



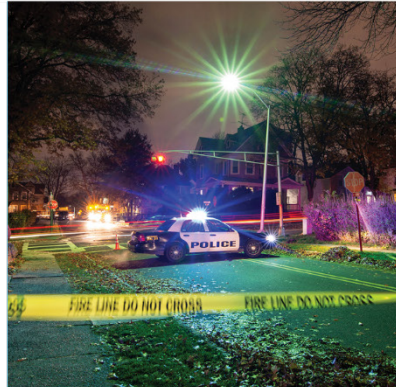
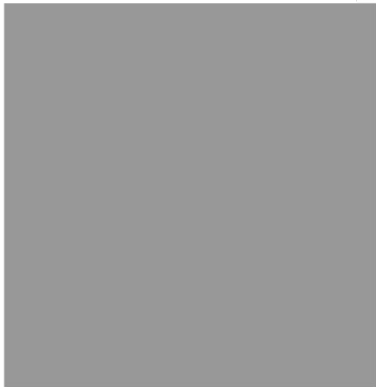
# National Case Closed Project

## Response to Fatal and Non-fatal Shootings Assessment Final Report

January 17, 2023



**Greensboro (NC)  
Police Department**



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## Executive Summary

In recent years, the City of Greensboro, North Carolina, has experienced a sharp spike in violent crime. This city of roughly 300,000 residents saw a record number of homicides in 2020, and the majority of these killings were committed with a firearm. The sheer volume of fatal and non-fatal shootings has made it difficult for the Greensboro Police Department (GPD) to close cases, and the agency's case clearance rates for these crimes are currently below the national average.

In 2022, GPD applied for and was accepted as a site in the National Case Closed Project (NCCP), an initiative funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance and led by RTI International. NCCP is designed to support local law enforcement agencies in improving their response to fatal and non-fatal shootings. An RTI-led team comprising criminal investigators, forensic scientists, researchers, prosecutors, and victim services experts conducted an assessment of GPD's policies and practices. The assessment included a review of GPD policies and training materials, a review and analysis of fatal and non-fatal shooting case files, and personnel interviews within GPD and among external partners, including prosecutors and members of community organizations. The NCCP project team will offer follow-up guidance and technical assistance to GPD as it looks to implement recommendations contained in this report.

Overall, this assessment found that GPD has many dedicated personnel who are working hard in the face of unprecedented violent crime levels, severe staffing challenges, and a lack of experience among investigators. The recommendations in this report are intended to build on GPD's considerable strengths as the agency looks to improve its investigative response to shootings.

This report details the assessment team's findings and recommendations for the following topics:

- **Investigator Training.** One of GPD's strengths is its in-house "CID Academy," which is a formal internal training program for newly assigned Criminal Investigation Division (CID) personnel. The CID Academy is a 30-hour course that covers a variety of basic investigative topics. This report offers recommendations for expanding the CID Academy and ensuring that all new investigators and supervisors receive this training in a timely manner. The report also discusses how to strengthen advanced investigator training opportunities, improve training for CID supervisors, and formalize the detective training officer (DTO) program.
- **Policies and Procedures.** GPD's standard operating procedures (SOPs) for CID include comprehensive and helpful information regarding the roles and responsibilities of division personnel. This report provides recommendations for expanding the CID SOP to include detailed guidance on the steps detectives should take throughout each stage of a fatal or non-fatal shooting investigation. This includes recommendations for strengthening both the overall SOP and specific provisions.
- **Agency Resources and Workload.** This section examines how GPD's resources and operations, especially those within CID, affect fatal and non-fatal shooting investigations. The report includes recommendations for using civilian aides to provide investigative support, revising detective shift schedules to strengthen the response to shootings that occur during off-hours, and developing a systematic process for triaging non-fatal shooting cases for investigation. This section also explores how to select experienced detectives and supervisors to CID and how to strengthen supervision through case reviews. The facilities and technologies available to CID investigators are also examined, as is the capacity of CID to conduct cold case homicide investigations.

- **Investigating Fatal and Non-fatal Shootings.** This section provides recommendations for strengthening the investigative process at every stage, from initial crime scene response to investigative follow-up. One key area of focus is improving coordination between case detectives and others throughout the department who are involved in fatal and non-fatal shooting investigations. For example, the report examines strengthening coordination between detectives and the patrol officers who respond to the scene, ensuring that detectives receive valuable information from the Criminal Intelligence Squad and other specialized CID teams and better leveraging crime analysis to assist with investigations. This section also includes recommendations for maximizing the use of digital evidence and for developing witnesses through improved collaboration with community groups and Crime Stoppers.
- **Physical Evidence and Laboratory Analysis.** The assessment team met with personnel from the Forensics Services Division (FSD) to understand how physical evidence is collected, processed, and analyzed in homicide and non-fatal shooting cases. The team found that FSD enjoys strong leadership and the division appears to be doing effective work, even as it faces staffing and resource challenges. It is critical that GPD strive to fill the vacancies at FSD and that each of the division's sections become accredited. This section also provides recommendations for how to streamline processing firearms evidence, such as by reducing the 60-day window that investigators currently have for requesting that firearms be processed for prints or DNA.
- **Case Prosecution.** The assessment revealed that personnel throughout GPD reported an overall lack of coordination between CID and the District Attorney's (DA's) Office. This section examines ways to improve this relationship, including arranging facilitated discussions between agency leaders, collecting and analyzing case data, and developing formal information-sharing protocols between the two agencies. This section also explores why GPD has a strong working relationship with the U.S. Attorney's Office (USAO) and suggests developing a formal checklist on how to build cases that will be accepted for federal prosecution.
- **Police–Community Relationship.** The assessment team examined how GPD facilitates community relationships through advocacy and collaboration. This section describes the role of GPD's only in-house victim advocate (VA) and recommends integrating advocacy into the investigative process as soon as possible. This includes developing strong policies that clarify the VA's roles and responsibilities, ensuring that the VA is receiving necessary training and certifications, and implementing a trauma-informed approach to death notifications. This section also examines GPD's current partnerships with community organizations such as Mothers Standing Against Gun Violence (MSAGV) and explores ways to expand collaboration with community-based or community-serving groups to improve GPD's response to shootings.

# 1. Shooting Response Assessment Overview

## 1.1 Introduction

In summer 2022, the GPD applied for and was accepted into the NCCP, a project funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance and led by RTI International designed to support law enforcement agencies in improving their response to fatal and non-fatal shootings to increase their clearance rates for these crimes. This report describes the methods used to assess GPD's response to shootings and provides recommendations for changes to improve GPD's fatal and non-fatal shooting clearance rates that are based on assessment findings and evidence-informed best practices. The NCCP is funding training and technical assistance for each participating site to support the implementation and evaluation of project recommendations.

## 1.2 Greensboro Violent Crime

Greensboro, a city of about 300,000 residents, has a high violent crime rate including high levels of fatal and non-fatal shootings. In 2020 it was ranked as the 15th most dangerous city according to its homicide rate (Mirabile & Nass, 2021). Gun violence in Greensboro has spiked in recent years. There was a record number of homicides in 2020, and aggravated assaults with a gun increased 18% from mid-year 2021 to mid-year 2022. Based on data submitted to the National Incident Based Reporting System, nearly 90% of the city's homicides are committed with a gun (Federal Bureau of Investigation, n.d.). Although not tracked in GPD's annual reports, research shows that for every one fatal shooting that occurs in large cities there are close to four non-fatal shootings on average (Hipple et al., 2019). A high volume of shootings strains investigative units, especially when there are sharp increases in crime that do not allow cities and police departments to prepare for the increased caseloads by hiring and training new investigators. Partly because of the large volume of violent crime in the city, GPD's clearance rates for these crimes are below the national average, which motivated the agency to apply to the NCCP for additional support in identifying strategies for improving their shooting clearance rates.

## 1.3 Greensboro Police Department

GPD is broken down into four bureaus: Patrol, Management, Investigative, and Support. Addressing violent crime primarily falls to the Patrol and Investigative bureaus. The CID, under the Investigative Bureau, includes approximately 115 sworn detectives and supervisors organized into eight squads responsible for conducting investigations of reported offenses and monitoring violent and repeat offenders. CID is overseen by a captain with three lieutenants who supervise the following units: "Investigations A" (Homicide Squad, Crimes Against Persons [CAP] Squad, Robbery Squad, Crime Stoppers), "Investigations B" (Property Squad, Family Victims' Unit, Fraud Squad), and Investigative Operations (Criminal Intelligence, Street Crimes Units A & B, Violent Criminal Apprehension Team). Shootings are investigated by the Homicide Squad if they result in a fatal injury, the CAP Squad if they result in a non-fatal injury, and the Street Crimes Unit (SCU) if they do not result in an injury, such as shooting into dwellings where no one is hit by a projectile. The Criminal Apprehension Team and Crime Stoppers Program are also located within CID.

The Homicide Squad comprises a sergeant, a corporal who fills in for the sergeant in their absence and carries a homicide caseload, 12 detectives who are assigned to two-person teams, a VA, and one investigative aid position. The Homicide Squad is responsible for investigating all death cases and

attempted suicides reported to GPD. The only exception is cases involving children 15 and younger, which are investigated by the Family Victims Squad in conjunction with the Homicide Squad. The nature of the death of the juvenile will determine which unit will assume the lead and is mutually determined by the respective squad supervisors. The CAP Squad comprises a sergeant, corporal, seven detectives, and one non-sworn investigative aide. The CAP Squad is responsible for investigating non-sexual assaults, threats, and adult missing person cases. These cases include violent crimes against persons 16 and older, including all non-domestic physical assaults, missing persons, harassing telephone calls, non-criminal injury cases, threats, and any reports of abuse of elderly persons. The SCU comprises two plainclothes squads with each squad having one sergeant, one corporal, and six detectives. The SCU is largely proactive and focused on repeat offenders, guns, and gangs. For shootings, SCU investigators are assigned shootings into dwellings and assist with fatal and non-fatal shooting investigations by providing additional manpower and support at crime scenes.

CID has partners internal and external to GPD that assist them in shooting investigations. These include the Patrol Bureau; Crime Scene Investigators (CSI) section; the Crime Analysis Unit; state and private crime laboratories; numerous community-based organizations, including the MSAGV group; the Greensboro/Guilford Crime Stoppers program; the Guilford County DA's Office; the USAO for the Middle District of North Carolina; and other federal and state law enforcement agencies.

## 1.4 Scope of the Assessment

The NCCP involves an in-depth agency assessment to understand how each participating site responds to fatal and non-fatal shootings<sup>1</sup> and to identify strengths and weaknesses within each agency to improve upon through customized training and technical assistance. Though data collection took place throughout the agency and some findings may be relevant to other units within GPD, the assessment was directed at fatal and non-fatal shooting investigations conducted within the Homicide and CAP units.

## 2. Assessment Methods

The GPD assessment considered all operational and administrative activities associated with the investigation of fatal and non-fatal shootings. The assessment was conducted using three primary methods:

- Review of relevant policies, trainings and curricula, and other documented procedures related to GPD's response to fatal and non-fatal shootings.
- Interviews with GPD personnel and external partners.
- Systematic review of fatal and non-fatal shooting investigative case files.

The assessment team first met on site with GPD command staff to develop an understanding of how violent crimes are investigated, from the initial patrol response to case closure. The assessment included interviews with members of command staff, CID supervisors, Homicide and CAP Squad supervisors, the

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<sup>1</sup> The NCCP defines a non-fatal shooting as a shooting where a person is struck by a projectile and survives the wound, which differentiates it from a fatal shooting where a person is struck and does not survive and other shootings where a person is not struck by a projectile (see Hipple et al., 2019). The latter type of shootings and other forms of gun violence were not in the scope of this assessment.



Office of Community Engagement management and the public information manager, Intelligence Unit officers, prosecutors from the county DA's Office and the district United States Attorney's Office, Street Crime Unit supervisors, first-line investigators, the Crime Analysis Unit, the Forensics and CSI unit, the Computer Crimes Unit, the community liaison/VA, and numerous stakeholders from the community and community-based advocacy groups. Concurrently, the assessment team reviewed administrative materials including CID training standards, a representative sample of investigative case files, crime statistics and investigative/analytical bulletins and memos, organizational charts, SOP, and strategic plans. Taken together, the on-site assessment and the administrative review provided a comprehensive understanding of GPD's response to shootings.

## 2.1 Policy & Training Review

One component of the assessment was an evaluation of policy, training, and organizational structures to assess whether GPD's policies and trainings (1) guide agency personnel through the response and investigation processes; (2) align with recommended practices in investigations; and (3) are used for agency oversight, accountability, and performance management.

GPD provided copies of all policies, memos, trainings, and documented procedures relevant to their violent crime response and investigations. RTI also requested relevant operational procedures, including organizational charts, case assignment processes, and caseload measures.

## 2.2 Personnel Interviews

Personnel interviews provided the opportunity to speak directly with individuals who participate in the response and investigation of fatal and non-fatal shootings cases, including staff within GPD, and those within external agencies and organizations (e.g., DA's Office). Interviews documented current practices, policies, trainings, and perspectives on what is going well and what has room for improvement in the agency's response to shootings.

The RTI-led assessment team identified relevant staff positions for the interviews and coordinated with GPD to set up these interviews, most of which were conducted in person. The assessment team also coordinated directly with some outside organizations to conduct multiple interviews. Two-person teams completed interviews using semi-structured interview guides specific to the position being interviewed. The interview guides used in this assessment are available to GPD or its partners upon request.

Interviews typically lasted 30–60 minutes. As seen in **Table 2-1**, we interviewed 51 individuals, including 44 personnel from GPD such as detectives and supervisors, patrol officers, victim advocates, command staff, forensic analysts, and crime scene personnel. In addition, we interviewed 8 external stakeholders, including prosecutors, and staff from community-based organizations.

## 2.3 Case Review

The assessment team reviewed investigative case files for 15 cleared fatal shootings, 20 open fatal shootings, 11 cleared non-fatal shootings, 29 open non-fatal shootings, 4 cleared shootings with both a fatal and non-fatal injury, and eight open shootings with both a fatal and non-fatal injury for a total of 87 cases. They recorded over 100 pieces of information about the crime and investigative follow-up for each

case. The purpose of this data collection activity was to understand common features of shootings in Greensboro and the types of actions taken by GPD in response.

Table 2.1. Personnel Interviews Completed

Agency Affiliation	Role	Number
Greensboro Police Department	Command Staff	5
Greensboro Police Department	CID Command	4
Greensboro Police Department	Office of Community Engagement	1
Greensboro Police Department	Criminal Intelligence	1
U.S. Attorney's Office	Assistant U.S. Attorney	1
Greensboro Police Department	CID Supervisors	4
Greensboro Police Department	Street Crime Unit	3
Greensboro Police Department	CAP and Homicide Detectives	7
District Attorney's Office	Assistant District Attorneys	2
Greensboro Police Department	Forensics/CSI	2
Greensboro Police Department	Crime Analysts	5
Greensboro Police Department (Contract)	Victim Advocate	1
Greensboro Police Department	Computer Crimes	2
Greensboro Police Department	Public Information Manager	1
Greensboro Police Department	Patrol	5
Crime Stoppers, GPD	Crime Stoppers Coordinator, Asst. Crime Stoppers Coordinator	2
Community Organizations	Various Leaders & Volunteers	5

### 3. Assessment of Policies and Procedures

The assessment team reviewed several of GPD's SOPs that govern fatal and non-fatal shooting investigations. These SOPs are well-organized and provide descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of personnel in the CID. Additionally, the SOPs cover several circumstances and processes that are important to shooting investigations.

