

Officer Harris smiled as he said goodnight to his partner, Jerry Wachsmann, and headed home. As he pulled into his garage at the corner of Mack Avenue and Helen Street, one block west of the Genesis Lutheran Church in Detroit, Michigan, where Jerry was the pastor, he disengaged his Robotic modular transportation pod. He then connected the Robotic Police Pod, known by the locals as the “Robo PoPo,” to the solar panel charging station for the evening. Happy to be safe at home, Harris transmitted the signal to the magnetic repulsion system, which immediately engaged the electromagnetic current around his two-story historic Victorian home. Constructed one hundred years ago in 1939, the house now stands as a testament to the Motor City boom of the 20th Century.

In the early 30’s of this century, the Mack Avenue neighborhood had been identified by the New Detroit Police and Safety Department (NDPSD) as a potential high risk/high crime area. The neighborhoods found to have the highest incidents of crime also had the highest levels of vacancy. The NDPSD opted to fill these vacant homes with police officers who would become contributing members of the communities they were assigned to monitor. After all, part of creating a safe neighborhood is knowing your neighbors. Computer-generated maps showed locations where crime was likely to occur, based on data accumulated through years of tracking. Police officers were installed in rent-free homes throughout these neighborhoods.

At the forefront of the reenergized community policing movement, The New Detroit Police and Safety Department initiated a Community Lateral and Safety Policy, or **CLASP**, creating a new decision-making strategy that relied less on traditionally-trained police officers and more on the community members themselves. The Tri-Lateral Safety Force consists of the police officer, a trained community member who is a constant presence patrolling alongside the police officer in the Robotic Police Pod, known as the Community Liaison Officer, and the Robotic Police Pod itself. The primary purpose of the Community Liaison Office (CLO) involves the de-escalation of potential conflict without the use of any force. The Robotic Police Unit programming uses complex algorithms to predict unforeseen outcomes of any police action. The RPP can then serve to guide both the police officer and the CLO in their response to any given situation. The RPP also has the ability to “LOCK” the police officers’ weapons, including tasers and short range electromagnetic fields, either through the use of jamming tools, which exist within the RPP itself, or through the CLOs direct transmission to the RPP.

The goal of CLASP was three-fold: deescalate situations that arise through the use of little to no force, improve the reputation and standing of the police officers in the communities where they work and live, and create an environment whereby the citizens within the community take responsibility for their own safety. Initially, the program had great success with lower rates of use of deadly force in not only routine traffic stops and during the act of non-violent crimes, but also during the commission of violent crimes.

While this has avoided instances of use of deadly force by police officers, distrust of police within CLASP neighborhoods remains high. This distrust is the main topic of many Detroit neighborhood focus groups. And while incidents of police brutality have decreased, injuries and deaths of officers in the line of duty have increased citywide by 25 percent, and 10 percent in the CLASP neighborhoods. This has resulted in low morale and increased turnover within the NDPSD.

This tri-lateral system of engagement often contradicts Officer Harris’ instincts as a 15-year veteran of the NDPSD. He often feels disengaged from the decision-making process, leaving him feeling demoralized and underutilized. He sighs deeply as he slowly ascends the stairs. He sneaks into his daughter’s room to kiss her goodnight, thankful for these precious family moments.

As problem solvers, your team has been selected to work with the New Detroit Police and Safety Department to analyze the issues involving the CLASP Program. Identify challenges relating to the program, create possible solutions and recommend an Action Plan for the NDPSD.