Draft

Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing:

The 2000 Herman Goldstein Award Winners

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Police Executive Research Forum

National Institute of Justice

Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

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The 2001 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing

■ Nominations for the competition will be accepted until May 1, 2001
■ Submissions should be limited to 4,000 words of text (approximately 15 pages, double-spaced)
■ Include an additional 300–400 word summary of the project and relevant charts, tables, graphs, and supporting documents
■ Submissions must address all four phases of the SARA model (Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment)
■ Entries are judged particularly on well-presented data, especially at the Analysis and Assessment stages
■ Complete submission requirements and forms can be found:

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OR THROUGH PERF:
Attn: Herman Goldstein
    Award
1120 Connecticut Avenue,
    NW, Suite 930
Washington, DC 20036
USA
tel: (202) 466–7820
fax: (202) 466–7826

Contents

Introduction

This report offers insight into excellence in problem-oriented policing (POP) demonstrated by the projects presented by the winner and five finalists of the Police Executive Research Forum's (PERF) 2000 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing. The Herman Goldstein Award recognizes outstanding police officers and police agencies—both in the United States and around the world—that engage in innovative and effective problem-solving efforts and achieve measurable success in reducing specific crime, disorder, and public safety problems.

PERF assembled a panel of seven judges, made up of experienced researchers and practitioners, who selected the winner and five finalists from among 99 award submissions from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia. The judges consider a number of factors in their selection, including the depth of problem analysis, the development of clear and realistic response goals, the use of relevant measures of effectiveness, and the involvement of citizens and other community resources in problem resolution.

Police agencies whose projects successfully resolve any type of recurring community problem that results in crime or disorder are eligible to compete for the award. Examples of problems addressed by past applicants include truancy abatement, calls-for-service in child custody disputes and exchanges, restoration of order to an urban intersection, and revitalization of neighborhoods. Though many previous winning projects have focused on a problem in a specific location, PERF encourages applicants also to consider problems that are larger in scope and impact.

The PERF award honors Herman Goldstein, professor emeritus at the University of Wisconsin Law School in Madison, who first articulated and later elaborated on the concept of problem solving in two seminal publications—the first in 1979, "Improving Policing: A Problem-Oriented Approach" (*Crime and Delinquency* 25: 236B258); the second in 1990, "Problem-Oriented Policing" (New York: McGraw Hill). Goldstein has continued to advance POP and to inspire police officers around the world to identify the problems that trouble communities, to analyze a wide range of information, and to craft and implement responses uniquely suited to each particular problem. Goldstein has urged police to consider implementing new and unique approaches to solve problems rather than relying solely on arrest-oriented practices.

Perhaps most important among his many contributions is Goldstein's encouragement of police to evaluate the impact of their responses to determine the effectiveness of their problem-solving efforts. Goldstein maintains that police problem-solving efforts should focus on the underlying conditions that give rise to crime and disorder. This focus, according to Goldstein, will help police address the root of the problem rather than the symptoms. The results of such a problem-solving focus should be more effective and long-lasting than repeatedly dealing with the same issues. Indeed, improving police effectiveness is at the center of problem-oriented policing.

The concept of problem solving is best illustrated by an example. Suppose police find themselves responding several times a day to calls from a neighborhood near a local high school where they need to disperse disorderly youths and stop acts of vandalism. But this common approach—dispatching an officer to the scene—may do little to resolve the long-term problems of disorder and vandalism. If, instead, police incorporate problem-solving techniques into their approach, they would examine the conditions underlying the youthful disorder and vandalism. This would likely include collecting additional information—perhaps by surveying residents, analyzing the time of day when incidents occur, examining the school's attendance regulations, assessing the availability of afterschool activities, and evaluating characteristics of environmental design and other elements of the problem. Once examined, the findings would be used to inform a response

uniquely developed to reduce or eliminate the problem behaviors. While enforcement might be a component of the response, it is unlikely to be the sole response. Recurrent enforcement has often been used by police, but it does not resolve long-standing problems. For this reason, police adopting the problem-solving approach are encouraged to develop innovative responses to the public safety issues in their community.

The Evolution of POP

Beginning in the late 1970's, researchers and policymakers became increasingly interested in how to improve the effectiveness of policing. Research during this period pointed out the limitations of random patrol, rapid response, and followup criminal investigations—practices that had been the foundation of policing for many years. These findings laid the groundwork for the development of problem-oriented policing. An early test of problem solving took place in the Newport News Police Department in the mid-1980's in a PERF research study that was conceptualized as a crime analysis study. Indeed, using analysis to inform policing remains a key tenet of problem solving today.

Early work on problem-oriented policing yielded important insights:

- Police deal with a range of community problems, many of which are not strictly criminal in nature.
- Arrest and prosecution alone—the traditional functions of the criminal justice system—are not always sufficient for effectively resolving problems.
- Officers have great insight into the problems plaguing a community, and giving them the discretion to create solutions is extremely valuable to the problem-solving approach.
- A wide variety of methods can be used by police to redress recurrent problems.
- The community values police involvement in noncriminal problems and recognizes the contribution they can make to solving them.[1]

As problem-oriented policing has evolved over the last 2 decades, researchers and practitioners have focused on the evaluation of problems, the importance of solid analysis, the need for pragmatism in developing responses, and the need to tap other resources—including members of the community. Indeed, the role of the community continues to be a subject of discussion in POP, and problem solving is a key element in many community policing initiatives.

The SARA Model. The preeminent conceptual model of problem solving, known as SARA, grew out of the problem-oriented policing project in Newport News. The acronym SARA stands for scanning, analysis, response, and assessment. This model has become the basis for many police agencies' training curricula and problem-solving efforts. Each step in the process is summarized below:

Scanning:

- Identify recurring problems of concern to the public and the police.
- Prioritize problems.
- Develop broad goals.
- Confirm that the problems exist.
- Select one problem for examination.
- Identify data collected.

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[1] Goldstein, Herman, *Problem-Oriented Policing*, New York: McGraw Hill, Inc., 1990.

Analysis:

- Try to identify and understand the events and conditions that precede and accompany the problem.
- Identify the consequences of the problem for the community.
- Determine how frequently the problem occurs and how long it has been occurring.
- Identify the conditions that give rise to the problem.
- Narrow the scope of the problem as specifically as possible.
- Be creative in identifying resources that may be of assistance in developing a deeper understanding of the problem.

Response:

- Search for what others with similar problems have done.
- Brainstorm interventions.
- Choose among the alternative solutions.
- Outline the response plan and identify responsible parties.
- State the specific goals for the response plan.
- Identify relevant data to be collected during the response for evaluation purposes.
- Carry out the planned activities.

Assessment:

- Determine whether or not the plan was implemented.
- Determine whether the goals were attained and collect qualitative and quantitative data.
- Identify any new strategies needed to augment the original plan.
- Conduct ongoing assessment to ensure continued effectiveness.

Evidence of POP's Effectiveness

The following report of the winning project and summaries of the five finalists describe how each of the police agencies and their officers used problem-oriented policing and the SARA model to address problems in their communities. A formal publication with full reports from each finalist will be available in the future.

With the widespread adoption of community policing across North America, police agencies are increasingly employing problem-solving strategies to address the concerns of the public. Indeed, problem solving is a core component of most community policing curricula.

