

**Seattle Police Department**

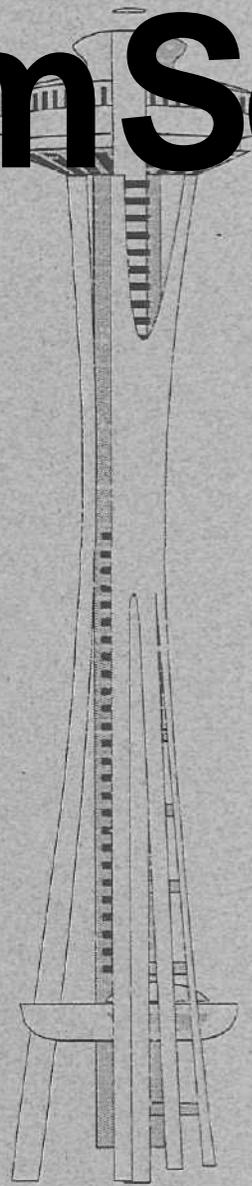
# Problem Solving Problem Solving

## Nine Case Studies and Lessons Learned

Jon Gerondale  
Research and Grants Unit  
Seattle Police Department  
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# Lox Stock Billiards and Sports Bar

Located in the University District at 4552 University Way NE, the Lox Stock Billiards and Sports Bar is a popular bar that attracts a large number of young college students on Wednesday and Saturday nights. Wednesday features a special ladies' night promotion, while on Saturday a local radio station, KUBE 93.3 FM, broadcasts live from the bar and hosts a dance party on-site. All other nights of the week, the bar is relatively quiet and rarely generates complaints requiring a police response.

On these two promotional nights, officers were frequently called by local residents and bar employees to handle a variety of problems ranging from noise and traffic complaints, to assaults, DUI's, shots fired, and large crowds congregating in the street. In the typical response, officers faced extremely hostile, intoxicated crowds of young college-aged males that oftentimes numbered in the hundreds. The bar had a capacity of 299 people.

Due to the significant officer safety issues involved, as well as the potential for a serious disturbance similar to the riots that occurred recently at Washington State University, Sergeant O'Neill, the patrol sergeant working the area, decided to proactively address the problems occurring at the bar. Initially, Sergeant O'Neill collected all DUI and incident reports generated by the bar and notified the Washington State Liquor Control Board of the numerous problems. Next, Sergeant O'Neill organized a meeting to increase communication between officers and bar management, and to collectively develop solutions to the problems stemming from the bar. Up to this point, there was minimal dialogue between these two parties.

At the meeting involving the district officers, agents from the liquor control board, bar owner and night manager, the problems occurring at the bar were identified and discussed, as well as possible consequences if the problems continued; namely, the loss of the bar's liquor license. Before this meeting, bar management was reluctant to take responsibility for the actions of

its customers. As such, very few steps were taken to alleviate or reduce potential problems.

From this meeting, the night manager agreed to hire private security to work these two nights and educate employees on ways to prevent "over-serving" of alcohol. Sergeant O'Neill agreed to work with management and have his squad increase their presence, call permitting, at closing time when the majority of the problems occurred as customers left the establishment.

Prior to the meeting, the bar hired only one person to handle security. Many times, this person's dress was indistinguishable from others in the bar, thereby limiting his effectiveness as an authority figure and confusing officers called to the scene to handle a disturbance. Also, security did not take responsibility for activities occurring outside the bar once the bar closed and relied exclusively upon the police to handle these situations, usually calling 911 after a disturbance had escalated to a point where it involved a number of individuals.

After the meeting, professional security was hired that consisted of four to six people on-site. These security personnel wore identifiable uniforms, took an active role in limiting the over-serving of alcohol, and helped ensure that order was maintained as people left when the bar closed.

The meeting dramatically improved the relationship between the police and bar management. Previously, officers rarely conducted premise checks of the bar because they were greeted with suspicion and hostility from employees and management in addition to the customers themselves. Now, officers are actively encouraged by bar management to conduct these routine checks and work closely with security personnel to identify and trespass problem individuals from the premise.

Although occasional problems are inevitable at the bar, open communication between officers and bar management has greatly reduced the potential for large disturbances and generated a positive result for both parties. The bar owner is able to continue sponsoring these two promotional nights that generate a significant profit without receiving sanctions from the liquor control board that could have resulted if changes were not made. Officers, on the other hand, are not called nearly as frequently to this location and have the support of both management and security in developing proactive solutions to address the problems, thus alleviating a significant officer safety issue. •

## (Case Study N0T2)

# Fifth Avenue Glass Gallery

During the summer months, when temperatures increased, employees of the Fifth Avenue Glass Gallery opened the large 15- x 10-foot sliding back delivery door and windows in an attempt to cool the gallery down as they worked blowing glass. During these same summer months, residents of the Charlesgate Apartments, located directly behind the Fifth Avenue Glass Gallery, would arrive home from work and open their windows in an effort to increase the circulation in their apartments and displace the heat that accumulated during the day. The only separation between the glass gallery and the 60-unit apartment building was a narrow 15-foot alley.

