

City of Rochester

# **APPENDIX B RPD VIOLENCE REDUCTION PLAN**



**B**lieve.



City of Rochester, NY  
Lovely A. Warren, Mayor  
Rochester City Council

# Rochester Police Department 2020 Violence Reduction Plan



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# 1. PHILOSOPHY

## 1.1 Community Policing and the Rochester Police Department

The men and women that represent the Rochester Police Department (RPD) are committed to community policing. Our Community Policing Plan incorporates Scanning, Analyzing, Response, and Assessment (SARA) to address violent crime reduction, enhance community engagement and advance public safety initiatives. Our community policing approach is balanced and the members of the Rochester Police Department, specifically the officers, must shoulder the responsibility of focusing on the reduction of violent crime. Community policing calls for officers to be proactive, embrace community educational outreach, use historical data, incorporate technology, and leverage partnerships and human intelligence. Using police officers' experience, combined with technology used to analyze crime patterns, our highly skilled team will use evidence-based practices to address violent crime to improve quality of life. This document serves as both a Community Policing Plan and Violence Reduction Plan. These strategies will remain flexible and exist as living, breathing documents designed to meet the needs of the community.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Since 2015, there have been a total of 1,177 shooting victims and 140 of them were fatal shootings. This year to date (October 28, 2020) there have been 275 shootings victims compared to 134 at this time in 2019, an increase of 105%.

Factors that often contributed to violence associated with shootings:

- On-going disputes left unresolved
- Repeat Offenders
- Individuals that obtain firearms illegally

Hence this collaborative, yet flexible plan, will require crime analysts and police leaders to work in tandem to formulate strategies identified as we move forward.

Goal: To use evidence-based strategies to reduce the influx of gun-related violence.

Objectives:

1. Utilize a problem-solving model, SARA, to determine the root cause, identify the areas of occurrence and develop the appropriate response.
2. Utilize our officers assigned to the five geographic sections (Lake, Genesee, Goodman, Clinton, and Central) of patrol and incorporate them into the model of community policing.
3. Work closely with community partners to introduce problem-solving methods to aid in the success of the plan.

## 1.3 The President's Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing

Our plan will use the collective experience of its members by working with both internal and external partners that place an emphasis on saving lives. We will embrace the recommendations from the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing.

Recommendation 4.5 in the Community Policing and Crime Reduction pillar of the report on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing states “Community policing emphasizes working with neighborhood residents to co-produce public safety. Law enforcement agencies should work with community residents to identify problems and collaborate on implementing solutions that produce meaningful results for the community.”

#### **1.4 Other Organizational Influencers**

While our objectives are to reduce violent crime and save lives, we will utilize recommendations and strategies supported by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), and the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) to ensure an effective community-based partnership.

The overall recommendations call for the adoption of new attitudes and resolutions, such as diversion programs, faith-based initiatives or other innovative strategies developed by partnering with community members. It also calls for building both trust and legitimacy. Rochester Police Department members will do this by remaining committed to the following:

- Treating people with dignity and respect
- Giving individuals a “voice” during encounters
- Being neutral and transparent in decision making
- Conveying trustworthy motives
- Extending grace when needed
- Building Trust and Legitimacy in the Community

## **2. OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIES**

**2.1 Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE):** Combination of regular duty/overtime police operational activities, analytical initiatives, and coordination with other components of the criminal justice system based on evidence-based practices to reduce gun violence.

**2.2 Dispute Mitigation:** Efforts to quickly identify and intervene in violent disputes that account for a significant proportion of violence in the City of Rochester.

**2.3 Section-Level Efforts:** Captains will be responsible for additional Section Hot Spots, Chronic Offenders, and other section-level crime and quality of life issues.

**2.4 Firearms Project:** A process that focuses on reducing the supply of potential crime guns in the City of Rochester.

