

MOTEL INTERDICTION PROGRAM

A CRIMINAL AND NUISANCE ABATEMENT PROJECT

RENO POLICE DEPARTMENT, MOTEL INTERDICTION TEAM, 2006

- THE PROBLEM:** The Downtown Tax District is only 1.78 square miles. This small area has fifty small motels that were once thriving with tourists. As large casino properties expanded downtown, the small motels lost their tourist base and depend on weekly/daily rentals of people that live in the downtown area. Unfortunately, the people in these low rent motels are financially challenged and many of them engage in criminal activities including drugs, alcohol abuse and addiction, prostitution, petty criminal acts, violent criminal acts and truant children. Two years ago, officers assigned to the downtown discovered that low budget motels were the primary residence for many downtown criminals. We also knew that attempts to arrest away the problem would not provide an acceptable long-term solution.
- ANALYSIS:** Crime Analysis revealed a high volume of crimes and calls for service at low budget motels. Drug dealing in the parking lots were visible to tourists and uniformed patrol officers. Surveillance showed the motel managers were also engaged in criminal activities such as drug use/dealing. Interviews of suspects also revealed that motel rooms were being used for prostitution. Many of the children residing at these hotels were not going to school. While some low budget motels had virtually no calls for service, we learned that this was primarily due to proper motel management.
- RESPONSE:** Traditional law enforcement failed to correct the crime problems at the low budget motels. The surrounding neighborhoods suffered as well. Meetings with motel managers failed because many of them were also involved in criminal acts. Some motel owners reside out of state and were unaware of the problems at their properties. We implemented Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), management training, owner awareness with nuisance abatement fines, free education for children as well as backpacks and personal hygiene products, and an electronic motel registration process. Our first motel, the Lido Inn, went from about 74 calls for service to virtually zero calls for service. And, they were able to raise their room rates.
- ASSESSMENT:** After two years, our first motel project at the Lido Inn had a significant reduction in calls for service per month. Our relationship with the owner and manager remains very strong. Registrations are e-mailed to us to quickly arrest wanted criminals, ex-felons, and sex offenders before they can start their illegal acts. We changed the culture of that neighborhood.
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INTRODUCTION

The Reno Police Department Motel Interdiction Team (MIT) deploys two officers that work in the Special Tax District in downtown Reno. They are Officers Kevin Barnes and Tim Mayes.

Downtown Reno is unique. The core downtown is 1.78 miles consisting of casinos, bars, liquor stores and 50 small motels. It also has the beautiful Truckee River running through the middle with an outstanding white water park. Reno is striving to replace old run-down businesses with modern ones. Due to the layout of downtown, it creates many complex and diverse issues for police to solve. Tourism is very important to Downtown Reno. The police, residents and business owners need to work together to create a safe, beautiful community to live. Due to the economic nature of our city it creates many opportunities for criminals, unlike other similar-sized cities.

Since 2004 MIT has practiced Problem Oriented Policing to minimize criminal acts in downtown Reno. Corrupt motels affect several city blocks surrounding them. The Motel Interdiction Team strives to:

- Reduce criminal activity;
- Establish a relationship with motel owners;
- Establish quality management;
- Make the motel safe for tenants by using Code Enforcement, Health & Fire;
- Direct children to tutoring and furthering of their educations; and
- Reduce the high number of calls for service for patrol officers.

MIT works with almost every resource in Washoe County to solve motel problems. Clearly the entire community needs to be involved to solve the City's problems.

MIT's first project was the Lido Inn. This motel's clientele plagued the area with drug dealers, prostitutes and violent criminals. It generated about 74 calls for service per month. After a two month operation by MIT, the crime is virtually non-existent, and has remained so for over two years. The owners upgraded their furniture and raised their daily room rates.

MIT has replicated its efforts at other motels. Since then, all of these motels have remained healthy and virtually crime free.

