



Salem Police Department

January 18, 2021

Mr. Ross Moldoff
Planning Director
Salem Town Hall
33 Geremonty Drive
Salem, NH 03079

Director Moldoff,

Thank you for allowing the Salem Police Department to participate in meetings with RKG Associates to discuss the impact of the proposed Tuscan Village Development. Throughout the course of the conceptual designs the police department has provided feedback and participated in studies on impact. As we have stated, the impact on our agency began with the site development in the form of traffic volume increase, motor vehicle crashes, criminal mischief to property and theft of equipment. While this is an overwhelmingly positive redevelopment for the town and area the police department should not be spread too thin and be unable to provide a high-level of professional law enforcement services.

This memo will serve as a reiteration of previous memos regarding staffing and equipment as well as an update based upon the most recent proposal for the property.

Background

The Salem Police Department is a full-service law enforcement agency providing 24/7/365 coverage. The police department has been historically understaffed. Prior to 2018 there had been no increase in staffing despite a nearly 100% increase in criminal calls for service and robust commercial and residential development throughout the town.

At the time of the initial development the police department estimated we were already short 8 patrol officers. Beginning with the 2018 budget and continuing with the 2021 proposed budget, the Town of Salem has added 7 additional officers to the allocated manpower. As of this memo, the police department has 63 of 68 positions filled. We are in the background process on two officers and have a proposed increase to 69 officers as of October (if the 2021 budget is approved by voters).

The number of officers has been discussed in previous studies and the town has addressed existing needs through the budget process. This increase was long overdue and exclusive of any development of the Tuscan Village. Previous studies have indicated the staffing needs of the police department would need to increase by an additional 5 officers solely due to the large-scale

redevelopment of the Tuscan Village. There are many reasons for the need for additional officers which I will detail below.

In addition to the increase in service there will also be a need for additional equipment and continued stress on an outdated and inefficient police department facility.

Increase in calls for service

At the onset of the redevelopment of the former Rockingham Race Track the Salem Police Department has experienced an uptick in calls for service to this area of town. In comparing the data researched over the identified time span the police department has already experienced a 1300% increase in calls for the parcel alone. In 2018 we responded to and/or initiated 30 calls for service on the property. In 2020, the same activity was 430. This increase of 400 calls, with a still limited build out of the property is only going to increase exponentially.

At full build out, projected data suggests an increase of 1,488 calls for service. This number does not include self-initiated activity. Self-initiated activity includes motor vehicle stops, property checks, and directed enforcement patrols to monitor traffic. Traditionally, the police department is close to 50% calls for service and 50% self-initiated activity. Projecting those numbers would be an additional 1500 calls for service for an increase of approximately 3000 per year for the Tuscan Village project.

The increase in calls include the variety of which is normally expected and encountered in Salem. The calls include property checks, motor vehicle stops, motor vehicle crashes, noise complaints, thefts, domestic disturbances, and others. We expect to see an increase in calls of this nature. Any increase in calls will be a drain on current staffing levels.

Increase of residential property

The elimination of the assisted living facility has no impact on the operations of the police department. Calls to these facilities are predominantly medical in nature. We rarely respond to the current facilities we have in the community. The proposed change to the development by the Dolban Group from an assisted living facility to a decent sized residential development of 250-300 apartments would have an impact on the police department. Some of this can be verified to the current impact of the Corsa development on Central St and the Hanover project on Artisan Way.

The density of the living arrangements creates an environment for an increase in calls for service. The obvious reason is the proximity of the apartments. Data indicates we would expect to see an increase in calls for noise complaints, disturbances, groups gathering, domestic disturbances, and substance use. This issue could be compounded if/when the entertainment district is built out.

As stated in the report submitted by RKG Associates, Inc the change from largely commercial and retail space to residential proposes different challenges for the police department staffing. Many of the calls for service to the Salem Police Department involve commercial or recreational property. Less commercial and retail space will mean less transient traffic. By nature, these

locations tend to have customers arrive, conduct a transaction, and depart. This creates more vehicular activity throughout the day, but traffic volume would fluctuate wildly based upon factors to include the time of day, time of year, destination, etc. A residential complex would create a predictable amount of vehicular traffic. However, the transient nature of the retail property would be eliminated with a more fixed and permanent presence of citizens. The increase of remote work can further add to the permanent presence of people in the Tuscan Village.