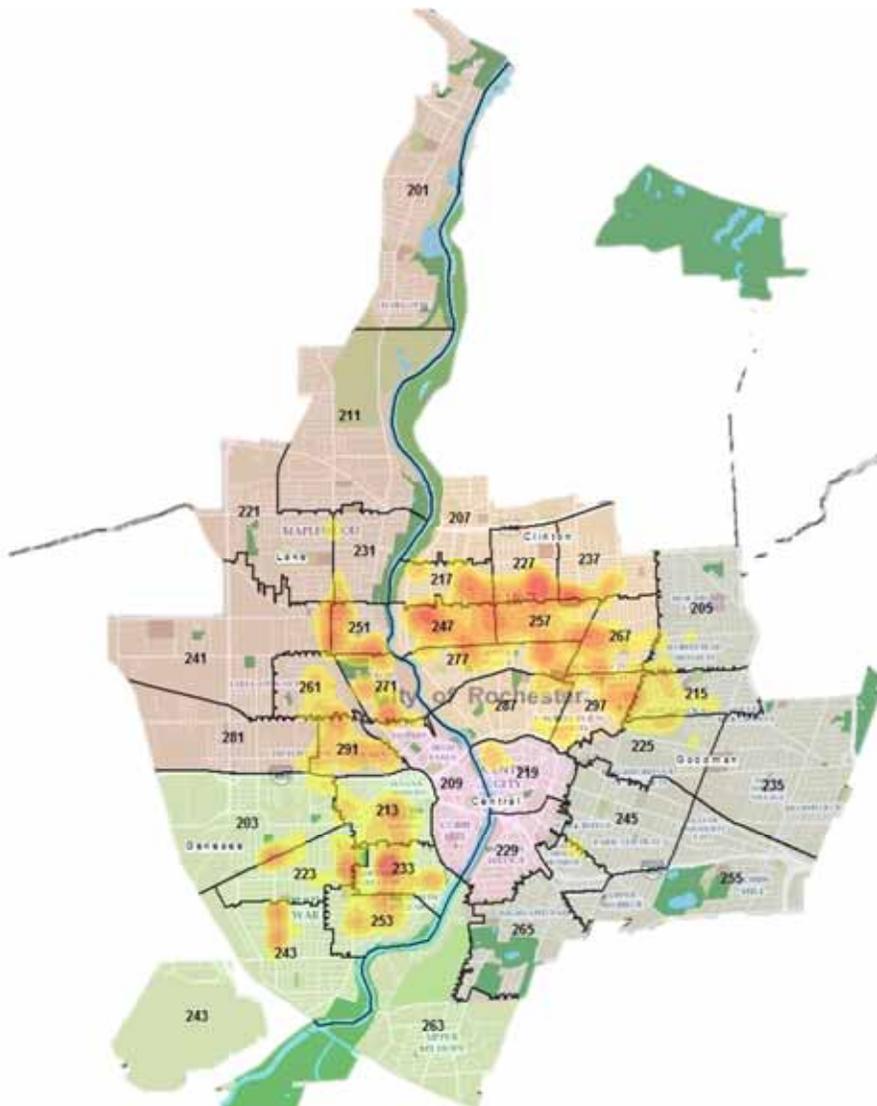
**2.5 Pathways to Peace:** We will continue to work with Pathways to identify and reduce violent conflicts.

