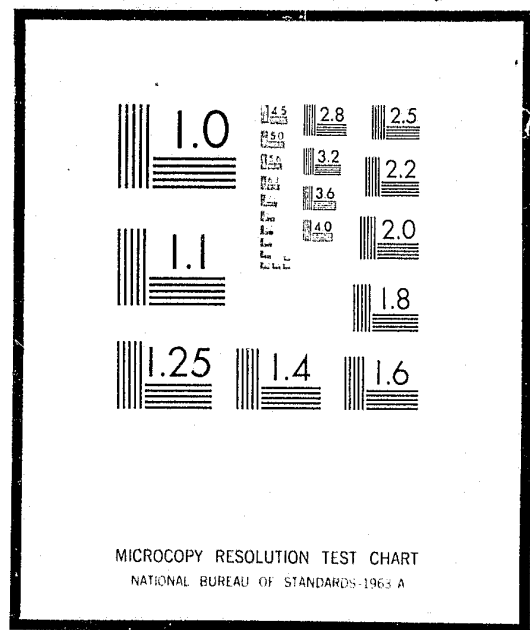


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Westinghouse Justice Institute

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ACQUISITIONS

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

FEASIBILITY STUDY ON
CONSOLIDATION OF POLICE SERVICES
SOUTH KINGSTON/NARRAGANSETT, R.I.

39096

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FOREWORD

Narragansett and South Kingston, Rhode Island officials requested technical assistance to investigate the feasibility of consolidating their police services prior to funding an in-depth study. The Westinghouse Justice Institute responded under U.S. Department of Justice Contract J-LEAA-016-72 through the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration Police Technical Assistance Program.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The leaders of the communities of Narragansett and South Kingston, Rhode Island, are interested in investigating the feasibility of consolidating the services provided by their police departments. Prior to funding a study for an in-depth assessment of all aspects of consolidation (i.e., legal, political, economic, and social), they requested through the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) Police Technical Assistance Program, a preliminary overview analysis of the feasibility, economic benefits, and constraints of a possible consolidation.

A comprehensive analysis would require: (1) the identification and development of specific alternatives, (2) evaluating each alternative based on quantitative considerations (cost savings), (3) evaluating qualitative issues (including political feasibility), and (4) development of an action plan for consolidation.

For this type of analysis, the scope of work will require a team of analysts with backgrounds in police science, personnel, organization/administration, and a specialist to interpret city ordinances, state laws, and relevant contracts of each community.

1.1 Objectives

The objective of this preliminary investigation was to determine the economic advantages of consolidating or regionalizing the police services for South Kingston and Narragansett. In addition, it was attempted to identify advantages and disadvantages, and any constraints to regionalization to be considered before making a meaningful decision on whether or not to proceed toward an in-depth study.

While quality police service must be considered as a principal objective of both communities, the transfer or shift of selected functions (or total law enforcement) from one police department to another (or total consolidation) is not likely to be decided solely on the basis of quality of service. Economic and other local considerations must be included; in particular, the self-governing, home-rule factor that has resulted in the present situation and which may have strength enough to retard, and indeed prevent, any change.

1.2 General Background Data

The tradition of local self-government is strong in Rhode Island. Its growth primarily represents an effort on the part of municipalities to avoid the restrictions of special and general law legislation. The basic precept of home rule is that municipalities be permitted to

establish and control their own charters, within certain constitutional and legislative limitations.

An analysis of the role of municipal home rule suggests that a multiplicity of local governments may contribute to the loss of local control over local problems. When a problem is common to an area, and not confined to a single municipality, it demands an areawide solution. Failing to solve the area problem on an areawide basis may bring action from a higher level of government. Typically, law enforcement problems are areawide and fall within this generalization. Local police departments, therefore, need to work together on problems where individual action is not sufficient and where specialized services, uneconomical for small departments to provide, are required.

