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ST. LOUIS PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT



Strategic Planning Consultation - Final Report

Phase I - Strategic Policing Strategy

Phase II - Implementation Decisions

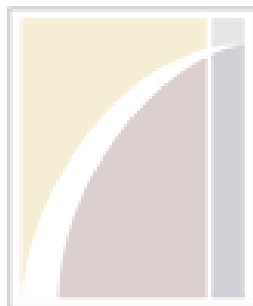
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Project Executive Summary

This assessment represents a multi-step strategic planning effort undertaken to help the St. Louis Park Police Department align its long-term direction with the expectations and priorities of the community it serves. Phase I articulated a clear strategic vision focused on professionalism, accountability, community engagement, and non-traditional approaches to public safety challenges. Phase II examined whether the department's current organizational capacity, staffing model, and support systems were positioned to execute that strategic vision effectively over time. Phase II was deliberately designed to not be a traditional staffing study based on the City's guidance during project development.

The findings reflect a police department that is professional, capable, and deeply committed to public service. Across patrol operations, investigations, specialty units, supervision, training, and professional support functions, personnel consistently demonstrate adaptability, sound judgment, and dedication to the community. These qualities have allowed the department to maintain high standards of service in an environment characterized by increasingly complex calls for service, evolving legal and accountability expectations, and heightened demands for thoroughness and transparency.

The strategic priorities articulated in Phase I are forward-looking and well aligned with contemporary expectations for policing. They emphasize service delivery that exceeds minimum industry standards, proactive and relationship-based approaches, long-term problem solving, and consistent professionalism. Collectively, these goals position the St. Louis Park Police Department to meet the challenges of modern policing in the years ahead.

At the same time, Phase II identified clear constraints affecting the department's ability to consistently deliver core operations and fully realize its strategic objectives. Patrol operations are being sustained through heavy reliance on overtime, extended shifts, and emergency scheduling practices in order to meet minimum coverage requirements. Staffing limitations also affect investigative follow-up, reduce the availability of specialty units for their intended purposes, and limit the amount of time available for training, supervision, and leadership development beyond required minimums. These conditions reflect structural capacity limitations rather than temporary fluctuations.

Importantly, these findings do not reflect shortcomings in leadership, planning, or organizational culture. Rather, they highlight a misalignment between the department's

Project Executive Summary (cont.)

strategic aspirations, the complexity of modern policing, and the staffing and support capacity currently available to execute that vision consistently. The department continues to meet its obligations through professionalism and dedication, but the current operating model places constraints on operational outcomes and has wellness impacts for the workforce.

The St. Louis Park Police Department is well positioned for the future in terms of values, professionalism, and strategic direction. Fully achieving the outcomes identified in the strategic vision will depend on the City's ability to make deliberate investments that align staffing, support systems, and operational capacity with community expectations. By ensuring that resources are matched to the level of service the community has identified as important, the City can enable the department to move beyond meeting minimum requirements and consistently deliver the high-quality, forward-looking public safety services envisioned in this plan.

The Axtell Group and Ethical Leaders in Action, would like to express its sincere appreciation to the City of St. Louis Park and the St. Louis Park Police Department for the opportunity to conduct this assessment. We are grateful for the trust placed in our team and for the openness, professionalism, and candor demonstrated by department leadership and personnel throughout this process. The department's willingness to critically examine its operations and capacity reflects a strong commitment to continuous improvement and to delivering the highest level of professional service possible. That initiative, combined with the dedication of the men and women of the department, positions the organization to build upon its strengths and continue advancing public safety and community trust in the years ahead.

A faded, light blue police badge is centered in the background. The badge is shield-shaped with a scalloped edge. At the top, the word "POLICE" is written in a white, sans-serif font. In the center is an eagle with its wings spread, perched on a shield with vertical stripes. Below the eagle, the words "ST. LOUIS PARK" are written in a white, sans-serif font.

Phase I

Strategic Visioning

Mission:

Develop an effective long-term policing strategy, grounded in the department's longstanding commitment to community oriented policing, and representative of the strategic priorities and department's operating philosophy. (SLP RFP)

Introduction

The St. Louis Park Police Department is a highly professional, forward-looking, community-oriented police agency deeply committed to serving the public as a department of the City of St. Louis Park. The Axtell Group is pleased to present this document reflecting a vision, largely created by and for the St. Louis Park Police Department. It includes a brief statement of purpose for the vision, followed by an overview of the vision for the department. That vision is then supported by a discussion of the department's strategic landscape, and long-range strategic opportunities arising from the current landscape, which comprise the "direction of change" necessary to realize the department's vision. The second phase of our engagement will build upon those strategic directions, articulating the long-range initiatives and the specific steps and resources necessary to pursue them.

The vision presented in this document is long-range, by design. We are considering a strategic horizon of between 10 and 20 years. In a rapidly changing world, our aim is to establish stable, well-founded strategic directions that guide continuous improvement in support of an enduring mission. These directions are also broad enough to support both strategic and tactical responses to changing circumstances, while pursuing a consistent vision over time. The department seeks to be agile in its response to the changing needs of the St. Louis Park community, while remaining true its purpose and principles.

The document is intended for review by internal department leadership; after discussions with department leaders, we can modify the document language based on input from leadership before sharing it more broadly. It is also a deliverable from this first phase of strategic work; the next phase will bring far more detailed recommendations and additional supporting analysis. Lastly, it will also serve as the foundation that drives the internal technical assessment and framework for the strategic vision.

Phase One of this report reflects a qualitative research design in which findings were derived from the lived experiences, perceptions, and narrative accounts provided by community members, elected officials, organizational stakeholders, and other key participants. The research team intentionally sought a broad and heterogeneous sample to ensure representation across multiple perspectives, professional roles, and demographic groups. This phase of the project was not intended to generate statistically generalizable conclusions and should not be interpreted as quantitative or population-level analysis. Rather, the themes presented herein emerge from systematic qualitative methods, including purposive sampling, thematic coding, and triangulation of participant inputs. Additional detail regarding the methodological approach, sampling strategy, and analytic framework is provided in the Process Notes located in the Appendix of this report.

Project Goals and Approach

This report articulates a vision drafted by the St. Louis Park Police Department in partnership with The Axtell Group. It is informed by input from employees, City leaders, and a broad representation of the communities the department serves. This vision is intended to guide the department's continuous improvement over the next ten years and beyond. The next phase of our engagement will develop an implementation plan, outlining the strategies, major steps, and resources required to realize this vision. The purpose of this vision and implementation plan will be to align the efforts of internal and external stakeholders and to plan for the resources necessary for the department to continue to achieve its mission as St. Louis Park continues to grow and the policing profession (along with society itself) continues to change.

Our approach to this project has been collaborative and input-intensive. We began with a standard set of law enforcement data, modified for the specifics of the St. Louis Park Police Department. Preliminary analysis of that data informed the creation of a community survey and interview guides for internal personnel. We conducted group interviews with front-line personnel and supervisors, and individual interviews with command level officers, operations, finance, leadership, and departmental culture. We also interviewed the heads of city departments and elected officials and engaged the broader community through surveys and open house style discussions. That community engagement work will continue into the early stages of Phase II.

This document marks the transition of Phase I to Phase II of this engagement. With a vision for the SLPPD's future articulated, the work of Phase II will be to establish the path and resources required to realize that vision over the next decade or more.

An appendix to this report includes a specific set of interviews conducted and data reviewed.

Strategic Vision Overview

Put simply, the SLPPD vision is to continue improving its performance and capacity in pursuit of its mission to serve and partner with the community, as a department of the City of St. Louis Park and in alliance with other agencies. The department will build on its current strengths, address shortcomings, and opportunities for improvement, and lead by nimbly addressing changes in the community and in the law enforcement profession over the next

ten years. While guiding its own growth and development, SLPPD will seek to optimize for three broad and widely accepted professional values:

- Excellent public service.
- Sound stewardship of public resources.
- Fairness and equity with respect to all stakeholders.

This value set, developed by Ethical Leaders in Action, Inc. as *Three Core Values for Public Safety Agencies*, should serve as a framework of evaluative criteria for evaluating projects, technologies, or other investments considered as part of the SLPPD Vision.

Of course, the SLPPD has long been guided by its own mission and organizational values. Today, the Mission Statement of the St. Louis Park Police Department is, “to provide a safe place to live, work, go to school, and visit, through quality service, community partnerships and professionalism. Our philosophy includes our strong commitment to community-oriented policing delivering effective and efficient services to everyone and providing a healthy positive work environment for employees through this mission and philosophy our police department supports the city’s overall goal of providing quality collaborative responsive services to community members.” [SLPPD 2024 Annual Report]

It is both likely and proper that the words of the department’s mission statement will change more than once over the next ten years. One of the ways that effective leaders keep their organizational missions and values relevant for members of an agency is to engage those members in updating statements of mission and values periodically. However, based on our engagement with the SLPPD and its stakeholders, we are confident that the following concepts will remain central to the agency’s mission and values, even as statement language may vary over time:

- Community Partnership, for true Community Oriented Policing
- Outcome Orientation, with respect to public safety, justice and equity, and community vitality
- Professionalism, in terms of:
 - high competence
 - commitment to service above self
 - continuous improvement
- Commitment to employee wellness, satisfaction, and engagement

These core concepts, therefore, form the center of the St. Louis Park Police Department’s identity and the basis for its long-term vision. As one senior SLPPD leader put it, “what’s

most important to me is that we continue to focus on community-oriented policing, as the orientation that informs how we do everything that we do.”

Thus, the SLPPD will pursue long-range vision centered on these concepts by purposefully improving and growing, and by responding to both predictable and unpredictable changes in the agency and in the world around it. SLPPD will build on extremely strong community support and a staff that is, at all levels, deeply committed to and highly capable of serving that community with professionalism and compassion. The department will also address current limitations in its capacity through selective addition of personnel and implementation of technologies, while strengthening practices and processes related to departmental leadership and communications. This will include improved connection and integration with the whole of the City of St. Louis Park.

The following sections of this report address these broad topics in much greater detail. First, an assessment of the strategic situation looks at internal strengths and areas for development, as well as environmental drivers and challenges facing the agency today and in the foreseeable future. Then, a discussion of recommended strategic directions arising from our analysis of that situation will offer a first look at how the SLPPD’s long-range vision will be realized.

Strategic Situation

The SLPPD is a highly effective, highly professional, service-oriented police agency that delivers a full range of law enforcement and public safety services in partnership with other agencies, as a department of the City of St. Louis Park. The department has earned exceptionally strong and broad-based community support through its commitment to community-oriented policing and the daily delivery of services with strength, clarity, and compassion. It has earned an excellent reputation in the law enforcement community for its many operational strengths, for its commitment to partnerships and collaboration, and for a record of good policing outcomes.

As with any agency, the SLPPD also has some limitations, or opportunities for improvement. These may include the potential to grow organizational capacity by realigning roles within the department, and by adding personnel in selected roles to meet increasingly complex service needs, and to relieve current strains on the organization. Other opportunities for growth will include improvements to facilities, equipment, and technologies, and continued development of better leadership and communication practices. While community relationships are very strong and collaboration with other aspects of the city is generally positive (especially with respect to the fire department), there are also opportunities for

SLPPD to better align its processes and to strengthen its relationships with other city departments.

The external environment includes some “drivers,” i.e., factors that tend to help the SLPPD to realize its vision. As noted above, through interviews, community members expressed a high level of support for the SLPPD and a generally high level of approval for its services. Elected officials likewise support the department’s commitment to community-oriented policing in particular and continue to express their commitment to support the department’s needs, including employee wellness. The department also has strong relationships with the fire department, EMS provider Hennepin Health Emergency Medical Services, and with neighboring agencies. Mutual aid agreements are working well, and agencies regularly support one another and work together on shared initiatives and details. This collaboration is likely to increase as light rail comes online, bringing more visitors and ultimately more residents and workers into St. Louis Park and neighboring cities. These factors constitute a strong set of external drivers, supporting SLPPD in pursuit of its mission.

There are also external challenges, factors that pose a risk or increase the difficulty of pursuing the department’s mission and emerging vision. As is often the case, some of these challenges are, in fact, also related to the above-noted strengths and drivers. Data shows that while call volumes are increasing relatively slowly, call complexity and expected police department responses are increasing more dramatically. This trend is likely to continue, driven by an aging population, increasing needs for mental and behavioral health services, and expansion of multi-unit housing across the spectrum, including workforce housing and housing with supportive services. At the same time, community expectations concerning how the police handle calls for service are also changing. Meeting these expectations may require more time on scene, more follow-up with persons involved, or both.

Further, demand for service is difficult to project with precision. St. Louis Park’s position as a first-ring suburb creates a unique set of public safety challenges due to its shared border with the City of Minneapolis. Minneapolis has experienced prolonged and significant staffing shortages within its police department for several years, resulting in reduced proactive policing capacity, slower response times, and diminished ability to address high-volume or emerging crime trends. This environment inevitably places additional pressure on adjacent communities like St. Louis Park, which often feel the downstream effects of limited police resources in the region’s largest city.

For St. Louis Park, these dynamics manifest in several ways: increased cross-jurisdictional crime movement, higher demand for interagency coordination, and the need to be consistently prepared for incidents that originate in or spill over from Minneapolis. Bordering a major urban center that continues to face staffing and operational strain also requires

St. Louis Park to maintain a higher level of situational awareness, data monitoring, and adaptability than many similarly sized suburban agencies. Additional contributing factors such as major transportation corridors, mobility between jurisdictions, and Minneapolis's ongoing struggle to stabilize its police workforce compound these challenges. As a result, St. Louis Park must remain vigilant, proactive, and strategically aligned to manage the complex public safety realities of its geographic location.

One current example is the volume of auto thefts, some of them involving violence to persons. Recent Hennepin County Sheriff's Department data from 2023 and 2024 shows St. Louis Park reports three times the number of auto thefts as the City of Minnetonka, two times as Edina and excluding the City of Minneapolis has the fourth highest number of auto thefts in Hennepin County. As noted above, the arrival of regional light rail services will lead to increased activities in St. Louis Park and surrounding communities. In all likelihood, this new activity will ultimately contribute to community vitality; it will also drive increased need for police services as other MN cities have experienced. Over time, these kinds of regional dynamics will continue to influence the need for police services in ways that are difficult or impossible to project. These increased demands have the potential to tax the capacity of the agency if SLPPD does not invest in technologies, processes, and organizational realignment to keep pace with these changing circumstances.

A predictable increase in workload also exists in the context of a community that is both satisfied by, and wants more from, its police department. Questionnaire and interview findings revealed a clear theme illustrated by the following statement by a community member: "I need the police to respond in a timely manner, and to do their best to get to know the people involved. I also want them to come to community events. I know that takes time, but we need that."

Political instability nationwide, and in particular the uncertainty of funding and services, may also place greater demands on SLPPD and other local agencies to prepare for and respond to larger emergencies. Climate change leading to more frequent and more intense weather events may likewise place demands on SLPPD for training and preparedness for increased natural disaster response. Changing political narratives also requires deliberate transparency and education efforts from the department.

Each of these factors is discussed in more detail below, organized in terms of a modified "SWOT" (for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) framework. We have modified this framework because we believe that the following categories better describe the nature of their respective factors:

Internal Strengths, including specific aspects of the department that position it to effectively pursue its mission over time.

Internal Limitations, which reflect internal areas for development that are relevant at a strategic level.

External Drivers, or factors outside of the agency (including other facets of the city) that will enable or tend to facilitate the agency's pursuit of its mission.

External Challenges, which should be addressed so that the agency is able to respond to them appropriately in order to pursue its mission.

Taken together, these factors will drive the agency to pursue its strategic vision by guiding its growth over time.

Internal Strengths

The department's most noteworthy strengths relate to its workforce; its strategic commitments and track record with respect to community-oriented policing and relationship development; specific capabilities such as its dedicated PSAP, Behavioral Health Unit, and tactical units and capabilities; and its alliances with outside agencies.

Excellent Workforce with Special Capabilities

The St. Louis Park Police Department has a dedicated workforce that includes both experienced leaders promoted from within, and a large number of new sworn officers. Thus, the department has been able to instill its values into its people over time, especially the commitment to community-oriented policing. In interviews with sworn personnel at all levels, their commitment to traditional law enforcement outcomes – e.g. crime prevention, upholding order, and solving crimes to hold offenders accountable and deter them from future criminal activity – were tightly linked to caring for the vulnerable and to upholding the rights and dignity of everyone in their communities. To uphold its mission in contributing to community vitality, the department maintains excellent skills and capabilities related to crime prevention and law enforcement. To do that work with compassion and with a commitment to equity and justice, the department is also deeply invested in community relationships and in being accessible to all members of the communities it serves.

The department has sworn personnel in full-time specialized positions including investigations, community development, school resources, behavioral health, and others. Much of the specialized work of the department, however, is accomplished by patrol officers, supervisors, and other sworn personnel serving in secondary assignments in addition to their "day jobs." These include tactical units and functions as well as community outreach and support functions. Taken as a whole, the department provides a full range of policing services.

Department members also cite internal and city resources for mental health and overall wellness as key benefits that enable them to perform at their best and to protect and care for themselves over the course of their careers. The Peer Support Network has broad participation and seems to have earned a high degree of trust among department employees. The department also engages in best practices such as critical incident stress debriefings (CISDs), in which all those involved in such incidents (including dispatchers) are invited to participate.

Dedicated Dispatch Center

One function of particular strategic importance to the police department is its dedicated Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). This “911 call center” answers all calls arising from within St. Louis Park, dispatches both police and fire, and refers calls for emergency medical services to a dedicated secondary dispatch center run by Hennepin County Health. The investment in a dedicated center in St. Louis Park directly supports the mission of the SLPPD by providing compassionate service from initial telephone contact, by engaging specialized resources such as the SLPPD Behavioral Health Unit, and by coordinating responses to highly complex calls. Shared dispatch centers serving multiple agencies are not equipped to provide this level of customized service to a single community. Larger-scale centers also cannot enable dispatchers to provide the level of personalized service to callers that SLPPD’s PSAP delivers.

There are also ways that the PSAP’s overall value could be enhanced. St. Louis Park could consider taking on dispatching for other communities, as it once did for Golden Valley. Such service contracts could offset some of the costs of delivering this high level of service without putting the quality of its work for St. Louis Park at risk.

Behavioral Health Unit and Related Services

The Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) represents an enormous area of success for the SLPPD in serving the community and serves as a catalyst for partnerships and community connections. This team of sworn and non-sworn personnel, including behavioral health experts, take the lead in responding to persons in crisis and other needs in the community for social services, medical, and other interventions. These efforts often lead to the best possible outcomes for all parties involved, including referrals to additional services and follow-up to assure that these interventions effectively “take hold.” Insofar as these services fall outside of what was once considered the domain of a police department, they serve as an example of how policing is changing. More importantly, the interventions of the BHU constitute a powerful and lasting contribution to community safety and security as well as to the quality of life for community members.

The BHU also works closely with all other functions of the department – patrol, investigations, dispatch, records, and at times tactical units – to coordinate responses and service delivery for some of the most complex situations and needs in the community. This includes the School Resource Officer (SRO) program, which school district leaders praise for the contributions that SROs make to school culture, and for the officers' thoughtful, constructive approaches to helping students and staff address a range of issues and needs. (SROs also do so with effectively zero instances of use of force.) Community members also recognized the excellence of SLPPD's BHU and related services and consistently expressed a desire for more of the same kinds of services in the future.

Commitment to Community-Oriented Policing, Compassion and Respect

As noted above, departmental leaders at all levels cite these philosophical and operational commitments as central to the department's identity. In this way, the SLPPD is closely aligned with the city's commitments to social justice, equity, and inclusivity. While much has been said about SLPPD's commitment to and implementation of community-oriented policing and the exercise of compassion along with courage in service delivery, it would be an all-too-commonly-made mistake to think of these aspects of SLPPD as separate from enforcement actions, including those where some level of force is necessary. Indeed, SLPPD sees the projection of power to protect people, interrupt and deter crime, and apprehend suspects safely as integrated with its commitments to compassion and professionalism. SWAT officers, negotiators, patrol officers, BHU officers, and dispatchers train together on scenarios where the modulated use of force, combined with purposeful communications, are used to bring about the safest outcomes – and to preserve human dignity to the greatest extent possible.

Partnerships and Alliances

The department delivers excellent service and contains costs in part by maintaining very strong relationships with neighboring departments. Some of these are formalized in mutual aid agreements with specific communities; the SLPPD is also committed to participation in the Southwest Consortium with the Cities of Hopkins, Minnetonka, Edina, and Eden Prairie. Consortium member agencies engage in integrated SWAT training and coordinated responses, and SLPPD participated with those cities on the Sheriff's Office-led Hennepin County Public Order team. By training and responding routinely together, these agencies improve responses and coordination in potentially high-risk situations so that these incidents are handled safely and with the highest regard for the rights and dignity of everyone involved. They are also able to share resources to reduce costs and mitigate the burden on members of these teams. The consortium also provides ongoing cost-effective, shared

training for officers and sergeants, which in turn increases every agency's ability to respond optimally with one another in mutual aid situations.

Internal Limitations

SLPPD Leadership is aware of both its strengths and its limitations; this visioning exercise can drive long-range improvements only if it includes a clear-eyed assessment of the department today. The relevant limitations of the SLPPD fall into the inter-related categories of capacity; technology, equipment and infrastructure; and leadership processes and practices. None of these represent critical failure points; all represent meaningful opportunities for improvement in pursuit of mission over time. Each of these areas is discussed below.

Capacity to Meet Service Demands

The current workforce, with today's staffing levels and available technologies, is struggling to maintain high standards, let alone to prepare for and respond to increasing demands. While the department has done a great deal to act in its commitment to employee wellness, a majority of employees surveyed noted that their work demands make it hard to use allocated time off, and that their duties sometimes feel excessively demanding.

One driver of these demands on employees is a heavy reliance on secondary assignments to staff specialty units, details, and functions, such as SWAT, the negotiating team, and the community outreach teams. More than a third of all patrol officers and all sergeants also serve in significant secondary duties. This has real benefits in terms of professional development, mission-driven staff engagement, and cost containment. The performance of these units remains high due to ongoing training and dedicated, highly skilled personnel. At the same time, department members report that these duties are taking a toll on their wellness, and many question whether they can continue at the current pace over the long term.

Day-to-day service delivery is demanding, as well. The department maintains a very high standard for how personnel interact with the public. While it generally meets the mark, and has broad community support as a result, our engagement with the public indicates that this remains a work in progress. In fact, excellence in police response always requires continuous effort and improvement. The department's commitment to compassionate, highly professional, community-oriented policing is strong and clear. Our interviews revealed that high expectations are generally understood and embraced all levels of the agency. At the same time, community input indicates that there is still work to be done. While overall satisfaction with police responses and interactions is high, most respondents who had contact with police noted some variability in that response. As one resident put it, "Most officers are wonderful, but sometimes you get one who's short or dismissive. It makes a big

difference in how people feel.” Another resident acknowledged the overall success, and the continuing challenge: “even when enforcing the law, patience and empathy go a long way.”

