



The Robert Hartley Housing Complex Project

Abstract

The Robert Hartley Housing Complex Project was initiated in the early part of 1999. This project, which is still in progress, began as a result of the Police and the Community, through the problem-solving technique of scanning, identifying this six-block area as the area with the most recurring problems of concern to the public and the police. This area, comprised mostly of municipal housing buildings, is centrally located in New Rochelle, which is the seventh largest city in New York with a population of 72,500. Drug dealings, shootings, assaults and robberies were prevalent in this area, and a consequence of this problem was not only fear amongst the residents but increased calls for service for the police. Compounding Police-Community interaction was a pervasive distrust of the police, who were perceived as insensitive and lacked understanding of the needs of the community. In March of 1999, local clergy and community leaders in partnership with the New Rochelle Police Department created a group named "Citizens for a Better New Rochelle". The city of New Rochelle, always ethnically diverse, has experienced population increases in blacks and Hispanics. With these increases have come racial tensions as the composition of neighborhoods has altered, and increased problems for the Police in addressing these tensions, and more complex Police-Community relations' issues. These tensions, as well as the distrust mentioned above, led to the formation of the "Citizens for a Better New Rochelle". Upon its formation, the following mission statement was adopted:

The police and community working together to provide a mutually respectful relationship through open lines of communication and cooperation.

"Citizens for a Better New Rochelle" consists of members from the New Rochelle Police Department, clergy, NAACP, New Rochelle Municipal Housing Authority, Youth Bureau, City Council, United Tenants Council, Community Action program and private citizens. (*Refer to page six for Committee composition chart*).

With the "Citizens for a Better New Rochelle" already in place as one key component, a multi-faceted response plan was formulated to deal with the above listed problems, and it included the following:

- Training for a Neighborhood Watch Patrol
- Assignment of Housing Officers to patrol the area on foot
- Assignment of Beat Officers to patrol the area on foot and bicycle
- Assignment of Critical Incident Unit Officers to park and walk patrol during hours of past criminal activity as well as patrolling Lincoln Park during summer basketball league
- Establishment of Community/Police Liaison Office to provide local residents with an immediate "bridge" to the Department
- Involvement of Department's Community Resources Coordinator to provide crisis intervention services to residents experiencing serious family and personal problems through information referral and counseling

The final stage of the problem solving process included conducting an assessment to determine whether the goals were attained and to collect pre-response and post-response data. The following project document clearly demonstrates that the SARA model was utilized in an efficient manner to Scan, Analyze, Respond and Assess the recurring problems listed above. The document further demonstrates that the goals have been attained, with all four stages utilized by the Police and the Community in attaining the specified goals of the **Robert Hartley Housing Complex Project**.

Project Document

Civilian Complaint Review Committee

Goals

- 1. Continual improvement of services to the community.**
- 2. Strengthening of police relations and promotion of community participation.**
- 3. Effective use of resources.**

The Civilian Complaint Review Committee was formed to help the community better understand the New Rochelle Police Department's civilian complaint procedure, thereby promoting a greater atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. The purpose of the committee is to assist in the investigation of complaints issued by civilians against members of the New Rochelle Police Department by gathering information, apprising the community of the process, dispelling rumors and assisting the Police Commissioner in the process to ensure fairness to all. The committee has distributed civilian complaint forms to numerous community groups and organizations. The forms have been translated into Spanish, and made available to community groups in areas of the city with large Hispanic populations. Members of the committee have attended community meetings to explain the proper method of completing the complaint form, and provide any other relevant information to residents concerning the complaint process.

