



# **DPI 663: Team Boston Police**

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## **User Insights**



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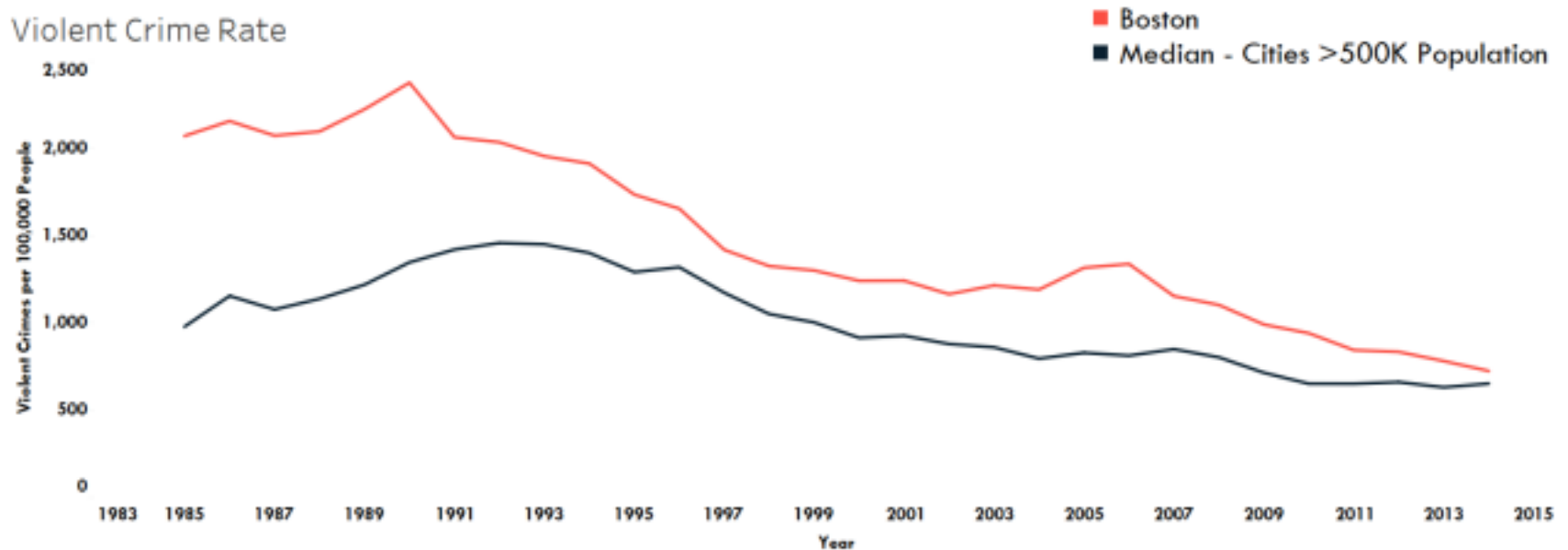


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# The city has made significant progress reducing violent crime, but gangs still play an outsized role in violence.



Source: Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics, FBI; Violent crime is composed of four offenses: murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault

30+

Active Gangs

The Boston Globe

Mass. homicides slightly higher due to gang feuds

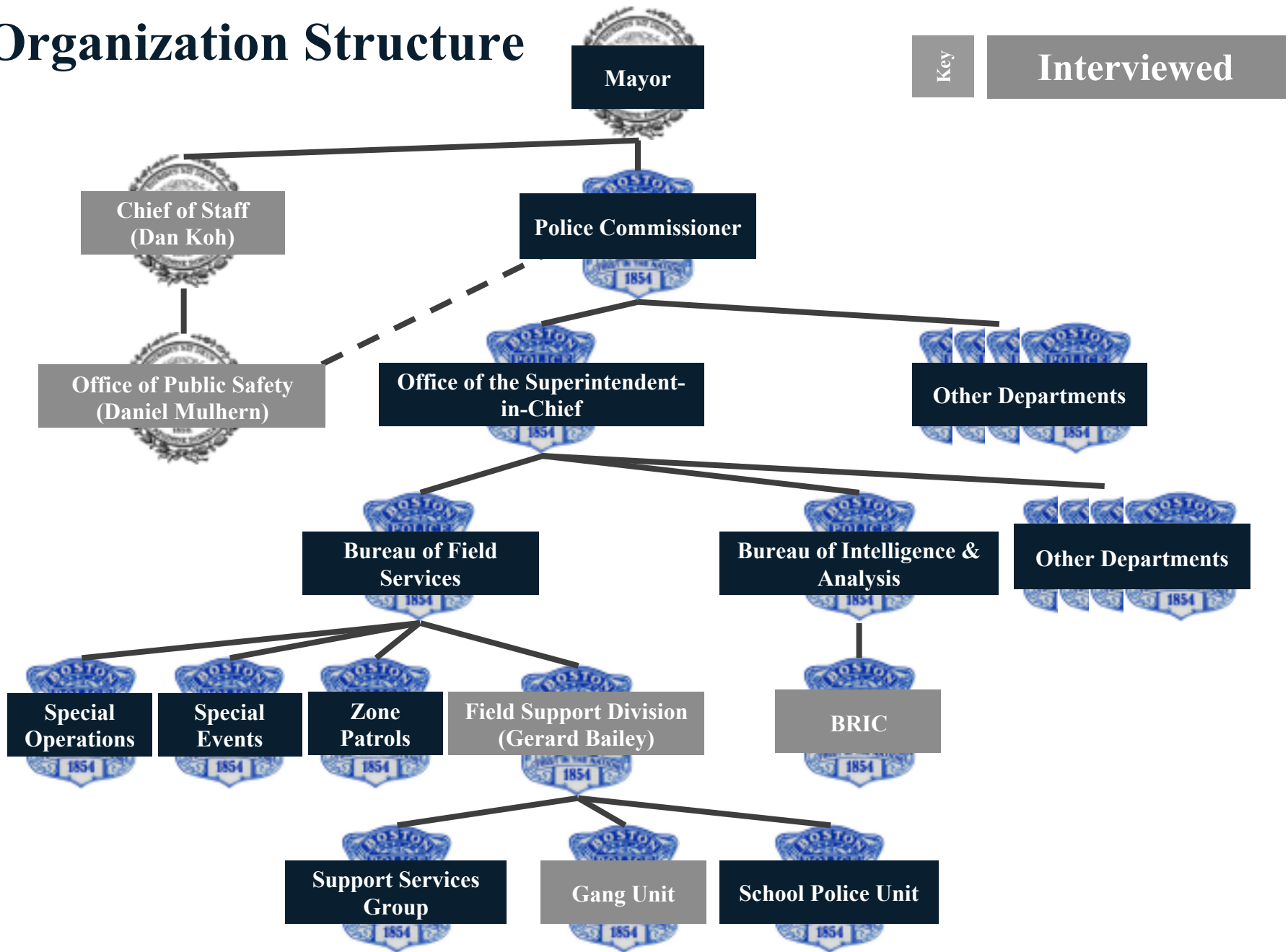
Source: Boston Globe, January 13, 2017



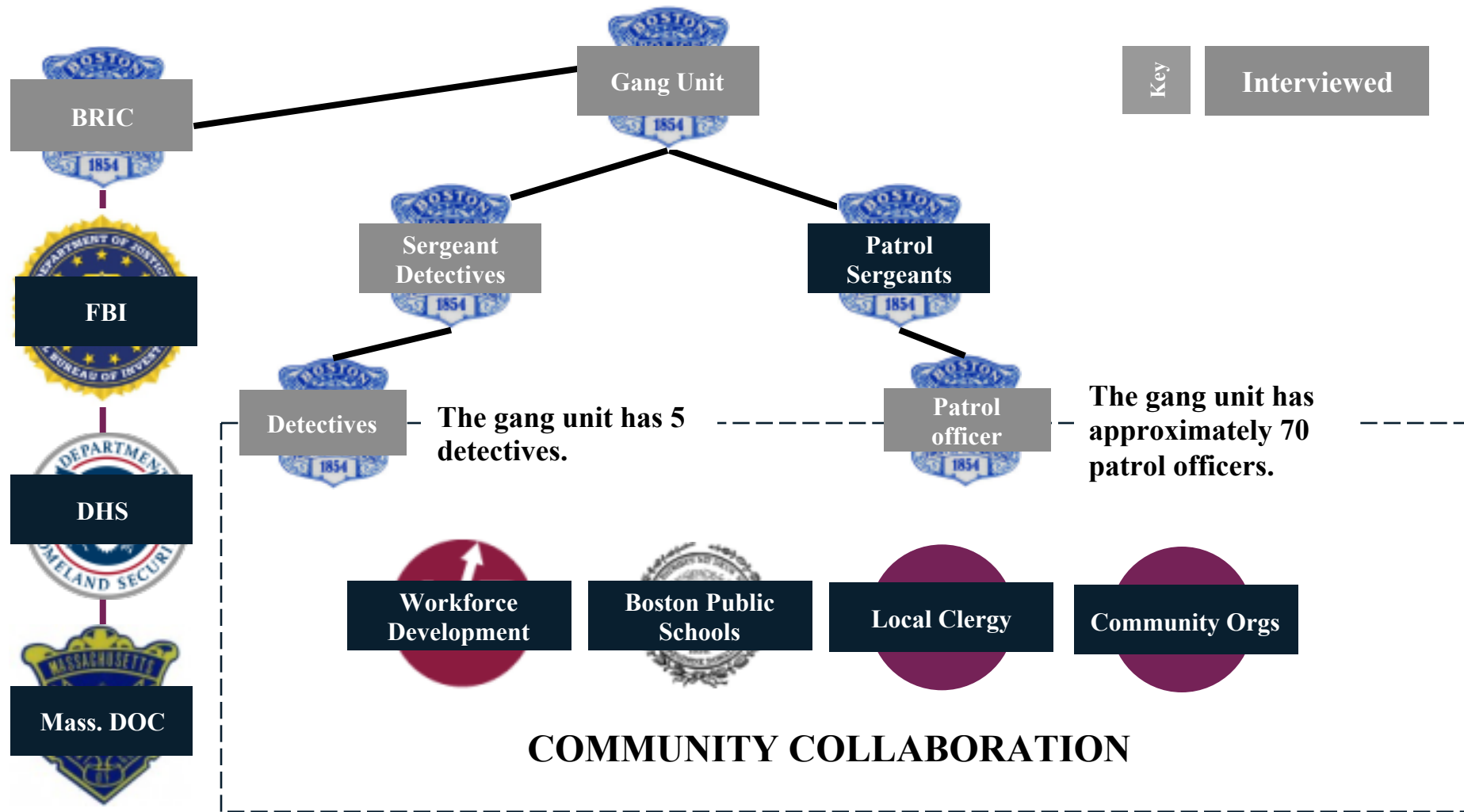
# Organization Structure

Key

Interviewed



Many people are working together toward a shared mission: a safer Boston with less gang violence.



# Our Problem Statement

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While data is abundant, **sometimes finding what you need fast is difficult for an officer.**

How might we develop a solution that will convey necessary information, so officers are prepared for the dynamics at a specific incident location?



# We interviewed over fifteen officers and stakeholders over the past four weeks.

## Desktop Research

*Multiple reports and news articles over the past several years:*

- The Official Website of the Boston Police Department
- “Strong Community Ties Crucial” (The Boston Globe)
- “How a Gang Operates” (The Boston Globe)
- NECN: Video Story of Ride Along with Gang Unit
- Gang Investigator: General Job Info

## Interviews

*City staff, police leadership, and front-line patrol officers:*

- Boston Regional Intelligence Center
  - David Carabin, Director of the BRIC
  - Ryan Walsh, Deputy Director of the BRIC
  - Kelly Nee, BPD Deputy Superintendent
- Brian Ball, Detective
- Daniel Koh, Chief of Staff at City of Boston
- Daniel Mulhern, Senior Advisor to the Mayor
- Gerard Bailey, Deputy Superintendent of Gang Unit
- Sergeant Detective Jay Broderick

