



# CRIME BRIEFINGS

*"A successful analytical approach to reducing non-fatal shootings in the city of Detroit."*



**DETROIT POLICE DEPARTMENT**

*under the leadership of*

***Ella M. Bully-Cummings, Chief of Police***

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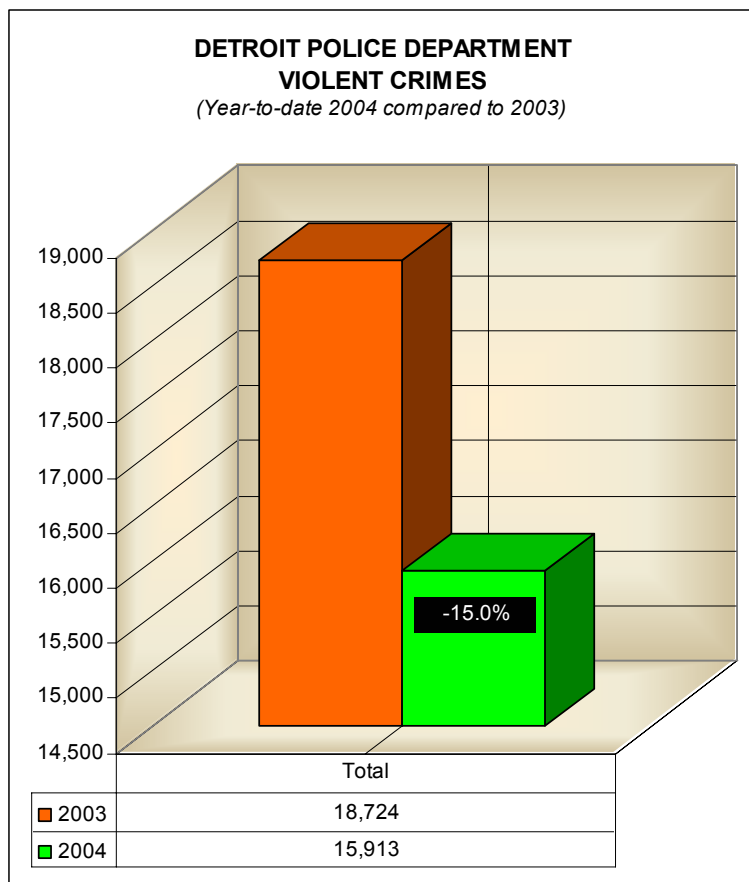
**2007 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem Oriented Policing**

*June 30, 2007*

# 1. SUMMARY

In 2004, while the nation's violent crime reflected a reduction of 1.2%<sup>1</sup> compared to 2003, the city of Detroit taunted a 15.2% reduction in violent crimes for the same period. This was the greatest reduction in violent crimes in 41 years

In 2005, as the nation experienced an increase in violent crime by 2.3%, Detroit experienced a measurable



increase of 33.5%. In mid 2006, an analysis of crime showed a remarkable increase in non-fatal shootings. By July 2006, the number of non-fatal shootings had reached their highest level of increase to 27% and the number of homicides had increased by 17%, both compared to the same time period in 2005. The vast majority of homicides were gun-related (85%) and an exorbitant amount (66%) of the homicides were directly linked to either the victims' and/or perpetrators' involvement in some facet of the illegal narcotics culture, be it a history of drug abuse or participation in the distribution and sale

<sup>1</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2004 Uniform Crime Report

of illegal drugs. The non-fatal shootings and homicides were occurring city-wide. There was no one particular area that required complete focus. Therefore, it was nearly impossible to section out a single area of the city and deploy a substantial amount of the Department's resources in one district to decrease the number of non-fatal shootings, as well as homicides.

The Detroit Police Department (DPD), like many departments nationally, had lost significant numbers of personnel by that time. In 2005, the DPD was faced with a single-year budget reduction of more than \$113 million and due to the fact that the majority of the DPD's budget is personnel costs (86%) it was initially suggested that the DPD layoff more than 550 police officers in order to maintain fiscal solvency. However, Chief Bully-Cummings and the DPD's Restructuring Committee were able to develop a plan that was fiscally responsible, which would save jobs and not compromise public safety. Unfortunately, the tremendous cut in funding to DPD resulted in the forced layoff of 150 officers. These layoffs, coupled with the already significant reduction of the DPD's ranks, caused the department to embark on an unprecedented restructuring and the challenge of addressing the increase of violent crimes with less resources and manpower.

