Problem Solving Quarterly

Tailor Tactics, Not Attitudes, to Poor Areas

By Deborah Lamm Weisel

Tactics, but not attitudes, of police should be adjusted to meet the needs of poor communities in the nation's cities, according to participants in the Police Executive Research Forum's Problem-Oriented Approach to Drug Enforcement project. At the project's management conference in Tampa, held June 5-7, police participants said the problems in poor communities are different from better-off areas of the city. Conference participants are applying principles of problem-oriented policing to drug-related problems in areas dominated by public housing communities.

Poor communities generally face higher crime rates, but statistically, crime in these areas is under-reported, which may result in inequitable allocation of staffing based on calls for service. In addition, residents of poor communities are often victims of fear of violent crime, which may serve to isolate residents from the rest of the community and the services needed. Those are the opinions of Lt. **Carolyn Robison** of the Tulsa Police Department, who served on a panel discussing the issue of policing poor areas.

Tailoring police services to address "problems," rather than geographic areas, better serves the needs of the entire city.

Lt. Robison said that tailoring police services to address "problems," rather than geographic areas or economic needs, better serves the needs of the entire city. **But** police should ensure that attitudes of officers are consistent despite any class or income variance of their service population.

The panel also discussed the issue of assigning black officers to poor black neighborhoods. Major **Julius Derico** of Atlanta cautioned police not to assume that because an officer is black that he or she came out of the projects. Officers participating in the project, particularly white officers in mostly black areas, feel that racial barriers can be overcome on a one-to-one basis.

Lt. Mike Hasson of Philadelphia said police often service poor areas differently. He noted that when community problems deteriorate, apparently beyond the bounds of social control, police have a tendency to retreat and just try to keep crime problems contained to a specific area. However, if police conduct their work from the perimeter of neighborhoods, crime problems will eventually begin to spill over into the surrounding **community.** Policing from the perimeter, project participants agreed, is reactive and incident-driven; thus police work will

only increase if problems are ignored or inadequately addressed.

Policing Poor Communities

The issue of policing poor communities was only one of a number of issues tackled by the 75 participants during the two-and-a-half day conference. Participants spent much of the conference relating problems being tackled by officers in each of the project cities—Atlanta, Tampa, Tulsa, San Diego, and Philadelphia. These case studies ranged from problems linked with abandoned autos and drug hot spots on street corners, to abandoned buildings used for drug sales and use, and physical conditions, such as lighting, roadways, and perimeter fencing that contribute to patterns of street-level dealing.

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Many of the problems identified by patrol officers are being addressed and brought to conclusion; a number of the problems addressed are being evaluated to measure the impact of responses implemented. The project, funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, is scheduled to run through September 1989.

An interim project report, **Taking a Problem-Oriented Approach to Drug Enforcement,** details the project's progress to date and is available from the Police Executive Research Forum which is administering the project. To obtain a copy of this free publication, please call (202) 466-7820.

PERF Offers Training in Problem-Oriented Policing

In February, PERF surveyed police agencies to determine their interest in training programs on problem-oriented policing. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents indicated they were interested.

Experience has shown that the successful implementation of a problem-oriented approach requires, at a minimum, both a level of instruction that reading material alone cannot provide and the full support and commitment of all members of the police department. Consequently, PERF has begun to develop training materials for police agencies that are committed to incorporating problem-oriented policing into their operations. Prior to each training program, the Forum will collect specific information about each participating department that can be integrated into the training program. This will allow the training sessions to be more relevant and realistic for training participants. A variety of training options will be made available to tailor the program to individual agency needs.

The training on problem-oriented policing will be valuable to elected officials, chiefs and command staff, mid-level managers, supervisors, training and support staff, officers and investigators. An introduction to problem-oriented policing will explore the current model of policing—its advantages and limitations. Forum trainers will then give an overview of the principles of the problem-oriented approach and how the approach differs from the way the police have traditionally operated. Cases studies of problem-solving approaches applied by other police agencies will be used to highlight the key elements of problem-oriented policing and to demonstrate how the approach can be used at the street, top, and intermediate levels in the department. Additionally, issues on implementing problem-oriented policing will be addressed. Alternative implementation plans, training needs, potential difficulties with implementation, and realistic timetables are among the areas that will be discussed.

PERF will consider working either with a single police agency or holding joint training programs for neighboring agencies.

