

Top 7 Apartment Initiative

Prepared for consideration of the Herman Goldstein Award

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#### **SUMMARY**

#### **SCANNING:**

Crime in Las Vegas is a large and unwieldy subject. Like many communities across the nation, ours is divided into reporting areas, which we call "Area Commands." Through careful consideration and analysis, it was learned that crime "hot spots" were mostly located in apartment communities. It was believed that these apartment communities were contributing to the overall crime in the Southeast Area Command in a significant way.

#### **ANALYSIS:**

Utilizing crime prevention specialists and crime analysts, calls for service were run from every apartment community in Southeast Area Command. Once those numbers were explored the top 7 apartment's highest calls for service in the area were chosen. Once those were established, specific crimes were examined, particularly those involving violence and quality of life issues. Many of the list toppers had many prior problems, including shootings, robberies, high prostitution and narcotics offenses and other serious crimes. Traditional methods of policing such as increased patrol, and "directed" patrol activity to enforce crime were ineffective as units moved on to other "hot spots". It was determined that some of the main attributes shared by these communities were similar environmental problems, and poor screening of applicants. Complaints issued from the Clark County Commissioners office were also examined and apartment communities were found at the heart of many crime problems.

#### **RESPONSE:**

The typical response was throwing more enforcement at the problem, and this was not entirely discarded. Instead a Crime Free Multi Housing (to be detailed later) approach was initiated. As a powerful incentive, two County Commissioners agreed to pay for advertising in two local apartment magazines if the communities became certified "Crime Free". Education of community managers was also deemed crucial. A multi-agency response was also needed during the response, and created an atmosphere of change.

#### **ASSESSMENT:**

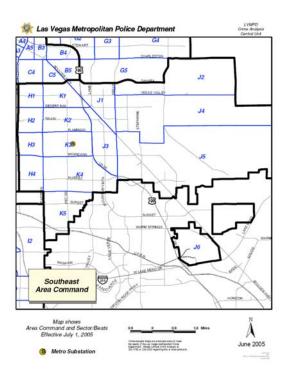
At the end of the initial plan, there was a significant reduction in crime. Relationships between the police and these communities improved, proven by increased communication. A learning environment was established, and a need for more training of officers in Crime Free Multi Housing and CPTED analysis was realized. Maintenance issues and a need for strong legislation were other very important considerations.

# Top 7 Apartment Initiative

## PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION (SCANNING)

Las Vegas is one of the fastest growing cities in the United States, with approximately 7000 new residents moving into the city per month. The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD), the largest police agency in Nevada, has been challenged with the explosive growth. The LVMPD has divided the county into geographic areas of responsibility, referred to as Area Commands. The South East Area command is located in the southeast portion of the valley, with a diverse economic and ethnic population of approximately 158,653 people. The command is further divided into Sectors which are indicated on Fig. 1 as H, I, J and K.

Fig.1



In late 2006, crime trends were on the rise in the area, and new and innovative processes were explored. In an effort to combat the rising crime rate, the most prolific problems were identified utilizing a 3 prong test, including crime analysis, police intelligence, and community concerns.

- CRIME ANALYSIS- Utilizing sophisticated software and the expertise of crime analysts; calls for service for the South East Area Command (hereafter referred to as SEAC) were analyzed from the prospective of apartment communities in the area. The information was then boiled down to the top seven communities with the highest calls for service for the year. This information was used as a baseline, and later maintained on a quarterly basis.
- POLICE INTELLIGENCE- It is a fateful error to trust just the numbers as most living in the unpredictable chaos of the day to day world can attest. Therefore, real police intelligence was garnished by asking members of patrol where the worst crime areas were. This was done in briefing settings and informally and it was fairly representative of the top seven apartments that had been discovered using raw numbers.
- COMMUNITY CONCERNS- The final prong of the test of the actual problem was talking to neighborhood residents and owners of surrounding businesses. While no formal polling was done, the direct questions of "do you have problems in your neighborhood?", and "how do you like living here?", were asked. The information garnished was fairly supportive of the raw data. Members of the Clark County Commissioners office were asked for input as well. There was

sufficient information to begin to analyze the problems, and to attempt to find a viable solution.

