



# GAITHERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT

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## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF



On behalf of the dedicated men and women of the Gaithersburg Police Department, I welcome you to read our 2021 Annual Report. The Gaithersburg Police Department is proud to serve our residents, businesses and visitors. We are committed to our mission of public safety through pro-active policing strategies, while maintaining the highest level of ethical standards and building trust throughout the community.

Our goal of community involvement and outreach has allowed us to earn the confidence and support of our community and City leaders. Through these community partnerships we will continue to build upon our successes, and improve the quality of life for those who live, learn, work and visit our City. This trust and support is not taken for granted and we understand that we have to continue working to maintain it.

The annual report is one of the many ways the Gaithersburg Police Department strives to engage and keep our community members informed.

I hope that you will find the information contained here to be helpful in learning about our Department and the services we provide.

Our dedicated officers and civilian support staff take great pride in providing you with the highest level of police services possible. Thank you for taking the time to read our annual report and engaging in the City's initiative to keep our neighborhoods safe.

Mark P. Sroka  
Chief of Police  
Gaithersburg Police Department

*Mayor*  
**Jud Ashman**

*Council Vice President*  
**Neil Harris**

*Council Members*  
**Lisa Henderson**  
**Jim McNulty**  
**Ryan Spiegel**  
**Robert T. Wu**

*City Manager*  
**Tanisha Briley**



# MISSION, VALUES AND VISION

## Our Mission

The mission of the Gaithersburg Police Department is to provide the highest quality police service, protect life and property, enforce Maryland laws and City ordinances, and protect the rights of all people.

We will accomplish this by:

- Working with our community, City Departments, and other stakeholders;
- Developing and implementing proactive strategies based on community needs;
- Growing to keep pace with our community; and
- Maintaining a workplace that promotes equal employment opportunities, respects employees as individuals, and fosters teamwork.

## Our Values

We are committed to professionalism through:

**Service** – Providing quality service and protection to all people in an efficient and competent manner, tempered with courtesy, compassion, and understanding;

**Integrity** – Upholding the public trust through honest, consistent, and forthright interaction with all people, fostering an atmosphere of mutual trust and cooperation; and

**Respect** – Treating all persons with dignity and respect by promoting equality and fairness in upholding the constitutional rights of all people.

## Our Vision

The Gaithersburg Police Department strives to foster an organizational culture that embraces the principles of extreme ownership and a strong commitment to the Department's mission and core values.

## HISTORY OF THE DEPARTMENT

The Gaithersburg Police Department (GPD) was established by a resolution signed by then Mayor Merton F. Duvall. Chief David Marstiller was the first Chief of Police, although there are references to a "Town Marshall" in the minutes of Town Council Meetings prior to 1963. The town budget for Fiscal Year 1964 included a "police protection" salary for the officer, amounting to \$4,000, and equipment purchases of \$500.

The Department grew from an authorized strength of three sworn officers and one civilian clerk in the early 1970s, when the City's population was 7,000, to its current authorized strength of 60 sworn officers and 20 civilian employees with a population of nearly 70,000. The adopted budget for the Police Department in Fiscal Year 2021 was \$9,710,447.

Over the years, there would be several Chiefs of Police: James Tassie, formerly of the Rockville City Police Department; Marson Johnson, who had been an officer in Michigan; John F. DeVries and George Fusco, both of who retired from the Montgomery County Police Department as Lieutenants; Mary Ann Viverette, who came to the Department from the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office; and John King from the Montgomery County Police Department. Upon the resignation of Chief King in January, 2010, Major Mark P. Sroka of the Maryland State Police was assigned as the Interim Police Chief and was later appointed Chief of Police in July, 2010, following a nationwide search.

Although the City and the GPD have grown tremendously over the years, the Department's mission remains very similar: We are committed to providing the highest quality police service, protecting life and property, enforcing Maryland laws and City ordinances, and protecting the rights of all people. The cornerstone of the Department's mission is every employee's commitment to service, integrity, and respect for all individuals.

Since the appointment of Chief Sroka, the Department has continued its trend of positive change, including:



- Continuing a proactive hiring process seeking qualified individuals to join the Department, with an emphasis on diversity and developing a workforce reflective of the community we serve.
  - Allowing officers more opportunities to work in specialized units on a permanent and temporary basis.
  - Using social media to inform residents of crimes and activities and to highlight the community involvement of Gaithersburg Police officers.
  - Establishing an intelligence-led, community oriented, and problem solving focus to reduce crime.
- Continuing to build community trust and legitimacy in the Police Department.
  - Fostering an organizational culture of accountability and transparency.
  - Providing and implementing training that allows officers to effectively accomplish the Department's mission in a manner that is consistent with our values.
  - Implementing a Body-Worn Camera (BWC) program.
  - Completing the design process and beginning construction of a new police station.
  - Continuing the Police Cadet program for college students interested in becoming Gaithersburg Police officers.

## **COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY**

The unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 public health emergency continued to test the resources and capabilities of emergency services across the nation in 2021. In response to these challenges, the Gaithersburg Police Department (GPD) altered traditional operational strategies and adjusted personnel resources to ensure police response remained relatively unaffected. In addition to standard response protocols, police personnel were tasked with adapting to rapidly changing conditions at a time when awareness about the potential impact of COVID-19 was progressing slowly. Working closely with the City's



Information Technology (IT) Department, the GPD was successful at maintaining workplace efficiency and continuity while mitigating potential risks to personnel, both within the Police Department and with the general public who have come to rely on our services. Additionally, the GPD took an approach of education over enforcement when it came to the application of executive orders, health department guidelines, and other COVID-19 related health and safety directives. Whether dealing with businesses, community groups, or individuals, our focus remained on the goals of voluntary compliance and safety.

## OFFICE OF THE CHIEF

### **POLICE ACCREDITATION**

The Gaithersburg Police Department (GPD) is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA). Participation in the accreditation process is a sign of the Department's dedication to the professional delivery of law enforcement services expected by the residents of Gaithersburg. Through voluntary compliance with internationally recognized standards of policing, the GPD demonstrates its commitment to excellence in law enforcement. These standards address major functions within law enforcement to include roles, responsibilities and relationships; organization, management, and administration; personnel structure and process; operations; operation support and traffic operations. Not only do these standards allow for the GPD to remain transparent within the community, they also provide a best-practices approach to policing based on effective policies, processes, techniques and strategies developed by other police departments across the country.

