

June 30, 2006

To Members of the Goldstein Award Selection Committee:

I am very pleased to submit the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department's Prostitution Exclusion Zone project for the 2006 Goldstein Award. This project addressed the prostitution problem that has existed in Charlotte's Camp Greene neighborhood since World War I. Over the years, our department has devoted a tremendous amount of time and resources to this problem but had few positive results to show for it.

The development and implementation of the prostitution exclusion zone ordinance is the result of the work of Sgt. Spencer Cochran, and Officers Norma Penix, Kenny Faulkner, and Scott Anderson. These officers were willing to take ownership of the problem and worked diligently to organize the neighborhood to be effective partners. The officers also learned to negotiate the political process and were willing to put in the time to collect and analyze the data they needed to build a business case for an exclusion zone.

We have now completed our first year with the prostitution exclusion zone in place in Camp Greene. The presence of prostitutes in the neighborhood has declined significantly and residents feel that their quality of life is much improved. The Camp Greene neighborhood has had some significant decreases in burglaries and robberies that go against the trend of city wide increases in the same time period. I am also pleased that the officers' work in Camp Greene has led to the formation of a strong neighborhood organization that actively partners with CMPD in making Camp Greene a safer place to live.

The Prostitution Exclusion Zone is a good example of the work that can be accomplished when officers take ownership of a problem, analyze it well, and build the partnerships they need to effect long term sustainable change. I am pleased to submit this project for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Darrel W. Stephens
Chief of Police

Prostitution Exclusion Zone Executive Summary

Scanning:

- Camp Greene neighborhood had prostitution problem since World War I.
- High crime in area
- Quality of life issues- children exposed to indecent acts; littering, excessive traffic, declining property values
- Health issues with highest incidence of new HIV cases in 28208 zip code
- Traditional law enforcement tactics to fight prostitution had not been successful

Analysis:

- 276 known prostitutes working in Camp Greene area
- From September 2003-September 2004-354 prostitution related calls for service resulting in 123 arrests
- Highest number of prostitution related calls for service and arrests of any area in the city.
- Study of 96 prostitutes arrested in four sweeps showed a total of 4,469 arrests among them, 578 for prostitution
- Prostitutes in custody no longer than 32-96 hours
- Average cost of prostitution sting -\$4,066.90 for each day
- Neighborhood frustrated but lacked community organization or leadership to effectively address the problem

Response:

- Internet search reveals ordinance in Portland, Oregon that deals with exclusion zones
- Met with District Attorney from Portland to get additional detail
- Worked with Police Attorney to draft ordinance that made Camp Greene a prostitution free zone
- Ordinance excludes prostitutes and johns who have been arrested, and probable cause has been established, for 90 days; exclusion goes to one year upon conviction
- Ordinance establishes variances for residential, educational, employment purposes, etc.
- Officers helped to organize the Camp Greene community to support their efforts
- Sought support of Chief of Police, District Attorney, defense attorneys and judges
- Ordinance went to Council Community Safety Committee for input and endorsement; potential displacement of prostitution problem was primary concern
- Media used to publicize the ordinance; explained to affected prostitutes through in-person contacts

Assessment:

- Prostitution related arrests and calls for service have declined in the exclusion zone
- 36 exclusions have been issued
- Metro Division officers continue to partner with McLeod Center and the Health Department to provides services to prostitutes to help them change their lives; new classes available to johns
- Crime has declined in exclusion zone; notable decreases in robbery and burglary despite city wide increases during same time period
- Camp Greene Neighborhood has remained organized; now has strong association and

leadership

–Positive media from both print and electronic media

–Displacement not a major issue

Project Description: Prostitution Exclusion Zone

Scanning

Prostitution-it's known as the oldest profession in the world. For one Charlotte, North Carolina neighborhood, it certainly seemed to be the oldest crime problem in neighborhood history. The Camp Greene neighborhood originated as an army training camp in World War One; at one time the camp had a population of 60,000 people. During the war, Congress established prostitution free zones around army camps to protect the moral welfare of the troops. That effort proved less than successful. After the war, the army left Camp Greene but the prostitution problem remained. For some eighty years, the neighborhood endured a prostitution problem so pervasive that the neighborhood was listed on a world sex guide website as a place to pick up a prostitute. For the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police officers assigned to the city's Metro Division, the oldest profession was a source of continuing frustration as they attempted to fight it with the oldest and most traditional law enforcement tactics, primarily centered around prostitution stings targeting both prostitutes and johns.

Both police and Camp Greene residents were deeply concerned about the effect that the constant presence of prostitutes had on the neighborhood. It was not uncommon to see prostitutes around the four day care centers and two churches in the neighborhood. Church members would arrive on Sunday mornings and be greeted by prostitutes sitting on the church steps with their legs open in an attempt to entice customers. Prostitutes would have sex and use the bathroom in residents' yards and it was not uncommon for residents to start their day by clearing condoms and drug paraphernalia from their yards.

