



Request for City Council Committee Action From the Department of Public Works

Date: January 14, 2009

To: Honorable Donald Samuels, Chair Public Safety & Regulatory Services Committee

Subject: **MPD Mounted Patrol Horse Barn Facility**

Recommendation:

- a). Authorize the proper City officials to continue discussions with the Minnesota State Fair Board supporting the potential for partnerships and to analyze the feasibility of the location, planning, design, and construction of a Mounted Patrol Horse Barn Facility at the Minnesota State Fair Grounds.
- b). Request that the Minnesota State Fair Board of Directors direct staff to continue discussions with the City of Minneapolis supporting the potential for partnerships and analyzing the feasibility of the location, planning, design, and construction of a Mounted Patrol Horse Barn Facility at the Minnesota State Fair Grounds.
- c). Direct the proper City officials to return to committee in April of 2009 to present a Project update and request further direction.

Previous Directives:

December 12, 2007 – Resolution 2007R-645 of the City Council Adopting the MPD Mounted Patrol Horse Barn Facility (MPD04) in the 2008-2012 Five-Year Capital Program.

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Approved by:

Tim Dolan, Chief, Minneapolis Police Department

Steven A. Kotke, P.E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works

Presenters: Paul Miller, Senior Project Manager – PW Property Services
Janee Harteau – Inspector - Minneapolis Police Department

Reviews:

Permanent Review Committee (PRC):	Approval	NA	Date
Civil Rights Affirmative Action Plan	Approval	NA	Date
Policy Review Group (PRG):	Approval	NA	Date

Financial Impact:

Action is within the Business Plan

Other financial impact: All capital funds by private fundraising sources. Long-term stabling costs should not exceed existing levels. MPD reductions in staff time and transportation costs due to reduced travel distance and travel efficiencies.

Community Impact

Neighborhood Notification: Not Applicable

City Goals: A SAFE PLACE TO CALL HOME: The Mounted Patrol is a proven key to enhancing the Minneapolis Police Departments ability maintain crowd control and reduce crime thereby increasing the safety and confidence of the citizens and visitors to Minneapolis.

Comprehensive Plan: Not Applicable

Zoning Code: Not Applicable

Background/Supporting Information

The MPD Mounted Patrol Unit began in 1995 with three horses and two MPD Officers. Originally, the Mounted Patrol operated as a function of the Downtown Command (now the 1st Precinct) and focused the majority of their patrol work in the downtown area. The primary function of the Mounted Patrol was to provide mounted support and service for crowd control to the Minneapolis Police Department. The use of police horses in law enforcement has been found to be a valuable asset to the Minneapolis Police Department. Mounted officers are often able to gain voluntary compliance when used in crowd control situations. As the downtown warehouse district began to grow and the demand from other precincts and large events for Mounted Patrol support increased, so did the Mounted Patrol Unit. The current unit strength is twelve horses, with an MPD staff that includes one lieutenant, two sergeants, eight full-time officers and twenty-three part-time officers.

Operating and Travel Expenses

Originally, the MPD boarded its horses at the University of Minnesota (UofM) Large Animal Hospital. However, issues related to the quarantine of sick and injured animals as part of the UofM Veterinary Clinic and the risk of exposure to MPD horses resulted in a change in location. Starting in 1999, the MPD began boarding its horses at the Zuhrah Shrine Ranch located in Maple Plain, Minnesota, approximately 30 miles west of downtown Minneapolis. Since 1999, boarding rates have increased 40%, with current monthly rates of \$415 per horse for twelve horses equaling a total of \$59,760 per year (excluding feed costs). Transportation of horses back and forth from the Shrine ranch based on shift changes and current service levels requires that the MPD typically make three (3) round trips per day, five days per week (April thru November). Consequently, transportation costs and travel time of staff becomes a large portion of the operating budget of the Mounted Patrol Unit. In order to reduce operating costs, travel expenses, and staff time associated with a private boarding facility, the MPD began to consider the feasibility of constructing a facility of its own in or near the City limits.

Project History

Since 2001, the MPD has considered various sites and partnership opportunities for a Mounted Patrol Facility. Basic facility and site requirements were defined as follows:

Mounted Patrol Horse Barn (approximately 25,000sf)

- Office space for MPD Staff

- Stables for twelve (12) horses
- Interior exercise space
- Interior storage for feed and tack
- Potential for larger facility based on Partnerships

Site

- 5 to 10 acres for pasture and turnout space
- Zoning Requirements - Industrial (I2)
- Central location and proximity to Downtown Minneapolis

Site selection has always focused on publically held land due to large site requirements, planning and zoning requirements, and that the funding for the design and construction of the facility was being raised by private donations.

Initially, in 2001, the University of Minnesota Veterinary Clinic approached the MPD, the Minneapolis Park Board, and the St. Paul Police Mounted Patrol Units as potential partners in the UofM Equine Center Project. However, continued issues related to the quarantine of sick and injured animals and the risk of exposure to Mounted Patrol Horses, coupled with limited ability to acquire capital funding on short notice resulted in this project not being pursued further.

The Minnesota State Fair Grounds was considered, but in past conversations with MPD staff, State Fair Officials were not interested in additional partnerships because their current equine facilities were not scheduled for upgrades and were basically unavailable due to long term commitments to numerous private horse show events.