The GPD has remained accredited by CALEA since achieving initial accreditation in 1993, and most recently received reaccreditation on November 30, 2020. As part of the reaccreditation assessment, assessors perform an onsite review of the Department, which is forwarded to the Commission. CALEA executives then conduct a Commission Review and Decision Hearing to evaluate the report presented by the review team and to hear any recommendations. Based upon the successful review by the committee members, the Department then receives its reaccreditation award from CALEA.

### **CRIME & TRAFFIC SAFETY**

The Gaithersburg Police Department continues to use and enhance its Data Driven Approach to Crime and Traffic Safety (DDACTS) philosophy. The Crime Analyst provides crime maps of specified crimes on a shift basis. This mapping allows officers on each patrol shift to see the type and amount of crime occurring during their specific work hours and days, allowing a more efficient allocation of resources to address these crimes and crime trends. A weekly list of "Quality of Life" calls, such as disorderly conduct and noise complaints, is also provided. Tracking these types of incidents enables the Department to address the issues with various resources, assuring that problems affecting our neighborhoods can be targeted and resolved in a timely manner. Our Street Crimes Unit also utilizes a variety of criminal intelligence information to target and address specific crimes occurring within the City. Continued use and enhancement of our crime analysis capabilities allows us to deploy officers in the right areas at the right times to impact crime and traffic safety.

### **2021 ANNUAL CRIME ANALYSIS REPORT**

Crimes against persons, which include offenses such as homicide, assaults and sex offenses, increased 10.7%, from 600 offenses in 2020 to 664 offenses in 2021. Of the 94 reported aggravated assault offenses in 2021, 54 were assaults against spouses, partners or otherwise domestic related, and an additional 16 were by a known suspect. Of the 29 forcible/statutory rape offenses, 14 were domestic related and 14 were by an acquaintance or otherwise known by the victim.

Crimes against property, which include offenses such as burglary, robbery, thefts and vandalisms, decreased 3.7%, from 1,915 offenses in 2020 to 1,845 offenses in 2021.

## Gaithersburg Police 2021 Annual Report

Robberies saw a 17.6% increase, from 34 incidents in 2020 to 40 incidents in 2021. Street robberies saw a 52.6% increase, from 19 in 2020 to 29 in 2021, and commercial robberies saw a 60.0% decrease, from 10 in 2020 to 4 in 2021.

In 2021, burglaries saw a 23.8% decrease, from 105 incidents in 2020 to 80 incidents in 2021. Residential burglaries decreased by 19.4%, from 67 in 2020 to 54 in 2021. Commercial burglaries decreased by 32.4%, from 37 in 2020 to 25 in 2021.

Crimes against society, which includes offenses such as drugs and weapons, decreased 17.0%, from 383 offenses in 2020 to 318 offenses in 2021.

Overall, there was a 2.4% decrease in Group A offenses, from 2,898 in 2020 to 2,827 in 2021.

<b>GPD ANNUAL GROUP A OFFENSES</b>					
<b>OFFENSE CATEGORY</b>	<b>NIBRS DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>% Diff.</b>	
<b>CRIMES AGAINST PERSON</b>					
Assault Offenses	Aggravated Assault	107	94	-12.1%	
	Simple Assault	423	487	15.1%	
	Intimidation	2	4	100.0%	
<i>Total Assault Offenses</i>		<b>532</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	
Homicide Offenses	Murder and Non-negligent Manslaughter	2	2	0.0%	
Kidnapping/Abduction	Kidnapping/Abduction	1	2	100.0%	
Sex Offenses	Forcible Rape	28	28	0.0%	
	Forcible Sodomy	12	14	16.7%	
	Sexual Assault with an Object	10	8	-20.0%	
	Fondling	6	13	116.7%	
	Forcible Fondling	7	11	57.1%	
	Statutory Rape	2	1	-50.0%	
<i>Total Sex Offenses</i>		<b>65</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>15.4%</b>	
<b>Total Crimes Against Person</b>		<b>600</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	
<b>CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY</b>					
Arson	Arson	2	6	200.0%	
Bribery	Bribery	0	0	0.0%	
Burglary/Breaking & Entering	Burglary/Breaking and Entering	105	80	-23.8%	
Counterfeiting/Forgery	Counterfeiting/Forgery	30	28	-6.7%	
Destruction/Damage/ Vandalism of Property	Destruction/Damage/ Vandalism of Property	251	272	8.4%	
Embezzlement	Embezzlement	7	6	-14.3%	
Extortion/Blackmail	Extortion/Blackmail	4	5	25.0%	
	Fraud Offenses	False Pretenses/Swindle/ Confidence Game	117	79	-32.5%
		Credit Card/Automatic Teller Machine Fraud	69	56	-18.8%
	Impersonation	0	6	100.0%	

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<b>CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY</b>				
	Welfare Fraud	0	0	0.0%
	Wire Fraud	3	4	33.3%
	Identity Theft	91	155	70.3%
<b>Total Fraud Offenses</b>		<b>280</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>7.1%</b>
Larceny/Theft Offenses	Pocket/picking	4	5	25.0%
	Purse-snatching	8	3	-62.5%
	Shoplifting	295	302	2.4%
	Theft from Building	167	174	4.2%
	From Coin/ Operated Machine or Device	1	0	-100.0%
	Theft From Motor Vehicle	388	237	-38.9%
	Theft of Motor Vehicle Parts or Accessories	89	133	49.4%
	All Other Larceny	163	154	-5.5%
<b>Total Larceny/Theft Offenses</b>		<b>1,115</b>	<b>1,008</b>	<b>-9.6%</b>
Motor Vehicle Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft	86	98	14.0%
Robbery	Robbery	34	40	-5.4%
Stolen Property Offenses	Stolen Property Offenses	1	2	100.0%
<b>Total Crimes Against Property</b>		<b>1,915</b>	<b>1,845</b>	<b>-3.7%</b>
<b>CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY</b>				
Drug/Narcotic Violations	Drug/Narcotic Violations	308	247	-19.8%
	Drug Equipment Violations	36	32	-11.1%
<b>Total Drug/Narcotic Violations</b>		<b>344</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>-18.9%</b>
Gambling Offenses	Betting/Wagering	0	0	0.0%
	Operating/Promoting/ Assisting Gambling	0	0	0.0%
<b>Total Gambling Offenses</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
Pornography/Obscene Material	Pornography/Obscene Material	0	4	100.0%
Prostitution Offenses	Prostitution	6	0	-100.0%
	Assisting or Promoting Prostitution	0	0	0.0%
Weapon Law Violations	Weapon Law Violations	33	35	6.1%
<b>Total Crimes Against Society</b>		<b>383</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>-38.3%</b>
<b>TOTAL CRIME</b>		<b>2,898</b>	<b>2,827</b>	<b>-2.4%</b>

Source: NIBRS data pulled from the MCPD dashboard on 01/21/2022

Homicide Offenses amended 08/08/2022 – One justifiable homicide, which is not a crime, was removed from the offenses.