#### **ANALYSIS**

In identifying the top seven apartments, it was believed that significant patterns would emerge in the handling of security, crime prevention, offender profiles, and nature of victims. By looking at the calls for service, strong trends were noticed in the top apartments, including high repeat frequency of calls at specific apartments, lack of physical security, environmental issues such as lighting, landscaping and overall cleanliness, and the lack of criminal background checks at the locations.

Police, the community and crime statistics were used to further analyze the apartments. Nature of offenders became an issue when it became apparent that those with lengthy criminal histories were abundant in these apartments. Move in specials and no credit checks, and furthermore no criminal check seemed attractive to not just the poor, but unfortunately to the criminal element as well. Most of the top 7 apartments did not have armed security, and environmentally most were dark at night, with landscape prone for hiding in. While most of the apartment communities were older (more than 10 years old) they had lengthy history of crime and high turn over in tenancy.

The innocent people living alongside those that had criminal history provided fodder for them. Immigrants seemed especially at risk, and robbery rates were disproportionately high. Domestic violence tended to be one of the repeat crimes that were occurring, as well as a number of juvenile (status offense) issues. The apartment

communities identified as "top 7" were described as "rough neighborhoods" and "crime ridden" by area businesses and by some residences. Management tended to have emphasis placed on vacancy/tenancy rates rather than quality of life issues.

The top seven apartments also had high crime statistics in the following areas:

- Robbery
- Burglary
- Auto burglary
- Grand Larceny Auto (stolen cars)
- Recovered Stolen Vehicles
- Juvenile Disturbances
- Domestic Violence
- Battery (with or without weapon)
- Narcotics

The typical response to high crime was to throw more enforcement at the problem. Directed patrol activities and special tactics used uniformed officers to saturate areas and make as many arrests as possible. While this generated favorable numbers in terms of arrests, there was no long lasting impact on the problem area. As soon as officers went somewhere else, the crimes continued unabated and sometimes even increased.

Another historical way of handling problems was through the use of the Identify, Detect, and Locate program (I.D.L.), which had apartment facilitators gathering new lessees information and providing it to the police department, who would in turn run the individuals for warrants and serve same if they were active.

With high crime, often dirty or even filthy surroundings, a fear of "going outside" prevailing, constant police presence, dark, unlit walkways, violence often ending in murder or attempt murder, and general "quality of life" issues these top 7 apartments appeared to be a problem on a massive scale. Even the areas surrounding the apartments appeared to have higher crime rates, as if the problems within were so large they spilled out into the nearby businesses and neighborhoods. Tackling a problem of this size would require innovation, dedication and a solid plan.

#### RESPONSE

Crime Free Multi Housing (CFMH) is a program that has been around for many years. It utilizes a process wherein a 3 phase process is applied to an apartment community in order to effectively reduce crime at that location. It was determined that as a key to success in the top seven apartments it would be crucial to have Crime Free Multi Housing implemented, and in a timely manner. The community policing section assigned specific officers to each community. Each officer began a dialog with the respective communities and attempted to garnish interest in the program.

The program is divided into three distinct phases:

- 8 Hour CFMH Certification Class (for managers)
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Inspection
- Safety Social (a community event for residents)

The certification class is for managers of communities and is administered by persons whom have attended an instructor course in CFMH. The class is 8 hours in length, and attendees receive a certificate and move onto phase II.

The CPTED inspection is very specific and deals with 6 areas of concern:

Adequate lighting

Deadbolt locks

Landscaping

Windows secured with top screws

3" screws in doorframes

180° Door viewers

Once the community has adequately addressed these environmental concerns, then it's on to the next phase.

