

XI – ELIMINATING BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS

This chapter discusses issues that present barriers to effective operations. Until these barriers are addressed efforts to improve department operations will likely be frustrated. The chapter is divided into four sections, each of which addresses a different category of barrier: administrative and operational practices; internal issues that cause attention to be diverted from improving citizen service; ineffective procedures for addressing issues raised by external stakeholders; and policies and procedures that are at odds with the suggested direction for the department.

A – ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL PRACTICES

Three issues relating to administrative and operational practices currently pose barriers to effective operations: paperwork requirements; staff assignment and rotation practices; and the budgeting process.

PAPERWORK REQUIREMENTS

Addressing Paperwork Requirements Currently Consumes Significant Resources And Diverts Attention From Addressing Core Issues

Paperwork demands on department mid-managers and supervisors are enormous. In the patrol operations divisions in particular paperwork demands are especially high. Indeed, each division employs a number of sworn staff who each has as one of his or her primary responsibilities processing paperwork:

- Administrative sergeants reporting to the deputy chief
- Senior corporal reporting to the administrative sergeant
- Administrative lieutenant
- Administrative sergeant assigned to each watch (three total)
- Field training sergeant

In addition, as discussed in Chapter IX, the activity analysis results for line patrol sergeants indicate that they spend more than 20 percent of their time on paperwork related activities although in interviews some patrol sergeants indicated that they devoted a greater portion of their time to such activities. Moreover, in interviews watch lieutenants indicated that they spend a significant portion of their time “shuffling” paper from the sergeants who report to them to division and department managers and transmitting requests for information from division and department managers to the line sergeants.

To better understand the magnitude of this problem a systematic review of paperwork requirements was conducted as part of this engagement. The results of this analysis are presented in Exhibit XI-1. As this exhibit shows, patrol divisions are required to complete 25 paperwork related activities each day, 18 each week and 15 each month. In addition, 53 paperwork related items are completed on an as needed basis. The estimated amount of time devoted to these activities on a yearly basis for different

positions in each patrol division is summarized in the following table. Over the six patrol divisions, therefore, the equivalent of a total of 36.66 positions is devoted to handling paperwork.

Position	Estimated Hours(a)	Full-Time Equivalent Positions(b)
Division Commander	1,141	0.55
Administrative Lieutenant	1,784	0.86
Administrative Sergeant	1,959	0.94
Watch Commander	2,849	1.37
Station Sergeant	2,859	1.38
FTO Sergeant	604	0.29
Field Sergeant	1,500	0.72
Total	12,696	6.11

(a) Assumes that paperwork related activities completed on an “as needed” basis are performed once every three months on average.

(b) Assumes a 2,080 hour work year.

In addition to documenting the extensive resources the department devotes to paperwork, the analysis of current paperwork requirements reveals how extensive existing review and approval processes are. The division commander – who devotes more than half of his or her time to paperwork – personally reviews 73 percent of the monthly paperwork items prepared in the division, 87 percent of the weekly reports he or she is not responsible for generating, and 48 percent of the daily paperwork items. In addition, all but a handful of the paperwork items are reviewed, approved or processed by three or more managers and supervisors.

The Department Should Take A Number Of Steps To Reduce The Paperwork Burden On Managers And Supervisors

The management framework and recommendations presented in this report will require that mid-managers and supervisors focus on addressing important issues relating to strengthening internal management processes, improving services to citizens and reducing crime. Unless the paperwork burden is reduced, however, administrative and paperwork requirements threaten to crowd out the more substantive work on which these managers should be focusing their attention. Four important steps should be taken to address this problem.

- **The department’s information and documentation needs should be systematically reviewed.** Much of the paperwork generated by the department has a substantive management or operational value and should be continued. Other paperwork, however, appears to be of less value to the department. To distinguish substantive paperwork requirements from requirements that are of less importance the department should systematically assess the information it needs, the frequency with which that information should be reported, the most useful

format for providing the information, and the activities that should be documented. This assessment of information and documentation needs should provide the foundation for the overall review of paperwork requirements.

- **Assess the overlap in information and documentation needs.** A common complaint voiced in interviews is that some of the department's paperwork requirements consist of little more than reformatting already available reports. As part of the department's systematic review of paperwork processes each of the substantive information and documentation needs identified during the previous step should be reviewed to identify overlaps in the information requirements. These overlaps should be explicitly considered when determining how best to gather needed information.
- **Determine the extent to which the review and approval of information is needed.** The department's current practice of requiring many levels of review for the same information should be curtailed. Certainly especially sensitive information or information for which the risks of mistakes are great should be reviewed and approved at a number of levels. However, not all information needs to be subject to this review. Consequently, for each of the information and documentation needs identified, a risk level should be assigned that should be used to determine how extensive the review of this information should be and, indeed, whether any review beyond the review of an immediate supervisor is necessary.
- **Develop cost effective approaches to collecting and documenting needed information.** After completing a systematic assessment of information and documentation needs, overlaps in information requirements, and the level at which information should be reviewed, the department should design approaches to collect, document and review information that minimize the administrative burden on staff. Certainly, making effective use of technology will be a key to reducing the administrative burden associated with paperwork.¹ However, "low tech" approaches to reducing the administrative burden associated with paperwork – for example, by redesigning forms – should also be considered.

