

Americus Police Department



Strategic Plan FY'20-FY'24

Chief Mark A. Scott

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Message from the Chief of Police

The Americus Police Department exists to serve the citizens, businesses and visitors in the City of Americus, Georgia. We are committed to maintaining the standards of a professional law enforcement agency while meeting the needs and expectations of our community. With this in mind, we have developed this three-year strategic plan as a working document to assist us in evaluating the continued development of the agency as well as the developments and challenges expected in Americus and in policing over the next five years.

More specifically, this plan is intended to communicate our goals and strategies in the context of providing for public safety and an enhanced quality of life for the City of Americus. It is also intended to recognize our strengths and our limitations and how they determine our capacity for the implementation of these goals and strategies.

This plan was first developed in 2016 with input from our employees and from various community stakeholders. It was updated in 2018 and 2020 and is an evolving document that will be reviewed and updated bi-annually to assist us in focusing our available resources for both efficiency and effectiveness. We welcome your review of the document and any feedback you may have to assist us in working collaboratively with you to better serve the citizens of Americus.

Gil Garcetti, former Los Angeles County District Attorney once said, "If you cannot have faith and trust in your police officer -- either as a citizen or as a juror or as a judge, as defense lawyers, as a district attorney -- then we do not have an acceptable, a viable criminal justice system". I firmly believe that the only way to build and maintain public faith and trust with the citizens of Americus is to welcome public scrutiny and to hold ourselves accountable to a high standard of professionalism and ethical behavior. We at the Americus Police Department are committed to building relationships with our community one citizen contact at a time.

Sincerely,



Mark A. Scott
Chief of Police

The APD Mission and Values

In the fall of 2016, each employee of the Americus Police Department was asked to contribute a Mission Statement that they felt summed up what we, as a department, hope to accomplish. We received many responses and listed them all in a survey, asking all employees to vote for the one statement that they thought was best. It took three rounds of voting to narrow the field to our final product.

Our Mission Statement

“It is the mission of the Americus Police Department to provide service to all citizens based on the foundations of honesty, integrity and respect.”

Our Values

HONESTY:

We accept responsibility for our actions. We are accountable to ourselves and those we serve. We will communicate honestly and maintain transparency in everything that we do.

INTEGRITY:

We are committed to the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct, which are the cornerstones of our profession.

RESPECT:

We believe in the intrinsic value of every human being. We will endeavor to treat every person with fairness, empathy, and compassion.

Recent Department Accomplishments

In order to appreciate the goals and priorities for the Americus Police Department going forward, it is important to maintain an awareness of our recent accomplishments that have served to enhance our administration and operations in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. The following is a summary of the most significant recent accomplishments that have impacted the department:

1) Georgia Law Enforcement Certification and CALEA Accreditation (November 2019)

The police department worked very hard to achieve certification from the Georgia Law Enforcement Certification Program. We successfully met all the required standards for the program and were approved for certification in December of 2017 receiving official certification in January of 2018. Immediately upon completing our State Certification, we began working toward international accreditation through the Commission of Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). We completed our work in the summer of 2019 and received accredited status in November of 2019.

2) Reduction in Part I and Part II Crimes

Each month we report our crime statistics to the FBI along with most of the other law enforcement agencies in the United States. The FBI makes an annual summary of these statistics available to the public each year in a publication called "Crime in the United States". It is available on the FBI's web site and is usually one year behind, meaning that the report posted at the end of 2019 is based on 2018 numbers. Fortunately for us, we can access our crime statistics in real time and are able to provide the public with the information as soon as the calendar year ends. We are pleased to report that our Part I Crime numbers for 2019 continued the downward trend and are the lowest they have been in over 30 years. In fact, the last time our total serious crime count was this low was in 1988. Part I Crimes are the more serious crimes tracked by the FBI and include murder, rape, robbery, burglary, auto

theft, theft in general, etc. These are all crimes that are generally reported to the police by the public and are driven by criminal activity, rather than police activity. These type crimes tend to be constant in a community and are a good indicator of trends in criminal activity.

We also track and report Part II Crime numbers to the FBI. These are crimes that the FBI considers to be less serious such as simple assault, criminal trespass, drug charges, disorderly conduct, forgery, DUI of alcohol or drugs, etc. These numbers reflect both crimes reported to the police by citizens and crimes discovered by the police through patrol operations. Part II Crime numbers can vary considerably, based on the activities of the police. For example, felony drug arrests made by the Americus Police Department have increased dramatically over the past two years. We have gone from a low of just 26 felony drug arrests in 2017 to 114 felony drug arrests in 2019, an increase of well over 300%! This is due in part to filling most of the vacancies in patrol and to a more proactive focus on drug enforcement, including the addition of our K-9 Team in 2018.

This can be a two-edged sword. While it is good that we have more officers on the street making more proactive arrests, taking criminals off the streets for minor crimes prevents them from committing major crimes, these arrests cause an increase in the number of Part II crimes we report to the FBI. Consequently, as our Part I Crime Index goes down, our Part II Crime Index can go up. This can make it appear that crime is increasing when it is actually getting better.

