Policing with Our Community
Woodbury Police Department

Winter 2022
The Policing with Our Community report, intended to communicate some of the work done between the Police Department and the public in Woodbury, aims to provide information to residents twice a year.

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Mission

We serve all people with compassion and courage.

Vision

Woodbury Public Safety is committed to a better future through:

• Exceptional and responsive service
• Community trust and engagement
• Unified and active leadership
• Planning and preparedness

Values

Woodbury Public Safety recognizes there is no greater priority than the preservation of human life.

Respect

Preserve the dignity and rights of all persons
Advance diversity, equity and inclusion

Integrity

Maintain unwavering ethical standards
Prudent use of public resources

Trust

Operate with transparency
Foster effective teamwork

Excellence

Provide exceptional service
Promote professional development and innovation
Multicultural Engagement

The Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC) was formed in April 2019 with involvement from a community steering committee. The purpose of our MAC is to enrich the relationship between community members with diverse identities and experiences and the police department by creating opportunities to learn from each other, engage in meaningful conversations, and solicit input for decision-making processes that impact the community. By building trust and communication between the police and community members, we work to ultimately improve the safety and livability of our community. Visit woodburymn.gov/MAC for more information.

The MAC has participated in multiple new police officer hiring processes this past year. MAC members developed their own questions, conducted their own interviews, and provided candidate feedback. Their perspectives were very helpful in the decision-making process and many of the candidates commented that it was great to see how closely the police department worked with the community. Currently, 14 of our officers have gone through the MAC interview process with another process taking place this winter.

During our monthly meetings, MAC members have participated in discussions on police training, police equipment, and de-escalation techniques. MAC members assisted in the selection process for an embedded full-time social worker, who will be working directly with our Community Support Team, (p.11). Previous work includes MAC members meeting with our School Resource Officers for a discussion on race and policing in the schools, a review of our restorative justice programs, and police case reviews of situations in Woodbury and around the Metro Area. In addition, the group advises the department on community communications, program design, and community program rollouts.

Committee Goals

• To provide opportunity for meaningful conversations that create an appreciation for different perspectives and mutual understanding

• To provide an open channel of communication between police and community for the sharing of information and feedback

• To help the police department better serve community members with diverse identities and experiences

• To recommend opportunities for maintaining and improving public trust in Woodbury law enforcement

• To assist the police department with inclusiveness, community outreach, public education and recruitment efforts

• To work together to build a safer community

Committee Authority

The Woodbury Police Multicultural Advisory Committee does not serve as an oversight committee but as a liaison between the police department and the community. This may involve serving as liaisons when evaluating police operations, police training, policy designs and reviews, and hiring processes.

Also see pages 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14 for additional multicultural engagement initiatives.
Community Oriented Policing

In 2021, we partnered with the National Police Foundation to develop our evidence-based community policing model. Through our work, we have developed a process to better identify and prioritize community issues while also collecting data around proactive policing. Our work focuses on how we can better partner with different city departments, county/state departments, businesses, non-profits, and churches to address issues that impact our community.

Community Policing Advisory Group

Several times each week our department’s Community Support Team (CST) sergeant, crime analyst, detective sergeant, patrol commander, and detective commander meet to review calls for service, crime data, and community impact topics. The group looks for partnership opportunities, coordinates evidence-based problem solving policing projects, and develops communication strategies.

Retail Patrols

Each year over the holiday season there is a significant increase in traffic in our retail areas. While most people come to shop at our businesses and enjoy our amenities we also see an increase in calls related to crimes of opportunity each holiday season. This holiday season we added 192 extra patrols hours to our retail areas to serve as a visual deterrent. It also allowed us to better connect with our retailers to work together to address problems.

City Park Initiative

This summer our officers made hundreds of visits to our parks to seek out community engagement opportunities. Our department are also working with the city’s Park & Recreation Department and our Public Works Department to determine how best to allocate police resources throughout our park system.

Catalytic Converter Thefts

As precious metal values have increased so has the number of catalytic converter thefts. To address the issue we have increased patrols to impacted areas, spread awareness via social media, partnered with service stations on a theft reduction program, and filmed and distributed a theft deterrent video.
Community Oriented Policing (cont)

Vehicle Thefts

We have seen a spike in motor vehicle thefts over the past year. We are providing extra patrol to residential areas, spreading awareness via social and traditional media, developing intel on suspects, collecting DNA from recovered vehicles, interviewing witnesses, and analyzing all of the data. Through these efforts, along with the community’s help, we have made several arrests and recovered several vehicles.

