Summary

The City of Hamilton Police Department East Ave Project

Scanning

In September of 2022, a deceased male was found on a sidewalk off of East Ave in the Jefferson Neighborhood. It was found that the male had been dropped off on East Ave in Hamilton by a Police Department from another city. The deceased stayed in the homeless shelter for one night a week prior to his death. This death prompted a closer look at this community and their problems, as well as the way that we police this community.

What are the neighborhood problems and what is the scope of the problems?

Crime Stats- Calls for Service- Intel- Police observations – Historical perception Narrow the scanned area to include highest crime area and make it manageable

Analysis

Data from first survey identifying neighborhood problems

Theft, Drug Activity/Overdoses, Prostitution, Trespassing

What Data Are We Collecting for Future Assessment?

Calls for Service – Worksheet Data – Follow up Surveys – Crime Stats

What is the cause of each identified/verified problem in this area?

Poor management of property- Public and Police Perception of Area- Lack of coordination of Efforts

Environmental Factors – Perception of Area by Offenders

Response

GOALS

1) Reduce criminal complaints in the target area

- a) Reduce drug complaints, theft and prostitution
- b) Reduce overdoses in target area
- 2) Reduce quality of life complaints in the target area
 - a) People trespassing, congregating and loitering on trespass properties
 - b) Open containers, public intoxication, litter
 - c) Drug use in alleys and behind buildings

FOCUS ON PROBLEM PEOPLE AND PLACES

Increased Police Presence in Target Area

Trespass Agreements for area properties

Signage on City Property – Clean up and Maintenance of City Property

Lighting in problem alleys and lots

Cite for trespass and open container violations- Don't ignore small violations

Make contact with problem area business owners – Stay in contact

Use nuisance ordnance for problem houses

Partner with shelter Management – Come up with a plan to address Problems at Shelter and Apartments

FI of people in target area

ORT Outreach in Problem Area

Partner with City Departments to Address Vacant Houses and Contact Owners of Property Use of City Strike Team for Clean-Up

Provide Intel and Resources for Patrol Officers Working the Project Area – Project Books Worksheets for Accountability While Working the Area

Prostitution Details

Focus on Drug Related Crime Enforcement

Second Survey to Re-Analyze

Assessment

Did We Achieve Our Goals? End of Project Survey Crime Stats Calls for Service

The City of Hamilton Police Department East Ave Project

The City of Hamilton, named after the Secretary of Treasury Alexander Hamilton, is located in southwest Ohio. It contains a population of approximately 63,000, making it the largest municipality in Butler County Ohio. Hamilton was founded in 1791 as Fort Hamilton on the Great Miami River and incorporated as a city in 1810. Hamilton grew into an industrial city with multiple paper mills and other industries lining the Great Miami River. In the 1920's, Hamilton gained the nickname of "Little Chicago" due to Chicago gangsters traveling there to "hide out". People tell stories of John Dillinger hiding out in a house on South Second Street in the early 1930's. Hamilton has had a colorful past; several areas of the city have historically been high crime areas for a long time despite efforts to address these issues.

The City of Hamilton Ohio Police Department has 120 sworn officers. The majority of these officers are assigned to the patrol division. The patrol division consists of 3 patrol shifts with a Lieutenant and Sergeants acting as supervisors to each patrol shift. The patrol division has traditionally been reactive, with officers being assigned to districts and dispatched to calls for service. In 2000, a Problem Oriented Policing Section was created. One Sergeant and four patrol officers were assigned to this section. They were trained in Problem Oriented Policing and used the SARA model to address problems throughout the city. Other than this section of the police department, Problem Oriented Policing was not made a priority of the department. Problem Oriented Policing training was not provided to the rest of the department. Although it was a program, it was not made a department wide philosophy. Without "Buy In" from administration and supervision, this program turned into directed patrol and slowly disappeared despite its

effectiveness. This program was created again several years ago as the Neighborhood Policing Section in order to address neighborhood problems using Problem Oriented Policing.

