

DRUG ACTIVITY AND DISORDER IN THE 3500 & 3600 BLOCKS OF MONTGOMERY ROAD -DISTRICT TWO-

The Team:

CPD District Two Neighborhood Unit, Violent Crimes Squad, Crime Analyst, City Buildings and Law Departments, Community members, Evanston Community Council, Evanston Business District

Scan:

In the spring of 2024, District Two Neighborhood officers noticed an increase of illegal activity in Evanston along the 3500 and 3600 blocks of Montgomery Rd. There was a high occurrence of drug sales, loitering and disorderly conduct affecting residences and businesses in the area. During the scanning phase, two problematic properties which are seeing higher incidence of violent crimes were identified:

- 3601 Montgomery Rd – Marathon Station
- 3564 Montgomery Rd – private property



Problem Definition/Contributing changes:

Although a history of illicit activity was known in this area, this recent increase was believed to be caused by multiple factors. The Marathon Station changed ownership in Nov 2023 and the previous funded police details stopped. In addition, the property across the street was being used for consumption of alcohol and drug-related usage and illegal activities.

Analysis:

Preliminary data analysis included reviewing CFS data (self-initiated and reactive) as well as crime incident data. Offenses that occurred in the two-block area revealed 3 top locations for offenses:

- 3641 Montgomery Rd – UDF
- 3601 Montgomery Rd – Marathon
- 3564 Montgomery Rd - Vacant

Upon review of the types of offenses, UDF tended to be primarily shoplifting, whereas 3601 and 3564 have crimes more violent in nature.

For this reason, work was concentrated on working with property owners on reducing crime for 3601 Montgomery Rd (Marathon) and 3564 Montgomery Rd (private residence).

Responses:

Vacant commercial & residential structure – 3564 Montgomery Rd.

The premise was ordered to be kept vacant by the Department of Buildings and Inspections for uninhabitable living conditions and secured by the City. A nuisance lawsuit was filed when the owner attempted to re-open the premises during the summer of 2025. The case remains pending.

Marathon Station – 3601 Montgomery Rd.

After meetings and agreements in June and July of 2024, owners agreed to take steps to address the violence perpetrated by drug dealers including adjustment of store hours for alcohol sales, hiring of private security and right of entry agreement. The owner never fulfilled his promises. Police made several undercover buys from inside the business in front of the store's staff. A nuisance lawsuit was filed and the premises was closed shortly thereafter on August 14, 2024. The owner sold the business and the City agreed to resolve the case and allow the business to re-open under certain conditions. To date, the station has not been reopened by the new owner.

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3569 Montgomery – This vacant premises, adjacent to the Marathon, was being used by the owner to dump/store construction debris and used by squatters for illegal activity. The Law Department filed a civil action to force the removal of refuse and ensure the property was maintained.

Assessment:

One violent crime was reported at 3601 Montgomery in 2024. Three property crimes were reported here, and eight Part 2 crimes. Project team members continue to monitor activities at this location.

Table 1. Full year data measures occurring at Marathon Gas Station (3601 Montgomery)

	2022	2023	2024	Change (23 - 22)	Change (24 - 23)
CFS from Caller	186	78	126	-58%	62%
Reported Crime	Violent	0	1	N/C	+1
	Property	3	0	-3	+3
	Part 2	5	3	-40%	167%
Arrests	7	12	10	71%	-17%

Note: CFS from Caller indicate only calls that initiated from a citizen, rather than an officer

Table 2. Full year data measures occurring at UDF Gas Station (3641 Montgomery)

	2022	2023	2024	Change (23 - 22)	Change (24 - 23)
CFS from Caller	154	148	144	-4%	-3%
Reported Crime	Violent	1	0	N/C	-1
	Property	16	22	38%	-36%
	Part 2	6	8	33%	-50%
Arrests	17	16	9	-6%	-44%

Note: CFS from Caller indicate only calls that initiated from a citizen, rather than an officer



At 3641 Montgomery, there were no reported violent crimes in 2024. Property crimes decreased by 36% and Part 2 crimes decreased by 50%.

The extensive measures taken to subdue illegal activity in these two problematic properties led to a noticeable improvement in crime in this area. While calls for service increased slightly in the area, violent crime and property crime decreased by 50% and Part 2 crime decreased by 21%. Arrests also decreased by 26%.

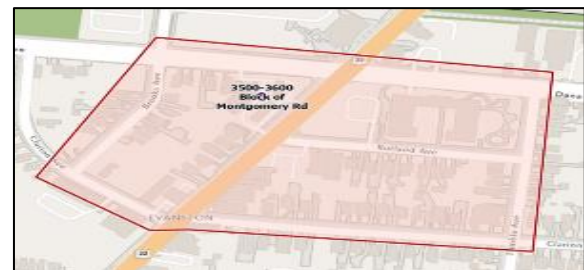


Table 3. Full year data measures occurring within identified area

	2022	2023	2024	Change (23 - 22)	Change (24 - 23)
CFS from Caller	634	463	496	-27%	7%
Reported Crime	Violent	6	4	33%	-50%
	Property	41	42	2%	-50%
	Part 2	47	38	-19%	-21%
Arrests	45	43	32	-4%	-26%

Note: CFS from Caller indicate only calls that initiated from a citizen, rather than an officer