Community/Police Liaison Office

Goals

- 1. Continual improvement of services to the community.**
- 2. Strengthening of police relations and promotion of community participation.**
- 3. Effective use of resources.**
- 4. Development of creative and innovative approaches that promote quality and excellence in law enforcement.**

The Community/Police Liaison Office was established at 33 Lincoln Avenue in January of 2000. The purposes of establishing the Liaison office were three fold: to improve mutual respect between the police and the community, to improve the lines of communication between the police and the community, and to gain a greater degree of trust between the police and the community. Community organizations and private corporations donated all office space, telephone, carpeting and furniture. The committee recognized that some residents of the community are quite often reluctant to come into Police headquarters to seek police assistance. The Liaison Office, which is staffed by both police officers as well as residents, has brought New Rochelle Police to the community. The assistance with the staffing of the Liaison office by residents has enabled the Police Department to strengthen police relations, effectively use

resources, while promoting community participation. Citizens can go to the Liaison Office to report crimes, request information on issues such as domestic violence, quality-of-life enforcement, and the civilian complaint process. If necessary, residents can utilize the Liaison Office as a meeting place. As an example, the New Rochelle Police Department's Training Unit provided training to residents forming a neighborhood watch patrol. Residents can meet with the areas community police officer to discuss community concerns. The Liaison Office can also be utilized as a place where residents can provide information to the police in a less formal setting than police headquarters. Since the community has more access to the New Rochelle police officers on a person-to-person basis, many barriers that existed have been broken down. The anticipated long term results are an increased level of intelligence provided to the police and less reluctance of citizens to approach the police for assistance, which will provide a safer neighborhood and less possibility of misunderstandings regarding police services. During 2000 and 2001, Detective Denise Watters has operated out of the Liaison Office. She has played an instrumental role in addressing gang-related issues by meeting with parents who have had children shot, killed or sentenced to prison from gang related crimes. The parents are from both New Rochelle and Mount Vernon, which is an adjoining city. Teenagers and young adults from the two cities have been involved in a long-standing feud, which has quite often resulted in violent encounters between the two factions. By engaging in a process of early intervention, Detective Watters has been successful in preventing additional incidents of violence, and has begun to bridge the gap that has existed for years between these two groups. (*Refer to supplemental information section*).

North Avenue Foot Post/Dedicated Patrol in Vicinity of Iona College

Goals

- 1. Continual improvement of services to the community.**
- 2. Strengthening of police relations and promotion of community participation.**
- 3. Effective use of resources.**

A large number of bars are concentrated within a two-block area on North Avenue in the central part of New Rochelle. The bars and the surrounding streets have been the focal point of police attention due to quality-of-life concerns such as drinking in public, underage drinking, urinating in public, littering, noise complaints and disorderly behavior. The Outreach Committee examined this problem, interviewed business owners and residents of the area and met with officials from Iona College, which is located in the neighborhood. The Outreach Committee reported their findings back to the Citizens for a Better New Rochelle Committee. It was determined that the best way to combat these quality-of-life concerns was through aggressive enforcement of existing laws and ordinances, as well as education. This is being accomplished by a two-fold method. The New Rochelle Police Department assigns a police officer to a foot post in this area at the times of greatest need. This police officer is responsible for patrolling the area to aggressively enforce city code violations that negatively impact on quality-of-life for residents of this area. In addition, Iona College stipends the services of a police officer at least three times per week to patrol this area in a marked police vehicle. The officer enforces city code violations, vehicle and traffic law violations and parking violations. The education component is accomplished by the following method. Iona College issues all students a handbook, which lists conduct and behavior, including that which occurs off-campus, which will not be tolerated. Conduct in violation of the handbook's code may result in disciplinary action by Iona College, including dismissal of the student. (*Refer to page 7 for Police activity chart*).

