



**OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF
BUNCOMBE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA**

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Quentin Miller, Sheriff

Asheville Downtown Central Business District Pilot Problem-Solving Initiative

Summary Report

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On April 14, 2023, The Buncombe County Sheriff's Office implemented a pilot problem-solving initiative in the Downtown Central Business District of Asheville, North Carolina. The initiative called for the utilization of saturated patrol (on foot and vehicle) by law enforcement personnel from both the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office and the Asheville Police Department. The goal of the initiative was to identify the "root cause" for the various crimes and undesirable activities being committed in the Downtown Central Business District and to identify strategies to eliminate or greatly reduce crime in the area utilizing the Problem-Solving model known as Problem Oriented Policing, or P.O.P. as it is commonly called.

Problem Oriented Policing is not to be confused with C.O.P. (Community Oriented Policing), P.O.P. is more analytical in nature and occurs over a short span of time. The focus of P.O.P. is narrowly focused on one or very few specific problem(s) and location(s). The study and interaction with the stakeholders are short-lived. C.O.P. on the other hand is a long-term engagement with the public to develop strategies and programs designed to address a multitude of problems, rather than one specific problem or location. In its truest sense, Community Oriented Policing is a philosophical approach that is adopted agency wide with a partnership component between law enforcement and the community.

It is important to understand that the goal of this initiative was not to implement heavy enforcement. While enforcement of state and local laws was a component of the initiative, and the issuance of citations and arrests did occur; this was not the primary focus of the initiative. The problem-solving approach calls for observation of all activities (crimes and undesirable events). Problem Oriented Policing seeks to answer the following questions:

- What are the problems?
- Where are they occurring?
- What conditions exist that promotes the problem?
- What actions are the victims engaging in that makes them likely victims?
- What conditions exists that enables the offender to commit certain crimes or behavior?

During the observation officers seek to determine whether an act is the symptom of a larger problem. Once all activities are documented, then the agency can delineate between symptoms and problems. Once collected, all activities are analyzed to determine the "root cause" by determining the "Restraining Forces," and "Driving Forces" in play.

RESTRAINING FORCES

Restraining Forces are things, actions, or conditions that allow, promote, or create the problem to be addressed. Examples could be things such as poor lighting, bars overserving alcohol, little or no law enforcement presence, lack of partnership with law enforcement, lack of trust towards law enforcement, poverty, and homelessness are things that can foster, promote, or exacerbate problems in a community.

DRIVING FORCES

Driving Forces are things or actions that create change. For example, having greater law enforcement presence, partnerships between all stakeholders, enforcement of laws, better housing for the homeless, greater clinical care for the homeless, a "Tri-Responder Model such as the one currently being piloted, etc.

Once these two factors are determined, law enforcement and community stakeholders can work together develop strategies designed to eliminate or greatly minimize the Restraining Forces that have contributed to crime and other undesirable elements in the affected area. Those implementing and executing agreed upon positive problem-solving strategies become the "driving force," which brings about change.

The Problem-Solving Initiative

This Problem-Solving initiative was carried out over a 30-day period on Friday and Saturday nights from 9:00 pm to 1:00 am with the exception of one weekend in which the hours were modified and the initiative was carried out from 10:00 pm until 2:00 am. This adjustment was made to determine if criminal acts or acts considered to be of a nuisance would increase once local bars and restaurants closed. Particularly business establishments that served alcoholic beverages. A total of 208 hours of manpower was allocated to this initiative by the BCSO.

It should be noted that on three separate weekends several crimes occurred within 1-2 hours after the initiative was concluded for the night and as some of the bars and restaurants were closing down. There was a robbery, a report of shots fired, and a felonious assault in which a Buncombe County Sheriff's Deputy was shot and an Asheville Police Officer was assaulted. It is unknown if one or more of these offenses could have been prevented had a law enforcement presence been in place.

This Problem-Solving initiative was proposed by Sheriff Quentin Miller and shared with Chief David Zack of the Asheville Police Department and various members of county and city government. The proposed plan called for collaboration between the sheriff's office and the police department. The plan called for a coordinated effort to present a highly visible and unified law enforcement presence in the Downtown Central Business District. Furthermore, the plan after presented was revised and called for a partnership between the two agencies whereas an officer from each agency would pair up in 2's for a total of 4 two-man teams. This partnership did not occur. The plan also called for inclusion of the North Carolina Alcohol Law Enforcement Agency (ALE). This partnership did occur.

While the initiative could be deemed successful in its goal to identify the "root cause" for the existence of crime and other problems or issues in the Downtown Central Business District; the collaboration and partnership between the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office and the Asheville Police Department unfortunately did not occur. Both agencies had a downtown presence, however only the Buncombe

County Sheriff's office was present in the target area (the Downtown Central Business District). Both the Sheriff's Office and Asheville Police Department were situated in the Downtown business district; however, they were in separate parts of the downtown area. There was no true partnership or collaboration between the two agencies.

To determine the root cause of problems and issues in the district, The Buncombe County Sheriff's Office documented all observed activities occurring in the district during this initiative. Criminal and non-criminal activities were observed and documented. In addition to documentation from the initiative, deputies interviewed downtown patrons, business owners, and employees. Historical law enforcement calls for service data for the downtown central district was collected from the Buncombe County Communication Center. A six-month report of all calls for service in the Downtown area was studied as well as a report comparing activity during the same time period as the initiative for this year in 2022. This information was helpful and enabled the sheriff's office to get a more complete understanding of the crime and nuisance events occurring in the district.