### 3. STRATEGY PRINCIPLES

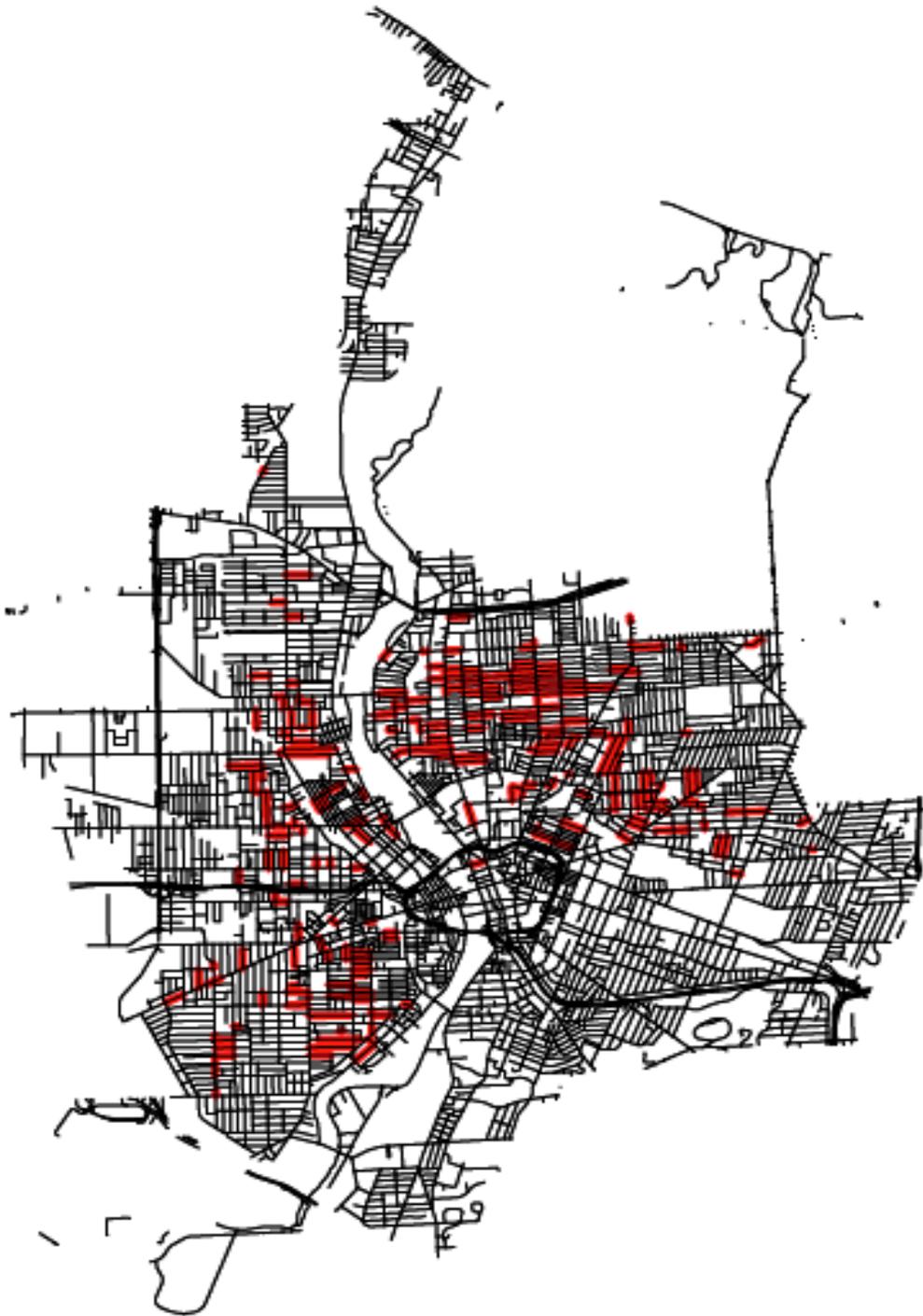
#### 3.1 Persistent Hotspots

Violence tends to cluster in small, concentrated geographic areas within the City of Rochester. These persistent problem areas account for a disproportional percentage of violence. For example, during the past ten-year period, 3.1% of street segments account for roughly 50% of all shooting victims in the City; see Map 1 and Map 2 below. This suggests that the greatest overall impact on reducing gun violence in the City of Rochester may be achieved by focusing RPD efforts on identified persistent violence hot spots, and even “micro-hotspots” down to the block level. To truly assess the impact of this approach requires long-term fidelity to the specifically tailored plans developed to address the unique circumstances in each hot spot. It also requires an ongoing assessment of results, adaption to changing circumstances, and modification of plans as needed.

##### 3.1.1. Persistent Gun Violence Hot Spots in City of Rochester.



3.1.2 Street Segments Accounting for 50% of shooting victims.



### 3.2 Chronic Firearm Offenders

Our strategy is also premised on the fact that a small proportion of offenders commit a majority of violent crime. Chronic offenders are over-represented in violent disputes, which account for a significant proportion of violence in the City. Thus, early identification of violent or potentially violent disputes, and proactive intervention is crucial. RPD has developed the following analytical model to identify the chronic firearms offenders most likely to re-offend:

Table 1. Weighted Scoring to Identify Chronic Adult Firearms Offenders



### 3.3 Accountability

Each section Captain is responsible for developing a specific plan for each POP area and higher-level chronic offenders within its area of responsibility. The Captain develops these plans in conjunction with other RPD components (e.g., Special Operations Division, community partners, federal task forces, crime analysts, other city departments and higher-level RPD command).