Community Input on Quality of Life Problems

Goals

- 1. Continual improvement of services to the community.**
- 2. Strengthening of police relations and promotion of community participation.**
- 3. Effective use of resources.**
- 4. Development of creative and innovative approaches that promote quality and excellence in law enforcement.**

The New Rochelle Police Department has addressed several **quality-of-life** issues after receiving requests from members of "Citizens for a Better New Rochelle". One of the conditions perceived by many residents of the central part of New Rochelle as a continuing problem is loitering. Specifically, groups loitering on a particular corner, blocking pedestrians from entering a store, acting disorderly, and creating additional calls for service for the police. The outreach committee, during their patrols of this neighborhood, engaged in conversation with these groups, and conveyed to them the community's displeasure with their conduct. In addition, they were told that the police would be aggressively enforcing the appropriate local and state laws when these groups persisted in remaining at a given location. In a short time, the loitering groups were dispersed, demonstrating that cooperation between the community and the police can produce timely results. Another example of a quality-of-life problem brought to the attention of the "Citizens for a Better New Rochelle" through communication with members of the community was drug activity, with its associated loitering, in several municipal housing authority buildings. Due to limitations placed on the police because of ambiguous/poor signage in these buildings, as well as the absence of the definition of "public place" in the New Rochelle city code, police were often powerless to enforce trespassing statutes in these buildings. The committee brought these concerns to the attention of the New Rochelle's law department. As a result, a comprehensive definition of "public place", which includes public housing property, was incorporated into the city code. The full definition is as follows: "Public Place" means a place to which the public or a substantial group of persons has access, and includes, but is not limited to, highways, transportation facilities, schools, places of amusements, parks, playgrounds, pedestrian walkways and parking lots of public housing, and hallways, lobbies and other portions of apartment houses and hotels not constituting rooms or apartments designed for actual residence. This detailed definition of "public place" was the missing element in effective enforcement by the police with an ongoing problem, and also demonstrated a creative and innovative approach that promotes quality and excellence in law enforcement. In addition, a banned list was created to identify those individuals that regularly disrupted the peace of the community through criminal behavior, loitering, drinking alcohol in public, etc. These individuals were served an official notice advising them that they were no longer legally entitled to enter municipal housing authority property. This process now allowed the police to make an instant arrest of a banned individual, thereby eliminating the presence of an individual who had created a nuisance and negatively affected the quality of life in the community. Two housing officers, Police Officer Claudio Carpano and Police Officer Joseph Berardi, were hired to patrol the municipal housing authority property, providing a police presence and immediate access to the police for the residents. Police Commissioner Patrick J. Carroll purposely assigned the two white police officers to these housing authority properties that are comprised of predominantly black residents. His intent was to demonstrate to the community and the police department that a white officer could succeed in gaining the trust of the residents. The overall result has been improved quality of life through a strong working relationship with the community, as well as a 33% reduction in serious crime. These officers have worked closely with "Citizens for a Better

New Rochelle", appearing regularly at meetings to engage in an exchange of information and ideas, and address concerns related to housing authority property. These officers have gained the community's trust by becoming personally involved with the lives of the residents, as well as dealing with serious crimes involving drugs and firearms. Larry Mosely, President of the United Tenants Council, and Steve Horton, Executive Director of the New Rochelle Municipal Housing Authority, have both been members of the "Citizens for a Better New Rochelle" since its inception. They have both been directly involved with PO Carpano and PO Berardi, and have commended the officers and their efforts. New Rochelle Mayor Timothy Itoni has called this community policing "experiment" a complete success. (Refer to supplemental section for statistical information and New York Times article)

Exchange of Information Between Community and Police

Goals

- 1. Continual improvement of services to the community.**
- 2. Strengthening of police relations and promotion of community participation.**
- 3. Effective use of resources.**
- 4. Enhancement of communications within and cooperation among agencies.**
- 5. Development of creative and innovative approaches that promote quality and excellence in law enforcement.**

