

**Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission**  
**Community Policing Program**  
**Annual Report**

**Section I**

**Appendix C**

Agency: Takoma Park Police Department

Region #: 2

Date Report Submitted: April 26, 2019

Submitted By: Name: Catherine Plevy

Title: Public Information Officer

Phone: 301-891-7142

Email: cathyp@takomaparkmd.gov

Number of sworn members: 43

Non-sworn members: 31

*Jurisdictional Demographics:* Population: 17,000

Square miles serviced by the agency: 2.5

White: 49.2% Black: 34.8% Hispanic: 10.8% Asian: 5.8%

Native American: 0.2% Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 0.0% More than one race: 4.5%

---

**Section II**

**Instructions:** Provide a detailed description of your agency's Community Policing Initiative by responding to the following **key points**. These key points address the Guiding Principles of Community Policing, as well as the Six Pillars identified in the Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing Report (see Guidelines for Reporting for explanation). Examples of specific programs, initiatives, and partnerships with community groups should be discussed along with any statistics or other relevant information. See *Appendix D: Examples of Best Practices in Community Policing* for your convenience and consideration.

**Key Points:**

- How community policing is integrated throughout your agency and how your agency incorporates community policing into its daily operation.
- How top management emphasizes or supports community policing within the agency.
- Training your agency has received in community policing and future plans to provide additional or specialized training to agency members to improve interaction with community members or problem solving efforts.
- How crime problems or community issues are identified and the method of communicating any trends with communities the agency services.
- How your agency partners with all segments of the community to prevent crime and address identified community problems. Segments of the community should include residential and business communities, schools, youth, minority groups, hospitals, senior population, faith based organizations, etc.
- How your agency measures the effectiveness of its community policing program.

## ANNUAL REPORT

### **1) *How is community policing integrated throughout your agency and how does your agency incorporate community policing into its daily operations?***

Response: All members of the Department integrate community policing into their daily operations. It is important to the Department to establish links with the community whereby the Department can learn of issues and respond to them before they become problems. The Department keeps in contact with existing community organizations and community groups as they are needed; assists in the development of community involvement policies for the Department; publicizes Departmental objectives, community problems and successes; conveys information from the community to the Department and vice versa; and develops community policing strategies. The Public Information Officer handles mass media exposure to include the community on on-going events and information that affects the community. The Department offers many services and programs (below) to the community, forms partnerships with community groups, provides current crime prevention safety tips and security information to the community, works daily on quality of life issues for the community and shares information with allied agencies/departments through the State and Metropolitan area. Community outreach is continuously evaluated to ensure they meet the needs of the community and are current and relevant.

### **2) *How does top management emphasize or support community policing within your agency?***

Response: Top management emphasizes and supports community policing in our Department in various ways, to include but not limited to training, through directives, allocating budget funds to support it, assignments and initiatives, performance evaluation ratings, leading by example by actively participating in community policing, as well as employing a full time community oriented policing officer.

### **3) *Describe training your agency has received in community policing and future plans to provide additional or specialized training to agency members to improve interaction with community members or problem solving efforts.***

Response: It is important that law enforcement professionals have the communication and leadership skills necessary to not only reach out to other agencies and collaborate in problem solving, but to also reach out to its community to that same end. Training is a vital component to maintain and improve interactions with community members. Takoma Park Police Department continues to send members of its agency to various training throughout the years - from command staff members to private officers. Other than the vigorous and all-encompassing training that officers receive in the police academy, they continue to learn and hone in on their training skills through in-service training in our agency annually, as well as outside training. They train to work with the disabled, senior citizens, veterans, developmentally disabled, as well as persons with mental health issues. Below is some of the training provided to officers, but it's not all-encompassing.

