



Thomson Reuters Institute

Post-Large Scale
Public Events Briefing
– Houston Area Council
on Human Trafficking

City of Houston, from the office of Mayor Sylvester Turner (2016-2023)

Coordinated Response to Large-Scale Events Pilot Program:

Program going well, extending it beyond the 5 week period of The Big Game. We placed clients from direct outreach agencies for a total of 10 days.

Tracking of Illicit Ads by Carnegie Mellon Researchers:

- Methodology: Analyzed a 7-day window ending on Sunday (Feb. 5th, 2017). Compared against a 91-day period for historical reference using surrounding Texas localities and comparable metropolitan centers (Chicago, NY, etc.)
- New-to-Town Ads’ Exceedance Expectations (or empirical probability that new-to-town ads would exceed number forecasted)

Ranking of Most Statistically Significant Increases in New-to-Town Ads during The Big Game from 2013–2017		
1.	2015 Major Sporting Event	0.35%
2.	2016 Major Sporting Event	0.68%
3.	2013 Major Sporting Event	1.6%
4.	2017 Major Sporting Event	8.4%
5.	2014 Major Sporting Event	34.0%

Note: According to Carnegie Mellon researchers, the lower the percentage, the more statistically unusual rates of activity (spikes, etc.) so the higher the percentage number the better.

- Conclusion: New-to-town ads had a mild, but not statistically significant impact.
- This does not take into consideration the variable of Backpage.com’s suspension of adult content at the time. Backpage.com has since been taken down by the DOJ.
- Carnegie Mellon thinks that the 1/12/2017 news conference had an impact and show a dip in postings on that day.
- HPD Crime Analyst independently confirmed that online ad postings did not show a significant spike during The Big Game. HPD tracked ads on a number of sites, not just backpage.com.

*Please note that the following initiatives were coordinated by the agencies listed, we are only providing information/summary.

United Against Human Trafficking and Houston Rescue and Restore Coalition — Outreach and Awareness

The Houston Rescue & Restore Coalition (lead by United Against Human Trafficking)

HRRC executed 20 events during National Slavery & Human Trafficking Prevention Month and the days leading up to The Big Game. Highlights from the efforts:

- 22 HRRC and Community Events were listed on the HAC-HT website to inform and invite the Houston community.
- “The Johns” Play, written by Mary Bonnett and produced by Mildred’s Umbrella Theater Company, had 12 shows reaching almost 500 people. HRRC members hosted “talkbacks” after 8 shows, featuring anti-human trafficking organizations and partners.
- HRRC partnered with In Our Backyard to launch the “Convenience Stores Against Trafficking” program and distributed over 1,000 Watch for Traffick materials to local stores around the Houston area.
- HRRC produced communication materials and a Press Kit for the media to inform about the city’s collaborative anti-human trafficking efforts.

Law Enforcement

Houston Police Department Data for The Big Game:

- According to preliminary data: 107 arrests related to The Big Game were made over a 10-day period. In comparison, over the course of four days around the The Big Game in 2004, 189 arrests were made.
- Arrest Numbers:
 - 21 by Vice Prostitution (Amounts to about to 10% of all arrests made during the 10-day period.)
 - 19 for Public Intoxication
 - 11 for Trademark / Counterfeit with illegal items seized worth a Manufacturer Suggested Retail Price of \$825,000
 - 8 for Assault
 - 8 for Open Warrant

HPD/(FBI and Homeland Security Investigations assisted) Trafficking related:

- 11 traffickers under 4 different charges
- 3 trafficking victims recovered by Vice and the Human Trafficking Unit.
- 100 sex buyers as part of the 13th annual National Johns Suppression Initiative.

Harris County Sheriff's Office Trafficking Related:

- Harris County Sheriff's Office led the nation in the 13th annual National Johns Suppression Initiative. HCSO arrested a total of 178 sex buyers.

Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission:

- Partners Assisting were FBI, HSI, HPD, Texas Department of Public Safety, Diplomatic Security Service (part of Department of State), Internet Crimes Against Children, Human Trafficking Rescue Alliance Task Force, and YMCA (NGO)
- Lead 12 undercover operations and assisted on 6 other undercover operations between January 20, 2017 – February 5, 2017 targeting Human Trafficking, Prostitution, and the Delivery/Possession of Narcotics at bars, nightclubs and other TABC licensed locations.
- Interviewed approximately 60 potential female victims of human trafficking at licensed locations and distributed HACHT palm cards accordingly.
- In conjunction with federal/state / local law enforcement partners, 28 arrests were made with the following charges:
 - 11 for prostitution
 - 2 for Delivery of Drugs
 - 3 for Unlawful Carrying of a Weapon and Security Guard Violations
 - 2 for Sale of Alcoholic Beverage Without a Permit
 - 8 detained undocumented persons
 - 1 for Promotion of Prostitution
 - 1 for Online Solicitation of a Minor (Arrest handled by ICAC)