

City of Salem, Massachusetts



**"Know Your Rights Under the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 30A ss. 18-25 and  
City Ordinance Sections 2-2028 through 2-2033."**

The City Council Committee on Public Health, Safety and Environment co-posted with the Committee of the Whole  
met via zoom on Wednesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 at 7:00 P.M.  
for the purpose of discussing the matters(s) listed below. Notice of this meeting was posted on  
March 1, 2021 at 4:35 P.M.

**(This meeting is being recorded)**

**ATTENDANCE**

**ABSENT WERE:** None

**Also in Attendance:** Councillors Flynn, Hapworth, Madore, McCarthy, Turiel

Acting Chief of Police (AC) Dennis King and Mayor Kim Driscoll

**SUBJECT(S)**

#94 – To meet with the Salem Police Department regarding the recent crimes in the city

C. Riccardi opens the meeting by reading the Order submitted at the Feb 25<sup>th</sup> Council meeting "to discuss the recent string of violent crimes throughout Salem, what police are doing to stop it from continuing and share what they can on successes they have on each matter, what additional resources are needed, and how can the Council and all residents can assist."

AC King makes opening comments thanking the Council for formally recognizing the departments commitment to the community in September of 2020. Each incident is taken seriously and personally by the Dept. There are many factors that the police cannot control when addressing crime in the city, but members of the community can. Trust between the public and the police force is vital. Fear of crime is often greater then actual crime and working towards reducing fear can be just as hard.

AC King then presented his prepared Powerpoint deck "Salem Solves Problems Together" which includes data and information regarding current and historical data on crime and incidents in the city of Salem and calls of services, as well as information on how the department operates and interacts with the community. The presentation noted the recent spate of violent activity, the outcomes of those crimes and what they are working to address and specific actions to be taken now.

C Riccardi thanked AC King for the detailed presentation and asked how the dept plans to implement their goal to increase information sharing with the community and how the Council could assist with this goal as well as citizen engagement.

AC King discussed the efforts to continue to meet with the neighborhood communications; an update to the website is coming soon; working on locking down the code red announcements; continue to meet in person when possible.

C Morsillo asked if AC King and his family felt safe in the city of Salem. AC King replied they do feel safe.

C Morsillo asked for AC Kings thoughts on comments made by resident that they feel a gun was needed to feel safe in Salem. AC King supports the constitutional right to carry a gun and supports that. He added that if you were getting a firearm solely for the recent incidents, he would ask that you have a deeper conversation and use some of what he talked about today before making that decision as they were not random acts of violence.

C Morsillo asked about what the dept needs from the Council during events, and afterwards. AC King requested the council allow the Dept to respond and do their job. If help is needed, especially with information sharing, they will request this.

C Morsillo requested that the Press Releases are also sent to the City Councilors when provided to the Press. AC King agreed to do this.

C Domingo asked AC King for his presentation. He feels this information also needs to be shared with the public. He stated he is concerned about the path we are going down with five incidents and wants to know what their motives are. And what is the departments strategies to stop these incidents.

AC King noted there were two shootings in the last five weeks, with three victims. There are common themes that have been identified by the investigators working these cases. The other incidents are also concerning and a lot of police and community efforts are being put in. The department needs corporation from those on scene, and trust the legitimacy of the work that is going on.

C Domingo noted that the communication with the community is important. AC King agreed and is open to any support that can be provided.

C Flynn asked how the council could help with budget season; is an increase in patrol officers needed, or community policing. An increase to get more officers on the street.

AC King requested support when the operational budget is submitted. The Department is currently at 91, would like to be a 95 full charter. Other then staffing, they are also working on other technological advances such as body cams.

C Dibble Thanked AC King and the dept and acknowledged the residents reaching out to him on this topic and requesting we reach out to the public faster with this information.

C Madore stressed the importance of leading with truth and facts and has been comforted by the facts and data shown this evening. She noted it has been discussed how the dept can improve, but would also like to look at how ourselves as leaders can improve

Mayor Driscoll commented we have a strong department and thanks King for the presentation. She reiterated her support for the department and acknowledged that they are working hard and working on strengthening relationships with the community

C Prosniewski spoke from his experience as the Public Information officer on the dept for 25+ years. He noted miss information and rumors spreading, jumping to conclusions is probably the most dangerous thing. Letting the department do their job is important and we need to not spread fear. He noted the department has solved the major incidents that have occurred over the past five weeks and they were not random acts.

C Hapworth agreed with C Prosniewski and noted that social media is not a great place to spread miss information, especially when an investigation is on going.

C Dominguez agrees, but feels the department needs to be providing these press releases to the public and the community in a better manner as the messages tonight have not gotten back to the community

AC King noted the code reds and press releases and acknowledged they need to be released to more then just the media and requested the help from the council on this.

### **Public Testimony**

Steve Kapantis, 23 Wisteria St, Salem MA- Thanked AC King for the presentation and the data, and heard the need for more officers. He requested King to expand what members of the public can do to help

AC King: "See something, say something" ; have trust in the system; be comfortable to come forward; the wiliness to come to community meetings and strategize with the department are all ways to help.

Fawaz Abusharkh, 9 Harrison Road, Salem MA asked about the data that was commented on during the presentation on the traffic tickets issued for hand held devices and questioned the demographics

AC King noted that the demographics for the handheld driving citations broke down as: 83% white 15% Hispanic 1% black, which roughly matches the demographics of the city. He invited Mr Abusharkh to contact him to discuss further if he wished.

C Dibble noted he wants to hear more about the facts and results of the recent incidents.

AC King summarized the six recent incidents. In all three major incidents there have been press releases.

C McCarthy brought back the original order for this meeting. He noted when he has questions, he reaches out to the current Chief for more information. He has gone to many community meetings, and unfortunately a lot of the 1:1 conversations have been on hold due to the pandemic. How can the council help? Reach out to the department for details. When we were sworn in as councillors, we were not given a badge and a gun. Our job is to help the department and not jeopardize the department. He thanked AC King for his presentation.


C Morsillo moved for the presentation to be received and filed and dismiss the matter from committee. Seconded by C Domingo

C Dibble move that we send a letter of thank you to the entire police department for the job they are doing from the city council and a vote be taken in support. Seconded by C Morsillo

The PHSE Committee voted 5-0 on the motion to receive and file the presentation and dismiss the matter from Committee.

The PHSE Committee voted 5-0 on the motion to recommend the full council send a letter of thanks to the Police Dept for the job they are doing.

