



DECATUR POLICE DEPARTMENT

Decatur, Alabama

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Executive Plan



Comprehensive Plan Components:

The Six Components of the Comprehensive Plan:

- 1. Develop a Crisis Management Communication System:**
 - Provide pertinent information to key stakeholders to enhance communication and transparency.
- 2. Conduct Structured Sessions with Concerned Citizens:**
 - Identify and resolve barriers hindering the city's efforts to achieve racial harmony and fair systems of justice and inclusion.
- 3. Conduct a Thorough Review of Current Police Policies and Procedures:**
 - Review and revise police policies and procedures to ensure fairness, transparency, and effectiveness within the community.
- 4. Implement a Support System for Decatur Police Department Leadership:**
 - Address factors affecting the development of current and future leaders of the Decatur Police Department to foster a positive work environment.
- 5. Implement an Officer Wellness Program:**
 - Support the DPD Officers' Health Program to ensure their well-being and effectiveness.
- 6. Secure Confidence in the Comprehensive Plan:**
 - Gain the confidence of civic-minded citizens by demonstrating a commitment to achieving restoration and addressing community concerns.

This comprehensive plan is a coordinated effort among stakeholders to address critical issues, build trust, and renew the relationship between the police and the citizens of Decatur, Alabama.

Communication, Crisis Management, and Information System Plan:

Background: The Decatur Police Department understands and embraces the need to establish trust within the community. Establishing an effective crisis management communication system is crucial to maintaining and rebuilding trust and transparency within the community.

I have actively engaged with city leadership, concerned citizens, council meetings, the business community, individuals who have requested meetings, and various other groups to hear their concerns about the current state of the Decatur Police Department. Based on this valuable feedback, I have developed an effective plan aimed at improving public confidence in our police department and fostering a stronger community environment.

While it is impossible to guarantee that our community will never face another crisis like the one resulting in the loss of Mr. Perkins, I firmly believe that we can reduce the likelihood of such incidents and enhance our ability to respond effectively to trust and transparency issues.

Together, we can work toward a safer and more trusting community environment.

The plan identifies key points including crisis preparedness, building trust and legitimacy, police policy and oversight, technology and social media usage, community policing, crime reduction, officer training and education, and officer wellness and safety. These critical points reflect areas that intend to foster healthier relationships between police officers and community members.

Proposed Steps:

1. Assessment of Current Crisis Management Plan:

- The City of Decatur has a need for a crisis management and communication plan. Conduct a systematic review of current procedures and make necessary adjustments to enhance its effectiveness.

2. Research and Benchmarking:

- Research crisis management systems and communication policies in other communities to gather best practices and insights for improvement.

3. Develop a Structured Crisis Management System:

- Establish a structured system that incorporates all crisis management services in Decatur. Review existing policies and procedures to ensure they address community crises effectively.

4. Review and Verification:

- Review, compare, and verify the effectiveness of the new crisis management plan. Identify areas for improvement and implement necessary adjustments.

Suggested Actions:

1. Reallocation of Funds:

- Reallocate funds from current crisis consultant sources and re-invest in a more effective communication system. Consider hiring a qualified communication professional to manage this crucial component of the city.

2. Consideration of Different Roles:

- Recognize the difference between crisis consultants and communications specialists. Consider hiring both to fulfill distinct roles, duties, and responsibilities effectively.

Establishing a robust crisis management communication system is essential for rebuilding trust and transparency within the community. By reallocating resources and hiring qualified professionals, the City of Decatur can effectively manage crises and ensure prompt, transparent communication with its stakeholders.

Concerned Citizens and Community Advocates:

1. Objective:

Facilitate structured listening sessions for concerned citizens and key stakeholders.

2. Desired Outcome:

- Improved communication between law enforcement and citizens to increase transparency and accountability.
- Strive for enhanced police perceptions by the community.
- Provide more information and educational opportunities for citizens.

3. Strategic Action Steps:

a. Advisory Council Restructuring:

- Restructure the Advisory Council using other accredited agency structures that best fit our community.

b. Conduct Structured Sessions:

- Organize structured listening sessions with community advocates, concerned citizens, and the Advisory Council.

Policies and Procedures Intervention:

1. Objective:

- Work with the Decatur Police Department to schedule a community meeting with the CALEA for a review of the standard and measurement for their accreditations process and procedures.

2. Desired Outcome:

- To improve community awareness of the review, revisions, enhancement, and execution of policies and procedures.

