Back From the Brink

Reclaiming the Antoine Corridor and the Development of Problem Oriented Policing within the Houston Police Department

Sgt. Mike Hill
Ofc. Ryan Watson
Ofc. Chris Schuster
The Problem

FROM THIS to THIS
Crime Tracker finds Houston's deadliest street

By Andy Cerota
(9/18/06 - KTRK/HOUSTON) (KTRK) -- A mother is heartbroken -- her son is one of six people killed on the same street, in just the past six months. It's an area of town that's quickly become one of Houston's most dangerous. Residents there aren't the only ones worried -- so are the police. Our Crime Tracker showed a half-mile area in northwest Houston is seeing a dramatic rise in all types of crime.

Michelle Harris said, "I don't go out at night at all. I don't even go to the store -- nowhere."

Two months ago, Michelle Harris' 15-year-old son Christopher was shot and killed outside a northwest Houston convenience store.

She said, "It's a hard pill to swallow, when a person loses their child. It's a hard pill to swallow." It's even harder for the Harris family. They are evacuees who escaped New Orleans only to end up in one of Houston's most dangerous neighborhoods.

Christopher's murder was not an isolated incident. Using our exclusive Crime Tracker we can show you that in one quarter mile stretch of DeSoto, there have been six murders so far this year. That number goes up to seven if you include the one that occurred on the 3300 block of DeSoto -- three quarters of a mile away......
The Location
Historical Approach from HPD

• Fish the "Honey Holes"- Stat driven
• Saturate the area with more patrols
• $100,000.00 per month in overtime
Scanning

- Economic Downturn of the 80's – loss in oil jobs
- Vacant Apartments
- “Affordable Housing”
- Influx of lower economic students in schools
- Residents fled, selling houses just to get out
What’s Left Over?

• Food Desert
• Good Businesses leave the area
• Predatory Businesses
• Predatory Renting Practices
The Levee Breaks

- Katrina
- Astrodome
- FEMA
New Orleans vs. Houston

Eight gang members from New Orleans are arrested in connection with 11 murders in the Houston area.
Analysis

• No zoning in Houston
• Reacted to symptoms of problems not root causes
• DRT dealt with small complaints and nuisance issues
• Neglected properties had become a haven for criminals
• Crime Analysis pointed directly to apartments as the cause of crime.
Recipe for Disaster

+ Incorporate property
+ Defer maintenance
+ Collect HUD/ Section 8 voucher $$$
+ Pocket FEMA money
+ Get loans for property from bank
+ Declare bankruptcy

___________________________________

= SLUMLORD!!!!
“You will never find a more wretched hive of scum and villainy”
Tenant Screening
Response

• Candlelight Trails Condominiums selected as first response
• 300 Units individually owned
• Nature of Condos
• Who to hold responsible?
• Issued hundreds of citations to individual owners of condos
• Dangerous Building Hearings
• Law Suit against all Owners
• Leveraged Fines to get Demo
Candlelight Trails Now
The bill by Rep. Sylvester Turner, D-Houston, applies only to Houston. It requires every condo development to maintain a registered agent to accept service of legal papers; if any development fails to do so, the Texas secretary of state automatically becomes the agent.
Mayor Drives the Bulldozer
The Dominoes Fall

- Candle Light Trls.
- Oak Brook Apts.
- The Gables
- Parking Lots
Problems in the Courts

• Backlog of cases

• Time it takes to prosecute

• Creation of new Impact Court
Administrative Violations

• Sections 54.043 and 54.044 of the Texas Local Government Code allow the City to adopt a procedure for an administrative adjudication hearing under which administrative penalties may be imposed for violation of an ordinance outlined in Chapter 10 of the Code of Ordinances, Houston, Texas.
Other Unit Contributions

- **Tactical Units** - Enforce Trespass Affidavits and clean up street corners
- **Gang Unit** - Document Gang Members
- **Warrant Execution Team** – Target the repeat offenders with outstanding warrants
- **Narc** – Conduct buy/bust operations
- **Vice** – Target prostitutes and convenience stores
- **Public Works** – Conduct building code inspections
Community Involvement

- Near Northwest Management District
- Forest West HOA
- Antoine Forest Estates HOA
- Positive Interaction Program – (P.I.P.)
- City Council Members including “at large” positions
- Mayor’s Office
- State Representative Sylvester Turner
Redevelopment

• Houston- Galveston Area Council
• Livable Centers Study
Areas Susceptible to Change

Demolished & Condemned Properties

County Flood Control Property

Under-Used Commercial Strip Centers
Rebranding
Affordable Housing

• Community Development Block Grants (CDGB)
• 3 Apartment Complexes for 1150 Units total
• Families moved in
CPTED

- All apartments were renovated with CPTED as a primary concern
- Cameras
- Fencing
- Landscaping
- Lighting
Assessment

• 69.7 % Decrease in violent crime
• 57 % decrease in Part I overall
• 62 % decrease in Narcotics
## Antoine Corridor Part I Crimes by Year

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The Trends are Obvious

Antoine Part I Violent Crimes

City Wide Violent Crimes

- MURDER
- AGGRAVATED ASSAULT
- ROBBERY
- SEXUAL ASSAULT
Guess Which Year Katrina Happened

Antoine Murder

City Wide Murder
Displacement vs Dispersement
New Partnerships
HPD Outcomes

- Developed P.O.P. strategies in Houston
- Spread to the rest of HPD
- New Tools
- New partnerships
- Greater Community involvement
- Significant Crime Reduction
- Reduced Calls for Service
For More Information Contact:

Officer Ryan Watson
Asst. City Wide DRT Coordinator
ryan.watson@houstonpolice.org