

Nancy Berube
10A Roberts Rd
Dover, NH 03820
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Dover City Hall
City Council
288 Central Avenue
Dover, NH 03820

Dear Mayor Carrier, City Manager Mr. Joyal, Police Chief Breault, and the entire Dover City Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for the Mounted Unit. As a City of Dover taxpayer, I feel very strongly that the mounted unit should continue.

I volunteer for many organizations, the NH State Police DARE road race, the NH SPCA, the Exeter Lions Club, and now the DPD Mounted Unit as a caregiver. It's easy to be emotional about the mounted unit as a unique feature to our urban landscape and resource to our community. I find it personally very rewarding, but there are many practical reasons to continue the unit.

As I understand it, the only City budget item is the officer's salary. Sponsors cover all other expenses, and care is provided happily by volunteers. Many volunteers love giving back to the community in this way and find caring for the horses very therapeutic. Many of you may not know the unit has served to help St. Thomas and Dover High School students to complete their volunteer requirements providing another positive nexus to the community.

It may be prudent to downsize the unit temporarily with Officer Murch's retirement. However, it is critical to keep it going with Officer Caproni and the two horses. Two horses are essential because they are herd animals that need companionship, and keeping only one horse would be a form of cruelty. Additionally, caring for two horses is not more significant than caring for a single horse. It would also allow resource flexibility if one horse becomes laid up and the other horse is available. More importantly, it would enable Officer Caproni to train a future mounted officer as an additional officer in the unit or preparation of Officer Caproni's eventual retirement. Training for the mounted unit could be appealing to a more seasoned officer looking for a change of pace and giving the department more flexibility. It may also be an incentive to attract a new experienced police officer to the department.

According to the mission of the Mounted Unit on the City of Dover webpage¹, "Mounted units are commonly utilized for their effectiveness and efficiency in crowd control. The efficacy of the mounted officer in a crowd control situation is staggering". Most estimates show that a horse and rider can do the job of 10-20 officers on foot, oftentimes with greater success and less injury to the officer or perpetrator." The unit's routine duties include speed and traffic enforcement, parking enforcement, search and rescue, crime scene security on the Community Trail when needed, parades, and special

¹ <https://www.dover.nh.gov/government/city-operations/police/mounted-patrol/mounted-patrol-mission/index.html>

events. For example, the use of the unit would have been an asset to the vigil in Henry Law Park on June 1st. They would be a great addition to the Dover Green and White Day DHS Graduation Parade and celebration this Friday.

In addition to routine duties, one significant benefit of the unit I see as a taxpayer and downtown business customer is the community policing component. Mounted officers can respond to street-level criminal issues often characterized as "quality of life crimes."² The mounted patrol monitors the community trail system, assisting the homeless while following social distancing guidelines and keeping the downtown inviting to business customers. The mounted unit is also part of the Community Response and Engagement Unit, or "CREU." Return use of the mounted unit can help address the increase in graffiti around the downtown area and trail system.

There may be an argument for the use of a mountain bike; however, that is not as noticeable and does not provide social distancing and safety that a mounted officer provides. A mountain bike will blend in downtown and not be a deterrent to speeders and traffic violators. When the officers are on horseback standing in a spot on Central Ave, they are genuinely noticeable. Additionally, horses attract children. It will not be the same reaction as a mountain bike. Children LOVE petting the horses and receiving police officer trading cards. Can anyone find a better way to interact with the community and give children a positive police exchange than these horses?

Think of the time, energy, and resources from local businesses provided to create the well organized Mounted Unit over the 20+ years it's been around. Their time and money have put in place the current and optimum infrastructure for the unit. What a tragic waste and loss to the City if this unit does not continue in some form.

Sadly, I tried to post several times a notice of this public meeting on the Dover Police Department and Friends of the Dover Mounted Patrol (Administered by the DPD) Facebook pages without success. Thankfully I was able to post to the Dover Community Connections Page and my newly formed page "Supporters of the Dover Mounted Patrol." I felt citizens and taxpayers needed a method of communication of the mounted unit separate from the DPD pages.

Patrolling downtown is a necessity, and doing so on horseback provides an efficient and safe way to patrol while practicing social distancing and officer safety. It's Summertime, and the unit should be downtown patrolling now!

In summary, let's continue this police service that makes this great City so unique. Please don't let the Mayor or City Council's legacy be the ending of the Dover Mounted Patrol.

Sincerely,

Nancy A. Berube

² <https://www.dover.nh.gov/government/city-operations/police/mounted-patrol/mounted-patrol-mission/index.html>