

Memorandum

Date: July 14, 2020
To: Supervisor Joan Hartmann
From: Sheriff Bill Brown
Subject: Community Policing in Isla Vista



Dear Joan:

During our conversation on July 2, 2020, you requested that we submit a document explaining the various community policing efforts that are occurring within the Isla Vista community. Lieutenant Juan Camarena and his chain of command put together the attached document for your review. It is our hope that the information will be of value during the upcoming Board discussions addressing the criminal justice system in Santa Barbara County. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me to further discuss any topics of interest to you and your constituents.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bill Brown".

BILL BROWN
Sheriff

Attachment

Community Policing in Isla Vista

July 2020



Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Isla Vista Foot Patrol

Lt. Juan Camarena

Executive Summary

In the wake of George Floyd's death in Minneapolis, communities throughout the United States are reexamining the provision of policing services. Significant focus is being placed upon law enforcement's connection within the communities they serve, along with the policies, procedures and training that drives how policing services are provided within the community. Of the unincorporated areas that are served by the Sheriff's Office, the Isla Vista community has been the most vocal in questioning the how and why of policing services within their community.

This report is being offered to help inform the reader about the type of policing services provided within the Isla Vista community. Through the operation of the Isla Vista Foot Patrol (IVFP), the County of Santa Barbara and the University of California collaborate to ensure the safety and well-being of all residents and visitors within the Isla Vista Community. Born out of the civil unrest and demands for change in the late 1960's and early 1970's, the Isla Vista Foot Patrol was created in an effort to close a perceived gap between the Isla Vista Community and its police.

The report will provide a high-level overview of policing services in Isla Vista and will highlight the ongoing efforts to provide residents with appropriate levels of safety and security, while simultaneously remaining considerate to both the collective and individual well-being of its community members. The key concept that is employed in the operation of the IVFP is that of community policing: a partnership between the community and the men and women that provide its policing services. Far from a historical document, this report provides a snapshot of ongoing community policing efforts and successes.

The Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office and the University of California Police Department are dedicated to providing the best possible policing services within the Isla Vista Community. Each and every deputy sheriff and police officer that is assigned to the IVFP is individually and collectively committed to maintaining and promoting the safety and wellbeing of the Isla Vista community.

Introduction

Isla Vista Community

Isla Vista is a residential and retail business community located in the unincorporated area of Santa Barbara County, immediately adjacent to the University of California at Santa Barbara campus. Isla Vista is 1.86 square miles with an estimated population of 15,250 to 21,000 residents, including full and part-time students and another 6,180 residents that are not identified as students¹. Isla Vista residents are incredibly diverse and include student renters, long-term owner occupants, lower-income renter households and a homeless population.

Community Policing

The concept of modern community policing emerged in the 1970s, and gained considerable traction in the 1990s, as a result of federal funding that supported community policing efforts and created the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) to distribute and monitor federal law enforcement funding². Community policing expands upon the provision of traditional police services, with a focus upon prevention, problem-solving, community engagement, and partnerships. The community policing philosophy moves beyond reactive response to calls for service and leverages community partnerships toward proactive problem solving. Community policing remains the dominant local law enforcement philosophy in the United States today, with 81% of the nation's population being served by law enforcement agencies that have adopted community policing approaches³.

Isla Vista Foot Patrol – History and Current Operation

The IVFP was created in December 1970, for the purpose of developing and implementing community-based policing for the Isla Vista community. Deputies and officers that serve the Isla Vista community do so primarily on foot or bicycle, making them more accessible and approachable for community members.

The IVFP is managed by a Sheriff's Office Lieutenant, who is considered the IVFP Station Commander. Current IVFP staffing is fifteen (15) SBSO personnel; 1 Sheriff's Lieutenant, 3 Sheriff's Sergeants, 2 Senior Deputies, 1 Community Resource Deputy, 6 Sheriff's Deputies and one vacant Sheriff's Deputy, 1 Sheriff's Service Technician (SST), and 1 Administrative Office Professional. Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, UCSB PD staffed IVFP with six (6) personnel, but the department has temporarily transferred all officers back to the campus in response to the pandemic. The California Highway Patrol (CHP) no longer provides full-time staffing toward the operation of the IVFP, but they do conduct traffic enforcement and investigation services within the Isla Vista community.

