

**WHAT IMPACT WILL RAPID POPULATION INFLUX HAVE ON
RURAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES BY THE YEAR 2001?**

JOURNAL ARTICLE

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This Command College Independent Study Project is a FUTURES study of a particular emerging issue in law enforcement. Its purpose is NOT to predict the future but rather to project a number of possible scenarios for strategic planning consideration.

Defining the future differs from analyzing the past because the future has not yet happened. In this project, useful alternatives have been formulated systematically so that the planner can respond to a range of possible future environments.

Managing the future means influencing the future--creating it, constraining it, adapting to it. A futures study points the way.

The views and conclusions expressed in the Command College project are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST).

Introduction

California, with its 29.8 million people, is a densely populated, ethnically diverse state that has seen rapid population growth in the past few decades. This growth, largely the result of migration and immigration, has had a significant impact on law enforcement service levels.

Accelerated growth often happens so quickly that it is very difficult to develop a planned strategy. Law enforcement agencies must be ready to meet the challenges imposed by the demographic shift of populations. There is an expectation by our citizens that law enforcement be prepared to handle the problems associated with changes in population. There is little tolerance for negative changes in service levels provided the public.

In this journal article, it will be the intent of the author to address the issues surrounding rapid population influx and provide the reader with a suggested strategy to meet the inherent challenges presented.

It is the opinion of some that California is attracting far more people that it can cope with. In 1970, California had a population of 20 million. It increased to 23.7 million in 1980 and 29.8 million in 1990. Of the 7 million persons arriving in California in the 1980's, 85 percent were Hispanic or Asian (United States Department of Commerce, 1983 and 1994)¹.

Demographic shifts occur constantly. Migration, regardless of the reason, can completely overwhelm population change resulting from natural increase (Bogue, Hinz & White, 1982)². It is when this overwhelming population change occurs that a review of police services provided to the community must be made.

Population Influx - A Model

With the end of the Cold War, the deployment of US armed forces changed significantly. Perceived diminishing threat levels from external entities resulted in a trend to reduce military expenditures. This resulted in the creation of Public Law 101-510, Defense Closure and Realignment Act and the subsequent closure of military installations and relocation of personnel. (Uribe and Associates, Environmental Impact Study, Vol. 1)³.

Public Law 101-510, Defense Base Realignment and Closure Act of 1990 (BRAC), mandated that a number of military facilities nationwide be closed and assigned personnel be transferred to other military facilities. For example, Lemoore Naval Air Station, located seven miles west of Lemoore, California, was told to expect aircraft and personnel from Miramar Naval Air Station in San Diego as a result of closure. This relocation was only one of many such realignments under consideration by the military.

The expected transfer of personnel to Lemoore Naval Air Station had special significance to law enforcement agencies in Kings County due to the large number of personnel that were anticipated over a short period of time. Law enforcement administrators needed to determine how this population influx would impact law enforcement service levels. This situation provided an excellent model for study.

Lemoore Naval Air Station is a master jet training installation. It currently employs 5,185 military personnel and 674 civilian personnel. Of those military personnel assigned to Lemoore Naval Air Station, 18.9 percent reside in Lemoore and 12.6 percent reside in Hanford, which is located 10 miles east of the Air Station. Approximately 49.8 percent of the civilian personnel reside in Lemoore and 33.6 percent reside in Hanford (Uribe and Associates, 1994)⁴. These

figures are significant when you consider that the population influx from expansion of Lemoore Naval Air Station could result in 22 percent of the population of Lemoore and 6 percent of the population of Hanford being associated with the Air Station.

If expansion was to occur as forecasted, as many as 9,614 military personnel and their dependents could move to the region. By 1997, this number could rise to 11,157 (Uribe and Associates, 1994)⁵. This potential growth equates to a 10 percent population growth for the County of Kings in addition to normal growth rates. It was estimated that Lemoore could experience a growth rate of 26.8 percent over three years from a combination of NAS Lemoore expansion and normal growth patterns. This rapid influx becomes even more critical considering a statement made by the Pentagon that personnel could begin arriving regardless of infrastructure (Todd, 1994)⁶.