Central Downtown Business District Concerns

At the commencement of this initiative the perception of many regarding the Downtown Business District was somewhat mixed in terms of overall safety, wellness, and a wholesome environment for patrons, business owners, and employees. Media coverage regarding the Downtown Business District as a whole had been mixed and at best less than favorable. The media has presented and quoted business owners, employees, and patrons who have made statements that indicate there is a heightened level of concern or fear of crime and other activities that threaten their personal safety while working, shopping, or dining in the downtown business district. There is concern by some that the district's economical livelihood is or could be negatively impacted as a result of issues currently being experienced in the district. The primary concerns and symptoms are:

Crime related incidents such as assaults, illicit drug activity, larcenies, damage to property, loud music, illegal possession, and use of firearms are some of the primary concerns. During this initiative, deputies responded to calls of this nature with the exception of larceny. There is also concern over the area being frequented by homeless persons. Some complaints are that of homeless individuals sleeping or camping out in front of downtown businesses. There have also been complaints of indecent exposure by offenders. These events can have a negative impact on the overall appeal of the business district.

A 2023 survey of 199 participants conducted by the Asheville Downtown Association supported the above stated fears and concerns. On a scale of 1 – 8; the top two issues concerning the participants were homelessness (a score of 6.53% out of 8) and safety/crime reduction (a score of 6.3 out of 8). In this same survey on a scale of 1– 4, the return of a downtown police presence was rated as the number one priority of four possible initiatives if funding was allocated by local government.

When asked if they were concerned with the issues listed below, those surveyed responded as follows:

Decrease in police presence – 58%

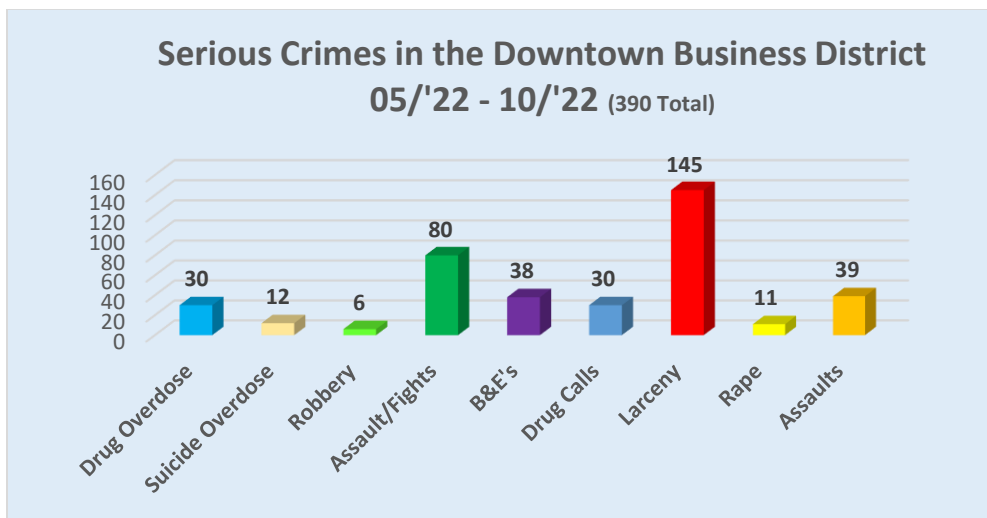
Criminal Activity – 55%

Vandalism/Property Damage _ 48%

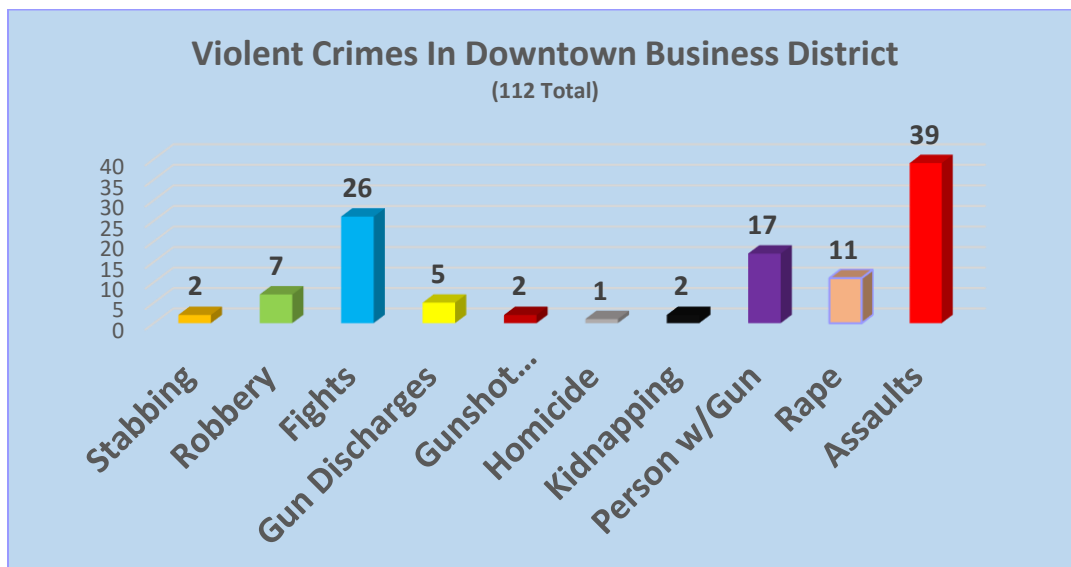
Illegal/Nuisance – 48%

Seventy-eight percent of the respondents of this survey indicated that they had staff or customers who expressed concerns regarding feelings of safety in the downtown business district. A spontaneous survey of random persons (downtown business owners, employees, and citizens in the area) showed that 34% of those surveyed had concerns regarding their personal safety. This same group when asked if they had witnessed anti-social behavior while downtown returned a result of 52.4%. The charts below depict various crimes and nuisance activities taking place in the downtown business district in the past six months.

