

Avondale Crime Reduction Project

Submitted to Councilman David Pepper
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Ohio Service for Crime Opportunity Reduction

Division of Criminal Justice
University of Cincinnati
PO Box 210389
Cincinnati, Ohio 45221-0389
Phone: 513/556-0856
Fax: 513/556-2037
www.uc.edu/OSCOR

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Avondale Crime Reduction Project

Tamara D. Madensen, M.A.
Project Director

Marie K. Skubak, M.S.
Research Associate

Darwin G. Morgan, M.A.
Research Assistant

John E. Eck., Ph.D.
Co-Principal Investigator

PROJECT CONSULTANTS

Bonnie S. Fisher, Ph.D.
Co-Principal Investigator

Michael L. Benson, Ph.D.
Senior Faculty Researcher

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INTRODUCTION

The findings presented in this report are part of a series of five hot spot analyses conducted throughout the City of Cincinnati beginning September, 2004 and ending June, 2005. This project is the result of a partnership formed between Cincinnati City Council Member David Pepper, the Cincinnati Police Department, and the Ohio Service for Crime Opportunity Reduction (OSCOR). This partnership was formed in an effort to identify high-crime locations in Cincinnati, conduct detailed analyses of the areas, and determine what types of interventions will most likely reduce levels of criminal activity at these locations.

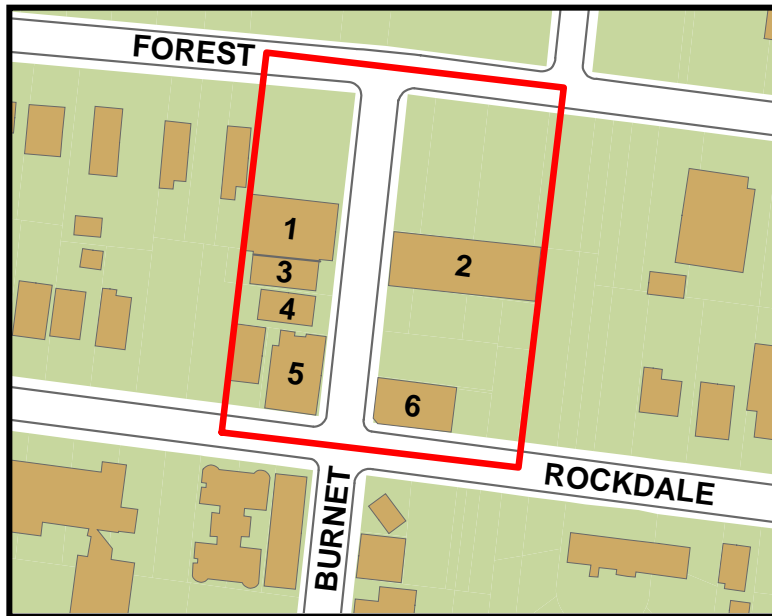
The findings of the analysis conducted in police reporting area 374, located in the Avondale neighborhood, are presented in the current report.¹ In particular, a detailed analysis of an open-air drug market located on the 3500 block of Burnet Avenue is provided. The report is divided into five major sections. First, the location of the drug market is described. Second, crime statistics for the area are provided. Third, a detailed description of the drug market is given along with descriptions of current, planned, and previously implemented strategies. Fourth, potential interventions are suggested based on the information gathered. Fifth, suggestions are provided for evaluating the impact of the proposed strategies.

PROBLEM LOCATION

The 3500 block of Burnet Avenue is located between the Burnet and Forest intersection and the Burnet and Rockdale intersection in Avondale (see Figure 1). This block is located in District 4 and bordered by police reporting areas 374, 370, and 369. The area is zoned for both residential and commercial land use.

¹ For information concerning the methodology used in this investigation, see Appendix C.

FIGURE 1. 3500 BLOCK OF BURNET AVENUE



1. 3515 Burnet Avenue – Mike’s J&W Super Market
2. 3520 Burnet Avenue – Laundromat, Police sub-station, Avondale Pride Center
3. 3509 Burnet Avenue – Vacant residence
4. 3505 Burnet Avenue – Residence
5. 3501 Burnet Avenue – Business/Residence
6. 3500 Burnet Avenue – Vacant business

The northwest end of the block is occupied by Mike’s J&W Super Market, a small convenience store that caters to the local community. The northeast corner is occupied by a small string of storefronts. There is currently a laundromat, an unused police substation, and the Avondale Pride Center at this location. There is a building at the southwest corner of the block that houses a few small businesses (i.e., a hair salon and barber shop) with apartments directly above these businesses. There is a vacant business located at the southeast corner that was most recently occupied by a small restaurant called Jimmy Jams Wings ‘n Things. Between these corners, there are two multi-family residences on the west side and an empty lot on the east side of the block. One residence is occupied while the other appears abandoned with boards covering many of the broken windows. Photographs of the parcels identified in Figure 1 can be found in Appendix A.

CRIME STATISTICS

Addresses along the 3500 block of Burnet Avenue and the adjacent intersections consistently rank as locations that produce the highest levels of disorder, drug activity, violence, and Part 1 crimes in District 4.² In 2004, this block produced 707 calls for service. A density map of calls for service in the surrounding Avondale area clearly shows the highest concentration of criminal activity is located on this block (see Appendix B).

Table 1 provides a breakdown of 2004 calls for service by crime type.³ The statistics indicate that significant amounts of violence, disorder, drug activity, and displays of weapons have been reported to police over the past year. The numbers for property crimes appear lower, but still represent a substantial amount of crime when concentrated along a single block. Tables 2 and 3 represent Part 1 and Part 2 crimes that were substantiated by police and have been recorded in official police statistics.

