

**EFFECTIVE METHODS TO REDUCE RESIDENTIAL BURGLARIES  
IN THE 5<sup>TH</sup> POLICE DISTRICT**

**BRYAN ANTHONY  
PHILADELPHIA POLICE DEPT**

**A Staff Study Submitted to the  
Northwestern University Center for Public Safety  
School of Police Staff and Command  
Class #277  
Philadelphia, Pa  
May 28, 2009**

## **Effective Methods to Reduce Residential Burglaries in the 5<sup>th</sup> Police District**

### **Problem**

The 5<sup>th</sup> Police District which is approximately 8.51 square miles is located in the Northwest part of the city primarily consists of lower middle working class families and small business owners. For the past two years there has been an increase of reported residential burglaries. The residents of the community and the 5<sup>th</sup> Police District have increasingly expressed their concern about the increase in residential burglaries. If an effective method for reducing the number of residential burglaries is not implemented residents of the community fear that other crime problems will occur in the district.

### **Assumptions**

1. Concern over the increase of residential burglaries will continue to place more pressure on law enforcement.
2. The 5<sup>th</sup> Police District will continue to focus attention to this problem
3. The 5<sup>th</sup> Police District does not anticipate receiving more manpower because of the city's financial situation.
4. The 5<sup>th</sup> Police District will not receive any additional funding to hire police officer in overtime status for extra deployment.
5. Some resident will relocate to other areas if the problem continues to grow.

### **Facts**

1. A map of the 5<sup>th</sup> District show it is approximately 8.51 square miles (Annex A)
2. In the year 2007 there were 149 reported residential burglaries in the 5<sup>th</sup> Police District (Annex B)
3. In the year 2008 there were 252 reported residential burglaries in the 5<sup>th</sup> Police District showing an increase of 69% from year 2007 to 2008 (Annex B)
4. The 5<sup>th</sup> Police District has approximately 100 officers assigned (Annex C)

### **Discussion**

For the past two years there has been an increase of reported residential burglaries. In the year 2007 there were 149 reported residential burglaries (Annex A) compared to 252 reported residential burglaries 2008 an increase of 69% (Annex A). The 5<sup>th</sup> Police District has attempted to reduce the number of burglaries by increasing the presence of uniform patrols and plainclothes officers in the areas where crime reports show where occurrences are most frequent. In an attempt to combat this problem the 5<sup>th</sup> Police District has requested more manpower and equipment. The 5<sup>th</sup> Police District over the past year has experienced a slight decrease in the number of officer assigned to the district. These losses have occurred because of disciplinary action, retirement, and transfer to other districts or units. Additionally, because of the current financial climate of the city the 5<sup>th</sup> Police District does not anticipate receiving increase in manpower to meet normal staffing levels in the near future.

During the past two years the residents of the community and the 5<sup>th</sup> Police District have increasingly expressed their concern about the increase in residential burglaries. The 5<sup>th</sup> Police District and some residents of the community believe that the increase in residential burglaries

will cause other crime problems in the district. The 5<sup>th</sup> Police District must find an effective method to reduce the number residential burglaries. One of the below listed approaches to reducing residential burglaries should be considered.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Police District could implement a program utilized by the Miami Dade Police Department (MDPD) in 1999 to reduce the number residential burglaries. This program consisted of applying for state or federal grants and using the proceeds within the Community Relations Unit. A major part of the MDPD program to reduce residential burglaries was to advertise through the local media that an initiative is being undertaken to reduce residential burglaries (DiBernardo, 2002). Similar to MDPD's program these funds would also be used to conduct security surveys for the residents most affected by residential burglaries. These areas would be selected by the district commander based on the current crime information. The Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) community relations unit officer would conduct a risk analysis survey of the area to determine if there are any at-risk houses (Weisel, 2004). At-risk houses include house accessibility, visibility, and victim characteristics (Weisel, 2004). The PPD has a Community Relations Unit that could develop and implement a program similar to the program that MDPD utilized in combating residential burglaries.

Another important part of this program was that if officers met with a homeowner who wanted a security survey and the survey showed the need for improvements to render the home safer, these security upgrades would be provided at no cost to the homeowner. The effects of the program in MDPD reflected a decline of 37 percent in the burglary rate from the first six months of fiscal year 2000, compared to the first six months of fiscal year 1999 (DiBernardo, 2002).

Another approach to combat the problem of residential burglaries is the use of DNA evidence. (Safir, 2007) states that DNA evidence is an effective tool in modern law enforcement to identify burglary offenders. For both violent and property crimes, DNA technology is often an important factor in prosecution (Safir, 2007). DNA technology can increase prosecution rates, increase case clearance rates, act as a deterrent, and otherwise play a part in crime reduction (Safir, 2007). DNA evidence increases the suspect identification rate for domestic burglary from 14 to 44 percent (Safir, 2007). The Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) could develop and implement a system similar to the one used by the Denver Police Department (DPD). PPD Crime Scene Unit does not process residential burglary scenes.

