

CITY OF OAKLAND

AGENDA REPORT

OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR
POLICE DEPARTMENT
2007 MAY 16 PM 5:34

To: Office of the City Administrator
Attn: Deborah Edgerly
From: Police Department
Date: May 22, 2007

Re: A Report and Recommendations From The Office of Chief of Police Concerning Increased Staffing of Thirty-Three (33) Police Services Technician (PST) II in the Bureau of Field Operations to Provide Non-Sworn Technical And Clerical Assistance To The Police Department And The Community and Enable Police Officers To Respond To Calls For Service In A Timelier Manner And Engage In Proactive, Sustainable Problem-Solving Strategies Within The Community

SUMMARY

Staff has prepared an informational report and recommendations to address the need for 33 additional Police Services Technician (PST) II within the Bureau of Field Operations, in accordance with the Department's transition to a new organizational structure based on information driven geographic accountability.

The goal of the reorganization is to reduce crime, fear, and disorder, while improving police services by implementing an effective community policing strategy. Achieving success will greatly depend on officers being available to quickly respond to incidents, and engage in proactive problem-oriented policing. Additional support staff is required to reach this goal, therefore staff recommends 33 police services technician positions be added to the Oakland Police Department.

FISCAL IMPACT

This is an informational report.

The estimated annual cost for one Police Services Technician II, at step 2, including fringe benefits and retirement is \$69,858.13 (the estimated cost does not include premium pay) for the first year. A total of 33 PSTs are required to effectively deploy throughout each of the three Command Areas within the Bureau of Field Operations, and the Special Operations Division. Additionally, 25 vehicles are needed to support the staffing increase at an approximate cost of \$800,000. Annual costs associated with maintenance, fuel, and replacement of the additional vehicles is approximately \$832,300, based on a 5-year *lifespan*.

Operations and Maintenance costs (including background and training) are estimated at \$150,000 for the first year and \$25,000 annually thereafter.

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	First Year	Second Year
PST II (\$69,858.13)	\$2,305,318.29 (33 PSTs)	\$2,609,112.00 (\$79,0604)
Vehicles	800,000.00 (25 Vehicles)	\$832,300.00 (Annually)
O & M	150,000.00 (Start-up)	\$25,000.00 (Annually)
Total	\$3,255,318.29	\$3,466,412.00

BACKGROUND

In the past, PST IIs were deployed throughout the Patrol Division to assist police officers in a variety of functions, including: Issuing parking, stopping or standing citations, towing unoccupied vehicles, obtaining statements, documents, and other evidentiary material from witnesses / victims, conducting Neighborhood Watch meetings and other crime prevention projects, and collecting, preserving, and transporting physical evidence to the Department's property section.

The contribution of PSTs significantly increased the amount of time officers were able to devote to working with the community to solve problems, and respond to calls for service.

For a variety of reasons, the number of PST IIs critically reduced or transferred from the Patrol Division which required police officers to again absorb those duties which did not fully support community policing or allow them to develop sustainable long-term problem solving solutions. This staffing issue has been a contributing factor to delays in police response as officers have been unavailable due to the performance of duties that could be performed by PST IIs.

KEY ISSUES AND IMPACTS

Historically, most traffic collisions Oakland police officers respond to do not involve injuries or other crimes. At these types of scenes the primary duties, such as the preparation of a collision report and the ordering of tows, are administrative and require minor investigative responsibilities (that may involve talking to the motorists and possibly determining fault). In the case of a hit and run, it may be necessary to take victim statements and collect evidence.

Non-sworn professional staff can be trained to effectively and efficiently perform all of these tasks at about half the cost of a sworn police officer. For example, PST IIs assigned to the Patrol Desk regularly take statements; non-sworn Police Evidence Technicians (PET) respond to crime scenes, collect evidence, and prepare reports. PETs are also trained in the use of sophisticated electronic mapping equipment used at both crime and collision scenes.

With adequate training and experience, non-sworn professional staff can be used to investigate more serious collisions, which would create opportunities for career growth while providing sworn officers the opportunity for to devote more time to problem-solving endeavors and community problems.

Currently, the Police Department dispatches officers to neighborhood parking complaints such as vehicles blocking driveways or vehicles parked on the sidewalk. Officers are also routinely assigned to posts at special events, fire scenes, and crime scenes to direct traffic, additional functions that were previously performed by non-sworn personnel.

