

CHAPTER IV

CRIME and SAFETY

Although crime and safety are separate issues, the two concepts are related. Residents' sense of security and safety are impacted by many factors, including the level of crime in the Neighborhood. This chapter discusses crime in Miracle Manor, the impact that crime has on the Neighborhood, and outlines steps that may lead to a greater sense of safety for residents.

Criminal Activity in Miracle Manor

High levels of crime in a neighborhood impact the entire community, not just the victims or their families. The most immediate impact is that crime forces innocent people into forms of behavior that would be unnecessary in a crime-free environment. Fear of crime can also impact the willingness of families to move into and stay in neighborhoods. Crime levels can then impact property values. Lower property values can in turn affect the ability of homeowners to obtain credit for purchase or improvement loans (Horowitz 1991).

Miracle Mile Neighborhood is policed by the third sector of the West Patrol Division of the Tucson Police Department. This sector also includes areas north of the Neighborhood as far as Roger Road, and areas west of the Neighborhood as far as Flowing Wells Road. Patrols through the Neighborhood include both bicycle patrols and car patrols. Although bicycle patrols do not operate during nighttime hours, officers believe these patrols can often be more efficient than car patrols. Officers on bicycles are less conspicuous and can access areas unavailable to those in patrol cars.

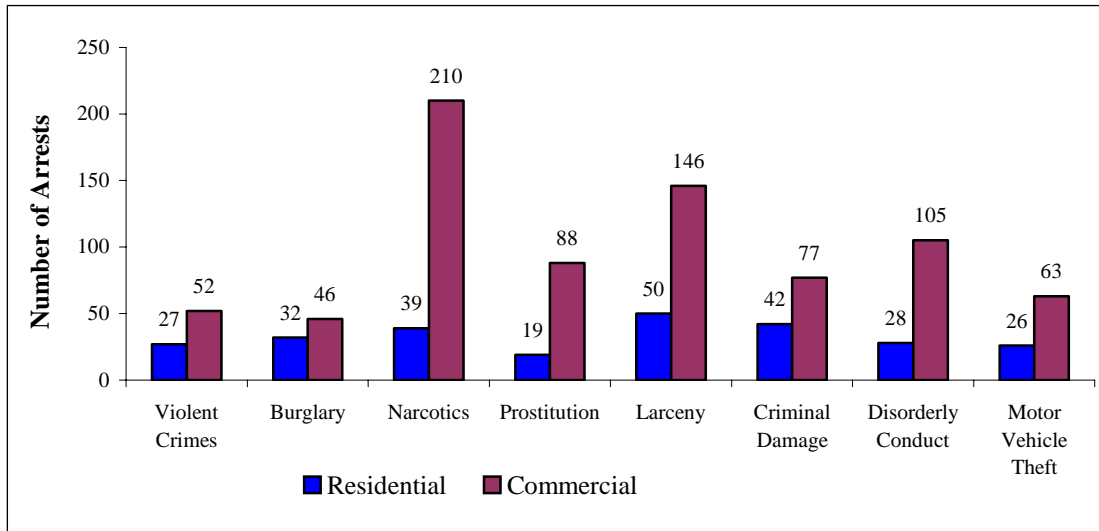
The closest police station to Miracle Manor is located at 1019 Prince Road, between Fairview Avenue and Flowing Wells Road. This location is less than a mile from the northern boundary of the Miracle Manor Neighborhood. However, a new sub-station is due to open within the next year at a former K-

Mart store located at Miracle Mile and Flowing Wells Road. Voters approved funds for the sub-station in 2000, but plans for the renovation of the site have been delayed. This sub-station would offer a police presence closer to the Neighborhood boundaries.

The Tucson Police Department tracks crime statistics in quarter-mile square areas (areas that are a half mile on each side). The section of the Neighborhood bordered by Fairview Avenue, Oracle Road, Grant Street and Glenn Street is one such area. Parts of the Neighborhood north of Glenn Street are included in another statistical area that includes Evergreen Memorial Park to the north, up to Fort Lowell Road. The total number of crimes in 2004 in these two areas was higher than other nearby areas on the west side of Oracle Road, but lower than nearby areas on the east side of Oracle Road.

