



OPERATIONAL STUDY OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT **VOLUME 1 – POLICE DIVISION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

CITY OF LINO LAKES, MN

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POLICE DIVISION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Lino Lakes (City) retained Citygate Associates, LLC (Citygate) to conduct an Operational Study of the Public Safety Department (Department). For the Police Division of the Department, this assessment, performed concurrently with an assessment of the Fire Division, included thorough review of the adequacy of current and future deployment systems, staffing levels throughout the Department, sustainable alternatives, medical incident response, and the organizational structure of both the Police and Fire divisions of the Department. The methodology utilized in this Operational Study in relation to the scope of work can be found in **Section 1** of Volume 3 of this report.

Citygate's study was initiated with on-site visits and stakeholder listening sessions beginning October 28, 2024. Subsequently, there was a pause to collect 2024 response data in its entirety for analysis and inclusion in our full report. Further, during the period of Citygate's analysis, the City experienced executive personnel changes, and interim leadership began substantive improvements within both the Fire and Police divisions. **It should be noted that the content of this report reflects the Department as it existed *prior* to the appointment of interim chiefs for both police and fire operations.**

This report is presented in three volumes. This volume (Volume 1) includes a Police Division Executive Summary, which contains a summary of Citygate's analysis and all findings and recommendations. Volume 3 contains the full technical report, including an introduction to the study and background information about the City and Department; detailed analysis of the data that drives staffing recommendations, including data concerning police unit response times, crime, and calls for service; and analysis of the staffing of supervision, management, and support functions within the Police Division. The Department provided incident and other workload measures data where available.

This assessment encompasses Citygate's recommendations for Department success over the next five years. Overall, there are **56 key findings** and **34 specific action item recommendations**. Findings and recommendations are presented in their narrative context in sections 2 through 4. A comprehensive list of all findings and recommendations is presented sequentially in this Executive Summary.

POLICY CHOICES FRAMEWORK

There are no mandatory federal or state regulations directing the level of police field service staffing, response times, or outcomes. The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) recommends methods for determining appropriate staffing levels based on local priorities, the

National Emergency Number Association (NENA) provides standards for 9-1-1 call answering, and the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials-International (APCO) and the International Academies of Emergency Dispatching (IAED) provide best practices that illuminate staffing needs for communications centers providing dispatch services.

Personnel costs are often the most significant cost center in any department budget. One of the greatest challenges for any City is managing limited fiscal resources and allocating them wisely across the vast needs of municipal government public safety operations. The recommendations contained within this report are made based on best practices, Citygate's experience, and guidelines established by professional industry organizations. The City's fiscal capacity must be considered when weighing Citygate's recommendations. Since there are no federal standards related to these aspects of law enforcement staffing and operations, the City is well advised to utilize the advice and counsel of City management and the Police Chief for guidance in determining where to allocate available resources to meet the service delivery expectations of the community.

GENERAL SUMMARY OF CITYGATE'S ASSESSMENT

Overview

The City contracted with Citygate to conduct a comprehensive operational study of the Public Safety Department that will provide integrated findings, recommendations, and implementation strategies for policy makers. The study included multiple levels of data analysis, gap analysis, interviews with stakeholders and decision makers, on-site assessment, and juxtaposition of the Department's current practices with best practices in public safety.

The current public safety model used by the City is one variation of the combined public safety department model. The City's structure consists of a Public Safety Director, trained in both Fire and Police services, who supervises both divisions. Each division, in turn, has a Deputy Director who is responsible for the supervision of operations within each division. While this system is not unique in the industry, it is a departure from most municipalities across Minnesota.

Citygate began on-site work in October 2024 before continuing with off-site statistical, financial, and personnel analysis, which was presented to the City in a Mid-Project Review presentation in February 2025—as well as in this Final Report completed in April 2025. Citygate's analysis is comprised of quantitative data from Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) data, financial documents, operational documents, benchmark data, interviews with personnel at all levels of the Department, and interviews with City staff and public officials outside of public safety.

Throughout Citygate's assessment, we found a Department with high level of commitment and professionalism and a staff willing to implement new ideas and technologies to improve public safety in the City. The members of the Department are extremely dedicated to the community they

serve. Many of the findings and recommendations in this report are items the Department is aware of and is already taking steps to implement. Some changes will take time and require resources as part of the normal budget process.

Throughout this assessment, Citygate’s recommendations will serve the Department in its effort to achieve the following goals.

