

Police Department

LOB #212:

OPERATIONS SUPPORT / TRAFFIC DIVISION

Purpose

The Office of the Operations Support Bureau (OSB) Commander consists of one Police Major and one Administrative Assistant III. The OSB Commander oversees the Traffic Division, Helicopter Division, and the Special Operations Division. The OSB Commander relieves the Patrol Duty Officer as Incident Commander on critical incidents such as barricades, hostage barricades, and EOD events. The Administrative Assistant III supports the OSB Commander, along with the Helicopter Division and Special Operations Division, as both divisions do not have an Administrative Assistant, and is responsible for coordinating all building work orders.

The Traffic Division encompasses the Traffic Safety Section, Alcohol Testing Unit, Motor Section, Motor Carrier Safety Section, Crash Reconstruction Unit, Auxiliary Police, Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS), Impound Section, Parking Enforcement Section, Honor Guard, DWI Coordinator, Crime Analyst, and Virginia Department of Transportation Liaison. The Traffic Division is tasked with improving road safety for vehicles and pedestrians through enforcement of vehicular laws, identification and resolution of unsafe road conditions, maintaining traffic flow at special events and accident areas, and providing educational services in highway safety to the community.

Description

The Traffic Division provides services throughout all of Fairfax County. The Traffic Safety Section coordinates the agency's participation in all regional and Departmental traffic enforcement programs. This section develops safety lectures and demonstrations for community, school, and civic groups, and assist the school system with transportation safety issues to include the requirement for, and training of, crossing guards. Officers coordinate the Department's sobriety checkpoints and alcohol enforcement programs, as well as research and apply for traffic safety grants.

The Motor Unit is responsible for assisting vehicular traffic movement safely and expeditiously throughout the County by monitoring and enforcing state and local laws. The officers direct traffic flow, to include vehicle escorts, conduct directed enforcement, manage crash scenes, and provide crowd and perimeter control at major incidents and special events.

The Motor Carrier Safety Section inspects trucks for compliance with Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. Commercial trucks can be inspected by these specially certified officers at any time for compliance. Officers conduct roadside equipment checks of intrastate trucks, to include compliance of state maximum weight requirements, and issue citations and remove trucks from service as necessary.

The Crash Reconstruction Unit provides technical expertise and investigative responsibility for all serious injury and fatal crashes, as well as all aircraft, rail, and serious commercial vehicle crashes. The unit also provides investigative assistance to the Criminal Investigations Bureau, the Internal Affairs Bureau, Patrol Bureau, OSHA, and other County transportation agencies. In addition, the unit responds on all County vehicles involved in a pedestrian accident to ensure complete documentation. Due to the level of expertise involved in these investigations, a great deal of advanced training is required of these detectives.

The Auxiliary Police Officers (APO) and Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) are community volunteers who give the Department approximately 68,000 hours of service annually. The APOs conduct both administrative and operational tasks, to include patrol augmentation, traffic control, minor crash investigation and report taking. VIPS perform primarily administrative tasks, to include research, data entry, and other office related duties, and act as role players at the Criminal Justice Academy and during other Department exercises.

Police Department

The Parking Enforcement Section patrols County-wide to enforce state codes, as well as County Codes and ordinances pertaining to parking, residential parking permit districts, abandoned vehicles, and vehicle registration and inspection. This section tows vehicles which have been abandoned, have excessive unpaid violations, and or have failed to pay County taxes. The officers also assist with traffic direction at school crossings, major incidents or large events.

The Honor Guard represents the department at official events such as Board of Supervisors Meetings, Academy Graduation, Police Funerals, Promotions and Awards, and other public functions as directed. This is a non-standing unit of 44 officers.

