

DELUXE TRAILER PARK PROBLEM SOLVING PROJECT



LITTLETON POLICE DEPARTMENT

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH
UNIT**

City of Littleton

Police Department

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April 29, 2002

Herman Goldstein Award Selection Committee
PERF
1120 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 930
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Herman Goldstein Award Selection Committee,

I enthusiastically nominate our Deluxe Trailer Park Project for the 2002 Herman Goldstein Award. Officers began this POP project utilizing the SARA method in 1998. The project has taken 4 years and extensive work with several City Departments as well as the community, property owners, and residents to reach the point that it is at today. Through the determination and perseverance of our officers and other City employees the trailer park has been closed and is in the process of being demolished. There were numerous health, safety, and code violations in the park that made it unfit for human habitation. The Deluxe Trailer Park is located at the gateway to the Littleton historic downtown area and its condition caused significant quality of life issues both for the residents and the neighborhood.

The attached supporting documentation will illustrate to you the amount of time and effort that went into this project. This project is certainly deserving of the Herman Goldstein Award.

Thank you for your consideration of this project.

Sincerely,



Gary L. Maas
Chief of Police
Littleton Police Department

Enclosures

SCAN

5260 S. SANTA FE DRIVE DELUXE TRAILER PARK

The Deluxe Trailer Park is located at the northeast corner of South Santa Fe Drive and South Prince Street, in the City of Littleton, Colorado. The park is comprised of twenty-three individual trailers and a separate brick building, which houses a coin laundry. The path through the park is unimproved and during inclement weather is nearly impassable. Increasing deterioration of the park is obvious to any casual observer. Public safety personnel complained about the hazardous environment and safety issues. Abandoned vehicles, rubbish, insufficient lighting, weeds, overgrown trees and shrubs, feral cats, cockroaches, rodents, building and safety code violations, dilapidated trailers and storage sheds, and noxious odors of raw sewage all contributed to the blighted conditions.

Littleton Police Officers have been responding to a disproportionate number of calls at this park for several years. The annual average calls for service, from 1996 through 1999, was 37. Calls for service have steadily increased since 1999. The largest increase was in 2000, when the park's call load jumped 54%. Some of these calls included child sex assault, frequent disturbances, harassment, domestic violence, assaults, drug possession, and noise complaints. Although the call load continued to increase, traditional police response failed to impact this problem.

The owner of the park did not provide proper maintenance or management of the lots leased to tenants or the surrounding park property. The maintenance failure includes, but is not limited to, ignoring leaks in natural gas lines, sewer seepage, water delivery

problems, failure to check tenant background information, lack of community regulations, and disregard for tenant rights. The poor management clearly included indifference by the owner regarding the urgent need to correct health and safety hazards within the park. The owner was advised of these problems but ignored them, along with the threat of fines for violations. Indifference to the law by the owner was a primary factor in the continued deterioration of the park. Crime, social disorder and deteriorating quality of life resulted.

ANALYSIS

Numerous City resources were utilized in the analysis phase of this project. Calls for service figures were obtained from 1995 through 1998. This revealed 58 calls were generated in 1995. Calls ranged, as previously stated, from suspicious incidents to possession of controlled substances. Of those 58 calls, 47% were considered high-risk calls, including disturbances, domestic violence incidents, assaults, and warrant arrests. In 1996, there were 33 calls, 39% were high-risk calls. Statistics revealed 40% of calls in 1997 were high-risk calls. In 1998, 73% were high risk. This original analysis data unveiled the unacceptable risks this park generated for police. Nearly half (49%) of the calls for the four years reviewed were high risk.

The original project resulted in a greater awareness of the extent of crime and social disorder in the park. It did not provide the long-term results sought by the team and another compilation of crime statistics for 1999 through 2002 was requested. The figures for these years uncovered a large increase in calls. In 1999, 32% of calls reported were high risk. Calls recorded in 2000 revealed that 29% were identified as high risk.

RESPONSE:

An extensive range of alternative responses to the problem was initially proposed. One idea was to request updated or alternative ordinances to be enacted by City Council to address absentee landlord legal liabilities for public safety and nuisance abatement issues. A property management training session for the owner or manager of the park was discussed. Public information and media involvement was also considered. The proposed intent of press coverage would be to evoke citizen concern, open criticism of these repeated problems, and put pressure on the landlord to eliminate the situation.

