

Public Safety

I. INTRODUCTION

Between the months of May and November 2007, community members were invited to participate in the development of the 2012 Strategic Plan. A total of 1,828 participants provided their input into this phase of the Strategic Planning process. The following breakdown provides the number of participants per citizen engagement venue:

- Community meetings: 404 (74 Adult, 330 Youth)
- Internet survey: 129 completed surveys
- 2007 Citizen Survey: 1,287 citizens
- E-mail responses: 8 responses

The 2007 Citizen Survey asked randomly selected County residents to assess the relative importance of various board planning and strategic goals that the County should pursue in the next three to four years. In all methods of citizen engagement, Public Safety was one of the four categories that consistently appeared in the top six.

More specifically, the respondents and participants identified the following issues of strategic importance relative to Public Safety: Law Enforcement

- Fire and Rescue
- Reduce Crime / Safe Community
- Reduce Gang Violence
- Juvenile Crime
- Public Safety Communications / 911 Services
- Community Safety Education and Awareness
- Emergency Services and Disaster Preparedness
- Community / Police Relations

II. POPULATION/CUSTOMERS

This chapter of the Strategic Issue Analysis describes the population/customers that are served by this issue. It details the characteristics and changing demographics of the customer group and answers the question-Who are we serving?

A. Overall Population

The 2007 estimated population of PWC is 381,221. The county population has grown by 56.5% since 1990 when the population was 215,686. Since 2000, growth has been 73.6%.

Table 1: PWC Population¹

Year	Population	Data Type
1990	215,686	(Actual)
2000	280,813	(Actual)
2007	381,221	Estimated
2010	415,763	Forecast
2015	463,343	Forecast
2020	491,456	Forecast
2025	523,668	Forecast

Table 2: PWC Age Group Breakdown²

Age Group	2000	2010	2030	% Change
Under 5	24,007	25,623	34,552	26%
15-19	20,433	27,478	31,452	11%
30-34	24,562	20,281	31,048	15%
45-49	20,543	32,484	27,912	-11.60%
55-59	12,227	23,192	28,909	125%
60-64	7,684	19,186	25,847	135%
65-69	4,944	11,837	26,218	221%
70-74	3,546	6,884	20,569	299%

B. Children, Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities

Are the most vulnerable populations since they are at high risks of fire and medical emergencies and crime victimization (ex. abuse, fraud). The increasing numbers of residents in these categories can impact the ability of public safety agencies to provide services.

C. School Age Youth

Early intervention is the key for an effective public safety strategy. School and youth based programs such as youth mentoring, police Explorer programs, 2nd grade fire safety education and school resource officer initiatives are keys to this strategy and very popular with the community. As the school age children population continues to grow, so too must these education, prevention and awareness programs. There are 53 elementary, 15 middle and 10 high schools serving over 72,000 students which is an increase of 1,877 students from the previous year.

¹ PWC Office of Information Technology, PWC Standard Dataset December 2007

² Virginia Employment Commission

D. Race and ethnicity composition of PWC

Table 3: Race and Ethnicity Composition of PWC³

Race/Ethnicity	Current	% change from 2006
White	68.9%	62.5%
Black	18.8%	19.4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.9%	6.8%
Hispanic	9.7%	18.1%
Aleutian Islander/Native American	0.4%	0.8%

Table 4: Region of Birth of PWC foreign born population 2007⁴

Region of Birth	%'age
Europe	4.6%
Asia	30.9%
Africa	9.7%
Latin America	53.9%
Other	0.9%

E. Job Growth

More jobs and business in the County are attracting a larger daytime population resulting in higher public safety service demands. It is anticipated that from 2002 to 2025 an additional 78,493 jobs will be located in the County, an increase of 91.3%

Table 5: PWC private/public sector jobs⁵

Year	Jobs	Data Type
1990	55,222	Actual
2000	78,084	Actual
2002	85,907	Actual
2007	101,900	Actual
2010	124,000	Projected
2020	152,800	Projected
2025	164,400	Projected

F. Motoring Public

Commuter and vehicle driver expectations are high regarding rapid public safety responses to accidents, traffic control/congestion issues, roadways and commuter lots that are safe for travel. The latest Department of Motor Vehicle Statistics reveal between 2001 and 2006, the number of licensed drivers in the County increased over 18% from 207,656 to 245,509.

Results from the 2006 US Census indicated that 25.8% of all workers in PWC travel 60 or more minutes one way to work. This figure is more than three times the national

³ PWC Office of Information Technology, PWC Standard Dataset December 2007

⁴ PWC Office of Information Technology, PWC Standard Dataset December 2007

⁵ Virginia Employment Commission

average. It also indicated that the average travel time to work for PWC commuters is 39.5 minutes. This is up from 36.0 minutes in 1990. The Census also indicated that nearly 70% of PWC's workers drive to work alone. About 18.2% carpool to work, which is down from 18.8% in 2000. About 5% use public transportation, which is slightly higher than the national average of 4.8% and the Virginia average of 4.0%.

Table 6: 2006 Prince William Commuter Information⁶

Avg time	39.5 minutes
Car poolers	18.20%
Solo drivers	70%

G. Homeowners

Homeowners expect rapid and efficient responses to emergency medical situations, fires and criminal matters such as burglaries, vandalisms and larcenies. As the number of homeowners continues to increase, public safety demands will continue to grow as well.

Table 7: Households in PWC⁷

Year	# of Households	% Increase
1990	70,253	
2000	94,570	26%
2007	127,617	26%
2030	193,127	34%

III. DESIRED OUTCOMES

Each agency strives to provide fast, efficient service to the community; however these efforts can be impacted by changes in trends that require adjustments in the delivery of service. This chapter also includes the results of citizen satisfaction surveys, and addressing citizen desires for the future. This chapter answers the questions—What trends are seen related to the issue? Are the trends improving, declining or remaining neutral?

- **Citizen Satisfaction Surveys**

The public safety agencies maintained a high level of satisfaction from citizens over the past 5 years and have shown overall improvement since FY 93. These satisfaction rates exceeded that of the overall satisfaction rate of all PWC agencies, which ranged from 89.5% to 92.1%. (Source: PWC Citizen Satisfaction Survey 2007)

⁶ Prince William County of Information Technology, Prince William County Demographic Fact Sheet Fourth Quarter 2007

⁷ Office of Information Technology Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Table 8: Citizen Satisfaction with Public Safety Agencies⁸

Department	FY 93	FY 03	FY 04	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07
Police Dept.	88.7%	93.2%	93.7%	93.7%	92.5%	92.3%
Fire Protection	97.2%	97.1%	98.2%	98.2%	97.9%	98.4%
Medical Rescue	96.6%	97.2%	97.4%	98.3%	95.7%	98.5%
Sheriff's Office	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	94.5%
Public Safety Communications	N/A	91%	91.9%	95.2%	92.5%	94.6%

- **Feeling safe in neighborhoods**

A high percentage of citizens continue to report they feel safe in their neighborhoods, particularly in the daytime. The trend for daytime safety increased slightly, while the night time trend remained steady.

Table 9: Citizen's Satisfaction - Feeling Safe in Neighborhoods⁹

Satisfaction Questions	FY 03	FY 04	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07
Feeling Safe in Neighborhood--Daylight	93.1%	91.9%	92.8%	93%	94.3%
Feeling Safe in Neighborhood--Night time	86.2%	86.3%	85.7%	85.6%	86.7%

- **Adult Detention Center (ADC) Inmate Population**

The number of inmates housed in the ADC exceeded its operational capacity and this trend will continue, despite “farming out” prisoners to other facilities outside PWC and the soon to be completed expansion. Other jails in the Commonwealth also experienced overcrowding, but not to the extent at the ADC.

Table 10: Percent of Daily Operating Capacity at ADC¹⁰

Jurisdictions	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03	FY 04	FY 05
Prince William	132%	140%	139%	146%	146%
Henrico	114%	129%	134%	136%	129%
Chesterfield	134%	117%	126%	135%	129%
Arlington	114%	119%	126%	135%	129%
Alexandria	113%	117%	132%	136%	125%
Fairfax	97%	84%	97%	99%	98%

- **Public Safety Dispatched Calls for Service**

The number of calls dispatched over the past few years has increased as the population of PWC increased. This trend is likely to continue as the population continues to increase and, in the case of medical related calls, as the population ages.

⁸ PWC Citizen Satisfaction Survey 2007

⁹ IBID

¹⁰ 2006 SEA Report

Table 11: Public Safety Dispatched Calls for Service¹¹

Dispatched Calls	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03	FY 04	FY 05	FY 06
Police calls for service	108,087	108,815	113,313	115,866	120,052	124,781
Fire and Rescue calls for service	27,461	29,709	29,556	31,442	31,588	34,034

- **Mental Health Client Admissions to State Facilities**

The number of admissions and re-admissions to state mental health facilities has shown an upward trend over the past 5 years. PWC, with the exception of FY 03 consistently had the highest admission rate (per 100,000 population) among comparable jurisdictions. This trend will likely continue due to the reduced number of private hospital beds and increasing population trends. This will also impact the police and sheriff's agencies as it will delay locating bed space at hospitals in locations that are further away. These numbers are expected to increase with changes being made to mental health legislation this year.

Table 12: # of Admissions & Re-Admissions per 100,000 Population¹²

Jurisdiction	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03	FY 04	FY 05	FY 06
Prince William	35.3	42.5	35.5	35.3	44.7	51.2
Chesapeake	19.8	37.2	45.5	12.8	21.1	25
Chesterfield	9.1	16.3	18.5	9.2	26.5	17.8
Fairfax	28	26.8	28.2	21.8	29.7	33.2
Henrico	16.3	12.3	18.6	8.9	31.4	34.2

- **Residential Fire-Related Deaths**

Fire and Rescue strives to minimize these deaths through education and inspections. The rate of deaths per 100,000 population in PWC is one of the lowest compared to other jurisdictions.

Table 13: Residential Fire-Related Deaths per 100,000 Population¹³

Jurisdiction	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03	FY 04	FY 05	FY 06
Prince William	0.34	1.59	0.61	0	0.28	0.27
Chesterfield	1.13	1.48	0.73	0.35	0.35	0.68
Fairfax	0.2	0.7	0.5	0.69	0.98	0.78
Henrico	0	1.48	2.19	1.07	0.35	0.7
Howard	N/A	N/A	0	0.37	0.37	0
Loudoun	N/A	0	0	0	0.4	0

¹¹ 2006 SEA Report

¹² IBID

¹³ IBID

IV. BASELINE TRENDS/RESULTS

Public Safety is a strategic goal in the adopted 2004-2008 Strategic Plan. The results of citizen surveys in 2003 indicated residents ranked their desire to have the county safe from crime as the number one priority. While it is impossible to have a crime-free community, it is possible to reduce the opportunity for crime to occur and focus resources on identifying crime trends, calls for service needs, enforcement of laws, educating the public and ensuring adequate staffing levels. The following are the outcome measures recommended by citizens and adopted by the Board of County Supervisors in 2003. These community outcomes measure the efforts in achieving the strategic goals.

- PWC will rank in the lower third of the COG Regional Crime Rate Index with a Part I crime rate of less than 24 per 1000 population.

The Council of Governments (COG) Crime Rate Index was developed by the PWC Police Department and is a comparison of crime rates among police departments within the participating COG jurisdictions. The desired outcome target is for PWC to rank in the lowest third with a crime rate of less than 24 per 1000. The 2006 COG statistics, the most current data, reflects PWC is within the lowest third with a crime rate of 21.6 per 1000 population.

Table 14: 2006 COG Crime Rate Comparison¹⁴

Jurisdiction	Crime Rate	Part I Crimes	Population
Greenbelt, MD	59.3	1,275	21,500
Washington, DC	59.1	34,423	582,049
Prince Georges Co., MD	55.2	45,292	841,315
Takoma Park, MD	45.9	794	17,299
Gaithersburg, MD	43	2,527	58,741
City of Frederick, MD	38.5	2,260	58,650
City of Manassas, VA	36.8	1,402	38,066
City of Rockville, MD	35.2	1,842	52,375
City of Falls Church, VA	35	362	10,333
City of Manassas Park, VA	31.4	424	13,500
College Park, MD	30.1	741	24,657
City of Fairfax, VA	27.3	615	22,500
Prince William County	21.6	8,026	371,178
Fairfax County, VA	16.8	17,108	1,016,483
Loudoun County, VA	12.3	3,311	270,056
Frederick County, MD	9.9	1,691	229,892

¹⁴ Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments 2006 Annual Report on Crime and Crime Control

PWC continued to see a decline in its Part I crimes over the past 4 years despite an increase in the County's population.

Table 15: PWC Crime Rate per 1000 residents¹⁵

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007
Rate	24.5	22.8	21.6	19.8

- Maintain a police emergency (in-progress) average response time of 7 minutes or less

This measure provides an indication of how quickly police units respond on average to emergency (life threatening) and in-progress calls. Over the period of the past several years, the response times have consistently averaged just below 7 minutes, which meets the outcome goals.

The Police Department's responses are based upon an established call prioritization procedure, which enables officers to be dispatched more quickly to calls involving emergencies and in-progress calls such as assaults, burglaries, robberies, etc. while calls involving incidents that don't meet these criteria are dispatched as staffing availability permits.

- Attain a juvenile arrest rate of 15.0 per 1000 youth population per year.

Table 16: Juvenile Arrest Rate per 1,000 Youth Population¹⁶

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Arrest Rate	13.4	13	14.5	14.7

The desired outcome has been met throughout the current strategic plan time frame. This represents a significant decline in the arrest rate from previous years, where the arrest rate was at or above 20 per 1,000 youth. One disturbing trend has emerged though: Juveniles have been arrested more frequently for violent crimes such as murder, aggravated assaults, rapes and robbery over the past 4 years.

Table 17: Juvenile's Arrested for Violent Crimes¹⁷

Type	2004	2005	2006	2007
Robbery	6	14	41	37
Aggravated Assault	36	38	46	41
Murder	0	0	3	2
Rape	4	0	2	1
Total	46	52	92	81

Juvenile arrests have remained at approximately 11% of all arrests over the above timeframe. Prevention efforts were made through programs as well. This was accomplished by;

¹⁵ Prince William County Police Department 2007 Crime Statistics Reports

¹⁶ Prince William County Police Department 2004-2007 Crime Statistics Reports

¹⁷ William County Police Department 2004-2007 Crime Statistics Reports Juvenile Arrests

1. Increasing the number of school resource officers (SROs) into most high schools and middle schools,
 2. Increasing the number of unannounced probation checks,
 3. Increasing juvenile gang enforcement efforts through arrests, search warrants and coordinating with other law enforcement and PWC government agencies,
 4. Initiating the “Be Aware” program for elementary school children until funding constraints eliminated this and the D.A.R.E. program, and
 5. Beginning a street robbery suppression initiative.
- PWC will attain a closure rate of 23% for Part I crimes

Table 18: PWC’s Part I Crimes Closure Rate¹⁸:

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007
Rate	22.2	22.3	21.8	24.6

The Police Department closure rate is the percent of major crimes that are closed because of an arrest, the victim no longer wants to prosecute, or other circumstances outside the control of law enforcement that prevents an arrest or prosecution. The desired outcome is to attain a closure rate of 23%. The Department struggled to achieve that rate over the past 4 years averaging just over 22%. In 2006, an increase in street robberies was partly to blame for the decreased closure rate. A Robbery Suppression Initiative started during the year and continued into 2007 resulting in the solving of a greater number of these and other crimes which helped enable the Department to exceed its closure rate goal by 1.6%. The clearance rates in PWC continue to remain above the national average.

