



City of Virginia Beach

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June 3, 2016

Councilmember Barbara Henley
Princess Anne District

SUBJECT: Policing in the Southern Portion of our City

Dear Councilmember Henley;

As requested, Chief Cervera provide some crime statistics regarding the southern portion of the City and summarize the thoughts of he and his staff regarding the most recent incidences in the Princess Anne District. Additionally, he provided comments regarding priorities, resourcing and recent investigation and arrest results.

First Precinct Captain Dave Squires and his staff will continue to provide interaction with our residents at the First Precinct CAC as well as at your monthly forums. I will be scheduling a Town Hall meeting at the Blackwater Fire Station in the latter half of June and will be adding this topic to our agenda.

Should you have any questions please contact Chief Cervera or me.

Respectfully,

David L. Hansen
City Manager

Attachment

c: The Honorable William D. Sessoms, Jr., Mayor
Members of City Council
James A. Cervera, Chief of Police



City of Virginia Beach

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INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 3, 2016

TO: David L. Hansen, City Manager *[Signature]*

FROM: James A. Cervera, Chief of Police

SUBJECT: Concerns Related to Crime in the Southern Portion of our City

I have received and reviewed communications sent via NextDoor.com regarding concerns about crime and policing services in the southern portion of the City. These messages include the following post shared with the police on May 24:

We do have a councilwoman out here that we should be going to and asking her to get us some police coverage. I have been told by many police officers that we have no coverage out here and have not for over a year. (Cut backs) The closest police officer we have if we call is at Red Mill.

In my consultations with the Commanding Officers of the 1st Police Precinct and the Detective Bureau I have developed the following summary of the various concerns citizens have and deserve to have addressed.

1. The area being discussed is contained within the three southernmost patrol zones of the City (patrol zones 120, 121, and 122).
2. There is a concern in these areas which include Pungo, Creeds, Sandbridge and Asheville Park, that there has been an increase in three particular crimes:
 - a. Motor Vehicle Theft
 - b. Theft from Motor Vehicles
 - c. Burglary (residential and commercial)
3. There is a perception that cutbacks or budgetary decisions have diminished available police resources in these areas and that there is inadequate police coverage to meet the growing need. This perception can lead to an increased fear of crime.

I will summarize my findings in response to each of the crime concerns and I will ensure that my Commanders are addressing both crime and the fear of crime in every area of the City.

With respect to crime in the area as described (Patrol Zones 120,121,122) here is what the data shows:

Burglary Residential/Commercial

Jan 1 st –May 25 th 2015		Jan 1 st –May 25 th 2016		% changed
120 zone	0	120 zone	0	0
121 zone	3	121 zone	3	0
122 zone	7	122 zone	14	100%

Motor Vehicle Theft

Jan 1 st –May 25 th 2015		Jan 1 st –May 25 th 2016		% changed
120 zone	0	120 zone	5	500%
121 zone	0	121 zone	1	100%
122 zone	7	122 zone	6	-25%

Larceny from Motor Vehicles

Jan 1 st –May 25 th 2015		Jan 1 st –May 25 th 2016		% changed
120 zone	3	120 zone	3	0
121 zone	14	121 zone	7	-50%
122 zone	18	122 zone	30	67%

Being familiar with crime statistics for every patrol area in the City, I want to emphasize one point at the outset. The theft of motor vehicles and thefts from motor vehicles is a crime problem we are seeing throughout various areas of the City. We are also noting an increase in these crimes in other Cities. This is not a problem isolated to any part of the City and there are things that can be done to reduce the costs and harms associated with these crimes.

In line with the Routine Activities Theory of Crime we are and have been making arrests, conducting ongoing investigations, focusing patrol efforts, communicating with the community about the risk, and improving the perception of guardianship in the area.

To summarize our response to these crimes: Every one of the crimes listed above has been reported and is being investigated. Last week alone a collaborative effort between citizens, patrol officers, analysts, and investigators has produced the arrest of a subject who is tied to several burglaries in the area. A significant amount of stolen property has been recovered and the investigation is ongoing. A different subject has been arrested in relationship to an ongoing investigation into car theft. The good news that we have already made two significant arrests relating to crime in this area is evidence of the diligence we apply to following up on crime and our efforts to reduce the fear of crime in all communities.

Captain Dave Squires of the First Precinct has continued to meet each month with members of the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) for the 1st Precinct and encourages people from all communities in the First Precinct to participate with the CAC. The crime problem and crime prevention tactics on point have been shared at each of the CAC meetings this year. The CAC is a focal point in our efforts to share information and receive feedback. Captain Squires attends Sandbridge Civic League meetings. He has made arrangements to speak on these issues at the Senior Resource Center June 15 at 10:00 a.m. and he has also spoken at the forum in the Municipal Center on May 26.

While we will continue to strive towards lowering the fear of crime in all communities, it is important to reflect on what the citizens can do to lower the risk of crime. In these cases, the data is especially clear.

- Out of the 12 Motor Vehicle Thefts in 2016, 9 car keys were immediately accessible to the thief.
- Out of the 40 larceny from Motor Vehicle cases in 2016, approximately 75% of the vehicles were left unlocked.
- 3 firearms were taken from unlocked vehicles during this time frame.

While thefts from motor vehicles is a problem throughout the City and beyond, so too is the problem of failing to secure valuable property. Captain Squires has already consulted with our Crime Prevention Unit to address ways to encourage greater rates of securing property. We hope in the near future to unveil a public messaging campaign geared specifically towards this goal.

With respect to the assertion that we have reduced staffing in the areas discussed above, I have confirmed the following:

1. There has been no diminishment of patrol resources to this area.
2. There is adequate staffing assigned to the three southern patrol zones.
3. There has been no leadership communication about de-prioritizing this area.

4. I have confirmed that we do have officers who regularly work in the southern police zones and who have a great deal of experience with this area. Reflecting the principles of Community Policing, these officers are invested in the neighborhoods they serve and are knowledgeable about the people who live there.

There is and has been for some time a need to increase police staffing generally. I have advocated for a planned expansion of police staffing for several years and plan to continue such advocacy because I believe it will help us deliver better services over the long term. I do not, however, believe in response to the concerns addressed above:

1. That there is truth in the assertion we lowered or have restricted resources
2. That merely adding more resources would help in this area more than it would cost in other areas of the City.

I remain committed to addressing crime and the fear of crime throughout the City and I am certain that view is shared by my staff. We encourage any and all who share these goals to hold us accountable and to help us accomplish the purpose we all share.

I encourage people in these areas to participate in their civic leagues, to meet with the CAC, to write and meet regularly with Captain Dave Squires, and to take reasonable steps to reduce risks as they become known.

JAC/dgs