Although criminal activity in Miracle Manor is greatest in the commercial and industrial areas on the perimeter of the Neighborhood, crime is still present in the residential areas (see Figure 4.1). In some categories of crime, like narcotics and prostitution, a low percentage of criminal incidents occur in the residential area. Other categories, like violent crimes (homicide, sexual assault, aggravated assault, and robbery) and burglary (unlawful entry into a building), show only a slight increase in the commercial areas (Tucson Police Department 2005). For a full listing of crime levels in the Neighborhood see Appendices I and J; definitions for all crime terms can be found in Appendix H.

Figure 4.1: Criminal Activity in 2004

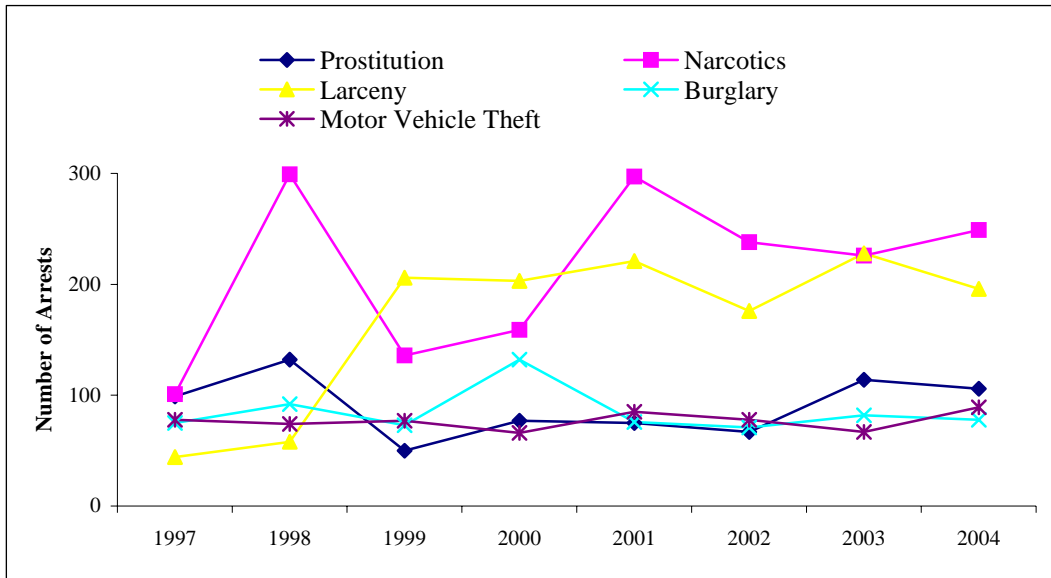


Source: Tucson Police Department 2005

Neighborhood residents and the Tucson Police Department have identified some specific areas of the Neighborhood as areas of concern. These include Miracle Mile, Kelso Street between 15th Avenue and Oracle Road, 15th Avenue between Alturas Street and Grant Road, and Jacinto Park.

In discussions with the Tucson Police Department and from responses in the Miracle Manor Neighborhood Survey, prostitution, narcotics, and property crimes have been identified as major concerns for the Neighborhood. Prostitution, burglary, and motor vehicle theft have shown no real change in the number of incidents in the Neighborhood during the past eight years (see Figure 4.2). Trends may even indicate an increase in narcotics and larceny during this time period.

Figure 4.2: Crime Trends in Miracle Manor, 1997-2004



Source: Tucson Police Department 2005

Prostitution

Because those seeking sexual services can feel uneasy in neighborhoods that appear threatening or dangerous, prostitution is often found in areas that are marginal or in transition. Prostitution thrives in areas where it does not conflict with legitimate businesses, but rather where it supports and is supported by those businesses. For example, prostitution markets can be fostered by all-night businesses like bars or coffee shops where prostitutes can take breaks, or motels or dark parking lots where sexual transactions can occur. Prostitution is linked with illegal drug use and is often found in areas where drugs are bought and sold (Scott 2005).

