

# Druid Hills: A Safe Place to Live

## Four Years of Detailed Crime Data

### Executive Summary

Beginning in May 2018, the Druid Hills Civic Association's Public Safety Committee has been tracking all crimes reported in Druid Hills. This report summarizes that detailed data and provides a baseline as we focus on how to make Druid Hills an even safer place to live. Two appendices at the end describe the law enforcement agencies covering the area and the two-year experiment with the Flock camera system on some DH streets.

1. Crime in Druid Hills is low compared with Georgia and the United States. Crime on streets with primarily single-family homes has been trending downward since September 2019. Meanwhile, crime in commercial areas and apartment complexes has been increasing as a percent of all crime in Druid Hills. Crime in Emory Village has been trending upward over the past two years.
2. Violent crime is extremely rare in Druid Hills; there were no murders and only nine aggravated assaults in the neighborhood over the four years. Of the six robberies and five rapes over the period, it appears that only four of the robberies and one of the rapes was committed by a stranger to the victim. The rate of violent crime is lower than in Georgia, DeKalb County, and the City of Atlanta.
3. About 90% of all crime in Druid Hills is property crime, and the rate as a percent of the population is lower than in Georgia and the U.S. If we use the narrowest definition of the DH population (excluding the 30,000 employees and 15,000 students at Emory University) the DH rate of property crime is slightly higher than those reported by DeKalb County and Atlanta. If we include all the people who work in DH or live here for nine months a year, the DH rate of property crime is below those of DeKalb and Atlanta. Over the four years of our study, only 18 burglaries occurred on the 95 single-family streets, or about 4.5 per year.

4. Larceny, theft from motor vehicles in particular, is the largest category of crime in Druid Hills, comprising 68% of all crime in the area. These auto-related crimes have been trending somewhat lower since May 2020, near the beginning of the pandemic, than in the prior two years.
5. After discussions with local police agencies, our view is that with better lighting, more signage, more public awareness, and perhaps more surveillance cameras (especially in parking lots) we may be able to push the car break-in rate lower. At a minimum, if more people removed valuables, we could probably reduce the losses incurred from car break-ins.

## Framework: Understanding Crime Statistics

Since May 2018, the Druid Hills Civic Association's Public Safety Committee has been keeping detailed records of all crimes reported in our neighborhood to DeKalb County and City of Atlanta police. Now that we have four full years of data, it's a good time to take a look at what the data tell us about crime in Druid Hills. First, let's provide a framework for understanding the data.

Our information for DeKalb County comes from **Crime Mapping.com**, which is a private, national database to which DeKalb County feeds data. For Atlanta, we use the Atlanta Police Department's **Open Data Portal**. Each month we record the type of crime reported, the street, the date and time of day, and whether the crime occurred in a commercial or apartment complex, in the Emory Village, or on a residential street. For Atlanta, we get the actual street address, and for DeKalb we get the block number in which the crime occurred.

Among the many issues surrounding crime reporting, one of the most puzzling and most important to understand is that surveys by the Census Bureau for the Bureau of Justice Statistics suggest that **less than half of all crimes are actually reported** to police. In other words, when people are asked whether they have been the victim of crimes in a certain time period, their responses are much higher than the number of crimes reported to police. (This survey is called the National Crime Victimization Survey, or NCVS.)

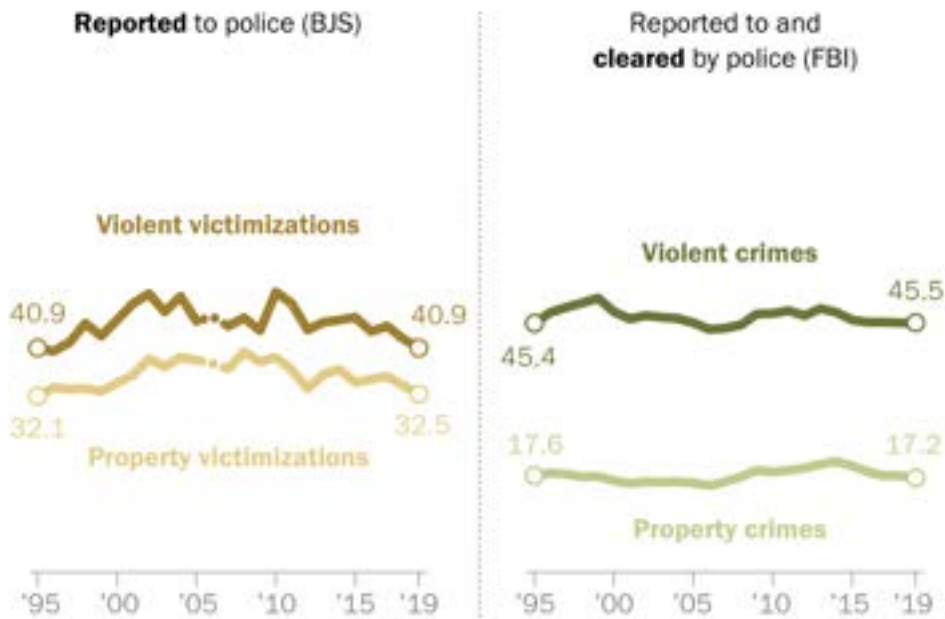
This under-reporting would appear to suggest that crime is worse than the reported statistics indicate. The NCVS ensures that double counting is minimized by only having one member of a household being surveyed. However, the NCVS does include attempted and threatened crimes, so that partly explains the higher numbers on the NCVS survey.

Nationally, a recent report by the respected Pew Research Center found that only about 41% of violent crimes and 33% of property crimes **are actually reported to police** (based partly on the NCVS surveys). And while about 46% of violent crimes are "cleared" (or solved), **only 17% of property crimes are solved** (Chart 1). It's easy to see why some people believe that their chances of being caught for property crimes are fairly slim.

## Chart 1. Crimes Reported and Crimes Solved Nationally

### Fewer than half of crimes in the U.S. are reported, and fewer than half of reported crimes are solved

% of crimes ...



Note: BJS and FBI crime definitions differ for some offenses. 2006 BJS estimates are not comparable with other years due to methodological changes. FBI figures reflect percentage of crimes cleared through arrest or "exceptional means," including cases in which a suspect dies or a victim declines to cooperate with a prosecution.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

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These low rates of reported crimes may partly explain why public perceptions of crime consistently run well above the reported crime rates. For many years, in fact, surveys have shown that **Americans perceive crime as increasing**, while police agency **data show a steady decline in the rate of nearly all crimes**.

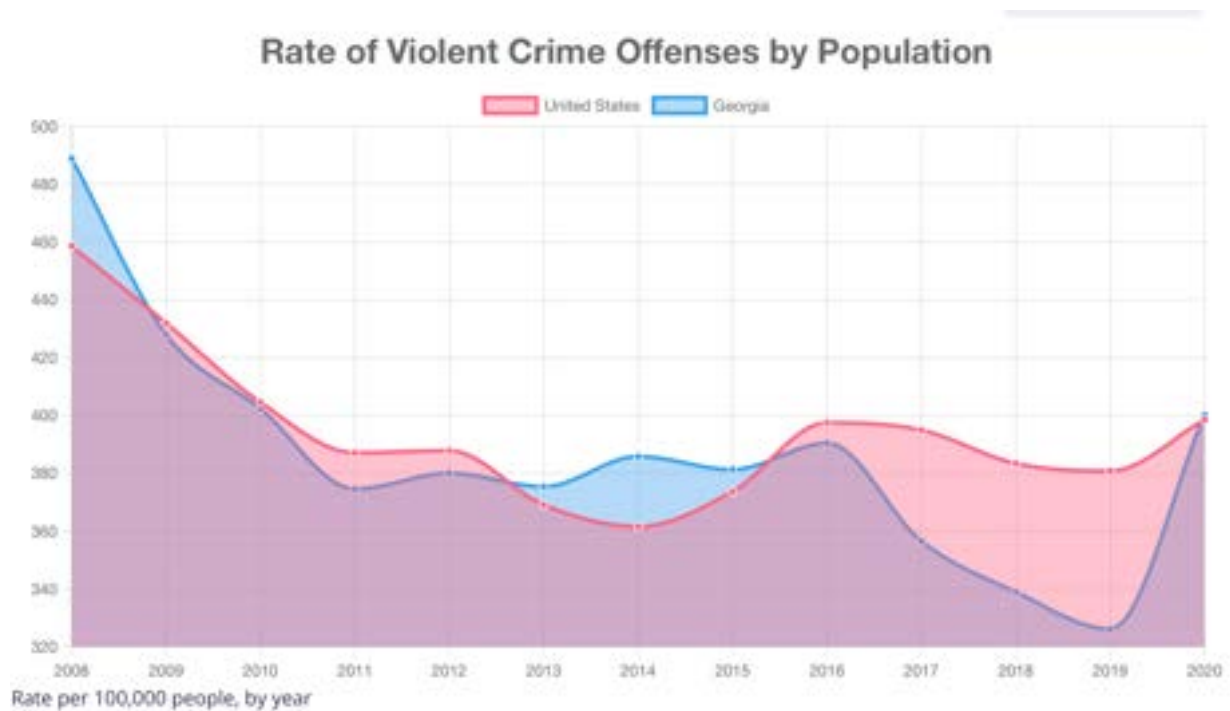
Police in DeKalb County and Atlanta base their patrol assignments on the numbers of crimes reported, **so it's important to report all crimes**. Each month, DHCA's Neighborhood Watch street captains send to residents a report on individual crimes that we collect from Atlanta and DeKalb County police departments. If you are not receiving this report, please contact your street captain or **volunteer to be a street captain by contacting the DHCA at [publicsafety@druidhills.org](mailto:publicsafety@druidhills.org)**.

## **National and Georgia Trends**

FBI crime data show that violent crimes per 100,000 population in Georgia (murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assaults) roughly tracked national trends from 2008-2016, then dipped below the national trend for three years before sharply increasing back to the national trend in 2019 and 2020.