TABLE 1. 2004 CALLS FOR SERVICE FROM 3500 BLOCK OF BURNET AVENUE⁴

Call Type	(N)	Call Type	(N)
<i>Violent activity</i>		<i>Disorder Calls</i>	
Assault ⁵	26	Disorderly group of 4 or more ⁶	16
Fight	38	Disorderly persons	54
Menacing	15	Suspicious activity	51
Robbery	8	<i>Drug/Weapon Calls</i>	
Person shot	8	Drug use or sale	52
Shots fired	15	Person with weapon	37
<i>Property Crimes</i>			
Auto Theft	13		
Burglary	8		
Theft	18		

² See Cincinnati Police Department's CinSite on the web at

http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/police/downloads/police_pdf5296.pdf.

³ Not all crimes are represented in this table. Crimes that are not related to street activity (e.g., family disputes, domestic violence, animal and noise complaints, etc.) were excluded.

⁴ This breakdown includes calls for service from 3495 Burnet Avenue, since calls to the intersection of Rockdale and Burnet may be recorded using this address.

⁵ Includes reports of persons cut and violent mentally ill individuals

⁶ Includes complaints of disorderly juveniles

TABLE 2. 2004 PART 1 CRIMES ON 3500 BLOCK OF BURNET AVENUE

Call Type	(N)	Call Type	(N)
Robbery	15	Theft	9
Burglary/B&E	2	Auto Theft	3
Felonious Assault	6		

TABLE 3. 2004 PART 2 CRIMES ON 3500 BLOCK OF BURNET AVENUE

Call Type	(N)	Call Type	(N)
Aggravated Menacing	4	Criminal Damaging/ Endangering	8
Assault	14		

PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

Drug dealing has been identified as the most serious problem in this area. Both qualitative and quantitative data suggest that the largest open-air drug market in Avondale is located along the 3500 block of Burnet Avenue. Most of the street crime that occurs on this block appears to be directly associated with drug dealing and the subsequent loitering that stems from this activity.⁷

The details of this market are described below. First, the specifics of how and when the drug transactions take place are described. Second, demographics of both dealers and buyers are provided. Third, characteristics of the environment that contribute to this problem are discussed. Finally, some of the interventions previously implemented in this location are briefly described.

TRANSACTIONS

Marijuana and crack cocaine can be easily purchased in this area.⁸ Most of the transactions are conducted through “drive ups.” However, some drugs are exchanged through

⁷ Detailed data concerning criminal activity on the 3500 block of Burnet Avenue were obtained using multiple data collection techniques. These techniques and a list of key contacts used to obtain these data are covered in Appendix C.

⁸ There is some evidence to suggest that heroin is also being sold in this location, although not as often.

foot traffic as well. It appears that buyers and dealers make contact based on the behavior of the buyer. Interested buyers slow down as they drive by to catch the attention of dealers. Most drug purchases take place on the side of the road (see Photo 1) or after the buyer pulls into one of the parking lots at the northern end of the block (see Photo 2). Dealers walk up to the cars to determine what drugs are wanted by the buyers and to make the transactions.

PHOTO 1: CARS STOPPED ALONG 3500 BLOCK BURNET AVENUE



PHOTO 2: PARKING LOTS AT THE NORTHERN END OF BURNET AVENUE



Drug activity at this location typically begins around noon and continues into the early morning hours. When the weather is warm, the market becomes more active and the drug dealing

and loitering continue throughout the night. Sometimes violence results from territorial disputes between dealers. However, this is not common since dealers are hesitant to attract police attention. There have been occasional reports of dealers assaulting buyers who owe them money.

Street level dealers rarely carry large amounts of drugs on their persons. Larger quantities of drugs are hidden in a nearby location or are carried by another individual who does not directly conduct the transactions. The dealers use pre-pay minute cell phones to communicate with one another. According to police, this type of phone is more difficult to trace than standard cell phones. Dealers also use “lookouts,” or individuals who warn them of police presence or help locate buyers. Dealers and their lookouts are discussed further below.

DEALERS/LOOKOUTS

Police officers are familiar with most of the dealers in the area. While new dealers are not uncommon, there is a stable group of individuals who continually engage in street-level dealing. Loosely formed groups of young males, who adopt gang-style names, will “run” particular blocks. The majority of street dealers in these groups are African-American. They range in age from 14 to mid-20s and most live in the Avondale area.

There are at least three types of lookouts that assist dealers on this block. First, there are younger neighborhood residents who look up to, or are related to, the dealers. These are usually children who are 10 to 11 years of age. Second, the girlfriends of the dealers loiter and act as lookouts. Third, drug users act as lookouts in exchange for small quantities of drugs.

BUYERS

There is no single description of drug buyers in this area. The buyers who frequent this market come from Avondale and other Cincinnati neighborhoods, but some buyers also come from Kentucky. The buyers are racially and economically mixed. They also vary in age.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITATORS

There are at least two environmental features that act to facilitate drug activity in this location: (1) access and (2) lack of place management. With respect to access, the officers interviewed maintain that it is very easy to loop around this location. This creates an attractive environment for “drive-thru” drug transactions. While access is an important component, this alone is not enough to support the existing drug market. The most significant facilitator appears to be the overwhelming lack of effective place management.

There are only two homes located on the west side of the 3500 block of Burnet Avenue and only one is occupied. Officers have noted that the few residents on this block and others in the area are afraid to report dealing or get involved in efforts to curb drug activity because they fear retaliation from the dealers. Therefore, there is little to no informal control exercised on this block, and this allows dealers, lookouts, and buyers to loiter in the area.