![Motor Vehicle Thefts by Year](chart)

*Does not include motor vehicle thefts where the vehicle is stolen from a garage (open or closed) as they are classified as burglaries.*

Officer Initiated Activity

To help address community issues and connect with the community members officers regularly stop in at our businesses, construction areas, parks, and schools. Here is an overview of those efforts in 2021.

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<th>Proactive Policing Activity</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>Aug</th>
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Community Engagement Activities

Coin Quest

To encourage community members to get outside and be active while also exploring our parks we collaborated with the Woodbury Park and Recreation Department for our second annual winter medallion hunt, dubbed Coin Quest. This event involved three separate searches for hidden coins where our officers read clues posted on our social media platforms. The finder of each coin receives $100 in gift cards to local businesses. For each coin found an additional $100 donation is provided to a local non-profit. This popular event is also supported by the Woodbury Community Foundation.

Faith & Blue

On Oct. 10, 2021, Woodbury Police, the Washington County Sheriff’s Office, and the Eastern Twin Cities Islamic Center partnered on hosting our first Faith & Blue event. This national event was launched to facilitate safer, stronger, more just and unified communities by directly enabling local partnerships among law enforcement professionals, residents, businesses and community groups through the connections of local faith-based organizations.

Holiday Hope

On Dec. 18, 2021, the Woodbury Police Department partnered with Community Thread to deliver community donated gift cards to families struggling during the holiday season. Community Thread is a non-profit that leverages resources and volunteers to improve the quality of life for adults and their families in the community.
Youth Engagement

The Woodbury Police Department has always seen our youth engagement programs and efforts as a great way to build relationships with our entire community. Our efforts are a wide-spectrum of engagement opportunities including building relationships of trust, hosted programs, educational events and fun partnerships. We approach each opportunity with the idea of building purposeful engagement with the kids of Woodbury.

Youth Police Academy

The Youth Police Academy is a free five-week introduction to the world of policing. Designed to be a fun and active program for students in grades 6 through 8, this program takes advantage of the HERO Center facilities. The HERO Center is a regional state-of-the-art immersive training center for police, fire, and emergency medical services. For more information on the HERO Center visit herocentermn.org. We will be hosting this event in the spring/summer of 2022. High school and adult versions are coming soon.

School Resource Officers

We have two officers assigned to serve our two high schools. These officers create many lasting connections with kids, support the school staff, and are active in many non-law enforcement activities at the school, which build relationships and trust. In the summer of 2021 our officers participated in a joint training with School District 833 administration on developing safety training and protocols for school staff.

Police K9 5th Grade Outreach

For the past five years, our K9 unit has conducted demonstrations for all of our 5th grade classrooms in the city. The demonstrations are an opportunity for kids to learn about our dogs and how we use them. These also allow our officers to explain to kids why they personally went into law enforcement and their role in the community.

Woodbury K9 Gift Drop-off Event:

On Dec. 4, the Woodbury K9 Unit collaborated with the Cottage Grove and the Washington County Sheriff’s Office K9 Units on collecting gifts for those in need. Community participants waved at our K9 officers (dogs and officers) at the drive-thru gift drop-off event. Some donated items were used for our Shop with a Cop program but most were delivered to the Tubman Family Alliance. Tubman is a non-profit that provides safe shelter, legal services, mental and chemical health counseling, youth programming, and community education.
Youth Engagement cont.

Other Youth Events

District 833 Read-A-Thon where Woodbury officers were videoed reading elementary level books and those videos were made available to our elementary schools. This year’s readings include Spanish-speaking readings by our Spanish-speaking officers. Additional events include: Lights and Sirens, Safety Camp, Scout Night, Cops N Bobbers, Tiny Tots, Build-A-Bike program, Shop with a Cop, Car Seat Safety checks, Big Truck Day, Woodbury Days tent event and K-9 demonstrations.

55 and Older Engagement

The Woodbury Police Department has developed a number of strategies for building relationships and protecting those within our 55 and older communities in Woodbury.