- Attending the International Association of Chiefs of Police training conference annually
- Attending the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association training conference annually
- FBI National Academy training
- How to deal with persons who suffer from mental illnesses

- What it means to be a community oriented policing officer
- Pathfinders for Autism
- Crisis Intervention Training
- Active shooter
- Basic Investigators School
- Crisis Negotiation
- Up-to-date information and crime prevention techniques concerning social media, crime prevention through environmental design, sexual assault and prosecution, drug identification, techniques for effective presentations, youth crime trends and crime prevention updates.
- Child Passenger Safety
- Residential & Commercial Crime Prevention
- Crime Prevention Techniques
- Customer Service
- Diversity Training against biased based profiling/policing and discrimination
- Building Trust in Law Enforcement

The Crime Analyst trains regularly in order to assist law enforcement agencies and detectives focus on areas of concern, growing problems, and areas in a particular area in the city where crime prevention techniques appear to be ineffective.

It is important to the Takoma Park Police Department to have meaningful interaction, open dialogue and strengthened relationships between community residents and the police officers who serve and protect them. A Unity in the Community initiative was created as a plan of action to build upon the continuation of community responses throughout the nation to unite local police departments with their communities into one collective voice. The initiative is a step Takoma Park took to create and strengthen relationships between the Takoma Park Police Department, elected city officials and community residents by expanding opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds to come together through community dialogue, relationship-building events, sustained partnerships and fundraising campaigns. Everyone in the community is encouraged to attend, volunteer or lend their services.

**4) Describe how crime problems or community issues are identified and addressed, and the method of communicating any trends with communities the agency services.**

Response: Crime problems and community issues are identified and addressed through conducting presentations to the community upon request, community meetings, complaint/compliment form on the web site, a GovQA website to identify problems from community members (i.e., abandoned autos, dangerous sidewalks, nuisances, etc.), visibility in neighborhoods, calls for service, community newsletter and through emails of community input and information exchange. Takoma Park has a large social media presence utilizing Facebook, Twitter and Nextdoor. The agency also has a mass email notification list for community members to sign up to receive alerts from the police department.

**5) Identify how your agency partners with all segments of the community to prevent crime and address identified community problems. Segments of the community should include residential and business communities, schools, youth, minority groups, hospitals, senior population, faith based organizations, etc.**

Response: The Takoma Park Police Department is committed to providing the highest quality of police services by promoting an environment where police department employees and the community work in partnership with a goal of improving the quality of life within our expanding multi-ethnic community, while at the same time maintaining respect for the diversity, individual rights and dignity of residents. This is integral towards developing and maintaining strong relationships. Our goal is to continue to expand these relationships, especially those within our community who may have mistrust of police. Examples of community partners include: multi-denominational/multi-faith based organizations, retail business owners, landlord groups, senior resident groups, corporate and industrial facilities within the community, group home, local health care providers, county health department, licensing departments, department of emergency services, resident community groups, local schools and principals and various boards.

The following are current community policing/crime prevention programs and/or services offered by the Takoma Park Police Department:

**SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH:** The Takoma Park Police Department is active on social media. The department uses Facebook, Twitter and Nextdoor to keep the community aware of quality of life issues, crime related incidents, traffic related issues, missing persons, as well as to provide daily crime prevention tips/tools.

**CARING ABOUT RESIDENTS EVERYDAY (CARE):** CARE is a program directed at our residents who live alone with special needs, or just need to be checked on each day. CARE is another way we can give back to the community and take care of those in need.

**COMMUNITY CAM PROGRAM:** The Community Cam Program allows members of the community who live in the City of Takoma Park to register any residential or commercial video surveillance system with the Police Department free of charge. If and when a crime occurs in an area of a registered camera system, detectives will have immediate access to the location of any registered cameras on their mobile devices. This will allow them to quickly obtain valuable video evidence to enhance apprehension capabilities. Working in partnership with the owner of the system is just one more tool in the police-community partnership to make Takoma Park a safe community.