## **INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

The Gaithersburg Police Department is a nationally accredited law enforcement agency that continually strives for professionalism while closely monitoring the conduct of its officers and civilian staff. The reporting of internal affairs complaints reflects the policy of the Chief of Police and the City of Gaithersburg government regarding transparency and open governance by reporting all complaints.

Member Status	Offense	Results
Police Officer	Violation of Traffic Law/Discourtesy	Exonerated / Not Sustained
Police Officer	Unbecoming Conduct	Sustained / One Suspension Day
Police Officer	Unbecoming Conduct	Not Sustained



## **GAITHERSBURG POLICE FOUNDATION**

The Gaithersburg Police Foundation (GPF), formed as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization in January 2008, seeks to support the members of the Gaithersburg Police Department (GPD) with its mission of providing quality services to the residents of Gaithersburg. The Foundation offers educational opportunities to members of the Department, enhances recruitment and retention of officers, provides logistical support and technology assistance to officers and helps to finance community

outreach initiatives.

The GPF had nine Board members in 2021. Chris O'Brien served as Chairperson, Tamara Clarke as Vice Chairperson and Patricia Elder as Treasurer. Board members at large were Ralph Billeter, Daniel Borten, Gary Hann, Claire Lane, Jeffrey Penn, and Laura Rowles.

Ralph Billeter was an active member of the Gaithersburg Police Foundation from 2011 until his passing in August, 2021. His energy, enthusiasm and dedication are fondly remembered and greatly appreciated by the Board of Directors and the members of the Gaithersburg Police Department.

In 2021, due to COVID-19, several of the events the Foundation normally supports were not held. Sponsorship was still provided for the virtual Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce Public Safety Awards Ceremony.

## **TRAINING**

With the recent national dialogue on police reforms, training programs for police departments across the nation came under scrutiny. The Gaithersburg Police Department's ongoing commitment to quality training allowed us to maintain our high standards in 2021, ensuring that every Gaithersburg Police officer continued to have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform their duties in a manner that is lawful, in compliance with policy, and respectful of the sanctity of life, especially in such situations as when force becomes necessary to overcome the resistance of a suspect.

The Maryland Police and Corrections Training Commission (MPCTC) establishes minimum standards for annual re-certification, to include firearms qualifications and 18 hours of "in-service" training. For 2021, the "in-service" training provided by the Montgomery County Police Academy staff covered topics such as constitutional and state law, defensive tactics, use of protective instruments, and de-escalation, as well as practical decision-making skills, building search techniques, and first aid.

In addition to this mandated training, Gaithersburg Police officers continued to attend a variety of external

training, both virtually and in-person. These included Fraud Investigations, Bias, Evidence Procedures, Human Trafficking, Rape and Sexual Assault Investigation, Mental Illness Awareness, Child Exploitation, Victim Rights and Assistance and many others. Despite challenges presented by the COVID-19 public health emergency, the Gaithersburg Police Department continued to place an emphasis on exceeding state training requirements, allowing officers to remain prepared to provide the professional police services that residents and visitors of the City of Gaithersburg deserve.

The training of newly-hired officers remained a priority in 2021. The opportunity to hire and train new officers, who will have an impact on the Department and community for years to come, is critical to the future of the agency. In 2021, significant support was provided by the Montgomery County Police Training Academy, which delivered entry-level training to four newly-hired Gaithersburg Police officers. Five other officers hired in 2020 completed the police academy in January 2021. Seven graduates completed their comprehensive, 14-week Field Training Program for on-street experience in 2021, and are currently working in the Operations Bureau. Three officers hired in 2021 will graduate in 2022 and complete their field training after graduation.

The Gaithersburg Police Department approaches training not only as an investment in its officers, but as an investment in the community in which they serve. Developing and maintaining well-trained, professional staff leads to greater trust and accountability.

## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

In 2021, the conditions presented by the COVID-19 public health emergency focused much attention on the City's principles of emergency management for the second year. Each of the City's Department Directors, led by the City Manager, was challenged with maintaining continuity of government operations while providing a safe work environment for the personnel under their leadership. Policies were evaluated and adjusted and teleworking for a significant percentage of the City's non-essential personnel continued.

Maintaining a supply chain of cleaning solutions, disinfectants, and personal protective equipment continued to pose challenges. The Police Department emergency management staff worked closely with the Finance Department to capture costs associated with the emergency so reimbursement requests to federal, state, and local partners were supported by accurate data. The Department also worked closely with the Human Resources Department to update policies for responding to COVID exposures, quarantine requirements, and return to work protocols, in compliance with guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Preparation and planning efforts for booster vaccine distribution to City employees also occurred in 2021.

In addition to the COVID-19 public health emergency, the Police Department continued to work with the City Manager, Human Resources, Office of Public Information, and Montgomery County Emergency Management partners to provide timely notifications about critical incidents such as traffic closures, inclement weather events, etc., via the Alert Gaithersburg system and social media. The Alert Gaithersburg system has more than 6,400 subscribers. To subscribe to Alert Gaithersburg, update or change contact information, visit <http://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/alerts>.

The City continues to maintain its relationships with federal, state and local partners in the emergency management field to foster continued cooperation, information sharing, and resource allocation.

## **HONOR GUARD**

The GPD Honor Guard was formed in 1996; it can be comprised of members from the ranks of Police Officer I to Sergeant. Led by Officer Lane, members in 2021 included Officers Del Orbe, Grubic, Jackson, Javier Melo, Kramer, Lane, Liddi, Loidice, and Seek. For the last 25 years, the Honor Guard has participated in funerals, parades, ceremonies, and other functions as directed by the Chief of Police.

