

THE COLUMBUS SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS TARGET ZONE

A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT TO REDUCE ILLEGAL DRUG ACTIVITY AND GUN VIOLENCE

Purpose: To reduce neighborhood drug sales and gun violence by more effectively dealing with the revolving door lifestyle of repeat offenders in the judicial system, and by offering assistance to first-time, nonviolent drug offenders under age 20.

Method: Inter-agency, multi-stakeholder demonstration project to target persistent neighborhood challenges by better addressing the neighborhood environment and repeat drug and violent offenders.

Proposed Partners/Working Group:

- Franklin County Municipal Court
- Franklin County Common Pleas Court
- City of Columbus, Public Safety Department, Division of Police
- U.S. District Attorney
- Columbus City Attorney
- Columbus City Council
- Franklin County Prosecutor
- Coalition of Neighborhoods: Olde Towne East, Driving Park, Old Oaks, Southern Orchards, Livingston Park, South of Main, Morrison Hill, Franklin Park, etc.

Proposed Safe Neighborhoods Target Area:

Whittier/Frebis (South), Broad (North) Parsons (West), Alum Creek (East)

DEMONSTRATION PROJECT COMPONENTS

- 1. Disrupt Open Air Drug Markets that Become Drive-By Shooting Sites***
 - Collaboration between city attorney, county prosecutor, U.S. District Attorney, Columbus police, and municipal court on essential components of an upgrade to City of Columbus Loitering in Aid of Drug Offenses law.
 - Legislative enactment of Loitering in Aid of Drug Offenses law by Columbus City Council to disrupt open air drug markets
 - Legislative finding by City Council on need for enhanced drug enforcement activities in a newly-designated "Safe Neighborhoods Target Area."
 - Enhanced police enforcement for Loitering in Aid of Drug Offenses to disrupt open air markets in Safe Neighborhoods Target Area
- 2. Disrupt Drug and Gang Activities in Private Residences and Commercial Establishments***
 - Zero tolerance for drug and other crimes to include Narcotics, Vice, Nuisance Abatement Group, and Gang unit efforts against bootlegs, sell houses, carry out stores, and safe houses (internal allocation or budget item).

3. Increase Penalties for Gun Crimes

- Up-charge to federal charges for gun crimes pursuant to policy adopted by working group in the target area.
- Work with State Senator Jim Hughes on toughening gun crime penalties under state law.

4. Address Offenders

Repeat and Violent Offenders

- Aggressive sentencing for chronic and repeat offenders with extended periods of probation, house arrests with ankle bracelets no waiving of court costs and fines, no credit for time served
- Evaluate NetRMS computer system. Complaints by officers indicate the system may not be performing adequately. Officers cite frequent software crashes, and inability to easily query the system for information. Olde Towne East Safety Committee was told it could not be queried for arrests, or for arrestee addresses – we were told to go to Courtroom 4-D and look at the daily docket for that information, then cross-reference with police reports. If this is true, NetRMS is clearly an inadequate database that cannot support effective law enforcement. (Potential Capital Budget item)
- NetRMS or other database information to support information sharing on arrests and convictions, and to allow an aggressive arrest address property owner contact program (budget item)
- Work with Courts to evaluate impact of HB 86, and strengthen local community post-release controls and probation orders.
- Evaluate Stay Away court orders on probation: tie to Loitering in Aid law and Safe Neighborhoods Target Area

First-Time, Non-Violent Offenders

- Restorative Justice work requirement for City Land Bank, and Civic and Business Associations (budget item)
- Stay Away and/or house arrest court orders on probation: tied to Loitering in Aid law and Safe Neighborhoods Target Area if/as feasible
- Expansion and enhanced use of Main Street camera program and/or city cameras along Main Street (budget item)

5. Community Based Coordination

- Community-based project coordinator for target area: Ohio-Champion spine, and Oak, Rich, Main, McAllister, Livingston, and Whittier off-shoots (budget item).
- Business associations and CDCs have been defunded on Livingston Avenue and Main Street over the past five years, with nothing to replace them. Neighborhoods need paid advocates to address these issues at a level that the City cannot.

6. Diversionary Strategies and Supportive Services

- Possible supplemental counseling and/or job search services targeted to first-time, non-violent drug sales/possession offenders under age 22. Partner with COWIC and/or City

summer youth program for dedicated openings. Possible expungement program for meeting goals in partnership with Municipal Court (budget item).

- Coordinate an area-wide prevention effort. Example: check on re-opening of Blackburn (new water park being planned?) to roll out in summer 2012 (budget item).

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- November 1: Council agrees to pursue Demonstration Project in conjunction with the Administration
- November 10: Council gives direction to City Attorney to develop a law to give police powers to disrupt open-air drug markets, including consideration of Loitering in Aid of Drug Offenses in a Council-approved demonstration program, with an analysis of the practical and legal implications of video surveillance evidence on convictions.
- November 30: First year budget of \$1,000,000 reserved in FY 2012 budget (actual costs likely much less, as many of these costs are already within existing agency budgets). Out-year funding through a dedication of Columbus casino revenues at an appropriate level.
- December 1: City Attorney reports on Loitering in Aid of Drug Offenses concepts to working group.
- December 15, Council holds first hearing on enhanced Loitering in Aid, or alternative drug market disruption, law.
- January 1, 2012: Operating budget in place to fund Demonstration Project
- January 10, 2011: Investigations of drug, gang, problem carry outs, and bootleg houses begin
- January 15, 2012: Coordinator hired
- February 1, 2012: Information Systems needs are known, and process to have adequate information system (Net RMS upgrade, enhancement, or replacement) is in place.
- February 15: Working group and courts develop mechanisms to work together on demonstration project and impact of HB 86 sentencing requirements.
- March 15, 2012: Open-air drug market enforcement begins
- April 1, 2012: Houses raided as informant/undercover information warrants
- May 1, 2012: Coordinator in place and landlord contact program begins
- May 1 – October 31, 2012: On-going pressure put on drug sellers and gun criminals
- June 1, 2012: Installation/upgrade(s) of camera system(s)
- November 1, 2012: Liquor permit renewal objections filed