



Levy Focus Report

The Levy Focus targeted the residential neighborhood of Levy bordered by 33rd and 47th Streets and Hillside/Maple and Camp Robinson Road. It ran from February 21 to March 3, 2017. Efforts included the Police, Fire, Sanitation, Code Enforcement, Animal Control, Electric, Street, and Neighborhood Services departments.

The focus area contains 676 residences and an estimated population of 1730 people according to the U.S. Postal Service. Looking at census data for 2016, there is a significant difference in the neighborhood between the areas south of 38th Street and north of 38th Street. South of 38th is almost 60% rental, while north of 38th is 70% owner occupied. Almost 13% of houses in the southern part are vacant as opposed to a vacancy rate of about 8% in the northern part of the neighborhood. There is also a \$23,000 variation in average household income between the northern and southern areas. (\$58,969 average for the north and \$35,298 for the south.) Levy is a diverse neighborhood. More than 16% of the residents are Hispanic and 28% are African American.

Every household in the focus area got notification in the mail two weeks before the start of the focus. Notices were printed in English on one side and in Spanish on the other. Houses from 33rd to 38th Streets in the target area also had a flyer physically put on each house by the Neighborhood Services staff in advance of the focus. A copy of the flyer is attached.

Levy Focus 2017 – Department List

Sanitation:

Sanitation picked up 93 used tires, 89 misused recycling bins, 17 boom truckloads of yard/bulky stuff, 489 cubic yards of yard/bulky stuff, and wrote 8 citations.

Street:

Street crews picked up litter (8 employees for 6 days), filled potholes (6 employees for 3 days), cut back limbs (10 employees for 8 days), and checked and cleaned drains (4 employees for 8 days).

Animal Control:

Animal Control issued 12 tickets, answered 19 calls for service, impounded 8 animals including two wild animals, and picked up 6 dead animals. The twelve tickets included 16 license and vaccination charges, 3 dog confinements, 2 pitbull charges, two chicken charges and one animal running at large charge.

Code Enforcement:

Code Enforcement issued citations for 10 houses to 13 people for a total of 29 violations. Of the 10 houses, 9 were issued citations for inoperable vehicles, 3 for outdoor storage, 3 for depositing waste outside, 2 for public nuisance, 2 for zoning, 1 for property maintenance, 1 for having no utilities, and 1 for having no business license.

Code Enforcement also warned residents about 63 inoperable vehicles, 36 outdoor storage violations, 2 zoning violations, 9 public nuisance violations, and 1 depositing waste violation. No citations were issued for these warnings.

Electric Department:

The Electric Department repaired or replaced 20 streetlights that were out.

Fire Department:

The Fire Department went house to house and installed 66 smoke detectors and replaced batteries in 11 smoke detectors at no charge. Residents were reminded they need house numbers when numbers were missing.

Police Department:

During the Focus the Police Department made seven misdemeanor arrests for nine criminal charges, two felony arrests for three criminal charges, wrote forty-five citations from sixty-eight traffic stops, and found one truancy violation. They recovered one stolen vehicle and impounded three other vehicles.

Past Ticket/Arrest Information

We requested older information about tickets and arrests from Police and Code in an effort to identify houses that have been a problem over a longer time period.

The Police Department sent us a list of arrests made in the target area over the previous three months. The Code Enforcement Department sent us information about tickets issued in a larger geographic area over the course of about eighteen months. We narrowed the Code list to the target area over eighteen months.

Looking back over the three months of arrests before the focus by the Police Department shows 31 arrests between December 18 and March 3. Eighteen of the arrests were on Camp Robinson Road with only thirteen in the neighborhood. There were no repeat addresses among the locations of arrests in the neighborhood and no indication of multiple arrests at any one address.

The Code Enforcement information submitted for the eighteen months prior to the focus showed that *more than one out of every five houses got a ticket in Levy* during that time period. 173 tickets were issued for a total of 220 violations. 152 individual houses received a ticket. Over the eighteen months, twenty houses got tickets on more than one occasion. 147 (85%) of the tickets were for a single violation.

Out of 676 total houses 152 houses were ticketed with a total of 220 violations.

Number of Violations	Violation	% of Total Violations
82	uncut grass	37%
57	inoperable vehicles	26%
21	outdoor storage	10%
20	deposit waste in yard	9%
9	property maintenance	4%
5	sanitation violations	2%
3	sewer violations	1%
2	public nuisance	1%
2	nuisance structure	1%

(The rest were for parking, basketball goals, zoning, etc.)

Approximately 2/3 of the tickets issued over the eighteen months were for either uncut grass or inoperable vehicles.

Fifteen of the houses getting tickets on more than one occasion were cited for uncut grass, inoperable vehicle, zoning, parking violation, graffiti, or basketball goal violations.

While identifying problem houses based solely on the number and types of citations issued can be somewhat problematic, it does give a good starting point. Sewer line issues that required citations before repairs, nuisance structures that might need condemnation, property maintenance issues, depositing waste outside, and outdoor storage issues can all identify problem houses if they are ongoing problems requiring more than one citation from Code.

There are six properties that meet the above standards when looking at eighteen months before the Focus started. Three were owner occupied and three were rental properties. Three of the properties had sewer issues. Of those three, two were also cited for other violations. None of the houses identified as problem houses by looking at the eighteen month list received further citations during the Focus.

Conclusion

Did the Focus have an impact on the neighborhood? 80% of the items Code Enforcement dealt with during the Focus were handled by residents without a ticket being written. Tons of junk were removed. Litter was picked up. Drains and potholes were fixed. Streetlights were repaired. The Police Department arrested nine people during the Focus as opposed to arresting thirteen the entire prior three months. In terms of just making the neighborhood look better, the Focus was successful. How long the effect lasts remains to be seen.

Suggestions include a follow up look at Levy to see if there is a decrease in crime due to the Police enforcement during the Focus. We should look for the same with Code and Sanitation tickets. A follow up should look for indications that the neighborhood has improved either in short, medium, or long term. Perhaps, reminder information sent out regularly about the code, animal control, and sanitation rules might prove effective in reducing problems as new tenants move in.

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BY Via email
DATE 4-20-17
Diane Whitbey, City Clerk and Collector
North Little Rock, Arkansas
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