Call volume may be a factor in meeting these expectations. When calls are “pending” or awaiting service, officers will correctly try to resolve the issues they are facing reasonably expediently, in order to move on to those pending calls. It is a matter for officers’ professional judgement whether they remain engaged or conclude the engagement with the public. Either can be done respectfully and tactfully, but when time is limited, members of the public may be left wanting more from officers.

These situations call for emotional intelligence and cultural competence, which in turn require a high degree of officer wellness. The link between employee wellness and the quality-of-service delivery is both intuitive and explicitly noted by city leaders and community members. “We want officers who are rested and supported – it’s better for them and for us,” noted one listening session participant. Today, we see department members striving to “keep up” with demands for service and to deliver high levels of compassion and professionalism, sometimes at the expense of time for their personal renewal and family connections.

As the largest department in the city, the SLPPD also takes seriously its duty of stewardship of public resources. Hiring and assignment of personnel must be done judiciously. We believe that there are opportunities to add non-sworn personnel in key positions, to close some service gaps and to function as “force multipliers” for sworn personnel. For example, the department’s property room, responsible for preserving evidence for the integrity of prosecutions (and the protection of the rights and interests of both victims and suspects), is currently managed by an officer and a records employee, both of whom are assigned part-time, and both of whom could pursue other duties if a full time property room technician took over those duties.

The Dispatch Center employs both full- and part-time dispatchers (all of whom come to the agency with prior experience, and many of whom are long-tenured in the profession and the agency). Staffing levels currently include just a single dispatcher on duty for 2-3 hours each day. This time window poses a recurring, avoidable risk related to service delivery and responder safety, especially since dispatch is also responsible for fire response, and the St. Louis Park Fire Department and its neighbors follow incident management best practices that rely heavily on the dedicated attention of a dispatcher during fire suppression operations. Having at least two dispatchers on duty should be a minimum staffing level. Finally, we will discuss an opportunity for the SLPPD to improve integration with the processes of other city departments. This, too, is a good role for non-sworn personnel who can develop specific expertise and knowledge in this area, allowing sworn command-staff

members to prioritize decision-making and leadership rather than these administrative duties. These are just initial examples of how strategic addition of non-sworn personnel can increase organizational capacity while limiting costs.

Technologies, Equipment, and Infrastructure

As a highly professional agency, SLPPD strives to be data-driven in its allocation of resources and its approach to public safety problem-solving. Today, these efforts are limited by the current base of technology. For example, while residents can report crimes, incidents, or issues online, these reports simply funnel into the workload of the patrol officers on duty, rather than being managed using a combination of technology and dedicated personnel and processes. This often leads to the inefficient use of officers' time, engaging in "phone tag" or "email tag" with reporting persons, consuming the time of on-duty sworn personnel while providing a sub-optimal customer experience. Patrol and investigative personnel praised the excellent work of the department's crime analyst, but too much of that analysis must be done by hand, reaching across multiple systems that are not integrated. The same is true for an increasing number of public requests for data and information, which must be fulfilled manually. As new statutes or regulations are passed, the department often must develop manual processes for responding to these new demands. That same crime analyst is often redirected away from the investigative mission to support these and other departmental needs. Technology can save staff time that can then be reallocated to higher-value activities.

We also heard that the current facilities hamper operations, due to a lack of space for storage, training, and even adequate locker rooms. These are known issues that are being addressed longer-term with designs for both a new facility and a major remodeling and expansion of the current facilities. We also heard from officers, including those involved in recruiting, that the limitations of the current facilities can make SLPPD less attractive to some recruits. In a very tight market for eligible officers, and in light of SLPPD's appropriately high standards for character and interpersonal skills among new hires, this may be a strategically significant consideration.

Finally, we heard that shortcomings in the current fleet are adversely affecting operational efficiency and, at times, officer safety. Investigations and community outreach share vehicles with public works, in ways which sometimes slow or complicate responses. The city also does not have its own armored rescue vehicle and relies on mutual aid for this equipment. Public safety and officer safety can be enhanced by the acquisition of an armored rescue vehicle that is available when needed. Such vehicles provide mobile cover for responders, victims, and bystanders. They can also be used to safely extricate shooting victims, or to bring police resources closer to a threat, reducing the risk to officers and

allowing the team to slow dangerous and volatile incidents down, thus improving outcomes for all persons involved.

Leadership and Communication: Processes and Practices

To be clear, the leadership, communication, and culture of the SLPPD are strong in many respects, some of which are inseparable from the strengths noted above: the dedicated and talented personnel committed to an excellent mission and strong values. In addition, we found that operational communication is quite strong: multiple people across the agency remarked that they always know what is going on in the agency, their specific duties and responsibilities, and other operational activities underway while they are working. Further, many front-line officers noted that in recent years, senior leaders have become very open to new ideas and willing to consider, and often pilot or implement, improvements recommended “from the street.” In fact, in Phase II we will recommend building on that specific leadership practice by implementing processes to help leadership evaluate recommendations and options. Finally, many people spoke of feeling highly supported by the agency and its leaders, both personally and professionally. There are many strengths to build on.

With that context established, there are also significant areas for development in departmental leadership and culture. One high priority is preparing people to succeed in their roles, across the agency. This includes both primary and secondary special assignments, and promotions at all levels. Formal and informal leaders said that their learning has been “on the job,” and that there is a general lack of up-to-date instructions and references once in the role. Practices such as job shadowing, dedicated training periods and processes (some with fairly structured curricula analogous to field training for patrol), overlap in assignments during a learning period, and informal mentorship processes should all be considered, and the best options implemented.

Training and preparation for roles should also be supported by more clearly established standards for many roles, with supporting documentation. While, by all accounts, service quality remains very high, the learning curve for new roles is excessively stressful, and a good deal of time and energy is spent determining how to address specific situations and circumstances, a challenge that could be addressed through the establishment of consistent standards in some instances, and the documentation of tacitly understood standards in others. This ongoing effort can also be facilitated through the implementation of technologies discussed below.

Based on our internal interviews and discussions, arguably the highest-impact area for development in leadership practices may currently be at the front-end of sworn personnel’s

careers: the recruiting, selection, and especially field training of officers. We heard from multiple people, including those serving as field trainers as well as many patrol officers, that while everyone is proceeding with the best of intentions, there are inconsistencies in the content and processes of field training that may hamper the effectiveness of the field training itself, and which have undermined trust in the process among at least some concerned patrol officers and sergeants. All aspects of this program should be reviewed and necessary changes made so that all trainers are prepared and confident in their roles, and each trainee is taught, mentored, supported, and objectively evaluated throughout the process. The field training process should prepare officers to perform to a high but realistic standard, including providing additional support as necessary without compromising the standards themselves. We believe that the shared intent of the SLPPD administration, the field trainers, and their leaders is clear: every trainee who is dedicated and capable of success receives the support necessary to help them succeed, and every officer coming out of field training should be ready to perform at the level of a new member of the patrol team. Our research indicates that there is room for development in order to assure that performance is consistent with that intent.

We have been advised that each of these leadership development priorities – preparation for roles; enhanced standards and documentation; and improvements to recruiting, selection, and field training – are already known issues that have been addressed to some degree. The department, and leadership in particular, has not had the capacity to address them as fully as they might to achieve maximum benefits.

Finally, many officers want a better sense of connection with the senior leaders of the department. While, as noted above, operational communication and support for wellness are quite strong, some kinds of communication that tend to support a culture of engagement can be improved. This includes providing more explanation and context for management decisions and action which will be especially important as standards are clarified or established, documented, and implemented. The context for these changes, some of which may result in changing expectations for some roles, will be critical for effective adoption and to maintain morale. Two elements of morale are affected here: an internalized sense of purpose, and a confidence that one can succeed (including understanding what constitutes success) in one's assigned roles. While we do not intend to suggest that there is a crisis here, there is room to improve morale through communication of purpose and context today, and making recommended changes in the organization over time will only increase the need for these same kinds of communication.

We also heard that department members simply want to see more of their senior leaders. Nobody doubts that everyone is working hard, and working for the mission and to

strengthen the agency. Many said they wanted more contact, especially informal contact, with senior leaders. Again, we believe that the capacity of these leaders – the hours in the days and the tasks that require those hours – is the limiting factor driving these communications challenges.

External Drivers

The St. Louis Park Police Department can also leverage some external factors to help it achieve its mission. These include the community support and external partnerships that also factor into its internal strengths as discussed above, as well as the ongoing development of law enforcement technologies and methods from which the department may benefit. Its relationships with other agencies also count among the external drivers that will help the department achieve its mission.

Public Support is Strong – and Public Expectations are High

Our survey results reflected overwhelmingly positive public opinions with respect to the outcomes and actions of the St. Louis Park Police Department. Survey results included large majorities endorsing the following statements:

- I feel safe in St. Louis Park.
- I trust SLPPD to act in the best interests of the community.
- SLPPD treats all residents fairly.
- I have had a positive interaction with an officer in the past year.

Working session input affirmed these findings. Trust and confidence were high across ages, income levels, and neighborhoods. Even those offering critiques framed them within a context of overall support and appreciation.

As we noted above, community members also have high expectations of their officers. They appreciate what they are doing and want even more. As one community member said in a working session, “We see officers at events and they’re approachable and kind. It would be great to have those same faces in our neighborhoods more often, not just at city events.” The majority of respondents identified variability in officer demeanor and communication, noting officers’ tone in communicating in stressful communications. Some also noted differences between shifts or teams.

Members of the public linked this to a need for continued training and skill development around communications, de-escalation, and cultural competency. They also made an explicit connection between officer wellness and performance, raising concerns about officer workload, shift fatigue, and stress, emphasizing that officer well-being directly affects

empathy and performance. With this awareness evident among community members, the department can be transparent and explicit about its ongoing efforts to continually improve officer competencies while managing workload.

In public forums, the strongest calls came for continued development of skills, partnerships, and other resources for helping those in crisis or in need of services beyond the scope of traditional law enforcement. The work of the Behavioral Health Unit consistently drew significant praise (which was intended to include the efforts of all officers working in concert with the BHU). Members of the public expressed a desire for more cooperation between partners and police responders, and more tools and resources to help people “after the immediate call for service was answered.”

Comments from members of the public should not be interpreted as implementation recommendations, per se. While the perspectives of the public provide excellent insight into real-world officer performance, departmental leadership is responsible for determining the best ways to respond to the evidence that such input represents. This combination of public support and high expectations for services reflects a strong environment for continued investment in the police department, and fertile ground for expanding relationships and community connections.

The State of the Art of Policing is Advancing

It has been just over 10 years since the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing released its landmark report, built around six “pillars” of professional, community-oriented policing:

1. Building Trust and Legitimacy
2. Policy and Oversight
3. Technology and Social Media
4. Community Policing and Crime Reduction
5. Training and Education
6. Officer Wellness and Safety

Even at that time, the St. Louis Park Police Department was “ahead of the curve,” with an orientation toward and track record of community-oriented policing that long pre-dated that report. In the decade that has followed, with both watershed events and slower trends, the profession has continued to advance in how it achieves the goals outlined by each of the priorities described in the report. SLPPD leaders have continued to pursue education and participate in local, regional, and national forums aimed at advancing the state of the art and applying best practices in St. Louis Park. This includes training and events presented at the state level by the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, and Minnesota Chiefs of

Police Association, and nationally through the FBI Law Enforcement Academy, Northwestern School of Staff and Command, the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), and others. These connections collectively represent a strategic asset to the department.

SLPPD Has Strong Partnerships Aligned with its Vision

As noted above, the SLPPD participates in the Southwest Consortium with four other agencies, and in that context continues to extend the capabilities of the agency. These relationships do not merely promote excellent public services and sound stewardship of resources. They also represent resources for SLPPD to continue to advance in pursuit of its mission in the future. The work of the consortium and that done through other mutual aid arrangements are explicitly consistent with that vision and its underlying values. For example:

- The consortium has developed and practices force-modulated approaches for apprehending suspects in potentially risky settings, using a Warrant Service Team staffed by patrol officers rather than a full SWAT response except when circumstances call for a higher level of risk mitigation.
- SWAT responses likewise reduce risk to all involved, favoring excellent reconnaissance, negotiations, and patience over traditional “dynamic entry,” (for example, breaching a door and moving rapidly into a building) except when absolutely necessary to address specific threats.
- The shared use of license plate readers in public places across jurisdictions allows for a regional response to specific criminal investigations as well as proactive strategies to address crime trends such as auto theft.
- The SLPPD participates in the Hennepin County Public Order Team, which trains to respond to civil unrest in ways that maintain order while protecting civil rights.
- SLPPD will participate in a new Hennepin County Auto Theft Task Force in 2026.

These strategic partnerships will help the department to pursue its vision.

External Challenges

The Department faces some external challenges, as well. These include drivers of demand for services such as light rail expansion, and the continued increase in complexity of calls for service, including investigative services. The department can also work with city departments to strengthen intramural cooperation and mutual support. Finally, regional and national politics and government introduce uncertainties that may influence funding as well as public support for law enforcement.

Unpredictable Demand for Services

The SLPPD exists to promote community safety and vitality through action. Demand for services in and of itself does not represent a challenge to SLPPD achieving its mission; that demand is the mission (or at least a critical aspect of it). The external challenge arises when the volume of demand for services and/or the nature of services needed are difficult or impossible to predict reliably. The expansion of regional light rail service (the Metro Transit Green Line) through St. Louis Park will drive changes to the community. Developers have recognized this and responded by building and planning multi-unit housing and retail close to train stations. This new stimulus of residential growth and retail activity is an exciting opportunity for St. Louis Park. From a policing perspective, SLPPD can be confident that this additional activity will result in additional demand for services in three core areas: 911 response, investigative services, and non-emergency responses to quality-of-life issues and crime prevention. But it is difficult to project the volume, specific locations, and nature of the services that will be required. Given the existing demands on the agency, and the long timeline to recruit, equip, and prepare personnel (as well as competing demands for resources city-wide), this hard-to-project additional demand poses a real challenge.

As noted above, the SLPPD has strong relationships with other agencies. These will no doubt be helpful in developing consistent, regional responses to policing challenges surrounding the light rail system. Indeed, the Metro Transit Police Department will have primary responsibility for policing on and immediately adjacent to the system, as they do for the Metro Transit bus system currently serving St. Louis Park. However, that agency is also working hard to recruit, train, and deploy officers to meet demands based on their projections. This change in demand is a challenge that will be shared with other agencies, but it is certainly a challenge facing the SLPPD.

The community's expectations that the department continue to expand its policing services that are adjacent to traditional law enforcement services poses a similar challenge. Doing the work itself is central to the mission of the agency. Knowing what resources will be available beyond the agency – e.g., providers of behavioral health services for both acute and chronic needs, the quality and reliability of supportive services in housing agencies, the availability of County social services, etc. – make it challenging to project demand and to plan SLPPD's delivery of services consistent with its vision.

Opportunity to Strengthen Relationships and Improve Process Alignment with Other City Departments

Effective cooperation between city departments is essential for the success of the police department, as it is for all city departments. While our interviews made clear that all parties want effective collaboration, these discussions also revealed some differences in process,

approach, and priorities that should be addressed over time. These differences can be successfully addressed through discussions with city leaders, including the city manager, aimed at addressing the operational needs of all departments involved.

Police department leaders understand the importance of cooperation with other city departments; the police department can further develop its capabilities for executing processes established by other departments. SLPPD also seeks similar cooperation from other departments in support of its mission and operations, which are, in some respects, unique within the city. Optimally, department leaders will work together to establish processes that reflect the needs and priorities of all stakeholders. That collaboration should continue over time, to solve problems as they arise, and to change processes by mutual agreement when relevant circumstances change.

Principles and parameters that guide the pursuit of grant funds are an area of specific concern. Police leaders understand the need to consider the ongoing, total cost of grant-supported products or programs, but seek the latitude to pursue grants with the understanding that future funding may not be available to continue programs indefinitely. Time-bounded programs can still solve problems and improve services.

In discussing the current situation, the parking lot that separates the police department building from city hall was cited as both a literal and metaphorical barrier between leaders; crossing that parking lot more frequently by leaders from both sides represents a suitable metaphor for establishing stronger mutual understanding and more effective and consistent cooperation over time. Strong cooperation will be necessary for the department to achieve its vision, which is inherently linked to the mission and value of the city, as well.

There are also strengths upon which to build. All parties interviewed were clear that they ascribed no ill intent or intentional disregard to others involved in these challenges. Those interviewed believe in the goodwill of all parties involved. In the field, cooperation remains strong, for example with public works and parks and recreation, where police officers work with team members for direct service delivery. The police department will also continue to seek additional assistance from the city's Racial Equity and Inclusion Team to elevate its connections with under-represented communities, and to support the enhanced cultural competence of SLPPD personnel.

Regional and National Politics

The SLPPD and the city do not exist in a vacuum. Political and cultural factors well beyond the borders of the city have impact on the department, in ways that are predictable and in ways that are not. Predictable risk factors include:

- Uncertain availability of grant funding for equipment, personnel, training, and more.
- Uncertainty about continuity of grant-funded public safety programs such as Toward Zero Death (TZD).
- Uncertainty about government-conducted and sponsored research to advance the state of the art in policing.
- The potential for future events that challenge the public trust in law enforcement generally.
- Changes in law that could either ease or hamper SLPPD's efforts to pursue community-oriented policing with compassion and professionalism.

Some of these factors are “standard” at any time. However, given the changes in society and in the way that federal policy is being made, these uncertainties seem more pronounced and potentially consequential than in any time in modern memory.

With respect to the availability of grant funding, the uncertain future of some programs highlights the urgency for the SLPPD and the city to achieve clarity with respect to the parameters that guide grant applications.

Strategic Directions

Looking forward, the SLPPD will realize its vision through a series of thoughtful investments and improvements. These will fall into the following general and inter-related categories:

1. Community Relationships
2. Structural Realignment and Expanded Capacity
3. Improved Technology, Equipment, and Infrastructure
4. Leadership Processes and Communication

A vision for the department's future achievements in each of these areas is presented below.

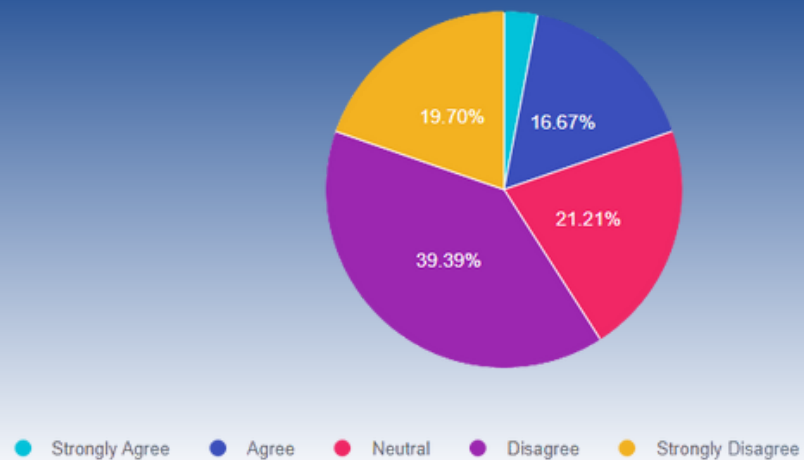
Community Relationships

Building community relationships is not a set of activities separate from other law enforcement duties. It represents an orientation, a commitment, and a set of outcomes that will continue to be achieved through all of the department's efforts. Senior patrol officers remember a time when officers spent more time on foot and more time simply connecting with the people they serve. As the department creates operational and administrative efficiencies, some of the time saved could be allocated to these kinds of activities, satisfying the desire of community members to have positive interactions with officers “in our neighborhoods, not just at events.” This time will also make officers better aware of the

dynamics of those neighborhoods, and forge relationships that can also help solve crimes or facilitate the delivery of other police and police-adjacent services. This is arguably the oldest form of professional policing, where officers moved naturally in the communities they serve, with the consent and support of community members, before anyone thought of the term, “community-oriented policing.”

**Employee Survey
Question 21:**

**The SLPPD has
adequate staffing to
effectively balance
community policing
and engagement
with responding to
current service
demands**



The department will continue to build purposeful relationships as well. This includes ongoing, consistent relationships such as with the school district and other schools in St. Louis Park. It also includes relationships that help prevent or solve problems, such as stronger connections with elder housing in advance of calls for service, which can prevent elder abuse or other crimes arising in those environments, and also serve to reduce avoidable calls for service by educating staff members about when and how to call police, fire, and EMS and how to address problems without those calls where appropriate. Dispatch and the fire department are natural partners in these kinds of initiatives, as well. Other solution-oriented relationships can be with the owners and managers multi-unit residential occupancies and retail stores, where crime prevention and problem resolution directly benefit everyone involved.

Some of this relationship development will be done strategically, based on data analysis and other sources of insight into public safety problems and issues. Others will occur organically, as officers, supervisors, and command-level leaders are present at community events and

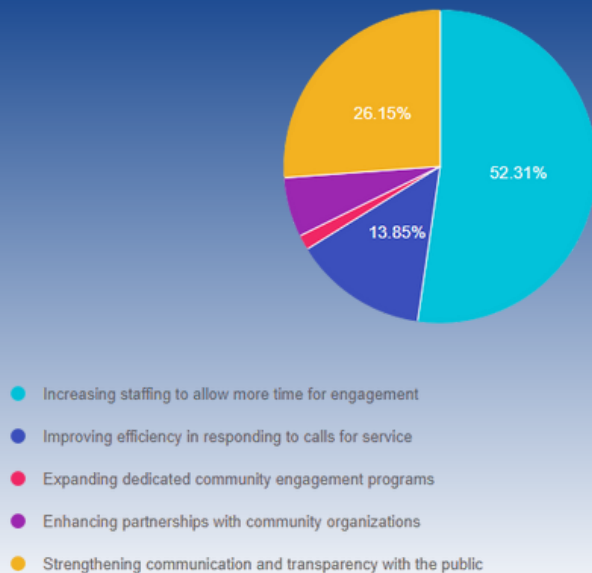
out in the public, and opportunities for stronger community relationships emerge. Data from records and dispatch can also provide insight into these opportunities, much as they provide “com-stat” information to target geographic hot spots with enhanced enforcement efforts. Overall, this strategic direction represents an incremental enhancement to the work that the department is already doing, powered by improved data tools and supported by additional capacity created through improvements.

Structural Realignment and Expanded Capacity

Financial resources are inherently limited. Phase II will include a critical look at all assignments and will likely include recommendations for the realignment of several existing departmental resources. This will include looking critically at specialty and secondary assignments, evaluating whether some of the rotating positions should be made permanent (or, as a hybrid arrangement, whether incumbents can re-bid for rotating positions) and whether the current secondary duties should be staffed full-time. Ultimately, departmental leaders will make these decisions. In all instances, these decisions will be made by balancing the overall impact on service delivery with the total cost, impact on employee wellness, and implications for equity with respect to both community members and employees.

