

Imperial Avenue Red Curb Project

Project Summary

"Imperial Avenue Red Curb Project"

SUMMARY

Scanning:

The Imperial Avenue corridor from the 1300 block to the 1600 block has long had the reputation of being a location where drug dealers, drug users, transients, and alcoholics congregate. The corridor was littered with trash and often choked with people congregating around the cars parked on the south curb of Imperial Avenue. Juveniles from the nearby St. Vincent DePaul Village had to walk through this crowd to get to the trolley station to get to school. Families had to walk through to get to the nearby Dept. of Social Services building. The cars seemed to provide a location for offenders to engage in the listed activity either in the cars or around the cars where officers can't clearly see it occur. The cars also created an eyesore. Officers Wes Mangum and Erroll McCrea decided to do something about the problem

The officers found that many of the vehicles were registered out of state or out of the city which supported the officers belief that people came to this location because of it's nefarious reputation. By talking to the drivers, officers found they came to the area for no particular legitimate reason. They came to simply "hang out" all day.

Analysis:

In their efforts to validate their preliminary conclusions, officers interviewed the residents and business owners in the area. The officers found their observations to be similar to

their own: cars parked along Imperial Avenue seemed to be a gathering point for the homeless population.

The officers used crime analysis to gather statistical information about the numbers and types of police responses and the time spent during each response. From this information, they found that many arrests have been made in this area in years past at great expense without a reduction in criminal activity.

By interviewing the offenders, the officers found that many of them are not residents of the area but were either staying temporarily at St. Vincent DePaul Village, visiting the Day Center, or visiting the area to engage in the described criminal activity.

Response:

Officers decided to change the environment in an effort to make the area unsuitable for criminal activity. They felt that by eliminating parking on the south side of Imperial Avenue, they could eliminate or sharply reduce the criminal activity.

On 02/15/01 City Traffic Engineering painted red the south curb line of 1300 - 1600 Imperial Avenue thereby eliminating all open parking. The office of City Council District 8 was involved and provided the support necessary to swiftly accomplish the task in partnership with the City's Department of Transportation. Calls for service and the number of other police responses immediately dropped dramatically and have remained far below previous levels.

Rather than end their response with the removal of open parking and the installation of red curbs, Officers Mangum and McCrea arranged for the Cox Cable utility boxes being used as seats at either end of the block to be removed.

The officers arranged for the Departments Neighborhood Policing Unit to do a site visit and conduct CPTED surveys for each business in the area.

Finally, the officers arranged for a local alternative secondary school to touch-up the mural and extend its length on the building. The mural is now graffiti free and as colorful as it was when newly painted.

Assessment:

As the result of eliminating parking, calls for service and other police responses dropped dramatically. Statistics show that officers are responding to the area b0% less frequently than before. Routine patrol provides the maintenance needed to suppress the activity to levels lower then ever experienced in this area. No significant portion of current criminal activity is associated with parked cars. The business owners and residents express profound satisfaction with the improvement of their quality of life. The corridor is now safer, cleaner, and potentially more attractive to business clients and residents than in years past. Patrol officers are free to answer calls for service and focus their efforts on other problems within the community.

Project Description

"Imperial Avenue Red Curb Project"

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

SCANNING:

Imperial Avenue from the 1300 block to the 1600 block has long had the reputation of being a location where drug dealers, drug users, transients, alcoholics, and prostitutes congregate. The Imperial Avenue corridor was littered with trash and blocked by people congregating around the cars parked on the south curb of Imperial Avenue. At times the sidewalks could not contain all the people on that side of the street. Juveniles from the nearby St. Vincent DePaul Village had to walk through this crowd to get to the trolley station to get to school. Families had to walk through to get to the nearby Dept. of Social Services building. The cars seemed to provide a location for offenders to engage in the listed activity either in the cars or around the cars where officers can't clearly see it occur. The cars also created an eyesore. The problem was all too visible when looking down the corridor from either the west or east end. Officers Wes Mangum and Erroll McCrea decided to do something about the problem

The officers found that many of the vehicles were registered out of state or out of the city which supported the officers belief that people came to this location because of it's nefarious reputation. By talking to the drivers, officers found they came to the area for no particular legitimate reason. They came to simply "hang out" all day.

By attending community meetings and listening to the residents, the officers found that they too were upset and fed-up with the "nuisance crimes" committed by the homeless that negatively impacted their quality of life. They were demanding action.