Population Influx- The Impact

The author conducted a study to examine what impact rapid population influx would have on rural law enforcement agencies by the year 2001. Among the issues examined were:

1. What police service level impacts can be expected?
2. How can law enforcement best respond to social issues resulting from rapid population influx?
3. What impact will rapid population influx have on municipal revenue and expenditure levels and how could these impact law enforcement agencies?

While the reasons for rapid population influx differ, all have one commonality; the increase in population impacts the surrounding rural community and effects how law enforcement and other organizations provide services.

When service levels are impacted by rapid population influx, the costs required to provide the needed services are also affected. Agencies need to examine their allocated and unallocated patrol times to determine staffing needs. Rapidly increasing service levels may demand additional personnel. With additional personnel come the need for more equipment and perhaps a larger facility to accommodate this increase in employees. A thorough examination of possible funding sources may be required. While revenue from sales and property tax can be expected to increase, the initial increase in funds from this source will very likely not be large enough to offset the additional expenses.

The Future - An Examination of Trends:

As part of the population influx study, a Nominal Group Technique was used by the author to forecast future trends as related to rapid population influx. Various professionals from the law enforcement field and other service oriented professions were invited to participate in this group activity. Individuals were invited for one of the following reasons: 1) Law enforcement background and experience 2) Military background and experience 3) Human Services background and experience 4) Judicial background and experience 5) Financial background and experience 6) Ethnic and geographic diversity 7) Management and/or Department Head experience.

Each member of the group was asked to bring with them a different perspective as to how rural law enforcement might be impacted by rapid population influx. It was suggested that they consider the STEEP Model (Social, Technological, Environmental, Economic and Political) as they examined the issue and identified future trends.

The group was provided with the following definition for the term "trend". *A trend is a series of events that are related, occur over time and can be forecasted.* The trend should *not* include a predetermined measurement. For example, "The level of burglaries within a community," is a trend that can be forecasted to increase, decrease, or remain static.

The panel was instructed that the author had selected a six year time period for this study (through 2001) and that their forecasting should be limited to this period. The group then forecasted trends that might be associated with rapid population influx. Through a process of voting, a final list of ten trends was identified by the panel. The panelists were also asked to forecast where they saw each of these trends going over the next six years. The results are as follows:

- ♦ **Level of demographic diversity. This is defined as the amount of racial, ethnic and gender portions of the population as evidenced on a yearly basis of the California Population Census.**

Most panelists felt that demographic diversity would increase as population increased. Increased demographic diversity could have an impact on gangs and thus impact service levels. Also, an increase in demographic diversity could require that law enforcement review the need for additional ethnic sensitivity training and examine their internal structure to determine if the organization is providing a diversity of personnel that meet the needs of a changing populace.

- ♦ **Level of revenue availability. This is defined as the level of revenue available to fund public safety programs as evidenced on a yearly basis of the city or county budget.**

Overall, panelists agreed that revenues would again increase with growth. However, they felt that revenues would not increase at the same rate as they had before 1992. The panel felt that

these relatively flat revenue increases would result in the continued trend of "doing more with less".

- ♦ **Changing composition of the economic base. This is defined as the changing balance between the various types of economic bases that provides revenue for funding. (i.e. agriculture economic base vs. retail economic base) as evidenced on a yearly basis of the California Economic Census.**

In examining this trend, the panelists took into account the level of retail services, the conversion of agriculture land to urban land, the level of economic investment and a change in employment patterns. Most felt that the economic base would change with a rapid increase in population. The panelists commented that with rapid population growth, agricultural land would most likely be converted into residential and business property, thus increasing the tax revenue possibilities.

- ♦ **Scope of law enforcement responsibilities. This is defined as the demand for police services as based on the yearly calls for service.**

The panelists agreed that population growth would result in an increase in calls for service, however they did not see the impact as being substantial over the six year period forecasted. If correct, then rapid growth may affect service levels much less and over a longer period of time than originally thought. This could be significant to law enforcement in that the affected agency may have a greater span of time to plan for anticipated policing services.

