

**City of Northfield, Minnesota**  
**Police Department Staffing Study**

**Project Report**

**November 2019**



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November 1, 2019

Mr. Ben Martig  
City Administrator  
City of Northfield  
801 Washington Street  
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We are pleased to present this project report regarding the staffing and operational assessment of the City of Northfield Police Department. This report includes observations and recommendations intended to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department.

Recommendations included in this report are guided by input from Northfield Police Department personnel as well as identified industry standards and best practices that are appropriate for the City of Northfield.

The Police Department is fortunate to have employees who are dedicated to providing excellent services to the community's residents and business owners who, in turn, support and want to connect with the Department. We are confident that these recommendations can provide a framework for improving operational performance, and the report will serve as a useful document for Police Department strategic planning.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with the City of Northfield.

Sincerely,

Julia D. Novak  
President

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## Executive Summary

The City of Northfield has an unusual set of public safety challenges. Although it is essentially a small, exurban community with a low crime rate, it is also an academic community with a manufacturing base. Carleton College and St. Olaf College have a combined student population of 5,050. While both institutions are staffed with private security that handles most routine incidents on campus, colleges and universities have a significant impact on their surrounding communities. As institutions that encourage independent thinking, colleges and universities can become centers of protest; they often draw large crowds for athletic and cultural events; and local authorities must be well prepared to respond to any critical incidents that may occur. Off campus, students are a major part of a city's commerce and its nightlife, and the academic schedule can result in significant fluctuations in the level of activity during the course of the year.

Northfield also has a manufacturing presence, as home to a major producer of breakfast cereals and several other production and transportation companies. The traffic safety impact of transportation of raw and finished materials into and out of the City by truck and rail, as well as the potential for industrial accidents, labor actions, and security concerns related to large businesses, requires an additional level of preparedness.

The City also faces challenges in emergency management. In recent years, the Cannon River has repeatedly flooded the downtown district, and the area has a history of tornado activity; Rice and Dakota Counties have been struck by 65 tornadoes since 1950,<sup>1</sup> and Northfield suffered significant tornado damage in September 2018.<sup>2</sup>

These factors illustrate the complexity of determining the appropriate staffing level and configuration of a police department. There must be a balance between the need to be prepared for all possibilities within the constraints of budgeting for probabilities. However, a review of these factors, as well as a detailed analysis of the City's emergency call volume, indicates that additional Patrol Officer staffing is needed during the day shift. This additional staffing will better position the Department to meet best practice guidelines for proactive and community-oriented policing, generate needed administrative capacity, and align officer availability with Northfield's workload demand profile. There is also a clear need to add a Sergeant to the Patrol Division to eliminate supervisory gaps and ensure a consistent supervisory presence within the Division. Lastly, support services capacity should be added through civilian positions and cross-training of existing personnel.

Beyond these staffing and capacity issues, there are also opportunities to create a departmental strategic plan and performance measures. This planning process will help the department practically align its operations with the community's strategic goals while also creating a data collection and reporting framework that increases transparency to the public and fosters data-based decision-making within the Department.

The following table summarizes the recommendations included in each section of the report

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<sup>1</sup> [https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/natural\\_resources/climate/summaries\\_and\\_publications/tortally2018.pdf](https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/natural_resources/climate/summaries_and_publications/tortally2018.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.southernminn.com/northfield\\_news/news/article\\_5b50f06f-2962-5e86-ad9e-6b5f558f57ae.html](https://www.southernminn.com/northfield_news/news/article_5b50f06f-2962-5e86-ad9e-6b5f558f57ae.html)

**Table 1: Summary of Recommendations**

#	Recommendation
<b>Patrol Staffing and Operations</b>	
1	Develop a proactive policing target for the Patrol Division.
2	Increase budgeted Patrol staffing by one officer and implement a swing shift model.
3	Add one Patrol Sergeant to reduce gaps in patrol supervision.
4	Expand Emergency Management capacity within the Department.
<b>Investigative Staffing and Operations</b>	
5	Enhance data collection regarding Investigations Unit workload indicators.
6	Initiate discussion with the School District regarding funding for a second School Resource Officer.
<b>Support Services</b>	
7	Add one Community Service Officer position.
8	Cross-train the Administrative Assistant on core record management duties to ensure operational continuity in the Records Unit.
9	Install an automated telephone information system (“phone tree”).
10	Install an interface connecting the evidence management and records management systems.
11	Plan for staffing impact of body-worn cameras.
<b>Policies and Administration</b>	
12	Pursue accreditation of the Department.
13	Develop a gender and racial diversity recruitment program.
14	Develop a training database.
15	Conduct a facility and space needs assessment of Police Headquarters.
<b>Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement</b>	
16	Adopt a Strategic Plan for the Police Department.
17	Implement a performance measurement system and annual report process for the Department.

## **Introduction and Methodology**

In June 2019, the City of Northfield retained the services of The Novak Consulting Group to conduct a staffing and operations assessment of its Police Department. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the City's police staffing and deployment approach within the context of workload patterns and trends and to determine what opportunities may exist to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the City's public safety services.

To accomplish these tasks, The Novak Consulting Group conducted extensive fieldwork that involved interviews with members of the Police Department and the City's administrative support team, as well as tours of the City and the police facility. In total, 21 City staff participated in individual interviews or focus group sessions. In addition, a confidential employee survey was administered to all Police Department employees to gather feedback regarding the strengths and challenges within the Department.

The Novak Consulting Group also requested and analyzed background information provided by Police Department staff. A thorough review of its core functions and activities was accomplished by evaluating budget information, workload measures, performance indicators, and other relevant data about operations and administration.

This data was evaluated using a multi-faceted analytical approach that takes into account service expectations and goals, practical operational constraints, and data-derived issue analysis and validation. This process has resulted in a series of staffing, administrative, and operational recommendations that are unique to Northfield's specific operating environment.

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## About the Northfield Police Department

The City of Northfield Police Department is responsible for patrol, response to calls for service, and investigation of crimes for a population of 20,634 residents in an area of 8.52 square miles.<sup>3</sup> Overall, the City's population increased 3.1% from the 2010 census; the City's daytime population increased by approximately 10.1% to 21,375.<sup>4</sup>

The mission of the Northfield Police Department is "to enhance the quality of life in Northfield by developing a close partnership with our community to solve problems, preserve the peace and provide a safe environment for all. Our community relationships are enhanced through recognizing and fostering the creativity and participation of all our members."<sup>5</sup>

The Department employs 28.05 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees; twenty-three are sworn officers:

- 1 Chief of Police
- 1 Deputy Chief
- 1 Investigations Sergeant
- 3 Patrol Sergeants
- 2 General Investigators
- 1 Drug Task Force Investigator
- 1 School Resource Officer/Investigator
- 13 Patrol Officers

The 5.05 non-sworn employees include:

- 1 Evidence Specialist
- 1 Community Service Officer
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 2 Records Specialists
- .05 Emergency Management Director (Part-time)

The Department has a Reserve Unit of 27 unpaid volunteers that primarily assists with crowd control at community events. They are non-licensed, unarmed, and do not have power of arrest. Reserve Officers provided 1,610.25 hours of service during 2018. The Department also has a Youth Explorer program that currently has five members.

Police Officers and Sergeants are represented by Law Enforcement Labor Services, Inc., Police Patrol Unit 293, and Sergeants Unit 331. Non-sworn personnel are represented by the International Union of Operating Engineers Local Union No. 70.

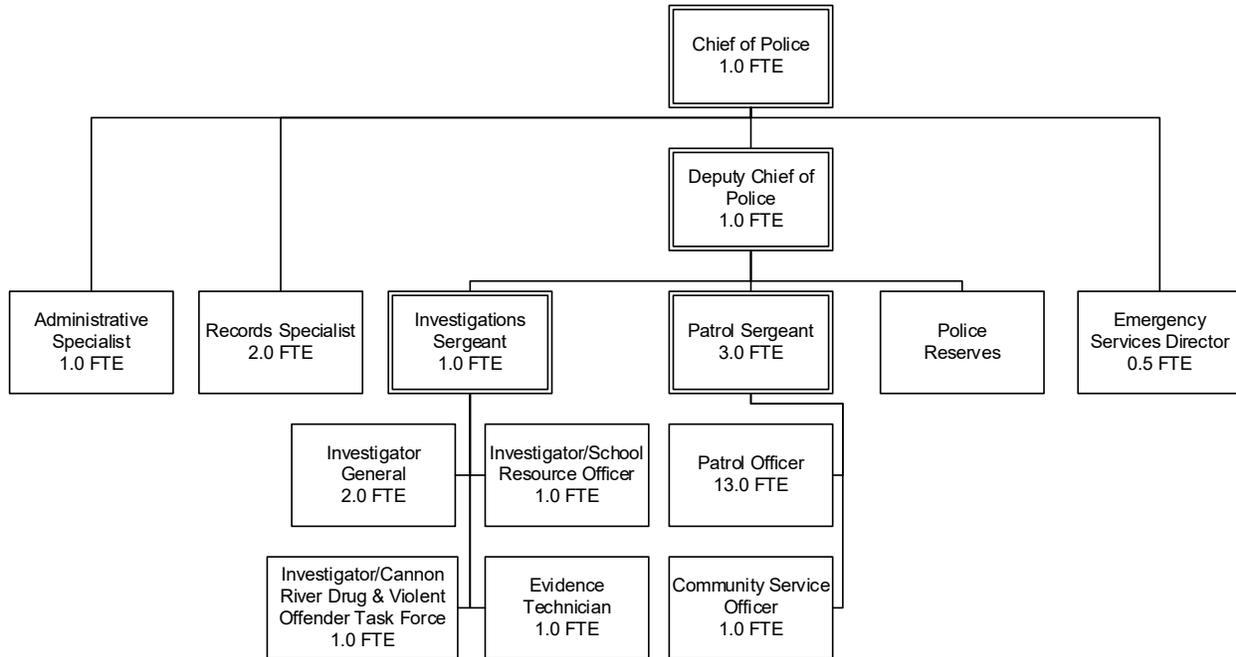
The following figure illustrates the Department's organizational structure.

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<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates 2018, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/northfieldcityminnesota>

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "Commuter Adjusted Daytime Population, Table 3," 2006-2010.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ci.northfield.mn.us/528/Information>



**Figure 1: Police Department Organization Structure, FY2019**

Under the City Code, the City Administrator supervises the administration of all departments and offices, including the Police Department.<sup>6</sup> The City Administrator appoints Department Heads and supervisory personnel, subject to the approval of a majority of the members of the City Council.<sup>7</sup>

The Chief of Police is responsible for managing the operations of the Police Department; administering its daily operations within the framework of long-range planning and the goals of the City; directing the Department’s law enforcement efforts to ensure public safety; and directing the main divisions of the Police Department: Patrol, Investigations, Records, and Emergency Management.<sup>8</sup> The Chief has three direct reports: the Deputy Chief of Police, the Administrative Specialist, and the Emergency Management Coordinator.

The Deputy Chief, under the general administrative direction of the Chief of Police, directs, manages, supervises, and coordinates the activities and operations of the Police Department; coordinates assigned activities within the Department and with outside agencies; and provides complex administrative support to the Chief. The Deputy Chief has six direct reports: the Investigations Sergeant, the three Patrol Sergeants, and the two Records Specialists.<sup>9</sup>

**Patrol**

The Patrol Division is responsible for the Department’s core function: uniformed patrol. Three Sergeants and 13 Patrol Officers are assigned to patrol duty. Patrol personnel bid annually for schedule assignments and rotate shifts every four months. Officers perform three shifts to provide coverage 24 hours daily: the Day Shift from 6:00 am to 4:00 pm; the Mid Shift from 4:00 pm to 2:00 am; and the Night Shift from 8:30

<sup>6</sup> Northfield, MN Code of Ordinances, §2-161 (b).

<sup>7</sup> Northfield, MN Code of Ordinances, §2- 91.

<sup>8</sup> City of Northfield Job Description: Chief of Police.

<sup>9</sup> The Records staff report to the Chief of Police or the Deputy Chief as needed but primarily to the Deputy Chief.

pm to 6:30 am. Officers work 10-hour shifts on a 28-day cycle of five days on, four days off, five days on, four days off, six days on, and four days off.

One Sergeant is designated as the Day Sergeant, working 10-hour shifts from 6:00 am to 4:00 pm on the same rotation as Patrol Officers. Two Night Sergeants work 12-hour shifts from 4:00 pm to 4:00 am on a rotation of five days on, four days off, five days on, five days off, four days on, five days off; their schedules are offset to provide seven days per week coverage. The Night Sergeants are excused for four hours during each two-week period, sometimes referred to as “chart time” or “Kelly time,” to offset hours worked over 80 hours during each cycle.

Under this schedule, a Patrol Sergeant is not scheduled to work between 4:00 am and 6:00 am daily, or from midnight to 6:00 am on days when the Night Sergeant uses accrued chart time. On those days when the Day Sergeant is off, a Patrol Sergeant is not scheduled to work from 4:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Four officers are assigned to each of the three shifts; as a result, two are typically available for duty on most tours, with overlaps in the schedule every fourth or fifth day, resulting in the availability of three officers. Average coverage is two officers and no more than one Sergeant on duty during each shift. Because of the overlap of the Mid Shift and the Night Shift, three to four officers may be on duty between 8:30 pm and 2:00 am.