In Miracle Manor, the majority of prostitution takes place on Miracle Mile and Oracle Road. Some of the motels and motor courts in this area provide rooms for prostitutes to conduct their business. However, of the 107 prostitution arrests made in 2004 in Miracle Manor, 17 of them (15.9 percent) were in residential areas (Tucson Police Department 2005). Prostitution sweeps in the area in the last year have yielded over two-dozen arrests, yet the problem persists (Metro

Briefing 2004). Police intervention may provide a brief and limited reduction in the level of prostitution in the area, but it is not a permanent solution.

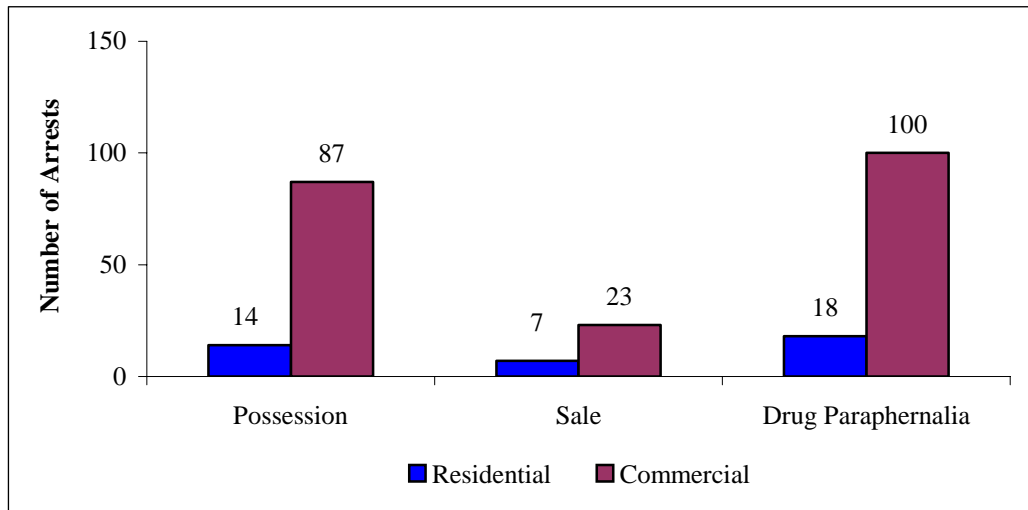
Prostitution markets are flexible, and when one area is shut down due to police activity or resident activism, another market usually appears in another area of the city (Scott 2005). Increased vigilance against prostitution and frequent reporting of suspicious activities in Miracle Manor can potentially push the prostitution market to other areas. In March 2004, the Tucson Police closed down the Tropicana Hotel. The operation involved a variety of City departments and neighborhood associations working together. In order to push prostitution out of the Neighborhood, conditions that encourage prostitution must be changed. For example, redevelopment of the area (as described in Chapter II) may help to reduce the level of prostitution by reducing the number of venues where prostitutes can serve their clients.

Narcotics

Miracle Manor and the surrounding neighborhood have some of the highest number of arrests for narcotics violations in all of Tucson. Like prostitution, most of the drug activity occurs in the commercial areas (see Figure 4.3). Drug use and sales are occurring in the residential areas, but at a lower rate than in the commercial areas on the perimeter (Tucson Police Department 2005).

A positive correlation exists between drug use and criminal activity. In 2003, 73.3 percent of males and 68.6 percent of females arrested in Tucson tested positive for cocaine, heroin, marijuana, or methamphetamine. One third of all arrestees in Tucson tested positive for multiple drugs (Office of National Drug Control Policy 2004).

