

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 19, 2010

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER *J*

SUBJECT: STATUS UPDATE ON THE TARGETED AREA PLAN FOR
SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN THE ARLANDRIA COMMUNITY

ISSUE: Receipt of staff update on the Targeted Area Plan for Substance Abuse.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council receive this report.

BACKGROUND: The Targeted Area Plan for Substance Abuse in the Arlandria community was submitted for consideration at the City Council meeting on June 24, 2008. In part, the plan called for Council to authorize staff to take the following actions:

- Work with businesses and the community to address the issue of alcohol abuse through a comprehensive Targeted Area Plan for Substance Abuse; and
- Seek grant or foundation funds to provide funding to plan the strategy for a Targeted Area Plan.

DISCUSSION: At the March 12, 2010, Quality of Life meeting, staff presented an update on the Targeted Area Plan for Substance Abuse. Following the presentation, the Mayor asked staff to brief City Council on the status of the Targeted Area Plan and related information regarding alcohol use in the Arlandria community.

Since June 2008, grant and foundation opportunities to fund community-based treatment services in the Arlandria community have been investigated. Unfortunately, no viable funding options have been realized. Additionally, due to budget cuts, substance abuse treatment options for adults have actually decreased over the last year, and waitlists have increased. Funds available to provide longer-term residential substance abuse treatment have been eliminated, and case management services for adults with substance use disorders have been cut. A staff person who provided prevention and outreach work in Arlandria was redeployed to provide treatment services to children in another program. Actual and recommended budget cuts during FY10 and FY11 have resulted in a loss of over \$725,000 in substance abuse services.

Despite these resource challenges, staff from the Alexandria Police Department (APD), Sheriff's Office, Department of Human Services (DHS), and Mental Health/Mental Retardation/Substance Abuse (MHMRSA) have been meeting regularly to monitor the issue and consider options to address the alcohol problems in Arlandria. Progress to date includes:

- Substance abuse treatment services at the Alexandria Detention Center (ADC) have been reorganized and expanded; treatment services to Spanish speaking persons have increased. Total bed capacity to provide substance abuse treatment at the Detention Center has grown from 35 to 57 in the past year.
- The Detox Unit, operated by MH/MR/SA and located on Mill Road, has expanded its capacity by three beds, specifically aimed at working with persons brought in by Police on Drunk in Public (DIP) charges.
- Between January 15 and March 1, 2010, APD staff conducted a Part One Crime Suppression detail in Arlandria. Because prior operations and analysis have found that intoxicated persons represent a high percentage of victims of crime in Arlandria, removing intoxicated subjects from the street was the primary focus of this operation. Results of this detail are as follows:
 - a. 114 arrests were made, 109 of which were for DIP charges;
 - b. Of the 109 DIP arrests, 47 were diverted to Detox, and two were sent to the emergency room for treatment (one at a BAC of .414). The remainder were taken to the Alexandria Detention Center;
 - c. Officers made nine additional criminal arrests: for Possession of an Open Container of Alcohol (3), Larceny from Auto (2), Possession of Marijuana (2), and one arrest each for Possession of Cocaine, Solicitation of Prostitution, Prostitution, Urinating in Public and Failure to Appear;
 - d. The highest-volume date for arrests was Saturdays, between 2300 and 0100 hours. The average Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) observed was .212 – more than 2.5 times the legal limit;
 - e. Persons arrested for DIP during this operation were found to be carrying a total of \$8,423 cash – cash that can be considered to have been protected from crime by the arrest and protection of those carrying it; and
 - f. Aggravated assaults dropped 40 percent in Sector Two during the operation, compared to the same time period in 2009.
- MHMRSA and Sheriff's Office staff conducted a point-in-time survey of all individuals picked up on DIP charges during two four-day periods in March 2010. The results are as follows:
 - a. All were men;
 - b. 81% were under the age of 33;

- c. 62% were from countries other than the United States;
- d. Half were employed in regular full or part time work; half were unemployed;
- e. None were homeless;
- f. 90% had been victims of a crime while intoxicated;
- g. Half had been arrested or had legal problems associated with their alcohol use;
- h. All but one reported using alcohol only; one reported using alcohol and marijuana; and
- i. Most had never had treatment for their alcohol use; half said they would accept treatment if it were made available to them.

Additional Data

APD staff picked up 845 persons for Drunk in Public (DIP) during fiscal year 2009. The highest concentration of these cases came from the Arlandria community (see attachment #1). By policy, APD staff transport all DIPs to the City's Detox Unit as an alternative to incarceration and as an opportunity for the person to engage in treatment.

During FY09, 36% of all DIPs were accepted at Detox and 8% were transported via EMS to the Inova Alexandria Hospital Emergency Department due to medical concerns related to their detoxification. The remaining 56% were denied admission at Detox due to a lack of bed space, or occasionally due to behaviors that could not be safely managed in the Detox Unit.

Due in part to the bed expansion at Detox and in part to the APD's Part One Crime Suppression detail, the Detox Unit saw a 300% increase in the number of DIP admissions during the first six months of this fiscal year (136 during the first six months of FY09 versus 446 during the first six months of FY10). As a result, the Detox Unit is chronically full and at times, cannot accept new admissions. Those denied admission at Detox are taken to the Alexandria Detention Center and criminally charged. Most are released the following day and ordered to appear in court at a later date. When the Detox Unit has space and is able to accommodate the person, no charges are filed and the person does not need to appear in Court.