Officers are not assigned to specific posts, zones, or sectors; they are deployed Citywide.

The Department reported an average of 23,194 calls annually for the past two years: 20,842 in 2017 and 25,546 in 2018. It issued 1,319 citations during 2018, and of 598 reported offenses, it cleared 294 by arrest or exceptional clearance.<sup>10</sup> The following table reflects enforcement activity during the past three years.

**Table 2: Selected Enforcement Indicators 2016 - 2018**

Year	Citations issued	Reported offenses	Offenses cleared by arrest or exceptional clearance
2016	998	659	265
2017	1,018	564	240
2018	1,319	598	294

One non-sworn Community Service Officer performs multiple functions, including animal control, parking enforcement, bank escorts, public fingerprinting, posting of parking signs, monitoring street maintenance and repair needs, and managing the Department’s vehicle fleet.

Two officers are assigned to the Dakota County South Metro Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT), which is composed of personnel from Dakota County, Rice County, and the cities of Northfield, Apple Valley, Farmington, Hastings, Inver Grove Heights, Lakeville, Faribault, Mendota Heights, Rosemount, South St. Paul, and West St. Paul. SWAT is a part-time assignment; members are mobilized from their

<sup>10</sup> Under the State of Minnesota’s definition, “exceptional clearance” applies when sufficient information has been obtained to identify and locate the perpetrator of a crime, but there are reasons beyond the control of law enforcement that preclude arresting, charging, and prosecuting the offender.

regular assignments as needed and train twice monthly. The following table provides an overview of the team's activity.

**Table 3: Annual SWAT Activity by 2016 - 2018**

Year	Callouts
2016	12
2017	23
2018	16

The State of Minnesota requires candidates for appointment as Police Officers to complete basic training and pass a licensing examination before appointment. The Department's 16-week structured field training program builds on that basic training by providing officers with individualized field training in local policies and procedures and the intricacies of the community. The program involves daily observations and periodic evaluations to ensure that training goals have been met. Field Training Officers receive a stipend of \$2.00 per hour while performing training duties.

### Investigations

The Investigations Division is responsible for the investigation of crimes, the School Resource Officer (SRO) program for the Northfield Public Schools, and the custody of evidence and property taken into the possession of the Department. It is supervised by a Sergeant and staffed by four Investigators and one Evidence Technician. Two Investigators are assigned to general investigations. One Investigator is assigned to the Cannon River Drug and Violent Offender Task Force, which covers Rice and Le Sueur counties and is made up of investigators from the Rice County and Le Sueur County Sheriff's Offices and the Faribault and Northfield Police Departments. That Investigator handles Northfield's narcotics investigations. One School Resource Officer/Investigator is assigned to the Investigations Unit; that officer covers all of the City's schools, teaches the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) Program in three elementary schools, handles most calls for service at schools, and assists with investigations when school is not in session. The School District contributes \$58,722 annually toward the SRO's salary. The Evidence Specialist is responsible for the intake, processing, custody, and disposition of evidence and property, and participates in crime scene processing.

The position of Investigator is a designation; Investigators retain the rank of Police Officer and receive a stipend of \$350 per month. They typically rotate out of investigative positions after four years. Investigators work eight-hour shifts, Monday through Friday, generally from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

The Investigations Unit opened an average of 96 cases annually in 2017 and 2018, as illustrated in the following table.

**Table 4: Annual Investigations Unit Cases Activity by 2017 - 2019**

Year	Cases Assigned
2017	95
2018	97
2019 YTD	35 (as of 7/18/19)

In addition, the Investigations Unit performs approximately 90 background checks each year for liquor and tobacco licenses and U-visa applications. They are carried under a single annual case number. Other duties include compliance checks for underage liquor and tobacco sales, the processing of U-visa applications for crime victims who are not residents of the United States, and predatory offender checks. Internal investigations are handled by the Deputy Chief and the Investigations Unit Sergeant.

The Investigations Unit Sergeant reviews all Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) reports to identify patterns, trends, and incidents requiring investigative attention. Intelligence information is conveyed to patrol personnel by email; in addition, the Investigations Unit Sergeant normally attends roll call to brief officers on crime trends and information of interest and to receive feedback.

Patrol Officers are expected to investigate cases to the fullest extent possible. Consequently, only more complex cases, or those that require resources beyond those available to a Patrol Officer in the course of his or her normal patrol duties, are referred to the Investigations Unit. Most misdemeanor cases and minor felony cases are investigated by Patrol.

### **Records**

The Records Unit is responsible for processing, maintaining, and disseminating all police records that include confidential and sensitive data pursuant to Minnesota data practices laws; coding reports in the Department’s Records Management System; completing case referrals to the City Attorney’s Office and the Rice County Attorney’s Office for prosecution of criminal charges; serving as the first point of contact for members of the public and other agencies at Police Headquarters; answering the Department’s telephones; serving as Terminal Access Coordinator (TAC) for state and federal databases; entry of “hot files,” such as reports of stolen vehicles, stolen property, and missing persons; responding to requests for reports, statistics, and other data; mailing, filing, photocopying; and providing general clerical support. The Unit is staffed by two Police Records Specialists, who are cross-trained to perform all of the unit’s major functions. The window is staffed eight hours a day. The two Records Specialists perform 8.5-hour shifts; one Specialist is scheduled from 6:30 am to 3:00 pm; the other is scheduled from 8:30 am to 5:00. Both work Monday through Friday. Public counter transactions include peddler permits, dog impounds, ticket payment, fingerprinting, and maintaining domestic violence records for advocates.

### **Emergency Management**

A part-time Emergency Management Director is primarily involved in planning the response to weather events; the Cannon River, which runs through the City, floods regularly, and the area is subject to tornado activity. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), emergency management is the managerial function charged with creating the framework within which communities reduce vulnerability to hazards and cope with disasters. An effective Emergency Management program protects communities by coordinating and integrating all activities necessary to build, sustain, and improve the capability to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from threatened or actual natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters.

## Dispatch

Dispatch and Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) services are provided by the Rice/Steele 911 Communications Center, a regional public safety answering point and communications center providing law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical service communications services to Rice County, Steele County, and the cities of Faribault, Owatonna, and Northfield.

## Facilities and Equipment

The Police Department is housed in a purpose-built facility at 1615 Riverview Drive. It does not have a firearms training facility; the Department uses the Faribault Rifle and Pistol Club and an FBI range located in the City of Rosemount. The Department operates a fleet of 18 vehicles: nine marked sport utility vehicles; two unmarked sport utility vehicles; two unmarked sedans; one pickup truck; two unmarked minivans; one command post bus; and one off-road utility vehicle. Take-home vehicles are assigned to the Chief of Police and the Investigator assigned to the Cannon River Drug and Violent Offender Task Force. Vehicles are typically replaced after 80,000 to 100,000 miles of usage; as a result, marked patrol vehicles are generally replaced after seven years; other vehicles are generally replaced after 10 years. Vehicle maintenance is coordinated by the Community Service Officer and performed by local dealerships.

Patrol vehicles are equipped with Mobile Digital Terminals (MDTs), in-car video systems, Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), fire extinguishers, portable breath test devices, digital recorders, and cameras. Officers are also equipped with Department-issued smartphones.

## Historical Staffing

The following table shows the full-time budgeted position history of the Department for the last five reported fiscal years.

**Table 5: Police Department Position History, FY2015-2019**

Police Department	FY2015 Actual	FY2016 Actual	FY2017 Actual	FY2018 Actual	FY2019 Actual	Percent Change
Sworn	22.00	22.00	22.00	22.00	23.00	5%
Civilian	5.05	5.05	5.05	5.05	5.05	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27.05</b>	<b>27.05</b>	<b>27.05</b>	<b>27.05</b>	<b>28.05</b>	<b>4%</b>

The number of sworn personnel has increased by one position over the last five reported fiscal years, due to the addition of an investigator in 2019. In FY2013, the Department had 6.0 Civilian personnel. However, the number of Civilian personnel was reduced to 5.0 in FY2014 and remained the same through FY2018. Furthermore, in FY2010, the number of sworn personnel was reduced from 22.0 to 21.0. The Department also generally operates with fewer than the authorized number of FTEs due to staff absence and turnover.

## Budget

Police operations are budgeted under the City's General Fund. The following table shows operating expenditures by category for the last five reported fiscal years based on their OpenGov webpage and the FY2017-18 and FY2018-19 budget documents.

**Table 6: Total Operating Expenses – All Funds, FY2015 through FY2019**

Category	FY2015 Actual	FY2016 Actual	FY2017 Actual	FY2018 Actual	FY2019 Budgeted	Percent Change
Personnel	\$2,472,838	\$2,296,411	\$2,766,131	\$3,024,071	\$3,263,895	32%
Non-Personnel	\$374,048	\$446,782	\$504,968	\$504,829	\$593,197	59%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,846,886</b>	<b>\$2,743,193</b>	<b>\$3,271,099</b>	<b>\$3,528,900</b>	<b>\$3,857,092</b>	<b>35%</b>

Expenditures have increased by 35% over the past five fiscal years, or an average of 7.1% per year. The increase is largely driven by increased personnel and charges for services. The largest increase in costs was between FY2016 and FY2017; in 2017, a new Citywide pay matrix was adopted, resulting in pay increases for all staff.

### Crime Rates

The Northfield Police Department participates in the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) system. It reports UCR Part I crimes to the FBI, which include serious crimes such as homicide, rape, assault, burglary, and arson. The following table lists the annual number of Type I crimes reported to the Northfield Police Department by category from 2014 through 2018.

**Table 7: Violent and Property Crime in Northfield by Type, 2014-2018, UCR**

Crime Type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Percent Change 2013-2017
Murder and Nonnegligent Manslaughter	0	0	0	0	0	-
Rape	1	1	5	15	18	170%
Robbery	2	2	1	1	1	-50%
Aggravated Assault	12	6	10	12	9	-25%
<b>Violent Crime</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>87%</b>
Burglary	58	26	19	25	25	-57%
Larceny-Theft	214	197	187	166	170	-21%
Motor Vehicle Theft	2	8	5	6	4	100%
Arson	1	2	2	2	2	100%
<b>Property Crime</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>-27%</b>

### Community Engagement

The Department appears to have a positive relationship with the community it serves. Policing in college towns – historically referred to as the “town and gown” relationship – can be challenging and often has the potential to be adversarial. However, the Northfield Police Department works well across the board with the academic, residential, manufacturing, and business communities. It has been referred to as an “event heavy” community, with many public events at which the Department maintains a presence, and the Department is proud of its community-policing philosophy and relationship with the community.

The most notable is Jesse James Days, a multi-day event to commemorate the townspeople who were the first to challenge and defeat legendary criminal Jesse James and the Younger Gang in 1876. The Department invests considerable effort into its annual “Night to Unite” event, during which it coordinates dozens of neighborhood block parties with residents. The Chief of Police works with the Government

Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), a national network of governments working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all;<sup>11</sup> the City's Climate Action Plan Advisory Board; the Mayor's Youth Task Force on Drugs; the Rice County Drug Court; the HOPE Center (Healing Outreach Prevention Education), which provides advocacy services for victims of domestic and sexual violence; Healthy Community Initiative programs, such as the Rice County Chemical and Mental Health Collaborative; and other organizations. Patrol Sergeants are assigned to liaison with various community groups and committees, with whom they meet routinely. The Department Policy Manual includes a procedure regarding bias-based policing.<sup>12</sup>

The Department has been successful in its efforts in this area and in implementing steps to maintain its collaborative relationship with the City's residents.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/about/who-we-are/>

<sup>12</sup> Policy #212: *"Impartial Policing/Avoiding Racial Profiling"*

## Police Department Employee Survey Results

As part of the Northfield Police Department Organizational Assessment, The Novak Consulting Group administered a survey to all Department staff to assess the perceptions and experiences of employees regarding the Northfield Police Department.

Respondents were asked to provide their views on the Department as a whole, in addition to their views on employee engagement, work environment, and communication. Questions were asked in two forms: rating scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree) and open-ended. The survey was administered using SurveyMonkey®, a web-based survey tool, and was available from July 27 through August 16, 2019. A total of 26 out of the 28 employees in the Department responded to the survey, a 93% response rate.