Our initial response took the form of education and awareness. We educated the City's Neighborhood Action Team members (NAT) of the magnitude of the problem, and solicited their participation in the response. We began implementing the response by conducting inspections of the property.

The first inspection sweep conducted by the team located and addressed over 160 building, safety, zoning or health code violations. Each owner/tenant who allowed inspections of their home was advised of the violations and ordered to repair or replace items to bring their unit up to standard. The landlord was also advised of violations and instructed to alleviate all violations and told the park would be closed if corrections were not made. All individual trailer owners attempted to comply with the order. Initially B.S.S. agreed to bring any deficiencies up to standard. Unfortunately, after several verbal agreements with the City regarding their responsibility and liability, B.S.S. failed to follow through.

The City team developed and continued to take a personal and professional interest in this project. Members pursued all reported violations and continued

inspections and enforcement. However, many safety, health, code and criminal violations continued due to the lack of action by B.S.S.

In 2002 City officials obtained an administrative warrant through the Littleton Municipal Court. An affidavit to acquire the warrant cited the resident owners' refusal to allow entry for further interior inspections and documentation of code violations from 1998 through 2002 as probable cause for the warrant. The warrant granted right of entry to authorized agents of the City Manager by any means possible for the purpose of discharging official duties. The inspection to the interior of the trailers showed that previous violations were not corrected as well as the discovery of new violations. Over 230 violations to the City code were found. These violations caused numerous health and safety hazards which was the basis to post the trailers and the park as uninhabitable. The inspectors advised that the violations noted were too extreme to repair to a safe condition and that it was necessary to condemn the entire park. The combination of these conditions were the basis for a final order of condemnation, vacate within ten days and demolish each trailer.

ASSESSMENT

The success of the program can be judged by the closure and pending demolition of the park. Additionally, the success of the program can be attributed to the fact that several departments within the City cooperated in the successful resolution of this project.

When the scanning and analysis of the project began in 1998, officers who responded to the area frequently were interviewed. Case reports were reviewed along

with actions taken while on scene of the park. The report data indicated that information reports would routinely be completed which would be forwarded to Social Services if a child or elderly person were involved. This "hands off approach led to the decay of the park, in turn creating a problem that grew in size. Further analysis of the data showed that a significant percentage of the population was the criminal element the police were dealing with. The lack of on-site management clearly was the basis for the nurturing of the blighted conditions. Interviewing district officers who handled the majority of calls at the park showed a larger predicament than just crime and decay.

The health and safety hazards were the stimulus that narrowed the focus of the project. During the initial analysis, officers teamed with code enforcement and building inspectors to complete the first of many site surveys of the trailer park. The paradigm shifted from solving the problem of crime alone, to solving quality of life issues. The expectation for this shift was a reduction in crime.

In 1998 the city initiated a group meeting process called the Neighborhood Action Team (NAT) as described previously. The NAT team offered the forum in which to solve problems like the Deluxe Trailer Park during a round table setting. With all necessary support personnel located in one location, problems are presented to all entities at one time to solve or offer suggestions that may not have been addressed. The Deluxe Trailer Park was presented for evaluation. Once presented to the NAT team, arrangements were made to meet at the park with designated City departments to evaluate the park status. During the first site visit, over 160 code violations were noted. These violations were discussed at the following NAT team meeting and presented to the City Manager and the City Attorney for discussion.

housing assistance applications to all of the parks residents and placed their names to the front of the existing waiting list. Plans were then implemented for condemnation and demolition of the Deluxe Trailer Park.

Currently all trailers have been vacated and personal items removed. The utilities that have been shut off cannot be re-activated until new underground services are installed. Two trailer owners have requested permits from the city to move their trailers. Any remaining trailers will be considered abandoned and demolished. The owner has agreed to accept responsibility for the clean up of the site. Demolition will be completed no later than June 30th, 2002.

AGENCY AND OFFICER INFORMATION

When the problems of the Deluxe Trailer Park were originally identified in 1998, the Littleton Police Department decided to initiate a Problem Oriented Policing (POP) project. The initiating officer, Chris Grosz, was assigned to the Patrol Division. He had received department POP training, and decided to initiate a problem-solving model to address a number of calls for service as well as City Code violations at the trailer park. The initial problem solving effort was addressed by the Littleton Police Department, including the Community Outreach Unit and with the assistance of the City Code Enforcement and Building Inspectors, the Littleton Fire Department and the Tri-County Health Department. In 2002, officers again worked with the City of Littleton Code Enforcement, as well as other officers and City departments to address the same issue. Several of the patrol officers, most of the Neighborhood Liaison Officers, and many other City officials were involved in the problem solving efforts. No extra funding was given to this project. Much of the time spent working on the problem was in addition to other responsibilities of the officers and employees involved.

