



Town of University Park

Operations and Management Study
Preliminary Findings

Michael Maker, Senior Manager
Edward Donahue, President

March 18, 2019

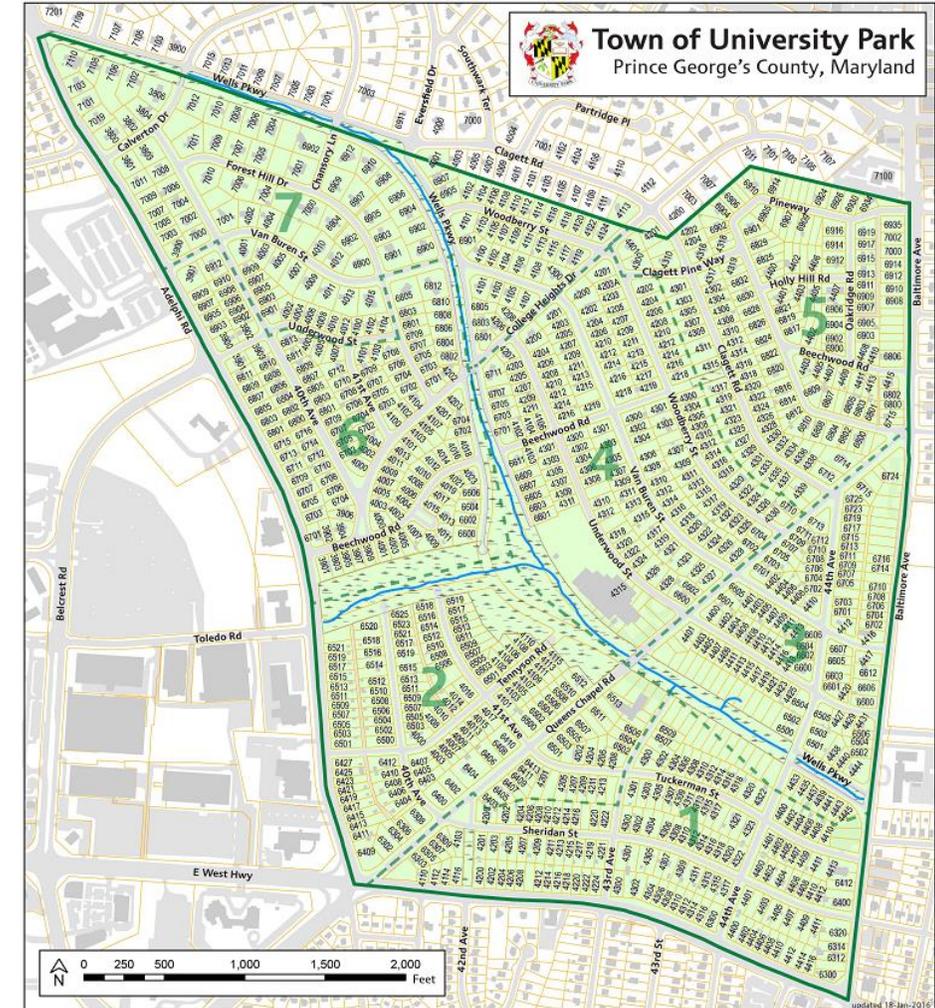


Agenda

- Scope of Services
- Stakeholder Interactions Timeline
- Community Survey Summary
- Focus Groups Summary
- Municipal Comparison
- Preliminary Findings
- Next Steps

Scope of Services

- Identify Town Services and Responsibilities
 - Review of duties and responsibilities of staff
 - Review of duties and responsibilities of the Mayor
- Conduct Focus Groups
 - Support staff and Town Attorney
 - Town residents
 - Recent Councilmembers and Mayors
 - Others as needed
- Review with Town Council
 - Kick-off
 - Preliminary findings (tonight)
 - End of project review



Stakeholder Interactions Timeline

Council Meetings

- Kickoff: November 5, 2018
- Preliminary findings: March 18, 2019 (today)
- End of project review

Community Feedback

- Developed Town resident survey
 - Received 150+ complete responses from late November to early February
- Conducted two focus groups with Town residents
 - Focus Group 1: January 22, 2019
 - Focus Group 2: January 29, 2019

