

FOLLOW-UP REPORT

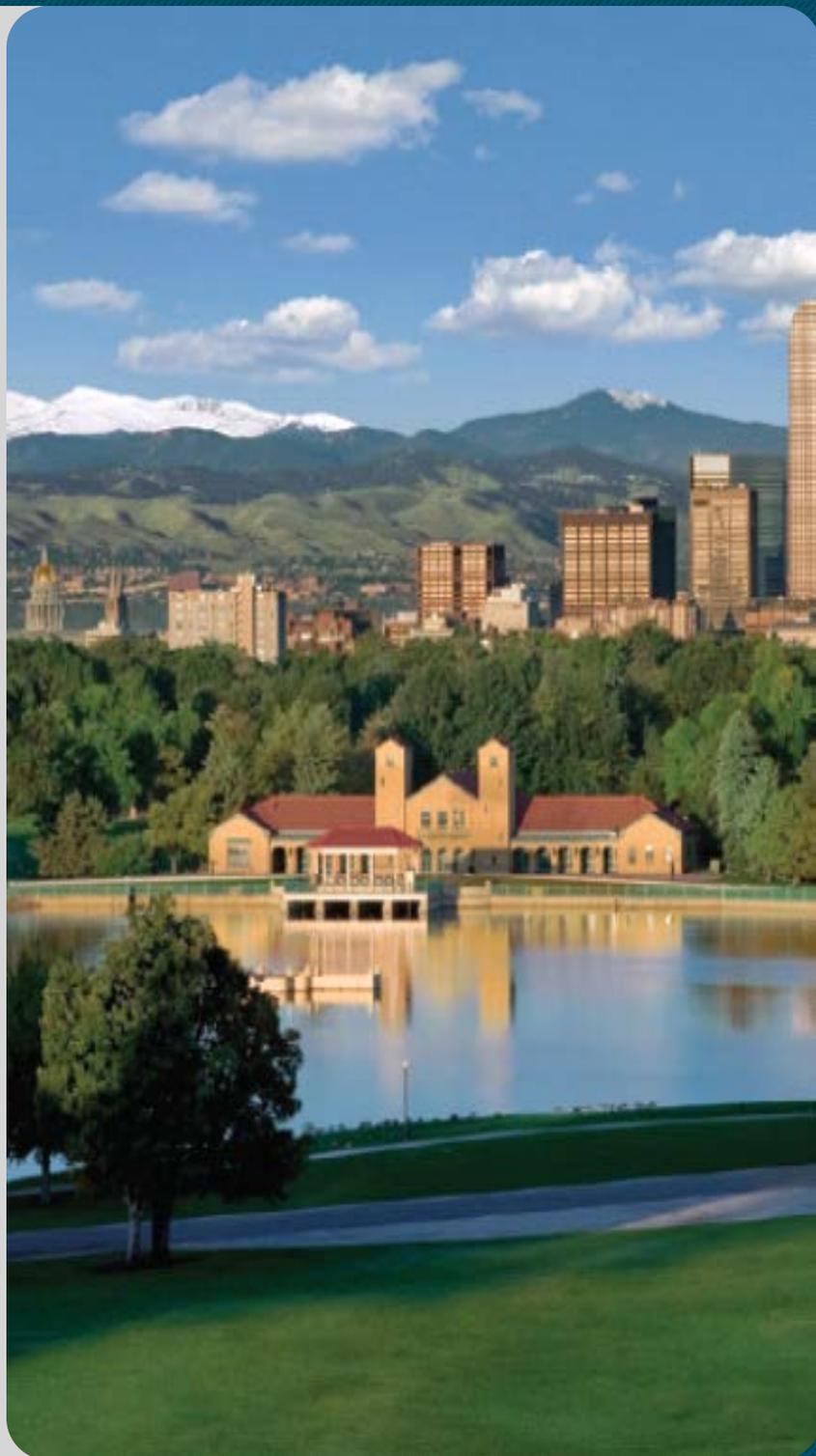
Police Response Time

August 2016

**Office of the Auditor
Audit Services Division
City and County of Denver**



**Timothy M. O'Brien, CPA
Denver Auditor**



The Auditor of the City and County of Denver is independently elected by the citizens of Denver. He is responsible for examining and evaluating the operations of City agencies for the purpose of ensuring the proper and efficient use of City resources and providing other audit services and information to City Council, the Mayor and the public to improve all aspects of Denver's government. He also chairs the City's Audit Committee.

