

DEPUTY ASSIGNED VEHICLE PROGRAM



Livingston County Sheriff's Office

Michael J. Murphy, Sheriff

<https://www.livgov.com/sheriff/>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	Page 2
Background	Page 3
Program Summary	Page 4
Program Benefits	Page 5
Eliminate Need for Building Expansion	
Allowing for Safe Social Distancing	
Increased Deputy Presence	
More Efficient Patrol Shifts Transitions	
Improved Operational Mobility/Flexibility	
More Efficient Community Response	
Increased Vehicle Longevity	
Operating Costs	
Parking Availability	
Community Outreach	
Program Cost	Page 9
Conclusion	Page 10
Appendix A	

Deputy Assigned Vehicle Program

Introduction

It is my pleasure to introduce to the Livingston County Board of Commissioners a proposal for a Deputy Assigned Vehicle (DAV) Program. This report will outline the benefits including:

- Decreased need for additional operating space
- Decreased operating costs
- Decreased response time
- Increased vehicle longevity
- Increased deputy coverage
- Increased community engagement
- Increased social distancing and safer working environments



Background

It has been highly recommended the Livingston County Sheriff Office should resolve the following issues:

1. In the fall of 2019, a space-needs study of the LCSO was conducted by Redstone Architects to determine the amount of space necessary to meet staffing and operational needs. The study concluded that 30,000 square feet was necessary to meet our operational needs – approximately 9,500 square feet more than the current building. Having this much of a space shortage means there is no place where essential services staff can socially distance safely before and after shift changes, during shift briefings and debriefings, or in the locker room. Since our staff are in constant contact with the public, as well as with inmates, extra precautions are vital to reduce the spread of contagions.

Based on the study, there are two options available to cure the deficient space needs:

- Renovate the current space, building and add a 8,500 square foot addition to provide additional space at an approximate cost of \$10 million.
- Construct a new 30,000 square foot building at an approximate cost of \$12 million.

2. There are 31 deputies and 6 sergeants currently assigned to the Uniform Services Division. In addition, there are 26 fully marked response vehicles assigned to the unit. Two of these vehicles are considered “pool cars,” available in the event a rotation car is being serviced or unavailable. The remaining 24 vehicles are assigned to be shared by two deputies each. Under this system we encounter the following issues:

- a. **Increased or delayed response time during shift change.** Deputies currently start and end their shifts at the Livingston County Sheriff’s Office. At the beginning of each shift, deputies must swap out their equipment from each vehicle, and a shift debriefing is conducted. If the

outgoing deputy using the car is delayed on a call, the incoming deputy must wait until the car returns to begin his shift, causing an unproductive delay.

b. **Decreased vehicle availability due to maintenance and service.** There are currently two “pool” cars in the fleet. Due to vehicle maintenance, both “pool cars” are often in use, leaving a vehicle shortage. Supervisors must then assign two deputies to share one vehicle. Due to the pandemic, this is not a safe option for the deputies and their families.

c. **Increased need for maintenance due to the rigorous demands of around the clock use-** Because the vehicles are shared by two deputies, they are, at times, continually in service, 24/7. This creates tremendous amount of wear and tear and mechanical stress, thereby increasing the amount of vehicle service necessary, as well as lack of availability of overall fleet.

d. **Reduced life expectancy of the vehicle related to constant wear and tear.** On average, the vehicles are rotated out of the fleet every two and half to three years, depending on mileage and/or wear and tear, because the vehicles are constantly in use. Division commanders do try to stagger the use of the vehicle if they can, but this is not always possible.

Program Summary

Under the Deputy Assigned Vehicle (DAV) program, each deputy and supervisor will be assigned a specific vehicle, not to be shared. Each vehicle will be supplied with all necessary equipment for each officer to fully perform his/her duties at any time or place from within the car.

Having the ability to take an assigned automobile home, deputies will be able to start and end their day at their place of residence by using electronic mobile platforms (Microsoft Teams, Zoom etc.) Sergeants will be able to deliver shift briefings and provide information to the deputies from their vehicles.

Deputies will be able to write reports, as well as request or provide information to/from LCSO from their automobile.

Program Benefits:

- **Eliminate the need for building expansion.**

Deputies and supervisors may work from their cars throughout the community. This reduces the number of individuals at the LCSO at any given time, thereby freeing up work space needed for LCSO team members whose work assignments do not allow for remote working. This includes support staff, sworn personnel not assigned to Uniform Services, and administration.

- **Allowing for safe social distancing.**

The current LCSO facility is a linear building. Unlike Livingston County EMS and Central Dispatch the LCSO building does not allow staff the ability to adequately maintain the social distancing space as recommended by CDC guidelines and the state and local health departments.

Under the DAV program, deputies and supervisors will be alone in their cars. Freed up space at LCSO will allow for safe social distancing. Additionally, freed up space within locker rooms during shift changes will enhance the safety for the jail staff and inmates.

MIOSHA Executive Rule 5(8) says: The employer shall create a policy prohibiting in-person to the extent their work activities can feasibly be completed remotely.

Deputies starting and ending from their place of residence, utilizing their vehicle as their work space, can be considered a “hybrid model” of remote working.

- **Increased deputy presence throughout Livingston County**

There will be higher visibility as the cars will constantly be on the road to and from shift start and end times, as well as going to and from court and other work assignments such as training, traffic details and other specialty assignments. We have also determined most of our Deputies and Sergeants live in different areas throughout Livingston County. This will inherently provide for increased coverage and improved services to all areas of the County based on the location of where the Deputies and Sergeants currently reside.

- **More efficient patrol shifts transitions**

Currently, deputies must wait until their assigned car is available at the beginning of their shift.