The officer's observations led them to believe that most of the people who were part of the problem seemed to be coming from or going to St. Vincent DePaul Village. It appeared that Village security forced the offenders off site and onto City streets where they became a police problem.

This problem solving effort did not directly address the larger issues of homelessness, unemployment, or substance abuse. The goal of this effort was to rid a specific area of the manifestations of those larger issues. In so doing, the officers also hoped to reduce police responses and improve quality of life in the community.

ANALYSIS:

Officers Mangum and McCrea used a number of tried and true methods to collect their information. They started with informal interviews. Only four businesses are in the immediate area. Officers interviewed the owners and employees of these businesses and enlisted their opinions about the condition of their neighborhood. They found that no specific length of time could be given for the duration of the problems, only that they had been occurring for as long as anyone could remember. They asked for ideas regarding solutions. They sought support for their own ideas.

Each of the officer's personal observations and experiences were heavily relied upon when attempting to determine the cause of the problems and when considering courses of action. They have worked this area for a number of years and are very familiar with the issues of homelessness and management of those issues.

The officers attended community meetings in the area. By listening to the residents, the officers found that the observations and experiences of those in attendance were the same as their own.

Finally, Crime Analysis provided any and all statistical information the officers requested. The officers wanted to know the number and types of calls for service and other police responses in the area and the total time spent by officers doing it. The time period examined included the year prior to implementing the response. (January 01, 2000 through February 15, 2001.)

Although the apartment complexes in the area are not within the Imperial Avenue corridor, they are close enough that the residents growing sense of community pride left them seeking solutions for the nearby problems. They did not want them spilling over into their neighborhoods. Additionally, many of these residents rely on the Trolley system for transportation and must walk down Imperial Avenue to get to the Trolley station. The security and feeling of safety for a number of residents and their families were jeopardized on occasion.

The officers found that their peers have been working long and hard enforcing the law in this area for years without reducing the problems for any significant amount of time.

One effort involved placing one of the Department's mobile command trailers to 1300 Imperial Avenue and manning it there 24 hours a day for two weeks to show of police presence. The immediate reduction in criminal activity as the result of this saturation patrol was short-lived. After the trailer was removed, the activity returned to prior levels.

In speaking with their peers the officers found that many had become discouraged by their own ineffectiveness. As the result, no individual officers took ownership of that problem location nor did it receive the overall police response necessary to permanently impact the problems.

Officers Mangum and McCrea discovered that the Village had much to do with the problems in the area. Again, by its very nature the Village attracts the homeless, who are the predominant offender group. The Village provides services to a segment of the population who desperately need them to survive and to hopefully become contributing members of society again someday. These individuals are not among the target group of offenders. Unfortunately the same services facilitate a homeless lifestyle to those who have no desire or no ability to become contributing members of society. These people include the substance addicted, the mentally ill, and the chronically unemployed that are among the target group of offenders.

To better understand the problem, one must understand the basic operating procedures of the two main service providers in the area. The Neal Good Day Center provides a mailing address, showers, job placement assistance, and a safe place to spend the daytime hours. They close at 1800 hours and everyone must leave the premises.

The St. Vincent DePaul Village provides short term and longer term housing to families and individuals in addition to many of the same services provided by the Neal Good Day Center. However only families can remain on the premises during the day. All others must leave the premises except during feeding hours that occur three times a day.

These summaries are basic outlines of the operating hours of each facility. As a result, the people leaving the Day Center occupied Imperial Avenue at night, and the people leaving the Village occupied Imperial Avenue by day. Neither facility is a secure premise so people are free to come and go during the day and night.

Once it is understood how these people with nowhere in particular to go come together, it is easy to understand how the Imperial Avenue corridor became fertile ground for criminal activity. Allowing people to park on Imperial Avenue and have their cars become individual party locations greatly added to the problem. The vehicles provided a place to sit, shelter from the cold or the heat, a place to sleep, and a place to hide from law enforcement.

RESPONSE:

A number of police responses to the criminal activity were considered. One was to assign more officers to the area to conduct strict daily enforcement. Or put another way, work harder than we already were.

Thought was given to installing red "no parking" curbs on both sides of the street or installing parking meters on one or both sides of the street.

These solutions were all rejected. The officers wanted a solution that would reduce the time and resources of the police department spent in the area and improve the quality of life and business as well. At the same time the response needed to be inexpensive to implement and could not unnecessarily inconvenience those with legitimate business.

