

Police Operations
Final Report
Cedar Park, Texas



POLICE OPERATIONS

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C E N T E R F O R P U B L I C S A F E T Y M A N A G E M E N T

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ICMA

Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

ICMA Background

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) is the premier local government leadership and management organization. Since 1914, ICMA's mission has been to create excellence in local governance by developing and advocating professional local government management worldwide. ICMA provides an information clearinghouse, technical assistance, training, and professional development to more than 9,100 city, town, and county experts and other individuals throughout the world.

ICMA Center for Public Safety

The ICMA Center for Public Safety Team helps communities solve critical problems by providing management consulting support to local governments. One of ICMA Center for Public Safety Services' areas of expertise is public safety services, which encompasses the following areas and beyond: organizational development, leadership and ethics, training, assessment of calls for service workload, staffing requirements analysis, designing standards and hiring guidelines for police and fire chief recruitment, police/fire consolidation, community-oriented policing, and city/county/regional mergers.

These performance indicators have been developed from decades of research and are applicable in all communities. For that reason, comparisons of reports reveal similar reporting formats, but each community's data are analyzed on an individual basis by the ICMA specialists and uniquely represent the compiled information for that community.

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I. Executive Summary

ICMA was commissioned to review the operations of the Cedar Park Police Department (CPPD). While our analysis covered all aspects of the department's operations, a particular focus of our study is on identifying the appropriate staffing of the agency given its workload, community demographics, and crime levels.

We analyzed departmental workload using operations research methodology and compared that workload to staffing and deployment levels. We reviewed other performance indicators, which allowed us to understand the implications of service demand on current staffing. We reviewed the department's organizational design to determine if the many functions required of a modern police agency are staffed appropriately.

Our study involved data collection, interviews with key police and administration personnel, on-site observations of the job environment, data analysis, comparative analyses, and development of alternatives and recommendations. We also present this written report followed by oral briefings.

Based on our review, it is our opinion that the CPPD is a highly professional, well-managed police agency. We found no serious deficits in the department. However, as in all organizations, there are areas for improvement. Embracing these opportunities for improvement will enable the department to carry out its mission, and, through a process of continuous improvement, fulfill its core values of life, law, integrity, accountability, service, community partnerships, and excellence.

In general, the department appears to be staffed appropriately with sworn personnel, and it is well-suited to meet service demands. At the same time,

ICMA believes that there are opportunities to supplement and/or replace tasks now performed by sworn officers with new non-sworn personnel.

ICMA is making the following recommendations for the department. These recommendations are intended to help improve an organization that is already performing well.

- The department should create a fifth platoon of officers (which we call a swing squad or impact team) to both supplement patrol response to calls for service and engage in proactive enforcement to address crime and quality-of-life issues in the community. It is recommended that this complement of officers be staffed using existing resources.
- The CPPD should empanel a "Calls for Service Committee" to evaluate service demands and attempt to reduce the number of nonemergency responses it is experiencing. Our review of CPPD responses indicates a very high number of responses to calls for service that do not warrant police involvement.
- The CPPD should use a strategic planning process to address all types of community crime, traffic, disorder, and problematic locations. This approach should consider the unique elements of the Cedar Park community and culminate with written plans that integrate all units of the CPPD. Plans should be evaluated on a frequent and regular basis.
- The CPPD should leverage the performance of the community Services unit to advance a robust crime prevention program in Cedar Park. This would involve providing training opportunities and organizational support for the development and implementation of crime prevention services.
- The CPPD should consider civilianizing several positions, including the special events sergeant and crime scene/property detective, and

return these sworn officers to patrol/enforcement duties. Also, the CPPD should consider staffing additional non-sworn positions. The positions recommended (in priority order) are:

- Forensic technicians to conduct crime scene investigations and manage property inventory
- An administrative specialist to coordinate special events and fleet maintenance.
- Additional animal control officer to cover weekend assignments.
- Additional information technology personnel.
- The CPPD should consider developing an “early warning system” to monitor human resources issues, and should develop and put into place standard time frames for administering department discipline.
- The CPPD must begin immediately to address the issues relating to the storage of evidence and property. It should also continue to make efforts to purge evidence that should be released by the courts.
- The CPPD should develop and implement a case management system that utilizes case solvability factors when assigning cases instead of assigning every incident for follow-up investigation.
- The CPPD should create a Technology Committee made up of representatives from the CPPD and from city government to explore all facets of technology within the department.
- The CPPD command staff must reconnect with the rank-and-file members of the organization by being more visible and accessible to subordinate sworn and non-sworn personnel. The chief and the president of the Cedar Park Police Association should have monthly, informal meetings to discuss matters of mutual interest and importance.

- The CPPD must reconstitute the fitness committee to include non-department fitness, health, and human resources professionals. Under a mandatory fitness program, the department should use fitness goals as incentives for officers to improve performance.

ICMA staff thanks the city and police administrations of Cedar Park for their assistance in completing this project. In particular, ICMA commends City Manager Brenda Eivens and Police Chief Henry Fluck for their enthusiasm and cooperation with ICMA staff regarding documentation requests and the overall project.

II. Methodology

A. Data Analysis

We used numerous sources of data to support our conclusions and recommendations for the Cedar Park Police Department. Information was obtained from the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, Part I Index, crime and police officer headcounts, along with numerous sources of CPPD internal information. UCR Part I crimes are defined as murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, and larceny of a motor vehicle. These internal sources include data from the computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system for information on calls for service (CFS).

B. Interviews

This study relied extensively on intensive interviews with CPPD personnel. On-site and in-person interviews were conducted with all division commanders regarding their operations. We interviewed representatives of the union to get an understanding of the labor-management climate in the CPPD.

C. Focus Groups

A focus group is an unstructured group interview in which the moderator actively encourages discussion among participants. Focus groups generally consist of eight to ten participants and are used to explore issues that are difficult to define. Group discussion permits greater exploration of topics. For the purposes of this study, focus groups were held with representatives of the department.

D. Document Review

ICMA consultants were furnished with numerous reports and summary documents by the Cedar Park Police Department. Information on strategic plans, personnel staffing and deployment, evaluations, training records, and performance statistics were provided.

E. Operational/Administrative Observations

Over the course of the evaluation period, numerous observations were conducted. These included observations of general patrol, special enforcement, investigations, and administrative functions. ICMA representatives engaged all facets of department operations from a "participant observation" perspective.

F. Implementing the Report's Recommendations

ICMA's conclusions and recommendations are a blueprint for both the city and police administrations. The city administration should have periodic meetings with the CPPD to ensure that ICMA's recommendations are implemented. It is strongly recommended that the chief identify and task one individual with responsibility for implementing these recommendations. This person should establish a liaison with the chief of police, and should be given the authority and responsibility to effectuate the changes recommended. This includes ensuring the recommendations are executed in a timely fashion and then evaluating the department's progress every six months for efficiency, effectiveness, and performance.

All of ICMA's recommendations are practical and sensible and should be implemented by the police administration within a reasonable period of time. If the city desires, ICMA can provide a service to review, monitor, and

evaluate the department's progress and ensure that the recommendations are being implemented properly. If the police administration continues to have difficulty implementing the recommendations, ICMA can assist with implementation.

III. Background

Policing involves a complex set of activities. Police officers are not simply crime fighters whose responsibilities are to protect people's safety and property and to enhance the public's sense of security. The police have myriad other basic responsibilities on a daily basis, including preserving order in the community, guaranteeing the movement of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, protecting and extending the rights of persons to speak and assemble freely, and providing assistance for those who cannot assist themselves.

The Cedar Park Police Department provides a full range of police services, including responding to emergencies and calls for service, performing directed activities, and solving problems. Both the city and the police department are dedicated to the principles of community policing, and the department strives to provide a high level of service to the Cedar Park community.

A. Cedar Park Demographics

When determining the appropriateness of the deployed resources—both current and future—a key factor for consideration is the demographics of the community.

Cedar Park is located in Williamson and Travis Counties, and is just north of Austin. According to the United States Census Bureau, the city's total area is 17.1 square miles, of which 17.0 square miles is land and 0.18 square miles is water. The city's population has grown significantly over the past two decades, and is now estimated at 56,000.

The racial makeup of the city is estimated to be 79.9 percent white, 19.8 percent Hispanic, 4.5 percent African-American, 4.1 percent Asian, and 7.9 percent other race.

The median income for a household in the city is approximately \$92,337, and the per capita income for the city is approximately \$34,962. The median age in Cedar Park is 32.3 years and the median home value is \$204,720.

B. Uniform Crime Report/Crime Trends

As defined by the Uniform Crime Report (UCR), the crime index is the total of the seven major Part I crimes used to measure the extent, fluctuation, and distribution of serious crime in geographical areas. Part I crimes are the seven most serious offenses: murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft.

In 2009, the City of Cedar Park reported 1,052 Part I crimes, compared to 1,049 in 2008, or a very slight 0.29 percent increase. Appendix A displays the seven categories of index crime for 2009 and puts the reported crime into proper context.

The crime rate in Cedar Park is low. In fact, the violent crime rate in Cedar Park is 70.4 percent lower than the national rate and 74.1 percent lower than the state rate. Similarly, Cedar Park enjoys a very low rate of property crime. According to the data in Appendix A, the rate of property crime is 41.3 percent lower than the national average and 55.6 percent lower than the state average.

