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[00:00:00] Good afternoon, everyone. We're going to start the safety and security meeting for today, and we've got two agenda items that we'll be covering. The first is drones as a first responder, which I'm really looking forward to hearing and gotten the opportunity to see the drone in action.

[00:00:22] And then second, our school crossing guard update. So we'll have both of those here on the agenda today. So let me start with drone as a first responder, and I will turn it over, I guess, to Assistant Chief Blakely. Good afternoon, Chairman Lusk and members of the board. Thank you for letting us come and talk to you about this exciting program that FCPD has been testing and evaluating along with our partners and the Fire and Rescue Department. I'm joined here by Chief Craven as we talk about drone as a first responder and how that's different from

[00:00:58] what we're currently doing. So as you all know, FCPD has decades of experience in aviation excellence. We've been operating helicopters in this highly restrictive airspace for a long time, have a lot of expert leaders in that field. And for several years, we've been operating a standalone drone program with our county partners and been doing so very successfully as well. So this is a program off of that program. So it's not something that's entirely new, but the concept as drone as a first responder is a national leading initiative in law enforcement

[00:01:34] in particular. And I thought it was very interesting because we've taken this concept and made it a whole public safety program. So by sitting down early on with our partners in fire and rescue, we recognized that there was significant value in using drones to fly as first responders, not only for police, but for the fire and rescue space. Unlike others in the United States that have deployed these for law enforcement missions. This does make our program unique, certainly even in the region. And I'm also happy to tell you that due to all this aviation

[00:02:11] excellence and the amount of time and energy we've put into this program, the Fairfax County Police Department is the first department in the region to receive FAA waivers to fly drones beyond visual line of sight in the D.C. flight-restricted airspace, which is something that no one else can say they've been able to accomplish at the point that we did it. So our goal in this program, and then I'm going to turn it over to Major Hudson Bull to kind of talk about the nuances.

[00:02:40] Our goal in this program and why this is so different is to have a negative response time to an emergency in our community. And what we mean by that is very soon with your support and our full integration, we hope to achieve integration with our 911 so that when key words are mentioned like gun, shot, fire, the drone or the technology is automatically saying, hey, we should start a drone now. And these drones would be launched from a real-time crime center.

[00:03:12] And before police or fire and rescue personnel are even sent on the dispatch button, a drone would be arriving overhead. So in our pilot, we've had great successes. And we're going to tell you a little bit about that. And I'll turn it over to Major Hudson Bull to share with you a little bit about our pilot and the successes that we've had. Yeah, thank you, Chief Blakely, and thank you to the members of the board for letting me present to you today. Over the past several years, drones have become commonplace in public safety departments to investigate crimes, search for missing people, and provide critical information at fire scenes or other major incidents. The drone

[00:03:50] is first responder program was established by the Fairfax County Police Department to study the ways in which a drone could decrease response times, increase information sharing, and create safer outcomes for the community and public safety members. This program is housed within the real-time crime center where all the supervisors and detectives assigned to the unit became certified drone pilots by the FAA. They attended traditional drone ground school to learn the basics of flying, and they attended several hours of enhanced virtual training and privacy training as mandated by the county drone policy.

[00:04:27] Upon the start of this study, Deputy County Executive Tom Arnold established a DFR working group to ensure compliance with the earlier established county drone manual, increase awareness and partnership amongst public safety departments, and ensure that the DFR program benefited the whole of public safety to the greatest extent possible.

[00:04:48] Thanks to the collaboration of the group, we created stronger lines of communication, set up future technology integrations and information-sharing platforms, and found ways to implement immediate command and control functions between the police department and the fire and rescue department within the real-time crime center.

[00:05:08] The drones used for this program are American-made SCADIO X10 drones with several advanced technologies built into the hardware and software of the drone. As shown in this slide, each drone contains a parachute, night sense technology, thermal camera, a spotlight or speaker, collision avoidance, and FAA-approved lighting.

[00:05:31] Paired with a powerful radar system, drone recognition equipment, and an ADS-B receiver, the FCPD leads most public safety agencies in knowing what is in the air while we are flying. The program works by pre-positioning drones in a docking station.

[00:05:52] When a 911 call is received, a pilot working in the real-time crime center flies the drone to the emergency and feeds the information to responding police officers or firefighters. Once the mission of the drone is complete, the operator flies the drone back to its docking station, where it is recharged and kept in a temperature-controlled environment.

[00:06:15] Any video collected during the flight is uploaded to our evidence.com platform, where it is either deleted or kept as evidence. During the first 100 missions, two locations were utilized to gather data on the program.

[00:06:30] There was an average 83-second response time by the drone, which flies at about 35 miles per hour to calls for service. Of the first 100 flights, the drone was first on scene in 71 of the missions. Some visuals of notable responses are included on this slide, most notably helping find a missing person, coordinating a high-risk traffic stop, and canceling a police response when the drone found that there was no danger or need for officers.

[00:06:59] After the first 100 missions, the program moved into Phase 2 by adding an additional two locations. The next two videos will show you examples of calls flown during the second phase.

[00:07:15] On this call, the drone was sent to a home where a man was threatening others with a baseball bat. As officers arrived, the man fled out the back door and into neighboring yards by jumping over a fence and at one point trying to open a locked door.

[00:07:32] Thanks to the immediate response of the drone, police officers maintained a visual location of the man during the entire incident so officers could plan a safe and measured approach to take the man into custody without utilizing additional resources. In this video, an autistic juvenile left his school and could not be located by staff members.

[00:08:02] The drone was first on scene and quickly located the juvenile wandering around the school and attempting to find a way to leave the area. When the juvenile saw officers nearby, he hid in some bushes, but thanks to the drone, his location was shared with the officers who were able to take their time and engage the juvenile, ultimately ensuring his safe return to the school.

[00:08:25] Again, the drone eliminated the need for additional resources and provided a swift and safe conclusion to this event.

[00:08:43] Calls for service data was used to plan for the 17 locations that we plan to use throughout the county. The heat map shows locations where there's a high volume of calls for service, which include, but are not limited to, crime, traffic crashes, or other police calls for service.

[00:09:01] The map also shows each location with a two-mile radius ring around each location, which is the flight limit of each drone. The map on the previous slide showed how we look to expand using the data-based approach.

[00:09:21] As we add locations, we are increasing the amount of data to better study results of the program. We are also increasing our public communication and awareness of the program to include the

posting of our flight data on the public-facing website. We continue to meet and work with the FAA, the military, airport control towers, and others who have an interest in the airspace over Fairfax County.

[00:09:46] Once we install all locations, we'll move into Phase 3, where we will complete system integrations into one platform. Most notably, we are working with our partners in the Department of Public Safety Communications to utilize technology that would allow us to send a drone to a 911 call and have it on scene prior to the call being dispatched, A goal that we are working to complete this calendar year.

[00:10:09] I want to thank you for allowing me to present this information to you today. I'll turn it back over to Assistant Chief Blakely. I think I could certainly talk about this for another 45 minutes. I think it might be best just to open the floor up for some questions, and we'd love to know your feedback and your remarks, and I'm sure we'll have lots more to say about it.

[00:10:32] Okay. Let me start by saying thank you for that very detailed presentation, extremely informative. I mentioned Franconia was a test for the drone pilot. We got the opportunity to see it flying in from one of its missions and really was impressed by the way that it was able to move quickly, but also to note that it wasn't extremely loud.