Based on these desired results, working harder and longer enforcing laws was not acceptable. Statistics showed that consistent law enforcement did not reduce the number of police responses. Central Division does not have the luxury of being able to throw resources at the problem by assigning the large number of officers it would take to eliminate criminal activity through police presence alone.

The ideas of painting the north curbs red or installing meters on the north side of the street were rejected as well. The bus station employees used this side of the street for parking. Their security was a full time presence there. Criminal activity did not occur on

that side of imperial Avenue. Either of these two options would not have been fair to bus station employees. Forcing them to pay to park or park somewhere else was never a goal nor was it considered necessary to attack the crime problem. The officers wanted all the stakeholders to be satisfied and to unduly inconvenience them did not make sense and was not necessary to impact the problem.

Officers had to decide how to change the environment in that specific area in order to make the area unsuitable for criminal activity. They decided that if they could eliminate parking within that area, they could eliminate or sharply reduce criminal activity within that area. Ultimately the decision was made to install red curbs from 16th Street to 14th Street on the south curb only.

The decision making process was impacted by several other factors. Cost was a consideration. Meters would have to be paid for and City employees would have to be paid to install them. The affected community really could not directly cut the cost of this process even if they wanted to. Additionally, meters would not keep drivers from parking if they were willing to pay the meter.

The intent of the response was to reduce criminal activity and free officers to address other issues while at the same time not negatively affecting the law-abiding citizens in the area. The best solution would be a long-term solution that required little maintenance by law enforcement. The other benefit the officers hoped to realize was a gradual change in the tarnished reputation of that portion of the East Village community.

A cleaner, safer neighborhood is one that people will want to live in, want to do business in, and want to further develop to accommodate both.

To install the red curbs, Traffic Engineering had to be involved. It would be their task to receive the request and initiate a survey to determine whether or not they felt the red curbs were necessary. Normally they make their decision based upon traffic control requirements.

Prior to approaching Traffic Engineering for consideration of the plan, the officers wanted to ensure they had the support of all the stakeholders. This was accomplished through a letter writing campaign. Officers obtained letters of support from all the businesses involved and from Central Division Commanding Officer Mike McCulloch (via chain of command).

In anticipation of a problem convincing Traffic Engineering that red curbs were necessary for other than traffic control reasons, Officers Mangum and McCrea contacted the office of Council member Juan Vargas, City Council District 8. Their objective was to explain the issue to Council member Vargas and gain his support and endorsement of the plan. They hoped he would be able to remove roadblocks if necessary and speed the approval process.

After receiving approval from the Chiefs office, Officers Mangum and McCrea met with Mr. Jamie Taylor from Vargas' office. They explained the difficulties faced by Vargas'

constituency. They took him for a site visit. Mr. Taylor himself witnessed a public urination offense and a consumption of alcohol offense. Both occurred between parked cars. As the result, they obtained his commitment to and support of the project. In turn, Mr. Taylor obtained Mr. Vargas' commitment to and support for the idea.

Through the efforts of Officers Mangum and McCrea, and the teamwork between Council member Vargas and Mr. Cruz Gonzalez, Director of Department of Transportation, Traffic Engineering painted the curbs red on February 15, 2001. All open parking was eliminated.

Rather than end their response with the removal of open parking and the installation of red curbs, Officers Mangum and McCrea went even further. They arranged for the Cox Cable utility boxes at either end of the block to be removed. These handy places for people to sit were no longer available.

The officers arranged for the Departments Neighborhood Policing Unit to do a site visit and conduct CPTED surveys. The retired architect volunteering his time to the unit prepared a customized list of CPTED suggestions for each business in the area to consider in order to improve their property.

Finally, the officers turned their attention to a large colorful mural painted on the side of a warehouse in the middle of their target area. It had become faded over time. With the owner's blessing the officers arranged for Second Chance, an alternative secondary

school in the neighborhood, to touch-up the mural and extend its length on the building. The mural is now graffiti free and as colorful as it was when newly painted.

ASSESSMENT:

After the curbs were painted red, no open parking was allowed from 1300 to 1600 Imperial Avenue. As the result, police response to the area immediately dropped dramatically.

The Department's Crime Analysis Unit made a comparison of calls for service before and after implementing the project, and a comparison of other recorded police action before and after implementing the project. Other police action included arrests, traffic citations, misdemeanor citations, field interviews, and traffic accidents. The comparison considered data for the year before implementing the project (02115101) and the year after implementing the project.