- ◆ Update organizational structures to maximize effectiveness.
- ◆ Improve public and officer safety through increased staffing and alternative structures to managerial oversight.
- ◆ Increase capacity in police services through expanded leadership communications, adaptations of technology, and improvements in record keeping related to the dispositions of field and investigative cases.
- ◆ Provide information to create a strategic approach for police services in response to community growth over the next decade.

If this study’s recommendations are implemented over several fiscal years, the Department will be well positioned to deepen its ability to provide enhanced public safety through transition to two distinct City departments for Police and Fire services.

SUMMARY OF POLICE SERVICES FINDINGS BY TOPIC

Organizational Summary

At the time of Citygate’s organizational review, the Department was operating with a staffing level of 31 Police Division employees—including 25 sworn staff (of 28 authorized) and 6 professional staff—organized into two sections and reporting to a Public Safety Director. Additionally, the Department was funded for 3 part-time Community Service Officers, which were being leveraged as a recruitment conduit to sworn officer status.

These staffing levels represent a ratio of 799.1 residents per sworn police officer, or 1.25 sworn officers per 1,000 residents. Citygate found that the Department’s ratio of supervisors and managers to line-level officers represents the “mid-range” when compared to similar regional police agencies. As will be discussed in this report in depth, Citygate does not believe that only a certain ratio of officers to population can deliver effective police services, as local contexts and variables differ, which will be discussed later in this report.

Patrol Services Summary

The current patrol shift structure meets the City’s needs with the exception of a gap in supervisory coverage between 1:00 am and 6:00 am daily, which needs to be addressed through the addition

of sergeants to provide coverage. Based upon analysis of CAD data, at full staffing, the number of authorized patrol officers appears to be adequate. Staffing is currently impacted by officer vacancies that are scheduled to be filled. Based on the timeline of required training for new officers, the agency will be operating with short staffing for approximately 1.5 years, assuming there are no new vacancies.

Current response times are reasonable. The series of lakes and parks dividing the east and west sides of the City are a significant factor impacting response times. As the City continues to grow, it will become necessary to hire additional officers and build a substation to maintain response times. Traffic enforcement overall is effective. Collecting additional collision statistics would enable a more detailed analysis. The K9 unit has a low number of deployments and should be evaluated for its cost effectiveness. Two of the three part-time Community Service Officer positions are currently vacant. Filling these vacancies would be a cost-effective way to improve the proactive patrol time of officers. Upgrading one of the positions to a full-time position would further improve the amount of time spent on proactive patrol by sworn officers. The City's current fleet replacement policy results in patrol vehicles reaching excessive mileage before they are taken out of service.

Investigative/Support Services Summary

Citygate found the Department's investigative unit to be functioning at a high level. The organization of the unit is rather flat, with a sergeant and three investigators. This structure provides a high level of service for those that live in, work in, and visit the City. The current system ensures cases assigned to each investigator are thoroughly investigated.

Current staffing is adequate but could be restructured to provide career opportunities and professional development, both of which will help with the retention of sworn staff. The Department should explore all available multi-agency task forces to determine where assignment of an investigator to a position would enhance the services provided to the community. Citygate recommends that all three investigator positions remain temporary assignments, with a staggered, three-year rotation for each position. The recently refilled Investigative Assistant position should be evaluated and upgraded to a Crime Analyst position within the next 24 months. Citygate has also determined that the Department is in need of one new full-time equivalent position to manage the Property Room. This change should be implemented within the next twelve months.

Process improvements can be made to address which cases are assigned to patrol and which are assigned to investigative units. Citygate found that improvements can be made to communications and expectations across the entire agency.

Administrative Services Summary

The City's current public safety model, as originally intended to function, has become progressively more obsolete over the past six years due to sworn police staff electing to leave fire

service responsibilities. This has resulted in the installation of a duty crew model and paid-on-call group within the Department's Fire Division. Citygate recommends the restructuring of the Public Safety Department into two distinct departments: a Police Department and a Fire Department, with each being headed by a Chief who reports to the City Administrator.

Further Police Division recommendations include an administrative reorganization that eliminates the use of the Deputy Director and Captain positions, creating two distinct divisions headed by lieutenant positions for Patrol Services and Administrative/Investigative Services, with each reporting to the Chief of Police. This reorganization would provide the City with a dedicated Police Chief and create clearer lines of communication and responsibility at the administrative level of the agency.

