

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE BLOOMFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT 2022



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Message from the Chief of Police

In 2012, I presented a Strategic Plan for the Bloomfield Police Department. The plan was intended to provide Town of Bloomfield officials, the public, and police department employees with an understanding of our core operating principles and our goals in serving the community. The plan was also meant to serve as a reference for Bloomfield Police employees, and provide a clear understanding of our mission, function and basic operating philosophy.

In 2017, I updated the Strategic Plan in response to community input, the changing role of the Police in society, and the need to update our core principles. I was our goal then, and now in 2023 to deliver the very best police services and improve the quality of life for residents, business owners and visitors to the Town of Bloomfield. Employees of the Bloomfield Police Department have continuously demonstrated a commitment to improve and increase the level of services available, work to create strong partnerships with our community stakeholders, and emphasize compassion, respect, professionalism and integrity in our conduct and actions. As police officers and public servants, the employees of the police department take pride in their responsibilities, and work hard every day to firmly establish our reputation as among the best in law enforcement.

The Bloomfield Police Department Strategic Plan

The prevention of crime, and improvement in the quality of life for the community of Bloomfield is at the core of the Police Department's mission. The dedicated members of the Bloomfield Police Department take their responsibilities very seriously. Collectively, we are not content with what we have accomplished in the past, and are always searching for opportunities to improve our performance and our ability to support the community of Bloomfield. The following plan is a blueprint that will guide us in our efforts.

The Strategic Plan was developed in response to concerns within our community regarding the role and function of the police, as well as continuous turnover in Bloomfield Police Department staff. National and local incidents involving the police pushed police-community relationships to the forefront of our political dialogue, and many within our community continue to have questions about the core philosophy and mission of the police department. At the same time, we, as an organization, have witnessed an unprecedented turnover in personnel, with new employees seeking information about their role and responsibilities in policing our community.

The strategies and objectives contained in this Strategic Plan were originally developed in connection with the core principles contained within the final report of *The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing*. Completed by the Department of Justice in May of 2015, under then President Barack Obama, the task force report outlines strategies to assist communities, law enforcement and government in identifying core areas to improve policing methods in the 21st century. By focusing on

improvement in these areas, we can answer many of the questions from our community and continue to build our reputation as a professional police department tasked with service to the community.

Many of the goals and strategies contained within this plan are unchanged from those laid out in the original strategic plan of 2012. The core philosophy of community policing has not changed, but other goals are meant to focus on redefining the police role in the community and recommitting to employee health and wellness. Although the goals of the Strategic Plan have changed, the core mission, vision, and values of the police department remain consistent.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Bloomfield Police Department is committed to improving the quality of life for all people in our community by developing community-oriented partnerships to prevent crime, uphold the law and provide a safe and secure place to live, work and visit.

VISION

The Bloomfield Police Department is committed to the philosophy of Community-Oriented Policing. All employees recognize public service as the foundation of police work, and dedicate themselves to serving our community through our operating principles and philosophy. We will create an atmosphere of excellence and dedicate ourselves to constant improvement in order to improve our service to the community, increase pride in the organization and establish a reputation for excellence in law enforcement.

DEPARTMENT VALUES

Public Service

We believe that we exist to protect and serve our community, and are firmly committed to improving the welfare of the residents and business owners of Bloomfield, CT. We will work in partnership with the people in our community and do our best, within the law, to solve community problems that effect public safety. Protecting the lives and property of all people is the highest calling of public service, and is a fundamental principle of policing. We value the great diversity of people in both our residential and business community and serve all with equal dedication.

Community Partnerships

We shall involve the community in all policing activities that directly affect the quality of life in Bloomfield. We recognize how important it is to create strong and effective relationships with residents, business owners, organizations and other stakeholders in the community to identify problems and work on creative solutions. We will look for opportunities to proactively engage the

community and make positive contacts whenever possible. We will earn a reputation in our community for being approachable, and proactive in identifying creative ways to solve community problems.

Leadership

We are committed to establishing a reputation for the highest level of professionalism and customer service to our community. Every member of the police department is a leader in the community. By empowering individual officers to make decisions in partnership with supportive and collaborative supervisors, we will attempt to make each officer a leader in his/her investigations and problem solving projects. Training and brainstorming sessions will be employed to give officers every opportunity to share and engage their leadership abilities.

Integrity

All members of the Bloomfield Police Department recognize that our personal conduct, both on and off-duty, is inseparable from the professional reputation of the Department. It is our responsibility to adhere to the highest standard of moral character. We embrace the law enforcement code of ethics, and will always act with integrity, honesty, courage and professionalism. We will perform our duties in a manner that is respectful of the rights of all citizens, and our integrity will be the foundation for building trust and confidence with the public.