The City of Hamilton is broken down into seven police districts. Within police district two is the Jefferson Neighborhood. The Jefferson Neighborhood, also referred to as the Fourth Ward, was once a highly industrial neighborhood. In the early days of Hamilton, it was inhabited by a large population of Italian Immigrants. It is now a very ethnically diverse neighborhood. A large Hispanic population currently lives in this district and a portion of this population is undocumented transient labor workers. The Jefferson Neighborhood has 1,136 households with a population of approximately 4,668. This neighborhood has historically been one of the highest crime areas and a draw on Police resources.

Throughout this area, traditional single resident houses have been converted into low rent, multi-room apartments and absentee property owners have not managed their property. The Jefferson neighborhood has one of the largest homeless shelters in Butler County, along with two transitional housing apartment buildings owned by the homeless shelter. A roadway, East Ave, runs north to south through the middle of the Jefferson Neighborhood. It is a two lane road with a significant amount of traffic. Located on East Ave are several businesses, including two markets, a gas station, a beverage drive through, and two bars.

The East Ave area was known for its open air drug market and prostitution. There had been criminal gang activity in the area so it was common to see gang graffiti belonging to a Latin King set, a Sereno set, a Blood gang set and a Crip gang set. In 2005, the Hamilton Police Department's Problem Oriented Policing Section had successfully addressed a neighborhood Blood set, the D Block Killas, who had taken over a block with drug trafficking in the Jefferson

Neighborhood. More recently in the Jefferson Neighborhood in 2019, there was a gang related homicide on East Ave.

It was not uncommon to have spill over from the homeless shelter and have transient people wandering the streets and alleys of the Jefferson Neighborhood. Due to the homeless population in the Jefferson Neighborhood, churches and charity organizations from outside the city would regularly visit the area handing out food and clothing. This would draw more people from outside the neighborhood. The organizations would then leave without cleaning up the trash.

Scanning

In September of 2022, a deceased male was found on a sidewalk off of East Ave in the Jefferson Neighborhood. The Hamilton Police Department could not immediately identify the deceased male and it was determined that it was not a homicide. During the investigation, the male was eventually identified and found to be from another city with no ties to Hamilton. The obvious question was, how did this person end up deceased in an alley in the Jefferson Neighborhood in Hamilton Ohio? It was found that the male had been dropped off on East Ave in Hamilton by a Police Department from another city. The deceased stayed in the homeless shelter for one night a week prior to his death. This death prompted a closer look at this community and their problems, as well as the way that we police this community.

What are the perceived neighborhood problems and are those perceptions correct? What are the root causes of these problems in the Jefferson Neighborhood? Does the police perception of the problems in the area differ from the residents of this community? What is the scope of the problems? Why haven't these problems been addressed previously?

Attempting to answer questions regarding the deceased male found in the Jefferson Neighborhood was the first step in trying to get an accurate picture of this neighborhood. The department utilized the patrol division to conduct field interviews in the area to determine not only who was in the area, but if they were residents of the community or from outside of the city. A new FI card was used with the addition of the following questions: "Where are you from?", "How did you get here?", and "What brought you here?"

An analysis of crime statistics and a crime mapping program were utilized to look at the entire Jefferson Neighborhood. Calls for service, Crime reports, drug and gang intelligence, drug overdose reports, interviews of district officers, and the data from the FI cards were used. All of this data gave a picture of what we thought was occurring in this neighborhood. Drug Offenses, Prostitution, Theft, Fights and Assaults, Homelessness, and Trespassing. While it provided us with a general picture, we still needed an in depth analysis to narrow our focus, find the underlying problems, and formulate a response.

Analysis

The initial task was to narrow the physical locations of focus for the project. It was predetermined that trying to address problems in too large of an area and not having obtainable goals would be detrimental to the success of the project. The Jefferson Neighborhood or Fourth Ward is a substantial area. The crime mapping program analyzing the calls for police service, crime reports, arrests and Field Interviews displayed high concentration around East Ave. The area for the project was mapped out around this high crime area. One block east of East Ave to South 11th St. One block west of East Ave to South 9th St. Bordered to the north by Maple Ave and to the south by Long St. This area includes: the homeless shelter and their transitional

housing apartments, two bars, three markets, overgrown vacant lots, and a large amount of unoccupied houses.

