



# Crime Prevention

• Causes • Demographics • Strategies • Next Steps • Call to Action

**August 10, 2021**  
City Council Briefing



# City Manager's City-Wide Comprehensive Crime Strategy - Goals

- Building Strong Community Engagement and Partnerships
- Prevention and Intervention programs
- Focusing on data driven enforcement
- Providing Safer and Healthier Neighborhoods
- Partnering with grassroots organizations to identify solutions that address the City's crime objectives



# WHAT IS CRIME?

- *noun*

- An action or omission that constitutes an offense that may be prosecuted by the state and is punishable by law
  - Illegal activities
  - An action or activity that, although not illegal, evil, shameful, or wrong

# WHAT CAUSES CRIME?

The causes of crime are complex but can be connected to:

- **Poverty,**
- **Low self-esteem,**
- **Unemployment,**
- **Alcohol and drug abuse**

# POVERTY

- **POVERTY** is perhaps one of the most concrete reasons why people commit crimes. Economic deprivation is seen as a major instigator.
- You will be shocked to know that 3 billion people in this world are categorized as poor and living on a very low per capita income.
- More than 20,000 children die due to poverty every day. In a country where economic deprivation is rampant, it is common for people to engage in criminal acts. Hunger and poor economic conditions lead many people to criminal activity.

# POVERTY (continued):

- Many young people engage in criminal activities because they believe it is their responsibility to take care of their impoverished household(s) even if it means to commit a felony.
- Society dictates, currently, that money is valued more than relationships and a normal standard of life.
- If you're not able to provide for the entire family as an impoverished individual, at some point, you may consider taking a negative path in order to take care of the family's needs.

# LOW SELF-ESTEEM

- **LOW SELF-ESTEEM** is a new form of concern in the modern world. Many young people commit crimes and use drugs because they see a lot of their peers engaging in such acts.
- Youth is a very critical period because one is not always filled with wisdom and experience.
- Youth and young adults become criminals by committing criminal acts due to a lack of strong will and peer pressure.

# UNEMPLOYMENT

- **UNEMPLOYMENT** is a skyrocketing factor in many countries.
- It is often the main reason why so many people commit crimes; more than 30% of people in this world are unemployed.
- Many young people destroy their careers when they engage in criminal activities very early on in one's life and are not able to qualify for jobs due to a blemished criminal background.



# ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

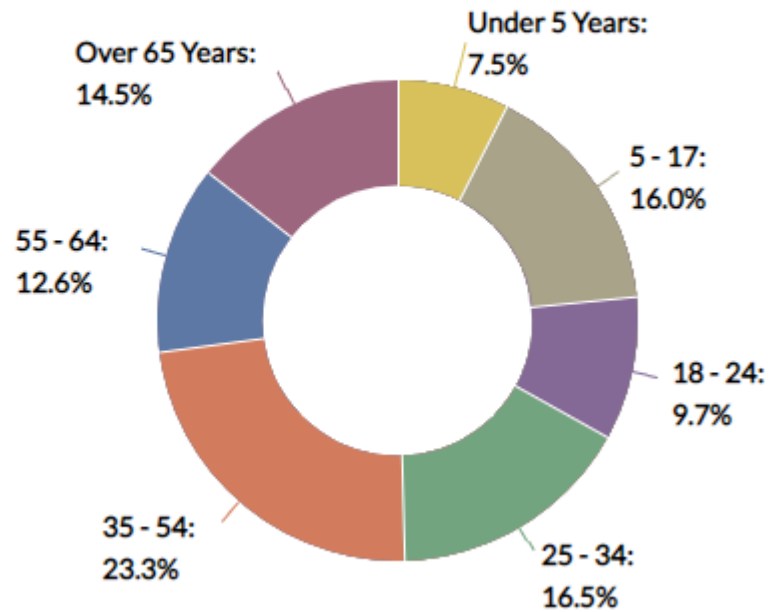
- **Drug and alcohol addiction** is another rampantly growing disease in our society today.
- As many as 0.7 million people die from drug addiction in US.
- Most violent criminals, when asked about their crimes, often blamed drugs as the main reason. A poor lifestyle compels a person to adopt habits which they would normally distance themselves from.

