

MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. LTC# 288-2016

LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Philip Levine and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager

DATE: July 5, 2016

SUBJECT: **Police Department New Crime-Fighting Initiatives and Proposed FY 16-17 Entertainment District Enhancements**

This Letter to Commission is prepared to summarize the short-term efforts and a longer-term proposed reorganization of the Police Department to create more visibility and greater impact on street crime in the Entertainment District. The short-term efforts will be managed within existing Police Department resources and with some modest overtime expenditure. The longer-term proposed reorganization of the Department will include the creation of a new, fourth Police Area Command, to be called the "Entertainment District." This will require policy endorsement by the Commission and enhanced staffing. The proposal will need to be evaluated and given full consideration in the upcoming FY 16-17 budget process.

Year-to-Date Crime Data and Trends

A number of recent robberies on the midnight shift have focused attention on the Department's crime-fighting efforts and crime statistics. Despite recent media coverage that might suggest otherwise, the Department is actually having a good year in terms of robbery reduction, with a very significant 27-percent decrease in this crime since January 1. In addition, major index crime, as measured nationally by the FBI, has generally trended downward for the City of Miami Beach in recent years. The past two years have seen modest decreases, with a 3-percent reduction in 2014 and another 2.27-percent reduction in 2015.

The Department has been particularly successful in addressing robberies in 2016, with a reduction since January 1 of over 27 percent. The city has experienced a modest increase of 2.16 percent in overall major index crime in 2016. The crime increase has been driven largely by a 3-percent increase in larcenies. Data for the four-week period ending June 23 shows a 12.3-percent overall decline in citywide crime compared to the immediately previous four weeks in 2016, and a 0.26-percent reduction compared to the same four weeks a year ago. For the four-week period ending June 23, there has been 21.77-percent decline in crime within Area 1/South Beach compared to the prior four weeks, and a 8.99-percent decline compared to the same four weeks in 2015. There have been six more robberies in the four-week period ending June 23 than the prior four weeks, and two more robberies than the same period a year ago.

When robberies do occur, the Department has also been more successful in the past 18 months in making robbery arrests, often within minutes and nearby the crime scene. This is particularly true in the Entertainment District (5th to 15th Street, from the beach shoreline to Washington Avenue). As an example, in April and May of this year, 19 percent of robberies occurring in Area

1/South Beach have resulted in an arrest by a uniformed patrol officer immediately after the crime was committed. This is a strong indicator of the effectiveness of our patrol deployment scheme. This success is particularly attributed to the Ocean Drive Squad of 1 sergeant and 7 officers that was formed in November, 2014 (which made yet another robbery arrest last night, July 4, immediately after it occurred). Another 11 percent have been arrested by detectives following a brief investigation. Robberies in Area 1 decreased by 40 percent in April and May compared to same period in 2015 and by 19 percent citywide during that same period.

The Department holds twice-monthly crime strategy meetings involving all its top commanders, shift leaders, investigative supervisors and specialized unit supervisors. At these meetings, the other noticeable trend in addition to the 27-percent decline in robberies this year has been the movement of this crime away from the Beach and Ocean Drive. This is almost certainly a result of the strategies and pressure the Department has placed on the Ocean Drive/Beach area.

Response to Recent High-Profile Robberies

In response to the recent robberies in Area 1, Operations Division Major Mark Causey directed the initiation of "Operation Strike Back," beginning June 22 (see attached memorandum). This initiative, involving the deployment of specialty units (crime suppression teams, undercover narcotics investigators, Robbery Squad, Ocean Drive Squad, etc.) to the Entertainment District and South Beach area, has resulted in 40 arrests in its early stages. This initiative will be continued indefinitely.

The Department began taking the following additional steps to address robbery and street crime in Area 1/South Beach beginning this past July 4 weekend:

1. Enhanced patrol staffing in the Entertainment District, focusing on the Beach and Ocean Drive. For the July 4 weekend, this included deploying the Ocean Drive Squad of 1 sergeant and 7 officers on Sunday and Monday, their regular days off, on overtime. (Note: the Ocean Drive Squad has been extraordinarily effective at arrests and crime suppression since its inception in November, 2014 and has compiled an impressive record addressing serious felonies and quality-of-life and disorder offenses.) This enhanced staffing will be reevaluated after July 4 and continued as needed.
2. Deployment of midnight "overlap" patrol officers to Area 1. Patrol shifts are designed to have an overlap of personnel during peak demand hours. The overlap between the afternoon and midnight shift is from 10 p.m. until 1 a.m. During this time, Major Causey has directed the deployment of the midnight officers from Areas 2 and 3 to anti-robbery patrol in Area 1 to the locations in which the recent crimes have occurred. This overlap deployment will continue indefinitely.
3. Extending hours of the Crime Suppression Teams (CST). The CSTs are the Department's multi-skilled patrol teams that are tasked with tackling particularly difficult street crime conditions. They are the proactive teams who are freed of radio assignments so that they can concentrate exclusively on disrupting troubling new crime patterns or trends. They use various tactics, uniforms, equipment, vehicles and other methods and constitute a flexible force that can be deployed on short notice. The afternoon and midnight CST units will be dedicated to the areas of the recent robberies and will extend their hours of coverage temporarily on overtime.
4. The Department's elite Robbery Squad, which works until 3 a. m., will have its hours extended to 5 a.m. temporarily on overtime.

