

Ft. Pierce Police Department

News Release

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Crime in Fort Pierce hits historic low

FORT PIERCE – Crime in Fort Pierce is at its lowest point in 32 years, with overall crime down 19 percent and violent crime down 38 percent since 2006, Police Chief R. Sean Baldwin announced in a report released Wednesday.

“We are extremely proud of these results,” he said. “Our community has worked hard to reduce crime in Fort Pierce, and we’ve seen incredible success over the last three years.”

The report includes an overview of historical crime rates from 1971 through 2009. It also examines more recent crime trends between 2006 and 2009, as well as between 2008 and 2009. Statistics used in the report come from the Federal Bureau of Investigations Uniform Crime Report, which tracks serious violent and property crimes across the nation. Violent crimes include murders, rapes, robberies and thefts, and property crimes include burglary, larceny, and auto theft.

The analysis shows that crime in Fort Pierce trended upward beginning in 1971 and reached a peak in 1987. Since 1987, overall crime has fallen 60 percent and violent crime has also fallen 60 percent and Fort Pierce is currently experiencing its lowest amount of crime since 1977.

“We are identifying patterns and trends in crime early and interrupting them through prevention and enforcement,” he said. “The incredible reductions in crime, especially violent crime in neighborhoods that have suffered for decades, shows this strategy is working.”

A comparison between 2006 and 2009 shows there has been a 19 percent reduction in overall crime and a 38 percent reduction in violent crime across the city. The largest single year reduction in crime came in 2009, with overall crime falling 11 percent and violent crime falling 34 percent compared to 2008.

“Over the last three years, the police department has focused on protecting our community by building strong community collaborations and proactively solving problems in our neighborhoods,” Baldwin said. “We are also using advanced crime analysis to focus resources on problem areas.”

The majority of the crime reduction occurred in the Fort Pierce Redevelopment Area, and more specifically within Lincoln Park neighborhoods, which have historically suffered violent crime rates as high as 10 times the national averages. Between 2006 and 2009, overall crime within the redevelopment area has been reduced by 43 percent and violent crime dropped by 54 percent.

“Fort Pierce is a safer place today, because our community and police department are working in partnership to solve crime problems in our neighborhoods,” Baldwin said.

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Fort Pierce Police Department

CRIME IN FORT PIERCE - 2009

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Fort Pierce Police Department CRIME IN FORT PIERCE - 2009

History of Crime in Fort Pierce

A study of crime statistics shows that Fort Pierce experienced a tremendous increase in crime between 1971 and 1987, when crime reached a historic peak. In 1987, our citizens suffered a total of 7,470 UCR Part 1 Crimes – a rate of one crime per 5 residents. Between 1987 and 2009, overall crime dropped 60 % and is currently at the lowest point since 1977 (see Figure 1 & 2).

1987 & 2009 Part 1 UCR Crime Statistics Citywide			
UCR Category	1987	2009	% Change
Homicide	17	8	-52.9%
Rape (Rape, Sodomy, Fondling)	39	23	-41.0%
Robbery	334	134	-59.9%
Aggravated Assault	832	330	-60.3%
Total Violent Crimes	1222	495	-59.5%
Burglary	1987	722	-63.7%
Larceny/Theft	3893	1653	-57.5%
Motor Vehicle Theft	368	133	-63.9%
Total Non-Violent Crimes	6248	2508	-59.9%
Grand TOTAL	7,470	3,003	-59.8%