If you have any questions about associated costs or training format and/or would like to begin planning a training program for your department, please call Michael Scott at (202) 466-7820.

Helpful Hints

Q. "How do you discourage negative peer pressure against officers who participate in problem-solving activities?"

A. "Improved evaluations and commendations for problem-solvers- nay-sayers will eventually get the message".

**Major Dave Been
Tulsa Police**
Department

A. "Hold supervisors accountable for having their officers use the problem-oriented approach to tackle neighborhood problems."

**Inspector
Ed McLaughlin
Philadelphia Police**
Department

Implementing Problem-Oriented Policing in Beloit

By Richard Thomas

After careful review of the existing police response system of the Beloit Police Department, police officials decided to introduce problem-oriented policing to the department, the community, and other human service agencies in the city. After eighteen months, problem solving has become the way of doing police work in the Beloit, Wisconsin, Police Department.

Why A Change

The change in the police delivery system was made as a result of actively listening to the officers and people within the community. An underlying theme always emerged — officers were apathetic about crime prevention and non-criminal justice problems. They felt hopeless in their attempts to provide police service. Over the years, they had adopted the "crime fighting philosophy" — a philosophy that was characterized by a police agency made up of a group of people organized and highly trained to respond in emergency situations. Further, the community had developed a poor self-image. Regardless of the crimes solved and the number of people arrested, the perception shared by the citizenry was a negative feeling about their community and their police department.

The concept and philosophy of problem-oriented policing was first studied by the executive managers of the police department. Discussion on the subject continued over a period of three months. In making a commitment to change the delivery system and integrate problem solving into the operations of the the department, a systematic process was designed.

The perception shared by the citizenry was a negative feeling about their community and their police department.

The following areas were addressed:

- **Education:** All managers and line officers were trained in the concept of problem-oriented policing. This involved a review of the available research, lectures at briefings and on-site visits at police departments that had tested the approach.
- **Field Work** A variety of projects were initiated by officers who used their imagination and creative thinking in resolving problems identified within certain neighborhoods. In addition, a change in the deployment system was initiated, whereby all officer assignments were extended to specific areas of the city. This was done to create officer beat integrity and to promote area responsibility.
- **Community Orientation:** Community leaders were briefed on the concept of a police agency using problem-solving techniques to resolve the root problems affecting crime. The local media were utilized in disseminating information about the concept to the general public.
- **Internal/External Support System: In** order to gather support and cooperation from other city agencies, a Problem Action Analysis Committee representing the various city depart-

ments was organized. This committee meets on a regular basis and reviews the projects that have been addressed using the problem-solving approach. Officers attend these meetings and participate by discussing specific strategies they have implemented to address particular problems in the community.

A Departmental Strategy

In implementing the problem-oriented approach in the police department, police officials made two operational decisions. First, problem-oriented policing would be integrated throughout the department. Second, the principles and practice of problem-solving would be introduced in various increments to allow sufficient opportunity for both the officers and the community to give feedback about the approach.

In Beloit, it has become obvious that people want to live with the assurance that they are safe in their neighborhoods. A police department can support the development of the community and enhance the quality of life by the way it delivers its product—human service delivery. With problem-oriented policing, there is new hope in the Beloit Police Department. There is enthusiasm, and there is confidence that problem-solving efforts will allow citizens to feel that their police department is an integral part of the community and is not a department that exists because it has been legislated to do so.

For more information, contact **Richard Thomas,** Deputy Chief of Police, Beloit, WI, (608) 364-6800.

(Beloit is located in the south central part of Wisconsin between Rockford, Illinois and Madison, Wisconsin. The police department has 70 sworn officers, 23 non-sworn, and 30 reserve officers. With a population of 35,000, the city has one of the highest crime rates per capita).

Crime Analysis in Support Of Problem Solving

Crime analysis units must redefine their missions and design new methods for assisting police officers if they are to fully contribute to problem-solving efforts. **Pat Drummy,** a crime analyst with the San Diego Police Department, and **Lt. Carolyn Robison,** of the Tulsa Police Department, discussed the changing requirements of crime analysis in their agencies at PERF's Problem-Oriented Approach to Drug Enforcement Management Conference in Tampa.

Traditional crime analysis can be divided into two types: operational crime analysis which draws on a variety of call and incident data to discern patterns of criminal activity for short term patrol officer deployment and detective investigations; and administrative crime analysis for allocating officers city wide, providing general statistical reports, and for special studies.