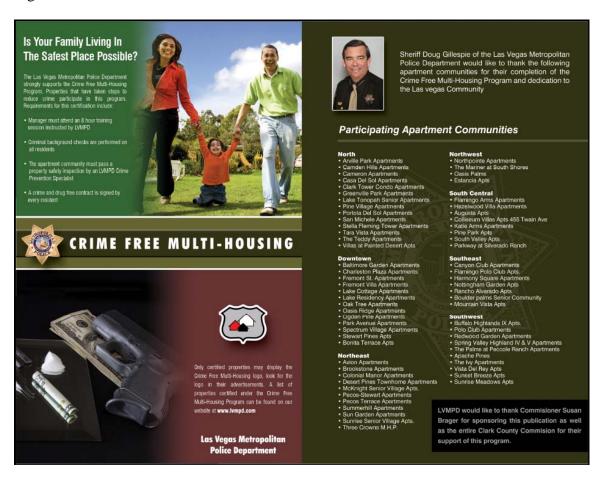
The Safety Social is an event managed by the community managers, and attended by community members, the police, and any other persons of interest. As an additional problem solving tool, apartment members introduced are now the "Watch Your Car" program. This program is separate from the CFMH and specifically addresses stolen vehicles. Participants agree to allow their cars to be entered into a wanted vehicle system, they adorn front and rear windows with special high visibility stickers and police officers can pull the car over anytime between the hours of 1am and 5am without the need for probable cause.

While CFMH has proved highly successful in numerous cities at reducing crime and improving quality of life it is not a panacea, but it is one of the most successful tools currently available for long term problem solving. One of the difficulties faced by police agencies is getting apartment communities to actually participate in the program. This can be described as the actual officers "sale" of the program to community managers. While the program itself (including signage) is free of charge, there are significant costs associated with the program. These include lights, changing locks, landscaping, the cost

of screw change-outs for both labor and materials, and new door viewers. When dealing with some of the larger communities the dollar amounts can stretch into the tens of thousands.

In a novel attempt to generate interest, members of the team decided to approach Chris Giunchigliani and Susan Brager, both Commissioners in the Clark County Commissioners office. The costs and benefits of the program were discussed, and thoughts were shared on how to provide a "carrot" to the communities in the top 7. The Commissioners agreed to provide \$12,000 to pay for advertising for the communities in the local "For Rent" and "Apartment Guide" magazines.

Fig. 2



By participating in CFMH, the complex would get free advertisings in these nationally distributed magazines. This incentive proved a powerful motivator to the communities in the top 7 apartments, and they began to respond favorably. The constant communication between assigned officers and community managers began to have an effect as well, and problem community members were quickly identified and either evicted or warned. The use of the LVMPD "red card" also helped facilitate the exchange of information. This card is filled out when officers respond to an apartment community, and contains sufficient details to determine the general nature of the problem. These cards then are returned to a crime prevention specialist, who tracks the cards in a database. When problems mount in a specific apartment, the crime prevention specialists gives this information back to the apartment managers and to the community police section, so that follow up can be done.

The antithesis of "carrot" has always been "stick" and not everyone was going to buy into the CFMH program just because of the advertising. One community in particular, "The Hamptons" was one such location. They did not want to participate even though they were major contributors to the crime issues in the area. Vehicle theft, robbery and burglary were among the top problems. General filth, broken glass, exposed wiring, pest infestation, were also present. The question was how to get the Hampton's to respond.

The problem was brought before the Community Multi-Agency Response Team (CMART). This is a group of diverse governmental agencies that meets once a month in the Clark County Government building. Every representative sits around a large conference table and in round robin, problems are discussed and exposed. Present at the

CMART are such entities as the Fire Department, County Code Enforcement, County Commissioners representatives, Building Inspectors, Manufactured Home Inspectors, Nevada Power company, Clark County Health District, and of course the Police Department to name a few.

Problems at the Hampton's were documented beginning in February of 2007. Calls for service records were collected and monitored, photos were taken, and the property was brought before the Community Multi-agency Response Team on April 5<sup>th</sup> of 2007. On April 17<sup>th</sup> of 2007, numerous county agencies descended upon the Hampton's and inspected the property. Numerous violations were discovered and the Hampton's was suddenly very interested in Crime Free Multi Housing!