The comparison showed an immediate drop in police responses. The statistics showed a peak number of police responses at 43 in November of 2000. They showed a low of 7 in April 2001 after implementing the project. The number of police responses averaged 26 per month for the year prior to February 2001. The number of police responses has averaged 12 per month for the year after February 2001. Costs per response varies depending on the type of incident, duration of incident, number of officers per call, etc. but the costs have been cut by more than half since implementing the project.

The comparison also showed an immediate drop in calls for service from an average of 28 per month for the year prior to implementation down to an average of about 14 per month for the year since implementation. At a cost of a few cents under \$60 per call for service (for one officer per the Crime Analysis Unit) the taxpayers are realizing a considerable savings every month.

Since the solution involves a permanent environmental change, the benefits are fully expected to continue. The amount of maintenance required will be based upon officer's observations and crime analysis data.

The unique partnership between Officers Mangum and McCrea and Council member Juan Vargas and their direct interaction with the Director of Transportation dramatically sped the approval and implementation process.

Due to concern for displacement of the problem, the area was monitored closely for a repeat of the problem. The problem did in fact begin to reappear in front of the Day Center. A similar project is currently being implemented at that location. Early intervention by police and committed community involvement is having a positive impact already. These crimes will not be tolerated there.

The red curbs will only be as effective as the degree of enforcement given to them. if the parkers are allowed to return without fear of contact, the project will ultimately be less effective. Continued maintenance will ensure a successful outcome. Primary

responsibility for maintenance has been given to the Central Enforcement Team, a specialized unit whose mission is management of the homeless population throughout the Division. Patrol officers are free to answer calls for service and focus their efforts on other problems within the community.

AGENCY and OFFICER INFORMATION:

This project was initiated by two patrol officers, Wes Mangum and Erroll McCrea, who are assigned to the target area.

Because having the response implemented required the officers to interact with City Council, Department policy required the officers to get the approval of the Division Captain, Mike McCulloch, to move forward. The Captain endorsed the idea and gave his approval to seek permission from the Chiefs Office to contact Council member Vargas. The officer's Supervisor, Todd Griffin, contacted Carol Trujillo, Chiefs Liaison, and got the approval of the Chief's Office.

The officers then worked with the office of Council District 8 and the office of the Director of Transportation to implement the response.

The San Diego Police Department has been committed to problem oriented policing throughout its inception and evolution. Problem solving is one of the primary tools of our officers and is taught as a patrol technique at the training academy. No other specific or
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ernative problem solving training was given to these officers. They relied upon current Department training during this project.

The officers were given support and guidance when needed from their command. They were given the luxury of time when they needed to leave the field and pursue their project goals. A large part of the first line supervisor's role was to create the positive work environment needed to make this effort a success. No other incentives were necessary nor were any promised.

Due to the hard work of the officers and the support of the Department, the officers did not encounter any internal problems. The only problems they anticipated involved the approval and implementation process of Traffic Engineering. Their interactions with Council member Vargas' office removed these potential roadblocks.

The only resources need for this project were supplied by Traffic Engineering. The soft costs of their equipment, supplies, and personnel were used to paint the curbs. The Department did not expend any financial resources aside from the salaries of its employees.

For further information, contact:

Todd Griffin
Sergeant, Central Enforcement Team
2501 Imperial Avenue, San Diego, Ca. 92102
(619)744-9564
wtgriff7@yahoo.com

Supporting Documents

Crime Prevention Site Survey

THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

February 20, 2001

IN REPLYING
PLEASE GIVE
OUR REF. NO.

SDPD Central Division
Attn: Off. Wes Magnum
2501 Imperial Avenue
San Diego, CA 92102

Dear Off. Magnum,

On Wednesday, February 14, Ted Parker (SDPD V.I.P.) and I conducted several CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) site surveys on the following 4 locations:

- 3011 Imperial Avenue
- 1401 Imperial Avenue
- 1435 Imperial Avenue
- 70 15 th Street

These CPTED surveys were conducted based on your request for some suggestions and/or recommendations to give these property owners to help reduce their potential of crime. The nature of these surveys concentrate mainly on the 'exterior' conditions of the property. Most site survey requests we receive are directly from the owner/building manager/property management and are able to do a more comprehensive report detailing both interior and exterior recommendations based on CPTED principles.

3011 Imperial Ave.

During the year 2000, there were 165 reported crimes against property and persons within a 0.2-mile radius of 3011 Imperial Avenue. The numbers and types are shown below.