Seniors – English as a Second Language

We developed a two track program in partnership with Cottage Grove Police and Hastings Police Departments. One track is for all seniors, where we currently have 160 participants. The second is for seniors speaking English as a second language, where we currently have 52 participants. The six-week program includes information on general home safety tips, current crime trends, current scams and preventions, car safety seats, Fire and EMS and dispatch procedures, hands free CPR, and traffic safety.

Be a Santa to a Senior program

We partnered with Home Instead and Lunds & Byerlys to collect, sort and transport hundreds of holiday gifts. It was a treat to help spread the gifts of love and joy (and wonderful gifts) during the holiday season.
People with Unique Abilities Engagement

Polar Plunge

The Polar Plunge is an annual event sponsored by Law Enforcement for Special Olympics Minnesota. Each year the Woodbury Police Department puts together a team of jumpers who raise funds to participate in the local event, which takes place at Carver Lake. In addition to assembling a team of jumpers, Woodbury police personnel also work to organize the entire Woodbury event, which has raised over $549,000 in its six year history. The 2022 event will be held on Feb. 12, starting at noon. For information on how to get involved, visit plungemn.org/events/woodbury.

Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR)

Last fall, Woodbury officers and community members participated in a remote run that benefited Special Olympics Minnesota, a group that helps individuals with intellectual disabilities through its athletic, health, school and leadership programs.

Coffee for Champions

Woodbury Officers partnered with Special Olympics Minnesota to help raise money for the group by participating in a Coffee for Champions event. The event was held at the Woodbury Dunkin’ location and involved athletes collecting donations and handing out coupons while also being greeted by Woodbury Police Officers. In total $2,221.95 was raised during the event.

Communication

Each officer is issued a cell phone with an app that connects with language interpreters, including a video option that allows for sign language communication.
Community Mental Wellness

Woodbury Community Support Team

Law enforcement agencies are frequently called to be the default first line of response to situations involving mental health crisis, substance abuse, and homelessness. In 2019, the Woodbury Police Department formed the Woodbury Community Support Team (CST) consisting of a full time detective and a sergeant working with several Woodbury officers. This team focuses on efforts by law enforcement to coordinate with Washington County Community Services looking for longer-term solutions. In November 2021 we added a full-time Social Worker, Angie Shackleton, who is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW). Angie had previously worked as a Child Protection Social Worker and also as a Washington County Crisis Response Unit responder.

The Woodbury CST’s mission is to provide focused efforts toward situations involving mental illness, substance abuse, and homelessness through early interventions, ongoing case management, and connections to resources. In 2021, our CST engaged on cases involving 263 different individuals, handled 194 calls that came in directly to the CST, responded to 114 dispatched in-progress calls for service, and conducted 147 in-person post-crisis follow up visits. CST also gave 12 presentations in 2021, including presenting at the 4th Annual Police Mental Health Collaboration Symposium which was attended by over 120 police officers and mental health professionals from all over the region.

We are also excited to welcome “Otis,” our new Community Support Dog. Otis is an English Golden Retriever. He will be a member of our Community Support Team with three main goals:

1. **Internal Support for Police, Fire, and EMS:** With the stressful nature of the profession, Otis will be available to reduce the effects of trauma and stress in the workplace.

2. **Call or incident based response:** The response of a certified therapy dog has been proven to ease the effects of traumatic events and provide some comforts in times of need.

3. **Community outreach and engagement:** Each year, public safety makes it a priority to participate in several community events and Otis will be helping build relationships with our community.

This program is only made possible with the support of the community via the [Woodbury Police K9 Fund](http://www.woodburypolice.org) non-profit.

**Crisis Intervention Training**

All Woodbury patrol officers complete 40 hours of community Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) during which advocates and consumers of mental health services speak on their experiences. The training also includes a group of mental health clinicians for a panel discussion as well as extensive role-play exercises featuring professional actors.

This course gives an in-depth look at mental illness and its implications for law enforcement. It covers schizophrenia and psychotic disorders, mood disorders, cognitive disorders, personality and substance disorders, suicide assessment, adolescent and elder issues, PTSD, excited delirium, suicide by cop, and mental health courts. Patrol Officers also undergo ongoing training on de-escalation techniques, conduct body-worn camera case study reviews, and attend CIT refresher courses.
Restorative Justice Programs

Lights On Program

The Woodbury Police Department is participating in this micro grant program that provides each officer with vouchers to give to motorists in lieu of a citation for burnt out vehicle lights. The driver can take the voucher to a designated repair shop for a free headlight or taillight replacement. The goal of the program is to offer a solution that is restorative rather than punitive, create a positive exchange between officer and motorist and make the roads safer with fewer cars having broken headlights or taillights.

