

# Phoenix TRUCE Hermoso Park Resident Survey

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January 23, 2011

## Survey Background

As a lead-in to the start of a major public education campaign, residents of the TRUCE target neighborhood, Hermoso Park, were surveyed about the knowledge and opinion of the Phoenix TRUCE Project, and opinions about crime in their neighborhood.

Residents were mailed a return postage paid postcard with a brief set of questions. The survey was presented in both English and Spanish. A list of all deliverable residential addresses attributed to the target neighborhood of Hermoso Park was acquired and 3,550 postcard surveys were mailed on October 25, 2010. A total of 444 (12.5% return-rate) surveys were returned completed, and are used for analysis in this report.

## Survey Instrument

The postcard included a brief statement (in both English and Spanish), informing recipients that the survey was being conducted in cooperation with ASU and Chicanos Por La Causa on behalf of the Phoenix TRUCE Program. The informed consent statement assured recipients that participation was voluntary and confidential. The statement also included instructions for participants to select the response that was most accurate for them, in their own opinion, and to the best of their knowledge, and a thank you for their participation in completing the survey.

The survey included nine statements residents were asked to respond to; five crime and safety related statements and four about the TRUCE Program. Participants selected the response that best described their opinion about the statement, using a typical 4-point Likert Scale, with responses ranging from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*. The statements were:

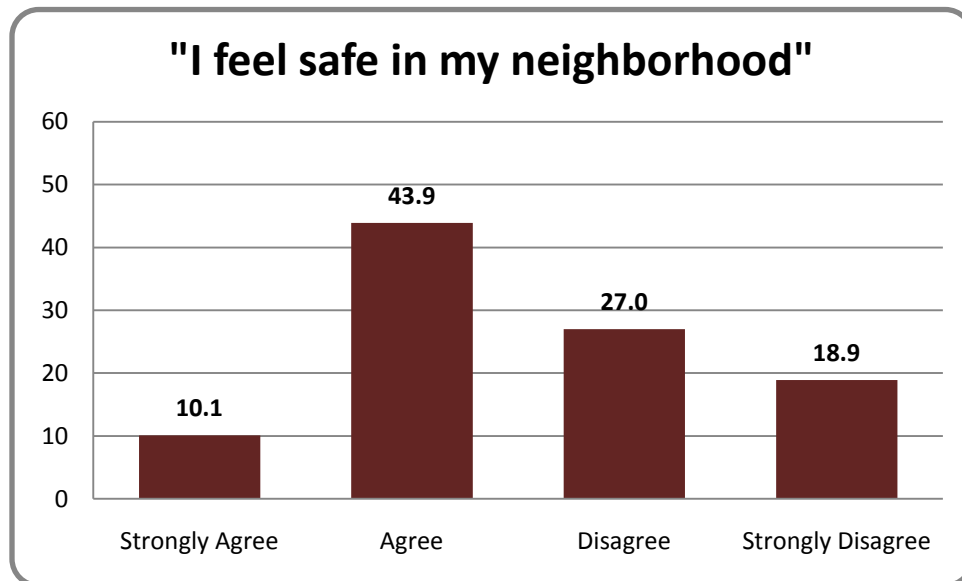
1. I feel safe in my neighborhood.
2. Crime is a serious problem in my neighborhood.
3. Violence is a serious problem in my neighborhood.
4. Shootings are a serious problem in my neighborhood.
5. I frequently hear gunshots in my neighborhood.
6. I know about the TRUCE Program.
7. I understand the purpose of the TRUCE Program.
8. The TRUCE Program has made a positive impact in my neighborhood.
9. I know how to reach the TRUCE community workers if I or family member needs them.

## Results

Overall the results of the brief survey found that residents of the Hermoso Park neighborhood felt that crime, and violence, shootings and gunshots were all serious problems in their neighborhood, but the majority still felt safe in their neighborhood, although not substantively. The residents reported very low rates of familiarity with the Phoenix TRUCE Program. This was expected, given the timing of the surveys. The major public education and awareness campaigns had not yet began, with most of the community's knowledge of TRUCE would have been derived from a handful of community events and meetings, or word-of-mouth.

