



MIDTOWN PONCE SECURITY ALLIANCE

MIDTOWN PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT 10 / 2006

MIDTOWN PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT – OCTOBER 2006 Draft

IN ATTENDANCE. - 25 in total attended this meeting on 10/09/2006, including:

- Moderator Peggy Denby
- Officer S. Hale of Atlanta Police Department and MPSA Patrol
- MPSA Patrol Coordinators Sgt. Cooper and Sgt. Miller
- Visitors from Central Park area and Virginia Highlands

CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING RECENT VICTIMS

- The meeting was opened by reading correspondence about recent attacks:
- An E-mail about a woman attacked while stopped at a traffic light
- Another victim of a daytime home invasion on St. Charles Avenue.
- The victim of our court watch case Damon Foson, who was attacked near a MARTA station in Midtown.

We cannot emphasize enough that one should always keep doors and windows secure even when home during the day.

REPORT AND DISCUSSION WITH ATLANTA POLICE

According to Officer Hale, Atlanta Police will begin another crack-down on disorder near Peachtree Pine and other shelters. In order to prevent loitering, urban camping and other nuisance activity from becoming too rampant in other areas like Midtown, Zone 5 has set up a special operation. Midtown has been divided into a grid containing 6 squares to be staffed by 10 officers. They will focus heavily on Ponce de Leon, with emphasis on its intersections with Charles Allen Drive and Boulevard. We are anticipating a reduction in quality-of-life crimes.

Residents complained of vagrants camping at Skate Escape (Piedmont & 12th) – supposedly the owner used to not run them off but now they have become a problem and therefore harder to get rid of. Also reported was the site of a neighborhood clean-up effort in the 700 block of Piedmont (between 3rd and 4th Street). We will investigate and direct appropriate parties to take action.

VOLUNTEER STREET WATCH

The MPSA is now developing a volunteer street watch patrol during the day. Empirical knowledge will enable us to finalize policies and procedures. Personal safety and liability concerns will be incorporated into the program. Initially, the MPSA will seek volunteers only among the MPSA and MNA Boards. This will supplement the existing MPSA Patrol. Later on the program will be expanded to include other carefully selected volunteers.

MPSA PATROL REPORT

Traffic Detail

Sgt. Cooper gave a report on MPSA Patrol and especially the daytime traffic details. He conducts these special MPSA projects mostly on Monroe Drive and Juniper Street on a police motorcycle (with blue lights enabling a traffic stop). Residents made us aware of speeding in places like 7th Street, Durant Place, Glendale Terrace – Sgt. Cooper will check the list of streets certified for use of radar gun and plan traffic stings accordingly.

Prostitution

Sgt. Miller stressed that the transvestitutes on our streets are dangerous and one should exercise caution around them. Most of them are doing so to support a drugs habit, making them irrational and potentially violent. They also carry blades and pepper spray, and are quick to attack residents when challenged or observed (especially when taking pictures or observing with binoculars).

Vacation check

Sgt. Miller also reminded residents who are members of the MPSA to take advantage of the vacation checks by MPSA Patrol. In the future these vacation checks will be supplemented by volunteers driving the MPSA Patrol vehicle.

Calling 911

Please call 911 when you see suspicious persons and activity. See our recent infosheet Responding to suspicious and criminal activity available for download at our website.
Home security check

MPSA Patrol will conduct a basic security check of your home – simply E-mail us and we will arrange this. We also urge participation in operation ID by the Atlanta Police Department.

COURT WATCH LIST

- **Jermaine Moss** - thief with striped car - was released from jail on 9/16- was allowed to sign his own bond. His next hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, October 17, 2006 before Judge Woodson at 9:30 am. Sharla Jackson will advise us of which court room.
- **Cecil Washington** confirmed still in jail. He is charged with a home invasion at the Dakota. A court hearing was scheduled on October 12th. The victims attended the meeting and spoke of their experience.
- **Ricky Love** confirmed still in jail - charged with a brutal beating of a woman in Midtown. At last court hearing, which was attended by area residents, the judge revoked all bonds, ordered a full psychiatric evaluation, and promised that no further action will take place until the community has adequate opportunity to voice input.
- **Damon Foson** is still undergoing psychiatric evaluation in Milledgeville to determine extent of criminal insanity, if any. He is also charge with a savage beating of a woman in Midtown (separate incident)

Our goal is to have dangerous and undesirable people such as these removed from our streets by whatever means, including prison sentences, and to have them otherwise banished from Midtown.