[00:11:04] So obviously, there's probably a reason for that so that people do not hear it when it's in play. Let me ask on the question of if something happens to the drone and you have to deploy the parachute, how does it let, if there's someone in the vicinity of it, does it let that person know that it's coming down?

[00:11:33] Or what's the warning, I guess, is what I'm asking? Yes. Thank you for the question. So as a general practice, we do not try to fly over any populated areas. However, it will be flying over some of those locations. But the parachute can deploy either manually by the operator or automatically if the drone senses that it's losing control, as long as it's over 100 feet, which we generally fly at about 200 feet.

[00:12:01] And so visually, you would see it, and there is an audible popping noise when that parachute deploys that is quite loud, and that's about the audible warning that you would have. Okay. I'm just trying to make sure that there was some way for someone to at least know in the event that it's coming down.

[00:12:22] And then next, when you mentioned that you were absorbing the cost of the drone within the current program, can you kind of help us understand what are the costs so far with the program, and then what do you see in terms of cost when it's fully implemented?

[00:12:41] And I'll take this one, Supervisor Luss. So the current program that we've run, the pilot, I think is run under our current contract with this vendor, which is a large contract, includes many modalities like our NCAR video system and the taser weapon system and body cameras.

[00:12:57] And so we've been able to absorb the cost of this program, and we anticipate being able to do that certainly in this budget year. And we hope to come back to the board and work with our other county agencies to request additional funding as this program proves to be a great success and an addition to public safety.

[00:13:19] That's our goal. Okay, that sounds great. And then at the point that we get the program fully kind of funded and executed, what do you envision to be the number of calls for service that can be supported and how many drones would be deployed for those calls of service?

[00:13:38] Tim, may I make a statement before you go to that question? Sure. With regards to the budget, I've submitted the budget. That's the budget. We will work forward to ensure that this program continues to move on. Nobody's asking for any money at this juncture, and if they do, they'll work through Deputy County Executive Arnold to ensure that the program continues to go forward.

[00:14:01] So I just wanted to make sure. Sure. And to the calls for service, I know Major Bull has some more exact figures. Okay. Currently, we're only restricted by the Code of Virginia as to what we would fly to. You know, I think in our vision of this program, I would tell you that, you know, the code pretty much restricts us to flying the things that involve, you know, life safety.

[00:14:25] As we view that program and as we hope changes come about, and we're seeing some of the movement in the General Assembly and other places, but as we watch what happens, what we would like at, you know, 2 in the morning when that commercial burglary alarm goes off at an industrial complex in the county, you know there would be nothing better than to have a drone overhead to say hey I see a hot vehicle in the back of the building or there's somebody coming in and out of the doors to inform our police officers as to their response. So we are limited a little bit by the code but not not

[00:15:00] much and Major Bull can give you the numbers that we have run and what we anticipate. So fully deployed at about 18 drones throughout the county under the current code section we estimate flying about 9,500 missions in a calendar year. Wow, that's impressive. Okay, and then let me ask about data. So for those residents who might have interest in kind of knowing what's the effectiveness of the drone program, are we going to be sharing in a public format some of the data on the flights

[00:15:36] and other information about the drones? Yeah, so we plan to put our flight data on the public-facing website, very similar to the way it is already posted under our current drone program and our helicopter as well. So that will be joining there in just a couple months once we get that fully integrated. And then as always, with any of our technology programs, we use our Public Affairs Bureau to share those success stories with our community, which we do very often.

[00:16:03] Yeah, even the videos you showed earlier just are pretty impressive for people to at least see kind of the value of this drone program. And then the last question I was going to ask is acknowledging that current technology that we're using has about a 25-minute timeline on deployment and then returning back to the station.

[00:16:25] What do you envision as a way for us to maybe get additional minutes of service and expanding the opportunity for the use of the drones? Yeah, so the vendor that we work with is always upgrading their technology. And even while we've been testing these drones, they were able to increase the miles per hour that the drone can fly from 35 to 45, which does increase the amount of time that we can stay on a scene to get additional footage or information.

[00:16:54] So we hope that that time does increase, and we know that the vendors are working on it. And that can be pushed out through the software technology. That's nothing that involves a larger placement of the drone or the physical equipment. That's great. So let me do this.

[00:17:09] I will turn it over to Chairman McKay for any questions that he has. Yeah, so first, great presentation. Love this use of technology. I mean, obviously, this is a huge force multiplier in a lot of ways, I guess. You know, one of the questions people ask us is you have this code guidance on when these can be

deployed, but obviously there's a subjective element of who decides and when they decide to do that, And it has to be immediate.

[00:17:39] So help me understand, you know, when these have been deployed before, you know, how that decision was made, who makes that. And obviously, I would presume if you were to get countywide coverage, these would all be remotely controlled. So you don't have to have personnel that are in the different locations where they are.

[00:17:57] But help me understand how that process works when the determination is made to deploy. Yep. Thank you. So the drones are remotely controlled from the real-time crime center, so we're not talking about additional personnel that are needed at these various locations.

[00:18:13] The personnel are already working. They just took on additional training to become certified by the FAA to fly the drone from the real-time crime center. So they are detectives and supervisors that are working at solving crime using technology currently. And then if a call comes out where the code section would allow us to fly to the call for service, they use that criteria.

[00:18:37] They also look at the county drone manual. But the pilot themselves, and per the FAA, is in control of whether or not they fly, and they look at everything from the weather conditions. They look at the code section. But they are also under the purview of a 24-7 commander that is in the real-time crime center with them, supervising these flights, supervising their daily duties.

[00:19:02] So they work together as a team. Ultimately, that responsibility comes down to the pilot that is in charge of that aircraft, whether or not they feel it is safe enough to fly and whether the code section allows them to fly. Okay, I think that's a really important part of this because that will be one of the things that I'm sure we'll hear from people as to how that happens.

[00:19:21] And then the only other question I have is, obviously, there are a lot of commercial entities that are looking to deploy drones for a lot of different reasons. Do we have any concerns right now about, obviously, we're following FAA guidelines, but do we have any concerns about space and conflict with other missions that are taking place?

[00:19:42] So we have a number of technologies in Fairfax County to help us detect not only drones, but other aircraft that are in our airspace. That includes de-drone technology, radar systems, so that we can see even if aircraft are flying via the military where they may not be broadcasting a signal, we can still use our technology systems to detect that to make sure that we de-conflict in our airspace.

[00:20:08] We also fly lower than what is permitted to avoid any type of conflict that could happen within the airspace. So we generally fly at about 200 feet where you would normally not see general aircraft flying.

[00:20:25] Okay, and then last, were there any of these missions that failed in your mind or there was a loss of a drone or did you have to ever, you know, use the parachute function? Or, you know, in where we are today, have we had any examples where you look back and say, wow, you know, that something happened it shouldn't have and what that was and how we prevent that?

[00:20:51] Yeah, so we've never had to use the parachute. All drones have landed safely during this test period. We've had some missions where we've been able to kind of enhance our technology systems. We've really built a better way to upload videos faster.

[00:21:07] We've built ways where we can build in emergency procedures should something occur. So the team that works in the Real-Time Crime Center on this is planning for all those if something were to happen. And that's what we're able to do over this test period is really make sure that we have a plan in place in case something were to happen.

