

Tustin Police Department
The Community Governance Model and Problem Oriented Policing;
A Holistic Approach to Transforming a Neighborhood

Summary

A small high density area in the City was identified as having the highest calls for service in the City. Identified as Reporting District 13 (RD-13), this two square block area has built a reputation for being an area of high crime, gang infestation, and blighted conditions. Crime analysis provided accurate crime information to assist us in making RD-13 a priority. The statistical information provided gave credence to long-held beliefs that RD-13 was the criminal "hot-bed" of the City. In a comprehensive study of Part I crimes and vandalisms, from 2000 to 2005, it became readily apparent something had to be done. In this relatively small section of Tustin, we recorded a total of 410 crimes in 2000. This number steadily increased over time, reaching an alarming number of 561 crimes in 2005; this amounts to nearly a 37% increase in the crime rate.

Census data revealed of the approximately 8,900 residents living in the area, approximately 83% were of Hispanic Ethnicity, 74% of them were renters, 84% were multi-family dwellings, approximately 34% of the population was under 17 and 19% were living below the poverty level.

Utilizing a Community Governance model of policing which incorporates sound community policing methods of problem solving, a multifaceted approach was used to address the problems in this area. The methods included a special enforcement team, gang team, bilingual neighborhood watches, town hall meetings and clean up days (Appendix A, Photo 1), Block Captain Networks, new and innovative software to track crime trends and creation of a Neighborhood Improvement Task Force (NITF) and a Tustin Against Graffiti (TAG) Task Force.

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Scanning

The City of Tustin is located in central Orange County. It is bordered by the City of Santa Ana to the west, Irvine to the east and south and an unincorporated area of Orange County to the north. Being situated in the heart of Orange County, Tustin is an area that has long been thought of as the perfect place to live, work and play. The proximity of state and interstate freeways, airports, seaports and rail service, including Amtrak and Metro-Link Commuter service, enables easy travel to and from Tustin. The City is also affectionately known as the "City of Trees." Despite the abundance of beautiful trees and landscaping throughout the City, there are sections of town which have fallen into disrepair over the years and are now havens for the criminal element and subject to urban blight.

One of those areas of greatest concern to the Police Department as well as other City departments was identified as Reporting District 13 (RD-13). Located in the southwest part of the City, and under the South Area Command's jurisdiction, this two square block area, bounded by Williams Street to the West, Tustin Village Way to the East, McFadden Street to the South, and Main Street to the North, had earned a reputation for being an area of high crime, gang infestation, and blighted conditions (Appendix A, Photo 2). The high incidences of violent crime in this area reached critical mass levels in the mid to late 1990's, when gangs were literally involved in running gun battles in broad daylight. Over the years, gangs, graffiti, drugs, and property crime had become a fact of life in that neighborhood and the residents simply accepted it as part of their daily lives.

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In a study conducted by the Urban Land Institute, RD-13 was identified as a critical area for future redevelopment efforts. The final study document referred to this area as the "West Village." As part of their study, they examined census data to gauge the demographic and cultural make-up of the neighborhood. Out of nearly 8,900 residents in this two-square block area, 74% of the residents live in renter occupied dwellings, and nearly 19% are living below the poverty line (median household income was \$43,306 in 2008). In this highly diversified, dense, and economically challenged area, it is all the more critical for the Police Department to enlist the help of the people who live there and to foster partnerships with concerned residents of this community.

Various groups from within and outside of the Police Department collaborated in providing information which assisted us in our planning. Internally, Special Investigations and the Gang Unit were instrumental in providing intelligence and hard information on the various gang members residing within this area. Task Forces such as the Neighborhood Improvement Task Force and Tustin Against Graffiti were integral in problem identification and resolution. City departments such as Community Development and the Redevelopment Agency provided us with Title reports to ascertain the actual owners of the properties. Code Enforcement personnel provided expertise in quality of life issues and violations related to substandard housing. Employing Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) concepts, Southern California Edison was approached and was very cooperative in upgrading lighting in areas where higher wattage lights would increase the sense of safety and security for the residents. The Fire Authority provided assistance with parking issues and fire lanes. Tustin

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Unified School District provided meeting locations as well as intelligence on students within their District.