The department need not wait until this comprehensive assessment of paperwork requirements has been completed to begin making changes. For example, if the assessment determines that some of the existing paperwork requirements are unnecessary (or require less extensive documentation) changes should be made immediately. Moreover, if an assessment suggests that the risk of mistakes associated with paperwork that is now subject to a review by two or more managers is low, the review and approval process for this paperwork should be modified immediately. There is no need to delay making changes until the more comprehensive review has been completed.

¹ As discussed in Chapter X and documented in Exhibit X-3, the department is already undertaking a number of initiatives to use technology to reduce the administrative and paperwork burden placed on employees.

STAFF ASSIGNMENT AND ROTATION PRACTICES

The Department Should Establish A Policy That Limits The Time Officers Can Spend In Any Non-Patrol Division Assignment

At present the department does not have a policy that requires officers to rotate among non-patrol division assignments at specified intervals. While such policies are helpful in supporting the development of a workforce with a broad range of experiences and perspectives, they are essential to effective risk management in units conducting work that is vulnerable to potential corruption or abuse. In particular, for example, staff rotation is essential in internal affairs, vice and narcotics units. Moreover, rotating staff among assignments helps prevent the development of fiefdoms within the department to which employees have more of an allegiance than to the department as a whole.

As the following table shows, because a mandatory rotation policy has not been established staff assigned to some units have been in the same assignment for a number of years. Approximately 10 percent of the officers assigned to the Internal Affairs Division, for example, have been in the assignment for more than 10 years. In the vice section, however, more than 60 percent of the unit's staff has been in the assignment for more than 10 years and 8.7 percent have been in the assignment for more than 15 years.

Tenure In Unit	Internal Affairs	Vice
Less Than Three Years	48.3%	17.4%
Three To Five Years	32.3%	4.3%
Five To Ten Years	9.7%	17.4%
Ten To Fifteen Years	9.7%	52.2%
Fifteen To Twenty Years	0.0%	8.7%

To address this issue the department should establish a general policy that limits the amount of time officers can spend in any non-patrol division assignment. In crafting this policy, however, the department should establish exceptions when there is an operational benefit to doing so. For example, the cost of training officers to be part of some units – the mounted unit, for example – may be so great that extending the expected tenure of officers in these units should be granted. Even in these situations, though, the amount of time an officer can stay in the assignment should be limited (as long as there are other officers who are interested in applying for the assignment). In addition, a petition process should be established that would allow officers who have developed significant expertise in an area to extend their tenure if it is determined that it is beneficial to the department for them to do so.

In developing this policy the department should also establish goals for the mix of staff with different tenures that should be assigned to each unit. Implementation of this recommendation should then be structured to ensure that this goal is achieved over time. Implementing the recommendation to limit the number of years an officer can spend in an assignment too quickly would result in some units being staffed predominantly with officers who have little experience in the assignment. This, of course, would not be beneficial to the department.

Practices For Assigning Officers To Patrol Shifts Should Be Modified To Ensure Sufficient Experience On Each Shift

The department's current policy of allowing officers to select the watch to which they are assigned based on seniority is not, for the most part, unreasonable. However, because no limits have been established on this practice some patrol shifts have a high percentage of officers with very little experience. As the following table shows, more than a third of the staff assigned to the third watch (3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.) in the Southeast Operations Division has less than three years experience.

	First Watch		Second Watch		Third Watch	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less Than Two Years	10	11.2%	6	6.1%	28	20.9%
Two To Three Years	11	12.4%	3	3.0%	21	15.7%
Three To Five Years	18	20.2%	21	21.2%	20	14.9%
More Than Five Years	50	56.2%	69	69.7%	65	48.5%

Assigning staff with little experience to the same patrol shift – especially the third watch which has more calls-for-service than any other patrol shift – places the department at some risk that if a particularly difficult situation arises the officers on duty will lack sufficient experience to effectively handle it.

To address this situation the department should set minimum expectations relating to the experience of patrol officers assigned to each patrol shift. In particular, minimum standards should be established with regard to the percentage of officers assigned to each shift that must have a certain level of experience (for example, five or more years of service as a patrol officer or a senior corporal). As long as these expectations are met the current practice of officers selecting shifts based on seniority should be maintained. However, limits on the selection of shifts by seniority should be established if the minimum standards established by the department are not met.

Over Time, The Department Should Eliminate The Senior Corporal Position

The senior corporal position, as it is currently defined, creates a number of barriers to effective operations. First, as discussed in Chapter VIII, while senior corporals serve as field training officers not all officers who become senior corporals have an interest in becoming an FTO. Nonetheless, if they wish to eventually become sergeants they must first become senior corporals (an intermediate promotional rank). As a consequence, the department employs a great many senior corporals who lack the interest and dedication to become effective field training officers. In addition, officers who wish to be assigned to investigative units and to some specialist units (such as the mounted and traffic units) must also be senior corporals. This practice complicates efforts to rotate the best staff into these assignments. For example, an officer who might have the potential to be an excellent investigator will not be considered for such an assignment if he or she has not first been promoted to senior corporal. This officer, however, might have little interest in serving as a field training officer and therefore may choose not to enter into the promotional process. In the current system, such an officer could never become an investigator.

In addition to serving as a barrier to effective operations, the department's current approach to using the senior corporal position is expensive. A great many senior corporals perform exactly the same function as patrol officers yet are paid a premium. When senior corporals perform the same work as patrol officers, costs increase yet the value of the work they perform does not.

