

Coral Springs Police Department

The Forest Hills Boulevard Initiative:

An
Educational Initiative
To Reduce the Occurrences
Of Crimes Involving Vehicles



A project submitted by the Coral Springs Police Department
For consideration for the 2003 Herman Goldstein Award for
Excellence In Problem-Oriented Policing

Project Team:
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CITY OF **CORAL SPRINGS** FLORIDA

POLICE DEPARTMENT

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April 21, 2003

PERF
1120 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 930
Washington, DC 20036

Herman Goldstein Award Selection Committee,

Please consider the **Forest Hills Boulevard Initiative: An educational Initiative to Reduce the Occurrences of Crimes Involving Vehicles** project conducted by the City of Coral Springs Police Department as a candidate for the **2003 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem Orientated Policing**. Through an educational initiative that involved partnering with the community and local businesses, the Coral Springs Police Department has implemented a successful neighborhood initiative aimed at reducing crimes involving vehicles.

The methodology utilized for analyzing statistical data for the five-year period entailed has been affirmed. The results are accurate and support the assessment that this has been a positive initiative for the community involved.

Developing creative police initiatives while fostering community involvement is the philosophy of the Coral Springs Police Department. Neighborhoods USA, and the State of Florida Governor's Sterling Award have nationally recognized our efforts for Quality Committee. This educational initiative has both enhanced our community and validated the efforts in advancing problem orientated policing.

Sincerely,

Roy A. Arigo
Chief of Police

The Forest Hills Boulevard Initiative: An Educational Initiative to Reduce the Occurrences of Crimes Involving Vehicles.

Summary:

The Problem: In December of 2000 the Coral Springs Police Department conducted a citywide analysis of crime data for the year. Analysis revealed that a one square mile area of the city, the Forest Hills Boulevard neighborhood, was responsible for nearly 10% of Burglary Vehicles and Grand Theft Autos committed in the city for the year. Further analysis indicated that crime rates for these particular crimes had steadily increased during the study years of 1998 through 2000.

Citizen input, solicited through community meetings also indicated that the residents and business owners in the area were aware of the problem and concerned about the degeneration of their neighborhood and businesses. The department recognized that the traditional policing techniques employed in this area were not successful in combating these types of crimes and was failing to improve the quality of life for the community.

Analysis: The police department relied heavily on the use of the crime analyst employed by the city in order to attempt to find commonalties in each category of crime. The department also solicited information from officers working the area and the community that was affected.

Analysis of all input sources revealed that there were commonalties with each crime. The analysis revealed that the best way to combat these types of crime would be to reduce the *opportunity* for criminals to be able to commit their crimes. It was found that vehicles that were targeted for Burglary had many of the following traits:

- Highest incidence of occurrence in multi-family complexes

- Second highest location of incidence around businesses
- Unsecured vehicles
- Valuable items left in plain view in passenger compartment

Analysis of Grand Theft Autos indicated the following:

- Stolen vehicles in the City of Coral Springs fell in line with a county-wide study that named the "top ten stolen vehicles"
- Highest incidence of occurrence was at night in multi-family complexes.
- Second highest incidence was in business area along University Drive.

Response: In January of 2001 the police department established its third neighborhood substation. This substation was located in the heart of the community affected by these crimes and was manned by one full time officer. From the onset, the officer took steps to study the problem, seek community input, conduct statistical analysis of information and utilize crime-tracking techniques in order to determine the best possible way to combat these two types of crimes.

After studying the problem and listening to community input, the officer decided to rely on a **multi** tier approach to lowering incidences of the crimes. The officer relied on four specific educational techniques to address this problem:

- Develop a working relationship with apartment complex managers and management boards of large multi-family complexes.
- Outreach to business owners and employees along University Drive, the vehicles of which were routinely targeted for these crimes.
- Employ the "If I Were A Thief program in multi-family and business areas
- Employ the "Operation Stop Auto Theft" program in multi-family and business areas.

In addition to the four educational principles described above, the department employed several other techniques aimed at enforcement in this area. These efforts included:

- Bicycle patrol
- Foot patrol
- Surveillance techniques
- Use of "Bait" vehicle and partnering with Criminal Investigations Unit

- Utilized aspects of C.E.P.T.E.D. in parking lots to reduce opportunity for criminal activity
- Publishing educational articles in local newspapers
- Increased lines of communications between substation, C.I.U. and road patrol officers

Assessment: Analysis was conducted in two stages and involved data analysis over a five-year period of time. The first stage took place during the years 1998 through 2000 and identified that a problem existed. The second stage of analysis was conducted during the years 2001 and 2002. This stage attempted to evaluate the response of the department. Analysis techniques remained the same for the entire five-year time period, which provided continuity and accuracy of the study.