The Audit Committee is chaired by the Auditor and consists of seven members. The Audit Committee assists the Auditor in his oversight responsibilities of the integrity of the City's finances and operations, including the integrity of the City's financial statements. The Audit Committee is structured in a manner that ensures the independent oversight of City operations, thereby enhancing citizen confidence and avoiding any appearance of a conflict of interest.

Audit Committee

Timothy M. O'Brien, CPA, Chairman
Rudolfo Payan, Vice Chairman
Jack Blumenthal
Leslie Mitchell
Florine Nath
Charles Scheibe
Ed Scholz

Audit Management

Valerie Walling, CPA, CMC®, Deputy Auditor
Kip Memmott, MA, CGAP, CRMA, Director of Audit Services

Audit Staff

Katja Freeman, MA, MELP, Audit Supervisor
Rudy M. Lopez, MS, Lead Auditor
Rob Farol, Senior Auditor

You can obtain copies of this report by contacting us:



Office of the Auditor

201 West Colfax Avenue, Department 705
Denver CO, 80202
(720) 913-5000 ♦ Fax (720) 913-5247

Or download and view an electronic copy by visiting our website at: www.denvergov.org/auditor
Report number: **A2013-014**



Timothy M. O'Brien, CPA
Auditor

City and County of Denver

201 West Colfax Avenue, Dept. 705 • Denver, Colorado 80202

720-913-5000 • Fax 720-913-5253 • www.denvergov.org/auditor

August 4, 2016

Ms. Stephanie O'Malley, Executive Director of Safety
Department of Safety
City and County of Denver

Re: Audit Follow-Up Report

Dear Ms. O'Malley:

In keeping with generally accepted government auditing standards and the Audit Services Division's policy, as authorized by D.R.M.C. § 20-276, our Division has a responsibility to monitor and follow-up on audit recommendations to ensure audit findings are being addressed through appropriate corrective action and to aid us in planning future audits.

This report is to inform you that we have completed our follow-up effort for the Police Response Time performance audit issued June 19, 2014. Our review determined that the Denver Police Department and the Denver 911 Emergency Communications Center have adequately implemented all of the agreed upon recommendations made in the audit report.

For your reference, this report includes a Highlights page that provides background and summary information on the original audit and the completed follow-up effort. Following the Highlights page is a detailed implementation status update for each recommendation. Although we did not update the status of recommendations that the Denver Police Department disagreed with, these recommendations are included in the status update section as a reference.

This concludes audit follow-up work related to this audit. I would like to express our sincere appreciation to you and to Department personnel who assisted us throughout the audit and follow-up process. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 720-913-5000 or Katja Freeman, Internal Audit Supervisor, at 720-913-5158.

Denver Auditor's Office

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy M. O'Brien".

Timothy M. O'Brien, CPA
Auditor



Police Response Time August 2016

Status

The Denver Police Department (DPD) and the Denver 911 Emergency Communications Center (Denver 911) have implemented all of the recommendations that were agreed upon in the June 2014 audit report.

Background

DPD and Denver 911 work together to ensure timely response for emergencies that require a police presence. From an internal operations standpoint, these functions are separate. However, from a citizen's perspective, police response is one seamless period of time from when an individual places a call for emergency service until an officer arrives on scene. Denver 911 is tasked with call handling from call in to dispatching to an officer. Once dispatched to an officer, DPD is responsible for ensuring a police officer arrives in a timely manner.

Purpose

The purpose of the audit was to determine and assess police emergency response times. The audit team used data analytics to determine police response time trends and to assess causes for increases in response times. The analysis included a review of DPD's community policing strategies.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights from Original Audit

The Denver Police Department (DPD) has made the policy decision not to use police response times as a primary performance metric. DPD has focused on community-oriented policing, crime prevention, and crime reduction. Police response time became an issue of concern for citizens after increases were observed and reported through media coverage. We found that between 2008 and 2013, average response time from call pick-up to officer arrival for Priority 0-2 calls increased from 11.4 minutes to 14.3 minutes, and priority 3-6 calls increased from 20.5 to 23.3 minutes. Priority 0-2 calls are defined as imminent danger or life-threatening emergency, and Priority 3-6 calls are defined as quality of life and public need calls.

