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Multifaceted POP Project Breathes New Life Into Apartment Communities

By Officers Harold Bickel and
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River Oaks and New Helvetia low-income housing developments are near the center of Sacramento and consist of single-family, one- and two-story apartments. They are owned and operated by the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA). Together, these developments are the approximate size of the largest public housing complex in Los Angeles. The ethnic breakdown of these densely populated developments is roughly one-third African American, one-third Asian and one-third Hispanic and Caucasian.

In 1991, SHRA called on the Sacramento Police Department's (SPD's) newly formed problem-oriented policing (POP) unit to help devise long-term strategies to combat crime in these complexes. Officers Harold Bickel and Gregory Dieckmann were assigned full-time to the area as neighborhood police officers (NPOs).

Scanning

Historically, River Oaks and New Helvetia were plagued with the highest crime rate in Sacramento, primarily due to drugs and the presence of several gangs. In 1991, there were over 1,900 calls for service in New Helvetia and River Oaks. There were two-and-a-half calls per household and over 470 reported crimes, of which 57 were assaults. In 1992, calls for service peaked at over 2,350 for these two complexes, along with an adjoining private complex called Camellia Commons.

Gang activity and related drug dealing had a rich history in these developments. The Project Gangster Bloods (PGB) were formed in the late 1980s by a group of young men who grew up together and banded together in response to an influx of Los Angeles Crips. These Crips had successfully taken over the neighborhood and its lucrative rock cocaine trade. The Crips were perceived as enemies of the community because they *did* not grow up there and they violently assaulted any residents who dared oppose them.

The PGB were also violent drug dealers, but they seldom preyed directly on the community. There were numerous gun battles and homicides during the time that the PGB *fought* the Crips. Many in the neighborhood viewed the PGB as their protectors and heroes. Other gangs, such as the Del Paso Heights Bloods and 29th Street Crips, violently competed for control of the rock cocaine trade.

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Environmental Changes Bring Order to School Campus

by Constable Tom McKay, Peel
Regional Police

Scanning

In January 1992, Constable Tom McKay of the Peel Regional Police Crime Prevention Services began a major problem-solving initiative in response to a letter received from local high school principal Drew Leverette. The letter, which principally identified a trespassing problem, read in part

I am requesting in writing assistance from your bureau to our school. Turner-Fenton Secondary School is a campus high school fast approaching 2,000 students, operating out of two buildings joined by a common parking lot. We have many ways of access onto our property and into our buildings. The size of our population is such that staff cannot know every student. This allows the problem of intruders to escalate.

I would like some professional advice on how we can make this location more secure. I am assuming that your

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Most residents feared leaving their homes, particularly at night, due to drug dealers and lookouts on most street corners. The gang members were so brazen that they would force fearful tenants out of their homes for days at a time, and use their apartments as sanctuaries from police. They constructed lookout platforms in the trees to watch for police and rival gangs.

Numerous environmental design problems exacerbated the crime problems. Both River Oaks and New Helvetia suffered from poor and broken lighting. Where lighting still existed, it was effectively defeated by trees that had overgrown the light standards. Where there was light, it was **uneven**, preventing surveillance of the area.

In River Oaks there was no place for residents to park. Concerned about theft and their own safety, residents parked their cars on the lawn in front of their units. This ensured quick access to their front doors after parking, and allowed them to observe their vehicle. Numerous abandoned and inoperable vehicles cluttered all of the **parking** lots. On Vallejo Way and 5th Street, groups of gangsters loitered by the abandoned vehicles and appeared to be working on them. In reality, the abandoned vehicles provided storage for narcotics and firearms.

Gangsters and other youths frequently drove through the complex at over 50 miles per hour. This presented an obvious hazard for children, and one child was run over in 1991.

Summer weather, with temperatures often exceeding 100 degrees, drove residents out of their homes and into the streets, where they merged with whoever was visiting the complex. Many drank alcohol in the streets, and it was difficult to distinguish those preying on the community from those who simply chose to be outside.

The Most valuable source for gathering information on crime was the district officers who had worked the area for several

years. The SHRA property managers, resident councils and residents also proved to be a valuable source. Once the pertinent information was gathered, Officers Bickel and Dieckmann and community leaders identified three of the most pressing problems feeding the area's high crime rate: the open-air drug market, numerous criminal gangs and environmental design issues.

Analysis

Analysis of Drug Markets. A large portion of the community was involved, directly or indirectly, with the drug subculture. This involvement included actively dealing drugs, catering to the drug dealers or using drugs. Rather than being overwhelmed by the immense drug problem, the NPOs broke down the drug market into the primary and secondary markets. This analysis was heavily influenced by *The Winnable War: A Community Guide to Eradicating Street Drug Markets*, published by the American Alliance for Rights and Responsibilities.

The primary drug market, controlled by the gangs, was the open-air market of dealers selling their drugs to strangers who roamed the streets or drove up to the curb to purchase drugs. Most dealers were armed with handguns because of the violent competition for turf and profits. Additionally, dealers used violence against tenants to promote fear of "snitching" Finally, criminals committed robberies, assaults and other violent crimes against unsuspecting buyers.

The secondary market was the drug dealing occurring behind closed doors. Generally, this type of dealing resulted in little violence because transactions took place between people who knew each other. This secondary market was also primarily controlled by gangs, and consisted of "small-time" dealers.

The NPOs first focused on the open-air market, because of the violence it generated and the residents' fear. If the NPOs were going to empower the residents to stand up to the drug dealers, this fear of

crime would have to be reduced. To reduce this level of fear, the close circles of drug dealers scattered throughout the developments would have to be removed.