There was a restaurant at the southeast end of the block, but this closed down relatively quickly. While it appears as though the same individuals have owned this building since at least 1985,⁹ there have been multiple businesses that have leased the building and all have closed down in a relatively short period of time. The hair salon and barber shop located across the street on the southwest corner of the block could potentially provide some level of place management, but seem to be ineffective (see Photo 1 for examples of people loitering outside this building).

⁹ See the county auditor’s website at: <http://www.hamiltoncountyauditor.org/REALESTATE>

This could be due to the limited view of the street provided by the small windows of the businesses that are at least partially obstructed by signs and window paintings.

In contrast, there is a significant amount of place management that occurs within the laundromat located at the northeast end of the block. The owner has been very cooperative with police. There is always a manager on the premises during business hours. Individuals who are not using the laundry machines are asked to leave. If they refuse, the police are immediately notified. The facility is clean and well lit (see Photo 3). Unfortunately, this place management does not extend into the parking lot (possibly because it is shared) and individuals often loiter and deal/purchase drugs at this location.

PHOTO 3. INTERIOR OF SUPER SUDS COIN LAUNDRY



Mike's J&W Super Market located at the northwest corner of the block was consistently identified as a problem location by each of the individuals interviewed. According to police, the owner was uncooperative in the past. Dealers would often hide their drugs in the store and exit through a back door when police approached the location. This door has since been secured and the relationship between the owner and police has reportedly improved. However, individuals

continue to loiter in front of the business and police claim the owner does not call to report them as trespassers.

PRIOR, CURRENT, AND PLANNED INTERVENTIONS

Several attempts have been made to reduce drug dealing, disorder, and violent activity in this area. These interventions are listed below. There have not been evaluations conducted concerning the effectiveness of these strategies, but anecdotal accounts concerning the impact of the individual strategies are given whenever possible.

1. Attempts to Restrict Activity at Mike's J&W Super Market – The owner's liquor license has been revoked in the past but now the owner is permitted to sell beer. Authorities have also conducted both health and fire inspections. Although the exact dates and results of these inspections are unclear, the owner appears to be more cooperative with police. Dealers can no longer exit through the back door of the market.
2. Officer Detail at Mike's J&W Super Market – According to police, the owner asked for assistance when the presence of the dealers began to affect sales. The owner hired officers to work detail at the store and this caused the dealers to stop congregating near the store. However, once the problem declined, the owner stopped hiring officers to work details and the dealers returned.
3. Eviction Laws – Police claim to work with landlords to gather information on suspects to evict "problem" residents. Although it is clear that this strategy is not frequently used, a

recent eviction of a young woman who let dealers hide from police in her apartment was noted.

4. *School Zone Zero-Tolerance Policy* – The neighborhood officers suggested that a zero-tolerance policy would soon be put into effect since Rockdale elementary school has moved closer to Burnet Avenue. However, several months later, this has not been implemented and there does not appear to be plans to implement this strategy in the near future.

5. *Violent Crime Task Force (district-wide) and Street Corner Unit (city-wide) Activity* – Police claim that the Violent Crime Task Force is very active at this location and the Street Corner Unit also works in this area on occasion. Some officers prefer to let the Violent Crime Task Force make arrests since they have better intelligence and can arrest dealers with larger quantities of drugs. Attempts to learn more about the activities of the Violent Crime Task Force proved unsuccessful. The majority of their activities are kept confidential.

6. *CCTV Cameras* – Two CCTV cameras are operating on the 3500 block of Burnet Avenue. The video feeds are visible in the District 4 Substation. These cameras can be set to observe a single location or they can be programmed to rotate and scan the area. Some officers claimed the cameras are useful but limited, since it is hard to distinguish people unless they are wearing something that stands out or have a unique body type. The level of detail may be compromised since they are located high above the street on utility poles and the cameras are set at a downward angle.

7. Avondale Redevelopment Strategy – Avondale is conducting a redevelopment strategy.

Phase 1 consists of building single family homes to spur ownership. However, this strategy does not directly affect the 3500 block of Burnet Avenue.

POTENTIAL INTERVENTIONS

A comprehensive literature search was conducted to compile a list of interventions used to address open-air drug markets. The results of the search are presented in this section. Most experts agree that successful crime reduction strategies are not based on a single intervention and do not rely on arrests as the sole or principle method of solving drug-related problems. An effective strategy will consist of several interventions, implemented simultaneously or in well-timed succession, that focus on various dimensions of the problem. Furthermore, police cannot be expected to disrupt these markets alone. Partnerships with community members/leaders, city/county agencies, and various local organizations are necessary to achieve a sustained reduction in drug-related activity.

Table 4 provides a list of 48 potential interventions that could be used in combination to disrupt the open-air drug markets in Cincinnati. Careful analysis of each drug market, like the descriptions provided in the previous section, will help to determine which combinations of site-specific interventions should be implemented. However, many of the interventions suggested can be implemented at the city-level. The interventions are listed under the agency or organization most likely to implement or design the intervention.¹⁰ Each intervention is described in greater detail below.

¹⁰ The exception to this rule is the list of environmental modifications.