- ♦ **Level of law enforcement personnel. This is defined as the number of personnel required to meet the public need for police service.**

Panelists implied that the growth in personnel would be necessary to meet the increase in calls for service. Some panelists suggested that crime from neighboring cities would result in the need for more personnel.

- ♦ **Level of crime. This is defined as the level of crime as defined by the yearly Crime Index provided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.**

Panelists felt that a number of crimes would increase with rapid population growth. Violent crime, high technology crime and domestic crimes were thought to be the most likely categories to be affected.

- ♦ **Population level. This is defined as the population levels for rural and urban areas as based on the California Population Census.**

Panelists thought that rapid growth in Kings County would occur between 1997 and 1998. This was attributed to the fact that panelists felt that presidential elections have a significant impact on base closures, and most did not feel that sweeping changes would be made until after the presidential elections. Following the elections, panelists felt that more cuts would be forthcoming, thus resulting in the transfer of military personnel.

- ♦ **Level of gang activity. This is defined as the level of gang activity in rural and urban areas as based on the estimated gang numbers.**

This was a trend that stimulated lengthy discussion among panelists. The panelists felt that rapid population influx would result in a moderate rise in gang activity through 1997. The majority of panelists felt that regardless of gang suppression efforts, an immediate population influx would increase gang numbers.

- ♦ **Level of state, federal and local legislation. This is defined as the level of response and allocation of resources needed to implement requirements and procedures mandated by new California laws enacted.**

This trend represents the impact that legislation enacting new laws will have on law enforcement during the next six years. The panelists agreed that new laws such as "Three Strikes and Your Out" have a significant consequence on law enforcement. The panelists felt that the legislation of new laws has climbed steadily over the past six years and will continue to do so for the next three before leveling off and then declining.

- ♦ **Level of impact of external factors. This is defined as the level of impact that such factors as the spill-over of crime from adjoining metropolitan areas will have on rural communities.**

In forecasting this trend, panelists considered that the City of Lemoore is located approximately 35 miles south of Fresno. Linked by a common state highway, Lemoore and surrounding communities often feel the impact of the crime activity in Fresno. Rural communities surrounding Fresno are seeing a direct correlation between the crime in Fresno and the increase in crime in rural areas..

Trends are critical areas to be considered by the strategist when developing a strategic plan to deal with issues created by rapid population growth. By examining the trends, the reader should be able to get a good picture of the future.

Developing a Strategy - A Plan of Action

For the purposes of this study, the organization selected for development of a strategic plan was the Lemoore Police Department. Lemoore Police Department is located in a

community of 16,000. It is one of only four local law enforcement agencies located in Kings County. Operating on a budget of 1.4 million dollars, Lemoore Police Department employs 28 full-time employees; twenty-two of who are sworn officers.

The City of Lemoore is located seven miles west of the City of Hanford and five miles east of Lemoore Naval Air Station. The primary industry in the area is agriculture, although three large industrial firms are located within the city limits. Two large California State Prisons are located within thirty miles of Lemoore.

The Mission Statement

An important element of successful strategic planning is a good understanding by the planners of the future state or desired goal of the plan. What are the values of top management? What are the long and short range objectives of the plan? These questions can be answered through the development of a mission statement. The author developed the following mission statement to address the expectations of management of the Lemoore Police Department in the development of a strategic plan pertaining to rapid population influx:

The mission of the Lemoore Police Department is to be proactive in preparing to meet the challenges that are inherent to rapid population growth. The Police Department will work closely with allied agencies, state and local government entities, and with the local citizens in developing a plan that will address law enforcement needs resulting from rapid population influx, taking into account internal and external factors, thereby preserving the quality of life that citizens of Lemoore have come to enjoy.