5. The Department's General Investigations Unit, consisting of detectives who respond to the most serious crimes during the overnight period and begin investigations immediately at the scene, will work extended hours until 5 a.m. temporarily on overtime.
6. Mobile license plate reader (LPR) teams of uniformed officers will be deployed during early morning hours in certain critical areas where recent robberies have occurred. The LPR is a particularly effective crime-fighting tool, both for intervention in advance of a crime and for prompt investigation and apprehension when crime occurs.

These additional measures and personnel, along with carefully directed deployment at the direction of Major Causey and his team's senior leadership based on evolving trends, should further address robbery and street-crime conditions in the short term.

Proposed Reorganization and Enhancements to Address Crime and Service Demand

New Entertainment District:

The Department is proposing a major reorganization in response to increased demand for services and the special circumstances of policing the Entertainment District. The senior leadership of the Department has long felt that Area 1 is too large and unwieldy to direct properly and efficiently, as it currently accounts for 46 percent of calls for service and the vast bulk of the city's special events and their concomitant policing challenges.

Under this new plan, the Entertainment District would become its own police command, a fourth "Area" for police coverage. The command would be run by a captain and named the "Entertainment District," covering 5th to 15th Street, from the Beach shoreline on the east to the west side of Washington Avenue. Under this plan, likely calls for service would be divided among the four police areas as follows: Entertainment District, 15 percent; the reconfigured Area 1, 31 percent; Area 2/Mid-Beach, 22 percent; and Area 3/North Beach, 17 percent. This would be a much better balance of Department resources and emphasis.

To support this restructuring, 51 current sworn police officer positions would be reallocated from among existing resources, including the captain and two of the three required patrol lieutenant/shift commander positions. (A proposed organizational chart is attached.) However, to specifically add visibility of key patrol units and to increase service and efficiency in certain areas of critical demand within the Entertainment District, 12 new sworn positions will be requested in the budget process. They are as follows:

1. 1 patrol lieutenant/shift commander, which is needed to complete staffing for the three patrol shifts of the Entertainment District and ensure proper span of control.
2. 1 Neighborhood Resource Officer (NRO) to assist the new Entertainment District Captain/Commanding Officer in dealing with the community policing and problem-solving elements of running a major command.
3. 1 sergeant and 4 police officers to create a second Ocean Drive Squad. This squad will work the opposite end of the week of the current extremely successful Ocean Drive Squad that was established in late 2014. This request is also responsive to a core recommendation of the Ocean Drive Task Force and is considered a vital need by the Department's leadership.
4. 2 additional police officers to create a full squad of Homeless Outreach Officers (HROs). The demands of the Department to deal with the homeless continue to increase. Homelessness is one of the top complaints citywide but of particular concern in the Entertainment District. The current two officers assigned to this issue full time cannot

meet the demands citywide for investigations, Baker and Marchman Act commitments, referrals, arrests, court appearances, etc. It has been shown that this work requires a special expertise that is beyond the capacity or time of regular patrol officers. This new squad of a sergeant and four officers would provide services citywide, but the bulk of their time would be spent in the Entertainment District and the Lincoln Road corridor. The sergeant position and the original two HROs would be funded from existing resources. The squad will report to the Entertainment District Captain for chain-of-command purposes but will have citywide responsibility to deal with the homeless.

5. 3 additional beat officers for the Washington Avenue corridor. With the reorganization in late 2014 that created the Ocean Drive Task Force, the Department reduced its full-time beat officer positions on Washington Avenue to one officer. Washington Avenue and its adjoining side streets present major challenges in quality-of-life and crime conditions. A total team of four officers, with two on days and two working evenings, would provide the ideal visible coverage and problem solving for this crucial business thoroughfare.

The fully funded cost of these 12 positions to support the proposed new Entertainment District in FY 16-17 would be \$1,140,453, with a second-year cost of \$1,176,837. The proposed new organizational chart for the Entertainment District is attached.

Assignment of 1 Detective to Miami Dade Robbery Intervention Detail:

The Miami-Dade Police Department's Robbery Intervention Detail (RID) is a robbery task force that investigates the most serious and violent robberies in the county and pursues robbery suspects and fugitives. A high percentage of Miami Beach's robbery suspects are from elsewhere in Miami Dade County. The Department had a full-time detective assigned to RID for many years but ended that relationship when the last assigned detective got promoted to sergeant and staffing on patrol in our city was depleted. The advantage to having a full-time task force officer on RID is that the MBPD can leverage all the resources of RID to hunt for Miami Beach robbery suspects and fugitives.