Tracking of data took on two forms. The first was tracking of actual crime data. Analysis indicated that the efforts of the police department reduced Burglary Vehicle rates by 45%. The analysis for Grand Theft Autos was even more encouraging with a 50% decrease in this type of crime.

The second form of tracking was in reference to *perceptions of the community*. This analysis was of information solicited by the community directly in the form of written surveys obtained on two different dates over a two-year period. Analysis of this survey data indicated that in 2001, with a response of 41%, Burglary was the number one concern of area residents. In 2002 results of the surveys collected from the community indicated a 32% decrease in the perception of Burglary as the number one crime in the neighborhood. Traffic concerns took over as the number one concern of residents, which matched citywide surveys that had found similar results.

• Scanning:

• In December 2000, the Coral Springs Police Department took advantage of their newly hired crime analyst and conducted a citywide study reference to all types of crimes that occurred in the city for that year. Management found that the study indicated there was a problem in the Forest Hills Boulevard Neighborhood with two particular property crimes. Those two types of crime were Burglary Vehicles and Grand Theft Auto's.

• The Forest Hills Boulevard Neighborhood is a one square mile, established community near the center of the city. This neighborhood is a diverse community, which includes a core area of single-family homes, surrounded by a large concentration of multi-family buildings and businesses. In 1999 the cities internal Community Development Census Report, estimated that this area had approximately 9000 apartments and rental units. This fact, with the addition of the single-family homes and the high concentration of businesses along University Drive, makes this the most densely populated area of the city. The diverse nature, and high concentration of citizens in this area provided opportunity for criminal activity to flourish. In particular, calls for service related to Burglary Vehicles and Grand Theft Autos had been consistently high in this area. This high incidence of property crimes had many factors but the primary factor was opportunity to commit the crimes due to the high density of population and property (vehicles).

Although property crimes involving vehicles are not a high visibility crime, nor usually present a danger to the average citizen like other high profile persons crimes, the Coral Springs Police Department felt they needed to address this problem as it was

becoming a quality of life concern for this mainly residential community. The department realized that each Burglary Vehicle and Grand Theft Auto diminished the neighborhoods vitality by draining resources from citizens (broken windows and missing property), businesses (loss of business due to neighborhood perceptions/decline) and the police department (officers responding to dispatched calls instead of pro-active patrol function). Management from the department also realized that the common practice of responding to the scene after the crime occurred/ was discovered, yielded little except written reports documenting the crime. Particularly with the occurrence of Burglary Vehicles, witnesses were very scarce and leads were few, yielding a low clearance by **arrest** rate for this particular crime. On the average, victims of Burglary Vehicles had to pay for a broken window/ lock and all of the property that had been removed by the perpetrators. Victims of Grand Theft Auto have lost their entire vehicles with losses totaling in the thousands of dollars. For all the above reasons the police department decided to make this neighborhood the next priority area for reduction of these crimes.

Analysis:

The Forest Hills Boulevard neighborhood is one of 27 patrol sectors throughout the City of Coral Springs. This area, which the police department designates as 34 Sector, had the distinction of having very high statistics for both Burglary Vehicles and Grand Theft Autos for the years 1998, through 2000 (C.S.P.D. Crime Analyst). Analysis revealed that this one sector accounted for an average of nearly ten percent of these types of crime citywide. Specifically, during the years of 1998, 1999 and 2000 the Burglary Vehicle rates were 8%, 7% and 9% respectively *{see appendix I}*. The Grand Theft Auto rates for 34 sector during the years 1998, 1999 and 2000 were 12%, 12% and 14%

respectively. (*see appendix 2*) The analysis clearly showed that this one square mile of area, out of a total of 25.5 square miles making up the City of Coral Springs, was responsible for 1/10th of these two types of crime.

In addition to analysis of the number of crimes being committed, the department studied the problem to determine the root cause or commonality of the two crimes. Review of reports and inquiries of officers working the area revealed that there were some distinct patterns for each crime. For Burglary vehicles, the pattern was that predominantly, vehicles that had items of value left in plain view in the passenger compartment were the vehicles being broken into. Examples of items that frequently attracted the attention of the criminals were: purses, wallets, cell phones, compact discs, briefcases, backpacks, currency (change and paper), radar detectors, watches and other items of value. Many of these vehicles also had been left unlocked or unsecured (window's down). An analysis of Grand Theft Auto reports revealed that most vehicles stolen did not have any anti-theft systems installed and fell in line with a study in Broward County that named the top ten most stolen vehicles (*see appendix 4*).