Larceny in Cedar Park is the highest reported crime and the one crime that drives the overall rate of crime in the community. In 2009, Cedar Park

recorded 795 larcenies, and this represented 75.6 percent of all serious crime. Since 2005, larceny has increased by 59.3 percent, from 499 reported larcenies to 795 in 2009. This increase, however, must be viewed in context with the increase in population during this time.

While the overall number of larcenies has increased over the last five years by 59.3 percent, the population-adjusted rate of larcenies has increased only 7.3 percent. Looking at the larceny data over this five year period indicates that the larceny rate is fairly stable, hovering around 1,100 larcenies per 100,000 population. The stability indicates one of the difficult features of larceny: that it is very difficult to police. Nonetheless, larceny is the largest contributor to serious crime in Cedar Park and demands the most attention from an organizational perspective.

Additionally, Cedar Park can be compared to other cities in Texas by rank-order of crime rates. To do this, we took information from the FBI UCR Program on *Crime in the United States* and compared Cedar Park with cities in Texas with similar demographics.

For this analysis, Allen, Flower Mound, Georgetown, Leander, Mansfield, Missouri City, North Richland Hills, Pearland, Pflugerville, Round Rock, and Sugar Land. It should be noted that the populations of these cities range from 110, 531 to 28,646. This analysis is not intended to compare Cedar Park with Leander or Round Rock. It is simply meant as an illustration of communities chosen by the CPPD as benchmarks and how they compare with respect to rates of crime.

Using the data from Appendix A, rankings are constructed to demonstrate the order in rank from highest to lowest on several categories of serious crime. A "1" in the table indicates the location had the highest rate of crime

for that category among the benchmark cities. Similarly, a “12” in the table represents the lowest amount of crime in that category among the cities. Examination of the relative ranks of the cities indicates that Cedar Park ranks 8th in violent crime rate and 10th in property crime rate. Cedar Park also ranks 7th in population size, so the crime rankings in the city indicate that crime is less than the population adjusted rates would suggest. Combining both rankings, Cedar Park has the 10th lowest rate of serious crime of the 12 cities chosen.

In general, Cedar Park is a low-crime and relatively safe community. Also, Cedar Park is a relatively affluent and homogeneous community. The combination of these factors means that a community policing style of police service would be appropriate for Cedar Park. The CPPD appears to be well suited to deliver this style of policing.

Our report now turns to the various elements of the CPPD and an assessment of those elements in context with prevailing industry standards and best practices.

IV. Operations

The CPPD provides the community with a full range of police services, including responding to emergencies and calls for service (CFS), performing directed activities, and solving problems. The CPPD is a service-oriented department providing a high level of service to the community. Essentially every CFS gets a police response and every criminal case gets investigated. The department embraces this approach and considers every request for service from the public important and deserving a police response. This approach to policing in Cedar Park has created what can accurately be called a “culture of service,” because this orientation is noticeable throughout the department.

Time and time again, it was reported to the ICMA team that no call is considered too minor to warrant a response and no case is too small to warrant an investigation. From the command staff to the rank-and-file officers, this approach was demonstrated to us on numerous occasions. The result of this policing philosophy is the delivery of comprehensive policing services to the Cedar Park community. The department has the hallmark of a small-town approach to policing, in which people are not just citizens but members of a community. Service is personalized, the police are part of the fabric of the community, and expectations for police service are high.

This approach is not without costs, however. Considerable resources are needed to maintain the small-town approach. The patrol division must be staffed with enough officers to respond to virtually every call placed to the CPPD, and the investigative division must be prepared to investigate every case that presents itself. From conversations with CPPD officers of all ranks, it’s clear that the community of Cedar Park expects this level of service, and

the CPPD is structured to deliver this level of service. Currently, this does not present an urgent problem, as the CPPD is appropriately staffed.

As the community grows, however, it will be necessary to make critical decisions regarding the continuation of this approach. Because the department entertains almost every request for police service, the choice will be between the options of “Do we continue to police the community in a full-service mode?” and “What steps can we take to restructure demand and still promote order and remain a low-crime community?” That is, the department must decide whether to sustain this comprehensive level of police service or take the steps necessary to manage it. Essentially, this is a political decision regarding the quantity of police services offered to the Cedar Park community. But quality doesn’t need to suffer. The recommendations offered regarding operations, if implemented, will permit the CPPD to continue its full-service model of policing and run the agency more efficiently while keeping personnel resources stable into the foreseeable future.

A. Strategic Planning

Recommendation:

The CPPD should embrace a strategic planning approach to address all types of community crime, traffic, disorder, and problematic locations. This approach should culminate with written plans that integrate all units of the CPPD and which are evaluated on a frequent and regular basis.

The CPPD must engage in the strategic planning process in two critical areas: traffic and larceny. In general, strategic planning involves a thorough analysis of the problem, development of a plan, and implementation and evaluation of that plan. It also involves identifying strengths, weaknesses,

threats, and opportunities for improvement, along with goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics to achieve results.

Examination of the CPPD reveals that most of the components of this process already exist. In fact, the CPPD is experiencing success in the area of traffic safety. This area of operations would benefit to an even greater extent with proper planning to engage all facets of the organization. It is necessary, however, to develop a plan and bring together and integrate broader elements of the organization to address the problems and achieve the stated goals.

The strategic planning process must be a deliberate and methodical approach toward agency problems and must be accomplished using as many stakeholders as possible. Officers of all ranks should be asked to participate to identify the appropriate problems to address and the strategies and tactics necessary to address them.

The value of this approach can be seen in impressive reductions in traffic crashes, even in light of an increasing population and increasing congestion on the roads in Cedar Park. This approach to accident reduction and traffic safety must be replicated in other areas of the CPPD operations.

Strategic plans must be created to address problem crime, disorder, and community problems. From a crime perspective, larceny is the largest UCR Part I index crime occurring in Cedar Park. It is also a crime that is difficult to address, and recent statistics indicate that larceny levels have fluctuated during the last five years. The CPPD response to the crime of larceny is also ripe for a strategic planning approach.

Again, strategic planning begins with a thorough analysis of the crime. Times, days, locations, types of property stolen, hot spots, frequent

offenders/known recidivists, wanted persons, and so on, must all be identified at frequent and regular intervals. Armed with this information, a coordinated and integrated plan must be created that involves all elements of the CPPD. For example, the role of patrol officers and detectives must be clearly established. Community service officers, public information officers, prosecutors, and dispatchers all must have responsibilities in addressing these offenses. And these roles, tasks, and responsibilities must be driven by the information presented.

More thorough, quicker, and more deliberate analysis of information and creation of actionable intelligence leading to an immediate deployment of resources will shorten the cycle between crime and arrest. A shorter cycle leads to greater efficiency and fewer instances of crime. It also lessens the possibility that good police work is left up to the individual motivation of certain officers, or worse, chance. Rather, results are driven by deliberate actions of the entire department. The outcome of a strategic planning approach will be a more robust response and fewer incidents of theft in Cedar Park.

The unique elements of the Cedar Park community need to be considered in developing such a plan. The common denominators, however, are that such a plan must be based on a thorough analysis of the crime, involve all facets of the CPPD (in other words, it is not a patrol plan or an investigative plan), and be evaluated regularly to track progress track and alter tactics in response to changing conditions. The plan must also be written and distributed to all personnel involved.¹

¹ Elements of a strategic plan regarding thefts might include the following: Deployment and activity of patrol and specialized units in hot spots; monitoring of repeat/known offenders;

B. Patrol Deployment

Uniformed patrol is considered the “backbone” of American policing. Bureau of Justice statistics indicate that more than 95 percent of police departments in the U.S. in the same size category as the CPPD provide uniformed patrol. Officers assigned to this important function are the most visible members of the department and command the largest share of resources committed by the department. Proper allocation of these resources is critical in order to have officers available to respond to calls for service and provide law enforcement services to the public.

In Cedar Park general patrol operations are staffed using 12-hour shifts. The day platoon is supervised by a lieutenant, with two squads of officers supervised by a sergeant and a corporal. The day platoon reports to work at 6 a.m. and rotates days off. The night platoon has a similar supervisory configuration and reports to work at 6 p.m.

Our examination of the patrol staffing and workload demands, combined with on-site observations and industry norms, leads us to several recommendations with respect to patrol deployment.

Interrogating all persons arrested for any form of theft to learn motives, tactics, associates, etc.; Identifying and monitoring pawn shop/fencing locations; Public education and programs public service announcements; Performing sting operations; Establishing heightened prosecution programs for shoplifting and other theft offenses; Working closely with private security; Working with building and property managers to provide greater physical security measures; Pickpocket or other training.

Although some police administrators suggest that there are national standards for the number of officers per thousand residents, that is not the case. The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) states that ready-made, universally applicable patrol staffing standards do not exist. Furthermore, ratios such as officers-per-thousand population are inappropriate to use as the basis for staffing decisions.