The DPD Crime Laboratory identified over 40 prolific burglars since the project started November 1, 2005 by focusing on DNA evidence at residential burglary crime scenes (Safir, 2007). Burglary cases where DNA was utilized, the prosecution rate is five times higher than cases without DNA evidence (Safir, 2007). In a recent case, after police arrested one man (who later admitted to over 1000 burglaries), the burglary rate in the West Washington Park neighborhood dropped about 40% (Safir, 2007).

A second part of a program that the Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) could develop in terms of training officers to collect DNA evidence could mirror a program similar to the one started in February 2007 called the LODIS Palm Bay, Florida pilot project. While the overall intent was to reduce property crime, the short-term plan was to achieve three progress goals

during the first phase (LODIS, 2009) The first goal was to train patrol officers and detectives in collecting DNA evidence. This was to include reusable training tools for officer training. It also required lab oversight as to best techniques and probable DNA evidence recognition (LODIS, 2009). The second goal to establish database so there were DNA records for comparison to collected evidence. This included the elimination records (officers and technicians) and reference samples collected to the greatest degree possible under Florida law (LODIS, 2009). While time would allow greater numbers of records some "priming" was considered essential. Finally, we were to evaluate and identify the interfaces and reporting that would best make the system work transparently in daily use (LODIS, 2009).

The third approach on how to reduce residential burglaries was offered by Deputy Police Chief Benjamin Walton of the Daytona Beach Police Department in Daytona Beach Florida (B. Walton, personal communication, March 22, 2009). Deputy Chief Walton stated that whenever there is residential or commercial burglary increase in a particular area he immediately direct his commanders to employ a patrol saturation strategy which includes focusing on rapid response, quality of life issues, community education. The deployment strategy utilizes foot beat officers, bike officers, in addition to patrol vehicles and community relation officers. Deputy Chief Walton stated that the officers assigned to the problem each have a primary role in reducing the residential burglary problem.

Similar to the plan used by the Daytona Beach Police Department, the Philadelphia Police Department could implement a program similar to created by Chief Lanier, Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), Washington, D.C. The program is Operation F.R.E.E. (Focused Redeployment Enhancement Effort). Operation F.R.E.E. uses police recruit officers who are currently in the police academy (Operation F.R.E.E., 2009) The recruit officers are deployed in selected crime areas with close supervision. The recruit officers are not allowed to enforce laws or make arrest but they can do crime surveys, talk to area residents about crime, and show a major presence in the community (Operation F.R.E.E., 2009). The Philadelphia Police Department could develop a similar program and deploy recruit officers in the 5<sup>th</sup> Police district where residential burglaries are most prevalent.

## **Conclusion**

The 5<sup>th</sup> Police District must implement a strategy to reduce the number of residential burglaries. In the year 2007 there were 149 reported residential burglaries (Annex A) compared to 252 reported residential burglaries 2008 an increase of 69% (Annex A).

The option that would have most immediate impact in reducing the number burglaries would be to implement a program similar to the program in Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, D.C. The recruit officers are deployed in selected crime areas with close supervision. The recruit officers are not allowed to enforce laws or make arrest but they can do crime surveys, talk to area residents about crime, and show a major presence in the community (Operation F.R.E.E., 2009). The Philadelphia Police Department could develop a similar program and deploy recruit officers in the 5<sup>th</sup> Police district where residential burglaries are most prevalent. This option has a more immediate impact in the community, it gives recruit officer a small feel of interacting with the community, and does not cost the department additional funding or manpower.

## **Recommendation**

In order have to the most immediate impact in reducing the number of residential burglaries in the 5<sup>th</sup> District, it is recommended that the Philadelphia Police Department should utilize the police recruit currently assigned to the Police Academy. The Philadelphia Police Academy would coordinate with the Commanding Officer of the 5<sup>th</sup> Police District and devise a schedule that will provide immediate and sufficient coverage to areas identified as having the most burglaries reported at specified times. This temporary assignment of recruit personnel to the affected would give immediate relief to the residents of the area. The Academy can provide the recruit officers with training on how to complete security surveys. The commanding of the 5<sup>th</sup> District would then schedule a community meeting to discuss this new program with residents. Once members of the community are informed, recruit personnel can be deployed in the area under strict supervision. This recommended solution can be implemented without re-locating committed police personnel at a no additional costs to the department. Not only will this solution have the most immediate positive impact it, also allows the police department and the citizens to work together in an effort to reduce crime and improve the quality of life in their community.