Planners need to ensure that a policy exists that provides for the adequate provision of services to the community, regardless of the level of population influx. A policy should be developed that addresses the dynamics of rapid population influx, including a propensity for

constant change and which provides for the ongoing evaluation of established policies and procedures and their applicability to the changing population.

Situational Analysis

Using trend and event data collected during the futures research, the author conducted a situational analysis of the Lemoore Police Department and its environment. Using environmental scanning based on the STEEP model, the author identified possible impacts resulting from rapid population influx. These possible impacts were categorized by (1) Social Environment, (2) Technological Environment, (3) Economic Environment, (4) Legal Environment, and (5) Political Environment.

Data developed during the environmental scanning process and from the events and trends lists compiled during the Nominal Group Technique were used to complete a WOTS-UP analysis. The data was reviewed from a perspective of the existing opportunities and threats in the environment and from the existing strengths and weaknesses of the organization.

Environmental opportunities were defined as factors existing in the environment that may help the organization achieve the goals as set forth in the mission statement. Environmental threats were identified as factors in the environment that the organization may need to overcome in order for the goal to be achieved. The following are environmental opportunities and threats that were identified in the Lemoore Model and which the reader may wish to consider when developing a strategic plan:

Environmental Opportunities

- ♦ **Increase in level of revenue availability** will provide funding for additional programs and services needed to police an expanding population.
- ♦ **Strong community support for law enforcement.**

- ♦ **Supportive City Council** is sensitive to law enforcement needs of the community and supports cost savings programs.
- ♦ **Changing composition of the economic base** from largely agricultural to retail will provide additional revenue for services.
- ♦ **Growth of the community** will result in additional jobs and a larger supporting tax base.
- ♦ **Excellent relationship between military and community** enhances successful implementation of policing programs and delivery of law enforcement services.
- ♦ **Additional employment opportunities** results in lower unemployment rates and stimulates the economy.
- ♦ **Increasing home values** result in increases in revenue from property taxes.
- ♦ **Excellent working relationship with allied agencies** enhances the success of service consolidation measures thus reducing expenses.
- ♦ **Military adjudication alternatives** result in reduction of booking costs as a result of pursuing military prosecution rather than civilian prosecution on a number of cases.
- ♦ **Supportive City Manager** enhances the smooth operation of the police department.
- ♦ **Volunteer Fire Department** increases the resources available from the General Fund.

Environmental Threats

- ♦ **Increasing demographic diversity** will require that law enforcement provide a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community. Currently, there is a small pool of ethnically diverse candidates available that are qualified for law enforcement jobs.
- ♦ **Increase in gang activity** will greatly increase current workloads and may result in community concern and demands for action.
- ♦ **Increasing crime rates** and external influence on these levels will result in greater workloads.
- ♦ **Increasing traffic management demands** may require additional staffing.

- ♦ **Domestic disturbance calls increasing** will result in additional calls for service.
- ♦ **Lack of recreational services** could result from rapid population influx and will require that funds be expended for additional facilities and programs.
- ♦ **Maximum student population in local schools** may result in the need for additional facilities. Bond issues will be competitive.
- ♦ **Increasing levels of state, federal and local legislation** may result in increased officer workloads.
- ♦ **Reduction in public funding** may adversely impact expansion of law enforcement programs and staffing levels needed to provide quality service.
- ♦ **Poor air quality** may have an impact on potential growth and costs of providing services.
- ♦ **Increase in aircraft noise** will result in increased noise pollution.
- ♦ **Maximum levels in jail populations** could result in alternative sentencing thereby placing many criminals back in mainstream populations.
- ♦ **The establishment of paid fire department** will reduce available revenue.

The author looked at organizational capability as being the ability of the organization to develop a proactive strategic plan that meets the challenges inherent to rapid population growth. Organization capability is analyzed by examining both internal strengths and weaknesses. In the case of the Lemoore Police Department, they were identified as follows:

Organizational Strengths

- ♦ **Five minutes or less response time** is a service standard that the Lemoore Police Department has been able to maintain which has become the expectation of the community.
- ♦ **Low employee turnover** has been the case in the department for a number of years. This has resulted in monetary savings associated with turnover as well as increasing the department's ability to respond to crimes with seasoned officers.
- ♦ **Take home car program** is cost effective and supported by the community.