Law enforcement is one of the problem areas where cooperation is needed. Water distribution and garbage disposal frequently have been provided on a regional basis; however, few municipalities have consolidated their law enforcement services. The prime reason for lack of cooperative action is the value each municipality places upon having its own law enforcement agency. It is not so much the argument for home rule, as opponents to coordinated or consolidated law enforcement agencies would have one believe, as the desire for control over police activities.

The leadership in both Narragansett and South Kingston express genuine interest in regionalization and hopefully this brief feasibility analysis will form the basis for an objective assessment of the quality of performance and economic advantages inherent with consolidation.

For this study it is important that the working definition used within this context is that "regionalization" and "consolidation" are used synonymously and that these terms indicate the merging, in whole or in part, of one governmental jurisdiction or function thereof with another governmental jurisdiction or function thereof.

2. COMPARISON OF COMMUNITIES

The Towns of South Kingston and Narragansett, Rhode Island, are contiguous, and at one time were one township. South Kingston has about 63 square miles of area, whereas Narragansett has about 25. Located on the sea coast and having extensive recreational and shore facilities, the two communities increase in population significantly during the summer months. Current estimates indicate that population increases during the summer months range from 16,913 to about 40,000 for South Kingston and from 7,138 to 35,000 for Narragansett.

The present strengths of the two police departments are as follows:

	<u>South Kingston</u> (16,913)	<u>Narragansett</u> (7,138)
Authorized Police Personnel	29	24
Authorized Civilian Personnel	3	0
Total Authorized Employees	32	24
Police per 1000 Population	1.71	3.36

Of comparative interest is the ratio of police per 1,000 population. The national average for police departments in U.S. cities with populations the size of South Kingston and Narragansett is 1.8 policemen for each thousand population. As indicated above, South Kingston is just below average in this category and Narragansett is almost double the national average.

The national average provides a community with an opportunity to gauge the degree of protection its police afford in relation to other communities of similar population makeup. Further, the national average provides a starting point which, combined with other factors, is helpful in determining whether the staffing of a police department is insufficient, adequate, or excessive. Manpower, because it is the most costly item in any police department budget (approximately 90 percent), it is a critical concern of the taxpayer. Because most police departments (like other activities) often grow with little or no concern for the relationship between the need for activity and size, a thorough study of manpower needs is required to determine applicable size.

2.1 South Kingston

The South Kingston Police Department Facility is located less than two miles from the Narragansett facility. Although the South Kingston building has some minor deficiencies, it meets most requirements for police departments. The Town has recognized the space deficiencies that exist and has allocated sufficient funds in the FY74 budget to double the present main floor facilities by adding a second floor.

The South Kingston Police Department, organized similarly to Narragansett, appears to operate efficiently with capable leadership and sound personnel administration. An administrative assistant has recently been hired who functions as a planner for the Police Chief and is responsible for analysis of police administration and operations. He assists the Chief from a planning standpoint in the preparation of current and long-range budget estimates, the implementation of new policies and procedures, and by collecting and interpreting statistical data regarding crime, manpower, and deployment of personnel. The Department also employs two civilian dispatchers and a secretary. The South Kingston personnel are represented by the Federated Order of Police and operate on a 40-hour work-week.

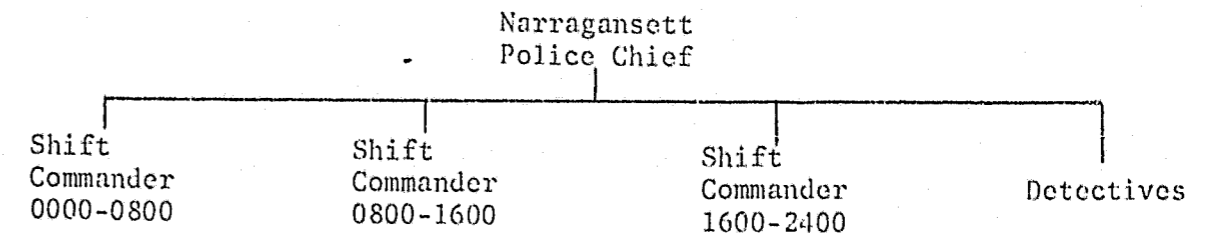
The South Kingston Police Department has had several in-depth studies made by the Bureau of Government Research at the University of Rhode Island covering:

- The utilization of personnel engaged in patrol, investigative, command, and supportive activities.
- An assessment of the Department's manpower needs.
- A position classification system and pay plan.
- Personnel practices and personnel rules and practices.

