

# City of Cincinnati



Interdepartmental  
Correspondence Sheet

November 6, 2006

To: Colonel Thomas H. Streicher, Jr., Police Chief  
From: Captain Howard L. Rahtz, Central Vice Control Section Commander  
Copies to:  
Subject: PROBLEM SOLVING REPORT -- IBM#06-131

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Category: Program / Project Case #: Operation Buyer Beware

District: City of Cincinnati Neighborhood: All

Coordinating Personnel: Lt. Art Frey

Description of Problem: Community complaints of open air drug dealing

Phase of SARA: Response/Assessment

## **SARA Documentation**

Scanning (state problem): Complaints from community representatives and citizens of open air drug dealing have increased in recent years. A particular complaint concerns people coming into the city from out of town to buy drugs. In the first quarter of this year, there were two wide-publicized homicides in Over-the-Rhine that involved out of town people who were murdered while involved in an illegal drug transaction.

Analysis (identify factual support): The number of drug complaints received by the Central Vice Control Section increased 14% in 2005 over the previous year. Felony drug arrests increased 29% and the number of weapons, vehicles and drugs confiscated all increased in 2005. Traditional enforcement efforts have not reduced the number of complaints nor reduced the level of drug dealing in our city. Jail overcrowding and a reduction in the number of felony cases indicted by the Grand Jury, very often involving those persons possessing a small amount of crack cocaine, add to the problem.

Response (define action taken): Operation Buyer Beware was developed to target those individuals who are purchasing drugs from street dealers. By increasing the risk of an adverse outcome to potential street level drug purchasers, we hope to decrease the level of blatant, open air drug dealing. This project increases the risk of arrest and could well be the impetus for an addict to seek treatment or be ordered by the courts into programs aimed at drug treatment. Additionally, an ordinance allowing police to civilly impound any vehicle used to facilitate the purchase or attempt purchase of drugs was passed by City Council and took effect 12/23/05. This ordinance requires a bond payment of \$500.00 in order for the vehicle to be released. This is in addition to the towing and storage costs.

Assessment (document measurement): The assessment is ongoing. Media attention has been significant and favorable. The community has been very supportive and on several occasions citizens have come out of their homes and cheered while officers were making arrests. The \$500 Civil Fine program has been an effective tool and the CVCS has towed 195 cars under this ordinance in 2006.

CVCS continues to mount these operations on a twice monthly basis. Locations are chosen with input from community leaders as well as District Commanders. The operations are supplemented by enforcement effort at the same locations.

Thus far, the effort clearly has had short-term impact but the long term results are difficult to measure. Not a single offender was has been rearrested since these operations began. The lack of recidivism would appear to be a very positive indicator and one could logically assume that at a minimum, the drug buyers arrested have moved their drug-seeking behavior out of the city.

**Police Participation  
Bureau**

Specific Feedback:

<b>City Department Participation</b>	<b>Specific Feedback</b>
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- Buildings and Inspections
- Community Development & Planning
- Fire Department
- Health
- Metropolitan Sewer District
- Parks
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation & Engineering
- Water Works

City of Cincinnati Law Department contact is Mr. Terry Cosgrove.

HLR