Driver’s License Reinstatement Diversion Program

The process of getting your driver’s license reinstated after it has been revoked/suspended/cancelled can be daunting as drivers need to work through both the court system and the MN Department of Vehicle Services. The Woodbury Police Department is participating in this program that helps drivers streamline the process of paying fines and getting their driver’s license reinstated. When an officer encounters a driver with a revoked, suspended or cancelled status, they provide information to connect them with state diversion managers who help them work through the process.

Youth Service Bureau

We partner with the Youth Service Bureau (YSB) to provide effective, early-intervention services for youth and their families through mental health, chemical health, family education and diversion. During diversion youth are held accountable and coached as they make amends to those hurt by their behavior while parents continue to get the support they need to guide their children through challenging times.
Officer Support

Policing is a demanding and often stressful career. On a daily basis, officers can be exposed to the worst humankind has to offer. They are called upon to make life and death decisions in a split-second and margins for error are slim. All of this can take a toll on an officer’s mental wellbeing. To help our officers maintain mental wellness we have incorporated several programs.

Annual Mental Wellness Visits

All Woodbury police officers must visit with our independent professional mental health provider at least once per year for a mental wellness check-up. If additional visits are needed officers can anonymously attend up to five additional sessions free of charge.

Physical Wellness

The City of Woodbury has its own fitness center, complete with strength and cardio equipment. Officers are encouraged to utilize this facility and can receive additional paid hours per month for working out. The city’s Wellness Committee also encourages physical wellness by organizing fun and challenging events, focused on creative ways to keep our officers engaged in physical fitness activities.

Peer-to-Peer Program

The Woodbury Police Department has three assigned peer-to-peer support officers with the team supervised by a sergeant. Members of this unit receive additional and ongoing training in mental health guidance. Members coordinate our new hire mental wellness training and provide support to current and former officers. After critical incidents these members can be brought in to provide immediate support to staff.

Critical Incident Services

The Woodbury Police Department utilizes an outside group to conduct debriefings of critical incidents. The Critical Incident Stress Debriefings (CISD) are a way for individuals to discuss their personal experience as it relates to their thoughts, perceptions, and feelings, in order to reduce stress. They normally take place 24 to 72 hours after the incident and consist of peers and mental health professionals who are specially trained in this process.

BIPOC Officers

Our racially diverse officers meet as a group regularly to discuss internal support, intentional community engagement strategies, and to discuss the recruitment of diverse candidates. A recent project that was developed is a pilot pipeline recruitment project where we will be financially incentivizing entry level employees who speak a second language. We are also working on translating our recruitment brochures in multiple languages.

After Action Reviews

As a learning organization we look for opportunities to learn from each other. We have developed a process for reviewing body worn camera footage, squad footage, and reports to look for learning opportunities and communicate them to the other shifts in the organization. This includes the review of significant calls to discuss what went well and what we could improve upon. The AARs help inform future police response, our training, and helps identify any equipment needs.
Officer Support (cont.)

Recruitment Team

Several of our officers serve as Police Recruitment Officers. Their goals are to create pathways for exceptional candidates to become police officers for Woodbury PD, increase the overall number of qualified applicants who apply, and achieve greater diversity of qualified applicants.

Courageous Conversations

Shawn Sorrell, a Woodbury Police Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC) member and trained facilitator provided “Courageous Conversations” trainings last spring for all of sworn staff to discuss race and policing. The training focused on how officers “show up” in situations. It also looked at how different community members may interpret and react to officers. We added additional sessions in the fall to continue the conversation.

New Hire Training

Our new hires and their families go through a training course during our in-house police academy and are provided information on financial preparedness, mental health and resiliency. They also meet with our independent professional mental health provider who educates them on our individual mental wellness program, family counseling options, and the substance abuse treatment options that are available.

Sympathy Card Program

Woodbury Public Safety has developed a sympathy card program to allow for our first responders (who provided assistance) to express their condolences to families that have experienced loss.