summaries, and crime mapping summaries. Most of the information provided is considered tactical crime analysis which addresses immediate recent crime activity (hours, days, or weeks from the time of the crime). It supports quick attention to incidents such as burglaries and can be used for short-term directed patrol. Strategic and administrative crime analysis reports have yet to evolve.

There are predictive statements in some of the reports to guide patrol officers on what to anticipate. Some broad guidelines are provided on how to take preventive measures. Specificity through data analysis on predictive policing and focus on precise preventive measures to be taken by patrol has not yet evolved.

The Executive Assistant, who should be commended for advancing crime analysis in the APD, routinely interacts with the Harford County Sheriff’s Office and the Bel Air and Havre de Grace Police Departments to share and disseminate crime analysis information.

***Consideration 45*** – The APD would benefit from contracting with or hiring a part-time retired crime analyst or police officer or obtaining the assistance of volunteers with analytical experience to assist in advancing the crime analysis function as the Executive Assistant continues to gain expertise. This would allow the APD to move more rapidly toward predictive policing – a technique that uses information, geospatial technologies, and evidence-based intervention models to improve safety and reduce crime. The APD has the data to support predictive policing.

**5. G. Public Information/Public Affairs/Media Relations**

An important area of improvement in recent years in the APD has been the agency’s focus on effective and timely public information and media relations. Public Information is the responsibility of the lieutenant who oversees the Administrative Division. The lieutenant is responsible for press releases, response to Freedom of Information Act requests, announcements of special events, updates to the media, information exchange through social media, and more. The lieutenant is supported in this function by a sergeant and patrol officer – all three performing their public information and outreach role as a portion of their job. There is no full-time public information officer. An agency the size of APD does not require one.

The APD has done a good job in getting its message out to the people of Aberdeen and other law enforcement agencies. The APD makes use of Facebook, Twitter, and other social media to communicate. It conducts outreach through newsletters and videos.

A system is in place that provides media representatives with rapid access to the APD on a 24/7 basis. The APD makes reports available to the media and initiates press releases as needed. The department does a good job getting information out to the media and the people within 24 hours of an incident or circumstance. The APD should be commended for being out front with both positive and negative information.

The APD’s website provides up-to-date information on programs and community events. It provides the community with an opportunity to make inquiries and provide comments. It also provides the opportunity to file compliments and complaints. The website provides information to people on how to access crime prevention support from the department. It also provides information on employment and code enforcement.

***Consideration 46*** – While the information available on the APD website that encourages/allows communication with the department is commendable, it needs greater prominence. Some of the information conveyed at the bottom of the website in small print should be highlighted (displayed more effectively) to increase public awareness/access.

**5. H. Policies and Procedures and Engagement of the City’s Attorney**

The APD maintains a Policy and Procedures Manual and publicizes it on the department’s website. To the APD’s credit, policies and procedures are readily available to anyone who wants to review them, including the agency’s personnel. New and updated policies and procedures are issued to personnel. All personnel have an obligation to review the issued documents.

A detailed review of the manual was not part of this review. Specific policies and procedures were reviewed that were relevant to the review team’s assessment of various functions.

The APD Policies and Procedures Manual contains policies and directives. Some of the directives in the manual describe administrative and operational processes and appear more like training guides (incorporating steps toward implementation of policy and directives).

The Policies and Procedures Manual has evolved to meet requirements of the CALEA accreditation process. Review of policies and procedures within the CALEA process is extensive and has been a driver of improvement to policies in many agencies. APD policies have been updated routinely as a matter of practice and to conform to CALEA standards.

All new and updated police agency policies should undergo a review for legal sufficiency before being implemented. APD conforms to this practice, relying primarily on a contracted attorney who has experience working with police policy and practice. This attorney is separate from the City’s attorney. This contractual attorney also assists with cases related to the Law Enforcement Officers Bill of Rights (LEOBR).

The relationship between the APD and the City’s attorney has progressed well under the current administration. Expanded interaction between the police department in the City’s attorney is needed. The City’s attorney should play a greater lead role in policy review and other activities including review of LEOBR cases and in-service training curricula developed by APD instructors.

***Consideration 47*** – The APD should establish two manuals, a policy manual and administrative manual. This two-manual system exists in many law enforcement agencies. The policy manual should contain policies and directives. It should be limited and concise. All other documents should be contained in the administrative manual.

***Consideration 48*** – All policies and policy updates should be forwarded to the City’s attorney for review before implementation. The review by the City’s attorney should be the required or paramount review. This does not preclude review by the other attorney as a system of checks and balances to ensure consistency with other police agencies in the State. The second review is an option and the degree to which it occurs should be determined jointly by the City Attorney, City Manager, and Chief of Police.

***Consideration 49*** – If it does not already exist, a structured process for review by the City’s attorney should be established. The process should include a timeline so that new and revised policies are not delayed.

***Consideration 50*** – The City’s attorney should sign all policies and/or a cover letter authorizing implementation.

***Consideration 51*** – The City’s attorney should be provided with a current copy of the Policies and Procedures Manual, a summary of how and when new and updated policies were distributed, and training curricula relevant to implementing policies and procedures. This information is important to preventing and addressing negative liability situations.

***Consideration 52 –*** The City’s attorney should be informed of all LEOBR cases immediately upon occurrence.

***Consideration 53*** – A review should be conducted to determine the merits of having a separate external contractual attorney involved in assisting with LEOBR cases. There may be considerable benefit to the external attorney based on experience with LEOBR, but the City’s attorney should approve such engagement and should be involved as a partner or in an oversight capacity.

**5. I. Human Resources**

Human Resources is a dynamic process in every agency. It is an area in which progress, concerns, and needs seem constant. The HR process within the APD is an area where change is needed to improve efficiency, consistency, and coordination.

Human Resources in the APD is a responsibility of the Administrative Division lieutenant. The APD has primary responsibility for most human resources functions, supported as needed by the City’s Human Resources Office. The City’s Human Resources Office consists of the Human Resources Manager and one assistant. The HR Manager has served the City for over 20 years. The HR assistant has served for just over one year.

This review considered five aspects of the human resources function: recruitment, selection, promotion, retention, and the role of the City’s Human Resources Office in matters related to internal investigations. Almost all of these functions are handled within the APD. Support from the City’s HR Office is peripheral.

The APD does a minimum amount of hiring of sworn and civilian personnel. Over time, a relatively small number of new and replacement positions have had to be filled. Similarly, the APD has made a small number of promotions. A number of new positions and promotions occurred recently due to reallocation of vacant slots in the retirement and resignation of several ranking personnel.

