

Open-Air Drug Markets: Analyzing the Details and Closing off Opportunities



Four Step Response to Open-Air Drug Dealing

- Get to know your local drug markets
 - Cincinnati, OH - analysis
 - San Diego, CA - response
- Collect baseline data
 - Suggestions for measuring what we can't always see
- Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy
 - Combine location specific data and crime prevention principles to create a framework
- Measure your impact
 - Pitfalls of analysis

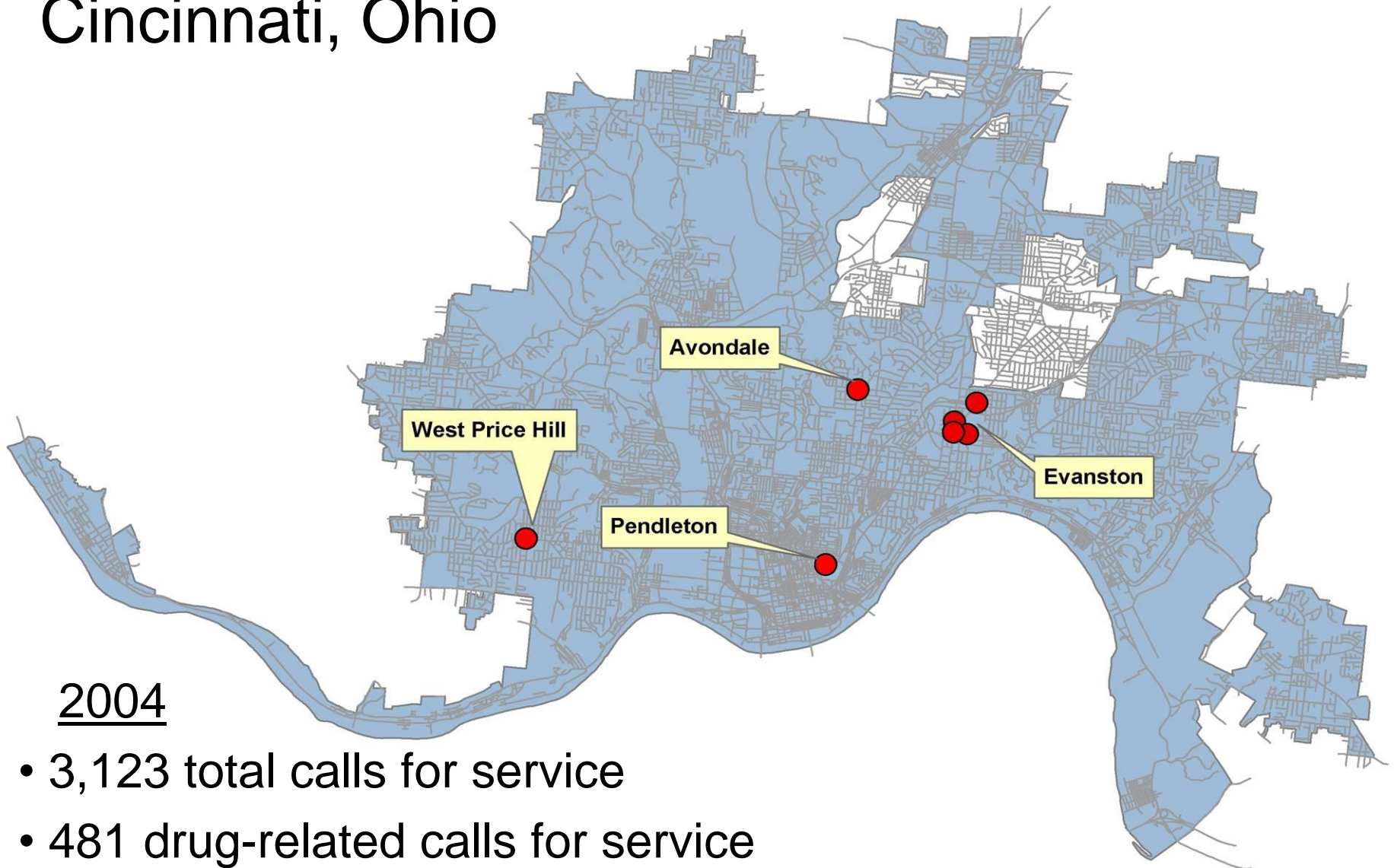


Step 1:

Getting to know your markets

- Do you know...
 - the number of active markets, their respective locations, and what drugs are being sold?
 - where the buyers and sellers are coming from?
 - what social and environmental characteristics are helping to facilitate these markets?
 - what interventions have been used in the past and the outcome of these efforts?

