

DULUTH POLICE DEPARTMENT

2020 Annual Report



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“ Our greatest strength is our community.
Building relationships is our bridge to
safety and quality of life. ”

-Chief Mike Tusken

MISSION:

To provide a safe Duluth for all by strengthening relationships and serving in a respectful, caring, and selfless manner.

CORE BELIEFS:

- We recognize that our authority comes from our social contract with the community.
- People will believe that we are there to serve them if we are kind, caring and compassionate, and our actions match our words.
- People will trust us if they believe we are protecting their rights.
- Every interaction leaves a lasting impression.
- The safety of both our community and officers are paramount.

VALUES:

Fair
Accountable
Caring
Transparent



FROM THE CHIEF

MIKE TUSKEN



We looked forward to 2020 being a great year for DPD.

We hired officers to reach full staffing for the first time in 20 years! Our desire to fully integrate community engagement,

especially with our youth, allowed us to purchase a pontoon with a generous community donation by the Irving Community Club. This pontoon brought kids from dock fishing out on the water for the popular “Get Hooked on Fishing” program. Indeed, 2020 was to be the year we hit our full stride in building relationships which are critical to our mission and community safety. Then the global pandemic of the novel coronavirus hit the United States and our lives all paused. Schools closed doors, businesses were moth balled, industry slowed, and people stayed home. Life became virtual through electronic mediums such as Zoom, Teams, and WebEx, but we still needed a way to connect with the public and build critical relationships. A local parent helped us find a way to do so. She asked me if we could come by her house for her son’s birthday party, flash our lights, and blare our sirens. She said it would make her son’s birthday a hit. We did it, and it was fun for the family and for our officers to put a smile on the face of a child on their special day.

Soon, word spread and we were invited to more birthdays than ever! We were able to provide a way to make kids and families feel special in a time that was anything but normal.

The death of George Floyd, at the hands of Minneapolis police officers who took an oath to protect him, became a national movement.

This tragic death reverberated throughout the State of Minnesota, the United States, and the world with marches, demonstrations, and rioting as calls to reimagine, defund, or dismantle policing became the prevailing narrative. The message was clear; communities wanted change.

Duluth was no different. On May 30, 2020, more than a thousand community members marched on City Hall peacefully. As the evening wore on criminal, civil unrest replaced respectful discourse and police made arrests and used gas to disperse an increasingly unruly crowd.

For the rest of 2020, our officers worked to assist the community and meet expectations, but were left wondering if the community still wanted our help. Without a means to gather and have desperately needed conversations, DPD staff served to the best of their abilities when trust in policing was at the lowest point in decades, or perhaps ever.

During this time, Duluth experienced the most gun violence recorded in our 150-year history with 41 incidents of people or property struck by gunfire or evidence of gunfire found at scenes. Arrests were made, but the majority of these incidents remain unsolved.

As calls for police reform grew, we advocated for changes in legislation to the arbitration process, banning chokeholds, and changing use of force legislation. The Duluth Police Department was proud to share with the community that we implemented many initiatives years prior to the proposed legislation - demonstrating that DPD is a leader in policing.

We don’t know what the future will bring to policing; however, we know that the strength of DPD has always been the community we serve with. We strive to be a police department that honors its citizens and we are committed to continuous improvement.

Mike Tusken,
Chief of Police

150 YEARS OF SERVICE



Exerpt from the 1903 DPD Annual Report:

Probably very few of the citizens of Duluth, resting quietly in their homes or walking safely upon the streets, pause to think how much of their comfort and safety is due to the police and how different it would be without them. The police department is a great moral power in a community. It is not so much what it does, but what it is capable of doing if the need arises, that makes the department a power for good and terror to evil-doers. Much of evil as there is done every day, there would be much more if the criminal minded did not know that there would be a gentleman in blue along very shortly, representing the law, to begin the process that ends in payment for law-breaking.