In addition to the regular meetings of the "Citizens for a Better New Rochelle" and the aforementioned subcommittees, several other events have been held to further strengthen police-community relations and obtain community input on perceived problems relative to **quality-of-life** issues, crime, community-police relations, civilian complaint process or any other concerns voiced by private citizens that the police and community need to address. In May of 1999, the "Citizens for a Better New Rochelle" announced an open house for the Police Mobile Precinct on Horton Avenue. Information was provided on employment opportunities, community programs and residents received answers to specific problems that they were experiencing. In January 2000, the grand opening of the community /police liaison office was held, with the press and media in attendance. In February 2000, a "Meet the Citizens for a Better New Rochelle" night was held as a way to introduce ourselves to community members who were unaware of the committee, and engage in meaningful dialogue with community members. The event was very successful, with over two hundred people in attendance. During the summer of 2001, the New Rochelle Police Department provided neighborhood watch training to a newly formed group of concerned citizens. This group was formed due to the efforts of "Citizens for a Better New Rochelle". Members of the group patrol the area of Hartley House, and report any suspicious activity to the Police. The presence of this patrol has resulted in reduced loitering in known drug locations and a greater sense of safety amongst the local residents. In addition, a Citizen Police Academy was conducted over the course of **ten** weeks, involving members of the "Citizens for a Better New Rochelle". (*Refer to supplemental information section*).

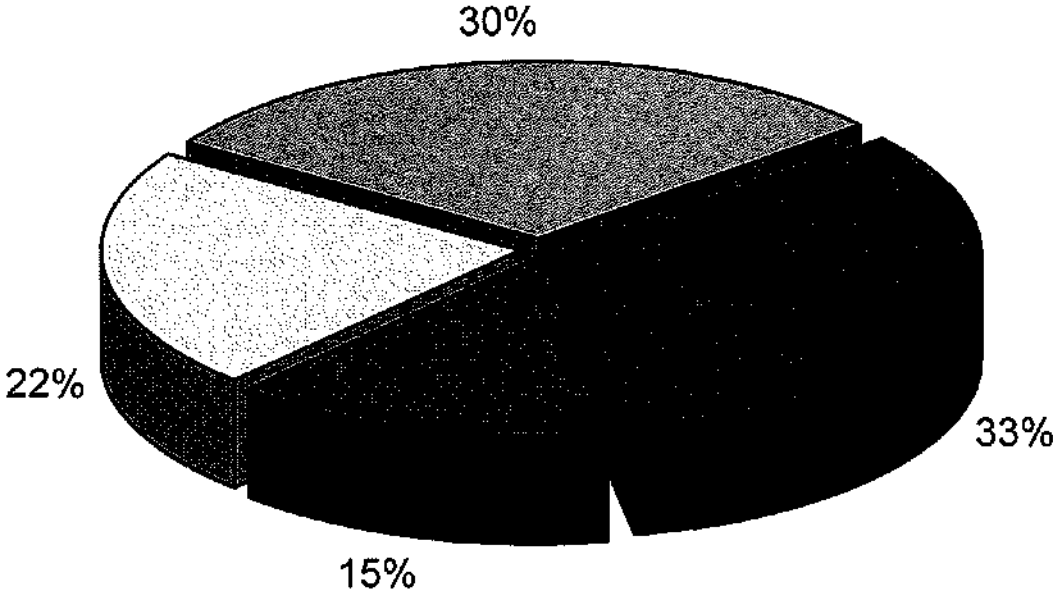
Condemnation of Racial Profiling

Goals

1. **Continual improvement of services to the community.**
2. **Strengthening of police relations and promotion of community participation.**

As numerous police departments throughout the country have been the subjects of racial profiling allegations, **The Robert Hartley Housing Complex Project** believed this to be a very timely and important issue to address. Racial profiling by police departments has resulted in costly litigation, damage of community-police relations, and fear amongst the citizenry because of poor and illegal police practices. The examination of this problem resulted in the formation of a New Rochelle Police Department training bulletin, which was distributed to all 186 sworn officers, and discussed by supervisors at roll call training. The publication of this training bulletin accomplished more than just formally condemn racial profiling. It was another example of how the **Robert Hartley Housing Complex Project** was successful in dealing with a potentially serious problem to both the New Rochelle Police Department and the community that it serves. During 2000, the Department was the only police agency in New York to have members from the State's Attorney General Office to address racial profiling during the annual in-service training cycle (*Refer to pages 8-9 for Training Bulletin*).

