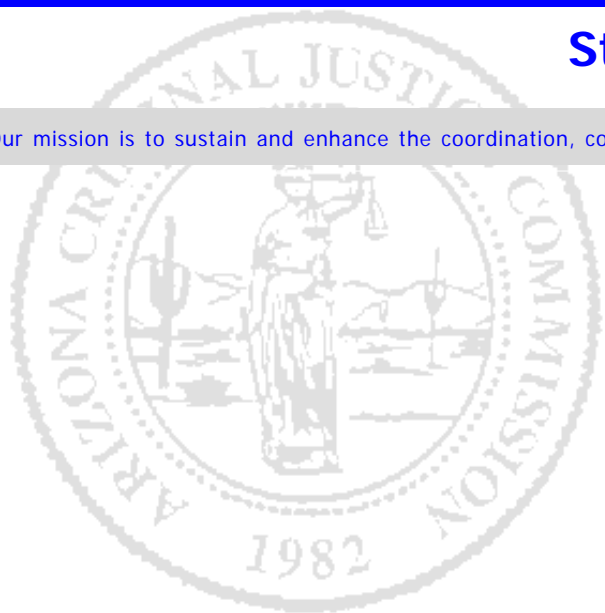


Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

Statistical Analysis Center Publication

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Violence Impact Project: A Multi-Governmental Strategy Against Violence

2004

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	1
Background.....	1
Target Area.....	1
Findings.....	1
Introduction.....	3
Evaluation Objectives.....	5
Evaluation Methodology.....	5
Project Background.....	7
Violence Impact Project/Project Safe Neighborhoods Strategy.....	7
Project Safe Neighborhoods.....	7
Partnerships.....	7
Strategic Planning.....	8
Training.....	8
Outreach.....	8
Accountability.....	9
Violence Impact Project.....	9
Area.....	10
Offenders.....	10
Conspiracy/Organization.....	11
Central City VIP.....	11
Neighborhood Profile.....	11
Crime.....	12
Strategies Employed.....	14
Action Plans.....	14
Prostitution and Robbery Reduction.....	14
Mexico License Plates.....	14
Operation Public Education.....	14
Narcotics.....	15
Gang Enforcement.....	15
Cruising.....	15
Project Silent Night.....	15
Media Campaign.....	16
PSN Prosecution of VIP Cases.....	18
Findings.....	20
Process.....	20
VIP Implementation.....	20
ATF Gun Recoveries.....	23
Prosecution.....	28
Strategic Approach to Future Implementation and Evaluation.....	29
Impact.....	31
Crime.....	31
Central City Crime.....	33

Comparative Analysis Among Precincts.....	36
Officer Perception.....	37
Citizen Perceptions.....	40
Involvement of Community Groups.....	41
Citizen Focus Group.....	43
Conclusion.....	45
Recommendations.....	48
Officer Participation and Input.....	48
Documentation and Evaluation.....	48
Federal and County Prosecution.....	49
Community Involvement.....	49
Outside Participant Agencies.....	49
Maintenance and Long-Term Evaluation.....	49
Resource Allocation.....	50
Bibliography.....	51
Appendix A: Phoenix Police Department Central City VIP area and Neighborhood Associations.....	53
Appendix B: Central City VIP Focus Group Questionnaire.....	54
Appendix C: Officer Survey.....	55
Appendix D: Part I Violent Crime Comparison Phoenix Police Department Precincts.....	56
Appendix E: 2000 Census Data.....	57
Appendix F: Percentage of Gun Crime.....	58
Appendix G: Summary of Findings.....	59

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2002, Phoenix ranked 11th in homicides among cities with populations greater than 500,000, with 13.4 per 100,000 residents compared to 5.6 per 100,000 for the United States and 7.1 per 100,000 for Arizona. (Crime in the United States 2002, 2003). In 2003, the Phoenix Police Department recognized that the city was on pace to reach a record number of homicides for the year, and decided to take specific measures to reverse this trend and make Phoenix the “Safest Major City” in America. The Central City Violence Impact Project/Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative was a collaborative effort by several agencies to reduce violent crime in some of the most dangerous parts of the city. The *Violence Impact Project: A Multi-Governmental Strategy Against Violence* report is an evaluation of that effort, and serves as a guide to assist in implementing similar projects in the future.

Background

The Central City Violence Impact Project integrated features of two separate but similar violence-reduction programs involving several governmental agencies from the local, county, state and federal levels. The first of these two programs was the Phoenix Police Department’s Violence Impact Project (VIP), a local strategy to reduce violence in targeted areas of the city. The second program was Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), based on a national model designed to reduce gun-related crime by using proven strategies and data driven processes to assist decision making and build local partnerships.

Numerous partnerships were formed or enhanced through the efforts of VIP including the United States Attorney’s Office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). The Phoenix Police Department worked in collaboration with the Arizona United States Attorney’s Office to target violent and gun-related crime through directed enforcement, aggressive prosecution, and reducing the number of guns in the hands of serious offenders. As over 70 percent of homicides and a large percentage of all violent crimes (46.4 percent in 2002) in the Phoenix area involved the use of a firearm, the integration of these two projects allowed the problem of violent crime to be addressed more effectively.

Target Area

The Central City Violence Impact Project area is a neighborhood characterized by poverty, large families, low levels of education, and high levels of unemployment. The area also consists of a large number of youths between the ages of 15 and 24. The median household income is almost half that of the rest of Phoenix and unemployment rates in this area are nearly double that of Phoenix. These characteristics are risk factors that have been identified to be associated with violent crime. This area had a violent crime rate over twice as high as the City of Phoenix as a whole. For these reasons, there was consensus among participating partners to select Central City as the initial site to implement the Violence Impact Project.

Findings

Uniform Crime Reports during the Central City VIP showed a considerable decrease in violent crime during the implementation period (October 2003 to June 2004) when

compared to the same period one year prior. The following are decreases in crime found through this evaluation:

- 69.6 percent decrease in homicide
- 31.6 percent decrease in rape
- 17.5 percent decrease in robbery
- 26.8 percent decrease in aggravated assault
- 26.5 percent decrease in overall violent crime

In addition, a comparative analysis was done for the time period of the Central City VIP/PSN implementation, as well as the four years prior to the implementation for the Central City VIP area and the six police precincts in the City of Phoenix. While the violent crime rate for the Central City VIP area had decreased in the four years prior to the implementation, the reduction of violent crime for the VIP area was substantially greater than in prior years in the same region. The VIP area had a larger decrease in crime than any other precinct during the VIP implementation period. A 26.5 percent reduction in violent crime was found in the VIP area with no other individual precinct recording a double digit decrease during this same time period.

An officer survey conducted by the Phoenix Police Department at the end of the VIP/PSN implementation found that officers perceived that the Violence Impact Project/Project Safe Neighborhoods operation was a successful tool in reducing violent crime, and that it would be useful to implement in targeted violent crime hotspots in the City of Phoenix. Nearly half of the respondents felt that the department's problem solving model was useful in directing their efforts in the VIP area. These officers also felt that while the program was successful, a maintenance program was needed to assure the reductions in crime realized during the operation were sustained.

At the conclusion of Central City VIP, a citizen-based focus group was held, a survey was administered to VIP officers, and Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data was reviewed. The focus group findings indicated that overall, respondents appreciated the fact that they were listened to throughout the project. There was a consensus that crime had been reduced and that there had been a greater visibility of officers. The three measures provided a triangulated method of determining the effectiveness of the Violence Impact Project.

The agencies involved in the Central City VIP showed that multi-agency collaboration is an effective strategy in addressing violent crime and can have a definitive impact on violent crime. Through this cooperation, violent crime decreased significantly in the Central City area, residents felt safer, and officers considered the project a success. Regardless of the unique challenges encountered by the multi-agency initiative, the combination of a strong problem solving model along with the dedication of the partner agencies created an environment where focus, flexibility, and creativity thrived to make this project a success.

