



# KENSINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

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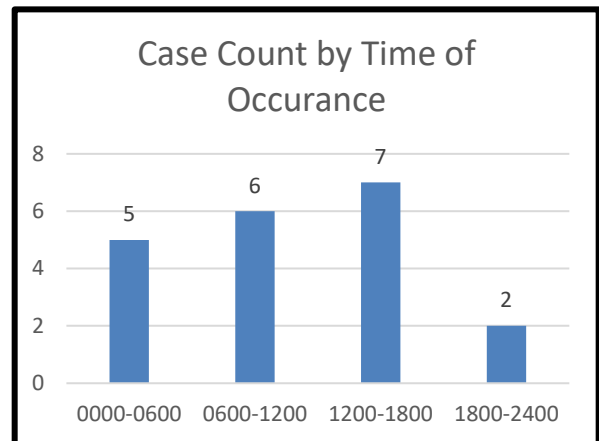
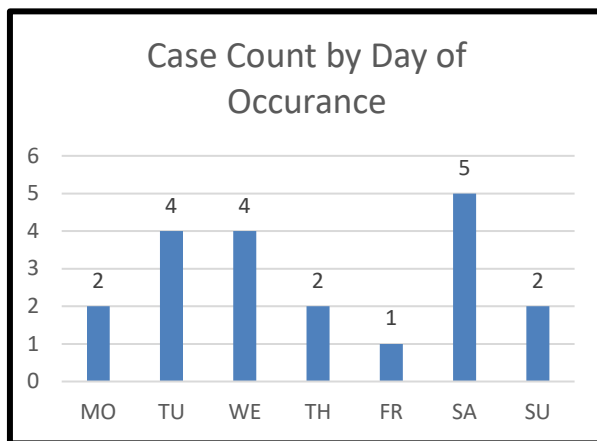
**DATE:** March 31, 2024  
**TO:** David Aranda: General Manager  
**FROM:** M. Gancasz, Chief of Police  
**RE:** Police Chief's Monthly Report, March 2024

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## Patrol Operations

The Kensington Police Department handled 996 incidents in March (up from 826 the prior month). 752 were officer-initiated events, including 53 traffic enforcement stops resulting in 26 citations (up from 21 in the prior month). Officers responded to 244 dispatched calls for service (up from 187) and took 21 reports (up from 20 in February). Two felony and six misdemeanor arrests were made. Officers investigated one home invasion robbery, one sexual assault, two drug-related offenses, one petty theft, three identity/mail theft/access card thefts, and six public intoxication investigations. Thirty percent of this month's investigations were felony crimes.

Our average response time increased from 4.5 minutes to 5.4 minutes. There were staffing shortages in March, as well as several major crime investigations which contributed to the increase in response time.



## Notable cases and arrests

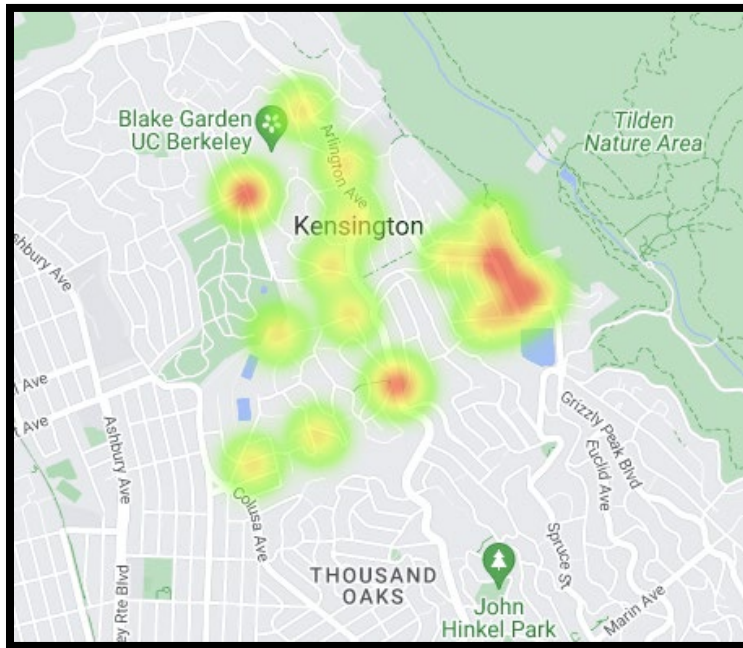
On March 4<sup>th</sup> a home invasion robbery occurred in the 200 block of Lake Dr. The robbery occurred at approximately 11 am. According to eyewitness and victim accounts, the perpetrators entered the residence, confronting the occupants and demanding valuables. The situation escalated rapidly, with one of the suspects physically assaulting a victim. The suspects took personal property of the

