



Aviation Program



The Prince George's County Police Department
Chief of Police Malik Aziz

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Prince George's County Aviation Section



Mission Statement

The Aviation Section provides critical airborne public safety services to the Citizens of Prince George's County. The Section provides a critical force multiplier to the Police Department and enhances the safety of patrol units.

Airborne public safety services are not limited to: observation of crimes and suspects, missing persons, vehicle pursuits, barricades, special events, reconnaissance, aerial photography, vehicle and property recovery, counterterrorism missions and community events.

In addition to its law enforcement mission, Aviation Section assets are used to survey environmental concerns, emergency weather conditions, building and site development surveys, firefighting, investigation, mapping, and live video data download to agencies including the County EOC.

Aviation Section assets are used to provide Counterterrorism operations and security measures from multiple airborne systems including rotary-wing and sUAS assets.

The Section serves multiple, local, State and Federal Agencies, including dozens of local towns and regions. The Section provides command and control platforms to Federal programs in the NCR to support Continuity of Government missions.

Prince George's County Aviation Section



History

- The Aviation section was started in August of 2000.
- A federal grant was given to the county for \$2,000,000 for aircraft and equipment. The County matched 10% for a total of \$2,200,000.
- In 1999, two new MD520N aircraft were purchased at a cost of \$968,000 each.
- \$264,000 was used to purchase mission and ground support equipment.
- In 2000 the initial maintenance budget was planned at \$580,000 per year, with planned steps to \$650,000 by 2003 and \$950,000 by 2010.
- The actual maintenance budget was \$500,000 from 2000 to 2015. It gradually increased to \$855,000 over the last 6 years.
- A third aircraft was planned for 2005 with an additional 2 crews allowing for partial 24 hour operations.
- A fourth aircraft was planned for 2010 with an additional 2 crews bringing the total manning to 8 crews for 4 aircraft allowing for uninterrupted coverage.



History (continued)

- Winter Storm Jonas in 2016 lead to a prime example of the benefits of Aviation.
- A new aircraft was ordered in March 2017 for \$3,800,000 which included state of the art avionics and mission equipment.
- The manufacturer had unreasonable delays for over a year, so the new aircraft was cancelled.
- A plan was developed to purchase two prior owned aircraft and outfit them for the price of one new. Both aircraft were found in as new condition for \$975,000 each.
- The entire 2 for 1 aircraft acquisition cost the County \$4.15 million



Posture

Located at College Park Airport (KCGS) – MNCPPC (Jan 2003)

-Leased Office trailers and Hangar from MNCPPC

Operational 1200-0600 7 days a week (staffing permitted)

Crew – Pilot and Tactical Flight Officer

-4 pilots: Chief Pilot, 2 sworn pilots, 1 non-sworn pilot

Contracted FAA Service Center –Summit Aviation- Full time A&P

4 MD Helicopters – MD 520N – NOTAR

sUAS (drone) Program

Secondary Staging Site – National Harbor Public Safety Helipad (77MD)

Prince George's County Aviation Section



Agencies Assisted

Supported Jurisdictions:

Maryland State Police
District of Columbia
Montgomery County
Charles County
St Mary's County
Calvert County
Anne Arundel County
Howard County
Fairfax County
[Assist Fairfax.mp4](#)

Supported Municipalities:

Greenbelt
Laurel
Hyattsville
Mount Rainer
Cottage City
Landover Hills
Cheverly
Seat Pleasant
Bladensburg
District Heights

State & Local Agencies:

Edmonston
Morningside
Bowie
Upper Marlboro
Fairmont Heights
New Carrollton
Brentwood
Colmar Manor
Capitol Heights
Forest Heights
Metro Transit
Prince George's Sherriff
Fire Board
MNCPPC
School Board [ARS.ts](#) [Overlay.ts](#)
Public Works
Prince George's Corrections
Maryland Transit Authority
MARC
CSX Rail

Supported Federal Agencies:

FBI FAA Marshals
DEA DHS
ATF Amtrak

Aviation Units in the NCR Region

Maryland State MPDC
Baltimore City Baltimore County Police
US Park Police Fairfax County Police
Anne Arundel County

Prince George's County Aviation Section



Performance

- The unit has flown over 45,000 flights
- The unit has flown over 23,000 accident and incident free flight hours
- Over 62,200 calls for service
- Over 2050 arrests, 70% being felony apprehensions
- Over 925 stolen vehicles have been recovered
- Over 440 LoJack vehicles, one of the highest recovery rates in the Country
- 265 firearms (47 with new camera)
- The unit has one of the most progressive training programs in the industry
- In 2007 our safety record lead to a 60% reduction in insurance costs. (\$73,000 per year)
- Aviation has received 7 International Airborne Public Safety Awards