¹ County of Santa Barbara (2015) *Isla Vista Funding Study*. County of Santa Barbara.

² Community Oriented Policing Services (2013). *COPS History: 1994 to the Present*. US Department of Justice.

³ Community Oriented Policing Services (2012). *COPS FY 2013 Performance Budget*.

A key philosophical concept in the operation of the IVFP and its community policing focus is one of volunteerism and continuity of its personnel. The men and women that provide policing services to the Isla Vista community do so on a voluntary basis and must commit to doing so on an ongoing basis. In doing so, IVFP personnel get to know the Isla Vista community, its public safety needs and the desires and expectations of its community members. Concurrently, community members get to know the deputies and officers that provide their policing services, affording them the opportunity to get to know them as something more than just a uniform with a badge. The IVFP is committed to improving its relationship with the community through the fostering of relationships and collaborative partnerships. All IVFP personnel are responsible for incorporating community policing strategies and its underlying philosophy into their day-to-day efforts to serve the Isla Vista community and improve the quality of life for everyone.

Current IVFP Community Policing Efforts

Isla Vista residents expect a reasonable level of safety and security within their community, including the ability to go about their lives without fear of becoming the victim of a crime. They also want to live in a community that protects them from nuisances and other daily stressors that negatively impact their lives. However, Isla Vista is a unique community and it requires equally unique policing strategies. What follows are several means by which the IVFP has operationalized its community policing philosophy toward meeting the needs of Isla Vista's residents and visitors.

Community Resource Deputy (CRD)

The IVFP CRD serves as a dedicated liaison between the IVFP and the many local organizations, student groups, businesses, property owners and residents throughout the community. The CRD's work is focused on improving our relationships and communication with Isla Vista residents, property owners and business owners. The CRD proactively engages with the Isla Vista community and is responsible for collaborating with the community toward designing and implementing initiatives and programs that focus on the safety, health and well-being of community members. The IVFP CRD regularly participates in the Isla Vista Property Provider meeting, coordinating with local property management companies to mitigate small problems before a police response is required. The CRD also engages with local businesses to promote "Crime Prevention through Environmental Design," providing crime prevention strategies and guidance.

Participation in Community Events

The IVFP collaborates with many community organizations, student organizations and individual community members in planning and participating in community events that enrich the lives of everyone in Isla Vista. A few quick examples include IVPRD's, "Meet your Neighbor Day," an opportunity for IVFP to introduce themselves to both new and long-term Isla Vista residents and to discuss the community's diversity. Other examples include regular hosting of "Pizza with a Cop" and "Coffee with a Cop" events that encourage interactions and

information sharing between community members and IVFP personnel. These events create a relaxed and neutral atmosphere where Isla Vista residents can sit down with IVFP personnel, ask questions and get to know the deputies and officers that serve their community. It provides community members the opportunity to discuss their concerns and provide insight as to their individual and community priorities.

IVFP personnel also regularly participate in events organized by other groups and individuals in the Isla Vista Community. Examples include the Isla Vista Youth Project, St. George Youth Center, IV Elementary School, and food distribution through the Foodbank. In particular, these events afford some of Isla Vista's most vulnerable community members an opportunity to meet IVFP personnel in person and to voice their concerns. Traditionally, many of these particular families are very unlikely to reach out to law enforcement for a variety of reasons, making these events a great way for IVFP staff to engage with the families and children.

[Isla Vista Citizens' Academy](#)

In August 2018, the IVFP sponsored the first Isla Vista Citizen's Academy. The Citizen's Academy is an opportunity for the Isla Vista community members to gain significant insight into their local law enforcement and to get to know the honorable public servants within the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office and the University of California Police Department. By allowing citizens a firsthand look at the IVFP, community members take away a much better understanding of both the "how" and "why" police services are delivered within their community. The Academy is a collaborative effort between the Sheriff's Office and the University Police Department.