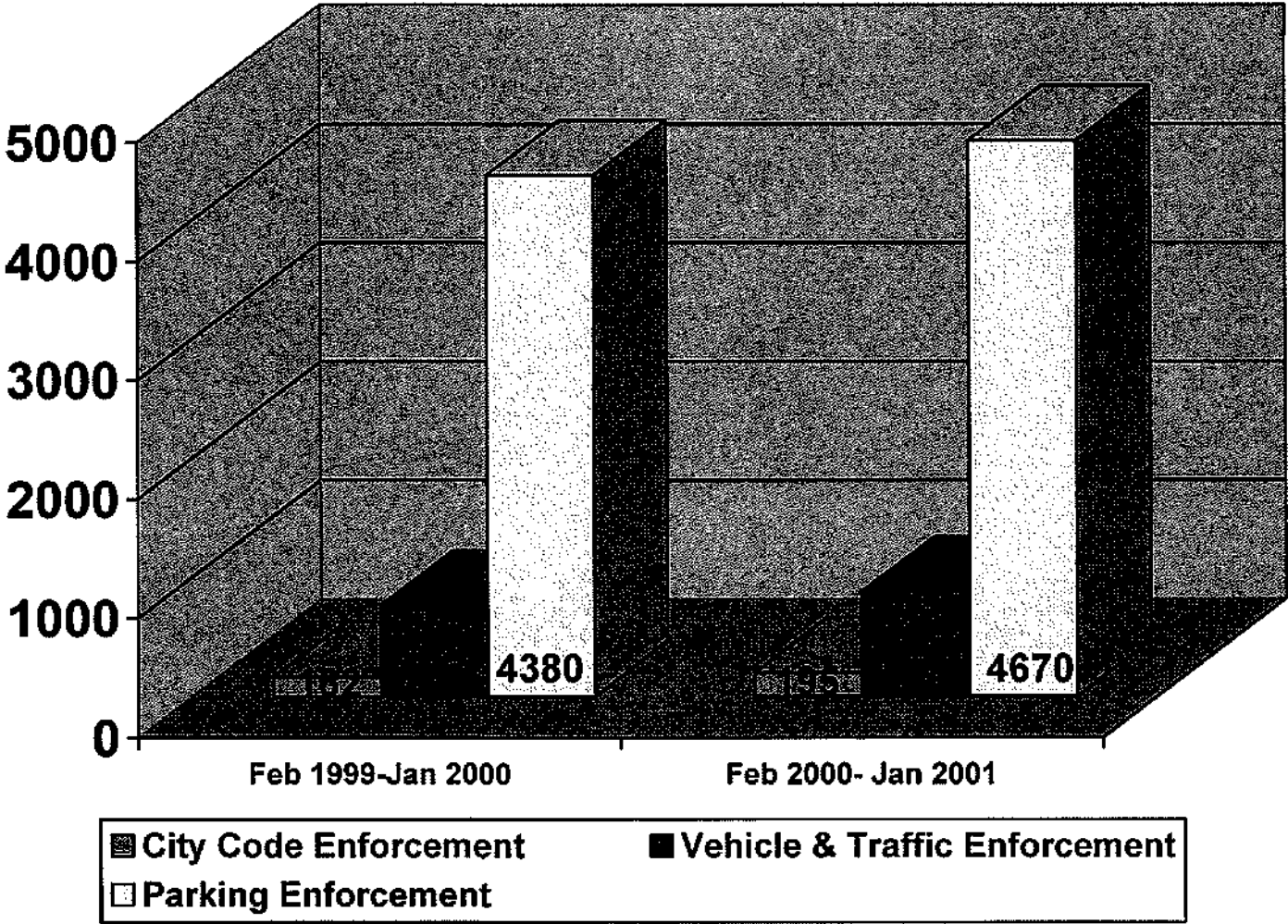
CITIZENS FOR A BETTER NEW ROCHELLE



■ POLICE DEPARTMENT	■ CLERGY
□ COMMUNITY LEADERS	■ PRIVATE CITIZENS

Police Activity in Vicinity of Iona College

(Chart depicts summonses issued prior to, and then during dedicated police patrol established because of community concerns regarding **quality-of-life** issues)