These studies are indicative of the Town's recognition of the need for outside research assistance to improve the operational and administrative performance of the department.

2.2 Narragansett

The Narragansett Police Department operates on a 37-1/2 hour work-week schedule and without any formal organization structure. The department is organizationally operated by shifts in accordance with the following diagram.



The Narragansett police personnel, including the chief, are represented by the Internal Brotherhood of Police Officers. No beat or vehicle patrol sections are designated and the department appears to have some operational and administrative deficiencies. The department operates with two unmarked vehicles (one assigned primarily to the chief) and two to detectives. In addition, the department has three cruisers, a three-wheel motorcycle, a jeep for beach patrol operations, and a patrol boat which operates for about 2 days/week during the boating season.

Physically, the Narragansett Police Department is located in a former Recreation Center renovated to house the department (formerly located in a section of town undergoing extensive urban redevelopment). The conversion of this building cost \$18,355 and although it supposedly is an improvement over the previous facilities, it lacks many basic features of even a minimally acceptable police facility for accommodating agency personnel, the general public, and prisoners. For a facility to be at least adequate, the specific requirements of these users must be incorporated in the design, with particular attention given to security, communications, records, supervision, and other concepts needed for effective police operation.

3. DISCUSSION OF SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Possible Personnel Cost Savings

A comparison of the 1972-73 estimated expenditures for the South Kingston and Narragansett Police Departments indicates the following:

	<u>South Kingston</u>	<u>Narragansett</u>
Personnel	\$335,718	\$241,976
Contractual	19,634	
Materials	31,070	36,545
Capital Outlay (Equipment)	20,018	17,050
	<u>\$406,440</u>	<u>\$295,571</u>
Total Estimated Expenditures	\$702,011	

Since personnel costs require about 90% of the total estimated expenditures, the consolidation of police activities and functions, where duplicative tasks can be eliminated, will result in significant cost savings. For example:

- The total possible days a police officer can work during a year is 365. The total days an officer actually works is determined by reducing this figure by his non-duty days (days off, holidays, sick days, training time, time in court, etc.). This leaves approximately 220 duty man-days/year.
- The man-days required to man a duty station (i.e., patrol, dispatcher, duty commander) for 24 hours, 365 days per year (three shifts x 365 days) is 1095 man-days.
- Relating these two figures:

$$\frac{\text{Man-days required to man a duty assignment}}{\text{Man-days worked/officcr/year}} = \frac{1095}{220} = 4.98 = 5.$$

Thus, 5 officers are required to man each duty station on a continuous 24-hour assignment basis throughout the year.

If the South Kingston and Narragansett organizations are consolidated, only one dispatcher will be required for each shift. Thus, five less personnel will be required for the dispatching function, resulting in a cost saving of about \$45,000 (approximately \$9,000/man x 5).

Similarly, only one duty commander will be required. At approximately \$12,000/man, this will produce a further cost saving of \$60,000. These two items alone will decrease total expenditures by approximately 14 percent--or more importantly, it will free 10 additional people for patrol or field supervisory roles.

At the same level of expenditures, additional professional services presently not available on a full-time basis could be provided, thus increasing specialization in such areas as juvenile offenders and investigations. A regionalized department also will require only one chief, decreasing the personnel cost by another \$13,000.

3.2 Physical Facilities

Both the Narragansett and South Kingston Police Department facilities are inadequate for the performance of staff, auxiliary, and field support functions. The inadequacies stem, however, from different sources.