Figure 1- 1987 & 2009 FBI UCR Statistics

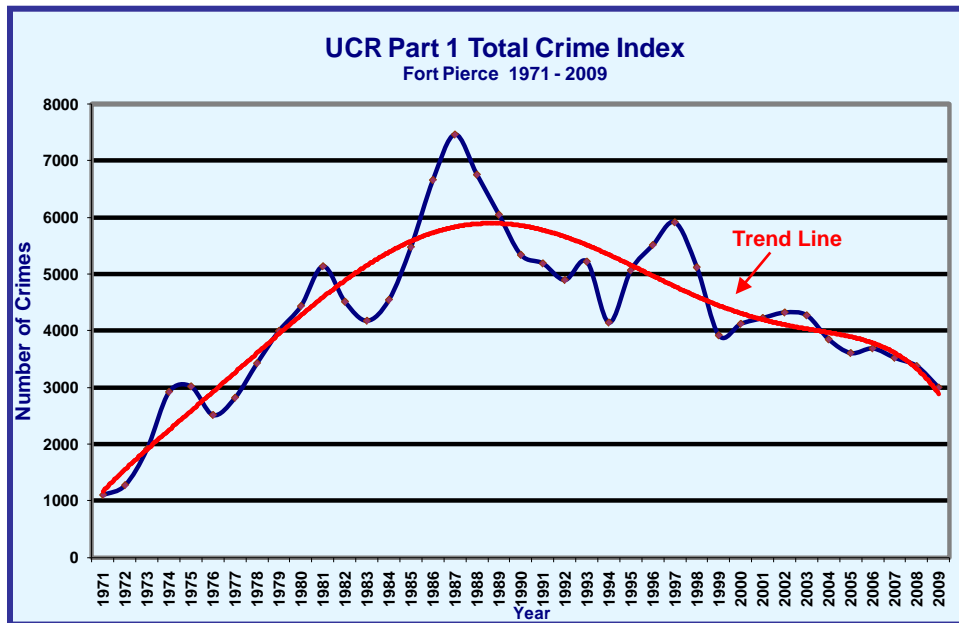


Figure 2- UCR Part 1 Crime 1971-2009

Historically, Fort Pierce has struggled with high rates of violent crime. Even in recent years, UCR statistics indicate that Fort Pierce suffers a disproportionate amount of violent crime when compared to other jurisdictions across the nation.¹ Over the last 35 years, violent crime has trended up and down reaching a peak in 1997 when citizens suffered a total of 1,425 UCR Part 1 Violent Crimes - a rate of one violent crime per 27 residents. While violent crime has continued to trend up and down in the last decade, it has fallen 65% since 1997. In 2009, Fort Pierce experienced the lowest number of violent crimes since 1977 (see Figure 3).

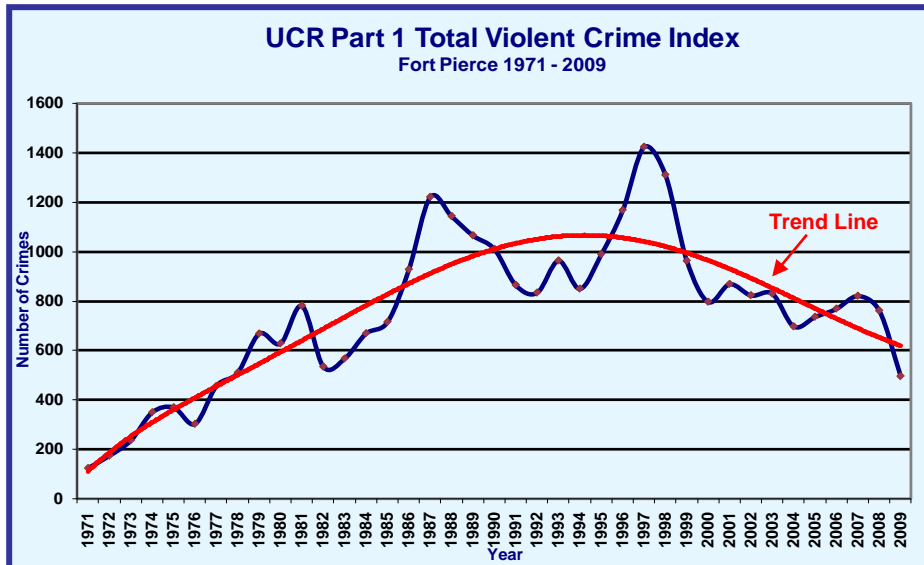


Figure 3-UCR Violent Crime 1971-2009

Recent Crime Trends

2006 – 2009

Citywide

In the last three years, Fort Pierce has experienced an incredible reduction in crime. Between 2006 and 2009, overall UCR Part I Crimes declined by 19%. In this same period, violent crime dropped 38% (see Figure 4).

