

The Three P's Project

Pimps, Prostitutes, and Pushers

Tucson Police Department

May 1999

PIMPS, PROSTITUTES AND PUSHERS PROJECT

ABSTRACT

For several decades, the city of Tucson has experienced a growing problem involving prostitution and narcotic activity in an area on the Northwest portion of town. This area encompasses the neighborhood surrounding the juncture of Miracle Mile and Oracle Road. In 1998 the Community Response Team of the westside patrol division joined with neighborhood residents and merchants to address this issue using the SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment) model of problem resolution.

In Scanning the situation, it was determined that the quality of life for the people who lived and worked in the area was being continually eroded by the rising level of prostitution and narcotic activity that was taking place. The residents and merchants were determined to not let this happen, and were in a perfect position to organize themselves and join with the Department in addressing these issues.

The Analysis of previous responses showed that while sporadic efforts in the past had enjoyed limited success in curbing the problem, as soon as the resources were pulled away, the problem returned. It was felt that a diversified approach involving a partnership between the Community and the Department to apply greater enforcement efforts, and at the same time encourage legislators to enact stiffer penalties, would have a more lasting effect. Intelligence was gathered that confirmed that most prostitutes were also drug addicts, and they conducted their trade primarily as a means of supplying their habit. This gave the drug pushers enormous power over them and it was a very easy step for the pushers to become their pimps. Often the pushers/pimps would move into the neighborhood in order to be closer to the

prostitutes, and this naturally brought even more addicts into the neighborhood when the pushers' clientele followed their source. This then caused an increase in the crimes associated with the narcotic trade.

A zero-tolerance enforcement Response was developed which attacked all three elements of the problem; Pimps/Pushers and Prostitutes. A combined neighborhood and merchant association was formed, and they used their influence to encourage stiffer legislation to deter the activity. Other criminal justice agencies such as prosecutors, judges, and correction officials were included in the project. The result was that 134 prostitutes were arrested, and over 50 people were arrested for narcotic activity.

The after action Assessment showed the project to be successful. The area experienced a 66% reduction in the number of prostitutes, and a 57% reduction in the amount of narcotic related calls. The newly established association continues to be active, and the feeling of the residents and merchants is that they have Won back their neighborhood. The success of this project demonstrates the effectiveness of the Community and Department working together to improve the quality of life in our City.

PIMPS, PROSTITUTES, & PUSHERS PROJECT

In 1997, there were approximately four hundred calls for service to the Tucson Police Department for prostitution. The Department, in partnership with neighborhood residents, merchants, other law enforcement entities/and City personnel, combined efforts to make successful the pimps, Prostitutes and Pushers Reduction Project for 1998. (The Three P's Project)

PROJECT MISSION

The Tucson Police Department will assist the residents and merchants, in the targeted neighborhood, in developing strategies to enhance the quality of life and reduce the elements of crime and fear.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The objective of this project is to address the criminal elements related to narcotics and prostitution within the targeted area in order to enhance the quality of life and overall perception of the public's safety. This will be done through the coordinated efforts of community members; law enforcement personnel; city departments; and existing programs.

SCANNING

Prostitution is one of the oldest professions known to mankind. In the last decade prostitution has also become recognized for the variety of associated crimes and criminal elements that this profession brings: In Tucson, Arizona, the hot spot for

prostitution activity is the area of Miracle Mile, from 1-10 to Oracle Road, south on Oracle Road to Drachman and Drachman to Stone Avenue. This area encompasses the Miracle Mile Strip and Oracle Boulevard. (See attached map)

The Miracle Mile Strip was built in the late 1930's. This strip was essentially the junction for highways running to Nogales, Benson, Casa Grande, and Phoenix. In the late 1950's, the area was thriving with businesses and motels enticing those traveling to and through the Southwest. Years later when the interstate was completed, this area saw less and less activity arid neglect began setting in. The Miracle Mile and Oracle Road area became known as a "red light" area in the early 1970's. At that time, many of the prostitutes working the area were not local and came into town as part of a "swing" through several other Southwestern cities. Most of the commercial sex business was conducted using bars and adult bookstores as bases of operation. Primarily, police vice unit personnel addressed the problem. Very little street walking occurred until the late 1970's, when there was a marked increase in homelessness, drug use, and petty criminal behavior. The concomitant deterioration of the area attracted those individuals engaged in illicit or illegal lifestyles. The former moderately priced and well-kept motels became dilapidated. The practice of renting rooms by the hour heralded the arrival of commercialized sex on a permanent basis. With cheap motels, and an "ask no questions" policy on the part of many motel managers, or in some cases outright collusion, the prostitution problem blossomed;