Overall, themes that emerged from the survey include the following:

- Over 90% of employees agreed that the Northfield Police Department is a good place to work and that the colleagues they work with most frequently have high standards and ethics.
- Almost all (96%) of respondents agreed that they have a clear understanding of their job responsibilities and expectations. However, 40% of respondents do not feel content with their Department's management, practices, and operations, and over 30% of respondents feel they cannot trust their Department Leadership.
- Over 90% of respondents feel that their job gives them a sense of personal satisfaction, that they are giving their best efforts at work each day, and that they are respected by their peers. However, at least 28% of respondents reported that they do not feel respected by Department Leadership.
- Respondents acknowledge that their Department is building a sensitive and inclusive environment, but there is an opportunity to incorporate a broader range of ideas and opinions. Over 95% of respondents believe that the people they work with most, as well as their Department Leadership, frequently avoid using insensitive, discriminatory, or charged language. However, 36% of employees do not feel people with different ideas and opinions are valued among their coworkers.
- Respondents are looking for more opportunities for professional development. Over 40% of respondents feel unsatisfied with their current opportunities for professional growth and development.
- Respondents feel the Department needs to adjust staffing levels and hire more staff to handle the current workload. The need for additional staffing to accommodate the current workload was a major theme throughout the open-ended questions on this survey. When asked about the challenges and suggested changes for the Department, many employees responded that they feel the Department does not have the appropriate staffing numbers or levels in place to maintain the high level of service quality expected by the City. Some employees expressed frustration with the length of time it takes to hire new employees. Additionally, over 30% of respondents reported that they feel their workload is unreasonable. However, a few respondents recommended the

implementation of a power patrol shift to help ease the workload for Patrol Officers during higher volume times throughout the week.

- Respondents feel they have access to the information they need but also feel communication could improve in the Department, specifically between management and line staff. Most employees (96%) feel that they have access to the information they need to do their job. However, over 60% of respondents do not feel that important information is provided in a timely manner. Over 30% of respondents do not feel comfortable talking about work problems with their direct supervisor, do not think technology is used effectively to communicate across the Department, and do not believe that problems or issues among coworkers can be discussed without blaming others.
- Respondents would like to see more clarification and consistency in the decisions made by Department Leadership. Over 60% of respondents do not feel the Department involves employees in decisions that affect them and that Department Leadership does not clearly describe the reasons behind policy decisions. Specifically, when asked for suggested changes, Department employees expressed frustration with the inconsistencies in how each Sergeant makes decisions, which makes it difficult to know how to operate from one shift to the next.
- Respondents are particularly proud of the Department's community engagement efforts. When asked what the Department does particularly well, at least 65% of respondents mentioned community engagement as a strength of the Northfield Police Department. Specifically, employees are proud of the Department's efforts to reach out and accommodate the various needs of the surrounding community.

## Analysis and Recommendations

The Northfield Police Department provides a high level of service to the residents, businesses, and visitors of Northfield. Interviews with Department personnel indicate a strong commitment to the work and mission of the Department, and the staff is particularly proud of its relationship with the community it serves. The Novak Consulting Group's review of the Department indicates that it is a generally well-managed agency that is well-equipped to meet the demands of policing. However, there are challenges with respect to both sworn and civilian staffing levels. This assessment is designed to highlight the things that the Department is doing well and provide a constructive path to improve operations, augment service delivery, and further strengthen the relationship between the Department and the community. In addition, the analysis indicates the appropriate staffing levels for the Police Department to handle its current workload and equip the Department with resources to align operations with the community's policing expectations.

The analysis and recommendations detailed in this report are organized under five topic areas: 1) Patrol Staffing and Operations; 2) Investigative Staffing and Operations; 3) Support Services; 4) Policies and Administration; 5) Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement.

### Patrol Staffing and Operations

The Patrol Unit of the Northfield Police Department serves as the public face of the organization. Patrol Officers are a visible presence on City streets and respond to any calls for assistance. Basic patrol duties include emergency response, traffic enforcement, preliminary investigation, and suppression of crime. The Department deploys Patrol Officers on a 10-hour shift schedule. The day shift lasts from 6:00 am to 4:00 pm; the evening shift lasts from 4:00 pm to 2:00 am; the night shift lasts from 8:30 pm to 6:30 am. The City has a minimum staffing level of two Patrol Officers per shift, with periodic support from Patrol Sergeants; one Patrol Sergeant is assigned to the day shift, and two Patrol Sergeants are assigned to the evening shift. The recommendations in this section analyze the current shift model and staffing configurations and make recommendations to best support the Department's policing efforts.

#### Proactive Policing

##### **Recommendation 1: Develop a proactive policing target for the Patrol Division.**

Determining an appropriate patrol staffing level for a Police Department is challenging. Ultimately, patrol staffing levels should be based on calls for service and community expectations for enforcement and service, which may be impacted by the following: traffic patterns; business versus residential concentration; population; density; socioeconomic character; daytime population increase; presence of educational, religious, medical, and cultural institutions; and planned development. Governing bodies face the challenge of ensuring that their public safety agencies are staffed, equipped, and trained to respond to any contingency, while funding them within the locality's ability to pay and in a way that ensures the future affordability of government services.

In patrol, the widely accepted industry best practice is to ensure time is available for officers to perform proactive policing. This is in contrast to reactive policing, which is the practice of responding to an incident after it has occurred. The goal in analyzing patrol staffing is to identify staffing levels and deployment practices that provide adequate coverage for response to calls for service, while also enabling officers to engage in the level of proactive policing desired by the community – that is, to be proactive as well as reactive.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) has established a general best practices guideline that calls for a Patrol Officer's time to be balanced equally between proactive policing, reactive policing, and administrative requirements. In other words, the best practices target is for an average of 33% of a Patrol Officer's time to be available for proactive policing (33% rule). Proactive policing allows an agency to strategically deploy personnel to focus on identified trends and high crime areas, thereby preventing and reducing crime. Whether it is referred to as Community Policing, Problem Solving Policing, Data-Driven Policing, or by some other term, the goal is largely the same: to provide sufficient time for Patrol Officers to identify problem areas or conditions, develop and implement strategies to address those conditions, establish relationships with members of the community to partner in developing long-term solutions to issues, gather intelligence, and show police presence through interaction with residents and businesses as well as team-led enforcement initiatives. It includes targeted patrols, narcotics enforcement, traffic enforcement, and community outreach.

In determining the appropriate level of staffing for a police department, it is also important to note that additional factors that do not lend themselves to such data-driven analysis must be considered. They are based on a community's unique needs and tolerances and are ultimately dependent on policy decisions. An example is the determination of the community's desired level of service. Although the IACP guidelines cited previously call for a target of 33% proactive time, many communities choose to staff to a higher level to allow for greater community interaction, quicker response time, or additional patrol capacity, such as business district foot patrol. This determination ultimately results in a greater staffing need, and the cost of the additional personnel must be evaluated within that context. Conversely, some communities may target a lower proactive policing target to account for resource constraints or the work of other specialized units that focus on community-policing activities. These are all viable approaches that reflect the particular service dynamics of a given community.

Geography is a second major consideration. Although a certain number of officers may be sufficient to meet the average calls for service workload, additional officers may be required to provide adequate coverage, visibility, backup, and availability for emergency response. Policy determinations regarding staffing should account for sufficient staffing to ensure that adequate and timely backup is available, given the size of a community and the presence of any geographical barriers. This is particularly relevant in Northfield, which is bisected by a busy rail line.

The Northfield Police Department values community policing, but it does not have a formal proactive policing goal. The Department should define proactive policing goals and should make structure, deployment, and staffing decisions to align with these goals. Further, it should adopt a practice of tracking proactive policing metrics and communicating those metrics, as well as reports on proactive and community policing activities and outcomes, to the administration and City Council every quarter.

However, in the interim, The Novak Consulting Group has applied the IACP's 33% proactive policing guideline to analyze patrol staffing needs.

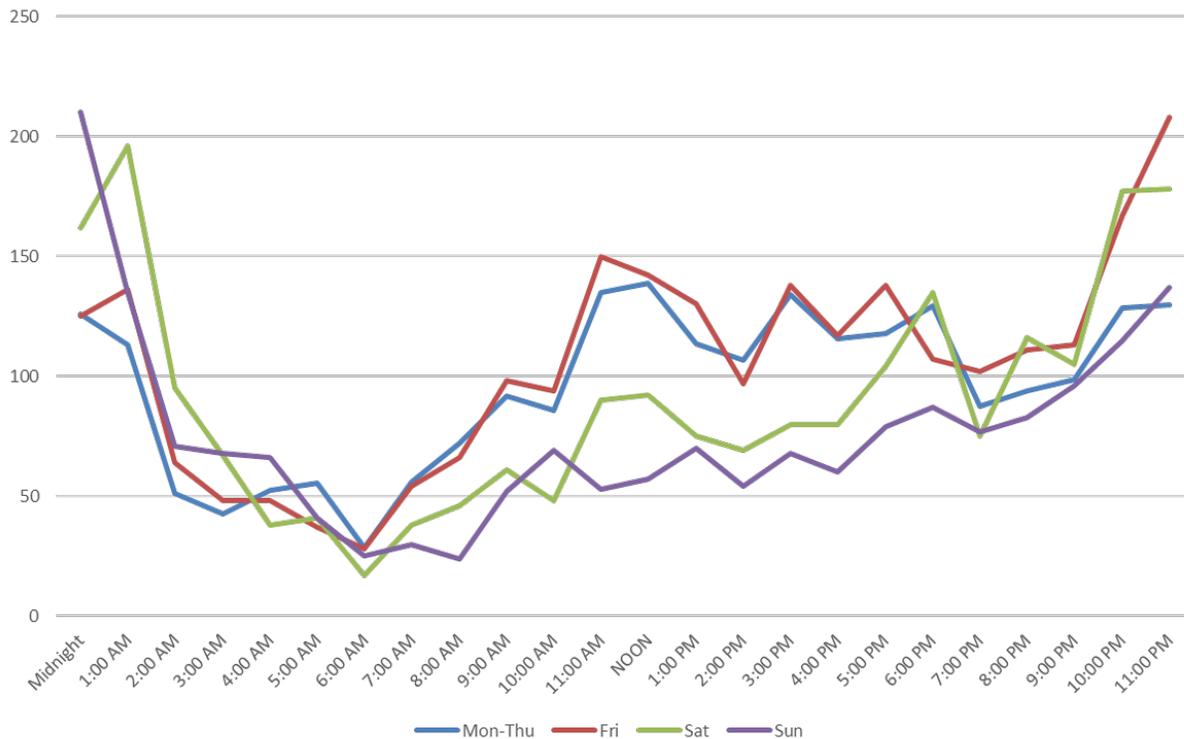
### **Patrol Staffing**

**Recommendation 2: Increase budgeted Patrol staffing by one officer and implement a swing shift model.**

To understand how closely the City of Northfield adheres to the IACP 33% guideline, it is necessary to examine the City's call data to see how much time patrol staff spend responding to requests for service. By analyzing the amount of time spent responding to calls by each hour of the day and each day of the

week, it is possible to extrapolate the appropriate number of officers required to accomplish the 33% proactive policing target.

The following graphic shows the average number of labor hours consumed responding to calls for service by day of the week and hour of the day, based on data provided by the Northfield Police Department.



**Figure 2: Average Labor Hours Consumed on Calls for Service by Hour of the Day and Day of the Week**

Labor hours consumed on calls for service are similar between weekdays and weekends, with the largest amount of time spent responding to calls on weekdays between 11:00 am and 12:00 pm and on weekends between 10:00 pm and 11:00 pm.

After identifying the average time spent responding to calls for each hour of the day and day of the week, it is possible to determine how many officers should be staffed, on average, at any given time to meet the 33% proactive policing threshold. The following table summarizes the total number of officers required for each hour of the day and each day of the week to meet the 33% goal. The data listed below are derived from the City’s call data for calendar year 2018.

**Table 8: Staffing Required to Meet 33% Proactive Policing Goal**

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
12am-1am	2.0	1.3	1.5	1.8	1.7	2.6	3.1
1am-2am	1.1	1.3	2.1	1.5	2.0	2.8	1.8
2am-3am	0.9	0.5	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.9	1.2
3am-4am	0.7	0.7	0.6	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.3

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
4am-5am	0.6	1.2	0.7	1.3	0.8	0.8	1.0
5am-6am	0.7	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.2	0.4	0.6
6am-7am	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.2	0.4
7am-8am	1.6	0.9	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.8	0.9
8am-9am	1.6	2.6	1.6	1.1	1.8	1.1	0.7
9am-10am	2.1	2.5	2.0	2.7	2.2	1.4	0.9
10am-11am	1.3	2.0	1.6	2.1	1.9	1.1	1.5
11am-12pm	3.4	2.4	2.5	2.7	3.0	2.3	1.4
12pm-1pm	2.9	2.0	3.2	2.6	2.8	1.6	1.1
1pm-2pm	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.4	1.7	1.6
2pm-3pm	2.0	2.8	2.3	3.5	2.2	1.9	1.3
3pm-4pm	2.2	2.2	3.4	1.7	2.6	1.4	1.6
4pm-5pm	2.1	1.9	2.0	2.4	2.3	1.5	1.3
5pm-6pm	2.1	1.9	1.8	1.8	2.0	1.6	1.3
6pm-7pm	1.9	2.4	2.5	2.1	1.7	2.0	1.5
7pm-8pm	1.1	1.3	2.1	1.9	2.0	1.3	1.4
8pm-9pm	1.6	1.9	2.0	2.3	2.0	2.1	1.7
9pm-10pm	1.8	2.5	2.1	1.7	2.5	2.4	2.5
10pm-11pm	2.6	2.3	1.3	2.2	2.7	3.0	2.7
11pm-12am	1.0	2.7	1.6	2.3	3.3	3.3	1.7

The number of officers needed varies depending on the hour of the day and day of the week. For example, the City requires 3.1 officers between 12:00 am and 1:00 am on Sundays to meet reactive needs while adhering to the 33% rule, but between 1:00 am and 2:00 am on Sundays, that number drops to 1.8 officers. The challenge in developing a staffing schedule is to meet reactive needs during periods of higher activity without overstaffing the Department during periods of lower activity.