The Hampton's began the process of CFMH and in August of 2007 held the required "Safety Social" which was well attended. The neighborhood was cleaner, and crime statistics began to fall. It appeared the process was very successful, and crime rates at the top 7 apartments continued to go down. A question of maintaining the properties was in the forefront of the community oriented police collective mind, and it was believed that a proper response had maintenance built in. Some questions remained though: What if the Hampton's and other properties refused to participate even under the pressure of multi-agency response? What if the advertising money ran out and no one wanted to pick up the bill? It was concluded that while CFMH was an effective tool in crime fighting, there was no way to adequately enforce it, since there was no statutory consideration reference it. So our PROBLEM (Top 7 Apartments) now had a special internal PROBLEM (The Hampton's) which lead to even more knowledge about the importance of having a maintenance and re-assessment plan.

Often when one faces problems from the police perspective, it is important to look at the big picture, to realize that while the trees are putting bark in the face, the rest of the forest is out there waiting. Suddenly we realized that while we had a great tool in CFMH, we will need to explore ways to "make it stick"

This need for a strong maintenance concept became more prominent as time went on, and is critical for the long term success of this type of operation.

As the response to the problem continued, it was determined that one crime prevention specialist was going to be over-tasked with the handling of all the training required for CFMH, not to mention the numerous CPTED inspections that needed to occur. To combat this, an expert instructor was brought in to certify more officers as instructors. More than 20 officers were certified, and that will be discussed in the assessment portion of this document as well.

The response was now complete. We had taken our top 7 problem apartment communities, brought them into the CFMH process, and now all that remained was seeing if it worked.

#### ASSESSMENT

Crime statistics were gathered from the top 7 apartment communities once again. There were significant reductions in calls for service at the focused properties, and there was a slight dip in the over all crime picture. More importantly, when one went to the apartments they were better maintained and while somewhat esoteric, in talking to community members they seemed to feel safer and happier then they had in past discussions. Since the drop was present, a new top 7 list was generated, and 5 new properties were added to the top 7, and 5 were removed. 7 is a somewhat arbitrary

number, and is directly related to the number that seemed manageable for the size of the community policing section.

The training of the large group of officers lead to a greater understanding by police of the CFMH program as a whole, and its effects are expected to be far reaching. Several other sections of the department in other area commands have made it a priority to have their own "top 7" type initiatives, and to bring CFMH to those locations.

Crime rates dropped significantly at the problem apartments, yet some of the original top 7 apartments crime rates began to creep back up. Maintenance appears to be a crucial element to the process, and without follow-up by police personnel problems will resurface. As a solid example, the Hampton's enjoyed a lull in their calls for service for a long period of time, but then began to rise. They had become a "Crime Free" property, yet suddenly were experiencing more problems.

It was learned on May 27<sup>th</sup> 2008 that the primary problem at the Hampton's was the fact that they were not running criminal background checks on perspective tenants, and had in fact not run them for some time. In spite of that they were still telling police that they were, and were reaping the benefits for being able to post and advertise that they were a CFMH community.

This brings to light an important point of the assessment phase. In order for programs like this to work, they must be backed up by a organized plan for follow up. Community contacts within the police department need to be maintained, and officers must be prepared to be creative when communities deviate from the CFMH plan. This need can be assisted by a rigorous continuation of communication between management and police, particularly setting the stage for open dialog. This dialog can be extended to

the community members of well, who may (as tenants paying rent) have a significant impact on the management as well.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The overall success of the Top 7 Initiative can be measured several ways.

- Crime rates fell at the selected properties, but only if they adhered to the tenants of the CFMH program.
- Officers on the street were pleased that they felt safer in the participating
  communities, especially in regards to CPTED issues such as lighting and
  landscaping. Furthermore they noticed a significant increase in
  communication between management and the police.
- In talking to the residents of the top 7 who ultimately participated in the CFMH program, they expressed great satisfaction at the effects the plan has had on their communities.