INTRODUCTION

In the early 1990s, many cities around the country experienced high levels of violent crime. Over the past decade, the levels have gradually decreased, but the rate of violence around the country remains unacceptably high and still of great concern. Policymakers and criminal justice leaders at both the national and local levels are seeking new partnerships and developing data-driven strategies to address both violence and gun violence rates throughout the country.

A constant factor in these violent crime rates is the number of deaths caused by firearm related injuries. In 2002, more than two-thirds of all homicides in the United States were the result of firearm inflicted injuries (Crime in the United States 2002, 2003). In Arizona during 2003, the state experienced 440 homicides of which firearms were used in 70.7 percent of the time (Crime in Arizona, 2003). Attorney General John Ashcroft, when speaking about the need to prosecute gun violators, stated, "In addition to prosecuting gun crime in order to take those who commit it off the streets, Project Safe Neighborhoods is working to prevent gun crime by reaching potential perpetrators before it's too late." (Ashcroft, 2004).

In recent years, several cities have implemented programs based on the national Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) model to reduce violent crime, particularly violent crime involving guns, by using data-driven processes to assist decision making. Project Safe Neighborhoods is unique in that it formulates strategies by combining data germane to the target area with the actual available resources of participating agencies, to generate a policy that is tailored to combat gun-related crime locally.

In Phoenix, the Violence Impact Project (VIP) was developed to reduce violent crime in areas known to have a high density of violent incidents. The VIP focused on reducing violent crime in highly violent areas, targeting serious repeat violent offenders, and identifying conspiracies that were contributing to violence in the City of Phoenix. The mission of VIP was "to make Phoenix the safest major city by eliminating violent crime through the collaborative efforts of law enforcement and the community." The VIP and PSN projects joined together in Phoenix to attempt to reduce violent crime by focusing on high violence areas and by getting guns out of the hands of prohibited possessors and

2003 Part I Violent Crimes				
	City	2003 Population	Violent Rate	Rank
1	New York, NY	8,098,066	734.1	8
2	Los Angeles, CA	3,838,838	1,271.8	5
3	Chicago, IL	2,898,374	1,300.2	4
4	Houston, TX	2,041,081	1,175.3	6
5	Philadelphia, PA	1,495,903	1,378.4	2
6	Phoenix, AZ	1,403,228	693.3	9
7	San Diego, CA	1,272,746	578.7	11
8	Dallas, TX	1,230,302	1,370.8	3
9	Las Vegas, NV**	1,189,388	770.0	7
10	San Antonio, TX	1,212,789	598.0	10
11	Detroit, MI	927,766	2,018.2	1

**Las Vegas Metropolitan Police

Source: Crime in the United States 2003 Report except for crime totals for Phoenix which were derived from Phoenix Police Department

repeat offenders. The goal of this joint effort was to decrease violent crime and increase community safety.

In 2002, Phoenix ranked 11th in homicides among cities with populations greater than 500,000, with 13.4 homicides per 100,000 residents. This compares to 5.6 homicides per 100,000 residents in the United States and 7.1 homicides per 100,000 residents in Arizona (Crime in the United States 2002, 2003). Approximately two-thirds of those homicides in Arizona were committed with a firearm (Crime in Arizona, 2002). In 2003, the Phoenix Police Department decided to take specific measures to reverse this trend. In fall of 2003, the planning stages for the Violence Impact Project began.

The first area selected for the implementation of VIP was in the Central City Precinct located in the central part of Phoenix bounded by 7th Street to 32nd Street and McDowell Road to Washington Street (Appendix A). This area was selected after examining existing data on homicides, aggravated assaults, robberies, and crimes involving weapons in the city. The Central City Violence Impact Project (VIP) was developed to combat violent crime by focusing resources on the areas that have the highest density of violent incidents. The VIP model was originally designed to address three specific elements of concern: Offenders, Conspiracies, and Areas. Three working groups comprised of officers and other criminal justice participants were created to address each of these elements.

These three groups delivered highly concentrated enforcement tactics to specifically reduce violent crime in their particular areas of responsibility. First, the Offender Impact group addressed violent crime by identifying violent offenders who have committed a disproportionate amount of crime in the past, and using enhanced prosecution strategies to remove them from the community. The Conspiracy Impact group worked to investigate and dismantle criminal organizations within the region that are engaging in violent crime for profit or personal gain. The third group, the Area Impact group, focused on areas or environments that facilitate criminal activity through aggressive enforcement of federal, state, and local laws in collaboration with the affected community. Numerous partnerships were formed or enhanced through the efforts of VIP.

During the early development stages of Central City VIP, a partnership was formed with the Arizona Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), with the state coordinator for the project being the Arizona United States Attorney's Office. This partnership allowed for the joint missions of reducing violent crime and reducing gun violence in the areas hardest hit by violent crime in the Phoenix area. This coordination prevented the duplication of efforts and allowed several agencies to work together toward addressing a common problem. This formed the VIP/PSN partnership in Phoenix, Arizona.

This evaluation and the subsequent report, *Violence Impact Project: A Multi-Governmental Strategy Against Violence*, was developed to provide a comprehensive

review of the Violence Impact Project/Project Safe Neighborhood initiative in its pilot stage, and to create an evaluation tool for future implementations of this strategy. This report will include a profile of community factors that may contribute to the high violent crime rate and provide a historical examination of crime in the Central City VIP area relative to other regions. Of primary concern will be violent crime and gun-related violent crime; however other major Part I Uniform Crime Report (UCR) crimes will also be analyzed. In addition this report will provide a review of the VIP and PSN strategies and discuss how these concepts were merged into a single initiative with goals seeking to reduce both violent crime in general and gun-related crime within a targeted region.

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The *Violence Impact Project: a Multi-Governmental Strategy against Violence* publication was written to address two primary objectives. The first objective was to report on whether the collaborative intervention had a positive impact in the targeted neighborhood. This would be portrayed in a reduction of violent and gun-related crime, as well as measures indicating positive feedback from officers working on the project and citizens in the affected community.

The second objective was to develop an evaluation model that could be utilized by the Phoenix Police Department in addressing targeted neighborhoods for future projects. This evaluation will identify information needed for future evaluations by examining the strategies and tactics that were used during the Central City VIP project and identifying issues where gathering more information might be useful. This will allow tools to be in place at the start of future projects, to allow for a more complete evaluation of successes or failures, and assist in identifying areas for improvement in future efforts.

This evaluation model will set forth a standard methodology and reporting procedure, allowing for the comparison of projects based on their effectiveness in reducing crime and enhancing community safety. By evaluating these projects, best practices can be identified and replicated and those in decision-making positions can have the necessary information available to make informed decisions on programs and projects geared toward violence reduction.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Three research partners were involved in the evaluation process: the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC) Statistical Analysis Center (SAC), Phoenix Police Department's Crime Analysis and Research Unit (CARU), and Arizona State University West Campus. These partners worked together to build a comprehensive evaluation strategy to examine the VIP/PSN program, and made recommendations to improve the evaluation process for future efforts.

The effectiveness of the Central City Violence Impact Project/Project Safe Neighborhood initiative was evaluated using a quasi-experimental research design. Specifically, changes in violent crime and gun violence were examined before and during program implementation within the targeted VIP area using Uniform Crime Report (reported crime) data. These changes were measured against crime trend data for the City of Phoenix, which served as the comparison area to assure the reduction in the target area could be attributed to the project, rather than to a general citywide decrease in violent crime.

A number of evaluation strategies and data sources were used in this analysis. First, administrative records, including documentation of the specific action plans carried out in the Central City VIP, were reviewed to develop an accurate description of the implementation of the project. This analysis included a brief overview of the action plans and an individual summary of each of the action plans submitted for the Central City VIP/PSN project. Second, surveys were conducted with officers, supervisors, and some external agency stakeholders who were involved in the VIP project. The data from these surveys were input into SPSS for analysis and the results were included in this report.

