Addressing Crime and Disorder in Seattle's "Hot Spots": What Works?

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Hot spots policing represents an approach to crime prevention that not only has the potential to generate strong crime prevention gains, but also, if implemented properly, increase police legitimacy in the eyes of community members.

- Anthony A. Braga and David L. Weisburd
  Policing Problem Places: Crime Hot Spots and Effective Prevention
  Oxford University Press, 2010

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Introduction

At the request of Seattle City Councilmembers Tim Burgess and Tom Rasmussen, our office initiated audits to examine how well the City is currently addressing two types of physical disorder[1]: graffiti and litter[2]. Our work on graffiti and litter led us to a growing body of research evidence in the field of criminology[3] that suggests that efforts focused on very small (e.g., one city block), discrete "hot spots" of crime and disorder can be effective in reducing crime and disorder in those areas. Further, this research shows that, rather than displacing the crime and disorder to adjacent areas, nearby areas often also benefit from the hot spot efforts.

Researchers who have studied focused efforts on hot spots indicate that this approach represents a more efficient and effective use of resources, because hot spots are shown to account for a significant portion of a city's total crime. For example, a 1989 U.S. Department of Justice study found that only three percent of the addresses in Minneapolis generated over 50 percent of all calls to the police, and other studies have found similar results. (See endnote #3.) Criminologists have evaluated efforts in other jurisdictions that have addressed crime in "micro-places" and have identified approaches that have demonstrated evidence of success. [4]

> **Hot spots are much smaller units of geography than neighborhoods, police precincts, or what is generally thought of as a community. Hot spots occur when crime and/or disorder are concentrated in an area such as a single address, a block face, or a small concentration of blocks. Researchers refer to these small geographic areas as "micro-places."**

In this paper, we:

1. Summarize the latest criminology research regarding hot spots of crime and disorder in Seattle;

2. Describe efforts in other jurisdictions that have demonstrated, through outcome data and evaluation, evidence of success in reducing crime ; and

3. Recommend steps, based on research evidence, for how Seattle could bring about positive community change in its hot spots of crime and disorder.

What do we know about crime and disorder hot spots in Seattle?

Figure 1: Data for Seattle

Figure 1: Percentage of Street Segments with 50% and 100% of Incident Reports from 1989 to 2002.
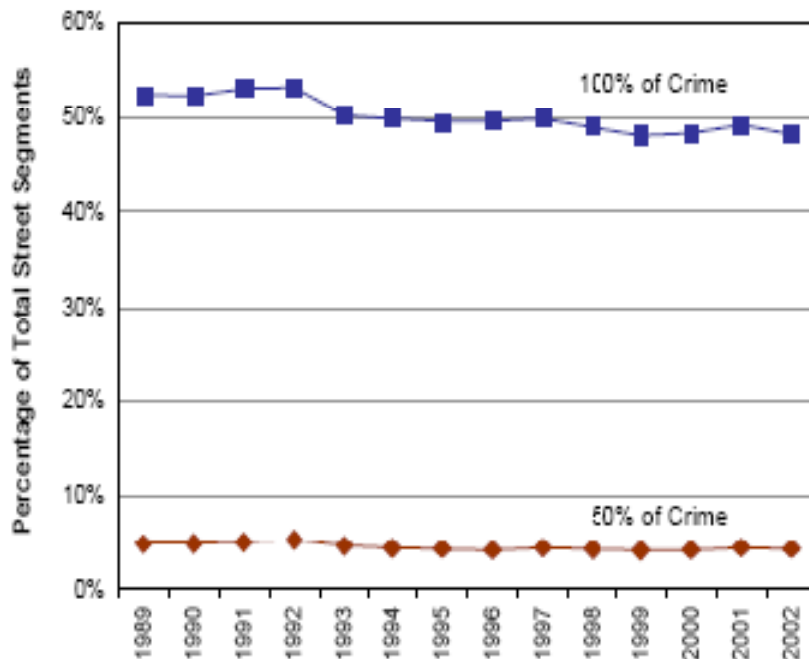
Source: Weisburd et al. (2004).

Seattle hot spots have been a recent focus of criminology researchers, providing a growing body of useful data for Seattle policy-makers and police officials. Using fourteen years of data from the Seattle Police Department and Seattle Public Utilities, researchers have been able to draw some conclusions about hot spots in Seattle. The first of these studies, conducted in 2004[5], showed that 50 percent of the crime was perpetrated in about 4.5 percent of Seattle street segments.

Further, using trajectory analysis to plot occurrence of crime over time, these researchers were able to show that crime in these specific hot spots remained quite stable over the 14-year period. They contrasted this information with data about offenders whose criminal activity varies over time. What they found was that on average only about 1,500 of Seattle's 30,000 street segments accounted for 50 percent of the crime each year during this 14-year period. During the same 14-year period about 6,108 offenders were responsible for 50 percent of the crime each year. Researcher David Weisburd concluded that, "Simply stated, the (Seattle) police would have to approach four times as many targets to identify the same level of overall crime when they focus on people as opposed to places."[6]

A 2009 study examined hot spots of juvenile crime in Seattle. The study found a consistently high concentration of juvenile crime in a small number of street segments (i.e., block faces). The researchers found that just 86 street segments, or .29 percent of the nearly 30,000 total street segments in Seattle,

accounted for over one-third of all of the juvenile crimes committed over 14 years. Figure 2 below shows the concentration of juvenile crimes in Seattle.

An even more recent (2010) body of research[7] examined Seattle hot spots for violent crimes, social disorder[8] (public drunkenness, disorderly conduct, etc.), and physical disorder[9] (graffiti, litter, illegal dumping, etc.). This study found that physical and social disorder concentrate at hot spots – and that these "powerful few" hot spots are responsible for many of the disorder problems in Seattle. In this study, the unit of analysis was the census block. About 12 percent of the census blocks accounted for almost half of Seattle's social disorder. And in the case of physical disorder, less than 5 percent of the census blocks accounted for almost 23 percent of physical disorder reported over twelve years.

Figure 2
Source: "Hot Spots of Juvenile Crime: A Longitudinal Study of Arrest Incidents at Street Segments in Seattle, Washington" *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*; David Weisburd,, Nancy A. Morris, and Elizabeth R. Groff; Published online: 29 August 2009

In addition, disorder and violence are correlated at these places, and the relationship is sustained over time. While places that have zero physical and social disorder also have zero violent crimes, places with high disorder have about a 30 percent chance of having high rates of violent crime.
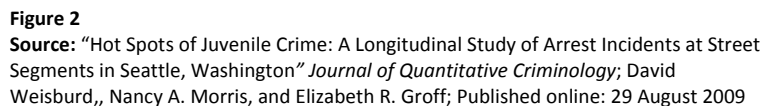
What hot spot approaches have been proven effective in other cities?

Since about 1995, there have been a number of scientific studies of hot spot policing efforts conducted in cities including Minneapolis, Kansas City, Jersey City, and Oakland. These studies all showed a reduction in crime in the areas that used a hot spot approach.[10] In 2004, the National Research Council Committee to Review Research on Police Policy and Practices reviewed this research and concluded:

> *There has been increasing interest over the past two decades in police practices that target very specific types of criminals and crime places. In particular, policing crime hot spots has become a common police strategy for addressing public safety problems. While there is only weak evidence suggesting the effectiveness of targeting specific types of offenders, a strong body of evidence suggests that taking a focused geographic approach to crime problems can increase policing effectiveness in reducing crime and disorder.*

This section describes a sampling of hot spot approaches used in other jurisdictions that have evidence of their effectiveness. We present three case studies:

- **Beat Health Program, Oakland, California** – supported by the strongest level of research evidence (experimental design/control group);
- **Auburn Boulevard Redevelopment Program, Sacramento, California** – supported by a moderate level of research evidence (quasi-experimental design); and
- **Cincinnati Neighborhood Enhancement Program, Cincinnati, Ohio** – supported by positive outcome data only (not scientifically evaluated).

In addition, the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy has identified rigorous studies of seven additional interventions in "micro-places" that have had proven successful outcomes. You can find an interactive tool that contains information about these studies at the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy: http://gemini.gmu.edu/cebcp/matrix.html.

Oakland, California's Beat Health Program

This program has the strongest level of scientific research evidence supporting its effectiveness because the researchers used a control group study. The Beat Health program is recognized by the federal government as an evidence-based practice. Many federal funders require grantees to use evidence-based practices. A summary of the research evidence for Beat Health was published by the U.S. Department of Justice: http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/175051.pdf. A summary of the Beat Health program can also be found on the federal government's database for evidence-based, federally-funded youth programs: http://www.findyouthinfo.org/programdetails.aspx?pid=454.

The Oakland Beat Health Program uses civil remedies to control drug and disorder problems by teaming police with city agency representatives to encourage landlords to clean up their properties, post no trespassing signs, enforce civil codes and municipal regulations, and initiate court proceedings against property owners who fail to comply with civil law citations. The Beat Health team will open a case after preliminary site visits to a zone that it identifies as a potential problem (due to a high number of narcotic arrests and/or citizen complaints) or at the request of community groups.

Beat Health teams try to establish relationships with place managers (landlords, managers, owners, or tenants of properties) or with others who hold a stake in improving the conditions of the case location. During the intervention, police communicate landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities, provide ideas for crime prevention measures, and assist civilians in contacting city or community agencies for legal, ordinance, and rental information. Police officers maintain contact with property owners and place managers for 6 months after the intervention.

Beat Health officers also coordinate site visits with the Specialized Multi-Agency Response Team (SMART), which is composed of city inspectors. Based on initial assessments made by the police, representatives from various agencies such as housing, fire, public works, gas, electric, or vector control are invited to inspect, enforce city codes, and offer solutions to related issues.

An evaluation conducted for the National Institute of Justice (a division of the U.S. Department of Justice) compared changes in the density of drug calls for service per square mile in Beat Health sites with control sites (sites that use standard police patrol practices) during the 12-month post intervention period. The evaluation found that Beat Health was more effective than standard patrol for both commercial and residential areas. In residential areas, the Beat Health sites showed a 16.2 percent decrease in calls for service, while the standard patrol sites experienced an increase of 5.4 percent. [11]

Sacramento California's Auburn Boulevard Redevelopment Program

The Auburn Boulevard Redevelopment Program, in Sacramento, California, was studied by California State University using a quasi-experimental design that compared the area receiving this intervention to a similar area that did not receive the intervention. This constitutes a moderate level of research evidence. In addition, the researchers developed an 11-year cost-benefit analysis.