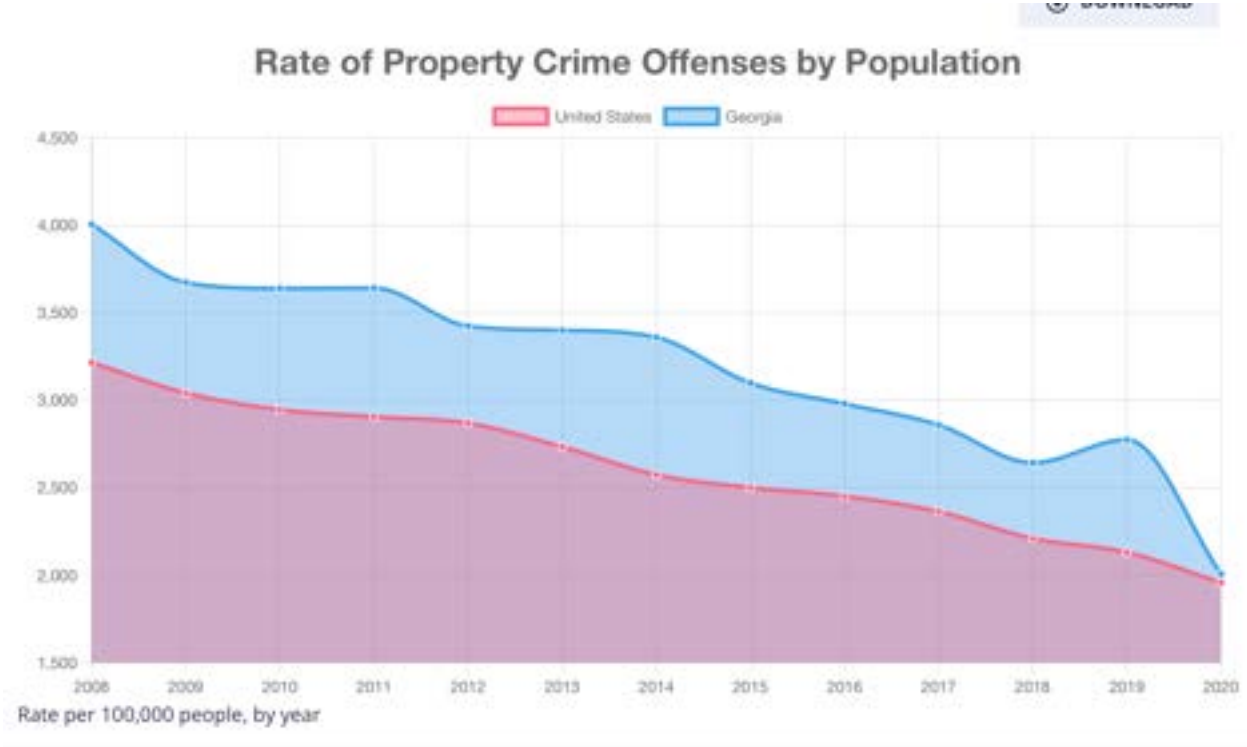
## Chart 2. Georgia and United States All Violent Crime: FBI Crime Data Explorer 2008-2020

In 2020, violent crime in both Georgia and the nation was reported as about 400 per 100,000 population, or about 0.4%. In other words, less than half of one percent of the population was a victim of violent crime in 2020.



Reported property crimes in Georgia have been running higher than the nation, but also declining along with the national trend from 2008-2020.

**Chart 3. Georgia and United States: All Property Crimes 2010-2020: FBI Crime Data Explorer**



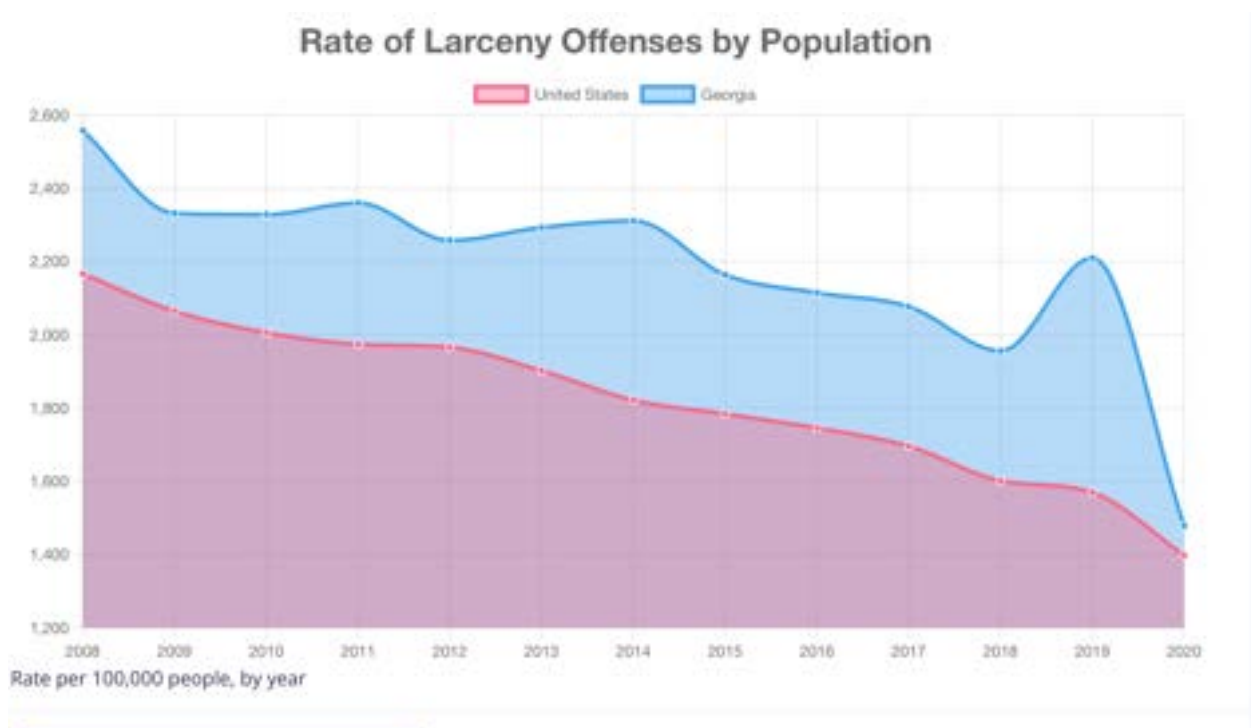
Property crime in Georgia and the U.S. was about 2,200 per 100,000 in 2020, or about 2.2% of the population. To clarify, this means there were 2,200 crimes, not necessarily 2,200 victims, since some property crimes may occur on the same property during a year.

Larceny has been generally declining in Georgia, although running slightly higher than the national rate per 100,000 people. The 2020 rate of 1,500 per 100,000

equates to about 1.5% of Georgia’s population having been a victim of larceny in 2020, compared with 1.4% for the U.S. To put this figure another way, about 15 out of every 1,000 people were larceny victims in Georgia in 2020.

**Chart 4. Georgia and United States: Larceny/Theft Offenses 2010-2020: FBI Crime Data Explorer**

**US and Georgia Larceny Per 100,000 Population**

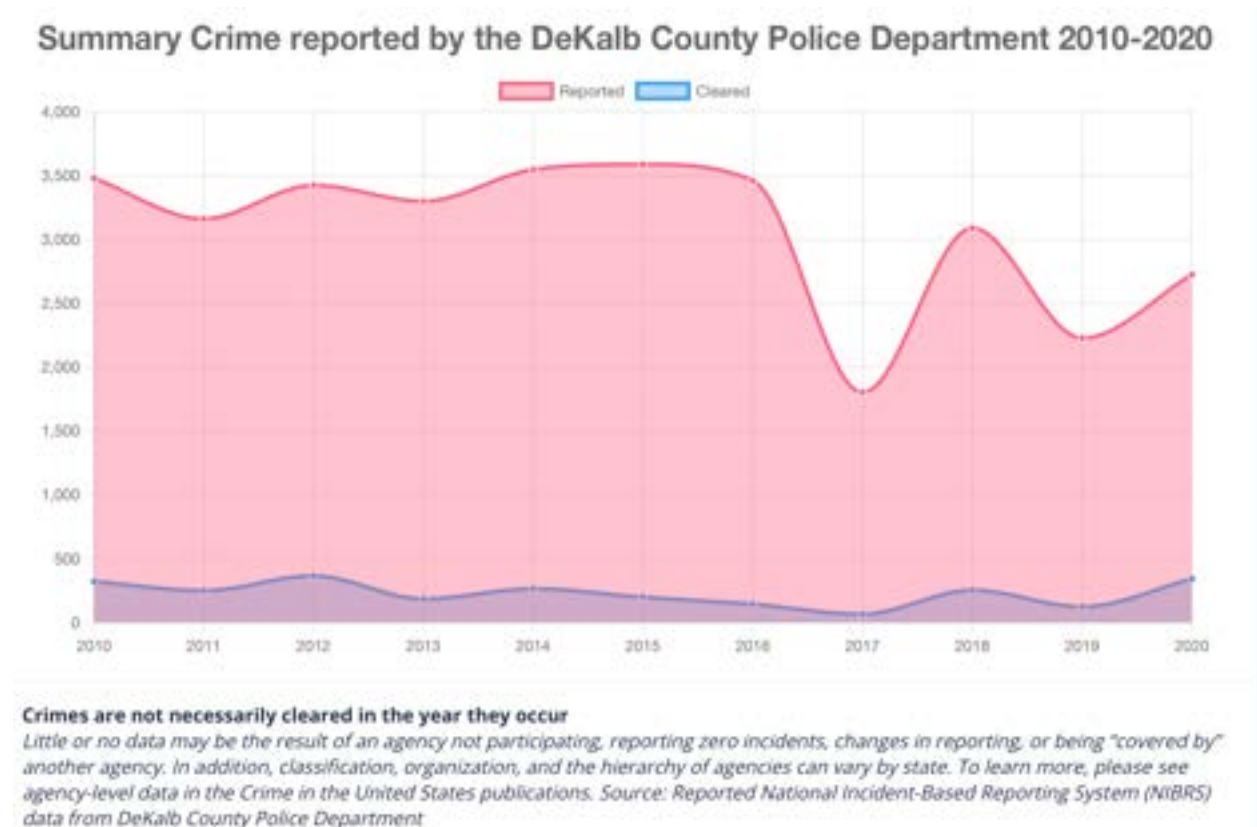




## Violent Crime in DeKalb County

For counties and cities, the FBI only reports raw data, not per 100,000, but we can convert that into percentages of the population.

