

Response to the 8/04/2010 *NOCrimeline*
And
Answers To Common Questions About The FQ Security District

August 11, 2010

It is routine for major American cities to have a special security district in their core neighborhood as a complement to the work of their police department. The French Quarter is no less deserving of a security district than the "downtown" neighborhoods of New York, San Francisco, Chicago or Atlanta. If approved by voters on October 2, 2010, the FQ Security District would work with the new NOPD leadership to address French Quarter public safety and other quality of life concerns.

Experts agree that visible patrols equal deterrence. The FQ Security District plan calls for a visibly present private security force – coordinated with NOPD -- to provide an enhanced level of patrolling services while NOPD maintains its regular services. The additional details by private security officers will patrol all areas of the FQ Security District during more than sixty 8-hour shifts per week. These additional patrols will be performed by a private security contractor and will run 24/7/365. The FQ Security District's two (2) employees will supervise the patrols and ensure they are coordinated with NOPD. The employees will also seek other funding sources, such as grants, for the security district.

In September, the FQMAMD will send an informational mailer to every household in the proposed security district and hold public meetings. One of the up-coming public meetings will be held on September 21, 2010, from 6 – 7:30 p.m. in the Ballroom of the Royal Orleans Hotel.

Frequently asked questions and issues raised by the *NOCrimeline* and some blogs are answered below. For further information, please email Alan Williams at awilliams@gcrconsulting.com.

1. The FQ Security District Will Be An Extremely Low Cost Public Safety Program For Residents –Less Than A Subscription To The *Times-Picayune*

Residential property owners will be assessed only about 50 cents a day (\$15 a month/\$185 per year) to fund the FQ Security District. Residential property includes single-family, double, tri-plex and 4-plex parcels. This NOMINAL FEE ranks the 21st lowest out of NO's 22 residential security districts! The extremely low residential cost is only possible because commercial parcels will be assessed almost sixty percent (60 %) of the cost even though the commercial parcels make up only thirty percent (30 %) of the

properties in the security district. See below for more information on parcel assessment fees.

2. Parcel Fees Cannot Be Increased

By state law, the amount of the flat fee parcel assessments cannot be increased during the term of the security district (1/1/2011 – 6/31/2014).

3. Try It Out, To See If It Works - The FQ Security District Will Last Only 3 ½ Years

If residential voters approve the FQ Security District, the security district will last only three and a half (3 ½) years. It is a trial period. At the end of four years, the parcel fee assessments will expire. There is no automatic renewal!

If residents find the security district effective and responsive, and they want to renew it, state law will have to be amended and then the security district's registered voters would have to vote a second time to approve the re-creation of the security district for another few years.

4. FQ Security Officers Will Deter Crime and Can Detain Felons

Experts agree that visible patrols equal deterrence. Hiring security officers instead of off-duty police means more "boots on the ground", patrolling every corner of the French Quarter 24-hours a day. FQ Security will provide more than sixty (60) 8-hour patrols per week. It is better to deter crime from occurring in the first place than to catch the criminal in the act.

The FQ Security District will use private security officers instead of off-duty police officers. They cost less per hour than off-duty NOPD officers, which allows the security district to provide more patrol shifts. The primary job of the private security force will be patrolling the FQ Security District. Patrolling the FQ will not be their part-time or second job. When a major crime occurs somewhere in the 8th District (an area that stretches from Mardi Gras World on the other side of the CCC, through the Warehouse District to the Superdome and then through the DDD, the FQ, and the Marigny Triangle), the FQ Security Officers will continue their regular patrolling while the 8th District officers respond to the call. The security officers will also patrol during special events like Mardi Gras.

FQ Security officers will be able to detain suspects when the officer observes a felony or receives a reliable report of such. The security officers will be trained and equipped to respond appropriately. Night patrols will be armed. FQ security officers will promptly notify the NOPD to report a felony.

5. FQ Security Officers Will Also Deter Nuisance and Ordinance Violations

Crime and nuisance violations are two sides of the same coin. Reducing nuisance problems will have direct benefits *and* it will facilitate better police protection. The high volume of nuisance misconduct requires significant NOPD attention. If security officers reduce this burden on the NOPD, it will in turn facilitate improved NOPD patrol coverage and reduce NOPD response time.