Recognizing their shortage of manpower, the DPD had to create innovative and experimental methods to combat the issue of gun violence. One of the most beneficial measures taken was to have members who are assigned to both patrol and investigative operations to collectively participate in a round-table to institute multi-faceted, comprehensive initiatives to combat the gun violence and existing street crime

that was permeating the neighborhoods. Under the direction of Chief Bully-Cummings, the DPD's senior management team developed a template called **Major Crime Briefings**, which is an unprecedented opportunity for members to share information and strategies for the apprehension of perpetrators of gun violence, along with collectively creating proactive initiatives to curtail the influx of street crimes and gun violence which was permeating various communities within the City of Detroit.

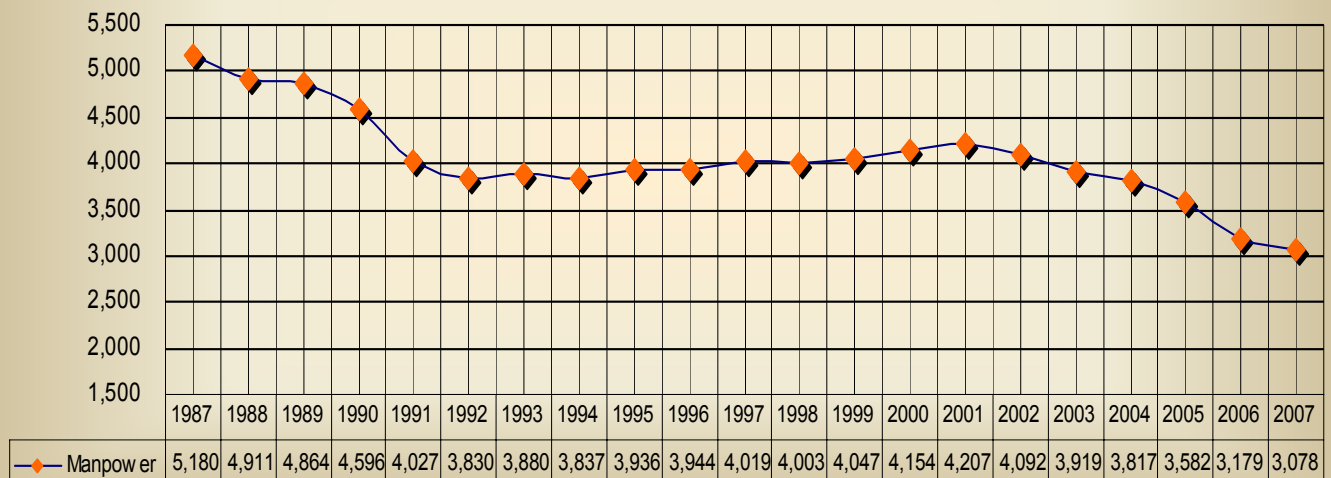
The preliminary results after the Crime Briefing began were exceptional; the non fatal shootings went from a 27% increase prior to the briefing to only a 5% increase, in only six months. The positive effects of the Crime Briefings have carried over into 2007. As of June 3, 2007, the City of Detroit has seen a total decrease of 7% in the total number of violent crimes compared to 2006 and homicides are down 11%, while non-fatal shooting are down 17%. Also a total of 1971 guns were confiscated.

## 2. DESCRIPTION

### SCANNING

The struggle to gain a handle on gun violence and illegal drug sales has been one of the main areas of focus of policing for DPD for over the last 20 years. However, the DPD currently has its lowest number of police officers in more than 50 years and has been dealing with a significant budget reduction. This has challenged the department to re-evaluate the way it handles gun violence. Conventional policing would state that more officers are needed to address the spike in gun violence; however, this is not a conceivable option currently for the DPD, not unlike other police departments across the nation. Other law enforcement agencies are facing similar challenges with shrinking budgets and manpower.