Third, a focus group was held with community members who had been involved throughout the project to obtain their feedback on the impact of the VIP effort in their neighborhood. Specific questions were provided to each of the community participants. The responses from the questions and the focus group were summarized and presented in this report. Fourth, calls for service, reported crime, and arrest data from the Central City VIP area and Phoenix as a whole were reviewed. More specifically, data were collected for comparable time periods (October through June) during and for the three years prior to program implementation. Fifth, gun recoveries were also examined for the purpose of analyzing the impact of the program in the targeted area. These data were obtained from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). Once again, data was examined for changes before and during the program implementation both within the targeted VIP area and in the City of Phoenix.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Violence Impact Project/Project Safe Neighborhoods Strategy

The Violence Impact Project (VIP) is an example of a multi-governmental partnership in which strategies and resources from two separate initiatives were integrated into a common approach. The VIP was originally developed as a local strategy to reduce overall violence in targeted areas of the city. The PSN approach is based on a national model designed to reduce gun violence by developing targeted strategies with local partners. The following section provides a background and a general description of the underlying philosophies of the PSN and VIP initiatives.

Project Safe Neighborhoods

Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) is a coordinated effort to stop gun violence in communities through enhanced, directed resources and more effective prosecutions of gun crime. This project is designed to reduce gun violence by targeting offenders, conspiracies and violence in such a way to reduce overall violent crime. This program is built upon five elements that are designed to work together to reduce gun violence: Partnerships, Strategic Plan, Training, Outreach, and Accountability.



Partnerships

Developing an effective partnership has proven to be a crucial aspect of implementing the combined VIP/PSN model. Based on the experiences of several Strategic Approaches to the Community Safety Initiatives (SACSI), knowing who to include is particularly important. Not only is it beneficial to include the right organizations, but knowing how to balance the need for high-level leadership and support with the need for line-level law enforcement knowledge and know-how is critical to the success of the program (Dalton, 2002).

The Violence Impact Project/Project Safe Neighborhoods partnership was built as one of the local partnerships that Project Safe Neighborhoods was designed to support. The initial Violence Impact Project was created to lower violent crime in areas of Phoenix with high violent crime rates. Given the high percentage of violent crime that involves a firearm in Phoenix, the partnership was a natural combination. This allowed two initiatives with similar missions to work together to maximize the impact on violent crime and gun violence in the area.

Active partners met on a weekly basis to share information and success stories and provide information on future action plans. In addition, meetings were held monthly with community members, local business owners, and law enforcement representatives. Community members were asked to participate in the project by using the Silent Witness Program to provide tips on drug cases or crimes in the area and several neighborhood associations agreed to be listed as victims on police department reports. Community members were encouraged to provide feedback on changes or improvements observed in the area.

Strategic Planning

The VIP process included a major focus on intelligence gathering and crime mapping during every stage of the operation. From the very beginning when crime mapping was used to identify the Central City VIP site as a hot spot for violent crime, the stakeholders used crime mapping to determine where crime was most prevalent within the Central City VIP area and when crimes were most likely to occur. This information was also used to track progress on the VIP efforts. Technology was further utilized in the tracing of guns recovered during the implementation of Central City VIP.

Training

A key element of the VIP initiative was the training of local law enforcement and prosecutors. Many diverse organizations provided specialized firearms related training to PSN participants including Michigan State University, International Association of Chiefs of Police, and the American Prosecutors Research Institute (PSN web site, Training). Agencies participating in the project worked together to provide cross training and inter-agency training. As with other aspects of the project, the idea is to use resources in the most cost-effective manner to make the greatest impact on gun-related crime.

Outreach

The next element of PSN, outreach, involved a media campaign publicizing aggressive enforcement to let criminals know that they would do prison time for gun crimes. The goal was to create a deterrent effect for would-be criminals and to alert current criminals to the increased enforcement and penalties. Outreach was accomplished through several venues including public service announcements, educational literature,

billboard advertisements, crime prevention tool kits and other available communication processes.

Accountability

The final element of this project was to provide accountability by measuring the outcomes of the project rather than the output. This was done by evaluating the various aspects of the program after the targeted enforcement had ended to determine whether there had been a reduction in the violent crime rate and an increase in safety within the community. The evaluation also included an assessment of resources, focused efforts/action plans implemented during the program, and perception of agency members involved in the effort as overall accountability measures of the program.

Violence Impact Project (VIP)

In the fall of 2003, the Phoenix Police Department formed a committee to address homicides in the city of Phoenix. The original focus on homicides was quickly expanded to include all violent crimes. Part of the initial strategy was to identify “hot spots” for violent crime in the city as one tool for targeting and reducing violent incidents. After an analysis of robberies, assaults, homicides, and weapons crimes, a central neighborhood in Phoenix was identified as a potential focus area. Residents in the area were concerned about the high level of crime, violence, drugs, and prostitution in the area. The department’s own statistics indicated this area as having one of the highest concentrations of violent crime in the city. Subsequently, the VIP was formed to deal specifically with this area known as the “Central City VIP”, which was bounded by 7th and 32nd streets, and Washington Street and McDowell Road. The VIP project was centered around three elements– targeting offenders, conspiracies and areas. Three separate groups were formed to address each element within the Central City VIP area. The program started in October 2003 with the public “kick-off” occurring in January 2004. The focused effort continued through June 2004 followed by an on-going maintenance component.



This strategy was designed so that one area would be used as a pilot project, then improvements would be made so that it could be replicated and implemented in other areas, incorporating lessons learned in the first project. These two projects were combined as one program in the VIP area to reduce gun-related crime and overall violent crime.

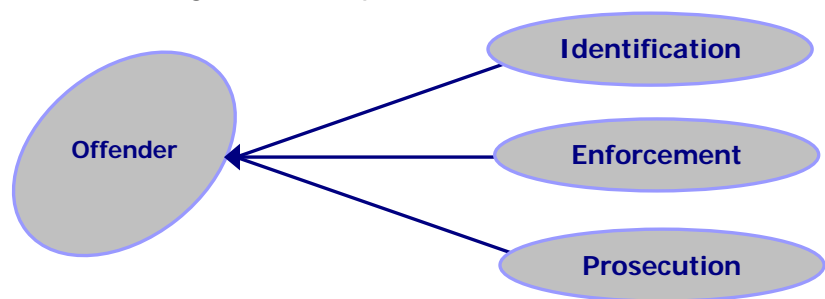
Area

The goal of the area impact group was to suppress and reduce crime and victimization by focusing on areas or environments that facilitate criminal activity through aggressive enforcement of federal, state and local laws in collaboration with the affected community. The area group identified the types of crime and disorder issues impacting the quality of life in this area and worked with resources in the department, other agencies, and other city departments to address these issues. This group began meeting on a weekly basis to share information and address ongoing problems. Leaders from the Central City Precinct and department management met with a community group to solicit support for the project. Members of local community groups agreed to be listed as victims of crimes that occurred in the area. This focus centered on the issues occurring in the geographic area of Central City VIP.

The area impact group also focused on reaching out to the community. Community leaders and community members were made aware of the program and were organized to help plan, strategize, and prioritize issues affecting the community. Monthly meetings were held to update the community on the progress of the project. This group conducted intensive patrol of high crime areas and followed officer action plans to target specific problems.

Offenders

The second focus within the VIP strategy was on removing identified offenders from the area. It is well documented that a relatively small number of offenders commit a disproportionate percentage of all crime in the United States. Specifically, the most active 10 percent of offenders are responsible for more than 50 percent of all reported crimes (Blumstein et al., 1986; Wolfgang et al., 1972). The offender group built its strategy on three facets: identification of potential offenders, enforcement, and prosecution. Through this strategy, the most significant offenders could be targeted to reduce continued crime and violence in the area through the incarceration of violent criminals using enhanced prosecution.



Conspiracy/Organization

For the third group, the initial planning committee determined that it was important to investigate whether violent crime in the Central City VIP was being perpetrated by those involved in human and drug smuggling. The Conspiracy group was formed to reduce violent crime by investigating and dismantling the criminal organizations that engage in unlawful activities for profit or personal gain. The Conspiracy/Organization team worked to identify smugglers and criminal organizations in order to focus on reducing crime and disbanding criminal enterprises within the area. This team worked in cooperation with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). While the original plan involved attempting to dismantle smuggling operations, it was later determined that the amount of time available for the Central City VIP implementation was not long enough to successfully find and dismantle these groups. Efforts continued along these lines, however, it was not part of VIP implementation.