On the motion of C. Dibble the meeting adjourned at 9:02 P.M.

  
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(Chairperson)

# SALEM SOLVES PROBLEMS TOGETHER

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ACTING CHIEF OF POLICE

DENNIS KING



# THE MISSION OF THE SALEM POLICE DEPARTMENT

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- The Mission of the Salem Police Department is to enforce laws, protect individual rights, lives and property and to arrest those in need of arresting, cite those who need citing, assist those who need assisting, in order to improve public safety for everyone, reduce crime in our community, and diminish the fear of crime. We will utilize problem-solving strategies that focus on crime prevention, dispute resolution, and foster enhanced communication, cooperation and involvement with the community. We will treat people with dignity and respect and deliver the highest standards of police service and assistance to all. We will do this with pride in our profession and with professionalism worthy of the badge.



# CALLS FOR SERVICE WHAT OUR CALLS LOOK LIKE

Outcomes and Performance Measures	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21 Estimate
Calls for Service	38,114	38,647	38,027	33,910	37,175
Arrests (Court Action Taken)/ Protective Custody	2,004	2,192	2,100	1,988	2,071
Robberies	35	22	22	20	25
Breaking & Entering	117	95	102	76	98
Sexual Assaults	31	19	20	26	24
MV Thefts	39	46	41	44	43
Larceny	919	880	696	696	798
Assaults	626	619	643	590	620
MV Accidents	2,025	2,156	1,976	1,545	1,926
MV Citation Violations	5,439	6,852	7,733	5,784	6,452
Neighborhood Meetings	38	22	14	36	28

# BASIS OF COUNCIL ORDER – WHY WE ARE HERE

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BREAKDOWN OF INCIDENTS

LOOK AT THE CRIME DATA – CITY AND STATE

# SHOOTING INCIDENTS BREAKDOWN

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- 2018 – today we have 11 Total incidents with an identified victim involving a firearm
  - 7 resulted in injuries and 4 no injuries – no deaths
  - 10 suspects identified – common connections – drug – firearm - gang association
  - 5 resulted in charges brought and 6 are open pending hopeful victim/witness cooperation – Cases are still being investigated in cooperation with State, Local and Federal Police agencies
- Salem has had an average of 3 total shootings per year over the last 4 years
- 2019, 2020 and 2021 identifies upward trend – Not Random Acts – Isolated Incidents where suspect and victim were associated with one another in some way
- Random violent street crimes such as robbery and purse snatching not trending upward
- 3 Murders since 2013 – 8 Years, none since 2016 – We want Zero, but this is a talk about Violent Crime



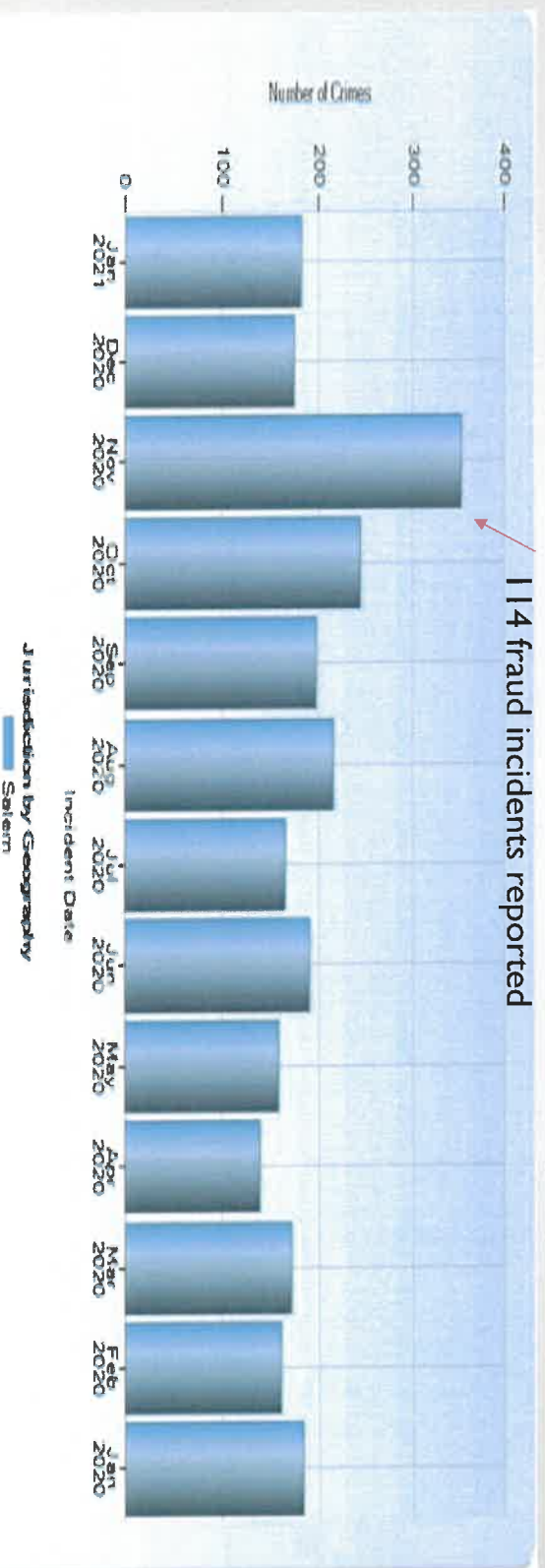
## QUICK BREAKDOWN OF THE SLIDES AHEAD

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- 2019 – 2020 Overall Crime did not change in Salem. Statewide data shows a drop in crime in the Commonwealth
- Property Crime is up most likely due to Increase in Identity Fraud Cases (Unemployment Claims due to COVID)
- Agg. Assault up 5% and Weapon offenses increased
- Robbery down 29% - Purse Snatchings – 2 in the last five years