Quality through Continuous Improvement

We will work to achieve the highest level of quality in all aspects of our work. Providing the highest level of service will require that all of us dedicate ourselves to continuous improvement. We value innovation and creativity, and dedicate ourselves to actively seeking new ways to improve our service to the community.

Promoting a Professional Image

We will promote a professional image by ensuring that our conduct is professional at all times, whether we are interacting with the public or with each other. We will ensure clean hygiene, and will maintain a professional appearance by wearing uniforms or business attire that are clean, pressed and fit appropriately. We will ensure that our vehicles and Police Department equipment are clean and well maintained at all times.

Goals and Strategies

Strategic Goal #1

Build legitimacy and trust

Trust between law enforcement and the community they serve is essential to Community Oriented Policing. One term that has surfaced in *The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing* is that of **Procedural Justice**; but, what is procedural justice and what does it mean? Events throughout our nation have reinforced the theory that people are more likely to obey the law when they believe that those who are enforcing it have authority that is perceived as legitimate by those subject to the authority. As reported in the President's Task Force Report, "The community confers legitimacy only on those whom they believe are acting in procedurally just ways, and the police cannot build community trust if it is seen as an occupying force coming in from outside to impose control on the community."

One of the core principles of the 2012 Strategic Plan was to increase our community policing efforts by building partnerships and relationships with the community in order to develop a sense of legitimacy and trust. The term procedural justice was not in vogue at the time, but the underlying theory has always been part of the police-community dynamic in Bloomfield. In 1829, the founder of modern policing, Sir Robert Peel, drafted what is known as the 9 principles or standards of modern policing. Principle number 7 reads:

"Police, at all times, should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence."

It is vital that we rededicate our efforts to building strong, effective partnerships with community residents, businesses and stakeholders. This is the central goal of community-oriented policing, and it is through these efforts, that we demonstrate our legitimacy, position ourselves to better identify and solve the problems that cause crime and create unsafe conditions in our neighborhoods and negatively affect the quality of life in the community.

The cornerstone of community policing in Bloomfield is building partnerships and relationships. One of the keys to building effective partnerships, and a focus of *The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing*, is the concept of embracing a guardian, rather than warrior mindset; but, what does that mean? What is a "Guardian" mindset, and how does that differ from a "warrior" mindset? A good definition can be found in a Harvard Law Review article:

“The guardian mindset prioritizes service over enforcement, and it values the dynamics of short-term encounters as a way to create long-term relationships. As a result, it instructs officers that their interactions with community members must be more than legally justified, they must also be empowering, fair, respectful, and considerate. The guardian mindset emphasizes communication over commands, cooperation over compliance, and legitimacy over authority.”

Embracing a guardian mindset does not mean sacrificing officer safety, or violating our oath to uphold the laws of the State of Connecticut, and the nation. It is a mindset of supporting our community and working in cooperation with town government, business and community to improve the quality of life in Bloomfield, rather than trying to impact change through rigid enforcement and separatism.

In order to build legitimacy in the eyes of the community, we must be viewed as protectors, rather than enforcers. As an agency, we must continue to demonstrate that we are committed to transparency, and will be held accountable for our actions.

In February 2017, the Bloomfield Town Council passed a resolution affirming Bloomfield as a welcoming and inclusive community. The Council resolution affirms:

“The Town of Bloomfield, its officials and government, will continue to uphold the values that led to our 1970 designation as an ‘All-American City’, and that we stand ready to protect the rights of all our residents and those who wish to call our town their home.”

The Bloomfield Police Department fully supports the Town Council resolution. Its central message has been and will continue to be the mission and practice of the Bloomfield Police Department. Building legitimacy and trust in the community can only happen if we continue to work on behalf of **all** in our community.

Finally, we will continue to focus on recruiting efforts to increase the diversity of our workforce, in particular recruiting from within the community of Bloomfield, so that the police department better reflects the diversity of the community it serves.

Strategies and Objectives

- Continue to organize police-community meetings focused on current topics and events in order to facilitate communication between the police department and residents.
- Incorporate progressive community policing training.

- Continue to report to the Public Safety Committee on a monthly basis the status of the Police Department, including police training, initiatives, the results of citizen complaints and unusual incidents throughout the previous month.
- Continue to use our community survey and scheduled events as a method of obtaining useful feedback about our agency and the perception of the Police Department within the community.
- Continue to emphasize strong relationships, and have officers continue to make contact with residents on a daily basis.

Strategic Goal #2

Community Policing and Crime Prevention

In the Strategic Plan of 2012, I provided an outline of the Bloomfield Police Department community policing strategy. Since that time, the department membership has witnessed regular turnover of personnel, introducing new faces, new perspectives and new opportunities. This turnover provides an opportunity to revisit and review parts of our core strategy.