TABLE 4. POTENTIAL INTERVENTIONS

<p><u>Law enforcement activities</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 22. Enforce eviction law associated with drug dealing 23. Apply nuisance abatement laws 24. Property owners sign trespassing waiver 	<p><u>Beautification organization partnerships</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 36. Sponsor neighborhood beautification efforts
<p><u>Environmental modifications</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<p><u>Probation/Parole partnerships</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 25. Work closely with probation/parole 	<p><u>Community partnerships</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 37. Establish citizen patrols 38. Offer an “Adopt-A-Block” program 39. Conduct neighborhood “Smoke Outs” 40. Organize block watches
<p><u>Court/Prosecution partnerships</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 19. Restrict prosecution to habitual offenders 20. Request particular sentences for dealers/buyers 21. Vertical prosecution 	<p><u>Other city agency partnerships</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<p><u>Local church partnerships</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 41. Sponsor outdoor church activities
	<p><u>Property owners/landlord partnerships</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<p><u>Cincinnati Recreation Commission partnership</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 42. Sponsor Cincinnati Recreation Commission activities
	<p><u>Victim resource center partnerships</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 35. Advertise victim resources 	<p><u>Media partnerships</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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
		<p><u>University of Cincinnati partnership</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 48. Conduct an on-going evaluation of the operation

Law enforcement activities

1. High visibility patrol surveillance or saturation
 - Often referred to as low-level enforcement, this intervention will most likely produce the strongest immediate impact. Using this intervention can help “jump

start” a comprehensive strategy. However, the impact is likely to be short-term due to resource limitations and the inability to sustain this response for long periods of time. Various types of patrols should be considered (car, foot, bike, horse, etc.).

2. Zero-tolerance enforcement

- Police can deter buyers and dealers by strictly enforcing all existing statutes in and around the drug markets. For example, police may enforce anti-loitering laws, tow vehicles with expired plates, and ticket all traffic infractions. This strategy must be used with caution since citizens may view this as police harassment. Over-zealous enforcement can bring negative publicity to the city and police department.

3. Create a public hotline to report drug activity

- This hotline should be used only to report local drug activity. Rapid police response should follow each call. Anonymity should be offered. This line can also be used for long-term intelligence gathering. CPD currently has a “Gang Tip Hotline” (513-721-4264) that could be used for this purpose. A webpage that allows residents to submit information anonymously could also be useful.

4. Juvenile curfew sweeps

- This increases the risks for juveniles who participate in dealing after hours. It also removes juveniles from the streets and limits their likelihood of victimization. Officers in West Price Hill reported some success when using this enforcement tactic.

5. Driver license checkpoints

- This is most effective when conducted at arterial routes into the neighborhoods when the drug markets are busiest. This can discourage buyers from entering the area and reduce unnecessary traffic.

6. Establish police command posts near existing markets

- Some departments across the U.S. have established command posts in storefronts (e.g., police substations); others have used mobile trailers. This is used to provide a visible deterrent while improving relations with the community. However, it would be impossible to establish a command post where each market exists. Still, there are existing substations (i.e., in Avondale and Evanston) that are currently unoccupied and could be used while coordinating the implementation of other intervention strategies.

7. Consistently fill out field interrogation cards

- This can be used to track the movement (and residence) of buyers and dealers. Information obtained from these cards can also be used in subsequent analyses and evaluations.

8. Buy/Bust – Drug sweeps

- Like patrol saturation, this can help disrupt the market initially. It can also be used to gather intelligence and secure informants. However, this should not be relied on as a long-term prevention effort. These undercover efforts become more difficult as dealers are driven indoors and become more suspicious of unknown buyers.

9. Target high-level dealers/distributors

- This appears to be the function of the existing street corner units/ Violent Crime Task Force (VCTF) teams. This is an important complement to any low-level enforcement effort. By reducing the supply of drugs for sale, this raises the street price of the drugs and many buyers are forced to purchase smaller quantities or are unable to buy as frequently.

10. Apply asset forfeiture laws against dealers/buyers

- Publicity of the application of asset forfeiture laws used to seize buyer/dealer vehicles can be used to deter recreational buyers from entering open-air drug markets. Seized vehicles can also be used by police to conduct undercover stings and fund subsequent enforcement efforts.

11. Mail postcard warnings

- Some cities have mailed postcard warnings to vehicle owners who have been seen loitering or cruising drug market areas. CCTV cameras can be used or community members can be enlisted to document the license plate numbers of “cruisers” or buyers and submit them to the police. After the license is run and it is determined that the vehicle does not belong to a local resident, a postcard can be mailed to the owner to warn them that they have been spotted circling a neighborhood with high levels of drug activity. This information can also help build a database of suspected buyers.

12. Build a comprehensive city-wide database

- This database can track the movements of local drug markets and the identities and activities of buyers and sellers. Many cities link this database with a “photo

album” of the offenders in each area. Additionally, these data can be linked with data from surrounding agencies (those in Kentucky). This database should also contain information on every intervention activity (not just policing activities) – measures of duration, intensity, and information concerning all of the major players involved in the interventions for future evaluation purposes.

Environmental modifications

13. Install CCTV cameras

- These are often very effective in reducing illegal activity. The main problems associated with cameras are the ability to secure funding, appropriate placement, quality of picture, and manpower necessary to review tapes or watch live feed. Even fake cameras or signs that claim cameras are in the area can have a deterrent effect (although it may not last long). Cameras are currently operating in many of the hotspots but are not being fully utilized.

14. Increase lighting

- Increased lighting allows citizens and police a better view of activities occurring at night and makes escape more difficult. This also improves the function and effectiveness of CCTV cameras during the evening.

15. Post “No Loitering”/ “No Trespassing” signs

- This intervention needs to be followed by strict application of the loitering and trespassing laws in these areas.

16. Put up “Scarecrows”

- The city may want to invest in temporary or permanent signs, banners, flyers, etc. that discourage dealers and buyers from frequenting the locations of well-entrenched drug markets. The signs may indicate that the area is a “Drug Free Zone,” describe the penalties associated with apprehension, or offer rewards for information leading to an arrest or conviction.

17. Address vacant/dilapidated buildings

- The city may be able to provide tax incentives or discounted properties for businesses to move into vacant buildings near existing markets. This will increase the level of place management in the area. However, these businesses should not rely on heavy drive-thru traffic. Additionally, buildings that cannot be rehabbed or that have been abandoned should be torn down or acquired by the city.

