

Public Safety

Overview

One of the primary concerns of city government is the safety of its citizens. The threat of crime and violence, as well as other individual or community disasters, requires that a considerable emphasis be placed on the facilities and services of the agencies dedicated to providing protection for citizens and property.

The city enjoys an advantageous Mutual Aid Agreement (Agreement) with the City of Manassas and Prince William County. The Agreement allows the City to request emergency response assistance from those surrounding jurisdictions. This enables the city to offer a highly effective and rapid response to the city's emergency service needs even when the city's own resources are committed to on-going incidents. This service has worked well for the city in helping to ensure that emergency responders are readily available and is reciprocal to all parties at no extra cost.

The city also participates in Virginia's Mutual Aid Program, which provides support in the event of a major incident.

The city currently shares an 800 MHz radio system with Manassas City for dispatching. This system is also being implemented by Prince William County. Changes to this system are coordinated between the jurisdictions to ensure we maintain compatibility with each other. There is a two-fold reason for this compatibility – one is the Mutual Aid Agreement between the jurisdictions; the second is the reality of the increased terrorist threat since September 11, 2001.

The following four sections, covering the Fire and Rescue Department, the Police Department, the Emergency Communications Center and the Animal Control Department provide a more detailed analysis of each department.

Fire and Rescue Department

Background

The Town of Manassas Park initiated its first fire and rescue service in 1965. This all volunteer department received state-certified training from Fairfax County. Fire service was provided using a 1951 Pirsch Squad truck and a 1956 Ford Pumper, both purchased from Fairfax County. Emergency medical service was provided by a 1965 Plymouth station wagon outfitted as an ambulance and staffed by basic first aid providers.

In 1975 when Manassas Park became a city, Prince William County provided a career fire staff for one year.



Figure 10.1 Fire and Rescue Equipment

On July 1, 1976, the City of Manassas Park hired its first career fire and rescue employees – three firefighters and two emergency medical technicians.

Today, the Fire and Rescue Department, consisting of 25 uniformed personnel, provides the following services to the city:

- Fire prevention and education
- Fire inspections and investigations
- Fire suppression
- Emergency medical service with Advance Life Support functionality

The major apparatus used by the Fire and Rescue Department include:

- Two (2) 2003 Ford Advanced Life Support Ambulances
- 2004 Pierce Quint 100' Platform Ladder Truck (Quint)
- 1996 Pierce Quantum Pumper
- 1988 Pierce Arrow Pumper
- 1994 Ford Brush Truck
- Hazardous Materials Unit Trailer

Fire Hydrants

The city has a complete fire hydrant system that provides water flow and pressure to support fire-fighting activities throughout the city. The fire hydrants are maintained and tested on an annual basis by Fire Department personnel to ensure adequate operation and water flow.

The city has begun a four-phase project to upgrade the water system. The improvements include additional fire hydrants in areas where there

were previously excessive distances between hydrants. When complete, the distance between fire hydrants will be less than 500 feet throughout the city, providing a more convenient water source for firefighting purposes. In addition, the water flow and pressure will be increased or enhanced throughout the city. (See the Public Works section for additional information)

Vehicle Replacement Program

During the early years of the city, there existed no plan for the replacement of aging equipment. Through all of the 1970s and most of the 1980s, replacing the larger fire apparatus was mostly overlooked due to the cost of replacing them. Recognizing the need to ensure the Fire and Rescue Department had reliable and modern equipment for the safety of its citizens, the Fire and Rescue Department has implemented a vehicle replacement program. This program, consistent with the city’s long-term strategic planning goals, provides a realistic budget forecast for the replacement of high-dollar-value fire and rescue equipment.

The current vehicle replacement schedule is:

Table 10.1 Fire & Rescue Vehicle Replacement Schedule		
<i>Item</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Backup</i>
Ambulance	4 years	4 years
Fire – pumper	10 years	5 years
Fire – ladder	10 years*	5 years*

* Dependent on actual utilization

Purchases of large apparatus such as pumpers, Quints and ladder trucks are typically financed through lease/purchase programs. These programs are designed to finance essential expensive equipment over a normal lease period of 5 to 7 years, thus mitigating the fiscal impact on small departments in any single year.

Ambulance purchases in Manassas Park have traditionally been purchased using existing funds in conjunction with the Commonwealth of Virginia Rescue Squad Assistance Fund, (R.S.A.F.) 50/50 match grant program.

Services Provided

Listed below are a sampling of the services provided by the Fire and Rescue Department:

- Fire Safety Education Kindergarten-3rd grade;
- Flow test and maintenance of all city hydrants;
- Provide and install free smoke detectors;
- Home fire safety inspections;
- Child car seat installation and inspection;
- Host an annual open house and Santa Claus ride;
- Conduct station tours for various groups;
- Provide on-site emergency medical services to city high school football games;
- Assist in opening non-emergency vehicles and home lock outs.