Finally, the police department sought to share information and solicit community input from neighborhood residents at the annual "Slice of Springs" community meetings hosted by Community Development. These meetings take place at strategic geographic locations throughout the city. The meeting held annually each January is at the Forest Hills Elementary School located in 34 sector. These meetings provided an open forum for the department to relay to the community the concerns of the agency and it provided the opportunity for citizens to voice their concerns.

Response:

In January 2001 the police department established their third neighborhood substation. The police department partnered with The Beginnings Apartments Complex and established a neighborhood office. As this apartment complex was located in the heart of 34 sector, the department named it the Forest Hills Blvd Substation. This substation was to be manned by one highly motivated autonomous officer who would have the responsibility to respond to the concerns of the community as well as the department. In addition to all other responsibilities, one of the primary functions of the new substation would be to address the problem of high occurrences of Burglary Vehicles and Grand Theft Auto's. The officer assigned to the substation immediately took steps to understand and address the problem. The following list represents efforts undertaken by that officer to this end:

- Statistical analysis of police reports and tracking of crimes geographically
- Slice of Springs Community Meetings
- Meeting with apartment managers in area of responsibility
- Meeting with business owners and employees along University Drive.

- Neighborhood outreach including crime perception surveys.

Tracking of statistics revealed that the number one area for Burglary Vehicles and Grand Theft Autos occurred in the multi-family apartment complexes. The second predominant area for these crimes was along the businesses lining the East side of University Drive. The officer concluded that the only way to combat these two types of crimes was to remove or diminish the *opportunity* to commit the crime. The officer felt that a mix of citizen education and pro-active patrol would be the most efficient way to address the problem.

The first step undertaken to combat the problem was to form partnerships with the apartment managers working for the ten largest multi-family complexes in the area. These partnerships created a mutual flow of information between private community and government. Through this partnership, five community meetings were held in 2001/2002 in which residents of the complex were invited to attend. The meetings covered crime prevention principles, recap of crime statistics in their geographic area and a question and answer session. In addition to meetings with multi-family communities, the officer also conducted outreach techniques to the businesses along University Drive, as employee vehicles were constantly targeted as they sat for long periods of time in the parking lots. This outreach primarily consisted of setting up meetings with employers and employees in order to discuss crime prevention techniques. The most significant business partnership formed was with L.A. Fitness, a health club located on University Drive. This particular business had been plagued by vehicle burglaries and stolen vehicles for years. The primary reason for high numbers of incidents at this location is that the nature of the business provided high levels of opportunity to commit the crimes as patrons routinely left purses, wallets and other items of value in plain view while they went inside and exercised.

As only one officer was assigned to the substation, it was paramount that the officer embrace expedient ways to educate citizens about the two specific crimes plaguing them. The officer decided to embrace two different programs recently developed by other aspects of the department.

The first program was the "If I Were A Thief initiative. This is a pro-active educational program that is easily initiated by individual officers. The program simply

entails conducting foot patrol in target areas, looking into the passenger compartment's of vehicles, observing if any valuable items were left in plain view, filling out a placard (*see appendix 5*) and leaving it on the windshield of the target vehicle. This initiative targets the individual citizens that display patterns of behavior that elevate their chances of becoming future victims.

The second program was the "Operation Stop Auto Theft" initiative. This was an initiative that also involved a placard (*see appendix 4*). This placard listed the top ten stolen automobiles in Broward County and suggested to the owner of vehicles listed that they may want to consider employing an anti-theft device. In addition to simply placing these placards on target vehicles, the substation officer incorporated this program with an existing grant program that the police department had secured. That grant consisted of securing \$63,361.00 worth of "CLUBS" (steering wheel locking devices). This combination of initiatives allowed the substation to offer education and a free solution to the community. This initiative could be conducted in the same target areas and at the same time as the "If I Were A Thief" program. Dissemination of "CLUBS" to citizens requesting them was facilitated through the substation.