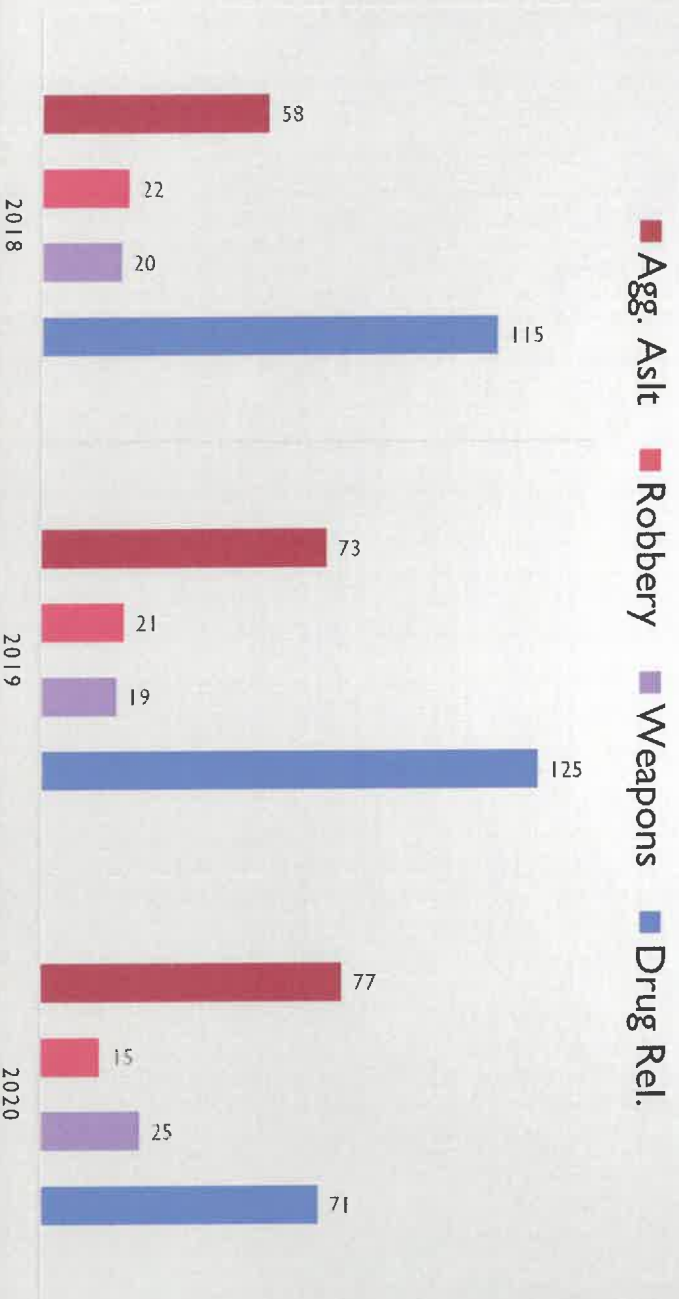
This is important because it dictates our strategies AND paints a picture of Random and Violent acts a community member would likely face. Example – random violent street crimes are not up

# SALEM CRIME INCIDENTS BY MONTH



Agg. Assault up  
Weapon Off. up  
Robbery down  
Drug Related Off. down

## SALEM CRIMES AGAINST THE PERSON – 3YRS

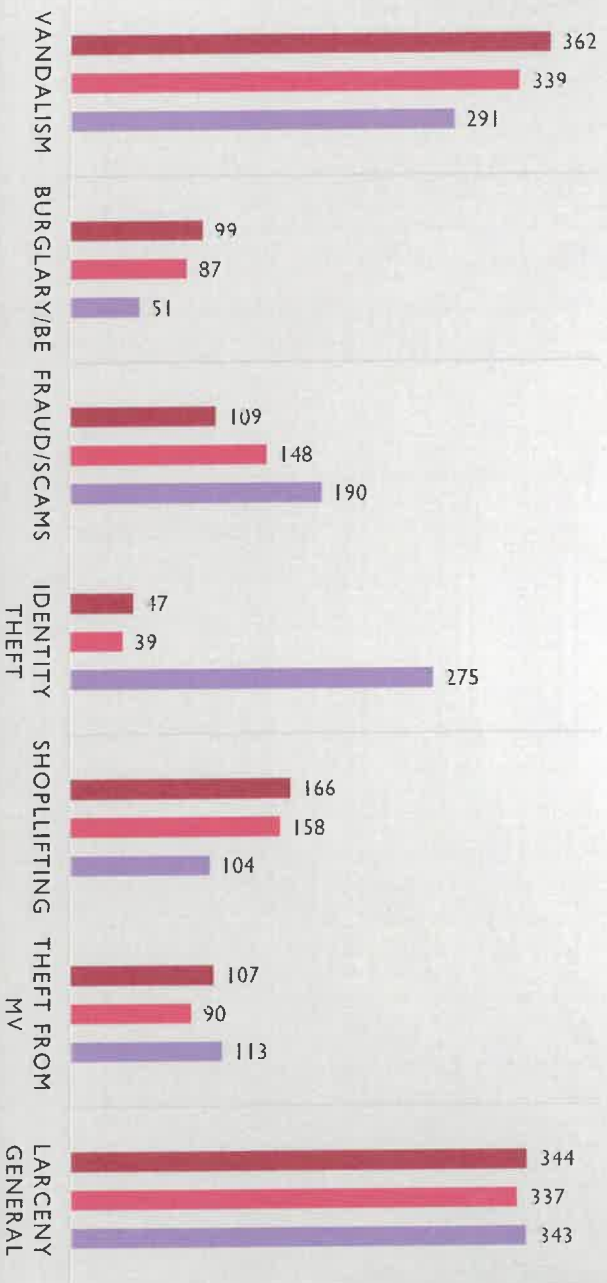


Vandalism down  
Burglary down  
Shoplifting down  
Fraud/Identity up  
General larceny –