Employee Survey Question 24 :

**Which area should the
SLPPD prioritize to
better balance
community policing
with service
demands?**



The department can only add personnel judiciously over time, in order to meet demonstrated needs and/or to achieve clear benefits aligned with community needs and priorities. This study has identified additional needs for officers to engage in more complex calls and to bring a broader set of tools to solve problems contributing to community safety and vitality. We have also observed that officers today are straining to meet current demands, sometimes at the expense of their own wellness. “Doing more with less” is not an option. Adding the right elements to the organizational structure to leverage and extend the capacity of the workforce as a whole is the best option.

Technology, Equipment, and Infrastructure

Over the next decade, the SLPPD will implement technologies and equipment that directly improve service delivery, enhance public and officer safety, and save labor without reducing the quality of work. Early on, the department will develop processes for considering new ideas and evaluating and prioritizing them based on evaluation criteria and appropriate input from stakeholders.

Examples of technologies (existing and emerging) that would directly improve service delivery include improved call handling support for dispatch, reliable automated language translation (consistent with the City’s initiative to improve language access), and better management of online reports. (This list, and those that follow, are intended to be illustrative but not comprehensive.)

Examples of equipment and technology that enhance public and officer safety include a dedicated armored rescue vehicle, drone technologies, less lethal weapons platforms, and additional equipment for officer safety. Information technology that enables and extends the reach of peer support also falls into this category.

Some of the technologies already listed will also save labor. Perhaps the greatest opportunity to do so would be improved computer-aided dispatch (CAD) and integration with that system and others to provide more automated access to information in support of crime analysis and prevention. Other labor-saving technologies might improve scheduling and other management-intensive tasks. The department is already piloting automated police reporting tools for first-draft work.

Finally, the city is developing a plan to enhance the police facility, whether newly built or extensively remodeled. Enhancements should include adequate space for training, officer readiness, storage, meetings, and unit-based work. It will also include adequate facilities for the fleet, so that personnel have ready access to the vehicles they need.

Leadership and Communications Processes

Over time, the function and culture of the department will benefit from internal investments in leadership and communications practices. Officers will have a better understanding of the purpose and context behind departmental directives and will have a stronger sense of connection to their command staff than at least some do today. Existing modes of communication such as labor-management committees and cross-functional workgroups will be maintained and strengthened over time.

Leadership processes will also be enhanced. The department will continue to establish, document, and maintain role- and unit-specific expectations. Better processes will be developed and implemented for preparing people for new roles, including primary and secondary assignments, special duties, and promotions.

Finally, recruiting, selection, and field training processes will be evaluated and improved where possible. This will include the above-noted processes for reviewing and improving the criteria against which trainees are evaluated, and an evaluation of the selection, preparation, supervision, and even compensation of field training officers. This effort offers a high degree of potential benefit, given the critical need to continue recruiting and retaining excellent officers.

The SLPPD already has a very strong foundation for doing all of the work envisioned over the next 10-20 years. These categories of growth will continue to evolve as the department makes progress on the challenges identified today, and as new challenges inevitably emerge.

Next Steps: Phase II Activities

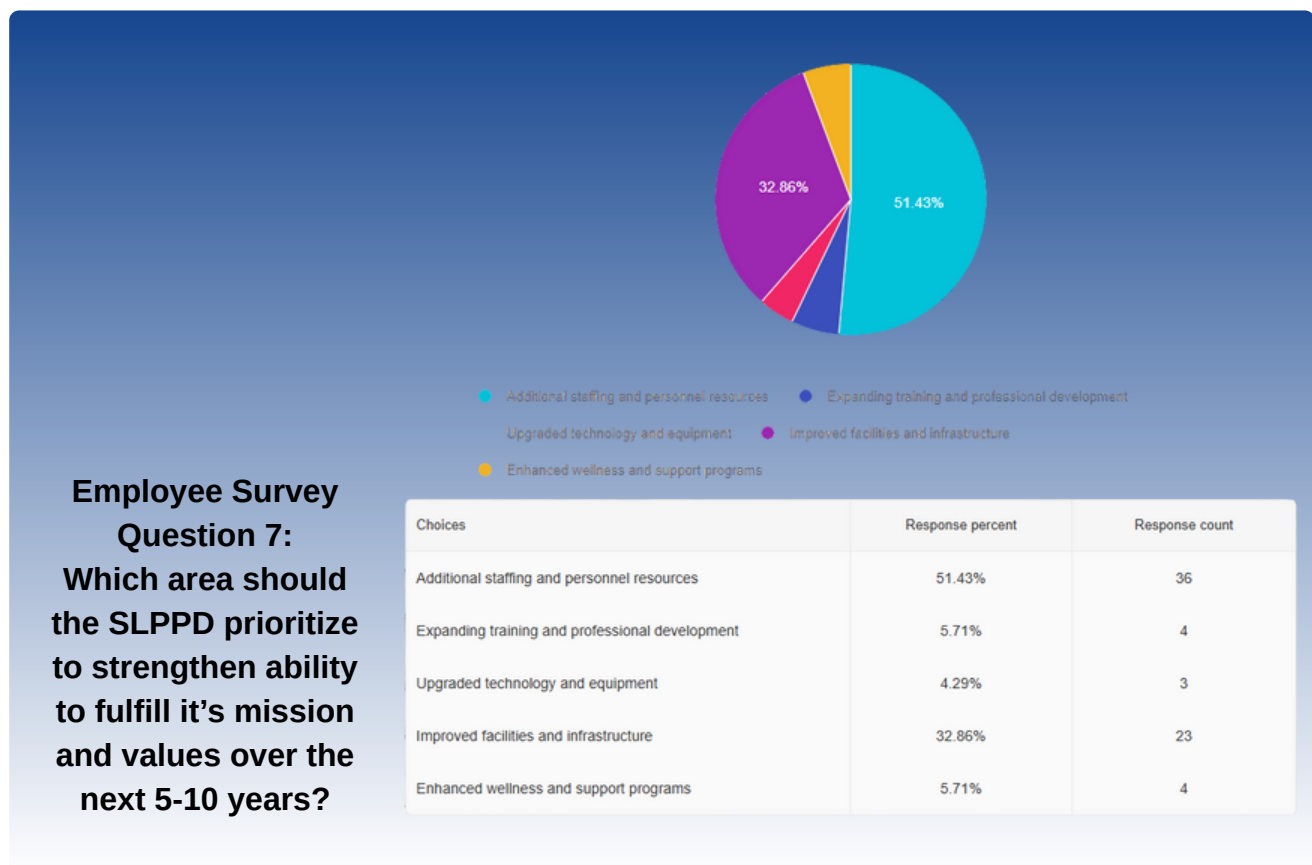
As the project transitioned into Phase II, the focus shifted from vision-setting to detailed analysis, planning, and preparation for long-range implementation. This phase will provide operational context to the strategic directions identified in Phase I by examining current demands, projecting future needs, and outlining a practical, actionable plan for the department to follow over the next several years.

The first major activity of Phase II is a comprehensive workload, staffing, and unit evaluation. This work includes analysis of calls for service, workforce distribution, scheduling models, and the structure and function of specialized units. The objective is to determine how best to align personnel, assignments, and organizational capacity with the increasing complexity of service demands.

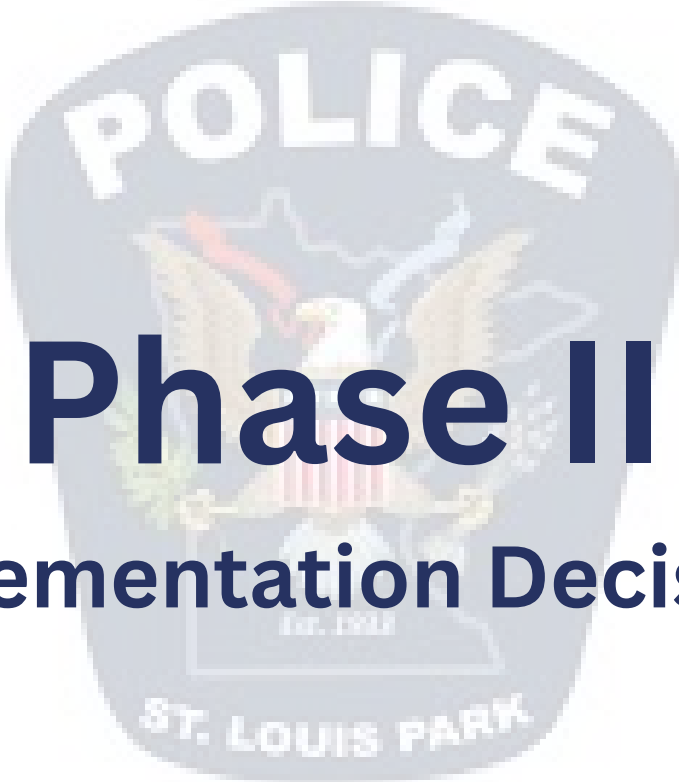
Concurrent with this analysis, a series of leadership visioning and development activities were conducted to identify the support, preparation, and developmental frameworks needed to build a resilient and well-prepared leadership team at all ranks.

These analytical and developmental efforts informed the creation of the SLPPD Strategic Implementation Plan, identifying initiatives, staffing and resource needs, operational priorities, and measurable objectives that will guide the department over the next five years.

The work of Phase I and Phase II are intended to support the SLPPD in bringing to action its long-term strategic direction and vision.



END OF PHASE I

A faded, light blue St. Louis Park Police Department badge is centered in the background. The badge is shield-shaped with 'POLICE' at the top, 'ST. LOUIS PARK' at the bottom, and 'Est. 1911' in the center. In the middle of the badge is an eagle with spread wings, perched on a shield with red and white stripes.

Phase II

Implementation Decisions

Mission:

Apply Phase I operating philosophy and vision to identify opportunities, efficiencies, and needs, in the near- and long-term. (SLP RFP)

Author's Note:

This report is not a staffing study and direct recommendations related to specific staff level increases in all areas of the levels do not exist. That said, the department is in need of immediate staffing investments in addition to developing longer term investment strategies.

Introduction and Purpose

This section represents Phase II of the City's multi-phase strategic planning effort conducted with the support of The Axtell Group. Phase I of this effort established a long-range strategic vision for policing in St. Louis Park, informed by extensive community engagement, internal stakeholder input, and elected leader perspectives.

Phase I articulated the values, priorities, and future direction the city expects its police department to pursue over the next ten to twenty years. That vision emphasized community-oriented policing, proactive engagement, problem solving, professionalism, and sustained attention to employee wellness. Phase I also identified several functional areas of focus critical to achieving that vision, including staffing and deployment, organizational structure and methodology, technology and data capabilities, leadership systems, and workforce wellness. Phase I was intentionally aspirational and did not attempt to define specific staffing levels, organizational models, or resource allocations.

Phase II is designed as a supplemental and objective assessment of whether the St. Louis Park Police Department currently possesses the staffing, organizational structure, funding alignment, and operational tools necessary to execute the vision articulated in Phase I. Rather than revisiting or redefining the strategic vision, this report evaluates current capacity and readiness across the same core domains identified in Phase I and documents where existing conditions support, or constrain, execution of the City's stated goals.

Scope and Intent of Phase II

The purpose of Phase II is to provide City leadership with a clear, evidence-based understanding of organizational readiness relative to the strategic vision of Phase I. This includes identifying strengths that support execution of the vision, as well as structural constraints related to staffing, workload, technology, organizational design, and support systems that may impede full alignment.

Phase II examines capacity across core operational and organizational areas, including patrol operations, investigations, specialty units, professional staff and support functions, technology and administrative infrastructure, and leadership and workforce development systems. Particular attention is given to factors highlighted in Phase I, such as officer wellness, sustainability of service delivery, and the department's ability to maintain proactive, relationship-centered policing alongside rising service complexity.

Phase II is not an implementation plan and does not prescribe specific staffing increases, budget decisions, or timelines. Decisions regarding policy direction, resource allocation, and prioritization remain the responsibility of the City Manager, City Council, and police department leadership. Instead, this report establishes a factual foundation to support informed governance by documenting where current capacity aligns with the Phase I vision and where gaps exist.

Analytical Framework for the Capacity Assessment

Phase II evaluates organizational readiness through a structured analytical framework designed to assess execution rather than intent. The framework examines how services are currently delivered, how those services are supported by existing staffing, systems, and infrastructure, and whether current conditions are sustainable given present and anticipated demands.

The assessment of capacity is organized around four interrelated factors: Demand, Capacity, Alignment, and Sustainability. These factors are applied consistently across each section of the report to evaluate readiness and identify constraints.

Demand

Demand refers to the nature, volume, and complexity of services the department is expected to provide. This includes calls for service, follow up responsibilities, administrative requirements, and partnership obligations. Demand is shaped by community expectations, regional dynamics, statutory requirements, and evolving service models such as behavioral health response. Understanding demand is necessary to evaluate whether current capacity is appropriately aligned with what the department is asked to deliver.

Capacity

Capacity refers to the people, systems, and resources available to meet service demands. This includes staffing levels, deployment practices, leadership structures, technology, facilities, and equipment. Capacity also includes the availability of support systems that enable personnel to perform effectively and safely. Assessing capacity requires examining not only what exists on paper, but how those resources function in practice.

Alignment

Alignment examines the degree to which current organizational structures, practices, and resource allocation support the strategic vision articulated in Phase I.

This dimension considers whether the way work is organized and supported reinforces stated priorities such as community-oriented policing, professionalism, and employee wellness. Misalignment may occur when expectations increase or change without corresponding adjustments in structure or support.

Sustainability

Sustainability considers whether current performance can be maintained over time without undue risk to service quality, employee wellness, or organizational resilience. This includes examining reliance on overtime, secondary assignments, informal workarounds, and individual effort to sustain performance. Sustainable capacity is defined as the ability to meet demands consistently without eroding the workforce or compromising strategic objectives.

Each section of the report applies this framework to a specific functional area. The analysis identifies current conditions, capacity strengths, structural constraints, and implications for executing the Phase I vision. Where appropriate, the report highlights considerations for future evaluation to support informed policy and budget discussions.

Current Situation Summary

Department Staffing Profile

The department's staffing model is built around patrol operations supported by investigations, specialty assignments, and professional staff functions. Current sworn staffing includes patrol officers, sergeants, lieutenants, command staff, and a range of specialty roles. Professional staff support dispatch, records, analysis, and administrative functions that are essential to daily operations and compliance.

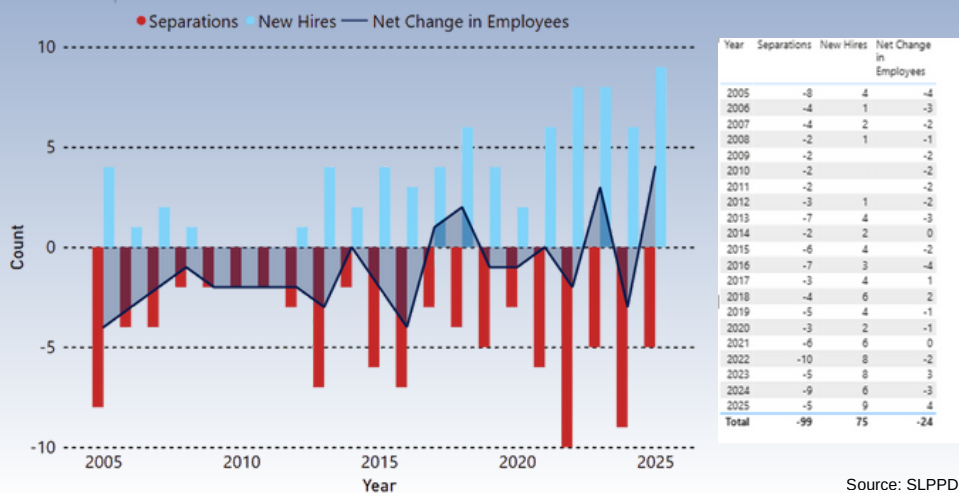
Patrol operations are structured around minimum staffing levels across three shifts. In addition to officers assigned to patrol bid positions, several specialized roles support patrol capacity, including behavioral health officers, traffic enforcement, and task force assignments. While these roles enhance service delivery, they are routinely required to assume general patrol duties when minimum staffing thresholds are not met, reducing the time available for their primary functions.

Supervisory staffing has remained relatively stable over a period in which service demands, training requirements, technology oversight, and risk management responsibilities have expanded.

In 2025, the department added two patrol sergeant positions, reflecting recognition of the increasing demands placed on front-line supervision. Sergeants are responsible for supervising patrol activity, responding to critical incidents, reviewing reports, overseeing training, monitoring compliance, and supporting officer wellness.

While the addition of these positions strengthens supervisory capacity, the overall span of control and workload placed on patrol sergeants remains significant given call volume, staffing variability, and the growing complexity of police work. As a result, supervisory capacity continues to be a key factor influencing patrol effectiveness, training support, mentorship capacity, and workforce sustainability.

Staffing variability is affected by annual total separations. Data indicates the current hiring practice lags behind attrition. FMLA use, military leave and other extended absences further complicate staffing levels.



Source: SLPPD

Workforce Experience and Its Impact on Capacity

Analysis of current staffing data shows that the department's sworn workforce is relatively young in terms of experience distribution. Nearly half of all patrol officers have fewer than five years of service, including approximately one quarter with less than two years of experience.

The average officer tenure is just over seven years, with a median tenure of approximately five years.

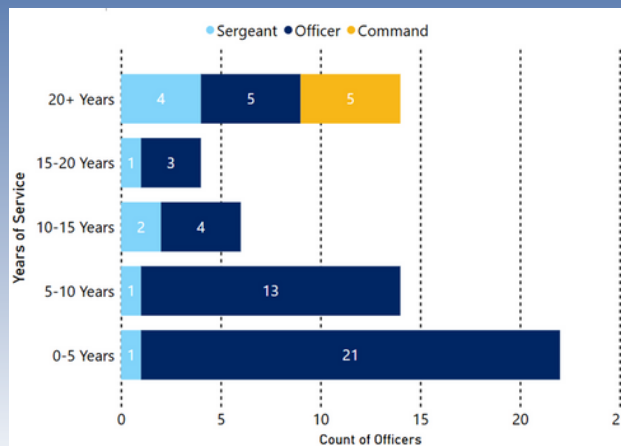


Table shows sworn staff years of service

Source: SLPPD

This experience profile has direct implications for operational capacity. Less experienced officers typically require more time to complete calls for service, conduct initial investigations, and prepare reports. They also require increased supervision, mentoring, and review by senior officers and sergeants. These factors increase the amount of time required to deliver the same level of service and place additional demands on supervisory staff.

These conditions do not reflect deficiencies in skill, performance, or training. They are a predictable outcome of hiring cycles, retirements, and broader labor market conditions affecting law enforcement agencies statewide. However, they reduce the department's effective staffing availability and increase reliance on overtime and shift extensions to maintain baseline coverage.

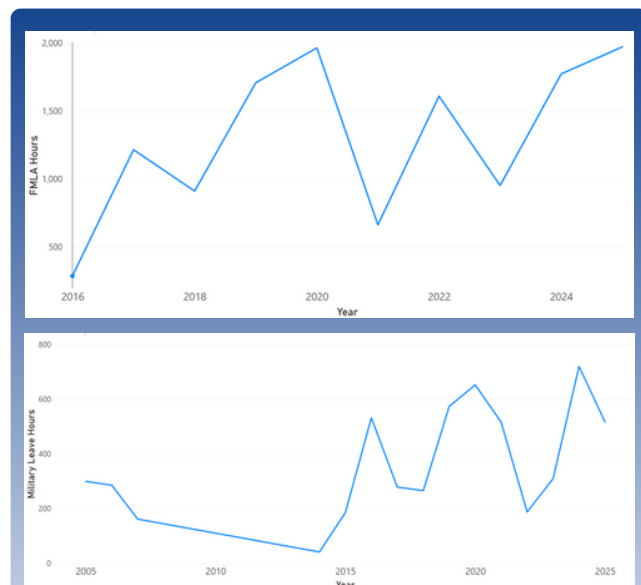
Leave Usage and Staffing Availability

Staffing availability is further affected by contractually obligated and necessary leave usage.

In recent years, the department has experienced measurable impacts from military leave and Family and Medical Leave Act usage. Military obligations resulted in dozens of unstaffed patrol shifts annually, requiring operational coverage despite no reduction in service demand.

Sick leave usage data over a three-year period provides additional insight into workforce availability. Sick leave patterns are consistent and predictable, with the majority of leave taken in full-shift increments. However, the cumulative impact is significant, particularly among patrol officers.

A review of sick leave usage shows sick leave usage increased modestly from 2023 to 2024. Based on year-to-date data through August 2025 sick leave usage is projected to exceed prior years, approaching 8,800 hours for the police officer title alone. Sergeant sick leave usage declined in 2024 but is projected to return to levels comparable to 2023 in 2025.



FMLA, military leave and other long term absences can have a compounding impact on staffing availability, overtime and employee wellness.

Source: SLPPD

While sick leave usage patterns do not indicate abnormal or inappropriate use, the frequency and volume of sick leave events materially reduce deployable staffing, particularly in patrol operations where minimum staffing requirements are most rigid and staffing models are lean. Each sick leave event typically requires coverage through overtime, holdovers, or redeployment, compounding workload and fatigue among remaining staff. This is discussed in detail in the Patrol section of this report.

Budget Context and Personnel Cost Concentration

The department's budget reflects the central role of staffing in public safety service delivery. Over multiple years, salary and benefit costs have consistently represented approximately 90 to 93 percent of total departmental expenditures. Total salary costs increased from approximately \$12.0 million in 2022 to \$13.35 million in 2025.

This personnel-heavy budget structure reflects rising personnel costs and means that staffing availability, experience mix, and leave usage have a direct and immediate impact on both operational capacity and financial outcomes. Unlike many comparable agencies, the St. Louis Park Police Department does not rely heavily on ongoing grant funding to support core operations or specialty programming. Most department costs are funded through the general budget, including overtime and other coverage costs associated with deployment needs. Staffing gaps are also absorbed directly within the department's operating budget.

When sworn staffing falls below authorized levels, salary savings may partially offset overtime costs. However, this dynamic also reflects a recurring condition in which authorized staffing levels are not consistently achieved in practice, reinforcing the operational pressures described throughout this report.

Integrated Capacity Perspective

Taken together, service demand levels, staffing structure, separation and hiring activity, workforce experience distribution, leave usage, and budget composition illustrate the interconnected nature of capacity at the St. Louis Park Police Department. The department demonstrates disciplined budget management and a strong commitment to maintaining service levels. At the same time, a relatively young workforce, increasing leave utilization, and a budget dominated by personnel costs limit flexibility and increase reliance on overtime and redeployment to sustain daily operations.

