

POLICY BRIEF:

Public Safety

FAST FACTS:

Quarterly Crime Statistics
January – March 2023
(Preliminary, per LCPD)

Crime type	YTD 2023	YTD 2022	% ↑↓
Homicide/manslaughter	2	5	-60
Robbery	17	27	-37
Aggravated assault	70	151	-47
Total violent crime	100	192	-47
Residential burglary	80	71	13
Commercial burglary	84	76	11
Felony larceny/theft	65	123	-47
Misdemeanor larceny/theft	301	270	11
Total property crimes	1516	1383	10

Project LIGHT (Lessen the Incidence of Grief, Harm and Trauma): The Las Cruces Fire Department's newest crisis-response unit which dispatches teams of first responders and licensed social workers through the 911 system to provide intervention for mental health crises.

Lift Up Las Cruces is a Multi-departmental effort of the City of Las Cruces to improve neighborhoods one at a time. From sidewalk replacements to ADA ramps to bike lanes and new streetlights, Las Cruces City streets and sidewalk improvements can enhance public safety and help in the reduction of crime.

Providing quality law enforcement and fire services is the foundation of my vision for a “Healthy Las Cruces.” Without first addressing these important aspects of our civic life, other areas such as business development are sure to continue to struggle. These efforts, however, require a shared commitment with our community. No single effort by a Mayor, City Councilor, or City Manager could ever be successful. The intent of this policy brief is to share my perspectives with you to illuminate where my focus will be for my **first 100 days as your Mayor**.

Building Trust

As with other agencies nationwide, I support the framework of [21st Century Policing](#) as envisioned in 2015 by a task force appointed by President Barack Obama. The framework identifies best policing practices for reducing crime while at the same time building public trust.

The City of Las Cruces established its Public Safety Select Committee in December 2015 to address issues related to safety and well-being in our community. Currently, this eight-member committee meets out of public view. As your mayor, I will advocate for these meetings to be open to the public to best encourage dialog between the Las Cruces Police Department (LCPD) and the people it serves. I believe that it is vitally important for the members of this committee to be aware of public sentiment and concerns as it pertains to their work.

Policy and Oversight

In my experience trust is enhanced when the public believes that law enforcement is working within established procedural guidelines. With that in mind, I support LCPD in obtaining nationally recognized accreditation through the [Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies \(CALEA\)](#). This multi-year application process requires improvements in agency data collection, the vetting of policies and procedures regarding employee relations and case law, a clear chain of command and accountability at all levels of policing — especially when the use of force is involved.

Benefits of CALEA accreditation

Ultimately CALEA accreditation results in a warning system. Making it possible to catch problems early so that they can be effectively addressed through proactive training and planning.

Updated Training

I will urge LCPD to revamp its academy training utilizing best practices culled from the national experience and submit this updated curricula to the Law Enforcement Academy Board for approval and statewide utilization. We can set the standard statewide instead of relying on Santa Fe to improve us.

Smart Crime Reduction Strategies and Programs

Property crimes and violent interactions are on the increase across the country. The reasons for this uptick are many and varied but there is no question that access to cheap illicit drugs such as Fentanyl and Methamphetamine have driven these statistics upwards. That said, it is important to note that total crime statistics in Las Cruces have been fairly level for the last two years. (See Fast Facts sidebar for data highlights.)

Here are just some of the many crime reduction strategies and programs that I will continue to champion:

- **Collaboration between LCPD and other criminal justice entities** Case in point: In February 2023 LCPD and New Mexico State Police conducted a joint 8-week effort to tackle stolen vehicles and other property crimes resulting in a near 20% reduction in auto thefts as well as a more than nine percent reduction in attendant violent crimes.
- **Cutting-edge technology**
Deploying proven technology such as portable solar-powered security cameras to increase our ability to monitor criminal activity and lessen the chance of collateral property damage and/or injury to the public.
- **Slowing the revolving door of repeat offenders**
Public Safety in Las Cruces is compromised when repeat-offenders are released back into our community. I will work to create a "Volunteer Court Watchers" group of interested residents who attend and monitor routine court proceedings. Empty courtrooms are the bane of justice.