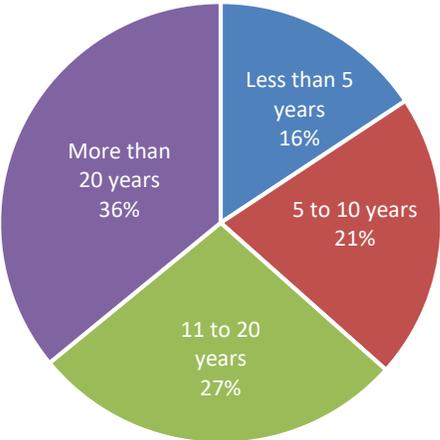
Employee and Elected Official Feedback

- Developed employee questionnaire
 - Received 15 complete responses (of 27 employees)
- Conducted Employee Interviews
 - Public Works Director: January 9, 2019
 - Mayor: January 30, 2019
 - Police Chief, Lieutenant and two Officers: February 7, 2019
 - Town Attorney: February 7, 2019
 - Town Clerk and Treasurer: February 11, 2019
- Conducted two focus groups with current Council Members and former Council Members and Mayors
 - Focus Group 1: February 28, 2019
 - Focus Group 2: March 5, 2019

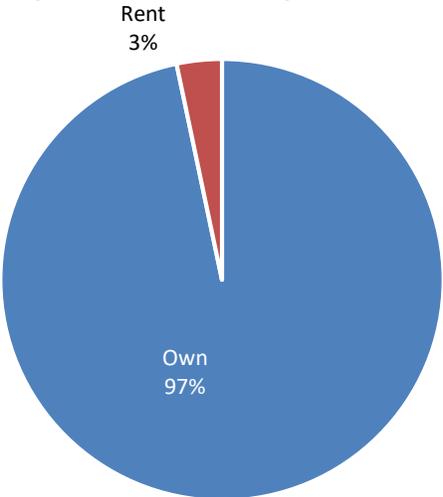
Community Survey Summary

- Received 150+ complete responses from late November to early February
- Three survey sections: Satisfaction of Town Services; Responsiveness and Communication; Quality of Life

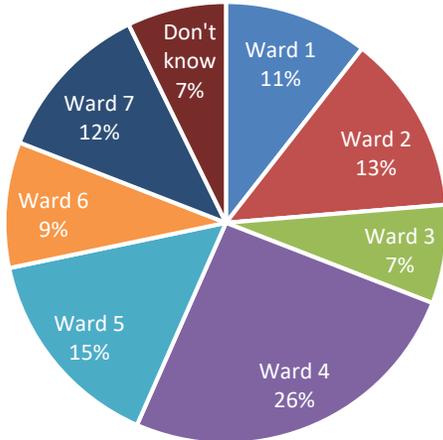
How many years have you lived in University Park?



Do you own or rent your home?



In which Town ward do you live?



Overall level of satisfaction:

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	No Opinion
Level of satisfaction with experience living in the Town?	2%	0%	3%	38%	58%	0%
Level of Satisfaction with how the Town is managed?	3%	5%	10%	46%	35%	0%

Community Survey Summary

Please rate your overall level of satisfaction with the following Town services:

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	No Opinion
Enforcement of Town codes and ordinances	1%	8%	15%	46%	20%	10%
Police / public safety services	1%	6%	8%	39%	44%	2%
Parks and playgrounds	1%	3%	7%	34%	49%	6%
Town bus	1%	2%	11%	23%	39%	25%
Trash / recycling collection	2%	5%	1%	28%	63%	1%
Leaf / yard waste collection	1%	5%	8%	32%	52%	2%
Compost program	2%	2%	11%	15%	39%	31%
Management of traffic on town streets	7%	19%	20%	32%	18%	3%
Maintenance of streets and sidewalks	5%	13%	17%	38%	25%	3%

In the past 12 months, have you done the following?

