



Independent Evaluation of Law Enforcement Services

*Executive Summary
And
Key Findings and Recommendations*

Prepared for:

Vermont General Assembly

Prepared by:

The Public Safety Strategies Group



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And
Key Findings and Recommendations***

February 20, 2009

Submitted to:

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Executive Summary

The following provides an overview of the Independent Evaluation of Law Enforcement Services (herein referred to as the Study) in the State of Vermont (herein referred to as the State), key findings, recommendations and next steps contained in this report.

Background

Pursuant to Act No. 90 of the 2008 Acts of Vermont, the Vermont Legislature commissioned this Study. The mission of the Study included the review of the roles and responsibilities of various State-funded law enforcement agencies and their impact on local and county law enforcement. An outcome of the Study was to define future roles, interactions, and responsibilities for all disparate law enforcement agencies, thereby determining the most effective and efficient methodology to improve the level of services offered to Vermont citizens.

The assessment of policing services in the State is not new; a number of studies have been conducted on the issues presented in the report. For a multitude of reasons the prior recommendations were not implemented. Despite the fact that the agencies were reluctant to enact change in the past, the project Steering Committee was firm in its resolve to move forward with the Study to obtain recommendations to set a new direction for future law enforcement services.

The State is at a crossroads; increasing demands on law enforcement and the inability to increase policing budgets forces the State to choose between either keeping pace with the demands of, or not providing policing services that citizens are accustomed to receiving. The lack of 24 hour per day police coverage in all State areas has been presented as a major concern, as has the increased demand on police services.

The findings and recommendations contained in this report are based on the current status of law enforcement services in the State and provide strategies for the State to plan strategically for the future.

Methodology

The Study was completed using a variety of primary data collection strategies, including interviews, surveys, data analysis and working group meetings. In addition, secondary data collection occurred through the review of previous studies, research of best practices, review of annual reports and analysis of strategies used in other areas.

The following summarizes the data collection efforts:

- Over 100 interviews with law enforcement officers.
- Collection of 600 law enforcement officer surveys.
- Presentation to Vermont League of Cities and Towns Annual Meeting.
- Public meetings (one north and one south).
- Working group meetings.
- Steering Committee meetings.
- Analysis of 5 years of law enforcement data.
- Interviews/Information collected from other states.
- Annual Reports, Strategic Plans and related material.

This methodology ensured that information was gathered at all levels from agencies participating in the review, and provided for a feedback process through the participation of a Steering Committee.

The information collected, along with conducting 100 interviews, shaped the findings and recommendations provided in the report.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

At the conclusion of the data collection, the Consultants determined there were three general options for future implementation of police services for State agencies:

- Maintain the status quo.
- Integrate all sworn police into the Vermont State Police.
- Develop a structure that consolidates the approach to police services, while allowing the identity of specialized units to be maintained.

The guiding principle and basic approach to developing the recommendations was evaluating how to “do more with less”: improving the coordination and communication among law enforcement officers while simultaneously minimizing the impact on the budget as requested by the Legislature. This can be achieved through the creation of a new division within the Department of Public Safety (DPS). The individual appointed to lead the Division should have equal standing with the other DPS Division Directors.

The primary law enforcement agencies recommended for realignment include:

- Department of Fish and Wildlife, Division of Law Enforcement
- Department of Motor Vehicles, Enforcement and Safety Division
- Department of Liquor Control, Education, Licensing and Enforcement

Each of these agencies would fall under the new division within DPS. During the transition it is recommended that the Directors/Colonel of these agencies remain with

the agency to aid in continuity of operations. Once the current staff leaves the position, the position should not be filled.

The recommendations do not include a change in uniforms, vehicles or general operations. Each division will maintain its identity and focus on its specific mission, but will work closer with each other and the State Police to streamline and improve operations.

In addition to the realignment, the recommendations include the following:

- Enhanced Coordination and Training of Specialized Units
- Consolidation and Streamlining of Grants
- Coordination of Crime Analysis
- Regionalization of Municipal Police Services

The outcomes based on the recommendations include increased communication, coordinated and strategic planning, resource sharing and cost savings as a result of the consolidation of services and the eventual decrease in Director level positions. The recommended changes will not impact the core mission of the individual agencies, but will ensure a unified approach to law enforcement in the State and provide efficient and effective service delivery to those who live, work or travel in Vermont.