Children boarding school busses in the early morning hours were exposed to prostitutes at work in the area. One employee of a business in the neighborhood reported that he came to work early one morning and was approached by a woman he knew was a prostitute. He told her he was just coming to work; she replied, “Really, I’m just working too.”

Police officers were concerned about the broader implications of the prostitution problem in the Camp Greene community. The presence of prostitutes was one of the primary contributors to robbery and assault rates in the areas. There were also significant public health issues related to the prostitution problem. A study conducted by the local Health Department in 2003 showed that the 28208 zip code where the Camp Greene neighborhood is located had the highest rate of newly reported HIV cases in the county, with almost half of those cases having already escalated into AIDS.

The Camp Greene neighborhood was also in a highly visible part of the city of Charlotte. It was only 1.3 miles to the main intersection in the center city and less than a mile from Bank of America Stadium where the NFL’s Carolina Panthers play their home games. Camp Greene is also on a main thoroughfare to and from Charlotte’s airport. Both officers and neighborhood residents were concerned about the impression that the neighborhood made on visitors to the area and the damage it could do to Charlotte’s image as a modern “New South” city.

Residents in the Camp Greene neighborhood had a strong desire to take back their neighborhood, if they could figure out how to do so. Given the level of concern on the part of both residents and police, Metro Division Sergeant Spence Cochran and Officers Norma Penix, Kenny Faulkner, and Scott Anderson made up their minds to find a way to decrease the prostitution problem in Camp Greene.

Analysis

The officers decided that the best way to attack the problem was to first be sure they fully understood it. They began by gathering available data which allowed them to identify 276 known prostitutes who frequented the Camp Greene area. They studied calls for service records and found that in the twelve months from September 2003 through September 2004, there were 354 prostitution related calls for service which had resulted in 123 prostitution related arrests. They also examined the data regarding johns arrested in the area and found that a third were White, a third were African American, and a third were Hispanic. This was an indicator that the problem crossed racial and ethnic boundaries. The officers worked with crime analysts to compare calls for service and arrest figures for the Camp Greene neighborhood with those from other areas of the city that had identifiable neighborhood based prostitution problems. They found that the Camp Greene neighborhood had, by far, the largest number of prostitution related calls for service and arrests.

Sgt. Cochran conducted a study of the arrests of 96 prostitutes who had been arrested in three prostitution sweeps in 2002 and one in May of 2003. He found that these 96 women had 4,469 arrests among them. 578 were for prostitution and 444 were for drug related charges. Out of the 96 women arrested, only three had no previous drug arrests, reconfirming that most of the prostitutes in the area were in the business to support drug habits, especially cocaine addiction.

Metro Division officers had primarily been attacking the problem through traditional enforcement measures including prostitution stings and reversals. Johns convicted of soliciting for prostitution in the area had their pictures shown on a program called "Shame T.V." which ran on the city's cable Government Channel. Letters were sent to the registered owners of vehicles telling them the vehicle had been seen in an area with frequent arrests for prostitution and illegal drug activity. The officers knew these methods were not solving the problem and cited one three day prostitution sting where they arrested the same prostitute twice because she had been released from jail so quickly and had immediately returned to the neighborhood to resume her normal business activities.

Despite all of the effort that went into the prostitutions stings, police had little to show for their efforts. For the 2002 stings, prostitutes were held in custody for an average of only 32 hours and were often right back on the street as soon as they were released. By May of 2003, the average hours in custody had increased to 96, due to a new program initiated by the McLeod Center, a local drug treatment center that had created an academy to work

with prostitutes on drug rehabilitation and life skills training, including how to find a job. Prostitutes were now being kept in jail long enough for them to be contacted by a caseworker from the McLeod Center and offered the opportunity to attend the academy voluntarily. Habitual prostitutes must either complete the program or serve a 120 day jail sentence. While this program has real promise in allowing the police department's pro arrest policy to succeed where it had previously failed, it is still not enough.

The analysis also included calculating the cost of an average police sting, factoring in the cost of the 2 sergeants, 15 officers, and four rented undercover vehicles that were used for each one day sting. That cost came to \$4,066.90 for each ten hours a sting was in operation.

The officers remained frustrated because their efforts were showing only short term results and their time was spent in an endless cycle of repeat calls for service and expensive stings that had no lasting impact on the prostitution problem. In the meantime, Camp Greene residents were increasingly frustrated by declining property values; the presence of trash, much of which created a health hazard; excessive vehicle traffic; business customers who were being harassed; and area residents, including children, and business customers, who were being exposed to indecent acts.