Drug dealing, like any other business, is based on the principles of supply and demand. The dealers' visibility, in conjunction with the history of drug dealing in the area, sent a clear message to substance abusers that the drug they wanted was readily available in the area. The result was large numbers of drug abusers coming to the area from all parts of the city to buy drugs. Eliminating the open-air market would reduce the supply and eradicate the visible reminder that drugs were being sold. The **diminishing** customer base would further decrease the **supply of drugs** in the area. **Being** that drug dealers are **business people**, they **would** most likely move their operation to more fertile **ground** where the economic forecast was more promising.

Analysis of Gangs. As both academicians and practitioners realize, street drugs and gangs are intricately intertwined. **Ridding** the streets of the open-air drug market would, in many cases, free the community from street gangs. **But** the communities' concern regarding gangs did not center entirely on drugs. The various gangs in the River Oaks and New Helvetia communities not only dealt drugs and intimidated residents, but also became involved in other crime and disorder. Many gang members specialized in stealing cursor burglarizing apartments. Additionally, many of the gangs vandalized the area by "tagging" their turf with their particular gang name, or caused disturbances by hanging out and drinking beer. These behaviors deteriorated the tenants' perceptions of their neighborhood, diminishing the likelihood of community empowerment. Additionally, these "broken windows" likely attracted other predators to the area.

Analysis of Past Enforcement Efforts. Officers Dieckmann and Bickel researched what resources law enforcement had deployed in recent years and learned some interesting lessons.

The open-air street drug market had

been active for several years before the start of the POP program. During these years, SPD's narcotic division actively initiated undercover buys in the area. During a six-month period in 1991, 140 arrests were made in the River Oaks development alone.

This tactic had little effect on drug dealing in the area for several reasons. First, there were so many dealers in the area that arresting one had little effect. An associate would simply **take his place**. Second, because SPD used this tactic so often, dealers became educated in how to avoid arrest or prosecution. Third, because the narcotics division was responsible for the entire city, they could not allocate resources consistently in the developments. This allowed drug dealers time, after release, to return to the same area to resume their activities. Upon release, a dealer was worthy of more "respect" from the community because he had served time. Members of the narcotics division were so frustrated with their inability to affect the drug trade that they despaired of arresting the most sophisticated and dangerous of the dealers.

In 1991, a community survey strongly stated that the community needed more police protection because of escalating gang violence. SHRA responded by hiring off-duty SPD officers, seven days a week, to work exclusively in low-income housing. Although SHRA paid more than \$50,000 for the extra police presence, the long-term effect was negligible. In fact, the following year, crime dramatically increased. This police program failed for reasons similar to those above. The tactics deployed by this program generally placed those arrested into the criminal justice system. Unfortunately, this expensive program had no long-term problem-solving strategies and the police resources left the area as quickly as they arrived. The approach provided no maintenance for any quality-of-life improvements they may have accomplished. This study of the past allowed the NPOs to formulate a more effective response.

Analysis Model As Offices

Dieckmann and Bickel continued to gather information on the open-air drug market

and related gang problem, they modeled these issues to put them in perspective.

The model for narcotic and gang activity in River Oaks and New Helvetia took the form of a conceptual pyramid. At the top of the pyramid were the senior gangsters, or "OGs." They were at the narrow tip of the pyramid because there were surprisingly few OGs. The combination of homicide, incarceration, a tendency to grow out of this lifestyle and other attrition issues restricted their number. The center of the pyramid consisted of gang associates who were lookouts, and mid- to upper-level members who engaged in gang and criminal activities, and sold and delivered narcotics. At the bottom of the pyramid were younger neighborhood youths who were easily impressed by the OGs, and were in search of role models and acceptance. *These youths* learned life skills as they matured and moved up the pyramid.

Analysis of Environmental Factors.

Absent and poor lighting allowed complete anonymity for criminals after dark, and prevented residents from surveying their complex from inside their apartments. Crowded parking areas and streets also prevented natural surveillance, provided cover for criminal activity and prevented residents from observing their legally parked vehicles. The wide streets without barriers or intersections encouraged speeding. The absence of air-conditioned apartments drove residents into the streets during the summer months when crime was at its peak. There they mingled with nonresidents who preyed on the community.

The NPOs' goal for the POP project was to eliminate the gangs and related drug activities from the neighborhood using both traditional and nontraditional long-term methods. Their approach would be two-tiered. First, a combination of selected enforcement and environmental changes would sever the top of the conceptual pyramid, and make the environment less conducive to drug and gang activity. Second, a community mobilization effort would both replace the OGs with more positive role models, and inspire community residents to become

involved in making their neighborhood safer. Because of limited space, this article only addresses the first tier of the approach—enforcement and environmental changes. The second approach—the community mobilization effort—was developed using a separate SARA process. This process will be fully detailed in the next issue of *Problem Solving Quarterly*.

Response

Some practitioners believe the community-oriented policing (COP) philosophy is ineffective because it is soft on crime. To the contrary, using the methods outlined here, Officers Dieckmann and Bickel made 70 arrests in the first 40 days of the response effort. This trend continued throughout the first two years of the program as the NPOs made 400 arrests.

Patrol Tactics. The officers first attacked the sense of impunity that surrounded the flagrant open-air drug market. The NPOs' response was to attack this feeling of impunity by instilling a legitimate fear in the drug dealers and gang members that they would be arrested and convicted.

Gang members watched the police carefully. The organizational decentralization of COP allowed the officers more freedom to choose appropriate patrol tactics and scheduling. To keep the gang members from tracking their movements, the officers changed work hours and days off frequently. In doing this, the NPOs confused the dealers. They did not know what day the officers would be in the complexes nor the hours they would be working. This gave them the impression that the officers worked seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

To increase the perception that there were more than two NPOs, the officers started a "vehicle decoy" program. On any given shift, when Officers Dieckmann and Bickel were concentrating enforcement in one of the two developments, they would drop off an extra patrol car in the

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other one. Dealers in the complex with the decoy vehicle were left to wonder where in the complex the officers were, and if they were on foot or bicycles. A related tactic involved using an unmarked car or hiding a patrol car outside the development and patrolling on foot or bike.