Today, the Miracle Mile strip is a mile long road filled with decaying adult motels, adult bookstores, and topless bars. The surrounding area includes various restaurants, businesses, motels and hotels, neighborhoods, day-care centers, city parks, public

schools, and recreation centers. The prostitutes that migrate to this area bring with them other criminal elements that degrade the neighborhood, increasing fear amongst area residents. Most of the prostitutes working this area are addicted to illegal narcotics and are working to support their drug addiction. A typical prostitute's drug habit costs an average of two to three hundred dollars a day. To support this habit, a prostitute must turn ten to twenty "tricks" a day. This strong dependency on drugs creates an attractive market for the narcotics pusher. This in turn attracts other drug abusing individuals to frequent the area in order to purchase drugs. Many of the pushers also "pimp" the prostitutes. This produces a vicious circle of pimps, prostitutes, and pushers, moving into an area and reducing the quality of life for law-abiding citizens.

During the last several years, business and community members pulled together in attempts to revitalize the area and to attract retail and industrial businesses to strengthen the economy and build a stronger, healthier community! At the same time, the Department was trying a variety of enforcement tactics to combat the problems. However, due to the magnitude of the problems, it was evident that a collaborative approach was required. In order to draw thriving businesses into the area, and improve the overall quality of life, merchants and residents knew they had to work with law enforcement in order to rid their community of the criminal activity.

ANALYSIS

In response to area complaints and an increase in calls for service, the Tucson Police Department conducted several meetings with neighborhood and business organizations from the area. The groups discussed past methods that were used to address the problem. In the 1980's, "crackdown" operations were employed with

moderate levels of success. These operations consisted of enhanced uniform patrol presence, undercover operations, media attention, and even the renaming of a portion of Miracle Mile to Oracle Road in an attempt to remove the stigma associated with the previous name. These "crackdown" efforts usually displaced the problem or caused the prostitutes to cease operations for a short period. While many of these efforts had dramatic short-term effects, it was clear that a new approach was necessary to ensure long term improvements.

During the process of opening lines of communication at the group meetings, the Tucson Police Department unit assigned to address these issues made a commitment to the organizations that in 1998 more than six "John sting" operations would be conducted in their community. These operations were geared towards targeting the customers of prostitutes in the hope of deterring them and others from coming to the area for this activity.

Additionally, in January of 1998, a series of meetings with the City Prosecutor's Office took place to discuss implementing zone restrictions for prostitution and its related activities. Under this policy, arrested prostitutes were served with a one thousand-foot zone restriction. This does not allow them within a thousand feet of the location where the arrest occurred. Prostitutes frequently violated their zone restrictions because of the need to satisfy their drug habits. Enforcing zone restrictions gave the assigned officers one more tool to help remove the prostitutes from the area.

In the targeted area, the ever-present prostitutes could be found propositioning anyone who walked or drove by their corners. The prostitutes rented many of the dilapidated motel rooms by the hour. Some rooms were rented for longer periods and

were used over and over again to turn "tricks". The clients who were not interested in sex would seek out the prostitutes in order to locate a pusher to purchase their crack, heroin or other drugs of choice. Statistics showed that criminal activity associated with narcotics, prostitution, vehicle thefts, and burglaries was extremely high. The prostitutes and drug dealers became extremely brazen and bold in flagging down customers. At one point, two street corners had groups of up to fifteen people openly selling drugs.

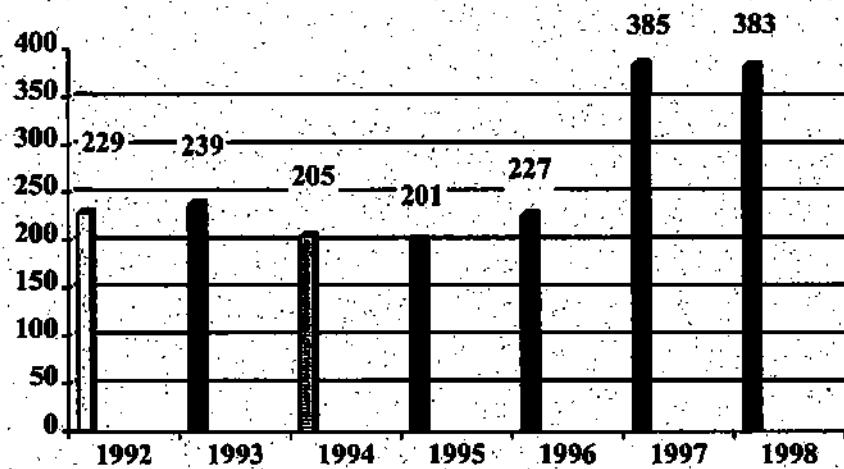
Business leaders, homeowners, City Council Members, and officers with the Tucson Police Department started meeting weekly in order to share information and work on lasting solutions. Not only was the criminal activity addressed, it was decided that efforts would also be made to change the city code in order to create tougher prostitution laws. Communication was excellent and many residents and business owners became involved in order to "take back their neighborhood". The sharing of intelligence was extremely helpful to the police officers. Prostitution was no longer viewed as a "victimless" crime. Residents were tired of finding the dirty needles, watching the "girls" trading their wares, and having to see their children walk by pushers.