### 3.4 SARA Model

RPD has taken a “Problem-Oriented” approach to developing violence reduction strategies and plans, focusing on persistent hot spots and violent offenders. RPD utilizes the cyclical “SARA” model in this effort: **Scan, Analyze, Response, and Assess**.



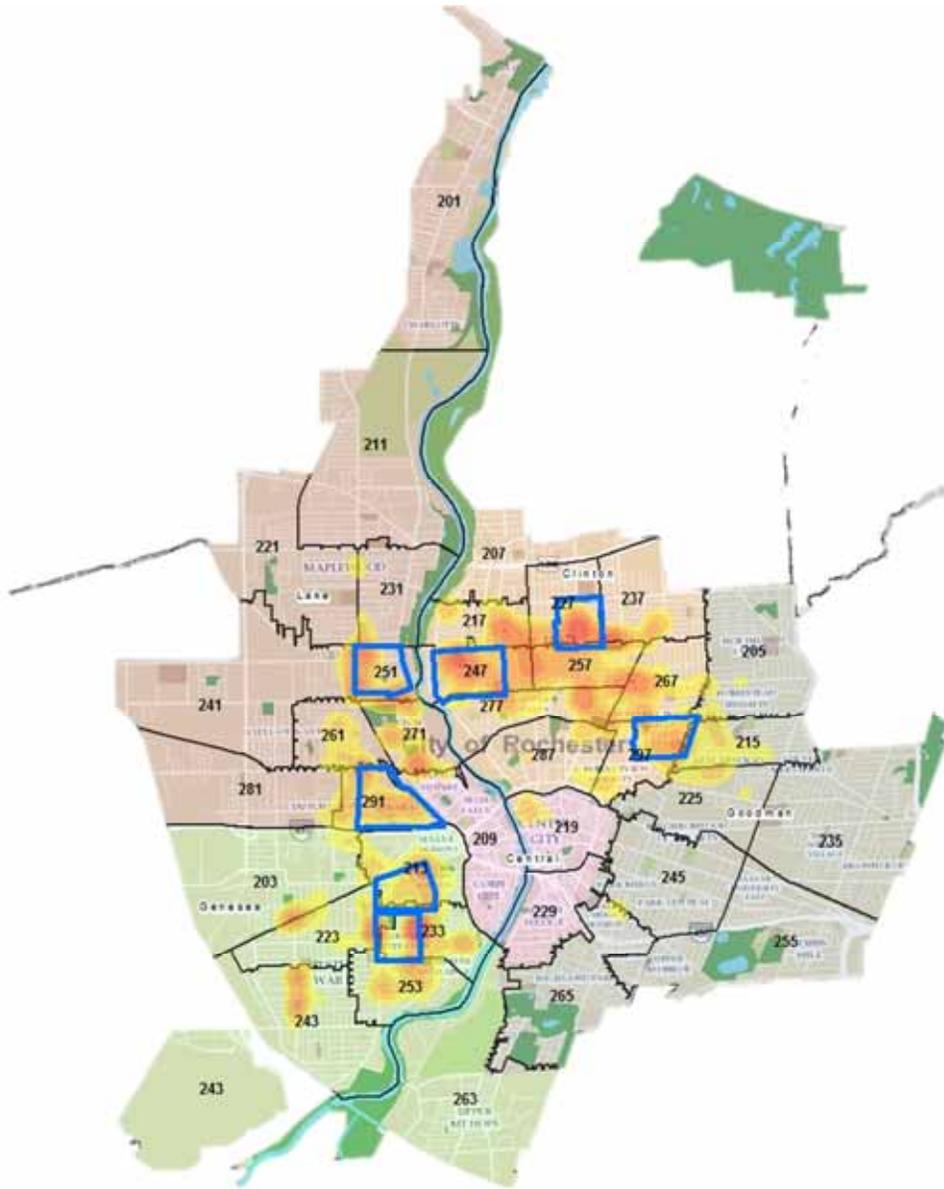
- **Scan:**
  - Identify shooting and firearm robbery hotspots, and chronic violent offenders.
  - Quantify the scope.
- **Analyze:**
  - Why is this particular area a hotspot?
  - Identification of conditions contributing to problem.
  - Validated analytical model to identify chronic offenders most likely to re-offend.
  - Apply judgment and experience in combination with data.
- **Response:**
  - Tailored plan to specific problems and conditions.
  - Plans must be fluid to adapt to changing circumstances.
- **Assess:**
  - Evaluate results.
  - Adapt based on results.
  - Identify and implement new strategies.

