

Public Safety Committee Briefings

June 16, 2026



BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS AND REVIEW OF GRPD'S K9 PROGRAM POLICY 6-8.1

Presented by The Office of
Oversight and Public
Accountability (OPA)
June 16, 2026



AGENDA

1

Introduction

2

Three-Part Framework:
Benchmarking Factors

3

Summary of Three-Part Analysis

4

Recommendations

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Questions

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OBJECTIVE

In response to the City Commission's request, the City Manager directed OPA to perform a benchmarking analysis of peer jurisdictions and national professional associations related to GRPD's canine policy.

OPA evaluated GRPD's written canine policy and identified areas it could be clarified or strengthened to better align with peer-city practices and nationally recognized guidance.

This review is based on GRPD's written policy, MOP 6-8.1, the K9 Handler Manual, and notes practices that are not yet reflected in written policy.

SCOPE OF ANALYSIS

This is a policy-level benchmarking analysis and review. **It is not a legal analysis** and does not conclude that any GRPD canine deployment or incident was unreasonable or unconstitutional.

The analysis was not designed to evaluate individual incident decisions or handler conduct.

After completing the written-policy review, OPA also met with GRPD to better understand current canine practices. The report describes operational practices GRPD reports it follows that are not yet fully reflected in written policy. These practices are described as GRPD stated them and were not independently verified by OPA.

DEFINITIONS

Canine Apprehension: A suspect surrenders or is otherwise brought into custody as the result of a canine deployment. This may be because the canine was used as trained, or because the suspect surrendered after becoming aware that the canine might be used (PERF).

Canine Handler: A sworn law enforcement officer trained and certified to work with a police canine.

UOF: Use of Force. The application of physical tactics or tools by law enforcement to gain compliance or control.

BENCHMARKING FACTORS: IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS



There is no single, universally adopted standard governing police canine programs in the United States. Canine policy varies widely across jurisdictions, and no federal statute or national accreditation body prescribes a uniform set of requirements.



The ten benchmarking factors used in this study were not developed by OPA. They were derived from the recurring requirements and recommendations found across these independent, nationally recognized sources such as International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), and the canine policies of the peer agencies reviewed.



These factors also reflect the operational categories around which law enforcement agencies routinely structure their canine policies.

THREE-PART BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK

1

Cross-Policy Analysis

Examines how MOP 6-8.1 interacts with six related GRPD policies: Use of Force (9-1.1), Vehicle Pursuit (8-6.1), Youth (8-16), Deaf/HH (8-10), Incapacitated Persons (10-2), and Mental Health Response (10-3.1)

2

Best Practices from Nationally Recognized Sources

Published guidance from IACP, PERF, CJTC, and NACOLE, plus peer-reviewed research.

3

Selected Peer City Comparison

9 agencies of comparable population, demographics, and policing structure. GRPD nominated up to four agencies; OPA independently selected the remainder.

4

10 BENCHMARKING FACTORS

- 1 **Force Classification:** Does the policy classify canine bites or apprehension as a use-of-force option?
- 2 **Apprehension Threshold:** Is physical apprehension limited to serious violent felonies, armed suspects, or high-risk situations?
- 3 **Supervisor Approval:** Does the policy require supervisory approval before bite-risk deployments?
- 4 **Warning Requirements:** What warnings must be given, and is documentation required when warnings are waived?
- 5 **Bite Incident Review:** Who conducts the primary review, and is it independent of the canine unit?
- 6 **Vulnerable Population Protections:** Are there restrictions for juveniles, elderly, persons in mental health crisis, or impaired individuals?
- 7 **Transparency and Reporting:** Is public reporting of deployments, bites, demographics, or bite ratios required?
- 8 **Training Methodology:** Does the policy specify bite-and-hold, bark-and-hold, or another approach?
- 9 **Demographic Tracking:** Is demographic data collected and analyzed for canine deployments?
- 10 **Recall and Control:** Is the handler required to recall the canine once the suspect is in custody or the threat has ended?

PART 1: GRPD CROSS-POLICY ANALYSIS



GRPD'S CANINE PROGRAM POLICY (MOP 6-8.1)

GRPD authorizes canine use across a broad operational range:

- 1 Tracking suspects and potential evidence during or after criminal offenses
- 2 Missing incidents where the person may be in danger
- 3 Article/evidence searches for stolen or abandoned property
- 4 Building searches where burglary or felony suspects are believed to be hiding
- 5 Narcotic searches (homes, vehicles, open areas, parcels) when legal requirements are met
- 6 Physical apprehensions based on totality of circumstances
- 7 Area searches to locate and apprehend hidden felony suspects
- 8 Off-lead apprehensions after verbal warnings and totality review
- 9 Tactical/SRT deployments under SRT supervisor direction

GRPD POLICIES CONSIDERED

- 1 MOP 9-1.1 Deescalation, Response to Resistance and Use of Force
- 2 MOP 8-6.1 Vehicle Pursuit Policy
- 3 MOP 8-16 Youth Interactions
- 4 MOP 8-10 Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- 5 MOP 10-2 Custody of Incapacitated Persons
- 6 MOP 10-3.1 Responding to Persons with Mental Disorders

PART 2: BEST PRACTICES FROM NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED SOURCES



NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED SOURCES USED TO DEVELOP BEST PRACTICES

1

IACP: International Association of Chiefs of Police

2

PERF: Police Executive Research Forum

3

NACOLE: National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement

4

Washington State CJTC Model: Criminal Justice Training Commission

These organizations provide policy models and best K9 practices.

PART 3: PEER CITIES ANALYSIS





1 West Covina, California

Pop. ~110,000

2 Detroit, Michigan

Pop. ~640,000

3 Madison, Wisconsin

Pop. ~270,000

4 Worcester, Massachusetts

Pop. ~206,000

5 Fort Collins, Colorado

Pop. ~170,000

6 Kent County Sheriff's Department, Michigan

Pop. ~663,000

7 Traverse City, Michigan

Pop. ~16,000

8 Salt Lake City, Utah

Pop. ~200,000

9 Spokane, Washington

Pop. ~230,000



Selection Criteria: Generally agencies of comparable population (150K– 250K), demographics, and policing structure. GRPD nominated up to 4; OPA independently selected the remainder.