Covid Effect

# SALEM CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY – 3YRS

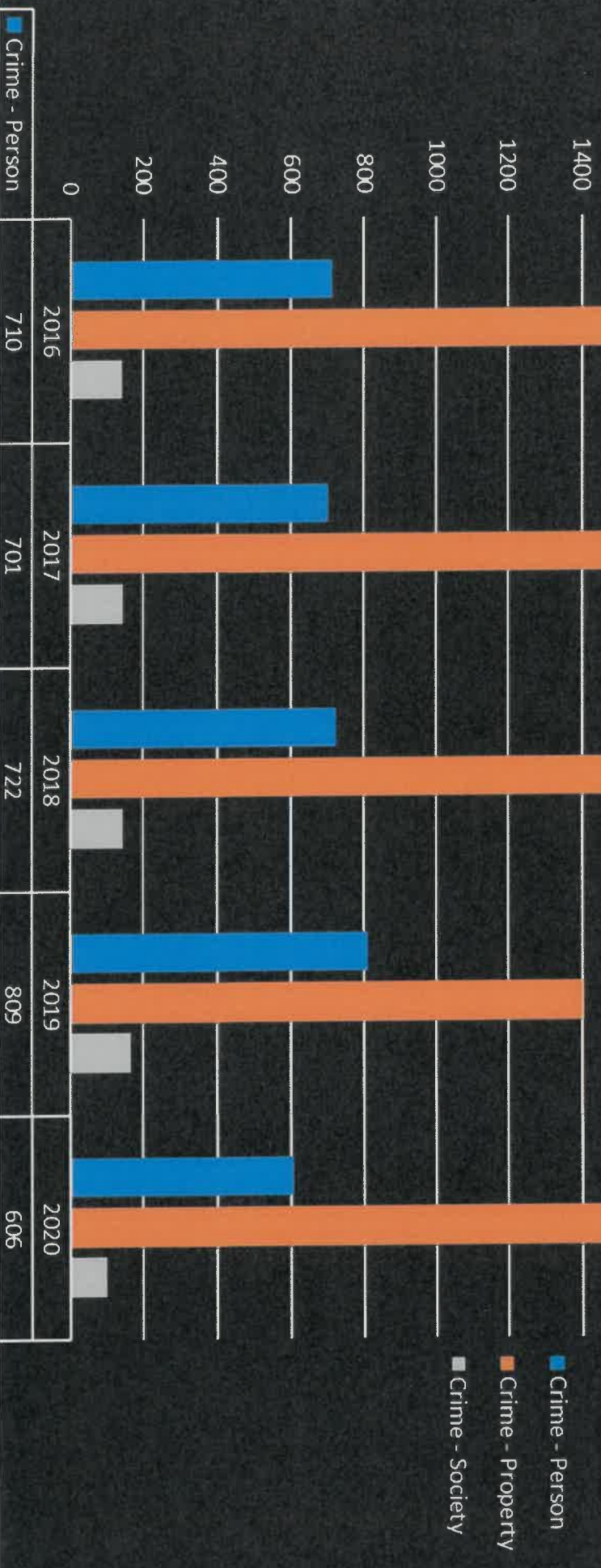
■ 2018 ■ 2019 ■ 2020





# City of Salem NIBRS Comparison 2016 - 2020

Overall Crime Same 2019 v 2020  
Property Crime Up (Fraud cases)  
Person Crime is Down

