Walterboro Public Safety

Crime and Police Activity Report

2012

Prepared January 17, 2013

About the Report

Each year, law enforcement agencies are required to report criminal offenses to the FBI within their jurisdiction, according to Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) guidelines. Within these there are two sections:

(1) <u>Violent Crime</u>, which consists of Murder, Forcible Rape, Robbery and Aggravated Assault, and

(2) <u>Property Crime</u>, which consists of Burglary, Larceny Theft, Motor Vehicle Theft (FBI lists arson but not does include it in the totals for property crime).

The following report consists of a brief description of current and historic trends over the past ten years followed by programs and activities undertaken by law enforcement in addressing the problems. Summary charts of showing twenty-year data are attached. Raw data is available at http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/ucr.

All projected data is based upon total reported crimes in 2012; however, these numbers may vary somewhat from the FBI reports as their criteria for reportable crimes may vary from the City's. It should be noted that when the FBI releases its 2012 data, this report will be updated to reflect their published data.

Executive Summary

Trend Analysis

Violent crime was relatively stable in the city for the first few years of the last decade with the number of reported incidents hovering between 68 and 77 for years 2002-2005. While violent crime began to climb in 2006 (30% increase over 2005), Walterboro actually reached its peak in violent crime in 2007 (another 40% increase over 2006).

Recognizing the significant increase from the prior years, the Public Safety Department began a community policing initiative in 2008. Community policing has officers engage the community at multiple levels to establish relationships and gain trust. This fosters the willingness of citizens to provide information both before and after a crime occurs.

"Violent crime dropped 30% in 2010… and it dropped another 40% again [in 2011]…"

The impact of this initiative was immediately but temporarily felt. By the end of 2008, violent crime dropped nearly 11% but rebounded by 2.6% in 2009. In 2009 a wave of

ACTUAL AND PROJECTED VIOLENT CRIME TREND
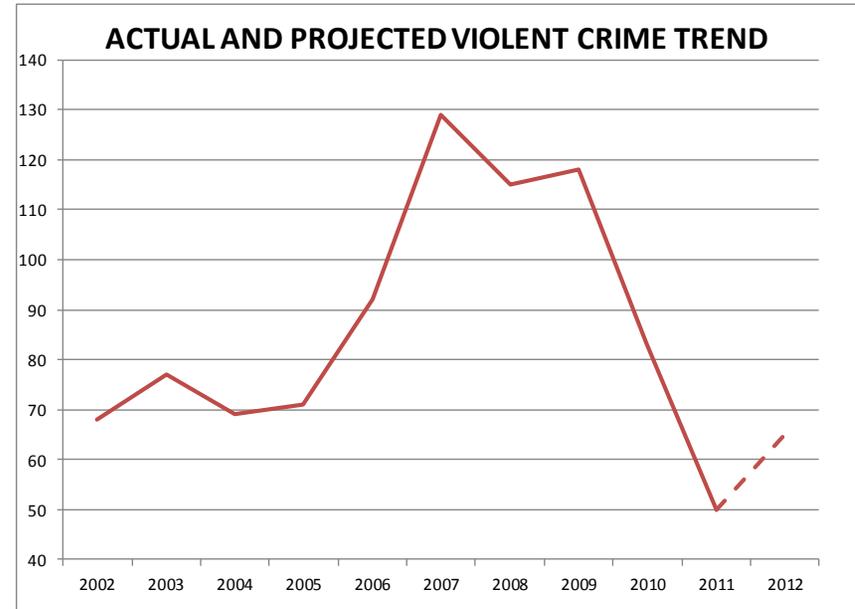
retaliatory violence occurred that was capped by the triple homicide late that year.

In response, City Council initiated several programs which came to be known as the "10 Point Plan," a plan that built upon the community policing philosophy, engaged other agencies, and partnered with other levels of government. Violent crime dropped 30% (83 reported incidents) in 2010 as a result of these efforts, and it dropped another 40% again last year as there were just 50 incidents

through the end of that year. There appears to be a small rebound in 2012 with 65 reported incidents at the end of the year. While more than the previous year it is still less than any other year since at least 2002. This increase is attributed to a series of armed robberies which occurred at some hotels at the beginning of the year and an increase in unrelated aggravated assaults.