Through various methods of community outreach, such as Town Hall meetings, Neighborhood Watch programs, and the Block Captain Network, we gained a clear sense of the problems in this particular area, especially as they relate to the residents' quality of life. Many people indicated their frustrations with the amount of graffiti on the walls, creating an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, as well as the poor lighting conditions and the overcrowded parking situation. We realized the "broken windows" theory was at work in this neighborhood; if the graffiti was allowed to stay on the walls, if the trash remained, and the blighted conditions festered, the criminal element would flourish. We realized the need to address issues that historically were not the Police Department's concern: lighting; tree-trimming; trash removal; abandoned vehicles; etc., along with the more traditional tasks of a Police Department such as crime fighting and prevention.

Analysis

Crime analysis provided accurate crime information to assist us in making RD-13 a priority. The statistical information provided gave credence to long-held beliefs RD-13 was the criminal "hot-bed" of the City. In a comprehensive study of Part I crimes and vandalisms, from 2000 to 2005, it became readily apparent something had to be done. In this relatively small section of Tustin, we recorded a total of 410 crimes in 2000 (appendix B, Table 1). This number steadily increased over time, reaching an alarming number of 561 crimes in 2005; this amounts to a nearly 37% increase in the crime rate!

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To be effective, we recognized the importance of having everyone on the same page and working in the same direction. Over the course of several months in 2006, several members of the department volunteered their time to be part of the Strategic Planning Committees. This “grass roots” effort ultimately resulted in the creation of the goals for the South Area Command personnel. Everyone had a voice in the process and all personnel were clear on the goals and objectives of the project.

Our objectives were clear; increase the sense of safety and security for the residents by reducing the crime rate, removing hardened criminals from the street, eliminating, or at least restricting, the opportunities for the criminal element to operate and improve the quality of life for the residents.

During the research for this Strategic Plan, committees conducted an analysis to identify trends and factors that might possibly impact the successful implementation of the plan. We looked at population trends, demographics, available resources, and future demands for police services. During review, the following key trends were identified:

- The population of Tustin will continue to increase.
- Calls for Service will continue to increase.
- Town Center Redevelopment Area, specifically the West Village (Appendix C, Map 1) will impact the Department's personnel needs and policing strategies over the next 5-10 years.

Crime will be affected by several factors. Most notably of these are population density; particularly youth concentration, and economic conditions. The ethnic make-up of the City will continue to evolve reflecting the diversity of the larger Orange County area.

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- The number of housing units in the City will continue to rise, placing more vehicles on the roadways.
- Miles of City roadways will continue to increase along with signaled intersections.

Response

The Department utilized both traditional and non-traditional methods in addressing these issues. Through a combination of specialized teams and partnerships the department committed itself to creating a permanent change in this area. The award winning (Appendix A, Photo 3) Tustin Police Neighborhood Improvement Task Force (NITF) is a problem-solving policing program in which members of the Community Policing Unit are designated to problem-solving activity. It was implemented in 2006. Primarily, their objective is to address quality of life issues with cooperation and collaboration from other City Departments, outside government agencies, local businesses and City residents. Our program was developed as part of our agency's transition to an Area Command concept of policing. This Area Command concept is part of Tustin Police Department's transition to Community Governance.

The Tustin Police NITF program is spearheaded by a team consisting of two Area Commanders and their adjutants who are sworn Community Impact Officers (CIOs). The "Community Impact Officer" is a Community Policing Officer who acts as a liaison between those people who work and/or live in a particular area, and the officers assigned to that area. Under the Area Command structure, each area will have one Community Impact Officer assigned to their region. Through the Community Impact Officer, we can respond and resolve the following:

- Problems that do not fall under the traditional category of crime.

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- Troubleshoot repeat calls for service.
- Provide immediate response to community concerns regarding City services and resources without the normal red tape.
- Act as a resource for patrol officers in order to improve the overall quality of life in the community through partnerships, empowerment, problem solving, and service orientation.
- Further involve residents in the process of identifying, reducing and controlling the present day problems of crime, fear of crime, and neighborhood decay.

The CIO's work with governmental agencies such as members from the Orange County Fire Authority, Health Services and Housing Authority, the Tustin Unified School District, and the Tustin Police Department and other City Departments such as Community Development (Code Enforcement, Planning and Building), Traffic Engineering, and Field Services. This format allows for direct interaction, coordination, and collaboration of response by the various participants, keeping in mind their sole purpose of jointly addressing and combating quality of life issues within their City. One advantage to this program is having access to the governmental services and resources including the City Attorney's office which also is considered part of the NITF matrix.