As a result, at least two or three times a week during the summer, residents of the Charlesgate Apartments called 911 complaining about the noise originating from the Fifth Avenue Glass Gallery. At all other times of the year, complaints were not made since the back delivery door and windows of the gallery, as well as the apartment windows, remained closed due to the cooler weather.

In the typical response, officers arrived at the scene, contacted the complainant, and asked the employees in the gallery to reduce the noise. While employees were always courteous to the officers and complied with requests to close the delivery door and windows and to turn down their stereo, the problem persisted.

Officer Hayes, the community police team officer assigned to the area, decided to take additional measures to address the problem. In speaking with the owner of the business and surveying the property, Officer Hayes discovered a number of factors contributing to the noise complaints. First, the business functioned as a working glass blowing studio utilized by a number of different, independent glass artists. Consequently, while officers repeatedly responded to the scene and requested that individuals in the studio close the sliding delivery door and windows, different artists constantly rotated through the studio and were rarely aware that officers had been called to the business previously for noise disturbances.

Second, artists typically worked weekdays in the studio until 9:00 p.m., sometimes even later. Therefore, when Charlesgate residents returned home from work in the evening, the artists were still in the gallery working on their projects.

Third, Officer Hayes recognized that the placement of the stereo employees played while working contributed significantly to the problem. Specifically, the stereo was situated next to the back delivery door. As such, no barriers existed to prevent the noise from carrying across the alley over to the apartments.

From this meeting, the owner agreed to take proactive steps to reduce the complaints. He instituted a policy, which he explained to each artist who utilized the studio, that limited the hours the back delivery door and windows could be opened during the summer. Since the complaints occurred in the evening hours when residents of the Charlesgate Apartments returned home from work, the owner mandated that the delivery door and windows close at 5:00 p.m. Additionally, he relocated the stereo to the other side of the business in an effort to reduce the noise that carried across the alley.

Through taking these steps, noise complaints were eliminated and everyone benefited. Patrol officers were no longer called to the scene to handle these repeat complaints, Charlesgate Apartment residents were no longer disturbed by the gallery. And the owner of the gallery was made aware of the problem and allowed the opportunity to address the issue before it escalated any further. •

## (Case Study No. 3)

# East Precinct Auto Thefts

During a three-month period from August to October 1997, the East Precinct experienced an approximate 150 percent increase in the number of auto thefts. Many citizens were extremely concerned with the recent number of thefts occurring in their neighborhoods and began demanding at various community meetings that additional patrol resources be devoted to alleviating the problem.

In an effort to address the increased thefts, Officer Cobane and Officer Williams were

assigned to analyze the problem and develop potential solutions. In the initial analysis of the problem. Officers Cobane and Williams worked with the crime analysis unit to generate crime statistics and arrest reports from the previous year to determine if any patterns existed among these auto thefts.

While spatial analysis of the crime data did indicate that a number of the thefts occurred in the Central District, a review of the arrest reports uncovered a fairly significant fact concerning juvenile offenders. Specifically, while only one repeat adult offender existed over the previous 12 months, there were a number of repeat juvenile offenders for auto theft in the East Precinct, with one juvenile having been arrested eight times over the past year. These officers also collected all incoming reports concerning stolen and recovered vehicles in the East Precinct and compiled a list of repeat juvenile offenders.

Officers Cobane and Williams then solicited the help of patrol officers and the precinct anti-crime team to proactively patrol the Central District for stolen vehicles in an attempt to apprehend these, repeat offenders. In interviewing a number of the repeat juvenile offenders apprehended. Officers Cobane and Williams discovered two important factors contributing to the increased thefts. First officers identified a new gang in the Central District, the CDS (Central District Savages), whose members admitted responsibility for not only a significant portion of the auto thefts, but also for a number of strong-armed robberies and assaults in the area. Second, these juveniles received minimal sentences for their auto thefts; the individual arrested eight times for auto theft spent a total of three days in juvenile detention.

Therefore, Officers Cobane and Williams decided they would utilize a two-pronged strategy to address these issues. First, they worked closely with the gang unit and patrol to identify those individuals involved in the CDS. Once identified, they contacted the parents of these individuals and informed them of their child's gang affiliation and provided resource and program information that was available to them for help. Second, Officers Cobane and Williams worked with the King County Juvenile Prosecutor's Office to explore the possibility of imposing stricter sentences on these repeat offenders for auto theft.

While many of the parents were extremely unreceptive and uncooperative with police, the Prosecutor's Office was willing to work with officers. Specifically, the prosecutor informed offi-

cers that, to receive "exceptional sentences," statements needed to be taken from repeat offenders in which the juvenile admitted their CDS gang involvement. Additionally, the prosecutor requested that officers attend sentencing hearings to provide insight as to the juvenile's gang involvement, prior criminal history, probation violations, family history and school records.

Through the project, the precinct established a new protocol when handling juveniles arrested for auto theft. Specifically, any officer that arrested a juvenile for auto theft who admitted CDS gang involvement, took a statement from the juvenile and forwarded the complete report and statement to the King County Juvenile Prosecutor's Office. Subsequently, prosecutors informed officers of the sentencing hearing so they could attend and provide additional information to the judge concerning the individual.

