Public Safety, Homelessness, Panhandling, Quality of life issues

Write down three words that come to mind when I say "police officer"
By the 1970s, Bryant Park had become a dangerous haven for drug dealers and was widely seen as a symbol of New York City’s decline. Bryant Park Corporation was founded in 1980.

In 1984, Mayor Ed Koch, at the behest of executives from many of the Fortune 500 companies that are headquartered near Grand Central Terminal in New York, asked Dan Biederman to bring his efforts to bear on making the downtrodden area around the terminal commensurate with the offices nearby. The Grand Central Partnership, a Business Improvement District, was formed.

The 34th Street Partnership was founded in 1989 when Mayor David Dinkins and property owners on 34th Street asked Biederman to bring his expertise to the area around Madison Square Garden in order to prepare it for the 1992 Democratic Convention.

Public Safety, Homelessness, Panhandling, Quality of life issues
CCD clean & Safe

1991: CCD 1.0 - focus on the basics: cleaning
Doing the job; being seen doing the job

Manual sweepers with lobby pan & broom

Mechanical sweepers: efficiency balanced with visibility:
Reassurance that someone is managing things
64% of survey respondents say Center City “much cleaner” than rest of the city.

Clean & safe remain very large expenditures.

Continuum from Security to Hospitality
Grand Central Partnership, NYC; Tampa, Florida.
Names

Ambassadors
Community Service Representatives
Downtown Watch
Guides
Public Safety Officers
Safety Team

99.9% of programs - unarmed; no powers of arrest

34th Street Partnership, NYC
www.34thstreet.org

34th St Partnership's in-house security team consists of 44 dedicated members who patrol the District 16 hours every day of the year.

At a central monitoring station, our operator is in direct communication with NYPD dispatchers from the Midtown South Precinct, ready to alert them to any disturbance in the District. We also assist the NYPD by identifying illegal activities, preventing felonies, making arrests, removing illegal street vendors, & eliminating quality-of-life offenses.

As a result of the combined efforts of 34SP and NYPD, 34th Street has been a low-crime area for nearly two decades.

Downtown Center, Los Angeles, “Purple Patrol”
www.downtownla.com/

The Down Center BID’s Safe & Clean team, the “Purple Patrol”, is committed to assisting those who work, live, and play within the district.

Team members are highly visible in their purple shirts and provide 24-hour supplemental services to maintain safety, cleanliness, and hospitality within the district.

All team members are provided enhanced training to ensure that your time spent in the Downtown area is memorable and safe.

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
Downtown Watch Ambassadors
http://downtownwinnipegbiz.com

Easily recognized in red and black, Downtown Watch ambassadors have been walking the streets seven days a week, year round, during the day and evening since 1995. This goodwill team patrols downtown, offering directions, tourist info, first aid (CPR-certified), and assistance wherever needed. They also participate in community events and act as additional “eyes and ears” for the Winnipeg Police Service.
Tampa’s Downtown Guides
www.tampasdowntown.com

Tampa’s Downtown Guides offer their presence for additional safety by being the eyes and ears for the downtown community. The Guides offer directions, assist stranded motorists with flat tires and dead car batteries, provide restaurant suggestions and even parking options. The services are FREE. Their “good-will ambassador” role is a vital part of the Downtown Security Network, working closely with the Tampa Police Department to observe and report suspicious activity.

Their mission is simple - to provide a safer & accessible environment for people in downtown. The Guides patrol downtown on foot, via bicycle and in an electric vehicle called the GEM car. They receive training by some of the best organizations in the area, including Busch Gardens, the American Automobile Association (AAA) and Tampa’s finest - The Tampa Police Department and Tampa Fire Rescue. Next time you are out and about, look for their signature pith helmets and bright yellow shirts.

Tampa’s Downtown Guides are also available for hire to assist at special events by directing attendees, distributing event information and greeting customers. To apply for assistance, please fill out the special event assistance application and/or contact Lynda Remund at (813) 221-3686 or via email at Lremund@tampasdowntown.com for more information.