2006 & 2009 Part 1 UCR Crime Statistics Citywide			
UCR Category	2006	2009	% Change
Homicide	4	8	100.0%
Rape (Includes Rape, Sodomy, Fondling)	68	47	-30.9%
Robbery	231	134	-42.0%
Aggravated Assault	528	330	-37.5%
Total Violent Crimes	831	519	-37.5%
Burglary	831	722	-13.1%
Larceny/Theft	1797	1653	-8.0%
Motor Vehicle Theft	298	133	-55.4%
Total Non-Violent Crimes	2926	2508	-14.3%
Grand TOTAL	3,757	3,027	-19.4%

Figure 4- 2006 & 2009 Part 1 UCR Crime Citywide

¹ FBI UCR Part 1 statistics for jurisdictions over 10,000 in population.

FPRA Area

In 2007, the police department conducted a comprehensive analysis of crime within the Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency (FPRA) area using 2006 crime statistics. This study found that neighborhoods within the FPRA area, and more specifically within Lincoln Park neighborhoods, suffer violent crime rates as high as 10 times national rates. In fact, neighborhoods within the FPRA area accounted for 2/3 of the city's violent crime.² Analysis of 2009 crime statistics shows that the greatest reductions of crimes are occurring in these neighborhoods. Overall crime within the FPRA area has been reduced by 43% and violent crime has been reduced by 54% (see Figure 5).

2006 & 2009 Part 1 Crime Statistics FPRA Area			
UCR Category	2006	2009	% Change
Homicide	3	5	66.7%
Rape (Rape, Sodomy, Fondling)	18	8	-55.6%
Robbery	171	59	-65.5%
Aggravated Assault	332	169	-49.1%
Total Violent Crimes	524	241	-54.0%
Burglary	502	297	-40.8%
Larceny/Theft	687	480	-30.1%
Motor Vehicle Theft	155	47	-69.7%
Total Non-Violent Crimes	1344	824	-38.7%
Grand TOTAL	1,868	1,065	-43.0%

Figure 5- 2006 & 2009 Part 1 Crime FPRA

The Spatial Trend maps below (Figures 6 & 7) represent areas in Fort Pierce where total crime and violent crime have increased or decreased compared to 2006. The areas shown in dark blue indicates locations in which activity has decreased and those depicted in dark red shows increases in activity.