Using technology similar to smart-phones, security officers will record information and take photos of illegal activity, vandalism, or needed municipal repairs—each report or photo will be “tagged” with the precise location, time and officer notes. This information will be forwarded to appropriate public agencies and entered into the FQMAMD’s database of community needs that will be created. The two (2) employees of the District will work on a daily basis to obtain City agency follow-through on repairs.

6. Boundaries Of The FQ Security District And Who Votes on October 2

The FQ Security District includes all properties in the French Quarter, including the downriver side of Canal Street and both sides of Esplanade Avenue. It also includes the properties on both sides North Rampart Street. Only the registered voters within these boundaries may vote on October 2 in favor or against the creation of the FQ Security District.

7. Marigny Said “All In, or All Out”

The Faubourg Marigny Improvement Association (FMIA) asked the FQMAMD to remove the Marigny from the security district because only a part of the Marigny Triangle would have been in the security district – instead of ALL of the Marigny Triangle and ALL of the Marigny Rectangle. The FMIA asked that either all of the Faubourg Marigny be included in the security district, or all of it to be excluded. Consequently, the Marigny Triangle will not be in the FQ Security District.

8. Both Residential and Commercial Interests Are Well-Represented on the Board; Residential Interests Are Protected

Six (6) of the thirteen (13) members of the FQMAMD Board of Commissioners are residents of the FQMAMD (Nathan Chapman, Chris Costello, Carol Greve, Ralph Lupin, Kim Rosenberg, and Ted Young). Seven (7) of the thirteen members own or operate a business in the District (Peter Ambrose, Darryl Berger, Al Groos, Steve Pettus, Sal Sunseri, Lois Sutton, and Robert Watters).

State law requires that eight (8) of the thirteen (13) Board Members approve any policy, financial or employment decision made by the FQMAMD Board. No decision of consequence can be made by a quorum (7 members) or a quorum majority. During

the Board's two and a half (2 ½) years of operation, all decisions of the Board have been with the agreement of the Board's residential members.

9. The FQMAMD Board Volunteers Their Services

State law prohibits compensation for Board Member work or attendance at meetings. State ethics laws prohibit Board Members from resigning and stepping into FQMAMD employment.

10. No Bureaucracy Will Be Created

The FQ Security District will have only two (2) employees. All of the security officers will be employed by the security contractor. All of the patrol equipment will be owned by the security contractor.

The two (2) FQ Security District employees will ensure that the security contractor is providing effective services. They will also work on other initiatives to improve the District.

11. Administrative Costs Will Be Kept As Low As Possible—Savings Will Be Invested in More Security Patrols

The District seeks to keep overhead as low as possible. The "worst-case" scenario predicts that 30% of first-year revenue will be necessary to cover start up expenses –the budget reflects the worst case scenario. Office space in the FQ is pricey. The FQMAMD will seek donated office space and parking and storage of security vehicles. If donated space is obtained, the savings will be used to provide even more patrol coverage for the District.

12. Why Funding Is Being Sought From Residents

Initially, the FQMAMD sought –unsuccessfully--- to obtain state funding for the District from a percentage of the state's sales taxes collected in the District. When that funding source was denied, the FQMAMD sought to obtain a sizeable state appropriation to fund the District. In 2008, the State Legislature appropriated \$1,000,000.00 to fund the District. However, Governor Jindal vetoed the appropriation. He also vetoed one of the two (2) \$90,000.00 appropriations the District obtained in 2009. The State is now financially strapped. Funding must come from within the District or not at all.

The FQ businesses community is willing to provide funding for a security district. The residential members of the FQMAMD Board consider it an important factor that residents "have skin in the game." The nominal parcel fee assessment that residential property owners will be charged will provide the necessary skin.

13. Creation Of The Security District Has Been Publicized, And Will Continue To Be Publicized

For the past two years, the creation of a security district has been discussed monthly at the public meetings of the FQMAMD. This year, presentations on the security district have also been made to the board and/or the general membership of most French Quarter organizations. Fliers were circulated at Night Out Against Crime. French Quarter Citizens (FQC) wrote about the security district in its newsletter, as did Jon Kemp recently in the TP's The Vieux. Last year and recently, WWL did a segment on the security district.

In September, the FQMAMD will send an informational mailer to every household in the FQ and hold additional public meetings. One of the up-coming public meetings will be held on September 21, 2010, from 6 – 7:30 p.m. at either the Royal Orleans or the Astor Hotel.

