



Police Chief's Review and Plan for the Grand Rapids Police Department

July 26th, 2022

Today's Context

City Manager Washington appointed me to be an agent of change and growth in our community. My focus today is on change in several areas based on my observations to date, including:

- Policy and Procedures
- Training
- Deployment and use of resources
- Our role in the community

Our City suffered significant trauma in 2020, through the pandemic and again with the shooting death of Patrick Lyoya in 2022. We have healing to do together.

Change will happen in both the short-term through community-informed steps I'll outline today and long-term through a community-engaged Strategic Roadmap for ongoing change and reform needed to continuously improve the safety of Grand Rapids.

Seeking Innovation

In recent years, our community has been engaged in a productive and forward-looking conversation about policing that has already generated change and advancement.

- **12 Pt Plan:** Community and Police Relations Committee's 12-Point Plan (January 2015)
- **SAFE:** SAFE Anti-Violence Strategy Report and Recommendations (March 2015)
- **TFPPP:** City of Grand Rapids Task Force on Police Policies and Procedures Recommendations with 21st Century Policing (September 2018)
- **Lamberth Consulting:** Traffic Stop Study (April 2017)
- **Hillard Heintz Study:** Staffing analysis (April 2019)
- **Grand Rapids Police Department Strategic Plan FY 2021-2023:** Presented September of 2020
- **OPA's Public Safety Alignment and Governance Report** (July 2021)

Chief's Initial Action Plan

- ✓ Complete review of Departmental policies and procedures
- ✓ Review all non-state mandated training
- ✓ Review of police equipment
- ✓ Review and consider different deployment strategies for sworn staff
- ✓ Establish a team to work on the continuation of the strategic plan
- ✓ Evaluate and update civilian Chief of Staff job description and responsibilities

Chief's Engagement Plan

- ✓ Expand the Police Chief's Advisory Team
- ✓ Continue conversations with ACLU, LINC-Up, NAACP, the Urban League, Neighborhood groups and others
- ✓ Listening sessions with faith-based organizations
- ✓ Partner with OPA to obtain community involvement in training
- ✓ Input from community surveys
- ✓ Learn by working with and listening to officers

Listening to Our Community

Committed to finding ways to make ourselves safer together.

Experienced over 100 meetings with community members including:

- Multiple question and answer sessions with Linc-Up, Neighborhood groups, Business groups, Faith based groups including several Congolese congregations, and even a question-and-answer session with GRPS 9th grade students as part of a presentation on police brutality.
- GRPD's ongoing participation in ALPACT (Advocates & Leaders for Police and Community Trust), the Aspen Institute Justice and Governance Partnership, and SAFE Task Force.
- PCAT, NAACP, ACLU, GRAP, Public meetings.

Observations

- While some have been vocal about “abolishing” the police, the majority of residents and stakeholders would like a more visible police presence in their community and consistently rank the need for public safety highly
- The community wants GRPD’s goal to be ensuring the safety and the feeling of safety for everyone in Grand Rapids
- How the community would like to be policed is evolving
- Mutual respect between the department and community is important to neighbors and critical to our success
- Our department has a strong training culture that promises the ability to learn and be positioned to continuously improve

Observations

- Committed to both safety and constitutional policing – they must work hand in hand
- Our police department has a strong foundation
- Other early practice and policy reforms provide a foundation for change (BWC, ban on chokeholds, duty to intervene, prohibiting no-knock warrants)
- We share many of the same challenges other communities are experiencing across the nation – including experience with increases in crime
- Recognition that the Police Department is only part of the effort to create a safe community
- Safety is a community priority and is every resident's responsibility
- Office of Public Accountability (OPA) is a critical element of joint progress
- Connection to the City Strategic Plan is unique and essential

Observations

The community–informed values we will follow include:

- **Integrity**
- **Bravery**
- **Competence**
- **Equitable and Inclusive**
- **Compassion**
- **Continued Listening**

By living these values, we will be positioned to co-produce safety.

To achieve the changes and safety outcomes promised by these community-informed measures now and to develop and begin implementing a community-engaged strategic plan update yet this year, we need to maintain the current level of investment in police services.

