

From: Esther Manheimer <esthermanheimer@avlcouncil.com>
Sent: 9/16/2022 4:48:02 AM
To: Debra Campbell <dcampbell@ashevillenc.gov>
Cc:
Subject: Fwd: Crime stats

Begin forwarded message:

From: Sally Kestin <skestin@avlwatchdog.org>
Date: September 15, 2022 at 3:53:15 PM EDT
To: "Esther E. Manheimer" <emanheimer@vwlawfirm.com>
Subject: Fwd: Crime stats

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Bill Davis <bdavis2@ashevillenc.gov>
Date: Thu, Sep 15, 2022, 3:20 PM
Subject: Re: Crime stats
To: Sally Kestin <skestin@avlwatchdog.org>
Cc: Chief David Zack <dzack@ashevillenc.gov>

Sally,

Unfortunately, your conclusions are incorrect. Here is some information we gathered from our crime & data analyst to help you understand that violent crime is, in fact, increasing in Asheville this year, and it's primarily attributable to the rise in aggravated assaults.

Year-to-date 2022, there has been an increase of 130 more violent crimes reported this year compared to 2021 (YTD), and, again, it's due almost entirely to an increase in aggravated assaults, which have increased by 44%. Robberies, YTD, have also increased by 29%. The only violent crime that has seen reductions is rape, down 28%.

Remember, too, that when we discuss violent crime, we're referring to the UCR standard, which includes homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault (not simple assault). NIBRS, which is used to track the Crime Summary Dashboard, includes all forms of assault in its data (including simple assault), but robberies are excluded as crimes against property. The dashboard looks at the last 365 days and compares to the previous 365 days and is not year-to-date data. Understanding that allows you to better understand the data.

You can also break down the data yourself by going to Asheville's Open Data Portal under APD Public Incidents, which includes a category called Offense Group Short Description that allows users to differentiate between simple assaults and aggravated assaults (https://data-avl.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/fa266be763124be89fee8c1fd99f88ff_0/explore)

Lastly, note that the NCSBI Annual Summary Report of 2021 does list 766 violent crimes for 2020 and 708 for 2021, but these are ACTUAL total counts, not crime rates per 100,000 people. Sure, Asheville's total counts of crime may not be as high as larger-populated municipalities, but the crime rates are comparable based on population differences. For example, Asheville historically has crime rates higher than Winston-Salem and on par with Charlotte, when you compare by population and not actual counts. Without current crime rates from each of these cities, we're unable to compare this year's crime rates to the other municipalities.

I hope this better explains why we say that violent crime is on the rise this year, primarily due to a rise in aggravated assaults. Hopefully, those numbers will decrease, but year-to-date data shows the increase.

Regards,

Bill D.

Bill Davis

Asheville Police Department
Public Information Officer
828-259-5881

On Thu, Sep 15, 2022 at 11:00 AM Sally Kestin <skestin@avlwatcdog.org> wrote:

Good morning, Bill.

I've been looking at crime stats as a result of the recent Fox News story and other media reports describing increasing violent crime rates in Asheville, making it one of the most violent cities in the U.S. According to SBI stats, Asheville's violent crime rate peaked in 2020 at 764 per 100,000 population and decreased in 2021 to 708. Other cities' rates were considerably higher, including Charlotte, Durham, Fayetteville, Greensboro, Raleigh and Winston-Salem. Additionally, APD's crime dashboard shows crimes against persons down 10 percent in the last year and crimes against property down 20 percent. Robberies and assaults also are trending down, according to the dashboard.

I'd like to speak to Chief Zack about the statistics, the stories that have been circulating about the crime rate and the impact of officers leaving the department. I'm available today except from 1:30 to 4.

Thank you,

Sally

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Sally Kestin, investigative reporter and co-founder, Asheville Watchdog, 954-802-9578
2013 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service