The CIOs are both proactive and reactive. Since they are an autonomous unit not subject to calls for service, they have the opportunity to singularly focus on problems either referred to them by officers and other City Departments, or handle situations based upon their own observations. If an officer has a situation in the field which he/she feels could be better handled by the CIOs, they simply fill out an Incident Card (Blue

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Card) which is then sent to the CIOs for follow-up. Each Blue Card is also reviewed and acted upon at the NITF Meeting.

The NITF meets bi-weekly with the Captain of the Community Policing Bureau hosting and facilitating meetings. The meetings are attended by the Area Commanders and CIOs, as well as representatives from the other involved agencies and departments. The meeting serves as a forum to provide progress updates on the various issues which the team is addressing. The meetings also allow for direct interaction, coordination and collaboration of response by the various participants.

The NITF has proven to be very effective in the City of Tustin. Below are a few examples of how our NITF has been successful:

- One of our CIOs received information from the property manager at a local apartment complex (Tustin Country Squires) regarding someone possibly growing marijuana plants on their back patio. The CIO coordinated with the Special Investigations Unit and within 48 hours confiscated grown marijuana plants from the residence and secured an arrest warrant for one of the residents.
- A patrol officer identified a mobile home in the City that was a major concern due to structural problems and hazardous living conditions. The residents of the mobile home were in need of mental health assistance. The CIO coordinated with Code Enforcement, Investigations, Social Services, and the State Department of Housing to devise a plan. A day was selected where members from all agencies could respond and the mobile home was declared “uninhabitable.” The residents were given the care they needed.

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- Another example involved a residence in the City that generated 44 calls for service. This tied up valuable police resources. Repeated attempts by patrol officers to deal with the problem were unsuccessful. A CIO partnered up with Code Enforcement, Special Investigations and members of the Orange County Fire Authority. Within one week the team had effectively eliminated the problem. Calls for police service have virtually stopped at this location and more importantly, the other residents in the neighborhood are extremely happy with the service provided by the police and the City as a whole.
- Patrol personnel responded to an address and found an 85 year-old woman showering in the pool area and entering her house through a small window (Appendix A, Photo 4). All of her doors and windows were blocked floor to ceiling with accumulated newspapers and other materials. A CIO utilized his resources from the Senior Center and Code Enforcement to provide help to this woman who now resides in a facility where she is receiving the care she needs.

The Agency focused on improving an area which had a highly disproportionate amount of crime; reporting district (RD) 13. This two square block area, comprised of high density, low income housing, was infamous for its high crime rate and blighted conditions. Gangs and graffiti were rampant and many of the residents were afraid to leave their homes after the sun went down. Using comprehensive crime analysis, we zeroed in on the days and times the crimes were being committed. Additionally, through Town Hall meetings, we identified the quality of life issues residents felt were most important: parking, inadequate lighting, and graffiti.

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Through the partnerships developed in the NITF, we were able to reach out to the community in a variety of ways. Our crime prevention officers added new groups to the Neighborhood Watch program, specifically within the RD 13 area. Out of these neighborhood watches, we developed Block Captains (Appendix A, Photo 5), individual residents willing to take on a leadership role on their street or in their apartment complex. We created a Block Captain Network, to facilitate the sharing of information and to assist us in public safety education efforts. We also formed a Community Policing Forum in July of 2007 to address local Tustin quality of life issues. This forum, comprised of residents and business owners, met every other month at the Police Department to discuss current crime trends and how the public can assist the police in our mission.

In 2009, the Community Policing Forum was merged with the Chief's Advisory Board. Along with quality of life issues the newly formed Chief's Advisory Board also provides a forum with key stakeholders regarding law enforcement policies within the community. The Tustin Police Chief's Advisory Board is comprised of a diverse cross-section of community activists, business leaders and citizens representing both Tustin and the greater Orange County area. The Board meets every other month at the Tustin Police Department or alternate pre-determined meeting site at a time convenient to the majority of Board members. The Board is designed to provide for member input on department policies and procedures. The Board is designed for open discussion regarding trends in law enforcement such as: uses of force, police pursuits and other significant police issues. The Chiefs Advisory Board is active in all areas of Community Governance including; Neighborhood Watch, Block Captains Network and the NITF.