2006/2009 Part 1 UCR Spatial Trend Map

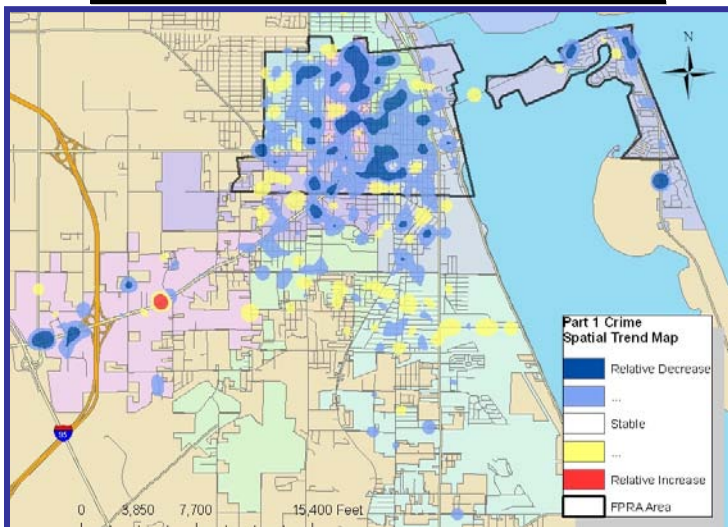


Figure 6- 2006/2009 Part 1 Crime Spatial Trend Map

2006/2009 Violent Crime Spatial Trend Map

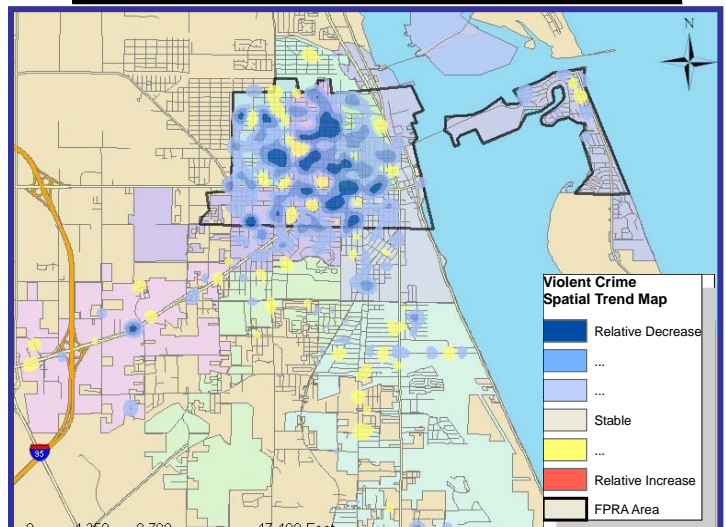


Figure 7- 2006/2009 Violent Crime Spatial Trend Map

² FPRA Funding Proposal. October 15, 2007.

2008-2009

Citywide

A significant portion of the crime reduction over the last three years occurred in 2009. Comparing 2008 to 2009 shows an 11% reduction in total crimes and a 34% reduction in violent crimes across the city (see Figure 8).

2008 & 2009 Part 1 UCR Crime Statistics Citywide			
UCR Category	2008	2009	% Change
Homicide	4	8	100.0%
Rape (Rape, Sodomy, Fondling)	69	47	-31.9%
Robbery	234	134	-42.7%
Aggravated Assault	484	330	-31.8%
Total Violent Crimes	791	519	-34.4%
Burglary	815	722	-11.4%
Larceny/Theft	1628	1653	1.5%
Motor Vehicle Theft	179	133	-25.7%
Total Non-Violent Crimes	2622	2508	-4.3%
Grand TOTAL	3,413	3,027	-11.3%

Figure 8- 2008 & 2009 Part 1 UCR Crime Citywide

FPRA Area

Spatial analysis shows that the majority of this crime reduction occurred in the Fort Pierce Redevelopment Area (FPRA). This analysis shows that our greatest reductions of crimes are occurring in neighborhoods within the FPRA area, and more specifically within Lincoln Park neighborhoods. In 2009, overall crime within the FPRA area has been reduced by 25% and violent crime has been reduced by 43% (see Figure 9).

2008 & 2009 Part 1 Crime Statistics FPRA Area			
UCR Category	2008	2009	% Change
Homicide	4	5	25.0%
Rape (Rape, Sodomy, Fondling)	19	8	-57.9%
Robbery	136	59	-56.6%
Aggravated Assault	261	169	-35.2%
Total Violent Crimes	420	241	-42.6%
Burglary	401	297	-25.9%
Larceny/Theft	532	480	-9.8%
Motor Vehicle Theft	65	47	-27.7%
Total Non-Violent Crimes	998	824	-17.4%
Grand TOTAL	1,418	1,065	-24.9%

