PORT AUTHORITY OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY POLICE





2024





ANNUAL REPORT

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

This annual report is produced by the Port Authority of Allegheny County Police Department to help support the Department's mission of ensuring a safe and secure environment within the transit system, reducing crime through a highly visible police presence and proactive enforcement of the law, and promoting public confidence and transparency by working in partnership with our stakeholders and the communities served by Pittsburgh Regional Transit.

Change in law enforcement is both constant and imminent. As Chief of the Port Authority Police Department, I feel a profound sense of humility and pride in the opportunity to share in this growth with you. It is truly through our officers' daily dedication, vigilance, and commitment to the citizens that we serve that we can accomplish the vision set forth in our mission statement.

A fundamental component of earning the public's trust includes transparency and the ability to form partnerships with our community under which the safety and security will continue to flourish. Transparency and a commitment form the foundation of our service and accountability to the citizens we serve. I believe in an ongoing process of advancement and growth as a professional law enforcement agency and re-affirm our commitment to making this department an agency in which every member can be proud. As Chief of Police, I am honored to serve with a group of professionals who re-commit themselves daily to serving the riders and employees of Pittsburgh Regional Transit with honor, pride, and dignity. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.



Matthew Porter
Chief of Police



STRUCTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT

The Port Authority Police Department is the primary law enforcement agency for Pittsburgh Regional Transit. The officers possess the powers of a municipal police officer in the immediate and adjacent vicinity of the property of the corporate authority or elsewhere within this Commonwealth while engaged in the discharge of their duties in pursuit transportation system business. The Department has 62 members and is comprised of sworn and non-sworn personnel. The Department, as of the issuance of this report, is currently budgeted for the following positions;

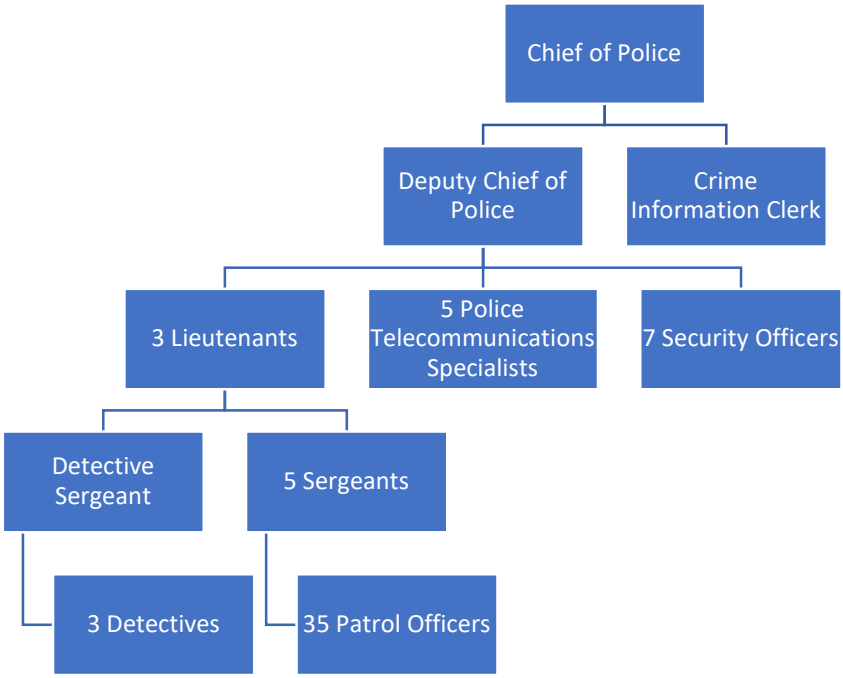
49 Sworn Pennsylvania Act 120 Certified Police Officers

- 1 Chief of Police
- 1 Deputy Chief of Police
- 3 Lieutenants
- 1 Detective Sergeant
- 5 Sergeants, which includes 2 K9 Sergeants
- 3 Detectives
- 35 Patrol Officers

1 Crime Information Clerk

5 Police Telecommunications Specialists

7 Security Officers



Over the last several years, and like many law enforcement agencies across the country, our department has faced ongoing staffing challenges. These challenges are fueled by an unprecedented lack of police officer candidates applying for open positions. This shortage of new officer candidates has left police departments competing for a smaller pool of candidates. In 2023 the staffing deficit left the department functioning below 70% of its budgeted staff. In 2024, the police command staff and PRT's employment department worked diligently and adopted new hiring initiatives. PRT leadership ratified new collective bargaining agreements focused on officer recruitment, professional development and retention with the Port Authority Transit Police Association (PATPA). These initiatives were only possible with significant support from PRT's Board, Chief Executive Officer Katharine Kelleman, and senior management team, along with the leadership and cooperation of PATPA, and have had a tremendous impact on both officer hiring and retention. At the end of 2024, department staffing was at 91% of the current budgeted staff.