The study found that crime on Auburn Boulevard decreased by 32 percent, while crime increased by 39 percent in the comparison area. The cost-benefit analysis showed that the benefits of the Auburn collaboration outweighed the costs by nearly $8 million, over the 11 years, given conservative assumptions about the project's impact.

Below are excerpts from the report that can be found at:
http://www.lisc.org/content/publications/detail/866/.

The Auburn Boulevard Redevelopment Area was formed by the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA) in 1992. This effort was launched to address the physical, economic and social deterioration of a 2-mile commercial corridor adjacent to Interstate 80 in Sacramento, California. At the time, the area was infamous for prostitution and associated crime stemming primarily from a collection of dilapidated, low-rent motels along the boulevard. SHRA quickly realized that the solution to revitalizing the area would take more than the traditional tools of redevelopment. Attention also had to be given to crime and nuisance activity.

In 1994, a coalition of public agencies came together to address the problem. Key players included the redevelopment agency, law enforcement, the district attorney's office, code enforcement and a host of other public safety agencies. These public agencies formed a

"Revitalizing the area would take more than the traditional tools of redevelopment."

The multi-agency team that worked on the Auburn Boulevard Redevelopment realized that development alone would not solve the complex community problems reflected in its crime rate. Their efforts proved them correct, but their realization is also supported by research data.

Researchers at Temple University and Rutgers University have conducted two studies of the effects of gentrification on crime. They found that gentrifying neighborhoods in Baltimore actually experienced unexpected increases in some types of crime.
(See http://www.rbtaylor.net/pubs.htm for the research articles.)

collaborative, called the Nuisance Response Team, which would jointly identify problem properties and coordinate enforcement activities. Together, the agencies sought to more effectively address the multitude of problems at a given site.

Many new tactics were utilized in the Auburn Boulevard area. Community police officers patrolled Auburn Boulevard and its surrounding residential streets on bike and foot. This enabled them to acquaint themselves with members of the community and to better understand the crime patterns and dynamics. The community prosecutor trained the code enforcement officers to provide better evidence for code violations in case property owners had to be brought to court in order to comply with regulations. In turn, the code officers educated the prosecutor about the most effective times to bring a case against landlords in light of the impact that a case could have on people living in those buildings. The willingness of these stakeholders to work together and communicate produced strategies that were more responsive to the needs of those who lived and worked in the community. Ultimately, this model for addressing neighborhood problems was extended elsewhere in the county through standing interagency committees that still exist today.

Cincinnati's Neighborhood Enhancement Program

Since 2005, Cincinnati, Ohio has used a hot spot approach for reducing disorder and controlling crime called the Neighborhood Enhancement Program[12]. Since its inception, Cincinnati has implemented this 90-day program in 10 discrete focus areas within its 52 neighborhoods. The program has won regional and national awards, and data collected by the Cincinnati police indicate that the program has been effective in reducing crime in the focus areas up to three years after implementation.

While this program has not been evaluated scientifically, we included it as a case study because of the quantifiable positive outcome data collected by the police department, and the detailed how-to-guide developed by the Cincinnati Department of Community Development that could help the City of Seattle develop a similar effort.

City of Cincinnati officials began the program as a concerted effort to use limited city resources for reducing crime and improving neighborhoods as efficiently as possible:

The Neighborhood Enhancement Program takes discretionary dollars and puts them to work in small, specific geographic areas. These areas are selected by analysis of crime, code violations, economic, social, and population trends across the City...

...Since the City has limited discretionary funding, and the health and vitality of a neighborhood is contingent upon the interdependent functioning of social, economic and crime prevention strategies, it follows that the best way to affect positive change is to focus our resources on strategically selected and manageable areas and hot spots within those

areas, and deploy efforts to simultaneously elevate all of the critical elements and subsystems of a healthy neighborhood.[13]

Neighborhood Enhancement Program hot spots (called focus areas) are selected based on the following data-driven criteria[14]: indicators of blight and crime data; capacity of the community to address complex problems; and economic development opportunities.

The crime data that is analyzed includes the number of "disorder calls for service" (e.g., crowd, curfew, noise calls). Cincinnati police have found that although they are lower priority incidents, disorder calls for service correlate to other crimes, particularly drug calls for service, drug arrest locations, and violent crimes.[15] Blight is assessed using an index created by Keep Cincinnati Beautiful and administered by community volunteers. (See website: http://www.keepcincinnatibeautiful.org/assets/documents/Blight_Index_Manual.pdf.)

Sample property from Cincinnati Blight Index. Photo courtesy of Keep Cincinnati Beautiful.

The City of Cincinnati team responsible for selecting the focus areas then looks at indicators that might reflect the likelihood of a successful hot spot intervention. They also identify stakeholders and assess the strength of community organizations in the focus area.

Once the focus areas are identified, City officials work with leaders in the areas to develop a list of specific improvements that they would like to see addressed during the 90-day Neighborhood Enhancement Program (e.g., street infrastructure, lighting, problem traffic or drug sale locations, etc). Public education sessions on crime prevention, personal safety, home ownership, or personal finances as well as community clean-ups are also planned for that period.

The 90-day intervention is then initiated. Cincinnati Police officials indicate that:
"Activities and initiatives taking place vary by community. Consistent programming involves:

- Code Enforcement staff (i.e., building inspectors) conducting visual inspection of each property in the focus area from public access areas. Observed violations are cited.
- Health Department staff inspecting all vacant properties and citing code violations including those for high weeds and litter.
- Fire Department providing inspections in the area.
- Public Services Department providing intensive attention to problem areas.
- Police providing additional presence and focused problem-solving and/or offender-targeting in the focus area.
- City infrastructure being improved or replaced where funding exists.
- Keep Cincinnati Beautiful planning beautification or clean-ups with the community and increasing recycling efforts."
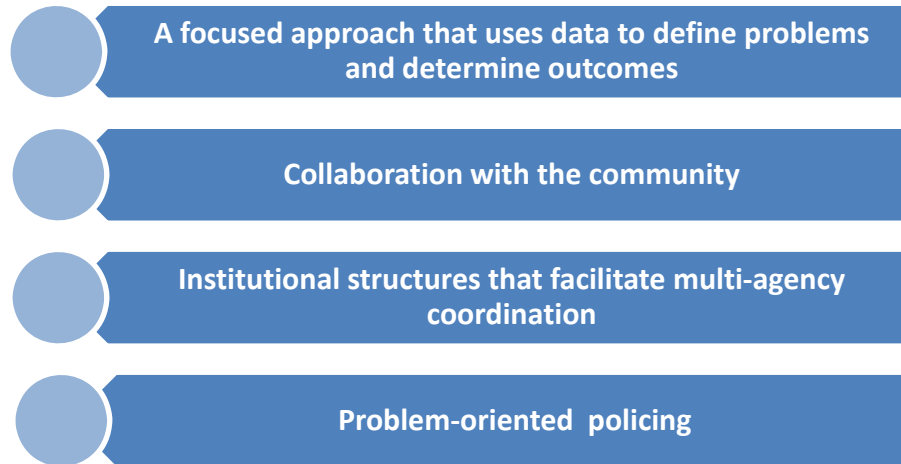
The program conducts an evaluation that includes:
- Thirty, sixty and ninety day status reports based on input from all City agencies and stakeholders,
- A ninety day follow-up to the community appearance index (Blight Index) conducted by the original team,
- A close out press conference is held citing accomplishments and acknowledging the efforts of all involved, and
- A one-year follow-up report.

These evaluation efforts indicate that the program results in a decrease in crime and blight in these areas and creates a "ripple effect" of benefits that flow into the surrounding areas. City leaders have also documented a 20 percent rise in property values in the initial focus area, for which the Neighborhood Enhancement Program may be a contributing factor.

What are the common features of a successful hot spot intervention?

All of the successful interventions, including the three that we highlight in the previous section, share similar features, including:

A focused approach that uses data to define problems and determine outcomes

Collaboration with the community

Institutional structures that facilitate multi-agency coordination

Problem-oriented policing

A focused approach that uses data to define problems and determine outcomes
Leading criminologists Anthony Braga and David Weisburd state that "A successful program of hot spots policing would require that the police routinely capture rich data about places." Further, they acknowledge that "Success in this context must be measured not in terms of how many arrests the police make, but in terms of whether places become safer for the people who live, visit, or work in such places."[16]

All three of the examples presented in the preceding section have used data to define the problems and determine the outcomes. In two cases, Sacramento and Oakland, the outcomes were evaluated by external researchers.[17] In Cincinnati, the City's agencies and the partners, including Keep Cincinnati Beautiful, collect the data and measure the outcomes.

In Cincinnati, for example, initial data is gathered from such sources as crime statistics, foreclosures, vacated buildings, weed and litter violations, population statistics and similar indices of neighborhood vitality or decline. The data is then mapped using the Cincinnati Area Geographic Information System. First, the entire city is examined for density of problems, and troubled areas are broken down into smaller geographic units and mapped to identify discrete hot spots.

Then Cincinnati officials and partners establish baseline measures for hot spots that are chosen as focus areas for the program. Keep Cincinnati Beautiful conducts a community appearance index (blight index)

in the focus areas before the initiative is launched. Police analyze the crime statistics from the previous year and for the months leading up to the start of the initiative. A table of property values based on the County Assessor's valuation is created for each and every parcel in the focus area. The baseline for building conditions is created as building and health and fire inspectors record the condition of each property by conducting house-to-house inspections.

Each hot spot may lend itself to a unique set of outcome data to be tracked to measure the success of the effort. Some of the outcome data tracked in the three previous case studies included:

- Changes in crime rates;
- Changes in assessed property values;
- Changes in tax revenue;
- Changes in community appearance;
- Changes in calls for service;
- Changes in number of code violations; and
- Changes in unemployment rates.

Collaboration with the community

Collaboration with community organizations and key community stakeholders is a cornerstone of a successful hot spot approach.   Officials from Oakland's Beat Health Program credit its success to effective partnerships with faith-based organizations, neighbors, the media, and external entities that reviewed and validated their approach including the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the National Institute of Justice. The three efforts that we presented in the previous section involved collaboration with a wide variety of stakeholders including:

- Neighbors;
- Property owners;
- Business associations;
- Community development organizations;
- Faith-based organizations;
- Neighborhood watch groups;
- Community councils;
- Community development organizations;
- Community beautification organizations;
- Philanthropic/volunteer organizations;
- Youth-serving organizations;
- Health and social service organizations; and
- Media.

Institutional structures that facilitate multi-agency coordination

In the case of the Auburn Boulevard Revitalization Program, the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency recognized that "isolated action by each agency was not going to produce the quantum leaps needed to affect the degree of change necessary." So, several public agencies formed a collaborative entity, called the Nuisance Response Team to jointly identify problem properties and coordinate enforcement activities.