Through these collaborative efforts involving community police team officers, patrol officers, anti-crime team officers, gang unit and the King County Juvenile Prosecutor's Office, two repeat CDS juvenile offenders received exceptional sentences for auto theft; one juvenile received a year in a juvenile correction facility while the other received six months. After these exceptional sentences were imposed, the number of auto thefts in the East Precinct declined approximately 80 percent and CDS activity in the city significantly decreased. •

#### [Case Study No. 4]

## 9000 Block of Delridge Avenue SW

Over the previous few months, the social character of the 9000 block of Delridge Avenue SW rapidly deteriorated as a drastic increase in open-air street narcotics dealing intimidated residents on the block and perpetuated fear in the community. Numerous strong-armed robberies, assaults, prostitution complaints, and two recent shootings—coupled with the aggressive, overt narcotics trafficking—initiated a feedback cycle further ingraining these illegitimate activities into the neighborhood.

The Highland Park Action Committee, a long-standing community group comprised of local business owners and residents, voiced their concerns over the many problems facing the area and became increasingly concerned about the safety and character of their community. The South Precinct acknowledged these issues and initiated a project to strategically address the problems facing the block.

Through meeting with the Highland Park Action Committee and local residents, and discussing the various problems with patrol units who worked in the area, Officer Askew identified two important, inter-related factors contributing to the problems. First, the vast majority of individuals engaging in the illegal activity did not live in the immediate neighborhood, but came from outside the city. Second, the 7/11 store located on the block acted as the catalyst for much of the crime in the area.

In an attempt to alleviate the problems occurring in the neighborhood, a three-pronged approach was adopted: law enforcement efforts were increased, changes were instituted at the 7/11 store to diminish its attractiveness as a marketplace to commit crimes, and community participation was emphasized to improve the perception of the neighborhood.

Initially, patrol and the precinct anti-crime team coordinated the increased law enforcement efforts in the area. The mobile precinct parked on the block to increase police visibility in the neighborhood, supervisors authorized additional emphasis units to enhance patrol in the area, and plainclothes sting operations conducted on the block apprehended numerous individuals for selling and purchasing illegal narcotics.

In regard to the 7/11 store, four primary environmental factors made it an attractive location to conduct illegal activity: three pay phones located outside the store along Delridge Avenue SW assisted narcotics traffickers in distributing their illegal drugs; unsecured dumpsters situated on the side of the store provided concealment for prostitution and narcotic activity; a large, open parking lot in front of the store became an area where people congregated and consumed alcohol purchased from the 7/11 store; and abandoned vehicles in the parking lot contributed to the general sense of disorder in the area.

Officer Askew contacted the owner of the 7/11 store, discussed the problems occurring on the store premise, talked about how these problems negatively impacted the community,

and suggested changes to reduce many of these problems. From these discussions, specific changes were made: a fence installed on the unsecured side of the store eliminated access to the area; a trespass contract signed with the precinct gave officers a legal justification to trespass individuals contacted on the 7/11 store premise who did not have a legitimate or lawful purpose to be on the property; "No Trespassing" signs posted in the parking area prohibited people from congregating in the lot; and store employees were trained on ways to deal with problem customers, to call 911 whenever observing illegal activity, and to discourage individuals from congregating outside in the store parking lot.

Officer Askew then contacted US West Communications, the business responsible for the pay phones outside the 7/11 store, and the Department of Construction and Land Use (DCLU). US West Communications agreed to voluntarily remove the three pay phones and adjust the pay phone located 200 yards south of the 7/11 store to disallow incoming calls. DCLU had the abandoned vehicles in the parking lot removed.

Finally, crime prevention actively participated in the project to educate residents on ways to deter and report criminal activity. From these meetings with the community, residents took it upon themselves to peacefully march through the neighborhood in an effort to protest the illegal activity and reemphasize their interest in the neighborhood. In fact, this march became the impetus for a much larger community event that was organized, in conjunction with the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, as a "Neighborhood Appreciation Gathering" to recognize residents who had done positive work in the community and increase the interaction of the diverse ethnic groups who lived in the neighborhood.

Through these combined efforts involving various units of the police department, other city agencies, and local community residents and businesses, the problems in the neighborhood decreased dramatically. The calls for service in the block declined significantly, citizen complaints at the neighborhood meetings diminished, and the community became more organized and empowered to report and address crime and disorder related issues. •

## Trespass & Burglary Complaints at 4507 University Way NE

During the winter of 1997, over an approximate two-week period, officers received a number of trespass and burglary complaints from the businesses located at 4507 University Way NE. Employees of these businesses frequently complained to officers that a number of different transients and street youth were breaking into the building at night, using the bathrooms, and sleeping in the common hallway. Many times they engaged in uncivil behavior once inside the building and out of view from individuals outside.

There were four suites in the building, with each suite having a different occupant: Hair Masters, University of Washington Social Work and Continuing Education, University of Washington Office of Annual Giving, and the Washington State Auditor's Office. There were two levels to the building with the Hair Masters located on the ground floor and the three other tenants occupying the second floor.

Each of these tenants, while occupying a different suite, shared a common hallway and stairwell that was inside the building. The main entrance to each of these businesses opened to this common hallway that had a front entrance at 4507 University Way NE, and a back fire escape door that exited to an alley behind the building.

