NPSC
NEWARK PUBLIC SAFETY COLLABORATIVE

Data-Informed Conversations Lead to Multi-Stakeholder Collaborations That Solve Pressing Crime Problems

Art School, Businesses and the Police: A Case Study

The NPSC helps reduce crime and improve public safety by making data analytics and research evidence accessible to local community groups and change agents.

The Backstory:

Newark experienced a rise in motor vehicle theft (MVT) because cars were being left running unattended. Early efforts by law enforcement to control this problem were largely ineffective. The PD presented the issue to the NPSC for additional support.

At the monthly NPSC meeting:

Police commanders explained to the group that their next course of action was to increase police patrols and write more summonses to idling vehicles as a means of deterrence. Local community stakeholders in attendance had concerns about this approach. They questioned the general deterrence effects that ticketing some individuals would have on the overall problem. They also worried that drivers would not be able to afford paying fines, which could lead to warrants, arrests and other penalties that would be punitively disproportionate to the offense committed, and disconnected from solving the underlying problem at-hand. Instead, they requested that the PD enhance its educational campaign based on NPSC analyses, and they offered to coordinate their own resources to assist in this effort.

The NPSC staff presented its spatial-temporal analysis of MVT to the group, which found that places near convenience stores/bodegas and pharmacies had the highest risk during daytime hours and places near liquor stores and gas stations had the highest risk during nighttime hours.. Consensus formed around the situational context, or 'risk narrative', that drivers were likely leaving cars running and unattended for quick errands at these particular businesses (probably on their ways to or from work).

> To address nighttime risks, the public utility company expanded its outreach to these businesses with offers to participate in the free street-pole mounted floodlight program -- to better illuminate storefronts.

> Community nonprofit organizations joined forces to implement resident-led business checks at the high-risk places. They encouraged managers to remind customers to turn off their cars. (Perhaps some retailers got creative and offered discounts to customers who showed their keys!)

> A charter school, along with mercantile associations and other local groups, established a poster contest for elementary school-aged children whereby the winning poster would be visibly affixed to entrances of storefronts located in high-risk places, reminding patrons to "Turn off your car, Take your keys".

> The PD agreed to direct patrols at the highest-risk places, and promised to reconsider the ticketing of idling vehicles while exploring other options. As part of their community policing efforts, they will also help distribute the wining poster to businesses within their newly optimized target areas.

Why This Works: Organizations that participate with NPSC maintain their independence, but they operate in a coordinated fashion by being equally data-informed. The combined collective actions contribute to crime reductions and increased public safety. **Visit www.publicsafetycollaborative.org to learn more.**