- The Narragansett facility is a recently renovated building which, aside from some office space, lacks the requirements for effective operations. These inadequacies include the lack of temporary holding rooms, training spaces, and public waiting areas. Public access conflicts with prisoner passage, security is minimal, and roll call rooms are within public view.
- The South Kingston facility, built as a police/civil defense building in 1964, has most of the requisite design features for a police facility but lacks sufficient space. However, the FY74 South Kingston budget includes a \$103,000 appropriation to add an additional floor to the present facility which will double the main-floor space presently available.

In general, the present facility deficiencies of both departments suggest that coordination and consolidation may be of economic benefit

to both communities. It should be remembered, however, that while consolidation of physical facilities will result in cost savings, the performance of a consolidated department does not necessarily improve unless physical consolidation is accompanied by a workable set of procedures and an organization for joint and integrated performance.

With the present two facilities located less than two miles apart, geographical dispersion advantages are nonexistent. Clearly, from an economic viewpoint, the cost savings resulting from using the South Kingston facility, expanded to accommodate a consolidated Narragansett/South Kingston department, offer long-range economic benefits to both communities. If consolidation does receive favorable consideration from both communities, present facilities must be improved and enlarged.

Prior to any program, nevertheless, estimates of space requirements and costs must be made. An approach for preparing estimates of facility space and cost is as follows:

- o Make projections of population gain in the area for the next two or three decades.
- o To the resulting future population figures, apply accepted proportions for police personnel to obtain the projected nominal police force size.
- o Refine the nominal projection by adjusting for nationally increasing trends in criminal activity, thus obtaining the projected police force size which the new facility will need to support during its useful life.
- o Derive a space factor per patrolman in modern but economically defensible police facilities.
- o Apply this factor to the projected size of the police force to obtain the size of the facility which can adequately support the expanding force through the next decade. -
- o Estimate the facility cost by applying to the facility size (just determined) an appropriate per-square-foot construction cost.

3.3 Communications

Rhode Island is developing a highly sophisticated police microwave communication system to cover the entire state. The system is currently being completed, with South Kingston already phased into its operation. This areawide communication capability, coupled with a regionalized record-keeping system, could greatly improve the speed with which requests for services are processed and patrol units dispatched to incidents. It demonstrates the use of one system to properly cover a large geographical area. To fully exploit this communications capability, a centralized records system is mandatory, because the two systems are interdependent.

With areawide communications a reality, the operation of localized complaint/dispatching functions (particularly for stations less than two miles apart) is highly duplicative. As indicated in Section 3.1, consolidation of communications and dispatching will reduce by five the personnel required to man the dispatching duty station. In addition, the cost of maintaining and operating separate communications equipment will be reduced.

3.4 Record-keeping

The value of an efficient and complete crime and traffic record system is well known to the law enforcement community. In fact, studies in this field have concluded that the effectiveness of a police department can be directly related to the quality and completeness of its records. Both police departments, South Kingston and Narragansett, maintain records of questionable completeness, particularly with relation to regionwide use. Centralization of record-keeping would eliminate duplication and reduce both the probability of error and the time necessary to process an inquiry or search for information.

With the geographical closeness and contiguousness of South Kingston and Narragansett, combined with the mobility of offenders, a consolidated records system appears to be an item of high priority, even if the two departments are not totally consolidated. Apparently, there is presently some reluctance on the part of the departments to exchange information except in cases of extreme urgency. This situation should be resolved. The concept of the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) has proven the effectiveness of a common information base made possible through the open exchange of data. A regionalized record system should be the localized equivalent to NCIC--not duplicative, but rather, complementary.

3.5 Juvenile Delinquency

A significant amount of police time for both departments deals directly with the problem of juveniles and juvenile delinquency. This encompasses not only the young people who live in the two communities, but also the great number of young people that are attracted to the seashore and beach facilities available. From interviews conducted with personnel in both departments, it was noted that juveniles and young adult offenders account for most of the work and incident activity.