These conditions do not indicate a department in crisis. Rather, they reflect an understaffed department operating under sustained pressure while adapting to the realities of current policing. Understanding these dynamics is essential as the city evaluates future staffing, budget, and deployment decisions, particularly in light of anticipated service demand increases associated with regional growth and infrastructure changes.

Current Service Demands

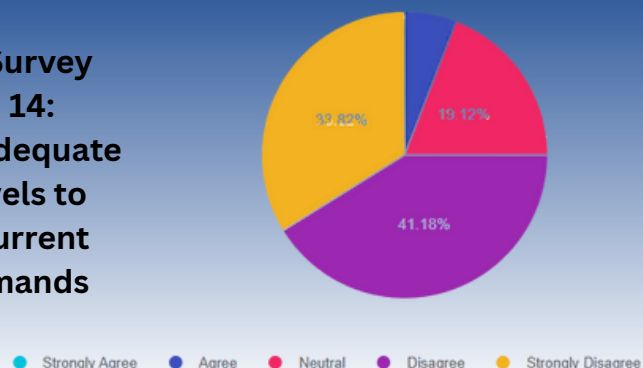
Calls for service represent one of the most visible and resource-intensive aspects of the St. Louis Park Police Department's workload. While overall call volume provides an important metric for understanding demand, it does not fully capture the operational reality of current expectations and demands for law enforcement services. Today's service demands are shaped not only by the number of incidents, but by the time, staffing, and expertise required to respond in ways that meet current community, legal, and professional expectations.

Department records show that annual calls for service have remained relatively stable in recent years, averaging in the range of approximately 47,000 to 53,000 incidents annually. For example, in 2020 the department recorded 52,997 calls for service, compared to 46,939 calls in 2024. While this represents a modest decline in total call volume, other indicators demonstrate that the resource intensity per call has increased.

One key indicator of increasing complexity is the proportion of calls that result in a formal police report. In 2020, calls for service generated approximately 6,715 reports, representing a smaller share of total incidents. By 2024, the department generated approximately 6,896 reports from a lower overall call volume. This shift indicates that a greater percentage of calls now require documentation, follow-up, and review, even as total call counts fluctuate. Calls that result in reports typically involve longer on-scene times, additional investigative steps, and increased supervisory and records workload.

Arrest data further illustrates the evolving nature of service demand. Between 2020 and 2024, total arrests increased from 875 to 1,237, with arrests peaking in 2024.

**Employee Survey
Question 14:
SLPPD has adequate
staffing levels to
meet the current
service demands**



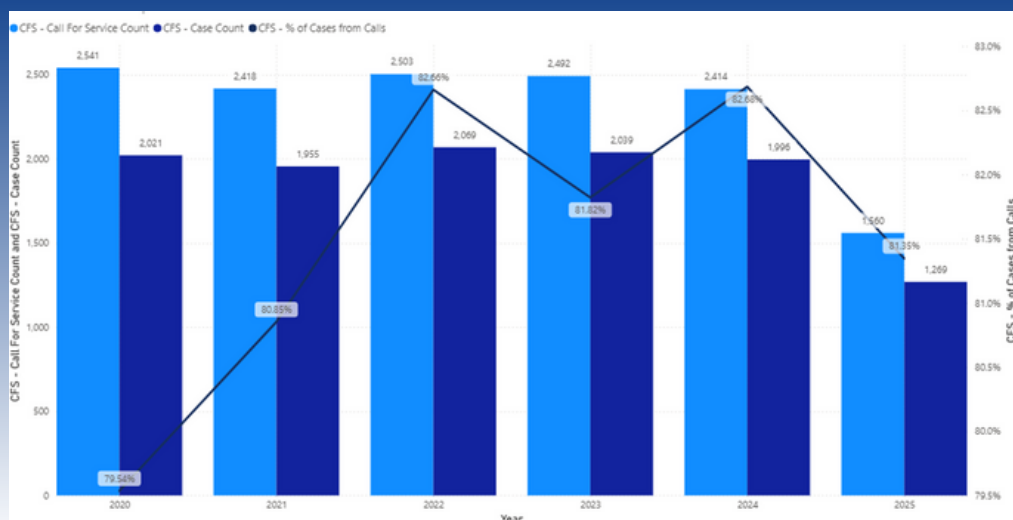
While juvenile arrests remained a relatively small portion of total arrests, the overall upward trend reflects sustained enforcement and investigative activity. In 2025 year-to-date, the department recorded 718 total arrests, suggesting continued enforcement demands. These figures underscore that even in years where calls for service are stable or slightly declining; enforcement and investigative workload can remain elevated.

The nature of initial field investigations has also changed significantly. Patrol officers today routinely encounter incidents involving multiple sources of digital evidence that did not exist or were uncommon in prior years. Residential and commercial surveillance cameras, body-worn cameras, in-car video systems, and mobile phone data now play a central role in many investigations. Even routine calls may require officers to identify, request, review, and preserve digital evidence from multiple sources, increasing the time and expertise required at the initial response stage.

This increased complexity extends beyond the field. Prosecutorial expectations have evolved alongside technological advancements. Prosecutors increasingly expect investigative files to include corroborating digital evidence such as phone records, text messages, location data, video, and computer forensic analysis, particularly in felony and violent crime cases. Meeting these expectations places additional demands on both patrol officers and investigators and increases coordination with records, evidence, and analytical staff.

Additional indicators point to the seriousness of current service demands. So far in 2025, the department encountered and seized more than 60 firearms, many of which were reported stolen, lacked serial numbers, or were possessed by prohibited individuals. These encounters reflect higher-risk interactions that require careful handling, longer call times, additional documentation, and follow-up, further contributing to workload intensity.

Part 1 calls for service and corresponding case count, 2025 data is YTD as of August 31, 2025



Source: SLPPD

Taken together, these trends demonstrate that service demand at SLPPD cannot be fully understood through call counts alone. The department is responding to incidents that increasingly require more time, more personnel coordination, and more investigative and administrative effort per event. As community expectations emphasize thoroughness, accountability, interpersonal compassion and professionalism, the resource requirements associated with each call continue to grow. Understanding this shift is essential when evaluating staffing models, deployment strategies, and long-term capacity planning.

Department Patrol Minimum Deployment Model

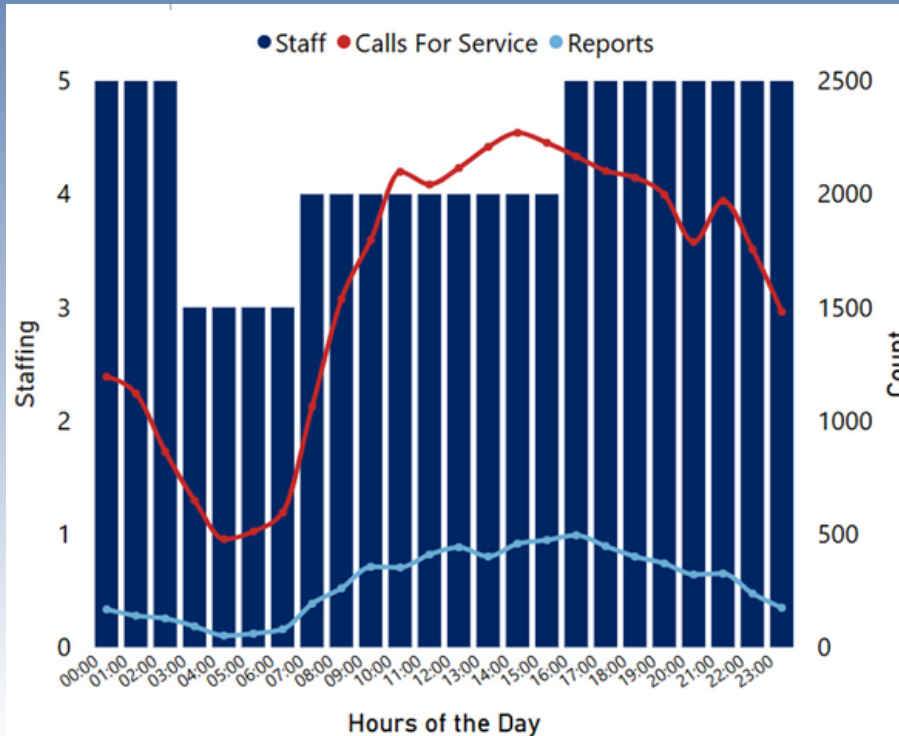
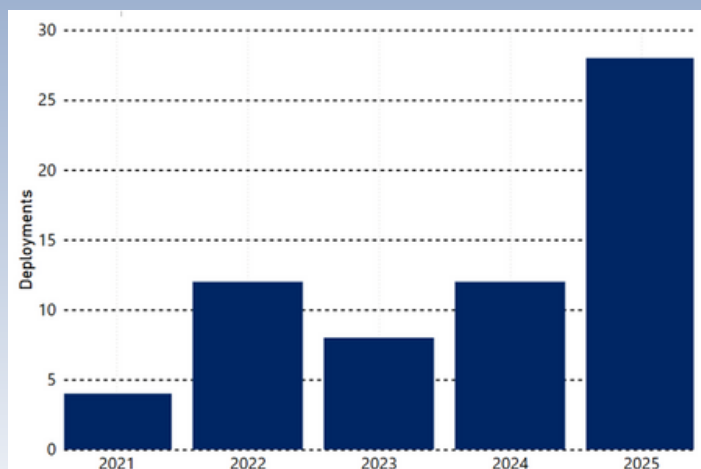


Table depicts an hourly analysis of the department patrol minimum deployment requirements with calls for service (red) and incidents resulting in a criminal report (blue) overlays (2024 data only). This data can assist the command in making deployment decisions based on front line service demands.

Source: SLPPD

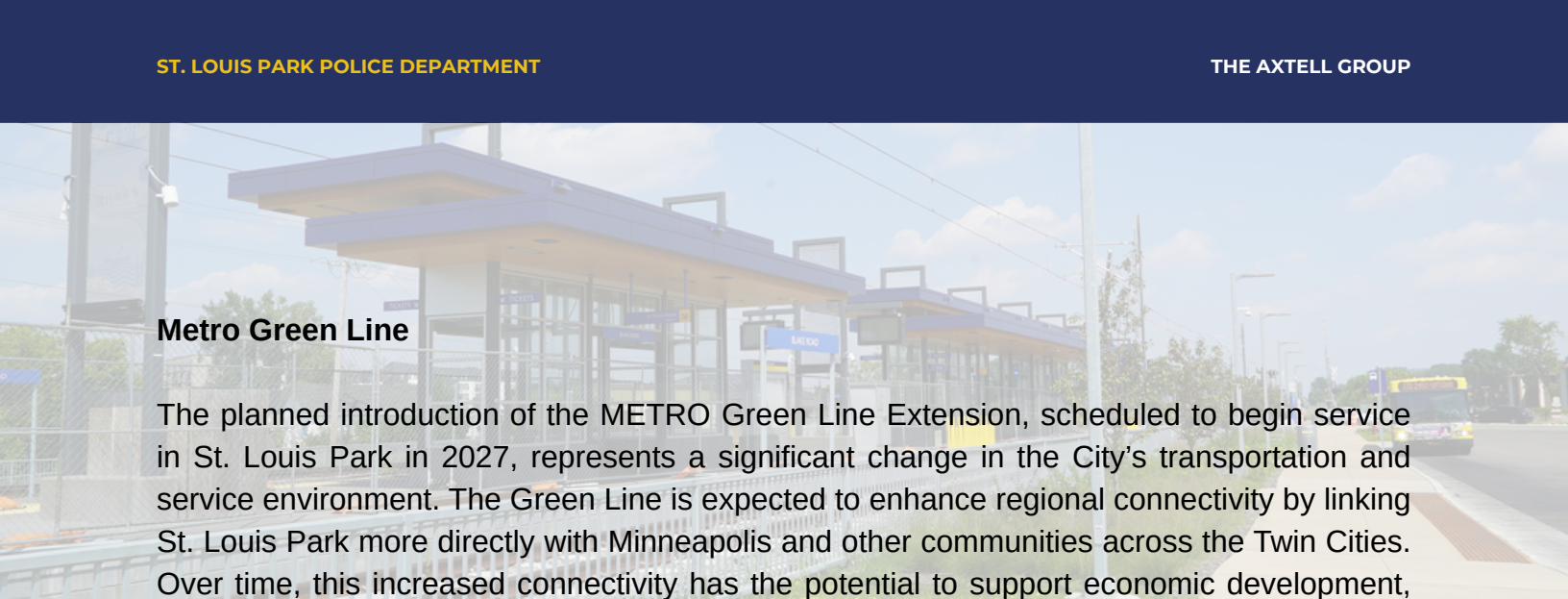
Safety Consideration. The department does not possess an armored vehicle, a critical piece of safety equipment. When available, this necessary asset is borrowed from neighboring agencies. This creates a potential public safety risk.

The asset is not always available for active operations. The asset is rarely available for training, which means that the team cannot incorporate it into their training regimen.



Annual SWAT Team Deployments

Source: SLPPD



Metro Green Line

The planned introduction of the METRO Green Line Extension, scheduled to begin service in St. Louis Park in 2027, represents a significant change in the City's transportation and service environment. The Green Line is expected to enhance regional connectivity by linking St. Louis Park more directly with Minneapolis and other communities across the Twin Cities. Over time, this increased connectivity has the potential to support economic development, improve access to employment and educational opportunities, and increase activity around station areas.

The St. Louis Park Police Department currently responds to approximately 50,000 calls for service annually and records approximately 3,000 reported criminal offenses in a typical year. These figures reflect the baseline level of service demand the department manages across all neighborhoods, business districts, and community spaces.

Experience from other jurisdictions with light rail service indicates that the introduction of rail stations is associated with additional public safety and service demands. While Metro Transit does not routinely publish station-specific crime data for light rail platforms, experience has shown that crimes and disorder incidents occur both on trains and at station areas, generating calls for service that routinely involve local law enforcement agencies. In general, Metro Transit reports approximately six times the average calls for services compared to St. Louis Park annually.

For planning purposes, even a conservative four percent increase in service demand associated with Green Line operations would represent a meaningful operational impact for St. Louis Park. A four percent increase in calls for service would equate to approximately 2000 additional calls (approximately 1.8 calls per shift) annually, while a four percent increase in reported criminal offenses would equate to approximately 120 additional crimes per year. Even modest increases of this scale can affect call response times, officer availability, and the amount of time officers are able to spend on individual calls, investigations, and problem-solving efforts.

It is also important to note that Metro Transit Police Department has publicly acknowledged ongoing staffing challenges. Limited transit police staffing capacity may increase reliance on local law enforcement agencies to address incidents occurring at or near stations, further amplifying the service impact on the St. Louis Park Police Department. This trend has been experienced in other cities opening light rail stations.

The planned 2027 service start provides an important planning window. This timeline allows the City and the Police Department an opportunity to assess staffing levels, deployment models, and support capacity in advance of service initiation. Proactive planning will be essential to ensure that the department can absorb additional service demand associated with the Green Line while continuing to meet existing community expectations for responsiveness, problem solving, and quality of service across all neighborhoods.

Organizational Capacity Assessment

Department Supervision

Effective supervision and leadership are foundational to professional policing. In a properly staffed and supported organization, a leadership team is expected not only to manage daily operational demands, but also to provide consistent oversight, develop personnel, monitor performance and quality, identify and respond to emerging risks, and deliberately plan for future service needs. Strong supervisory systems enable an organization to maintain high performance standards, adapt to changing conditions, and execute strategic priorities in a sustainable manner.

The assessment examined supervisory capacity at both the executive and front-line levels, with a focus on whether current structures, support systems, and workloads allow leaders to balance day-to-day operational responsibilities with the broader leadership functions required in an increasingly complex policing environment.

Current Conditions

Command Team

At the command level, the department's supervisory structure appears generally appropriate for the size of the organization and the scope of its mission. Command staff roles are clearly defined, and the leadership team demonstrates strong engagement with operational issues, community concerns, and organizational responsibilities. The department benefits from experienced leaders who are actively involved in daily operations and responsive to emerging issues.

At the same time, the assessment found that the volume and immediacy of day-to-day demands require executive leaders to spend a significant portion of their time addressing reactive matters.

These include responding to unplanned operational issues, managing emergent personnel concerns, coordinating interagency matters, and addressing time-sensitive administrative tasks. The executive team does not have dedicated professional clerical or administrative support to assist with routine but time-consuming responsibilities such as scheduling coordination, document preparation, correspondence management, and tracking follow-up items.

As a result, executive leaders are frequently engaged in staff-level and process-oriented work in addition to strategic leadership functions. The executive team also does not have consistent access to consolidated department data in the form of operational dashboards, automated trend analysis, or real-time performance metrics. This limits the availability of timely information related to workload patterns, emerging risks, or performance indicators and often requires leaders to conduct manual research or operate with incomplete data when making decisions.

Together, the absence of administrative support and readily accessible management-level data constrains executive capacity. Time that could otherwise be devoted to coaching and developing supervisors, reviewing organizational performance trends, proactively identifying risk-producing conditions, and deliberately operationalizing the City's and Chief's priorities is instead consumed by necessary but lower-level administrative and analytical tasks. This dynamic reflects a capacity constraint rather than a lack of leadership capability or engagement, but it fragments executive focus and reduces opportunities for sustained strategic leadership.

Further, because executive leaders transition between roles on a regular basis, there are limited opportunities for them to develop efficient, repeatable means of managing administrative tasks. Dedicated administrative support could, by contrast, develop efficiencies and potentially improve performance with respect to administrative duties, while enabling executive leaders to engage in more strategic activities.

In a complex policing environment, the ability of executive leaders to consistently step out of reactive cycles and invest time in leadership development, quality assurance, and organizational learning is essential. Without sufficient administrative support and data infrastructure, even a well-structured executive team faces limitations in maintaining this balance.

Sergeant Supervisors

Front-line supervisors occupy one of the most demanding and consequential roles in the department. Sergeants are responsible for translating policy and strategy into daily practice,

managing personnel performance, ensuring officer safety, reviewing reports, responding to critical incidents, and serving as the first level of accountability for field decision-making. The consistency and effectiveness of this role directly affect service quality, risk exposure, employee morale, and public trust.

The department provides sergeant candidates with foundational training through basic supervisory courses when feasible. This initial preparation establishes baseline knowledge related to supervision, labor considerations, and leadership responsibilities. However, beyond this entry-level training, the assessment found no structured, ongoing development program to support supervisors as they grow into the role and navigate its increasing complexity.

As a result, newly promoted supervisors are often required to perform immediately under operational pressure, with limited opportunities for mentoring, reflection, or structured skill development. Over time, this contributes to variation in supervisory practices, as individual supervisors develop approaches based on personal experience rather than reinforced organizational standards.

Information collected during both Phase I and Phase II indicates that this condition is associated with inconsistent application of deployment plans, report review expectations, and work product standards. These inconsistencies do not reflect negligence or lack of effort, but rather the absence of a formalized system to calibrate supervisory decision-making, reinforce expectations, and provide ongoing feedback and development.

A recurring theme across interviews and survey responses was the challenge of investing in new or developing employees under sustained workload demands. Personnel across ranks described an environment in which promotion or assignment to a new role often comes with an expectation of a great deal of self-directed learning. While this cultural feature fosters adaptability and self-reliance, it also increases variability and places additional strain on supervisors who are already managing significant operational responsibilities.

Leadership Development Program

The St. Louis Park Police Department maintains a structured Leadership Development Program to prepare interested officers having three years of police experience for future supervisory roles. Eligible officers apply for participation and are selected through a process involving sergeants and command staff. Participants are paired with a sergeant mentor and complete required leadership training, ride-alongs, and a structured training manual focused on supervisory expectations.

As officers demonstrate readiness, they may be approved to work acting sergeant shifts, allowing practical application of supervisory skills in operational settings. The program supports internal leadership readiness and reinforces the department's commitment to consistent, well-prepared front-line supervision.

Source: SLPPD

Observed Capacity Strengths

The department benefits from an experienced and committed leadership team that remains closely engaged with daily operations. Executive leaders demonstrate responsiveness, accountability, and a clear understanding of both internal and external expectations. Despite workload pressures, command staff remain visible, accessible, and actively involved in organizational decision-making.

Front-line supervisors play a critical role in maintaining operational continuity. Sergeants manage personnel performance, respond to critical incidents, ensure officer safety, review reports, and provide immediate oversight in the field. Foundational supervisory training opportunities offered through the optional Leadership Development Program provides a baseline level of preparation, and many supervisors demonstrate adaptability and professionalism in managing complex situations under pressure.

Across ranks, personnel expressed confidence in leadership intent and commitment, even as they acknowledged the strain associated with sustained workload demands.

Observed Capacity Constraints

The most significant supervisory constraint identified through the assessment is the imbalance between leadership responsibilities and available support capacity. Executive leaders are frequently required to engage in staff-level and process-oriented work that limits the time available for higher-order leadership functions such as coaching and developing supervisors, conducting quality control reviews, proactively identifying risk-producing conditions, and operationalizing long-term strategic priorities.

Limited access to timely, consolidated data further constrains executive effectiveness. Without management-level dashboards or automated trend analysis, leadership must rely on manual information gathering or fragmented data sources. This reduces the ability to quickly identify emerging issues, assess performance trends, or deploy resources in the most effective manner.

At the front-line supervisory level, the absence of structured ongoing professional development contributes to variability in supervisory practices. Newly promoted sergeants are often required to perform immediately under operational pressure, with limited opportunities for mentoring, reflection, or structured skill-building. Over time, this condition contributes to inconsistent application of deployment plans, report review standards, and work product expectations. These inconsistencies reflect system limitations rather than individual shortcomings.

Nearly all department sergeants also carry important and time-consuming collateral responsibilities to fill administrative and operational needs in the department. These extra duties involve everything from managing various department inventories to fulfilling training needs and operational leading/managing mission specific teams such as SWAT, Mobile Field Force, evidence and crime scene processing and more.

Implications for Strategic Vision Execution

The Phase I strategic vision emphasizes professionalism, consistency in service delivery, risk reduction, and meaningful community engagement. Achieving these objectives depends heavily on the department's ability to provide consistent, engaged, and well-supported supervision at both the executive and front-line levels.

When executive leaders are constrained by routine administrative workload and lack timely access to consolidated operational data, their ability to proactively guide the organization is diminished. Time that could be spent aligning priorities, monitoring trends, identifying emerging risks, and reinforcing expectations across the department is instead absorbed by reactive problem-solving and staff-level tasks. This limits the organization's capacity to intentionally translate strategic goals into daily operational practice.

At the front-line level, variability in supervisory development and support affects how consistently policies, deployment plans, and professional standards are applied. In the absence of structured ongoing development and calibration, supervisors must rely on individual judgment rather than shared frameworks. This can result in uneven implementation of department priorities, particularly in areas such as deployment consistency, report quality, risk management, and coaching of newer officers.