The officers knew that any efforts they made to impact the prostitution problem would need the support of the Camp Greene community. Although the residents were united in their frustration with the problem, they did not have any type of community organization

or leadership to help them take any positive action. Officers Penix, Anderson, and Faulkner organized a community meeting which one of the local churches agreed to host. They publicized the meeting by developing a flyer with the Heading “Are You Tired of Prostitutes in Your Community?” which was distributed door to door. 40 residents attended that meeting and promised to support police efforts, including reporting all criminal activity so police could gather the needed documentation to support whatever action plan they developed. Armed with community support and feeling a sense of ownership in the problems of the Camp Greene community, the officers moved forward with finding a new solution to an old problem.

Response

As the officers attempted to find a more lasting solution to the prostitution problem in Camp Greene, they conducted internet searches to see how other communities dealt with the issue. During one of those searches, the officers found an ordinance from Portland, Oregon that dealt with exclusion zones for drugs and prostitution. Intrigued by the concept, the officers sought out Jim Hayden, a district attorney from Portland, during his visit to Columbia, South Carolina for a speaking engagement. He gave them valuable guidance on how to explore the possibility of such an ordinance for Charlotte.

The officers presented the data they had collected to Police Attorney Bruce McDonald who worked with them to craft an ordinance that would create a prostitution exclusion zone in the Camp Greene neighborhood. The boundaries of the zone were fully

delineated in a three page geographic description of the zone. Under this ordinance, members of the sex worker industry could be excluded from the geographic areas defined as the prostitution exclusion zone if they were arrested and a magistrate issued an order based upon probable cause for a series of prostitution related offenses. These offenses included soliciting for prostitution or a crime against nature, loitering for prostitution/ crime against nature, engaging in prostitution/crime against nature, occupying a conveyance for prostitution, etc. Once a magistrate has found probable cause on one or more of these charges, an officer goes to the jail and issues a 90 day exclusion to the individual charged under the ordinance. Requiring a finding of probable cause to issue an exclusion is one way that the Charlotte ordinance differs from Portland's. It adds an extra level of protection that helped the ordinance to gain acceptance from the District Attorney, defense attorneys and judges who were asked for their input as the ordinance was being drafted. If the individual is ultimately convicted on the charges, the exclusion becomes effective for one year. Individuals charged can receive a variance to the ordinance which allows them to enter the prostitution exclusion zone (PEZ). for specified purposes:

- Residential; may travel in the zone directly to and from their residence
- Essential Needs: may travel in the zone to obtain food, physical care or medical attention, if those needs cannot be reasonably satisfied outside the PEZ
- Educational: may travel in the PEZ to enroll at or attend a school
- Employment: may travel in the PEZ if an employee, owner, or agent of a place of lawful employment or to perform employment related services to a lawful employer

–Social Services: may travel in the zone to obtain social services related to health or well-being and the social service agency has written rules and regulations prohibiting the unlawful use and sale of controlled substances by clients

Any individual subject to the provisions of a variance must have that variance in their possession at all times when traveling within the PEZ and present it to a police officer upon request. The individual must be traveling directly to or from the location for which the variance was issued. An individual in the PEZ in violation of the terms of their variance is subject to arrest for second degree trespass or a violation of the City Code. The ordinance provides an appeals process.

Once the officers began working with the Police Attorney on the ordinance, they presented their problem analysis and the concept for the ordinance to Police Chief Darrel Stephens at his monthly problem solving meeting with the Metro Division. Stephens liked the concept and gave officers the green light to move forward. His support was crucial in moving the ordinance forward including making it a priority for the Police Attorney and getting the ordinance into the political process through the City Manager's Office.

Throughout the process, the officers kept Camp Greene residents informed of the proposed ordinance. They invited the City Council member who represents the Camp Greene neighborhood to one of their community meetings. He was solicited by a prostitute as he came to the neighborhood church for the meeting, giving him a strong sense of the problem and the need for a meaningful solution.

Once the ordinance was fully conceptualized, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department took it to the City Council's Community Safety Committee for review and input. The Committee was generally supportive of the ordinance as they too wanted to address the most visible prostitution problem in the city and were supportive of the police department's goals of improving the neighborhood's quality of life, reducing the vehicle traffic in the area, reducing crime, and reducing calls for service. However, they did have some concerns that needed to be addressed. At the time the ordinance was originally presented to the committee, it referred to prostitution free zones. This generated considerable discussion since, in theory, every part of the city should legally be free of prostitution. The decision was made to call the zone a prostitution exclusion zone based on the goal of keeping prostitutes out of the areas for an extended period of time. The Committee was also concerned about the issue of displacement, fearing that the ordinance might solve the problem in Camp Greene by simply transferring it to adjacent neighborhoods. Officers promised to monitor the displacement factor. The Committee then endorsed the ordinance and recommended its adoption by the full City Council.

Once the full Council adopted the ordinance, to be effective June 1, 2005, the Metro Division enlisted the local media as a partner in promoting the ordinance, creating both community awareness of the significance of the prostitution problem and how the ordinance would work on a practical basis. The Metro Division also began educating the prostitutes who were soon to be subject to the provisions of the ordinance through their regular contacts in the street. They found that the news of the ordinance spread quickly!