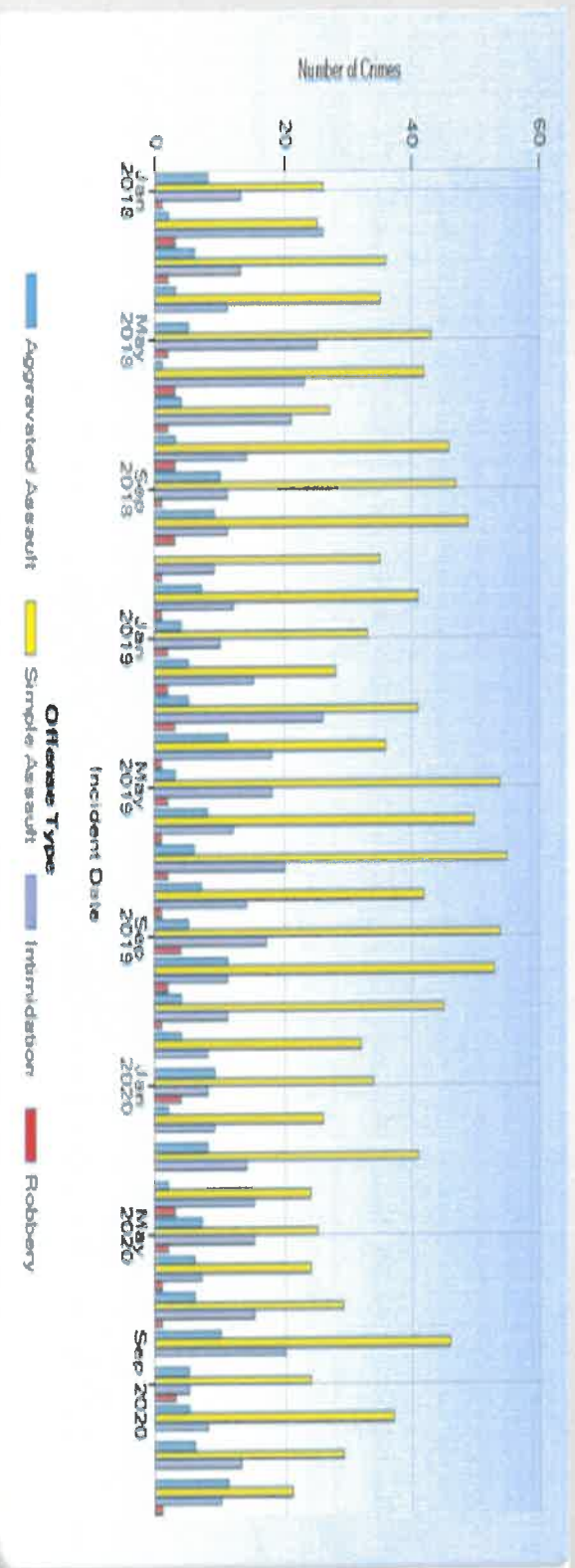




# SALEM CRIME INCIDENTS BY VIOLENT OFFENSES

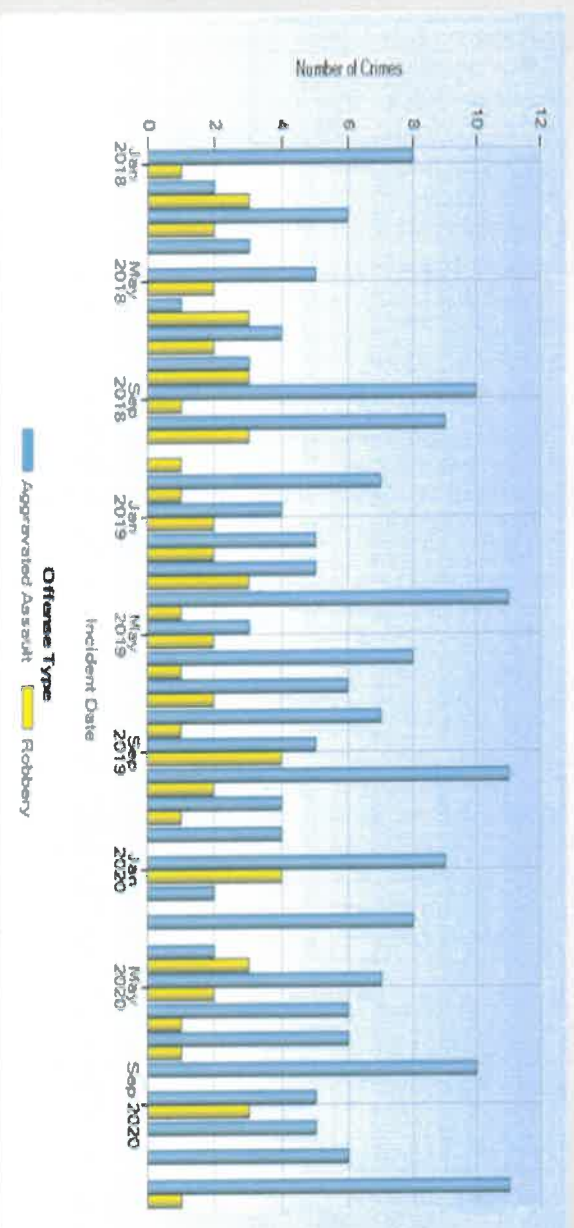
Simple  
Assault and  
Intimidation  
Greatest #

Robbery  
and  
Agg. Assault  
Least #



# SALEM CRIME – AGGRAVATED ASSAULT & ROBBERY

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# CRIME DATA CAN BE CONFUSING

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- **Index Crime** includes murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson. These **eight crimes** serve as a common indicator of the nation's **crime** experience because of their seriousness and frequency of occurrence.
- Part I crimes are **murder**, manslaughter, sex offenses, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, **motor vehicle theft**, and arson. Additionally, non-Part I crimes reportable with a hate crime bias are **larceny-theft**, simple assault, intimidation and vandalism/destruction of property.
- Part II Crimes are “less serious” offenses and include: Simple Assaults, Forgery/Counterfeiting, **Embezzlement**/Fraud, Receiving Stolen Property, Weapon Violations, Prostitution, Sex Crimes, Crimes Against Family/Child, Narcotic Drug Laws, Liquor Laws, Drunkenness, Disturbing the Peace, Disorderly Conduct, Gambling, DUI ...

# CRIME DATA CAN BE CONFUSING

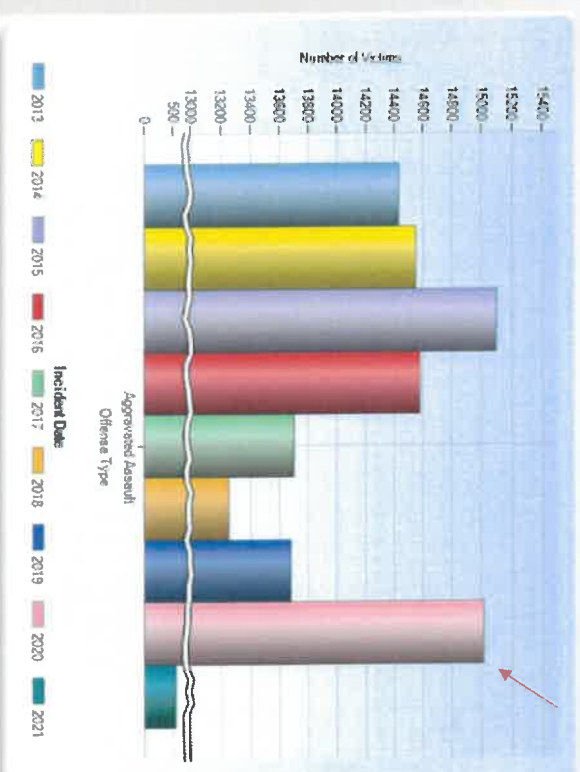
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- **Aggravated Assault**—An unlawful attack by one person upon another wherein the offender uses a weapon or displays it in a threatening manner, or the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury involving apparent broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injury, severe laceration, or loss of consciousness. This also includes assault with disease (as in cases when the offender is aware that he/she is infected with a deadly disease and deliberately attempts to inflict the disease by biting, spitting, etc.).
- **Simple Assault**—An unlawful physical attack by one person upon another where neither the offender displays a weapon, nor the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury involving apparent broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injury, severe laceration, or loss of consciousness.
- **Weapon Law Violations**—The violation of laws or ordinances prohibiting the manufacture, sale, purchase, transportation, possession, concealment, or use of firearms, cutting instruments, explosives, incendiary devices, or other deadly weapons.



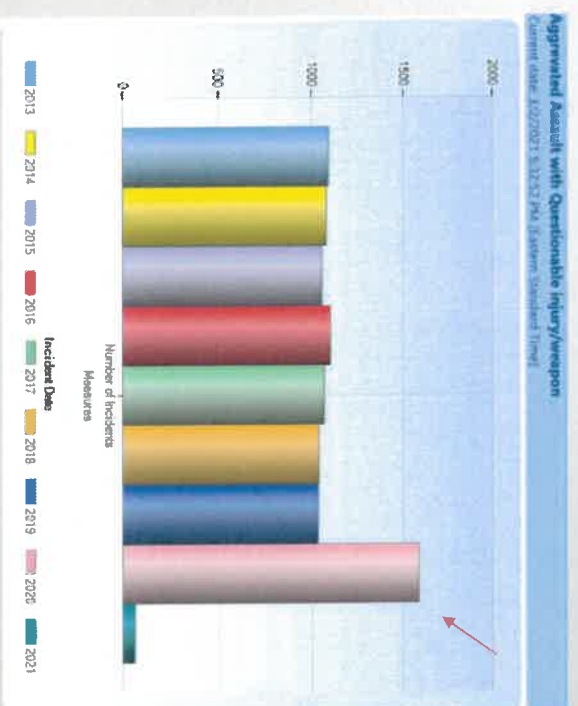
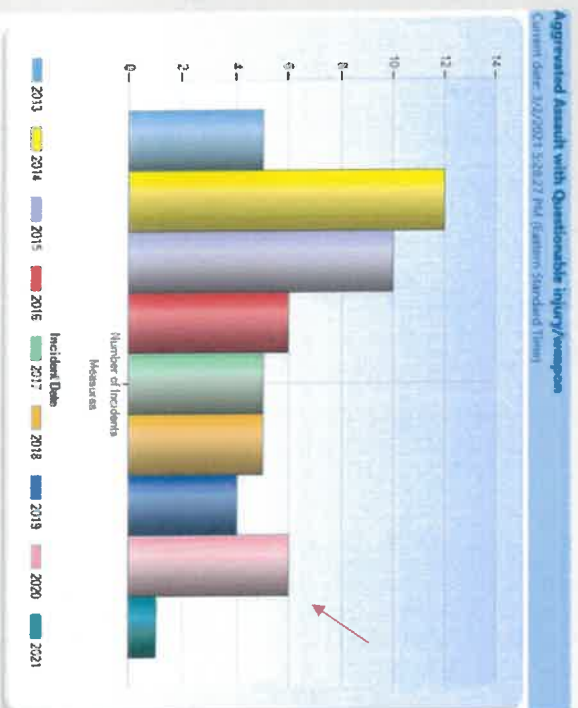
# STATE AGGRAVATED ASSAULT INCIDENTS NO WEAPON

