AKRON POLICE DEPARTMENT

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APD Comprehensive Plan

"Increasing Community Engagement and Crime Prevention in Akron"

Introduction

Community engagement and crime prevention are critical components of an effective police department. This plan outlines strategies and initiatives that the Akron Police Department can implement to foster positive relationships with the community, enhance transparency, and proactively address crime. By leveraging the unique roles of officers assigned to different units and subdivisions, this plan aims to create a safer and more connected community.

Objective

To build stronger, more positive relationships between the police department and the community through proactive engagement, transparency, collaboration, and effective crime prevention strategies.

Strategy 1: Community-Oriented Patrols

A. Foot Patrols - Park, Walk, and Talks (PWTs)
   1. **Patrol commanders** will continue encouraging and assigning officers to conduct regular foot patrols in high-traffic areas to increase visibility and approachability. During these patrols, officers are encouraged to engage in casual conversations with residents, business owners, and visitors. All foot patrols shall be documented on the commander's report, and a CAD call will be created.
   2. **Captains, lieutenants, and sergeants** in all units will also conduct PWTs.
   3. **Commanders** shall provide guidance and expectations for conducting PWTs.

B. Bike Patrols
   1. **Patrol commanders** and the **CET supervisors** will implement bike patrols in parks, residential areas, and community events to increase officer visibility and foster community interaction. **CET supervisors** will organize weekly bicycle patrols, and **patrol commanders** will utilize bicycle patrols as staffing allows. Bicycle patrol routes will rotate to ensure coverage of different neighborhoods. A "Bike Patrol" CAD call will be generated for every bike patrol.

a. A bicycle training course is scheduled for May 19-21, 2025. Ten patrol officers will attend the training.

C. Community Engagement Patrol Detail
    1. **Platoons 1, 2, and 3** will dedicate a patrol unit to conduct community engagement at least twice weekly. **Patrol commanders** will reference the Akron Bicentennial magazine and the APD Patrol Hub event list and utilize CET supervisors to develop a list of community engagement opportunities for the dedicated patrol unit to attend.
    2. **Platoon 4** community engagement details will focus on 24-hour or late-night businesses such as gas stations and restaurants.
    3. **Patrol commanders** will rotate officers through the patrol community engagement assignment at their discretion.

D. Neighborhood Watch Programs
    1. **CET supervisors** will provide information on starting and maintaining neighborhood block watches at council ward meetings and on social media. **CET officers** will assist those requesting to start new neighborhood watch programs.
    2. **Patrol commanders** and **CET supervisors** will assign officers to attend neighborhood watch meetings.
    3. **Detective Bureau, Safety Communications, and AVB captains** will assign personnel to attend and provide information and crime prevention tips. The CET supervisors will coordinate these presentation**s**.

Strategy 2: Youth Engagement Programs

A. Youth Sports Programs
    1. **The services captain** will partner with a local organization or faith-based group to develop a youth sports event to engage youth in positive interactions with law enforcement through sports. This event will take place in late summer or early fall.

B. School Resource Officer (SRO) Program
    1. The **SRO supervisors** will continue to develop specialized programs focusing on issues like bullying, substance abuse, sexting, internet safety, and general safety education to build positive relationships with students. These presentations will be documented in the SRO commander's report.

C. Elementary School Visits
    1. **Patrol Operations, Safety Communications, patrol commanders, and CET supervisors** will assign officers to attend reading with a cop, recesses with a cop, lunch with a cop, or other school special events. The **SRO supervisors** will assist with coordinating these events.
        a. APS has been contacted and is excited about the program. **Patrol Operations** will conduct a pilot program during the remainder of this school year, with a full program deployment scheduled for next school year.

D. Expand Juvenile Diversion Program

1. **Patrol officers** and **SROs** will identify juveniles who committed minor offenses and refer them to our juvenile diversion unit. The program aims to divert youth from a formal court process and reduce recidivism through educational services and programs while building positive relationships with law enforcement.
    a. **JAM supervisors** will visit roll calls annually to discuss the Juvenile Diversion Program. The roll call visit will start at the beginning of May.
    b. **JAM supervisors** will meet with SROs in August during their school in-service training prior to the start of the school year.

Strategy 3: Transparent Communication

A. Social Media Presence
    1. **Community Relations** will continue to highlight exceptional police work and maintain active social media accounts to share success stories, safety tips, and upcoming events.
    2. **All supervisors** will be encouraged to share their officers' daily activities and positive interactions with community relations.
B. Community Newsletters
    1. **Community Relations,** in conjunction with the **Chief's Office,** will distribute department-oriented quarterly newsletters highlighting department achievements, community engagement information, security tips, unit spotlights, awards, crime stats, technology spotlights, and other important updates**. All captains** will be responsible for forwarding information from their respective units to be used in the newsletter, which is projected to start in July.
C. Monthly Crime Prevention Social Media Blitz
    1. **Community Relations** will conduct social media crime prevention blitzes once a month. These blitzes will be during the first full week of each month and cover topics such as traffic safety, financial crime prevention, new phone apps, etc. The **Community Relations Captain** will coordinate with supervisors from various units to provide the information for the blitzes. The projected start of the crime prevention social media blitz is in June.