Figure 4.3: Narcotics Arrests in Miracle Manor, 2004



Source: Tucson Police Department 2005

Property Crimes

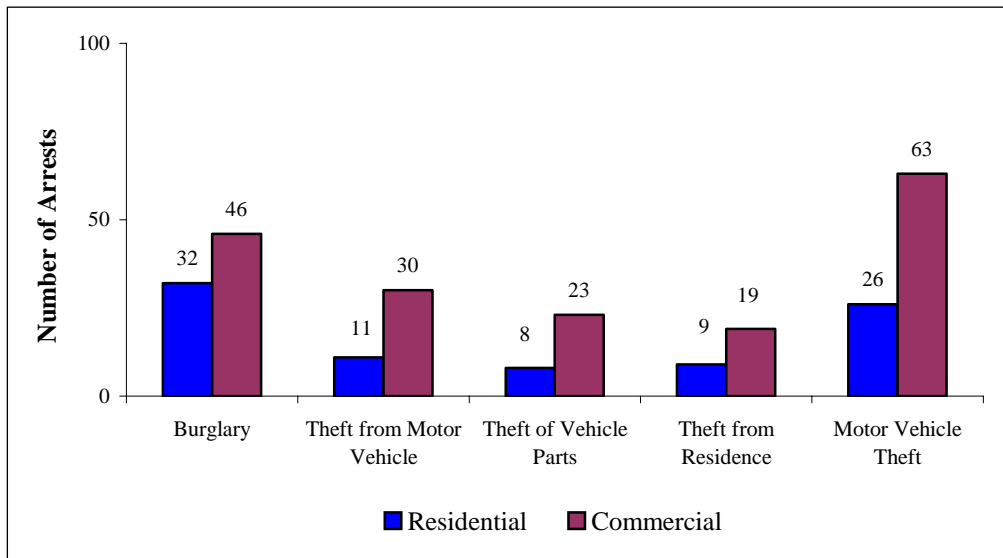
Property crimes include burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft. In the U.S., individuals over the age of 65 are disproportionately affected by property crimes. Over 90 percent of all crimes committed against the elderly are property crimes (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2005). In Miracle Manor, the level of property crimes is less than in the surrounding neighborhoods and is only slightly above the Tucson-wide average (Tucson Police Department 2005).

Property crimes are committed against both residents and businesses. The most common form of larceny in Miracle Manor is shoplifting. Forty-two percent of all larcenies in the Neighborhood in 2004 were incidents of shoplifting (Tucson Police Department 2005). However, residents have expressed specific concern over burglary, larceny from a residence, and larceny from a motor vehicle.

Unlike many other crime trends for the area, burglary is evenly split between the commercial and residential areas. Of the 78 burglaries that were committed in Miracle Manor last year, 32 of them (41 percent) were committed in residential areas. Other types of property crime occur only slightly more

frequently in the commercial areas of Miracle Manor (see Figure 4.4) (Tucson Police Department 2005).

Figure 4.4: Property Crimes in Miracle Manor, 2004



Source: Tucson Police Department 2005

Other Crimes

Residents have expressed concern over criminal damage, liquor laws, public intoxication, and vagrancy. Concern for these crimes is focused on nighttime activities in Jacinto Park and the unlit portions of Kelso (between 15th Avenue and Oracle).

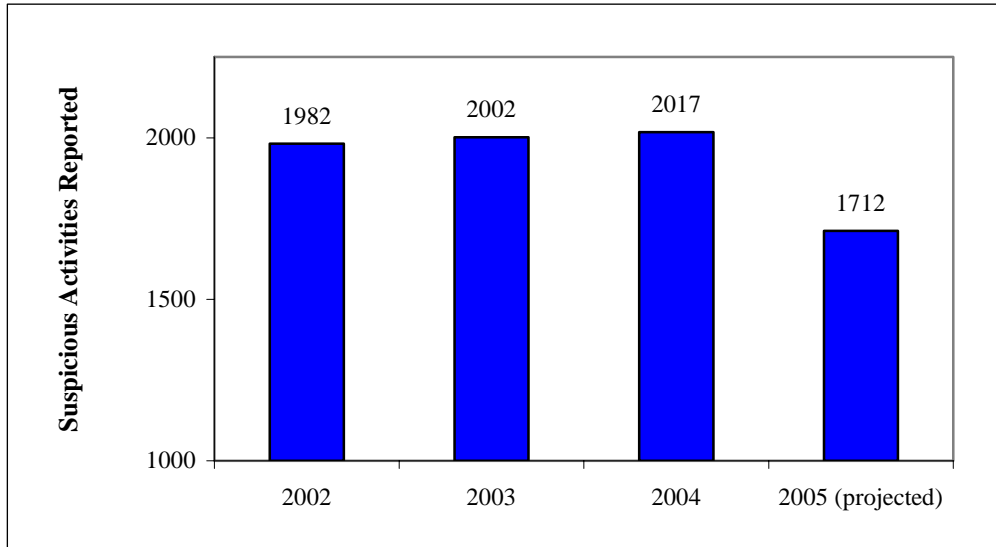
Crime Prevention

The most effective method that residents have to fight crime is to report suspicious activities and individuals (Schroeder 2005). Suspicious activities that should be reported to the police include, but are not limited to, the following: someone looking into windows and parked cars; unusual noises; cars, vans, or trucks moving slowly with no apparent destination or without lights; a stranger

sitting in a car or stopping to talk to a child (Los Angeles Police Department 2005).

