

A Community Plan for a Safer Future

**2006
and Beyond**

**Uxbridge Police Department
275 Douglas Street
Uxbridge, MA 01569**

The purpose of this Plan is to assist in shaping the Future of the Uxbridge Police Department as the town continues to change in this fast paced world.

As a dynamic and professional organization, a certain vision needs to be agreed upon and should include, but not be limited to, the same vision articulated in the 5-year plan that was developed for 2000. That vision is:

A Community with a continued sense of safety, improved quality of life, economic vitality and stability, and a continued reduction in the fear of crime.

A true partnership between the police and the community.

An organization that provides each employee with the opportunity for professional and personal growth through challenging performance expectations.

Much has happened in Uxbridge since January 2000. The town's infrastructure is constantly changing, personal interactions between individuals and groups have increased, some for the good, and some to the detriment of all. The changes ahead are expected to accelerate at an even faster pace as the age of innovation continues. This has been placing and will continue to place new demands on the police department. Many of these demands involve the financial resources that support municipal government in general, and others relate specifically to the needs of the police department in order to accomplish the mission of the Uxbridge Police.

Mission Statement:

The Mission of the Uxbridge Police Department is to enhance the quality of life in our town by working in partnership with the community and in accordance with constitutional rights and responsibilities to enforce laws, maintain peace, reduce fear, and provide a safe environment for all citizens, with a special emphasis on the youth and elderly.

As stated in the last strategic plan, the mission was developed in 1998. In that plan it was mentioned that it was possibly without need of amendment. How true those words ring today no different than when it was written. Although the mission does not change the goals, the strategies, demographics, tactics and infrastructure will constantly evolve.

Since 2000 the department has moved to a new location, 275 Douglas St. This is a vast improvement in relation to the basement of the town hall. State of the art fingerprint technology is in place; upgrades in all computer systems have been installed, enhancements in E-911 hardware and telecommunications have arrived. In spite of all that has changed, some things still remain the same, human nature. Therefore, the need remains for an adequately staffed and highly motivated police department.

Goals:

In order to get directions when someone needs to be somewhere, they first must know where they want to go. From there, although there may be many routes, decisions can then be made as to how to arrive at your destination. In the book of Proverbs it says, "Without a vision, the people perish!" The vision in this case needs to be a picture of what Uxbridge will look like in the next 5 to 10 years. Sometimes you can attempt to forecast results based on past trends. For Example 1987 to 1998 population in Uxbridge increased from 9,140 to 12,111, that is an increase of approximately 3,000 people. Based on that trend, it is not out of line to think that in approximately 8 more years (2013) there will be approximately 15 to 16 thousand residents in town. (With a total town build out projected by experts of 23,000 this number is probably quite accurate.) If you compare the number of full time police officers that service the town then and now, you can easily see that the number has seen little increase. As a matter of fact since 2003 we have seen a decrease. Yet the population has definitely increased. We still have a clearance factor that is above the national average for major crimes yet the demands and increases in calls for service continue to grow.

Planning now, in line with current technologies, will assist in making the evolution to the type of community desired in Uxbridge much easier.

On 4-13-05 at a departmental staff meeting I asked the patrol officers what they had for a vision for the next 5 to 10 years and almost everyone said an increase in staffing was what was needed. I agree, however, the decision on increased staffing also has to be supported by the data. The fact is that as the trends mentioned above continue to go up so will demands on police services. Unlike many other activities in government the police department cannot tell it's employees to stay home because of weather, disasters, or pending crisis. In fact they must remain open 24/7 year round. The unpredictability of service needs create difficulties when attempting to plan. One thing is clear, when crime is going down it means that you are winning. When fear of crime is low, it means you are winning. When the quality of life is good for citizens it means you are winning. Then is not the time to make drastic cuts. Conversely, when demands for all types of service go up, the need for additional staffing needs to be considered.

Based on the fact that it is more than reasonable to think that the population will continue to grow, demand for services will therefore increase, and the expectation as a community is, and should remain, that we are a safe community with a very good quality of life. An important element is the recruitment, training and retaining of qualified officers. That is not done in a fast manner. It takes a long time to appropriately hire and train individuals to work in this field. One year ahead is a minimum time to bring staffing up in most situations. Clearly we must start now to prepare for the future. It is therefore only reasonable that the following goals be set:

Continue to Encourage Professional Career Development:

Provide career development and educational opportunities for sworn and civilian personnel.