In the typical scenario, employees arriving to work in the morning were confronted by the transients and street youth that broke in the previous night. Typically, these transients and street youth were sleeping in the hallway inside the building or utilizing the bathrooms to bathe. In one case, an employee confronted two individuals having sex in the hallway when she arrived to work.

Although these transients and street youth would leave once employees arrived in the morning, they were extremely intimidating and posed a significant safety threat to the employees. Additionally, while The individuals breaking into the businesses typically did not take

anything, pry marks were oftentimes left on the doors inside the building suggesting that attempts were made to break into the businesses.

After responding to a number Of these calls. Officer Stevens learned that there were two primary factors contributing to the problems, First, he recognized that the individuals breaking into the building were putting something in the back door during business hours to prevent the door from locking, Once all the employees left for the evening, these individuals would then enter through the rigged back door.

Second, after speaking with a number of the employees, Officer Stevens learned that employees rarely checked the back door at night when they left. Although employees would lock the doors to their respective suites, no one locked the back door at the end of the common hallway. Employees often worked late hours and did not feel safe checking the back door to ensure that, it was locked as the back door was at the end of an isolated stairwell and opened to a dark alley.

With this information. Officer Stevens contacted the building manager to discuss possible solutions. From the meeting, the building manager agreed to the following: he posted "No Loitering" signs in the front and back of the building; he signed up for the **criminal** trespass program giving officers the **authority** to arrest trespassers; he gave Officer Stevens keys to the building, allowing the officer to walk through the building periodically during hours of closure; and, he agreed to have the building cleaning crew check the back door at night. •

Through these efforts, a number of benefits resulted. First, officers were no longer called to the scene to handle the burglary and trespass complaints as the officers were able to proactively conduct indoor premise checks of the building during late night hours when the transients and street youth would typically enter the building. Second, employee safety was dramatically improved as employees of the businesses were no longer confronted by the transients and street youth when arriving at work and opening the building. Third, the potential for a serious incident at this location significantly decreased since, previous to the project, employees typically confronted the transients and street youth alone, during early morning hours and in isolated locations inside the building. Finally, future burglary attempts at the building were significantly reduced as individuals no longer had easy access into the building, •

## **(Case Study No. 6J)**

# **Ballard Fraternal Hall and Lodges**

Over the previous few years, the number of citizen complaints generated by events held at four different fraternal halls and lodges within the Ballard community steadily increased. Not only were focal residents increasingly alarmed and frustrated with the repeat problems occurring, safety became a primary concern to officers responding to these locations as many events involved more than 100 individuals, with a significant number of them usually intoxicated and hostile towards police.

At least two or three times a month, typically on a busy Friday or Saturday evening, officers responded to at least one of these problem lodges to handle a variety of complaints. In addition to noise complaints and the associated disturbances that accompany large crowds (fights, excessive loitering, traffic congestion, etc.), numerous civility complaints including public urination and public drunkenness negatively impacted the community. The problems reached such an extent that the *Ballard News-Tribune* highlighted an out-of-control party held at one of these lodges involving a significant number of juveniles consuming alcohol.

Sergeant Wilson and Officer Wooiery decided to formally address the problems associated with these problem lodges. In the initial assessment of the problem, Sergeant Wilson and Officer Wooiery realized that problems typically arose at these premises when rented to outside individuals for private events. Additionally, they recognized a system did not exist to CD notify the precinct when an event was going to occur, or (2) inform the precinct of the individual(s) responsible, either on-site or from the lodge, for a particular event if it needed to be shut down.

As such, the only notification the precinct typically received of an event was comprised of a 911 call for service. Consequently, by the time patrol officers arrived on the scene, the problems associated with the event had in many cases escalated to such an extent that a number of officers, sometimes an entire squad, were required to handle the situation.

Sergeant Wilson and Officer Wooiery decided that, to proactively address the problems occurring at these locations, an "event notification" system was essential to inform the precinct on when events were going to occur, what type of event was to take place, and who was responsible for the particular event.

A meeting was held involving representatives from each of the four problem lodges, police and the Washington State Liquor Control Board. Through the meeting, the lodges were formally made aware of the problems occurring at their premises when rented to outside users, educated on the importance of informing the precinct when events were to occur, and notified of possible consequences if they did not take more responsibility in renting out their premise. Specifically, they could be placed on the state master denial list, thereby preventing the establishment from hosting events that involved alcohol. Up to this point, these lodges were unwilling to accept responsibility for the problems occurring at their locations.

From the meeting, an "Event Notification" form was created that each lodge would complete and return to the precinct before an event was to take place. This "Event Notification" form accomplished two primary goals. First it informed the precinct when events were to occur, how many people were expected to attend, whether or not liquor was involved, and listed an on-site individual associated with the event whom officers could contact if called to the scene. Second, the form increased fraternal hall management accountability through requiring them to have an individual from the fraternal organization itself who would shut down the event if required to do so by officers.