## Ride Alongs

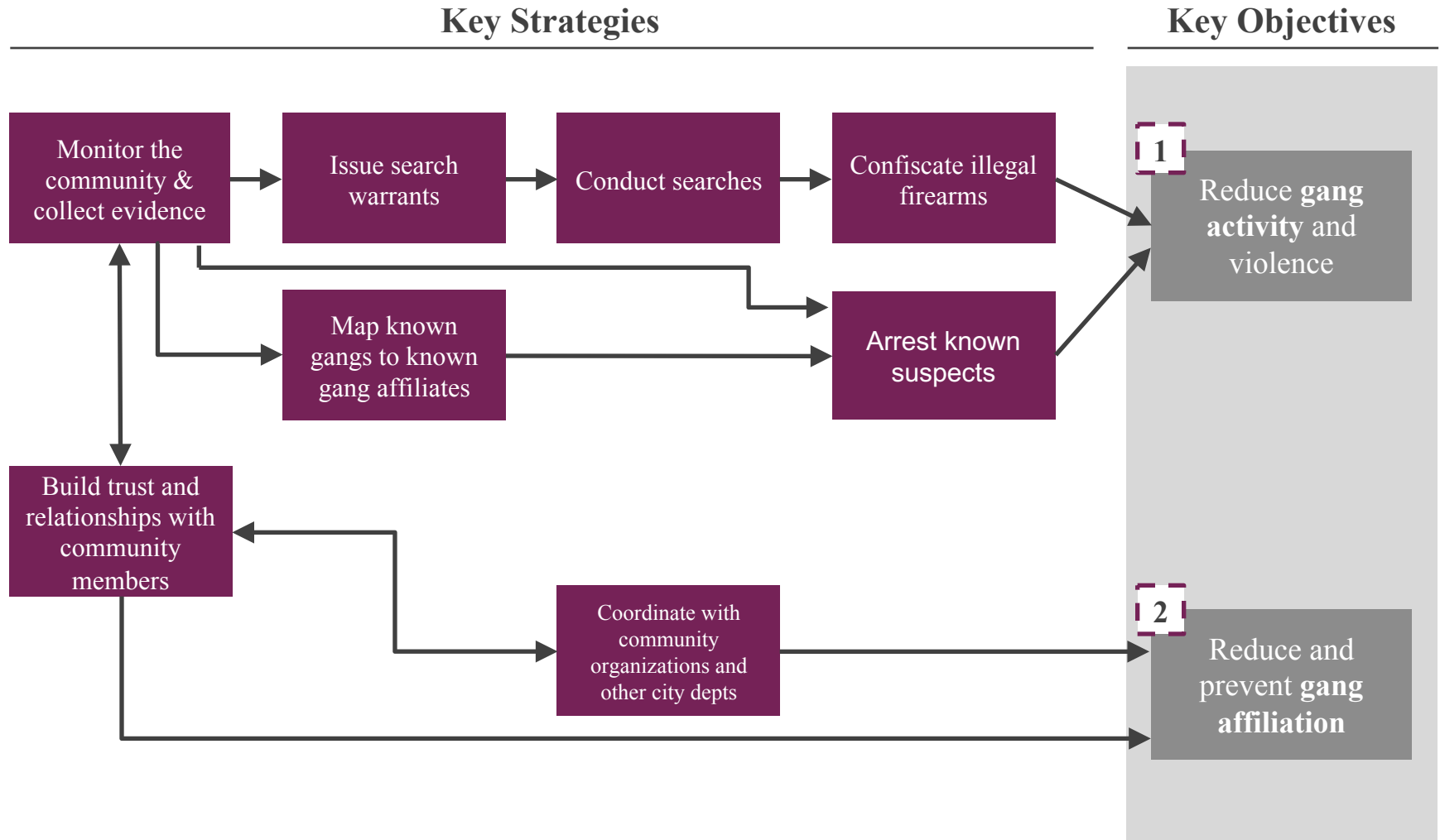
*9 hours with 7 Gang Unit patrol officers through multiple Boston neighborhoods, including:*

- John Burrows, Gang Unit Patrol Officers
- Matt Conley, Gang Unit Patrol Officer
- Rev Degrave, Gang Unit Patrol Officer
- Korey Franklin, Gang Unit Patrol Officer
- Thomas P., Gang Unit Patrol Officer