To address this situation the department should, over time, discontinue the senior corporal position. While existing senior corporals should be "grandfathered" into the position all functions currently performed by senior corporals should immediately be made "assignments." In other words, staff for these positions should be selected to fill such important roles as investigator and field training officer based on their background, interest and experience relative to the job and not because they have been promoted to a senior corporal position. Officers who are selected to fill these assignments should receive an appropriate stipend while filling the role but should revert to a police officer's salary when they return to patrol duties. In addition to providing stipends for officers assigned responsibilities broader than a normal patrol officer, the department should work with city human resource professionals to determine in what ways, if any, the pay schedule for patrol officers should be modified when this recommendation is implemented.

In the future, the department may wish to establish a "master patrol officer" position to replace senior corporals. Such positions should not be a promotion officers must pass through on their way to sergeant and higher ranks but rather should be used to reward officers who consistently do excellent work for the city and have done so for a number of years. In the current structure, excellent officers who wish to be paid more must be promoted to senior corporal or another position. After the "master patrol officer" position has been established increased compensation can be provided to officers based on their excellent performance over time and the need for officers to seek a promotion (which they may or may not be suited for) just to receive a salary increase will be eliminated. In addition, establishing such a position will provide positive rewards to officers who receive continually high ratings on their performance evaluations. (As discussed in Chapter VIII, few consequences – either positive or negative – are currently related to the results of annual performance evaluations.)

BUDGETING PROCESS²

The Current Budget Process Has A Number Of Shortcomings That Hamper Operational Effectiveness

As discussed in Chapter V, a key element of the management framework presented in this report is to improve the linkage between department's resource allocations (as reflected in its budget), its performance expectations, and the strategic, operational and tactical plans developed to achieve those performance expectations. While the department has made good progress over the past year in modifying its budget process

² This discussion focuses on internal department budget practices. Issues relating to the need to work with the city leadership to determine what overall level of funding should be provided the department – and how that funding level should be linked to service expectations – are discussed in Chapter V.

to better link resource allocations with department priorities³ further improvement in this area is warranted. (Specific recommendations to improve the linkage between resource allocations and expected results are presented in Chapter V.) Other short-comings associated with the budget process must also be addressed, however, if the recommendations for strengthening department operations presented in this report are to be successfully implemented.

The budget process is not sufficiently collaborative. As part of the budget development process the department takes a number of steps to seek input from individual divisions and units. In particular, budget forms are disseminated to bureau and division managers that ask these managers to justify budgetary changes from the prior year's budget for each service provided and also ask them to justify new initiatives. While this process is generally sound, repeated concerns were expressed in interviews that more collaboration and communication is needed as part of the budget process. Such collaboration will become even more important in the future as budgeting becomes more integrally linked with the planning process and the process for setting department priorities.

Senior managers are not sufficiently accountable for managing the budgets of their units. As additional authority is decentralized to division managers consistent with the recommendations presented throughout this report it will be imperative that budgetary authority and accountability be decentralized as well. At present, however, while managers are expected to adhere to their budgets the consequences for overspending are not clearly defined. In addition, because managers are currently able to control only their supply and overtime budget – a small percentage of a total budget in which 96 percent of expenditures are related to personnel – their ability to set and manage a budget to optimize performance against pre-established goals and objectives is limited.

Excessive use of special assignments distorts budget allocations. The primary purpose of budget allocations is to determine how scarce resources should be divided among competing needs within an organization. In the Dallas Police Department, however, these budget allocations are distorted by the department's current practice of reassigning staff out of the unit to which they have been assigned (and to which their costs are budgeted) to another unit on a "temporary basis." Indeed, as Exhibit XI-2 shows, as of May 25, 2004, 91 department employees were on special assignment and of these 41 (45.0 percent) had been in their assignment for more than six months. Seven employees had been in their special assignment for more than two years.

Some budget management practices have negative operational consequences. Because 96 percent of the department's budget is allocated to personnel related expenditures and decision-makers have been reluctant to change this percentage, department managers have been forced to slow down the hiring process and curtail overtime expenditures to free up the resources needed to procure needed supplies and equipment. While taking these actions is understandable given the constraints of the current budget they nonetheless have negative consequences for department

³ The department has introduced a "zero based" approach to budgeting that divides department services into 58 separate services and then ranks those services using criteria established by the Office of Financial Services and the City Manager's Office.

operations. Certainly if needed officers are not hired to replace officers who leave the department's employment the level of service the department provides citizens will suffer. Likewise, if overtime is unduly curtailed – especially in cases where it is operationally necessary to cover needed positions⁴ – the level of service citizens receive will decline.

Managers do not have incentives to aggressively seek ways to increase revenue.

While the primary purpose of the department is not to generate revenue, a number of opportunities to raise modest revenues have been identified as part of this engagement.⁵ At present, however, when viewed from the department's perspective alone, managers have little incentive to pursue such entrepreneurial opportunities because any additional revenues received as a part of their efforts will accrue to the city's general fund. While no one in the department indicated that they would not be willing to pursue revenue enhancement opportunities simply because the resulting revenues would not accrue to the department directly, given the effort associated with pursuing such opportunities creating an extra incentive for managers to pursue such opportunities by ensuring that the resources generated will directly benefit the department seems warranted.