[00:21:24] Great. Well, I think it's great. I think this is another example of why that Real-Time Crime Center is so valuable and so important to us and just a great use of technology. I can just think of so many different missions from missing persons to, I mean, you gave great examples here of the usefulness of this.

[00:21:44] And, you know, I just, you know, want to close by saying I know you have various phases here that we're going through. This is pretty quick to get to phase three, summer, fall of this year. And so obviously I look forward to continue to get updates on how this is working because I think there's great promise here.

[00:22:02] And, you know, you all have obviously spent a lot of time and energy into putting together a plan for how to do this, and I commend you for that. Okay. Thank you, Chairman McKay. Next is Supervisor Herity. Yeah, a great presentation.

[00:22:18] I'm looking at the map, and I don't know whether to be happy or sad that none of the drone locations are in the Springfield District. I guess that's good news on calls for service, bad news on other things. You know, this is clearly, on top of the real-time crime center, pretty incredible what we're doing in terms of law enforcement.

[00:22:41] Is there anybody else? I mean, I think this is something we ought to be shouting from the rooftops. Anybody else that's anywhere near what we're doing in terms of this? So our friends across the river in Montgomery County have been, you know, poking at this concept a little bit too.

[00:22:59] And we've talked to them a lot. We've far surpassed their program. We obtained our FAA waivers to fly in the D.C. flight restricted zone kind of ahead of them. And our expansion plan is certainly a little more aggressive.

[00:23:18] And I'm not sure about the restrictions in Maryland, but that's really what, in terms of DFR, that's what's going on in the region. I think every department in the region has a significant drone footprint, but not a DFR footprint. That's, again, pretty incredible, and combine that with the real-time crime center, you guys are going to be way ahead of things before anybody gets there, which is amazing.

[00:23:42] So it takes legislation to expand burglaries, that kind of response. You're limited. You know, we definitely see it as a clear, you know, restriction on when we can fly, But we don't necessarily see that it's limited.

[00:23:59] I think the chairman's point about it being subjective is correct. And, I mean, we look at public safety very seriously. And that's why our expansion into the fire and rescue space, I think, was so important for us. Because if there's a call for a smoke or a fire in a home, you know, our ability to get on scene quickly and tell the battalion chief that's still responding where we may see something in a particular structure, It's been valuable.

[00:24:27] So I think interpreting that certainly gives us plenty of work to do, and I think we will see some of those restrictions loosen as other jurisdictions that don't have other aviation assets are really trying to

get a footprint and ask for resources.

[00:24:47] And then just as a curiosity question, when we say we're piloting them, are we literally 100% fly them, or is it an assisted technology? So they are actually flying them, and they are the remote pilot in control, which is an FAA term, and they go through the FAA certification as if they were any other drone pilot.

[00:25:09] The technology is there where they can click to an address, or even with our future integration of the 911 system, where it will pinpoint the address and say that the drone is within range, and the officer can just click on the computer and say fly to here.

[00:25:26] They are ready at the controls, but the drone can fly itself to that location. And to build on that, you know, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department is probably the leader in the nation right now for DFR. We're just right behind them.

[00:25:42] And, you know, they have FAA waivers so that one pilot in command can control up to five remote drones. So we haven't asked for waivers in that space yet. We're growing our program and want to stay very concentrated. But the other component is when the battery starts running, the battery is a constant thing.

[00:26:02] And when the battery gets to a point, the drone just tells you, I'm going home now. And it turns around and begins heading to home. And the pilot's always in command. They have to be in command. But the automation here is the last point. I think the chairman mentioned something about safety.

[00:26:18] Unlike our manned drones that we've been flying, these drones, we can set up no-fly zones. We can set up with the anti-collision technology. They won't fly into buildings. You can try. We've seen it tried.

[00:26:35] You can't do it. So there's a lot of automation to these drones that make them kind of at the next level of safety. And as batteries get better, I think those circles will expand too. So somebody asked that question, I think, earlier. Thank you.

[00:26:50] Again, incredible stuff. Okay. Supervisor Alcott. Thank you. And very much appreciate this approach, the presentation, the background. And as some of my colleagues have already said, I think we're going to see this technology as more and more a part of our public safety program.

[00:27:10] So this is definitely part of our future. And I do very much appreciate it. And I really want to encourage your engagement with the public on the technology because I think we're going to get to a point, if we're not already there, where the only thing holding back use of this is public understanding and public acceptance of it.

[00:27:31] So the more we can tell folks what we're doing, and I appreciate the transparency, the flight logs, that kind of thing, but also what we're not doing with it. I mean, you know, just as with our uniformed police officers, you know, our drones as first responders are basically following the law, you know, and we're not sharing data, you know, whatever.

[00:27:56] All those things, I think, are going to be a matter of a lot of public and community interest. And the more we can stay out front and transparency, I think the more we're going to be able to use this and it's going to really help us in so many ways. So thank you for doing that.

[00:28:16] Supervisor Bierman. Yeah, building on that, what's the code section? Actually, you can just send that around. Excuse me. I didn't mean to put you on the spot if you didn't actually have it in front of

you.

[00:28:34] Would love for you to send that around because I think there are certainly in the public going to be some civil liberties concerns about this program. So the other question is what do you do with the video footage after an incident to prevent it from being used in an improper way?

[00:28:54] Yeah, so the video footage is uploaded to our evidence.com platform as soon as the drone lands. And that's where all of our digital evidence is stored within the police department, most notably from our body-worn camera system. From there, it is kept for 60 days before it is deleted unless it is evidence in a crime.

[00:29:15] So as soon as the drone lands, the pilot will classify that video to say whether or not it can be deleted or it will be saved for evidence in a trial. And that's the same policy as our body-worn camera system.

[00:29:33] And Supervisor Beeman, one other point. So we follow the Library of Virginia standard on that. And, you know, I think it's important for the public to hear this as well, that, you know, these drones will not be used for routine investigative purposes. Our standard drones with search warrants attached, you know, would be the mechanism to do things of that nature. But, and if you recall some of the videos, one other thing that we think is very helpful to kind of build that trust is these drones fly with cameras forward facing. It's part of the anti-collision technology. It's also part of the pilot's ability to see out until we get to the scene. And then the camera will go down to what we're looking at. So if it was an address, for

[00:30:12] instance so we're not kind of like flying looking down below us to see what what everything is going on it's a very direct route camera facing forward and um as we we respect that um uh position too and we we're we're going to do a lot of outreach to to continue to build that trust to to show that we're not out just looking around while we're flying yeah yeah that's that's a good answer and i i uh i appreciate that that is um that we're trying to follow those rules and standards i think it's really important, especially if you want this program to succeed, that we are putting in

[00:30:48] proper guardrails. I'll also note, I won't put you on the spot with another question, but I'm assuming that nobody here knows the answer, but I'm assuming we have operated police helicopters in Fairfax County for about 40, 50 years, maybe, however many years. These drones are akin to your modern-day police helicopter, which we have had for a long, long time. They just happen to be a lot smaller and a lot quieter, and actually in some ways probably have more guardrails around how you're utilizing them than your traditional police helicopter. But I think it's very

[00:31:26] important for people to understand what we're doing with this data, how we keep this data, how we store it, how we potentially delete it, who we're not sharing it with. We do still have the trust policy in place. We are not utilizing the data in improper ways. And if anybody were ever figured out that it was being utilized in improper ways, there need to be consequences for that. But you have my point, and thank you. Okay. Next, Supervisor Stewart.