The intervention by watchful residents is important and effective and residents in Miracle Manor are continuing to report suspicious activities and behaviors. In 2005, every report of a suspicious activity came from the residential area in the Neighborhood (Tucson Police Department 2005). Figure 4.5 shows the number of suspicious activities reported in Miracle Manor during the past four years. This chart includes reports of suspicious persons and vehicles (even those the police were unable to locate), reports of disturbances, and unfounded reports. It does not include false alarms from businesses or residences, calls for public assistance, or other peacekeeping duties (traffic accidents, personal injury accidents, and fire).

Figure 4.5: Suspicious Activities Reported in Miracle Manor, 2002-2005



Source: Tucson Police Department 2005

Community cohesiveness is also important for fighting crime within a neighborhood (Schroeder 2005). Residents who know each other and visit often are more likely to notice suspicious activity around each other's homes. The

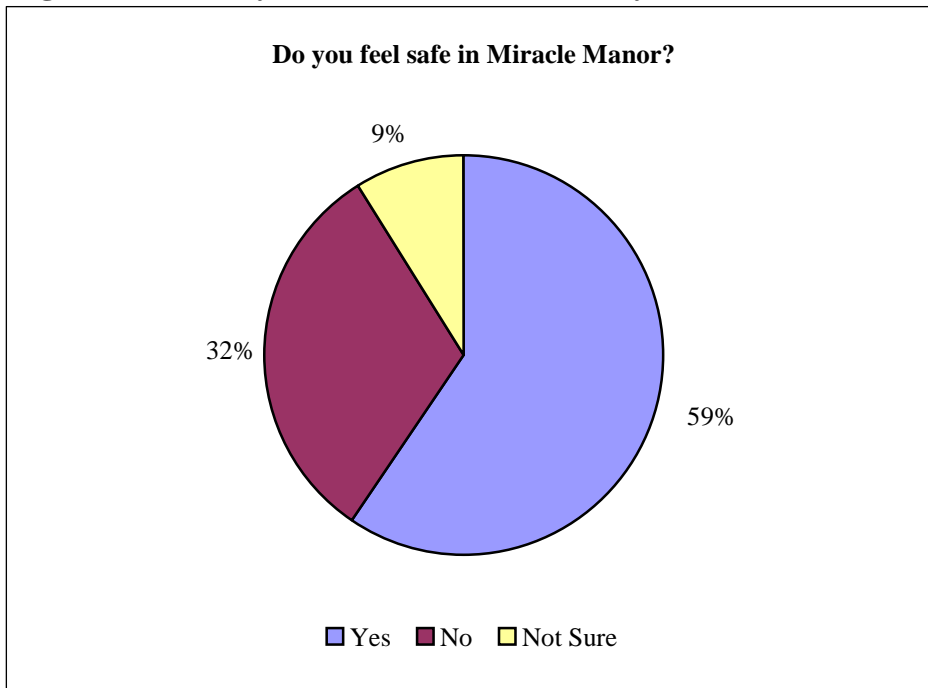
Neighborhood Survey indicated that one of the reasons many residents feel safe in Miracle Manor is due in part to the presence of alert neighbors.

Property crimes are usually crimes of opportunity, and lowering the number of these crimes is possible by reducing the number of opportunities available to criminals (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2005). A crime of opportunity is one that is not pre-meditated or planned in advance (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2005). With property crimes, a perpetrator may see a house or car that is not well protected and may take that opportunity to break in or steal from the house or car. Reducing these opportunities will have a corresponding reduction in the level of property crimes in Miracle Manor.

