

Police Cruiser Graphics: Factors and Considerations

- Officer safety issues were a main factor for the “stealthier” look. With domestic violence incidents on the rise nationally (Hudson included), a highly visible police cruiser does little to protect an officer who is about to walk up to an unpredictable and, many times, dangerous situations (Burglaries, Prowlers, Car Thieves, Etc.). This same reason applies to the many mental health crises we respond to. A highly visible police cruiser will sometimes alarm the individual we are there to help (CIT). In some incidents outside Hudson, officers have been ambushed because the offender can see them coming from a great distance away. The police need to have some advantage of concealment in many situations.
- Our new vehicle graphics not only meet but exceed standards for markings and visibility for police vehicles. This is not by accident, visibility and conspicuity were part of the design process to improve officer and motorist safety in both day and night. This includes state of the art reflective decaling, use of patterns and smart lighting technology.
- To offset the darker cruisers, smart lighting has been added to the light bars to improve officer and motorist safety, both day and night. Additional lighting has been added to the sides of the vehicle so that it can easily be seen from all angles of approach.
- The number one complaint from residents in Hudson are traffic related incidents (speeding, stop signs, etc.). To address this issue, the darker cars allow police to have more contact with violators to slow the traffic down. Though one might say a highly visible car can deter violators is true, the act is only deterred momentarily. When you have a physical contact with a police officer on a traffic stop, it tends to be more of a lasting moment.
- The lighter lettering does not hold up well in the severe weather conditions of Ohio. “Yellowing” occurs and the striping sometimes needs to be replaced.

- Since March of 2020, we have had discussions with our graphics designers to add more reflective decaling to the sides and back of the cruisers to increase visibility but still allow for officer safety to remain a priority. The current health pandemic has delayed implementation. I have attached our current graphics and the enhanced or edited version.
- Polling many of the officers, there has been an abundance of positive feedback from Hudson residents on the design of the police cruisers. The police officers/end users were involved in the design process and final selection of cruiser graphics.

Some of our officers have said the following:

“I just wanted to let you know that so far I have received several compliments from residents on the new design. In addition, I also feel that having the new subdued look makes us safer when responding to certain incidents. For example, responding to a call of someone having a mental health event will sometimes cause the person alarm when a highly visible cruiser arrives outside their home.”

“I am happy with the current design of the new cruisers. It makes patrolling the neighborhoods easier, especially with the recent break ins and car thefts. Another reason I like the newer car designs is the Officer safety factor.”

“I’ve received more compliments than complaints about the cruisers from the public. The police world and the way that things were done many years ago has changed. Police ambushes have increased and with our graphics I feel that it provides a little more of a safety net. If we were to switch back to the basic black and white cars, I feel that this could possibly endanger the lives of the officers that are out on patrol serving the community.”

“We are very visible in the neighborhoods we patrol. People are always waving to me as I drive by and I have heard many compliments from residents of the new design”