Open-Air Drug Market Locations Cincinnati, Ohio



2004

- 3,123 total calls for service
- 481 drug-related calls for service
 - Neighborhood crime statistics driven by drug markets

Analysis of Cincinnati Drug Markets

Police data, Observations, Interviews, Spatial Analysis

Similarities Across Drug Markets

1. Type of drugs and price

Crack, marijuana, heroin – Price varies based on race of buyer

2. Time of market activity

Early afternoon through evening – 1st & 15th of the month – Seasonal effects

3. Territoriality

Stable groups maintain markets – Conflicts = street violence

4. Lookout & communication networks

Live close – Two-way radios – Lookouts – Police scanners – Demographics

5. Street configurations

Major thoroughfares – Interstate on/off-ramps

6. Convenience stores

Facilitate drug dealing

Local Convenience Stores As Facilitators



- Solicit legitimate store customers
- Provide a “cover” to explain loitering
- Provide food and shelter for dealers/lookouts
- Sell paraphernalia used to smoke crack

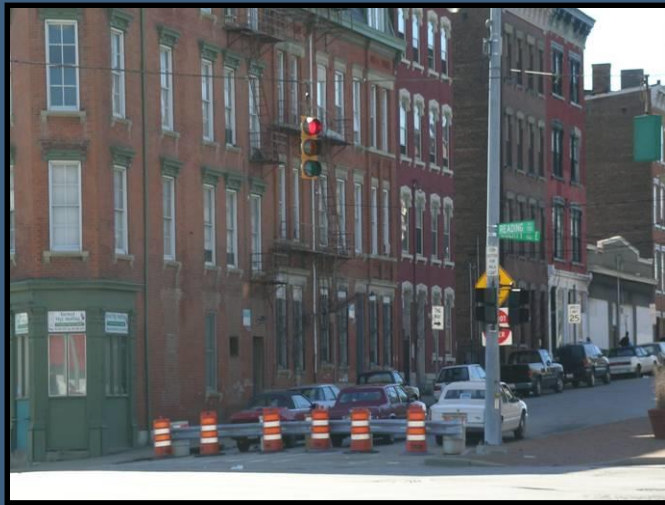


Weaknesses of previous responses

- Use of discrete interventions
 - Likely to lead to displacement
- Lack of evaluations
- Little communication and coordination
- Sustainability issues
- Anticipation of crime displacement
 - Ex: Pendleton barricade project

