

APRIL 21, 1998 APRIL 21, 1999

**A YEAR OF CHALLENGES...
A YEAR OF CHANGE**



**A Report to the Washington, D.C., Community
From Chief Charles H. Ramsey
Metropolitan Police Department**

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To the Washington, D.C., Community:

On April 21, 1998, I became chief of the Metropolitan Police Department. I inherited a good police department. A police department with a rich history and tradition of service. A police department with talented professionals at all levels of the organization. A police department that had begun to make important progress in reducing crime and reaching out to the community.

But I also inherited a police department that was sorely lacking the basic infrastructure, support and leadership it needed to do its job—and do it effectively. A police department that often did without such basic necessities as scout cars and police radios that worked, toilet paper and air conditioning, computers and copier paper. A police department where accountability was not clearly affixed, and training (beyond recruit instruction) was almost nonexistent. A police department whose members were often demoralized by the instability of leadership within, and by the lack of trust and confidence from the outside.

My long-term goals for the Department were clear: to make the District of Columbia the safest major city in America by making the MPDC a national model of community policing. To achieve those goals, however, I quickly realized that I had to address three immediate priorities:

- 1.** Reorganize the Department to put us in a better position to fight crime.
- 2.** Shore up the Department's essential infrastructure.
- 3.** Restore the public's confidence in the MPDC.

This report documents the progress our Department has made on these three priorities. Our progress is all the more significant because it came at a time when crime in our city continued to decline—and decline sharply, reaching its lowest level in a quarter century last year. I am proud of our accomplishments. They are the result of the hard work, dedication and professionalism of the members of the Metropolitan Police Department and our partners in the community.

As I enter my second year as chief, I believe the MPDC is a department on the brink of even greater success—of bringing crime rates down even further, as we develop even stronger and more lasting partnerships with the community. The MPDC is better equipped, better trained and better organized than we have been in many years. We stand ready and able—with the community's help—to tackle our true challenge: to prevent crime and to help build safe and healthy neighborhoods throughout Washington, D.C.

Charles H. Ramsey
Chief of Police

LOOKING BACK: ADDRESSING CRITICAL NEEDS

Priority: Reorganize the Department to put us in a better position to fight crime and strengthen community policing.

One year ago, the MPDC was traditionally structured, overly bureaucratic and organizationally out of sync with the principles of community policing. Functions were scattered throughout four, largely autonomous bureaus—meaning that accountability for results could not be firmly affixed in any one unit or command-level official. High-visibility crimes such as prostitution, auto theft and environmental offenses were not being adequately addressed. And leadership at all levels was lacking, in large part because there were not enough sworn and civilian leaders in critical positions. Over the past year, the MPDC implemented a top-to-bottom reorganization, putting more resources in the community and creating a new system of managerial accountability throughout the Department.

More Resources In the Community



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The three Regional Operations Commands are strengthening accountability and ensuring efficient use of resources in the community.

Less Bureaucracy, More Accountability

- The seven police districts were organized into three **Regional Operations Commands**—each located in the community and headed by an assistant chief who is accountable for the quality of policing in that region.
- **Full-service police districts** were established. Uniformed patrol officers, detectives, focused mission teams and other field units are now directly under the control of the District Commander. Approximately 150 detectives are being reassigned from headquarters to the seven districts, where they will investigate a wider range of violent or property crimes.
- Leadership was strengthened in the city's **83 police service areas (PSAs)**—the backbone of community policing. In the past, each PSA was led by one sergeant. Now, a lieutenant—assisted by a *team of sergeants*—has 24-hour accountability for fighting crime and solving problems on each PSA.
- New **focused mission teams** were created in each district, with up to 30 officers per team concentrating on hot spots of crime and violence. A new Summer Mobile Force is providing additional visibility and flexibility citywide. And a unique cross-border initiative with Prince George's County, Maryland, is addressing problems along our common border.
- More resources are being devoted to high-visibility, **quality-of-life enforcement**. The prostitution unit was expanded from 1 to 17 officers; auto theft from 1 to 8. And a new Environmental Crimes Unit is addressing major quality-of-life problems that breed crime in the community.
- The Department's business functions were streamlined under a new **Corporate Support** structure, headed by an experienced civilian executive manager.
- The MPDC promoted **new talent within the sworn ranks**—both command-level appointments and 124 new captains, lieutenants and sergeants. These officials are providing new leadership and accountability in the community.
- **Civilian managers** were hired to help design and carry out reorganization and community policing plans, and to oversee Department-wide functions such as organizational development, research and evaluation, corporate communications, information technology and key support functions.
- A new **Operations Command** was established, providing a round-the-clock command presence in the field and promoting Departmental effectiveness.