Recommendations and Response

New Policies and Procedures

- Focused on continued culture improvement
 - Constitutional policing
 - Benchmark to national best practices
 - Training
- Evolution of police culture and policy:
 - Former: “Use of Force”

PURPOSE. “To provide personnel with a procedure regarding use of force.”
 - **Update: “De-escalation, response to resistance, and use of force.”**

PURPOSE. “To set forth Department policy regarding de-escalation, response to resistance, and use of force.”

Recommendations and Response

New Policies and Procedures

- Sanctity of Human Life our top priority:

Sanctity of Human Life:

The Department's highest priority is the sanctity of human life. The concept of the sanctity of human life is the belief that all human beings are to be perceived and treated as persons of inherent worth and dignity, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, age, religion, disability, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, military status, immigration status, housing status, source of income, credit history, criminal record, criminal history, or incarceration status. Department members will act with the foremost regard for the preservation of human life and the safety of all persons.

Recommendations and Response

New Policies and Procedures

De-escalation:

De-escalation involves the use of techniques which can reduce the intensity of an encounter with a suspect and provide an officer with additional options to gain voluntary compliance or mitigate the need to use a higher level of force while maintaining control of the situation. Appropriate techniques vary depending on the circumstances. Examples include continued communication including persuasion, advice, or instruction, and employing trauma-informed communications techniques such as using a respectful tone and acknowledging any confusion or mistrust by the person; tactical positioning to create distance between officers and a potential threat; and using time as a tactic to permit the de-escalation of the subject's emotions and allow the person an opportunity to comply with the lawful verbal direction, allow for continued communication with the person and the adjustment of the verbal control techniques employed by the members, and allow for the arrival of additional members or resources.

Recommendations and Response

Additional Policy Language Changes

- Require a warning before the use of deadly force
- Use deadly force only when “necessary” to do so
- De-escalation and the opportunity to voluntarily comply required

Training to these new policies is scheduled

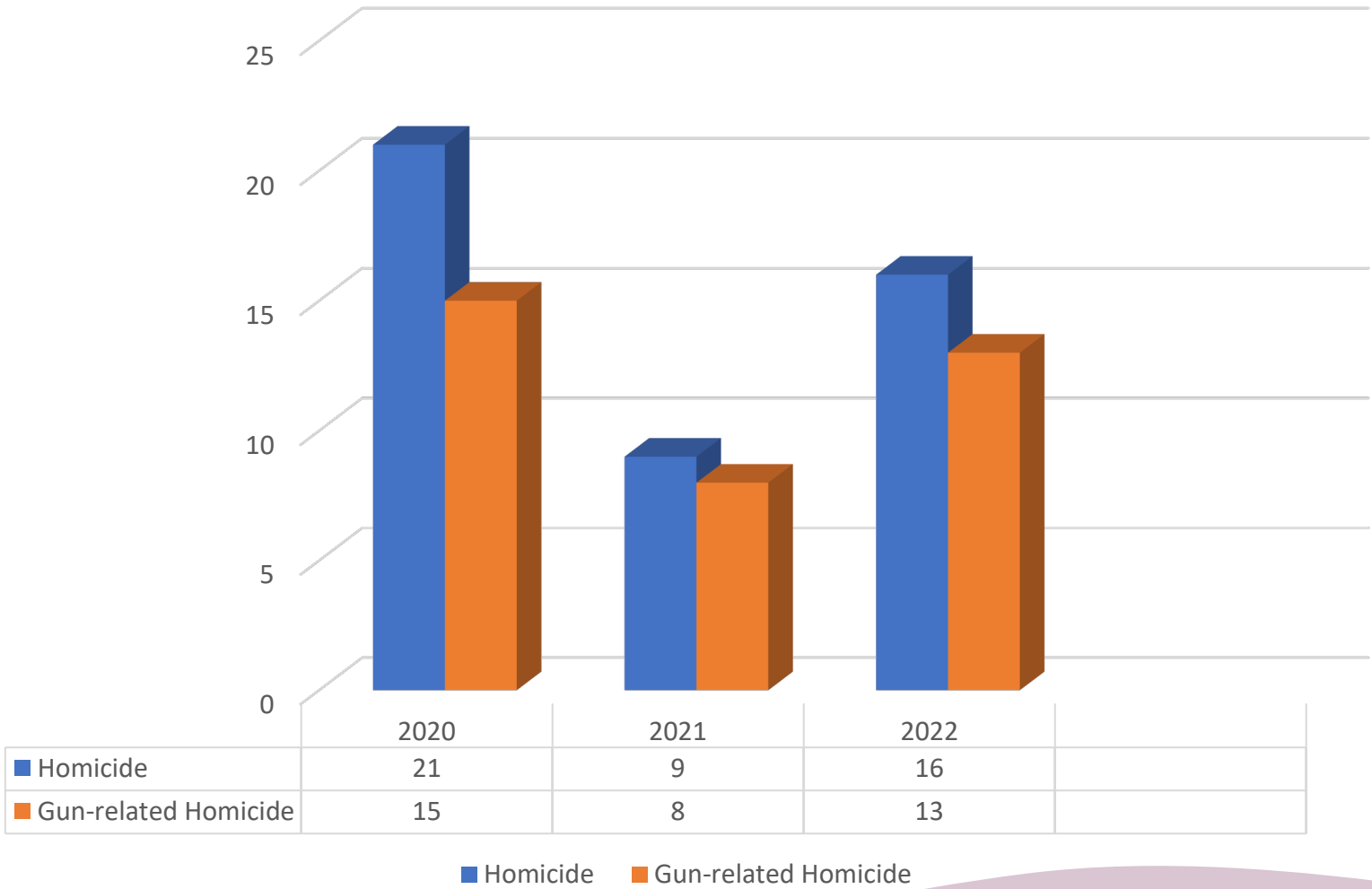
- Thanks to City Manager recommendation and City Commission approval on July 12, training to new policies will begin on August 2
- Improve understanding of the entire history of policing
- Self-regulation, De-escalation, Neuroscience of Stress/Fear response, Constitutional Policing
- Re-enforcement of core policy principles through training provided by OPA