The State has seen a significant increase in Aggravated Assaults w/o weapons

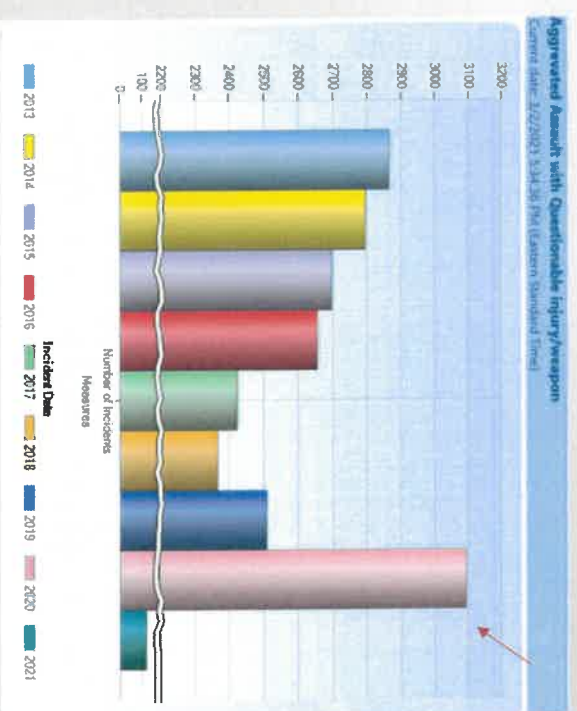
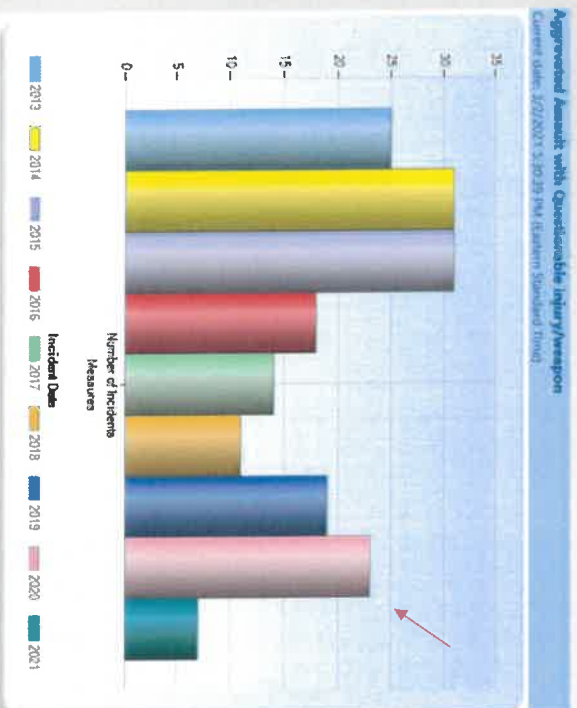




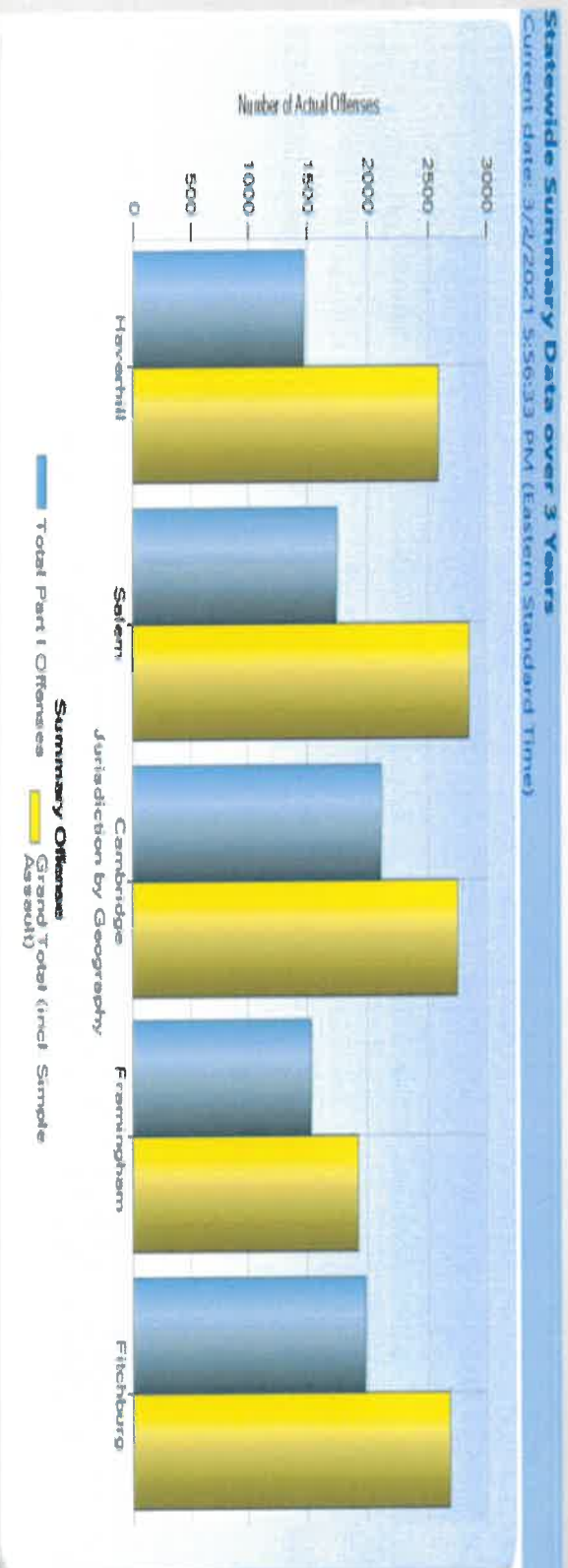
# AGGRAVATED ASSAULT W/FIREARM BY YEAR SALEM



