

## Public Safety

### *Setting and Issues*

Public safety and the fear of crime along the University Avenue corridor has been the number one priority of this community since the beginning of the planning process. The University Avenue community had been insistent that prior to the discussion of any other issues, public safety had to be reviewed, discussed and acted upon.

A number of specific issues were identified as part of the overall concern about public safety, the first of which was an expressed need for *increased police presence*. The Police Department's recently adopted community policing approach will be an effective tool to implement the public safety improvements of the University Avenue plan.

Community policing is based, in part, on increased daily contact with the community, usually by foot or bicycle patrol. The other primary component is developing a problem solving approach to crime in partnership with the community. Both of these elements have been reviewed, discussed by the community, and adopted as part of the Strategic Plan process. In the 1994-95 City budget, the City Council increased the Police Department budget significantly. One additional foot patrol officer and 2.5 additional bicycle patrol officers were added to the University and San Pablo area.

*Physical maintenance* was an issue identified as having an impact on the community's sense of security and perception of public safety. The proliferation of graffiti and litter were specific concerns that surfaced early in the process, and were addressed in the short-term through concerted clean-up days and the location of additional trash cans along the corridor. In the long-term, joint clean-up efforts might be formalized and combined with periodic public safety audits to determine where other maintenance related improvements affecting public safety could be needed.

The community is also concerned with achieving improved communication with the police department including *obtaining and maintaining crime statistics*. In the past there were difficulties and complications in obtaining data, due to the fact that many of the statistics were still being recorded manually and the study area stretches across six census tracts.

The *prevalence of liquor stores* in the area and the permitted sale of fortified beer and wine have been identified by the community as public safety issues. Because the State regulates the license of liquor sales, the City currently has limited control over the location and regulation of liquor sales outlets. Nevertheless, the City is in the process of developing a city-wide strategy for addressing public safety and nuisance problems related to alcohol outlets and the sale of fortified liquor. This strategy involves legislative action, enforcement, and prevention planning.

The *design of physical improvements*, although not specifically identified by the community as a critical public safety issue, has the potential to significantly improve the conditions and perception of safety throughout the corridor. Design considerations affecting public safety can be divided into categories: the awareness of the environment, visibility, and finding help.

Awareness of the environment relates to designing public space that is understandable to the pedestrian. Design features such as pedestrian-scaled lighting, clear sight lines, and the elimination of entrapment spots can significantly change the real and perceived safety in the area.

Increasing the visibility of activities taking place in the public areas by all members of the community promotes safety and a sense of comfort. Visibility is affected by the number of people who are available to “look out” on the street. Defining the appropriate mix and intensity of land uses for the area can provide “eyes on the street” at all times of the day and night.

Finally, improving the *ability to locate assistance* and help promptly can enhance a person’s sense of security. For example, the community identified a specific need for additional public phones to be located on University Avenue. Other design features that could be considered include clearly

demarcating exit, alarm, and telephone locations, as well as maintaining clear passageways that allow easy access and movement throughout the area.

### *Crime Data*

Newly obtained 1995 crime data for the University Avenue Strategic Plan area has recently been developed through the use of a Geographic Information System (GIS) software program. This program allows the user to aggregate crime data according to specific geographic boundaries, such as each of the four Plan Sub Areas, the Plan area as a whole, and for comparative purposes, similar commercial corridors within the City.

The data for this analysis is drawn from the Berkeley Police Department’s Records Management System for 1995 and is aggregated into two classifications: “Crimes Against Persons” including murder, rape, robbery (by force or threat) and assault, and “Crimes Against Property” including burglary, theft, car theft, etc. Crimes are identified by address but, given the limitations of the program at this time, each incidence is plotted (or “geocoded”) by city block rather than individual parcel.<sup>10</sup>