Table 19: Comparison of PWC’s Closure Rates to National Average¹⁹

Closure Rates	Violent Crime		Property Crime	
	PWC	National	PWC	National
2005	59.0%	45.5%	19.2%	16.3%
2006	54.9%	44.3%	18.3%	15.8%
2007	58.3%	N/A*	21.6%	N/A*

*National figures for 2007 have not been released.

- The vehicle crash rate per vehicle miles traveled will be no more than 5 percentage points over the previous year.

Table 20: PWC Vehicle Crash Rate and Annual Percentage Change²⁰

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Rate	.000608	.000626	.000637	.000641	.000624	.000508
% Change	-4.4%	2.9%	1.8%	.05%	-2.7%	-18.6%

¹⁸ Prince William County Police Department 2004-2007 Crime Statistics Reports

¹⁹ Prince William County Police Department 2005-2007 Crime Statistics Reports, “Crime in the United States 2006 Department of Justice”

²⁰ COG data

This information is based upon COG data as it relates to total vehicle miles traveled each year and the number of crashes that are reported here in PWC. There were 9,212,075 vehicle miles traveled and 4,684 reported crashes. These rates remained fairly steady over the previous years; however the 2007 data reflects a significant drop in crashes despite the increased number of miles traveled. The number of crashes that resulted in fatalities, which had been rising over the years, also saw a drop to 24, from a high last year of 31. The number of deaths, which also had been rising, dropped to 24 from a high last year of 35. Excessive speed and alcohol continue to be contributing factors in fatal crashes.

Table 21: PWC Vehicle Crash Data (2004-2007)²¹

Type	2004	2005	2006	2007
Miles traveled	8,606,200	8,821,725	9,075,175	9,212,075
Crashes	5498	5656	5668	4684
Fatal Crashes	17	25	31	24
Deaths	20	26	35	24

The factors contributing to this significant reduction are not clear. Possible explanations include public education efforts at the local and regional levels with programs such as public service announcements, DUI checkpoints, “Smart, Safe and Sober,” as well as overall enforcement efforts. Drivers were also subjected to additional fines for certain driving offenses that frequently contribute to crashes (reckless driving, DUI, no license, etc.). PWC also saw road improvements such as Sudley Manor Drive, Linton Hall Road, and Minnieville Road which eased traffic congestion.

- Hold residential fire-related deaths to less than two per year.
- Maintain fire injuries at 11 or fewer per 100,000 residents per year.

Table 22: PWC Residential Fire Injuries/Residential Fire Deaths (FY01-FY07)²²

Type	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07
Fire Injuries / 100k	8.18	8.08	14.57	9.61	11	7.5	6.4
Residential Fire Deaths	1	4	2	0	1	1	2

During FY02, two people perished in a townhouse fire in Dale City and two others were killed as a result of a townhouse fire in the Sudley area. There are many variables associated with fire deaths and injuries. Historically, this number fluctuates over a multi-year period. However, fire-related injuries are showing a gradual decline. The mean for fire deaths during this period is 1.6 per year and 9.3 per 100,000 residents for fire injuries. The ultimate measure of success for the Department of Fire and Rescue is zero fire deaths or injuries.

Fire and Rescue must continue their diligent efforts to educate the public on general and home fire safety. This includes taking prudent fire safety precautions in the home and maintaining and practicing a fire safety evacuation plan that includes occupant accountability and notification to responding fire units.

²¹ Prince William County Police Department Vehicle Crash Data

²² Fire and Rescue PAMS reports/ 2006 SEA

- Attain a witnessed cardiac arrest survival rate of 10 percent or greater.

Table 23: Witnessed Cardiac Arrest Survival Rate (FY04-FY07)²³

	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07
Witnessed Cardiac Arrest Survival Rate	14	15	21	33*

** Cardiac arrest must be witnessed by fire and rescue personnel with a shockable electrocardiogram (ECG) rhythm (ventricular fibrillation or ventricular tachycardia) and a return of circulation (pulse) prior to arrival at the hospital. This methodology may differ from other statistical models and appears to be too specific to offer usable data. Fire and Rescue is exploring state mandated reporting that may offer a more useful measure of system assessment and performance.*

- The County will experience a 4% improvement in ALS, BLS and fire suppression response times over FY04.
 - Fire suppression time (high densities areas)
 - BLS response time (high densities areas)
 - ALS response time (high densities areas)

The Department of Fire and Rescue has historically reported response times for Fire Suppression, Advanced Life Support (ALS) and Basic Life Support (BLS) with data obtained through an automated reporting process. The methodology used for the historical data is not available due to its proprietary nature and thus, the data source will no longer be used for future calculation. An alternative data source has been identified and tested with County Internal Audit staff validating the results. The actual systemwide response measures in the Office of the Chief Program for FY 05 and FY 06 have been changed to reflect the new data methodology. The systemwide response data was calculated first due to its link to the Strategic Plan and the Service Efforts and Accomplishments (SEA) report and the fact that it reports on the entire fire and rescue system's impact on the community.

In addition to utilizing a new methodology to report response time data, the Department of Fire and Rescue and the Fire and Rescue Association have adopted new measures of performance based on nationally recommended and recognized National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) performance standards.

The Primary System-Wide Response Measures currently await the review and approval from the Prince William Board of County Supervisors. With the exception of Emergency Incident Response, these measures are based on Standard #1710 published by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Emergency Incident Response is a local performance measure adopted by the County's FRA.

- Meet or exceed response times established for Fire and Rescue in Primary System-Wide Response Measures:
 - Turnout time <= (60 seconds / 1 minute)
 - Emergency incident response <= (240 seconds / 4 minutes)
 - First engine on scene - suppression <= (240 seconds / 4 minutes)

²³ Fire and Rescue 2006 SEA / 2007 PAMS

- Full first-alarm assignment on scene - suppression <= (480 seconds / 8 minutes)
- Advanced Life Support (ALS) Response <= (480 seconds / 8 minutes)

Table 24: Fire and Rescues Department Response Measures²⁴

Response Measures	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07
Turnout Time	15%	41%	34%	38%
Emergency Incident Response	62%	55%	51%	48%
1st Engine on Scene (Suppression)	60%	48%	46%	45%
Full First-Alarm Assignment (Suppression)	53%	34%	27%	24%
ALS Response	82%	79%	78%	78%

The Primary System-Wide Response Measures replace the previous standards of performance for Advanced Life Support (ALS), Basic Life Support (BLS), and Fire Suppression responses which were based on a subjective measure of density (e.g., low, medium, high).

Under the new response criteria, Fire and Rescue performance is based on turnout time and response time. Turnout time is defined in the NFPA standard as the time beginning when units acknowledge notification of the emergency to the beginning point of response time. Response time is the travel time that begins when units are en route to the emergency incident and ends when units arrive at the scene. The performance standards identified in NFPA 1710 are based on the presumption that all fire and rescue units are fully staffed by appropriately trained and qualified emergency response providers at all times (e.g., 24/7).

For all units and all stations, the identified target for turnout time is 60 seconds (1 minute). The response times specified in the standard vary; however, each of these performance objectives should be achieved 90% of the time on all incidents that are measured. Clearly, with the exception of ALS response, Fire and Rescue is falling well below the established targets. The data suggests that considerable progress and improvement in this area is needed. There are a number of factors that influence these statistics including inadequate data collection, non-standard design of fire and rescue stations, training, insufficient number of fire and rescue stations, staffing, and unit workload. Each of these issues will need to be addressed in order to improve this strategic outcome for Fire and Rescue.

- Increase the percentage of citizens who report they are prepared to be self-sufficient in the event of a disaster.

²⁴ Fire and Rescue CAD data

Table 25: # of Days Residents State Citizen's are Self-Sufficient in the Event of an Emergency²⁵

Days Self-Sufficient	With electricity	Without electricity
3 days or less	16%	33.3%
4 days to 1 week	40.8%	43.6%
8 days or more	43.2%	23.1%

With respect to our citizens' ability to shelter in place, the survey results are mixed. Based on the methodology used for this survey, the results imply that citizens can shelter in place for longer periods in some cases without electricity than with electricity. This data will need to be supplemented with further research to confirm the capability of our citizens to be self-sufficient for a defined period during a disaster. Based on current data, emergency planners have concern that the results are overly optimistic. Planners will continue to assess this situation and examine ways to improve the number of citizens that are truly prepared to be self-sufficient for extended periods in the event of a disaster with or without electricity.

V. *STORY BEHIND THE TRENDS*

This chapter of the Strategic Issue Analysis looks at the internal and external opportunities and challenges associated with this issue. A factor is considered external if the agencies have no direct control over it. A factor is considered internal if the agency has direct control over it. This chapter is meant to provide important information and analysis for the next phase of the strategic planning process - developing strategies and objectives (solutions). As such, this chapter answers the question - What are the external and internal factors that will affect this issue over the next four years?

Public safety strengths and challenges are presented in this report in the following seven categories: Community Safety, Emergency Preparedness, Equipment, Facilities, Staffing, Technology, and Traffic Safety.

Community Safety

Table 26: Citizen Satisfaction with Public Safety Agencies²⁶

Function	FY 93	FY 03	FY 04	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07
Police Dept.	88.7%	93.2%	93.7%	93.7%	92.5%	92.3%
Fire Protection	97.2%	97.1%	98.2%	98.2%	97.9%	98.4%
Medical Rescue	96.6%	97.2%	97.4%	98.3%	95.7%	98.5%
Sheriff's Office	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	94.5
Public Safety Communications	N/A	91%	91.9%	95.2%	92.5%	94.6%

Source: PWC Citizen Satisfaction Survey 2007

Strong, positive citizen attitudes and overall satisfaction with public safety agencies have provided support for funding public safety staffing and resource needs in recent years.

²⁵ 2007 Citizen's Satisfaction Survey

²⁶

Each public safety agency received high levels of satisfaction in response to the citizen surveys and has internal quality control systems in place to ensure their members provide services to citizens in a manner consistent with PWC standards.

Uniformed public safety members are the most recognized employee in the county and frequently are the first to be called when a resident needs assistance. They are also visible in the schools to both educate and protect students and faculty. Crime prevention officers have the responsibility to educate the public and encourage participation in crime prevention programs such as Neighborhood and Business Watches.

The Criminal Investigation Division (CID) is responsible for the overall Police Department's clearance rate for all Part 1 offenses. These offenses include murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft and attempts to commit these offenses. CID supervisors routinely review all Police investigations to ensure the proper case closure standards are being followed and work closely with the Crime Analysis Unit to detect crime trends, determine patterns and disseminate this information to officers within and outside the Department. Specialized units, such as the Gang and Street Crimes units, target specific groups, individuals and locations where known or suspected criminal activity occurs. This also includes assisting probation officers in monitoring residents who are under court supervision for a variety of offenses including sex offenders and gang members.

The Sheriff's Office has the responsibility to ensure the safety and security of all judicial staff and public that access the judicial campus on a daily basis. Acts of violence are on the rise nationwide at judicial centers. People screened entering the Courthouse increased by 17% from FY04 - FY07, or more than 500,000 people from FY03 - FY07. This is an average of 2,381 people per day, or an average of 265 people per hour. The Sheriff's Office Road Units have seen an 11% increase in Civil Process from FY04-FY07, along with the rise of Warrant Service, Prisoner/Mental Transports, and Funeral Escorts.

In addition to providing fire, EMS, special rescue, and hazardous materials response services to the community, Fire and Rescue places great emphasis on educating the public to prevent fires and injuries. Personnel from the Community Relations section, assisted by many other fire and rescue personnel, provide information on the proper installation of child safety seats, home fire safety, injury prevention, and emergency preparedness. Efforts to educate the public begin very early starting with the second grade program provided by Fire and Rescue in cooperation with the PWC Public Schools.

External Challenges

- **Crime Trends**

Trends develop after the offenses occur and are analyzed by members of the police department and its Crime Analysis Unit. These trends can be short lived or ongoing involving multiple jurisdictions. Overall crime has decreased in recent years, but some such as robberies have increased. The sharing of this information with other agencies is an ongoing effort. Prosecution of these and all other cases is pursued through the Commonwealth Attorney's office. Their dedicated and busy staff does an admirable job despite their case load and staffing issues.

- **Large Court Dockets**

The increasing population leads to a larger court docket and longer time spent in court. Judges try to expedite cases through but must also be mindful of ensuring due process for all. One method of handling large dockets is to engage in plea bargaining that either reduces or drops some charges in order to get convictions on others. While there are significant benefits to plea bargaining, it does allow some criminals to avoid jail sentences and in some cases return to engaging in criminal activity. Docketed cases for PWC Courts have steadily increased as the population increased. Since FY05 the docket has increased 22,759 from 236,142 in FY05 to 258,901 in FY07.

- **Court Supervision Staffing**

Accused (pretrial) and convicted criminals are subject to court supervision, at both the adult and juvenile levels, and are monitored by probation officers, court services personnel, group homes or other services as the courts deem appropriate. These employees, like the Commonwealth Attorney's office and courts, are under increasing case loads with limited staffing. Staffing levels for the above agencies are determined by the Commonwealth, which has historically been slow to respond to population growth and regional cost of living increases. The result is inadequate staffing levels and poor pay for state officers leading to a high turn-over. From 2003 to 2007, Pretrial cases increased 93%; the average Pretrial Officer had a caseload size about 38% above the state guidelines. Probation cases increased 17%; the average Probation Officer had a caseload size about 81% above state guidelines.

- **Sex Offenders**

Increased publicity in cases involving child pornography, child predators, and other sex related crimes has caused concern throughout the country. The Commonwealth maintains a database of sex offenders and the Virginia State Police (VSP) has the responsibility to ensure these offenders keep their information current. Offenders from Virginia or other states who violate these terms are difficult to locate at times and can go undetected, which provides an opportunity for the offender to reoffend. Services for these offenders have proven to be effective at reducing recidivism; however funding at all levels of government has been inadequate. State of the art supervision and services for these offenders provided in PWC, including institutional (inpatient and correctional center) and intensive outpatient (known as "Containment Model" and "Best Practices" in the adult and juvenile systems, respectively) have been proven to reduce repeat offending.

- **Gangs**

Gangs continue to be a concern to public safety agencies throughout the country and in particular PWC. These gangs engage in criminal activity throughout the region and have been involved in many serious crimes, including murder and aggravated assaults. To date, most gang crime has related to inter-gang rivalry. A significant percent gang members moved here from other countries or other states. Identifying them as they arrive is nearly

impossible and for those who are transient or from other counties makes locating them after being involved in a crime more difficult, particularly if they leave the United States. Since 2002, the Gang Unit has made 202 arrests for gang participation.

- **Drug Use**

Nationally drug use has been on the rise and PWC appears to not be exempt; police, court, and probation data appear to indicate a rise in the use of illegal drugs. Today some of the illegal drugs are stronger, more powerful, more addictive and deadlier. In many ways PWC is on the cutting edge of addiction treatments, by being a spotlighted High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) site. However the resources in police, courts, probation, and Community Services (CS) remained inadequate.

