



Massachusetts

ACORN

• Mattapan demonstrators demand foot patrols

Demanding more police protection in their neighborhood, a group of Mattapan-Dorchester residents last night blocked traffic at the busy intersection of Morton Street and Blue Hill Avenue in Mattapan.

Boston and MDC police converged on the scene to control the crowd and direct the snarled traffic while the group of about 75 protesters circled the intersection, chanting, "We want foot patrol, we want them now."

No one was arrested during a 45-minute demonstration causing some irate motorists to honk and others to exchange words with the demonstrators.

The group first met at the Mt. Sinai Baptist Church on Wellington Hill Street in Mattapan and marched to the intersection, carrying posters, "Save Lives, Give Foot Patrols," and "Spend \$100,000 Community Development Block Grant Funds."

Charles Allen, 41, of Mattapan, spokesman for the Association of

Community Organizations for Reform (ACORN), said, "We are demonstrating to get the public attention because we don't have any police protection for our neighborhood."

He added, "Our Community Development Block Grant of \$100,000 that was granted to the City of Boston is for foot patrols for a year, but we haven't seen one patrol out here."

He charged that Emmanuel Berk, Director of Commercial Development at the Neighborhood Agency, and Police Superintendent William Bratton "keep passing the buck to one another."

"They closed our Police Station. Three. They laid off our police. There is no excuse for the city not spending our money. We want foot patrols now," Allen demanded, hinting the group might return tonight to block traffic again unless Berk agrees to meet with the group.

Francis Rideout of Mattapan agreed with their leader, saying, "We

can't even come out of our own homes at night because we are afraid of mugging, handbag snatching and all the criminals running around in our neighborhood. We need some police protection."

One of the onlookers had his own observation about the demonstration and said that blocking the traffic was the "wrong approach" to solve the problem.

Brandon Sadberry, 31, of Stratton Street, Mattapan said that, while he agrees with the group's demand for more foot patrols in the neighborhood, blocking the traffic "would create only anger and no support" from the motorists.

Police Deputy Superintendent William Celester of the Area B said that the group was cooperative, letting cars and buses go by.

He added, "The group was orderly and was not getting out of our control. There was no reason for any arrest."

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