The City's Parking Enforcement Department has employed non-sworn staff to perform parking enforcement for over three decades. It is recommended that non-sworn professional staff be added to the Police Department to relieve sworn police officers of these duties.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Department currently has three traffic enforcement squads with an authorized strength of three (3) sergeants and 24 officers. The authorized strength of these squads has not been achieved for more than a brief period in the last seven years. Of the 33 recommended PST positions assigned to the Bureau of Field Operations, staff recommends that nine (9) be assigned specifically to the Traffic Operations Section. The addition of non-sworn professional staff to the squads would improve their effectiveness. The nine PST IIs would be equally assigned (3) to each of the three squads and supervised by the regularly assigned sergeant, giving coverage throughout the week and at such times when demand is the greatest. Their duties will be to perform routine assignments such as preliminary investigation of collisions, parking complaints, and traffic posts (direction). The use of non-sworn professional staff to accomplish these tasks will create more opportunities for sworn staff to engage problem-oriented policing activities that are directly related to enforcement, and target neighborhood traffic safety and crime issues.

PST II Duties

The other 24 Police Services Technicians will be assigned to the individual Command Areas and be tasked with responsibilities including, but not limited to:

- Responding to questions or complaints, service requests or referrals from the public, other law enforcement agencies or City departments, processing licenses, permits and applications, and collecting fees;
- Scheduling meetings and appointments and maintaining meeting calendars, screening and routing telephone calls and taking messages;
- Operating internal and external law enforcement computerized data systems on terminals or personal computers;
- Conducting surveys, inspections and research, and analyzing data and compiling statistics;
- Patrolling assigned areas and operating the two-way radio;
- Issue citations and/or warnings for parking, standing or stopping violations; research, mark, inventory and/or tow abandoned vehicles.
- Responding to non-hazardous criminal complaints such as vandalism, petty theft, and locked auto burglary, writing crime reports, reviewing incident reports for completeness and accuracy, making follow-up contacts by telephone, letter, teletype or in person;

- Obtaining statements, documents, and other evidentiary material from witnesses/victims, collecting, preserving and transporting physical evidence, transporting victims, witnesses and juveniles;
- Retrieving and disposing of found, lost or stolen property;
- Photographing vehicles, crime and accident scenes, juvenile and adult suspects and victims, employees, and applicants, fingerprinting criminal registrants, applicants and juvenile suspects and police officers;
- Directing traffic as needed;
- Maintaining crowd control at festivals and other gatherings;
- Interpreting and applying Police Department policies and procedures;
- Conducting preliminary investigations of traffic collisions; and
- Performing related duties as assigned.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: The use of Police Services Technician IIs to perform non-sworn related functions will allow police officers to respond to calls for service more quickly, providing an opportunity to reduce overall crime, and improve the City's image. An improved image may attract new business, residents, and visitors, all of which are vital to the City's economic prosperity.

Environmental: There are no environmental opportunities identified in this report.

Social Equity: With more time to dedicate to community policing and problem-solving, officer visibility and presence will be increased throughout the community, creating a safer and secure environment. By reducing crime, fear and disorder, the quality of life will be improved for members of the community, employees, vendors, and visitors to the City of Oakland.

DISABILITY AND SENIOR CITIZEN ACCESS

There are no ADA or senior citizens access related issues with this report.

RECOMMENDATION(S) AND RATIONALE

The success of geographic-based Area Command, with an emphasis on community policing, will depend on the availability of officers to engage in problem-solving activities. The Department's limited staffing has created a necessity for the use of non-sworn professional staff to perform some functions currently being performed by police officers. This realignment of duties will provide officers with additional opportunities to devote more time and attention to problem-solving and collaborative endeavors with the members of the community, and aide in fostering mutual respect and understanding between police and citizens.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE COUNCIL

Staff recommends Council accept this informational report and, consider adding 33 Police Services Technician II positions to the Oakland Police Department, Bureau of Field Operations, to provide non-sworn technical and clerical assistance to the Police Department, which will enable police officers to respond to calls for service in a timelier manner and engage in proactive, sustainable problem-solving strategies within the community.


Respectfully submitted,

Handwritten signature of Wayne G. Tucker in black ink, written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and includes the word "FOR" written below it.

Wayne G. Tucker
Chief of Police

Prepared by:
Steven Tull
Captain of Police
Bureau of Field Operations

APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO THE
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Handwritten signature of the City Administrator in black ink, written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and spans across the line.

Office of the City Administrator