August 7, 2015

Dear Resident:

The Ladue Police Department is committed to excellence in law enforcement and is dedicated to the people of this community. The City of Ladue is proud of its performance over the last five years in addressing community concerns regarding traffic-stop data.

Current Traffic Safety Policing Strategy
The Ladue Police Department has a very clear traffic safety policing strategy focused on hazardous moving violations that have a high correlation with accidents and injuries. Examples of these are speeding, reckless driving, rolling stops, driving under the influence, etc. The results of the strategies over the past five years have been very successful.

- 88% of all traffic tickets are written for hazardous and reckless moving violations.
- Fewer than 12% of all traffic tickets are written for violations unrelated to safety such as expired license plate stickers.
- In 2014, traffic stops involving African-Americans in the City of Ladue represent 14% of the total number of traffic stops. There were a total of 4,107 traffic stops and 575 involved African-American drivers.
- According to the US Census Bureau, St. Louis County has a 23.7% African-American population.
- In 2013, the City of Ladue collected $464,213 in court fines and costs for all violations, which is 3.9% of general operating revenue according to the 2013 audit. The 2014 audit is currently being conducted and the city will make those numbers available once the audit is complete.

In 2010, a New Police Chief was Appointed and Questions were Addressed
In 2010, I was appointed Police Chief for the City of Ladue. Since then, policing strategies, policies and practices have been refined to ensure that the people who live and visit Ladue are treated respectfully and fairly. The City of Ladue is proud of its performance over the last five years in addressing community questions regarding traffic-stop data.

- In 2010, I signed a community outreach agreement with the Department of Justice.
- I am only one of two police chiefs in St. Louis County to voluntarily sign and abide by this agreement.
- The city reports regular data to the Department of Justice and has remained compliant each year.

- The city established a productive dialogue with representatives from area advocacy groups, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.
- The City of Ladue developed an interactive system that relies on an internal benchmark for monitoring vehicle stops at the individual officer level.
- I have identified additional methods for evaluating vehicle stops and post stop events (i.e. arrests, searches, etc.) that are more precise than the methods used by the Attorney General to ensure all appropriate data is regularly monitored.
- The city subjected its 2008, 2009 and 2010 vehicle stop data to a more rigorous analysis by a nationally recognized racial profiling expert to seek a more clear understanding of the data and to develop policies and strategies to prevent inadvertent racial profiling.
- The City of Ladue receives a small number of citizen complaints against its officers each year. These complaints are taken very seriously and investigated thoroughly. These complaints are available to the public.
- The City of Ladue posts all public policing data on its website to ensure a transparent relationship with the public.

To more precisely evaluate its vehicle stops, the City of Ladue developed a system whereby each officer's performance is compared with that of other similarly situated officers. Among the various methods used to identify potential racial profiling behaviors, this technique is the most promising. In fact the United States Department of Justice often uses this technique to monitor police departments accused of civil rights violations. Using this method, the city can actually identify specific officers who are stopping substantially higher proportions of drivers from one racial or ethnic group.

Methodology of the Attorney General's Vehicle Stop Report

Each year, the Missouri Attorney General releases a Vehicle Stops Report. The data is particularly harsh for communities that have a low population of African-American residents, such as the City of Ladue.

The Attorney General's method uses a community's residential population to estimate its driving population. Critics of the report, like UMSL Criminologist Rick Rosenfled, say the data don't accurately measure the population of people (by race or ethnicity) who drive through the communities in which they are stopped by its police officers. This method does not account for transient traffic, like motorists who drive through a community but do not live there. The methodology inflates the disparity index in these communities making it appear as if their officers are racial profiling.

The method used by the Attorney General to calculate the disparity index has also been summarily discredited by experts in racial profiling research. The Attorney General's own experts have publically criticized the use of the residential population as an estimate of the driving population. Two Interstate highways and several other heavily travelled regional transportation systems either traverse or border the City of Ladue. The average daily

traffic on these thoroughfares is *fifteen times larger* than Ladue's residential population and likely very different in terms of its racial and ethnic proportions.

Accurate Evaluation of Data

Ladue provided its 2008 and 2009 vehicle stop data to an independent researcher for analysis. This researcher, Dr. Brian L. Withrow, an Associate Professor from Texas State University, subjected these data to various analyses. Professor Withrow has authored numerous articles, conducted studies throughout the nation, testified as an expert witness in more than a dozen court cases, and published two books on racial profiling. After evaluating Ladue's 2008 and 2009 vehicle stops data he concluded:

- *There is no single officer or small group of officers in the City of Ladue who appear to be consistently stopping inordinately high proportions of African-American drivers.*

- *These results of the internal benchmark analysis do not provide support for an accusation of racial profiling.*

- *Consistently, African-American individuals appear to be arrested in higher proportions for non-discretionary rather than discretionary reasons. This finding suggests that police officers in the Ladue Police Department do not appear to be using their discretionary arrest authority to the disadvantage of African-American drivers or individuals.*

- *Although the police officers in Ladue are searching a higher proportion of African-American drivers and individuals, they appear to be more likely to find contraband during these searches. More importantly, it would appear that factors, other than the race of the individual searched, are more important indicators of search productivity.*

Dr. Withrow's subsequent analysis of Ladue's 2010 vehicle stop data reached the same conclusions. There is simply no evidence of racial profiling within the Ladue Police Department.

Dismissed Lawsuit

Former Police Chief Larry White filed a lawsuit in March 2010, claiming city officials pressured him to pull over blacks and set ticket quotas for those who live outside of Ladue's city limits. He then claimed he was fired when he refused to follow this alleged policy. It is accurate that Mr. White was terminated from his position with the City of Ladue in August of 2009.

Mr. White's lawsuit claiming wrongful termination was dismissed by the Circuit Court in April 2012. A second count of a failure to abide by Missouri's Freedom of Information Act was dismissed by the Circuit Court in September 2012. These dismissals were upheld by the Missouri Appellate Court. The Supreme Court was asked to review the case by Mr. White. The Court refused to hear the case in early 2014.

Despite Mr. White's best attempts, his allegations were unfounded. There was no racial or non-resident quota system in place in the department. No officer was ever terminated, reprimanded or disciplined for actions related to this alleged quota system.

When I was appointed to the position of Police Chief and enacted a new traffic-stop policing strategy to ensure all people were being treated justly and fairly by police, I had the full support of Ladue City Council. I continue to enjoy the support of city officials in this important matter. I have a 29-year history with the Ladue Police Department, and I can assure you that I know our residents well. The people of this community would not stand for a police department that targeted specific racial groups or discriminated against anyone. Frankly, nor would I.

Sincerely,

Richard D. Wooten
Chief of Police