**Chart 5. DeKalb County: All Violent Crime 2010-2020: FBI Crime Data Explorer**



In DeKalb County, the FBI reported about 2,800 violent crimes for 2020, which is about 0.3% of DeKalb's 2020 population of 755,287, slightly lower than the 0.4% reported for the state and the nation.

But there is an important caveat to DeKalb crime data: the reports sent to Crime Mapping include "simple assaults" in the "assault" category of violent crime. But the FBI's NIBRS data system only includes "aggravated assaults" in the assault category. That means that the assaults we pick up for Druid Hills will be greater

than the number actually picked up by the FBI for NIBRS. We'll explain the effect of this inconsistency when we get to the Druid Hills data.

### Chart 6. All Property Crimes: DeKalb County 2010-2022: FBI Crime Data Explorer

For DeKalb County property crimes, the FBI reported about 14,000 in 2020, or about 1.8% of the population, again a slightly lower rate than the state and national rates of about 2.2%. Note the extremely small number of property crimes that were “cleared.”

Summary Crime reported by the DeKalb County Police Department 2010-2020



**Crimes are not necessarily cleared in the year they occur**

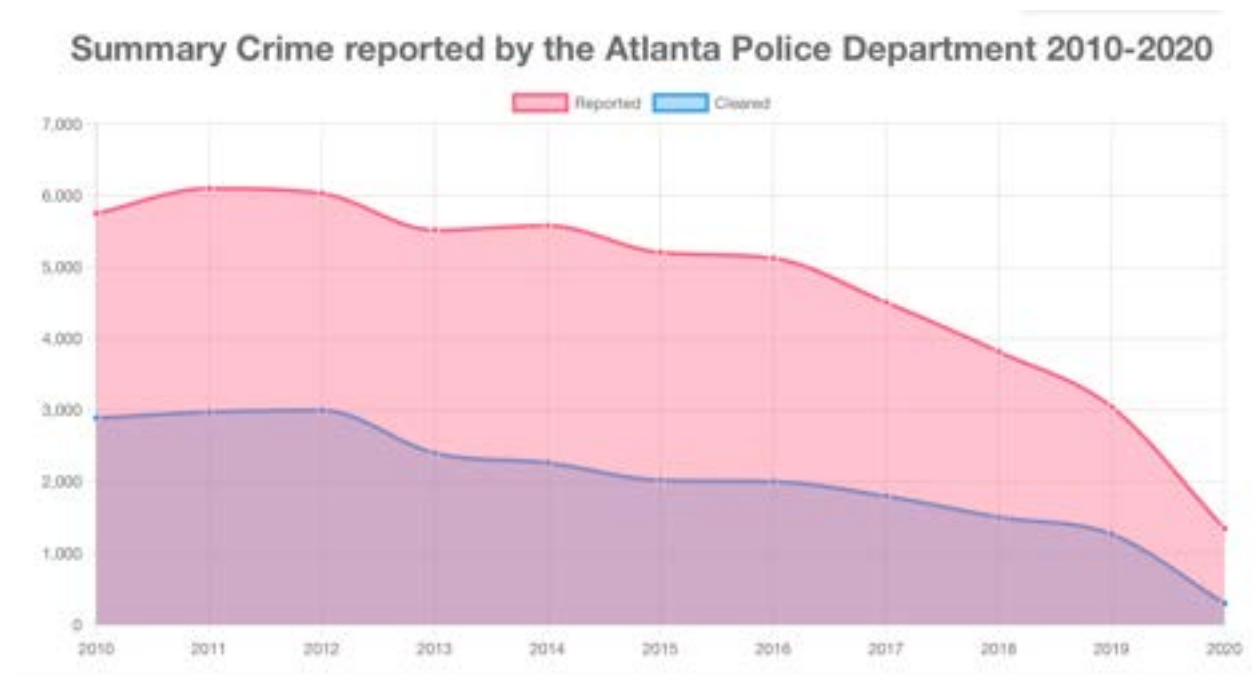
*Little or no data may be the result of an agency not participating, reporting zero incidents, changes in reporting, or being “covered by” another agency. In addition, classification, organization, and the hierarchy of agencies can vary by state. To learn more, please see agency-level data in the Crime in the United States publications. Source: Reported National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) data from DeKalb County Police Department*

## City of Atlanta

When comparing with the city of Atlanta, we should keep in mind that, very roughly, **only about 8-10% of the Druid Hills population is inside the city of Atlanta's physical boundaries** (10 streets out of the 105 streets in our footprint). That does not include Emory University, which is in Atlanta and Druid Hills, but since we don't include the crime data from Emory, we'll omit it when discussing the portion of Atlanta that is in DH. **From January 2020 through May 2022 the Atlanta streets accounted for 7.5% of the reported crime in Druid Hills.**

For the city of Atlanta, the FBI reported about 1,600 violent crimes in 2020, or about 0.3% of its 2020 population of 497,642, slightly below the state and national rates of about 0.4%. (Like the FBI, Atlanta only reports aggravated assaults in its violent crime category in its Open Data Portal, not simple assaults. So there is no inconsistency in the DH data for violent crime in Atlanta.)

### Chart 7. City of Atlanta Violent Crimes 2010-2020

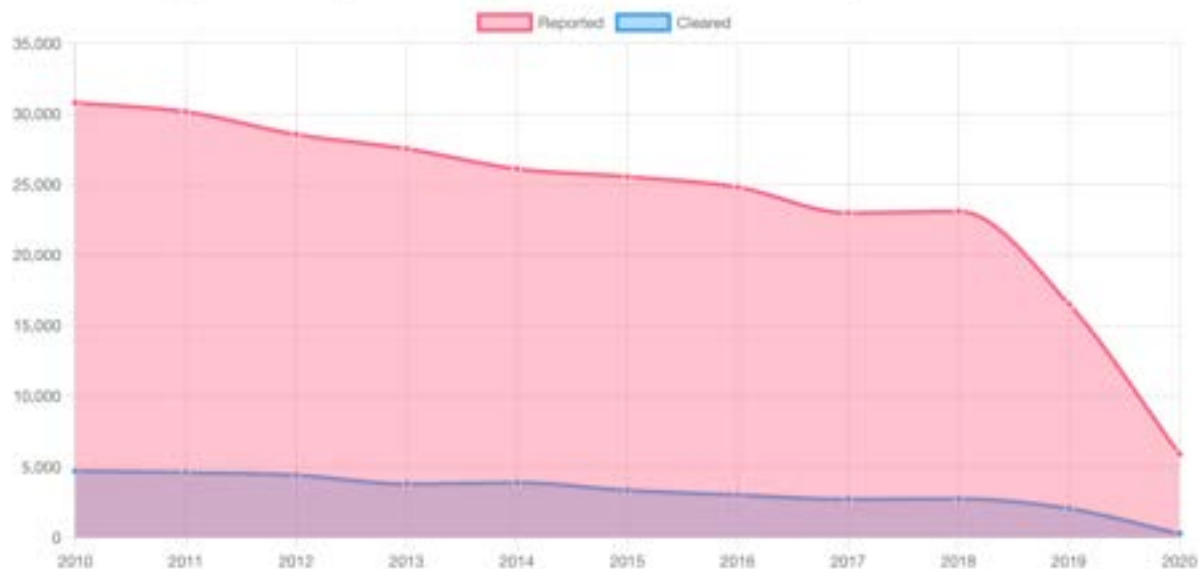


Crimes are not necessarily cleared in the year they occur

## Chart 8. City of Atlanta: Property Crimes 2010-2020

Property crimes for the city in 2020 were reported at 6,000, or about 1.2% of the population, below the state and national rates of 2.2%. Note: We checked this against the Atlanta Police Department's Annual Report for 2021, and it shows a higher rate for Atlanta's property crimes (See Appendix). We'll discuss this discrepancy later in this report.