### Current Schedule

To determine if the current staffing level is appropriate, it is necessary to compare current staffing to the staffing requirements to meet the 33% threshold. It is also important to consider the roles of the Patrol Sergeants on duty. A Police Department should minimize the amount of time Patrol Sergeants spend responding to calls in order to maximize their capacity for staff oversight, workload analysis, and other high-level responsibilities. However, in small departments, this is not always achievable. Often, Sergeants must serve as front-line response personnel due to staffing constraints. However, in Northfield, Sergeants are also responsible for several additional administrative duties assigned outside of those related to direct patrol supervision. This is particularly relevant on the day shift. The day shift Sergeant, based on the nature of the schedule and assigned tasks, is often drawn away to meetings and community engagement requirements. As such, it is imprudent to rely upon the day shift Sergeant as an element of shift minimum staffing.

Taking these factors into account, as well as DCFS workload analysis, it is appropriate to increase shift staffing by one position (from two per shift to three per shift) during the day shift. This will enable the Department to more consistently achieve best practices guidelines for proactive policing during daylight hours when proactive and community-policing efforts are most effective. In addition, this will reduce the

time the Patrol Sergeant assigned to the day shift spends on reactive response and generate additional administrative capacity at the Sergeant level.

To determine the number of officers required to be on staff to increase day shift deployment from two officers to three, it is necessary to calculate a staffing factor. A staffing factor is the number of FTEs that must be hired to fill each daily position, considering sick leave, vacation, and other leave time. Northfield Patrol Officers earn between 88 and 169 hours of vacation and 96 hours of sick leave per year, per the City’s agreement with the Law Enforcement Labor Services, Inc. Police Patrol Unit 293. An analysis of work hour data from 2018 indicates that Patrol Officers take an average of 194 hours of leave per year. Patrol Officers are assigned to work 2,088 hours per year. If they are on leave for 194 of those hours, they work an average of 1,894 hours per year. The Department requires 3,650 hours of staff time to fill one 10-hour shift 365 days per year. If one individual is able to work 1,894 of those hours, on average, the Department must employ 1.93 officers to staff that shift year-round. This means that the Department’s current staffing factor is 1.93.

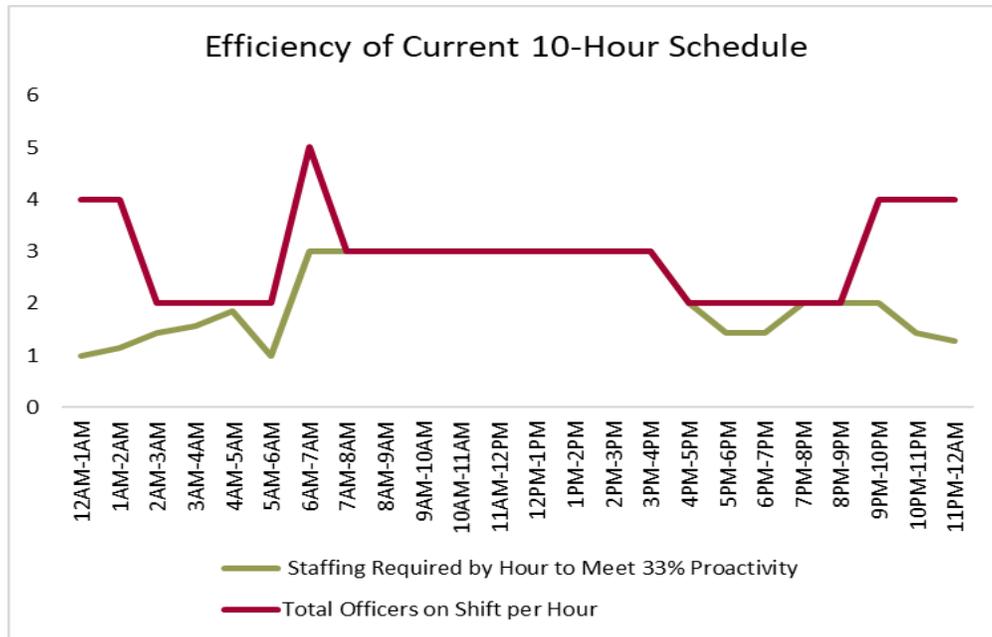
The following chart shows how this staffing factor applies to the Department’s shift schedule.

**Table 9: Staffing Required to Meet 33% Proactive Policing Goal**

Shift	Staffing Required to Meet 33% Target	Staffing Factor	Total Officers Required
Day Shift, 6:00 am - 4:00 pm	3	1.93	6
Evening Shift, 4:00 pm - 2:00 am	2	1.93	4
Night Shift, 8:30 pm - 6:30 am	2	1.93	4
<b>Total</b>			<b>14</b>

The City currently employs 13 Patrol Officers and three Sergeants. To meet the proactive shift staffing target, the Department would require a total of 14 Patrol Officers, which means that it would be necessary for the City to add one new Police Officer position under the current shift configuration.

While this schedule would meet the Department’s reactive response needs while allowing appropriate capacity for proactive and administrative work, there are times when the number of staff on duty would not correlate efficiently with the peaks and valleys of the patrol workload profile, as illustrated in the following figure.



**Figure 3: Efficiency of the Current Schedule**

The number of officers on duty spikes from 6:00 am to 7:00 am, but this represents a 15-minute overlap when one shift leaves duty and the other begins. This provides an opportunity for exchange of information. It is more concerning that the number of officers remains flat between 7:00 am and 4:00 pm, even as reactive calls spike during that period. Other deployment models may be able to pair staffing more closely with reactive needs. The Novak Consulting Group also investigated several other shift options to determine the optimal schedule for deployment.

**Swing Shift Option**

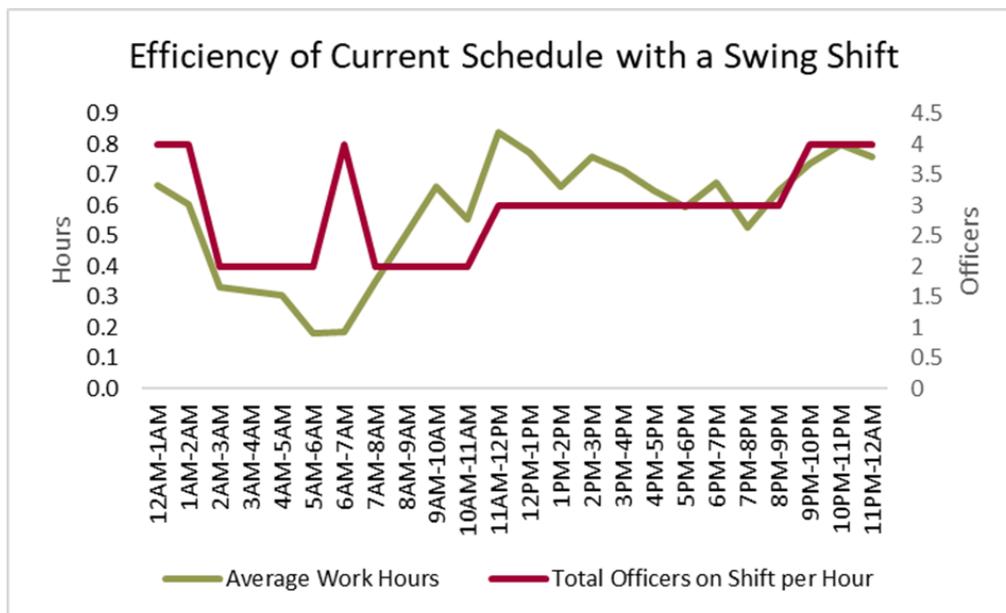
There is also an opportunity to maintain the current shift configuration but to assign additional personnel to a swing shift that overlaps the day and evening shift. This would require the same number of staff as under the current shift, but the addition of a swing shift would allow staff to be deployed more efficiently. Rather than increasing day shift staffing from two to three officers, the option would keep the current day shift at two officers but add a swing shift with one officer serving from 11:00 am to 9:00 pm to cover the period of highest activity and provide the greatest additional community-policing capacity during hours of the day when residents are both awake and in town.

The following table illustrates the staffing needs for each shift under this option.

**Table 10: Staffing Required to Meet 33% Proactive Policing Goal Under Swing Shift Option**

Shift	Staffing Target per Shift	Total Officers Required per Shift
Day Shift, 6:00 am - 4:00 pm	2	4
Evening Shift, 4:00 pm - 2:00 am	2	4
Night Shift, 8:30 pm - 6:30 am	2	4
Swing Shift, 11:00 am - 9:00 pm	1	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>14</b>

This option would require one additional officer, as under the current schedule. However, the swing shift would allow the officers to be more efficiently deployed. The number of officers on duty would pair more closely with workload than under the current schedule, as illustrated in the following chart.



**Figure 4: Efficiency of the Current Schedule, with Swing Shift**

This option would retain the 6:00 am to 7:00 am overlap for training and briefings but would deploy staff more efficiently during late morning, afternoon, and evening hours to more adequately pair with the reactive demand in the community. This would help distribute reactive calls more evenly, giving officers capacity for proactive and administrative work even during periods of heavy activity.

**Eight-Hour Shift Option**

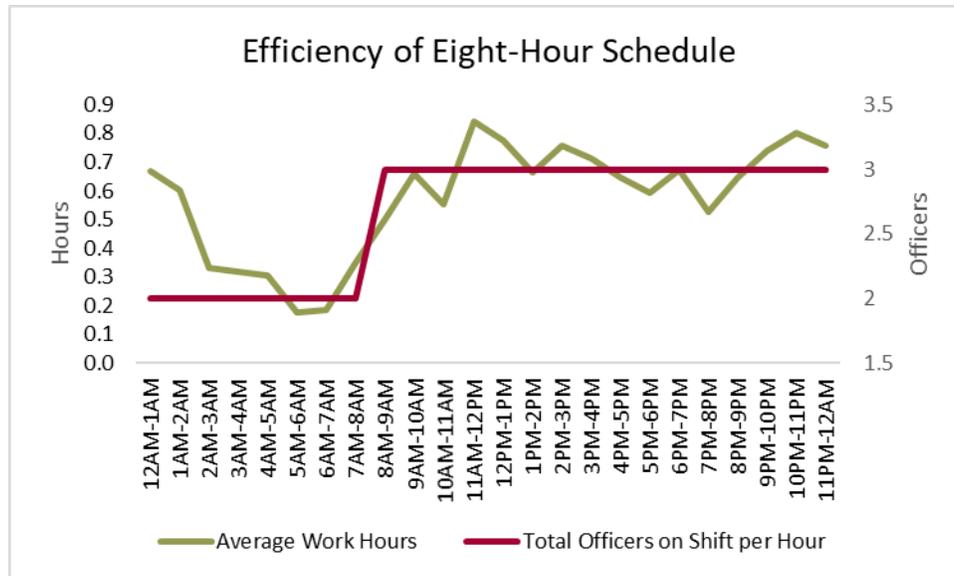
The Novak Consulting Group also considered the option of transitioning to eight-hour shifts. Under this model, officers would be deployed in three shifts: a day shift from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, an evening shift from 4:00 pm to 12:00 am, and a night shift from 12:00 am to 8:00 am.

The following table summarizes the total officers assigned per shift under this model. This alternative, like the other options discussed thus far, would require the addition of one Patrol Officer position.

**Table 11: Staffing Required to Meet 33% Proactive Policing Goal Under Swing Shift Option**

Shift	Staffing Target per Shift	Total Officers Required per Shift
Day Shift, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm	3	5
Evening Shift, 4:00 pm - 12:00 am	3	5
Night Shift, 12:00 am - 8:00 am	2	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>14</b>

The eight-hour schedule would allow the Department to align the number of officers on duty fairly closely to the reactive workload, as illustrated in the following figure.



**Figure 5: Efficiency of Eight-Hour Schedule**

The eight-hour shift model is an efficient option. However, it would remove any overlap between shifts. Shift overlap is important as an opportunity for debriefing and shared training. Periods of overlap also help prevent interruptions in service due to shift change; under the eight-hour model, there would be periods twice per day when officers are occupied returning to or leaving from the station.

**Twelve-Hour Shift Option**

Finally, The Novak Consulting Group analyzed an alternative 12-hour shift model, with two shifts per day: a day shift from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm and a night shift from 7:00 pm to 7:00 am. Like the other options discussed, the 12-hour shift option would require one additional officer to meet the 33% proactive policing goal.