- 29 crimes against vehicles: 17 theft, 7 break-ins or tampering, and 5 vandalism
- 46 crimes against other property: 10 burglary, 17 theft, 1 arson, 1 trespassing, and 17 vandalism
- 90 crimes against persons: 6 robbery, 43 assault and battery, 3 threats, 1 false imprisonment, 1 rape, 1 carjacking, 33 domestic violence, and 2 other sex offenses
- Calls for service in Year 2000: 61 Crime Cases in Year 2000: 5

Upon surveying the property several areas were found that could be modified in hopes of reducing or eliminating the potential for criminal activity.

Office of the Chief of Police

1401 Broadway *San Diego, CA 92101 5129

Tel (619) 531 2000

1. Installing 6 foot high fencing or gating to the property and restricting parking lot access so vehicular traffic must enter/exit via Imperial Avenue. This would allow liquor store employees to view all vehicles parking in lot since they would pass near the Plexiglas windows located at the northwest corner of the store. *Employee stated that store has additional staff during evening hours that help keep loiterers from hanging around.*
2. Gating off area at the southwest corner of the property (currently a dirt, weeds, & broken cement area connected to the paved parking lot) would also eliminate the loitering of people in that area of the property.
3. Installing a CCTV camera to cover the rear of the liquor store delivery area so all activity can be seen in the alley. Check to ensure that lighting is adequate! Discovered that chain-link gate to the delivery area had been pulled down & compromised. This fencing needs to be repaired or replaced. Once secured, access control is again effective.
4. Owners could remove the boarded up windows on the west side of the business to help with surveillance looking out into their parking lot -and- also visibility from the outside looking into the liquor store. If this were done, the stocked shelves would have to be moved so it didn't impede with the line-of-sight between the register area and the parking lot.
5. Electrical power box at southwest portion of the property can be a loitering magnet. However, this is property of SDG&E and needs to be addressed with them. Maybe fencing can be pinched closer towards the transformer box so as to limit the hiding areas between the fence & the box.

After briefly surveying this property location, nothing really stands out much different than your typical liquor store establishment located in the Central, Southeastern, & Mid-City's geographical area.

15th Street and Imperial Avenue

During the year 2000 there were 217 reported crimes against property and persons within a 0.2-mile radius of the intersection of 15^h Street and Imperial Ave. The numbers and types are shown below.

- 24 crimes against vehicles: 12 theft, 5 break-ins or tampering, and 7 vandalism
- 39 crimes against other property: 6 burglary, 29 theft, 1 trespassing, and 3 vandalism
- 154 crimes against persons: 23 robbery, 92 assault and battery, 6 threats, 2 kidnapping, 3 rape, 22 domestic violence, and 6 other sex offenses.

Other Data

Address	Calls for Service in Year 2000	Crime Cases
1401 Imperial	2	0
1435 Imperial	10	0
7015 ¹¹¹ Street	2	0

1401 Imperial Avenue

1. To eliminate loitering activity on the west side of this sheet metal sided building; some thorny-type landscaping can be planted to discourage people from congregating in that area.
2. Can parking on that side be secured by fencing? If so, employees can park in a safe, secure parking area protected by fencing or gates which would also eliminate loiterers inside the fenced off section.
3. Regarding the posts protecting the gas meter that subjects like to sit on, if the horizontal pipes were removed, then there wouldn't be anywhere to sit down.

1435 Imperial Avenue

1. It has come to our attention that this location has a big problem with unwanted loiterers along the north side of the building. Some of the solutions would include: cementing the 5 or 6 concrete blocks so that they are at a sharp angle so as to make sitting on them very difficult; planting of thorny landscaping in the dirt area next to the wall of the business; and painting the south curb of 1400 Imperial Avenue to eliminate the vehicular congestion that contributed to the problem. Lighting with protective screening can be installed if visibility is poor during evening hours.

70 15^o Street

1. It has also come to our attention that this location has a problem with both unwanted loiterers and trespassers who frequent this address (located on other side of street from St. Vincent de Paul homeless shelter). Thorny landscaping can be planted where applicable. Lighting with protective screening to prevent being intentionally broken can be installed or replaced (if out-of-order). Six-foot high gating or fencing can be installed along the perimeter of the property. If loading gates are still actively being used, separate lockable gates can be incorporated into the fencing so that only loading bays being used can be opened when necessary.

Please note that these possible solutions are recommendations/suggestions made by the Crime Prevention Unit based on CPTED principles that focus on Surveillance, Access Control, Territoriality, and Maintenance issues. Displacement of criminal activity to other areas nearby if these physical changes are made. For clarification of any of the recommendations or if you have further questions regarding this site survey, please feel free to contact Ted Parker at 531-2202 or myself at 531-2837.