**COMMUNITY POLICE ACADEMY:** The Community Police Academy is a 12-week long annual program. The classes cover the following topics: Communications, Basic Criminal Law & Current Hot Topics, Traffic Law (with traffic stops practicals), Criminal Investigations, Victim/Witness Rights, Domestic Violence, Driving Under the Influence (with field sobriety test practicals), Use of Force/Tasers (with practicals), Speed Camera Program, Emergency Preparedness, Crime Analysis, Firearms, Media Relations, Gangs, Bike Patrol/Laws, Canine & demonstrations, Emergency Response Team, Patrol Procedures (with practicals), Community Relations/Policing and Crisis/Hostage Negotiations. The presentations are slide show/lecture style and are given by officers, detectives and civilians of the Takoma Park Police Department. There are also multiple opportunities for hands-on learning through equipment demonstrations, practical scenarios, field trips and ride-alongs with patrol officers. Field trips include the Emergency Operations Center, Clarksburg Jail and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. The Takoma Park Police Department believes that educating the community results

in gaining their understanding and support. Through implementation of the Community Police Academy, the community gains new insight into how law enforcement officers perform their duties. The success of any law enforcement agency depends largely upon the amount of cooperation and support it receives from the community it serves.

**HOMEWORK CLUB:** The Homework Club offers young people an after school experience where they can socialize with their peers, earn Student Service Learning (SSL) hours, enjoy some pizza, and complete their homework. It's a comfortable and supportive environment embracing teamwork and an increased positive attitude towards school. These kids take homework seriously, together, one assignment at a time!

**NATIONAL NIGHT OUT:** The City's National Night Out Against Crime observance takes place every year the first Tuesday in August. National Night Out is held by individual communities to demonstrate their commitment to being partners in the fight against crime. National Night Out Against Crime is designed to heighten awareness, strengthen neighborhood spirit and enhance police-community relations.

**NATIONWIDE PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAKE BACK:** In April and October of each year, the Takoma Park Police Department participates in the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Nationwide Prescription Drug Take-Back Day. This campaign gives the public an opportunity to prevent pill abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs. Although our agency participates in this nationwide event, residents looking to dispose of excess and expired prescription and over-the-counter medications can visit our safe and secure permanent drop off location at our police department. The collection site is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Drugs can be dropped off with no questions asked. The Takoma Park Police Department collects and stores the items and then safely disposes of them through accepted practices as approved by the DEA.

**WATCH YOUR CAR PROGRAM:** Takoma Park Police offer residents an opportunity to sign up for the "Watch Your Car Program." This program is a way for police officers to ensure the residents' vehicles are not being driven by an unauthorized driver. The "WATCH YOUR CAR" program is administered by the Maryland Vehicle Theft Prevention Council (MVTPC) and is provided as a public service, free of charge, to owners of vehicles registered in the State of Maryland. It is a voluntary vehicle registration program designed to deter auto theft and assist in the apprehension of auto thieves.

**OPERATION CHILL:** The Takoma Park Police Department is proud to be in partnership with 7-Eleven in its "Operation Chill" program; a program that aims to reduce crime and build rapport between kids and law enforcement. "Operation Chill" is a great way of teaching the importance of making good decisions, being kind and doing the right thing. When school's out for the summer, kids in Takoma Park look forward to their next encounter with the 'heat' thanks to 7-Eleven stores' popular "Operation Chill" program that rewards positive behavior with a very cool treat. Through "Operation Chill," Takoma Park Police patrol officers can 'ticket' youngsters caught in the act of doing good with Slurpee beverage coupons. Appropriate 'offenses' might include helping another person, deterring crime, practicing safety (wearing a helmet during bike riding), participating in a positive activity in the community, or just for having a pleasant conversation with an officer. Each coupon can be redeemed for a small Slurpee drink at

participating 7-Eleven stores. The coupons are great for officers who are on patrol in the community. It's an icebreaker, a way to encourage dialogue in a non-threatening, non-law enforcement situation. Since its inception in 1995, "Operation Chill" has grown to include several hundred law enforcement agencies in the United States and Canada each year, and more than twelve million coupons have been distributed to officers on the beat in cities and towns where 7-Eleven does business. "Operation Chill" was developed by 7-Eleven, Inc. to positively reward and encourage good behavior by kids during the hot summer months, when communities may experience increases in loitering, shoplifting and graffiti, and to support law enforcement agencies' community relations projects. The Takoma Park Police Department will use the "Operation Chill" program to reward youth for their good deeds as well as to enhance their relations with the young people of their city.