- ♦ **Stable management or supervisory staff** resulting from low turnover provides direction and leadership for department line staff.
- ♦ **Few formal citizen complaints** are reflective of the professionalism of officers in the department and of the respect the department receives from the community.
- ♦ **Community oriented policing philosophy** results in a police/community partnership to solve problems.
- ♦ **Consolidated records management system and dispatching system** results in cost savings and greatly enhances information sharing capabilities.
- ♦ **Supportive Police Officer Association** greatly allows for more time to be spent on providing services for the community and less on internal problems.
- ♦ **Competitive salary structure and benefit package** helps reduce turnover and stabilizes the department workforce.

Organizational Weaknesses

- ♦ **Tight budget** reduces options for providing police services to the community.
- ♦ **Inadequate police facility** is not conducive to a good work environment and adversely impacts morale of personnel.
- ♦ **No prisoner holding facility in community** results in loss of patrol time as a result of a fourteen mile round-trip required to book prisoners.
- ♦ **Presence of mild complacency at times** reduces workload efficiency and adversely impacts service levels.
- ♦ **No recruitment program** reduces the pool of prospective employees and makes ethnic diversity within the workforce difficult.
- ♦ **No traffic division** takes patrol officers away from other community policing duties and makes traffic enforcement minimally effective.

It is easy to see that the WOTS-UP Analysis can provide the strategic planner with a good overview of both external and internal factors which may impact the agency affected by rapid population influx. Another area that needs to be examined by the planner is that of the Stakeholders.

Stakeholder Analysis

In the Stakeholder Analysis, the planner identifies those individuals or groups who are affected or can have an impact on rapid population influx and on the desired outcome as set forth in the mission statement. The stakeholders are identified by using the Strategic Assumption Surfacing Technique. This technique includes the following stakeholder conditions.

- ◆An organization is a collection of internal and external stakeholders.
- ◆Each stakeholder is unique.
- ◆ There are interdependent relationships among stakeholders.
- ◆ The state of the organization, at a given point in time, is a result of the interactions with and among stakeholders.
- ◆ A successful change strategy must account for relationships with and among stakeholders.

By identifying potential stakeholders, the planner is able to focus on certain stakeholder assumptions that are crucial when developing a strategic plan, rather than concentrating on those assumptions that are neither important or are uncertain. This information is crucial when developing a strategic plan that meets mission statement objectives.

Examples of Stakeholders identified as part of the Lemoore model included 1) Lemoore City Council 2) Naval Air Station Lemoore 3) Lemoore Chamber of Commerce 4) Lemoore Police Officer Association 5) Lemoore Unified School District 6) Kings County Board of Realtors.

Snaildarter Identification

As part of the strategic planning process, it is important to identify any potential "Snaildarter's" that could have a significant impact on the issue or the strategic plan being developed. A "Snaildarter" might be defined as an unanticipated stakeholder whose action could

have a devastating impact on the issue or whose actions could significantly and adversely affect the strategic plan.

In the Lemoore Model, the author identified the California Air Resource Board as the number one Snaildarter. The quality of air in the San Joaquin Valley is such that any significant growth must be approved by the Air Resource Board. Lack of approval or severe restrictions would substantially influence any rapid population influx and would seriously affect any strategic plan designed to accommodate such growth.

Strategy Identification and Development

To identify a strategy, the author again used the Modified Delphi Process. A panel of eight was formed to suggest and eventually identify a strategy that could be used to address issues resulting from rapid population influx. Panelists were selected from the Police Department and the community based on qualifications that the author felt would be helpful in obtaining diverse opinion in developing a strategy. The group identified "Developing A Police Agency Growth Plan" as the preferred strategy in responding to rapid population influx. This strategy provides the following advantages:

- ♦ Will prepare the organization for majority of problems to be encountered
- ♦ Allows for assignment of personnel where needed.
- ♦ Points out areas of concerns that need to be addressed.
- ♦ Addresses liability potential associated with rapid organization growth.
- ♦ Maintains a proactive approach to crime.
- ♦ Provides obtainable objective that are measurable by stakeholders.
- ♦ Deals with the issue long term, rather than just crisis management

- ♦ Maintains a better quality of life.

