City of Freeport
Public Safety Plan

This City is dedicated to crime reduction. We will be relentless in pursuing criminals and bringing them to justice. We intend to serve notice on people who come to Freeport thinking it is a good place to hang out, rip people off, sell drugs and otherwise drag this City down. The message is: clean up your act or go to prison. For the people who have families, or live alone, who work hard or have retired, and all who care about this City, we also have a message: this City is dedicated to helping you succeed – to live, work and enjoy life in a safe, caring community.

This plan has six (6) goals. It seeks to: (1) create safer neighborhoods, (2) promote personal accountability, (3) develop stronger community relationships, (4) create safer housing, (5) foster interdepartmental cooperation in the deployment of city resources, and (6) make sound, data driven decisions. The City already has reinstated Community Policing, but we know we need a broader strategy that builds strong relationships with all parts of our community.

This is a draft plan. The next step is to engage the citizens of this city in conversation about its contents, make needed changes, and make sure there is pubic buy-in. Once the comment period is over, we will seek to implement every point in the plan. If some strategies do not work, we will change them. The bottom line is to make sure we do everything we can to create a safer community. Our by-word is action.

One last point: this plan is an outgrowth of the Mayor's and the Police Department's promise to create a focused plan for increased public safety. The Mayor and the Department believe in this plan and are prepared to do their utmost to improve Freeport. But, we cannot do it alone. The safety of this city depends on everyone lending a hand and looking out for each other. This plan is merely the organized expression of that necessity.

MAYOR'S OFFICE   **FREEPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Goal 1: Create safer neighborhoods

Safe, healthy neighborhoods are a cornerstone of the community policing philosophy, which is why this goal is so crucial to this public safety plan. The department will focus on three types of strategies to meet this goal: neighborhood-based, offender-based, and location-based strategies.

Neighborhood-based strategies

- Use bike and foot patrols, consisting of a two person team of community policing specialists, proactively enforcing quality of life issues and working directly with residents to engage them in helping the department solve issues of crime.

- Employ a Problem-Oriented Policing Initiative (POPI) to increase the overall safety of all Freeport neighborhoods while additionally targeting specific hot-spots and problem areas as they arise, with an emphasis on violence prevention. Tactics used will include

  - talking with and interacting with individuals on the street;
  - flyers explaining laws and enforcement actions;
  - neighborhood meetings;
  - parole and probation forums; and
  - home visits.

- Develop a plan and program for future reinstatement of the K9 program as part of the Department's patrol duties;

- Develop a program for licensing of tobacco merchants which includes an element requiring ownership, maintenance, and operation of security cameras and which can be used to curb other illegal activities on the premises.

- Continue a program for placing temporary pole cameras in high priority areas as identified by crime and call data analysis.

Offender-based strategies

- Actively seek to engage past offenders of crime and violence in an effort to reduce recidivism.

- Communicate information to rental property owners regarding location of parolees and registered sex offenders to allow owners to safeguard their interest in the property.

- Work with probation and parole departments to have officers accompany agents on home visits and ride-alongs.

- Initiate an ordinance to develop minimum mandatory fines for repeat noise ordinance violators.

- Notify rental property owners of all drug arrests involving tenants, even when those arrests do not occur at the rental property.

Location-based strategies

- Conduct saturated patrols in conjunction with state police on specified dates and locations based upon analysis of call and crime data.

- Implement a zero tolerance policy at specific chronic locations regarding quality of life issues (gambling, open alcohol, noise).

- Designate sound amplification enforcement zones in targeted areas.

- Review the City's location-based noise ordinance to consider adding a distance component.

- Increase fines for repeat noise violation offenses.

- Perform curfew enforcement details twice weekly on a seasonal basis.

- Place pole cameras and overt cameras in locations based upon analysis of call and crime data.

- Coordinate with ComEd to improve lighting in poorly lit areas

- Research and develop a pedestrian ordinance.

- Implement a Beat Team Leader Program, which would assign a leader in each beat to help resolve complex issues.

Goal 2: Promote positive youth behavior, accountability and family involvement

The primary focus of this goal is to keep our community's children safe. When children are out past curfew, when they are truant from school, and when they are engaging in risk and problem behaviors, their safety, well-being, and chances for future success are compromised. The programs and interventions planned under this goal – including holding parents accountable – are aimed at encouraging positive behavior and enlisting parents in doing the same.

- Develop methods to hold parents accountable for criminal action and conduct of minors.

- Strictly enforce curfew ordinance.

- Strictly enforce the truancy ordinance by coordinating with the school district.

- Review truancy and curfew ordinances for opportunities to strengthen parental accountability sections.

Goal 3: Develop stronger community relationships

Success in Community Policing depends on the development and maintenance of strong positive relationships between the community and the police department. The strategies under this goal are designed to do just that, and to provide opportunities for members of the public to be meaningfully engaged in promoting public safety in our community.

- Expand the Neighborhood Watch program to every area of the City.

- Coordinate with Crime Stop and Crime Stoppers to

  - Expand the availability of rewards for information leading to arrests; and

  - Promote the availability of rewards on a case-by-case basis for major crime events.

- Expand the Police Auxiliary and volunteer program by promoting the program and actively recruiting new volunteers and by increasing the use of auxiliary members to assist patrol officers.

- Reinstitute the Civilian Police Academy program.

- Develop and deploy a public information campaign to encourage citizens to report crime and provide information to law enforcement to assist in solving crimes.

- Develop and deploy a proactive campaign to ensure accurate crime and public safety information is available to the public through various media outlets.

