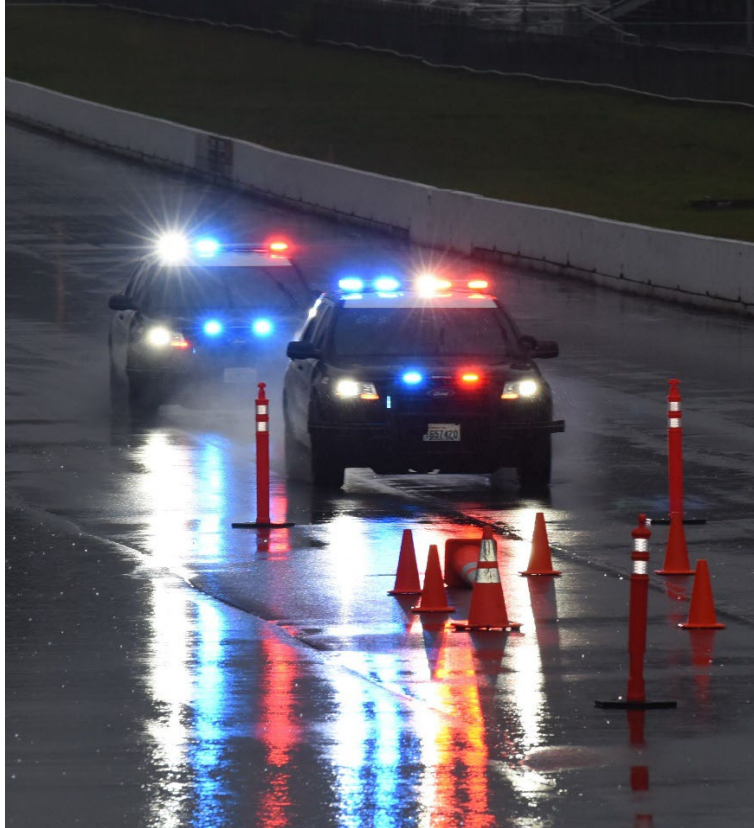


# AUBURN POLICE DEPARTMENT



## Pursuit Analysis 2023

This document is to report 2023 pursuit information, conduct a comparative analysis against recent years on a variety of pursuit aspects, offer suggestions on how to improve decision-making during pursuit driving by Auburn Officers, and to identify areas where EVOC training can be enhanced.

Commander Todd Byers

# AUBURN POLICE DEPARTMENT

## 2023 PURSUIT ANALYSIS

The information in this analysis was obtained from Spillman Incident Reports, CAD dispatch, Supervisors' Reports of Pursuits which includes the Supervisors Critique of the pursuit.

The current procedure for collecting data on pursuits is outlined below and in the Auburn Police Department Policy Manual, Chapter 307.

### Vehicle Pursuit Reporting

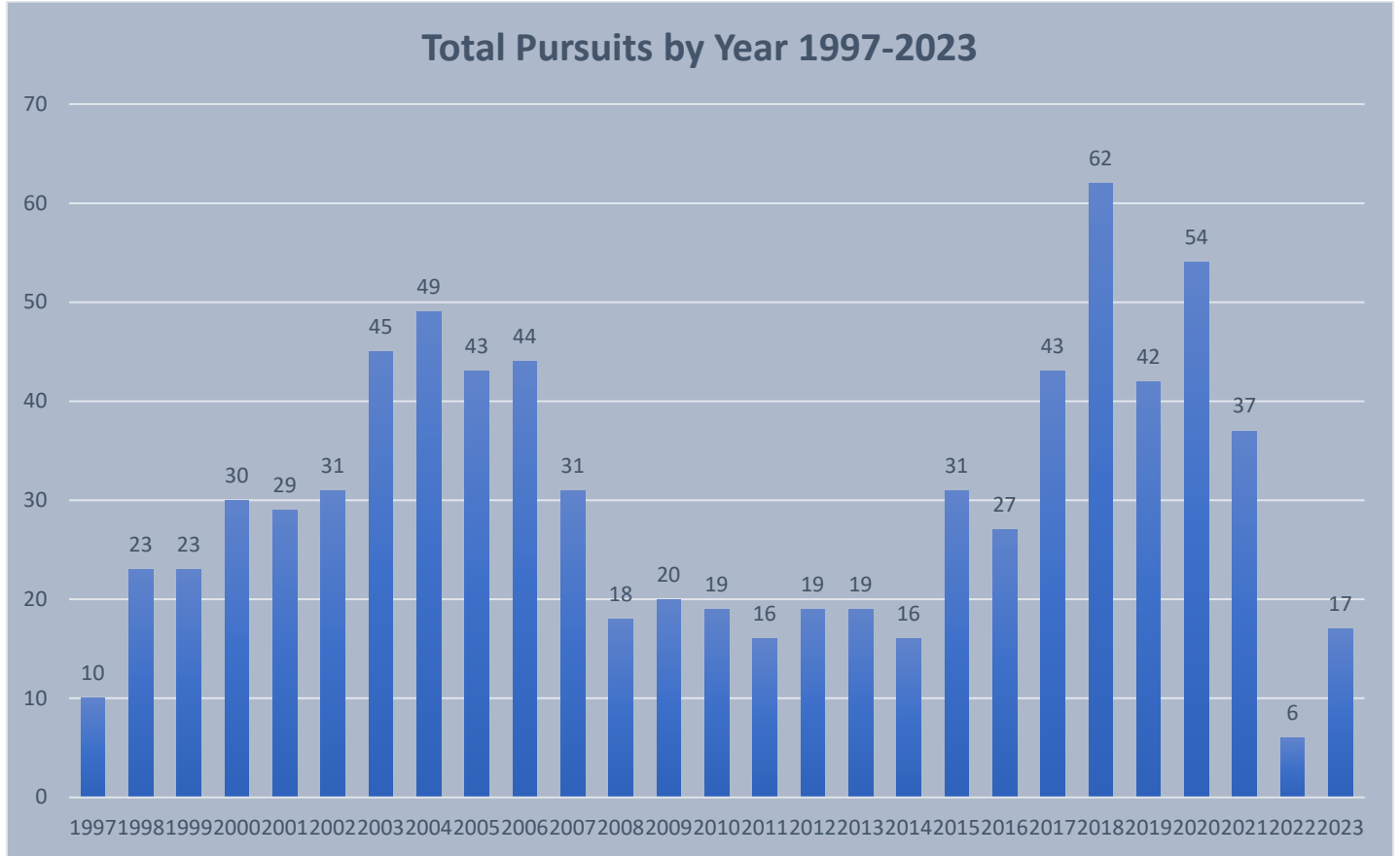
1. Immediately following pursuits, patrol supervisors are responsible for completing a *Supervisory Report of Pursuit* through Blue Team. This report has been changed to include the Supervisors critique of the pursuit. This report is forwarded through the chain of command to the Chief of Police. The Division Commander has the option of providing additional critiques for any pursuit, for training purposes. All pursuits are documented in this manner and reviewed for this analysis. The report is then forwarded to Inspectional Services.
2. Following the pursuit, at the next opportunity, the patrol supervisor completes the *Blue Team Report of Pursuit*. Oftentimes, this occurs immediately following the pursuit. The first line supervisor will interview the involved officer(s) and review all available in-car and body worn camera video, prior to completing this report. The purpose of this report and critique is to identify those aspects of the pursuit that went well and those that could be improved upon. It is also designed to determine whether the pursuit met the policy manual guidelines and legislative mandates or whether it deviated from those guidelines. If the pursuit deviated from policy, a determination should be made as to whether this deviation was acceptable. If it was acceptable, the EVOC coordinator can then determine whether a policy modification is in order.
3. Once the Office of Inspectional Services logs the report, it is then available to the EVOC coordinator for the purposes of data collection, annual analysis, evaluating and/or recommending changes to the pursuit policy, as well as identifying potential training opportunities.

