

## PROJECT ABSTRACT

9934

### SCANNING

Situated in the easternmost portion of the Wilmington community in Reporting District (RD) 529, the area commonly referred to as "the junkyards" is a land that time has seemingly forgotten. This 100-acre parcel region features unpaved streets, buildings in disrepair, trash and cardboard homes. The junkyards experienced a steady deterioration since the 1960s and the area simply became an embarrassing eyesore.

Community members, patrol officers and Harbor Area's Community-Police Advisory Board (C-PAB) members all expressed concerns about the area. In addition to the area's unsightly appearance, a thriving prostitution and narcotics trade, stray dogs and a significant homeless population rendered the area unsafe for law-abiding citizens. Furthermore, it attracted an undesirable element to the Wilmington community.

### ANALYSIS

On July 22, 1998, the senior lead officer spearheaded an initial taskforce meeting. This meeting provided an opportunity for representatives from the Los Angeles Police Department, the Port of Los Angeles Police, the Long Beach Police Department, and a host of City of Los Angeles agencies to meet and discuss their mutual concerns with respect to the junkyards. The agencies represented included Public Works, Street Maintenance, the Department of Water and Power, Animal Regulation and Councilman Rudy Svorinich's Office.

During the initial meeting, stakeholders shared concerns and expectations for results. The taskforce developed short term, intermediate and long-term goals, and a project title. After careful deliberation, the project title "Operation: Field of Dreams" was chosen.

### RESPONSE

Officers developed a zero-tolerance strategy on crime and provided a highly visible presence during all shifts. The taskforce efforts coincided with the LAPD's transition to the Ideal Basic Car approach, in which every officer assigned to the Wilmington district became accountable for community problem solving.

The taskforce met bi-weekly and addressed building and business code violations, and Health Department representatives issued citations and offered counseling. Animal Regulation officers retrieved stray, sick dogs and issued owner citations. Officers made arrests for trespass, narcotics and warrant violations, or simply issued verbal warnings.

### ASSESSMENT

In the nine-month period since the project's beginning, the appearance of the area has transformed dramatically. Trash piles were cleared, graffiti painted over and homeless encampments removed. Word spread quickly throughout the area that the police-led operations were going to continue in earnest and violators fled the area in increasing numbers. Business owners reported to officers and taskforce members that incidents of theft and vandalism decreased, as did the once-thriving narcotics and prostitution trade.

Los Angeles Police Department  
Harbor Area  
OPERATION: FIELD OF DREAMS  
The Far East Wilmington Beautification Project

## **PROJECT IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION**

### **SCANNING**

There exists within Harbor Area an area in the easternmost portion of the Wilmington community that time has seemingly forgotten. Commonly referred to as "the junkyards," this 100-acre portion of land, situated in Reporting District (RD) 529 (Anaheim Street to Grant Street, and the Long Beach city limits to Henry Ford Avenue), features unpaved streets, buildings in disrepair, trash and cardboard homes.

Since the 1960's, the area has witnessed a steady decline and become an embarrassing eyesore. Community members, patrol officers and Harbor Area's Community-Police Advisory Board (C-PAB) members all expressed concerns about the area. An October 25, 1998, article in the Daily Breeze newspaper entitled "Cleaning up a Dirty Secret" captured the sentiments of many within the Harbor Area community, especially the Wilmington community.

Despite the problems and the obvious decay, other areas within Harbor Area received greater attention and focus. The explanation is simple. The junkyards is a business region, far removed from local residents. History has proven that problem areas in close proximity to residences are the most likely to receive the greatest share of police and city attention.

After years of neglect, decay, and relegation to a "backburner" role, it was clear to all involved stakeholders that the time was right to make the junkyards a primary focus of attention.

### **THE ALAMEDA CORRIDOR PROJECT**

Another important element in the selection of this project was the construction of the 3.2 billion dollar Alameda Corridor Project. This massive effort, scheduled for completion early in the millenium, will consolidate rail traffic from four rail companies along Alameda Boulevard. The construction from this project yielded an unexpected benefit in that it cleaned up much of the area along the railroad tracks, and it led to the evacuation of much of the homeless population.