# CRIME PROFILE: PORTSMOUTH POPULATION & AGE DISTRIBUTION

TOTAL POPULATION  
**94,398**

**Date(s) & Update Frequency:** 2019 (latest available). Updated annually.

## AGE



# CRIME IN PORTSMOUTH

## PORTSMOUTH CRIME DATA



### CRIME INDEX

1

(100 is safest)

Safer than 1% of U.S. Cities

### PORTSMOUTH ANNUAL CRIMES

	VIOLENT	PROPERTY	TOTAL
Number of Crimes	905	5,518	6,423
Crime Rate (per 1,000 residents)	9.59	58.45	68.04

# CRIME IN PORTSMOUTH (continued):

## PORTSMOUTH PROPERTY CRIMES

POPULATION: 94,398

	BURGLARY	THEFT	MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT
Report Total	846	4,191	481
Rate per 1,000	8.96	44.40	5.10

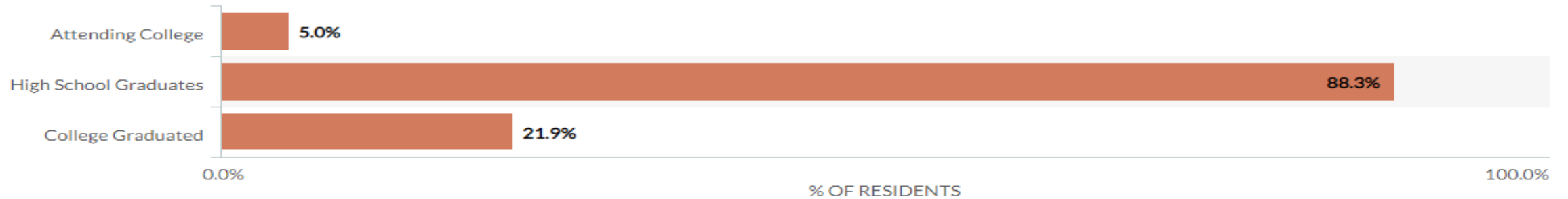
## UNITED STATES PROPERTY CRIMES

POPULATION: 328,239,523

	BURGLARY	THEFT	MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT
Report Total	1,117,696	5,086,096	721,885
Rate per 1,000	3.41	15.50	2.20

# DEMOGRAPHICS

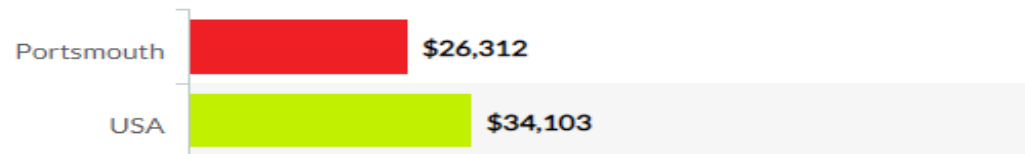
## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF ADULTS