The Department Should Take A Number Of Steps To Strengthen Its Budgeting Process

The department should build on the excellent steps it has already taken to further strengthen its budgeting process. In particular the department should revise the budgeting process to ensure a strong linkage with planning (as discussed in Chapter V) and to promote discussion and collaboration on budget related issues with all bureaus, divisions and units within the department. Establishing a vibrant budget process characterized by extensive discussions about department priorities, the best use of resources to achieve those priorities, and what plans developed by individual bureau, division and unit managers should be implemented is crucial to the success of the overall improvement efforts outlined in this report. In addition to revising the budget development process the budget management process should be revised as well. Managers should be held strictly accountable for adhering to the budgets that have been established for their divisions and failure to do so should be met with appropriate sanctions. (As discussed in Chapter VI, in the recommended management framework the authority to manage one's budget should be viewed as a privilege that is earned. Managers who demonstrate that they are not able to effectively manage their budget should have their authority to do so curtailed.)

⁴ As discussed in several sections of this report, the number of staff needed to provide needed staffing in some areas is not sufficient to fill these positions while allowing for vacation, holidays, sickness and regularly scheduled days off. When available "relief" staffing is not sufficient the only recourse managers have is to hire employees on an overtime basis.

⁵ For example, the department may be able to generate some revenues by allowing other area police departments to use its shooting range when it is not needed to support department training. In addition, the collaborative arrangements the department has established with software developers might be modified to provide the department with a royalty when software developed with the department's assistance is sold to other agencies.

In addition, if the budget is to be an effective decision-making tool the department should clearly articulate its needs for staffing, materials, vehicles and equipment. No pre-conceived ratio of staffing expenditures to total expenditures should be established. Instead, each category of expenditures within the budget should be set at the level necessary to achieve department objectives (within the constraints of available resources.) Eliminating arbitrary constraints – especially the expectation that 96 percent of the department’s budget be devoted to personnel related expenditures – will eliminate the need for department managers to go through extensive budget gyrations to free up the resources needed to support expenditures for supplies and equipment that should have been incorporated in the budget in the first place.

To ensure the integrity of budget allocations the department should also make more judicious use of officers on special assignments. While assigning officers from one unit to another may be necessary to address an unanticipated staffing shortage or to find appropriate work for officers who are working in a limited duty capacity, the department should recognize that these assignments distort budgetary allocations and limit these reassignments to within the same budgetary unit whenever possible. In addition, the budget allocation for a position should be transferred when any officer is on a “temporary” assignment while the department’s budget is being prepared and there is a reasonable expectation that he or she will stay in that assignment into the next budget year.

The department should also work with the city’s budget staff to provide incentives for managers to generate revenues through their entrepreneurial efforts. In particular, mechanisms should be established for any revenues generated from such efforts to accrue to the benefit of the department. To the extent possible, given the fiscal realities faced by the city, these revenues should augment and not supplant existing city support for the police department.

B – INTERNAL ISSUES THAT DIVERT EMPLOYEE ATTENTION

The interviews and survey findings conducted as part of this engagement identified significant internal dissatisfaction with a range of issues relating to internal management and operations. These issues are of significant concern to employees and unless they are addressed efforts to direct the attention of department employees on serving citizens will be difficult. These issues, which will be discussed in this section, may be divided into three categories: relationships with the city government; internal processes; and relationships among civilian and sworn employees.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE CITY GOVERNMENT

Relationships With The City Government Have Deteriorated

From the perspective of many of the employees interviewed as part of this engagement, relationships with the city government are at an all time low. Police officers are deeply upset about a number of issues including the following:

- **Elimination of 52 week coverage for employees who are injured on the job.** In interviews, department employees were deeply concerned about a decision to modify coverage for workers compensation cases. The city had made a decision that the number of weeks for which employees who are injured on the job receive

supplemental pay would be reduced from 52 weeks to 13 weeks. This reduction was implemented for all city employees regardless of source or type of injury. Given the risks associated with law enforcement, department employees were concerned about the implications of this action on employees who are shot or gravely injured in the line of duty. To its credit, as the city's leadership became aware of these concerns steps were recently taken to restore the 52 week coverage for employees who are injured on the job.

- **Reinterpretation of FLSA laws relating to overtime.** The department had been misinterpreting the FLSA laws relating to overtime and compensating staff for overtime based on their daily rather than weekly work schedule. In fact, Dallas was overcompensating its staff and modifications to overtime based on the FLSA laws that occurred nationally many years ago. Despite the fact that the city is now merely correctly interpreting FLSA law, department employees view the change as a negative action taken against them by the city.
- **Elimination of tuition reimbursement.** The city had provided tuition reimbursement to officers who were taking courses at local colleges and universities. This benefit was eliminated although there has been some discussion about the possibility of restoring this benefit.
- **Elimination of an annual bonus based on an employee's longevity.** The city provided two types of longevity pay to sworn staff based on their years of service – Service Incentive Pay (SIP) and a longevity payment (up to \$1,200) based on their years of service.⁶ The Service Incentive Pay was eliminated for sworn staff in 2003.
- **Concerns that compensation is too low.** The perceptions of many officers are that despite recent raises their compensation is not competitive with that of other area police departments. In particular, the perception among many officers is that new police officers leave the department's employment with considerable frequency to take jobs with other local police departments that offer higher salaries.⁷
- **Increased healthcare deductibles.** Officers express considerable consternation that at the same time the city was raising their salaries their healthcare deductibles were increased thus partially offsetting the impact of their salary increase.

It is difficult to overstate the preoccupation of many officers with these issues and their consternation over how the city addressed them. Certainly, these perceptions are reflected in the results of the employee survey in which 84.3 percent of the survey respondents disagree or strongly disagree that their work is valued by the city's leadership. Perhaps most troubling, however, is the fact that some officers have reportedly allowed these issues to affect the quality of service they provide citizens. In interviews, a small number of officers indicated that they were much less likely to respond quickly to calls or to put themselves in harm's way because they were so upset about these issues.