SUMMARY OF THREE-PART BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS



SUMMARY OF PART 1: GRPD CROSS-POLICY ANALYSIS

- **De-escalation, Response to Resistance, and Use of Force (MOP 9-1.1):** Canine apprehension is not expressly described as a use-of-force option within MOP 9-1.1. The force continuum covers compliance controls, CEWs, impact weapons, strikes, and more, but does not include canine apprehension or bites. De-escalation and duty-to-intervene provisions also do not extend to K9 deployments.
- **Youth Interactions (MOP 8-16):** GRPD's youth interactions policy contains protections that are not currently extended to canine encounters. GRPD requires supervisor notification when a child under 13 has been handcuffed and restricts firearm display against youth, yet the canine policy permits physical apprehension without age-based restrictions or supervisor approval.
- **Deaf/Hard of Hearing (MOP 8-10):** K9 warnings are entirely verbal. The Deaf/HH policy warns that failure to respond to commands may indicate hearing loss, not defiance.
- **Incapacitated Persons (MOP 10-2) and Mental Health (MOP 10-3.1):** Protective frameworks for intoxicated, incapacitated, and "persons with mental illnesses" (MOP 10-3) are not explicitly reflected in K9 operations, despite these being precisely the situations where modified approaches are most critical.

SUMMARY OF PART 2:

BEST PRACTICES FROM NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED SOURCES

Benchmarking Factors	Best Practices from Nationally Recognized Sources	GRPD Current Status
Force Classification	Classify canine apprehension/bites as a use-of-force option on the force continuum (IACP Model Policy, Sec. IV.B.5; PERF Rec. #17–20;).	K9 not classified as UOF in canine policy. Sec. F.1 references a UOF Report but canine policy lacks explicit UOF statement. In practice, K9 is implied as UoF.
Apprehension Threshold	Limit apprehension to serious violent felonies with enumerated conditions; require probable cause predicate (IACP Graham factors; PERF Ch. 3).	Sec. D.1.f prohibits apprehension in non-serious offenses when no danger exists. Sec. D.1.e requires weighing severity/threat/resistance. No named felony floor.
Vulnerable Population Protections	Restrict or prohibit canine deployment against known juveniles, elderly, persons in mental health crisis, and hearing-impaired persons (CJTC; NACOLE; peer agencies including Greenville PD and Winter Haven PD).	No restrictions for juveniles, elderly, mentally ill, deaf, intoxicated, or pregnant persons during K9 encounters. Protections exist in other GRPD policies (MOPs 8-16, 10-3.1, 8-10, 10-2).

Factors	Best Practice from Nationally Recognized Sources	GRPD Current Status
Transparency & Reporting	Publish annual K9 data: deployments, bites, bite ratios, injuries, demographics. Include in annual UOF report (PERF Rec. #20; PERF Principle #11; NACOLE).	Handler Manual Sec. 8-1: deployment reports every use, monthly stats, quarterly reviewed training logs. No public reporting required. GRPD publishes annual K9 force count on dashboard (de facto).
Warning Requirements	Standardized warning language, multiple announcements, multilingual considerations, documented justification when waived (PERF Ch. 3; CJTC).	Sec. D.1.c(2): building search announcements required. Sec. D.1.e(3): verbal warnings for off-lead. Waivable without documentation.
Supervisor Approval	Require supervisor authorization before any deployment where a bite is foreseeable (PERF Rec. #18).	Sec. D.1 authorizes most functions “without prior supervisory approval.” Supervisor required only for special circumstances (Sec. D.2).

Benchmarking Factor	Best Practice From Nationally Recognized Sources	GRPD Status
Bite incident Review	Route canine bites into the same review process as other serious force; IA or external body conducts primary review (PERF Rec. #18–19).	Multi-layer: UOF Report + K9 supervisor review (Sec. F.4) + copies to IA, Chief, service area cmdr (Sec. F.7, Handler Manual 11-D). IA notified but not leading.
Training Methodology	Specify training methodology (bite-and-hold vs. bark-and-hold) in policy; document maintenance training; align with national certification (IACP; PERF;).	Handler Manual Sec. 4-4: sociability selection, apprehension-as-“game.” Sec. 6-1: weekly training, national cert (IPWDA/NAPWDA/USPCA). Bite methodology not named in policy.
Demographic Tracking	Require demographic data collection for all canine deployments; analyze for patterns and disparities (NACOLE; NIJ-funded research).	No tracking of race, age, or gender of K9 subjects. GRPD already tracks demographics for other UOF categories via IAU annual statistical analysis (MOP 9-1.1, Sec. K.2.b).
Recall/ Control	Require immediate recall/restraint once suspect is in custody or threat has ended (PERF Rec. #15; IACP Model Policy, Sec. IV.B; CJTC).	Sec. D.1.e(4-5): handler must recall dog once suspect in custody or no longer a reasonable threat. Applies to commanded and uncommanded apprehensions.

GRPD K9 PRACTICES

THIS REVIEW WAS BASED ON WRITTEN POLICY. HOWEVER, OPA MET WITH GRPD AFTER COMPLETING THE ANALYSIS AND LEARNED THAT THERE ARE SEVERAL POSITIVE PRACTICES THAT ARE NOT REFLECTED IN WRITTEN POLICY.

- 1 Force Classification.** GRPD reports that canine apprehensions are treated as a use-of-force event in practice and that a Use of Force Report is required for each apprehension.
- 2 Apprehension Threshold.** GRPD states that it adheres their apprehension policy to the US Supreme Court Case of *Graham v. Connor* which sets the minimum standards for K9 Apprehension.
- 3 Warning Requirements.** GRPD has stated that standardized warnings are taught through training and that any omission must be documented in the Use of Force Report.
- 4 Bite Review Independence.** GRPD has stated that Internal Affairs reviews all Use of Force Reports, including those involving canine apprehensions that result in bites.
- 5 Vulnerable Population Protections.** GRPD reports that officers are trained to weigh a person's status in a vulnerable population as part of the totality-of-the-circumstances analysis applied to any use of force.
- 6 Training and Methodology.** GRPD indicates that bite-and-hold is the default for any K9 program which is why it is not documented in their policy.
- 7 Demographic Tracking.** GRPD indicates that demographics are documented in Use of Force Reports, however, they do not analyze for patterns and disparities.

