

Greenbrae Community Meeting
Twin Cities Police Authority
2/2/2012 18:00-20:00

Present:

Twin Cities Police Authority:
Detective Michael Mejía
Detective Cheryl Paris
Sgt. Hamid Khalili

Marin County Sheriff's Office:
Lt. Steve de la O
Detective Ed Rudolph
Detective Mike Schemmel

General notes:

- The Twin Cities Police Website is tcpd-authority.org. Citizens can sign in with a login of their choice, or with Facebook.
- The meeting was split into about ½ city and ½ county attendees.
- Speakers (for future meetings) to use less specific verbiage. For example, not every citizen knows what a “generalist” is.
- Examples of city and county (blue vs. green) street signs would be helpful.
- Crimereports.com requires flash player, and is not available on mobile devices.

Community Questions (in order.)

1. **Generally, the part of Greenbrae that's in Larkspur is TCPD? Yes. Unincorporated is County? Yes.** Citizen's group would like to know what street are under what jurisdiction, and why if possible.
2. **How immediate is the notification system we have in place?** Right now, TCPD is using Nixle, and the immediacy is situation-dependant, meaning that it is based on personnel availability to send out a message. Citizens would not have been allowed back into their homes after the Via le Cumbre incident if the area was not deemed secure. Public safety is the primary concern. TENS system is also a tool that is available for activation. TENS is a nonjurisdictional system that calls landlines automatically with emergency information once activated. Cell phones are not included, but you can register a cell phone for the system through The Office of Emergency Services. In an emergency, cell phone calls may be routed by the nearest cell phone tower to the local police agency, but they may also be routed to CHP dispatch, which may mean a delay in response. It's recommended that citizens program the seven digit emergency line for their local police departments into their cell phones to call in the case of an emergency. For the Marin County Sheriff's office it is 415-479-2311. For Twin Cities Police, it is

415-927-5150. It was also noted that when a cell phone is used to call a police agency in an emergency, your information is NOT shown on the screen to the dispatchers, as it is with a landline. When a landline is used, at the very least, the address that is linked to the phone shows automatically on a 911 call. Also, landlines work without electricity, if they are hardwired (not cordless) which may also be important.

3. ***What can homeowners do to make police officer's jobs easier?*** Prevent crimes of opportunity. Stolen items are often easily accessible – “it’s as easy as shopping,” is what some criminals have told us. Please do connect with the police department on a regular basis. Evaluate your home for safety. Trim bushes, ensure there is lighting at night (especially motion activated lights), and be sure not to leave homes, cars, and storage unlocked. This is attractive to criminals. Ask for neighborhood checks if you suspect suspicious personas or activity, and vacation checks can be requested when a homeowner is away.
4. ***What do you do if an armed intruder is in your house? Should you remain passive? Should you be armed?*** The primary goal is to avoid letting this type of person into your home. You have the legal right to protect yourself if you fear for your life. You have the right to protect your property WITHIN REASON. If you decide to own a weapon, you may be overpowered by the intruder and harmed with it. It’s important to remember that bullets do not always go where they are intended to; they may pass through walls and harm unintended targets. This is a personal decision, and each person is legally responsible for any weapons they own. If a homeowner does decide to own a weapon, it’s recommended that s/he train with it regularly, to be aware of children’s access to it (TCPD offers free gun locks), etc. Criminals are usually not violent, and are primarily there for the property. If at all possible, get out of the house and away from them.
5. ***What should people do when a stranger or solicitor knocks on the door? Should the door be answered? Say something to them, or not?*** Solicitors are required in both City and County to have permits. Use peephole in the door (if possible) to see who is there before opening it. Say something (through the door) like, “We are busy now,” or “we don’t accept solicitation,” so that the person knows someone is home. Sometimes criminals use the guise of solicitation to see if people are home. Call law enforcement to check the area if people are knocking on doors. Draw the drapes and shades in the house so the window are covered. Display alarm signs if applicable.
6. ***If a homeowner has an alarm, is it better to use the panic button, or call directly to law enforcement?*** A direct call is best, because it goes right to the people you need to respond, but the panic button is fine if that is needed.
7. ***What are the current crime trends in our area? It seems that crime is rising during the day, what are the police doing to address this?*** This question was from a County resident. She is fearful about coming and going from her home during the day, for fear she will interrupt an intruder. Per the Sheriff personnel who answered, they are by nature reactive. They can only respond largely when they are directed to. Take pictures of suspicious persons if it’s safe to do so. Criminals often do surveillance now before choosing a home. Door knocks before

attempting entry are common as well. Both TCP and MCSO read current statistics to the group.

