

Preventing Crime is Everyone's Responsibility

Huntington Police Department



STRATEGIC PLAN 2009 - 2013

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES STATUS REPORT
APRIL 2011

An update on the status of the five-year goals and objectives are as follows:

Goal #1 Strengthen community problem-oriented policing. . Using the four accepted police responses: strategic policing, responsive policing, “broken windows” and community policing.

Objectives:

- A. Weed and Seed model implementation.
- B. Establish specialized units (SEU, K-9, Bikes).
- C. Continue to improve partnerships with other governmental entities in order to improve the quality of life of citizens in each neighborhood.

Status: The Weed and Seed project has been an unqualified success; it has been recognized as a startup model on a national level. In 2010 there was a 19% increase in the number of Weed and Seed residents who feel safe at night and a 21% increase in residents who feel police are doing a good job. One of the key indicators of this success is that vandalism has replaced murder as one of the biggest crime concerns of Weed and Seed area residents.

The COPS Recovery Hiring Grant (\$713,260) has allowed us to establish a Special Emphasis Unit. This Unit works closely with our citizens to identify and solve problems that are not easily remedied by a traditional patrol response. These officers conduct numerous vice and prostitution operations throughout the City. In 2010 this Unit was responsible 373 arrests. The K-9 Unit currently has five certified handlers and five dogs. In 2010 they assisted in seizing 1,145 grams of cocaine, 74.9 grams of heroin, 4,617 grams of marijuana, 2,013 dosage units of illegally diverted pills and approximately \$250,000 in illegal drug proceeds.

Edward G Byrne JAG and Weed and Seed provide funding for us to fully staff our bike patrol throughout the City. These bike officers are approachable and can effectively move around the City providing police service. This is one of the most highly praised and requested services we offer.

An improved partnership with other governmental agencies has been one of our strongest improvements over the last three years. The Weed and Seed Steering Committee and Weed and Seed Law Enforcement Committee are two examples of this success. Additionally we now serve on Task Forces with the FBI, DEA, ATF and the US Marshall’s office. We work closely with the US Attorney’s Office on a daily basis.

Goal #2 Expand and enhance recruitment and retention efforts to maintain full staffing levels.

Objectives:

- A. Enhance organization through recruitment and retention of diverse and quality employees representing our professional standards.
- B. Develop a diverse staff that reflects the community.
- C. Develop a marketing strategy.

Status: Over the last two years recruitment for employment at the Huntington Police Department has improved dramatically. We have focused on recruiting a more diverse pool of applicants. Officers made site visits to predominately Africa- American colleges in order to diversify our applicant pool. We worked closely with the local black pastors association and community groups to reach out to the minority community. As a result, we have seen a significant increase in the number of minority applicants applying and hired the first African-American Officer in fifteen years. A new recruiting website was developed, along with new recruitment posters, brochures, display panels with HPD logos and photos, and a recruitment video. The TTA donated space to run bus ads throughout the region. These developments provided the department with a modern and professional look for recruitment. The result was positive feedback from potential applicants and a 30% increase in the number of applicants received over the previous year. We have an effective marketing campaign that has proven to increase awareness of the Department throughout the community. Our next step in the marketing campaign is the Crime and Drug Tip Line and the unveiling of the new interactive Huntington Police Department website.

Goal #3 Improve the accountability and professionalism of the Huntington Police

Department.

Objectives:

- A. Expand the Professional Standards Bureau in scope and staffing.
- B. Continual update/re-write for policy and procedure manual.
- C. Enhance transparency of police operations as viewed by public.
- D. Continue to identify “best practices” of law enforcement at a national level.
- E. Continue to establish ourselves as a regional training hub.

Status: Three years ago we began searching the law enforcement community for best practices that could be applied in Huntington. Several of those, including DMI and Weed and Seed Initiatives, have been major successes. Over the last year, due to these successes, agencies from around the country began to contact us to find out how we are achieving our successes. Next month the Chief of Police will be presenting to the Gatlinburg Law Enforcement Conference on our DMI strategy. Professional

Standards Unit now consists of one Captain and one Sergeant. This office is now working with the Administrative Bureau to complete the significant update to our policy and procedure manual. They are also facilitating the Department through the CALEA accreditation process.

