

Stemmons Corridor Service Delivery Project

Abstract

The Stemmons Freeway corridor contains the major traffic artery through Northwest Dallas that stretches for thirteen miles from the city limits on the north to downtown Dallas on the south. It is populated entirely by businesses, some of which have interacted with the Dallas Police Department and the City of Dallas through a single business association whose boundaries covered only a portion of the corridor. The Police Department did not have a coordinated plan to deal with problem resolution in the area. Interactive Community Policing officers assigned to the area in 1998 recognized a need for a coordinated approach to service delivery similar to that used in Weed and Seed areas that are largely residential.

The problems identified by area stakeholders and police officers had existed for a long time. Past efforts had only succeeded in moving problems along the corridor. A large transient population along the freeway, coupled with huge business parking areas and an abundance of liquor stores, created conditions for a variety of criminal offenses and citizen complaints.

The alternatives considered by the Northwest Operations Division of the Police Department ranged from continuing past practices of treating problems as they occurred to developing a comprehensive strategy for city service delivery for the entire corridor. ICP officers had experienced success in residential areas with problem resolution techniques and welcomed the challenge to apply these practices in a business community. Future City of Dallas plans along the corridor made the comprehensive approach the obvious choice. A proactive response adopted now would prevent the escalation of existing problems as the area developed.

Officers assigned to the response reorganized the existing business association and established six others. Effective lines of communication between all associations and the ICP unit at Northwest were established. Goals of the associations were prioritized and action plans were implemented. Criminal activity in the area has decreased significantly, more so in areas with energetic members. A single unit coordinates all operations along the corridor and stakeholder satisfaction has increased.

Stemmons Corridor Service Delivery Project

Scanning

The Stemmons Corridor in Northwest Dallas consists of the area along Interstate 35E (Stemmons Freeway) between downtown Dallas on the south and Interstate 635 to the north. The Stemmons Freeway is the major traffic artery located within the Northwest Operations Division of the Dallas Police Department. This traffic artery serves the many businesses along the freeway and the downtown business district from the suburbs north and west of the City of Dallas and from DFW Airport. Interstate 35E is recognized as part of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The Texas Department of Transportation estimates that 265,000 people utilize this freeway on a daily basis.

The Stemmons Corridor is the domain of a variety of businesses large and small. The area contains four major hospitals, four wholesale market showplaces, forty hotels, three restaurant/entertainment complexes, and many industrial areas spread along the thirteen miles of freeway.

The development of a strategy for service delivery over such a diverse, large area was a major obstacle to improving the quality of life in this area. Business associations along the freeway interacted with the Police Department at different levels, with different individuals, or not at all. Community Policing officers, previously assigned to residential areas only, were not actively involved in this area. In April 1998, ICP Officers were assigned to the Stemmons Corridor

area due to the number of citizen and officer complaints or requests for service directly affecting the business corridor. At that time, the only association in contact with the Police Department was the Stemmons Corridor Business Association, which has been in existence for fifteen years.

In meetings with SCBA members, it became apparent that different areas within the association had different needs and concerns. The officers recognized that many of the problems were similar to, or affecting, other areas and businesses along Stemmons Freeway outside the boundaries of the SCBA. ICP officers and Crime Prevention officers determined that the Police Department was not effectively and efficiently delivering a coordinated service package to address problems along this thoroughfare.

The initiation of a strategy to coordinate service delivery in such a large area was a challenge that the Community Policing officers welcomed. Recognizing that dealing almost exclusively with business areas rather than residential areas provided the officers new opportunities in problem resolution. The officers initially considered three or four issues in the development of the strategy: geographic locations, business classes (i.e. hotels), common crime activity, and future City of Dallas plans. The decision to invest in a major strategy effort along the freeway was chosen as a proactive approach to manage future developments in the area, such as: 1) Trinity River Development, 2) Dallas Area Rapid Transit rail service expansion, 3) American Airlines Center sports arena, and 4) future development of the vacant land adjoining Stemmons Freeway.