Our analysis found that decreasing staffing levels is the primary cause for the increases in response times. Despite the significant impact that staffing has on response times, we found that DPD's current staffing approach continues to evolve and DPD has not determined or been approved for the number of officers it needs to achieve its current goals. To promote openness in government and improve transparency, we recommended the City share police response times from call pick-up to officer arrival with Denver citizens. Additionally, we recommended DPD should determine the number of officers needed to accomplish its strategic objectives, meet various performance measures, and adequately support a community-oriented policing strategy by relying on a staffing approach derived from workload or data-based methodologies.

Findings at Follow-up

The Denver Police Department (DPD) and the Denver 911 Emergency Communications Center (Denver 911) have been meeting on a quarterly basis and are working together to address issues that impact police response times and opportunities for improvement, which includes publishing police response times annually on DPD's website, increasing the number of emergency call operators and police dispatchers, and planning on moving to a larger facility by 2018 to accommodate the increase in staff. Police Command and the Data Analysis Unit are continually reviewing staffing levels and calls-for-service data to determine optimal staffing levels, which has resulted in many officers moving to eight-hour shifts. Finally, the Denver Police Department implemented PowerDMS, a document management system, to update officers on all new or updated policies and training bulletins.

For a complete copy of this report, visit www.denvergov.org/auditor
Audit Contact Person: Katja Freeman | 720.913.5158 | katja.freeman@denvergov.org

Recommendations: Status of Implementation

Recommendation	Auditee Action	Status
<p>Finding: Response Times Have Increased and the Denver Police Department Cannot Ensure Achievement of Strategic and Performance Goals</p>		
<p>1.1 Response Times – To formally address increasing response times, the Executive Director of Safety should direct the Denver Police Department and the Denver 911 Emergency Communications Center to work together to identify changes necessary to reduce response times and publicly present the results of the analysis with sufficient time for 2015 budget planning.</p>	<p>The Denver Police Department and the Denver 911 Emergency Communications Center meet quarterly to identify and address changes necessary to reduce police response times and any other operational issues that may impact operations. In 2015, the Denver 911 Communication Center conducted a staffing analysis and performed a review of established policies and procedures. These efforts resulted in updating the Standard Operating Procedures and identifying a need to increase the number of Police Dispatchers from 47 to 51 and Emergency Communications Operators from 69 to 124. To reach the required number of dispatchers and operators, a request will be made annually over the next five years, predicated on the availability of funds. The request will be confirmed each year by conducting a staffing analysis annually. Although the staffing analysis results were not publicly presented, the main intent of the recommendation has been achieved and progress has been made as a result.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>

Recommendations: Status of Implementation

Recommendation	Auditee Action	Status
<p>1.2 Communicating Police Response Times – To promote openness in government, build trust through increased transparency, and provide information that is of interest and educational to Denver’s citizens, the Executive Director of Safety should direct the Denver Police Department and the Denver 911 Emergency Communications Center to work together to holistically measure and share at least annually response times with the public from the time a 911 call is picked up by a 911 Call Intake Operator until an officer arrives on scene. 2014 response time data should be released by March 31, 2015, and by the end of the first quarter each year thereafter.</p>	<p>The Denver Police Department publicly reports on its website police calls for service from the time a 911 call is received to the time an officer arrives on scene. The 2015 data was posted by the end of the first quarter. Currently, the website includes police response times for 2013, 2014, and 2015.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>
<p>1.3 Operational Monitoring – The Executive Director of Safety should direct the Denver Police Department and Denver 911 Emergency Communications Center management to meet at least quarterly to update Department of Safety management on operational issues affecting emergency services, including a holistic evaluation of response times from call pick up to officer arrival.</p>	<p>Personnel from the Denver Police Department and the Denver 911 Emergency Communications Center have been meeting on a quarterly basis to discuss issues and areas for improvement that impact police response times and other operational areas. Ad hoc meetings also occur when necessary. Some discussions have included topics related to holistic evaluation of response times from call pick-up to officer arrival. Police response times are reported annually on the Denver Police Department’s website.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>