In each of the case studies we cited above, multi-agency teams were created to respond to hot spot issues. Although these multi-agency collaborations are designed to address crime and disorder, the institutional leadership is not always in the police department. In Cincinnati, the Community Development Department provides the institutional leadership, and in Sacramento the effort was led by a housing and redevelopment agency. Further, officials

> **"The city manager or mayor has got to be the quarterback of the hot spots effort."**
>
> Captain Ed Tracey, Oakland Police Department

from Oakland and Cincinnati indicated that having a high-level policy-maker, such as the city manager or mayor, who champions the approach, is the key to successful multi-agency coordination.

Summary of multi-agency coordination approaches:

Jurisdiction	Multi-Agency Team	Leadership and Composition
Oakland	Specialized Multi-Agency Response Team (SMART)	Led by Oakland Police Department with ongoing participation from code enforcement, health department, and utilities, and participation from external agencies (e.g., U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) as needed.
Sacramento	Nuisance Response Team	Led by the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency with participation from the Sheriff's Department, county code enforcement, the District Attorney's Office and City agencies.
Cincinnati	Neighborhood Enhancement Team	Led by the Community Development Department with participation from Police, Code Enforcement, Health Department, Keep Cincinnati Beautiful, Law Department, Community Development Corporations, and other City agencies.

The Neighborhood Enhancement Program "How-To" manual for the City of Cincinnati defines the roles of each of the agencies participating in the program. It is attached as Appendix A.

Problem-oriented policing

Common to each of the successful hot spot approaches is the use of a policing strategy known as Problem-oriented policing. Herman Goldstein, of the University of Wisconsin Law School, originated the approach in 1979 and summarized the approach as follows:

> *Problem-oriented policing is an approach to policing in which discrete pieces of police business (each consisting of a cluster of similar incidents, whether crime or acts of disorder, that the police are expected to handle) are subject to microscopic examination (drawing on the especially honed skills of crime analysts and the accumulated experience of operating field personnel) in hopes that what is freshly learned about each problem will lead to discovering a new and more effective strategy for dealing with it. Problem-oriented policing places a high value on new responses that are preventive in nature, that are not dependent on the use of the criminal justice system, and that engage other public agencies, the community, and the private sector when their involvement has the potential for significantly contributing to the reduction of the problem. Problem-oriented policing carries a commitment to implementing the new strategy, rigorously evaluating its effectiveness, and, subsequently, reporting the results in ways that will benefit other police agencies and that will ultimately contribute to building a body of knowledge that supports the further professionalization of the police.[18]*

Over time, as problem-oriented policing began to be used around the country, a set of steps were developed, known as the SARA model. The stages of the SARA model are Scanning (issue identification), Analysis (data collection on the problem), Response (design and implement an appropriate intervention), and Assessment (measure outcomes, determine next steps). There is a growing body of research evidence that has found problem-oriented policing to be effective in controlling crime. The Center for Problem-Oriented Policing maintains a database of these research evaluations.[19]

While there is a strong body of evidence in support of its effectiveness in controlling crime, problem-oriented policing has also been difficult for police organizations to implement. Problem analyses may be superficial, responses may rely too much on traditional tactics, and assessment may be cursory. However, Braga and Weisburd concluded that, "While it is difficult for police agencies to implement the 'ideal' version of problem-oriented policing, we believe that even 'shallow' problem solving better focuses crime prevention efforts at hot spots."[20]

Sustaining the Effort: Lessons Learned from the Beat Health Program

The Beat Health Program, described in a previous section, began in 1988 as a collaborative effort between the Oakland Police Department and Oakland Community Organizations http://www.oaklandcommunity.org/, a faith-based community organizing coalition. Between 1988 and 2005, Beat Health completed over 2,500 projects in Oakland hot spots while receiving national attention and the endorsement of researchers and the federal government.

In recent years Beat Health strategies have become institutionalized throughout the Oakland Police Department. In 2004, Oakland voters passed the Violence Prevention and Public Safety Act, commonly referred to as Measure Y, a 10-year initiative designed to facilitate community policing, foster violence prevention, and improve fire and paramedic service. Approximately $9 million of the $19 million total annual funds from the measure go toward the Problem-Solving Officer Program. A total of 57 Problem-Solving Officers are deployed in beats throughout the city. Drawing on the success of the Beat Health program, these officers utilize problem-solving strategies including civil remedies and multi-agency response, according to Oakland's Deputy Police Chief Eric Breshears. In addition, in 2010, the Oakland Police Department made "problem-solving" a required activity for all patrol officers and an element of their performance evaluation.

Sergeant Bob Crawford, a 43-year veteran of the Oakland Police Department, led the Beat Health Program between 1988 and 2005, and, in a recent phone interview with our office, he offered five essentials for sustaining an effective hot spot effort over the long term:

1. **Support from the Police Chief**: The Police Chief has to fully support this effort. The Beat Health Program is the answer for reducing crime in hot spots. Unfortunately many police managers cannot grasp the concept. For Beat Health to be effective, the Police Chief and the managers have to understand that problem-solving is not a unit in the department, it is a way of doing things. Beat Health is about looking at a hot spot and seeing what kind of changes you can make in the environment. It involves a different kind of police work. You might be working with crews from the electric utility or figuring out a way to contact the CEO of the parent company of a national motel chain that has a problem property in your area. You cannot do this type of problem-solving policing without the full support of the Police Chief.

2. **Diverse Funding Sources**: Beat Health tapped into a variety of funding sources. Some of the funding came from our partners in the electrical company and the water company. It was in their best interest to work with us because people steal water and electricity, especially in drug houses. We also worked with the state to create a "deemed approved status" for any new liquor stores in the City. The deemed approved status came with a $1600 fee that we used toward the program. And many of our projects used federal Community Development Block Grant funds for redevelopment of housing or business areas.

3. **Entrepreneurial Spirit:** Beat Health is not about driving around and looking for "dopers" all day. The focus is on the location not the people, so every project has its unique challenges that need creative responses. We've gone after the parent companies for Motel 6 and Exxon Mobile to let them know about drug dealing and prostitution at their Oakland locations. We worked with the Army Corps of Engineers to remove an old boat that was being used as a drug house. We even organized a Sunday morning church service at a drug market corner.

4. **Community Partners:** Oakland Community Organizations, a faith-based community group, was instrumental in beginning the Beat Health program. Their members advocated for the program and helped us with specific projects. With each project, we tried to get the neighbors involved in some way. We also invited reporters to come out with the team when we would do a site assessment or a project response.

5. **Measuring Results:** It is important to document all of the projects and to collect data on your results. We documented over 2,500 projects with before-and-after photos and case files. And we collected data on the outcomes of our projects. People were surprised by the results. They thought that our efforts were going to be like stepping on a balloon – if you squashed one area, the crime would pop out in another area. The data showed that it is more like a pebble in a puddle effect – if you clean up one property, the benefits ripple out into the neighborhood.

What steps can Seattle take to create positive change in hot spots of crime and disorder?

Research data from 1989-2002 shows us that Seattle hot spots account for a significant percentage of crime in the city.   Specifically:

- Approximately 50 percent of reported crime in Seattle occurs on just 4.5 percent of our block faces;
- These block faces remained relatively unchanged during the 14-year study period;
- There were even greater concentrations and consistency of reported juvenile crime;
- Social disorder is Seattle is also concentrated in hot spots; and
- Disorder and violence in Seattle are correlated at the same locations; places with zero physical and social disorder have zero violent crime, places with high disorder have approximately a 30 percent chance of having high rates of violent crime.

We have also compiled information on how focused hot spot efforts in other jurisdictions have proven effective in reducing crime in those areas and providing benefits to the surrounding area.

Based on both our analysis of the research on Seattle's concentration of crime and on the research evidence supporting efforts underway in other jurisdictions, ***we recommend that the City of Seattle consider developing a coordinated approach to address hot spots of crime and disorder.***

We recommend that this consideration take account of the four features of successful hot spot efforts described in the previous section:

- A focused approach that uses data to identify hot spots, define problems, and determine outcomes;
- Collaboration with the community;
- Institutional structures that facilitate multi-agency coordination; and
- Problem-oriented policing.

Further, based on our research, we have identified three key elements for implementing a coordinated hot spot approach for Seattle.

Creating a Hot Spot Approach in Seattle: Three Cornerstones of a Successful Implementation
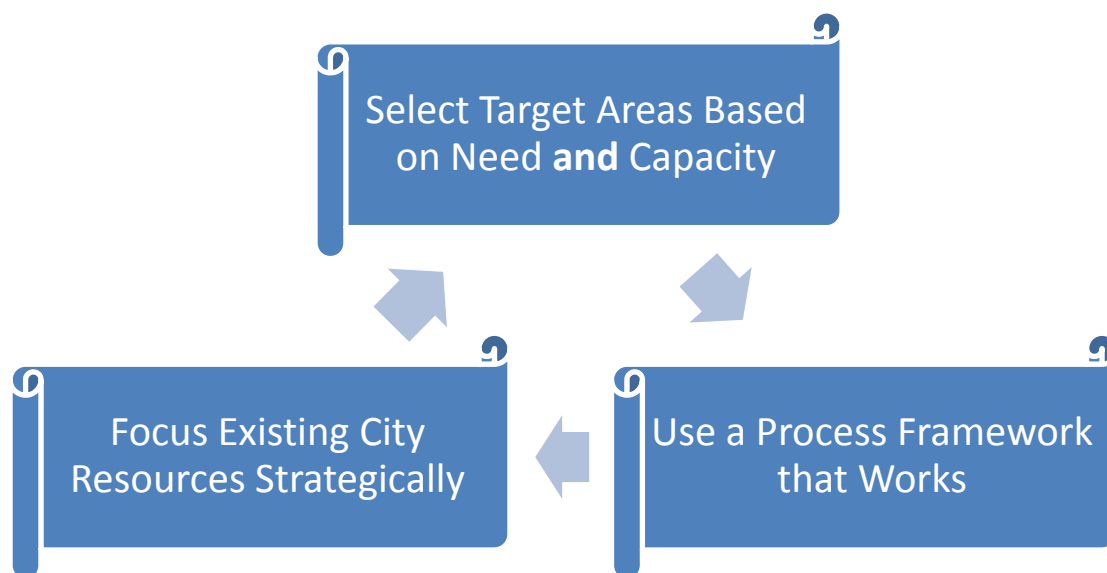
Implementation Cornerstone #1: Select Target Areas Based on Need *and* Capacity

Currently in Seattle, crime analysts in the Seattle Police Department conduct analyses of certain crimes within each precinct and prepare reports for the precinct captains and command staff. The City has additional analytical capability in its citywide infrastructure of Geographic Information Systems.   Seattle could also benefit from the historical analyses of hot spots that have been conducted by researchers at George Mason University and elsewhere. This base of analytical data will help the City of Seattle select hot spots that have the greatest needs to receive interventions. In addition, we recommend that Seattle use the criterion of "community capacity" to select hot spots that should receive focused interventions. To explain what we mean by community capacity, we will provide an example from Cincinnati.