**DETROIT POLICE DEPARTMENT  
Total Manpower by Year**



The DPD organization underwent a major restructuring in September 2005, to offset the impact of a major budget reduction which included laying off 150 police officers. Although the *Restructuring Plan*, which consisted of combining 13 police precincts into six (6) police districts, caused more officers to be placed in patrol functions, there is still a shortage in the manpower for the department. A glaring example of this manpower deficiency is in the number of investigators handling homicides. There is a huge disparity in the number of cases assigned per homicide investigator, when compared to most major cities. Chicago, Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia and Los Angeles have on average from four (4) to eight (8) cases assigned per investigator, while the DPD averages over 11 per investigator. With such a large caseload, DPD homicide investigators must utilize the resources available to them and be able to identify crime trends throughout the city of Detroit.

The increase in the number of gun-related homicides and non-fatal shootings has had a devastating impact on local residents' perception of the safety of their neighborhoods and the performance of their police department. Consequently, Chief Bully-Cummings made the reduction of gun-violence a core priority and continuously strives to have the Detroit Police Department nationally recognized for its inventive problem solving; focused crime prevention and intervention initiatives.

It became imperative to apprehend the perpetrators responsible for these crimes, with a well planned, effective strategy. To develop the strategy, officers assigned to various districts and investigative units were given an opportunity to provide input based

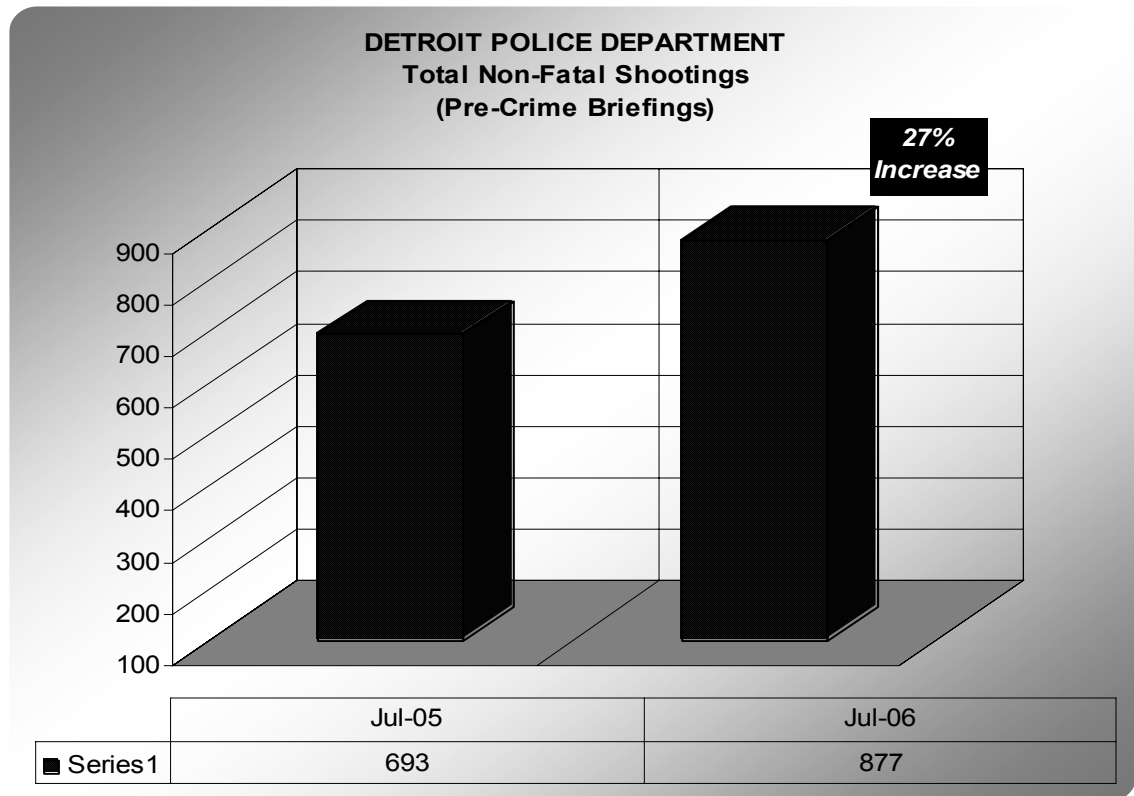
on their experience and expertise related to gun-violence. By doing so, the DPD could identify the motives surrounding the majority of the shootings and accurately address this trend.