The Honor Guard participates in National Peace Officers' Memorial activities, held over several days each May in Washington, D.C. During this very special detail, members of the Gaithersburg Police Honor Guard escort the family members of officers from across the U.S. and Canada who have been killed in the line of duty. During 2021, the Honor Guard presented colors for police graduations, Chamber of Commerce events and police funerals. The team added two new members, Officers Del Orbe and Javier Melo, this year. Due to COVID-19, National Police Week, which is generally held in May, was postponed to October 2021.



## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

The GPD has the following programs in place to assist and educate the residents of Gaithersburg:

### **POLICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Police Advisory Committee is designed to facilitate the flow of information between the community and the Department. Members of the Police Advisory Committee make suggestions, voice concerns and give important feedback to the Chief and Department members. The Committee holds quarterly meetings throughout the year.

Committee members are Andrew Bove, Diane Cabness, Joshua Fischer, Ty Hardaway, Carol Martin, John Monroe, Doug Wagner, David Weber, Sara Yassin, and City Council Liaison Robert Wu.



## NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME

National Night Out events are held by individual communities to demonstrate their commitment to being partners in the fight against crime. The observance is designed to heighten crime awareness, strengthen neighborhood spirit and enhance police-community relations. The City's National Night Out Against Crime observance returned in 2021, after being canceled in 2020 due to COVID-19 concerns. The event took place in six communities on August 3: Bennington, Casey Community Center, Montgomery Meadows, Kentlands, Lakelands and West Riding.

## NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

There are 28 neighborhoods participating in the Neighborhood Watch program. This program teaches residents how to help themselves by identifying and reporting suspicious activity within their neighborhoods. The program has become a valuable resource for the Police Department. Neighborhood Watch groups typically focus on observation and awareness as a means of preventing crime, employing strategies that range from simply promoting social interaction to “watching out for each other.”

Through regular communication, the Community Services Office provides all Neighborhood Watch groups with safety tips and other crime prevention information, and strives to keep the communities informed of criminal activity within their neighborhoods.

## SOCIAL MEDIA



GaithersburgPolice



@GPDnews



GPDNews

The Gaithersburg Police Department maintains a presence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Nextdoor, creating additional channels of direct communication with the community it serves. By doing this, the GPD is letting residents see how its goals and missions are accomplished on a daily basis, while at the same time providing, as quickly as possible, public safety information that may affect their lives. The Twitter feed also appears on the Police Services page of the City's website at [www.gaithersburgmd.gov/services/police-services](http://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/services/police-services)

## PRESCRIPTION DRUG DROP BOX

The Gaithersburg Police Department participates in a year round, anonymous, prescription medication disposal program. The Department obtained a Prescription Drug Drop Box from the National Association



of Drug Diversion Investigators (NADDI). The box is managed by the Property Custodian and Police Community Services Office. Drugs are bagged and placed into evidence, pending destruction. The collected pharmaceuticals are then transported for incineration. The Prescription Drug Drop Box is located in the Police Station lobby and is accessible to the public from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., seven days a week. Prescription Drug Take-Back Days are held with allied agencies twice a year, allowing for additional publicity about the need to properly dispose of unwanted and expired medications. During 2021, the GPD collected more than 500 pounds of unwanted/unused prescription drugs.

**INTERNET PURCHASE EXCHANGE LOCATION**

Two designated parking spaces have been made available in the public parking lot of the Gaithersburg Police Station to serve as Internet Purchase Exchange Locations. Residents may conduct any type of legitimate buyer/seller transactions from internet purchases to conducting any other lawful in-person transactions.

The parking spaces are available 24/7 and are clearly marked with signage, donated by Offer Up. The spaces are under camera surveillance. The Gaithersburg Police Station lobby is also available for such exchanges and is also open seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. This service is promoted periodically through the City’s many communication outlets.



## **AWARDS**

### **SUPERVISOR OF THE YEAR**

#### **Corporal Milano**

Corporal Milano's award cited his outstanding team work, dedication and display of cooperation, loyalty, and initiative. Corporal Milano approaches his duties with a positive attitude and portrayed leadership. Corporal Milano led all patrol corporals in statistical measures by handling 285 calls for service, authoring one arrest warrant, making eight self-initiated criminal arrests, three adult misdemeanor arrests, and issuing 545 traffic related citations. He served as the Field Training Officer (FTO) program's senior instructor and ensured objectives were met, helped to enhance the Taser program, and served as his shift's primary supervisor for almost a month. He commanded four major incidents as the primary supervisor, including a home invasion robbery, strong-arm robbery, in-progress shooting, and he discovered an in-progress burglary. Corporal Milano's work ethic, devotion to duty, performance under pressure, and commitment to training were qualities which instilled confidence in his leadership.

### **OFFICER OF THE YEAR**

#### **Officer Simpson**

Officer Simpson's award cited leading the Department, as well as his Montgomery County Police 6th District colleagues, in DUI enforcement, with 54 DUI arrests. Officer Simpson responded on 430 primary calls for service, which resulted in 10 felony adult arrests, 27 adult misdemeanor arrests, 10 criminal citations, 32 self-initiated criminal arrests, 479 traffic citations, 130 reports written, nine arrest warrants authored, and 273 traffic warnings issued. Out of all of these contacts, none resulted in a citizen complaint, evidencing his consistent professional and courteous conduct. He spent 51 hours conducting Spanish translations for DUI, domestic abuse, and criminal investigation cases. Officer Simpson created positive interactions in the community, especially with children, to build confidence and trust. He served as an FTO and determined appropriate training styles for each new officer he trained. He adapted to the style of training that best suited each officer. His work ethic, unwavering dedication to remain vigilant, motivation, and competence demonstrate his commitment to duty, professionalism, and contributions to the City of Gaithersburg.