Economic Development Summary

For a community in a prime location between two major interstate highways, with significant employment opportunities in near proximity, metro-wide housing pressure and available land places the City in a potential growth cycle for new housing and commercial development. Over the next decade, the City will continue to experience additional growth in population and the number of households. Citygate recommends closely monitoring such growth over the next decade as it relates to the resultant impacts to municipal services.

POLICE DIVISION FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following are Citygate's Police Division findings and recommendations as contained throughout this report.

Organizational Review

Findings

- Finding #1:** The City has the potential for continual growth over the next 10–20 years.
- Finding #2:** The City will have the challenge of maintaining road infrastructure and municipal services during this period of growth.
- Finding #3:** Citygate found the prior Department structure to be an industrywide accepted model for structure of a public safety department; however, it is no longer meeting the City's needs.

- Finding #4:** The Police Division was in a period of restructuring during Citygate’s study, which creates opportunities for permanent changes during the post-study period based on recommendations and City leadership directives.
- Finding #5:** The Police Division is a consistent contributor to the state and national crime reporting systems.
- Finding #6:** The City consistently has a low rate of crime relative to the selected benchmark cities, all Minnesota cities, and overall national rates.
- Finding #7:** Police officers began to opt out of being cross-trained as firefighters in 2019.
- Finding #8:** The combined Public Safety Department model is not functioning at a field response operational level due to the lack of police personnel participation. Currently, only the Police Captain and two other sworn staff are cross-trained in firefighting capability.
- Finding #9:** Recruitment for new sworn officer positions is a challenge to the Department.
- Finding #10:** The Public Safety Director is funded 85 percent by the Police Division budget and 15 percent by the Fire Division budget.
- Finding #11:** Actual workload for the Public Safety Director is a 60/40 overall split between divisions, with allocations changing depending on the needs of each division.
- Finding #12:** The Public Safety Director also serves as the City’s Emergency Management Director and conducted one emergency training exercise for City department heads in 2024. No City government personnel are currently certified for Emergency Management through the state of Minnesota.
- Finding #13:** The Deputy Director is responsible for managing patrol, fleet services, and finance. There is significant conferring on operations and strategy with Public Safety Director, sometimes creating a redundancy in responsibilities.
- Finding #14:** The Deputy Director and Captain represent two unequal ranks overseeing different operational portions of the agency; however, both report to the Public Safety Director.
- Finding #15:** The Captain has fiscal grant responsibilities and patrol information activities that merge into the area of command of the Deputy Director.
- Finding #16:** The Captain has oversight of background investigations for Police and Fire, as well as Police Records staff, the Investigative unit, and Traffic Safety initiatives.

The Captain also has oversight of the training function for Police and serves as the training planner and partial administrator for Fire.

- Finding #17:** Job duties assigned to the Captain position create a significant workload which spans both divisions under the current model.
- Finding #18:** The Department’s police operation has experienced higher-than-normal levels of attrition—especially as it relates to “mid-career” staff. It was reported to Citygate by staff that this was occurring due to three factors: 1) the combined public safety staffing model, 2) a perceived lack of consistent leadership within the Police Division, and 3) a confusion of culture within the Police Division caused by inconsistent and mixed messaging related to goals and direction.
- Finding #19:** The current police facility accommodates the Division’s current level of staffing and fleet.
- Finding #20:** Significant expansion of Police staff will impact the Department’s footprint within the current facility in the future.
- Finding #21:** There is no security fencing around the back ingress/egress area of the Police facility.

Recommendations

- Recommendation #1:** The City should cease utilization of the combined Public Safety Department operational model and reestablish separate Police and Fire departments.
- Recommendation #2:** The new Police Department should be led by a restored, dedicated Chief of Police position.
- Recommendation #3:** Cease using the Deputy Director of Police and the Captain positions within the Department.
- Recommendation #4:** Divide the Department into two divisions: one for patrol operations, and a second for investigations and administrative services. Create two lieutenant positions to lead each division.
- Recommendation #5:** To help stem the amount of staff turnover and attrition the Police Division has experienced in recent years, the Department should create retention-supportive structures through leadership, training, and

competitive compensation to become an employer of choice as well as a destination agency for prospective candidates regionally.

Recommendation #6: Any bond planning related to City facilities should include a plan for expansion of police facilities as the City grows in size over the next 20 years.

Recommendation #7: Create and implement a plan for security fencing to provide a buffer for the side and rear areas of the police facility.

