



## KENSINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

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**DATE:** September 30, 2023

**TO:** David Aranda: General Manager

**FROM:** M. Gancasz, Chief of Police

**RE:** Police Chief's Monthly Report, September 2023

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The Kensington Police Department handled 700 incidents during September (down from 817). Four hundred fifty-four were officer-initiated events, including 50 traffic enforcement stops resulting in 34 citations (down from 35 in the prior month). Officers responded to 238 dispatched calls for service (up from 276) and took 28 reports (up from 24). Officers focused on deterring auto burglaries and vandalism around Grizzly Peak Blvd and Beloit Ave, where there has been an increase in reported crimes. Two felony arrests were made. Officers received one report of a catalytic converter theft, one stolen vehicle report, one residential burglary, and one vehicle burglary report, all of which are being investigated. Officers are pursuing leads and working with our partner agencies to reduce and prevent similar crimes. Response time for officers has remained consistent at 5.8 minutes.

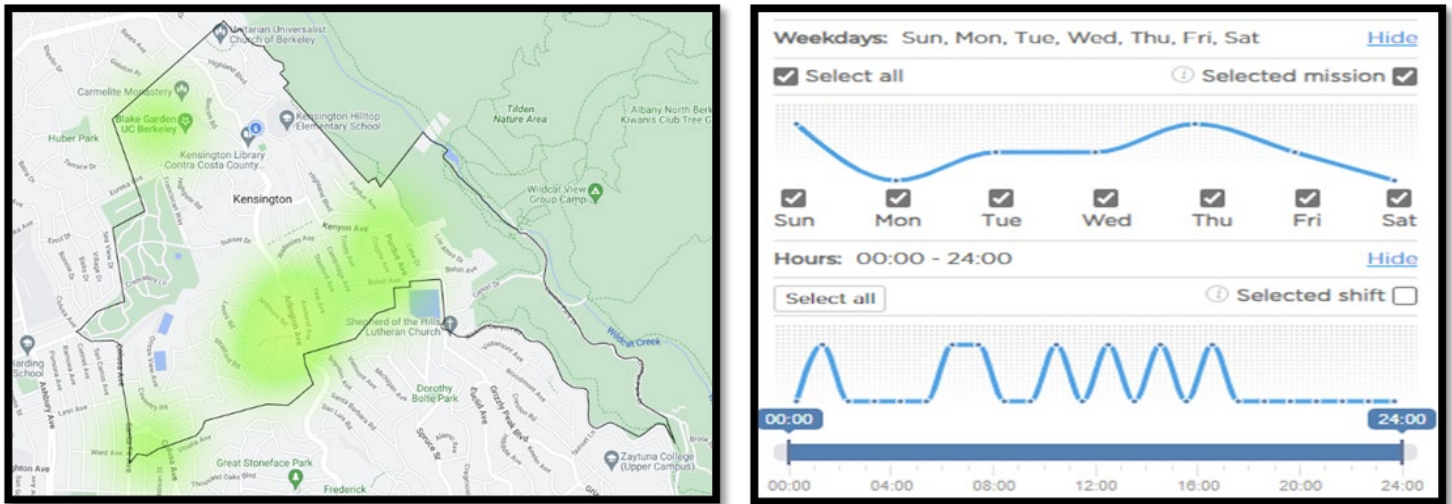
Kensington PD obtained crucial information from the City of El Cerrito's Flock Automated License Plate Reader cameras. A reported abduction was resolved when their cameras identified the suspect vehicle, providing investigative leads for KPD officers. The investigation ultimately determined a kidnapping did not happen. An attempted catalytic converter theft was interrupted by Officer Smith. During the intervention, the suspect vehicle fled; however, a pursuit was not initiated due to the risks associated with pursuing a car at high speeds. Officers later identified the vehicle using El Cerrito's Flock camera system again. The investigation is ongoing.

On Thursday, September 21, the Berkeley and Albany Police Departments responded to an active shooter at the Berkeley Toyota Dealership. Due to the seriousness and complexity of the scene, Albany requested Kensington Officers provide mutual police services in their city until additional Albany Police Officers could be called into work. Off-duty KPD officers responded to Albany to assist, and police services in Kensington were unaffected. Sgt. Lande supervised operations in both Kensington and Albany until KPD was relieved.

On Saturday, September 23, the Berkeley Police Department responded to a homicide and requested similar mutual aid support from the Albany Police Department. Kensington officers provided mutual aid support in Albany until more resources arrived to take over. Police services in Kensington were unaffected.

Mapping data revealed that highlighted areas are experiencing more criminal activity than other parts of the District. Our crime analysis software helps us direct patrols to areas at risk. Sunday and Thursday, in the afternoon, had the highest frequency of property crime.