### **ANALYSIS**

The junkyards progressive decay began in the 1960s, when labor became prominent in the area and the area took on a more transient appearance. As businesses began to suffer, several establishments sublet available space to other businesses. Unfortunately, several of these businesses proved to be disreputable. In time, the area decayed as trash, graffiti and an ever-increasing homeless population permeated the landscape. It wasn't long before prostitution, thefts and narcotic trade operated openly and often with little disruption.

Criminal activity in the junkyard region include the following violations:

- 11350(a) H&S (possession of a controlled substance-Rock Cocaine).
- 11377 H&S (possession of Methamphetamine).
- 11379.6 H&S (manufacturing of controlled substances).
- 674(B) PC (prostitution).
- 11364 H&S (possession of paraphernalia)
- 602(n) (trespassing)
- 554(g) PC (trespassing near railroad property).
- Illegal dumping of trash and debris.

The below listed problems exist throughout the area but are more prevalent within three main locations:

- Along the railroad tracks from the 900 block of Foote Street to Hobson Avenue (Tract MP12 14, block 15, lot 1, 2, 3,4 and 5).
- McDonough Avenue from Anajieim Street to Grant Street.
- Schley Avenue from Anaheim Street to Grant Street.

The senior lead officer obtained the assistance for this project from the following Harbor Area resources:

- Basic Cars 5A15, 5A17 and 5A25 (within the Wilmington community)
- Harbor Area Hype Detail
- Harbor Area Bicycle Detail
- Narcotics Group, Field Enforcement Section, Harbor Squad
- Harbor Area CRASH Unit
- Harbor Area Felony Warrant Car

The crime statistics for Reporting District 529 were reported as follows:

#### ARRESTS:

- In October 1998, there were 40 arrests made in Reporting District 529
- In November 1998, there were 22 arrests made in Reporting District 529
- In December 1998, there were 26 arrests made in Reporting District 529

The majority of these arrests were for narcotic charges.

The taskforce also used knowledge obtained during a previous effort aimed at an area beautification in 1994. A similar, multi-agency approach was used but, unlike the earlier effort, the LAPD assumed the leadership role. With the LAPD orchestrating the enforcement efforts, the political pitfalls that encumbered the 1994 effort were significantly mitigated.

On July 22, 1998, the senior lead officer for the project spearheaded an initial task force meeting. This meeting provided an opportunity for representatives of the Los Angeles Police Department, the Port of Los Angeles Police, Long Beach Police Department, and a host of City of Los Angeles agencies to share mutual concerns about the junkyards. The agencies represented included Public Works, Street Maintenance, the Department of Water and Power, Animal Regulation and Councilman Rudy Svorinich's Office. This meeting provided a valuable forum for a meaningful dialogue on the problems these agencies have observed throughout the junkyards. What resulted was a list of stakeholders, short term, intermediate and long-term goals, and a taskforce meeting schedule. In an effort to change the mindset of those living and working in the affected area, as well as that of the project participants, a project title was developed with that goal in mind. After careful deliberation, the project title "Operation: Field of Dreams" was chosen.

Operation: Field of Dreams reflects the sense of hope associated with the project. Among the long-term goals for the project include the creation of a ball field for the recreational use of local children in the Wilmington community.

While the information received about the target area was largely qualitative, efforts to obtain quantitative information were undertaken. The senior lead officer contacted Harbor Area's Crime Analysis Detail (CAD) to determine crime statistics within the target area.

#### PART I CRIMES:

- In October 1998, there were 29 Part I crimes in Reporting District 529
- In November 1998, there were 31 Part I crimes in Reporting District 529
- In December 1998, there were 25 Part I crimes in Reporting District 529

Unfortunately, much of the crime that occurred in the junkyards went unreported. Many business owners reported that narcotics transactions, prostitution, acts of vandalism or theft frequently were not reported by affected businesses.

The reluctance of these businesses to report crimes was due to a number of factors including, but not limited to, repetition of crime, the lack of visible police patrols, and a lack of education by law enforcement on the benefits of reporting crime.

On September 24, 1998, the senior lead officer in charge of the project and the project coordinator presented an Operation: Field of Dreams status report to the Harbor Area Community-Police Advisory Board (C-PAB). The group was very receptive to the project. In fact, one member, the C-PAB Secretary, volunteered to assist with the project and ultimately became an integral component.

