

Community Safety Priorities

Our new Strategic Business Plan clearly identified four priorities for community safety: Youth Safety; Roadway Safety; Violence Against/Exploitation of Persons; and Property Crime. Significant progress was made in all four areas in 2008.

Youth Safety

National, Provincial and local statistics are clear – despite gradual decreases in most crime categories, violent crime involving youth is slightly increasing. Most disturbing is a rise in street-level violence and drug-related incidents. In 2008, the DRPS had a multi-faceted approach to address this disturbing trend.

Our dedicated team of elementary and high school liaison officers work directly with children in classrooms across Durham Region every year, talking to them about bullying, respecting others and the dangers of drugs. In 2008, our officers delivered thousands of hours of education directly to young people in schools. An additional 10,000 students received our message about safety at the Kids' Safety Village in Whitby.

We are supporters of the popular Racing Against Drugs educational program held in Whitby and Clarington. Our joint venture with the Ministry of Child and Youth Services expanded our summer student outreach program to include 28 high school students in 2008, creating ambassadors who shared our enthusiasm for equal rights and personal responsibility. These students came away with leadership skills and a new respect for each other, the police and the community in which they live.

For those young people in conflict with the law, criminal charges and a lengthy court process are often counterproductive for their rehabilitation. That's why we invest heavily in youth intervention strategies for less serious crimes, including diversion from traditional court to a more timely and victim-focused approach. In 2008, we diverted 467 young people involved in less serious offences away from the traditional court system. This initiative helped clear the backlog in court and provided a swifter resolution to everyone involved.

Of that total, 59 youths were placed in anger management programs, 97 were provided with drug addiction counseling and 194 were referred to anti-theft programs.



Chief Constable Mike Ewles chats with youngsters at the Eastview Boys and Girls Club in Oshawa.

Over 150 young people attended the first ever youth forum called the Ripple Affect hosted by the DRPS Youth in Policing students on Aug. 26 in Ajax.

Deputy Chief Chuck Mercier welcomed the youths before listening to inspirational speakers Farley Flex and Spider Jones. They encouraged them to continue their leadership roles in the community and to live their passion everyday. "When I see young people like you," said Spider Jones, "it gives me hope for the future."

The day also included some break-out sessions, with the youths tackling issues such as cyber-bullying, gangs, drugs and racism. Each group presented some viable solutions to the problems and ideas that they could take back to their communities. All students involved in the forum will receive an action plan to implement in their school.

The Youth in Policing summer program introduced 28 students to the world of policing and focused on developing their leadership skills. Throughout the course of the summer they were certified in CPR, worked at St. Vincent's Kitchen and participated in diversity workshops.

Roadway Safety

The top concern in every municipality is roadway safety – from cars speeding in school zones to impaired drivers endangering the lives of others.

In 2008, the number of registered vehicles in Durham Region surpassed 400,000 for the first time. Despite increasing traffic volume on existing roads, a strategic approach to traffic enforcement paid dividends. There were decreases in both persons killed in motor vehicle collisions and those injured. By concentrating on school zones at the beginning, middle and end of the school year and targeting the Region's most dangerous intersections, enforcement campaigns made a difference. The total number of roadway fatalities decreased 7.7 per cent and the number of collisions involving injury fell 3.9 per cent in 2008.

A yearlong Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere (R.I.D.E.) initiative and aggressive enforcement around the holiday season also made a significant difference. A record number of impaired drivers were pulled over in our annual Festive R.I.D.E. 2008/09 – 152 persons were charged with drinking and driving offences, an increase of 39 from the previous year. Our dedicated R.I.D.E team targeted neighbourhoods near bars and taverns. The campaign began by Traffic Services sending a Christmas card to every suspended driver in Durham Region, reminding them not to drive during the holidays. Throughout the entire year, total Impaired Operation incidents were down 2.2 per cent in 2008. from the previous year.

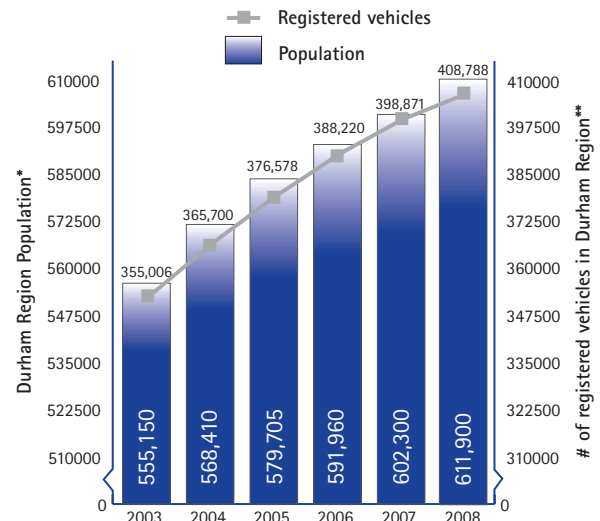
The number of Highway Traffic Act Offence Notices remained consistent with the previous year (42,151 compared to 42,391 in 2007). Frontline Officers continued to spend a considerable amount of time stopping speeders and other dangerous drivers to change their behaviour.

Durham Regional Police continue to receive invaluable assistance from many community organizations and volunteers to help keep our roads safe, such as Road Watch and Mothers Against Drunk Driving (M.A.D.D.).



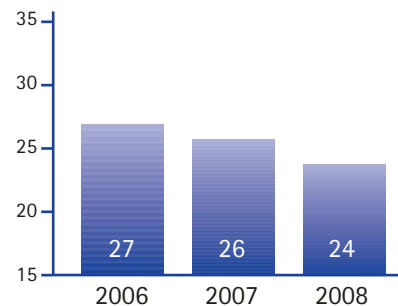
Our 2008/2009 Festive R.I.D.E. Team.

Our Roads: Population* vs # of registered vehicles in Durham Region**



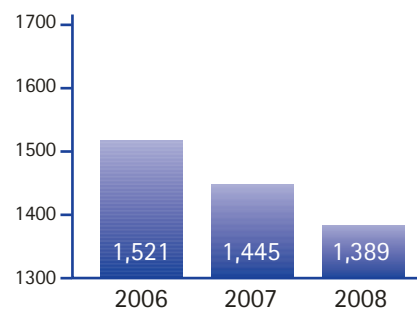
* Revised from previous counts ** Source: MTO

MVC* Persons Killed**



** Excludes Medical Episodes

MVC* Injury Collisions



*MVC – Motor Vehicle Collision