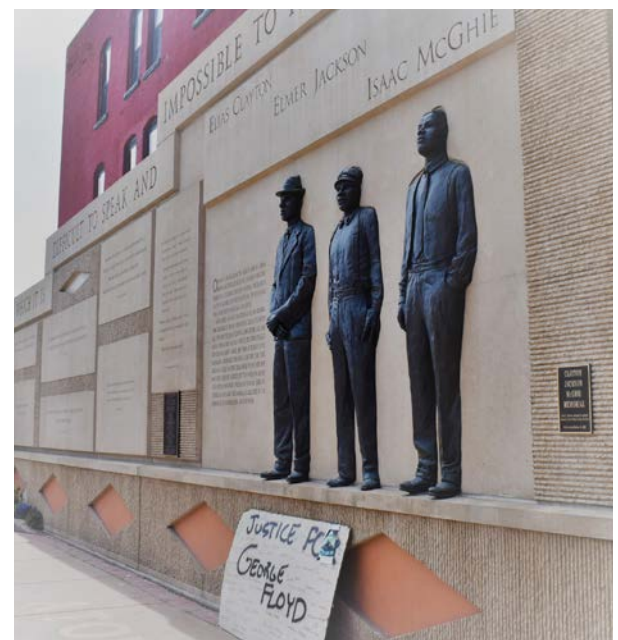
CIVIL UNREST

On May 25, 2020, video capturing the arrest and murder of George Floyd by a police officer in Minneapolis exploded across the nation. In response, protests and riots erupted throughout communities all across the United States, including here in Duluth. Citizens were demanding police reform and, in some cases, defunding or abolishing police.

With the demand for changes in policing, the state legislated changes to all Minnesota police use of force policies. In reviewing the mandated changes, the Duluth Police Department was proud to be a leader in having adopted all proposed legislation prior to any mandates. We did, however, take the opportunity to update our policy further to meet the needs and expectations of our community.

The Duluth Police Department has always been committed to finding innovative ways to serve our community. We were the first department in the state to implement an embedded social worker program which includes two social workers who work alongside our officers and help the entire department in finding ways to help those with mental health issues seek help. We have also been trained in fair and impartial policing and crisis intervention techniques.

Despite all the work we have done to be better, we can always do more. We will continue to review and modify our policies based on the interests of everyone in our community.



Photos courtesy of The Duluth News Tribune



A SAFE DULUTH

People will believe that we are there to serve them if we are kind, caring, and compassionate, and our actions match our words.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

In March 2020, the world changed as we went into lock-down to stop the spread of COVID-19. Businesses shuttered, public spaces closed, and rapidly changing information caused worry and confusion about the virus. Police and other first-responders were immediately deemed essential, thus putting them in a position to be exposed to a virus there was little known about. Rather than shy away from continuing to serve our community, we began working on an emergency schedule to strike a balance between providing the same response our community expects and deserves while keeping our employees safe.

While trying to balance the need for sufficient staffing and minimize the spread of COVID, we created a work schedule that transferred investigative staff to patrol, allowing us to create six different patrol groups. This was a five day on/fifteen day off schedule which allowed staff to ensure they weren't symptomatic prior to returning to work for their next shift.

This plan was successful at mitigating exposures and many other departments throughout the state adopted this plan.

We handled many calls for service over the phone, created video tips on how to keep businesses safe, and provided messages to the community on a regular basis.

Following a fairly "normal" summer, COVID cases began to rise throughout the country a second time, so we again adjusted our schedules based on revised CDC guidelines. Despite safety precautions, the inherent risks of public service resulted several members of the DPD contracting the virus. Staff stepped up and covered for those who were out, continuing to provide safety services to the city.

Through the first pandemic in 100 years, the Duluth Police Department was able to limit exposures with detailed protocols and provide consistent services to our community.

150 YEAR HISTORY

As the Duluth Police Department celebrated 150 years of service to the citizens of Duluth, officers commemorated the anniversary by wearing a replicated badge from 1870. Although the look of the Department has changed dramatically throughout the years, the core objective still remains the same - to protect and serve the city and citizens of Duluth. Our 1919 Annual Report states, in part, "Once upon a time a police officer was looked upon as a stern keeper of the peace who gloried in the number of offenders he apprehended and the number of convictions he secured. He was rough and gruff, autocratic and imperious, but there is a new order now. Men are helped to keep the peace. Trivial offenses by novices are dealt with lightly, and offenders are given wholesome advice on the majesty of the law with the hope they will do better the next time."

As far back as 1919, leaders realized the need for a better way to police. Our Department today continues to find innovative initiatives to engage with our community. It has been an honor to serve this community through the years and we'll continue to evolve to meet the needs of the people. We will find more opportunities to spend time with our communities, and better ways to police and keep our city safe. We value everyone and will advocate for all within our community.