# The gang unit's charge is to reduce gang activity and gang affiliation.

## Tactics vary based on their objective.

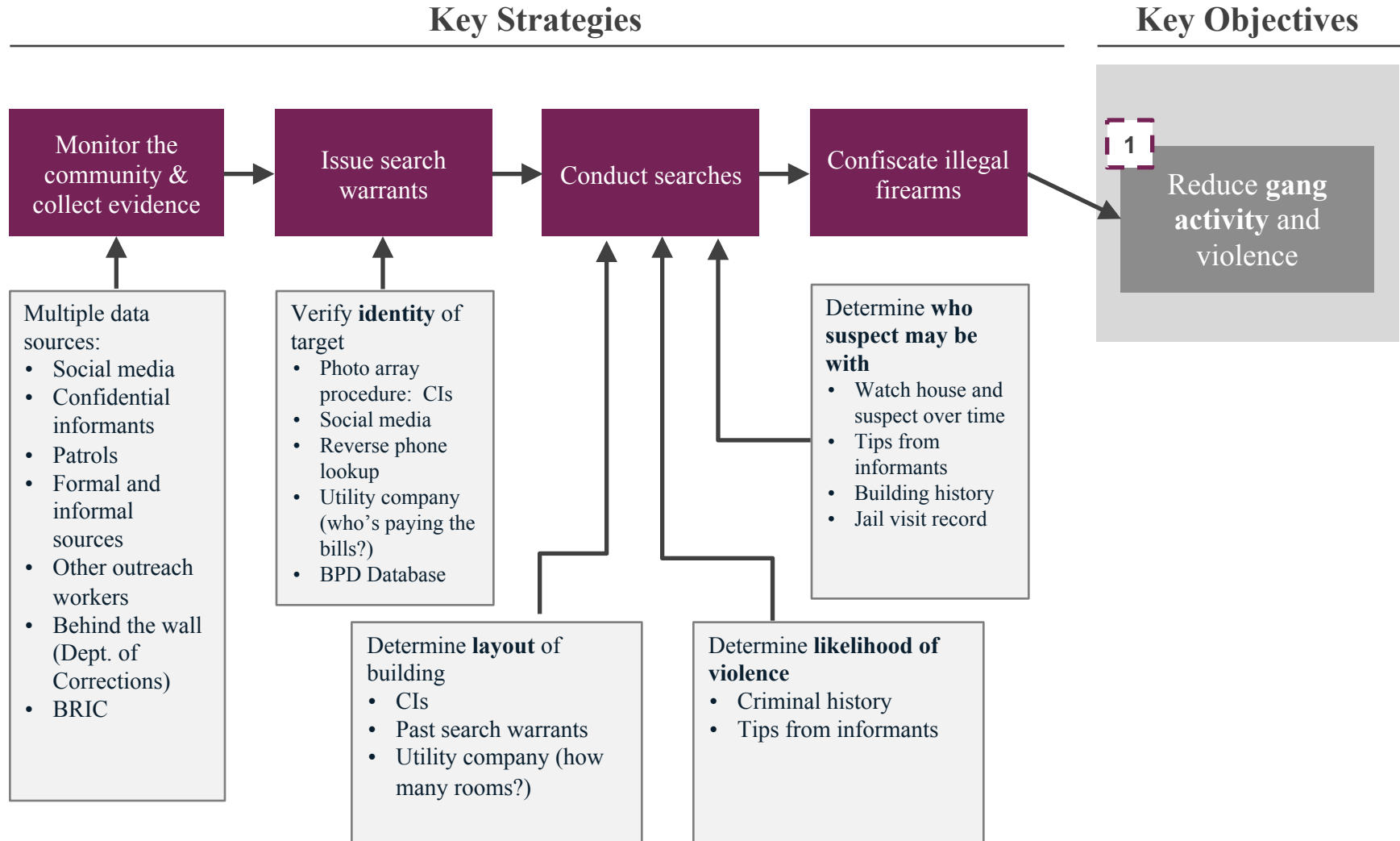


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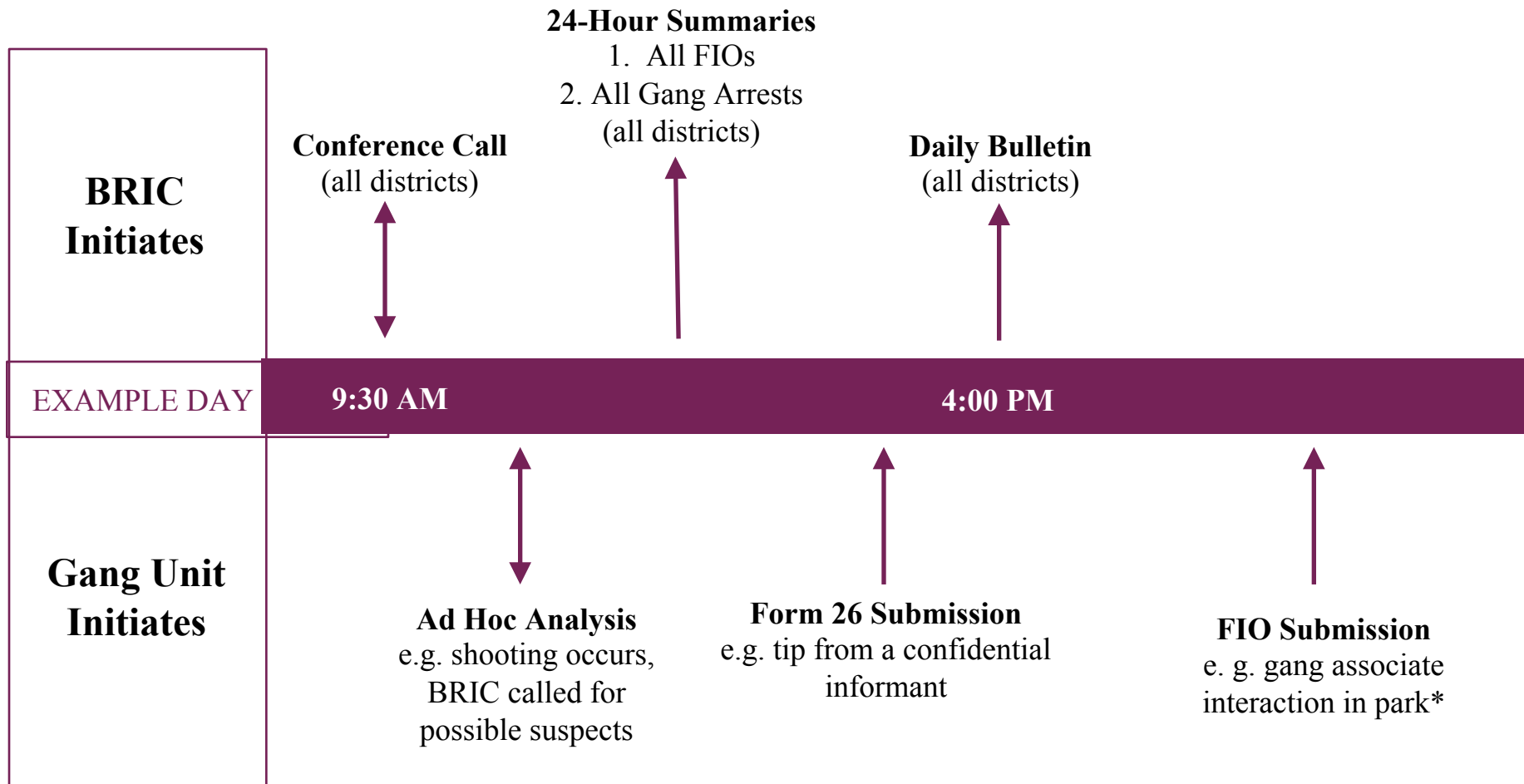




# The process of issuing warrants and conducting searches requires collecting significant information from multiple sources.



# The Gang Unit is in constant communication with the BRIC. Both organizations initiate information sharing and requests.

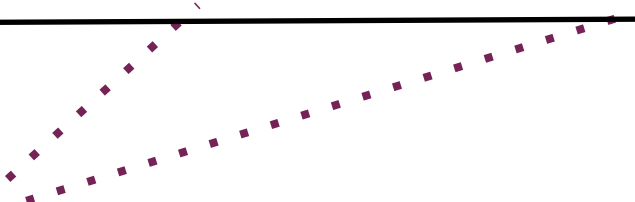


\*Estimated 2-10 per shift, per squad

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# The Gang Unit relies on multiple data systems based on the situation and questions at hand.