⁶ This longevity payment is mandated by state law.

⁷ Low turnover among department employees – 2.2 percent – does not support this perception.

Lack Of Effective Communication Has Contributed To The Ill Will On The Part Of Department Employees

A certain amount of ill will and resentment is to be expected whenever an organization such as the City of Dallas, in response to fiscal constraints, reduces employee benefits and perquisites that had been viewed as part of the employees' overall compensation package. The level of resentment and, in some cases, militancy engendered by these actions in the Dallas Police Department is, nonetheless, surprising. It appears that lack of dialogue, communication and information about some of these issues has fueled employee resentment.

Lack of communication about the rationale for decisions. The perception among many officers is that the department was singled out by the city's leadership for cuts and give backs. While it was beyond the scope of this engagement to assess the validity of such claims, certainly for a number of issues the changes that were made affected all departments. For example, the reduction in the number of weeks for which employees who are injured on the job receive supplemental pay from 52 weeks to 13 (which was recently restored) was implemented for all city employees. Moreover, in some cases the city had been providing preferential treatment to the department not available to other city departments and had taken steps to correct this inequity. For example, most other city departments did not receive both longevity bonuses and SIP pay. The elimination of SIP pay for sworn officers merely put officers on the same footing as civilian city employees.⁸ While understanding the rationale for decisions and making it clear that at least some of these decisions affected all city departments will not eliminate resentment, effective communication might at least diffuse some of the anger resulting from the perception that the police department has been singled out.

Failure to effectively communicate factual information. A common perception among many department employees is that the department is losing a large number of new employees to other area police departments because starting salaries for police officers are so low. Analysis, however, suggests that very few police officers leave the department's employment during their first two years on the job and of these only slightly more than half leave to work for other police departments. Data indicates that 10 percent of new officers leave the department during their first two years for a variety of reasons. (Six percent report leaving to accept jobs with other police departments and four percent leave for other reasons.) In fact, the turnover rate at the entry rank, police officer has averaged 3.5 percent over the past two years, a relatively low percent for an entry level rank. Because this information has not been effectively communicated to department employees, however, the city and department leaders failed to take advantage of an opportunity to correct this clearly erroneous perception.⁹

⁸ SIP pay was retained for civilian employees but set at a level that matched the longevity pay received by officers.

⁹ Some department staff suggests that this information has been communicated to department employees. Given the frequency with which employees cited the perceived problem of new officers leaving to go work for other agencies, however, if this information has been communicated the communication efforts have been extremely ineffective.

The Department Should Work Closely With The City To Improve Communication About Internal Issues That Preoccupy Department Employees And, To The Extent Possible, Should Take Steps To Address Them

The level of anger and resentment that many department employees feel towards the city will not dissipate overnight regardless of any action that is taken by the city (although the city's recent decision to expand coverage for workers who are injured on the job to 52 weeks is an excellent first step). Nonetheless, proactive steps are needed if relationships are to begin to mend. First, the city should improve communication about these issues and provide a context for the decisions that have been made. In addition, a process should be established to consider alternative approaches to addressing some of the issues that are of crucial importance to employees. While these efforts are taking place, however, department leaders should stress in no uncertain terms that the quality of service citizens receive should in no way be affected by the fact that employees are disgruntled about internal and management issues. Any indication that employees allow services to citizens to suffer because of their anger and resentment toward the city should be dealt with swiftly and decisively.

Improving communication. It would be naive to assume that by improving communication alone some of the deep seated resentment currently felt by many officers toward the city can be eliminated. Certainly, however, effective communication can take "the edge off" some of this resentment and provide for officers who are still willing to be even handed a broader context for the decisions that were made. In particular, the city should provide annual statements for all department employees that detail the total compensation the city pays on their behalf. By doing so the city can provide a constant reminder to employees of the total financial commitment it makes to each and every police department employee.

Addressing issues. A joint city and department task force should be established to assess the extent to which some of the issues that are of most concern to department employees can be addressed within the city's fiscal constraints. (It should be noted that the issue (based on interview findings) that was of greatest importance to employees – the elimination of 52 week coverage for workers who are injured on the job – has recently been addressed by the city council. This is just the sort of action that will help mend strained relationships between the department and the city.) As part of this process, the task force should work to understand what issues are of greatest concern to department employees and what the costs of addressing these issues would be. To collect this information, the task force could undertake a survey of employees using a statistical technique called conjoint analysis. Conjoint analysis surveys can be structured to collect information on the relative importance of various issues to employees. This information could then be compared to the relative cost of addressing each issue.

Care should be taken to ensure that employee do not interpret establishing this task force to mean that any of the changes made by the city will be rescinded. On the contrary, by establishing the task force both the department and the city will demonstrate their understanding that these issues are important to employees and that they are willing to make a good faith effort to address them within the city's budget constraints. Regardless of the decisions that are made by this task force, the rationale for the decisions should be clearly communicated to all department stakeholders.

INTERNAL PROCESSES

Dissatisfaction With A Number Of Human Resource Processes Is High

In interviews, employees expressed significant dissatisfaction with human resource processes relating to promotion, employee discipline, transfers and grievances. These perceptions were supported by the results of the employee survey.

- **Promotional process.** Employee dissatisfaction with the promotional process is extremely high. During interviews specific problems identified with the promotional process were the lack of regularly scheduled promotional examinations and assessment centers and delays in filling promotional positions. Additionally, during interviews staff expressed frustration with department leaders not following the specific general orders related to the promotional process and allowing personal relationships and preferences to undermine the process.

