

See comments below (top page 2) by Queens Civic
Congress President Corey Bearak

http://www.nydailynews.com/ny_local/queens/2009/01/12/2009-01-12_shootings_up_in_queens_but_gun_arrests_a.html#ixzz0ZVNyfe5O

Shootings up in Queens, but gun arrests are down

BY [John Lauinger](#)
DAILY NEWS STAFF
WRITER

Monday, January 12th
2009, 10:39 PM

DelMundo for News
NYPD Crime Scene Unit investigate the scene where 14-year-old Sabrina Matthews was murdered located at 119-41 234th Street in Queens on Monday 11-10-08.



Queens saw an overall drop in serious crime in 2008, but the southern portion of the borough was plagued by a dramatic spike in homicides.

Felonies declined in Queens in 2008 at a rate roughly equal to the citywide dropoff of 3.3% compared with 2007, according to Police Department figures obtained by the Queens News.

Crimes such as homicide, rape, robbery, felony assault, burglary, grand larceny and auto theft in the NYPD's Patrol Borough Queens North dropped by 3.6%, from 13,994 in 2007 to 13,479 in 2008, according to preliminary NYPD statistics through Dec. 31.

Felonies in Patrol Borough Queens South fell 3.1%, from 12,422 to 12,036.

However, Queens South experienced the borough's most significant jump in violent crime in 2008 — a 65% increase in homicides. Queens South had 71 murders in 2008, and 43 in 2007.

Community leaders said the rise in homicides in the southern part of the borough shows that authorities must do more to get guns off the street.

“Easily accessible junk guns lead to violence and death all too often,” said City Councilman Eric Gioia (D-Sunnyside).

Corey Bearak, president of the Queens Civic Congress, an umbrella group of civic organizations, agreed.

“The use of force to settle a dispute and the availability of guns in those communities remains troubling,” he said. “It is something that needs to be addressed and targeted.”

The 113th Precinct topped the list of Queens precincts for homicides, with 15. The precinct encompasses the neighborhoods of St. Albans, Hollis, Springfield Gardens, South Ozone Park, South Jamaica and Addisleigh Park.

District Attorney Richard Brown has previously committed to bringing a gun buy-back program to Queens, but has thus far declined to state where the program would focus its efforts. Similar programs saw success in Manhattan, Brooklyn and most recently in Staten Island.

Queens registered another trend that was also seen citywide in the crime statistics - a rise in shootings, coupled with a decrease in gun arrests.

Shootings increased 18.6% - from 43 to 51 - in Queens North, which saw a modest decrease in gun arrests, from 130 to 127.

But in Queens South, shootings rose by 32.2%, from 152 in 2007 to 201 in 2008.

Gun arrests declined by 13%, from 474 in 2008 to 412 in 2007.

The Police Department did not respond to requests for comment.

Two serial rapists terrorized women in southeastern Queens for several months in the first half of 2008 before the string of attacks ceased without an arrest.

Yet the number of rapes in Queens South remained virtually unchanged - 175 rapes in 2008 compared with 174 in 2007.

Queens also experienced a reduction in the number of parking tickets that were written in all 16 police precincts.

The 108th Precinct in Long Island City, Sunnyside and Woodside had the largest dropoff, at 40%, from 29,102 in 2007 to 17,438 in 2008.

The next largest decline, in the 113th Precinct, was 21%.

jlauinger@nydailynews.com: