

INTERSECTING SOLUTIONS

HOW CONSISTENT POLICE ENFORCEMENT, PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE RESTORED ORDER AND CIVILITY TO AN URBAN INTERSECTION

VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT, CANADA, 1999

THE PROBLEM: In mid 1997, the Grandview Woodland Community Policing Centre (GWPC) conducted a survey to determine the opinions of people in the Commercial Drive area about activities and conditions in the neighbourhood. The goal of the survey was to establish what community standards and levels of tolerance existed on issues that related to community policing and municipal governance. This survey provided the GWPC with base line data which combined with other reporting sources (911, reports to the GWPC and the Neighbourhood Integrated Services Team), allowed for proper identification of community problems.

ANALYSIS: Nuisance behaviour (aggressive panhandling, public drunkenness and squeegee activity) and standards of maintenance issues (litter and graffiti on public property) turned the intersection at 1 st Avenue and Commercial Drive into a focal point for complaints to 911, the GWPC and the NIST. The Community Survey established that these behaviours and conditions were unacceptable to area residents. A concerted initiative was developed to address the multitude of problems affecting this intersection. Because of the varied root causes of the problems and their impact on the environment, the GWPC utilized several resources in the problem identification phase and in the solution implementation phase.

RESPONSE: The GWPC combined a consistent enforcement approach with significant changes to the environment. Environmental changes included:

- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design review of surrounding buildings.
- Identification and removal of structures and vegetation that facilitated problematic behaviours.
- Removal of graffiti on surrounding buildings which was replaced with murals.
- Installation of new garbage receptacles, combined with increased

litter pick-up.

- Involvement of local businesses in upgrading building and street maintenance.

ASSESSMENT:

Once the initiative was completed, the results were thoroughly measured. This evaluation included analysis of 'calls for service' to 911, assessment of cost reduction in emergency services, analysis of calls to the GWPC and visual assessment of the intersection. Results indicate that the initiative was:

- Effective in reducing call load to 911 and the GWPC.
- Efficient in reducing the need for emergency resources, eliminating graffiti and reducing litter.
- Equitable to the community by re-establishing the quality of life to the intersection.

The improved quality of life the community enjoys as a result demonstrates the success of this *Intersection Project*. The associated reduction in costs and use of emergency service allows resources to be re-allocated to higher priority calls. This comprehensive approach targeting multiple repetitive problems at a major intersection is transferable throughout any city.

INTRODUCTION

The Grandview Woodland Community Policing Centre (GWPC) is dedicated to identifying and resolving community problems through various problem-solving tactics. During the summer months of 1997 and 1998, the intersection at 1st Avenue and Commercial Drive became a focal point for complaints to the GWPC. The problems manifested at this intersection were multi-faceted and impacted other areas within the neighbourhood.

The *Community Survey* conducted in 1997, combined with studies by Simon Fraser University (SFU) criminology students, helped the GWPC during the scanning phase of the *Intersection Project*. In order to properly determine the extent of the problem, reports to the GWPC and calls for service to 911 were analyzed.

Once the problem was identified, extensive analysis was conducted. Certain behaviours (squeegee activity, aggressive panhandling and public drunkenness) were determined to be problematic. The GWPC identified the various consequences of these behaviours on the area surrounding the intersection and on other locations in the community. Proper analysis of the problem enabled the GWPC to develop a comprehensive project that targeted these behaviours and their effects on the environment. Consistent police enforcement combined with environmental changes were the basis of the *Intersection Project*. This project was implemented during the months of June, July and August 1998.

The success of the *Intersection Project* was assessed and evaluated in August 1998. For this purpose, researchers analyzed 911 calls for service, associated police service costs, reports to the GWPC and visual assessment of the intersection. Results indicated the project

successfully reduced the occurrence of problematic behaviours and eliminated their effect on the environment. Follow-up assessment will be conducted for the corresponding months of 1999.

The *Intersection Project* is the response from the GWPC to address concerns from the community. Complaints were from residents, local businesses and their employees. The GWPC concluded that the quality of life in the neighbourhood was significantly impacted by the activities at 1st Avenue and Commercial Drive. The goal of the project was to involve the community to re-establish a sense of order and to elevate the acceptable standards for street behaviour.