2020 STATS

87,284

Calls for Service

158

Sworn Personnel

37

Civilian Personnel

13%

Decrease in part 1 crimes which include aggravated assault, arson, auto theft, burglary, homicide, rape, theft, and robbery from 2019

33%

Decrease in Burglaries from 2019

37%

Decrease in Robberies from 2019

PARTNERSHIPS, PREVENTION & PROBLEM SOLVING

Every division in our department works to keep our neighborhoods safe. In July 2020, patrol officers were able to develop solid intelligence regarding a resident who was a long-term problem for a local neighborhood, lowering quality of life for neighbors due to suspected drug sales. Patrol officers gathered information and obtained a search warrant for the residence, the individual, and their vehicle. During the execution of the search warrant, patrol officers located and seized approximately 70 grams of methamphetamine. This is a great example of community members being the eyes and ears of the Department and working with officers to make their neighborhood safe.

In August 2020, investigators received information from a local bank regarding unusual money withdrawals from their ATM. Investigators began a surveillance operation and were able to identify a suspect and track down victims of what appeared to be a scheme to take out fraudulent loans using the identities of unsuspecting victims. Search warrants were granted and a search procured large volumes of physical evidence of an organized crime to include \$189,796 in cash – this was one of the largest money seizures ever for the Financial Crimes Unit. The United States Attorney's Office adopted the case for prosecution. Alert bank employees set the ball rolling in this investigation and subsequent charges for this suspect.

Investigators of the Lake Superior Drug and Violent Crime Task Force discovered a significant Drug Trafficking Organization (DTO) distributing heroin/fentanyl, methamphetamine, and cocaine throughout greater Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin.

The initial round up of suspects yielded 35 arrests with an additional 15 over a six-month period. The dismantled DTO was selling multiple illegal drugs to include: fentanyl/heroin, methamphetamine, and cocaine. The dismantled DTO also had ties to several overdose deaths in the region, which are still being pursued.

Prior to it being dismantled, we believe this DTO distributed the following amounts of drugs throughout our region:

- 12.3 pounds of heroin/fentanyl
- (5579 grams X \$80.00 per gram = \$446,320.00)
- 66 pounds of methamphetamine
- (1,056 ounces X \$600.00 per ounce = \$633,600.00)
- 3.1 pounds of cocaine
- (1406 grams X \$75.00 per gram = \$105,450.00)

The sheer size of this operation required extensive coordination with our Task Force, HIDTA, and Federal partners.

SEPTEMBER 15, 1920

Article courtesy of The Duluth News Tribune

Acting Duluth Police Chief A.G. Fiskett reported yesterday that fewer automobiles have been stolen so far this year than in the same period last year. "The wave of petty crime which followed the breaking up of the World War is subsiding," Chief Fiskett said.



DRUG TASK FORCE STATS

The Duluth Police Department continues to address drug addiction with a multifaceted approach. We provide outreach and connect with the community. We educate and offer diversion and treatment to those suffering from addiction, and our Task Force continues to investigate and remove drugs and illegal firearms from our streets. This three-pronged approach has the ultimate goal of removing the demand of drugs in our community.

4,681

Grams of Methamphetamine Seized

182

Search Warrants Seized

479

Grams of Fentanyl Seized

498

Grams of Heroin Seized

73

Firearms Seized

Opioid Response Team/Substance Use Disorder Diversion Program

This team was created in 2018 through a partnership with the Lake Superior Drug and Violent Crime Task Force and the DPD. They are responsible for following up with all recorded overdoses in the Task Force area and assisting those with Substance Use Disorders to get the treatment they need.

This year the Substance Use Disorder Diversion program was added to help those with low level drug offenses avoid entering the criminal justice system. Participants are diverted towards treatment options, while also giving them ownership

over their pathway to recovery. They also work to decrease the public stigma against Substance Use Disorder by treating the disorder as a public health crisis instead of a crime. So far, since September 2020, three applicants have been accepted to diversion and two are currently enrolled in treatment.

- **Over 100 contacts with opioid involved individuals**
- **56 facilitated entries into treatment for clients**
- **200 officers trained in the use of NARCAN**
- **167 lives saved using NARCAN**

MENTAL HEALTH UNIT

Our Mental Health Unit consists of two mental health professionals and two dedicated officers, and is a vital part of our organization. They provide field diagnostics, treatment, and referrals for those suffering from mental illness. This unit began in 2016, and is able to help more and more people every year.