Summary Crime reported by the Atlanta Police Department 2010-2020

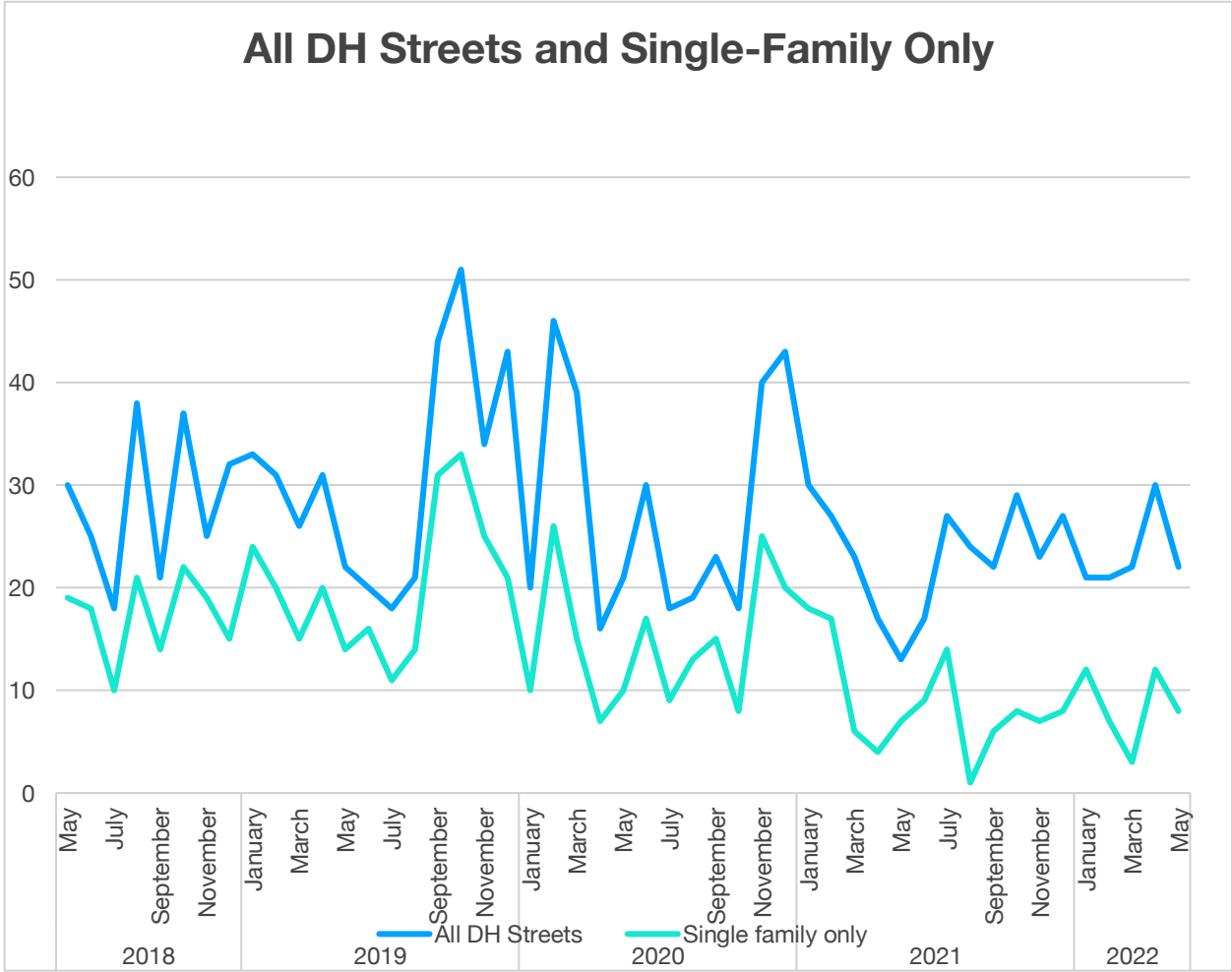


### Crimes are not necessarily cleared in the year they occur

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# Crime Trends in Druid Hills Over the Four Years

Chart 9. All DH Streets and Single-Family Streets Only



We estimate that the 105 streets within DHCA’s Druid Hills footprint, including the apartment complexes, contain about 15,000 residents. That does not include the 30,000 employees and 15,000 students of Emory University, the CDC’s 15,000 employees, or Children’s Hospital of Atlanta’s approximately 3,000 employees. Not all of these work in Druid Hills, but it’s fair to say that about 15,000 people live year-round in DH, another 15,000 students live here for nine months, and roughly another 40,000 people commute to and from and work in the area daily. All these people are potential victims of crime in Druid Hills.

To arrive at a crimes per population figure, it would be reasonable to use a number larger than 15,000, given the much higher population that typically lives or works inside Druid Hills, but for now, to be conservative, let's use the 15,000 number. The same factor (more people than residents) could be said to be appropriate for city of Atlanta statistics.

For Druid Hills, police report a total of 124 violent crimes, or about 31 **per year** for Druid Hills (102 of them were "simple" assaults) or 0.2% of the population, slightly lower than the 0.3% rate for DeKalb County or the 0.4% rate for Georgia. **Note: If we exclude the simple assaults as the FBI does, Druid Hills experienced only 22 violent crimes, or about 5.5 violent crimes per year, or less than 1/100 of one percent of the population of 15,000.**

For **property crimes** Druid Hills has had 296.5 per year, a rate of about 2.0% of the population, lower than the 2.2% for Georgia and the U.S. but slightly higher than DeKalb County's rate of 1.8%. If we used a higher population for Druid Hills, these crime rates for Druid Hills would be lower. For example, if we used 30,000 as the relevant population of Druid Hills, the rate of property crime would be only 0.9%.

Total crimes in Druid Hills average 28.4 per month. As Chart 9 shows, the number for May 2022 was 22. Chart 9 also shows that crime on single-family streets has been trending downward since it peaked in September 2019.

Let's start with the top locations (both residential and commercial) in Druid Hills for crimes over the four years. Column Two indicates whether the street has some commercial businesses and/or multi-family complexes.

**Table 1. Top 15 Druid Hills Streets by Total Crimes May 2018-May 2022**

<b>Street</b>	<b>Incl. Some Comm/Multi Family</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Per Month</b>
N. Decatur Rd	yes	192	4.0
Briarcliff Rd	yes	134	2.8
Clifton Rd.	yes	68	1.4
Oxford Rd.	yes	67	1.4
Rock Sprgs Ct.	yes	66	1.4
Oakdale Rd.	no	49	1.0
Springdale Rd.	no	49	1.0
Emory Rd.	no	46	0.8
S. Ponce	yes	38	0.8
Ponce	yes	35	0.7
Rock Sprgs Cir.	yes	29	0.6
Villa Dr.	yes	28	0.6
Lullwater Rd	no	25	0.5
Harvard Rd.	no	23	0.5
Normandy Dr.	yes	19	0.4

Next, **Table 2 below lists all 105 DH streets** ranked by the number of reported crimes over the four-year period. Remarkably, 57 streets had 4 or fewer and 25 of those had no reported crimes over the four years.

### All DH Streets By 4-year Crimes

	Street	Total	Per Month
<b>Total</b>			
1	N. Decatur Rd.	192	4.0
2	Briarcliff Rd.	134	2.8
3	Clifton Rd.	68	1.4
4	Oxford Rd.	67	1.4
5	Rock Springs Court	66	1.4
6	Oakdale Rd.	49	1.0
7	Springdale Rd.	49	1.0
8	Emory Rd.	46	1.0
9	S. Ponce de Leon Ave.	38	0.8
10	Ponce de Leon Ave.	35	0.7
11	Rock Springs Circle	29	0.6
12	Villa Dr.	28	0.6
13	Lullwater Rd.	25	0.5
14	Harvard Rd.	23	0.5
15	Normally Dr.	19	0.4
16	Stillwood Dr.	18	0.4
17	Cornell Rd.	17	0.4
18	Briarwood Dr.	16	0.3
19	Dyson Dr.	15	0.3
20	Chelsea Circle	14	0.3
21	N. Ponce de Leon Ave.	14	0.3
22	Ridgecrest Rd.	14	0.3
23	Fairview Rd.	13	0.3
24	E. Clifton Rd.	11	0.2
25	Hancock Dr.	11	0.2

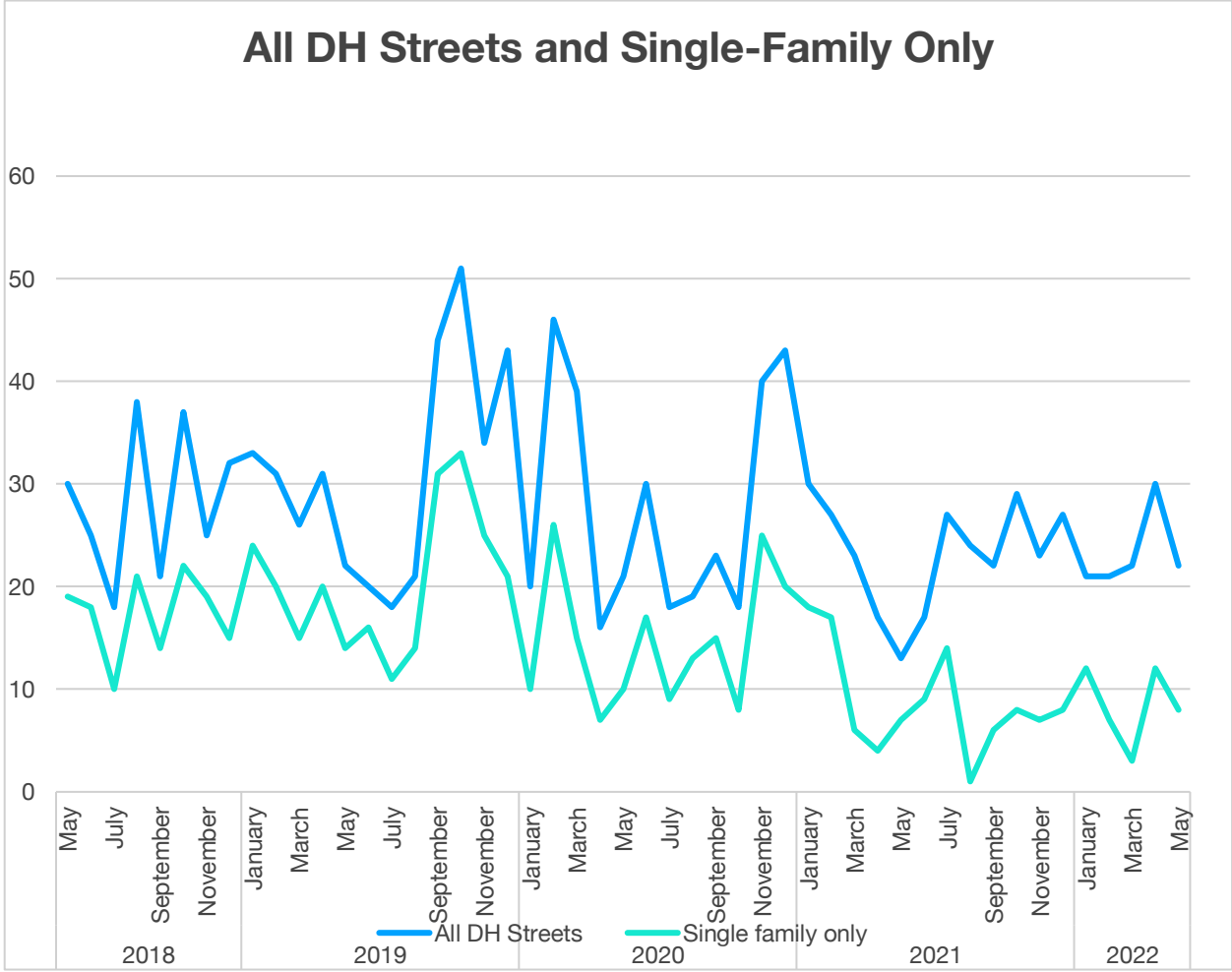
26	Ridgewood Dr.	11	0.2
27	Chalmette Dr.	10	0.2
28	E. Lake Rd.	10	0.2
29	Rosedale Rd.	10	0.2
30	Anita Place	9	0.2
31	Briardale Lane	9	0.2
32	E. Rock Springs Rd.	9	0.2
33	N. Parkwood Rd.	9	0.2
34	Lullwater Place	8	0.2
35	Markan Dr.	8	0.2
36	Princeton Way	8	0.2
37	Stillwood Chase	8	0.2
38	University Dr.	8	0.2
39	Highland Square Dr.	7	0.1
40	Woodview Dr.	7	0.1
41	Barton Woods Rd.	6	0.1
42	Coventry Rd.	6	0.1
43	Beech Valley Way	5	0.1
44	Cameron Court	5	0.1
45	Coventry Place	5	0.1
46	Heaton Park Dr.	5	0.1
47	Poplar Grove Dr.	5	0.1
48	Artwood Rd.	4	0.1
49	Durand Dr.	4	0.1
50	King's Walk	4	0.1