As police officer vacancies occur, the APD generally seeks to hire lateral entry officers – those with law enforcement experience and current certification within the State of Maryland. Recent hires have included new recruits who have no prior experience. Lateral entry officers do not attend a police academy or participate in other classroom learning. Rather, they participate in extensive field training within the APD. New recruits are sent to area police academies in the Harford County Sheriff’s Office and the Baltimore County Police Department. (Additional information is provided in the training section of this report.)

Recruiting efforts within the APD follow standard practice. This consists primarily of advertising open positions and appearance at functions such as career fairs. Recruiting is a responsibility of the APD accreditation manager. Recently, more of the recruiting process is transitioning to the City’s HR Office.

The APD website has a section on employment that lists available positions and full job announcements. It provides an employment application. The job announcement on the website conveys all information including minimum requirements and a summary of benefits, salary, and career opportunities. The job announcement for police officer also offers information on permanent shifts and take-home vehicles. The City’s HR Office assists in advertising announcements and processing applications. The HR Office enters applications into the system and notifies applicants about the written test.

The selection process from initial testing through completion of background investigations rests primarily with the APD, with assistance from the HR Office. There are eight components to the selection process:

1. Physical agility test

2. Written examination

3. Formal interview

4. Background investigation

5. Polygraph examination

6. Psychological examination

7. Pre-employment physical examination

8. Drug screening

Applicants must complete each step successfully in order to advance in the process. Those who do not complete the process can reapply. As with most police departments, the application process is lengthy and often takes six months or longer from initial application to completion. The City’s HR Office has no involvement in approving background investigation processes or developing and approving questions posed by background investigators.

The promotions process is conducted completely within the APD. The APD follows a standard promotional process. The City’s HR Office is notified that a process will occur. The HR Manager will assist, upon request, in monitoring promotional exams (written). The HR Manager does not oversee or participate in promotional interviews. The HR Manager is informed of the APD’s selection when the process is completed.

The City’s HR Office plays no role in internal investigations, nor should it. The HR Manager is informed of the outcome of internal investigations when discipline results in lost leave, termination, or other personnel action.

Despite considerable rhetoric to the contrary, retention issues within the APD are not continuously excessive. Relatively few people leave the Department, although there have been concentrated periods in which a larger number of people than normal have left the agency. Recently, there was a surge in vacancies, but there does not appear to be any pattern among personnel who leave the Department sufficient to warrant concern. There is no structured process or predefined questions for exit interviews. The City’s HR Office may not be notified of an employee’s leaving the APD until several days after the employee is gone. As such, much of the information about retention-related concerns is based on perception and casual conversation. More needs to be done to understand retention within the APD. The exit process needs to be formalized.

***Consideration 54*** – All APD human resources functions with the exception of internal investigations should fall under the City’s Human Resources Office. The APD should support the HR Office in facilitating recruiting, selection, and promotional processes as requested/required by the HR Manager. Some HR responsibilities may be delegated completely to the APD, but the decision to do so should rest with the HR Office. This is important for quality control, consistency, and prevention of negative liability.

***Consideration 55*** – The HR Manager should formalize and approve all background investigation questions and processes prior to each hiring cycle. This is an important form of checks and balances to the background investigations process and provides greater assurance of consistency and reduced risk of negative liability.

***Consideration 56*** - The APD online announcement for the position of police officer (recruit and in-service) should be rewritten to emphasize service in uniformed patrol. Currently, the announcement discusses career opportunities and a wide range of specialty assignments such as traffic, criminal investigations, and K-9. While these opportunities exist, they are small in number. Expectation and pride in serving in uniformed patrol should be the focal point of the announcement.

***Consideration 57*** – The HR Manager should establish formal guidelines on when the APD human resources liaison (currently the Administrative Division lieutenant) provides notification on HR-related needs, processes, and outcomes.

***Consideration 58*** – The CALEA accreditation process should not dictate City HR functions but, rather, provide standards to guide these functions. The decision to conform to CALEA standards relevant to human resources should rest with the City’s HR Manager, with input from the Chief of Police (and/or designees) and the City Manager. CALEA-related reporting needs from the HR Office should be conveyed by the APD accreditation manager as early as possible to allow sufficient lead time for compilation.

***Consideration 59*** - The HR Manager, with support from APD personnel designated by the Chief of Police, should undertake a study on retention. This should include an in-depth look at data for the past five or more years and, perhaps, conversation with a sample of people who left the agency.

**6. Other**

**6. A. Accreditation**

The APD is an accredited law enforcement agency. Initial accreditation was granted in 2015 by CALEA. Accreditation has been accepted within the APD as an agency strategy to facilitate advancement, but it is not well understood by a large number of personnel. Questions about accreditation were raised repeatedly during this review.

Accreditation for law enforcement has grown considerably over the past four decades.  The concept evolved to provide a common set of standards for police agencies as a blueprint for advancing service delivery to communities, strengthening the overall quality of agencies, and making efficient use of resources.

CALEA was established in 1979 and is the nation’s primary accrediting body for law enforcement agencies. CALEA was begun by four of the nation’s leading law enforcement professional associations – the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), National Sheriffs' Association (NSA), and the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF). Since then, a number of states have established state-specific accreditation processes that parallel CALEA. By federal legislation, the Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation process was begun.

CALEA Tier One Accreditation requires meeting 189 standards while Tier Two (Advanced) Accreditation requires meeting 484 standards. Every agency establishes the standards to be met in coordination with CALEA officials. The APD has met and must continue to meet over 300 of the standards.

Questions posed to review team about accreditation parallel those asked about accreditation by agencies considering the process and by personnel in accredited agencies. Among the questions posed to the review team were:

1. Is there sufficient return-on-investment for participating in the accreditation process?
2. Could the money being spent on accreditation be used more effectively elsewhere?
3. Is accreditation a “paper process” or does it result in positive change in frontline operations?
4. What happens if an agency chooses to discontinue CALEA accreditation?

Simply stated, law enforcement agencies benefit from compliance with nationally-recognized standards in the same manner as medical institutions, colleges and universities, and other entities. Funding for accreditation can be lowered by streamlining internal processes and planning more effectively. Demonstrating compliance with accreditation standards is predominantly a paper process, but most accredited agencies can demonstrate that they have benefited from improved policies and procedures, consistencies across units and in conjunction with other agencies, improve training, and more. Discontinuing accreditation has potential long-term and negative implication for any agency that has been involved successfully in the process. Regardless of the rationale, members of the community may perceive discontinuing accreditation as “losing accreditation” and perceive it as a failure of their police department.