Strategy 4: Collaborative Problem-Solving

A. Neighborhood Problem-Solving Focus
    1. **CET supervisors** will continue working with patrol officers, detectives, traffic officers, community leaders, and community partners to address recurring issues such as property crimes, drug activity, traffic, or other community concerns.
B. Partnerships with Local Organizations
    1. **Zone commanders** will continue strengthening partnerships and collaborating with local non-profits, religious institutions, and civic groups to address community needs and support community event initiatives.
C. Community Survey

1. **Community Relations** will develop a community survey to help identify issues important to community members, allowing us to focus efforts on these concerns. The goal is to complete the survey by the end of 2025.

Strategy 5: Community and Special Events

A. Local Community and Special Events
    1. **Patrol Operations** will ensure patrol officers, CET officers, detectives, and traffic officers are aware of community events such as festivals, parades, and fairs through the APD Patrol Hub event list. These events provide opportunities for officers to engage with community members in a relaxed setting.
B. Parades and Races
    1. Parades and races offer the opportunity to engage with the community in a positive and approachable manner. The **traffic supervisors** will ensure that officers working on these events engage with community members.
C. National Events
    1. All command staff members should participate in national events like National Night Out to promote police-community partnerships.
D. Informal Engagement Activities
    1. The **CET supervisors** will continue to host informal gatherings such as "Coffee with a Cop" and "Ice Cream Socials," where residents can meet and talk with officers in a relaxed environment.
    2. **Unit commanders** will coordinate with **CET supervisors** to ensure detectives, patrol officers, and members of other units are scheduled to attend these events when possible.

Strategy 6: Community Outreach and Education

A. Educational Opportunities
    1. **CET Supervisors** shall coordinate with other commanders to present crime prevention or other information on topics such as fraud prevention, home security, and personal safety at scheduled community events.
B. Ride-Along Program
    1. Continue offering ride-along opportunities to allow community members to experience firsthand what patrol officers do daily. This program can increase transparency and understanding of police officers' work.
C. Citizens Academy
    1. **CET supervisors** will continue to offer the Akron Police Citizen's Academy twice yearly to educate citizens and provide interactive and hands-on training and scenarios that recreate situations Akron officers could find themselves in.
D. Self-Defense Class
    1. The **community relations captain** will coordinate the development of self-defense courses for community members. These classes will enhance community relationships,

empower citizens, include advice on situational awareness and risk avoidance, and improve public perception of the police by highlighting our role as protectors and supporters rather than just enforcers. The goal is to host this event by the end of 2025.

Strategy 7: Crime Prevention

A. Home Security Fliers
    1. **Patrol commanders** will ensure officers pass out the Taking Steps to Protect Yourself from Crimes door hangers in their assigned areas.
B. Crime Prevention Alerts
    1. **All commanders** will encourage their officers to look for conditions that may pose a security threat to businesses and residents within our community. If a security threat is identified, officers will complete the Crime Prevention Alert door hanger and leave it at the location.
C. Building and Security Checks
    1. Due to limited opportunities for community engagement, **Platoon 4 supervisors** will ensure officers conduct building and security checks for businesses in their assigned areas. Any officer can complete building and security checks, not just Platoon 4. The Crime Prevention Alert door hanger should be completed and left after all security checks, regardless of whether a security threat was identified.

Strategy 8: Training and Development

A. Community Engagement
    1. **CET officers** will visit roll calls to discuss specific neighborhood problems. CET officers began visiting roll calls at the beginning of April.
B. Temporary Assignments to Community Relations
    1. **Patrol and traffic commanders** should allow officers to work temporary assignments in community relations to positively interact with community members. This can counterbalance the often-challenging aspects of their regular duties.
C. Cadet Community Engagement
    1. The **Training supervisors** will ensure that all cadets participate in two community engagement events while attending the police academy. This will allow cadets to establish positive relationships and trust early in their careers, gain firsthand experience and insights into community concerns, and develop a community engagement focus.
        a. One possible event, “Cruise into Summer,” has already been identified.

Tracking Community Engagement and Crime Prevention Activities

A. CAD Calls
    1. A CAD call should be generated for all informal and formal community engagement and crime prevention activities.
    2. A new “Community Meeting” CAD call has been established and will be used whenever an officer attends a meeting or forum.

3. Other CAD calls include “Park and Walks,” “Bike Patrols,” and “CIPs.”

B. New CAD Clearance Code of “Crime Prevention Alert.”
    1. The “Crime Prevention Alert” code has been created and should be used after all business or residence security checks. The Crime Prevention Alert door hanger should be left after all security checks, regardless of whether a security threat was identified.

C. Commander’s Reports
    1. Unit commanders’ reports should document all officers’ community engagement and crime prevention activities.

Conclusion

By implementing these strategies, the Akron Police Department can build stronger, more positive relationships with the community, fostering mutual trust and cooperation. This comprehensive approach leverages the unique roles of all officers and emphasizes proactive crime prevention, ultimately contributing to a safer and more connected community.