SCANNING

After being assigned to the Downtown Tax District, Officers Kevin Barnes and Tim Mayes began to

focus on the root causes of the crime specific to the downtown core. It became clear to them that low budget motels were the major foothold for the criminal element. We were allowing the motels to house a majority of our criminals and not holding the businesses accountable for these properties. Small motels were home to drug dealers, prostitutes, drug addicts, petty criminals and truant children. Innocent financially struggling families were trapped in small motel rooms to avoid facing the criminal acts surrounding them.

Some of these motels were not fit to live in. There were problems with sewage, running water, electrical hazards, no fire protection, overgrown bushes/trees (hiding criminal activity), garbage issues, black mold, sick animals, and non-licensed construction work. Tenants were afraid to ask management to fix these living conditions out of fear of being evicted.

Criminals were able to pay cash and rent rooms without providing identification. Once the police discovered the criminals, they were able to quickly move to another one of our 50 low budget motels. We knew we could no longer react to their crimes so we developed the Motel Interdiction Team.

The criminal acts were visible to patrol officers. Before an officer could get out of his/her patrol vehicle, the offender disappeared in one of the motel rooms. There were numerous complaints from surrounding business owners and tourists concerning the above-listed crimes.

We began our research by compiling calls for service statistics for each downtown low budget motel. Our first project was the Lido Inn, which is a 22 room motel that was generating 75-100 calls for service per month. Police agencies have been traditionally excellent in responding to calls and handling a specific issue; however, we have never focused on solving the problem from the ground up for permanent results. The Lido Inn was the single worst motel in our downtown district. It had been overrun by criminals. Of the 22 rooms, 9 were operational drug rooms, 3 were being used for prostitution and the others were rented to drug addicts. The current managers were a married couple who were drug addicts. They traded motel rooms in exchange for drugs, which is unfair to the motel owner. The drug dealers were so comfortable in their motel that they would taunt the police. They controlled who came onto the motel property. All police responses were a minimum of two units. This drain on police resources was consuming approximately 1,800 officer hours per year.

It became clear to Officers Barnes and Mayes that the police could never arrest away these problems. Other alternatives had to be established.

During initial surveillance on the Lido Inn, Mayes and Barnes began to learn/identify all of the issues surrounding the property and how the property supported criminal acts. They identified all of the property improvements needed, coordinating Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, identifying children and families in need, elderly in need, health violations, fire violations, and code violations. With this information they began to develop an action plan to address the motel's issues.

ANALYSIS

Since the early '90s our daily motels that used to house law-abiding tourists started to change to low budget weekly/daily motels. It wasn't long before drug dealers started to control these properties.

A Patrol Officer's response was the only tool used to address this problem. At best an arrest was made. No problems were solved.

Through our experience and history, we know that the business of drug dealing is dangerous and competitive. Reno had drug dealers engaging in shootouts against each other in the parking lots of motels, resulting in homicides, as well as other violent crimes. During our surveillance we saw numerous drug-related crimes such as robberies (drug rips) and beatings that didn't get reported.

Prostitution goes hand and hand with drug dealing. Usually the prostitute is a drug addict that works to support his/her daily habit. They tell us, "It takes away the pain of our condition."

Interviewing suspects, we learned that ex-felons and sex offenders call these small motels their home. They can easily travel from town to town without being detected, usually leaving victims behind. A lot of motels simply ask for a name on the registration card without verification. Some managers that we arrested and interviewed trade a motel room for drugs and don't fill out a registration card on the renter.

Drug addicts that live in the motels commit property crimes in the neighborhood to support their habit. They prey on patrons of downtown casinos, bars and clubs.

Working with the school district, we learned that a lot of the children living in these motels were not attending school. We talked with the children and were told that they frequently miss school due to irresponsible parents. Children have told us they are too embarrassed to go to school because they don't have backpacks, clothing, or personal hygiene products. One 15-year-old said, "Look at me (as he points around the room). Mom's drinking all the money away. I don't have soap, shampoo, t-shirts or pants to wear. How can I go to school in this condition?"

When we checked motel registrations we found that Managers were not properly renting their rooms. Some were unaware of the proper procedure, and some intentionally hid criminals. They would not document credit-card information or collect valid identification. Sometimes it was merely a first name only. Owners and management were not trained in recognizing drug paraphernalia or acts of criminal behavior. They were unaware of their rights as property managers.