Assessment

Charlotte's Prostitution Exclusion Zone Ordinance went into effect on June 1, 2005 and has proven to be an effective tool in reducing the level of prostitution and related crime in the target area.

There have been 37 people arrested in the zone for prostitution related offenses as compared to 50 in a comparable period prior to implementation of the ordinance. To date, 36 people have been excluded from the zone. Of that number, 21 are active exclusions, 7 are pending, and 8 were dismissed in court. Six of the dismissals were for johns who now have the option of attending a new program at the McLeod Center which provides counseling and classes on several topics including health issues. Johns who successfully complete the course can have their cases adjudicated through a prayer for judgment continued. Some dismissals are also the result of a high turnover rate in the District Attorney's Office, with new assistant district attorneys not familiar with the ordinance. The Metro Division is addressing that problem through ongoing training with the District Attorney's Office.

There have been 25 re-arrests in the zone. 3 were for prostitution, 6 were for orders for arrest or other state statutes. Six prostitutes have been rearrested 16 times among them for violating the ordinance. 12 individuals have been rearrested outside the zone. One of the arrests was a john who was soliciting for prostitution in another area of the city, 8

were for orders for arrest or other state statutes, 1 was for DWI, 1 for assault, and 1 for possession of cocaine.

Calls for service to the area designated as the prostitution exclusion zone have been reduced. From June 1, 2005 through March 10, 2006, there were 157 prostitution related calls for service as compared to 240 calls in the nine months prior to the implementation of the ordinance.

Crime in the target area has declined. In the period from June 1, 2004 to May 31, 2005 (the year before the ordinance went into effect), there were 660 Part One UCR offenses in the area now designated as the prostitution exclusion zone. From June 1, 2005 to May 31, 2006 (the first year the ordinance was in effect), there were 574 Part one UCR offenses, a decrease of 13%. Most notable are a 48.7% decrease in robberies as compared to an increase of 11% citywide and a 33.1% decrease in burglaries as compared to a 5.1% increase in the entire city.

The Camp Greene neighborhood has responded enthusiastically to the ordinance. Residents report feeling safer and more likely to let their children play outside without fear they will be exposed to indecent acts. Residents also report decreased vehicular traffic throughout the neighborhood. Metro Division officers recently presented an update on the ordinance to the City Council's Community Safety Committee and were accompanied to the meeting by Brain Fincher, the president of the Camp Greene Neighborhood Association. Mr. Fincher told the committee about the positive effect the

ordinance has had on the neighborhood. Mr. Fincher says that it is “amazing how much the neighborhood has been cleaned up.” He says that Camp Greene residents are back out in their yards and are not afraid of being solicited. Mr. Fincher stated that this project proves that “if a neighborhood bands together and works with police and city government, things can change.”

The prostitution problem and the resulting ordinance proved to be a catalyst for the organization of a strong neighborhood association which now meets monthly at a local church which received a grant to provide dinner prior to the meeting. The neighborhood association now publishes its own newsletter to which the Metro Division officers are regular contributors. For the Camp Greene community, the prostitution exclusion zone has come full circle, 88 years after it was first tried to protect the morals of soldiers during Word War One.

Some of the prostitutes credit the ordinance with getting them out of the zone and forcing them to re-evalaute their lives. One transvestite, who was known on the street as Mom, has now gotten a job, and is going back to school with a scholarship. The prostitutes are still offered the services of McLeod Center to fight their drug addiction and to learn life skills. Representatives from the McLeod Center and the Health Department accompany the officers on prostitution stings and attempt to establish relationships with the women at the time of arrest. The officers also continue to send letters to the owners of vehicles seen in the area in an attempt to discourage johns from coming into the neighborhood.

The local media has given the prostitution exclusion zone positive coverage, touting the success of the ordinance. The ordinance and the Camp Greene community have been featured on the Police Department's cable television show CMPD Today. It is a testament to the success of the ordinance that it was difficult to find a prostitute in the Camp Greene area when the piece on the ordinance was filmed.

Displacement of prostitutes from the exclusion zone does not appear to be a major issue. Some of the women who worked the Camp Greene area are now active in other areas of the city but they have not relocated to any one area in large numbers nor have they had a negative effect on the neighborhoods adjacent to Camp Greene. The displacement has been manageable for police since it has not been concentrated in large numbers in any one area of the city.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department is pleased with the results of its first prostitution exclusion zone and will consider asking Charlotte's City Council to add additional zones if a prostitution problem becomes concentrated in a geographic area that lends itself to the zone concept. The Prostitution Exclusion Zone is a good example of police, the community, and local government working together to build a safer, more livable city.

Agency and Officer Information

–This problem solving initiative was adopted by officers in the Metro Division who work in the response area that includes the Camp Greene neighborhood. It had the support of their chain of command and the Chief of Police.