Report Overview

The following provides detailed findings and recommendations of the Independent Evaluation of Law Enforcement Services conducted from August of 2008 through January of 2009.

Background

Pursuant to Act No. 90 of the 2008 Acts of Vermont, the Vermont Legislature commissioned this Study. The mission of the Study included the review of the roles and responsibilities of various State-funded law enforcement agencies and their impact on local and county law enforcement. An outcome of the Study was to define future roles, interactions, and responsibilities for all disparate law enforcement agencies, thereby determining the most effective and efficient methodology to improve the level of services offered to Vermont citizens.

This report contains the following sections:

Methodology

This section outlines PSSG's approach to primary and secondary data collection and analysis, and describes the scope, key evaluation questions, and data gathering.

Comparison to Other Policing Strategies

This section provides information on the structure of other state law enforcement services and municipal strategies related to regionalization.

State of Vermont Overview

This section discusses basic demographics and information about the State, as well as information on the impact of the budget cuts.

This section discusses steps the State can employ as it further examines and transitions toward the report's recommendations.

Study Methodology

This section outlines PSSG's assessment approach for primary and secondary data collection and analysis, and describes the scope, key evaluation questions, and data gathering.

Scope of the Assessment

PSSG conducted the assessment under contract with support from the Secretary of Administration's Office and a project Steering Committee.

The members of the Steering Committee included:

- The Secretary of Administration's Office
- Commissioner - Department of Public Safety
- Colonel - Fish and Wildlife
- Director - Liquor Control
- Director - Department of Motor Vehicles
- Representative - Sheriff's Association
- Representative (2) - Chiefs of Police Association
- State Senate
- State Attorney's Office

The Steering Committee developed the following components for the study to serve as the basis of the evaluation.

Key Evaluation Areas

- Identify the various state policing and enforcement services, their respective core missions and priorities, areas of specialized training and expertise, and the fiscal relationships among these services.
- Review and evaluate options for making state policing and enforcement services more effective and more equitably distributed.
- Review strategies employed by other states and agencies which could be replicated in Vermont to improve efficiencies.

Data Gathering

The first step was to gather information through secondary and primary sources. PSSG requested information from each agency on staffing, budgets, strategic plans, training, deployment, specialized services, and statistical data related to calls for services and incidents.

The following describes the key data elements used for the project:

Agency Data

The Department of Public Safety provided records related to calls for services and law enforcement responses. Only those agencies using the Spillman records management system were provided. Of the agencies using Spillman, Colchester, Barre City, Barre Town, Essex, and Richmond opted out of the Study. PSSG reviewed records covering the time period January 1, 2003 through December 31, 2008.

Staffing Records

PSSG received varying levels of staffing information. Some agencies did not provide any staffing information other than current total strengths; others provided a yearly breakdown by position for the review period of January 1, 2003 through December 31, 2008.

Law Enforcement Outreach

Surveys

An anonymous survey was created and opened to all sworn law enforcement officers in the State. Administration of the community surveys was electronic. An email was sent to every law enforcement officer having a state-issued email. The process used an email distribution vendor to ensure delivery and separate emails from the State distribution controls. The Study relied on the Steering Committee members to ensure that other agencies were appropriately notified. The survey was hosted electronically using a vendor portal, again, in an effort to separate the survey from internal systems. A total of 600 officers responded to the survey. Information gathered through the survey informed the findings and recommendations in the report.

Interviews

PSSG conducted more than 100 individual interviews with representatives from each agency participating on the steering committee. PSSG was required to conduct interviews covering 25 specific service areas. PSSG over-sampled with respect to the interviews to provide additional opportunities for input and agency participation.

Working Group Meetings

Two separate working group meetings were held. The first was a day-long session with Steering Committee members. The second was a day-long session held with a different set of representatives from each agency. The purpose of these sessions was to discuss initial findings and test early assumptions as a means to develop final report recommendations.