We held public meetings with all the managers in the Tax District, but only a few showed up. We discussed this problem with the Tax District Board for their input. They agreed that the small motels were directly affecting the entire tax district and asked that we focus on the problem. We discussed the motels in an additional meeting with the Downtown Improvement Association. They, too, agreed that something other than a patrol response was needed. The downtown community was highly supportive of the Motel Interdiction Team.

Officers Barnes and Mayes began a detailed assessment of the Lido Inn and listed what would be needed to solve their problem permanently.

Research on the Lido Inn consisted of the following:

- Property ownership

We identified the owners of the Lido Inn and their relationship to management. We found that the owners were local residents, however, took no interest in the property other than daily collection of rents.

- Business licensing

The property was properly licensed to the current owners. Avenues were explored for putting a license on probation or suspension if nuisance abatement requirements were not met.

- Types of crimes

We identified crimes consisting of assault with deadly weapons, battery with deadly weapons, prostitution, sales and use of rock cocaine, sales and use of methamphetamine, sales and use of marijuana, weapons charges, sex offender charges, gaming violations, stolen vehicles, check fraud and numerous property crimes.

- Calls for service

Quantity and nature of calls reported were given to us by Crime Analysis Unit.

- Tenant demographics

Identifying the age ratios of tenants, size of families, marital status etc.

- City Laws

Compiling and researching all applicable City ordinances with regard to motel operations.

- State Laws

Officers researched all State of Nevada laws with respect to motels.

- Landlord / Tenant Law

As motels differ in the application of residency definition, research of applicable law was conducted with regard to the rights of both landlords and tenants.

- Other city agencies

MIT started working with the Code Compliance Task Force which included Fire Inspectors, Health Inspectors and Code Inspectors working together to accomplish a common goal: to fix a motel permanently. After one operation MIT became a member of this task force.

- Interviews of current tenants

After reviewing and conducting this research, officers Barnes and Mayes realized that to completely solve this problem they would need to establish partnerships within and outside of City government.

We compiled our findings and decided that opening a master case was a better way to track our progress. We developed a chronological plan to address the property and its issues. The first phase would be a surveillance to clarify all issues on the property.

Following the surveillance, officers set up a meeting with the owners to explain the violations and build a positive working relationship with them. The time of this meeting was most beneficial as on the same day we were serving search warrants and making arrests at this motel.

During the course of this meeting we shared our findings with the owner. Not only would we explain the criminal activity, but we planned for CPTED improvements, registration procedures, education with regard to statutes concerning motels, education for owners and staff to aid in recognizing criminal activity, and providing owners, management and tenants with resources to support them.

After identifying the elderly, children and families in need of assistance, we had additional resources such as Family Promise, Kids Corner, Social Services and Senior Services on site with us and made room contacts together.

After making the motel safe and stabilized, we conducted an intense maintenance phase consisting of daily visits for at least 30 days to reinforce the implementation of new procedures and keep resources flowing into the property. During this time we tracked the calls for service to evaluate the effectiveness of the project.

RESPONSE

MIT uses non-traditional law enforcement techniques to attack problems at their root. They specialize in using all available resources in Northern Nevada including Code Enforcement, Family Promise, Fire Inspectors, Kids Corner, etc. We're not strong by ourselves, but teamed with the rest of our City departments and the community, we're unstoppable. We don't focus on just making arrests. We try to change the environment around each motel to make a safe, thriving, healthy, law-abiding neighborhood.

The Reno Police Department Motel Interdiction Team brainstormed and developed a number of resources to assist us in an attempt to completely eliminate the crime and problems in the low budget motels. We realized that we could never arrest this activity away. We began with surveillance on one of our worst motel problems. We wanted not only to conduct surveillance for criminal activity, but also to handle CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) issues, and help tenants who had physical needs (medical, food, housing assistance, etc). All this information was put into our surveillance notes.

Upon concluding the research and developing an initial response plan, officers viewed several options. Continuing our efforts as they were with increased enforcement would not completely solve this problem. We have been doing this for many years and showing no complete results. The option to simply hand off referrals to other agencies would show effort however not accomplish goals. The option we chose to implement was to become an organizational resource and become the pivotal agency coordinating efforts and tracking results.