The following stakeholders were identified:

- \*LAPD, including patrol, bicycle details, Vice Unit and Narcotics Division
- \*Long Beach Police Department
- \*Los Angeles Fire Department
- \*Port of Los Angeles Police Department
- \*City of Los Angeles Street Maintenance
- \*Local media
- \*Department of Transportation
- \*City of Los Angeles Health Department
- \*City of Los Angeles Street Maintenance
- \*City of Los Angeles Department of Animal Regulation
- \*Cal Trans
- "California Highway Patrol
- "Office of the City Attorney
- \*City of Los Angeles Street Lighting
- \*Gang Alternatives Program
- \*Counciiman Rudy Svorinich's Office
- \*Harbor Area Community-Police Advisory Board
- \*Union Pacific Railroad Company Police Department
- \*Support for Harbor Area Women's Lives (S.H.A.W.L.)

The following goals and timetables were established for the project:

Short-Term Goals (0-6 months)

- Create a project vision
- Determine project name
- Identify stakeholders
- Identify necessary resources
- Create project interest
- Establish timetables
- Document a historical perspective
- Seek C-PAB and community input
- Photograph current conditions and document improvement
- Obtain CAD statistical information for the affected area
- Establishment of a "We Tip" number for those desiring to offer assistance or report problems

### Intermediate Goals (6 months to 1 year)

Begin to positively impact attitudes and perceptions within the area

Reduce repeat calls for service

Improve safety for business community

Reduce or eliminate hazardous materials

Ensure adherence to City Municipal Codes

Document the project via the SARA model

Eliminate graffiti

Improve look of local businesses

Achieve a decrease in Part I crimes in RD 529

Achieve a decrease in narcotics and prostitution-related activities within RD 529

### Long-term Goals (1 year to 5 years)

Change the attitudes and perceptions within the area

Eliminate the eyesore

Reduce or eliminate unhealthful conditions

Improve the environment

Improve the quality of life for stakeholders

Re-establish pride of ownership and community

Creation of a ball field for youths

Abate abandoned or illegal businesses

Involve the EPA in cleaning the environment within RD 529 for alternative uses

## **RESPONSE**

The initial taskforce meeting was convened on July 22, 1998. That meeting brought representatives from throughout the cities of Los Angeles and Long Beach. Participants discussed the contribution potential of their respective agencies. The following issues were discussed during that initial meeting:

- \*The scope of the problems within the affected area;
- \*A historical perspective of the problems;
- \*Stumbling blocks to previous beautification efforts;
- \*A taskforce meeting schedule;
- \*Goal completion timelines.

During the formulation of the project response, a number of approaches were adopted. Officers developed a zero-tolerance strategy on crime and provided a highly visible presence during all shifts. At the same time this project entered its intermediate goals portion, the Department transitioned to the Ideal Basic Car concept. Harbor Area became a Department leader, as it was the first Area to fully integrate the district approach. Senior lead officers returned to a full-time patrol function, and every member of a basic car assumed responsibility and accountability for community problem solving efforts. Moreover, the entire service delivery system within a basic car was not just limited to all the officers assigned to that car 24 hours each day, but also to the bike details, CRASH officers, and Vice and Narcotics officers assigned within an identified community.

Operation: Field of Dreams became Harbor Area's primary SARA project. A SARA Book, coordinated by the senior lead officer, became the repository for project updates, resources listings, copies of arrest reports and e-mail correspondence between officers. As the project yielded positive results, the successes filtered through all of Harbor Area. Patrol officers increasingly devoted available time to enforcement efforts within the affected area. Officers proudly placed copies of arrest reports in the SARA Book as a means to communicate crime trend information and to document their enforcement successes.

The implementation of this service delivery concept proved to be extremely beneficial for this project. An enhanced sense of ownership facilitated an increased involvement of Vice and Narcotics personnel. Narcotics personnel, for example, were extremely helpful by serving search and arrest warrants, while Vice officers enforced prostitution and gaming violations. One notable example occurred in February 1999, when undercover Harbor Area Vice officers, operating on intelligence information received from taskforce members and patrol officers, observed a large-scale cockfighting operation just south of Grant Avenue and west of Schley Avenue. A subsequent raid on the cockfighting operation resulted in the arrest of 64 suspects and the confiscation of cockfighting paraphernalia. Los Angeles City Attorney James Hahn filed criminal charges against all of the 64 defendants.