Community Outreach

Interviews

PSSG conducted two interviews with staff members from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) to discuss community-based issues related to policing in the State. The VLCT had previously prepared an informational brochure for distribution to communities seeking solutions to their law enforcement needs. The topics “Vermont State Police Services”, “Contractual Police Services”, “Regional Police Services” and “Single Agency Approaches” have been discussed on several occasions within the VLCT membership and the interviews served to review the past information.

PSSG also worked with the VLCT to devise a strategy to inform the citizenry of the Study and its purpose.

Presentations

The VLCT arranged for PSSG representatives to brief City and Town Administrators during the annual fall meeting. PSSG staff provided an overview of the Study’s purpose, approach, and strategies and fielded questions from participants. During the session, the participants were informed of the statewide survey and PSSG requested that information be shared with constituents.

Meetings

The VLCT organized two additional meetings with representative Boards of Selectmen and interested members of the public. These meetings were held in St. Albans and Rutland. The locations of the meetings were based on the variety of strategies the communities were using to provide law enforcement coverage (Vermont State Police, Sheriffs, Constables and Municipal Police) to the residents and businesses.

Survey

The third outreach strategy was an online survey open to all residents and business owners in the State. To promote the survey the VLCT posted a link to the survey on its website as did the Vermont Agency of Administration. With a less than desirable initial survey response, the survey was re-opened and additional outreach conducted.

Despite these efforts, the number of respondents did not reach a statistically valid sample. While PSSG has reviewed the results, they will not be published as part of this report: if needed, the State can re-open the survey at a later date as recommendations are implemented, without compromising the data.

Summary

The Study's assessment approach ensured review of all data resources available and afforded the opportunity for both law enforcement and community members to participate in the process of shaping future strategies for effective and efficient services.

The research conducted revealed significant limiting factors with respect to use of technology and maximization of the law enforcement resources in the State. It was also discovered that, despite inferences to dramatic shifts, crime trends have remained relatively unchanged. What have appeared to change are the expectations of government leaders and community members with regard to the delivery of services.

The assessment also revealed that the various law enforcement agencies in the State are committed to their individual agencies, but less so to an overall approach to policing that would benefit the community. Past history of studies "left on the shelf" confirm that the State has been unable to reach consensus on the strategies. This report provides recommendations similar to some previous studies; however, this report also includes data analysis and best practices research that can provide a framework for implementing change.

The report's next section provides a discussion and overview of the findings and presentation of the recommendations.

Findings and Recommendations

The following findings and recommendations cover all areas of law enforcement services in the State. The consulting team developed the recommendations after careful review of all the information and data gathered and provided. The data review included evaluation of the surveys and interviews. Based on this comprehensive review, the PSSG team has assembled strategic recommendations to maximize on the police resources in the State improving efficiencies, eliminating redundant operations and increasing communications, processes and capabilities.

The recommendations suggest significant changes to the positioning of law enforcement agencies, however, the core functions will not be disrupted. Adoption of the recommendations will streamline law enforcement service, improve coordination and provide a higher level of service delivery. The overarching recommendations include consolidation and elimination of duplication of services.

Based on information obtained through the Study, it became clear that strategies were needed to “do more with less”, improving the coordination and communication among law enforcement officers, while at the same time minimizing the impact on the budget. The key issues finding and recommendations are discussed below.

The four largest law enforcement groups, the State Police, Fish and Wildlife, Commercial Motor Vehicles and Department of Liquor Control are currently under four separate command structures. PSSG recommends that these major groups of law enforcement officers fall under the Department of Public Safety. This process will improve the coordination and communication of the sworn and civilian personnel. An example of the complications that arise from the disparate, “siloed” structures and operations is evident in the overtime enforcement grants. Currently, each of the agencies can apply for grants to obtain additional resources through the scheduling of shifts to focus on a particular issue. As each agency conducts these programs independently, the agencies do not always know about or participate in the initiatives and priorities of the other. A consolidated and coordinated effort would improve safety and security for those that live, work and travel in the State. Further, the redundant efforts related to the implementation of grants, collection and reporting of data and use of resources is not only wasteful, but creates a missed opportunity for the State to coordinate data driven policing to address the crime and quality of life issues facing the State. If the agencies are working together, instead of in a vacuum, comprehensive strategic planning can occur; priorities will address the state as a whole, and resource sharing will create cost savings.