In developing a response after compiling our research we concluded that the most effective way to achieve success was with public safety first. Once the environment was safe, we would receive more cooperation from other City agencies as well as support from the private sector. While researching this property, we found that the other City agencies would not conduct their regularly scheduled programs due to the extreme danger on this property.

While evaluating the problem and what would benefit the City, we saw that while the initial operation would cost the City extra time and money, the end result would far outweigh the costs. We also saw that we would be creating a safer environment for other officers and the public would benefit from reduced crime and risk of crime.

We began our project with a two-week surveillance of the property. During this time we identified that a majority of the rooms were involved in illegal drug trade, including cocaine and methamphetamine sales. The current management was identified as also being involved in this criminal activity. We kept records of activity and identified each suspect in preparation for the application of search warrants.

Identified during this time were CPTED issues that would need to be addressed at the time of our meeting with the owners. There was no control of the foot or vehicular traffic on the property. Fencing would need to be installed to direct all traffic on the property to pass in front of the manager's office. Lighting was severely inadequate, allowing criminals to hide in stairwells and hallways. Stairwells and the elevator had

no controls on them, not even requiring keyed access. Exterior paint, signing and landscaping would need to be upgraded.

Once search warrants were received we began our enforcement on the property. In the first week we arrested approximately 27 individuals on felony-related crimes. At the time of our initial enforcement action, we requested the owners be present to view the activities as they would be needed to run the property after the management was arrested. It was at this time we set a date for an official meeting. The news media was included.

During our initial response we had identified two elderly tenants and a family in need of services. We had on scene County resources and Social Services to step in and assist with these individuals. The second day of our presence we conducted door to door contacts of every tenant left. Several more arrests were made at this time.

Upon meeting with the owners we advised them that they were well within the scope of a license revocation process under our nuisance abatement statutes. It was at this time we developed a positive working relationship.

We presented our CPTED ideas which were well accepted and every one was implemented. For this particular project, lighting needed to be replaced and added to dark areas, fencing needed to be installed to control the flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, directing it all to pass in front of the managers office, exterior painting, the dumpster removed from the front and hidden near the parking structure, brick walls was needing repaired, controlled elevator access implemented, the stairwells fenced to block off hiding areas, and the removal of overgrown bushes that hid prostitution activity. The owners moved onto the property to oversee the re-structure of the property. Implemented were new registration guidelines requiring every tenant to provide adequate identification as well as every visitor on the property to register with identification at the manager's office.

Next, the Code Compliance Task Force inspected the property. This task force is comprised of Code Compliance, the Fire Department, Health Department Inspectors, and us (MIT). Upon completion of the inspections, the owners are given a list from all agencies of required repairs to bring the property up to acceptable code levels and a reasonable time frame to complete them.

During the course of this operation we utilized existing government agencies such as Fire, Health, Code Enforcement, Social Services, City Attorney's Office, District Attorney's Office, Kids/Senior Corner, Regional Vice Enforcement, Zoning Department, Nevada Parole and Probation, Juvenile Probation, District Mental Health Court and the District Drug Court Liaison.

We were able to get one Deputy District Attorney to handle all of our cases. The Deputy District Attorney that was assigned to us handled our cases and would not dismiss them without discussion. We presented a map of the downtown district boundaries, that contain our low budget motels to the DA's office and requested that as a condition of sentencing our criminals be mapped out (not allowed in the downtown motel area) of downtown. If the police caught them, they could be remanded back to jail and court. The purpose for this was that a number of criminals lived elsewhere in the Reno area and were just using the downtown motel to storefront drugs or prostitution.

MIT met with Parole and Probation, who assigned a liaison to us. When we are working on a motel project, they will check on all of their clients living at this address. If they feel that the client needs to move out of the motel district, due to the tempting environment, they require him/her to do so. They also are willing to respond on our inspection day and conduct searches on those clients with search clauses.