The DPD identified the following objectives:

1. Reduce the number of shootings and aggressively apprehend and prosecute perpetrators of these crimes.
2. Encourage department-wide information sharing regarding shootings across the city.
3. Encourage the community to become actively involved in making their neighborhoods safe by providing information to the police regarding gun-related crimes.

The combined numbers of fatal and non-fatal shootings within the various districts of the city were evaluated not only on an intelligence and investigative-driven basis, but also in a systematic, problem-solving approach. It was revealed that many of the shootings had a direct correlation to other shootings that occurred in different districts within the city.

The below graph shows the number of non-fatal shootings prior to the development of Crime Briefings. As indicated, there was a 27% increase in non-fatal shootings in 2006 compared to the same period in 2005.



### [ANALYSIS](#)

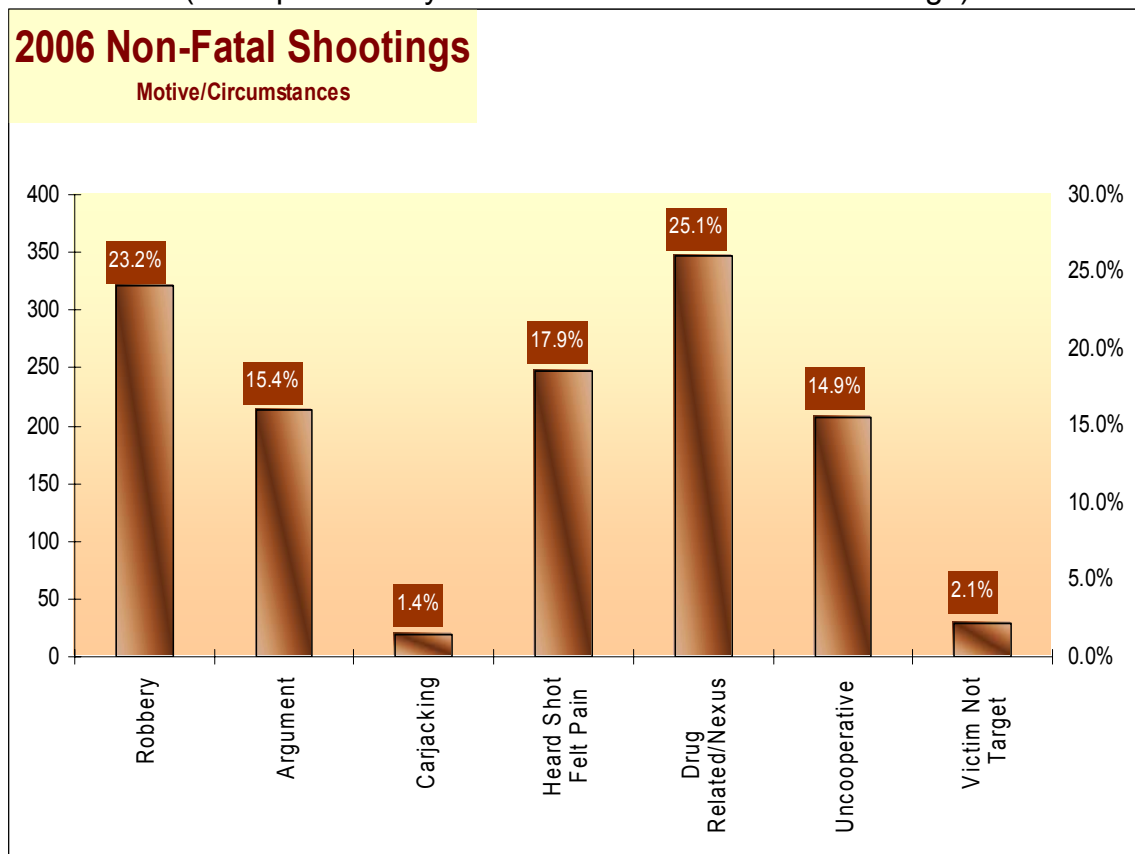
Upon initial review it was noted that in order to increase our effectiveness in combating gun-related violence, the patrol and investigative entities within the DPD must have a forum that facilitated department-wide communication and involvement. Crime briefings provided the settings for this to be accomplished.