FISCAL IMPACT: Costs to the City's treatment and criminal justice system to manage DIPs vary significantly depending on a number of variables. Costs range from a low of approximately \$225 per case to a high of approximately \$1600 per case. Variables that influence these costs include Police time and the costs associated with incarceration, treatment in the hospital emergency department, EMS services, Court services, and treatment at Detox. The lowest cost is associated with bringing the person to Detox, while the highest costs are associated with bringing the person to the ADC and/or the emergency department.

Staff will continue to seek funding opportunities to expand services to this population and continue to implement components of the plan that are possible with existing resources.

ATTACHMENTS: Density of Drunk in Public Arrests, July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009

STAFF:

Debra Collins, Assistant City Manager

L. Michael Gilmore, Ph.D., Director, MHMRSA

Liz Wixson, LCSW, Director of Acute Care Services, MHMRSA

Earl Cook, Chief of Police

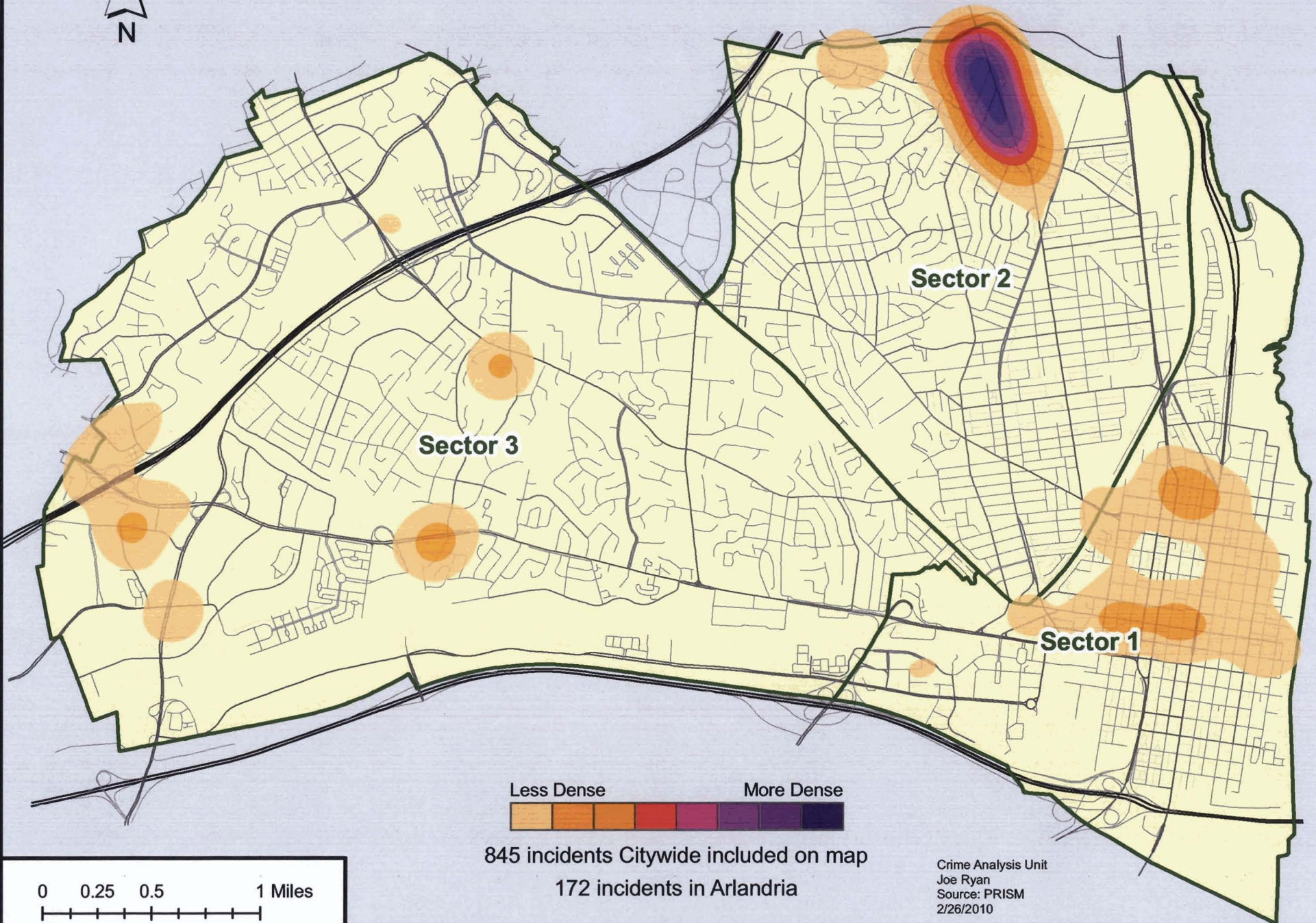
Hassan Aden, Deputy Chief, APD

Dianne Gittins, APD Captain, Sector 2 (Arlandria/Del Ray)

Dana Lawhorne, Sheriff

Density of Drunk in Public Arrests

7/1/2008 - 6/30/2009



Sector 3

Sector 2

Sector 1



845 incidents Citywide included on map

172 incidents in Arlandria

Crime Analysis Unit
Joe Ryan
Source: PRISM
2/26/2010

