

# Safe Streets

## Introduction:

The cornerstone of Mayor Buckhorn's campaign was an improvement in the quality of life for all of Tampa's citizens. A critical part of that effort is **personal safety**. Mayor Buckhorn is committed to **tackling crime before it happens**. As Mayor, Bob Buckhorn is leading the fight to make our streets safer, our neighborhoods less open to violence and our businesses less vulnerable. For the last 8 years the work of the Tampa Police Department has been nothing less than exceptional. Since 2003 Tampa has seen a reduction of more than 50% in the crime rate, which translates to approximately 100,000 less victims. This comes as a result of a Police Department that is focused on self-initiated crime reduction, aggressive tracking of career and habitual offenders, both adult and juvenile, and a targeted and quantifiable law enforcement strategy.

Mayor Buckhorn is committed to making sure that this department remains focused on the future and continues to be aggressive about incorporating new crime fighting tactics in its arsenal.

## The Buckhorn Plan

- ✓ Since 2003 the Tampa Police Department has focused on four crimes that are barometers of future criminal activities. They are: auto theft, auto burglary, robbery and burglary. The Focus on Four initiative has proven to be successful and would remain in place in a Buckhorn Administration.
- ✓ The COPPER (Comprehensive Police Performance Effectiveness Review) program which measures and tracks crime trends down to the street level is an extremely valuable tool for the TPD. Not only does it identify emerging patterns, it also allows supervisors to measure and hold accountable the initiatives of the officers and supervisors on the street. This program needs to be expanded and exported to other City Departments.
- ✓ The Tampa Police Department has identified a small number of career criminals who are the most dangerous and the most prolific. As such TPD has initiated three squads aimed at targeting repeat and violent offenders. The Criminal Tracking Unit, the Fugitive Apprehension Unit and the Strategic Enforcement Unit are particularly effective.



- ✓ Each month, close to 250 individuals are released from jail or prison into the City of Tampa. Some have conditions attached to their release. As far back as 1999, Mayor Buckhorn initiated a collaborative program between the Tampa Police Department and the Probation Officers of the Florida Department of Corrections to monitor individuals on probation through collaboration between Probation officers and TPD. As Mayor, Bob continues to work to strengthen the Tampa Police Department's relationship with their State counterparts.
- ✓ Mayor Buckhorn believes that technology is a critical component in leveraging the talent of our Police officers. As Mayor, he continues to evaluate best practices around the country to take advantage of new technologies and their deployment in the fight against crime.
- ✓ Mayor Buckhorn recognizes that the Neighborhood Watch program is a valuable tool in combating crime. As Mayor, Bob is working to enhance and grow neighborhood groups and their role in assisting the Tampa Police Department.
- ✓ Ybor City continues to pose a law enforcement challenge. The Buckhorn administration will have zero tolerance for disruptive behavior in our historic district. This includes bars and other establishments serving alcohol that continue to flaunt the codes and zoning laws currently in place.





- ✓ The Buckhorn administration will work to ensure that the Tampa Police Department will reflect the community it serves by emphasizing the recruitment of minority and Spanish-speaking officers.
- ✓ Mayor Buckhorn believes in proactive community-oriented policing. The difficult budget situation of recent years has vastly diminished the community affairs component of the TPD. This program should be strengthened with both uniformed and non-uniformed personnel to ensure that ties to the community remain strong.
- ✓ In Hillsborough County alone there are over 60,000 outstanding arrest warrants. In the City of Tampa we have close to 8,000. Mayor Buckhorn will work with the Police Department and the Sheriff's Office to prioritize these warrants, identify the most dangerous and prolific criminals, and take the steps necessary to get them off the streets.
- ✓ As a City Councilman, Mayor Buckhorn established himself as a leader in tackling emerging drug crimes. Today, prescription drugs have become the drugs of choice among our young people and Methamphetamine, a common street drug, has been called "the worst drug to ever hit America" by the former "drug czar" General Barry McCaffrey. Aggressive law enforcement aimed at "pill mills" will be enhanced and pursued. As Mayor, Bob Buckhorn will work with the Tampa Police Department, State Attorney Mark Ober, neighboring law enforcement agencies and federal and state officials to tackle these issues before they become crises.
- ✓ Having public safety officers, our police and firefighters, living in our neighborhoods bolsters community security, decreases neighborhood crime, improves the residency base, enhances the neighborhood economy, reduces response time in emergency situations and improves officers' loyalty to "their" community. As Mayor, Bob Buckhorn plans to encourage public safety officers to reside in the City by implementing a residency incentive program. This program will provide police officers incentives such as low interest loans, or down payment assistance.
- ✓ Since 1995, Mayor Bob Buckhorn has consistently voted for, and has been a vocal advocate for, allowing officers to take home their police cars. This policy reduces

neighborhood crime and increases employee morale at very little cost to the City. As Mayor, Bob is continuing this policy.

- ✓ As a City Councilman Bob has consistently supported the Tampa Police Department's current pursuit policy. As Mayor he will continue to vigorously support that policy.
- ✓ Mayor Buckhorn believes that citizens will only use the City's major parks if the parks are safe and secure. As Mayor, Bob is working to strengthen the security in our major parks.
- ✓ Mayor Buckhorn will work with the Tampa Housing Authority to strengthen enforcement of the "One Strike and You're Out" policy in public housing. In addition, there will be increased attention focused on Section 8 housing to ensure that residents are maintaining high community standards.

