

The Virgin Islands Consortium

New Initiative At St. Thomas P.D. Aims To Target Troubled Areas, A Focus Of New Chief

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ST. THOMAS -- Just as new St. Croix Police Chief Winsbut McFarlande [announced changes](#) to curb gun violence in the territory, Jason Marsh, the new police chief [who replaced](#) former Chief Darren Foy, announced at a meeting with the media his own efforts to fight the heightened crime here.

"The Police Department has recognized that there has been an increase, sharp increase in homicides and gun violence. And what the department has done is create a homicide task force. We have used experienced detectives to assist the Criminal Investigation Bureau with those crimes," said Chief Marsh. Like his St. Croix counterpart, the chief said there have been initiatives since he became the chief aimed at defeating the criminal

element.

"The initiatives [include] members of the department going out into the community and targeting some hot spots [and] specific individuals. We use the crime analyst to assist us in identifying the hot spot areas," he said.

Chief Marsh said the St. Thomas P.D. also uses its intelligence arm to help in identifying possible suspects. But he was measured in his approach in the long battle ahead, stating that while he would like to see quick arrests for the homicide crimes, "as you know, crimes of [this nature] take time to properly investigate."

"While we would be happy with arrests, we would be happier with convictions," he said. Chief Marsh also said one of the most critical components of effective crime-fighting initiative is "boots on the ground" and "traffic stops."

Another important element of crime-fighting efforts, the chief said, is the level of faith the community has in the Police Department, and how often they come forward with tips.

"We can't do this alone as a police department. We can't be everywhere at the same time but somebody sees, and we realize that we can only try to encourage them to come forward," he said. The chief said residents can call his office directly to relay information, and said those who seek anonymity can call Crime Stoppers.

"Once identified, we have leads [and] we can make arrests. We need citizens to come forward because it's really a small group of people that has this community living in fear. And I think we have the numbers as a community to stop that, and I'd encourage the community to have faith in us."

The chief said assessments are ongoing, which will result in some additional shifts at the force. And he revealed strong communication between himself and Chief McFarlane, noting that the criminals often travel between the islands.

"Being in constant contact with him and identifying these individuals, we're able to be more proactive in how we address the crime situation," Chief Marsh said.

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