Property crime has seen a similar but slower and less significant response, likely due to the focus given to violent crimes. While property crimes remained fairly constant from 2006-2011 (between 603 and 665), there are signs of improvement within the city with 493 reported in 2012, but it ap pears to continue to be on the rise regionally.

New programs like predictive patrolling, which uses data analysis to shift patrol resources to have the best coverage where a crime is most likely to occur, and the creation of a Street Crimes Unit, which serves as both a strategic reserve and an investigatory unit, appear to have had a positive impact on property crimes. In addition, successes in the area of drug enforcement have had an ancillary benefit because many larcenies and burglaries are committed to sustain a drug habit.

ACTUAL AND PROJECTED PROPERTY CRIME TREND
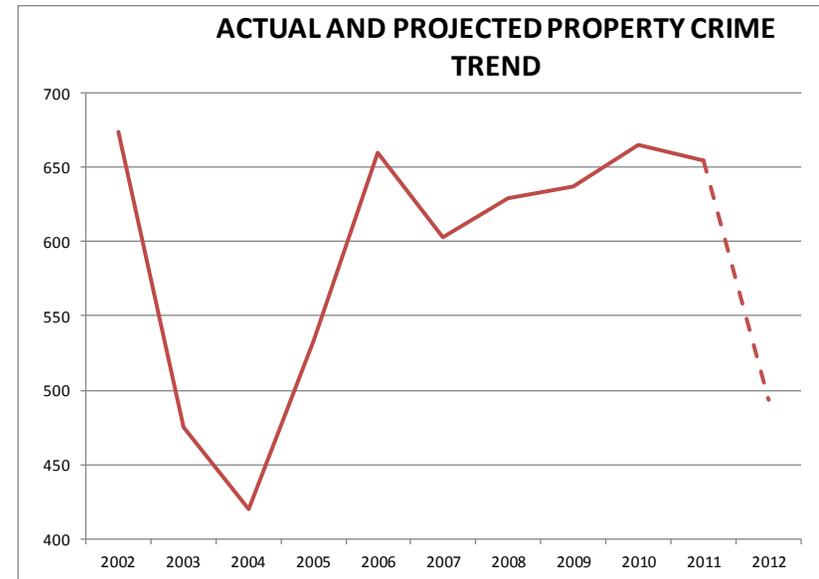
Larcenies continue to be the most common and thus most predictive measure of the property crime trends, and while there was a measurable decrease in 2010 (10%) there was an increase in reported burglaries, which resulted in a 4% increase in property crime. In 2011 the city did not experienced the same level of burglaries as in 2010 (down 43%), but there was an increase in larcenies (up 17%). The combination of these two measures leads the city to the lowest property crime rate since 2004.

There appears to be a positive trend for both burglary's and larcenies in 2012 as there were significant reductions in

both for 2012 (32% and 24% respectfully). This would result in the property crime being lower than eight of the past ten years.

AGGRAVATED ASSAULTS

Trend Analysis

In 2009, 94 assaults occurred. This was during the time when the triple homicide occurred and the City was dealing with reciprocal violence. Sixty assaults occurred in 2010, a 36% reduction primarily due to aggressive enforcement, community involvement, and several key arrests. In 2011, 31 aggravated assaults occurred, a 48% reduction. In 2012 there were 43 reported assaults, which while higher than last years is less than in nine of the past ten years. This increase is attributed to the number of responses with weapons but there does not appear to be a particular pattern.

Current Activities

The City of Walterboro consulted with other agencies to review and incorporate current best practices. For example, if an area is very dark, street lights are installed and/or repaired (e.g., Gerideau Street). In addition, gang members are identified and recorded through the state (gang.net), which enhances penalties for being in a gang. Club checks are being performed and officers are standing by until the clubs are closed and everyone has left the property. City officials have met with property owners and businesses to encourage them to stop allowing loitering. Effective communication with the Colleton County Sheriff's Office; assisting when they are dealing with investigative support issues; meeting with the judge during bond hearings to insure that the bonds for suspects are set appropriately; meetings with the Solicitor's Office to insure that the cases are complete and ready to be prosecuted in a timely manner have all been successful strategies. Also, we follow up with victims and suspects to diffuse any situations that may lead to revenge by identifying and monitoring known criminal suspects and the areas which they frequent through patrols and other investigative techniques.