### Residents' Perception of Safety

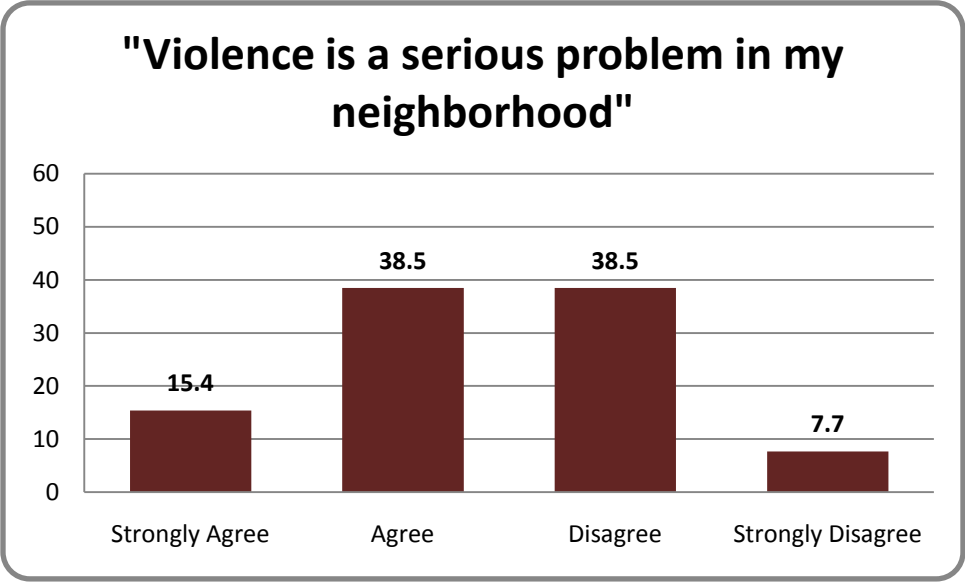
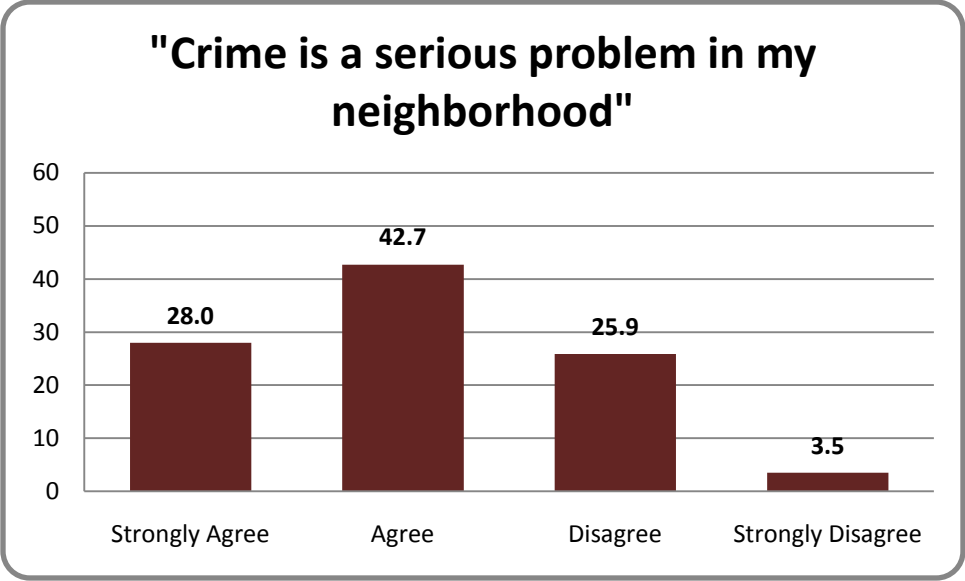
Residents reported feeling safe in their neighborhood 54.0% of the time (agree or strongly agree). Although this does represent a simple majority of residents, the fact that almost half (45.9%)<sup>1</sup> of the respondents did not feel safe in their neighborhood is of concern. Almost one out of five (18.9%) of residents indicated that they "strongly disagreed" with the statement that they felt safe in their neighborhood.