While minor disturbances still occasionally occur at the respective lodges, the problems have decreased and a system was established that more effectively addresses the problems at these locations. Under this new system, officers and community residents benefit as potential problem events are identified beforehand, thereby allowing officers the opportunity to proactively patrol these locations to prevent problems from escalating to larger disturbances requiring significant police resources. Additionally, fraternal halls and lodges were made aware of the possible consequences if problems continued, thus ensuring increased responsibility when renting their premises to outside users. •

## [Case Study No. 7]

# Market Grocery and Deli

Due to its close proximity to Pike Place Market and the generous customers and tourists who visited the site each day, Victor Steinbrueck Park traditionally attracted a number of transients who panhandled in the area. Nevertheless, the foot beat officers who patrolled the park noticed a significant increase over the previous few months in the number of intoxicated transients congregating at the park and creating disturbances. During this same period, residents of the Market Place Condominiums, located one block east of the park, and many local businesses complained to district patrol officers about the large number of transients drinking alcohol, aggressively panhandling, engaging in fights and destroying property in their neighborhood.

After some preliminary research, Sergeant Ibuki, the patrol sergeant who worked in the area, discovered that the Market Grocery and Deli, which recently sold to a Korean owner and was located on the retail level of the Market Place Condominiums, engaged in business practices that significantly contributed to the problems occurring in the neighborhood. Specifically, the new owner increased the number of inexpensive malt liquors carried in the store and frequently sold alcohol to individuals already intoxicated. As such, the Market Grocery and Deli became a destination for many transients to purchase inexpensive alcohol with money they had panhandled from visitors of the park.

Sergeant Ibuki made contact with the owner to discuss the complaints associated with the business. Through this meeting, Sergeant Ibuki learned that the owner, a recent immigrant who operated the store with his family, was new to the neighborhood and not very familiar with the neighborhood dynamics or liquor laws. As such, Sergeant Ibuki notified the owner that he would return with a Korean-speaking officer and a representative from the Washington State Liquor Control Board to educate the owner and his family on the various liquor violations occurring at the store, possible consequences

if violations persisted, and steps to reduce the problems.

The owner was educated on a number of ways to change business practices to eliminate the problems: identify intoxicated individuals as they enter the store and refuse service; trespass problem individuals from the store; check the identification of alcohol purchasers (this is a requirement by state law and many transients did not possess valid identification); and, instruct employees to check outside for intoxicated individuals when selling several bottles of alcohol to an individual who may be distributing the alcohol once outside the store to intoxicated friends.

Sergeant Ibuki also explained to the owner the dynamics of the community and how he could actually change his product line to achieve the dual benefits of increasing store profits and reducing neighborhood problems. Three new condominiums had recently been built in the immediate area and officers explained to the owner that he actually could turn a higher profit through selling products that better catered to individuals living in the neighborhood.

After meeting with the owner, patrol emphasis was increased in the area to ensure the store complied with the new business procedures. The owner reduced the number of malt liquors carried in the store, made the suggested changes in business practices, and trespassed problem individuals. In replacing the inexpensive malt liquor with higher quality alcohol products, the store no longer acted as a magnet for transients seeking inexpensive alcohol, but instead became an attraction for individuals living in the neighborhood.

Once these changes were instituted, the problems in the neighborhood decreased significantly. The manager and residents of the Market Place Condominiums commended officers for the dramatic decrease in problems associated with intoxicated transients in the neighborhood. Although a few intoxicated transients continue to congregate at Victor Steinbrueck Park and create disturbances, the problems became more manageable as the Market Grocery and Deli no longer provided these individuals the opportunity to purchase inexpensive alcohol in the immediate area, •

## (Case Study No. 8)

# Mirror Tavern

The Mirror Tavern, located downtown at 110 Pike Street, was rapidly becoming the source of numerous community complaints. Specifically, residents in the area and customers of the tavern constantly complained of the heavy narcotics activity occurring inside the bar. While the Pike Street corridor had always been an area that required a significant police emphasis because of its history of high narcotics activity, the tavern had not traditionally been a problem location requiring repeat police responses.

The tavern was in the process of changing ownership. A new person assumed management responsibility for the tavern and was making monthly payments to the owner to purchase the tavern. While the owner worked closely with officers to prevent problems from occurring, the new manager turned a blind eye to the illegal activity and refused to acknowledge that problems existed. In fact, the new manager hired employees who tolerated and, in some cases, participated in the illegal activity.

While beat officers were well aware that known narcotics dealers would congregate and deal inside the tavern, law enforcement efforts were extremely difficult for a number of reasons. First, the tavern provided concealment for narcotics dealers as they no longer had to conduct their activities outside in open view on the street. Second, the interior of the tavern was extremely dark, thus making it difficult for officers to observe transactions once inside. Third, the people involved in the narcotics activity would only deal to known individuals, thereby preventing the success of undercover operations.

Consequently, the two sergeants coordinating the project decided to attack the problems via a different route. Since narcotics arrests were proving difficult, it was decided to work with the Washington State Liquor Control Board to address the various liquor violations occurring at the tavern. While officers were typically unsuccessful in apprehending

individuals dealing narcotics, they did observe tavern employees frequently over-serving customers—a violation of state liquor law.

Officers were able to document four cases where customers were over-served in a one-week period. With these cases, liquor control board agents contacted the manager and discussed the consequences of the liquor violations—namely, that the liquor license could be revoked and the tavern closed.