**POLICE EXPLORER PROGRAM:** The mission of the Takoma Park Police Explorer Program is to guide young adults to a better path for the future through training, leadership, teamwork, discipline, friendship, and to assist the Takoma Park Police Department and the residents of Takoma Park through community service. It's a chance to change, a direction for growth, a look toward the future, and a safe place to be. Explorers are offered numerous opportunities throughout the year to assist, i.e., the July 4th festival/parade, National Night Out, Folk Festival, Street Festival and many other events! All Explorers have the opportunity to earn community service hours for community events and training. Explorers are expected to keep good grades in school and maintain a high level of respect and good conduct at all times. Some benefits of being an Explorer:

- Gain exposure to various criminal justice careers and have positive interactions with law enforcement professionals.
- Obtain "hands-on" experience and awareness of the criminal justice system, which can help Explorers make an informed decision on a career in law enforcement or a related field.
- Gain interpersonal growth through self-discipline, teamwork, challenging experiences, and high standards of performance and personal conduct.
- Obtain enhanced character development and improved physical and mental fitness.
- Learn responsibility to self and others through leadership and opportunities.
- Get involved in community service and networking activities by assisting sponsoring agency in supplementary law enforcement.
- Are introduced to specialty units, such as K9, Emergency Response Team (ERT), Criminal Investigations Division (CID), Community Policing, CPR/1st Aid, etc.
- Have the opportunity to ride with a patrol officer and experience the job through the eyes of an officer.
- Receive extensive training in various techniques used by law enforcement professionals, such as traffic stops, building searches, search and seizure/arrest techniques, etc.

**RESIDENTIAL HOME SECURITY SURVEYS:** Takoma Park Police offer residents, free of charge, a Residential Home Security Survey. This survey is an inspection of their home, performed by a police officer, in an effort to identify areas in which they could improve the physical security of their residence. It is also a good opportunity to review personal safety and security habits with an officer so that their daily routines incorporate habits to decrease the likelihood that they might be victimized by crime.

**RIDE ALONG PROGRAM:** The Ride Along Program provides residents the opportunity to ride in a marked police cruiser alongside a patrol officer to observe the daily duties of an officer.

**SAFE PLACE FOR ONLINE TRANSACTIONS:** The Takoma Park Police Department joined a national trend by offering a safe place for online transactions. We would like the community to feel safe when dealing with strangers through online classified ad transactions, such as Craigslist. Following that national trend, the department set up a safe place for sellers and buyers to carry out purchases and/or sales in the Takoma Park Police Department parking lot or lobby. Crime prevention is extremely important to the men and women of the Takoma Park Police Department and the department is happy to continue to be a part of this nationwide safety trend.

**SECURE THE CALL PROGRAM:** The Takoma Park Police Department partnered with Secure the Call. Secure the Call is a charity with a single mission; to collect and convert as many old cell phones as possible into \*911\* emergency access phones. This is done on a national basis, with collections and distributions going on in most states. They furnish user-ready phones to their Community Partners—a growing network of over 350 law enforcement agencies, senior centers and domestic abuse shelters nationally—at no charge and in the quantity they request. Service to the public is FREE. They collect phones nationally from a network of over a thousand permanent collection barrels and about two hundred one-month drives per month. All the phones come through the Takoma Park, MD headquarters, where volunteers begin the process and take the phones from the tangled mass previously described to finished ready-to-use FREE \*911\* phones.

**TIP 411:** Takoma Park Police Department joined the Tip411 program, which gives the ability to our residents to provide immediate, anonymous tips and intelligence to help fight crime. It's an application that engages the public as a force multiplier by creating awareness through community alerts and expanding our reach through social media.

**OFFICERS AS AGENTS OF THE LANDLORD:** The Takoma Park Police Department offers a program in which landlords can contractually agree to allow police officers to act as agents for the purpose of enforcing trespassing laws. This allows the police department to warn and remove individuals from properties where they do not reside and where they are causing disturbances. If the individual(s) returns, he/she is subject to arrest for violation of trespassing laws without the need to rely on the landlord having to appear in court. The program is a highly useful tool in combating chronic disorderly behavior, drug offenses and other nuisance violations that tend to center around apartment complexes and other business areas.