During the Crime Briefings, the following support mechanisms were used to identify crime patterns and analyze crime data: presentation of fatal and non-fatal shooting synopses are done in PowerPoint; crime mapping, area and city-wide crime analysis; time of day, age of victims and perpetrators, and reasons for fatal and non-



fatal shootings; information is emailed to attendants prior to the briefing; profiles of victims and suspects indicating prior contact with law enforcement, gang affiliation, and other possible contributing factors; photographs of suspects and perpetrators are disseminated; media is used to broadcast crime alerts to the community and elicit tips and information; rewards for tips are provided by 1-800-SPEAK UP, through donated funds; meeting are held three (3) times a week; fatal and non-fatal shooting incidents occurring between meetings are discussed explicitly; in addition to the presence of patrol and investigative, administrative members are also in attendance to address operational issues in the areas of risk, labor, legal, fiscal and other related administrative issues.

(Example of analysis conducted on non-fatal shootings)



As stated in the summary, the surge in non-fatal shootings began in 2005, with a noticeable increase in mid-2006. In addition, there was a significant increase (33.5%) in violent crime in 2005; and, a 0.2% increase in 2006.

Prior to the Crime Briefings, there was no formal forum for information sharing on a department-wide scale. Crime Briefings provided additional benefits as:

1. Investigators consistently communicate with both the uniform and plainclothes officers and employ them as their eyes and ears on the streets.
2. Reduce duplication in investigations of the same individuals, who may be responsible for shootings in several different areas.
3. Enhance information sharing between patrol officers and investigators.

### RESPONSE

Due the budgetary and manpower constraints of the DPD, it was determined that a cost effective initiative which did not require additional personnel or equipment had to be implemented to assist the DPD in addressing the issue of rising gun-related crime totals.

In May 2006, the DPD began convening a weekly meeting with Deputy Chiefs and Commanders, from both the Operations and Investigations Portfolios, to discuss the homicides and non-fatal shootings occurring throughout the city. The initial meetings were very rigid and structured and consisted of the command officers essentially "reporting out" on the violent crimes that occurred in their jurisdiction.

However, Chief Bully-Cummings wanted the meetings to be more conducive to an open discussion for sharing information; formulating tactics and initiatives to address the increase in gun-violence. The meetings were then expanded and reorganized to correspond with Chief Bully-Cummings vision.

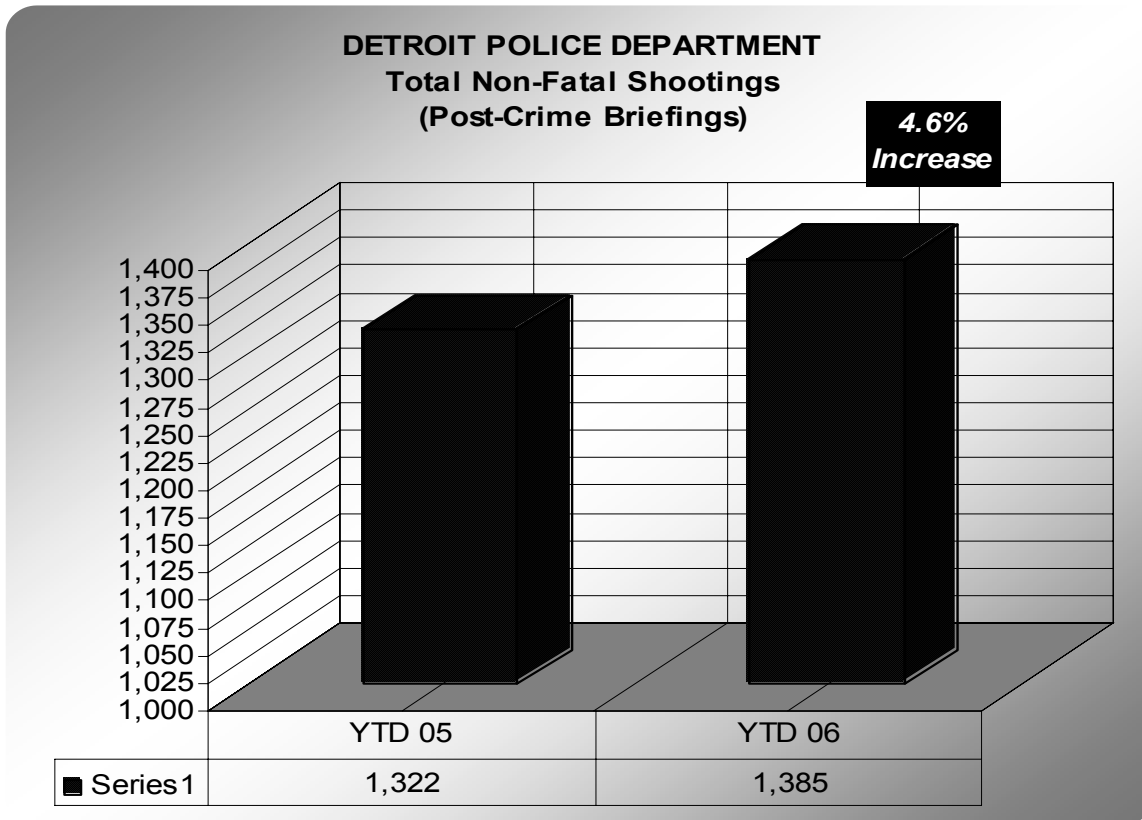
In August 2006, the DPD developed a template called **Crime Briefings** in which members of the Investigations Portfolio and Operations Portfolio assemble three (3) times a week to review and analyze fatal and non-fatal shootings. This forum allows dialogue department-wide and an opportunity to identify and address patterns and individuals that crossed District boundaries. This forum also permitted the development of strategies designed to reduce non-fatal shootings, which immediately proved to be successful—as the variance in the number of non-fatal shootings decreased significantly.

