

Abstract

The Carol Stream Police Department in conjunction with several other stakeholder agencies initiated a problem solving project to address issues of mutual concern at the Carolwood Park Apartment complex. Participating agencies included the Village of Carol Stream, Carol Stream Fire Protection District, and Glenbard School District #93.

Carolwood Park Apartments was chosen by the Police Department as a project after it was determined that the calls for service and crime rate was significantly higher than other comparable multi-family residential areas in the village. The buildings in the complex were deteriorating and a significant gang presence was developing. The cooperation of the landlords and the homeowner's association had been marginal at best.

The collaborative partnership which was called the Carolwood Park Action Team (CPAT) met and identified the problem and companion symptoms. The identified problem was;

The lack of a central management system for the complex which would provide for owner accountability, responsibility, and concern for all issues which impact the apartment complex.

Following the identification of the problem, the CPAT developed a resident survey to identify their needs and concerns. The results of this survey assisted the team in developing a coordinated response.

Responses included the development of a working relationship with the owners and the homeowner's association which led to the development of a central property manager. Additional social service programming was also initiated. This collaborative effort allowed all of the impacted agencies to work together on the common problem.

Though more data is necessary, an initial assessment indicates that crime has been reduced significantly, major capital improvements have been made to the complex and we have developed an excellent working relationship with the property manager.

Village of Carol Stream, IL Police Department

Introduction

The Village of Carol Stream, Illinois is located in west-central DuPage County, twenty-seven miles west of Chicago. Incorporated as a village in 1959, the town has grown from a small subdivision of tract homes to a culturally diverse and dynamic community. The planned development of the community has allowed Carol Stream to blend single family residences, multi-family dwellings, retail centers and industrial/warehousing within specific zones.

The Village of Carol Stream currently serves a population of approximately 40,000 residents. The population of the village has dramatically increased during the past two decades.

Due to the growth of the community and surrounding area, the Village of Carol Stream has experienced an increasing demand for police services. Increasing criminal activity and population base have stimulated the department to find ways of pro-actively policing the community.

In December 1993, the Carol Stream Police Department was a first round recipient of a Police Hiring Supplement grant award by the Department of Justice. With the grant, the department was able to create a five officer "Community Problem Oriented Policing Unit" in May of 1994.

The highlighted project for this application is the Carolwood Park Action Team. This collaborative group involving village, public safety and school officials worked together to address a problematic apartment complex in Carol Stream. Through their efforts major capital improvements have been made to the complex and serious crime has been significantly reduced. This was the department's first collaborative effort and we believe that it has had a significant positive impact on the future of community policing in Carol Stream.

The Carolwood project was selected after Sgt. Rick Willing conducted a crime analysis of several multi-family areas in Carol Stream. That study revealed that Carolwood had a calls for service rate per residential unit twice that of the other locations and a crime rate that was three times higher. In review of the crime statistics and our own personal observations, the Carol Stream Police Department identified the complex as an "at-risk" community for crime and violence.

The CPOP Unit developed an action team consisting of representatives from several governmental agencies that were stakeholders at the complex. The team was able to identify not only the symptoms that they experienced at the complex but were able to identify the problem as well;

The lack of a central management system for the complex which would provide for owner accountability, responsibility, and concern for all issues which impact the apartment complex.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Scanning

Several high-density areas on the village's north side were of concern to village administration due to their deteriorating conditions and an increase in absentee landlords. The village had experienced problems in the past when the number of absentee landlords increased in a particular area. In many cases areas of owner occupied residences evolved in to pockets of rental properties in our more established neighborhoods. In November 1994, Sgt. Willing was directed by then Chief Gary Konzak to research a particular area of townhomes to determine its viability for a major CPOP project. A crime and calls for service survey of that particular area was completed; however, there were no available standards for comparison.

A similar study was completed of a comparable townhome area in the same general vicinity. We found these two areas to be very similar in the number of calls for service and crime. For comparison purposes, Sgt. Willing then extracted the calls for service and reported crime data for the Carolwood Park Apartment complex. He had reason to believe that this complex was an at-risk neighborhood. He was familiar with this complex and believed that it was more problematic than the two other neighborhoods that were examined. He found that the calls for service levels were almost twice that of the other two locations when compared on a per household basis. Comparative reported criminal activity was over three times higher than that of the other two locations.