This dissatisfaction is reflected in the results of the employee survey. Between 84 and 90 percent of all survey respondents disagree or strongly disagree that the promotional process is fair (85.4 percent), that the best candidates for promotion are selected (90.0 percent), that the promotional process is timely (84.8 percent), that the factors that are considered when making promotional decisions are clearly articulated (82.6 percent), and that promotional decisions are made without regard to race or ethnic background (88.1 percent).

- **Disciplinary processes.** The employee survey also reveals significant concern about disciplinary processes with the greatest level of dissatisfaction relating to the timeliness of decisions relating to discipline. 79.1 percent of employees disagree or strongly disagree that disciplinary process are fair, 86.7 percent disagree or strongly disagree that discipline is consistently applied across department bureaus, divisions and units, 90.8 percent disagree that decisions relating to discipline are timely; and 78.1 percent disagree or strongly disagree that decisions relating to discipline are made without regard to race or ethnic background.
- **Employee transfer process.** Levels of dissatisfaction relating to employee transfers are also extremely high. More than eight out of ten employees responding to the survey disagree or strongly disagree that decisions relating to the transfer of employees from one unit to another are fair (87.7 percent); decisions relating to the transfer of employees from one unit to another are timely (83.1 percent); factors that are considered when making transfer decisions are clearly articulated (84.9 percent); decisions relating to the transfer of employees are consistent throughout the department (89.7 percent); and transfer decisions are made without regard to race or ethnic background (89.7 percent).
- **Grievance process.** While employees are generally dissatisfied with a number of aspects relating to the grievance process, levels of dissatisfaction are somewhat lower than for the promotional process, disciplinary processes, and employee transfer process. More than three out of five survey respondents disagree or strongly disagree that the grievance process is fair (61.5 percent), timely (66.2 percent) and that grievance decisions are made without regard to race or ethnic background (64.3 percent). Perceptions on whether steps in the grievance process

are well articulated, however, are mixed. 39.5 percent of the survey respondents agree or strongly agree that “the steps in the grievance process are well articulated” while 41.0 percent disagree or strongly disagree with this statement.

The consistency with which employees voiced concerns about these processes in interviews, combined with the high levels of dissatisfaction reported in the employee survey suggest that unless decisive action is taken to address these internal issues efforts to reorient employees to focusing on issues relating to improving service to Dallas citizens will be difficult.

The Department Should Increase The Transparency Of Decision Making And Take Steps To Strengthen Human Resource Related Processes

Regardless of the steps the department takes to strengthen processes relating to promotion, discipline, employee transfer and grievances, survey and interview findings suggest that there will be a high level of skepticism that the processes have in fact improved. Consequently, efforts to strengthen and improve these processes must be supported by an overall effort to make these processes as transparent as possible. To the extent feasible given the need for confidentiality in some areas, employees should receive feedback on the decisions that were made. In particular, when employees are not selected for a transfer or promotion they should receive feedback on why they weren't selected and what specifically they might do to improve their chances for success in the future.

In addition to making decision-making more transparent additional steps should be taken to strengthen and improve these processes.

Promotion. Clear guidelines relating to the promotions process have been established. The department should take steps to ensure that these guidelines are understood by all employees and that they are followed explicitly. The department should also ensure that promotional examinations and the assessment center process are conducted in a timely manner.

Discipline. Established processes for employee discipline are specifically laid out in the department's general orders. To address employee concerns about discipline, therefore, the department must take steps to ensure that these processes are followed to the letter. To achieve this goal, managers and supervisors should receive supplemental training on issues relating to employee discipline. In addition, department leaders should review data relating employee discipline on a regular basis to ensure consistency across divisions.

Transfer. Again, the department has very specific orders related to transfer which are not consistently followed and are frequently bypassed. To address employee concerns about the transfer process the department should ensure that these orders are followed without exception. In addition, supervisors and managers should receive supplemental training on the key features of the transfer process.

Grievance. The average number of grievances filed in the Dallas Police Department each year is relatively low given the size of the department.¹⁰ This is especially true given a handful of employees account for close to 20 percent of the grievances filed each year. The grievance process, however, does bog down because internal policies currently require that all grievances that are filed, whether the charge is grievable or the filing is timely, be reviewed by the grievance review panel. The Personnel and Development Division has been working to modify grievance procedures to allow grievances to be screened so that matters that do not meet the criteria for being grievable or that are not filed in a timely manner are removed from the process. Implementing these proposed procedures would allow the grievance review panel to focus on valid grievances and ensure consistent responses to all grievable matters. The department should, therefore, move forward immediately with implementing the proposed modifications to the grievance process.

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SWORN AND CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES

Civilian Department Employees Tend Not To Feel Respected

It is not uncommon in police departments for civilian employees to feel less respected than sworn officers. This situation is no different in the Dallas Police Department. Indeed, 80.3 percent of civilian employees disagree or strongly disagree that civilian employees are treated with as much respect as sworn employees. (Interestingly, only 38.0 percent of sworn officers disagree with this statement.) While issues relating to ensuring civilian employees are respected and valued are endemic to police departments this does not mean that these issues do not deserve management attention.