In portions of the complex, groups of gangsters gathered who were difficult to surprise or survey for environmental reasons. An SPD unmarked surveillance truck with a camper, which had been used with success in other parts of the city, was brought in to serve as a forward observation post. Officers concealed in the camper were to report crimes in progress to nearby officers, who would come in and make arrests.

To compound gang members' worries, the NPOs frequently changed their patrol tactics. These tactics mixed traditional and unconventional methods. Gangsters were forced to wonder what type of cop they should be looking for. The success of these tactics was intensified by the NPOs' constant physical presence, as they were committed exclusively to these developments for the long term.

Traditional patrol car enforcement remained an effective tactic for stopping suspect vehicles, transporting prisoners and rapidly responding to calls for service. It was especially effective during colder weather when the number of residents and suspects loitering outside was minimal.

The project area was well-suited for bicycle patrols. The numerous walkways, fields and areas not observable from the street were patrolled efficiently, quickly and silently with the use of mountain bikes. Area youths still refer to the bikes as "light fighters" because their use, without lights, continues to result in surprise and confusion when officers suddenly appear.

D4rlight foot patrol in uniform and in plainclothes was crucial and provided the jasiy of resident contacts and intelli-

gence gathering. Community partnerships established and maintained during foot patrols were indispensable in helping the NPOs identify "the players."

Evening foot patrol in plain clothes and in uniform was equally crucial, although administrators were understandably concerned to see the NPOs in dark, oversized, hooded sweatshirts. The tactic was admittedly high-risk, but there was no substitute for walking the complex clothed as a faceless gangster. An argument might be made that if it is too dangerous for the police to patrol in this manner, then the environment is unacceptable for the residents.

Photo Identification System. One of the reasons the drug dealers felt impunity was that they were known only by a flashy nickname. They frequented the complexes as nameless gangsters who considered the developments their personal playground, and were never held accountable for their actions. To combat this, Officers Dieckmann and Bickel developed a photo identification system. Because both complexes were posted with "No Trespassing" signs, officers legally contacted every person loitering in the area. Each contact involved getting the subject's name, nicknames, address, gang affiliations, friends' names, friends' addresses and criminal history. Each contact culminated in the officers taking a Polaroid picture of the subject. All the information and accompanying photos were logged. Soon, the NPOs had volumes of photo identification books organized by gang association, age, location of contact, etc. This system enabled the NPOs to learn everything they needed to track drug operations. The books also played a vital role in solving numerous crimes when area crime victims identified suspects' pictures.

Effective Partnerships. Rather than taking all the community problems on their own shoulders, the NPOs established partnerships with other law enforcement agencies. 10 such partnerships were with California State Parole and Sacramento County Probation. The NPOs found that the complexes had an unusually dense population of people on parole and probation.

Although police, parole and probation are all law enforcement agencies, they rarely worked together. Officers Dieckmann and Bickel contacted the local parole office and told them of the large population of parolees in the developments. The parole agency agreed to assign one parole agent to the area to supervise all parolees known to them in the area. The assigned parole agent agreed to make home visits, accompanied by the NPOs, with her entire caseload. The NPOs introduced themselves to the parolees and entered them into the photo identification system.

In addition to the probation officers who were assigned to the New Helvetia Service Center, the probation department assigned an officer to supervise the communities' probationers. Probation took the partnership a step further by providing teams of officers to assist the NPOs as they patrolled the area.

Both partnerships were extremely effective. Probation and parole were able to supervise the caseload more closely, and the newly opened lines of communication helped track the criminals' activity. In the past, probationers and parolees could tell police one story and their court-appointed supervisor another, knowing that neither law enforcement agency would communicate with the other. This partnership changed the rules of the game. Now, when a probationer or parolee got into trouble after his supervisor went home at 5 p.m., the NPOs reported his activity to the supervisor, who had the immediate power to revoke the criminal's probation or parole and place him back in confinement.

Another valuable partnership was with patrol officers. To build this working relationship, the NPOs partnered with various patrol officers for a shift. The NPOs explained the COP philosophy, introduced the officers to active criminals in the area, and informed them of information the NPOs needed to support criminal cases or civil evictions. This partnership became more crucial as calls for service began to decline. Although the NPOs remained in the area 40 hours each week, these was a

decreasing patrol presence because district cars were handling *fewer* calls for service in the area. By establishing this partnership and getting the district officers involved in the program, the NPOs made it more likely that district officers would spend their discretionary patrol time assisting the community with neighborhood problems.

The NPOs helped decrease activity in the open-air drug market through a partnership with a local drug task force. This large, multiagency task force was developed to lower rock cocaine sales throughout the city and county of Sacramento, and included representatives from SPD, the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department, the Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The program consisted of an informant who would drive into an area and purchase cocaine. His or her vehicle would be equipped with audio and video recording devices. The task force contacted Officers Dieckmann and Bickel regarding rock cocaine sales in New Helvetia and River Oaks.

The NPOs' intimate knowledge of the dealers and the task force's **focus** on open-air drug markets were a **natural match**. The task force program lasted seven months and led to **190 arrests**, **30 of which** were of dealers in River Oaks and New Helvetia. This allied agency partnership proved to have a **huge impact** on the open-air market. The task force came along after the NPOs had made numerous arrests, but were having trouble with the more sophisticated dealers. Additionally, after this task force left the area, the NPOs continued intense enforcement to provide maintenance—something traditional policing cannot provide.

