



GDSN Neighbors:

We hope this season finds you well and encourage you to take a few minutes to review this year-end report from the GDSN.

The Patrol

After a full year of service to the neighborhood, the new patrol provider has received high marks from many. Since 1998, the Garden District Security patrol officers have provided around-the-clock enhanced security patrols for the neighborhood. This includes multiple private patrol officers on simultaneous duty plus NOPD detail officers on duty for random shifts. Every day, at least three GDSN officers are available in the District to assist in emergency situations, check homes when you are out of town, provide an escort from your car to your door, or check out suspicious persons in the area. They work closely with the NOPD officers of the Sixth District to deter crime in the area. All residents and businesses within the boundaries of Louisiana Avenue, Carondelet Street, Jackson Avenue and Magazine Street (both sides of all streets) are eligible to receive GDSN patrol service any time, day or night. The positive results of this coverage can be noted in our crime reports which are consistently lower than many other areas across the city that do not have enhanced security.

Earlier this year, the Board approved an additional 8-hour shift to add oversight between 4 pm and 8 pm every day. This vehicle “floats” to areas that were recently hit or reports of suspicious activity have been received. During the month of December and through the holidays, the officer in this unit will pay particular attention to Magazine Street to help deter shoplifters and provide an extra pair of eyes while the shopping season is in full swing. This shift is in addition to the year-round NOPD detail patrol scheduled each evening during random hours.

Actions by The Board of Commissioners

This year, several meetings of the GDSN Board of Commissioners were held. All GDSN meetings are open to the public. This year, the Board voted to form four committees made up of Board members and residents to assist in the following areas: Long Range Planning, Outreach, Neighborhood Camera Program, and Public Safety. Several residents signed up to assist. These committees were recently approved by the Louisiana Board of Ethics and will begin meeting in earnest in 2024.

Ideas being considered by the committees include: increasing security coverage and visibility via added patrols, securing an NOPD vehicle for use by our NOPD detail officers; hiring a tech manager to provide support for the new camera system, our reporting and tracking systems and other IT needs; hiring a consultant to complete a district assessment to determine the best use of long term resources; and setting up block captains to assist in reaching residents not yet on our email list.

Cameras

After a few technical hiccups in our residential camera program, we have made some great strides for a higher quality program all around: the newly found equipment is better and the cost of the program to all residents interested in signing up is lower. The biggest program improvement allows residents to use their existing cameras as part of this integrated system. The cameras must be able to capture the street and or sidewalk footage to be eligible. With your help, we hope to have hundreds of public-facing cameras installed across the district in 2024. Because these cameras will immediately alert the dispatcher and officers on duty when a certain activity is captured on video, potential crimes can be deterred, rather than just investigated after the fact. Thus, the more cameras that are installed as part of the GDSN program, the safer the neighborhood can be. Be sure to look for more info to come as we roll out this new and improved program.

A Few Reminders

Lights: The benefits of additional lighting cannot be emphasized enough. All residents are asked to help light up the District by keeping porch lights on at night and adding additional security lights to their property. Lights can go a long way in deterring crime! Entergy offers low-cost security lighting that anyone can add to their block. There is no charge for the light or the installation. A low fee is added to your monthly bill. Visit Entergy’s website under Residential >Products>Security Lighting.

Safe walks: Call 504-899-4373 (GDSN). Escorts can help prevent a would-be criminal from taking advantage of a situation. Please play it safe, call the patrol. Remember to give this number to your

visitors and family members to use whenever possible for escort service or to report unusual activity or criminal behavior.

Email Blast List? If you are not already receiving our periodic email blasts, we invite you to join our email list to receive alert notices and activity reports regarding the patrol, the NOPD and general neighborhood concerns. *If you received this newsletter by email, you are all set.* To sign up, simply send a request to join along with your email address and physical home address to gdsdpatrol@bellsouth.net.

GDS Decals: Telephone and car decals are available for your use. The phone stickers can be placed anywhere to facilitate easy access to the number for the patrol. GDS car decals should be placed on your rear windshield to allow the patrol to easily identify your car as belonging to a resident. Simply send an email request with your address to gdsdpatrol@bellsouth.net to receive either or both decals.

Your Alarm System. If you have a house alarm, it is recommended that you add the GDS number as one of the first responder numbers in case of emergency. The GDS patrol officers can usually respond faster than the NOPD to help control the situation.

Crime Statistics:

This year, as always, car burglaries top the list of reported crimes. Car burglaries are a big nuisance, and the cost of replacing shattered windows can be expensive. In addition, the risk of having criminals in the neighborhood elevates the potential for more serious crimes to occur. The NOPD and the GDS officers cannot solve this alone. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, we remind you to **remove all items from your car**, report each incident, report all suspicious activity immediately and, if possible, add camera surveillance to your home to help in the identification and apprehension of these perpetrators.

This year our GDS patrol officers have answered thousands of calls for service including hundreds of resident escorts, home checks for our traveling residents, and business checks for area merchants. They have responded to medical/mental emergency responses, car thefts and burglaries, auto thefts, auto accidents, suspicious person calls, and shoplifting, and assisted NOPD on serious crimes such as residential burglaries and carjackings. These are only a few of the activities they have encountered throughout the year trying to keep our neighborhood safe. We believe that their visibility continues to be a deterrent to potential crime in this area for our 2500+ residents and our many visitors. Our GDS patrol statistics are posted on our website (gdsdpatrol.com>activity) every two weeks. The city-wide information can be found on the NOPD's website <https://nola.gov/nopd/data/>.

2024 Budget

At its public hearing and budget meeting earlier this year, the GDS Board of Commissioners voted to roll back the number of mills to be levied against each parcel in 2024 to 6.7 mills, down from 2023 levy of 8 mills. This tax is billed as part of the city's property tax bills that are mailed to all homeowners or to their mortgage company. The 2024 budget below shows the projected income and expenses for the coming year. Note that the policy set by the board aims to retain a healthy fund balance to be prepared for continued coverage in case of a disaster or evacuation.

Fund Balance, Forwarded from 2023	\$ <u>830,202</u>
Income:	
Revenue from taxes * (net 99% collectible)	\$ 889,904
Less @ 4% City collection fee	(35,596)
Prior years taxes	15,000
Interest income	<u>20,000</u>
 Total Revenue	 \$ 889,308

EXPENSES

Patrol	daily/ 24 hour coverage	\$1,015,859
NOPD Extra Patrol		124,000
Insurance		35,000
Enhanced Security Program		15,000
Neighborhood Camera Program		166,880
Audit/ Accounting		10,000
Administration/Office/GPS:		66,427
Website		2,000
Legal Fees		10,000
Contingency		<u>5,000</u>
		<u>\$ 1,450,166</u>

Balance Forward

\$ 269,344

*Based on estimate from Assessor's Preliminary Net Taxable Property Assessments for 2024 (112,734,780) @ 99% collection rate at 6.7 mils and average costs of patrols and NOPD.

GDSD was formed in 1998 through legislative action taken by its sponsoring organization, The Garden District Association. By significant margins, it was approved by the voters of the District several times since then. It is a subdivision of the state of Louisiana and an approved taxing district. The GDSD Board of Commissioners is made up of 11 residents of the Garden District. Five of the GDSD Commissioners are appointed by the GDA, one member is appointed by the State Representative, the State Senator, the Mayor, the Magazine Street Merchants and the St. Charles Avenue Association. The President of the GDA also serves on this Board. The annual fee assessed to each homeowner is based on a millage determined by the Board of Commissioners each year. All meetings are open to the public.