Maryland law enforcement agencies have been leading participants in CALEA accreditation since its inception. For example, the Baltimore County Police Department was the first large law enforcement agency in the nation to be accredited. Over one-fifth of the law enforcement agencies in Maryland, including almost all of the large and medium-sized agencies, are currently accredited (based on Department of Justice data). CALEA accredited agencies in Maryland include:

Aberdeen PD MD State Police

Annapolis PD MD Transportation Authority PD

Anne Arundel County PD Montgomery County PD

Baltimore County PD Montgomery County Sheriff

Carroll County Sheriff Prince George’s County PD

Charles County Sheriff Rockville PD

Cumberland PD Salisbury PD

Frederick County Sheriff Salisbury University PD

Frederick PD St. Mary’s County Sheriff

Gaithersburg PD Towson University PD

Greenbelt PD University of Baltimore PD

Hagerstown PD University of MD – Baltimore County PD

Howard County PD University of Maryland – Public Safety

Hyattsville PD University of Maryland – Baltimore PD

Kent County Sheriff Washington County Sheriff

MD National Capitol Park PD - PGCo

The APD Accreditation Manager, a full-time civilian, has been in position for five years and joined the department with prior accreditation-related experience in other agencies. In addition to managing the accreditation process, the Accreditation Manager plays a key role in recruiting, selection, and coordinating the APD’s policies and procedures manual.

The APD is heavily involved in the reaccreditation process. The reaccreditation site visit is planned for August 2018 (originally scheduled for April 2018. The department underwent a mock accreditation site visit in June 2017. It was estimated that the department is 75% ready for the next site visit and will continue to develop compliance documentation over the coming months.

There is a variance in internal processes relevant to accreditation and participation in CALEA. Internal processes may be cumbersome, paper-dominant, and demanding. Internal processes to meet the standards at times overshadow the purpose of accreditation. In Aberdeen, some questions and concerns focused on the merits of accreditation, but most focused on internal process. Lack of timely information sharing and last-minute demands for reports and other information were among the most common concerns.

***Consideration 60*** – The APD and City should continue their commitment to the CALEA accreditation process for the coming reaccreditation and beyond. Assessment of the accreditation process and how it can be improved should occur after the reaccreditation process is completed.

***Consideration 61*** – The Chief of Police should immediately convene a session of all ranking members of the APD, including the Administrative Supervisor and the Accreditation Manager, to discuss accreditation, its implications for the department, and future commitment to the process. The session should allow for frank discussion about the process and suggestions to improve it between now and the upcoming reaccreditation site visit.

***Consideration 62*** – An internal process should be initiated to explain accreditation to all sworn and civilian members of the department. First line supervisors should have “buy in” and be the main conveyors of information and support accreditation to their personnel.

***Consideration 63*** – The accreditation process in the APD should be formalized in a document that provides expectations, schedules, reporting needs of APD units, and sample reports.

***Consideration 64*** – The accreditation manager, in conjunction with the Chief of Police and members of the command staff, should give greater notice for required information and take immediate steps to reduce the number of rush requests for data and reports needed to meet accreditation requirements. The number of “rush” requests is inhibiting APD personnel “buy in” and commitment to CALEA accreditation.

**6. B. Grant Funding**

At the time this review, the only grant funds the APD was receiving were related to traffic enforcement crash prevention. Funds provided by the State of Maryland supported the “Smooth Operator” initiative, pedestrian safety, and DUI enforcement.

Funding support was provided by the State to upgrade the train station and the nearby bus stop and some improvements were made. While the police department supported this effort and has been active in efforts to improve the train station, this project was not based on an APD grant.

In the past, federal funds supported 50% of the cost of body armor (ballistic protection). There has been no recent effort to obtain federal grant funds.

The APD does not have a designated grant developer or grant coordinator. The City has no one assigned to assist the APD in obtaining grants. Plans exist to develop grant writing and grant management skills within the APD, but details have not been finalized. This is particularly important because of new and expanded grant funds being made available to law enforcement agencies by the Department of Justice.

***Consideration 65*** – The APD should provide grant identification and development training to all members of the command staff and others in key positions such as the Administrative Supervisor.

**Consideration *66*** – The APD should designate one employee to assume the part-time role of grants coordinator to assist in finding grant opportunities and bringing the appropriate personnel together to develop proposals. Consideration may be given to assigning the Accreditation Manager to this role once the upcoming reaccreditation process nears conclusion.

**6. C. Internal Affairs/Internal Investigations**

In the APD, the Deputy Chief of Police is responsible for oversight of internal investigations. The CID lieutenant is responsible for conducting internal investigations.

The APD provides information to the community on how to provide compliments and file complaints. Information on filing complaints is available on the APD website and in a brochure provided by the department. Officers and civilian employees are versed in providing information when asked about how to convey compliments or complaints.

Per Chapter 5, Section 4 of the Policies & Procedures Manual, Rules of Conduct and Internal Affairs, all employees of the APD shall accept any allegation or complaint made by a citizen. The allegation/complaint is placed in a sealed envelope and forwarded to the Deputy Chief. The Deputy Chief reviews the documentation and determines whether to assign the complaint to a supervisor for follow up or initiate a more formal internal investigation.

Internal investigations are conducted on but not limited to the following:

* Excessive force
* Criminal conduct
* Deprivation of civil rights
* Corruption or dishonesty
* Unlawful arrest
* Vehicle pursuits resulting in personal injury
* On-duty serious injury or death of an employee
* Serious injury or death of a person resulting from an officer’s actions
* Complaints that cannot be resolved by a supervisor
* Cases as directed by the Chief of Police

Over the past four years the APD averaged an internal affairs complaint every 43 days, or 8.5 IA investigations per year. Complaints are generated by citizens and others (external) and by supervisors and employees (internal).

**Internal Affairs Summary 2014 – 2017**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **External Complaints Received** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** |
| Citizen Complaints | 4 | 3 | 4 | 0 |
| Sustained complaints | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Not Sustained Complaints | 2 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Unfounded Complaints | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Internal Complaints Received** | 6 | 4 | 6 | 7 |
| Sustained Complaints | 3 | 2 | 6 | 4 |
| Not Sustained Complaints | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Unfounded Complaints | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Resigned Prior to Finding | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| **TOTAL COMPLAINTS** | **10** | **7** | **10** | **7** |

APD follows the Maryland Law Enforcement Officer Bill of Rights (LEOBR) as well as *Garrity v. New Jersey,* 385 U.S 493 (1967)protections to employees, which arises from the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. APD’s approach to internal affairs cases is consistent with those of other Maryland law enforcement agencies, APD policies and procedures, and CALEA standards.

