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Public Safety Assessment & Feasibility Study

City of Tucker PD

Presented To:

**TUCKER-NORTHLAKE
COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT
DISTRICT**

Presented by:

**ED DENSMORE
DWAYNE ORRICK
BUTCH AYERS
BRANDON MAY
GARY YANDURA**



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Executive Summary

In January 2025, the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police (GACP) entered into an agreement to provide consulting services for the Tucker-Northlake Community Improvement District (TNCID). The purpose of this agreement was to conduct an objective feasibility study and needs assessment for the potential creation of a police department for the City of Tucker. Pursuant to this, GACP staff and consultants conducted numerous interviews, obtained and analyzed two years of dispatch data, collected and analyzed data from recently formed police departments within DeKalb County, and attended listening sessions.

Currently, the DeKalb County Police Department (DKPD) provides law enforcement services in accordance with an Intergovernmental Agreement between DeKalb County and the City of Tucker. These services are provided by officers assigned to four territories (often referred to as zones by other departments). In addition, the Tucker-Northlake CID and the Tucker Summit CID have funded off-duty officers to patrol and enhance the visibility and presence of law enforcement officers within their coverage area since 2018.

As part of this assessment, the findings below indicate the City of Tucker could form a police department that would operate at significantly less cost with substantially higher service delivery levels. A summary of the key findings and recommendations of this study are provided below.

Dispatch Services

There were numerous issues identified regarding DeKalb County 911 services. Individuals who had called 911 indicated they had to wait for 15 or more minutes for someone to answer the phone. An Atlanta Journal Constitution survey revealed DeKalb 911 had the worst metrics of seven 911 agencies when compared with the industry standard: “that 95% of calls were answered within 20 seconds”.

In addition, an examination of approximately 65,000 validated calls for service revealed the average time required to dispatch DKPD officers was 4.9 times longer than Brookhaven and 4.3



times longer than Dunwoody. Similarly, when the time required to arrive on scene was evaluated, DeKalb was approximately 3.2 times longer than Brookhaven and 1.5 times longer than Dunwoody.

Staffing

The findings strongly suggest that while Tucker's current policing arrangement is operationally functional, its current approach limits its capacity to provide localized policing with continuity, responsiveness, and accountability. Should the City approve forming a police department, initial staffing should focus on personnel required to respond to 911 calls, follow-up on investigations, and maintain operational services. Based on 911 data, community concerns such as visibility, response times, etc. and comparable staffing of similar/neighboring agencies, the initial staffing level would be fifty-three (53) sworn officers and ten (10) civilian positions for a total of sixty-three (63) full-time employees (FTE). Additional specialty units such as traffic units, K-9, etc. can be evaluated based on community desires and operational needs.

Reconfigure Patrol Zones

As the department is being implemented, leaders should conduct a comprehensive review of patrol zones and reconfigure the assignment of officers based on workload. In addition, the department should explore the use of proactive hotspot policing strategies. This approach would provide increased patrol presence as well as enhanced community policing strategies to both deter crime and reduce response times.

Schedule

If the City of Tucker decides to establish a police department, it is recommended that the uniformed patrol division be assigned to work 12-hour schedules. This schedule enables officers and supervisors to work the same schedule together as a collective group. In addition, this schedule allows for maximum staffing on all shifts, fixed rotations of off-days, and a consistent, fair schedule for all employees.



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Funding

Currently, property owners located within the Tucker city limits pay \$15,947,200 in property taxes for the law enforcement services provided by the DeKalb County Police Department. This does not include other revenue sources such as 911 fees, alarm fees, etc.

Startup Costs

The total initial cost to implement the police department is \$10,712,713. This includes salaries/benefits, equipment, vehicles, as well as report management and computer-aided dispatch technologies. These estimates are based on current averages derived from current operational costs from neighboring law enforcement agencies. This does not include the potential cost for a police headquarters facility or 911 services.



Narrative Analysis

In January 2025, the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police (GACP) entered into an agreement to provide consulting services for the Tucker-Northlake Community Improvement District (TNCID). The purpose of this agreement was to conduct an objective needs assessment and feasibility study for the potential creation of a police department for the City of Tucker. This assessment includes an overview of the detailed activities that will be required, as well as the associated costs and funding availability.

To accomplish this, GACP staff and consultants conducted numerous interviews, obtained and analyzed two years of dispatch data, collected and analyzed data from recently formed police departments within DeKalb County, and attended listening sessions.

Currently, the DeKalb County Police Department (DKPD) provides law enforcement services for the City of Tucker. These services are conducted in accordance with an Intergovernmental Agreement between DeKalb County and the City of Tucker.¹

The City of Tucker is located within portions of four of seven territories in the DeKalb County Police Department's Tucker Precinct, which is significantly larger than the City. The City occupies 20.4 square miles with a population of 37,005 and the DeKalb Police Tucker Precinct is 40.4 square miles with a population of approximately 122,000².

¹ Intergovernmental Agreement for the Provision of Police Services Between Dekalb County, Georgia and The City of Tucker, Georgia , April 9, 2018.

² This number is an approximation based on 2023 census tract estimates, excluding Clarkston and Pine Lake. A population estimate for the DeKalb County Police Tucker Precinct, obtained from the Atlanta Regional Commission in April 2025, estimates a precinct population of 122,000.



Coverage Area

	Brookhaven	Dunwoody	Tucker
Square Miles	12 ³	13 ⁴	20 ⁵
Population (Official)	55,161	51,683	37,005
Population (Est.) ⁶	57,224	51,563	37,022

Interviews

As part of this study, staff conducted interviews with representatives from hotels, security staff from the Northlake Mall area, commercial property owners, and retailers from across Tucker. The team also engaged in conversations with representatives from the Tucker Summit CID, Tucker Business Association, Tucker Civic Association, Tucker Main Street Alliance, and Northlake Condominiums. Each of these groups voiced concerns regarding DeKalb 911. Some shared experiences of how “getting through to 911 was a real hurdle”. In some cases, they “had to wait more than 15 minutes for someone to answer the phone.” This was a common theme across all conversations.

Individuals frequently remarked that the DeKalb County Police Department is short-staffed, and calls are dispatched on a priority basis. Because of this, it sometimes “takes several hours for officers to respond” to lower priority incidents. It is important to note the department is operating at approximately 63% of their authorized strength.⁷

³ <https://www.brookhavenga.gov/media/17621> Accessed: 5/5/25

⁴ <https://www.dunwoodyga.gov/police/about/police-divisions> Accessed: 5/5/25

⁵ <https://www.tuckerga.gov/departments/economic-development/-:~:text=The%20City%20of%20Tucker%20epitomizes,inside%20and%20outside%20the%20Perimeter>. Accessed: 5/5/25

⁶ <https://opendata.atlantaregional.com/datasets/GARC::population-2023-all-geographies-statewide/about?layer=9> Accessed: 7/22/2025

⁷ Dekalb County Board Meeting, CEO Lorraine Cochran-Johnson’s presentation February 19, 2025. <https://citizenportal.ai/articles/2337033/Dekalb-County/Georgia/Dekalb-County-CEO-proposes-10M-plan-to-enhance-police-recruitment-and-retention#:~:text=The%20Dekalb%20County%20Board%20of,paying%20positions%20in%20other%20jurisdictions>. Accessed: 6/17/2025



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Hotel representatives shared that car break-ins are common. Hotels have local negotiated rates (LNR's) for regular business customers. When their employees are repeatedly victimized at hotels, companies move those employees to other communities resulting in a huge impact on Tucker businesses. When hotels lose customers, the City also receives less revenue from hotel/motel taxes.