SUMMARY OF PART 3: MID-SIZE PEER CITIES COMPARISON

Benchmarking Factor	GRPD Written Policy	GRPD Practice	W. Covina PD	Detroit PD	Madison PD	Worcester PD	Ft. Collins PD	Kent Co. Sheriff's Office	Traverse City	Salt Lake City PD	Spokane PD
Force Classification		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Apprehension Threshold		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Supervisor Approval			✓	✓							
Warning Requirements	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bite Incident Review	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vulnerable Population Protections		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		
Transparency and Reporting	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓		
Training Methodology		✓		✓						✓	
Demographic Tracking		✓									
Recall and Control	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		22

RECOMMENDATIONS



RECOMMENDATIONS (1 OF 2)

Recommendation	Peer & National Reference Point
<p>1. Classify Canine Apprehension as a Use of Force Classify canine apprehension as a use-of-force option on the GRPD force continuum and integrate canine apprehension into MOP 9-1.1.</p>	<p>IACP Sec. IV.B.5; PERF Rec. 17-20; WA State CJTC; West Covina, Detroit, Madison, Worcester, Salt Lake City.</p>
<p>2. Narrow the Canine Apprehension Threshold Limit apprehension to serious violent felonies, armed or dangerous suspects, or comparable high-risk situations, and state that flight alone does not justify apprehension absent an articulable safety threat.</p>	<p>IACP Sec. IV.B.4; PERF Ch. 3; WA State CJTC; West Covina, Worcester, Madison, Fort Collins, Traverse City, Salt Lake City, Spokane.</p>
<p>3. Establish Vulnerable Population Protections Establish restrictions for known or suspected juveniles, elderly persons, persons in crisis, deaf or hard-of-hearing persons, and incapacitated persons, and cross-reference MOP 8-16, 10-3.1, 8-10, and 10-2.</p>	<p>West Covina, Detroit, Salt Lake City; WA State CJTC; NACOLE.</p>
<p>4. Expand Transparency and Reporting Expand public reporting of canine deployments and outcomes and formalize routine OPA access to canine program data.</p>	<p>Worcester (bite-ratio review); PERF Rec. 20 & Principle 11; NACOLE; West Covina, Detroit, Madison, Salt Lake City.</p>
<p>5. Standardize Warning Language and Documentation Adopt standardized warning language, require a defined opportunity to surrender, provide for multilingual considerations, and require written justification when a warning is not given.</p>	<p>West Covina, Detroit, Madison, Worcester, Fort Collins, Kent County, Traverse City, Salt Lake City, Spokane; PERF Ch. 3; IACP; WA State CJTC.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS (2 OF 2)

Recommendation	Peer & National Reference Point
<p>6. Require Supervisor Approval Before Deployment Require supervisory approval, or at minimum sergeant-level concurrence, before physical apprehension, area-search apprehension, or off-lead deployment.</p>	<p>West Covina, Detroit; Madison, Worcester, Fort Collins, Traverse City, Salt Lake City, Spokane; PERF Rec. 18.</p>
<p>7. Mandate Bite Report Review by IAU Designate Internal Affairs as the primary reviewing authority for canine bites and apprehensions, with the Canine Program supervisor providing technical input, and make review components mandatory.</p>	<p>West Covina, Detroit, Madison, Worcester, Salt Lake City; Kent County; PERF Rec. 18-19; IACP; WA State CJTC.</p>
<p>8. Clarify Training Methodology in Policy Specify GRPD's canine training methodology in MOP 6-8.1 and document maintenance-training requirements.</p>	<p>Detroit, Salt Lake City; IACP; PERF; Mesloh (2006).</p>
<p>9. Include Demographic Tracking in Reporting Collect and analyze demographic data for canine deployments and incorporate it into the IAU annual statistical analysis (MOP 9-1.1, Sec. K.2.b).</p>	<p>NACOLE; NIJ-funded research; some peer agencies.</p>



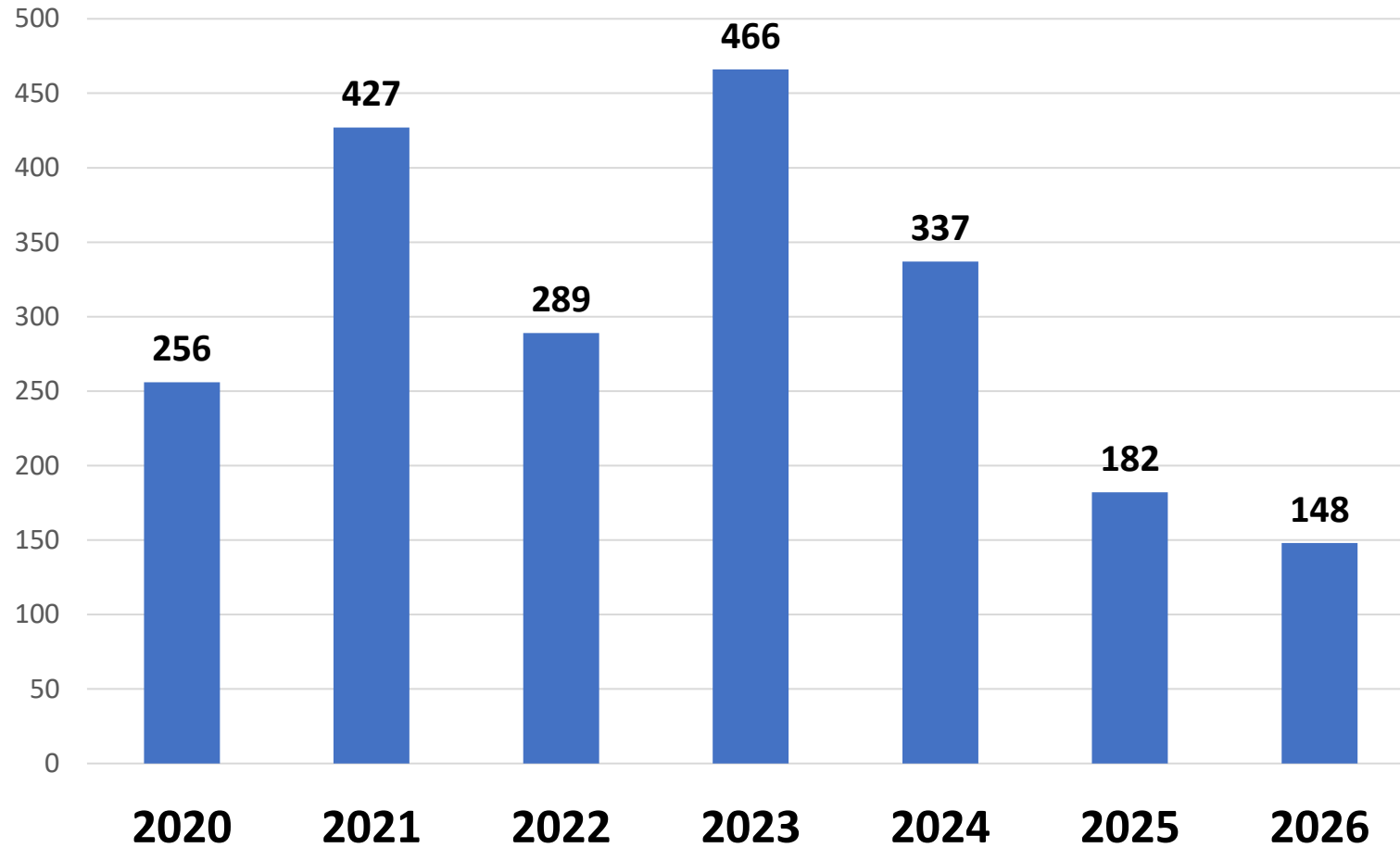
Questions?