According to *Public Management* magazine, "A key resource is discretionary patrol time, or the time available for officers to make self-initiated stops, advise a victim in how to prevent the next crime, or call property owners, neighbors, or local agencies to report problems or request assistance. Understanding discretionary time, and how it is used, is vital. Yet most police departments do not compile such data effectively. To be sure, this is not easy to do and, in some departments may require improvements in management information systems."² Essentially, "discretionary time" on patrol is the amount of time available each day where officers are not committed to handling CFS and workload demands from the public. It is "discretionary" and intended to be used at the discretion of the officer to address problems in the community and be available in the event of emergencies. When there is no discretionary time, officers are entirely committed to service demands, do not get the chance to address other community problems that do not arise through 911, and are not available in times of serious emergency. The lack of discretionary time indicates a department is understaffed. Conversely, when there is too much discretionary time officers are idle. This is also an indication that the department is overstaffed.

² John Campbell, Joseph Brann, and David Williams, "Officer-per-Thousand Formulas and Other Policy Myths," *Public Management* 86 (March 2004): 22–27.

Staffing decisions, particularly in patrol, must be based on actual workload. Once the actual workload is determined the amount of discretionary time is determined and then staffing decisions can be made consistent with the department's policing philosophy and the community's ability to fund it. The CPPD is a full-service police department, and the philosophy is to address essentially all requests for service in a community policing style. With this in mind it is necessary to look at workload to understand the impact this style of policing in the context of community demand.

To understand *actual workload* (the time required to complete certain activities) it is critical to review total reported events within the context of how the events originated, such as through directed patrol, administrative tasks, officer-initiated activities, and citizen-initiated activities. Doing this analysis allows identification of activities that are really "calls" from those activities that are some other event.

Understanding the difference between the various types of police department events and the staffing implications is critical to determining deployment needs. This portion of the study looks at the total deployed hours of the police department with a comparison to the time being spent to currently provide services.

From an organizational standpoint, it is important to have uniformed patrol resources available at all times of the day to deal with issues such as proactive enforcement and community policing. Patrol is generally the most visible and most available resource in policing and the ability to harness this resource is critical for successful operations.

From an officer's standpoint, once a certain level of CFS activity is reached, the officer's focus shifts to a CFS-based reactionary mode. Once a threshold

is reached, the patrol officer's mindset begins to shift from one that looks for ways to deal with crime and quality-of-life conditions in the community to one that continually prepares for the next CFS. After saturation, officers cease proactive policing and engage in a reactionary style of policing. The outlook becomes "Why act proactively when my actions are only going to be interrupted by a CFS?" Uncommitted time is spent waiting for the next call. Sixty percent of time spent responding to calls for service is believed to be the saturation threshold.

In general, a "Rule of 60" can be applied to evaluate patrol staffing. The "Rule of 60" has two parts. The first part maintains that 60 percent of the sworn officers in a department should be dedicated to the patrol function, and the second part maintains that no more than 60 percent of manpower should be "saturated" by workload demands from the community.

Rule of 60 – Part 1

According to the CPPD "Chain of Command" report dated 10/1/2010 (updated 2/1/2011), patrol in the CPPD is staffed by two lieutenants, four sergeants, four corporals, thirty-four patrol officers, and two K-9 officers, or forty-six sworn officers assigned to a CFS response capacity. These forty-six officers represent 57.5 percent of the total number of sworn officers in the CPPD. This percentage is slightly lower than the 60 percent benchmark for patrol staffing for an agency the size of the CPPD.

In addition to these officers, the patrol function is supported by special operations, which is staffed by one sergeant, one corporal, eight traffic motor officers, and one warrant officer. These officers are available and generally do handle CFS when they are working, but were excluded from the previous staffing analysis. Including these officers in the patrol-to-total ratio

increases the patrol staffing to 57 officers, which is 71.25 percent of the total sworn personnel strength.

According to these statistics, the CPPD adheres to the first component of the "Rule of 60" and the patrol function of the agency is appropriately staffed.

Rule of 60 – Part 2

The second part of the "Rule of 60" examines workload and discretionary time and suggests that no more than 60 percent of time should be committed to calls for service. In other words, ICMA suggests that no more than 60 percent of available patrol officer time be spent responding to the service demands of the community. The remaining 40 percent of the time is the "discretionary time" for officers to be available to address community problems and be available for serious emergencies. This Rule of 60 for patrol deployment does *not* mean the remaining 40 percent of time is downtime or break time. It is simply a reflection of the point at which patrol officer time is "saturated" by CFS.

This ratio of dedicated-time compared to discretionary-time is referred to as the "Saturation Index" (SI). It is ICMA's contention that patrol staffing is optimally deployed when the SI is in the 60 percent range. A SI greater than 60 percent indicates that the patrol manpower is largely reactive, and overburdened with CFS and workload demands. A SI of somewhat less than 60 percent indicates that patrol manpower is optimally staffed. SI levels much lower than 60 percent, however, indicate patrol resources that are underutilized, and signals an opportunity for a reduction in patrol resources or reallocation of police personnel.

Departments must be cautious in interpreting the SI too narrowly. For example, one should not conclude that SI can never exceed 60 percent at any time during the day, or that in any given hour no more than 60 percent of any officer's time be committed to CFS. The SI at 60 percent is intended to be a benchmark to evaluate service demands on patrol staffing. When SI levels exceed 60 percent for substantial periods of a given shift, or at isolated and specific times during the day, then decisions should be made to reallocate or realign personnel to reduce the SI to levels below 60. Lastly, this is not a hard-and-fast rule, but a benchmark to be used in evaluating staffing decisions.

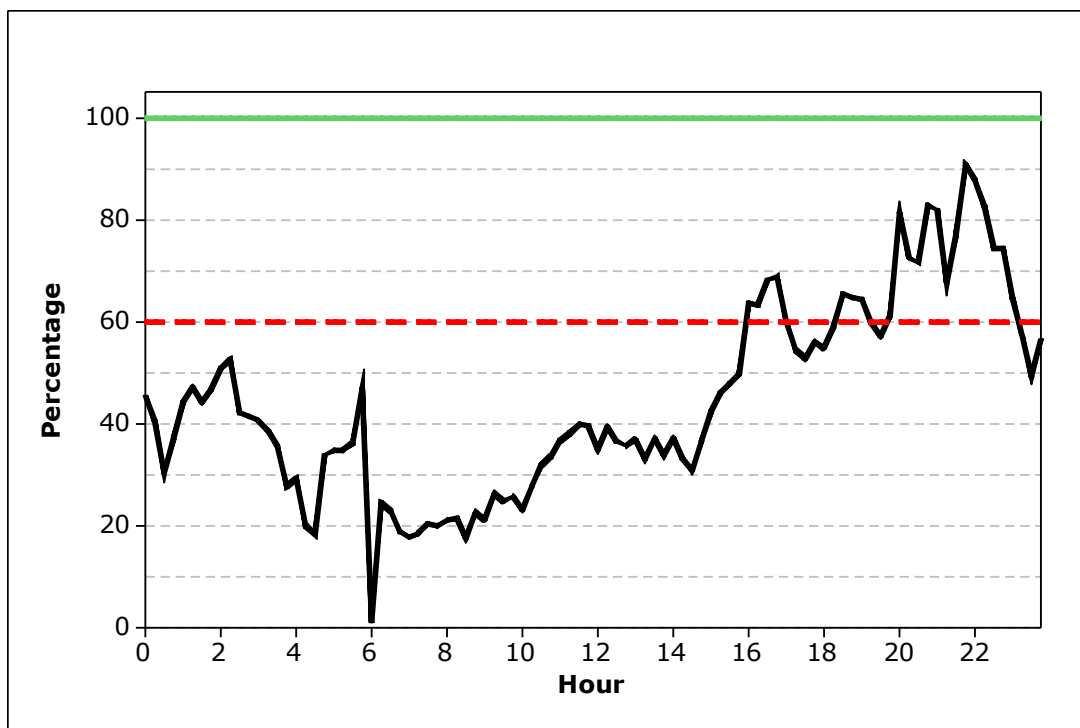
The ICMA data analysis in the second part of this report provides a rich overview of CFS and staffing demands experienced by the CPPD. The analysis here looks specifically at patrol deployment and how to maximize the personnel resources of the CPPD to meet the demands of calls for service while also engaging in proactive policing to combat crime, disorder, and traffic issues in the community.

Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 represent the "saturation" of patrol resources in the CPPD during the two months in 2010 on which we focused. By "saturation" we mean the amount of time officers spend on patrol handling service demands from the community. In other words, how much of the day is "saturated" with workload demands. This "saturation" is the comparison of workload with available manpower over the course of an average day during the months selected.

The four figures represent the manpower and demand during weekdays and weekends during the months of February and July, 2010. Examination of

these four figures permits exploration of the second prong of the Rule of 60. Again, the Rule of 60 examines the relationship between total work and total patrol, and to comply with this rule, total work should be less than 60 percent of total patrol. For the purposes of this discussion, only basic patrol personnel will be included. In the context of the CPPD, both day and night patrol platoons are staffed similarly, so the interpretation of Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 will be straightforward.

Figure 1. Saturation Index by Hour, February 2010 Weekdays



According to Figure 1 above, the patrol resources available are denoted by the solid green line at the top of the figure. The 100 percent value indicates the total police officer hours available during the 24 hour period. This amount varies during the day consistent with the staffing of the

platoons/squads, but at any given hour the total amount of available manpower will equal 100.