[00:31:57] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you very much for the presentation, and I think it is a huge opportunity. I want to start with the question of response time. I know we talk, and that's one of the big selling points for living here, is that four minutes or so, you're going to have somebody at your door. And here you talk about 83 seconds. Do you mean response time from when we get the call to at that site? I

just want to be clear about what that means. Yeah, that would mean from when the operator launches the drone to when it gets on scene. And as we build in those

[00:32:33] technology integrations, that will go down to from when the call is dispatched. And then eventually, as Assistant Chief Blakely stated earlier, we will work into a negative response time. So before the call is dispatched, we hope to have a drone on scene using some of those technologies with our 911 center. So in some ways, the AI words that are used would automatically trigger something based on the criteria, the formulas that we use for doing it.

[00:32:59] Okay, excellent. I mean, those are real opportunities and real benefits that all of us have, and I think I'm thankful for that. I know in general, the flock cameras, some of the other things, there's always the balance between invasiveness and protection, safety, and I see, at least in Mount Vernon District, we've done a great job, I think, of balancing that because we've had a number of successes that would not have happened, you know, cars stopped, you know, guns taken off the street, you know, folks who were kidnapped that were found and people that have, you know, that have some mental health issues or whatever and are found.

[00:33:36] So I see this as really a wonderful follow-on to all that, and I'm very thankful. The other benefit I see is the helicopter noise decrease. Along the Mount Vernon District in particular, and I know some of Franconia, we have huge helicopter noise issues.

[00:33:53] And I'm hopeful that we can see some decrease, although over the last year there's actually been an increase because of how they are routing, I think, military helicopters. They're not riding them along the river the way they once were, et cetera. Do we see a decrease in the dispatching of our helicopter?

[00:34:14] I mean, how do we see those two integrating? So, Supervisor, what I think we would say is that this technology is very different from our helicopter. It doesn't replace it. It somewhat supplements it. But if you look at a critical incident that would require aviation assets, what we hope, our vision is that those keywords come in before a police officer is put in the car and drive. The drone is already airborne and on scene in 60 seconds. And let's say if it was something like a shooting or a significant emergency, that the helicopter would be getting launched. It takes several minutes to

[00:34:53] arrive on scene, typically six or seven minutes to the Mount Vernon district from the time we ask them to go. And then the helicopter would relieve the drone from its responsibilities there. They can operate together. They don't fly in the same airspace, so there's no conflict between the to, but you get much different response. The helicopter can also stay on scene for an hour, sometimes longer, has more advanced capabilities along with the medevac capability. So it's kind of the big brother for sure of the drone. So that's kind of what we see. We don't see taking

[00:35:30] business away from the helicopter because we typically are only deploying the helicopter for the most critical of incidents where we really need it. So what we do see is that we may, in fact, as we saw in one case, one particular call we ran was a weapons call where a person, someone called in and said a person was holding a bow and arrow and pointing it at traffic.

[00:35:52] Our drone arrived on scene in about 80 seconds and said the person had a walking stick and was not violating any laws. So as you can imagine, police officers sitting in a car hearing dispatch to a

person pointing a bow and arrow at traffic, You know, you can imagine the escalation occurring, the blue lights and sirens coming on to everyone can continue about your day.

[00:36:12] There's nothing for police to be involved in. So that's the value I think we see at that 80-second mark. But we'll probably still see our helicopter coming on scene of the major incidents that need that level of sophistication. And my last question is there's a concentration, obviously, of flights.

[00:36:30] And I particularly look at Lorton and has substantial, maybe the highest number of deployments. I was curious about that, also curious about how that ties into Fort Belvoir and our restrictions are accessed to and how we interact with that. I also know there's local, state, federal restrictions and what are our criteria.

[00:36:51] If it meets all the local, state, federal restrictions, then there's also another criteria saying, okay, we should deploy or we shouldn't deploy. So 15 in Lorton, you know, what in general was that? I'm not looking for specifics on that, but what in general is different from that?

[00:37:07] So, for Belvoir deployments and... Yeah, thanks to our long record of aviation with the Fairfax County Police Department, we've already built in those relationships with the military, with the Dulles and Reagan Towers. And so, our department's already very familiar with airspace restrictions and what is needed to fly in those areas.

[00:37:28] And what we actually did was bring one of our subject matter experts from the aviation unit to the Real Time Crime Center to help us as we build this program out to make sure that we understand, work with those partners, but also to show them. And we're actually bringing all of them together in about a week or two to come and see our program. But they've been to them several times. And so we're able to seamlessly work this program into the airspace in Fairfax County. As Assistant Chief Blakely stated earlier, we are the first in the National Capital Region

[00:38:03] to obtain an FAA waiver to fly beyond visual line of sight within the D.C. flight restricted zone, something that has taken, I want to say, years to build just because of those relationships that we had to build with the FAA, with the Dulles-Oragon Towers, with Davidson Airfield to make sure that we could obtain that. And Lieutenant Brad Worland's here with Sergeant Ryan Quarto. Lieutenant Whirland's been involved with FCPD's drone program probably almost its entire lifetime and is truly our subject matter expert and helped us build the program. And

[00:38:38] Sergeant Quarto has been the supervisor. So putting that level of leadership, I know that Lieutenant Whirland in particular, you know, had countless meetings in the tower at Reagan at Davison Airfield. And that stakeholder relationship component means all the difference. And I think that's what we tend to see in Fairfax County where we spend that much time with our neighbors because it pays huge dividends. So we have a great relationship with them. And we have a unique environment with Fort Belvoir and National Parks. I mean, so many federal state agencies that are here. So thank you all very much. Okay, last list of speaker I have for this item is Supervisor

[00:39:17] Palchuk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all so much. I think most of my questions have been answered. But generally, I'm not the one to try to figure out worst case scenarios. But in this one, I'm just, you know, it's very exciting. And then I'm just trying to think about risk assessment, anything maybe we haven't thought about. Number one, it looks like mine was about policies and how often we're going to

continue to review sort of both the policy that's in the books, but also the practices and what we're seeing and any impact that we see or that the community

[00:39:52] tells us about so the DFR work group that Deputy County Exec Tom Ronald started really brought all of us together and looked at the existing DFR manual which was revised in 2024 and then so already again we've looked at that to see line by line what maybe needs to be reviewed or what kind of suggestions could be made and actually from that work group we've now said you know our work is not done so we are scheduling another meeting after this to meet again so we expect that we will continually meet to review those policies

[00:40:28] and then also the communication amongst the public safety agencies to make sure that we're talking communicating the the technology integrations are something that can always be worked on with each other and then we look at the public and so one thing that came from the work group was making sure that we inform the public. So not only just posting on the website, but I think next will be a further discussion about how do we post this information so that the community at large knows that this program exists in Fairfax County. That's awful. I mean, I would say you're one of the agencies that probably has the most interactions. You have a great public social media team. So I think you're in a good

[00:41:08] place for that. But just want to ensure that it includes, and I know she's been nodding her head, And I hope that we're having our equity teams or leads really take a look at those policies as well. And are they part of that team? So they were not part of the DFR work group, but as with any policy, I believe that the program safety manual is something that was approved by the board and revised in May of 2024.