Description of the Grandview-Woodland Community Policing Centre

The Grandview Woodland Community Policing Centre (GWPC) opened in April 1995 inside the Britannia Community Centre located near Commercial Drive. The office is volunteer managed and operated in partnership with the Vancouver Police Department (VPD). It acts as a resource for both the community and the police department. The Board of Directors of the GWPC consists of local residents, business owners and people who work in the area. A paid civilian co-ordinator staffs the office and runs a variety of programs. A constable is assigned to the GWPC as a liaison between the VPD and the community. The primary function of the constable is to collaborate with various community and government agencies and the GWPC Board of Directors and staff to develop and implement problem-oriented projects that target issues or concerns identified by the community.

The GWPC is a unique community police office model in that the impetus for opening the office came directly from the community. A group of residents decided there was a need for this type of police service then approached the police department with an implementation plan. This has allowed the GWPC to enter into an

equal partnership with the police department. The active collaboration between the community and the police is implicit in every project undertaken by the GWPC.

Problems are mainly identified through reports to the GWPC from concerned citizens regarding situations occurring in the neighbourhood (e.g.: drug dealing, loitering, problem businesses, noise complaints, prostitution and disorder issues). Most complaints involve ongoing, repetitive problems which cannot be solved through traditional, reactive policing. This reporting mechanism identifies specific problems. Supporting information is gathered (e.g.: crime analysis, information from various VPD squads, or information from City Departments) and a comprehensive solution is proposed, reviewed, implemented and assessed.

This pro-active approach to community identified issues and concerns have proven effective in dealing with a variety of problems. Since the office opened, the GWPC's area of responsibility has seen a reduction in 911 calls for service. This success is dependent on an active collaboration between the assigned constable, the GWPC volunteers and staff, the community, and various government agencies. The *Intersection Project* is an excellent example of how this type of collaboration can result in viable solutions for a problematic area located at the centre of the community.

PRELIMINARY STEPS

Previous projects had been undertaken to identify the specific problems occurring at the intersection of 1st Avenue and Commercial Drive. An extensive *Community Survey* allowed for proper analysis of community opinions and limits of tolerance on nuisance behaviours and standards of maintenance issues. A *Poster Project* informed the community of the existence of the GWPC and provided high visibility for the office. Several Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) studies by Simon Fraser University (SFU) criminology students identified various

structures and vegetation which facilitated criminal activities.

1. Community Survey

During the summer of 1997, the GWPCPC conducted an extensive *Community Survey* to determine the opinions of people in the Commercial Drive area. Three survey questions dealt with street level nuisance behaviour occurring at the intersection (squeegee activity, public drunkenness and aggressive panhandling) and two questions addressed standards of maintenance issues (litter and graffiti on public property). The *Community Survey* also contained questions on positive aspects of the community such as murals. Survey researchers endeavoured to be inclusive of all sections of the community during the survey interviewing phase. Results are representative of a cross-section of the Commercial Drive area. 720 out of 1000 surveys were completed and returned to the GWPCPC. Results indicated that:

- 39% of respondents found squeegee activity unacceptable
- 54% of respondents found public drunkenness unacceptable
- 82% of respondents found aggressive panhandling unacceptable
- 91 % of respondents found litter unacceptable
- 62% of respondents found graffiti on public property unacceptable
- 92% of respondents found murals acceptable

These results were applied during the scan, analysis and response phase of the *Intersection Project* and will be further explored.

2. Poster Project

In September 1997, the GWPCPC initiated the *Poster Project* in the Grandview Woodland Neighbourhood. The GWPCPC based this project on the New York model. The poster indicated

the types of complaints that could be reported to the office. The GWPCPC's assigned constable and telephone number were listed on the poster. This poster was delivered to all the businesses along Commercial Drive. Business owners were

Poster Project

**THIS BUILDING IS LOCATED IN VANCOUVER
POLICE DISTRICT 2
GRANDVIEW-WOODLAND COMMUNITY
POLICING BEAT**



Actual size: 8.5" x 14"

**IF THERE ARE PROBLEMS OR CONDITIONS
THAT NEED ATTENTION OR ASSISTANCE
PLEASE SEE YOUR BEAT OFFICER:**

Cst. Jean Prince

**OR CALL THE GRANDVIEW WOODLAND
COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICE**

7 1 7 - 2 9 3 2

**AND HELP US TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY
WE ARE LOCATED AT THE BRITANNIA ICE
RINK 1/2 BLOCK WEST OF COMMERCIAL
DR. AT PARKER**

(IN EMERGENCIES CALL 9-1-1)

asked to display the poster in a visible location either inside the store or in a street window.