Evictions and Tenant Screening. SHRA proved to be the most effective partner throughout the project's duration. Historically, poor relationships exist between housing authorities and law enforcement agencies. Sacramento's POP program mended these relations. When the NPOs began work, they spent considerable time with the SHRA property managers to explain the POP philosophy and involve them in planning the NPOs' long-

term response to neighborhood problems. The managers were also a valuable source of information as the NPOs familiarized themselves with SHRA leases and eviction procedures.

Lease violations and evictions became important strategies for long-term community improvement. As Officers Dieckmann and Bickel began arresting numerous subjects for dealing drugs in association with a specific apartment, the crime information was forwarded to management for eviction. At first, evicting a tenant for cause would **take** six months or longer. In fact, the first drug-related eviction the NPOs requested took over a year. This was unacceptable if the NPOs were to send a message to criminals.

The NPOs successfully lobbied to make any drug-related incident a health and safety violation, resulting in nearly immediate eviction.

Additionally, after tenants were served with eviction notices, they would cause **additional havoc** beratise they no longer had anything to lose. To rectify this problem, the NPOs had several meetings with SHRA's legal representatives and the attorney retained by the housing authority to represent them in eviction hearings. This resulted in a streamlined eviction process. There were three types of evictions SHRA could serve: a 30-day notice for a lease violation, a 14-day notice for nonpayment of rent, and a three-day notice for a health or safety violation. In Sacramento, a drug-related arrest was only considered a 30-day violation. Officers Dieckmann and Bickel felt that an arrest for drug sales was worthy of a three-day notice. They argued that selling drugs is not a victimless crime and should be considered a health and safety problem for the community. The NPOs eventually made their case and drug sales became worthy of a three-day notice. As these evictions prevailed in court, the SHRA lease was later altered to make any thug-related incident a health and safety violation.

These tactics were good examples of a long-term approach. The dealer and all occupants on the lease were removed from the area. The SHRA lease clearly stated that leaseholders were responsible for the actions of their guests while they were on the property. Because of this provision, if an arrested drug dealer was not on the lease but was connected with an **apartment, the whole household was evicted**. As past Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Jack Kemp stated, low-income housing is a privilege, not a right. Public housing should not allow these types of tenants to prey on other community members who have no other resources to help themselves.

As the number of evictions increased, new tenants began moving in. The NPOs became frustrated when they learned that the new arrivals had as much or more of a **propensity** for crime as the previous tenants. Officers Dieckmann and Bickel **decided** to test this **perception** by running criminal history **background** checks on two lists of **qualified household** members who were cleared to move into the developments. The results **astonished** the officers. Of the two lists checked, **70 to 80 percent of all the eligible households had at least one violent crime or drug conviction** in their recent past. **To have a long-term effect on the quality of life, the officers needed to not only remove criminals from the apartments, but also find a way to prevent them from moving in.** Tenant screening needed to be implemented.

The officers began researching this approach. Attempts at tenant screening began in 1991. SPD upper management and SHRA were unable to formally begin the program because of California case law that specifically prohibited using state criminal history information. The NPOs forced the issue to resurface after demonstrating the need based on their study. A committee was formed to develop a plan and begin a pilot program. The pilot included SPD running criminal history checks and forwarding a recommendation on whether the applicant was suitable for placement in housing. No actual criminal history information was released.

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Representatives lobbied both state and federal lawmakers to authorize the use of criminal history information.

Displacement to the Camellia Commons Apartments. By the end of the NPOs' first year, much of the narcotic activity had retreated to the Camellia Commons complex—a private complex owned by a consortium of out-of-town investors. It abuts the south end of River Oaks and contains 100 apartments. Due to its proximity and rampant gang activity, it had to be included in the project area. Eventually, activity in Camellia Commons required up to 50 percent of the NPOs' work week. In the **beginning**, SHRA objected to the NPOs working in this complex because it was not their property and SHRA paid the NPOs' salaries. Officers **Dieckmann and Bickel** explained that this property was only separated from River Oaks by a six-foot fence and that **violence and drug problems associated** with Camellia Commons directly impacted the **quality** of life in River Oaks.

A partnership **among** the city council, **city code enforcement, the Land Park Community Association, SPD's POP Unit, SHRA and the River Oaks Resident Council** was established to force the Camellia owners to improve the physical plant, tenant screening policy and eviction policy for criminal activity. The Camellia owners were unable to respond appropriately and were forced into foreclosure. The partnership successfully encouraged the sale of the complex to a reputable nonprofit corporation. The partnership also forced conditions on the purchase, including a commitment of over \$5 million to renovate the complex. The number of units would be reduced from 100 to 75, each unit would be renovated, the grounds landscaped and a pool installed. The complex's promising future is a direct result of countless arrests and powerful community partnerships.

Gangs. The 29th Street Clips were the most **f** violent and notorious gang in Sacramento, and controlled most of the cocaine sales in New Helvetia. The week before the NPOs started their prob-

lem-solving project, the gang was walking the developments in groups of 30 and threatening police not to get in their way. After numerous arrests for cocaine sales and violent assaults, it became apparent that their profits *were a* greater motivation than fear of arrest. As one gang member went to prison, another took his place. To stop this cycle, officers sent a strong message to the gang's notorious leader *via his* "lieutenants" and "enforcers." The message was simple. The NPOs listed all of the 29th Street Crips they had arrested and stated that they were going to be working this area exclusively for a long time to come. The officers suggested they tell their leader he would not have much of a gang left if they continued to sell rock cocaine in the area. A short time later, the 29th Street Crips essentially disappeared from both **developments**.

Most members of the Project Gangster Bloods (PGB) were significantly older than members of other gangs. They were all sophisticated rock cocaine dealers and most were on probation or parole. The PGB were held in high esteem by many community members **and** taught their trade to younger children **in the neighborhood**. The River Oaks resident council had given one PGB member a plaque for his instrumental role in instigating a bloody war against a group of Los Angeles Crips.