Prince George's County Aviation Section



Performance

following the addition of two more aircraft

CATEGORY	2021	2020 w/ 4 aircraft	% change	2019	2018	2017
Arrests	202 (81 Carjack)	191	+285%	67	42	72
FLIR finds	146	145	+392%	37	27	51
Missing persons	12	15	+1500%	0	4	4
Recovered vehicles	101	90	+243%	37	43	27
LoJack finds	38	45	+22%	37	31	16
Weapons found	35 Guns on Roof.mp4	12	+1200%	0	0	0

Prince George's County Aviation Section



Strengths

STRATEGIC

- Effective
- Safety Record
- Efficient
- Force multiplier (30 to 90 officer coverage) [Ride Out.mp4](#)
- Reputation with the FAA and TSA
- Aircraft and Equipment
- Messaging our mission to others when given the opportunity

TACTICAL

- Patrol methods
- Working relationship with DPIE - [Quality of Life Survey 2021](#)
- Working relationship with EST
- Working relationships with non SOD units (WAVE/SAT)
- Development of patrol tools and willingness to learn new methods
- Willingness to review our own work critically and conduct AARs

Prince George's County Aviation Section



Challenges

- Communicating the benefits that Aviation can provide to the County as a whole
- Communicating the benefits of Aviation and the return on those investments
- Remaining at an ageing facility
- Understanding that sUAS (drones) cannot replace crewed aircraft
- Not developing a cyclical aircraft acquisition plan
- Developing plans for retaining current aviators and identifying new qualified aviators

Prince George's County Aviation Section



Opportunities

- Update Councilmembers on the benefits to County by having an Aviation Unit
- State of the Art facility at College Park Airport
 - City of College Park is interested in assisting with ARPA funding
- Develop Aircraft Acquisition cycle
- Upgrade current aircraft engines for mission enhancement and service longevity
- Assess the viability of creating key civilian positions to progress the Aviation Unit



Hot Topics

- US House Bill 545 regarding Persistent Aerial Surveillance
 - Page 2, 3-350 C: exceptions (entire Prince George's mission)
[Shooting at House.mp4](#)
- Helicopter Noise in the NCR
 - Prince George's is an advisor to congressional oversight committee due to no FAA noise complaints
- Drones (sUAS)
 - They fill a void but are not a replacement for helicopters



Costs

The section operates the most efficient single engine turbine engine rotorcraft for our mission. Our aircraft are \$365 (Direct Operating Cost) a flight hour to operate, contrasted to a Maryland State aircraft which cost \$7200 a flight hour.

The entire Aviation Program costs the County \$1.2 million a year

\$72,000 Facility lease

\$75,000 Fuel

\$8,000 Utilities

\$190,000 Insurance

\$855,000 Maintenance , safety, shop supplies

The cost of Aircraft ownership is \$38,000 a year per aircraft if not flown. The County owns all the aircraft outright.

[Suspect Pursuing Officer.mp4](#)

Prince George's County Aviation Section



Summary

With four patrol aircraft in service, the Aviation Program could provide the citizens of Prince George's County, surrounding jurisdictions and agencies in the NCR, 24 hour Aviation services.

Two aircraft will be available at anytime allowing for special events and consistent patrols. With four aircraft in service now, patrols are now no longer limited for maintenance.

Airborne Public Safety is a critical force multiplier providing multifaceted mission support to daily operations. Developing Intra-County support to non-public safety Agencies will enhance the Section's mission capabilities and purpose. This will enable The Prince George's County Aviation Program to continue to thrive as the East Coast's most effective Airborne Public Safety Unit.

Prince George's County Aviation Section





PGPD Aviation Unit

Lt. Aaron Smith – Commander and Chief Pilot
Sgt. Jason. Huntley – Sworn Pilot
M/Cpl. Edwin Robertson – Sworn Pilot
Cpl. Michael Kane – Sworn Pilot
Pofc. Benjamin Conner – Sworn Pilot
Mr. Merriel Corser – Civilian Pilot
Cpl. Brian Catlett – Tactical Fight Officer
Cpl. Christopher Elrod – Tactical Fight Officer
Cpl. Derrick Williams – Tactical Fight Officer
Cpl. Jessica Johnson - Tactical Fight Officer

Questions and Discussion