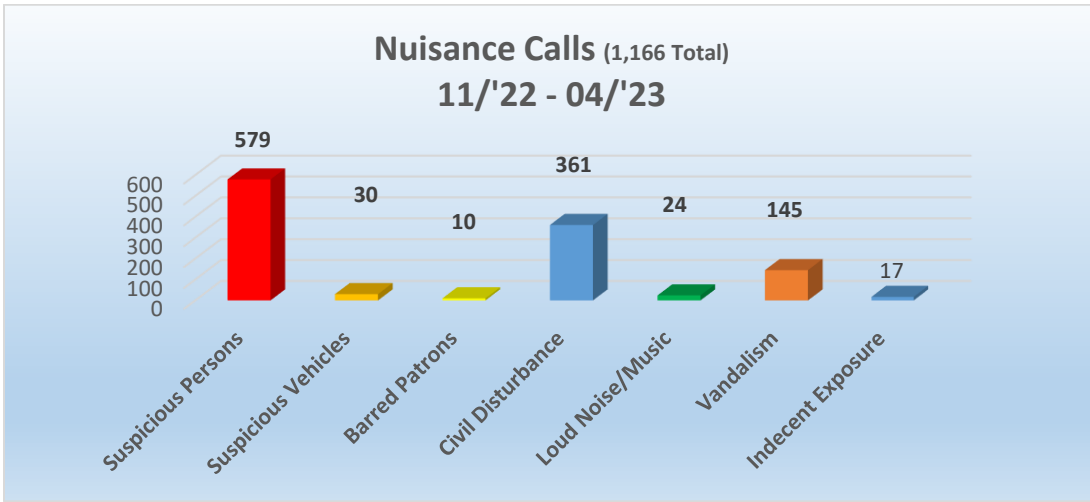
Serious Offenses



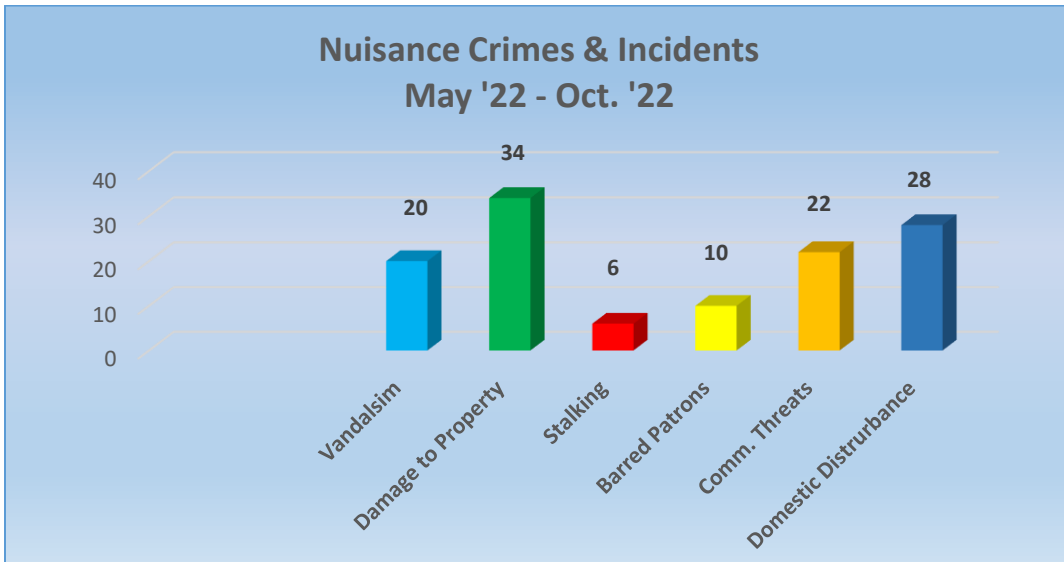
Violent Crimes by Type in the Downtown Business District



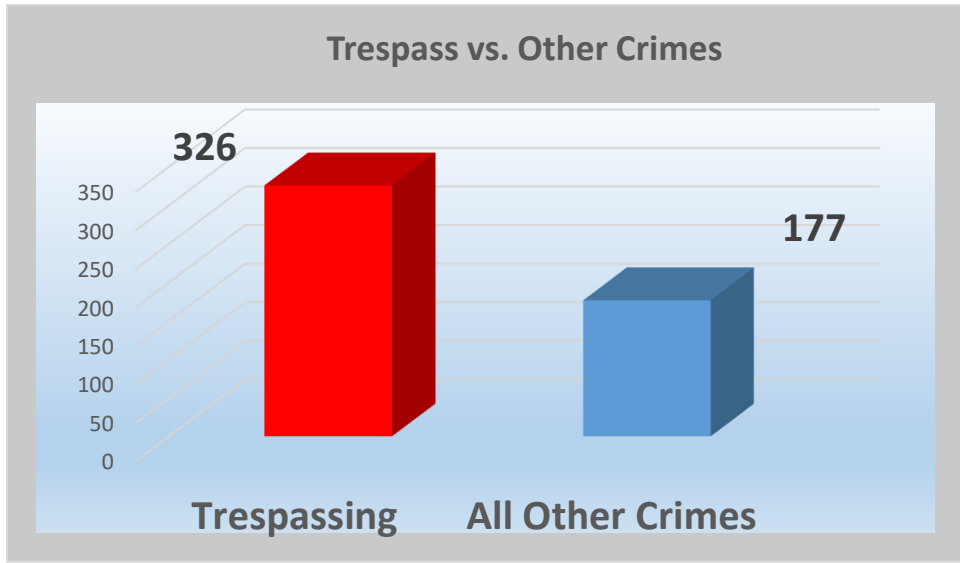
Downtown District Nuisance Calls for Service