New Rochelle Police Department

Training Update

"Excellence Through Training"



April 2000

00-6

In light of recent cases involving alleged misuse of power by police officers, we at the New Rochelle Police Department are reminded that the basis for any stop of an individual must be based not upon the person's race, but upon a totality of circumstances. Improper police tactics have received national media attention and the hostility created can be long lasting.

The New Rochelle Police Department has historically been, and continues to be, committed to the following ideals: integrity, teamwork, diversity, empowerment, high quality service, commitment to employees, and the protection of constitutional rights.

Building on our proud traditions, we recognize our obligation to acknowledge, discuss, and confront current issues that have an impact on the law enforcement profession. One such issue is "racial profiling."

Racial profiling should not be confused with criminal profiling, which is a legitimate tool in the fight against crime. Criminal profiling is an investigative method in which an officer, through observations of activities and environment, identifies suspicious people and develops a legal basis to stop them for questioning. Racial **profiling** refers to the decision by police to selectively stop and question people when the race of the person is used as an indicator of suspicious activity.

We recognize that crime disproportionately afflicts some of our communities. It is an unfortunate paradox that vulnerable neighborhoods that most need police are often inhabited by racial and ethnic minorities who feel unfairly targeted by police. Yet our experience tells us that the intelligent, assertive use of police authority to stop people and vehicles can be an invaluable tool that reduces crime and enhances safety in these neighborhoods. To this end, any temporary detainment will be done with the utmost sensitivity to the concerns of those being stopped.

We must understand that proper police tactics can be experienced by people as frightening and alienating. We must recognize that many of the people we stop will be released without further action. In this context, we believe that how our authority is employed is as important as the results of its use.

We know that the act of stopping an unknown subject frequently occurs under ambiguous and dangerous circumstances. Our commitment to employees requires, in our profession, a commitment to officer safety. One of the strongest guarantees of officer safety is community support and acceptance.

The New Rochelle Police Department will continue to work to build effective partnerships with all of our constituencies. We also commit the department to the development of training, tactics, and timely intelligence that enhances officer effectiveness and increases officer safety.

We are the inheritors of a social history that has been marked by racial and ethnic discord and distrust. Our profession has a duty not to contribute to that discord; instead, we must establish relationships based on trust with all our communities.

Our integrity demands of us that we reject expedient tactics. We pledge to focus our energies on smart policing strategies based on probable cause, the judicious use of police discretion and partnerships with the community, while rejecting any tactics based solely on assumptions about race or ethnicity.

Conclusion

The preceding project document demonstrates, by specific examples that the **Robert Hartley Housing Complex Project** has been, and will continue to be successful, in achieving all of the award program goals. Always a central component of the project has been the "Citizens for a Better New Rochelle" mission statement; "The police and the community working together to provide a mutually **respectful** relationship through open lines of communication and cooperation". A municipality in which there exists a sound relationship between the community members and the police is invariably a safer community, has better crime prevention methods, has residents who provide input into the police department's policies and has police officers who genuinely are concerned with the people who live or work on their beat, sector or zone. Police officers who care about the people they serve have, in turn, people who care about them. **The Robert Hartley Housing Complex Project** exemplifies this partnership in our city. Much has been accomplished in a relatively short amount of time. Additional achievements will be realized because this partnership is viable, based in trust and understanding, and limited only by its imagination.