[00:41:32] So that would be something that we would put forth for review by any committee. Okay, yeah, I think it would be helpful to have a, maybe it's every other year, every year that we continue to review that. I think it's great to get ahead of the technology. I mean, ahead, I know it's been out there, but it's not going away, right?

[00:41:49] It's here, like AI, and so I think the more work you all do is very much appreciated. My other question, so number one, I brought back my area equals pi r squared, and I believe, rough estimate, you'll be able to cover about half the county, if I'm calculating correctly, back of the envelope.

[00:42:10] So I believe it's a little bit less than half the county. Now, those circles are showing a two-mile radius around each location. However, that's not to be exact. And so with each location that we apply for, there are different restrictions, such as we were stating earlier with military airfields that we have to stay away from.

[00:42:28] So we'll be, we believe, probably less than half of the county. But when we look at calls for service data, everything from traffic crashes, any call for service that the police department may receive, We hope to cover about 85% to 90% of those hot zones where there are more calls for service than not that show up on the heat map.

[00:42:50] And so that's what we were looking at, but it will be probably about less than half the county. The supervisor, Palczyk, everything that we do, we try to lead with that data-informed model because we know that when we have to sit down and kind of show our work, it always leads us to the right place.

[00:43:08] in this particular uh model we did that we we talked with fire and rescue as well as we as we expand we want to include their calls for service data as well so that we're covering all spaces in the county that that uh can use this technology so we'll continue evaluating that and um and i do think our reports

when we when we start talking about annual reporting you know we'll we'll be talking about um the success in that area as well i have two more questions this is probably the most interesting conversation we've had today, so thank you. My other one is around the cameras,

[00:43:45] right? I think it helps to know that it's looking forward, because I assume if it's going in evidence.com, this is foiable? Will all of the images, or are they not foiable? Could anyone just come and say, hey, I want to see what they're seeing? So once it's in evidence.com, If it's found to be evidence of a crime or put into evidence, then it wouldn't be FOIAable at that time.

[00:44:11] However, a FOIA request can still be made, and then our FOIA team can determine at that time whether or not it's evidence of a crime or falls under the code section of which they would have to release that information. So someone could make the request for footage from it, and if it met the requirements that our FOIA team could release it, they would request the footage from us, or they could get it from evidence.com and release it at that time. Yeah, and I guess that's my one big concern is assuming most will be good players, but if someone is coming and saying, oh, I can get footage of things that maybe I can't get otherwise and use it for nefarious purposes, I think that, I don't know if that's something you've

[00:44:51] all thought through, what is footage that could be taken, could be asked for, and sent out that maybe is sensitive in one way or another. Yeah. And we've, you know, we, we've had a lot of conversations about that, especially as we expanded body camera early on and, uh, same thing. So if the police officer is talking to somebody about anything, you know, is it subject to FOIA? And in many cases it is. Um, but the cases that are attached to a police investigation, a criminal investigation, uh, typically are exempt from FOIA for a period of time anyway. So, um, it's definitely

[00:45:26] something to continue to look for, but the video would be releasable the same, body camera or the drone. So anything you could get really any video for, you could also get the drone footage for. Yeah, and I guess that's just one thing to monitor, you know. Video on a body can only get so much, right? I just want to make sure that we continue to monitor. These drones do have a wider range, so while it's helpful to know they're not fully out and looking down while they're flying, you know, will people start to ask for the footage and use it? So I think that's the one caution I have

[00:46:03] around us to be cautious around that. And then, yeah, finally, just continuing to think about the risk and the human factors. I assume a lot of these will be related to mental health calls, because that's the largest number of calls we get. And so I don't know if you already have people from CSB or others who can think about the human factors and the mental health pieces, and are helping look at, train, and be part of the DFR team if they haven't already been part of that.

[00:46:34] Yeah, so very early on we brought them in to talk about just exactly what you said. So we are looking at this as to, you know, a mental health call that's an emergency, you know, where we may use a drone instead of a helicopter because maybe it might make that person feel at ease.

[00:46:50] Maybe they don't know that that object is there. We have gone to a number of calls for service that are mental health calls for service, And we believe that it is useful. However, we're continuing to look at that and expand and look at ways in which the technology will advance in the future that can help even more on those calls for service.

[00:47:09] So I think it will be exciting to see where it takes those calls for service in the future, where it could help intervene in a situation or take someone out of danger. And I appreciate the technology piece. I

think my only recommendation is making sure you have the training piece, coordinated training with the mental health experts to make sure that you're all seeing things as well, the same way they are, right, going through that. But no, I mean, I think it's very exciting, just new. So I want to make sure we continue to be cautious. But thank you for your work. Okay. And Supervisor Herdy? Yeah, we talked a lot about the police side of this. Just a couple

[00:47:48] of seconds. I mean, I could see, imagine the benefits, but how are you getting the video and how are you using it in a couple because otherwise we're going to be late, but we are. Yes, sir, absolutely, Supervisor Herity. So we have a small presence in the Real-Time Crime Center currently.

[00:48:03] We're looking to increase staffing there. And I think it's really the partnership with PD. They acquire the footage, and it's showing us heat signatures. It's showing us number of patients on fire calls. We're trying to paint that picture for the first responders while they're en route and therefore reducing the risk to them.

[00:48:23] So because of the thermal imagery, we can show is the fire working or not. Is it a real fire or not? Do we need additional resources? We can get them on the road prior to any fire department's arrival. Also, hazardous materials. If there's a leaking tank around the interstate or rail, then we can see that with thermal imaging and request the appropriate hazmat resources.

[00:48:45] So I think we don't know the expanse of the capability, but the calls that it's run so far, it's proven immensely beneficial for the fire. side. Absolutely. Supervisor Laskin, I just want to quickly echo a great job, guys. Anytime you guys want to come over and see things, please come on over and see it because it's a really impressive operation and the interconnectivity between FRD, FCPD, and DPSC is moving us forward into the next

[00:49:18] century the topic about Maryland kind of chuckles makes me chuckle because my friend rich Maddalena who is my counterpart over there is always asking me what we're doing and I never tell them so keep up the good work guys okay so thank you again for an excellent presentation and keep up the good work so we'll look forward to seeing additional reports in the future so thank you. Our next item is on the school crossing guards update. So we will go ahead and I guess I

[00:49:55] hand this one off to you, Mr. Blakely. Thank you. All right. Thank you for continuing to let us talk about some of the advancements we're making. So we last appeared before the Safety and Security Committee in July of 2024 and spoke about the crossing program. And Major Colwell has kind of overseen this program now for a few years, so I've asked him to come up and give you an update kind of where we were, a quick recap, and then what progress we've made since then.