The red dashed line fixed at the 60 percent level represents the saturation index (SI). As discussed above, this is the point at which patrol resources become largely reactive as CFS and workload demands consume a larger and larger portion of available time.

Like most communities in the U.S., demand for police services in Cedar Park increases from the morning hours and throughout the day, peaking at night, and then decreases after midnight. Figure 1 depicts the SI in Cedar Park during weekdays in February 2010. As can be seen, SI remains under the 60 percent threshold until approximately 4 p.m., where it breaks this benchmark and remains elevated until approximately 11 p.m. This indicates that during weekdays in February, patrol resources are engaged in a reactive mode for most of the evening hours and bear a heavy burden of service demands.

Conversely, the SI remains consistently low between the hours of 3 a.m. and 3 p.m. This indicates a relatively low level of workload demand. It also represents an opportunity to reduce patrol resources deployed during these times, and also opens up greater opportunities for proactive enforcement and community policing activities.

Figure 2. Saturation Index by Hour, February 2010 Weekends

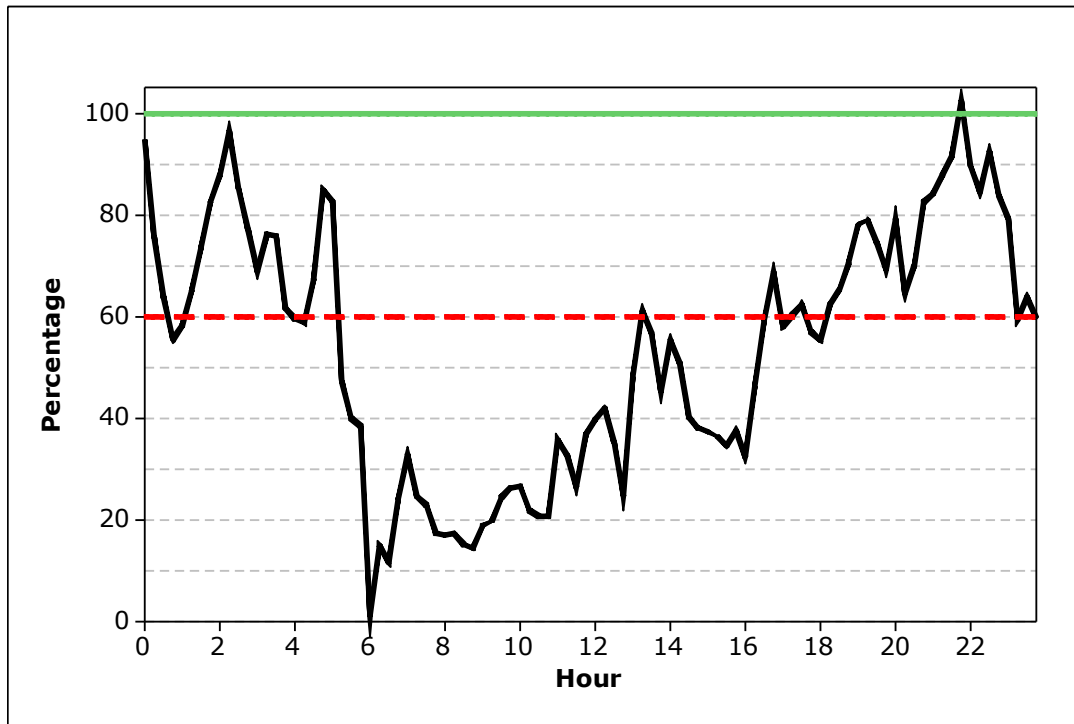


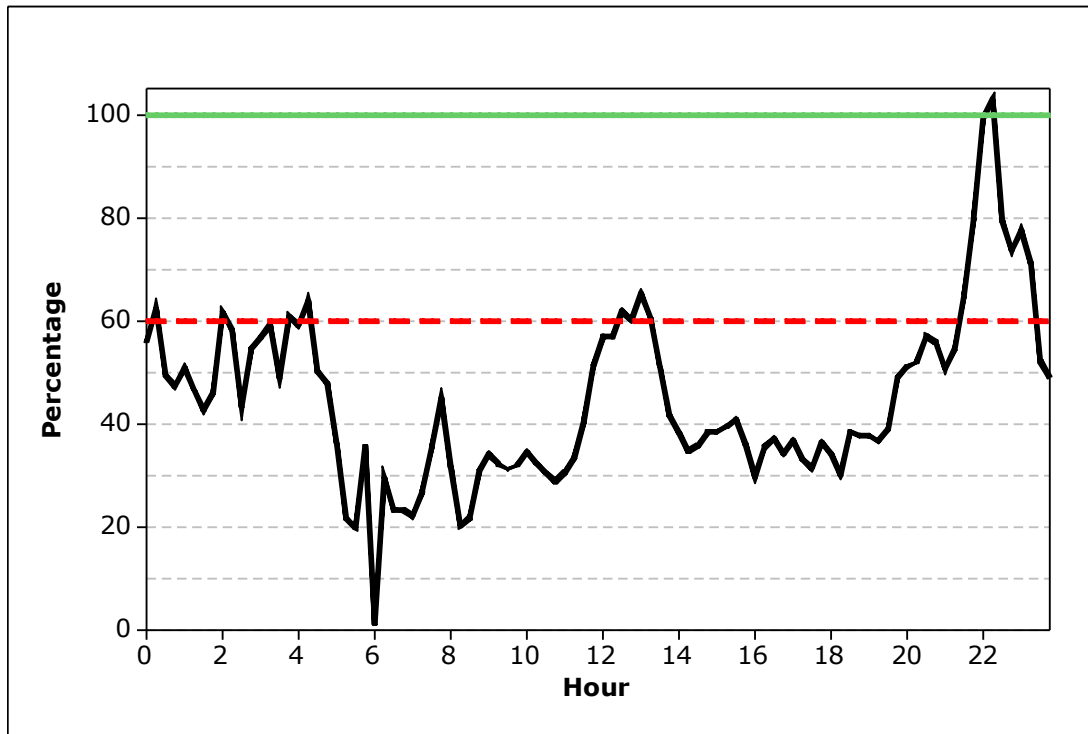
Figure 2 depicts the SI of patrol resources during weekends in February 2010. It can be seen that from approximately 5 p.m. to 5 a.m., the SI in Cedar Park is consistently higher than the 60 percent threshold. Here again, patrol resources are heavily burdened and operate in a largely reactive mode. The patrol resources available during these hours on the weekends are dedicated to CFS response and have limited or no time for proactive enforcement and community problem solving. Similarly, the hours between 5 a.m. and 5 p.m. on weekends in February indicate an SI much less than 60 percent. This implies that there is an excess of personnel deployed during these times and a larger amount of discretionary patrol resources available to dedicate towards proactive enforcement and community policing.

Figure 3. Saturation Index by Hour, July 2010 Weekdays



Patrol resources are deployed more optimally during July. According to Figure 3, SI exceeds 60 percent on July weekdays between 8 p.m. and 11 p.m.

Figure 4. Saturation Index by Hour, July 2010 Weekends



And as can be seen in Figure 4, SI greatly exceeds 60 percent between approximately 10 p.m. and 11 p.m., and also is just above 60 percent at sporadic times during the day on July weekend. In general, the deployment of patrol resources during the month of July 2010 appears consistent with desirable levels as it meets the conceptual threshold of an SI less than 60 percent.

When the SI exceeds 60 percent it is not meant to imply that police resources are not available to meet service demands. This situation would occur when the SI exceeded 100 percent during extended time periods. (An individual value of greater than 100 percent would indicate that all available resources are being used and patrol officers are assigned to multiple CFS at

one time. This would indicate a CFS backlog, with resources completely committed. According to the figures presented here, this situation occurs only once during the time periods under examination: weekends in February at 9:45 p.m. This would only be cause for concern if the 100 percent SI threshold was exceeded at numerous and frequent times during the day.)

There are clearly sufficient resources available throughout the day (SI levels consistently less than 100). However, at critical and extended times during the day the 60 percent SI is passed and in all likelihood proactive patrol ceases. This is not desirable from a police personnel deployment perspective, and it is recommended that steps be taken to ameliorate this condition.

Recommendation:

Create a fifth squad of officers (called a swing squad or impact team) who would supplement the current patrol deployment and would also engage in proactive enforcement to address crime and quality of life issues in the community.

The recommendation ICMA offers is to create a fifth squad (commonly referred to as a "swing" or "impact" squad), that can bolster patrol deployment at critical times during the day. This third platoon would commit personnel resources to respond to CFS **and** engage in proactive enforcement and community policing initiatives. These officers would have the same duties and responsibilities as the other platoons and be used as a resource during the times needed most.

This squad can be staffed with existing resources through realignment of personnel (see additional recommendations). For the ideal time to deploy these personnel, consideration must also be given to the times and days of

the week when serious crime and traffic accidents are at their highest. The data analysis presented here gives a very accurate indication of the times and days of these occurrences, but a thorough and deliberate strategic analysis must be undertaken to properly identify these time periods and staff patrol resources accordingly.