Analysis

The issue of developing a strategy for the coordinated delivery of services in the Stemmons Corridor had never been addressed. The specific problems along the corridor had been in existence for a long time, and began to gain attention as development occurred along the freeway. ICP officers noticed a lack of coordination when they were first assigned to the area. The personal observations of ICP officers in the area, an analysis of specific crime along the corridor, and meetings with the various stakeholders led to the recognition of the problem facing the Stemmons Corridor.

Prior to the assignment of ICP officers to this area, the problems in the area were dealt with in a piecemeal manner. This resulted in moving crime and quality of life problems up and down the freeway without bringing a resolution to the issues. The size and business make up of the area made it difficult to coordinate police activities with the stakeholders in the area. There are virtually no residential areas along the freeway. Many of the industrial and business enterprises along the freeway are closed in the evening and on weekends. The variety of businesses along this route made it difficult to suggest, or enact, a specific activity to address their problems.

The vast physical boundaries and differing businesses made it difficult to coordinate a strategy to provide problem-solving services to this community. Identifying stakeholders willing to work with the Police Department and the City of Dallas also proved to be difficult. The area is the home of numerous liquor stores and day labor services. This combination makes the area attractive to homeless

individuals and panhandlers. To compound this situation, the Salvation Army, Parkland Hospital (Dallas County Hospital), and four jail facilities are also in the area. The transient population along the freeway is large and is a source of many of the complaints and criminal offenses throughout the corridor.

Due to the lack of a coordinated strategy for service delivery many problems were allowed to fester and grow. The transient population exploded during the spring and summer of 1998. Along with this increase came an increase in Business Burglaries, Burglaries of Motor Vehicles, and Individual Robberies. The ICP Unit of the Northwest Operations Division began seeing an increase in requests for service from officers, business owners, and city government. These requests all dealt with the transient population and their encampments located throughout the area.

The physical appearance of much of the area was also in decline. Business owners in some areas were not organized and were not aware of how to access City of Dallas services. Vacant businesses and vacant lots became eyesores with broken windows and high weeds. Trash from the transients in the area filled alleys and lots in the area. Homeless individuals, many within site of people working or traveling through the area each day, were utilizing vacant buildings.

Response

The range of possible responses to the problem was almost as large as the area being considered. The easiest response was to continue to treat

problems in a reactive manner as had been done in the past. Secondly, the Department could continue to work with the Stemmons Corridor Business Association, and focus efforts on problems in this area only. The most difficult response was to try and coordinate a strategy to address problems in the entire Stemmons Corridor. The ICP Unit, in conjunction with the Northwest Operations Division command, adopted the most comprehensive response. This response recognized the future developments planned along the Stemmons Corridor, and presented the opportunity to take a proactive approach to potentially more severe problems.

The analysis showed that the Department was more successful at providing services to solve problems in the area of the Stemmons Corridor Business Association (SCBA) than in areas along the freeway not covered by business associations. It was noted that quadrants within the SCBA that interacted more often with the police achieved the best results in problem resolution. This seemed logical to ICP officers familiar with the successes of working with committed stakeholders in residential areas. Thus, the organization of business associations by geographic areas or by business type throughout the corridor was implemented. Once the stakeholders were established, a line of communication between the various groups became necessary. Prioritizing the goals of the almost-identical groups was followed by an introduction to the providers of various City of Dallas services and instructions on how to obtain them.

The existing SCBA was divided into four quadrants with "block captains" in each to report concerns and communicate with Crime Prevention and ICP officers. Business associations were organized north and south of the SCBA area in an attempt to cover the entire freeway corridor. The establishment of six new organizations covered ninety percent of the area along the freeway not covered by the SCBA: 1) Walnut Hill Area Merchants Association, 2) Design District, 3) Trinity Business Watch, 4) Korean Business Association, 5) Mix-Master Business Association, and 6) Hotel Association. ICP and Crime Prevention officers have met with the new and existing associations on a regular basis to stay abreast of concerns in the area.