## 2023 Pursuit and Comparative Analysis

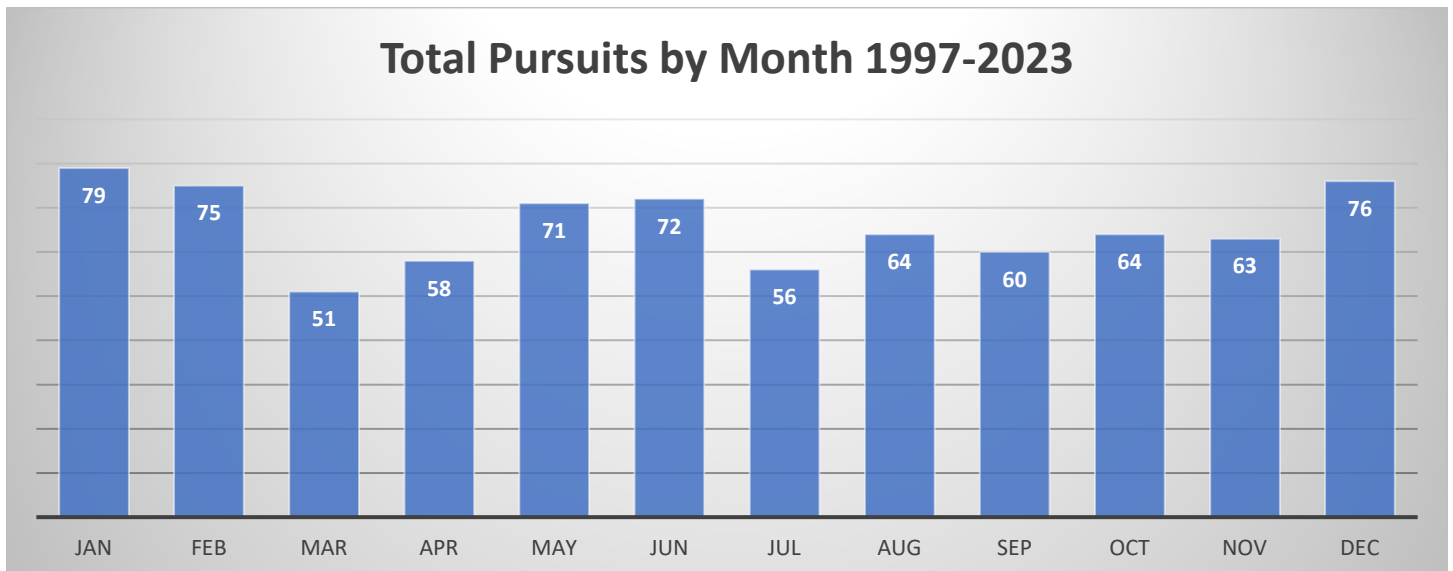
On the pages following is a collection of key charts and tables that cover vehicle pursuits by type, time of day, tactical intervention and more. In addition, key observations for each category are provided.

*Chart 1. Total Pursuits by Year*

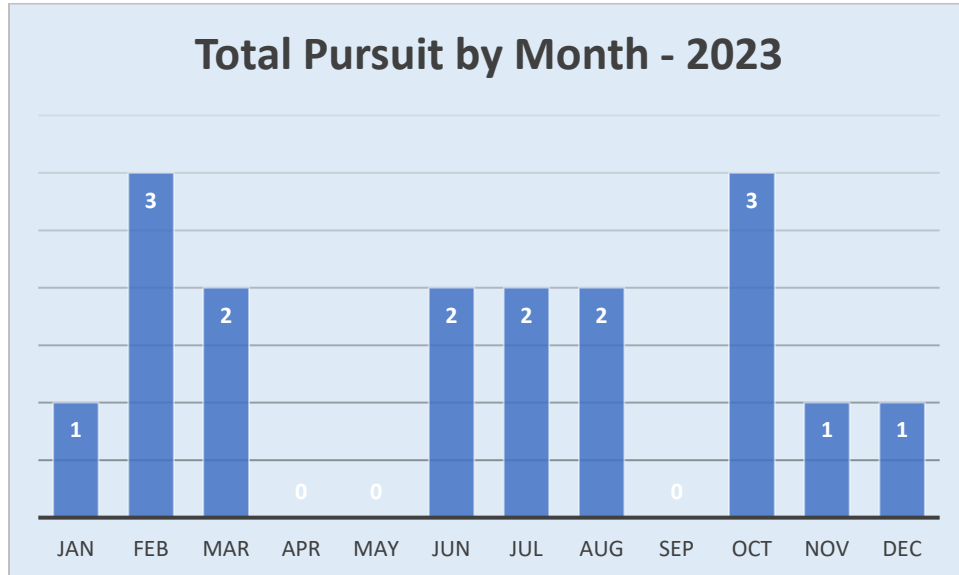
Observations: There was a 283% increase in the number of pursuits from 2023. This was due to lawmakers lowering the threshold for police to pursue from probable cause to reasonable suspicion. This was only for offenses that included violent crimes, sex offenses, escape, domestic violence (all degrees), and DUI.