[IVFP Volunteer Program](#)

The IVFP operates a Volunteer Program that allows community members to actively contribute to the community's overall quality of life through their service. In addition to helping in the day-to-day operation of the IVFP, our volunteers help IVFP strengthen our relationships within the community and facilitate communication between groups and individuals within the community and the IVFP.

[Party Registration Program](#)

In 2019, the IVFP reestablished the Party Registration Program for its residents. The party registration program is a voluntary program that allows Isla Vista residents who are planning an event to register it with the IVFP and minimize the need for any law enforcement involvement. By allowing the resident to register their party in advance, the party host can be contacted by phone instead of a deputy/officer coming to their resident if a complaint is received. This allows the host to regulate their party and remedy any issues that arose without police intervention. The program also provides tips and recommendations, creates an open line of communication between residents and law enforcement, and can change the overall attitude and behavior associated with Isla Vista parties. Although the IVFP does not condone or sponsor any party that has been registered using this program, it affords the opportunity to minimize the need for law

enforcement involvement as result of complaints from other community members or other forms of minor violations.

During the initial launch of the Party Registration Program there were 25 parties registered. Three parties out of the 25 were subsequently contacted via telephone to inform them that their neighbors had made a noise complaint and two of the three complied immediately when asked bring their event into compliance with the rules. One party failed to comply, and IVFP responded to the party's location and issued a loud noise citation. To make sure IVFP Party Registration continues to be successful, more information about the program needs to be made available to the ever-changing population within Isla Vista.

Restorative Justice

In 2019, the IVFP established the Isla Vista Restorative Justice Program. Restorative Justice is an approach to justice that focuses on the needs of victims, offenders and the involved community. It identifies the harm that was done, how the harm can be repaired, and who is responsible. The Isla Vista Restorative Justice Program has changed the citation outcome for various infractions in Isla Vista, including possession of an open container of alcohol in public (SBCO 36-3), consumption of alcohol on public streets (SBCO 36-2), and loud music violations (SBCO 40-2). Instead of paying a fine, individuals who are found guilty of these sections are required to attend 2-hour educational workshops and do four hours of community service in Isla Vista. During these classes, deputies allow people to tell their side of the story, remaining neutral in decision-making and behavior, treating people with respect, and explaining actions in a way that communicates caring for people's concerns and demonstrates trustworthiness.

This program strengthens ties between IVFP and the community of Isla Vista and reduces recidivism rates for these low-level offenses. Since its implementation, eight (8) Restorative Justice classes have been offered, and 125 people have participated. Participant comments:

“Overall, I really think that the restorative justice program is a great idea that will be extremely effective in not only improving community and law enforcement relations, but also in lowering the crime rate in Isla Vista, and contributing to a safer and better community.”

“I did not know what to expect from the class and what we were going to learn about. Going into the class, I was a little quiet, but as the class went on, I began to feel more comfortable with my peers and the officers running the Restorative Justice class. I think it will be beneficial towards the community and help create better relationships between civilians and the police force.”

“I personally think that I learned more from going to the class than I would've if I had gone to court and paid the ticket. I thought that stressing community and working together to make Isla Vista a better place was the most important part of the class.”

Townhall Meetings & Community Group Meetings

IVFP participates in several town hall meetings in Isla Vista. The town hall meetings give IVFP and the community the opportunity to have light conversations, question and answer sessions, and conversation in low-pressure environments. The topics range from general safety or specific topics like sexual assault to large-scale events such as Halloween and Deltopia. During these town hall meetings, IVFP shares its approach, and listens to everyone in the community and creates an open dialogue with the residents.

IVFP also participates in a network of community engagement meetings that are hosted by community groups and are geared toward outreach and relationship building within Isla Vista's unique population. IVFP personnel participate in these meetings, utilizing them as an opportunity to work with community members, business leaders, property owners' associations, and other local organizations. We participate every Thursday in the Isla Vista Community Network Committee meeting, and every other Tuesday with the Isla Vista Community Service District meeting. IVFP also participates in the UCSB Police Collaborative Board, UCSB Alcohol and Drug Coalitions, and the Coalition for a Safe IV.