Despite these strengths, the assessment team identified multiple areas where the SOPs could be strengthened. Discussions with GPD personnel also made it clear that detectives do not always consult with these policies and SOPs; in fact, some personnel were only minimally aware that they existed. This section provides recommendations for strengthening specific language and content within the existing SOPs. Section 5 of this report includes additional recommendations for strengthening general policies and procedures.

## 3.1 Policies and Procedures

### 3.1.1 GPD SOPs – CID

#### Overall Recommendations

- GPD should review and update the CID SOP periodically, preferably every 3–5 years.
- Detective training should include a review of the CID SOP and any other relevant policies. Each detective should be given a copy of the CID SOP upon joining the division.
- GPD should create a user-friendly manual that includes all relevant policies, SOPs, checklists, and other written materials that govern homicide and non-fatal shooting investigations. The manual should be organized into clearly marked sections and include a detailed table of contents. Each detective should be given a copy of the manual upon joining the Homicide or CAP Squads. To make them more user-friendly, these manuals may be separated into a “Homicide Squad Manual” covering homicide investigations and a “Non-Fatal Shooting Investigations Manual” covering non-fatal shootings.
- GPD should switch to using gender-neutral language in its policies and SOPs. In the current CID SOP, the description for every position uses masculine pronouns except for the description for the Administrative Assistant, which uses feminine pronouns.
- Remove any references to “interrogations of victims” and replace with “interviews with victims” (see CID SOP Sections 2.4.3 and 2.5.3).
- Develop policies that clarify the roles and responsibilities of the VA position and coordination between the VA and case detectives.

#### Sections 3.4 (Filing System) and 3.5 (Case Management)

- **Recommendation:** GPD should develop a case file checklist that lists each report, note, and other documentation that should be included in a comprehensive case file. The SOP should clearly require supervisors to review the files periodically to ensure that detectives are adhering to the checklist. (See Section 5.3 of this report for more details about what should be included in the case file.)

#### Section 3.8 (Constitutional Considerations)

- **Recommendation:** Add language to Section 3.8 regarding the expectations for victims’ rights as provided by the North Carolina Constitution and state statutes.
- **Recommendation:** GPD’s current policy is for all suspects to sign and date a *Miranda* waiver after their rights are read to them. Given that GPD requires detectives to audio and video record all interrogations, the department, in consultation with the Guilford County DA’s Office, could consider moving away from obtaining the signed waiver forms.

#### Section 3.12 (Interview Recording System)

- **Recommendation:** Add language that clearly states who at GPD is authorized to have access to the Interview Recording system and what is used to determine those permissions.
- **Recommendation:** Add language addressing expectations for recording interviews with victims and co-victims/families.

## Section 4.2 (Crimes Against Persons)

- **Recommendation:** Include the case checklist of basic investigative tasks that detectives must meet when investigating fatal and non-fatal shootings. (See Recommendation 27 in Section 5 of this report for more detail on the case checklist.)
- **Recommendation:** Add standard protocols and procedures regarding the organization of the CAP Squad, including how detectives are selected and evaluated, whether there is a probationary period, required and recommended training, and how cases are assigned. (See Section 5 of this report for more detailed recommendations about detective selection, training, assignment, and evaluations.)
- **Recommendation:** Restructure Section 4.2.2 (Responsibilities) so that the responsibilities are bulleted under categories that address each stage of the investigative process (e.g., Crime Scene Response, Investigative Steps, Victim Outreach, Follow-Up, Reporting). The topic categories should follow the general organization of the case checklist discussed in Section 5 of this report.
- **Recommendation:** Broaden the “harassing telephone calls” language in Section 4.2.2 (Responsibilities) to also include online harassment unless that is handled by a different unit at GPD.
- **Recommendation:** Provide more specifics on CAP Squad detective engagement with victims, including the following:
  - Developing a communication plan with victims, including timelines for initial contact, follow-up communications, and providing case status updates;
  - Required notifications and contacts with victims;
  - Documenting contacts with victims;
  - Working with the GPD VA, when relevant; and
  - Helping victims exercise their rights upon request.
- **Recommendation:** Include procedures for how CAP Squad detectives should handle digital and physical evidence, including the following:
  - Who is responsible for collecting which types of digital and physical evidence;
  - Procedures for submitting evidence to the FSD (physical evidence) or to the Computer Crimes Unit (digital evidence) for testing;
  - How and when test results will be obtained by detectives;
  - Required and recommended communications with the FSD or Computer Crimes Unit; and
  - Cross-references to the FSD SOPs.

## Section 4.7 (Homicide Squad)

- **Recommendation:** Add standard protocols and procedures regarding the organization of the Homicide Squad, including how detectives are selected and evaluated, whether there is a probationary period, required and recommended training, and how cases are assigned.
- **Recommendation:** Restructure Section 4.7.2 (Responsibilities) so that the responsibilities are bulleted under categories that address each stage of the investigative process (e.g., Crime Scene Response, Investigative Steps, Victim Outreach, Follow-Up, Reporting).
- **Recommendation:** Provide more specifics on Homicide Squad detective engagement with victims and families, including the following:
  - Developing a communication plan with victims, including timelines for initial contact, follow-up communications, and providing case status updates;
  - Requiring notifications and contacts with co-victims and families;
  - Documenting contacts with co-victims and families;

- Working with the GPD VA;
  - Helping families and co-victims exercise rights upon request; and
  - Helping victims and families navigate press conferences and media contacts.
- **Recommendation:** As part of standard procedure, require that detectives inform victims' families about the VA position and provide the VA's contact information. GPD investigators could contact the VA directly to make sure they are aware of the homicide so that all eligible victims' families receive contact from the VA.
  - **Recommendation:** Include procedures for how Homicide Squad detectives should handle digital and physical evidence, including the following:
    - Who is responsible for collecting which types of digital and physical evidence;
    - Procedures for submitting evidence to the FSD (physical evidence) or to the Computer Crimes Unit (digital evidence) for testing;
    - How and when test results will be obtained by detectives;
    - Required and recommended communications with the FSD or Computer Crimes Unit; and
    - Cross-references to the FSD SOPs.
  - **Recommendation:** Add a checklist to Section 4.7.3 (Case Prosecution) that outlines the specific process for detectives to follow when preparing a case to be sent to the prosecutor for charging decisions.
  - **Recommendation:** Add language to Section 4.7.5 (Property and Evidence) emphasizing that detectives should follow trauma-informed practices when returning property to victims or families. This includes presenting the property in neutral packaging and removing biohazard fluids.

#### Section 4.8 (Street Crimes Unit)

- **Recommendation:** Add standard protocols and procedures regarding the organization of the SCU, including how detectives are selected and evaluated, whether there is a probationary period, required and recommended training, and how cases are assigned. (See Section 5 for more detailed recommendations about detective selection, training, assignment, and evaluations.)

#### Section 4.11 (Violent Crime Apprehension Team)

- **Recommendation:** Add standard protocols and procedures regarding the organization of the Violent Crime Apprehension Team, including how members are selected and evaluated, whether there is a probationary period, required and recommended training, and how cases are assigned.

#### Section 4.13 (Digital Forensics Lab)

- **Recommendation:** Review Section 4.13 to ensure it is up to date and reflects the current protocols being used by the Computer Crimes Unit when processing and analyzing digital evidence. Section 4.13 should also include any required or recommended trainings and certifications for digital evidence examiners.

#### Section 4.16 (Polygraph Procedures in Investigations)

- **Recommendation:** The policy should have strong guidance on the process for administering polygraph examinations to crime victims or witnesses. This process should include obtaining approval from the CID commander before administering a polygraph examination to any victim or witness.

#### Section 4.17 (Victim Advocate)

- **Recommendation:** Review Section 4.17 and determine whether it is still applicable. Interviews with GPD personnel indicated that the only VA GPD uses is the non-sworn VA assigned to the Homicide Squad. GPD should develop comprehensive policies and SOPs governing the VA position as it currently stands.

## 3.2 GPD SOPs – Forensic Services Division, Crime Scene Investigation

### Overall Recommendations

- **Recommendation:** The CSI SOP is extremely well-written and comprehensive. To the extent they are not included in other guides or SOPs, GPD should add separate chapters to the CSI SOP that contain detailed instructions regarding trajectory assessment and analysis for shooting incidents and bloodstain pattern analysis.
- **Recommendation:** GPD should add language to the CSI SOP clarifies the difference between a CSI and a Forensic Specialist. It should also detail the process for becoming a CSI and a Forensic Specialist, including the specific skills necessary for each role. GPD should consider requiring CSIs and Forensic Specialists to obtain certification after their first year of employment, similar to what is currently being done by the property & evidence technicians. At minimum, CSIs and Forensic Specialists should be required to undergo proficiency testing to ensure competency. These requirements should be spelled out in the CSI SOP.

### Section 1.0 (Introduction)

- **Recommendation:** The SOP notes that work conducted by FSD members will be performed in accordance with applicable ISO/IEC 17020:2012 standards. GPD's CSI section is not ISO accredited. GPD should seek this accreditation for the CSI section because it would increase the professional standing of the unit and keep it aligned with the Latent Print and Firearm/Toolmark sections, which are accredited. Additionally, if members are to conform to ISO/IEC 17020:2012 standards, GPD must ensure that these standards are made available to CSI section personnel. The SOP does not include a reference section which would indicate that members have access to these standards.

### Section 2.1.2 (Investigative Calls for Service)

- **Recommendation:** Although the calls described in Section 2.1.2 may involve forensic documentation or processing, this is not always the case—in fact, these calls are a shared responsibility between the CSIs and the patrol division. Although the SOP includes a note indicating that the FSD will not respond to Priority 4 calls when staffing levels are below minimum manpower levels, GPD should separate the CSIs from these calls altogether except when specific forensic processing is needed. In these cases, the Priority 4 calls should be investigated by a patrol officer, and the CSI function should be limited to forensic processing where the ability to do so exceeds the capability of a patrol officer.
- **Recommendation:** The FSD should train and equip patrol officers (or a select number of patrol officers) to handle the minor forensic documentation needed in Priority 4 calls, especially involving Larceny, Vandalism, and Found Property. This would allow the CSIs to focus on Priority 1 calls and follow-up forensic work needed for these cases.

### Section 3.1.1 Information Gathering & Initial Assessment

- **Recommendation:** Section 3.1.1 notes, "Often times an officer will not be present and only the victim/reporting party will be on-scene." This aligns with interviewees who told the assessment team that sometimes CSIs are the only GPD personnel present at a scene and that the responsibilities of meeting with victims and witnesses falls on them. GPD should require that a patrol officer or detective always be present at a scene to be the primary interacting party to victims and witnesses. If this duty is left to the CSI, their main responsibilities of documenting and processing evidence may suffer.

### Sections 5.14–5.16

- **Recommendation:** The duties of a Forensic Imaging Specialist could be performed by a CSI or Forensic Specialist (FS) with proper training. Thus, GPD should consider the value of eliminating this specific position and transferring person(s) assigned as such to the CSI or FS section.

### Section 9.8.1 (Gunshot Residue Evidence Collection Kits)

- **Recommendation:** This section notes, “The collection of gunshot residue from the hands requires the use of a combination style Gunshot Residue Collection Kit that utilizes both of the following collection methods: (1) adhesive lift stubs and (2) cotton swabs moistened with 5% nitric acid.” Although the GSR collection kit stubs are common practice, using swabs with 5% nitric acid is much less common. Therefore, GPD should include further explanation of this method in the SOP.

### Section 17.2.1 (General Response Protocol)

- **Recommendation:** This section notes, “If the lead detective/investigator requests that the CSI omit a mandated processing procedure(s) noted above, it is the responsibility of the CSI to inform the lead detective/investigator as to the recommended nature of the procedure. If the detective/investigator further requests the CSI to veer from the prescribed protocol, then the CSI shall abide by the request, fully document the protocol departure in the case notes, and articulate same within the CSI case report.” GPD should consider omitting this language, because the forensic documentation performed by the CSI section should not be dictated by the wishes of the investigator. Doing so may compromise the work of the CSI.

## 4. Case File Review Findings

Reviewing and coding fatal and non-fatal investigative case files allowed the assessment team to evaluate select aspects of the shooting; the agency’s response, including investigative actions; and case outcomes. Because of limitations with how case files were organized and the burden required to transfer entire case files to RTI in their current state, RTI and GPD agreed that only the case narratives should undergo review and analysis. Before making this decision, the assessment team compared case narratives with entire case files to determine the amount of information that would be lost by only reviewing case narratives instead of entire case files and determined an acceptable amount of information could be learned from the case narratives alone. Thus, case narratives for a random sample of 35 fatal shooting incidents, 40 non-fatal shooting incidents, and 12 incidents involving both a fatal and non-fatal shooting were provided to RTI for the years 2019 and 2020. Because homicide investigators take the lead in incidents involving both a fatal and non-fatal shooting injury, we grouped those cases with cases involving only a fatal shooting and compared them to incidents with only a non-fatal shooting. Although RTI requested an equal number of cleared and uncleared cases, RTI received mostly uncleared case files (66%). RTI and GPD had a data use agreement in place that met the data security standards of both RTI and GPD and RTI adhered to this agreement when storing and accessing case files for review and analysis. Members of the assessment team reviewed the case narratives to understand GPD’s response to each type of shooting and to extract over 100 pieces of information on the shooting and agency response from each case. **Tables 4-1** and **4-2** provide summary statistics for key attributes related to the crime and agency response, respectively, measured from the case file data. Key information was extracted from the case files and coded using a set of predetermined data metrics. The data collection instrument and codebook used to code investigative case files are available to GPD or its partners upon request.