18. Limit access routes

- Blocking access routes can make it more difficult for buyers to enter a particular area to meet with dealers. Although much controversy surrounded the use of a traffic barricade in Pendleton, this strategy has proven very successful elsewhere. After determining that 60 percent of those arrested for drug-related offenses did not live in the area, police in Charlotte, North Carolina closed two main routes leading into the neighborhood and the arrest rate dropped 42 percent during the following year. Homicides decreased 65 percent and violent crime fell 37 percent when LAPD implemented Operation Cul-De-Sac and closed 14 streets with traffic barriers. Additionally, the Dayton, Ohio, Five Oaks neighborhood experienced a

50 percent decrease in violent crime and 26 percent decline in total crime after being subdivided into small areas to prevent drive through traffic.

Court/prosecution partnerships

19. Restrict prosecution to habitual offenders

- Many Cincinnati officers have complained that the penalties for drug dealing are not a viable deterrent because of plea-bargaining. Police may be able to strike a deal with prosecutors. For example, the police may not forward users/buyers or first-time dealers to prosecutors in exchange for harsher penalties for habitual dealers.

20. Request particular sentences for dealers/buyers

- Police in other cities have requested that buyers and dealers be required to participate in mandatory drug treatment and testing as part of their probation. Others have found that sentencing dealers and buyers to complete community service in the area they purchased drugs works as a deterrent. Conditions of probation and parole have also been used to ban convicted dealers/buyers from frequenting drug market locations.

21. Vertical prosecution

- Other cities have used vertical prosecution to take legal action against dealers. This method of prosecution requires that the same prosecutor handle all drug cases that stem from a particular market. This allows prosecutors to become familiar with key market players and the objectives of current enforcement

efforts. Use of this tactic will depend on the flexibility of current court case assignments in Cincinnati.

22. Enforce eviction law associated with drug dealing

- A new mechanism for enforcing the existing eviction law should be developed by the City to streamline this process. A new city-wide process of information sharing with landlords needs to be developed to let them know when a tenant has been arrested. Additionally, the community prosecution office or some other designated body must track the outcome of these notifications.

23. Apply nuisance abatement laws

- Melanie Reising, Senior Assistant Prosecutor of the Community Prosecution Section, has been actively working with police to secure compliance from owners of properties that produce high numbers of calls for service. However, a pre-determined benchmark that indicates when a property should be considered a nuisance may result in more proactive rather than reactive responses. This could also help to create a priority list of properties so that limited resources can be devoted to properties causing the most harm to communities.

24. Property owners sign trespassing waiver

- This waiver, which has been signed by owners of some of the hotspot properties, allows officers to arrest trespassers without the consent of the owner/manager of the property. It essentially allows police to act in place of the owner. This can reduce the intimidation that some store operators may face if they continually call the police when dealers loiter on and around their properties.

Probation/Parole partnerships

25. Work closely with probation/parole

- Other cities have formed these partnerships to identify buyers/dealers who may be violating the conditions of their release. Some simply share intelligence while others ask probation/parole officers to ride with them through the neighborhood to identify offenders.

Other city agency partnerships

26. Conduct street clean-ups

- Public Services should increase their clean-up efforts in and around the identified drug markets. Besides adhering to the “broken windows” theory of crime, the additional presence of city workers may deter open drug dealing. Clean-ups should be held in the afternoon when the drug market is most active rather than early morning.

27. Request Certified Emergency Response Team (CERT) intervention

- Pressure can be placed on landlords who allow drugs to be dealt in and around their buildings by conducting code inspections. Some of these violations directly contribute to the drug market (e.g., broken gated entrances, weak locks).

28. Remove indicators of drug distribution

- Drug dealers leave environmental cues to indicate an open drug market is operating in a particular area. In Cincinnati, officers have told us that shoes tied together by the laces are thrown over telephone wires to let buyers know an open-air market is located nearby. These shoes have been hung over wires at

intersections near the drug markets in Pendleton and Avondale. The telephone or power companies should be notified and asked to remove these markers.

29. Remove environmental features that facilitate dealing

- Trees or overhangs that provide shade for dealers should be cut back or removed. Shrubs or trees used to stash larger quantities of drugs in nearby locations should also be removed. If dealers are storing drugs in nearby trashcans, these cans should be removed or modified so that items cannot be retrieved once placed inside.

Property owners/landlord partnerships

30. Inform property owners/landlords of crimes committed on their properties

- This can result in the eviction of problem tenants and prevent owners, landlords, and store managers from ignoring the problems occurring on their properties.

31. Ask nearby apartment owners to share tenant information

- This information can be used to corroborate or disprove information obtained by police during FI contacts. Police will also know which apartments are occupied or vacant. Additionally, this information can also be used to track citizen and offender movement in the community.

32. Notify landlords of broken locks on exterior gates/doors

- These exterior apartment complex doors need to be secured to prevent dealers and buyers from consuming drugs or hiding from police in these areas. Landlords should also attempt to prevent doors from being propped open (perhaps install an alarm that produces a buzzing sound when the gate is not fully closed).

33. Remove visual obstructions from store windows

- By clearing windows of signage or installing larger windows at the front of the store, the clerk or manager on duty has a better view of outside activities and can quickly detect and report the presence of loiterers.

34. Stop stores from selling drug paraphernalia

- Police or city officials can try to reach an informal agreement with the local markets to stop selling the glass vials and Chore Boy scouring pads used to smoke crack. If an informal agreement cannot be made, the city may consider passing an ordinance that would prevent corner markets from selling these and other drug-related paraphernalia.