3) Fitness Program Update

The law enforcement profession is a dangerous career choice for anyone willing to dedicate their life to serving others. The Americus Police Department recognizes that we have an obligation to our employees and to the community we serve to support a personal fitness initiative. Officers that are physically fit are better able to perform their essential job functions in a safe and efficient manner.

The department has pledged full participation in the city's wellness program. A wellness coach makes regularly scheduled visits to the department and many of our

employees, both sworn and civilian, regularly meet with her to track their progress on their personal fitness plans. Several of our employees have set and met very ambitious weight loss and exercise goals. We are currently participating in a competitive fitness challenge with seven other agencies across the state to achieve specific goals for participation and daily exercise activity.

In addition to our focus on individual wellness, we have also begun to emphasize physical strength ability. The State of Georgia is implementing a pre-employment Physical Abilities Test (PAT) that all cadets seeking to attend a state academy will be required to pass as a condition of admission. We are preparing to implement this same PAT into our hiring process to ensure that newly hired cadets will be able to meet the physical standards for academy admission.

4) Recruitment and Retention

The population for the City of Americus has decreased significantly since the 2010 census. Population trends published by the Census Bureau indicate that this trend has slowed and that the city's population should remain fairly stable through the 2020 census. The department's current authorized strength of 44 sworn officers should allow us to meet the current level of calls for service and also fully staff the Criminal Investigations Division and implement a new Street Crimes Unit.

The department implemented an aggressive recruitment campaign to try to identify and hire qualified personnel to fill the line level vacancies. Unfortunately, we are competing with over 35 other agencies in the surrounding area, and the hundreds of police agencies across the State of Georgia, almost all of whom are hiring. We are actively recruiting experienced sworn officers who might be willing to transition from their current agency to Americus. These officers can typically complete our local Field Training Program within a few weeks and begin working a patrol shift. It takes at least six months from the date of hire for a new uncertified officer to complete required training and be ready fill a vacancy as a patrol officer. We have made tremendous strides in our hiring initiative and hope to transition from aggressive recruitment to career development and retention of employees.

As of December 2019, we have been able to fill all but 4 of our open positions. We have filled the vacancies in our Criminal Investigation Division and are operating with fully staffed patrol teams. Thanks to a grant from the One Sumter Economic Development Foundation we were able to restart our canine program and now have one fully trained German Shepherd and handler available for drug searches and fugitive tracking.

S.W.O.T. Analysis Summary

Strengths * Weaknesses * Opportunities * Threats

Current Strengths of the Americus Police Department

- Community Partnerships, Visibility in City
- Cooperation and Teamwork, Positive Atmosphere
- Professionalism, Accreditation and State Certification
- Equipment and Vehicles, Professional Look and Professionalism
- Competitive Pay
- Strong Leaders, Supervisors easy to talk to, Hardworking Chief
- Communication
- Great Employees with a lot of potential
- Diversity in Workforce

Current Weaknesses of the Americus Police Department

- Communication (lack of)
- Personnel Shortage, Recruitment and Retention
- Immaturity of Young Officers
- Gossiping and Drama among Employees
- Lack of Rain Gear
- Lack of support from Management
- Older Officers having bad influence on Younger Officers
- Department Complaint System
- Officers circumventing Supervisors by breaking Chain of Command

Opportunities for the Americus Police Department

- Community Relationships, Meeting with Public, Town Hall Meetings with Council
- Bike Patrol
- Training, Career advancement
- GSW and SGTC
- Extra duty jobs for Younger Officers
- Mentoring opportunities for Younger Generation in the Community

Known and Anticipated Threats to the Americus Police Department

- Attitude of Young People toward the Police
- Too much free access to the PD
- Hiring Immature Officers, Poor Recruitment Pool
- City Council doesn't understand what officers do
- Drugs, Juvenile Crime, Gun violence, and Gangs, Lack of prosecution of crimes
- Bad Radio System, Poor Radio Communications (cited multiple times)
- Supervisors not sharing experience with Young Officers
- Lack of Equipment
- Personnel Shortage
- Officer Safety in the community

SWOT Analysis Discussion

All personnel were asked to complete an online survey in 2017, listing four Strengths, Weaknesses, External Opportunities and External Threats relating to the Americus Police Department. Personnel were asked to repeat the survey at the beginning of 2020. Similar comments were grouped together and paraphrased to come up with a single list of topics for each category. There were several topics in each category that were noted by almost every respondent in both versions of the survey and many of the topics discussed in 2017, resurfaced in 2020.

Common strengths included teamwork and a sense of pride in getting the job done with limited resources, a sense of professionalism and pride in being accredited, and good community relations that are getting even better. Common weaknesses mentioned in both surveys were a lack of advancement opportunities, personnel shortages, accountability issues with some supervisors, and poor communications within the department. A new recurring theme in 2020 that did not appear in 2017 centered on issues of immaturity exhibited by some of the younger officers. The most commonly mentioned opportunity was increased community involvement through engaging civic and church groups and through department sponsored community outreach programs. The greatest threat mentioned was the current undercurrent of mistrust for police officers across the country, high crime areas, and the poor coverage of our antiquated radio system, which frequently leaves officers unable to contact dispatch by radio. The radio system was mentioned multiple times in both surveys.