**VACANT HOUSE CHECK:** Takoma Park Police Department offers free vacant house checks to residents. A Takoma Park Police Officer will visit a resident's home once a day during their absence and inspect the premises for any signs of suspicious activity. It provides the residents with some peace of mind if they will be away from their property for an extended period of time.

**THEFT FROM AUTO INITIATIVE:** The Takoma Park Police Department is committed to fighting theft from auto, burglaries and theft of all types in our community. Our number one goal is to protect lives and property through proactive measures to make our community a safe place to

live, work or visit. Our officers proactively canvas neighborhoods and look into vehicles for a crime prevention initiative to see if there are valuables in plain view. We care about the community and their property. If officers see property in plain view, a letter is sent to the owner of the vehicle about what property was in plain view with a friendly reminder to remove the property to keep them safe from criminals.

**POLICE CHIEF'S ADVISORY BOARD:** The Police Chief's Advisory Board was formed in October 2009. Members of the Board are briefed on all activities of the Police Department and bring issues and community concerns to the Chief's attention. Board members meet monthly with the Chief of Police and receive updated advisories and alerts on crimes and are invited to department events.

**SHOP WITH A COP:** The purpose of the event is to foster positive relationships between youth and officers. Young children are selected each year during the end of the year holiday season to shop at one of the local area stores to purchase gifts for members of their immediate family. After shopping, the children will eat lunch, wrap their gifts and continue to get to know the police officers.

**COFFEE WITH A COP:** Takoma Park Police participate in Coffee with a Cop. It provides an opportunity for our residents and business owners to meet with our police officers in a non-threatening environment with no agenda. They ask questions, real conversations occur and strong relationships are built.

**PACK THE PATROL CAR SCHOOL BACKPACK DONATION DRIVE:** Takoma Park Police participate in a school supplies donation drive. Local residents are asked to donate backpacks filled with school supplies for children in need. Officers deliver the filled backpacks to the schools prior to the start of the school year. School staff members determine the families most in need and present the students with those backpacks.

**INTERNATIONAL WALK TO SCHOOL DAY:** Takoma Park Police participates in Walk to School Day each year. This is a global event that involves communities from more than 40 countries walking and biking to school on the same day.

**AREA PRINCIPALS MEETING:** During the school year, Takoma Park Police, along with members of various city departments, meet with the area school principals to discuss school safety, resources and outreach.

**PUBLIC COMMUNITY COMPSTAT MEETINGS:** CompStat is a system to strategically manage law enforcement operations. The purpose of CompStat is to develop effective strategies to combat crime or other issues within a neighborhood, based on data analysis and accountability. It focuses on outcomes and is not used to measure productivity. The goal of CompStat is problem solving and, as a result, creating a safe community.

**POLAR BEAR PLUNGE:** Takoma Park Police participate in the Polar Bear Plunge for Special Olympics. The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for persons two years of age and older with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness,



demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community.

**WINTER COAT DRIVE:** Each year, the Takoma Park Police Department holds a winter coat drive. The department collects clean, gently used warm coats in any size from infant to adult. The coats are donated to people in need in the community and beyond.

**BLANKET/TOWEL DRIVE FOR ANIMAL SHELTERS:** Each year, the Takoma Park Police Department holds a towel/blanket drive for animal shelters in need.

**CLICK IT OR TICKET CAMPAIGN:** The Takoma Park Police Department participates in the statewide Chief's Challenge, which emphasizes safety restraint enforcement. Officers focus on enforcement of the state's seat belt laws as part of the nationwide "Click It or Ticket" campaign. Officers stand at various places throughout the City during the campaign in order to issue tickets to any person not wearing a seatbelt or who does not have their child properly restrained. They also educate the public on seatbelt usage and safety.

**DISTRACTED DRIVER AWARENESS:** Takoma Park Police participates in the 'National Distracted Driver Awareness,' campaign, focusing their efforts on distracted driving using traffic enforcement initiatives. Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving; this includes using a hand-held cell phone and texting. This effort is part of a high-visibility enforcement initiative that combines intense enforcement with further educating the public of the dangers of distracted driving. The ultimate goal is to save lives by convincing motorists to obey the law. Takoma Park Police continue their efforts beyond the campaign month to focus on drivers who are distracted using hand-held cell phones, or engaging in other distracting activities while driving.