While this project has a beginning and middle, the end is probably not near.

There needs to be a constant updating of the new Top 7, probably once per year, in order to attack the problems those are most prevalent first. This is an ongoing process but appears to have a significant positive impact on the lives of the citizens of our community.

#### AGENCY AND OFFICER INFORMATION

Currently the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department is establishing a department wide direction towards a Crime Free Multi-Housing concept. The success of this program in other departments and agencies across the nation is well documented, and it is believed this an excellent tool for communities to use. Training officers in the

concepts of CFMH is critical, and in a best case scenario, should be a portion of the Academy training. At minimum officers assigned to community policing and problem solving units should be instructor certified.

Using the SARA model was effective in this process, but as always the assessment needs an additional "R" for "Re-assessment". Follow-up is necessary to keep the ball rolling, without which a huge problem may develop, such as at the Hamptons'. Of course if the assessment concludes that there was no problem or that it is not a police issue, than at least for the police that is an important consideration.

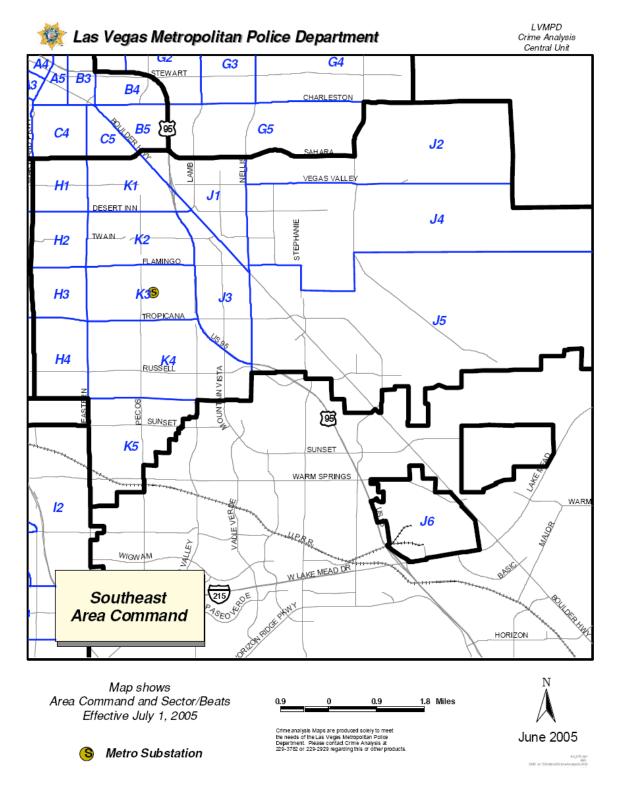
Resources committed to this problem were not overly large, as an existing community oriented police unit was utilized. As maintenance continues though, overtime has been made available for additional enforcement in some of the initiative areas. The money for the advertising was gone quickly, and was not easily replaced. If free advertisement will be considered in the future, substantial financing will need to be obtained.