- **Emotionally Disturbed Persons (EDP)**

The number of persons needing evaluation has increased in recent years causing additional demands on public safety agencies. With the decrease in local facilities (ex: Potomac Hospital psychiatric unit, Northern Virginia Doctor's Hospital) providing services for these persons, additional challenges have occurred arranging transportation to more distant facilities. This has resulted in additional staff hours and mileage on vehicles used in transporting these persons. These numbers are expected to increase again in July with changes being made to mental health legislation (see Public Safety Appendix A). This will lengthen the time a person can be held for evaluation and broadens the language as to the criteria a person can be taken into custody for evaluation. In FY07, the Sheriff's Office handled 843 EDP transports, an increase of 54% from FY06. From FY06 to FY07, there was a 63% increase in staff-hours and a 58% increase in miles driven.

- **Schools**

School safety, particularly after such events as Columbine HS, Virginia Tech, and Northern Illinois University shootings, has received great media attention and caused public safety agencies to reconsider its responses to such events and engage in proactive measures. However, because of privacy concerns, students who transfer to PWC schools and have either emotional or mental issues may not be identified until after problems begin to occur here. This also applies to students who have always been enrolled in schools. There is legislation being proposed in the General Assembly to address mental health issues that impact public safety as outlined in Public Safety Appendix A.

- **Crime Prevention**

The police department's Crime Prevention Unit continues to enlist participation in the Neighborhood and Business Watch programs and conduct public education programs. The number of watches fluctuates regularly, partially due to the business community, which is predominantly made up of small businesses that may not always remain in business for long. This creates turn over in staff and businesses making it difficult to maintain a high level of

attention to crime prevention practices leading to greater opportunities for victimization. The number of neighborhood Watches ranged from 192-218 over the past 3 years while the number of Business Watches ranged from 27-34.

- **Building Lot Separations**

The building lot separation code allowance continues to allow structures to be built close together increasing the risk for multiple unit fire spread and increasing the life safety risk and property damage potential.

- **High Rise and High Density Buildings**

There are emerging plans for higher density development that will include high-rise residential buildings. The buildings will create challenges in providing fire and rescue and police services (ex. communications, emergency response planning, and equipment). Additionally, having a higher density population increases the impact from natural disasters (i.e. hurricanes) in a given area.

- **Demand for Traffic Calming Devices Increasing**

Citizen demands for traffic calming devices has seen a proliferation of stop signs, speed humps and other measures. These devices, speed humps and traffic circles, slow down emergency response vehicles in route to incidents; thus slowing the response time. Citizen interest in these devices may not consider the impact they have on emergency response, particularly on service areas beyond their development. Consultation with public safety agencies regarding these calming devices may benefit both the citizens and the responding units.

- **Legislative Challenges**

The Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code allows large, single family dwellings to be constructed using lightweight, wood frame materials. Some of these homes exceed 6,000 square feet which has proven to generate significant challenges for fire and rescue departments across the country. Ongoing efforts to get residential sprinkler systems installed in single-family dwellings and town homes through the building code process in Virginia have been unsuccessful. In addition, concern is growing in the fire and rescue community regarding the inadequacy of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 13-R fire sprinkler systems (4-head designs). Systems designed to this standard are used to protect multi-family residential buildings (apartments, condominiums, senior living) up to four stories in height. They do not provide the same level of protection as systems designed to NFPA 13 which is placing fire and rescue personnel at greater risk.

- **Economy**

In the past year, the local and national economy has slowed down significantly which has caused additional needs from public safety agencies.

The number of mortgage foreclosures have risen dramatically which has resulted in evictions by the Sheriff's office increasing by 430% between FY03 - FY07. This has contributed to neighborhood blight and risks becoming a magnet for crimes. Police officers have been attentive to these neighborhoods during their patrol time and there has not been an appreciable increase in crime noted thus far.

Table 27: Foreclosures in PWC²⁷

YEAR	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
JAN.	34	21	12	2	0	117
FEB.	25	15	11	4	6	140
MARCH	28	18	8	4	10	142
APRIL	29	14	5	10	7	173
MAY	30	15	7	3	19	198
JUNE	30	12	4	6	19	244
JULY	22	9	8	4	18	234
AUG.	27	11	4	1	23	279
SEPT.	18	6	4	2	40	256
OCT.	13	22	2	3	39	313
NOV.	30	6	3	2	50	386
DEC.	15	11	2	11	51	862
TOTAL	301	160	70	52	282	3,344

External Opportunities

- **Task Forces**

Public safety agencies participate in a variety of regional task forces to facilitate communication between other agencies and organizations which includes crime trends, recent arrests, wanted subjects and any other pertinent information related to crimes in their respective jurisdictions. These task forces also include state and federal agencies. Examples include Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), High Intensity Drug Traffic Area (HIDTA), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Northern Virginia Gang Task Force, and Virginia State Police (VSP). Some of these investigations have resulted in seizures of money and property, which PWC receives a portion of.

- **Immigration Enforcement**

A regional gang task force has generated greater cooperation and communication between agencies and has included federal prosecutions on cases and deportations initiated by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Agreements with ICE to certify police and ADC staff to assist with identifying criminal aliens who have been arrested and initiate deportation proceedings has recently been signed.

²⁷ PWC Land Records Office, March '08, through PWC library's MAGIC System

- **Regional Databases**

COG sponsors a regional pawn database where participating members can research data from other jurisdictions that enables comparisons of items pawned (sold) and people who do the pawning. This database has enabled jurisdictions to identify subjects and recover property that was stolen, thereby successfully prosecuting and closing cases. A gang database, maintained by Fairfax County Police Department, enables information sharing on gang members.

- **Probation Checks**

Public safety agencies have been working cooperatively with probation officers to conduct periodic checks on gang members, sex offenders and other criminals on probation to ensure compliance with the terms of their probation. Violators are referred to court for review of their sentence or terms of release.

- **Strong Private Sector Support**

There is strong non-profit private sector support to provide services for victims of crime including Turning Points, Sexual Assault Victim Advocacy Services (SAVAS), and Northern Virginia Legal Services.

- **Fire and Rescue Association**

The Fire and Rescue Association serves effectively as a forum for issue discussion, policy development and implementation coordination on issues relative to both career and volunteer departments providing fire and emergency medical services in the County.

- **Public Safety Planning**

Public safety planners work with PWC Planning Office staff routinely in forecasting growth and development, assessing impacts on public safety services and ensuring public safety interests are addressed.

- **National Organization Affiliation**

Public safety agencies education/prevention sections continued to develop prevention strategies that are aligned with national organizations such as the National Fire Prevention Association, the National Safe Kids Coalition, the National Crime Prevention Council, and Operation Lifesaver to provide comprehensive and consistent public safety education and prevention strategies. These programs link private/public partnerships to fund and deliver childhood injury prevention programs such as safety seat inspections and finding missing seniors. Law enforcement agencies have also taken advantage of the latest research and training opportunities as a result of affiliation with the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police (VACP) and International Association of Chief of Police (IACP).

- **Schools**

The PWC school system maintained a good rapport with the police department's School Resource Officers (SRO) and utilizes the officers for security at school functions such as sports and dances in addition to regular staffing at most high and middle schools. Faculty has sought assistance from the SROs to speak with their classes or particular students on a variety of topics. This has led to improved relationships with students and faculty alike and gathered intelligence to identify criminals or planned crimes.

- **Existence of Media Outlets**

The existence of well established media outlets/liaisons involving public safety agencies and other service oriented agencies promotes the dissemination of public safety education/prevention information to the public. Examples include monthly meetings with media representatives and daily press releases.

- **Fire & Rescue Proffer Formula and Fire Levy**

The established fire and rescue proffer formula and the county-wide fire levy facilitate the acquisition of public safety facilities and partially mitigate the fiscal impact of new development on existing fire and rescue facilities.

Internal Challenges

- **Task Forces**

Participation in task forces are dependent on staffing levels. The police department has committed to providing staffing for the full time task forces (ex: drug, gang, and fugitive) and rotate assigned members on a 3-5 year basis. The regional task forces, which involve much of the information sharing, are dependant on the availability of members. Court schedules, case loads or investigations, training, vacations, etc. may inhibit participation on a regular basis. These meetings occur either monthly or quarterly.

- **Staffing Levels**

Overall staffing levels, at times, have been below the needs of the various agencies. Ensuring adequate staffing levels for patrol officers has taken precedence over other units in the Police Department which results in larger case loads for detectives, less time dedicated to investigating crimes and lower overall clearance rates of Part I offenses. It is important to factor in that with each increase in the number of police officers, there is an expectation of support that will be required from agencies such as the Sheriff's Office and Adult Detention Center. The recent Line of Duty Death (LODD) Investigative Report conducted by Fire and Rescue revealed staffing challenges that must be addressed in order to provide an effective fire fighting force within timeframes identified by national standards.

- **Probation Checks**

Probation checks require police department members to participate on their days off. This entails paying members overtime, which impacts the police department's budget. Ensuring adequate funds are available continues to be closely monitored and can impact the effectiveness of the program.

- **Inmate Population**

The Adult Detention Center (ADC) has made every effort to address the increased population of people under its control. However, ongoing efforts to address future growth (jail expansion underway will not fully accommodate all of the inmates) will continue to be a challenge with possible solutions involving more use of pre- and post-trial diversion programs resulting in convicted criminals serving less or no time in jail for their offenses. This has led to increasing case loads on court supervision staff as mentioned above.

The total number of inmates committed annually for FY 04-FY 07 has trended upwards (FY 04-12,068 FY05-12,306 FY06 12,271 FY 07-12,880) while the average daily population at the ADC has also increased annually (FY04-684, FY05- 698, FY06- 719, FY07- 734). This does not include the farm outs, which currently stands at over 200.

- **9-1-1 Call Taking and Processing Methods**

9-1-1 call taking and call processing methods continued to be analyzed to find ways to expedite the dispatching of emergency response units.

- **Education, Prevention and Awareness**

Prevention of public safety emergencies is the most effective way to ensure the quality of life is not adversely affected by fires, medical emergencies or crime. Effective public education programs are essential to teach citizens how to protect themselves and increase their capabilities to recognize potential hazards and take steps to correct them before an emergency develops. Additionally, in areas where they are currently not mandated by code, technological initiatives (smoke detectors and sprinkler systems) continue to be solutions for reducing injuries and deaths from fire. Transient population, business growth, and aging housing stock increase the need for educational and awareness initiatives. Programs addressing racial/ethnic diversity and immigration have increased those challenges.

- **Employee Language Skills**

The lack of fluency in the Spanish language among public safety responders' impacts the ability to communicate with citizens regarding issues such as gathering medical, crime and witness information, court testimony and suspect interrogations. Hiring more bi-lingual staff is being addressed through recruitment and incentives.

- **Support Personnel Needs**

Obtaining adequate support staff positions (ex. plan reviewers, financial and clerical) continues to be a challenge to public safety agencies in an effort to keep pace with service delivery and performance expectations.

- **Response Time**

Achieving and maintaining an adequate public safety response to citizen calls for help continues to be a priority to both the police and fire and rescue agencies. While the police department met its strategic plan response goals, several factors impacted fire and rescue's ability to achieve their internal goals. This included adopting new standards based upon National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) #1710. Both agencies continue workings to ensure data collection and measures are accurate.

- **Mandates and Nationally Recognized Standards**

Public safety agency continue to be challenged in meeting the basic local, state, and federal mandates. Examples include but are not limited to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 29 CFR 1910.1030 for Blood borne Pathogens, OSHA 29 CFR 1910.134 regarding respiratory protection, and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1971 for personal protective equipment.

- **Judicial Process Service**

The police and sheriff's office combined their warrant file system to enable 24 hour access to the warrants. Previously, the Sheriff's Office retained their own, but was not always readily accessible. This cooperation helped ensure a wanted subject is arrested if an outstanding warrant exists. The number of unserved warrants at the end of the year, over the past 5 years, ranged from 3,100 to 4,200. The number of new warrants received annually has increased from a low of 7,497 ('02) to 8,653 ('06). Both agencies have struggled to reduce the numbers of active warrants and summonses in file as staffing and levels of service needs changed.

Internal Strengths

- **Crime Analysis**

The police department's Crime Analysis Unit has done an excellent job in disseminating information both within the department and to outside agencies. They have utilized email to distribute crime alerts and bulletins to and from members and outside agencies. The analysts have attended training to improve their skills, are assigned to regional task forces and are dedicated to their mission. Additional staffing has enabled them to have members assigned to both police districts for quicker access to sworn members. They recently identified a trend in street robberies, where victims were attacked while walking to and from work, the store or within their neighborhoods. The Department dedicated additional resources to this trend and were able to make

a significant number of arrests, seize weapons and drugs, and increase clearance rates, which contributed to achieving the 23% goal set in the 4th year of the current strategic plan.

- **Gang Unit**

The Police Department's Gang Unit has been very proactive in its approach to identifying gang members through intelligence gathering and sharing of information, monitoring known gang locations and working closely with ICE to deport members. Other jurisdictions have sought advice and guidance and the Unit has pushed to add additional offenses to include in gang statutes which have made it easier to convict subjects of gang participation or recruitment. The Gang Unit has conducted over 150 presentations and made over 600 arrests since 2004.

- **Street Crimes Unit**

The police department's Street Crimes Unit took a similar approach to address street robberies. The highly motivated unit worked cooperatively with other components of the department to develop a strategy that resulted in removing numerous guns from the street, closed cases and reassured the public of the Department's commitment in addressing crime in their neighborhood. This Unit has made nearly 700 arrests for a variety of offenses, including 33 for robberies since its inception in 2006.

- **Inter-Agency Relationships**

In PWC, there exists a high level of collaboration between various community corrections (probation, jail, group homes, etc) programs and agencies. The Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS), for example, worked closely with the Adult Detention Center (ADC) to address population issues, advancing and improving alternatives to incarceration. The state's Juvenile Court Service Unit worked closely with the Department of Social Services (DSS) to maximize their impact on At-Risk Youth and with the police department to combat serious crime risks with gang and intensive probation programs. All community corrections programs benefited from the collaboration with the Community Services (CS) to provide mental health and addiction services.

- **Information Dissemination**

Technology has created many new ways to disseminate education/prevention information to the public and within each agency (ex. Internet, email, fax on demand, computerized notification system, local cable Channel 23, and crime alerts).

- **Self Help Programs**

Public safety agencies continued to encourage citizens and businesses to conduct their own life safety inspections at home and commercial establishments. Additionally, internal risk management techniques were promoted to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of fire, disaster

preparation and crime prevention programs and reduce property loss and casualties through increased life safety awareness.

- **Training**

Existing Hazardous materials (Haz-Mat) training has enabled fire and rescue staff to identify and contain hazardous materials spills and has laid the foundation for preparing to handle additional hazards. Fire and rescue has increased the level of hazardous materials training and equipment to handle incidents like the recent overturned propane tanker on Bethlehem Road. The entire uniformed service is trained to the HAZMAT Operations level in accordance with the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) and OSHA standards. We now have 45 uniformed personnel that have been trained to the HAZMAT Technician Level under the VDEM program requirements.