In Cincinnati, before a hot spot is even selected as a focus area for the Neighborhood Enhancement Program, "a listing of all of the community groups and their accomplishments (is) assembled to pair with the data that has been mapped in the hot spot areas." Communities are selected to receive the hot spot intervention if they can demonstrate adequate community capacity including:

- Active community councils;
- Engaged neighbors;
- willing property owners;
- Presence of non-profit partners; and
- Potential for additional funding sources.

(See example to the right.)

If the hot spot does not demonstrate sufficient community capacity for change, it is not selected to receive the intervention.

To apply Cincinnati's approach for determining community capacity for a specific Seattle hot spot, Seattle decision makers should look at indicators including:

- Activity of the local community crime prevention council;
- Organization of property owners and local businesses (Business Improvement Areas, etc.);
- Work of local redevelopment corporation(s) in the area;
- Existence of organized neighborhood efforts (Adopt-A-Street, etc.);
- Efforts of non-profit organizations in the area;
- Presence of faith-based groups in the area; and

Successful Partnering – Case Study

In one Cincinnati neighborhood, Over-the-Rhine, the Neighborhood Enhancement Program (described on page 7) helped to stimulate a larger revitalization effort. This poor neighborhood located adjacent to Cincinnati's central core, had been plagued with drug trafficking, violent crimes and economic decline. Although some redevelopment efforts had been underway, the Neighborhood Enhancement Program helped jumpstart a larger effort, according to Linda Holterhoff, director of Keep Cincinnati Beautiful.

The Cincinnati Police Department partnered with community organizations including Keep Cincinnati Beautiful and the Over-the-Rhine Revitalization Corporation, to initiate a high visibility police problem-solving effort that drew on partnerships between City and community agencies, neighborhood groups and private businesses to bring resources to identified hot spot areas in the neighborhood. Some specific tools that the City and its partners utilized included:

- Problem-Oriented-Policing;
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design;
- Citizen Patrols;
- Hot Spots Hotline;
- Litter Control;
- Landscaping/Beautification;
- Code Enforcement; and
- Art Projects.

The collaborative approach allowed the Cincinnati Police Department to utilize crime analysis to identify high crime areas and work with citizens to strategically direct police resources, while other community organizations rehabilitated abandoned and underutilized properties and beautified streetscapes and green spaces. The impact of strategic police enforcement, coupled with targeted economic development efforts produced a significant reduction in drug activity and related violent crime and substantially increased economic viability in this community.

See a full case study of this effort at: http://www.lisc.org/content/publications/detail/6963/

- Existence of state or federally funded efforts in the area (This could include the Drug-Free Community Coalitions which are funded through the federal Office of National Drug Control Policy. Currently, there are three funded coalitions in Seattle: Central Seattle Drug-Free Communities Coalition, Neighborhood House's Community Advisory Coalitions/Project HANDLE, and Seattle Children's Hospital/Prevention Works).

Using the criterion of community capacity in the selection of hot spots for focused intervention does not suggest that hot spots lacking community capacity should be ignored.   Rather these should be areas for which the City and its partners strategically direct their resources to stimulate capacity-building.

Implementation Cornerstone #2:   Use a Process Framework that Works
Criminologists Braga and Weisburd indicate that, "Effective problem analysis is rooted in creativity, insight, and imagination, and this requires a variety of problem frames and dimensions to be considered and a varied set of analytic methodologies to be engaged."

Since each hot spot will have a unique set of problems and assets, the interventions that will bring about positive change will look different for each hot spot as well. For example, one Seattle hot spot may benefit from a combination of increased civil remedies and property clean-ups, as are used in Oakland's Beat Health program. Another hot spot might better respond to targeted enforcement and community capacity-building, as in Sacramento's Neighborhood Enhancement Program. Given these complexities, how can the City of Seattle best determine the path that will lead to a successful outcome for each unique hot spot? Each hot spot will likely require a unique multi-agency response and involve a unique collaboration of community stakeholders. Given these complexities, how can the City ensure that the process does not become unwieldy or unfocused?

Fortunately, the field of prevention science[21] offers a number of process frameworks for community change problem-solving that research evidence and outcome data have shown to be effective. Elements of these frameworks include:

- Systematic **data collection** about the problem and the outcomes (evaluation),
- A logical framework for change, often called a **logic model**;
- **Community mobilization** and leadership; and
- An effective sustainable **organizational structure**.

We present two examples that the City should consider for its process framework. Both of these frameworks are based on research evidence that demonstrates their effectiveness: the Strategic Prevention Framework and the University of Kansas' Best Process for Community Change and Improvement.

These process frameworks include an evaluation of the outcomes of the effort. Evaluation is critical to determining whether the initiative actually worked. Evaluation cannot efficiently and effectively be done "post facto". It must be planned at the outset. Both of the frameworks presented below offer guidelines and tools for planning and executing an evaluation of the effort.

Example: Strategic Prevention Framework
A roadmap for change that is particularly applicable in communities dealing with the complex issues of drug and alcohol abuse is the Strategic Prevention Framework developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (See this link for an overview of the Strategic Prevention Framework http://www.cadca.org/resources/detail/strategic-prevention-framework .)

The Strategic Prevention Framework is a systematic community-based approach that aims to ensure that interventions produce results. The framework uses findings from public health research along with evidence-based prevention programs to build capacity and create positive change in communities. SAMHSA requires that its state, local, and community grantees follow this framework that has five elements and two overarching principles:

1. Assess needs based on data;
2. Build organizational capacity;
3. Develop a strategic plan;
4. Implement effective (evidence-based) programs, policies and practices; and
5. Evaluate efforts for outcomes.

In addition, the themes of sustainability and cultural competence permeate all five elements of the framework.

SAMHSA provides a no-cost interactive tool that provides organizations and communities with resources and guides for utilizing the Strategic Prevention Framework. It is available at the following website: https://preventionplatform.samhsa.gov/Macro/Csap/dss_portal/templates_redesign/more_about.cfm?sect_id=1&CFID=4142342&CFTOKEN=75381510&topic_id=99.

This framework is required by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy for all grantees in its Drug Free Communities program. The grant program supports community coalitions in preventing and reducing youth substance abuse. To date, more than 1,600 community coalitions have implemented this framework, and their efforts are resulting in evidence of positive change. Prevalence of 30-day use of alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana was lower for high school students in Drug Free Communities-funded communities than among a nationally representative sample of high school students. The Strategic Prevention Framework requires strong organization and coordination, but the Drug Free Communities Program has proven that this framework can be successfully applied in communities of many different sizes and composition.

Example: Best Process for Community Change
A very similar but more detailed framework has been compiled into an interactive tool by the University of Kansas titled "The Community Tool Box". See the website at: http://ctb.ku.edu/en/promisingapproach/index.aspx.

This framework documents 12 "Best Processes" or activities that have been shown to promote community change and improvement. Clicking on any of the Best Processes listed on the site will provide you with the underlying research evidence that support that process. Each process also has tools (e.g., checklists, case studies) for putting it into practice. The twelve processes identified are:

1. Analyzing information about the problem or goal	7. Developing leadership
2. Establishing a vision or mission	8. Implementing effective interventions
3. Developing an organizational structure and operating mechanism	9. Assuring technical assistance
4. Developing a framework or model of change	10. Documenting progress and using feedback
5. Developing and using strategic action plans	11. Making outcomes matter
6. Arranging for community mobilization	12. Sustaining the work

Implementation Cornerstone #3: Focus Existing City Resources Strategically

A coordinated hot spot approach does not mean funding an entirely new program. Rather, it would require the deployment of existing resources in a more strategic and focused way. The City of Cincinnati's Neighborhood Improvement program consciously focuses discretionary dollars on small specific hot spots rather than "spreading discretionary dollars thin across all 52 neighborhoods."[22]

Focus on hot spots has the potential for more efficient deployment of police resources. David Weisburd studied crime incidents in Seattle between 1989 and 2002. His analysis showed that about 1,500 street segments accounted for 50 percent of the crime, contrasted with 6,108 offenders who also accounted for 50 percent of the crime during that period. If the focus had been on place, Seattle officers would have had to address four times fewer targets. He concluded that "places were indeed a more efficient focus than offenders."[23]

A hot spot approach could change the focus of how other City of Seattle resources are deployed as well. Some of these might include code enforcement, utility inspection, graffiti abatement, and illegal dumping clean-up. Below we present an example of the recent deployment of the City's Clean and Green resources to support a recent Seattle pilot hot spot effort.

> **Example of Potential for Strategic Deployment of Existing City Resources: Clean and Green Seattle**
>
> The Clean and Green Seattle program was established in 2002. It is an interdepartmental partnership led by Seattle Public Utilities and Seattle Parks and Recreation. Clean and Green Seattle officials indicate that the program integrates elements of existing programs such as graffiti abatement, Adopt-A-Park, Adopt-A-Street, Spring Clean, and other community engagement programs to create clean and safe neighborhoods while leading to community empowerment.
>
> Since 2002, Clean and Green Seattle has held over 90 clean-up events. In 2010, Clean and Green Seattle conducted over 10 community clean-up events engaging over 2,500 community volunteers. Activities may include litter collection, graffiti abatement, tree planting, streetlight repair, pothole repair, and illegal dumping clean-up. Clean and Green sites are currently spread across all City districts and are selected by the Department of Neighborhoods District Coordinators. Each Coordinator is assigned a month and works with their community to identify the actual clean-up site(s).
>
> In October 2010, in a nascent pilot effort in hot spot policing, the Seattle Police Department approached Clean and Green officials about organizing a community clean-up event at an intersection that has had a 30-year history of open-air drug dealing. The larger surrounding area had been the focus of a Drug Market Initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Justice. After

that effort, Seattle Police Department officials believed that this particular intersection was at a kind of "tipping point" and would benefit from some type of focused intervention.

With support from the leadership in Seattle Parks and Recreation and Seattle Public Utilities, Clean and Green agreed to take on this effort that diverged from its usual site selection process.