Downtown Alliance; Lower Manhattan
www.downtownny.com

“Red Coats”
The Downtown Alliance’s Public Safety officers, known locally as “red coats” thanks to their distinctive & recognizable uniforms, are our community-facing ambassadors. They patrol the streets every day, constantly on alert to identify & help resolve any incidents or hazardous conditions. Additionally, they provide directions to local points of interest to any inquiring visitors.

The Downtown Alliance’s public safety department operates a “Safe Corridor to the Subway” program that offers extra protection for homeward bound commuters, especially those returning to their Lower Manhattan residences late at night. From evening rush hour through 9 PM, our public safety officers are stationed on the streets near key subway entrances and nearby residential buildings. Our aim is to create a safer atmosphere for Lower Manhattan residents, workers and visitors heading home for the night.

Liverpool, England,
www.liverpoolbidcompany.com
A former Merseyside Police chief has taken a new role at Liverpool BID Company as part of a £3m drive to boost safety and the environment within the BID areas.

In the newly created role of Head of Operations, Shaun Holland will be responsible for the BID ambassadors as well as the BID funded police officers who patrol the Commercial District and City Central BID areas tackling crime and anti-social behavior.

Further safety measures that have been put in place by the BID include an online crime reporting portal with up to the minute information about city centre security alerts, loss prevention and counter terrorism training.

Over the course of his 30-year career in the police force, working in both London and Merseyside, Shaun also worked with the Home Office to develop legislation around tackling mobile phone theft and alcohol related crimes. During his last five years as the Chief Inspector of Operations with Merseyside Police, Shaun worked closely with local businesses and partner agencies, including Liverpool BID, to improve safety in the city centre.

In his new role, Shaun, will also manage the BID street carers who were recently instated to provide street cleansing services to support the baseline provision from Liverpool City Council.

The Liverpool BID Company decided to provide funding to Merseyside Police in order to create a dedicated BID Police team – the first of its kind in the UK.

The new team will consist of two officers who will work directly with the BID Company with a brief to address city centre issues such as aggressive beggars, antisocial behavior and retail crime. Businesses will be able to raise issues with the BID Team who will pass them directly to the officers. They will be on duty each day of the week.

The posts have been created following a review of the BID Company’s safety programme & will ensure that the officers are aware of local issues affecting the BID area, as part of the forces commitment to neighbourhood policing. This is one part of the review which has been carried out and will allow businesses reassurance and continuity.

Bill Addy, Chief Executive of Liverpool BID Company, said: “Liverpool city centre is one of the safest in the UK but there is always room for improvement.”
CSR roles

- Crime & disorder prevention through visible uniformed presence;
- Identification of public safety problems & pursuit of their resolution through coordinated CCD & Phila Police Depart effort;
- Visible “City Ambassadors,” dissemination of public information & assistance to visitors support services for conventions;
- Identification of public nuisance & exterior code violations & resolution through a coordinated CCD, Streets Department & Department of Licenses and Inspections effort;
- First aid assistance;
- Long-term crime prevention advocacy for residents, businesses & visitors.

Deployment

- Overlapping Shifts
  - Monday – Saturday
    - 8am – 4pm
  - Tuesday – Saturday
    - 3pm – 11pm
  - Sunday
    - 10am – 6pm

Hiring Process

Requirements
- Minimum age 20 years old
- Two years college
- High school diploma with at least two years experience in hospitality, tourism, security, or retail industries
- Excellent Interpersonal skills
- Starting Salary $31,200

*CSRs come from all backgrounds:
  - Early in career & retired individuals
  - Move on to hospitality, security, retail

Training Program

- 2 weeks in the classroom
- 3 weeks in the field
- 5 weeks of CSR Training
Unique partnership: Daily combined roll-call

Police districts

Separate CCD Police Substation
Where Police & CSRs stand joint roll call

Dedicated foot & bicycle patrol
Assigned only to the CCD
Deployment planned in part through GIS mapping

Since 1995 serious crimes cut in half
declined from 18.2 to 9.9/day thru 2017
Even as population & activity increased downtown

Heat Maps

79% feel safe “most of the time” or “always”
Most of these items are part of urban life and do not bother me.