At the **Crime Briefings**, many aspects of these violent crimes, which normally are not evaluated, are discussed. Profiles of the victims, including criminal history, gang affiliations and any other possible contributing factors, are reported and discussed at the briefings. Also, a detailed summary is prepared for crime incident location, listing all previous calls for police service, narcotics complaints and complaints of any other illegal activities. This information is shared between officers who would not normally be privy to such information.

The **Crime Briefings** were started to achieve the following goals:

1. Open the lines of effective communication throughout the department.

2. Reduce the number of gun-related crimes and increase the closure rate for homicide and non-fatal shootings.
3. Develop strategic plans, based on dialogue shared at the briefings which allows everyone to have a voice in the implementation of the plans.



What was also a catalyst for the discussion on establishing a formal department-wide communication forum was the success to the DPD's Twenty-Five (25) Most Violent Persons (MVP) Program. This program was launched in August 2004 and continues to be a viable crime reduction tactic. The program entails the distribution of posters, profiling the city's 25 most violent persons, in public venues, such as: police districts, neighborhood city halls, libraries, and local businesses as a mechanism of communicating the need for public assistance in the apprehension of these violent

persons. Through information received from the public and police officers, a total of 89 out of 100 profiled have been arrested since the program's inception. Of the persons arrested, 65% were arrested for murder. The program validates the importance of communication in successfully investigating violent crimes.

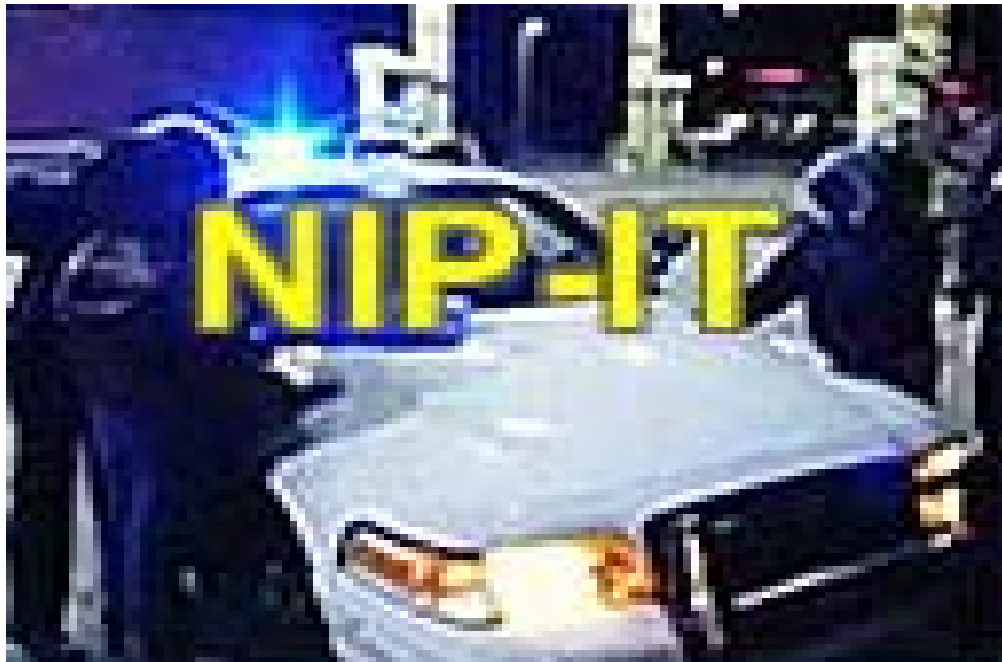
Although simplistic in design, the development of the Crime Briefings was brilliant in the sense that it enhanced the DPD's communication process as it relates to solving crimes and effectively addressed the increase in gun violence, without costing the Department any additional resources or funding.