APD Policies and Procedures Manual Chapter 5 Section 5 provides direction on conducting internal investigations including how the investigation casebook should be compiled. The CID lieutenant is responsible for maintaining the IA case ledger as well as the expungement of formal complaints that were not sustained (upon written request of the member seeking expungement after three years have passed). The lieutenant is responsible for entering written or verbal counseling into the personnel database. The lieutenant will have the option to assign IA duties to the sergeant soon-to-be assigned to CID.

***Consideration 67*** – The APD should make the section of the website on filing compliments and complaints more prominent. It is currently located at the bottom of the website.

***Consideration 68*** – The APD should designate a sergeant or corporal to conduct internal investigations as one of his or her primary responsibilities. Some internal investigations can be tedious and time consuming, particularly when interviewing numerous witnesses, preparing the investigative casebook, and establishing hearing boards are required. While the number of cases is limited, the task should not be placed primarily on a senior command lieutenant who is already engaged in managing numerous and varied responsibilities.

***Consideration 69*** *–* The APD should consider using contractual civilian(s) without prior association with the APD to aid the full-time sergeant or corporal in conducting internal investigations. The APD could draw on the talents of retired law enforcement officers who have the appropriate understanding of LEOBR and rights afforded by *Garrity v. New Jersey.* With the limited number of internal investigations in the APD, this could be accomplished on a contractual basis when the support of an external investigator is needed.

**6. D. State’s Attorney’s Office**

The overall relationship between the State’s Attorney’s Office and the Aberdeen Police Department is positive and the two agencies work well together. As needs, special circumstances, and concerns arise, they are resolved well and quickly by the State’s Attorney and the Chief of Police. In providing support to victims of domestic violence and follow up on domestic violence cases, the relationship between the two agencies is deemed excellent.

The quality of patrol officer and criminal investigator reports presented for review and potential prosecution by the State’s Attorney’s Office are considered to be generally well prepared. As is the case with every police department, some officers need to improve the quality of their reports. Testimony in court is considered to be very good, with experienced officers performing at a higher level.

***Consideration 70*** – When the State’s Attorney’s Office provides information on new case law and other training-related matters to the APD, feedback should be provided on how and when the information was conveyed to officers and civilian employees. The State’s Attorney’s Office needs to know that such information was provided through training or bulletins in a timely manner.

**7. Brief Response to Questions Posed to the Review Team**

Questions were posed to the review team by City officials, frontline personnel, and members of the community. To answer some of the questions requires assessments that could not be accomplished as part of this review. Such questions focused on beat alignment, salary comparison, and consolidation of communications. The following provides a brief response to a series of other questions.

1. Is the APD moving in the right direction?

Without qualification, the review team observed that the APD has progressed significantly in recent years. While improvement is needed in some of the areas described in this report, there is strong basis to believe that positive change will continue into the future. There are no indicators that suggest that the APD will become stagnant or complacent. It will continue to learn from its successes and mistakes and overcome the hurdles that every police department faces as communities, crime trends, public issues, public and political demands, and technologies change. The APD’s service to the people of Aberdeen and commitment to their well-being and that of its employees are poised to grow.

1. Is internal communication in the APD effective?

Internal communication within the APD is effective. This does not imply that there is no room for improvement. Generally and on matters of importance personnel seem well versed on current policies and activities. As in any agency of size, there are those who believe that internal communication is a problem and that most information is shared from the “top-down.” While personnel are versed in core information, they need greater awareness/understanding of the rationale, concepts, organizational demands, and evidence that drives the information that was disseminated to them.

1. Is the APD “top heavy” in rank?

At first glance, the APD appears “top heavy” in rank. In reality, small and medium-sized police agencies almost always have a smaller span of control than in larger agencies and give the impression of being “top heavy.” For example, in a small police department in Maryland, one of the officers wears the badge of chief of police and another, a sergeant, wears a badge that says deputy chief of police. There are only three other officers.

The APD has an adequate span of control at the senior command level (lieutenants and above). Where the number of rank seems high is in the patrol shifts. A sergeant, two corporals, and a soon-to-be officer-in-charge (OIC) are assigned to each shift. This may have been done to make certain that at least one supervisor is on duty in the field at all times. It also may have been done to provide promotional opportunities to officers. It is of concern only if all of the ranking officers on a shift assume a supervisory role when more than one is on duty at the same time. It is less of a problem if the corporals and OICs assume beat patrol responsibility, including handling calls for service and community problem-solving. While there may be some exceptions during periods of extreme workload or emergency situation, no shift requires that more than one supervisor be in a lead role at a time.

1. Is there a need for the officer-in-charge rank?

The officer-in-charge (OIC) rank provides an opportunity for officers to advance at minimal cost and with little or no disruption to the staffing of patrol beats. OICs ensure that someone is leading a shift when no patrol sergeant or corporal is on duty.

The rank allows senior command to observe each OIC’s potential to advance to supervision. It must be made clear, though, that the OIC is first and foremost a patrol officer whose role as supervisor should not be taken as a secondary responsibility. OICs should assume the role of supervisor infrequently.

1. Is the monthly command staff meeting worthwhile?

The monthly command staff meetings are worthwhile, but the format should change. Currently, they provide an opportunity for sworn and civilian commanders and supervisors to share information on their units and activities. The meetings consist primarily of sharing statistical data and crime and workload summaries, which could be accomplished in brief reports that are sent to all the participants as prior reading.

The meetings would prove to be more worthwhile if they focused on community and departmental problem solving. If desired, brief updates could be given by one or two of the unit heads on a rotating basis. Each meeting should address one or two well-defined internal and community issues or challenges. The meeting should seek input from all of the players in the room and plan a course of action to address the identified issue(s). Each meeting should include an update on the progress made on the issue(s) discussed at the previous session.

1. Do lateral-entry officers carry the culture of their prior agency to their work in Aberdeen? Is this a concern?

There is almost no research or literature on the short and long-term outcomes of hiring lateral entry police officers. Little is known about the time it takes for them to adjust, their rate of retention, or their successes compared to those who enter as recruits.

Hiring lateral entry officers allows an agency to gain employees who have experience and certification, and who do not have to attend a full police academy. They can be assigned to patrol duties in a relatively short period of time.