Because of the long delays in police responses, many hotel guests simply leave without making a report. As a result, crime reporting statistics do not provide an accurate reflection of what is occurring. Unfortunately, guests oftentimes post their experiences online, resulting in fewer guests choosing establishments in Tucker. One hotel representative said their company has properties in McDonough, Kennesaw, and Savannah. They do not have any incidents occurring on those properties.

All the groups noted they were experiencing quality of life issues. For example, several shared they choose to go to service stations in other areas because they cannot fuel their cars without being approached by people asking for money. Others spoke of how the unhoused are impacting their businesses.

Current Law Enforcement Coverage and Call Analysis

An open records request was submitted requesting every call for service within the latitude and longitude coordinates for the City of Tucker. Pursuant to this request, the DKPD provided a spreadsheet of every call dispatched within the Tucker city limits for the calendar years of 2023 and 2024.

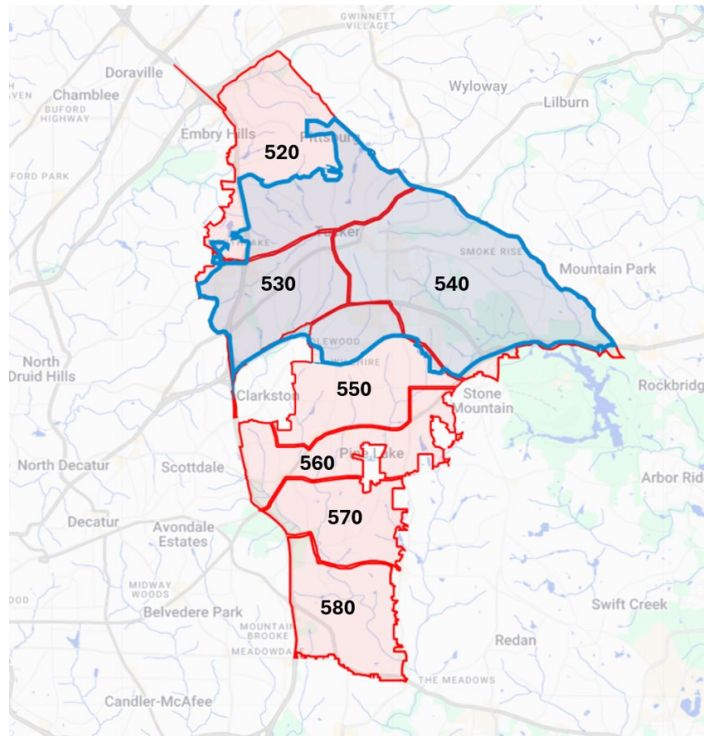
An examination of approximately 65,000 validated calls for service revealed a system that is operationally functional but experiences persistent geographical disparities, structural inefficiencies, and a resource model that may not fully align with long-term service expectations. Pursuant to this analysis, it was determined the City of Tucker is serviced by officers assigned to four of seven geographic territories (zones) in the DeKalb Police Tucker



Precinct (Figure 1). No territory is dedicated exclusively to the City of Tucker; therefore, no patrol officer is exclusively assigned to the City.

Figure 1

DeKalb County Police Tucker Precinct Territories and City of Tucker Boundaries⁸



The average time required to dispatch DKPD officers was 4.9 times longer than Brookhaven and 4.3 times longer than Dunwoody. Similarly, when the time required to arrive on scene was evaluated, DeKalb was approximately 3.2 times longer than Brookhaven and 1.5 times longer than Dunwoody.

⁸ City of Tucker municipal boundary. https://tucker-open-data-tucker-ga.hub.arcgis.com/datasets/e76bafd7ca724933a4c7648260a78725_0/explore?location=33.847436%2C-84.194650%2C13.03 Accessed 07/18/2025. DeKalb County Precinct boundaries, <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/instant/lookup/index.html?appid=80212a1c8b4243fb8f4148309c03a291> Accessed 07/18/2025. Territories obtained from DeKalb County Police Department 07/15/2025.



Comparison of Police Departments in DeKalb County

Average Dispatch and Response Times

	Brookhaven	Dunwoody	DeKalb County
Time to Dispatch	1m:17s	1m:26s	7m:37s
Response Time	1m:58s	3m:22s	8m:12s
Average On-Scene	29m:34s	33m:49s	30m:37s

The most time-sensitive incidents (i.e. medical emergencies, assaults, and domestic violence) do not consistently receive rapid responses in all territories. Particularly, in Southeast Tucker, in the Juliette Road area, a substantial proportion of incidents exceed acceptable dispatch and response thresholds, even when classified as high priority.

In addition, a recurring theme throughout the analysis is the geographic inequality in police response times. The Southeast and East-Central regions of the City of Tucker consistently experienced slower responses at all stages - dispatch, travel, as well as time on-scene compared to the Central and North-Central regions. Over one third of calls where officers were dispatched to Southeast Tucker exceeded a 10-minute response time, and more than 23% of travel times exceeded 15 minutes.

The delays in these regions were not attributable to incident complexity or prioritization but were more accurately explained by structural constraints such as distance for officers to call locations and possible traffic congestion patterns. Even where priority-based triage systems expedite dispatch, they failed to meaningfully overcome these geographic limitations. The analysis further showed that areas with higher incident volumes, particularly hotspots for burglary and theft in Juliette Road area, strained DKPD's available resources and also systematically underserved the area in terms of response time.



The prioritization of incidents influenced dispatch speed across all regions, with high-priority calls typically dispatched five to seven minutes faster than low-priority calls.⁹ However, the expected benefit of priority dispatch decreased substantially when considering travel times, which were largely unaffected by priority status due to geographic and infrastructural barriers. In Southeast Tucker, the efficiency gains from prioritization were particularly limited. This structural bottleneck weakened the capacity of the policing system to consistently deliver timely responses in this area.

Multi-officer responses showed similar geographic vulnerabilities to single-officer responses. While dispatch and travel times remained broadly consistent, time spent on-scene increased significantly for complex incidents such as assaults or mental health crises. Importantly, geography remained a limiting factor even when more officers are deployed, with response times in Southeast Tucker still lagging despite the larger resource commitment.

The analysis of response times that exceeded established thresholds provided an insight into systemic weaknesses. Across all incidents, approximately one in three dispatches exceeded a 10-minute threshold, and around 20% of on-scene times exceeded one hour. Southeast Tucker consistently exhibited the highest exceeded established thresholds across all benchmarks. When disaggregated by incident type, the data showed that alarms, assaults, medical emergencies, fraud, and vandalism exhibited particularly high response times in Southeast Tucker and, to a lesser extent, in the East-Central and Northwest regions. These patterns suggest sustained incident-specific vulnerabilities that may place residents in these areas at elevated risk.

Perhaps one of the most structurally significant findings is the policing model utilized to provide service in the City of Tucker was not based on a dedicated police force but rather on a shared, rotational pool of county officers. This coverage was maintained by a highly fluid,

⁹ High-priority crimes typically involve immediate threats to life, safety, or property (e.g., assaults, robberies in progress, or active shooters). Low-priority crimes include nonviolent or delayed incidents (e.g., theft reports, noise complaints, or minor traffic accidents).