Each of the four agencies are performing duties that are aimed at protecting the lives and property of Vermonters, yet have created silos within the system focusing less on an overall goal and more on individual agency goals. While each of the law enforcement agencies perform functions that are integral to the operation of another agency the State would be better served having the enforcement agencies under a

single command structure with inter-agency agreements in place for the administrative and ancillary functions. Positions such as public information officers, crime analysts, technology specialists, administrative support and project management can be streamlined with all of the law enforcement agencies operating under a single umbrella.

The recommendations begin with the creation of a new division within the Department of Public Safety (DPS). This division should be headed by an individual that will have the same level of authority and responsibilities as the other division heads within DPS.

The primary law enforcement agencies recommended for realignment include:

- Fish and Wildlife, Division of Law Enforcement
- Department of Motor Vehicles, Enforcement and Safety Division
- Department of Liquor Control, Education, Licensing and Enforcement

Each of these agencies would fall under the new division within DPS. During the transition it is recommended that the Directors/Majors of these agencies remain with the agency to aid in continuity of operations. Once the current staff leaves the position, the position should not be filled.

The recommendations do not include a change in uniforms, vehicles or general operations. Each division will maintain its identity and focus on its specific mission, but will work closer with each other and the State Police to streamline and improve operations.

The following detailed findings and recommendations include strategies to reduce duplication and improve efficiencies.

Consolidated Services Division

Finding: The Four Major State Law Enforcement Agencies Operate Under Four Separate Commissioners/Command Structures.

The following key issues were discovered related to State law enforcement agencies:

- Operate without an overall strategic plan.
- Perform duplicate services.
- Lack integrated operations.
- Lack the benefit of a consolidated approach to data analysis.
- Implement programs through grant funding that are not coordinated with other agencies.

Recommendation: Consolidate F/W Division of Enforcement, DMV Enforcement and Safety Division, DLC Education, Licensing and Enforcement Section Into the New DPS Division.

The new division would include the following agencies and personnel:

- Director, DMV Enforcement and Safety Division
- Director, DLC Enforcement Section
- Chief Warden (Colonel), F/W Division of Law Enforcement

In addition, the Governor's Highway Safety Program would be repositioned in the new divisions relocated from Criminal Justice Services.

Recommendation: During the Transition Period the Command Structure of the Units Within the New DPS Division Should Remain Intact.

- Evaluate the command structure of the new division and the four units to increase the span of control.
- Eliminate a minimum of two command positions.
- Consolidate and streamline civilian staff functions.

Finding: The Fish and Wildlife, Division of Enforcement is Under the Command of a Chief and Deputy Chief Warden.

- F/W has two administrative assistants.
- Wardens are assigned to geographical areas, contained within four districts, and work out of their homes.
- Each of the four districts is supervised by a lieutenant and a sergeant, although the sergeant is also assigned a patrol area.
- Wardens have office space at the VSP barracks.
- Wardens work independently and will set their own schedule according to current workloads.
- Wardens provide support and assistance for other sections of the Agency of Natural Resources.

Recommendation: Move the F/W Enforcement Section Into a New DPS Division.

- Consolidate the majority of sworn state law enforcement under a single command.
- Ensure that under the control and direction of the DPS the F/W wardens continue to perform all current activities for the ANR under an inter-agency agreement.

Finding: The Department of Liquor Control (DLC) Education, Licensing and Enforcement Section Has Sworn Investigators.

- Thirteen DLC investigators are assigned to geographical areas within the state.
- Two investigators are assigned to educational duties.

- Field supervision consists of two lieutenants who divide the State.
- There is a director and administrative staff.
- DLC investigators work from their homes with minimal supervision.

Recommendation: Move the DLC Education, Licensing and Enforcement Section Into the New DPS Division.