Several factors contribute to the concerns voiced by civilian employees that they are not as valued and respected as sworn employees.¹¹ First, as discussed in Chapter X, the number of civilian employees in absolute terms and as a percentage of the total work force has declined in recent years. Experiencing significant cutbacks, even as the number of sworn employees has modestly increased, has been interpreted by some civilian employees as a sign that the work of civilians is not valued. In addition, civilian employees report that they are reticent to seek career advancement for fear that if they take a new position they will be among the first to be cut when a new round of civilian retrenchment occurs.

In addition, pay practices and work rules contribute to the perception among many civilian employees that they are “second class citizens.” In interviews, a number of employees (both sworn and civilian) noted noticeable tension among some sworn and civilian staff is created by the fact that police officers have recently received a pay

¹⁰ In 2001, grievances were filed. In 2002, 82 grievances were filed and in 2003, 48 grievances were filed. The average number of grievances filed during this three year period is 65.6.

¹¹ It is worth noting that while in interviews significant concerns were voiced by civilian employees with regard to how their work was valued, overall the employees survey results reveal that a higher percentage of civilians feel valued by police department employees, mid-managers and the department’s leadership than sworn employees. In addition, civilians feel only slightly less valued by their immediate supervisor than sworn employees.

increase of 15 percent while civilian employees have not received a pay increase for four years.

A Standing Committee Should Be Established To Identify Issues That Create Discord Among Civilian And Sworn Employees And To Work To Address These Issues

As previously noted, almost all police departments struggle with issues relating to the relationship between sworn and civilian employees. Such challenges are endemic to any organization in which employees that are paid differently and are subject to different employment rules work side-by-side. The fact that these problems are so common and so difficult to address suggests the need for ongoing focused attention on them. No amount of management attention will make these issues disappear entirely but certain aspects of the problem – for example, that civilian employees do not feel they are respected as much as sworn employees – can be mitigated.

As a demonstration of its commitment to addressing these issues, the department should establish a committee charged with focusing on understanding the issues that create discord among sworn and civilian employees. Initially, this committee should focus on developing a sound understanding of the issues that create discord and should develop strategies to address them. While addressing issues of salary and compensation is difficult in any environment in which resources are scarce, it may be possible to modify work rules¹² or, perhaps, to more strictly enforce work rules that appear to benefit sworn officers to reduce some of the perceptions of inequity. In addition, the committee should seek to better understand some of the underlying issues that create the perception among civilian employees that their work is not as respected as the work of sworn officers (as well as the perception among sworn officers that a discrepancy does not exist). The work of all department employees is essential to its overall success and implicit or explicit messages the department's leadership and its employees send to the contrary should be eliminated.

Because addressing issues relating to the relationship between sworn and civilian employees requires "constant vigilance" the committee should meet and discuss problems and issues on a regular basis. During its initial tenure, however, the committee should act more as a task force and should be responsible for analyzing underlying issues, developing strategies for addressing those issues and working with managers and staff from throughout the department to implement needed change. As a standing committee, the group should be responsible for monitoring the relationships among sworn and civilian staff and ensuring that these important issues do not get relegated to the "back burner."

¹² In developing these strategies the committee should work closely with city human resource managers.

C – EXTERNAL ISSUES THAT DIVERT EMPLOYEE ATTENTION

This section discusses the department's current approach to handling requests from city council members and individual citizens and presents suggestions for how to comply with these requests in a manner that is less disruptive to department operations.

The Department Has Not Developed Effective Approaches For Handling Service Requests From City Council Members And Individual Citizens

Providing an appropriate response to service requests from city council members and individual citizens is an important department function. The department recognizes the importance of this function and currently provides a prompt and detailed response to every request for service received from city council members and also provides a prompt response to many individual service requests from ordinary citizens. While the department should be commended for its efforts in this regard, the current approach to handling these service requests can disrupt day-to-day operations and is unnecessarily time-consuming.

The number of service requests the department receives from the city council, the city manager's office, the city's website, or the 311 system over the course of a year (7,361 requests or an average of 20.1 per day) while not small does not appear excessive. While these requests include reports of crimes or vandalism, the vast majority (6,125 in 2003 or 83.2 percent of all requests handled) relate to parking violations. The impact these requests have on department operations are disproportionate¹³ to their number for two primary reasons.

- **All service requests are given equal priority.** The department does not currently prioritize the service requests that are received. Instead, a response to each and every service request is required within 14 days.
- **The same format is used to document the response to all service requests.** The department has developed a consistent format to respond to all city council service requests. The forms, which are somewhat cumbersome to fill out, are used to document the department's response to all requests whether it be the investigation of a dope house or the need to tow an abandoned vehicle. In addition, all forms are reviewed by at least four levels in the chain of command (administrative sergeant, assistant chief, administrative sergeant who serves as city council liaison and the assistant city manager), with changes sometimes suggested at several points in the review process, before the form is sent to the City Council. While using this format to respond to some city council service requests may be appropriate the level of detail included and the level of review provided is excessive for some types of service requests.

The fact that the same response is provided to every service request can actually hinder the department's efforts to effectively address the identified problem. Addressing some issues requires planning (or the time to integrate the issue into existing plans) and

¹³ Based on comments in interviews about the amount of time devoted to responding to council service requests it would not have been surprising to the consultants if double or triple the number of service requests actually received were referred to the department.

focused attention over a period of time. However, given the pressure department managers currently feel to meet the “suspense” date for the request they will tend to apply a “band aid” solution rather than consider how best to address the core problem that manifests itself in the service request.