At this point, officers informed the owner of the problems occurring at the tavern since he relinquished management to the new manager and the possibility of losing the Mirror Tavern liquor license, which was still under his name, if the problems persisted. Upon learning this, the owner became extremely concerned, and informed the new manager that if immediate changes were not implemented to reduce the problems occurring at the tavern, the sale of the tavern would be terminated.

The manager, while initially unreceptive to officer suggestions, agreed to implement changes once pressured by the owner. First, problem employees engaging in the illegal activity were fired and an employee rehired who worked at the tavern for a number of years before the change of management. Second, a row of booths along a back wall that provided concealment for narcotics dealers was removed and in its place, tables and chairs were set up that increased visibility in the tavern. Third, locks were installed on the bathroom doors that could only be opened by the bartender. Before the locks were installed, individuals would go inside the bathroom to conduct their transactions. Fourth, video surveillance cameras were installed to monitor the activities within the tavern. Finally, employees were educated on ways to detect possible narcotics activity and encouraged to trespass individuals engaged in illegal activities.

Through these changes, and aggressive patrol enforcement of liquor, narcotics and trespass violations, an environment once conducive to illegal activity dramatically changed. Individuals no longer had a safe place to conduct their illegal activities and discontinued utilizing the Mirror Tavern as a market for narcotics transactions. While the Mirror Tavern subsequently relocated outside the city after its lease expired, the problems at the tavern significantly declined for the two years after the project ended. •

## Ross Playfield Neighborhood

During the summer of 1998, the neighborhood around Ross Playfield, located in the 4300 block of 3rd Avenue NW, experienced a number of problems associated with transients congregating in the area. Residents frequently complained to officers of transients sleeping in their yards and the playfield, drinking alcohol, urinating in public, engaging in narcotics activity, and being extremely belligerent and hostile when confronted about their behavior.

Through speaking with many of the local residents and increasing her patrol presence in the area, Officer Hentz, the patrol officer working in the neighborhood, discovered a number of factors that were contributing to the problems. First, there was a vacant house located at 4403 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW where a number of transients would sleep in the yard. This house attracted transients not only because of its vacancy, but also because it had a three-foot concrete wall surrounding the property that provided concealment from the street. Second, a local "mom and pop" grocery store, located at 4404 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue NW, stocked numerous inexpensive 40-ounce malt liquors that transients desired. Third, the bathrooms at the park were not locked at night thereby providing a place where transients could sleep, conduct illegal activities, and bathe.

In the typical scenario, transients would walk from the ship canal, which is located approximately one-half mile south of the neighborhood, to the grocery store to purchase their alcohol—usually at 6:00 a.m. when the grocery store opened. After these transients purchased their alcohol, they would drink the alcohol at either the vacant house or the playfield, many times conducting other illegitimate activities at these locations as well. This cycle was repeated on a daily basis by approximately ten transients.

In assessing the problems occurring in the neighborhood, Officer Hentz learned that precinct community police team (CPT) officers were already working on ways to improve the

conditions at the vacant house. Officer Hentz learned from CPT officers that the owner lived in eastern Washington, left the house unoccupied during a significant portion of the year, and was not willing to work with officers or the Health Department in addressing the problems occurring on the lot.

Therefore, Officer Hentz decided to focus her efforts on the two other factors making the neighborhood an attractive place for the transients to congregate: the grocery store and Ross Playfield. The neighborhood consisted predominantly of single- and multi-family housing units, with the grocery store being the only commercial space in the immediate area. Ross Playfield was located across the street from the grocery store and occupied an entire block of the neighborhood.

Officer Hentz contacted the grocery store owner and educated him on the factors contributing to the problems in the neighborhood—specifically, how the sale of inexpensive malt liquors from his store was a primary source of the problems occurring in the area. The owner, unaware of his store's contribution to the problems, was receptive to officer suggestions. The grocery store owner voluntarily made changes to the store's product line and discontinued carrying the products transients desired.

In regard to Ross Playfield, Officer Hentz recognized that during the afternoon and early evening hours, the playfield was well utilized by a number of legitimate users in the neighborhood. As a result, transients rarely congregated at the playfield during these times as their activities were reported to officers.

The only times transients would congregate in the park were in the early morning and late evening hours when no one else was around. At these times, transients would utilize the bathrooms for their illegitimate activities since the bathrooms provided an area of concealment. All other areas of the playfield were extremely visible from the four streets surrounding the park, thereby providing good natural surveillance. With this information, the officer contacted the Parks Department, informed them of the problems occurring at the park, and had them agree to lock the bathroom doors at night. In locking the doors at night, the transients no longer had a reason to be in the park after it closed at 11:30 p.m.

Subsequent to these efforts, Officer Hentz increased her presence in the area, educated residents to contact 911 whenever they

observed illegal activity, and informed the transients that their behavior would no longer be tolerated in the neighborhood. Through these integrated efforts, the transient problems in the neighborhood disappeared. An area that once possessed a number of factors that attracted these transients and their associated illegitimate behavior quickly changed as steps were taken to alleviate the factors contributing to the problems in the neighborhood. •

Case Study No. 9

## Ross Playfield Neighborhood

During the summer of 1967, the neighborhood around Ross Playfield in the 4300 block of the Avenue 2400 experienced a number of transient problems with transient drug dealing in the area. Resident indignity complaints in the area were reported to the police. The police provided a patrol officer, who was assigned to the area, to investigate the problem. The officer engaged in various activities and eventually eliminated the transient drug dealing problem.