- Consolidate the majority of sworn state law enforcement under a single command.
- Decrease command and administrative positions.
- Ensure that under the control and direction of the DPS the DLC investigators continue to perform all current activities for the Department of Liquor Control under an inter-agency agreement.

Finding: Commercial Vehicle Enforcement (CVE) Responsibilities Are Shared Between the VSP and the DMV/Enforcement and Safety Division CVE Section.

- VSP has two full time troopers assigned to CVE.
- Additional VSP troopers are trained in CVE and perform CVE enforcement on overtime.
- DMV/CVE has a CVE section that consists of north and south teams of sworn investigators that perform CVE on a full-time basis.
- DMV/CVE receives federal grants for CVE and education (some funds have been provided to VSP in a sub-grant).
- DMV/CVE investigators have a training program that is progressive and keeps up with state and federal guidelines for CVE.
- The DMV Enforcement and Safety Division also has an Investigative Section and Education Unit consisting of both sworn and civilian investigators that investigate civil and criminal cases involving motor vehicle related crimes and regulates training, licensing and education.

Recommendation: Move All CVE to DMV/CVE and the DMV Enforcement and Safety Division Into the New DPS Division.

- Consolidate the majority of sworn state law enforcement under a single command.
- Ensure consistency and coordination through a unified approach to services.
- Reassign VSP troopers currently assigned to CVE to patrol.
- Assign all CVE to those currently in the DMV CVE unit.
- Ensure that under the control and direction of the DPS the CVE and DMV Enforcement and Safety Division personnel continue to perform all current activities for the Agency of Transportation under an inter-agency agreement.

Duplication of Special Services

Finding: Duplication of Specialized Teams and Units Drain Staffing and Budget Resources.

The State has limited law enforcement resources, yet many services are duplicated from agency to agency.

- Individual agencies including municipal, state and sheriffs are creating specialized teams and units that duplicate services.
- Coordination and consolidation of specialized services is lacking.

Recommendation: Ensure Specialized Services are Developed Based on Community Needs and Available Resources.

The State has demonstrated success with regional approaches to services as exhibited with the implementation of the Chittenden Unit for Special Investigations (CUSI) and the Northwest Unit for Special Investigations (NUSI).

- Regionalize the efforts of municipalities, state agencies and sheriffs related to specialized skills.
- Use the data contained in this report to inform decision-making as to the areas of greatest need by incident type and allow targeted training for services to continue without impacting the individual agencies.
- Improve coordination and diminish the impact on budgets through streamlined efforts.

Finding: VSP and Fish and Wildlife both have Search and Rescue Responsibilities and Capabilities.

- The VSP team consists of twenty troopers who receive regular training to maintain readiness.
- The training takes troopers away from regular assignments requiring backfilling and impact budgets.
- Search and rescue missions are conducted in urban and wilderness areas.
- F/W wardens have extensive knowledge of the wilderness areas of the state.
- F/W assists VSP in wilderness search and rescue efforts.

Recommendation: Restructure the Search and Rescue Team into a DPS Team consisting of VSP and F/W.

- Assign command responsibilities of the team to VSP.
- Integrate F/W during wilderness searches ensuring F/W plays a major role in the operation and at the command post (using joint command as needed).

- Reduce the number of troopers dedicated to the team, resulting in less training time and increased regular duty/patrol time.
- Include interested and qualified members of local and county law enforcement agencies as appropriate, and at the expense of each individual agency.

Finding: VSP has a SCUBA Team for Search and Recovery and Fish and Wildlife has some Swift Water Rescue Capabilities.

- The VSP team has ten full-time troopers that maintain SCUBA training and certifications.
- During training and missions, team members are taken from their regular assignments.
- F/W has wardens that are trained divers.

Recommendation: Restructure the VSP SCUBA Team into a DPS Team consisting of VSP and F/W.

- Assign command responsibility for recovery to VSP and rescue to F/W.
- Include other state, county and local law enforcement agencies to compliment the team and decrease the number of VSP dedicated to this task.
- Create a north and south, or similarly structured regional teams, to allow for more efficient response.

Finding: Vermont Law Enforcement Officers Attend the Same Academy for Recruit Training - Specialized Training is Not Coordinated on a Statewide or Regional Basis¹.