Times and days of the week when the prostitution activity was heaviest were evaluated. To better understand the problem, officers gathered intelligence from police records, neighborhood and business groups, and by conducting a comprehensive study and head-count of the suspected and known prostitutes at various times during a twenty-four hour period. Based upon this research, it was found that prostitution activity tended to go in cycles corresponding with the weather. In the winter, fewer prostitutes

were out walking the streets than in warmer weather. During the heat of the summer, from 11:00 to 3:00 PM, the number of prostitutes decreased in comparison with the early morning hours. Findings showed that the demand for prostitutes increased between 5:00 and 7:00 AM when potential customers were on their way to work. The activity would increase again in the evening when the potential customers were on their way home from work. Additionally, increased demand was observed from 12:00 to 2:00 AM, after bars closed. With the benefit of hindsight this information seems to be elementary, yet proved to be enlightening as the problem had never before been studied in this manner.

In addition, prostitution related calls for service in the targeted area for the last seven years were tallied. The statistics showed a dramatic increase in prostitution activity in the past two years.

Targeted Area Prostitution Related Calls For Service



During the course of this operation, a journal that was being kept by a prostitute was discovered. The interesting fact about the journal was that contrary to some stereotypical views, the journal was well written and showed intelligence on the part of the author. It also clearly demonstrated the intricate connection between drugs and prostitution in the area. There were numerous mentions of the prostitute's pusher and pimp, and the need for her to make enough money to "get well" and pay for rent (Excerpts from the journal are attached.) >

To address the drug problems, narcotics officers identified 41 addresses and locations that were suspected of illegal narcotics activity and sales. The primary drugs were crack cocaine, marijuana, and meth. Some pushers sold narcotics at these locations while others conducted street sales.

The Department and involved community members identified resources needed for this project which included undercover vehicles/additional personnel, a sufficient supply of necessary paperwork, cassette recorders and tapes, and Polaroid cameras and film; The Oracle Boulevard Merchants Association found out about this need and in one day raised over \$2,000 to purchase a body bug and donate it to the Tucson Police Department for this project. Prior to this analysis, this same association had donated a \$500 pair of night vision goggles to help surveillance officers observe the prostitutes and pushers who occasionally moved into darker areas to conduct their activities. Finally, some hotel and motel owners in the targeted area donated rooms for use in undercover and surveillance operations.

RESPONSE

Objectives:

- Locate, target and arrest the pimps, prostitutes and pushers who are responsible for reducing the quality of life in the Oracle Boulevard area.
- a. Implement programs and procedures for tracking and deterring the pimps, prostitutes, and pushers from returning to these areas after their arrest.
- Enhance police and public awareness about the problems that pimps, prostitutes, and pushers bring to an area
- d. Work in partnerships to deter prostitution related crimes from taking over an area.

The first step in the response phase of the project was to address pimps, prostitutes, and pushers through relentless zero tolerance enforcement action. Assigned officers set aside a full week out of each month to solely address prostitution issues. In the month of July, during a four-day period, six officers working forty hours were able to arrest thirty-one prostitutes. Additionally, bike and solo motor officers were brought into the area to address violations committed by the prostitutes and their pimps such as jaywalking, bicycle violations, and trespassing.

In addition to targeting prostitutes, "John Stings" were conducted in order to apprehend the customers. "John Stings" involve police officers portraying prostitutes. When a sex act is solicited, the "John" gets arrested. The number of "John-Sting" operations increased from the norm of two per year, to six in 1998. There was also a push to have the names of the arrested "Johns" released to the news media in an effort

to deter them from coming into the area seeking prostitution. Meetings with the local newspaper editorial boards were held, asking them to publish the names and photos of people convicted of prostitution related activity.