Recommendations and Response

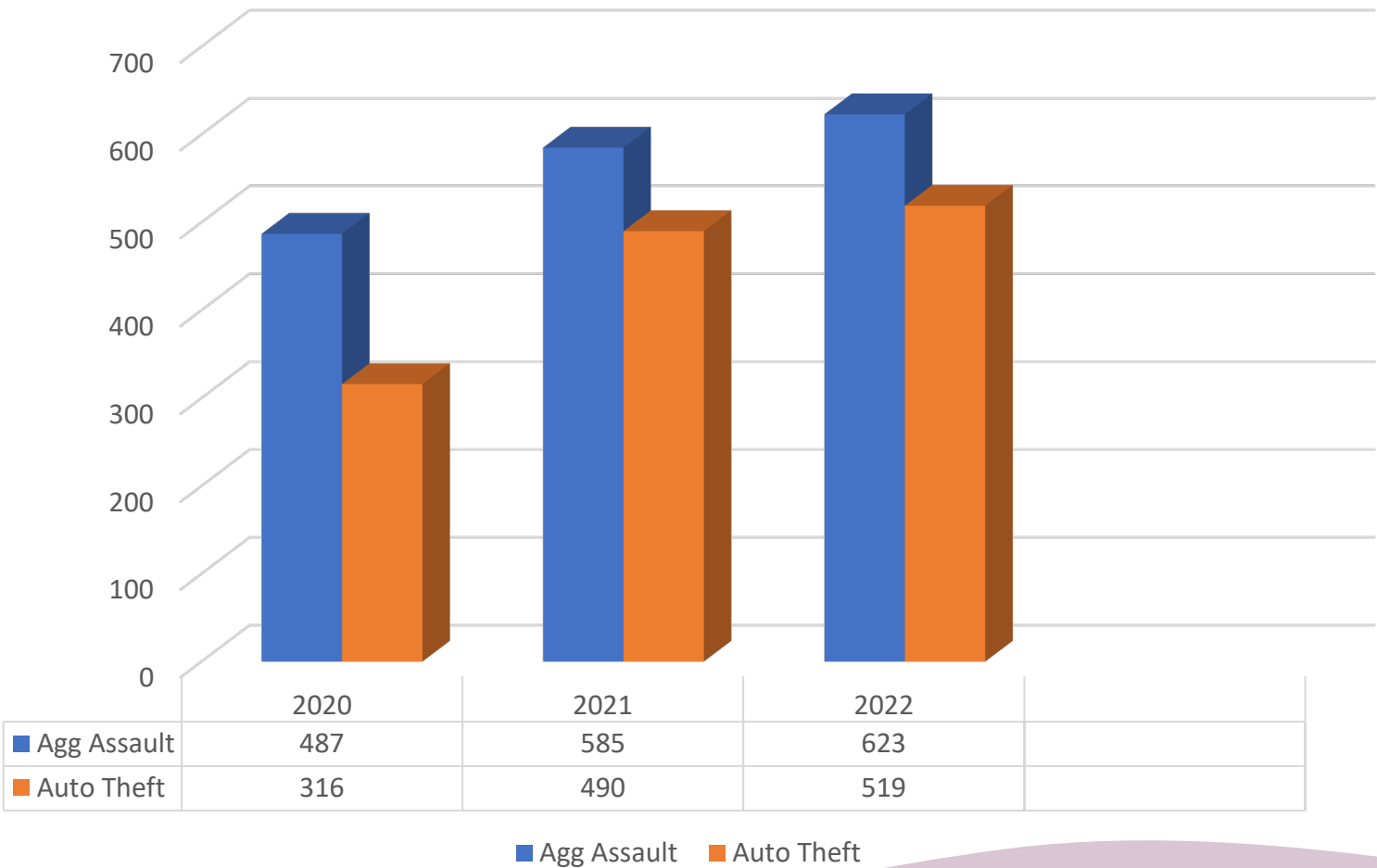
Deployment and use of resources

- Staffing to authorized strength is critical – progress is being made now. Consistent progress is required with 31 current vacancies.
- Patrol and Investigations remain the backbone of sworn GRPD
- Opportunities for civilianization remain
- Recasting of role of Special Response Team
- Continuing with HOT/ B&G
- Mobile Crisis Response (Webinar discussing program: [Session recording link](#))
- Work to improve efficiency, transparency and victim services

January 1 – July 25 Homicides



January to June - Aggravated Assault and Auto Theft Data



GRPD efforts to combat violence

Cleared Homicides

- National Average: 55%
- GRPD 2021 Cleared rate: 78.9%
- GRPD 2022 Cleared rate: TBD

2022 Murders

- Sixteen total murders in Grand Rapids
- Nine closed by arrest and prosecution
- Majority of other murders in prosecution review