[00:50:26] We continue to talk about the staffing vacancies and challenges that face the crossing guard program. We've had some success in removing police officers from these school crossings, so I'm excited to share that with you today. And we'll talk a little bit about the most recent change, which came in the form of our budget proposal as we talked about high school crossing guards. So we'll kind of end on that note. So I'll introduce Major Scott Colwell and have him take over for the presentation. Good afternoon. My name is Scott Colwell. I'm the

[00:51:02] commander of the traffic division. I'm going to start by providing a brief recap of the crossing guard program. FCPD is responsible for 328 crossing locations, which are made up of 164 AM and PM crossings per day. These are primarily covered by school crossing guards. We currently have 44 of 62

crossing guard positions filled and we have several interviews this week as we continue to try to recruit new guards. On average approximately 110 crossings per day have been

[00:51:36] covered by police officers. Every crossing is 30 minutes in duration during which time those officers cannot leave for any call for service to include any type of emergency situation. Based on prior board feedback, we began to look at several options for improvement and pursued a pilot program with a private vendor. In August of 2025, we began a pilot program with a private crossing guard company with the goal of filling the crossings that required police officer coverage without impacting our school crossing guards. To do this, FCPD has engaged with multiple stakeholders

[00:52:15] throughout this pilot. We continually work with FCPS Safety and Security, which provides us with crossing recommendations. We've exchanged numerous emails and have had meetings with our current school crossing guards to provide them with updates and solicit their feedback. We spoke with FCDOT and discussed design changes to crossing locations, which includes additional signage, additional lighting, and pedestrian safety features as a means of possibly eliminating the need for guards at certain locations. We surveyed all our crossing locations to determine

[00:52:50] if changes could be made. These include working with FCPS on suggestions and changes to their kiss and ride locations, changes to vehicle and bus entry and exit points, environmental design, and parent and student messaging. This resulted in 14 crossings being eliminated at the beginning of 2025 as they no longer met our criteria to have a guard. Currently, we're seeking to expand the level two crossing locations which would allow our crossing guards to direct traffic. This is in response to FCPS feedback where they had become accustomed to police officers directing traffic

[00:53:27] while they were at crossings. Here's where we are today. We currently have 314 total crossing times. As I previously stated, there are 62 total crossing guard positions. 44 of them are filled.

[00:53:43] These 44 crossing guards cover 184 crossing times, which are broken down to 90 a.m. crossing times and 94 p.m. crossing times. The private vendor is covering 68 crossing times, 35 in the morning, 33 in the afternoon. FCPD officers are covering 62 crossing times, 32 in the morning, and 30 in the afternoon. These numbers have changed slightly since this slide was created because the private vendor has hired a few additional guards. So far, we've had positive feedback for the private vendor and there have not been any crashes at the locations covered by the private vendor. We will

[00:54:22] continue to expand this program as we move forward. So as you can see, from where we were in 24 to currently, we've been able to make a big dent in the number of police officers who are standing in these crossing positions. So how that affects the budget, you know, is pretty significant because we got to a point where we were utilizing overtime funding and a lot of ways to have many of those school crossings covered. So when you look at our total program in FY25, which includes our

[00:54:56] school crossing guards and the police officer overtime that was needed to fill all the vacant school crossing guards, we spent \$3.9 million. As we prepared our FY27 budget, we are recommending to eliminate high school crossing positions, but not secondary school positions, so just the true high schools and reallocate those existing 13 crossing guards to some of the, we have 18 vacancies, so we can move them into vacant positions so there shouldn't be any loss of

[00:55:32] work or does not necessitate a RIF of any kind, which would save upwards of \$800,000. And then as we plan out the rest of this crossing, when you look at the total cost of our school crossing guard

program, meaning the employees, without the high schools, that totals \$1.9 million.

[00:55:56] We plan to eliminate all FCPD sworn police officer crossing overtime in FY27, so zeroing that out. And currently, we've spent about \$75,000 of our contract to staff the number you saw there of our private vendors, 30-some-odd crossings in the morning and afternoons, so 60-some-odd total.

[00:56:18] So if we fill the rest of those police officer-based positions, we believe that will get us up to around \$150,000 for those 60-some crossings a day, which would total \$2 million. So we're proposing these changes, which would amount to some budget savings.

[00:56:37] Our priority remains to remove police officers from the crossings by using the private vendors, but not eliminating our school crossing guards. So I'm happy to take any questions or comments or feedback you have on the program.

[00:56:57] Thank you very much. I appreciate the presentation, and I'll say this issue, we might differ on that last point, and I'll say for the high schools, I made this point last year, I felt pretty strongly that some of the high schools might still need to have crossing guards, And I think about Edison High School, which is right off of Franconia and the level of traffic that's there.

[00:57:25] I'm not so sure about Lewis, but there's a lot of traffic there, too. So I guess the point here is I don't know if we should just blanketly say no to all the high schools because I think that could create an issue. So I hope that we can maybe relook at that point and see if there's any possibility that we can have some criteria for deciding which high schools are or are not included in the crosswalk program.

[00:57:52] Tom Arnold, Deputy County Executive. And certainly we know that we kind of conflate two subjects with this presentation. The point of the presentation is to update you all on the crossing guard contract, but obviously you're going to have questions about the budget reduction. And so I think that we would recommend, and we'll certainly do what you desire, but we would handle the topic of the high school reductions through the budget process and stick to the outline of the – but I understand your perspective.

[00:58:18] That's fair? That's fair. And what you've said is also fair. So we can take that offline, but I just at least wanted to at least make the point, which we made at the last discussion here as well. I'll get to my colleagues here in just a minute if I can just ask maybe a couple more questions.

[00:58:36] One of the things that I wanted to make sure we were clear on is when you think about the training for the contract crossing guards, are they getting the same level of training as we provide to those that are in the Fairfax County system?

[00:58:53] because we want to make sure that they're providing the same level of safety and other preparedness for our kids as our own crossing guards. The only difference in the training is the private company trains their people themselves.

[00:59:10] The school crossing guards are trained by our academy, but the training is consistent. Okay, so foundationally they're getting the exact same sort of training as our Fairfax County, just making sure. Yes, sir. Okay, perfect. And, Supervisor Losky, I would add that we've received feedback from some of the board offices and police have obviously worked with school security.

[00:59:33] There have been instances where the school crossing guards have the historical knowledge of doing multiple crossings. And so we have had to deal with issues that have come up to make sure that the

education on what the expectations are in certain crossings. And so I think, like any pilot, it's proving that there are issues that we need to resolve.

[00:59:51] We're still certainly working through this. Okay. And then on the point you just made, just thinking about the existing school crossing guards, they're able to stay if they so deem that they'd like in our Fairfax County system. They're not required to move to the contract position.

[01:00:08] They can stay in the county's position. Yes, sir. That's an absolute. With the 18 vacancies and our recommendation of eliminating 13, we would be able to place all the guards. We did outreach and actually met with all the guards to share with them. Some of the information prior to prior to it being presented in a public forum and Their feedback was pretty consistent that they are very happy here And we're also happy that they're here and some of their concerns that they are able to maintain their three or four crossings a day Whereas the primary concern

[01:00:43] My commitment to them was if the board adopted the budget and we we saw a loss of high school crossings we would do everything in our power to match times to ensure all of our guards were able to continue doing the number of crossings that they desire to do. With 300 and some odd crossings a day, we feel pretty confident that we can get that done. So, and the last point I'll make here is that I think in the previous presentation in 2024, you had roughly Fairfax County patrol officers doing 88 of the crossings now what you are reflecting is about 62 of the crossings so that's

[01:01:23] down about a third which is great um i think the goal is to get it to zero in overtime in the budget so help me um what what is it going to take to get us to zero dollars of overtime for police officers in this program? So, you know, two decades ago, there was no such thing as overtime for crossings. Police officers handled the assignments, and that obviously changes for a lot of variables. But what we are committed to in FY27 is that, number one, we believe the

[01:01:58] vendor has demonstrated consistent progress with onboarding personnel. So we believe that that progress will continue to take up some of these, the remaining 60 or so crossings that police officers perform daily, and then the rest of them we will cover as part of our operational footprint until the vendor can take them, but it would be done by on-duty personnel and not on the basis of overtime, just as it was done when I was a police officer working the street. Okay, that makes sense.