### Residents' Perception of Crime Problems

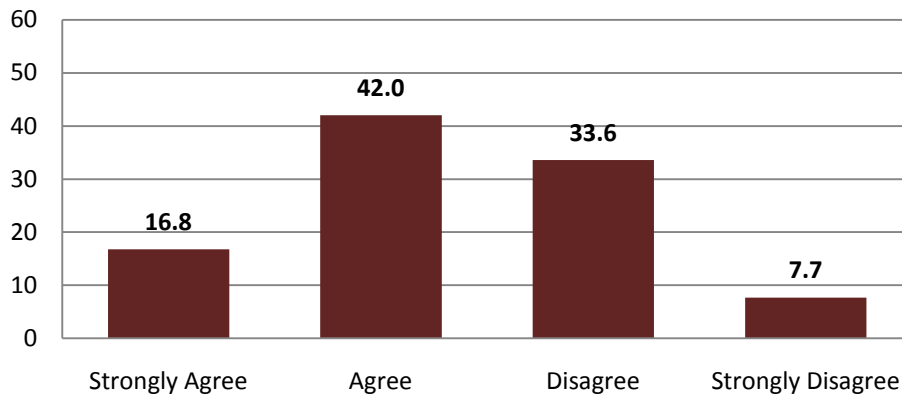
Perceptions about the seriousness of crime, violence, and firearm problems in the neighborhood indicated that residents considered each of the issues a major concern. Nearly 3 out of 4 respondents indicated crime was a serious problem (70.7%), including 28% who strongly agreed it was a problem. Besides residents' concerns for crime in general, they also indicated that violence was a serious problem in their neighborhood. The majority of respondents (53.9%) strongly agreed (15.4%) or agreed (38.5%) that violence was a serious problem.

<sup>1</sup> Percentages for individual questions may not total to 100%, due to rounding, or missing or "don't know" responses.

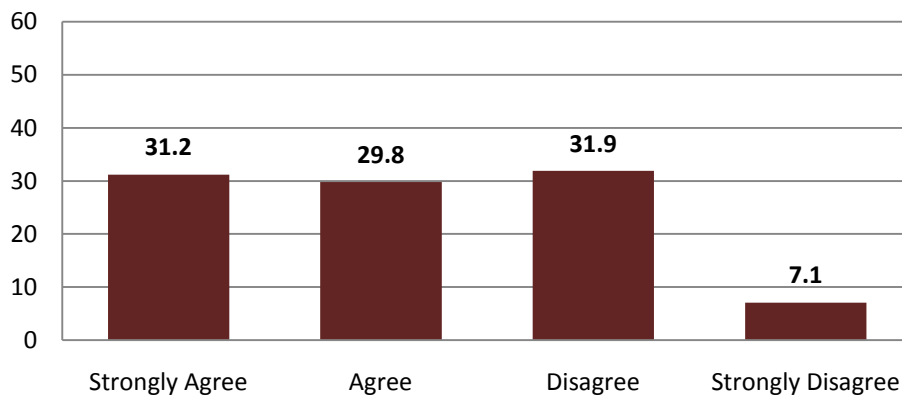


Serious problems associated with shootings and gunshots were exceptionally common. Residents agreed or strongly agreed that shootings were a serious problem in their neighborhood (58.8%) more often than not, and 61.0% of residents reported hearing gunshots “frequently”. Taken together, gun violence is perceived by the residents of Hermoso Park to be a serious problem.

