

# Foot patrols may return to Beach Flats

*Beach Flats*  
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The City Council signaled its intention to beef up the police force and bring back foot patrols in Beach Flats and Lower Ocean to stem the surge in drug sales in those neighborhoods.

The council voted unanimously Tuesday to consider the cost of several options:

- Fully staffing the police department, which is now down 22 officers.

- Keeping officers at the police department who are looking for jobs in departments that pay better.

- Starting foot patrols in Beach Flats and Lower Ocean again;

- Using community service teams and officers to better effect in those neighborhoods.

While council members also discussed the importance of treatment, they said the only way to slow the increase in drug activity is to get more officers on the street.

"I've been frustrated not with the police department but with the council, because we learned about the police department's problems in November and didn't do anything," said Councilman Ed Porter, who initiated Tuesday's conversation. "How many houses need to be on fire for us to send someone to help? I believe Beach Flats is a house on fire."

Over the last five months, the city police, with county and federal help, arrested 451 people on drug charges and netted 93 drug dealers and 30.9 pounds of drugs with a street value of \$1.3 million.

Right now, the police department provides the area with one police officer 24 hours a day.

Beach Flats landlords and business leaders said drug dealing in the area is flagrant. Some, like landlord Emilio Martinez, urged the council to establish a police substation in Beach Flats. Others, like Downtown Association Director Pete Eberle, said the Beach Flats needs more police, but so does every other area of town.

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