*Chart 2. Total Pursuits by Month*



*Chart 3. Total Pursuits by Month 2023*

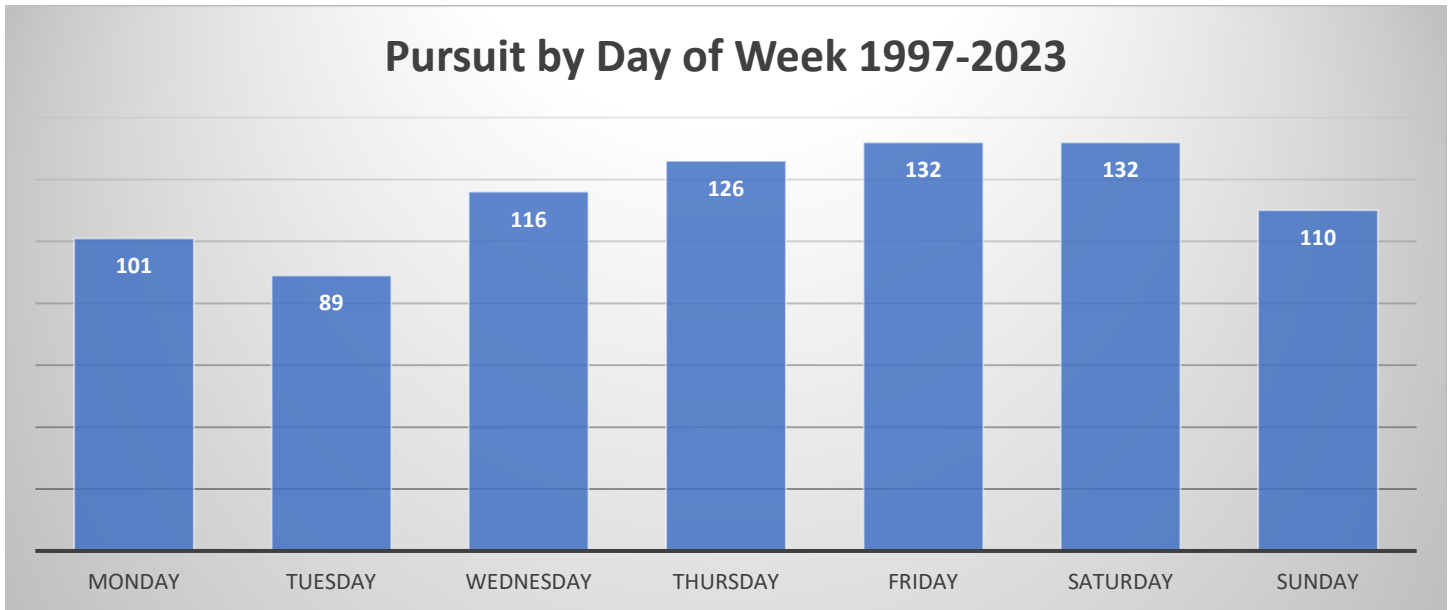


Observations: Chart 3: There is no significant trend in the cumulative number of pursuits by month. February and October have the highest number of pursuits. There were two pursuits each in the months of March, June, July and August. There was one pursuit each in the months of January, November and December.

Chart 3: Due to legislation and policy changes in 2021, there was a significant decrease in the number of total pursuits in 2022. The total number of pursuits for the entire year 2022 was six. This increased in 2023 to a total number of seventeen.

Officers were limited by legislation to pursuing violent felons, sexual offenders, DV assault suspects, and drivers that the officer had a reasonable belief were DUI, by either alcohol or drugs.

*Chart 4. Pursuits by Day of the Week 1997-2023*

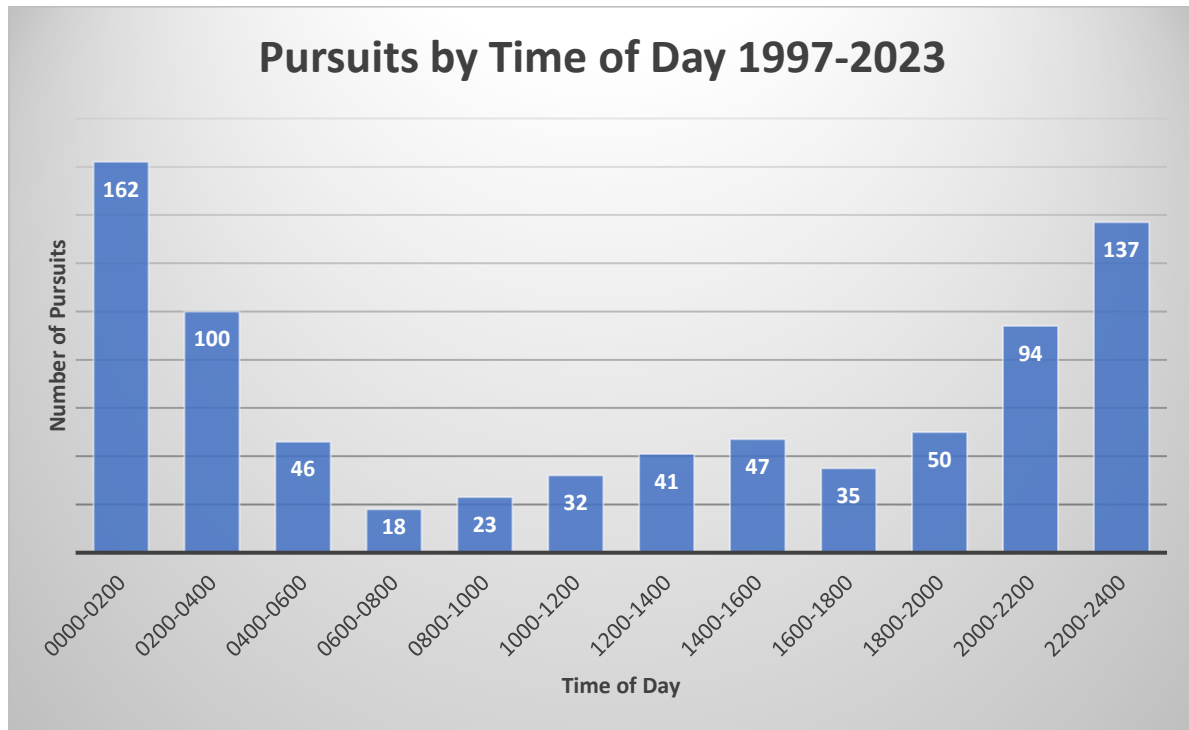


**Observations:**

- ❖ Weekends historically have more pursuits.
- ❖ In 2023, There were no pursuits on Tuesday or Saturday. There were eight pursuits on Thursday. Three each on Friday and Sunday. There were two pursuits on Monday and one on Wednesday.