The high visibility of this project resulted in a 150% increase of calls to the GWPCPC. Complaints dealing with street level nuisance behaviour increased significantly. This can be explained by the nature of the targeted area of the *Poster Project*: Commercial Drive is a busy area of small shops and coffee bars where street life is very active (please see page 9).

3. Simon Fraser University Student Studies

During the summer and fall semesters of 1997, SFU criminology students studied the blocks in the surrounding area. The students applied CPTED principles to the surrounding buildings, structures and vegetation. They identified elements in the environment which, facilitated certain types of criminal behaviour (e.g.: bushes in which squeegee people could hide their equipment, alcoves in buildings where panhandlers could sit away from the rain, and structures used by intoxicated people).

The students provided suggestions for environmental modifications. These suggestions were implemented during the response phase of the *Intersection Project*. The students observations were also taken into consideration during both the scan and analyze phase.

SCANNING

During the scan phase of the *Intersection Project*, several sources were utilized to determine the amplitude and cause of the problem. Sources included reports to the GWPC, 911 calls, *Community Survey* results and observations made by the students. Reports to the GWPC indicated that a multitude of disorder issues at this central intersection were affecting the quality of life of residents and local business owners and their employees. Citizens were fearful of using bank machines, shopping at businesses, and walking or driving through the intersection. Local businesses were complaining of reduced business and employees expressed concerns for their safety when arriving or leaving for work.

911 calls showed that patrol was frequently attending the intersection to deal with aggressive panhandlers, squeegee activity and public drunkenness. These activities sometimes resulted in theft, mischief and assault. During May 1998, prior to the implementation of the *Intersection Project*, 18 of the 32 calls were the result of the above mentioned behaviours. From May to August 1997, 44 of the 193 calls to the intersection were the result of the above

mentioned behaviours. These statistics showed the extent of the problem.

The *Community Survey* conducted during the summer of 1997, determined that nuisance behaviour (squeegee activity, aggressive panhandling and public drunkenness) was problematic for the majority of respondents. Standards of maintenance issues (litter and graffiti on public property) were found to be completely unacceptable to most respondents. The SFU students spent two semesters (summer and fall 1997) studying the Commercial Drive area. Of these students only two lived in the neighbourhood. The observations of these students provided the GWPC with a valuable objective perspective. GWPC Board members, volunteers and staff are for the most part local residents. Conditions in the neighbourhood such as graffiti, litter, panhandling, squeegee activity or public drunkenness can easily become unnoticed elements of the environment and residents can develop defence mechanisms. The students' observations, comments and suggestions brought to light the cumulative effect of these conditions. Students observed incidents and situations which they determined were problematic whereas GWPC Board members, volunteers and staff saw these as common, unremarkable occurrences.

Through these various sources, reports to the office, 911 calls, *Community Survey* results and SFU students' observations, the GWPC determined that the intersection at 1st Avenue and Commercial Drive was a focal point for the community. Problems occurring at this intersection were cumulative and their combined effect was directly impacting the quality of life of the community. The goal of the *Intersection Project* was to reclaim this intersection and instill a sense of civility, community pride and ownership.

ANALYSIS

During the analytical phase of the *Intersection Project*, the GWPC mobilized several resources to properly determine the extent and various sources of the problem. The Community

Survey provided information on the opinions of the community regarding conditions manifested at the intersection. Reports to the GWPCPC helped further determine the nature of the problem. Once the problem was properly identified, legislation to deal with the street level behaviour was consolidated, CPTED principles were researched, and community resources were identified. This process was conducted by the assigned constable and the GWPCPC Board of Directors and staff.

Results from the Community Survey indicated that several behaviours and conditions present at this intersection were problematic for the majority of respondents. Survey researchers conducted street interviews at this intersection with squeegee people, panhandlers, intoxicated people, local business owners, employees, residents and visitors to the area. Researchers found that respondents were generally accepting and tolerant of a variety of street level behaviours. However, when the combined effect of various conditions breached the level of tolerance, citizens turned to city bylaws and police enforcement for solutions.