Patrol Section Review

Findings

Finding #22: The current shift structure causes a gap in supervisory coverage of patrol operations from 1:00 am to 6:00 am daily.

Finding #23: Due to staffing shortages, some sergeants supervise officers who are not working during the same shift.

Finding #24: The series of lakes and parks within City boundaries are a geographical factor which increases response times to calls for service.

Finding #25: Useful data is missing from the Department's computer-aided dispatch (CAD) records.

Finding #26: The City's average utilization per police unit is within International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Center for Public Safety Management guidelines.

Finding #27: The average first-unit response for higher-priority calls for service was 4.6 minutes.

Finding #28: The average second-unit response for higher-priority calls for service was 5.7 minutes.

Finding #29: When using the average calculation, patrol response times were reasonable for the City.

Finding #30: The 90th percentile fractile first-unit response for higher-priority calls for service was 10.8 minutes.

- Finding #31:** The 90th percentile fractile second-unit response for higher-priority calls for service was 13.6 minutes.
- Finding #32:** The difference between average and 90th percentile fractile measurements for first-unit response to higher-priority calls for service was 6.2 minutes.
- Finding #33:** The difference between average and 90th percentile fractile measurements for second-unit response to higher-priority calls for service was 7.9 minutes.
- Finding #34:** The difference between the 90th percentile fractile and average response times to higher-priority calls for service is excessive; there are too many calls for service with extended response times. After analysis, Citygate believes these excessive variances are due, in part, to the geography of the service area inhibiting response, as well as errors in computer-aided dispatch data that were discovered during the process of data collection. Other, unknown factors may also have contributed.
- Finding #35:** The highest-priority calls for service are geographically split east and west of the lakes corridor which negatively impacts response times due to a lack direct roadways providing quick access to either side of the community.
- Finding #36:** Longer periods of committed time are caused by officer-initiated, DUI enforcement-related arrests.
- Finding #37:** Fully staffing the Patrol Section would likely provide adequate coverage at current call volumes.
- Finding #38:** Traffic enforcement in the City appears effective overall.
- Finding #39:** The City does not actively collect traffic safety-related statistics.
- Finding #40:** The Police Division appears to require reports which unnecessarily reduce officers' proactive patrol time.
- Finding #41:** Training and related records for the K9 unit both appear to be appropriate.
- Finding #42:** The K9 Unit has a low number of deployments, particularly within the City.
- Finding #43:** The current CSO program is a cost-effective way to accomplish tasks otherwise completed by sworn officers.
- Finding #44:** The current CSO program is utilized as a recruiting tool for full-time sworn officers.

- Finding #45:** The reserve program has provided 2,151.25 sworn hours of donated time over the last three years at minimal expense.
- Finding #46:** The reserve program has the added benefit of potentially generating full-time officers.
- Finding #47:** The North Command Mobile Field Force and Anoka County SWAT Team provide the Department with valuable resources that would otherwise be difficult to maintain for an agency of its size.
- Finding #48:** The current fleet replacement policy has resulted in vehicles with high mileage remaining in service.

Recommendations

- Recommendation #8:** Add two additional sergeant positions to provide 24-hour critical supervision from 1:00 am to 6:00 am.
- Recommendation #9:** As patrol staffing levels improve and allow, realign supervision to ensure officers to work the same shift as their assigned sergeant.
- Recommendation #10:** Monitor response times as the City continues to experience population growth to add a substation when necessary.
- Recommendation #11:** Take steps to correct missing data in the Department's computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system.
- Recommendation #12:** Continue to monitor the average utilization per police unit as a helpful metric to modify or increase staffing as necessary.
- Recommendation #13:** Monitor response times to higher-priority calls for service and investigate and track the reasons for longer response times related to such incidents.
- Recommendation #14:** Collect and analyze traffic enforcement and collision data to better identify opportunities to improve traffic safety.
- Recommendation #15:** Pursue a grant-funded position for an officer dedicated to DUI enforcement when staffing levels allow.
- Recommendation #16:** Review the current report-writing committee's findings and recommendations and implement changes to the report-writing policy

where possible to reduce the number of reports generated by the officers.

Recommendation #17: Evaluate the cost effectiveness of the current K9 unit.

Recommendation #18: Consider a police station dog as an alternative to the current K9 unit.

Recommendation #19: Continue the current CSO program and pursue opportunities to fill current vacancies.

