

# SAFE COMMUNITIES

## DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION

Safe Communities prevent and reduce violent crime and increase perception of safety through interagency collaboration with residents and empowered partners.

## CURRENT STATUS

The Baltimore City Police Department (BPD) works to build safe communities through several strategies, with the ultimate goals of: preventing and reducing crime, improving the perception of safety, improving police-community relations, and promoting cross-sector collaboration. BPD's strategic focus on People and Place involves several initiatives that seek to prevent and reduce violent crime. Additionally, ensuring that BPD has sufficient staffing in place to support those crime prevention and reduction strategies is a priority for the Department in 2017. Finally, under the recently negotiated Consent Decree, BPD will begin implementing a range of reforms, including efforts to improve police-community relationships.

## EQUITY INDICATORS

BPD will incorporate equity into its policies and procedures. These include, but are not limited to:

- Hiring of a Chief Equity Officer at BPD to ensure all reform activities are understood and evaluated through an equity lens.
- Developing and incorporating analysis of pedestrian and vehicle stops to determine if and how any demographic group is disproportionately impacted. Specifically, BPD officers will document demographic information on people subject to stops, frisks, and arrests, and use this information to ensure fair and impartial policing.
- Integrating training on community engagement, implicit bias, the importance of civil rights to the police mission, the history of race in Baltimore, strategies for interacting with LGBT individuals, working with youth, and Constitutional and other legal requirements related to anti-discrimination. BPD will include community members in this training as appropriate.

## STRATEGIES

### 1. Prevent and Reduce Violent Crime

#### Action 1- Focus on People and Place

Based on data and indicators, BPD is focusing its policing efforts on chronically violent geographic locations, individuals, and groups most likely to be associated with violence. This is achieved through:

- Immediate enforcement efforts of individuals on BPD's Trigger Puller List and violent drug organizations, focused on extracting the most violent offenders from our streets and neighborhoods.
- The Gun Violence Enforcement Division (GVED) works to improve outcomes of prosecution against violent gun offenders. Through GVED, BPD and the State's Attorney work jointly on gun cases, and track them from beginning to end in order to identify opportunities for additional training and improvement across the two departments.
- Partnerships with Federal law-enforcement agencies on long-term criminal conspiracy investigations.

- Place-based, cross-sector focus in four ‘Transformation Zones’ – areas with the highest concentration of gun-related crimes and call for service in 2016. Sustainable solutions to gun violence require the support of City agencies and the community. Recognizing this need for cross-sector resources, BPD and the Mayor’s Office have begun a process to coordinate resources with multiple City agencies in the Transformation Zones. For example, Housing and Public works will support strategic remediation of vacant buildings and lots; and Baltimore City Public Schools and Rec and Parks will improve programing and outreach to youth living in these areas. Another key partner in this effort will be the Health Department’s Safe Streets Program, which has boundaries that are adjacent or overlap with the Transformation Zones. With this cross-sector foundation, Safe Streets will be a valuable resource in helping to drive violent crime reductions in the Transformation Zones.
- Pilot the Neighborhood Coordination Officer (NCO) position to improve how the Department works with community members in each of the Transformation Zones. The NCO positions were adapted from a similar program from NYPD, developed to provide the highest quality of policing service tailored to individual community need. In Baltimore, NCOs will work in Transformation Zones to: lead community outreach efforts, participate in community meetings/events, coordinate the Department’s resources with other city agencies, direct problem-solving, and contribute to criminal investigations.

### **Action 2 – Increased Staffing, Hiring and Retention**

Ensuring sufficient staffing levels is critical to preventing and reducing violent crime by addressing current staffing needs with the following efforts:

- Reassigned over 100 officers to sector patrol duty in order to address crime locally.
- Faster processing of applicants’ background investigations through clearing backlogs, automating processes, and outsourcing investigations to expedite hiring.
- Increasing the pool of potential applicants by changing the prior regulation requiring a lifetime ban on marijuana use.
- Restoring the Police Cadet Program that allows hiring of younger prospects and Explorers.

## **2. Improve Police-Community Relationships**

### **Action 1 – Community Policing Strategies and Survey**

BPD will issue an annual report describing community oriented policing efforts by district, noting perceived deficiencies and opportunities for improvement. Further, BPD has integrated foot patrol and community policing curriculum into the Training Academy. Additionally, on an annual basis, the Consent Decree Monitor will conduct a survey to assess community perception of BPD. Both the report and the survey will be made publicly available.

### **Action 2 – Community Oversight Task Force**

An effective relationship between the BPD and the community is essential to rebuilding trust. The Consent Decree requires the establishment of a Mayor-appointed commission of 5 people representing diverse communities of Baltimore, which will be responsible for recommending improvements to the current system of BPD civilian oversight. This new body will be called the Community Oversight Task Force (COTF). Among other things, the COTF will assess the current operations of the Civilian Review Board (CRB) and whether improvements to BPD’s community policing strategies should be recommended.

### **Action 3 – Improving Interactions with Youth**

The Consent Decree requires Baltimore City to assess its efforts to decrease youth involvement with the juvenile and criminal justice systems. To do so, BPD is partnering with community organizations and

programs -- including diversion programs, community-based alternatives to incarceration, and treatment options for youth in need of mental health treatment, drug treatment, or other services, as well as the issuance of a report on the results of its assessment. Initial progress in this effort includes:

- Youth-police dialogue circles during in-service and entry-level training at the Professional Development and Training Academy.
- A new training, beginning in May, that will describe the development of the teenage brain and how that can inform police interactions with youth.
- Establishment of a Youth Advisory Board.
- Youth diversion pilot program to be launched this year in the Western District.

**Action 4 – Improving Responses to People with Mental Health Disabilities of in Crisis**

BPD is expanding the level of service the BEST (Behavioral Emergency Services Team) provides by developing a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Unit to provide a highly trained, timely response to persons in behavioral health crisis. Under CIT, mental health clinicians (e.g., LCSW-C, LCPC) and police officers will be paired to respond to calls for service to deescalate persons in crisis, to connect individuals with behavioral health care and other resources, provide follow-up support to individuals who have previously interacted with the unit, and outreach to individuals who call the police or 911 but do not require an immediate in-person response. There are several training initiatives that are either underway and/or in development related to CIT:

- 40 hours of BEST training to 30% of Patrol Division personnel across all districts and shifts
- 40 hours of BEST training to Academy recruits (current practice)
- 40 hours of BEST training plus additional specialized training to CIT Unit personnel (approximately 10)
- Up to 8 hours of BEST training to 911 operators and police dispatchers
- Partnership with the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health to collect and analyze data related to BPD’s response to behavioral health calls for service
- Selection of Baltimore Crisis Response, Inc. (BCRI) to provide two mental health clinicians who will be paired with two police officers in the Central District for the duration of the pilot program

**METRICS FOR SUCCESS**

**Strategy 1:** Quantitative \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_

**Strategy 2:** Quantitative \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_

**Strategy 3:** Quantitative \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_

Qualitative Improve \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_