Although these four educational initiatives provided the main attempt at resolving this problem, they were not the only initiatives undertaken. The substation automatically allowed for increased patrol of the area due to permanent manning out of the station. The officer assigned decided to conduct pro-active patrol and operations in the most effected areas (University Drive and apartment complexes). These attempts at pro-active initiatives included:

- Bicycle patrol
- Foot Patrol

- Surveillance techniques
- Partnering with C.I.U. Unit utilizing a "BAIT" Vehicle.
- Utilizing aspects of C.E.P.T.E.D. in parking lots to reduce criminal opportunity.
- Publish educational articles in local newspapers warning citizens about criminal activity.
- Increased lines of communication between substation and road patrol officers.

Assessment:

The Forest Hills Boulevard Substation has conducted tracking and assessment of this ongoing initiative. Assessment has occurred through two forms of medium. The first medium discussed will be neighborhood surveys solicited from the community by the substation. The second form of media involves analysis of crime statistics, utilizing the same percentage formulas that had been utilized in 2000.

In July of 2001, the Forest Hills Boulevard Substation hosted a Grand Opening Event. The location of the event was at the Beginnings Apartment Complex and involved all aspects of public safety along with interactive entertainment for the citizens that attended. Part of the event was soliciting the adult participants, who lived in the community, for their perceptions on criminal activity occurring in their neighborhood. The results for the survey conducted in July of 2001 revealed the following data. 41% of citizens felt that Burglary was the number one concern in the area, followed by traffic concerns at 38% and Theft at 21% (*See appendix 3*).

In December of 2002, the Forest Hills Substation hosted a Holiday Party in an effort to outreach to the community. Once again, part of the event was to solicit feedback in survey form from the adult attendees. The same survey was used, with the addition of copies in Spanish in order to reach out to that segment of the population. The results of that survey were as follows. Traffic was now the primary concern of residents with a total of 40%. Burglary had decreased from 41% to 28%.

Theft had maintained its position in third place with a slight increase to 22%. 10% of responses did not list any of the three above-mentioned categories.

The data from the surveys was an intriguing gauge of citizen perception reference these crimes. Although the perception of theft had remained relatively constant, perceptions of Burglary decreased 32% in an 18-month period and was no longer the number one fear of criminal activity in the area.

A far more accurate gauge of efforts to lower the occurrences of these crimes is to actually review criminal statistics. With the assistance of the department's crime analyst, statistics were pulled in the same method as previously documented. The analysis of Burglary Vehicle statistics for 34 sector revealed that in 2001 there was a 3% drop to 6% of Burglary Vehicles citywide. That trend continued in 2002 with an additional 1% drop. At this time 5% of all Vehicle Burglaries that occur in the City of Coral Springs occur in 34 sector. This represents a 45% decrease in occurrences of Burglary Vehicles in a two-year period. This is an especially impressive number due to the fact that Burglary Vehicle occurrences increased 8% citywide in 2002 while Burglary Vehicles increased by only 0.8% in 2002 in sector 34.

Analysis of statistics related to Grand Theft Autos was even more encouraging. Analysis reveals that there was a 1% decrease in rates in 2001, and an additional 6% drop in 2002 for a total of 7% of Grand Theft Autos occurring in 34 Sector. This represents a 50% decrease in the occurrence of Grand Theft Autos for the Forest Hills Boulevard neighborhood. Once again, it should be noted that Grand Theft Autos actually increased citywide 0.4% from 2001 to 2002, while 34 sector decreased its occurrences of this crime 44%.

It is apparent that the efforts undertaken by the Coral Springs Police Department to address the patterns of criminal behavior related to these two crimes has been successful. Occurrences of both crimes have decreased significantly over the two-year tracking period even as statistically, these crimes are on the rise citywide. This initiative demonstrates how a small number of officers can positively effect the community by conducting outreach, opening lines of communication and employing education techniques that target potential victims. Patrol officers now routinely utilize "If I Were A Thief and "Stop Auto Theft" placards in all areas of the city. Efforts to decrease the rates of occurrence citywide will continue with the hope of continued success.

Agency and officer information:

The Coral Springs Police Department is committed to the philosophy of community policing. The neighborhood substation program is highly indicative of the departments willingness to partner with the community in order to address quality of life problems.

Captain Frank Mckeldin, the Northeast District commander, was instrumental in not only identifying that a problem existed, but working to convince the department that placing a substation in the heart of the community affected would be the best possible way to combat not only this crime problem, but all quality of life concerns for the community in general.