These dynamics are especially significant in a policing environment that prioritizes de-escalation, procedural justice, and non-traditional service delivery. Such approaches require supervisors who have the time, tools, and support to actively observe performance, provide real-time feedback, and reinforce expectations. Without sufficient supervisory capacity, even well-articulated strategies may be implemented inconsistently across shifts and units.

Ultimately, limitations in supervisory support and development do not reflect a lack of leadership commitment or capability. Rather, they represent a structural constraint on the department's ability to execute its strategic vision in a deliberate and sustainable manner. Strengthening supervision systems is therefore not only an internal management consideration, but a critical factor in achieving the long-term service outcomes articulated in the strategic plan.

Investment Considerations

From a capacity perspective, strengthening supervisory systems represents an opportunity to enhance organizational effectiveness and reduce risk. Professional administrative support for the executive team would allow leaders to shift time and attention away from routine staff work and toward leadership functions such as coaching, planning, quality control, and strategic execution.

Investment in data systems and analytical support that provide timely dashboards, trend analysis, and performance indicators would significantly improve leadership's ability to identify emerging risks, monitor outcomes, and deploy personnel efficiently. Access to reliable, real-time information enables more informed decision-making and supports proactive management rather than reactive response.

Targeted investment in leadership development represents an opportunity to more effectively translate the department's strategic vision into consistent operational practice. Individual executive coaching can support senior leaders in refining decision-making, prioritization, and change management skills while maintaining alignment with City and community expectations. Complementing this, a structured command-level development series would allow the leadership team to collectively focus on operationalizing the department's priorities by establishing shared understanding of goals, deployment strategies, and success measures. Together, these approaches would strengthen alignment between strategic intent and daily operations, improve consistency in supervision and deployment decisions, and create clearer feedback loops between leadership actions and measurable outcomes. By investing in leadership development as a coordinated system rather than as isolated training events, the department can more efficiently advance the objectives articulated in the strategic vision and support sustained organizational performance.

At the front-line level, developing a structured, ongoing supervisory development framework would help reinforce consistent standards, reduce variability in practice, and support supervisors as they navigate one of the most challenging roles in the organization. These investments are not about expanding hierarchy but about ensuring that existing leadership capacity is fully supported to meet both current operational demands and the long-term objectives set forth in the department's strategic vision.

Patrol Operations

Patrol operations serve as the foundation of municipal policing and represent the most visible and frequently experienced function of the St. Louis Park Police Department. Patrol officers are the primary point of contact between the community and the department and often serve as the most forward-facing representation of local government. In this role, patrol officers are expected to act not only as first responders, but also as problem solvers, investigators, crisis interveners, and community partners.

Over the past two decades, expectations for how patrol services are delivered have expanded significantly. Today's patrol officer is required to respond to a wide range of incidents that extend well beyond traditional enforcement activity. These include behavioral health crises, civil disputes, traffic safety concerns, quality-of-life complaints, and situations involving vulnerable individuals. Patrol officers are expected to demonstrate technical competence, emotional intelligence, compassion, and sound judgment in environments that are often dynamic and high stress.

Contemporary patrol practices emphasize approaches designed to improve safety and outcomes for both officers and the public. Current training and professional standards prioritize slowing incidents down, using coordinated multi-officer responses when appropriate, and employing communication and de-escalation techniques to reduce the likelihood of force. These approaches often require additional time, staffing, and coordination compared to past models of rapid single-officer response, but they are widely recognized as best practices for achieving safer and more effective resolutions.

The nature of initial field investigations has also changed. Patrol officers are increasingly responsible for managing complex evidence collection at the scene of incidents. The widespread availability of technology such as body-worn cameras, in-vehicle cameras, neighborhood security systems, and digital records means that even routine calls can generate substantial amounts of evidence that must be identified, preserved, documented, and later reviewed. As a result, patrol work now involves more extensive documentation and investigative follow-up than in prior eras.

Patrol unit staffing must be designed to account not only for daily calls for service, but also for the full range of organizational and employee needs that accompany modern policing. This includes the ability to absorb required training, professional development, court obligations, and lawful leave without destabilizing front-line coverage. When staffing models are calibrated solely to meet minimum response thresholds, they leave little margin to support these essential functions.

Over time, this approach increases reliance on overtime, limits opportunities for employee development, and places additional strain on personnel who must cover gaps created by training or leave. Sustainable patrol staffing therefore requires sufficient depth to meet service demand while also supporting workforce development, wellness, and long-term organizational resilience.

Traffic enforcement remains a core patrol responsibility and continues to play a critical role in community safety. Proactive traffic enforcement reduces crashes, deters impaired and reckless driving, and provides opportunities for officers to engage with the public in preventive and educational ways. These activities are an important component of visible policing and contribute directly to the safety and quality of life in St. Louis Park.

Equally important, and often less visible, is the non-enforcement role of patrol officers. Building relationships outside of crisis situations through informal interactions with residents, business owners, and community groups is central to long-term crime prevention and trust. These engagements reinforce the legitimacy of the department and support collaborative problem solving. However, the ability to consistently engage in this work depends on having sufficient staffing and time beyond responding to calls for service.

The St. Louis Park Police Department is staffed by a dedicated workforce committed to serving the community and upholding professional standards. Officers and supervisors expressed pride in their work and belief in the department's mission. At the same time, patrol operations face increasing pressure from growing service demands, more complex calls, and a deployment model that must absorb specialized assignments, training requirements, court obligations, and unplanned absences.

Additionally, patrol operations are currently being sustained under a near crisis-level staffing profile, with minimum deployment requirements met primarily through overtime, extended shifts, and emergency scheduling practices. While this approach has allowed the department to maintain baseline patrol coverage, it reflects a structural staffing shortfall rather than a temporary or isolated condition.

These conditions reflect a critical staffing level, and certainly a department operating under sustained operational pressure. Understanding how patrol staffing, deployment practices, and workload interact with the evolving expectations of modern policing is essential to assessing the department's capacity to deliver the level of service envisioned in the Phase I strategic vision. The sections that follow examine patrol operations through this lens, focusing on alignment, sustainability, and readiness rather than short-term performance outcomes.

Current Conditions

Patrol operations within the St. Louis Park Police Department are understaffed and impacted by a sustained gap between authorized staffing levels and functional, deployable capacity. While authorized patrol strength sometimes reflects full allocation on paper, operational reality is shaped by vacancies, officers in development or field training who are not yet independently deployable, injuries, military deployment, and extended leave.

At the time of this assessment, patrol operations were sustained by approximately 19 (this number changes frequently, but projections have it reducing to 18 in January (2026) functional officers, a figure that included two employees still in the Field Training Officer program and therefore not fully deployable. This operational reality stands in contrast to authorized staffing levels and underscores the difference between headcount and functional capacity.

The current patrol officer staffing allocation was 28 police officers (14 per calendar side) to meet the established minimum deployment plan. The current full staffing complement of 28 is fewer staff required to account for this minimum deployment model and ideally the staffing complement would be closer to 18-20 officers per side making a total patrol deployment of 36-40 officers.

Hourly Patrol Staffing vs. Minimum Deployment Requirement

Hour	Days	Mids	Nights	Total Assigned	Minimum Required	Reserve Capacity
0-2	0	5	4	9	5	+4
3-5	0	0	4	4	3	+1
6-12	4	0	0	4	4	0
13-15	4	0	0	4	5	-1
16-19	0	5	0	5	5	0
20-23	0	5	0	5	5	+4

Reserve capacity reflects the number of officers available above or below the minimum required staffing level.

A value of zero indicates no margin for training, leave, court, or other absences. Negative values indicate periods where minimum staffing is not met without overtime or reassignment.

Source: SLPPD

While this deployment model meets minimum staffing requirements during most hours, it provides little to no reserve capacity for routine absences, training, or leave, and requires overtime or reassignment during peak periods. The department must also utilize a hybrid of 10-, 11- & 12-hour shifts to accommodate minimum staffing shift needs. Staffing reserve capacity should be a minimum factor of two for the smallest shift and more as the shift size increases.

NOTE: This table reflects the department's patrol deployment model and employee staff numbers **if fully staffed**. The department was operating with 19 deployable patrol unit officers at the time of this assessment.

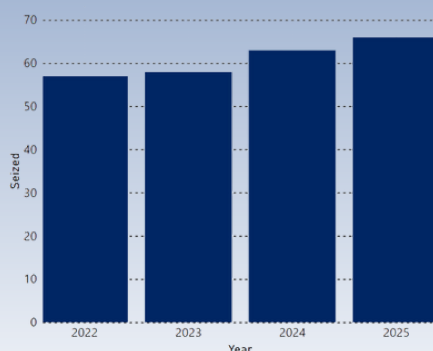
The department's minimum deployment model divides patrol coverage into three primary shifts: day, mid, and nights (dog watch). Minimum staffing requirements are set at four officers on days, five officers on mid-shift, and three officers for several hours on dog watch. This minimum model assumes availability of all assigned patrol officers and does not account for predictable absences related to training, various leave types, injury, or long-term absences. When functional staffing falls below these thresholds, the department relies on overtime, extended shifts, and the redeployment of officers from specialty assignments to maintain baseline patrol coverage.

"The number of hours per shift and the risk of injury have a direct relationship: As the shift length increases, so does the potential for on-the-job injury."

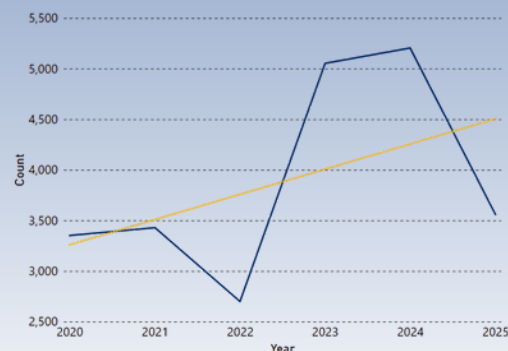
-Lexipol

In response to sustained staffing shortfalls, the department implemented an emergency staffing strategy using 12-hour shifts. While this configuration increases short-term operational coverage and reduces the number of daily shift changes, it also concentrates workload and fatigue. Research conducted by the National Institute of Justice and the National Policing Institute has documented that extended and compressed schedules are associated with increased sleepiness, decreased alertness, and diminished quality of life for officers. These effects are exacerbated by the inherent stressors of police work and conflict with community expectations that officers are healthy, alert, and well-rested while performing high-risk duties.

Under emergency staffing conditions, all patrol training conducted during 2025 occurred while officers were working overtime. Mandatory training, certification requirements, and skill development were accomplished by bringing officers in on days off or extending shifts, further increasing workload and exacerbating recovery needs. This practice reflects a patrol system operating without sufficient staffing buffers to support routine training within regular duty hours.



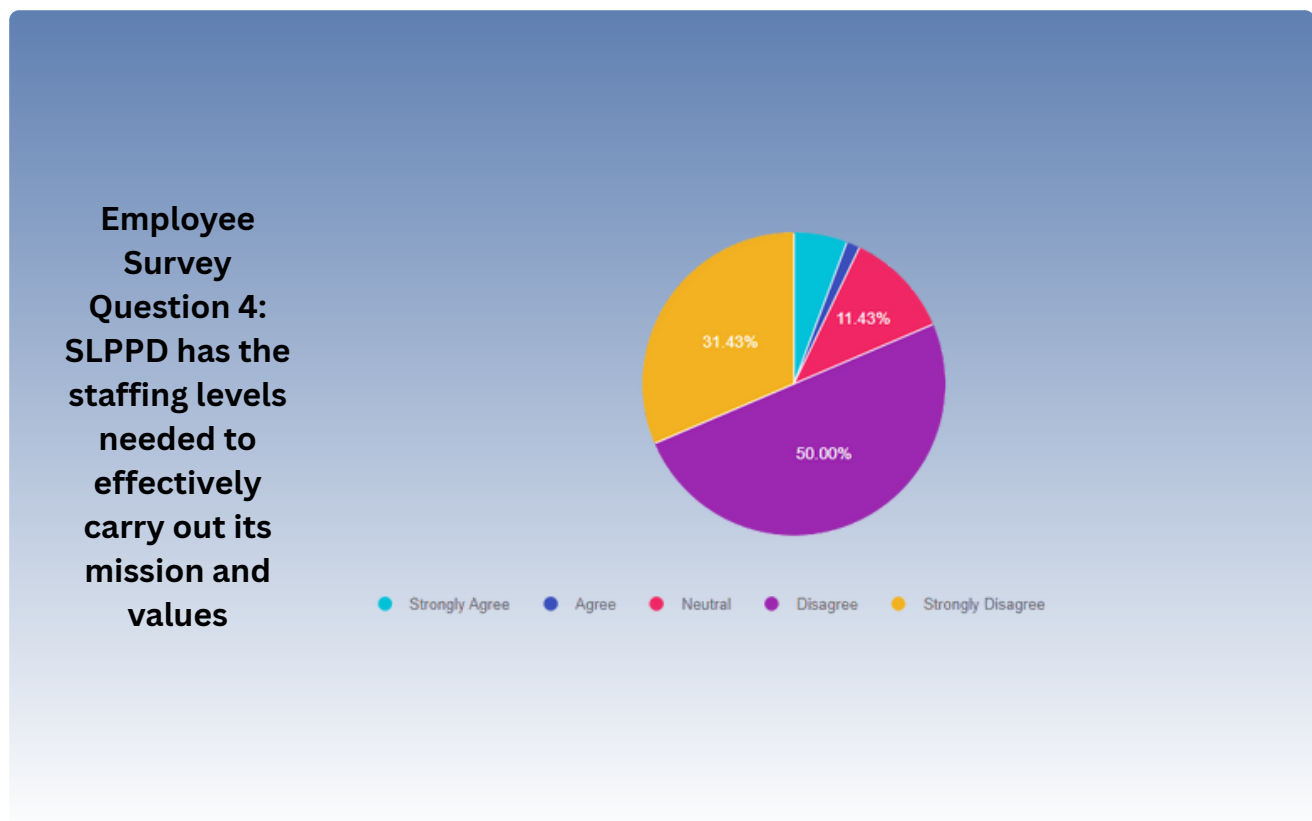
Firearms Recovered by Year
2025 data through Q3 2025



Annual Traffic Stops.
2025 data through Q3 2025

Observed Capacity Strengths

Despite these constraints, patrol operations continue to demonstrate notable resilience. Officers and supervisors consistently meet minimum deployment expectations, often through voluntary overtime, extended shifts, and assignment flexibility. The department has preserved baseline response capability even during periods of acute staffing stress, reflecting strong professional commitment and adaptive leadership at the line and supervisory levels. This noted strength bridges a demonstrable understaffing condition that is likely not sustainable without causing workforce impacts.



Patrol operations are further supported by the willingness of specialty units and patrol support assignments to absorb patrol calls when minimums are not met.

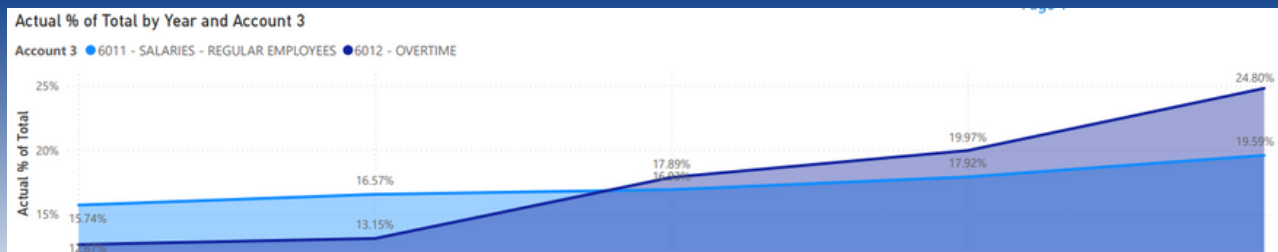
Behavioral health officers, traffic officers, and other department officers are routinely redirected to patrol response during staffing shortages. While this practice carries tradeoffs for specialty unit continuity, it has allowed the department to maintain public-facing patrol presence and response reliability under challenging conditions.

Observed Capacity Constraints

The most significant constraint affecting patrol operations is the current staffing allocation methodology, specifically the budgeting and accounting practice of counting newly hired candidates who are not yet licensed or who have not yet completed field training as part of the deployable patrol workforce. This practice creates a structural gap between authorized staffing levels and actual operational capacity, resulting in patrol schedules that appear sufficient on paper, but are functionally understaffed in practice.

This gap is most clearly evidenced by several independent factors. The department's significant reliance on overtime, recurring temporary reassignment of other department personnel to vacate their regular role to perform a patrol function (further explained below) and the current need for the emergency 12-hour deployment schedule.

Staffing shortfalls appeared to be chronic and not acute. Overtime utilization has increased over the past five years, with growth observed across patrol officers, patrol sergeants, and training-related assignments. Total overtime hours increased from 4,573 hours in 2020 to 6,854 hours in 2024. Patrol overtime alone increased from 2,979 hours to 3,262 hours over the same period, while patrol sergeant overtime nearly doubled. Training-related overtime increased from negligible levels in 2020 to more than 1,600 hours in 2024. Important to note is a recent staffing correction to add two additional patrol sergeants in 2025. This adjustment has significantly reduced the need for patrol sergeant overtime in 2025.



Above: Overtime hours as a percentage of total salaries showing a rise of relative OT, e.g., 24.8% of overtime was taken in 2024 which was \$926,000.

Source SLPPD



Above : 2024 OT increased by 24.16% YoY from 2023 (\$746,021 to \$926,298).

Source SLPPD

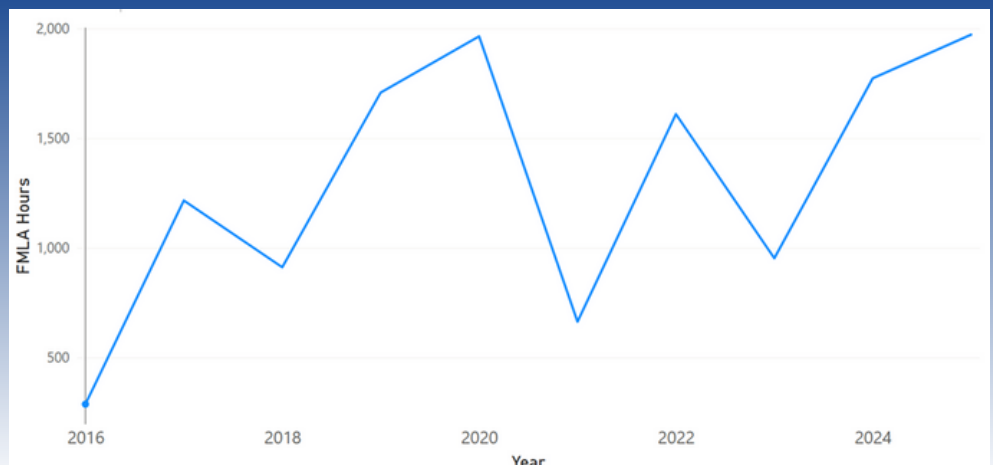
Operational data from 2024 and 2025 illustrate the budgetary implications of staffing availability challenges. In 2024, the department experienced 65 unstaffed police officer shifts, totaling approximately 720 missed working hours, attributable to military leave obligations. In 2025, through August, the department recorded 47 unstaffed shifts, totaling approximately 517 working hours, again linked to military service.

Additionally, Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) usage has increased. Through September 2025, the department recorded 1,972 missed police officer working hours, exceeding the 1,773 hours recorded during the entirety of 2024. This increase reflects broader workforce trends rather than department-specific management decisions, but it has direct operational and budgetary consequences.

Missed shifts and unplanned absences do not reduce service demand. Instead, they typically require coverage through overtime, shift extensions, or redeployment of personnel from other assignments. While overtime data reflects the department's ability to maintain baseline service delivery, it also represents a recurring cost pressure within a budget already dominated by personnel expenses.

The department also must regularly use sworn officers normally assigned to high-engagement programs, including the BHU and community outreach. These two functions alone are not enough to supplement patrol needs and officers are also regularly re-deployed from other specialty units including investigative detectives and officers normally tasked with traffic safety. This reliance on non-patrol staff has had an effect on the positive impacts these units can make. The work capacity of these units, which also need to manage their own absences, has been reduced, and arguably so have positive impacts on the community.

This chart depicts the department's FMLA trends year over year; increased safe and sick time availability will likely result in increased use trends that will further impact staffing availability. 2025 data was through Q3.



Source: SLPPD

Rather than reflecting short-term anomalies, these overtime patterns are a predictable outcome of a staffing model that does not distinguish between headcount and deployable strength. When trainees and officers in early field training are counted toward patrol minimums, the system lacks sufficient buffer to absorb routine and foreseeable absences related to training, leave, injury, or long-term assignments. As a result, overtime becomes the primary mechanism for reconciling this structural mismatch, and training itself becomes increasingly dependent on overtime rather than being integrated into regular duty schedules.

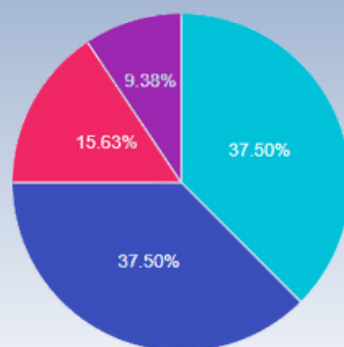
Extended reliance on 12-hour emergency schedules further compounds these pressures. Fatigue associated with extended shifts is not only a workforce wellness issue but an operational risk. National research has linked officer fatigue to impaired decision-making, slower reaction times, and increased likelihood of error. When emergency staffing requires officers to arrive early or remain on duty beyond scheduled hours to fill vacancies, the risk of burnout and degraded performance increases, and undermines the efficiencies the model is intended to achieve.

Employee survey results further corroborate these capacity constraints. Eighty-one percent of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the department had adequate staffing to carry out its mission and values.

Additionally, seventy-five percent of respondents reported that their current workload negatively impacted their personal wellness. These findings align with observed overtime patterns and emergency scheduling practices and reflect internal recognition of capacity strain.

"In addition, there were some disadvantages related to 12-hour shifts, including greater reported levels of sleepiness and lower levels of alertness while at work as compared to those on 8-hour shifts. ... caution should still be exercised by agencies planning on implementing those shifts."

Vila, B., Morrison, G. B., & Kenney, D. J. (2012). The impact of shift length in policing on performance, health, quality of life, sleep, fatigue, and extra-duty employment. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice. Republished by the Policing Institute.
Retrieved from:
<https://www.policinginstitute.org/publication/the-impact-of-shift-length-in-policing/>



● Strongly Agree ● Agree ● Neutral ● Disagree ● Strongly Disagree

**Employee Survey
Question 28:
Workload, scheduling,
or exposure to critical
incidents negatively
impacts my wellness.**

Implications for Strategic Vision Execution

The patrol deployment model described above has direct implications for the department's ability to execute the strategic vision articulated in Phase I. That vision, informed by extensive community engagement and internal input, emphasizes community-oriented policing, visible presence in neighborhoods, consistent follow-up, relationship building, and problem-solving approaches that extend beyond immediate call handling. These expectations require discretionary time, continuity of staffing, and sufficient capacity for officers to remain engaged after the initial call for service is resolved.