Through working with the police, the neighborhood around Ross Playfield was transformed. The area, which had been a transient drug dealing area, was now a safe and pleasant area. The police provided a patrol officer, who was assigned to the area, to investigate the problem. The officer engaged in various activities and eventually eliminated the transient drug dealing problem.

In the Ross Playfield neighborhood, the police provided a patrol officer, who was assigned to the area, to investigate the problem. The officer engaged in various activities and eventually eliminated the transient drug dealing problem.

In closing the book on dealing with neighborhood problems, the police provided a patrol officer, who was assigned to the area, to investigate the problem. The officer engaged in various activities and eventually eliminated the transient drug dealing problem.

# Appendix Projects

## Lessons Learned

While the ideal goal of problem solving is to find a "tailor-made" solution to each particular problem, specific lessons can be learned from previous projects that could help in future problem solving endeavors. The following are just a few of the lessons learned from the particular projects analyzed that help explain their success. While only one project is highlighted under each lesson, a number of the projects could apply to each.

**1 Be aware of the various methods available to address a particular problem; if one avenue does not work, be willing to address the problem from a different angle.**

Although narcotics activity at the Mirror Tavern was the primary concern of both the officers and community, liquor violations eventually provided officers the leverage to mandate that changes be made. Once officers recognized that the narcotics activity was going to be extremely difficult to document, the officers changed their plan of action and focused their efforts on the liquor violations.

**2 Utilize crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles as a component in the problem solving efforts—not the exclusive tool.**

When analyzing the problems occurring on the 9000 block of Delridge Avenue SW, officers recognized that a number of physical factors existed at the 7/11 store which made the area conducive to illegitimate activity: unsecured dumpsters, accessible pay phones, and abandoned vehicles. Addressing these CPTED issues, in conjunction with increased patrol and community involvement, made the project successful. While making an area less conducive to crime is important, enforcement and community involvement were just as essential to break the cycle of crime occurring in the neighborhood.

**3 Develop partnerships with other agencies that might be better suited to handle the particular problem and impose sanctions.**

Officers recognized they had limited influence when attempting to address the

problem occurring at the Lox Stock Billiards and Sports Bar. That is, officers did not have authority, in and of themselves, to force the owner to make changes in his business practices. Therefore, officers solicited the help of the liquor control board, which had authority over the liquor license of the establishment, to pressure the business to make changes.

**4 Provide solutions to alleviate problems.** Not only is it important to identify problem areas, officers should also help formulate solutions. The manager of the Mirror Tavern, while aware that problems existed, did not know what specific steps to take to alleviate the problems. Therefore, the officers acted as a resource and provided numerous ways to reduce the illegitimate activity occurring in the tavern.

**5 When possible, do not shift the entire burden of addressing a particular problem to others; officers must agree to be part of the solution to increase acceptance of problem solving efforts.**

With the Lox Stock Billiards and Sports Bar, officers agreed to increase their patrol presence in the area at the time of closing. In doing this, officers demonstrated that they were willing to work with the owner in addressing the problems. As such, the owner was more willing to do his part in combating the problems generated by the bar as the process became more of a collaborative effort. The project would most likely not have been as successful if the owner felt that the officers were telling him what to do and were not willing to help him alleviate the problems.

**6 Knowledge of neighborhood dynamics is critical in understanding problems and developing collaborative solutions.**

Officers were aware that Victor Steinbrueck Park was an attractive location for transients to panhandle. Officers also knew that three new condominiums in the neighborhood housed a number of individuals with relatively high incomes. With these facts, officers were able to educate the new business owner at Market Grocery and Deli of ways to turn a higher profit through selling products that were more in line with neighborhood residents and did not contribute to the problems in the neighborhood.

**7 Recognize cultural barriers that might exist when developing solutions.**

Once officers determined that the new owner of Market Grocery and Deli was a recent Korean immigrant who was unfamiliar with the

state liquor laws and neighborhood dynamics, officers obtained a Korean-speaking officer to communicate with the owner. This helped reduce any misunderstandings that might otherwise have occurred, and improved the relationship and trust between the officers and owner,

## **8 Educate people on problems that are occurring.**

The owner of the Fifth Avenue Glass Gallery was unaware that his business was the source of numerous complaints. Once he became aware of these issues, he was more than willing to take steps to alleviate the problems.

## **9 If possible, address a number of problem areas with the same solution.**

Officers in the Ballard area recognized that they were repeatedly called to various fraternal halls and lodges to handle very similar complaints. As such, they realized that the most efficient way to handle these problem locations would be to develop a solution that could be applied to each premise.

## **10 Inform other agencies of inadequate response.**

After discovering that repeat juvenile offenders were receiving extremely light sentences for their crimes, officers worked closely with the prosecutor's office to implement stronger sentences for these repeat juvenile offenders.