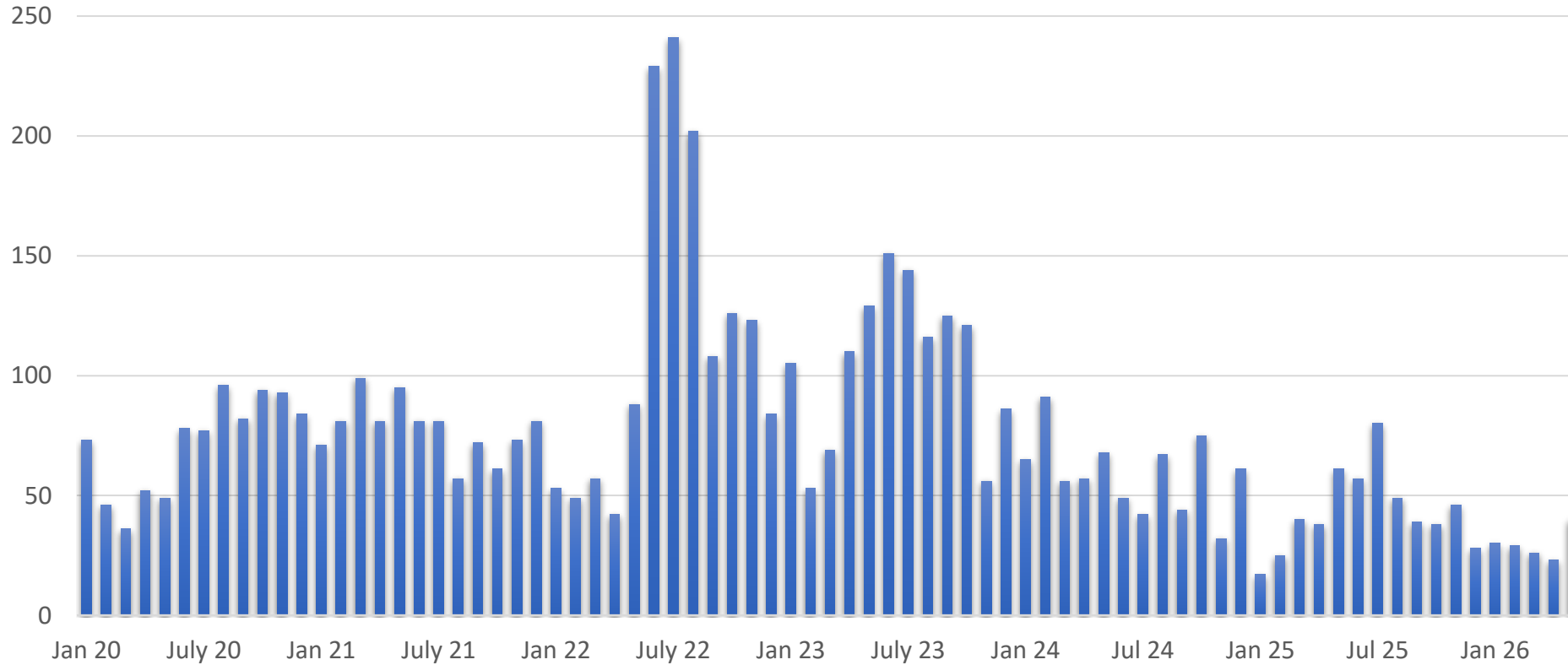
Grand Rapids Police Department Public Safety Committee Update