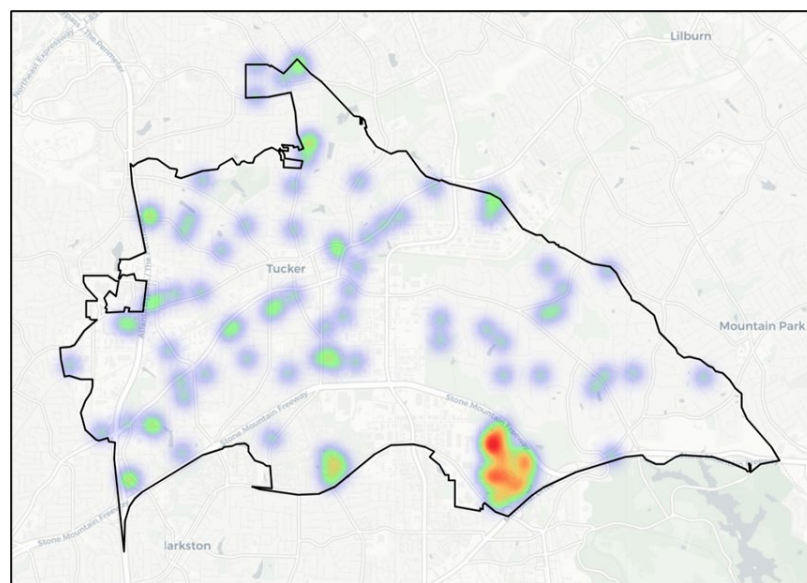


cross-jurisdictional staffing system in which officers routinely cover the City of Tucker and surrounding unincorporated areas.

This approach adversely impacts “zone integrity”. For example, officers are assigned to a territory within the precinct. When an officer is not available to respond to a call in their designated territory, an officer from another territory is dispatched. While officers are answering a call outside their assigned territory, the 911 dispatch center receives a call in the officer’s assigned area. This requires an officer from another territory to cover the area the officer left. Each of these responses takes longer for officers to arrive on scenes, resulting in a breakdown in officers’ ability to quickly and effectively respond to citizens’ calls.

An additional strain on Tucker's policing resources was the volume of incidents occurring outside the city boundaries. This was most pronounced during daytime hours. This required police resources to be diverted from within the City of Tucker, further impacting their capacity to provide timely, locally focused services.

**Figure 2
Residential Burglaries**



Spatial analyses revealed significant clustering of incidents along specific road networks, particularly in Southeast Tucker, where burglary and theft incidents were heavily concentrated



in the Juliette Road area bordered by U.S. 78, Memorial Drive, and Ponce de Leon Avenue, where road infrastructure and dispatch proximity appear to hinder response time.

Travel times were consistently longer in these high-density areas, which correlated with greater resource strain and reduced response efficiency. The analysis identified two significant response time hotspots where road infrastructure and dispatch proximity appear to hinder response time.

Notably, distance to major roads was inversely associated with incident rates, suggesting that incidents in more remote, less accessible areas not only occur more frequently but also experience longer response times. This points to a geographic vulnerability and operational strain that the current resource allocation system does not adequately address.

Finally, the findings strongly suggest that while Tucker's current policing arrangement is operationally functional, it is structurally sub-optimal for delivering consistent, equitable, and community-focused services. The reliance on a shared, rotating pool of county officers, combined with high demand from unincorporated areas, limits Tucker's capacity to receive localized policing with continuity, responsiveness, and accountability.

If Tucker's strategic objectives include improving response equity, the data provides a case for transitioning toward a dedicated police department or requiring the county to substantially reconfigure resource distribution and patrol zoning to mitigate the geographic disparities identified in this report.

Patrol Shift Schedules

Brookhaven	Dunwoody	DeKalb
4 Squads/12 Hours	4 Squads/12 Hours	3 Shifts/10 Hours

To illustrate the potential differences in police service delivery, one must examine the police departments of two cities that were formed in DeKalb County, Brookhaven (2012) and Dunwoody (2008). The Brookhaven Police Department's patrol division operates on four



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squads working 12-hour shifts. Two squads work dayshifts and two squads work nightshifts. Each squad has one lieutenant, two sergeants and ten officers. With a twelve-hour shift, the officers and supervisors on each squad work the same schedule together.

The Dunwoody Police Department's patrol division also staff patrol positions utilizing 12-hour shifts. Day squads have two sergeants and eight officers, and night squads have two sergeants and seven officers.

The DeKalb County Police Department operates on three, 10-hour shifts (Day Shift 6:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Evening Shift: 2:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m., Morning Watch: 10:00 p.m. – 8:00 a.m.). This schedule provides for a 2-hour overlap during each shift.

Unlike agencies utilizing eight and 10-hour shifts, 12-hour schedules allow the shift to work as a collective group.

Territory Staffing

A review of one month's staffing schedule determined there were an average of six officers assigned to work in territories within the Tucker precinct that covered parts of the City of Tucker.¹⁰ An average of 1.5 to 2.1 of the officers working these zones were working overtime. Overall, 59% of the sworn officers on overtime did not work a full 10-hour shift.

It is important to remember these officers are responsible for responding to calls within the full territory they are assigned not just to the City of Tucker. Combined, the unincorporated areas of these four territories have an estimated population of as many as 37,000 residents.¹¹

¹⁰ Daily logs for the Tucker precinct for the period of April 1, 2025 – April 30, 2025. Requests for the traffic unit activity resulted in a message "The STEP Unit assigned days to work in Tucker Precinct were April 7,14, 21, and 28th. The Motor Unit worked Tucker Precinct April 7-11." Requests for more specific times and numbers indicated the department does not have watchlists for the Special Traffic Enforcement Patrol (STEP) or motor unit.

¹¹ Complete census tracts; 217.11, 218.08, 218.12, 218.13, 218.15, 218.16, 218.20, 219.11, 220.15, and 220.16. Partial census tracts; 219.08, 219.10, 218.21, 220.10, 220.11, and 219.13. Census tracts perceived to have less than 20% unincorporated residential property excluded from this estimate. ACS2023 Demographic Population Tract, Atlanta Regional Commission, February 21, 2025. <https://opendata.atlantaregional.com/datasets/GARC::population-2023-all-geographies-tatewide/about?layer=21> Accessed:07/22/2025.



DAY WATCH

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Avg
Avg. Assigned	5.5	6.25	6.4	6.8	5.75	5.75	5.25	5.95
Assigned O/T	2.25	2.25	2.4	2.6	1.25	1.75	2	2.1
Reg. Scheduled	3.25	4	4	4.2	4.5	4	3.25	3.85

EVENING WATCH

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Avg
Avg. Assigned	6.25	6.5	6	6.8	6.75	6	5	6.18
Assigned O/T	1.5	2.5	1.75	1	2.75	2.25	0.5	1.75
Reg. Scheduled	4.75	4	4.25	5.8	4	3.75	4.5	4.43

MORNING WATCH

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Avg
Avg. Assigned	5.2	6.25	6.5	6.8	6.5	6.25	4.75	6.03
Assigned O/T	2	1.4	1.4	1	1.5	1.75	1.25	1.5
Reg. Scheduled	3.2	4.85	5.1	5.8	5	4.5	3.5	4.53

Establishing New Police Department

Authority to Form

Forming a new police department is a monumental undertaking. Before any work can begin, the City of Tucker must have the authority to form a police department. With a municipality, this



authority is provided in the City Charter. According to the City of Tucker’s Charter, the City has the authority to form a police department. However, the city council must submit a resolution to registered voters who reside within the City for approval.