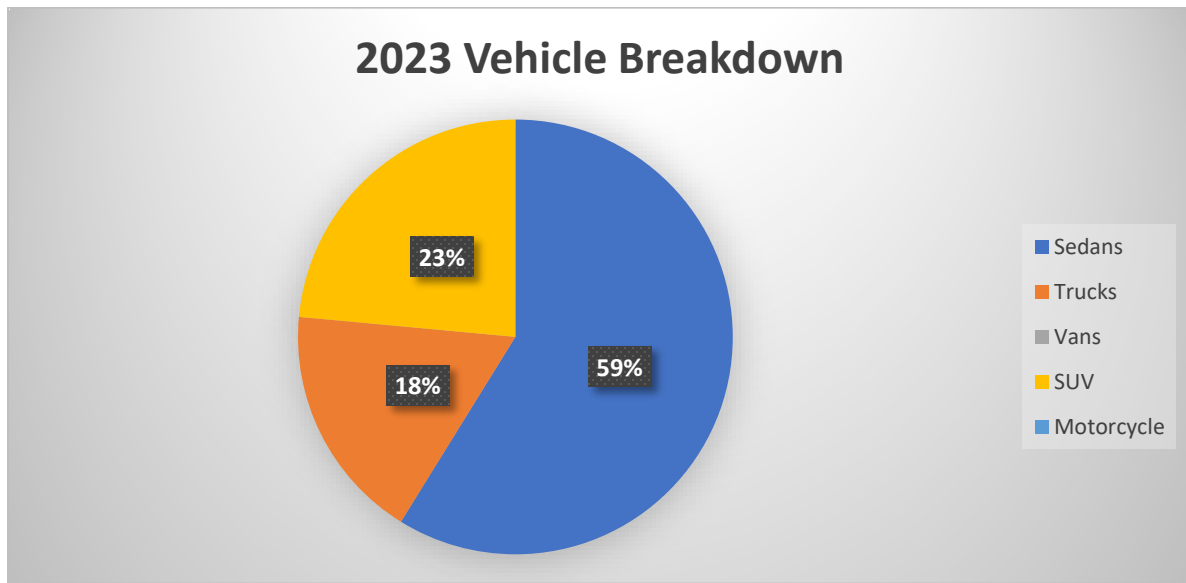
*Chart 5. Pursuits by Time of Day (1997-2023)*



**Observations:**

Pursuits in Auburn primarily occur between 2000 hours and 0400 hours. The time period between the hours of 2200 and 0200 has the highest frequency of pursuits. There are several possible explanations for this. During this time there are favorable traffic conditions. The ratio of officers versus citizens on the road is greatest at this time, and Auburn crime data indicates the criminal element is more active between these hours. Except for the afternoon rush hour, this is reflective of the APD workload and staffing distribution. Patrol staffing deployment between these hours is increased as this period correlates with the hours of the highest calls for service.

*Chart 6. Pursuits by Vehicle Type*

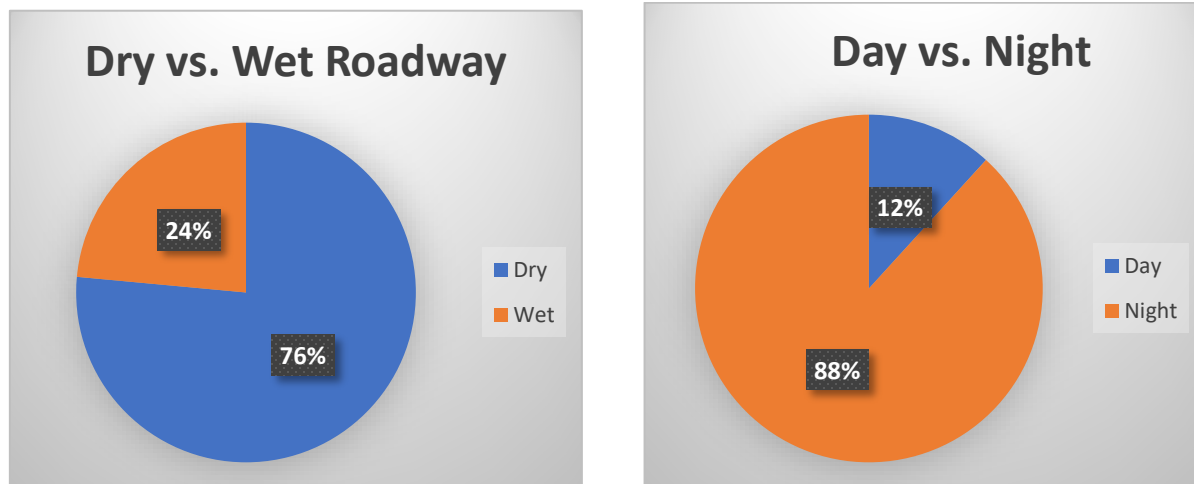


**Observations:**

Sedans traditionally make up the vast majority of vehicles being pursued. In 2023 this trend continued with 59% of the suspect vehicles being sedans. The remaining involved vehicles were SUV's making up 23% and pickups which were 18% of the total number.

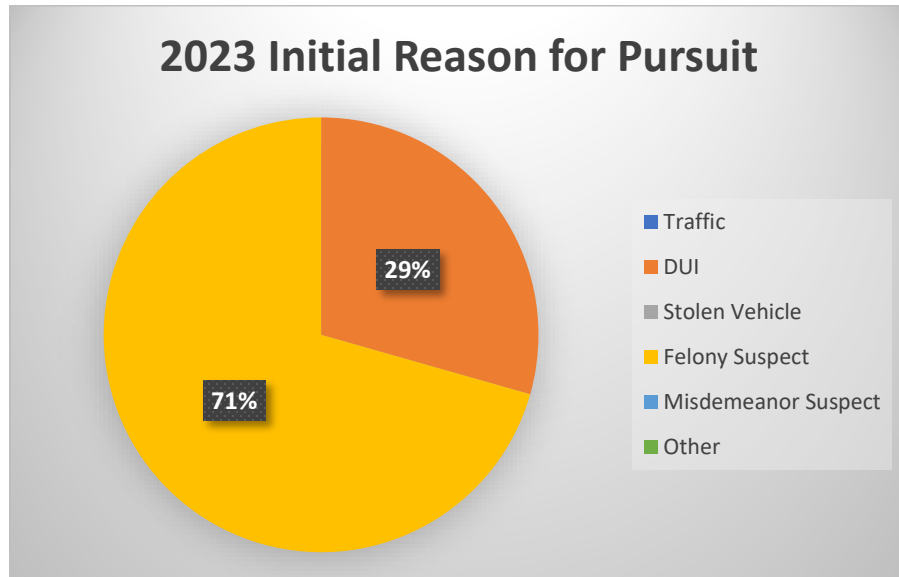
*Chart 8.*

**Observations:** Most pursuits occur at night and on dry roadways. Historically, this is a stable trend for pursuits in Auburn.