The only disadvantage identified by the group was that this strategy would be very time consuming.

Implementation Plan

In selecting a desired strategy for developing a Police Agency Growth Plan, the author carefully considered the study sub-issues to ensure that the strategy and subsequent implementation plan would address them. This necessitated that the strategy and implementation plan would:

- ♦ Consider service level impacts resulting from rapid population influx.
- ♦ Address social issues resulting from rapid population influx.
- ♦ Address revenue and expenditure levels.

Additionally, the author felt it important that the strategy and implementation plan consider department policy. This required that consideration to the following be given:

- ♦ Planning members be representative of the local area.
- ♦ That quality services are provided to the community regardless of rapid population influx.
- ♦ That the strategy and implementation plan account for the dynamics of constant change and provide for on-going evaluation of established policies and procedures applicable to a changing population.

To implement the suggested strategy of developing a Police Agency Growth Plan, the author concluded that the best approach would be to form a steering committee that would be representative of both the agency and external stakeholders.

In the next section of this article, the author will present a transition management plan for implementing the selected strategy and establishing the steering committee.

Transition Management

Now that the strategy for managing rapid population influx has been selected, how do you implement the strategy of developing a Police Agency Growth Plan? As mentioned earlier, a steering committee could be used to achieve this strategy. It should be representative of both the agency and the local area. In the Lemoore Model, the author suggested selecting representatives from the Lemoore Police Department, the Kings County Sheriff's Department, the City of Lemoore, Lemoore Elementary School District, Lemoore High School District, NAS Lemoore Social Action/Family Services and the Lemoore Chamber of Commerce.

The inclusion of these entities was consistent with the mission statement goal of "*...working with allied agencies, state and local government entities and with the local citizens in developing a plan that will address law enforcement needs resulting from rapid population influx*". It also represented a number of stakeholders identified in the strategic planning process.

It is not the main objective of this steering committee to design a plan that addresses issues primarily considered internal, such as increasing staffing levels or budget recommendations. Rather, this steering committee should look to the future policing needs of the community and develop a plan of action that provides direction and can be used by the organization in making decisions that ensure that the policing needs of a rapidly growing community are met.

The Critical Mass and Commitment Planning

One of the first requirements of developing a transition management plan is to identify the "critical mass" individuals (or "key players") relevant to the plan. Usually stakeholders are assessed for their level of commitment to the proposed strategy, their range of influence, and what might be required to move the individual to the required level of commitment. This process is referred to as "Critical Mass Assessment". The goal of this assessment is to determine the minimum number of individuals or groups needed to achieve the desired strategy. Once identified, it is important that the level of commitment for change of each member or group in the "critical mass" be evaluated from three standpoints:

1. What level of commitment is needed from the "critical mass"?
2. Where does each member of the "critical mass" stand regarding the intended change?
3. Will the members block change, let change happen, help change happen or make change happen?

This evaluation assists in determining the level of commitment of each individual or organization identified as being a part of the "critical mass".

The Steering Committee

A transition management structure would need to be established in order to move the organization from its current state to the desired future state of developing a Police Agency Growth Plan. This structure would take the form of a steering committee and would be formed on a temporary basis. Included in the steering committee would be representatives of the "critical mass" and perhaps a few other affected entities. A project manager would need to be

appointed to coordinate efforts. The Chief of Police would be the likely person to make this appointment from internal staff. Again, this steering committee should be:

1. Representative of local law enforcement and the community.
2. Understand local policing needs.
3. Have the ability to address the issues of:
 - ♦ Service level impacts resulting from rapid population influx.
 - ♦ Social issues resulting from rapid population influx.
 - ♦ Impact on revenue and expenditure levels resulting from rapid population influx.