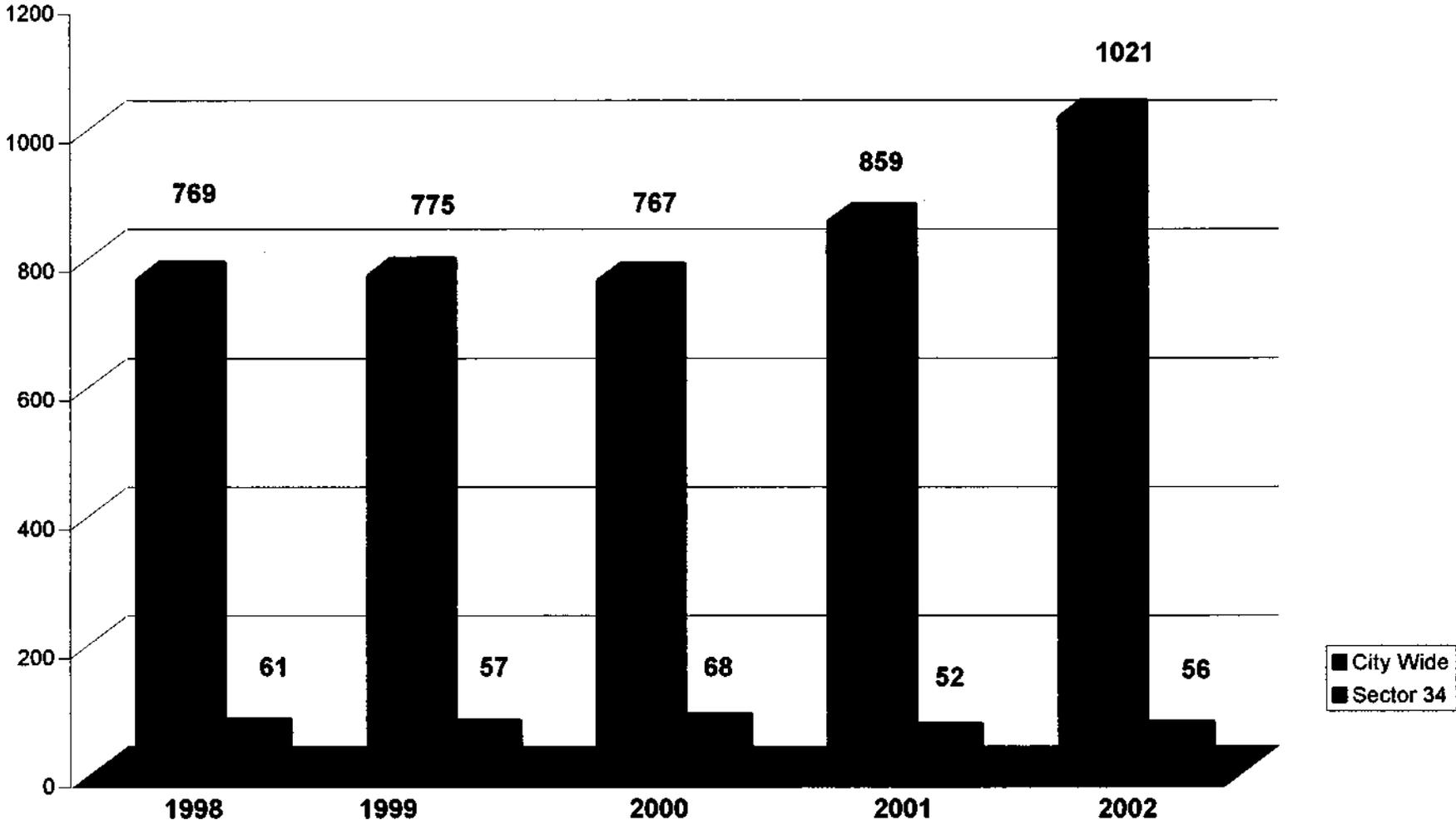
Sergeant Paul Geraine oversees the officer assigned to the Forest Hills Blvd Substation. As a front line supervisor he is responsible for direction of programs and communication within the department.

Officer Shawn Hines was given the opportunity to establish and man the Forest Hills Blvd Substation in January of 2001. For the past 27 months he has operated out of the substation, partnering with the community he serves on a continual basis. Officer Hines has attended additional training in the area of community policing and crime prevention.