Attempts to reason with these street-smart gangsters failed. Arrests did little, as members simply served their time in jail and returned to the community. To break this cycle, when gang members were arrested, the NPOs included in their report documentation of the gangsters' illegal activity for several years prior to the latest arrest. The documentation was presented during sentencing to justify stay-away orders, granting a condition of probation forbidding entry to River Oaks or New Helvetia. Those who failed to meet this condition violated probation and were automatically sentenced to six months in jail.

Finally, the Varrio Cinco was a Hispanic gang active in the area for three generations. The Cincos were responsible

for intimidation, graffiti, violent turf protection and the bulk of the methamphetamine trade in the area. The NPOs met with the Varrio Cinco leadership. The officers explained that illegal activity would not be tolerated and that retaliation toward a gang entering their neighborhood would result in arrest. Officers Dieckmann and Bickel explained that they too wanted to protect the neighborhood from outside gangs, and that if the Varrio Cinco called the officers when their territory was being breached, the rival gang would be arrested. The Varrio Cinco agreed to try this approach, and the result was limited, but mutual, respect.

The NPOs pointed out that the gang's pride in their neighborhood should have positive results, **and** that if the **gang truly** respected the **neighborhood**, it should be considered disrespectful to spray the community with graffiti. The officers then made a deal with the Cincos. If the **gang** agreed to stop putting up graffiti **and** remove the **old** markings, **they would** be given a wall in the **community** where they could paint a community mural. The **gang** agreed and showed up with some children **on a Saturday afternoon** to paint **out** the graffiti. **Shortly after, some Cincos quit the gang. Those who remained and continued their criminal behavior were removed from the area by arrest and eviction.**

Environmental Changes. Once all the heavy growth around existing lighting was trimmed, all the lighting was repaired. Additional sodium lighting was installed by the housing authority and additional lighting poles were provided by the utility company. A resident was then employed to report burned-out lights, as housing authority employees were generally gone before dark. The resident was also responsible for locking the laundry rooms at a specified hour to prevent unobserved loitering.

Fifth Street and Vallejo way were posted with "No Parking At Any Time" signs. With encouragement from the officers, the resident council established a permit parking program at River Oaks. A specified number of spaces was allocated to each unit, which varied with the number of

bedrooms in the unit. All spaces were numbered, and each car was assigned a specific space and parking permit. Vehicle registration to a specific address was required for a permit. The residents retained a private tow company to perform sweeps and remove vehicles without permits. Selected spaces were marked and reserved for guests. Tall curbs were poured around the exterior of the complex to limit vehicle access. Speed bumps were installed on the streets where speeding was a chronic problem. Both complexes were posted with "No Trespassing" signs, with the SPD as the enforcing agent. Finally, SHRA, which was rehabilitating each unit, installed air conditioning.

Assessment

The two most exigent problems identified during scanning were the open-air drug market and the criminal gangs. As indicated by the previous narrative, the officers' response attacked these two problems at several levels.

Virtually all of the open-air drug market was eliminated by the end of 1993. Most dealers were removed by arrest or eviction. As the primary market was reduced, those dealers who remained could not blend into the community and were quickly apprehended. Outsiders were no longer entering these developments and few people loitered in the area for fear of being contacted by police. The community became more adept at spotting the drug dealers and became more comfortable informing the NPOs, allowing the NPOs to arrest the dealers.

The surveillance camper strategy was not at all effective. On their first attempt, the surveillance team had to call in the NPOs for assistance when a group of gangsters realized what was happening and attacked the vehicle, wrenching at doors and windows to get inside. Eventually, one gangster smashed the passenger window and entered the cab, forcing the team to leave the area before they had a chance to do their work. The surveillance camper was not used again.

Due to the officers' patrol tactics, some drug dealers moved to other areas of the city, which meant that other communities now had to endure their presence. Because the NPOs tracked gang members, once they learned that a dealer had moved to another area, they informed the appropriate district officer. The district officer received the NPOs' information and photo on the dealer. The district officer then investigated the dealer, and usually arrested him.

Virtually all of the open-air drug market was eliminated within the POP project's first two years.

As the open-air market decreased, so did the presence of local gang members. The officers' constant presence and patrols, and the additional presence of parole and probation officers, put pressure on the gangsters and made it difficult for them to hide their activities and contraband. Additionally, gangs survive by being visible in the neighborhood. This became increasingly difficult since they could not blend into the community and the community began to disapprove of their presence. Once the gangsters were identified, then arrested, the NPOs obtained stay-away orders as a condition of probation. These forces combined to keep gangs from the area.

The environmental changes had a dramatic effect not only on the physical plant, but on the social environment as well. The improved lighting and speed bumps decreased the number of dealers and users congregating in dark alleys, as well as incidents of reckless driving. The permit parking was adopted wholeheartedly by residents, creating more available parking and removing abandoned cars. The air conditioning allowed more tenants to stay in their apartments, reducing incidents of street dealing. The posting of "No Trespassing" signs enabled the NPOs to contact any person on the grounds to determine if illegal activity was occurring and keep outsiders from entering the community. The total effect of these improvements decreased the "broken windows"

that attract predators and improved community members' feelings about their neighborhood.

Perhaps a police department's most important tool to measure effectiveness is to listen to community members. The officers interviewed citizens in May 1993 to get their perceptions about how the neighborhood had changed since the program's inception.

A River Oaks resident stated, "Before the cops came here, there was heavy, visible drug traffic. You saw guns, cars being stolen. Since then, you can walk around at night. It's calm...soothing. You hardly ever see a drug dealer any more."

The River Oaks resident council president stated that "it was really rough around here...neighbors wanted to move out Now it is quiet. You can walk around outside. There are no dealers on the street. No kids could ride their bikes before. Now they can ride their bikes."