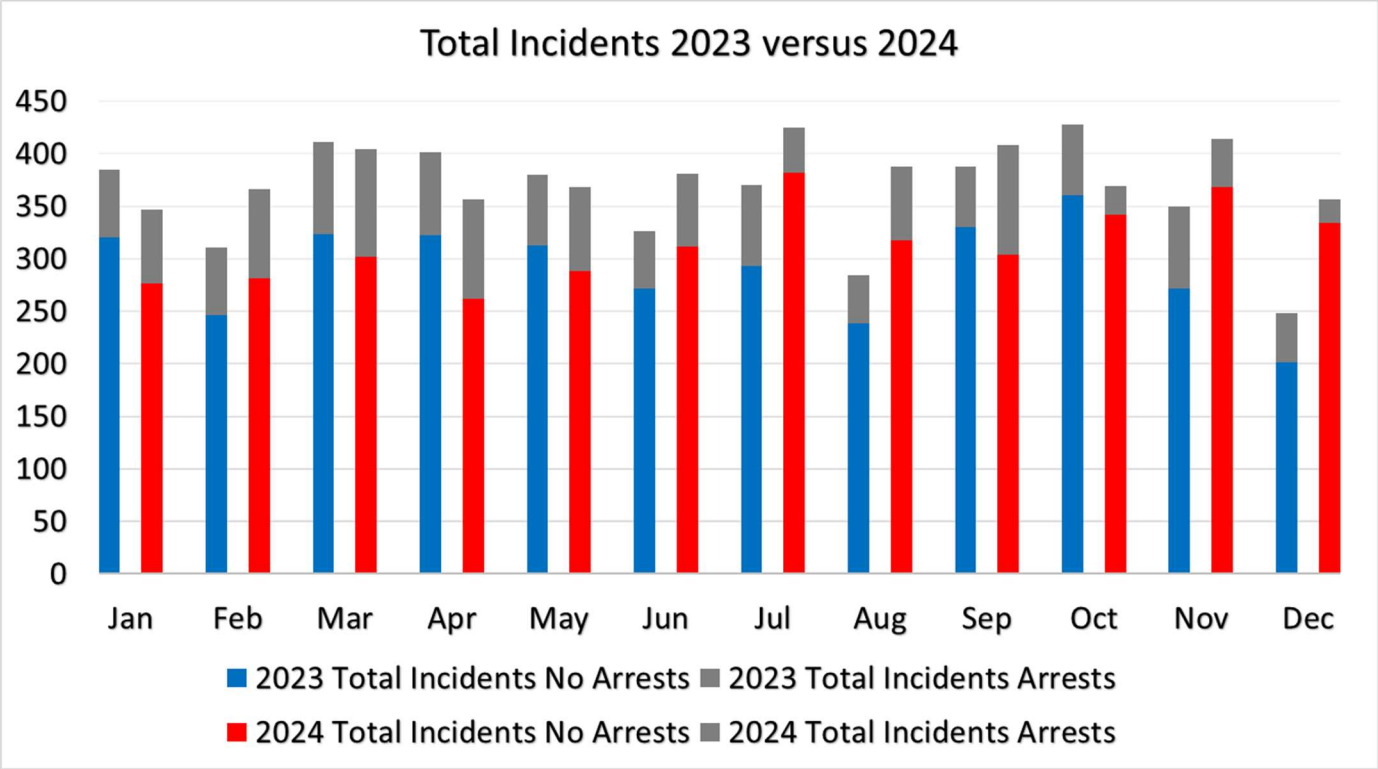
STATISTICS

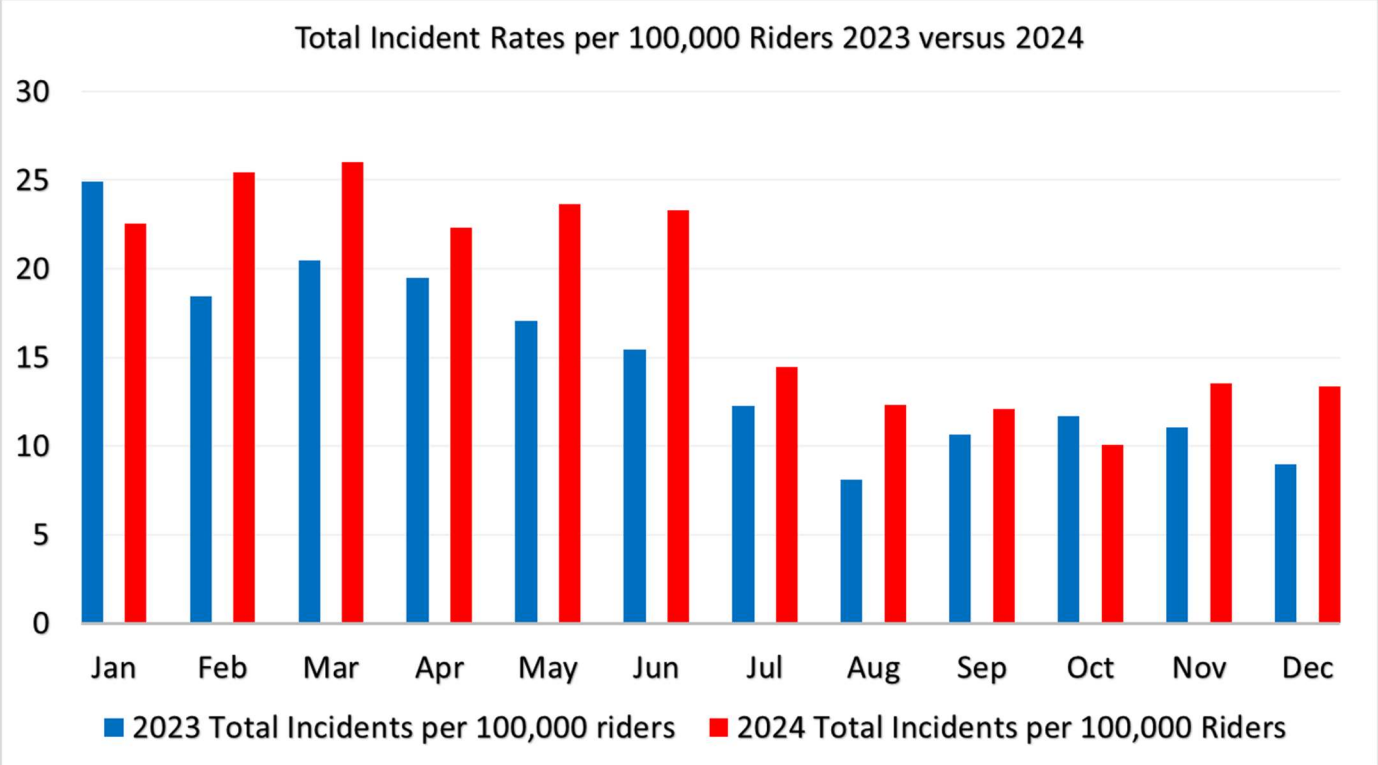
The following section outlines Statistical Crime Data and is compiled based on incidents per 100,000 riders. For comparison, we have included the prior calendar year and the current calendar year. Our statistics are divided into five (5) categories: Crimes Against Persons, Property Crimes, Quality of Life Incidents, Mutual Aid Incidents, Transit Oriented Policing Services (TOPS), and Other Incidents.

STATISTICS 2023 VERSUS 2024

TOTAL INCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS PER 100,000 RIDERS

The below charts outline total incidents as well as total incidents per 100,000 riders.

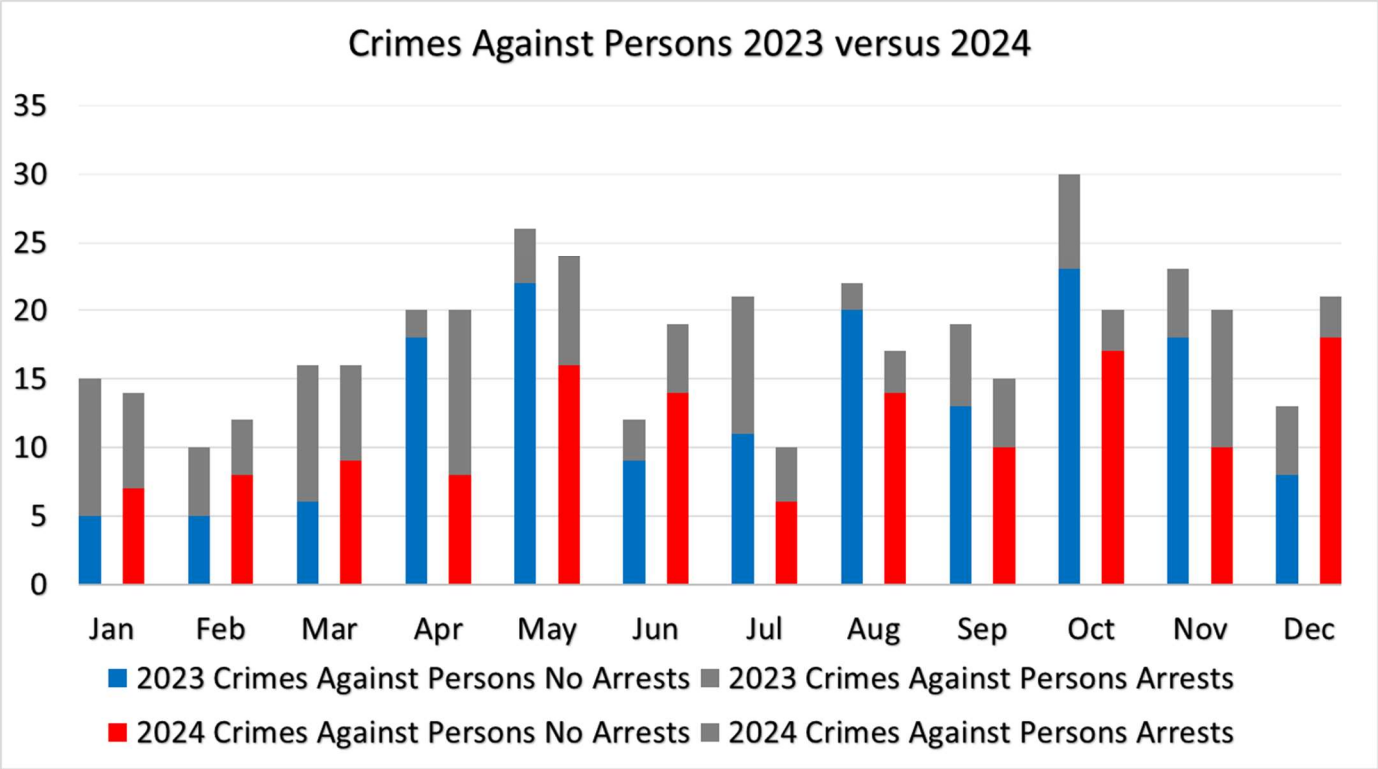


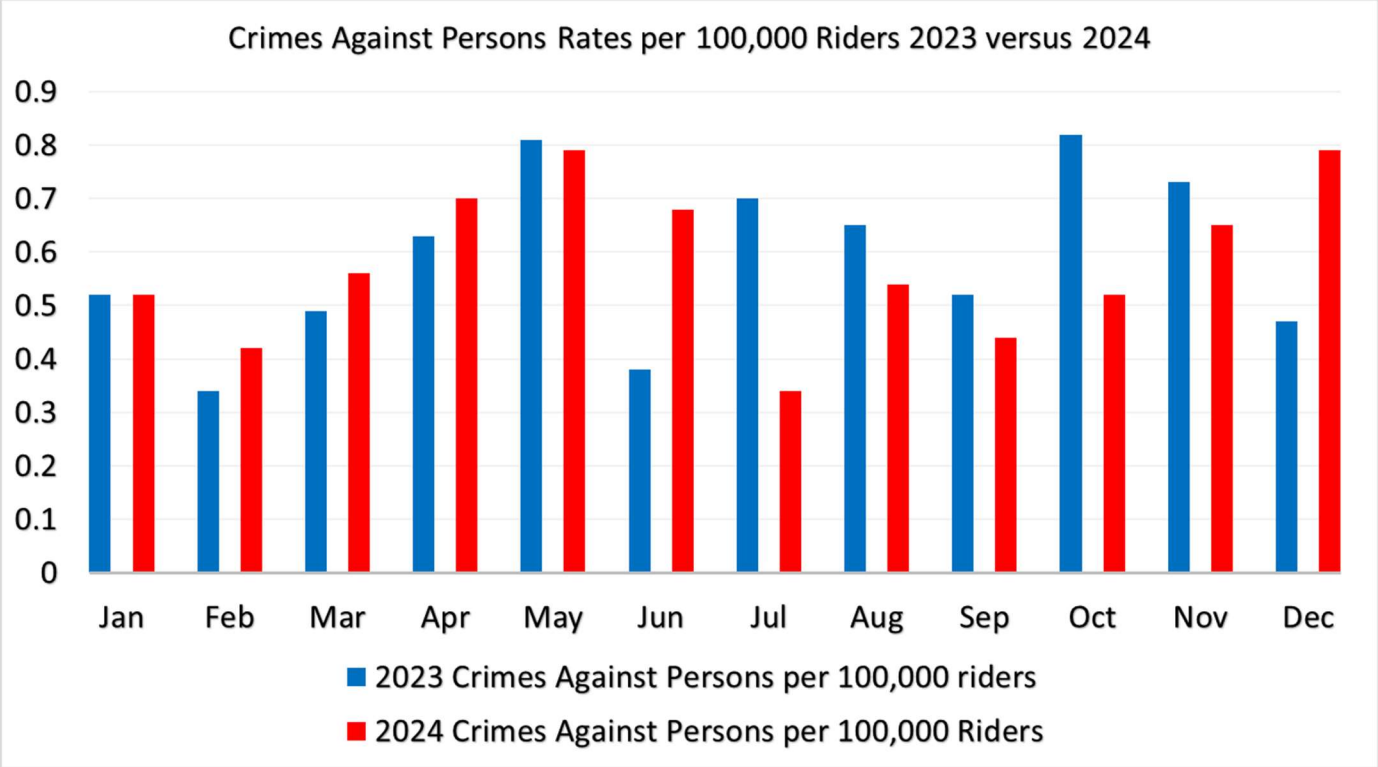


STATISTICS 2023 VERSUS 2024

CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS AND CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS PER 100,000 RIDERS

Crimes against persons data includes reported incidents of criminal offenses which usually involve bodily harm, the threat of bodily harm, or other actions committed against the will of an individual.