Lateral entry police officers always carry the culture of their prior agency with them to their new assignment. Through orientation and field training, most adjust quickly to the culture of and style of policing in their new jurisdiction. The shift to a new culture is the responsibility of both the lateral officer and his or her new agency.

1. Should the APD maintain a mobile command vehicle?

The APD mobile command vehicle provides radio mast, communications consoles, other electronics, and a command meeting area for use during a major event such as a disaster, major crime event, multi-jurisdictional response situation, or crisis requiring large-scale deployment in an area in which regular communication is ineffective. Police agencies throughout the United States obtained mobile command vehicles through grants in the years following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Agencies smaller than the APD obtained mobile command posts through federal and state funding.

The APD mobile command vehicle is made available to the Bel Air and Havre de Grace Police Departments when needed. The APD mobile command vehicle is used for community and educational events. While limited in use for major crises, it is a resource maintained primarily for such purpose. At this point in time, the benefits of having the vehicle in readiness for emergencies and using it for events and community relations make it worthwhile for the APD. The cost savings to be gained by eliminating the command vehicle do not outweigh its actual and potential benefits.

**8. Concluding Statement**

The Aberdeen Police Department is a full-service law enforcement agency. It is the primary law enforcement agency serving the City of Aberdeen.

The APD has progressed well in recent years and continues to seek opportunities to advance its efforts to serve the community. The agency has gained the respect of other law enforcement agencies within the State. Its personnel are committed to providing a high level of service to the people of Aberdeen. Members of the department and others in City government, along with community leaders and residents, should take pride in the progress that has occurred and in the APD’s commitment to take this progress to new levels.

Due to the changing nature of crime, increased demands for service, increased scrutiny and demands for transparency, changing technology, and fiscal accountability, no law enforcement agency can remain stagnant or be organized in final form. The APD continues to change.

The APD has overcome a number of internal and external challenges successfully. These include a loss of experienced personnel, fiscal constraint, and minimal support for technology maintenance. The APD has focused on community policing, community outreach, improving crime analysis, and advancing service to all neighborhoods and communities in the City. Personnel throughout the agency recognize the need for continued improvement in all areas of service.

The considerations suggested in this report are designed to build on APD successes and overcome some of the obstacles and challenges that have prevented it from advancing at a faster pace. The considerations reflect an extensive review of materials, interviews with APD personnel and others, and more.

In some areas, the APD will have to overcome long-standing traditions and culture that inhibit potential positive change. To give a few examples:

* The APD’s approach to its patrol schedule, specifically its reliance on permanent shifts, is in need of change. (It should be noted that the Chief of Police and command staff are aware of this need and have sought employee input to potential change.)
* The APD’s organizational structure needs revision. Operational and administrative functions are muddled across the divisions within the structure.
* The APD’s commitment to accreditation (by CALEA) is commendable and has the potential to yield long-term benefits to the agency and the people of Aberdeen. However, not all members of APD understand or are as committed to accreditation as the Chief of Police. The internal accreditation process needs to be improved and personnel need to be better oriented to the value of accreditation.
* Change needs to occur in how the APD interacts with other City agencies. The APD needs to rely more on the City Office of Human Resources and the City’s Attorney, which it has not done traditionally. The HR Manager and City Attorney need to provide the support the APD needs in order to affect this change.

Most importantly, while this report cites issues such as those described above and offers considerations for improvement, there were no concerns identified by the review team that rose to the level of “serious” or that cannot be addressed completely and, in many cases, quickly. Many of the considerations cited can be implemented at no cost and with no additional resources.

The current administration in the APD and other City agencies, with support from community leaders and residents, has the commitment and capability to build on past successes and address all of the issues and needs cited in this report. There is great cause for optimism that they will take the APD and the quality of the service provided to residents, visitors, and others to new heights.

Members of the Powhatan Group review team express their appreciation for the support provided by the City Manager, Chief of Police, and other City officials – and to all sworn and civilian members of the APD – for their assistance during this review. Powhatan Group is honored to have served the City of Aberdeen.

**Appendix**

**Compilation of Considerations**

The following is a list of considerations that appear throughout the review report. Explanation leading to these considerations is in the report narrative.

**APD Organization Structure**

***Consideration*** *1* – The APD should develop a new organizational chart that lists only units and functions. The divisions on the chart should show the Field Operations or Patrol Division, Criminal Investigations Division and Administrative Division. All functions, other than those reporting to the Office of the Chief of Police, should be listed under the three divisions. A separate personnel assignment chart should be developed.

***Consideration 2*** – The assignment of all units to the Deputy Chief of Police on the organizational chart is awkward for an agency the size of the APD. The chart should reflect that all division heads report directly to the Chief of Police. The chart should show that the head of the Field Operations or **Patrol** Division is also the Deputy Chief of Police.

***Consideration 3*** – Efforts should be made to place like assignments in the appropriate division – operations within operations, administrative functions within the administrative division, etc. Some of these changes may have to occur over time, as experience is gained and resources allow.

**Strategic Plan – Strategic Initiatives – Community Policing**

***Consideration 4*** – The APD should develop a strategic plan that coincides with the City’s future initiatives and is practical, conveyed in action steps for sworn and civilian personnel, and focused on the sustained well-being of residents and neighborhoods. Development of the strategic plan should involve diverse players from within the APD, other City government agencies, neighborhood and community organizations, APG, and local schools. The APD’s annual objectives and other planning and operational activities should stem from the strategic plan. The strategic plan should be reviewed informally each year and formally every three or four years. The APD strategic plan should be shared on the APD website.

***Consideration 5*** - The APD should prepare a monthly list of the repeat call locations in the city. For example, a list should be prepared that shows all locations in Aberdeen that generate five or more calls. This list should be shared with patrol officers and supervisors with the expectation that they identify the underlying causes of the repeat calls. They should develop an approach or solution to resolve the underlying cause(s) of the problem. They should present the solution to the Patrol Commander and proceed to implement the problem solving steps. They should participate in the review process to determine what worked and what other steps may be needed.

***Consideration 6*** – The APD should assign patrol officers to permanent beats for a period of at least one-to-two years before rotating them to another area of the City. The officers should be provided with a “beat book,” summarizing all aspects of the area (active and potential residential and commercial development, small businesses, community organizations, community leaders, demographics, background on schools, etc.). “Beat books” should be updated frequently.