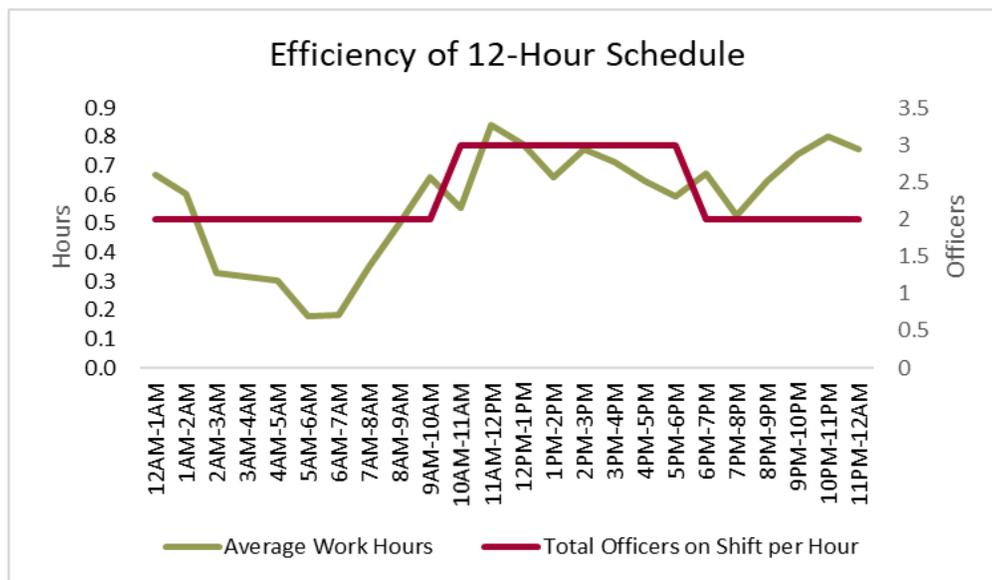
The following table summarizes the total officers assigned per shift in the 12-hour shift model.

**Table 12: Staffing Required to Meet 33% Proactive Policing Goal Under Swing Shift Option**

Shift	Staffing Target per Shift	Total Officers Required per Shift
Day Shift, 7:00 am - 7:00 pm Team 1	3	4
Day Shift, 7:00 am - 7:00 pm Team 2	3	4
Night Shift, 7:00 pm - 7:00 am Team 1	2	3
Night Shift, 7:00 pm - 7:00 am Team 2	2	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>14</b>

This would have the advantage of reducing the number of shift changes from three to two per day, thereby reducing the downtime officers spend leaving from and returning to the station. However, the 12-hour model would not allow for the periods of overlap that currently exist between shifts. These overlap periods are useful for debriefing and as opportunities for training. Furthermore, officers working 12-hour night shifts would still be required to appear in court as necessary and fulfill other daytime obligations;

this would impact their ability to get adequate rest between shifts. However, the 12-hour option does pair well with the Department’s demand profile illustrated in the following figure.



**Figure 6: Efficiency of 12-Hour Schedule**

**Comparison of Shift Alternatives**

Each of the shift alternatives discussed would require the City to hire one additional officer to meet the 33% proactive policing goal. This means that the choice of the appropriate shift schedule for the City of Northfield should be based on other factors, including efficiency of deployment and impact of the shift on officers’ ability to effectively do their jobs.

Of the options discussed, the eight-hour shift model, 10-hour with swing shift model, and 12-hour schedules are the most efficient, with officer deployment levels aligning most closely to workload. However, the eight-hour and 12-hour options do not allow for any overlap between shifts, inhibiting communication and creating the potential for service interruptions during shift change. The 10-hour swing shift option, in contrast, creates periods of overlap, helping to reduce any service interruption due to shift change. The swing shift option also builds in a period of overlap between 6:00 am and 7:00 am that can be used for important training. These factors indicate that the swing shift model is the better of these two options.

The 10-hour swing shift model requires the City to hire one additional officer to meet the 33% goal. The base salary for each new officer would be approximately \$71,000 in the first year, based on the City’s FY2020 salary schedule, plus an additional \$33,000 in benefits, for a total cost of \$104,000 in the first year.

**Patrol Supervision**

**Recommendation 3: Add one Patrol Sergeant to reduce gaps in patrol supervision.**

As it is currently structured, the Department has significant gaps in first-line supervision. There are three Patrol Sergeants. Two are assigned as “Night Sergeants,” working 12-hour shifts from 4:00 pm to 4:00 am. They work opposite each other on a rotation of five days on, four days off, five days on, five days off, four days on, and five days off, theoretically providing seven days per week coverage. The third Sergeant is the

“Day Sergeant,” working 10-hour shifts from 6:00 am to 4:00 pm on a rotation similar to the Patrol Officers’ schedule of five days on, four days off, five days on, four days off, six days on, and four days off.

As a result, a Patrol Supervisor is not scheduled to work between 6:00 am and 4:00 pm during 12 out of every 28 days, or 43% of the time, not including the Day Sergeant’s absences for vacation, sick leave, training, or other reasons. A Sergeant is never scheduled between 4:00 am and 6:00 am. Night Sergeants are required to take four hours off every two weeks to compensate for hours worked over 40 hours per week under the duty schedule. Therefore, for an additional eight hours every 14 days, typically between the hours of midnight and 4:00 am, there is no Night Sergeant, leaving a gap between midnight and 6:00 am.

When viewed in total, during every 28-day period, supervisory coverage should be scheduled for 672 hours. Under the current schedule, a Patrol Supervisor is scheduled for only 488 hours, a deficit of 184 hours. The schedule results in a structural gap in supervision 27% of all hours – exclusive of Sergeants’ vacation, sick leave, and other authorized absences. There is a two-hour daily gap from 4:00 am to 6:00 am; a six-hour daily gap from midnight to 6:00 am, once every two weeks; and gaps from 6:00 am to 4:00 pm for periods of up to four days when the Day Sergeant is on regular days off. In addition, when a Sergeant is unavailable for duty due to vacation, sick leave, training, or other reasons, the shift is not backfilled with a supervisor. There is no formal system in place to backfill those vacancies or to designate specific Police Officers to assume a supervisory role.

First-line supervision in policing is far more than the routine management of a shift. Critical incidents can happen at any hour of any day, requiring immediate, decisive action by a trained and experienced supervisor. Tactical decisions must be made. The activity of responding personnel – including officers and supervisors from other agencies on a mutual aid response – must be coordinated. Critical action must be taken long before command personnel can arrive on the scene.

Police activity is under increasing public scrutiny. Police/citizen contacts in which the actions of the police are challenged are routinely filmed, publicized, and litigated. The first-line supervisor has multiple roles: ensuring that the law is enforced in compliance with statute and policy; ensuring that the rights of both citizens and police personnel are protected; ensuring that the interests of the Department, its members, and the City are protected; ensuring that incidents are adequately documented to ensure that a fair and truthful account of police action is presented; and intervening when police conduct is questionable. The first-line supervisor has an even more important long-term role as a mentor to the officers under his or her command. The Sergeant ensures that officers are current in their understanding of laws, policies, and procedures, and monitors and evaluates their performance to identify strengths and weaknesses, recognizing good performance and correcting deficiencies as appropriate. He or she is the Department’s first line of defense in detecting behavioral issues, training needs, or personal issues that have affected the workplace – and conversely, in recognizing officers’ unique skills, talents, and career potential.

The impact of the first-line supervisor’s role is most significant during long-term supervisory shortages or absences; lack of effective first-line supervision is often cited as an underlying factor in major scandals involving police agencies.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> For examples, see Department of Justice-sponsored reports on incidents involving the San Diego and New Orleans Police Departments, <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/police/pdf/perfrpt.pdf> and [https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2011/03/17/nopd\\_report.pdf](https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2011/03/17/nopd_report.pdf). Both are large agencies, but the underlying concept is relevant.

Scheduling Sergeants to provide seamless coverage without inefficient overlaps can be challenging in a small agency; however, supervisory vacancies should be minimized. To address the current situation and minimize supervisory vacancies, the Department should increase its staffing by one Patrol Sergeant, and assign two Sergeants to 12-hour day shifts to provide coverage equivalent to the current night shift configuration. While there may still be gaps in coverage when Sergeants are unavailable for duty, they will be of short duration, and the long-term systemic gaps in coverage will be eliminated. The annual cost of adding this position is estimated at \$126,000, including salary and benefits.

**Recommendation 4: Expand Emergency Management capacity within the Department.**

The City faces challenges in the area of emergency management. The primary focus is weather-related; the Cannon River has routinely flooded the downtown district in recent years, and the region has a history of tornado activity. There is also the potential for industrial accidents with a large manufacturing plant, a railroad line, and trucking companies in the City. The presence of two colleges presents additional emergency management challenges.

The Department's priorities in the administration of its emergency program are updating the emergency operations plan, maintaining and testing the emergency warning siren network and its operating software, conducting public education, and providing planning resources. However, the current labor hours allocated to the function are reportedly insufficient to accomplish these tasks. The position is currently filled by an Emergency Management Director, a very limited part-time, non-benefit position with a salary of \$5,000.

The importance of emergency planning and emergency management – and of a municipality's ability to respond to natural or man-made disasters even when limited outside assistance is available – became clear in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Super Storm Sandy, and similar events. The position should have sufficient time and resources, as well as rank/stature commensurate with those responsibilities when dealing with outside agencies. The Department should ensure that the position of Emergency Management Director is provided with sufficient hours and compensation to ensure that the City's needs are met; in the alternative, it should consider assigning the task to a ranking officer with sufficient time allocated to perform the duties.

## **Investigative Staffing and Operations**

The Investigations Unit is staffed by one Sergeant, two Investigators assigned to general investigations, one Investigator assigned to the Cannon River Drug and Violent Offender Task Force, one School Resource Officer/Investigator, and one Evidence Technician. The unit's caseload has been stable for the past three years, averaging 96 cases per year; in addition, it does approximately 80 to 90 background checks, primarily for licensing purposes.

Staffing levels for investigative units do not lend themselves to the same sort of analysis as patrol units, which have recognized national standards that can be applied as general guidelines. Caseload and clearance rates are frequently used as valid metrics, although they cannot be used as raw numbers without further scrutiny. The workload of a detective specializing in the investigation of violent crimes may show a relatively small number of cases, but each is a labor-intensive, major investigation. Conversely, some property crimes with no significant leads may be routinely closed based on a quick telephone call to the victim, so a higher caseload may not reflect a significantly higher workload. However, other factors impact even that analogy. Property crime investigations, for example, have become more numerous and complex with the advent of identity theft and cybercrime. In addition, the increasing

availability of surveillance video and digital evidence from computers and cell phones has increased both the solvability and the scope of investigations. Computer forensic examination – tracking information on cell phones, laptops, and social media – has become almost a routine part of the investigative process.

The standard of customer service set by the agency and expected by the community also impacts the workload by raising or lowering the criteria for accepting cases for investigation and determining when they are to be closed. The assignment of cases is essentially a triage process that evaluates several factors: the level of the crime; the presence of a willing complainant; the availability of evidence or witnesses; the extent to which the suspect is or can be identified; and the availability of investigative resources. Some cases are not amenable to successful investigation and should be closed. There is a segment that clearly merits further investigation, and there is a cutoff point between cases that are investigated and those that might be solvable if additional resources were available but must be closed based on a cost-benefit analysis.

In Northfield, Patrol Officers are expected to investigate cases to the fullest extent possible. Cases are referred to the Investigations Unit using a “Case Referral Request Form” that describes the investigative work needed and witnesses to be interviewed, if identified, and is reviewed and approved by a supervisor. Consequently, only more complex cases, or those that require resources beyond those available to a Patrol Officer in the course of his or her normal patrol duties, are referred to the Investigations Unit. Most misdemeanor cases and minor felony cases are investigated by Patrol. This limits the number of cases referred for investigation and enables the Investigations Unit to deploy its resources more effectively.

**Recommendation 5: Enhance data collection regarding Investigations Unit workload indicators.**

Data regarding basic indicators, such as investigative caseload and clearance rates, properly interpreted, is invaluable. It provides police and municipal administrators an empirical basis for evaluating performance, making staffing and deployment decisions, and submitting budget, grant, and other funding requests that are supported by facts. It enables elected officials and other decision-makers to make informed choices and validates to residents and businesses the return on their investment of tax dollars.

Two measures generally used to assess investigative work are clearance rates and caseload. The clearance rate – essentially the percentage of cases that are solved – reflects individual performance, as well as the overall performance of a unit in successfully completing investigations. Caseload is a measurement that provides a snapshot of the workload of an investigator at a given point in time: the number of open cases for which he or she is responsible. Both metrics should be immediately available and reviewed on both a monthly and an annual basis to track short-term needs for adjustment of deployment, long-term staffing needs, and overall performance.