We contacted Drug Court and again a liaison was assigned. They e-mail us regularly with an updated list of everyone on the diversion program. And they will require a person to move if they are living in a drug haven. They will also remand them back into regular court if they are involved in narcotics activity.

While working through this month-long operation we developed dozens of civilian resources such as the Washoe County Library, Washoe County School District, Public Transportation, Northern Nevada Food Bank, Parks and Recreation, and military recruiting offices. Several liaisons were formed during this time which will be described in the assessment phases of this project.

During our surveillance and meeting with people who live in the motels, we learned that quite a few families are working and have good jobs. They are paying rent that adds up to a house payment or apartment rent. The difficulty in moving out of a low budget motel is being able to save first and last months rent and deposits required by most apartment complexes. MIT developed a relationship with an organization called Family Promise. They will give a family that we recommend food and a place to live free of rent, while saving 80% of their paycheck for a deposit thereby assisting them with moving into an apartment.

Truancy was a problem with a number of the children living in the motels. After studying the problem, we realized that some of the children were just embarrassed with no clean serviceable clothing, backpacks, or hygiene articles (toothpaste, soap, deodorant). A lot of the calls for service were corrected with community resources supplying clothing and the Northern Nevada Food Bank assisting with food and back packs for children to carry books. Once these simple issues were corrected, our calls for service dropped. Another thing learned was that the children live in decrepit conditions with no computers to do homework on and no help from an adult. Working with the Washoe County School District and Washoe County Library, we set up a location at the downtown Library for students to have access to computers and tutors. We were able to obtain grant money for two tutors to work at the Library after school for a hour and a half every day to assist downtown youth with homework. The students have this available Mon-Thurs every week. Also working with the Washoe County School District, Officers had a liaison with a Homeless Children Advocate, and we could keep her updated on children found in the motels who need assistance. Contacts with military recruiters have assisted us in working with several young men just out of high school (or who could pass the GED test) to get into the military to thwart their criminal activity.

During this process of working with motel managers we began an educational program. We taught them about drug dealers, prostitutes, and criminal habits and activity. We showed them narcotics paraphernalia and how it is commonly used for narcotics. We taught them Crime-Free International practices (security, lighting, evicting criminals, etc.).

During this phase of operation we encountered issues which slowed our progress. One was educating both tenants and the owners in the area of residency and eviction. Another was being able to educate management in identifying criminal behavior and recognition of drugs and paraphernalia. Probably the most difficult obstacle to overcome was convincing the owners that after we arrest away over half of their tenants they will be able to rebuild their business and not suffer losses, but increase profits with better customers.

ASSESSMENT

In order to accurately identify the results of any specific project, we had to initiate a tracking system from the onset of our nuisance property projects. We began with our initial research of the property by compiling last year's statistics of calls for service. In doing so we were able to identify the major issues surrounding the property, (e.g., robbery, drugs, prostitution, truant juveniles, etc.). As the project continues we analyze the calls monthly to assess our effectiveness in these areas. We were responding to our first project motel approximately 74 times per month. After completion of the first 30 days of this project, our department responded about 2-3 times per month and these calls mostly consist of intoxicated subjects or domestic disturbances, not the prior armed robberies, drug rooms, shootings etc.

These 74 calls per month resulted in a minimum of 150 officer hours for each month. Not having this problem for a year has resulted in the Department freeing up approximately 1800 officer hours each year. This equates to one full time officer for about 9-10 months.

The next motel project we conducted was on a motel that had been a problem for the last 20 years. After initiating our program and implementing our resources into this motel the owner realized that he could no longer "slum lord" this property. He placed the motel up for sale and it has been sold to an owner who is currently renovating the property and complying with all local and State ordinances.

As we proceed through our motel projects we continue to reduce calls for service and connect our citizens with resources, some of which are designed to help families secure permanent housing.

In addition to this research we have gone far beyond the normal police strategies of assessment. We conducted citizen interviews of the motel tenants at the onset of the project and continue these contacts throughout the project until its completion. While conducting these interviews we have found citizens living in fear daily, afraid to exit their motel rooms. By the end of our project we have seen that small environment come together and take ownership of their housing complex, socializing with each other and having open and cooperative communication with the police, thereby developing extensive information networks. We observe a complete cultural change in the motel environment.