The practice of problem solving continues to evolve. Police increasingly have access to technology, such as mapping and sophisticated crime analysis techniques, that can aid in meaningful problem analysis. Technology also provides a tool for police to learn and exchange information—including elements of effective responses—about problems that are quite similar. Police are building their capacity to collaborate by identifying and working with other stakeholders who share responsibility for many community problems. The following report and summaries are a sampling of just a few of the interesting and unique efforts that police are making everyday out on the streets.

To obtain a copy of the 1999 winning projects, visit http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/pubs-sum/182731.htm and watch for the 2000 winning projects at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/pubs-sum/185279.htm.

Graffiti Prevention and Suppression—WINNING PROJECT

San Diego Police Department

The Problem: Gangs and graffiti throughout the Mid-City police division.

Analysis: Officers developed a better understanding of the motivations for graffiti in the area. They concluded that improved monitoring of chronic offenders, consistent removal of graffiti, and alternative activities for offenders could best respond to the problem.

Response: Officers used six approaches in a comprehensive response strategy:
1) Some chronic juvenile offenders received professional psychological counseling.
2) Convicted juvenile offenders painted over graffiti as a condition of probation.
3) Citizen volunteers monitored and cleaned graffiti-prone areas.
4) Police officers helped supervise juveniles on probation for graffiti-related offenses and enforced laws prohibiting graffiti.
5) Juveniles were encouraged to paint murals in select areas.
6) Police coordinated a juvenile bicycle patrol to monitor the neighborhood for graffiti.

Assessment

After the strategy was implemented, officers noted a 90-percent reduction in the more than 300 instances of graffiti in the division. Several chronic offenders who had received counseling stopped painting graffiti altogether. The murals remained free of graffiti.

Judge's comment

This project was exemplary for several reasons. For police, graffiti normally is not a high priority. However, these officers, in reaction to the concerns of the community, agreed to take on the problem and correct it. They went to great lengths to document the dimensions of the problem by surveying the community, counting the number of sites defaced, analyzing patterns of vandalism, and noting the prevalence of different types of graffiti. They distinguished graffiti reports from all other vandalism reports. After developing a better understanding of the motivations of graffiti vandals, police were able to design a multifaceted response plan. Rather than assuming sole responsibility for addressing the graffiti problem, they got the support of schools, juvenile probation, professional counselors, the juvenile court, youth services, and community volunteers.
The officers studied reports on effective responses to graffiti elsewhere and incorporated what they learned into their local response. The response was creative and collaborative, and while it was difficult to determine precisely what impact each part of the response strategy had on the problem, the overall effect was dramatically positive.

Scanning

San Diego Police Department's Mid-City Division, which is densely populated and ethnically diverse, comprises 4 square miles of mixed residential and commercial zones. Thirty-eight languages are spoken in local schools, and the population includes lifelong residents and new immigrants. Housing consists largely of Section 8 apartment complexes and other low-income renters. The business district is primarily made up of churches and small family-owned stores, such as pawnshops, ethnic restaurants, liquor stores, automotive repair shops, and thrift stores. The area has a long history of robberies, drug deals, prostitution, auto theft, and other street crimes. Naturally, the Police Department concentrated on the crimes.

The division already had adopted wide use of problem-solving techniques, including weekly community meetings. At a community meeting in March 1999, an officer presented crime statistics for robberies, prostitution, and drug offenses in Mid-City. After listening to the litany, a member of the community asked, "What about the graffiti problem?" Several other community members chimed in, "How are you going to stop graffiti in our neighborhoods?" The officer was astonished, but had to concede that graffiti, and not other crime, was the greatest quality-of-life concern for the community. Describing how the increase in graffiti encouraged the increase of crime, one resident said, "Blight creates blight." From this point on, graffiti became a top priority for the Police Department's Mid-City Division.

A team of officers decided to quantify the extent of the problem. An officer and a detective charted on a map the amount, sites, and types of graffiti in the community. After 2 days of covering 2 square miles of the division, their findings were disturbing: upon reaching 300 instances, the officers discontinued their count. The community's concern, they realized, was well founded.

The stakeholders were identified as business owners and merchants, homeowners, local residents, the El Cajon Boulevard Business Improvement Association, shoppers, city government, the school district, and the Police Department.

Analysis

The community believed that graffiti ranked low on the Police Department's list of priorities. The community also believed that blight breeds blight: If graffiti were to continue unchecked, property values would plummet, personal safety would be jeopardized, and the neighborhoods would decay.

A team of two officers and a detective researched the problem. The team calculated the local dollar costs related to graffiti and compared the costs nationwide. In 1998, the San Diego City School District spent $500,000 on paint alone to cover graffiti. The city spent $24,000 to cover walls, curbs, and other city property. Additional money was spent on sandblasting, which is a more common method of graffiti removal.

Research also disclosed that the demographic profile of taggers (graffiti writers) in Mid-City roughly matched national findings.

While reviewing the data, police discovered numerous Web sites that promote tagging. Taggers can boast about their activity, showcase their work, gain information about the "best" tagging locations in any city, and find stores with tagging supplies.[2]

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[2] See, for example, http://www.mearone.com.

The team analyzed the information from the 2-day mapping survey and found the following:

- 265 of the 300 instances of graffiti were concentrated on rented multifamily housing that bordered business districts.
- 35 of the 300 instances of graffiti were at single-family homes.
- Business corridors were tagged on any blank wall and within the first 30 feet of an alley so the tag would be visible to passing traffic and the taggers could see if anyone was coming.
- Alleys, dumpsters, telephone poles, electrical poles, and boxes were prime tagging targets because they rarely got painted over.
- School walls were tagged daily.

The officers next studied graffiti-related calls-for-service, out-of-service time, number of graffiti arrests compared to crime arrests, times of day for tagging, types of graffiti (gang, crew, or solo), age of suspects, and the proximity of tagging to suspects' homes. The crime analysis unit of the San Diego Police Department supplied the data. An examination of graffiti-related calls showed:

	1998	1999
Calls for Service	218	149
Out of Service Time	264 hours	227 hours
Arrests	16	18

The decrease in calls-for-service may suggest that the graffiti problem was getting under control. However, based on the intense community concern and the incomplete survey that found more than 300 instances of graffiti, the team concluded that the problem was under-reported because of the complacency of residents who felt that the problem couldn't be solved and that there were serious shortfalls in enforcement and arrests. The 300 instances of graffiti were concentrated in 2 square miles of the division, and only 70 percent of the graffiti tags were reported. Police found the crime cases for graffiti difficult to extract because all vandalism cases were logged under the same Penal Code Section: 594(b)(4). (See appendices on pages 22 and 23).

Common aspects of graffiti in Mid-City began to emerge as the analysis continued:

- Tagging is geocentric—that is, it is concentrated near the taggers' homes and along routes to and from school.
- Tagging is a multiple-suspect activity (gangs and crews).
- Time of tagging is most likely from 5 to 8 p.m. during the week and all hours on the weekend.
- Tagging by scratching—for example, by scraping a sparkplug on Plexiglas—is rapidly growing.
- Graffiti is prevalent near multifamily housing and adjoining alleys.