> **"36% reduction [of Aggravated Assaults] in 2010 … primarily due to aggressive enforcement, community involvement and several key arrests. In 2011… a 48% reduction."**
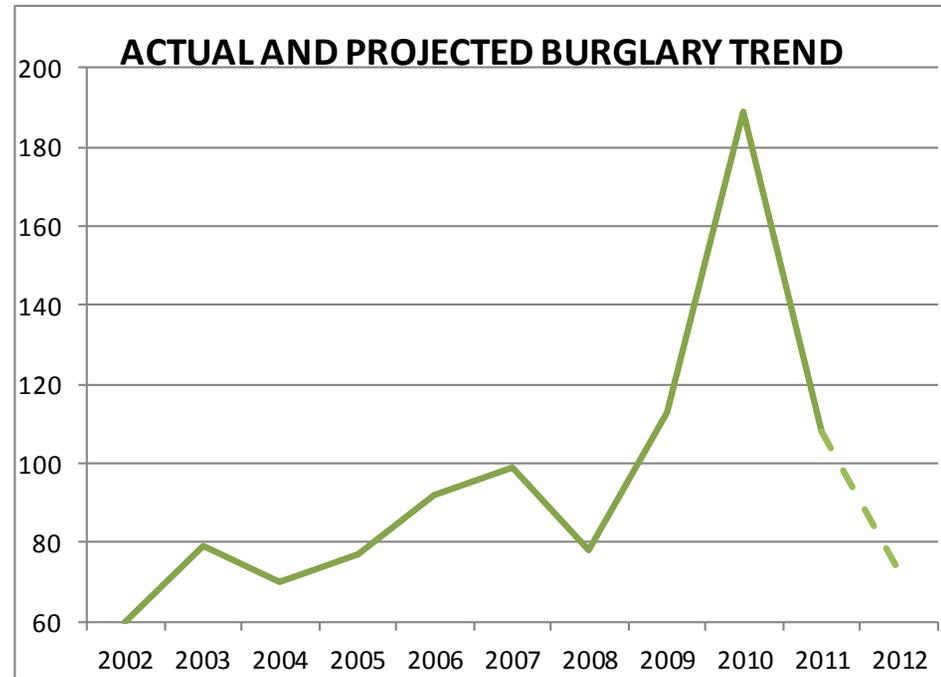
BURGLARY

Trend Analysis

In 2009, 113 burglaries occurred. In 2010, there were 189 burglaries. In 2011, 108 burglaries occurred, which indicates a 43% reduction and in 2012 there were 73 reported burglaries (another 32% reduction). The burglaries in the first few months of 2010 were due to a juvenile offender who was responsible for many of the burglaries that occurred around the Hampton Street area. He was caught in the act and is now serving a three-year prison term. In 2012 nine of the burglaries have been associated to a burglary ring that was working in the area, which has been arrested and is currently awaiting trial.

Current Activities

Neighborhood watch groups were started in several areas. A Street Crimes Unit was initiated, whereby patterns are recognized and the unit has the flexibility to react appropriately. There may be certain locations, times or other factors that appear to indicate the need for increased presence or surveillance. Homeowners are advised that when they are

ACTUAL AND PROJECTED BURGLARY TREND

away from home for any period of time, they should utilize security checks wherein they provide headquarters with the dates and times they are going to be away so officers may periodically check the home. These services are being communicated to citizens via print and radio media and through individual contact.

"… 73 reported burglaries [in 2012] (another 32% reduction)."