### **OFFICER OF THE MONTH**

#### **January**

Officer Ovalle

#### **May**

Officer Moorman

#### **September**

Officer Fortin

#### **February**

Officer Breck

#### **June**

Officer Simpson

#### **October**

Officer Diggons

#### **March**

Officer Simpson

#### **July**

Officer Simpson

#### **November**

Detective Grubic

#### **April**

Corporal Scire

#### **August**

Corporal Milano

#### **December**

Officer Camp

## COMMANDER'S AWARDS

### OPERATIONS BUREAU

#### Corporal Leach

Corporal Leach demonstrated advancement in his leadership abilities, and quickly readapted to the patrol function after special assignment. As a recently promoted corporal, he also had to learn to be the supervisor in charge of multiple officers on different incidents throughout the shift. In the midst of learning these new responsibilities, Corporal Leach still made the intentional effort to inquire of his personnel how many reports down they were so he could pitch in and run the next report call. Corporal Leach was also willing to step in and assist midnight shift and the other evening shift on short notice when they needed supervisory coverage. These actions are a solid example of the cover-and-move principle that has been encouraged in the Department for some time. Corporal Leach has been commended for his continued commitment and contributions to the Department's firearms training program. He is an integral part of the training team and the lead firearms instructor for annual handgun qualifications. Corporal Leach plans the training days, identifies necessary drills, and coordinates with the other firearms instructors, leading them in the delivery of instruction and training to all sworn personnel. In addition, Corporal Leach assisted the lead rifle instructor in hosting this year's rifle school. In February 2021, Corporal Leach served as the acting sergeant for his patrol shift while his sergeant was unavailable. Corporal Leach navigated this role well and did an admirable job as the lone supervisor for the shift over the course of several months.

#### Officer Diggons

Throughout the year, Officer Diggons, through his work ethic and high level of motivation, continuously offered himself as a resource, mentor, and guide for his peers. During 2021, Officer Diggons successfully completed several training courses to further his knowledge and better serve this Department and the City. This training included Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE), the Cannabis Intoxication Impaired Driving Lab, and the Community Engagement Officer Compliance course. After completing ARIDE, Officer Diggons volunteered for assignment to the Montgomery County Holiday Task Force for a third consecutive year. He utilized his existing knowledge of DUI enforcement, along with his new ARIDE training, to produce five DUI arrests during an eight-day assignment. As a result of his recently completed Community Engagement Officer (CEO) compliance training, Officer Diggons provided assistance to the Department's primary CEO by helping school staff and administrators in the resolution of daily issues, particularly at Gaithersburg High School, and as a resource for patrol in the area of community engagement, particularly with MCPS students. This extra assistance proved helpful in preserving relationships between the police and public schools – both staff and students – as we navigate through many changes and new expectations. During 2021, Officer Diggons was one of the most statistically productive officers in the Department, with a significant amount coming from self-initiated activity. Officer Diggons is respected by his peers for his drive to serve the people of this community and the Gaithersburg Police Department. In these times of great uncertainty, it is officers like William Diggons who bring calm to the storm, and faithfully demonstrate the Department's core values. He has proven to be an example of what professional policing looks like.

**Officer Fortin**

Officer Fortin delivered a level of service to this community that should be regarded as a standard to follow. Officer Fortin raised the bar of proactive public safety, representing the City's interests in providing safer streets through high-visibility enforcement. Officer Fortin applied effective strategies to reduce the dangers posed by individuals driving while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. She can be counted on to actively pursue taking impaired drivers off the streets, every night while on patrol, through impaired driving overtime details, and as a member of the MCPD Holiday Impaired Driving Task Force. During 2021, Officer Fortin was responsible for 37 DUI arrests, making area streets safer for everyone. Her commitment to excellence in DUI enforcement has motivated other officers to increase their own attention to this cause. Officer Fortin also displayed pride and commitment in her role as a trainer, making her a valued member of both the Taser training team and the Field Training Program. This year was Officer Fortin's first year as a Field Training Officer (FTO). She quickly distinguished herself as a reliable resource and had a successful training year. Additionally, Officer Fortin had an impressive overall year of statistically-measured performance, with 367 primary calls for service and 342 back up calls; six adult felony arrests; seven misdemeanor arrests, and two criminal citations; 600 traffic offenses enforced, through a combination of both citations and warnings; 120 reports written; and four warrants authored. Through these and other measures, it is estimated that Officer Fortin had more than 1,200 engagements with members of the public during the year, without a single complaint.

**Sergeant Leache**

Sergeant Leache consistently demonstrated his commitment to the Department and his dedication to positively influencing its members. He routinely took on roles and responsibilities beyond the duties and expectations of a sergeant to ensure the continued success of the Gaithersburg Police Department. Throughout the year, Sergeant Leache created a positive and productive work environment for the Community Action Team (CAT). He made himself available to his team, and anyone else, regardless of whether he was working or not. Sergeant Leache adjusted his schedule many times, often on short notice, to work various details or cover unanticipated needs for patrol. Sergeant Leache demonstrated his habit of looking out for his officers and mentoring them to reach their goals. Through his demonstration of solid leadership principles and disciplines, Sergeant Leache elicited the participation of his team members to accomplish a number of collateral duties. This added to the experience and competency of his personnel, and modeled how to lead for the future of the Department; Sergeant Leache consistently demonstrated his commitment to leading his team to do what's best for the Department, while encouraging a positive and fun work environment for the unit. There were numerous occasions over the past year when Sergeant Leache was tasked with leading through critical incidents, including a carjacking, a "swatting" incident, a homicide, and a fatal traffic collision. His ability to calmly control a chaotic scene, communicate with other patrol supervisors, use all appropriate resources, and effectively delegate tasks, demonstrated a strong and competent example for other first-line leaders to follow. Sergeant Leache also developed operational plans for various events or incidents that occurred in the City, such as short-notice car meetups, which caused issues not only in Gaithersburg but throughout the greater Washington Metropolitan area. Over the course of several engagements with these

groups during the events, Sergeant Leache built and refined a comprehensive plan of action to successfully combat this problem and peacefully shut down these events in Gaithersburg. Other area agencies learned of this success, and Sergeant Leache readily shared the strategies and techniques he had developed. In some instances, he led meetings with officials from various jurisdictions to share this expertise.