Tucker, Georgia Code of Ordinances

Part I Charter, Article I. Creation, Incorporation, and Powers

Section 1.03. Powers and construction

a) (27) Police and Fire Protection

Provides for “the power of arrest through duly appointed police officers and to establish, operate, or contract for a police and a fire agency.”

- b) Requires “services enumerated in subsection (b) of this section, the city council shall pass a resolution specifically stating the services sought to be offered by the city and shall submit such resolution for ratification by the electors of the city in a referendum. If the electors of the city vote in favor of ratifying such resolution, then the city shall be authorized to exercise the powers enumerated in subsection (a) of this section for the purpose of providing such services stated in such resolution and those items directly related to the provision of such services and for the general administration of the city in providing such services. If the electors of the city disapprove such resolution, such resolution shall immediately be null and void and of no force and effect.”

If a decision is made to move forward with forming the department, a comprehensive strategic plan should be developed that outlines the specific tasks to be completed, responsible people, associated costs, and deadlines. This document is not a comprehensive guide for creating a law enforcement agency. Rather, it is designed to provide the reader with a baseline of information needed to begin work and make informed decisions in a complex process.



Chief of Police Selection

The most important decision to successfully plan, create, and begin operations for a new police department is the selection of a police chief.¹² This person must be a sworn, certified officer.¹³ If the chief is from outside of Georgia, they must coordinate with the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) to determine Georgia-specific training they must successfully complete prior to being provided Georgia peace officer certification. In addition, it is mandatory for the newly appointed police chief to attend the next available Chief Executive Training Program (CETP) that is provided by the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police (GACP). If the agency fails to send the new police chief, substantial liability may apply.¹⁴

Once selected, the police chief must be intricately involved with developing the organizational structure and the on-going management of the agency. The chief executive is usually responsible for ensuring a wide variety of activities are accomplished including: developing/managing the budget, identification of staffing needs and standards, developing the organizational structure, recruiting, selecting and on-boarding sworn officers¹⁵ and civilian employees, implementing operational policy and procedures, training officers and employees to perform to standard in a consistent manner, and purchase of equipment. Some of the critical equipment that must be purchased include: records management systems (RMS), agency vehicles and related equipment, (i.e. emergency lights/sirens, security screens, in-car camera system, data terminals), handguns and other lethal weapons (i.e. patrol rifles), less lethal weapons (i.e. Taser), mobile and in-car radios, personal equipment (i.e. body worn

¹² The GACP can assist with advertising for the position as well as conducting an Assessment Center to identify finalists for the consideration by the hiring authority. The final decision to select a specific candidate is the governing authority's responsibility.

¹³ OCGA 35-1-12 Chief of Police or Law Enforcement Head

¹⁴ OCGA 35-8-20.1 Training for Police Chiefs, Department Heads, and Wardens; Effect of Failure to Fulfill Training Requirement.

¹⁵ OCGA 45-3-10.1 requires officers to be sworn. Oath should comply with the requirements of 45-3-1 Oaths Required in Addition to Oath of Office and Constitutional Oath (45-3-7). The GACP can provide sample oaths of office that comply with the Georgia statutes.



cameras, ballistic vests, uniforms, and uniform accessories (i.e. badges, nametags, duty belts, shoes, headgear, inclement weather gear).¹⁶

Intergovernmental Agreement

State law requires the City of Tucker to have an intergovernmental agreement with DeKalb County that outlines the services provided by each as well as the distribution of certain tax funds¹⁷. If a vote by the citizens of Tucker approves the City to form a police department, the City and County must modify this agreement.

Georgia and National Crime Information Centers

In order to submit reports of criminal offenses, access state and federal criminal history databases, and submit fingerprints of arrested persons, the agency must obtain an Originating Agency Identifier Number (ORI number) from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation's (GBI), Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC).^{18 19} The ORI number is a nine-digit number that provides a unique identifying number for the agency. To initiate the ORI request process, the agency head must submit a written request, on agency letterhead, to GCIC. The request must document:

- The criminal justice authority, duties and functions of the agency.
- Support the contention that the primary function of the agency is that of criminal detention, apprehension, or criminal investigations of applicable laws as opposed to civil or administrative functions.
- Documents may include, but are not limited to, federal and state statutes, executive orders, current budgets, and law enforcement training and certifications.

¹⁶This list is not exhaustive. Performing these tasks/functions is complex and time-consuming requiring extensive support.

¹⁷The City of Tucker currently has an Intergovernmental agreement for the provision of police services with DeKalb County. This agreement must be updated.

¹⁸Contact number for the Georgia Bureau of Investigation is 404-244-2601

¹⁹See OCGA 35-3-33 Powers and Duties of Center Generally, OCGA 35-3-36 Duties of State Criminal Justice Agencies and Political Subdivisions; Responsibility and Liability of Issuing Center, and Official Rules of Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC) and via the web at: <https://gbi.georgia.gov/georgia-crime-information-center> for more information.



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Each request shall include:

- The Official Agency Name,
- Name and Title of Agency Head,
- Contact Name (if Different from Agency Head),
- Telephone Number,
- Mailing Address,
- Physical Address/Location (if Different from Mailing Address),
- Hours of Operation, and
- County the Agency is Located.

Upon receipt, each request for access to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) Network will be evaluated to determine if the agency meets the established criteria. Upon notification from the CJIS Division of an ORI assignment or denial, GCIC will provide written notification to the requesting agency.

Submit Request to: ORIrequests@gbi.ga.gov

Contact GCIC: (404) 244-2770 - option 2

In addition to obtaining the ORI number, the agency must also coordinate obtaining access to the Georgia Crime Information Center/National Crime Information Center (GCIC/NCIC) network to receive/send administrative messages, look out notifications for stolen items and/or wanted persons. The system's database also enables the agency to conduct driver's license status and history checks, criminal history checks, wanted person checks, vehicle registrations, stolen article entries/checks, and other critical information.²⁰

²⁰ Access to the GCIC/NCIC system requires a double verification system that is established through GCIC and the Georgia Technology Authority. Prior to being provided access, the agency must designate and train a Terminal Agency Coordinator (TAC) and a back-up TAC. Every person having access to any criminal history information, must complete an on-line course and sign an "Awareness Statement". Improperly releasing criminal history information is a criminal



Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training Council

Georgia POST Council is responsible for auditing law enforcement agencies within the State for compliance with the POST Rules and Regulations.²¹ This includes verifying officers' certification and annual training requirements.²² Prior to hiring any officers, the jurisdiction must notify POST that the agency is being established. The governing authority will be required to provide a copy of the minutes from the city council meeting in which the establishment of a police agency was authorized and/or approved.²³

Once operational, the department must update their POST roster whenever an officer is employed or has a change in status. The agency is required to notify POST if an officer is promoted, demoted, suspended more than 28 days, resigned, resigned in lieu of termination, or terminated. Upon receipt of this information, POST will conduct an inquiry to determine if an investigation should be conducted and possible action taken against the officer's certification.