Priority: Shore up the Department's infrastructure through major investments in equipment, technology, facilities and training.

One year ago, our members routinely endured broken-down vehicles and radios, outdated computers, insufficient office supplies, and facilities where critical systems often didn't work. After the academy, officers had almost no opportunities for additional training—a large percentage of officers hadn't even completed required firearms qualification. Over the past year, the MPDC addressed these needs through significant investments in our members.

A Better Equipped Police Department



Deploying 287 new police mountain bikes is bringing added visibility and flexibility to community policing.

- **490 new police vehicles** acquired or on order: the MPDC is adding five new vehicles a week over two years, and cutting the age of our fleet in half.
- Nearly **1,900 new hand-held police radios** acquired or on order: a first-ever take-home radio program is enhancing both officer and public safety.
- **287 new police mountain bikes** and uniforms, a fourfold increase in bike patrols: all recruits are now being trained and certified as bicycle officers.
- Updated **less-than-lethal weaponry**: new OC spray canisters and retractable (ASP) batons have been acquired for sworn members.

Technology Enhancements

- **300 new mobile data computers** and upgrades to 177 existing devices: the MDCs provide officers with instant access to vehicle and criminal history information, and serve as a platform for future technologies.
- **1,150 new digital radios** on order, to provide enhanced radio communications in police vehicles.
- **1,000 new desktop computers**, to support field and headquarters operations.
- Planning and design of **critical enterprise systems** to be installed in 1999: a new computer-aided dispatch system, a revamped records management system and a new crime analysis and mapping program will improve officer efficiency.

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Better Facilities for Employees and Customers

- A comprehensive **assessment of all MPDC facilities**—approximately 1.2 million square feet in 19 buildings—found \$100 million in needed upgrades.
- **Initial phases of renovation**, totaling \$18 million, were begun. Projects include new work space for detectives reassigned to district stations and structural repairs at district stations and headquarters.
- Mayor Williams's budget includes a **\$101.2 million capital improvement plan** over six years. The goal: provide a safe and productive working environment for MPDC employees, and customer-friendly facilities for the community.

Quality Training

- The **training academy was reinvented**. An assistant chief now manages this critical function, and its mandate has expanded to include not just recruit training, but also continuing education and executive leadership development.
- **Firearms and use-of-force training** was doubled from 8 to 16 hours a year, and now focuses on judgment and marksmanship. New courses on street survival and defensive tactics and violent crime investigations were also offered.
- A two-week **executive leadership course** for all commanders, captains and lieutenants was developed, in conjunction with Penn State University.

Priority: Open up new avenues of communication and partnership with the community and other government agencies.

One year ago, the MPDC had taken the first steps to forging the partnerships that are essential to community policing. But basic avenues of communication—including regular face-to-face meetings, television and radio, and the Internet—were not being used to their full potential. In addition, residents had received no formal training on community policing, recruiting efforts were underfunded, and the Department had seldom sought feedback from the community in a systematic manner. Over the past year, the MPDC opened up important new avenues of communication and partnership—not just with residents but with other government agencies as well.

Information and Training for the Community



The Department's Web site—www.mpdcc.org—is opening up new lines of digital communication between police and community.