Next we open direct communication with the owners of the property. Many times owners have no knowledge of the illegal activity. We set up an initial meeting with them and develop a plan to help them make their business succeed. The results of this approach have been phenomenal. The owners of the property realize that we want to help them, and together in partnership we all accomplish our goals and objectives. Our desire is to see the motels thrive and prosper. Since the development of our program we have seen the owners actually start communicating with their competitors to share information to protect all of their properties.

We have completed ten motel projects and have seen 100% positive results. While we will never eliminate all calls for service we have created such a reduction so far that officers are beginning to realize extra time in these specific beats and are able to conduct proactive work.

As our program has developed we have expanded the parameters of our successes. While conducting our research phases we analyze all of the CPTED issues on the property, we identify families or juveniles in need of any social services, and have connected elderly individuals with medical issues to health care agencies. We identified a need for teens in our downtown environment, and that is assistance in school tutoring. We felt that education assistance would help break the chain of raising future criminals in motels. After months of research and meetings with other local organizations, we successfully completed and implemented a tutoring program at the downtown public library. This was designed for motel kids who are classified as homeless. They now have a quiet and safe place to study with state-of-the-art

computers, and the program is staffed by certified teachers. The program now has 15 students and is growing. We hope to reach the majority of the 300-400 teens in our downtown motel culture. This program is funded by grants that we assisted in acquiring.

Having run and developed this program for about two years, we realized that a different problem-solving technique must be implemented. We realized that any problem has to be dealt with in a complete way. For years, departments have been very good at putting out fires while not fixing the entire problem, therefore returning continually to the same issues. Our program has been developed to “fix” the problem once, then maintain it with little or no effort. We have successfully convinced the motel owners, managers, and tenants that these problems are community problems and not police problems, thereby shifting ownership of these issues and sharing the responsibilities.

Recently we developed an electronic registration procedure for our motels. This is a voluntary program for the motels and the several that have started it are extremely happy with the results. Our local statutes allow for motel registrations to be open to police. Instead of physically going to each motel daily and spending a lot of time clogging up their offices, we completed electronic document for them to enter their registration information. They then e-mail it to us daily at which point we conduct warrants checks. We have effectively stopped drug and prostitution rooms before they can be started.

Our first motel to come on line with us was a huge success; a wanted felon was taken into custody within 40 minutes of his checking into the motel. This individual was released from an out-of-state prison on a Saturday where he served time for auto theft. He failed to report Monday morning to his parole officer at which point a warrant was issued for his arrest. He stole a vehicle, credit cards and cash from his girlfriend and drove to Reno. He checked into this motel at about 1500 hours. They sent our office the registration information, and at 1540 hours he was in custody. While in his room he was setting up a drug environment, however he never had time to open his business.

As of this date we have identified and arrested several sex offenders who have been on the run and living in our City undetected, by moving from motel to motel, and who have failed to register with our agency.

Due to the great success of this program and the support of the media we are now receiving requests from neighboring cities to use our program as a model to start their own motel interdiction teams. We have been receiving reports from them that since we implemented our program, they have seen an increase in their criminal behavior in their motels, showing substantial displacement. We have received information from the illegal interstate drug criminals that the motels in our program are “hot” and no longer a “safe zone” for their sales. Requests have come from the City of Sparks, NV, Redding, CA, Mesa, AZ, and the state of Illinois for training and information about our program.

We have identified that there is low-budget motel networking from state to state. Recently, a reporter who has written for the London Times and the New York Times flew to Reno to ride with our unit during a motel operation. Based on his international exposure dealing with the motel culture he was unaware of any program as detailed as ours with regard to problem-solving within motels.

The results that we have seen in the assessment phase were astounding. As successful as this operation is, we discovered that what we learned and implemented was invaluable.

Upon tracking the calls for service results we found that after the completion of this 30 day project and the tracking each month, we reduced calls for service from approximately 75 to 2 or 3. This has saved the

city approximately 1750 officer hours per year, and has held this level of success for close to two years so far. Violent crime in the area of this motel has decreased and we have seen this immediate area re-visited by tourists.