The complex contains 23 six-flat apartment units. These units are owned by absentee landlords and are managed individually. Over the years the complex has experienced periods of revitalization and then deterioration. For the past five years, the condition of the complex had progressively deteriorated. The Carolwood Park Homeowner's Association had little control of the individual owners and was not an active viable management group.

The complex is located directly across from Glenbard North High School. This property attracted the students before, during and after school. The police department experienced an increasing gang presence in the complex and its associated crimes. Several owners were frustrated to learn that tenants that they were evicting were simply moving in to another owner's building in the same complex. It was obvious that there was little if any cooperation between the individual owners or the homeowner's association.

The buildings were deteriorating and subsequently tenant turnover was quite high. Individuals owners expressed concern about their investment. The Carolwood Park Homeowner's Association was experiencing financial difficulty and was subsequently neglecting property maintenance. Accumulating garbage and abandoned autos were left to accumulate in the parking lots. This visual cues concerning the complex signaled that a significant problem existed.

Based upon this information, Carolwood Park Apartments was selected as a problem-solving project by the department.

Analysis

Several stakeholders were invited to participate in a collaborative partnership called the Carolwood Park Action Team (CPAT). The development of this partnership allowed critical stakeholders to be part of the analysis, response and assessment of the problem solving project.

An organizational meeting was held at which time the symptoms and problems at the complex were identified. Those participating in the CPAT were Village Manager Greg Bielawski, Police Chief Gary Konzak, Community Development Director Joanne Kalchbrenner, Code Enforcement Officer Barb Grady, Glenbard School District #87 Superintendent Dr. Bob Stevens, Glenbard North High School Assistant Principal Dr. Bob Jerrick, Carol Stream Fire Protection District Lt. Terry Ruch, Mindi Thomas of the police department's Social Service Unit and members of the Carol Stream Police CPOP Unit. The team coordinator was Sgt. Willing.

Prior individual actions by members of these represented organizations had no impact upon the conditions at the complex. All of the individuals had recognized the difficulty they were experiencing in regards to the Carolwood complex.

At the first meeting the complex was evaluated and each stakeholder discussed the impact of the complex on their organization. Identified symptoms included; high crime rate, high rate of calls for police service, numerous complaints from residents about the condition of the complex, numerous fire code violations, accumulating

garbage, numerous abandoned autos and a disproportionate number of medical emergency calls for overdoses, (see appendix A)

The list of symptoms generated by the complex which were identified led to the identification of the problem:

The lack of a central management system for the complex which would provide for owner accountability, responsibility, and concern for all issues which impact the apartment complex.

The CPAT members agreed to share information concerning the complex and work cooperatively on issues generated by each represented organization. An option of a zero tolerance enforcement approach to the situation was discussed. It was obvious that enforcement alone would have little impact on the problem since it had not been effective in the past. In order to be successful, both intra- and inter-team partnerships had to be developed.

Sgt. Willing then met with both the Carolwood Park Homeowner's Association and with the owners to share with them the information garnered by the CPAT concerning the symptoms and identified problem.

In order to properly assess the nature of the problem at the complex we decided to conduct a door-to-door survey to evaluate resident demographics, concerns, and sentiment. This information would be valuable for problem identification and problem solving.

Over the next few months, civilian members of the Carol Stream Police Social Service Unit conducted a door-to-door canvass of the complex. The surveys were completed in an interview format. Each interview took approximately 20 minutes. Over 70% of the available residents were surveyed.

The results of the survey provided some very valuable information for the stakeholder team. Much of the data was quite remarkable. The surveying process allowed residents to communicate their concerns to the police on a personal level. Such communication had not occurred in the past.

Some examples of the findings include:

- 53% of the residents surveyed were single parents.
- Over 30% of the residents surveyed were minority compared to 11% in the general village population.
- Over 60% of the residents surveyed reported annual income less than \$25K.
- 49% of the residents had lived in Carolwood less than 2 years; however, less than 20% have lived in the complex more than 5 years.
- 50% of the residents do not know or will not renew their lease at contract end.

- The top five quality-of-life impacts identified by the survey were:
 - Building conditions
 - Garbage and trash
 - Juvenile delinquency
 - Noise/disturbances
 - Gang activity
- 42% of those surveyed were dissatisfied or somewhat dissatisfied with living in the complex.
- 77% of the residents rated the overall quality of police services in Carol Stream as good or excellent.