June 16, 2026

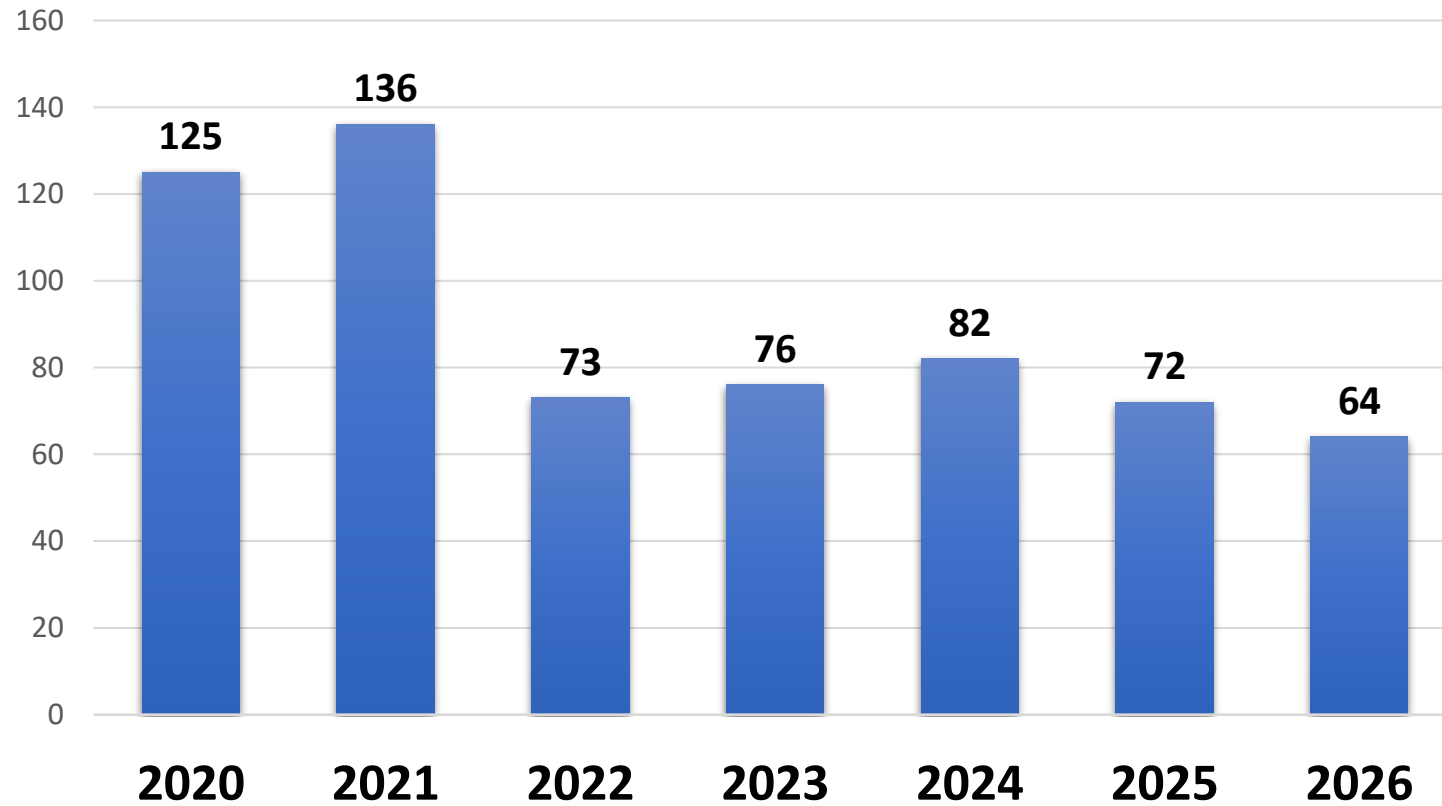
Auto Theft Totals January – May



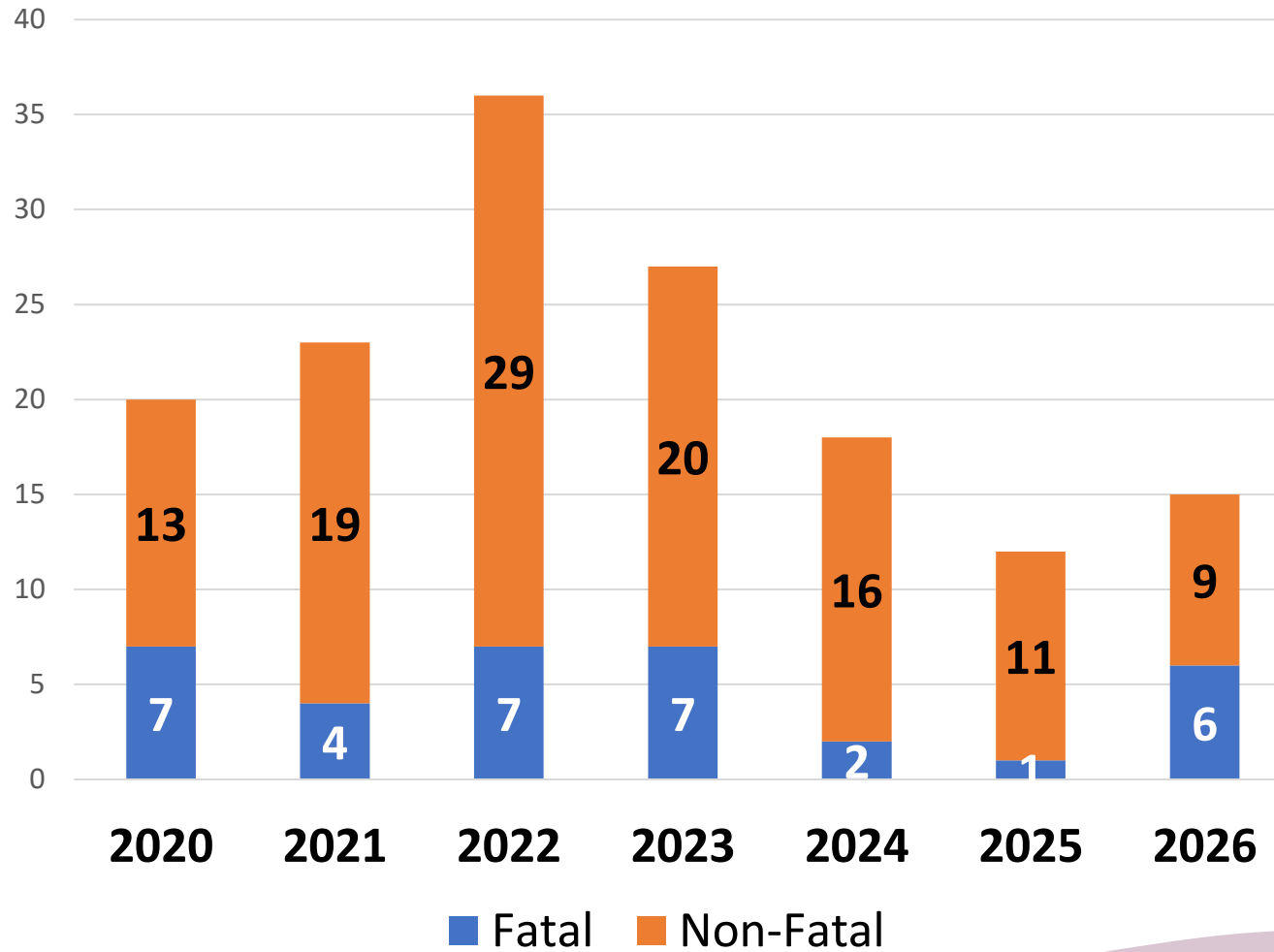