**Incidence of Crime  
City-wide vs. Plan Area**

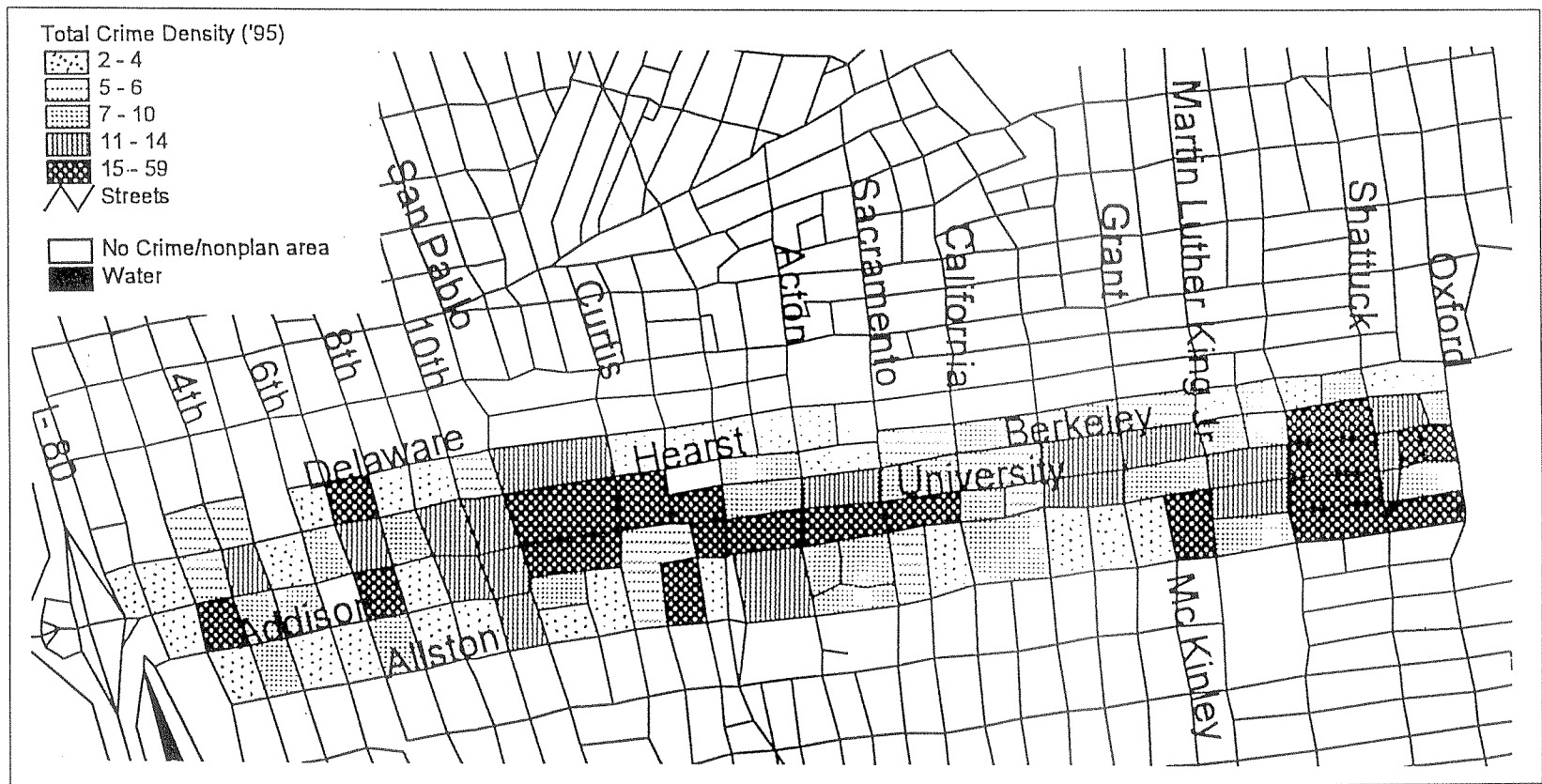
	<i>Citywide</i>	<i>Plan Area</i>	<i>% Citywide</i>
<i>Population</i>	102,718	7,712	8%
<i>Total Crimes</i>	6,947	1,066	15%
<i>Crimes Against Persons</i>	2,317	440	19%
<i>Crimes Against Property</i>	4,630	626	14%

*Plan Area*

Out of the 6,947 crimes plotted city-wide, 1,066 occur within the University Avenue Plan area, or approximately 15% of all crimes in the City. Out of the 1,066 crimes committed in the Plan area, 626 are defined as “Crimes Against Property” while 440 come under the category of “Crimes Against Persons”. The figures for the Plan area compared to the city-wide

total for crimes against persons and property respectively are: city-wide “Crimes Against Persons” = 2,317, vs. the Plan area = 440 (19%); city-wide “Crimes Against Property” = 4,630, Plan area = 626 (14%).