565

People referred to the MHU since March of 2017

198

People referred in 2020

DPD Mental Health Unit How We Help

In November 2020, officers received a report of a woman being assaulted by her son. Upon arrival, officers found the woman was very concerned about her son's mental health, but there was not enough evidence on scene for an involuntary hold.

Patrol officers consulted the Mental Health Unit social worker during the in-progress call. Working with the mother, our social worker was able to establish psychiatric behavioral evidence to convey the need for an involuntary hold at the hospital. The officer assisted with the transport of the young man to the hospital and our social worker coordinated with the emergency department and inpatient unit. This resulted in the young man being admitted and civilly committed. We were able to divert this young man from the criminal justice system and potential further crimes as well as change the trajectory of his future recovery.

Early psychosis, or first episode, is the most important time to connect people with the right treatment. Doing so can be life changing and radically alter a person's future. Patrol officers took the initiative to involve the Mental Health Unit to ensure proper care was given to both mother and son.



SAKI INITIATIVE

The Duluth Police Department was awarded Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) funds in 2015. Over the past five years, the DPD SAKI project has reached a number of its primary objectives. Foremost, all previously unsubmitted, unrestricted sexual assault kits were submitted to the MN Bureau of Criminal Apprehension for testing by May 2018. Since 2015, all incoming unrestricted sexual assault kits were submitted for testing within 30 days to ensure that no additional "backlog" developed.

Partnerships with the MN BCA, the Program for Aid to Victims of Sexual Assault (PAVSA), and the Saint Louis County Attorney's Office are integral to the success of this project.

As of 2021, over 150 victim-survivors have been notified that their sexual assault kits have now been tested. Once notified, victim-survivors can choose whether or not to participate in additional investigation of their case. Over 60% of victim-survivors opt for some engagement and follow-up with SAKI-designated investigators. So far, the investigators have referred 31 suspects for criminal sexual conduct charges to the Saint Louis County Attorney's Office; 17 suspects

have been charged, four defendants have accepted plea agreements, and two defendants were convicted by juries.

A secondary goal of the project is to conduct training for law enforcement officers, prosecutors, forensic nurses, and advocates. SAKI project team members have been trained on issues related to the value of forensic evidence, victimization and trauma response, and best practices for cold case investigations and prosecution.

In 2018, the City of Duluth hosted the SAKI Assembly of Cities to bring together investigators, prosecutors, advocates, and forensic nurses from across the country to discuss lessons learned from testing sexual assault kits and next steps for holistic sexual assault reform.

The DPD SAKI project is committed to reviewing each case and doing its due diligence to notify victim-survivors affected by the backlog. Victim-survivors can also reach out to the victim advocate on a confidential information line, the Betty Skye Line at 218-730-5449 and bettskyeline@pavsa.org.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS



Community outreach looked different in 2020. On average, we attend about 2,000 community events, both big and small. 2020 allowed us to have more one on one contacts with our community, but kept us from attending and holding larger events as we had in the past. Despite dealing with COVID, we were still able to participate in almost 800 community engagement activities.

Parades were a great way for us to engage with our community. We had a blast participating in a number of parades to celebrate birthdays, retirements, and anniversaries along with family members and the Duluth Fire Department.

Blue Santa

Blue Santa is an annual event we all look forward to. This year, we did the shopping on our own and delivered gifts via patrol

squad to families in need. Making the holidays special for the children in our community is one of the most gratifying events of the year.

Special Olympics

Police and the Special Olympics have had a long, rewarding relationship. Each year our staff plays a significant role in organizing and participating in the Polar Plunge.

Youth Programs

Throughout the pandemic there were a few after school programs that had to stay open and offer services to our youth. Our officers were able to stop in and spend some time with the kids, which is invaluable in building relationships with our next generation.





Criminal and Intelligence Analysts

Aspects of crime and intelligence analysis have always been inherent in policing, but it wasn't until the early 2000s that the role of an analyst started to become more clearly defined and utilized extensively in the Duluth Police Department. Members of the department identified a critical need for intelligence analysis and case support.

In the mid-late 2000s, the need for intelligence led policing and policing inspired by the COMPSTAT model became paramount and the department required skilled crime analysis. DPD hired a grant-funded intelligence analyst and a MN CounterDrug analyst later joined the group.