The Investigations Unit maintains a comprehensive spreadsheet that tracks the nature, status, and disposition of cases on an annual basis. In light of the unit’s structure and workload, it appears to provide adequate information for tracking cases. However, it is done on a calendar year basis, and investigations may take months or even years to run their course. It would benefit the Unit to track caseload on a rolling basis so that at any given moment, it possible to get a snapshot of Investigators’ workloads. This ensures efficient and equitable distribution of cases and provides support for both short and long-term staffing adjustments to address increasing workload. It would also be beneficial to track the unit’s clearance rate on an annual basis as a performance measure.

Although these are basic indicators, the amount of effort required by a particular case or category of investigation can vary widely. For example, a complicated homicide or serious assault investigation can

require numerous interviews and canvasses, invoicing of evidence, surveillance, multiple search warrants, coordination with outside agencies, repeated conferrals with prosecutors, and production of witnesses for multiple hearings. A simple theft case may require little beyond an interview with the victim and perhaps the review of security video. Consequently, a single-digit caseload for one detective may be equally or more demanding than another detective's caseload that numbers in the dozens. Statistics regarding investigative workload must be viewed in context.

However, while there are opportunities to improve data collection, there is sufficient qualitative data to assess whether the Investigations Unit is adequately staffed. One additional Investigator was recently assigned to the Investigations Unit to bring the total number of Investigators assigned to general investigations to two. Available data does not provide a basis to change that number. Data for the past two years indicates an average of eight new cases opened by the Unit per month, which in the absence of other factors, is a manageable number for the current staffing level. The Department should continue to monitor caseload to ensure that staffing remains adequate and make adjustments as needed.

**Recommendation 6: Initiate discussion with the School District regarding funding for a second School Resource Officer.**

The School Resource Officer provides services to six schools – one High School; one Middle School; one Alternative Learning Center; and three Elementary schools – teaches the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program to four fifth grade classes in each of three elementary schools; responds to most of the Department's calls for service involving schools; and is the lead Investigator for juvenile matters. During the summer months, the SRO assists with general investigations and, as a firearms instructor, conducts use of force and tactical training. Staff and supervisors were consistent in saying that the workload of the position warrants at the minimum, a second D.A.R.E. Officer, and ideally, a second SRO. Currently, meetings, calls for service, D.A.R.E. instruction, and other duties limit the SRO's availability for proactive visibility at the schools. However, the position is primarily funded by Independent School District No. 659, which pays the City \$58,722.00 annually to defray the officer's salary.

The assignment of additional School Resource Officer(s) is a complex matter. It requires the assent of the School District to having police personnel on school grounds, and the number of officers assigned is largely the School District's determination. Ultimately, It is also a funding decision, contingent on how much the School District is willing to contribute toward staffing. However, the workload that must be managed by one SRO warrants further discussion regarding the service level expectations and potential resource needs in the school. As such, the City should initiate discussions with the School District to assess the feasibility of assigning an additional SRO and the availability of additional funding.

## **Support Services**

The support services functions in the Department are managed by the Records Unit, Community Services Officer, Evidence and Property Technician, and the Department's Administrative Assistant. Staffing levels in support functions can easily be overlooked. They are often not afforded the priority attention received by the core services of a Police Department – patrol, response to calls for service, traffic enforcement, and criminal investigations. However, the administrative functions performed by these units are just as important to the professional operation of a Police Department. The "back office" requirements of a Police Department are considerable, and they have grown substantially in recent years as technology that was unheard of a decade ago has been introduced to policing, and as regulatory and reporting requirements continue to increase.

It is critical that the growth in volume and complexity of police workload is considered not just as a driver of Police Officer staffing and resources needs, but of support service resource needs as well. The following analysis and recommendations define staffing adjustments and process improvements that are intended to expand the capacity of Northfield's support services personnel.

### **Community Service Officers**

#### **Recommendation 7: Add one Community Service Officer position.**

The Department employs one Community Service Officer (CSO), a full-time, non-sworn employee who wears a uniform distinct from that worn by sworn staff and performs a wide variety of tasks, including parking enforcement, animal control, enforcement of minor code violations, dangerous animal declarations, public fingerprinting, bank escorts for the Finance Department, posting and removal of parking signs, management of vehicle maintenance, and deployment of Variable Message Signs. This is consistent with the typical duties of a Community Service Officer; while their duties may vary slightly in different agencies, CSOs typically perform support functions that do not require full police authority. The CSO reports to the Patrol Sergeants.

There are two schools of thought regarding Community Service Officers: they can be career employees, or the position can be used as a training and evaluation opportunity for young people considering careers in law enforcement. In many agencies, it is a part-time position that allows students or law enforcement candidates to work 20 to 30 hours per week while they attend college or specialized training and provides agencies with the opportunity to assess the aptitude and performance of a potential candidate over an extended period and under actual working conditions. Both approaches have merit depending upon the needs of the agency.

In Northfield, the CSO is responsible for a wide array of duties, and department staff consistently cited the CSO's value to the Department, as well as the volume of work associated with the position. The position is vital in that it provides a valuable customer service interface to the community and allows officers to focus on issues that require sworn personnel. However, the CSO function is staffed by one person, and there are no back-ups in the Department.

In addition, there is also a clear need for additional civilian support in the evidence management function of the Department. Evidence and Property Management, which is under the supervision of the Investigations Unit, is handled by an Evidence Technician who performs multiple functions:

- Management of physical and digital evidence and property taken into the custody of the Department
- Intake and disposal/destruction of released evidence
- Processing latent print trace evidence
- Assisting with crime scene processing
- Managing the City's photo ID and access card system
- Managing the Department's prisoner booking rooms
- Maintaining the Alcohol Breath Testing machine
- Performing firearm traces
- Fingerprinting new hires
- Maintaining the prescription drug disposal box in the Headquarters lobby
- Preparing digital evidence in response to data requests.

The evidence and property workload has grown from 2,600 items in 2015 to 3,990 items in 2018, mainly due to the increase in digital evidence. This has led to a backlog in the disposal of evidence. While attention to detail in the intake of evidence is critical, it is not unusual for evidence units to encounter challenges in disposing of it, which can be a complex task, requiring verification of an item's release by the court; determination of whether it should be released to its owner, destroyed as contraband, or auctioned; and physically disposing of it. Although the Evidence Technician brings drugs to a facility in the City of Mankato to be burned approximately every six weeks, it has been harder to keep pace with other items, primarily due to the volume of material deposited into the drug surrender box.

Given the limited capacity of the existing CSO and Evidence Technician position, and the need to create additional backup in these areas, it is recommended that the City hire an additional CSO position who can split time between CSO and evidence management functions. This will not only provide backup and support in these key areas but will also create an opportunity for the Department to target candidates who are considering a police career. This will assist in managing the CSO and evidence management workload and will assist with other functions. It will provide potential officers with job-related training in customer service and dealing with the public and provide the Department with a valuable recruitment and evaluation opportunity while maintaining the skills, experience, and knowledge of a full-time career employee. The annual cost of one full-time Community Service Officer is estimated at \$77,000, including salary and benefits; however, it is also important to note that the City may choose to hire more than one part-time CSO, or multiple part-time CSOs, as a means to create greater flexibility and potentially utilize the CSO position as a recruitment tool for future sworn officers.

## **Records Management**

### **Recommendation 8: Cross-train the Administrative Assistant on core record management duties to ensure operational continuity in the Records Unit.**

The Records Unit is staffed by two Records Specialists who work 8.5-hour shifts. Their schedules are largely dictated by their responsibility for staffing the public window in the lobby of Police Headquarters, where they serve as the first point of contact for visitors and handle transactions such as peddler permits, dog impounds, ticket payment, fingerprinting, and maintaining domestic violence records for advocates. They also have limited backup; the Administrative Specialist will staff the office during lunch periods but does not perform Records Unit tasks.

The two Records Specialists work staggered schedules that allow them to prepare critical documents early in the morning for forwarding to prosecuting attorneys' offices as well as to maintain public window coverage. One works from 6:30 am to 3:00 pm; the other works 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. If one Records Specialist is off, the other covers the window hours (8:00 am to 5:00 pm Mondays through Fridays). This frequently results in the accrual of overtime. Because of the need for window/counter coverage, the Records Specialists are generally unable to attend off-site events together. That limits their ability to attend meetings, conferences, and training on subjects like developments in Data Practices – Records Requests, record retention, and data systems maintenance that would benefit from attendance by both of them. The Administrative Assistant fills in for meal periods but generally does not perform records-related duties.

In addition to its routine duties, the Unit has a substantial backlog of "suspense cases," which are arrests that have not been entered into arrestees' criminal histories because of conflicting information from one

or more of the parties involved in the process – the Police Department, the Court, and the Jail.<sup>14</sup> Since correcting these files frequently requires outreach to other agencies or reporting officers to obtain necessary information, each file can take up to three hours to process; there are approximately 17,000 cases to be updated. The City is also in the process of transferring old files to Laserfiche, a computer-based document management system. The Records Unit also handles a significant volume of requests for data under the Open Meeting Law, which typically require close scrutiny, redaction, and often require conferral with the City Attorney. Records Unit activity is reflected in the table below.

**Table 13: Annual Records Unit Activity**

Year	Requests filled	CAD Reports processed
2015	111	1,843
2016	283	1,730
2017	248	1,841
2018	166	1,892

In a Police Department, it is important to maximize operational continuity by ensuring that an adequate number of personnel are cross-trained in multiple areas. There are critical functions that must be performed by the Records Unit, ranging from the timely transmission to prosecutors of documents related to in-custody arrests, to the validation of reports, to maintenance of multiple state and federal databases, including arranging access for new employees and monitoring unauthorized usage. It is important to maintain the adequate capacity to sustain operations during not only short-term but long-term absence of one or both Records Specialists. In addition to the staffing recommendations made in this report, the Administrative Specialist should be cross-trained in the unit's critical functions in order to provide backup to the Records staff when needed. In addition, the new CSO position(s) recommended above should also be trained to provide additional support in this area.

**Recommendation 9: Install an automated telephone information system (“phone tree”).**

The Records Unit also serves as the answering point for the Department's non-emergency telephone lines (911 emergency calls and dispatch are handled by the Rice/Steele 911 Communications Center). Staff reports that they answer more than 30 calls per shift, many of which have to be redirected to the 911 Communications Center.

The Department should install an automated telephone information system, commonly known as a “phone tree,” with connectivity to staff voice mail. This would enable residents calling regarding routine matters to access the desired office or person or leave a voice mail without having to pass through the Records Unit.

Phone trees are used successfully in many public safety agencies. There can be some resistance to their implementation from users who prefer personal contact when calling a police department, or from those who have experienced the frustrating systems in use in many private enterprises. That can be addressed effectively in the design of the system, particularly by emphasizing easy access to a live operator at the beginning and intermittently during a call, and using streamlined menus. For example, the initial message should effectively be this: “You have reached the Northfield Police Department. If this is an emergency,

<sup>14</sup> Issues with these files often involve prisoners who were not fingerprinted at the jail or missing entries in court records.

please press 0 to be transferred immediately to 911. If at any time during this call you need to speak with a live operator, please press 0.” There should also be an option to dial the extension of known parties and voice mailboxes. The message should proceed promptly through a series of menus and submenus, e.g., “Press 1 for Detectives, 2 for Patrol, 3 for Records, etc.,” followed by a series of options for each branch, e.g., the supervisor, specific subunits. Each branch should conclude with the option to be transferred to a live operator or to repeat the available options. Callers should also be provided with the option to hear the message in Spanish and/or other languages appropriate to the community.

Implementation of a phone tree improves the ability of members of the community to quickly identify and contact the department unit or person with whom they wish to speak. It improves customer service by reducing the number of times callers must be placed on hold while a Records Specialist is handling other calls. Most importantly, it can enhance the efficiency of the Records Unit.

### **Evidence and Property Management**

#### **Recommendation 10: Install an interface connecting the evidence management and records management systems.**

The Department utilizes a system known as the Crime Fighter BEAST by the Porter Lee Corporation to barcode and track items of evidence. As currently configured, the system does not interface with the Department’s Records Management System (RMS), which is the TriTech suite produced by the LOGIS Corporation. As such, the Evidence and Property Management Technician must manually transfer case and evidence information between the two systems.

Installation of an interface between the systems would benefit evidence management in two ways. First, it would allow invoicing officers to package and barcode evidence, which is commonly practiced in other departments. Currently, officers package their evidence, but the Evidence Technician must enter it into the BEAST system and label it with relevant barcodes. An interface would facilitate labeling at the earliest step of the process, and it would also populate many fields in the BEAST system that now require a second manual entry. This would streamline the process and reduce a step that can potentially lead to misidentification of evidence.

Secondly, the RMS does not issue an alert indicating that evidence is associated with a report. This has become a particular concern with the increasing volume of digital evidence. Because video and audio recording systems automatically purge after fixed periods, the Evidence Technician must ensure that any evidence that is subject to production in the future is preserved. This function would reduce the potential for the erroneous or premature destruction of evidence.

The initial cost estimate for an interface is \$1,200, with an annual license fee of \$200. However, additional costs may be incurred as implementation is more fully defined. The Department should pursue this option as an enhancement to its evidence management process.