Question	Software System		
What do I need to know <b>before I go on patrol?</b>	<p><b><u>Daily BRIC Reports</u></b> Summaries of the previous day's FIO reports, suspects with search warrants, active feuds, key locations, etc. Accessible via Gmalil.</p>		
I see a suspicious car. <b>Who is the driver</b> and are they a gang suspect?	<p><b><u>Criminal Justice Info Service (CJIS)</u></b> Used by patrol officers to verify license registration</p>	<p><b><u>Records Management System (RMS)</u></b> Once patrol officers identify car owner, RMS is used to search name and records</p>	<p><b><u>Gang Database</u></b> Database of gang suspects and associates, with links to Field Incident and Observation (FIO) reports and photos</p>
How do I record my observations for the BRIC and the rest of the department?	<p><b><u>Field Based Reporting System (FBR)</u></b> Used by patrol officers to log Field Incident and Observation Reports</p>		

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# Key Insights (1 of 3)

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## **a** Location is key for effective policing.

- Knowledge of a neighborhood increases officer effectiveness:
  - Officers familiar with a neighborhood can quickly locate addresses and respond to dispatches
  - Officers familiar with a neighborhood typically have better understandings of historical gang behavior, which can inform current policing strategies
- Gang unit officers are frequently in unfamiliar neighborhoods
  - The gang unit is a citywide unit (not tied to a particular area)
  - New recruits rotate through Boston neighborhoods
  - Unlike other cities, officers do not need to live in the neighborhood they patrol
- Gang unit officers frequently patrol multiple neighborhoods in one shift, forcing them to toggle between multiple neighborhood-based dispatches

## **b** Analytics reports are essential, but require reference.

- BRIC sends all officers a large number of daily crime reports, and officers find those reports useful and important
- Much of the information is relevant over an extended period of time, but only goes out in one email
- Officers often don't remember old information. A common solution is to search email for old reports, which are often in PDF form

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# Key Insights (2 of 3)

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## **Building relationships with community members is a major priority, but only certain info is shared.**

- The mayor has defined success as developing more relationships with current and former gang associates, and has established important programs (e.g. Operation Exit) toward that goal
- Information about gang associates who are reforming is often not shared with patrol officers, leading them to treat reformed gang associates as if they are still a threat

## **Databases often have low usability for officers.**

- Officers interact with multiple databases in the course of their jobs (including FBR, RMS, CJIS, Gang database)
- Officers frequently complained about the usability of specific databases, particularly FBR and RMS
  - Officers uniformly preferred their previous FBR system
- Common complaints include:
  - Inputting reports and FIOs is difficult and time consuming
  - Searching reports returns many irrelevant results
  - Common processes are split across multiple databases

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# Key Insights (3 of 3)

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- e Entering a home is a high risk, low information event.**
  - Entering the home of a suspect can be very risky both for officers and for citizens
  - Increasing officers' knowledge of a home can make executing search warrants more predictable and safer
  - Currently, most information about home layouts comes from confidential informants who have been in the home. However, their memories are imperfect and incomplete

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# In prioritizing potential solutions, several design considerations unique to the BPD will be essential.

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## Safety

- **The objective of the gang unit is not only to decrease gang violence, but to keep all officers safe.**

## Zero Errors

- According to Sgt. Broderick, “**the last thing you want to do is knock down the wrong door.**” Any misstep in a process could put suspects and officers in danger.

## Confidentiality

- **Information about suspects, warrants, etc. needs to be kept confidential.** Breaching this confidentiality could result in defamation of gang associates or increased turmoil within or between gangs.

## Respect for Existing Processes & Culture

- **Gang unit detectives rely on unstructured information, relationships, and memory.** They generally prefer hard copies and proactive, user-friendly technology.



# Next Steps

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## Continue to Research

1. Gain a deeper understanding of the programs related to reducing gang affiliation
  2. Interview individuals that are running and part of these programs to understand the challenges associated with the transition
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## Prototyping and User Feedback

1. Develop an MVP solution that provide officers with real-time, relevant community information
2. Test prototype with officers and solicit feedback for subsequent iteration

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# APPENDIX



# **We have outstanding questions around how information is gathered, catalogued, and acted upon.**

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## **Information Gathering**

- What information is required to get a warrant?
- Can officers search and see that a case has been closed or resolved other than via a BRIC notification email?
- How do officers know which jurisdiction they are operating in? Are there any tools to search current feuds, trends, and wanted individuals by location?

## **Community Relations**

- How is the gang unit building relationships with gang associates and community groups?
- Where is this outreach being tracked?
- How long does a former gang associate need to be ‘on-track’ before he/she is not considered a threat?
- How do other community groups and outreach programs feed information to the gang unit?