Victim resource center partnerships

35. Advertise victim resources

- Victim resource centers in the Cincinnati area (e.g., Pro Seniors, Inc.) may be able to help citizens who have been, or continue to be, victimized by drug trade activities. A complete list of these services and organizations should be compiled and advertised to local residents/businesses (e.g., through flyers, posters, contacts made responding to calls for service, etc.), particularly if these organizations can help residents/businesses secure their property (e.g., provide new gates, locks, lighting).

Beautification organization partnerships

36. Sponsor neighborhood beautification efforts

- It should be determined whether organizations such as Keep Cincinnati Beautiful can help to sponsor small neighborhood beautification efforts around the identified markets. In other communities, “take back our streets” efforts include flower planting in green space and curb painting by local artists.

Community partnerships

37. Establish citizen patrols

- Community Problem Oriented Policing (CPOP) members and other local residents can form small patrol “units.” These units can patrol the neighborhood during busy drug market times and take pictures and video of illegal activities to deter buyers and dealers. In other cities, those on patrol radio illegal or suspicious activity to a resident stationed at home. This resident then calls police for assistance.

38. Offer an “Adopt-A-Block” program

- Churches, citizens, businesses, and other groups are often willing to “adopt” a street corner. By adopting a corner, these groups pledge to remove graffiti, paint, pick up trash, repair playground equipment, and conduct other maintenance activities to reduce perceptions of disorder.

39. Conduct neighborhood “Smoke Outs”

- In Chicago and other U.S. cities suffering from high levels of drug activity, citizens have conducted “Smoke Outs” by grilling hamburgers and hotdogs for

residents on street corners. These activities are most effective if they are held at known drug transaction locations during “business” hours.

40. Organize a block watch

- CPOP members can help residents to form a traditional “neighborhood watch” program. This can be used to gather intelligence about the individuals who participate in the market, increase tips to an established hotline, and deter dealers from conducting transactions in an open market.

Local church partnerships

41. Sponsor outdoor church activities

- Local churches may hold outdoor services or other outdoor activities to discourage dealers from hanging out on the corners. Church members may be interested in conducting outreach services during busy drug market periods.

Cincinnati Recreation Commission partnership

42. Sponsor Cincinnati Recreation Commission activities

- The Cincinnati Recreation Commission may have the resources to sponsor after-school or weekend activities for children/teens living near the drug markets. Surrounding blocks can be shut down for a few hours during what would normally be busy drug market times in order to hold the activities in these neighborhoods. This gives kids a legitimate place/reason to loiter and limits outsider accessibility to these public spaces.

Media partnerships

43. Create a media campaign

- Publicity can be a very powerful tool in disrupting drug markets. Many cities come up with a name for their targeted efforts (e.g., Operation Drug Safe) to engage the media. Large and small businesses and other local organizations might offer assistance (monetary or otherwise) to be associated with a well-publicized project. Additionally, a “diffusion of benefits” is more likely to occur as the project gains more attention. Offenders are unlikely to know the exact boundaries/limits of the operation and will curb their activities in surrounding locations as well.

44. Publish dealers/buyers names and photographs in local papers

- This was found to have a significant deterrent effect in Boston, MA, and has been used successfully in many other cities. Identities should be published in both Cincinnati and Kentucky newspapers (perhaps highlighted on local TV media as well). While adult arrest information is already available to the public, the city attorney should be consulted before implementation.

45. Advertise drug treatment resources

- If the drug market is disrupted and people find it more difficult to purchase drugs, some may consider treatment options before finding a new market. Available drug treatment in Cincinnati should be publicized and offered to arrestees while other intervention strategies are taking place.

46. Monitor hospitals and publicize overdoses

- Media coverage of drug overdoses decreased drug consumption in Boston, MA, Columbia, SC, El Paso, TX, Portland, ME, and St. Louis, MO. While this is unlikely to have an impact on serious users, the coverage may deter less committed buyers and help to disrupt open markets.

47. Advertise local job fairs

- Some less committed dealers may also seek legitimate employment once they can no longer profit from selling drugs on the street. Advertising resources that can connect them with potential employers may encourage offenders to seek employment, especially if the risks associated with dealing begin to outweigh the benefits. It is important that the jobs advertised pay a decent wage if they are to be an attractive alternative to money made by dealing.

University of Cincinnati partnership

48. Conduct an on-going evaluation of the operation

- Process and strategy evaluations should be conducted to determine if there is evidence of significant crime reduction, displacement, or diffusion of benefits. A feedback system between the researchers and police should be established so that police can act and adjust the operation based on the most recent information available.

While the interventions listed above have been used as part of larger strategies to reduce open-air drug dealing, the vast majority have not been subjected to formal evaluations.

Consequently, the effectiveness of many of these interventions is unknown. Furthermore, even if an intervention is found to be effective in another city, this does not guarantee that the intervention will be effective in Cincinnati. If the city is going to invest fiscal resources to implement any of the interventions presented, proper evaluations should accompany these expenditures. The evaluation process is discussed further below.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STRATEGY EVALUATION

After implementing a strategy to reduce crime and disorder at particular locations, it is important to evaluate the response to determine if it was successful or not. Evaluating the effectiveness of a crime prevention strategy can inform resource allocation decisions. If a particular strategy is found to be effective, it may be replicated in other areas with similar problems. Should the evaluation reveal that the strategy was ineffective, resources should be shifted to a more promising approach. The evaluation design should be planned prior to strategy implementation so the necessary data can be collected before, during, and after the strategy. To determine the effectiveness of a particular strategy, it is necessary to conduct a process evaluation as well as an impact evaluation.

A process evaluation determines if the crime prevention strategy was implemented as planned. Therefore, data should be collected regarding where, when, how often, and to what degree the strategy was put into action. For example, when evaluating the effectiveness of increased police presence, it is necessary to collect data about where the officers patrolled, the time of day they patrolled, how often they patrolled, and what specific activities they engaged in during the additional patrols. Without this information, it is unknown if there was an actual

increase in patrol, what “types” of additional patrols were used, and what level of increase was necessary to produce the intended effect.