The survey disclosed three types of tagging in Mid-City: Gang, crew, and solo. The three types form a type of hierarchy, where solo taggers work to form a group, called a tagging crew, that has an identified name. The crew then works to be asked to join a tagging gang, which is the aspiration of most taggers. Gang graffiti and crew graffiti mark the tagger's home territory. The gangs and tagging crews "bomb in packs"—that is, they work in groups to ensure an extensive attack. The crews often cross out tags by rival crews and rewrite their own tag over it. The solo tagger attacks anywhere to promote his tag name. The team identified the sources of most of the graffiti. The top two gang graffitis were identified as the Oriental Boys Society (OBS)

and the Holy Blood Gang (HBG). The top two tagging crews were identified as Running the Show (RTS) and Van Dyke Krew (VDK). The top two solo taggers were identified as Clever and Rascal.

Gang and tagger crews comprise 90 percent of the problems in Mid-City, as they all mark territory, bomb in packs, and cross out rivals. The solo tagger causes only 10 percent of the problem, is considered a "lone wolf," and tags everywhere.

After analyzing the graffiti survey, police looked at the social aspect of graffiti. They found that tagging is part of a natural progression to gang activity. Tagging begins at school with children tagging on paper, ball caps, and backpacks. Tagging is part of social learning through negative behavior. The behavior is learned in small, intimate settings with people who have "influence." By watching the taggers in focus groups, police found that they exert negative social control, which means that the tagger lacks control and is at the mercy of others who teach criminal behavior.

One of the better methods of deterring criminals is the "Pulling Levers Theory," which involves advance warning of enforcement, meticulous follow through, and alternatives to criminal activity.[3]

The team looked at the best solutions adopted by other police departments throughout the Nation to control graffiti. The research showed:

Murals: Philadelphia and Reno have painted murals around the city to prevent tagging. Police in both cities discovered that taggers normally leave murals alone. Therefore, taggers on probation paint the murals in highly tagged areas. The murals were left alone because all taggers view the murals as artwork that conveys a sense of ownership.

Colorizing: A national study found that a graffiti site covered with paint the same color as the graffiti was 10 times less likely to be retagged. Officers in San Diego found, however, that taggers daily hit high-visibility sites (freeway access), even after "colorizing." Alleys were slow to be retagged after "colorizing."

Counseling: Counselors in a graffiti abatement project in Cathedral City, California, identified reasons for tagging and then treated it as an addiction.[4] San Diego police endorsed counseling, but asserted that tagging is criminal behavior, not an addiction.

The team developed a survey in conjunction with the San Diego Association of Governments. Police asked juveniles who had been arrested for tagging to explain their motives. Of the 59 juvenile taggers in custody, 25 admitted to tagging.

The primary motives given by the taggers were boredom, recognition/popularity, member of a gang, and personal tag identification.

The team looked nationwide at the percentage of vandalism arrests handled by the juvenile justice system. Statistics showed that 53 percent of vandalism cases were handled as informal probation and that the rest, 47 percent, were dropped. In Mid-City Division, 75 percent are handled informally and the rest, 25 percent, go to formal probation. None are dropped. The chart below shows the judiciary response. The team spoke with a San Diego juvenile probation officer, Carmen Kneile, who said, "We do not have enough case workers to handle

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[3] Kennedy, David. APulling Levers: Getting Deterrence Right,@ *NIJ Journal* 236 (June 1998): 2B8 (NCJ 184871).

[4] Sgt. Bill Jones, Counseling for Taggers, Cathedral City, 1997.

the number of juvenile offenders. We need help if we're going to keep on top of the taggers. We carry case loads of up to 100 probationary juveniles at a time."

Judiciary Response for Offenders	
National	**Mid-City Cases**
53 percent of the tagging cases are handled informally	100 percent of the cases are handled by probation
47 percent of the informal cases are dismissed	75 percent get informal probation, meaning some type of community service
17 percent agreed to informal probation	25 percent of those attend court for formal probation

Finally, police analyzed past responses and their effectiveness. The responses included surveillance, citizen paint-outs, random patrol, crime reports and arrests, restorative justice, juvenile court, and probation. None of these responses seemed to deter taggers. The officers at Mid-City knew they had to look for both a different response and new resources.

Response

After in-depth scanning and analysis, officers realized that the best problem-solving approach would be to target both active taggers and potential future taggers. Youth-oriented resources would have to be the primary partners in this effort.

The Police Department joined with the Community Advisory Board, youth mentoring programs, city schools, the Code Compliance-Graffiti Control Program, Juvenile Probation, and Juvenile Court.

Based on the analysis, officers set up six steps to stop graffiti in Mid-City.

1. Counseling: Two social workers volunteered to help in these sessions, which were informative for the police, but also designed so the taggers were counseled by the social workers in an attempt to get them to stop tagging. Ten juvenile taggers, who were chosen because they were responsible for 10 percent of the tagging in the area, set goals to stop their tagging. Each week, the taggers would meet with the counselor to discuss methods to prevent tagging. The hours would count toward their community service. Three of the 10 juveniles completely stopped tagging. The group was effective, but due to lack of funding, it is no longer being implemented.

2. Paint-outs: Juveniles on probation for tagging clean up graffiti with bimonthly paint-outs at heavily tagged sites. Police and Juvenile Probation, working with SAY (Social Advocates for Youth), supervise the paint-outs. Paint and supplies come from the city's Graffiti Control Program. Community members contact the Police Department to identify newly tagged sites. Officers drive around the community to identify the tagged areas. The paint-outs "colorized" the graffiti.

3. Adopt-a-block: Community stakeholders volunteer to keep a block free of graffiti for 6 months. The Graffiti Control Program provides the paint and supplies.

4. Handler program: Officers are assigned to repeat juvenile offenders. The officers established a list of known chronic taggers by talking to patrol officers and detectives. The list is kept in a secured cabinet, but is accessible to all officers dealing with taggers. An officer, called a "handler," visits weekly with the tagger to monitor his behavior. The handler checks on the juvenile's school, home, and street contacts. The handler updates the juvenile's file after each visit. A zero-tolerance policy is in effect for repeat offenders. If they are not at school or at home when they are supposed to be or if their tag shows up anywhere, they are sent back to the probation officer and are ordered to perform paint-outs in the neighborhood or other community service. The purpose of the program is to let taggers know that the community and Police Department will no longer tolerate graffiti. The handler program has greatly assisted Juvenile Probation with its large caseload.

5. Murals: Students at the local junior high school paint murals on heavily tagged walls. The students work with teachers, businesses, and residents to plan and paint murals that reflect positive images of the community. The students have painted seven murals so far. Except for some minor pen marks, the murals have escaped tagging.

6. Joint Patrol: "Kids in Control," a youth bike team, joins police, also on bikes, to patrol highly tagged sites. The program improves the relationship between youth in the area and police officers. The youth are taught how to work together to solve crime problems, such as graffiti, in their neighborhood. Officer David Tos wrote a grant for Mid-City for Youth to raise money to buy bikes for the youths. Based on the crime statistics for graffiti, the officers concentrated on youth aged 13 to 18.

The Probation Department put 10 convicted taggers in a graffiti focus group. A psychologist counseled the taggers to find out their motivations. The taggers gave these reasons:

- Need for attention and acceptance.
- The thrill of risk taking.
- Competition.
- No adult role models.

