# ACP DFR Follow-Up Questions - MCPD Responses (June 6, 2024)

(ACP members were encouraged to send follow-up questions to the department. MCPD provided responses in three separate emails to address those questions. The questions and responses have been incorporated into one document by staff. MCPD Responses are in red *.)

## Group 1:

1)How was the Silver Spring/ Wheaton area chosen as the first operational field? Is there where the most street crime happens in the county?

*These locations were determined with crime analysis and staffing analysis data. Where are our busiest areas, crime/problem areas, areas with police staffing issues, areas where response times had been increasing, etc. The location and operational times/days are all data driven.

 2) You shared that the DFR would be expanded to Gaithersburg & Germantown (where I live). Was this decided democratically? Did street crime statistics determine this move?

*Yes, calls for service increases and response times along with staffing issues, etc. also drove this decision. Along with crime data and staffing data as what was used for Silver Spring and Wheaton.

## Group 2:

1. What Directive Number is the DFR Pilot Program Policy and where is it posted on the MCPD website?

*Covered under FC460 UAS located here: Directives - 400 - Uniforms and Equipment,Montgomery County Police, Montgomery County, MD (montgomerycountymd.gov)

 2. Is this an Interim Policy since the DFR Program is a Pilot Program?

*The policy will be reviewed annually for appropriate updates. We are willing to hear input from the community and everyone else when considering updates.

 3. Where can the DFR Pilot Program Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) be obtained?

*All operational orders/procedures are maintained at SOD. I'm told this request would have to go through records (MPIA) to be recorded.

4. Were any FEMA Grant Funds used to purchase any of the equipment to support the DFR Pilot Program?

*Grant funds were used to pay for our 4 week DFR training course through our vendor. Equipment for DFR was NOT purchased with any grant monies. Equipment has been purchased with FY24 supplemental funds.

5. Can MCPD provide a copy of the DFR Pilot Program Implementation Plan that outlines the goals, objectives, strategies, performance measures, and outcomes for the DFR Pilot Program?

*These are the objectives/goals of the program:

Improve police response times.
Allow MCPD to be more efficient with police resources.
Provide real time information to ground officers to allow for better decision making.
Assist with de-escalation of incidents to enhance safety for both officers and our community.
Assist with locating and apprehending criminal suspects.

We measure our success by tracking results back to the program objectives/goals:

Improve police response times - DFR RESPONSE TIME and FIRST ON SCENE COUNTS

Allow MCPD to be more efficient with police resources. NUMBER OF CALLS HANDLED WITHOUT THE NEED FOR PATROL RESPONSE ENTIRELY, HOW MANY OFFICERS CANCELED OR PREVENTED FROM BEING DISPATCHED TO CALLS, CALLS WHERE DFR ALLOWED OFFICERS ALREADY DISPATCHED TO DISREGARD/GO IN SERVICE/ OR DIVERT TO OTHER CALLS.

Provide real time information to ground officers to allow for better decision making. CALLS WHERE THE DFR WAS ABLE TO PROVIDE REAL TIME INFORMATION TO OFFICERS WHICH ALLOWED BETTER DECISION MAKING/PLANNING/BETTER TACTICS, ETC.

Assist with de-escalation of incidents to enhance safety for both officers and our community. EVENTS WHERE DFR PROVIDED INFORMATION THAT ALLOWED A DE-ESCALATED RESPONSE OR BETTER TACTICS THAT REDUCED THE LIKELYHOOD OF ESCALATION.

Assist with locating and apprehending criminal suspects. NUMBER OF SUSPECTS/SUBJECTS LOCATED

6. What metrics are being collected for the DFR Pilot Program, how were they selected, and who is coordinating the collection, analysis, and reporting of this information?

*There is a nightly shift report completed via Microsoft Forms and also a nightly word document form/report. CAD data is also used to compile data which ports to the public dashboard. We track number of calls and all call information (event numbers/dates/times/district/beat), brief narrative of each call and outcome, number of DFR flights per site, number of calls where DFR is first on scene, number of calls where DFR located subjects/suspects, DFR response times, number of calls where DFR avoided the need for patrol to be dispatched, number of officers put back in service or canceled due to DFR, number of calls where DFR aided in arrest, de-escalation examples involving DFR. All flight maps and call data is published on the public flight maps page. The Director of SOD is responsible for compiling and reporting out this data as requested. These metrics were selected because they relate to the program objectives/goals.