Recommendation #20: Consider upgrading one of the current CSO positions to full-time to provide consistency and increase proficiency.

Recommendation #21: A pay equity study should be conducted for the CSO position.

Recommendation #22: A comprehensive list of duties should be developed to provide clarity regarding the daily work responsibilities of CSOs.

Recommendation #23: A CSO training program should be developed to prepare CSOs for work as licensed police officers for the Department—including report writing, firearms, use of force, investigations, patrol officer crime scene management, etc.

Recommendation #24: Continue to promote the reserve program and expand it as qualified candidates are identified.

Recommendation #25: Continue participation in the North Command Mobile Field Force and Anoka County SWAT Team, which provide the Department with valuable resources.

Recommendation #26: Consider developing a replacement policy which facilitates earlier identification of vehicles to be replaced to account for extended vehicle delivery and build-up times.

Investigations Review

Findings

Finding #49: Personnel issues caused the Department to end the practice of one of the Investigation unit's three Investigator positions being a permanent assignment.

- Finding #50:** Having a sworn command overseeing the Investigation unit is within industry standards for an agency of the Department's size.
- Finding #51:** The current Captain is responsible for investigations for Fire cases while maintaining all responsibilities as a member of the Department command team. This is not in alignment with industry standards.
- Finding #52:** The current Captain's duties are spread across both the Police and Fire disciplines, leading to a need for realignment of responsibilities within the newly recommended structures for distinct Police and Fire departments moving forward.
- Finding #53:** Year over year, the caseload assigned to investigations is increasing. The Department should strive to return to full, authorized staffing levels throughout the agency. Returning to an Investigation unit capacity of three Investigator positions augmented by one Investigative Assistant should be the Department's goal.
- Finding #54:** The Department does not have a case management system for assigning, monitoring, and tracking the work of the Investigation unit. Acquiring a modern case management software platform would allow for crime analysis and the tracking of crime trends and would ensure that desired workflows are being followed.
- Finding #55:** The assignment of one of the investigators to a task force has had both positive and negative impacts for the agency in the past.
- Finding #56:** The work of the Investigative Assistant is a valuable resource and helps support the Investigation unit. This position is paid a fraction of what a police detective makes, and their duties directly impact the number of necessary unit staff in a positive way.

Recommendations

- Recommendation #27:** The creation of two Police Lieutenant positions should be refined to include one of the positions being assigned to investigative and administrative services as their primary area of focus.
- Recommendation #28:** The Deputy Director and Captain positions should be reclassified as Lieutenants and their job duties should be balanced during this evaluation. Having two command positions within the organization

with different titles is not in alignment with best-practice professional standards.

Recommendation #29: Further refinement of the new Lieutenant duties and the Investigative Sergeant duties would be supported by the investment in a records management system (RMS) that includes an investigative case management module. This type of software will allow data mining and analysis by everyone within the agency, management of Investigator caseloads, and the monitoring of crime trends, as well as resource allocations within both Investigation services and Patrol operations to address crime trends within the City.

Recommendation #30: Command staff should work out the details of the future Investigation unit staffing model, establishing whether any of the three Investigator positions should be permanent. If a permanent Investigator position is decided against, command staff should evaluate the length of assignment and offset the timing of personnel entering and leaving the unit to ensure continuity of expertise.

Recommendation #31: The new Lieutenant of the Investigation unit should evaluate all current regional task forces and determine whether any would better support the overall crime needs of the community. Having officers assigned to a regional task force creates career opportunities and provides valuable development of expertise through training and enhanced experience. However, effective communication between a Task Force Officer position and the home agency is essential. If the capabilities, training, and investigative work are not shared and transparent to those working at the home agency, the value of these positions can be misunderstood. Having additional career development opportunities within the Department will be an effective step toward retaining staff.

Recommendation #32: The City should create a full-time Property Room Manager position and fill this role with a non-sworn technician. The new position should report to the Department's second-in-command level.

Recommendation #33: The duties of the Investigative Assistant should be codified and, if there is additional time or capacity within the position's schedule, the Department should consider additional crime analysis training for this position.

Recommendation #34: The new Investigation unit Lieutenant should evaluate what type of criminal analysis would most benefit the Department and work toward supplying this data to all members of the Department. The Lieutenant should also evaluate which databases are currently used by staff to analyze cases and crime trends. A gap analysis should be completed and any new software systems needed should be identified.