

02/19/03

City of Minneapolis

City Council

PS & RS Meeting

MPD Traffic Unit Decentralization

Presented by: Deputy Chief Gregory Hestness and Lt. Gregory Reinhardt

Pros	Cons	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAFE, K9 and Robbery have been placed in the Precincts. This is in step with department's current philosophy. • Provides Precincts with additional resources to manage neighborhood traffic complaints. • Improve response time to neighborhood complaints of traffic. • Reduces some management costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of revenues Projected loss is over \$1,000,00 over 5 years • Increased costs. Equipment and training needs are duplicated to maintain knowledge base and availability. • Increase Civil Liability The unit's primary task is accident investigation. This skill is used in city-owned vehicle accidents and also reduces the city liability on other accidents. Example: an intersection with two green lights. • Centralized scheduling. Would require citywide scheduling to ensure adequate staffing. • Loss of grants. DWI, Seat Belt are citywide campaigns that operate under a state grand \$50,000-\$150,000/yr. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's been done. Since 1991 the Traffic Unit has lost 12 officers. The positions were never replaced while overall department numbers increased. • The last complete decentralization occurred in 1980. This effort was abandoned in 6 months. • Loss of a training pool for traffic issues. State requirements on pursuit training. Traffic Unit handles traffic training and of all officers and recruits. • Loss of institutional knowledge: Skills set is specialized and necessary knowledge used in policing. While positions would be at precincts, there is no guarantee that the trained officers could be in those positions.

Traffic Unit's History

- In the past, the Traffic Unit was staffed with 110 officers. It was part of the Headquarters precinct. Assigned officers included Foot Beat Officers, Motorized Traffic Squads, Motorcycles and Traffic Control.
- In the mid 80's to 90's the unit's staffing numbers ranged from 24 to 35 officers. This was the unit's most productive time in recent history. Every night there were 4 to 5 Traffic Squads assigned to a shift. The department made over 2 ½ times more DWI arrests (2,500 compared to 980 DWI arrests) and issued over 3 ½ times more citations (44,000 compared to the current 14,000 citations). Promotions, retirements and a gangland murder reduced staffing to its current level of 10 officers.
- Current staffing is comprised of 10 officers and 2 sergeants. Officers provide service 20 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are on call for fatal accidents level of 10 officers. Future promotion will reduce staff by 20%.

Traffic Unit Mission

“To keep our streets safe and secure.”

Functions

Each year there are over 15,000 traffic accidents in Minneapolis. The estimated loss of life and property to society is over \$150,000,000 per year. MPD Traffic officers investigate all types of traffic accidents (including fatalities), measure and reconstruct accident scenes, and provide emergency response to accidents.

Officers respond to citizens' complaints regarding traffic violations, prevent future accidents via focus enforcement, and conduct DWI saturation traffic details. Officers are also called upon to provide traffic enforcement in high crime areas and conduct chemical testing on suspected DWI suspects. Officers conduct many traffic safety clinics with citizens on seatbelts, child restraint systems and other traffic safety issues.

- Emergency Accident Response
- Accident Investigation
- Focused Accident Prevention
- Traffic Safety Education
- Accident Reconstruction
- Hit and Run Investigation
- Respond to Neighborhood Traffic Issues
- DWI Enforcement
- Commercial Vehicle Inspection