After working with the taggers for 3 months, the psychologist theorized several probable underlying causes for tagging:

- Lack of intimate adult interaction and direction.
- Lack of self-discipline.
- Poor self-esteem.
- Unresolved life trauma.
- Impulsiveness.

An erroneous belief is that taggers come from single-parent homes. The survey showed that 60 percent of the taggers live in two-parent homes.

Assessment

In the past 16 months inspections of the neighborhood recorded a 90-percent decrease in tagging.

The counseling program was effective, resulting in 30 percent of graffiti taggers in the program ultimately stopping tagging. However, the unbudgeted program ended after the volunteers had finished working with the youths.

Juvenile Probation continues to work with the Police Department on the paint-outs. Probation assigns 10 juveniles to bimonthly paint-outs in Mid-City.

The handler program has 10 chronic graffiti taggers assigned to officers. Police have arrested two of these taggers after visiting the taggers' homes, one for drugs found in his room during a routine visit and the other for curfew violation. The police are adding more handlers to the program.

Seven murals have been painted in the popular graffiti tagging locations. So far, only one mural has been tagged. Additional murals are being planned. The youth in "Kids in Control" have identified 20 graffiti crews and have identified the neighborhoods in which they tag. The program currently has 10 youths involved and is expected to expand to 20 by the end of June 2001. The program is still in its infancy and has yet to be evaluated.

As a result of these newly formed partnerships among existing agencies, the amount of graffiti has been reduced in Mid-City Division. Ongoing efforts and programs will continue to expand. The goal of removing graffiti as the community's biggest concern is closer to being achieved.

For More Information

For more information about the San Diego Police Department's activities, contact Dan Albright, Officer; Corinne Hard, Officer; or David Tos, Officer of the San Diego Police Department, Vice; Mid-City Division; 1401 Broadway; San Diego, CA 92101; phone: 619–531–2438 for Officer Albright; 619–531–2423 for Officer Hard; and 619–516–3083 for Officer Tos.

Reported Gas Thefts at Service Stations

Kansas City, Missouri, Police Department

Scanning

During a routine review, Officer Kent Morton, a crime analyst in the Police Department's North Patrol Division, noticed a disproportionate number of Part I Stealing offenses reported in July 1999. Then, he found the cause—reported gasoline thefts at convenience stores. Officer Morton could not immediately put a dollar figure on the thefts, but he suspected that the documentation and investigation of gas drive-offs were costing police precious hours and resources that should be devoted to more serious crimes.

Analysis

After reviewing hundreds of reports in search of a pattern, Officer Morton discovered that a disproportionate number of reported drive-offs occurred at three convenience stores, all owned and operated by the same company, Gas Star.[*] In July 1999, 150 reports in the "Stealing (Other)" category were filed in the North Patrol Division. Of the 150 reports, 72 (48 percent) were gasoline drive-offs. Of the 72 reported drive-offs, 62 (86.1 percent) came from the three Gas Star stores. Only 12 (19.4 percent) of those 62 reported drive-offs contained information on either the vehicle or the suspect. Of the 10 reports from stores other than Gas Star, 9 (90 percent) included information on the vehicle or the suspect. Officer Morton found a similar pattern in the August reports.

The 126 gas drive-offs reported in August 1999 in the North Patrol Division accounted for 51 percent of the 245 drive-offs citywide. But the division has only 41 gas stations, only 23 percent of the city's 182 total number of gas stations. Officer Morton discovered that 135 of the 245 citywide reports of gas drive-offs included information on suspect, license, or vehicle. That amounted to 95 percent reporting with information in the other divisions, compared to only 15 percent with similar information in the reports for the North Patrol Division.

Few gas theft cases go to court. Information on a suspect usually is lacking and store managers are reluctant to press for prosecution because of the time and effort required. Therefore, detectives assign gas drive-offs low priority. Still, each report to the department of a gas drive-off requires about 25 minutes to process, depending on the information provided. The Gas Star stores reported 114 drive-offs in August 1999. Based on rough estimates, the job of putting those 114 reports into the system required about 2,850 minutes, or 47.5 man-hours. The expenditure in manpower and resources jumps considerably if a detective is assigned to investigate.

Store employees at the three North Patrol Division Gas Star infrequently witnessed the drive-offs. Employees often called at the beginning of their shifts to report drive-offs that allegedly occurred before the caller arrived for work. The North Patrol Division desk clerks noted that other convenience stores called at the time the drive-offs occurred and usually provided specific information on suspects.

The vice president of sales and the director of security for Gas Star told Officers Timothy Griddine and Mark Reed that the company policy is to report only gas thefts that are witnessed with enough certainty to identify the suspect and the vehicle's license plate. This policy contradicted information reported during interviews with the three managers of Gas Star stores in the North Patrol Division. Officer Morton then contacted the Internal Revenue Service and was told that if a company reported the theft of gasoline under the "casualty," or loss, column of its tax form, documentation, such as an insurance or police report, would be needed. However, if the company reported the thefts in the "reduction of inventory" column, only an inventory showing the difference

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[*] Name changed to protect identity.

between what was purchased and what was sold would be necessary. In other words, Gas Star stores, contrary to what store managers believed, did not have to file a police report to document the loss for tax purposes.

The officers now realized that the underlying cause of the problem apparently was a combination of company policy and, perhaps, employee theft. Both store managers and clerks had good reason to report inflated numbers of thefts without confirming an actual drive-off. Company policy of deducting monthly bonus pay for unaccounted losses encouraged managers to log all losses—no matter what the cause—as thefts.

Response

With the problem redefined as stemming from poor company policies and possible employee theft, the officers reviewed the findings of their analysis:

- The majority of reported drive-offs were at four stores, all part of the Gas Star chain.
- Environmental design factors might have encouraged actual thefts by customers or employees because the pumps at these stores were not easily visible from inside the store.
- Based on a misunderstanding of tax liabilities, the company reported all losses as thefts. Police told the company that the IRS indicated there are other means of reporting losses for tax purposes and that reporting them as thefts was unnecessary.
- Although company policy indicated that losses could be reported as thefts only if the clerk or manager had an adequate description of the suspect or vehicle license plate, the policy had not been adequately conveyed to store managers.

The primary response was to ask corporate officials at Gas Star stores to clarify for store managers the company's policy on reporting gasoline thefts. Corporate officials said store managers would be instructed to report a drive-off only if the drive-off was witnessed. The police officers also relayed information they had gathered from an environmental design assessment and suggested changes to enhance visibility of the gas pumps from inside the store.

Assessment

After the September meeting with Gas Star stores' corporate officials, Officer Morton noticed a significant decrease in the reported number of gasoline drive-offs, starting immediately that month. By the end of 1999, the "Stealing (Other)" category of the North Patrol Divisions Part I Stealing reports had steadily dropped from a high of 256 in August to a low of 117 in December. Officers exceeded their goal of reducing drive-off reports. By identifying the root of the problem, the officers reduced the time and resources committed by the department.

The officers recommended that the department accept a drive-off report only when accompanied by clear evidence that a theft has been witnessed. The officers also recommended that the department design a simple form for store managers to report drive-offs. This would save the department from spending considerable time and resources on an offense that rarely goes to court because of lack of witnesses and evidence. Third, officers recommended setting up a separate category for reports of gas drive-offs. The separate category would provide more accurate monitoring. The recommendations are under consideration.