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## **APPENDICES**

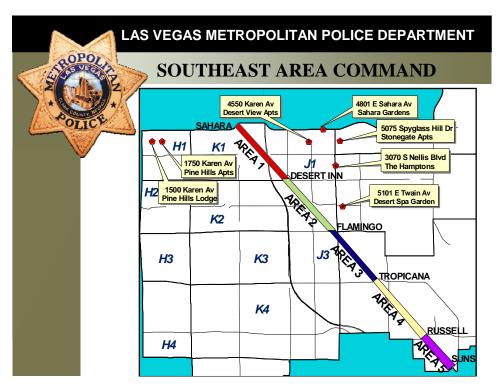
## Map of Area of Consideration



# Population Strata

POPUL	.ATI	ON	TRE	END	S											
City/Area	1970	1980	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Boulder City	5,223	9,590	12,760	14,090	14,460	14,493	14,730	14,860	15,519	14,839	14,993	15,125	15,342	15,367	15,790	18,21
Henderson	16,395	24,363	69,390	115,490	130,380	147,870	159,380	177,030	198,691	199,335	212,855	220,238	234,320	243,730	256,390	265,7
Las Vegas	125,787	164,674	268,330	368,360	398,110	425,270	441,230	485,050	483,448	508,111	520,946	535,395	559,824	575,973	591,536	603,0
Mesquite	N/A	914	1,980	5,120	7,480	9,270	12,070	14,070	15,605	12,134	13,278	14,073	16,180	16,600	18,012	19,1
North Las Vegas	36,216	42,739	50,030	77,820	83,830	93,010	108,660	117,250	124,936	129,398	137,691	147,877	168,081	182,159	202,520	215,0
Unincorporated C.C.	89,667	219,536	367,810	455,410	481,700	502,287	521,130	555,280	587,524	636,462	678,569	708,823	753,278	781,871	828,406	877,2
CLARK COUNTY (Las Vegas Metro)	273,288	461,816	770,280	1,036,290	1,115,940	1,192,200	1,255,200	1,343,540	1,425,723	1,498,279	1,578,332	1,641,529	1,747,025	1,815,700	1,912,654	1,996,5
Percent Increase			8.7%	6.6%	7.7%	6.8%	5.3%	7.0%	6.1%	5.1%	5.3%	4.0%	6.4%	3.9%	5.3%	4.
Pop. Increase			61,530	64,610	79,650	76,260	63,000	88,340	82,183	72,556	80,053	63,197	105,496	68,675	96,954	83,8
Average new residents moving to Clark County each month	-		5,128	5,384	6,638	6,355	5,250	7,362	6,849	6,046	6,671	5,266	8,791	5,723	8,080	6,9
IOTE: Non-census years	are as of July 1	ı														
OURCES: I.S. Census Bureau, levada State Demographe lark County Comprehensi as Vegas Convention and	ve Planning.	<b></b>														

New Top 7



# Comparison of 2007 to 2008 in new top 7.

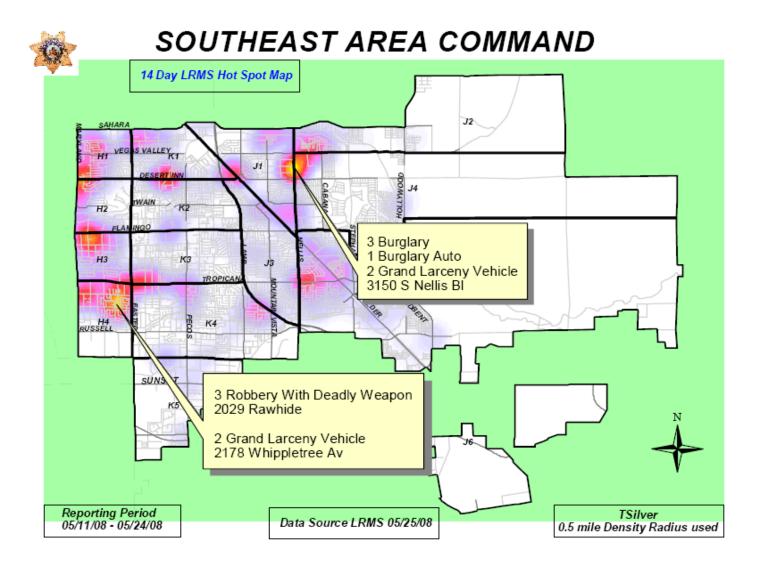
## 7 APTS INITIATIVE 2007-2008 CMS CRIMES CURRENT MTH TOTALS