Facilities

On April 23, 2005, the Fire and Rescue Department had an official ribbon-cutting ceremony. This new state of the art fire and rescue station is located at 9080 Manassas Drive just west of its intersection with Euclid Avenue. The site of the new station places it near the center of the city, thus improving response times to the eastern area of the city, while minimizing any negative impact to response times to the western area of the city.

The new Fire and Rescue Station was designed with sufficient space to allow reasonable growth of the Department, as the city reaches build out.

In addition to housing emergency vehicles, the fire station provides office and training spaces, sleeping quarters, a full-service kitchen, workout and recreation areas, and living and storage spaces for the Fire and Rescue personnel.

Training

The city's Fire and Rescue Department uses the training facilities of Prince William County to meet the state-mandated training requirements for firefighters. Paramedic training is accomplished through local colleges and approved training facilities.

Information Technology

Information technology (IT) needs for the Department include computers, software, telephones,

radio systems, and cell phones. The IT needs for the Department range from your typical office software (i.e., word processing and spreadsheets) to wireless telemetry transmission of vital patient information from the incident scene to the hospital. The IT needs for the paramedics are, in reality, driven by the capabilities of the local hospitals. To ensure we provide the best possible care to our citizens, any IT system supporting the paramedics must be compatible with local hospital systems.

Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT)

To improve the emergency response preparedness of the city, the Fire and Rescue Department implemented a Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT) program. Currently the CERT program has 22 volunteers, and has received 18 hours of training.

The Manassas Park CERT is comprised of city employees and citizens interested in being active members of a volunteer neighborhood-based disaster response team. Training is free and prepares the members to assist the Fire and Rescue department and to assist friends, relatives and neighbors in a disaster. Training covered includes: Introduction to Disasters, Medical Operations including first aid, triage, and CPR, Basic Search and Rescue skills, Basic Fire Suppression skills, Team Organization, Disaster Psychology, Introduction to Terrorism response.

Goals and Objectives

GOALS

- Save lives and preserve property;
- Maintain the highest levels of training and education;
- Promote health and safety throughout the community;
- Endeavor to always excel in our effort to meet our five department goals.

INTEGRITY

- We will be honest, forthright, and loyal;
- We will treat our customers and each other with respect.

TEAMWORK

- Only through effective communication, positive attitudes, shared work-loads and collective commitment will we meet our responsibilities to the community;
- Through constructive actions, comments, suggestions and an openness to new ideas, we shall achieve our team goals and objectives.
- “We” rather than “I” will be the prevailing attitude and practice.

COMPETENCE

- We will strive to be proficient and optimally effective.
- We will continually work to improve our knowledge of the profession and individual and collective performances.

IMAGE

- We will seek to improve and protect the public image of the Department and the profession.
- Fostering community trust shall remain a high priority.

SERVICE

- We will provide quality life safety, health care, property conservation and environmental preservation for our customers in a safe, timely, professional and effective manner.

Police Department

The City of Manassas Park must maintain a sufficient police force to provide twenty-four hour police protection and services for its residents, businesses, schools and visitors. The Police Department has the sole responsibility for ensuring public safety within the corporate limits of the city. Our ability to provide a quality level of police service is greatly affected by the physical size of our service area and the amount of personnel available to patrol this locality. Our goal is always to maintain a safe, secure and well-protected community.

Background

The Town of Manassas Park initiated its own police protection in 1957. When Manassas Park acquired city status in 1975, the Police Department consisted of 12 officers.

Currently, the Police Department employs 27 sworn officers and two non-sworn civilian members assigned various administrative and record keeping duties to provide all law enforcement services within the city. Department detectives are assigned to regional task forces and police K-9 units are assigned to patrol duties.

The Police Department maintains a fleet of 12 of marked police vehicles, 4 unmarked police vehicles, 1 emergency operations center vehicle and 6 bicycles for their bike patrol.

Accreditation

The City's Police Department is one of only 50 police departments accredited by the Commonwealth of Virginia, out of 360 law enforcement departments within the commonwealth. The Police Department received its accreditation in 2003. To retain its accreditation status, the department must continuously maintain the highest professional standards and be re-inspected every four years.



Figure 10.2 Police Department Accreditation

The accreditation inspection covers over 200 accreditation standards, covering everything from crime scene investigation to filing of forms and records.

Vehicle Replacement Program

During the early years of the city, there existed no plan for the replacement of aging police equipment. Recognizing the need to ensure the Police Department had reliable and modern equipment for the safety of its personnel and citizens, the Police Department has implemented a vehicle replacement program.

Table 10.2 Police Vehicle Replacement Schedule					
	05	06	07	08	09
Marked Police Car	3	4	3	2	3
Unmarked Police Car	0	1	1	1	
Mobile Center				1	

This program, consistent with the city's long-term strategic planning goals, provides a realistic budget forecast for the replacement of police equipment.



Figure 10.3 Police Department Vehicle

Most of the city's police vehicles are in use 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In addition, police vehicles idle for extended periods of time; therefore,



Figure 10.4 Department K-9 Unit

the mileage of the vehicle is not a good replacement indicator. The public safety replacement program is based mainly on the age of the vehicle, not the mileage.