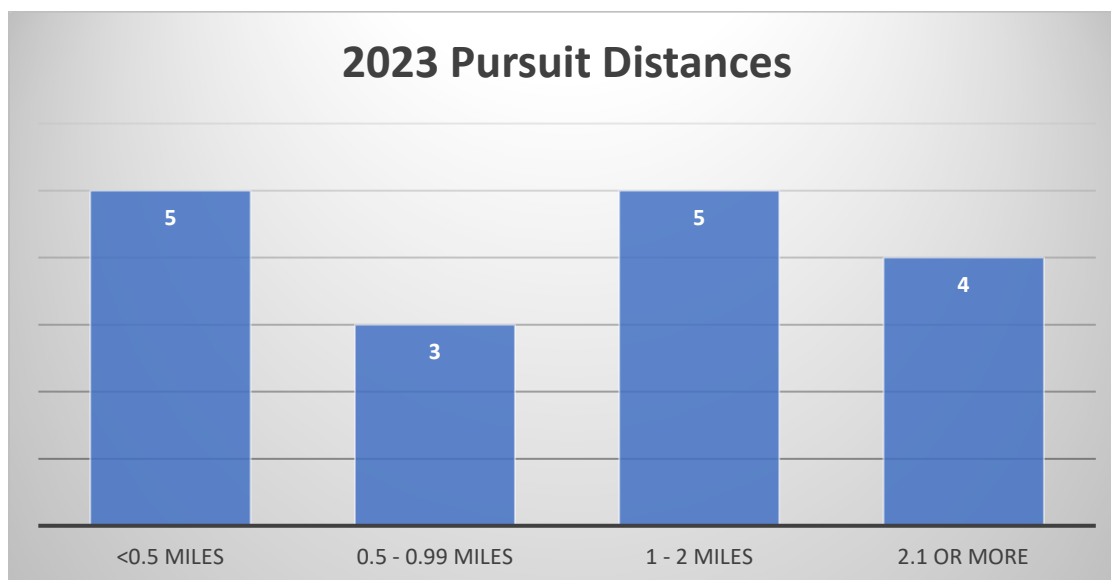
*Chart 9. Initial Reason for Pursuits*



**Observations:**

- ❖ Definition: The *Initial Reason for Pursuit* refers to the crime or infraction observed by the officer that provided probable cause or reasonable suspicion for the initial stop. The purpose for collecting this data is to show that officers often have only limited knowledge as to the underlying reasons why suspects are fleeing from them.
- ❖ In 2022, 100% of pursuits were initiated for violent felonies. This was due to legislative requirement present at the time.
- ❖ In 2023, the legislature relaxed the requirement to pursue from probable cause to reasonable suspicion for violent offenses, sexual offenses, and drivers that the officer had a reasonable belief were DUI, by either alcohol or drugs, along with adding all DV related assaults. Although other crimes may have been present, in all cases officers knew they were pursuing suspects for crimes other than eluding or possession of stolen vehicles. In 2023, 71% of pursuits were for felony suspects, while 29% of pursuits were for DUI.

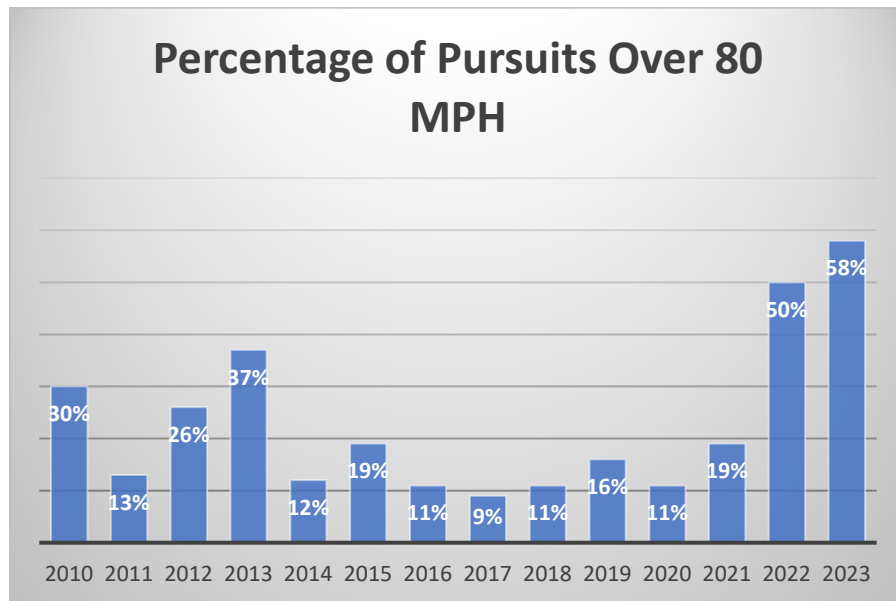
Chart 10. Pursuit Distances



Observations:

- ❖ Chart 10 depicts the categorical distance of the seventeen pursuits in 2023.
- ❖ In previous years, officers were reporting exact distances of pursuits. That changed in recent years when nearly all reports of pursuits were entered into Blue Team. This program only reports the distance by category. However, a rough estimate is still available. The hope is to reduce the length of pursuits such as in 2017, when average pursuit distance was less than one mile (0.94).
- ❖ In 2023 the total number of miles Auburn Officers pursued suspects was 33.6 miles, versus 11.6 miles in 2022. This was an average of 1.93 miles for the seventeen pursuits, whereas in 2022 the 6 reported pursuits averaged 0.66 miles per pursuit. In 2023 the distance was higher due to one pursuit which lasted 12 miles. (This anomaly was involving officers pursuing two suspected attempted carjackers, both of which were armed at the time of the offense). This pursuit occurred on Monday morning at 0300 HRS with minimal traffic on the involved roadways.
- ❖ Also, in 2023 the shortest pursuit (aside from those pursuits that were immediately terminated) was less than .10 miles.