Process evaluations are important for two reasons. First, successful crime prevention strategies can be replicated more easily at similar problem locations if the exact dosage of the response is known. Simply reporting that increased patrols reduced crime in an area does not provide much guidance for those looking to obtain the same results in other areas. Second, a useful crime prevention strategy that is poorly implemented may be mistakenly rejected as ineffective if a process evaluation is not conducted. A process evaluation reveals if the results of the impact evaluation should be attributed to the planned strategy.

In addition to conducting a process evaluation to measure the actual response, an impact evaluation should be conducted to determine if the problem declined, and if so, if the decline should be attributed to the response. Given the specific characteristics of the open-air drug market, both quantitative and qualitative measures should be collected to monitor the level of crime and disorder at the problem location. Because any individual measure suffers limitations, it is recommended that multiple measures be used to gain a more complete understanding of the problem and the impact of the response.

Calls for service, Part 1 crimes, Part 2 crimes, and arrests are sources of quantitative data that can be used to measure whether crime and disorder decreased at the drug market locations. Pre- and post-traffic flow measures could also be used to determine whether drug-related traffic declined during the intervention period. Possible qualitative measures are resident surveys and site observations. In addition, individual offender tracking can be used to determine if offenders desist from crime or simply move to a new site once the problem is reduced at a particular location.

While the measures listed above can be useful, note that each may vary for reasons other than changes in crime and disorder. For example, calls for service may increase due to increased citizen awareness and participation, even if crime activity and disorder remain the same or decrease. Similarly, arrests may increase due to an increase in police response, without the level of crime in the area increasing. It is important to maintain measurement validity during the evaluation, meaning that the selected measures are an adequate reflection of the problem, in this case drug activity and disorder. Because it is nearly impossible to measure the level of drug activity directly, several indirect quantitative and qualitative measures should be used in order to gain a more accurate understanding of the problem and the impact of the response.

While the measures may indicate whether or not crime declined, the evaluation design can help to determine if the decline should be attributed to the crime prevention strategy. Observing a reduction in crime after the crime prevention strategy is implemented is not enough to claim that the strategy caused the reduction. There are many plausible explanations of why crime declined in an area. Stronger evaluation designs provide more information in terms of how much crime decreased and what caused the reduction, while weaker designs may only reveal the level of crime following the intervention. In general, measuring crime several times before and after the response and using control groups will improve the strength of an evaluation design.

With respect to measuring crime, several measures should be taken before and after the intervention to develop an understanding of the crime trends in an area. Because many factors influence the level of crime in an area, it is important to collect data at several time points before and after the strategy to ensure that the observed reduction is not simply part of a general trend that would have likely occurred in the absence of the intervention. For example, open-air drug activity tends to decline during the winter due to cold weather. Failing to control for seasonal

effects may cause researchers to attribute a decline or increase in crime to the planned response, when in reality the fluctuations were caused by seasonal changes.

Second, the use of control groups will also eliminate alternative explanations for reductions in crime. Other factors will likely influence the crime rate at the same time as the planned response. The use of control groups allows for a comparison between two similar areas whose only notable difference should be the planned response implemented at one location and not the other. Any significant difference between the levels of crime at the two locations following the crime prevention response can then more confidently be attributed to that response.

There is a concern that preventing a particular crime will only cause it to be displaced to another time, place, or type of offense. The existing research indicates that displacement is not inevitable and crimes are rarely displaced completely. However, displacement should be anticipated prior to implementing a crime reduction strategy so that additional steps can be taken to prevent and measure displacement. Studies indicate that crimes will most likely be displaced to similar times, places, and types of offenses. As offenders are forced to move outside of their familiar surroundings, displacement is less likely to occur. Therefore, it is important to anticipate where, when, and how crimes may be displaced in order to accurately measure the impact of the crime prevention strategy.

A catchment area for displacement should be defined prior to the implementation of the crime prevention strategy. By anticipating where displacement is likely to occur, crime can be measured before and after the intervention within the catchment area to determine if crimes from the problem location were displaced following the intervention. In addition, one should be mindful of the potential for displacement when selecting control areas for the evaluation design. Given that control areas are selected based on their similarity to the problem location, they may

also be likely sites of displacement. If crime is displaced to the control area, the control area no longer remains unaffected by the implemented response, thus weakening the evaluation design.

While a crime prevention response may cause crimes to be displaced to other locations, times, or types of offenses, it is also possible that a response may have a diffusion of benefits beyond the problem location that was targeted during the response. A diffusion of benefits occurs when offenders, aware of the crime prevention response but unsure of its extent, refrain from committing crimes in nearby locations. For example, if drug dealers are aware that undercover sting operations are taking place in Cincinnati, but are unsure what drug markets are being targeted, there may be a diffusion of benefits (i.e., crime reduction) in markets surrounding the targeted locations. Dealers will become more suspicious of unknown buyers and refuse to make what they once considered relatively safe transactions. Similarly, drug buyers who are unaware of the extent of the operation may choose not to purchase drugs at their regular markets to avoid what they perceive as an increased risk of being arrested, even if their particular market does not receive the intervention. Similar to displacement, it is important to anticipate and measure any diffusion of benefits associated with a particular intervention in order to more accurately evaluate the impact of a strategy.

In summary, evaluations are a necessary component of successful crime reduction strategies. Both process and impact evaluations must be designed prior to strategy implementation. Displacement and diffusion of benefits must be anticipated and measured. The methodology used to assess strategy effectiveness should ultimately depend on the types of interventions implemented and the predetermined objectives of the crime reduction project.

