



The City of Aurora, Colorado is the third largest in the State. It is located on the eastern boarder of the Denver Metropolitan area. The City encompasses 161 square miles and has a population of 247,000.

The Aurora Police Department employs 723 individuals, of which 492 are sworn officers. Since 1988 the City Government and the department have been collaborative partners committed to the philosophy of Community Policing. Through education, training, and application, the department practices many traditional and non-traditional problem solving methods including the SARA model, with emphasis on community collaboration.

For example, through these efforts we recognized that there were significant and unique problems associated with multi-family residences in the area of drug and gang activity. Since 1980, there has been a 300% increase in multi-family units city wide. The City of Aurora in cooperation with the Police Department, developed and implemented new programs to address these problems. The City of Aurora created a Community Outreach City Attorney's position. The attorney was situated in a store front operation in downtown Aurora to allow easier access to the community for his services. The city also created a new ordinance called the Specified Crime Property. This was designed to prohibit any structure to be used for illegal activity involving prostitution, gambling, and drugs. The city then established a Multi-Family Task Force comprised of Council members, City Managers, Police Command Staff, and other city support personnel, to assess the problems associated with multi-family dwellings.

Another example, was the collaboration between the department and the business community dealing with a prostitution problem. The downtown business owners believed that retail sales were declining because of the visibility of suspected prostitution. The department created a Foot Patrol Unit exclusively to address this problem. These officers had specific boundaries designed around the business community and were responsible to monitor and remove the illegal activity.

For the past several years, the city has been plagued with a problematic motel, located in the northwest portion of the city. This area of town is perceived to have high crime activity and the availability of drugs and prostitution. This motel called the Red Coach Motor Inn is located on the East Colfax Corridor within this geographical region. This

motel experienced a very high rate of calls for service, including drugs, prostitution, gang related, and other serious crimes. The increase in the calls for service and the nature of them caused concern for the police department. The department utilized many resources within our organization to address them, including Vice and Narcotics, Gang Intervention Unit, Direct Action Response Team, Police Area Representatives, Foot Patrol, and the Multi-Family Housing Officer. It was through these resources and repeated citizen complaints that the department became aware of the problems associated with this motel, and tried to address them.

In 1995, the Red Coach Motor Inn had the highest calls for service compared to similar motels in the area. On view criminal activity had become so blatant that uniformed patrol officers in marked units were able to witness drug deals and prostitution on and around the premises. In contacting customers of the motel these officers learned that people were coming from all over the metropolitan area to participate in illegal activity at the motel. PAR Officer Mike Mangino, and Foot Patrol Officers Tim Jeffrey, Gerald Kirby, Gary Reiningger, and Sean De Bow, began working together to address the flagrant criminal activity at the Red Coach Motor Inn. They had numerous meetings with the owner to establish a cooperative relationship to alleviate the criminal activity. Efforts were made to educate the owner on the problems associated with his property and he was given advice on possible crime prevention techniques. During these meetings there initially appeared to be a sense of cooperativeness on the part of the owner to cleaning up the problems associated with his motel. There was a concern that since the owner was Korean, there may have been a communication problem. During these initial meetings, the owner had an interpreter available to him to ensure the accuracy of communication.

The Community Outreach City Attorney, Dave Lathers, was consulted to assist in the problem solving efforts of the PAR and Foot Patrol Officers. The Multi-Family Officer Dean Harris completed the crime analysis of the property to determine the nature and number of calls for service at the Red Coach. Through personal observations on a daily basis from the above officers, information was provided to Vice and Narcotics and other specialty units to assist in the problem. The motel was closely monitored for illegal activity and was being assessed by the City's Multi-Family Task Force. After what appeared to be a lack of cooperation by the owner of the Red Coach, we became suspicious when we saw the calls for service reduce significantly. In August 1995, we learned that the owner of the Red Coach had discreetly acquired interest in the motel across the street called the Cottonwood Motel. This is a 25 room motel which is located on the East Colfax Corridor directly across the street from the Red Coach. Intelligence information and personal observation indicated that while the owner of the Red Coach appeared to be in compliance with initial police requests at the Red Coach, he was allowing criminal activity to occur at the Cottonwood Motel. There was a marked increase in calls for service at the Cottonwood. Information was obtained from Foot Patrol Officers that a previous manager of the Cottonwood verified that the owner of the Red Coach had ordered him to rent to undesirables who were turned away from the Red Coach. In December 1995, a Vice and Narcotics Officer contacted Multi-Family Officer Dean Harris advising that he personally observed six drug deals in one day at the Cottonwood Motel. It became readily apparent that the owner of the Red