### **ASSESSMENT**

Statistics regarding the decrease in homicides and non-fatal shootings, along with the increase in the closure rate for homicides (currently 49% compared to 44% for this time in 2006) illustrates the success that the DPD has garnered since the inception of the Crime Briefings. The process leading to the implementation of the Crime Briefings was ground-breaking, logical, fiscally responsible and required for the DPD to be successful in the reduction of gun violence.

Aside from the statistical improvements, the **Crime Briefings** has enhanced many of the other innovative operations currently being executed by the DPD. The following are examples:

1. Narcotics Intensity Patrol Impact Teams (NIP-IT) which is an intense, narcotic enforcement initiative targeting narcotic activity in high crime areas, city-wide. Information from the *Crime Briefing* has been used to target a specific location to be raided with the goal of gathering information and intelligence on suspects who are wanted regarding a recent homicide or shooting. Members from Homicide de-brief all persons arrested by the NIP-IT members and attempt to gain information on open murder investigations. This is an example of the collaborated efforts that have come about since the implementation of the *Crime Briefings*.



2. Inside – Out Detail, as identified at the **Crime Briefings**, many of the shootings were occurring on Friday, during the evening hours at various retail businesses, gas stations and restaurants. To address this issue, officers who are normally assigned to a inside staff position are assigned out to patrol, every Friday, between the hours of 2 P.M. to 10 P.M., for increased officer presence.



3. Citywide Crime Walks (Crime Reduction/Community Outreach) is an anti-crime initiative to engage the community (residents and businesses) in partnering with police to reduce crime and provide community awareness, inclusive of crime prevention seminars and training. The crime walks are held in every Police District through neighborhoods with high-crime areas. Many of the target neighborhoods for the crime walks are determined by the information shared at the **Crime Briefings** relative to areas experience a spike in

gun violence. The photograph below shows DPD members and citizens at one of our crime walks.