- **Fire & Rescue Facility Planning**

Fire and rescue facility planning process identified general areas of vulnerability and needs by modeling response time coverage from existing stations using GIS and comparing the coverage to national standards and updating the Comprehensive Plan goals. This is a dynamic process that needs continual updating and evaluation. Currently, 25% of the population is not covered by a 4-minute travel time. To ensure all areas of the County are within the 4-minute travel time standard, 22 additional fire and rescue stations would be required to cover all areas.

- **School Emergency Response Plan**

Despite the number of school-associated violent deaths across the county over the last five years, schools continue to be relatively safe places for children. Accordingly, the Police Department with the assistance of other county agencies maintain and update a very extensive and detailed school emergency response plan. Fire and Rescue collaborate to ensure a coordinated response to such an event.

- **School Based Fire and Injury Prevention**

Fire and Rescue continues to provide the second grade survival skills program to all county public schools.

Emergency Preparedness

The events on September 11, 2001 created new challenges for public safety agencies that continue to this day. Members have been tasked with additional duties to ensure various locations within the county are safe. These facilities include the courthouse, utility sites, water treatment plants, fuel depots, bridges, public transportation, waterways, and large gathering sites such as malls, schools, parks and places of worship.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has worked hard to ensure all public safety agencies will be prepared for the next incident. This has included requirements to train,

plan, coordinate, practice and implement new programs and measures in order to be capable of responding to and handling such future incidents. This has created many opportunities for training, mutual aid agreements, information sharing and cooperation between various County agencies, non-government agencies, and other jurisdictions. Fire and Rescue has been working with the Office of Emergency Services to educate and encourage residents to develop plans to be self sufficient for 72 hours. This would include being able to shelter in place with sufficient food and water, have an evacuation plan in the event of a natural disaster, terrorism incident, etc.

External Challenges

- **Homeland Security/Emergency Services Initiatives**

Emergency response personnel are strained to keep pace with new equipment and training initiatives for Homeland Security. In addition, it is resource intensive to assure the county applies for and receives its fair share of Homeland Security and emergency services grant funding.

- **Mandatory Training**

Training required by federal and state regulations has put additional burdens on staff as they arrange for classrooms, schedules and equipment needs. These requirements are updated and expanded as regulations change. Examples of this training follow.

- **National Incident Management System (NIMS) training**

Nearly all members of the county public safety agencies have undergone this training which was done both on-line and in classrooms. Supervisors received additional training and many have participated in exercises, both table-top and actual, to determine response and preparedness levels.

- **Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)**

Nearly all county public safety members have also received training in WMD and have been outfitted with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) which includes masks and clothing for protection from chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) incidents.

- **Ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan**

International incidents such as the “War on Terror” have resulted in the activation of members of all public safety agencies into their respective reserve or National Guard units. These deployments range from several weeks to a year, and in some cases, members have been activated several times over the past 6 years. This has resulted in staffing challenges, disruptions for members’ families, and increased instances of overtime to achieve minimum staffing levels. The Police Department has had at least 25 members activated, with 6 having been activated at least twice. The Sheriff’s Office has had 2 activated, the ADC has had one, who was seriously injured while activated and has not returned to duty. Fire and Rescue has also had several members activated.

- **Regional Communications**

Residents in PWC, the City of Manassas Park, and the City of Manassas enjoy the efficiency of shared fire and rescue services through a mutual aid agreement. In FY07, fire and rescue units from PWC, the City of Manassas, and the City of Manassas Park responded to several hundred mutual aid incidents. However, each jurisdiction maintains independent dispatch centers. Some of the challenge includes the following:

- This creates delays in fire and rescue response with mutual aid units due to the increased time it takes for notifications to be made to neighboring dispatch centers and supplemental dispatches that must occur.
- This circuitous process also requires mutual aid units to switch from their primary radio frequency to the host other jurisdiction's frequency.
- Multiple radios (apparatus and portables) must be switched when these events occur. These procedures create response delays and greatly increase the potential for units to switch to the wrong frequency and miss critical radio transmissions during an emergency incident (e.g., May Day call, emergency evacuation, rescue situation, etc.).

- **Environmental Hazards and Related Emergencies**

The community is increasingly aware that sustained quality of life depends on preventing, detecting and controlling environmental hazards and emergencies. Increases in transportation of hazardous materials and local use of those materials are a by-product of growth in non-retail economic development of the region. Federal regulations regarding the protection of workers from air and blood-borne pathogens have added to the complexity of resolving emergencies. Notifications are routinely made to the state (Department of Emergency Management, Department of Environmental Quality) when a spill occurs in the county. Also notified are Watershed Management office (Public Works/Environmental Services) as well as the Health Department. Public safety agencies continue to experience an increase of emergency incidents that run several days (ex. Hurricane Isabel, Palm Pools fire).

- **Growth in Commercial Property**

The growth in commercial development has generated additional requests for plans to be reviewed both routinely and rapidly. The types of plans that are reviewed by the Fire Marshal's Office include site, subdivision, and fire protection plans which include automatic fire sprinkler, fire lane, fire alarm, standpipe, smoke control, kitchen hood suppression, paint spray booth suppression, Temporary Commercial Activity, and Operational Permit plans. The Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit regularly reviews site plans, rezoning plans and special use permit requests. Also, commercial establishments generate the need for additional life safety building inspections and they install automatic alarm systems that could increase the number of calls for service due to mistaken alarms. Responses to alarms involve

numerous staffing and equipment resources until the nature of the alarm is verified.

- **Major Events and Tourism**

Major events were held in PWC that required a great deal of resources to ensure overall public and traffic safety were maintained. Over 20 million tourists visit the County annually. Examples of events that draw tourist include the President's Cup PGA golf tournament, Nissan Pavilion, Potomac Mills Mall, and the Marine Corps museum.

- **Aging Housing Stock**

The County's aging housing stock in key areas increases the potential for crimes and unwanted fires, thereby increasing the need for public education. The challenge is to ensure that those individuals wanting to improve such properties do so in accordance with the County process and the Code.

External Opportunities

The above stated challenges have brought about greater interaction with other agencies at the federal, state and local level. The exchange of information, ideas, personnel, and material has led to enhanced cooperation and better preparedness.

- **Involvement in Professional and Regional Organizations**

Public safety personnel, at all levels of the organization, serve on many local, regional, state, and national committees such as the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) committees and sub-committees. This involvement assisted in developing policies and standards, providing feedback regarding proposed laws, statutes and standards and updates to emergency response agreements. Regional and inter-jurisdictional cooperation in sharing resources, conducting joint training exercises, and providing increased preparedness in the event of major public safety incidents (terrorism, natural/man-made disasters, etc.) the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF).

- **Mutual Aid Agreements**

Mutual-Aid Agreements have been established with surrounding jurisdictions and other county agencies as well as with COG to provide for coordination of public safety services in the event of natural disasters, major events such as mass evacuations due to HAZMAT spills and other environmental hazards, demonstrations and riots.

- **Citizen Involvement**

Emergency preparedness of an increasing population is vital. The current Citizen Corps Councils can educate and train dedicated volunteers that can help meet the needs of all citizens in a public safety emergency. During a disaster, the public needs to be able to be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours, if not longer, for Fire and Rescue, Police, or other Public Safety personnel to

reach those in emergency preparedness situations. The aging population is particularly vulnerable during these incidents because if they may not have sufficient food, water, transportation, medications, and/or shelter which could lead to medical emergencies when assistance may not be available.

- **Grants**

Federal and state funding opportunities are continually reviewed to determine applicability to the county in an effort to support preparedness activities. Grant opportunities have allowed public safety agencies to obtain additional equipment and training. Equipment examples include;

- a. A boat to provide opportunities to patrol the waterways along the Potomac River and Occoquan River, bridges, and power plants while also providing assistance to recreational users of these waterways,
- b. Command Post vehicles for use at large or unusual events such as President's Cup, crime scenes, etc.,
- c. Variable message boards to assist with traffic control at major incidents,
- d. Armored vehicle for use by SWAT team members,
- e. A vehicle to provide air tank refilling capability for self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) used by Fire and Rescue personnel,
- f. Haz-Mat chemical and spill containment unit,
- g. Decontamination equipment, and
- h. Mass casualty unit.

Internal Challenges

- **At-Risk Facilities**

The demands to patrol various high risk sites have impacted, on occasion, opportunities to patrol neighborhoods, conduct traffic enforcement, and other proactive enforcement activities. These facilities include fuel depots, power plants, malls, hospitals, public transportation, and government buildings.

- **Staffing**

Staffing impacts include members who have been activated to serve in their military units. Public safety agencies target nearby military bases as sources for employees, but must accommodate their military activations' impact maintaining adequate staffing levels.

- **Position Vacancies**

The police department has had difficulty filling a position to coordinate the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) / WMD training and equipment requirements as required by Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The department has

utilized sworn members to fill this position which, in some cases, is in addition to their regular duties.

- **Emergency Planning**

The challenges in Emergency Management include providing National Incident Management System (NIMS) training, maintaining a minimum facility and alternate facilities to house and provide appropriate services and technologies to operate the County Emergency Operation Center, providing continuing disaster management exercises to County leadership and staff, development and exercising of regional evacuation plans; planning for pandemic flu, pharmaceutical distribution, Continuity of Operations (COOP), Continuity of Government (COG), weather-related disasters, international and domestic terrorism incidents, hazardous materials emergencies; Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS); long term recovery; training and functionality; PAlert and WebEOC. The increasing requirements for planning and exercises are straining existing staff and resources.

- **Growth in Population**

The continual increase in the population growth combined with resident turnover provides additional challenges. A new stream of citizens settling into the community must be reached by education and/or prevention messages which requires an ongoing education effort by all public safety agencies.

- **Increase in Population Diversity**

With the increase in county racial/ethnic diversity, greater language and cultural challenges exist as agencies ensure all citizens receive public safety prevention, education and preparedness information.

- **Pre-Alarm Activities**

In many cases there are systems and processes that can be initiated prior to and in conjunction with fire & rescue response. For example, sufficient use of technology and training (Automated External Defibrillator's (AED), Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), sprinklers, etc.) would improve the effectiveness of citizen's actions during the early stages of an emergency or prevent them from worsening.

- **Grant Funding Challenges**

Current grants are largely planning grants that have specific criteria to meet for local, state and regional strategies. Grant close-out takes a significant amount of time to ensure grant expenditures and reporting requirements are audit ready. Direct applications for grants are increasing with a significant amount of time being expended on looking for funding for special projects. Reporting requirements for all grants are increasing, with monthly progress reports due to state and federal agencies. Applying for grants has increased as the budget for special projects have decreased due to budget constraints. Additionally, the format for applying for grants on-line has significant

challenges due to the County requirement to seek Board of County Supervisors approval before application, and ensuring funding is available to meet the required local in-kind and cash matches. The increasing requirements for managing these grants are straining existing staff and resources.

- **Fund maintenance or replacement**

Grant awards are for limited terms and do not fund multi-year maintenance costs. The maintenance costs become the county's responsibility to maintain grant funded equipment. Replacement of expiring equipment (specifically drugs for the required pharmaceutical caches) is not included in grant funding, as they are multi-year requirements which cannot be funded once the grant has expired. Acquiring funding for the grant maintenance and sustainment for these programs will be a challenge. Currently, many of these costs are not budgeted and therefore eaten up with in the host agencies budget.

- **Additions to Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)**

Additional annexes to the EOP are needed in the area of school violence, continuity of operations planning, business recovery and terrorism.

- **Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT)**

These teams consist of community volunteers who provide local neighborhood support regarding emergency preparedness issues. As part of Homeland Security initiatives, state and federal agencies are encouraging localities to develop local CERTs. Courses have been conducted at the public safety academy; however funding is not currently available for further development of this initiative.

- **Training**

Training requirements for public safety personnel continued to increase. Local, state, and national standards for emergency medical care, minimum performance, health and safety, hazardous materials, National Incident Management System (NIMS) and many others challenge public safety agencies ability to place fully trained emergency responders in the field and maintain those certification levels. Staffing needs for career and volunteer providers continue to be challenged to meet the numbers of staff needed to keep emergency units in-service to meet the demands of the citizens. The time required obtaining and maintaining certifications is a challenge for public safety agencies, especially those who volunteer their time to provide services to their neighbors and communities. The expected time from hiring a public safety member until they are capable to perform on their own is up to 2 years, which includes additional training required to maintain skills, proficiencies, and certifications.

- **Mutual Aid**

Mutual aid agreements and their impact on services delivered within and outside of PWC are an ongoing challenge that has increased over time as regionalization and interoperability increase the necessity for these types of agreements. Fire and Rescue does not meet the minimum requirements, in every case, to fully participate in these agreements as defined by regional partners. Staffing, training, performance measures and other measures of performance need sustained improvement prior to the county's ability to provide or receive full benefit from these agreements. Mandatory participation in some areas such as 800 MHz radio re-banding are critical not only to PWC's public safety agencies but also the region as radio systems and other IT components become interrelated and interdependent in providing interoperability. PWC must meet these challenges in order to maintain basic critical public safety needs but also to support regional public safety systems.

Internal Strengths

- **Training**

Continued training opportunities are soaring regionally and locally as well as via internal staffing knowledge. Public safety agencies have highly trained, educated and dedicated members who have accepted the challenges to ensure its members are capable of handling events as they arise. Many members of the public safety agencies either are or were members of the military and bring this training and experience to assist in developing training and policies. Public safety personnel have completed extensive preparations for the increased threats impacting the community regarding terrorism.

- **Management Courses**

Leadership and managerial skills are vital to public safety agency. Every opportunity is utilized. Public safety agencies regularly send supervisors to management courses to improve their knowledge, skills and abilities. These courses include the FBI National Academy, Administrative Officers Management Program, National Fire Academy, and Emergency Management Institute.

- **Police Intelligence Unit**

Multi-agency communication data sharing continues to be an opportunity as data practices a partnership continue to strengthen. The Police Department has started an intelligence unit staffed by one sergeant, three detectives, and one crime analyst supervisor. This unit is tasked with working with other law enforcement agencies, sharing intelligence information, and representing the Department in the JTTF. The unit receives training, as available, on criminal and terrorism-related training topics and is able to quickly respond to or assist other agencies with investigations or receive additional assistance should the investigation occur in PWC.

- **Office of Emergency Services**

A continued opportunity is found in the Office of Emergency Services which continues to review and improve the Emergency Operations Plan for the community. Operational readiness is tested through periodic drills to exercise the plan.

- **Increased Threat Preparedness**

Agencies continue to utilize many opportunities to improve their preparedness by obtaining grant funding, continuing involvement in regional preparation and response capability meetings on large scale emergencies and disasters, and updating emergency and operational plans on a local and regional basis. This continued operational readiness will provide the community with the most experienced public safety professionals ready to handle most county-wide emergencies.

Equipment

Public safety agencies relied upon a variety of equipment in order to do their job safely and effectively. This equipment include uniforms, vehicles, radios, weapons, as well as dogs to detect drugs, bombs and arson. There is a need to ensure the equipment is in good working order which requires maintenance and replacement as needed in addition to keeping with current and future standards. There is also a need to ensure adequate equipment is available to train with or in reserve to be utilized when equipment is damaged, being serviced or wears out.

External Challenges

- **Future Trends**

Changes in equipment standards and products require agencies to conduct ongoing planning and research to identify future resource needs.