Central City VIP

Neighborhood Profile

The Central City VIP area is an inner-city area of a major metropolis. It is physically divided into quadrants by an interstate freeway and a local commuter freeway. The area is comprised primarily of owner occupied and rental single family homes, small duplexes and apartment complexes, sole-proprietor businesses, chain stores, fast food outlets, and shopping markets. The Central City VIP area is bordered by the urban core of downtown Phoenix, an upscale country club, and Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.

The VIP area is a densely populated neighborhood characterized by poverty, large families, low levels of education, and high levels of unemployment based on information from the 2000 Census. The area also consists of a large number of people between the ages of 15 and 24. The demographic makeup of the area may be related to the trend in violent crime in Central City VIP. (See Appendix F for a Census breakdown.)

While the VIP area makes up only 0.7 percent of the land mass in Phoenix, 2.3 percent of Phoenix population lives in the area (U.S. Census, 2000). More than seventy-eight percent of residents in the Central City VIP area identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino, compared to 34.1 percent of residents in the City of Phoenix. In terms of age, 36.8 percent of the population in the VIP area is under 18, and 29.0 percent of the overall Phoenix population is under 18. An additional 14.1 percent in the VIP area are between the ages of 18 and 24, compared to 10.9 percent in Phoenix. This leads to a higher percentage of the overall population in the age groups that are viewed as "at risk" for criminal activity.

Age Distribution 2000 Census						
	9 and Under	10 to 17	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 54	65 and Over
VIP area	23.5%	13.3%	14.1%	18.8%	21.4%	9.0%
Phoenix	17.1%	11.9%	10.9%	17.2%	27.9%	15.0%
Arizona	15.1%	11.6%	10.0%	14.5%	27.2%	21.6%

Source: 2000 Census Corresponding Tables, Population by Age: SF1, P12

The VIP neighborhood has three times the proportion of unemployed persons, over two times the proportion of people with less than a high school degree and had 33 percent more persons per household when compared to the rest of the city.

Crime

Crime rates per 100,000 residents in the Central City VIP area historically have been considerably higher when compared to Phoenix as a whole. The total violent crime rate in the Central City VIP area was 1,639.6 in 2003, compared to 692.8 in Phoenix and 549.6 in Arizona. This rate historically has been at least 2-3 times higher in the Central City VIP area than the Phoenix or Arizona rate. In 2003, the VIP area experienced a spike in the homicide rate increasing from 26.8 homicides per 100,000 residents in 2002 to 90.3 homicides per 100,000 residents in 2003. It should be noted that between 2002 and 2003 there were at least six homicides that were attributed to the actions of one "serial murderer" who was targeting prostitutes primarily within the Central City VIP area.

Violent Crime Rate per 100,000 Residents Central City VIP area, Phoenix and Arizona							
	Year	Homicide	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Total Violent Crimes	
VIP area	1999	29,885	23.4	83.7	983.8	1,422.1	2,513.0
	2000	29,885	40.2	97.0	896.8	1,238.1	2,272.0
	2001	29,885	43.5	53.5	773.0	913.5	1,783.5
	2002	29,885	26.8	77.0	632.4	1,020.6	1,756.7
	2003	29,885	90.3	77.0	532.0	940.3	1,639.6
Phoenix	1999	1,225,881	17.6	32.6	311.5	470.4	832.1
	2000	1,300,786	11.7	32.4	289.3	416.4	749.9
	2001	1,366,542	15.1	29.3	338.7	387.4	770.6
	2002	1,404,938	13.0	29.2	290.0	395.8	728.1
	2003	1,403,228	17.2	37.5	262.0	376.2	692.8
Arizona	1999	5,130,632	7.5	26.4	141.4	328.2	503.5
	2000	5,130,632	7.1	30.7	145.6	346.5	529.9
	2001	5,130,632	7.8	29.4	171.6	344.3	553.0
	2002	5,130,632	7.5	30.9	154.4	387.7	580.5
	2003	5,130,632	8.6	35.6	146.9	358.6	549.6

Population figures for VIP area and Arizona are from the 2000 Census, while the population figure for Phoenix is based on the FBI's population estimate for each year. Rates are based on crime counts from the Phoenix Police Department's database and Crime in Arizona Reports.

While over half of homicides in the Central City VIP area involved the use of a firearm in 2003, this was lower than the statewide percentage (Appendix F). However, in 2003, 46.3 percent of aggravated assaults in the Central City VIP area involved the use of a firearm compared to 35.2 percent in Phoenix and 30.5 percent statewide. Statewide, 26.9 percent of aggravated assaults involved the use of a firearm in 2003, while aggravated assaults in the Central City VIP area involved the use of a firearm 46.3 percent. For this reason, one focus of the Violence Impact Project was to remove firearms from prohibited possessors, especially violent offenders on parole. By partnering with Project Safe Neighborhoods, cases in the VIP area involving a firearm were able to be prosecuted by specially trained prosecutors in a coordinated effort to remove illegal guns from chronic offenders.

STRATEGIES EMPLOYED

Action Plans

During the Central City Violence Impact Project (VIP), numerous action plans were presented and implemented to direct enforcement efforts toward critical crimes in the area of 7th Street to 32nd Street and McDowell Road to Washington Street. By applying the SARA (Scan, Analyze, Respond, and Assess) method of problem solving, command staff and street officers were able to target some of the most pressing issues as demonstrated by crime reports and citizen complaints. This list does not include each and every action plan, but it provides a summary of some of the action plans that were initiated during the Central City VIP that covered a variety of issues. Some action plans were ongoing or repeated during the course of the operation.

Prostitution and Robbery Reduction

The first action plan was instituted in late October, targeting prostitution and robberies within the Central City VIP boundaries. Officers conducted crime analysis and concluded that prostitution was one of the leading factors associated with street level robberies in this area. It was also noted that Central City precinct had the highest rate of robberies citywide. A zero tolerance enforcement action plan was put into place, targeting supply and demand. Officers conducted an inner precinct sting using a bait vehicle and increased officer presence in the target area in an attempt to discourage prostitution and related criminal activities. The Drug Enforcement Bureau assisted patrol and Neighborhood Enforcement Teams in targeting individuals specifically involved with prostitution-related armed robberies and drug activities.

Mexico License Plates

Acknowledging the unique challenges that exist due to Arizona's proximity to the United States/Mexico international border, an action plan was directed at educating officers on the requirements of vehicles with Mexico license plates. Without knowledge of the Mexico license plates and/or vehicle ownership, it has been difficult to enforce laws pertaining to traffic enforcement and makes it more difficult to conduct any follow-up on crimes. The strategy was to contact the drivers and briefly interview them on the ownership of the vehicle and their residency. The Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) was verified in at least two locations on the vehicle. If the information could not be verified, the vehicle information was then recorded into a log and cleared through the ORCA (Oficina Coordinadora Riesgos Asegurados) database whenever possible. To assess the action plan, citations, recovered stolen vehicles and educational contacts were tracked on a weekly basis.

Operation Public Education

It was determined that non-American residents (recent immigrants) were being specifically targeted as victims in many violent crimes. Without a United States identification card or social security number to properly obtain a bank account some

immigrants were forced to carry large amounts of cash with them. Victims were being robbed and assaulted, but because they feared possible deportation if they went to authorities, most went unreported. Operation Public Education was designed to increase awareness of potential crimes targeting Hispanic residents by involving organizations such as Chicanos por la Causa that traditionally reach out to Hispanics. Detectives also created a helpful list of robbery prevention tips in English and Spanish and the information was distributed to residents and businesses within the Central City VIP area.

