



PROVO CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

2021 GOLDSTEIN AWARD - NOMINATION PROJECT

SUMMARY

AGENCY

Provo City Police department is a medium-sized police department employing 114 sworn police officers. The city houses one of Utah's largest universities - Brigham Young University. The population of Provo is approximately 116,500 full time residents and can fluctuate up to 50,000 more residents when the university is in session. Provo city incorporates 44.2 square miles in Utah County, and is also the county seat.

The city of Provo is broken down into 34 neighborhoods. Each neighborhood is assigned to one of three districts. Provo City Police Department assigns each patrol officer a neighborhood to be responsible for. Officers are encouraged to know what is occurring in their neighborhood and to spend time patrolling, and becoming familiar with its citizens, organizations and businesses. The Department also has a Community Oriented Policing team (COP) in which there are three officers – each one assigned to one of the three Districts. Their primary role is to focus on solving and managing long-term problems as well as crime trends within their District's neighborhoods. The COP team works on a weekly basis with numerous outside agencies, to include: Wasatch Behavioral Health (the primary Mental Health and Substance Abuse providers for the county); multiple housing and homeless-assistance agencies; Provo City Zoning and Code Compliance; Adult Probation and Parole; Division of Child and Family Services.

PROBLEM: BEEBE PROPERTY

In the central area of Provo City at the corner of 600 South and 300 West stands a relatively small apartment property, owned by Beebe Properties. The property was built in 1981, but started its decline over the last 20 years. Even though the apartments were established for three separate residences, the building was responsible for more calls for service than one of the largest shopping centers in the city – which is located just eight blocks away from the Beebe Property. The residents and guests of the apartments brought crimes such as: drug use and distribution; trespassing; drug overdoses; DUI; theft and other quality of life crimes to this neighborhood.

A nickname of the 'Dog House' emerged over 20 years ago, when both the residents and police officers at the time referred to it as "the place where strays would go for the night." 'Strays' being those who were homeless, and/or people experiencing mental health or drug addictions. The name quickly spread beyond the town into other neighboring communities - so much so that people from outside of Provo knew about the 'Dog House' and would come to Provo specifically to go there. Right or wrong, the nickname remained.

Initially, the police department attempted an aggressive policing style in the area looking for offenders and being proactive in the neighborhood. After months of working through this response there was little to no effect on crime rates, and quality of life for residents in the immediate area. The Community Oriented Policing (COP) team worked through the SARA model and Crime Triangle model multiple times before coming to a long-term solution to this problem property. A different approach was taken, calling on partners within the community to participate in the process of helping relocate residents from the property, and working with the property owner to invest in the building and potential tenants. The apartment has since transferred ownership, and has gone through an extensive remodel. New renters have been placed, and quality of life for the neighborhood is rising.

In reviewing police cases dating back to 2013 compared to 2020, there is a reduction in cases of over 50%. The average number of police cases generated per year from 2013-2019 was 162, whereas in 2020 there were only 71 police cases in the area. 2021 is on pace to be even lower, with only 12 cases from January through May.

DESCRIPTION

The property that this report is documenting is a multi-family residence, built in 1981. In 1998 it was purchased by Beebe properties. The building has 4 individual rooms with common bathrooms and kitchens. The apartment is in the Franklin neighborhood in district #3. The Franklin neighborhood is comprised mostly of residential housing with a few small businesses located throughout it.

SCANNING

In August of 2019 Officer Brough was assigned to the COP division over district #3. Even though Officer Brough knew about this apartment complex and that it was a high call address, he was overwhelmed by the morale problem it was causing both within the surrounding community and also the police department. The community was upset because of quality of life crimes being committed in the neighborhood. Crimes being committed at this address were bleeding over onto their property diminishing property values and scaring away potential customers at surrounding businesses. Officers were frustrated about having to respond to the same types of calls, over and over, with the same people.

ANALYZING

In 2018, 180 cases were generated within a 100-yard radius around this address. The most common categories were: Trespassing; Theft; Recovered Stolen Property; Drugs.

There were three legitimate individuals residing at this apartment complex. These three residents were seldom involved in these cases. Generally, the offenders were people coming to the common areas of the complex.

Dating back to 2011, there have been 1,349 calls for service at this apartment. The following is a breakdown of the more significant calls for service at the apartment dating back to 2011:

DRUG & ALCOHOL	97
ASSAULT	24 <i>(Incl: 2 assaults on police officers, 1 assault with a dangerous weapon.)</i>
OVERDOSE DEATHS	3
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	19
DISORDERLY CONDUCT	116
NUISANCE/PUBLIC PEACE	38
SEXUAL OFFENSES	12 <i>(Incl: 3 rape reports.)</i>
CRIMINAL MISCHIEF	25
MENTAL HEALTH	26
TRESPASSING	394
THEFT	67

Over the course of approximately 10 years, officers with the Provo Police Department responded to the area approximately 135 times per year. There are over 33,000 households in the City of Provo. If each household within Provo City produced the same number of calls (135), the Provo Police Department would have to respond to 4,455,000 calls per year. Currently Provo Police Dispatch receives an average of 150,000 calls per year.

