

Minutes - East Colfax Safety Meeting - DPD District 2 (8/22/2024)

Attendees: Dr. Herold, Brothers Redevelopment, Mercy, Hope, DOTI, Fax Partnership

- 1. Introductions
 - Monica Martinez of The Fax welcomes attendees, The Fax will facilitate.
- 2. Recap of last Meeting
 - Monica goes over the past year of focus on crime in EC, including the survey conducted in conjunction with The Fax.
 - Goal is to monitor the efforts of DPD to address the issues and concerns of the community.
 - Monica opened the floor to recap questions - none received
 - Monica introduced Dr. Herold
- 3. Dr. Herold - PNI Refresher
 - Dr. Herold's background is in studying the stickiness of crime to places.
 - Place Network Investigations look to find the infrastructure that undergirds the crime that persists in certain locations
 - Places are Networks so what can be done proactively to alleviate the pressure that creates crime
 - Involvement of all members - Police, Residents, City Leaders (devoting city resources across the spectrum)
 - Long-term resilience is born from community strength
 - Holistically - lower crime, grocery store will open reducing food deserts
 - Don't just close down problem spots, neutralize issues then rebuild to turn a negative into a positive
 - Goal is to reduce crime while keeping the community (makeup) the same
 - Question: What does community involvement look like?
 - It will depend on each community. For EC, having community organizations already involved, that is a great start. Next step is to have them collaborating along with the community to identify what the community needs.
 - Question: Do police view homelessness as crime?
 - No, but that doesn't mean that those who are unhoused can't commit crime. The grey area is when large populations of unhoused overtake public spaces making them unusable to the general public. There is not one way to address homelessness because there isn't one cause for why one becomes unhoused. Goal is to get appropriate resources to those individuals/areas to alleviate the stress put on individuals that perpetuate the issue.
 - Question: When do the PNI investigations begin? Is there a crime threshold?
 - The PNI Board knows the problem areas because they have been so persistent and long-standing, but this approach can change over time.
 - Follow-up Q: How is city red-tape cut to expedite addressing?
 - The PNI Board works across departments to expedite.
 - Question: Where does the crime go when one network is resolved? Will it just shift the problem area?
 - Old Way was to just deploy resources to try and shut things down, and the crime networks retreat for a time and wait things out, or slightly shift the location (displacement).
 - PNI New Way: resolving the whole network brings down crime on the whole because the underpinnings that prop up the crime (large and small) are no longer there.
 - Follow-up: What happens when that initial area is resolved?
 - The work spirals out to expand the effect.
 - Question: How was the initial focus box defined? What's the timeline?

- It has to start somewhere, based on data (algorithm) and empirical knowledge. It needs to start small and focused because excessive, quick expansion waters down the effect and just makes it the same as the old manner of policing.
 - Commander Aragon introduces himself. Acknowledges that he does not specifically live on Colfax, so he doesn't intrinsically know the needs of the residents, so it's incumbent on police and community to have dialogue to establish what the needs are. Much of the police work now is about identifying the sources of issues, so that doesn't happen immediately, and it may mean that the network extends beyond the specified PNI area - but you have to have an understanding of the scope to be able to effectively address. Commander wants accountability not only from above, but from the community he serves.
 - Follow-up: What can community do? We see a lot.
 - Notify the police, just keep calling. DPD is data driven, if there is a volume of people calling in, that will raise flags - even if it isn't an active crime. CRO's are there to get any and all info community wants to share. Their aim is to connect, get a real understanding of how the community lives.
 - Remove the doubt of the efficacy of calling. DPD recognizes that there is some hesitancy, there is ambivalence because calls so often go on hold, etc...
- Question: Business owners in this area fear retribution when they call the police and because of that, they struggle to survive as the crime goes unchecked and dissuades customers. When people come back, the crime comes back or gets worse. Just a repetitive cycle.
 - It is a process, especially for those in the PNI box. The goal is to be a long-term solution to get areas out of that cycle.
- Question: Living in Aurora, what are we to do when the crime moves to Aurora? Just where you stand on Yosemite means a different jurisdiction.
 - Commander advises that they are in constant contact with Aurora. When it comes to PNI, Aurora not operating in the same way - need to address infrastructure at the moment.
- Question: What is the PNI Board - is it macro (city) or micro (district)?
 - Board is macro for the time being, comprised of heads of city depts that the district chiefs can directly work with and get actionable decisions immediately. These current safety meetings work as the avenue for the community to have a sounding board for DPD to understand how community sees the effects of PNI work.
- Question: On homelessness, it's worse now than ever before (questioner is 3rd gen EC res), what if people are resistant to help, services, etc...?
 - This is not specific to EC unfortunately, but just a general trend.
 - Follow-up: What services are available to the homeless? Questioner works for VOA, and they see a lack of resources for these services - the capacity is inadequate.
 - There are gaps, but there are also services that go underutilized. Essential to get awareness out.
- Question: How does PNI address private ownership that may prop up or look the other way on the crime for their own benefit?
 - Identifying these instances is essential, and if this can be clearly established, then steps can be taken to remove the problem owners.