51	The Byway	4	0.1
52	Vickers Dr.	4	0.1
53	Westminster Way	4	0.1
54	Briar Hills Dr.	3	0.1
55	Durand Mill Dr.	3	0.1
56	Emory Dr.	3	0.1
57	Lullwater Pkway	3	0.1
58	McLynn Ave.	3	0.1
59	Ridgecrest Ct.	3	0.1
60	Spring House Cove	3	0.1
61	Amsterdam Ave.	2	0.0
62	Burlington Place	2	0.0
63	Carol Lane	2	0.0
64	Emory Circle	2	0.0
65	Kay Lane	2	0.0
66	Lullwater Estates	2	0.0
67	Markan Court	2	0.0
68	Prescott Way	2	0.0
69	Scott Blvd.	2	0.0
70	Durand Falls Dr.	1	0.0
71	Edinburgh Terrace	1	0.0
72	Grist Stone Court	1	0.0
73	Hummingbird Lane	1	0.0
74	Lakeshore Dr.	1	0.0
75	Oak Park Dr. Condominiums	1	0.0

76	Ponce de Leon Manor	1	0.0
77	Rock Creek Dr.	1	0.0
78	The Falls Court	1	0.0
79	Avenue Place	0	0.0
80	Briar Hills condos	0	0.0
81	Briarcrest townhomes	0	0.0
82	Briarpark Court	0	0.0
83	Burlington Rd.	0	0.0
84	Cumberland Rd.	0	0.0
85	Dan Johnson Rd.	0	0.0
86	E. Parkwood Rd.	0	0.0
87	Edmund Court	0	0.0
88	Edmund Park Dr.	0	0.0
89	Edwards Court	0	0.0
90	Emory Pointe Dr.	0	0.0
91	Hertford Circle	0	0.0
92	Kiimberly Lane	0	0.0
93	Lion's Gate	0	0.0
94	Mill Creek Bend	0	0.0
95	N. Emory Place	0	0.0
96	Parkwood Circle	0	0.0
97	Parkwood Lane	0	0.0
98	Rock Springs Rd.	0	0.0
99	S. Westminster Way	0	0.0
100	Spring Valley Lane	0	0.0
101	Vickers Circle	0	0.0
102	Vilenah Lane	0	0.0
103	W. Parkwood Rd.	0	0.0
104	Woodridge Hollow	0	0.0
105	Woodridge Hollow Lane	0	0.0

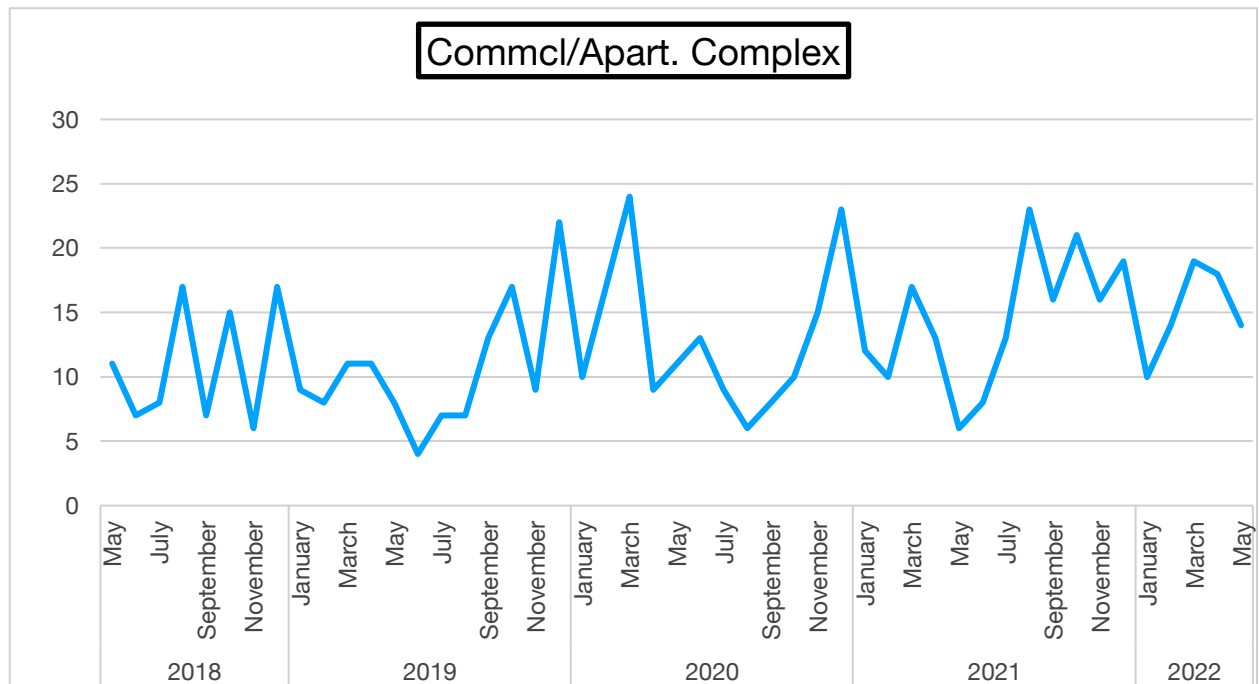
Repeating our original DH chart (Chart 9), we see that, for the past two years, crime on streets with primarily single-family homes has been running less than half the rate of crime on all streets, which includes the commercial and multi-family facilities.



Four years is a small sample size to try to discern seasonal patterns. However, in 2018-2021 crime in Druid Hills appears to start trending upward around September and to start receding a bit in January. In September, high school and college students are back in school, traffic in Druid Hills intensifies, and more people are using the parking lots. It may also be that we tend to have more new residents in apartment complexes and homes, and they may not be alert to the need to remove all valuables from their cars. Our sample period is just not long enough to reach any firm conclusions.

A chart of the crime in the commercial/multi-family areas shows a generally increasing trend over the four years, with **clear dips in the summer**.

**Chart 10. DH Commercial and Apartment Locations**



## Commercial and Institutional Areas of Druid Hills

Now let's look a little closer at the data for the commercial, institutional, and multi-family areas. Our data for the Emory Hospital complex is limited, because Emory has its own police force, and we are only picking up crimes reported to the DeKalb County Police. (For those interested, Emory Police publish monthly and daily reports on their website.) In addition, some crimes reported at Emory Hospital actually occurred outside Druid Hills and the victims just reported them at Emory.

Because we only get block numbers for DeKalb County incidents, these figures are only approximate. In some (not all cases), the police report lists the specific location.

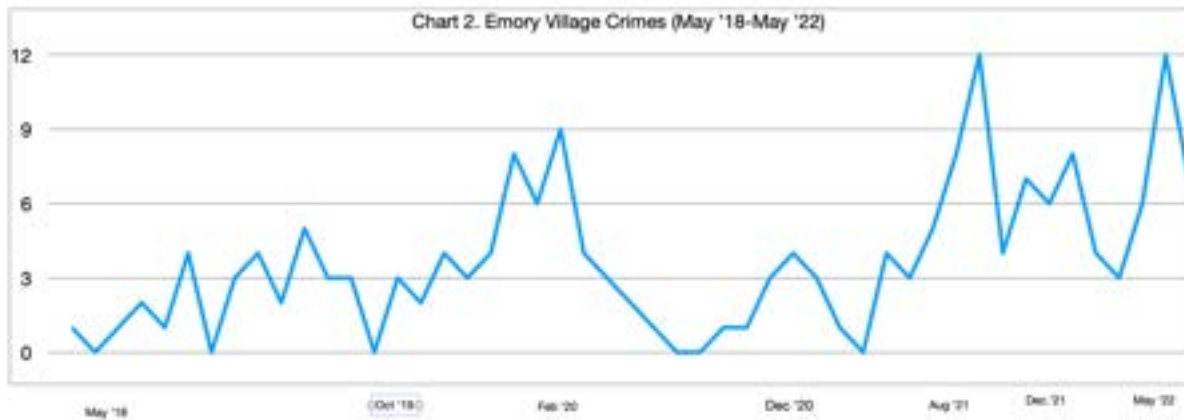
**Table 3. Top Commercial or Institutional Areas in Numbers of Crimes (May 2018-May 2022)**