Showdown at the Playground

Vancouver Police Department, British Columbia
Grandview-Woodland Community Policing Centre

Scanning

Grandview Park, a one-square block of green space at the center of Grandview-Woodland, is a diverse community. The park, located on Commercial Drive, the neighborhood's main road, doubles as a backyard for a variety of people and a variety of purposes. The park is also adjacent to a large community center that houses an elementary and high school, day-care center, and various community services.

The neighborhood is next to Downtown Eastside (DTES), an area plagued by drug use and drug dealing. However, DTES is slowly gentrifying and its drug dealers are moving to other areas. When some drug dealers and their clients from DTES moved to Grandview Park in the summer of 1998, Grandview-Woodland Community Policing Centre (GWCPC) recognized that the park faced an emergency.

Reports to GWCPC regarding routine park problems were consistent from 1995 to the summer of 1998. However, reports to GWCPC of hard drug sales and drug use in the park during the summer of 1998 prompted the Centre to declare a state of emergency in the park.

Analysis

To properly respond to the array of problems in the park, police analyzed the problem from the following perspectives:

- Social dynamics and the movement of problem populations within Vancouver.
- Park structure and its effect on criminal behavior.
- Police response to problems in the park.
- Coordination of services.
- Community meetings and community surveys.
- Maintenance of community standards.

DTES, which is comprised of about 20 square blocks, is the country's poorest section, as reported by Census Canada. It also has one of the highest needle-based drug user populations and HIV drug infection rates in North America. As DTES undergoes gentrification, available low-cost housing diminishes. The criminal element in DTES is moving to other low-rent areas in Vancouver. Grandview-Woodland, a working-class community with an artistic component, is highly diverse, and the available housing provides a range of options, which is attractive to DTES residents. Additionally, public transportation links the two neighborhoods.

In June 1998, police renewed efforts to control the criminal element in DTES. One effect was dispersal of crack dealers and their clients. Some of this criminal element moved to Grandview Park, causing frightened local residents to abandon the park. Through the media, GWCPC in August and September 1998 placed the onus of reclaiming the park on the community.

Response

The many project partners set a number of goals, including:

- Ensure that members of the community could safely return to the park.
- Ensure long-term solutions for park problems.

- Involve the community in the problem-solving process.
- Redirect delivery of police services.
- Coordinate delivery services(s) among the providing agencies.

With the significant increase in reports on drug dealing, and especially the dealing of crack, Constable Jean Prince organized several plainclothes operations to identify the drug dealers. Community members willingly opened their homes to police officers as observation points, and Park Watch, a volunteer foot patrol, provided police with information on drug deals and dealers.

GWCPC asked the Park Board for immediate action to control graffiti and litter. The Board responded within 1 week. Britannia Continuing Education created "Spruce the Drive," hiring youth to pick up litter, remove graffiti, and paint murals. The workers spend 1 day every week in the park.

Information collected about drug dealers during the plainclothes operations and suggestions from Simon Fraser University criminology students helped horticulturists understand how the park should be changed. They eliminated obstructed sightlines, severely pruned covered areas, and replaced the low bushes where dealers hid drugs. In 1999, GWCPC began a proactive summer program called Park Watch, a volunteer, nonconfrontational patrol of the park.

The Dog Pound also stepped up its enforcement of unleashed dogs used by drug dealers to intimidate residents. The Park Board and the Britannia Community Center contributed staff and organized cleanups and mural painting.

Assessment

At each phase of the project, local residents and community agencies responded to the requests of GWCPC to help save the park. Before the response, drug dealers and their clients dominated the park. Few children used the playground and local residents walked around the park, not through it. After the response, the drug trade fell, parents began bringing their children to the playground, and area residents returned to the park.

By the end of September 1998, GWCPC had drastically reduced the number of drug dealers. The highly visible response caused a marked decrease in 911 calls. During August 1998, police received 37 calls to 911 for service to the park. In September 1998, the number dropped to six. Similarly, calls to GWCPC went from five in August 1998 to zero in September 1998.

One of the goals was to increase the effectiveness of police responses in the park. This goal was reached through the information collected during Park Watch. Further, 911 calls-for-service indicate solid successes as police increased arrests, warrant arrests, and drugs seized.

Proactive police work also increased significantly. The results can be measured in calls generated by patrol members. Dispatched calls are generated by a public complaint. The monthly average of dispatched calls during the summer of 1998 was 19, falling to 13 the next summer. In July 1998, police reported 15 dispatched calls and only 3 the next year. Comparison of these two summers discloses an inverse relationship between dispatched calls and calls generated by police and Park Watch. In July 1998, there was 1 police-generated call and 15 dispatched calls. In July 1999, there were 18 police- or Park Watch-generated calls and 3 dispatched calls. The results indicate that in 1999 GWCPC successfully helped patrols to respond proactively to park problems.

Homeless Men's Shelter

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, North Carolina

Scanning

The Uptown Men's Shelter at 1210 North Tryon Street provides temporary housing, mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, and employment and permanent housing assistance to 200 homeless men. The shelter is located near a soup kitchen on a major business corridor adjacent to a residential neighborhood. Calls-for-service at the Uptown Shelter have increased over the years. Police in the David Three District reported that many responses to the shelter did not require police attention. Area businesses complained of losing business because patrons linked criminal activity with the homeless population. Police found that many of the homeless in the neighborhood were not associated with the shelter.

Analysis

Community Policing Coordinators Nathan King and Ginny Woodlief devised a survey of 911 calls at the shelter to determine whether the shelter's management had taken appropriate action before calling. The survey disclosed that most of the calls concerned matters that should have been resolved by the shelter's management. Police found that managers of the shelter were poorly trained and had little understanding of the appropriate use of 911. Of the 642 calls placed for service to the shelter in 1998, 78 percent required neither an offense report nor an arrest. Police clearly were being used as surrogate shelter managers.

The officers interviewed residents and business owners and found that the respondents assumed that shelter residents caused all the crime in the area. In 1998, 216 suspects listed the shelter as home at the time of their arrest. In truth, only 88 of the suspects were either shelter visitors or residents when they were arrested. Suspects listed the shelter as their home because the address gave them easier access to a State identification card. The cards facilitate the cashing of paychecks from temporary labor services and government subsistence programs.

The officers found that the shelter's few written policies on management were inconsistently applied. For example, some managers would place a resident on probation, others would ban the resident for several hours, and still others invoked permanent bans—all for the same offense. Moreover, the physical appearance of the shelter and its surroundings helped foster crime: An overgrown lot bordering the shelter provided concealment; the shelter parking lot was poorly lit and had two entrances, which hindered efforts to control access; residents walked the railroad next to the shelter to get to the soup kitchen; and high grass along the tracks provided one more concealed area.

Officers King and Woodlief set several goals:

- Establish a productive working relationship with the shelter staff.
- Improve management of the shelter.
- Reduce the number of calls-for-service to the shelter.
- Reduce criminal activity at the shelter.
- Reduce the fear that the facility generated among residents of the neighborhood.