***Consideration 7*** - The APD should undertake a review of the time spent on officer self-initiated activities, looking beyond the raw totals (percent of total calls for service). The APD should then set an expectation on the amount of time officers should devote to problem identification and resolution (for example, approximately 20% of total time on day shift, 10% on evening shift, and 30% on night shift could be committed to resolving the identified persistent neighborhood and community concerns.)

***Consideration 8*** – The APD should provide patrol officers with advanced training on problem-oriented policing (POP), which increases their focus on identifying and resolving the underlying issues or causal factors that drive recurring calls for service and other concerns within the City. The POP training should provide officers with specific examples of how patrol prevented escalation, intervened, and solved problems. (Examples and training guides are readily available from the website of the Center for Problem Oriented Policing at the University of Albany.)

**Community Relations and Outreach**

***Consideration 9*** – The APD should establish several ongoing advisory panels. The panels provide opportunities for citizen input to the APD and foster a different type of interaction between community members and police officers. The APD could, over time, establish separate advisory panels on police/community relations, education and training, and school safety. The APD may determine other topics that could be served by advisory panels. Each panel should include members of the community, members of police command, and frontline officers and civilian personnel. The advisory panels should meet twice annually or more often if needed. Member may be appointed by the Mayor, Council, City Manager, or Chief of Police. Policies and procedures should be developed on coordination of advisory panels.

***Consideration 10*** – The following suggestions are offered to increase the value of the community survey:

* The survey should be placed in a more prominent location on the webpage.
* The survey should include an introductory statement at the beginning of the survey.
* Consideration should be given to having a survey link on the City’s webpage.
* The APD should print cards with the survey link for officers and civilian employees to distribute.
* The APD publishes a “Compliments and Complaints” brochure. The survey link should be included.
* There is a link on the APD website to Facebook. The Facebook page has a place for people to tell the APD what they think, but there is no link to the community survey. The APD should link the “tell us what you think” section to the survey.
* The APD should also consider using its Twitter feed periodically as a way to provide feedback on the community survey.
* The APD should explore the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Platform (administered by the Police Foundation) that provides community and internal surveys at no cost to police agencies.

***Consideration 11 –*** The APD should establish a structured volunteer program. An advisory group should be established to assist. Policies and procedures should define the initial tasks, required minimum hours, parameters for background screening, and recognition. Efforts should include working with the high school and Harford Community College to provide APD volunteer opportunities to young people.

***Consideration 12*** – The APD should continue directed patrol efforts in the immediate and nearby areas of the station. The APD should move forward with plans to establish a uniformed civilian presence at the station. (Members of the Powhatan Group review team have experience in establishing such an initiative and are prepared to assist the APD in moving forward with the concept of using uniformed civilians.)

**Field Operations**

***Consideration 13*** *–* The APD should conduct a workload analysis to determine the minimum number of officers required to meet patrol needs and expectations (total and by shift). The analysis should consider citizen-generated CFS, officer-initiated activity, administrative duties (court, training), officer leave, overtime use, and special and geographic requirements. This analysis will assist the APD in maximizing its current resources and determining future staffing needs.

***Consideration 14*** – Until a full workload analysis study is completed, the APD should reallocate resources to a structured “power shift.” When sufficient officers are on the evening or night shift, one or two should be assigned to an overlap schedule (such as 7pm-3am) to provide maximum patrol coverage during periods of peak need. The overlap shift may be a rotating or permanent role. It should occur on days when data shows the need exists, such as Friday and Saturday evenings. This may have been done in the past, but the overlap shift should be formalized as part of the schedule.

***Consideration 15*** – Regardless of when or if a workload study is conducted, the APD should reconsider the permanent shift assignment. (The Chief of Police and command staff is already focusing on this and have solicited input from officers.) Permanent shifts as they currently exist should be eliminated. Alternatives approaches exist.

* Announce the end of permanent shifts at some point in the near future, moving to total rotation.
* Maintain some positions on each shift as permanent assignments, with others rotating. (This presents a challenge because officers will work for different supervisors.)
* Maintain permanent shifts, but with a declared rotation date (permanent shifts rotate every one, two, or three years).

**Consideration 16** – Conduct an analysis of the “Take 30” traffic initiative to determine its effectiveness. The assessment should determine if traffic enforcement mandate is causing officers to engage in “fishing hole” enforcement (targeting areas to easily make a large number of stops) or is focusing officer activity on more in-depth crash prevention and traffic-related problem solving. The assessment should determine if alternatives or additional approaches to traffic safety and enforcement would be beneficial, such as identifying the 10 or 15 roadways of highest crash frequency and requiring officers to conduct high visibility patrols and enforcement activity on those roadways during the periods when crashes occur. The assessment should also include how the program could increase police officers’ engagement in identifying traffic-related concerns that may be due to roadway design or ill-placed or lack of traffic control devices.

on those roadways during the periods when crashes occur.

**School Resource Officer Program**

***Consideration 17*** – Reports on the SROs’ activity should separate their work in patrol from their work in schools. Their work in patrol should be incorporated in overall patrol activity to avoid duplication and misperception of data.

***Consideration 18*** – Reports on SRO activity should reflect a qualitative summary and assessment of their activity in the schools. Other than establishing a presence of police in schools, the APD should justify return on investment for the assignment of almost 5 percent of its sworn officer workforce to schools. A qualitative summary should also show how the APD SROs support students, teachers, and staff. It also should show how APD’s SROs avoid exacerbating the ‘school to jail” pipeline.

***Consideration 19*** – Patrol officers, particularly those on day shift and evening shift (focusing on after-school activities and events) should be provided with guidelines on patrolling schools within their assigned work area. If time permits, this topic should be included in in-service training.

***Consideration 20*** – The APD should plan ahead and begin developing proposal information in anticipation of new State and federal funding to support SROs. General information on rationale, duties, outcomes, and budget could be developed and modified later to meet the requirements of grant solicitations.

**Criminal Investigations**

***Consideration 21*** – General investigations (Part I and other offenses) should occasionally be assigned to the investigators assigned to SOU and the Crime Scene Technician. In this way, they can be kept abreast of investigative techniques and skills across a wide range of crimes in the event they must fill in for other investigators who may be on leave or who are engaged in a major case. They will also be better prepared to assist in a major case investigation requiring multiple investigators.

***Consideration 22*** *–* After the pending implementation of rotation and the likelihood that the most experienced investigator will rotate, the senior investigator will have less than two years’ CID experience. Rotating every three years means losing investigative experience shortly after it is developed. APD should consider a longer rotation or a multi-tiered rotation in which one or more slots rotate every five years, every four years, and every three years. This would allow for new opportunities for officers while maintaining a heightened degree of experience.