7. Has MCPD issued an Interim or Final Report for the DFR Pilot Program? If so, where can a copy of this report be obtained?

*Not yet but will be published soon at the end of June 2024. This will not be a final report as we plan to provide more periodic reports showing data and call examples of how DFR is used along with success cases.

8. Does MCPD have an MOU in place with MCFRS outlining coordination and/or mutual assistance related to use of drones? MCFRS is not currently operating their UAS program.

*In the event they want UAS support they make the request through ECC or MCFRS SOD to MCPD SOD and we will assist. All of these calls already have police involvement in some capacity, so we just use our MCPD call for service information. (example: building fire, building explosion, missing person, etc.)

9. How many full or part-time MCPD personnel and contractors are currently assigned to support the DFR Pilot Program?

*16 MCPD members (SOD and decentralized UAS pilots) and 3 contractors (although the contracting firm is bringing on more people). No one is assigned full time exclusively to DFR at this time.

10. Has MCPD conducted a workload assessment to determine the recommended staffing needed to support the expansion of the DFR Pilot Program to Gaithersburg/Germantown and Bethesda as proposed in the FY25 Budget?

*Yes we are in the process of adding 12 more decentralized UAS pilots and the contractor is adding 2-3 additional staff as well. That will increase the MCPD decentralized staff associated with this program to 28 and the contractors to 6.

 11. Can MCPD provide a copy of the Lesson Plan(s) developed to train the personnel assigned to the DFR Pilot Program, as well as any training provided to Patrol Officers, Supervisors, and Executives?

*I'm told this request would have to go through records (MPIA) to be recorded.


## Group 3:

The following questions are based on a review of MCPD's FC 460 - Unmanned Aircraft Systems where the DFR Program is referenced.

 IV. Procedures

 A. Administration

 Statement: MCPD has adopted the use of UAS to provide an aerial visual perspective on responding to calls for service.

Issue: Calls for Service is not specifically enumerated to understand the types of calls for service that would warrant the deployment of the UAS. The policy does outline some examples of the situations where the UAS would be helpful such as to support tactical deployments, however other deployments related to CFS to support patrol-related responses are not defined.

* [SEE OPERATIONAL ORDER UAS02](#) (ATTACHED)

 IV. Procedures

 B. Procedures for UAS Use

 Statement: 6. All flights will be captured and recorded by software designed for that purpose. In addition, each deployment should include information regarding the reason for the flight…

 Issue: Why is the word 'should' being used here in lieu of 'shall'? What flights would be authorized that would not require the reason to be captured and recorded? In terms of transparency and accountability, it would seem that ALL flights should be captured and recorded.

*We do capture and record all flights and information as noted in the first sentence "All flights WILL be captured and recorded....". Pilots are trained in how to document the reasons for flight, etc. That data collection is not optional for the pilot, it is a must.

Also, FC 0460 addresses Unmanned Aerial Systems and appears was revised to cover the Drone as First Responder (DFR) Program in September 2023. In my view, the DFR Program is not adequately addressed by the limited information that was added to the existing UAS policy. MCPD should revise FC 0406 to more comprehensively cover the DFR Program, or alternatively, develop a separate standalone policy for the DFR Program.

 *We are open to this feedback for consideration. We currently have DFR Operational Orders which get into the fine details of DFR and specific DFR related procedures. Being this was a pilot program, we captured some of what could be in policy into orders. This allows us to make tweaks as we go through the pilot program as we learn and develop things. Changing policy is a huge hurdle so we kept FC460 basic and put our emphasis into orders instead for the time being. Operational Orders are direct orders from command to the officer. Failure to follow a direct order can result in discipline as outlined in FC300. A direct order carries similar weight to a policy.  I'd be happy to explain this more if needed.