A comparison using crime and resident population can be useful in comparing cities to each other because, at least in theory, cities have a comparable mix of characteristics or land uses (e.g. commercial, residential,



1995 Total Crime Density by Block

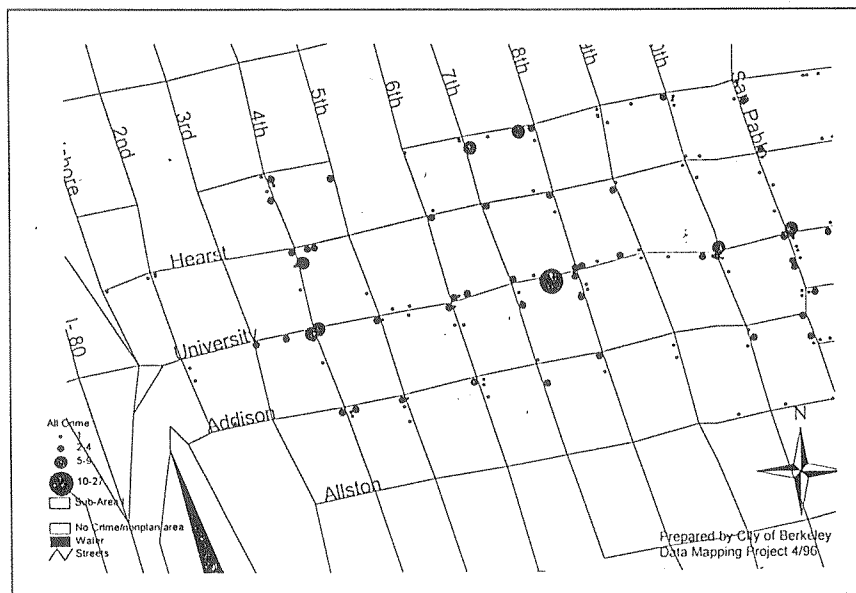
industrial and parks). Between areas of different land uses within a particular city however, a comparison is generally meaningless since the lesser populated but more heavily traveled commercial areas frequently have higher absolute crime figures than a more densely populated neighborhood.

Using crime per 1,000 resident figures for comparison shows, for instance, that crime (as defined here) in the City of Berkeley stood at 67 per 1,000 residents for 1995. In Sub-Area 4 of the Plan area (Downtown) it

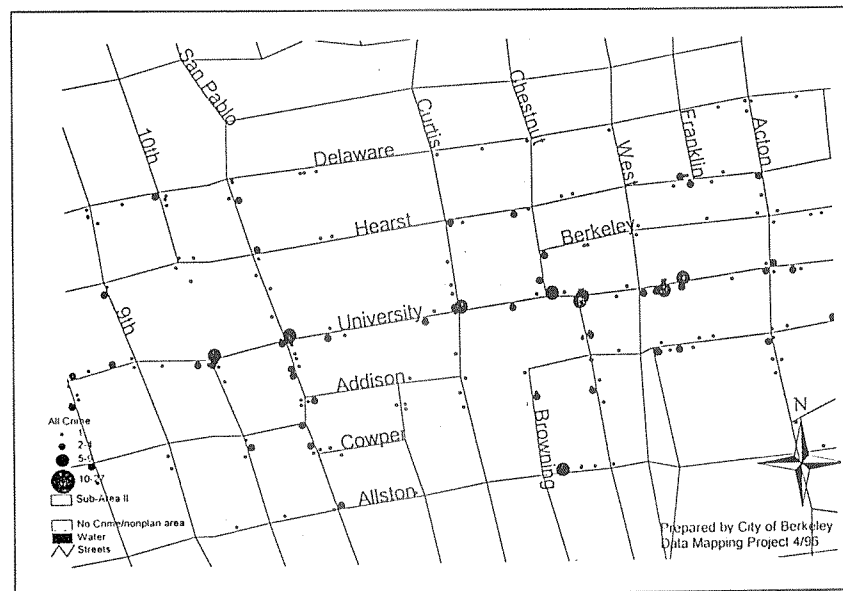
stood at 328 per thousand. While there is certainly more crime in the Downtown than in other areas, the relative lack of residential population in the Downtown drives the figure up disproportionately. For instance, Sub-Area 3 has a rate of 68 incidents per thousand residents or 20% of the 328 per thousand ratio found in Sub-Area 4. However, the actual number of crimes in Sub-Area 3 is 168, or 40% of the actual 419 crimes in the Downtown. The point being, one must be careful with these types of data comparisons as they can be interpreted in several ways.

