



To: Mayor, City Council, City Manager
From: Ronnie Roberts, Chief of Police
Date: 11/5/2012
Re: **Alcohol Impact Area Update**

In February 2012, the Olympia City Council enacted an ordinance designating an Alcohol Impact Area in the downtown core. An Alcohol Impact Area (AIA) is permitted by the State of Washington in areas where alcohol abuse causes Public Safety issues and an extraordinary need for City resources. An AIA designation limits retailers from selling specific fortified alcoholic beverages. Retailers are given six months to voluntarily comply with the ordinance. The Olympia City Council requested a report from the Chief of Police after the initial six month period had passed in order to evaluate whether voluntary compliance had been effective. The Police Department analyzed baseline data from the summer of 2011 that indicated that alcohol abuse was a significant contributing factor to crime downtown and the use of City resources in the form of calls for medical aid and police services. Data was again gathered over the same time period in 2012.

Results of Voluntary AIA Compliance on Public Safety

The City evaluated three key factors in determining whether voluntary compliance had been successful:

- How many retailers voluntarily complied and removed restricted items from their inventory?
- Did liquor-related crimes and calls for Olympia Fire Department services fall in the Downtown area?
- Did the rate of crimes committed while the suspect had been drinking decline during the voluntary period?

The Olympia AIA encompasses eight establishments that sell alcohol. Of those eight, five stocked fortified alcoholic beverages before the implementation of the AIA. During the voluntary compliance period, the same retailers continued to sell the fortified products. Anecdotal evidence gathered by counting empty alcohol containers found in alley ways and sidewalks downtown, indicates that the volume of the banned products consumed has not substantially changed.

The map below shows the top 5 crimes noted by the Police Department in both 2011 and 2012, by area. As you can see, liquor violations are only noted as a “Top 5 Crime” in the downtown

area. This information supports the establishment of an AIA in the downtown area. The data also shows that liquor violations fell between 2011 and 2012. However, liquor violations, which include Drinking in Public, Minor in Possession of Alcohol, etc, are generally “on-view” crimes - police officers notice the behavior themselves while on patrol as opposed to citizens calling to report the crime. Between 2011 and 2012, the Police Department instituted a new program to focus its limited resources on verifiable crime trends. In 2012, the City experienced a significant up-swing in residential burglaries in nearly all of its areas, with the exception of downtown. OPD resources were targeted in resolving this, and other, crime trends, leading to less officer patrol of the downtown area. It is likely that the reduction in police patrols downtown is responsible for the decline of liquor violations.



During the months of June through August, Police Officers tracked how many suspects of crimes committed downtown had been drinking. Results for 2011 and 2012 were compared. On average, 7% of the crimes downtown involved at least one suspect who had been drinking. This average held true between 2011 and 2012. While total number of incidents declined due to focused policing in other areas, the rate of crimes with inebriated suspects did not vary.

2011 ALCOHOL-INVOLVED INCIDENTS			
	Total Incidents	Alcohol-related Incidents	% of Total
June 1-8	351	50	14%
June 9-15	299	20	7%
June 16-July 20	1517	91	6%
July 21-August 3	530	35	7%
August 4-10	287	22	8%
TOTALS	2984	218	7%

2012 ALCOHOL-INVOLVED INCIDENTS			
	Total Incidents	Alcohol-related Incidents	% of Total
June 1-5	139	13	9%
June 6-19	509	38	7%
June 20-July 17	1068	74	7%
July 18 to July 31	592	33	6%
August 1-14	481	39	8%
TOTALS	2789	197	7%

In addition to crime in the downtown area, excessive drinking can have an impact on the calls for service to the Olympia Fire Department. OFD frequently responds to calls in the downtown area that are related to an individual being intoxicated. OFD calls for service were gathered for the downtown area for June-August, 2011 and 2012. The data shows that OFD responded to more calls downtown in 2012, after the AIA was implemented with voluntary compliance. In particular, Medical Calls, which are the type of calls most correlated with intoxication, increased by 11%.

OFD Calls 2011-2012				
	2011	2012	Change	% Change
Medical Calls	333	368	35	11%
Fire	9	19	10	111%
Service Calls	12	17	5	42%
Good Intent Calls	57	61	4	7%
Hazardous calls	3	7	4	133%
TOTALS	414	472	58	14%

Conclusion

During the AIA voluntary compliance period in 2012, the crime rate associated with alcohol consumption has not significantly changed compared to the same timeframe in 2011. Medical Calls for Service to the Fire Department actually increased, rather than decreased. The stores who we had hoped would voluntarily comply with the AIA restrictions did not significantly change their inventories. The evidence of high-alcohol products being used in the downtown suggests that restricted beverages continue to be sold frequently. The Police Department recommends enforced compliance of the AIA ordinance in order to reduce crime in the downtown core and to reduce calls for service to the Fire Department.