Many factors are concerned in the issue of delinquency control; there is no simple definition of what constitutes delinquent behavior or what the police role should be in curbing juvenile delinquency. The juvenile problem is approached differently by the South Kingston and Narragansett Police Departments. One officer is designated as the juvenile officer in each department; both operate within the detective unit of their departments. Joint interdepartmental juvenile programs have been attempted, but for the most part these have been unproductive. Juvenile problems are handled independently, without much interaction between the two departments.

Consolidation would have the advantage of establishing at least a central index of juvenile offenders who have come in contact with either jurisdiction and even with other nearby departments. Such an arrangement involves a central confidential file containing pertinent identifying information for use by a combined juvenile bureau staffed by specialists in juvenile problems.

A regionalized juvenile police operation, for South Kingston and Narragansett and other contiguous towns, would be effective in stimulating the exchange of ideas among the juvenile officers familiar with each jurisdiction, and would serve as a means of increasing the level of competence in this specialized and sensitive area.

Operationally, a regionalized records system would be of significant value to field personnel by providing quick response to requests for information on wanted persons, identification of suspects, outstanding warrants, status of wanted vehicles, and other stolen and recovered property.

In addition, the records system would support the decision-making process of command personnel for operations matters (i.e., deployment

of personnel, shift scheduling, etc.). For this purpose, data on time and location of incidents, workload measurement, clearance statistics, and analysis and personnel management data must be maintained.

For the South Kingston and Narragansett police departments to continue to maintain separate record systems requires considerable man-time and expense, and the results are usually incomplete, fragmented, and duplicative. A consolidated records system, appropriately structured and maintained by a records specialist, would eliminate related files, improve the overall quality of the system itself, and properly support the operational, administrative, reporting, and statistical information requirements of the consolidated department.

3.6 Recruitment and Selection

The need for quality policemen is generally recognized; the police administration of both municipalities are seeking to recruit more qualified personnel. South Kingston expects to add at least six new personnel during 1975. Recruitment and selection are critical processes in maintaining and building the police department. There are advantages with a larger and more widespread geographical area from which to recruit. Consolidation offers the opportunity to initiate realistic cadet and personnel selection programs. A specialized professional officer also would aid more effective recruitment and result in a higher degree of reliability in screening.

3.7 Planning

Sound police organization and procedures depend upon good administrative and operational planning. Large police departments have established planning units to assist the administration. For the most part, these units are staffed by police officers and civilians with the technical expertise to perform analyses to improve operational procedures, organizational planning, and financial and budget administration. Smaller departments tend to lack this capability, although South Kingston has recently added an administrative assistant to perform police planning, which is indicative of farsightedness in that department.

If administrative planning is performed in both South Kingston and Narragansett, however, the effect would be highly duplicative. Since crime patterns do not conform to political boundaries, operational planning (i.e., crime, and modus operandi analysis) must be performed on an areawide basis. Many crimes fail to be cleared because of the lack of areawide crime analysis.

3.8 Purchasing

Purchasing of police vehicles, equipments, and supplies is an activity performed by every public jurisdiction. This function is not a cut-and-dry, static activity, since prices change frequently, the uses of products change, new products are developed, and the materials in products may change significantly. Consequently, purchasing requires some knowledge of products and a fair understanding of specifications development, negotiating, and contracting techniques. It is a function which should be executed by a professional individual who in the course of operation can exploit the advantages of centralized purchasing.

Although it is difficult to estimate the extent of savings possible through centralized purchasing for the South-Kingston/Narragansett Police Departments, there is little doubt that this type of operation would provide the advantages of

- Lower prices through volume buying
- Improved quality of purchased items
(achieved through development of adequate specifications)
- Better capability for testing and inspecting products.

