

## Our Men and Women in Blue - Trust, Respect and Fairness

By Supervisor Dan Storck

Whether it is rescuing a bald eagle or preserving a life during a 34-hour standoff, our Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) officers are some of the finest and best trained in the country. Yes, we have challenges – staffing shortages, ongoing training needs, long shifts and overtime. However, our officers rise to the occasion day in and day out to protect and serve our community.



Fairfax County is the safest jurisdiction of its size. What does this mean? While as all communities do, especially along urban corridors, we still have incidents and crime, however, compared to other large counties and cities, our numbers of incidents are low. This is largely due to our officers being proactively engaged in our neighborhoods and our neighborhoods being actively engaged with our officers, as the survey information below confirms.

I want to share with you several recent positive developments. This week we voted on the FY 2024 Budget, which due to my and my colleagues' advocacy, contains additional compensation increases averaging 12.8% for department personnel, and over the past two years 22.1%. Paired with already enacted signing bonuses and an excellent benefits package, we are seeing our recruitment efforts pay off with our largest academy class in almost a decade, and one of the most diverse in FCPD's history.

The Department joined over 2,000 law enforcement agencies, neighborhoods and commercial centers in using the Flock Safety License Plate Reader (LPR) system, first installed on November 1. These stationary, solar-powered, pole-mounted readers interact with patrol officers and detectives, sending alerts in real-time to officers if a stolen car or a missing person passes by. In six months, officers have used the LPRs to recover 30 stolen vehicles, six firearms, dangerous drugs including fentanyl and methamphetamines, assist in 50 arrests and help locate four missing people.

The FCPD also completed a nine-month pilot program that engaged the community and sought additional ways to understand how the community feels about FCPD. The first set of results have just been released and here are the highlights:

- **High levels of overall trust and satisfaction.** Of the over 9,500 responses of residents who had recently interacted with an FCPD officer, 90% of respondents viewed their interaction as positive.
- **Residents reported that their top local safety concerns** were higher visibility of our officers, theft, and traffic concerns. All items are being addressing with enforcement and education initiatives this year.
- **Residents feel respected and treated fairly.** Residents strongly agree that FCPD treated them with respect (86%) treated them fairly (83%), officers listened to them (76%) and were understood (77%).

- **Both positive and negative comments provided offered specific suggestions to FCPD on how to improve.**

Other FCPD highlights include the 30 x 30 pledge, committing the department to increasing the representation of women in police recruit classes to 30% by the year 2030. Since joining the initiative, FCPD has met or exceeded the 30% benchmark, resulting in an overall department representation of 29.7% women. In coordination with our regional partners, we are also showing crime doesn't pay in Fairfax. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) is assisting our detectives by offering a \$5,000 reward to anyone who can identify the suspects involved in a series of commercial robberies. The suspects have committed two robberies in our County, and through our past partnerships, our detectives facilitated this reward. <https://fcpdnews.wordpress.com/2023/04/27/atf-offer-5000-cash-reward-to-help-identify-serial-robbery-suspects/>. And, it is with great excitement that we look forward to opening the new Lorton District Police Station and Fairfax County Animal Shelter – Lorton Campus this fall. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/capital-projects/south-county-police-station-and-animal-shelter>.

I'm proud to support our Fairfax County Police Department each and every day and know you all do as well. Send us a note and we will share it with the station commanders. This way you can join me in thanking our hardworking and dedicated officers for putting themselves on the frontlines to keep us safe!

To learn more about these topics, and other FCPD news, check out and sign up for the police blog: <https://fcpdnews.wordpress.com/> and follow them on Twitter: @FairfaxCountyPD. If you are interested in a career in law enforcement, consider joining our men and women in blue: <https://joinfcpd.org/>.