Response

The results of the survey were used by the stakeholders to develop sub-initiatives to address concerns and conditions within their control. The Fire Protection District offered information to the owners concerning fire code regulations and compliance obligations.

Social services began monitoring families at the complex and attempted early intervention in any "at-risk" case. The village's code enforcement officers made every attempt to seek voluntary compliance by the owners before citing violations. The school district flagged students who resided in the complex and monitored their performance for early intervention counseling. The police department increased their patrols in the area and took a "zero tolerance" approach to any criminal activity. Several gang sweeps were conducted in the area.

The survey revealed that in order to have an impact in the complex, CPAT had to develop a working relationship with the owners. The two highest quality of life impacts were environmental issues that the owners controlled. Sgt. Willing conducted

several meetings with the owners and homeowner's association. The survey results and information concerning activity at each individual building was shared with the owners.

Based upon the information provided by the survey, an attempt was made to organize a neighborhood watch group. The organizational attempt failed due to a lack of participation. It was clearly evident that many of the residents were apathetic about the problem at Caroiwood.

Within a short period of time, the homeowner's association towed the abandoned cars and repaved the parking lot. They also increased their garbage collection schedule to help reduce the trash accumulation on the complex. These initial steps were clear indication that they were willing to work on improving the appearance of the complex.

The most significant change took place when the homeowner's association contracted with a property specialist to manage the property. The creation of this position addressed the problem which had been identified by CPAT. The property manager has been very helpful in working with members of CPAT however he does not have complete authority at the complex. Each building owner still manages their units individually. The manager has no ultimate control of the individual lease agreements.

Since the hiring of the property manager, the homeowners have made several capital improvements to the complex. These include additional security lighting which was suggested by the police department and the residents of all the buildings. These improvements have made a significant impact upon the appearance of the complex.

Community Development and Code Enforcement have been working with the homeowners to facilitate these improvements.

Several owners have also been sensitive to problematic tenants. They have taken proactive measures to non-renew or evict tenants which have caused problems or committed crimes on the complex. The police department continues to work with the property manager to share relative information concerning disturbances and crimes on the complex.

In order to provide additional social service programming for the children at the complex, the police department solicited the cooperation of the local Girl Scout council. For the past two years, the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts have conducted a cooperative week long day camp at the complex. These day camps have led to some year long programming for the children. The police department has participated in these camps each year.

The Police Department is also planning a landlord training program which will be offered to the owners at Carolwood. Approximately half of the owners have expressed their interest in the program. Topics to be included in the 20-hour course include:

Working with the police,
Identifying narcotic activity,
Identifying gang activity,
Carol Stream Social Services,
Property Values,
Village codes concerning property maintenance.
Working with the Fire Protection District,

Pro-active property management,
Preparing the property-crime prevention and security.
Promoting an apartment "community",
Employee screening,
Tenant applicant screening,
Rental agreements,
Gang Awareness,
Warning Signs of Drug Activity,
Social Services,
Section 8 Housing- DuPage County Housing Authority,
Eviction Process,
Civil liability for property owners and managers; and,
Marketing your property.

This class will help educate the property owners on how to proactively manage their property and work together with the police department to improve the quality of life for their residents.

The development of the CPAT has had a significant impact in the community. This was Carol Stream's first attempt at developing a collaborative partnership to address a common problem. This collaboration has demonstrated the importance and potential of community partnerships. The collaboration team realized that all organizations were working individually towards a common problem and that the combined effort was more effective and efficient. This effort legitimized collaborative partnerships and allowed individuals the opportunity to work together comfortably.

It would appear that the homeowner's association realized the importance of the problem and has taken measures to develop a permanent solution.

The department has also been able to develop a staffing system which allows for the permanent assignment of a zone officer to the area. This system has permitted the development of a geographic team coordinated by a designated officer from the Community Problem Oriented Policing Unit. This staffing system has created "zone ownership" and new incentives for the officers to become involved in the problem-solving project.

Assessment

The CPAT has realized several successes since implementation. The homeowner's association has made several capital improvements to the complex. These improvements have addressed identified concerns of the residents. The survey administered by the CPAT indicated that environmental issues at the complex were the highest quality of life impacts of resident concern.