### **Sergeant Ramirez**

Sergeant Ramirez has been a steadfast and reliable patrol sergeant throughout the 2021 calendar year. Sergeant Ramirez is committed to the officers on his shift, encouraging them to identify and work toward achieving their goals. His leadership enables his team to be successful and accomplish a variety of goals that uphold public safety. Sergeant Ramirez is also heavily involved in Taser training, and he brings a high level of expertise to the Department in this regard. Sergeant Ramirez respects and values the varied perspectives of officers, and listens to input and recommendations on the scene of incidents. He recognizes that each officer, regardless of rank, has the ability to provide valuable insight, and doesn't take that for granted. This characteristic of leadership is often overlooked. It requires an uncommon level of humility; this type of humility elicits trust and respect from others. Sergeant Ramirez's leadership style empowers officers to think critically and make independent decisions, which is essential to long-term success in this profession. He understands that complex scenes require officers to think and act autonomously. Through delegating authority, Sergeant Ramirez encourages officers to make their own decisions. He always responds to the scene of critical incidents and other complex calls, never supervising via the station or his cell phone. Sergeant Ramirez balances the input of others with his knowledge and experience to make quick, reasoned decisions. He is transparent in his decisions, open to feedback, and doesn't allow his ego to interfere with how he treats others or handles calls. These are admirable qualities that inspire trust and confidence from others. Sergeant Ramirez is detail-oriented in his administrative responsibilities, an effective communicator who ensures his shift is on the same page, and a knowledgeable leader who makes competent, on-scene decisions.

## **GAITHERSBURG-GERMANTOWN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 26TH ANNUAL PUBLIC SAFETY AWARDS**



The Annual Public Safety Awards presented by the Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce (GGCC) honor the Law Enforcement, Fire & Rescue, and Emergency Service professionals who protect the communities of northern Montgomery County.

The awards program provides the business community with an opportunity to publicly thank those who help maintain the quality of life in the Gaithersburg and Germantown areas. The GGCC recognized public safety officials from the Gaithersburg Police Department, Montgomery County Police 5th & 6th Districts, Montgomery County Fire & Rescue, Montgomery County Public Safety Communications Center, and Montgomery County Sheriff's office in the following categories: Citation for Bravery, Distinguished Service Citation, and Meritorious Service Citation.

## **DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CITATION**

### **Detective Corporal Scire**

Detective Corporal Scire was presented the Distinguished Service Citation for his hard work and dedication on closing a case involving an attempted murder that occurred at a local hotel. Detective Corporal Scire, with the valuable assistance of Gaithersburg Police Department patrol officers and members of the Investigations Section, weaved together an impressive investigation. The lengthy process resulted in four violent offenders and three handguns being taken off the street. Detective Corporal Scire was awarded the GGCC Distinguished Service Citation.

## **MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

### **Officer Sample**

Officer Sample was recognized for providing quality police service to the residents of Gaithersburg with the Meritorious Service Citation. Officer Sample responded to multiple attempted armed robberies in Olde Towne Gaithersburg. He arrested a suspect and identified him in three other robberies. Due to Officer Sample's actions in a quickly evolving situation, he prevented further harm to the residents of Gaithersburg. This was just one example of Officer Sample's quality work as a police officer. His work ethic, positive attitude, and mature mindset is an example for every officer who is focused on developing trust and legitimacy in the police.

## **18TH ANNUAL DUI LAW ENFORCEMENT AWARDS**

The Maryland Highway Safety Office, a division of the Motor Vehicle Administration, and the Impaired Driving Coalition recognize those law enforcement officers who have gone above and beyond the call of duty in the fight against impaired driving through DUI arrests or innovative programs to reduce incidents of drunk or drugged driving. GPD officers Simpson, Ovalle, and Sample were recognized for the number of DUI arrests made in 2020. Recognition for efforts in 2021 will be awarded in 2022.

# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Gaithersburg Police Department is made up of three bureaus: Administrative, Operations and Special Operations.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE BUREAU**

### **Lieutenant Ray Campbell, Administrative Bureau Commander**

The Administrative Bureau is responsible for the logistical operations that support delivery of the highest quality police services, consistent with the GPD mission. The Bureau delivers professional service to both internal and external customers and stakeholders.

The Administrative Bureau is responsible for functions such as budget preparation, liaison with other City departments, accreditation, policy development and review, records management and retention, planning and research, risk management, vehicle maintenance and fleet management, the quartermaster function, recruitment and retention, NCIC/CJIS computer security, expungements, technology, procurement, facilities, and other duties and responsibilities as assigned or initiated.

Personnel in the Administrative Bureau also provide administrative support to all Department staff, as well as lobby services to the public. Lobby services include payment of parking citations, literature distribution, prescription drug disposal, and connecting people to the resources best suited to resolving their inquiries or complaints.

## **CURRENT STAFFING**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Authorized</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Police Chief	1	1
Lieutenant	3	3
Emergency Management Coordinator	1	1
Sergeant	9	9
Corporal	9	9
Police Officer	38	38
Crime Analyst	1	1
Police Administrative Services Supervisor	1	1
Administrative Assistant III	1	1
Administrative Assistant II	1	1
Speed Camera Technician	2	2
Accreditation Manager	1	1
Police Systems Support Manager	1	1
Parking Enforcement Official	1	1
Part-Time Police Cadet	3	2
Part-Time Police Personnel	8	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>79</b>

**Yearly Statistical Reports:**

Calls for Service	24,728
Traffic Citations	4,683
Traffic Warnings	7,191
Adult Criminal Arrests	275
Juveniles Taken into Custody	15

**FIREARMS RECOVERED DURING CALLS FOR SERVICE:**

Property Type	Found	Seized	Total
Firearms	4	27	31
Ammunition	2	9	11
Magazine / Clip	3	9	12
Airsoft / BB Gun	2	4	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>60</b>

**OPERATIONS BUREAU****Lieutenant Christopher Vance, Operations Bureau Commander**

The Operations Bureau consists of uniformed officers who respond to police calls for service and patrol Gaithersburg 24-hours a day, 365 days a year. The Operations Bureau is the backbone of the Department and consists of six patrol shifts and a Community Action Team, totaling 37 officers, which is 65% of the officers in the Department. The Community Action Team focuses on pattern crimes and quality of life issues, with a tailored plan of action based on the community's needs and circumstances of the problem to bring a successful resolution to community issues.

The mission of the Department and the Operations Bureau is to provide high quality police service by protecting life and property, enforcing Maryland laws and City ordinances, and protecting the rights of all people. Additionally, the Operations Bureau is committed to the Department's values of Service, Integrity and Respect by using those core values along with the Department's mission to drive decision making in the field.

The Department's philosophy of "Focused Enforcement Policing" has effectively institutionalized Community Policing. Its premise requires every patrol officer to spend set periods of time each day in smaller, specific geographical areas based on crime and/or traffic trends, conducting traffic enforcement, field interviews and strengthening working relationships with citizens and businesses.