The HPD Policy and Procedure Manual covers broad categories of behavior and performance expectations to which we hold employees accountable. Complaints about employee misconduct are classified in two ways: external (citizen complaint) and internal (initiated by command staff or an administrative review of an incident.) The Huntington Police Department makes every effort to investigate and adjudicate all complaints in the most expedient time frame as possible. However, there are circumstances, such as case complexity and/or witness unavailability, which can delay the process. There are five ways a Complaints of Misconduct 24 allegation can be adjudicated—sustained, not sustained, unfounded, exonerated and withdrawn. In 2010, there were 19 allegations of misconduct reviewed by the Office of Professional Standards. The goal of the department is to apply progressive disciplinary action to ensure misconduct will not recur. Disciplinary action can range from counseling to employee termination. In some cases employees may also receive additional training in the subject areas where violations have occurred. In 2010 disciplinary action taken against employees ranged from counseling to suspension without pay. Remedial training was also ordered in several incidents.

Goal #4 Identify and address critical public safety issues.

Objectives:

- A. Address the open-air drug markets.
- B. Identify groups or organizations associated with guns and violent crimes.
- C. Identify and target trends that impact overall crime rates, such as prostitution, metal theft and selected property crimes.
- D. Improve quality of life through crime reduction.

Status: The City of Huntington has experienced a 21.20% reduction in overall crime since 2006. During that same time there has been a reduction in breaking and entering of 29.9% and a 27.05% reduction in aggravated assaults.

One of the most visible changes this year was the implementation of the Drug Market Intervention (DMI) strategy in Huntington. The DMI strategy is a problem-solving initiative aimed at permanently closing down open air drug markets. The most violent offenders are targeted and prosecuted as examples. The strategy then targets low-level offenders and stages an intervention with families and community leaders. Offenders are “called-in” and given the option to straighten up or face lengthy prison sentences. The offenders are provided assistance in locating employment, housing, transportation, health care, and access to other social services.

Pre DMI statistics showed there was an average of almost three violent crimes per month in the DMI area. In the five and a half months since then, there have been only two total. Neither case was determined to be drug related.

During the last year the Huntington Police Department partnered with the ATF to conduct a covert sting operation aimed at reducing the number of guns from our streets. This yearlong effort culminated with warrants for 55 criminal suspects, 110 firearms removed from the community and \$500,000 in drugs taken off the streets. U.S. Attorney Booth Goodwin stated this investigation “will deal a crippling blow to the criminal element.”

Goal #5 Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our delivery of police services by expanding the use of technology.

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Objectives:

- A. Acquire technology to manage and track the effective deployment of personnel.
- B. Establish Departmental intranet to improve information sharing and communication among employees.
- C. Increase officer ability to integrate new technology and acquire information from their police vehicle.
- D. Install in-car cameras in entire patrol fleet.
- E. Explore technology to improve or enhance officer safety.

Status: We have taken advantage of every opportunity to obtain funding for technology related projects, but as this year’s grant projects come to a close, we find ourselves with many unfinished projects that could have a detrimental impact on our day to day operations without sustaining support personnel positions.

One of our concerns is the retention of our IT Coordinator. All of the below listed projects are currently funded by outside sources, they are either in the planning or implementation phase. The continued support of qualified personnel that is not available either at the police department or at the City administration is absolutely critical to the success of these projects. There are many routine, day to day functions that are provided by our IT Coordinator. Below is a list specific projects that this position has the most impact on:

Surveillance camera/wireless network expansion (Department of Homeland Security) - This project involves the addition of four surveillance cameras to our existing network along with monitors and a second digital video recorder. These cameras are to be installed within the Weed & Seed/DMI area.