- Develop and implement a program for coordinating efforts with local social service organizations to ensure that recipients of social service assistance (e.g., rent payment assistance) are remaining law-abiding while on assistance.

- Implement a Court Watch Program in which volunteers from Neighborhood Watch groups attend court and administrative hearings on nuisance and property violations and report back to their neighbors to formulate follow up plans.

Goal 4: Ensure safer housing

While the department's role in this goal is that of support, in many cases, this is a crucial public safety goal. The "broken windows" theory of public safety maintains that allowing property code violations and minor nuisances to persist can lead to more serious criminal behavior. To that end, the department will work with other City departments to support the accomplishment of the strategies under this goal.

- Implement a program of rental property / landlord registration that ensures safe, habitable housing and facilitates cooperation and shared problem-solving among the department, landlords, tenants, the building department, and other stakeholders.

- Implement a City-wide landlord training program, including a Crime Prevention through Environmental Design component.

- Develop a program to require a pre-occupancy inspection for properties receiving government-subsidized rent, including but not limited to Freeport Township assistance and Section 8 voucher assistance.

- Coordinate with Freeport Township as they develop guidelines for a work program for recipients of Township financial assistance.

- Employ the "broken window theory" of law enforcement by stepping up enforcement of property nuisance violations.

Goal 5: Develop stronger interdepartmental relationships

All City departments operate with limited resources, and must coordinate and focus our energies where they can do the most good for the community. The strategies under this goal are designed to promote effective, efficient interdepartmental coordination to facilitate each department meeting its respective goals.

- Develop stronger relationships with other City departments, including fire, building, animal control, nuisance, public works and community development, to bring about better communication and mutual problem solving. Meet with departments twice monthly to discuss and resolve shared issues.

- Develop stronger relationships with Stephenson County probation and Illinois Department of Corrections parole departments to ensure better communications and more effective program administration.

- Incorporate nuisance, animal control, building and fire reports into the police department records management system to allow tracking of property issues.

- Institute a coordinated program for reporting property and other issues to other departments.

Goal 6: Make sound, data-driven policy decisions

This goal focuses on implementing systems to compile crime and call data, analyze that data, and use that data to drive department decisions. The strategies listed below also will lay the groundwork for a citizen portal in which crime tips and leads can be submitted online to aid in police investigations.

- Implement a system of crime mapping and data analysis that plots crime and calls for service and provides analysis and allows the department to plot trends and make some predictive assumptions to inform staffing and other resource allocation.

- Use data from crime mapping system to inform decisions on placement of temporary pole cameras, the alignment of patrol resources, and the determination of the type of patrol operation (squad car, bike, foot) in specific areas of the city.

For more information or to submit comments on this draft plan, please contact Mayor Jim Gitz at (815) 235-8200 or mayor@cityoffreeport.org.

MAYOR'S OFFICE   **FREEPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Task Description	Deliverable(s)	Responsibility	Due	Measure(s)
Goal 1: Create safer neighborhoods				
Location-based strategies				
Expanded bicycle and foot patrol programs				
Problem-Oriented Policing Initiative (POPI)				
Develop plan to reinstitute K9 program				
Licensing program for tobacco merchants, including requirement for surveillance cameras				
Program for placement of temporary pole cameras in high priority areas				
Offender-based strategies				
Actively engage offenders				
Program to communicate with rental property owners leasing to offenders				
Increased cooperation with parole and probation departments				
Increase minimum fines for repeat noise ordinance violators				
Notify rental property owners of all drug arrests involving tenants				
Location-based strategies				
Conduct saturated patrols with state police				
Zero tolerance policy on quality of life issues (e.g., gambling, open alcohol, noise)				

MAYOR'S OFFICE   **FREEPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Designate sound amplification enforcement zones				
Review location-based noise ordinance to consider distance component				
Twice weekly curfew enforcement details				
Pole and overt cameras placed based on analysis of data				
Coordinate with ComEd to improve lighting in poorly lit areas				
Research and develop a pedestrian ordinance				
Implement Beat Team Leader program				
Goal 2: Promote positive youth behavior, accountability and family involvement				
Hold parents accountable for criminal actions of minors				
Strictly enforce curfew ordinance				
Strictly enforce truancy ordinance				
Review truancy and curfew ordinances for opportunities to strengthen parental accountability language				
Goal 3: Develop stronger community relationships				
Implement Neighborhood Watch in every area of City				
Coordinate with Crime Stoppers for increased rewards and increased awareness for major crime events				
Expand Police Auxiliary and Volunteer Program				
Reinstitute Civilian Police Academy				

Public information campaign to encourage reporting of crime and crime information				
Program to ensure accurate crime and public safety information available through media outlets				
Program to coordinate with local social service organizations				
Implement a Court Watch Program				
Goal 4: Ensure safer housing				
Implement program of rental property / landlord registration				
City-wide landlord training program				
CPTED training program				
Program to require inspections for rentals receiving government-subsidized rent				
Work with Township to create program to require work programs for recipients of assistance				
Step up enforcement of property nuisance violations				
Goal 5: Develop stronger interdepartmental Relationships				
Program for interdepartmental cooperation with City departments (fire, building, public works)				
Program for interdepartmental cooperation with County departments (sheriff, probation, parole)				

MAYOR'S OFFICE **FREEPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Incorporate nuisance, animal control, building and fire reports into police records management system				
Coordinated program for reporting property issues to other departments				
Goal 6: Make sound, data-driven policy decisions				
Implement a system of crime mapping and data analysis				
Use data to inform decisions on deployment of staff and other resources				