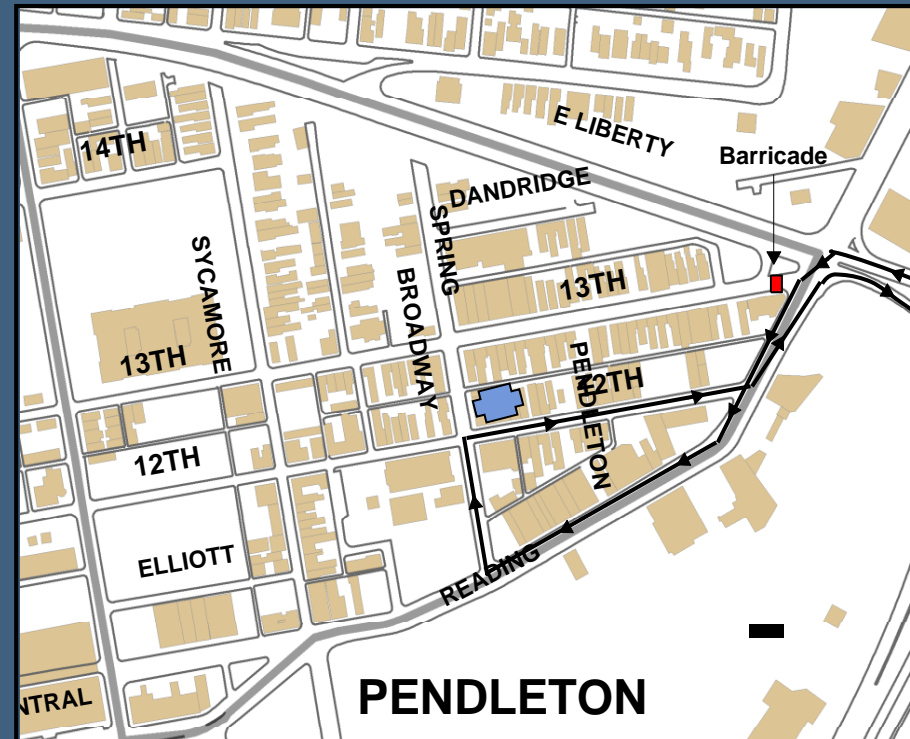
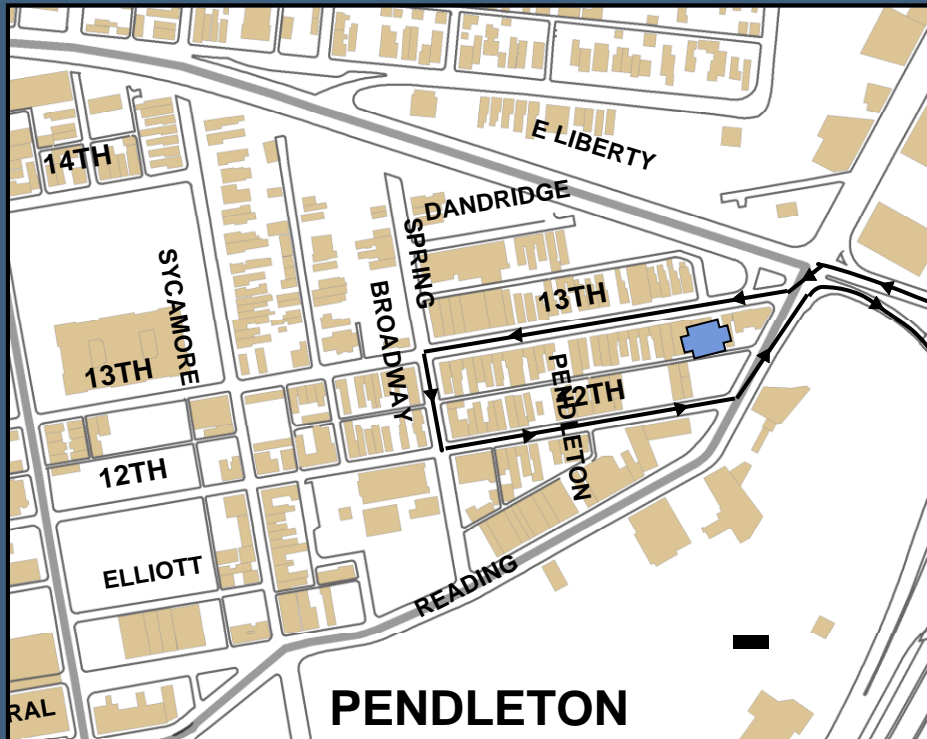


Discrete Responses: Displacement



Pre-Barricade

Post-Barricade



Step 2:

Gather baseline data for post-intervention evaluations

- Which criterion will you use to determine the effectiveness of your responses?
 - Calls for service, reported crimes
 - Measure of community responsiveness
 - Arrests
 - Measure of police activity
- Using alternative indicators of drug activity
- Must also gather baseline data in surrounding areas (where displacement is likely to occur)

Step 3:

Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy

Recognize characteristics of successful approaches used in other cities

1. Long-term commitment
2. Measurable objectives
3. Comprehensive strategies
 - Partnerships with multiple organizations
4. Accountability
5. Publicity
6. Ongoing evaluations
7. Strategy maintenance

Designing a “comprehensive” strategy

What does this mean?

