

Entry Name: Problem Oriented Policing Through Community Partnerships and Multi-Agency Collaboration

Entry Identification #:

City Population Served: 30,174

Executive Overview

Brooklyn Center is a first-ring suburb of Minneapolis and has a population of 30,174. Ethnically diverse, with a poverty level 5.5% higher than the State average, Brooklyn Center shares a large majority of its crime and public safety issues with Minneapolis's Northern district.

In 2006, Brooklyn Center saw its crime trending to a 10 year high. With violent crime on the rise, the city faced disorder and crime at unprecedented levels. The city had witnessed enormous growth in its ethnically diverse population, creating issues with language and cultural barriers, which resulted in cultural clashes. Running on fumes from a dwindling tax base and a tight budget economy, violent crime across the city began to increase at an unprecedented rate. Above all, juvenile crime was on the rise.

The Department assessed that the only way to stem the tide of violence, keep it down, and make the city a safe place to live again was to get the community involved more than ever. The Police Department, along with community stakeholders, and Civic Organizations adopted new framework for community programs and worked to identify and alleviate the problems involved.

With backing from the community, Community stakeholders, and new Crime Analysis data, the Department was able to analyze the data and input from many community organizations to identify and correct problems within the city that were leading to the dramatic increase in violent crime.

Violence and disorder across the city decreased over the following years, making the city once again a safe place to live and work. The department found that a truly personal partnership, not just superficial engagement with community stakeholders and community organizations was paramount in crime reduction and sustained peace. New programs and organizations appeared including the Multi-Cultural Advisory Committee, Joint Community Police Partnership, and the Juvenile Officer Position.

Framework Questions

Brooklyn Center has long made it a commitment to work with the community through participation with community organizations such as the Neighborhood Watch program, Open Gym, and Juvenile Diversion Programs. These were only scratching the surface of reaching out to the community and building the

relationships needed for effective communication, collaboration, and positive results. More integration into the community was needed. Community stakeholders needed to be sought out so that the different cultures within the city could be brought into the partnership as well.

“To protect and serve in a manner that preserves the public trust” is the Department’s mission statement. The “serve” in the mission statement is to the community of Brooklyn Center and helps dictate the structural lay out of the department. Preservation of the public trust is only achievable by striving to have personal and constructive relationships with the community and stake holders. An important part of this concept in the community policing effort is the department’s internal community liaison expert. They specialize in coordinating between the community stakeholders, local Civic Organizations, and the ethnically diverse community members and the department itself.

The Department adopted and utilized the Sector Team Policing Model, dividing the city into 5 sectors and assigning a patrol sergeant to be responsible to the residents and community members in their assigned sector and to assist them in identifying and resolving concerns in that area. Annual sector team meetings are held so that citizens may become familiar with issues in their specific neighborhoods and come up with ideas and solutions for these issues.

One of three Police Commanders within the department assumes the role of the Commander of the Community Services Division which oversees the Community Liaison Coordinator and their operations within the department. The Community Liaison Coordinator works with Patrol officers throughout the department that are assigned specific rental properties, apartments, and places of business throughout the city. Every major business and rental unit has a liaison Officer assigned. These Officers build rapport and relationships with managers, business owners, and land lords to help facilitate a safe place to work and live.

Community policing has been at the core of the Department’s philosophy and practice for decades. The Department has many community based programs and groups that are specifically designed to take input from Community members to facilitate problem solving within the city. These groups such as the Joint Community Police Partnership, Multi-Cultural Advisory Committee, and Crime Prevention Board were designed in collaboration with community members and stake holders to meet consistently and discuss strategies for solving issues within the community.

One of the strongest programs that the Department uses as a community outreach tool is the Officer Cadet Program. This program is available to minorities within the community who have an interest or desire to become a Police Officer within the community. This program allows citizens within the city and educational opportunity where they will participate in an internship within the Police Department. They will also be able to attend college while working at the Department. This not only provides a multi-cultural member of the community a great educational opportunity, it also promotes the recruitment of new Police Officers who are from

different cultural branches within the community. It also brings in Officers who speak multiple languages who can assist with language barriers that arise on a daily basis.