Police Facility

If the City approves the formation of a police department, the governing authority must acquire a location for the police department's building. There are several alternatives available.

First, an existing structure can be identified for renovation. To accomplish this, the City can lease or purchase an existing facility that could be renovated to meet the department's current needs. This will likely require significant modifications to include enhanced hardening and security.

offense punishable by up to 15 years imprisonment and fines up to \$50,000 for each offense. Persons operating a computer to access the system must first complete on-line operator training. It is highly recommended that if the TAC or operators do not have prior training, the agency coordinate with another department to assist with this training.

²¹ Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training Council can be contacted at 770-732-5604, www.gapost.org

²² Officers who have been certified in another state must successfully complete specific courses to receive certification in the State of Georgia. Certified officers must successfully complete a minimum of 20 hours of training including some specific courses every year. Police chiefs must complete 20 hours of in-service training that is provided or approved by the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police (GACP) in addition police chiefs must also complete the Governor's Mandated Classes as advertised by the Georgia POST Council.

²³ OCGA Title 35, Chapter 8 Employment and Training of Peace Officers



A second alternative is to consider entering into an intergovernmental agreement to transfer ownership of the DeKalb Police Tucker Precinct building located inside Tucker city limits to the City.²⁴ This facility may provide sufficient security that would require limited modifications.

Third, the City can build a new police facility. Because of the time restraints to identify a location, purchase the property, design the facility, obtain building permits, and securing funding, this alternative should be considered a long-term initiative.

Most communities have little to no experience building these specialized facilities. The useful life of a police facility typically ranges from 25 to 50 years. The construction and design of the facility will impact the department's operations for decades. Because of this, it is critical for the department to engage in extensive planning to identify current and future space and technology needs.²⁵ Some of the required areas include:

- Reception Area
- Command Staff Offices
- Administrative/Support Staff Offices
- Shift Supervisor Offices
- Sergeant Offices
- Training Areas
- Meeting Rooms
- Briefing Areas
- Evidence Storage Room(s)
- Evidence Processing Areas
- Interview Rooms
- Armory
- Technology/Computer Rooms
- Locker Rooms
- Storage Areas Break Rooms
- Copier and Supply Storage
- Records Staff and Storage
- Workout Rooms
- Dressing/Locker Rooms
- Visitor Parking

²⁴ Located at 4451 Lawrenceville Highway Tucker, GA 30084, the 1.64-acre site includes 69 secured parking spaces.

²⁵ See Police Facility Planning Guidelines: Desk Reference for Law Enforcement Executives, Moyer, Frederic, James L. McClaren, Mary Calderwood, and Deborah Finette, International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), 1998. <http://www.theiacp.org/portals/0/pdfs/publications/acf2f3d.pdf>



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- Staff Parking
- Restrooms (Public and Staff)
- Janitorial Rooms
- Electrical Rooms

Insurance Coverage

Police departments are exposed to a variety of forms of potential litigation. In Georgia, there is no waiver of sovereign immunity.²⁶ The City of Tucker receives their liability, auto, and workers compensation insurance coverage from the Georgia Interlocal Risk Management Agency (GIRMA). Costs for this coverage are estimated at:

- Law enforcement liability coverage with \$2 million in limits - \$3,377 per officer
- Auto liability and auto physical damage coverage - \$5,428 per police vehicle
- Workers' compensation coverage - \$776 in premium per \$10,000 in payroll

Operational Policy/Procedures

Modern law enforcement agencies must operate under current accepted and approved policy and practice. To accomplish this, the agency must develop a comprehensive policies and procedures manual to govern the department's operations. While the City should pursue State Certification, it is not required to launch the agency.²⁷ It is strongly recommended that part of the selection process for a police chief consider candidates with a strong knowledge of and experience with state and national certification requirements. Policies should be developed in accordance with state standards to aid the agency in achieving state certification.

²⁶ OCGA 36-33-1 Immunity from Liability for Damages; Waiver of Immunity by Purchase of Liability Insurance; Liability for Acts or Omissions generally.

²⁷ If the department obtains state certification with Georgia Law Enforcement Certification program, the city can receive a 20% discount in liability insurance.



Technology

CAD/RMS & Field Reporting

Technology is rapidly changing the way law enforcement services are being delivered to communities in today's complex, ever-evolving world. Communities have come to demand increasing levels of transparency and higher expectations of service provision. Because of this, law enforcement must continually look to increasing service levels in a cost effective and efficient method. Technology offers a way to increase service levels by providing additional methods to maximize and support existing field and support operations in law enforcement.

Most modern law enforcement agencies operate with technology platforms that provide proven results: crime reduction, efficient allocation of manpower, and provide for managed fixed costs for budgeting allocations. Law enforcement agencies must continually examine how resources are being allocated for patrol, investigative, and administrative functions.

Our findings suggest that delays in officers' arrival on scene cannot be explained with dispatch and call prioritization. Rather, they are more accurately explained by the location of the incident and how the resources are being allocated throughout the City. Therefore, response inefficiencies are structural rather than operational and indicate the need for strategic adjustments in the resource deployment and planning to provide an increased level of timely service across all areas within the City of Tucker.

Collectively, our findings suggest a generally efficient policing operation but uneven with significant disparities in response times, reflecting logistical challenges, infrastructure limitations, and resource distribution imbalances. When examining the patrol functions in a law enforcement agency, the requirement to keep the patrol unit in their assigned area is of extreme importance. The need for that unit to leave the assigned area must be limited to only incidents necessary to complete their duties, such as transporting a prisoner, placing



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evidence/property into a secure location, assisting another unit, or other duties assigned by a supervisor.

To accomplish this, the patrol units must be equipped with mobile field reporting in connection with Computer-Aided Dispatch/Records Management Systems (CAD/RMS) reporting functions. This allows officers to remain in their assigned patrol area and maintain visibility while performing the required administrative duties of report writing and submitting reports for review/approval by supervisors.

Costs will depend on the form of 911 services utilized, but the cost to provide MFR (Mobile Field Reporting) will need to be reviewed to provide the expected level of service as well as the overall daily visibility of officers. Anticipated one-time costs for the City of Tucker would be approximately \$333,865 for MFR/Vendor Support/Program and \$47,144 for CAD/RMS. Depending on 911 service providers, this cost could be rolled into a negotiated fee by the elected service provider.

Dispatch Services

Currently, the City's 911 service is provided by DeKalb 911. There are three considerations for the City of Tucker to examine for 911 providers.

First, they can elect to remain with DeKalb 911 with no significant changes in service delivery as they are currently operating. Second, is to explore funding a dedicated call taker/dispatcher who would only service the City of Tucker. A third option would be to enter into an agreement with a separate 911 service provider. One example of a separate service provider is iXP-Chatcom, which provides services to Brookhaven and Dunwoody. Each option would have differing costs depending on expectations of service delivery and levels of resources.