At this point, we began to dig deeper into our perceived problems. We also attempted to find out what the residents who lived in the area considered to be a problem. This led us to conduct our first neighborhood survey. Officers went door to door with this survey. Since it is a large Hispanic community, we brought Spanish speaking officers with us. We also conducted the survey at different times of the day in order to reach as many residences as possible in consideration of those who work shift work. This survey was important for several reasons. First, it enabled us a better understanding of what was important to the people who live in the neighborhood. Second, it established a face to face relationship with the residents of the neighborhood. Third, it allowed the people the opportunity to share problems with us. Fourth, it was a chance to make people aware of the Jefferson Community group and to get them involved in their community. After the survey, we listed the prominent problems that needed to be addressed in the target area. These problems were as follows: trespassing on private property, drinking alcohol in public or open containers, loitering on corners and alleys selling drugs or soliciting prostitution, theft of property from yards and vehicles, overdoses, and drug houses.

We considered all of this information from the surveys, plus the other sources, then started working on a comprehensive response. From the analysis, we further narrowed down the focus to problems that were manageable. We looked at possible reasons for past failures, such as lack of coordination, follow through, and officer and public perception of the area. We proceeded to set feasible goals and a date of completion for these goals. The main goals for the project were:

- 1) Reduce criminal complaints in the target area. Specifically, reduce drug complaints, theft, prostitution, and overdoses.
- 2) Reduce quality of life complaints in the target area. This includes trespassing, loitering, open containers, public intoxication, litter, and drug use in the alleys and behind buildings.

A start date of April 1st, 2023 and end date of September 30th, 2023 was established.

Response

At this point, the project area of focus had been narrowed down, the goals for the project were set, and a timeframe for completion was determined. Now it was time to dictate a response. The past practice of a law enforcement only approach was not effective. This would not be an attempt to arrest our way out of this problem. The response needed to be a comprehensive approach involving multiple divisions of the police department, other city departments, outside partnerships, community organizations, courts, other law enforcement agencies, property and business owners, and the residents of the neighborhood. The objective of the response was to prioritize problem people and problem places.

Problem Places

All of the businesses located within the project area were contacted. These businesses were made aware of the project and we obtained contact information for the ownership and management. One of the businesses, Party Mart, had been identified as a problem place. The complaint was open air drug dealing in the parking lot, as well as prostitutes hanging out on the lot. We obtained a trespass agreement for the property from the owner for the people found

trespassing after business hours. Anyone who trespassed on the property was placed on a searchable list. We asked the property owners to install extra lights on the property. Furthermore, we installed a covert pole camera across the street from the property to aid in monitoring activity.

Another substantial problem in the targeted area were people trespassing, using drugs, and sleeping in overgrown vacant lots. We identified the owners of all of the vacant properties. The City of Hamilton owned several vacant lots. The city mowed and cleared brush from these properties. We utilized the City Strike Team for trash and debris cleanup on vacant properties. For the City owned problem properties, we installed no trespassing signs and addressed the lighting of these properties. Additionally, the City installed LED street lights along the alley side of several properties. Several vacant buildings were also identified in the area of focus. Again, landowners were contacted and trespass agreements obtained. If open, the buildings were secured and the City followed up with the owners to ensure there was a long term plan in place for the property.

Several drug houses in the target area had been identified by the neighborhood survey and through confidential informants. These properties were investigated by our Neighborhood Policing Section, County Drug Task force, and the patrol division. Continuing, controlled buys were made and search warrants served at these properties. These drug complaints were referred to the City to be placed on a public nuisance list and the owner to be fined using the City Public Nuisance ordinance. The City Health Department also followed up on several of these complaints after the search warrants were served.