The overall goal for the Stemmons Corridor Service Delivery Project was to develop a coordinated strategy for the delivery of problem resolution services to the area. It was surmised that through this effort the Department would be able to eliminate or reduce the root causes of problems in the area. This would be accompanied by a decrease in crime, an improvement in the quality of life in the area, and an increased potential for economic development. ICP officers would have the overall responsibility for the coordination of efforts in this area. Two officers were assigned primary responsibility for the area, and four others whose ICP areas abutted the area would also be involved. These officers would coordinate needed police operations along the corridor. They also had the responsibility of coordinating other city services in the area through the Northwest Service Coordination Team in the Dallas City Manager's Office. Police operations involved officers from the ICP Unit, Crime Prevention Team,

Bicycle Unit, Patrol, and Support Abatement Forfeiture Enforcement (S.A.F.E.) Team.

Assessment

Six business organizations were established, or co-opted, along the Stemmons Corridor between June and December of 1998. These organizations, coupled with the existing Stemmons Corridor Business Association, now cover about ninety percent of the occupied land along Stemmons Freeway. The goals and objectives of all the groups were gathered and prioritized. A strategy to address these problems was then put in place to resolve the problems. The ICP Unit has conducted twenty-four operations within the corridor in the past eleven months. The operations conducted thus far in the area are:

Environmental Enhancement (Homeless Relocation)	June 1998
Bar Inspection	June 1998
Public Intoxication Sweep	June 1998
Saturation Patrol - Alcohol Enforcement	June 1998
Homeless Relocation from Area Businesses	June 1998
Homeless Camp Clean Up	June 1998
Public Intoxication Sweep	June 1998
Homeless Encampment Clean Up	July 1998
Establishment of Stemmons Hotel Association	July 1998
Public Intoxication Sweep	July 1998
Homeless Encampment Clean Up	August 1998
Mix-Master Homeless Operation	August 1998
Alcohol Related Problem Enforcement	October 1998
Walnut Hill Area Clean Up	November 1998
Part 1 Offense Reduction - Stemmons Corridor	November 1998
Mix-Master Crime Reduction	December 1998
Removal of Homeless Encampment	January 1999
Homeless Encampment Clean Up	January 1999
Crime Reduction in the Design District	February 1999
Robbery Reduction in Korean Business District	February 1999
Walnut Hill Area Clean Up	April 1999
Alcohol Enforcement - Stemmons Corridor	April 1999

Auto Theft, BMV Reduction - Stemmons Corridor	April 1999
Vacant High Rise Clean Up	April 1999

Communication along the corridor now flows much more effectively as the new associations interact with one another and the SCBA. The ICP unit acts as a single point of contact for all groups in the area and all operations are coordinated from this unit. The command staff at the Northwest Operations Division has given great latitude to the unit to conduct necessary operations and to contact other needed City of Dallas departments and outside agencies.

The crime statistics in this area for the period of January-March 1999 vs. October-December 1998 show a seventeen percent reduction in violent crime, a four percent reduction in non-violent crime, and a five percent reduction in total crime. The Walnut Hill Area Merchants Association, which has been one of the most active associations, has experienced even greater reductions in crime. This time period was used for evaluation since the formation of the new associations was not complete until December of 1998.

Officers attending meetings with stakeholders have noted an increase in satisfaction with the response from the City to problems in the area. ICP and Crime Prevention officers have monitored the satisfaction level among association members throughout the implementation of this response. The Police Intelligence Research Specialist at the Northwest Operations Division has kept the ICP Unit informed of the crime statistics by association and for the entire corridor.

The main problem encountered in the implementation of the response was the relationships between the new associations and the Stemmons Corridor

Business Association. Each group was concerned about getting the appropriate attention to their problems. The SCBA thought the formation of industry specific groups (hotels) was diluting their influence in the region. ICP officers began to address this problem by taking association members to other association meetings to discuss common concerns and goals. Once the open dialogue was established, association members began communicating with other associations to offer assistance and support.

The ability to involve more police manpower in the response would have made the response more effective. The area is very large and diverse, and different problems require varied police actions at different times of the day. Officers have adjusted their work schedules and days off to address problems, but an increase in manpower would allow a more complete effort to address crime problems.

The coordination of other city services, in particular: Code Compliance, Fire Inspections, and Streets and Sanitation, has been conducted through the Service Coordination Team in the City Manager's Office. This has been somewhat effective in getting concerns addressed along the corridor. The ICP Unit would be able to more efficiently and effectively address many of the non-criminal type concerns if Code Compliance and Fire Inspectors were assigned to the ICP unit on a permanent basis. This would allow for an immediate response and follow-up to problem locations throughout the division.