Coach was displacing criminal activity from that motel to the Cottonwood across the street while maintaining the appearance of cooperation at the Red Coach.

Through the collaborative efforts of the PAR Officers, Foot Patrol Officers, and the City Attorney's Office we determined that traditional law enforcement techniques were not curtailing the criminal activity at the Red Coach and Cottonwood. Saturation and high intensity police activity would only temporarily abate the problem, but did not prove to be a long term solution.

An innovative approach was needed to address the situation. Due to lack of local examples of success dealing with this situation, we had to be creative with our response. The use of the Specified Crime Property Ordinance was discussed as a possible solution. Although the ordinance was perceived to be applicable to single family dwellings only, this core group recommended expanding its application to this motel situation. The city government agreed to initiate the first use of this ordinance against these properties. The police department through the office of the Multi-Family Officer made a preliminary determination that the properties fell under the Specified Crime Property Ordinance. In February 1996, a warning letter was issued by the police department to the owner of the motels informing him of the city's ability to take civil action against the owner for allowing the illegal activity to occur on his premises. Officers Mangino and Harris with the Foot Patrol Officers posted both properties with the Specified Crime Property Notice. Because it was a motel, every room, occupant, and owner had to be served, and each room physically posted with a document alleging it to be Specified Crime Property. After this posting occurred the city could not take action for at least ten days. During this time, there was ongoing negotiation between Assistant City Attorney Dave Lathers and the owner of the properties. An agreement was reached between the two containing numerous stipulations that would be placed on the properties with which the owner had to comply. These stipulations were then made an order of municipal court subject to contempt proceedings for failure to comply.

The owner alleged that the police department and the City Attorney's office were overzealous in targeting his properties without cause, however, he later agreed to every court ordered stipulation. In the proposed stipulation/stay settlement, there were 18 conditions placed on the property and owner. Those conditions required increased cooperation with the police department, improved business practices and physical plant improvements. One major stipulation required the owner to close one unit in each motel for one year with a sign attached to the door stating "closed by the order of the Chief of Police due to criminal activity." The police and City Attorney's Office continue to monitor the compliance with these stipulations and, if the owner fails to comply, the matter will be returned to the court.

Although it appears that the owner is doing the minimal amount of improvements needed to comply with court ordered stipulations, he has spent \$50,000.00 on physical improvements to raise the Cottonwood Motel to meet required building code standards. During inspections for compliance, minor violations have been noted. The number of arrests at both properties have decreased significantly.

In a letter dated July 23, 1996, Assistant City Attorney Dave Lathers stated that the property owner has repeatedly and materially breached or violated the terms of the court ordered stipulation. The owner has failed to employ a legitimate security force, upgrade lighting, retro fit properties, meet building codes, follow valid guest registration requirements, and reduce overall crime to an acceptable level. As a result, the City Attorney's Office is preparing to prosecute this matter in court to achieve either full compliance with the stipulations or closure of these properties.

Quality of life issues are sometimes difficult to measure, however, there was a significant decrease in reported crime after the application of the Crime House Property Ordinance, four months after filing in court there were 58 calls for service compared to a total of 98 calls in the prior month. Officer Dean Harris determined there was a drop of 45% in the calls for service from April 1996 to July 1996, as compared to the same period in 1995.