residents and fled the scene. One victim was taken to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. Due to the vigilance of the Kensington community, numerous leads were developed, leading to the identification and eventual recovery of the suspect vehicle. Multiple Search Warrants have been served by the Kensington Police Department in furtherance of this investigation and the case is ongoing.

On March 13<sup>th</sup>, Ofc. Thota was conducting extra patrol on Grizzly Peak Blvd at 3am. Ofc. Thota stopped a car for vehicle code violations and during the stop determined the passenger had warrants for her arrest and the driver was a felon in possession of a loaded and concealed firearm. The firearm was a “Ghost Gun” meaning it was illegally produced and had no serial number. Methamphetamine paraphernalia and burglary tools were also seized during the encounter. Both suspects had lengthy criminal histories and were on probation for previous criminal convictions. Both were arrested and transported to County Jail.

On March 29<sup>th</sup>, Albany PD requested assistance with an in-progress burglary. Ofc. Thota responded to the Albany United Methodist Church and identified a subject matching the suspect’s description fleeing the area. Ofc. Thota pursued the suspect on foot and apprehended him a short distance from the scene. The suspect was turned over to Albany PD.

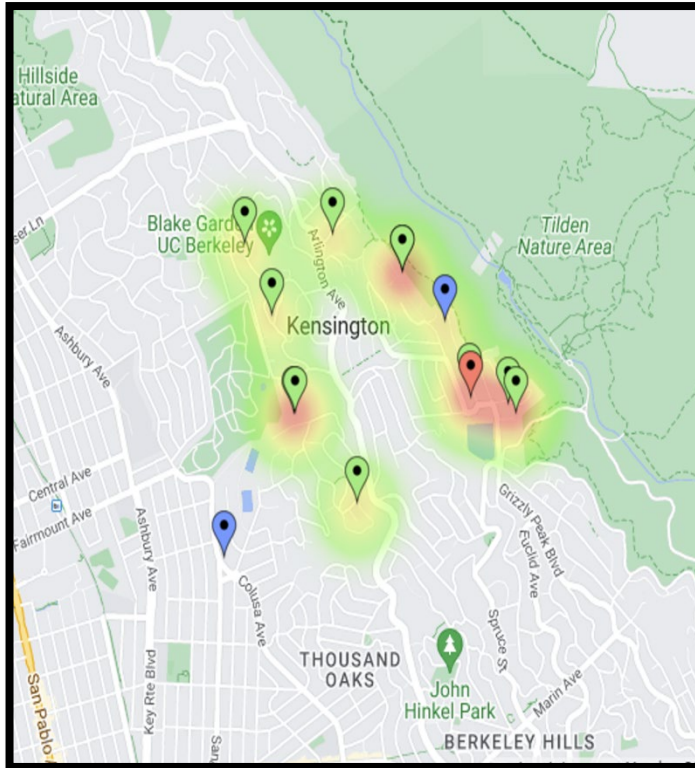
### Crime Trend Mapping March 1-31, 2024



#### 30 Day GIS mapping of Case Reports.

The map includes all criminal and non-criminal case investigations, including traffic accidents, death investigations, and vehicle impounds. The highest level of reported activity was around Beloit Ave/Lake Dr/Grizzly Peak Blvd. Extra patrols and interdiction resources have been deployed this month to the area.

