

TURNAROUND IN THE '70s



TURNAROUND IN THE SEVENTIES

In the decade of the 1970's, the Detroit Police Department has begun a turnaround of unprecedented magnitude and scope, in its management, organization, operating methods and service to the citizen.

The size of this turnaround, and some of its initial effects, are just beginning to become visible, and give much promise for the future.

This special report is an effort by the senior executives of the department to summarize the progress that has been made during the period 1970-1973. It is an effort to provide the city administration, the Common Council, the citizens of Detroit and the individual members of the police department with an "accounting of stewardship," including the way in which more than \$10 million in Federal funds is being applied to foster the turnaround.

The city and its Police Department owe a major debt of gratitude to the Michigan Office of Criminal Justice Programs—the operating agency created by Governor William G. Milliken to assign priorities for and oversee the equitable allocation of Federal funds to local police departments—and to its policy-making, supervisory Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, under the chairmanship of Lieut. Governor James W. Brickley.

Acknowledgement and grateful appreciation are also due to the hundreds of police officers and their supervisors, the Detroit Police Officers' Association and the Lieutenants' and Sergeants' Association, without whose help and patient cooperation none of the changes described in this report could have been brought about. For it was they who had to implement the new procedures, and live through often confusing weeks and months while new operating methods were being tested and put into effect.

Progress, to many of us, has seemed to be tantalizingly slow. Some have likened "turning around" a police department to reversing course in a giant ship at sea. Momentum may still seem to be carrying the vessel in the original direction, even after most of the moves that will eventually bring the ship about already have been made.

Nevertheless, whether or not the Detroit Police Department is in "mid-turn" or less at present, a drastic change of course has been instituted, to build a better police department, and increase its ability to help build a better Detroit.

THE NEED FOR CHANGE

The need for a police department turnaround was spotlighted during the late 1960's by rising tensions in police-community relations, and a sharply rising crime trend.

In 1970, crime reached an all-time peak in the city, with a total of 192,886 crimes of all types reported. This represented an increase of 25 percent in only three years. Robberies, the most frequently reported crime involving personal violence, rose even faster, by 92 percent over a three-year period, to a total of 23,038 in 1970.

ROOTS OF THE TURNAROUND

The passage of the Omnibus Crime and Safe Streets act greatly expanded federal aid to the criminal justice system. The first federal funds to reach Detroit in 1970 arrived as crime approached its peak.

The efforts of the community, including the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce and privately funded groups such as New Detroit, Inc., aided the planning and cohesive actions of municipal government and the police to augment the fight against crime.

The new city administration under Mayor Roman S. Gribbs placed top priority on support for effective counter-crime measures and improvement of police operations.

Within the department, a move to bureau organizational structure was begun.

The city administration joined with the leadership of the Police Department in a search for additional outside help, including substantial funding and management research manpower to help develop a coordinated approach to total department improvement, and put it into effect.

All these essentially long-range moves had no immediate effect on the rising crime trend through 1970.

CRIME IN DETROIT 1966-1972
(ALL REPORTED CRIME—IN THOUSANDS)