Further, field interviews are being conducted, which helps deter someone from breaking into a home or business due to early identification and intervention.
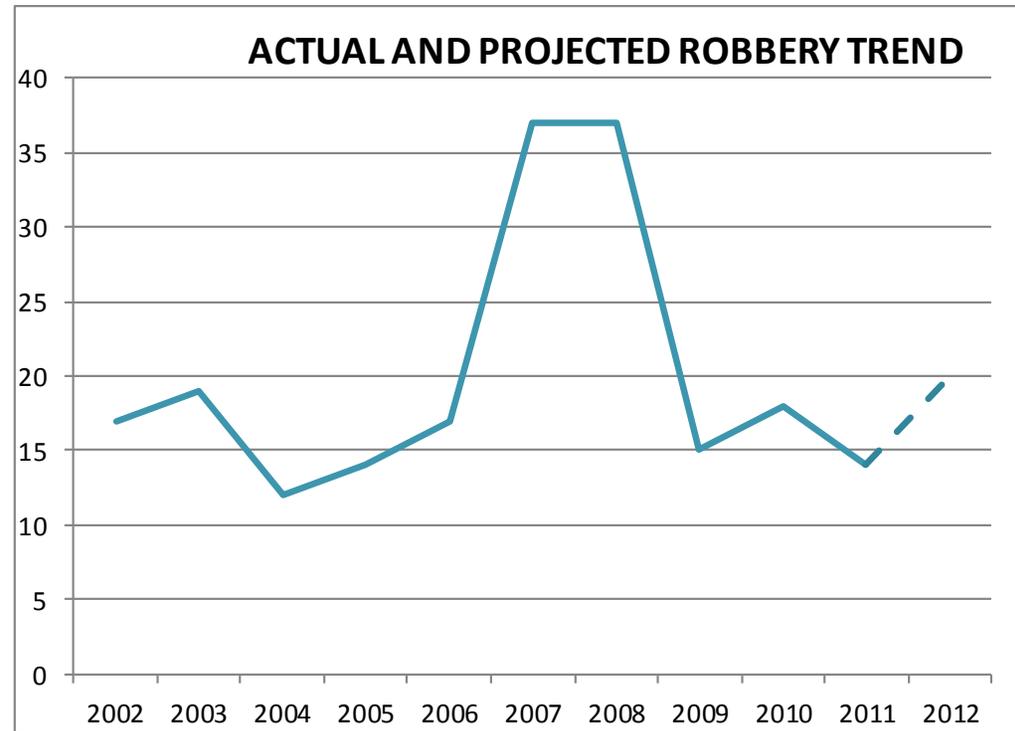
ROBBERY

Trend Analysis

In 2009, 15 robberies occurred. In 2010, there was a slight increase to 18 robberies and in 2011, it dropped to 14 robberies, but 2012 robberies bounced back with 20 reported. In 2007 and 2008, robberies were as high as 37 incidents. Many of these robberies occurred at the hotels near the interstate where the night clerks were not using the night window, leaving doors unsecured, or were sleeping.

Current Activities

Officers met with hotel managers and asked them to start using the night windows and officers started checking doors to ensure compliance. This had an immediate and identifiable effect on hotel robberies. Staff will continue to evaluate and educate businesses and persons on how to not become a victim, through the community policing officer, community contacts and utilizing the Street Crimes Unit when a trend is recognized. The increase in 2012 was attributable to
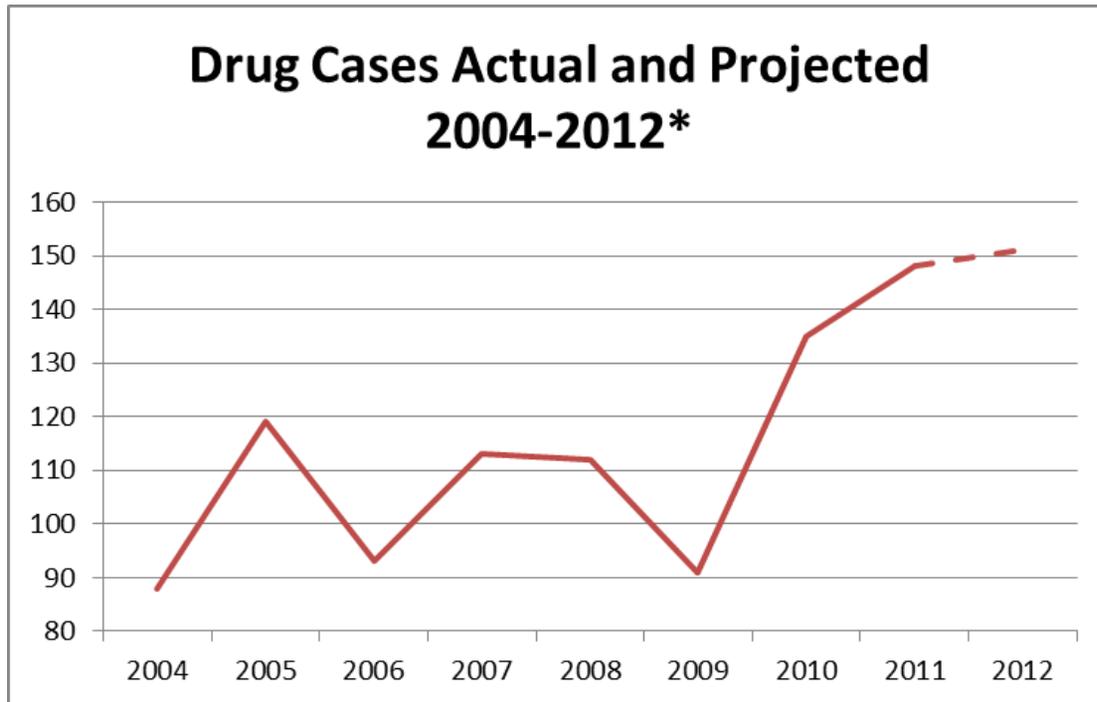
ACTUAL AND PROJECTED ROBBERY TREND