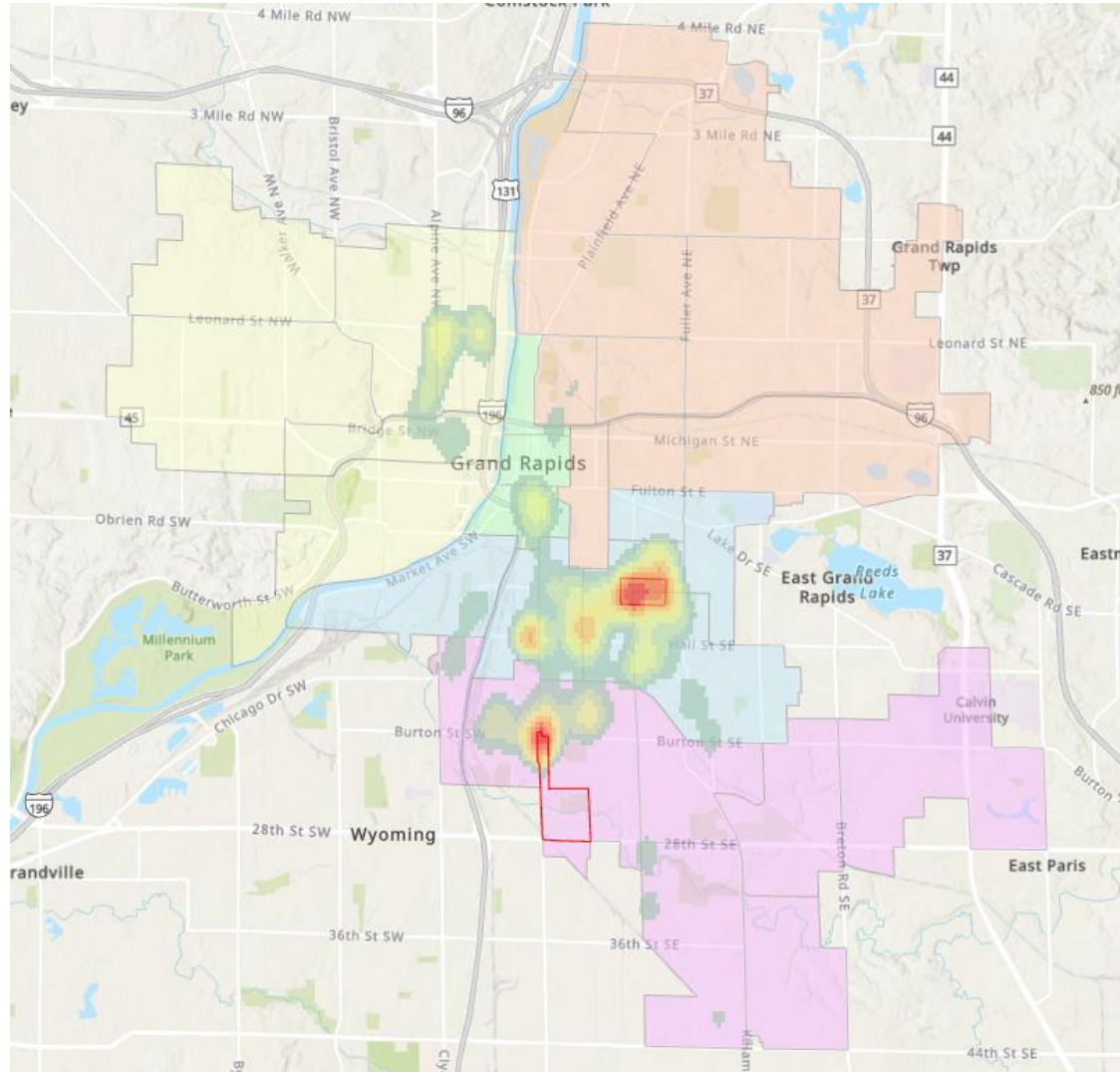
Illegally Possessed Firearms Recovered by GRPD (YTD)

- 2022 – 314
- An average of 1.5 illegally possessed guns recovered every day



Observations

The impact of crime is historically felt disproportionately in several neighborhoods.



Recommendations and Response

Strategic Deployment Plan

- Data Informed Community Engagement (DICE)
Pilot Areas
 - Burton Heights
 - Heartside
 - Martin Luther King Jr and Eastern

What DICE is and how it works

- GRPD Data analysis
- Resident and business engagement
- GVSU, SRT other outreach
- Service Referral Tracking Number
- Deployment of internal and external resources (Vice, Detective Unit, SRT etc)
- Strengthening bonds with GRPD personnel

