

Police Department

Department Mission

The mission of the Police Department is to promote the quality of life in Decatur by providing police services with integrity and with a spirit of excellence, in cooperation with the community.

Department Overview

The Decatur Police Department is responsible for providing protection and police services to the Decatur Community.

The Decatur Police Department is a full-service law enforcement agency. The Police Department is comprised of 47 full-time sworn officers, 15 full-time non-sworn employees, 1 part-time sworn officer and 18 part-time non-sworn employees, for a total workforce of 81 employees. The department is organized into four divisions. The four divisions are the General Administration Division, the Uniform Patrol Division, the Criminal Investigations & Special Patrol Division, and the Support Services Division.

Accomplishments

The Decatur Police Department has maintained its level and quality of service to the community, in spite of staffing shortages. Even with these shortages, our incidents of Part I crimes have remained low and our clearance rates remain significantly above national averages. Additionally, the department has maintained its standards of conduct and professionalism during this period. Unlike many agencies, we have refused to lower our standards to recruit or retain employees.



We have established and/or rekindled relationships with members of the community. We have made responsiveness to community concerns a cornerstone of the department. We have received many notes of appreciation from community members about our responsiveness. Our reputation for responsiveness has increased our effectiveness in addressing crime issues and

solving other problems. In particular, we have started our C.A.P.S. (Citizens Assisting Public Safety) program this year. The C.A.P.S. program will involve members of our community in service to their neighbors. The C.A.P.S. volunteers will assist the police and fire departments in many ways. Some examples of C.A.P.S. duties include:

- Traffic direction at special events
- Staffing the mobile incident command trailer at special events
- Augmenting fire department first aid duties at special events
- Serving as goodwill ambassadors on the Square
- Permit fingerprinting processing
- Child safety seat technicians

We look forward to the full implementation of this program in the coming year.

Staffing remains a constant priority of the department. While this is still a critical issue, we have achieved some success in this area. The police department has actively worked to address the issue and the success we have achieved was brought about through several initiatives:



- Marketed the department through traditional media such as the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and internet based sites
- Established a relationship with the Georgia Department of Veteran's Affairs, which has allowed us to attend job fairs at military bases
- Created a part-time "Background Investigator" position to facilitate and expedite the hiring process
- Working with a professional communications firm to develop a portfolio of recruitment materials aimed at filling police officer vacancies

Budget Summary FY 08-09

This FY 08-09 Police Department budget addresses three areas of Sustainability – environmental, financial, and social. From an environmental perspective, the department desires that the non-patrol vehicle in this year's budget be a fuel efficient and/or hybrid vehicle. The budget process was guided by the goal of producing a sustainable financial request while meeting the community's public safety needs. From a social perspective, one of the biggest challenges faced by the police department in the approved FY 07-08 and proposed FY 08-09 budgets is the ability to maintain its current level of service. Although the department has experienced a shortage in staffing, it has not reduced its level or quality of service to the community.



The police department's goal when developing the FY 2008-2009 budget request was to secure funding that would address the following issues: allow necessary personnel re-allocations, facilitate the implementation of the department's five year plan, and to continue the department's implementation of new technology. The main criterion for items to be included in the budget request was that the justification be an accurate and honest assessment of the department's needs.

The department has created a 5 year strategic plan and will constantly monitor progress and any need for modifications. In particular, the major strategies, which will be implemented or continued in FY 2008-2009 are the following:

- *Recruitment & Staffing* - The recruitment of qualified personnel continues to be a major emphasis in the department. Our ability to implement many other strategies is contingent on having adequate staffing. We will expand our efforts in recruiting by attending job fairs, developing relationships with colleges and universities through participation in internship programs, and consistently evaluating our current efforts. A part-time background investigator position was approved during the 2007-2008 fiscal year. This position was funded through salary savings from unfilled police officer positions. We are asking that this position be funded as a regular part-time position in FY 2008-2009.