In May 1998, a territorial conflict began to occur between street people and other users of this intersection (e.g.: business owners, employees, residents, motorists and visitors). The problem manifested itself in street level behaviour. The resulting effects of these behaviours included:

- Territorial graffiti.
- Occupation of public property such as benches by inebriated people.
- Claiming of street space by squeegee people and aggressive panhandlers.
- Improper disposal of litter and used syringes.

This increase of street people using the intersection also resulted in complaints about other areas in the community. Street people were sleeping in building alcoves within a one block radius and using the facilities at local businesses. Squeegee people claimed Grandview Park (which is located 4 blocks away) and were

drinking, sleeping, making excessive noise at night, and visibly using drugs in the park. When approached by community workers, the squeegee people stated that Grandview Park was *their* park. Tension between this street group and local residents increased. The territorial nature of this street group caused concerns to the community which was expressed through an increase in calls to the GWPCPC.

The GWPCPC was able to determine that this problem was creating increased fear in the community and compromising the quality of life. The repercussions were multi-faceted:

- Increased fear at the intersection.
- Disputes over territory.
- Graffiti, litter, discarded needles and public urination.
- Thefts, mischief and assaults.
- Traffic problems.
- Problems in the local park.
- Street people sleeping in building alcoves and using business facilities.

Most important was the heightened perception held by the community of the inability of the police to deal with any *one* of the problems.

Resources used to analyze the problem included SFU students, GWPCPC volunteers, local residents, businesses, area patrol cars, community agencies, and City Enforcement agencies through the NIST (Neighbourhood Integrated Services Team). These resources helped the GWPCPC look at the problem from a variety of angles. The problematic behaviours had a variety of repercussions which also needed to be addressed (e.g.: territorial graffiti, litter, local park ownership and sleeping in building alcoves). The environment needed to be modified to facilitate consistent police enforcement and to prevent reoccurrence of street level nuisance behaviour. This was done by making the environment uncomfortable for

the problematic intersection users and comfortable for the other intersection users - residents, business owners, visitors, motorists and people who work in the area.

RESPONSE

The response to the various problems required a consolidated effort of consistent police enforcement with significant changes to the environment. The goal of the *Intersection Project* was to:

- Restore the quality of life.
- Decrease the public perception of fear.
- Increase public confidence in the police.
- Reduce 911 calls.
- Lessen criminal activity.
- Eliminate the repercussions to other areas in the neighbourhood.
- Encourage community pride and ownership.

Police action at the intersection included enforcement of Motor Vehicle Act regulations, City by-laws, and Criminal Code offences. Cst. Prince developed a list of repeat squeegee offenders and a list of Motor Vehicle Act and by-law charging sections which were distributed to patrol. These lists were designed to facilitate patrol response and ensure proper identification of the offenders. Aggressive panhandlers were asked to move on. Public drunkenness was not tolerated and offenders were taken to a detox centre. A consistent method of approach by patrol was encouraged in order to eliminate the argument that street people view the police as condoning the act when just driving by. Patrol was asked to respond to problems at this intersection by taking the initiative every time they saw street nuisance behaviour rather than only responding to 911 calls.

Police action also included pursuing Criminal Code charges when appropriate. Gas stations in

the area were involved in the project through the engraving of their windshield washing squeegee equipment. Charges of Possession of Stolen Property were pursued when squeegee people stole engraved squeegees from local gas stations. Cst. Prince developed a *Squeegee Impact Statement* which was submitted with reports to Crown Counsel. The impact statement outlined the costs incurred by the gas stations and the effects on the community.

Changes to the environment were crucial in order to prevent repetitive calls. The first modification occurred in September of 1997. SFU students established that the bench on the northeast side of 1st Avenue and Commercial Drive was the site of dispute between various groups of drinkers. The bench, adjacent to a bank machine, was almost always occupied by intoxicated people. Patrol was repeatedly dispatched to arrest people for public drunkenness.

The intoxicated persons seated on the bench made it undesirable for public use. Newspaper boxes were used by intoxicated persons to hide their bottles, by squeegee people to hide their squeegees and by panhandlers to rest up against. The newspaper boxes were obstructed and could not be used by the general public.

Two changes were necessary to eliminate these activities. The bench was removed and results indicate that public drunkenness calls were reduced from 24 over four months in 1997 to 5 in 1998. The next change to the environment was removing the newspaper boxes on the northeast corner of 1st Avenue and Commercial Drive.