RESPONSE

Heavy policing was the initial response to this problem. Police officers would frequently patrol the area and respond as calls came in. Officer Brough met weekly with Beebe property and had frequent conversations about the issues and crimes that were occurring on or around their property over the week. Beebe Property, who already had an onsite manager in a building next door, asked the manager to contact police for anyone trespassing on the property. Dozens of arrests were being made for trespassing

ASSESSMENT

After 4 months of heavy policing in the area, officers found the same people were still coming to the property, the same type of crimes were occurring, and frustration from the community continued to grow. Simply put, despite applying a strong response with visible policing, and working with management, these efforts provided little to no change for the community. This initial response ran from August through December 2019.

Between the months of August and December 2019, officers responded to 75 incidents at the Beebe House, of which 22 were initiated by officer contact. The following is a breakdown of the calls for service during that time:

TRESPASSING	40
DRUGS	10
CIVIL PROBLEMS	6
SUSPICIOUS INCIDENTS	5
THEFT	3
DISORDERLY CONDUCT	3
MENTAL HEALTH	2
WELFARE CHECK	2
NUISANCE/NOISE DISTURBANCE	2
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	1
CRIMINAL MISCHIEF	1

By following the SARA model, the assessment phase showed Officer Brough that a different, or additional response was needed. It was time to dig deeper into the problem, to find what the root-cause was, in order to address the above-ground problems.

SCANNING II

The original problems in the area were still occurring. The community was upset because of crimes being committed in their neighborhood, reducing their quality of life. Officers were still being called to the property and spending large amounts of time investigating crimes with no real solution.

ANALYZING II

Officer Brough began working through the crime triangle. The initial attempt in focusing on the *offender* showed little long-term solutions to this problem. The same offenders were re-committing the crimes, most of which were considered quality of life crimes, which held minimal criminal sanctions or legal consequences, forming no motivation for the suspect to stop their behavior. Trespassing, misdemeanor drug offenses, or theft suspects are frequently released with a citation arrest, not a physical detention. Once the court process is complete, a fine or a short duration in jail is generally the final disposition for these offenders.

Back to the triangle, the *location/place* was reviewed, along with its *controller/handler* - Beebe Property. When asked about their long-term goals for the property, they said they wanted to demolish the building and replace it with a larger apartment complex. But, due to zoning restrictions, such development was not permitted in the area, and Beebe properties didn't express interest in attempting to rezone the property.

In reviewing the triangle more, it was decided to look at the tenants through a *Target/Victim* lens rather than that of a suspect, or contributor to the problem. Officer Brough noted that two of the three tenants were patients with Wasatch Behavioral Health, and were placed there through an assisted housing program. All three tenants were on disability government subsidies. Beebe properties was guaranteed rent payments because these payments were coming from government entities.

An in-depth review of each of the tenants and the property managers for the apartment complex was conducted, to include their history for the past five years.

- For the two individuals that were placed by Wasatch Behavioral Health, they were both middle-aged to elderly. Their rental contract was in fact held by Wasatch Behavioral Health and the property owners, so WBH had some involvement of where their consumers were being housed. These two individuals will be referred to as person 1 and person 2.
- The third person living there was also middle aged, and housed through a local assisted housing program. This individual will be referred to as person 3.
- Two property managers resided next door to the Beebe property, and were also responsible for site security. They will be referred to as person 4 and 5.

Person 1: Female approximately 63 years of age. Lived at the location 5 years before the closing date. Person 1 had contacted the police department 157 times during her residency here. Some of the crimes reported by person 1 were: Trespassing x37 (x27 of which were in the last year alone); Illegal drug activity x 9; Assault, Thefts and Disorderly Conduct x7 (Person 1 was listed as victim in these calls).

Person 2: Female approximately 53 years of age. Lived at the location three years until closure. In this time period Person 2 contacted the police department 25 times to report crimes. Some of the crimes included: Trespassing x2; Domestic Violence x1; Assault x3; Sex offense x1. Person 2 was listed as a victim a total of five times for assaults, thefts, and domestic violence. Person 2 was also listed as a suspect/arrestee 6 times.

Person 3: Female approximately 70 years of age. Lived at the location just under a year until its closure. During this time Person 3 contacted the police department 2 times. Both these calls were death investigations involving overdoses.

