

STREET CRIME FORUM - JUNE 23, 2004

SESSION 2 - DISCUSSION GROUP F

- 1. PETTY CRIMINALS WHO GO THROUGH THE COURTS AND HOW WE ADDRESS THE SOCIAL ISSUES THAT BRING THEM**
- 2. EROSION OF COMMUNITY THROUGH PETTY CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

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TOPIC (B) YALETOWN

- Problem people not from community
- Lack of respect for other's community
- Petty crime, e.g. turn over mailboxes, etc.

Q: what is at the root of petty crime?

Q: what to do to address it

TOPIC (A) PETTY CRIMINALS

- People on street
 - Urinating in public
 - Open drug use/sales (i.e. Granville and Smythe)
 - Activity dispersed outside DTES
 - Regulars on street
 - Sleeping on sidewalk
 - Public nuisance
- Drugs and abuse and petty crimes are all over city – no boundaries
- Major crimes get more attention, but “broken window theory” community decay
- West End starting to crumble/become unlivable

Q: Attitude of police

A: Yes they are stretched – theft auto not as significant as serious violence

- Another concern, street fighting, i.e. Yaletown nightclub “Atlantis” – people moved off premises to street
- Now by-law – fighting a ticketed offence
- Granville/Smythe problem despite Community Police Station nearby
- Civic theatres – police (community police) parked cruiser in lane, solved problem for a short term
- In these areas, no “beat cops”
- However at night more police on scene
- Problems – daytime

- Another problem – violence between panhandlers – territorial disputes – night-time (800 Granville/Seymour)
- Vancouver Agreement
 - Looking for other ideas/collaborations to deal with problem
 - Seeking funding

Q: Locations for people to urinate; panhandle

- If you reduce funding/assistance – will cause more street problems
- Instead of more police – disperse problem – look at the way money is spent
- Look at causes, not the people
 - Homelessness, etc.
 - Marginalized people

Q: Is there an acceptable level of crime?

- Being poor is not a carte blanche excuse to commit crime vs. they are “survivalists” doing what they need to do to get by
- Problem – access public washrooms
 - West End Community Centre had to limit washroom access because of behaviour in washroom
 - What about washroom monitors – pay people to supervise? Help them organize – enable them

Q: How many of them could monitor each other?

- They know how to behave, but if no-one gives a damn, why should they?
- Have to provide normalcy to their lives
- Problem – addicts, crime – not capable of participating in program on a voluntary basis
- LINES - “Life Is Not Enough Society”
GROW “Grass Root Opportunity Worker” – located in Sunrise Hotel
 - “they” run the programs – they can do better if they have the opportunity
- Nightclub fighters – don’t fit within above problems/programs

Q: Why problem in Vancouver with public/family events?

- Vancouver – hub
- e.g. Seafest – instead of managing events properly, cancel events; no normalcy to event therefore people do not know how to behave
- coarsening of society, erosion of community

Q: Why fights in Vancouver? What do they do differently in Toronto, Montreal

- Need sense of community; care/respect for one another
- View of police – image of police – military training

SOLUTIONS

- education/advertising:
 - i.e. Liquor Distribution Branch – teach about alcohol and disorder
 - information has to come from “peers”
 - similar to youth anti-smoking campaigns
- Publicity – get people to speak to groups, e.g. Judy Greves (of Vancouver, homeless advocate, came to West End Residents presentation: who the people are on the street; how to approach homeless, how to react (open communication)
- Need beat cops/community liaison – represent a “social standard” – certain behaviour is unacceptable
- 2 categories of bad

- they always will be bad, no matter what
- they are bad because of problem – addiction, etc.

SOLUTION

- Get involved: community patrol, dial 911, crime watch, citizen patrol
- “Neighbours First Program (in downtown east-side) wear yellow jackets, local volunteers