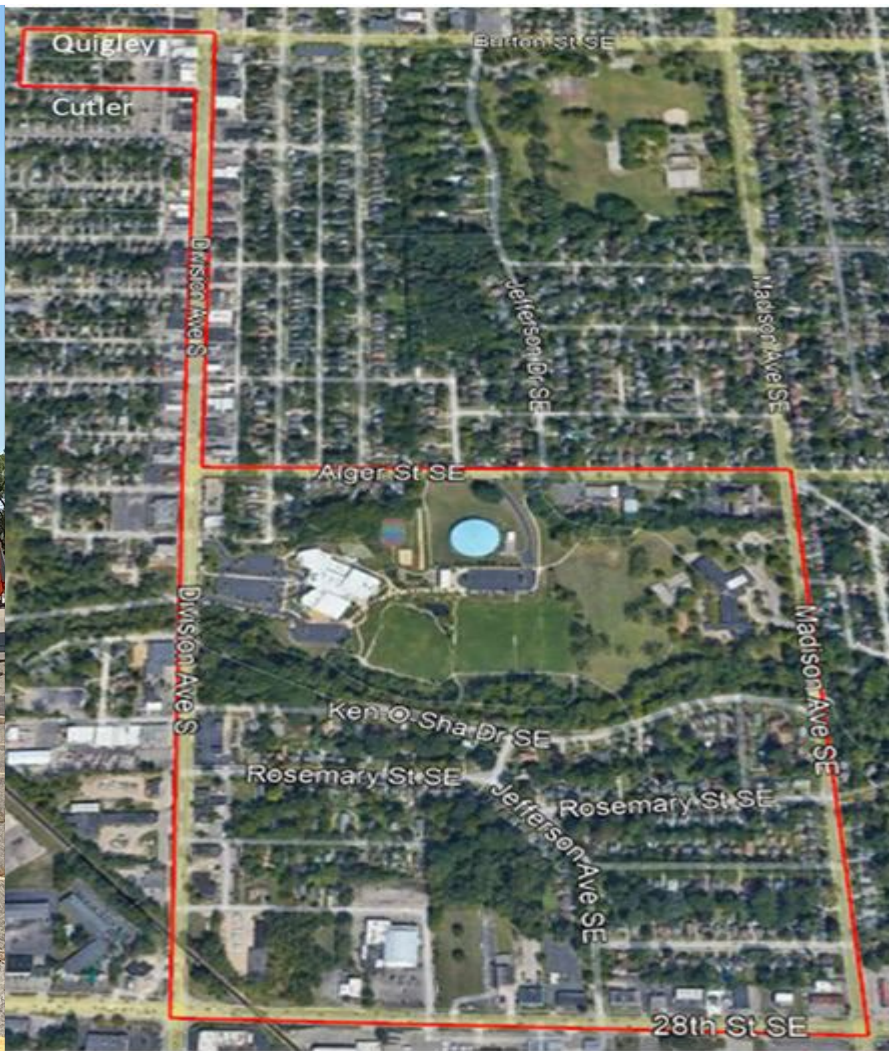
Recommendations and Response

Strategic Deployment Plan

DICE: Heartside

- Community concerns brought to GRPD:
 - Open air drug sales
 - Drug-related criminal activity
 - A feeling of being unsafe in the neighborhood
- Operation targets those profiting off drugs, not persons with dependencies
- Additional resources allocated for those medically impacted by removal of drug supply
- Early results