Available statistics do not indicate displacement of this problem to surrounding neighborhoods or similar motel properties in the area. Due to the reduced volume of calls for service to these motels, there is an increase in available time for the area patrol officers to spend on other community policing activities. The coordination of efforts between the city government, police, judicial system, and other city departments proved to be extremely successful in our first implementation of the Specified Crime Property Ordinance. Although it is too early for statistics to show long term measurable success, this project sent a clear message to neighbors and other businesses that such flagrant criminal activity will not be tolerated. As a result, approximately 75% of the motel owners and operators have attended training seminars designed to teach proactive crime prevention techniques as a standard component of responsible property management. These well attended programs have provided a resource for substantial crime reduction for those who have actually applied the techniques learned in these programs.

This innovative problem solving action was initiated by Multi-Family Officer Dean Harris, PAR Officer Mike Mangino, Assistant City Attorney Dave Lathers and Foot Patrol Officers, Tim Jeffery, Gary Reininger, Gerald Kirby, Sean De Bow. The Aurora Police Department provides specialized training in problem solving policing through our annual in-service training and initial academy instruction. The department encourages officers to engage in traditional and non-traditional approaches in their daily operations, and at no time were any of the participants involved given any incentives to engage in problem solving. The resources committed to the success of this project were within the normal duties assigned to these officers in addressing the problem. There were no additional monetary costs associated with this project and the expended man hours were within projected parameters.

MEMORANDUM

To: Dave Lathers, Community Outreach Attorney

From: Dean Harris, APD Multi-family Officer

Date: 020596

Re: Sampling of contacts with known criminals at Cottonwood Motel taken from January '95 offense reports

In an effort to better document the pervasive influence of drugs and prostitution at the Cottonwood Motel I researched APD records to document instances in which reports taken for incidents apparently un related to drugs or prostitution actually involved known drug users/dealers or prostitutes. The last twenty-five available offense reports taken at the Cottonwood Motel include five reports taken for drug violations. The remaining twenty reports show numerous contacts with parties involved in drug activity and/or prostitution. I have included a brief statistical breakdown of contacts first and then a summary of those contacts listed in chronological order:

Statistical Breakdown

Listed below are the numbers and percentages of reports involving drugs and/or prostitution (numbers and percentages may total more than twenty reports and 100% because some reports involve both drugs and prostitution):

Drugs	Prostitution	No drug or prostitution involvement Or involvement unknown
Twelve/60%	Five/25%	Six/30%

Summary of incidents

Date of report	Report number	Nature	Summary of activity
013196	96-5350	Warrant	Party arrested on traffic warrants
013196	96-5362	SPP	Summons issued—Loitering for drug activity
013196	96-5251	Disorderly	Party with history of cocaine possession gave fictitious name on registration; registered with known prostitute
012996	96-4963	CVC	Known prostitute held for mandatory HIV testing by Denver PD
012996	96-4842	Warrant	Drug user with burglary history
012696	96-4296	Aggravated Assault	Known prostitute arrested for biting party with arrest history of selling cocaine
012596	96-4194	Found Property	Drug paraphernalia recovered from parties in Room 9 (parties not registered guests)
012596	96-4179	Trespass	Party arrested also has burglary history
012596	96-4178	Trespass	Party arrested is known prostitute and

			drug user
012496	96-4015	Larceny	Suspect was known prostitute and drug user (see 96-4296 above)
012496	96-4027	Liquor Violation	Summons issued—party has history of distributing cocaine
012396	96-3793	Domestic	Drug/prostitution involvement unknown
012296	96-3749	Warrant	Party arrested on warrant has arrest history for possession of cocaine
011896	96-3656	Trespass	Basis for original trespass notice unknown at this time
012196	96-3479	Assault	Drug involvement by suspect unknown; witness suspected in drug activity
012096	96-3308	Trespass	Party arrested has arrest history for distribution of cocaine
011896	96-3065	Loitering	Summons issued for Loitering for drug activity; party has prior history for possession of cocaine
011896	96-2943	Obstructing Police	Involvement unknown at this time—summons issued
011796	96-2864	Assault-knife	Involvement unknown at this time
011696	96-2506	Warrant	Involvement unknown at this time