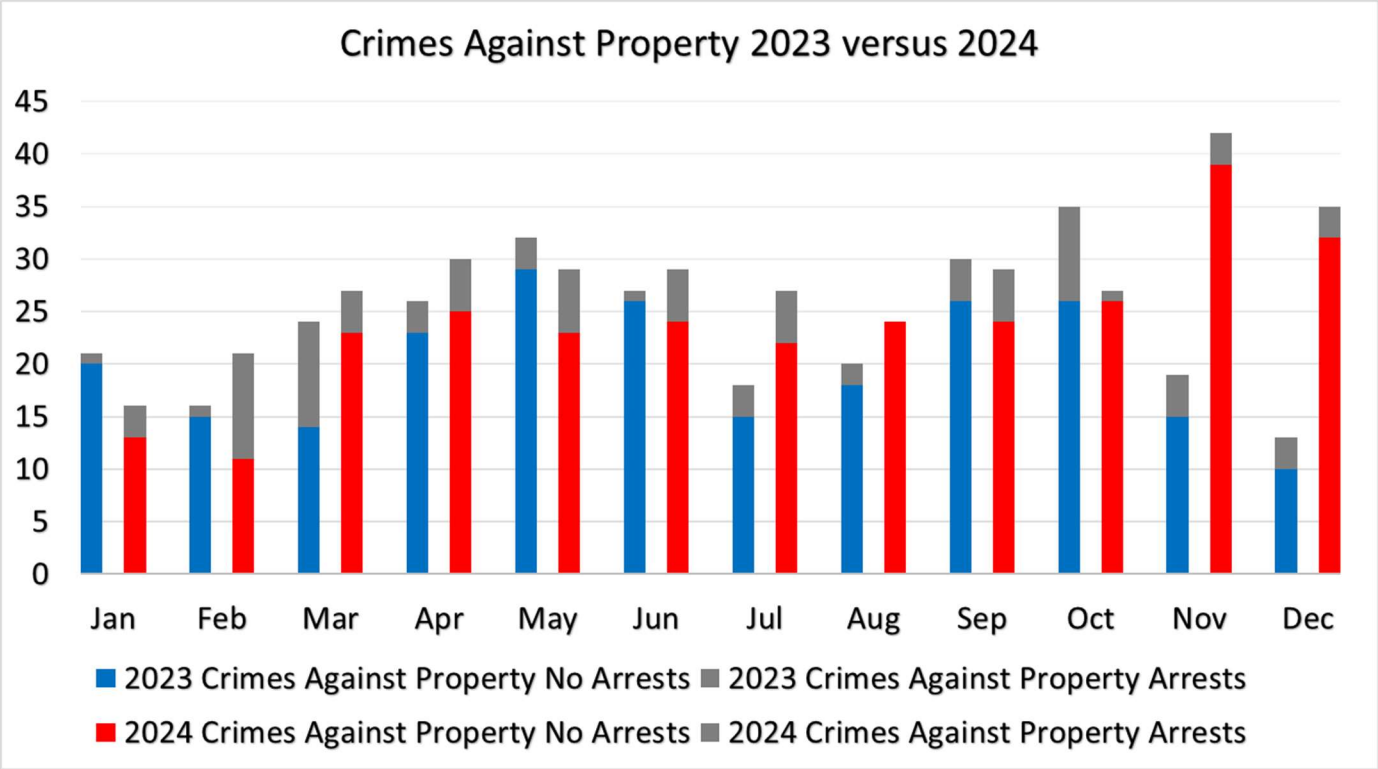


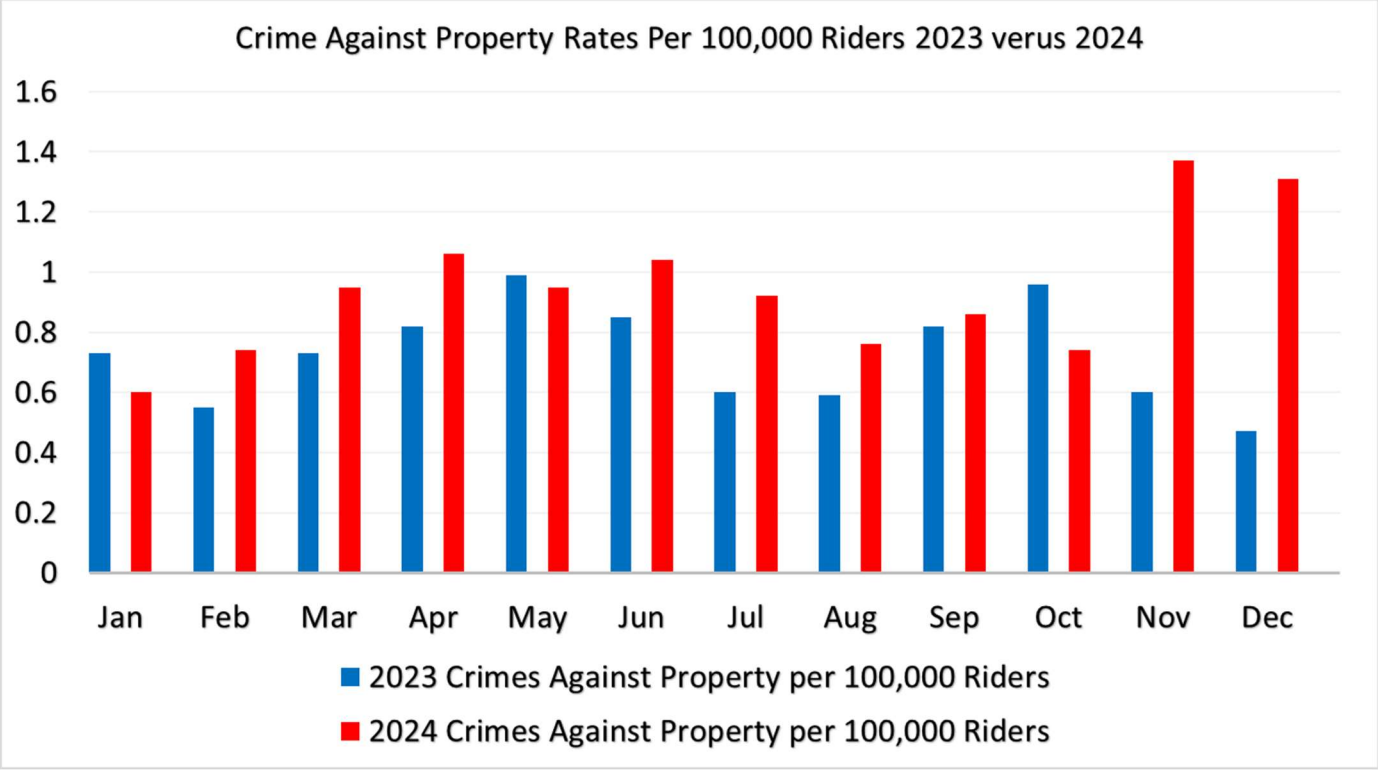


STATISTICS 2023 VERSUS 2024

CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY AND CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY PER 100,000 RIDERS

Property crimes data includes reported incidents of many common crimes involving the taking or destruction of someone's personal property or entering someone else's property without permission.

