

TO: Michael C. Van Milligen, City Manager
FROM: Phyllis E. Russell, Management Fellow
SUBJECT: Safe Community Task Force Recommendations to City Council
DATE: July 15, 2010

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this memorandum is to forward to you the second set of recommendations from the Safe Community Task Force to present to the City Council. Along with this current series of recommendations I am also including the first set of recommendations that were adopted by the Council February 2010 and an update on the Crime Study being conducted by Northern Illinois University.

BACKGROUND

On September 17, 2009, Mayor Roy Buol and the City Council hosted a community forum that was attended by more than 130 residents. The purpose of this forum was to initiate an open dialogue on crime issues in our community and how, as a community, we could address them. After such a high response to the open dialogue, the Mayor and City Council appointed 25 citizen volunteers to a "Safe Community Task Force" in October.

This group of diverse volunteers was asked to holistically look at both the causes of, and solutions to, crime in Dubuque. The group was tasked with gathering facts about the scope of the crime problems, focus on identifying efforts that are already underway to improve and prevent future problems, review and analyze how other communities have addressed this issue and recommend goals and objectives for the leadership of Dubuque. Beyond the 25 appointed members, the Safe Community Task Force utilized sub-committees and work groups to get all interested parties involved, and submit recommendations to the City Council for further action.

The sub-committees were:

- Neighborhood engagement/social capital,
- Enforcement,
- Management of physical environment, and
- Research and facts.

In February 2010, Urban Strategies from St. Louis, MO was hired to facilitate the Safe Community Task Force meetings and aid in guiding the appointed group through the recommendation process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Each of the sub-committees produced several recommendations for the Task Force to consider and come to consensus on. The following are the recommendations (identified by category) the Task Force is submitting to Council:

Enforcement

1. Develop and implement a juvenile curfew ordinance to use as a tool to help reduce crime. Research utility, efficacy and enforcement issues, taking the following suggestions into consideration:
 - The police department would not conduct curfew sweeps of the community.
 - There would be a designated and staffed location to hold juveniles who violate the curfew. Contact with parents or a responsible adult would not be handled by police. (It is critical to keep the officers on the street and not deploy them as babysitters). Penalties for curfew violations could include fines, community service requirements and parenting classes.
2. Provide additional resources for the Community Policing Program
3. Direct Police Department to enforce noise ordinances more aggressively.
4. Direct Police Department to enforce traffic ordinances more aggressively.
5. Give the Safe Community Task Force and Police Department the opportunity to respond to the Northern Illinois University crime study report and recommendations due at the end of September, which may result in additional recommendations.
6. The Safe Community Task Force recommends its continued existence to monitor the implementation and progress of its recommendations through quarterly progress reports from city staff, and special meetings as necessary. The SCTF further recommends that the City Council consider creation of a Safe Community Commission.

Housing Code Enforcement

7. Support landlords in evicting problem tenants for cause.
8. Mandate that landlords conduct renter background checks, using the city's free service.
9. Establish threshold number of complaint calls that will place a problem property in priority category. Establish policies and processes for immediate response and resolution of problems involving those properties,
10. Tie frequency of property inspections to landlord's history of cooperation with code compliance. Establish a threshold number of problem complaints that will trigger a meeting among the landlord, the tenant, and representatives of the Housing and Police Departments.

11. Intensify exterior code enforcement efforts. Encourage city employees across departments to identify and report property code enforcement problems and establish ways to reward employees.
12. Create a data clearing house limited to verifiable and factual information that landlords and tenants can share and reference when making their rental decisions.
13. Develop and offer frequently a training program on code enforcement and property management for all landlords. Require all landlords to attend the program; issue only temporary occupancy permits/licenses until training has been completed

Section 8 Program

The City Council has addressed community concerns about the real or perceived impact of the Section 8 program on the community by:

1. Decreasing the desired number of Section 8 vouchers in the program to 900
2. Limiting voucher eligibility to Dubuque residents
3. Increasing the staff capacity of the Family Self Sufficiency Program