Covert pole cameras (PSN) - This project involves the assembly and deployment of covert mobile surveillance cameras that will communicate with our network via a wireless connection.

Crime mapping software (State JAG/DMI) - This project involves the application of crime mapping software to track incidents and crime trends in near real time. The technology end of this project involves the installation and configuration of host servers to run the application. This project is an evolution of the Drug Market Intervention Initiative, and will be discussed further in the Criminal Intelligence Analyst portion of this narrative.

Microwave link (Project Safe Neighborhoods) - This project involves the establishment of a wireless microwave network bridge between the Huntington Police Department and our law enforcement outpost at the Weed & Seed Community Center. This will allow for a secure means of communication and intelligence sharing between these locations. The construction of this link will serve as a stepping stone for further camera network expansion into the Weed & Seed area and the DMI target area.

Field Reporting Software - This project is currently in the planning stages, but funds have been secured through a COPS Technology grant. This project will update the manner in which we generate, store, and audit general incident reports. Deployment will involve a large amount of hardware and software configuration.

Interoperable Radio System - This project constitutes the remainder of our current COPS Technology grant. It will involve the programming, assignment, and maintenance of some 120+ mobile and portable radios. These new units will be compatible with the State of WV's interoperable radio system.

The continued monitoring of the DMI target area, along with the monitoring of the rest of the City is a must. We will continue to monitor crime trends in near real time. The technology end of this project involves the installation and configuration of host servers to run the application, other aspects will be discussed below in the Crime Analyst portion of this document.

Our IT Coordinator has been with the department for two years now, and has become familiar with our systems, applications, and needs. In this time, we have also sought training and experience to make him more knowledgeable about our AS/400 based HTE Sungard applications. As these same applications are also used at City Hall, our coordinator has developed a working relationship with the City's IT department so that they can share knowledge and assist each other with problems that arise.

Our second concern is the continued monitoring of the DMI target area, along with the monitoring of the rest of the City. This will be achieved by the retention of the Crime Analyst from our DMI program.

As this individual has become familiar with the applications and methods used to monitor the DMI target area over the past year, we will now apply these methods and applications city wide to provide a more data-driven policing effort. We will continue to utilize the crime mapping software application from the DMI program along with analysis of intelligence and UCR data to measure our progress in crime suppression in both the DMI target area and the rest of the City.

The DMI program was intended to be a onetime application to shut down a violent drug market permanently. We prosecuted 25 violent habitual offenders in state and federal court, and identified four individuals who were identified as non-violent who were eligible for the rehabilitative aspects of the program. We plan to keep close tabs on the four non-violent individuals, but once the original program has run its course in June 2011, and we will release our four participants from their daily reporting obligations.

At this time our focus will shift from their progress to the continued monitoring of the target area. It will be very important to keep tabs on this neighborhood so that we may continue to measure the effects of the DMI program, and to monitor the rest of the city for signs of other developing drug markets where we might need to implement a new DMI program.

This program provided our department with a very powerful and expensive crime mapping software application. The methods, applications, and best practices learned in the DMI program will also be used to identify crime trends and outbreaks throughout the city, so that we can apply our limited resources where they will have the most impact. In monitoring crimes and incidents in something near real time, we hope to become more proactive than reactive in our law enforcement mission.

The crime mapping and data analysis information that our analyst generates is also regularly used to support other programs and organizations. We regularly provide data to the Neighborhood Institute, City Administration, the Huntington Housing Authority, programs such as Weed & Seed, Projects Safe Neighborhoods, and other various committees and groups that we collaborate with. This type of data is also essential to the success of future grant applications.

Our objective is to see all of our currently developing technology projects through to their completion, while continuing to take advantage of developing technologies that will enhance our ability to serve the citizens of Huntington. We also hope to continue to provide analysis of the DMI target area and surrounding areas for signs of recurrences or displacement of drug and violent crimes for one year beyond the original time period, and to apply the methods and practices learned from this program to become a more proactive, data-driven police agency.