- Vermont has a well-established and effective process for training law enforcement personnel.
- A single academy site is used for basic and in-service training.
- This process ensures a consistent training message is delivered.
- Specialized training is at the discretion of individual agencies which results in over-training in some areas and duplication of efforts.

Recommendation: Continue the Practice of Joint Academy Training and Increase Multi-Agency Team Based Training.

- Evaluate the training needs across the state and establish opportunities for joint training.
- Increase the number of regional based teams instead of single agency teams for capacity building and shared responsibility.

¹ This finding is based on actions of police agencies; it is not to infer that the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Academy is not coordinating training.

Finding: Recreation Enforcement is Performed by Multiple Agencies.

- There are three types of recreation enforcement: snowmobiles, boating and ATV's.
- VSP receives a federal grant for boating safety and enforcement.
- VSP has two full-time troopers assigned to recreational enforcement.
- VSP pays auxiliary troopers to enforce recreational vehicles.
- VSP sub-grants to F/W for the provision of recreation enforcement.
- VSP, F/W, some sheriffs and local police independently maintain boats, snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles (ATV's).
- F/W wardens routinely patrol the waterways and trails of the state, and conduct recreational enforcement while on regular duty.
- VSP, F/W and some sheriffs receive enforcement grants from the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST).
- Coordination of recreational enforcement between the different state, county and local agencies is lacking.

Recommendation: Assign Primary Responsibility of Recreational Enforcement and Education to F/W.

- Implement a coordinated exchange of information, procedures and resources between the VSP and F/W on the federal boating safety and enforcement grant.
- Assign F/W to coordinate recreational enforcement and education on a statewide basis.

These changes should be implemented after the creation of the new division of DPS and shifting of the F/W law enforcement to that division. Changing the responsibility, without moving the agency would create more infrastructure requirements within F/W that should be supported by a single unit within the DPS.

State Police Functions***Finding: Deployment of VSP Troopers to Patrol Has Decreased Since 2001.***

- The total number of sworn troopers has remained consistent.
- Supervisory and command staff has increased.²
- Specialized units staffed with troopers have increased.

Recommendation: Evaluate Supervisory and Command Staffing.

² For the purposes of this study VSP command staff relates to Lieutenants and above.

- Review job descriptions in specialty units and administrative positions, replace troopers with qualified civilian staff and return troopers to patrol functions.
- Evaluate supervisory and command staffing levels and determine the optimum rank structure.
- Freeze non-essential promotions until patrol staffing is proportionate to supervisory staffing.
- Decrease responses to quality of life calls to increase patrol time.

Finding: The Homeland Security Unit is a Separate Unit Within the VSP.

- The unit includes the Fusion Center
- Staffing includes a captain, 3 lieutenants, 2 sergeants, 2 detective troopers and 7 civilians.

Recommendation: Move the Homeland Security Unit Out of VSP and Create a Stand Alone Unit Reporting Directly to the Commissioner of the DPS.

- Evaluate the personnel within the unit, replace sworn staff with civilians wherever possible and return troopers to patrol functions.
- Include members of other state and local law enforcement agencies in the unit for better balance and coordination.
- Include members of other State agencies as possible.
- Reassign VSP Troopers to patrol functions.

Finding: VSP Troop Detectives are Assigned to Each of the Twelve VSP Barracks.

Demands are placed on the VSP to create special teams and units to support specific issues. This process taxes the resources of the patrol division and has created an unbalanced workload between patrol troopers and detective troopers.

- VSP Detectives handle a variety of crimes but primarily focus on major crimes and sex offenses.
- VSP Detective caseloads are such that they could handle more cases.
- VSP Troopers assigned to patrol often handle felony level crimes from start to finish. These investigations can be lengthy, taking troopers away from patrol for extended periods.

Recommendation:

- Reevaluate cases assigned to troop detectives.
- Create a process for patrol troopers to take initial reports of felony level crimes and forward reports to troop detectives for further investigation.
- Reallocate patrol troopers from most felony investigations and increase general patrol time.

