

HAMPTON VA

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Robin McCormick | rmccormick@hampton.gov | 757-728-3276
22 Lincoln Street | Hampton, VA 23669

Report to Council: Crime down in city

July 8, 2015 - Serious crimes in Hampton decreased last fiscal year, City Council was told Wednesday. Nearly two years ago, Council authorized intensive measures in higher-risk areas to address crime and blight. Areas in the city targeted for this special effort - dubbed the Safe and Clean Campaign - saw bigger improvements than the city as a whole.

"It's clear that the holistic approach to community crime and disorder is paying off in these targeted areas," said Police Chief Terry Sult. "Overall, Part 1 offenses (including homicide, rape, robbery, assault and burglary) are down 15% in the Safe and Clean areas, helping the city overall to achieve a 3% drop in those serious crimes from fiscal year 2014 to fiscal year 2015."

Some types of crimes showed more dramatic results. In the defined focus neighborhoods there were 12 murders in fiscal year 2013 - the year before Safe and Clean was launched. Efforts ramped up during fiscal year 2014, which started July 1, 2013 - and there were 9 murders in the defined area. During the last fiscal year - 2015 - there were 2 murders in the defined area.

Other data showed an increase in codes violations issued, which was expected given the extra focus to address blight. The amount of money being invested in the Safe and Clean neighborhoods - whether to address violations or voluntary investments in property - has increased as well, as measured by construction permits.

The Safe and Clean campaign has included city workers from all departments, increased police patrols, and face-to-face discussions with resident. In response to concerns about youth violence and pockets of neighborhood blight, Council also enacted an earlier curfew, a rental inspection program for targeted neighborhoods and a limit on the length of time people can stay in hotels that are not set up to be extended-stay facilities.

"Having representatives from more than a dozen departments and agencies around the table, regularly talking about how we can address issues, helps focus resources in critical areas," said Assistant City Manager Steve Bond. "We were able to react more quickly to neighborhood concerns."

The Safe and Clean program includes building connections between the targeted neighborhoods and city staff and services. Shellae Blackwell, a neighborhoods expert, was hired to work with residents. "We found many of our neighborhoods and their leadership are in transition," said Blackwell. "They need support and training but want to work with the police and the city to make

their neighborhoods better places to live, especially for children and families."

For more information about the Safe and Clean Campaign, go to www.hampton.gov/safeandclean.

To see the latest presentation on the campaign, go to

<http://www.hampton.gov/DocumentCenter/View/7915>.

###