Jennifer Wolch, Explaining Homelessness

Homelessness is not is not a sudden event in the life of most victims.

It is more usually the culmination of a long process of economic hardship, isolation & social dislocation.

Homelessness generated from poverty & addiction

- 52% of those at intake had been evicted by friend or relative
- 35% reported building emergency, fire, unfit property, eviction or pending eviction
Huge impact of Kensington Opioid crisis

- Over the course of a year 15,000-20,000 people use the city’s shelter system.
- City of Philadelphia spends $90 million annually on services for the homeless, providing outreach, intake, temporary & permanent shelter and a broad array of social & medical services.

On a typical day 5,700 individuals are homeless in Philadelphia; 3,250 families in shelter, approximately 2,548 single individuals in shelter.

92% of the homeless eagerly accept the help that is provided. On average throughout the year – 400-500 on the street, parks, concourse over night.

- Significant portion of those on the street are “shelter-resistant” i.e. for variety of reasons they don’t accept offers to come into shelters and get help.
- Among the chronically homeless, 52% have received publicly funded mental health services and 41% have received substance abuse treatment.
- Among “shelter-resistant” more that 70% suffer from mental health and/or drug & alcohol problems; 40% higher mortality rate.

Homelessness in Center City

- On-street represents very small percent

Unsheltered Individuals 8%
Sheltered Individuals 40%
Sheltered Families 52%

Encampments in alleys

- Often accompanied by active drug use; public urination & defecation

Center City District
Blocking doorways & storefronts

Encampments on the Parkway
Along a prime visitor route

On-street feeding

Recent trends

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<td>458.25</td>
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What is the attraction of Center City?

(1) anonymity – it is everyone & no one’s neighborhood

(2) the location for intake for shelter system

(3) on-street feeding programs

(4) commercial dumpsters

(5) people who give to panhandlers

(6) Changes in regulatory environment
How has the City’s approach changed over time?


- 7 separate agencies: $49 million
- No strategic plan
- 1/2 resources spent on temporary shelter

Dennis Culhane: 1990-1995

- 79% of shelter users: 1.2 episodes/year
  Average stay: 18 days/year (transitionally)
- 12% recurring users, 4 episodes/year
  Average: 15 days/stay (episodically)
- 10% of shelter users: 165 continuous days
  265 nights over two years
  Consume 50% of bed-nights (chronically)

1996

(1) Open up the end of the funnel

- “homeless czar”
- Strategic plan to coordinate 7 departments
- Unified homeless budget: “continuum of care”
- Increase in funding on back end by 50% – $80 million/yr
- Shift in emphasis from shelter to recovery programs

  Substantial funding from Clinton Admin. “shelter + care”

(2) On-street enforcement

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Continuum of care

Outreach
OCC
Police
Daytime
Nighttime
Intake
& Assessment

Emergency Shelter
Year-round Beds
Winter Beds

Transitional/Supportive Housing
Federally funded
Shelter + Care

Permanent/Supportive Housing
Case Management
Employment Training/Placement
Substance Abuse
Mental Health

Life Skills Training
Child Care
Education

Outreach & engagement

Outreach
OCC
Police
Daytime
Nighttime
Intake
& Assessment
To respond to those on-street, “safe havens”
An alternative to sleeping on street; no beds, no services
A safe haven

Only 35.6% of shelter resistant agree to accept help
Don’t feel safe; don’t want to give up current drug habits;
Can not cope with structure and social demands

Continuum of care

Community opposition closes the “back door”
The Soloist: Housing First as a Option

Analysis of existing city statistics

2009, the City of Philadelphia’s Department of Behavioral Health spent $6,000,000 on outreach services.

Outreach workers made 30,202 contacts with 4,506 unduplicated individuals. These 30,202 contacts resulted in 1,509 people being placed into various programs including shelter and detoxification programs.

