

Youth Shooting Curtailment PlanPART I: HISTORY

As you are aware, the Youth Crime Unit was originally instituted in the summer of 1974 to combat a rising tide of organized youth gang activity in the City of Detroit. Some of the more notorious gangs were the Bishops, Chains, Flynn's, and a multitude of others. These gangs were in constant conflict and participated in violent acts in order to secure status. They were easily identifiable by their dress code and geographical boundaries. However, once these gangs were suppressed, the new money making youth groups emerged, such as the "Young Boys Incorporated," and "Pony Down."

The Young Boys Incorporated and others like them, were determined to be operated by adults who utilized youths in narcotic street sales. With the arrests and convictions of adult leaders the problem was abated. However, new drug related problems have developed.

Today's youth groups are transient in nature and are not organized street gangs such as the ones we experienced in the mid 1970's, which are now for the most part extinct. At present, we are experiencing problems with loosely knit youth groups who are involved in street crimes for profit and to a greater extent narcotic activity. With the influx of "Crack" cocaine, these youth groups have become much more drug profit motivated, and as disputes over drug territory developed, so did the use of handguns and more sophisticated weaponry. Thereby creating a marked increase in the amount of guns being carried by youths on our city's streets. This is evidenced by today's exorbitant amount of youth shootings. The below listed factors have been identified:

The phenomena of youth shootings is not new to Detroit. In the past, however, when we experienced youth gang violence, our Department was better able to mobilize resources, respond expeditiously, and equitably resolve these occurrences. The resources which made this possible have since been depleted primarily through the loss of experienced personnel, as well as other factors, has had a major impact on our capabilities to combat youth violence.

1. As a result of the massive lay-offs of experienced patrol personnel, the remaining patrol segment was necessarily relegated to a reactive mode of responding to police runs.
2. As a result of massive retirements, the training of patrol personnel was minimal and supervision was limited.
3. The Youth Crime Unit was severely reduced in personnel, and by necessity, surveillance and intelligence capabilities were relinquished. Additionally, upon return of the Department's personnel to full strength, the unit was staffed with inexperienced officers. This situation was further belabored as experienced personnel were promoted and transferred to other commands, thus minimizing the expertise necessary for training new personnel.