Officers do not draw on crime analysts' data systems frequently, choosing instead, to collect and analyze their own data.

Drummy and Robison agreed that while useful, operational crime analysis services do not fully contribute to problem solving. They noted that officers do not draw on crime analysts' data systems frequently, choosing instead, to collect and analyze their own data.

Crime analysis units, however, could play a much bigger and very important role in helping officers address problems.

At the assessment stage, crime analysis units should be able to give beat officers and their supervisors regular reports on calls-for-service patterns. These reports could identify locations with high call rates as well as describe characteristics of callers and locations that generate a disproportionate number of calls. In addition to flagging potential problems, crime analysis can aid officers by verifying the existence of problems initially identified by officers and others.

During the analysis stage, crime analysis units should be able to perform custom statistical operations to pinpoint the characteristics of actors associated with problems, problem locations, and police responses. Further, crime analysis units should be able to assist officers in preparing and analyzing special data collection efforts, such as citizen surveys.

A crime analysis unit could stimulate the outcomes of response options.

During the response stage, a crime analysis unit could simulate the outcomes of various response options. For example, if a new response for handling children found associated with drug dealing is being planned, the time needed to follow the procedures could be estimated and the impact on officers' workloads could be assessed. Or, in anticipation of possible displacement effects, the crime analysis unit could suggest locations where the problem would likely be displace.

During the assessment stage, the crime analysis unit could establish an evaluation design and performance measures to keep the problem-solvers and their supervisors abreast of their progress.

Removing Obstacles to Effective Problem-Solving

Crime analysis should also be able to give police managers details on the time officers are spending on various activities so managers can determine how many problems can be undertaken by officers. Problem-solving officers often ask supervisors to alter their work hours in order to facilitate problem-solving efforts, and supervisors can more easily work with the officers if they are aware of likely future workloads. Crime analysts could give supervisors this information.

In order to provide these services, crime analysis units will need to change in the following ways.

- Patrol officers, detectives, and supervisors must be seen as the primary customers of crime analysis supervisors. The performance of crime analysts must be judged on the basis of how well they serve their customers.

- Customers must be trained to make the best use of crime analysis services, as well as encouraged to use the services.

- Greater emphasis needs to be placed on creating unique, customer defined services, instead of generic routine reports.

- Crime analysts will have to broaden their skills to include many of the methodological techniques used by statisticians, economists, sociologists, demographers, and geographers.

  Crime analysts will need quick and easy access to automated data files of virtually all police records, as well as access to other local data bases such as

land use files, emergency medical calls, and so forth.

• Crime analysts should be able to help train others in the department in data collection and analysis methods and they should be available to collaborate with others in the design of special research projects associated with problem-solving efforts.

In short, crime analysis units should function in a manner that is analogous to a library or computer center of a university: they should provide the technical assistance and expertise to people who have substantive questions and are conducting the investigations.

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who's Who?

Problem-Oriented Approach to Drug Enforcement

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McLaughlin Gets Award

By Richard Shopes

Philadephia, PA — For Edward Mc-Laughlin, the difference between community service and traditional crime fighting is a philosophical one. This difference, he said, is evident in the officer's view as a public servant.

"If all you considered your job to be was to make arrests, if you considered yourself a law enforcement officer, then all you'd be concerned with is enforcing the law. And you do that to the best of your ability and go home at night thinking, `Well, I've done a good job for the people.'"

"The concept of public servant includes law enforcement. It includes crime fighter but it is not limited to either one of those things. So that what we have been doing traditionally is valid but limited," said McLaughlin.

McLaughlin is commander of the South Police Division of the Philadelphia Police Department. In May, he was awarded the Gary P. Hayes Memorial Award, a national distinction bestowed on a city or state law enforcement official who has made an innovative contribution to law enforcement. "Ed is an outstanding police officer, with his work in community policing and his history in the police department as a hard worker," said Darrel Stephens, executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum, which administers the award.

"There is no one on the police force who is more creative and innovative."

According to Marion Tasko, a community relations officer who worked in the 35th district, "There is no one on the police force who is more creative and innovative." McLaughlin not only came up with new programs, but he brought the commitment here to plot crimes.

According to Tasko, one program McLaughlin implemented actually reduced crime in the 35th District which is Philadelphia's most populous by more than 30 percent.