## 4. STRATEGY COMPONENTS

### 4.1 GIVE Hot Spots and Chronic Offenders

RPD has identified seven (7) “*Problem-Oriented Policing*” or “POP” areas that experience the elevated levels of gun violence in the City:

#### 4.1.1. GIVE POP Areas.



Utilizing the Chronic Violent Offenders risk assessment criteria noted above, RPD has also developed the “*GIVE Offenders*” list. We use an objective data-driven approach to identify the most serious chronic firearms offenders who are most likely to re-offend. The list focuses on individuals, and is ranked for intervention in accordance with the level of risk determined:

**Priority** – Proactive major investigations utilizing a variety of RPD resources.

**Tier 2** – Incorporated into POP area plans.

**Tier 3** – Focused Deterrence efforts.

Plans or tactics addressing chronic offenders must be tailored to the individual. Notably, intervention is not limited to arrest and enforcement tactics. The purpose of this communication is

to identify services and support that may assist in avoiding recidivism, such as education, job training and placement, medical and mental health services, and life skills. Through the GIVE program we make an effort to link the offender with available services to assist this process.

*Taken together, these persistent violence hotspots, and the list of chronic firearms offenders, comprise the foundation of our plans to reduce violence.*

During the summer months we also receive assistance with additional patrol personnel from the New York State Police (NYSP). The plan is tailored to address the specific conditions that contribute to violence in these areas. Plans are informed not only by data and analysis, but also by the knowledge and experience of beat officers working these areas. POP response plans are tailored to specific problem locations and specific chronic offenders. They include the following elements as appropriate:

- Focused police intervention.
- Problem-oriented policing.
- Identified chronic firearms offenders.
- Community outreach and participation.
- Directed Patrol (bike/foot/car).
- Environmental Issues (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design “CPTED”).
- Proactive enforcement and arrests.

There are regular meetings to ensure fidelity to the plan, objective assessment of plans and ongoing results, and to determine the need for modification:

- **Regularly scheduled meetings** consist of Section Captains, and representatives from the Major Crimes Unit (MCU), Special Investigation Section (SIS), Tactical Unit, District Attorney’s (DA’s) Office, Monroe Crime Analysis Center (MCAC), Monroe County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO) Jail Intelligence, Parole, Probation and NYSP.
- **Monthly POP Team Meetings** consist of the Section Captain, Captain’s Aide, 2<sup>ND</sup> and 3<sup>RD</sup> Platoon Lieutenants, GIVE Crime Analyst, Assistant District Attorney (ADA) assigned to the POP area, Probation, Center for Governmental Research (CGR) representative, and NYSP.
- **Monthly GIVE Executive Board Meetings** provide executive-level oversight and policy direction to the GIVE program, and are attended by the RPD Chief of Police, the District Attorney, and representatives from MCSO, NYSP, Parole, Probation, and MCAC.

The monthly POP Team meetings are critical to the implementation and assessment of the specific POP plans. The POP response plans are reviewed at these meetings. The review includes:

- Incidents over the last month.
  - More to do?
  - Continuing trends identified.
- Reports reviewed for on-duty and overtime efforts over the previous month.

- Response plans reviewed for efforts to address problem locations and problem people.
  - New tactics needed?
  - Problems eliminated?
  - New locations or people identified?
- Plan of action for the coming month.