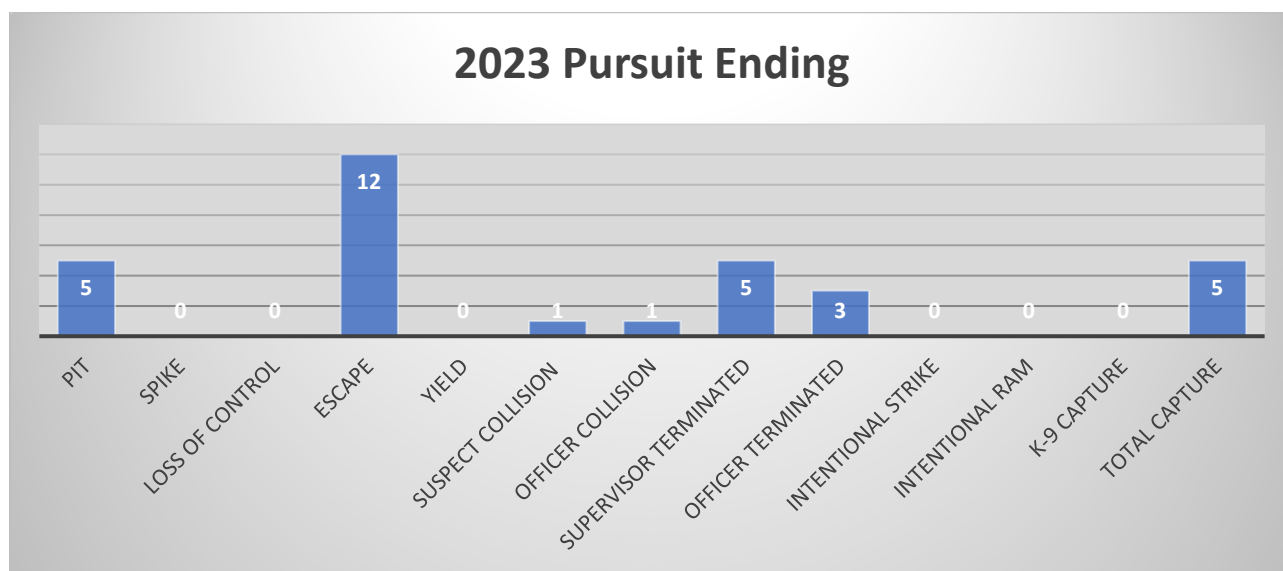
*Chart 11. Pursuit Speeds (2010-2023)*



**Observations:**

- ❖ Of significance to note is the percentage of pursuits during each year with sustained speeds at 80 MPH or greater. The reason for selecting this range of speeds is so officers understand the importance of ending pursuits as soon as possible. Furthermore, there is a correlation between high speeds, prolonged distance, and pursuits that end in a collision. The above chart shows the percentage of pursuits between 2010 and 2023 that were classified at speeds greater than 80 MPH. All years prior to 2014 combined averages of 32.5% over 80 MPH.
- ❖ In 2022 and 2023 the speed greater than 80 MPH occurred more often than in previous years although the total number of pursuits was significantly lower in both years.
- ❖ The reason for this increase is the fact that the officers are pursuing the most violent suspects that are more willing to use almost any means to escape. This is a significant statistical increase as the percentage of pursuits over 80 MPH in 2021, (the year of the Legislative reform) was 19%.

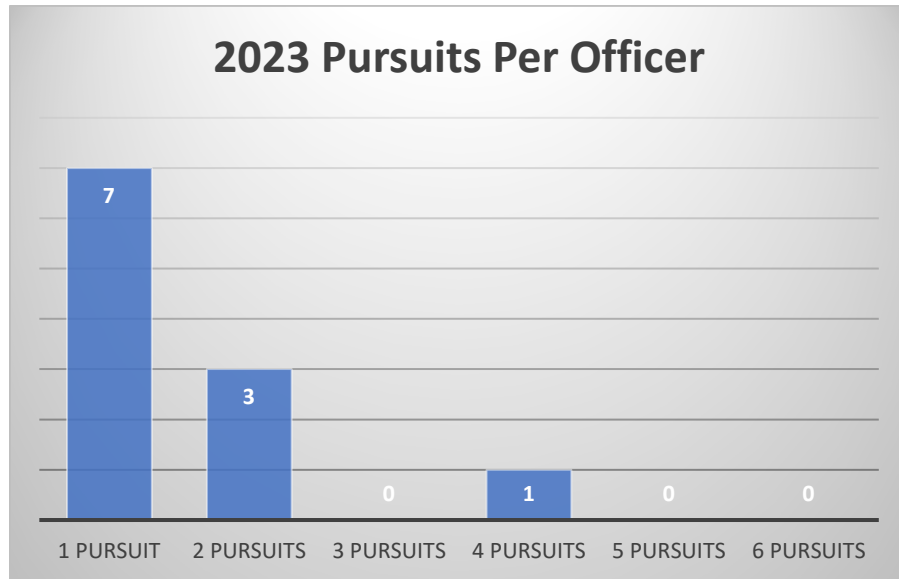
*Chart 12. Pursuit Ending*



**Observations:**

- ❖ The above chart reflects how 2023 pursuits concluded. Some pursuits are represented by more than one category. For example, whereas 12 suspects escaped, some of them are represented under suspect collision and terminated. Of note, in 2023 47% (8) of the 17 pursuits were terminated by either the supervisor or the pursuing officer. This demonstrates that the Sergeants were closely monitoring their Officers involved in the pursuits and the circumstances of the pursuit. Supervisors were compelled to terminate the pursuit when the risk of the pursuit outweighed the seriousness of the crime involved. It also demonstrates that the officers showed restraint and good judgment by recognizing the same circumstances and terminating the pursuits on their own.
- ❖ Officers did not have opportunities to use spike stripes in 2023. This is most likely because nearly all pursuits were terminated or ended after a very short distance.
- ❖ Of the nine pursuits (9) in 2023 that were not terminated, five (5) pursuits ended in the capture of the suspect.

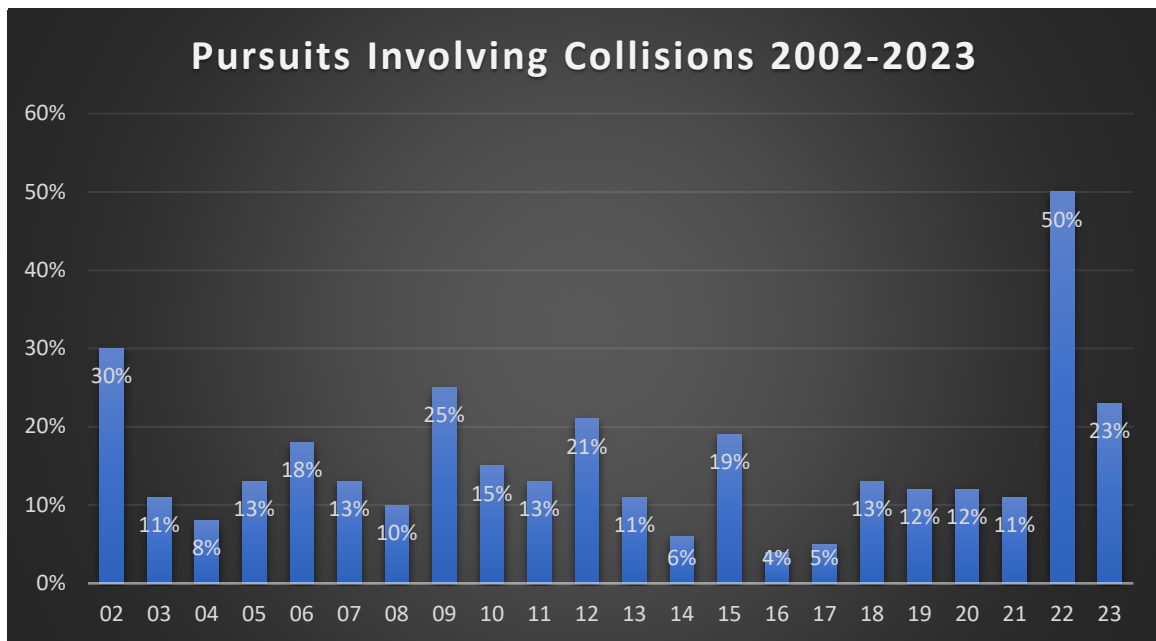
*Chart 13. Officer Frequency 2023*



**Observations:**

For training purposes, it is helpful to monitor the number of pursuits that individual officers initiate. For example, in years past, an officer who initiated far more pursuits than other officers prompted a review of the officer's practice. It was determined that this officer made a habit of turning on emergency equipment from long distances behind motorists. This possibly instilled confidence in the motorist to flee. After training, the following year when that officer turned on the emergency equipment directly behind the motorists, the frequency of pursuit was significantly reduced. In 2023, of the seventeen pursuits, seven officers initiated one pursuit, three officers initiated two pursuits and one officer initiated four pursuits. (This officer self-terminated two of those pursuits after less than a mile)

