



Wilshire Area Captain's Newsletter



Captain Shannon K. Paulson, Commanding Officer

May 9, 2021

Wilshire Area Crime Update – As of 5/7

Robbery	Up 46.4% (45 more robberies compared to this time last year)
Aggravated Assault	Up 3.6% (up 7 compared to this time last year)
Burglary	Down 17.6% (down 55 burglaries compared to last year)
Grand Theft Auto	Up 71.9% (120 more cars stolen than this time last year)
Burglary/Theft From Motor Vehicle	Down 12.0% (62 less cars broken into)
Violent Part I Crime in Total	Up 19.5% (60 more violent crimes than this time last year)
Property Part I Crime in Total	Down 6.6% (102 fewer property crimes)
Total Part I Crime	Down 2.3% (42 fewer overall serious crimes)

National Peace Officers' Memorial Day is May 15, 2021

Since the first known line-of-duty death in 1786, more than 22,000 U.S. law enforcement officers have made the ultimate sacrifice. In 1962, President Kennedy proclaimed May 15 as National Peace Officers Memorial Day and the calendar week in which May 15 falls, as National Police Week. National Police Week pays special recognition to those law enforcement officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty for the safety and protection of others.

This year, the names of 295 officers killed in the line of duty in 2020 will be added to the Law Enforcement Memorial in Washington, D.C. An additional 96 officers have already sacrificed their lives between January 1 and May 9, 2021.



The Current Status of the Department

Two questions I am frequently asked in public forums and individual interactions are:

- Given the current political climate and budget issues (Covid and Defunding related), what is the status of the Department and what effect has it had on capabilities?
AND
- Again, given the resoundingly loud anti-police/defunding political movement, “what can I/we do” to assist or support the officers or the Department?

As of Monday, May 3, 2021, the Department stood at 9515 officers. That brings us down to the number of officers we had in 2005 – a loss of 15 years of progress where we had succeeded in at least flirting (at times) with the 10,000 officer goal. At the height of that achievement, we remained the most under-policed big City in the nation. In 2016 (when we were still flirting with that 10,000 officer number) LA numbered 24.6 officers for every 10,000 residents. For comparison: New York = 42.3; Chicago = 43.9; Philadelphia = 40.2; Boston = 31.5; Detroit = 35.1; Baltimore = 40.6; Milwaukee = 31.5; Atlanta = 35.8; Cleveland = 37.4, etc.

To put this in better context, that reduction in personnel (a problem growing exponentially each day) is a number equivalent to the complete closure of both Wilshire Division **and** West LA Division, while also reducing Hollywood Division by 100 officers.

Currently, 41 recruit officers remain in training at the Los Angeles Police Academy – this has been the only academy class in existence for several months. After they graduate in June, we will have nothing left in the pipeline. In an average year, the LAPD needs to begin a class a month (of that size or greater) just to cover average attrition. Once we start hiring again, even if we can pull the trigger on that immediately, it will still be 6 months of training before the first class will graduate from the Academy and begin their year of field training. Obviously – this means every month we dig ourselves into an increasingly bigger hole.

And let’s be brutally honest, current Department attrition is not “average.” The current climate is leading to personnel leaving at an astounding rate. Officers are retiring earlier, leaving for other departments or other professions, and our youngest officers are returning to prior professions or just plain quitting. Many are willing to leave carrying with them only the hope of finding something, simply anything, that will provide an honest income and rewarding experience, but won’t require them to stoically tolerate being referred to as a murderer by their own government leadership, and verbally abused by various members of the public they serve almost every time they get out of their car.

So, in answer to the question I get from the many supporters I know we do have: please, let your voice be heard. Many of our City leaders truly believe the loudest voices they hear are the only opinions out there. Log in to City Council meetings or Police Commission meetings (its easy to do these days – they are all on Zoom), and just listen to the public comment period. Literally – and I do mean literally – 95% of the comments heard are the voices demanding defunding of the police department. In the eyes of many of them, the valid concerns over justice and police reform have been unilaterally associated with abolishing and defunding law enforcement – as if that will solve all the problems. This is happening because little to no public voice is being heard to counter that argument. No one is speaking to moderation, much less support of law enforcement or law and order. So when politicians consider what stand or issues their voting block wishes them to pursue or support, what do you think their impression is?

If you have alternative thoughts or opinions on this issue, on how your streets, homes and businesses are policed or protected, please participate: write an email or log in to a meeting ... let your voice be heard.

Don't Be a Victim of an Opportunistic Robbery

Approximately two months ago, Wilshire Area suffered a rash of strong arm style robberies, committed by a band of juveniles who victimized people throughout the area surrounding Pan Pacific Park. Several of those individuals were eventually caught and the robberies ceased.

Then, just two weeks ago, over a period of two days, we had several more robberies, committed in the same general area, also committed by a band of four to six male juveniles. Over a period of Sunday and Monday, they approached a number of persons and grabbed property from them by force. The property was most frequently cellphones. In some instances the victims struggled with the suspects over the property and were knocked to the ground or punched and kicked. On the second day, after the fourth such robbery, Wilshire officers obtained enough information they were able to track the suspects to the point they entered an MTA bus. They broadcast an alert to surrounding divisions, and later the same day the suspects were further tracked by officers from our Transit Services Division, who with the assistance of USC Department of Public Safety, took two of the suspects into custody on the university campus after they committed at least two more similar crimes. Property linked to the Wilshire robberies was recovered, and multiple suspects were identified by their victims during the course of the follow up investigation.

Then, on Thursday of this past week, another similar robbery was committed within the confines of The Grove shopping center. The suspects, all juveniles, approached the victim who was seated with his phone and wallet on the table in front of him. They first asked to borrow the phone, claiming their battery was dead. When the victim declined, the suspects became verbally abusive, then grabbed at the victim's phone and wallet. There was a struggle, and the victim was ultimately able to retain his wallet, but the suspects made off with his phone.

The Grove security was on the ball and gave chase, with Wilshire officers responding to the call. The suspects were tracked across the street, where they attempted to ditch the phone in a trash can of a nearby drug store. One suspect was ultimately caught.

Officers and detectives subsequently followed up on a hunch, and the investigation ultimately identified several of the same individuals who had been taken into custody just the prior week as being part of this robbery. These juveniles had returned to the exact same area to engage in the exact same criminal conduct, following the exact same MO.

Our Wilshire officers are making every effort to prevent crime and apprehend criminals. This is admittedly becoming increasingly challenging given the current social, political and legal environment and the reduction in the police budget, personnel and resources. It is challenging given the remaining Covid related court procedures as well as judicial limitations and practices which lead to the ongoing release of repeat offenders. We need you to act in your own best interest and engage in practices and positive habits which help prevent you from being a victim.

Here's a few suggestions:

- Always be aware of your surroundings and be pro-actively defensive in your posture, position and actions (don't walk alone at night, don't walk with your head buried in your phone, etc)
- Do not openly display expensive or valuable possessions (use the phone, wallet, etc then immediately put it back in the pocket, purse, bag, etc) – don't leave the item sitting on the table or the bench next to you, even if "it's right next to me." You're inviting someone to snatch it or fight you for it.
- If someone asks to "borrow your phone" because they lost theirs or the battery died, perhaps offer to call someone for them – do not hand them your phone!