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MICHAEL J. MURPHY
ALDERMAN, 10TH DISTRICT

April 7, 2017

City of Milwaukee Fire & Police Commission
Attn – MaryNell Regan, Executive Director
200 E. Wells St., Rm. 706A
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Executive Director Regan,

After reviewing statistics on City of Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn’s police pursuit policy, I am requesting that the Milwaukee Fire & Police Commission (FPC) review said policy given the amount of crime we are currently experiencing when it comes to vehicle flights, mobile drug transactions, and more.

As you know, the pursuit policy changed in 2010 under the direction of Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn when four innocent civilians were killed as a result of high-speed pursuits. I respect Chief Flynn’s rationale based on the protection of civilian lives and officer safety, but I feel that the pursuit policy must be reexamined and possibly amended based upon current pursuit data. I encourage you to examine the data below from the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) Office of Management, Analysis & Planning:

Vehicle Pursuits & Non-Pursuits by the MPD								
Police Activity	2012	2013	2014*	2015*	2016*	YTD 2016	YTD 2017	YTD % Change
Vehicle Pursuits	49	82	102	263	305	71	27	-62%
Non-Pursuits	12	36	689	2,544	4,317	863	1,675	94%

**Indicates both pursuit and non-pursuit data is not comparable due to policy changes or reporting practices*

In 2016, there were 305 vehicle pursuits and 4,317 non-pursuits. As you can see, vehicle pursuits decreased 62% from January 1 through March 13, 2017 (27) from the same time period in 2016 (71); however, non-pursuits dramatically increased by 94% from 863 in YTD 2016 to 1,675 in YTD 2017. If current trends continue, we will likely exceed the 2016 figure this year. Again, while I respect Chief Flynn’s rationale, I also wonder whether some of these should be pursued to prevent further illegal acts.



It is worth noting that prior to year's end in 2015, MPD officers had to have a reasonable belief that a vehicle occupant was a suspect in a violent felony before they could actually pursue the vehicle. Chief Flynn later modified the policy to allow vehicle pursuits used in a violent felony whether officers had reasonable belief or not that occupants were actually involved.

According to many citizens, the lawlessness occurring today in regards to speeding, reckless driving, and traffic violations is astounding. The number of individuals not responding to basic traffic stops and standard traffic calming measures has an adverse effect on our citizens' public safety concerns. Both in public perception and in reality, I often hear residents expressing fears of driving on our streets. Criminals in our city believe that there are no consequences to their actions – Criminal behavior continues to escalate because appropriate action, both enforcement and court system, are not taken.

I am not declaring that I have all the answers. I am simply respectfully requesting that the FPC review and, if deemed appropriate, make modifications to the current pursuit policy because of the staggering statistics.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Murphy
Alderman, 10th District

Enclosure

CC: Tom Barrett, City of Milwaukee Mayor





Milwaukee Police Department Vehicle Pursuits and Non-Pursuits by MPD

Request: Data pertaining to vehicle pursuits that resulted from fleeing from January 1, 2012 to March 13, 2017.

Data Notes: Fleeing from MPD includes both “vehicle pursuits” and “non-pursuits”. A vehicle pursuit is initiated by officers to apprehend a suspect(s) of a violent felony (or an occupant(s) of a vehicle used or taken in commission of a violent felony) in a motor vehicle attempting to evade law enforcement (SOP 660). A non-pursuit is when an officer does not attempt to pursue a vehicle that flees in accordance with Standard Operating Procedure (SOP 660).

Table 1 illustrates vehicle pursuits and non-pursuits for the full years 2012-2016 and YTD 2016 & YTD 2017. Due to variation in reporting methods of non-pursuits and the policy change of police pursuits, full year data should not be compared. Year-to-date data was provided for 2016 and 2017, which can be compared.

In June 2015, the vehicle pursuit policy was modified to include the pursuit of vehicles that were used or taken in the commission of a violent felony. This may include a stolen auto that was subsequently used in the commission of a violent felony, such as a carjacking. In 2014, MPD began to consistently track and record non-pursuits.

Summary: In 2016, there were 305 “vehicle pursuits” and 4,317 “non-pursuits”. Vehicle pursuits declined 62% from January 1 - March 13, 2017 (27) from the same time period in 2016 (71). In contrast, non-pursuits increased 94% in 2017 (1,675) from 2016 (863).

Table 1. Vehicle Pursuits and Non-Pursuits by MPD

Vehicle Pursuits & Non-Pursuits by the Milwaukee Police Department								
Police Activity	2012	2013	2014*	2015*	2016*	YTD 2016	YTD 2017	YTD % Change
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Questions pertaining to this document should be directed to the Milwaukee Police Department, Office of Management, Analysis & Planning at omap@milwaukee.gov or by phone at (414) 935-7835.