To promote the project and seek community support and input, the senior lead officer contacted a local reporter from the Daily Breeze newspaper regarding the project. The reporter took an immediate interest in the effort and joined the taskforce on site to gain a firsthand look. What resulted was an October 25, 1999, article entitled "Cleaning Up a Dirty Little Secret." The article featured several painfully personal accounts. These stories revealed individual plunges from prosperity and conformity to despair among the ruins of the junkyards. The article also chronicled important outreach efforts undertaken through the project.

Concern about displacement was an important project consideration. Simply moving the problem to another location was an unacceptable option. Instead, the project sought outreach experts to provide counseling and alternatives to arrest or continued homelessness. Representatives from the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority and Support for Harbor Area Women's Lives (S.H.A.W.L), located at 936 South Centre Street, San Pedro, actively participated in this project. Between January through March 1999, SHAWL House personnel participated in the field taskforce efforts, met with detained female transients and counseled them on site. To date, 50 transients have been contacted through the taskforce operations and 40 have been placed into suitable housing. Countless additional women were either provided bus tokens or given referrals. The remainder were either arrested on narcotics, trespassing or outstanding warrants or simply released and admonished not to return. These placement efforts will continue until the area is free of transients.

The senior lead officer, with the assistance of the Port of Los Angeles Police and the Union Pacific railroad police, enforced Penal Code Section 369(1) (Trespassing on Railroad Property). This provided an additional tool with which to combat the homeless population.

An additional important resource became the City Attorney's Office. Deputy City Attorney Betty Davidson, also a regular participant at C-PAB meetings, took an interest in the project and created a key enforcement component. She approached the project coordinator with the idea of introducing court-ordered Stayaway Orders to junkyard-related convictions. Similar to orders frequently issued by judges in prostitution cases, these orders, if violated, constitute a violation of probation and provide officers with yet another valuable enforcement tool.

In March 1999, Harbor Area commenced a "We Tip" hotline. This 800 number provides citizens with the opportunity to anonymously report crimes or information. At present, Harbor Area personnel and C-PAB members are promoting this program throughout the Harbor Area community. It is anticipated that the "We Tip" hotline will prove a valuable source of intelligence information relative to this project.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Since the project began in July 1998, several tangible signs of improvement have been noted. The overall appearance of the region has improved tremendously. Much of the garbage, graffiti and homeless encampments that had riddled the landscape are gone. The once active transient population, including prostitutes, narcotics users and the homeless, has noticeably decreased. The mere appearance of a black and white police vehicle causes the few wanderers who remain to vacate. Not long ago, business owners and officers reported that police presence provided little, if any, deterrent effect.

An important intermediate goal for the project was to change the attitudes and perceptions within the junkyards. It was vital that the mindset moved from that of an "anything goes" mentality to one of pride and self restraint. The removal of trash and graffiti, as well as the regular business inspections, has made violators far more conspicuous and self-conscious.

Of great concern in this effort was the displacement of the once thriving transient population. Simultaneous to this project is a recently undertaken effort on the part of the city of Long Beach to revitalize the west side of the city. It was not surprising, therefore, that the Long Beach Police Department participated in this project from the outset and have monitored results with great interest. Outreach and placement efforts among the junkyard's homeless population became an integral part of the taskforce operations.

As the end of the intermediate goals timetable (six months to one year) approaches, the focus of the response has transitioned from primarily a cleanup and outreach effort to that of business code enforcement. The Los Angeles Fire Department is proving to be extremely valuable in this area. With limited resources and staffing, the Department of Building and Safety has been able to provide a lone inspector on site on a very limited basis. With their limitations in mind, an inspector from the Los Angeles Fire Department acted as the liaison with Building and Safety. This representative conducted field inspections and noted violations within his purview. Additional code violations were forwarded by him to Building and Safety in the form of referrals. These referrals caused subsequent Building and Safety inspections. To date, no abatements have occurred but the project's long-term goals include the abatement of nuisance and non-compliant businesses.