The homeowner's association also hired a property manager for the complex. This addressed the identified primary problem by CPAT. Though not the ultimate solution due to the limited control of the property manager, the members of CPAT have found the interaction with the manager to be much improved. The manager has cooperated in every way possible to enhance the property and situation.

Problematic tenants and situations are promptly and effectively addressed by the property manager. These situations are brought to his attention through an apartment complex incident reporting system. These one page reports are completed by the field

officers handling the specific call. The complex manager's position has also facilitated communication and cooperation between the participating agencies and individuals.

This initiative has also had an impact on crime at the complex. In 1996, there was a 48% decrease in serious crime (Part I) and a 6% decrease in other crimes (Part II) as compared to 1995 statistics.

Since the inception of the CPAT, most of the major issues at the complex have been addressed. There has been a higher level of cooperation between the complex representatives and members of the CPAT.

In order to complete the assessment, another resident survey should be completed. We would then be able to assess our efforts by comparing the pre- and post-project feedback. It is believed that there will not be a definite conclusion to this project. It is felt that the complex will require constant monitoring and additional situational initiatives will be required periodically.

The response could have been more effective if the CPAT would have been able to generate resident participation. For the most part, the residents did not become an active participant in the project. Their survey results would indicate that they had an interest in developing a neighborhood council type organization however no resident leader could ever be identified or cultured. Once the initial problems were addressed, the residents became complacent.

The quality of life in Carol Stream has been greatly effected since the implementation of community policing and problem solving. Our efforts have greatly increased the level of communication between the community and the police. This communication has created a better understanding of each other and has fostered the necessary partnerships to make a difference.

The police have a better understanding of the community's concerns and the community has a better understanding of how they can assist to make a difference. There is a greater level of trust between the community and the police as we work to address issues of mutual concern.

Community policing and problem solving has allowed the department to move from reactive to proactive policing. Instead of waiting until situations become major problems, minor issues are handled promptly and effectively. This also increases resident satisfaction.

One of the most significant transitions has been the ability to permanently assign officers to a specific zone. This has allowed officers to develop "zone ownership" and undertake problem solving projects. The residents have embraced the neighborhood police officer concept and realize the benefits of the program. Officers and residents are excited about the possibilities of these neighborhood partnerships. Residents also report that they are more satisfied with police services and that they feel safer in their community since the implementation of community policing.

As we continue to develop our community policing philosophy we look forward to the positive impact that it will have on the residents in Carol Stream and especially in the Carolwood Park Apartment complex.

Agency and Officer Information

The problem-solving initiative was originally adopted by the Community Problem Oriented Policing Unit and ultimately included the entire department and other inter-agency members.

Members of the CPAT team had received community policing training through regional conferences and specific problem solving classes. Several non-police personnel involved in the project had attended a community policing conference in Cincinnati. This proved to be beneficial as they understood the problem-solving process.

Since this was our first true experience at problem-solving under the SARA model, we did not have any prior experiences to rely upon. Our approach to this problem was developed through textbook and training methodology.

In retrospect, we discovered that the development of the team was both part of the assessment and response to the problem. The team was able to identify critical issues concerning the problem while at the same time being a partner in the solution.

All of the participating agencies committed the resources necessary to work this project. No large capital expenditures were necessary. Each agency committed the necessary time and manpower to accomplish this project.

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CAROLWOOD PARK ACTION TEAM

PROBLEM AND SYMPTOM IDENTIFICATION

PROBLEM: The lack of a central management system for the complex which would provide for owner accountability, responsibility and concern for all issues which impact the apartment complex.

SYMPTOMS:

- The lack of a single point of contact by impacted agencies and organizations.
- High volume of calls for service.
- Disproportionate crime rate.
- Propensity for a significant high-profile crime to occur.
 - Increasing gang presence
- Deterioration of the building structures.
- Overcrowding.
- Complaints from neighboring residents/political issue.
- Garbage accumulation.
- Balcony storage - unsightly/dangers.
- Student hang-out.
- Significant number of Emergency Medical calls for overdoses.
- Fire Prevention - lack of owner control,
 - storage of material in stairwells
 - exit lighting
- Lack of resident concern.
- Approximately 50% of resident students at GNHS have had reportable incidents.
- Abandoned vehicles.