

Hawthorne Police Department

Safe Business Initiative

Business Plan 2020

Background

The annual cost of crime against businesses is in the billions of dollars. Business victimization hurts business owners, employees, neighbors, customers, and the public at large. Still, convincing businesses of the importance of participating in crime prevention partnerships with the police can be challenging. The overall impact may have a significant and adverse effect on a municipality as well as a decrease in revenue may result in reduction of public services, lay-offs, and in extreme cases, the outsourcing of critical services. As such, recognizing the importance of maintaining open lines of communication between the police and business is not only necessary, but should become a matter of mutual interdependence.

The Hawthorne Police Department's "Safe Business Initiative" is the first documented effort to formalize the relationships encompassing the over 4300 businesses currently licensed to operate legally in the City of Hawthorne. While efforts to contact the over 4300 business is a daunting task and may not target the specific approaches within the vision of this initiative, it is imperative to clearly define the goals of this initiative, its parameters and approaches to measure its success.

Safe Business Initiative Goals

First: The goal of a police-business partnership is identifying the various businesses throughout the City of Hawthorne where partnerships will benefit the business in achieving its purpose for operating within the boundaries of the City of Hawthorne. For example, South Bay Ford may be in existence to increase sales of Ford Motor products; however, if it is unable to sustain viability due to blighted conditions surrounding the Ford Dealer, then potential buyers may apt to take their businesses elsewhere; hence negatively impacting the Ford Motor Corporation in the City of Hawthorne. This may impact revenue for the City of Hawthorne and in turn, impact it the quality of life for the Hawthorne residents.

Understanding and establishing an ongoing business partnership, improving dialogue and working together to mutually address and mitigate barriers to increase delivery of service is a critical component to this program.

The first priority is to identify the large scale stakeholders that, through their vision, will remain the Hawthorne Police Departments first priority to contact, establish and improve ongoing open lines of communication to resolve any issues that are adversely impacting their goals. This large group, can best be defined as the City's "Major Stakeholders."

Second: The goal of this police business partnership is to identify the businesses that are currently struggling to increase revenue that due to their size, limited resources, and lack of support, are struggling and are unable to address problems on their own. These types of businesses, best described "Chronically Challenged", often face continuous challenges that commonly include robberies, theft, extortion, gang violence, and other crimes such as drug sales, drinking in public and graffiti that deter shoppers from shopping at these locations. It is the Hawthorne Police Departments goal in this partnership to help address these challenges by using contemporary approaches to mitigate crime, nuisance, and vagrancy impacting these small businesses.

Through this partnership, we hope to embolden the businesses to cooperate with the Hawthorne Police Department in providing support with recommended environmental design, prosecutions and other related forms of enforcement. For example, after numerous complaints by adjacent business and local homeowners regarding illegal drug sales, prostitution and illegal dumping at a family owned business along the Imperial Highway corridor, officers approached the business and arranged for the establishment of a wrought iron gate to the rear of Variety Liquor. By enclosing an area plagued by drug users, homeless encampments, prostitution and illegal dumping, there has been nearly a 90% reduction in calls for service. The resultant is a family owned business that is well established in a major thoroughfare that is appealing, safe and now enjoys the comfort of increased sales. Through these approaches, both the businesses and Law Enforcement can come up with common sense approaches that have deep rooted, and often permanent impacts.

Third: The effectiveness of a police – business partnership is predicated on statistical data in regards to the increase in business success, which can only be measured by the business itself. For law enforcement, it is based on the volume of increase or decrease in calls for service at each of the designated and target locations. While some businesses may see an increase in revenue, sales or an increase in productivity – the contributing variables are difficult to measure from the Law Enforcement perspective. However, Law Enforcements only measure of contributed success is predicated on the call volumes at each of the businesses. Therefore, as part of this approach, it is imperative that a sunset is in place to allow Law Enforcement to test its effectiveness. As a recommendation, each phase of the testing period will begin and end with each patrol shift deployment period.

Types of Partnerships

Area- Specific: The city of Hawthorne operates patrol deployment on a 4-beat system for the deployment of uniformed personnel to address daily calls for service. Utilizing this same model, the Safe Business Initiative will utilize the same quadrants to identify the targeted businesses. After compiling a list of “Major Stakeholders” and “Chronically Challenged” businesses, a strategic approach to meet and greet will be in effect. If the area is small, you can contact business owners and employees by visiting each location. For larger areas, initial contact can occur through the mail. Before this can be done, however, a reliable listing of businesses is needed and such lists can be surprisingly difficult to obtain.

Issue- Specific: Issue-specific partnerships focus on a certain type of crime or a particular situation, most commonly a public order problem that has reached the point where intervention is needed. This form of partnership need not last once the specific problem is solved. Because they may be short-lived, such partnerships may not need to be formal or institutionalized. For example, the City of Hawthorne Oceangate Complex is composed of various large scale retailers that are self-sufficient, but are often disrupted by the number of transients that settle for short periods of time in adjacent parking lots, freeway embankments or in parking lots where customers are routinely approached or encroached up. These type of nuisance calls take up significant patrol time and often the solution is only temporary. But pooling in resources such as Public Works and Caltrans, a

more permanent solution can be attained through direct enforcement, removal of vegetation along the freeway or added private security in the main parking area.

Business- Specific: Business- specific partnerships are often formed in response to a rash of crimes that target a particular type of business, such as bank or convenience store robberies; others are formed to address a specific chronic problem. This type of partnership requires a variety of approaches to help mitigate barriers to progress for the small business. These types of business may require the following proactive approaches:

- Zero-Tolerance
- CPTED Inspections / Enforcement
- Hot Spot Policing
- “Koper Curve” Theory
- CITF Involvement

Methodology

The Special Operations Bureau (SOB), Community Affairs Bureau (CAB) and members of the Community Improvement Task Force (CITF) will compile a list of businesses suited for direct contact during the current deployment period. Both SOB and CAB will identify the “Major Stakeholders” and together, will contact and conduct not only an assessment of business needs, but will complete a business profile that identifies all of the business components necessary for current and future partnerships.

Once the targeted Stakeholders are identified, the members of the SOB / CAB will maintain continuous assessment of stakeholder needs, with an ultimate goal of maintaining long-term relationships. The Stakeholder group will require very little engagement and interaction, but the relationship has to be consistent and continuous.

As for Chronically Challenged businesses, utilizing Comp stats, internal databases and businesses identified by the CAB / SOB as chronic locations, the teams will require a more diligent approach with a variety of approaches.

Once the target businesses are identified, a comparison of calls for service during the prior deployment period for the targeted group, will serve as a means to measure future success at the end of the current targeted time frame. In addition to the above groups that provide ongoing police services to the targeted groups, information sharing with other bureaus that include the Patrol Division, Traffic Bureau and Detective Bureau will be essential for continuous attention.