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Coordination with Other Agencies

- **Partnerships for Problem Solving**, an ambitious program to train the community in community policing, has been designed and tested. Beginning in the spring of 1999, training teams of police officers and community volunteers will be offering problem-solving training to residents on every PSA.
- A new and robust Web site—www.mpdcc.org—is providing residents with updated information about the Police Department and their communities, and is promoting for the first time digital communication between residents and police.
- **Police recruiting efforts** have been expanded to include greater community outreach plus a new toll-free number (1-800-99-4MPDC) and use of the Internet (including a copy of the application form on the MPDC Web site).
- Citizen patrols and other neighborhood groups now have **access to free cellular phones** (donated by Cellular One and Ericsson Mobile) to support their crime prevention efforts.
- The MPDC's new television news magazine program—**DC CrimeWatch**—is educating residents about community policing by showcasing successes from across the city. Through new programs with the mainstream media, residents can also interact directly with the Chief through call-in and e-mail.
- **Face-to-face communication** between the police and the community has also been expanded—through more regular PSA meetings, town hall meetings and community training sessions.
- The Department has begun **seeking the community's opinions** in a systematic way. Last summer, a citywide telephone survey asked District residents their opinions on neighborhood problems and perceptions of police service.
- Some city agencies—including the Departments of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs and Public Works—are beginning to **realign their service delivery systems** to more closely match the geographic boundaries of the MPDC. This will improve coordination in addressing quality-of-life problems.
- Through a **partnership with Court Services personnel**, police in one district are teaming up with probation and parole agents to more closely monitor and assist individuals released to the community.
- The MPDC has forged new partnerships with government and social service agencies working to find **long-term solutions to problems** such as prostitution, family violence and open-air drug markets.

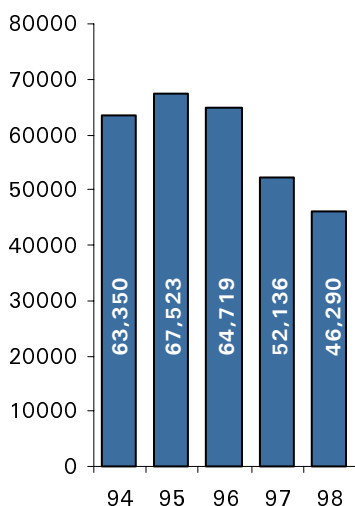
LOOKING AHEAD: CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH COMMUNITY POLICING

Over the last 12 months, the Metropolitan Police Department has made significant progress in addressing the immediate priorities it faced one year ago. The work in these critical areas—infrastructure, organizational development and community partnerships—is by no means complete and must continue in the years ahead. Nevertheless, with the progress in these areas, the Department is today in a much stronger position to focus on our long-range goal of preventing crime through community policing. Three key areas will be the focus of the next year: expanding community partnerships; being more proactive in our approach to policing; and retaining a high-quality work force.

New Partnerships for Community Policing

- **Problem-solving training** will be provided to hundreds of community members through the *Partnerships for Problem Solving* program. Community policing training for recruits and officers and officials will also be expanded.
- At least one active **problem-solving partnership on every PSA** will be created to apply the techniques covered in the community training.
- **Monthly PSA meetings** will be held on every PSA, allowing police officers and community members to carry out the problem-solving process.
- **Strategic alliances** with other criminal justice agencies and other community institutions will be extended, to continue addressing those broader, citywide problems that contribute to crime in the neighborhoods.

Index Crimes: 1994-1998



Continuing to reduce crime through more effective community policing will be the focus of the next year.

A High-Quality Work Force

- A variety of **enforcement, prevention and intervention strategies** will be integrated into the community policing model. Problem-solving strategies will be tailored to the needs of each community, with residents actively involved in developing and carrying out the specific plan for their neighborhood.
- Under the full-service police district model, PSA officers, detectives, focused mission teams and specialized personnel will work closely **to solve neighborhood crime problems**. Improved information sharing and collaboration will both strengthen prevention efforts and improve the Department's ability to solve crimes that have already occurred.
- Formal, efficient systems will be established for **police officers to access other city services** that are critical to addressing quality-of-life concerns and physical conditions that can breed crime.
- **Police visibility** will be increased even further through the more systematic and targeted use of bike and foot patrols.
- The Department's **response to crime victims** will be enhanced through partnerships with other organizations and agencies.
- By continuing to invest in **information technology**, the Department will provide both police officers and residents with the information tools they need to identify problems and prevent crime.
- By continuing to invest in **better facilities**, the MPDC will improve employee morale and make the community feel more welcome in working with police.
- By continuing to invest in **recruiting and training** top-notch talent, the Department will build the quality work force it needs for today and tomorrow.

Government of the District of Columbia

Anthony A. Williams, Mayor

Charles H. Ramsey, Chief of Police