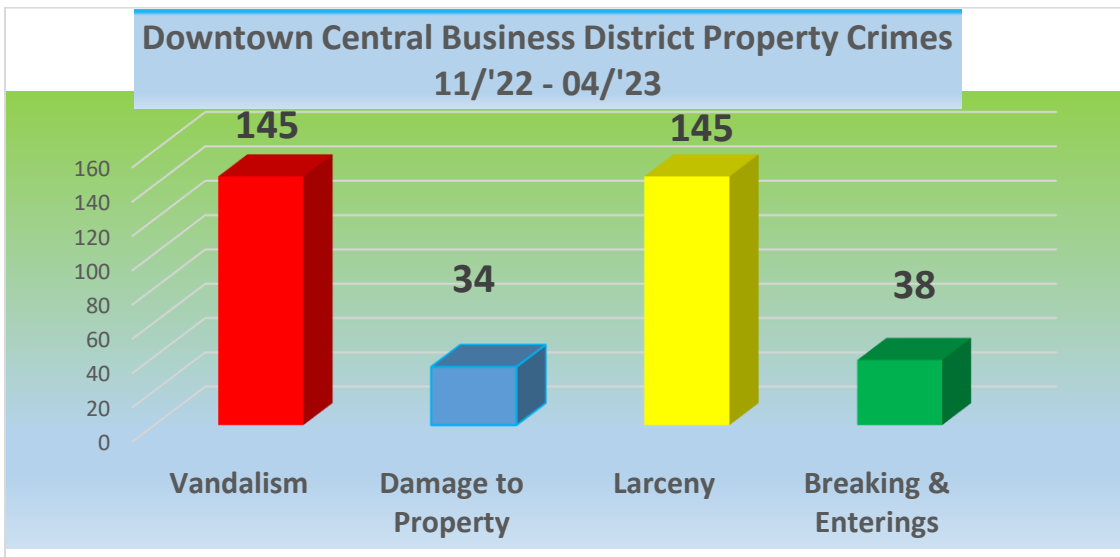
Other Nuisance Crimes & Incidents in Downtown Business District



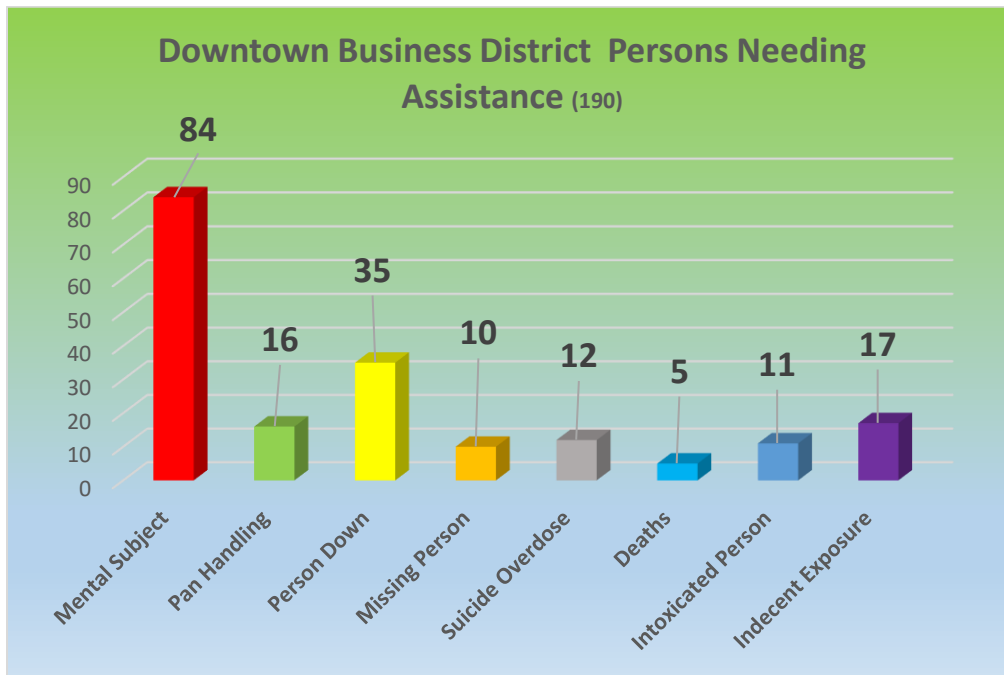
Trespass and Other Offenses



Downtown Business District Property Crimes



Persons Needing Assistance



Problem-Solving Initiative Observations

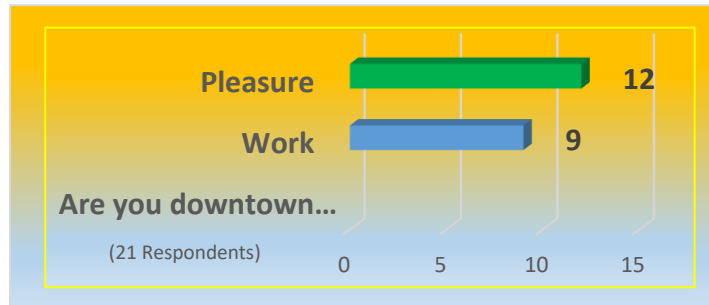
During the initiative, the BCSO had the privilege of speaking with numerous individuals in the Central Business District. The overall response by the public to the heightened law enforcement presence downtown was overwhelmingly positive. Unsolicited “thank you’s” and “Glad you all are down here.” were typical comments deputies received from persons they encountered as foot patrol was being conducted. This was quite frequent and ongoing. These comments came from business owners, patrons, and employees of downtown businesses. When asked to participate in a survey, all who were asked to participate did so quite willingly. The sheriff’s office also received emails from various sources expressing appreciation and support for the heightened law enforcement presence downtown.