### Total 1995 Crime Occurrences by Location

Sub-Area 1



Sub-Area 2



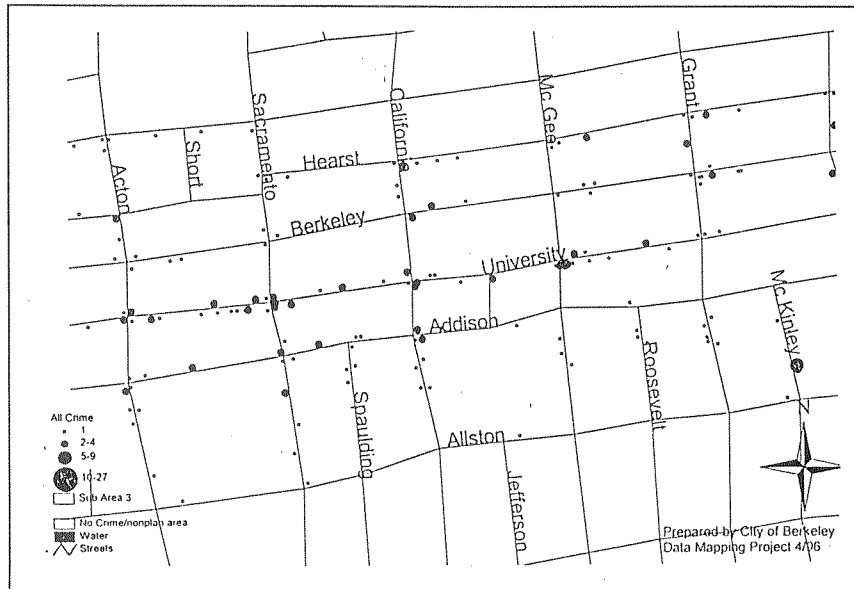
### Sub-Areas

Crime is unevenly distributed in the Plan area with concentrations along the corridor vs. the surrounding residential areas. There is also a much higher concentration in the Downtown, as Sub-Area 4 accounts for 39% of total crime vs. Sub-Area 3 which accounts for 16%. Since crime requires: a) favorable location, b) criminals, and c) victims, it is reasonable to expect the higher density of potential victims (e.g. pedestrians in the Downtown area) to correlate with higher numbers of crimes.

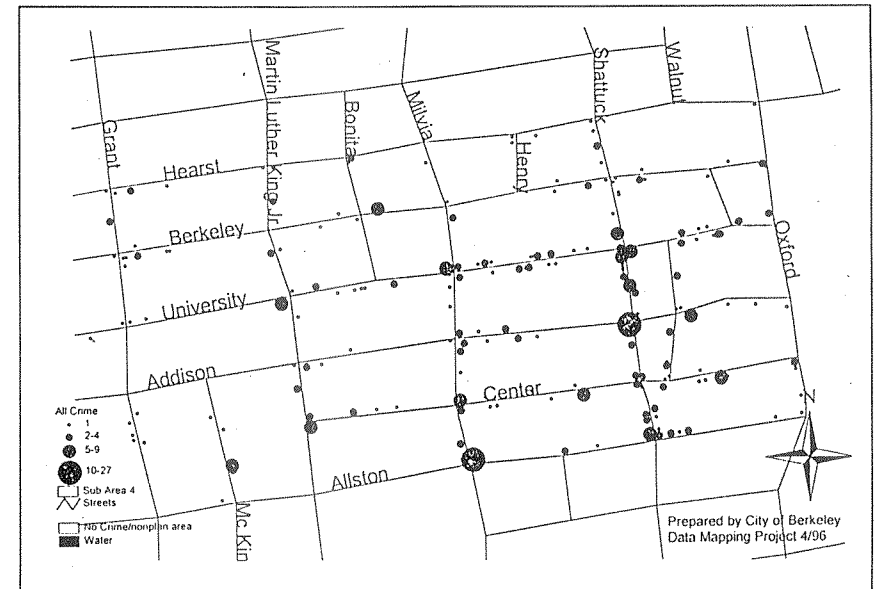
### Incidence of Crime Sub-Area Comparisons

	All Crime	% Plan Area	Crime v. Persons	% Plan Area	Crime v. Property	% Plan Area
Sub-Area 1	229	22%	81	18%	148	24%
Sub-Area 2	250	23%	113	26%	137	22%
Sub-Area 3	168	16%	59	13%	109	17%
Sub-Area 4	419	39%	187	43%	232	37%
Plan Area	1066	100%	440	100%	626	100%