Figure 9- 2008 & 2009 Part 1 UCR Crime FPRA

2008/2009 Part 1 UCR Spatial Trend Map

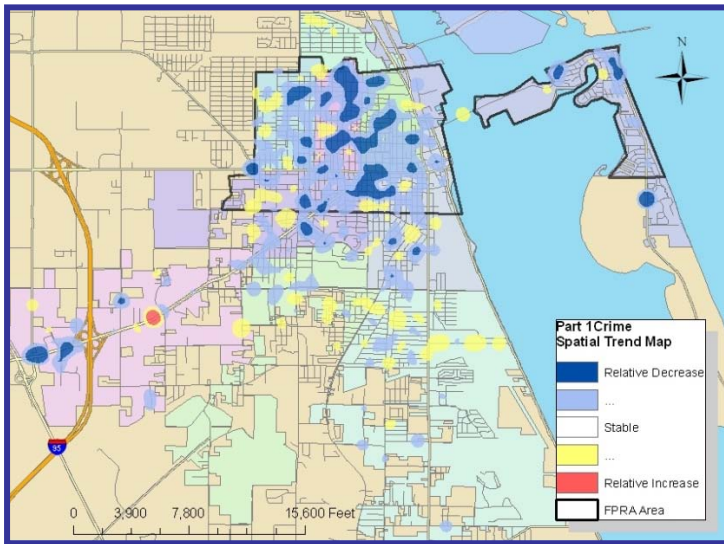


Figure 10- 2008/2009 Part 1 Crime Spatial Trend Map

2008/2009 Violent Crime Spatial Trend Map

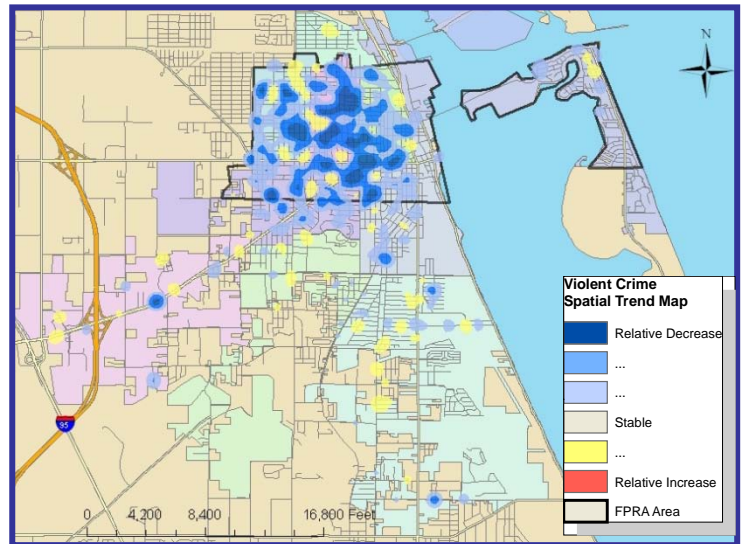


Figure 11- 2008/2009 Violent Crime Spatial Trend Map

Crime Strategies in Fort Pierce

There is a direct correlation between crime reduction and the introduction of Community Oriented Policing (COP) and Problem Oriented Policing (POP) in Fort Pierce around 1990. These philosophies have created a culture of community collaboration and problem solving within the police department and community. These principles continue to serve as the foundation of our policing strategies today, and form the basis for the following promising practices and initiatives:

Community Partnerships – The police department has forged strong partnerships with community organizations, churches, and government entities to create strategies that go beyond the traditional enforcement role of policing.

Enforcement Partnerships – The police department is leveraging assistance from other local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies to bring resources to Fort Pierce. While we have maintained strong relationships with local agencies for several years, we have significantly improved involvement from state and federal agencies in the last few years. Currently, the police department serves in partnership with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Task Force; US Marshall’s Task Force; Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) Task Force; and the Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Blue Lightning Task Force.

FPRA Innovative Community Policing Grant – The FPRA awarded the police department a grant originally worth over \$5 million in 2008 (reduced due to budget constraints in 2009). This grant provides staffing to provide enhanced community policing services to the FPRA area. This program won the Florida Redevelopment

Association's 2008 Roy F. Kenzie Award for Management Programs / Creative Partnerships

Intelligence Driven Problem Solving – The police department has invested heavily in developing analytical capabilities to identify and predict patterns and trends in crime and disorder problems. The department has created a system wherein every level and operational component of the organization is driven to identify and interrupt these patterns and trends through enforcement, prevention and other intervention methods.

INVEST - The police department has created an effective partnership with SafeSpace to screen every instance of domestic violence to identify threats of continuing and escalating violence and then intervene through enforcement and counseling services. This program is also providing advanced training to officers and investigators in the investigation of domestic violence incidents.

Juvenile Intervention – The police department has focused on developing juvenile intervention programs that reinforce the premise of community policing. The **Juvenile Diversion Program** provides an alternative to court processes for juvenile offenders focused on restorative justice rather than punitive justice. Our **Police Athletic League (PAL)** has provided thousands of children with positive activities and fostered valuable relationships between officers and our children. Our **Juvenile Assessment and Monitoring (JAM)** program partners officers with juveniles that are on probation to provide enhanced monitoring and counseling for the children and their families. **Police Explorers** provides an opportunity for teenagers to work with officers to explore careers in law enforcement. Several officers are serving as **mentors** at Garden City Early Learning Academy through Big Brothers Big Sisters. The police department is supporting the Roundtable of St. Lucie in their efforts to establish **Kids at Hope** as an overall philosophy and standard of care for our children.

Operation Ceasefire – The police department partnered with the Roundtable of St. Lucie County to draft and implement a countywide gang abatement plan, which includes Operation Ceasefire, an intervention and enforcement initiative aimed at disrupting gangs responsible for violent crime in our community.