Below is a chart depicting answers from members of the public when asked about their perspective on safety in the Central Downtown Business District. This particular survey was conducted by Deputy Mark Warren of the BCSO. This particular survey was limited in scope (in terms of the number of participants-21); however, the responses were similar to those received from downtown patrons, business owners, and employees when interviewed by other deputies working in the Downtown Central Business District. A list of the various businesses visited by the deputies is listed just below the survey charts.

Downtown Safety and Wellness Perception Survey

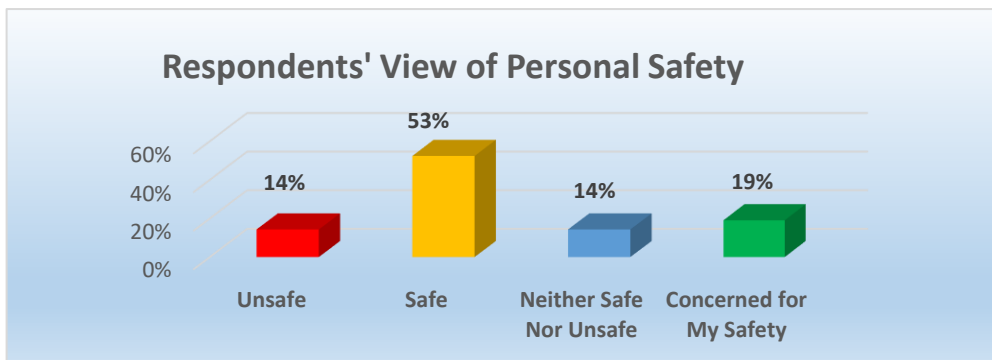
Question: Are you downtown for work or pleasure?

Response:



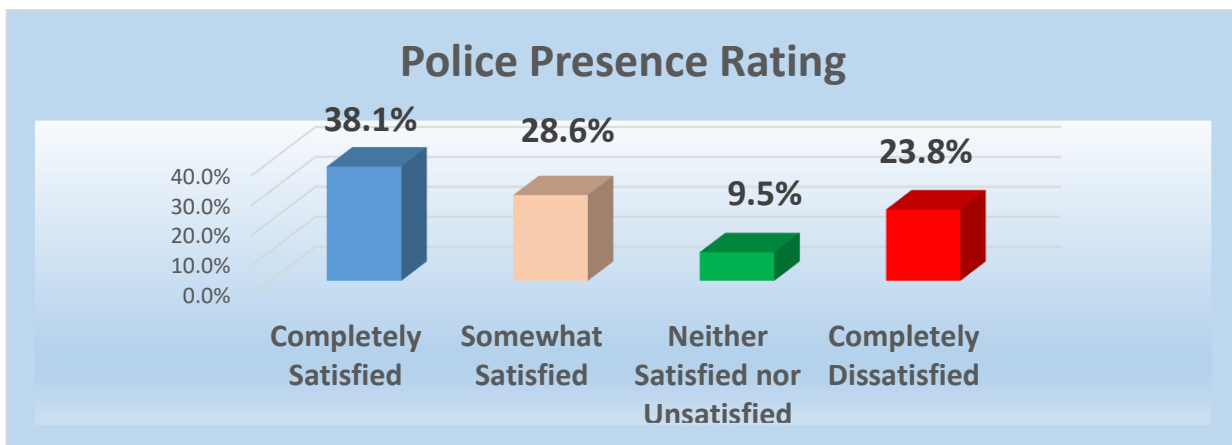
Question: Do you feel safe while downtown?

Response:



Question: How satisfied are you with a police presence downtown?

Response:



NOTE: The number of persons in this survey was a total of 21 individuals. Even though some deputies did not conduct formal surveys, they did engage in conversations with downtown patrons and inquired of their overall impressions of the downtown business district and the presence of the BCSO deputies in the area. Everyone expressed a high degree of approval for a greater law enforcement presence. One deputy engaged in conversations with over fifty individuals (mostly small groups) in one night. Engagement with citizens present in the Downtown Central Business District was extremely high and led to very positive exchanges between deputies and the public.

Law Enforcement Activity and Observations

On Site Business/Merchant Visits:

The following is a list of some of the businesses in the Downtown Central Business District visited by BCSO deputies during this initiative. These encounters were initiated by the deputies. Additional businesses were contacted as a response to law enforcement assistance. These businesses are not included below.

AC Hotel	Cambria Hotel	Aloft Hotel
Melting Pot Social	Room Nine	Chestnut Restaurant
Havana Miami	The Piano Bar	Rosetta's Kitchen
Mellow Mushroom	Ben & Jerry's	Treasures of Earth
Tupelo Honey		
Carolina Cigar	Miyako House	Hikawa Restaurant
		Mountain
Pack's Tavern	Rhubarb Restaurant	Inspirational
Posana Restaurant	Salsa's Restaurant	Barley's Tap Room
Wonderland Retail	The Lobster Trap	
Store	Restaurant	Forever Tattoo
Jack O' the Wood	Orange Peel	Dueling Piano Bar
Wicked Weed Brewing	Mamacita's Restaurant	Hazel Twenty

During the weekends this initiative was in operation pedestrian traffic was moderate. Warmer nights resulted in elevated foot activity (mostly restaurant and bar patrons). Vehicular traffic was medium during the hours of operation. Deputies were primarily patrolling the area on foot, but also utilized vehicular patrol and use of the Sheriff's Office electric mobile cart.