In the past decade, the roles of analysts have grown. These professionals strive to provide actionable solutions for crime and social harm reduction, prevention, apprehension, and prosecution by using systematic analytical processes that convert historical police data, regional data, and open source data into actionable solutions. Analysts are integrated into the department as a key tool in identifying patterns and trends, providing actionable analytics, developing patrol deployment and investigative strategies, assessing strategic operations, and providing process and impact recommendations in order to embody the department's mission of providing a safe Duluth for all.

Parking

The Duluth Police Department's Parking Unit, like many throughout the country, has evolved over time, but our basic goals remain the same as ever: Preservation of fair public access to their destinations and promotion of public safety. Our image and our technology have changed over time – what were once “parkettes,” an exclusively female staff dressed in skirts and formal caps, issuing handwritten tickets are now a diverse crew of Parking Services Agents, employing the latest technology and electronic connectivity. Where once our geographic scope was limited to the downtown area and consisted primarily of walking beats, we can now promote access and safety throughout the entire city utilizing hybrid gas/ electric all-wheel-drive vehicles in even the most inclement weather conditions.

Through all of these changes, though, our underlying ethic remains the same as ever: Helping make people's lives better by ensuring there is a place for them to park near their destinations and by ensuring that parking is done in a manner that does not put others' well-being at risk. Our Parking Unit is a hard-working, friendly crew who keep the community's best interests at heart, and we are proud to provide these services as part of the Duluth Police Department as we celebrate our 150th year.

CIVILIAN SUPPORT

Records – The records department has changed dramatically throughout the years. In the 150 year of history the first mention of a secretarial unit was in the 1940s. Prior to that the chief had an assistant and there were a few stenographers employed by the Department. Back then all record keeping was done by hand, often on 3 x 5 note-cards tracking crime by type and year.

Now, we have dedicated records staff who use cutting edge web-based programs to streamline the availability of data for use in all levels of the Department and the court system.

At the end of 2020, DPD implemented a new records system to further improve our process

and data gathering capabilities allowing our staff to better serve the public.

The Property and Evidence Unit

This Unit has come a long way since its inception. The original evidence room was located in the basement of city hall – a very damp area. Although the area was secured, it wasn't until DPD moved into the public safety building that a state-of-the-art evidence storage unit was built. This has controlled access with only a handful of people having access to evidence. Each piece of evidence is tracked by a bar coding system and is audited on a regular basis. This Unit handles on average 7500 pieces of evidence each year.