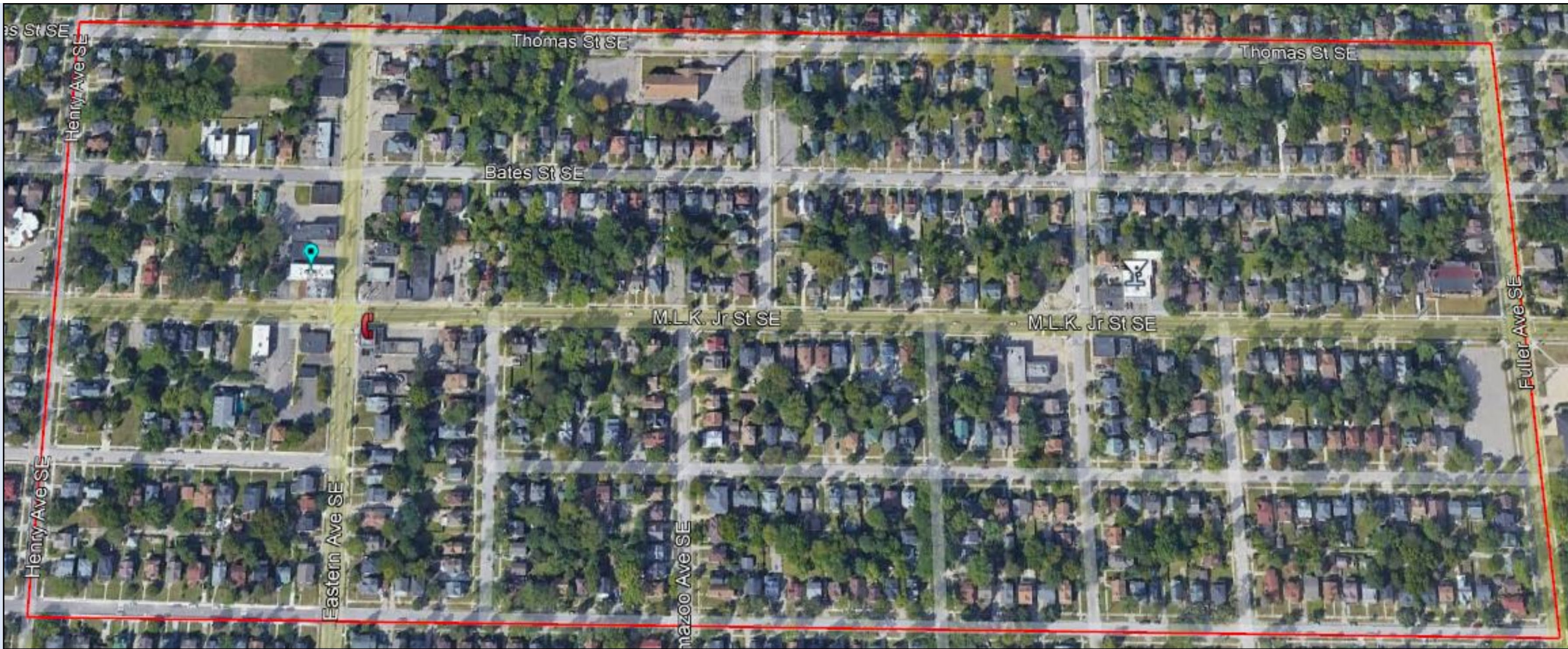
Burton Heights



DICE



Eastern Ave and Martin Luther King Jr. St



DICE



Recommendations and Response

Whole of government approach

- HOT (Homeless Outreach Team)
- Mobile Crisis Response (Co-response model)
- Code Enforcement
- CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design)
- Public Safety Strategy Team – intentionally integrating all services that add to community safety
- Additional security contracts for service in City parks
- Additional security for and downtown commercial areas
- Expansion of video surveillance on public property
- Assessing who else can contribute
- Redeploy SRT (Special Response Team)

Collaboration with OPA

- Community Informed Training
- Management and support of body-worn cameras
- Cure Violence
- Accountability

Public Safety Focused Enforcement



Public Safety Focused Enforcement



Strategic Roadmap for Moving Forward Together

- Implement changes to vital policies in coming weeks
- Train to those policy changes – process started with CC approval of contract on July 12 and training to begin on August 2
- Work with OPA on community-informed training to be conducted in current fiscal year
- Use product of community-informed training to inform evolution of public safety services to achieve the next consensus on how the community wants to experience public safety

Strategic Roadmap for Moving Forward Together

- Accelerate collaboration with other government agencies for more collective impact that produces safe community outcomes together. Health, economic prosperity, affordable housing, mental health, trauma and more impact public safety. Recognize and explore who else can contribute.
- Forge a stronger connection to community in part by engaging with community-based efforts such as SAFE, Cure Violence, GR Justice and Governance Partnership, and more.