Community policing is the core of our operating philosophy. At the Bloomfield Police Department, community policing is not restricted to an officer, a unit or a program, rather it is meant to be an overall philosophy that requires the support and participation of every member of the Bloomfield Police Department. It is an organizational strategy built on the foundation of **Partnerships** and **Problem Solving**.

Partnerships are the cornerstone of this strategy. In order to establish legitimacy and trust, it is vital that every member of the Police Department work to create strong, effective partnerships with community residents, businesses and stakeholders. Many officers in our department have embraced this strategy, and over the past several years have established strong relationships in the community. With the recent addition of many new members of the department, I challenge every member of the department to join me in continuing to create new relationships, while strengthening existing ones. I cannot overstate the importance of this practice. It is fundamental to maintaining trust within our community and continuing our reputation as guardians within our community.

Community policing also requires that police officers become **problem solvers**. In the Strategic Plan of 2012, I outlined a well-known problem solving technique known as the “S.A.R.A.” model, developed to aid officers in this role.

Scanning	Identifying problems, patterns and complaints.
Analysis	Investigate the causes of problems and underlying conditions.
Response	Develop and implement solutions to problems.
Assessment	Evaluate the effectiveness of your strategy.

The four-step process is an objective method of gathering information, using experience and training to evaluate and assess the best course of action, responding in an effective manner and ultimately assessing the results. The problem-solving method requires critical thinking and innovation in order to develop strategies to address different conditions and situations confronting officers. Officers are encouraged to be innovative and use their discretion when developing creative solutions to community problems.

Proactive Policing and Crime Prevention

A fundamental aspect of crime prevention is the effective use of discretionary time, or that time when an officer is not otherwise engaged in handling a call for service. Properly focused and productive discretionary patrol time will result in the prevention of crime. Discretionary time is not idle time, but rather time that should be spent **scanning** your geographic area of responsibility, following up on complaints, initiating citizen contacts and identifying potential problems.

Random, reactive patrol is ineffective in preventing crime. Instead, officers should be proactive, focused on directed patrol techniques, engaging the community and problem solving. In 2012, I explained what I mean by focused and directed activity by examining the subject of motor vehicle enforcement, and I have shared my philosophy on this subject many times.

With the exception of dedicated traffic enforcement programs, I have argued that traffic enforcement should be focused primarily on locations identified as those where motor vehicle accidents are occurring, or at locations in which citizens have made complaints regarding speeding or unsafe operation. Targeted enforcement at these locations through directed patrols and motor vehicle enforcement is effective in reducing accident frequency and improving the quality of life for the community.

On the other hand, excessive time conducting motor vehicle enforcement at locations that have few accidents, an insignificant history of violation issues, or for the purpose of providing statistical evidence of officer activity, is a poor use of police resources. The quantity of motor vehicle infractions is not an effective measure of productivity or public value, rather the reduction in the number of accidents, as well as community satisfaction in its safety is an effective measurement of our value to the community. This philosophy is reflected in another of Sir Robert Peel's principles, which reads, "The test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with it."

In order for us to be effective in our mission, discretionary time must be productive and focused on creating the greatest impact on issues of concern to the community we serve.

Below are several categories that should be given priority during discretionary patrol time, and are included as a reminder for experienced officers and a reference for our novice officers. More

experienced officers will find many of these points simple and repetitive of our 2012 directives, but they serve as effective reminders of our core responsibilities and obligations (The categories are not all-inclusive, but a reference for officers).

- Directed patrols of target areas or identified during daily Roll-Call briefings.
- Identifying and reporting unsafe or hazardous conditions.
- Monitoring primary roadways & intersections for unsafe operation or locations identified as having a high frequency of motor vehicle accidents.
- Motor vehicle enforcement in areas identified as needing additional attention.
- Focus on intelligence-based information, known offenders or problem locations.
- Engage residents and businesses: Get out of the car and engage community members. Stop in at local businesses, athletic games and town functions (This is key to creating partnerships with the community).
- Conduct business checks during off hours.
- Dispersing disorderly parties or groups that may gather at local attractions such as the Movie Theater, local businesses and public areas, as well as UHART off-campus houses and events.
- Regular stops at the Senior Center and Leisure Services to engage seniors and community youth.
- Investigate suspicious activity involving vehicles or persons that are observed or reported.

Strategic Goal #3

Commitment to Excellence through Effective Police Policies and Oversight

In 2019, the Bloomfield Police Department was successfully reaccredited with the designation of Advanced Accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies for the second time. The accreditation process is widely accepted as the most credible roadmap for any law enforcement agency in pursuit of professional excellence. It is a proven modern management model that provides law enforcement agencies with an opportunity to voluntarily demonstrate that they meet over 1500 nationally-recognized standards of excellence in policing.