- *Professional Development* - The department will implement new procedures relating to promotional testing and supervisory/leadership training. The department has requested funding to employ an outside agency to design and conduct promotional testing for the department. This will ensure a fair and objective process and protect the city against claims of bias or favoritism. The department has also requested additional funds for training. This is due to a re-commitment to professional development, especially focused on the supervisory and management staff. All members of the command staff have attended at least one of the national executive level training courses (FBINA or SPI). One of the department's lieutenants will complete the Georgia Chief's Association's Command College this fiscal year and a second Lieutenant will attend the Southern Police Institute.
- Although there are current studies being conducted into various plans for the major renovation of the police department building, we continue to seek short-term solutions to some of the deficiencies in our current facilities. The following renovations were completed in FY 2007-2008:

- Court clerk offices and payment windows
- Security camera upgrade and expansion
- Portable storage building
- Outside awning over rear entrance
- Break room remodeling
- Weight room conversion into office space and interview room



In FY 2008-2009 we are requesting funding for one other facility maintenance/renovation projects. This project will be the addition of a wall and entrance door to an upstairs storage room. These projects will assist us in providing a safe workplace for our employees and guests.

- *Community Education Programs* - As part of our strategic plan, we have identified several areas where we can expand our current community education programs. Our Citizen's Public Safety Academy remains one of our most successful programs. We recently conducted our 16th session and are already in the planning stages for the 17th. We intend to create a "Junior Police Academy" (JPA) in FY 2008-2009. This will be a shortened course targeted towards young people from 12-16 years of age. The JPA will be conducted during the summer school vacation. Additionally, we have met



with the City Schools of Decatur and have committed to participation in the "Dual Enrollment" program. This program allows students to take specialized career training course and receive both high school and college credit.

We will also be conducting community education programs targeted towards the elderly population. Possible topics include identity theft and fraud prevention.

- *Pedestrian Safety* - The police department has identified pedestrian safety as a growing concern. With the increased residential and commercial enterprises in the downtown area and the ensuing traffic congestion, pedestrian safety continues to be a high priority. We intend to address this issue through education programs and enforcement actions. We will monitor traffic and pedestrian patterns and when necessary propose traffic calming measures.
- *Traffic Safety* - The department is dedicated to implementing a traffic safety unit as soon as staffing levels allow. It has become apparent that current methods of traffic enforcement are limited because of traffic congestion. One method of addressing these limitations is through the use of alternative vehicles. The department is proposing the use of a traffic enforcement motorcycle. A motorcycle would allow greater ease in entering and exiting traffic patterns and allow a more comprehensive traffic enforcement program. The department is requesting funding to lease a suitable motorcycle, rather than funds to purchase a motorcycle. This will allow for an analysis of the effectiveness of the program before the expenditure of increased funding.
- *“Quality of Life”* - Many members of the law enforcement profession have long realized that addressing *small* problems or *quality of life issues*, often have a larger impact on crime than major endeavors geared towards *real crime*. The Decatur Police Department has operated under this theory for many years. In FY 2008-2009 we will continue to expand our efforts. We recognize the tremendous work done by many members of the city staff and our community to rejuvenate and beautify our downtown area. We are dedicated to ensuring these efforts have not been in vain. We are developing operational plans and strategies to address quality of life issues such as; littering, noise violations, graffiti, panhandling, and improper usage of facilities. We are also committed to assisting in the drafting of ordinances to address these issues. We wish to add an additional officer to patrol the downtown area. This is one of those initiatives dependent upon adequate staffing, but we recognize the need for an additional officer, as soon as feasibly possible.
- *Technology* - We remain committed to providing our employees with the technology necessary to excel in their jobs. We recognize the constant advancements in technology render it impossible to remain “cutting edge,” and also realize the “fastest, biggest, or best” is not always necessary for quality performance. However, we realize the importance of utilizing technology to be more effective or efficient. In 2006 the police department hired a Technology Services Officer. This position will be eliminated in the FY 2008-2009 budget. The person who held the position has been hired full-time as a police lieutenant. He will continue to address technology issues as well as supervise the communications division.