Finally, the New Helvetia property manager stated, "The bottom line is the response I get from the tenants. The tenants tell me they enjoy living here, they come into the office, kids are now playing outside. There is just a marked difference since the officers came here."

Editor's Note: Officers Dieckmann and Bickel won a 1996 Herman Goldstein Excellence in Problem Solving Award for this project. As stated above, the officers, recognizing that the community had to feel increased responsibility for their own neighborhood if these improvements were to remain, instituted a separate SARA process to address the barriers to community mobilization. Their community mobilization project will be summarized in the Spring 1997 issue of Problem Solving Quarterly.

School from page 1

department gives local industry advice on parking lot flow and access, building access, employee security, etc. We would like to explore some of these concepts with your department to see which are applicable to a school setting.

McKay requested a statistical overview from the divisional crime analyst and arranged for an on-site, preliminary meeting with Leverette.

Analysis

The meeting with Leverette revealed the true extent of the trespass problem. On any given day, the school received 20 to 25 trespassers, some traveling up to 25 kilometers to be with friends and acquaintances. While on school property, the trespassers would gather, loiter and frequently engage in criminal activity, including one incident when someone brandished a **handgun during a basketball game.**

The trespassers exacerbated the congestion, loitering and vandalism caused by students, and school officials' occasional attempts to address the problem were ineffective. The school therefore developed an unsafe reputation.

McKay undertook a much more thorough analysis, using a crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) approach to comprehensively assemble crime statistics, collect floor and site plans, make regular observations during different times and periods, and conduct frequent user interviews with students; administrators; and gym, teaching and maintenance staff. He then organized the information into a matrix-style assessment that detailed the major crime environment problems.

The assessment revealed a number of design and use deficiencies not mentioned by interviewees. They included the following-

The parking lot between the two schools physically and psychologi-

cally divided the campus into two halves. Cars were parked in solid rows parallel to the school buildings' entrances, so that someone coming out of one school was faced with a solid barrier of cars separating him or her both visually and physically from the other school. To walk across the lot, one would have to walk between parked cars, as there were no cleared walkways.

- The parking lot entrance had an irregular border, and there were multiple access points and escape routes.
- The classroom and gymnasium areas were open and undifferentiated. This exacerbated problems related to visitors/trespassers loitering in the hall leading to the gym.
- There were no effective, well-placed signs informing visitors of where to go or warning against trespassing on school property.
- There were no walkways to safely move people between school buildings.
- There was no separate bus-loading facility, so that buses lined up around the perimeter of the parking lot, adding to traffic congestion and loitering problems in the lot.

Response

This project considered a range of CPTED-style response alternatives, emphasizing the proper design and effective use of the built environment. The main objective was to develop an effective and efficient school environment.

Fundamental to achieving this was the reorientation of the school's parking lot from an east-west bias to a north-south bias. Cars were thus parked in rows perpendicular to the school entrances, allowing for a clear line of sight between the schools. This plan

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Problem Solving Quarterly Submission Guidelines

PERF invites submissions of articles describing successful problem-solving projects. Articles should discuss the four phases of the effort:

Scanning: What was the problem? How and by **whom** was it identified?

Analysis: What methods, data and information sources were used to analyze the problem? What did the analysis reveal about the nature and extent of the problem? How was the community involved in analyzing the problem?

Response: What responses were considered? What responses were implemented, and **how** were they developed as a result of analysis? What was the goal of the response **plan**?

Assessment: What were the results? How were results evaluated, and for how long? Was the response goal accomplished? Are there any efforts underway to ~~maintain~~ or monitor the long-term results of the project?

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provided for pedestrian traffic between the two schools, including the addition of raised concrete walkways between the rows of parked cars;

- regularly introduced natural surveillance opportunities between school buildings;
- better defined the parking lot entrance and facilitated the development of clearly marked transitional zones between semi-public and private space;
- reduced parking lot entry points from three to two, while limiting escape routes by 50 percent;
- provided for a separate bus-loading area complete with feeder sidewalks allowing for safe passage to the loading area; and

established a fire route by eliminating parking from in front of the Turner building.

Other external changes included a series of signs that effectively communicated campus rules, bolstered property rights and reinforced transitions from public to private space. Speed bumps were strategically placed in the driving areas to encourage safe driving.

Inside the school, partitions were added to address the trespassing and loitering problems in hallways, particularly near the gym. The gymnasium corridor was effectively separated from the classroom corridors. The partitions also

- distinguished these areas from the school's more active hallways;
- facilitated the development of out-of-bounds hallways and territorial feelings on the part of students and faculty; and
- provided for the continued natural surveillance of problem corridors through the extensive use of safety glass.

Construction to carry out the plan began in August 1992. As the plan was implemented, additional enhancements were considered, including the development of a parking permit system and a designated visitor parking area. Signs would instruct visitors to report to the main office upon arrival.

Assessment

The CPTED response was an unqualified success. In the three calendar years following construction, police occurrences at the 2,000-student high school campus dropped by an average of 87 percent, from a pre-intervention high of 62 police occurrences in the 1991-92 school year, to between seven and nine police occurrences in each of the following years.

Equally impressive was anecdotal evidence of the plan's effectiveness. For example, Leverette told a group of visiting school officials that the parking lot had been transformed from a "no man's land into part of the campus," and that "the word is out that you don't trespass at Turner-Fenton" A graduate student and a summer school principal claimed that grades had improved at the school and that traffic flow was much better. As a final example, a visiting school official parked his vehicle in a space outside the visitors' parking area. A student approached him and told him that, because he was a visitor (he didn't have a parking permit), he would have to park in the visitors' area and report to the main office.