	Yes	No
Used Bike Share	5%	95%
Used the Town bus	52%	48%
Visited a Town park, field or playground	94%	6%
Contacted the Town Clerk's office	60%	40%
Contacted Code Compliance	15%	85%
Contacted the Police	43%	57%
Contacted Public Works	51%	49%
Visited Town Hall	60%	40%
Visited the Town's website	89%	11%
Read the Town's newsletter	98%	2%

Community Survey Summary

Please rate the responsiveness of the following Town offices/departments:

	Very Unresponsive	Somewhat Unresponsive	Neither Responsive nor Unresponsive	Somewhat Responsive	Very Responsive	No Opinion
Mayor and Council	5%	3%	3%	15%	58%	16%
Code Compliance	0%	3%	7%	7%	17%	66%
Town Clerk	3%	1%	4%	6%	59%	28%
Police	1%	3%	3%	14%	60%	18%
Public Works	2%	1%	4%	6%	70%	17%
Town Bus	0%	0%	7%	6%	29%	58%

Please rate your level of satisfaction with the following aspects that affect the quality of life in the Town:

	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	No Opinion
Overall quality of life in the Town	0%	0%	1%	15%	84%	0%
Overall quality of life in your neighborhood	0%	1%	1%	18%	80%	0%
Overall customer service provided by Town staff	0%	0%	3%	21%	70%	7%
Availability of community space	5%	11%	9%	21%	42%	13%
Availability of shopping and restaurants nearby	1%	3%	7%	43%	45%	1%
As a place to raise and educate children	1%	3%	7%	24%	49%	17%
As a place to retire	2%	8%	9%	23%	35%	23%
Feeling of safety	0%	3%	5%	36%	56%	0%
Overall value you receive for Town taxes and fees	5%	9%	6%	33%	47%	0%

Focus Groups Summary

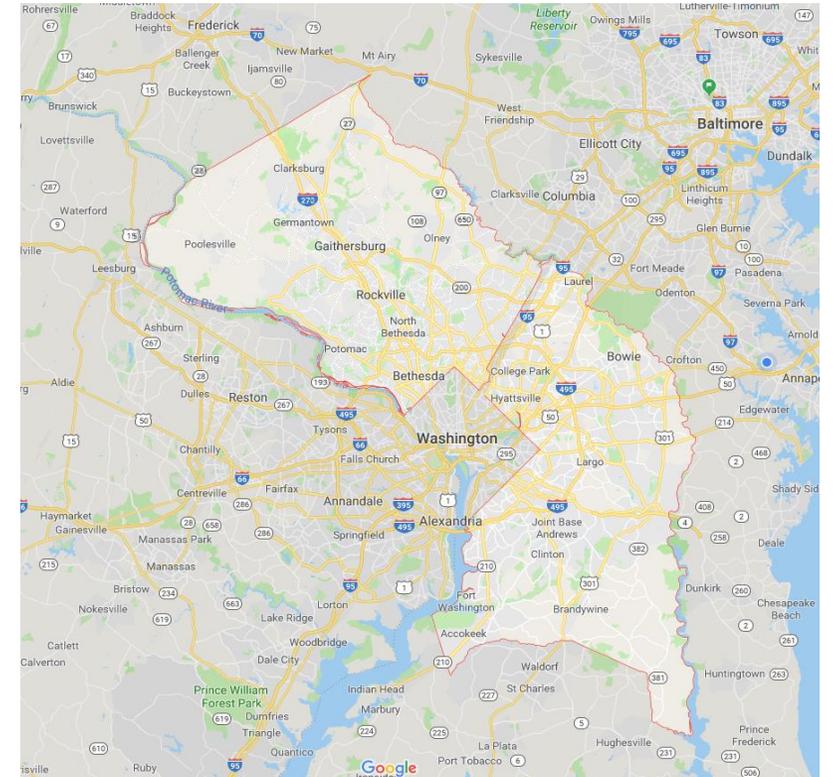
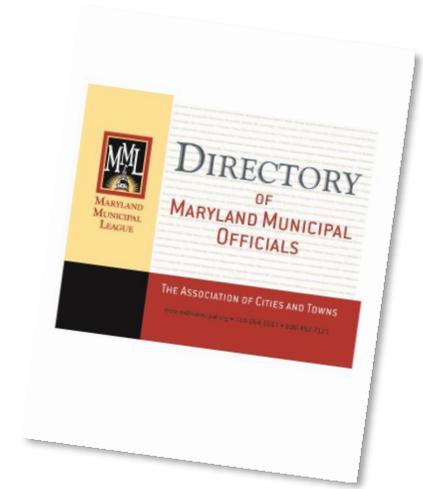
- Overview
 - Six to eight participants in each of four focus groups (two groups of residents, two groups of former/current elected officials)
 - We prompted the groups with a couple of broad questions about what the challenges/issues facing the Town were and whether the current government structure was dealing with issues effectively
 - Groups were very engaged and readily began a wide-ranging discussion among themselves
- Services Provided and Cost of Government
 - Big city services and small-town government - need to choose one
 - Residents expect a lot because they pay a lot in taxes
 - Value received from services is fantastic
 - Police and DPW are very responsive
 - Traffic and surrounding development are major challenges
- Alternative Structures
 - There is little to no interest of combining with another municipality such as Hyattsville or College Park
 - There is little no interest of un-incorporating (all services and governance would revert back to PG County and UP would create an HOA)
 - The Town has approached College Heights Estates in the past about being annexed but CHE does not appear to be interested in paying higher taxes for a higher level of service