Auto Thefts – Monthly



Robbery Totals January – May

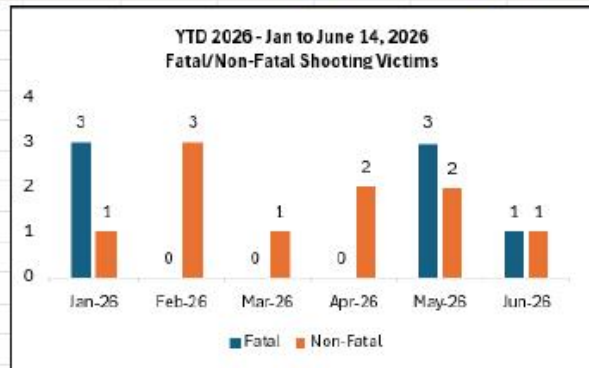
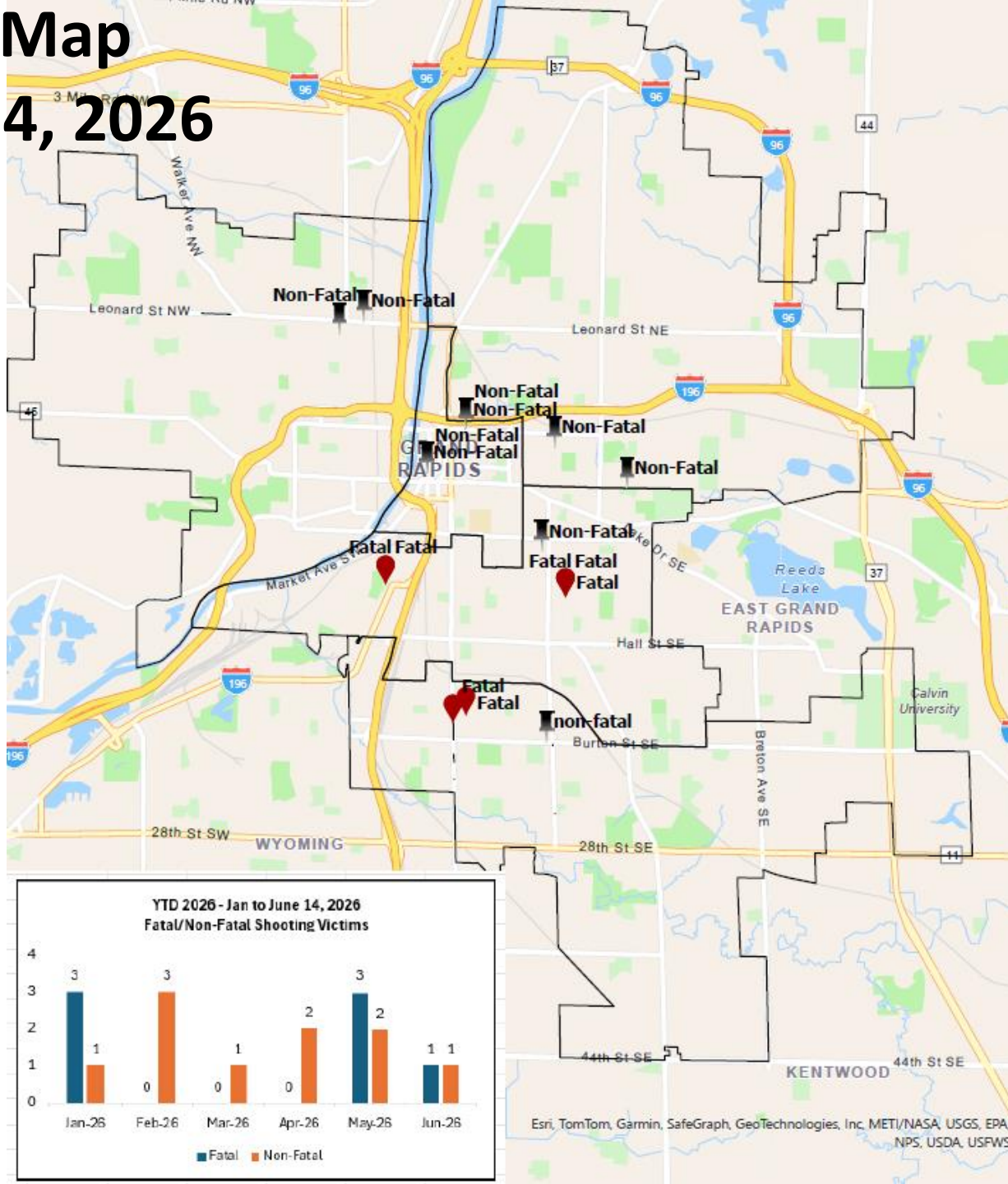


