The English Avenue Drug Market Intervention (DMI): An Ongoing Police/Community Partnership

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Numerous prior efforts by law enforcement and residents, yet ... open-air drug markets continued to dominate the English Avenue neighborhood.
Looking toward the Yellow Store on October 31, 2014
The “Yellow Store” at JP Brawley/C.Alexander
Why DMI?
Goals of DMI:

1. Eliminate open-air nature of drug markets (not eradicating drug use)
2. Return the neighborhood to residents (improve safety/quality of life)
3. Improve police/community trust
How a DMI Works:

• Build relationships w/ residents, churches, cops
• Identify/investigate street-level dealers
• arrest offenders w/ history of violence (Tier 1)
• “second chance” for non-violent offenders (Tier 2)
• “call in” Tier 2 and confront with evidence while providing support from family, law enforcement, service providers, clergy, and community leaders
First Drug Market Initiative (DMI) = High Point, North Carolina in 2004

- Since 2004, DMIs in over 35 U.S. cities (i.e. Baltimore, Nashville, New Orleans)
- Overall = reduction 40-80% in violent crime and drug-related crime
- Expect about half of “call in” group reoffend
How English Avenue DMI Worked …

1. Community Engagement/Partnership
2. Investigation (controlled drug buys)
3. Intervention
   - Federal arrests (May 2015)
   - Call-in program (June 2015)
4. Maintenance
   - Ongoing enforcement
   - Ongoing “second chances”
Phase 1: Community Partnership

- English Avenue Neighborhood Ass’n
- Community input
- Training
- Residents/clergy part of “call-in”
- Building relationships of trust
Phase 2: Investigation
Law Enforcement Partnerships

Atlanta Police, Fulton Co. DA

U.S. Attorney’s Office and GaNG

ATF
GBI
HIDTA

Code Enforcement/
Atlanta Solicitor’s Office

Atlanta Fire Rescue
Phase 3: Intervention

**Tier 1** - **27** Federally Charged

**Tier 2** – **“call in”**

**18 Invited / 15 Attended**

= **45** Drug Traffickers
Social Services Partners

THE PHOENIX PARTNERSHIP
English Avenue Drug Market Initiative

- EANA/EAVC Ministerial Alliance
- Urban League Greater Atlanta
- St. Jude’s
- GRAN Recovery/VP Health
- Integrity, CDC
- Atlanta Mission
- Georgia Justice Project

- Salvation Army-Metro Atlanta
- Families First, Inc.
- City of Refuge
- ITC
- Center for Working Families
- Georgia Works
- Georgia Department of Labor
- Fulton County Health Services
“Call-In” Tier 2 Participants

- 4 participated in treatment/counseling/job skills programs
- 1 returned to college
- 2 left town
- 4 not dealing in EA
- 1 arrested on unrelated technical parole violation (later received services)
- 4 charged federally (2 later received services)

(12 of the 18 “Tier 2” dealers were offered services after call-in)
Phase 4: Maintenance

• Encouraged resident calls, immediate response
• Increased police patrols; APF installed surveillance cameras
• Secured funding for officer OT
• 1 cop only for EA
• 2 Reversals = 13 arrests
Maintenance: Properties

Forfeiture complaints filed on 7 properties

(incl. single-family homes and apartment buildings)
• 2 Properties – Owners sold to investors who plan to renovate

• 3 Properties – Stipulated to settlement with owners, who must abide by strong terms to keep properties drug-free

• 2 Properties – Owners pleaded guilty (one to be forfeited; one donated to Atlanta Police Foundation)

• Still sending notice letters to owners ...
690 Cameron Alexander

As of August 1, 2017...

Before....
Maintenance: City Trash Pick-Up

Proctor Street- between James P. Brawley Drive and Andrew Hairston Pl

Complaint: Piles of trash
581 Griffin Street - dead body found (heroin overdose)
The Georgia National Guard’s Counterdrug Task Force demolished 15 persistent problem properties, leaving clean lots with fresh grass.
Where We Are…

- Since 2015, almost 40% decrease in violent and drug crimes
- Market is confined to 3-4 hot spots, changed techniques, moved indoors
- Enforcement continues – more than 30 criminally charged since 2015
- Residents actively partnering w/ law enforcement
- Shooting death of 81-yr-old Mildred Martin solved in 3 days
- DMI notes left on cars parked by heroin dealers
(Where We Are…)

• Sending letters to property owners - invite to meet and discuss criminal activity on their property

• Angel nonprofits acting

• Ongoing referral of residents “in need” to DMI partners for a “second chance”
Restoration – Giving Law Enforcement a “Second Chance”
Revitalization of English Avenue …

“Yellow Store”

St. Mark A.M.E. Church = community events/concerts

@Promise Youth Center (previously vacant elementary school)
@Promise Center
Our English Avenue DMI ...