Sincerely,



Officer P. t Fune

Crime Prevention Unit

Statistical Information

CITY OF SAN DIEGO
MEMORANDUM

DATE: 04122/2002
TO: Wes Mangum, Central Division
FROM: Joe Dalton, Crime Analysis
SUBJECT: 1300-1400 Imperial Av. _____

Search Criteria:

January 1, 2000 through March 31, 2002
All Activity

Request Summary:

I pulled all activity for the block and the time frame. I then reviewed the street numbers to see if there was a particular problem address, I found that officers are using 1300 and 1400 as the address for the block (1304, 1305 & 1399 was used once each during the time frame). There were a total of 550 activities for the 27-month time frame, these included AR/Bench Warrant/CCIFI/Local Warrant/Muni Cite/Traffic Accident/Traffic Cite.

I graphed the data, which shows a precipitous drop in activity starting in January 2001. The activity dropped to 7 in April 2001 and has leveled to 15 per month since November 2001 (it peaked at 43 in March 2000. These numbers show the POP project was very successful.

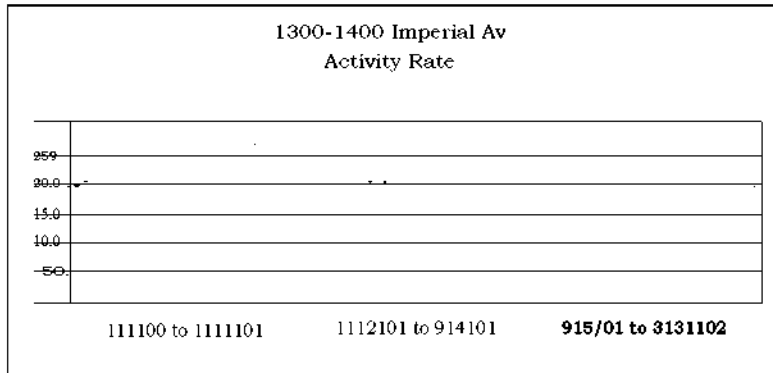
If you have any questions regarding this report, call me at 531-1536.

Joe Dalton
Crime Analyst

From: Dalton, Joseph
Sent: Wednesday, April 24, 2002 10:11 AM
To: Mangum, Wes; Griffin, Todd
Subject: activity rate

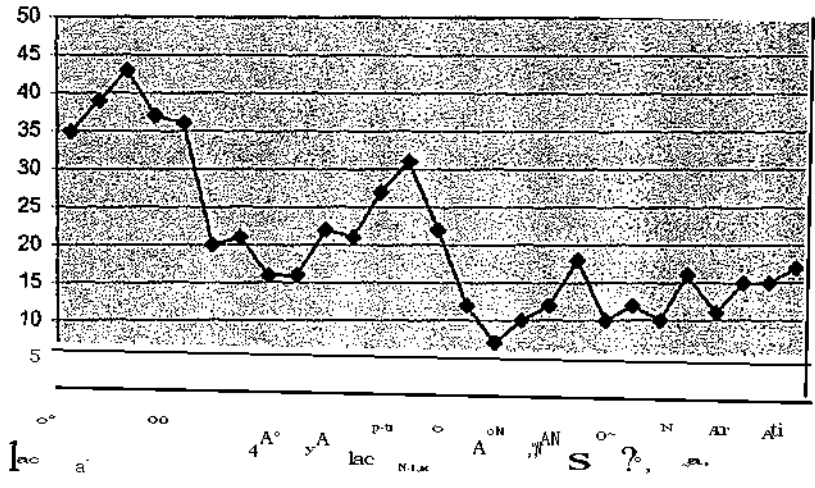
This shows the activity for the year prior to the POP project (1/1/00 to 1/11/01), during the POP project (1/12/01 to 9/4/01), and after the POP project (9/5/01 to 3/31/02). Note that the rate of occurrences dropped from 28 per month to 15 per month and continued to drop to 14/month after the project was done. This shows a continued positive influence in the area without the continued increase in police presence.

Joe balton



WLS418.xls

1300-1400 Imperial Av
Jan 2000 to Mar 2002



Time Frame	Number	# Months	#/day
111100 to 1111101	345	12.5	27.5
1112101 to 914101	110	7.2	15.3
915101 to 3/31/02	94	6.9	13.6

1300-1400 Imperial Av
Activity Rate