### Commercial and Institutional Areas

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
<b>Emory Village (N. Decatur &amp; Oxford)</b>	11	41	34	61	32	
<b>Pruitt Health (1000 block Briarcliff)</b>	5	7	7	2	1	
<b>Laurel Heights Health Care (900 block Briarcliff)</b>	3	4	7	4	1	
<b>Sage Hill Shopping Center (1700 Briarcliff)</b>		0	2	5	4	
<b>Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (1405 Clifton)</b>	0	1	0	1	0	
<b>Emory Hospital (1300 block Clifton)</b>	0	0	0	1	2	
<b>Fernbank Museum (765 Clifton)</b>	1	0	0	0	0	

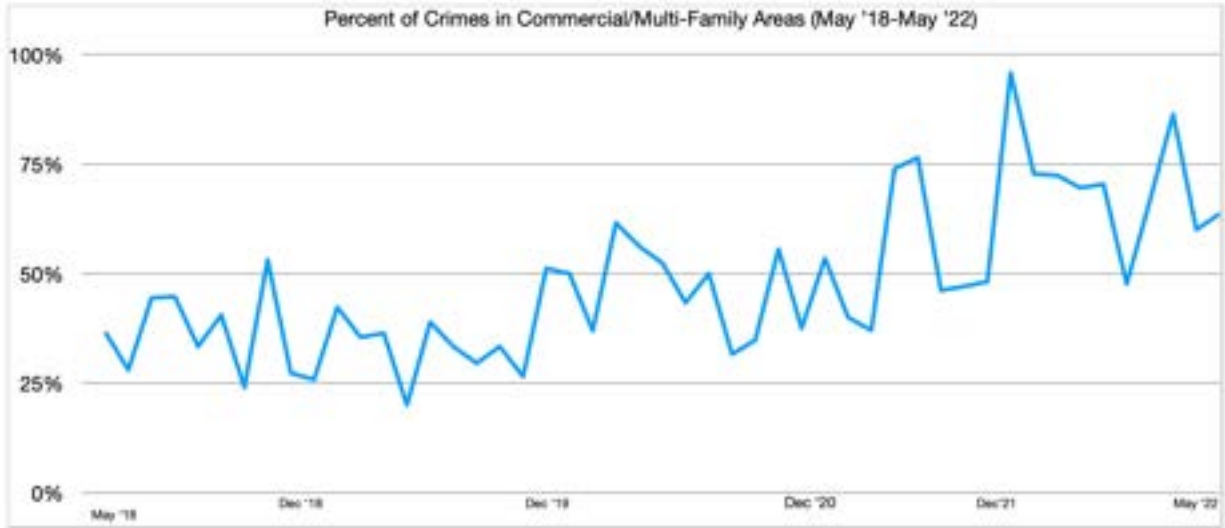
We also track the trends for Emory Village, the central commercial area in Druid Hills. Chart 11 shows a clearly increasing trend since early 2021.

### Chart 11. Emory Village Crime



When we look at the commercial/multi-family area crime as a percentage of all crime in Druid Hills (see chart 12 below), we see a clear shift of crime toward these commercial and multi-family areas since early 2021. Possible reasons include more people working from home during the pandemic and more homes using surveillance cameras.

**Chart 12. Percent of DH Crime in Commercial/Multi-Family Areas**



## More Detail on Types of Crimes

Over the four years, 1211 property crimes were reported in Druid Hills and 22 violent crimes (excluding the 102 simple assaults) for a total of 1233 crimes. That works out to be 308 per year and about 25.7 per month. As Chart 9 above shows, that total has been trending slightly downward since it peaked in September 2019.

### Violent crimes

Over the entire four-year period, police recorded no murders, 6 robberies and 5 rapes in the Druid Hills area. We have so few of these types of serious crimes that we can actually mention each one.

For the six **robberies**, one was an armed robbery from a landscaping truck, two were committed by family members (one at Pruitt Health and one at Sage Hill), two were in Emory Village (one was the cash register at Jimmy John's), and one was in the 1500 block of Beech Valley Way, near the Dan Johnson Nature Preserve.

For the five **rapes**, one was in the 1300 block of Briarcliff (apartments), one was forcible sodomy reported at Laurel Heights hospital, one was forcible rape where both victim and suspect were patients at Laurel Heights Hospital, one was forcible sodomy that was actually a domestic assault by a brother upon a sister, committed elsewhere but reported at Emory Hospital, and one was forcible rape committed in Decatur but reported at Emory Hospital. So it appears that only one of these rapes (the Briarcliff apartment case) may have been committed by a stranger within Druid Hills.

On the surface, the largest category of violent crime within Druid Hills is **assault**, and we had 111 of those over the four years, or about 2.3 per month. However, as we mentioned above, the FBI's NIBRS report only lists aggravated assaults, and **only nine of the DH cases were aggravated assaults** (assault with intent to murder, rape, or rob or assault with a deadly weapon). Three of those were in Emory Village, two were reported at Emory Hospital but occurred elsewhere. The others were on Fairview, Ponce De Leon Ave, King's Walk, and Rock Springs Court.

Of the 102 **simple assaults**, 11 were reported at Pruitt Health on Briarcliff and 10 were at Laurel Heights Hospital on Briarcliff. At least 26 others were

described as domestic incidents. A few occurred elsewhere but were reported at Emory Hospital. At least 20 others occurred in apartment complexes. Of the remaining 32 assaults, some were in other retail areas, like Sage Hill or Emory Village, at gas stations, or at intersections.

We don't always have enough details, but where we do have details we can find **only five cases of simple assaults clearly committed by strangers to the victim**, and one of those was a break-in suspect who fought with police when apprehended. To repeat, the FBI data for violent crime reported in state and national data DO NOT include simple assaults in the Violent Crime category. **If we excluded these simple assaults, we would have had only 9 assault cases in Druid Hills in the four years, rather than 111.**

## Property Crimes

Over the four years, if we exclude the simple assaults, **property crimes comprised about 98% of all crime in Druid Hills.** (If we include the simple assaults, property crimes still comprise 91% of all DH crime. The FBI sorts property crimes into burglary, larceny/theft, motor theft, and other.

The four-year totals for property crimes in DH are:

Residential burglaries:	36
Larceny/theft:	914
Motor Vehicle Theft:	71
Other:	<u>190</u>
Total:	1211

By far the largest category of crime in Druid Hills is **larceny/theft**, with about 75% of property crimes and 68% of all DH crimes falling into this category.

About 90% of these larcenies are **vehicle break-ins**, with most of the remainder being stolen landscaping equipment. In the 105 streets in the DH footprint, then, we average about 18 of these auto break-ins per month. DeKalb Police estimate that about 30% of these break-ins are committed by homeless people and the other 70% are by "professional criminals" looking for higher value items. The car break-ins are the most frequent type of crime reported in DH and also one of the most difficult to prevent or to "clear" (solve).



Interestingly, when we add motor vehicle thefts to the larceny car break-ins, we see in Chart 13 that auto-related crimes as a percent of all Druid Hills crimes have been slightly declining from their peak in January 2020, which also happened to be the beginning of the pandemic, when more people started working from home. They had been running at about 80% of all DH crimes, but since October 2021 they have been at about 62% of all DH crimes.

**Chart 13. Auto-Related Crimes as a Percent of All Druid Hills Crimes**

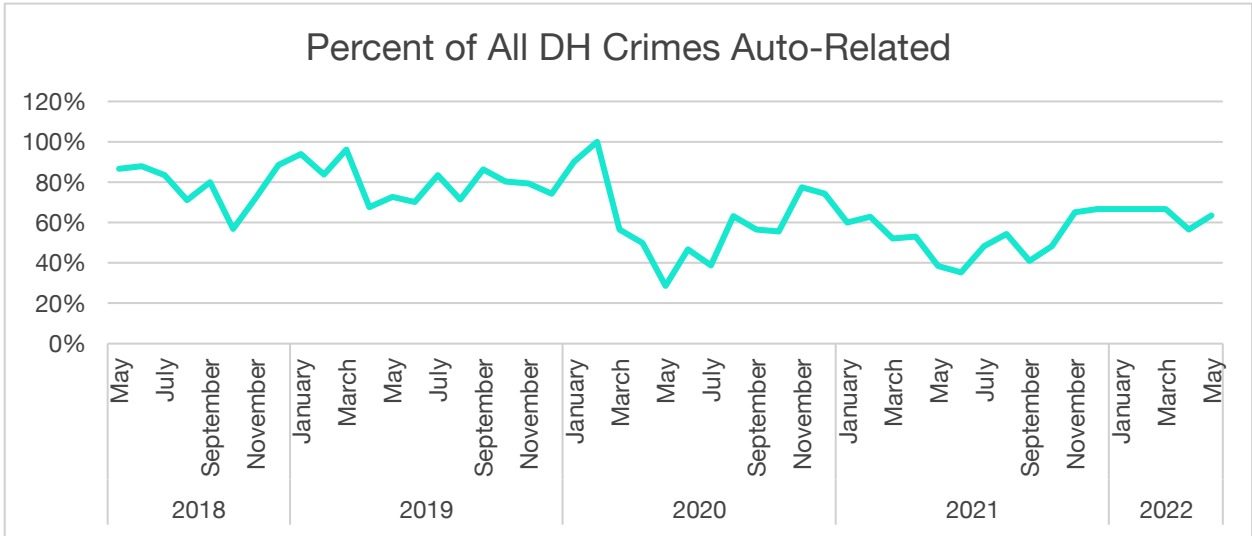
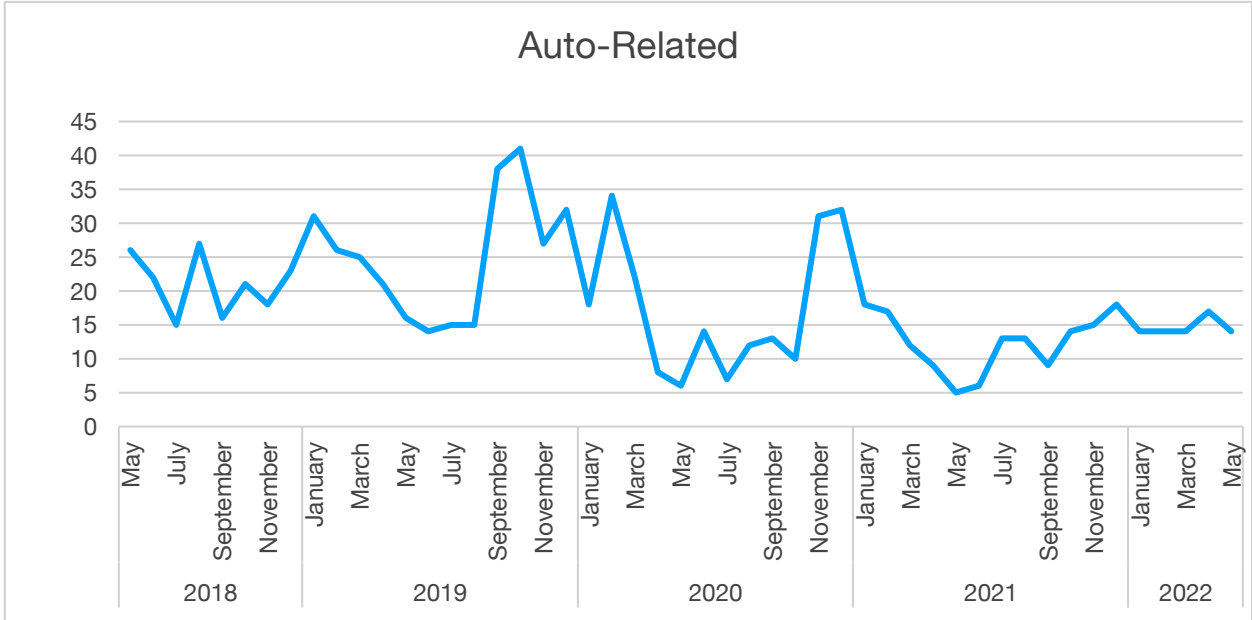