### "Shootings are a serious problem in my neighborhood"



### "I frequently hear gunshots in my neighborhood"

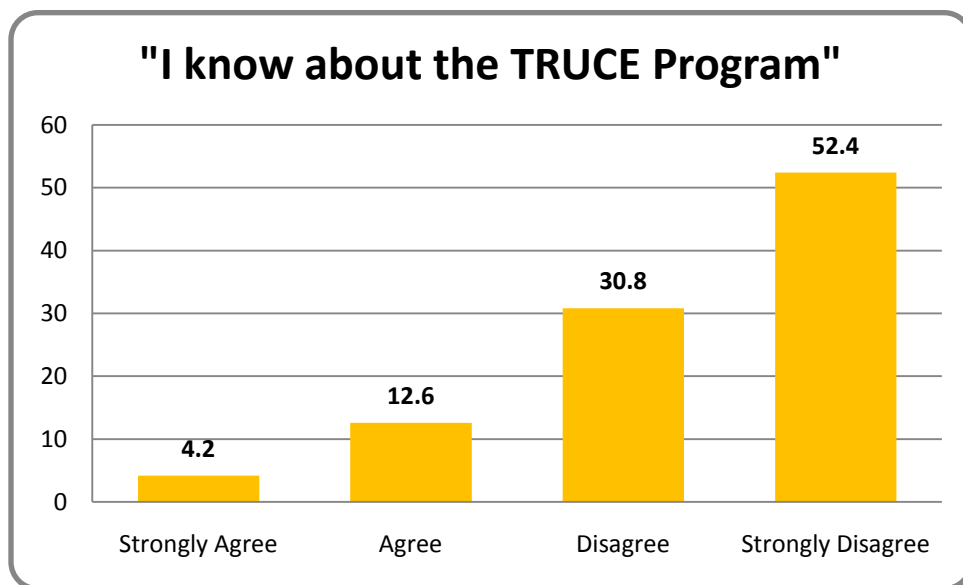


## Residents' Awareness of Phoenix TRUCE

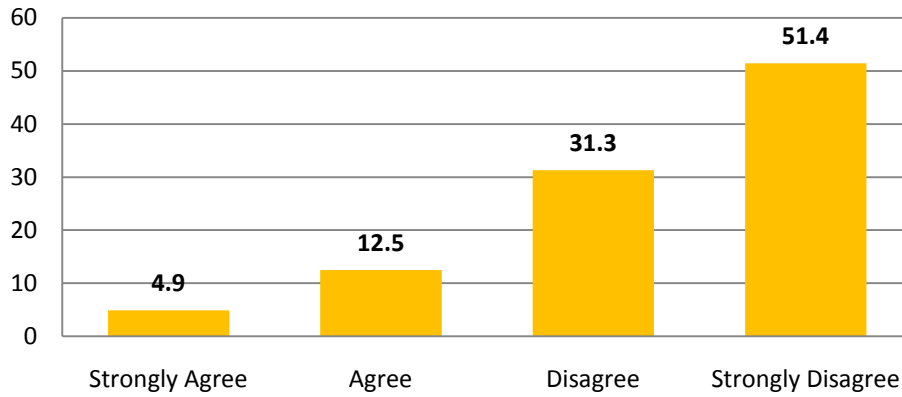
The timing of the resident survey was intended to provide an initial measurement of residents' awareness and knowledge of the Phoenix TRUCE Program prior to initiation of its major public education and awareness campaign. Prior to the implementation of billboards, and other media materials, most of the public education and awareness efforts relied on community meetings and events, and word-of-mouth. Therefore, we anticipated that a small portion of the community would already be aware, and have some knowledge of, the Phoenix TRUCE Program, but that it would likely be a minority proportion of respondents. Residents were provided four statements regarding whether they were aware of

Phoenix TRUCE, understood its purpose, if they knew how to contact TRUCE workers, and an assessment of its impact.

We did find one small inconsistency in the responses. Less than 17% (16.8%) indicated that they knew about the Phoenix TRUCE Program, while 17.4% indicated that they understood the purpose of the program. It is obviously a logical fallacy that one can understand the purpose of a program of which you have no knowledge. Conducting a bivariate examination of the two statements and their corresponding responses, we found 9 cases where the resident indicated that they either disagreed (n=6) or strongly disagreed (n=3) with the "I know about the TRUCE Program" statement, and then indicated that they agreed (n=9) with the statement "I understand the purpose of the TRUCE Program." This may be due to the respondent incorrectly marking "agree" instead of "disagree", or a misinterpretation of the "know about" statement (i.e. interpreting it to mean a higher-order level of knowledge or understanding than the statement was meant to convey). Regardless, the resident perceptions and responses provide an informative baseline measurement for possible comparison of programmatic public awareness after a significant post implementation time and effort.