–Officers receive training in problem oriented policing as a part of their recruit training

–The only incentive provided to police officers who engage in problem solving is the opportunity to receive the Chief’s Award for Excellence in Policing for successful projects. The awards are presented annually during National Police Week.

–The officers used the internet to research how other communities have addressed the prostitution problem; they also used a district attorney from Portland, Oregon as a resource.

–The problem solving model was effective in dealing with this problem.

–The resources committed to this project were a portion of the time of Sgt. Spence Cochran, Officers Norma Penix, Scott Anderson and Kenneth Faulkner, and Police Attorney Bruce McDonald. There were no resources outside of the existing department budget.

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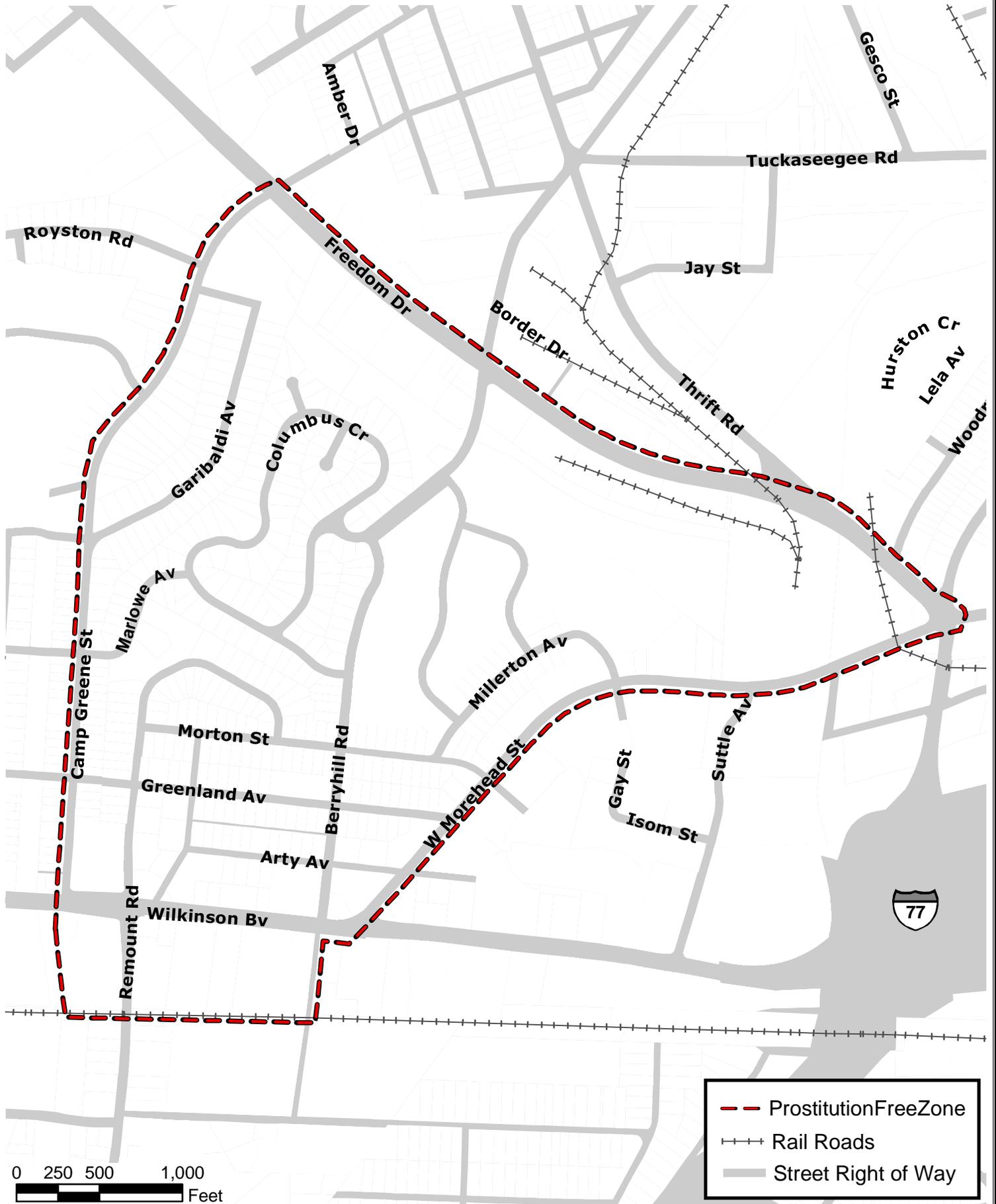
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Prostitution Free Zone



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PROSTITUTION HOT SPOT MAY BE TARGET OF BAN
CITY WANTS TO KEEP JOHNS, STREETWALKERS FROM WILKINSON BOULEVARD AREA
NEW ORDINANCE DESIGNED TO CURB RAMPANT PROBLEM IN WEST CHARLOTTE

Charlotte-Mecklenburg police have a simple message for prostitutes and johns in west Charlotte: Get out and stay out.