Chart 14 shows that the actual number of auto-related crimes has been generally lower since May 2020 than in the two prior years. It also shows typical dips during the summer and surges during the holiday season. The average is about 19 per month.

**Chart 14: Auto-Related Crime (Larceny and Vehicle Theft) in Druid Hills**



Of the 36 **burglaries**, four occurred at businesses, 14 at apartments, and a surprising 11, or 31%, did not involve forced entry. So **we experienced less than one burglary per month over the four years** in the 105 streets of Druid Hills. We had a total of 18 burglaries on our roughly 95 single-family streets over the four years, or only about 4.5 per year.

**Motor vehicle theft** is slightly more common, with a total of 71 for the four years, or about 1.5 thefts per month. We don't get much detail on these in the police reports, except for a few reports that mention that keys were in the car. We don't get exact addresses for the DeKalb crimes, but roughly 17 of those 71 occurred in apartment or condo parking areas. Two appear to be in Emory Village, two were in Emory or Emory Hospital parking lots, and one was at Fernbank Museum. Police reported that in 7 cases the keys were left in the vehicles. That leaves about 50 cars stolen from single-family residences over the

four years, or slightly more than one per month. Unfortunately, we do not get enough detail to say how many of these occurred on the street versus in driveways. A few streets had multiple auto thefts: Briarcliff Rd had 7, North Decatur Rd, 6, Ponce de Leon Ave 5, Clifton Rd 4, and Fairview Rd 3. These five streets, some of which include apartments or institutions, accounted for 35% of all vehicle thefts during the period.

The “**other**” category is largely comprised of “damage to property or vandalism” but it also includes a surprising number of “fraud/confidence game” type crimes, “impersonations,” and various other crimes, including shoplifting, “disputes” that were intense enough for police to be called, “harassing statements on Instagram,” “flower pot thrown through bedroom window,” arson, a stolen dog, and a stolen fish. One person sent \$8,000 to someone who claimed to be her granddaughter and needed to be bailed out of jail. Five checks that were mailed at the Sage Hill Post Office were stolen and cashed. Beginning in February 2021, four catalytic converters were stolen from two Priuses, a Lexus, and a small bus. Three of those were in the Briarcliff Road area.

## **Apartment and Multi-Family Locations**

Keeping in mind that our numbers for commercial and institutional areas are not exact (since we only get block numbers, not exact addresses, from DeKalb Police), we can say that roughly 237 crimes were reported over the four years from these commercial and institutional areas. And we count a total of 604 crimes in our combined commercial/multi-family category in our master table. That means that roughly 367 crimes were reported in the apartment and other multi-family addresses in Druid Hills.

In the case of Briarcliff Road, we count 134 total crimes, and about 42 of those were in the health care facilities and in Sage Hill Shopping Center, which leaves

roughly 92 crimes reported in the various apartment complexes in the Druid Hills portion of Briarcliff.

Below are the top-ranking streets for crimes occurring largely in **apartment or multi-family complexes** over the four years. Again, since we only get block numbers from DeKalb Police, these numbers may not be precise. All these streets are on or very close to the boundary between Atlanta and DeKalb County.

Briarcliff Rd.	92
Rock Springs Court	66
Rock Springs Circle	29
Villa Dr.	28
Normandy Dr.	19
Chalmette Dr.	10
E. Rocks Springs Rd.	9
Lullwater Place	8
Markan Dr.	8
Stillwood Chase	8
University Dr.	8
Highland Square	7

Summarizing our data for crimes at the three main types of locations for the four years, we have:

Single-Family:	724
Apartments:	367
Commercial/Institutional:	237

## Conclusions:

Four years is not a long enough period to make hard conclusions. It was also a period of turmoil, with a pandemic and major shifts toward working and schooling at home. But the data point us toward a few trends that we can identify with a fair degree of confidence. The figures below are for 2020 in each crime category as a percentage of the population for 2020 for the U.S., Georgia, DeKalb, and Atlanta. For Druid Hills we used the per year average of each category over the four years.

1. Using our conservative population estimate of about 15,000, Druid Hills' rates of violent crimes are lower than the rates for the United States, Georgia, DeKalb County, and the city of Atlanta.

## Violent Crime:

US	0.4%
GA	0.4%
DeKalb	0.3%
Atlanta	0.3% (but APD Annual Report says 0.6%)
Druid Hills	0.2% (even lower when we exclude simple assaults)

## Property Crime:

2. For property crimes, Druid Hills rate is below the state and nation but slightly higher than DeKalb and city of Atlanta. As we explained above, however, Druid Hills is unusual in that many more people work in the area than many parts of DeKalb and Atlanta. **If we used a more appropriate estimate of 30,000 people for Druid Hills, the property crime rate would be only 0.9%.**

US	2.2%
GA	2.2%
DeKalb	1.8%
Atlanta	1.2% (but APD Annual Report shows 3.6%)
Druid Hills	2.0% (but 0.9% if we use 30,000 population)

## Larceny:

US	1.4%
GA	1.6%
DeKalb	1.2%
Atlanta	0.9% (APD Annual Report shows 1.7%)
Druid Hills	1.6% (but 0.8% if we use 30,000 population)

As mentioned above, the City of Atlanta larceny figure from the FBI Crime Explorer (4,352 for 2020) does not match up with the APD's 2021 Annual Report, which shows 8374 for 2020 (1.7%) and 8086 (1.6%) for 2021.

Based on the Georgia and Druid Hills figures, we suspect that the Annual Report number for APD is closer to reality. We show 914 larcenies in Druid Hills over the four years, or about 228 per year. Again with larceny, if we used the more likely estimate of 30,000 people whose cars are in Druid Hills every day, the rate of larcenies would drop to about 0.78%.

3. As Chart 9 showed, crime in Druid Hills tends to have a seasonal pattern, with dips in the summer and increases from September through January. The overall trend has been generally decreasing since the peak in September 2019, just before the pandemic hit.
4. As Chart 12 showed, since early 2020, crime has been shifting fairly dramatically away from single-family home streets to commercial and apartment areas. Our hypothesis is that, with more people working and studying at home and more of those homes having surveillance cameras and alarm systems, the parking lots in commercial and apartment areas became easier targets.

## How Can We Push the Crime Rate Lower?

This report has shown that Druid Hills has a very low rate of violent crime, and its rate of property crimes is below those of the nation and Georgia. Using a conservative estimate of the number of people and cars in the neighborhood, our property crime rate is slightly higher than those reported by DeKalb County and the city of Atlanta. If we expanded the population to include those who work or study in Druid Hills, the adjusted property crime rate would be lower than DeKalb's and Atlanta's.

Nevertheless, the car break-ins (about 18 per month) are widely perceived to be a problem. One inherent special issue is that with the hospitals, CDC, and a stream of parents and friends visiting Emory students, Druid Hills always has a high number of drivers who are not familiar with the area and who may not be aware of the need to remove all valuables from their vehicles.

After discussions with local police agencies, our view is that with better lighting, more signage, more publicity, and perhaps more surveillance cameras (especially in parking lots) we may be able to push the car break-in rate lower. At a minimum, if more people removed valuables, we could probably reduce the losses incurred from car break-ins. As we said at the beginning of this report, with only 17% of property crimes being solved nationally and local police forces understaffed, prevention and/or loss reduction probably are more promising avenues than apprehension of the criminals.

The DHCA Safety Committee has met several times over the four years with members of the law enforcement agencies responsible for our neighborhood. We hope to get all four agencies together to discuss ways to improve coverage and coordination. Police consistently offer the following advice:

1. Remove all visible items from your car, and lock the car whenever you leave it, even to get gas. Even visible small change can be a target.
2. Businesses, institutions, and apartments should make sure that all parking areas have **adequate lighting, warning signage, and working surveillance cameras inside and outside**.
3. Home owners should consider using outdoor lighting, alarm systems, and surveillance cameras.
4. Police urge all residents to belong to a **Neighborhood Watch** program, which should include an e-mail or other system to alert neighbors about suspicious activity. Everyone should know their neighbors and how to get in touch with their closest neighbors (ideally quickly via text or phone call) if they see anything suspicious.

