

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD (CRAB)  
REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL**

**SUBJECT:** Council Referral – Petition for “Congress to shut down the 1033 program”

**REFERRAL:** At the Regular Meeting on October 9, 2017, Council referred this petition to CRAB. Specifically, the petition was signed by “Greenbelters who do not want military equipment as part of our police department’s arsenal, ...and who do not want the police considering the public to be the enemy”.

**BACKGROUND:** CRAB considered and discussed this referral at meetings on:

- February 13, 2018
- March 8, 2018
- November 8, 2018
- December 13, 2018
- February 9, 2019
- June 13, 2019

Members of the public and the Greenbelt Police Department attended/participated in these meetings. Specifically, Greenbelt Police Chief Richard (Rick) Bowers made himself available for numerous discussions as well as question/answer sessions. In addition, CRAB is grateful for the information provided by petitioner Ms. Elizabeth (Lolly) Gaines as well as input from the Greenbelt East Advisory Coalition (GEAC), Greenbelt Racial Equity Alliance (GREAA) and other engaged citizens in the discussion and consideration of this topic.

**DISCUSSION:** CRAB fully recognizes and appreciates the perspective of the petitioner, as well as the signers of the petition, and shares the desire to ensure that the existing positive relationship between the Greenbelt police and Greenbelt citizenry is maintained and fostered. CRAB also shares the desire to prevent an “us” versus “them” mentality throughout our community, and recognizes the need for diligence in preventing any visible presence or military-style dress or equipment, which can foster fear in the community and perpetuate distinctions between the police and citizens.

For this reason, CRAB carefully deliberated the issue over multiple meetings and multiple months. CRAB took the opportunity to thoroughly review the supplemental materials provided by the petitioner as well as hold a conversation with her. In addition, CRAB sought to fully understand the Military surplus 1033 program in general, as well as how it

is applied and used in Greenbelt through a series of conversations, and written Questions and Answers (attached), with Chief Bowers.

By way of background, the 1033 Program (formerly the 1208 Program) permits the Secretary of Defense to transfer, without charge, excess U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) personal property (supplies and equipment) to state and local law enforcement agencies (LEAs).

Since the items can be acquired free of charge, CRAB views the 1033 program as one outlet to lessen the burden on local municipalities' limited budgets, and also as an avenue to reduce waste when equipment is no longer needed by the military. Examples include desks, office supplies, helmets, and other office equipment. Waste reduction is a Greenbelt value that CRAB supports and wishes to encourage.

**RECOMENDATION:** Since the 1033 Program is a federal program, CRAB recommends that it is not the jurisdiction of local municipalities to recommend to Congress that the program be terminated.

However, CRAB recommends that the City uphold the need for the community to maintain a strong relationship with the police, while balancing the desire to honor the value of surplus equipment that can be protective (e.g. helmets and Kevlar vests) and reduce injury to both police and citizens alike.

In order to ensure that no excessive equipment is acquired from the military, CRAB recommends that the City Manager, in her role as the public safety officer for Greenbelt, ensure that the following steps are taken in sequence whenever the need/opportunity arises to use the 1033 program:

- The mission need for any piece of equipment is identified first
- Then the item to fulfill that need is identified
- The cost for that item is identified
- Available resources are examined from other sources
- Once the specific need is identified, a surplus catalog can be looked at in order to acquire the item
- Items can be acquired, if appropriate, for free (plus the cost of shipping from wherever it is located domestically)

This Civilian oversight is a critical component in maintaining the strong connection between the police force and the community. It is also an important element to maintain the distinction that, while sometimes outwardly apparent military equipment may be required for protection, as a community we must be diligent to ensure that it remains a rare exception and does not become the norm. In addition, efforts should be made to minimize the outward militaristic appearance of any items obtained for

civilian use (e.g. Armored Personnel Carrier painted blue; Greenbelt logos affixed to the items, etc.)

CRAB also encourages City Council, CRAB and PSAC to continue to monitor, and provide the opportunity, for the community to share any rising concerns if additional equipment is acquired. This can be done through regular open-comment time during existing CRAB or PSAC meetings.

CRAB recommends that the City should continue to allow, encourage, and require the police force to fully participate in the training they need.

CRAB asks that the police website be continuously updated to ensure that all trainings are listed and current.

<https://www.greenbeltmd.gov/government/departments-con-t/police/police-training>.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rick Ransom and Jamie Krauk,  
Co-Chairs  
Community Relations Advisory Board