

## Public Safety Meeting and Survey Recap

1 message

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Thu, Apr 13, 2017 at 6:14 PM



# Special Report Public Safety Meetings Results

Dear Neighbor,

It is highly distressing to learn about [the recent shooting](#) just outside our Ward where two 12 year olds were mistakenly shot in what may have been a failed drug deal. Incidents like this anger all of us and fuel questions about the safety of our neighborhoods here in the 43rd Ward.

Here is a re-cap of the Survey and March Safety Meetings where we sought perspective and answers to some of your concerns. We still await requested specific data from the Chicago Police Department.

While survey feedback shows there is a perception that overall crime is on the rise, the data shared at our community meetings suggests a mixed bag- violent crime is not surging in our Ward but property crime has increased.

Thanks to the hundreds of people who attended one of our three Safety Meetings and the over 1,600 residents who took part in our online survey. Over 85% of all survey respondents are homeowners. More than half identify themselves as longtime residents who have lived in the 43rd Ward over 20 years. About 1/3 have children living at home while 60% are married and 1/3 indicated they are single.

### Attitudes & Behavior

The vast majority of our respondents, almost 70%, indicated they generally feel safe in the community. Most said they follow crime and, as a result, have altered their daily routines somewhat. Less than 6% say they do not feel safe in their neighborhood. The following information is intended to help us all "harden the target" against criminal activity and assist police in better protecting our Ward.

## Calling 911

Over 48% of all respondents have called 911. Of those who called, 66% had a satisfactory experience. We are awaiting the requested statistics on police response times from the Police Department and OEMC (Office of Emergency Management and Communications.)

OEMC representatives offered these tips :

- **Call 911 if you see anything suspicious** or believe a crime may have occurred - your call may be the only way police learn of an incident
- Give your **location**, say if a crime is progress, happened recently and if you saw a weapon
- **Describe the suspect** from the top down - features, general characteristics and specifics like shoes or a tattoo
- Tell the operator if you have photos. **Photos can be uploaded.**
- Police can be dispatched during your call, so **continue to answer operator questions**
- **You can remain anonymous if you like**
- If your experience is not satisfactory **ask for a supervisor** or hang up and call back

## Getting Involved

One-third of those taking the survey say they might consider getting involved in a block safety effort. Our office will be reaching out to those respondents.

A States Attorney panel member explained that successful prosecutions require help from victims and witnesses. Always swear out a complaint to help authorities pursue your case.



Our Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson supports pending legislation in Springfield to **keep repeat gun offenders off the street**. I urge you to support the **Safe Neighborhoods Reform Act** by reaching out to your State Senator and State Representative. To find out who represents you, [visit here](#).

## **Questions for the Commanders**

Our survey participants listed a variety of questions they would like to ask the Commander. Most responses fell into three categories:

- Concern over lack of police presence and whether resources are diverted from the Ward along with a call for increased foot patrols
- Perception that violent crime is rising, especially during the daytime
- Desire to learn what residents can do to help reduce crime

We asked these questions during our meetings. The following is a synopsis of safety meeting remarks from Commanders Buslick (19th District) and Bauer (18th District) and panel members representing the 911 Center, Cook County States Attorney and Detectives assigned to the 43rd Ward.

### **Police Presence**

Both Commanders stated that resources are not being diverted from our Ward. In fact, because both the 18th and 19th District have many large public events (Michigan Avenue, North Avenue Beach and Wrigley Field, etc...), additional police resources are often brought into these districts, leaving local officers on the beat. Tactical teams are never pulled or detailed out of the Ward.

Foot patrols, while reassuring to residents, are a tool, not a solution, according to Commander Bauer. Squad cars and undercover officers are more omnipresent, less predictable and more effective in fighting crime. Bike patrols have been stepped up at the lake and more officers will be seen in Oz Park, the beach and other areas, such as around Lincoln Park High School, as the weather warms up.

The Commanders said traffic stops are up and are effective as criminals hate having license or insurance checks run.

While police do respond in person to property theft from homes, they do not come out for incidents involving theft from a garage. Please call 911 to file a report, as this helps police understand potential patterns of crime. Police response times to 911 calls from our ward have been requested.

### **Is Violent Crime Increasing?**

The Commanders feel social media plays a large role in contributing to the public perception that crime is increasing, but also helps alert neighbors to suspicious activity and informs residents, especially about crimes beyond the immediate neighborhood. Local block email chains and community group newsletters that span ward boundaries are tremendous resources to help keep us engaged and aware.

In general, property crime is up in the 18th District, which covers the North Side from North Michigan Avenue to Fullerton. In our beats, while property crime

is up, a recent arrest of an offender for a rash of thefts at a fitness club on North Avenue may ameliorate the situation. Burglaries in the two beats that are part of the 19th Police District (north of Fullerton) are down.

The Police Department maintains that daytime crime is not surging and the Ward remains one of the safest in the city. Arrests, they say, have increased or are on par with one year ago. While there were 34 total robberies in February and March in the 18th District, there was only one in each of the four Lincoln Park beats. The vast majority of robberies occur between 10 PM and 6 AM. About half of all robberies involved a threatened use of a firearm.

One sixth of all liquor licenses in Chicago are located in the 18th District. This concentration results in more citations issued against bars for underage drinking than in any part of the city.

Concerning sexual crimes against women, the commanders state that most attackers are known by their victim. Rarely is a stranger predator seeking out a victim within the Ward, as happened [last month](#). That case is still under investigation.

### **What we can do to protect ourselves - "Hardening the Target"**

Panel participants stressed that we can do a lot to prevent crime. The vast majority of the crime in our Ward is a result of an opportunity presented to a criminal, usually an open back door or garage. The panel made the following recommendations, also reported by [DNAinfo](#):

To help prevent burglaries:

- **Criminals hate nosy neighbors - listen to your instincts, stay alert and **call 911 about suspicious or unusual behavior. A call to 911 will bring squad cars to the area.****

Your car:

- Remove keys, packages and valuables from plain view in your car
- **Never leave the engine running** and then get out of the car

Your house:

- **Lock your doors, windows and garages** - upgrade locks and your door frame if necessary
- Replace burned out bulbs on your home exterior lighting - and leave the porch and garage light on to help your neighbors
- Call 311 or our office when streetlights are out
- Make sure surveillance equipment is recording and you know how to retrieve pictures
- Update cameras purchased over 5 years ago
- Take photos and keep serial numbers of major items
- Move your trash cans into your garage - cans could be used to jump over your fence

To keep yourself safe:

- Verify the identity of Uber and Lyft drivers before getting in a vehicle
- Walk the other direction or go to a more public area if you feel uncomfortable while walking at night. At night, walk in the middle of the street right under the lights.

Finally, to get the most current detailed information about your area, attend Community Policing Meetings (CAPS) beat meetings. You can find the scheduled dates [here](#).

My office will continue to advocate for appropriate police resources, partner with the police and assist community efforts to increase our safety together.

## Easter Office Closing

Our office will be closing **tomorrow at 2:00 PM** for the Good Friday holiday. The office will re-open at 9:00 AM on Monday, April 16th.

If you have a need for city services, please call 311 for non-emergency requests, or dial 9-1-1 if you require immediate assistance.

Thank you for all that you do for our community and City,



Michele Smith  
Alderman, 43rd Ward

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