Response

Shelter staffers denied they had a problem, and the shelter director denied any obligation to the community. Officers Woodlief and King then decided to galvanize the community. They suggested to the North Tryon Street Business Coalition and to residents of the Lockwood area that they confront shelter management about their concerns. The officers also spoke with the shelter's board of directors and with a county commissioner. The commissioner reminded the managers that county funds are a critical component of the shelter's budget. The board of directors replaced the site director with the day manager who had been more cooperative with police.

The survey that police had taken of the 911 calls helped single out shift managers who needed additional training in enforcement of shelter rules. The survey provided examples of improper use of 911, which in turn gave shelter management a clear picture of the problem. Each supervisor now logs the nature and outcome of 911 calls placed during the supervisor's shift. In their training of staff and managers, the officers suggested ways to identify potentially volatile situations so that police could be called before violence broke out. The officers emphasized the distinct roles of police and shelter managers.

The shelter improved use of ID badges. Police noted that it was difficult to identify shelter residents, which hindered the timely sharing of information between police and management. Officers realized that an identification system and tighter controls at the shelter would help dispel neighborhood fears and prejudice. Shelter managers adopted a written policy, consistently applied across all shifts, that articulates the grounds for banning people from the shelter. The shelter improved lighting on its property and joined in efforts to clean up the immediate area. The shelter posted "No Loitering" signs and closed one of the two entrances to the parking lot. Police expanded their authority in the area by adopting agreements with several businesses and with Norfolk Southern Railroad. The agreements, known as "Authorization to Act as Agent," empower police to enforce the law on private property in the absence of the owner or manager.

Officers set up a method for shelter residents to pass information about criminal activity to an intermediary on the shelter staff, who in turn provide the information to police. This allows residents to share information with police without fear of being intimidated or of becoming known as a snitch. The program is another way that officers hope to gain the trust of a population that traditionally has had an uneasy relationship with police.

Assessment

Police are aware that correcting problems at the shelter is an ongoing effort, not in small part because of the transience of the homeless and the high turnover rate among shelter employees. The most obvious measure of success is the reduction in 911 calls-for-service to the shelter during 1999. In 1998, calls had reached a high of 642. The next year brought only 282 calls-for-service to the shelter.

Members of the North Tryon Street Business Coalition and residents of the Lockwood area say they believe that improvements in management procedures and in the physical environment have gone a long way to reduce many of the problems—loitering, assaults, drug dealing—associated with the shelter. Residents and business owners alike have changed their perception of the shelter, believing that the shelter wants to be a part of the solution, not part of the problem.

The Question of Independent Living[*]

San Diego Police Department

Scanning

The apartment complex at 1280 Elmwood Avenue is in the City Heights section, which comprises low-income, single-family residences and apartments. Absentee landlords are the norm in City Heights and the neighborhood around 1280 Elmwood Avenue is plagued by prostitution, narcotics, and gangs. Officers believe these factors aggravated the problems at 1280 Elmwood Avenue when the building was converted from single-family apartments to an independent living facility for people with mental disabilities.

Before February 1999, families occupied the 8-unit apartment complex at 1280 Elmwood Avenue. Police in the Mid-City Division experienced few problems there, even though the area accounted for a high number of calls-for-service and reports of crime. The setting quickly changed when the families were summarily evicted from 1280 Elmwood Avenue. The owner had leased the property to John Doe, who had promised to generate far more income from the property with far less responsibilities. Doe converted the building into an independent living facility, filled the apartments—four residents in each of eight units—with people with mental disabilities, and called the new enterprise Winchester Court.

Within a month, police were responding to a significant increase in calls concerning violence and drug deals. Many of the complaints and calls-for-service were focused on the new tenants of Winchester Court.

Analysis

Officers reviewed radio calls in the neighborhood. The volume of calls for service had increased dramatically both at the apartment complex and in the surrounding area. The average number of service requests to Winchester Court alone increased from an average of 2.66 to 12.6 per month. Residents told officers that a large number of incidents went unreported. Officers also analyzed the type of calls and found that police responded 158 times to Winchester Court.

Police learned that many of the residents of Winchester Court were victims of crimes. Within 100 feet of Winchester Court were two drug-dealing sites, which many of Winchester Court's residents frequented. The dealers frequently assaulted and robbed Winchester Court's residents.

Independent living facilities became popular after the State of California cut bed space at State hospitals. Independent living facilities were supposed to accept only those people capable of living on their own—with or without mental disabilities. Winchester Court's residents needed care and supervision. They could not live on their own. Facilities that house residents like those at Winchester Court who require care and supervision come under strict government guidelines. By California standards, Winchester Court should have been classified as a board and care/group home with definite license provisions.

Officers learned from the State Community Care Licensing that complaints of crime or health are a local matter. State Licensing was interested in the facility only if the officers could show that its residents were incapable of independent living.

Checking on city licensing requirements, officers learned that San Diego does not track or regulate independent living facilities. By claiming he was operating an independent living facility, Doe was skirting city regulations

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[*] Names and places have been changed to protect identities.

regarding the running of a business. Police thought they could pursue this angle in their attempt to bring order to Winchester Court.

The manager of the property was a convicted felon with an extensive drug history. Police discovered that the manager had a felony warrant for his arrest and was on felony probation with a 4th waiver. Doe promised to fire the manager, but chose not to, and instead gave him control of all the residents' medications.

When contacted by police, the owner said that he did not see any problem and that if crimes were being committed at Winchester Court then that was a police concern, not his. The owner said that unless he was presented with evidence of a problem, he was unwilling to listen.

Based on this analysis, police came to a new conclusion: Winchester Court for mentally disabled residents was responsible for a significant increase in calls-for-service, crimes of violence, and fear in the neighborhood. Primary contributing factors were Winchester Court's poor onsite management and the large percentage of Winchester Court residents who were not qualified for independent living.

Response
Police formed a partnership with the government agencies and members of the community and set several goals:

- Compel Doe to comply with State licensing regulations and to take better care of the property and its residents.
- Remove all residents not qualified for independent living.
- Improve management practices for tenants.

Neighbors raised the stakes dramatically by threatening Doe with a civil lawsuit under the Safe Streets Now act, which provides that residents can sue individually.

Informed of the trouble at Winchester Court, State Community Care investigated and found numerous violations, including the dispensing of medicine by the onsite manager. Police threatened Winchester Court and the property owner with an abatement process that could lead to forfeiture of the property. Doe pulled up stakes, evicted all the residents, and sold the property.

Assessment
Once residents were evicted, calls-for-service in the neighborhood nearly ceased. An informal police survey of the neighborhood disclosed that the residents of Elmwood Avenue felt safe again and were proud of their problem-solving partnership with police. A review of calls-for-service disclosed a significant reduction—from a high of 23 a month to a low of only 2 per month, and those 2 calls were complaints about noisy construction crews.

Repairing Neighborhoods with Partnerships

Joliet, Illinois, Police Department

Scanning

Joliet, Illinois, located 45 minutes southwest of Chicago, has a population of 100,000. It is primarily a working class community that endured economic crises in the 1970's and '80's as industry left the city. Joliet's problems intensified with burgeoning gangs and open-air drug markets, especially in the older neighborhoods.