## **4.2 GIVE Focused Deterrence and Procedural Justice**

Our GIVE strategy also includes a suite of Focused Deterrence and Procedural Justice tools with the goal of decreasing firearm violence. The Focused Deterrence program utilizes group-based call-ins to deliver a message of severe penalties for firearm violence, while at the same time offering access to social services to assist call-in attendees with reforming their own lives. These call-ins continue to focus on individuals on probation or parole who are either directly involved in firearm violence, or in gangs or other crime-related groups that are active in firearm violence. The deterrence-based message is reinforced through crackdowns on the entire group, if firearm offending persists despite the warning.

The GIVE partnership utilizes Procedural Justice call-ins to target at-risk offenders with violent firearm criminal histories. Specifically, the call-in attendees are firearm-related offenders recently released to parole or probation supervision. The goal of the Procedural Justice call-ins, contrary to the more aggressive approach of the Focused Deterrence call-ins, is to level the perceived fairness of procedures and interpersonal treatment of the criminal justice system in order to increase compliance.

In addition to a continued commitment to group-based violence and Procedural Justice call-ins, custom notifications play a role in our strategic approach to addressing hotspots and likely offenders. The GIVE partners will continue to attempt custom notifications on the GIVE Tier 2 offenders in each POP area. Notification letters are delivered and immediately followed with an informational discussion. The interactions are designed to directly address firearm offenders by putting them on notice that the entire law enforcement community is aware of their past offending while also offering assistance with individual services that may positively impact them. The notification letters are signed by the Chief and hand-delivered by a group of representatives from the partner agencies that include the Section Captain, ADA for the POP area, Senior Probation Officer, and a community representative.

Call-ins and custom notifications allow for direct contact between GIVE partners and potential firearm offenders in a less adversarial setting than the traditional contact between offenders and law enforcement (e.g., arrest, street stops, court appearances). This direct contact in a less adversarial setting allows GIVE partners to deliver a more holistic message, emphasizing both potential punishment and consequences for criminal behavior, as well as potential assistance, awards, and benefits for offenders changing the trajectory of their lives. These contacts also allow offenders to voice their opinions on matters concerning policing and public safety. Allowing participants in the criminal justice system to be heard is a key part of procedural justice.

## **4.3 GIVE—Swift, Certain and Fair (SCF)**

SCF is both a “control” and cognitive-behavioral intervention model program that addresses risk, need, and responsiveness while recognizing the importance of changing probationer criminal thinking and behavior. This program is based on the HOPE (Hawaii Opportunity Probation with

Enforcement) program that showed significant decreases in drug use and arrest rate for felony probationers. However, our program is among the first to apply this model to firearms offenders. The model engages the offender in cognitive and skill-building interventions and is designed for the high-risk individual who is typically not otherwise actively involved in education, employment, or vocational activities. The high-risk individuals accepted into the program are given explicit guidelines on behavior and expectations, with pre-agreed consequences for their failures to adhere to the program.

The program is attempting to adapt the successful principles of the original drug-offender based program to focus on the problem behavior of firearm-based offending. The local SCF program is a probation-based program that is offered to qualified individuals aged 16 to 24 who have recent firearm-related arrests. Monroe County Probation is the lead agency on this program, with significant involvement by the New York State Supreme Court, the DA's Office, the Public Defender's Office, DCJS's Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives, RPD, and others. SCF is administered as a component of Monroe County's Gun Court, within the court of NYS Supreme Court Justice Thomas Moran. The involvement of a single Justice in SCF ensures consistency across the program.

#### **4.4 Dispute Mitigation**

Personal disputes account for a substantial portion of violence in the City of Rochester. An analysis of our fatal and non-fatal shootings revealed that roughly 60% of incidents stem from known interpersonal disputes. Intervention in retaliatory disputes is not a new concept. What is new is the idea that police can and should proactively develop systematic approaches for identifying, assessing, and intervening in potentially violent retaliatory disputes.

Recognizing this, we have included in our strategy the continuation of a process we commenced several years ago under a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, called the Smart Policing Initiative (SPI). The goal of the SPI model is early identification and quick proactive intervention in violent and potentially violent disputes.