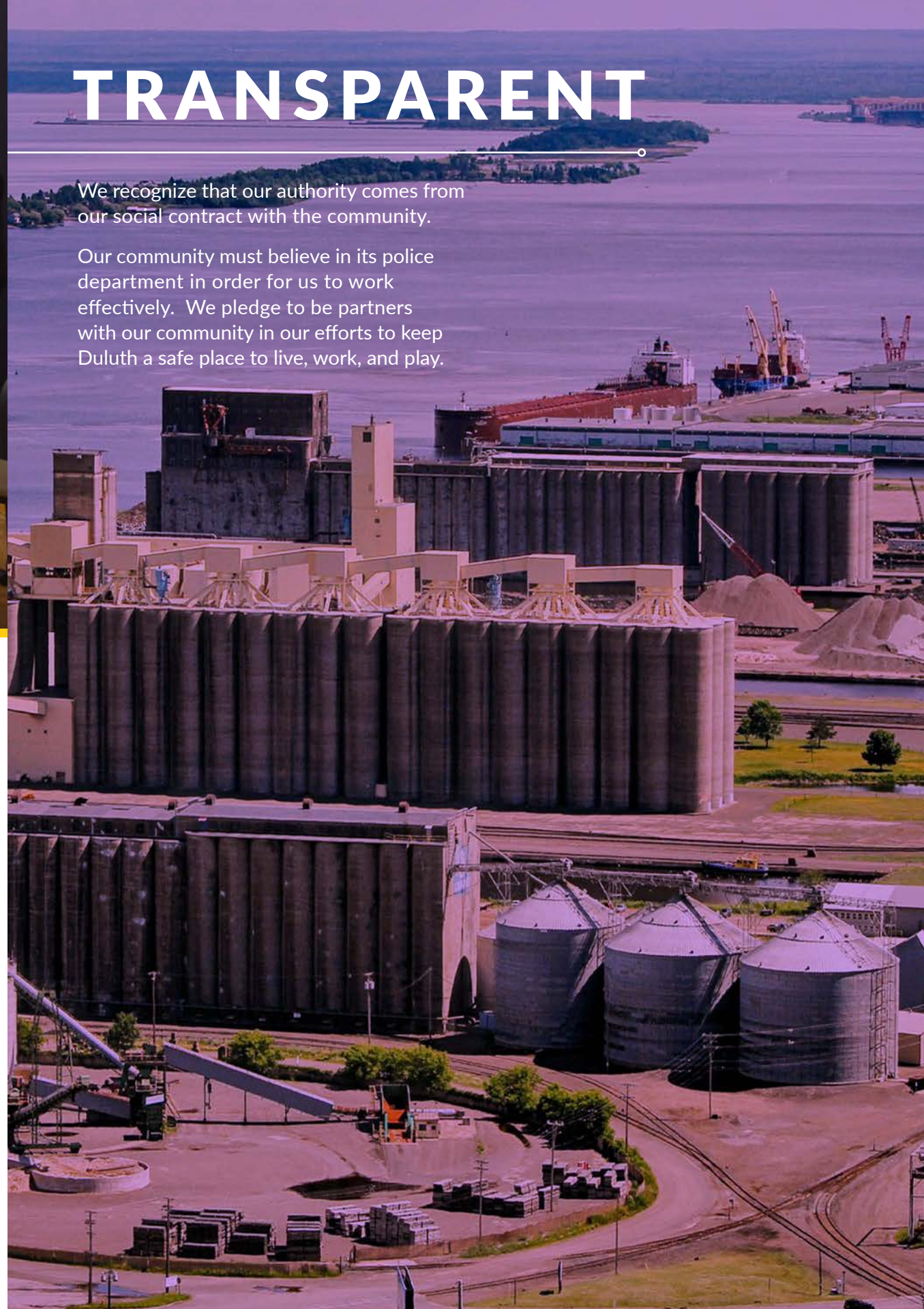




TRANSPARENT

We recognize that our authority comes from our social contract with the community.

Our community must believe in its police department in order for us to work effectively. We pledge to be partners with our community in our efforts to keep Duluth a safe place to live, work, and play.



ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

At the end of 2019, the Duluth Police Department and City Administration were presented with a completed report from BerryDunn which detailed several recommendations the Department and City could implement to increase efficiencies, provide better services to the public, and aid in future planning.

In early 2020, an Organizational Improvement Committee was formed with each unit within the department represented. This committee provided input on the recommendations and how to best keep moving forward to implement changes.

We began working to expand civilian positions so sworn staff could be freed up to perform other duties. Our Community Service Officer (CSO) program expanded to create efficiencies for patrol by training CSO's to take minor calls and retrieve evidence.

Our Internet Crimes Against Children Unit has seen a consistent increase in referrals. In 2020 we were able to add a second forensic examiner to allow more timely review of evidence.

Lastly, we were able to ensure department wide compliance with data privacy. We will continue to work on the recommendations in the coming year.

ACCOUNTABILITY

People will trust us if they believe we are protecting their rights.



GRANTS

We believe in being good agents of tax payer dollars. Our 2020 budget was more than \$24 million, but to supplement our budget, and improve our ability to provide additional outreach and services, DPD applied for nine new grants, and received eight awards!

Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI)

- Two-part award totaling \$1,341,161 over the next three years. These funds will be utilized to build on the foundation of our first award in 2015. We will continue to partner with PAVSA, the St. Louis County Attorney's Office, and the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to bring justice to those who are guilty of sexual assault. This will also fund a new full-time DNA collection coordinator.

Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Site-Based Program (COSSAP)

- This award of \$899,055 will enhance work being done by our Opioid Response Team. Over the course of the next three years, it

will fund the hiring of an additional full and part-time recovery specialist who will provide outreach services to individuals with Substance Use Disorder. In addition, we will partner with the Center for Alcohol and Drug Treatment (CADT) to receive a full-time, dedicated, Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC) who will provide Rule 25 assessments within 24-hours. Currently, people will wait 30 plus days to get the services they need to survive.

Project Safe Neighborhoods

- This grant rolled out in two phases: planning and implementation. The project coordinator started with DPD in October 2020. During the planning phase, the project coordinator will create an Advisory Committee consisting of DPD staff, a civil rights officer, the Department of Corrections, Probation, and community stakeholders. The implementation phase will see the Advisory Committee creating a re-entry program for violent offenders with a focus on decreasing recidivism.



Thank you for reading the Duluth Police Department's 2020 Annual Report. We look forward to continuing to protect and serve the citizens of Duluth for many years to come.

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