[01:02:29] Let me turn it over to Chairman McKay. Thank you. Let me ask this. You just want to be clear that the contract, the private vendor positions, that you're going to be maintaining both of these parallel systems. You're going to have the conventional crossing guards. You're going to have the private vendors in perpetuity. In other words, we're not trying to push out the crossing guards and get to a system where it's entirely private vendor run. That is correct. And we have no proposals out there to eliminate any other positions. And we heard the board in 2024 and And we're very committed to not eliminating our crossing guard program.

[01:03:07] And we've relayed that information to our crossing guards as well. I appreciate that. And in concert with that, we're continuing to recruit for those positions too. We are. And it remains the same challenge that it was last time we talked to you.

[01:03:23] But we continue. And I know they just had some interviews this week. So we're still working on it. Yeah. Okay, good. And for students, traffic, people traversing the areas that are patrolled by the private vendors, is there anything noticeably different, visibly different?

[01:03:45] I mean, you know where they are, but do people know where they are? In other words, is there something about them where you're like, hey, that's the private vendor running this one as opposed to a conventional crossing guard? I think we had a picture, too, if you go back in the slide while you answer the question, or maybe not.

[01:04:05] I thought we had a picture of one of them on the slide. Their uniform looks similar, but it's slightly different. I would certainly be able to tell, but it doesn't say police on their vest. That would be the main difference is just the uniform with the patch. But they would look similar to that right there with the same safety equipment.

[01:04:24] Okay. And then the last question, in terms of where the private vendors go, they're going where we have vacancies. but are we thinking long-term about, based on some of the features of the schools themselves and the complexity of the crossing work of trying to steer as many of the conventional crossing guards to the locations where we know there's an increased potential of conflict and having the vendors handle the locations that maybe are simpler crossings?

[01:04:55] We are trying to do that. Major Colwell actually has done quite a bit of research into the Level 2 crossing conundrum, which we talked a lot about last time. And we feel pretty comfortable with our ability to expand that as needed. So I think we felt relatively constrained before.

[01:05:10] We've reviewed federal standards, state law, and we believe actually state law would even support the vendors being allowed to direct traffic, although that's not our recommendation. So we're putting our crossing guards in places. The major and his team have actually gone out and made recommendations for adjusting kiss and ride lines and um so we're gonna we're gonna be very kind of agile to to put the right person at the right place for the right uh solution on all of these i appreciate that and i appreciate that this is a pilot that was done before to help inform some of the decisions moving forward i mean you know i think one of the things that we've undersold here is we we talked a lot about the

[01:05:50] budget and that's important and why we're doing this but the availability of these officers i think it's something we don't talk about enough. You know, the fact that they can't leave those positions and are tied up for that period of time. At the same time, we know there's increased traffic calls and other things happening because these are in the morning commutes, towards the afternoon commutes. And so I, you know, I think we just need to be cognizant of that. I mean, look, things have to change. This is going to be hard for a lot of folks, but ultimately we have to be creative about the way we use our resources to be able to do that in a smart way, well thought out

[01:06:26] way. And I know that, you know, not everyone's going to love this particular proposal. But I commend you for thinking outside of the box and coming forward with solutions that not only help cover these locations, challenge all of us to solve a problem we know we've had now for a lot of years that concerns a lot of us and to do it in a creative way. I would just say on the high school crossing guard piece, that is a budget decision. And I would just say for the purposes of saving a lot of our time, making a budget Q&A, telling us specifically about the methodology that

[01:07:02] was used to determine that high schools were of lower risk and therefore could be eliminated, maybe some information about, you know, some of the data you have where there had been incidents, And just help us through a budget Q&A understand why that was one of the, you know, what the criteria

was that was used to determine that high schools were of lower risk and why we should consider elimination of those as a budget Q&A.

[01:07:28] And then the whole board will get the benefit of getting a little more data and a little bit more thought process behind that. But I appreciate you thinking outside of the box here. Okay. Next, Supervisor Palchuk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[01:07:43] Thank you, all of you. I think some of us have been having these conversations for a long time, and I always think about my elementary school. It was a lovely old retired crossing guard, and we don't even have one there anymore. So I know it has changed over time. I would say I agree with the chairman, right?

[01:07:59] Change is hard, but as long as we continue to focus on, number one, meeting the standards and the safety we've had, but then I would say number two, and I know you look a lot at this major call, well, those improvement areas at once I think are really important. Where can we make it so we make it safer, right, without having to have a body there?

[01:08:20] I'm concerned about the kind of driving I'm seeing everywhere these days. And so I think anything we can do physically to the environment, that makes it a little bit safer. But then also, as we look at the holistic safe routes to schools, I assume that the school staff were involved in reviewing some of these routes or changes, Or if they haven't been, I hope we partner with the new staff doing that over there.

[01:08:48] Yes, so we work directly with FCPS Safety and Security. So they're the ones that give us recommendations and change routes and do everything like that. So we continually work with them, get their feedback, tell them what we're looking to do. So it's definitely a partnership as far as making those adjustments.

[01:09:04] That's excellent. And the one thing I would say is, you know, as we're looking to the future budgets, if this hopefully continues to be successful, and I think it will be, they've targeted so well, I got Facebook ads for the crossings, Fairfax County Schools, oh, this must be the vendor, is how do we prepare if we do start to get more requests, which I know I did when I was on school board for crossing guards in places where families have felt for some time that it's not safe to cross the street, but we haven't had crossing guards. So I don't know if that's something that's been

[01:09:40] taken into account sure so anytime that we get a request for a potential new crossing we go out and survey it to see if it meets the criteria to have a guard or not so we have had a couple additional ones come in recently that have met the criteria and we've put them on the list for the private vendor to handle as we go forward now there's been several requests that haven't met the criteria so they haven't been considered but the ones that have been considered are currently on the list to be filled by the private company okay that's that's helpful to know because having a little bit more flexibility. I know as things change, right, and as the streets and our

[01:10:16] traffic change, it's helpful to know we can have that ability to maybe expand when they do meet the criteria. So thank you and your team for your work on this. Okay, next is Supervisor Harry. Yeah, Chairman McKay, thank you for the budget question. If I could do a friendly amendment to that right out of the budget guidance language. You know, the school bus and kiss and ride operations need to be a part of that consideration I know you probably meant that that be included but I wanted to make sure and

clearly define metrics that prioritize the safety of students as kind of a part of that and that was in the budget language from last time on the program I'm just I'm struggling with

[01:10:55] the numbers a little bit slide 4 which we got up so we're going to know slide four back one. Is FCPD going to continue covering 62 crossings? Pardon me. So our goal is to have the vendor covering their 68 plus our 62. Ooh, then the math that I wrote down is really wrong then. Let me just go to slide five. And I could correct that also, and I should correct that. So

[01:11:31] Also, given the vacant positions we have, so many of those are current crossing guard vacant positions. So as we continue to hire out to full staffing, several of those would be covered. So I think we currently have 18 vacancies.