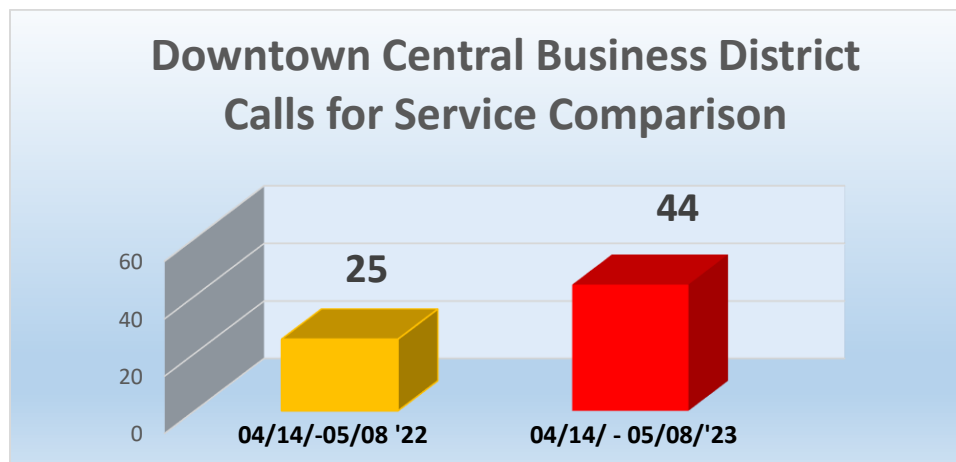
Calls and Complaints:

Deputies responded to various complaints and calls for service. These calls consisted of the following:

- Loud Music/Noise (primarily around Pritchard Park)
- Mental Health - Subject with an axe striking a building
- Civil Disturbance
- Subjects possessing/smoking marijuana
- Hotel guest creating a disturbance
- Mental Health/Homeless Person displaying acts of aggression and creating a disturbance due to mental issues (transported to hospital for evaluation)
- Traffic related calls for service (speeding and lack of parking for district as a whole)

- Suspicious persons (multiple calls)
- Intoxicated person
- Vandalism of Vance Monument (reported by downtown patron; juvenile detained, released to parents, and referred for juvenile court)
- Homeless individuals doing drugs in stairwell of a business
- Trespassing by homeless persons sleeping in front of businesses storefront
- Investigated call regarding person with outstanding warrants
- Civil disturbance (persons engaged in an argument)
- Person down needing assistance
- Miscellaneous calls

A comparison of calls for service in 2022 during the same time period of this initiative is shown below.



NOTE: Homelessness: From November 2022 - April 27, 2023, there were a total of 5,999 calls for service.

Deputies working this detail on several occasions spoke with merchants and employees who expressed heightened concern for their personal safety. The lack of police presence was mentioned by several individuals. There were also complaints of the problems presented by homeless individuals. Some individuals who were interviewed by deputies were mainly concerned with homeless individuals with mental issues. Because of the lack of police presence, some may not have contacted law enforcement. The presence of homeless individuals was observed on multiple instances during this initiative. Some were sleeping in storefronts and entry ways. Others were either walking in the area or camped out under bridges and one “sanctuary church site.”

On one occasion, one homeless man was observed sleeping in a storefront. This person was interviewed by members of the BCSO. A local mobile paramedic was requested by the BCSO for a medical assessment for this person. The paramedic determined that this person was not in need of any medical care. An interview with this person revealed that on this particular night he had sought shelter, but no one could house him. He advised all shelters were full that night. This individual had been drinking; however, he was not intoxicated, he did not have any health issues, and other than sleeping under a sign

with wording prohibition such was on file with the Asheville Police department, he had not committed any crimes.

Several things became evident in this and other encounters:

- There is a need for more temporary housing and assistance to the homeless.
- There are various organizations that attempt to assist the homeless, but due to a lack of resources and a lack of collaboration between the various non-profits that deal with homelessness many in need go unassisted.
- According to this individual, he and other homeless persons are often fed by local downtown businesses as was the case this time.
- Because of the lack of police presence, the prohibition against sleeping in storefronts is not observed by the homeless and is consequently ineffective.
- The City of Asheville should review its ordinance on camping in the city to determine if it is adequate and enforceable as written and if not, it should be re-visited.
- A review of calls for service for this time period in 2022 did not reveal any enforcement action such as citations or arrests. A six-month review of calls for service in the downtown district between the months of May 2022 and October 2022 did not indicate any enforcement action for the act of camping out in front of businesses.

Lighting:

Upon inspecting the downtown business district, it appears there is a need for more and brighter lighting in the downtown area. Some areas had lights that were not working. These locations as well as poorly lit locations were documented by deputies so that Duke Energy could be notified to address this problem. Past experiences have proven that brighter lighting gives shoppers and other patrons a greater sense of safety during afterhours in locations such as the downtown district.

Poor or no lighting can sometimes be conducive to criminal activity. An assessment of the entire downtown lighting by the City of Asheville is highly recommended.

Loud Noise:

During the hours of this assignment, there were several bars and restaurants in operation. Some of these businesses played music that could be heard multiple blocks away while in the district. Most businesses were reasonable in terms of the volume of their music considering the time of night. One location was definitely the exception, and its noise level was well beyond what would be considered reasonable. Due to the decibel level of the music, it could be heard for many blocks away in all direction. This was on multiple nights and needs to be addressed if the city in fact has a noise ordinance, it should be enforced.