Narcotics

Central City precinct officers identified and documented the activities of persons suspected of drug sales in the VIP area. Drug Enforcement Bureau and Department of Public Safety officers worked in an undercover capacity, primarily making case buys. Focused enforcement efforts pursued high-volume offenders, seized personal property and applied enhanced prosecution measures.

With the support and collaborative effort by the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, detectives from the Drug Enforcement Bureau and Central City Precinct staff focused on mid to high level illegal drug distribution suspects. These investigations intercepted a high quantity of drugs that were destined for the Central City VIP area. An investigation was conducted by Central City Precinct officers with support from detectives from the Drug Enforcement Bureau and the Arizona Department of Public Safety that was focused on the specific Central City VIP area, which was known for open-air street drug deals. This multi-level approach increased the number of drug investigations significantly during the Central City VIP implementation.

Gang Enforcement

Another recurring theme in the Central City VIP neighborhood was gangs. Three separate but similar action plans were written to diminish their foothold in the communities. Gangs have been a continual source of disruption within the community and were frequently involved in the violent street crime. Action plans were devised to specifically focus on violent gang members, and involved the coordination of state, local and federal officers. Identifying and focusing on gang members through the use of arrest warrants, sweeps, and raids helped to get the message out that gang activity would not be tolerated.

Cruising

Complaints were made by neighboring businesses about people congregating on the streets, liquor law violations, squealing tires, racing vehicles, random shots fired, traffic collisions caused by impaired drivers and numerous violent crimes. This action plan addressed the issue of cruising and its respective crimes around three nightclubs in the VIP area. Prior to the start of the action plan, Central City Precinct asked for assistance from the three nightclubs to hand out fliers to their patrons for proper notification. Residents in the area were also notified of the action plan. The Phoenix Police

Department enacted an abatement plan to occur on three consecutive weekends. Using traffic barricades, stepped-up patrols, and strict enforcement of all traffic and criminal codes, criminal activity was reduced along the streets and near the clubs.

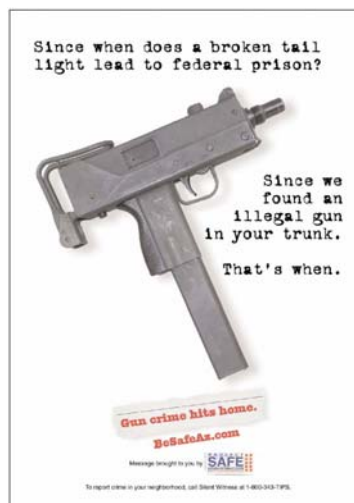
Project Silent Night

An action plan was devised to identify, educate, and enforce laws and ordinances to reduce loud music and noise-related disturbance complaints in the Central City VIP area. Volumes of noise disturbance calls generated by citizens in the VIP area greatly affect the police department's ability to respond and effectively manage these types of calls. Community and officer education efforts were enacted, and a new policy of citing responsible parties for return calls was put in place to reduce the number of noise and disturbance calls in the VIP area. Success was measured by monitoring the number of contacts, citations issued, and a decrease in calls for service.

These action plans allowed all participants in the Central City Violence Impact Project to work together toward commonly desired outcomes. These action plans were focused on a number of critical issues in the Central City VIP area including gangs, drugs, robbery, prostitution and other problems. These plans gave officers and investigators the necessary facts to work together in planned operations. Action plans also provided a forum for making suggestions regarding critical areas that needed to be addressed. These coordinated efforts demonstrated the benefits of a strategic plan in the implementation of major violent crime reduction efforts. The Phoenix Police Department used over \$370,000 in overtime funds to allow officers and other staff to formulate and implement the action plans related to Central City VIP. The action plans were carried out with a combination of on-duty activity from the Police Department's operating budget and overtime hours. The overtime was paid for, in part, by the Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, Homeland Defense funds, which are designed to combat terrorism, violence, and drug use in our communities, as well as RICO funds seized from criminal organizations, which are used by law enforcement to help address neighborhood problems.

Media Campaign

The Central City Violence Impact Project started in October 2003; however, the public kick-off for this project was at a press conference in January 2004. The "kick-off" was designed to generate the maximum amount of media exposure in order to alert the community to the program and put violent offenders on notice that enforcement would be increased. This press conference announcing the kick-off of the Violence Impact Project and Project Safe Neighborhood initiative was held in downtown Phoenix at the U.S. Attorney's Office. This kick-off resulted in reports through various media. Several ongoing processes were put in place to increase visibility of the program, including publicizing arrests, and keeping the media alerted on major milestones of the program.



Media campaigns have been used nationwide to increase awareness of the dangers of gun crime and the consequences associated with it. A web site, www.projectsafeneighborhoods.com, has been set up



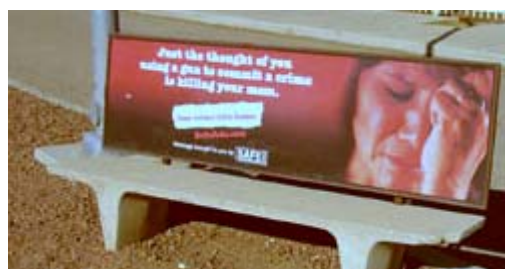
to detail the national effort to increase penalties for those who break federal gun laws, especially when guns are used in the commission of a violent crime. This web site details the national strategy, provides law enforcement with information, and disseminates stories of successful projects.

The web site also provides posters for entities to use to promote Project Safe Neighborhoods in their jurisdiction as well as links to other organizations that are affiliated with the project. Other resources provided are national radio and television public service announcements, television public service announcements created for other states, and print public service announcements. These resources are available for use by participants in Project Safe Neighborhoods.



To raise the awareness of Project Safe Neighborhoods, gun crime and its consequences, the Arizona Firearm Safety Coalition was awarded a grant from Project Safe Neighborhoods to create a statewide media campaign geared toward juveniles as well as a general media campaign. Several mediums of

communication were utilized including press conferences in Phoenix and Tucson, television and Radio Public Service Announcements, signage at transit shelters and bus benches in Tucson and Phoenix, a web site, press releases and booths at events where information and free gun locks were distributed.



Signage was set up in Phoenix at various locations, starting on December 15, 2003. These advertisements consisted of a picture of a crying mother with the statement "Just the thought of you using a gun to commit a crime is killing your mom." The posters had two purposes, the first was to introduce the consequences of gun crime to potential offenders, and the second was to

bring viewers to the Arizona Project Safe Neighborhoods web site.

In the Central City VIP area, there were two billboards, as well as signage at one bus bench and one bus shelter. These were intended to serve as a visible deterrent to potential offenders informing them that there was enhanced enforcement in the area.

Signage Central City VIP area	
Billboard	32 nd St. & McDowell Washington & SR51
Bus Shelter	Van Buren & 24th St.
Bus Bench	Van Buren & 11th Way

A web site, www.besafeaz.com, was created by the Arizona US Attorney's Office and the Arizona Firearm Safety Coalition to showcase Project Safe Neighborhoods in Arizona. This web site provides information on Project Safe Neighborhoods in general, on gun-crime laws, on apprehension and prosecution successes, and on the prevention of gun crime. In addition to providing general information, this web site provides information for witnesses on where to call to report gun crime, information to educate the public on legal and illegal uses of firearms, and resources for those involved in Project Safe Neighborhoods and the Violence Impact Project in Arizona.

Statistics regarding gun crime are also provided, as well as a historical perspective of Project Safe Neighborhoods, a description of how the project works, and answers to frequently asked questions. This web site provides resources for those involved in Project Safe Neighborhoods, as well as the general public by providing links to web sites of partner agencies, as well as recent news releases related to PSN.

A television media blitz of public service announcements was held during the Central City VIP implementation. While some of these spots were purchased, cable stations provided numerous free spots in Phoenix. The remaining spots were paid for with Project Safe Neighborhoods grant funds. In Phoenix, 34.2 percent of the population are males between the ages of 18 and 34 (2000 US Census), the primary target of these PSAs. This gun crime campaign directly targeted potential offenders by airing the PSAs on channels popular with this age demographic.