The SARA problem-solving model was used. Officer Grosz originally wrote up a SARA project in 1998, revising it in 2002. In 1997 our agency received training on Problem Oriented Policing and the use of problem solving models. As a result of the training, our department put together a problem-solving workbook that all officers can use as a guide.

For further information or follow-up, please contact the following contact officer:

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REFERENCE

Sheree Matousek (Littleton Police Department Crime Analyst) Deluxe Trailer park and surrounding area aerial photograph and statistical crime graphing. Pg. 1-4.

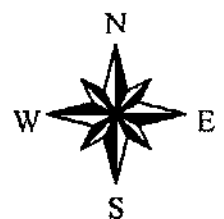
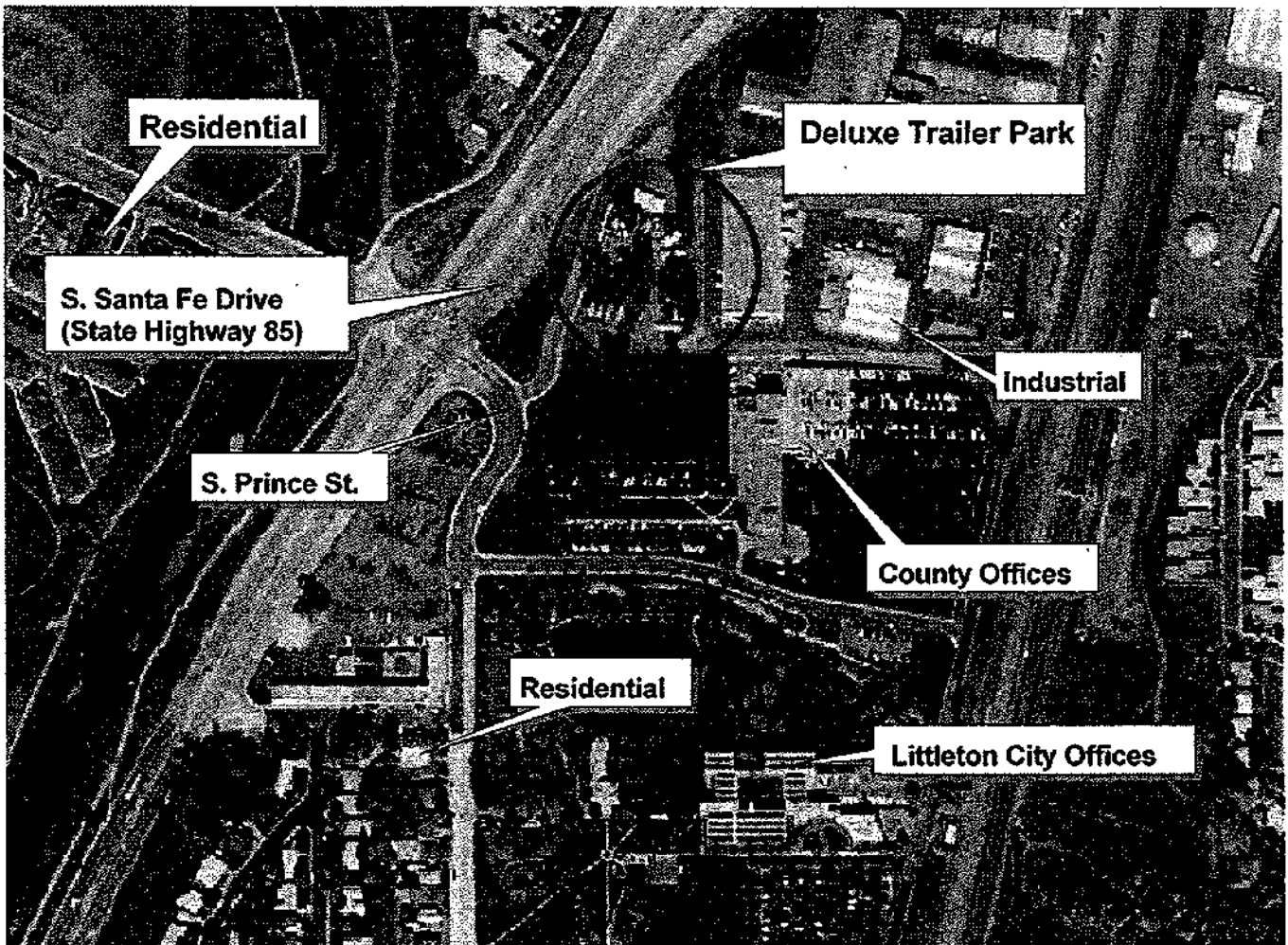
Shawna Hickman, Littleton Independent Newspaper, March 28, 2002. Pg. 7-8.