The Department Should Work With The City Council To Develop A System For Prioritizing Council Service Requests And Providing An Appropriate Response

The department should work with the city council to develop a more measured and effective approach to handling service requests from city council members. Rather than handling all service requests in the same way, a system should be established to prioritize service requests in a manner that is consistent with the department’s overall objectives and priorities (which will be set by the city council) and that also meets city council expectations for responsiveness. In addition, a range of alternative approaches to document response to the service request should be developed that provide city council members with assurance that the issue has been addressed but that is less administratively burdensome to department managers and staff. Furthermore, in addition to simply tracking the number of service requests that are received the department should categorize and summarize these requests. As part of the annual planning and goal setting process with the city council then, these summaries of service requests by city council members can be used to inform the process for establishing overall expectations for department performance and for setting the department’s budget.

D – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This section discusses the department’s current approach to establishing and developing policies and procedures and presents recommendations for revamping procedures in a manner that is consistent with the recommended management and operational approaches presented throughout this report.

Many Of The Short-Comings Of The Department’s Existing Management Approaches Are Reflected In Its Policies And Procedures

The Dallas Police Department’s policies and procedures mirror the management approaches that characterize the organization. Because these policies and procedures reinforce many of the existing management practices that this report suggests should be changed, existing policies and procedures must also be changed if the management improvements suggested in this report are to be successfully implemented. A discussion of the ways in which existing policies and procedures reinforce existing practice follows.

Policies and procedures are overly prescriptive. As currently structured, department policies and procedures appear to have been designed to cover all potential contingencies. Some procedures are extremely long. For example, the procedures relating to transfer are five pages long, the procedures relating to the performance management system are four pages long, the procedures relating to driver and vehicle safety are seven pages long and the procedures relating to internal affairs investigations and disciplinary processes are 14 pages long. Employing extensive policies and procedures makes it difficult for managers and staff to be sufficiently familiar with policies and procedures with which they are expected to comply. Moreover, such overly

prescriptive policies and procedures may hamper efforts to give division and unit managers the authority they need to achieve substantive results. In an environment in which little attention has been given to pushing authority out into the organization, overly prescriptive policies and procedures can become a crutch that managers can use to avoid making substantive decisions and accepting the authority and associated accountability they have been granted.

Policies and procedures reinforce existing tendencies to micro-manage. As discussed in Chapters IV and VI existing policies and procedures require excessive review of comparatively mundane issues. For example, citing an officer for an on-view policy violation requires the approval of managers and leaders up to the chief of police. Likewise, decisions relating to assignments within specialized units must be approved at the command staff level before being finalized. In addition, background investigation reports for every potential hire are reviewed at each level in the reporting structure up to and including the chief. As long as policies and procedures require a review of so many decisions¹⁴ up the chain of command, efforts to encourage supervisors and managers to be more assertive in their decision-making will be undercut.

Policies and procedures are used as a substitute for management. There is a tendency in the Dallas Police Department for new policies and procedures to be developed whenever a significant problem arises. For example, a recent question of whether a recruit who was about to be terminated should be allowed to resign resulted in the development to new policy to address this issue. Policies and procedures should not be used as a substitute for management, however. Indeed, even if extensive policies and procedures relating to a specific problem have been developed if management is lax there is no guarantee that the problem won't recur. More importantly, these policies and procedures do nothing to address fundamental issues that may be at the core of the problem and that may spawn other issues as well.

Policies and procedures complicate effective personnel management. Existing policies and procedures require that supervisors must get approval for all disciplinary matters. These requirements create a situation where punishment for inappropriate actions is not quick, not sure and may not happen at all.

Policies and procedures institutionalize low expectations for employees. As discussed in Chapter VIII, one key to improving the police department's overall performance is to set high standards for the performance of all employees. Existing policies and procedures, however, tend to reinforce and institutionalize low expectations for employees. For example, requirements for shooting recertifications have been reduced to the point that, at present, to become recertified, officers have an unlimited number of opportunities to meet state standards. This requirement is colloquially referred to as "shoot until you pass." Likewise, as discussed in Chapter VIII, standards for successfully completing the training academy have been steadily and consistently reduced over time.

¹⁴ Clearly, some decisions are of such importance that review up the chain of command is appropriate. However, relatively few decisions are of such importance.

The Department Should Revamp Its Policies And Procedures

The department should revise its policies and procedures. This process should proceed in three steps. First, the department should review the existing general orders and cull out orders where a specific delineation of department policy is not necessary. The general orders need not be designed to cover every possible contingency and efforts to do so will result in a bloated set of requirements that few if any officers fully understand. Second, the remaining policies and procedures should be reviewed to ensure that they support the overall management and operational approaches recommended in this document. Finally, after the overhaul of the general orders has been completed, an ongoing program of training to ensure all officers are familiar with the orders should be established.¹⁵

As part of this process, the department should convene a task force to articulate core values of the department and to detail supporting principles that elaborate on these values. For example, if a core value is to be “trustworthy” an elaborating principle might be articulated as “doing the right thing when no one is looking.” As training on general orders proceeds then, the relationship between the general orders and the values should be articulated. (The department may choose to preface each policy with a statement of the relevant core value.) The training should emphasize that when employees encounter situations that are not covered by explicit policy, they must be required to act in furtherance of the department’s core values, and be prepared to explain their actions in that context should questions arise after the fact.

¹⁵ The department already does a very good job of ensuring employees are familiar with its policies and procedures. 91.3 percent of the respondents to the employee survey either agree or strongly agree that they are familiar with the department’s general orders and 74.5 percent agree or strongly agree that these policies and procedures guide their activities on a day to day basis.