3. Strategic Action Plan:

a. Advisory Council to Review

Policies:

- Enhance the Community Police Advisory Board to review, examine, and advise on DPD's current and new policies.

b. Policy Identification:

- Identify policies, procedures, and revisions that may require community education.
- Review other Law Enforcement professional entities to assist in outside audits of key practices, training, and policies.

Police Leadership Support Plan:

1. Understanding Police Morale:

- Numerous factors, including job satisfaction, support from leadership, public perception, departmental policies, work environment, pay and benefits, stress and trauma, training opportunities, community service projects, and educational opportunities influence morale.

2. Objective:

- Create structured opportunities for officers to feel valued and engage in discussions about their concerns, beliefs, and feelings.

3. Desired Outcomes:

- Continued enhanced training and education for officers.
- Improved communication between law enforcement and community members.
- Increased morale among police officers.
- Reduced stress and improve mental health resources.
- Decreased number of police terminations and suspensions.
- Improved work environment and job satisfaction.

4. Strategic Action Plan:

a. Engagement of Certified Consultant:

- Secure the services of a certified team-

building consultant with conflict-resolution skills to facilitate structured sessions with the police force.

b. Sessions for Police Leadership:

- Conduct structured sessions with the command staff of the police force:
 - 1st Session: Identify areas of concern and begin to develop a strategy for building a culture based on the values and mission of the Police Leadership.
 - 2nd Session: Solidify action steps for leading their direct reports with a strategy that aligns with the goals and vision previously established.
 - 3rd Session: Create accountability and an ongoing process for addressing a strong culture of cohesiveness and trust.
- Provide sessions as needed to support the leadership.

c. Sessions for Police Officers:

- Conduct structured sessions with police officers:
 - 1st Session: Begin the process of creating trust and an avenue for officers to discuss the issues they regularly encounter.
 - 2nd Session: Provide officers with effective tools and methods aimed at creating a culture of communication and trust within the force and the community.
- Provide consistent coaching opportunities as needed within the department.

Officer Wellness Support System:

Background: The mental, physical, spiritual, and psychological well-being of Decatur Police Officers are crucial, given the high-stress nature of their profession. Officers regularly face challenging and traumatic situations which can significantly affect their personal and professional lives. Access to effective mental health resources and the perceived negative impact on an officer's career when seeking help often decrease the likelihood that officers will receive the assistance they need. This creates a significant barrier to

addressing mental health issues within the force, potentially leading to detrimental effects on both the individual officers and the communities they serve. The comprehensive plan recommends the implementation of an officer wellness program to address these challenges.

Suggested Actions:

1. Review of Training Systems:

- Assess officer training systems and incorporate emotional intelligence and crisis management skills. Providing officers with the tools to manage stressful situations effectively is essential for their emotional well-being.

2. Expansion of wellness coaches:

- Expand existing wellness programs to include professional coaching services within the DPD. A skilled team of individuals can provide vital support and resources for personal growth and cultural development in the department.

3. Consideration of Additional Licensed Professional:

- Consider hiring a licensed and certified mental health professional dedicated to providing services to police officers. Having specialized support available within the department can ensure timely access to resources and interventions.

4. Expansion of Services with Culturally Competent Organizations:

- Expanding services to provide access to qualified First Responders when appropriate or as indicated by the management or personnel department.

5. Exploration of Additional Options:

- Review options for training and workshop opportunities with criminal justice or other academic institutions to collaborate with experts in the field who can provide insights and resources to address officers' emotional wellness and professional needs.

Note: It is crucial to integrate officer wellness initiatives into police procedures and policies to destigmatize seeking help and ensure officers feel supported in their overall health and wellness.

Regular peer-to-peer wellness checks and access to counseling services are encouraged and emphasized as essential components of maintaining a healthy and resilient police force.

The department will improve the referral policies and procedures and outline when an officer should receive assistance or resources to help normalize the process. In addition, all officers should have a comprehensive assessment (counseling, therapy, or wellness checks) at least annually regardless of their involvement in any dramatic occurrence.

Decatur Police Department Action Plan:

1. Crisis Management Communication System:

- Collaborate with the Mayor and Council to redefine or establish a Crisis Management Communication System, incorporating various platforms like Emergency Management Services, websites, social media, and press conferences. Take inspiration from successful models like Tuscaloosa's communication center for suggestions.

2. Communication Leadership Team:

- The Chief will establish a leadership management process system tasked with articulating a comprehensive action plan for effective communication strategies within the department.

3. Citizens Advisory Committee Structure:

- Collaborate with the Mayor and Council to restructure the Citizens Advisory Committee to a city-appointed, district-planned committee that will represent, enhance, and strengthen, community engagement and accountability between the police department and the community.