Facilities

Currently, the Police Department occupies the Public Safety Building. This building was constructed to meet the needs of both the Police and Fire and Rescue Departments in 1988. The Fire and Rescue Department recently moved into the new fire station, leaving the Police Department as the sole occupant. With the increasing population growth within the city and the events of September 11, 2001, the need for an Emergency Operations Center is evident. The current building is unable to adequately meet these and future needs. With this in mind, the city recently purchased land adjacent to the existing building and has begun construction on a modern police station, which should be completed by the early part of 2007.

Training

The Police Department utilizes the Northern Virginia Justice Academy training facilities in Loudon County to meet the Commonwealth's mandated training requirements for police officers.

Information Technology

Information technology (IT) needs for the Department include computers, software, telephones,

radio systems, and cell phones. The IT needs for the Department range from typical office software (i.e. word processing and spreadsheets) to specialized programs supporting state requirements for crime reporting.

The Department also uses mobile data terminals (laptop computers) in each of its vehicles. These terminals allow the officers to perform tasks such as vehicle registration checks and outstanding warrants without going through the dispatchers. The Department recently upgraded the computers in its police cars to allow for advanced in-car reporting and GIS guided mapping capabilities.

Near Term Outlook

During the next few years, we project the population to increase from 12,400 to 15,000. Residential, commercial and industrial development within the city continues to increase with the addition of several new projects. The planned and current developments of Park Center and the adjoining land next to the VRE train station have further increased the community's demands for our services.

Given the physical characteristics of the city, city police services are oriented towards all types of proactive and reactive law enforcement activities. These include, but are not limited to, assaults, domestic disputes, burglaries, larcenies and traffic enforcement. Traffic radar enforcement is regularly requested within the community. The

Department has seen an increase in calls for services during the past several years. The public appreciates and frequently requests the high visibility of police personnel.

One method of increasing the visibility of the officers within the city was to create a new color scheme, potentially blue/grey to tie into the historical background of the area, for the marked police vehicles. The white color cars with blue lettering previously used in the City did not readily stand out in traffic.

Goals and Objectives

Promote a safe community by providing the highest quality of police services available with first class equipment and well-trained personnel who are prepared for a wide variety of emergencies, and who serve the community in a personal effective manner.

Maintain and renew Manassas Park Police Department's Virginia State-accreditation, while providing a wide range of law enforcement operations and functions on a 24-hour, 7 days a week basis from the Public Safety Building.

Emergency Communications Center

All calls for police and fire services are routed through the Emergency Communications Center located in the Public Safety building.



Figure 10.5 Emergency Communications Center

Background

The city's first Emergency Communications Center was staffed by 2 employees who dispatched during the normal business day, with Prince William County providing dispatch services at all other times.

The city implemented the Enhanced 911 system in 1987.

Today, the Emergency Communications Center is staffed with six communications specialists and one communications supervisor responsible for operating the E-911 system and dispatching both the police and fire departments.

Facilities

Currently, the Emergency Communications Center shares the Public Safety Building with the Police Department. Once the new police station is completed, the Emergency Communications Center will be relocated.

Training

The Emergency Communications Center uses the training facilities in Loudoun County to meet the state mandated training requirements for dispatchers.

Information Technology

Information Technology (IT) needs for the Center include computers, software, telephones, radio systems, and cell phones. The IT needs for the Center range from typical office software (i.e. word processing and spreadsheets) to specialized programs supporting state requirements for crime reporting.

In addition to the Mutual Aid arrangements with the City of Manassas and Prince William County, the Center is also tied into various Commonwealth law enforcement systems to facilitate the coordination and communication of law enforcement information throughout the Commonwealth.

Animal Control Department

Background

The Town of Manassas Park received its animal control services from Prince William County. When Manassas Park acquired city status, the City hired its first animal control warden in 1976.

Today, the Animal Control Department still consists of one (1) officer and one (1) animal control vehicle.

Vehicle Replacement Program

Recognizing the need to ensure the Animal Control Department had reliable and modern equipment to ensure the safety of its citizens and animals that are captured and impounded, the Animal Control



Figure 10.6 Animal Control Vehicle

Department has implemented a vehicle replacement program. This program, consistent with the city's long-term strategic planning goals, provides a realistic budget forecast for the replacement of high-dollar-

value Animal Control Department items.

The current schedule replaces the animal control vehicle every five (5) years.

Services Provided

Listed below are a sampling of the services provided by the Fire and Rescue Department:

- Dog licensing
- Animal code enforcement
- Investigating charges of animal cruelty

Facilities

Currently, the Animal Control Department shares the Public Safety Building with the Police Department. Once the new police station is completed, the Animal Control Department will be relocated.

The City currently uses Manassas City's new animal shelter.

Training

The Animal Control Department uses Commonwealth-provided training.

Information Technology

Information technology (IT) needs for the Department are the same as for the Police Department.