Upgrade and utilize technology to improve officer performance and decision-making.

Encourage health and wellness programs among the staff on a continuing basis.

Establish and maintain a standard of police integrity and ethics.

Enhance organizational communication through staff meetings, meeting one on one, and through supervisory communication methods. Sergeants will play an important role in this.

Continue to Decentralize Most Law Enforcement and Investigative Functions:

Continue to practice community-policing techniques.

Utilization of supervisors to maintain control and complete administrative tasks to benefit the department as a whole, including but not limited to crime mapping, roll call training, licensing, investigation co-ordination and scheduling.

Make Police Officers responsible for not only reporting but for investigating incidents that occur. Encourage cooperation and communication between officers in the investigation of crime.

Maintain the definition of patrol as the primary provider of police services to the community and direct the needed resources into patrol operations and maintain adequate staffing of patrol.

Continue to expand on the State Accreditation and Certification process of the Department as the Opportunity Arises: Currently we are one of very few certified police departments in Massachusetts and efforts will continue to maintain this certification.

Complete the Buildout and Expansion of the Current New Police Facility:

With the potential short-term location of the School administration, an opportunity arose to expand the extra space on the second floor and see a build out come to fruition. Obstacles have made that impractical. An alternative plan will allow flexibility in the use of current rooms for specialized investigative activities like SAIN Interview rooms, and increased security and officer access to the building that was overlooked upon construction. Based on a generous donation in memory of Virginia Taft, some projects were done in 2005 and more a doable in the not too distant future. If this project is to

come to fruition it must be done in an appropriate and aesthetic manner with security in mind also.

Enhance the Department Staffing at the Operational and Administrative Level:

It is apparent that the consistent increase in calls for service create difficulty in adopting programs that deal with specific needs. Community surveys that allow input into the concerns of the citizens will help determine and justify obvious needs such as:

Provide for adequate staffing of patrol operations on all shifts based on workload and calls for service.

Establish a Traffic Officer position in an effort to help reduce collisions that continue to rise at an alarming state.

Establish a Juvenile Officer position, which will be a merger between the Youth Center Officer and School Resource Officer of the past with other function dealing with Juvenile Crime. The timing of this should at the very least fall in line with the opening of a new High School in the town of Uxbridge.

Establishing a Lieutenant's position in the Department to assist the Chief in the numerous tasks of administering a medium sized police department.

The establishment of one more full time dispatcher position will help fill vacancies due to benefits and to assist in the myriad of paperwork responsibilities that are required of professional police operations. These administrative functions will assist in keeping the patrol officers in the community as opposed to being in the police station engulfed in the paperwork requirements of the Justice System.

Establish a Program for Planning and Research:

Develop and implement a mapping and crime analysis program to target areas of special need in the community. Allow the system to assist in deployment of personnel and special equipment to reduce crime, fear of crime, traffic collisions, and to increase the overall safety of the community.

Continue to Search Out, Apply for, and Implement Grant Programs from Both Private and Governmental Sources.

Such grants have been especially helpful in the past in the areas of youth violence, investigations, traffic safety, and data sharing capabilities. To discount their continued effectiveness would be detrimental to the department and the community as a whole.

Continue to Foster Regional Relationships with Neighboring Police Departments and Agencies:

Since the tragic events of 9-11 there has been much talk of sharing of resources. Over the past year concrete strides have been taken to accomplish this. A resource list from surrounding communities in central Massachusetts has been developed by the Uxbridge Police. This list continues to grow. Grants have been applied for that will establish special response teams in the areas. The regional accident reconstruction team was established. All of these are for the betterment and increased efficiency of Law Enforcement.

Fiscal Management and Planning:

In conclusion one must also keep in mind that public sector managers must remain concerned with how public funds are spent. Public demands for “high quality” services have to balance with the concept of “more for less.” Fiscal planning therefore becomes imperative.

Development of capital planning in co-ordination with the town wide capital-planning committee is imperative.

Re-establishment is needed of the equipment replacement program in all areas but especially with regard to items such as police cruisers.

Continue, as stated above, to maintain efforts to receive alternative funding through State, Federal and Private Grant sources.

If any citizen of Uxbridge has constructive input relative to this strategic plan they are encouraged to call the station or stop in and speak with the chief or any of the command staff of sergeants at any time.