



# **LAPD**

## **STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT**

**PLAN OF ACTION  
FOR THE LOS ANGELES THAT IS  
AND THE LOS ANGELES THAT COULD BE**

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**OCTOBER 28, 2004**

# LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Honorable Board of Police Commissioners  
150 Los Angeles Street, Room 150  
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Honorable Members:

I am writing to introduce *LAPD, State of the Department: A Plan of Action for the Los Angeles That Is and the Los Angeles That Could Be*. These documents strive to do two very different things and in so doing, they encapsulate the best thinking of the people inside our agency and many of the residents of our city with whom I have spoken during the past two years.

The first volume describes what we inside LAPD are doing and planning to do with what we have today to make Los Angeles as safe a city as possible. This volume explains how the police officers and detectives of the LAPD achieved a 21% drop in murder last year and through the first half 2004 two-year reductions of:

- 18.2% in murder
- 15.9% in violent crime
- 8.3% in total crime

The second volume describes what LAPD would do with significantly more resources to make every neighborhood a place where families can live, work,

or play without fear of gangs, violence, drugs, or intimidation.

I have been a police officer nearly all my adult life. In the military, I was an MP. After getting back from Vietnam, I joined the Boston Police Department. Since then I have led six police departments of varying size. While working for several years in the private sector, I learned that there was one piece of unfinished business in my career: I wanted to serve in one more department to help it redeem its full potential as the agent of making a city fit for all families, regardless of race, country of origin, economic status, or geographical location. And this would require, I have long known, making certain that officers perform their work in a constitutional manner that is free of corruption, bias and brutality.

Los Angeles seemed the best possible place to make this hope a reality. I was and am grateful to Mayor James Hahn for giving me the opportunity to help implement his vision of making this the safest big city in America.

Since joining the department two years ago today, I have been focused on one job: that of rebuilding (and in some places building for the first time) trust between the LAPD and the communities it is sworn to protect and serve, while at the same time rebuilding trust between officers and their department.

When I got here, the Police Commission, Mayor Hahn, and the City Council had given us the basic tools for succeeding. During difficult economic times, they had provided pay raises, an attractive work schedule, and more police officers. Dangerous attrition of uniform strength had been stopped. The agency's inability to hire new officers had been resolved.

Yet two years ago, the symptoms of broken trust were still widespread, if not systemic.

The 1999 Rampart scandal had reopened old wounds, outside as well as inside the department. Police abuse of power in the Rampart Division had convinced many in the community that the LAPD had not learned from the Rodney King incident or from a history of achieving law and order through estrangement from the public and what was perceived by many as orchestrated propagation of fear.

The public response to the Rampart scandal, including imposition of a court-ordered Consent Decree specifying hundreds of procedural requirements throughout the organization, triggered intended and unintended reactions inside the LAPD. The disciplinary process came down heavily on many who had committed only minor infractions, while the investigative process for potentially major infractions was neither thorough nor credible.

Police alienation led to police inaction with respect to crime fighting. After 1999, arrests fell precipitously and crime rose dramatically. By the end of 2002, murder showed a three-year rise of 54%.

Our goal was construction of a police organization, effective against crime and potential terrorist attack, that conducted itself lawfully, constitutionally, and respectfully at all times. The watchwords of this process are accountability and transparency.

#### ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

As a reflection of the fact that the first responsibility of government in a democratic society is to preserve public safety, the first responsibility of the police department to the community is to do all in our power to reduce crime, fear, and disorder.

Dramatic crime reductions have been achieved in the last two years because police officers have become much more active in making appropriate arrests. In 2003, arrests for all offenses went up 10.9%. In the first half of this year, arrests increased another 8.4%; weapons arrests went up 20.1%. Response time to emergency calls has improved significantly.

The LA Compstat system has been retooled to use weekly crime meetings to discover patterns and devise better strategies to address emerging crime problems. Backlogs in warrants, case investigations, fingerprint searches, firearms examinations, and DNA analysis are being tracked and, where possible with our scarce resources,

reduced. The Compstat unit has also striven to deliver more timely, more accurate data to and from division commands, even though LAPD's technology remains a system in need of radical repair. Some 57 separate operational systems containing more than 400 access databases remain fragmented and disconnected. Intensive command-based Compstats and police-executive mentors are being directed at Areas where crime problems require more attention.

Except in the area of technology, the LAPD is making substantial progress toward achieving compliance with the Consent Decree. Recent tests of these changes have emerged in a number of use-of-force cases, especially one involving the use of a flashlight by an officer following the pursuit of a fleeing car-theft suspect. We are now awaiting the results of parallel internal criminal and administrative investigations, with other investigations into the matter being conducted and/or monitored by the FBI, District Attorney, the Inspector General of the Police Commission, and the Los Angeles County Sheriff. I am determined that our investigation will be thorough — and transparent. Guided by the Consent Decree, we will do this right.