Focus Groups Summary

- For Town Manager
 - Requirements of the position of mayor seem to have evolved over the years
 - What we're doing now is becoming unsustainable
 - It is a huge problem that only a retired person can run for mayor currently
 - The Town is one bad mayor away from a big issue
 - Zoning is changing outside of the Town and it will have an enormous effect
 - Hiring and firing and other government activities should not be left to novices
 - We need a professional, not a volunteer
 - Have someone else run operations and let the Mayor do more of his mayoral duties
 - If we don't maintain the amenities, the value of our homes goes down
 - Communication plan would be key
- Summary
 - Overall, more participants were for a Town Manager than were against
 - Consensus that current Mayoral structure makes it difficult for anyone else who isn't retired to seek the job
 - Focus is needed on future of Town: strategy development and implementation, planning, project management, grant work, external engagement (particularly on surrounding development)
 - Education is essential: effort required to communicate the need for a Manager to Town citizens, perhaps through a committee of volunteers
- Against Town Manager
 - Risk of losing the town's identity
 - Town hasn't changed much over the past 50 years – if didn't need one then, why now
 - Tax burden is a factor - want to make sure increase in taxes is worth it
 - A town manager separates the community from the staff because there's no political linkage
 - When an elected official walks into a room, people listen
 - Mayors cut themselves out when they have a town manager because it tends to be a lazier job as a result
 - If going to hire a professional for town manager, make the Mayor a volunteer again
 - Doing something on a temporary basis could be appealing
 - We don't take advantage of the smart people in town – set up a committee

Municipal Comparison

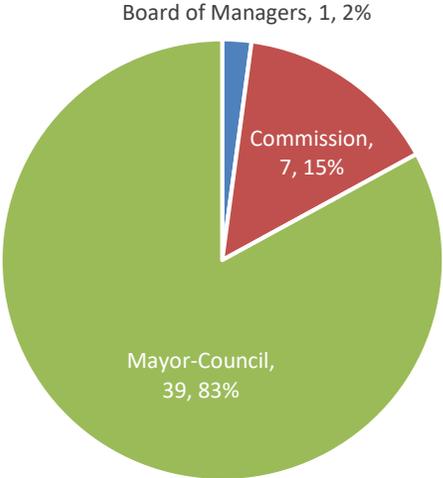
- Maryland Municipal League's Directory of Maryland Municipal Officials (published 2/2019)
- 47 municipalities within Prince George's County and Montgomery County
 - 28 towns, 13 cities, four villages and two census-designated places (CDP)
- Directory included population, operating budget, full time and part time paid employees and elected and other officials
- Supplemented with U.S. Census data on population (2017 estimates), housing units (2010) and total area (2010)