CITY COUNCIL

City Councilwoman Mary Norwood was in attendance at this month's public safety meeting. She announced several things:

- A survey at her website, www.marynorwood.com, relating to public safety and code enforcement in our city. She needs residents to take that survey.
- That City Council had passed an ordinance enabling judges to banish offenders from certain parts of town where their criminal activity occurred.
- We need to continue writing to city council and especially the Mayor to make expansion of public safety a core issue in our city.

NEIGHBORHOOD PATROL NEAR CENTRAL PARK

Representatives from Central Atlanta Neighbors attended the meeting. As they share many of the same issues, they want to make another run at a neighborhood patrol. We will gladly give them guidance.

SPECIAL TOPIC: PERSONAL SAFETY IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT BY RUDY FOX

Mary Grace Albuna, of the MNA Board, introduced her co-worker and this month's guest speaker Rudy Fox. He conducted a brief seminar entitled personal safety in an urban environment. The topic was selected by MPSA and Mr. Fox was invited by Mary Grace because of recent attacks on females in Midtown.

Rudy Fox is the Safety Manager of Northside Hospital with over 27 years of security experience. He also teaches self defense tactics to law enforcement officers.

Mr. Fox gave a very interesting presentation on the basics of personal protection – the highlights are outlined below. If there is enough interest he will return to present a three-hour self-defense course.

Highlights of the presentation

Body Language

- How do you walk - with a sign of insecurity or an air of confidence? Criminals are attracted to weak targets.
- When you speak to someone do you look them in the eye or down at the floor?

- You could be sending out messages about yourself without even knowing. It has been found that a personality can be changed by changing your body language. A person can develop more confidence after learning appropriate body language.

Profile of a "Victim Mentality"

- *Easily distracted* - Individual has low awareness level, tendency to daydream in public
- *Lack of Self-Confidence* - individual with a poor self-image reflected in their walk and body language.
- *Easily intimidated* - will usually succumb to verbal threats
- *Overly trusting* - individual will accept any story at face value without checking its authenticity
- *Reckless* - individual is willing to take unnecessary risks.

Remove vulnerability to criminal by hardening the target

- Stay alert to your surroundings, trust your instincts, and if you feel uncomfortable in a place or situation leave immediately
- Look at the message you are sending through body language - you want to project strength and self-confidence
- Exercise and/or participate in a sport
- Take self-defense training

Pedestrian safety

- Walk or jog in pairs, groups or with your dog whenever you can.
- Carry a personal alarm in your hand.
- Be aware of your surroundings and don't use unfamiliar shortcuts to save time. Plan a safe route and stick to it.
- Whenever possible, stay on busy well-lighted streets. Walk on the sidewalk. Set boundaries and keep a safe distance from strangers on the street.
- Walk facing traffic so you can see approaching cars. If you are being followed, change direction and head for a populated area.
- Never accept rides from strangers or people you do not know well. When you jog or cycle, vary your route and use populated paths.
- When you go out shopping carry only what you need. Do not carry a large amount of money, ATM or credit cards, and checkbooks.
- Carry extra money and keys somewhere else on your person so you can get home and get in if you are robbed.

Car safety

- Open windows an inch or two.
- Do not store personal items in our car.
- Do not leave anything of value on the seats of your car.
- If someone approaches you with a weapon while you are in your car drive off immediately.
- If someone approaches you with a weapon as you are entering your car and wants your car, throw the keys at them and run, but do not get into the car with them.
- A moving car offers a greater degree of protection than one sitting still.
- Try to prevent being boxed in. At traffic lights and stop signs leave enough room between you and the car in front of you (1/2 car length).
- Always lock the doors, even when you are in the car or when you will be away for just a minute.
- Maintain the same level of alertness while driving as you would walking. Use your mirrors to help you.
- Avoid distractions - don't balance the checkbook, go over a to-do list, etc.
- Keep a "Get Help" sign handy in the car. Print in the largest letters possible on a standard sheet of paper, and have it laminated at Kinko's for around \$3.
- Do not allow anyone to give you a lift or come into your car during a roadside emergency. Have them go get help.
- Carry a cell phone for emergency response contact.
- Do not leave the whole bundle of keys with a parking lot attendant - leave only a spare car key. Copies can be made easily, and your home address can be extracted from registration papers.
- Have someone walk you to your car whenever possible.
- Walk with keys in hand so they may be used as a weapon.
- Never leave the car running.
- Never go home if you think you are being followed. Instead go to a police or fire station or any 24 hour public place. Do not get out - just blow your horn.