4. Expansion of Wellness Services Consulting:

- Collaborate with the Chief of Police and his leadership team to expand services that provide support to the department in various aspects of leadership training development.

5. Wellness Provider Services:

- Collaborate with the Mayor, City Council,

and personnel department to hire a mental health liaison to assist with internal crisis response services within the police department, expand on programs already in place with current providers, or seek additional providers as indicated for assistance.

6. Collaboration with Colleges or Universities:

- Collaborate with University and Criminal Justice Programs to leverage academic, practical, and scientific-based research, evaluation, and analysis to support the police department and its communities.

7. Leadership Program for DPD “Command Staff”:

- Collaborate with a Consulting firm to develop a leadership program tailored for the DPD “Command Staff” to enhance leadership skills and effectiveness.

8. Coaching Program for Officer Wellness:

- Collaborate with a consulting firm to develop a coaching program focusing on stress management and well-being.

9. Community Listening Sessions:

- Collaborate with the Advisory Council to facilitate and assist with community listening sessions to promote dialogue, transparency, and collaboration between the police department and the community (Specifically designed for the minority community).

10. Engagement with Businesses, Churches, and Communities:

- Engage with businesses, churches, and the community to facilitate and assist with listening sessions, fostering partnerships and community involvement in police-community relations (Specifically designed for the silent majority).

11. Policy Development:

- Create and implement a policy requiring immediate mental health services when

applicable; and establish a schedule requiring officers to participate in structured sessions annually. Culturally relevant providers, when deemed appropriate by a qualified agent or sponsor will be available as indicated.

The Citizens Advisory Council

Mission: The Decatur Citizens Police Citizens Advisory Council (DPCAC) aims to enhance trust between the community and the police department through education and dialogue, thereby improving public safety for all citizens. It advises on policy changes, recruitment, diversity, and discipline.

Core Tasks:

- 1. Advisory Role:** Advising the DPD Chief and Command Staff on policy changes, recruitment, and best practices.
- 2. Community Dialogue:** Facilitating dialogue and trust through public meetings, community outreach, and attendance at various venues.
- 3. Incident Review:** Providing members to Incident Review Boards (IRBs) and supporting the Internal Affairs process for citizen complaints.
- 4. Strategic Planning:** Participating in DPD Strategic Plan and Annual Report reviews and reviewing quarterly summaries of IA complaints.
- 5. Education and Participation:** Promoting and participating in DPD education seminars and the ride-along program.

Structure: The DPCAC should be comprised of thirteen members, three appointed by the mayor and two appointed by each City Council member representing each district. Members must pass a background check without pending criminal charges or recent convictions.

These initiatives demonstrate collaborative efforts between community organizations, civic leaders, and law enforcement agencies to address racial tensions, improve communication, and enhance trust between police and the community.

“Secure The Confidence of the Comprehensive Plan”

The entire Decatur Police Department is committed to working with our citizens to restore trust and confidence in our community. We are determined to demonstrate our allegiance to our oath to protect and serve. Our department understands the importance of supporting and trusting the legal system to ensure that law and order are accomplished.

As the Chief of Police, I will continue to work and provide the leadership required to achieve restoration. I am committed to leading our department with honesty, integrity, transparency, and dedication to our community’s well-being. Our goal is to rebuild and strengthen the trust between our officers and the citizens we serve. Let us continue to support one another, uphold our principles, and work toward a safer, more united Decatur.

Please join me in keeping the Decatur Community in your thoughts and prayers as we navigate this process together. I want to reiterate our commitment to working collaboratively with our community. We are dedicated to listening to your feedback and incorporating your insights into our plans and actions. Your voice is crucial in shaping the future of our community and our police department.

Our goal is to restore confidence and build a stronger, more united Decatur. By working together, we can create a community where trust, transparency, and mutual respect thrive. I ask for your support and collaboration as we embark on this journey. Let us come together to make Decatur a safer and more trusting place for everyone.

POLICY

To define the mission of the Police Department and conduct all Departmental operations toward the accomplishment of that mission.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Decatur Police Department is to enhance the quality of life in our community by providing an environment where people can live safely and without fear.

VISION

To continue to be a premier law enforcement agency within Alabama, striving to attain the highest level of customer satisfaction and safety for our communities.

VALUE

We value professionalism as the ideal style of employee conduct which is based upon the uncompromising virtues of character that embraces public trust and promotes the relentless pursuit of justice.