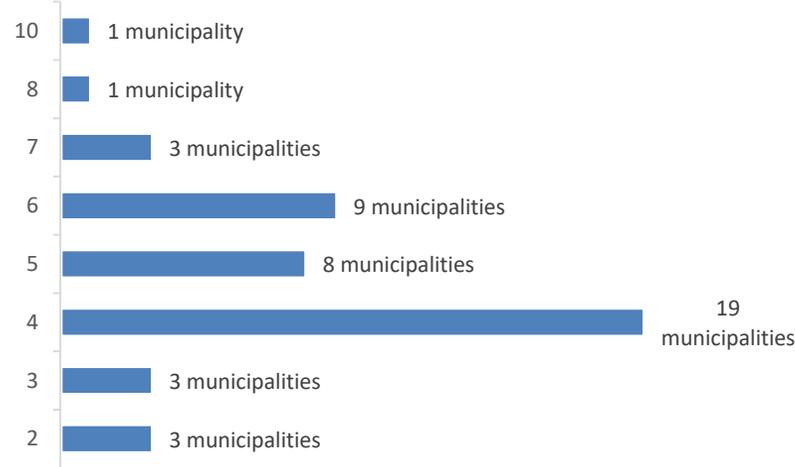
Municipal Comparison

- 2017 estimated populations range from over 67,000 (City of Gaithersburg) to just 41 (Town of Eagle Harbor); University Park’s population of 2,645 is 23rd largest.
- 2017 estimated number of housing units range from over 29,000 (City of Rockville) to just 40 (Town of Eagle Harbor); University Park’s 971 housing units is 23rd largest.