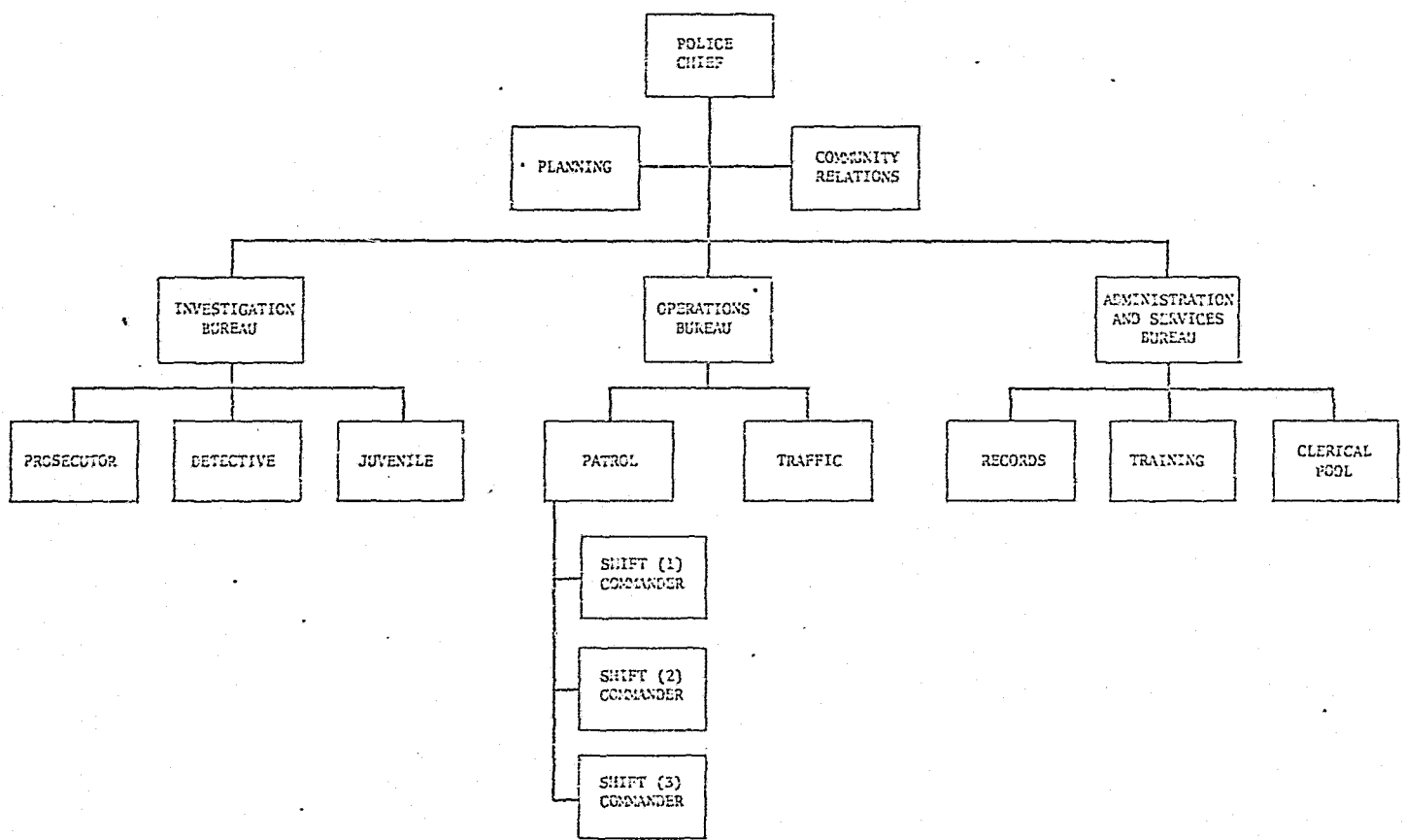
The police department should not be involved in the active purchase of vehicles, equipment, and supplies; however, it should advise on the specifications for products that are used, and should assist in testing the products as required.