Each of the proposed goals for the next four years is intended to build upon the strengths and opportunities identified by our employees and address the weaknesses and threats. Each goal is defined and accompanied by strategies and milestones. These strategies are assigned to specific components of the organization and include measurable milestones with projected timetables for completion. It is our intention to conduct a follow up SWOT Analysis at the end of each fiscal year to help monitor our

progress in addressing our employees' concerns as we track our progress in achieving the milestones for each goal.

Department Goals for FY'20-FY'24

- Goal #1: Enhance community trust, interaction & accountability, expand and improve community programs*
- Goal #2: Implement proactive strategies to reduce crime and enhance response to crime scenes*
- Goal #3: Improve intelligence gathering and dissemination of information within the department and between partner agencies*
- Goal #4: Provide Career Development opportunities for all employees and develop new front-line supervisors*
- Goal #5: Implement 700 MHz Radio System through SPLOST Funding and Grants*
- Goal #6: Enhance officer safety, through personal wellness and fitness training.*

Goal #1: Enhance community trust, interaction & accountability

All Divisions

It is important that the public trusts the Americus Police Department (APD) to act legally, ethically and appropriately according to professional and community standards. This expectation deals with the overall actions of the department and the actions of our personnel individually and collectively. The APD cannot be effective without the trust, confidence and support of the citizens it serves. This trust must be earned each day. Trust can be enhanced by increasing the frequency and quality of police-citizen interactions. The APD will interact with the citizens it serves on a regular basis and will do so in a professional and courteous manner. The APD will increase its opportunities for citizens to be involved with their police department, and the police department will seek out different ways to be involved with the community. The APD will enhance its level of accountability to the community.

Strategy 1.1: Competent Internal Affairs

We will continue to fully investigate all complaints and concerns expressed regarding departmental or individual actions. We will disseminate information regarding how to file complaints or ask questions and we will publish annual statistical summaries regarding complaints; this includes providing enhanced explanations regarding the outcomes of complaints and internal investigations as allowed by law.

Strategy 1.2: Enhanced Use of Social Media

We will increase the quality and quantity of information made available to the public by use of the department and city websites, the local news media, Facebook, Nextdoor and other methods. The information shared will include crime prevention materials, crime and statistical information, safety tips, contact names and numbers and general information on department administration and operations.

Strategy 1.3: Community Education

We will develop programs and materials to educate citizens about various components of and operations within the Department. We will publish an annual report and we will publish and update this strategic plan.

Strategy 1.4: Strengthen partnerships with community groups and develop new relationships with community stakeholders.

We will participate with community groups who are actively working to improve the quality of life for the citizens of Americus. We will continue our relationships with our current partners and will seek opportunities to join and participate with other groups that align with the department's mission and vision

Strategy 1.5: Customer satisfaction surveys

We will solicit citizen and other customer feedback regarding the level and quality of services delivered. We will use the feedback provided to enhance our practices and procedures.

Strategy 1.6: Georgia Law Enforcement Certification Program

The Americus Police Department achieved certification by the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police through the Georgia Law Enforcement Certification Program (State Certification) in 2017. There are a little over 100 certification standards divided into eight key areas: The Role and Authority of Law Enforcement Agencies, Management and Organization, Personnel, Legal Issues, Operations, Support Services, Communications, and Holding Facilities. Each of these areas contains specific standards which reflect the current best practices for law enforcement agencies across the State of Georgia. Our goal for the next four years is to maintain compliance with the standards.

Strategy 1.7: CALEA Accreditation

The Committee on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) is an international organization which establishes certification standards for law enforcement agencies. CALEA was originally developed to address what was a need to enhance

law enforcement as a profession and to improve law enforcement service delivery. That mission continues today through a tiered law enforcement accreditation program. Agencies may participate in either CALEA Law Enforcement Accreditation (Tier 1) or CALEA Advanced Law Enforcement Accreditation (Tier 2), without regard to agency size. The Americus Police Department achieved Advanced Law Enforcement Accreditation (Tier 2) in 2019. The accreditation award is valid for four years, but we must work to maintain the 461 CALEA Standards and comply with annual standard reviews by CALEA personnel.

Success for this goal will be measured by:

- The number of complaints against agency personnel; the quality of investigations regarding complaints and concerns; findings regarding complaints and concerns; dissemination of results as allowable by law.
- The number of compliments and commendations received for agency personnel.
- Our level of cooperation with other community and public safety entities.
- The quantity, quality and scope of information provided to the public.
- Our level of interaction and the nature of our relationship with the media.
- Feedback from citizens regarding services delivered.
- The quantity of and the area covered by community and business watch programs administered by the department.
- The quantity, quality and variety of crime prevention programs provided.
- Maintenance of State Certification
- Maintenance of CALEA Accreditation

It should be noted that even though many of these have numeric metrics, the goal is to have an effect, i.e. a positive outcome. We are more focused on outcomes rather than outputs and results rather than efforts.