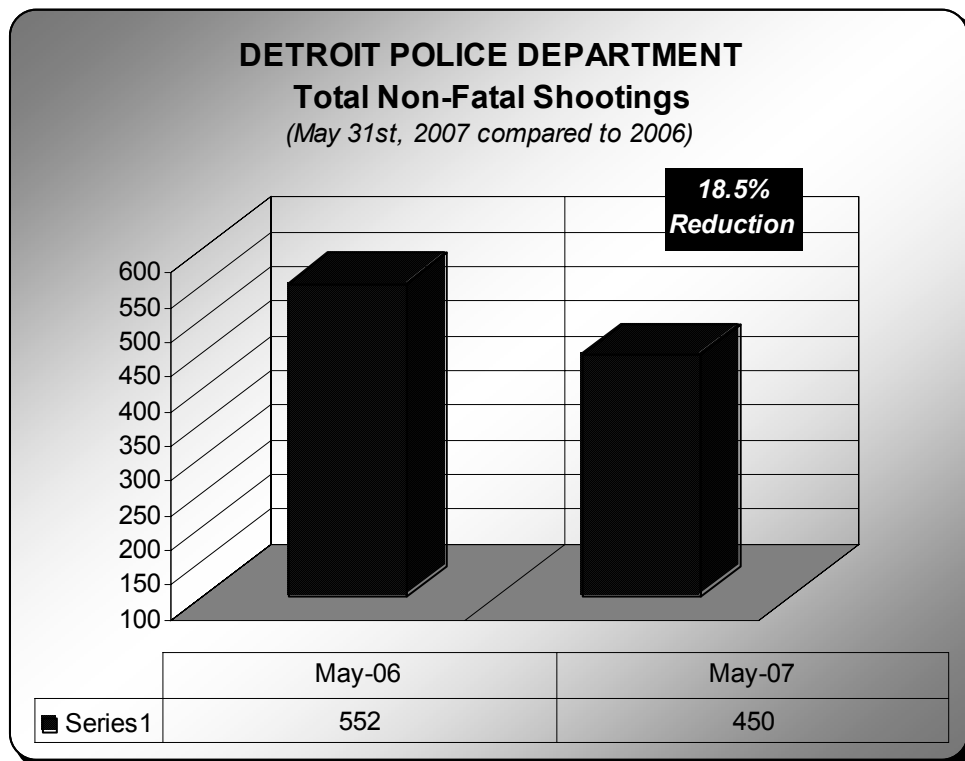
4. Thursday Night Impact Patrol (TIP) is an initiative that is directly correlated to the **Crime Briefings**. After each Thursday night **Crime Briefings**, officers from each Police District's Special Operations Section (plain clothes officers) are dispatched to a pre-determined high crime area to effectuate zero tolerance patrol and the apprehension of felons

The **Crime Briefings** have been beneficial in opening the line of communications for members throughout the Department, as well as outside the Department. The DPD has extended invitations to both federal and local law enforcement agencies to attend the forum. The



**Crime Briefings** has fostered productive working relationship, which has led to the different Police Districts within the DPD collaborating and forming joint initiatives to address crimes that are bordering each others geographic territory. Furthermore, the Crime Briefing has led to a heightened sense of camaraderie and a boost in morale of the members who participate in this forum.

The chart below depicts the tremendous success of the Crime Briefings. As of May 31, 2007, there has been an 18.5% reduction in non-fatal shootings compared to the same time in 2006. Prior to the development of the Crime Briefings, there was a 27.5% increase in non-fatal shootings.



### 3. AGENCY AND OFFICER INFORMATION

- The problem solving initiative, known as **“CRIME BRIEFINGS”**, was conceived, formulated, and implemented to include members of both patrol and investigative operations who are directly responsible for investigating fatal and non-fatal shootings, narcotics and vice enforcement and investigating armed robberies. The Detroit Police Department is divided into six (6) Police Districts, and contains various specialized investigative operations which are centralized and responsible for the entire city of Detroit. The **Crime Briefings** was a department wide initiative that was conceived by Chief of Police Ella M. Bully-Cummings.
- In terms of training and/or familiarity with the concept of Problem Oriented Policing, over the course of her career, Chief Bully-Cummings, and the Senior Management Team of the Detroit Police Department, have all had to take Civil Service Promotional Exams in order to achieve the ranks of Sergeant, Lieutenant, prior to being appointed to their current positions. The material from which the promotional exams were based contained lengthy sections on Problem Oriented Policing and the S.A.R.A. Model. Chief Bully-Cummings is also a member of the Executive Committee of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), Board of Directors for the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), Major Cities Chiefs of Police Association and the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police. All of

these organizations embrace the concept of problem-oriented policing and the SARA model.

- There were no additional incentives given to police officers who participated in the Crime Briefings; however, the officers expressed their pride in the results shown from their participation in this successful initiative.
- Basically, the statistics from our crime databases, good problem-solving techniques, and shared ideas from relationships forged with other law enforcement agencies.
- The problem-oriented policing model was a resource in designing and developing the initiative.
- Members from patrol, investigative, and administrative entities participated in the Crime Briefings. No additional budgeted funds were required. However, rewards for tips were furnished through 1-800-SPEAKUP.
- Project Contact Person:

Name:	Robert B. Dunlap
Position/Rank:	Assistant Chief
Address:	Detroit Police Department 1300 Beaubien, Room 318
City/State:	Detroit, Michigan 48226
Phone:	(313) 596-2007
Fax:	(313) 596-6818
Email:	Dunlapr696@detroitmi.gov