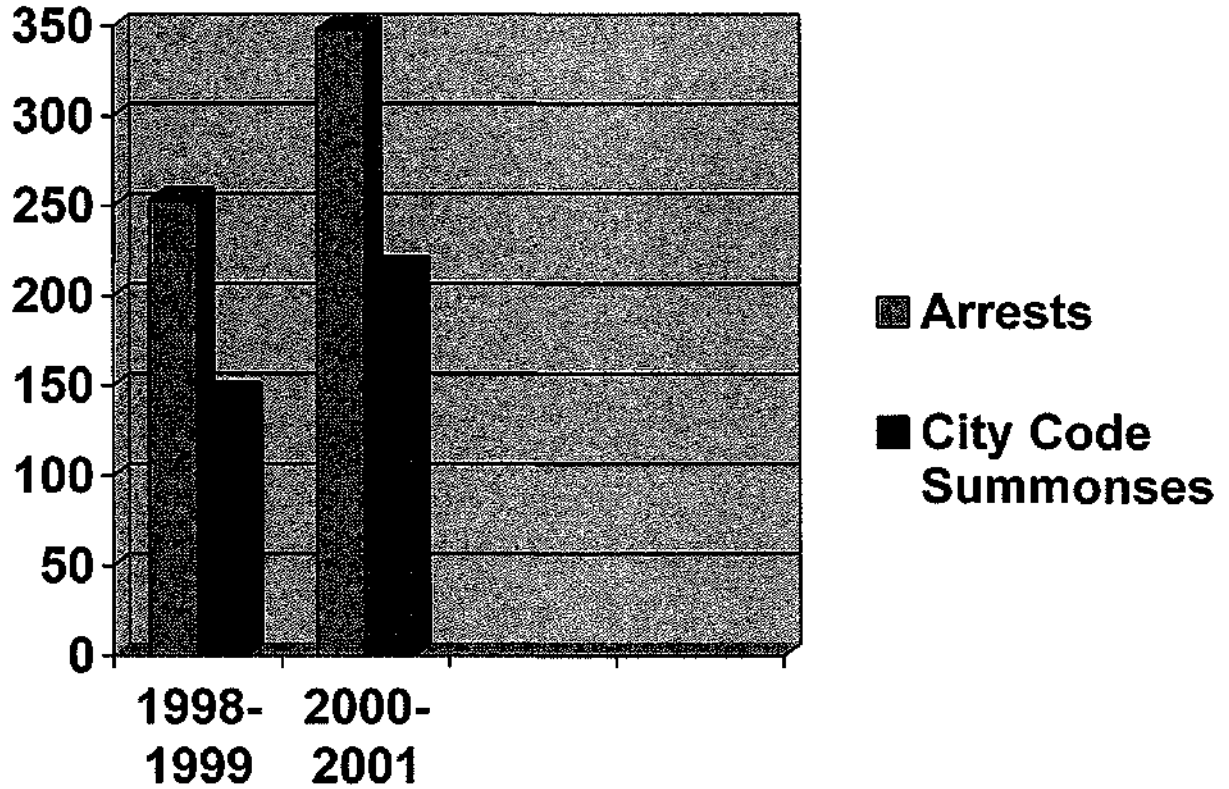
In Summary, we proudly list the following as some of our accomplishments:

- Creation of a Civilian Complaint Review Committee;
- Establishment of **Community/Police Liaison Office** at 33 Lincoln Avenue;
- Police foot patrol of North Avenue "bar strip" in response to community concern;
- Community input on quality of life problems;
- Structuring of a future Police Athletic League;
- Dedicated police patrol, three nights per week, of Iona College Campus and vicinity, paid for by Iona College, in response to Hilltop and other neighborhood association concerns;
- Honest exchange of information between community and police, dispelling rumors and preventing possible crises;
- Increased communication and good will between community leaders and police.
- Housing Officers decrease crime and gain trust of residents.