Shawna Hickman, Littleton Independent Newspaper, April 4, 2002. Pg. 9-10.

Littleton Police Department 5260 S. Santa Fe Drive Deluxe Trailer Park

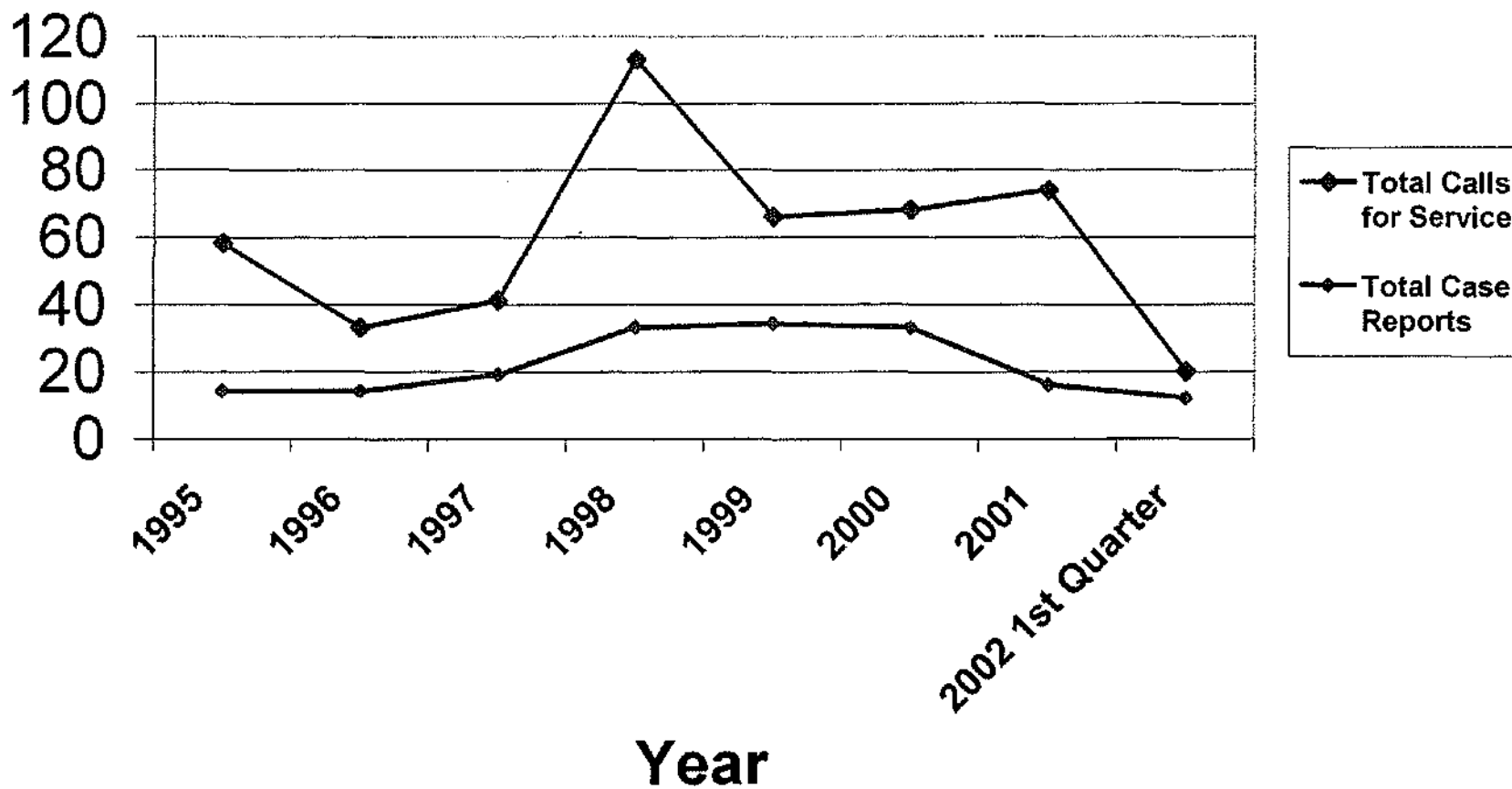


Figure 3

