apartment safety project

22nd Annual Problem-Oriented Policing Conference
October 10 and 11, 2011
chula vista: where is it?

237,000 residents

215 sworn officers
Why Focus on Apartments?

- Officers identified need in 2004 beat project
- Community telephone calls: is x apartment safe??
- Motel project illustrated what could be achieved
  - At single locations and neighborhood level
- 13% of all CFS at apartments
- Home to 25% of city residents
West Side Chula Vista Apartment Complexes with 8+ Units, and Violence and Disorder Hotspots

Legend
- Green: Apartment Complexes (8+ Units)
- Red: 2009 Violence and Disorder Hotspots

Sources:
- Chula Vista Information Technology Services, Geographic Information Systems
- Chula Vista Police Department
- Code Enforcement Division
- Chula Vista Planning and Building Services Dept.
- Chula Vista Finance Dept.

Prepared By:
CUPD Research & Analysis Unit (J. Riolindo)
Southwest Chula Vista Apartment Complexes with 8+ Units, and Violence and Disorder Hotspots

Legend
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- Red: 2009 Violence and Disorder Hotspots

Prepared By:
CVFD Research & Analysis Unit (J. Rietlorido)

Sources:
Chula Vista Information Technology Services, Geographic Information Systems,
Chula Vista Police Department, Code Enforcement Division,
Chula Vista Planning and Building Services Dept.
Chula Vista Finance Dept.
apartment safety project

- Sought BJA funds, received $357,000 grant
- Hired neighborhood prosecutor, assistant

Project goals (2 years)

- Improve quality of life for residents
- Reduce police calls to apartments
- Build partnerships with stakeholders for success
Analysis
apartment safety project

Studying the Problem

- Literature review
- CFS analysis
- Resident surveys
- Manager surveys
- Manager focus group
- Investigating causes
literature review

• POP guides, research, news articles, city websites, state and local laws, prior Goldstein submissions

• Key source:
  – Keeping Illegal Activity Out of Rental Housing: A Police Guide for Establishing Landlord Training Programs
Identified all apartments in city with 8+ units - 340 total

Sources:
- Business Licensing
- Code Enforcement
- Planning data
- Police CFS data
- On-site verification
apartment database

• Individual addresses that comprise a single complex

• Number of units at each complex address

• Cherry Tree Apartments (34 units) has 7 separate addresses on multiple streets:

  – 201 Blossom St – 4 units
  – 203 Blossom St – 4 units
  – 205 Blossom St – 4 units
  – 207 Blossom St – 4 units

  – 202 Cherry St – 6 units
  – 204 Cherry St – 6 units
  – 206 Cherry St – 6 units
apartment database

Crime Free Easy Tracking System
www.crimefreesoftware.com
CFS to Apartment Complexes by Year

* projected
## Top Apartment Call Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call Type</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise/Party</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disturbance - Person</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check a Person’s Well Being</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disturbance - Family</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>44%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Method to compare 340 complexes

• Calculated CFS/unit ratios and city median
  – 0.36 per unit, per complex, per year

• Identified 40 complexes for intensive outreach
  – Higher than 0.67 CFS per unit
  – 8 to 352 units
• Crime-Free Multi-Housing program
• 2004 beat problem solving project
• Extra patrol of problem properties
stakeholders and harms

• Additional Stakeholders
  – City/county departments
  – Apartment associations
  – Elected officials

• Harms
  – Direct/indirect victimization
  – Quality of life
  – Fear
resident surveys

- 2,000+ residents
- 40 complexes
- Delivered by 21 officers
- Response rate: 18%
key findings

• Top concerns:
  1. Unwanted people hanging out on property
  2. Drug use/dealing
  3. Noise

• Almost 40% don’t feel safe

• Almost 60% said they don’t know their neighbors at all, or very well
owners/managers

- **Surveys**
  - 275 operators
  - Online and mail
  - Response rate: 22%

- **Focus Group**
  - 9 managers and owners
Key findings

- Managers focus on ability to pay when screening tenants, not past tenant behavior
  - Only 10% check 2nd and 3rd prior landlord for references

- 87% said reports on crimes and CFS at their complexes would be helpful
investigating **causes**

- Bad neighborhood
- Low rents
Complexes by CFS Ratios

- 0.00 - 0.30
- 0.31 - 0.59
- 0.60 - 0.66
- 0.67 - 0.99
- 1.00 - 2.56

Mapped Complexes by CFS Ratios
rents

#1

CFS Ratio: 3.63
2-Bedroom Rent: $975-$1050

#2

CFS Ratio: 0.83
2-Bedroom Rent: $925-$1050
rents

#3
CFS Ratio: 0.27
2-Bedroom Rent: $1125

#4
CFS Ratio: 0.14
1-Bedroom Rent: $800
apartment problem causes

• Weak tenant screening
  – Inadequate past reference checks
  – Emphasis is on payment history, not nuisance behavior history

• Poor management of problem tenants
  – Don’t have or enforce rules/let problems fester
  – Reluctant/not able to end leases of problem tenants
  – Manager turnover; lack of formal training/education/experience in apartment management
Goldstein Hierarchy

- Bringing a civil action
- Legislation mandating prevention
- Charging a fee for police service
- Withdrawing police service
- Public shaming
- Creating organization to assume ownership
- Engaging another existing organization
- Targeted confrontational requests
- Straightforward informal requests
- Educational programs
1-on-1 meetings

40 focus properties managers, owners

• Landlord’s crime and disorder concerns, challenges, management practices?