At the same time, we have reformed the disciplinary system to achieve consistency and fairness, to make certain that all public complaints are thoroughly investigated and adjudicated in a timely manner, to expand the number of targeted sting operations to ferret out serious misconduct and corruption, and to broaden training on police misconduct policies. In the process of building both trust and accountability among police officers, we are also saving time and money. Between 2002 and 2003, a 31% reduction in Board of Rights hearings has saved the city an estimated \$3.69 million.

Better management can save money in other areas as well. As one example, City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo recently worked with LAPD to create a program that he believes will save the city \$1.9 million in court-related police overtime cost in the first six months alone.

Just as important as accountability in operational and fiscal management, though, is winning the trust of the community. By attending many community meetings and reporting on all the activities summarized above, by developing additional Community Police Advisory Boards, by opening Compstat to the public and the media, and by utilizing more effectively our Senior Lead Officers, I have tried to impose a new standard of transparency on all of LAPD's interactions with the residents we are working to serve and protect.

While I am pleased with the progress we have begun to make, I now know that when I took the oath as Chief two years ago I understood some — but not all — of the significant obstacles to achieving our goal of creating the trust necessary inside and outside LAPD to secure every Los Angeles neighborhood.

## HISTORY

Excellent sources, such as Joe Dominick's *To Protect and to Serve*, describe how the complex history of the LAPD had embedded certain cultural attributes in the organization.

Like most big city American police departments, the LAPD was conceived in sin and born in corruption. From the late 19th century largely through the middle third of the 20th, the LAPD was used by its civilian overseers and most of its internal bosses as an instrument of private gain and social control. Specialized units like the Vice Squad, the Intelligence Squad, the Gun Squad, and the Red Squad all delivered on one or both purposes. And like other American police departments during that period, the LAPD was segregated and racist in heart, mind, and action.

During its middle years, the LAPD became something dramatically different, the nation's first and foremost professional policing organization. This was the LAPD those of us growing up in the 1960s, even in Boston, came to admire and even hero-worship.

Starting about the time of the police recruit class of 1940, the first to wear what would become the most famous badge in the world, the LAPD systematically transformed itself into a force dedicated to the ubiquitous imposition of law and order. Police union leader and then Chief of Police William H. Parker created a department governed by meticulously detailed rules and procedures, steeped in military discipline and tactics, and distanced from civilian oversight (which he considered interference). His swarming motorcycle officers, for example, engrained in the city's pedestrian behavior jaywalking prohibitions still rigidly observed today, long after bike officers were consumed by duties elsewhere. As the Parker years unfolded, the LAPD showed that hard work and relentless application of innovative strategies and technology could secure results far beyond what much bigger East Coast police departments would even aspire to attain.

The success of the Parker model, developed in a city of rapidly expanding diversity and population within an immense geographical area, formed a bedrock sense of distinction within the agency. The LAPD, in many respects rightfully, regarded itself as the Marine Corps of American policing. Its integrity, training, practices, rapid mobility, and relatively small size all set it apart from every other police agency in America — but also from the community it served.

The Watts riots, the Rodney King incident, including the riots following the acquittal of officers charged in response, and the Rampart scandal each spotlighted flaws in the Parker design. But in all those cases, the LAPD was counseled to take more control, select recruits more carefully, perform better and more extensive training, impose more rules and regulations to obtain lawful and respectful behavior from its officers. In short, the department understood it was being told to apply more Parker remedy, not less.

What I have learned most starkly since becoming Chief is that the LAPD is far too small to carry out its mission in every neighborhood of the city. It has never been realistically and correctly sized to succeed in making and maintaining a safe city — everywhere — through lawful and respectful policing, in which officers know they

have sufficient numbers to safely handle any emergency, protect all residents, and protect each other while they do so. This reality has inexcusably jeopardized too many of our officers in too many situations. It has also created a style of policing that sometimes has created and reinforced fear rather than trust in all concerned. As a result, this community (acting in concert with our state and national governments) must make a major decision. Are we satisfied with continued incremental progress against crime and potential terrorist threats? Or will we make the investment necessary to secure every part of Los Angeles, and not just certain parts of it?

#### THE GANG PROBLEM

After the turbulence of the 1960s, the gang and drug problems in Los Angeles grew out of control, though they were largely confined to certain areas of the city. Today, there are 80,000 gang members in Los Angeles County, with a majority of them in the city.