Additional recommendations include supporting and providing resources to:

- Increase public understanding of the Section 8 Program
- Increase participation of Section 8 residents in effective self-sufficiency programs
- Provide training to housing commissioners to increase their leadership, public relations and community building skills
- Implement an Exception Rent Program to avoid concentrated pockets of poverty
- Develop a stronger role for the Resident Advisory Board to encourage residents of subsidized housing to give feedback on proposed new policies and procedures and to cultivate leadership within the low income residential community.
- Provide community service credits for participation in effective programs that foster self sufficiency
- Continue to provide resources to FSS program based upon evidence of success

Neighborhood Engagement and Social Capital

1. **Human Relations (A Task Force Priority)** - The SCTF believes that in order to achieve its goals there will need to be a major citywide human relations effort .The human relations effort will have these objectives:
 - a) Increase tolerance and mutual understanding among the diverse segments of the population. The adoption of educational initiatives that foster community solidarity and global citizenship should be among the first practical steps taken by our City.
 - b) Implement appropriate measures that safeguard the rights and opportunities of all.

2. Develop a Neighborhood Watch program.
3. Increase resident participation using such vehicles as clean up campaigns, neighborhood picnics, new neighbor welcome events and other strategies developed by residents
4. Cultural Competency Training should be offered periodically to businesses and the community at large. It should be mandatory for city board and commission members as well as for city staff.
5. The Human Rights Department should receive continued support. In addition the city should devote resources to a human relations initiative that could include programs in the arts, cultural programs and other strategies that promote respect and understanding among residents.
6. Support a welcoming program for all new renters through community based organizations (such as GDDC provides for new families coming to Dubuque).

Management of Physical Environment

1. Install street lights in the middle of the block to brighten up the streets at night and increase visibility for residents.
2. Improve Dubuque neighborhoods by: a) encouraging home ownership, b) encouraging a mixed income approach to neighborhood development, c) creating (or re-creating) a sense of place through good design. All buildings using city, state or federal dollars should be required to meet these objectives and all projects should be required to meet the City's sustainability goals.
3. Create an ordinance prohibiting the boarding of windows and doors facing streets.
4. Develop and enforce policies consistent with the "preservation briefs" to maintain historic properties.
5. Increase the number of trash receptacles on the street.
6. Increase the number of neighborhood clean- ups and educate the community on city waste disposal policies in an effort to clarify the purpose of neighborhood clean- up programs.

Research and Facts

The crime study previously recommended by the SCTF and approved by the City Council is in progress and will be completed by Northern Illinois University in late September. The study authors will analyze crime and survey data which will: 1) clarify crime data and crime trends in Dubuque; 2) identify demographic and other characteristics most strongly related to the sorts of crimes that have increased significantly in the past few years, and 3) compare these data with the public's perception of the nature of crime and criminals in Dubuque.

The study asks these questions:

- Does the perception of criminal activity and its causes in Dubuque match what is actually happening?
- What policies or strategies are effective in decreasing crime, especially within categories of crime with significant recent increases in arrests?
- If there are community perceptions of increased criminal activity but no evidence to support the perception, what policies or strategies can effectively address the concerns?

Dubuque 2010 Quantitative Research Study on Crime & Poverty

Project Status Report

As of July 9, 2010

Provided by:
Greg Kuhn, Project Director
Shannon Sohl, Project Manager
NIU Center for Governmental Studies

General Project Info

- ❖ The contract and confidentiality agreement were formally executed on May 27th when all required signatures were in place.
- ❖ On May 25th, Carol Spinoso forwarded 26 documents related to the study. The team has been reviewing the documents and CGS has assembled a timeline that reflects our understanding of key events that have led up to the current study in place. The timeline is appended to this *Project Status Report* for your review and feedback.
- ❖ City staff and study team members have been in regular and ongoing conversation on a variety of project elements, research questions, logistical matters and data sharing transfers.
- ❖ The project is estimated to be completed by mid to late October but is highly contingent upon timely turnarounds for missing data or clarification of data issues.
- ❖ Optimally, if data scrubbing and matching can be completed within the next two weeks, CGS plans to have a preliminary set of findings available for Dubuque's review by mid to late September. This projection is highly variable and is subject to change depending on data conversion/ data scrubbing processes.