8. ***How many people have been harmed in burglaries?*** There are no specific numbers. Most are nonviolent. Burglaries are higher in residences during the day, and during the night hours they are higher in cars, storage areas, and construction sites.
9. ***It seems like some instances of vandalism are increasing. What about this? Is this a serious marker for more criminal activity?*** Vandalism tends to occur more when kids are present – during the summer, vacation times, etc. (see also next question and response).
10. ***There were incidents of Halloween vandalism, but residents didn't report it. Should this have been called in? Should "nuisance calls" be reported?*** Yes!!! Citizens are law enforcements "eyes and ears." Don't be shy, we will come out, no matter what the call. We want the community to use all resources.
11. ***Is there anything being done about chronic speeding?*** (Greenbrae Assoc. President answered first): Let him (the President) know, and he will notify Chief Cusimano, who generally sends a patrol car the next day when he asks; he is very proactive. Some residents also mentioned speed bumps, which the president says is a complicated issue. Another resident mentioned at this point that the patrol officers are too obvious when they post to look for speeders. Sgt. Khalili answered here, and mentioned that budgetary constraints limit officer availability for directed enforcement. Patrol must first answer calls for service and protect public safety. As of the meeting date, TCPD no longer has a traffic unit, due to decreased resources. However, the upcoming shared services (beginning this next Monday) initiative with San Anselmo Police will allow for a traffic unit again, as enhanced services are a benefit of the cost savings with shared services. If there is a specific complaint about a car, and a license number is taken, someone can contact the registered owner with the complaint. There will be no ticket issued, but it's a reprimand of sorts. There are also traffic boxes in town that collect data that can assist with looking for trends.
12. ***A council member asks about Via le Cumbre, which seems to be a street that especially hard hit. Is this because it is a back door to San Rafael?*** Criminals like Via le Cumbre as they like any street that is off of the main thoroughfares. It's less likely that their activities will be noticed. Statistics were read for Via le Cumbre for 459 P.C. activity: 2008 10-11 2010 12-14 Sgt. Khalili says that the police department is working with the city about a possible street closure at the end of Via le Cumbre.
13. ***Why are there so many burglaries in Greenbrae?*** It is a street with easy access to Sir Francis Drake Blvd, and thus to the bridges. It's easy for outside people to blend in and be mostly unnoticed.
14. ***Solicitors do have to have permits? Yes. Displayed? Yes. Why isn't it trespassing?*** The First Amendment allows for free speech, which is what allows solicitors to talk with people. However, if there is restricted access (like a gate) and/or a sign that prohibits solicitation at your residence, then it becomes trespassing. Solicitation with a permit is conducting legal business.

15. *If you see someone taking mail out of mailboxes, should you call the police?*
Yes!!!
16. *Other than homeowners doing additional security enhancements, can the police do more? What about an unmanned police car parked in different locations as a deterrent?* Do not leave valuables in plain view. Criminals are sophisticated; do not assume that they will not get into a vehicle or an area. An unmanned car was left at the new TCPA Department when it was under construction. Within a very short time of being checked, all the windows were smashed in the car. Marked police patrols are only one way we do our job. We also have unmarked cars (like the ones our detective and Administration drive) moving through town as well for additional coverage.
17. *What are neighborhood watch programs? What are they? How do they work?* The programs are usually not effective – people fizzle out. Community groups like this one at the meeting ARE effective, as they allow community members to meet each other and share information amongst themselves and the police. Crime prevention officers are an example of a law enforcement tool that has been largely eliminated from budget cuts. Accurate reporting allows trends to be tracked, and for the community to recognize patterns.
18. *If there were cameras at key town entrances and portals, would the information be useful and how would it be used?* Sgt. Khalili says that license plate readers are in the process of being implemented. Cameras are very expensive, no matter what the type, but yes, the information would be very helpful and it would be used if we had it available.
19. *Knowing that departments are financially strapped, what is the allocation of officers for the MCSO?* Kentfield has one officer for that area, and there is the ability to use mutual aid if needed from surrounding agencies.
20. *How do we make sure that ideas are followed through on?* Council member attending says that they are working with the police department, City Manager, and the Council overall about closing Via le Cumbre. Sgt. Khalili referred to traffic studies such as speed surveys as a follow through tool for speeding concerns. Speed surveys look at traffic in a specific location for a period of time to determine what speed the 85th percentile of drivers drive at, and use the information for accurate signage, and to address community concerns. For example, on Via le Cumbre, 85% drive at 32 mph, with the posted signage at 25 mph. Per state guidelines, the area should be resigned to 30 mph, but in accordance with community concerns, the speed limit signs of 25 mph have been left in place. Traffic enforcement is a balance of safety and community needs.
21. *Coyote issues; how dangerous are they?* Be mindful of garbage, and keep small animals secure. They are indigenous to our area. Calls about them go to the Humane Society, but the police will also respond to dangerous animal calls.

Meeting closed approximately 2000. Sgt. Khalili led interested citizens on building tours.

Transcribed 3/20/12: C. Heidi Hansen Mejía from written notes.



Twin Cities Police



Neighborhood Reminder

Recently there has been a rise in mail theft throughout Marin County. Often times mail is stolen to obtain the information needed to falsify checks or apply for credit cards in a person's name. The Police Department would like to remind residents of the following:

- Do not mail checks or any items with personal identifying information from your personal mail box
- Remove mail from mailbox after delivery as soon as possible
- Do not leave outgoing mail in mailbox with flag raised
- Take outgoing mail directly to Post Office
- If you go on vacation, submit a vacation mail hold at your Post Office of delivery
- Install locking mailbox to prevent/deter mail thieves
- Report any suspicious individual(s) accessing your mailbox - USPS employees are the only people, other than yourself, that should access your mailbox

Please call the Twin Cities Police Department at 415-927-5150 to report any suspicious activity.