Recommendations: Status of Implementation

Recommendation	Auditee Action	Status
<p>1.4 DPD Staffing Level – The Executive Director of Safety should direct the Denver Police Department to finalize the number of sworn officers needed to accomplish the Department’s strategic objectives, meets its various performance measures, and adequately support a community-oriented policing strategy by relying on an approach derived from data- or workload-based methodologies. This information should be provided to stakeholders including the Executive Director of Safety, Budget and Management Office, City Council, and the citizens of Denver. If budget limitations or other factors prevent DPD from hiring the amount of officer required to meet the Department’s current performance measures and strategic goals, DPD should modify its performance measures and strategic goals to more accurately reflect staffing realities.</p>	<p>No action taken</p>	<p>Disagree</p>
<p>1.5 District 6 Staffing – The Executive Director of Safety should direct the Denver Police Department to reassess the staffing needs of District 6 to determine the number of uniformed personnel required to provide officers with an optional ten-hour shift schedule.</p>	<p>On an annual basis, District Commanders and the Data Analysis Unit conduct a staffing assessment for each police district. The assessment evaluates shift hours and staffing levels for efficiencies based on dispatch call volume, available personnel, and police response times. As a result of the staffing analysis conducted at the end of 2014, District 6 moved from twelve-hour shifts to ten-hour shifts. An additional staffing analysis was conducted at the end of 2015, resulting in District 6 moving from ten-hour shifts to eight-hour shifts.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>

Recommendations: Status of Implementation

Recommendation	Auditee Action	Status
<p>1.6 911 Dispatch Assessment – The Executive Director of Safety should direct the Denver Police Department and the Denver 911 Emergency Communications Center to work together to determine what, if any, impact an increase in authorized strength might have on the 911 dispatching process or the total number of 911 Dispatchers needed.</p>	<p>Personnel from the Denver Police Department and the Denver 911 Emergency Communications Center, using the staffing analysis referenced in Recommendation 1.5, identified a need to increase the total number of Denver 911 Emergency Communications Center personnel by four police dispatchers and fifty-five 911 operators and the need for a larger facility to accommodate the increase in staff and equipment by 2021. A new Dispatch Support Telecommunicator position will be requested as part of the 2017 budget to assist dispatchers and reduce their workload, in order to better manage and stay focused on radio transmissions, calls for dispatch, and officer updates.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>
<p>1.7 Overtime, Backfill, and Off-duty – The Executive Director of Safety should direct the Denver Police Department to enhance monitoring efforts to ensure that officers are not working extensive overtime, backfill, and off-duty hours to avoid potential officer stress, fatigue, and other safety concerns as new recruits are hired.</p>	<p>No action taken</p>	<p>Disagree</p>

Recommendations: Status of Implementation

Recommendation	Auditee Action	Status
<p>1.8 Code 6 Policy – The Executive Director of Safety should direct the Denver Police Department to update officers on Code 6 policy and the importance of recording their on-scene arrival time using Mobile Data Terminals or calling arrival time into 911-Dispatch.</p>	<p>The Denver Police Department (DPD) has sent correspondence to all officers requiring a review of the Radio Communication policy, which requires that officers who are responding to a radio-dispatched call must use Code 6 upon arrival (Code 6 captures an officer’s arrival time). According to the policy, officers are required to “respond to on-sight police activity without delay, and at their earliest convenience, notifying the dispatcher of such action. Notification before leaving the vehicle is preferred as long as such notification does not affect the officer’s efficiency or safety by delay.”</p> <p>In February 2016, DPD implemented PowerDMS, a document management system that sends automatic notifications to officers with any new or updated policies and training bulletins. DPD supervisors are responsible for ensuring that officers review these updates. Additionally, DPD’s Data Analysis Unit monitors the total number of 911 calls and instances where no arrival time (Code 6) was specified to inform Command staff of any opportunities for improvement.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>

Conclusion

We found that the Denver Police Department and the Denver 911 Emergency Communications Center have implemented all agreed-upon recommendations and adequately mitigated the associated risk identified during the original audit. As a result, we conclude our follow-up effort related to the Police Response Time performance audit.

On behalf of the citizens of the City and County of Denver, we thank staff and leadership from the Denver Police Department and the Denver 911 Emergency Communications Center for their cooperation during our follow-up effort and their dedicated public service.