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Specific issues arising from these networks and forums filter back to the NITF for follow up. This is where the real work gets done. For example, several residents of RD 13, in the Town Hall meeting, brought up the concern of vehicles blocking the fire lanes on a nightly basis. The people were fearful that emergency services would not have immediate access to their apartments in their time of need. Unfortunately, the property owners allowed the alleyways to fall into disrepair; the fire lane signs were faded beyond recognition and the red paint markings had disappeared after years of neglect. Through the NITF and the partnerships created with the Orange County Fire Authority, City Code Enforcement, and the City Attorney's office, we were able to force the uncooperative property owners to comply. As a result, officers can now properly enforce the fire lane regulations and the alleyway is clear of parked vehicles.

Another partnership stemming from the NITF is the Kiwanis Key Club Cleanup Days. Members of our local Tustin Kiwanis have enlisted the aid of their high school counterparts in the Key clubs. Students from Tustin, Foothill, and Beckman high schools meet once a month on a Saturday morning in RD 13. They use donated paint and supplies to paint over graffiti and to clean up trash-strewn alleyways. This particular program has made a dramatic impact on the overall appearance of the neighborhood (Appendix A, Photo 6).

In addition to the problem solving successes of the NITF, we are still "tough on crime." We utilized the crime fighting skills of our four-person Special Enforcement Detail (SED) to take the criminals off the streets of RD 13 (Appendix B, Table 2). The Special Enforcement Detail was created on August 21, 2006, as part of the Police Department's new Area Command structure. The SED team consists of one Sergeant

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and four officers. The SED team was sent into the highest crime area of the City for the purpose of reducing overall crime in the southwest area of Tustin.

In addition to providing proactive law enforcement services to the residents of southwest Tustin, the SED team also provides "mission specific" police services in problematic areas throughout the City at the request of patrol officers and investigators from the Special Operations Division. These incidents involved situations where the time commitment and personnel required to accomplish the mission, necessitated the specialized services of the SED team.

The SED team also conducts probation and parole searches at the request of the Orange County Probation Department, and the State of California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The SED team is requested when information is received that a probationer or parolee is engaging in criminal activity. The normal work shift is from 1800 to 0400 hours, Wednesday through Saturday. These hours were selected based on statistical information, showing these were the hours in which it was most likely that our target crimes were being committed. These appear to be optimum working hours as they allow the team to focus their crime intervention activities during peak hours. Additionally, these hours allow SED to assist patrol during critical incidents, or during peak service times when south end patrol officers become backlogged with priority calls. The SED Team will also join forces with the Gang Unit for operations to address crime issues in a large portion of the south end of the City including RD 13.

Assessment

Since its inception, through 2009, the SED made arrests, mostly serious criminal offenders; drug dealers, car thieves, and gang members. They also seized huge

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quantities of narcotics, several firearms, and recovered thousands of dollars in stolen property, to be returned to the rightful owners. They were very successful in reducing crime rates in the area (Appendix B, Table 3).

A recent survey was conducted in 2008 (Appendix A, Photo 7), by an independent firm to address citizen satisfaction with the City and the Police Department. The population surveyed included a large population from RD 13. The following is a direct sample from the survey:

"Tustin's 98% resident satisfaction with quality of life is excellent, the highest we've seen for a city in California," said Dr. Alice Chan, Director of Research and project manager for the Tustin survey.

"This extremely high rating from the citizens of Tustin is a testament to the excellent management of our City by both the City Council and City staff," said Mayor Jerry Amante. "Our governance philosophy is to be responsive to concerns, listen to our constituents, solve problems, keep taxes low, protect property values, and safeguard the high standard of living and quality of life experienced in our town. We are very proud of this expression of confidence in that work by the citizens of Tustin."

Overall satisfaction with City government was at 95%, among the top for cities in California. The Police Department was among the Departments receiving the highest ratings, receiving an overall satisfaction rating of 94%.

The results speak for themselves, more importantly, the residents feel comfortable walking the streets of their neighborhood, kids readily play outside in front of their homes, and the gang members and drug dealers have decided to wreak havoc in some

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other city. This could not have been accomplished by the Police Department alone. Adopting the Community Governance philosophy and utilizing the principles of problem-oriented policing, we were able to combine efforts of other City departments, county agencies and community groups to be successful in improving the quality of life for the residents of this once blighted area.