Person 4: Male approximately 67 years of age. Person 4 lived next door, to the North of the property. This residence was also owned by Beebe Property. Person 4 was tasked with security for the Wasatch Behavioral Health clients living at the 'Dog House'. Person 4 contacted the police 254 times in the last 5 years. Some of the crimes reported included: Trespassing x89; Sexual Offense Incidents x2; Assault, Domestic Violence, and Disorderly Incidents x28.

Person 5: Male approximately 47 years of age. Person 5 also lived next door to the North of the property, and was also tasked with security for the Wasatch Behavioral Health clients. Person 5 contacted the police 31 times within a year of its closing. Some of the crimes that Person 5 called in were: Trespassing x20; Drugs x4.

While conducting in-person visits at the property, Officer Brough found the environmental living quality was severely sub-standard, with issues ranging from backed-up sewage lines occurring multiple times per month, to plumbing leaks and lack of adequate heating, and infestation of insects and vermin. There were other possible building code violations noted by the officer.

RESPONSE

The first priority was focused on finding a better living solution for the tenants of the apartments. The COP team holds a weekly meeting with community partners including Wasatch Behavioral Health, Provo Housing Authority, Food and Care Coalition (who provide services and transitional housing programs for homeless individuals), and Community Action - a division of United Way that provides rental and food assistance. Those in attendance were briefed on the severity of the deplorable living conditions for those tenants. Case-workers for Wasatch Behavioral Health set-about to re-house these individuals into suitable housing. All three tenants were also provided with information multiple times, of how they could apply for new housing and receive additional assistance from the above listed organizations.

Provo City Zoning Enforcement, a civilian division of Provo City was asked for input. It was found that the way the apartment was licensed with the city, it permitted inspections from the city for code violations and building/fire safety. Provo City's Fire Marshal, and a Provo City Building Inspection Officer also worked closely with the zoning officer. All three attended the location and conducted an on-site inspection of the property. Several additional safety concerns were found, that included: mold growing throughout the apartment; improper exhaust gas venting from the water heater; lack of smoke detectors; blocked windows/fire exits; leaking sewer lines inside the common areas; numerous electrical code violations; structural damage to the building itself.

A list of these violations was created and sent to Beebe properties. As well as notification that if the violations weren't repaired the property could be condemned. Beebe properties became more receptive to the living environment that these three tenants were experiencing. They promised to fix the property, yet after several weeks there was still no improvement into the living conditions. One of the tenants had left the property and was re-housed through Wasatch Behavioral. In May of 2020 one of the tenants died from an alleged drug overdose. Provo Zoning officers, Building Inspectors and Fire Marshal continued inspections on the property from January until June of 2020. In June of 2020 Beebe properties sold the property and the last tenant was evicted shortly thereafter.

The new owner of the property was contacted and was told about the concerns the police had been having with the property. Not surprisingly the new owner already knew the reputation of the 'Dog House' and was looking for police assistance. Because the property was now vacant, a Trespass Grant of Authority was signed by new owner, giving Police Officers permission trespass anyone found on-site. Along with this affidavit, signage was also placed around the property and on the buildings. The building was also secured when construction workers weren't present. The COP team and Patrol Officers enforced any trespassing incidents, removing anyone found inside the building or around the property.

ASSESSMENT II

Since the property went through the inspection and sanction actions of the Zoning, Building Inspection, and Fire Marshal offices, there has been a steep decrease in the number of calls for service. Prior to January of 2020, officers would respond on average 145 times to this area every 6 months. Since January 2020 the average response for a 6-month time period has dropped to 77 times, a reduction of close to 50%. Perhaps an even better success can be measured by the dramatic improvement in the living standards for the two tenants who were re-housed.

MAINTENANCE

Even with the significant drop in crime and police response to this area, a history of 20 years isn't soon to be forgotten by the community. The new owners of the property have nearly completed their full renovation. A working dialogue with the new owners has continued – to include updates on the property, and who they intend to rent the new rooms to. The new owner has expressed a deep desire to invest in the community, and has committed to maintain the building to code, improve aesthetics of the immediate building and surrounding area, as well as properly vetting future tenants who will enjoy being part of the community rather than hinder its growth. Even with the great results we have seen so far, this case is far from closed and Officers will maintain their partnership with the owner and city entities to ensure its success.

Agency and Officer Information

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APPENDICES

Calls Within 300 Feet of 584 S. 300 W., Provo

01-01-14 to 06-30-14	131
07-01-14 to 12-31-14	105
01-01-15 to 06-30-15	96
07-01-15 to 12-31-15	173
01-01-16 to 06-30-16	149
07-01-16 to 12-31-16	128
01-01-17 to 06-30-17	132
07-01-17 to 12-31-17	147
01-01-18 to 06-30-18	141
07-01-18 to 12-31-18	180
01-01-19 to 06-30-19	168
07-01-19 to 12-31-19	262
01-01-20 to 06-30-20	84
07-01-20 to 12-31-20	89
01-01-21 to 05-23-21	59