Table 4.1. Incident Characteristics, by Type of Shooting

Incident Characteristic	Shooting	
	Non-fatal	Fatal
Total number of cases reviewed	40 (100%)	47 (100%)
Number of guns fired		
1	30 (75%)	29 (62%)
2	6 (15%)	10 (21%)
More than 2	0 (0%)	5 (11%)
Unknown	4 (10%)	3 (6%)
Type of gun used <sup>1</sup>		
Handgun	23 (58%)	35 (74%)
Rifle	2 (5%)	6 (13%)
Shotgun	1 (3%)	0 (0%)
Unknown	16 (40%)	13 (28%)
Median number of rounds fired	4.5	4.0
Location of shooting		
Street/outdoors	25 (63%)	31 (66%)
Inside residence	7 (18%)	6 (13%)
Other	6 (14%)	10 (21%)
Unknown	2 (5%)	0 (0%)
Any victims armed		
No	31 (78%)	32 (68%)
Yes	4 (10%)	9 (19%)
Unknown	5 (13%)	6 (13%)
Number of victims		
1	19 (48%)	35 (74%)
2	13 (33%)	5 (11%)
More than 2	8 (20%)	3 (15%)
Number of suspects at time of initial response		
1	18 (45%)	20 (43%)
2	3 (8%)	6 (13%)
More than 2	0 (0%)	6 (13%)
Unknown	19 (48%)	15 (32%)
Number of suspects at end of investigation		

(continued)



Table 4.1. Incident Characteristics, by Type of Shooting (continued)

Incident Characteristic	Shooting	
	Non-fatal	Fatal
1	19 (48%)	24 (51%)
2	2 (5%)	7 (15%)
More than 2	1 (3%)	8 (17%)
Unknown	18 (45%)	8 (17%)
Victim sex <sup>1</sup>		
Male	38 (95%)	43 (91%)
Female	19 (48%)	12 (26%)
Unknown	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Victim race <sup>a</sup>		
Black	34 (85%)	42 (89%)
White	10 (25%)	8 (17%)
Other	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
Unknown	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Median victim age	27 years	24 years
Final suspect sex <sup>a</sup>		
Male	20 (50%)	37 (79%)
Female	1 (3%)	4 (9%)
Unknown	22 (55%)	15 (32%)
Final suspect race <sup>a</sup>		
Black	20 (50%)	34 (72%)
White	0 (0%)	2 (4%)
Other	1 (0%)	0 (0%)
Unknown	22 (55%)	16 (34%)
Median final suspect age	27 years	24 years
Relationship between victims and offenders		
Current/former intimate partner	0 (0%)	3 (6%)
Family member	2 (5%)	0 (0%)
Friend/acquaintance	9 (23%)	12 (26%)
Stranger	9 (23%)	7 (15%)
Rival gang/cliq ue member	1 (3%)	8 (17%)
Other relationship	2 (5%)	4 (9%)
Unknown	17 (43%)	13 (28%)

(continued)

Table 4.1. Incident Characteristics, by Type of Shooting (continued)

Incident Characteristic	Shooting	
	Non-fatal	Fatal
Primary motive for shooting		
Conflict over money	2 (5%)	9 (19%)
Drug-related	5 (13%)	9 (19%)
Gang-related	4 (10%)	6 (13%)
Other conflict	8 (20%)	12 (26%)
Unknown	21 (53%)	11 (23%)
Clearance status		
Open/inactive	29 (73%)	28 (60%)
Cleared by arrest or exceptional means	11 (28%)	19 (40%)

<sup>a</sup> Because crime incidents can involve more than one type, totals may sum to greater than 100%.

Table 4.2. GPD Response Characteristics, by Type of Shooting

Response Characteristic	Shooting	
	Non-fatal	Fatal
Total number of cases reviewed	40 (100%)	47 (100%)
Initial Police Response		
Number of patrol officers who responded to scene		
0	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
1–4	5 (13%)	1 (2%)
5–9	5 (13%)	3 (6%)
10+	6 (15%)	13 (28%)
Unknown	24 (60%)	30 (64%)
Patrol supervisor present at scene		
No	5 (13%)	0 (0%)
Yes	5 (13%)	25 (53%)
Unknown	30 (75%)	22 (47%)
Number of detectives who responded to scene		
0	2 (5%)	0 (0%)
1	4 (10%)	2 (4%)
2	2 (5%)	5 (11%)
3	0 (0%)	3 (6%)
4	0 (0%)	2 (4%)

(continued)

Table 4.2. GPD Response Characteristics, by Type of Shooting (continued)

Response Characteristic	Shooting	
	Non-fatal	Fatal
5+	1 (3%)	3 (6%)
Unknown	31 (78%)	32 (68%)
Investigative supervisor present at scene		
No	17 (43%)	3 (6%)
Yes	1 (3%)	11 (23%)
Unknown	22 (55%)	33 (70%)
Evidence collected at scene		
No	2 (5%)	0 (0%)
Yes	37 (93%)	46 (98%)
Unknown	1 (3%)	1 (2%)
Type of evidence collected at scene		
DNA/bodily fluids	21 (53%)	45 (96%)
Latent prints	9 (23%)	28 (60%)
Pattern evidence	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Trace evidence	1 (3%)	4 (9%)
Suspect firearm	3 (8%)	11 (23%)
Bullets	25 (63%)	44 (94%)
Casing	28 (70%)	40 (85%)
Clothing	25 (63%)	42 (89%)
Electronics	9 (23%)	36 (77%)
Digital	9 (23%)	32 (68%)
Drugs	7 (18%)	18 (38%)
Other	10 (25%)	15 (32%)
Victim statement obtained		
No	1 (3%)	28 (60%)
Yes	38 (95%)	14 (30%)
Unknown	1 (3%)	5 (11%)
Victim participated/cooperated in investigation during initial response		
No	10 (25%)	28 (60%)
Yes	26 (65%)	14 (30%)
Unknown	4 (10%)	5 (11%)

(continued)

Table 4.2. GPD Response Characteristics, by Type of Shooting (continued)

Response Characteristic	Shooting	
	Non-fatal	Fatal
Number of third-party witnesses		
0	14 (35%)	4 (9%)
1	6 (15%)	3 (6%)
2	8 (20%)	1 (2%)
3	5 (13%)	11 (23%)
4+	5 (13%)	26 (55%)
Unknown	2 (5%)	2 (4%)
Witness statement obtained		
No	15 (38%)	5 (11%)
Yes	25 (63%)	42 (89%)
Witness participated/cooperated in investigation during initial response		
No	15 (38%)	5 (11%)
Yes	24 (60%)	41 (87%)
Unknown	1 (3%)	1 (2%)
A suspect identified at time of response		
No	30 (75%)	29 (62%)
Yes	10 (25%)	18 (38%)
Suspect identification at time of response <sup>1</sup>		
Police identified	1 (3%)	12 (26%)
Victim or witness identified	10 (25%)	14 (30%)
Other identification	1 (3%)	3 (6%)
Identifying information on a suspect vehicle at time of response		
No	29 (73%)	23 (49%)
Yes	11 (28%)	24 (51%)
Follow-up Investigation		
Number of days until first detective activity		
0	24 (60%)	45 (96%)
1	2 (5%)	1 (2%)
2	3 (8%)	0 (0%)
3+	5 (13%)	0 (0%)
Unknown	6 (15%)	1 (2%)

(continued)

Table 4.2. GPD Response Characteristics, by Type of Shooting (continued)

Response Characteristic	Shooting	
	Non-fatal	Fatal
Investigator(s) contacted victim(s)		
No	7 (18%)	0 (0%)
Yes	33 (83%)	11 (23%)
In person	25	13
Not in person	5	0
Not applicable	0 (0%)	0 (77%)
Victim participated/cooperated in investigation after initial unwillingness to		
No	31 (78%)	0 (0%)
Yes	3 (8%)	0 (0%)
Unknown	1 (3%)	0 (0%)
Not applicable	5 (13%)	47 (100%)
Detective contacted third-party witnesses identified at scene		
No	11 (28%)	4 (9%)
Yes	15 (38%)	39 (83%)
In person	12	37
Not in person	0	0
Not applicable	14 (35%)	4 (9%)
Witness participated/cooperated in investigation after initial unwillingness to		
No	11 (28%)	25 (53%)
Yes	2 (5%)	4 (9%)
Unknown	1 (3%)	1 (2%)
Not applicable	26 (65%)	17 (36%)
Initial leads on motive		
No	22 (55%)	17 (36%)
Yes	18 (45%)	29 (62%)
Unknown	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Confidential informant(s) came forward with information		
No	37 (93%)	47 (100%)
Yes	2 (5%)	0 (0%)
Unknown	1 (3%)	0 (0%)

(continued)

Table 4.2. GPD Response Characteristics, by Type of Shooting (continued)

Response Characteristic	Shooting	
	Non-fatal	Fatal
Specialized unit(s) helped with investigation <sup>a</sup>		
Fugitive	1 (3%)	5 (11%)
Gang/narcotics	0 (0%)	2 (4%)
Intelligence	1 (3%)	1 (2%)
Crime analysis	0 (0%)	2 (4%)
Crime lab	8 (20%)	17 (36%)
Victim advocate	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Street Crimes	3 (8%)	16 (34%)
Other	1 (3%)	2 (4%)
External resources/partners helped with investigation <sup>a</sup>		
Federal law enforcement	0 (0%)	3 (6%)
Local/state law enforcement	0 (0%)	3 (6%)
Regional fusion/intelligence center	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Community-/faith-based organization	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Public tip line	0 (0%)	2 (4%)
Other	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Technologies used in investigation <sup>a</sup>		
Hidden recording device	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
License plate reader	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Facial recognition	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Social network data	3 (8%)	14 (30%)
Gunshot detection	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Firearm/toolmark identification	12 (30%)	33 (70%)
Gun trace	2 (5%)	5 (11%)
Digital data	1 (3%)	13 (28%)
IMSI-catcher	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Cell phone location	3 (8%)	17 (36%)
Vehicle computer data	0 (0%)	2 (4%)
Other	1 (3%)	4 (9%)
Search warrant executed		
No	33 (83%)	16 (34%)
Yes	7 (18%)	31 (66%)

(continued)

Table 4.2. GPD Response Characteristics, by Type of Shooting (continued)

Response Characteristic	Shooting	
	Non-fatal	Fatal
Community group/leader asked to help with investigation		
No	40 (100%)	43 (91%)
Yes	0 (0%)	4 (9%)
Investigator made further contact with patrol officer(s) who responded to scene?		
No	39 (98%)	45 (96%)
Yes	1 (3%)	2 (4%)
Suspect interviewed by an investigator		
No	31 (78%)	22 (47%)
Yes	9 (23%)	25 (53%)
Suspect confessed to the crime		
No	37 (93%)	40 (85%)
Yes	3 (8%)	7 (15%)

<sup>a</sup> Because crime incidents can involve more than one type, totals may sum to greater than 100%.

There are a number of relevant findings in **Tables 4-1** and **4-2**, which we integrate into the next section containing our assessment findings and recommendations. Importantly, it must be noted that when there is an absence of a case or investigative response characteristic in these tables, it could mean that the characteristic was not present in the case, or it could mean that the characteristic was present but not documented. For example, we found that investigators seldom reached out to community- or faith-based leaders for help with a non-fatal (0%) or fatal (9%) shooting investigation. This could be accurate, or it could be that investigators did so more often but did not document that outreach in the case narratives. We discuss case file documentation and organization in detail in the next section.

In addition to the findings shown in **Table 4-2** regarding GPD's response to fatal and non-fatal shootings, the site assessment team documented investigative components that (1) seemed to have contributed to clearing the case for cleared shootings and (2) may have led to investigative leads but did not receive sufficient attention during the investigation. For eight non-fatal shooting investigations that were cleared by arrest or exceptional means, the only investigative component measured here that seemed to consistently contribute to case clearance was participation/cooperation in the investigation by a victim or witness. For 16 cleared fatal shootings, the greatest contributors to case clearance included participation/cooperation in the investigation by a victim or witness, audio-visual data, cell phone data, and information on a suspect's vehicle, in that order. For non-fatal shooting investigations, the assessment team believed many of the cases would have benefited from additional victim or witness follow-up, additional suspect follow-up, an appeal to the public for information, and the use of additional technologies during the investigation. For fatal shooting investigations, the assessment team believed these components received much more attention. The components that the assessment team viewed as needing additional attention in these investigations included the use of additional technologies in the

investigation, the collection or use of additional evidence during the follow-up investigation, and appealing to the public for information. The next section discusses our findings regarding GPD's response to fatal and non-fatal shootings in more depth and integrates these case review findings with findings from our site visit, personnel and stakeholder interviews, and policy and training review.

## 5. Findings

### 5.1 Agency Resources and Workload

#### 5.1.1 CID Staffing and Organization

One of the major challenges GPD is facing is that the volume of crime has been increasing while the department remains critically understaffed—GPD is approximately 100 personnel under staff as allocated by the budget. This has a rippling effect throughout the department. For example, although the Homicide Squad currently has an adequate number of detectives, many of the units that support homicide investigations—Patrol, the FSD, the Criminal Intelligence Squad—are experiencing critical vacancies that can affect investigations. Additionally, detectives are also now being pulled to answer calls for service.

One way that law enforcement agencies have addressed staffing shortages is to rely increasingly on professional, non-sworn staff to fill certain roles. For example, civilian positions can be developed to handle responsibilities such as crime analysis, advocacy, forensics/computer crimes, and liaisons with outside agencies (e.g., the DA's Office). Civilians can also be useful as investigative aides to the CID squads, including Homicide and CAP, and can relieve detective workload by performing administrative and support duties (King & Wilson, 2014).

#### Recommendation

1

#### **Expand the use of professional staff to provide greater technical support to the Homicide and CAP Squads.**

Investigative aides should be embedded in the Homicide and CAP Squads to assist detectives with administrative and support duties, including writing warrants, making follow-up phone calls, and processing phone calls. It would also be helpful to train professional staff placed in the Homicide and CAP Squads to perform criminal intelligence analysis tasks, such as conducting open-source investigations using social media. The role of the investigative aide should be clearly defined by policies and SOPs. The CID SOP Section 2.8 (Duties and Responsibilities – Program Technician) describes the Program Technician position, which appears to be akin to an investigative aide. When expanding or redefining this role, GPD should review and update this section of the SOP.

#### 5.1.2 Detective Assignments and Caseload

Detectives on the Homicide and CAP Squads work an 8-hour shift during business hours Monday through Friday with weekends off, except for on-call duties. Shift times are staggered between 8:00 am–4:30 pm or 9:00 am–5:30 pm. The CID SOP states: “All squads, with the exception of the PM Investigations Squad, will maintain coverage from the hours of 0800 to 1730, Monday through Friday, with personnel working an 8-hour day.”



## Homicide Squad

GPD's SOP also defines the on-call system. In the Homicide Squad, two detectives (one team) are assigned to be on call for off-hour and weekend callouts. The standby period is from Monday to Monday, and the team is usually on call every 5–6 weeks.

Both detectives on the on-call team respond to crime scenes. One of the two detectives handles all homicides that occur during the week, and the other detective handles all other incidents such as dead body investigations or overdose deaths. The detective who handles homicides typically has not had a recent homicide. The Homicide Squad sergeant and corporal also alternate being on call every week. Whoever is on call during the period will also respond to the crime scene. Homicide detectives are handling an average of five homicide cases per year and an average of 15 death investigations per year.

Interviewees said that homicides that occurred when all staff were on duty (during weekday daytime hours) were more likely to be solved than all other homicides. Of the 47 fatal shooting case files reviewed as part of this assessment, 11 were reported on a weekday between 8:00 AM and 5:30 PM. Of these 11 cases, 7 (64%) were cleared by an arrest or by exceptional means while 4 (36%) were not cleared. Close to the exact opposite situation was found for the 36 fatal shootings that were reported during off-hours, in which 12 (33%) were cleared and 24 (67%) were not cleared. Although this difference in clearance status could be related to elements of the crime like the victim-offender relationship or motivation for the killing, GPD personnel reported that weekday, daytime cases receive greater investigative resources than cases during off-hours. One detective noted that when someone catches a homicide while on call, everyone "fades away and you're left holding the bag." Some detectives would like a more team-oriented approach where more people respond to homicide scenes. A 2013 Bureau of Justice Assistance report on best practices for clearing homicides noted, "Using a team approach to investigations, including not only the homicide investigators but also any other unit or agency that can contribute to the investigation of cases, will significantly contribute to success" (Carter, 2013). Detectives left to investigate shootings on their own during off-hours are put at a disadvantage.

