

Chief's Corner

Public Safety Master Plan: Mapping Morgan Hill's Public Safety Needs for Today and Tomorrow



As you drive through Morgan Hill, you can see that our community is undergoing a lot of changes from new housing developments to the revitalization of our downtown. Although the number residential units is capped each year by the voter approved Residential Development Control System (RDCS), Morgan Hill continues to flourish as a family oriented community with a great quality of life. As communities grow and change, it's important to include plans and strategies that will ensure public safety needs are met. While Morgan Hill is well known as a safe city with a lower than average crime rate, our City Council recognizes that continually working to increase public safety is vital. For the past several years, the City Council has identified *Enhancing Public Safety* as the highest on-going priority for our city. This not only includes police and fire services but also safe streets, safe water and proper infrastructure. Morgan Hill residents also demonstrated support for public safety. In a 2015 Community Priorities Survey, public safety was identified as a top priority for Morgan Hill.

In order to be ready for future changes and development, in 2016 the City Council commissioned the preparation of a Public Safety Master Plan (PSMP). The intent of the PSMP is to address the adequacy of current police and fire staffing levels today and in the future. As noted, Morgan Hill enjoys a low crime rate and our fire department excels in remaining prepared to respond to fire-related or medical events. Therefore both Fire Chief Derek Witmer and I recognize the PSMP



requires a strategic approach to public safety that builds upon our existing successes and best meets the future needs of our community. The city entered into an agreement with a consultant to develop the PSMP with a focus on identifying both immediate and future staffing needs for police and fire. Our consultant made several site visits to Morgan Hill to meet with members of each Department and key city staff as well as gathered operational data. They conducted a thorough analysis that included delving into officer/fire fighter workload, data collection, on-site observation, and comparative analysis. Their analysis also examined some of the benefits/impacts of construction of a 3rd fire station in Morgan Hill.

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Morgan Hill Police Officer Honored for Work to End Domestic Violence

Morgan Hill Police Officer Mindy Zen is no stranger to working long hours and going above and beyond to do what she can to help a crime victim find justice. These days, you'll find Officer Zen behind the wheel of a patrol vehicle, but for the past four years, she worked as our Department's Detective dedicated to domestic violence and missing persons cases. She was recently honored and received not only one, but two prestigious awards. The first is a newly created award from the Santa Clara County Office of the District Attorney. This award was actually named in her honor as the ***Melinda "Mindy" Zen Award for Domestic Violence Victim Advocacy***. Officer Zen herself is the very first recipient of this award! The second is the ***2017 Helping Hand Award*** from local non-profit organization Community Solutions. Both awards are for her outstanding work as an MHPD Detective.



Officer Melinda "Mindy" Zen

Four years ago, Officer Zen began her work as our DV/Missing Persons Detective. The work she accomplished in that role gained her recognition throughout our county and the state. Officer Zen jumped right into her role and began her fight for domestic violence victims. Her compassion and willingness to serve gave the victims she worked with the hope and support needed to navigate the sometimes very daunting judicial process.

Over the years Officer Zen worked with hundreds of domestic violence victims. As is her way, she made each one feel as if she/he was the only victim on her caseload. As you know, many times victims of domestic violence must take brave and independent steps to separate themselves and their children from a dangerous situation. "It is important to me to lead with dignity and respect in hopes that those I serve come away whole again", said Zen. With that in mind, she made it a point to

do what she could to help find emergency housing, counseling, translation and other services to ensure victims had what they needed to change their lives. Mindy partnered with local non-profit organization Community Solutions where victims are paired with a Victim Advocate to help make their transition away from violence easier.

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Inaugural Award from DA Awarded to Officer Zen

Police Department Community Survey Results: We Asked, You Responded

At the beginning of the year, we conducted a survey that asked the community three questions: what you saw as the top public safety issues facing Morgan Hill; your expectations of the Police Department; and what areas you believe the police should focus on to enhance our community. The purpose of the survey was to ask for the community's input to help us shape our Strategic Plan for Public Safety (SP). In 2012, we launched our first Strategic Plan with 4 goals that were tied to measurable outcomes. To view the 2012 SP, [click here](#).

We drafted the SP as a "living" document intended to be revised and changed to meet the needs of our community. Now is the time to build upon the successes of the past three years while working to strengthen certain areas. This is where your input and comments are invaluable. We recognize a strong police/community partnership enhances our community as a whole. Only by working together can we make Morgan Hill an even greater community to live, work and play!

There were 549 respondents to the survey of whom 95% were Morgan Hill residents. Of the remaining respondents 2.5% worked in Morgan Hill the other 2.5% stated they visited Morgan Hill on a regular basis for shopping, entertainment or sports events.



Question 1 asked what public safety issues face Morgan Hill today. The top 5 responses included the following:

- 1) Home Burglaries
- 2) Overall Crime & Theft
- 3) Illegal Fireworks
- 4) Downtown
- 5) Traffic Safety

We found these results insightful on behalf of our community members because although overall crime has not risen in the past years, we have experienced an uptick in both auto and residential burglaries and thefts at the end of 2016 and during the beginning of this year. We find the use of illegal fireworks is seasonal and we work proactively to deter this behavior and will continue our efforts. Our traffic division and all patrol officers make traffic enforcement in downtown and throughout the city a priority. Getting impaired drivers off the road is also a priority that our officers take very seriously and will work to enforce on a daily basis.

Below is a graphic representing Question 1 by popularity of response

Q1 What issues do you feel Morgan Hill is facing today that pertain to public safety?