Milestones

1.1 – Internal Affairs

Conduct annual analysis of use of force, pursuits, and enforcement activities

Publish Annual Statistical Summary

1.2 – Social Media

Update Facebook page and post information continually

Better utilize the Code Red Program

Promote the Nextdoor program and provide current information

1.3 – Community Education

Continue Citizen's Police Academy

Implement Citizen's Firearms Academy

Reorganize and revitalize Neighborhood Watch Program

Provide GREAT Training in Americus/Sumter Schools

Provide GREAT Summer Component to sixth graders

1.4 - Enhance Partnerships

Continue partnership with Family Connections

Initiate partnership with Boys and Girls Club

Continue partnership with Sumter Area Ministerial Association (SAMA)

Increase participation of local chiefs in GACP District 2 meetings

Identify groups who are having a positive impact on the community and establish new partnerships

1.5 Customer satisfaction surveys

Continue to promote Customer Satisfaction Survey

Publish an annual summary of responses

1.6 State Certification

Maintain all required State Certification Standards

Schedule a mock assessment prior to onsite in 2020 and 2024

Schedule an onsite assessment with GLECP in 2020 and 2024

1.7 CALEA Accreditation

Maintain compliance with CALEA Standards

Establish compliance with new CALEA Standards

Work with CALEA Personnel to meet annual compliance checks

Schedule an onsite assessment with CALEA in 2024

Goal #2: Implement proactive strategies to reduce crime and enhance response to crime scenes

Crime Analyst and Enforcement Services

The police department began a focused review of property crime statistics in Americus in 2015. The purpose of the review was to determine whether our crime statistics were being reported correctly to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program. The review determined that our records management software was incorrectly coding several categories of both property and persons crimes and reporting incorrect numbers to the FBI. We contacted the software vendor and corrected the problem. Although the total number of crimes being reported did not change significantly, the severity of the reported crimes changed dramatically.

Even with corrected statistics, the number of property crimes in the City of Americus was high. Our most frequently reported property crime was and continues to be theft from automobiles. To help enhance our ability to identify suspects, we provided training on basic crime scene processing to all our patrol personnel and provided them with additional equipment for use in processing minor crime scenes for physical evidence. We have also implemented new records management software which greatly enhances our ability to analyze and respond to property crime. We also began doing weekly public service announcements through the local paper and on local radio encouraging people to remove valuables from their cars and lock them at night. At the close of 2019 we had seen a marked reduction in property crimes to the lowest level in over 20 years.

Our most frequent source of violent crime and of police response to calls for service overall is domestic disputes. To help reduce the incidents of domestic violence, we partnered with the SW Georgia Victim's Alliance and began sending a copy of all incident reports involving any type of domestic violence to the advocacy center so that they can contact both the victim and the aggressor and offer counseling and other resources. The close of 2019 also saw a reduction in personal crimes to a 20-year low.

Strategy 2.1: Statistical review and enhanced crime analysis

We have implemented a records management software with crime analysis capabilities. We are now reviewing all existing property crime data, to include incidents, reports, arrests and convictions and are working to update our current statistics related to proactive efforts to reduce property crime. We will integrate crime analysis with property crime reduction by providing proactive, predictive data for the patrol division.

Strategy 2.2: Training and Equipment for Field Personnel

We have purchased and issued fingerprint kits to all patrol personnel and provided training on basic crime scene response and evidence collection. We have received a cargo trailer from the Fire Department that is outfitted with a desk, radios, and storage area. The trailer was formally a mobile communications unit. Our plan is to repurpose it into a crime scene response trailer for us on major crime scenes

Strategy 2.3: Proactive enforcement of property crimes

We will continue to work proactively on other property crimes that have a significant impact on the community, including but not limited to burglary and larceny from motor vehicles.

Strategy 2.4: Early intervention in domestic disputes

We will utilize enhanced crime analysis capabilities to identify households with repeat calls for service for domestic disputes and develop a program to offer family members resources to help them deal with disputes without resorting to violence or to develop strategies to exit unhealthy and potentially violent relationships.

Strategy 2.5: Criminal Justice Summit

We sponsored a meeting of all criminal justice stakeholders in the Sumter County area, to include judges, prosecutors, local, state and federal law enforcement agencies. Several joint initiatives came out of this summit and out of the follow up summit held in 2017. We plan to schedule another summit in 2021.

Success for this goal will be measured by:

- Using enhanced crime analysis software to improve the rate and consistency of property crime analysis.
- Using the information developed through the property crime analysis to develop a proactive program for preventative patrol and surveillance.
- Organizing a loss prevention association that meets regularly and disseminates information from all partners to reduce repeat offenders and more easily spot crime trends.
- Enhanced cooperation between all criminal justice stakeholders.

Milestones

2.1 Installation of new software and training of all personnel.

2.2 Purchase of crime scene equipment and outfitting of trailer for major crime scene response.

2.3 Implementation of theft prevention strategies based on crime analysis.

2.4 Early Intervention – Identification of At-Risk Households based on crime analysis and documented meetings with families to provide resource materials and referrals to family services.