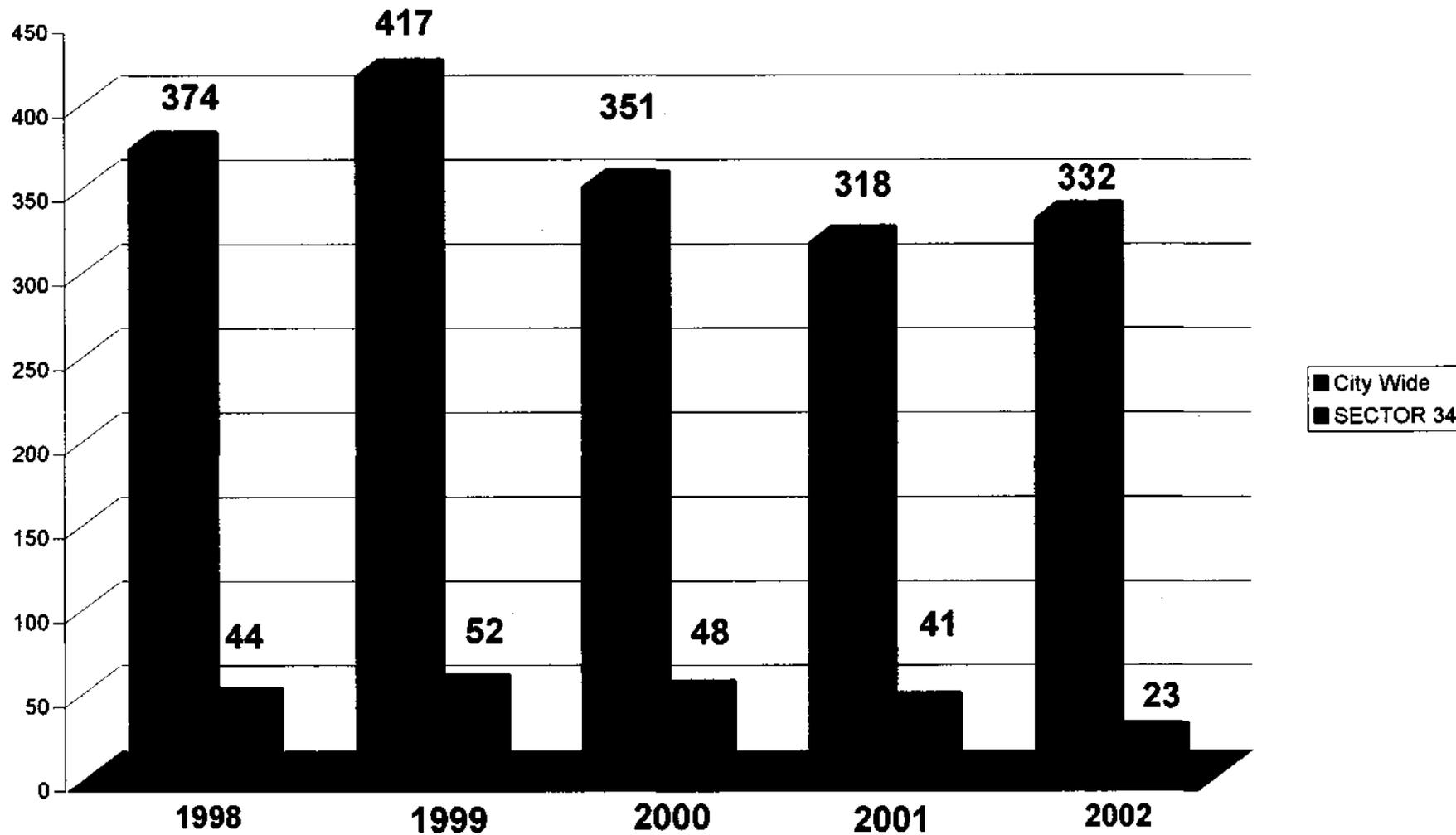
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CITY OF CORAL SPRINGS VEHICLE BURGLARIES - 1998 thru 2002