Answered: 548 Skipped: 1

Home Break-ins Main Street Cross Walks
Police Presence Growth Kids Morgan Hill Stealing
Drug Residents Increase Public Safety
Theft Red Lights Crime Casing Traffic
New Years Speeding Growing Community
Illegal Fireworks Monterey Rd
Home Burglaries Good Job Home Robbery
Reckless Drivers Parking Lots

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Police Patrol Vehicles - From Sedans to Sport Utility Vehicles

The traditional black and white sedan style patrol vehicle is quickly becoming a thing of the past. Today, more police departments (including Morgan Hill) are moving toward the "new" style of patrol vehicle which is a sport utility vehicle. The sport utility vehicle gives officers more room inside plus flexibility of use. For example, our Department recently purchased this type of vehicle for our K9 officer Basco and his handler Officer Santiago Fierro. Basco has more room in this vehicle and it's equipped with a cooling system designed to keep him comfortable and accommodate long time idles.

To date, we have purchased four sport utility vehicles and as our existing vehicles rotate out of our fleet, they'll be replaced with this type of vehicle. The sport utility vehicle is so popular with law enforcement agencies that we had to wait about 6 month for the delivery of



our first vehicle. The California Highway Patrol and other law enforcement agencies are also



moving toward the sport utility vehicle. If you've recently traveled along US 101 or I-5, you probably saw these types of vehicles patrolling the freeway. "We are excited about the changing look of our fleet" said Captain Shane Palsgrove who oversees our Field Patrol Division. "The sport utility vehicle gives our officers more flexibility in the field and looks good too" he added.

A few of the features that make this vehicle popular with police include:

- Enhanced electrical system that distributes electrical loads more efficiently.
- Special instrument panel.
- Tailgate release reachable from the front seat.
- Beefier cooling system to accommodate long idle times.
- Special brakes designed to withstand excessive use.

So, next time you see our K9 vehicle about town. You'll know that Basco is riding in comfort and style waiting for his next call for service.



Join Us at the Cops & Robbers Ball Saturday April 29th

Morgan Hill's Community Law Enforcement Foundation (CLEF) will hold the 2017 Cops and Robbers Ball on April 29th. We would like to extend a special invitation to you to join

us! The event will be held at the Community & Cultural Center from 5:30 to 11:00 pm. Tickets cost \$95 each.

This year's event will be the best one yet! CLEF will honor Frank Leal with the 2017 Public Safety Award in recognition of his contribution to our city's overall public safety.

Funds raised that night will go toward a new Force Operations Simulator for the Department. The simulator will be used for officer training in potentially dangerous "shoot/don't shoot" situations. To enhance our police/community partnerships, we plan to offer community members the opportunity to experience the same simulations used in officer training. "We believe when participants of our Citizens Police Academy or other community members experience the situations our officers might face, the result will be a greater understanding of what we do and the risks we take everyday" said Chief David Swing.

CLEF is a private non-profit volunteer led organization dedicated to supporting the Morgan Hill Police Department. All proceeds from the Cops & Robbers Ball go toward enhancing our Department's capabilities through technology and equipment. Through CLEF we've received a vehicle mounted night vision camera, a license plate reader to help identify stolen vehicles, funds to purchase our K-9 Officer and numerous donations of supplies and materials.

We look forward to seeing you at the Cops & Robbers Ball on Saturday April 29th. For more information, visit. www.morganhillclef.org

TICKETS ON SALE NOW

The Community Law Enforcement Foundation of Morgan Hill
Presents the 2017
COPS & ROBBERS BALL
Proceeds Benefit the Morgan Hill Police Department

Saturday, April 29, 2017
5:30pm-11pm
Morgan Hill Community
& Cultural Center
17000 Monterey Road, Morgan Hill
Black Tie Optional

Tickets are \$95 per person includes:
Reception with a hosted bar including local wines, Silent Auction,
Complimentary Photos with the MHPD '55 Olds
Catered Dinner and Dancing
Presentation of the
Public Safety Award
to
Frank Léal

Many thanks to our sponsors, past, present and future.

Contact Co-chairs for tickets and questions.
Doug Moffat 408-848-7218 Craig van Keulen 408-779-7991 Terry Moriyama 408-710-1832

Snapshot of 2016 Crime Stats

2016 was a busy year for law enforcement agencies throughout the state. Morgan Hill was no different. Morgan Hill enjoys a lower than average crime rate, and that means our officers are on our streets and in neighborhoods 24/7 to respond to calls for service and deter criminal activity. In 2016 we saw some crime types rise while some fell. We make it an ongoing priority to track crime types, patterns and trends throughout the year. Our officers use this information to make both tactical and strategic decisions on how best to deploy our resources to fight crime.

We track all crimes, but we report our Part 1 crimes to the FBI on a monthly basis. What are Part 1 crimes? Part 1 crimes are a group of crime types specifically selected by the FBI in order to measure the level and scope of crime occurring throughout the nation. The FBI chose these crime types because they are serious crimes, occur with regularity in all areas of the country, and are likely to be reported to police. Part 1 crimes are separated into two categories: Property Crimes & Violent Crimes. Property crimes are defined as offenses against property and violent crimes are defined as crimes against persons.



Corporal Joe Burdick responds to a call for service

In 2016 we experienced an uptick in violent crimes over 2015. Both Robberies and Aggravated Assaults increased in 2016. Robberies increased by 23% and Aggravated Assaults by 14%. Although we had an increase in these crime types, our officers worked throughout the year to make arrests and solve these crimes. Our arrest rate for Aggravated Assaults was 62% and for Robberies was 40%.

Property Crimes fell in 2016 as compared to 2015. Burglaries saw a slight increase of 9% and Theft of Motor Vehicles rose by 3%. Larcenies fell by 24% and we had no arson offenses in 2016. We attribute this overall drop in Property Crimes to our proactive policing efforts and effective partnership with the community. Working together we make Morgan Hill a safer community.

Click [here](#) to view 2016 Part 1 crimes.