more robberies at the city's hotels early in the year. As a result hotel managers were reengaged and educated on proactive measures, which, in addition to a few arrest, has help stem the increase for the rest of the year. Investigators review locations (businesses) and identify things that can be done to prevent robberies when one occurs, helping the business owners understand that officers need to be able to see through the windows so they may recognize potential problems. Officers are also available to do bank and vehicle escorts, day and night.

DRUGS

Trend Analysis

In 2009, there were 91 drug cases made. In 2010, there were 135 drug cases were made, an increase of 44 cases and in 2011 148 cases. This increase is primarily due to the focus on drug crimes as, unlike other crimes, drug cases tend to be initiated by the agency due to proactive investigations. In 2012, 151 drug cases have been made to date, which indicates we may have reached a saturation level with these kinds of cases.

Current Activities

In April 2010, a Drug Suppression Team was established, made up of two officers. This team was made possible by a JAG grant which outfitted the team with vehicles, equipment, and salaries for two years. In the past, officers would make a traffic stop or arrest and the suspect would go to jail and any intelligence gathered may have only been used for that specific charge.

Now, officers are able to pass that information on to the team. In some cases, meth labs were found, search warrants were executed, numerous stolen guns were recovered, and several corrupt employees at drug stores were identified and arrested. It is believed that 85% of the crime witnessed begins with the use of drugs and the sale of drugs. A vigilant effort to identify and apprehend both users and dealers should help ensure a high quality, safer community.

Drug Cases Actual and Projected 2004-2012*

* Limited comparable data prior to 2004

LARCENIES

Trend Analysis

In 2009, there were 500 thefts. In 2010, it dropped by about 10% to 448 thefts. Them in 2011 it increase to 523. Through 2012, there were 396 thefts. At this rate, there may be a 20% or better decrease.

Another contributing factor may be inflated metal costs. First, it was the catalytic converters and copper wire; then it turned to anything metal, old cars, scrap metal and even man-hole covers.

Current Activities

Due to the Community Contacts and Community Policing approach, officers have educated the community on how not to become a victim and reduced the potential for crimes, which is why we believe that thefts have not risen as dramatically here as they have elsewhere. Re-instituting the field interview program, where officers stop individuals walking the streets