Persons Shot January – May

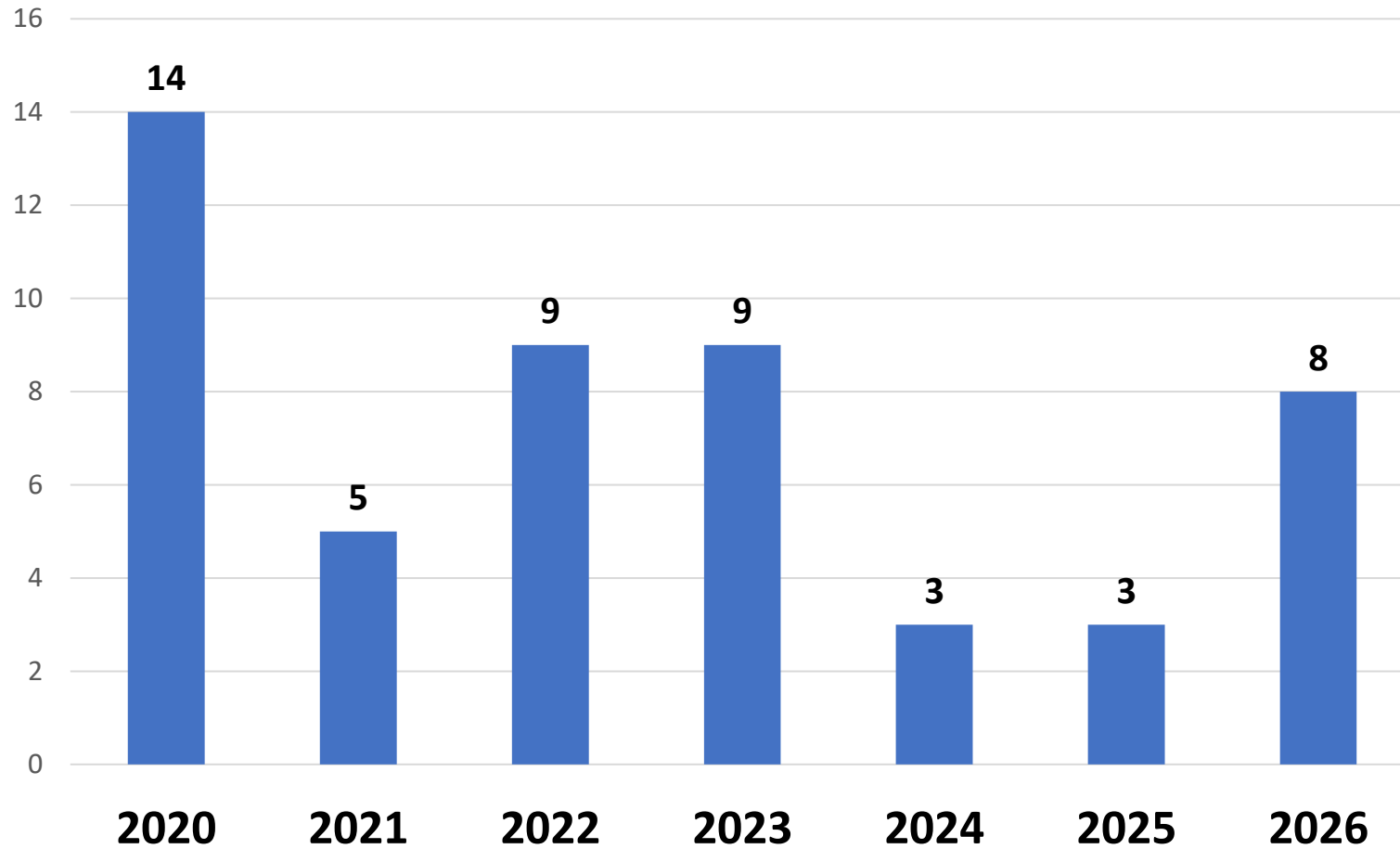


Persons Shot Map

January – June 14, 2026



Homicide Totals January – May



2026 We Remember

Jacqueline Neill, 40 years old – January 27

Cameron Kilpatrick, 15 years old – January 27

Michael Kilpatrick, 13 years old – January 27

Vincenzo Palmeri, 53 years old – March 9

Jeremiah Griffin-Cuevas, 15 years old – May 5

Savanah Villareal, 38 years old – May 5

Gatlok Nguany, 18 years old – May 24

Angel Rivas, 32 years old – May 24

Terry Corona-Tenorio, 26 years old – June 1



Other Updates

Cleared Homicides

- National Average: 55%
- GRPD 2022 Clearance rate: 77%
- GRPD 2023 Clearance rate: 75%
- GRPD 2024 Clearance rate: 77%
- GRPD 2025 Clearance rate: 71%
- 7 of 9 homicides in 2026 cleared by arrest