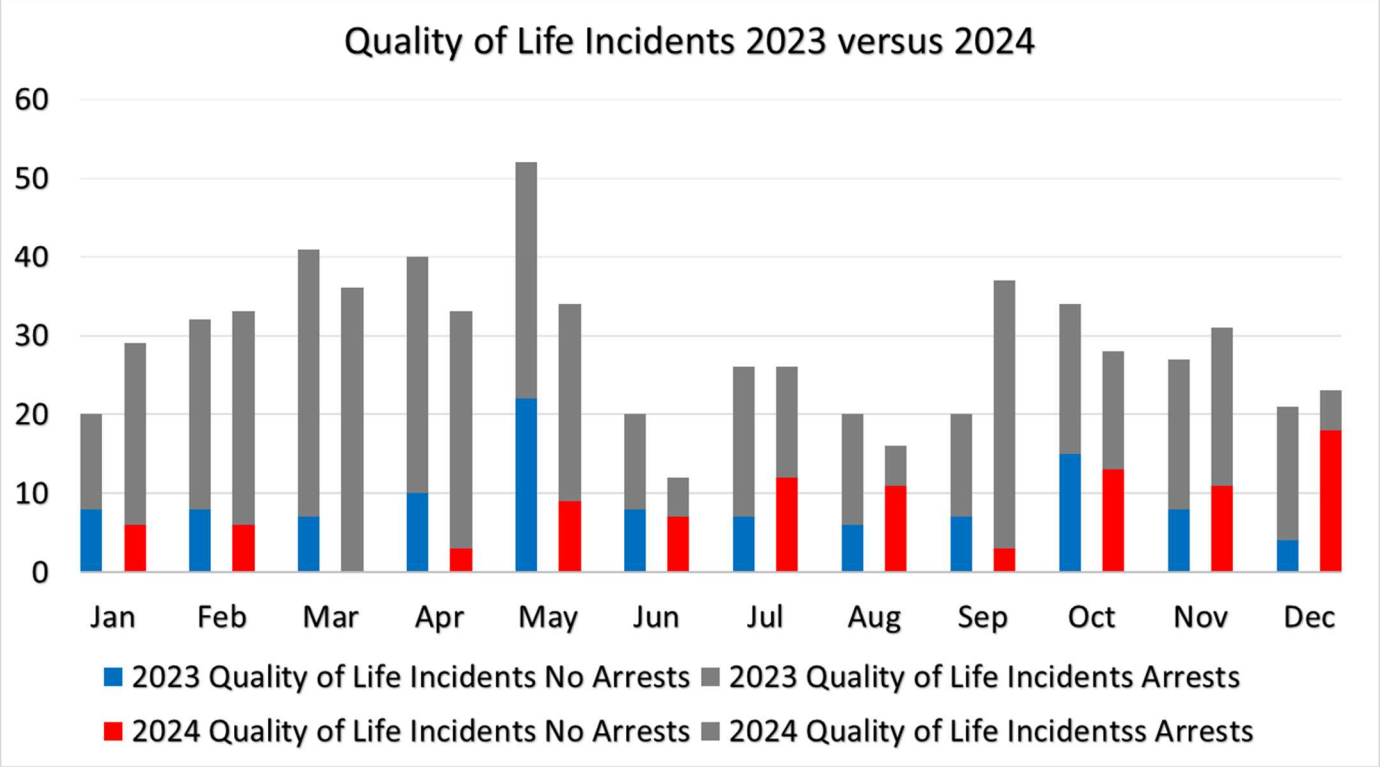


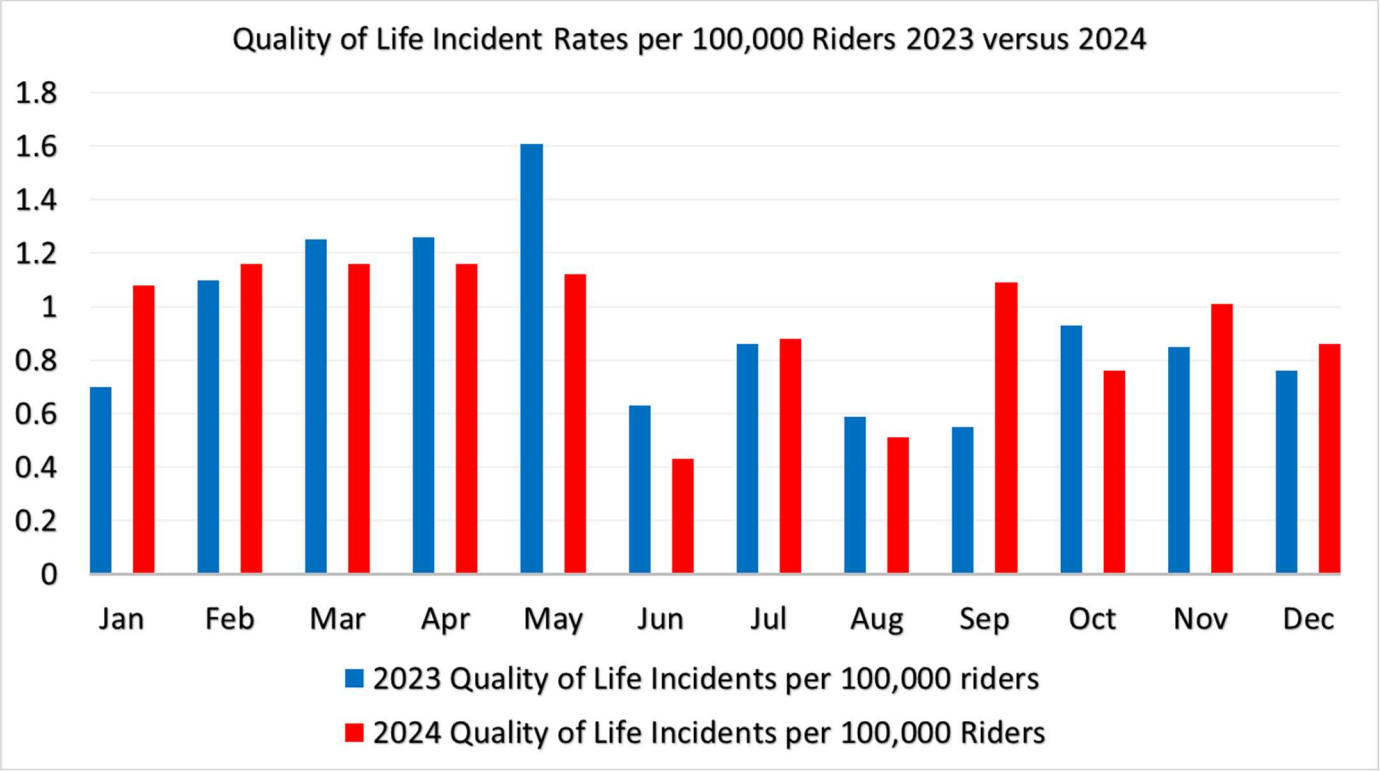


STATISTICS 2023 VERSUS 2024

QUALITY OF LIFE INCIDENTS AND QUALITY OF LIFE INCIDENTS PER 100,000 RIDERS

Quality of life incident data includes reported incidents that affect the public. These include things such as public intoxication and disorderly conduct.