***Consideration 23*** – The exception to the above consideration would be the investigator detailed to the Harford County Narcotic’s Task Force. That position should remain on its current three-year rotation.

***Consideration 24*** *–* The name of the Special Operations Unit should be changed to Special Investigations Unit, Narcotics Enforcement Unit, or a similar name to reflect the nature of the work. With the change of title, the community understands that the APD recognizes the need and is proactively addressing narcotics and other high-profile types of crimes. Special Operations Unit is a generic name that in many agencies refers to tactical patrol or SWAT units.

***Consideration 25*** *–* Certain equipment is necessary to support officers involved in covert or high-risk investigations, particularly when dealing with informants. The APD should consider purchase of additional equipment to support these and related tasks. Equipment such as body-wires, and other audio and vision equipment should be considered. Such equipment should be registered with Maryland State Police. The Crime Scene Technician should be assigned to maintain the equipment and should be provided with the required training to do so.

***Consideration 26*** – As an alternative to the above consideration, the APD may enter into a formal agreement with the Harford County Sheriff’s Office and/or Maryland State Police to gain access to such equipment when needed. Reimbursement to the Sheriff’s Office or State Police may be required.

***Consideration 27*** *–* APD should revise forms on confidential informants. The APD Form 70, Confidential Informant History, revision should include a block to document in detail why the informant is cooperating so there is no misunderstanding as to the informant’s purpose and intent. In addition to a block for the Originating Officer, there should be a block on the form listing a Secondary Officer. Signature blocks should be placed on the form to be signed by the sergeant and lieutenant indicating that they reviewed and approved the use of the confidential informant. (The current method of a supervisor initialing the bottom of the form is not sufficient.) It should be noted that a confidential informant is different from a “street contact” developed by a patrol officer or investigator to gain information.

***Consideration 28*** *–* APD should implement a form to be presented for the confidential informant to sign listing rules and prohibitions while serving as a documented informant with the APD. The form should state that the confidential informant is not an agent of the APD and is not to engage in any illegal activities while serving an informant with the agency. It should also state that the informant must not disclose to anyone the fact that he or she is a documented confidential informant. This form should be signed by the confidential informant and interacting officers.

***Consideration 29*** – Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) should be developed for aspects of criminal investigations not currently addressed in the APD manual. For example, SOPs should be developed on expectations and guidelines for case management and investigator performance.

**Crime Scene Technician**

***Consideration 30***– The newly assigned sergeant who supervises the Crime Scene Technician should be given access to inspect the property/evidence room and CDS vault. If the APD does not grant access to the sergeant, supervision of the Crime Scene Technician should remain with the CID lieutenant.

***Consideration 31* –** The title given to the officer assigned to the function is misleading. In many agencies, a crime scene technician is a civilian position whose sole job is crime scene processing, evidence collection, and evidence control. The officer assigned to the task fills other roles including quartermaster.

***Consideration 32*** – The Crime Scene Technician should occasionally be assigned cases as the lead investigator. The CST should fill in when other investigators who are on leave or administrative assignment (court, training) and provide back up to other investigators in major cases.

**Training**

***Consideration 33*** – Training records should be maintained in the City Human Resources Office. This does not preclude the APD from maintaining a duplicate record.

***Consideration 34*** – The APD should draw on the talent of its in-house instructors, other City of Aberdeen employees, and external resources to conduct a Citizens Academy at least once each year. It may also consider a separate Citizens Academy tailored for business leaders, teachers, and other cohorts.

***Consideration 35*** – The APD should establish an in-service training program for all personnel (sworn and civilian) that addresses community policing and problem-oriented policing to expand current skills and imbed the concepts in day-to-day operations on a grander scale. Community policing and problem-solving should be a component of all activities, from initial point-of-entry contact in a call for service or officer on-view activity to resolution. Such training will advance the quality of service delivery and police/community relations.

**Technology**

***Consideration 36*** – The City should ensure that there is rapid response to technology needs within the APD, particularly when these needs involve frontline operations such as radio communications, laptops, and vehicles.

***Consideration 37*** – The City and APD should budget for a full-time technology support person (or the equivalent in part-time support) for the APD. During periods of low activity in the APD, the support person can assist other City agencies.

**Fleet**

***Consideration 38*** – The APD and City Manager’s Office should undertake a review to determine the reason for the wrong equipment being provided to ready new vehicles for operation. Based on the findings of the review, new assurances should be built into the vendor contract or a new vendor should be sought. It is important to determine what checks and balances are in place to avoid recurrence of the recent problem with vehicle equipment.

***Consideration 39*** – The APD City Manager’s Office should undertake a review to determine if current maintenance processes are the most efficient and cost-effective for the City. Arrangements/contracts with local external providers may save time and money in providing routine preventive maintenance to police vehicles.

**Communications**

***Consideration 40*** – The City should advance the feasibility study to determine if space for the Communications Center can be expanded. If expansion is feasible, the City should give priority to the needed construction/build out.

***Consideration 41*** – The APD should provide two PCOs on duty on evening shift. Relying on support from Records personnel and field patrol officers and supervisors may not be feasible due to workload and other demands. Staffing the evening shift with two PCOs is particularly important in the warm weather months when demand is high and potential support from officers on patrol is least likely. Additional personnel may be needed to implement evening shift staffing. Staffing of the evening shift should be based on scheduled assignments and PCO rotation rather than overtime.

**Records and Information Management**

***Consideration 42***– There are many people in the APD involved in preparing and disseminating information and preparing reports. The APD should implement a structured system of review (checks and balances) to ensure consistency in numbers and accuracy of information before any data are shared internally or released to the public. Where variances exist in data, explanation should be included in the report.

***Consideration 43*** – Patrol supervisors should ensure that all traffic stops are reported to communications for entry into the CAD data. More importantly, notifying communications about stops enhances officer safety. (Such reporting may be occurring. If it is, other explanation for the variance in data is needed.)

***Consideration 44*** – If raid scenes are processed, the data should be recorded in the CST report according to the type(s) of offense (narcotics, weapons violations, etc.) along with a corresponding note indicating that the crime scene investigation was subsequent to a “raid.”

**Crime Analysis**

***Consideration 45*** – The APD would benefit from contracting with or hiring a part-time retired crime analyst or police officer or obtaining the assistance of volunteers with analytical experience to assist in advancing the crime analysis function as the Executive Assistant continues to gain expertise. This would allow the APD to move more rapidly toward predictive policing – a technique that uses information, geospatial technologies, and evidence-based intervention models to improve safety and reduce crime. The APD has the data to support predictive policing.

