

## **Gang Elimination Strategy**

### **Intent**

To make Sunnyside the safest community in Washington State

Complete elimination of gang activity in our community is the only acceptable outcome.

### **Plan**

- This is the translation of our vision into specific courses of action

#### Assess during planning: perform mission analysis

- Learn about the people
- Require subordinate leaders to specialize in some aspect of the operation.

#### Analyze the problem

- Who is the enemy?
- What motivates them?
  
- Who is the community?
- What motivates them?
- Why are they supporting/tolerating the enemy?

### **Prepare**

- Preparations consist of our activities before execution, to improve our ability to conduct the operation.
- Preparations consist of plan refinement, rehearsals, reconnaissance, coordination, inspection, movement.
- Great emphasis must be put on organizing for intelligence and for working with supporting organizations

#### Organize for intelligence

- Intelligence and operations must complement each other.
- Operations must be intelligence driven.
- The organization must be designed to gather and process intelligence.

#### Organize for interagency operations

- Other agencies/groups are essential to the success of our mission. They are not under our control but we must identify them and determine their role and capabilities.

#### Harden sustainment assets

- Sustainment assets include supplies and equipment necessary to support our troops. Additionally these assets are our court system, judges, prosecutors, jurors etc.
- These may be considered weak points and may be attacked.

- We must harden these resources and ensure they have communications with us should they need it.

#### Political/Cultural advisors

- We must identify staff with exceptional people skills and a feel for the community to help shape the environment.
- Additionally, we must identify and nurture individuals within our community who are connected and willing to assist us.

#### Train the squads –then trust them

- Our units must act intelligently and independently.
- We must train for basic skills relevant to the mission.
- We must aggressively replace ineffective leaders.

#### Identify and use talent

- A few good people doing the right thing can succeed. A large group doing the wrong things will fail.
- Not everyone will be good at what is necessary to combat gangs. Everyone can and must learn the basics.
- Those who stand out must be assigned responsibilities where they can make a difference.

#### Continue to assess and plan –be flexible

- We must adapt to changing tactics.
- We must adjust course when we determine we are off course.
- We must not finalize our plan too early since we will continue to gain situational knowledge as time progresses.
- We will also get better grasp of our limitations and adjust around them.
- With these considerations we can visualize and make adjustments to the plan.
- We must set phases for the operations in terms of major objectives to achieve such as suppression, building local networks, changing community values, transitioning to community oriented policing.
- The plan must be simple enough to survive setbacks without collapsing.

#### **Execute**

- Execution is putting the plan into action.

#### Establish and maintain a presence

- The 1<sup>st</sup> rule is to establish a presence in the area of operation. When not present we can often not do anything when an incident occurs. We cannot be everywhere at once.
- The more time we are in the field the more likely we will be in the right place at the right time.
- Officers need to be visible. They must appear as real people but also as protectors.

- They must be encouraged to create relationships with business owners and community members.

#### Assess during execution: avoid hasty actions

- We must base our action on facts.
- Knee jerk reactions are often not the best response to a situation.

#### Build trusted networks

- This is one of the most important actions within our operation. This is the true meaning of “winning hearts and minds”.
- We must persuade people that their best interests are served by us.
- We must convince them that we can protect them.
- Calculated self-interest not emotion is what counts.
- We should use city and neighborhood surveys to identify community needs and then follow through on them.
- We can make no empty promises. We must always under promise and over deliver.

#### Go with the grain and seek early victories

- Do not crack down on the hardest target first. We can't identify the worst neighborhood and begin action there.
- We must seek to secure safer neighborhoods first. Once these neighborhoods are hardened and provided the tools needed to prevent repopulation by gang members, we can move on to the next neighborhood.
- We must seek a victory early in the operation to demonstrate dominance in the operation.

#### Practice deterrent patrolling

- Patrol tactics that deter gang activity keep the gangs off balance and population reassured.
- Constant unpredictable activity over time deters attacks and increases security.

#### Be prepared for setbacks

- There will be additional shootings. We may be forced to shoot someone. We may get sued. Partners may not live up to our expectations. Politicians may cave to pressure.
- Setbacks are normal in all operations. When setbacks occur we must plan in such a way that we can fall back to a previous phase of the plan, recover, and resume operations.
- We must give our subordinates leaders the freedom to adjust their response to local conditions. This creates flexibility that helps survive setbacks.

#### Remember the national/global audience

- We must train our people to consider how their actions will be perceived on camera.

- As we succeed and as we suffer setbacks we must be prepared for the larger response.
- We will be criticized. We may be praised. We must seek not to create unnecessary opportunities for criticism.

#### Engage women and families

- Most gang members are male. They are however supported by women and families. These should be considered resources and also threats.
- Children are not our enemy. As we arrest their fathers, uncles, brothers and sisters we must seek not to create a new generation of animosity.
- Women and families have ability to pressure gang members into changing their behavior. This must be exploited.

#### Maintain mission focus throughout

- Our vision is to make Sunnyside the safest community in Washington State.
- Everyone must be focused on this outcome.
- A routine is ok as long as the mission is being accomplished.
- We must be alert for complacency

#### Exploit a single narrative

- Gang elimination is a competition to mobilize popular support.
- Our population contains opinion makers. These are local leaders, religious figures, media, and others who set trends and influence public opinion.
- This influence often follows a single narrative –a simple unifying, easily expressed story or explanation that organizes people’s experiences and provides a framework for understanding events.
- In our case this single narrative is poverty and loss of hope.
- Gang members are using this local narrative to support their behavior.
- Undercutting their influence requires exploiting an alternative narrative.
- The best approach is to tap into an existing narrative that excludes gangs.

#### Conduct civil operations

- We must address the basic local and political problems
- We must restructure the environment to displace and exclude gangs.
- Close cooperation with interagency partners, community leaders, and special interest groups is essential.
- We must remember there is no such thing as impartial humanitarian assistance.
- When someone is helped on one side, someone is hurt on the other side.

#### Remember, small is beautiful

- Ideas that work should be replicated.
- Small programs that are successful are not often successful on large scale.
- Small programs are cheap, sustainable, low key and recoverable if they fail.

#### Fight the enemy’s strategy

- When our efforts succeed, gangs will transition to a different offensive.
- They may attack general population or political figures.
- We must not get distracted or forced into a series of reactive moves.
- We should seek to attack the gang member's strategy not their forces.

Assess during execution –recognize and exploit success.

- Implement the plan that was developed early in the campaign and refined with local partners.
- Focus on the environment not the enemy
- Aim at implementing solutions to systemic problems

Transition to maintenance

- Eventually we will win the war on gangs but we need to work continuously to make it impossible for them to return.
- We must continue to create an environment where they do not thrive.
- The preferred end state is a safe community protected by our police officers not soldiers.