Many of the neighborhoods targeted by police contained a large portion of dilapidated Victorian houses that were owned by absentee landlords. The landlords had divided the houses into small apartments that complied with the minimum inspection standards of the time. As a result, Joliet was replete with low-income rental property. The city contained 74 percent of the Section 8 housing in Will County, but only 21 percent of the population, according to the Joliet Housing Authority. The rental property generally was in neighborhoods rife with gang members and drug dealers.

Analysis

Officers knew that problems associated with rental property had a long history and probably extended beyond the areas targeted by community policing. However, not much more than reactive law enforcement had been tried in the past. A formal analysis of problem-solving efforts between January 1992 and January 1996 confirmed police suspicions: The vast majority of problems involved rental property and over half involved drug or gang activity.

Police analyzed all calls-for-service in 15 target neighborhoods during 18 randomly picked days in 1996. Police received 890 calls-for-service to 297 different addresses. A police study of water bills disclosed that 700 of the calls were to residential property and 137 to commercial property. About 75 percent of the residential property to which officers responded involved rental property.

Response

Rather than continually confront suspects at the rental units, police tried to win the cooperation of landlords. Police believed that landlords could reduce disturbances by screening tenants and evicting problem tenants; however, few landlords cooperated. Then-Sergeant Jim Powers and Officers Bob Blackburn and Jim Scarpetta found that other city departments were frustrated in their efforts to solve problems at the same rental properties.

In response, police in 1997 developed a formal abatement process for dealing with drug, weapon, and nuisance complaints. The officers learned of a city rental inspection ordinance that requires property owners of two or more rental units to pass a maintenance inspection and to maintain a rental inspection certificate for each property. The certificate, which can be revoked for cause, must be renewed every 2 years. For the most part, however, the city enforced certification only in response to complaints from tenants and neighbors.

At police request, the city council passed an ordinance requiring landlords to cooperate with police once they are notified that their property is involved in criminal activity. If landlords fail to cooperate, they can be forced to vacate their property. Police teach landlords to identify problem tenants, to screen prospective tenants, to enforce illegal drug clauses in leases, and to evict problem tenants. Representatives of Neighborhood Services and of fire, zoning and legal departments also participate.

The "intimidation factor"—fear of gang members—often kept law-abiding neighbors from stepping forward. After some success in closing problem property through the hearing process and in gaining the cooperation of landlords, residents became more comfortable cooperating with police, even in gang neighborhoods.

Assessment

The abatement cases had a positive effect on the community by reducing the number of calls-for-service and by increasing the quality of life in the neighborhood.

The first step of the analysis involved a look at 10 percent of each year's abatement caseload from 1997 through 1999. Police also collected calls-for-service for each of the selected addresses for 3 months prior to the opening of the case and for one full year after. Findings indicate that the abatement process had an increasingly positive influence. During 1997, calls for service at four of seven addresses involved in the abatement process decreased immediately. The decreases ranged from 31 percent to 62 percent.

In the second step, police checked calls-for-service in neighborhoods with a high proportion of rental property. Calls in the three target areas had been increasing since 1995, 2 years before the abatement process began. Calls decreased slightly in 1997 and 1998, and significantly in 1999. The data suggest that some intervention occurred in 1999 to stem and then to reverse the upward trend in calls-for-service.

The third step involved a closer look at the types of calls-for-service that decreased. Because the abatement process usually begins in response to an excessive number of disturbance, drug, or weapon calls, police expected a precipitous drop in these calls. Most types increased in the second year of implementation (1998) and then decreased in the third year (1999). One possible explanation could be stronger community support for the abatement process.

The decrease in calls-for-service from 1998 to 1999 is striking, from 22 percent for calls involving violence to 55 percent for calls involving drugs. Disturbance calls decreased by 39 percent.

More significantly, police found decreases in calls-for-service that related to residents' quality of life, such as neighborhood disturbances, property damage, abandoned vehicles, and suspicious incidents. Calls related to battery, weapons, and drug incidents—calls that often prompted abatement actions—declined as well.

