TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT: POLICE

DATE: MARCH 22, 2004 CMR:197:04

SUBJECT: POLICE RESPONSE TO NOISE COMPLAINTS AT 2811 MIDDLEFIELD ROAD

This is an informational report and no Council action is required.

BACKGROUND

On February 2, 2004, the City Council requested a detailed analysis of the Police Department’s response to all noise violation calls for service relating to the Safeway store at 2811 Middlefield Road.

It is important to understand how noise violation calls for service are prioritized within the Police Department’s call taking/response procedures. All police calls-for-service received by the 9-1-1 Emergency Dispatch Center are assigned a level of priority based on the initial facts known at the time of the call. The highest priority calls are defined as emergency/high priority calls. They usually are of a life-threatening nature or major crime in progress, and receive an immediate dispatch and response by an officer within three minutes.

The second level of calls-for-service consists of medium priority calls. These calls are usually dispatched within 10 minutes, with corresponding officer arrival within 30 minutes after being dispatched. Examples of medium priority calls include an intoxicated person, missing person, suspicious packages, etc.

The third level of priority is low priority. Depending upon other higher priority calls-for-service and availability of staff, these calls are dispatched within 30 minutes of receipt, with officer arrival 30 minutes after being dispatched. Examples of low priority calls-for-service would be theft reports that are not in progress, cold vandalism reports and noise violations. Many times low priority calls are dispatched and responded to well under the 60-minute time goal. Occasionally, during exceptionally busy periods, response to low priority calls
may be extended. If a low priority response is extended due to a high volume of higher priority calls-for-service, the reporting party is usually contacted by a dispatcher or field supervisor and advised of the delay.

**DISCUSSION**

Staff reviewed all calls-for-service for in and immediately adjacent to the Safeway store at 2811 Middlefield Road for the two-year period between January 1, 2002 and February 27, 2004. All noise violation complaint calls were analyzed for the call type, date of call, time the call was received, time the call was dispatched, time the officer arrived and the disposition of the call.

There were five noise calls reported during this time period, including one complaint regarding construction noise, one loud music complaint, two complaints of power washers being used and one complaint of a loud leaf blower. The average total response time was 15 minutes from the time the calls were received until the officers arrived. See Attachment A for the specific details for each call. Officers contacted the subjects responsible for the noise in four out of the five cases. Responding officers were unable to locate a responsible party in one of the cases. One written warning was issued.

As a result of concerns from residents in the area of the Safeway store, staff has assigned specific police personnel to work with Safeway regarding noise complaints. This officer has met with senior Safeway management staff and has provided training to Safeway management regarding Palo Alto’s Noise Ordinance, including hours of operation for construction, power washing and leaf blowers. They have been advised of the types of noise complaints that have been reported at their business and that future noise violations will result in the issuance of citations.

Staff has also emphasized the importance of responding police personnel to properly document noise violations and issue citations when necessary.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Noise Complaints Reported to Palo Alto Police from January 1, 2002 to February 27, 2004
## Attachment A
### Noise Complaints Reported to Palo Alto Police from 2811 Middlefield Road
**01/01/02 to 02/27/04**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call Type</th>
<th>Date of Call</th>
<th>Time Received</th>
<th>Time Dispatched</th>
<th>Time Arrived</th>
<th>Disposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction noise.</td>
<td>03/02/2002</td>
<td>12:35 am</td>
<td>12:52 am</td>
<td>12:56 am</td>
<td>Pest control workers contacted. No report taken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music from a car in rear lot of Safeway.</td>
<td>08/11/2002</td>
<td>10:24 pm</td>
<td>10:32 pm</td>
<td>10:36 pm</td>
<td>Subject contacted, music turned off. No report taken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power washing in Safeway lot.</td>
<td>08/10/2003</td>
<td>7:57 am</td>
<td>7:58 am</td>
<td>8:03 am</td>
<td>Contact with person using the power washing machine. Verbal warning given. No report taken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loud leaf blower.</td>
<td>09/02/2003</td>
<td>8:32 am</td>
<td>8:35 am</td>
<td>8:43 am</td>
<td>Unable to locate the violation. No report taken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power washing in Safeway lot.</td>
<td>01/31/2004</td>
<td>8:30 am</td>
<td>8:32 am</td>
<td>8:40 am</td>
<td>Violator contacted and given a “First Warning.” Report taken.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>