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APPENDIX A: PICTURES OF LAND PARCELS

1. 3515 Burnet Avenue – Mike’s J&W Super Market



2. 3520 Burnet Avenue – Laundromat, Police sub-station, Avondale Pride Center



3. 3509 Burnet Avenue – Residence



4. 3505 Burnet Avenue – Residence



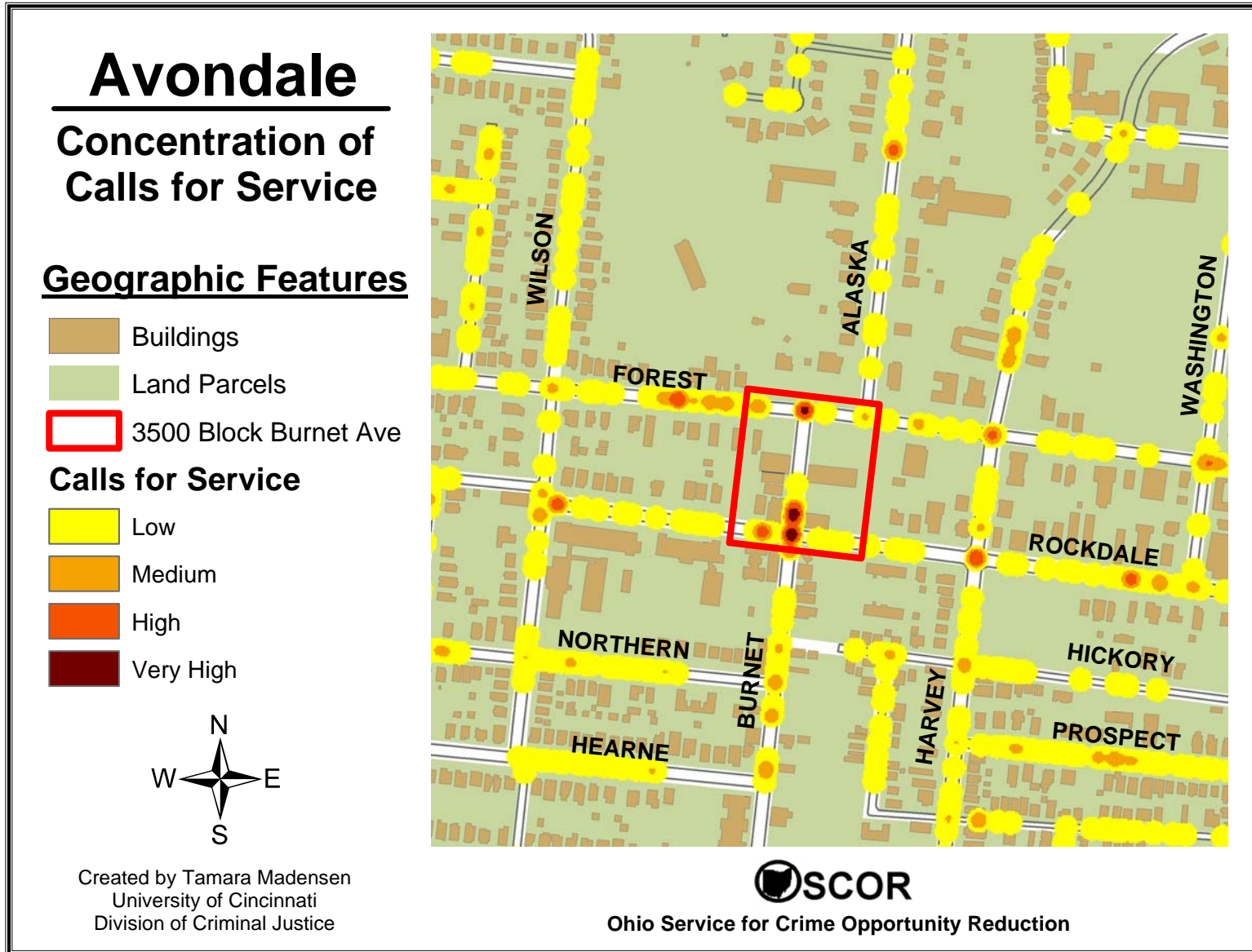
5. 3501 Burnet Avenue – Business/Residence



6. 3500 Burnet Avenue – Vacant business



APPENDIX B: DENSITY MAP OF CALLS FOR SERVICE



APPENDIX C: DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND KEY CONTACTS

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The OSCOR research staff and the Cincinnati Police Command staff identified one hotspot within each district for analysis. The sites were chosen from the list of high crime police reporting areas identified through CinSite. Final selections were based on Command staff recommendations, using crime seriousness and problem isolation as major criteria.

The research began with an early analysis of police statistics in order to identify locations that had the highest concentration of crimes within the reporting areas. In the area chosen for District 4, reporting area 374, it was determined that the intersection of Burnet and Forest was producing the majority of calls for service for this area. An interview was then conducted with Mr. Jefferson who is a community member, business owner, and member of the Avondale community council. He also identified this intersection as the most dangerous location in the community and suggested that the problem extends into the 3500 block. Subsequent interviews with neighborhood officers and a ride-along with a beat officer were used to gather specific information about street-level criminal activity. Throughout the analysis, multiple site visits were conducted to take photographs and confirm the information gathered during the interviews.

KEY AVONDALE CONTACTS

Name	Title	Date Contacted
Fulton O. Jefferson, Jr.	Member of Avondale Community Council	12/06/2004
PO LaDon Laney	Avondale Neighborhood Officer	01/13/2005
PO Wiley Ross	Avondale Neighborhood Officer	01/13/2005
PO Marcus Jackson	Avondale Beat Officer	03/30/2005