The cost of retaining these two essential positions is as follows;

IT Projects Coordinator. This program is achieved through a contract with Mountain State Computer & Networking Solutions. This contract provides for one full time Information Technology Projects Coordinator at the Huntington Police Department, and for 24/7 support from the rest of the staff at MSCNS as needed. MSCNS provides this service for \$45,000 annually, or \$3750/month. MSCNS has verified that they will continue this contract at the current rate for another year.

Criminal Intelligence Analyst. This position is a full time civilian employee. On the City's administrative pay scale, he will be making \$13.58/hour for the first 37 weeks of this program. After that he will receive a pay scale increase that takes him to \$14.52/hour for the remaining 15 weeks.

Fringe benefits add 23.1% to his hourly rate. \$24,741 for the first 37 weeks plus \$10,724 for the remaining 15 weeks = \$35,465 for next years salary. The City is self-insured, so we pay actual medical costs, but for budgeting purposes, the City's finance department uses the current COBRA rates. A family plan under COBRA is \$14,530, which makes the total cost of retaining this employee \$49,995.

Goal #6 Expand volunteer opportunities within the Police Department.

Objectives:

- A. Continue our internship program with Marshall University.
- B. Develop a Citizen Police Academy whose alumni association will serve as a pool of potential volunteers.
- C. Creation of Volunteer/Reserve Coordinator to oversee all volunteer initiatives of the Police Department.

Status: The most significant growth in volunteer services at the Huntington Police Department has been the reemergence of the Explorer Program. Last year 16 youth, representing 5 schools completed the program. Additionally we have greatly expanded our Reserve Unit.

The Huntington Police Department also has an outstanding relationship with Marshall University Forensic Science Department. Officer Kathcart works closely with these students enhancing their education and developing resources used by our Department.

We have also expanded our Neighborhood Watch / Neighborhood Safety Awareness Teams throughout the City, predominately in areas covered by groups in The Neighborhood Institute.

Goal #7 Improve internal and external communications.

Objectives:

- A. Utilize external communications strategically.
 - 1) Develop proactive media program in order to ensure positive coverage of organization and promote key messages.
 - 2) Develop better employee and public involvement in the development of the organization.
- B. Improve communications with other city departments.

1) Establish relationships to aid in problem solving

initiatives.

2) Encourage more efficient work processes when installing or servicing

equipment.

3) Gain access to more advanced technology applications used by other

departments.

C. Develop culture within the organization of openness and transparency, improving

two-way communication between bureaus and throughout the Department.

1) Develop proactive internal campaigns to provide issues and messages of

importance from the Chief.

2) Develop feedback mechanism to ensure that employees' views and concerns

are heard and acted on by the organization.

3) Reduce frustrations caused by misinformation through the implementation

of regular meetings with the Chief of Police.

Status: Over the last three years great strides have been made to improve the image of the Huntington Police Department. Ad campaigns and public service announcements are now done with a consistent, professional image. We have expanded and improved the annual report into an all-encompassing document that effectively communicates the accomplishments of the officers of the Huntington Police Department. We are now more transparent and accountable to the public than ever. We conduct customer surveys on a monthly basis. With the new website, these surveys will be able to be conducted easily online.

The public now plays a key roll in the recruitment and selection of new hires. We have members of the community serve on interview boards for police applicants.

The facility at the Jean Dean Public Safety Building has been improved to a level that reflects the proper level of honor and pride of a professional police department. Hallways, conference room, roll call and the training room have been fully updated.

The key work processes that have been put in place have occurred in the area of fleet management and IT. We now have a fleet manager that oversees our fleet. We now have GPS on all patrol vehicles, outsource all vehicle body work and have implemented a new fleet fuel system.

Communication within the Department has improved greatly with the addition of a new email system and each officer being issued a laptop. All big projects are now reviewed by a committee representative of the Department during the planning stages. Communication with other City Departments is being improved with our participation in a Benedum project.

Departmental forms have all been streamlined and made available in a digital format.