In 2021, the Operations Bureau adopted a patrol philosophy that focuses on building relationships in the community with high quality professional and disciplined policing for every individual contact. This policing strategy emphasizes service and problem solving more than enforcement. The goal of this philosophy is

to focus on increasing the community's perception of trust and legitimacy in the Gaithersburg Police Department. By implementing a relationship-building strategy, the Gaithersburg Police Department has been able to decentralize community policing into the Operations Bureau on every call-for-service and individual contact.

## **K-9 SECTION**

The GPD currently has two patrol K-9 teams: Both teams were operational throughout all of 2021. All GPD K-9 teams are certified in police patrol dog operations and one of the teams is certified in controlled dangerous substance detection. The K-9 teams serve many different functions, such as assisting in locating missing persons, detecting narcotics, locating hidden suspects, apprehending fleeing suspects, and conducting article searches. In addition to their traditional duties, Gaithersburg K-9 teams assist in reality-based training scenarios, firearms, and first aid training. During 2021, Officer Eastman and Joey had 27 patrol deployments, which resulted in 12 criminal apprehensions. Additionally, they conducted 36 narcotic scans, which resulted in 27 drug apprehensions. In all, Officer Eastman and Joey ran 530 calls-for-service without any dog bite uses-of-force. Officer Story had 31 patrol deployments, which resulted in one criminal apprehension. In all, Officer Story and Crash ran more than 227 calls-for-service without any dog bite uses-of-force.

## **SPECIAL OPERATIONS BUREAU**

### **Lieutenant Shawn Eastman, Special Operations Bureau Commander**

The Special Operations Bureau is comprised of the specialized units of the Police Department and is supplemented by key civilian staff. These units consist of the Community Engagement Officer, the Community Services Office, Speed Camera Enforcement Officials, and Parking Enforcement Officials. These units are supervised by the Special Operations Bureau Sergeant.

The Special Operations Bureau also is comprised of the Crime Analyst, the Investigations Section, and the Street Crimes Unit, which falls under the direct supervision of the Special Operations Bureau Commander. The Police Cadet program, which falls under the Community Services Office, is also part of the Special Operations Bureau. The Special Operations Bureau works directly with other members of the Department, as well as with allied law enforcement agencies, to provide an enhanced level of service to the community.

As was the case for nearly every industry, the operations of the Gaithersburg Police Department were affected in a myriad of ways in 2021 by factors related to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Many special events were cancelled and all of the units in the Special Operations Bureau were affected in one way or another. Despite these complications, the men and women of the Gaithersburg Police Department worked extremely hard to continue delivering quality service to the community.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES OFFICE (CSO)**

The CSO establishes and maintains communication with Homeowners Associations, Neighborhood Watch groups and other civic organizations. The CSO also conducts security surveys for both commercial and residential owners and participates in various committees, both within the City and at the State level. Community

Services Officers are also advisors with the Montgomery County Police Explorers program, teaching youth about the law enforcement field and basic life skills.

The GPD Police Cadet Program was created for college students who have an interest in pursuing a career with the Gaithersburg Police Department. The Police Cadet Program serves to identify and select qualified individuals contemplating a career in the field of law enforcement and provide them with career orientation and first-hand experience to better prepare them to become a Gaithersburg Police Officer.

Cadets perform a variety of hands-on administrative, technical, and other tasks supporting the functions, services, and operations of the Gaithersburg Police Department while gaining insight and awareness into a law enforcement career. Cadets have an opportunity to work directly with, assist, and observe sworn and civilian personnel, to experience the challenges and personal rewards of a police career. In addition to exposure to the career field, Police Cadets receive \$15 per hour worked in the program (up to 20 hours a week), and are eligible to receive up to \$3,500 in tuition reimbursement per year of GPD Cadet employment.

During 2021, the Community Services Office added a seconded Community Services Officer, Officer Kramer, whose focus is on Youth and Senior Engagement. The Community Services Office is responsible for the public information function, performed in coordination with the City's Public Information Office, with the goal of ensuring that information is relayed to the public via the Crime Summary webpage, social media outlets, and local media in a timely fashion. The Community Services Officers also conduct follow-ups with people in need of mental health services. The CSO works closely with the Montgomery County Police Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) in identifying and assisting those in need.

The Community Services Office coordinates community outreach and presentations such as:

- **Active Shooter Training:** The Department teaches the Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE) model. It is taught to businesses, nonprofit organizations, places of worship and schools.
- **Bike Rodeo:** Family-friendly community bike safety event with officers from the Gaithersburg Police and other law enforcement agencies where participants learn about bike safety tips, get safety helmet checks, and learn riding skills through a bike obstacle course.
- **Coffee with a Cop:** An opportunity for residents to speak with officers in a casual atmosphere with no formal agenda. Officers are on hand to answer questions about crime and quality-of-life issues in neighborhoods and on roadways.
- **Community Caravans:** Police Community Service officers team up with the City's Community Services, Youth Services, and Neighborhood Services division to visit rental communities and provide resource information and opportunities for engagement. Some of the Caravans conducted in 2021 included food distributions in partnership with the Gaithersburg CARES Hub.
- **Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE):** Certified instructors deliver DARE curricula for elementary and middle school programs, parent and community programs, as well as several enhancement lessons on such topics as bullying, gangs, and internet safety.



- **Golf Clinic:** Officers partnered with a local country club offering underprivileged children, ages 7-12, the opportunity to receive help for those new to the game, and to experience the enjoyment of golf while learning the fundamentals.
- **Holiday Baking with Seniors:** Gaithersburg Police Officers and members of the Benjamin Gaither Center joined together to bake pies for the holidays, with casual safety information shared while baking.
- **National Night Out:** An annual event held by individual communities where they demonstrate their commitment to being partners in the fight against crime.



- **National Drug Take-Back Day:** In partnership with the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the Gaithersburg Police Department holds two events a year, giving the public an opportunity to prevent prescription drug abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous, expired, unused, and unwanted prescription medications.
- **Popsicle with a Cop:** Residents and Gaithersburg Police Officers come together for a free popsicle and friendly conversation.
- **Safety Presentations:** The Community Services Office provides a variety of presentations to our community members. Some of these presentations include general safety, crime prevention, identifying and preparing for active threats, workplace violence, social media and youth, senior safety, scams and several others topics.