The Seattle Police Department and Clean and Green then partnered with property owners, neighbors, local non-profits, the Washington State Department of Corrections, and the City's Community Court program in efforts to reduce the physical disorder at the intersection and improve its appearance.

The Seattle Police Department requested and participated in the development of a Community Appearance Index for the intersection. Baseline data was collected and post intervention data will be collected in 2011.

A young volunteer and a property owner at the October 30, 2010 Clean and Green event at the corner of 23rd and Union.

 Also, the efforts around community appearance have resulted in better communication and organization among the intersection's property owners, and they have begun to explore options for redevelopment. Two new businesses are slated to open at the intersection in the spring of 2011, and the Seattle Police Department reported that calls for service at that intersection went from an average of 30 per month to just nine in December 2010.

While this pilot effort lacks some of the elements of the hot spot approach that we recommend that the City consider, it illustrates the potential for the City to focus its limited resources in a systematic approach for addressing hot spots of crime and disorder.

Our office would be happy to conduct additional research or provide more information to support City leaders in their decision-making around hot spot efforts. In addition, the City has received generous offers of technical assistance from David Weisburd of George Mason University, the Community Safety Initiative of Local Initiatives Support Corporation (New York), Elizabeth Groff of Temple University, and the Oakland Police Department.

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- Lieutenant Colonel Cindy Combs, Cincinnati Police Department
- Sergeant Bob Crawford and Captain Ed Tracey, Oakland Police Department

[1] Physical disorder usually refers to the deterioration of urban landscapes (Sampson and Raudenbush 1999). Physical disorder generally includes: illegal dumping, litter, graffiti, weeds, vacant buildings, inoperable cars on the street, junk storage, zoning violations, substandard housing, and minor property damage.

[2] See our Graffiti audit at http://www.seattle.gov/audit/docs/2010GraffitiReport.pdf .

[3] "Over the last decade there has been a substantial body of research documenting the importance of crime places in understanding and controlling crime (Eck and Weisburd 1995; Sherman 1995; Taylor 1997; Weisburd 2002). At the core of this academic interest are a series of studies that show that crime is highly concentrated at small units of geography. Whether the unit of analysis is defined as an address, a street segment, or a cluster of street segments, a large number of studies now document that crime is clustered at what have come to be termed ''crime hot spots'' (Brantingham and Brantingham 1999; Crow and Bull 1975; Pierce et al. 1986; Roncek 2000; Sherman et al. 1989; Weisburd et al. 1992, 2004; Weisburd and Green 1994). This concentration of crime, moreover, has recently been found to be stable across relatively long periods of time (Weisburd et al. 2004). The extent of the concentration of crime at place is dramatic. In one of the pioneering studies in this area, Lawrence Sherman et al. (1989) found that only 3 percent of the addresses in Minneapolis produced 50 percent of all calls to the police. Fifteen years later in a study in Seattle, Washington, Weisburd et al. (2004) reported that between 4 percent and 5 percent of street segments in the city accounted for 50 percent of officially recorded crime incidents for each year over 14 years. These studies and others (Brantingham and Brantingham 1984; Clarke 1983; Curtis 1974; Maltz et al. 1990 [2000]; Pyle 1976; Rengert 1980; Skogan 1990) have established small units of geography or micro places as an important focus of criminological inquiry and practical crime prevention." **Source:** "Hot Spots of Juvenile Crime: A Longitudinal Study of Arrest Incidents at Street Segments in Seattle, Washington*" Journal of Quantitative Criminology*; David Weisburd , Nancy A. Morris, and Elizabeth R. Groff; Published online: 29 August 2009.

[4] See Micro-Places information at Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy: http://gunston.gmu.edu/cebcp/Matrix.html.

[5] Weisburd, D., & Eck, J. E. (2004). What can the police do to reduce crime, disorder, and fear? *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 593*, 42–65.

[6] Weisburd, D., C. Telep, and A. Braga (2010). *The Importance of Place in Policing: Empirical Evidence and Policy Recommendations.* Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention.

[7] Yang, Sue-Ming (2010), Assessing the Spatial–Temporal Relationship Between Disorder and Violence, *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 26, 139-163.

[8] The author offers the following definition of social disorder:"Social disorder generally refers to behaviors that are considered threatening by other people or defined as public moral offenses which tend to result in police reactions such as prostitution, gambling, indecency, public drunkenness, narcotics arrests and disturbing the peace (Sampson and Raudenbush 1999; Skogan 1990; Weisburd and Mazerolle 2000). Summarizing from past research, the social disorder measure includes the following items: disorderly conduct, noise, alcohol and public drinking, gambling, drug-related offenses (not including large scale drug trafficking), and prostitution. Thus, the social disorder measure represents events that were perceived as bothersome by citizens and also substantiated by police."

[9] The author defines physical disorder: "Physical disorder usually refers to the deterioration of the urban landscapes (Sampson and Raudenbush 1999). The physical disorder measure in this study includes: illegal dumping, litter, graffiti, weeds, vacant buildings, inoperable cars on the street, junk storage, weeds, zoning violations, exterior abatement, substandard housing and minor property damage.

[10] For a more detailed discussion of the research evidence that supports a hot spot emphasis, see Chapter 10 in The *Importance of Place in Policing: Empirical Evidence and Policy Recommendations* by David Weisburd, Cody W. Telep, and Anthony A. Braga, published by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, 2010.

[11] The evaluation found that calls for service decreased by 16.2 percent in the Beat Health residential sites and increased by 5.4 percent in the control residential sites.   For commercial sites there was an increase in calls for service in both the Beat Health sites and the control sites. However, calls for service increased at a significantly lower rate in the Beat Health sites (48.5 percent increase) compared with the control sites (282.2 percent increase). See the evaluation report at: http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/175051.pdf.

[12] See website: http://www.ci.cincinnati.oh.us/cdap/pages/-34625-/.

[13] From Neighborhood Enhancement Program, Program Guidelines and Implementation Strategy, City of Cincinnati.

[14] Cincinnati officials indicate that in spite of attempts by several political entities to drive the selection process, the data-driven criteria and adherence to community participation requirements are two factors that have kept the NEP from being politicized. They credit these two factors with the program's effectiveness.

[15] From unpublished Masters' thesis, University of Cincinnati, June 2010, Lieutenant Colonel Cindy Combs, Cincinnati Police Department.

[16] Braga, A. and D. Weisburd. (2010) *Policing Problem Places: Crime Hot Spots and Effective Prevention*. New York. Oxford University Press.

[17] It is important to use as strong a research design as possible to be sure the effect observed is due to the program and not some other extraneous factor.

[18] For this and further descriptions of Problem-Oriented Policing, see the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing website at http://www.popcenter.org/.

[19] The Center for Problem-Oriented Policing maintains a database of research evaluations of situational crime prevention initiatives at: http://www.popcenter.org/library/scp/.

[20] Braga, A. and D. Weisburd. (2010) *Policing Problem Places: Crime Hot Spots and Effective Prevention*. New York. Oxford University Press. See Chapter 5 for a full discussion of Problem-Oriented Policing.

[21] Prevention science refers to the body of research on the practice of prevention of a variety of health and social problems, including but not limited to substance abuse, violence, accidents, teenage pregnancy, suicide, delinquency, mental health issues, sexually transmitted diseases, obesity, and chronic illness.

[22] From Neighborhood Enhancement Program, Program Guidelines and Implementation Strategy, City of Cincinnati.

[23] Braga, A. and D. Weisburd. (2010) *Policing Problem Places: Crime Hot Spots and Effective Prevention*. New York. Oxford University Press.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES &

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 4 – Division of Code Enforcement

4.1   **Inspections**
4.2   **Vacant Buildings**
4.3   **Demolition**
4.4   **Zoning**
4.5   **Business Districts**

Chapter 5 – Department of Community Development

5.1   **Overall NEP Facilitation**
5.2   **Reporting Requirements**

Chapter 6 – Health/ Litter Control

6.1   **Vacant Lots**
6.2   **Health Code Enforcement**

Chapter 7 – Keep Cincinnati Beautiful

7.1   **Blight Index**
7.2   **Clean Up/Beautification Events and Coordination**
7.3   **Educational Programming**
7.4   **Business Districts**
7.5   **CPTED coordination with Police**
7.6   **Mobilizing volunteers**

Chapter 8 – Law Department & Community Prosecution Section

8.1   **Court Watch**
8.2   **Legal Remedies for Code Enforcement, "CERT"**

Chapter 9 – Police Department

9.1   **Community Oriented Policing**
9.2   **Neighborhood Watch**
9.3   **Citizens on Patrol**
9.4   **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)**

Chapter 10 – Code Enforcement Response Team

Chapter 11 – Other Departments & Agencies

Chapter 12 – CDC's Support and Development & Non- Profits

Chapter 13 - Implementation Time Lines

Appendix

Flyer Announcing Focus Areas and Meeting Notice

PREFACE

About This Document:

The following represents problem solving tasks, organizational strategies and programs found to be effective. This document contains a "basic program" or compliment of services that each agency offers as a "basic package." The needs of the neighborhood are paramount and the services offered should be tailored to these needs. The ways communities and cities can work together to improve neighborhoods are endless. In the interest of concise guidelines, this document attempts to keep the solutions to complex neighborhood problems relatively simple while keeping central the vision of exceptional neighborhood quality of life.

INTRODUCTION

Mission

To significantly improve the quality of life within a geographic focus area by strategically deploying public resources to leverage private investment

Goals

- ❖ Create an economic "ripple effect" in the neighborhoods surrounding the focus areas.
- ❖ Build and sustain investor confidence
- ❖ Effect and sustain real and visible improvement in the physical characteristics of the area
- ❖ Reduce the number of vacated buildings and increase homeownership
- ❖ Reduce Crime
- ❖ Increase property values
- ❖ Strengthen the business districts
- ❖ Increase residents' community pride and self sufficiency

Rationale:

The City does not have the resources to reach the goals stated concurrently in every neighborhood. Therefore, thoughtful and strategic use of limited resources is critical for maximum impact. The program emphasis is on two areas. The first is strategic placement of resources in geographic areas of the City where need and likelihood of

success is determined through analysis of data. The second is through heightened cooperation and collaboration among City Departments and public agencies.

The Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP) takes discretionary dollars and puts them to work in small, specific geographic areas. These areas are selected by analysis of crime, code violations, economic, social, and population trends across the City. Experience tells us that stemming the decay of neighborhoods in transition will have a positive economic ripple effect across broader areas of the City, and eventually the City at large. Similar initiatives have been successful in older cities such as Richmond, Virginia, i.e. Neighborhoods in Bloom, The Ripple Effect. However, the focus of services cannot be to the detriment of continuous delivery of basic service across the entire City. Focusing resources is favored over the potential for real change by spreading discretionary dollars thin across all 52 neighborhoods.