The Royal Bank on the southwest corner of 1st Avenue and Commercial Drive was a trouble spot for squeegee activity and panhandling near the ATM (bank machine). Several CPTED modifications were implemented. Next to the entrance of the bank, there were two alcoves which provided panhandlers with cover and shelter. A slanted structure was installed in both alcoves which made it impossible for panhandlers to sit down. A ledge near the entrance of the bank provided squeegee people

with a location to hide squeegees. Installation of a glass window eliminated this hiding space. The final modification was to the landscaping on the street corner. An area planted with a large bush provided both squeegee people and panhandlers with a hiding place and cover. The Royal Bank cut down this bush and paved the area.

The Vancity Credit Union on the northwest corner of 1st Avenue and Commercial Drive also implemented environmental changes. The design of the structure contains several large alcoves. The alcove closest to the corner and the ATM was a problematic area. At any given time there would be 2 to 5 people in this alcove. This provided squeegee people with a good hiding place while they waited for the next red light. Intoxicated people found shelter from the rain. Vancity gated this alcove thus eliminating these activities. In a recent conversation, a 'regular' squeegee person stated that he now felt uncomfortable squeegeeing at 1st Avenue and Commercial Drive because he was "out in the open". Without these changes, consistent police enforcement would have been much more difficult. Once the changes were implemented visual assessment was sufficient to determine the success.

The last component of the *Intersection Project* was the beautification of the area. The CIBC bank was actively involved in graffiti elimination. The Goodbye Graffiti company was hired to remove graffiti from the CIBC within 24 hours of its application. Vancity already had a graffiti removal program. Maintenance staff removed graffiti immediately and conducted regular cleaning of the exterior area. The Royal Bank did not have a consistent policy to deal with graffiti until it was approached by the GWPCPC.

A collaborative effort resulted in the Royal Bank engaging in a pro-active antigraffiti program and the implementation of a "Welcome to Commercial Drive" mural on their retaining wall. It is interesting to note that to date this mural has only been 'tagged' once and the 'tag' was quickly painted over.

Lastly, the GWPCPC approached the owner of the building on the southeast (fourth) corner with a mural proposal. Community volunteers painted a mural using a local artist's original design. The mural is covered with an anti-graffiti coating and is maintained by a GWPCPC volunteer. It is interesting to note that this mural has only been tagged three times in one year. Both murals were inspired by information from the *Community Survey* where the majority of respondents found murals to be a positive aspect of the Commercial Drive ambience.

The GWPCPC then approached City Hall for more garbage receptacles and increased litter pick-up. The intersection received two new receptacles.

The *Intersection Project* combined consistent police beat patrol tactics for order maintenance with targeted changes to the environment. This project requires beat patrol to move away from strictly reactive policing to addressing the underlying problems which may not necessarily be considered a beat officer's mandate; "beat patrol with a twist". Changes in the environment were crucial to drastically reduce the problematic behaviours. Police enforcement would have escalated and remained reactive had these environmental changes not been implemented. The present situation requires intermittent assessment and minimal enforcement by the assigned constable.

(Please note: territorial behaviour by squeegee people in Grandview Park was addressed through a different project which focused on problems specific to the park. Street people sleeping in building alcoves within the block radius of the intersection was also addressed through a collaborative effort between police and City enforcement agencies. Building owners were contacted and CPTED solutions were proposed and implemented.)

ASSESSMENT

Through various means the GWPCPC was able to determine that the *Intersection Project* was

successful. Sources include: 911 call load analysis, police resources cost analysis, reports to the GWPC and visual assessment. Because the project addressed a variety of behaviours and their effects on the environment, these sources were necessary in the assessment phase.

Calls to E. 1st Av. and Commercial and associated police wages, 1997

Month	May	June	July	August
Total calls '97	39	53	53	48
Squeegee calls '97	5	5	1	1
Squeegee cost '97	\$51.00	\$97.50	\$26.00	\$23.00
Panhandler calls '97	0	1	4	2
Panhandler cost '97	\$0	\$22.40	\$104.00	\$98.00
Drunk calls '97	1	4	10	8
Drunk cost '97	\$0	\$137.30	\$259.00	\$274.00
Total Cost for disorder calls '97	\$51.00	\$257.00	\$389.00	\$394.00