If the City of Asheville does have a noise ordinance, it should be enforced.

Enforcement:

Most all businesses serving alcohol were visited by deputies of the BCSO and/or North Carolina Alcohol Law Enforcement agents, (ALE) to assure all businesses were in compliance with state laws regulating the sale of alcoholic beverages. No establishments were found to be in violation of any laws. As stated,

enforcement was not the primary purpose for this pilot initiative, however; there were some offenses committed that warranted enforcement action. Enforcement led to the following actions:

Arrests-Citations-Charges

- Possession of cocaine
- Possession of drug paraphernalia
- Possession of a firearm by a convicted felon
- Juvenile detention and referral for vandalism

Non-Enforcement Action

The sheriff's office responded to a call of a disturbance at a local club. On arrival, deputies encountered a homeless individual who was creating a disturbance. Deputies attempted to contact a family member; the family member refused to get involved. The deputies then transported the individual to Mission Hospital for a clinical assessment.

Follow Up Actions:

The sheriff's office conducted an inspection of all lighting in the Downtown Central Business District and noted areas where streetlights were not installed but needed. Lights that were inoperable or not adequate were noted for repair or replacement by the power company. The BCSO will contact Duke Energy once all of the downtown business district has been assessed for lighting.

Sheriff Miller and staff from the sheriff's office met with Mr. Michael Woods of the Western North Carolina Rescue Mission to discuss various remedies for providing assistance to homeless individuals who are in need of and willing to participate in programs designed to provide clinical treatment, short term housing residency, employment opportunities and life skills. Sheriff Miller discussed the possibility of working with the rescue mission on a project that could provide the different services mentioned. Sheriff Miller and Mr. Woods will be having additional discussions in the near future on this possible joint venture.

As stated at the beginning of this report, the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office realizes the importance of working in partnership with all stakeholders to address the needs and concerns that exist in the Downtown Central Business District and the Downtown District as a whole. The sheriff's office will be conducting an onsite visit with the New Hanover Sheriff's Office to observe their collaborative effort with the Wilmington Police Department to address issues of crime in the community. BCSO staff will spend time in the field and review policies and procedures for this partnership.

The sheriff's office will also be conducting a listening session meeting with all downtown merchants and employees. The sheriff's office is currently expanding its FUSUS Realtime Intelligence System access to facilitate real time monitoring of the various businesses in the downtown district. We are currently contacting local hotels so that we can place cameras on hotel buildings, thus providing the sheriff's office with greater video surveillance/coverage of the Downtown Business District.

The Buncombe County Sheriff's Office will await the conclusion of the City of Asheville Safety Initiative and meet with the involved agencies to become familiar with its outcomes and assessment of

this collaboration between the various agencies involved in this project and discuss if this is something all parties are interested in and willing to pursue.

Summary of Findings

Based on onsite observations and historical data collected and reviewed during this initiative it is apparent that the concerns for the present conditions downtown are warranted. In looking for the “Root Cause” the sheriff’s office looked at many symptoms (Restraining Forces) and reviewed information captured on site during the initiative and in person and past documentation on crimes and incidents in the Downtown Business District to determine the “Root Cause(s).” Based on what we’ve discovered during this initiative it appears that the “Root Causes” are related to homelessness and law enforcement in the downtown business district.

Root Causes

Lack of Enforcement meaning the Lack of An Appreciable Law Enforcement Presence in the Downtown Business District and the Lack of Collaboration During Current Manpower Shortage

The “Root Cause” here is the absence of a police presence in the Downtown Business District. As a result of this, certain individuals are more comfortable committing and ignoring crimes and are likely to continue doing so until there is an improved police presence and more enforcement. There appears there has been a lack of enforcement in the area due to a minimal police presence to observe violations and act on them. Based on reports in the media and statements from Chief Zack himself, this absence in the district is due to a loss of one hundred officers in the past two years. One could accurately determine the root problem for law enforcement is the loss of one hundred officers, thus resulting a very limited presence in the district.

Another factor associated with law enforcement is public perception that the city’s police department is limiting its response to certain types of crimes that may occur in the district and the city as a whole. This has been reported in the media. There appears to be a common occurrence in which homeless individuals sleep in storefronts which is prohibited. These individuals do so without fear of arrest for trespassing or violating local ordinances. According to the calls for service report covering the time period of November 2022 through April 27, 2023, there were a total of 326 trespassing complaints in the business district and only fifteen arrests for trespassing.

This is in no way meant to be critical of the city’s police department. Often times offenders will leave the area prior to police arrival. Sometimes the caller will not press charges, which in turn prevents the police from citing or arresting an individual since the complaint is a misdemeanor and occurred outside of the officer’s presence. And as stated earlier, the current manpower situation has a negative impact as well.

The lack of collaboration and in some instances cooperation between the various stakeholders affected by the current situation is a primary root cause. Cooperation and collaboration are key elements necessary to efficiently and effectively address the issues the district is facing. There is a need for law

enforcement, city and county government, merchants, the district attorney's office, local 501(c)(3) organizations, and clinical/medical providers to come together and determine the resources each have that can be directed towards addressing the needs and concerns the Downtown Business District have.

The Second Root Cause Is a Lack of Adequate Housing, Clinical Treatment, and Rehabilitative services for the Homeless.