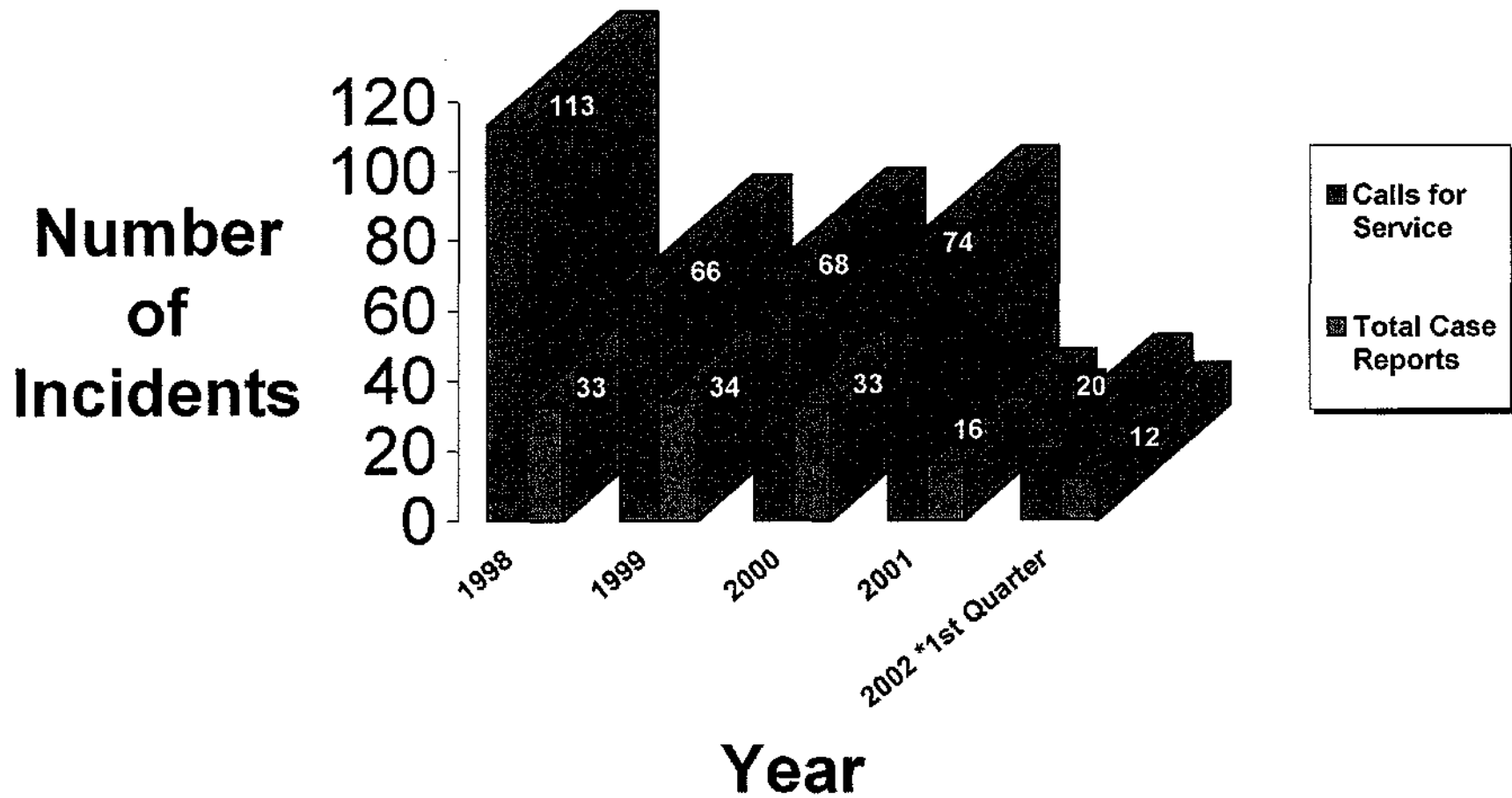


Deluxe Trailer Park 5260 S. Santa Fe Drive

Number of Incidents



Deluxe Trailer Park 5260 S. Santa Fe Drive



Deluxe Trailer Park 5260 S. Santa Fe Drive

