

## A Note about the Annapolis Police, Chief Pristoop, and Dialogue

Because of recent articles in The Capital about the City's police, I write in support of the City's Police Chief, Mike Pristoop, and the 100+ officers and department staff that work to protect our City, many of whom risk their lives to do so. That support is based on my subjective evaluation of the Chief's qualifications, integrity, and initiative, and an objective review of crime statistics. As I'll elaborate below, it is not a conclusion that everything is perfect or can't be improved, but is support that the City has the right leader in place of its police department and that it is generally successful. I also write to support continued dialogue which has been productive but caution that making personal attacks against the Chief is not productive or deserved and is, in fact, counter-productive.

Since coming to the City in 2008, Chief Pristoop and the City's police officers and department have focused on community outreach, overseen a significant overall crime reduction, invested in cultural diversity, and made greater use of available technology. The chart below illustrates the changes in overall crime reduction since a peak in 2008 when the Chief started. Impressively, the total number of Part One crimes (violent and property) in 2016 (847 year to date) is almost half (53%) of the number in 2008 (1586). Of note, the department is securing these reduced crime rates with a similar number of officers (109) as when crime was at its recent peak in 2008 (108), but with far fewer officers than when crime trended down in 2009 (120) and 2010 (125).

	RMS Year to Date Comparison *										'15-'16
Part One Offense	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Change
Homicide	7	7	3	4	1	1	4	1	1	9	800%
Forcible Rape	4	6	8	6	7	3	3	3	8	14	75%
Robbery	156	110	54	64	50	38	47	54	43	44	2%
Assault, Aggravated	201	142	114	100	77	97	71	96	80	129	61%
<b>Total Violent</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>48%</b>
Burglary	290	252	152	129	143	141	124	124	152	145	-5%
Theft (from Auto)	420	431	210	210	198	215	285	230	203	181	-11%
Theft	517	523	346	405	409	381	374	335	394	299	-24%
Motor Vehicle Theft	153	115	55	74	51	67	52	41	39	26	-33%
<b>Total Property</b>	<b>1380</b>	<b>1321</b>	<b>763</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>801</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>835</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>788</b>	<b>651</b>	<b>-17%</b>
<b>Total Part One</b>	<b>1748</b>	<b>1586</b>	<b>942</b>	<b>992</b>	<b>936</b>	<b>943</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>884</b>	<b>920</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>-8%</b>
Shootings	21	15	5	3	4	4	8	10	8	12	50%
Other Offenses	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	'15-'16 Change
Simple Assault	406	399	303	340	273	264	251	230	268	209	-22%
Arson	3	6	4	2	7	1	2	1	5	1	-80%
Sex Offense	23	28	27	31	16	20	22	18	24	32	33%
Trespass /	86	87	43	40	34	53	43	33	49	46	-6%
<b>Total Other</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>-17%</b>
Police Department Staffing; approximations											
official # of positions		131	131	125	125	125	121	114	114	114	
positions funded		108	120	125	115	115	115	109	109	109	

Successfully reducing the overall crime statistics does not diminish the fact that homicides are up, from 7 in 2008, down to 1 each in 2014-15, and up to 9 so far this year, and overall violent crimes are up to 196, a number not seen since 2008 when it was 265. Certainly, the City Council and residents want to ensure that the Chief and department are up to the

challenge of limiting the number of these crimes as much as reasonably possible. To that end, I outline 3 steps: (1) review the monthly reports of activities, (2) review the 2016 summary of police accomplishments below, and (3) attend a City Council Public Safety Committee meeting.

Each month, I review the police department's activities as summarized in the City Manager's Monthly Reports (link: <http://www.ci.annapolis.md.us/government/city-departments/mayors-office/city-manager>) and you can too. If you review the most recent (August 2016), for example, you'll see dozens of activities that are positive and cooperative with the community, such as: Coffee with a Cop; Eastport Civic Association Picnic; Stanton Center Girls Club; events at Harbor House, Annapolis Gardens, and Bay Ridge Gardens; Parole Elementary Celebration; West St Library Community Helper Day; Oxford Landing Backpack giveaway; Annapolis Oaks Back to School; and Lighthouse Apostolic Church Back to School Event. They had a presence at 21 events (again, just August). You'll also see examples of a problem larger than the police, drug use. For instance, in August alone, the police responded to 12 overdose calls.

The 2016 summary of police accomplishments (below) demonstrates that the police department is appropriately focused on combating the heroin epidemic and enhancing a community presence. The department has kept up with current needs and issues with programs such as: Transaction Safe Place (you can conclude online purchases, such as Craig's List activities, at the Police Headquarters), PEDEL (register your bike), and Prescription Drug Drop Off.

No doubt, all these statistics, programs, and activities don't ensure that everyone feels like the department and Chief treat people from all backgrounds fairly. And, no doubt, despite all the training that department provides, a given interaction between an officer and a citizen, or the department and an officer, can be actually or perceived to be inappropriate. At its root, that is what seems to be alleged by Mr. Snowden in the recent Capital article. Chief Pristoop points out that many if not all of the specific allegations have already been adjudicated, and always in favor of the police department. Perhaps there is a justifiable argument that the process has worked, because the allegations have been heard, and that should be the end of it. However, this might be an instance where being vindicated is not enough. To truly tackle crime, drug activity, and the underlying related issues such as poverty, hunger, and lack of opportunity, the City should remain open to new ideas and continue to work to get buy-in from as many communities as possible. To that end, I look forward to the discussion planned at the next Public Safety City Council Committee on Monday at 5 PM in Council chambers.

At that meeting, Chief Pristoop is scheduled to update the Council on actions taken on the recommendations made by various community members and groups. As chair of the committee, Alderwoman Finlayson has given serious thought to productive paths forward, and I look forward to hearing and considering her recommendations. As a Council, it is important that we work together to achieve the above-mentioned goals.

I encourage you to attend this meeting if possible and, while being open to further productive suggestions and dialogue, to extend your support to the Police Chief and department. As a community, we must show our support for the men and women who protect us all, day in and day out, and the man, Chief Mike Pristoop, who leads them.