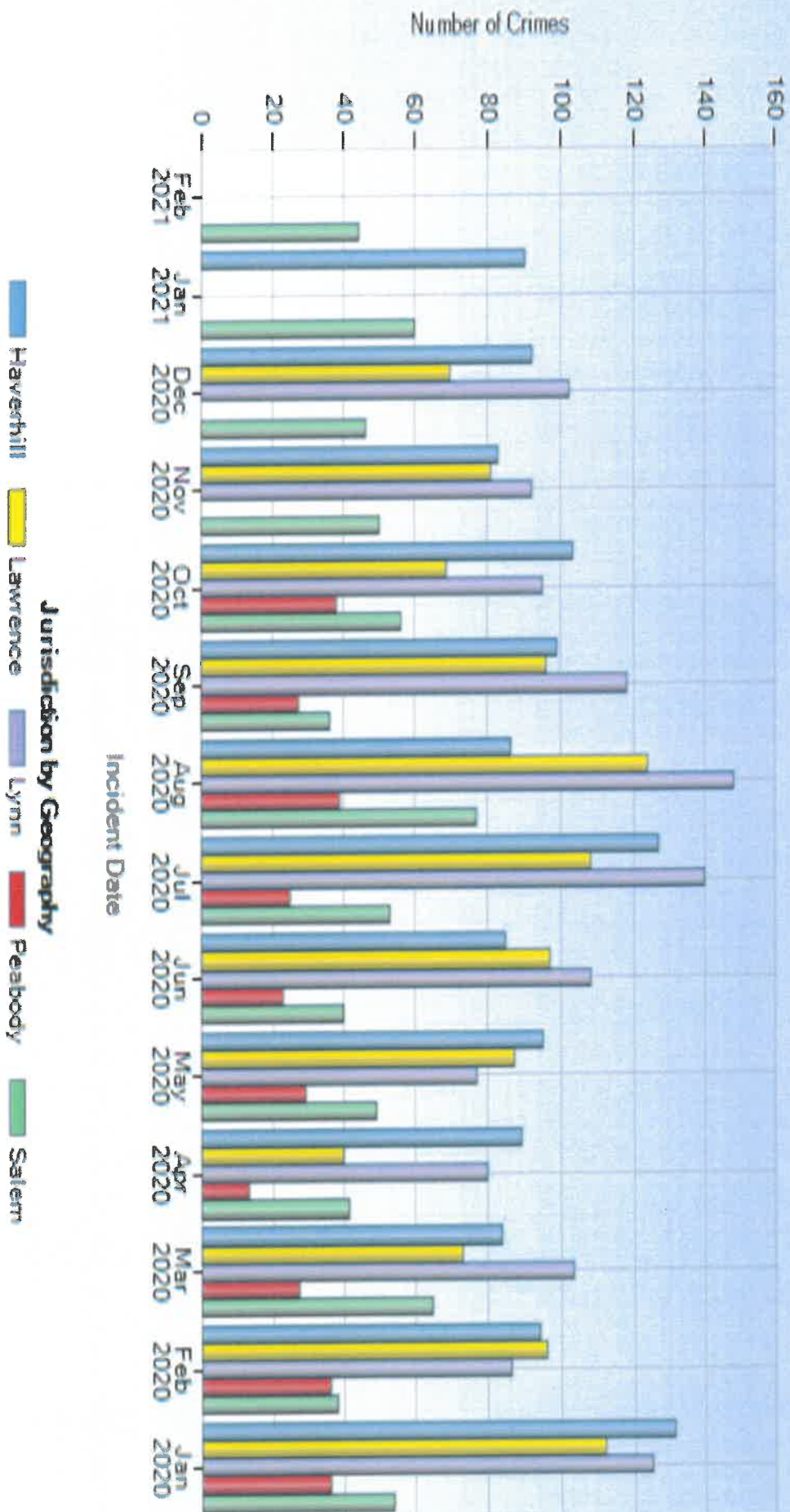
# AGGRAVATED ASSAULT W/KNIFE BY YEAR SALEM