4. CONSOLIDATED ORGANIZATION

For the consolidated department, an entirely new organizational structure would have to be developed. It must be specifically structured to take into account proven police organizational principals. For example, a properly organized police department must have a chain of command which establishes in an orderly fashion the patterns of authority at all levels of command and supervisory personnel. All command and supervisory positions must be sufficiently strengthened to the degree that men in designated positions have the authority to act in behalf of the Chief and make certain that only his regulations are observed, that policy is carried out, and that orders are followed.

Another principle of proper organization is the grouping of like functions--all functions similar in nature should be grouped together organizationally and performed either by the same person or the same group of persons. As a general rule, tasks should be considered similar when the same level of authority is required for their execution and when the performance of the tasks requires the same skill, experience, and training.

Figure 4-1 suggests a possible organizational structure for the consolidated South-Kingston/Narragansett Police Department. Like functions are grouped, and span of control is not excessive at any level of command. This structure provides the Police Chief with freedom to direct, coordinate, and control a 3-bureau organization comprising (1) Service and Administration, (2) Investigations, and (3) Operations. With this organization, the Police Chief can readily put the principle of organizational accountability into effect. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined throughout the organization. Also within this structure, reporting lines are clearly demarcated, a viable chain of command is established, and the principle of unity of command is put into effect.



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Fig. 4-1 Suggested Organization for Consolidated South-Kingston/Narragansett Police Department

Also to be anticipated is opposition to consolidation based on the concern that centralization of police service poses a threat to democratic self-government. A counterpoint to this is to focus on the increase in police ability to resolve localized problems that are the result of the close proximity, contiguousness, and commonality of South Kingston and Narragansett. All these favorable points should be appropriately publicized within the two communities.

The South Kingston police facility, located two miles from the Narragansett facility, is centrally and strategically located and, with additional space, will be highly suitable to serve as a regional police facility. This location offers immediate access to main roads and presents no hardship for personnel from management to travel to this facility as a duty station. The Narragansett police facility is grossly inadequate.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Consolidation of police services for the towns of South Kingston and Narragansett, Rhode Island, into a single regionwide force is both feasible and practical. Such a consolidation will eliminate costly duplication of administrative and operational functions and activities being performed currently by both departments. Consolidation of the dispatching and shift commander positions alone will result in a cost saving of over \$100,000 per year, or about 14 percent of the total two-community aggregate budget for police services. Additional cost savings will result from reduction in command personnel and centralizing the purchasing function (vehicles, equipment, and supplies).

A unified South Kingston and Narragansett police force will provide better service to the citizens of both communities. With the same budget level, more personnel will be made available for preventative patrol activities. A more complete record-keeping system of centralized information of local interest (i.e., offenders, stolen property, etc.) to complement the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) will be available to the two-community area and will eliminate delays involved in search of the several present files.

Prior to proceeding with consolidation, the preliminary investigation reported in this document should be supplemented by an in-depth analysis which was not possible under this effort because of the short duration of the assignment. The in-depth analysis should cover not only all economic benefits in detail, but also the qualitative constraints (legal, political, and social) which have in the past hindered consolidation efforts. These constraints are particularly evident in South Kingston and Narragansett, where the fragmented, decentralized system of police administration parallels the organization of local government. [During this assignment, it became evident that strong sensitivities (political and social pressures) inherent in the desire for local self-government, rather than strictly constitutional and statutory legal restrictions, may militate against the consolidation of police services.]

Prior to the implementation of any effort to consolidate the two police departments, the rationale, advantages, and cost-benefits resulting from the reorganization must be explained in detail to the citizenry of both communities. Particular emphasis must be given to the economics of consolidation. Additional funds should be solicited through the Rhode Island Governor's Committee on Crime to implement helpful consolidation projects, cause high police visibility, and at the same time be aimed at further professionalization of the new police force. These factors will, in turn, lead to favorable public acceptance.

END