- Do NOT implement an exact replication of a successful program used elsewhere
 - Use information gathered from drug market analyses
 - Understand existing opportunity structures
 - Identify intervention options
 - Select promising interventions using crime prevention theory and frameworks
 - Recognize the five dimensions of criminal opportunity

Potential Interventions

48 interventions

13 partnerships

(enforcement is only part of the solution)

Law enforcement activities

1. High visibility patrol surveillance or saturation
2. Zero-tolerance enforcement
3. Create a public hotline to report drug activity
4. Juvenile curfew sweeps
5. Driver license checkpoints
6. Establish police command posts near existing markets
7. Consistently fill out field interrogation cards
8. Buy/Bust – Drug sweeps
9. Target high-level dealers/distributors
10. Apply asset forfeiture laws against dealers/buyers
11. Mail postcard warnings
12. Build a comprehensive city-wide database

Environmental modifications

13. Install CCTV cameras
14. Increase lighting
15. Post “No Loitering”/ “No Trespassing” signs
16. Put up “Scarecrows”
17. Address vacant/dilapidated buildings
18. Limit access routes

Court/prosecution partnerships

19. Restrict prosecution to habitual offenders
20. Request particular sentences for dealers/buyers
21. Vertical prosecution

22. Enforce eviction law associated with drug dealing
23. Apply nuisance abatement laws
24. Property owners sign trespassing waiver

Probation/Parole partnerships

25. Work closely with probation/parole

Other city agency partnerships

26. Conduct street clean-ups
27. Request Certified Emergency Response Team (CERT) intervention
28. Remove indicators of drug distribution
29. Remove environmental features that facilitate dealing

Property owners/landlord partnerships

30. Inform property owners/landlords of crimes committed on their properties
31. Ask nearby apartment owners to share tenant information
32. Notify landlords of broken locks on exterior gates/doors
33. Remove visual obstructions from store windows
34. Stop stores from selling drug paraphernalia

Victim resource center partnerships

35. Advertise victim resources

Beautification organization partnerships

36. Sponsor neighborhood beautification efforts

Community partnerships

37. Establish citizen patrols
38. Offer an “Adopt-A-Block” program
39. Conduct neighborhood “Smoke Outs”
40. Organize block watches

Local church partnerships

41. Sponsor outdoor church activities

Cincinnati Recreation Commission partnership

42. Sponsor Cincinnati Recreation Commission activities

Media partnerships

43. Create a media campaign
44. Publish dealers/buyers names and photographs in local papers
45. Advertise drug treatment resources
46. Monitor hospitals and publicize overdoses
47. Advertise local job fairs

University of Cincinnati partnership

48. Conduct an on-going evaluation of the operation

Selecting Interventions: Forming a “comprehensive” strategy

Criminal Opportunity Theory Framework

- Crime can be prevented by altering the 5 dimensions of opportunity that influence offender decision-making

Effort	Risk	Reward	Provocation	Excuses
---------------	-------------	---------------	--------------------	----------------

- Integrate the characteristics of YOUR drug markets

	EFFORT	RISK	REWARD	PROVOCATION	EXCUSES
DEALERS/ LOOKOUTS		High visibility patrol	Buy/Bust operations		Provide job placement services
BUYERS	Remove paraphernalia from stores			Publicize drug overdoses	Free drug treatment
ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITATORS	Limit access routes	Nuisance abatement against owners			NO LOITERING signs

Step 4: Measure your impact

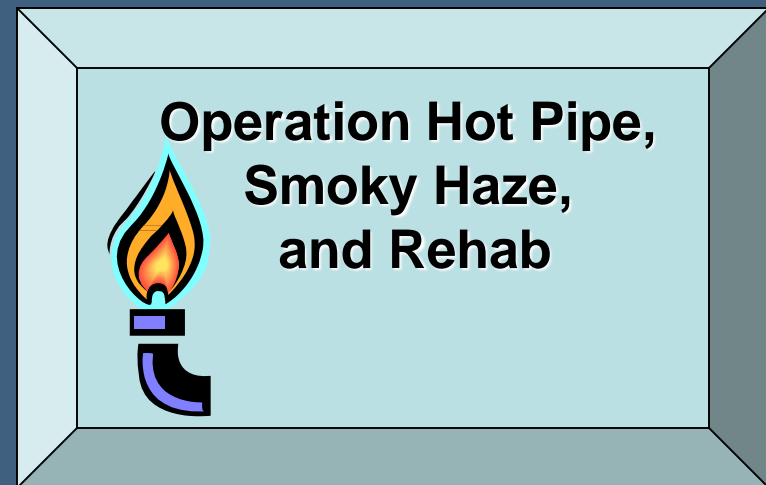
- Gather data on an on-going basis
 - Inform strategy maintenance activities
- Look for evidence of unintended effects
 - Increased violence
 - Displacement
 - Diffusion of benefits
 - Incorporate spatial analysis
- For departments without (or with overworked) crime analysts
 - Consider partnership with local universities
- Share your successes! (And failures)

Evidence of Spatial Displacement



Responding to Open-Air Drug Markets: San Diego, California

- Tailoring your response to local analysis



- Stress importance of...
 - Gathering several sources of data
 - Community partnerships
 - Attacking more than one dimension of open-air markets

Drug Trafficking



Remember what's important!