Comparative Data

- ❖ CGS researchers confirmed the list of cohort members with Dubuque in May for the comparative analysis of crime rates.
 - ❖ Contacted and collected all crime data necessary from Iowa's Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the City of Dubuque to complete the comparative analysis. Final set of Dubuque's data, including year 2009, was received from Dubuque on June 18, 2010. CGS currently has compiled crime incident count data for all cohort members (as well as university data where applicable) for years 2004 - 2009.
 - ❖ Received confirmation on June 25, 2010 from the lead project staff member, Kelly Larson, to include an analysis that combines university crimes with city crimes for Ames and Iowa City and to apply total city population (as annually estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau). Plans are to also present the data by separate categories of crimes.
 - ❖ Began formatting charts/graphs for presenting the comparative data.
 - ❖ Uploaded, reviewed and entered data into files for analysis; Excel (for presentation purposes) & SPSS (for statistical analysis).
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- ❖ Awaiting suggestions from City staff for groupings/consolidation of crimes to reduce the number of charts and to present data in a format that the City is accustomed to reviewing when analyzing crime data.
 - ❖ A CGS team member will schedule a time to review (with Stacey Moore) reporting standards for the various degrees of crimes to clarify how the City collects various incidents and applies definitions for reporting purposes.
 - ❖ The findings of this analysis will be included in the preliminary feedback report (projected to be ready mid to late September).
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Incident Data

- ❖ An updated incident data file for the period under study was forwarded by Dubuque to the secure ftp site on July 7th.
 - ❖ Data interpretation, cleaning and conversion to an analytical format that removes confidential information is underway.
 - ❖ Analysts are working to create a “Master” file with the Incident file serving as the base set of data and consolidating Housing data & Arrest data into this file by running matching routines.
 - ❖ The key issues surrounding the Incident data that CGS is currently working on include the following items:
 - Within the Incident file, there are approximately 200,000 records of which not all data is necessary for the scope of this project (e.g., witness information). Thus, CGS is working to identify the variables that could be eliminated to make the file more manageable from an analytical standpoint.
 - Within this new “Master” file, data must be manually scrubbed in a confidential environment for inconsistencies in identifier fields (e.g., SSN and NameNo fields). Early reviews indicate some of this data is missing, invalid or inconsistently reported within the file. CGS will pursue obtaining the necessary data, if available, from Stacey Moore.
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Housing Data

- ❖ Housing data was received (via the secure ftp site) from Dubuque’s database vendor on June 18th but a significant level of follow-up clarification was needed. Janet Walker assisted with the clarification and confirmed various classifications of fields. This clarification was completed on June 28th.
 - ❖ The housing data received is not in as “readily useable” format as expected (e.g., the data includes several fields/categories that require clarification, sorting and interpretation). CGS staff has been in conversation with City staff on this issue and clarification is ongoing at this writing.
 - ❖ Data interpretation, cleaning and conversion to an analytical format that removes confidential information is now underway using the clarified file.
 - ❖ CGS is also working to consolidate/cross compare the Housing data with Arrest and Incident data to create a “Master” data file for use in the analytical operations to be undertaken.
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Arrest Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Arrest data was received directly from the City via the secure ftp site the on June 7th. ❖ Data interpretation, cleaning and conversion of the arrest data to an analytical format that removes confidential information is underway. ❖ As referenced above, CGS is matching up the Arrest data with Incident and Housing data to create the “Master” data file. ❖ CGS has begun geo-coding the arrest data. Thus far, “EventLocations” is approximately 75% complete in the geo-coding process. Once this field is geo-coded, CGS will geo-code “ArresteeAddress” data.
Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ CGS has undertaken a broad literature search as identified in the project tasks and scope of services. ❖ Researchers have identified over 900 articles/books/writings covering the eight topics specified in our proposal. ❖ Researchers have identified and obtained the bulk of the sources necessary for the literature review and have begun the reading/annotation/review process. ❖ The majority of the literature review is expected to be completed by late July and made available to the entire CGS team for their review and comments prior to submitting it to Dubuque for their feedback. ❖ The literature review summary should be available for inclusion in the preliminary report projected to be ready mid to late September.
Perception Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ NIU’s POL is carrying out the community survey component of the project. ❖ POL worked with staff to develop a set of recommended questions for the survey. The survey used to interview community members was reviewed by Dubuque and returned by City staff with some recommendation for changes on June 7th. ❖ The final set of questions was approved by the second week of June. ❖ The Public Opinion Lab (POL) has conducted 385 phone interviews as of July 8. ❖ Their plan is to complete a total of 500 interviews and provide a final tabulated report to the CGS team by mid July.
Additional Site Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ A contingent of the research team anticipate another visit in the next few weeks from members who were not able to attend the first set of meetings and to gain additional insights from the preliminary analysis of the data. ❖ Members expected to visit include (tentative) Greg Kuhn, George Graves, Charles Cappell, David Mitchell, Roger Dahlstrom and Rima Roy.



