

MEMORANDUM

Milpitas Police Department



DATE: February 1, 2022

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

THROUGH: Steve McHarris, City Manager *Steve McHarris*

FROM: Jared Hernandez, Chief of Police

SUBJECT: 2021 Uniform Crime Report Data

The purpose of this Information Memorandum is to provide the City Council with the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data from 2021 for the City of Milpitas, which shows an increase in several types of crimes within our City.

Background

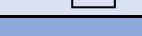
As reported in the news, in 2021 there were increases in homicide rates, aggravated assaults, and gun-related violence throughout the nation and this trend is expected to continue into 2022. Additionally, there have been reports of sizable increases in auto theft across the country. At the same time, some law enforcement agencies reported declines in the types of offenses that tend to increase with higher volume of social interactions, such as robbery and larceny. However, communities began to see these crimes return as cities resumed pre-pandemic activities.

The increase in crime nationwide and in our region was primarily related to the COVID-19 pandemic which led to social dislocations, financial and health stresses, and alterations in society's daily routines. Particular to California, early in the pandemic the State adopted a **zero-dollar emergency bail schedule** and Santa Clara County almost immediately implemented the bail schedule to reduce the jail population and minimize the COVID-19 spread within the jails. Any person booked into jail that did not meet the criteria of a violent felony was immediately released back into the community. The zero-dollar emergency bail schedule resulted in a lack of accountability and a revolving door for the re-offending population.

Additionally, the City of Milpitas has grown substantially over the past decade. As noted by *Silicon Valley One World* in a 2020 publication, Milpitas was 15th in a U.S. Census Bureau ranking of the fastest-growing incorporated places in the country. The City has rapidly increased its population with the development of new high-density residential housing units. The residents of these residential units are often affluent and have become a target for criminal activity. Our rapid growth and the addition of the new Milpitas Transit Center that connects Milpitas to other regions of the Bay Area has undoubtedly contributed to an increase in crime. It should be expected that continued growth will continue to be a contributing factor to increase in crime in the future.

UCR Crime Report Data

For several years, the City experienced a gradual reduction in overall crime and in most Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) crime types tracked consistent with federal requirements. The UCR program is a Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) effort to compile national crime data from over 18,000 law enforcement agencies. The UCR data is reported on a monthly basis. The UCR Part 1 crime categories include murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assaults, burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. As shown in the following table, the City experienced increases in several measured crime categories from 2020 to 2021. It is important to note that our rise in crime is consistent with surrounding cities.

UCR Crime Type	2020	2021	Change from 2020 to 2021
Homicide ¹	2	1	
Rape ²	16	16	
Robbery ³	40	57	
Aggravated Assault ⁴	53	81	
Residential Burglary ⁵	95	117	
Commercial Burglary ⁶	182	208	
Theft ⁷	1,516	1,628	
Theft of Motor Vehicle	310	310	
Total	2,214	2,418	

When analyzing crime data, it is important to consider all the various factors that lead to crime activity and crime reporting in a community. Factors to consider include population size and density, economic conditions, employment rates, prosecutorial, judicial, and correctional policies, administrative and investigative emphases of law enforcement, citizens' attitudes toward crime and policing, and the effective strength of the police force. When drawing conclusions about how these factors influence crime, it must be considered from a local and regional perspective. The fact that most crimes committed in Milpitas are perpetrated by non-Milpitas residents illustrates the importance of viewing crime factors from a regional perspective. Because crime is influenced by so many factors, the FBI discourages the use of UCR data as a way of measuring law enforcement effectiveness.

Conclusion

Despite the rise in crime, our officers remain vigilant and proactive while patrolling. Equally, our detectives remain tenacious when identifying suspects and clearing cases. As we continue to address the crime issues in Milpitas, we will continue to use a holistic approach focused on crime prevention, deterrence, and enforcement. Through public education we will give residents the information necessary to protect themselves. Being aware of, and responsive to, evolving crime trends while deploying officers in a data driven manner will allow us to deter crime and take enforcement action more effectively. The use of technology, such as Automatic License Plate Readers (ALPRs) and Unmanned Aircraft Systems, has already paid dividends with identifying and apprehending criminals. In many cases, our ALPRs have allowed us to arrest suspects before they were able to commit additional crimes.

With the continued support from the City Council, the Police Department will be able to continue being innovative and progressive in keeping Milpitas a safe place to live and desirable City to visit.

¹ The homicide in 2021 was a domestic violence related homicide where the suspect and victim knew each other

² In all reported rapes, the suspect knew the victim. We did not have an incident of rape where the victim was attacked by a stranger.

³ Our robbery spike was attributed to an increase of Estes Robberies, a robbery series committed by the same suspect, and a series of chain snatch jewelry scam robberies. An Estes Robbery is a theft that began as a shoplift but the suspect was confronted and used force to complete the crime.

⁴ Assault is reported per victim and not per incident. (Ex: A suspect that punches three victims during a fight is reported as 3 assaults)

⁵ Immediately following the pandemic there was a decrease of residential burglary. As people returned to work, we saw a short spike in residential burglaries. Additionally, several burglaries are the result of thefts from open garages.

⁶ Immediately following the pandemic there was a drastic decrease in auto burglary and auto theft while there was an increase in commercial burglaries.

⁷ Reported thefts include vehicle burglary. Vehicle burglaries remained lower than pre-pandemic levels however package theft and catalytic converter theft has contributed to the climbing theft numbers.