Tag shown at the end of television public service announcements:



PSN Prosecution of VIP Cases

In order to coordinate an extensive prosecution strategy for the Central City VIP implementation, the Phoenix City Prosecutors, Maricopa County Attorney's Office, and the United States Attorney's Office worked together to create a policy of aggressively prosecuting local cases involving armed felons with a prior history of violence or gang membership under applicable local, state and federal laws. The overall objective of the task force was to send a strong message to the criminal community to dissuade gun

crime, target criminal organizations, and reduce gun crime by locking up repeat offenders.

One tool for enhancing communication among partners is ongoing training provided to the various units. The U.S. Attorney's Office, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Phoenix Police Department conducted ongoing classes that instructed task force members on the available gun laws and how the laws in different jurisdictions should be applied to bolster cases and lengthen sentences. They instructed officers to highlight PSN cases so they could be forwarded to a specialized group of "gun prosecutors" that were trained to manage cases so that defendants were tried in the jurisdiction that carries the longest sentence. Officers also underwent specific training on building a solid gun case in order to increase the likelihood of conviction.

The enhanced prosecution strategy creates other benefits to law enforcement. Cases of armed robbery in the Central City VIP area were specifically marked for PSN prosecution. Successes of the enhanced prosecution procedure included higher bonds for suspects and fewer suspects being released on their own recognizance because of the strength of the cases presented to judges at the time of the arrestees' first appearances. When courts send offenders to federal or state prisons for extended sentences, offenders are off the streets, providing for safer neighborhoods. The PSN project specifically targeted known offenders and those with outstanding felony warrants to remove serious offenders from the community. Enhanced prosecution of these offenders allowed for specially trained prosecutors to prosecute the cases to the fullest extent allowed by law, increasing prison times for offenders.

The open communication process between law enforcement and prosecution along with an aggressive prosecutorial strategy have created an adaptable and aggressive approach to reducing the prevalence of guns as well as the violence related to weapons. The strategy was designed to put violent criminals from the VIP Central Phoenix area in prison and to provide for a safer community.

FINDINGS

The findings of the Violence Impact Project evaluation are broken into two categories—process and impact. The process evaluation examined the methods used to employ the Central City VIP implementation and ways to improve those methods. The impact evaluation examined the actual results of the implementation from a crime reduction aspect, as well as an officer and citizen perspective.

Process

As part of the process evaluation three specific areas were assessed: 1) VIP implementation 2) ATF gun recoveries and 3) prosecution. Information was obtained from participating agencies, weekly meetings and administrative minutes of the meetings. In this section, we discuss the implementation of each of these areas as they relate to the Violence Impact Project. In addition, we provide a discussion of strategies for the future implementation and evaluation of the Violence Impact Project.

VIP Implementation

After the initial decision to move forward on the VIP effort, the committee began meeting to discuss possible solutions to remove the criminal element from this neighborhood, particularly in instances of homicide and robbery. During the initial meetings, logistical, communication, and resource issues were discussed, and the priorities of the project were clarified. The first action plans were devised in the fall of 2003. A task force consisting of Vice Crimes, Neighborhood Enforcement Teams (NET), Violent Crimes Bureau, Drug Enforcement Bureau, Organized Crime Bureau with gangs and enforcement, motor officers from Traffic Enforcement Bureau, Property Crimes/Street Crimes Unit, and the Central City precinct patrol officers began developing action plans and initiating enforcement efforts in the area. The first action plan was devised to remove prostitutes and their customers (johns) from the neighborhood through targeted “prostitution sweeps” geared to attack both the supply and demand sides of this crime. This effort was also intended to reduce the number of robberies in the area, as many of them involved schemes where prostitutes were setting up their “johns” to be robbed.

As the rollout progressed, communication between specialized bureaus and the patrol units continued. Weekly progress reports were shared at the area impact group VIP meetings, and project leaders continually revisited the goals and objectives of the program. The participants formulated additional action plans to engage drug crimes, youth-related crimes such as cruising, loitering, curfew, and substance abuse violations and motor vehicle theft, among others.

As the VIP strategy was joined with the PSN program to allow more resources to be directed toward the VIP area, the direct involvement of other agencies such as the

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE); Maricopa County Adult Probation and Parole; Juvenile Probation; United States Drug Enforcement Administration; and the United States Attorney's Office were added. A concerted effort by the Phoenix Police Department, ATF, and the U.S. Attorney's Office incorporated a specific focus on Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) firearm violation cases to address the prevalence of gun violence in the area.

Throughout the duration of the nine month project, PSN cases were coordinated among ATF, U.S. Attorney's Office, and all of the participating units in the VIP. Enforcement activity that involved guns was approached with PSN in mind, and special training was conducted on how to create solid gun cases. The VIP's mission to reduce violence was further accomplished by removing the chronic offenders through special sentencing procedures that identified (PSN) cases and enhanced prosecution and the focus of resources in a defined geographic area worked to improve the overall safety of the neighborhood.

Part of the VIP process included using a variety of methods to reach out to the community, both to let citizens know about the program and to act as a deterrence to potential criminals. Included in this outreach were media kickoffs, posters announcing the penalties for gun crimes and community outreach. In order to reach out to the community, officers distributed information to leaders of community organizations on a regular basis regarding the VIP implementation. In addition, gun locks were distributed to gun owners free of charge within the community.

The first step in the Violence Impact Project strategy was to evaluate crime trends and hot spots in the City of Phoenix to determine the area with a high density of violent crimes that would be likely to benefit from the implementation of the program. The first VIP area was determined based on the high number of homicides, assaults, and robberies committed in the area relative to the rest of the city. The initial planning phase of the project focused on homicides, but this was soon expanded to address other types of violent crime. During the planning phase of the first project, the target area was selected and the three focus groups (Offender, Area, and Conspiracy) were developed based on the current understanding of the nature of violent crime in the area. A coalition was then formed of police management, officers and supervisors in the selected VIP area and in relevant specialty details, as well as members of outside agencies. Members of the coalition outside the Phoenix Police Department included prosecutors, neighborhood services, Maricopa County Adult Probation and Parole, Juvenile Probation, and the United States Attorney's Office, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), along with other federal, state, and county agencies, and interested community leaders to develop a coordinated process to attack violent crime in the area. Training was then given to all involved to develop the focus for VIP, to help officers learn how to build an

effective PSN gun case, and to help develop processes for determining the best jurisdiction to prosecute gun-related crimes.

Once the coalition was formed and training had taken place, the VIP strategy was implemented in the area selected, in this case the area known as the “Central City VIP” between 7th and 32nd streets, and Washington Street and McDowell Road in Phoenix. In determining the location of the Central City VIP implementation, the Phoenix Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) conducted independent evaluations of violent crime in the City of Phoenix and determined that this was an appropriate target area. Between October 2003 and June 2004, resources were directed at this area and involved parties met together weekly to form a coordinated strategy for reducing violence. Technology was used to pinpoint the exact locations of crime clusters so that officers could focus efforts in the area most needed. Regular status updates were provided on the progress in the area in terms of impacting violent crime. In addition, officers from patrol and specialty units worked together to build effective cases and make successful arrests in an effort to reduce violence and increase community safety.

The Phoenix Police Department’s Crime Analysis and Research Unit (CARU), along with Phoenix Police Department personnel participating in the VIP process, gathered data and intelligence information that was used to identify problem areas and focus active enforcement efforts on particular areas and targets. Regular action plans were formulated to help officers address the most prevalent and/or violent crimes. These action plans were discussed during weekly meetings that were held to share progress, challenges and to coordinate efforts.

To identify potential offenders within the VIP area, the stakeholders determined that the Repeat Offender Program (R.O.P.) could be enhanced to better isolate those most likely to commit serious crimes and those that may be eligible for enhanced prosecution. That, combined with a list of probation violation warrants, allowed officers in the area to target offenders that were already known to be in the area. This process focused on indicators such as intelligence information, Department of Corrections data, or other sources of information that would show that a known offender was active in committing crimes.