Vandalism Arrests and Crime Cases in Mid-City: by Month
Jan 1, 1999 through Mar 31, 2000
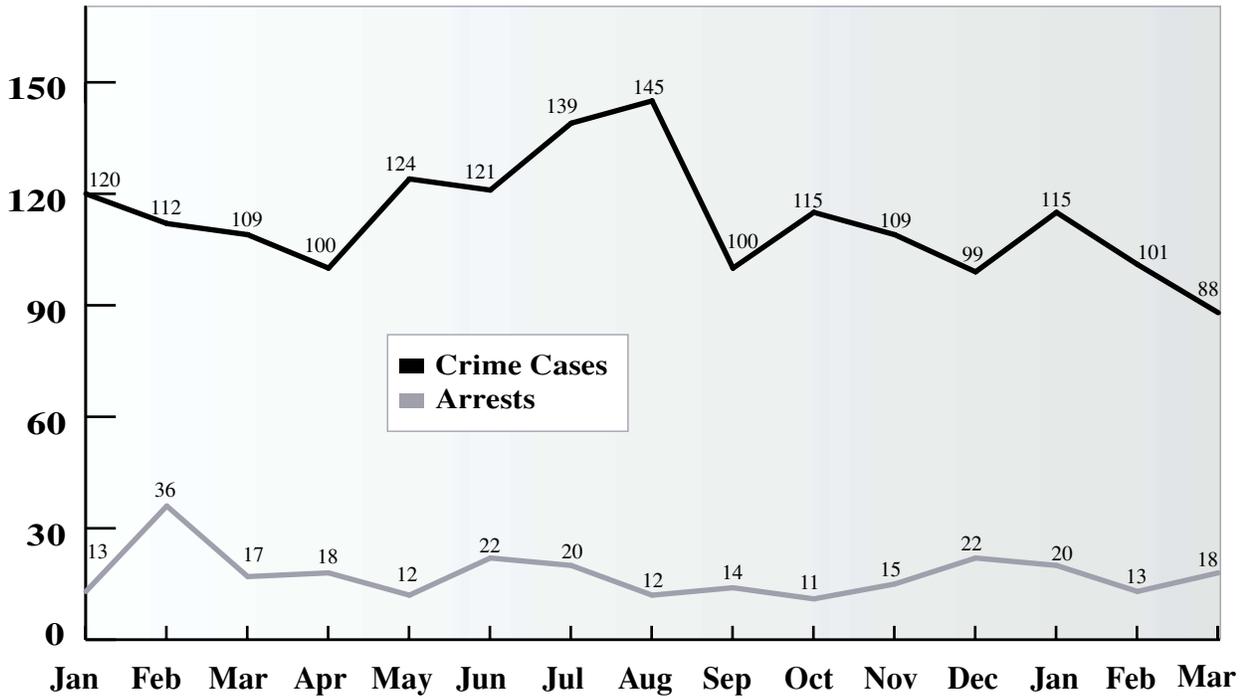
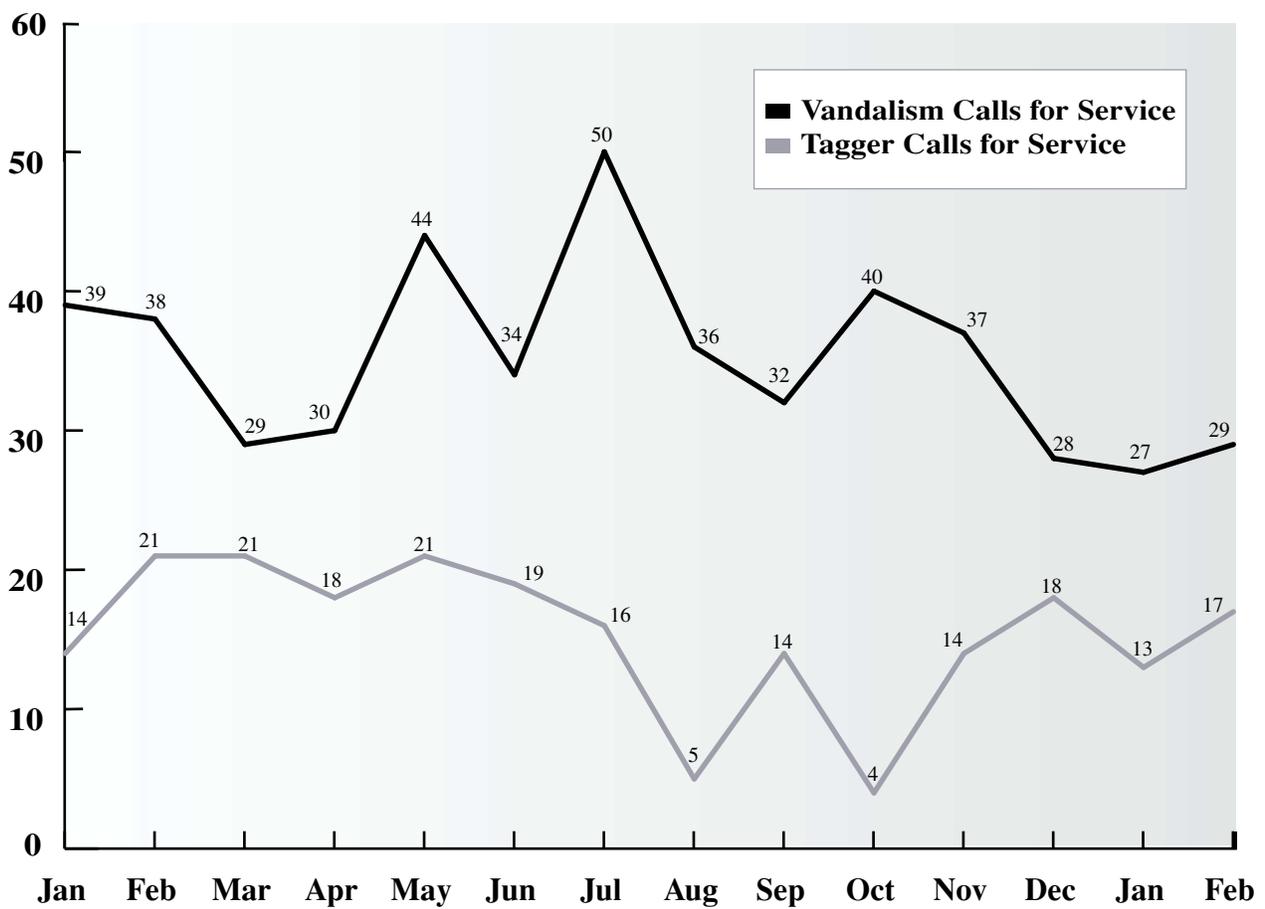# Vandalism Arrests and Crime Cases in Mid-City: by Neighborhood
Jan 1, 1999 through Mar 31, 2000
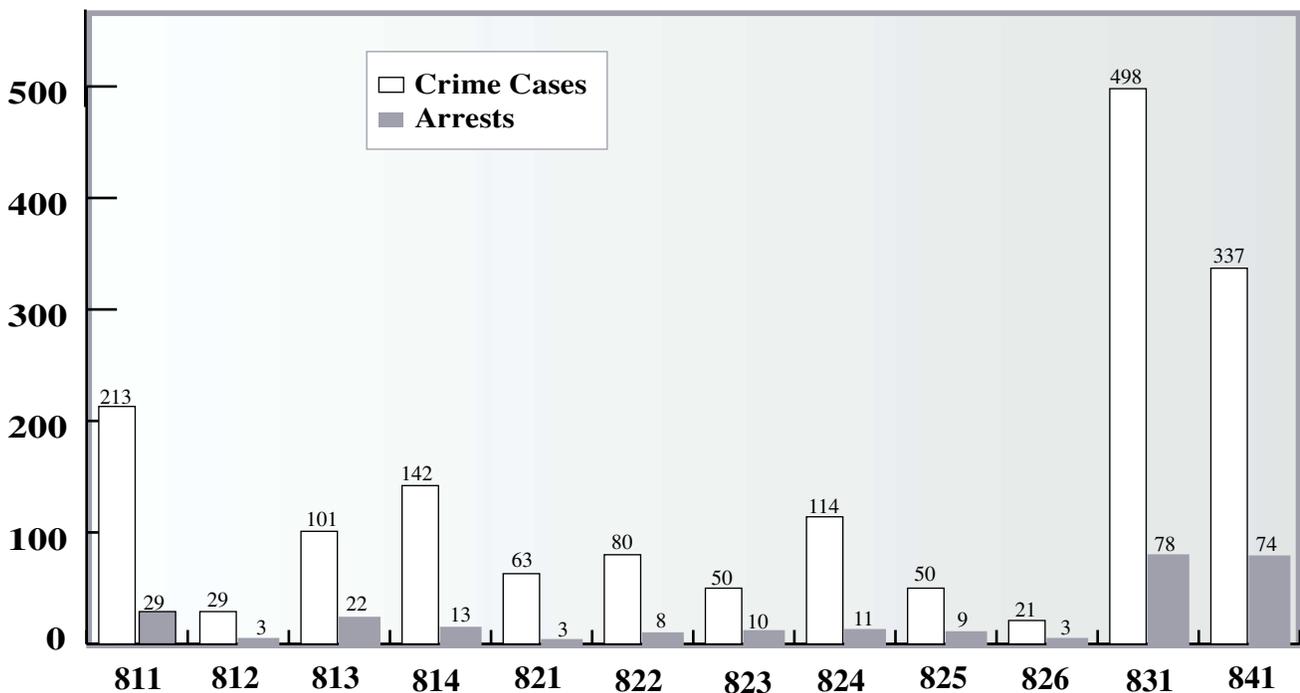
"Tagger" and Vandalism" Calls for Police Service in Mid-City: by Month Jan 1, 1999 through Feb 29, 2000

■ **Vandalism Calls for Service**
■ **Tagger Calls for Service**

Vandalism Calls for Service: Jan 39, Feb 38, Mar 29, Apr 30, May 44, Jun 34, Jul 50, Aug 36, Sep 32, Oct 40, Nov 37, Dec 28, Jan 27, Feb 29

Tagger Calls for Service: Jan 14, Feb 21, Mar 21, Apr 18, May 21, Jun 19, Jul 16, Aug 5, Sep 14, Oct 4, Nov 14, Dec 18, Jan 13, Feb 17

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
810 Seventh Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20531

Janet Reno
Attorney General

Daniel Marcus
Acting Associate Attorney General

Mary Lou Leary
Acting Assistant Attorney General

Julie E. Samuels
Acting Director, National Institute of Justice

Office of Justice Programs	**National Institute of Justice**
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