- 4. Dr. Herold - PNI Project (merged with section above)
- 5. DPD Crime Stats and Updates - Lighting Improvement
 - East Colfax Lighting Changes:

- Lt. Curtis introduces himself, works with PNI board. Assessment was clear that lighting in EC was very inadequate. 65 Street lights in the problem box. What can be done to lighten things up? Dissuade crime. They requested doubling the brightness of the lights (10k lumen to 20k lumen). DOTI advised that this needs to be accepted by the community before enacting.
 - Posed question by Lt. Curtis: Are attendees of this meeting (who encompass a swath of the community) in favor of this effort?
 - New Freedom Park has had the brighter light implementation. No complaints but also no feedback solicited in an area that already under-reports.
 - Attendee Question: are there ecological effects of brighter lighting?
 - There have been studies from DOTI but do not have data on hand.
 - Attendee Question: Because a lot of crime happens behind private property, is there anything on the table to deliver funds for private lighting or to light private areas?
 - Yes. This is on the table and has been funded in the past - Taco Mex and Sheps. Lighting and fencing via Brothers Redevelopment with September implementation.
 - Goal is to have a standing budget to have this be a continual option.
 - Business owners should contact DPD to let them know if they are willing to have public lighting attached to their business.
 - There will still be dark spots even with the brighter lights - the way to address that is more poles.
 - If the community does not like the change once implemented, there is always a chance to downgrade back to old bulbs.
 - Attendee Question: Who can we petition to change placement of poles?
 - Xcel.
- 6. DOTI Updates - Safer Streets: Christian Stewart introduces himself
 - Project is to fund CPTED, increased lighting, with focus between Ulster and Verbena.
 - Objective 1: Community Walks to increase surveillance and feedback/data
 - Sub-Goal: Train individuals in CPTED
 - DPD doing work on this front, DOTI wants to bolster this for both businesses and residents
 - Sub-Goal: Internal outreach regarding people experiencing homelessness.
 - Objective 2: DOTI to allocate money for micro-grants, with goal to fund CPTED recommendations. Up to \$1500 grants directly to businesses (40 total over 2 years)
 - Objective 2.2: DOTI to install 20 streetlights
 - DOTI awarded \$869,000 (not full amount). Wanted to do tree planting, but not enough money - and who would maintain?
 - John from DOTI advised that the grant is being held up in the Mayor's Office, perhaps this PNI board can get movement on the grant.
- Meeting time has elapsed - Monica introduced a website tool that The Fax has established to help communication between community and DPD (shared flier with QR code).
- Next Wednesday, Street Frat - Mayor's Office will be there on 8/28
- Commander asked if lighting was resolved or should a vote be conducted, Christian cautioned against immediate approval without hearing from members who are directly affected, Meghan (DPD) recognized that the community may have survey fatigue - what is the best way to actually get this feedback.
 - Commander said that if this is approved now, Xcel is ready to implement in Sept.
 - Monica suggested and attendees agreed that if there isn't a big push for no lights after the meeting, DPD will advise PNI board of approval.