The Northwest Operations Division will continue this response for the area indefinitely. The level of involvement by officers will decrease with time as

associations learn how to obtain city services directly. Some crime problems such as burglary of motor vehicles and business burglaries will be reduced as crime prevention measures are implemented. The future developments along the corridor require the Police Department to maintain an active role in the area. A proactive approach with new businesses in the area will reduce or eliminate problems. Many of the planned activities along the corridor will not be completed during the careers of the officers currently working on the plan for the Stemmons Corridor today. This long-term initiative is the first of its kind for the Community Policing Unit at the Northwest Operations Division. This comprehensive approach has proven to be successful in residential areas throughout the City of Dallas over the past five years.

Agency and Officer Information

The Stemmons Corridor Service Delivery Project was conceived in the 1CP Unit of the Northwest Operations Division, and approved by the command of that Division. The ICP officers have all received training in problem resolution through Facilitative Leadership. This training focused on meeting management and conflict resolution. All of the officers have also attended Community Policing classes at the Dallas Police Academy. These classes offer instruction on identifying stakeholders, the development of goals and objectives, and the creation and implementation of operational plans to address problems.

Officers involved in this initiative have been given a tremendous amount of latitude in the development and implementation of this response. They have

been allowed to adjust their schedules and days off to meet the needs of the operation. Officers were given this initiative in broad terms and allowed the freedom to develop specific strategies on their own. The ability and authority to create a successful program has been rewarding to the officers involved.

The ICP officers at the Northwest Operations Division were all experienced in the problem resolution process within their work with residential communities. These officers have successfully implemented operational plans many times in their roles as ICP officers. The scale of the project has required additional coordination that has brought the unit together for a common purpose. This initiative has committed six ICP officers and four members of the Crime Prevention Team. Not all personnel work on the project full time. The initiative has required the expenditure of overtime, but actual overtime for the unit has been reduced compared to past years.

The contact person for this project is:

Sergeant Scott Bratcher #4532

Dallas Police Department - Northwest Operations Division

Interactive Community Policing Unit

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Dallas, Texas 75235

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NORTHWEST OPERATIONS DIVISION

CRIME WATCH

JANUARY - MARCH 1999 VS. OCTOBER - DECEMBER 1998

UCR CATEGORY	1999	1998	# OF CHANGE	% OF CHANGE
MURDER	2	2	0	0%
RAPE	2	13	-11	-85%
BUSINESS ROBBERY	11	10	1	10%
INDIVIDUAL ROBBERY	38	39	-1	-3%
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	56	67	-11	-16%
TOTAL VIOLENT	109	131	-22	-17%
BUSINESS BURGLARY	126	89	37	42%
RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY	6	19	-13	-68%
BMV/RLTD	318	309	9	3%
THEFTS	283	342	-59	-17%
AUTO THEFT	191	200	-9	-5%
TOTAL NON-VIOLENT	924	959	-35	-4%
TOTAL	1033	1090	-57	-5%

WHAM - R.A.'s 3024,3025,3040,3041,6060

Mix Master - R.A's 2057,2069,9105

Dallas Design - R.A.'s 3130

Stemmons Corridor - R.A.'s 3077,3078,3091,3099,3093,3100,3101,3110,3111,3112,3122,3124,3125

Stemmons cont. - 3126,3129,3130,3099,4452,6064,6067

NORTHWEST OPERATIONS DIVISION

WALNUT HILL AREA MERCHANTS

JANUARY - MARCH 1999 VS. OCTOBER - DECEMBER 1998

UCR CATEGORY	1999	1998	# OF CHANGE	% OF CHANGE
MURDER	2	1	1	100%
RAPE	2	5	-3	-60%
BUSINESS ROBBERY	3	6	-3	-50%
INDIVIDUAL ROBBERY	16	14	2	14%
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	22	38	-16	-42%
TOTAL VIOLENT	45	64	-19	-30%
BUSINESS BURGLARY	27	23	4	17%
RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY	0	8	-8	-100%
BMV/RLTD	109	112	-3	-3%
THEFTS	86	94	-8	-9%
AUTO THEFT	63	87	-24	-28%
TOTAL NON-VIOLENT	285	324	-39	-12%
TOTAL	330	388	-58	-15%