External Opportunities

- **Regional Cooperation**

Public safety agencies took advantage of regional cooperation to obtain equipment to assist in their duties. In addition to the equipment obtained with Homeland Security grant money mentioned previously, the police department benefited from one of its members being trained with a drug detection dog while assigned to a federal task force.

Internal Challenges

- **Vehicle Maintenance**

Public Works opened a central maintenance facility near the landfill which makes them more centrally located, but creates longer turn around times for vehicles that used to be serviced at the Gar-Field shop. While Public Works

provides transportation for the vehicles to and from the facility, these transports occur only 2-3 times a week, as opposed to daily. This can mean delays in getting routine or minor repairs accomplished.

- **Vehicle Replacement**

The replacement mileage requirement for patrol vehicles changes periodically and currently is at 110,000 miles. SUV replacement is 120,000 miles. While this may not negatively impact all public safety vehicles, those vehicles used to transport prisoners or emotionally disturbed patients long distances and those used by police officers to conduct traffic enforcement or travel at high speeds need to be in top performing condition. The ADC routinely conducts transports of up to 400 miles round trip for its “farm outs” to other jails and the Sheriff’s Office routinely travels upwards of 200 miles round trip transporting emotionally disturbed persons to treatment facilities. This is in addition to the many prisoner transports generated on a daily basis.

Internal Strengths

- **TASERS**

Agencies obtain and deploy TASERS as an additional tool to assist in the apprehension of subjects who are not cooperating with staff. This has led to fewer injuries to officers and subjects because it allow greater stand off distances. Subjects also comply more quickly, particularly when they understand a TASER is about to be used.

- **Take Home Vehicles**

Funding for additional police vehicles for the take home vehicle program continued until FY07. At the present, most members eligible for both the permanent and part-time take home program have access to a vehicle. This allows greater visibility of police vehicles throughout PWC as officers conduct business in accordance with policy.

- **Patrol Rifles**

Officers and deputies issue rifles to provide members with weapons to allow greater stand off distances with armed individuals. This weapon also provides greater accuracy at these increased distances. Additional rifles are being sought to provide more availability to members.

- **K-9s**

Public safety agencies benefit from the use of dogs to assist with their duties. The police department increased it number of dogs to 7, of which 3 were cross trained to detect drugs and track criminals. One has been trained as for bomb detection. The Department of Fire and Rescue has one dog trained to detect ignitable liquids for arson investigations.

Facilities

Public safety agencies have continued to expand in size to account for population increases, maintaining levels of service, increasing demands for service and training requirements. These agencies have added facilities but additional facilities will be needed to accommodate the anticipated future growth and to replace existing facilities which have outlived their intended service life. Most recent accomplishments:

- ADC
- Fire
- Police
- Sheriff

The Police Department opened a new district station in Manassas. The Adult Detention Center is completing Phase 1 expansion to add 200 new beds, soon to be starting a renovation project to the first floor of the main facility in late November of 2008 and is in the beginning stages of researching Phase 2 expansion. Fire and Rescue has added a new station (Nokesville Station 25) and relocated another (Yorkshire Station 8). The Sheriff's office has expanded into already cramped space in the courthouse, where there is no further expansion space available.

External Challenges

- **Land Acquisition**

As the County continues to grow in population, the availability of open land to build public safety facilities decreases.

External Opportunities

- **Inmate Farm-Outs**

Due to the ongoing increases in the inmate population, the Adult Detention Center (ADC) continues to exceed the operational capacity of 467 and maintained a daily inmate population average for 2007 of 734; with an additional 180 inmates farmed-out to other jails within the state of Virginia for a total inmate population of 914. Agreements with other jails to house the excess inmates will continue for the foreseeable future to enable the ADC to fulfill its mission.

- **Land Acquisition**

The current economic downturn has reduced the cost to purchase land that public safety facilities can be built on.

Internal Challenges

- **Existing Facility Resources**

Work space has not kept up with demands of each public safety agency. The ADC has utilized the old police station in Manassas as an administrative and training facility while the jail expansion occurs. Others include;

- **Gar-Field Police Station**

With the elimination of the Central District Station from the CIP, the Gar-Field police station continues to operate at capacity. The facility opened in 1996, but with the rapid growth of police personnel, stations have not kept pace with personnel growth. Over the next several years, space reconfiguration and leased space will be required to meet the growing facility demands and alleviate the overcrowding.

- **Evidence Warehouse Facility**

As part of the 75,000 sq.ft. Judicial Center Administrative facility expansion, the evidence facility project was eliminated from the CIP in FY07. The Police Department is currently at capacity in regards to the storage of evidence to include drugs, weapons and administrative staff space. The existing facility has exceeded its life span and is undergoing constant repairs

- **Animal Control Facility Expansion**

This project involves a 2,000 sq.ft. expansion to safely handle the growing animal population coming into the facility as well as provide adequate administrative space for staff. Furthermore, the current facility is lacking sufficient heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) infrastructure. No funding for this facility has been identified.

- **Population Location**

25% of the population served is not covered by a 4-minute fire and rescue response. This is expected to increase as fire and rescue facilities continue to be pushed back.

- **Unfunded Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Public Safety Facilities**

Several public safety facility projects have not been identified for funding (full and/or partial) in the CIP to date including: warehouse, administrative (ex. police administrative space), operational and animal control facilities. Overcrowding and aging building infrastructure is causing operational inefficiencies (decentralization of staff and equipment) and employee dissatisfaction. The Police Department's central district station has been eliminated from the CIP after nearly 6 years of funding and the purchase of the land to build the facilities. The Bacon Race fire and rescue station was also removed from the CIP.

- **Funding**

The greatest challenge is funding. Each new facility requires millions of dollars to design, build, outfit and maintain. Some of the funding is obtained through general funds with others through bond referendums. As the population grows so will the expectation of services from public safety agencies. The CIP for Fire and Rescue calls for 3 new facilities (Antioch, River Oaks and Innovation) and one relocation (Dale City-Birchdale) through FY12.

- **Future Land Acquisitions**

In most instances, land for public safety facilities has not been identified to meet future needs. This includes the Police Department's Gainesville/Haymarket area station and fire and rescue's 22 stations to achieve the desired 4 minute travel time.

- **Phase II Expansion of the Public Safety Training Center (PSTC)**

Due to increased public safety staffing levels and complexity in training (homeland security and bio-terrorism), there are short and long-term demands at the Public Safety Training Center that need to be addressed through additional facilities. This project is a 100,000 sq. ft. facility to provide much needed classrooms and administrative space. The existing classroom facility is operating at capacity. This facility will support the 2,600 public safety personnel and volunteers. This project is not in the proposed 2009-2013 CIP.

- **Driver Training Facility**

The Police Department is working in cooperation with the Northern Virginia Criminal Justice Academy (NVCJA) to construct a drivers training facility. This 100 acre parcel adjacent to the Public Safety Training Center (PSTC) is planned to contain a high speed track, urban course, wet skid pan area, and a 14,000 sq.ft. classroom facility. This project will provide training to new police officers and sheriff's deputies as well as in-service training. Design has recently been completed and construction is estimated to be completed in 2010. No formal driver training facility exists for DFR personnel though. Large apparatus, such as those used by DFR, will not be able to use it due to weight limitations on the track's surface. Driver training for DFR occurs at the PSTC or the local roads near fire stations after members' probationary period ends and after a two week training class.

- **Animal Control Facility/Western District**

A 10,000 sq.ft. facility will be needed in the western part of the County to accommodate the growing animal population and reduce the excess travel time for citizens and staff to/from the existing facility. A 2.5 acre proffered land site has been acquired for this facility.

- **Public Safety Communications Center (PSCC)**

The current PSCC was built in 2003. Replacement or reconfiguration will be required in the next 3-5 years to maintain dispatch support for growing Police and Fire calls for service needs. Extra space may be required to support in-house training efforts as demands increase for more dispatchers.

- **Back-Up Emergency Operations Center (EOC)**

There is still no formal back-up EOC. Currently a conference room at the McCoart building serves as this purpose, but would not work well if the PSCC is using it as a back-up 9-1-1 center. The need for such a facility still exists, with some relief coming with the completion of the McCoart backfill project that will have most of the same AV equipment that the current EOC has. The backfill will not be equipped with laptop computers.

- **Facility Security**

The terrorist attacks led agencies to develop specific target hardening needs and measures.

- The current PSCC does not completely comply with National Fire Prevention Association standards for communication centers. Currently, the 9-1-1 and County Data Center are password protected; however the building is susceptible to individuals walking or driving up to the building unimpeded.
- The police western district station was built with security in mind by surrounding the rear and sides of the facility with fencing and a brick wall with access controlled by a gate.
- The Gar-Field police station is undergoing security upgrades to its building and parking lot, the latter being controlled by a gate and fencing.
- The courthouse obtained some target hardening measures, but lacks a means of preventing vehicle access to the building and a secured parking area for courthouse staff.

- **Inmate Farm Outs**

Because of the farm-outs, transports have increased from 2462 in 2006 to 3408 in 2007 which places staff at greater risk for possibly escapes or vehicle accidents with these jails located as far away as Piedmont and Hampton Roads jails, 254 and 400 miles round trip respectively. In addition, finding jails willing to accept the farm outs continued to be a challenge.

Internal Strengths

- **New Emergency Operations Center**

The new Emergency Operations Center under construction in the McCoart building will provide a needed location for continuity of operations in the event the Owens Building is unavailable during emergencies.

- **Public Safety Communications Center (PSCC)**

There are now three levels of back-up for the Public Safety Communications Center (PSCC). There are backup radios and telephones at each call taker and dispatcher position so evacuation of the PSCC is not necessary if the 911 or radio system fails. If evacuation is necessary because of building compromise or Immediate Danger to Life or Health (IDLH), there is a short term back-up site in the Potomac Room of the McCoart Building and a long term back-up site in the Western District Police Station. Both sites have radios and telephones.

- **Western District Police Station**

With the completion of the Western District Police Station in 2006, the state of the art facility provides a 50,000 sq.ft. secured facility and parking area for citizens and staff, space for training, public safety disaster recovery equipment, emergency backup for public safety dispatching and a location for critical incident response planning and operations.

- **Forensic Science Facility**

This 9,000 sq.ft. facility provides space for state of the art forensic examination equipment, crime scene analysts, forensic response vehicles, lab examination areas and advanced fingerprinting and digital photographic areas. All post event crime scene analysis and processing occurs at this site.

Staffing

PWC continues to grow and show great potential in attracting quality employee applicants to public safety jobs. Public safety agencies actively worked to recruit qualified applicants while addressing the need to have a workforce that is reflective of a diversified community. In the next few years, the county will see an increase in retirements, thus requiring the organization to better prepare personnel for the responsibilities incumbent with upward mobility and leadership of each agency.

Public Safety applicants must go through an extensive background processing to be eligible for hire. All applicants must pass the following phases: written exam, pre-screen, polygraph, interview, background, physical, psychological exam, physical fitness test, and drug screening. At any stage of the process, an applicant may be found unsuitable. In 2007, of the 980 people who applied for a police officer position, only 57 were hired. It continues to be a difficult and lengthy process for public safety agencies to recruit and train personnel for their respective agencies to then serve the residents of PWC.

The hiring and training of staff at the ADC to account for the expansion project and the 287(g) program, maintaining the police staffing plan, and the results of the Fire and Rescue Line of Duty Death recommendations will continue to impact recruitment efforts already underway.

External Challenges

- **Recruiting**

All agencies seek applicants with the following characteristics: clean criminal and driving records; little or no drug usage; physically fit; high school diploma or college degree; good communications skills; integrity and a good work ethic. These are the same attributes that military, private industry, homeland security, and other public safety agencies desire.

- **Workforce**

A nationwide health care provider shortage is affecting the supply of Advanced Life Support (ALS) providers, impacting both career and volunteer fire and rescue agencies recruitment efforts.

External Opportunities

- **Candidate Resources**

Because PWC is in close proximity to numerous military bases, the applicant pool and recruiting opportunities are more prevalent than a jurisdiction located outside such an area. George Mason University (GMU) and Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) both have campuses in the county and have criminal justice programs that also provide a good pool of candidates to recruit from.

- **Media**

Recruiters used the county's website, national web sites, local military bases, newspapers, radio advertisements and poster and flyer distribution to reach the community. A police recruiting video and job announcements are regularly aired on PWC government cable channel 23.

Internal Challenges

- **Staffing Plan**

Staffing plans for public safety agencies are a challenge to fully fund when the economy is not strong. Identifying funding to address the Fire and Rescue Line of Duty Death recommendations, continuation of the police staffing plan and addressing the needs of the other public safety agency needs will generally be around 12% of the PWC annual budget.

- **Recruiting Limitations**

The recruiting units sought applicants through job fairs, events and presentations in Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Delaware, Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia. The primary focus has been Northern Virginia, because it is believed that candidates with existing ties to the community will be more likely to stay with the agency. Travel expenses have also limited the agencies to concentrate their efforts more locally and to be more efficient with its available resources.

- **Internships**

Some public safety agencies have utilized internships for prospective candidates who are attending college and seeking degrees in criminal justice. Identifying areas to facilitate these interns needs to be better organized within the Police Department. The Sheriff's Office internship program has been met with success. There have been several participants within that program who have moved into a public safety position and three participants have been hired as Sheriff's deputies.

- **Volunteers**

Recruiting volunteers to provide additional assistance to the law enforcement agencies is a low priority, in part because the emphasis of the recruitment staff and background investigators concentrate on filling paid vacancies since volunteers must undergo similar vetting as well.

- **Impact of public safety staffing levels on Public Safety Communications**

Office of Public Safety Communication (OPSC) personnel have not increased at a corresponding rate in-line with the public safety staffing plan. This has impacted their ability, on occasion, to process calls within established guidelines. The OPSC rank structure was established to coincide with the Police, Fire and Rescue personnel; however recent rank adjustments for these agencies did not include OPSC staff. The work performed by OPSC is inextricably linked to the success of public safety agencies.

- **Staff Health, Wellness and Injury Prevention**

Public safety occupations present high risk for injury. Progress is being made to develop programs in health, wellness and injury prevention. New threats continue to emerge along with new regulatory mandates therefore, public safety agencies are working to address and develop programs to meet anticipated need, and national standards. The health and safety of staff is critical to meet the physical, emotional, and psychological needs of emergency services providers. Instituting a culture of safety within the public safety agencies has been successful in meeting many of the physical challenges of providers. However, significant increases in the use of mental health and psychological services indicate a crucial need to provide these services to emergency responders. Public Safety is a dangerous occupation

with the real potential for loss of life and property and a high rate of injury and disability.

- **Attrition**

Each public safety agency experienced attrition. Since 1999, the Police Department has had 370 members leave. This would include retirements and separations, both voluntary and involuntary. Replacing these members as well as filling budgeted positions have and will remain a challenge. The Police Department has worked with the BOCS to ensure staffing levels will allow the department to address the increasing population and ensure the county remains a safe place to live, work and visit. The police department averaged fewer than 20 new positions per fiscal year during the same timeframe.

- **Civilian Vacancies**

Filling civilian vacancies, both new and existing, has also been a challenge. Uniformed/sworn positions have been a priority and finding qualified candidates to fill civilian vacancies at the advertised pay grade left many unfilled.