*Chart 14. Pursuits Involving Collisions 2002-2023*

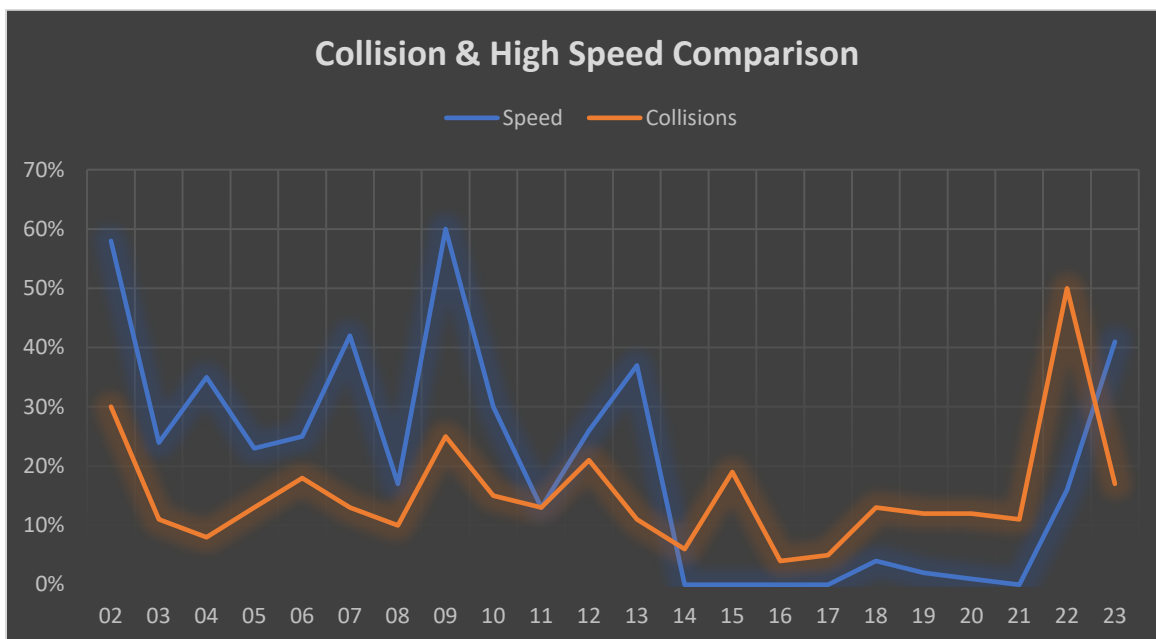


**Observations:**

- ❖ In 2023, there were two (2) collisions by suspects and two (2) by Officers. Both of the collisions by officers were associated with a suspect collision. One of the suspect drivers were captured after the collision and one fled the scene on foot. There were no injuries associated with these collisions.



*Chart 15. Collisions Vs. High-Speed Pursuits 2002-2023*



#### Observations:

This chart depicts a possible correlation between the incidence of collisions and pursuits at speeds greater than 80 MPH, at least for most of the years shown. It is interesting to note that in years 2014-2017, there were no reported collisions involving speeds over 80 MPH. The minor collisions that did occur were at slower speeds. In 2019, there was only one collision in a pursuit where speeds reached 80 MPH. However, the collision occurred at a slower speed when the suspect collided with two police cars.

In 2023, there was one collision involving a pursuit in which the speed had been greater than 80 MPH. The collision occurred at a significantly slower speed and resulted in the patrol vehicle being damaged/disabled. The suspect fled on foot and escaped. All other collisions were at slow speed. There were no known injury collisions involving pursuits in 2023.

Even though legislative changes significantly reduced the number of pursuits, officers are still responsible to constantly weigh the risk of the pursuit against the seriousness of the crime involved. This statistic points to the fact that Officers and Sergeants are very cognizant of this and are terminating pursuits appropriately.

Chart 16. Suspect Gender

Chart 17.

Suspect Age

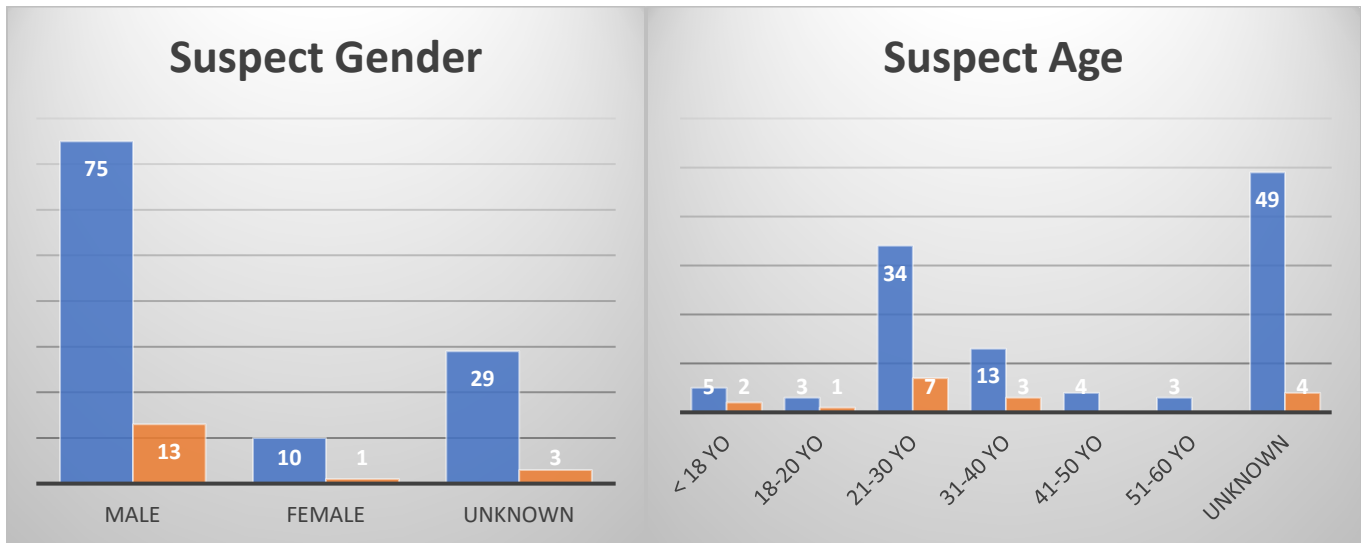
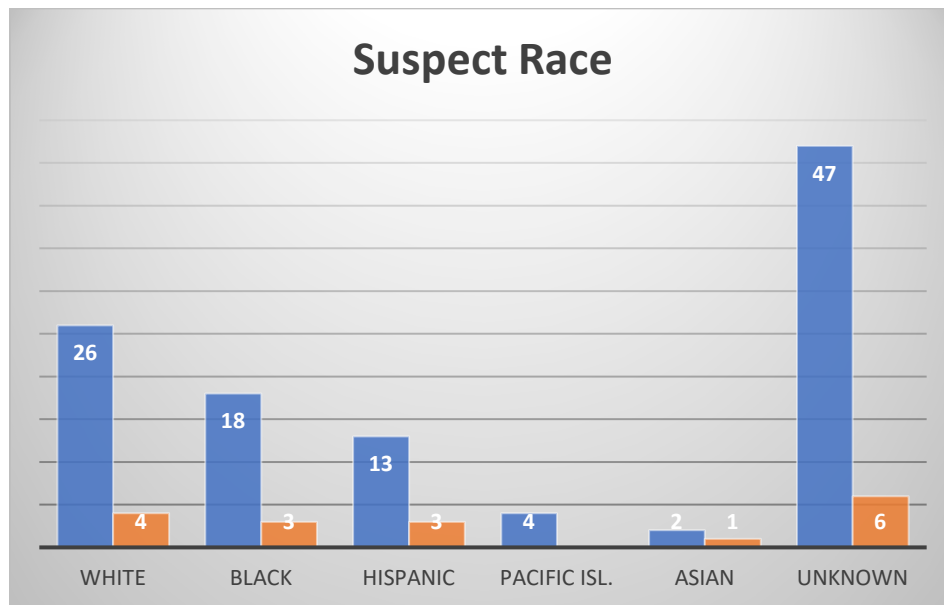