Technologies and Methods to Support Implementation

Certain technologies and methods can be employed to support program implementation. These technologies or methods are used to manage anxiety and uncertainty during transition. The following methods or technologies can be used during the change:

- ♦ **Survey** - A survey can be used to determine the community's current satisfaction with policing being provided.
- ♦ **Cable Television** - Local stations on cable television can be used as a method of soliciting opinion on policing needs from the community.
- ♦ **Internet** - The steering committee could direct that the talents of computer programming students at a local high school be used to develop an "Internet Home Page". This "Home Page" could be used as an instrument for providing information about potential community growth and for obtaining information or suggestions on meeting the policing needs caused by this growth.

- ♦ **Newsletters** - The steering committee could assign members of the committee to complete a monthly or quarterly newsletter that could be distributed to affected employees and stakeholders to keep them well informed and supportive of intended changes.
- ♦ **Focus Groups** - The steering committee could meet with various focus groups (senior citizens, Neighborhood Watch Groups, etc.) to solicit suggestions that would assist the steering committee in developing the Police Agency Growth Plan.
- ♦ **Flow Charts** - The project manager could develop a "flow chart" to ensure that projects and assignments given to the steering committee are completed on time and to ensure that the steering committee stays on task and meets appropriate deadlines for plan development.
- ♦ **Responsibility Chart** - The responsibility chart is designed to assist steering committee members in understanding and appreciating the roles of other members in the group. It provides clarification in the decision-making process and ensures that responsibilities are distributed appropriately.

Finally, an implementation plan will need to be designed. The plan is an outline that is specific as to the sequence of actions to be taken to arrive at the desired future state. It includes a timetable that provides direction for accomplishing the selected strategy. This plan should consider anticipated obstacles and problems that may be encountered during implementation of the proposed strategy.

Conclusion:

In this article, we have discussed the impact that rapid population influx can have on policing services in a rural police agency. We have identified a strategy and implementation process for dealing with the potential changes. Rapid population influx can be expected to affect a police agency in a number of ways, including increasing service levels, expanding social issues, and changes on municipal revenues and expenditure levels.

We have observed that accelerated growth can happen so quickly that it is very difficult to develop a planned strategy. Today's rural law enforcement manager must have a good understanding of rapid population influx and how such a shift in population could impact policing. There is an expectation by the citizenry that law enforcement be prepared to handle the problems associated with changes in population.

By examining some of the potential impacts that rapid population influx can have on rural policing, it is possible to design a strategic plan that can greatly assist the local police agency in providing adequate service levels to the public, while meeting the needs of other community stakeholders.

The law enforcement agency preparing to develop a strategic plan should design a carefully thought-out Mission Statement. This Mission Statement will set the tone for addressing the expectations of management in the development of a strategic plan. A situational analysis will also provide the strategist with an excellent overview of the existing strengths and weaknesses in an organization. As important as any part of the strategic planning process will be the identification of "Snaildarters" that could have a significant impact on the issue or the strategic plan being developed.

The development of a Police Agency Growth Plan was selected as being the preferred strategy for meeting the challenges that rapid population influx can place on rural law enforcement. Using this strategy allows an organization to prepare for the majority of problems to be encountered. Areas of concerns are identified and addressed. A proactive approach to crime is maintained and issues are dealt with on the long term rather than by crisis management.

Critical to the development of this Plan is to ensure that members of the community and other "stakeholders" are included in the formation of the Plan. Through careful coordination and cooperative effort, a Police Agency Growth Plan can be designed and implemented which is mutually beneficial and meets the needs of those affected.

By continuing to be aware of future demographic shifts, the law enforcement manager of a rural police agency should be able to anticipate many of the changes that would impact service levels and methods in his or her agency and because of this foresight, adjust accordingly, both for the good of the agency and the community.

Endnotes

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