- **Internal Expansion**

Identifying the need for additional units within the respective public safety agencies occurred as the needs to provide services changed. The police added new investigative functions (i.e. Criminal Alien Unit, Intelligence Unit, Gang Unit, and Computer Forensics Unit) in recent years. The ADC and Sheriff's Office added immigration enforcement staff; and Fire and Rescue increased the number of personnel assigned to their Health and Safety Office to reduce risks to its members.

- **Racial/Ethnic Diversity**

With the increase in PWC's racial and ethnic diversity, public safety agencies work hard at recruiting candidates to ensure a diverse workforce reflective of the community. It also presents greater challenges to ensure all citizens receive public safety prevention, education and preparedness information in their native languages.

- **Maintaining Service Levels**

As the result of increased residential, commercial and industrial growth, demand for services steadily increase. Maintaining service levels is an ongoing effort by agency heads to ensure adequate staffing levels to address this growth.

- **Other Public Safety Staffing Plans**

The public safety agencies do not have proportionate staffing plans to account for impacts on each other as service levels increased. As staffing levels of the police and fire and rescue increase, so too do the workloads of the other public safety agencies as they dispatch members, monitor and transport prisoners,

secure courtrooms, monitor pre- and post-trial defendants, etc. Support staff (administrative) positions are also areas needing attention.

- **Limited Training Opportunities**

Finding adequate time to train public safety personnel for new types of challenges (Homeland Security/terrorism, swift water rescue, high angle rescue, and hazardous materials) has become increasingly more difficult due to scheduling of available classroom space. As the organizations continue to grow, employee education needs to continue to grow (in both in-service and basic training) in order to meet the needs of the community.

Internal Strengths

- **Staffing Plans**

The County is committed to maintaining the staffing plans for the Police Department and Fire and Rescue.

- **Fire & Rescue volunteer incentives**

Incentives exist for volunteer fire and rescue personnel by exempting them from personal property tax on one vehicle and providing a free county sticker. There has been a length of service awards program (LOSAP) established to provide a supplemental retirement pension for their volunteer years of service.

- **Local Fire and Rescue Partnership**

The Department of Fire and Rescue relies on close cooperation with the Volunteer Fire and Rescue Companies to develop staffing plans for seamless service delivery.

- **Cadet Program**

In 2006, the Police Department launched a Cadet Program. The program provided law enforcement training and experience to men and women, ages 18 to 21, who are looking for a law enforcement career with the PWC Police. At age 21, cadets automatically transition to the Police Academy and, upon graduation, become PWC police officers. The Sheriff's Office has shown interest in establishing a cadet program as a useful tool in employment and retention.

- **Recruitment and Retention Issues**

In an effort to attract and retain qualified candidates, public safety agencies have the following incentives:

- Retention Supplement - This supplement is calculated based on annual salary on the appointment anniversary date following release from initial probation and annually thereafter based on years of service. \$4,667 is the current maximum that will be paid to any one employee, excluding

overtime/holiday payments. This supplement is only for the Police Department and Fire and Rescue uniformed/sworn employees.

- ALS Incentive Pay - This supplement is provided to all fire and rescue employees who have Advanced Life Support (ALS) certification. Its purpose is to attract ALS certified employees and encourage current employees to acquire ALS certification. The Base incentive pay is currently \$5,279 and increases annually in accordance with the county cost of living adjustment. There is also an hourly increase to rate of pay of \$3.16 to ALS employees when they are on duty on an ALS transport unit and \$2.11 for those serving on a Basic Life Support (BLS) unit.
- Signing Bonus - \$3,000, minus applicable taxes, is given to a employee who successfully completes Academy and Field Training. This supplement is only for the Police Department and Fire and Rescue uniformed/sworn employees.
- Referral Bonus - \$500, minus applicable taxes, shall be paid to any one county employee who refers an applicant who is employed by the Police Department or Fire and Rescue. This is given to the referring employee after applicant successfully completes academy training. No such bonus exists for the ADC or Sheriff's Office recruits.
- Tuition Reimbursement - To participate employees must apply to the program at least one month prior to the beginning of classes. Employees must be working toward a degree at an accredited college or university in order to qualify.

- **Lateral Transfers**

In order to expedite placing more police officers on the street, law enforcement officers from within the Commonwealth of Virginia, as well as to those officers certified in other states, are now able to become members of the police department contingent upon approval from the Chief of Police and the state Department of Criminal Justice Services. These transfers involve hiring officers/deputies who are already trained and certified by their original agency and complete an approved training program conducted by academy staff and field training officers. This training process takes approximately 3 months. Previously, many of these officers would have been required to complete a full academy and field training program which would take nearly 9 months before being released to solo duty.

Technology

Public safety continues to be challenged by information technology needs. These once stable technologies continue to change at a rapid rate and the challenges to develop and maintain knowledge, skills and abilities from the inception of a technology project from the technical staff down to the end-user continue to increase. These tools are implemented within critical functions of public safety agencies who are dependant on them to achieve their missions. Ongoing and continued collaboration with Office of Information Technology (OIT) has been critical in agencies ability to meet the challenges

of the future. Multiple large system needs are moving towards the end of life cycles which will have a major impact on assuring the continuity and future interoperability of critical IT systems infrastructure within public safety.

Many of the public safety agencies installed laptop mobile data computers (MDC) in their vehicles involved in operational functions. These computers provide staff with the ability to communicate more efficiently, reduce the amount of work placed on communications staff, and write reports. There are approximately 335 MDCs with the law enforcement agencies and 150 with Fire and Rescue. Expanded use of cellular phones and “Blackberries” has enhanced communication within each agency, particularly when members were on scenes of incidents that required immediate contact with other staff.

External Challenges

- **800 MHz Radios, re-banding and interoperability**

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has mandated re-banding of the 800 MHz radio system and PWC is participating currently in negotiations which impact the county and the region. The county will re-band as part of the National Capitol Region (NCR) and each jurisdiction is dependant on the other for maintaining interoperability. The challenge has been to have this completed in a fashion that is seamless to the end-user and minimizes impacts on this primary communication method within Public Safety. The fleet of radios and templates that must be addressed with no errors is massive. This mandate has the capability of severe and costly negative impacts.

- **Regional Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) Interoperability**

The radio systems used by Fairfax, Montgomery, and PWC offer seamless interoperability. With regard to CAD and 9-1-1 systems, the jurisdictions currently do not have interoperability but remain engaged to capitalize on PSAP emergent technology.

- **Vendor updates/upgrades and version changes**

The version of mobile data (MDC) software public safety agencies are currently using is 5 versions old and is in danger of losing complete support from the vendor. This means agencies have already out-lived the ability to take advantage of new features that vendors “build” into the new versions. Changes in laptop models required a change in mounting systems in each vehicle.

- **CJIS, NCIC, VCIN and DMV policy and program modifications**

As new security requirements are put into place by Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS), Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN) and National Crime Information Center (NCIC), the trickle down effect from the federal to the state to the county level requires changes to agencies infrastructure to be compliant. Recently, a simple change in the way a NCIC

return was formatted caused an issue with some of the software: Staff worked with the vendor to create a software fix be applied to each MDC.

- **Public Wireless Carrier**

Each time the public wireless carrier use makes system and software changes it causes the public safety agencies to assess and change it needed to keep up with the technology. For example, in December 2004, Verizon was ended service to the data system county agencies were using resulting in acquiring a new contract with Sprint. Since then agencies have dealt with similar situations with regard to cell phone providers changing systems, sometimes without adequate advance notice.

External Opportunities

- **Technology Innovations**

Rapid advances in new technologies such as mobile data computer systems allow for greater access to information and more efficient and effective response improving the overall delivery of services. Technology advancements (ex. thermal imaging cameras, new biomedical equipment and hazardous material equipment) continue to reduce the risk of fire and injury to businesses and citizens as well as increase the efficiency of fire suppression and emergency medical services. “Smart software” is available to enhance the CAD system so that it will recommend the move up of fire and rescue units to provide coverage when the primary units are committed to other significant incidents.

- **Technology and benchmarking**

Public safety personnel participate in local, state, and national committees and organizations that provide networking opportunities for evaluating new technology and best practice methods. Examples include personal protection and hazardous materials equipment and standards.

- **MDC Grant money**

The Town of Haymarket Police Department was able to obtain funding through a grant to purchase 2 MDCs for use in their police vehicles. This has enabled them access to the same system as the PWC police and help reduce the use of the radio to communicate and obtain information.

- **Vendor Relations**

Positive relationships with vendors are one of the biggest and most under-utilized resources within the county. Many contracted vendors offer other services and solutions to assist in deployment, maintenance, enhancement, etc. of the products agencies utilize.

Internal Challenges

- **Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD)**

The current CAD system requires continuous upgrades to support interface systems such as 9-1-1, Radio and Fire Station Alerting as they change or require replacement. Continuous upgrades will also be necessary as operating systems are upgraded and hardware is replaced. The industry is working toward data interoperability between CAD systems and that will require additional funding as the technology progresses.

- **CAD Enhancements Phase-In**

Due to the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system's size and complexity, not all enhancements requested by staff were implemented all at once. Some enhancements are phased in over several fiscal years. These enhancements/upgrades need to continue as technology advances. Impacts will include Records Management System (RMS) and Mobile Data for public safety agencies.

- **Mobile Data Systems**

Mobile data systems in public safety emergency vehicles provide complete information of calls as well as additional information on an incident without tying up a communications channel. Additional systems have been requested for the Sheriff's Office, Animal Control and parking enforcement vehicles but funding was not available.

- **E 9-1-1 System**

The current E 9-1-1 system was purchased and installed in April 2003. The nation's current 9-1-1 system is designed around telephone technology and cannot handle the text, data, images and video that is becoming increasingly common in personal communications and critical to future transportation safety and mobility advances. The Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1) initiative will establish the foundation for public emergency communications services in a wireless mobile society. NG 9-1-1 will drive the replacement of the current system within the next 3-5 years.

- **800 MHz Radio System**

The current system went into service June 2003 and the vendor support ends in 2012. This will drive the upgrade decision to chose system that is vendor supported and complies with the latest standards. In addition, the LODD investigative report identified challenges for fire and rescue with the system that must be addressed.

- **Communication**

Increasing the number of public safety agencies staff complement who understand technology systems along with educating the stakeholders

regarding the projects and the process to implement them can help improve customer expectations.

Internal Strengths

- **Station Alerting Technology**

A standardized alerting system has been installed in all fire and rescue stations. This system provides for a uniformed method of alerting stations to emergency calls. This system is compliant with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard #1221 and the Insurance Services Office (ISO). This system allows for notification to personnel on duty at all of the stations of important information and its messaging (e.g., weather alerts, terrorist events, staffing, etc.).

- **Automated Field Reporting (AFR)**

This has allowed fire and rescue personnel to complete patient care reports and electronically forward them to regional hospitals. AFR also allowed for improvements in the agency's system-wide quality assurance program.

- **Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) and Automatic Vehicle Recommended Route (AVRR)**

Fire and Rescue has recently began the implementation and use of the Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) and Automatic Vehicle Recommended Route (AVRR) that allow CAD to locate emergency units so that the closest unit can be dispatched. Following successful deployment with fire and rescue, it will be deployed for police units.

- **Station Connectivity**

All fire and rescue stations are connected to the County's IT network via the I-Net (fiber optic cable provided by Comcast). Personnel can access CAD, SafetyPAD, VoIP and RMS with greater speed and reliability. Newly implementation station alerting system also connects to the stations over the I-Net. Enhanced messaging is also possible as part of the station alerting system.

- **Integrated Fire & Rescue and Police RMS System**

An integrated police and fire & rescue management information system has been implemented. These systems are designed to:

- Provide timely and accurate public safety information, and
- Provide critical patient care and fire & rescue information for improved system analysis.

- **Enhanced GIS capabilities**

Enhanced Geographic Information System (GIS) capabilities for public safety agencies and the use of "smart" software (CAD Analyst, BARB "Box Area

Run Card Builder" and ADAM "Apparatus Deployment Modeling") have provided improvements to planning and analysis of public safety services delivery such as response routing and facility planning. Additionally, the Office of Building and Development funded a GIS Specialist for address validation purposes to ensure public safety staff are dispatched to the correct location. Since crime mapping/GIS technology was implemented in the Police Department in the fall 1998, it continues to be an important tool in analyzing crime patterns, providing crime analysis information to officers in the field, aiding in the prosecution of criminal cases and planning and conducting drug raids and preparing for major events. Within the Department of Fire & Rescue, GIS provides mapping and analysis on major incidents such as Sam's Junk Yard, the Poppy Court bombing, overturned propane delivery trucks, train derailments, fuel tanker and chemical spills and weather related emergencies. GIS is used to identify property lines and responsible persons, nearest streams to prevent contamination, identify special needs population, preparations for potential evacuations, create isolation zones and plume flow modeling. GIS also provides modeling for deploying public safety resources using time/distance travel analysis, calls for service, maps, and preplans for emergency operations, action plans for dams, high hazard areas and modeling future fire and rescue station location sites.

- **800 MHz radio system**

Implementation of the public safety radio system has improved communications in the following ways:

- a. Inter-operability between public safety agencies: Public safety agencies can now communicate with each other through existing radio system.
- b. Seamless inter-operability with other public safety agencies outside of PWC.
- c. Elimination of radio saturation problems: Additional radio channels can be used as radio traffic increases or as special events and major incidents occur.

- **Automated License Plate Reader**

The police department recently obtained a device that can read license plates and compare them with information stored in a database that includes stolen vehicles, AMBER alerts, and the driver license status of the owner of the vehicle. This device has led to several recoveries of stolen vehicles.

- **Teamwork**

The team that handles mobile data, radios, cellular phones and other assigned technical issues for the public safety agencies have a vast amount of technical knowledge, project management skills and experience that has helped in advancing these programs within their agencies.

Traffic Safety

As PWC and surrounding jurisdiction's populations grow, so will the number of vehicles traveling on the highways. PWC has two interstate highways (I-95 and I-66) and other major and minor roads which are used as major commuter routes. As a result, there are additional hazards public safety agencies must contend with in order to provide services to residents and visitors to the county. Increased traffic can slow down response times for emergency vehicles who are responding, in some cases, to a life threatening situation. Current strategic plan goals incorporate response times as a measured outcome. This additional traffic impacts overall safety of other drivers, pedestrians, school zones and residential areas due to unsafe driving behaviors.

External Challenges

- **Traffic Enforcement requests**

With the continued growth in population and housing in PWC, there have been increases requests for the police department to control driving behaviors such as speeding, crashes and other dangerous acts. The Police Department has increased its number of hours spent conducting speed enforcement and deploying the SMART trailer which has a RADAR unit and a display of a vehicle speed visible to the drivers approaching the trailer.

Table 28: Radar Hours and SMART Trailer Hours²⁸

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total Radar Hours	5336	5131	5707	6305
Total SMART Trailer Hours	3245	2332	3016	3412

- **Road Construction**

Failure of road construction at the state level to keep pace with growth of vehicular traffic is causing delays and increased traffic congestion. These problems cause challenges to public safety agencies responding to emergencies.

- **Through Traffic**

The completion of transportation projects such as the Prince William Parkway and Dumfries Rd (Rt. 234) which connects I-66 and I-95, has increased traffic with drivers using it as an "outer beltway" to avoid northern Virginia.