## INCOME



### PER CAPITA INCOME



### MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

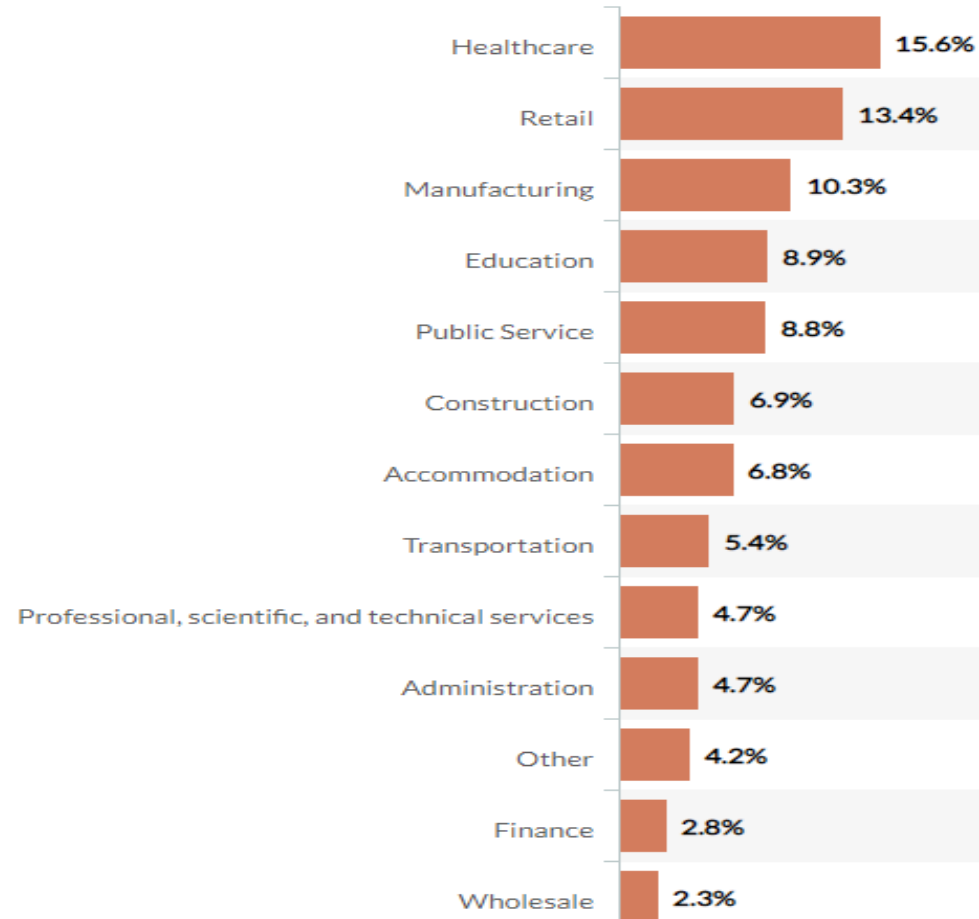


INDIVIDUALS BELOW POVERTY LEVEL:  
**16.8%**



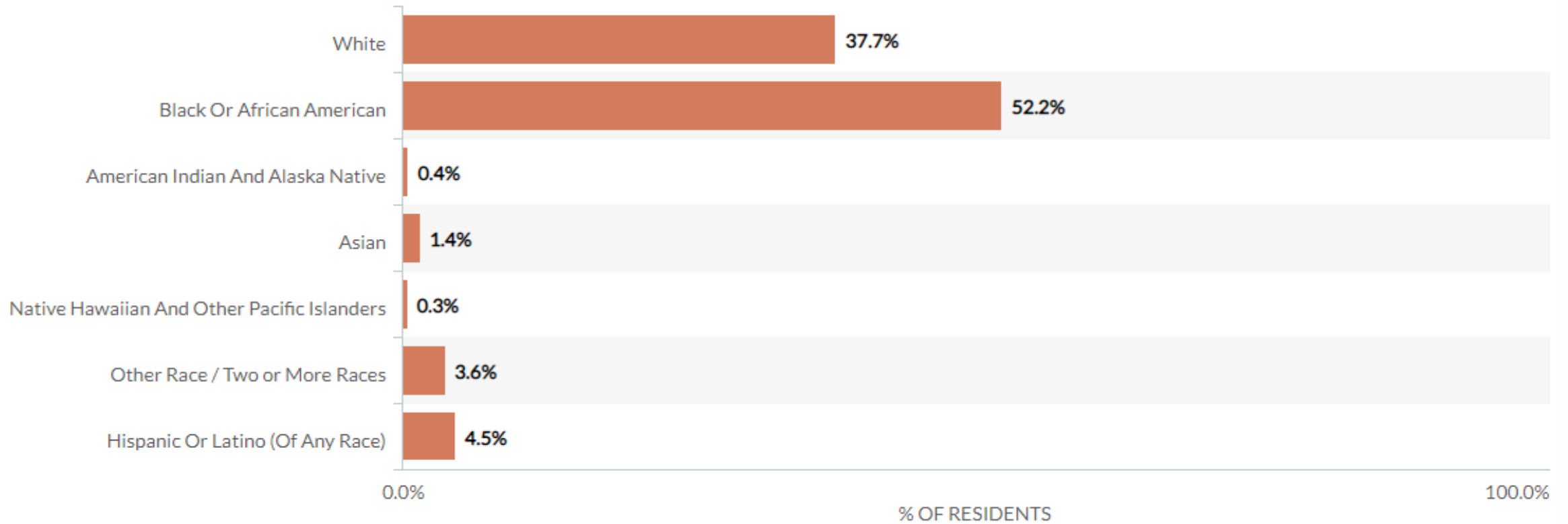
# DEMOGRAPHICS (continued):

## EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRIES IN PORTSMOUTH



# DEMOGRAPHICS (continued):

## RACE & ETHNIC DIVERSITY



# WHAT IS THE CITY'S CRIME PLAN?

- To address the root cause of crime by using a systemic and holistic approach in changing cultural norms and policies in a collaborative and comprehensive manner.

# WHAT ARE WE DOING?

- **DEVELOPING CITY'S CRIME PROFILE**
- **DEFINING GOALS & OBJECTIVES**
- **IDENTIFYING PARTNERSHIPS**
- **IMPLEMENTING INITIATIVES**
- **GETTING RESULTS**

# IN PROGRESS:

- Extending youth programs through partnership agreements with Portsmouth Public Schools to secure access to neighborhood school facilities for recreational and after school programs
- (Engaging in Community Participation) working with Civic Leagues throughout the city to obtain short/long term suggestions for crime reduction
- Initiated requests to Dominion Power to enhance lighting within high crime areas as defined by crime data
- Partnering with grass roots organizations to break down the silos that often impede the progress of community engagement and inclusion
- Providing mental health, training classes and initiatives from Social Services and Behavioral Health Services to public safety employees and others to address individual needs



# IN PROGRESS (continued):

- Redirecting patrolling in neighborhoods based on key factors (Sheriff Deputies visible and assisting)
- Developing public/private partnership plan of action for violent crime reduction
- Developing additional outreach strategies for the Portsmouth at work and Hampton Roads workforce development program for youth
- Responding to community concerns to create positive perceptions
- Enforcing blighted buildings (residential and commercial) aggressively
- Increasing maintenance of overgrown vegetation to deter crime
- Hiring new Police Chief; Evaluating all positions that impact crime
- Increasing opportunities for minorities and women owned businesses as a means to combat crime

# UNDER DEVELOPMENT/CONSIDERATION:

- Homelessness Initiatives (the city has identified a facility and partnering with the local stakeholders to address homelessness)
- Enhancement of a city-wide mentorship program in the peak crime areas
- Development of internal and external operations procedures – improving on how we engage with the community
- Educating and open communication in our community and across the organization on city goals and transparency
- Technology integration which will increase efficiencies and expand the city's footprint
- Training and accountability to ensure optimal performance and service
- Setting city-wide curfews for kids
- Identification of safe school zones throughout the city
- Increase protection for residents who work with the city to assist in identifying neighborhood injustices and crime
- Partnering with community stakeholders to identify grant funding for vocational education programs for youth, adults and families

# RESEARCH:

- Accountability for residents that have an excess of complaints for illegal activity within the communities (criminal blight)
- Housing initiatives and incentives for employees that live in Portsmouth with public safety being the 1st priority
- Leverage city resources with grants that allow for crime reduction programs
- Public safety divisions collaborating with national organizations in problem-solving approaches
- Reconsider Tech programs in schools for skilled trades
- Approaches to engaging parents and addressing existing stigmas regarding skilled trades

# NEXT STEPS:

- Complete comprehensive crime strategy
- Develop grassroot grants process, metrics and measures
- Continue discussions with PPS and develop action plan for CTE (certified and technical education) programs
- Develop crime financial plan and budgeting

# CALL TO ACTION:

**Crime** is not only an issue in Portsmouth, but also an issue that is plaguing our Nation.

The city's **call to action** will require all of Portsmouth in this fight; it is not a one person show or an overnight fix.

As we continue to knock down barriers, boundaries and stigmas that surround this great city, we must lean on each-other for help and support.