[01:11:47] We have 62 positions. So the more crossing guards we fit, and that is kind of on that total budget number for the budgeted cost of school crossing guards, includes that full staffing. I'm just looking at this sheet.

[01:12:04] School crossing guards with 18 vacancies was at 2,500, roughly, 2,464, 499. And then we are making that up with overtime. And I agree 100% we have to address this, but I'm just trying to figure out what the numbers are. I go to FY27, and I see the drop for eliminating the high school, so the 1,948 makes sense.

[01:12:27] The FCPD crossing overtime, I'll come back to in a minute. But private crossing guards, if I just do 68 crossings, which was what we said on the previous slide, we were given not 68 plus the 62, it's \$16.50 per crossing, as I understand, roughly.

[01:12:48] I may be wrong with that number. Somebody can correct me. So 68 times \$1,650 gives me \$2,244 per day times five days a week gives me \$1,220 per week times 40 weeks.

[01:13:05] That's roughly \$450,000 versus the \$150,000. That may be our contract number from last year, but if we're going to cover 68, it's more like \$450,000 unless we're paying people a lot less than \$1,650 a crossing, which I can't imagine.

[01:13:26] So that's the first question. The second, then, is if they're picking up the 62, that number becomes more like a million. And I think we've got our savings overstated, and I just ask that you go back and look at it. So to go back to the crossing overtime, what happens when somebody doesn't show, or is that just going to be regular patrol handling that?

[01:13:49] Yes. The plan, so you're not staffing it, it's not overtime. Since we've been able to apply the vendors, It's a much more manageable number, so what we believe is even at today's state, we would be willing to manage it, but we're hoping that the vendors keep increasing and it'll be much easier to manage that.

[01:14:09] And I know we're short on time, so I'm going to do one thing, and thank you for mentioning the retention of the current crossing guards. A lot of them have four crossings, and they count on four crossings for a lot of reasons. If we eliminate high schools, there's no way they can do four crossings.

[01:14:25] They could do three, but they probably won't be able to do four. And same with some of the ones that do three. And it's got to be geography and everything else. So I think we've got some work to do there. And I've got a lot of other questions, but I want to be respectful of the rest of the board, so I will hold them in.

[01:14:43] Okay, thank you. Next, Supervisor Alcorn. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So quickly, thank you again for reiterating the commitment to the existing school crossing guards. I know a lot of folks will appreciate that. One quick question, I guess in my district we experienced a couple of the situations where the private crossing guards did not have the ability to direct traffic, weren't trained, weren't certified. Could you expound on that? There's potentially a state law issue, but

[01:15:16] can we get some of them certified? I mean, I think ultimately if we're going to be using these folks, there are a few folks that are a few places where we need somebody that can do both because it's kind of a mess if they can't in some places. Not very many, but in some. Understood. And nearly a decade ago, I think the department overhauled the school crossing guard program, and that's when the level one, level two came about. It was when it had to do with some authorities, but long story short, very few crossings remained level two at that point. Federal guidelines say you shouldn't

[01:15:52] have school crossing guards directing traffic. Now we shifted and we agree they shouldn't direct traffic, but they should take control of traffic when it's convenient to move. So we said, well, level two crossing guards, we're going to allow them to bring all traffic to a stop, allow children to cross, and then maybe direct buses to come on out or direct the kiss and ride line to move.

[01:16:14] But they weren't necessarily taking command of an intersection. I think at some of the schools that we've evaluated when we've received some feedback, they've been used to having a police officer present and the police officers routinely direct traffic. So the police officers kind of take command of all traffic moving for that 30-minute period, and it would be a little bit more productive. There is a risk to that. And, you know, I know that the big reason we made that change a decade ago was partly with our work with risk management and the amount of injuries and money that we had paid out to injured crossing guards who had been injured in the line of duty

[01:16:52] directing traffic. So I wasn't, we will look at that. The reason we did that research is I think we agree with you. We want to get traffic moving most efficiently, and we'll try to find as best we can ways to insert a crossing guard there that can do that. Thank you. Yes, sir. Appreciate it.

[01:17:10] We have three speakers remaining, so Sizemore Heiser, Bierman, and then Smith. Thank you, And many of my questions have been answered, so I won't repeat some of the questions that have been answered. But I did have a question on the overtimes, the slide, where you said the proposed cuts would have zero overtime, whereas before you had significant overtime, because I'm assuming there weren't enough officers to cover the crossing guard to be in there.

[01:17:39] But if we have a new program where we eliminate the crossing guards at the high school, that helps them fill in the vacancies, correct, at the middle and elementary schools, wouldn't you still have an overtime need if people were out?

[01:17:55] So when we made our commitment to eliminate all crossing-related overtime in FY27, we're just saying that for the few positions that are left every day that require a police officer to go and actually handle that crossing, they're going to do it as part of their work as an area police officer.

[01:18:14] So we wouldn't bring an off-duty cop in to do a three-hour block of crossings. we're just going to make the on-duty officer for that area go to the crossing for 30 minutes and handle it and then return back to their patrol duties. Was that not feasible to do while maintaining the high school crossing guards? Oh, I don't think it necessarily is. I don't think it's connected to the high school decision one way or another. So I

think for us, it was a total number of crossings. So back last year, we had, you know, over 100 crossings daily that had to be covered. Well, there's not even that many police officers work in the street. So that's why we had to utilize overtime. So as we bring more

[01:18:52] vendor-based contracts in, the total number of vacant crossings that need coverage from a police officer, I think is becoming more manageable to the point where we definitely feel in FY27 we can do it without overtime. At least that's our commitment. All right. Well, there's more questions I had down this vein of questioning, but I'll save that for the budget questions. I think I'm probably crossing into that, no pun intended, line. The other question I guess I have is in terms of this pilot you have with the vendor, are you seeing or are you following a difference in quality in terms of either connectivity with the families, the children, the schools, knowledge of the area, and even being timely or present?

[01:19:30] I've just heard from the community anecdotally some complaints of the vendor didn't show up and then there was nobody there. So I'm just curious what data you've seen so far. Most of our feedback has overwhelmingly been positive for them.

[01:19:47] We have had a couple issues. The nice thing about this vendor is they're very quick if they have issues with a guard to get rid of that guard and replace them with someone else because obviously they want our contract and it's the reputation for other ones.

[01:20:02] So they are very quick to address any issues that they've had. A couple of the ones that we've brought to their attention, their supervisor actually goes to the scene the next several days to monitor themselves that intersection and make sure any deficiencies are corrected.

[01:20:18] All right. Well, that was my curiosity, just, again, having heard anecdotally of some concerns around that quality, because, of course, safety is the most important. So I have more questions, but I'll stop here in respect to my other colleagues. Thank you for your time. I appreciate that. I have to remind people we have about five minutes left. So next is Behrman, Supervisor Behrman.

[01:20:35] My questions have already been addressed. Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Behrman. Last, Supervisor Smith. I appreciate the information on slide three that tells about your outreach, because I think it's important for the community to see that. I appreciate that you have come up with this Way to deal with it with continuing the crossing guards and having the private company and in the budget out Answer if there would be the list of the high schools because I know there's more than 13 high schools. Thank you Thank you. So this will conclude our meeting for today and want to thank the police department and fire department for their engagement in this conversation here this afternoon