#### **Recommendation 11: Plan for staffing impact of body-worn cameras.**

The Department has requested funding for the purchase and deployment of body-worn cameras, and the project has been included in the City’s Capital Improvement Plan with a goal of implementation in Fiscal Year 2021. Although the Department has wisely proceeded at a deliberate pace to allow full analysis of the legal and procedural implications of their use, there is no denying the fact that the demand for body-worn cameras is a rapidly growing nationwide phenomenon.

Body-worn cameras were essentially unheard of prior to 2005. Usage of the devices grew rather slowly until 2014 when several controversial incidents triggered national debate about their widespread deployment. In 2013, 75% of police departments reported that they did not use body-worn cameras.<sup>15</sup> By 2016, 95% of major police departments across the country either were using them or had committed to their implementation.<sup>16</sup>

Use of body-worn cameras has significant value to a Police Department; the data captured by the cameras can be important evidence to assist in the prosecution of criminals. The cameras also help reduce the Department's liability by demonstrating its commitment to accuracy and transparency. Furthermore, the cameras disincentivize the public from committing acts of violence against officers and from filing false complaints of police misconduct. However, use of the cameras also comes with a cost. Planning for implementation of body-worn cameras has typically been focused on the expense associated with the purchase and maintenance of the devices and the storage of recorded data. However, there is a potentially greater impact: the personnel costs associated with managing recorded video.

Videos must be filed with associated call data in a way that facilitates retrieval. Requests for recordings can be an unexpected burden. In addition, prosecutors have been known to expect that investigating detectives review all video associated with a case and that officers review videos before offering testimony. All of this can consume considerable staff hours, which must be evaluated as a potential future need. The administrative burden varies by jurisdiction, depending on factors such as the number of units deployed, the volume of data recorded, and the demands of the local prosecutor; however, the volume of demands for digital evidence, including in-car video recordings, has already been felt by the Records and Evidence staffs.

As the Department moves toward the implementation of a body-worn camera program, the associated fiscal and staffing issues should be considered. The program should also be monitored post-implementation so necessary adjustments can be made to the workload.

## **Policies and Administration**

The Novak Consulting Group's review of the Department's command structure, span of control, administrative and supervisory workload, and special assignments indicates that the current command and supervisory structure is appropriate. It ensures that the Department's patrol, investigative, and administrative functions are equally represented in the command staff and provides adequate focus and oversight in each of these three areas.

However, there are opportunities to improve the administrative and procedural practices of the Department. Specifically, there are opportunities for the Department to pursue accreditation, strengthen its efforts to recruit and staff a more diverse workforce within the Department, and enhance the use of technology to augment administrative practices.

### **Accreditation**

#### **Recommendation 12: Pursue accreditation of the Department.**

Accreditation – a process by which an outside agency evaluates and certifies an agency's compliance with specific operating standards – is a valuable tool for validating the proper operation of a police department.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.nij.gov/topics/law-enforcement/technology/pages/body-worn-cameras.aspx>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.governing.com/topics/public-justice-safety/gov-police-body-camera-survey.html>

It can also serve to reduce an agency's insurance premiums and can assist in defending against liability in civil litigation. The accreditation process provides a framework to ensure that the Department is, and remains, in compliance with best practices in a series of standards that cover critical operational and administrative areas. Periodic reaccreditation assessments ensure ongoing maintenance of such standards.

Many states have individual accreditation programs that are available at little or no cost, but the State of Minnesota does not. Therefore, the options available are the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). In addition, Lexipol offers a policy development toolkit that helps departments prepare for the accreditation. Lexipol is a risk management, policy and technology development firm that specializes in public safety and law enforcement.

Obtaining accreditation can be a challenging task for a police department, and it requires leadership and perseverance on the part of the Chief of Police and key staff, as well as the support of the City's administration. It is in the City's best interest to pursue it for the benefits that derive from the ongoing operational review it requires. There is a significant cost associated with CALEA accreditation. For an agency with 25 to 199 employees, the initial accreditation fee is \$11,450, plus costs associated with the onsite assessment.<sup>17</sup> Thereafter, the participating agency is charged an annual fee of \$4,065, which includes the cost of the re-accreditation assessment conducted every three years.<sup>18</sup> There is also a personnel cost; typically, oversight of the process requires the assignment of virtually a full-time employee, either a sworn supervisor or a civilian Accreditation Manager. Cost estimates for the Lexipol policy development program are unavailable.

In spite of the effort involved in the process, including the necessary commitment of personnel and money, it is in the City's best interest to engage in an ongoing review of its compliance with industry standards.

## **Diversity and Community Relations**

### **Recommendation 13: Develop a gender and racial diversity recruitment program.**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2018 population estimates, the City of Northfield is composed of 53% females and is 88.5% Caucasian and 8.7% Hispanic/Latino. However, sworn staffing is primarily composed of male, Caucasian officers; there is one Hispanic officer, and there are no female officers among the Department's sworn personnel. The City of Northfield has identified equity and inclusion as a strategic priority of the City. One of the goals of the City Administrator and the Police Chief is to increase racial and gender diversity in the Department, and the Department and the City have made concerted efforts toward that goal. It is prudent to develop a more formal and targeted effort to provide a recruitment pipeline to serve this important goal.

It is also worth noting that many of these efforts are underway. The Department currently recruits candidates for positions through job fairs, high school career exploration fairs, and advertisements in newspapers and at local colleges. The Department also works to actively recruit community members who participate in the Department's programs, such as its Police reserves program and its Explorer program. The Department also has a designated recruitment team consisting of Police Officers, Sergeants, Public Safety Directors from local colleges, law enforcement personnel from other cities and counties, and

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<sup>17</sup> The fee is based on the total of both sworn and non-sworn personnel.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.calea.org/content/law-enforcement-accreditation-cost>

personnel from Northfield Ambulance and Northfield Public Schools. The Department has an opportunity to build on these efforts through the creation of a formal diversity recruitment program.

The process of formalizing a diversity recruitment program will require cooperation and coordination from the City's human resources personnel, engagement from police command staff, and, just as importantly, engagement from front-line sworn officers.

There are multiple key traits and steps that this program should encompass. The first step is to expand the City recruitment team to include representatives from community leaders of the groups from which the Department wishes to recruit. The second key step is to identify target groups that represent a broad spectrum of community members, such as youth organizations, community centers, etc., and to proactively engage with those groups in a recurring recruitment conversation that is tailored to each cross-section of the community. The recruitment team will actively engage with these groups to identify and groom potential candidates for the police service in Northfield. Another important step is to conduct in-house training on the benefits of diversity as it relates to customer service, internal leadership, and professional development; involve members in recruitment, develop incentives for successful recruitment, and provide ongoing communications to personnel about the process. The most useful recruiters in the department are the department's officers. By developing the officers' buy-in into the program, the Department will expand its capacity to implement meaningful change in this area.

## Technology

### **Recommendation 14: Develop a training database.**

The State of Minnesota's Police Officer Standards and Training Board (POST) has extensive requirements for initial and in-service training required to obtain and maintain licensure as a peace officer. Compliance with POST requirements – including both the overall number of hours and the completion of specific courses – must be documented. In addition, the State reimburses municipalities for training time; documentation must be provided both to verify training and to receive reimbursement. The Novak Consulting Group reviewed the Department's training records as an element of this assessment process and found that the Department consistently meets its training requirements. However, the administrative process used to schedule and track training is cumbersome and difficult to utilize.

Currently, the Department maintains its training records on a system that was created in-house and is based on Microsoft® Word documents with spreadsheets inserted into the text. The maintenance of this critical documentation would be facilitated, and its accuracy enhanced, by the development of a database utilizing more current technology. This will also help the Department better implement a proactive performance measurement program, as defined in Recommendation 18.

The Department may be able to expand the utilization of its existing RMS system with the development of additional training modules. However, there are also several stand-alone training management systems available for consideration. It will be appropriate for the Department to engage with the central IT Department to evaluate options, purchase the necessary modules/applications, and deploy the software.

## Facility Assessment

### **Recommendation 15: Conduct a facility and space needs assessment of Police Headquarters.**

The Police Headquarters building was built in 2014 and is a modern, well-maintained, and functional facility. However, much of the space incorporated into the initial plans for the building to accommodate future growth was reportedly removed during the planning and construction process due to financial considerations. As a result, just five years later, it is operating at full capacity. There are no clear

opportunities to create additional office space to accommodate expansion in the number of sworn officers. With the recent addition of personnel in 2018, the Department has been required to begin sharing desk space for Patrol Officers. In addition, though the Department has access to a functional indoor garage, the number of vehicles that require storage fully utilizes the number of available spaces.

Although the building is relatively new and in excellent condition, the City should conduct a space needs assessment to plan for future growth through remodeling, reconfiguration, or expansion. As such, the Department should engage with the facilities management function of the City to begin evaluating options for facility retrofit and propose alternatives through the budget development process.

## **Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement**

The City of Northfield has an established community-wide strategic plan that serves as an overall framework for policy decisions within the government. However, there is a further opportunity to focus on Department-specific strategic planning efforts in the Police Department and the development of a supportive and linked performance measurement framework to track and report Department outcomes. The following sections outline the analysis and recommendations in this area.

### **Strategic Planning**

#### **Recommendation 16: Adopt a Strategic Plan for the Police Department.**

The Novak Consulting Group's review indicates that the Northfield Police Department works diligently to ensure public safety and actively engages with the public and civic associations to maintain and strengthen the relationship between the Department and the community. This approach to policing is reflective of the community's values and strategic goals, as defined in the City's strategic plan, adopted in September 2017.

Through that process, the City articulated a vision that "Northfield is a safe and welcoming community recognized for its world-class colleges and historic riverfront downtown and is dedicated to sustainably enhancing and preserving its vibrant culture, celebrated arts, strong economy, and an excellent quality of life where all can thrive." With the strategic framework, the City has defined several key priority areas and has sought to focus efforts on operational effectiveness. However, as a broader planning framework, the City's strategic plan does not articulate detailed public safety priorities that can serve as a framework for operational decisions in the Police Department.

While police department leadership has participated in Citywide strategic planning, the Police Department does not currently have a departmental strategic plan. Further, the Department has not adopted a specific work plan that links with the Citywide strategic plan. Citywide strategic planning is certainly a best practice in the administration of the entirety of City government. However, because of the distinct operational differences of a law enforcement agency, a Police Department often benefits from specific, individualized strategic planning that recognizes its needs, objectives, and limitations. A strategic plan would provide a useful tool for Police Administration to lead the Northfield Police Department well into the future.

The process of developing a departmental strategic plan is similar to that of a broader government. A comprehensive departmental strategic planning process considers the vision and mission for the organization and articulates the organization's values in the context of an environmental scan. An environmental scan identifies the factors affecting the organization, establishes goals, identifies priority strategies, and creates implementation plans. Typical factors assessed include fiscal constraints and

opportunities, service demand drivers, policy issues, legislation, demographic characteristics of the community, and workforce issues. A “SWOT” (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis is normally part of the environmental scan.

Goals set the framework for the organization’s policies that guide the direction and focus of the Department’s budget decisions and allocation of other resources such as staff time. Goals can be broadly viewed as opportunities for change and improvement. They provide the larger context of the specific actions the organization takes. They help administrators decide which of the many worthy projects should be done and when within available resources. Goals must be meaningful and attainable.

Strategies are the means to achieve the goals. They are the individual tasks that must be assigned, with resources identified, that will contribute to the achievement of a goal. Tasks and assignments should be achievable within the available resources, with clear direction and attainable timeframes, with periodic checking on progress, changes, or challenges.

The Department would benefit from a comprehensive strategic planning process and corresponding work plans that directly support the overall City-wide strategic plan. In this way, elected officials and citizens can be assured that Police Department resources are deployed effectively, and its employees are united in focus toward common and shared community goals.

### **Performance Measurement**

#### **Recommendation 17: Implement a performance measurement system and annual report process for the Department.**

One of the broader goals of the City’s strategic planning process is to define a framework for measuring the outcomes of local government programs. Performance measurement is designed for policy-makers, chief administrative officers, department heads, and program managers to assess whether a program or service is obtaining desired or expected results. Performance measurement should be considered an integral part of the overall performance management system.

The use of CAD, RMS, and case management systems to collect and collate law enforcement metrics is common in policing, and the Northfield Police Department collects extensive data through various sources. The Northfield Police Department collects and analyzes performance measurement data as an element of its annual budget process and also utilizes these systems to track and report crime trends in the community. However, the Department does not have a comprehensive performance measurement and reporting process.

The use of performance measures is an excellent management tool to help assess the overall effectiveness of services that are provided and determine if resources are allocated efficiently. Department programs can be subjected to measurement to ascertain current levels of effectiveness and efficiency. If performance is measured systematically, leaders will have the information that can serve as the basis to make changes to improve on quality, timeliness, or cost over time. Performance measures should become part of the organization’s regular dialogue about program goals, budget allocations, and accomplishments.

There are several factors to be considered in the structuring of a good performance measurement program. Once the measures themselves have been determined, care must be given to the implementation of the program. Data collection, reporting, and survey development are three important

areas requiring management attention if the program is to be successful and provide relevant information in order to adopt best practices and strive for continuous improvement.