The Atlanta Journal Constitution conducted a survey of seven 911 agencies in the Metro Atlanta area. As part of this survey, each agency was evaluated by the 911 calls answered as compared



with industry standard: “that 95% of calls were answered within 20 seconds” in 2023 and 2024. Their findings were:

Agency	2023	2024
ChattCom	98%	99%
Cobb County	95%	97%
Fulton County	84%	95%
Clayton County	96%	93%
Gwinnett County	65%	84%
Atlanta	71%	84%
DeKalb County	54%	52%

DeKalb County had the worst answer metrics of agencies the AJC surveyed. Call takers answered a little over half of the calls within 20 seconds last year, a slight decline from the agency’s 2023 performance. But when the DeKalb data was reviewed more closely, it determined DeKalb 911’s answer rate improved over the course of the year. The agency struggled in the first half of the year, leaving about two-thirds of callers waiting for longer than 20 seconds in April. By December, the agency was answering more than 60% of calls in that time window.²⁸

Traffic Enforcement

Assuming the new agency will be performing traffic enforcement, patrol vehicles must be properly marked and equipped.²⁹ In addition, the City must submit an application to the Georgia Department of Public Safety for a permit to authorize the use of speed detection devices for speed enforcement.³⁰ This application must name the street(s) or road(s) on which

²⁸ <https://www.ajc.com/news/investigations/how-tragedy-forced-metro-atlantas-911-systems-to-evolve/7T4LFH4KJFBVRF6MPYWPFX6JU/> Accessed: May 5, 2025

²⁹ OCGA 40-8-91 *Marking and Equipment of Law Enforcement Vehicles* (Size of the lettering on the side of the car), OCGA 40-1-7 *Blue Light Required for Officers Enforcing Traffic* (Must be roof-mounted)

³⁰ DPS Rules Chapter 570-7 *Speed Detection Devices*, <https://rules.sos.ga.gov/gac/570-7>



the device will be used and the speed limits on such street or road have been approved by the Georgia Department of Transportation, Office of Traffic Operations.

A 'certificate of calibration' is required for each speed detection device in use by the department. In addition, a copy of each officers' "Speed Detection Device Operators Permit" and the agencies' "Radio Station License" must be included with the application. In addition, applications must state whether the governing authority has signs warning approaching motorists that speed detection devices are being used. Finally, the governing body seeking the permit must provide a certified resolution stating it approves of and desires the use of speed detection devices.

City Ordinances and Municipal Court

If the new agency enforces anything other than State laws, the governing authority must create and adopt ordinances. It is suggested the City consider transferring cases from state court to the municipal court. There are several advantages for implementing this strategy, primarily the process of streamlining cases. If the City implements a municipal court, they should determine the court's authority under their charter. In addition, plans must be implemented for appointing a judge, hiring court staff, and implementing courtroom security procedures. Some agencies use off-duty officers to provide security. As the court's case load increases, there may be a need for increased court dates and staff.

Once a person pleads or is found guilty by the court, the judge issues a judgment. Individuals who do not possess the funds to pay the fine are placed on probation so they can make payments within a specified period. The municipality must create an in-house probation department or contract with a private company to provide these services. Payment of the service is funded through a monthly probation supervision fee.



The court clerk is responsible for assessing, collecting, and forwarding add-on fees for all fines to the State. These fine add-ons must be paid in a specific order as outlined in state law. Some of the fine add-ons include:

- Peace Officers' Annuity and Benefit Fund (POAB)
- Superior Court Clerks' Retirement Fund of Georgia
- Sheriffs' Retirement Fund
- Jail Construction and Staffing Fund
- Local Victim Assistance Fund
- Georgia Crime Victims Emergency Fund
- Indigent Defense Services
- Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund
- Drug Treatment and Education Fund
- Sexually Exploited Children Fund.

Housing of Prisoners

Operating a detention facility is a very complex and potentially litigious endeavor. Under no circumstances should the City consider operating their own facility. The DeKalb County Sheriff's Office offers one of the most supportive housing arrangements for police departments of any sheriff's office in the State. They utilize a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with municipalities in which they conduct the booking, fingerprinting, and bonding of arrested persons. The sheriff's office charges \$80.00 per day after 48 hours if the case is not bound over to state court.

In the event a police officer transports an arrested person back to DeKalb County, the county sheriff has the right of first refusal to transport the inmate. The agency must receive this from the sheriff or enter a contract authorizing the department to conduct these transports.³¹

³¹ OCGA 17-4-25.1 Transporting of Arrested Person to Jurisdiction in Which Offense Committed; Transport of Prisoner Outside County or Municipality



Revenues

Property Taxes

The bulk of revenue received by municipalities is received through property taxes. A 2020 study revealed DeKalb County raised \$8,912,518 in property taxes and a total of \$11,079,664 from all sources within the City of Tucker in 2018. That study projected if DeKalb County no longer provided law enforcement services, the county would lose \$11,079,665 in revenue, resulting in a net loss in revenue to the county of \$2,956,596.³²

Currently, property owners located within the Tucker city limits pay \$15,947,200 in property taxes for the law enforcement services provided by the DeKalb County Police Department. Interestingly, 51.58 percent of property taxes in Tucker are provided by commercial and industrial facilities.³³

2024 DeKalb County Police Services in Tucker				
Land Use	Parcels	Percent parcels	Billed	Net Tax Due
Residential	12,202	89.13%	\$ 7,721,519.48	48.42%
Commercial/Industrial	1,205	8.80%	\$ 8,225,680.54	51.58%
Tax Exempt	283	2.07%	-	0.00%
Totals	13,690	100.00%	\$ 15,947,200.02	100.00%

³² Analysis of Fiscal Impact on Dekalb County from Potential Municipal Incorporations and Service Displacement, Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia, February 2020, pp. 156 – 157.

³³ This represents 9.69% of total projected police revenue, and 9.99% of proposed Dekalb County police expenses, for FY 2025. See Dekalb County Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Budget pp. 5 – 7.

<https://www.Dekalbcountyga.gov/sites/default/files/users/user3568/FY%202025%20Annual%20Budget%20as%20proposed%202025.01.15.pdf> Accessed: 07/21/2025.



911 Fees

State law assesses a monthly 911 fee on all cell phones to assist with lowering the cost of operating a 911 center. This fee is submitted to the Georgia Department of Revenue by the cellular service providers. Unfortunately, they cannot articulate individuals who reside within the City of Tucker. As a result, the State cannot simply transfer those payments to Tucker. Other newly created local law enforcement agencies have successfully addressed this issue by conducting public information campaigns encouraging residents to notify their service provider they reside within the city limits.

Estimated Revenue with Population of 37,000

$$9,250 (25\%)^{34} \times \$1.50 = \$13,875 \times 12 = \$166,500 \text{ annually}$$

$$12,210 (33\%) \times \$1.50 = \$18,315 \times 12 = \$219,780 \text{ annually}$$

Alarm Fees

Burglar and panic alarms are important for protecting persons and property. However, when they are not properly maintained or operated, false alarm activations can result in a significant and unnecessary impact on the availability of officers to respond to other calls. To avoid this, the City should consider implementing a false alarm ordinance. Many communities earmark these fees to reduce operational costs on 911 centers.

Staffing Projections

This report only examines the initial staffing model and does not incorporate additional specialty units. Initial staffing will require personnel to respond to 911 calls, follow up on investigations, and maintain operational services. Future specialty units, such as K-9, traffic

³⁴ This percentage was included simply to demonstrate potential revenue that could be received. The actual revenue may very likely be more than presented.



units, etc., can be evaluated based on community desires and operational needs to address those levels of service and trending crime/traffic data.