ACTUAL AND PROJECTED LARCENY THEFT TREND
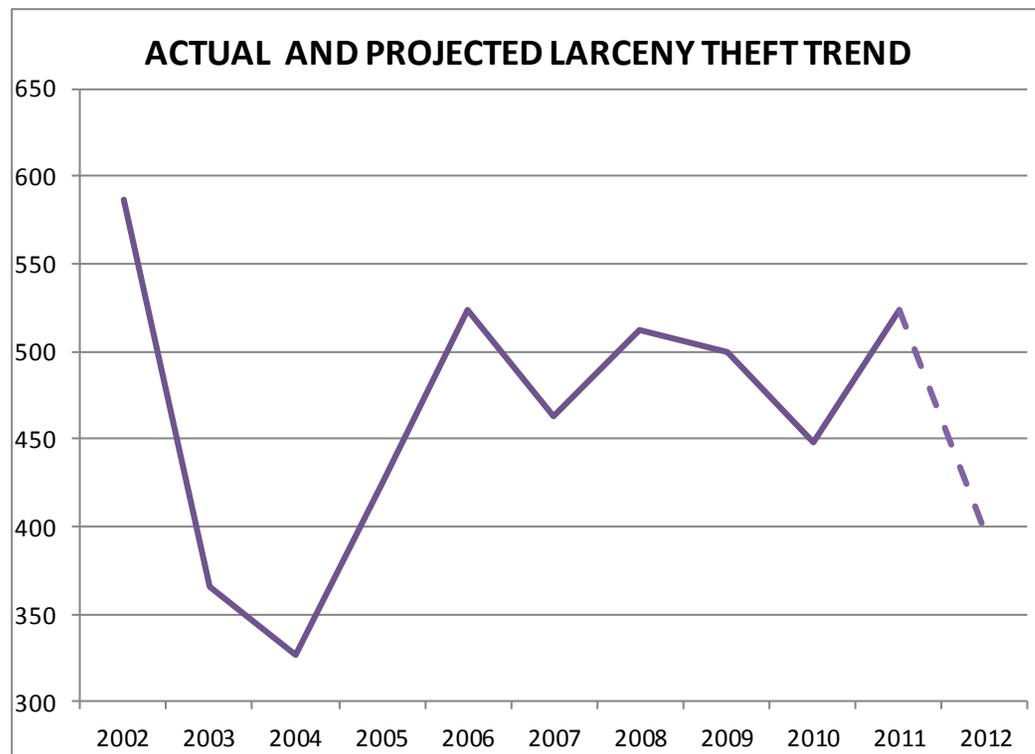
and identify them, has also played a key role in reducing crime.

"…In 2011, [Larcenies] went up about 17% … there may be a 20% or better decrease in 2012."

This tactic prevents an immeasurable amount of thefts and burglaries. New laws that restrict the sale of non-ferrous metals may also help.

PROGRAMS THAT WALTERBORO PUBLIC SAFETY USES TO HELP FIGHT CRIME

DMV ONLINE: DMV ONLINE is helpful in many ways. When the road patrol is out on traffic stops and a suspect gives them a name and date of birth, officers can then refer to DMV ONLINE from their in car computer to confirm the suspect is/is not who they say they are. From an investigation standpoint, while investigating a case, officers may get the name of a possible suspect. They can then pull up his/her picture for recognition in order to verify who they are looking for when they go out into the field. This is a very helpful tool in identifying suspects or even victims and most of the time provides an accurate address for the subjects.

BUSINESS CHECKS: Officers check businesses at night. With more patrols at night coming and going, this gives night clerks a sense of security due to more of an officer presence. Officers also escort individuals to the bank and their vehicles.

COMMUNITY CONTACTS: This was started in late 2008. This is a program wherein officers contact citizens at their residence, introduce themselves, and ask if there are any problems in the community or if there is any way we can better serve. If there are concerns, they are acted on through the proper channels. Each officer makes at least one contact per day. This is also an opportunity for the officer to learn more about the community and its citizens.

FIELD INTERVIEWS: Field interviews were initiated in 2009 to identify people walking or riding bicycles in high crime areas or areas where problems have been identified. This program gives officers the opportunity to interact with citizens. Officers have made several arrests, such as unlawful possession of a firearm and drug arrests, and also deter crime.

MENTORING PROGRAM: The Mentoring Program was started by the Department of Juvenile Justice in 2009. At present, Walterboro Public Safety has three officers who are certified. Each officer is assigned a juvenile to mentor. Additionally, officers have been reading to kids at Black Street Elementary, Hendersonville Elementary, Northside Elementary, Campus A, Edgewood Baptist, and Colleton County High School, along with participating in various activities at local churches.

GANG.NET: Gang.net is a computer based program initiated and maintained by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division. Gang.net allows officers to gather intelligence on gang members, so the information can be shared statewide. By being able to share this information, officers are able to achieve stiffer punishments for career criminals when they commit crimes in other jurisdictions. This program was successfully used in the apprehension of several members of the group that was directly responsible for the murders of three citizens of Walterboro in November, 2009. With the continued support of the State Law Enforcement Division, much success from this program should continue to be seen in local law enforcement.

