



CITY OF IOWA CITY MEMORANDUM

Date: April 20, 2016
To: Geoff Fruin, Interim City Manager
From: Chief Sam Hargadine
Re: St. Ambrose Study on ICPD Traffic Stops

The ICPD started to collect demographic data on traffic stops in July of 1999. The first report where an analysis had been done was in January of 2004 titled *“Traffic Stop Practices of the Iowa City Police Department: January 1 –December 31, 2002.”* The research team was from the University of Louisville and this report was frequently referred to as the Louisville study.

In 2006 the Command Staff was approached by Dr. Christopher Barnum, Associate Professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice and Director of Graduate Studies Masters in Criminal Justice at St. Ambrose University. Dr. Barnum was familiar with the Louisville study and became interested in analyzing ICPD traffic stop data utilizing a differing approach. Dr. Barnum initially indicated a desire to study the data for a six month period of time.

After an initial review of the six months period of time, both Dr. Barnum and I determined that a more in-depth analysis was needed in order to better understand operational trends in the department. I maintained the working relationship with Dr. Barnum and provided him data for the years 2005, 2006, 2007, 2010, 2011 and 2012. Unfortunately, a transition to a new data management system resulted in conversion problems that prevent us from analyzing 2008 and 2009 data. Throughout this partnership with Dr. Barnum, our officers were not advised of the study due to the potential of changing behavior patterns.

In June of 2013 the City Council passed Resolution 12-320 establishing an Ad Hoc Diversity Committee to study City transit and law enforcement operations as they relate to minority populations. Over the course of six months the Ad Hoc Diversity Committee held 22 committee meetings. Several community discussion forums were held with community members from diverse backgrounds to discuss and receive feedback about transit and law enforcement operations. During this time a renewed conversation on disproportionate contact with minority populations was sparked.

Based on the community conversation generated by the Ad Hoc Diversity Committee, I worked with Dr. Barnum to incorporate more traffic stop data and finalize his analysis. While this study was initially intended for internal and academic purposes, I felt it was appropriate to have a public discussion on the topic. By participating in the multi-year study, I hope it sends a clear message that the ICPD has taken the issue of disproportional minority contact very seriously in the past and will continue to do so in the future. The ICPD is one of two police departments in the state that collect and analyze traffic stop data.

Dr. Barnum presented the results of his analysis to the City Council on June 16, 2014. At that time we set a twofold goal: Reduce the traffic stop disproportionality as experienced in the high levels in 2010-2012 and gain the confidence and trust of our community, especially the minority community. There were three additional items reported to the City Council in 2014 that were not in Dr. Barnum’s report which were:

- Complete CALEA® assessments in 2007, 2010 and 2013. The 2013 assessment team was provided with Dr. Barnum’s report. CALEA® is the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. The accreditation process requires compliance with rigorous standards that meet the best practices for police agencies in the U.S. and

Internationally. Proof of compliance is also required and continually monitored over three year periods.

- All traffic stops are videotaped and routine and continued random audits by supervisors have not shown any pattern of biased based policing or unprofessional behavior.
- Complaints that have come in claiming racial bias have been taken seriously and are fully investigated by supervisory staff.

Dr. Barnum has met with the officers twice to explain the methodology and results of the findings. The first meeting was in 2014 after it went public that the data was being analyzed and again on April 13, 2016. The officers asked concerned questions and were genuinely interested in the results of the analysis. Concerns nationwide about police misconduct and the perceptions of police by the entire community do weigh heavily on the minds of the officers. It is my belief that ICPD officers continually strive to improve the ways in which they serve.

Ongoing professional development includes annual training specifically on race based traffic stops. Officers have also been through diversity training provided by Diversity Focus and Diversity, Privilege and Unconscious Bias training with Dr. Eddie Moore and Diane Finnerty. Several officers also participated in the all-day Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE) training held in November of 2015.

The latest analysis generally indicates that most of the department's outcome measures are trending in the right direction. The data also indicates that there is still work to be done and the department remains committed to eliminating the disproportionality of traffic stops, and the equal treatment of all. My recommendation is to continue with the data collection and analysis which needs to be discussed publicly and with the officers. Continual refinement of the data should lead to better understanding.