**CHRISTMAS GIFT DONATIONS FOR YOUTH:** Takoma Park Police officers coordinate a Christmas gift give-away to the members of the community who are less fortunate. Officers spend a considerable amount of time sorting and labeling all of items so that they can be given to the age appropriate children. They also personally deliver the gifts throughout the community.

**BIKE PATROL:** Bikes afford speed, stealth and mobility in a community where patrol vehicles could not otherwise be useful. Bike patrol can handle enforcement of criminal statutes, parking violations, bicycle infractions, crime prevention activities and special details to assist in quality of life issues. Bikes are less threatening than patrol vehicles and they result in more than twice as many contacts with the community than patrol vehicles.

**SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL:** Officers work Safe Routes to School details, which is a program designed to target vehicle/pedestrian violations around schools in an effort to provide a safer commute for the children coming and going to school. Violations can include signals, signs, crosswalks, speeding, school bus violations, pedestrian related offenses, etc.

**VICTIM/WITNESS SERVICES UNIT:** Our agency employes a victim witness coordinator who works closely with the community for various types of cases. Many community victims or witnesses are contacted by the coordinator to offer support, information, accompaniment to court or to offices of other agencies for services. The coordinator passes on important information to

victims and witnesses and explains police procedures, the investigative process and the criminal justice system.

**POLICE CHAPLAIN:** Takoma Park Police is fortunate to have a volunteer chaplain to provide moral support and comfort to the department and the community.

**ALCOHOL HOLIDAY TASK FORCE:** Takoma Park Police partner with other allied agencies each year for an alcohol holiday task force targeting drunk driving to create safer communities through education and removing impaired drivers from the roadway.

**CAR SEAT INSPECTIONS:** Takoma Park Police work together with the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department and Safe Kids Montgomery County providing car seat inspections. The goal is to ensure that children are properly secured in car seats and seat belts while traveling.

**SAFETY LETTERS TO DANGEROUS DRIVERS:** Takoma Park Police encourage the community not to engage in or react to road rage. Instead, they are offered an opportunity to send an email or letter to the department with a description of the vehicle, license number/state, date of occurrence, place of occurrence and what happened (i.e., running a stop sign, road rage incident, etc). While a ticket cannot be issued, we do send the registered owner of the vehicle a safety letter letting him/her know that members of the community noticed their dangerous driving behavior and what types of fines would be associated with such driving behaviors, as well as some driver safety tips.

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS:** The Takoma Park Police Department's Emergency Manager works with the Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security on many community projects, including but not limited to:

Mosquito Task Force with multi-county agencies to educate the public and prevent Zika and other mosquito transmitted diseases.

Takoma Park Boy Scout Troop 33 projects

Nuclear Fallout Ingestion Pathway Plan

Family unification plan for after an incident or disaster.

Hazard Mitigation Plan

County Emergency Operations Plan

Everbridge Mass Notifications plan to better improve the alert system in the National Capital Region and share best practices for use on the Region's Alert System.

Takoma Park Emergency Preparedness Committee's outreach project events in the City, such as Celebrate Takoma, National Night Out, Folk Festival and the Street Festival.

Represents the City on the National Capital Regions Council of Governments Emergency Managers Committee. Committee discussions are centered on regional exercises, training and the yearly Threat Analysis to the region.

Works with the Volunteer Fire Department giving safety presentations to members of the community.

Meets with the senior residents in the community to discuss emergency preparedness.

The Takoma Park Police Department also participates in various parades and social events., i.e., Fourth of July, Jazz Festival, Street Festival and Celebrate Takoma.

SEASONAL MESSAGES: The Department sends annual seasonal messages to the community regarding safety of property, fire safety, holiday safety, pet safety, etc.

**6) *How does your agency measure the effectiveness of its community policing program?***

Response: The Department measures the effectiveness of its community policing program through feedback from community residential surveys, crime statistics (where to allocate resources), social media feedback, letters from the community, emails, feedback from community meetings and from community listservs.

**NOTE: Email Agency report and document(s) to: [pctc.mandates@maryland.gov](mailto:pctc.mandates@maryland.gov)**