Tasko described a truancy problem and how it directly related to the levels of misdemeanor crimes in the the area. In 1983 McLaughlin had truant children picked up by officers and brought to the district's headquarters. There, the youth were held until either parents or school officials were able to pick them up. The program reduced daytime crime by 33 percent and in some cases reduced the number of truant youths.

"We picked up about 40 kids a day," Tasko said. "About 90 percent of the juveniles never showed up in the district again. The program was very successful."

Tasko added that despite its success, the project was short lived, surviving only two semesters because school administrators and the American Civil Liberties Union argued that the rights of the children were being violated.

Using Crime Bulletins
Another program McLaughlin began at the district depended on the use of "crime bulletins" or 24 hour police reports. Tasko explained that the bulletins, which indicated what crimes occurred and where they took place in a 24-hour period were compiled and filed at the district. He said that before the project started, the reports were organized in a way that neglected to pinpoint specific areas where crime patterns had developed. With the use of a computer, McLaughlin had the bulletins structured in a way that showed what crimes took place, where they occurred and whether

Partners Against Crime

By Mary Weathers and Major Steven Bishop

In early 1977, ten young women were murdered in Kansas City, MO. The murders were particularly brutal and went unsolved for several months. Many people felt the police department was not vigorously pursuing an arrest because nine of the victims were black. Enraged, several hundred concerned citizens joined together and met with members of the police department in November 1977. The heated, but constructive, meeting resulted in the organization of the Ad Hoc Group Against Crime. The first two efforts of the group, the Reward Fund Commission and the 24-Hour Secret Witness Hotline, proved to be beneficial. The police solved several of the murder cases from tips received through the hotline.

The Ad Hoc Group Against Crime is at the forefront, assisting police authorities and working with the community.

The Ad Hoc Group focuses on real issues and solutions to community problems. The mission of the group goes beyond providing passive community support for local law enforcement efforts. Helping people of different incomes, occupations, races and lifestyles to live together in a reasonable and peaceful fashion is the real core of its mission. By mobilizing the community in the fight against crime, the Ad Hoc Group has been able to make a difference in various neighborhoods in Kansas City.

It has become increasingly clear to the group that the police alone cannot rid communities of the crime and violence which threaten to turn tranquil neighborhoods into drug-infested, armed camps where violence is the rule. Thus, the Ad Hoc Group Against Crime, a grassroots organization, is at the forefront, assisting police authorities and working with the community to do something about escalating crime and violence.

The police were initially cautious in dealing with the Ad Hoc Group. Today, the Ad Hoc Group is highly regarded in Kansas City by the law enforcement community at the local, state and federal level. Initially, however, the Ad Hoc Group was confronted with distrust and not taken seriously by the police. The police department was unfamiliar with this type of community involvement. Further, the department, then, as many still do today, resisted any intervention from outsiders. Police officials became vehemently defensive whenever criticisms of police unresponsiveness surfaced.

A Partnership Develops

It was not until the appointment of **Larry J. Joiner** as chief of police in 1984, that the walls of suspicion and distrust began to be dismantled. Chief Joiner established as his number one priority a commitment to giving real meaning to the concept of police service. His message was clear. The police would work with the community to address community/crime problems. It wasn't until then that a positive and productive relationship blossomed between the department and the Ad Hoc Group Against Crime. It had taken several meetings, several years, and "attitude adjustments" on both sides before the spirit of unbridled cooperation emerged. But the years of hard work and patient determination by both groups have yielded a successful and effective model relationship between a police department and a community organization.

Using Volunteers

The group of volunteers who staff the Ad Hoc Group manage several programs designed to address crime problems in the community. The Interpersonal Violence Reduction project seeks to reduce violence by providing conflict resolution training to persons prone to violent confrontations; the Crisis Intervention project focuses on mediating disputes between high school youth and families. The Victim Support Committee offers support groups for relatives of homicide victims, and the Black Men Together project attempts to build pride and self-esteem among black male youths and improve the image of the black male through the use of successful black male role models. The two original programs, the Reward Fund Commission and the Secret Witness Hotline, are still in operation.

For additional information, contact Mary Weathers, Director, Ad Hoc Group Against Crime, at (816) 861-9100 or **Major Steven Bishop,** of the Kansas City Police Department, at (816) 234-5000.