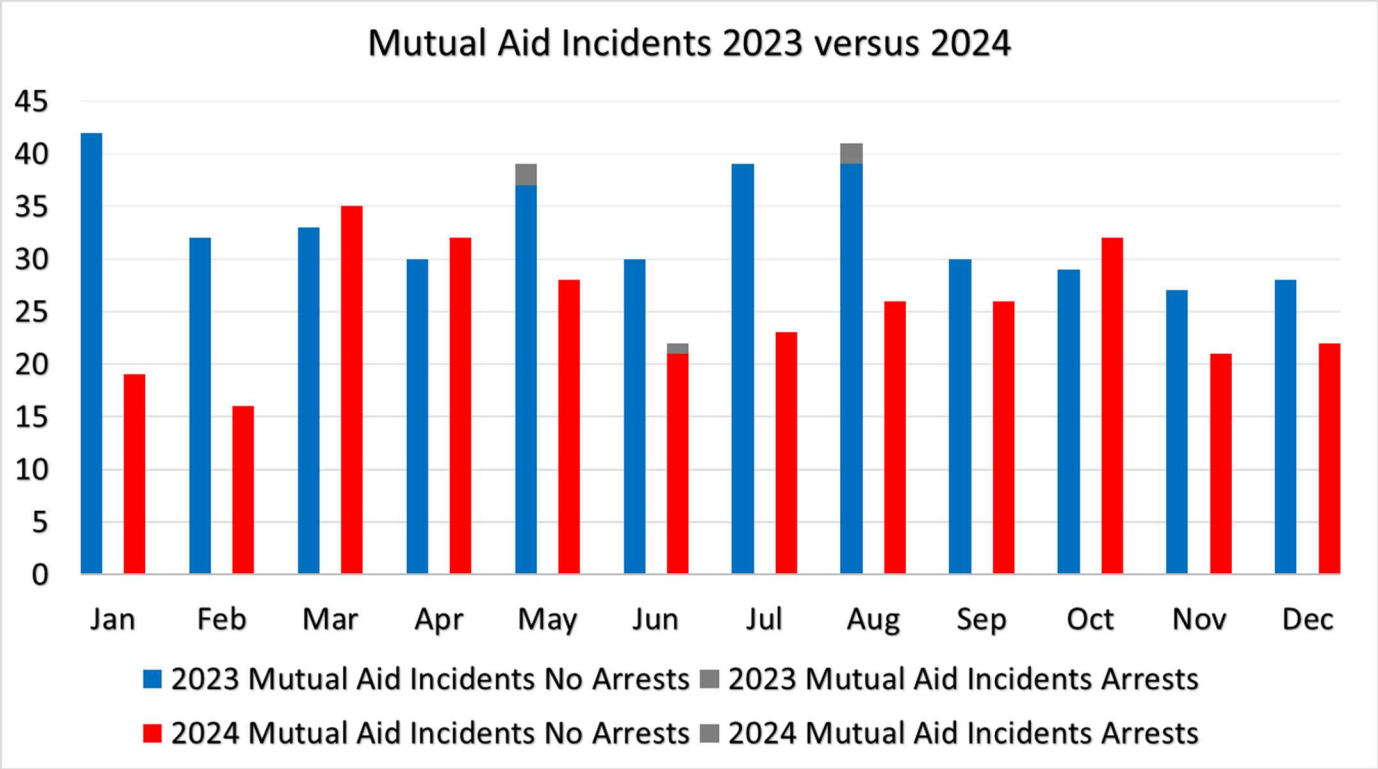


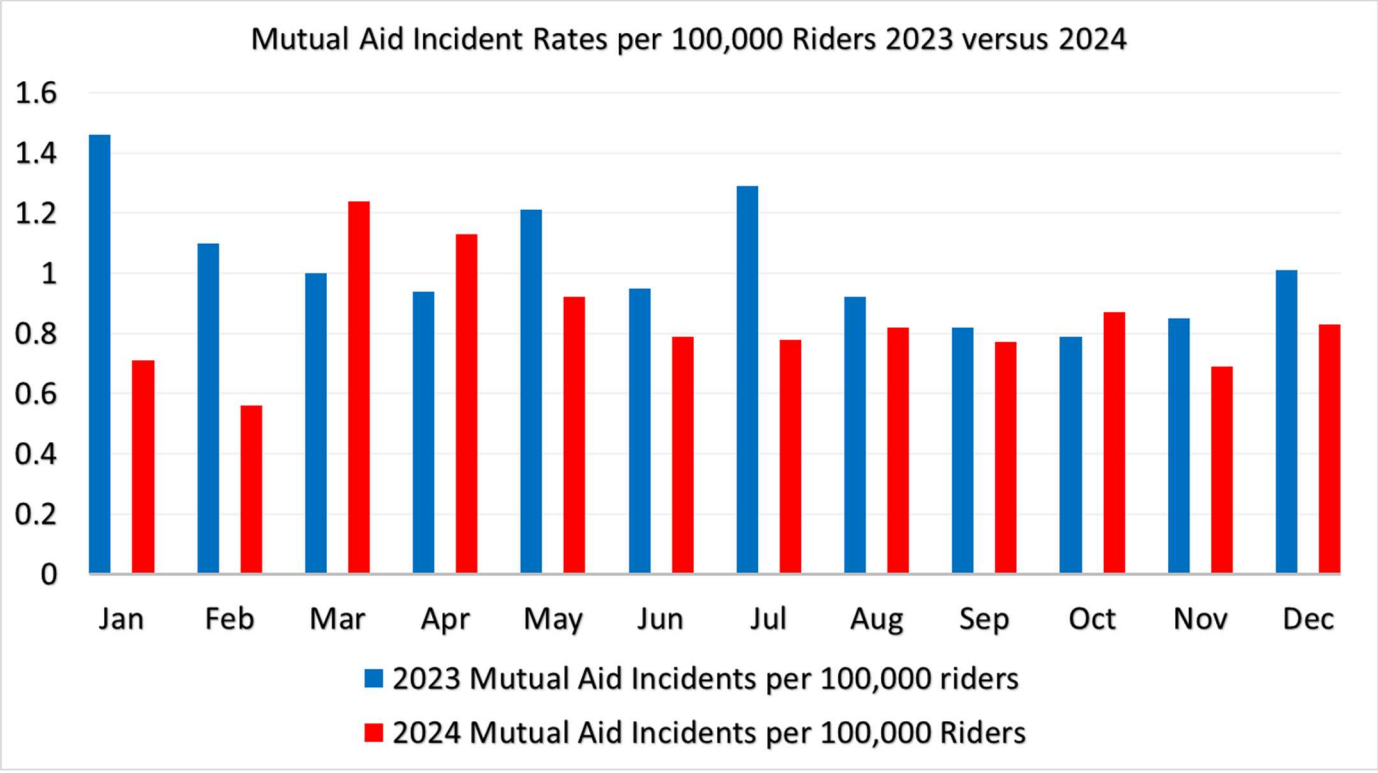


STATISTICS 2023 VERSUS 2024

MUTUAL AID INCIDENTS AND MUTUAL AID INCIDENTS PER 100,000 RIDERS

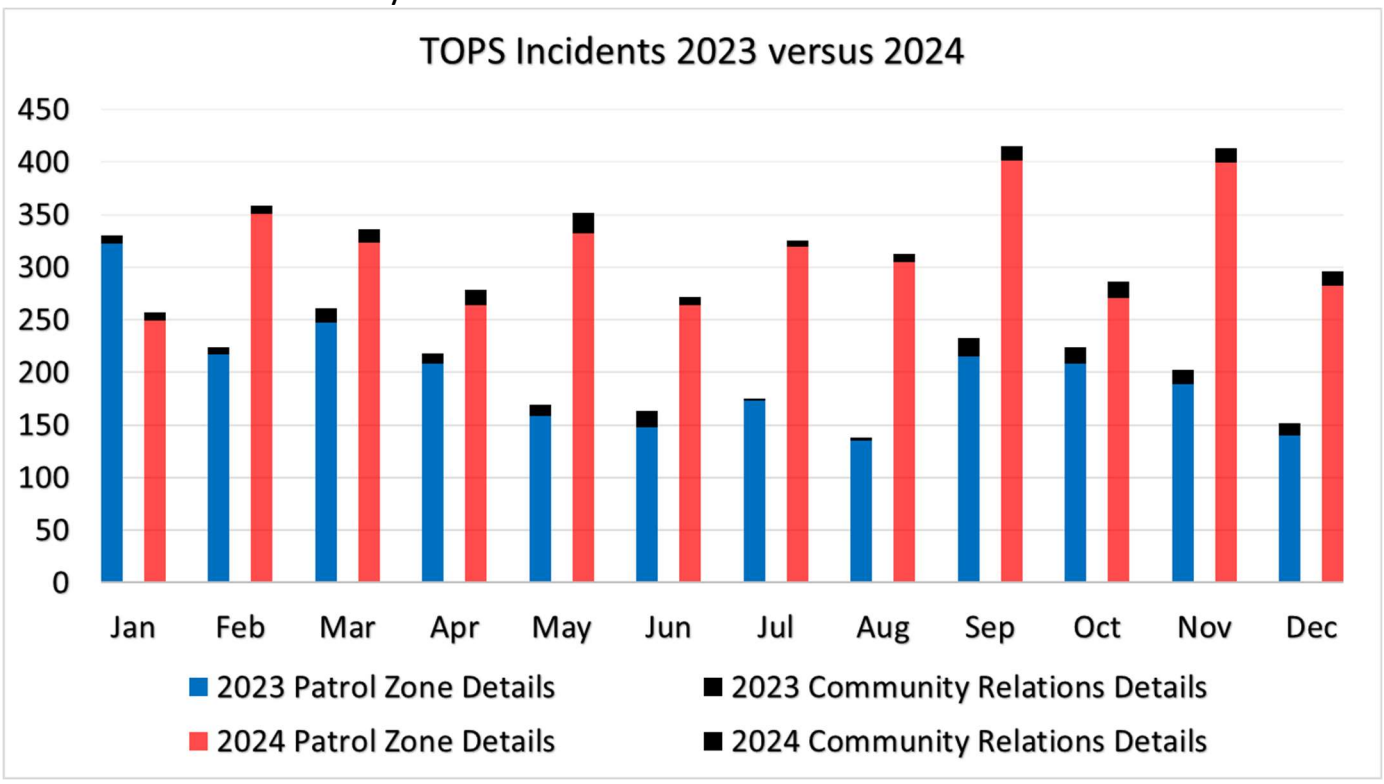
Mutual Aid incident data includes reported incidents that Port Authority Police receive from or provides assistance to another law enforcement agency.