A number of people were placed multiple times, as the total placements during the time period was 2,424.

outreach workers contact each individual on the street almost seven times and that 35.6% of them choose to enter shelter

Logic of Housing First

Traditional approaches to helping the homeless begin with engagement and the offer of group living situations with the goal of gradually progressing toward individual, independent housing.

Option fails 68% of the for people with a chronic mental illness that includes a personality disorder. Their illness severely limits their ability to manage social interactions with people they do not know, let alone live among a group of “strangers.”

Housing First: New York City, Denver, Seattle, San Diego, San Francisco, and Chicago,

Logic of Housing First

Housing First = direct placement of people who are homeless into permanent rental housing without first requiring period of sobriety or the acceptance of a specific set of services after admittance.

Recognizing debilitating physical & mental effects of remaining on the street, the approach seeks to initially reduce harm.

Clients agree to be visited by case managers regularly & are offered appropriate substance abuse & harm reduction counseling. But, they are not required to participate in congregate living in order to have a place to call home. (section 8 units)

Even if client lapses back onto the street, the housing is held for short periods. Rather than erect barriers to obtaining a roof and a bed, the program literally places housing first.
Significant higher placement rate 92.5%

Placement Rate

- Pathways to Housing
- Residential Drug and Alcohol Homeless Mentally Ill
- Safe Havens
- Outreach Coordination Center

Substantially lower recidivism among 100 individuals who participated in a pilot program funded by the City

Shelter episodes decreased by 88%.
Number of shelter nights decreased by 87%.
Crisis Response Center episodes decreased by 71%.
Mental Health Court episodes decreased by 11%.
CBH hospitalizations episodes decreased by 70%.
CBH hospitalization days decreased by 46%.
Philadelphia Prison System episodes decreased by 50%.
Philadelphia Prison System days decreased by 45%.

Annual cost per person significantly lower

- Permanent Housing for Chronically Homeless: $56,641
- Residential Drug and Alcohol Homeless Mentally Ill: $41,228
- Pathways to Housing: $28,181

What variables influence homelessness

1. the overall state of the city’s economy/poverty
2. Funding for welfare & assisted housing
3. new addictive drugs
4. Climate: Los Angeles
5. quality, philosophy (Santa Monica), availability & location of city services
6. the extent to which outreach teams are present & the police are empowered or constrained to enforce standards of public behavior.
What are the rules on the street
For those who choose not to come in?

Language from vagrancy statutes
1. a person who wanders about idly and has no permanent home or employment; vagabond; tramp.
2. an idle person without visible means of support.
3. a person who wanders from place to place; wanderer; rover.
4. wandering idly without a permanent home or employment; living in vagabondage

Virtually all determined to be discriminatory/unconstitutional

Regulatory framework: “302 commitment process”
Court order to transport: danger to oneself or others
Available facilities, ability to detain

“Code blue” procedures
Throughout the 1990s, special homeless detail of the Philadelphia Police department was able to work in tandem with outreach teams, indicating that they would cite an individual for the criminal violation of “obstructing the highway” should that individual refuse to accept help from an outreach team & move from a sidewalk to shelter.

Very few individuals were ever arrested, but this approach provided leverage, similar to the approach during code blue, encouraging individuals to accept the services that the City provides. Lawsuit brought this to an end in 1999. Settlement agreement has expired; policy continued.

Changes in enforcement policy: 1999

With inception of the Sidewalk Behavior bill in January 1999, which reduced violations to civil offenses, & with all subsequent directives, police authority to enforce standards of conduct was significantly curtailed. Police must provide oral & written notices, call civilian, social service outreach teams, who must concur before officers can use their authority. If no outreach team is available, a police officer is unable to take any action. If an outreach team does come and the individual still refuses services, police can only write the equivalent of a parking violation.

One practical effect of this process of oral & written notices is that homeless encampments simply relocate around the corner, requiring the process to start over again, discouraging the police and the citizens who requested help originally.