It is apparent that there is a critical need to address homelessness in the City of Asheville. The encounter cited earlier in this document was just one prime example of how difficult the task of addressing homelessness is. The individual was not intoxicated, he had no medical problems, aside from sleeping in a store front property downtown, he had committed no violations of the law. This individual advised he had been turned down for overnight lodging due to there being no available space in any of the local shelters. What started out to be a potential law enforcement matter evolved into a homelessness situation where neither law enforcement nor the responding paramedic unit could provide any assistance to address his needs.

There appears to be inadequate plans to meet the needs of the homeless at present. For various reasons, many of these individuals are drawn to the downtown district. Limited shelter from the elements by using store fronts, restaurants feeding the homeless when they have excess food at closing, members of the public sometimes feed the homeless or give money when approached by panhandlers, etc.

The third root cause is the lack of collaboration among all of the stakeholders attempting to serve and address this special population.

It is apparent that there is a need for more accessible housing and mental health treatment for the homeless. The cost for this will be extremely high. Various sources for funding should be pursued by the city and county if they hope to properly address the homelessness problem. Both the county and city should assess its present inventory of unused buildings and spaces to see how they might be utilized to assist agencies capable of facilitating short term housing, treatment, and employment assistance for the homeless who are viable candidates for such services. City and county leaders must resolve to bring all stakeholders to the table to find, adopt, and implement best practices for addressing homelessness. Both governmental entities should stipulate that any agency requesting funding from the county and city governments must agree to collaboration with other stakeholders to provide a more efficient and effective process for assisting the homeless.

Often many well-intentioned organizations seek to address the same problem. In this case crime and homelessness. It appears that some of these stakeholders fail to communicate and collaborate with one another. This results in duplication of efforts and lacks efficiency and effectiveness in addressing the root of the problem, which is the lack of collaboration and coordination of efforts to address homelessness. Some organizations refuse to work with other organizations with similar goals and purpose for fear they may hamper their own efforts in terms of financial support. Some agencies see others with similar goals as competition. They view other similar agencies as their competitors rather than potential partners and therefore a threat. This initiative in no way suggests such is the case for all agencies, but this can be a problem that needs to be overcome.

The main focus areas in this initiative were law enforcement and homelessness. Both do and will continue to require an abundance of resources. Financial and otherwise. Funding for law enforcement is quite costly. Conducting this limited pilot strategy generated a cost of \$75 - \$90 per hour for every law enforcement officer involved in this initiative (with the exception of ALE agents). This does not include cost for administrative hours invested in this pilot. The County of Buncombe and the City of Asheville must decide whether or not they are willing to commit the funds necessary to sustain an effort such as the one just completed by the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office and the Tri-Responder initiative underway now should it be deemed productive and beneficial.

There must also be a willingness for the two primary law enforcement agencies to work together for the good of the community when the situation requires it. Obviously, the Asheville Police Department is the primary law enforcement service provider in the Downtown Business District, however at this time it appears that staffing levels hamper the agency's ability to fully commit the resources it has in the past. Partnering and working in collaboration with the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office is a viable way forward and should occur.

In discussions with Mr. Michael Woods, CEO of the Western North Carolina Rescue Mission, Sheriff Miller, and his staff were informed that there are federal funds being used by an organization locally to address homelessness. This is something that needs to be verified and sought after if true. The city and county governments should identify all stakeholders and facilitate a discussion on collaboration with all stakeholders. Both governmental entities should look at what contributions they can and will make from a financial standpoint in addition to assessing physical assets at their disposal.

Some stakeholders to consider in an area wide collaborative effort are:

City of Asheville City Council	Buncombe County Board of Commissioners
Department of Social Services	Buncombe County Sheriff's Office
Asheville Police Department	Buncombe County District Attorney's Office
Buncombe County Public Housing	Area Non-Profits (501(c)(3) Agencies
NC Employment Security Comm.	Downtown Business Owners/Management
Buncombe County Health Dept.	Local Churches committed to addressing homelessness
Mission Hospital	Asheville Chamber of Commerce
Dogwood Health	Local Judicial Officials
Local Food Banks	Other agencies and Stakeholders

SUMMARY

As stated, this Problem-Solving Initiative was intended to be a joint collaboration between the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office, the Asheville Police Department, and NC Alcohol Law Enforcement. Even though this effort for collaboration was not fully realized, the goal to identify the root cause(s) for the problems facing the Asheville Downtown Business District was realized. This was accomplished by documenting activities and incidents observed by deputies of the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office and agents of ALE (Alcohol Law Enforcement) while patrolling in the Downtown Central Business District. The sheriff's office reviewed historical data on calls for service provided by the Buncombe County Communications Center. Two additional key components that helped in this initiative was the responses from the 2023 survey conducted by the Asheville Downtown Association and the survey and feedback deputies received while working in the Downtown Central Business District.

Based on the results of this Problem-Solving Initiative the three "root causes" for the problems and concerns in the downtown district are the lack of adequate law enforcement presence and enforcement, the lack of resources necessary to adequately address homelessness in the City of Asheville, and the absence of an adequate collaborative effort/master plan by all stakeholders who have a role in the problems needing to be addressed.

To adequately address the three key root causes for the problems and concerns of the downtown business district there must be an initiative which brings all stakeholders together to discuss and develop a collaborative plan of action that is long term with plans for long term sustainability. There must be a plan to allocate personnel to provide police services in the downtown district. This must include a plan for recruiting, hiring, and maintaining an adequate workforce in the Asheville Police Department. Increased and more competitive salaries are needed for the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office and the Asheville Police Department. Local government leaders must realize this and make the right decisions that will support law enforcement and foster improved employment longevity in the agencies and as a result, creating a situation that will allow law enforcement to better serve the downtown business district, the homeless, and the community as a whole.