For these reasons, we respectfully submit the Tustin Police Department for the *2010 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem – Oriented Policing.*

Key Project Team Members:

Captain Stephen D. Lewis, Community Policing Bureau Commander

Lieutenant John Strain, North Area Commander

Penni Foley, Administrative Secretary

Project Contact Person

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Appendix A

Photo 1



Sub-station for a Day

Photo 2



Blighted conditions in RD 13

Appendix A

Photo 3



Neighborhood Improvement Task Force accepting IACP Award

Photo 4



Residence of 85 year old woman

Appendix A

Photo 5



Block Captain's meeting

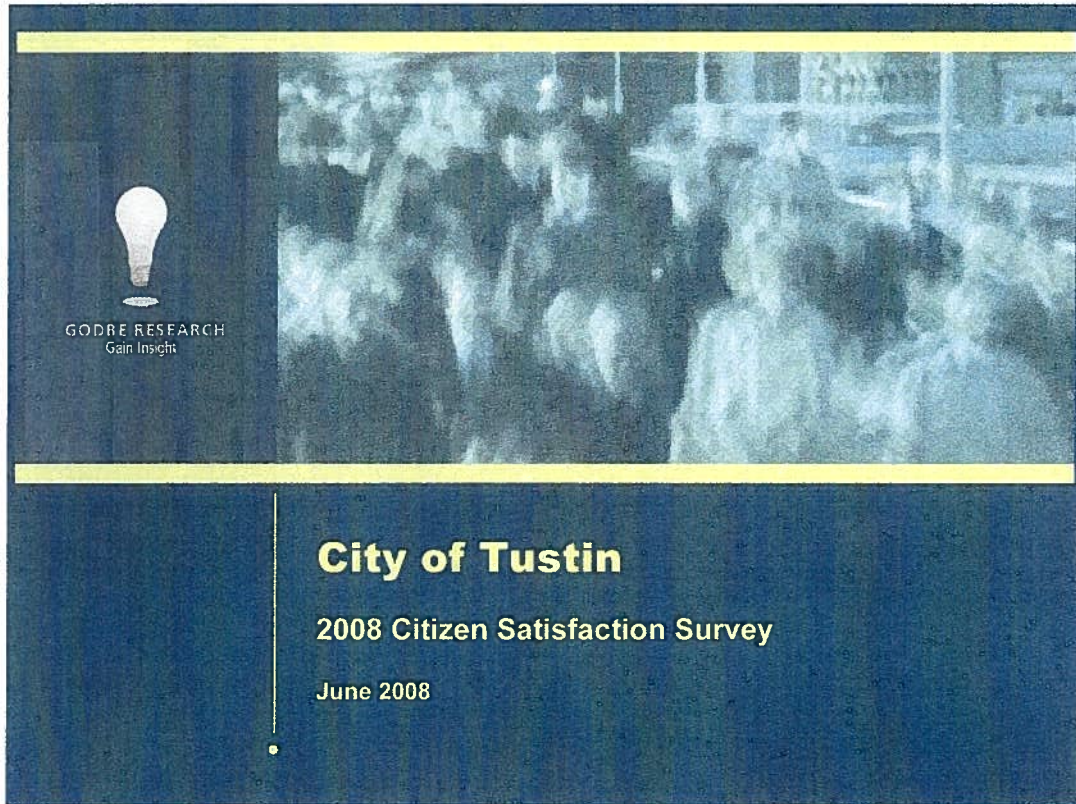
Photo 6



Tustin Kiwanis working with High School Key Clubs

Appendix A

Photo 7



Appendix B

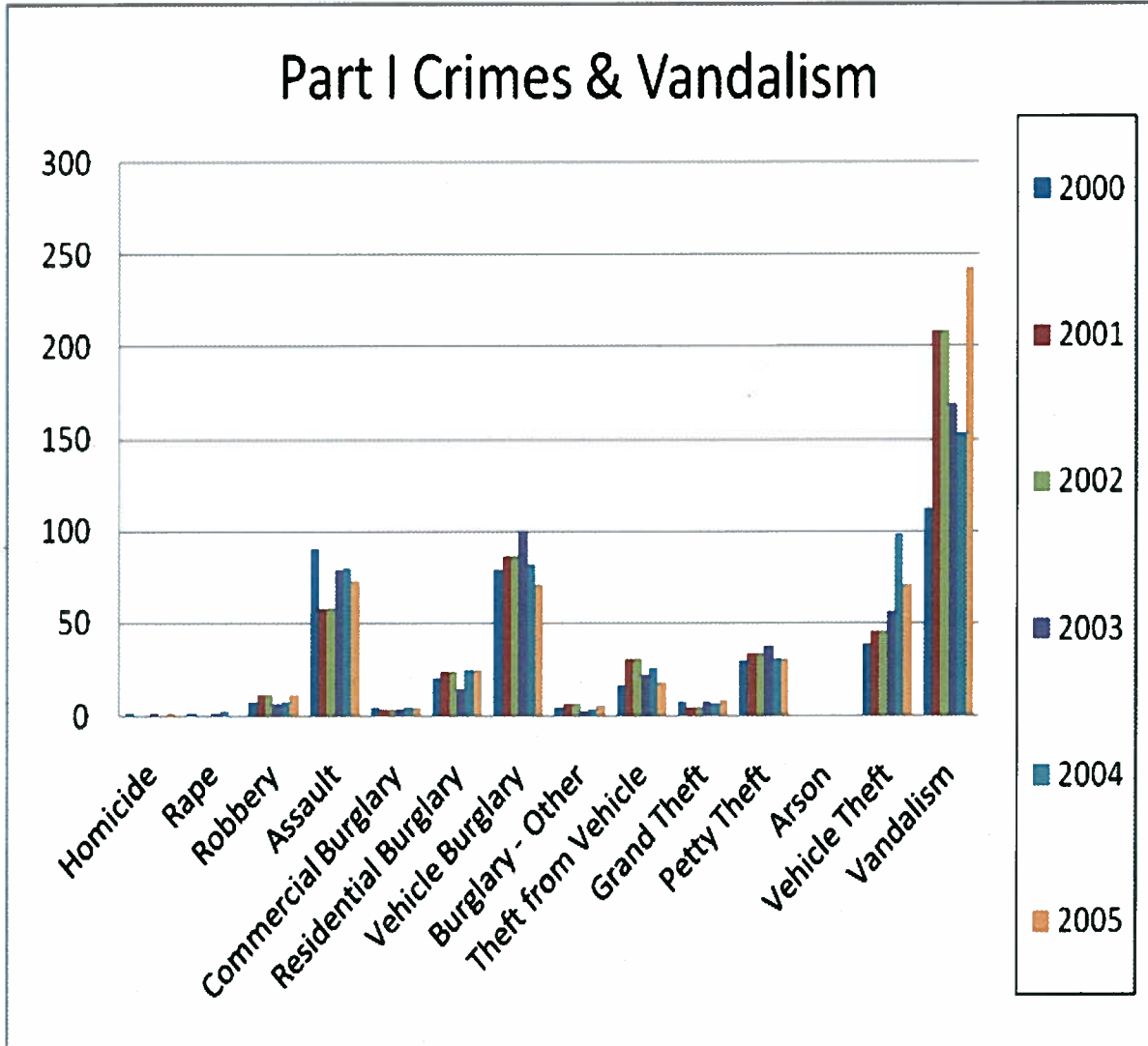


Table 1

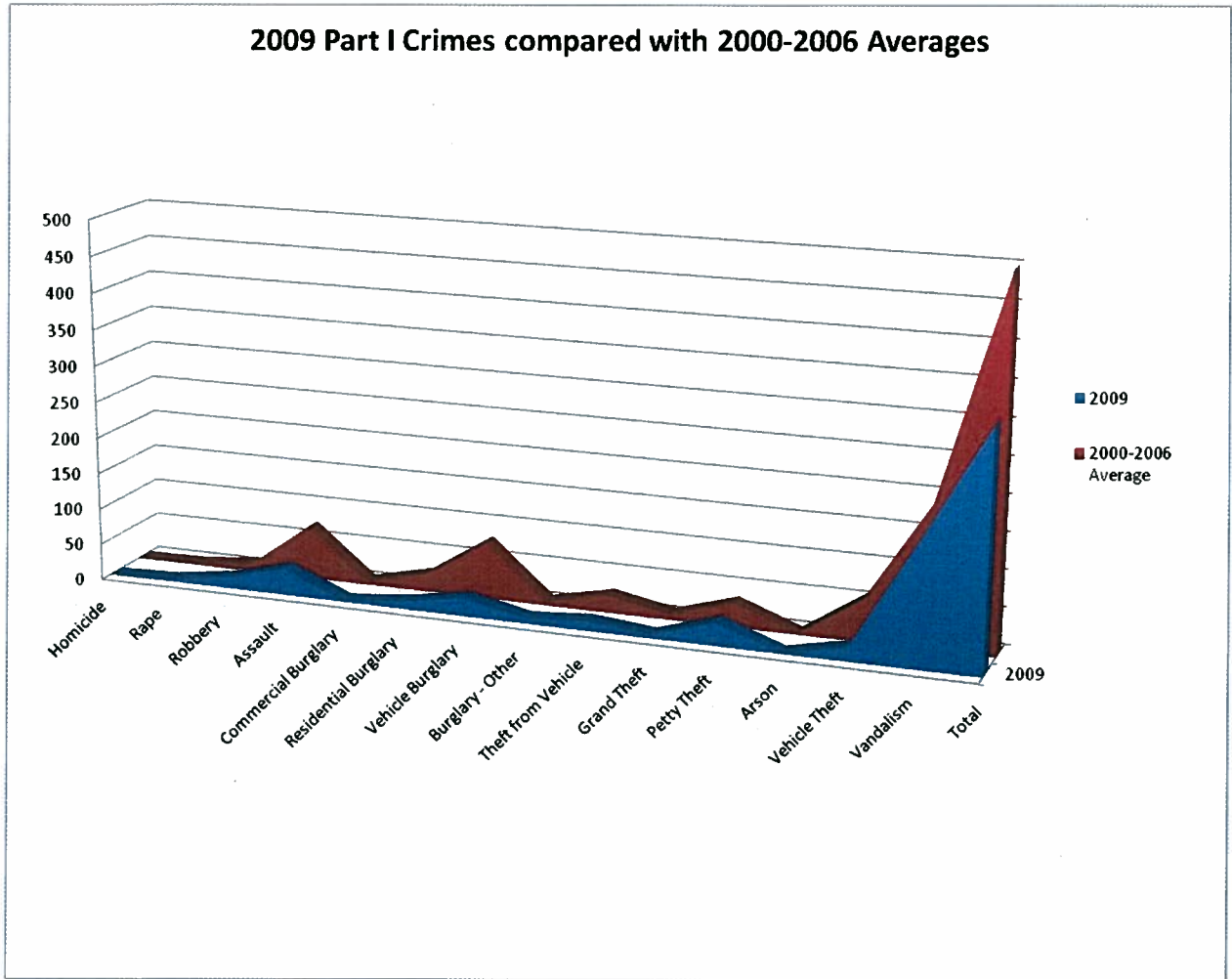
Appendix B

SED Year end Statistics	*2006	2007	2008	2009
Total Arrests	237	449	366	291
Felony street charges	70	182	147	93
Misdemeanor street charges	99	144	139	130
Felony arrest warrants	11	32	17	14
Misdemeanor arrest warrants	38	39	38	29
Parole Violations	11	21	12	7
Probation Violations	8	20	13	18
FI's conducted	142	414	487	207
S.T.E.P. notices served	64	46	46	14
Marijuana seized	178.74g	2 lbs	375.04g	544.49 g
Methamphetamine seized	57.37g	84.94g	47.55g	24.68g
Cocaine seized	2.45g	11.16 g	11.05g	10.35
Heroin	43.63 g	8.12g	4.54g	10.55g
Pills	69	792	65	86
Cutting agent seized		39.86	32.96g	268.87 g
Firearms recovered	3	10	1	2
Weapons (brass knuckles)				1
Recovered Stolen Vehicle	1	2	1	1
Stolen Property Amt	\$2,747.60	\$3,477.00	\$19,900.00	\$2,100.00
Asset Forfeiture Amt				\$3,180.00

*beg 8/21/06

Table 2

Appendix B



2009 Part 1 Crimes compared to 2000-2006 Averages
Table 3

Appendix C

Map 1



Existing Conditions in RD 13