## **11 Increased patrol emphasis and suspect apprehension are critical components to problem solving.**

Increased patrol enforcement was a significant, if not the primary, problem solving component in reducing the East Precinct auto thefts. The increased enforcement by patrol and the anti-crime team was essential in that it led to the apprehension of the juvenile auto theft suspects who then informed officers of the CDS activity in the precinct. Additionally, the increased enforcement let CDS members on the street know that their activity would not be tolerated,

## **12 Utilize other units and resources within the organization, where possible, to help in the problem solving process.**

In addressing the East Precinct auto thefts, the officers coordinating the project solicited the help of a number of different units: patrol, crime analysis, gang unit and anti-crime team. Through involving the various units, each of which had an interest in the problem, the project was much more

successful than if the officers attempted to do everything themselves.

## **1\*<sup>i</sup> Involve the community, where possible, to take ownership of their neighborhood.**

When addressing the problems facing the 9000 block of Delridge Avenue SW, officers encouraged the community to take ownership of their neighborhood. Through educating the community on ways to deter and report criminal activity, citizens became important allies in preventing similar conditions from returning.

## **M Develop solutions that provide benefits to each party involved.**

Through the problem solving process, the Lox Stock Billiards and Sports Bar owner was able to continue sponsoring the two promotional nights that generated a significant profit without receiving sanctions from the liquor control board. Officers, on the other hand, were not called nearly as frequently to the location and significant officer safety issues were reduced as the bar took more responsibility in handling their customers. These "win-win" solutions also ensure that individuals involved in the process follow through on task items.

## **W Problem elimination is not the only successful outcome of problem solving efforts.**

Although problems still occasionally occur at the various fraternal halls and lodges in Ballard, a system is in place that notifies the precinct of potential problem events before they occur. This provides officers the opportunity to proactively patrol these locations and prevent problems from escalating to larger disturbances,

## **1<sup>JL</sup> Do not make problem solving efforts more complicated than needed; attempt to focus problem solving efforts on areas where changes can be made easily.**

In assessing the problems occurring in the Ross Playfield neighborhood, the officer identified three main factors contributing to the problems in the area. In formulating a response, the officer focused her efforts on two factors that she could most likely change: the grocery store sale of inexpensive alcohol and the Ross Playfield bathrooms. In addressing the issues she had the most influence over, she alleviated the problems quicker and easier than if she focused her efforts on the vacant house where the transients congregated.

**1<sup>^</sup> /** Make those individuals responsible for a particular problem accountable for their actions.

Through not holding owners of the Ballard fraternal halls and ledges accountable for the problems generated at their establishments, the owners left the responsibility to precinct officers. The owners had no incentive to change their business practices because no one was pressuring them to institute changes. However, once officers involved the liquor control board and informed the owners that current conditions would not be tolerated, the owners were pressured to develop new practices to reduce the problems.

**1 A** Address the problem before it turns into  
**1 O** something more serious.

While the trespass complaints at 4507 University Way NE were a fairly low priority complaint that many times did not require a report as the suspect typically left peacefully before police arrived, the problem had the potential to lead to a much more serious incident. The potential for a serious assault at this location was significant as employees typically confronted these transients alone, during early morning hours, and in isolated locations. Through the problem solving efforts, however, the likelihood of a serious incident at this location decreased as efforts were taken to eliminate the factors creating the risk.

**19** Documentation of steps taken during a project is essential.

When other agencies were not willing initially to use their authority or resources to solve a problem, they were much more responsive when provided written reports and chronologies of chronic problems. Without documentation, officers were not as likely to receive support in addressing problems.

**20** <sup>calls for service and</sup> crime statistics should not be used as the exclusive indicator of a problem area.

Although 911 calls for service do provide an indication as to what problems are occurring in a neighborhood, they are not the exclusive indicator. In many cases, the problems in an area become so entrenched in a community that individuals become discouraged and stop calling police to report illegal activity. As such, calls for service and crime statistics would not have shown the seriousness of the problem even though a problem definitely existed.

**21** Calls for service and crime statistics should not be used as the exclusive indicator of the success of a problem solving project.

While calls for service and crime statistics can be utilized to support the success of a problem solving project, they must not be the sole assessment tool. In many cases, employees of the businesses at 4507 University Way NE would not call 911 to report the individuals sleeping inside the building because the transients usually left peacefully once the employees arrived. As such, when assessing the project via calls for service and crime statistics, one does not see the true effects the project had in alleviating the fears of many of the employees, nor the amount of times these incidents actually occurred before the project.

**22** While officers might not consider a problem a high priority, individuals living and working in the area might view the same problem as a significant issue requiring additional police resources.

While officers repeatedly responded to the Charlesgate Apartments for noise complaints, many did not view the problem as being a significant issue. Therefore, not much time was taken to address the underlying causes contributing to the problem. Residents, however, were extremely frustrated with the noise complaints and upset with the police response. In taking the time to analyze the problem in a little more depth, the officer recognized that a relatively easy solution existed that went a long way in improving the relationship between the apartment residents and police.

**23** Be willing to proactively speak with residents in the neighborhood to discuss the problems occurring in their community

In the Ross Playfield case, the officer spoke with many of the residents in the neighborhood to get an idea as to what problems were occurring in the area. In speaking with a number of the residents, the officer gained a more thorough understanding as to the particular problems in the neighborhood, possible causes of the respective problems and potential solutions. With this knowledge, the officer was better able to formulate a successful response. •