Benefits

Fairfax County now has a population over one million with the daytime workforce population being even higher. Growth throughout the County has continued and roadway improvements have struggled to keep up. With limited mass transit in the County most people commute by private vehicle. In a 2014 survey there were 805,585 licensed drivers residing in Fairfax County. These drivers were involved in 13,680 DMV reported vehicle crashes in 2014 which is by far the greatest number in Virginia. The Fairfax County Police Department handled an additional 15,269 non-reportable DMV crashes in 2014. All of these factors drive the calls for service of the Traffic Division. The division strives to reduce these numbers through both enforcement and education and has seen declines in crashes resulting in injury within Fairfax County.

Mandates

The Traffic Division is responsible for enforcement of selected laws of the Code of Virginia and Fairfax County Code.

The Motor Carrier Safety Section is mandated by both state and County code and the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). Citation: Virginia Code § 46.2-1001 - Vehicles inspected by law enforcement officers and found of defects must be issued a 90 day sticker.

The Crash Reconstruction Unit is mandated on fatal vehicle crashes to report to VA DMV a File 41death report.

The Alcohol Testing Unit is mandated by Virginia code. Virginia Code §§ 18.2-267(B) and 18.2-268.1 Citation: The Department of General Services, Division of Forensic Science, shall determine the proper method and equipment to be used in analyzing breath samples taken pursuant to this section and shall advise the respective police and sheriff's departments of the same.

Trends and Challenges

A recent traffic survey conducted by Texas A&M of behalf of U.S. Department of Transportation determined that the Washington area is now number one in the nation in the amount of time drivers lose sitting in traffic. Future major traffic improvements will include I66 and continued expansion of the Metro silver line. Both of these projects will change traffic flow during the construction phase as more vehicle use secondary roads in the County to avoid the construction. This will prove a challenge as both congestion and accidents may increase in these areas as feeder roads have a higher crash rate than interstates.

The number of overall crashes and DWI arrest have declined which mirrors national trends. DWI arrests are time consuming for the involved officer and take approximately four hours to complete. Staff are investigating grant funding for a dedicated DWI patrol squad to increase DWI arrests and hopefully decrease DWI accidents.

Driver inattention has steadily increased over the past decade as portable technology has become more prevalent. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has conducted a study that

Police Department

determined 80 percent of accidents are caused by driver inattention. Laws have lagged behind this technology and existing laws are a challenge to enforce.

Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #212: Operations Support / Traffic Division			
FUNDING			
Expenditures:			
Compensation	\$6,439,601	\$6,322,288	\$6,746,738
Operating Expenses	114,344	133,556	101,988
Total Expenditures	\$6,553,945	\$6,455,844	\$6,848,726
General Fund Revenue	\$903,634	\$838,290	\$0
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$5,650,311	\$5,617,554	\$6,848,726
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
Positions:			
Regular	70 / 70	70 / 70	70 / 70
Total Positions	70 / 70	70 / 70	70 / 70

Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
DWI Arrests (Department Total)	2,724	2,677	2,138	2,306	2,461
Alcohol-Related Crashes	638	574	526	546	571
Motor Carrier Safety Section - Unsafe commercial motor vehicles (Trucks)	420	272	206	303	309
Motor Carrier Safety Section - Unsafe commercial motor vehicles (Trailers)	75	43	30	46	49
Number of cases investigated by members of the Crash Reconstruction Unit	54	60	42	57	59
Number of citations issued by the Motor Squad	26,394	26,529	22,098	24,951	26,271
Number of public events/displays the Traffic Division's motor squad participated in	356	246	205	280	292
Number of public events/displays the Honor Guards participated in	64	75	69	72	76
Number of tests performed by members of the Alcohol Testing Unit	1,404	880	558	703	669
Total number of parking citations issued by the Parking Enforcement Section per calendar year	24,555	30,284	19,920	25,312	28,913

Police Department

The OSB Commander supervises the Traffic Division, Helicopter Division and Special Operations Division and thus any metric would be tied to the metrics of those three divisions.