A program evaluation system should be in place for each program and include the following elements:

- Provision of clear direction and support from the City Administrator, City Council, and Mayor
- Inclusion of feedback from constituents and key stakeholders, collected through surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc.
- Identification of information needed for measuring effectiveness and efficiency
- Determination of criteria for effectiveness
- Identification of resources available for collecting information

The Chief of Police, with the participation of command staff, supervisors, and line officers, should define a series of performance measures for each major departmental program. That data should be collected every quarter and presented to the City Administrator and City Council with identification of any important trends or changes, as well as actions taken by the Department in response to those trends. This reporting process can then be expanded into an annual reporting process for the Department that provides a summary of major outcomes and tells the Department's story.

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## Conclusion

This study was undertaken to assess opportunities for efficiency and effectiveness within the City of Northfield's Police Department. The anticipated staffing increases and other changes provide a prime opportunity to assess the Department's needs and provide Police Administration with a roadmap for success. The recommendations herein were developed to build on the Department's high service level and community-focused approach to policing. The City of Northfield is fortunate to have a Police Department staffed with employees who care deeply about the community and meeting its expectations.

There are several areas where staffing increases are warranted to better meet best practices policing guidelines and provide additional support services capacity in the Department. Specifically, the analysis and recommendations call for an increase of FTE, including one Patrol Officer, one Sergeant, and one CSO. The following table summarizes the recommended staffing increases and the associated cost estimates.

**Table 14: Summary of Position and Cost Estimates**

Position	Number of Positions	Salary and Benefit per Position
Patrol Officer	1	\$104,000
Patrol Sergeant	1	\$126,000
Community Services Officer	1	\$77,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>\$307,000</b>

Using this report as a guide, the Police Administration will be able to continue to improve operations and services for the benefit of the Northfield community. The challenge to the City is to make the decision to implement needed changes and to complete implementation. Prioritization of these recommendations and thoughtful, planned implementation are needed to ensure resources are expended prudently.

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## Appendix A – Employee Survey Results

The following sections summarize the results of the employee survey by topic. This report uses the term “significant” to describe statements with which 92% or more of respondents expressed overall agreement and statements with which 24% or more of respondents expressed overall disagreement. These thresholds capture substantial areas of agreement or disagreement in the context of all survey responses. The numbers presented in the tables of this report are rounded to the nearest whole number and, therefore, may not add to 100%.

### Department Overall

Respondents were asked their level of agreement with several statements about the Department overall. The following table summarizes responses to the statements within this category.

**Table 15: Summary of Responses to Statements Regarding the Organization Overall**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I believe the Northfield Police Department is moving in the right direction.	16%	64%	12%	8%
I feel content with the Department’s management, practices, and operations.	4%	56%	32%	8%
I have a clear understanding of my job responsibilities and expectations.	32%	64%	0%	4%
I trust and believe in Department Leadership.	8%	56%	24%	12%
My job gives me the opportunity to use my own judgment and initiative.	32%	44%	20%	4%
The employees I work with most frequently have high standards and ethics.	52%	44%	4%	0%
The Northfield Police Department is a good place to work.	40%	52%	8%	0%

Generally, respondents answered positively about the Northfield Police Department overall. Over 90% of employees believe that the Northfield Police Department is a good place to work. Almost all (96%) respondents reported that they have a clear understanding of their job responsibilities and expectations and that their fellow employees frequently have high standards and ethics. However, 40% of respondents do not feel content with their Department’s management, practices, and operations. Over 30% of respondents feel they cannot trust their Department Leadership and 24% feel their job does not give them the opportunity to use their own judgment and initiative.

## Employee Engagement

Respondents were asked their level of agreement with several statements about engagement with their positions and with the Northfield Police Department as a whole. The following table summarizes responses to the statements within this category.

**Table 16: Summary of Responses to Statements Regarding Employee Engagement**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Doing my job well gives me a sense of personal satisfaction.	64%	32%	4%	0%
I am determined to give my best effort at work each day.	52%	44%	4%	0%
I am satisfied with the culture of my workplace.	24%	56%	8%	12%
I feel respected in the workplace by my direct supervisor.	40%	44%	8%	8%
I feel respected in the workplace by my peers.	44%	48%	4%	4%
I feel respected in the workplace by Northfield Police Department Leadership.	28%	44%	20%	8%
I would recommend working for the Northfield Police Department to a friend.	36%	48%	12%	4%

The majority of respondents (86%) feel positive about Employee Engagement in the Northfield Police Department. Specifically, 96% of respondents feel that their job gives them a sense of personal satisfaction and that they are giving their best efforts at work each day. Over 90% of respondents feel respected by their peers. However, at least 28% of respondents reported that they do not feel respected by Department Leadership.

## Work Environment

Respondents were asked their level of agreement with several statements about their experiences with the work environment of the Northfield Police Department. The following table summarizes responses to the statements within this category.

**Table 17: Summary of Responses to Statements Regarding Work Environment**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Department leadership avoids using insensitive, discriminatory, or charged language.	36%	60%	4%	0%
I am satisfied with my opportunities for professional growth and advancement.	16%	40%	32%	12%
I feel my Department values diversity and inclusion.	12%	72%	12%	4%
I have the necessary materials and equipment to do my job.	20%	60%	16%	4%

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have the necessary training to do my job.	28%	60%	12%	0%
I know who to talk to if I see or experience something discriminatory, harassing or retaliatory.	44%	44%	4%	8%
My workload is reasonable.	8%	60%	24%	8%
People I work with most frequently avoid using insensitive, discriminatory, or charged language.	44%	56%	0%	0%
People with different ideas and opinions are valued among my coworkers.	4%	60%	28%	8%

At least 80% of respondents feel positive about their work environment. Over 95% of respondents believe that the people they work with most and their Department Leadership frequently avoid using insensitive, discriminatory, or charged language. However, over 40% of employees feel unsatisfied with their opportunities for professional growth and advancement. Additionally, over 30% of employees do not feel people with different ideas and opinions are valued among their coworkers and do not believe their workload is reasonable.

## Communication

Respondents were asked their level of agreement with several statements about communication in the Department and on a City level. The following table summarizes responses to the statements within this category.

**Table 18: Summary of Responses to Statements Regarding Communication**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Department Leadership clearly describes the reasons behind policy decisions.	4%	33%	46%	17%
I am comfortable talking about work problems with my direct supervisor.	17%	46%	29%	8%
I have access to the information I need to do my job.	8%	88%	4%	0%
I trust the information that City management provides employees.	4%	76%	20%	0%
I trust the information that Command staff provides employees.	12%	68%	16%	4%
Important information about the organization is provided to me in a timely manner.	4%	36%	40%	20%
Our Department does a good job involving employees in decisions that affect them.	4%	29%	42%	25%
Technology is used effectively to communicate across the Department.	4%	64%	16%	16%
When there are problems or issues among my coworkers, they are discussed without blaming others.	4%	58%	25%	13%

Communication was ranked lowest in agreement (62%) among all categories in this survey. Most employees (96%) feel that they have access to the information they need to do their job. However, over 60% of respondents do not believe that Department Leadership clearly describes the reasons behind policy decisions or involves employees in decisions that affect them. Additionally, 60% of employees do not feel important information about the organization is provided in a timely manner. Over 30% of respondents do not feel comfortable talking about work problems with their direct supervisor, do not think technology is used effectively to communicate across the Department, and do not believe that problems or issues among coworkers can be discussed without blaming others.

## Open-Ended Questions

Respondents were also asked to respond to several open-ended questions about the strengths, challenges, and opportunities for change in the Northfield Police Department. Responses are summarized below.

### Department Strengths

Respondents were asked, “What do you believe the Northfield Police Department does particularly well?” Responses varied for this question. However, one key theme that emerged was Community Engagement. Specifically, employees believe that the Department does an excellent job reaching out and engaging with the community and being responsive to their needs. Employees feel as though the Police Department has a good reputation with residents and surrounding communities.

### Department Challenges

Respondents were asked, “What do you believe is the most significant challenge facing the Northfield Police Department?” The three most common categories of responses are listed below, along with the number of responses.

**Table 19: Categories of Response- Department Challenges**

Category	Number of Responses
Staffing	7
Recruitment Process	4
Outgrowing Facility	2

The majority of responses to this question were related to staffing and recruitment. Many respondents feel that the Department is understaffed and does not have the appropriate staffing levels in place to maintain the high level of service quality expected by the City. Some employees also expressed frustration with the length of the time it takes the Department to hire new staff. Additionally, respondents observed that the Department is beginning to outgrow its facility and may want to consider expanding or finding a larger facility to operate out of in the future.

### Suggested Changes

Respondents were asked, “If you could change one thing about the Northfield Police Department, what would it be?” The three most common categories of responses are listed below, along with the number of responses.

**Table 20: Categories of Response - Suggested Changes**

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Category	Number of Responses
Staffing	9
Favoritism	3
Communication	3

Responses to this question reiterated the challenges from the previous question, specifically regarding staffing. In addition to feeling that the Department is understaffed, respondents recommended the implementation of a power patrol shift to help ease the workload for Patrol Officers during higher volume times throughout the week. Respondents also noted that there was a perception of favoritism within the Department between management and specific employees. Additionally, employees suggested that top-down communication between management and staff could improve, especially regarding decisions made within the Department. Respondents expressed that there are inconsistencies in how each Sergeant makes decisions, which makes it difficult to decide how to operate from one shift to the next.

### **Other Thoughts**

Finally, respondents were asked to share any other thoughts or comments about the Department that would be helpful as a part of the organizational analysis. The most common themes that emerged from this question were the perception of favoritism and staffing concerns. Respondents reiterated their frustration with the perception that some staff members receive preferential treatment. Employees continued to express that shifts appear to be continually understaffed for the workload, which can contribute to burnout in some employees.

## Employee Survey Instrument

### Introduction to Survey

The City of Northfield has retained The Novak Consulting Group to conduct an Organizational Assessment of the Police Department. The purpose of this Organizational Assessment is to review the efficiency, effectiveness, and organizational culture of the Department. As part of this effort, The Novak Consulting Group developed this survey to gather input and suggestions from all Police Department employees. Your ideas regarding the work environment, as well as possible improvements in operations, structure, and procedures, will be very valuable. We appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey and share your thoughts.

All responses are **confidential**, and no identifying information will be collected. Your submitted survey results will be sent directly to the consultant and tabulated and summarized by The Novak Consulting Group.

### Organization Overall

The following statements are about your overall perceptions of the Northfield Police Department and are intended to gauge the effectiveness of your working relationships and your perceptions of the workplace environment.

1. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding **the organization overall**.  
Scale - Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree
  - I believe the Northfield Police Department is moving in the right direction.
  - I feel content with the Department's management, practices, and operations.
  - I trust and believe in Department Leadership.
  - The employees I work with most frequently have high standards and ethics.
  - I have a clear understanding of my job responsibilities and expectations.
  - My job gives me the opportunity to use my own judgment and initiative.
  - The Northfield Police Department is a good place to work.

### Employee Engagement

The following statements are intended to gauge your level of engagement as an employee in the Northfield Police Department.

2. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding **employee engagement**.  
Scale - Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree
  - Doing my job well gives me a sense of personal satisfaction.
  - I am satisfied with the culture of my workplace.
  - I am determined to give my best effort at work each day.
  - I feel respected in the workplace by my peers.
  - I feel respected in the workplace by my direct supervisor.
  - I feel respected in the workplace by Northfield Police Department Leadership.
  - I would recommend working for the Northfield Police Department to a friend.

### Work Environment

The following statements are about your perceptions of the workplace environment.

3. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding **your work environment**.  
Scale - Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

- I have the necessary training, materials, and equipment to do my job.
- I am satisfied with my opportunities for professional growth and advancement.
- My workload is reasonable.
- I feel my Department values diversity and inclusion.
- People with different ideas and opinions are valued among my coworkers.
- People I work with most frequently avoid using insensitive, discriminatory, or charged language.
- Department leadership avoids using insensitive, discriminatory, or charged language.
- I know who to talk to if I see or experience something discriminatory, harassing or retaliatory.

### Communication

The following statements are about communication throughout the Department.

4. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements about **communication within the organization**.  
Scale - Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

- Important information about the organization is provided to me in a timely manner.
- Department leadership clearly describes the reasons behind policy decisions.
- Our Department does a good job involving employees in decisions that affect them.
- I have access to the information I need to do my job.
- I am comfortable talking about work problems with my direct supervisor.
- When there are problems or issues among my coworkers, they are discussed without blaming others.
- Technology is used effectively to communicate across the Department.
- I trust the information that City management provides employees.
- I trust the information that Command staff provides employees.

### Overall Experience

5. What do you believe the Northfield Police Department does particularly well?
6. What do you believe is the most significant challenge facing the Northfield Police Department?
7. If you could change one thing about the Northfield Police Department, what would it be?
8. Are there any other thoughts or comments about the Department that you would like to share that would be helpful during this review?