Viewed as a Business Function

Police T-Shirt Business

- \$100,000 to invest in a start-up company.
 - ROI important to me
 - Tried and true...shown success in the past
- Any one have an idea? Justice T's...
- Lets put a business plan together:
 - What are the basic elements we need to cover in this plan?
- How is a drug business similar and dissimilar?

Business Essentials

What are the basic elements?

Which of these is most important? Vulnerable?

- Customers?
- Marketing plan?
- Location?
- Product?
- Security?
- Production Process?
- Investments?

Skyline and Meadowbrook

- Entrenched Eastside Piru gang area with rampant drug sales 50-75 fellows hanging out, flying colors
- Fearful and timid population
- Community could not use corner market without risk of violent crime
- Many sympathizers in community

Analysis of Problem

- Survey of residents (75 door to door)
 - Drug hiding spots (rips)
 - Primary players
 - Violent players
 - Logistical support (Store)
 - Environment belonged to ESP, not community
 - Actions consistent with survey
 - One person termed it a form of slavery

Skyline Solution

- Operation Red Rag
 - 75 UC buys all plead guilty
 - African American Community took on the store owners (During Gulf war 1)
 - Community (Diverse) filled void of left by arrests immediately
 - Positive steps to re-construct neighborhood as safe...
 - One termed it as the emancipation of proclamation for Skyline community

Results

- Store followed the lead of influential community members...so did politicians
- Patrol enforced the no gang indicia rule
- Community members cleaned the 40oz bottles from the empty lot
- Violent crime decreased 85% over same time last year
- Drug sales difficult and rare

Operation Hot Pipe, Smokey Haze and Rehab

- Entrenched drug sales at 3800 University
- Associated violence over turf control
- Decay of neighborhood due to drug sales and wrecked lives

Analysis of Problem

- 20 year history
- Facilitation through smokers, no d2c transactions...all the facilitators were smokers chipping off a nickel for themselves (narc team, arrest reports)
- One on one interviews with dealers (VIP)
- Mass survey with community members (cops hate doing this)

Analysis Continued

- Debriefing all arrested persons in area
- One on one conversations with business owners

Lessons

- The Wal-Mart of drug dealing had taken over the neighborhood
- Community members afraid to walk the streets and hear “are you looking?”
- Violence – street robberies – were frequent
- Narco was not getting to most of the dealers...

Lessons

- Dealers had a specific marketing plan
 - Free for first week to create a frenzy
 - Prostitutes were used in marketing plan...
 - Set the atmosphere of a free for all
 - Three types of buyers drove profitability
 - Addicts needed no marketing
 - Users liked easy access to community
 - Weekend partiers needed marketing and word of mouth (guerilla) marketing to be attracted to location, liked anonymity

Plan of Attack

- Operation HOT PIPE
 - Make the neighborhood too hot to handle for facilitators. Arrest them for anything and everything and tell them why...They got it about the 3rd arrest
- Smokey Haze
 - Market to Weekenders and occasional users that jail and “Bubba” were waiting for them...
 - Create confusion about police activity leak sweeps, and then follow through...then leak but no follow through.
- Rehab
 - Users and community to come out and patronize the businesses

What's the Point?

- Drug sales is a business
- They need profitability
- They need all the basic elements of a business
- Destroying the business opportunity is a relevant strategy
- Each project still took enforcement along with other options!

Contact Information

Tamara D. Madensen, M.A.

University of Cincinnati
Division of Criminal Justice

P.O. Box 210389
Cincinnati, OH 45220

513-556-0856
513-556-2037 (fax)

Tamara.Madensen@uc.edu

Sergeant Andy Mills

San Diego Police Department
Gang Unit
MS786

1401 Broadway
San Diego, CA 92101

619-990-5178 cell
619-531-2346 desk

amills1@pd.sandiego.gov

Related reports: www.uc.edu/OSCOR

COPS guides on open-air drug dealing: www.popcenter.org