Since 2005, the MPD has worked with the Property Services Division to identify potential sites within the City limits. Various Park Board properties were evaluated including space on Nicollet Island and adjacent to Cedar Lake. Both sites were considered too small for the intended use (less than five acres) and not considered further. Another Park Board site located at 47th Ave. N. and Osseo Road in North Minneapolis was evaluated. However, this site is owned by the Soo Line Rail Road and is highly contaminated (a former creosote facility). Consequently, this site was not considered further due to high acquisition and environmental site costs.

Recommended Potential Sites

Public Works Water Treatment and Distribution Site

A vacant portion of the City owned property located at Marshall St. N.E. and 37th Ave. N.E. (bordering the City of Fridley) was analyzed. This site is owned by the City and is home to the PW Water Treatment and Distribution Divisions (Pump Station No. 4) and the MPD Canine Unit. Approximately five (5) acres of this site is undeveloped and meets the minimum requirements of the Mounted Patrol Unit. In addition, larger portions of the Water Facilities located north of this site are open and available for pasture access. The site is currently zoned residential and would either require rezoning to the Industrial (I2) district or the City would need to amend its Zoning Code as it relates to its requirements for Mounted Patrol uses in order to meet the requirements for a Mounted Patrol Facility.

Advantages of the PW Water Treatment and Distribution Site as a future location for the Mounted Patrol include the following:

- The property is owned by the City.
- The site is vacant and undeveloped.
- The site is in close proximity to additional City property that is available for pasture access.
- There are existing synergies with the MPD Canine Unit.

- There are potential future synergies with the proposed Emergency Operations Training Facility that will be located on adjacent City property.
- Although not centrally located, this site is within easy access to freeway and parkway routes to downtown Minneapolis.

Based on this opportunity the Mounted Patrol Horse Barn Facility (MPD04) was included in the 2008-2012 Five-Year Capital Program, adopted in December 2007 with stipulations that funding would come from private sources, such as the Downtown Council (Friends of the Mounted Patrol), and that the MPD seek partnership opportunities with other agencies and mounted patrol units. The City of St. Paul Mounted Patrol Unit has been contacted about co-locating at this site, but they have expressed concern regarding the travel distance and have not made a commitment (at this time) to this site.

Minnesota State Fair Grounds (Revisited)

Although the Fridley Water Treatment and Distribution site remains a viable option, at the request of the Facilities Space and Asset Management Committee (FSAM), discussions with the UofM and the Minnesota State Fair Board of Directors were revisited. In these discussions, the State Fair Board indicated that they are now starting the process to expand and upgrade their current equine facilities, and that partnership's with Mounted Patrol Units from Minneapolis, St. Paul, and the UofM could be mutually beneficial. The details of the discussions with the State Fair Board were presented at the December 4th 2008 FSAM meeting.

The State Fair Board expressed interest in having further conversations with the City regarding the Project, and that these discussions include the potential partners of the City of St. Paul and the UofM. The State Fair Board is prepared to direct staff to continue discussions with the City of Minneapolis supporting the potential for partnerships and analyzing the feasibility of a Mounted Patrol Horse Barn Facility at the Minnesota State Fair Grounds. Based on this information the FSAM Committee voted approval of the State Fair Grounds as a potential site for the Mounted Patrol Facility and that staff continue conversations with the State Fair Board. In addition, the FSAM Committee directed that staff request approval of further direction from City Council.

Advantages of the State Fair Grounds as a future site for the Mounted Patrol include the following:

- The State Fair Board is in the process of planning to expand their current facilities, and they are open to discussions of partnerships.
- The State Fair Grounds is centrally located to the entire metro area which supports a "big picture" view of Mounted Patrol Support for large scale events beyond the boundaries of the City.
- The State Fair Grounds is located within easy access to the UofM Transit Way, reducing transportation time and costs between the proposed site and downtown Minneapolis.
- The State Fair Grounds provides the best opportunity for long-term Partnerships with other mounted patrol units. Both the St. Paul Police Department and the UofM have indicated positive interest in the proposal.
- The State Fair Board of Directors has stated that they are interested in encouraging a higher Police presence on the fairgrounds during the Fair and other events, and that they have a long standing positive relationship with the various mounted patrol units.
- The State Fair offers unique funding advantages as a venue for charitable fund raising.
- Better and more comprehensive facilities to support the professional training of the horses and staff.
- Higher Public Visibility.

Private Fundraisers

To date the Downtown Council (Friends of the Mounted Patrol) have supported the project and have expressed interest in providing charitable fundraising support for the Project. However, until the City commits to a project site and begins the Project Development Process the Downtown Council has been reluctant to begin a charitable campaign.

Recommendation

Therefore, staff is requesting authorization for the proper City officials to continue discussions with the Minnesota State Fair Board supporting the potential for partnerships and to analyze the feasibility of the location, planning, design, and construction of a Mounted Patrol Horse Barn Facility at the Minnesota State Fair Grounds. In addition, staff is requesting that the Minnesota State Fair Board of Directors direct their staff to continue discussions with the City of Minneapolis supporting the potential for partnerships and analyzing the feasibility of the location, planning, design, and construction of a Mounted Patrol Horse Barn Facility at the Minnesota State Fair Grounds. Finally, based upon the continuation of these discussions, City staff shall be directed to return to committee in April of 2009 to present a Project update and request further direction.