The Public Perception of the Consolidation of two Police Departments
Consolidation 2007

- Plant – Moran Study performed with recommendations that include a Consolidated Police Department between Walled Lake and Wolverine Lake.
- **February 2007** – Joint scheduling agreement reached. Both departments scheduled and organized as a single department with 12-hour shifts on patrol. Patrol, dispatch, records, lock-up centralized in Walled Lake. Wolverine Lake Police Department facility closed to the public.
Consolidation 2007

- **February 2007 to May 2008** – Communities negotiated a permanent shared services agreement. Negotiating teams included elected officials, staff, and police personnel.
Consolidation 2008

- **June 2008** – Shared services agreement in effect. Officers deputized in both jurisdictions.
- Contract term of initial shared services agreement is five years. Dispatch agreement extended three years. Both Agreements set to expire June 30, 2013.
Specifics

- Officers from each community remain employees of that community.
- Communities agree to use best efforts to concurrently negotiate future union contracts.
- Equipment and other expenses split 2/3 Walled Lake and 1/3 Wolverine Lake. (8 officers from Wolverine Lake and 16 Officers for Walled Lake)
- New combined logo Badges on uniforms and cars - logo created by members of department.
Officers created this design using both departments logos and now feel like part of the new “Team”.

![Police logo](image)
Southeast Michigan Council of Governments Featured our Departments on the cover of their Magazine in the Spring of 2009.
What do the residents think?

- We gave an 11 question survey to the residents of both jurisdictions to measure how they thought the police departments were performing.
Survey of Residents

- City of Walled Lake
  Survey was hosted on the City of Walled Lake Web-site
  Very low response rate with only 24 surveys submitted

Village of Wolverine Lake

The same survey was mailed to the Village of Wolverine Lake residents (1100 homes) as an insert with the Village newsletter “Village Lite” which was mailed on May 1st, 2009, with a deadline for return of June 1st, 2009. There were 99 responses during this time frame.
This survey was a simple, multiple choice, 11 question survey.

- Were you aware the Village of Wolverine Lake / City of Walled Lake are currently working as a Consolidated Police Department under a shared services agreement?

- Have you had any contact with the Consolidated Wolverine Lake/Walled Lake Police Department in the last 2 years? (If you answered “Yes” to this question, please proceed to question #4. If you answered “No” please skip to question #7).

- Were you satisfied with the response time provided by the Police Department?

- Please rate the quality of services that you received during your experience with the Police Department

- Overall attitude and helpfulness of the officer who responded to your situation?
Survey Continued

- Are you currently satisfied with the level of service being provided to your community by the Consolidated Police Department?

- Looking at the overall police services for your respective communities, do you believe they are:
  - Excellent  
  - Good  
  - Fair  
  - Poor  
  - Don’t Know

- What is your perception of the Safety and Security within your community?

- How satisfied are you with the existing level of traffic enforcement?

- Do you believe traffic enforcement activity should be increased?

- Overall, what is your perception of the police Department’s efforts regarding Criminal Activity?
Have you had contact with the Consolidated Police Department?

Walled Lake: 88% Yes, 12% No

Wolverine Lake: 69% Yes, 31% No
Walled Lake

Were you satisfied with the response time?

- Yes: 84%
- No: 16%

Wolverine Lake

Were you satisfied with the response time?

- Yes: 89%
- No: 11%
Walled Lake

Are you Satisfied with the Level of Service Provided?

- Very Satisfied: 41%
- Satisfied: 33%
- Neutral: 21%
- Dissatisfied: 4%
- Very Dissatisfied: 0%

Wolverine Lake

Are you Satisfied with the Level of Service Provided?

- Very Satisfied: 39%
- Satisfied: 32%
- Neutral: 9%
- Dissatisfied: 16%
- Very Dissatisfied: 4%
Walled Lake

Looking at the overall Police Services for your community, do you believe they are:

- Excellent: 54%
- Good: 29%
- Fair: 12.50%
- Poor: 4%

Wolverine Lake

Looking at the overall Police Services for your community, do you believe they are:

- Excellent: 36%
- Good: 44%
- Fair: 8%
- Poor: 12%
- Don't Know: 0%
What is your perception of the Safety and Security within your Community?

Walled Lake

Excellent: 25%
Good: 50%
Fair: 21%
Poor: 4%

Wolverine Lake

Excellent: 40%
Good: 44%
Fair: 8%
Poor: 8%
Don't Know: 0%
Are you satisfied with current traffic enforcement levels?

Walled Lake:
- Very Satisfied: 29%
- Satisfied: 41%
- Neutral: 16%
- Dissatisfied: 12%

Wolverine Lake:
- Very Satisfied: 19%
- Satisfied: 45%
- Neutral: 15%
- Dissatisfied: 12%
- Very Dissatisfied: 9%
What is your perception of the Police Departments effort regarding Criminal Activity?

Walled Lake:
- Excellent: 29%
- Good: 29%
- Fair: 29%
- Poor: 8%

Wolverine Lake:
- Excellent: 36%
- Good: 35%
- Fair: 10%
- Poor: 6%
- Don’t Know: 13%
Public Perception vs. Reality

- The public’s perception regarding the consolidation may not be that diverse between these two communities, however that is not to say that the police departments are not different both in personnel, practice and management philosophy.

- Consolidating these 2 departments can be like trying to put together a puzzle without a picture of what it is supposed to look like or putting something complex together without directions. There are no guidelines to follow or to use as an example.
The Public’s Perception

- Everything looks good on paper.
- The community will benefit
- The “Little things” will all work out
- The community will be better off – more secure
- The community will save a lot of money
- The community will get better protection and have more officers on the street
- We will have less duplication of administration
The Reality / Results

- Everything doesn’t always go as planned – Dispatch was closed as another cost saving measure on September 1, 2009 and turned over to Oakland County.
- Combining departments has actually resulted in less officers on the street for longer hours per day - Minimum staffing reduced to 2 officers for both cities.
- Money savings is not as much as initially thought – Start up costs were not included in the savings calculations.
- Still have two Police Chief’s but less officers for the road –
- Both Chief’s are afraid to make a decision,(not wanting to step on the others toes) thus NO DIRECTION and an Uncertain Policing philosophy –
- Neither political subsidy is willing to give up any control
Summary

Before any consolidation is considered, many aspects must be considered besides the “Public Perception” or public sentiment of a consolidation. This process must involve a very self-critical review of management, staff and personnel.

The evaluation of the internal chemistry and of the “policing philosophy” of the departments involved must be measured along with the expectations of the communities they serve.
Thank you for your time and attention
THE END!