Part I Violent Crimes 1993-2012
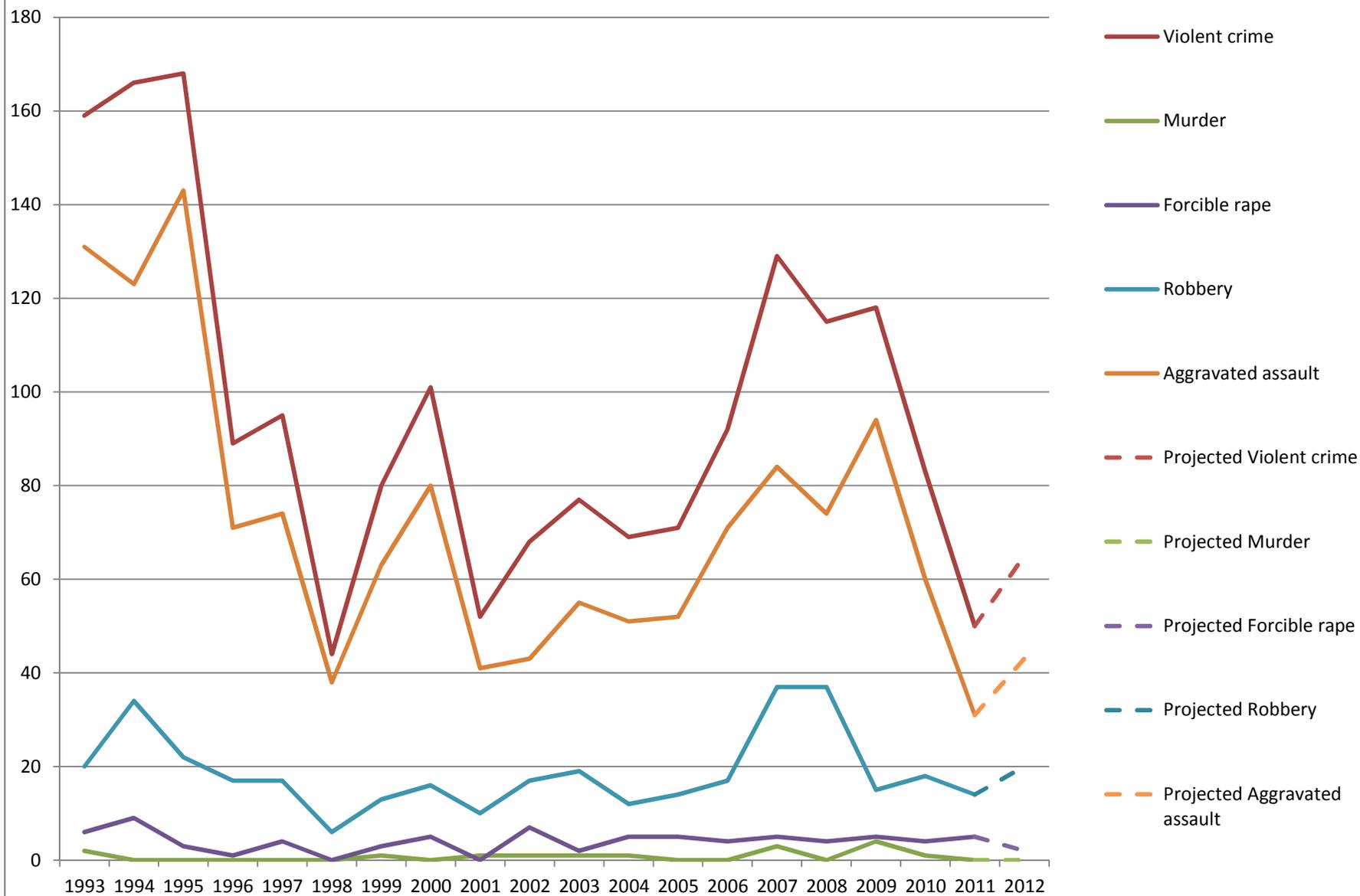
Part I Property Crimes 1993-2012