R.A.'S 3024,3025,3040,3041,6060

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

1. Sample Operation Plan
2. Newspaper article
3. Northwest Corridor Major Investment Study
4. Trinity Corridor Transportation Improvements

NORTHWEST OPERATIONS DIVISION
OPERATIONAL PLAN

MIXMASTER CRIME REDUCTION OPERATION
(FOLLOW - UP)

DECEMBER 1, 1998

98-0069_{part}8.5

OPERATIONAL PROTOTYPE:

Interactive Community Policing

SUBJECT:

Operational plan to reduce the frequency of alcohol related crime on South Industrial Blvd., through increased enforcement and specialized patrol.

IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEM:

The Mixmaster / Industrial Blvd. area has experienced, theft, BMV, and robbery problems in the past directly related to the congregation of petty thieves hanging out around area liquor stores.

METHOD OF IDENTIFICATION:

Numerous citizen and business owners have complained about the crime and public drunkenness occurring in the area.

LOCATION:

(Beat 526) The South Industrial area of the Mixmaster between Continental Ave. and Cadiz.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY:

The Industrial Blvd. area borders a "TABC Dry Area" which contains 33 businesses that sell alcohol for off premise consumption. There are also two day labor facilities which caters to unskilled laborers and transients.

HISTORY:

Because there is such a large proliferation of alcohol establishments in such a small area, Industrial Blvd. has become a hang out for drunks and petty thieves.

CITY DEPARTMENTS/INTERACTIVE COMMUNITY POLICING GROUPS:

Northwest ICP

OPERATIONS COMMANDER:

Lt. John Sullivan

FIRST LINE SUPERVISOR:

Sgt. Scott Bratcher

OFFICERS:

Sr. Cpl. Philip Strodtman #4877

P.O. Tom Clayton #6153

P.O. Steve Gable #6890

P.O. Chris Grail #6240

COMMAND POST:

300 S. Industrial Blvd.

MATERIAL RESOURCES:

2 - marked patrol cars

1 - paddy wagon

EMERGENCY LOCATION:

Parkland Hospital

5201 Harry Hines Blvd

590-8000

OBJECTIVE:

To adopt a zero tolerance policing in dealing with petty thieves and transients in an effort to reduce crime in the Mixmaster / Industrial Blvd. area.

RESULTS:

From August 24,1998 through December 1,1998 ICP Officers conducted this operational plan which produced the following results:
393 - City arrests - which included the violations of public intoxication, sleeping in public, urinating in public, open container of alcohol and alias tickets.
12 - Investigative arrests - which included arrests for criminal trespass, evading arrests, and active felony warrants.
5 - hazardous traffic citations

The Mixmaster / Industrial Area experienced a reduction in the following crime categories for the months of August through November 1998 as compared with the same months in 1997

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>% OF CHANGE</u>
Business Burglary	- 80%
BMV	- 56%
Individual Robbery	- 25%

In addition to this there was no increase in the categories of:
Murder
Business Robbery
Residential Burglary

In an effort to monitor and track the criminal element, ICP Officers created a picture hook file to assist them in their future operations.

OPERATIONAL EVALUATION

WAS THE PROBLEM CORRECTLY IDENTIFIED?

Yes, there was a definite crime problem directly related to misdemeanor violations occurring in the area.

WERE THE ACTIONS TAKEN APPROPRIATE TO SOLVE THE IDENTIFIED PROBLEM?

Yes, increased enforcement and specialized patrols were effective in dealing with the problems.

DID THE OPERATION ACHIEVE THE DESIRED RESULTS?

Yes, there were significant decreases in business burglaries, BMV's, and individual robberies.

WERE THE OFFICERS INVOLVED SATISFIED WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE OPERATION?

Yes, all involved were pleased with the crime reductions.

WHAT CHANGES COULD BE MADE TO IMPROVE FUTURE OPERATIONS?

Incorporate this operational plan into the SOP for locations operating in this manner.