These comments and incidents are typical of a properly designed, self-policing environment that has developed strong feelings of ownership. It is fully anticipated that the campus will continue to work well into the future, and that these feelings of ownership engendered by the design will continue.

Editor's Note: Constable McKay won a 196 Heenan Goldstein Excellence in Problem Solving Award for this project.

Evanston Reduces Aggressive Panhandling by Influencing the Behavior of Givers

by Officers John Mulholland, Janice Sawa and Edward Steinhoff, Evanston, Ill., Police Department

With a population of approximately 75,000, Evanston is a socially, racially and economically diverse community. As in many cities, Evanston maintains an older core downtown area that has been struggling with revitalization as it tries to compete with shopping malls. In recent years, panhandling has been the major public safety concern in the downtown business district.

Scanning

Panhandling had existed in Evanston for many years without creating a serious problem. Most people had only casually thought about it, because it had little or no effect on them personally. Evanston panhandlers were concentrated in the core downtown shopping area where pedestrians were most prevalent. Few in number, they only occasionally asked someone for a dime for a cup of coffee. However, beginning in 1992, the nature and extent of panhandling in the Evanston downtown area dramatically changed. Panhandlers became "aggressive." That is, panhandlers would "verbally strong arm" people as they walked in the downtown area. In fact, the aggressiveness escalated to threats, and in some cases, physical assaults on citizens. Panhandling also became more prevalent. It is not dear why panhandling changed so dramatically, but many people blamed the economy or lack of services for the indigent. Whatever the cause, the impact of this change on citizens, business and local government was significant.

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As panhandling changed, so did the public's response. Evanston shoppers felt uncomfortable walking through a gauntlet of panhandlers as they shopped in Evanston. People, especially business owners, became less tolerant of the panhandlers. They realized that the aggressive panhandlers were giving shoppers a negative image of Evanston, which in turn affected their businesses. The Evanston Chamber of Commerce and Evmark (a privately funded organization established to revitalize downtown Evanston) received many complaints from its constituents. The police department was also receiving many complaints, both formal and informal. However, police were frustrated in their attempts to respond, because panhandling itself was not illegal and many citizens were reluctant to sign complaints on other charges.

As discussions and complaints continued, the community needed to rethink what it could do to solve the problem. A public dialogue began between the city's officials, the Chamber of Commerce and Evmark. Addressing this issue, however, was very difficult for Evanstonians and, in many respects, the community was polarized. Some people felt that shoppers should be free from harassment; others felt that panhandlers had a constitutionally protected right to ask others for money. Some demanded a law enforcement response, others a social service response. To add to the confusion, many people lumped the homeless, legitimate street vendors and panhandlers into the same category.

Struggling to find a solution, several strategies were proposed and attempted during 1992 and 1993. Homeless shelters and soup kitchens were opened. The police continued to respond to calls about panhandlers, but were unable to reduce the problem through traditional law enforcement activities. In an effort to give police a law enforcement tool, the city council proposed various ordinances that would make panhandling illegal. Under one repealed ordinance, the city would aggressively panhandlers up to \$5001. Unfortunately, this proposal made come-

dian Jay Leno's headline segment on the *Tonight Show*. After this embarrassment, city officials were completely frustrated, and the problem continued.

Finding a solution was made difficult by a variety of factors and limitations:

- Panhandling cannot be prevented or eliminated. Its roots in broad social and economic factors were beyond the scope of this project, and a legalistic approach was not practicable.
- Civil rights and free speech issues made it controversial to ban panhandling.
- Evanston is a compassionate community, with many social agencies, including homeless shelters and soup kitchens. Many people did not want to interfere with people in need.

Inspired partly by Chief Gerald Cooper's community problem-solving focus, Mayor Lorraine Morton created the Evanston Citizens Panel on Panhandling. By February 1994, representatives had been appointed by Mayor Morton from the business, religious and educational communities, as well as elected officials and, representing the police department, Deputy Chief Frank Kaminski.

In April 1994, the panel began to work intensively on the problem. The first step the panel took was to establish its mission. As stated in the panel's final report "The charge of the Panel was to have a diverse group of community representatives and City officials develop a coordinated program with specific strategies to address the issue of panhandling in Evanston." The panel's first objectives were to study the nature and extent of panhandling in Evanston and to survey the experience of other cities in addressing the same issue. They agreed 1) to focus on the challenges presented by panhandling and not attempt to solve its broader social-economic causes, and 2) to create a program that satisfied the disparate views in the community. In other words, the strategy must both reduce and contain the problem, and help people who

are truly in need.

Analysis

The Evanston Police Department was commissioned to conduct the study of the nature and extent of panhandling in the downtown business district. Motor patrol officers Ed Steinhoff and Jan Sawa, and foot patrol officer John Mulholland were assigned to investigate panhandling in the core business district. The challenge was to determine the nature and extent of a behavior that was somewhat scattered and irregular without using standard law enforcement methods (such as detainment and interrogation). The officers investigated the identity of and background information on the panhandling population through observation and discussions with business owners and others familiar with the street scene. The research enabled the officers to distinguish between aggressive panhandlers, who were generally able to care for themselves but chose to panhandle for easy money, and homeless individuals, who were less likely to be able to care for themselves and were genuinely in need of social assistance.

A core group of 36 aggressive panhandlers was identified, most of whom were already known by the police and had alcohol or substance abuse problems. The officers' report included a general description of their purposes and motivations: "These individuals practice panhandling because it is a quick, easy way to get money. Panhandling offers a more cost effective way to get what they want, as compared with availing themselves of social services." Additional information was collected from individuals familiar with the panhandler group and activities on the business area streets. These reporters included a street vendor and representatives from social service agencies. Their testimony corroborated the findings of the police officers.