2.5 Completion of criminal justice summit and identification of specific strategies to address repeat violent offenders.

Goal #3: Improve intelligence gathering and dissemination of information within the department and between partner agencies

Enforcement Services, Intelligence Officer

Although violent crime has decreased greatly over the past five years, we are not immune to violence in our community. There has been an increased awareness and focus on criminal gang activity across the nation and particularly in the State of Georgia. Governor Brian Kemp has made the prosecution of gang related crimes a focus for the state and the GBI has formed a specialized unit to deal with gang activity in the State of Georgia. Locally, we have sent seven of our officers to training on the investigation and prosecution of gang related crimes. We are partnering with our District Attorney, Lewis Lamb, and the Albany office of the U.S. Attorney to add gang charges to any offender that we can prove committed a crime in the furtherance of a criminal street gang.

In 2019 we identified eighteen different incidents that were in some way related to gang membership or gang activity. Five of these incidents involved assaults and four involved armed robberies. The remaining incidents involved a drug charge, a stolen car, a firearm possession charge and two burglaries. We were able to charge two offenders with Participation in a Criminal Street Gang in addition to their original charges. Why not charge them all with the additional charge? The way the law is currently written, we can only add a gang charge if we can prove that the suspect committed the crime to further the cause of the gang or at the direction of a gang leader. It is not enough to simply be a verified gang member committing crimes. We are working with state and local law enforcement partners to maintain a database of validated gang members who are living in our community and to track criminal activity associated with these gang members. We are fully committed to prosecuting criminal gang members as allowed by law, but we are even more committed to working with the youth in our community to help them choose not to get involved in gangs in the first place.

One of the keys to addressing criminal gang activities is to develop and maintain a robust system for gathering and disseminating criminal intelligence.

Strategy 3.1: Crime Analysis

Conduct weekly crime and traffic enforcement/accident analysis through RMS system and provide information to line personnel.

Strategy 3.2: Establish a Gang Database

Set up a database of validated gang members and suspected gang members. Document gang status of all suspects, even if not charged.

Strategy 3.3: Increase Prosecution on Gang Charges

Work with the District Attorney's Office to add gang participation charges to suspects charged with base crimes whenever possible.

Strategy 3.4: Train Personnel on Recognition of Criminal Street Gangs

Provide Gang Intervention Training to all personnel and train additional personnel to teach GREAT in the school system

Success for this goal will be measured by:

- Dissemination of weekly Crime and Traffic Analysis Reports
- Developing and maintaining a database of gang members
- Increased prosecution on gang charges.
- Implementation of gang training and certification of two new GREAT Officers

Milestones

3.1 Database

Monthly reports of validated gang members by home address, provided by the Department of Corrections, will be used to start the Gang Database.

A data field for gang membership will be added to the RMS Program.

3.2 Training

Schedule in-house training for all patrol personnel

Identify two officers interested and suitable for teaching the GREAT Program

Send both GREAT Officers to GREAT Certification Training

Participation in at least two job fair events

3.3 Prosecution

Successful prosecution of suspects on gang charges

Goal #4: *Provide Career Development Opportunities for all employees and develop new front-line supervisors*

Training Officer, Administration, and Lieutenants

As the Americus Police Department continues to grow and evolve, it is imperative that we prepare for the future and equip our personnel to move into future leadership positions within the department. Our goal is to develop officers so that they are ready to step in as first line supervisors whenever openings occur. First line supervisors have an incredible responsibility for the day to day management of department operations and for making sure that all personnel are well trained and held accountable.

Strategy 4.1: Training review and recommendations

We will review the training of all officers who are eligible for promotion to sergeant and lieutenant in the next four years to identify those areas where additional training will improve the leadership, supervision and management knowledge, skills and abilities for potential candidates.

Strategy 4.2: Selection of leadership training

We will work with current and newly promoted supervisors to make sure that they have the training they need to be successful in their current roles and are ready for future promotional opportunities.

Strategy 4.3: Identification of funding

We will research the cost of courses on the identified curriculum list to identify those courses that are most cost effective in meeting employee needs.

We will work collaboratively with other agencies in our area to identify local training opportunities. We will also utilize internal trainers when possible to minimize cost.

Strategy 4.4: Diversity of assignment and experience

We will make a commitment to rotate all sworn staff through specialized assignments in order to expand individual and collective breadth and diversity of assignment and experience.

Success for this goal will be measured by:

- Preparing a training report that includes a list of officers who are eligible for promotion and the training they need to become successful first line supervisors.
- Developing a curriculum that can be used to train and develop new leaders.
- Locating and securing facilities, funding, and instructors to provide as much in house support for training as possible.
- Working with current sergeants to continue to review and update job tasks, significant skills needed, and work processes so that training for future leaders is relevant and applicable for the sergeant positions.
- Preparing cost estimates and identifying funding for long term training courses such as the Professional Management Program (PMP), the Georgia Command College, the FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Association (LEEDA) Programs, etc.