Neighborhood problems are complex. A neighborhood in trouble will typically have high crime rates, numerous vacated buildings, blighted housing and businesses and declining and abandoned business districts. An economic development project can be launched in such an area. However, citizens will not purchase the new and rehabilitated housing where they do not feel safe due to high crime. Merchants will not do business in an area where there are few customers due to abandonment, crime and blight. When a code enforcement program conducted in the area without economic development opportunities, many property owners are not willing to invest money to correct code violations where they cannot collect rents, even when faced with jail time. Some owners would prefer to simply abandon the property. If we send in the police by themselves to rid the area of crime, they will have limited impact if the area is run down and abandoned and drug dealers control the streets. As housing and commerce is abandoned, and crime grows higher, the neighborhood continues on a downward spiral as owner occupants with the means to do so flee to the suburbs. As this spiral continues, property values decrease, tax revenue drops and there are even fewer resources for the City to use to leverage positive change.

If we focus our resources and simultaneously deploy police to make the area safe, economic development to encourage the return of law abiding citizens, and code enforcement to correct code violations while partnering with every willing stakeholder in the area, the whole of the positive change will be greater than the sum of it's parts. A City neighborhood is a form of "urban ecosystem"; a dynamic complex of homeowners, business owners, renters, visitors and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit. These elements have a symbiotic relationship and are dependant on each other to survive and to flourish. So is the case for City Services, public safety and law enforcement is contingent on economic development, high employment rates, and the presence of enough law abiding neighbors on the streets to preserve the peace. Economic development is contingent on the human need for safety, lack of crime, and adequate shelter to be satisfied, and blight to be abated to sell housing and businesses. Code enforcement and blight abatement is contingent on the willingness of homeowners and investors to spend money to make improvements. These investors are by nature primarily driven by profit motive, and commerce is contingent on safety and economic opportunity to succeed.

Since the City has limited discretionary funding, and the health and vitality of a neighborhood is contingent upon the interdependent functioning of social, economic and crime prevention strategies, it follows that the best way to affect positive change is to focus our resources on strategically selected and manageable areas and "hot spots" within those areas, and deploy efforts to simultaneously elevate all of the critical elements and subsystems of a healthy neighborhood. Such an effort fosters hope, enjoyment and excitement as the potential of the neighborhood is realized.

CHAPTER 1 - PLANNING

1.1 **Gathering Data and mapping**

Data is gathered from such sources as crime statistics, foreclosures, vacated buildings, weed and litter violations, population statistics and similar indices of neighborhood vitality or decline. The data is then mapped using the Cincinnati Area Geographic Information System. First the entire City is examined for density of problems, and troubled areas are broken down further and mapped. (see example Price Hill Map in the appendix). Note that while "neighborhood" is important in identifying stakeholders and improving the identity of the area, the data will often show "hotspots" that cross the neighborhood boundaries. "Hotspot" for the purpose of this discussion means a geographic area with high density of incidences of crime and/or blight that show a pronounced spot on the maps.

1.2 **Identifying Stakeholders**

The greater the organizational skill and capacity of the community councils, business associations, and community development organizations, the greater will be the likelihood of success. A listing of all community groups and their accomplishments or capacity should be assembled to pair with the data that has been mapped in the hot spot areas. In some cases, an otherwise good candidate for a focused effort may lack strong community organization and will need assistance in growing and strengthening their own resources.

1.3 **Identifying Community Assets and Services**

Of great importance in evaluating the needs of a focus area are the assets upon which to build. Does the community have a City or River view, historic buildings, art or cultural institutions, parks, and similar amenities around which to build? Are social service agencies, businesses and services operating who have potential to grow and strengthen the neighborhood or provide employment? Are active trends in economic development evident and are active developments already under way?

1.4 **Evaluating Data**

The data that has been assembled should "speak for itself." However, it is not possible to make decisions on where to focus without weighing the likelihood of success, the potential to leverage private development and other elements that become difficult to quantify. It has been the experience thus far that areas in downward transition who need "a hand up" to change direction, or areas on the way up who need a boost to continue to recover should become evident upon review of all the data.. When evaluating the data, the approach should rely on empirical evidence to the extent possible as opposed to undue political influences.

1.5 **Administration Review**

Once the potential focus areas are selected, the data, and reasoning are presented to the City Administration for review. Once the final areas are selected, the Administration plays a key role in ensuring that all City Departments are deploying the necessary resources to the focus areas.

1.6   Funding
As Departments and the City plan their budgets, and make decisions on where to expend existing resources, consideration must be given to the focus areas. A basic premise of this program is to leverage private investment with limited City dollars. The dollars have to be allocated with this goal in mind. Issues such as police overtime for special operations to reduce crime, façade programs to improve the business districts, demolition of unsafe buildings, various loan products that encourage private investments and smaller grants requiring matching funding or similar incentives, as well as gap funding for rehabilitation, are all important components. Also, without any new programs, what existing programming decisions can be made to enhance the efforts in the focus area? A "Property Maintenance Code Assistance" program should be established to assist the funding of repairs resulting from Concentrated Code Enforcement for lower income homeowners. Every dollar spent should be designed to leverage private initiative and investor confidence.

1.7   Community Review
Once Administration has approved the plans and funding has been identified the program can be offered to the community. The City Focus team meets with an "executive session" of community council members, area agency leaders, business leaders and similar stakeholders in leadership positions to outline the program. If approved, the program is normally presented to the community council and neighbors at large at the monthly meeting. If the community is not interested in advancing the effort, it can be offered to the next prospective area.

1.8   Setting Goals and Objectives
Clear and measurable short and long-term goals should be established. Short-term goals should be able to produce results that are visible to the citizens to begin changing attitudes about the potential of the area. Long-term goals should be directed at solving root causes of neighborhood problems. Specific objectives and programs to reduce unemployment and crime, as well as methods to improve more costly and serious decline in the physical environment need to be established.

1.9   Establishing a Baseline
Keep Cincinnati Beautiful conducts a blight index before the initiative is launched (see Chapter 7). Police store the crime statistics from the year before and for the months leading up to the start of the initiative. A table of property values is created for each and every parcel in the focus area based on the County Auditor's valuation. The baseline for building conditions will result as building and health and fire inspectors record the condition of each property by conducting house-to-house inspections.

1.10   Operations Center
A Pride Center or Focused City Services Center in the neighborhood is a good way to provide a visible presence, information exchange and meeting point within the area. Weekly meetings of the Focus team and other stakeholders are conducted at the Center. The Center may be staffed limited hours each day on a departmental rotation basis. The center also contains basic office equipment and serves as a field office and neighborhood base of operations.

Chapter 2 – City Property & Infrastructure

2.1 **Condition Inventory**

As the City is conducting an inventory of private property in the focus area via building and health inspectors, so should the City conduct an inventory of the condition of all structures in the public environment. A comprehensive program such as the Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP) should be deployed to the focus area. Under the program, defective elements in the public environment should be identified and referred to the proper agency for correction. Also, any City owned buildings in the area should be evaluated and defects corrected. It is important that the City demonstrate good faith in keeping the public environment for which it is responsible up to high standards.

2.2 **Streets, signs and parking**

Defective streets, sidewalks, curbs and highway signage should be repaired or replaced as needed. Traffic Patterns and parking should be optimized to encourage patronage of legitimate businesses and discourage illegal activity through CPTED (see Section 9.3).

2.3 **Street Cleaning and Garbage cans**

A rigorous street and sidewalk-cleaning program should be established. Adult Probation has been a source of labor for this activity to compliment the work of automated street sweepers and volunteer clean up efforts. A survey of the number and location of garbage cans should be completed to see where littering is occurring and to ensure that an adequate number of cans are provided. Power washing of sidewalks where needed is also encouraged.

2.4 **Public Lighting**

An inventory of all inoperable, missing or defective public lighting can be conducted by private citizens or City employees and referred to the responsible agency such as Duke Energy for burnt out light bulbs. Additional public lighting may be recommended to deter crime.

2.5 **Vacant lots and buildings**

Cincinnati Area Geographic Information System (CAGIS) has developed a layer that identifies all City owned property and the responsible department to ensure all properties are accounted for and evaluated for code violations, weeds and litter.

2.6 **Parks**

Any park or parkways in the focus area should be reviewed for potential enhancements, deferred maintenance or improvement that may be needed.

Chapter 3 – Implementation

3.1   Community Notification

Using the mailing list feature in CAGIS, a mailing list of all property in the focus area can be generated. A standardized flyer that is customized to each neighborhood is mailed to all property owners in the focus area approximately 2 weeks prior to beginning the initiative. This flyer contains a signed message from the community council president, information on resources for correcting code violations and making improvements to properties and businesses, and general information on the NEP initiative. These flyers can be delivered to business owners who are not buildings owners and tenants of rental property using volunteers or as youth employment activity. (See Appendix). This flyer should contain a public meeting announcement described in Section 3.2 .

3.2   Public Meeting

This meeting is to engage other citizens who may not be active in the Community Council and is scheduled prior to the beginning of the initiative. The agenda for this meeting is an overview of the focus area initiative, available resources for making improvements, and a general question and answer period. Community Councils should use this meeting as an opportunity to recruit new members.

3.3   Program Roll Out

The program is announced via a press release. All stakeholders and participants are invited to attend the "kick off" media event at which the goals and intentions of the project are publicized and celebrated. Press releases should be issued as newsworthy milestones are reached in the process, again coordinated through public relations. A high profile for the Focus efforts is needed to rally support and enlist assistance of all stakeholders and neighbors. The media can be an excellent resource for generating interest in the work.

3.4   Events Calendar

An events calendar showing all NEP related events is maintained for each focus area. The calendar is established using the City Microsoft Outlook system.

Chapter 4 – Division of Code Enforcement

4.1 Inspections

The Department of Buildings and Inspections (B&I) conducts inspections of each building in the focus area. This includes both commercial and residential. The inspections will be exterior of the buildings only and cover all parts of the building and lot visible from the public right-of-way. All violations are noted and orders to correct the violations within a period of 90 days are issued to each property owner where violations are found. If funding permits, a congratulatory letter, explaining the inspection service provided and thanking the owner for maintaining their property is issued to property owners where no violations are found.