The start and end times for this platoon can be determined by taking the data analysis presented here and putting it into context with the crime and traffic crash occurrences, along with the times and days of the week most conducive to proactive patrol and community problem-solving. The start time of this platoon, considering all of these variables, would likely be 2 p.m. and the end time would be 2 a.m., seven days each week. Furthermore, flexibility could be built into this platoon by incorporating a periodic analysis of community conditions (quarterly for example), to re-evaluate the appropriate start/end time that optimizes all of these conditions.

Priority should be given to deploying this swing/impact platoon into the regular patrol operations seven days per week. This platoon could be staffed by one sergeant, one corporal, and eight officers by realigning existing resources. One example of a possible realignment is as follows:

- Transfer the special events sergeant to swing platoon and reassign duties and responsibilities to administrative staff
- Transfer one detective from criminal investigations back to patrol in the swing platoon
- Transfer three traffic motor officers to the swing platoon for general enforcement functions
- Transfer the two K-9 officers from their existing platoons to the swing platoon

- Transfer the warrant officer duties and responsibilities to criminal investigations and reassign this officer to the swing platoon for general enforcement functions.

This one squad would be responsible for coverage seven days per week, and would be used to address community crime, traffic, and disorder issues from a proactive perspective as well as lend support to strained CFS resources during peak hours. Also, consistent with the CPPD "core values," providing service through community partnerships can be accomplished with this swing shift. Having a dedicated cadre of personnel working for the patrol bureau captain has the potential to address many of the concerns for the CPPD all at the same time.

Communities around the country are implementing what are known as "impact" teams of officers to address community problems. These teams work with the community and other units of the police department and city/state/federal officials to identify and solve community problems. These problems can range from crime, to traffic, to disorder, to schools, etc. Essentially, this approach incorporates the "S.A.R.A" process of community policing (scanning, analysis, response, and assessment) with problem-oriented policing to eliminate community problems.

Strong consideration must be given by the CPPD toward adopting this approach. Realigning existing officers and deploying them at the appropriate time, while directing their duties through a strategic plan based upon the CPPD core values, will have a substantial impact on the quality of life in Cedar Park. This swing shift or "impact team" can be used as a resource to assist the CFS function of patrol and target community problems simultaneously.

C. Manage Demand

Recommendation:

Empanel a Calls for Service Committee in order to evaluate service demands and attempt to reduce nonemergency responses.

In calendar year 2010, the CPPD responded to more than 53,000 calls for service. Examination of data extracted from the CAD system (and detailed in the data analysis section of this report) indicates that out of these 53,000 CFS, approximately 18,522 are actual calls for service generated by public demand. The remaining 34,500 are out-of-service administrative/personal calls (12,455), directed patrol (5,537), and traffic enforcement (16,712). While these calls are calculated in the workload and staffing models, they will be excluded for the purposes of this discussion.

Table 1 lists these calls generated by public demand by category for 2010. The category "Check/Investigation" has the highest number of CFS with 3,776. "Suspicious vehicle/person" is the next highest at 2,696 CFS, "Miscellaneous" is next at 2,315 CFS. Miscellaneous can be anything from routine sick cases to other non-crime calls. These calls come through the 911 system, but are mostly direct calls for service to the CPPD headquarters.

Inspection of this information leads to several observations.

Out-of-service calls in 2010 (total of 12,455) represent 23.5 percent of all assignments, which is a very high percentage of time. There could be several reasons for this. There could be a high level of administrative responsibility associated with handling CFS in Cedar Park. Also, there could be a lack of supervision of patrol personnel, resulting in units taking themselves out of service without authorization. It could be a combination of

these factors or some other, undetermined factor. This high out-of-service rate, however, demands a closer inspection by the CPPD to determine the cause and craft a solution. The department must ensure units spend more time in service and needs to reduce the incidence of off-patrol time.

The 16,712 CFS related to traffic enforcement represent 31 percent of all CFS activity in 2010. This activity is due, clearly, related to the traffic motor officers deployed by the CPPD. This deployment may also be an important contributor to the decrease in traffic crashes over the previous year.

Transferring traffic officers to a swing squad need not significantly affect traffic safety in Cedar Park if the department uses strategic planning efforts to manage future traffic enforcement.

The CPPD handles an inordinate number of CFS that have limited or no relationship to law enforcement. The CPPD must evaluate its response to these calls. This evaluation should be performed by a committee of CPPD personnel, who should look at the volume of CFS and seek to eliminate, downsize, and streamline responses to certain types of calls by units on patrol.

Table 1. 2010 Calls For Service

Category	Total Calls	% Total
Accidents	1,439	7.8
Alarm	2,117	11.4
Animal calls	777	4.2
Assist other agency	830	4.5
Check/investigation	3,776	20.4
Crime-persons	1,065	5.7
Crime-property	1,357	7.3
Disturbance	1,586	8.6
Juvenile	400	2.2
Miscellaneous	2,315	12.5
Prisoner-arrest	164	0.9
Suspicious person/vehicle	2,696	14.6
Calls for Service Total	18,522	

The quantity and quality of CFS can be examined for enormous potential for operational efficiencies. Certain types of calls – burglar alarms, traffic crashes-property damage, and animal complaints – do not necessarily require the response of a sworn police officer. For example, at motor vehicle accidents involving only property damage, the police role is largely administrative: preparing and filing reports. Similarly, industry experience also tells us that greater than 98 percent of all burglar alarms are false alarms and that CFS regarding animal complaints are typically only nuisance-type calls without any danger. The bottom line here is that a substantial number of CFS dispatches to officers in the CPPD could be eliminated.

In 2010, the CPPD responded to more than 2,000 burglar alarms, which represented 11.4 percent of all public CFS. This equates to almost 1,000 officer hours on this one type of call (or more than 0.6 percent of all

personnel resources used in the department), as these calls require two officers to respond.

The alarm industry is a strong advocate of developing ordinances and procedures to address police responses to false alarms and will work closely with any agency exploring this issue. The 98 percent of alarm calls that are false are caused by user error, and this can be addressed by alarm management programs. For example, a double-call verification protocol is becoming the norm across the country. Alarm reduction needs to be addressed aggressively in Cedar Park. Adopting an alarm callback program has the potential to reduce calls for service by up to 2,000 calls, or roughly 11 percent of all CFS that come from the public.

In 2010, the CPPD responded to 3,776 "check/investigate" CFS. Again, the need for the response of a sworn police officer here is questionable. The majority of these calls are routine resident and business "checks," requests for information from the police, and "welfare checks." In emergency cases, sworn officers can be the difference between life and death, but in routine premises inspections, non-urgent welfare checks, etc., police officers are not needed.

Similarly, property damage traffic crashes represent almost 8 percent of the total CFS workload. Here as well, police departments across the nation are removing these types of calls from the emergency police responsibility. Response by a sworn police officer to a routine property damage traffic crash is a questionable use of emergency police resources. In 2010, the CPPD responded to 647 "blue form" traffic crashes that did not warrant an accident investigation, and therefore, did not warrant the response of a police officer.

Close inspection of the CAD data reported by the CPPD reveal in excess of 2,000 CFS related to animal complaints. CFS have been generated for officers to respond to "barking dogs," "cat at-large," "dog at-large," etc. Here again, the response of a sworn police officer to assignments of this type produce little added value from a public safety perspective.

Additionally, the CPPD staffs full-duty animal control officers (ACOs) who should be handling the majority of these calls. However, discussions with officers and supervisors in the CPPD indicate that ACOs do not work nights and the majority of the weekend shifts, thus leaving response to these calls up to sworn officers on patrol. In addition to this being a waste of valuable police resources, it is also a point of dissatisfaction that was expressed by numerous officers in the CPPD.

These four categories of CFS represent almost 25 percent of the patrol CFS workload in Cedar Park. However, the need for a police response at the large majority of these incidents is likely not necessary. These categories of CFS must be examined carefully and a determination must be made whether or not a police response should be continued. It is strongly recommended, therefore, that the CPPD establish a committee that includes all the principal stakeholders in this process and which has the responsibility of evaluating the CFS workload with the eye toward reducing nonemergency CFS response. This committee should begin with these four major categories of CFS response and formulate the response (or nonresponse) protocols for these assignments.

The data analysis supports the notion that a thorough examination by the CPPD of CFS response is necessary in order to eliminate, downsize, and streamline CFS.

The viewpoints of officers on patrol also support this notion. Officers discussed the over-response demanded by citizen-generated CFS. Anecdotes were readily offered about wasteful and needless response by CPPD officers. Officers recounted responses to leaking water heaters, black-birds on residents' lawns, "918" misdials (where the caller intends to dial 918, but holds the 1 key down too long, thus repeating it), and "continual issue" people (residents that call over and over about the same nonsensical complaint that has no police relevance). It is claimed that there is no filter between the caller and the response by the police. Clearly, this is straining police resources. The committee empanelled to explore this issue needs to look at the entirety of CFS responses with the goal of eliminating, downsizing, and streamlining CFS response.

ICMA recommends that from a policy perspective: responses to major categories of CFS be reduced, including responses to traffic accidents involving only property damage; an alarm callback system be instituted; and 911 call-takers, dispatchers, be trained to trigger a police response in cases only when there is an emergency situation.

With a reduced CFS volume, opportunities then arise for redeployment of patrol resources in the CPPD. These opportunities must be explored in context with this workload reduction, and as other units in the department become consolidated, it will be incumbent on officers working routine patrol to pick up the slack and fulfill these obligations.