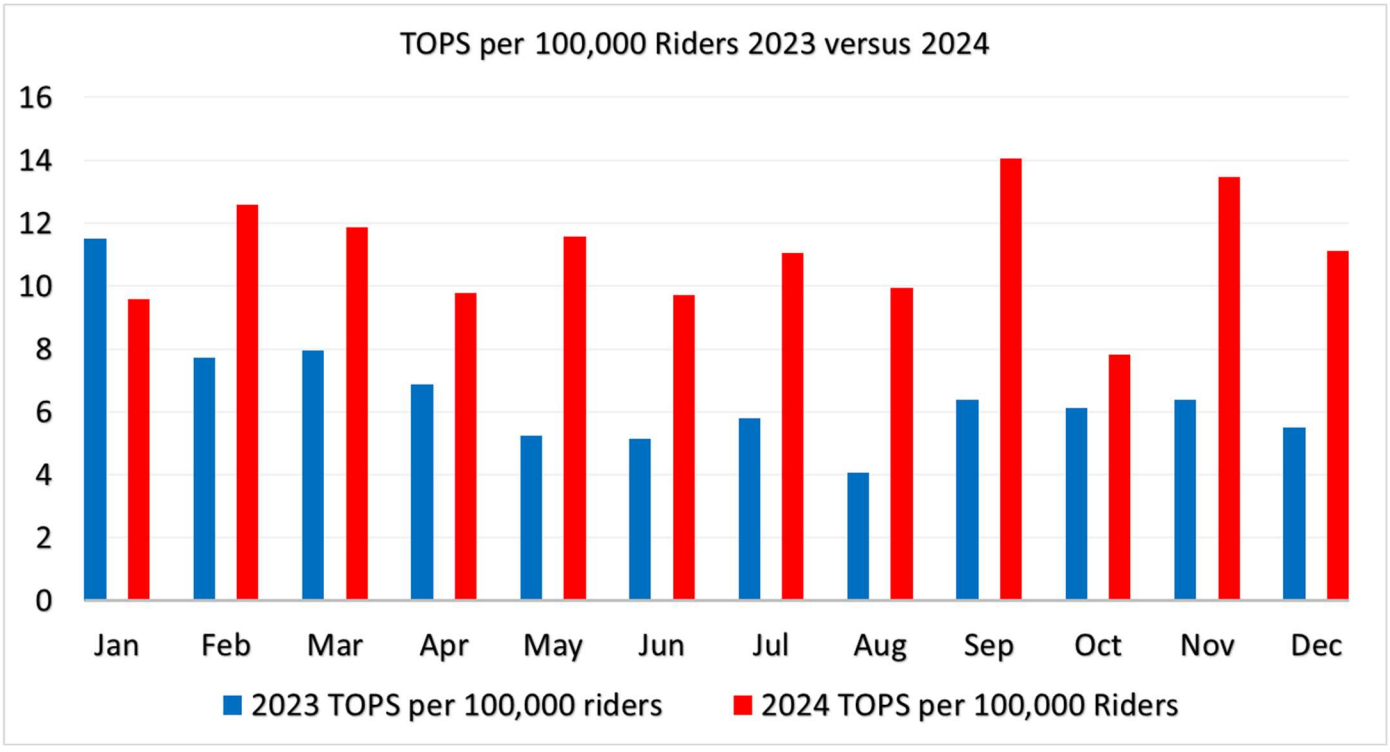




STATISTICS 2023 VERSUS 2024
TOTAL TRANSIT ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES AND
TOTAL TRANSIT ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES PER 100,000 RIDERS

Transit Oriented Policing Services (TOPS) includes patrol zone details or directed patrols and community relations details. These are incidents that are designed to build our relationship with our transit community.

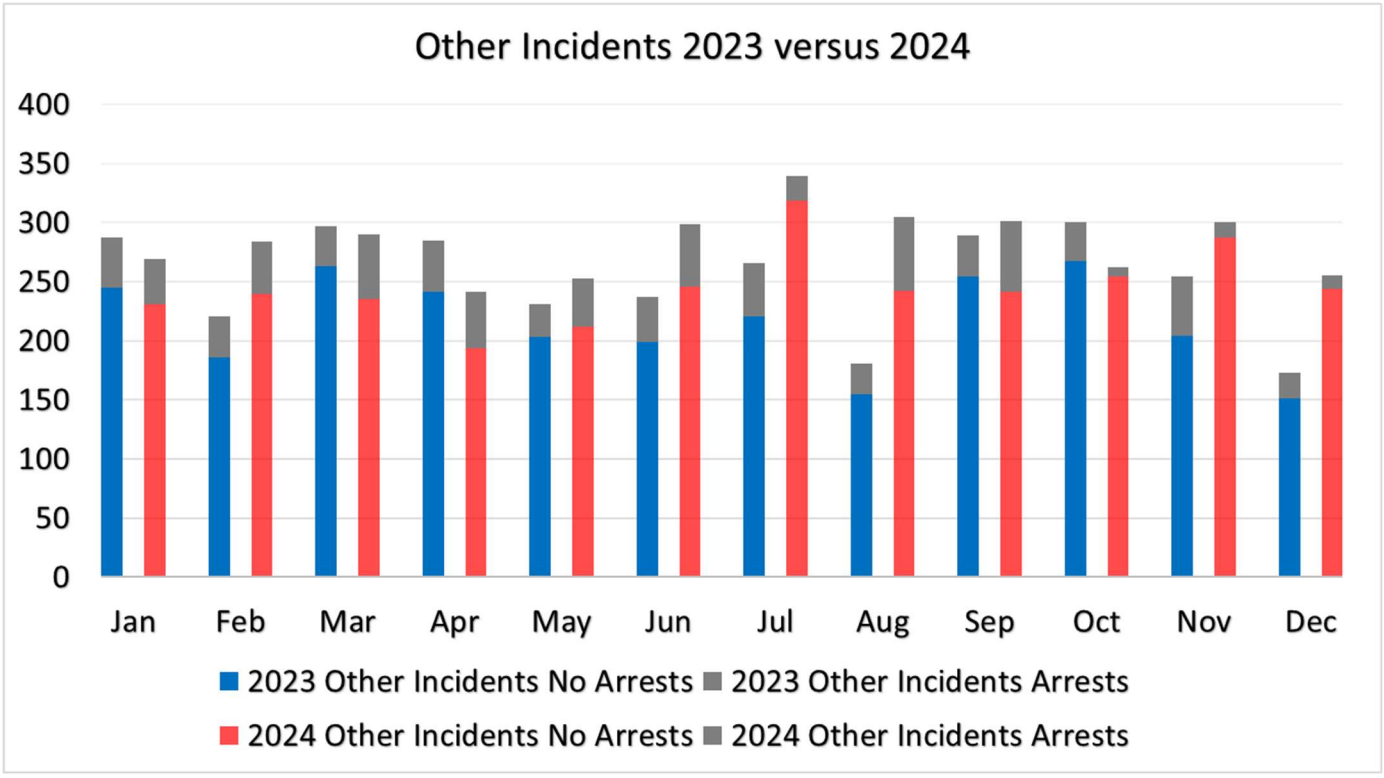


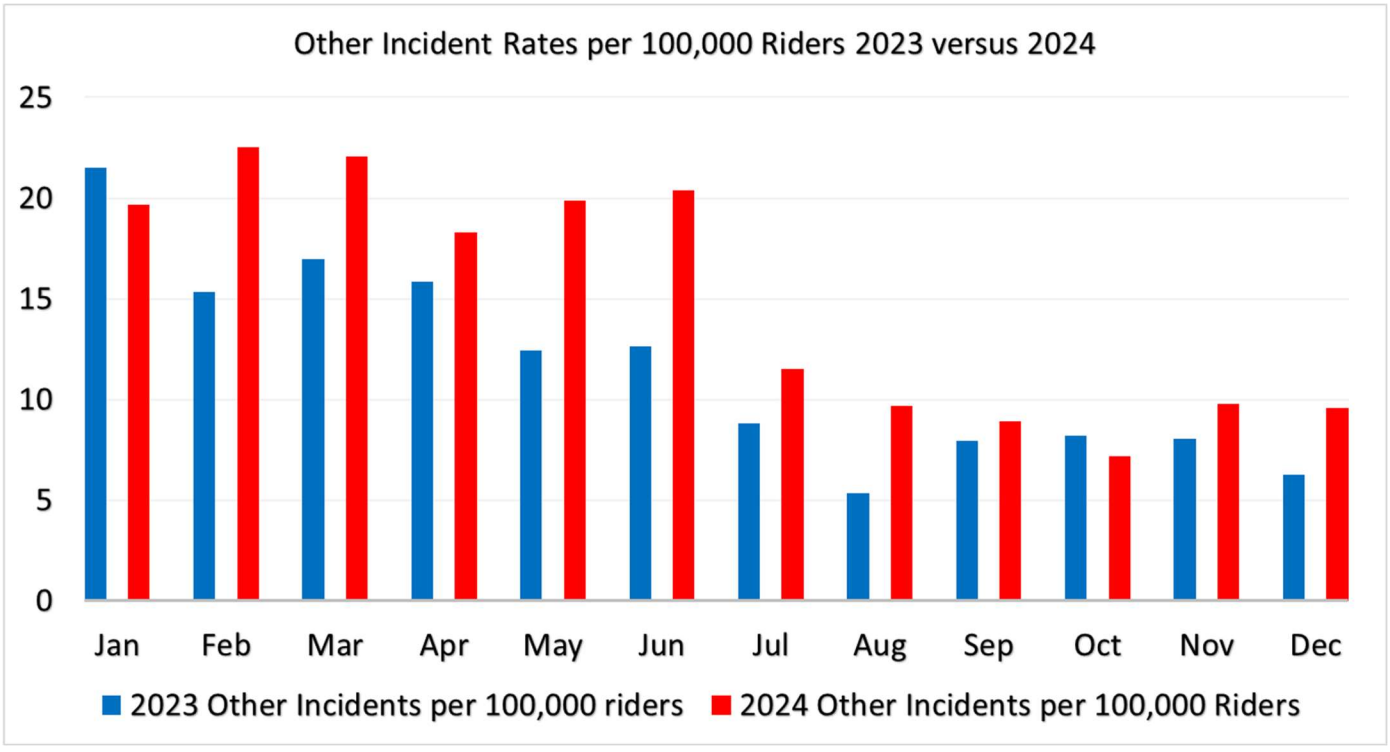


STATISTICS 2023 VERSUS 2024

TOTAL OTHER INCIDENTS AND TOTAL OTHER INCIDENTS PER 100,000 RIDERS

Other incident data includes all other incidents. Data from 67 different types of incidents such as collisions, medical emergencies, video forensics reports, traffic offenses, driving under the influence, warrant arrests, and alarm calls.