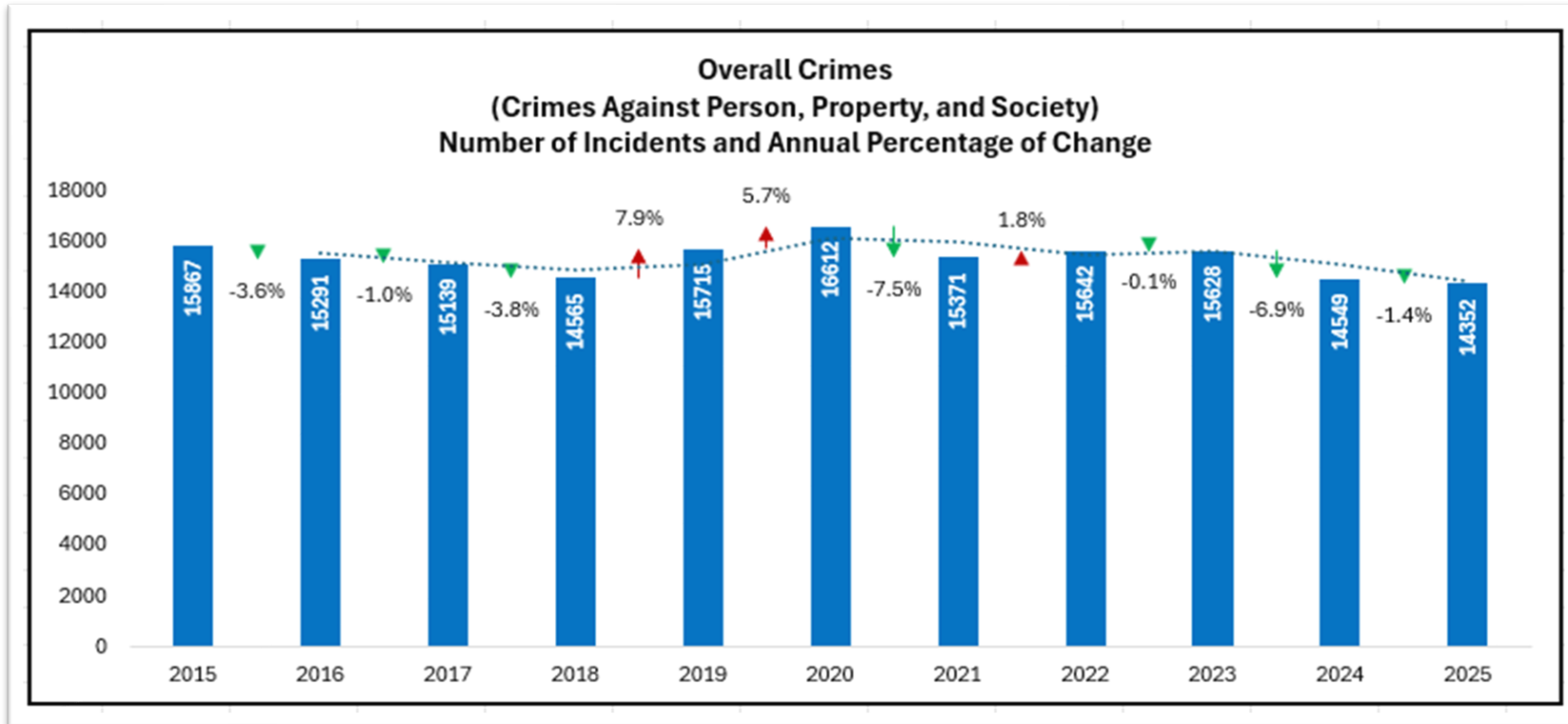
Other

- 14 recorded fatal overdoses year-to-date
- 160 illegally possessed guns recovered through May



Historical Crime Trends

Overall crime is **down by 8.9%** over the past 10 years.



A group of firefighters in maroon shirts and helmets are gathered around a yellow fire hydrant. One firefighter is using a tool to work on the hydrant's valve. In the background, a red fire truck is visible, and another firefighter is standing near it. The scene is outdoors on a grassy area.

PUBLIC SAFETY
MEETING
JUNE 2026

RECRUITMENT
& HIRING

RECRUITMENT

- Working with HR, the Fire Department, engages the community to share what public service and public safety have to offer the Grand Rapids workforce.



SUMMER YOUTH ACADEMY

- Summer camp environment: show our communities youth the core of the fire service
- Teamwork
- Self-Efficacy
- Excellence



FIRE CADET PROGRAM

- **Paid Internship:**
 - Community Connection
 - Fire Service Curious
 - Refinement

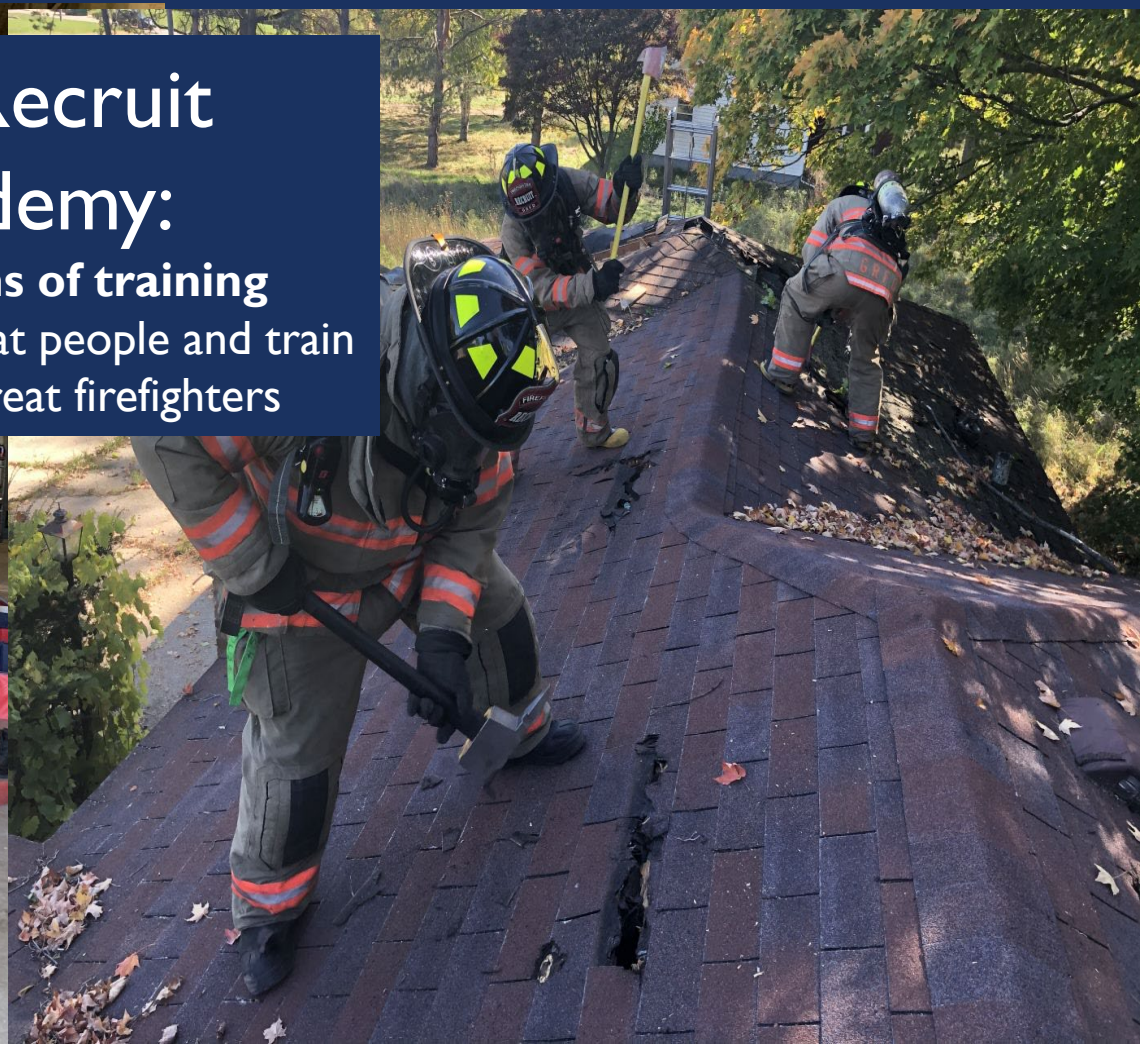
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FIRE RECRUIT TRAINING ACADEMY



Fire Recruit Academy:
6 months of training
We hire great people and train them to be great firefighters



GRAND RAPIDS FIRE DEPARTMENT



Looking for a fulfilling career?