MPSA MAILBAG (not necessarily the viewpoint of the MPSA)

E-mail from victim of attack by Damon Foson

On July 16th, 2006 I was attacked in Midtown. I am currently recovering from my injuries with the help and support of many people. I wanted to let your organization know that your support has meant very much to me. It's difficult to describe in words my gratitude for the support. It has let me know that I am not alone. That in itself has made a world of difference in my recovery. I hope that your organization will continue to support my case throughout the court process. As you might know, this incident happened early on a Sunday morning as I was walking to the Marta station to attend a work-related tradeshow downtown that day. I began my day like any other day. As a matter of fact, I was carrying a bag of clothes to change into to attend a concert in the park with a few of my friends after work. My point is, this can happen to anyone. I have often thought about my mother who works at Pershing Park Plaza, which is only a block away from where this happened to me. I believe it is everyone's responsibility to not place blame on who's fault it is that crime occurs in our communities, but to support each other and ask how we can make our communities safer for everyone, even the strangers we see walking on the sidewalks everyday. Each one of us has a life we work hard for and a family that cares about us. It's important we not forget that. I hope you will pass this on to the members and supporters of your organization my gratitude from the bottom of my heart. Thank you many times over.

MPSA Response (excerpt): Thank you so much for writing this note. We are so touched by it. WE are extremely upset by what happened to you and we are working hard to prevent such a horrible thing from ever happening to anyone else in Midtown.

We hope you are doing well and will have a total recovery. Many people have asked about you. Please stay in touch. Also, we would like to have you talk to the Midtown residents attending the Safety Meeting if and when you feel up to it. We meet every month on the second Monday.

(9/19)E-mail about home invasion on St. Charles

Just thought I'd pass this along....my sister and brother in law, who have lived on St. Charles Ave. for 15 years, were burglarized WHILE HE WAS HOME!! My brother-in-law was working quietly upstairs and heard someone come in (presumed it was his wife & child). The intruder, a tallish black man wearing a white T-shirt, took all their change and their digital camera. He was coming upstairs to see what else he could score when my brother turned around saying "what's up?" thinking it was his wife. The guy bolted. He had apparently knocked out a screen to get in. Thank God he didn't have a weapon and the 2 year old wasn't there. It happened in the early afternoon. So BEWARE!

(10/14) I would like to pass along a suspicious persons report from 700 block of Monroe Drive. 911 was contacted and an Officer responded very quickly to investigate.

Saturday afternoon 10/14/06 - about 3:15 pm - I observed three suspicious persons out the window of my condo walking down the easement that runs along side our building. A white male proceeding a white female followed by a black male about 25 feet behind them. I watched to see if they were using the easement as a cut-through to St. Charles...but they did not. I proceeded to walk out the back of our building but did not see anyone. My husband had coincidentally just driven into the back and so I asked very loudly if he had noticed three people back there as he'd driven in. He replied that all three were hiding in the corner by the fence. I proceeded to call 911 and very loudly began describing the hiding group. As the call continued, they one-by-one began to come out of hiding and walk back up the easement towards Monroe. Two of them tried to get my attention as they walked by. The last I overheard question the other two as to whether they had known they were on private property. The three exited before the police arrived. Did not appear to be the usual prostitution action, but drug-related.

Subject descriptions:

- (1) White male - curly blondish hair somewhat long on top- pock-marked face - in a white t-shirt and jeans. Appeared to be leading the group.*
- (2) White female - blondish hair twisted up messily in back - "tired" facial appearance - about 5 feet tall - partially wearing a green windbreaker - carrying a broken white cane that she was dragging/banging on the ground.*
- (3) Black Male- tall, thin muscular build - dressed completely in black - had a long chain of some type around neck and chest, appeared to be gold- might have had something dangling at end - had on some type of black hat, but not a baseball cap.*

They exited the property in same manner entered...white male first, female...and then black male several paces behind. We believe they turned right on Monroe and headed up the direction of the park.

What is SO BRAZEN about their actions...it's broad daylight, there were plenty of resident and scooter shop cars in the lot, and there was scooter-riding training taking place in the easement. However, overgrown brush and trees along the fences bordering the easement in the back do provide ample hiding coverage...unfortunately.

I know you are dealing with more serious crimes elsewhere...but we are seeing increased daylight activity of what appears to be prostitution and drug-related activity taking place at the back of this easement. It would be great if there was room to add "drive-ins" by the MPSA vehicle to this easement. Five years ago...this easement used to be routinely policed by the APD...in fact, it was not unusual to come home and find marked and unmarked APD vehicles parked in the easement monitoring activity street-wise and other. Us dog-walking residents were often asked to help keep our eyes out for miscellaneous vehicles and suspicious persons being called in. For whatever reasons, we no longer routinely see the APD visit/drive-in-out of the easement. Further, due to construction or other...the suspicious persons no longer seem to be going down the easement next to the Church and 746 Monroe on the other side...rather all that traffic is now walking down our side.