Other possibilities for the future might include more cameras that can read license plates or have broader street coverage, but evidence that this deters crime appears so far to be inconclusive.

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This report was written by Gary Tapp of the DHCA Public Safety Committee, chaired by Doug Rollins. Ellen Meshnick collected the primary data for Druid Hills crime over the four years. Other members of the Public Safety/Transportation Committee are Kirk Larsen, Karen Hunter, Carol Sleeth, Landon Ansell, and Justin Critz.

## **APPENDICES:**

### **I. Law Enforcement**

The Druid Hills Neighborhood is covered by four different law enforcement organizations: City of Atlanta Police, DeKalb County Police, Emory University Police, and the Druid Hills Patrol. While this can be a benefit, at times it can also create issues of coverage and coordination.

The **DeKalb County Police Department** has 860 sworn officers and 232 support staff to cover the county's 271 square miles. Druid Hills falls into the North Central Precinct, based in Tucker under Major P.S. Sheirling. Major Sheirling has one captain, five lieutenants, 16 sergeants, and 63 officers under his command. North Central is the smallest of the county's four precincts in terms of number of officers. In our conversations with DeKalb Police, they have recently stated that officers have been leaving at a higher rate than usual, and this force is often stretched to cover adequately the large North Central Precinct with regular patrols.

As with most local police forces in the U.S., in the last few years DeKalb has had difficulty filling all the vacant positions on its force. However, DHCA has found them to be responsive and cooperative and willing to meet with us and other community members when needed. To file non-emergency police reports or other non-emergencies, call 678-406-7929 or dial 311.

The **City of Atlanta Police Department**, which reported having 2,425 sworn officers in 2021, says it is the largest law enforcement agency in the state.



(Interestingly, Atlanta, whose population is about 66% the size of DeKalb County, has a police force that is more than twice as large as DeKalb's. APD operates with six zones, and Druid Hills is a tiny portion of Zone 6. As Table 4 shows, Zone 6 by itself had more crimes in all categories in 2021 than Druid Hills had in all four years of our study.

Zone 6 is under the command of Major Peter Ries. The APD hired 122 officers in 2021 and has a goal of hiring 250 officers for 2022, so it appears that, like most police forces, they may also be feeling understaffed. APD is making a big push into technology, with 300 LPR cameras (License Plate Readers) already installed and a goal of having 25,000 residents' cameras integrated into APD's interactive system by 2023. For police non-emergency calls, dial 311 or call 404-614-6544.

**Table 4: Major crime categories in 4 of the 6 Atlanta Police Zones, 2020 and 2021 (Source: Atlanta Police Department)**

ZONE 1				ZONE 2			
OFFENSE	2021	2020	% CHANGE	OFFENSE	2021	2020	% CHANGE
Murder	33	26	27%	Murder	13	9	44%
Rape	27	20	35%	Rape	34	20	70%
Robbery	135	145	-7%	Robbery	107	112	-4%
Agg.	513	503	2%	Agg.	239	203	18%
Burglary	270	328	-18%	Burglary	289	394	-27%
Larceny / From Auto	732	669	9%	Larceny / From Auto	1,799	2,087	-14%
Larceny / Other	612	602	2%	Larceny / Other	1,076	962	12%
Auto Theft	395	403	-2%	Auto Theft	607	706	-14%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,717</b>	<b>2,696</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,164</b>	<b>4,493</b>	<b>-7%</b>

ZONE 5				ZONE 6			
OFFENSE	2021	2020	% CHANGE	OFFENSE	2021	2020	% CHANGE
Murder	20	28	-29%	Murder	24	15	60%
Rape	26	31	-16%	Rape	22	15	47%
Robbery	149	161	-7%	Robbery	132	123	7%
Agg.	366	329	11%	Agg.	277	236	17%
Burglary	201	270	-26%	Burglary	269	351	-23%
Larceny / From Auto	2,192	2,535	-14%	Larceny / From Auto	1,946	1,692	15%
Larceny / Other	1,051	865	22%	Larceny / Other	869	863	1%
Auto Theft	792	597	33%	Auto Theft	429	498	-14%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,797</b>	<b>4,816</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,968</b>	<b>3,793</b>	<b>5%</b>

The **Druid Hills Patrol** is a non-profit, membership-funded effort that uses off-duty Atlanta and DeKalb police officers. The DHP provides an extra level of security for members, including vacation check-ups, evaluating home security, and checking on suspicious activity. DHP officers are armed, have arrest power, and patrol in a marked vehicle with lights and siren. Patrol hours vary based on membership, but they typically patrol for between 4 and 8 hours every 24 hours. Phone number for Druid Hills Patrol is 404-373-1060.

**Emory University's Police Department** has 52 sworn officers and 29 support staff to cover its three locations: the main Atlanta campus, the Emory Midtown Hospital area, and the Oxford, Georgia campus. On its web site, **EUPS says that its jurisdiction extends to "500 yards beyond our campus borders."** In fact, we have known EPD to respond to 911 calls and home alarms in this 500-yard zone a few times in past years. They do not, however, appear to regularly patrol this 500-yard zone.

For the month of May 2022, the EPD reported a total of 47 criminal incidents at their three locations, including 20 larcenies, one theft from a vehicle, 6 burglaries, 4 assaults, 2 criminal trespasses, 1 motor vehicle theft, 1 fraud, 7 property damage, 1 rape (at Oxford) and 2 incidents of stalking (Atlanta). They made one arrest during the month. On their web site, Emory also has a daily log of police activities.

EPD notes that their numbers are slightly distorted upward because people injured elsewhere may report at Midtown Hospital. EPS also responded to 93 "non-criminal incidents," including 34 motor vehicle collisions and 23 incidents of suspicious activity in May. Phone for Emory Police is 404-727-6115.

## **II. Review of our Analysis of the Flock Camera Experiment**

Surveillance cameras are widespread in the U.K., Europe and Asia, and their use is increasing in the U.S. Police officials in both DeKalb and Atlanta say that, in general, surveillance cameras help officers and can help identify perpetrators. So far, however, the evidence that cameras actually reduce crime appears to be inconclusive. New technologies and systems for camera surveillance are being rolled out rapidly, so improvements are likely.

A 2016 study of research papers and reports about the effectiveness of surveillance cameras by the Municipal Technical Advisory Service at the University of Tennessee concluded the following:

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**Research Results | MTAS Research and Information Center | September 2016**

In summary, based on the papers, articles and reports reviewed, here it seems that CCTV is most effective when combined with other crime reducing/detering methods such as improved lighting, security guards and defensible space. On its own, cameras have been shown to reduce vehicle crimes especially in parking garages. However, some studies showed an increase in crime after the installation of CCTV. And CCTV has not been shown to reduce violent crime.

Researchers consistently report that efforts to reduce or deter crime are complex (as are the causes of crime) and that pointing to one method of reducing crime is an erroneous path.

Some researchers mention the social costs of cameras but then state that most citizens in study areas report feeling safer with cameras installed.

Overall, more research is needed to understand the real effect of cameras on crime but there is a clear message that CCTV is most effective when combined with other methods.

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Thanks to a grant from the city of Atlanta and support from the DHCA, Flock cameras (license plate readers) were installed in October 2018 in all of Lullwater Road and Fairview Road and in the Atlanta portions of Oakdale and Springdale. Residents on Cornell, Cameron Court, and parts of Oxford paid for Flock cameras to be installed later. These cameras are designed only to pick up license plates of cars entering and leaving the area.

Looking at all the streets in Druid Hills not covered by Flock cameras (roughly 100 streets), our data show 141 crimes in the six months before Flock was installed, or about 23.5 crimes per month. In the six months after Flock was installed, those non-Flock streets reported 156 crimes, or about 26 per month.

In the subsequent three months (May-July 2019) the non-Flock streets counted another 39 crimes, or only 13 per month. So for the nine months AFTER Flock was installed, the non-Flock streets reported 195 crimes, or about 21.66 per month. **That's a decline of about 7.8% a month from the pre-Flock period.** So the period immediately following the installation of the Flock cameras saw a decline in crimes throughout Druid Hills.

Meanwhile, the streets and parts of streets covered by Flock cameras reported about 3.66 crimes per month in the six months before Flock and 3.11 crimes per month in the nine months after Flock, for **a decline of about 15% on a monthly**

**basis.** Because crime levels were already low, that's a decline of only about half a crime per month. Still, it was a slightly greater decline than seen on the non-Flock streets.

### **Expiration of the Grant**

When the grant expired in October 2020, and further funding for the cameras would have to come from the residents, **none of the streets opted to continue funding the cameras.** At the time, the cost for two cameras to monitor both ends of a street was \$4,000. Residents had to request that a Flock coordinator (who was a DHCA board member) review video from a specific camera and then that video could be shared with police.

As mentioned above, our data suggested that the Flock cameras may have reduced the number of crimes on those streets by about half a crime per month. Police were able to list only one crime that was "cleared" (solved) because of the cameras. Residents requested video from Flock on only 14% of the reported crimes during the Flock trial period.

It's difficult to reach a conclusive answer on how effective the Flock cameras were, because the Covid-related shut-downs began in March 2020 and many people began working at home. At the same time, a major shift toward home surveillance cameras of all kinds was underway by then. As this Four-Year Crime Report shows, around this same time we began to see a shift in car break-ins away from single-family homes and toward commercial and multi-family parking areas.

In 2021, the city of Atlanta launched a program that allows homeowners and businesses to integrate their home surveillance cameras directly into the Atlanta police video center. The program, called **ConnectAtlanta.org**, allows homeowners and businesses to register their video cameras with police, and, if they choose, connect a separate device that integrates their cameras into the system so police can immediately access that camera's footage on a real-time basis if a crime occurs in the area. The web site shows 5887 cameras integrated into the system so far.