The DAV program means deputies will no longer have to compensate for the “dead” time required

maintenance and unusual circumstances can also play a factor in vehicles not being available during shift change, resulting in delayed call response and reduced coverage.

- **Improved operational mobility and flexibility**

According to statistical data, deputies average one to one-and-a-half hours of down time per shift due to shift briefings, debriefing and report writing. Total hours gained by eliminating this down time with personally assigned units equates to three additional full-time deputies.

- **More efficient community response for emergency calls for service**

Increasing mobility will reduce the time it takes to respond to emergency calls for service throughout the County. Instead of starting their shift from the LCSO in the center of the county, deputies will instead start from different areas throughout Livingston County. The closest deputy can be dispatched, cutting response time immensely. During a crisis situation, this time reduction can save lives.

- **Increased vehicle longevity**

As stated, vehicles are currently rotated out of the fleet every two to three years. Studies show the average life expectancy of an individually assigned police unit is six to seven years. Under this proposed model, we would purchase vehicles far less often. This would reduce the number of vehicle change overs that are necessary which cost approximately \$10,000 every time a new vehicle is rotated into the fleet.

Currently, we often run a vehicle continuously for 24 hours and at times 5 days a week. Studies have proven when vehicles are assigned to deputies/officers the vehicles are better maintained and cared for which results in:

- Lower operating cost per mile
- Less down time for maintenance

- **Operating costs**

There is significant evidence to show operating costs for assigned vehicles are substantially less than a pool system. This is a direct result in overall care and maintenance and assigned accountability. Studies completed by other agencies offer the following statistical data:

- A study by the City of St. Petersburg (FL) found the cost per mile to operate patrol cars in a pool program was \$0.49 compared to a cost of \$0.40 per mile for assigned vehicles. This savings amounted to \$7,650 per vehicle over the course of its life expectancy.
- Manatee (FL) County Sheriff's Office reported a savings of \$0.17 per mile when comparing assigned vehicles to pool vehicles, totaling nearly \$15,000 over the life of each vehicle.
- Galloway Township (NJ) Police fleet manager reported a transition from an Assigned Vehicle Program to a pool system would nearly double operating costs from \$130,000 to \$228,000.
- Since 1999, the Daytona Beach (FL) Police Department has reported its Assigned Vehicle Program has reduced maintenance costs 40%.
- The Kansas City (MO) Police Department has saved \$.05 per mile to operate assigned vehicles versus the same make and model in regular pool service.
- The Visalia (CA) personalized patrol vehicle program has realized a savings of more than 31% as compared to a conventional patrol vehicle program.

- **Additional parking availability at West Complex**

The program will increase the available parking spaces at the west complex buildings on average of six spaces a day, or 180 extra parking spaces per month.

- **Community Outreach**

One of the most important of the qualitative benefits the program provides is an increased connection and outreach with the community. Deputies will be encouraged to make connections with citizens, businesses, senior centers, public officials, and others in their local communities. This will enhance and improve problem solving abilities, investigations and community outreach. An additional benefit is that a marked police car is a deterrent to criminal activity in areas where deputies reside or are stationed.



Program Cost

There are 24 assigned marked cars currently available. An additional 14 vehicles would be needed to begin this program. However, the initial cost is merely an advance of the funds that would be spent rotating additional cars into the pool. By working with the County Administration during the budget cycle; the proposed plan, beginning in 2021, is to increase the Uniform Services fleet by 4 to 5 vehicles yearly. We anticipate having the necessary number of vehicles needed for individual assignment by 2024. Further, once implemented, this program will be much more cost effective for Livingston County. Cost savings will include building cost due to space needed, vehicle longevity and maintenance and upkeep (Appendix A demonstrates a per-vehicle cost breakdown).

LCSO researched other agencies utilizing assigned vehicle programs. Sheriff Departments in Sanilac County, Barry County, Newaygo County and Chippewa County have all implemented some type of assigned vehicle program.

Sanilac County Sheriff Department has found the program to be much more cost effective during the ten years of their Assigned Vehicle Program, and stated they would never advocate going back to a shared car system. The Sheriff said it was one of the best things he accomplished while in office with the full support of the County Commission.

Approximately 10 years ago, the Michigan State Police transitioned to a similar model. As a result, they were able to reduce the number of necessary MSP Post (stations). Several posts were able to close, resulting in millions of dollars saved annually.

Michigan State Police Brighton Post Assistant Post Commander, Lt. Sura, advised their Assigned Vehicle Program has been extremely successful, providing a significant cost savings to the state, as well as providing better service to the public. Lt. Sura does not envision the Michigan State Police ever returning to a "pool" system.

Conclusion

In summary, the DAV program provides for:

- A safer environment for the staff and the public.
- Enhanced Law enforcement services provided to the community without adding personnel and at reduced costs.
- Vehicles will not need to be replaced as often which results in a significant cost savings in unfitting cost.
- Maintenance costs will be reduced.
- A safer community by increasing law enforcement visibility, flexibility, deployment and response to emergency calls and critical incidents.

The Commission is aware that we are functioning under unprecedented conditions and times, and we have had to make many changes to the policing model in order to keep the community and staff safe. We believe this program is best for the community of Livingston County and the Livingston County Sheriff's Office.

Thank you in advance for your support. Respectfully,

Sheriff Michael J. Murphy



APPENDIX A

Annual Per Vehicle Cost	
12,572	Vehicle
2,400	Maintenance
1,200	Axon
846	Insurance
480	Data/Phone
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17,498	

One Time Per Vehicle Cost	
4,300	Mobile Radio
4,000	MDC
2,000	Less Lethal/Stop Sticks/First Aid
250	Activation (Radio)
75	Phones/Accessories
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10,625	