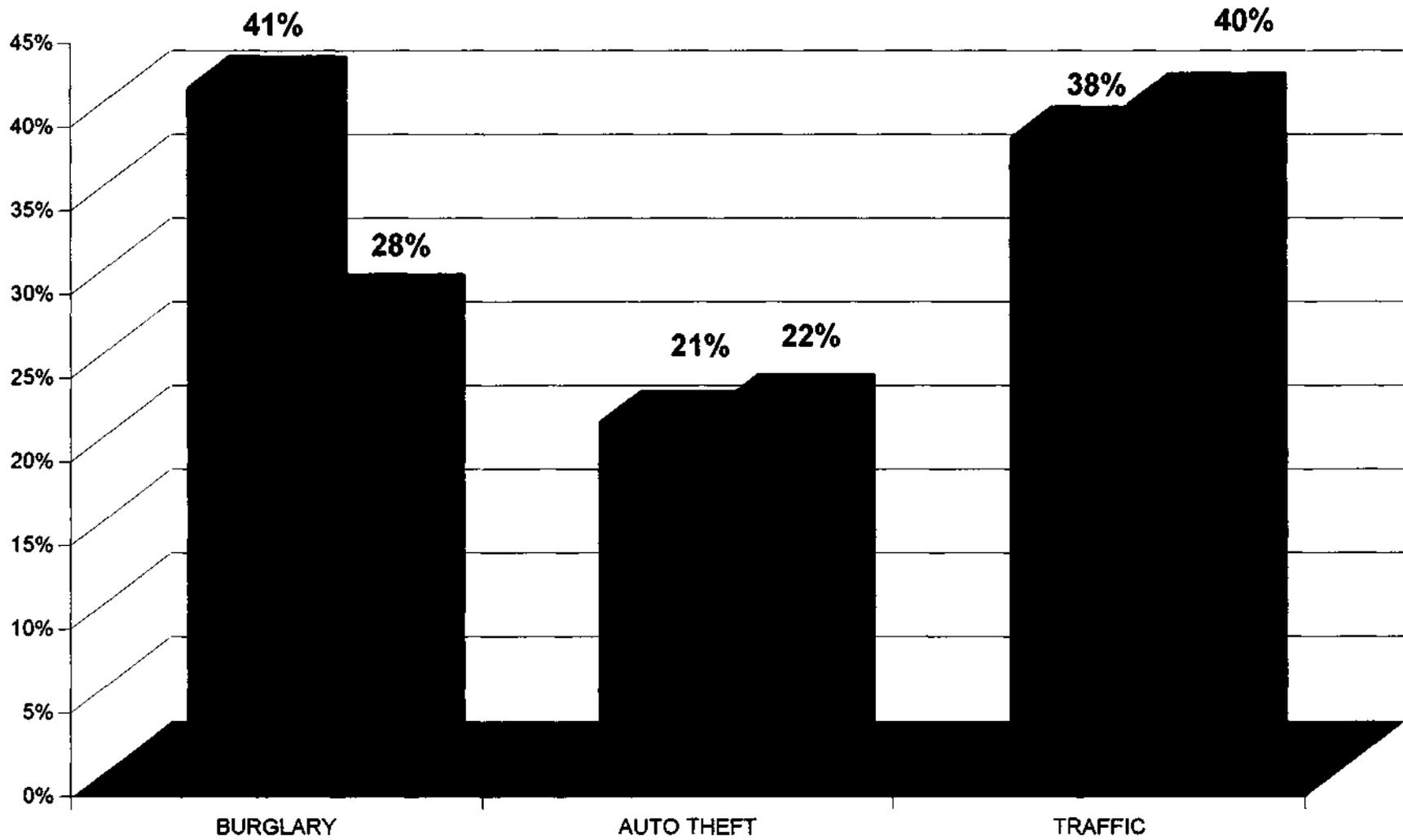


CITY OF CORAL SPRINGS
AUTO THEFTS - 1998 THRU 2002



2001
2002

CITY OF CORAL SPRINGS - TOP THREE CONCERNS (CITIZEN SURVEY)



CORAL SPRINGS POLICE DEPARTMENT

WARNING!

OPERATION STOP AUTO THEFT

DATE: **TIME:** **AM/PM**
LOCATION:

VEHICLE MAKE:
TAG:

This is a courtesy warning to inform you that your vehicle fits the profile of one of the most popular vehicle stolen from Coral Springs in the last year. The vehicles on this auspicious list include:

- **Honda Civic**
- **Honda Accord**
- **Accura Integra**
- **Mitsubishi Eclipse**
- **Ford Windstar**
- **Ford Ranger**
- **Ford Mustang**
- **Nissan Altima**
- **Toyota Camry**
- **Dodge Caravan**

You may wish to take the proper precautions and have your vehicle equipped with anti-theft device such as an alarm, hidden kill switch or a steering wheel locking device.

If you would like a **FREE** steering wheel locking device contact:

Nereida Rodriquez at 346-1278

If you have questions or concerns contact:

Officer: _____

at 346- _____

Sponsored by:
**THE FLORIDA MOTOR VEHICLE
THEFT PREVENTION AUTHORITY**

**IF I WERE A THIEF
I WOULD HAVE SELECTED
YOUR PROPERTY BECAUSE...**

**EASILY STOLEN ITEMS WERE LEFT
VISIBLE**

**YOUR GARAGE DOOR WAS
OPEN**

An open garage door is an invitation to a thief to take anything he sees

**YOUR WINDOWS OR DOORS
WERE OPEN**

Never leave a door or window open when gone

**YOUR VEHICLE WAS LEFT
UNSECURED**

COMMENTS: _____

C.A.P. VOLUNTEER _____

DATE & TIME OBSERVED _____

LOCATION _____

TAG # _____

**FOR CRIME PREVENTION INFORMATION CONTACT
THE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT OFFICE OF THE
CORAL SPRINGS POLICE DEPARTMENT AT 346-1835**

**POLICE 911
NON-EMERGENCY 344-1800**

**YOUR HOUSE NUMBERS ARE NOT VISIBLE FROM
THE STREET. PLEASE CORRECT THIS PROBLEM.**

8/01 BBF

THANK YOU



CITIZEN

An Official Publication of the City of Coral Springs, Florida

August/
September
2001



Police Substation Now Open in Forest Hills



Coral Springs Police Officers Glen Ritta, Shawn Hines and Skip Cline are stationed at the Forest Hills Police Substation, which recently opened at the Beginnings Apartment Complex on Forest Hills Boulevard.

The Coral Springs Police Department recently hosted the grand opening of the Forest Hills Substation, located in the leasing office of The Beginnings Apartment Complex at 2940 Forest Hills Boulevard.

The grand opening featured demonstrations from the Police K-9 Unit and appearances by the Special Response Team Mobile Command Vehicle and the Fire Department, as well as face-painting and free bicycle registrations.

Police Officers Shawn Hines, Glen Ritta and Skip Cline will work out of the substation on a regular basis. Residents are welcome to visit the substation or can call 340-5025 for more information.

Coral Springs Forum

THURSDAY, AUGUST 2, 2001 Including Parkland

PHOTO EXTRA

POLICE PARTY



BOOK 'EM: Finger printing was part of the many activities at the opening of the new Coral Springs Police substation. Photo by Christine Parkinson.

TAKING A RIDE: Officer Bill Floyd with his daughter Kayla riding K-9s Boris. Below, town officials (from left): Mayor John Sommerer, Manager of the Beginning Apartment complex, Mary Frances Koff, Police Chief Ron Argo, and Officer Shawn Hines, cut the cake to celebrate the opening of the new police substation in Forest Hills. The celebration took place on July 28. Photo by Christine Parkinson.



CITIZEN

An Official Publication of the City of Coral Springs, Florida

Annual
Report
2001



A Place for Service

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

| | FY 2001 GOAL | FY 2001 ACTUAL |
|---|--------------|----------------|
| 1. Percent of plan reviews completed within 15 days. | 85% | 93.5% |
| 2. Satisfaction with quality of City employees' customer service. | 90% | 94% |
| 3. Overall quality rating for City services and programs. | 91% | 90% |

inspection requests and results; building plan review and studies; and registration and payment of inspection programs.

STREET LIGHTS

The City has taken over maintenance of City-owned street lights from the County. All 250 City-owned street lights were inspected and tubed outages will be repaired within five working days. The City is continuing to coordinate with the County and work through a private contractor to identify non-complying County-owned streetlights on our main streets and have them re-cabled in two weeks or less. This program has significantly reduced the time to connect all outages, increasing both pedestrian and vehicle safety at night.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Coral Springs Police Department sustains one of the lowest crime rates in the State of Florida for cities with a population of 100,000 or more. In the past year, the City's overall crime rate decreased by 3.3 percent and the burglary rate dropped 6 percent.

Much of this success is due to the Department's community policing efforts. For example, the City's third police substation opened this summer in the Forest Hills neighborhood.

AUTOMATIC VEHICLE LOCATOR AND GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM

The City is in the midst of building its inventory of Automatic Vehicle Locators/Global Positioning Systems in police cruisers, fire/emergency units, and code enforcement vehicles. The systems use radio computing modules that use geostationary maps of the City to aid in quicker and more accurate dispatching of emergency vehicles. The modules include enhanced 911 service that provides location coordinates of towers involved in emergency calls from cellular phones.



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DID YOU KNOW?

residents gave the City of Coral Springs a 94 percent customer satisfaction rating.