Do Good Fences Make Better Neighbors? Environmental Change to Reduce Underage Drinking

NASPA Strategies Conference
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Introduction

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  - Amherst, MA. Police Department
  - Liaison Officer
- Sally Linowski
  - University Of Massachusetts at Amherst
  - Associate Dean of Students, Off Campus Student Life and Community Engagement
- Ian Cyr
  - University Of Massachusetts at Amherst Police Department
  - Deputy Chief
Our “little” college town

37,819 residents
22,726 undergrad enrollment
14,000 students in residence
AMHERST AGE DISTRIBUTION (2010)

- Under 18: 7%
- 18-24: 10%
- 25-44: 14%
- 45-65: 56%
- 65 plus: 13%
RESIDENTIAL POPULATION

- On-Campus: 36%
- Off-Campus: 12%
- Non-Student: 52%
AMHERST HOUSING UNITS

- Owner-Occupied: 54%
- Rental: 46%
The Problem - For Over 20 yrs...

- History of large, off-campus parties - "day drinks" and "night rages" at large off-campus residential apartment complexes
- Defied traditional prevention and enforcement efforts
- Strained relationship between students and law enforcement
- Detrimental to image of town and university
- Participants' and law enforcement safety and owners' liability risk
- Student resident safety and quality of life in their homes
Another quiet Saturday in Amherst
...One hour later!
Contributing Factors

How does campus culture contribute?

How do individual decisions contribute?

How does social influence contribute?

How do institutional policies contribute?
The Goal?

In a perfect world, end it! In the real world, control it!

Harm reduction

Transparency. Transparency leads to trust which leads to change

Capitalizing on the strengths of many to make an impactful change in our known high risk environments

Maintain a constant flow of information sharing to avoid surprises
Transition to CPTED
Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

• A multi-disciplinary approach incorporating theories of design, psychology and sociology, suggests that physical environments, structures and landscaping, can be designed to change behavior, reduce crime and fear, and improve quality of life.
Transition to CPTED
Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

• Shifted from response to prevention
• Alternate approach outside of traditional law enforcement
• Making the safe choice the easy choice
• Encourage intended behaviors for facilities- risk/reward
• Engaged property owners and managers to solicit support
• Team established- regular meetings as part of Campus and Community Coalition
Territorial reinforcement
Natural Surveillance
Natural access control
Maintenance
Regional Planning 587 People and the Environment-

Interdisciplinary seminar on the applications of environmental psychology research to planning and design. Topics include landscape preference, territoriality and defensible space, way finding, and restorative settings/therapeutic gardens.
Assistance from Regional Planning class-

- Created town/gown relationship
- Pizza party - Students speaking with peer residents about the challenges of living there
- Brought in new ideas
- Created opportunities for student to intern and design landscape
Benefits? Property Owner Perspective

Were the costs of the improvements worth it?

“Not where the return on our investment is concerned. But it’s the right thing to do - no question. Providing safe housing is definitely our #1 priority.”
Was all of this successful?

“The number of parties have dropped down to almost nothing. However I don’t think this is due solely to our improvements. I’m convinced it has been successful because of the efforts of each of the individual stakeholders that worked to achieve the goal of increasing student safety. This could not have happened without the diligence of many professionals who educated property owners & managers. The process created new & improved old relationships which will benefit other aspects of property management.”
Our Team

- Amherst Police: dedicated community outreach officer
- University Relations
- Conduct/Dean of Students/UMass Police
- Town Code enforcement
- Greek Life
- Off Campus Student Life office
Our process now...

- Behavior change/trust reinforced
- Liaison/District Officer Follow-up
- Liaison education
- Permissions/Trust extended
- Police/Fire or Code enforcement contact w/student
- Conduct referral to Dean of Students
- Student behavior
Quality of life improvements off campus

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Town police data</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
<th>13-14</th>
<th>14-15</th>
<th>`15-16</th>
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<tr>
<td>Noise complaints</td>
<td>996</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>467</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nuisance House/ Noise Arrest/Fine</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>80</td>
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Townehouse Apartments Data

Quality of Life Analysis Townehouse Apartments

Liquor Law Violations  
Fight  
Disturbance  
Noise  
Community Policing  
Mass Gatherings

Hobart Lane Data

Quality of Life Call Analysis Hobart Lane

- Liquor Law Violation
- Disturbance
- Noise
- Fight
- Community Policing
- Mass Gatherings

Year:
- 2014
- 2015
- 2016
- 2017
- 2018
- 2019
Party Registration Data

FALL 2019
PARTY SMART
AT A GLANCE

- 454 PARTIES REGISTERED
  *14 WERE IN HADLEY
- 39 COURTESY CALLS GIVEN
- 2 CITATIONS GIVEN TO REGISTERED PARTIES
- 2207 PARTIES REGISTERED OVER PROGRAM LIFETIME

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Registered Parties</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
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<td>Spring 2017</td>
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<td>Fall 2018</td>
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<td>Spring 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>2,207</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>11</td>
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Party Registration
What has been working

- Stakeholders as a team - assisting each other with fixing concerns
- Relaxed approach by police - not rushing into gatherings
- Using subject matter experts to design the environment
- Party smart - establishing trust and respect of student and police roles
Conclusion

Still a work in progress- CPTED changes need to be implemented

People in the community want to help address the concerns- create working groups and develop capacity

The student's behavior can be changed

Legacy behavior and tradition are difficult to overcome-work with what you have, create small victories

When we pull in the same direction, change can be made.
Thank you- Let’s Talk For A Bit

• Please feel free to ask us questions, we all gain valuable information from constructive conversation.

Contact Us:

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• Sally Linowski - Associate Dean of Students sallyl@umass.edu
• Ian Cyr - UMass Police Department: jpc@umass.edu