

## Citrus Heights business district sees dramatic drop in crime

on September 27, 2020



*File photo. Officer Jeff Schouten, right, stands outside Starbucks in the Marketplace at Birdcage accompanied by Sgt. James Evans. / Mike Hazlip*

*Mike Hazlip—*

The Sunrise Marketplace business district, made up of more than 400 businesses in the Sunrise-Greenback commercial corridor, has seen crime slashed in half in recent months.

Crime data from June 1-Sept. 21 provided to The Sentinel by police on Wednesday show “persons crimes,” which include homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, plummeted 58% compared to the same period last year. Data shows 12 such crimes occurring during that time period in 2019, while only five have occurred since June this year.

The data show property crimes are also down. Burglary, larceny and theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson dropped from 126 incidents in 2019 to 64 this year, a 49% decrease.

Police Lt. Chad Morris said a reduction in traffic in the area because of COVID-19 shutdowns has contributed to the drop in crime, but he also credited efforts of a new dedicated officer patrolling the area as a significant factor.

“While not all of this decrease can be attributed to our new SMP officer, we do feel this is an example of how impactful additional police department resources and staff can be for the safety of our community,” Morris said in an email statement.

Earlier this year, the Sunrise MarketPlace contracted with the city to receive a dedicated patrol officer at an annual cost of approximately \$177,000. Officer Jeff Schouten was chosen for the role and began working in the area full time on May 12.

Sunrise MarketPlace Executive Director Kathilynn Carpenter told The Sentinel on Thursday that the district’s new patrol officer has focused efforts on crime preventive measures, as well as providing assistance to homeless individuals and responding to calls.

“These measures have had a significant positive impact on public safety in the District,” she said.