

Is his journey really necessary?

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As I testified to the Trenton City Council December 20, the cost of having our police director (PD) reside 50 miles from the city in which he works is considerable:

Assuming his vehicle gets 20 mpg, the cost of driving 100 miles a day at \$3/gallon = \$15/day. Assuming he works 240 days a year = 24,000 miles = \$3600 for gas. Add \$400 for oil = \$4000. Add \$1000 for wear and tear on the vehicle = \$5000 a year.

In terms of the overall police department budget this is not a huge percentage but we must include the cost of removing from the atmosphere the 15,000 pounds of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses generated by the fuel combustion in driving 24,000 miles.

Does the PD drive himself to and from his home? If so, does his two hour daily drive render him less fit for the strenuous job of running the police department? If he is driven 100 miles a day, we must include the cost of the driver's time, including the likelihood the driver must travel extra distance to and from his/her home. This would conservatively add another \$3500 to the amount we taxpayers must pay for this waiver of the law extended by the mayor to the PD. This would make a total of \$8500 plus the hidden cost of offsetting the greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution created by the car's fuel combustion.

On the other hand, if, as is required by the law, the PD resided in Trenton, the city would benefit in the six following ways:

- 1) The city would save \$8500 a year and have an additional car available for more critical services.
- 2) The PD would either pay the city property taxes on a house he bought or pay rent to a property owner in Trenton. His family would spend at least \$20,000 on food and other items purchased at local stores and restaurants.
- 3) The PD would get to know the neighborhoods he resides and works in by walking or bicycling, both of which would help keep him in top physical shape for his arduous duties. Or he could use public transportation, as does the mayor of New York City,
- 4) In so doing, the PD would see at first hand the serious threats to public safety caused by the high percentage of out-of-order streetlights, malfunctioning traffic signals, unfinished sidewalks, and other hazards that so far have escaped his and the Mayor's attention.
- 5) Given that a high percentage of serious crimes and public safety accidents occur at nights and on weekends and given that a PD's responsibilities are not limited to weekdays 9-5, the PD would be available to respond more rapidly to a greater number of such situations where his expertise would be most valuable.
- 6) By spending more time in the city the PD could avail himself and his family of Trenton's extraordinary recreational and cultural amenities, many of which are city-owned -- Cadwalader, Mill Hill, Waterfront, and other parks, Passage Theater, Ellarslie, the Old Barracks, Classics Bookshop, Gallery 125, the Marriott Hotel, Cafe Ole, City Smiles, Joe's Mill Hill Saloon, the Candlelight Lounge, and the War Memorial, to mention but a few. In sum, in addition to having a PD obeying the legal requirements of his job, having him resident in the city where he works would bring us (and him) a significant number of benefits, including improved public safety and quality of life. --Jon NaarMill HillTrenton, NJ