Another element of the response was that the Department implemented a policy to take all prostitutes arrested in this area on misdemeanor charges to the Pima County Jail for processing, rather than being field-released. Staff from the jail agreed to attempt to incarcerate as many prostitutes as possible, given space availability. This resulted in approximately eighty percent of the arrested prostitutes being incarcerated, instead of being released by the Pre-Trial Services Unit.

Additionally, neighborhood problem locations were targeted in 1998 for abatement. A team effort comprised of police patrol and investigative units, the City Prosecutor's Office, and City of Tucson Development Services Department employees resulted in abatement action. The Tropicana Adult Book Store; the Monterrey Motel, the Aragon Nightclub; and a local residence were the targets of abatement actions. Results varied from behavior and landscaping changes to boarding up and closure of the establishment.

The final response phase involved a three-week, twenty-four hour a day pimp, prostitution and pusher enforcement operation beginning August 24th, 1998 and ending on September 12th, 1998. In addition to the existing resources, one sergeant and six officers from the Metropolitan Area Narcotics Trafficking Interdiction Squad (MANTIS) were assigned to the operation to address narcotics problems associated with prostitution. Unit officers were also assisted by ten officers from other patrol divisions, making a total of sixteen officers, both uniform and plainclothes^to aggressively target,

identify and arrest all pimps, prostitutes and pushers in the designated area. It was expected that during the first week of the zero tolerance approach, enforcement activities would displace pimps, prostitutes and pushers from the targeted area. Contingency plans were in place to follow them wherever they went in the city to continue the zero tolerance enforcement actions in order to encourage them to give up their lifestyle or leave the City of Tucson.

During the operation, the additional narcotics officers obtained and served 13 search warrants on addresses for narcotics related activities. This resulted in the seizure of 110 grams of crack cocaine, 57 grams of powder cocaine, ten firearms, one rophyhol tablet, 10 grams of marijuana, and \$12,018.00 in cash. In addition to the prostitutes arrested, officers arrested 50 other people involved in narcotics, and identified four additional suspects. Eleven of the fifty people provided general delivery addresses.

ASSESSMENT

The twenty-day Pimps, Pushers & Prostitutes Project zero-tolerance operation was successful. Six months following this project, there is a significant decrease in police calls for service, and community members express they have less fear of crime in their area. Because of this project, which served as a Uniting force among the neighborhood and merchant groups, the Ocotillo/Oracle Neighborhood and Merchants Association ^{wais} formed (See attached letter:) All business and residential neighborhood organizations whose quality of life was effected by the pimps, prostitutes and pushers attend monthly meetings. The general opinion expressed by this group is that the Three P's Project has made a notable impact in reducing the level of criminal activity in their neighborhoods. They feel they have "taken back the heart" of their neighborhoods. The partnerships that

developed between the police and the community resulted in an improved quality of life and a feeling of safety among the citizens and business owners.

Prior to the zero tolerance operation, statistics covering a 90-day period showed that within the targeted area there were:

- 135 prostitutes identified
 - a 72 prostitution related calls for service
 - a 170 narcotic related calls for service.

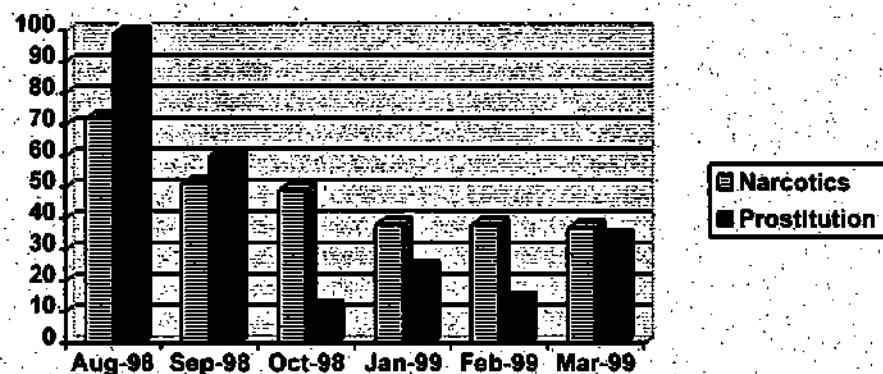
Six months following the operation, statistics for the same area, again covering a 90-day period, reflect:

- Q 45 prostitutes identified = **65% reduction**
- 113 prostitution related call for service = **34% reduction**
 - 72 narcotic related calls for service = **57% reduction**

The chart below summarizes these findings.