• Police calls and arrests for past 8-18 months

• Site- and problem-specific recommendations & action plan (improve screening, enforce community rules; remove problem tenant; CPTED; police response)

• Free resources
• Long-term trends
• Comparison to other properties
• Hot units
• Common problems
general recommendations

• Screen tenants carefully – pay now or pay later
• Use month-to-month tenancies for greatest flexibility
• Use a Crime-Free Lease Addendum
• Enforce community rules – document, be firm & fair
• “3 Strikes, You’re Out” – after notice, take action
• Negotiate to get problem residents out ASAP
• Leverage Section 8 relationship
• Ask residents to make noise & low-level complaints to management first, not police
• Hold quarterly community meetings
dv recommendations

**Make it Stop**

You can help stop domestic violence.

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE** occurs in your community.
Learn to recognize, respond and report. Research shows calling the police to report these incidents helps prevent future domestic violence.

If you answer yes to one of the following questions, please take action:

- **Have YOU been a victim?**
- **Have you **noticed** domestic violence happen to family members, friends, coworkers, or neighbors?**
- **Have you **heard** domestic violence occurring in neighboring homes?**

The Chula Vista Police Department urges you to call the police to report any domestic violence incident. Contact the police department by dialing 911.

**RECOGNIZE ABUSE**

**DOES YOUR PARTNER:**

- Discourage relationships with others?
- Track all of your time?
- Argue easily and take it out on you?
- Control all the finances?
- Physically harm or threaten you?

**DO YOU:**

- Feel afraid of your partner much of the time?
- Believe you deserve to be hurt or mistreated?
- Feel emotionally numb or helpless?

If the answer is yes to any of these questions, you may be in an abusive relationship. It's time to get help.

If you don't feel comfortable calling the police, please talk to someone. Part of the abuser's power comes from secrecy. Go to a neighbor or call South Bay Community Services at (800) 560-4357.

Visit [http://www.nwdv.org/protection](http://www.nwdv.org/protection) for additional information. Generate a safety plan you can tailor to your needs.

**WANT TO LEAVE?**

A domestic violence victim may break a lease by giving the landlord 30 days' notice and a copy of the police report. [Cal. Civ. Code §1946.5](http://www.nwdv.org/protection).

- Encourage reporting by neighbors
- Local resources for victims
- 30-day lease break law
40 focus properties
Residents, managers and owners

- CFS trends at complex
- Apartment Safety Tips
- DV Flier
- Q&A
community meetings

Woodlawn Avenue Apartments
June 30, 2011

Kingswood Manor Apartments
July 7, 2011
Apartments at 336 Zenith Street

June 16, 2011
April 21, 2011

Park Regency Apartments

To whom it may concern. I am writing this letter to report a problem that has been going on for a few months. I want to report the Apartment #119 who has been using the location as a Tattoo Shop. Every day numerous people come to the apartment complex to this apartment #119 to get work done. It has come to the point where the environment gets very noisy and the living conditions of this apartment complex gets very uncomfortable. They sleep by day and party at night. They are causing too much trouble. Can you please take care of this situation or advice us who should we contact to solve this problem.

Sincerely,

Apt #101
Sara Jean

Apt #118
Fernando

Apt #123
Jose Luis

Park Regency Apartments
April 16, 2011
preliminary results

• Of 17 complexes with 1-on-1 meetings more than 100 days ago
  – 35% (6) now under 0.50, but had improved prior to meeting
  – 6% (1) now under 0.50
  – 59% (10) still at least 2 times higher than median, although half improved

• Overall: total CFS down 28% for this group*

*reduction does not include properties with pre-meeting improvement
preliminary results

• Of 9 complexes that will not meet with us
  – 33% (3) now under 0.50 (improved on own)
  – 67% (6) still at least 2 times higher than median (only 1 improved)

• Overall: total CFS up 24% for this group
• Landlords hungry for information on crime prevention and police calls

• Residents willing to participate in surveys, meetings

• City leaders supportive

• Apartment associations enthusiastic

• Successful Partnerships
  - Chula Vista-based Crime-Free Easy Tracking software
  - City Departments (Code, Housing)
  - County’s Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT)
  - Section 8

preliminary results
Plan public website

- Police CFS information posted by complex and unit # -- daily

- List of city complexes with annual CFS ratios in descending order

- Annual “report cards” for each complex w/CFS summary like Gilbert, AZ

http://www.gilbertaz.gov/police/analysisapts.cfm
future outreach

• Will invite all 340 apartment operators to 3 city-wide meetings to share survey results, recommendations on management practices, Q&A

• With community stakeholders: business associations, social service providers, other City of Chula Vista departments
future options

- **Regulation, enforcement, fees?** (i.e. “responsible owner” permit tied to a public safety standard and operating conditions; public nuisance prosecution)

- **Individual MOUs** for problem properties?

- Attempts to encourage voluntary partnership, improvement = evidence for a future enforcement response
challenges

• Management turnover
• Owners not participating in 1-on-1 meetings
• Property representatives not willing to meet
challenges
challenges
challenges
challenges
• Encourage responsible management, partnership – “When you are successful, we are successful.”

• No surprises – involve landlords and tenants in the process AND solutions

• Provide opportunities to improve before more coercive measures
ideas & questions
contacts

Captain **Roxana** Kennedy
Southern District Commander
(619) 476-2453
rkennedy@chulavistapd.org

**Karin** Schmerler
Senior Public Safety Analyst
(619) 409-5410
kschmerler@chulavistapd.org

**Carol** Trujillo
Deputy City Attorney
(619) 409-5466
ctrujillo@chulavistapd.org

[www.chulavistapd.org/safeapts](http://www.chulavistapd.org/safeapts)