Neighborhood Watch

The IVFP is currently spearheading the Isla Vista Neighborhood Watch Program, which encourages community members to proactively participate in crime reporting and prevention. Isla Vista Neighborhood Watch calls upon residents to partner with the IVFP, act as a "community ambassador" and take an active role in building a safer neighborhood and community. Through the Neighborhood Watch program, we supply Isla Vista residents with information and instruction in various crime prevention techniques and partner with them in addressing community concerns.

IVFP Activity Log

In an effort to build transparency, IVFP continuously strives to provide information about incidents that occur in Isla Vista. IVFP has published on its website the IVFP Weekly Activity Log. The IVFP activity log includes information about calls for service in Isla Vista. Some of the calls for service range from traffic stops, check the welfare, alarm calls, noise complaints, or alleged crimes. **Note:** *Due to COVID-19, the IVFP Weekly Activity Log was suspended, but it will resume in August 2020.*

Homeless Outreach

IVFP continues to explore best practices to help prevent, reduce and end homelessness in Isla Vista. Through collaboration and Community Policing efforts, IVFP staff work to connecting those in need to necessary resources and working with public and private partners to find unique solutions for those experiencing homelessness. IVFP assists local groups such as the Isla Vista Parks and Recreation Department in providing help to and enhancing the safety of the local houseless population.

Measuring IVFP Community Policing Efforts

A couple of quick metrics related to the effectiveness of the IVFP community policing effort:

1. The partnership between the IVFP and the Isla Vista Community has resulted in consistently declining levels of serious crime within the Isla Vista Community. Uniform Crime Report (UCR) stats:

| | 2019 | 2018 | 2017 |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Part 1 Crimes⁴ | 224 | 319 | 422 |
| Part 2 Crimes⁵ | 190 | 284 | 375 |

2. Members of the Isla Vista Foot Patrol utilize force less frequently than most policing agencies, including the remainder of the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office. Outside of Isla Vista, force is generally used in 1% of arrests. The ability of IVFP personnel to carry out their duties without the need to use force is a testament to their aptitude, training, patience and their relationship with the Isla Vista Community.

| | 2019 | 2018 | 2017 |
|----------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Arrests | 1533 | 1417 | 1888 |
| Force incidents | 9 | 8 | 14 |
| Rate (force incidents / arrests) | .6% | .6% | .7% |

Conclusion

It is well understood that community policing strategies have positive effects on community member satisfaction and police legitimacy. IVFP has achieved ongoing partnerships with the community, and it continues to tackle the underlying causes of crime through community partnerships and relationships. IVFP has made community policing strategies work by having ongoing input, evaluation, and feedback from both inside and outside IVFP. We will continue to building relationships and encouraging community engagement, whether through town hall meetings, restorative justice programs, neighborhood watch, and participating in community events. We are committed to serving the Isla Vista community and meeting its public safety needs.

⁴ UCR Part 1 crimes include the most serious crimes. Among others, Part 1 violent crime includes rape, robbery, murder, assault with a deadly weapon and assaults causing serious injury. Part 1 property crimes include burglaries and significant thefts.

⁵ UCR Part 2 crimes include less serious crimes such as public intoxication and drug/ weapon offenses, among others.

Reference:

- Bureau of Justice Assistance (1994). *Understanding Community Policing: A Framework for Action*. U.S. Department of Justice.
- Community Oriented Policing Services (2013). *COPS History: 1994 to the Present*. U.S. Department of Justice.
- Community Oriented Policing Services (2012). COPS, FY 2013 Performance Budget.
- Community Oriented Policing Services (2014). *Community Policing Defined*. U.S. Department of Justice.
- County of Santa Barbara (2015) *Isla Vista Funding Study*. County of Santa Barbara.
- U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Polices Services, 2003.
- Trojanowicz, R. & Bucqueroux, B. (1994). *Community policing; How to get started*. Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing.
- Weisburd et al. (2010). "Is Problem-Oriented Policing Effective in Reducing Crime Disorder? Findings From a Campbell Systematic Review." *Criminology & Public Policy*, Vol. 9, Issue 1. The American Society of Criminology.