Since the motel owners have experienced this success they have invested tens of thousands of dollars in remodeling and are currently seeing higher rents and an increase in business. To this day they are excellent allies of the Police Department and have promoted our program to other motel owners in the area.

The time involved in developing our response plan was critical. A chronological chain of events needed to happen in order for each phase of response to be effective. The best example of this was when other city agencies were unable to effectively monitor their responsibilities safely. When we created a safe environment they were able to address the issues and solve them for the owners and tenants. As this transpired we saw ownership being transferred back to the residents.

As we evaluated our results we relied on our Crime Analysis Division for reported crime statistics. We took it even further by continuing contacts with residents. Those who were ready to move out are now staying and feel good about their safety. They have started communicating with other tenants and created a type of neighborhood watch with each other. The owners state that they have seen a dramatic reduction in property damage, therefore increasing their profitability. We have received numerous compliments from patrol officers with regard to being pleased by not having to spend their time at problem motels any longer. The tenants and community win, the owners win, and the police win.

Each motel operation is slightly different in nature; however, the core problems that exist are similar. The difficulties we encountered in the first motel project has since led us to refine our approach and develop our program a greater level. We have now successfully completed several motel operations in our downtown area, all with similar results, saving the City thousands of calls for service.

We have evolved into a framework of community development. We have built operational levels of cooperation never seen before in our City. New liaisons developed have grown rapidly. We were assigned a Deputy District attorney to our unit to assist in prosecuting offenders using motels. Regularly our drug dealers live somewhere else in the city and only use a motel room as a storefront for their trade. We can now request special attention for these criminals and have input for probation recommendations. Recently we have been successful in having this type of criminal "mapped" out of our motel district. As part of this agreement, if they are found in a motel they are remanded into custody.

We now communicate directly with our district drug and mental health courts. By working together with them we can track the movement and placement of our offenders. If we identify a drug-court client and find them living in a drug-infested motel, the officer of that court will have them moved in 24 hours. This helps our motels and the client during rehabilitation. Since we have established this relationship, our drug court has seen a dramatic recovery of missing clients.

Our unit has formed an alliance with the State Parole and Probation Division. We now work in cooperation with them to assist with placement, tracking and searches.

We work with our local regional H.E.L.P.(Homeless Evaluation Liaison Program) office to relocate our prostitutes, as we discovered on several occasions some of these females were in town temporarily, lost their money and support, and then resorted to working the street to survive. Many times they have a family support unit in another state. By reuniting them with their families we have not seen them return to our City streets.

Support for this program has come from the Northern Nevada Food Bank as well. They provide non-perishable food items and personal hygiene items in backpacks for kids. Many times these kids do not have essential items; therefore, embarrassed, they do not attend school.

Bank Loan Officers have contacted us and want to implement/develop criteria for prospective buyers to meet Motel Interdiction requirements as a condition of a loan. This is one of our next goals to work on.

We have developed a lesson plan to begin teaching our program to patrol and have received much public attention. Since our program was made public we have received requests from several states and other cities requesting training in our program. One of our neighboring cities has seen a dramatic increase of criminal activity in their low budget motels. It appears that displacement has been great and they are requesting not only training but the possible formation of a regional unit.

Once we complete the project on a motel the property normally requires minimal maintenance and contact to assist the management with the property. This maintenance can be shared by patrol beat officers who are usually aware of the issues surrounding the property.

The overall assessment on these projects has shown results far beyond what we initially believed possible. The continuing evaluation of our approach has proven that we have come a long way and have a long way to go. As we know, our business is always changing and requires that we change with it. The realization we have come to is that the only effective way to eliminate a problem is to assess it and solve it in its entirety. Any other way is not cost effective and proves futile in the long term. Once we identify a problem as a community problem and share ownership, we will succeed.

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- All three officers received a 40 hour POP/CPTED class before this project began.
- Problem-solving efforts were generated from the officer rank. They received much support from the entire Department.

Tax District Outlined in Green
1.78 square miles
Red dots are motels