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>2</b>	<p><b>Take all necessary steps to maintain the current caseload of five homicide cases per detective, per year. This is consistent with national best practices, which recommend that homicide detectives take on an average of no more than four to six new homicide cases per year (PERF, 2018).</b></p> <p>The current Homicide Squad staffing levels appear to be adequate for maintaining reasonable caseloads. If homicides in Greensboro continue to rise, the Homicide Squad's staffing levels will need to be reconsidered.</p>
	<b>3</b>	<p><b>Take steps to ensure that more detectives are available to respond to homicides during off-hours. This approach would enable these cases to receive additional resources and ensure they are treated with the same degree of urgency as incidents that occur during the weekdays, which should improve clearance rates.</b></p> <p>GPD should review its homicide data to determine the times of day and days of the week when homicides are most likely to occur and should structure its shift schedule to ensure that there is adequate coverage during those times. Regardless of the shift structure, the Homicide Squad sergeant must be responsible for ensuring that resources and personnel are available to support the lead detective immediately following a homicide.</p>
	<b>4</b>	<p><b>The Homicide Squad should consider revising the on-call system to prevent detectives from catching multiple new homicides in a row.</b></p> <p>Two important issues that affect case solvability are a detective's caseload and the time between assigned cases (PERF, 2018). When a detective is assigned multiple new cases during their on-call week, they are at an immediate disadvantage. Under the Homicide Squad's on-call system, it is possible for one detective to be assigned multiple cases during the week-long period they are on call. Strategies include shortening the on-call period or assigning two teams to be on call at once and alternating which team responds.</p>

### CAP Squad

Detectives in the CAP Squad work the same daytime weekday shifts as the Homicide Squad. The CAP Squad detectives are also on call for 1-week periods (Monday through Monday) to handle incidents that occur during nights and weekends.

When determining which new cases to assign to detectives, the CAP sergeant triages the incoming cases and prioritizes those with leads or clues. The sergeant reads each case narrative and assesses the case using a set of eight dichotomous "solvability factors" located in the record management system (RMS). Interviewees believe that the solvability factors are fairly accurate. Their effectiveness relies in part on what information is collected when the incident calls come in, and the CAP sergeant has reportedly talked to supervisors about the importance of officers asking good questions when responding to calls.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>5</b>	<p><b>Develop a systematic process for triaging non-fatal shootings cases for investigations. If solvability factors are used to triage cases, this information should be research-based, consistently used, and thoroughly documented in the CID SOP. Non-fatal shooting cases should receive greater investigative priority than less severe forms of assault.</b></p> <p>CAP supervisors should be trained on how to use the solvability factors to assess cases, and patrol officers and dispatchers should be trained on how to elicit and report information that speaks to the factors.</p>
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CAP detectives work individually, rather than with assigned partners. The CAP sergeant tries to assign no more than two cases to each detective per week. In certain instances, cases are assigned to specific

detectives with special skills and interests. The average running caseload in CAP is 42 cases per detective. It was reported that each CAP detective maintains 8–12 open cases at any time.

Recommendation	6	<p><b>Develop a systematic process for tracking non-fatal shootings and prioritize their investigation. GPD should use this information to assess CAP’s staffing and resource needs and to explore mechanisms for providing additional support to detectives investigating non-fatal shooting cases. Additionally, non-fatal shooting counts should be included alongside other crime counts in GPD’s annual reports. Options for GPD to consider might include the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Accounting for crime severity when triaging cases based on solvability. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Adding more detectives to CAP to investigate non-fatal shooting cases or designating a separate unit dedicated to investigating non-fatal shootings.</li> <li>ii. Having the Homicide Squad investigate non-fatal shootings involving a projectile hitting a victim’s body.</li> <li>iii. Moving toward an assigned partner system in CAP. Several interviewees reported that they would like to see the CAP Squad adopt an assigned partner system, similar to the Homicide Squad. They believe that the partner configuration would provide them with better back-up and support during investigations. GPD should explore whether a two-investigator team approach within CAP is possible or desirable.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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### 5.1.3 CID Personnel Experience and Selection

#### Detective Experience

It is critical that investigative units are staffed with experienced and knowledgeable detectives. However, the project team learned that there is a significant lack of experience among CID personnel. Detectives and supervisors are sometimes assigned to investigative squads, including Homicide, with little-to-no experience investigating violent crimes. Even the more tenured detectives in these squads may only have 2 years of investigative experience. This puts detectives and supervisors in a difficult position and may make it harder for them to clear cases successfully (Goodison, 2021).

Despite this lack of experience, the detectives and supervisors interviewed by the project team—including the new appointees and hires—demonstrated a strong commitment to their units, a willingness to learn, and a desire to be effective in their roles. They are there to learn and want to do a good job.

Recommendations	7	<p><b>Make every effort to place newly promoted detectives in a property crime or non-violent investigative assignment during their training period, with more experienced detectives then transitioning to CAP and Homicide after the training period is over.</b></p> <p>This will help give hard-working and dedicated detectives the tools and experience they need to investigate violent crimes successfully. Some police agencies have also found success with providing opportunities for patrol officers and investigators in other squads to be temporarily detailed to assist with homicide and non-fatal shooting investigations. This gives personnel the chance to gain experience and allows supervisors to evaluate the person’s abilities.</p>
	8	<p><b>Create a corporal track for the specialized investigative units. The track would allow personnel to be promoted and stay within the unit where they have built experience.</b></p> <p>This could help keep experienced people in those specialized units where expertise is critical for success.</p>

9	<p><b>Require Homicide or CAP Squad supervisors without prior detective experience work a case as a lead detective.</b></p> <p>This would involve the supervisor handling the case from the crime scene through prosecution, which would expose them to many of the challenges regularly faced by detectives.</p>
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### Detective Selection

Some interviewees reported that burnout and high turnover make the Homicide and CAP Squads undesirable assignments. However, other personnel—mostly in leadership—said that they never struggle to get applicants for Homicide or CAP.

Recommendations	10	<p><b>Establish a rigorous, formal process for selecting detectives for the Homicide and CAP Squads.</b></p> <p>The process and metrics for selecting detectives into the Homicide and CAP Squads should be standardized and put into an SOP.</p>
	11	<p><b>Dedicate time to understand diverse personnel perspectives on working in Homicide and CAP Squads through anonymous surveys, stay interviews, and exit interviews.</b></p> <p>Because motivations for joining or staying in these units can change over time, it is important to regularly engage in this activity.</p>
	12	<p><b>Take steps to attract and retain dedicated and experienced detectives to the Homicide and CAP Squads.</b></p> <p>There are numerous recruitment and retention strategies and practices and the effectiveness of each can depend on the context of the organization and position. The NCCP team can work with GPD to identify an evidence-based strategy and practices to improve the recruitment and retention of shooting investigators and their supervisors.</p>

## 5.2 Training

### 5.2.1 CID New Detective Training and Onboarding

All new detectives, regardless of their assigned unit, should receive basic investigations training that provides the knowledge and skills needed to work general investigations (Carter, 2013; PERF, 2018). The training can also ensure that detectives selected into the Homicide and CAP units are well-versed in fundamental investigative techniques. All detectives interviewed by the assessment team attended a basic detective course and at least one specialized interview and interrogation course. This gives new detectives a solid base on which to expand.

One of GPD’s strengths is its in-house CID Academy, a formal internal training program for newly assigned CID personnel that was developed by a senior GPD homicide detective. The academy covers training in the following areas:

- Case management
- Responding to crime scenes
- Cell phone extraction
- Crime scene processing

- Adult and juvenile interview and interrogation
- Internal investigations
- Search warrants
- Officer-involved shootings
- Information regarding Crime Stoppers, gangs, National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN), Street Crimes, and the DA's Office

The CID Academy does not receive any separate funding, but it is offered with the support of GPD management. The program is a 5-day (30-hour) basic investigations training course taught through a mix of lectures, discussion, and practical exercises. The subjects are taught by GPD personnel and partner agencies, including the DA's Office.

The CID Academy is viewed positively throughout GPD. Interviewees commented that the training is informative and provides a good overview of the basics of investigating cases. The program appears to serve as a solid foundation for the training needed for new detectives, especially those coming into the position with little or no prior investigative experience.

One limitation of the CID Academy is that it is not offered to detectives immediately upon their assignment to CID. Instead, the program is scheduled once there are enough new personnel to attend. As a result, some detectives do not receive this training until they have already been working cases in CID for months or even years. Detectives who were in CID before the training program development also reported that they had not been offered the training. Interviewees also reported that many, if not most, sergeants assigned to CID do not have investigative experience and had not gone through the CID Academy. Additionally, interviewees said that the CID Academy does not include specialized training on investigating homicide or non-fatal shooting cases.

When it comes to advanced investigative training, the assessment team learned that detective supervisors often recommend classes but that generally it is up to the detective to seek out training opportunities. Interviewees repeatedly said that GPD leadership does not emphasize advanced detective training and that requests for attending fee-based training courses are regularly denied because of budget restrictions.

The primary source of outside training for all GPD personnel is through free classes offered at Guilford Technical Community College. The course topics offered range from interview and interrogation to the tactics of handling an active shooter. Often, detectives seek this training on their own.

In addition to the CID Academy, new detectives are assigned to a DTO. Typically, the detective and DTO will work together, and the DTO will evaluate the detective using a checklist to document progress. Interviewees reported that the DTO program is informal and not governed by consistent standards or protocols. Additionally, personnel said that it is difficult to find detectives with advanced investigative experience and training to serve as DTOs.

Recommendations	13	<p><b>All newly assigned detectives should participate in the DTO program for a 3-month probationary period</b> (Carter, 2013).</p> <p>The DTO program should follow a standard curriculum that includes metrics detectives must meet to join the division. The protocols and metrics used during the program should be included in written SOPs and policies, and the DTO should have a field training officer certification.</p>
	14	<p><b>Expand and institutionalize the current CID Academy. GPD should build upon the foundation of the CID Academy through the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requiring by policy that all newly assigned CID detectives and supervisors attend the program upon joining CID. We recommend the CID Academy be offered on a quarterly basis to ensure new detectives do not go extended periods without adequate training. To support quarterly trainings, GPD could offer the training to neighboring agencies.</li> <li>• Inviting personnel from the Crime Analysis Unit, Criminal Intelligence Squad, and VA units to present during the program, including an overview of their role, concerns, and how they can assist with investigations.</li> <li>• Developing additional training modules for new CID supervisors that cover the supervisory roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>• Developing additional training modules that are specific to certain CID squads, especially Homicide and CAP.</li> </ul>
	15	<p><b>Require all newly assigned CID supervisors to attend the CID Academy.</b></p> <p>The CID Academy should be expanded to include a specialized module for supervisors.</p>
	16	<p><b>Consider creating a Training Coordinator position within CID. This position should be staffed by a CID sergeant.</b></p> <p>Their duties should include monitoring and facilitating the training needs of detectives and ensuring that GPD personnel outside of CID are trained in areas that will benefit homicide and non-fatal shooting investigations. Creating this position will also demonstrate GPD leadership's commitment toward ensuring that detectives receive the training they need to investigate serious violent crimes effectively.</p>
	17	<p><b>Prioritize ensuring that Homicide and CAP detectives receive the appropriate specialized investigative training.</b></p> <p>Specialized training would include using social media in investigations, advanced interview and interrogation techniques, and network analysis to identify linkages between individuals or groups. Detectives should be encouraged to take free courses offered at Guilford Technical Community College.</p>

### 5.2.2 Leadership and Supervision

This assessment was conducted during a time when GPD's leadership was in flux. Not only was the department in the process of hiring a new chief, but it was also facing imminent turnover in senior leadership. Once new leadership is in place, they must take an active role in addressing current challenges facing investigative units. This includes finding ways to expand detective training and development, rethinking how detectives are evaluated, building community trust, and finding creative solutions to resource and staffing challenges. This will help demonstrate to victims, community members, and agency personnel that GPD leaders are committed to prioritizing violent crime, including homicide and non-fatal shooting investigations.

## Direct Supervision and Accountability

In effective investigative units, the unit's leader is recognized as an expert in investigations who can provide daily guidance and direction to detectives. The project team found that although Homicide and CAP Squad supervisors are dedicated and hard workers, their overall lack of investigative experience makes it difficult to provide the investigative guidance and direction that detectives need.

Additionally, the project team found that the roles of corporals and lieutenants were often unclear. It appears that corporals both serve as investigators and fill in for sergeants in their absence and that there was some confusion about the delineation of responsibilities between sergeants and corporals. Interviewees also said that under CID's current structure, the lieutenant position serves more as a "captain's corporal" rather than as someone who takes an active part in leading and overseeing investigations. As a result, Homicide and CAP sergeants have had to take on the multiple roles of manager, supervisor, and leader, which can lead to burnout amid the high number of shooting cases.

Recommendations	18	<b>CID should consider increasing the number of supervisors assigned to the Homicide and CAP units.</b> A recommended practice for investigative unit supervision is one supervisor for every four to six investigators. This ratio generally affords the supervisor the ability to monitor and direct investigations, including for stalled cases, and to guide their investigative experience and training to close cases successfully. With GPD's current configuration, the corporal fills in for the supervisor as needed, which can negatively impact their ability to solve cases.
	19	<b>Clarify the roles of the lieutenant, sergeant, and corporal in the Homicide and CAP Squads. The CID SOP should be revised to reflect these changes to the duties and responsibilities.</b> Lieutenants should supervise and manage the overall investigation of cases in their unit. Sergeants should focus on two primary responsibilities: (1) providing regular investigative support to detectives and (2) holding detectives accountable for completing investigative tasks. This includes knowing what detectives are doing and what steps they are taking in their cases, ensuring that detectives are developing leads and conducting follow-up, and reviewing case files with detectives to discuss strategies. Corporals assigned to Homicide and CAP should perform in the capacity of a senior detective or training detective and not be burdened with supervisory or administrative duties. Working homicide and non-fatal shooting investigations is extremely difficult and requires diligence and momentum. If GPD needs more supervision within Homicide and CAP, they must provide or promote sergeants to fill that void. Simply stated, detectives need to investigate while sergeants need to supervise.

Interviewees said that case clearance is currently the only metric used for evaluating detective performance. However, case clearance does not fully measure whether detectives are conducting quality investigations, and there do not appear to be any other consistent standards for holding detectives accountable for thoroughly performing investigative tasks. It was reported during the personnel interviews that detectives are occasionally transferred out of CID on account of poor performance but that this happens very rarely.

Recommendation	20	<p><b>Strengthen the annual performance review process to include metrics that assess whether detectives are conducting thorough investigations. All GPD members, including CID personnel, should have at least an annual performance review.</b></p> <p>Evaluations for detectives should be designed to measure whether they are performing all necessary investigative tasks, conducting thorough follow-up, properly documenting investigative tasks and findings, and meeting the needs of victims and families. Supervisors should be trained on how to conduct these assessments. Performance metrics and the evaluation process should be documented in CID policies and SOPs.</p>
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### Case Review Process

When done consistently and correctly, case reviews can be an effective way to provide investigative support to detectives, develop new leads and strategies, and hold detectives accountable for completing and documenting investigative tasks. Case reviews can take different forms, including larger group meetings in which representatives from various units discuss open cases or supervisors reviewing cases with detectives to provide substantive feedback.