The Department continually seeks out new stake holders within the community and is always aggressive in welcoming new members of the community by having annual outreach programs. The meetings with each of the different community members are designed to build rapport and working relationships with stakeholders and multi-cultural members of the community. The Department frequently offers programs to Officers to learn languages other than English to better assist them in engaging members of the community. The Department also strives to achieve the goal of not only getting community members and stakeholders involved but to also use common Policing practices to attack problems within the community. If a community member comes forward at a meeting and brings up information about problem residence or persons, the Department will document the information and conduct surveillance on the item in question to see if any further action is needed.

Community Policing is practiced by the Department consistently through outreach programs such as the Multi-Cultural Advisory board and the Crime Prevention Board. The Department meets with these groups on a consistent basis to go over new issues and problems within the different cultures within the community. The Multi-Cultural Advisory Committee has participated in many crime prevention events within the community such as conducting surveys at the local Transit Center to help understand the community's views on the safety of public transportation.

Programs such as the Drive to Serve Meal Serving, Big Brother-Big Sister, Food Shelf Volunteering, and Adopt a Family are programs that the Department has initiated and participated in for many years and remains committed to for the inevitable future.

The Department frequently holds meetings that are open to all residents of the community to participate in. These meetings are Question and Answer meetings that are in languages other than English for those who are new to the community and have questions regarding how the police work and what the State laws and rules are within the city.

The Crime Prevention Board meets on a quarterly basis at the Department to discuss issues within the City. This meeting is attended by several higher ranking and patrol ranked members of the Police Department who actively seek input from these community members about issues or ideas they have to make the community a safer place to live.

Initiative Questions

The City began investing a large amount of money into a citywide revitalization project in 2010 to help give the City a facelift and encourage new businesses and residents to move in. The

commercial district of the City was picked as the focal point for this revitalization project. Centered in at the heart of the City's commercial district is the Metro Transit Bus Station. It is located in the center of the City of Brooklyn Center and serves as the main port of public transportation for the City. From the initial opening of the Transit Center, the Department began receiving complaints from community members who lived in the area as well as business owners and community stake holders that the Transit Center was causing problems for their business or place of residence. The Department began to analyze Crime Data Statistics specifically for the Transit Center and the surrounding area and noted that since the opening of the Bus Station, crime and disorder in the area increased by more than 200% in the immediate area.

Violent crime was at a 10 year high. Assault, theft, armed robbery, and heavy narcotics were prevalent throughout the Transit Center and the surrounding area. The Transit Center also suffered from lack of upkeep. Litter and cigarette butts covered the floor. The bathrooms were frequently out of order, resulting in people urinating on the interior of the building.

The Department along with the Metro Transit Police Department and community members in the surrounding area met and came up with a plan to measure the community's opinion of the Transit Center as a whole. Officers from the Department along with members of the Multi-Cultural Advisory Committee came together and created a survey to hand out to users of the public transportation. Officers and MAC Members then went out and handed out the surveys to community members that were using the buses for transportation. The results showed a prominent fear among both community members and stakeholders surrounding the Transit Center about riding the buses. After conducting the surveys, the Department, it's Crime Data Analysis Expert, the Department's Community Liaison Officer, members of the MAC team, and the Crime Prevention Board came together to come up with a new action plan to combat the crime and disorder that were rampant in the community surrounding the public transportation hub.

The Departments along with MAC members and community stake holders came up with an action plan to curb the violence on and near the Transit Center property and make the Transit Center a safe place to commute to and from. Together, it was decided that saturation patrol between the two Police Departments was necessary in order to get the crime and disorder under control. Other community stake holders such as the Adult Education Center, which specializes in secondary education for adults and financial aid for the community, also had input as the Transit Center was crucial in allowing students to come and go from their facilities. Several options were explored including relocation of the Transit Center and the possibility of shutting it down. This was ultimately slated as a last resort as it would have long term consequences for the city as a whole. After receiving input and ideas from the Metro Transit

Police Department, community members, business and apartment owners around the Transit Center, as well as MAC members, a plan was put in place. Implementation of that plan was completed and the results were immediate. The city saw a 70% declination in violent crime in that area. Much of the credit was given to the business owners and community members who came together to design and initiate the new plan.