Finding: State Police Do Not Provide Coverage 24/7

The issues of 24/7 coverage is a pressing one to many individuals.

- State Police operate on an on-call basis for hours not staffed.
- Some municipal agencies operate 24/7.

The research revealed there are minimal calls for services during the off hours.

Recommendation: Refrain From Instituting 24/7 Coverage with the VSP.

The data does not support 24/7 coverage by the State Police and there is not a sufficient budget to staff 24/7.

Department of Public Safety***Finding: Grants Obtained and Administered by DPS Divisions are Managed by Personnel Within Each Division Without Coordination or Consolidation of Efforts.***

- F/W, DMV/CVE and DLC all receive funding from federal, state or private organizations.

Recommendation: Create a Grants Office in the Administration Division of DPS.

- Create a system to distribute, coordinate and administer all state law enforcement grants through the new grants office.
- Provide a centralized process of all grants allowing efficient and organized operation and oversight.

Finding: The Governor's Highway Safety Program awards and administers traffic safety programs and grants to state, county and local law enforcement.

- The Governor's Highway Safety Program is located within the Criminal Justice Services Division of DPS.
- The grants issued under the program create a duplication of services and initiatives that are not integrated and coordinated.

Recommendation: Relocate Governor's Highway Safety Program Into the New DPS Division.

- Reposition the highway safety program under the new division making it a coordinated resource for all law enforcement agencies.
- Realign the grant administrative function under a single unit in DPS.

Finding: Civilians Staffing of Position Held by Sworn Personnel Needs to be increased. Civilians contribute to the effective operations of DPS.

- Budget cuts are impacting civilian position.

Recommendation: Evaluate the Cost of Civilians vs. Sworn Personnel Filling Civilian Roles

- Ensure civilian cuts do not require troopers to be assigned to those positions.

Civilian Investigators

Finding: The Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) and Other State Agencies have Civilian Investigators That are not Assigned to, or Supervised by, Sworn Law Enforcement Officials.

- Investigators often investigate in isolated areas.
- Investigators do not have access to criminal records on suspects.
- Investigators do not have access to radio communications with police dispatch.
- Investigators have uncovered criminal actions while investigating civil violations.

Recommendation: Provide Civil Investigators a Liaison with Appropriate State Law Enforcement.

- Develop a liaison to provide support as needed to address safety concerns.
- Develop a protocol for communication with investigators in isolated areas.
- Consider a long term strategy of integration into DPS.

Municipal Police Services

Finding: Municipalities Contract for Police Services with Multiple Agencies.

There are four main ways that municipalities secure police services:

- Contracting with neighboring police departments.
- Contracting with sheriffs.
- Contracting with VSP.
- Contracting or employing officers from other police departments on a part-time basis.

The current process does not provide adequate local control over police services. Municipalities are also investing resources in agencies that do not have a long term obligation to the citizens of a particular town. A review of contracts shows that

municipalities would obtain greater coverage and enhanced services if a regional approach was employed. Although the current contracting of VSP and Sheriffs is providing needed policing services in some areas of the State, the process is largely dependent on personnel in positions resulting from an election process rather than an appointment process. This can create complications with oversight and services.

Recommendation: Municipalities Without an Organized Police Department Need to Consolidate Resources with Neighboring Communities for Needed Policing Services.

The primary areas to address include:

- Develop local control of policing services.
- Target funding for regional police services.
- Develop an infrastructure for operations.
- Phase out State Police contract services.

An entire section of this report is devoted to the discussion of regional police strategies and consideration.

Finding: Municipalities Use Constables for Policing Services in Varying Degrees.

- Constables, when used, primarily handle minor civil matters.
- Some constables are performing traffic enforcement.
- Effective in 2010, constables will be mandated by law to be certified by the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council to perform most policing services.
- Municipalities are appointing rather than electing constables increasing government control.

Recommendation: Use of Constables for Response to Minor Quality of Life Issues is an Option for Smaller Municipalities.

- Ensure that Constables have proper training and State certifications prior to conducting law enforcement services.
- Align the duties and responsibilities of the Constable with relevant State statutes and regulations.
- Define the roles, responsibilities and authority over Constables to align with other police resources.