Staffing levels in MBPD have now returned to an acceptable level so that one detective can be reallocated for a RID assignment. We expect to do this by no later than the end of the summer. We further expect that as a result, the full resources of RID will help MBPD solve robberies and catch offenders at a higher rate, thereby reducing robberies here in our city.

Technology to Support Crime Suppression:

In the current fiscal year, \$265,000 was allocated to the Police Department for an initial build-out of infrastructure to support cameras and license plate readers on the MacArthur Causeway. This money has been held in reserve pending the Transportation Department's research and implementation of the "Intelligent Traffic System" comprehensive initiative. That project may take some time to complete but will not be finished in this fiscal year. In addition, it remains unresolved (even doubtful) whether FDOT will permit LPRs on the MacArthur Causeway.

The Police Department will seek to reallocate all or a portion of the \$265,000 and may seek still more funding in the future to place additional fixed LPRs and surveillance cameras in critical areas of the Entertainment District and other parts of the city to fight crime. While the county and state control most major roads in the city and have generally opposed cameras and LPRs, there are a number of important streets and structures such as parking garages that the city controls that would be ideal for placement of cameras and LPRs to fight crime. The Police Department will undertake a comprehensive survey in the next few weeks, consider crime data and develop a list of best locations for immediate impact using this technology.

Reward Fund:

The Police Department intends to partner with a local non-profit to create a reward fund to assist the police in catching criminals involved in particularly high-profile crimes, especially robberies.

An effective reward program is particularly useful in cases where, in the early stages of the investigation, the detectives are short on leads but there is still significant media attention. When a reward is offered immediately and gets broadcast as part of the initial wave of media coverage, it can often lead to crucial tips coming into the police. The reason is that persons who commit particularly heinous and high-profile crimes often tell (or even boast to) someone in their personal life about the crime. The reward is sometimes just the motivation for the person with knowledge to pass the information on to the police.

The reward in these cases can still be funneled through the current Crime Stoppers program. Such a reward would be in addition to but a significant boost above what Crime Stoppers offers. Because Crime Stoppers has a proven method to do so, the reward can still be handled and paid out anonymously. A fully funded reward program, from private tax-deductible donations, will have greater impact than the current Crime Stoppers program because it can offer larger rewards that garner more significant media attention and broadcast. The money would be collected and distributed by the private non-profit corporation selected to run it, with the Police Department validating final rewards disbursements through regular presentations to the non-profit's board of directors. The Police Chief had significant success setting up a similar program in his prior city. The Department is currently looking for a willing non-profit entity to manage this program.

Conclusion

While the Police Department has been effective in reducing robberies this year, we believe that still more can be done to reassure the community about street crime. Toward this end, the Department has implemented several short-term initiatives and is considering longer-term solutions, one of which is a reorganization of the Department and the adding of a fourth "Entertainment District." The Entertainment District will require enhanced staffing and must be considered by Commission during the upcoming budget process.


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MIAMIBEACH POLICE



MEMORANDUM OPERATIONS DIVISION

TO: Chief Daniel Oates
FROM: Major Mark Causey
DATE: 07-01-16
SUBJECT: Operation Strike Back – Ocean Drive and Area 1 Initiative

On Wednesday, June 22, 2016, we initiated Operation Strike Back. This initiative is directed to target narcotic dealers, narcotics users, aggressive panhandlers along the west sidewalk, and any other quality of life crime along Ocean Drive.

Units assigned to this proactive detail include: Afternoon Shift Crime Suppression Squad, Midnight Shift Crime Suppression Squad, and the Ocean Drive Squad.

The hours of operation are: 1500 – 0700 hours.

Over the past nine days, these squads have made a total of forty arrests.

Criminal charges are as follows:

• Possession of Cocaine with Intent to Distribute:	03
• Possession of Marijuana with Intent to Distribute:	11
• Possession of Cocaine:	05
• Possession of Marijuana:	21

Some of the secondary criminal charges include:

- Possession of MDMA
- Carrying a Concealed Firearm by Convicted Felon
- Carrying a Concealed Firearm and a Stolen Firearm
- Possession of Ammunition by a Convicted Felon
- Carry a Concealed Weapon
- Resisting Arrest without Violence
- Purchase of Narcotics
- Resisting Arrest with Violence

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- Simple Battery
- Trespass After Warning
- Tampering with Physical Evidence
- Violation of Probation
- Drinking in Public

Due to the recent Car Jacking (Area One) and the Robbery (South of Fifth Street), the two Crime Suppression Squads will now expand their area of assignment from Government Cut to 23rd Street.

Shift Overlap Initiatives for the Midnight Shift, seven days a week:

For additional enhanced staffing and visibility, we are deploying as follows:

- Area One (South Beach) Officers will be assigned to the Entertainment District
- Area Two Officers (Mid Beach) will be assigned from Government Cut to 17th Street
- Area Three (North Beach) Officers will assigned from 17th. Street to 23rd Street

Lastly, we will start scheduling ALPR checkpoints at different locations and times throughout Area One.

Entertainment District Proposal