**Figure 1. Property theft heat map for September 2023.**



## Traffic Safety

There were two traffic collisions reported in September. Community members provided two online supplemental traffic reports. Both issues were resolved. There are no speed analyses for September. We continue exploring new modern signs to enhance our ability to capture this type of information.

## Administration

Newly hired police officer Vijayram Thota began his field training on September 11. Recruiting and hiring continue to challenge the profession. We took possession of a new patrol car from Arizona. A recently awarded CHP grant funded the vehicle. We anticipate the car entering service in November/December 2023.

## Training

The majority of September training was focused on preserving and improving perishable skills. Sgt. Lande taught several Advanced Arrest and Control/De-Escalation courses during September. Officer Farley attended an 8-hour patrol rifle course. Officer Payne attended a 4-hour Drug Abuse Recognition course. Sgt. Lande completed a 4-hour update on Elder and Dependent Abuse, a Use of Force update, and an AB392 Use of Force Standards update. All patrol personnel attended a 4-hour Crypto Currency Crime Investigations class provided by a financial crime detective from the Pleasant Hill Police Department.

## September Patrol Log

- On Friday, September 1, at 1306 hours, officers responded to the zero hundred block of Highgate Road and took a report of a residential burglary with a loss of approximately \$725.00. The investigation is ongoing.
- On Friday, September 1, at 1553 hours, officers were dispatched to Arlington Avenue and Westminster Avenue for a possible child abduction. After a thorough investigation in Contra Costa and Solano Counties, it was determined a child abduction did not occur.
- On Friday, September 3, at 0820 hours, officers responded to the Sunset View Cemetery for a trespassing call. Officers located the suspect, who was arrested for an outstanding Felony warrant from Alameda County. The suspect was transported to Contra Costa County Jail.

- On Sunday, September 3, at 1630 hours, officers responded to an at-risk 81-year-old missing person. After a thorough investigation, the missing person was found unharmed in another city.
- On Monday, September 4, at 2050 hours, officers responded to a non-injury collision on Arlington Avenue at Oberlin Avenue.
- On Wednesday, September 6, at 0951 hours, officers responded to the 200 block of Yale Avenue and took a report of theft of funds.
- On Monday, September 11, at 2240 hours, officers responded to the one hundred block of St. Albans for a vehicle vandalism report.
- On Tuesday, September 12, at 0714 hours, officers responded to an auto burglary in the four hundred block of Beloit Avenue.
- On Sunday, September 17, at 1452 hours, officers responded to a stolen vehicle report in the one hundred block of Purdue Avenue.
- On Wednesday, September 20, at 1106 hours, officers responded to the Mechanics Bank, where staff reported a person was trying to cash fraudulent checks. Officers arrested a 58-year-old female suspect engaged in multiple crimes along with several outstanding warrants for similar crimes in other states. The suspect was booked into the County Jail in Martinez.
- On Thursday, September 28, at 1653 hours, officers took a report of an auto burglary in the one hundred block of Ardmore Avenue. The loss was approximately \$3,100.00. The investigation is ongoing.

### **West County Crime Suppression (WCCS) Patrols**

On September 29, The Kensington and El Cerrito Police Departments hosted the West County Crime Suppression (WCCS) operation. Sgt. Lande supervised a team of 17 officers from neighboring jurisdictions throughout the event. Officers Fajardo and Thota participated in the operation as well. Officers from Richmond, El Cerrito, Pinole, San Pablo, and the Contra Costa County Probation Department participated. Each West County agency combines resources to complete saturation patrols in every jurisdiction throughout the summer. The operation was productive for making our community safer. This event yielded 51 traffic stops, nine citations, and five arrests. This was the final joint operation for 2023. Our continued partnerships with allied agencies in West County provide KPD with the staffing for crime deterrence and interdiction that would otherwise be cost-prohibitive for KPD to deliver independently. This summer's operations were a resounding success, and we look forward to participating again next year.

### **California Highway Patrol DUI/DUID Grant**

On Sunday, September 3, the second of ten DUI enforcement saturation patrols occurred during Labor Day Weekend. Kensington Officers completed extra patrols and were on the lookout for impaired drivers. Vehicle enforcement stops were completed, and citations were issued for various infractions. The next saturation patrol is scheduled for Friday, October 20.

### **Community**

On Saturday, September 23, Sgt. Lande and Ofc. Thota represented the Kensington Police Department at the 2023 Tri-City Safety Day at the El Cerrito Plaza. KPD joined agencies from El Cerrito, Albany, the Fire Department, American Medical Response, Contra Costa Animal Control, Community Emergency Response Team, and many others to engage in dialogue with the community on a wide range of public safety issues, concerns, and plans to keep our community safe.