Chart 18. Suspect Race



Observations:

- ❖ Of the known suspects in 2023 pursuits, thirteen were male. Four were White. Three suspects were Hispanic and three were Black. Two identified suspects were minors, while the identified female suspect was 39 years old.



- ❖ Not all suspects are identified or captured. Due to the higher probability of pursuits occurring at night, and the fact that most pursuits are terminated, makes it difficult for officers to obtain these characteristics.

### *Summary:*

- 1) The number of pursuits in the City of Auburn tends to fluctuate like other crimes reported. 2008-2014 were recorded as low years with averages in the teens. The next five years (2015-2019) there was a significant increase in the number of pursuits. 2020 has the second most pursuits recorded in a calendar year, and the highest recorded captures of any prior year. In 2023, the legislature relaxed the pursuit laws enacted in 2021 slightly, to allow pursuit based upon reasonable suspicion instead of the higher standard of probable cause. The crimes that could be pursued also changed slightly to include all degrees of DV assault, along with the previously allowed violent felonies, sex offenses, escape, and DUI. To date, there continues to be modifications to police practices and the legislation that governs them.
- 2) In the years leading up to 2023, the average length of pursuits had drastically declined. This was due to a change in the department pursuit policy of not engaging in pursuits for minor crimes. In addition to this change, this had likely contributed to the increase in the number of pursuits as many suspects are aware of the “No Chase Policy”. Again, in 2021, considerably restrictive legislative changes prevented officers from pursuing nearly all violators. However, the distance of the pursuits increased slightly due to the severity of the crimes for which pursuit was allowed.

Initiative 2113 will become law on June 6, 2024. This will restore autonomy to law enforcement agencies within the state. This initiative will remove restrictions previously implemented by the legislature regarding Police pursuits. It will allow the Department to implement a pursuit policy that is determined by the Chief of Police, and can be modified as needed based upon local crime trends, performance by the officers, and the standards and expectations of the community.

- 3) In terms of what the officers knew at the time each pursuit was initiated, a vast majority were for felony crimes.

- 4) The Auburn Police Department has a highly efficient method of capturing pursuit data for subsequent analysis and training. The department should continue evaluating what information should be captured, and how that information should be recorded.
- 5) There are current discussions pertaining to the modification of the pursuit policy to allow for greater discretion for officers and supervisors on pursuits for crimes that are less severe. This is being prompted by Initiative 2113. There are always underlying reasons why suspects flee from the police. We do not know the extent of the reasons for motorists to flee, such as warrants, weapons violations, and other felonies. As mentioned in #4 (above), the “real” reasons suspects are fleeing should be recorded on those suspects who are captured and are willing to speak.
- 6) Supervisors were very involved in monitoring the 2023 pursuits. This year, 5 of 17 pursuits (30%) were terminated by the first line supervisor after approval had initially been given to pursue. Officers have self-terminated and have noted several times that they would have pursued under previous legislation and have made the correct decision not to do so. This is commendable for both supervisors and Officers as it shows that they have adjusted to the legislative changes. Based upon this previous action it is reasonable to believe that they will adjust accordingly in June 2024.
- 7) No officers received discipline as a result of their action or decisions during a pursuit in 2023.

### *Training*

For many years, EVOC,(Emergency Vehicle Operators Course), training consisted of eight hours for each officer, every three years. During the eight hours, the officer received training in the Pursuit Policy, vehicle placement, auto-cross, high speed tactical driving, pursuit scenarios, and the Pursuit Immobilization Technique (PIT).

For the past four years, there has been a slight change. To capture officer attention, EVOC training was shortened to four hours of intensive high speed, PIT, and scenario-based training, spike deployment training, as well as slow speed training. This change allowed the department to provide the training with greater frequency per officer. We are currently legislatively mandated to provide EVOC training to every officer every two years. The change in training that was made four years ago actually placed us in a position where we were doing this prior to the mandate.

During these training sessions at Pacific Raceways, EVOC instructors have the officers continue to perform high speed training and the PIT maneuver until both the officer and instructor are confident that the officer is thoroughly familiar with these techniques. The intent of training at Pacific Raceways is to get more officers through this critical high risk – low frequency training, and on a more frequent basis. This is even more important now that this critical task is less frequent.

The EVOC Commander and several instructors review department pursuits and collisions. A determination is made to consider additional training for the officers that are found to be involved in preventable collisions. This training will be provided by EVOC staff and documented after the determination is made what type of training will occur.

There is currently a consideration to provide basic EVOC training to new recruits to give them this important training prior to annual training in October or November. This is problematic at times as finding a location that will allow the training is challenging. However, we have recently reached an agreement with the Auburn School District that allows the Department to use specific school parking lots for EVOC training when the schools are on an extended break.

We have been sending our new hires to EVOC training prior to the academy if they are in that period between being hired and attending the academy.

As discussed in #2 above, there will be a legislative change June 6 due to Initiative 2113. This will allow greater discretion by the officer and supervisor in their respective decisions to pursue or allow the pursuit. Many of our current officers have only worked under the current legislative constraints. This compels the EVOC staff to spend additional time training these officers the decision process necessary to be successful and safe during a pursuit.

We will be providing Supervisors with what will be the current departmental policy and training them first. We will ask the Supervisors to prioritize EVOC training during patrol briefings, and ensure that they continue to closely monitor each pursuit. EVOC training will then be tailored to match the existing legislation.