Announcement

The Santa Ana Police Department has put together a very informative video tape on problem-oriented policing. Appropriately entitled, "Problem-Oriented Policing," the ten-minute video highlights key principles of the problem-oriented approach by describing problem-solving efforts of several Santa Ana officers. For more information about the video tape, contact **Sgt. Gary Adams,** Santa Ana Police Department, 24 Civic Center Plaza, P. O Box 1981, Santa Ana, CA, 92702..

Submissions

When submitting descriptions of problem-solving efforts for the newsletter, remember to consider the follwing questions:

- What is the problem?

- For whom is it a problem and how are they harmed? How did the problem come to yor attention?

- How has the department handled the problem in the past?

- What information did you collect about the problem?

- Where did you get the information?

- Did you have any difficulties in getting the information?

- Once you were clear about what the problem was, what was your goal?

- What strategies did you develop to reach your goal?

- What agencies assisted the police department in achieving the desired goal?

- Did you accomplish your goal? How do you know that your goal was accomplished?

- What would you recommend to other police agencies interested in implementing similar strategies to address similar problems?

- Did you have fun? (okay, you don't have to answer this one. I wouldn't want anyone to know that you actually had fun at work!!!)

A Plea For Help

By Nancy McPherson

During the past year, complaints about panhandlers and narcotic activity at the corner of Euclid and Imperial in the southeast area of San Diego increased dramatically. *The* corner is considered one of the busiest in the southeast, and the gas station-convenience store located at that intersection is the only such store in the area. Initially, patrol officers believed that the Iarge number of radio calls were a result of heavy pedestrian and vehicle traffic through the station and across the street where a liquor store sometimes attracted problem clientele.

Officer Gail Arcediano had worked the area for the past five years and had responded to many of those radio calls at the gas station during that time. Through responding to radio calls and talking with other police officers, she learned that many hours were spent handling the calls which usually netted no suspects and no evidence of illegal activity. Arcediano contacted the department's crime analysis unit to request a report of calls for service. She discovered that hundreds of radio calls in a one-month period had been dispatched to that location.

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During one particular day watch, Arcediano responded to a radio call of panhandlers at the station. The reporting party said the panhandlers were still on the premises and were harassing customers. When Arcediano arrived, the clerk said the panhandlers had just left the lot. The officer drove across the street to observe the store for a few minutes.

As the officer sat watching the activities at the gas station, a second radio call was dispatched reporting panhandlers harassing the customers at that same location. Arcediano had observed the gas station continuously since the first call came through and had not seen any panhandlers. Arcediano drove across the street to confront the manager.

A Case of Fear

In her discussion with the manager, the officer discovered that the clerks were afraid of the clientele and thought if the police were called on a regular basis, the owner might be compelled to hire full-time security guards. Arcediano explained the consequences for initiating false calls and told the manager that the police would not be part of any scheme to manipulate the owner. She encouraged the manager to speak with the owner about the fears, but to call for police assistance only when it was really needed.

The radio calls decreased almost immediately to a few calls a week. When she is doing routine patrol, Arcediano stops by the store to check on the clerks.

For more information, contact Officer Gail Arcediano, San Diego Police Department at (619) 236-6816.

patterns had developed.

And for the first time, the bulletins were available to officers on the beat to show them what occurred in their patrol area during the past 24 hours.

District supervisors could produce their own district-based drug forces which would be available on an immediate basis.

This program was one of McLaughlin's earliest efforts at a project known as "decentralization," which is currently underway at South Police Division. The program, which is in the pilot stages, places more investigatory control into the hands of district officers and supervisors.

In South Division which includes South Philadelphia's four police districts, decentralization began shortly after the inspector arrived in November 1986.

McLaughlin explained that the advantage of decentralization rests in its access to resources. If, for example, a drug bust required additional narcotics officers, district supervisors wouldn't have to request help from the centrally-administered narcotics unit which customarily handled all drug operations in Philadelphia. District supervisors could produce their own district-based drug forces which would be available on an immediate basis.

He added that another benefit to decentralization was that officers, who were more familiar with the area than central administrators, could easily establish contacts, and were more flexible.

"I don't issue divisional orders to make everybody in the division do the same thing. The captains don't issue the districts orders if they realize that there is a special problem in a certain area that needs some special attention or some customized type of policing. What we are focusing on are the individual needs of the community."

And while McLaughlin contended that, overall, decentralization worked and was based largely on community input, he added that in recent years there have been problems getting the community involved.

(Excerpted with permission from the **Review Chronicle,** May 25, 1989. Richard Shopes is a Chronical staff writer.)