The project team learned that the Homicide Squad currently holds case reviews, or “Quarterly Open Meetings,” every 90 days. The meetings are attended by the CID Command Staff, the entire Homicide Squad, FSD supervisors, and CSIs. During the meetings, participants review all unsolved cases for the quarter. The lead detective walks through the case status and then attendees engage in roundtable discussions about evidence and leads.

Recommendations	21	<p><b>Both the Homicide and CAP Squads should conduct a weekly squad meeting to discuss new cases and activity from the prior 7 days.</b></p> <p>Coming together to share this information can help participants identify patterns, develop leads and strategies, and offer guidance when cases have stalled. Having the case review on a weekly, rather than quarterly, basis will ensure that information is shared in a timelier manner. Weekly case reviews should be attended by representatives from across the GPD who are involved with various aspects of the homicide or non-fatal shooting investigations, including the FSD, Crime Analysis Unit, Criminal Intelligence Squad, the VA, and other CID investigative squads as needed. When possible, the squad meeting should include a guest to discuss their area of expertise (e.g., an ADA, Crime Stoppers personnel, medical examiner).</p>
	22	<p><b>In addition to weekly squad meetings, GPD should implement a timeframe to conduct a case review of all unsolved murder investigations. These case reviews should be conducted no more than 60 days after the occurrence and should be comprehensive.</b></p> <p>The assigned detective would be required to complete a single summary report documenting the facts of the case and all investigative steps taken. Once the detective completes the report, an in-person meeting must be scheduled to include the assigned detective, homicide supervisor(s), and the CID lieutenant or commander.</p>

### 5.2.3 Physical Work Location and Facilities

All CID squads are physically located together in a GPD substation. The FSD and Crime Analysis Unit are co-located in a separate substation from CID. CID detectives have cubicles in an open plan configuration so that it is easy for them to talk and exchange ideas on an informal basis.



The CID facilities include five interview rooms, which each have audio-visual recording capabilities. CID SOP Section 3.12 (Interview Recording System) requires that all in-custody interrogations for felony arrests or homicides must have audio and video recordings. The CID SOP also notes that some designated computers have software installed that enables them to view the recordings of interrogations. The CID substation also has a “soft” interview room that is used for interviews with victims and family members.

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>23</b>	<p><b>Improve the soft interview room used for interviewing victims and families.</b></p> <p>GPD’s VA created this space and did their best to make it a warm, inviting place for victims and families. However, the room is very small, has extremely thin walls, and is attached to the station’s lobby. The soft interview room should be relocated to a more private location that can accommodate larger groups. The NCCP can work with GPD to identify room design features shown to support individuals who are describing traumatic experiences.</p>
	<b>24</b>	<p><b>GPD should continue providing detectives with useful technological tools that can help reduce wasted time, improve investigations, and allow detectives to focus more of their time on investigative tasks.</b></p> <p>One additional tool that would be helpful is to ensure that detectives can access the National Crime Information Center on their own, rather than having to use other resources to obtain necessary information.</p>

#### 5.2.4 Cold Case Capacity and Process

GPD does not have a designated Cold Case Squad. Instead, there is currently one retired homicide detective who is responsible for investigating all cold cases for the agency. This person is now a civilian and works part-time for GPD. At GPD, a case is classified as a cold case if it is an unsolved homicide and if the original detective has left the Homicide Squad. Active cases stay with the original detective as long as they remain in the Homicide Squad. At the time of this report, GPD had approximately 145 cold cases, as currently defined.

Solving cold cases not only brings offenders to justice, but it can also raise morale within a police department, strengthen community trust and satisfaction in the police, and relieve the burden on detectives working active cases. However, there are also costs to investigating cold cases, and there is little evidence on which cold case investigation models provide the greatest return on investment. Should GPD decide it wants to expand its cold case investigation capacity, the assessment team can provide the agency with resources on how to effectively implement and manage a cold case unit.

### 5.3 Case File Documentation

The assessment team reviewed 87 investigative case files supplied by GPD, consisting of 47 fatal and 40 non-fatal shooting investigations. Although it was apparent that the supplied cases did not include all reports and documents prepared by detectives, there was enough information supplied in the narratives for a review and assessment of GPD’s investigative response to shootings. GPD officers that respond to a fatal or non-fatal shooting incident are required to complete a statement form listing their duties performed and any information that adds to the investigation. These reports were thorough and described the officers’ actions at the crime scene. Likewise, the CSI reports were detailed and listed the duties performed, the processes of the identification and recovery of all evidence, and what scientific testing was conducted. The CSI reports were excellent in their thoroughness.

The reports completed by detectives often lacked important information. Many cases had been classified as “Closed/Inactive Leads Exhausted,” yet they did not document enough information to support the conclusion that all leads were in fact exhausted. Many cases left the reader to wonder what other investigative duties must have been performed to come to that conclusion. Some cases listed a suspect or possible suspect who was never interviewed per the reports. There were also references of a victim’s or suspect’s phone being in police custody and no documentation of whether a search warrant was obtained to retrieve information from the phones. Somehow, these cases were listed as “Leads Exhausted.”

Another investigation listed the case as “Cleared By Arrest,” but information contained in the supplied case package did not support this. The suspect was in custody out of state on another charge, and the GPD case had not been charged by the prosecutor’s office. Of course, this does not comply with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Uniform Crime Reporting guidelines on how cases should be cleared (FBI, 2004).

There were also many reports that had not been reviewed by a supervisor. Additionally, there was only one case that had a crime scene log in the file. Most other cases stated that the log had been booked into evidence. This report should remain with the case package and available for review when necessary. A best practice is for every document produced as part of an investigation to be stored in one location. It appears GPD is maintaining some reports in the case package, others being stored in RMS, and others booked into evidence.

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>25</b>	<p><b>Adopt the “Murder Book” model, which was developed by the Los Angeles Police Department, as a standardized method to capture and retain case information.</b></p> <p>Case file reviews indicate that they are not well-organized. Interviews supported the conclusion that there was no required structure for the files. A structured Murder Book concept would ensure standardized organization and reports, which is critical in managing shooting investigations and prosecutions. Shooting investigations organized consistently based on a standardized protocol as opposed to the habit of an individual investigator also promotes efficiency and accountability. GPD’s current case file organization is less effective than a three-ring binder system with a standard table of contents, chronology section, and consistent organizational protocols. All CDs and DVDs of witness interviews, photographs, and other digital evidence should be properly labeled, identified, and stored. A standardized Murder Book can also be easily scanned and digitized for copying and sharing with prosecutors. Another benefit of a uniform Murder Book is accountability. A supervisor can review a book that has all information under consistent tabs.</p>
	<b>26</b>	<p><b>Include requirements for proper case documentation in the policy manuals governing fatal and non-fatal shooting investigations.</b></p> <p>The importance of case file documentation should be reinforced during training. Policies should include a case file checklist that states which documents must be included in the file and the order in which they should be filed. Supervisors should review the files as part of the detectives’ evaluations. GPD should work with the DA’s Office and USAO when determining the information that must be documented in case files.</p>

## 5.4 Investigating Fatal and Non-fatal Shootings

This section explores how fatal and non-fatal shootings are investigated by GPD and provides recommendations for strengthening practices through every stage of the investigation.

A consistent finding that emerged from interviews and the case file review is that key investigative tasks are too often either skipped or incompletely conducted by fatal and non-fatal shooting investigators. Findings from both the case file review and interviews with personnel outside the Homicide and CAP Squads revealed that investigators sometimes seemed reluctant to pursue leads rigorously. In the case file review, there were multiple instances of investigators failing to follow up on leads, such as not conducting interviews or applying for search warrants or prematurely ending interviews with witnesses and suspects without asking key questions or by making it easy for interviewees to end the interview. In sum, the assessment showed that there is much room for improvement in the amount of follow-up dedicated to shootings by investigators.

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>27</b>	<p><b>Develop and use a standard case checklist of basic investigative tasks that detectives must follow when conducting fatal and non-fatal shooting investigations. The checklist should provide a detailed, step-by-step description of actions to be taken at each stage of the investigative process (Police Executive Research Forum and the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2018).</b></p> <p>Supervisors should hold detectives accountable. The checklist form should include room for the detective to note when the task was completed and the reason for not completing any unfinished tasks. The checklist should include a step for providing victims and their families with information about their rights and expectations for assistance (National Crime Victim Law Institute, 2021). Supervisors should use the case checklist to conduct case reviews at key intervals throughout the investigation. Case review documentation should include the supervisor’s signature, date/time of review, and comments or suggestions.</p>
	<b>28</b>	<p><b>Ensure detectives are held accountable for conducting thorough follow-up investigations,</b> including by implementing the “Murder Book” model of case documentation, weekly case reviews, a revised performance review process, and improved training, as discussed in prior recommendations.</p>

#### 5.4.1 Initial Response and Crime Scene Management

##### Patrol Response to Crime Scenes

Patrol officers are typically the first to arrive at a fatal or non-fatal shooting scene. The patrol supervisor also responds to the scene and updates the Watch Commander, who in turn contacts CID personnel. Upon arriving at the scene, officers secure the scene, look to see if the suspect(s) is still present, attends to victims as needed, conduct a preliminary canvas and attempts to identify witnesses, looks for surveillance cameras, and more. Patrol officers are also responsible for managing the crime scene log, which documents all personnel who enter and exit the scene and what time they enter and exit. The responding officers will also follow the victim to the hospital, and they are responsible for writing the primary incident report.

Because of staffing shortages, it was reported that it is often the case that only two officers are dispatched to the scene of a shooting. If another officer is on patrol nearby they may also respond, but that causes them to put their own calls on hold so they are often unable to remain at the scene for long. Supervisors will often call other units to assist if possible. Based on the 87 case files reviewed as part of this assessment, more than two officers responded to most scenes, though this information was often missing due to a lack of the crime scene log in case review materials. A low number of officers responding to shooting scenes makes it challenging to effectively perform every responsibility at the scene and has been shown to reduce the likelihood that a homicide is cleared (Wellford et al., 2019).

The assessment team also learned that the first responding officers are regularly pulled off the scene before detectives arrive, either because of a high call for service demand or if their shift ends. The first arriving officers, sergeant, and all officers with pertinent information must be required to remain at the scene to brief the handling detective personally upon their arrival. It is too common for critical information to be lost or not transferred accurately when it is explained second- or third-hand.

Recommendations	29	<b>Develop SOPs for the response to homicide or major crime scenes.</b> The SOPs should clarify the expectations for all personnel who respond to the scene and include a checklist of tasks that must be completed. This should include the requirement for the first officers and sergeant at scene to remain present for the briefing and handing off the responsibility of the scene to detectives.
	30	<b>Provide additional training to patrol officers on responding to shooting scenes.</b> The assessment team learned that officers currently do not receive much training on crime scene response outside of the CID Academy, and interviewees said that it would be useful to participate in additional practical exercises and role-play training on how to properly manage a crime scene. It would also be helpful for Homicide and CAP Squad detectives to provide training on crime scene response to patrol officers during roll calls, especially if officers have made recent mistakes at a scene.

### CID Crime Scene Response and Coordination with Patrol

Interviewees said that there is a big difference between the CID response to incidents depending on whether they occur during business hours (when specialized units are available and CID detectives are on duty) or overnight and on weekends (when only the on-call detectives respond). GPD should explore ways to ensure that enough detectives are available to provide a timely response to the scene, which has been shown to increase the likelihood a homicide is solved (Wellford & Cronin, 1999).

Upon arriving at the scene, the detectives take over the scene and talk to the responding officers about what they have learned. The assessment team found that there are often challenges regarding communication between the case detective and responding officer. For example, sometimes the responding officer may leave the scene before the detective arrives, such as when there is a shift changes, the detective is slow to arrive, or the responding officer accompanies the victim to the hospital. When this happens, it is possible that the detective and responding officer may never have a chance to discuss the case.

Even when the patrol officer is required to complete a report before leaving, that report is put into the computer system and may not be seen by the detective for hours or longer. Furthermore, the project team learned that it is very rare for detectives to follow up with the responding officer to get more details and information.

Recommendation	31	<b>Explore ways to improve coordination between the case detective and responding officer, both at the scene and after.</b> SOPs should mandate that the first responding patrol unit and supervisor remain on the scene for its duration. They must also be responsible for briefing the Homicide or CAP unit upon their arrival. The case detective should also hold a “day after” incident meeting with the patrol officer or patrol supervisor who first responded to the scene.
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Several interviewees said that the CID investigative squads sometimes rely on patrol officers to conduct the bulk of the investigation at the scene. For example, it was reported during the personnel interviews that patrol officers at the scene of a fatal or non-fatal shooting have been asked or directed by detectives to write search warrants, *Mirandize* and interrogate suspects, and obtain arrest warrants.

Recommendation

32

**The crime scene response SOPs (detailed in Recommendation 28) should clearly delineate which tasks should be performed by patrol officers and which should be performed by detectives.**

If patrol officers are being asked to perform tasks that are investigative or outside of their usual responsibilities, they should receive training on how to complete those tasks safely and effectively.

#### 5.4.2 Developing Trust and Engaging Witnesses

Personnel throughout the department said that it is challenging to obtain participation or cooperation from witnesses and victims in a shooting investigation, especially if the victim or witness is exposed to potential criminal liability. Multiple interviewees also explained that Homicide and CAP detectives do not always dedicate sufficient effort to following up with potential witnesses and engaging them to earn their participation in the case.

Trust between police agencies and the communities they serve is particularly important when it comes to earning participation from witnesses in investigations and solving violent crimes. Without strong police–community relationships, it can be difficult to motivate members of the public to report violent incidents, participate in investigations, testify in court, and engage in the criminal justice process (Wellford & Cronin, 1999). GPD has strong existing relationships with several community-based organizations that work with victims and witnesses of violent crime. There are many community-based groups that act as current or potential partners in GPD’s efforts to develop and engage witnesses. Many recommendations in this section address how GPD can further leverage these relationships to strengthen its ability to encourage witness participation in investigations to improve clearance rates.

In interacting with victims and witnesses of violent incidents, it is important to acknowledge consider the trauma they have experienced. A trauma-informed approach will lead to better interaction between law enforcement and victims/witnesses, which may improve cooperation, increase victim/witness sense of safety and feelings of trust, and elicit more information for investigative purposes.

Recommendation

33

**Consider a required training for all law enforcement personnel (both sworn and non-sworn) who interact with victims and witnesses about how trauma impacts the brain and body, which in turn affects a victim/witnesses’ ability to recall details of an event or to communicate about an incident.**

Training will allow law enforcement personnel to better understand the behaviors of “difficult victims/witnesses,” which may be related to trauma. Consider an additional required training for all investigators about trauma-informed interviewing techniques.