¹ Founded in 2004, "Every Child, Every Promise" grew out of the Presidents' Summit for America's Future in 1997. At that gathering, Presidents Clinton, Bush, Carter and Ford, with Nancy Reagan representing President Reagan, challenged America to make children and youth a national priority. America's Promise uses the Five Promises framework to shape their efforts and improve the odds for youth: 1) Caring Adults, 2) Safe Places, 3) Healthy Start, 4) Effective Education, and 5) Opportunities to Help Others. Every Child, Every Promise is introducing the concept of "Building a Culture of Promise."

² In 2005, a partnership with the "Washington Initiative" and the "Washington Neighborhood Association." city departments, private lenders and neighborhood businesses was introduced. This partnership addresses both physical improvements to create a better environment for economic investment, and programs necessary to provide less-advantaged citizens with the capacity to "access the ladder of economic opportunity that leads out of poverty."

³ In July 2005, the "Multicultural Family Center" officially opened and they envision a welcoming Dubuque built on a foundation of understanding and collaboration across racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups committed to producing engaged families and community members. Serve as an inviting and safe place for community members, stimulate connections and provide programs to foster civic engagement and social and economic success. Build unity out of diversity.

⁴ In September 2005, pregnant teen fatally stabbed and fetus died, too, during an altercation on Bluff Street.

⁵ In 2006, the City embarked on a three-year contract with One Ummah Consulting as part of its efforts to achieve diversity goals that include promoting community understanding and education, encouraging a more diverse workforce, identifying tools residents can use to resolve conflict, and supporting a community that values all residents.

⁶ In 2007, the "Washington Neighborhood Development Corporation" was formed. Their visioning effort in defining a neighborhood was one that promotes pride, diversity, homeownership, civic responsibility and opportunity.

⁷ In August 2007, following the fatal stabbing of man outside of a downtown bar, racial tensions stirred following the identification of an African-American suspect.

⁸ In 2009, a Problem Property Task Force was organized through the Housing Department to address the chronic complaints regarding vacant and poorly-managed properties.

⁹ In November 2009, Alta Vista Research conducted a multiple component study for the City of Dubuque.

¹⁰ In February 2010, following an incident of violence which resulted in the death of a community member, the City Council held a community forum to address public safety issues. From this meeting, a Safe Community Task Force was formed.

¹¹ In May 2010, the Human Rights Director, the Assisted Housing Specialist, and the AmeriCorps Volunteer met with the Board of Director of the Dubuque Area Churches United (DACU) for their consideration to engage the churches in town by soliciting their members to become involved in the "Circles" program. This program is an extension of Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin'-By World.

Note: The violent crimes listed on the timeline in no way represent all the crimes that occurred.