Dispatching Services

Finding: Dispatching in the State is Provided by State, County and Local Agencies.

- There are eight Public Safety Answering Points, (PSAP) located throughout the State.
- All 911 calls are answered at the PSAP's.
- The PSAP's are located in State, County and Local law enforcement facilities.
- There are numerous agencies dispatching at a municipal level.
- Some municipalities contract with other agencies for dispatching services.
- At any given time there are multiple agencies within the State assigning personnel performing dispatching services.

Recommendation: Conduct a Comprehensive Review of Dispatch Centers.

This Study recognizes the need for a more consolidated dispatch process, but the magnitude of this study did not allow a full set of recommendations in this area.

Conclusion

The ideas presented in this section represent significant change for the State of Vermont, which can sometimes be difficult for established agencies to embrace. However, the significant benefits, including increased communication, coordinated strategic planning, resource sharing and cost savings are incentives that make this process worthwhile. In the current economic climate, creative thinking is required to operate with decreased budgets, yet still deliver needed services.

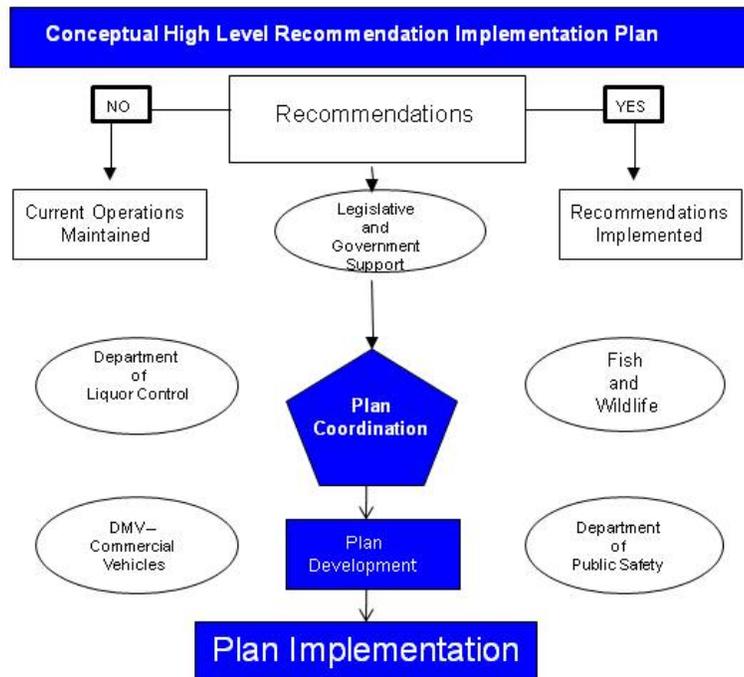
There are not any laws or regulations that specifically prohibit the implementation of the recommendations; however, each recommendation needs to be considered with respect to collective bargaining units and the impact on budget allocations.

Next Steps

The delivery of this report is a starting point of an implementation process designed to create progressive and meaningful change for the law enforcement agencies in Vermont. For this process to be successful there needs to be a coordinated and concentrated effort on implementing the recommendations in a manner that includes discussions and strategic planning among the various agency stakeholders.

The plan specifically recommends that the current agency heads maintain their positions throughout the change. In addition, it is recommended that each of the agencies include staff members in the discussion and planning phase efforts to effectively manage the transition process.

The following diagram provides a visual of the overall process:



Upon determination of which recommendations to implement, a transition team with representation from each of the affected agencies must be established. While the Study reviewed every aspect of the law enforcement functions, there needs to be further analysis on the specific administrative staffing levels. It is understood that some administrative functions are shared between agencies and it is important that one agency does not lose its support during the transition. Conversely, the consolidation will allow streamlining of these functions; not all current administrative personnel will be required in the long term.

While the study was focused on the services provided by law enforcement, the transition needs to include changes in management. For this to happen, the vision must be articulated to staff, and concerns about operations and functions discussed with individuals in a participatory manner. The State of Vermont can positively impact its law enforcement service delivery through this process.