Open-Air Drug Markets: Analyzing the Details and Closing off Opportunities
Four Step Response to Open-Air Drug Dealing

• Get to know your local drug markets
  – Cincinnati, OH - analysis
  – San Diego, CA - response

• Collect baseline data
  – Suggestions for measuring what we can’t always see

• Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy
  – Combine location specific data and crime prevention principles to create a framework

• Measure your impact
  – Pitfalls of analysis
Step 1: Getting to know your markets

• Do you know…
  – the number of active markets, their respective locations, and what drugs are being sold?
  – where the buyers and sellers are coming from?
  – what social and environmental characteristics are helping to facilitate these markets?
  – what interventions have been used in the past and the outcome of these efforts?
Open-Air Drug Market Locations
Cincinnati, Ohio

2004
- 3,123 total calls for service
- 481 drug-related calls for service
  - Neighborhood crime statistics driven by drug markets
Similarities Across Drug Markets

1. **Type of drugs and price**
   Crack, marijuana, heroin – Price varies based on race of buyer

2. **Time of market activity**
   Early afternoon through evening – 1\textsuperscript{st} & 15\textsuperscript{th} of the month – Seasonal effects

3. **Territoriality**
   Stable groups maintain markets – Conflicts = street violence

4. **Lookout & communication networks**
   Live close – Two-way radios – Lookouts – Police scanners – Demographics

5. **Street configurations**
   Major thoroughfares – Interstate on/off-ramps

6. **Convenience stores**
   Facilitate drug dealing
Local Convenience Stores As Facilitators

- Solicit legitimate store customers
- Provide a “cover” to explain loitering
- Provide food and shelter for dealers/lookouts
- Sell paraphernalia used to smoke crack
Weaknesses of previous responses

- Use of discrete interventions
  - Likely to lead to displacement
- Lack of evaluations
- Little communication and coordination
- Sustainability issues
- Anticipation of crime displacement
  - Ex: Pendleton barricade project
Discrete Responses: Displacement
Step 2:
Gather baseline data for post-intervention evaluations

- Which criterion will you use to determine the effectiveness of your responses?
  - Calls for service, reported crimes
    - Measure of community responsiveness
  - Arrests
    - Measure of police activity
- Using alternative indicators of drug activity
- Must also gather baseline data in surrounding areas (where displacement is likely to occur)
Step 3: Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy

Recognize characteristics of successful approaches used in other cities

1. Long-term commitment
2. Measurable objectives
3. Comprehensive strategies
   - Partnerships with multiple organizations
4. Accountability
5. Publicity
6. Ongoing evaluations
7. Strategy maintenance
Designing a “comprehensive” strategy

What does this mean?

• Do NOT implement an exact replication of a successful program used elsewhere
  – Use information gathered from drug market analyses
    • Understand existing opportunity structures
  – Identify intervention options
  – Select promising interventions using crime prevention theory and frameworks
    • Recognize the five dimensions of criminal opportunity
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Interventions</th>
<th>48 interventions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Law enforcement activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. High visibility patrol surveillance or saturation</td>
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<td>2. Zero-tolerance enforcement</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Create a public hotline to report drug activity</td>
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<td>4. Juvenile curfew sweeps</td>
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<td>5. Driver license checkpoints</td>
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<td>6. Establish police command posts near existing markets</td>
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<td>7. Consistently fill out field interrogation cards</td>
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<td>8. Buy/Bust – Drug sweeps</td>
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<td>9. Target high-level dealers/distributors</td>
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<td>10. Apply asset forfeiture laws against dealers/buyers</td>
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<td>11. Mail postcard warnings</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Build a comprehensive city-wide database</td>
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| Environmental modifications |
| 13. Install CCTV cameras |
| 14. Increase lighting |
| 15. Post “No Loitering”/ “No Trespassing” signs |
| 16. Put up “Scarecrows” |
| 17. Address vacant/dilapidated buildings |
| 18. Limit access routes |

| Court/prosecution partnerships |
| 19. Restrict prosecution to habitual offenders |
| 20. Request particular sentences for dealers/buyers |
| 21. Vertical prosecution |

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**Probation/Parole partnerships**
25. Work closely with probation/parole

**Other city agency partnerships**
26. Conduct street clean-ups
27. Request Certified Emergency Response Team (CERT) intervention
28. Remove indicators of drug distribution
29. Remove environmental features that facilitate dealing

**Property owners/landlord partnerships**
30. Inform property owners/landlords of crimes committed on their properties
31. Ask nearby apartment owners to share tenant information
32. Notify landlords of broken locks on exterior gates/doors
33. Remove visual obstructions from store windows
34. Stop stores from selling drug paraphernalia

**Beautification organization partnerships**
36. Sponsor neighborhood beautification efforts

**Community partnerships**
37. Establish citizen patrols
38. Offer an “Adopt-A-Block” program
39. Conduct neighborhood “Smoke Outs”
40. Organize block watches

**Local church partnerships**
41. Sponsor outdoor church activities

**Cincinnati Recreation Commission partnership**
42. Sponsor Cincinnati Recreation Commission activities

**Media partnerships**
43. Create a media campaign
44. Publish dealers/buyers names and photographs in local papers
45. Advertise drug treatment resources
46. Monitor hospitals and publicize overdoses
47. Advertise local job fairs