D. Weekend coverage

Recommendation:

To the greatest extent possible, resources that support patrol operations should be scheduled to work nights and weekends.

Examination of the work schedules of sworn personnel reveals that of the thirty-three sworn officers assigned to nonpatrol functions, only two are scheduled to work on either Saturday or Sunday. Similarly, only one animal control officer is scheduled to work on Saturday and none on Sundays. None of the criminal investigators, community services personnel, or professional standards personnel work weekends. The bottom-line here is that police work is a 24-hour, seven-day per week, service industry and the overwhelming majority of police personnel in Cedar Park do not work weekends. This needs to be changed immediately.

Discussions with patrol personnel indicate that the lack of support on the weekends negatively impacts their performance. This situation was stressed by patrol personnel with respect to traffic enforcement, animal control, and criminal investigations.

The department needs to consider "stretching" schedules to include coverage on the weekends to support patrol personnel by deploying resources during the times and days needed.

E. Crime Prevention

The community services unit is staffed by one sergeant, one corporal, and four school resource officers (funded by the LISD). This unit performs many tasks related to community outreach, including organizing neighborhood

watches, attending community meetings, operation "Blue Santa," National Night Out, coordinating community events, conducting tours of headquarters, the citizens' police academy, and general patrol and enforcement activities in and around Cedar Park schools. The work output and professionalism of this unit is nothing short of impressive. The CPPD and the citizens of Cedar Park are fortunate to have this dedicated cadre of officers.

Since the unit is successful, it would be possible to expand the unit's duties and responsibilities from a concentration on public relations and community service toward more focus on crime prevention. The unit clearly has numerous and productive relationships with community groups in Cedar Park and can leverage these relationships to offer crime prevention services to business and residents. This crime prevention function is a natural extension of the excellent work already being performed and will link it closely to the crime prevention and crime reduction mission of the CPPD. Crime prevention services could be in the form of business and residential security surveys; auto theft prevention programs like VIN etching or vehicle marking; personal safety and awareness lectures (drugs-gangs-rape awareness, etc.); volunteer patrols; and much more.

Discussions with unit personnel indicate such an undertaking would be a natural extension of the unit's current role in the community. They are aware of these programs and believe they have the potential to flourish in Cedar Park. Because the LISD is not funding 2 positions and these positions will remain as part of the CPPD, a valuable opportunity arises. These officers can be removed from their current SRO duties and transferred to a crime prevention and community services function.

Recommendation:

Provide training opportunities and organizational support for the community services unit to expand its function and develop a robust crime prevention program in Cedar Park.

F. Special Events

The CPPD staffs a position called the special events sergeant, who is assigned to the operations bureau under the patrol day platoon lieutenant. This position is responsible for the coordination and staffing of major events, as well as the distribution and management of overtime within the department. Through this position, the CPPD manages a detailed process of overtime control and event staffing. The process appears to be effective, but it is a questionable use of a sworn position.

Recommendation:

Civilianize the special events sergeant position and return this sworn supervisor to patrol/enforcement duties.

V. Support Services

A. Criminal Investigation Division

The criminal investigation division (CID) is staffed by one sergeant and nine detectives. The detectives are assigned to the following duties:

- Property crimes – two
- Financial crimes – two
- Crimes against persons – two
- Statistical analysis/information dissemination – one
- Narcotics and Drug Crimes – one.
- Crime scene/property and evidence manager – one.

All detectives work ten-hour shifts, which means they take three days off per week. No detectives work weekends. If a detective responds to a weekend callout, overtime is paid to the detective. In order to accommodate the ten-hour shift schedule, detectives are assigned their third day off on either Monday or Friday. This practice has been in place for approximately five years and management believes that it is cost effective.

A sergeant supervises the day-to-day operations of the CID, and also manages cases and their assignment. The sergeant reviews all of the reports generated by the department, and he makes the decision as to what cases are assigned to the detectives for follow up. There is no limit on the number of cases assigned to the individual detectives and there is no limit on the number of cases the individual detective can carry in an active status. It does appear that the detectives make a concerted effort to close cases when all of the credible leads are investigated.

The staffing level within the division is appropriate for the level of work required from each detective. The department has eleven percent of its personnel assigned to CID.

In 2010, CPPD detectives were assigned 869 cases for investigation. Of these cases, the detectives cleared 189 cases, or a 21.75 percent clearance rate. The department did not report any gang activity in 2010. The department also reported 148 narcotics-related arrests in 2010.

The criminal investigations division is a full service division within the department. Detectives investigate all crimes that occur within their jurisdiction. The detectives also may investigate any other matter that may be authorized by the Chief of Police. Members of the CID enjoy a close relationship with the Williamson County Sheriff's Department, the City of Austin, and other municipal departments in the investigation of criminal activity that may involve multiple jurisdictions.

The criminal investigations division seems to be well run and well managed. The morale of the detectives assigned to the division is good. The detectives understand their job assignments and seem to work well with the other members of CID. There is also a good working relationship with the other members of the department. All that being said, we make the following recommendations for consideration by management.

Recommendation:

Closely evaluate narcotics activity in Cedar Park

The recent assignment of the drug investigator to the federal drug enforcement task force has caused some concern within the organization as to how to deal with the lower-level drug activity within the city. The 148 drug arrests in 2010 indicate that there is street-level drug activity within

the city. There is a real possibility that this drug activity might increase if there is not a dedicated investigator position to review and follow-up reported drug activity, drug arrests, and intelligence information provided by sources within the community. There is also the very real possibility that other crimes such as burglary, larceny, and robbery might increase if drug crimes are not actively investigated. The assignment of an officer to the federal task force will deliver long-term dividends to the department, and the decision to assign an officer was in the best interests of the city.

Recommendation:

Develop and implement a case management system that utilizes case solvability factors for assignment.

A second area that should be reviewed is the assignment of cases by the CID sergeant. It is the practice of detectives in CID to investigate most reported felonies and selected misdemeanors. The department should consider utilizing a solvability factor process in these assignments. This relatively simple process would be initiated by the responding officer at the time a crime report is prepared. This information from the field, which identifies circumstances and evidence relating to the case, can assist the CID sergeant in his analysis of the case and ultimately his decision to move the case forward for follow-up.

Recommendation:

Conduct an inventory of specialized equipment assigned to the CID.

The third area that should be reviewed is the equipment inventory within CID. All surveillance and electronic monitoring equipment should be inventoried to determine the equipment's condition and state of readiness for use.

B. Victims' Services

The department has a victims' services advocate who works in the criminal intelligence division. The department provides services to victims of violent crimes, sexual assaults, domestic violence, and child abuse. The victims' services advocate works closely with members of the Cedar Park Police Department. This position is funded through a state funded program, and it provides a tremendous benefit to the police department, the community, and the unfortunate victims of crime. The counseling and education provided assists greatly in reducing these types of crimes. The department and the victims' advocate are to be commended for this forward-thinking, innovative, cooperative program.

C. Code Amber Alert

The department actively supports the Amber Alert program. It places information about the program and how to help on the city's website.

D. Equipment, Vehicles and Facility

A review of the CID facility and equipment revealed no deficiencies. The workspace was adequate to handle the number of personnel assigned. It should be noted that the work space was clean and comfortable for the staff working there. The workspace also had adequate space for interviews, interrogations, and other space required for use by the public.

The CID detectives are provided with a take-home car to be used by the officers exclusively during their tour of duty. Each officer is provided with a Glock 9mm handgun. Each investigator is provided with an individual workspace.

A random inspection of the vehicles, individual workspaces, and personal equipment revealed that these items are well maintained and in good working order.

The detectives interviewed did indicate that there was interest in streamlining their report writing capabilities. They indicated that a new automated system such as a system known as "Dragon Voice" would allow them to complete report writing duties more quickly, thus allowing them to have more time to spend actually investigating cases.

E. Crime Scene Processing

The processing of crime scenes and the gathering of evidence is the responsibility of the responding patrol personnel and detectives. The patrol sergeant, patrol corporal, and each detective have fingerprint dusting kits. The patrol sergeants and the detectives have cameras available to them. The crime scene/property manager assigned to CID does not respond to crime scenes. In the event of a large, complex, or protracted investigation, the department is able to call upon the Williamson County Sheriff's Department for assistance.

The police department does not have crime scene investigators or forensic technicians at this time. The property and evidence manager who is a sworn police officer is currently assigned to manage property and evidence and is trained to perform some limited evidence analysis. Any analysis or processing that is needed at this time must be performed by the Williamson County Sheriff's Department Crime Scene personnel.

Recommendation:

Evaluate crime scene processes, including staffing a nonsworn forensic technician position(s).

The department should begin a study immediately on restructuring crime scene response procedures. Careful consideration should be given to having dedicated, nonsworn position(s) to handle crime scene investigations from start to finish. Responsibilities of this position or positions can include responding to crime scenes to gather evidence, photographing the scene, properly marking and storing evidence, communicating with the officers and detectives at the scene, preparation of crime scene reports, and analyzing collected evidence at the scene and at police headquarters. Forensic technicians could also work closely with the county, state, and federal agencies when seeking outside assistance in evidence analysis.