Initial staffing levels based on 911 data, community concerns such as visibility, response times, etc. and comparable staffing of similar/neighboring agencies would be fifty-three (53) sworn officers and ten (10) civilian positions for a total of sixty-three (63) full-time employees (FTE).³⁵

Sworn: 53

- Chief – 1
- Major – 2 (Operations and Administrative)
- Training Sergeant – 1
- Professional Standards Sergeant – 1
- Uniform Patrol – 40
- 4 Squads - 10 Officers Per Squad
(8 officers, 1 sergeant, and 1 Lieutenant per squad)
- Criminal Investigations – 8
(6 detectives, 1 sergeant, 1 lieutenant)

Non-Sworn/Civilian – 10

- Evidence Technician/Property – 2
- Executive Assistant (Chief) – 1
- Administrative Assistant – 2 (Operations and Administrative)
- Records/GCIC – 5 (4 Staff/1 Supervisor)

Operational Sworn Staffing

	Brookhaven	Dunwoody	Tucker
Sworn Staff	61	82	53

Scheduling

Traditionally, law enforcement agencies operated on 8-hour schedules, covering 3 shifts on a 24-hour schedule. These models have been in place for years due to ease of scheduling, requiring minimal staffing adjustments. However, they failed to be flexible for crime trends,

³⁵ In discussions with other departments that have formed in recent years, it is important for the City to anticipate an increase in calls for services once the department is operational. Potential contributing factors include enhanced responses to calls, community engagement, confidence in service delivery.



staffing changes, and provided officers with little to no adjustments to better off-day rotation. Officers could remain on an afternoon schedule with Tuesday/Wednesday as their off days for years.

With a 10-hour schedule, the same issues exist as experienced with 8-hour schedules. This schedule allows for a two-hour overlap period that provides an increase in staffing. While in theory this practice offers increased numbers of officers to allow more time for completing reports, training, and other activities, the operational realities do not support this. Some agencies have evaluated the 10-hour shift and reported “that if not closely supervised, the overlap can be an inefficient use of manpower”. Officer “productivity actually decreased” as individual officers averaged fewer general and traffic calls than officers working eight-hour shifts³⁶ Further supporting the finding 10-hour schedules are inefficient is when officers are scheduled to work 30 hours to cover a 24-hour schedule. The issue of inefficiency is compounded by the staffing shortage.

The 12-hour scheduling allows for maximum staffing on all shifts, fixed rotations of off-days, and a consistent, fair schedule for all employees. This schedule also allows easy staffing increases in the event of critical incidents or emergency situations that can strain staffing levels to maintain adequate levels of service. Finally, 12-hour schedules have been proven to aid in the hiring of new officers due to weekends off for personnel time as well as retention of current staff.

Salary & Benefits

When staffing a newly formed agency, there are unique challenges. First, considering the timeline to start the agency, typically only Georgia POST Certified Officers can be hired. To attract and maintain staffing, an initial pay premium is recommended to staff the agency. Generally, other cities have offered significantly higher pay during the initial six (6) months

³⁶ Gwinnett County (Georgia) Police Work Schedule Review, November 2006.



and then returned to established pay ranges. Areas for consideration are 5 - 10% salary adjustments for each pay grade, vacation/sick leave accruals, and hiring/retention bonuses, and housing stipends.

Equipment

Vehicles

Following recommended guidelines for operational capabilities and recruitment/retention of officers, a ratio of one (1) officer to one (1) vehicle program is highly recommended.

Reviewing the current six (6) available police models and the up-fit of equipment for those vehicles from current vendors, an average cost was calculated:

Patrol Vehicle	\$47,231
Equipment	\$23,833 ³⁷
Total	\$71,064

These costs are inclusive of current trends that are included in outfitting a patrol unit. Costs can be lowered if the city desires to lower the cost of vehicles. The cost estimate provided includes the following:

- Vehicle
- Graphics
- Emergency equipment – lights & siren
- Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) and GPS
- In-Car Video (Run/Compatible with Officer body cameras)
- Laptop
- Wireless ticket writers

³⁷ The cost for administrative vehicles is approximately \$12,000 less due to the need for less equipment than a patrol unit.



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- Automated External Defibrillator (AED)/First Aid Kit
- Traffic Cones
- Crime Scene Processing Kit
- Long Weapon Locking System
- Radio
- Modular Vault
- Tactical Ballistic Vest & Helmet
- Front Bumper Guard
- Interior Barrier Separating Officer/Prisoner
- Modular Seating/Restraint System for Safely Securing/Transporting Prisoners
- Uniforms, Duty Gear, Issued Weapons as Decided by City.

Recruitment Plan/Hiring/On-Boarding

Generally speaking, it takes a minimum of six (6) to twelve (12) months to start a police agency. Several factors must be considered and implemented to streamline the hiring of staff and purchasing of equipment. Depending on outside factors, due to demand or supply, the timeline for large purchases such as vehicles, ballistic vests, and ammunition can be substantial. If the City elects to start their own police agency, it is imperative that the City should consider a minimum of twelve (12) months.

All staffing/hiring must follow state and federal legal guidelines. The vetting process must not be circumvented, nor should shortcuts be considered to meet deadlines. All personnel, even though certified, must be trained in agency specific policies and expectations, as well as all Georgia POST requirements.



Training

Specific training of all staff, at a minimum, must include the following which are key liability areas:

- Use of Force
- Pursuits
- Property & Evidence
- Special Operations
- Domestic Violence
- Mentally Ill/Diminished Capacity
- Sexual Harassment/Discrimination
- Off Duty Conduct
- Selection & Hiring
- Promotions
- Search and Seizure/Arrest

Funding Summary

Personnel Cost	Salary	Benefits³⁸
Sworn: 53	\$4,062,839	\$1,631,359
Civilian: 10	\$ 542,923	\$ 328,028
	<u>\$4,605,762</u>	<u>\$1,959,387</u>
		+ \$1,959,387 = \$6,565,149

Technology

Mobile Field Reporting/Message Switching	\$333,865
CAD/RMS	\$47,148
	\$381,013

Fleet

Patrol & Administrative Operations	\$47,234 (53)	\$2,503,402
Equipment	\$23,833(53)	\$ 1,263,149
		\$3,766,551
		TOTAL = \$10,712,713³⁹

³⁸ Benefits were calculated at 42% of salaries based on averages of comparable agencies. Again, the final data can be adjusted by the City as to what benefits they elect to offer.

³⁹ This estimate represents a baseline cost for implementation. Decisions made by the City will affect the overall costs (i.e. office supplies/equipment, utilities, travel, etc.)



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While these numbers are based on current averages derived from current operational costs from neighboring law enforcement agencies, this does not include the potential cost for a police headquarters facility. There are several factors that the City would have to examine that will need to be addressed if the decision is made to establish a police department for the City of Tucker.

Police Budgets Compared to Estimated Tucker Police Budget

	Brookhaven ⁴⁰	Dunwoody ⁴¹	Tucker
Budget	\$15,036,010	\$14,264,890	\$10,712,713 Est.

After the initial purchase and equipment of patrol vehicles, the City should consider creating a vehicle fund. Once established, funds should be deposited annually to purchase replacement vehicles in a deliberate manner. This approach will provide consistent revenues and avoid unanticipated surges in budget expenditures.

Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

If the City decides to move forward with establishing a police department, it is critical they view their officers and employees as an investment, not an expense. Public safety is a fundamental human need. Having an engaged and supportive police department is just as important to economic and community development as an excellent school system, workforce, roads, water, sewage, gas, and internet infrastructure. When people do not feel safe, they will move their families and businesses to other communities. The only individuals and businesses left are those who do not have those options.

Second, it takes approximately three years for new officers to be selected, trained, and gain the experience of responding to calls without having to routinely consult with a supervisor. To accomplish this, it easily costs agencies more than \$250,000. When officers leave, the sunk

⁴⁰ City of Brookhaven, 2025 Adopted Budget <https://www.brookhavenga.gov/media/41971> Accessed: 7/22/25

⁴¹ City of Dunwoody, 2025 Annual Operating & Capital Budget

<https://www.dunwoodyga.gov/home/showdocument?id=3579&t=638606285533227934> Accessed: 7/22/2025



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cost is more than \$500,000. Because of this, it is critical for leaders to provide an EVP that highlights a unique work environment that engages and supports their officers and civilian employees.

Salaries, Pensions, & Benefits

Historically, local governments have provided basic salaries, pensions, and health insurance. These agencies are seeking to fill police vacancies with individuals who have the same knowledge, skills, and integrity many other employers are seeking to attract. As a newly formed agency, the City must be able to attract seasoned supervisors and officers who fit with the department's organizational culture. To accomplish this, the department must offer an above average salary and benefits package. While these benefits are critical for attracting exceptional candidates, to retain these individuals the City must create and maintain an outstanding work environment.

Work-Life Balance

Employees today expect to be able to maintain a separation between their work and personal time off. This will require the governing body to employ sufficient staff to ensure officers as well as civilian employees will not be required to work overtime to cover vacancies.

Opportunity to Serve the Community

While responding to calls for service is a core activity for officers, the best candidates are those seeking to connect with and make a difference in their community. To accomplish this, officers cannot spend a major portion of their activity going from one call to another and quickly documenting their findings. This will require sufficient staffing to ensure officers can engage with the community to address issues with regard to the customer experience. This concept should be a central theme in recruiting activities.



Developmental Opportunities

The department must focus on continually developing staff to enhance individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Career Progression

Officers must see they will be provided with fair opportunities to grow and expand their talents. Some of this may occur through transfers to other assignments (i.e. detectives, field training officers) or promotion in rank.

Paid Time Off (PTO)

To recruit outstanding experienced staff, it is imperative during the first six months when officers and employees are initially being hired, the City should consider crediting them with the vacation and sick leave and other PTO they had accrued with their former employer. This small investment reinforces the understanding they are valued as individuals and will not require them to sacrifice this valuable time.

Overtime

Because of staffing shortages, many agencies across the State have mandatory overtime for all officers. This increased workload can impact officers' health, relationships, and quality of life. The City should consider implementing a policy that restricts officers from having to work overtime two days in a row.

Off-Duty Jobs

There are two types of off-duty jobs, *extra-duty* and *off-duty*. Extra-duty jobs are classified as the officer may be required to actually or potentially functioning as a police officer. On the other hand, off-duty jobs are independent of their authority as an officer. State law regulates some requirements associated with extra or off-duty enforcement activities.



Hiring Bonuses

To compete in the current labor market, the City must consider providing a hiring bonus for officers joining the department.

Liability Insurance

The City will be required to obtain automobiles, workers compensation, and liability insurance. This is in addition to the health/dental insurance as part of the employees' benefits package. As an added benefit, some communities are providing officers with expanded coverage for claims filed against officers that occurred because they were performing their assigned duties. The City should consider including it in their benefits package. Typically, this can be provided in two ways. First, the City can fund insurance policies for individuals to provide them with an attorney. Another approach is to create a city ordinance mandating the City to pay for an officer's legal fees if the insurance carrier refuses to represent the officer. Typically, this coverage would be contingent on the officer's actions were not conducted with 'deliberate indifference'.

Employee Assistance Program

While most local governments provide employee assistance programs for employees and their families, agencies have found officers often have to cope with issues that other employees do not encounter. In many cases, employee assistance providers oftentimes do not have the experience and ability to help law employees address these issues. When this occurs, they do not have confidence in the service providers and do not use the service. This failure can result in a variety of bad outcomes. Because of this, it is highly recommended the City consider contracting with an employee assistance provider who specializes in working with public safety/law enforcement agencies.



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Chaplaincy Program

Chaplains provide emotional, moral and spiritual support to officers, staff, and their families. Chaplains hold a confidentiality privilege for officers seeking assistance with personal as well as professional issues. They are often called to assist in difficult situations (i.e. death notifications) as well as help to create a positive and supportive work environment. In addition, they have been utilized by agencies across the nation to facilitate partnerships with community stakeholders.



Contributors

Ed Densmore

Ed Densmore is a native of Michigan. He holds a Bachelor of Science from Michigan State University, and he moved to Georgia in 1988. He began his career in law enforcement with the City of Decatur in 1992; and then he joined the City of Alpharetta as a police officer in 1994. After rising to Police Chief in Alpharetta, Ed then became the first Police Chief in Johns Creek, establishing the city's first police department. After serving as the Police Chief for approximately 14 years, Ed transitioned to the City Manager of Johns Creek in 2019.

In December 2023, Ed retired after 32 years of Public Service. In January 2024, Ed joined the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police, serving as the State Certification Coordinator.

Ed is a graduate of the FBI National Academy (229th Session), FBI LEEDS, GILEE, Georgia Command College, POST Certified Instructor, CALEA Assessor, and a prior member of the Joint Review Committee (JRC) for State Certification.

Dwayne Orrick

Dwayne Orrick has more than 45 years law enforcement experience including 23 as a chief of police and currently serves as the Assistant Executive Director of the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice and Master of Public Administration from the University of Georgia as well as a graduate of the FBI National Academy (186th Session). Orrick is the author of more than 50 articles on police leadership and management as well as the book *Recruitment, Retention and Turnover of Police Personnel*.

Brandon May, PhD. FHEA

Dr. Brandon May is an Applied Cognitive Psychologist specializing in Law Enforcement, Defense and Security Psychology, including decision-making, and the psychology of information elicitation. More recently his research has examined the cognitive and social mechanisms underpinning effective intelligence collection, with a particular focus on enhancing interviewing



strategies, improving decision accuracy under uncertainty, and addressing the operational challenges faced in non-kinetic security contexts. His work contributes to the advancement of evidence-based intelligence-led policing practices, with an emphasis on ethical information gathering, cognitive resilience, and the refinement of behavioral assessment frameworks within security and intelligence-led operations.

Butch Ayers

A.A. “Butch” Ayers has 35 years of law enforcement experience at a large metropolitan Atlanta police department, including five years as the chief of police. He became the Executive Director of the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police in January 2020. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Georgia as well as a Master of Public Administration from Columbus State University. Ayers is a graduate of the FBI National Academy (237th Session), the FBI National Executive Institute (39TH Session), and the Georgia Law Enforcement Command College (Class VI).

Gary Yandura

Gary Yandura has more than 49 years of law enforcement experience starting his career in Lake Forest, Illinois. Prior to launching Brookhaven Police Department as its first chief in 2013, he served as the police chief in College Park and Hiram. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice and Master of Public Administration. He has also attended Northwestern University’s School of Police Staff and Command as well as the FBI LEED’s program in Quantico, VA.