During interviews with community organizations and respondents who work closely with them, participants shared that members of community groups have resident trust and respect. As such, members of community organizations often receive information from witnesses that they can provide to investigators or to GPD’s VA. When asked why they believed that witnesses share information with them,

community group interviewees said that witnesses may want to share information to release the burden of carrying the information. Furthermore, some witnesses want to have the information acted upon but may not want to report it directly to law enforcement. Therefore, some witnesses may feel safer passing information along to a civilian who is not law enforcement because they are not directly violating the “no snitching” code.

Recommendation

34

**Consider building the capacity of community groups to serve as intermediaries, or “civilian buffers,” between witnesses/victims and GPD.**

It is important to recognize the unique role that community groups can play in soliciting actionable information about shooting incidents. Consider ways to develop and implement more formal approaches, in partnership with community groups, to allow community groups to grow their role as intermediaries in this area.

The findings from community groups and those who work closely with them highlighted the importance of having trusted community groups present in the community in response to shooting incidents to demonstrate partnership with law enforcement and to encourage the community to come forward with information. The MSAGV group currently holds walks in the community in partnership with GPD where residents have come forward to community organizers with information. The walks are typically done in honor of someone who has been murdered and are selected by MSAGV each month. These efforts should be continued.

Recommendation

35

**Develop and standardize community-led responses to shooting incidents so that all shooting incidents meeting certain criteria are responded to uniformly and to increase the likelihood that trusted community groups and Crime Stoppers representatives are present in the community in response to violence incidents.**

- a. One action would be to implement community-led neighborhood canvassing, in partnership with GPD, in areas where shootings have occurred. Canvassing efforts would include conversations with residents, door hangers, and materials to solicit information from potential witnesses. GPD should also look to provide options for potential witnesses to provide information, including Crime Stoppers, a civilian buffer from a community-based organization, law enforcement, or a VA. Include family members of those impacted by violence as messengers to encourage witness participation.
- b. Include written materials messages to inspire or encourage witnesses to share information. See p. 34 of the following resource for an example: <https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/Publications/cops-p158-pub.pdf> (PERF, 2009). Messages to the community should aim to reset norms about sharing information and promote a sense of shared responsibility.
- c. Establish information-sharing agreements and policies between GPD and community-based organizations serving in this role so that community-based organizations will know what to do with any information received and what they can expect law enforcement to do with information.

Note: Victim-serving organizations may have policies that prioritize victim empowerment, safety, and confidentiality which may conflict with sharing information with law enforcement for investigative purposes. Any potential challenges should be discussed and addressed in the development of information-sharing agreements and policies.

Crime Stoppers is a tool that GPD can use to encourage witness participation in investigations. However, the community may be reluctant to use Crime Stoppers to provide tips if they are unsure of whether they will truly remain anonymous and if they are unsure of how the Crime Stoppers process works. Crime

Stoppers personnel work to create education and awareness about the program in several ways, including presenting at schools and to community partners, participating in candlelight vigils, and participating in community walks organized by MSAGV. Many victims, witnesses, and offenders are juveniles, so Crime Stoppers is expanding educational and awareness efforts into local high schools. Crime Stoppers interviewees noted the importance of having “civilian buffers” as a way for witnesses to provide information to someone other than law enforcement and stated that some community members view Crime Stoppers as a civilian buffer. Crime Stoppers serves as an intermediary between witnesses and law enforcement officers. Some witnesses are motivated to share information to release the burden of holding the information, but they do not want to go directly to law enforcement. Many tipsters are not motivated by financial reward (only half of tipsters requested compensation).

Recommendations	36	<p><b>Promote the use of Crime Stoppers as a safe, anonymous way for community members to provide information regarding crimes.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Update educational and awareness efforts about Crime Stoppers to include the message that the program is a safe, confidential way to report information and help address violence in the community. State that no one’s identity has ever been compromised as a result of their participation in Crime Stoppers.</li> <li>b. GPD should continue to promote Crime Stoppers and have Community Resource Officers and School Resource Officers advertise the program.</li> <li>c. Community-based organizations should also promote Crime Stoppers at their events, as individuals affiliated with trusted community-based organizations could be effective messengers.</li> <li>d. Crime Stoppers messaging to encourage witnesses to provide information should acknowledge the various motivations of witnesses to report information and highlight that the Crime Stoppers program is separate from GPD.</li> </ul>
	37	<p><b>Develop a standard process or set of criteria for identifying which cases will be publicized through Crime Stoppers and which tips will be followed up on. This process should be included in the SOP.</b></p> <p>Crime Stoppers personnel rely on detectives to tell them which cases they want publicized for tips. It is unclear how these cases are selected or whether there is a consistent set of criteria for determining which cases to publicize.</p>
	38	<p><b>Strategize about campaigns or efforts to combat “no snitching” norms.</b> Community interviewees shared that victims and third-party witnesses are often reluctant to come forward with information because of fear of retaliation, which may be actual or perceived. Addressing community fears about intimidation or retaliation is a part of the overall strategy to combat community norms about “no snitching” in Recommendation 40.</p>
	39	<p><b>Develop a protocol for GPD and partners to better identify, record, and respond to acts of victim/witness intimidation. Tracking levels of witness intimidation over time would support GPD’s crime prevention and investigation strategies and allow for evaluations of practices meant to combat the crime.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Use existing tools that have been developed for practitioners to develop protocols to identify and respond to victim/witness intimidation and to promote victim/witness safety. Review the following (AEquitas, 2014) resource: <a href="https://aequitasresource.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Benchmarks-for-Progress.pdf">https://aequitasresource.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Benchmarks-for-Progress.pdf</a>.</li> <li>b. Increase identification of potential victim/witness intimidation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Educating law enforcement, prosecutorial personnel, and victim/witness-serving personnel about the various forms of intimidation.</li> <li>ii. Educating victims/witnesses about the various forms of intimidation and manipulation they may encounter and how and to whom it should be reported.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- iii. Checking in regularly with victims/witnesses. Be alert for signs of intimidation, such as increased apprehension or anxiety, and increased reluctance to speak with law enforcement.
- c. Ensure the collection and documentation of evidence related to victim/witness intimidation by:
  - i. Instructing victims/witnesses on how to preserve evidence of intimidation or harassment (including online and social media evidence).
  - ii. Ensuring that communication on a victim/witness's personal device or computer is properly documented and collected according to departmental procedures.
  - iii. Developing a process and point of contact to ensure that all instances of victim/witness intimidation are shared with and documented by GPD, including the type of intimidation act or threat that was committed and how the instance was identified by GPD or other reporting agency.

The “no snitching” code was mentioned across several interviews as a reason why victims/witnesses do not participate in shooting investigations. The code or norm not to snitch may be a powerful narrative within the community that must be addressed to increase the likelihood that victims/witnesses will come forward with information. A resource developed by Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) (2009) may be a good source of information as shown in the recommendations below. According to the PERF (2009) resource, addressing the reasons why the “no snitching” code exists could potentially alleviate barriers preventing victims and witnesses from coming forward with information. First, some community members distrust the police. Second, the criminal justice system moves slowly. This can lead to community perceptions that the police are not doing enough to hold offenders accountable or that police do not care, and this may encourage some community members to retaliate against offenders themselves. Also, the delay in the criminal justice process allows time for offenders to intimidate potential victims and witnesses before the case is closed or prosecuted. The PERF (2009) resource provides strategies to combat these various factors, which contribute to the “no snitching” norm: “Communities, working with police, must change the culture... as a community, we allow this to happen... Some of the solutions have to come from the community... We need to have so many people cooperating with the police that there is a tipping point. The message will not be ‘stop snitching,’ but rather these are our neighborhoods and we will come forward” (PERF, 2009).

Recommendation

40

**Develop strategies to combat the “no snitching” norm in the community.**

- a. Community members must be convinced that working with the police benefits the community and that doing so is safe. Refer to the resource called *The Stop Snitching Phenomenon: Breaking the Code of Silence* developed by PERF and funded by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (PERF, 2009), which includes promising practices and potential solutions to address the “stop snitching” phenomenon.
- b. Identify and review existing campaigns to combat “no snitching” norms in other communities. Lansing, Michigan is a peer NCCP site. Community-based groups in Lansing are leading these types of efforts.
- c. Consider convening a working group including community leaders and community-led organizations to discuss strategies around this topic. Partner with community groups to develop forums and spaces to discuss norms around “no snitching” which would include listening to the community (especially young people) about their perceptions of the norm, why it exists, and suggestions to overcome it. If Crime Stoppers builds relationships with local schools, consider partnering with community-based organizations as credible messengers to present information during Crime Stoppers sessions to combat the “no snitching” norm.



Community-based groups indicated that, in general, the community perceives GPD positively. However, families can become frustrated when the investigative process moves slowly or when there is an unfavorable prosecution outcome. They reported that many community members do not fully understand the criminal justice process and what aspects of a case are out of GPD’s control. Negative criminal justice outcomes or experiences can damage community perceptions of GPD when GPD is blamed for criminal justice decisions and processes beyond their control. Incorrect information or having an experience inconsistent with expectations may lead some victims and witnesses to disengage from the process. Therefore, setting accurate expectations up front and providing ongoing communication and support are good practices to sustain longer-term engagement throughout the investigation and prosecution of a case.

Recommendations	41	<p><b>Educate victims, witnesses, and families about the criminal justice process and what they should expect should they engage with law enforcement investigations and interviews.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Investigators and prosecutors should provide consistent and transparent information to victims and witnesses about what to expect throughout the process. This would include information about the subpoena process, how to identify witness intimidation and how to report it, the anticipated criminal justice response to witness intimidation, and notification of court proceedings.</li> <li>b. Community groups and community-serving agencies who work with victims and witnesses could help prepare individuals about what their participation in investigations and the court process would look like and possibly provide ongoing support to victims and witnesses throughout the process. First, these groups and agencies need to be appropriately educated about the process so that they can provide accurate information to others.</li> <li>c. Community groups could extend their educational efforts about the criminal justice system and various actors’ roles and responsibilities beyond just victims, witnesses, and families that are already justice-involved to the broader community. The more that the community understands about the police and the criminal justice process, the better prepared that they will be to participate in the process if needed. Leaders and groups that are already trusted by the community would also be trusted educators in this role.</li> </ul>
	42	<p><b>Conduct a formal inventory of community-based and community-serving organizations and convene leaders of community groups to discuss ways to develop and implement strategies to address the recommendations in this section.</b></p> <p>Community groups can take on some of the work and responsibilities in the area of developing and engaging witnesses to alleviate demand on GPD to do so, and community groups may be better suited than law enforcement in this area to facilitate community participation in investigations. A formal inventory of community groups involved in gun violence prevention and response, or public safety more generally would establish a pool of potential community partners available to assist GPD with development of strategies and implementation to address relevant recommendations. The project team learned that faith-based leaders have been called upon to do more to address gun violence in Greensboro. Faith leaders are viewed as instrumental messengers to their congregations about GPD’s efforts and the importance of participating in the criminal justice process to address violent crime. Convene community groups to discuss the relevant recommendations in this section and develop strategies. GPD should formally acknowledge that the police cannot address the issue of gun violence alone—the community is a necessary partner in the effort and community groups are the experts who hold the knowledge and power to address the issues related to victim and witness participation and engagement.</p>

### 5.4.3 Accessing and Gathering Digital Evidence

The Computer Crimes Unit (CCU) performs digital forensics on any technology that stores data or has memory, including cell phones, thumb drives, computers, tablets, and digital video recorders. The CCU is currently made up of two detectives assigned to the Fraud Squad. These two detectives handle the extraction and analysis of all digital evidence at GPD. The project team found the CCU detectives to be very highly motivated and qualified. Despite only having two members to process up to 75 devices in a month, the unit has a backlog of only 2 weeks. The recommendations in this section seek to build upon this strength and institutionalize the CCU detectives' knowledge and capabilities.

Recommendations	43	<p><b>Ensure that the policies and SOPs governing the CCU are up to date and are being followed.</b></p> <p>CID SOP No. 4.13 (Digital Forensics Lab Procedure) outlines the procedures for requesting, processing, and documenting digital evidence. CCU members, and the investigators making digital evidence requests, should review this SOP and ensure that it is being followed. If any part of the SOP is outdated, it should be revised.</p> <p>CCU should also develop a flow chart to include in the SOP and training materials that describes what information to request in various types of detectives.</p> <p>GPD needs to ensure that the current extensive knowledge held by the CCU members is institutionalized into formal policies and procedures. This will help ensure continuity when there is turnover in the unit.</p>
	44	<p><b>Prioritize ensuring that CCU members receive the annual training necessary for maintaining their certifications.</b></p> <p>The project team learned that although CCU personnel have requested annual training, they have not received it in 4 or 5 years because of budgetary concerns. Because of this, their certifications have expired. Although they can still testify in court as experts, the lack of certification makes their testimony weaker.</p>
	45	<p><b>Provide training and information to CID detectives on the digital forensic capabilities of the CCU.</b></p> <p>Interviewees said that the CCU and detectives from the Homicide and CAP Squads have a good working relationship. Additionally, members of the CCU present during the CID Academy and strive to informally educate detectives on the unit's capabilities. Despite these efforts, some detectives are not aware of the extent of services that CCU can provide. For example, CCU can analyze device data, conduct narrow searches for specific dates and information, and present a more detailed analysis upon request.</p> <p>To help increase awareness, CCU should attend CID squad meetings or morning briefings to personally explain all of the services they are able to provide them. It would also be beneficial to give real life examples of the many times they were able to assist detectives and help further investigations.</p>
	46	<p><b>Provide training to prosecutors about the CCU's capabilities and services.</b></p> <p>CCU performs many services that could be useful to the DA's Office. CCU members have offered to provide training to the DA's Office on the services they offer, how to understand extracted data, and how to prepare digital evidence for trial. However, interviewees said that this offer of training was rejected by the DA's Office.</p> <p>GPD leaders should work with leaders at the DA's Office to incorporate a training course into the orientation for new ADAs. The course could be taught by members of the CCU. Courses could be offered to all ADAs whenever CCU implements a new technology or tool.</p>

#### 5.4.4 Coordination with Other CID Squads

Collaboration and communication between various investigative units can be critical to an effective homicide or shooting investigation (Wellford, 2018). Members of different units may have pertinent information to share about suspects, witnesses, or leads, and this vital information may fall through the cracks without strong coordination.

The project team found that there are strong relationships between individual detectives on different squads within CID. However, interviewees said that it is up to the detectives themselves to foster this collaboration, and there is no formal coordination or information-sharing protocols coming from the top. One way to address this is through the weekly meetings detailed in Section 5.2.2 (Leadership and Supervision) of this report.

#### Street Crimes Unit

When it comes to shootings, the SCU is mainly assigned to cases involving shootings into occupied and unoccupied dwellings. The SCU is also usually the first member of CID to respond to an active homicide or shooting scene, particularly during nights and weekends when Homicide and CAP Squad detectives are off duty. Interviewees said that in these cases, SCU detectives do not necessarily take over the scene when they arrive. Instead, they look for cameras, help interview witnesses, and begin uncovering background on the shooting location and potential people involved. Some interviewees also said that SCU detectives do not stick around a shooting crime scene for long and instead leave to track down potential suspects. SCU also helps CAP and Homicide detectives with follow-up later in the investigation. This may include helping locate witnesses and suspects, executing high-risk search warrants, performing surveillance, conducting open-source investigations using social media, and collecting intelligence.