Police and city leaders want to create a Prostitution Exclusion Zone off Wilkinson Boulevard and ban people accused or convicted of certain crimes from re-entering the area.

A Charlotte City Council committee unanimously recommended a new ordinance Thursday evening, and the idea will head to the full council in late February.

"If people want to not heed that warning, they must be prepared to suffer the consequences," said Mayor Pro Tem Patrick Cannon, a Democrat.

Police developed the idea after years of trying other approaches to halting prostitution in its west Charlotte hot spot. They went undercover. They did sting operations.

They even sent letters to drivers whose cars were moving slowly through the neighborhood.

But the problem kept coming back, and police say they have identified 267 known prostitutes.

"We don't have a concentration like that anywhere else in the city," said police Capt. John Diggs.

The new rules would apply in an area roughly bounded by Wilkinson Boulevard, Camp Greene Street, Freedom Drive and Morehead Street.

Police will not post signs marking the zone.

Brian Fincher, president of the Camp Greene Neighborhood Association, said he hopes that removing prostitutes can help his diverse neighborhood bloom.

"It's a very serious problem. You can go out there, 5 o'clock in the morning, you can have icy roads and there are at least three or four girls out there," he said.

People arrested for prostitution, solicitation or several other offenses would be taken before a magistrate, who would issue an immediate, 90-day exclusion order, even before a trial. If suspects are convicted or sent to a deferred prosecution program, they would get a one-year exclusion order. People who are acquitted before the 90-day period ends would no longer be excluded from the area.

The ban would prohibit them from entering the zone for almost any purpose. Police can grant exceptions for a variety of reasons. For example, people who live, work or use a social service in the targeted area can get limited exceptions.

Offenders with exceptions must carry documents with them once they enter the exclusion zone, and must present them to police officers if asked.

Once banned from the area, people can be charged with second-degree trespassing for coming back. Because police know so many of the regulars, they would be able to identify them easily, Diggs said.

Like any ordinance violation, exclusion can be appealed to city officials and all the way to Superior Court.

Portland, Ore., has a similar ordinance, and Cincinnati uses a similar method for drug offenders, said police attorney Bruce McDonald.

Police acknowledge that their emphasis on Wilkinson Boulevard could just shift the problem to other neighborhoods.

But, Diggs said, "Displacement is not always a bad thing."

If that happens, the City Council could add new zones.

Committee members debated the name of the proposal, originally called the Prostitution-Free Zone. That label opened up easy jokes about free prostitution and questions about why the whole city is not a

prostitution-free zone.

But Democrat James Mitchell said he worried that the targets of the ordinance might not understand what exclusion means.

Police assured him that they would get the message across.

"Whether they can read it or not," said Democratic council member Warren Turner, "it's against the law."

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HOOKER OUSTINGS HAVE A CATCH
PROSTITUTION ZONED OUT OF ONE AREA SEEMS TO BE CROPPING UP IN OTHERS

Jazz doesn't walk the streets of the Camp Greene neighborhood anymore, not since those streets became a lot less inviting to hookers.

A longtime prostitute and crack addict, Jazz was picked up several months ago in a sting off Wilkinson Boulevard and West Morehead Street. She sounds almost relieved.

"It's so degrading the things you'll do for money," said Jazz, who declined to give her real name. "People would be trying to go to church on Sunday, and there I was out front in the shortest skirt and highest heels I could find, trying to do my business."

Ten months after Charlotte launched its first Prostitution Exclusion Zone in west Charlotte, fewer prostitutes are working in the Camp Greene area, police and residents say.

Not only is prostitution down, but police say crime overall in the zone has plunged 16 percent. The drop comes at a time when crime citywide rose 2 percent.

Prostitution is illegal across Charlotte, but arrests are difficult. The zone changes that. Once prostitutes are arrested within its boundaries, they can be picked up for simply being there.

Camp Greene residents say it's made a big difference in their lives.

Brian Fincher doesn't find condoms in his yard anymore.

Robin Hunter has started letting her teenage daughter walk the two blocks to the school bus by herself.

And other neighbors say they no longer have to call police daily to report prostitutes.

"It's amazing how quickly it's turned around," Fincher said. "A year ago, there were always four or five girls working the streets, and johns circling the neighborhood. All of that is pretty much gone now."

But that success may have hurt other parts of town.

Police in three other areas have seen an increase in prostitution, which they attribute to traffic from Camp Greene. And at least five neighborhoods want their own zones, each citing a growing prostitution problem since the first community ban was put in place.

"It's awful because it's just pushing them to other areas," said Vanessa Johnson, vice president of the Thomasboro Neighborhood Association, which is asking for its own zone. "If we could find some way to help get (these women) cleaned up long-term, maybe they wouldn't just jump from one neighborhood to another."