TRANSIT ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES

The Port Authority Police Department continues to be a leader in transit-oriented policing initiatives throughout Allegheny County. The department regularly participates in community events to help us better know and understand the diverse community of employees and riders Pittsburgh Regional Transit serves.

Special Olympics

Chief Porter has continued his service for Special Olympics PA as Law Enforcement Torch Run Director for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and ongoing support for numerous other fundraising endeavors throughout the year. In 2024, the Pittsburgh Polar Plunge raised over $1.2 million with Chief Porter's team raising over $100,000 alone.



Pittsburgh Polar Plunge



Reverse Day at Bigs in Blue where the kids visited PAPD

Bigs in Blue

The Port Authority Police Department has three officers participating in the Bigs in Blue program at Sto-Rox Upper Elementary School in McKees Rocks and Keystone Oaks Middle School in Mt. Lebanon. This year, the Port Authority Police Department hosted reverse day. On reverse day, the "littles" traveled to a police department and got a more detailed look into the officers' (their "bigs") work.

Allegheny County Camp Cadet

The Port Authority Police Department had three officers acting as counselors in 2024, and the department maintains a position on the Allegheny County Camp Cadet Board. This year, 49 cadets graduated from Allegheny County Camp Cadet, which remains tuition free through Camp Board fundraising initiatives throughout the year.



Officer Hannon at Allegheny County Camp Cadet

Allegheny County Communities and Police Together (ACCAPT)

Allegheny County Communities and Police Together (ACCAPT) was started back in 2020 by the Allegheny County Police, Allegheny County Sheriff's Office, and PA State Police. The group's mission is to share resources without municipal borders while in partnership with community members. The Port Authority Police joined the group at its start and continue to support community-based initiatives throughout Allegheny County.



Visiting Senior Centers throughout Allegheny County was the latest ACCAPT initiative.



Sgt. Masi at bring your kid to work day

Safe Kids Allegheny County

Port Authority Police continues to be active members of Safe Kids Allegheny County. Safe Kids Allegheny County is a community coalition focused on reducing accidental childhood injuries in our region. In 2024, PRT hosted its first ever Bring Your Kid to Work Day at the rail center. Port Authority Police distributed free bicycle helmets to kids and offered car safety seat checks.

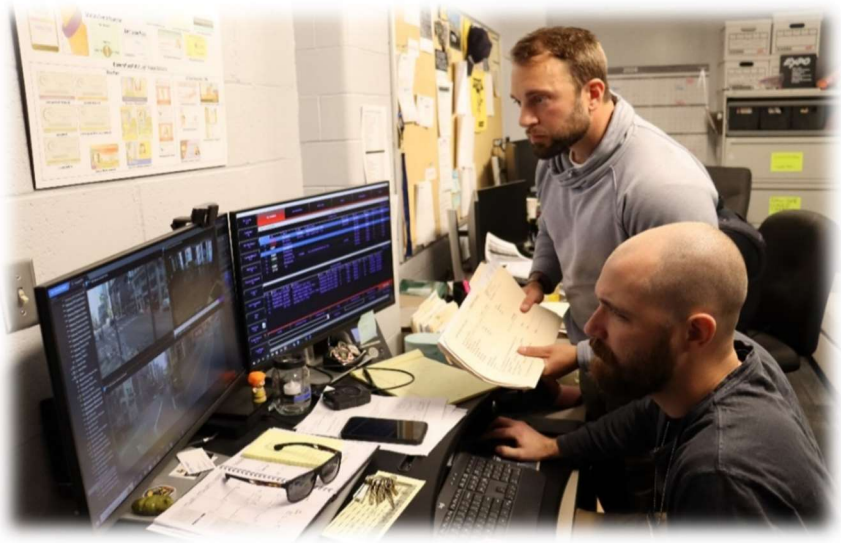


Coffee with a COP 2024 at Wilkinsburg Station

INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION

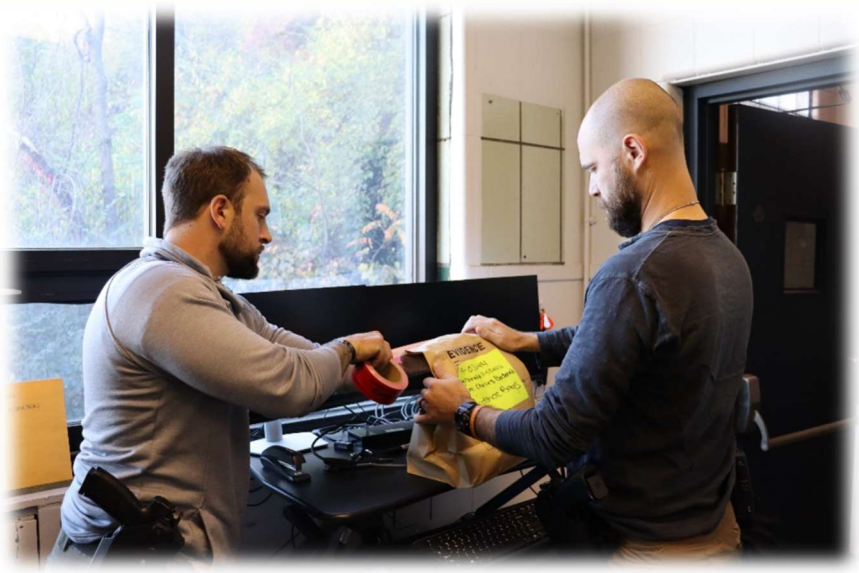
This year, we are highlighting the work of the Department's Investigations Division, comprised of a detective sergeant and three detectives. The members of this unit are officers who have all exhibited extraordinary investigative and technical abilities and intuition when investigating criminal activity. The Detectives are generally assigned critical incidents that will require extensive follow up, or incidents in which a patrol officer has exhausted their resources in their initial investigation. When responding to critical incidents such as aggravated assaults, the detectives' initial duties include processing the crime scene, collecting evidence, and interviewing subjects. Additional investigation entails the use of extensive databases and established relationships with other criminal intelligence units that operate within the Port Authority Police area of responsibility. These include City, County, State and Federal law enforcement partners that the detectives regularly liaison with.





The Investigations Division is also the primary group responsible for the management, acquisition and processing of PRT video evidence. The detectives have received extensive training from the Law Enforcement and Emergency Services Video Association (LEVA) and have hundreds of hours of experience in acquiring and processing video evidence. Every PRT Bus and Light Rail Vehicle (LRV) is equipped with a video system as well as numerous bus and rail stations throughout the PRT system. The detectives regularly process crucial video evidence for incidents that occur within the PRT system as well as provide mutual aid for incidents that have occurred in other jurisdictions and were captured on a PRT Bus or LRV video system. Detectives obtain and process video from over 200 incidents for other law enforcement agencies relating to homicides, fatal collisions, assaults, thefts and numerous other serious crimes and incidents that occur within other jurisdictions but are captures on PRT Bus or LRV video systems. Additionally, detectives provide video for over 500 internal criminal and civil incidents.

INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION





The detectives are also responsible for maintaining the Port Authority Police evidence and property room. Within the evidence and property room are seized currency, firearms, narcotics, and other forms of evidence or property, all of which the detectives are ultimately responsible for when an item must be presented in court or returned to an individual. The Detectives are responsible for transferring all evidence to and from the Allegheny County Crime Lab. This includes drugs, firearms, fingerprints, and biological samples. As the department has continued to expand its duties, so has the amount of property and evidence seized increased. The evidence and property room requires daily attention from the detectives to maintain the chain of custody with the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office.

PORT AUTHORITY POLICE OPERATIONS CENTER

The Port Authority Police Operations Center serves as the communication hub for police, fire, medical and other emergency response incidents for the Port Authority Police Department and Pittsburgh Regional Transit. The center is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



The Port Authority Police Operations Center is one of just two police operations centers in the region directly linked to the Allegheny County 911 Computer Aided Dispatch Center. When requests for service are received, the incident can be viewed in real time by the Allegheny County 911 Center. Police Telecommunications Specialists are responsible for accessing the Commonwealth Law Enforcement Assistance Network (CLEAN) to provide law enforcement officers in the field with driver license and motor vehicle information, state criminal history record information, Protection from Abuse orders and other information found in national and international criminal justice databases. The specialists also monitor a video wall displaying CCTV feeds from over 450 cameras across Allegheny County.

PORT AUTHORITY POLICE SECURITY OFFICERS

The Port Authority Police Department currently has seven security officers assigned to the East Liberty Garage and South Hills Village Rail Center. Maintaining staffing levels for security officers has also been an ongoing challenge. The security officers are responsible for being the eyes and ears of the Port Authority Police Department. They escort people to and from lost and found and perform both vehicular and foot patrols at each location outside of regular working hours. Security officers also respond as needed to police, fire, and medical emergencies and provide critical information and support to first responders.