## Crime Trend Mapping previous 365 days

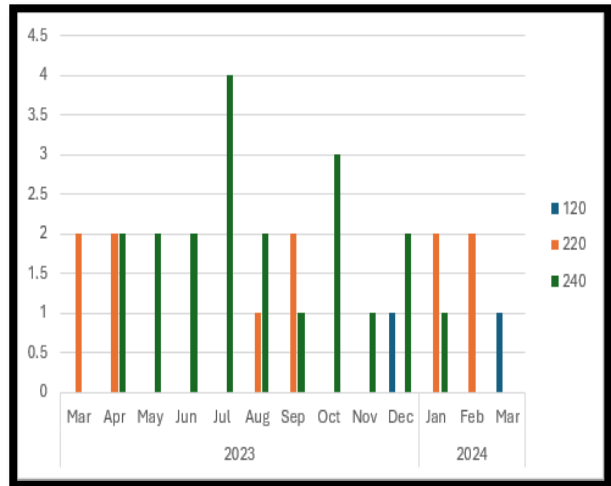
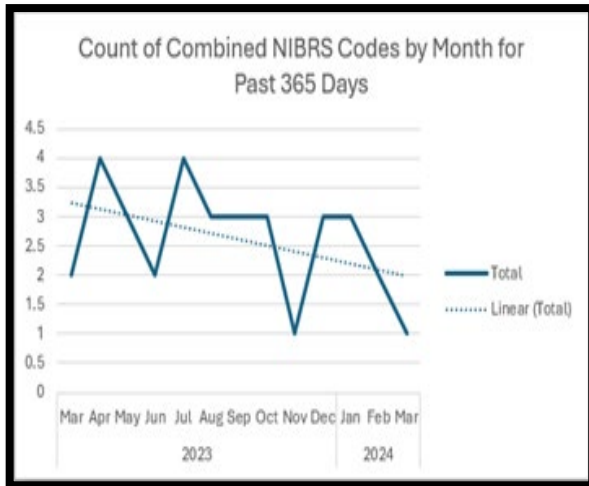


The 365-day map to the left shows crimes by type for the past twelve months. Most of the crimes are in the Grizzly Peak/Lake/Purdue area and just east of Arlington Ave.

Below are two charts showing more crime trends and usable data from the past year:

120 = Robbery  
 220 = Burglary  
 240 = Stolen Vehicle

(120, 220, and 240 do not denote the number of crimes but are mapping categories)



## Analysis

Since early 2023, crime rates have been steadily decreasing across almost all categories of crime. As of the first quarter of 2024, there are no significant or sustained increases in serious violent or property crimes.

## **Traffic Safety**

During March, there were five traffic collisions, none of which were criminal in nature. No hit and runs collisions were reported this month. One of the traffic collisions involved loss of control of a vehicle with it crashing into a business, and the incident is being resolved civilly between the involved parties.

## **Administration**

I met with El Cerrito Chief of Police Paul Keith and Albany Chief of Police John Geissberger on March 6 to discuss interagency support, safety, and collaboration. Officer Harjot Gill successfully completed our Lateral Officer Field Training Program and is now working a shift, patrolling Kensington. A weekly check-in with Flock Safety revealed the County is in possession of the required permits and Kensington is scheduled for its camera installation in the coming months. The program is proceeding faster than we anticipated. We received a second application for our volunteer program and that applicant is in the background phase. The payroll implementation team met on March 5 and March 20 and initiated several successful tests in accordance with the contract agreements. We are optimistic testing can be completed and the system will go live by May 31. I interviewed a police officer applicant on March 28 and extended a conditional offer of employment contingent on successful completion of a thorough background investigation completed by Jason Haynes. If successful, his anticipated start date will be mid/late April. This additional hire will increase staffing levels to eight (8).