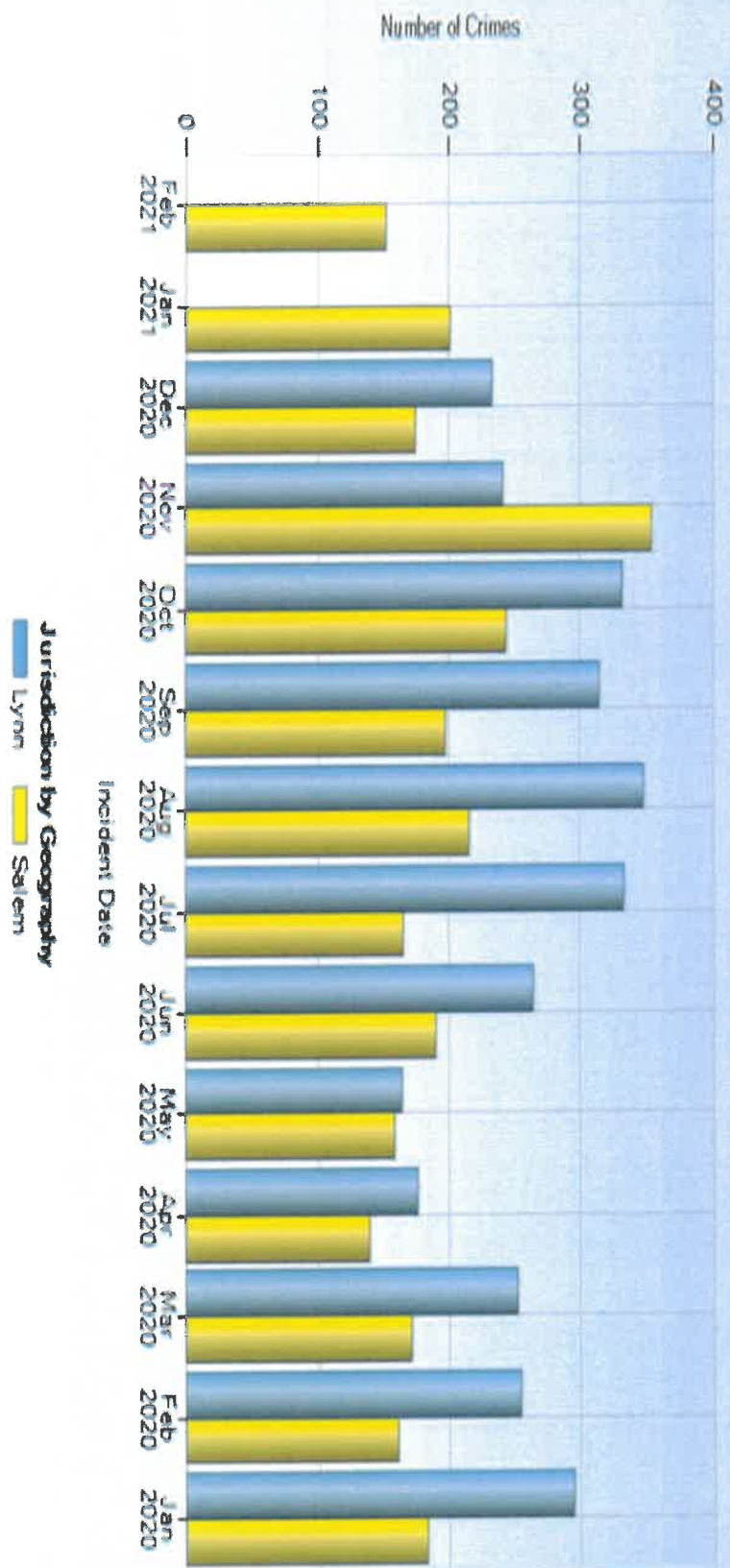
# CITY COMPARISON BY CRIME RATE



# Offense Type: Crimes Against Person









# WHAT WE DO TO PROVIDE A SAFE AND SECURE COMMUNITY

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TRADITIONAL AND NON TRADITIONAL POLICING STRATEGIES  
EFFORTS TO BUILD TRUST AND LEGITIMACY WITH RESIDENTS

# HOW WE OPERATE AT SPD

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**Patrol Division** – Maintain the day to day response to calls for service. Professional, motivated and dedicated to the community. Most of our crime is identified and addressed by Patrol – serious crimes then passed to our Criminal Investigation Division (CID) for follow up.

**CID** – Handles all Major Cases and Investigations to include Violent and Property Crimes and Drug offenses. Works with outside agencies to better address serious crime trends and share intelligence. In 2020 took 500 grams of illicit drugs off the streets, made numerous arrests involving firearm and narcotic violations and continues to be the model investigative unit on the North Shore.

**Community Impact Unit** – addresses quality life issues such as graffiti, loitering and public drinking in an effort to keep more serious crimes from happening – Eyes and Ears on the street every day – Works with SPD Mental Health, Substance Use and Homeless outreach workers to provide support to vulnerable groups and address illicit activity.

**Traffic Division** – Provides traffic enforcement throughout the City – Recently recognized as issuing the second highest citation totals for the Hands Free Law – Leads traffic coordination for major events – Can interdict serious crimes

## HOW WE OPERATE AT SPD

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SPD continues to sustain strong relationships and build trust with the community, as evidenced by:

Annual Resident Survey and the recent RETF Survey – high satisfaction ratings

Regular Participation in NIAC, PNA and other neighborhood organization meetings

Always looking to break down barriers and improve – participation in RETF, longstanding relationships with stakeholders such as Lifebridge, Plummer Youth Promise and the Council on Aging – implementing the recent Criminal Justice Reform Legislation

## WE TAKE IT PERSONAL

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All of the aforementioned efforts anchor us when addressing crime, in particular violent crimes, that may occur within our community.

In the first two months of 2021, we've had a spate of violent activity that we are working to address and respond to as a police department and a community. No one wants this type of activity gaining a foothold in our city.

Important considerations with respect to these activities:

Many of the suspects have been apprehended – Last two incidents within days 3 were charged

Individuals involved in these activities were known to each other – not random acts of violence

Individuals had a history of firearm and drug related charges against them



## SPECIFIC ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN NOW

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Continue our efforts to build trust with community stakeholders through neighborhood meetings – information sharing. Identify and Reduce the fear of crime neighborhood by neighborhood – use accurate data and communicate

Enhance police presence in neighborhoods where criminal activity is being reported by all Divisions and the Strategic Task Force.

Work with residents in these neighborhoods to identify strategies we can implement together to be more proactive - publicizing and sharing anonymous tips line contact numbers to report information – create forums for officer and citizen engagement

Re-establish monthly landlord meetings with Police, Health and Inspectional Services personnel to open up a consistent line of communication; discuss best practices for managing landlord/tenant relations; address quality of life concerns and beautification efforts. This meeting should include large landlords and voucher holders, such as the NSCDC and SHA.

Utilize the On Point building at Palmer Cove for residents to learn more about community policing efforts and provide access to agencies focused on youth base initiatives.



## SPECIFIC ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN NOW

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- Warrant sweeps working with MSP warrant teams and our detectives – enhance efforts on weekends
- Increase SPD participation in State and Federal drug and/or gang units as done in past
- Enhance surveillance activity through technology
- Use Crime Data analysis, mapping and intelligence to identify hot spots for enforcement
- Continue specialized trainings in Drug Interdiction Operations
- Hold those responsible accountable for their actions – Work with the District Attorney on submitting the strongest cases possible. Continue follow up with VSO.

# SALEM'S COMMUNITY NEEDS TO COME TOGETHER BE TRANSPARENT – COMMUNICATE - INCLUSIVE

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SPD encourages members of the Council, residents and others to reach out with any concerns. This is a distressing time for many people. COVID has created economic hardships, mental health crisis among many, along with the lack of socialization and normalcy that comes from interacting with other people. It's been a long year and we're close to resembling some form of new normal.

At times like this, we need our community to come together. We shouldn't be turning on each other or stoking fear, we should be rallying to support each other; not jumping to conclusions or characterizing criminal activity before investigations have even begun; misinformation and disinformation can actually harm investigative efforts; be patient and know that SPD takes each and every violent crime seriously and works day in and day out to keep our community safe.

With trust in SPD by our citizens, the Mayor and Council, we will be able to address an increase in criminal activity when it happens – I am certain of it

I ask all members of the City Council to support the strategies I have discussed and thank you for your time