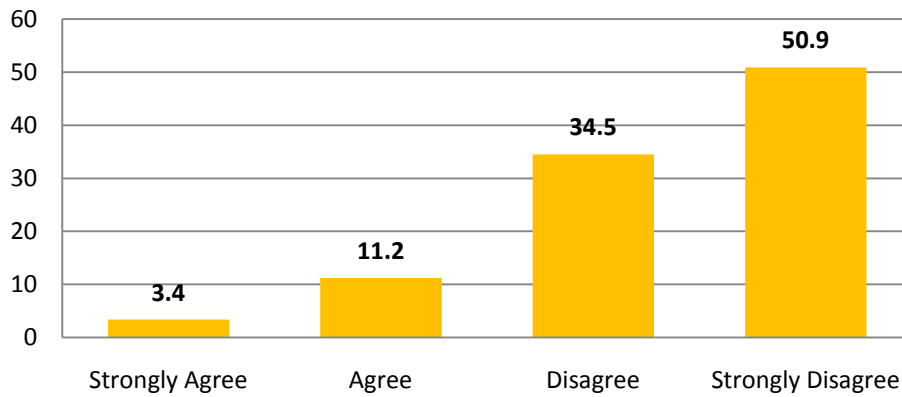


### "I understand the purpose of the TRUCE Program"

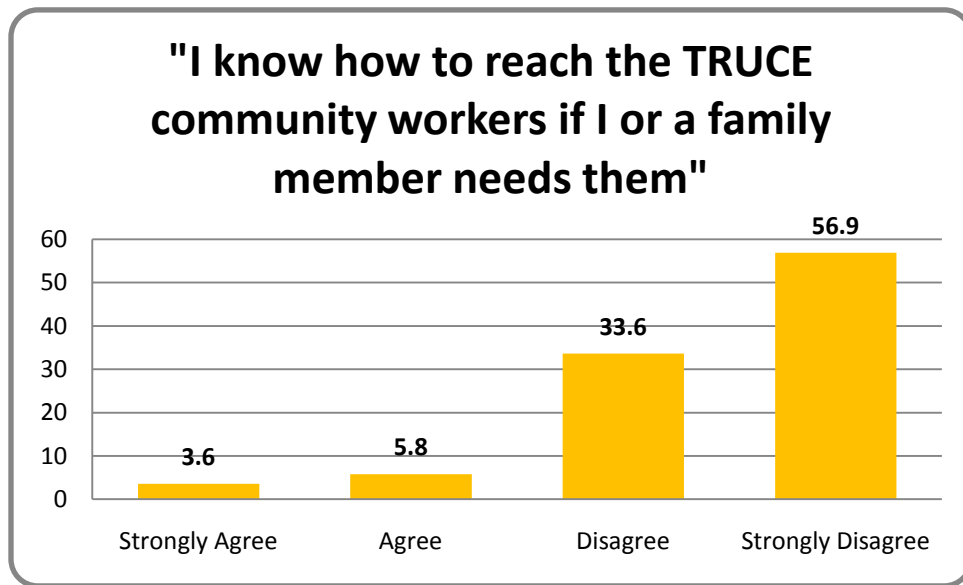


The statement about whether the respondent felt Phoenix TRUCE had made a positive impact on their neighborhood was intended as a pre-test measurement for post-test analysis. At the time of the resident survey, it is unlikely that noticeable impact effects would have been realized, and there were only 47 individuals contacted as part of the outreach worker intake process.

### "The TRUCE Program has made a positive impact in my neighborhood"



Residents indicated only 9.4% of the time that they knew how to contact a Phoenix TRUCE community worker if they or a family member were in need. This finding was expected to be low. Important to the overall purpose of public education and awareness campaigns are not only to make people aware of a particular program, but also its function and services provided, but how to connect with those services. Slightly more than half of the residents who indicated that they knew of TRUCE, indicated that they also knew how to reach program staff. Emphasis on not only programmatic activities, but also the means to contact TRUCE staff will be beneficial to programmatic activities and success.



## Conclusion

The majority of residents reported serious problems with crime (70.7%), violence (53.9%), shootings (58.8%), and gunfire (61.0%) in their neighborhood. It is important to note that these perceptions are just that – perceptions. They are anecdotal assessments based on the personal experiences and opinions of people living in the Hermoso Park neighborhood. The perceptions do not necessarily reflect actual current conditions, which may or may not be better than the perceived conditions of the respondents. These limitations considered, the perceived fear of crime and seriousness of crime-related problems are relevant measures for understanding some of the community-based context of understanding not just crime, community collective efficacy, and informal social controls, but also of public-police relations.

As an initial measurement of public awareness of the Phoenix TRUCE Program, a follow-up would be advised to assess relative changes in responses, which will contribute to evaluating the effectiveness of the public education and awareness campaign.