Interestingly, one of the taskforce members, an inspector from the Los Angeles Fire Department, became so impressed by the outreach efforts in which he both witnessed and participated, he became a member of the Harbor Area Crisis Response Team.

The Crisis Response Team is a group of specially-trained volunteers on call 24 hours a day who provide on-scene counseling and assistance to those who are burdened by emotional trauma or grief.

The methods chosen to evaluate the success to date of this project include, but are not limited to:

- "Input from local residents during community or neighborhood watch meetings
- \*Input from the Wilmington Business Watch
- \*Input from Harbor Area C-PAB members
- \*Input from Narcotics Group, Field Enforcement Section, Harbor Squad personnel
- \*Input from Harbor Area Vice
- \*Input from the Wilmington community senior lead officers
- \*Input from Harbor Patrol Division officers assigned regularly to the Wilmington community
- "Input from the Harbor Area Felony Warrant Car officers
- "Input from the Harbor Area Crime Analysis Detail

To date, the project has achieved all of the short-term goals established during the July 22, 1998, initial taskforce meeting:

#### Short-Term Goals (0-6 months)

- Create a project vision
- Determine project name
- Identify stakeholders
- Identify necessary resources
- Create project interest
- Establish timetables
- Document a historical perspective
- Seek C-PAB and community input
- Photograph current conditions and document improvement
- Obtain CAD statistical information for the affected area
- Establishment of a "We Tip" number for those desiring to offer assistance or report problems

With several months remaining in the second (intermediate-goal) phase of the project, attention is focused in the following areas:

- \*Changing attitudes and perceptions within the area
- \*Reducing calls for service within the area
- improving the safety for the business community
- \*Reducing hazardous materials
- \*Ensuring adherence to city Municipal Codes
- "Documenting the project via the SARA Model
- "Decreasing Part I Crimes in RD 529
- "Improving the appearance of local businesses
- "Reducing the narcotics and prostitution-related activities in RD 529

The challenge of changing the appearance of an area so blatantly ignored for many years is a large one. But as taskforce participants, business owners and community members witness the transformation, they are becoming increasingly involved in the project. As the project progresses through its second phase and transitions to the third phase, it is important to remember that the long-term goals may take several years to achieve. With a renewed interest and commitment to the area, and with several enforcement mechanisms in place, there is every reason to believe that all of the goals established for Operation: Field of Dreams will be realized.

Bi-weekly task force operations  
Communicate at roll calls  
Copies of arrest reports and RFCs in SARA Book  
Utilized local press (newspaper article)  
Impromptu operations  
C-PAB meetings (input)  
Outreach with SHAWL, GAP paint outs, Port Police, Railroad Police  
CPAB involvement  
Narcotics Group, FES, search and arrest warrants served  
VICE-cockfighting arrests

Feedback from stakeholders, officers, CPAB, Council Office, CAD stats  
Bullet list of results achieved to date

\*  
\*  
\*  
.  
.

Copies of arrest reports and RFCs in SARA Book  
Utilized local press (newspaper article)  
Impromptu operations  
C-PAB Meetings (input)  
Outreach with SHAWL, GAP paint outs, Port Police, Railroad Police  
CPAB involvement  
Narcotics Group, FES, search and arrest warrants served  
VICE-cockfighting arrests

Harbor Area personnel and members from various City entities meet at the site on a bi-weekly basis to enforce code violations, provide uniformed presence, conduct homeless placement and counseling, and generally clean and beautify the area. A majority of citations issued are generated by Building and Safety and the Department of County Health, but not limited to other unrelated penal and municipal code violations. The task force is comprised of the following City and County entities:

Representatives from the SHAWL House, located at 936 S. Centre Street, in San Pedro, actively participated in this project. Between January through March 1999, SHAWL House personnel participated in the field taskforce efforts, met with detained female transients and counseled them on site. Of those counseling and outreach efforts, eight women were transported directly to the SHAWL House and immediately introduced to rehabilitation programs. Countless additional women were either provided bus tokens or given referrals. The remainder were either arrested on narcotics, trespassing or outstanding warrants or simply admonished not to return and released.

# PART 1 CRIMES RD 529