Recommendations	47	<b>Shift the responsibility of conducting open-source investigations to investigative aides embedded within the Homicide and CAP Squads (see Recommendation 1 for details about investigative aides).</b> Investigative aides can be trained to perform some intelligence responsibilities, including conducting open-source investigations using social media. This would take the burden off SCU detectives and better integrate the function into homicide and shooting investigations. If the open-source investigation function remains with SCU, GPD must provide SCU members with specific training on conducting open-source investigations using social media.
	48	<b>Build upon strong existing relationships between SCU and the Homicide and CAP Squads by requiring Homicide and CAP detectives to consult with the SCU at the outset of each investigation.</b> Investigators should discuss how SCU's capabilities—intel gathering, surveillance, opens source investigations—could benefit the investigation and strategize next steps for the investigation.

#### Criminal Intelligence Squad

The Criminal Intelligence Squad (CIS) includes one sergeant, one corporal, and six to seven detectives. Most of GPD's federal task force officers, including those assigned to the FBI and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), are also housed in CIS. Like with many of the specialized units, the project team found the CIS personnel to be well-qualified and dedicated to their mission.

49

**Review CID SOP No. 4.3 (Criminal Intelligence Squad) to ensure it is up to date with CIS's current practices and revise it if necessary.**

CIS should also review the SOP to ensure it is being followed.

CIS is responsible for gathering, analyzing, and disseminating intelligence data related to subversive groups, including gangs. Personnel throughout all levels of GPD repeatedly said that gang-related violence is the primary driver behind shootings and homicides in Greensboro, an assertion that has been supported by the project team's review of shooting case files. However, CIS is the only unit that qualifies gang validations, and GPD has no specialized gang unit tasked with investigating gangs.

50

**Given the proliferation of gang-related violence, GPD should dedicate additional resources toward gang validation and investigation.**

In lieu of creating a dedicated gang unit, GPD could ensure that CIS has the personnel, training, and tools it needs to perform gang-related work.

If a homicide or shooting appears to be gang-involved, the CIS detective should reach out to the lead case detective and obtain information about the crime. The CIS detective can then perform the gang validation and forward results back to the investigator.

51

**Require Homicide and CAP Squad detectives to consult with CIS at the beginning of each case and during the critical stages of all investigations that may include persons or items on which CIS maintains information (e.g., potential gang-related cases).**

Although there are good relationships between detectives in CIS and in the Homicide/CAP Squads, there appears to be no formal coordination or required information sharing. This step should be included in the CID SOP and the case checklist detailed in Recommendation 27.

52

**A representative from CIS should be required to attend the weekly meeting/case reviews detailed in Recommendations 21–22.** This would help promote communication and coordination between these units.

#### 5.4.5 Crime Analysis

The Crime Analysis Unit (CAU) is located in the Information Services Division and comprises five crime analysts and one supervisor. Each analyst is assigned to a district and specific specialized units. According to GPD's *Organizational Structure and Functions Guide*, "Crime Analysis provides reports and research to assist administrative personnel in forecasting, planning, and budgeting...[and] provides technical assistance for Patrol Divisions." In furtherance of these goals, CAU disseminates a Weekly Violent Crime Bulletin that maps out shootings and firearm-related offenses, develops a weekly summary report of crimes for CompStat meetings, and sends maps to patrol units identifying crime hot spots. CAU also currently staffs GPD's Real Time Crime Center.

Recommendations	53	<p><b>Expand the role of CAU to focus on leveraging data sources to analyze and better understand the violent crime problem to improve investigative responses to shootings and homicides.</b></p> <p>The project team learned that CAU focuses primarily on using data and statistical analysis to support administrative functions, rather than providing investigative support. As a result, CAU does not currently give priority to violent crimes. As part of this effort, GPD should consider creating positions with CAU for a specially designated gun crime analyst or violent crime analyst.</p>
	54	<p><b>Crime analysts should be trained and certified through the International Association of Crime Analysts or another organization.</b> Training should include systematic analysis of NIBIN hits, link analysis, social network analysis of intelligence and data on gang members and other violent crime suspects, and how to leverage the ATF NIBIN Enforcement Support System analytic tool.</p>

Interviewees indicated that CAU is largely disconnected from the Homicide and CAP Squads. Not only are they located in separate divisions and physical locations, but detectives do not seem to fully understand CAU’s capabilities and how it could assist with investigations. Detectives do not proactively use CAU or consult with analysts during cases, and CAU personnel do not proactively offer assistance to CID. When the units do communicate, it is typically through text or email rather than in person.

Recommendation	55	<p><b>Require detectives to consult with CAU at the outset of homicide or non-fatal shooting investigations. This step should be included in the CID SOP and the case checklist detailed in Recommendation 27.</b></p> <p>In turn, CAU analysts should be proactive in using data and analysis to provide support for detectives, the CIS, and investigative aides who perform intelligence tasks.</p> <p>CAU could provide investigative support by analyzing data to identify trends and patterns, providing mapping and link analysis, and creating linkage charts using an analysis of NIBIN hits.</p>
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## 5.5 Physical and Digital Evidence and Laboratory Analysis

### 5.5.1 FSD Organization and Staffing

The FSD is responsible for collecting, processing, analyzing, reporting on, and storing physical evidence. FSD and the Forensic Lab facilities are located in a substation. FSD consists wholly of non-sworn personnel and is led by a director and assistant director. There are three main sections within FSD:

- **CSI Section:** The CSI Section includes four CSI supervisors; 18 Field CSIs who provide 24/7 coverage for crime scene response; four forensic specialists who process evidence in the Forensic Lab, respond to homicides, and act as the lead field investigator throughout the entirety of a homicide investigation; and one forensic imaging specialist who assists with specialized photography.
- **Forensics Section:** This section includes two latent print examiners (one is part-time), one part-time employee who handles print intake, and one certified firearms examiner. There are also two contractors, including one ATF contractor, who currently assist with firearms processing and testing.
- **Property & Evidence Section:** This section includes one supervisor and five evidence technicians.

DNA evidence is processed by GPD’s Forensics Specialists and then sent to the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory.

The project team found that personnel throughout GPD view the FSD positively. The division's leadership appears strong and capable, and members of the FSD appear to be doing effective work even with staffing and resource challenges. Additionally, FSD personnel appear to be adequately trained and have access to the training they need.

However, like other units throughout GPD, the FSD is experiencing several vacancies and staffing shortages. These vacancies have led to backlogs in evidence processing, which has a negative impact on homicide and shooting investigations. Personnel said that one challenge is finding someone to perform background checks on the applicants, because there are currently a limited number of people within the department who do them.

Recommendations	56	<p><b>Make every effort to fill the vacancies within FSD, particularly those that have resulted in backlogs or other negative impacts on violent crime investigations. GPD should also work with FSD to identify areas where creating additional positions would help facilitate successful homicide and shooting investigations. The following staffing needs should be prioritized:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. <b>Creating a second position for a certified firearms examiner.</b> FSD currently has only one full-time certified firearms examiner position, which is problematic given the mandate that one examiner is required to conduct the examination and a second is required to confirm the leads identified through NIBIN. FSD has tried to address this by having an ATF contractor perform verifications; however, this process is not as efficient and creates delays in producing results to detectives. Given the volume of gun violence in Greensboro, creating a second firearms examiner position should be a priority for GPD.</li><li>b. <b>Filling the Field CSI vacancies and hiring two additional forensic specialists.</b> This will help ensure that Field Specialists, who typically have more training and experience at handling homicides, will be able to continue serving as lead field investigator on these serious cases.</li><li>c. <b>Filling the vacant position for full-time latent print examiner.</b> Interviewees said that when the section had two full-time certified examiners, it typically had an 8-hour turnaround time for testing latent prints. The current vacancy has created backlogs, and now the turnaround time is closer to 1 month.</li><li>d. <b>Creating a supervisory position in the Forensics Section to oversee the Firearms Examiners and Latent Print Examiners.</b> Currently, personnel in those sections report directly to FSD's Assistant Director.</li><li>e. <b>Filling the two vacancies in the Property &amp; Evidence Section,</b> because these vacancies have contributed to a backlog of approximately 2 months in the evidence intake process</li></ul>
	57	<p><b>All sections of FSD should be accredited under ISO/IEC 17020, which is one of the major forensic accreditation standards.</b></p> <p>Currently, only the Firearms and Tool Marks and Latent Print Sections have this accreditation. One challenge to achieving accreditation is that the process would require hiring an additional person to manage quality control. Presently, there are not enough personnel to handle this responsibility</p>

### 5.5.2 Firearms and Ballistics Evidence

After retrieving a firearm, the officer turns it into one of the various substations throughout Greensboro. FSD personnel are responsible for making runs to the substations to retrieve the guns, which can create delays in processing firearms evidence.

Recommendation

58

**Require officers to submit firearms directly to the Forensics Lab or another centralized location, rather than at substations throughout the city.**

GPD policy currently gives detectives 60 days after evidence is submitted to request that the evidence be tested for prints or DNA. This creates a particular challenge with respect to firearms because test firing weapons can potentially compromise print and DNA evidence. Therefore, the Forensic Lab cannot test fire guns until either they have been processed for prints or DNA or the 60-day window for making the request has closed. This creates delays in the test fire process, which can seriously hinder homicide and shooting investigations. Interviewees said that in most cases, requests for testing for prints or DNA are made well before the 60-day window has closed and closer to 14 days.

Recommendation

59

**Reduce the 60-day window that investigators have for requesting that firearms be tested for prints or DNA. All crime guns should be swabbed for prints and DNA upon collection or submission to the Forensics Lab.**

The swabs should be submitted for DNA processing for all firearms involved in a homicide. Ideally, FSD should aim for 48 hours between collecting a firearm and test firing it for submission to NIBIN. At the least, this window between collection and test firing should be no longer than 7 days.

Once the firearm has been test fired, the information is entered into NIBIN. GPD is a NIBIN partner site, which means that ATF has provided GPD with a NIBIN machine that grants the department access to the NIBIN system. Several people at GPD have been cross trained to enter casings into the NIBIN system, including two CSIs, a CSI supervisor, and a property & evidence technician. If NIBIN identifies a potential lead, a trained firearms examiner must agree with the assessment to verify the results.

This correlation process can potentially provide helpful case linkages and investigative leads for detectives to follow up on. FSD sends the leads to CIS, which then translates it into a user-friendly report for the lead case investigator. An analyst with the CAU is assigned to track and map NIBIN leads, and members of the SCU will also follow up on leads generated by NIBIN.

Recommendations

60

**Leverage the existing partnership with ATF to launch a Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC).** The initiation of a CGIC would promote efficiencies in collection and processing of crime gun evidence and timely entry into NIBIN. This would also allow for use of eTrace for more streamlined tracking of firearms.

61

**Maintain a strong relationship with ATF and continue to leverage ATF's capabilities to assist with firearms investigations.** ATF offers an analysis tool called the NIBIN Enforcement Support System, which GPD can use to strengthen its use of NIBIN.

62

**Train additional evidence technicians or other personnel to make NIBIN entries.** CSIs are not required to make NIBIN entries, so training other personnel to help with this effort would free up CSIs for their other duties.

During its review of fatal and non-fatal shooting case files, the project team found that several files described the existence of NIBIN leads but did not contain details about an investigation into those leads. It is unclear whether the issue is that the leads were not adequately investigated, or whether the investigation was simply not documented thoroughly in the case file. Given how often bullets and casings were collected at crime scenes among the 87 shooting cases reviewed as part of this assessment (see **Table 4-2**), it seems important that effort is dedicated to ensuring investigators are swiftly processing this evidence and thoroughly investigating the resultant leads.

Recommendation

63

**GPD should review how it uses NIBIN leads as part of fatal and non-fatal shooting investigations.**

This review should examine how often these leads are investigated and the outcome of any such investigations.

### 5.5.3 Property and Evidence Storage

The Property & Evidence storage warehouse is located in the same facility as the Forensics Lab. There is a separate entrance to the warehouse area for the public, which has a small waiting room and public hours. There is also a vehicle storage lot that can hold 75 vehicles. A state biohazard statute makes it difficult to dispose of any evidence, even cars, because of the possible presence of touch DNA. This has caused GPD to stop bringing cars to the storage lot when possible, to avoid not being able to dispose of them.

Recommendation

64

**Maintain the strong security and surveillance measures currently in place in the Forensic Lab and the Property & Evidence warehouse.**

GPD recently installed a new camera system in these areas that has facial recognition capabilities. Additionally, each of the evidence and processing rooms and the warehouse had sign-in sheets to document anyone entering or exiting the room. GPD should continue taking these measures to protect the integrity of the Forensic Lab.

Although the storage warehouse is very large, it is currently at or near maximum capacity. The main driver behind this is the number of firearms that must be stored in the warehouse because of a 2013 North Carolina law that prohibits the destruction of firearms. Additionally, GPD policy prohibits selling or trading seized guns. As a result, the agency is currently storing almost 11,000 firearms. GPD's firearms vault is designed to hold only 3,000 firearms, so the agency had to create a relocation area inside the warehouse outside of the vault to hold the overflow guns. Once the relocation area also filled up, they began putting guns in recycling bins provided by the City of Greensboro.



<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>65</b>	<p><b>Strive to dispose of stored items other than firearms in as timely a manner as possible.</b></p> <p>Although GPD is not permitted to dispose of firearms, disposing of other items can help free up much-needed storage space.</p> <p>GPD can dispose of non-firearm items that have been seized as evidence as long as the agency has a court order. However, interviewees said that there is often no follow-up from detectives or ADAs to obtain the court order, so items end up staying in storage longer than necessary. Detectives handling non-fatal shooting cases should consider property disposition when the statute of limitations for the incident has expired. They should flag this date in the RMS.</p>
	<b>66</b>	<p><b>Secure contracts with companies that can dispose of stored items.</b></p> <p>The project team learned that GPD lost a contract with one of the incinerators they use to dispose of narcotics. The agency should strive to maintain these contracts and ensure they have the mechanisms needed to dispose of stored items.</p>
	<b>67</b>	<p><b>Continue exploring ways to build onto the warehouse and alleviate the storage issue.</b></p> <p>FSD is currently exploring claiming an adjacent warehouse space to use for extra storage. This would be a positive step toward improving the current storage conditions.</p>
	<b>68</b>	<p><b>Consider designating a separate area in the warehouse to hold evidence from cold cases.</b></p> <p>This is a practice used by many law enforcement agencies.</p>

## 5.6 Case Prosecution

### 5.6.1 District Attorney's Office

The Guilford County DA's Office has 14 Assistant District Attorneys (ADAs) assigned to the Superior Court, which handles felony criminal cases. ADAs are not assigned to specific types of felonies, so there are no ADAs who solely handle homicide cases. There are two GPD officers embedded in the DA's Office who liaison with detectives, a practice that the ADAs find helpful.