While not all gang members are violent criminals, research has shown that gang membership intensifies and expands criminal behavior. As Fr. Greg Boyle has said, "There are no good gangs."

Over half of the city's murders are gang-related. Despite the best efforts of all available police, some Los Angeles neighborhoods are believed by residents to be essentially ruled by gangs. Law-abiding residents of these places report that they are afraid to walk their streets or be seen even talking with police. Intimidation keeps them from reporting crimes, and serving as witnesses in court or even as effective jurors. Police officers themselves come under attack in these places. Children become victims in several ways. Sometimes they are shot and killed. Frequently they feel compelled to carry guns and even join these gangs to protect themselves or to flee the misery of their lives. And there are instances of coercion that simply must not be allowed to continue in the United States of America, particularly in a city that bears the name Los Angeles, City of Angels.

Recently, I was stunned to hear that one gang leader bragged that to compel a reluctant 15-year-old boy to join his gang, the boy was shown a videotape of eleven gang members (faces hidden from the camera) raping his 13-year-old sister. I was told he joined the next day, fearing that if he did not, the gang would kill her. In their impact on the communities they regard as their own turf, violent gang members are, in fact, domestic terrorists. And they always have the potential to export their criminal actions and even organizations to other areas of the city, county, and nation — and in fact they have been gaining momentum in doing so.

#### SECURING EVERY STREET, BLOCK, AND NEIGHBORHOOD IN LOS ANGELES

Work done in Los Angeles and other cities has demonstrated that we know how to address the gang problem: through prevention, intervention, and enforcement. Enforcement can be fully and effectively delivered by a properly managed and resourced police department. In 2003, the presence of an additional 83 officers in 77th Division resulted in a murder reduction of 57% there. Since we have moved some of those officers elsewhere this year we have experienced a murder increase of 42% in 77th as of October 14th.

Because of the complexity of overlapping and adjacent jurisdictional boundaries (88 cities in a county where 10 million people live within nearly 1,000 square miles), we must share information and coordinate actions among all the law enforcement entities in this region. Since the Sheriff polices half of these cities and all the unincorporated areas of the county and has built a technology backbone we can use, this regional approach can be done relatively easily, with an appropriate investment in technology.

A similar approach must be taken to deal with terrorist threats to our people and infrastructure, including the twin ports that handle half the nation's trade and are the busiest in the country. Public-tips and police-observation data can be assembled and matched against crime data with a relatively small investment in new technology. But we must have the funds to deploy such readily available technologies.

The larger matter is the question of the numbers of police the city needs to secure every part of the city. National crime-fighting experts who have had major success in other cities have recommended a minimum number of nearly 16,000 police officers, rapidly hired, trained, and deployed to quell the gang problem in LA. Apart from the issue of funding what would amount to a 76% buildup of police officers in the city, the problems of finding so many qualified new recruits, training them properly, and then supervising them adequately are, in my judgment, prohibitive. Instead, I am putting before the people of this region (as well as leaders in Sacramento and Washington) what I believe it will take to protect fully and well the national asset that is Los Angeles.

Quite simply, I believe we need 3,300 new officers to achieve a uniformed strength of 12,500 (500 fewer than the number in Chicago, with a land area less than half the size of LA's and a population 23% smaller), combined with state-of-the-art technology to eliminate unnecessary paperwork, streamline arrest processing, and instantaneously deliver appropriate crime and counter-terror information to every level and individual in the police department.

Based on my experience as head of the police departments in Boston and New York (both successful in turning crime back to the levels of my childhood), I believe that number will secure a lasting 50% reduction in murder and violent crime from the still too-high levels we see today.

Gradual growth of police staffing strength can and will be monitored to see if staffing levels smaller than the ultimate goal achieve control of the gang problem in every neighborhood, protection of police officers in all places at all times (making possible cultural embrace within LAPD of the practice of community policing), and thorough and reliable counter-terror systems – in short, realization of Mayor Hahn's vision of the safest big city in America.

Whatever decision is made by those in charge of every relevant level of government, my commitment and that of all the other police officers of the LAPD is to do all in our power to achieve continued reductions in crime.

Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

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As I wrote nearly a decade ago: "There are not many optimists in this country. I am an optimist. An organization is always reflective of its leader, and if there is no belief at the top echelons, there will be none below. I fully believe that with able police leadership, political will, well-trained cops, and community participation, we can take back America state by state, city by city, borough by borough, block by block. And we will win."

I believed that then, and I believe that now. The unfolding success of Los Angeles is confirming it once again.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William J. Bratton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "W" and "B".

WILLIAM J. BRATTON

Chief of Police

# **LAPD PLAN OF ACTION**

**BOOK I:  
FOR THE LOS ANGELES THAT IS**

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