Now that we have reaffirmed the Gold Standard of excellence, the next step in that process is to continue to demonstrate consistency in our efforts over time. The police department will complete our third accreditation process in 2023 after a comprehensive inspection by representatives of CALEA. These inspections occur on a yearly basis, with a complete and comprehensive inspection, including community input, for “re-accreditation” occurring every fourth year. The process ensures that accredited agencies do not lapse in their commitment to excellence, but instead demonstrate consistency in procedures and operations over time.

Police Department operational policies and procedures are critical to the management, direction and function of the department. They serve as a blue print for how the department will execute its responsibilities, and the manner in which it will serve the community. The policies and procedures represent “best practices” in policing, and must be clear and comprehensive in order to guide employees in the most effective and efficient methods of handling various responsibilities.

The emphasis on management, oversight, and a commitment to professionalism is important to support Goal 1, of building legitimacy and trust. In order to demonstrate our commitment to public service and integrity, the police department voluntarily submits to annual inspections from independent professionals. This transparent and public process of inspection is critical to maintaining professionalism, demonstrating accountability and building legitimacy and trust with the community.

Strategies and Objectives

- Continue to maintain our affiliation with CALEA.
- Meet compliance with yearly inspections.
- Successfully pass our re-accreditation application in fall of 2023.

Strategic Goal #4

Training and Education

The Bloomfield Police Department is committed to staff development and progressive department-wide training that is consistent with and responsive to the needs of the community. High quality and appropriate training is critical for public safety personnel. Routine and dangerous situations are more likely to be resolved positively if police officers and support personnel have received appropriate and consistent training. It is critical to our success that we ensure that our employees have attended modern, progressive training programs that follow best practices in our profession. As part of our Strategic Plan, we will conduct an analysis of our training needs and explore how we can maintain the quality of our mandatory training while also including new and innovative training opportunities.

Areas of particular focus will be:

- Officer safety, use of force, and de-escalation techniques
- Cultural awareness and diversity training
- Crisis Intervention Training (CIT)
- Bias-Based Policing

Leadership

The role of supervisors and managers in the police department is critical. The Bloomfield Police Department encourages and expects participative supervision and leadership. Bloomfield Police supervisors play a vital part in our policing strategy. The success of the organization is directly dependent on the degree to which supervisors and managers apply sound principles of leadership to everyday operations.

Sergeants, in particular, serve a critically-important role within the Bloomfield Police Department. Most of the time, the shift supervisor or sergeant is the highest ranking officer on duty. They are responsible for ensuring the effective operations and conduct of officers under their supervision on all three shifts and in every support function. A supervisor's role is that of coach and mentor; an effective supervisor should coordinate, encourage, develop, support and improve the efforts of their subordinates. Considering the number of new employees who have joined the department in the last three years and are projected to join in the next five years, the role of the sergeant will continue to be more important than ever. Much of our future success and the quality of our service delivery is dependent on effective supervision by the first-line supervisor.

Strategies and Objectives

- Encourage and support advanced formal education
- Review career objectives during annual evaluations
- Emphasize and sponsor progressive training opportunities
- Provide scenario-based training

Strategic Goal #5

Officer wellness and safety

The wellness and safety of our police officers and support staff is of primary importance to the police department and the community. The central mission of the Police Department is service to the community, but we can only be successful if we ensure that our employees are functioning at their very best. This means ensuring that our employees are both physically and emotionally healthy, and prepared to meet the challenges of being a law enforcement professional. *As The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing* points out, “Officers who feel respected by their organizations are more likely to bring this respect into their interactions with the people they serve.”

The Police Department must continue to focus on supporting strategies that improve the physical, emotional and mental health of its employees.

Strategies and Objectives

- Implement an effective fitness incentive program
- Encourage and support a healthy lifestyle
- Promote effective employee assistance programs
- Support an expanded Peer Counseling program

Strategic Goal # 6

Support the Town of Bloomfield Local Road Safety Program

The Police Department’s traffic safety initiatives are dedicated to reduce motor vehicle accidents and improve the safety of our roadways through education, enforcement and engineering. The safety and quality of life of our residents, businesses and visitors to Bloomfield depends on our ability to maintain safe roadways. Part of our Strategic Plan must include an analysis of our current traffic enforcement efforts and accident reduction strategy. The Town of Bloomfield Local Road Safety Committee has been tasked with receiving citizen input regarding road safety and traffic calming initiatives. The Police Department must support this program through enforcement, monitoring and statistical analysis, to ensure that the program is successful.

Strategies and Objectives

Evaluate current traffic enforcement efforts.

- Emphasis on neighborhood-based traffic complaints.
- Focus on high-accident locations and school zones.
- Comprehensive analysis of motor vehicle stops and accident data.
- Continue child safety seat installation efforts.
- Post traffic hot spots on the department website.
- Post traffic safety tips on the web site.