The Traffic Division encompasses the Traffic Safety Section, Alcohol Testing Unit, Motor Section, Motor Carrier Safety Section, Crash Reconstruction Unit, Auxiliary Police and Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS), Impound Section, Parking Enforcement Section, Honor Guard, DWI Coordinator, Crime Analyst, and Virginia Department of Transportation Liaison. The Traffic Division is tasked with improving road safety for motorists and pedestrians through enforcement of vehicular laws, identification and resolution of unsafe road conditions, maintaining traffic flow at special events and crash scenes, and providing educational services in highway safety to the community.

One metric for overall effectiveness is looking at DWI arrests and Alcohol Related Crashes. The number of these events have declined in recent years based on the Department's efforts. As previously noted, staff are investigating grant funding for a dedicated DWI patrol squad to increase DWI arrests and hopefully decrease DWI accidents.

A member of the Crash Reconstruction Unit must respond on every motor vehicle crash which results in a fatality or predicted fatality. Additionally, members of the Crash Reconstruction Unit are tasked with investigating serious injury crashes and other crash scenes of an unusual or complicated nature when requested by the Staff Duty Officer.

Officers assigned to the Motor Squad are tasked with identifying and enforcing violations regarding motor vehicles. Many of these violations are known to contribute to motor vehicle crashes resulting in injury or death. Others violations are related to occupant protection and vehicle safety.

A goal of the Traffic Division's Motor Squad and Traffic Safety Section is public outreach, with numerous tours, parades, public displays, funeral escorts conducted each year.

Members of the Alcohol Testing Unit are responsible for conducting breath, or blood tests, on individuals arrested for Driving While Intoxicated, or Driving Under the Influence of Drugs.

Auxiliary Police Officers, (APO's) and Volunteers in Police Service, (VIPS) are invaluable programs. Members of the APO/VIPS programs perform numerous hours of service each year, at no cost to the County, while freeing up paid officers to perform other necessary tasks.

The Parking Enforcement Section is responsible for enforcing parking laws and impounding scofflaw vehicles at the direction of the Department of Tax Administration.

Police Department

Grant Support

FY 2016 Grant Total Funding: Funding of \$2,503,233, including \$552,436 in Local Cash Match and 9/9.0 FTE positions supports the Operations Support/Traffic Division LOB.

DWI Enforcement Grant - \$2,209,753, including \$552,436 in Local Cash Match and 9/9.0 FTE positions

The Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) utilizing Federal Pass Through funding from the National Highway Safety Administration recently awarded the County the Driving While Intoxicated Enforcement Initiative Grant. Funding will support 9/9.0 FTE police officer positions and Operating Expenses associated with each officer (e.g. cost of vehicle, uniform, equipment, radio). There is a 25 percent Local Cash Match requirement.

The program provides federal funding to support enforcement of DWI laws in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The FCPD was approached by DMV and asked if the Department would staff a designated squad of officers to specialize in enforcing Virginia DWI laws. The objective is to reduce the number of alcohol related accidents and alcohol related fatalities in the County. The priority of the assigned officers would be to patrol for violations of alcohol related driving incidents, but they will also be available if emergency calls necessitate their response. Statistical data will be collected to analyze the enforcement efforts to see if DWI accidents and fatalities decrease, thus providing a model for other Virginia law enforcement agencies. Initial funding has been awarded for one year but the Virginia DMV is confident that the program will be funded for several years.

DMV Traffic Safety Programs - DWI Enforcement Grant - \$252,980

The Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles provides Federal Pass Through funding to support traffic safety information and enforcement programs in Fairfax County. There are no positions or Local Cash Match associated with this grant.

DMV Traffic Safety Programs - Speed Enforcement Grant - \$30,000

The Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles provides Federal Pass Through funding to support speeding enforcement as well as traffic safety information and enforcement programs in Fairfax County. There are no positions or Local Cash Match associated with this grant.

DMV Traffic Safety Programs - Pedestrian Bicycle Grant - \$10,500

The Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles provides Federal Pass Through funding to support pedestrian and bicycle enforcement as well as traffic safety information and enforcement programs in Fairfax County. There are no positions or Local Cash Match associated with this grant.