Police Chief Darrel Stephens said he wants to recommend exclusion zones for other parts of town and will ask his officers for nominations.

He acknowledged the zones may push prostitutes to new areas, but said national studies show the strategy helps reduce the overall problem. It takes time for prostitutes to find new locations, he said, and "some will stop the activity rather than take the chance of going to a strange area."

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'More normal now'

Camp Greene, just over a mile from The Square uptown, was by far the city's busiest prostitution spot.

Police identified 276 hookers who regularly worked there. They clustered on street corners, hollered at cars and flashed people walking into a local church. They kept senior citizens from sitting on their front porches and parents from allowing their children to play outside.

"Many times I'd be in my backyard or on my back porch and men driving by would come almost to a stop,

looking at me," said Tara Loughlin, 48. "They thought I was a hooker."

The exclusion zone changed everything. Now, instead of calling police two to five times a day, Loughlin says, she calls only a few times a month. And she feels comfortable again gardening in her front yard.

"It's so much more normal now," she said. "I'm not taking down license plates anymore, or watching every single female that walks down the street."

Before, there was little police could do when residents called. They couldn't arrest a woman for standing on a street; they had to wait until she actually solicited, or named a price. That meant they had to rely on stings - costly operations that take a lot of manpower to do the undercover work.

Now, once a woman has been banned from the zone, police can arrest her solely for being there or not carrying her so-called "exclusions papers" that show she's been arrested there before.

"That's the biggest thing," said community police Officer Kenny Faulkner. "In other areas, you might see someone you recognize as a prostitute, but you can't arrest them for walking down the street."

So far, 35 people have been excluded from the zone. Eight of the bans have been lifted - most of them involving johns arrested for the first time who agreed to enroll in a rehab program.

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More zones requested

Across town, in northeast Charlotte, William Mustafa was on his way to work recently when he saw a woman walking down the street naked.

He believes the woman was kicked onto the street by a dissatisfied john. "Luckily, I had some dirty laundry in my back seat," Mustafa said. "So I stopped my car and I gave the lady a shirt."

To Mustafa, president of the Hidden Valley community association, it was another sign that some of Camp Greene's prostitution problem has moved to his neighborhood. He and his neighbors had already noticed more strange cars and more women on the streets.

Residents of Smallwood/Biddleville, NoDa, Lakewood and Thomasboro have similar stories. And police have some of their own.

"We're picking up more girls during our monthly stings and it's new faces," said Sgt. Mike Smathers, whose division covers Hidden Valley. "That's unusual because typically, these folks are very territorial. They felt the pressure from the prostitution-free zone, so they moved."

Police in Thomasboro and Lakewood also have identified "several prostitutes who had been known to frequent the Morehead Street area," said Sgt. Pat Tynan.

It's unclear how much the zone has contributed. Only one woman banned from Camp Greene has been arrested elsewhere, in Thomasboro, police said. Others may have moved before getting arrested in the zone.

Chief Stephens said he will consider several factors in deciding where to put new zones, including residents' willingness and the size and shape of the problem area. For example, he said, a zone that covers a long, busy corridor would be difficult to enforce and could drive prostitutes onto residential streets.

Charlotte modeled its ordinance on one in Portland, Ore., which has withstood several legal challenges. Portland has added at least one new zone and expanded another in response to neighborhood concerns since its first three debuted in 1995. The strategy continues to be an effective crime-fighting tool, said Portland police spokesman Paul Dolbey.

In Charlotte, the City Council will make the final decision on adding zones.

"People laughed about this when they first heard about it," said council member Warren Turner, whose district includes the Camp Greene area, "and now they're asking for it."

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Ready to go

Jazz spent a month in jail after her last arrest and is enrolled in a prostitution-rehabilitation program. She said she never thought the zone would work.

"They had been trying to stop us for years," she said, "and I always was just walking along, no problem. I knew there was nothing they could do."

But after her first arrest in the zone, everything changed.

Though she was allowed to be in Camp Greene because she lived there, as soon as she stopped on a corner or approached a car, police could arrest her again.

"There were cops on every corner, always harassing me," she said. "A lot of times I would ride through there and it was, like, dead.

"I was about ready to go to another area when they got me."

Excluded So Far

35 people have been excluded so far: 26 prostitutes and nine johns

9 have been re-arrested for violating the terms of their ban.

1 has been arrested for soliciting in another area.

In the Zone:

People arrested for a prostitution-related crime are banned from the area for 90 days. If convicted, they're banned for a year.

Those who live, work or have other business in the zone can get exceptions allowing them to be there for those purposes only.

Those banned are given documents that include their name, a copy of the ordinance and a map that shows the zone's boundaries.

If they return to the area, they can be arrested for trespassing. They can also be arrested for not having their exclusion papers.