Proposed patrol route

For patrol response purposes the Salem Police Department has broken the town down in to 5 designated patrol routes. An additional sixth (6) officer is assigned as a town wide roving car. The Tuscan Village falls within the designated patrol route 3. This is the smallest of our patrol routes due to the demand of the mall at Rockingham Park and the traffic surrounding this area of the community. A new sixth (6) designated patrol route would be required for the Tuscan Village once it is fully built out.

The most recent Development Agreement between the Town and Tuscan include up to 1000 sq ft of designated space for public safety. The officer assigned to this area would be based with in this space. Current thought would be to include a bicycle patrol officer to this area. This would be a joint community policing effort and efficient way to navigate the entire area including open spaces which may not be readily accessible by a traditional patrol vehicle.

While the inclusion of this proposed patrol route will increase presence in the development, it will not eliminate the need to draw resources from other areas of town. Many calls for service require a multi-unit response. Some of these calls can be in progress crimes against people or an activation of a burglar or hold-up alarm. The primary responding officer would be the Tuscan Village area car with additional units responding from their areas. Conversely, calls to other areas may also draw the Tuscan Village car from its primary area of coverage. Absent a dedicated patrol officer to this area multiple resources would be pulled from other areas delaying any response to that area of town.

Police Station

The current police station has been in use since the early 1960's when the department moved from it's Main St location to Veterans Memorial Parkway. An addition was constructed in the early 1980's and a series of manufactured trailers have been added over the years to increase much needed space. The current facility has outlived its use and is entirely inadequate. There is no space to account for the needed additional staffing. We are at max capacity in the male locker room. Prisoner holding cells have been converted to storage areas and many essential records are stored offsite due to lack of storage space at an expense to the town.

Over the past 17 years the Town has proposed a new facility on three occasions, 2004, 2007, and a public safety complex in 2013. All three proposals have been rejected at the polls. While this is not the fault of the developers of the Tuscan Village the need for an updated facility continues

to grow each day. The police department has identified town owned land near the current facility for a new proposal. There is no timetable for this project at this moment.

Equipment

In addition to personnel and a facility the police department would also require additional equipment due to the development of the Tuscan Village. The proposal of a dedicated patrol route would require one additional marked police vehicle to provide the coverage to the area. The cost associated with the vehicle is dependent on the current state bid. This is a recurring cost as the police department replaces its fleet every three years.

As stated previously, the police department would deploy additional patrol options in this area to include a bicycle patrol unit. The police department does not currently deploy bicycles in town which would require startup costs. Startup costs would include the purchase of a patrol bicycle, uniforms, and associated equipment. The officers assigned to this area would also need specialized training prior to establishing a bicycle unit.

Conclusion

The cost for an entry level police officer in salary and benefits is \$125,000. Exclusive of that amount is the cost to outfit and provide initial training for a new officer. These costs can be further broken down to include:

Uniforms:	\$3,500.00
Ballistic Vest:	\$1006.00
Firearm:	\$500.00
Light for Firearm	\$130.00
Taser:	\$1,200.00
Portable Radio	\$2,500.00
Training:	\$2,500.00
Field Training:	\$3,500.00
Ammunition:	\$350.00

Estimated cost to hire an officer:	\$140,186
Projected first year cost to town:	\$140,186 (6) = \$841,116

The police department recognizes the planning board is not responsible for staffing levels and budget concerns. However, we do ask the board take careful consideration of approvals and note the impact these approvals would have on the overall public safety of our community.

Thank you for your time and attention to these concerns. We appreciate any consideration you may give to these matters.

Respectfully submitted,



Joel P. Dolan
Chief of Police (A)

CC: Christopher A. Dillon, Town Manager