One house in the target area was identified as a hangout for members of a Blood Gang set. This gang had been involved in multiple homicides in the City so a covert pole camera was

put up in order to address this problem. Multiple gun and drug arrests were made from this location. Therefore, the property was deemed a nuisance by the city and the property owner was fined.

Furthermore, an identified problem property was a large house that had been converted into an apartment building. We received complaints of drug dealing from the porch and stairwell, prostitutes hanging out on the property, and people loitering on the property. The owner of the property was a company in Colorado with no idea of the state of the property and its mismanagement. After making controlled drug purchases from the property and deeming the property as a nuisance property, the owner hired a new property manager. We were able to obtain a trespass agreement and tenant list for the property in order to address the problems at the property.

Moreover, the homeless shelter and the two transitional housing apartment complexes in the target area were identified as problem places. The homeless shelter on East Ave is a privately owned, multi-bed facility that temporarily houses people on an emergency basis. They own two multi-unit apartment buildings where people are housed long term to transition to their own housing. For several years, this facility had been mismanaged. We had received drug complaints from the property, as well as non-residents congregating on the property of the shelter and transitional property. At the start of the project, the shelter had just hired a new executive director. We met with the new director with a list of concerns and changes that we would like to see. After meeting with the director, management personnel were changed, policies were modified, and a better partnership with increased communication was established.

Reiterating the response to problem places, several actions were taken. Lighting in the alleys along East Ave were addressed with lights replaced and added in dark areas. Trespass

agreements for property and trespass lists were obtained and updated. A searchable list of property owners and their contact information was established. Overgrown brush and trash were addressed by the City. Covert recorded pole cameras were put up in the target areas.

Problem People

People who were not residents of the area were historically drawn to the location due to the reputation of open air drug markets and prostitution. These people were in the area to sell or buy drugs, engage in prostitution, or participate in gang activity. Consequently, repeat offenders who did not live in this area were identified. Several problematic people were linked to the drug houses in the project area. Information pertaining to these identified problem people were passed on to patrol officers and other agencies such as Parole and Probation.

Accountability

This project was presented to the police department's command staff before the project was started. It needed support from the command staff and from patrol front line supervision. This response would not be effective with only the Neighborhood Policing Section officers working it. We needed the patrol division to be involved and invested. This was also an opportunity to grow the problem oriented policing philosophy within the patrol division.

The Jefferson Neighborhood, along with the target area, are within police district two. For accountability and data collection purposes, a worksheet was developed for patrol officers assigned to work the target area. The worksheet was given to the district officer at the beginning of shift by the shift supervisor. It was then to be filled out by the officer and turned back into the shift supervisor at the end of tour. The direction given to patrol shift officers working the problem area was no more than an officer should be doing when working a beat. A binder

containing all of the intelligence and resources for the project area was given to each patrol shift. In the binder were face sheets for each problem place and person in the target area. Log-in information for the pole cameras were included in the binder. The list of contact numbers for property owners, trespass agreement and trespass lists, and business contacts were included in the binders. These binders, along with the worksheets, were given to the patrol officer assigned to work the target area. The hope was that if officers had to hand their supervisor the worksheet at the end of tour, they would be more motivated to fill it out. Accordingly, first line supervision were responsible for the accountability of their officers working the project.

The direction for patrol was clear. Answer calls for service in the target area. Deal with the quality of life issues like trespassing and open containers of alcohol in public. Do frequent business checks. The emphasis was to be present in the area. Officers had their binders with all of the information pertaining to the problem people and places to aid in their effort on working these complaints.

Additional Response

While working the target area, officers were asked to stop and check on the staff at the homeless shelter. The shelter staff became familiar with officers working the area which resulted in better communication with shelter staff. Also, K9 officers did random drug searches at the shelter. In addition to this, our Opioid Overdose Quick Response Team made frequent stops at the shelter to offer addiction services to those in need of it.

Bike patrol details were worked by officers in the target area with an emphasis on addressing the problems taking place in the alleys and parking lots of businesses at night. Hot Spot details targeting gun violence were also scheduled.