- **Commercial Vehicles**

Commercial vehicles are using PWC roads, in part, as a means of avoiding the truck scales on I-95 north of Dumfries. Data from the Special Operations Bureau's reports found that between 2004 and 2007*, commercial motor vehicles checked by the police department's part-time Motor Carrier Safety Inspectors found on average 64% of the trucks had a defect and 25% had

²⁸ Special Operations Bureau Annual Reports 2004-2007

defects that were serious enough to take them out of service. Out of service means the truck could not be driven until repairs were made to correct the defect. As a result, this can decrease the safety of these roads.

- **Traffic Light Pre-emption restrictions**

Fire and Rescue vehicles utilize the traffic light pre-emption devices; however law enforcement agencies do not participate due to Virginia Department of Transportation restrictions. These devices cause a traffic light to turn green in the direction of the approaching vehicle to allow a safe crossing of the intersection.

- **Traffic Volume**

Public safety personnel are at great risk for injuries while operating at incidents on area roadways due to traffic volume. Law enforcement officers who engaged in traffic enforcement have to be vigilant not only for violations but also to be able to safely stop the violator's vehicle. As the population and traffic volumes increase, members will continue to have to contend with this issue.

- **Child Safety Seats**

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 80% of child safety seats on a national level are not properly installed which increases the risk of injury. Fire and Rescue installs child passenger safety seats in the stations at appointed times. Fire and Rescue is also the lead agency with the Prince William Community Safe Kids Coalition that offers this service six times a year at various locations. The Prince William Community Safe Kids Coalition is comprised of members from the PWC Police, PWC Sheriff's office, area hospitals, Kiwanis, and other nonprofit agencies with a shared interest in children's safety.

External Opportunities

- **Grant Funding**

The Police Department has applied for and received grant monies to address traffic safety issues. Law enforcement agencies work cooperatively with other agencies such as VSP and the town police departments, to conduct checkpoints to combat drunk and drugged driving (DUI), conduct commercial vehicle safety and weight inspections, as well as enforce aggressive driving law and seat belt compliance.

- **VDOT**

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has been extremely helpful in the area where PWC has experienced large numbers of crashes by increasing the number of lanes on several roads to accommodate the volume. They have also changed the timing in light cycles with delays added to give additional time for stopping and to clear the intersections.

- **Regional traffic safety campaigns**

Law enforcement agencies participate in such campaigns as “Click it or Ticket,” “Smooth Operator,” and “Smart, Safe and Sober” which provide additional awareness through public service announcements in the media.

- **Public Transportation**

The use of public transportation such as car/van pooling, bus and commuter rail lessen the impact of traffic congestion on the existing roadway system and increases the safety of pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

- **New Road Construction**

The county’s successful road bond program constructs miles of roads in the county which ease congestion and improve public safety response time.

Internal Challenges

- **County Vehicle Crashes**

Each of the public safety agencies contend with traffic issues in their daily driving and have also been involved in incidents and crashes with their vehicles. These crashes lead to vehicles being placed out of service for repairs and in some cases staff being injured. Ongoing training opportunities to improve driving skills is dependant upon available training days, work schedules and practice vehicles. All public safety agencies have been experiencing an increasing number of miles driven each year by staff and will continue to have to contend with this challenge.

- **Pedestrian Safety**

Educating the public to cross roads at designated points has always been a challenge which has been impacted by greater numbers of non-English speaking residents in the county and in certain high density areas. Better communication with the civic groups and media outlets including Spanish language radio and cable stations are ongoing. Working with VDOT on implementing better lighting at the high volume intersections and increasing timing cycles of high pedestrian traffic areas. Educating motorists on yielding to pedestrians at intersections with marked crosswalks is also ongoing.

- **Dispatch Modifications**

Ongoing analyses of traffic patterns and routes used by responders has provided recommendations to modify dispatches during specific times of the day.

- **Commercial Motor Vehicle Training**

The personnel assigned to conduct Motor Carrier inspections must attend an 80-hour school and upon successful graduation can enforce Federal Standards

on commercial motor vehicles (CMVs). Additional training is required for Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) and tanker trucks. Coordinating schedules for staff to attend, while still maintaining service levels, is an ongoing challenge.

- **Response Times**

Ensuring adequate police staffing levels are maintained to allow for quick responses to calls for service required vigilance by patrol supervisors and dispatchers. Patrol officers also have to contend with other vehicles on the road which delayed some response times.

- **Resource Allocation**

Police supervisors worked to ensure sufficient staff are trained in RADAR operation and units available for use by members. Supervisors task members to engage in speed, DUI and other dangerous driving behaviors enforcement. Supervisors task officers with monitoring high risk intersections as part of the Reduced Incident Management Program (RIMP).

Internal Strengths

- **Traffic light pre-emption**

These devices have been installed at approximately 166 intersections to improve response times for Fire and Rescue vehicles. This also improves the safety for emergency providers, pedestrians and other vehicles. An additional 90 are to be installed in the future.

- **Resource Allocation**

The police department conducts traffic enforcement in identified areas prone to vehicle crashes and citizen complaints. High visibility, RADAR, SMART speed trailer and use of unconventional vehicles were used in this effort. Fire and Rescue strives to ensure equipment is strategically placed throughout the County for quick access and rapid response to scenes.

- **Inter-parcel connectors**

Coordination with the Planning Office on new developments to provide inter-parcel connectors will allow emergency responders to use the quickest and most direct routes of travel allowing first due and support units to arrive on the scene in a more efficient and effective manner

- **Vehicle Occupant Safety**

Over the last several years, the county increasingly focused on vehicle occupant safety which included: seat belt checks, child restraint checks and child safety seat inspections.

VI. PARTNERS

This chapter of the Strategic Issue Analysis describes the county's community partners and how they impact on this Issue. This includes non-profit organizations, volunteer organizations, other levels of government, and businesses, among others. This chapter answers the question - Who partners with Public Safety in achieving results for the community?

PWC public safety agencies have had to adapt their response(s) to the county changing, dynamic, and sometimes catastrophic environment. In recent years these agencies have had to focus more on the exchange of information, strategic planning, combining resources, mutual aid, task force development, and homeland security. To accomplish these goals, public safety has had to develop closer ties with other governmental entities, non-governmental organizations, and internal organizations. In recent years PWC has experienced rapid population growth and the resulting increased demands on public services. Single government agencies cannot function alone; public safety agencies have partnered with other public service agencies to achieve a continuing high quality of life within PWC.

A. Governmental Partners:

- **Federal Government Agencies**

Public safety agencies work in close coordination with federal agencies such as the Office of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice on multi-agency initiatives in areas such as transportation safety, domestic counterterrorism, defense against catastrophic threats, and emergency preparedness and response. In addition, addressing the county's public safety needs requires collaboration with agencies that are not traditionally seen as relating to public safety such as the Department of Energy, Bureau of Land Management (Parks), Department of Interior and Department of Health and Human Services; all contribute to local public safety response(s), partnering with the county on matters such as environmental protection, weather monitoring, contagious illnesses, and workplace safety.

- **State Governmental Agencies**

State agencies such as the Health Department, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Criminal Justice Services, Department of Corrections, State Police, and Department of Fire Programs are relied upon for services including: emergency preparedness, law enforcement, corrections, transportation, juvenile justice, health, fire and EMS, housing and community development, training, research, environment and judicial services.

- **Regional Governmental Agencies**

Public safety agencies work in close collaboration and coordination with agencies in surrounding jurisdictions, Northern Virginia agencies, and Council of Government (COG) agencies by oral and written agreements to share resources when requested to assist in solving crime and apprehending criminals, as well as mutual support on fire and rescue emergencies.

- **Local Government Agencies**

Human Service agencies, planning and development agencies, administrative agencies, schools, parks, and libraries all are key components to an effective public safety and criminal justice strategy for the county. The specific roles of Human Services organizations as partners in Public Safety can be illustrated with the following:

- The Area Agency on Aging (Agency) through home visits to older adults helps determine if there are signs of abuse, and if so refers immediately to Adult Protective Services. Following emergency services by Fire and Rescue, the Agency may follow-up with services to citizens, by assessing needed services so they can remain safely in their homes. Social workers look for unsafe conditions and fire hazards, provide safety education, and connect customers to their local Fire House. Injury prevention programs are offered regularly at the Agency's two Senior Centers. Safety information, with topics such as holiday decorations and fire prevention materials, is sent to customers who are homebound. Medication management and falls prevention techniques are provided through the Senior Centers' nurse to reduce injuries. The Agency works closely with Virginia's Office of the Attorney General's Community Outreach Coordinator to keep up-to-date on prevalent scams and exploitative practices targeted toward older adults. Programs and information is provided, and confidential opportunities are available for persons to report if they suspect a crime.
- The At-Risk Youth and Family Services (ARYFS) program serves approximately 100 children annually on probation at the request of probation officers. Also, they place over 120 children a year into residential facilities, most commonly because they can't be safely treated in a community setting since they are a risk to their own well being or to the safety of others. Another partnership is with the county's group homes for boys and for girls. Over 90% of the group home residents are placed there through ARYFS.
- Community Services (CS) provides a variety of mental health, mental retardation, substance abuse, and early intervention, as well as emergency services. CS:
 - Provides 24 hour coverage to provide evaluations for possible involuntary psychiatric hospitalization for individuals deemed to be at imminent risk of harming themselves or others or who are unable to care for themselves due to their mental illness.
 - Provides mental health and substance abuse assessment and treatment services on an outpatient basis to individuals who have been court ordered or who are court involved. The agency has staff on site at the Juvenile Detention Center and at the Office of Criminal Justice Services and provides an adult substance abuse program in the Adult Detention Center (DORM program). CS staff also monitors and provide treatment to individuals who have committed a criminal offense but have been found to be Not Guilty by Reasons of Insanity (NGRI acquittees).

- Partners with Public Safety Communications, Police Department, and Fire and Rescue in providing crisis support to public safety personnel (Critical Incident Management Team). Selected staff participates in a more intensive program called Adopt a Firehouse where clinicians are assigned to county fire stations to be available for consultation regarding customer issues or to provide behavioral health support to fire department personnel.
 - Provides training to PWC Police Department regarding the civil involuntary commitment process and ways to identify and work with individuals experiencing problems related to mental health, substance abuse or mental retardations.
- Cooperative Extension collaborates with the Office of Criminal Justice Services to identify and refer children and their parents who would benefit from Extension's Juvenile Justice Parenting Program. Health inspectors refer clients to Extension's Nutrition Program and make referrals to Extension's Serv-Safe Program upon discovery of unsafe food handling practices. In conjunction with Fire and Rescue, Extension's 4-H Program teaches basic safety skills such as fire safety, stranger danger, and telephone and internet procedures to 4th graders.
- Office of Criminal Justice Services works closely with the Adult Detention Center to develop alternatives to incarceration examples of which include Pretrial Assessment and Supervision and Intensive Pretrial Supervision, a program unique to PWC. In addition, OCJS relies on and collaborates with human service agencies like the CS (mental health), Virginia Cooperative Extension, and Virginia Employment Commission to improve offender competency in ways that enhance public safety.
- The Health Department collaborates with the Adult Detention Center by providing maternity services, and communicable disease advice and education. They provide STD screening and treatment for the Juvenile Detention Center and Molinari Shelter. They are participating in developing the GRIT tattoo removal program and its implementation.
- The Department of Social Services and Child Protective Services:
 - Participate in quarterly Multi-disciplinary Team Meetings with the Commonwealth Attorney's Office, PWC Police, the County Attorney's Office, and Probation to review challenging cases and/or situations and to identify ways to improve processes.
 - Participate in a process for the police and CPS to work together when conducting joint investigations so that the interview process is effective and children do not have to be interviewed multiple times.
 - Work with Quantico Marine Corps Base to provide Child Protective Services to children on the military base and to review all cases of abuse/neglect that involve military personnel and their families. Monthly multi-disciplinary committee meetings are held.
 - Provide on site education to the youth while they are placed in the Juvenile Detention Center, Group Home for Boys, Group Home for

Girls, and Molinari Juvenile Shelter partner with PWC Schools. These youth have been identified as needing to be placed outside of their homes and the community.

- The Outreach to Detention and Electronic Monitoring Program and the Juvenile Court Services Unit have partnered to have OTD/EM program provide additional supervision to intake diversion cases to prevent further delinquency and to maximize services to non-judicial referrals.
- Act as the lead agency (DSS) for shelter management in emergency operations coordination.
- The Juvenile Justice Action Team (JJAT) consists of members from other agencies. JJAT is an interagency, inter-jurisdictional team that works together on behalf of juvenile justice.
- The Gang Response Intervention Team (G.R.I.T) and G.R.I.T Steering Board consists of members from many agencies to address gang issues in the community. This includes the inter-jurisdictional collaboration for the upcoming Make a Change Tattoo Removal program.

B. Non Governmental Partners:

- **Non-Profit Agencies**

Public safety and criminal justice agencies work with many non-profit agencies including; SAVAS (Sexual Assault Victims Advocacy Services), Turning Points, Red Cross, Hospitals and American Heart Association for services including: crime/abuse victim support, disaster assistance and health and safety education.

- **Professional Organizations**

Professional organizations such as the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police (VACP), and Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA) play an important role by working closely with public safety agencies on education, research, community safety programs and maintaining professional standards. Additionally, other organizations such as news media organizations and utility companies play important roles in providing public safety assistance.

- **Faith-Based Organizations**

Faith based organization such as the Fire and Rescue and Police Chaplain's programs provide assistance to victims and counseling support. Additionally, religious leaders from local places of worship work closely with public safety and criminal justice agencies regarding services to those in need and collaboration on community issues and concerns.

- **Businesses**

Certain business locations are active partners in security planning and operations related to potential terrorist activity and homeland security.

- **Volunteer Fire & Rescue Companies**

Among the many other organizations that provide various assistance and resources to public safety and criminal justice endeavors, the 12 PWC Volunteer Fire and Rescue Companies provide invaluable service in the areas of policy development, funding, fire prevention and fire and rescue emergency response activities.

- **Other Volunteer Organizations**

Volunteer organizations such as alumni from various public safety citizen academies, the Prince William Crime Prevention Council and the Neighborhood Watch Program provide support, feedback, and recommendations on public safety programs and services.

- The Prince William Crime Prevention Council is a non-profit organization comprised of citizen volunteers and law enforcement. It was established in 1982 for the exclusive purpose of promoting the common good and the social welfare of the citizens of PWC by:
 - Stimulating interest in crime prevention in PWC,
 - Promoting the formation and effective operation of Neighborhood Watch programs under the auspices of the PWC Police Department,
 - Providing a forum and a voice for the exchange of ideas about reducing and preventing crime,
 - Maintaining a Speakers Bureau for educating County residents about crime prevention, and
 - Serving as a liaison between the Police Department and citizens, businesses and police-authorized Neighborhood Watch programs.
- The Neighborhood Watch Program encourages citizens to partner with their law enforcement agencies in an effort to reduce various types of "neighborhood crime."
 - Neighborhood Watch is a free service of the PWC Police Department, and is available to all PWC residents.
 - Currently there are more than 200 Neighborhood Watch groups operating in PWC.
 - Neighborhood Watch groups receive Crime Reports, Crime Alerts and the McGruff Speaks newsletter, and are contacted regularly by their police officer coordinator to monitor the effectiveness of the Watch programs.