## WORKS CITED

- Bernardo, J. (2002). Burglary Prevention Program. *Innovation in American Government*
- Bruce, C. (2009). Districting and Resource Allocation: A Question of Balance. *National Institute Of Justice. U.S. Department of Justice.*
- Local DNA Index System. (n.d.). Retrieved March 29, 2009, from <http://www.theiacp.org>
- Operation F.R.E.E. (n.d.). Retrieved March 29, 2009, from <http://www.theiacp.org>
- Safir, H. (2007). DNA Technology as an Effective Tool in Reducing Crime. *Forensic Magazine*
- Weisel, D. (2004) Burglary of Single-Family Houses: Understanding Your Local Problem, *Community Oriented Policing Services. U.S. Department of Justice*

DATE: 5-

28-09

TO : Police Commissioner

FROM : Lt. Bryan Anthony #291, Administrative Lieutenant, 5<sup>th</sup> District

SUBJECT : **REDUCING RESIDENTIAL BURGLARIES IN THE 5<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT**

### **Problem**

The 5<sup>th</sup> Police District which is approximately 8.51 square miles is located in the Northwest part of the city primarily consists of lower middle working class families and small business owners. For the past two years there has been an increase of reported residential burglaries. The residents of the community and the 5<sup>th</sup> Police District have increasing expressed their concern about the increase in residential burglaries. For the past two years there has been an increase of reported residential burglaries. In the year 2007 there were 149 reported residential burglaries (Annex A) compared to 252 reported residential burglaries 2008 an increase of 69% (Annex A). The 5<sup>th</sup> Police District has attempted to reduce the number of burglaries by increasing the presence of uniform patrols and plainclothes officers in the areas where crime reports show were occurrences are most frequent. In an attempt to combat this problem the 5<sup>th</sup> Police District has requested more manpower and equipment, because of the current financial climate of the city the 5<sup>th</sup> Police District does not anticipate receiving increase in manpower to meet normal staffing levels in the near future.

### **Solution**

In order have to the most immediate impact in reducing the number of residential burglaries in the 5<sup>th</sup> District, it is recommended that the Philadelphia Police Department should utilize the police recruit currently assigned to the Police Academy. The Philadelphia Police Academy would coordinate with the Commanding Officer of the 5<sup>th</sup> Police District and devise a schedule that will provide immediate and sufficient coverage to areas identified as having the most burglaries reported at specified times. This temporary assignment of recruit personnel to the affected would give immediate relief to the residents of the area. The Academy can provide the recruit officers with training on how to complete security surveys. The commanding of the 5<sup>th</sup> District would then schedule a community meeting to discuss this new program with residents. Once members of the community are informed, recruit personnel can be deployed in the area under strict supervision. This recommended solution can be implemented without re-locating committed police personnel at a no additional costs to the department. Not only will this solution have the most immediate positive impact it, also allows the police department and the citizens to work together in an effort to reduce crime and improve the quality of life in their community.

---

Bryan Anthony  
Administrative Lieutenant  
5<sup>th</sup> District

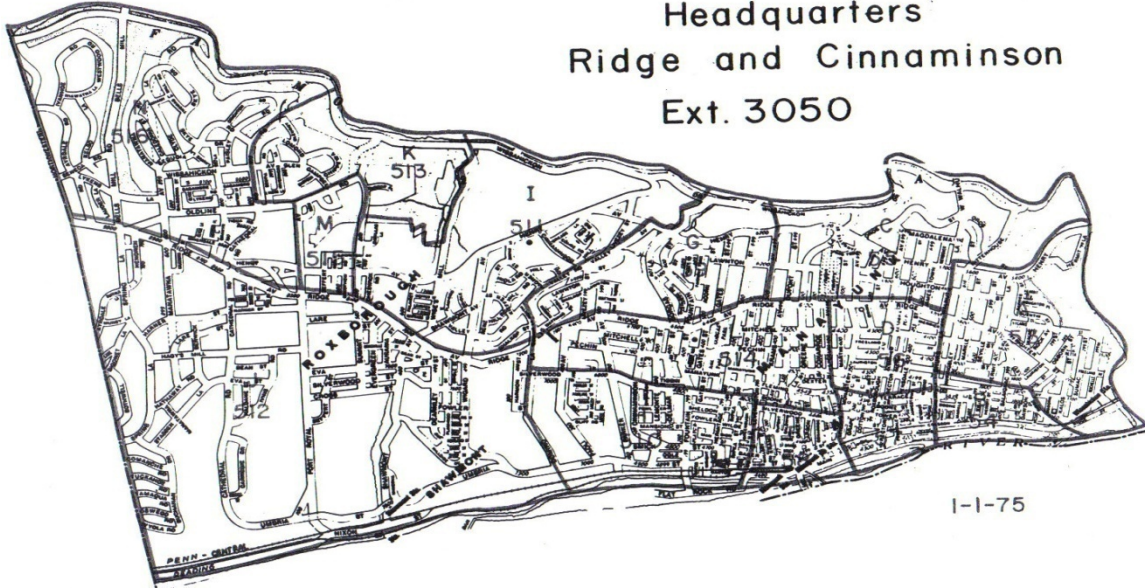
## ANNEX A

The 5<sup>th</sup> police District is located in the Northwest part of the City of Philadelphia. The district is approximately 8.51 square miles



# 5 th DISTRICT

Headquarters  
Ridge and Cinnaminson  
Ext. 3050



1-1-75