Dedicated positions for forensic technicians will create consistency in the investigative process. These technicians can be provided with specialized training, which is more cost effective than training patrol officers or detectives. This would also allow detectives more time to actually investigate the crime and to focus on investigative matters that require their immediate attention. It would also allow patrol officers to handle the initial response and return to road patrol duties.

There is no question that a well-trained forensic unit would add greatly to the efficiency and effectiveness of the department. Such a unit may help increase the crime clearance rate, thus making Cedar Park a safer place to live and work.

F. Evidence and Property Management

Recommendation:

- **Immediately begin to deal with the issues relating to the storage of evidence and property, and continue to make efforts to purge evidence that should be released by the courts.**
- **Staff the evidence and property management function with nonsworn personnel and reassign the sworn officer now handling this function to patrol/enforcement duties.**

The responsibility of maintaining all evidence and property storage is assigned to the criminal investigations division. The sergeant assigned to CID directly supervises one sworn police officer, who handles all evidence and other property retained by the police department. The crime scene/property and evidence manager generally works alone, with some assistance from the CID sergeant and other members of the department who are assigned temporarily to the evidence and property room to assist with administrative duties.

Recently, the department worked diligently to update records and to reorganize the evidence storage facility. The department received a best practices award and designation from the Texas Police Chiefs Association Foundation Best Practices Recognition Program. This award recognized the Cedar Park Police Department as utilizing best professional practices in the overall management of the department. The evidence and property storage facility were part of this review. As a result, the facility and the evidence/property contained within the main police building were greatly improved.

Our areas of concern are outside the confines of the main evidence storage room within the police building. The evidence room located inside the police department is orderly, and items have been bar coded for easy identification

and access. There is additional evidence and property stored in a portable trailer located within the garage at the police station. In this trailer there are thousands of pieces of evidence and property that should be inventoried, bar coded, and integrated into bar code system. There is no indication that the integrity of any of the evidence or property contained within the trailer has been contaminated or otherwise compromised, but dealing with this issue should be a priority.

There is also a large quantity of drug evidence now being stored in the police department's prisoner holding facility. Again, there is no indication that any of this evidence has been compromised in any fashion, but this evidence should be stored in an evidence facility designed for exclusively holding drugs and narcotics evidence. The drugs emit strong odors that are easily detectible when you are present in the holding facility.

There is also the issue of purging material from cases that are concluded from both the evidence and property rooms and the drug storage site. There seems to be an issue with the courts and/or the district attorney's office in obtaining releases for the destruction of drugs and other evidence.

Addressing this should be a top priority.

The Chief of Police is aware of the issues we present here, and is committed to dealing with them in the near future. He has indicated that he is preparing a plan to again temporarily assign police personnel to address this very important issue.

The first issue relating to evidence and property management is the issue of an evidence and property audit. There have been a total of three evidence and property custodians employed by the police department in the last ten years. During this period, there has been no detailed audit of the evidence

and property stored at the police department. Interviews with the property and evidence custodian/crime scene technician revealed audits have been limited to a random check of a limited number of cases.

Department Policy Number 12.07.1 states that the department has a system for documented inspection of property/evidence every six months.

Department Policy Number 12.08.1 requires an inventory sample annually or when change of personnel takes place. This policy also requires all drugs, money, and guns be inventoried annually.

The CPPD must adhere to departmental policy relating to inventories and inspections of evidence and property. If this requires the hiring or reassignment of personnel, serious consideration should be given to doing so.

G. Professional Standards Division

Our observations, discussions with staff, and review of documents related to this division indicate that this is an outstanding feature of the CPPD that warrants recognition. The chief and his staff should be commended for creating an organizational entity that is responsible for the full range of “professional standards” responsibilities. The PSD manages hiring, training, and internal investigations. Having these important functions all under the responsibility of one unit provides seamless organizational oversight of the integrity, development, and professionalization of the department. In order to improve upon an already outstanding unit, two recommendations are offered:

Recommendations:

- **Develop an “early warning system” to monitor human resources issues**

An early warning system would enable the CPPD to address employee discipline and misconduct in a proactive manner. Instead of waiting for employees to be charged with misconduct, an early warning system would help the department manage information and provide more comprehensive supervision of “at-risk” employees. Common risk factors associated with employee misconduct (sickness, absenteeism, poor performance, minor infractions, etc.) can be tracked and monitored by individual supervisors and commanders. Heeding early warning signals could lead to early intervention.

The Department of Justice conducted a comprehensive analysis of early warning systems in three major American cities: Miami, New Orleans, and Minneapolis. This report, published in July 2001, is an excellent resource for the CPPD to design and implement such a system.

- **Develop and put into place standard time frames for administering department discipline.**

Both the “Meet and Confer Agreement” and CPPD Policy 2.05.1 contain language that governs the lengths of time permitted to conduct and adjudicate internal investigations. This language, however, is not sufficient and the CPPD should consider more exact time frames to apply to internal disciplinary processes.

Feedback from rank-and-file personnel indicates that the lack of specificity in this area is a source of considerable concern for officers in the CPPD. Having disciplinary charges “hanging over your head” can have a negative impact,

not only on the officer awaiting the discipline, but also on their co-workers and families. Swift and certain discipline is the most effective discipline, and having a structured and predictable timetable for adjudicating disciplinary cases in the CPPD is strongly recommended. For example, consistent with current regulations, the CPPD has 365 days to commence disciplinary action against an employee. Once an investigation commences there should be a time limit governing how long the investigation can proceed, and a time frame for when a decision is to be made regarding discipline after the investigation is concluded. Also, a specific penalties associated with different categories of misconduct should be put in place. The range of penalties should incorporate the principles of progressive discipline and also include a list of aggravating and mitigating factors that can be used in determining sanctions. This would allow a predictable and understandable approach towards implementing employee discipline.

H. Communications

The communications section is staffed by one communications/records staff manager, three communication supervisors, and eleven dispatchers. There is also an information technology position in the police department that is paid for by the city. This employee is responsible for the police department technology maintenance, and is also required to perform additional duties outside the police department for other city departments.

There are a total of sixteen personnel in the communications section. The dispatchers work twelve-hour shifts. There are three console positions that are in operation on each shift.

The console positions are:

1. Administrative phones/radio for nonpatrol
 - a. All special operations
 - b. School resource
 - c. Selective traffic enforcement
2. Fire services
3. All other police calls and 911 dispatching.

There is a fourth console that is utilized by the supervisor to monitor activities during the shift. The shift supervisor is required to fill a dispatch position when one of the console positions is vacant due to illness, vacations, or other situations that cause the dispatch shift to be short on assigned personnel.

The communications system utilizes an enhanced 911 system and an 800 MHz radio system with a CAD (computer aided dispatch) system that interfaces with mobile data terminals (MDTs) in police vehicles.

All calls for service are dispatched by voice. Additional details and other pertinent information relating to the call can be replayed through mobile data terminals that are in all police cars.

The department has made all of the necessary upgrades to the system hardware. The system software is eleven years old. The current system does not allow communications with other municipal or county police agencies. There are interfaces available to allow interagency communication, but the department has no current plans to pursue this at this time.

The communications system is in excellent working order. The department has an excellent support program. Upgrades to the system have been made as necessary and as budget appropriations would permit.

The city has also been exploring the possibility of a partnership with Williamson County in the Sungard Public Sector OSSI system that is being used currently by the Round Rock Police Department, the Georgetown Police Department, and the Williamson County Sheriff's Department. Joining these groups is another option that would solve the issue of interagency communication.

In addition to their duties of receiving calls and dispatching officers to handle requests for service, the dispatchers have other duties that should be noted:

1. Warrants – maintaining and updating files
2. Answering administrative phones
3. Mapping system updates
4. Handling walk-in complaints between 7:00 pm and 7:00 am
5. Monitoring holding cell facility
6. Monitoring security cameras inside and outside police building
7. Handling emergency protective orders
8. Data entry for the Texas Crime Information Center (TCIC) and National Crime Information Center (NCIC)
9. Maintaining files on all NCIC and TCIC entries
10. Performing records services for the criminal intelligence division.

The reports that are generated as a result of a police response cannot be directly entered into the records system. The reports must either be handwritten or typed into the computer and later printed for a supervisor's

signature. These paper reports are then sent to CID for review and then forwarded to the records section for manual entry into the records system.

The department put a field-based reporting system into place on January 20, 2010, but it was dismantled in April 2010 due to software issues that could not be resolved. The department then returned to a paper driven system.

General Observations of Communications:

The communication section is well staffed, and the members of the communication staff are well trained and highly motivated. Employees that were interviewed and observed understood their mission and their responsibility to the citizens they serve and the officers on the street that depend on them. Morale in the communication section is high. Working conditions are very good. The communications center was also very clean and appeared to be an excellent work environment.

The communications equipment within the center is in excellent working order. The department has in-house support for the system as well as contracted maintenance programs. The department has upgraded the system when necessary and as budget appropriations would permit. There were no complaints or negative comments by any persons interviewed about the communications center equipment.

Recommendations:

Continue to explore ways to make the operation more efficient. Continuing to move toward the goal of paperless report writing in the police vehicles seems worthwhile (see also our technology recommendation).

