CHARLOTTE

City Council
Follow-Up Report

March 18, 2011

March 7 – City Council Workshop

Community Safety: Six Year Crime Trends

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At its March 7 Workshop during the presentation on six year crime trends, Council asked several questions related to analysis of DNA evidence and the implementation of the rental property ordinance. Those questions are addressed below:

Analysis of DNA Evidence

1.) How many positions are dedicated to DNA analysis and how are they funded?

The Biology (DNA) Section of the Crime Lab has ten employees.

Full time permanent allocations funded by the City:

1 Chief Criminalist-Supervisor
1 Criminalist III- CODIS (Combined DNA Index System) administrator
1 Criminalist II -Screener
4 Criminalist II- DNA analysts

Grant funded positions:

2 Criminalist II-DNA analysts
1 Criminalist 1-DNA support position

2.) What is the current DNA backlog?

As of March 1, 2011, the DNA Section of the Crime Lab had 900 pending requests for DNA testing. 694 of those requests are for testing in property crime cases. The remaining 206 requests are for testing in violent crime cases.

The current DNA backlog is the result of significant yearly increases in the number of analysis requests (1608 in 2010 vs. 1208 in 2009). The increased requests are primarily from property offenses. The recent focus of the Crime Lab has been to reduce the turnaround time and the backlog of DNA requests related to violent crimes by dedicating personnel and resources to completing priority and high profile cases. The DNA Section has a performance objective of completing 90% of DNA evidence in cases designated as priority within 10 working days. Cases designated as priority include high profile cases, violent crimes where rapid suspect identification is critical, cases involving chronic offenders, and multiple cases where the same suspect may be involved.

3.) Analysis of Property Crime Cases

The DNA Section of the Crime Lab performed DNA testing in 273 property crime cases in 2010. Results from DNA testing in burglary cases led to ninety-six (96) hits in the CODIS database. These CODIS hits linked the DNA evidence from burglary cases to convicted offenders as well as other criminal cases and suspects previously entered in the database.

One DNA analyst is currently dedicated solely to property crimes. This analyst is funded through a combination of federal grants and private donations. Since June 2010, the property crimes DNA analyst has tested evidence in 142 cases and entered 132 DNA profiles into CODIS. The property related casework has resulted in 49 CODIS hits. Funding for the property crimes DNA analyst will expire in July 2011.

Rental Property Ordinance

1.) How many rental properties are on the list and how many has CMPD dealt with?

The original list of rental properties meeting the threshold for remedial action contained 673 properties. Once the list was compiled, each property was reviewed individually to confirm that it is a rental property, not in foreclosure, not pending sale, and is still standing. There was also a manual review of each property to verify that each crime and call for service was actually attributable to the property. So far 25 cases have been closed for one of the listed reasons and another 180 are pending review for closure, leaving 468 properties.

After the initial list was created, each of the 13 patrol divisions was allowed to create a top ten list for their division based on their knowledge of the properties. Once the top ten properties in each division have been dealt with, CMPD will go through the remainder of the list in disorder activity count order.

Through the end of February, CMPD has met with 52 property owners. 77% of the properties involved were single family homes.

2.) How much revenue has been collected as a result of the ordinance?

Through February, the revenue generated from the ordinance totals $23,200. CMPD has received compliance from all of the owners it has met with and has entered into at least two payment option plans with owners who have limited income.

3.) What are the duties of the Rental Unit Analysts and what is their salary?

Duties for the analysts include:

-Reviewing all crime and disorder calls for service for each property to determine if the calls actually occurred on the property
-Verifying the status of each property on the list, including the parcel identification
-Completing the initial meeting packet for each location
-Coordinating and scheduling meetings with property owners
-Meeting with appropriate patrol division staff to develop meeting plans
-Conducting initial meetings with property owners, developing remedial action plans agreeable to both the property owners and CMPD, accepting a receipting fees
-Maintaining contact with property owners through the remedial action process and verifying all proofs of remedial actions steps taken
-Conducting six month reviews of each property

The Rental Property Analysts are paid $48,900 per year.

4.) How does a rental property get off the list?

There are several ways to get off the list:

-The Rental Property Analysts may determine that crimes and/or disorder calls for service are not attributable to the property or the owner may present evidence that they did not occur on the property. If the recalculation of the disorder activity count shows the property then falls below the disorder threshold, the property is removed from the current year's list.
-If at any of the three six-month review meetings with the property owner the disorder activity count for the previous six months falls below the disorder threshold, the property is removed from the list.

5.) When will Council receive a full report on the ordinance?

The report is being prepared now and CMPD anticipates it will be presented to Council in late April or early May.