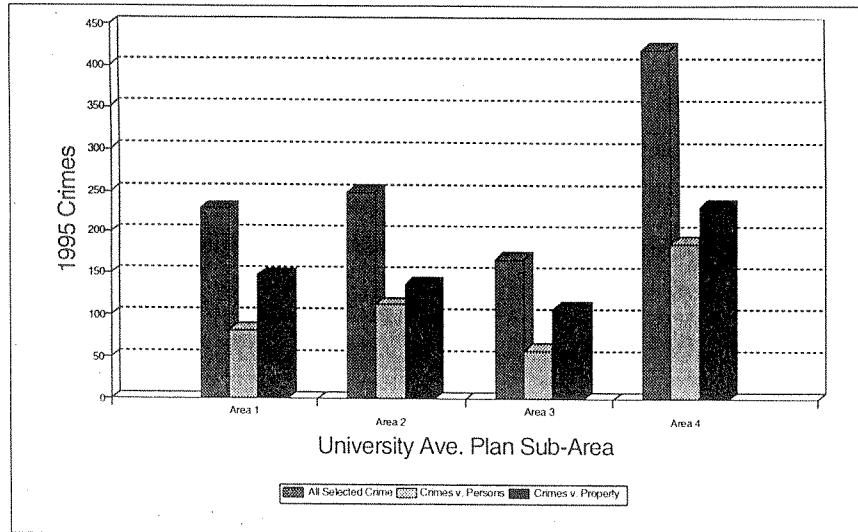
#### Sub-Area 3



#### Sub-Area 4



PERSON/PROPERTY AND TOTAL CRIMES  
Sub-Area Comparison



Commercial Corridors

While a comparison of only the various commercial areas using a ratio of crime to land area suffers from the fact that some commercial areas are more heavily used than others and data is not available to correct for those discrepancies, it may nonetheless be the most valuable type of comparison. The attached charts and tables on comparative crime rates in the commercial corridors were prepared as follows. 1995 crime data was plotted along the following corridors:

- Telegraph Ave. (Bancroft to Oakland line)
- San Pablo (Albany to Oakland)
- Shattuck (Rose to the Ward St. split with Adeline)
- College (from Stuart to Alcatraz)
- Solano (from the Albany line to the Alameda)
- University (from Eastshore to the Campus)

Incidence of Crime  
Commercial Corridor Comparison  
(Crime per Linear Foot of Corridor)

	<i>Avenue</i>	<i>Avenue and Neighborhood</i>	<i>Neighborhood</i>
<i>Shattuck Ave.</i>	3.88	9.17	5.29
<i>Telegraph Ave.</i>	3.78	10.46	6.68
<i>University Ave.</i>	3.37	9.33	5.96
<i>College Ave.</i>	2.06	4.48	2.41
<i>San Pablo Ave.</i>	0.97	4.37	3.40
<i>Solano Ave.</i>	1.19	2.04	0.85

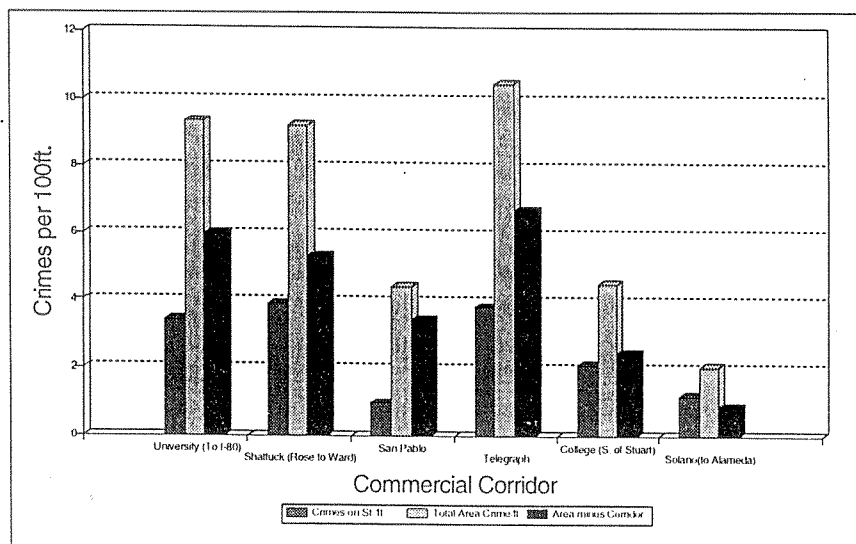
Crimes were plotted in three categories:

1. *Avenue*: All crime occurring in the commercial corridor, then adjusted by the approximate length of the avenue (accurate to within about 100 feet) to produce a number of crimes per 100 linear feet of commercial corridor.