4.2 Vacant Buildings

A vacant building inventory is conducted in the focus area. Each vacant building is evaluated for condition, obsolescence, owner plans, neighborhood impact, owner type, intrinsic value and safety. Individual case planning is done on each building to determine the most effective enforcement remedy. These remedies include civil and criminal and well as demolition. Code Enforcement will barricade vacant open buildings and the owner is billed for the costs. The Vacated Building Maintenance License Ordinance is enforced on all other vacated buildings.

4.3 Demolition

The Hazard Abatement Program processes condemned buildings determined to be candidates for demolition by Government action. In every case, except imminent danger of collapse, a public nuisance hearing is conducted to hear from the neighbors as to what effect the building is having on the community. These hearings have been conducted in the neighborhood community center to facilitate the appearance of neighbors and concerned citizens who are encouraged to testify at the hearing. The owner and interested parties, Police, Fire, a Certified Property Manager and Code Enforcement testify at the hearing also. If a building is declared a Public Nuisance, it is demolished using City funds. The Owner is billed for the demolition costs.

4.4 Zoning

Zoning violations associated with illegal land use such as repair garages in residential zones, front yard parking, etc., are enforced as part of the concentrated code enforcement inspections.

4.5 Business Districts

A "sign sweep" inspection program along all business corridors is designed to identify illegal signs. Obsolete signs allowed to remain after a business has long closed are ordered removed, illegal banners and temporary signs, including illegal sandwich boards, are also ordered to be removed so that excess signs do not blight the business district.

4.6 Code Violations Correction Programs

Code Enforcement has partnered with non-profit social service agencies, to do outreach to owner occupants who receive orders to correct violations but have no funding. A list of violations is sent to the

agency that is able to assist low-income owners make corrections. A "Property Maintenance Code Assistance" program is important since a building that is blighted and not repaired hurts morale of neighbors and property values in the focus area. Criminal and Civil penalties are not effective when the owner is on a fixed low income with no reserves to make repairs.

Chapter 5 – Department of Community Development

5.1 **Overall NEP Facilitation –** the Community Development Department has overall responsibility for facilitation of the NEP through the entire process. This includes setting up all the City team and stakeholder meetings, issuing the initial invitation letters to the property owners, coordinating the early meetings with the community leadership, the property owners meeting, and facilitating the community engagement process. The CD Dept. coordinates the kick off and close out press conferences. Also, the CD Dept. brings a variety of programs to the NEP, including assistance to income eligible homeowners, and to new homebuyers. Also there are programs to assist developers to increase homeownership as well as to improve rental property. Further, business incentives for small neighborhood businesses also exist.

5.2 **Reporting Requirements** There are reporting requirements during the NEP. Updates are given at the 30, 60, and 90 day benchmark. These reports are a compilation of the City agencies, non-profit partners and community stakeholders and are distributed to all involved. Two follow up reports occur, one at 6 months and one after one year.

Chapter 6 – Health/ Litter Control

6.1 **Vacant Lots**
The Litter Control Unit of the Health Department has the regulatory responsibility to uphold sections of the CMC that are related to litter and tall grass/weeds on privately – owned property. As part of their concentrated code efforts within the focus areas, Code Enforcement inspectors will identify and take measures to remedy any weed or litter violations that are observed on private property where there is a structure.

Litter Control staff will do a systematic inspection of each privately – owned vacant lot in the focus areas. The owner of any property found to be in violation will be issued a civil citation and given 10 days to demonstrate to the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) that the property has been brought into compliance. If after 10 days it has been determined that the property is still in violation, a referral will be made to the Private Lot Abatement Program administered within the Department of Public Services (DPS). Currently DPS has a contract with an outside vendor that has the responsibility to abate these violations on private property. The cost of clean – up will be billed to the property owner.

6.2   Health Code Enforcement
In addition to litter and tall grass/weed concerns, Health Department staff will address environmental health concerns identified in the focus areas. These include abandoned/junk vehicles, vermin control, trash storage, and dog waste issues.

Chapter 7 – Keep Cincinnati Beautiful (KCB)

7.1   Blight Index
KCB will conduct a Blight Index pre and post initiative. It consists of a street-by-street survey of blighted conditions within the focus area. A numerical rating is assigned to each street and provides a baseline of current conditions. For evaluation purposes, KCB will also conduct a Blight Index at the end of the focus period and again, one year after the initial index was taken.

7.2   Clean Up/Beautification Events and Coordination
KCB will work with neighborhood stakeholders and City Services to identify and address areas in need of extensive cleanup. This may include illegal dumpsites, graffiti etc. During the Great American Cleanup and Make a Difference Day, KCB will also bring a spotlight component to whatever neighborhood is currently in the focus area.

7.3   Educational Programming
KCB will provide environmental programming in the focus area schools, and where appropriate, social service agencies.

7.4   Business Districts
KCB will work with Community Development and neighborhood Business Associations to evaluate the aesthetic condition of the neighborhood Business District and identify potential improvements. Projects may include community art, landscaping, façade painting, clean up events etc.

7.5   CPTED coordination with Police
KCB will work with CPD and their partners to implement strategies based on CPTED analysis. (See Police Chapter 9, Item 9.4)

7.6   Mobilizing Volunteers
a.) KCB will work with neighborhood residents to coordinate events (see above) which will promote community involvement and foster community organizing

b) KCB will utilize various volunteer groups from organizations and entities around the City, depending on availability, to support community efforts in the focus area.

Chapter 8 – Law Department & Community Prosecution Section

8.1   Legal Council
The City of Cincinnati Law Department, through the Economic and Community Development section and the Prosecutors Office provides legal assistance to the NEP.

8.2   Court Watch
The Law Department encourages community members to become involved in the judicial process through the use of the Court Watch program. Court Watch volunteers are trained by the Prosecutor's Office to use the electronic database system to track cases that are of interest to their community. Court Watch volunteers attend court sessions to voice community concerns to the Judge during the sentencing phase of a court proceeding.

8.3   Code Enforcement
The Law Department participates in Code Enforcement Response Team (CERT), provides assistance to Code Enforcement, Police and Fire in the preparation of search warrants, both criminal and administrative. It also advises the departments on the proper charges to file and when necessary, prosecutes cases criminally, or files the appropriate civil action.

8.4   Community Groups
The Law Department regularly meets with community groups and attends Community Council meetings in order to provide another entry point to communicate neighborhood issues to appropriate City Departments.

8.5   Liquor Licenses
The Law Department pursues objections to liquor license renewals and the issuance of new licenses, based on City agency, City Council, and community objections to nuisances involving such establishments.

Chapter 9 – Police Department

9.1   Community Problem Oriented Policing (CPOP)
CPOP looks at a problem and through analysis, attempts to identify its underlying cause(s). Through more rigorous analysis of data used to identify the focus area, the District Commander, Neighborhood Liaison Supervisor, and officers will work with the NEP community using the SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment) method to identify specific problems in the focus area. Problems will be identified and documented. Responses will be based on review of best practices and can be addressed by a variety of responses not limited to policing responses such as those listed below, but creative solutions including working with various social service agencies and other community resources. The goal to it reduce calls for service to particular locations or in response to repeat victims or offenders to have long term problem solution which will free officers' time resulting in their ability to devote more attention to problem solving.

9.2   Neighborhood Watch
The Police Department will host several training sessions within the focus area over the course of the program. The goal is to provide public education regarding crime/trends and prevention methods to reduce victimization. Building safe neighborhoods is the responsibility of the entire community, not just the police. By engaging citizens to commit to Neighborhood Watch, they are encouraged to take a more active role in reporting suspicious activities in their neighborhood or just being a good neighbor to those likely to be victimized. The net effect generally results in more proactive engagement ensuring safety is addressed by citizens and the police.

9.3   Citizens on Patrol
Citizens on Patrol is a group of community volunteers who act as extra eyes and ears for the Police Department. These volunteers provide additional walking patrols or surveillance with the goal of reporting activity needing the attention of not only the Police Department but all City Departments. They are not involved in enforcement.

In communities with an established Citizens on Patrol Group, this group will be asked to provide additional patrols or act as resources for other efforts within the focus area such as clean-ups, safety assessments, etc. Efforts will also involve recruiting additional members.

In communities without an established group, efforts will involve the recruitment and training of enough members to form a team for that community.

9.4   Crime Reduction Through Environmental Design (CPTED)
The Police Department has numerous officers who are certified Crime Prevention Specialists. These officers will assist in problem solving through analysis of areas or locations that would benefit from some physical changes to reduce crime. In past such efforts creative solutions included street closures to reroute drug clientele from an area, fencing to reduce ingress/egress, enhanced lighting, surveillance camera installation, piped in classical music to deter youth loitering, etc. Communities will be directed

toward possible funding and the Department will assist in co-sponsored grant applications where appropriate.

9.5   Visibility Patrols
The Police Department will provide enhanced visibility within the focus area to enhance the perception of safety, encourage citizen participation, and deter criminal activity. This will be achieved through a variety of methods not limited to regular patrols/walking beat officers spending all time within the area when not deployed on a call for service, focused attention by the District Violent Crime Unit, additional Police Visibility Overtime details, walking patrols, bicycle officers, mounted patrol, Vortex Unit, use of officers from other districts to assist with curfew or truancy sweeps in the area, to name a few. Officers in the area will address or alert other City team members to items needing the attention of these other City Departments.

9.6   Vortex
The Vortex Unit is a highly visible proactive unit that has a zero tolerance approach to street crimes, drug trafficking, and quality of life issues. Vortex will be deployed into the focus area as deemed appropriate based on the level and types of activity identified where their expertise would be of benefit.

9.7   Prostitution Enforcement
If the area analysis shows prostitution activity, Vice and district officers will provide the necessary response including active attention to the prostitutes as well as reverse stings to address the patrons. Appropriate referrals to programs such as "Off the Streets" are made to address long term effects of this community problem.

9.8   Drug Abuse Enforcement
Complaint locations within the focus area will be given enhanced attention by uniformed and covert officers. Reverse stings will be used as appropriate, to address those coming into the area to purchase drugs.

9.9   Youth Issues
During the time of the focus effort, additional truancy and/or curfew sweeps will be conducted. Efforts will include Department personnel and additional community resources where available and/or appropriate. Efforts include locating resources to assist in dealing with repeat offenders.

The Department will make efforts to provide positive interaction with youth in the area wherever possible including but not limited to initiating Police Activities League projects, invitations to the Police-Youth Live-in, or referral to camps/activities under the direction of the Youth Services Section.

9.10   Landlord Training
The Department will determine the viability of providing Landlord Training based on analysis of rental property problems within the focus area. If determined this training would be useful, the appropriate number of training sessions will be held to educate rental property owners on how to reduce crime at their properties through better screening of renters, security measures, and other available methods to deal with tenants causing or encouraging criminal activity.