Under current patrol staffing conditions, including periods outside of formal emergency scheduling, patrol operations are largely calibrated to meet minimum response thresholds. When staffing is maintained at or near minimums, patrol activity is necessarily oriented toward reactive call response. Officers are required to prioritize clearing calls efficiently in order to manage pending demand, which limits the time available for follow-up, proactive enforcement, informal engagement, and presence-based policing. This operational reality is not consistent with stakeholder expectations expressed during Phase I, where community members consistently indicated a desire not only for timely response, but for officers who are able to spend time in neighborhoods, know community members, and engage with individuals beyond transactional interactions.

Phase I feedback further highlighted that community members value consistency and familiarity. Stakeholders expressed a desire to see the same officers in their neighborhoods and at community events, and to experience interactions characterized by patience, empathy, and professionalism, even during enforcement actions. A patrol model that relies heavily on overtime, extended shifts, and frequent backfilling undermines this consistency by increasing fatigue, compressing discretionary time, and reducing officers' capacity to engage at the level envisioned in the strategic vision.

Department leadership articulated similar expectations in Phase I. Leaders emphasized a vision of policing that balances enforcement with prevention, integrates behavioral health and social service partnerships, and allows patrol officers to function as problem-solvers and community connectors. Current patrol capacity constraints limit the department's ability to operationalize this vision. When patrol staffing is sustained through emergency schedules and overtime, specialty units and patrol support functions are routinely redirected to basic call response, reducing the department's overall capacity to deliver the expanded services and partnerships that stakeholders value.

The sustained use of extended shifts also has implications for employee wellness, which Phase I identified as a core value and prerequisite for service quality. Community members and stakeholders explicitly linked officer wellness to performance, empathy, and professionalism. Research-supported impacts of fatigue, combined with employee survey results indicating widespread concern about staffing adequacy and wellness, suggest that current patrol staffing conditions are not aligned with the department's stated commitment to maintaining a healthy, resilient workforce capable of meeting rising community expectations.

Taken together, the current patrol deployment model constrains the department's ability to deliver the form of policing described in Phase I. While patrol officers and supervisors continue to meet minimum service requirements through dedication and adaptability, the existing staffing profile does not fully support the proactive, relationship-centered, and wellness-informed policing model that community members, city leaders, and department leadership have identified as the desired future state.

Investment Considerations

Patrol operations need immediate staffing relief and would significantly benefit from a complete evaluation of budgeting related staffing allocation practices that distinguish between employed headcount and functional, deployable staffing. Consideration may be given to removing unlicensed employees and officers who have not completed field training from the operational patrol count for deployment planning purposes. Doing so would provide a more accurate representation of available patrol capacity and reduce the likelihood of emergency scheduling driven by optimistic staffing assumptions. This would require a philosophical change in the budget and accounting practices that assumes a position is filled when a patrol hire is made. Predicting vacancies and hiring sworn positions in anticipation of vacancies would also reduce vacancy length that impacts operations.

The current need to utilize an emergency staffing model appears to be the direct result of the staffing allocation approach rather than an isolated operational decision. Strengthening patrol capacity to align with authorized staffing levels and the full range of patrol obligations, including training, leave, injury recovery, and long-term assignments. This consideration will also need to factor the 2026 State of Minnesota's implementation of the Paid Family Leave program. Reducing structural dependence on overtime and emergency scheduling is central to improving patrol sustainability and readiness.

These considerations are intended to frame future analysis rather than prescribe specific actions. Additional quantitative modeling and policy review may further clarify the staffing configurations necessary to support stable patrol operations and long-term execution of the department's strategic vision.

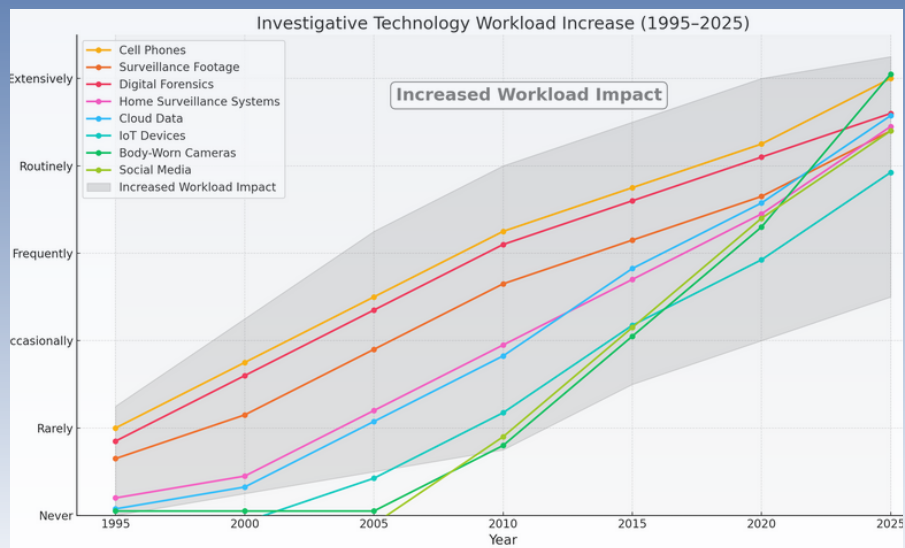
Investigations

Criminal investigations represent one of the most consequential service points provided by the St. Louis Park Police Department. For individuals and businesses that experience crime, the investigative process is often the primary means by which accountability, resolution, and a sense of justice are pursued. The quality, timeliness, and consistency of investigative follow-up directly influence victim confidence, community trust, and perceptions of public safety.

Not all crimes can be solved, and investigative outcomes vary based on evidence, witness cooperation, and offender behavior. However, many crimes are solvable, and investigative success is closely tied to organizational capacity. When sufficient investigative resources are available, cases receive timely follow-up, evidence is thoroughly reviewed, and investigative leads are pursued. When capacity is constrained, even cases with strong solvability factors may receive limited attention or delayed follow-up, affecting outcomes and victim experience.

The nature of investigative work itself varies widely. Some investigations are primarily administrative in nature, particularly cases where an offender has already been identified or arrested. Examples include retail thefts where suspects are taken into custody at the scene, domestic violence cases involving known parties, or incidents where probable cause is immediately established. While these cases may require less traditional investigative work, they still involve substantial documentation, coordination with prosecutors, victim communication, and compliance with statutory requirements.

Technology used in everyday life has significantly increased investigator workloads. Criminal prosecutors require all available evidence to be included in every case presented requiring in many cases multiple search warrants and review of extraordinary amounts of data.



In contrast, many cases require active investigative follow-up even when an offender is known. Witness interviews, corroboration of statements, evidence review, and case preparation remain essential steps to ensure legal sufficiency and prosecutorial success. Other investigations involve unidentified suspects and require sustained effort, analysis, and coordination to develop leads and build cases over time.

Criminal investigations have also become significantly more complex as technology has advanced. Modern cases routinely involve cell phones, surveillance cameras, license plate readers, financial records, social media activity, and other forms of digital evidence. The presence of additional evidence sources increases the potential for case resolution, but it also expands the number of steps required to complete an investigation. Reviewing, preserving, and analyzing digital evidence is time-intensive and often requires specialized skills and coordination.

Prosecutorial expectations have evolved alongside these technological changes. Today, prosecutors increasingly expect comprehensive investigative files that include cell phone records, digital communications, computer forensic analysis, and corroborating electronic evidence, particularly in serious felony cases. Meeting these expectations places additional demands on investigators and reinforces the importance of adequate capacity, training, and technical support.

Understanding investigations through this lens is essential to evaluating organizational readiness. Investigative capacity is not solely a function of caseload numbers, but of the time, expertise, and resources required to navigate increasingly complex cases while maintaining consistency, quality, and accountability. The sections that follow examine the department's investigative function with attention to these realities, focusing on capacity, sustainability, and alignment with the department's strategic vision.

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Current Conditions

The Investigations function of the St. Louis Park Police Department operates within a complex and demanding workload environment characterized by a high volume of Group A (Part 1 under UCR) offenses, significant case heterogeneity, and increasing cross-jurisdictional crime. Investigators are responsible for a broad range of violent, property, financial, and person-based crimes, many of which involve limited solvability factors or require coordination with external partners. Case intake is driven primarily by patrol activity and external reporting sources, including the Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (MAARC) and Hennepin County Child Protection Services. For context, the investigative unit received an additional 408 abuse-related cases in 2024 and 412 in 2023, adding materially to investigative demand.

Persons who are arrested for new crimes are entitled to a hearing or release within 36 hours, which adds time constraints to the investigation unit, which handles more than 800 adult and juvenile arrests annually

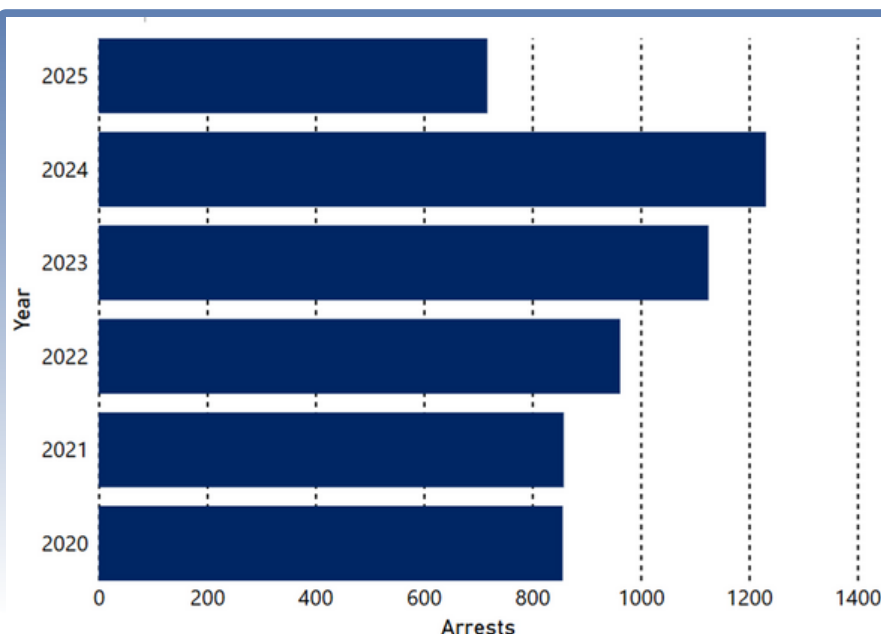


Chart depicts annual department arrest data. 2025 data was through Q3 2025.

Source: SLPPD

Investigative case assignments and prioritization rely heavily on supervisory triage rather than automated case management tools. Supervisors review reports to assess solvability, urgency, and investigative priority. This approach allows for professional judgment and flexibility but concentrates situational awareness in a small number of individuals and limits visibility into investigator workload distribution when supervisors are unavailable. The absence of a fully integrated case management system constrains real-time monitoring of case age, assignment balance, and follow-up status.

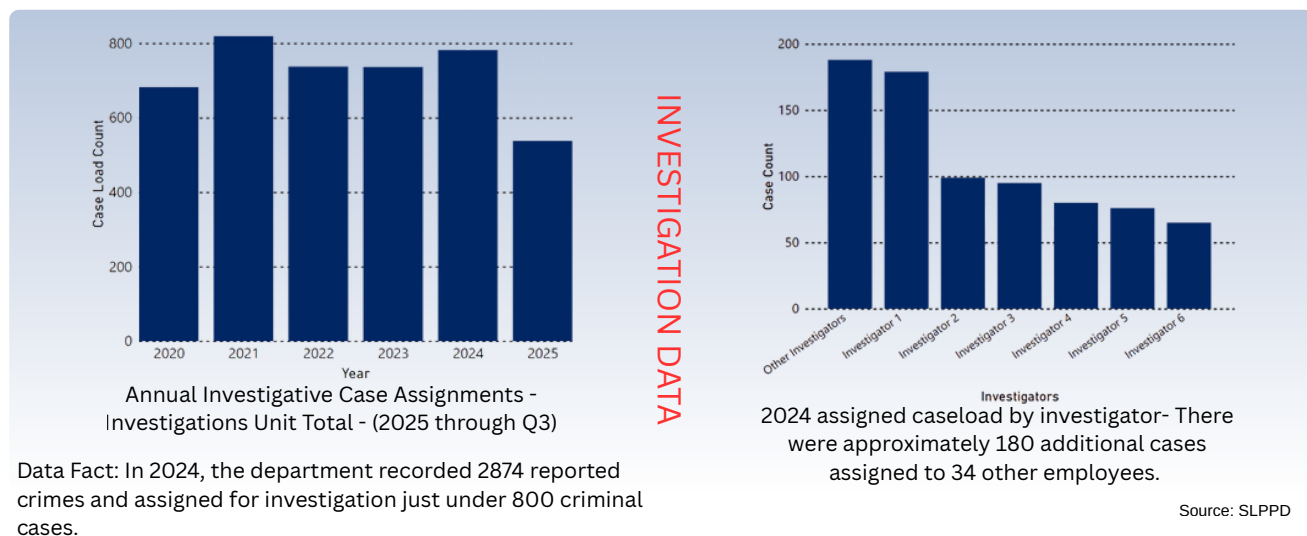
The unit operates largely under a generalist model, though de facto specialization has emerged in response to crime patterns and task force participation. Investigators carry responsibility for core casework while also supporting organized retail crime, auto theft, narcotics, internet crimes against children, school-related investigations, and task force obligations. Participation in regional task forces, including the West Metro Drug Force and the Secret Service Task Force, expands investigative capability but draws from the same limited investigator pool.



A review of assigned investigative cases over multiple years indicates that investigative capacity operates within a relatively stable and constrained assignment range, despite year-to-year fluctuations in reported crime and arrest activity. Between 2020 and 2024, the total number of cases formally assigned to investigators remained within a narrow band, ranging from 719 cases in 2020 to 932 cases in 2024. Annual assigned case totals were 931 in 2021, 885 in 2022, and 876 in 2023. During the same period, arrest activity varied significantly, increasing from 133 arrests in 2020 to 357 in 2023 and 342 in 2024. The relative stability of assigned investigative caseloads, despite fluctuating enforcement activity, indicates that investigative assignments are governed by functional capacity limits rather than overall incident volume.

Compounding these workload pressures is the department's staffing model, under which unfilled patrol shifts are routinely addressed through the redeployment of personnel from other functional areas to meet minimum patrol staffing requirements. This practice includes the redeployment of investigators into patrol capacity during staffing shortfalls. Available data indicates that current investigative staffing levels already require the department to forego investigation of a significant number of cases that possess solvability factors, supporting the conclusion that the investigative function is operating at or near a critical capacity.

The additional diversion of investigative resources to patrol further constrains throughput, resulting in cases that are likely solvable with dedicated investigative effort being closed prematurely or remaining unsolved. Over time, this dynamic increases the risk that repeat offenders remain unidentified and unchecked, reinforcing both investigative workload pressure and patrol demand.



Observed Capacity Strengths

Investigative personnel demonstrate strong professionalism, adaptability, and effective use of triage to prioritize cases with higher solvability and public safety impact. Clearance data shows strong performance in offenses typically driven by patrol arrest and immediate suspect identification, including violent crime, weapons offenses, and narcotics cases. These outcomes indicate sound investigative practices within the limits of available capacity.

Regional partnerships serve as important force multipliers. Participation in the West Metro Drug Task Force and the Secret Service Task Force provides access to specialized training, intelligence sharing, equipment reimbursement, and collaborative investigative opportunities that would be difficult to sustain independently. These partnerships enhance the department's ability to address complex and high-risk offenses that exceed local investigative capacity.

Investigators also benefit from professional analytical support. Crime analysis products and case investigative support including weekly and monthly intelligence bulletins, significantly enhance situational awareness and investigative efficiency. Without this analytical function, the department's current investigative staffing levels would be measurably insufficient to manage existing caseload demands, underscoring the importance of professional staff as a core component of investigative capacity.

Observed Capacity Constraints

The most significant constraint affecting investigations is staffing capacity relative to sustained case volume and complexity. Investigative supervisors are required to triage aggressively, resulting in some misdemeanor and property cases with solvability factors being deprioritized due to workload pressure. This constraint reflects capacity limits rather than investigative quality.

Analysis of 2024 case assignment data further illustrated this constraint. Investigative workload is highly concentrated among a small number of personnel. In 2024, one investigator was assigned 198 cases, while two additional investigators were assigned 114 and 108 cases, respectively. Collectively, these three investigators were responsible for more than 420 assigned cases during the year. By contrast, a number of sworn personnel recorded only one or two assigned cases, reflecting supervisory, administrative, or incidental involvement rather than primary investigative responsibility. This concentration indicates that investigative capacity is being sustained by a limited core of heavily burdened investigators, a common indicator of an organization operating at or beyond sustainable capacity.

Task force participation, while strategically valuable, further reduces available local investigative capacity when investigators are assigned without corresponding staffing offsets.

Technology limitations compound these pressures. The current CAD/RMS environment lacks robust case management functionality, automated workflows, and integrated dashboards. Investigators and supervisors rely on manual tracking, institutional knowledge, and informal processes to manage caseloads. This limits access to standardized performance metrics such as clearance rates by offense type, average case open time, and longitudinal workload distribution, and increases vulnerability to imbalance, delay, and succession risk.

While no single national standard exists for investigative caseloads, academic research and practitioner organizations provide useful context. Studies and practitioner guidance commonly cite investigative workloads of approximately 6–8 major cases per month, or 72–96 cases annually, with some agencies reporting upper ranges of 12–15 cases per month depending on offense type and complexity. Within this context, assignment levels exceeding 100 cases per investigator per year, and approaching 200 cases in a single year, indicate workload demands that substantially exceed commonly referenced capacity ranges and reinforce the conclusion that the Investigations function is operating at a critical minimum threshold.

Implications for Strategic Vision Execution

The Phase I strategic vision emphasizes accountability, follow-up, and problem-oriented policing. Investigative capacity constraints directly affect the department's ability to meet these expectations. While violent and high-risk cases are appropriately prioritized, limited capacity reduces the department's ability to consistently pursue mid-tier property and financial crimes that significantly influence community trust and perceptions of safety. Auto thefts for example, a recurring statistical offense category in St. Louis Park with 128 reported in 2024 and 178 reported in 2023 respectively, has a national clearance rate of nearly 7%. In St. Louis Park the clearance rate was 1.5% in 2024 and 5% in 2023.

Stakeholders expressed a desire for visible follow-through and resolution, particularly in cases involving repeat victimization, organized retail theft, auto theft, and fraud. When investigative capacity is constrained, these expectations are difficult to meet, reinforcing perceptions of unresolved crime despite strong patrol presence.

Historically, the department maintained a proactive victim notification practice in which reporting parties were informed when investigative leads had been exhausted and cases were being suspended absent new information. This practice provided transparency, closure, and trust-building communication. Interviews and operational reviews indicate that this service model has declined over time, not due to policy choice, but because of investigative workload pressure and the absence of automated case management and notification tools. The department's reduced ability to provide consistent case status communication represents a gap between community expectations for service and the department's current capacity to deliver that level of engagement.

The reliance on informal systems and individual expertise also presents a sustainability risk. As experienced investigators retire or transition, the absence of standardized workflows and integrated technology increases vulnerability to knowledge loss and service disruption, undermining long-term alignment with the strategic vision.

Investment Considerations

Investigative staffing levels are insufficient to absorb current caseload volume and complexity. Investigative assignments are being governed by capacity limits rather than solvability. Investigative outcomes would benefit from staffing and support models that better align investigative demand with functional capacity. Consideration may be given to civilian force multipliers such as additional crime analyst support, investigative assistants for video and data collection, and full-time property and evidence specialists to reduce sworn workload.

Technology modernization represents a critical enabler for investigative effectiveness. Integrated case management, evidence tracking, analytical dashboards, and automated victim notification tools would improve workload visibility, prioritization, accountability, and communication without increasing sworn staffing.

These considerations are intended to frame future analysis rather than prescribe specific actions. Additional evaluation of investigative workload, solvability patterns, and support functions would further clarify the conditions required to sustain investigative effectiveness and alignment with the department's strategic vision.

Specialty Units

Specialty units play an important role in delivering service outcomes that are difficult to achieve through routine patrol operations alone. While patrol officers are responsible for responding to a wide range of calls for service, specialty units are designed to provide focused attention, continuity, and expertise in specific areas such as behavioral health response, youth engagement, problem properties, and complex investigations. These units allow the department to move beyond incident-based response and invest in long-term solutions, relationship building, and proactive problem solving. By maintaining sustained contact with individuals, families, and community partners, specialty units help build trust, reduce repeat calls for service, and address underlying issues that contribute to ongoing public safety concerns. This approach enhances service quality and supports outcomes that are not easily attainable through traditional patrol deployment models.

Current Conditions

The St. Louis Park Police Department provides a broad array of specialty units and non-traditional service functions designed to extend the department's capacity beyond routine patrol response. These units address behavioral health response, school safety, youth diversion, crisis intervention, high-risk investigations, community outreach, electronic forensics, and regional violent crime enforcement that impact the St. Louis Park Community. Collectively, these functions represent a substantial institutional commitment to non-traditional policing strategies, long-term problem solving, and improved quality-of-life outcomes for individuals who live, work, and visit St. Louis Park.

Key specialty functions include the Behavioral Health Unit (BHU), School Resource Officers (SROs), participation in regional task forces such as the West Metro Drug Task Force, and the BCA Violent Crime Reduction Unit (VCRU), as well as the department's Special Services Task Force Officer (SSTFO) role responsible for electronic and digital forensic analysis. Additional specialty capacity is provided through community outreach programming, juvenile diversion partnerships, K-9 operations, reserve officers, and peer support.

At the time of this assessment, several specialty missions were not fully staffed. One School Resource Officer position was not deployable, creating a functional vacancy within the school safety and youth services model. The department's position within the BCA Violent Crime Reduction Unit was also unstaffed, temporarily reducing regional violent crime enforcement capacity.

Observed Capacity Strengths

Each specialty unit serves a distinct purpose and contributes uniquely to the department's non-traditional policing model. The Behavioral Health Unit, operating in partnership with Hennepin County Social Services and the St. Louis Park Fire Department, provides immediate response and sustained follow-up for individuals experiencing mental health crises, substance use issues, housing instability, and related challenges. In 2024, the BHU handled 2,459 calls for service, including 1,138 behavioral health-coded incidents and 369 follow-up calls, completing 414 follow-up contacts. These follow-ups, many of which occur outside initial response, are central to the department's strategy of reducing repeat calls and stabilizing high-need individuals.

School Resource Officers play a critical role in youth safety, early intervention, and prevention. Beyond daily school presence and relationship building, SROs are also responsible for investigating all child abuse and neglect reports occurring within city limits, in coordination with Hennepin County Child Protection Services. This function represents a significant investigative and follow-up workload that directly supports vulnerable populations and long-term community safety.