2. *Avenue and Neighborhood*: All crime occurring within an 850 foot band on either side of the commercial corridor and including crime in that corridor - then adjusted to produce a number of crimes per 100 linear feet of commercial corridor extending 850 ft. on either side.

3. *Neighborhood*: The crime figures for the 850 foot range including the corridors was adjusted by removing the crime in the commercial corridor itself - thereby producing a "neighborhood" crime figure per 100 linear feet of commercial corridor.

CRIME IN THE COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS  
(Crimes per 100 ft of Street)



This is obviously a less than perfect comparative model but it is the best available at present. Illustrating the limitations of such comparisons is the fact that San Pablo Avenue shows the lowest crime of all commercial corridors in the City - in spite of periodic problems with prostitution, a heavy share of bars and liquor outlets etc. The fact that there is relatively little foot traffic (removing potential victims from the necessary triad of victim/location/perpetrator that characterize all crime) is a likely explanation.

## Public Safety Policies and Strategies

**POLICY 1: MAINTAIN A VISIBLE AND COMMUNITY-ORIENTED POLICE PRESENCE ALONG UNIVERSITY AVENUE.**

Strategy 1A: Emphasize the use of bicycle and foot patrols.

Strategy 1B: Encourage community-policing principles, particularly ensuring that police officers are given a regular beat in the area and can become knowledgeable and engaged about the community.

**POLICY 2: PROMOTE PUBLIC SAFETY PROBLEM SOLVING.**

Strategy 2A: In recognition that improved public safety continues to be the highest priority for the University Avenue community, a comprehensive Public Safety Program be developed with the explicit goal of reducing crime and improving public safety. This program should commence with a thorough study of how such improvements can be accomplished.

Strategy 2B: Conduct regular meetings between police, merchants, residents and property owners.

Strategy 2C: Encourage the formation of merchant and neighborhood groups where none exist to further crime prevention efforts.

Strategy 2D: Solicit input from those most at risk of being directly affected by crime: women, racial and ethnic minorities, the elderly and the poor.

**POLICY 3: IMPROVE AND MAINTAIN THE APPEARANCE AND FUNCTION OF THE UNIVERSITY AVENUE CORRIDOR.**

Strategy 3A: Develop a targeted graffiti and litter removal program between the merchants and the Public Works Department.

Strategy 3B: Develop safety audits, to be conducted by the Police Department, to assess commercial buildings and neighborhood districts.

Strategy 3C: Develop a legible public sign program, e.g. to locate phones, finding help, washrooms, transit routes and schedules, and to report maintenance or vandalism problems.

**POLICY 4: DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN CRIME STATISTICS AND IDENTIFY HOT SPOTS WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY AVENUE CORRIDOR.**

Strategy 4A: The Crime Analysis Unit should develop and maintain a more focused set of crime data for the University Avenue corridor. The Crime Analysis Unit should also work with the University Avenue Subcommittee of the Planning Commission to educate the community as to how crime statistics are maintained, the types of calls for service, trends and the limitations of the data. Ultimately, the greatest value of the analytical capacities contained in GIS systems lie not in the ability to compare or to prove any particular point but in the ability to clearly analyze and identify characteristics that policy makers do and do not like and to benchmark those characteristics in an overall plan for their improvement.

Strategy 4B: Continue to link crime data to electronic maps of the corridor to produce current crime density maps. Improved software and more complete data will allow the City to plot specific parcel usage, look at areas surrounding those specific parcels and make even more of an “apples to apples” comparison than is possible at this time.

**POLICY 5: ALL IMPROVEMENTS ALONG THE UNIVERSITY AVENUE CORRIDOR SHALL BE DESIGNED TO CONSCIOUSLY PROMOTE THE SAFETY OF INTENDED USERS AND THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOOD.**

Strategy 5A: Develop a set of public safety criteria to address design issues such as: compatible mixed uses, natural surveillance, pedestrian lighting, public phones, ATMs, bus shelters and crosswalks; consult actual or potential users if possible.

Strategy 5B: Establish police review for all projects which must comply with public safety design criteria.

Strategy 5C: Maintain records of how safety concerns were dealt with in order to develop a knowledge base.