Additional achievements will be realized because this partnership is viable, based in trust and understanding, and limited only by its imagination. For over three years, the partnership has grown, matured and persevered in an arena where many such partnerships lose their purpose, lose their strength and eventually cease to exist. We confidently anticipate that **The Robert Hartley Housing Complex Project** will, for many years to come, improve the **quality-of-life** for New Rochelle business owners and residents.

Hartley House Municipal Housing Authority Property

Chart Depicts Enforcement Activity Prior to and After Inclusion of "Public Property" into City Code

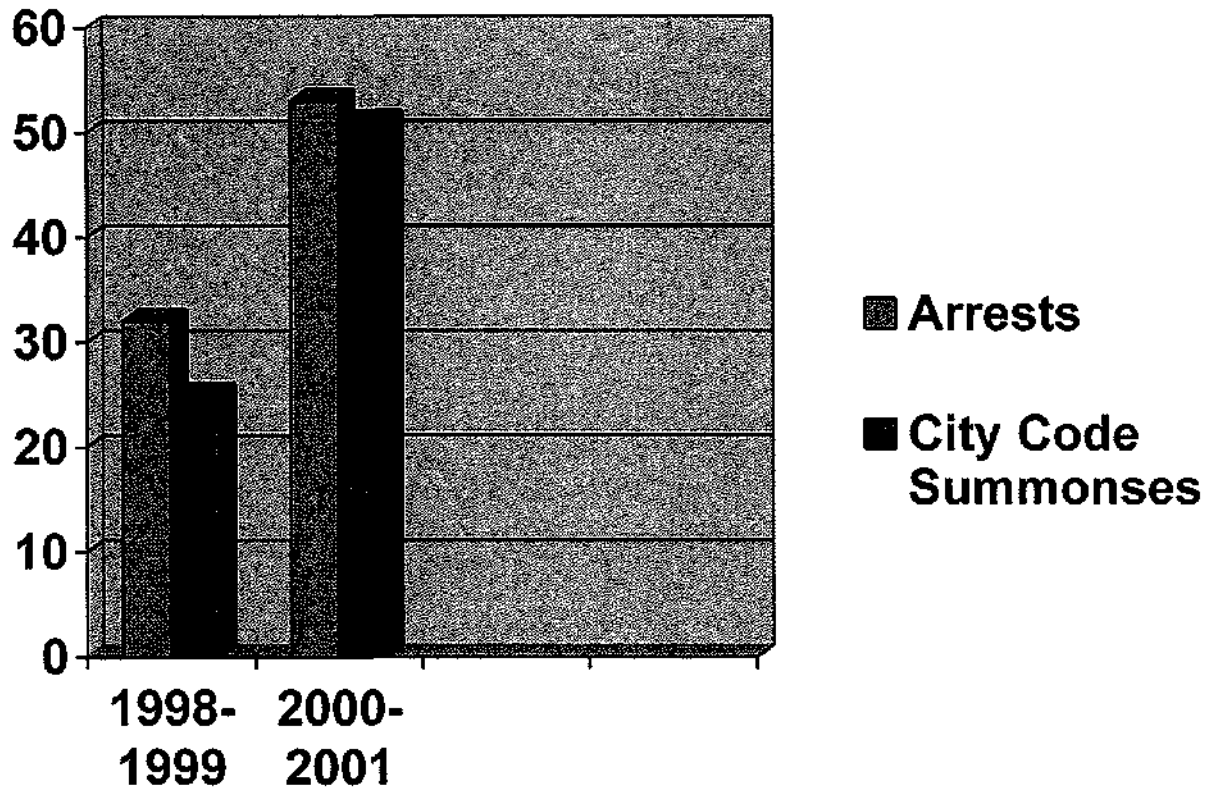


Arrests increased by 38%

City code summonses increased by 45%

Bracey Municipal Housing Authority Property

Chart Depicts Enforcement Prior to and After Inclusion of "Public Property" into City Code



Arrests increased by 66%

City code summonses increased by 77%