If a homicide occurs and a suspect exists, the Homicide Squad detective usually calls the DA's Office the day of the incident or the next day. They then maintain a relationship with that ADA throughout the case, even though they are not dedicated homicide prosecutors. The DA's Office uses the Discovery Automation System (DAS), a state-wide discovery system used by district attorneys, to share case file information with GPD detectives. Per GPD's policy, when a detective prepares a case file for prosecution, they scan it into GPD's RMS, make a copy for the DA, and upload the copy into the DAS.

Personnel throughout GPD reported an overall lack of coordination and trust between CID and the DA's Office. Although some individual, experienced ADAs were thought of well, the project team found that overall, there is a deep lack of trust between the two agencies. This was compounded by the recent high-profile indictment of a GPD officer related to an officer-involved shooting. Senior GPD detectives reported fewer problems working with prosecutors in the DA's Office, primarily because of the longstanding relationships they have built with staff in that office. ADAs do not participate in the quarterly Homicide Squad case reviews, and there are no regular meetings or formal information-sharing protocols between the two agencies.

Discussions with community-based groups revealed that community members often do not differentiate between GPD and the DA’s Office when it comes to who controls trial strategies and case outcomes. This can lead to general frustration with GPD among the public or victims’ families when they view the case outcome as unfavorable, even when the case is under the DA’s Office control.

Recommendations	69	<b>Arrange a facilitated discussion between leadership of the GPD and the DA’s Office to promote better communication and coordination.</b> This discussion should result in an ongoing plan to resolve important conflicts during the conduct of an investigation and trial.
	70	<b>Develop formal information-sharing protocols between GPD and the DA’s Office. This could include the following:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Continuing to invite ADAs to teach courses at the CID Academy, as is current practice;</li> <li>b. Hosting twice-annual meetings between CID detectives and DA’s Office representatives to share information regarding legal updates, new investigative technologies, discovery issues, challenges facing both organizations, and any ongoing concerns;</li> <li>c. Institutionalizing regular meetings between agency leadership or senior agency representatives to discuss any issues impacting investigations and the trial of these cases; and</li> <li>d. Requiring detectives to meet with the ADA to review trial preparation before any homicide or shooting case.</li> </ul>
	71	<b>Develop a checklist for investigators that define the key priorities for the DA’s Office in the submission of cases.</b> GPD and the DA’s Office should collaborate to develop a checklist for detectives to consult when planning investigative strategies. The checklist should include tasks and priorities that the DA’s Office consider critical for successful prosecutions.
	72	<b>Review and strengthen protocols for sharing case files between the DA’s Office and GPD.</b> Members of the DA’s Office and CID should be familiar with the DAS used for sharing case files, and the protocols for sharing case files should be incorporated into policies and training.
	73	<b>Routinely collect and analyze data regarding successful and unsuccessful cases to identify both promising practices and any gaps in the processes.</b>
	74	<b>Consider ways to work with the DA’s Office to provide additional education to victims and families about the criminal justice process.</b> The goal is to help victims and families understand why and how decisions related to their cases are made, ensure transparent and timely communication with victims and families, and help witnesses feel supported throughout court processes.

### 5.6.2 U.S. Attorney’s Office

There are three Assistant U.S. Attorneys (AUSAs) from the USAO for the Middle District of North Carolina assigned to Guilford County. The USAO typically takes around four to five gun cases per month from GPD. Many of the AUSAs started their careers with the Guilford County DA’s Office, so they have prior experience working with some of the more seasoned members of GPD. Interviewees from both agencies said that this helps foster a good working relationship between the USAO and GPD.

GPD and the USAO collaborate on several initiatives, including the Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) program. PSN is a partnership between community groups, clergy, service providers, non-profits,

probation/parole, prosecutors, law enforcement, and others to reduce gun and group/gang-related violence crime. There is a designated PSN prosecutor at the USAO and a coordinator who manages the project at GPD. The USAO's involvement with PSN has helped that agency become more engaged on the ground, which has helped strengthen their relationship with GPD.

The USAO also works closely with GPD's CIS, which is where federal task force officers are located at GPD. Interviewees reported that CIS has a good understanding of what the USAO needs to accept federal firearms cases.

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>Maintain a strong working relationship with the USAO.</b> GPD should continue to seek partnerships with the USAO, maintain open lines of communication, and promote collaboration on federal cases.
	<b>76</b>	<b>Develop formal standards and checklists to provide detectives with guidance for building cases that will be accepted for federal prosecution.</b> Personnel from the USAO and GPD, especially those from CIS, should collaborate to create these standards. The standards and checklists should be included in the CID SOP and in training for officers and detectives.
	<b>77</b>	<b>Resurrect pre-COVID-19 collaboration around gun violence to include in-person meetings between GPD, USAO, Guilford County DA, and other allied agencies to include regular meetings (in person or virtual) to screen gun cases and address broad issues relating to violent crime.</b>

## 5.7 Victim & Family Advocacy

GPD's only in-house VA works almost exclusively with families of homicide victims. The VA will occasionally work with shooting victims whose cases are more exceptional or who request help and families of overdose and suicide victims who request additional assistance. The current VA is a former GPD Homicide Squad detective who left GPD and then returned to start the victim advocacy program. Interviewees from GPD and community-based groups said that the VA is well-regarded and provides significant help to victims and families. Therefore, these recommendations are focused on building upon this strong foundation and ensuring that the VA's roles and responsibilities are formalized in policy. Providing advocacy support to victims and families involved in non-fatal shootings could be instrumental for GPD to develop relationships with victims/witnesses and the community more broadly, thereby leading to better case closure outcomes and other benefits.

78

**Expand VA efforts to include families and victims of non-fatal shootings.**

GPD’s in-house VA may be at capacity and unable offer additional advocacy. Therefore, other options may be considered for GPD or partners to offer advocacy to families and victims of non-fatal shootings.

- a. Consider grants or other opportunities to add personnel to support victim advocacy work for non-fatal shootings. For example, the North Carolina Governor’s Crime Commission has a Crime Victim Services funding priority area, which provides funding for victim advocacy positions within law enforcement agencies.
- b. Discuss options with existing community-serving partners who may naturally intersect with victims/families of non-fatal shootings, such the Guilford County Family Justice Center or Kellin Foundation, about formalizing an approach for these partners to meet GPD’s victim advocacy needs for non-fatal shootings.
- c. Use the recommended inventory of community groups to identify other potential partners to serve in this role.
- d. Identify groups doing violence interruption work in the community. Many individuals served by these groups are victims of non-fatal shootings. Although these groups are reported to maintain a distance from law enforcement, it could be valuable to discuss with them whether they are currently serving or have capacity to serve families of victims of non-fatal shootings, and what those services may entail.

79

**Develop policies clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the VA position.** The VA serves as the liaison between the GPD and victims and families throughout the course of the investigation. This includes relaying information between detectives and families; regularly reaching out to and meeting with families; connecting victims and families to resources and support; assisting families with applying for victim compensation under the North Carolina Victims Compensation Services; helping families retrieve the victim’s property; and working with families and victims during the prosecution phase of the case.

The SOP should be based on research and best practices regarding a victim-centered approach to advocacy. The SOP should include details regarding the following:

- a. Required outreach to victims and families, and the timelines for those contacts;
- b. Topics that should be covered during the initial contacts with victims and families;
- c. The death notification process and the VA’s role in that process;
- d. Procedures for documenting contacts with victims and families;
- e. Formal reports or information-sharing protocols with detectives;
- f. Any required trainings or certifications, which should include at a minimum specialized training on victim advocacy and training on trauma-informed death notifications;
- g. The process for selecting the VA, which should include a background screening if the VA is co-located with CID and has access to Criminal Justice Information Services and GPD’s RMS; and
- h. Spontaneous disclosures of case-related activity by victims and families.

Interactions and communications between the VA and families were reported to be positive and helpful for those who have received assistance from the VA. A set of standard procedures for the VA when approaching work with families could be useful to make sure that consistent information is provided to those who receive services and that all contacts between the VA and those served are documented.

80	<p><b>During initial contact with the victims and families, the VA should:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identify themselves as the VA and clarify that their job is to provide support to victims and families and to look out for victims' rights, interests, and needs;</li> <li>b. Clearly state that they are not acting in any investigative capacity;</li> <li>c. Inform the victims and families about the laws, statutes, and rules governing disclosure requirements, including the fact that conversations with the VA are not legally confidential and that the VA will be obligated to pass along to detectives anything shared with them that is pertinent to the investigation;</li> <li>d. Notify victims/families of their statutory rights, such as the right to obtain information, get case updates, and be part of the investigative process;</li> <li>e. Provide the victims and families with introductory information about any available support services and resources; and</li> <li>f. Facilitate a meeting/conversation between the detectives and the victims.</li> </ol>
81	<p><b>Implement a formal, standardized, and consistent process for documenting the VA contacts with victims and families.</b></p> <p>It is critical for the VA to continue to thoroughly document all contacts with families and all communications with detectives about these contacts. This is especially true given that everything the VA does as an advocate with GPD is discoverable, subject to open records requests, and subject to <i>Brady</i> disclosures. The documentation requirements should be included in policies and SOPs governing the VA. The VA attempts to make initial contact with victims' families within 24–48 hours of the homicide. During this introductory contact, the VA explains their role as the liaison between GPD and the victims' families, what the detectives do and how the investigation will proceed, and the autopsy process and how it might impact funeral planning. After a few days to a week, the VA mails the families a packet of information. The packet includes information about grief counseling and other resources and a card from GPD's Chief of Police.</p>
82	<p><b>Incorporate into written policies/SOPs expectations for detective follow-up and communication with victims and families.</b></p> <p>These expectations should be grounded in a victim-centered approach and emphasize that detectives should treat all victims and families with respect. Policies should also require that all detectives receive training on the duties and capabilities of the VA.</p> <p>Policies and protocols should require detectives to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide victims with the VA's contact information before and after interviews, and, if possible, have the VA available before and after interviews for additional victim support;</li> <li>b. Keep victims and families informed of the investigation to every extent possible;</li> <li>c. Promptly return calls and emails from victims and families regarding inquiries about the case or status of the investigation;</li> <li>d. Proactively reach out to victims and families at regular intervals (e.g., monthly), regardless of whether the detective has any case updates; and</li> <li>e. Meet with the VA at the outset of any case in which the VA is involved.</li> </ol> <p>These steps should also be included in the checklist discussed in Recommendation 27.</p>

The project team learned that the VA does not typically respond to homicide scenes, nor is the VA automatically included in the death notification process. The VA does not work in an on-call capacity or have a take-home car, but the VA will occasionally go with detectives to give the death notification if it is during daytime hours. The project team also learned that families of homicide victims sometimes need additional financial assistance beyond what is currently available. Having additional assistance available for families and victims to use may increase trust and strengthen relationships between the police department and those who are most affected by violence in the community. Finally, the project team learned that the VA is highly regarded by community-based groups that engage with victims and families affected by violence. Therefore, there is an opportunity to leverage these relationships to continue to strengthen trust between the police department and the community and to expand the capacity of the victim assistance available through partnerships with community-based groups.

Recommendations	83	<p><b>Implement a trauma-informed approach to death notifications and integrate advocacy into the investigative process as soon as possible.</b></p> <p>Suggestions to improving the death notification approach include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Providing trauma-informed death notification training to detectives and to the VA. This could be included as a module at the CID Academy.</li> <li>b. Implementing a dual notification process in which the VA accompanies detectives to all notifications. GPD could begin by piloting dual notifications during daytime hours or for certain types of homicides and then expanding the program if it is found to be helpful. If GPD does not implement dual death notifications, then at minimum they should include the VA earlier in the process rather than waiting 24–48 hours after the death to reach out.</li> </ol> <p>If capacity of the VA position could be expanded to include other personnel or to support on-call work, consider on-scene VA responses for fatal and non-fatal shootings.</p>
	84	<p><b>Consider options for financing a victims’ compensation fund within the GPD. This effort could help victims and families and potentially motivate community engagement and retention during the criminal justice process.</b></p> <p>This fund would cover costs not currently covered by the state compensation fund, including assistance with relocation, repairing structural damage to property caused by gunshots, providing childcare so that victims can attend court, and other financial needs because of lost work or income. Victims’ families are typically not eligible for victims’ compensation from the state if the deceased was committing a felony at the time of their death. GPD’s fund could help address this gap.</p> <p>GPD could explore financing this project through grant opportunities, such as the North Carolina Governor’s Crime Commission Crime’s Victim Service priority area. Consider partnering with MSAGV to develop a funding plan. MSAGV currently provides out-of-pocket financial assistance to victims’ families, so they need additional funding in this area.</p>
	85	<p><b>Strengthen and expand partnerships with community-based organizations that provide services and support to victims and families.</b></p> <p>GPD should leverage existing relationships to expand GPD’s victim advocacy capacity by formalizing and strengthening partnerships with these organizations. Identify areas where it may be possible for partners to assist with or take on some of the advocacy or service work currently provided by GPD to reduce the demand on the GPD VA’s capacity or to expand the types of advocacy and services that could be offered to support victims and families and their long-term healing.</p>

The current VA has a good working relationship with counterparts in the DA's Office. They communicate directly with each other and share a great deal of information. Interviewees said that has remained true regardless of the state of the overall relationship between GPD and the DA's Office.

Recommendations	86	<p><b>Continue to foster communication and collaboration between GPD's VA and the VAs from the DA's Office.</b></p> <p>GPD and the DA's Office should make every effort to ensure the strong relationship between the VAs continues. For example, if a victim's family requests GPD's VA to sit in on meetings at the DA's Office, this request should be granted unless there are extenuating circumstances. Additionally, GPD's VA should continue the practice of forwarding the victim's family's information to the VA at the DA's Office anytime there has been an arrest in a homicide case.</p>
	87	<p><b>Ensure that victims and families are notified before GPD releases an announcement or story to the news media about cases in which they are involved.</b> Some interviewees stated that families and victims are not always notified by GPD prior to releasing an announcement or story to the media about an investigation. This can upset victims and families and damage their relationships with GPD.</p> <p>Providing notification should be the responsibility of the lead case detective, though it could also be delegated to the VA or command staff.</p> <p>The process of notifying victims and families prior to running stories in the media—including who should give the notifications—should be clarified in GPD policies and SOPs. GPD should also explore ways to integrate victim advocacy into GPD's media engagement. This will help humanize media stories, which could potentially prompt more people to come forward with information. For example, GPD has a YouTube video series on cold cases produced by the local city-run TV channel. GPD's Public Information Officer has put the producers in touch with the Homicide Squad and VA to see if any family members would be interested in highlighting a cold case. These kinds of efforts should be continued and expanded upon.</p>

## 6. Conclusion

Overall, the NCCP assessment of GPD's response to fatal and non-fatal shootings revealed many agency strengths, including dedicated personnel who are committed to serving the Greensboro community regardless of current obstacles like a massive staff shortage and large increases in homicides and gun assaults, a well-respected in-house CID Academy, an effective FSD, and more. The assessment also uncovered gaps in GPD's response to shootings, including that shooting investigations were too often concluded prematurely with remaining leads left uninvestigated, poor documentation of investigative activities, and insufficient oversight and accountability within the Homicide and CAP Squads. The NCCP team will work with GPD to determine which recommendations the agency can address and will support the agency in implementing and evaluating changes to how they respond to fatal and non-fatal shootings.

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