- Evaluate and consider expansion of co-response model.
- Continue to find ways to make ourselves safer together.
- Measure results and report periodically to the public, City Commission and Public Safety Committee on progress.
- Staffing to authorized strength is critical – progress is being made now including exploring proven interview and background software. Consistent progress is required.

Strategic Roadmap for Moving Forward Together

Work will begin on an update to the Police Department Strategic Plan that will take the elements discussed today, further test them and mold them into our approach for FY2024 – 2027 and beyond.

What we will be measuring:

- Sentiment
- Crime data
- Feedback from neighbors and neighborhoods
- Training to policy changes
- Community informed training
- Other policy changes
- Co-response model outcomes
- Staffing and Deployment progress

Conclusion

Thank you to the community for their earnest engagement with me – your ideas have informed my actions.

We are already hard at work implementing the strategies outlined today to reach our goal of becoming the most trusted police department, and safest community we can be.

In the face of intense public scrutiny, the men and women of GRPD continue to give a 100% effort to make Grand Rapids a safer place for everyone. Our success will hinge not only on our efforts to provide professional, compassionate and courageous service, but on the support Grand Rapids shows its police officers. In a time of unprecedented recruitment and retention challenges, knowing that the city stands with its police officers is the key to our success in keeping and recruiting the best officers and inspiring those officers to continue to make daily sacrifices for this great city.