The panel collected and reviewed information about the experience of other cities attempting to deal with this same issue. The hope was to identify successful strategies that could be used in Evanston

and to get an idea of what results they might expect for their efforts. The review generated many ideas for discussion, but no existing program seemed to fully meet Evanston's complex needs and goals.

Response

The dilemma was resolved by the group's decision to focus on changing the behavior of the givers and reduce the main attraction for the panhandlers—namely, money. The innovation, however, was not to discourage people from giving to help the needy, but to rechannel the giving. Rather than give cash to panhandlers, people would be asked to give to the numerous local social assistance agencies. This would be accomplished through an extensive public information campaign and an "intervener" program. Designated individuals, called interveners, would be authorized to identify givers on the street, discreetly explain the problem, and provide them with alternative giving strategies. In addition, the police planned to increase their presence in the business district to help restore a feeling of safety.

Public Information Campaign. The focus of the public information campaign was to educate the givers. As stated in the panel's report "Giving pocket change to panhandlers encourages and supports panhandling and, in most cases, puts the panhandler more at risk by supporting [his or her] addiction to alcohol or drugs." Thus, the goal of the information campaign was to rechannel the desire to help the needy away from giving directly to panhandlers toward giving to the agencies that serve and assist the needy. In other words, it was not a matter of giving vs. not giving, but rather giving effectively and productively.

Each organization represented on the panel participated in the information campaign by passing out posters to businesses, conducting media presentations and mailing presentations to community groups. Deputy Chief Kaminski served as a liaison with the Northwestern University police to help educate the Northwestern students who, it was learned, were the

largest group contributing to panhandlers. In addition, the panel developed a brochure titled "Where to Find Assistance in Evanston," containing a complete listing of local charities and social services for people in need. The brochures were placed at points-of-purchase locations and distributed by the interveners and Officer Mulholland.

Intervener Program. The interveners, who would be talking directly to the cash givers on the street, were an important part of the public education campaign. They needed training to maximize their effectiveness and safety. In coordination with Evmark and other participating agencies, Officers Steinhoff and Mulholland developed and conducted a one-day classroom training for the interveners, followed by a three-day field training. The connection between the interveners and the officers was essential to the strategy's success, so Officer Mulholland worked closely with the interveners on a day-to-day basis.

Increased Police Presence. Police presence played a key role in making shoppers feel safe. An increased level of cooperation and ownership was fostered between the permanent, motorized downtown beat officers, Steinhoff and Sowa, and the foot patrol officer, Mulholland. They were clearly allowed to be the experts in this problem and they rallied to the occasion. They worked truly well as a team, and the goal of increased police presence was achieved without additional deployment or cost.

Program Monitoring. Once the mayor's panel completed its final report in June, an implementation/monitoring committee was created among Evmark, the Chamber of Commerce and the police department. Initially meeting semimonthly, then monthly, the committee's purpose was to make certain the strategies were implemented properly and to monitor the overall project.

This approach proved to be successful. Several problems were resolved that could have adversely affected the project. For example, a communication problem between the interveners and the officers

was resolved through the adoption of cellular telephones, a series of roll-call presentations by the interveners, and a police request protocol. Also, when some threats were made against the interveners by panhandlers who were losing business, a special random-saturation patrol was brought in to stabilize the situation.

Assessment

The three action strategies—public education, interveners and increased police presence—were implemented and positive results soon followed. As people began noticing a reduction in aggressive panhandling, the strategies received local and national attention from the media. Both the Chamber of Commerce and Evmark received numerous calls from the businesses they represented about the success of the program. Two quantitative instruments were used to measure these results.

The first instrument was a follow-up to the original police report. Using the same data-collection methods, Officers Mulholland, Steinhoff and Sowa compared aggressive panhandling in the fall (post-program) with aggressive panhandling in the spring (pre-program). The results of this report were encouraging. The initially identified group of panhandlers was reduced by 64 percent. In other words, 23 of the 36 original panhandlers were no longer panhandling in the core area. Eight, or 22 percent, were observed continuing to panhandle, but at a significantly reduced level. Also, during the evaluation period, 10 new panhandlers were identified by the beat officers. This increased the survey total to 46. Even including these individuals in the data, 55 percent no longer panhandled at the time of the follow-up survey.

The police report confirmed the reduction in panhandlers, but the program could not be considered successful unless the perception of Evanston's downtown area as a safe place to shop and work was restored. In other words, reducing the actual level of aggressive panhandling was a necessary, but not a sufficient, mea-

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sum of success: businesses and other users of the downtown area needed to see and feel a difference for the situation to return to normal. Therefore, the second evaluation instrument, sponsored by Evmark, was an opinion survey of the 250 downtown businesses. Business owners were given five statements and asked to rate their level of agreement or satisfaction with each. Forty-eight, or 19 percent, of the survey group responded.

The results from this survey were very positive and corroborated many of the independent comments received by both the Chamber of Commerce and Evmark. Seventy-five percent of the respondents stated that they strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement "Aggressive panhandling has been reduced significantly in the downtown area." Seventy-five percent of the respondents also stated that they were either very or somewhat satisfied with the overall strategies to reduce panhandling.

In addition to reducing aggressive pan-

handling, the project produced some positive secondary results as well. The beat officers involved in the community problem-solving process took ownership for the problem and, thus, they felt their contributions were significant. The opportunity to be actively involved in a problem-solving project was a boost to the officers' morale and attitudes.

Second, the community problem-solving process brought various segments of the community together. The results clearly demonstrated to Evanstonians what can be accomplished when people work together and how effective the community

problem-solving model can be.

Third, the process established a new long-term relationship and better communication between the police department and the business community via the Chamber of Commerce. As a result of this new relationship, other programs were jointly implemented by the police and the chamber, such as the Business Security Initiative. This program was designed to encourage businesses to increase their use of security measures and communication with the police department. This new relationship was institutionalized through the project monitoring committee.

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