Analysis of our data on dispute-related violence served as the basis for the creation of a two-pronged risk assessment tool, which examines whether certain individual and situational characteristics are present during a suspected dispute. The tool asks whether an incident consisted of violence or the threat of violence; whether it was linked to a previous violent event; whether the previous event involved weapons; whether the victim or suspect has a history of weapon-carrying or weapons violence; and whether the participants had a reputation for violence, belonged to a gang, or were involved with the drug trade. Disputes are scored as high- or low-risk based on the presence of the factors listed above.

We hold regularly scheduled dispute meetings attended by Section Captains, and representatives from MCU, SIS, Tactical, DA's Office, MCAC, MCSO Jail Intelligence, Parole, Probation and NYSP to review the risk assessment scores of new disputes and the intervention progress of existing disputes. Disputes that are determined to be likely to continue are assigned to a Case Manager to utilize investigative, location-based, and offender-based intervention strategies to address these high-risk violent retaliatory disputes. We also coordinate with Pathways to Peace to intervene in disputes.

#### **4.5 Firearms Project**

The Firearms Project is a collaborative investigative process that focuses on the firearm rather

than the offender. Cases originate when a crime-involved handgun is seized by RPD or MCSO but was not reported stolen. Typically, gun arrest cases stop with the arrest of the possessor and do not include follow-up on how the gun was procured and from whom. The project provides a sharper focus on potential trafficking of weapons, straw purchases, and potential suspension/revocation cases. The goal is to reduce the supply of potential crime guns in the City of Rochester.

Working in conjunction with the Administrative Judge, the County Clerk's Office, and the DA's Office, RPD identified and improved upon several procedural issues occurring between agencies related to data quality, roles and responsibilities, and uneven implementation of existing processes and procedures. Changes implemented under this project include:

- Creating a central data repository within MCAC.
- Establishing a formal review meeting to identify new cases.
- Standardizing firearm suspension and revocation letters.
- Providing intelligence packets to the District Attorney for pending hearings.
- Ensuring compliance with court orders.
- Developing an educational pamphlet for Funeral Homes to distribute outlining what to do with a deceased family member's legally registered handgun.

#### **4.6 Section-Level Planning**

Under RPD's decentralized community policing approach, each Patrol Section plays a critical role in addressing violence, crime, and quality of life issues within its boundaries. Each Section Captain is responsible to work with the Section team and the community to determine Section-level priorities and proactive strategies, as well as ensure the delivery of traditional police services such as police patrol, response to calls for service, investigation of reported crimes, and crime prevention activities.

Comprehensive and flexible planning is key to this process. Sections address the following strategy components as appropriate to the individual section:

- **Special Events impacting the Section.**
  - Major Special Events centrally planned and usually subject to overtime staffing.
  - Minor special events covered by Section.
- **Bike and foot patrols.**
  - Focused on main thoroughfares and areas of special attention.
  - Sections are in the process of training additional bike officers.
- **Identify and Address Section-Level "Hot Spots" separate from GIVE POP areas.**
  - Although lower in violence than the GIVE POP areas, these areas still experience a higher than average level of violence.
  - The Section develops plans for proactive strategies for these areas.
- **Identify and address other Section-Level issues, including:**
  - Open Air Drug Sales and Drug Houses.
  - Vacant/Abandoned Houses.
  - Nuisance Issues.

- Prostitution Activity.
- Aggressive Panhandling.
- Traffic Issues.
- Special Location Issues.
  - Parks/Beaches
  - Downtown/Central Business District
  - Schools
  - Recreation Centers
  - Libraries
  - Public Housing
  - Special Populations (e.g., refugees)
- **Community outreach and engagements, including:**
  - Project TIPS (*“Trust, Information, Programs, Services”*).
  - Community/Neighborhood Events and Outreaches.
  - Community Uplifts.
  - Clergy Walks (*“Clergy on Patrol”*).
  - Community Walks.
  - PAC-TAC (*“Police and Citizens Together Against Crime”*).
  - Schools and Recreation Centers.