Milestones

4.1 Completion of Training Review Report for eligible officers

4.2 Completion of Training Review for current supervisors

4.3 Enrollment in Supervisory and Management Courses

4.4 Identification of funding and low-cost programs

4.5 Rotation of assignments

.

Goal #5: Enhance Technology and implement 700 MHz Radio System with SPLOST and Grant Funding

Administrative Services

The Americus Police Department strives to stay abreast of technological advances in the business field and in the field of law enforcement which will help to make us more efficient and effective. We have identified and implemented new software and are continually working to learn to utilize the full capabilities of the software. We will also be moving forward with installing mobile CAD software in all patrol vehicles so that they can have direct access to the information contained in the dispatch system. We will continue to provide out field personnel with personal digital video recorders and we plan to continue to utilize in-car video systems.

As identified in both versions of the SPLOST Analysis, radio communication is a major officer safety concern for all public safety employees in Sumter County. Both the city and the county have set aside SPLOST funding to purchase and implement a 700 MHz radio system county wide. Current funding is not sufficient to fully fund this system for all county public safety entities. Options are to scale the project back to start with law enforcement only or to identify additional funding through grants.

Strategy 5.1: - Maximize use of RMS Software

We have contracted with Synergist Software Inc. and have installed their InterOp RMS package. We will continue to work with their trainers to maximize the benefit from the software's analytic capabilities.

Strategy 5.2: Identification of funding for mobile CAD

We will work with community partners and known grant providers to identify funding sources for the purchase of mobile CAD software and the continuing cost of annual access.

Strategy 5.3: Implement 700 MHz Radio System

Hire an engineering firm to guide the city and county through the radio project and procure additional grant funding to fully implement the project.

Strategy 5.4: Continue contract with Taser International for video hosting

We will continue to utilize Evidence.com to host our body camera video and will need to renegotiate the contract when the current agreement expires in 2022.

Strategy 5.5: Maintain in-car video systems

We will continue to maintain the current video server which stores the data from our in-car video systems. We will also work to identify the best equipment and storage options for new vehicles going forward.

Success for this goal will be measured by:

- Full utilization of the capabilities of our Records Management Software Program.
- Purchase of enough additional laptops with Wi-Fi capability to provide laptop computers to all patrol personnel.
- Purchase and installation of Mobile CAD Software
- Continuation of current data storage contract with Taser International and evaluation of video storage needs at the end of the four-year contract in 2018.
- Continuation of in-car camera program.
- Implementation of 700 MHz Radio System

Milestones

5.1 Documented use of Crime Analysis and Case Management capabilities of RMS System.

5.2 Purchase of laptops and printers for all patrol vehicles

5.3 Purchase of Mobile CAD licenses and Maintenance Contract

5.4 Renegotiate data storage contract with Taser in 2022 or identify a new solution.

5.5 Identify vendor and data storage system for in-car cameras systems.

5.6 Identify and contract with engineering firm to assist with 700 MHz Radio Project

5.7 Install 700 MHz Radio System

Goal #6: Enhance officer safety, fitness, and physical training

All Personnel

The Americus Police department recognizes that physical fitness is a key requirement for personnel employed as law enforcement officers. Aside from the physical requirements inherent in dealing with violent suspects who violently resist arrest or flee to avoid apprehension, the physical and emotional stress of police work can negatively impact the health of our officers. The department is committed to encouraging our employees, both sworn and civilian, to maintain a level of physical fitness and wellness that will positively impact both their professional and overall wellbeing.

Strategy 6.1: Encourage all employees to participate in the city's Wellness Program

The department will encourage 100% employee participation in the wellness program by providing employees time during their workday to meet with a fitness coach and attend incentive events sponsored by the city.

Strategy 6.2: Implement a Physical Abilities Assessment as part of the hiring process

We will implement the assessment chosen by the state as a prerequisite for academy attendance as part of our hiring process to ensure that candidates for sworn positions are physically able to perform the job tasks associated with police work.

Strategy 6.3: Implement training programs for employees who wish to increase their level of physical fitness

We will identify personnel who wish to be certified as physical fitness instructors and work with our wellness coaches to design physical fitness routines for employees who wish to begin or enhance a fitness regimen.

Strategy 6.4: Implement annual physical fitness assessments for sworn personnel

We will identify and implement an annual assessment tool that will give sworn personnel a good idea of their current fitness level and provide measurable goals for improvement.

Success for this goal will be measured by:

- Documentation of 100% employee participation in the city's wellness program.
- Implementing the state's required Physical Abilities Test as a preemployment test for applicants.
- Completing an analysis of physical abilities assessments in use by other agencies in the state and selecting an instrument for our department
- Identifying and implementing an annual physical fitness assessment for all sworn personnel and any civilian employees who wish to participate.
- Providing both department wide and officer specific training to improve performance on the fitness tests

Milestones

Strategy 6.1: 100% participation in the City of Americus Wellness Program

Strategy 6.2. Implementation of a pre-employment Physical Abilities Test (PAT) for recruits

Strategy 6.3: Training of Fitness Instructors

Strategy 6.4. Design and implement fitness routines for all participants

Strategy 6.5. Begin annual physical abilities assessment of all sworn employees

Capital Improvement and Equipment Needs

Capital Needs

The most significant capital need is to upgrade our antiquated UHF Radio System to an 700/800 MHz Digital Radio System. The proposed system would require the construction of two tower sites, which would be connected to the radio network controller in Albany or in Cordele. This system would give reliable radio coverage throughout Americus and Sumter County and would link Sumter County Agencies into a regional communications system which covers the majority of the Southwestern region of the state. The estimated cost for the new system, including all necessary radios and equipment is \$3.75 million.