South Hills Village Rail Center



East Liberty Division

OTHER DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

As part of its efforts to be more transparent, the Port Authority Police Department issued Axon Body Cameras to all police officers in 2022. The body cameras issued at that time were the Axon Body 3 cameras and were considered the most advanced model available. In November 2024, as part of the 5-year contract with Axon, the Police Department received and issued all new Axon Body 4 cameras to all the police officers. The Axon Body 4 has the latest current advancements available in body camera technology, including upgraded camera sensors with increased field of visibility as well as extended battery life. The body cameras have proven to be an invaluable resource to the Police Department in a variety of ways:

1. *Transparency and Accountability* - Body cameras promote transparency by providing an objective record of police-civilian interactions. They help ensure that everyone is held accountable for their actions, provide an unbiased account of events, and help protect agencies and the community.
2. *Enhancing Safety* - Body cameras enhance the safety of officers and civilians. Officers knowing their actions are being recorded can ensure officers follow procedures and can also deter civilians from behaving in a confrontational or aggressive manner.
3. *Evidence Gathering* - Body camera recordings serve as valuable evidence in criminal cases. The captured footage provides an objective record of events that can be used to verify witness and officer testimony and ensure the accuracy of any report.
4. *Training* - Body cameras can be used for police training. Footage from body cameras can identify areas where officers may need additional training and can help improve police practices.
5. *Public Trust* - Body cameras strengthen public trust in law enforcement agencies. By promoting good behavior, evidence transparency, and accountability, body cameras can help reinforce trust between law enforcement agencies and their communities.



Axon Body 4 Camera

OTHER DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Education and Training

Training and development empower police officers with the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their jobs effectively, leading to increased productivity, improved officer satisfaction, better retention rates, and ultimately, a more competitive and successful police department. It is because of these initiatives that our department has experienced boosted morale, fostered innovation, and officers aligning with PRT goals. In 2024, Port Authority Police Officers attended 106 training sessions on a variety of topics including executive leadership, video forensics, duty to intervene, de-escalation, domestic terrorism, enhanced OEO training and violent extremism.

In September 2024, Sgt. James Ciocco and Officer Paul Dowds attended drug evaluation expert (DRE) training for 3 weeks, and both are now certified DRE Officers. The training focusses on teaching police officers to recognize when an individual has been driving under the influence of drugs and to identify the type of drug causing impairment. The program was developed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and approved by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). Numerous other officers attended classes focusing on impaired and distracted driving as well. Officer Paul Dowds received a Top Gun award from the PA DUI Association for handling 60 DUI cases in 2023. The Port Authority Police Department received a Community Traffic Safety Platinum award from AAA for participation in numerous other traffic safety programs throughout 2024.



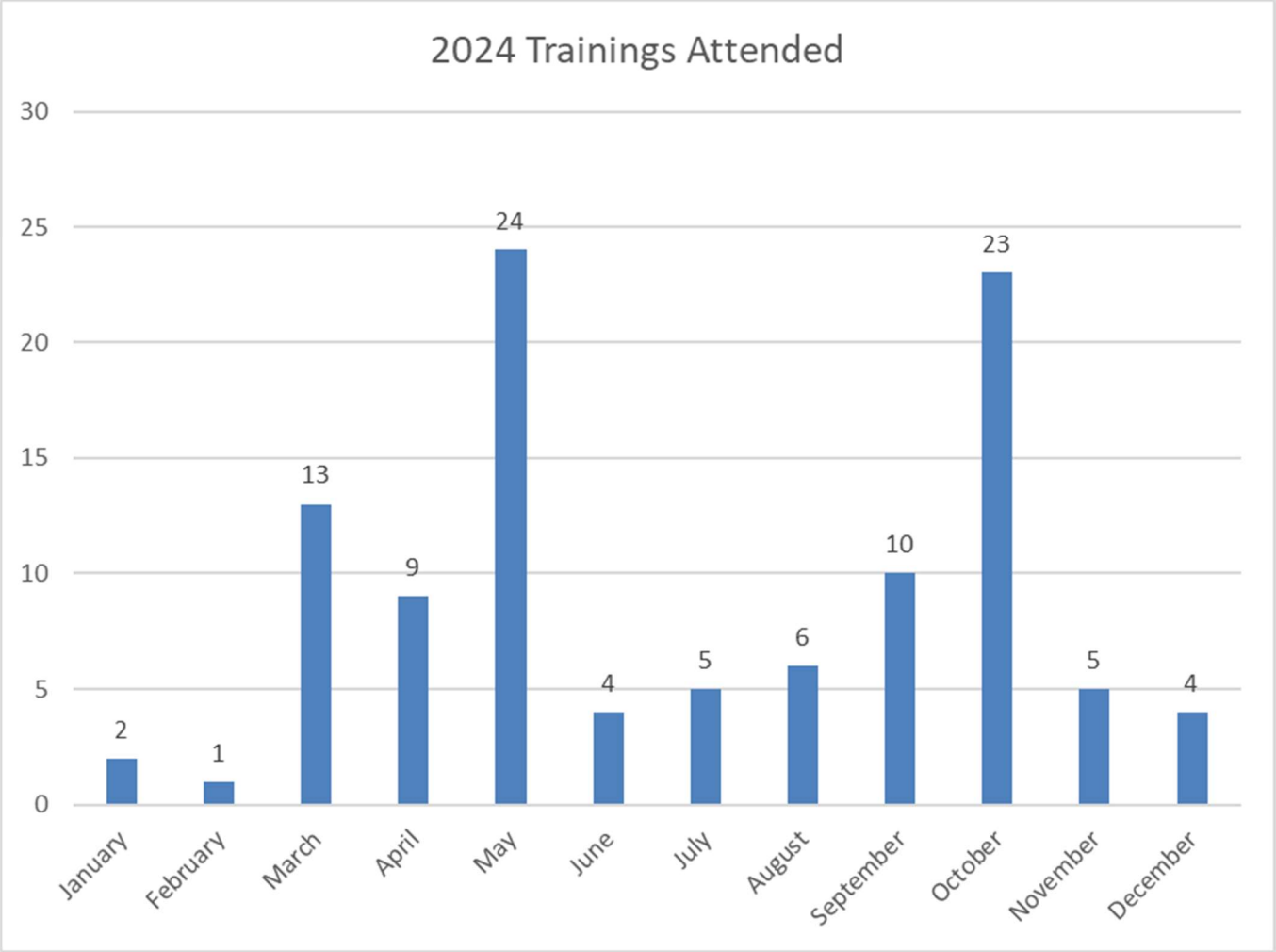
Left to Right Lt. DiPippa, Chief Porter, Officer Dowds, Sgt. Ciocco and Dep. Chief Hudzinski at the Pa. DUI Association Top Gun Awards.



2024 AAA Community Traffic Safety Platinum Award

OTHER DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Below is a graph outlining the total number of training sessions attended in 2024.



FUTURE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In 2024, Chief Porter and Chief Safety Officer Jennings took significant steps toward the procurement and implementation of a security alerts platform that would let PRT riders use their mobile phone to report concerns and problems. Giving our riders access to such an application will equip them to be our eyes and ears on every bus, LRV and property—helping the Police Department to respond more rapidly to safety and security concerns. Response times are critical to our department and the sooner we are aware of an incident, the sooner we can respond to protect our employees and riders.

In 2024, Chief Porter began the planning and procurement process to implement an unmanned aircraft system or drone program at the Port Authority Police Department. Use of drones by law enforcing agencies and media outlets have proven to be an invaluable means to obtain an overview of emergency scenes without compromising officer safety or civilians' right to privacy. In addition, drones can be used to reconstruct crash and crime scenes. In 2024, officers began training with the Allegheny County Sheriff's Department who has an existing drone program. Policies and procedures have also been developed, and the procurement process was also started. Chief Porter hopes to implement the program by late 2025.

In 2024, Chief Porter began researching means to incorporate use of force data into the police records managements system, as well as reporting crime data to the national incident-based reporting system or NIBRS. After extensive research, it was determined that it would be more economical to purchase a new police records management system, rather than updating the existing system. Chief Porter is currently previewing two new systems, both of which have the necessary features to move the Port Authority Police Department to the next generation of records management and incident reporting.

In 2024, 14 new officers were hired with the Police Department, and no officers left the department to go to other police agencies. This is a tremendous shift from 2023 and is in part due to increased competitive salaries as well as recruitment practices such as identifying cadets who are completing the police academy but have not yet secured employment with a police department. The department also continues to focus on efforts to hire and retain officers who represent the diverse population of the communities, riders, and PRT employees that we are proud to serve. Recruitment and retention will continue to be a significant area of focus in CY 2025.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for taking the time to review the Port Authority Police Department's annual report for calendar year 2024. Nothing is more critical to a police department's success than for the community it serves to trust and be engaged with law enforcement. It is the ongoing goal of the Port Authority Police Department to continue to be transparent in its operation and to continue to make transit-oriented policing services the highest priority for the department. It's through these efforts, and others, that we can create a partnership with the community we serve and continue to build collaborative and proactive relationships with Pittsburgh Regional Transit's customers, employees, and other stakeholders critical to the agency's mission, vision, and values.

Please expect to receive future reports regarding the Port Authority Police Department. Questions, comments, and feedback, including content you would like to see in future reports and/or questions or concerns regarding the calendar year 2024 Annual Report are welcomed and encouraged. Feedback can be provided directly to Chief Porter via e-mail at mporter@portauthority.org or by calling the Chief's direct office line at (412) 255-1376.

And please remember, if you ever see anything concerning while using PRT's transit system, please call 911 or the Port Authority Police Department directly at (412) 255-1385. We all are safer on public transit and in our neighborhoods and community when we **See Something** and **Say Something**!