Regional task force participation significantly extends the department's enforcement and investigative reach. The West Metro Drug Task Force provides access to specialized training, intelligence, and investigative resources that would be difficult to sustain independently. The BCA VCRU role, when staffed, enhances the department's ability to address violent crime trends regionally. These partnerships have the potential to produce measurable enforcement outcomes and support public safety beyond St. Louis Park's borders.

The SSTFO role provides the department with essential electronic forensic capacity, including computer analysis, cellular phone data extraction, and digital evidence review. In current policing, electronic forensics is integral to nearly all serious criminal investigations. This role serves as a force multiplier across investigations, patrol, and specialty cases.

The department's decision to maintain its own Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) further distinguishes St. Louis Park from many peer agencies. Operating an internal dispatch center represents a significant financial and operational commitment, but it allows the department to maintain high quality service, local control, and close integration between dispatchers and field personnel. When coupled with highly functioning specialty units, this capability positions the department to deliver a level of service continuity and responsiveness that many regional agencies can no longer provide.

Observed Capacity Constraints

Despite their potential and demonstrated value, specialty units are supported by small teams and are highly sensitive to staffing fluctuations. Even when fully staffed under the current model, these functions operate with limited buffer capacity. Legal requirements and contractual obligations to provide employees with time off and training demands further reduce available time for this critical mission driven specialty work.

A recurring constraint is the routine redeployment of specialty officers into patrol roles to meet minimum staffing requirements. This practice affects BHU officers, SROs, task force participants, and other specialty assignments. While redeployment preserves immediate patrol coverage, it directly and further reduces the continuity, productivity, and long-term effectiveness of specialty units. Follow-up activities are delayed or suspended, partnerships are disrupted, and preventive work is deprioritized.

The SSTFO role illustrates this fragility. As the sole point of electronic forensic expertise, the role is tasked with supporting all department investigations involving digital evidence. Any diversion of this function, or staffing instability within it, creates investigative bottlenecks and delays that ripple across multiple case types.

Vacancies within specialty assignments further exacerbate these constraints. Unfilled SRO and VCRU positions reduce capacity in already thinly staffed functions, increasing reliance on remaining personnel and limiting program reach. As a result, specialty services often operate below their intended impact even when the department is nominally "fully staffed."

Implications for Strategic Vision Execution

The specialty units and non-traditional service functions described in this section are central to the strategic vision articulated in Phase I. That vision emphasized prevention, partnership, long-term problem solving, and improved quality-of-life outcomes for individuals and communities. The department's specialty units represent deliberate investments in these priorities and reflect a forward-thinking organizational design aligned with contemporary policing practices.

From an organizational design perspective, the department's specialty structure is sound. Behavioral health response, school-based services, youth diversion, electronic forensics, regional task force participation, community outreach, and internally operated dispatch collectively position the department to deliver proactive and relationship-centered policing. These functions are designed not only to respond to incidents, but to reduce repeat calls for service, interrupt cycles of harm, and strengthen community trust over time.

However, current staffing levels do not provide sufficient capacity to support this structure and its intended level of impact articulated by community stakeholders. There is continuity of service disruptions, follow-up activities are delayed or deferred, and long-term problem-solving capacity is diminished. These dynamic limits the department's ability to fully realize the preventive and demand-reduction benefits these programs were designed to deliver.

While the department has made a clear commitment to non-traditional policing and enhanced delivery service, the current staff capacity constrains their effectiveness. Over time, this erosion undermines the strategic intent of Phase I by remaining in a reactive service model and limiting the department's ability to achieve stated goals of community engagement, building trust, achieving sustained reductions in repeat offenders, high-frequency callers, and quality-of-life concerns.

Investment Considerations

The primary consideration is not whether the department's specialty structure is appropriate, but whether staffing levels and support resources are aligned to sustain it. The department's organizational design reflects a balanced and modern approach to policing; however, the staffing model does not currently provide the resilience necessary to support specialty functions alongside core patrol obligations.

In other words, specialty units are strategically aligned with the department's vision but are understaffed relative to their intended purpose.

Should the City and department elect to make strategic investments in both sworn and civilian professional staff, measurable and demonstrable impacts could reasonably be expected. These include reductions in repeat calls for service and repeat offenders, improved individual outcomes for high-need populations, strengthened partnerships with community and service providers, and increased consistency and effectiveness in outreach, prevention, and follow-up activities. These outcomes align directly with the objectives established in Phase I.

The broader context of police recruitment and retention in Minnesota further underscores the importance of role alignment. Law enforcement agencies statewide face persistent challenges in hiring and retaining licensed officers. In this environment, careful analysis of job functions indicates that civilian professional staff can significantly support non-traditional policing missions without requiring sworn authority. Expanding civilian roles where appropriate can increase organizational capacity while preserving sworn resources for duties that require licensure and enforcement authority.

One illustrative example is the Community Outreach function, which is currently staffed by sworn officers. While sworn presence adds value, many outreach activities do not require licensed authority and could be effectively performed by professional staff. Adjusting staffing models to incorporate civilian support in such roles could expand outreach capacity, improve continuity, and reduce reliance on hard-to-fill sworn positions.

Similarly, sustaining internally operated dispatch services, specialty investigative support, and electronic forensic capacity requires staffing models that recognize these functions as core service components rather than auxiliary roles. Without corresponding investments to support the department's existing structure, specialty programs will continue to operate below their potential, limiting the overall effectiveness of an otherwise well-designed service model.

Professional Staff and Support Functions

Over time, the scope and complexity of police support functions have expanded significantly. Records and administrative staff are no longer responsible solely for processing written police reports and citations. Today, these roles involve managing and maintaining large volumes of digital data generated across multiple technology platforms, including body-worn cameras, in-vehicle camera systems, digital evidence repositories, and electronic court filing systems. Reporting requirements have also become substantially more complex. The transition from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) system to the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) represents a fundamental shift in how crime data is categorized, validated, and reported, requiring greater detail, accuracy, and oversight.

This change has increased workload demands across the department, but has had a particularly pronounced impact on records personnel, who are responsible for ensuring data integrity, compliance, and timely submission. As a result, records unit staff are managing far more data, across more systems, and with higher expectations for precision and accountability than at any point in the department's history.

As the demands placed on police departments have evolved, professional support staff have become essential to the effective delivery of police services. These roles provide the administrative, technical, and compliance infrastructure that allows sworn personnel to focus on public safety, investigations, and community engagement. Records staff, analysts, dispatchers, and other professional personnel ensure that information is accurate, accessible, and managed in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. Their work supports transparency, accountability, and continuity across all department functions. In a technology-driven policing environment, professional support staff serve as force multipliers, enabling the department to meet expanding service expectations while maintaining data integrity, operational efficiency, and public trust.

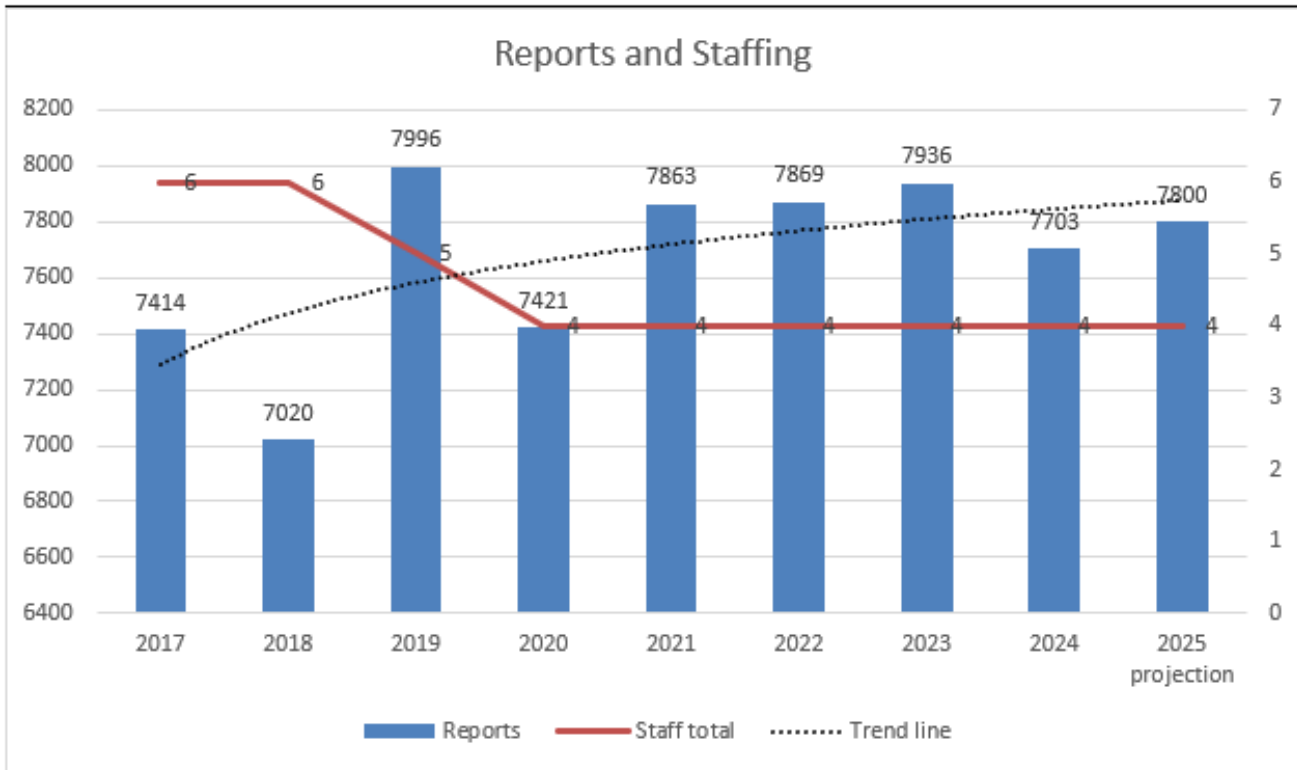
Current Conditions

Professional staff and support functions play a critical role in enabling the St. Louis Park Police Department's operational effectiveness, compliance, transparency, and service quality. These functions include records and property management, the department's internally operated Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), the intelligence and crime analysis function, and administrative support for department leadership. Collectively, these roles form the administrative and informational backbone of the department and directly support patrol operations, investigations, specialty units, and executive decision-making.

The Records and Property/Evidence functions support a broad range of responsibilities that extend well beyond traditional report processing. These duties include discovery coordination, body-worn and in-car camera dissemination, property and evidence management, background investigations, citation corrections, warrant processing, transcription, regulatory permitting, public data requests and required state and federal reporting. The scope and complexity of these responsibilities place sustained demand on a relatively small number of professional staff and create downstream impacts for investigations, patrol, and criminal prosecutions.

Significant workload analysis has been completed and reported by the records unit in several 2025 memos. This information was reviewed as part of this assessment and the table depicted on the following page was created in support of the internal workload analysis.

The department's PSAP allows direct control over call-taking and dispatch services. This model allows for close integration between dispatchers and field personnel, local familiarity with geography and call patterns, and a high degree of service continuity.



The above table was created by the SLPPD and compares a nine-year staffing profile overlaid with report volume.

Source SLPPD Memo Dated May 15, 2025

Operating an internal PSAP represents significant organizational and financial commitment, but one that can materially enhance service quality and responsiveness when adequately supported.

The intelligence and crime analysis function provides analytical support across the department, including investigative case assistance, data queries, and tactical analysis. At present, analytical capacity is heavily concentrated on supporting active investigations, reflecting investigative demand and case complexity.

Department leadership, including the Chief of Police and command staff, operates without dedicated executive, assistant, or clerical support. Senior leaders are therefore required to manage administrative coordination, scheduling, correspondence, document preparation, and routine process tasks in addition to their operational and strategic responsibilities.

Observed Capacity Strengths

Professional staff within the department demonstrate strong technical competence, adaptability, and commitment to service quality. Records personnel consistently meet statutory reporting requirements, discovery obligations, and internal service demands under challenging workload conditions. Operational adjustments and informal cross-coverage practices have allowed essential functions to continue despite limited staffing depth.

The department's internal PSAP represents a notable organizational strength. Many comparable agencies have transitioned dispatch services to regional centers, often reducing local familiarity and responsiveness. St. Louis Park's decision to retain an internal PSAP supports high service quality, rapid coordination, and strong operational integration between dispatch and field personnel.

The intelligence and crime analysis function serves as a force multiplier for investigative operations. Analytical support materially improves investigative efficiency, supports case solvability, and enhances situational awareness. Current investigative capacity is significantly augmented by this professional role.

Department leadership demonstrates strong engagement and accountability despite limited administrative support. Executive staff remain closely involved in operational oversight, interdepartmental coordination, and community engagement, reflecting a high level of professional commitment.

Observed Capacity Constraints

The primary constraint affecting professional staff and support functions is misalignment between staffing levels and workload. Records and property functions lack sufficient staffing resiliency to absorb routine leave, training, or workload surges without operational strain. As a result, staff operate with limited buffer capacity, increasing the risk of backlog, delay, and burnout during periods of increased demand.

The breadth of responsibilities assigned to records and property staff further compounds this constraint. Functions that are distributed across multiple civilian or administrative roles in other agencies are concentrated within a small number of positions, increasing vulnerability during absences or high-volume periods.

PSAP operations face similar fragility. Staffing shortages and solo-dispatch conditions reduce scheduling flexibility and increase fatigue. While the internal PSAP model provides significant service advantages, it requires sufficient staffing depth to sustain those advantages safely and consistently.

Analytical capacity is also constrained by workload concentration. Because the intelligence analyst's time is devoted almost entirely to investigative support, the department has limited capacity to use data proactively to inform deployment decisions, identify emerging risks, evaluate performance trends, or reduce activities that generate organizational or public risk. As a result, analytical resources are applied reactively rather than strategically.

An additional capacity constraint is the absence of dedicated executive or clerical support for department leadership. Without professional administrative assistance, senior leaders must personally manage a wide range of process-oriented tasks. This limits the time and attention available for long-range planning, organizational oversight, quality assurance, performance management, partnership development, and strategic coordination with City leadership. This model is atypical among similarly sized police departments and constrains executive effectiveness through time fragmentation rather than lack of expertise or intent.



The St. Louis Park Police Study (September 2024), prepared by BKV Group, examined whether the Police Department's current facility can meet today's operational demands and support future needs. Using staff input, facility condition assessments, space benchmarking, and long-range planning, the study found that the existing building is significantly undersized, aging, and no longer capable of supporting modern policing functions, training requirements, security needs, or effective community access. The study concluded that meaningful investment is required, with major renovation or new construction necessary to ensure the department can continue delivering professional, effective services to the community well into the future.

Police Department	Population (2024)	Facility Size
Eden Prairie, MN	61,500	72,733 GSF
Rosemount, MN	28,200	49,971 GSF
Burnsville, MN	64,800	102,312 GSF
Minnetonka, MN	52,000	50,733 GSF
St. Louis Park, MN	50,000	31,600 GSF*

*Existing St. Louis Park Police facility is size.

Implications for Strategic Vision Execution

The Phase I strategic vision emphasizes accountability, transparency, prevention, and long-term problem solving. Professional staff and support functions are essential to executing this vision. Records capacity affects investigative follow-through, victim communication, and public transparency. PSAP performance shapes response effectiveness, service continuity, and public trust. Intelligence and analysis capacity enables evidence-based deployment and proactive risk management.

Current capacity constraints limit the department's ability to fully realize these objectives and in fact are impacting the department's ability to deliver basic core services. When records and property functions are stretched, investigative continuity and service quality are affected. When PSAP staffing is thin, dispatcher wellness and operational resilience are compromised. When analytical capacity is consumed by immediate investigative needs, the department loses the ability to apply data strategically to reduce demand and improve outcomes.

Limitations in executive and administrative support further constrain leadership capacity by diverting senior staff attention away from long-range planning, quality assurance, and strategic execution. Together, these constraints create a gap between the department's forward-thinking organizational design and its ability to fully execute that design in practice.

Investment Considerations

Professional staff and support functions should be viewed and incorporated as core operational enablers rather than ancillary support. Strategic investment in records staffing, PSAP resiliency, analytical capacity, and executive support would strengthen every functional area of the department. To explore additional investment opportunities, St. Louis Park could consider taking on dispatching for neighboring communities.

"A property and evidence room is not just a warehouse for the storage of goods or materials; rather, it stores a large volume of unique items that range from narcotics and confiscated money to stolen art and bloodied clothes." This statement emphasizes the specialized nature of evidence storage and the need for meticulous management.

Office of Justice Programs (OJP)

<https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/not-just-bar-codes-bring-property-and-evidence-room-management>

Additional professional staffing in records and property functions would improve resiliency, reduce administrative burden on sworn personnel, and enhance compliance, service quality, and transparency. Sustaining an internal PSAP requires staffing models that support safe operations, training coverage, and scheduling flexibility, allowing the department to preserve a service capability that differentiates it regionally.

Expanding intelligence and crime analysis capacity would allow the department to move beyond reactive case support and apply data to deployment planning, performance measurement, risk reduction, and long-range strategy. Introducing dedicated executive or administrative support would multiply leadership effectiveness by enabling senior staff to focus on strategic oversight, organizational development, and execution of the Phase I vision.

These considerations are intended to inform future evaluation and decision-making rather than prescribe specific actions. Additional analysis of workload growth, staffing resilience, and professional support capacity would further clarify the conditions necessary to fully support execution of the department's strategic vision.

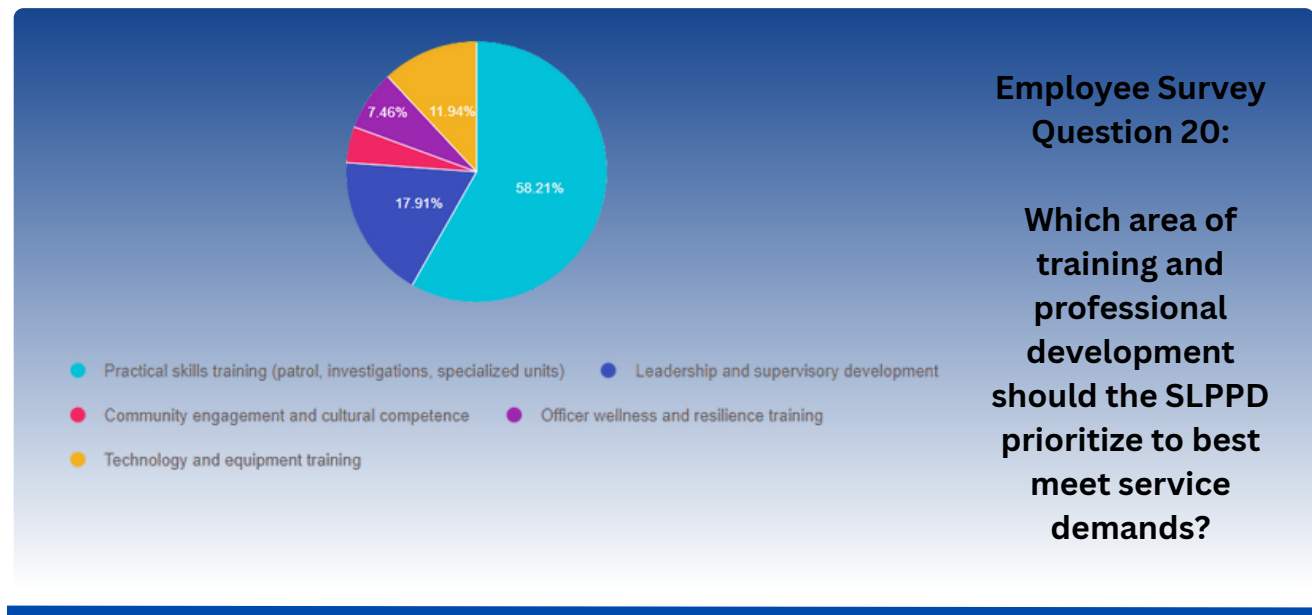
Department Training

Training is a foundational element of modern policing and directly influences officer safety, service quality, legal compliance, risk management, and public trust. Minnesota law enforcement agencies are required to meet a wide range of mandatory training standards established by the Legislature, the Minnesota POST Board, OSHA, and other regulatory bodies, as well as training requirements tied to specialized equipment and operational roles. These standards establish minimum expectations for professional practice, but they do not define the upper bounds of effective or high-performing policing.

Well-designed training systems do more than satisfy compliance requirements. They shape deployment practices, reinforce organizational culture, support consistent decision-making, and ensure that officers and professional staff are prepared to respond confidently and appropriately to complex and evolving situations. The assessment examined whether the St. Louis Park Police Department's training system is positioned to meet both mandatory requirements and the broader expectations articulated in the department's strategic vision.

Current Conditions

The St. Louis Park Police Department maintains a comprehensive training program designed to meet all statutory, regulatory, and certification requirements.



The department tracks required training hours, schedules mandated courses, and ensures personnel remain compliant with POST Board standards and other applicable requirements.

The department has one assigned employee to manage the training functions and uses a blended training delivery model that includes in-person instruction, scenario-based training, and online learning platforms. Online training is used extensively for recurring or lower-risk topics, allowing personnel to complete required coursework efficiently while minimizing disruption to daily operations. Department policy updates are also delivered primarily through online platforms, with personnel required to review and acknowledge changes.

At the same time, the department's staffing profile and deployment demands significantly influence how training is delivered. For non-patrol functions, some training can be scheduled within regular duty hours; however, as discussed above, for patrol operations, staffing levels do not provide sufficient flexibility to absorb training time without affecting minimum coverage. As a result, required patrol training is completed almost exclusively through overtime rather than being integrated into normal deployment planning. This approach allows the department to meet mandatory training requirements, but it also means that training competes with patrol coverage needs and adds to overall workload and fatigue rather than being treated as a built-in operational function.

Observed Capacity Strengths

The department demonstrates a strong commitment to training quality. Training topics are selected thoughtfully, and personnel consistently describe the training provided as professional, relevant, and credible. Leaders support personnel attending outside training to advance their skills in leadership, supervision, and specialized areas of policing. The department regularly meets or exceeds all POST Board training requirements, reflecting disciplined oversight and effective coordination.

A notable strength is the depth of internal expertise available within the department. Many officers and supervisors possess specialized knowledge and certifications that allow them to deliver training internally. This approach enhances relevance, builds credibility with staff, and reduces reliance on external vendors, allowing the department to provide high-quality instruction at a lower cost.

Personnel expressed confidence in the department's training instructors and trust in the content delivered. They generally believe that the department is willing to invest in their professional development with outside training opportunities, as well. When in-person training is provided, it is generally well-received and viewed as meaningful and applicable to daily work. This foundation positions the department well to expand or refine training approaches as capacity allows.