911 call load analysis showed that the three identified behaviours (squeegee activity, public drunkenness and aggressive panhandling) drastically decreased after the project was initiated. Calls for these three behaviours went from 18 of 32 in May 1998 to 4 of 22 in August 1998, which represents a 38% drop in calls. Comparing total calls to the intersection from June to

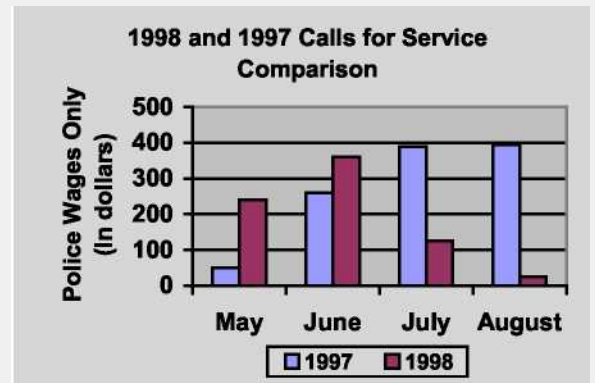
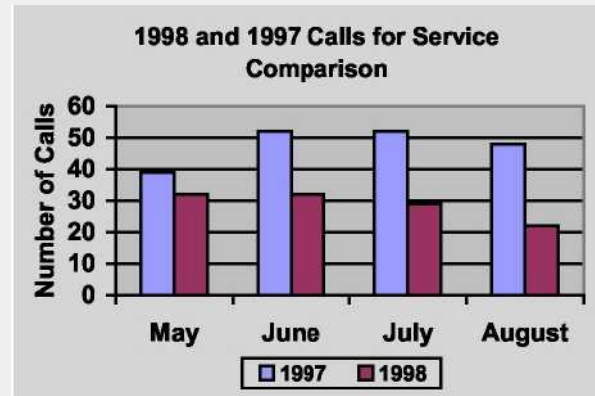
August 1997 and June to August 1998 shows a drop from 153 to 83 calls, which represents a 54% reduction.

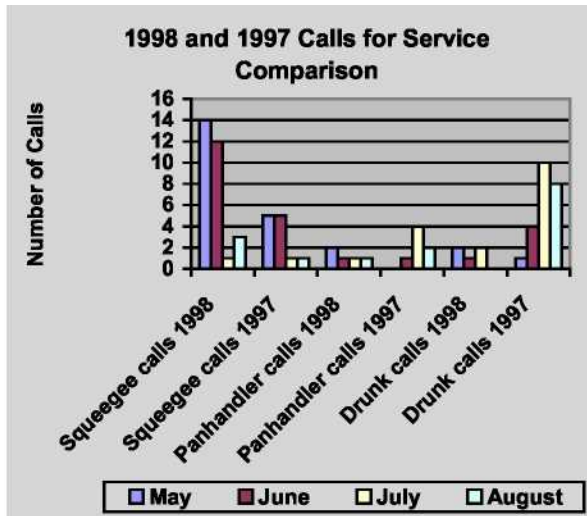
From these 911 calls, police time costs were determined. It is important to note that these costs are based *only* on police wages and *do not* include other associated costs such as police equipment, dispatching, Emergency Hospital Services (ambulance), volunteer detox transportation, or associated costs to businesses (e.g.: graffiti on buildings, theft of squeegees, lost of business due to fear, etc.). Cost analysis indicated that an initial investment of time during the month of June 1998 when the project was first implemented resulted in a significant

cost reduction (please see comparison charts below).

Calls to E. 1st Av. and Commercial and associated police wages, 1998

Month	May	June	July	August
Total calls '98	32	32	29	22
Squeegee calls '98	14	12	1	3
Squeegee cost '98	\$163.30	\$338.00	\$26.00	\$20.00
Panhandler calls '98	2	1	1	1
Panhandler cost '98	\$62.40	\$22.40	\$13.00	\$5.00
Drunk calls '98	2	1	2	0
Drunk cost '98	\$13.00	\$7.80	\$83.20	\$0
Total Cost for disorder calls '98	\$238.70	\$368.20	\$122.20	\$25.00





(Please note: August 1998 drunk calls and May 1997 panhandler calls were 0.)

It is important to note that the majority of incidents recorded in June 1998 were generated by Cst. Prince, the GWPC's assigned constable, who targeted squeegee activity, aggressive panhandling and public drunkenness.