- **Local, State and National Partnerships**

Partnerships with local, state and nationwide organizations help to achieve the mission of the fire and rescue service providers in the county. Examples include partnerships with:

- American Heart Association for CPR training.
- Safe Kids Coalition for injuring prevention for children.

- Virginia Department of Fire Programs for self certification services for fire training programs.
- Virginia Department of Emergency Medical Services for paramedic certification training program

VII. *ACHIEVING THE FUTURE VISION*

Continued support from the community is essential. Public safety agencies have consistently received high satisfaction rates from the citizens of PWC and each agency will continue to provide quality service in the future. Ensuring these agencies receive the resources needed to provide the levels of service the community expects will be the challenge for the respective department heads and the PWC government. Referencing the Future Commission 2030 Report, the below are key elements into achieving the citizen’s future vision.

1. Adequate Funding

“Public safety agencies are fully staffed and equipped to meet the County’s needs. They have the necessary funds to upgrade their facilities, vehicles and equipment as technology advances.²⁹”

A significant challenge faced by public safety agencies over the next ten years will be achieving the outcomes desired by the community, including quick response times, low crime rates and homeland security. Obtaining sufficient funding, managing the costs associated with the provision of public safety services, and the acquisition of facilities necessary for the achievement of these outcomes will be a challenge. Police stations, fire stations, judicial facilities, correctional facilities, public safety communications center and other facilities will require significant levels of expenditures and will require ongoing annual expenses to staff and operate these facilities. These new facilities will need to be constructed during a period in which there are other major demands on County resources for the construction of other facilities and infrastructure, such as roads and schools. Managing and controlling the requirements for the infrastructure that will be essential for meeting the various public safety needs, including staffing, will be very difficult in a climate in which the BOCS is attempting to restrain tax increases of homeowners and businesses particularly as the economy continues to worsen.

2. Crime Prevention

“Citizens assist the Police Department with crime prevention and are actively involved in reporting crimes. Personal safety courses are widely available for citizens of all ages and abilities. Crime alerts and information about crime patterns is available electronically on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis.³⁰”

Prince William County will likely continue to experience overall growth in population and jobs for the foreseeable future. The current economic situation may slow this growth in the short term and will likely present new problems. These problems can include an

²⁹ PWC Future Commission 2030 Report p.24

³⁰ PWC Future Commission 2030 Report p.24

increase in crimes and quality of life issues, which will directly impact public safety agencies. Abandoned houses in neighborhoods invite mischief and blight. Research has shown that increased levels of foreclosure have the potential to cause declines in neighborhood property values and increases in neighborhood crime while putting an increased strain on municipal services and decreasing revenues. Concentrated foreclosures may also have a negative effect on the budget where property taxes make up a substantial portion of the revenues. Declining revenues can place an increased strain on the provision of necessary public safety services. It is critical that local, state, and federal governments develop aggressive interventions to keep families in homes and stabilize neighborhoods³¹.

The Sheriff's Office has the responsibility of courthouse security and civil process. As PWC continues to grow, so too will the demands on this office to fulfill its duties. As previously mentioned in this document, the court dockets have increased significantly as have the number of foreclosures of homes. Tragic events like the Virginia Tech shootings and changes in mental health laws will likely increase the demands put on the office as it transports patients to distant psychiatric facilities. The Police, ADC and Community Services staff will also be impacted by this trend. There has been more publicity nationwide involving threats and assaults on judges and prosecutors. PWC has not been immune from such threats and it falls upon members from the Sheriff's Office to ensure the safety of court staff. Resources must be available to them in order to accomplish this mission through training, conducting assessments and improving their methods to protect the courthouse and the grounds surrounding it.

Other agencies impacted by this growth are the various agencies that are responsible for subjects involved in the judicial process. These include subjects incarcerated at the Adult Detention Center, the Juvenile Detention Center, pre-trial and post conviction court supervision and diversion programs. The ADC is completing an expansion that will not be able to accommodate all its inmates. "Farming out" of inmates to other facilities will continue as planning is conducted for additional facilities locally. Should there be a significant increase in crime in this troubled economic time, it is likely these agencies will be burdened further. Additional resources will be needed in order to maintain public safety service levels that the community expects.

3. Crime Rate

"The County has the lowest crime rate in the Commonwealth. The County ensures that its children are safe at school and safe from predators. There is little or no gang activity in our community."³²

Prince William County has experienced a downward trend in overall crime rates over the past 15 years and is one of the lowest in the metropolitan region. Additionally, the Police Department recently exceeded its strategic plan objective of major crimes clearance rate. In order for the Police Department to continue to achieve these objectives, resources will need to be available for its members to prevent such crimes or investigate them to successful conclusions.

³¹ Woodstock Institute, March 2008

³²PWC Future Commission 2030 Report p.24

Table 29: Crime Rates per 1,000 Population³³

Comparison	1992	1995	1998	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Prince William County	38.2	39.8	30.3	27.8	25.9	24.3	24.5	22.8	21.6	19.8
COG Region Index	55	55.9	43.5	40.9	41.4	38.3	35.3	34	31.8	N/A

On March 3, 2008, the Police Department implemented an Illegal Immigration policy in response to BOCS direction. The policy empowers officers to check the status of criminal aliens who are in the United States illegally and who commit crimes that would make them eligible for deportation. Accordingly, police officers will protect victims and cooperative witnesses – regardless of their immigration status. In past years, day labors gravitating around local convenience stores generated service calls to include littering, alcohol violations, loitering and quality of life complaints. As this policy is enforced in a fair, lawful and reasonable manner throughout the various PWC agencies, public confidence in the County government in general, and public safety agencies specifically, may waver as it is debated by the public and critiqued by a team of assessors.

4. Rapid Response & Fire and Rescue Management

“Police and fire and rescue units can arrive quickly at any location within the County. Public safety response times are better than average response times in the Commonwealth.^{34,}”

“Other communities have adopted our hybrid fire and rescue system as a model for public-private partnerships. Both career and volunteer opportunities are available in the County’s fire and rescue services. The career department and volunteer companies have standardized equipment, facilities and training to ensure seamless service to residents.^{35,}”

In order for public safety agencies to achieve the goals of rapid responses to emergencies, they too will need to have the resources available to them to accomplish this. Many areas in PWC are outside the fire and rescue 4 minute response time goal, but these locations can be reached sooner with the addition of new stations. However, in order to effectively deal with these emergencies, particularly fires, the responding units must have adequate staff in order to combat the fire quickly and most importantly, safely. This is accomplished through a cohesive partnership between the Department of Fire and Rescue and the twelve volunteer fire and rescue companies that provide seamless service to our residents, visitors, and business community.

5. Prevention and Education

“Residents understand the importance of fire prevention and know how they can prevent fires. Our schools have a coordinated role in fire prevention and education. Fire education prepares residents for fire and rescue careers and emergency preparedness.^{36,}”

“Residents are well prepared for disasters and know what to do when the emergency plan is activated. Teams of citizens are trained in basic disaster response skills and are located

³³ COG Report on Crime and Crime Control 2002-2006; PWC Police Annual Reports

³⁴ PWC Future Commission 2030 Report p.24

³⁵ PWC Future Commission 2030 Report p.24

³⁶ PWC Future Commission 2030 Report p.25

near high-density communities. We have a county-wide emergency notification system accessible to all residents.³⁷”

Citizens expect a high degree of service from public safety agencies and County government in the form of high visibility, fast response times to calls and provision of supplies. Meeting realistic expectations can be a challenge in these situations. Citizens need to understand the importance of thorough family and individual preparation planning for emergencies (ex. family and individual emergency communication plan, maintaining three days worth of provisions). Continued education and communication is needed to reach a common understanding of what services can be provided. Fire and Rescue will continue to engage in efforts to prevent fires and injuries through education and regulations.

6. Partnerships

“The Police Department partners with the FBI Academy at Quantico and the FBI facility at INNOVATION to enhance the training, skills and experience of officers.³⁸”

“As with other public services, public safety agencies participate in regional organizations, training opportunities and disaster preparedness, ensuring coordination among the metropolitan area’s emergency responders during major incidents. Public safety agencies periodically test regional emergency plans.³⁹”

Public safety agencies are comprised of individuals who are dedicated to their professions and are part of a team that strives to provide quality service to their customers, both internal and external, with the resources they have available. Cooperation examples include;

- Joint probation checks by law enforcement and probation staffs to ensure compliance of those deemed by the court to still present a level of danger to the community,
- Public education events such as child car seat checks involving police and fire and rescue staff,
- A joint communication center,
- Intensive community supervision and incarceration diversion programs
- Shared training academy facilities, and
- Mutual aid agreements.

Should resources not be made available to the public safety agencies and to those that support the mission of these agencies, the risks to the residents and visitors to PWC will increase. One means to ensure these agencies can continue to dedicate resources to accomplish their missions in the future is to implement a staffing plan that is proportionate for all agencies. A coordinated staffing plan will help to ensure increasing work loads will be able to be accomplished without undue burdens on staff and facilities.

³⁷ PWC Future Commission 2030 Report p.24

³⁸ PWC Future Commission 2030 Report p.24

³⁹ PWC Future Commission 2030 Report p.24

7. Emergency Response Technology & Safety Equipment

“Emergency responders are able to link electronically to information about a location where a fire, crime or other emergency is underway. First responders and other field personnel have access to electronic diagnostics, which are linked to local hospitals and other medical personnel. Public safety personnel have access to robotic technologies to respond to emergencies and increase the safety of responders.⁴⁰”

“Building codes and construction increase the safety of structures and decrease the risk to emergency responders. In general, structures are constructed with fire-resistant materials. All new residential units have automatic sprinklers while older units have been retrofitted. High-risk facilities have yard sprinklers with monitoring capability to detect fires and direct sprinklers toward the heat source.⁴¹”

There will also be risks associated with the safety of the public safety staff as they engage in their various missions. PWC has lost 2 police officers in the line of duty and most recently, the Department of Fire and Rescue lost their first member while fighting a house fire. There have also been numerous occasions where public safety staff have been injured while engaged in their duties. Providing quality training facilities, equipment and time to train in addition to staffing levels that promotes safety will reduce the opportunities for future deaths and injuries to occur.

The Department of Fire and Rescue Line of Duty Death (LODD) Investigative Report highlighted 250 recommendations for improvements within the Fire and Rescue that not only will strengthen the organization, but many recommendations will be beneficial to other public safety agencies within PWC and public safety agencies around the world. Key elements include;

- Tools and Equipment - Multiple challenges regarding the tools and equipment provided to emergency responders will need to be addressed including but not limited to radios, power sources for self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), and other critical components of protective equipment for emergency responders.
- Effective Firefighting Force - National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard #1710 provides the minimum staffing and response standards for substantially all career fire and rescue departments. Specifically, it defines the number of personnel and apparatus required for the initial full alarm assignment dispatched to structure fires and the time for that force to be assembled and operational on the scene of an incident. One of the measures identified in this standard indicates that the entire first-alarm assignments must be assembled on the scene of a fire emergency within eight minutes for 90% of all incidents measured. All of the necessary and concurrent tasks associated with firefighting activities cannot be completed if an effective firefighting force cannot be assembled within the recommended time period.
- Incident Command, Control, and Management – A sufficient number of command officers are required on the first alarm assignment for incident command and control. Responsibilities include resource supervision and

⁴⁰ PWC Future Commission 2030 Report p.24

⁴¹ PWC Future Commission 2030 Report p.24

deployment, risk management, personnel safety, and deployment and oversight of a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) if that becomes necessary. All of the necessary resources deployed for firefighting activities cannot be supervised, coordinated, and managed without competent and trained personnel specifically dedicated to the Incident Command, Control, and Management function.

8. Health Care & Equipment Staging

“Fire and rescue stations are a focal point for community health care. As actual emergency calls decrease through better awareness and safety, the stations provide safety education and preventative health activities in support of community-wide health goals. Rescue services provide more pre-hospital care and carry x-ray devices to help reduce the time a patient stays in the hospital.⁴²”

“Emergency units are at locations that allow for quick arrival. Individual fire stations have limited equipment as specialized firefighting equipment is pre-positioned at high-risk facilities. Fire and rescue facilities are not necessarily located together as their missions have separated, and locations are more dependent on the type of emergency most likely to occur.⁴³”

Other factors will impact public safety agencies' abilities to meet the immediate and future needs of the community. The initiation of fees for services such as EMS fees will be an immediate challenge for Fire and Rescue. The information technology currently in place will need to be enhanced to provide the minimum data collection and transfer of the data to provide a billing component that currently does not exist within Fire and Rescue. The data collection is assumed to be an additional responsibility that will be placed on already over capacity emergency medical units. This initiative may have an impact on donations received by the Volunteer Fire and Rescue Departments within Prince William County. There are several issues that will need to be addressed before this program may move forward. Stakeholders (volunteer and career fire and rescue personnel, citizens, elected officials) will need to be educated so they will have a clear understanding of how this program can work. There is much misinformation circulating about this program. Further analysis will need to be done to examine how these funds could conceivably be used to offset General Fund expenditures. In addition, there are several other issues that must be assessed before a decision can be made by policy makers including legal ramifications, use of funds, training, and policy development.

VIII PUBLIC SAFETY APPENDIX A: 2008 MENTAL HEALTH LEGISLATION

Gov. Timothy M. Kaine signed two General Assembly bills on April 9 that arose from the Virginia Tech tragedy of a year ago and will improve protections for citizens and treatment for people with mental illness. The omnibus mental health bills are House Bill 499 (Hamilton) and Senate Bill 246 (Howell).

⁴² PWC Future Commission 2030 Report p.24-25

⁴³ PWC Future Commission 2030 Report p.24

Both bills address the following:

- Commitment criteria;
- Disclosures of mental health information between parties (in various Code sections relating to juvenile and adult commitment, jail transfers, and the Health Records Privacy statute);
- Definition of “responsible person” who may initiate the involuntary treatment process;
- Evidence that can be considered in issuing emergency custody orders (ECO), temporary detention orders (TDO), and commitment orders;
- 2-hour ECO extension for good cause;
- Feedback from community services boards to the petitioner or physician if a TDO will not be recommended;
- Pre-hearing independent examination and CSB preadmission screening;
- Required elements of independent exam;
- Requirements for examiner and CSB to attend and participate in hearings;
- Procedure for transfer of cases between courts, when necessary;
- New Mandatory Outpatient Treatment (MOT) requirements and procedures, and;
- Confidentiality of court records.

The conference report on the 2009 and 2010 biennial budget includes flexibility for the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services (DMHMRSAS) to work with system stakeholders to determine how funds can best be allocated to meet the pressing need for improved care surrounding the civil commitment process. The biennium budget includes \$28.3 million to be allocated in key areas, including:

- Emergency Services:
 - Improving access to emergency psychiatric care
 - Increasing emergency staffs to provide crisis response, participate in commitment hearings, etc.
 - Expanding the number of residential crisis stabilization programs
- Expanded emergency services would provide intensive services, rapid access and peer-provided services as part of the civil commitment process
- Outpatient Services - Expands and improves outpatient services by adding new outpatient clinicians as part of the civil commitment process
- Case Management - Increases case management throughout the Commonwealth to provide coordination and linkage services with a focus on helping individuals adhere to a treatment plan as part of the civil commitment process