CAPTION: 1. T.ORTEGA GAINES - OGAINES@CHARLOTTEOBSERVER.COM. "Jazz," a prostitute arrested in the Camp Greene community, shows the citation map she was given. ; 2. T.ORTEGA GAINES - OGAINES@CHARLOTTEOBSERVER.COM. With prostitution moving out of their neighborhood, Camp Greene residents such as Tara Loughlin say they feel more comfortable outside their homes.; 3. T.ORTEGA GAINES - OGAINES@CHARLOTTEOBSERVER.COM. During a police ride-along last week, police identified this woman walking along Hoskins Road in the Lakeview community as a prostitute. ; 4. JOHN D. SIMMONS - JSIMMONS@CHARLOTTEOBSERVER.COM. Attorney Charles Jones is concerned for his neighborhood of Smallwood/ Biddleville, where prostitution is re-emerging.

laura

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POLICE: STING SHOWS EXCLUSION ZONE WORKS
SUSPECT: TOUGHER ENFORCEMENT MAY KEEP WOMEN LIKE HER AWAY
1 OF 12 ARRESTED IN PROSTITUTION ENFORCEMENT AREA

Unlike some of the others, the 39-year-old woman didn't cry or scream or protest when she realized the man who picked her up Tuesday afternoon was an undercover police officer arresting her on prostitution charges.

She'd been arrested before. And she had been the first person arrested for re-entering the prostitution exclusion zone that the city set up almost a year ago to stem street-walking in a west Charlotte neighborhood.

On Tuesday, she was arrested there yet again in the undercover sting, despite being barred for one year from even entering the zone off Freedom Drive. She told the Observer she returned because she knows the neighborhood well and needed money to get high.

A team of about a dozen Charlotte-Mecklenburg police officers, including some undercover officers posing as customers, worked the area Tuesday to gauge how the zone was working and follow up on neighborhood complaints.

Though this woman was back working the exclusion zone Tuesday, police say they've seen a dramatic decline in the number of women arrested on prostitution charges there since implementing the zone on June 1.

Now, surrounding neighborhoods are clamoring for their own zones, arguing that the prostitutes excluded from the zone have set up shop on their street corners.

Modeled on a program in Portland, Ore., the current exclusion zone includes the area inside Wilkinson Boulevard, Freedom Drive, Morehead and Camp Greene streets. It's near Bank of America Stadium and about a mile from The Square at Trade and Tryon streets.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg police had focused on the area after identifying 276 hookers who worked the streets there.

Under the exclusion program, those arrested and charged with a prostitution-related crime are banned from the area for 90 days. If convicted, they're banned for a year, like the 39-year-old woman arrested Tuesday.

Starting just after 3 p.m. Tuesday, police had arrested 12 women by 9:30 p.m., including one who police said is four months pregnant. Only one - the 39-year-old - was arrested in the exclusion zone, police said. The others were arrested in adjacent neighborhoods.

Most of the women snagged in the sting had crack pipes on them, police said. For many, the prostitution stems from a problem that arrests alone can't solve: drug addiction.

Officer Kenny Faulkner said police used to come out to the neighborhoods and arrest the same women again and again. Now they bring along a team of specialists from the nonprofit McLeod drug treatment center and health experts who explain the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases.

Many of the women arrested will be ordered by the courts to the 14-week drug treatment program at the McLeod Center. But even that doesn't necessarily stop the problem. Caseworkers said they recognized some of the women arrested Tuesday and said they've seen some clients get re-arrested just 15 minutes after a session at the center ends.

On Tuesday, staff from the center dropped business cards into the plastic property bags where police had placed the women's purses, hoping for another opportunity to help the women change.

The 39-year-old woman who was arrested said she would consider going to the McLeod program. She said she has been using crack for five years, turning tricks for four. She was ordered to attend the program the last time she was arrested on prostitution charges but never showed up.

She said the exclusion zone is helping to clean up the neighborhood where she makes her drug money. And she told the Observer she thinks the city should expand the zone to other neighborhoods to help stop women like her.

"It would help. It would sure slow me down a lot," she said as she leaned against a police van, hands cuffed. "I'm tired of using anyway."

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CAPTION: 1. STAFF PHOTOS BY T. ORTEGA GAINES -

OGAINES@CHARLOTTEOBSERVER.COM. A Charlotte-Mecklenburg police officer checks the halter top of a woman and finds a crack pipe. She had been arrested before in the prostitution exclusion zone in west Charlotte. The woman told the Observer she thinks the city should expand the zone to help stop women like her. ; 2. Charlotte-Mecklenburg police had arrested 12 women by 9:30 p.m. Tuesday in west Charlotte and more arrests were expected. ; 3. T. ORTEGA GAINES -

OGAINES@CHARLOTTEOBSERVER.COM. Charlotte-Mecklenburg police say there has been a dramatic decline in women arrested on prostitution charges since the inception of an exclusion zone off Freedom Drive on June 1. Surrounding neighborhoods are now asking for their own zones.

harriet