Targeted Area Prostitution & Narcotic Related Calls for Service

Three Month Periods at Project Onset & Completion



The efforts to encourage legislative changes to increase penalties related to prostitution have been successful. In January 1999, the City of Tucson Mayor and Council passed amendments increasing minimum jail time and fines. These significant changes combined with revised enforceable zone restrictions, assist in the fight against these

Uniformed officers continue to put pressure on the known areas of prostitution; while enforcement pressure continues from an undercover standpoint. Through this approach, both uniform and undercover officers gained knowledge and awareness of the prostitution problem.

As stated previously, the area merchants and residents combined their various groups to form the Ocotillo Neighborhood and Merchants Association. This group continues its efforts to encourage legislative changes regarding the sentencing of first time prostitution offenders. The lines of communication between the project partners such as the neighborhood, business and City Council offices remain open.

One of the tactics used was the attempt to have the local newspapers publish the names and photos of the men who were arrested in the "John Sting" operations. It was hoped that the embarrassment caused by the publication of their information would serve as a deterrent to prevent them from coming back, and would cause other men to think twice before coming to the area to contact prostitutes.

Unfortunately, this tactic was only partially successful. Although the papers would readily publish pictures and names of the prostitutes, as well as the names of the men arrested, they would not publish photos of the men. In a show of support, the Tucson City Council unanimously voted to pay the costs for publishing the photo? as an

advertisement, but the papers still refused, citing fear of libel suits if the men were acquitted or the criminal cases against them were dismissed. However, just the fact that there was news coverage about the issue and the controversy it created was beneficial.

AGENCY AND OFFICER INFORMATION

This project falls directly in line with the concepts of "Geo-Based Policing", which is the local name given to the method of community policing employed by the Tucson Police Department. Geo-Based Policing divides patrol beats into smaller more manageable areas based upon geographic boundaries of existing neighborhoods. Technology is used to set up a voice mail system for each beat, so that residents have an available means of sharing intelligence information about the beat directly with the beat officers who work in their area. Additionally, alternative response methods have been developed to allow beat officers to handle low priority calls in an appointment fashion, thus increasing the awareness of beat activity for the officers, and giving the citizen the satisfaction of dealing with their beat officer. This program was piloted in one patrol division in 1996; and due to its immediate success and acceptance, was implemented city-wide in 1997. X

As part of the implementation of Geo-Based Policing, every officer on the department went through an eight-hour block of training which included training on the SARA model of problem solving. Beat officers were encouraged to employ the SARA model in dealing with problems in their areas. Officers were given responsibility for the response to criminal activity in their beats, and were encouraged to develop or improve relationships with the beat residents and merchants.

The officers and sergeant of the Operations Division West, Community Response Team (CRT) developed this project at the line level. Each patrol division has a CRT, formed with COPS Office hiring grants to promote community-policing concepts. These teams use a variety of methods to address community problems within their respective divisions. They work in tandem with beat officers who have the best information about activities in their areas, and they provide greater freedom to be proactive since their primary function does not involve responding to routine calls for service. In this regard, the sergeant of this unit met with various business and residential members of the targeted area during all phases of this project.

The success of this operation exemplifies the unlimited potential in establishing partnerships between the police department, members of the community and judicial agencies. A key factor in this project's success was receiving input from all parties involved to collaboratively identify the problems, develop and implement innovative strategies, and continue to follow up on a regular basis in order to maintain the group's efforts. Although this project focused on problems specific to orbit area in Tucson, it serves as a model to other neighborhood and business groups demonstrating the tremendous potential in using problem oriented policing.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Should you desire further information concerning this project, the following personnel can be contacted.

The Commander of Operations Division West (the patrol division in which the Miracle Mile/Oracle Road area is located) and the sergeant of the primary unit involved are listed below:

Captain Kathleen Robinson

(520)791-5328

Fax:(520)791-5425

KrbinsT<@ci.tucsonaz.us

Sergeant Mikael Allen

(520)791-4467

Fax: (520) 791-5425

Mallen1@ci.tucson.az.us

The author of this submittal and former commander of Operations Division West is listed below:

Captain Roberto Villasenor

(520) 791-4499 ext.1411

Fax: (520) 791 -4408

Rvillas1f3>ci.tucsoh.az.us

AN three of the above can be reached by conventional mail at:

Tucson Police Department

270 S. Stone Avenue

Tucson, AZ 85701-1917