In all we conducted three neighborhood surveys. All were implemented in the same manner as the first, going door to door. The second was done halfway through the project and was used to re-focus our response and look for any new area problems. The third survey was done to help assess the effectiveness of the project.

Difficulties of Response Implementation

One difficulty with response implementation was lack of buy in from patrol shift supervision. I had support from the Police Chief and the two captains, however I had little cooperation and support from two of the three patrol shift Lieutenants and several patrol shift Sergeants. The day shift Lieutenant supported the project and held his officers accountable when assigned to work the project area. Second and third shift patrol officers were constantly missing project worksheets and when they did turn them in they were often blank. It was a constant battle to get cooperation from second and third patrol shift supervision. At one point third shift lost their project intelligence binder and after several weeks missing it was turned in by a citizen who found it alongside of a road. With my rank as Sergeant it was often difficult for me to deal with a higher ranking supervisor that did not want to participate in or support the project. During the project the second and third shift Lieutenants were replaced and the new shift commanders were very supportive of the project and held their officers accountable.

Assessment

To measure the results we used comparative crime data and a community survey. Four crime categories were chosen to compare from data April through September of 2022 to April through September of 2023. Those categories were Total call for police service, Theft offenses,

Drug activity and Drug Reaction (Overdose). The police department's central records clerks prepared the comparison data for the project. Theft offenses in the target area were down 31%. Drug Activity was down 71%. Drug overdoses were down 79%.

Total calls police for service were down 30% in the project area. When dealing with data from the homeless shelter, the numbers needed to be looked at a little closer. In the target time frame in 2022 there were 224 calls for police service at the shelter. Within the same timeframe in 2023 there were 347 calls for police service at the shelter. An increase of 55%. However, in the 2022 target timeframe there were only 7 self-initiated police business checks at the shelter. In 2023 target timeframe there was 178 self-initiated police business checks of the shelter. Total calls for service at the shelter 2022 without business checks was 217. Total calls for Service at the shelter without business checks 2023 was 169. The total calls for service for the project area would be less than a 30% reduction if we took out self-initiated police business checks when comparing the data. Throughout the project area business checks as self-initiated calls for service went up because of officers extra efforts in the area.

The third neighborhood survey was done at the end of the project. 62.5% of the people surveyed reported that they thought that their neighborhood is safer since February. 79.55% of people surveyed had seen an increased police presence in the community. 30.68% of people surveyed though that crime had been reduced in their neighborhood since February.

Moving Forward

As we move forward there has been a maintenance of what we achieved so we don't lose ground in our efforts in the community. There is a lasting effect of the new way that we do business in this area. The established relationships and partnerships are ongoing. We met the

goals that we set at the beginning of the project. Officers who worked this project area take pride in the success that they were part of.

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2022 Apr-Sept	2023Apr-Sep	ot	% Change	
Drug Reactions	38	8		-79%
Drug Activity	39	11		-72%
Thefts	59	41		-31%
Total Calls	2016	1417		-30%
Total Calls (- FI's and Business Checks) 1,819 1.062 -42%				
Shelter				

2022 Total Calls	2023 Total Calls	<u>Increase</u>
224	347	123 or 55%
2022 Business Checks	2023 Business Checks	<u>Increase</u>
7	178	171 or 2,343%