Safety

Results from the Miracle Manor Neighborhood Survey indicate that only one-third of residents do not feel safe, yet crime and safety are the most important concerns for residents (see Figure 4.6). Feedback from the Survey included reasons why residents did or did not feel safe. Common reasons for feeling safe in the Neighborhood include the recent improvements from the Back to Basics grant (which included the installation of streetlights and sidewalks), good neighbors, a strong police presence, and the lack of any serious incidents occurring to the respondent. Common reasons for not feeling safe in Miracle Manor include burglaries, drug activity, prostitution, loitering in the park by suspicious individuals, and the lack of police in the area.

Figure 4.6: Survey Results for Personal Safety



Source: Neighborhood Survey 2005

A resident's sense of security and safety are affected by a variety of factors. This report includes chapters that cover some of those factors, including vacant or abandoned housing (see Chapter III), or sidewalks and crosswalks (see Chapter V). Even an increase in participation and sense of community (Chapter VIII) can affect a resident's feeling of security.

Safety is also impacted by regional context. For example, Neighborhood residents are less than five miles from three major hospitals. They are two miles away from St. Mary's, three miles from University Medical Center, and five miles away from Northwest Medical Center. The proximity to police and fire protection can also impact how safe a resident feels in the Neighborhood. Two fire stations and two police stations are within five miles of the Neighborhood. Proximity to these facilities is a benefit for residents in Miracle Manor.

The 2002 Back to Basics grant also had an impact on how safe residents feel. The grant provided installation of new streetlights throughout the

Neighborhood. From Budmoore Terrace to Vanover Road between Fairview Avenue and 14th Avenue, streetlights are spaced every 125 to 150 feet. Similar spacing in streetlights is found on Glenn Street, Florence Street, and Laguna Street between Fairview Avenue and 14th Avenue.

Some areas of the Neighborhood remain without adequate lighting. For example, 15th Avenue between Kelso Street and Jacinto Street has no streetlights. Kelso Street between 15th Avenue and Oracle Road has been identified by the Police Department and by Neighborhood residents as a location for criminal activity. This area has no streetlights. Other areas without streetlights include the blocks south of Miracle Mile and the trailer parks south of Jacinto Street (see Map 5.2).

Another factor contributing to residents' sense of safety are the trash- and weed-filled easements that occupy certain areas of the Neighborhood. These areas are dark and shadowy during nighttime hours and are adjacent to the homes of many Miracle Manor residents. Cleaning out these easements would increase residents' sense of safety and security.

Assumptions

- Active citizen involvement in reporting suspicious activities will continue to have a positive impact on the level of crime in Miracle Manor
- Business owners in the Neighborhood share similar goals with Neighborhood residents and are likely to participate in crime prevention measures.
- Different criminal activities are connected. Reduction in one type of crime may lead to the reduction in another. For example, a reduction in drug activity in Miracle Manor may also lead to a reduction in burglaries.
- Neighbors who know each other will more closely scrutinize individuals and activities that do not belong in Miracle Manor.

- Crime will continue to be concentrated in the commercial areas of Miracle Manor.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal: Foster a safe environment in Miracle Manor

Objective 1: Increase the number of residents and Neighborhood businesses participating in crime prevention measures.

Strategies:

- Continue to invite Tucson police officers to speak at Neighborhood meetings.
- Form partnerships with Neighborhood businesses and work together on implementing crime prevention measures.
- Set up a system of “Block Captains” to encourage residents within each block to follow measures suggested by the Police Department to reduce the amount of crime on their street.
- Encourage residents and business owners to keep their homes well lit at night.
- Ask residents and business owners to call 911 whenever suspicious behaviors or activities are observed.
- Establish a Miracle Manor Neighborhood Watch Program to help educate residents and local business owners on what activities and behaviors should be reported to the police, and how to report accurate and useful information.

Objective 2: Increase residents' sense of security

Strategies:

- Inform residents about police procedures, including past successes in the Neighborhood that have reduced crime.
- Maintain a strong and visible presence of the Neighborhood Watch Program, such as displaying signs in the doors or windows of participants, organizing service projects such as cleaning up trash or graffiti, or clearing out an easement.
- Form partnerships with other Neighborhood Watch programs throughout the City to discuss strategies and tactics in the fight against crime. Strong partnerships should be formed with Balboa Heights and other neighborhoods that face issues related to crime.
- Work with the City to install streetlights in areas where they are needed.