MPSA Reply: Thank you very much for this thorough report. We ask the MPSA Patrol and APD to watch for this group. We would add that you did exactly the right thing. Your description is consistent with drug activity - they were likely looking for a quiet place to smoke crack. This goes on day and night along the Ponce corridor in dark places and otherwise unattended places. This is why we ask that residents also report litter accumulation. We need residents to help us monitor these things. The more they return to the same spot, the harder it is to get rid of them. We want the street people to know that we are watching, and keep the pressure on them.

(10/14) CC to MPSA on reply to Southern Voice article entitled Atlanta police, trans activists try to 'build bridges' Meetings focus on trans prostitution, alleged police harassment

Our neighborhood safety and security program is driven in part because we do not want prostitutes plying their trade here. We simply do not want prostitution in our neighborhood or anything else that adversely affects safety, quality of life, aesthetics and good public order. As I often tell people in the neighborhood, Midtown is still a revitalizing neighborhood. We need not only to replace the roof, fix up the yard, and buy new furniture, but also to clean up the neighborhood too. Prostitution is among the old baggage being swept away.

It is of no consequence whether the prostitutes are the "transvestitutes" or the "real" females (or hustlers for that matter). Prostitution is not a diversity issue but a crime and quality-of-life issue. We will continue working to get rid of such undesirable activity, and request that the Atlanta Police crack down as hard as they can on the prostitution in our neighborhood.

Also in the works is an expansion of our court watch program, where we will ask judges to come down hard on prostitutes when they are arrested for something in Midtown. As a neighborhood safety activist I also strongly oppose anything that perpetuates the problem, such as "harm reduction" and pacts (which is what "building bridges" might do). We are at war with prostitution, and are willing to do whatever it takes to get rid of it.

SUPPLEMENT: REPORTED CRIME INCIDENTS FOR MPSA SERVICE AREA (selected crimes)

ROBBERIES

- (9/10) 9TH ST near Myrtle / ROB-STREET-STRONGARM / #62530129
- (9/15) PONCE DE LEON AVE near PDL Hotel / ROB-STREET-KNIFE / #62582191
- (9/24) 5TH ST near Argonne / ROB-STREET-GUN / #62670255
- (9/24) 10TH @ PIEDMONT 10th & Piedmont / ROB-STREET-KNIFE / #62662259
- (9/27) MONROE DR near PDL / ROB-STREET-GUN / #62702165

Surrounding area highlights: A robbery at a residence occurred on Piedmont near 11th. There were also several street robberies on Boulevard and Parkway Drive involving guns. These elements frequent our area.

BURGLARIES

- (9/04) PENN AVE near 5th / BURGLARY-FORCED ENTRY-RESIDENC #62470266
- (9/18) 6th ST near Argonne / BURGLARY-FORCED ENTRY-RESIDENC #62611189
- (9/20) ST CHARLES near Monroe/ BURGLARY-FORCED ENTRY-RESIDENC #62631323
- (9/21) PIEDMONT AVE between 8th & 10th / BURGLARY-FORCED ENTRY-RESIDENC #62640331
- (9/30) CHARLES ALLEN DR near 6th/ BURGLARY-FORCED ENTRY-RESIDENC #62731193

AUTO THEFT

- (9/02) DURANT at 3rd/ AUTOTHEFT / #20060902
- (9/02) ARGONNE AVE near 3rd / THEFT OF OTHER VEHICLE / #62451862
- (9/03) CHARLES ALLEN DR near 4th / ATTEMPTED THEFT TRUCK/VAN/BUS / #62460346
- (9/15) 5TH ST near Argonne / THEFT OF TRUCK/VAN/BUS / #62580630
- (9/20) PONCE DE LEON AVE near Argonne / AUTOTHEFT / #62630956
- (9/20) PONCE DE LEON AVE near Argonne / AUTOTHEFT / #62631060
- (9/21) PIEDMONT AVE near 8th / AUTOTHEFT / #62632008
- (9/22) PONCE DE LEON AVE near Argonne / THEFT OF TRUCK/VAN/BUS /#62651013

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A Safer Midtown... You are truly a part of it! www.midtownponce.org

The Midtown Public Safety Meeting is held at 7pm on the second Monday of the month, at Mary Mac's Tearoom.

A very special thanks to our Corporate and Community Sponsors who provide a major enhancement to your patrol's effectiveness:

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