An equally critical capital need for the department is to continue to replace a minimum of six vehicles for the police fleet each year. Six Ford Explorer Police Interceptors were approved in the 2018, 2019, and 2020 capital budgets. Although we have made progress in updating the fleet, we still have a number of Crown Victorias in the fleet with excessive mileage. Vehicles purchased in the early stages of the vehicle plan are also starting to fail or require extensive maintenance.

Equipment Needs

In November 2017 we entered a payment plan to replace all the department's aging Taser Conducted Energy Weapons (CEW) with new Taser X-2 weapons. The first two payments of the purchase plan were made through a grant from the Smarr Smith Foundation. The Foundation was not able to fully fund the third-year payment and the difference had to be made up from asset forfeiture funds. There are two more payments left to complete the five-year purchase plan. It is hoped that the Smarr Smith Foundation will be able to continue there commitment to fund this project, but the CoVID19 pandemic forced the cancellation of the foundation's primary fundraising event this year and it is uncertain if they will be able to raise adequate funds for this year's

payment, due in November. We are currently exploring alternative funding, other than depleting our asset forfeiture account.

We also have a pressing need to upgrade our ability to respond to major crime scenes, as evidenced by shortcomings in our response to a recent outdoor murder scene which covered a two-block area. We were severely hampered in searching the scene due to a lack of outdoor lighting and the availability of evidence collection supplies. The Fire Department has transferred an enclosed trailer to us that was formerly used as a mobile communications center. The trailer has been sitting unused for years and needs some minor repair. Most of the radio equipment has been removed, but the trailer is still outfitted with lights and electrical outlets. It needs shelving for scene supplies, a set of portable flood lights and a generator to power it on a scene to make it ideal for major crime scene response.

Current Equipment Needs Include:

- Purchase new door control system, or upgrade current door control system
- Outfit Communications Trailer as a Crime Scene Response Trailer
- Body Cameras for New Hires
- The Fourth and Fifth Year Payments for the Taser X-2 Purchase
- RADAR Units to outfit vehicles for New Hires
- Ballistic Shields and Active Shooter Armor for all Patrol Officers
- Computers, Office Furnishings and Office Supplies for new Street Crimes Unit
- Additional Handguns for New Hires
- Axon In-Car Camera Systems for new cars
- Portable Radios for New Hires
- Replacement Handguns

Collaborative Systems Review

The Americus Police Department works collaboratively with many groups and individuals in our community. Individual officers volunteer their time to service organizations and the department is committed to working with the community to improve the standard of living for all residents of Americus and Sumter county. Below is a summary of the organizations with which the department participates in formal collaborative agreements.

One Sumter Economic Development Foundation

One of the mandates for One Sumter is to work to enhance public safety in Americus and Sumter County. The Foundation provided \$45,000 to the police department to fund the purchase and training of a Police K-9 and a Patrol Vehicle for the K-9 Program. The executive board meets regularly with the chief and sheriff to discuss needs of their agencies. We are currently (May 2018) working with One Sumter to sponsor community meetings, hosted by a moderator from the University of Georgia to discuss concerns and needs in neighborhoods around the city.

Smarr Smith Foundation

The Smarr Smith Foundation was formed in 2017 after the line of duty deaths of Nick Smarr and Jody Smith to provide support for our local law enforcement agencies. The foundation raises money to provide scholarship opportunities at GSW State University and at South Georgia Technical College for students interested in studying criminal justice. The foundation also provides grants to the three local law enforcement agencies for equipment and training. The police department was able to purchase new Tasers for all patrol and investigative personnel through funding from the Smarr Smith Foundation.

Sumter County Schools

The Americus Police Department has a strong partnership with the Sumter County School System. We provide two officers to teach the GREAT Program at Sumter

County Intermediate School and partner with the school system to provide the GREAT Summer Program to 5th and 6th Graders. The department also works closely with the SRO's provided to the schools by the Sheriff's Office.

Sumter YDC

The Sumter Youth Development Campus is a secure long-term facility for youth sentenced or committed to DJJ custody by juvenile courts. This facility houses teens from across the state and is highly secure facility. The Americus Police Department partnered with the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice to help launch a pilot mentoring program at the YDC. The program was moderately successful, but unfortunately the facility is being closed by the state in June of 2020. Should the facility be reopened or repurposed, we will explore building a partnership with the new entity.

Middle Flint Behavioral Health

The department is working toward full compliance with the One Mind Initiative sponsored by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). The campaign involves establishing a clearly defined and sustainable partnership with a community mental health organization, developing a model policy to implement police response to persons affected by mental illness, training and certifying sworn officers and selected non-sworn staff in mental health first aid training or other equivalent mental health awareness course, and providing crisis intervention team training.

