

City of Arts & Innovation

A Message from the Chief

Police Department
LARRY V. GONZALEZ
Chief of Police

May 2, 2024

Fellow Riversiders,

Over the past several weeks, my Narcotics Unit has been conducting an undercover operation along the Magnolia Avenue corridor targeting street dealers of methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, and fentanyl. It recently concluded with a three-day zero-tolerance sweep where we arrested 104 people, including 33 dealers and 71 others for various misdemeanor and felony offenses. Sadly, most of those we booked into jail have already been released and are back on the streets. Let me explain why.

The laws referred to as the "Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act" have made it difficult to ensure our citizens' safety. Offenders with multiple prior convictions used to face substantial criminal penalties, but these penalties have since been legislated away, leaving our communities suffering.

Prop. 47 downgraded many drug offenses to misdemeanors and raised the theft threshold to \$950. AB109 shifted felony sentences to county jails, and Prop. 57 granted early release to numerous inmates, including repeat offenders.

With overcrowded jails and minimal deterrents, defendants serve minimal to no jail time, leading to deeper addiction and chronic homelessness. The majority of those arrested last week are on our streets due to these failed propositions and assembly bills.

As a community and as a state, we must recognize and admit that our prison reform efforts and removal of criminal penalties, has gone too far. They have gone beyond their intended purpose and are neglecting the victims of all types of crimes, and they are causing devastation to our neighborhoods.

I urge you to educate yourself on various proposed legislative efforts to bring back some of the tools to help law enforcement agencies keep our streets safe.

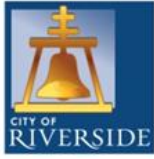


One such effort is the "Drug Addiction, and Theft Reduction Act" ballot initiative. This initiative is endorsed by law enforcement organizations, District Attorneys, Chiefs, and Sheriffs throughout the state, including ARCCOPS (the Association of Riverside County Chiefs of Police and Sheriff). Visit www.casafecommunities.com to learn more.

Finally, to the criminal element peddling these drugs and violating the law in our city; NO MORE. This wasn't a one-and-done operation, and our enforcement efforts will continue until our community members, businesses, and visitors feel a constant sense of safety in Riverside.

Stay safe,

Chief Larry V. Gonzalez



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PRESS RELEASE

Police Department
LARRY V. GONZALEZ
Chief of Police

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 2, 2024

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OPERATION “STREET SWEEPER” NETS OVER 100 ARRESTS ALONG MAGNOLIA CORRIDOR

RIVERSIDE, CA – Over the past several weeks and in response to increased criminal activity and complaints from community members and businesses, the Riverside Police Department's Narcotics Unit conducted an undercover drug purchase operation along the Magnolia Avenue corridor, between Van Buren Boulevard and Pierce Street. 46 different purchases of methamphetamine, fentanyl, cocaine, PCP, and Psilocybin mushrooms were made over a three-week period in this area, mainly from individuals who identified as homeless and/or living in the various motels along Magnolia Avenue.

At the conclusion of this undercover program, the Narcotics Unit coordinated a three-day arrest operation to locate the 44 suspects who were caught selling illegal drugs. Of the 44 drug dealers identified, 33 were arrested and booked into the Robert Presley Detention Center last week for narcotics sales violations.

Additionally, and with assistance from our Problem Oriented Policing (POP) Team, Public Safety Engagement Team (PSET), Training Bureau, Park and Neighborhood Specialists (PANS), Crime Analysis Unit, Post-Release Accountability and Compliance Team (PACT), Riverside County Probation, and our METRO and SWAT Teams, 71 other suspects were also arrested and booked into jail for charges that included:

- 15 arrests for violation of parole, probation, and post-release community supervision



- 3 outstanding felony arrest warrants
- 21 outstanding misdemeanor arrest warrants for shoplifting, petty theft, trespassing, possession of drug paraphernalia, illegal possession of controlled substances, and being under the influence of a controlled substance
- 32 misdemeanor arrests were made for trespassing, public intoxication, possession of drug paraphernalia, and illegal possession of controlled substances
- 3 probation searches were conducted at local motel rooms
- 2 search warrants were served at local residences

During one of the probation searches conducted at a motel room, a woman was found to be wanted on a 2022 felony drunk-driving case where she struck a vehicle containing two adult women and a 4-year-old boy, all who sustained serious injuries from the crash. Also inside her room was a man with an outstanding felony warrant for burglary, and officers discovered several thousand dollars' worth of stolen merchandise in his possession during their search.

Of the 104 arrests made last week during Operation "Street Sweeper," almost all the suspects claimed to be homeless and living on the streets and motels along Magnolia Avenue. Furthermore, medical aid and police calls for service along the Magnolia Avenue corridor immediately and significantly decreased as a result.

Eleven drug dealers are still outstanding and currently wanted on felony drug sales charges. Of the 33 drug dealers arrested, 4 are still in custody. 5 were released within 24 hours, 4 released within 48 hours, 8 released within 72 hours, 4 released within 96 hours, and 8 were released after 96 hours.

The Riverside Police Department will continue its directed enforcement and efforts to investigate those engaged in the trafficking and sale of illicit drugs within our neighborhoods, amongst other crimes affecting the safety of community members.

To submit tips about suspected illegal drug activity in your Riverside neighborhood, download the Riverside Police Department's "Atlas 1" mobile app and utilize the "Send a Message" feature to send us the information. If you don't have our app already, it can be downloaded at [APPLE](#) or [ANDROID](#).

Video clips from the arrests can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/iYSc7ztbA>.