**Public Information/Public Affairs/Media Relations**

***Consideration 46*** – While the information available on the APD website that encourages/allows communication with the department is commendable, it needs greater prominence. Some of the information conveyed at the bottom of the website in small print should be highlighted (displayed more effectively) to increase public awareness/access.

**Policies and Procedures and Engagement of the City’s Attorney**

***Consideration 47*** – The APD should establish two manuals, a policy manual and administrative manual. This two-manual system exists in many law enforcement agencies. The policy manual should contain policies and directives. It should be limited and concise. All other documents should be contained in the administrative manual.

***Consideration 48*** – All policies and policy updates should be forwarded to the City’s attorney for review before implementation. The review by the City’s attorney should be the required or paramount review. This does not preclude review by the other attorney as a system of checks and balances to ensure consistency with other police agencies in the State. The second review is an option and the degree to which it occurs should be determined jointly by the City Attorney, City Manager, and Chief of Police.

***Consideration 49*** – If it does not already exist, a structured process for review by the City’s attorney should be established. The process should include a timeline so that new and revised policies are not delayed.

***Consideration 50*** – The City’s attorney should sign all policies and/or a cover letter authorizing implementation.

***Consideration 51*** – The City’s attorney should be provided with a current copy of the Policies and Procedures Manual, a summary of how and when new and updated policies were distributed, and training curricula relevant to implementing policies and procedures. This information is important to preventing and addressing negative liability situations.

***Consideration 52 –*** The City’s attorney should be informed of all LEOBR cases immediately upon occurrence.

***Consideration 53*** – A review should be conducted to determine the merits of having a separate external contractual attorney involved in assisting with LEOBR cases. There may be considerable benefit to the external attorney based on experience with LEOBR, but the City’s attorney should approve such engagement and should be involved as a partner or in an oversight capacity.

**Human Resources**

***Consideration 54*** – All APD human resources functions with the exception of internal investigations should fall under the City’s Human Resources Office. The APD should support the HR Office in facilitating recruiting, selection, and promotional processes as requested/required by the HR Manager. Some HR responsibilities may be delegated completely to the APD, but the decision to do so should rest with the HR Office. This is important for quality control, consistency, and prevention of negative liability.

***Consideration 55*** – The HR Manager should formalize and approve all background investigation questions and processes prior to each hiring cycle. This is an important form of checks and balances to the background investigations process and provides greater assurance of consistency and reduced risk of negative liability.

***Consideration 56*** - The APD online announcement for the position of police officer (recruit and in-service) should be rewritten to emphasize service in uniformed patrol. Currently, the announcement discusses career opportunities and a wide range of specialty assignments such as traffic, criminal investigations, and K-9. While these opportunities exist, they are small in number. Expectation and pride in serving in uniformed patrol should be the focal point of the announcement.

***Consideration 57*** – The HR Manager should establish formal guidelines on when the APD human resources liaison (currently the Administrative Division lieutenant) provides notification on HR-related needs, processes, and outcomes.

***Consideration 58*** – The CALEA accreditation process should not dictate City HR functions but, rather, provide standards to guide these functions. The decision to conform to CALEA standards relevant to human resources should rest with the City’s HR Manager, with input from the Chief of Police (and/or designees) and the City Manager. CALEA-related reporting needs from the HR Office should be conveyed by the APD accreditation manager as early as possible to allow sufficient lead time for compilation.

***Consideration 59*** - The HR Manager, with support from APD personnel designated by the Chief of Police, should undertake a study on retention. This should include an in-depth look at data for the past five or more years and, perhaps, conversation with a sample of people who left the agency.

**Accreditation**

***Consideration 60*** – The APD and City should continue their commitment to the CALEA accreditation process for the coming reaccreditation and beyond. Assessment of the accreditation process and how it can be improved should occur after the reaccreditation process is completed.

***Consideration 61*** – The Chief of Police should immediately convene a session of all ranking members of the APD, including the Administrative Supervisor and the Accreditation Manager, to discuss accreditation, its implications for the department, and future commitment to the process. The session should allow for frank discussion about the process and suggestions to improve it between now and the upcoming reaccreditation site visit.

***Consideration 62*** – An internal process should be initiated to explain accreditation to all sworn and civilian members of the department. First line supervisors should have “buy in” and be the main conveyors of information and support accreditation to their personnel.

***Consideration 63*** – The accreditation process in the APD should be formalized in a document that provides expectations, schedules, reporting needs of APD units, and sample reports.

***Consideration 64*** – The accreditation manager, in conjunction with the Chief of Police and members of the command staff, should give greater notice for required information and take immediate steps to reduce the number of rush requests for data and reports needed to meet accreditation requirements. The number of “rush” requests is inhibiting APD personnel “buy in” and commitment to CALEA accreditation.

**Grant Funding**

***Consideration 65*** – The APD should provide grant identification and development training to all members of the command staff and others in key positions such as the Administrative Supervisor.

**Consideration *66*** – The APD should designate one employee to assume the part-time role of grants coordinator to assist in finding grant opportunities and bringing the appropriate personnel together to develop proposals. Consideration may be given to assigning the Accreditation Manager to this role once the upcoming reaccreditation process nears conclusion.

**Internal Affairs/Internal Investigations**

***Consideration 67*** – The APD should make the section of the website on filing compliments and complaints more prominent. It is currently located at the bottom of the website.

***Consideration 68*** *–* The APD should consider using civilian(s) without prior association with the APD to aid in conducting internal investigations. The APD could draw on the talents of retired law enforcement officers who have the appropriate understanding of LEOBR and rights afforded by *Garrity v. New Jersey.* With the limited number of internal investigations in the APD, this could be accomplished on a contractual basis when an investigator is needed.

***Consideration 69*** – The APD should designate a sergeant or corporal to conduct internal investigations as a primary duty. Some internal investigations can be tedious and time consuming, particularly when interviewing numerous witnesses, preparing the investigative casebook, and establishing hearing boards are required. While the number of cases is limited, the task should not be placed primarily on a senior command lieutenant who is already engaged in managing numerous and disparate responsibilities.

**State’s Attorney’s Office**

***Consideration 70*** – When the State’s Attorney’s Office provides information on new case law and other training-related matters to the APD, feedback should be provided on how and when the information was conveyed to officers and civilian employees. The State’s Attorney’s Office needs to know that such information was provided through training or bulletins in a timely manner.