We have established a partnership with Middle Flint Mental Health Services and implemented a comprehensive policy on dealing with persons with mental health issues. We have made significant progress in training our personnel and have identified training opportunities across the region for both Mental Health First Aid and the Crisis Intervention Team Training. We have made CIT training a priority for both sworn and civilian personnel and intend to exceed the IACP standard by having our entire department CIT certified.

Americus Housing Authority

The department works closely with the housing authority to provide criminal history information on applicants and to provide off duty officers to work security details at housing authority properties.

Americus/Sumter Transitional Housing

Americus-Sumter Transitional Housing Ministries, Inc. seeks to assist homeless families in the community. Their goal is to have a “web” of properties, in many different neighborhoods, that provide safe, affordable and temporary (18 months), transitional housing. They provide volunteer mentors, who assist families in meeting some of the following challenges: unemployment, lack of savings for rental and utility deposits, abuse, addiction, educational needs, and bad credit. Chief Scott serves as an advisor to the Board of Directors to provide input on security and safety planning. The department also provides criminal histories on applicants to the program.

Friendship Missionary Baptist Church Homeless Shelter

Friendship MBC operates a temporary shelter for homeless men. The police department provides criminal history and warrant checks for applicants to the program.

Georgia Southwestern State University

The Americus Police Department has a formal Mutual Aid Agreement with the GSW Department of Public Safety to provide assistance on any incident occurring on campus. GSW Public Safety Officers routinely patrol the areas adjacent to campus, particularly off campus apartment complexes that are predominantly occupied by students.

South Georgia Technical College

The police department provides adjunct instructors to teach at the Police Academy operated by SGTC. The department also responds on request to incidents on campus.

Time Table

GOAL	STRATEGY	ESTABLISHED DATE	COMPLETION DATE
ENHANCE COMMUNITY TRUST, INTERACTION & ACCOUNTABILITY	1.1 - COMPETENT INTERNAL AFFAIRS	03/16	ONGOING
	1.2 - ENHANCED USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA	08/16	ONGOING
	1.3 – COMMUNITY EDUCATION	04/16	ONGOING
	1.4 – STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS	04/16	ONGOING
	1.5 – CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS	12/17	ONGOING
	1.6 – MAINTAIN STATE ACCREDITATION	08/16	ONGOING
	1.7 – MAINTAIN CALEA ACCREDITATION	11/19	ONGOING
REDUCE CRIME AND ENHANCE CRIME SCENE RESPONSE	2.1 – ENHANCED CRIME ANALYSIS	07/17	ONGOING
	2.2 – TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT	01/17	ONGOING
	2.3 – PROACTIVE ENFORCEMENT	07/17	ONGOING
	2.4 – EARLY INTERVENTION	07/17	ONGOING
	2.5 – SCHEDULE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SUMMIT	04/20	07/22
INTELLIGENCE GATHERING AND INFORMATION SHARING	3.1 – CRIME ANALYSIS	04/20	ONGOING
	3.2 – GANG DATABASE	4/20	12/20

	3.3 – PROSECUTION OF GANG CHARGES	04/20	ONGOING
	3.4 – STREET GANG RECOGNITION TRAINING	4/20	12/21

GOAL	STRATEGY	ESTABLISHED DATE	COMPLETION DATE
CAREER DEVELOPMENT	4.1 – TRAINING REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS	01/17	ONGOING
	4.2 SELECT LEADERSHIP TRAINING	01/17	ONGOING
	4.3 – IDENTIFY FUNDING	01/17	ONGOING
	4.4 – DIVERSITY OF ASSIGNMENT	07/17	ONGOING
ENHANCE TECHNOLOGY	5.1 – MAXIMIZE RMS USE	01/17	ONGOING
	5.2 – IDENTIFY FUNDING	04/20	12/22
	5.3 IMPLEMENT 700 MHz RADIO SYSTEM	04/20	12/23
	5.4 – CONTINUE DATA STORAGE CONTRACT	10/17	ONGOING
	5.5 – MAINTAIN IN-CAR VIDEO PROGRAM	01/17	ONGOING
OFFICER SAFETY AND FITNESS	6.1 – PARTICIPATION IN WELLNESS PROGRAM	10/16	ONGOING
	6.2 – IMPLEMENT PAT TEST	04/20	12/20
	6.3 – IMPLEMENT FITNESS TRAINING PROGRAM	04/20	12/21
	6.4 – IMPLEMENT ANNUAL FITNESS ASSESSMENT	04/20	12/21

COMPLETED GOALS

ENHANCE COMMUNITY TRUST, INTERACTION & ACCOUNTABILITY	1.6 – ATTAIN STATE CERTIFICATION		November 2017
	1.7 ATTAIN CALEA ACCREDITATION	11/2017	November 2019
ENHANCE TECHNOLOGY	5.1 – IDENTIFY AND INSTALL RMS SYSTEM	2016	2017