The enforcement phase involved two facets: felony warrant apprehensions and proactive surveillance. Several units within the Phoenix Police Department worked to apprehend known felons with outstanding warrants within the VIP area. The Maricopa Adult and Juvenile Probation Departments provided ongoing communication regarding offenders with warrants in the VIP area. Once other avenues of apprehension were exhausted without an arrest, the case would be turned over to the Phoenix Police Department Public Affairs Bureau to broadcast information to the media about the suspect. In addition, in situations where suspects were known to police but there was

not enough information for an arrest, the subject would be put under surveillance to collect enough information for a successful case and apprehension.

The prosecution phase broke into two paths, depending on whether a gun was involved in the crime. If a gun was involved in the crime, the case was labeled as a Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) case and was sent to a special team of prosecutors to determine which venue, state or federal, would be the most appropriate place for prosecution based on the term, ease of prosecution, venue, case load and other factors. Officers worked closely with federal and local prosecutors to determine the venue that would deliver the strongest penalty, and to have all necessary paperwork in order to prevent offenders from being released on their own recognizance or being released with low bail.

ATF Gun Recoveries

Research has shown that a strategy employing gun seizures can be effective in reducing gun violence (Braga, 2004). The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) is an invaluable partner in Project Safe Neighborhoods, and participated strongly in the VIP/PSN partnership. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) indicated the following as a primary objective in its most recent strategic plan: “partner with law enforcement agencies and prosecutors at all levels to develop focused strategies that lead to the investigation, arrest, and prosecution of violent offenders, persons prohibited from possessing firearms, domestic and international firearms traffickers, violent gangs, and others who attempt to illegally acquire or misuse firearms” (ATF, 2004). Active participation by ATF in the Violence Impact Project initiative created an opportunity for this type of cooperation.

When a gun is recovered by law enforcement that was used in the commission of a crime, information regarding the gun, including the serial number, is reported to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) National Tracing Center to be traced. While not all agencies report all firearms to ATF, the Phoenix Police Department reports all recovered firearms used, or suspected of having been used, in the commission of a crime to ATF. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives then attempts to trace the weapon back to the original seller. When successful, this information can allow a gun to be traced from seller to purchaser, and often, to the perpetrator of a gun crime.

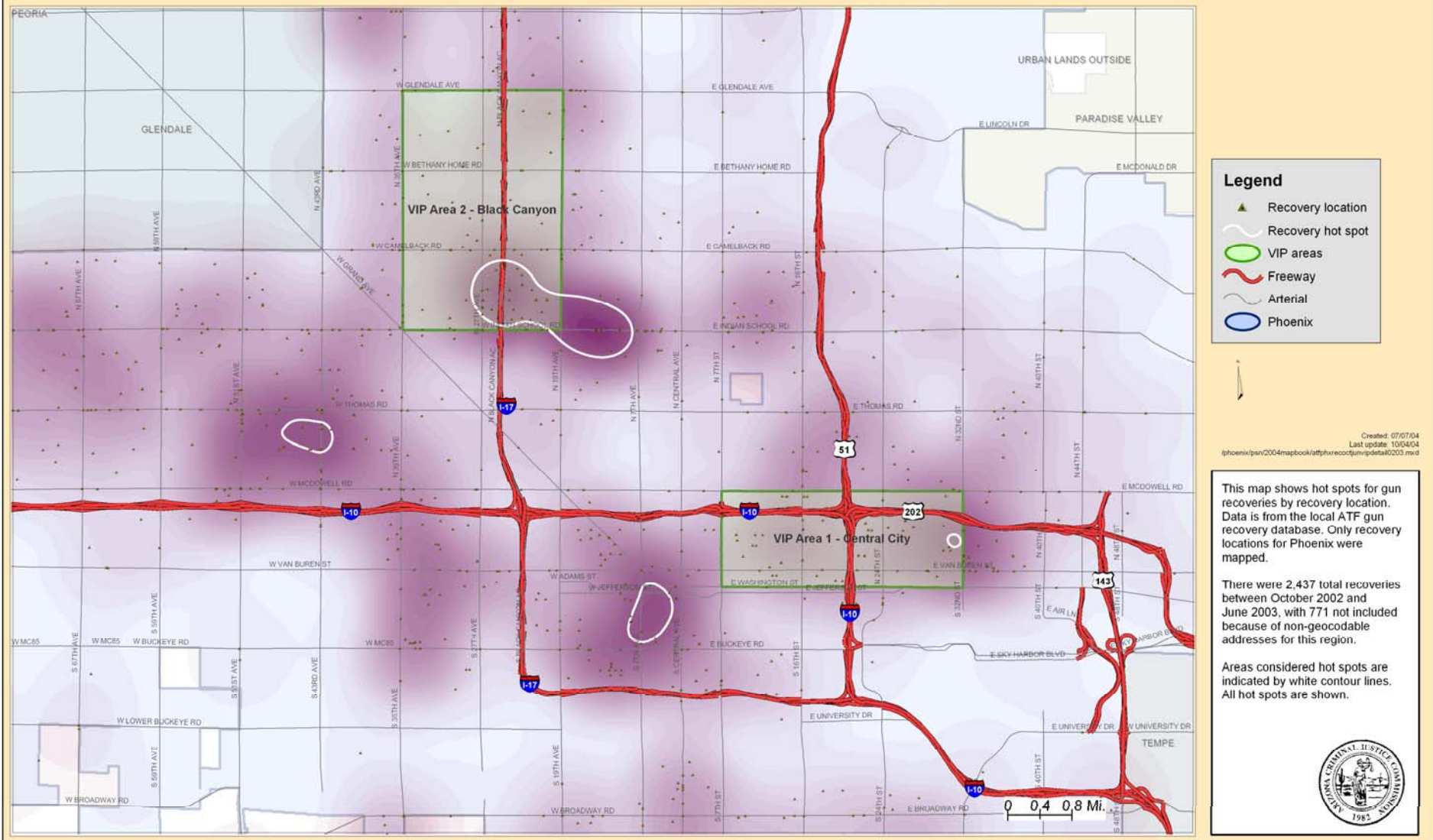
As seen in the table below, the Central City VIP area had a much higher rate per 100,000 residents of guns recovered than the City of Phoenix. During the Central City VIP implementation, the rate for gun recoveries per 100,000 residents was 485.2, considerably higher than the rate of 200.1 for Phoenix. The same trend can be seen one year prior when the recovery rate for the Central City VIP area was 839.9 compared to 126.1 for Phoenix.

ATF gun recoveries in Phoenix				
	October 2002 – June 2003		October 2003 – June 2004	
	Recoveries	Rate per 100,000	Recoveries	Rate per 100,000
Phoenix	1,666	126.1	2,644	200.1
Central City VIP	251	839.9	145	485.2