2022 Calls for Service without Business Checks - 217

2023 Calls for Service without Business Checks – 169

		2022	2023	% Change
			(Apr - Sept)	1 YEAR
	Drug Reaction	38	8 8	-79%
		39	11	-79%
Grand Total	Drug Activity Thefts	59	41	-72%
	Total Calls	2016	1417	-31%
	Overdose	16	4	-75%
East Ave	Drug Activity	15	2	-87%
	Thefts	16	10	-38%
	Total Calls	895	560	-37%
	Overdose	12	2	-83%
Serve City	Drug Activity	3	0	-100%
	Thefts	12	13	8%
	Total Calls	224	347	55%
	Overdose	4	0	-100%
Mana Aug	Drug Activity	3	0	-100%
Mape Ave	Thefts	10	1	-90%
	Total Calls	351	75	-79%
	Overdose	1	1	0%
	Drug Activity	7	4	-43%
S 9th	Thefts	11	4	-64%
	Total Calls	154	125	-19%
	Overdose	2	0	-100%
	Drug Activity	4	5	25%
S 11th	Thefts	5	3	-40%
	Total Calls	175	128	-27%
	Overdose	0	0	0%
	Drug Activity	1	0	-100%
Long	Thefts	0	1	100%
	Total Calls	45	12	-73%
	Overdose	2	1	-50%
	Drug Activity	4	0	-100%
Ludlow	Thefts	3	0	-100%
	Total Calls	127	72	-43%
	Overdose	0	0	0%
	Drug Activity	0	0	0%
Sycamore	Thefts	1	0	-100%
	Total Calls	21	8	-62%
	Overdose	0	0	0%
		0	0	0%
Chestnut	Drug Activity Thefts	0	2	
		0	23	200%
	Total Calls	_		2300%
Walnut	Overdose	0	0	0%
	Drug Activity	0	0	0%
	Thefts	1	2	100%
	Total Calls	3	18	500%
Hanover	Overdose	1	0	-100%
	Drug Activity	2	0	-100%
	Thefts	0	5	500%
	Total Calls	21	49	133%

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Hamilton Police Department Neighborhood Survey

Addre	ess of Survey
Name	e and Phone Number
1.	How long have you lived at your current residence?
	*
2.	Do you rent or own? Rent Own
3.	What is the most serious crime problems in your neighborhood?
4.	Have you been a victim of crime in your neighborhood? Yes No Not sure Can't remember
5.	What do you feel could be done to decrease crime in your neighborhood?
6.	Are you involved in any neighborhood watch programs, community involvement programs in your neighborhood?
	Yes No Not anymore Not sure how to
7.	Are there any specific addresses in your neighborhood that the police should be aware of?

Hamilton Police Department Neighborhood Survey II

Addres	s of Survey			
Name and Phone Number				
1.	Have you recently moved to	this residence or did you partake in	the survey in February?	
2.	Has your neighborhood become a better or worse place to live in since February, or is it about the same?			
	Better	Worse	Same	
			ř	
3.	Would you say the level of pabout the same, or decrease	olice presence in your neighborhood ed sinde February?	has increased, stayed	
	Increased	Stayed the Same	Decreased	
4.	Do you feel there need to be more police officers, about the same amount, or less police officers in your neighborhood?			
	More Police	Same Police	Less Police	
, 5				
5.	Have you attended a Jeffers	on Alliance Neighborhood Meeting s	ince February?	
	Yes	No		
6.	What is the most serious cri	me problem in your neighborhood?	When does it occur?	
			-	
7.	Are there any specific addre	esses in your neighborhood that the p	police should be aware	

Hamilton Police Department Neighborhood Survey III

Address of Survey				
1.	How long have you lived at your current residence?			
2.	Do you feel your neighborhood has become safer since February?	Yes	No	
3.	Have you seen an increase in police presence in your neighborhood?	Yes	No	
4	Do you feel crime has increased, decreased or stayed about the same?			
5.	Since February, have you been a victim of crime in your neighborhood?	Yes	No	
6.	Since February, have you been involved in any neighborhood watch pro meetings in your neighborhood?	grams, neighbor Yes	hood No	
7.	What is the most serious crime in your neighborhood?			

Next Jefferson Alliance Neighborhood Meeting: October 18th 2023 @ 6pm. Jefferson Park

SURVEY #3

How long have you lived at your current residence? Average 12.11 Years

Do you feel your neighborhood is safer since February? YES 62.5%

Have you seen an increased in police presence in your neighborhood? YES 79.55%

Do you think crime has increased, decreased or stayed about the same? Increased 6.82%

Decreased **30.68%** Same **60.23%**

What is the most serious crime in your neighborhood? 37.5% Drugs

13.6% Theft
9.1% Homeless