

District2Atlanta

The Heart of the City

Midtown Public Safety Briefing Recap

Hosted by Atlanta District 2 City Councilmember Amir Farokhi

Tuesday, October 9, 2018 / 7:00 pm / Margaret Mitchell House

About 70 Midtown residents attended the briefing.

The briefing began with a panel moderated by Councilmember Farokhi (arfarokhi@atlantaga.gov):

- Major Darin Schierbaum, APD Zone 5 Commander (dschierbaum@atlantaga.gov)
- Kevin Green, Midtown Alliance / Midtown Blue (kevin@midtownatl.com)
- Courtney Smith, Midtown Neighbors' Association (marketing@midtownatlanta.org)
- Moki Macias, Atlanta-Fulton Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative (moki@prearrestdiversion.org)
- Justine Ingram, Fulton County Board of Health (justine.ingram@fultoncountyga.gov)
- Keith Lamar, Fulton County Community Prosecutors' Office (keith.lamar@fultoncountyga.gov)

Panel presentation highlights (7:05-7:55 pm)

- Major Schierbaum: In September Midtown experienced 4 violent incidents that were "very outside the norm" for the neighborhood. 3 occurred within days of each other. Zone 5 fields 66,000 calls annually. The bulk of Zone 5 work is responding to 911 calls. Over the past few months, the largest number of emails and 911 calls for Zone 5 have been for e-scooters.
- Kevin Green: Midtown is home to 100,000 people each day. Midtown Blue is the largest initiative of Midtown Alliance: \$1.7M annually, bringing 700 additional patrol hours weekly through off-duty APD and civilian staff. 94% of crime in the Midtown Improvement District (MID) is non-violent property crime; 6% is person-on-person crime, mostly between people who know each other. Midtown Blue is "additive" to Zone 5 coverage.
- Courtney Smith: MNA is a 50-year-old nonprofit. Annual memberships fund a local safety patrol. MNA is active in Fulton County's Citizens' Court Watch program, an effective way for residents to communicate with the court system re the local impact of crime, especially violent crime and repeat offenders. To learn more about the organization and how you can support its initiatives: MidtownAtlanta.org
- Moki Macias: PAD currently serving 55 individuals during the first year of a two-year pilot. The initiative aims to provide assistance to non-violent offenders and prevent them from getting caught up in the revolving door of the criminal justice system. To learn more: prearrestdiversion.org
- Justine Ingram: Described Fulton County's focus for populations of concern to Midtown residents, including HIV education and prevention for youth and young adults.
- Keith Lamar: Provided updates on cases of concern to Midtown residents, including the recent murder of a homeless man on Peachtree Street. Also encouraged attendees to become active in Fulton County's Citizens' Court Watch program, which includes an annual training.

Open Q & A / Attendees and panelists (7:55-8:30 pm)

- Q: Does Midtown Blue have full arrest powers?
 - A: Yes, with the exception of moving violations.
- Q: Where do our tax dollars go? Why do we have to pay extra for public safety?
 - A: This is a citywide challenge in a context where we are 300 + officers short of our 2,000 officer goal. The City's recent approval of a 30% salary increase for APD officers over the next 3 years should help us address recruitment and retention.
- Q: How does APD's new online crime reporting function work?
 - A: You can report everything except Part 1 crimes online via <http://www.atlantapd.org/services/online-reporting>
- Q: What is legal/illegal on sidewalks?
 - A: You can't sleep on a sidewalk. You can't block a sidewalk. But you can sit on a sidewalk.
- Q: Why can't we get sex workers and loiterers out of our alleys? How do alleys work that make it so hard?
 - A: The City of Atlanta abandoned jurisdiction over alleys decades ago. APD can patrol, as can the Midtown Neighbors' Association public safety patrol. Request a "directed patrol" via 911 if you are experiencing issues in your alley. Some non-violent individuals may qualify for referral to the Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative. Referrals made by APD officers.
- Q: Who is in charge of public safety in and immediately adjacent to MARTA stations?
 - A: MARTA. To report incidents and other concerns, you can call 911; dial #MPD on your mobile phone; call MARTA Police at 404-848-4911; or download MARTA's free See & Say app, which allows you to send photos and descriptions directly to MARTA Police.
- Q: Do you have an update on the Piedmont Park incident in which a man exposed himself to a jogger?
 - A: We have some leads, but we have not made an arrest yet.
- Q: I've been here 6 years. Seems like panhandlers are becoming more aggressive.
 - A: Call 911. If you note someone frequenting a location, provide APD Zone 5 with details.
- Q: Do we have a drug court?
 - A: Yes.
- Q: How can we put pressure on johns?
 - A: This is an important issue, but not easy. If you can provide photos and license plate details to 911 or APD Zone 5, please do.
- Q: I've called 911 about homeless issues, with no response.
 - A: When you do not receive the response you expect, Zone 5 Commander Schierbaum wants to hear from you: dschierbaum@atlantaga.gov