14. Public Input Is Essential To The Security District's Operation Plan

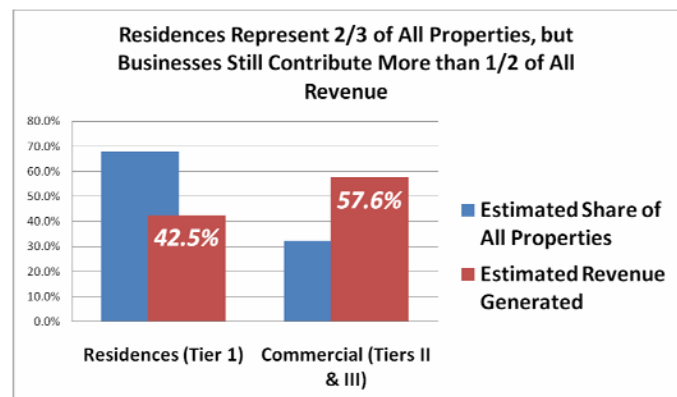
Public input is critical to crafting an Operations and Management Plan for the security district that meets the needs of the residents and businesspeople of the French Quarter. The FQMAMD launched a DRAFT of its plan for the security district four to five (4 -5) months ago in an effort to obtain public feedback on what residents and businesspeople wanted in the plan. A FINAL plan will be posted in early September. Nonetheless, the public's feedback will continue to be sought out throughout the course of the security district's operations.

15. Supporters Of The FQ Security District Initiative

City Council Members Kristin Palmer and Jackie Clarkson support the creation of the FQ Security District. The following French Quarter organizations also support its creation: French Quarter Citizens, Lower Quarter Crime Watch, French Quarter Business Association, and Bourbon Street Merchants Association. The Greater New Orleans Hotel and Lodging Association and the Louisiana Restaurant Association also support its creation.

16. Businesses Will Be Assessed Higher Fees Than Residents

Almost 60% of the security district budget will come from commercial parcels, even though they constitute only about 30% of the parcels in the security district.



An owner of a residential parcel will pay significantly lower fees than an owner of a commercial property —about half as much as the owner of a retail shop and about a third as much as a bar owner. The owners of about two dozen very large properties will contribute a sizeable chunk of the total budget.

- **I am a residential Property Owner-- How Much am I Asked to Pay?**

Tier I *Single-Family and Small Multi-Family Residences (4 or fewer units)* **\$185**
per year

If your residential property has four (4) units or fewer, this is your category. This category includes individual condos in condominium buildings. ***This fee equals about 50 cents per day, or almost \$15 dollars per month.***

COMPARE: Prior to discontinuing its patrol services, Lower Quarter Crime Watch (LQCW) charged residential property owners dues of \$260 for seven 4-hour patrol shifts per week. The FO Security District will assess \$185 for more than sixty 8-hour shifts per week.

- **I Own a Small Commercial Property And Alcohol Is NOT Sold On Premises -- How Much am I Asked to Pay?**

Tier II *Large Multi-Family Buildings, Mixed Use and Most Businesses* **\$395**
per year

If you own a residential parcel with five (5) or more units, this is your category. Or, if you own a mixed residential and commercial parcel or a small/medium commercial parcel that does not have a business on it that sells or serves alcohol, this is your category. If you have a boutique hotel, B&B, or an inn with under 25 rooms, that does not sell alcohol, this is also your category. ***This fee equals about \$1 dollar per day, or \$30 per month.***

- **I Own a Small Commercial Property And Alcohol IS Sold On Premises -- How Much am I Asked to Pay?**

Tier III (N) *Properties that Sell Alcohol on Premise* **\$545 per**
year

If you own a small/medium sized commercial parcel that has a liquor store, a bar, or an alcohol-selling restaurant on premises, this is your category. ***This fee equals about \$1.50 per day, or almost \$50 per month.***

- **I Own A Major Commercial Property-- How Much am I Asked to Pay?**

Tier III (A-M) Hotels, Large Parking Lots, Retail Malls, Large Offices
\$15,000 per year

\$900 -

If you own a large commercial property, your parcel fee is determined by the particular use of your parcel and the size of the improvement on your parcel. The amount of the parcel fee you will be assessed reflects that large properties profit from the high volume of visitors to the FQ.