## **Training**

Officers completed mandatory training this month, despite the staffing challenges. Officers Payne, Thota, and Gill completed a 24-hour tactical patrol rifle course put on by the Hercules Police Department at no cost to the Kensington Police Department. We did, however, provide lunch for their staff during one of the training days. The class certifies the officers to deploy patrol rifles, which is an invaluable tool for responding to active shooters and other armed and dangerous suspects.

Officers Payne, Thota, and Gill along with Sgt. Lande participated in K9 training with the El Cerrito Police Department. Officers practiced conducting felony traffic stops in conjunction with ECPD and learned how to coordinate safely with the deployment of a canine to assist in suspect apprehensions for felonies. The KPD team also practiced conducting building searches and room clearings with the assistance of a canine. The goal is to ensure safer operations for officers when working with a canine and a canine handler whether in Kensington or other Jurisdictions.

Officers Gill, Fajardo, and Sgt. Lande, attended a POST mandated Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC) through the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office. The team reviewed and acknowledged our pursuit policies and emergency driving procedures and spent time on a driving course perfecting their slow speed maneuvers and their emergency vehicle operations. This training satisfies their state requirement for pursuit driving for the next two years.

Sgt. Lande completed the POST Under the Influence training and the POST Active Shooter training.

## March Patrol Log

- On Saturday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, officers responded to the 200 block of Grizzly Peak Blvd to complete a death investigation. No foul play is suspected, and the case was referred to the Coroner's office.
- On Saturday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, officers responded to the 300 block of Coventry Road to investigate mail theft. Officers determined the crime occurred in another jurisdiction but took a courtesy report to assist the neighboring jurisdiction with their investigation.
- On Thursday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024, officers responded to a cycling-related injury in the 200 block of Kenyon Ave. A cyclist rode their bike over uneven pavement resulting from East Bay MUD pipe replacement work. The cyclist lost control and fell off their bike causing a complaint of pain. EBMUD was notified.
- On Saturday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, an officer was conducting extra patrol on Grizzly Peak Blvd when he noticed a vehicle that appeared to be casing the area for an opportunity to commit a crime. The officer conducted a vehicle stop for a vehicle code violation and contacted the driver who was acting suspicious and verbally combative with the officer. The vehicle was later towed from the scene for vehicle code violations and the driver cited.
- On Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, officers responded to Kingston Rd to investigate a report of identity theft.
- On Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, officers responded to the intersection of Purdue Ave and Kenyon Ave for a report of a collision. Officers determined there were no injuries, and the parties had successfully exchanged information. A report was taken documenting the exchange.
- On Saturday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, officers responded to a report of a vehicle that collided into a building in the 200 block of Arlington Ave. Officers determined the driver accelerated over the curb and into a business. The driver and the business management exchanged information and resolved the matter civilly. A report was taken to document the incident. No injuries were reported.
- On Wednesday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, officers responded to the 200 block of Lake Dr for a theft report that occurred overnight. Initially, the owner did not realize anything had been taken; however, the following day, the victim received a call from a bank stating someone had attempted to cash their checks. An officer was able to gain additional leads from the bank, and the investigation is ongoing. An arrest warrant is being sought for more evidence that will lead to the apprehension of the suspect.
- On Thursday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, officers responded to the 200 block of Purdue for identity theft. A case report was authored.
- On Wednesday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, officers responded to the 100 block of Arlington Ave for a report of a bicycle vs vehicle collision with injuries. Fire and Medical responded to the scene to render aid to the cyclist. An injury-collision investigation was completed.
- On Friday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, officers received a report of a sexual assault. The investigation is in the early stages and officers are working with the DA's office to further the case.

## Community

Sgt. Lande attended a neighborhood meeting to talk to citizens about the recent robbery that took place on their street.

Training with El Cerrito Officers interacting with Police K9's in the field



**POST Mandated Driving and Patrol Rifle Training Completed in March**



**Weapon and narcotics seized during a felony traffic stop March 13 by Officer V. Thota**