The technology to accomplish paperless report writing is available. The issue is cost. Everyone understands that due to budget constraints, the option to

do this may be limited. However, the department should continue to explore its options to integrate this capability into its operations in the future when the funding becomes available.

The number of dispatchers and supervisors seems to work very well for the department. Any change in staffing levels - either increasing or reducing personnel - is not justified at this time

The department should pursue any opportunity to enhance its capability to communicate by radio and mobile data terminal with neighboring jurisdictions. This instant communication can add immeasurably to the effectiveness and safety of citizens and officers. This should be a high priority.

No additional work responsibilities should be given to the dispatchers. As was mentioned earlier in the report, the dispatchers have a great number of things to do during their shifts. The dispatchers did not complain about these additional duties, but there is a sense that any new, additional duties could impact their ability to handle their very important primary responsibility.

Consideration should be given to preparing a future plan for communications within the department. Some things to consider would be future staffing needs, equipment needs, relations with other agencies, sharing costs with other agencies, how to better assist the officers on the street, specialized training, and other issues that confront communications employees. A planning and self-assessment project would be a valuable tool in mapping future operational strategies for the communications section.

Efforts should be made to limit the amount of intrusion into the dispatch/communications center by on-duty police personnel. The dispatch

personnel recognize that they must communicate with on-duty personnel and supply them with information and support during their tour of duty. The dispatch personnel also recognize that visits from on-duty officers distracts them and takes away from their primary responsibility of communicating with the officers in the field. This issue should not be addressed by merely banning all noncommunication personnel from the dispatch center. The ideas and thoughts of all of the department members should be considered to find a solution that will resolve the issue but will also allow necessary communication with dispatch/communications staff members.

VI. Administrative & Personnel

A. Labor-Management Relations

Employees up to the rank of lieutenant are covered by a "Meet and Confer Agreement" between the City of Cedar Park and the Cedar Park Police Association (CPPA). The agreement contains standard language governing personnel, wage, and benefit policies and is in effect until September 30, 2011.

As discussed previously in this report, there is a strong perception that the command staff of the CPPD is not communicating effectively with the rank-and-file members of the department. Although the "Meet and Confer" agreement stipulates an annual meeting between the city and the employee association, much more frequent and regular contact between the command staff and the CPPA is warranted.

Recommendation:

Schedule an informal monthly meeting between the chief and the president of the CPPA to discuss matters of mutual interest and importance.

The purpose of this meeting is not only to discuss matters contained in the agreement, but also as a mechanism to allow the rank-and-file employees an opportunity to raise issues with the chief and the command staff that are not being addressed currently. This forum would give employees an opportunity to raise issues and get responses directly from the chief and permit an open dialogue between both parties. It is also recommended that this meeting be informal, but include a working agenda and minutes. This process would accomplish many important goals: it will improve communication between the chief and the department, it will allow

employees to raise important issues in an informal environment, and it will foster a better working relationship between the CPPD and the CPPA.

Recommendation:

Ensure the command staff is more visible and accessible to subordinate sworn and nonsworn personnel.

During our numerous group and individual discussions with officers and supervisors in the CPPD, a strong and reoccurring theme was raised. There is a strong perception that the chief and the command staff are inaccessible and “out of touch” with the day-to-day operations and concerns of the rank-and-file. The perspective of the rank-and-file is that communications within the department only flow from the top down, the command staff does not have a visible presence among the employees, and there is a disconnect between officers and supervisors and the command staff. This perception of a disconnect has the potential to manifest itself as negative behavior, dysfunctional communications, and inferior service delivery. It must be addressed immediately.

There appears to be a recognition of this disconnect, as members of the command staff have performed “ride-alongs” with subordinate officers on patrol. While this effort is commended, reconnecting and ensuring proper organizational communications needs a more robust approach than simply riding along with officers on patrol. This is a good first step, but a more deliberate and coordinated effort must be undertaken to reestablish communications, visibility, and understanding of the management of the CPPD with subordinate officers and supervisors.

An insightful comment was made by a CPPD officer that captures the sentiment of this disconnect. It was stated that the “command staff should wear their vests to work.” This implies that they do not work out in the front

lines with the officers, but only manage from their offices. It would serve the department well if the command staff worked nights, weekends, and performed duties on patrol among the officers. This would allow them to observe tasks being performed, observe problems first-hand, and seek input from officers as the officers perform their jobs.

B. Technology

Recommendations:

- **Empanel a Technology Committee with representatives from the CPPD and from city government.**

The CPPD is a professionally organized and managed agency. The one exception to this statement is in the area of information technology. The ICMA site visit revealed numerous instances of inadequate or outdated technology.

- The CAD system and MDTs need updating. Officers cannot self-generate calls. Also, officers must wade through a series of questions in the MDT log in order to learn about the particulars of a call for service. This is a cumbersome process that needs attention.
- The records management system is outdated and needs improvement. Databases are not integrated and are difficult to query. Civilian personnel were observed entering data into the systems from handwritten and typed reports generated by uniformed personnel
- The evidence management system is inadequate and is a serious liability for the agency (see comments below).

Currently, the CPPD has one non-sworn member assigned to IT management and administration. Consideration should be given to expanding IT responsibilities and adding personnel to this important area.

C. Prisoner Detention Facility

The prisoner detention facility was examined during the site visit. Detention cells and related equipment were viewed. The Cedar Park Police Department detention facility policies were also reviewed. The department is complying with these policies as well as complying with state and federal regulations for detention facilities of this type.

Recommendation:

One comment should be noted regarding the storage of drug evidence within the detention facility. The items are secure in the facility, but as soon as practical these items should be stored in another location.

D. Fitness

Recently, the CPPD created a fitness committee, with the goal of improving the fitness of CPPD officers. The benefits of fitness in the police profession are well known. Lower risk of disease and injury, as well as emotional well-being, are associated with improved levels of physical fitness. While the goal of achieving a more fit department is commendable, the process by which this goal is being pursued is causing considerable dissatisfaction among the officers. In fact, the process itself appears to be undermining the laudable goal of employee well-being.

Recommendation:

Reconstitute the fitness committee to include non-department fitness, health, and human resources professionals.

The department should use fitness goals and a mix of incentives to implement a mandatory fitness program.

A substantial amount of feedback was received by sworn officers and supervisors that the current process of establishing fitness standards and proposed compliance with those standards is creating a negative employment environment. Officers are in fear of termination because of their perceived inability to attain potential fitness standards being considered by the committee. And the positive environment that is possible with a fitness program is actually having the opposite effect of disrupting the work environment.

Experience in human resources indicates that implementing such fitness standards must be done gradually, using a mix of incentives to reinforce positive behavior. Reinforcements such as merit pay, bonus pay, lower medical co-pays, awards, extra vacation days, disciplinary action, assignment changes, etc. can be used to motivate employees to maintain fitness standards, and will work toward the positive goals of instilling a fitness program.

E. Rules, Regulations, Policies, and Procedures

ICMA reviewed the CPPD's rules, regulations, policies, and procedure manuals and found that the documents provide direction and guidance to the police officers and civilians in the department. An extensive review of each procedure is beyond the scope of this report. Examination of the most critical and frequent police policies and procedures reveal that the CPPD has thorough and comprehensive policies in these critical areas and which are consistent with respect to acceptable industry standards. Recently, the CPPD was awarded "Recognized Status" from the Texas Police Chiefs Association

Foundation Best Practices Recognition Program, and the ICMA review of critical procedures supports the conferral of this award.

ICMA reviewed CPPD policies on the use of force, domestic violence, vehicle pursuits, prisoner processing, and complaints against police officers. In general, these policies are current and accurately reflect current laws and accepted industry standards in these critical areas. The CPPD should be commended for adhering to such high standards and promulgating appropriate and relevant policies.

VII. Summary

The CPPD is a well-managed, professional police agency that provides excellent service to the community of Cedar Park. The result of the ICMA study indicates the addition of nonsworn personnel is necessary in several key areas. Consideration should be given to adding forensic technicians to address a critical problem in the management of evidence and property, as well as enhance crime scene processing. Consideration should also be given to adding civilian staff to administer numerous tasks now being performed by sworn personnel, such evidence control and crime scene investigations, overtime and event planning and vehicle maintenance. Similarly, consideration should be given to assigning dedicated personnel to information technology to assist the CPPD improve its technology infrastructure, and add personnel to animal control to cover shortages at night and on the weekends.

Based upon the ICMA review of CPPD operations, there appears to be a sufficient level of sworn positions to meet community demands for service. It is recommended, however, that a thorough examination of those service demands be undertaken to eliminate unnecessary calls and streamline the response to CFS. Also recommended is realignment of existing resources to deploy an additional platoon(s) of officers as a "swing" or "impact" shift during peak hours of service demand.

It is also recommended that the CPPD embrace a rigorous process of strategic planning for major elements of operations. At a minimum, strategic plans should be created to address traffic safety, serious crime (larceny), and crime prevention. These plans should be comprehensive and engage all levels of the organization from patrol, to criminal investigations, to administration. And finally, ICMA recommends that the CPPD examine the

current process of organizational communications with the goal of making communications in the organization vertical and horizontal, open, and free-flowing.

Embracing and adopting these recommendations will undoubtedly advance the CPPD from its current position of strength to an even more outstanding organization.