Authors are of the opinion that call analysis for May to August 1999 will show the project's incremental success in reducing nuisance behaviour. Initial project time investment during the month of June 1998 will not have to be repeated. It is anticipated that enforcement for these behaviours will be minimal during the summer months of 1999. The environment is no longer conducive to these activities and changes have created an added sense of community ownership. The GWPC will endeavour to encourage a pro-active approach by area sergeants and patrol.

Researchers found 911 calls for service analysis tedious in that the identified behaviours fell under a variety of 911 sub-headings (e.g: suspicious person, suspicious circumstances, annoying person, mischief, assault, theft, and detox). Researchers had to read each call to the intersection in order to determine whether or not the call pertained to the identified behaviours. The limitation of 911 to record such behaviours is being addressed by

VPD through education and the creation of new 'call types'.

This limitation is discussed by Herman Goldstein in *Problem Oriented Policing*: "Overly broad categorizations of incidents impede efforts to gain insight into a discrete substantive problem" (p.39, *Problem Oriented Policing*). Reports to the GWPC were taken in a manner which captured the nuances of a variety of behaviours and therefore helped to properly determine specific behaviours and identify their root cause.

Visual assessment of the intersection allows for proper monitoring of the problems. Regular patrols by the assigned constable allows for ongoing evaluation. Calls to the GWPC corroborate these observations and helps determine the extent of the problem and its effect on the community. Since the implementation to the project, the GWPC has not received any calls about this intersection. The problems are under control and the tolerance level of the community is not breached.

Before and after photographs provided the GWPC with a visual perspective of the impact of the project. 15th Avenue and Commercial Drive was overloaded with problems and repercussions which visibly impacted the environment. When citizens have to walk or drive by a specific area daily, the environment becomes so familiar that it either goes unnoticed or, as was the case with this particular intersection, citizens develop defence mechanisms or avoid the location. This intersection was appropriated by street people causing other citizens of the community to use the intersection with extreme caution. The project aimed to re-establish a sense of order and balance. Street behaviours have not been completely eliminated, but they are presently at a level which does not threaten other citizens in the community.

The photographic record of how problems can evolve to a point where an entire area is significantly impacted is clear. Based on Kelling's *Broken Windows* theory, it is possible

to speculate that this intersection, left unattended, would have deteriorated even more.

CONCLUSION

The effects of public nuisance behaviour on various communities is dependant on the amount of street level activity and the level of tolerance present in each neighbourhood. Once the level of tolerance of a community is breached, street level activity and its impact on the environment becomes problematic, and repetitive calls to 911 are the result. Reactive police enforcement does not solve the problem. Repeat calls to 911 indicate that street level behaviour has increased to the point where citizens have become overwhelmed.

A pro-active approach must be adopted to properly address such a problem. The approach must include consistent police enforcement and significant changes to the environment. Combined efforts will result in a significant decrease of calls for service to 911. The perception of fear by the community will also be reduced and the confidence in the police will be restored.

The GWPC includes the community in the problem-solving process. Police alone cannot solve the multitude of issues affecting a neighbourhood. The *Intersection Project* included the community during the mural implementation phase. Businesses were encouraged to take ownership of the intersection through anti-graffiti programs. Once the project was completed, businesses continued to maintain the intersection and community members paint out graffiti on the murals. The community has verbally complemented the assigned constable on the improvement to the area.

Police and community agencies will often become complacent when faced with street level behaviours. The SFU students provided a very valuable outside, objective perspective and assisted in outlining the extent of the problems at 15 Avenue and Commercial Drive. The GWPC determined that when combined, the

various behaviours were seriously affecting the community. The goal of the *Intersection Project* was to change the perception about acceptable and unacceptable street level behaviours and standards of maintenance issues. Through targeted environmental change, the GWPC succeeded in modifying the types of behaviour that can comfortably occur at this intersection. Squeegee people can no longer hide, aggressive panhandlers have to sit out in the open, and inebriated people have to sit on the ground. The result is that people engaged in these activities have to seek out a 'friendlier' environment that will allow them to conduct their business discreetly.

The *Intersection Project* is easily expandable within Vancouver or any city which is impacted by public nuisance behaviour. A city-wide initiative would reduce nuisance behaviour, associated problems, criminal behaviour and calls to 911. By co-ordinating efforts throughout the city, nuisance behaviour can be significantly decreased through consistent enforcement, sharing of information and modifications to the environment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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