9.11   Communications Networks

The Department currently utilizes an "opt-in" communications network called Citizen Observer. This allows participants to receive notifications community/business specific generated by the Department or approved community liaisons via email, fax, or text messages. Examples include financial institutions being alerted to fraudulent check casher operating in the area, a rash of thefts from autos on particular streets, etc. Efforts will be made to reach out to the community to engage in program participation even to taking an active leadership role in providing information/notifications for the system.

Chapter 10 – Code Enforcement Response Team (CERT)

10.1 Case Selection Matrix
CERT cases are reviewed for the following characteristics: the property is a suspected safety hazard, the problem involves more than one agency, the problem has not been solved under standard code enforcement or the problem is recurring. CERT actions are reserved for more complex problems where expertise of various agencies is needed.

10.2 C.E.R.T. Implementation
The CERT team meets bi-monthly or as needed to review candidates for CERT action and to plan enforcement actions. The standing team is made up of representatives from Police, Health, Fire, Buildings and Law. If a case is selected, an Administrative Search Warrant is obtained and the team meets at the Police District to organize. Once the building is entered under the warrant and Police have cleared the area for inspection, the various agencies conduct a full inspection noting all violations. Often additional agencies are present for the inspection such as Children's Services, Animal Control SPCA, and services for the elderly or mental health to address issues at the time of the inspection and for follow up. If Criminal Charges are needed to bring about compliance after the inspection, the charges are consolidated and filed together to go before the same judge at the same time.

Chapter 11 – Other Departments & Agencies

11.1 Fire Department
The fire Department works in conjunction with Police, Health and B&I on referral when fire hazards encountered require specialized enforcement. The Fire Department can bring it's fire safety programs to the community to raise awareness of fire hazards and fire prevention techniques.

11.2 Department of Transportation and Engineering
The Department of Transportation and Engineering can help by replacing defaced, missing or damaged street signage, guardrails, City Stairs and any infrastructure under their control to ensure the area is free of damaged, missing or unsafe conditions. Also, parking and traffic patterns should be reviewed with police and the community to see if there are open air, drug traffic issues that can be addressed.

11.3 Public Services
The Department of Public Services is instrumental in assuring that there are adequate number of public trash cans to discourage littering and that the cans are picked up regularly and that the streets are swept. Public Services also operate the call center 591-6000, to take citizen complaint in the focus area.

Encouraging the recycling program and distributing bins is another way Public Services supports the NEP.

11.4   Duke Energy
Duke is the gas and electric commercial utility provider responsible for keeping streetlights on in many areas of the City. Duke conducted a survey of the missing or defective street lights and restored them. Street lighting is an important deterrent to crime.

11.5   Human Relations Commission
The Human Relations Commission has used "Street Monitors" to approach persons loitering on the streets to determine if they are in need of assistance with employment, training or social services to help lead them to more productive and healthy activities

11.6   Police Partnering Center
The Partnering Center has assisted with distributing "safety kits" to citizens as well as education on CEPTD and facilitating crime prevention outreach initiatives.

11.7   State of Ohio Attorney General's Office

11.8   Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority

Chapter 12 – Community Development Corporations (CDCs)

12.1   Support and Development
Community Development Corporations can be active in rehabilitation and production of owner occupant housing as well as development of strategic areas in order to encourage further private development. CDCs may need assistance with legal, technical of organization issues and should be encouraged to grow and provided with support wherever possible.

12.2   Non-profit partners- play an important role in the NEP and can be different depending on the neighborhood. Some non-profits offer services citywide while others are area specific.

Chapter 13 – Implementation Time Lines

13.1   First 90 Days
Much of the work is within the first 90-day implementation period. Reports of accomplishments are created every 30 days.

13.2   6 Month Report
To ensure sustainability and ongoing programs established during the 90 days are evaluated for effectiveness and adjusted as needed.

13.3   12 Month Report

A second blight index is conducted and police crime statistics are reviewed to begin to measure effectiveness. Any Hot Spots identified are addressed and long-range plans are evaluated and adjusted to meet their objectives.

APPENDIX

Flyer Announcing Focus Areas and Meeting Notice

NORTHSIDE
Neighborhood Enhancement Team

Improving Quality of Life

City of Cincinnati
Customer Service
513.591.6000

Permit & Development Center
Existing Building Inspections
3300 Central Parkway
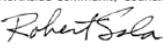Cincinnati OH 45225

Dear Property Owner:

We would like to thank City Manager Milton Dohoney, Jr. and his staff for implementing this new strategy to more efficiently utilize City departments within a focused area of selected neighborhoods. Beginning September 5, 2007 the City will deploy these new strategies whereby all City departments will be working co-operatively within the selected area of Northside for a 90-day period. The goal is to enhance the quality of life, eliminate blight and increase safety in our neighborhood. We are contacting you on behalf of the City and as neighborhood leaders to join us to help and support this effort. There will be an informational meeting at 6:30 pm on August 29th at McKie Recreation Center on Chase Avenue for more information.

Beginning September 5, City inspectors will be going street-to-street within the Project Area noting the condition of each property, including peeling paint and litter, among other building maintenance and safety issues. If you own property that is littered or has tall grass, please keep the property clean and the grass cut for the good of the neighborhood and to avoid fines and citations. To help you comply with building and health code regulations, a list of housing and business development programs, with contacts and phone numbers, is provided within.

We encourage you to become involved in the Northside Community Council and Northside Business Association, both of which are dedicated to improving the quality of life in Northside. It will take your cooperation and dedication, and the support of many agencies to make a real impact. We hope you'll join us!

Sincerely,

Tim Jeckering, President
Northside Community Council

Bob Sala, President
Northside Business Association

Working together

The Neighborhood Enhancement Team is a 90-day focused strategy addressing neighborhood quality of life issues in Northside. The program is designed to jumpstart the community on the road to revitalization and redevelopment through a coordinated partnership between the City of Cincinnati and the Northside community.

The City of Cincinnati departments of Community Development and Planning, Buildings and Inspections, Health, Fire, Police, Law, and Public Services, as well as the Cincinnati Geographic Information System (CAGIS), Keep Cincinnati Beautiful and other agencies and community groups collaborate under the initiative to maximize available resources for the greatest positive impact in Northside.

The collaborative effort has been designed to meet the needs of the neighborhood. Initiatives include: concentrating building code enforcement; identifying and "cooling down" crime hot spots; cleaning up streets, sidewalks and vacant lots; beautifying landscapes, streetscapes and public rights of way; and engaging property owners and residents to create and sustain a more livable neighborhood.

The Neighborhood Enhancement Team program builds upon other initiatives already in place and serves as a catalyst for community re-building. Covered in this brochure are the guidelines for the property inspections as a part of this project. If property owners receive a violation notice, resources may be available.

If you have any questions about property maintenance or codes, please call or visit the City of Cincinnati, Department of Buildings and Inspections, Business Development and Permit Center, 3300 Central Parkway, Cincinnati, OH 45225, call 352-3275 or visit the website at www.cincinnati-oh.gov/buildings.

Homeowner Support Services

Available Resources

If a property owner receives notice of a code violation, there are some programs that may provide assistance. Please note that the following three programs are federally funded and have income eligibility requirements. The household's total income cannot exceed the following limits:

# In Household	Income Limit
1	$36,200
2	$41,350
3	$46,550
4	$51,700
5	$55,850
6	$59,950

American Dream Down Payment Initiative (ADDI) – Down Payment assistance. Grants available to income eligible first-time homebuyers. Contact Roy Hackworth 352-6119.

Emergency Repair Grants – Emergency repairs for income eligible homeowners. Contracted with People Working Cooperatively, Inc. Call 351-7921 for more information.

Homeowner Rehabilitation Loan Program – Low interest and deferred loans for the rehabilitation of income eligible owner occupied homes. Contracted with the Homeownership Center of Greater Cincinnati. Call 961-2800 for more information.

Available Resources

The following resources may provide some assistance, should a property owner receive a code violation notice:

Home Improvement Program – Linked Deposit Program with Hamilton County (946-8234). Provides low interest loans to existing property owners to make home repairs. Five local banks participate. No income restrictions.

Tax Abatement – Abatement on property improvements: 10 years for rehabilitation, 15 years for new construction (up to $245,970). Contact: 352-5352 or click "I want to apply for tax abatement" upper right of the home page of website: www.cincinnati-oh.gov .

Home Improvement Contracts

Before hiring a contractor to do repairs or improvements to your home, check the requirements of Chapter 891 HOME IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTORS of the Cincinnati Municipal Code. (View the Municipal Code online at www.municode.com.) These rules assist consumers and contractors with entering proper contracts for home improvements over $500.00. Learning the elements of a proper Home Improvement Contract may keep you from being trapped in an unfair transaction.

Building Permits

Renovations involving the cutting of structural members or opening of walls, installation of heating, mechanical, plumbing, electrical wiring and equipment, or alterations of structures and room additions require building permits.

Call 352-3275 to learn more about building permit requirements in order to protect your investment and reduce potential for problems at the point of sale.

Boundaries

The area eligible for the Northside Neighborhood Enhancement Team initiative is bounded by the houses south of Chase Avenue on the west side of Hamilton and south of Pullan Avenue on the east.

Get Involved

We hope you will find the information in this pamphlet useful. The City of Cincinnati encourages you to become involved in your community council and neighborhood associations dedicated to improving the quality of life your community if you are not already. It will take your effort and the support of many agencies to make a real impact with the Neighborhood Enhancement Team initiative. We are asking you to please join us to make a difference in your community today.

"The Neighborhood Enhancement Team initiative is a partnership in which the City departments, the residents and the community organizations collaborate to address neighborhood problems, supply information, and arrive at solutions together. By working as one team, we have a greater chance to set the stage for long-term positive changes."

-City Manager Milton Dohoney, Jr.

Available Resources Contact List

1. **City of Cincinnati- Customer Service**
   (513) 591-6000

2. **Down Payment Assistance**
   (513) 352-6119

3. **Emergency Repair Grants**
   (513) 351-7921

4. **Homeowner Rehabilitation Loan Program:** (513) 961-2800

5. **Home Improvement Program**
   (513) 946-8234

6. **Tax Abatement**
   (513) 352-5352
   Website: www.Cincinnati-oh.gov
   Click on "I want to apply for tax abatement" in upper right-hand corner of homepage

7. **Home Improvement Contracts**
   View Municipal Code online at www.municode.com

8. **Building Permits** (513) 352-3275