Observed Capacity Constraints

Despite strong training quality, the department faces significant capacity constraints related to training delivery and time allocation. The current staffing profile makes it extremely difficult to rotate personnel into training without affecting patrol coverage. In 2025, mandatory training was completed almost exclusively through the use of overtime, reflecting a deployment model that does not fully account for training time as an operational requirement.

Front-line staffing levels are calibrated tightly to minimum service demands. Required training, while mandatory, is not consistently built into deployment models in a way that allows training to occur during regular duty hours. This dynamic limits flexibility and increases reliance on overtime, cancellations, or compressed training schedules.

The use of online training also presents limitations. While online delivery is appropriate and effective for many low-risk, repetitive, or informational topics, it is less effective for more complex or high-risk subject areas. Topics such as use of force, law and principles, constitutional policing, procedural justice, legislative updates, ethics, and professional conduct are arguably more effectively delivered in environments that allow for discussion, clarification, and instructor interaction.

THE VALUE OF COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING

“Law enforcement training provides protection, reduces risks, and fosters growth for officers, agencies, and ultimately communities.”

“The high-risk profession of policing leaves little room for error; therefore, training is critical and should be the top priority of every law enforcement organization.” - FBI

Similarly, delivering policy updates exclusively through online acknowledgment limits opportunities to contextualize changes, address practical implications, and reinforce expectations through dialogue. Over time, this can reduce consistency in understanding and application, particularly in a department with a relatively young workforce.

Implications for Strategic Vision Execution

As noted above, the Phase I strategic vision emphasizes service delivery that far exceeds minimum industry standards, in order to continue to contribute to the vitality and safety of the community, and to maintain the trust of community members. Achieving these objectives depends heavily on the department's ability to deliver training that not only meets regulatory requirements, but also builds confidence, judgment, and consistency among personnel.

The department's workforce is relatively new to the profession, with nearly half of sworn personnel having fewer than five years of service. In this context, training plays an especially critical role in ensuring that officers and professional staff are well-prepared, current on legal standards, and confident in applying policy and law under real-world conditions. Training is one of the most effective tools available to reduce errors, mitigate risk, and reinforce professional standards before incidents occur.

While the St. Louis Park Police Department delivers training that exceeds minimum quality expectations, current capacity constraints limit the amount of training time available beyond mandated minimums. This creates tension between the department's aspirations to exceed industry standards and the operational realities of staffing and deployment.

Investment Considerations

The department's current staffing profile does not allow training to be treated as a routine operational function. Mandatory patrol training is completed almost exclusively through overtime, reinforcing the appearance of an understaffed deployment model.

Training must be treated as a core operational requirement rather than an auxiliary activity. Aligning training time more deliberately with deployment models would reduce reliance on overtime and allow training to occur more consistently during regular duty hours.

This would lessen impacts to employee wellness and likely improve student information retention, and individual employee performance in core areas. As staffing levels grow and stabilize, the department may also consider expanding training time in areas that carry higher risk to personnel, the community, and the city. Investing additional time in training environments that challenge thinking, allow student and instructor interaction, incorporates role-play or skill demonstration would support risk reduction, reinforce service quality, and strengthen public trust through achieving improved outcomes.

The department already demonstrates a strong foundation in training quality and expertise. The primary constraint is not instructional capability, but time. Shifting the training goal from simply meeting minimum requirements toward intentionally preventing errors, reducing risk, and protecting service quality would further align the training system with the ambitious objectives set forth in the department's strategic vision.

Technology, Systems, and Data Environment

Technology as a Core Operational Infrastructure

Technology is now interwoven into nearly every aspect of law enforcement services and functions as core operational infrastructure rather than a discrete support function. While police departments once relied primarily on handwritten reports, radio communication, and manual recordkeeping, contemporary policing depends on interconnected digital systems to deliver services, ensure accountability, and meet legal and community expectations.

Across patrol operations, investigations, specialty units, professional support functions, and executive leadership, technology now underpins routine work processes. Patrol officers rely on mobile data terminals, in-vehicle cameras, body-worn cameras, and real-time records access to document incidents, collect evidence, and communicate with dispatch and supervisors. Investigators depend on digital case files, electronic evidence, data queries, and forensic analysis tools to manage complex cases that routinely involve electronic devices, digital communications, and online activity. Specialty units leverage technology to coordinate with regional partners, track follow-up activities, and support non-traditional service delivery models such as behavioral health response and youth diversion.

The scope of technology integration extends beyond operational policing into administrative, legal, and governance functions. Records management, property and evidence tracking, digital discovery, electronic court filings, data reporting, and compliance auditing are all technology-driven processes. Expectations for transparency, timely disclosure, and accurate reporting have expanded significantly, increasing reliance on systems that can manage large volumes of digital information efficiently and reliably.

As technology has become more central to policing, its role has shifted from supporting documentation to shaping how work is performed. The effectiveness of officers, investigators, and professional staff is increasingly influenced by how well technology reduces administrative burden, eliminates redundant steps, and supports decision-making. When systems are well integrated and designed around workflows, they function as capacity multipliers. When they are fragmented or underutilized, they introduce friction, consume staff time, and constrain organizational effectiveness.

Understanding technology as a foundational element of policing is essential to assessing organizational readiness. Capacity limitations in technology affect not only efficiency, but also service quality, accountability, and the department's ability to adapt to evolving demands. For this reason, the assessment of technology in Phase II focuses not on individual systems in isolation, but on how the department's overall technology environment supports or constrains execution of the strategic vision articulated in Phase I.

Current Conditions

The St. Louis Park Police Department relies on a wide range of technology systems to support all areas of the department - specifically patrol operations, investigations, records processing, dispatch, and administrative functions. These systems are integral to daily operations and enable the department to meet legal, evidentiary, and service obligations in a modern policing environment.

Assessors observed that the department's technology platforms have largely been implemented to support specific functional needs. As a result, systems tend to operate independently, with each performing its primary role effectively. In practice, this means that personnel often interact with multiple systems to complete a single operational or administrative process. While workable, this approach reflects an environment where technology supports individual functions rather than end-to-end workflows.

Several of the department's core technology platforms could offer additional value if configured or modernized to emphasize efficiency, automation, and interoperability. Opportunities exist to reduce manual handling of information, streamline routine processes, and better align system functionality with how work is performed across the organization.

The Records Management System plays a central role in nearly all police department functions, including patrol documentation, investigative case management, records processing, discovery preparation, and reporting.

At present, the RMS functions primarily as a repository and compliance tool. Greater integration with the department's public-facing online reporting function and with property and evidence systems could allow information to flow more seamlessly, reducing duplicative effort and staff time devoted to routine processing.

Overall, the department's technology environment supports core operational needs, but has not yet been fully leveraged as a capacity multiplier. As service demands increase and staffing resources remain constrained, continued modernization and alignment of technology systems represent an opportunity to enhance efficiency, support employee productivity, and strengthen service delivery without altering the department's underlying service model.

Observed Capacity Strengths

The St. Louis Park Police Department has demonstrated a consistent ability to adopt and use technology to support core policing functions and meet evolving legal, evidentiary, and service expectations. Across patrol, investigations, records, and dispatch, personnel routinely rely on technology to document incidents, manage information, and deliver services in a timely and accountable manner.

Technology systems currently in place support reliable execution of essential functions. Patrol officers are able to complete electronic reports, access information in the field, and capture digital evidence through vehicle and body-worn camera systems. Investigators depend on digital case files, electronic evidence, and analytical queries to support complex investigations that increasingly involve electronic devices and online activity. Records and property staff use technology to manage discovery, reporting, and evidence tracking in compliance with statutory requirements.



The department has also expanded the use of technology to improve accessibility and service delivery. Public-facing online reporting options provide an alternative pathway for community members to report certain incidents without requiring in-person or patrol response. These tools offer convenience to the public and help manage patrol workload for lower-priority incidents.

The internally operated PSAP further illustrates effective use of technology in service delivery. Dispatch systems support real-time call handling, officer status monitoring, and coordination with field personnel. When combined with local knowledge and direct operational integration, these systems contribute to efficient response and strong situational awareness.

Personnel across the department demonstrate adaptability and technical competence in navigating multiple systems to complete their work. Institutional knowledge, training, and experience allow staff to maintain continuity of operations even in a complex technology environment. In several areas, staff have identified and utilized available system features that improve efficiency, such as electronic templates and automated functions, indicating a readiness to leverage additional capabilities as they become available.

These strengths indicate that the department has the technological foundation in place to meet core operational needs and provide a platform upon which future integration, workflow optimization, and efficiency enhancements can be built to further strengthen organizational capacity.

Observed Capacity Constraints

The most significant technology-related constraint is the lack of integration between core systems. The RMS, online reporting platforms, property and evidence management systems, dispatch systems, and analytical tools do not share data seamlessly. As a result, information must be manually transferred or verified across platforms, increasing workload and the potential for delay or error.

The Records Management System serves as a central repository for incident and investigative data; however, its current configuration does not fully support efficient case management, automated workflows, or advanced reporting across the organization. Users frequently rely on manual processes to track case progress, reconcile data fields, and prepare information for internal review, external reporting, or discovery. Assessors also observed that the system includes an AI-enabled report writing function that was available to and used by some front-line personnel, while other staff did not have access to, or were not utilizing, this capability. The uneven availability and use of efficiency-enhancing features limit their overall impact. Given the department's current staffing shortfalls, a more consistent evaluation and implementation of RMS functions that improve report writing efficiency and reduce administrative burden would represent an opportunity to maximize front-line output and better align technology use with operational capacity constraints.

The department's online reporting program, while valuable for the public to efficiently report minor incidents, was not fully integrated into downstream workflows. Reports submitted online require a police officer to then manually write a report, validate and contact the original complainant. Modern online reporting systems that are fully integrated into a department's RMS can generate a filed police report and trigger downstream department investigative processes effectively by passing the need for an officer to handle the same information.

Property and evidence management technology similarly lacks full integration with investigative and records systems. Tracking, reconciliation, and purge identification often require separate processes and manual cross-checking. This increases administrative burden on records staff and investigators and contributes to delays in evidence handling and case closure.

Across systems, limited emphasis has been placed on workflow optimization, automation, or user-centered design. Technology largely reflects a compliance-driven configuration rather than one designed to reduce administrative burden, support decision-making, or improve organizational efficiency.

Implications for Strategic Vision Execution

The Phase I strategic vision emphasizes accountability, transparency, prevention, and long-term problem solving. Technology plays a critical role in enabling these outcomes. Fragmented systems and manual workflows reduce the department's ability to operate efficiently, apply data strategically, and sustain non-traditional policing models.

When technology does not support efficient information flow, staff time is diverted from higher-value activities such as investigative follow-up, community engagement, proactive problem solving, and analytical review. This reinforces reactive service delivery and limits the department's capacity to use data to inform deployment decisions, identify emerging risks, or measure program effectiveness.

Technology limitations also affect transparency and service quality. Delays in data reconciliation, case tracking, and reporting reduce the department's ability to provide timely updates to victims, partners, and the public. These constraints directly affect the department's ability to meet the service and communication expectations articulated during Phase I engagement.

Taken together, the current technology environment constrains the department's ability to fully leverage its forward-thinking organizational structure and specialty programs. The gap between system capability and organizational need limits execution of the strategic vision, even where intent and professional commitment are strong.

Investment Considerations

To optimize operational efficiency and potential effectiveness, technology should be leveraged as a strategic enabler that supports long-term organizational effectiveness rather than as a static collection of independent tools. As the department looks ahead over the next two decades, technology investments represent an opportunity to improve efficiency, increase effectiveness, and maximize the impact of the department's allocated workforce.

An effective technology investment strategy should focus not only on system functionality, but on how technology supports streamlined processes, reduces redundant steps, and minimizes manual work across the organization. Integrating core systems, improving workflow design, and automating routine tasks can allow sworn and professional staff to devote more time to higher-value activities such as problem solving, investigation, community engagement, and strategic planning.

Improvements in Records Management System functionality, online reporting integration, and property and evidence system connectivity have the potential to produce measurable efficiency gains without changing service expectations. Similarly, enhanced data integration and reporting capabilities would strengthen analytical functions, support performance measurement, and enable more consistent evidence-based decision-making across patrol, investigations, and specialty units.

Technology platforms and service delivery models will continue to evolve over the coming decades. As such, future technology decisions should consider not only current operational needs, but adaptability, interoperability, and scalability over time. Systems that are designed to evolve alongside organizational processes are more likely to support sustained effectiveness and reduce the need for frequent, disruptive system replacements.

These considerations are intended to inform future evaluation and planning rather than prescribe specific solutions. Additional assessment of system interoperability, process design, and user experience would further clarify how technology investments can best support the department's long-term capacity to execute its strategic vision.

Readiness Assessment and Path Forward

Integrated Readiness Findings

The St. Louis Park Police Department has developed a forward-thinking organizational structure that aligns closely with the strategic vision articulated in Phase I. Across patrol operations, investigations, specialty units, and professional support functions, the department demonstrates a clear commitment to non-traditional policing, long-term problem solving, and service models designed to improve quality-of-life outcomes.

At the same time, the Phase II assessment indicates that current staffing levels, support capacity, and system integration do not fully support execution of that vision at the scale or consistency envisioned. In multiple functional areas, the department is operating at or near a critical minimum capacity, relying on individual effort, informal workarounds, and cross-functional redeployment to sustain baseline service delivery.

This pattern is consistent across sworn and civilian functions. Patrol staffing is calibrated tightly to minimum deployment thresholds. Investigative capacity is constrained by a stable assignment ceiling that does not scale with reported crime volume. Specialty units deliver high-value services but lack sufficient protection from routine redeployment or capacity to absorb routine staffing absences without service disruptions. Professional staff functions support an unusually broad scope of responsibilities with limited staffing depth. Technology systems meet core compliance needs but are not optimized to reduce workload or improve efficiency across the organization.

Taken together, these conditions indicate that the department is directionally aligned with its strategic vision but capacity-constrained in its ability to fully realize that vision under current conditions.

Key Risks and Dependencies

The most significant risk identified through this assessment is misalignment between organizational design and available capacity. The department has intentionally built service models that emphasize prevention, follow-up, partnership, and non-traditional problem solving. However, insufficient staffing depth and system integration limit the department's ability to sustain those models consistently.

A related dependency is the department's reliance on specialty units, professional staff, and individual expertise to absorb workload pressures. While this approach has allowed the department to maintain service quality, it reduces resiliency and increases vulnerability to staffing fluctuations, retirements, training demands, and leave utilization.

Technology fragmentation presents an additional risk. Siloed systems and manual workflows increase administrative burden and limit the department's ability to use data proactively to inform deployment, manage risk, and evaluate outcomes. Without improvements in integration and workflow design, technology will continue to function as a compliance tool rather than a capacity multiplier.

Leadership capacity is also affected by limited administrative support. Senior leaders devote substantial time to process and coordination tasks, reducing available time for long-range planning, quality assurance, and strategic execution. This dynamic constrains the department's ability to move deliberately from vision to sustained implementation.

Conditions Required for Successful Execution

Successful execution of the Phase I strategic vision will directly depend on aligning staffing, support functions, and technology with the department's existing organizational structure. The assessment indicates that the structure itself is sound, but that additional capacity is required to support it effectively.

Key conditions for success include sufficient staffing depth to protect specialty and non-traditional functions, professional support capacity that enables compliance and transparency without over-reliance on sworn personnel, and technology systems that reduce redundancy and improve efficiency. Equally important is the ability to deploy analytical resources beyond reactive case support to inform strategy, deployment decisions, and risk reduction.

The department's internally operated PSAP represents a strategic asset that, when adequately supported, can enhance service quality and operational integration. Similarly, civilian professional roles offer opportunities to expand capacity in areas that do not require sworn authority, particularly in a challenging recruitment and retention environment.

Phase II does not prescribe specific actions or investments. Instead, it provides a foundation for informed governance. The findings indicate that, with deliberate alignment of resources and capacity, the St. Louis Park Police Department is well positioned to advance its strategic vision and continue delivering high-quality, community-centered policing over the coming decades.

End of Phase II

Appendix I

The Phase I qualitative research process was highly input-intensive, gathering from both internal and external stakeholders from a wide range of perspectives and was not statistically driven. Department employees were engaged through:

- A confidential online survey open to all employees, in which 77.17% (71 employees) submitted answers.
- Group interviews of front-line personnel in every unit, sworn and non-sworn, including all four patrol shifts.
- A group interview with patrol sergeants separate from their respective teams.
- Individual interviews with command staff leaders and non-sworn supervisors.

We also sought to understand the department “by the numbers,” reviewing an extensive data set that will also inform Phase II.

Because the SLPPD is an integral part of the City of St. Louis Park, city leaders were involved as well:

- The City Manager reviewed our approach and conducted a preliminary interview before we began.
- The City Manager and Deputy City Manager were interviewed in the course of the project.
- Two group interviews were conducted, including all department heads in the city.
- Because of the special nature of public safety collaboration, the Fire Chief was interviewed independently.
- Elected officials participated primarily through phone call interviews.

Finally, direct community input was gathered through the collaborative efforts of the SLPPD, the City’s Community Engagement team, and The Axtell Group. Our aim is to understand the needs, perspectives, and opinions of community residents, leaders, and representative groups and organizations. Methods include a written questionnaire that is being proactively distributed to communities and facilitated group listening sessions. These efforts are ongoing as we move from Phase I to Phase II of this engagement, but the learning from them to date has been integrated into this Phase I report.

At a recent check, the questionnaire had been emailed to more than 350 people and remains available to community members. So far, 127 people have responded, in whole or in part. Currently, those who responded have been only somewhat reflective of the community at large: 75% are age 40 or older, most are homeowners, and 79% identify as White.

In all, the following groups were invited to participate in listening sessions:

Community Leaders

- Board and Commissions Members
- HRC
- PMAC
- PAC
- Vision 4.0 Community Committee
- VFW
- Rotary Club
- Neighborhood Leaders
- Neighborhood Leader
- Block Captains

Jewish Community

- Beth El Synagogue
- Torah Academy
- Sholom Home
- Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC)

Somali Community

- Multi-Cultural Liaisons
- New American Academy
- Oak Park Village
- Somali Community Leader
- Somali School Board Member

Hispanic Community

- Multi-Cultural Liaisons
- New American Academy
- Mexico City Café

Faith-Based Communities

- Beth El Synagogue
- Thai Cultural Council
- Westwood Lutheran Church
- Marantha Seventh-day Adventist Church (African Church)
- Holy Family Catholic Church

Rental Communities (full spectrum)

- Sparc Group
- Union Park Flats (affordable housing)
- Hamilton House (affordable housing)
- The Mera (Bigos Property)
- Arbor Court Apartments
- Somerset Oaks
- Sela Properties
- Mission Apartments (affordable housing)
- Oak Park Village
- Wayside Housing Program
- Wayside Supporting Housing (affordable housing)
- Rise on 7
- PPL Affordable Housing (Louisiana Court Apartments)
- Kleinman Property Management

Schools and Education-Oriented Groups

- SLP HS School Cabinet
- Benilde St. Margaret HS
- Children's First
- Community Education
- Friends of Arts
- Multi-Cultural Liaisons
- SLP Library
- SOAR (adult education with disabilities)
- Torah Academy
- Groves Academy
- SLPHS Student Council
- SLPHS Students Organized for Anti-Racism (SOAR)
- Holy Family Academy

Senior Citizens

- Lenox Senior Center
- Sholom Campus Admin
- Senior Police Academy Graduates
- Risor Senior Living

Women

- League of Women Voters (SLP Chapter)

Business Leaders

- Volo at Texa Tonka
- Mexico City Café
- Park Nicollet
- The Block restaurant
- SPARC Group
- Home Depot
- Park Nicollet/ Methodist Hospital
- Park Nicollet Foundation
- TJ Maxx
- AC West End Hotel
- Kohl's
- Courtyard by Marriott
- Trailways Apartments
- Target Knollwood
- Double Tree Hotel
- Target Hwy. 100
- q. Homewood Suites

Non-Profit Organizations

- SLP Rotary Club
- STEP
- VFW
- Wayside
- PPL

Other

- Three Rivers Parks District
- SLPPD BHU Social Worker
- LGBTQ+ ERG Members
- SLP ARM (BHU)
- SLPPD BHU Officers
- COPE

Appendix II

Employee Survey Questions

Administered via anonymous link to all SLPPD employees

Q1. This best describes my role.

Q2. This best describes my role.

Q3. I have served SLPPD for this long.

Q4. SLPPD has the staffing levels needed to effectively carry out its mission and values

Q5. SLPPD provides the training and professional development necessary to fulfill its mission and values.

Q6. SLPPD has the technology and equipment required to support its mission and values.

Q7. Which area should SLPPD prioritize to strengthen its ability to fulfill its mission and values over the next 5–10 years?

Q8. Internal communication (briefings, emails, leadership messaging) is clear, effective, and supports SLPPD's mission and values.

Q9. Supervisors and command staff are approachable, responsive, and demonstrate the mission and values of SLPPD in their leadership.

Q10. I feel my input is valued in decision-making processes that affect SLPPD's mission and values.

Q11. Which area of communication or leadership should SLPPD prioritize to best support its mission and values?

Q12. SLPPD fosters a workplace that is respectful and inclusive of diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

Q13. My workload is manageable while meeting the current service demands.

Q14. SLPPD has adequate staffing levels to meet the current service demands.

Employee Survey Questions (cont.)

Q15. Specialized units (e.g., Behavioral Health, K9, SWAT) receive the resources and support needed to meet the current service demands.

Q16. Which staffing or resource area should SLPPD prioritize to best meet the current service demands?

Q17. SLPPD provides adequate training opportunities to perform my duties effectively while balancing the demands of current service needs.

Q18. I have enough time and staffing support to participate in training and professional development opportunities.

Q19. SLPPD offers sufficient resources and access to training programs that prepare staff to meet current and future service demands.

Q20. Which area of training and professional development should SLPPD prioritize to best meet service demands?

Q21. SLPPD has adequate staffing to effectively balance community policing and engagement with responding to current service demands.

Q22. SLPPD has the staffing and resources necessary to support both community engagement and timely response to service demands.

Q23. SLPPD's current deployment allows officers and professional support staff to dedicate sufficient time to building trust and relationships with the community while addressing service demands.

Q24. Which area should SLPPD prioritize to better balance community policing with service demands?

Q25. SLPPD provides adequate resources to support employee wellness, including mental health, peer support, and work-life balance.

Q26. I have enough time and staffing support to maintain a healthy work-life balance while meeting current service demands.

Employee Survey Questions (cont.)

Q27. Which area of wellness support should SLPPD prioritize to best support employees?

Q28. Workload, scheduling, or exposure to critical incidents negatively impacts my wellness.

Q29. How should the SLPPD adjust to prepare for the next 10–20 years to be successful?
(Open text response)

Q30. If you could change one thing about SLPPD today to prepare for the future, what would it be? (Open text response)

Q31. What are you most proud of about working at SLPPD? (Open text response)