Changes in enforcement policy: 2001

Police were given a directive not to enforce park curfews & instead to allow individuals to sleep on the Parkway, in Rittenhouse Square & in other public parks. Police are directed to wake up individuals & ask them to move along at dawn.

52% decrease in on-street homelessness 1997-98

Following deployment of police outreach team
A steady increase after sidewalk behavior bill

Street Homelessness in Center City by Year

This is not prohibited conduct

This is trespassing, if posted by the owner

Today: none of this activity is prohibited
Outreach services to the homeless

- Help those on street connect with needed services
- Coordinate with Deputy MDO & Outreach Coordination Center

2018 CCD funded a combined outreach effort: Project Home, Police & CSRs all working together

In 2018: 137 individuals came off streets
2019: 130 people have connected with services
No arrests; no citations

Legal Framework

First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.
Initial Consideration

Restrictions must be **Content Neutral**

**IF NOT**, then there is an overwhelming likelihood that they will be illegal

*Snyder v. Phelps, et al.*

(Westboro Baptist Church)

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How is this different from panhandling?

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**Additional Requirements for Content Neutral Restrictions**

**IF:** Restrictions are Content Neutral

**THEN:** Restrictions Need to be:

- Narrowly Tailored
- Permit open, ample alternative channel for communication
- Serve a Significant Governmental Interest
  - (a sufficiently important governmental interest that it can justify incidental limitations on First Amendment freedoms)

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**Examples of Loitering/Panhandling**

Prohibitions being Ratified as Constitutional

- OK – to prohibit intentional impediment to pedestrian traffic
- OK – to prohibit solicitation near public transit centers and sidewalk cafes
- OK – to prohibit aggressive panhandling
- OK – to prohibit begging on beach (FL, 1999)
- OK – to prohibit solicitation of drivers and passengers in cars (NY, 2006)
Examples of Loitering/Panhandling

Restrictions being Deemed as Unconstitutional

- NOT OK – to prohibit all forms of begging (FL, 1994)
- NOT OK – to prohibit begging in public places – too broad (MI, 2012)
- NOT OK – to prohibit begging upon public way – too broad (FL, 1995)

Counter cards and change collection boxes

Give your change to the people that make Real Change.

Panhandling: Public information campaign
Newspapers, bus shelters
Alternative message
Offered a comprehensive response to quality-of-life crimes
• Reduce caseload and prison overcrowding
• An innovative approach that blends criminal justice & social services.
• Emphasizes community service sentences & treatment programs instead of jail time.
• Helps reduce repeat offenses by addressing underlying social service needs.

Philadelphia’s Community Court
2002-2015

Partners
First Judicial District
Philadelphia Police Dept.
District Attorney’s Office
Public Defender
Health Department (CODAAP)
Center City District
University City District
PHMC

Funding
$1,064,350 City of Philadelphia/FJD
$492,544 Center City District
$93,315 Grants
$1,580,583 TOTAL
Misdemeanor & Summary Offenses

Within Court boundaries, adjudicates following offenses, subject to the approval of the District Attorney:

- Criminal Mischief
- Vandalism, Graffiti
- Possession of Instrument of graffiti
- Theft from Auto
- Obstructing the Highway
- Prostitution
- Disorderly Conduct
- Theft of services: Fare jumping/Cabs/Meals
- Retail Theft
- Defiant Trespass
- Possession of Instrument of Crime
- Possession of Drugs (sections 1316 and 1331)
- All Summary Offenses

Those arrested for specified offenses within boundaries were brought to Court

Following arrest: Social service interview

Address underlying causes of crime & break downward spiral

- Drug & alcohol assessment, placement & case management.
- Drug treatment readiness & anger management classes.
- Health screening, education & referral.
- Referrals for other social service needs:
  - GED classes
  - Housing
  - Employment
  - Civil legal services
- Clothing bank

Community Court Resources
Defendant can plead not guilty & have traditional hearing

80% accept the Court’s disposition

Judge can sentence individual
- to drug & alcohol treatment
- counseling
- community service

Record Expunged