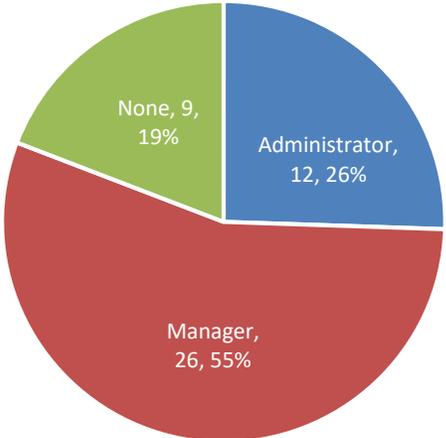
Form of Government



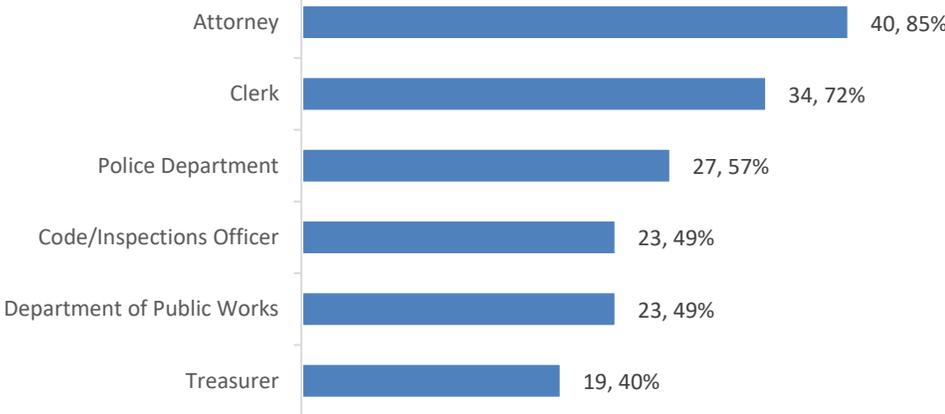
Number of Governing Members



Chief Administrative Officer

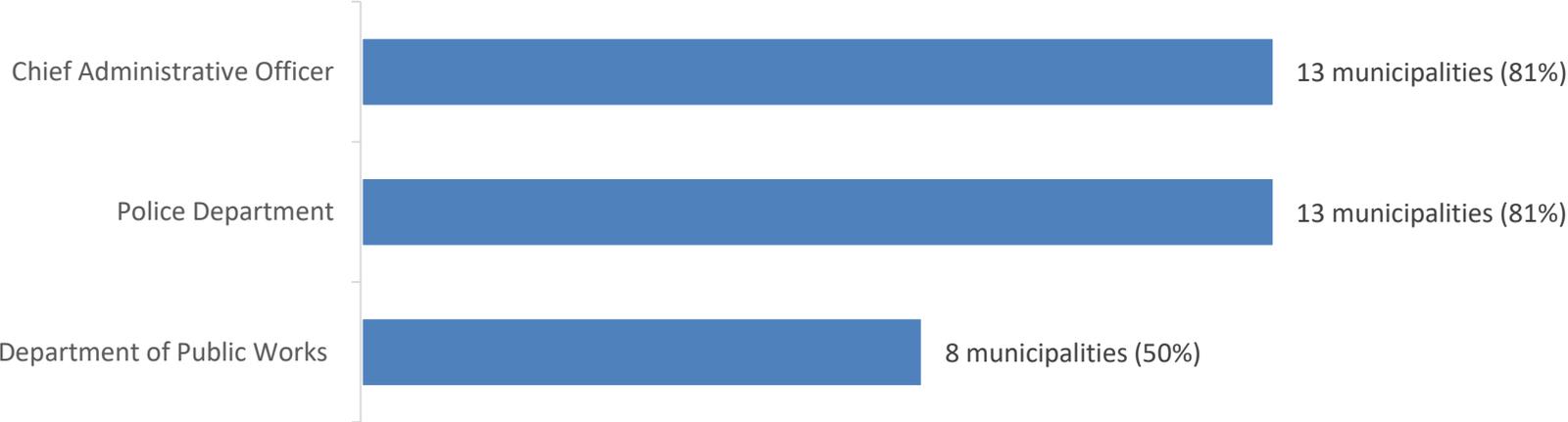


Number of Officials/Departments



Municipal Comparison

- Municipalities with populations $\geq 1,000$ and $\leq 5,000$ (16 municipalities); University Park is 2,645



- Municipalities with housing units ≥ 500 and $\leq 2,000$ (13 municipalities); University Park is 971



Preliminary Findings – Governance

- Current Town structure is Strong Mayor-Council
 - the Mayor is a full-time job with a part-time salary, functioning as both the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operations Officer
 - a busy week includes evening meetings typical of a Mayor, plus daytime meetings common to a Town Manager
 - a busy week may involve 60 hours of work, while a light week is closer to 35 hours
- Typically, the fundamental role of the Mayor is to work externally for the Town – with other municipalities and state, etc.
 - involvement in development and redevelopment in adjoining municipalities has increased greatly
 - most municipalities have a person other than the Mayor who "runs" the town
- Typically, the Town Manager is the chief administrative officer (CAO) for the town
 - responsible for implementing the Council's direction by encouraging Town staff to focus on providing a high level of service to Town customers (external and internal)
- Municipality size plays a role
 - most large American cities use the Strong Mayor-Council structure, with a full-time paid Mayor (and usually several chief administrative staff)
 - most middle-sized and small American municipalities use the Council-Manager structure
- Options
 - create a Council-Manager structure; hire a Manager (a non-political position) to operate the Town and who is accountable to the entire Council; make the Mayor the official representative of the Town externally and a member of the Council
 - maintain a Mayor-Council structure and hire a Manager that reports to the Mayor; this is less common and does not remove politics
 - Hire a Manager and take a hybrid approach to the powers and authorities of the Mayor and Council
 - Maintain status quo but make Mayor paid full-time; may not provide continuity/objectivity in the Town's operations as it does not remove politics

Preliminary Findings - Operations

- Overall, the departments of the Town appear to be well-run and have adequate resources; however, there is a balance between level of service and cost of service
- Public Works - Compared Town DPW budget and service offerings with that of nine nearby similarly sized municipalities in Montgomery and PG Counties
 - Town is unique among those in the comparison
 - everything is done in-house (collection of trash, recycling, yard waste, bulk trash and leaves, snow removal, street and tree maintenance, composting)
 - Highest DPW budget in comparison
 - Berwyn Heights is the only other town that does all sanitation work in-house; all others compared use a contractor
 - Other Towns' residents may not get the customer service that UP residents get, but UP residents pay for that level of service
- Police - Compared Town Police Department staffing and crime statistics with all others in Maryland (75 municipalities) included in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program for 2017
 - With eight sworn officers in the Department, there are 2.99 officers per 1,000 Town residents
 - Of 75 comparables, that is the 23rd highest ratio of officers per 1,000 residents
 - Of those with population of $\leq 5,000$ (40 comparables), that is the 19th highest ratio
 - There were 41 crimes in Town in 2017 (eight robberies and 33 burglaries/thefts)
 - Of 73 comparables, that is the 22nd lowest number of crimes
 - Of those with population of $\leq 5,000$ (40 comparables), that is also the 22nd lowest number of crimes

Next Steps

- Draft Report (all findings and recommendations)
- Final Report (after receipt of comments on Draft)
- Presentation of Final Findings and Recommendations