- **Shop with a Cop:** Held every December, the program pairs underprivileged children, ages 6-17, with a law enforcement officer for a prepaid shopping trip. The hope is that this experience of holiday shopping alongside an officer will instill in each child a positive experience toward law enforcement, which will carry into their adolescence and adulthood.
- **S'mores in the Park:** Officers from the Gaithersburg Police and other law enforcement agencies joined City residents for an afternoon of S'mores and fun at the Seneca Creek State Park Amphitheater. There were police cruiser tours, K9 demonstrations, and a bonfire.
- **Touch-a-Truck:** A community wide event that allows children the opportunity to explore vehicles of all types: public service, emergency, construction, utility, transportation, landscaping, excavating, and more.
- **Trunk-or-Treat:** Area law enforcement agencies participated together (typically in a school or church parking lot), decking out their trunks with Halloween decorations, and letting kids meander from car to car, collecting candy.

## CRIME ANALYST

The Crime Analyst is trained in the use of crime analysis and mapping software. Using these programs, the Police Department is able to determine specific activity and patterns that are occurring in both the City and the County to identify crime trends. The dissemination of criminal intelligence gained by the work of the Crime Analyst, and communication with other analysts of surrounding agencies, promotes information sharing and de-confliction in criminal investigations.

The Crime Analyst often takes the lead in researching new investigative tools and databases for training, making them available to officers. The resources provided by the Crime Analyst allow officers to work in a more efficient and productive manner.

## INVESTIGATIONS SECTION

The Investigations Section of the Gaithersburg Police Department currently consists of three full-time detectives. Each detective routinely utilizes traditional investigative techniques, numerous databases, covert cameras in public areas, and the Computer Voice Stress Analyzer (a device used for detecting deception)

to conduct thorough investigations. In order to maintain proficiency in these areas, detectives attend regular training provided by other law enforcement agencies and private vendors. Gaithersburg Police detectives share the responsibility of investigating and coordinating efforts of all officers in solving and identifying significant crimes and crime patterns within the City and, as a result, are subject to being called out 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Gaithersburg detectives maintain liaison with other investigative units of the Montgomery County Police, Maryland State Police, and federal agencies. The detectives work closely with the Department's Crime Analyst to stay informed of criminal activity in and around the City. The Investigations Section is also responsible for the criminal intelligence process and conducting Internal Affairs investigations, as directed by the Chief of Police. In 2021, the Investigations Section had a case closure rate of 53.7%. The unit investigated 147 criminal cases and made 18 felony arrests. The Investigations Section also investigated an additional 16 non-criminal cases, primarily consisting of background investigations on sworn personnel and civilian staff.

## **STREET CRIMES UNIT**

Members of Street Crimes Unit (SCU) focus on pattern crimes, including aggravated assaults, burglaries, narcotics distribution, sex assaults, auto thefts, theft from autos, weapons violations, and street robberies.

## **TRAFFIC SAFETY**

The Special Operations Bureau Sergeant continues to coordinate the Department's response to traffic complaints and parking violations, with the goal of obtaining long lasting solutions to neighborhood traffic issues and meeting resident expectations. The Department addresses specific neighborhood complaints regarding traffic violations using the Traffic Check-on-Patrol program. This program takes complaints received from the community and assigns them for specific attention by patrol officers and/or the Special Operations Bureau Sergeant. The Special Operations Bureau Sergeant receives Traffic Check-on-Patrol complaints. Once the complaint is received, the Special Operations Bureau Sergeant responds to the complainant, evaluates the complaint, and determines the best course of action needed.

Police officers conducted directed patrols to address pedestrian safety, driving under the influence offenses, and distracted driving violations. Multiple enforcement and educational efforts were conducted at various locations. During these efforts, officers issued citations and warnings and handed out educational brochures. In 2021, officers issued 4,683 traffic citations, 7,191 warnings, and 426 Safety Equipment Repair Orders (SEROs).

The Special Operations Bureau Sergeant works closely with the City's Traffic Engineer to identify and address structural changes to roadways and intersections that correlate with traffic safety-related concerns and issues.

## **PHOTO RADAR & PARKING ENFORCEMENT**

Speeding and parking-related concerns continue to be two of the leading community priorities. In its continuing effort to address speeding concerns, the Department utilizes Photo Speed Enforcement Systems to identify and cite motorists traveling 12 or more miles per hour above the posted speed limit in targeted areas where the dangers

associated with speed present a high risk to the community. In 2021, 51,108 Photo Speed Enforcement violations were issued. Photo Speed Enforcement works together with radar and laser enforcement by individual officers to encourage motorists to comply with the posted speed limits within the City. In addition to enforcement efforts, the Department deploys speed messaging systems in City neighborhoods to inform motorists about their speeds. Motorist speeds are displayed with a message encouraging violators to slow down. The Department deployed speed messaging systems in eight neighborhoods during 2021.

One full-time and two part-time parking enforcement officials continue to address the growing number of parking concerns in the City. They work in conjunction with the City's Neighborhood Services inspectors and GPD officers to ensure that parking complaints and concerns are addressed in an effective and efficient manner. The Police Department issued 4,864 parking citations in 2021. With the multitude of COVID-19 restrictions encouraging the public to stay at home, the Department deemphasized enforcement in many situations. Initially, warnings were issued instead of citations in all but the most egregious of violations. Additionally, the City suspended enforcement of all time-restricted streets and City-owned parking lots, which remained in effect during the public health emergency.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

The Special Operations Bureau, with assistance from other police personnel, are responsible for planning, supervising, and/or facilitating many special events that take place in the City annually. Many of these events have the potential to attract crowds in excess of 10,000 people. The Bureau Sergeant is also responsible for reviewing all special event permit requests for a variety of private events throughout the year. A significant number of these special events were cancelled in 2021 due to COVID-19 health and safety concerns. Several other special events were modified or held virtually. Near the end of 2021, the return to some in-person events resumed.

The City's annual Winter Lights Festival proved to be the perfect social distancing holiday event. The Winter Lights Festival had significant attendance in 2021. Gaithersburg Police officers were called upon to mitigate traffic issues that were created by the large volume of cars, ensuring a safe and enjoyable holiday festivity.



City of Gaithersburg  
Police Department  
14 Fulks Corner Avenue  
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877  
301-258-6400  
[Gaithersburgmd.gov](http://Gaithersburgmd.gov)