7 APARTMENTS		406			406V			407			411			426	
April-08	2007	2008	ACTUAL												
1500 KAREN AV PINE HILLS LODGE	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	-3	0	0	0
1750 KAREN AV PINE HILLS APTS	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	3	0	વ	0	0	0
3070 <b>S NELLIS BLVD</b> HAMPTONS	0	2	2	1	0	-1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
4550 KAREN AV DESERT VIEW APTS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
4801 E SAHARA AV SAHARA GARDENS	2	4	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	2	-1	0	0	0
5075/5150 SPYGLASS HILL DR STONEGATE APTS	0	1	1	2	0	-2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
5101 E TWAIN AV DESERT SPA GARDEN	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GRAND TOTAL	2	9	7	4	2	-2	3	5	2	10	5	-5	0	0	0

## Codes:

- Burglary
- 406v-Auto Burglary
- Robbery
- 411- Stolen Vehicle
- 426- Sexual Assault

Notice the lack of Top 7 in Hot Spot map. However, 3150 Nellis is near the Hampton's so may be relevant.



Q:1Statistical\_Crime\_BriefinglCFS\_Hot\_Spots/14DaySpatial 051108 - 052408.xis

05/25/2008

Attempts were made to determine specific offender/victim statistics to better predict crimes. Black offender on White or Hispanic victim appeared dominant.

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Diask va Asian	
Black vs Asian	1
Black vs Black	1
Black vs Hispanic	6
Black vs White	1
Black vs Mixed Group	1
Hispanic vs Hispanic	1
Hispanic vs White	1
	•
3070 S NELLIS HAMPTONS	
JAN 1 '05 thru MAY 28 '08	16 ROBBERIES
Black vs Black	2
Black vs Hispanic	3
	_
Black vs White	6
Black vs Mixed Group	1
Hispanic vs Hispanic	2
Hispanic vs Mixed Group	1
White vs White	1
1750 KAREN SONOMA SHADOWS	
JAN 1 '05 thru MAY 28 '08	15 ROBBERIES
Black vs Black	2
Black vs Hispanic	3
Black vs White	4
Hispanic vs Asian	2
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Hispanic vs Hispanic	2
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Mixed Group vs Hispanic	1
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Black vs White Hispanic vs Hispanic White vs Black Mixed Group vs White  1500 KAREN PINE HILLS LODGE JAN 1 '05 thru MAY 28 '08  Black vs Asian Black vs Black Black vs Hispanic Black vs White Hispanic vs Black Hispanic vs Hispanic Hispanic vs White White vs Asian  4550 KAREN DESERT VIEW APTS JAN 1 '05 thru MAY 28 '08  Black vs Hispanic Black vs White  5075 & 5150 SPYGLASS HILL DR STONEGAT JAN 1 '05 thru MAY 28 '08  Black vs Black	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 20 ROBBERIES 1 3 6 6 6 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

This figure shows compelling data comparing the main portion of the project on a year long basis. Notice the reductions in all area

D.O.C. 7 APTS INITIATIVE Page 1

January 1, 2006 - May 29, 2006 vs. January 1, 2007 - May 29, 2007

7 APARTMENTS	406			406V				407	7		411	1	426			
	2006	2007	ACTUAL													
3070 S NELLIS HAMPTON APTS	3	1	-2	1	4	3	1	1	0	9	13	4			0	
3955 ALGONQUIN HESPERIAN FALLS	1	2	1	3	1	-2	1		-1	11	10	-4			0	
4701 E SAHARA EMERALD BAY APTS	3	4	-1			0	1	2	1	9	6	-3	1		-1	
5088 S MARYLAND PKWY RANCHO ALVARADO		1	1			0			0			0			0	
5100 E TROPICANA SONOMA HILLS APTS	6	7	1	2		-2	1		-1	12	4	-8	1		-1	
5101 E TWAIN DESERT SPA GARDEN		1	1	2		-2	1		-1		6	6	1		-1	
5600 BOULDER HWY SPORTSMAN MANOR	8	4	-4	9	1	-8	6		-6	21	6	-15	4		-4	

## Codes:

- Burglary
- 406v-Auto Burglary
- Robbery
- 411- Stolen Vehicle
- 426- Sexual Assault