**University of Cincinnati partnership**
48. Conduct an on-going evaluation of the operation

(enforcement is only part of the solution)
Selecting Interventions:
Forming a “comprehensive” strategy

Criminal Opportunity Theory Framework

- Crime can be prevented by altering the 5 dimensions of opportunity that influence offender decision-making:
  - Effort
  - Risk
  - Reward
  - Provocation
  - Excuses

Integrate the characteristics of YOUR drug markets

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<td>Remove paraphernalia from stores</td>
<td>High visibility patrol</td>
<td>Buy/Bust operations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide job placement services</td>
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<tr>
<td>BUYERS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Publicize drug overdoses</td>
<td>Free drug treatment</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITATORS</td>
<td>Limit access routes</td>
<td>Nuisance abatement against owners</td>
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<td>NO LOITERING signs</td>
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Step 4: Measure your impact

- Gather data on an on-going basis
  - Inform strategy maintenance activities
- Look for evidence of unintended effects
  - Increased violence
  - Displacement
  - Diffusion of benefits
    - Incorporate spatial analysis
- For departments without (or with overworked) crime analysts
  - Consider partnership with local universities
- Share your successes! (And failures)
Responding to Open-Air Drug Markets: San Diego, California

- Tailoring your response to local analysis

- Stress importance of...
  - Gathering several sources of data
  - Community partnerships
  - Attacking more than one dimension of open-air markets
Drug Trafficking

Viewed as a Business Function

Remember what’s important!
Police T-Shirt Business

• $100,000 to invest in a start-up company.
  – ROI important to me
  – Tried and true…shown success in the past

• Any one have an idea? Justice T’s…

• Let’s put a business plan together:
  – What are the basic elements we need to cover in this plan?

• How is a drug business similar and dissimilar?
Business Essentials

What are the basic elements?

Which of these is most important? Vulnerable?

- Customers?
- Marketing plan?
- Location?
- Product?
- Security?
- Production Process?
- Investments?
Skyline and Meadowbrook

- Entrenched Eastside Piru gang area with rampant drug sales 50-75 fellows hanging out, flying colors
- Fearful and timid population
- Community could not use corner market without risk of violent crime
- Many sympathizers in community
Analysis of Problem

- Survey of residents (75 door to door)
  - Drug hiding spots (rips)
  - Primary players
  - Violent players
  - Logistical support (Store)
  - Environment belonged to ESP, not community
  - Actions consistent with survey
  - One person termed it a form of slavery
Skyline Solution

• Operation Red Rag
  – 75 UC buys all plead guilty
  – African American Community took on the store owners (During Gulf war 1)
  – Community (Diverse) filled void of left by arrests immediately
  – Positive steps to re-construct neighborhood as safe…
  – One termed it as the emancipation of proclamation for Skyline community
Results

- Store followed the lead of influential community members…so did politicians
- Patrol enforced the no gang indicia rule
- Community members cleaned the 40oz bottles from the empty lot
- Violent crime decreased 85% over same time last year
- Drug sales difficult and rare
Operation Hot Pipe, Smokey Haze and Rehab

- Entrenched drug sales at 3800 University
- Associated violence over turf control
- Decay of neighborhood due to drug sales and wrecked lives
Analysis of Problem

• 20 year history
• Facilitation through smokers, no d2c transactions…all the facilitators were smokers chipping off a nickel for themselves (narc team, arrest reports)
• One on one interviews with dealers (VIP)
• Mass survey with community members (cops hate doing this)
Analysis Continued

• Debriefing all arrested persons in area
• One on one conversations with business owners
Lessons

• The Wal-Mart of drug dealing had taken over the neighborhood
• Community members afraid to walk the streets and hear “are you looking?”
• Violence – street robberies – were frequent
• Narco was not getting to most of the dealers…
Lessons

• Dealers had a specific marketing plan
  – Free for first week to create a frenzy
  – Prostitutes were used in marketing plan…
    • Set the atmosphere of a free for all
  – Three types of buyers drove profitability
    • Addicts needed no marketing
    • Users liked easy access to community
    • Weekend partiers needed marketing and word of mouth (guerilla) marketing to be attracted to location, liked anonymity
Plan of Attack

• **Operation HOT PIPE**
  - Make the neighborhood too hot to handle for facilitators. Arrest them for anything and everything and tell them why…They got it about the 3rd arrest

• **Smokey Haze**
  - Market to Weekenders and occasional users that jail and “Bubba” were waiting for them…
  - Create confusion about police activity leak sweeps, and then follow through…then leak but no follow through.

• **Rehab**
  - Users and community to come out and patronize the businesses
What’s the Point?

• Drug sales is a business
• They need profitability
• They need all the basic elements of a business
• Destroying the business opportunity is a relevant strategy
• Each project still took enforcement along with other options!
### Contact Information

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Related reports: [www.uc.edu/OSCOR](http://www.uc.edu/OSCOR)
COPS guides on open-air drug dealing: [www.popcenter.org](http://www.popcenter.org)