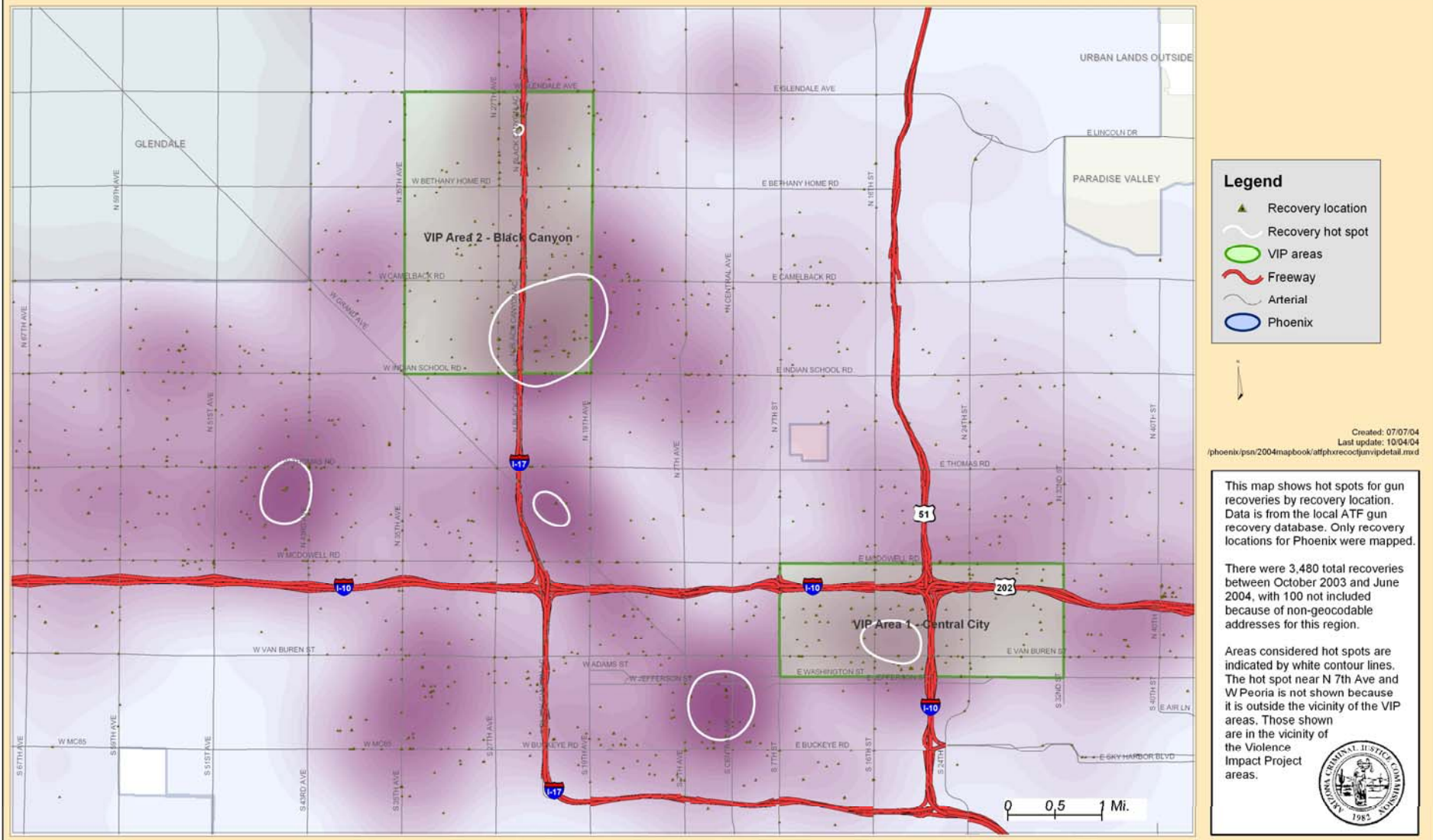
Source: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearm and Explosives database

When a gun is recovered, the location where it is seized or found is recorded. Using a geographic information system and the Arizona portion of the National Trace database, recovery location information was used to generate a hot spot analysis. This analysis was then used to determine where illegal or suspicious guns are found most frequently with the goal of allowing local law enforcement to concentrate resources more effectively. The number of locations that were able to be geocoded in this database increased from 93 percent to 95 percent between October 2002-June 2003 and October 2003-June 2004, the two time periods analyzed. The hot spot analyses for the time periods on the next two pages show that there were two recovery hot spots within the Central City VIP area between October 2002 and June 2003, and one hot spot between October 2003 and June 2004.

ATF gun recovery hot spots in Phoenix Police Department VIP areas: October 2002 - June 2003



ATF gun recovery hot spots in Phoenix Police Department VIP areas: October 2003 - June 2004



As more than 70 percent of homicides in Phoenix involve the use of a gun, as well as a considerable percentage of other violent crimes, one of the goals of Central City VIP was to remove firearms from prohibited possessors and prosecute firearms offenders to the fullest extent of the law. In addition to the gun tracing process that was used, recovered guns were screened for entry into the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN). [This data was not used in the maps.] This process consists of test firing the weapon, scanning the bullet, and entering data into the NIBIN database regarding the gun. This information can be compared to bullets found at crime scenes to determine whether the guns were used during a crime.

The NIBIN process works by local law enforcement agencies entering data into Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS) units that are distributed to state and local law enforcement agencies by ATF. These units are connected into the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN). This system allows firearms technicians to acquire, digitize, and compare markings made by a firearm on bullets and cartridge casings. The process minimizes the amount of non-matching evidence that firearms examiners must inspect in order to discover a match. The NIBIN system allows law enforcement agencies to discover links between crimes more quickly, and to discover links that would have been lost without the technology (ATF, 2001).

Since January 2004, ATF has been providing ongoing assistance to the Phoenix Police Department Violence Impact Program in conjunction with the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative. ATF has pursued a multi-pronged approach to firearms violence including concentrated firearms enforcement, external training, and community outreach. In the area of firearms enforcement, ATF conducted gun show enforcement operations within the Phoenix Police Department impact area to combat the purchase of firearms by prohibited possessors. In addition, ATF and Phoenix Police Department placed "file stops" on known repeat offenders to vigorously investigate the illegal possession of firearms by convicted felons. In many cases, ATF pursued Federal firearms charges against multi-convicted felons.

In the area of training, ATF provided assistance to the Phoenix Police Department Central City Precinct (i.e., the violence impact area) to educate front line police officers on effective firearms enforcement (e.g., investigation techniques, elements of proof, etc.). ATF also delivered outreach to community groups to provide public information and act as a sounding board for neighborhood concerns. For example, in the days prior to New Years Eve, ATF and Phoenix Police Department educated Central City "partygoers" as to the dangers of random gunfire (i.e., celebration gun shots, etc.). Phoenix Police Department then followed up with concerted enforcement of "Shannon's Law" during the holiday period. "Shannon's Law", named after Shannon Smith, a 14-year-old girl killed by a stray bullet, is the commonly used name for A.R.S. §13-3107, which raised the penalty for random gunfire within the city limits. In addition, ATF and Phoenix Police Department promoted firearms safety at the Garfield Elementary School Cinco de Mayo celebration and distributed gun locks to members of the community.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) has been a vital partner in the Violence Impact Project/Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative, providing active assistance and training to the project. In partnership with Project Safe Neighborhoods, ATF assigned agents for the specific purpose of supporting Project Safe Neighborhoods (Anderson, 2002). Most recently, the Phoenix Police Department has deployed several officers to work in partnership with ATF in developing a newly established Gun Squad.

Prosecution

In the Central City VIP, the Phoenix City Prosecutors, Maricopa County Attorney's Office, and the United States Attorney's Office coordinated an extensive prosecution strategy that included specialized gun prosecutors and an aggressive policy of prosecuting local cases involving armed felons with a prior history of violence or gang membership. The overall objective of the task force was to send a strong message to the criminal community to dissuade gun crime, target criminal organizations, and reduce gun crime by locking up repeat offenders.

The federal statutes that were devised specifically to combat gun crime are 18 USC § 922, 924, and 28 USC § 5861. Statute 18 USC § 922 (g) and (n) deals with the issue of prohibited possessors, which includes felons and illegal aliens. In the Central City Violence Impact Project (VIP) area, some of those committing violent crimes fell into the category of prohibited possessors. When a prohibited possessor was arrested during the program, those cases were specifically marked for enhanced prosecution at the federal level because this would ensure the stiffest penalty. Statute 28 USC § 5861 specifies federal penalties for illegal possession of certain weapons, including machine guns. Other federal, state and local statutes regarding weapon possession and use provide prosecutors with several avenues to explore to determine the best venue (i.e. federal or state) for prosecuting individual cases. Although in many states the state penalties are more lenient than federal penalties, Arizona statutes frequently provide for harsher penalties for gun crimes than federal statutes.

The U.S. Attorney's Office has an aggressive prosecution strategy through the enforcement of 18 USC § 924 that leverages firearms cases to dismantle these trafficking organizations and their gun sources. This statute provides stiff penalties in federal prison for those who knowingly possess or obtain a firearm when they are a prohibited possessor.

Cases of armed robbery in the Central City VIP area were specifically marked for PSN prosecution. Successes of the enhanced prosecution procedure included higher bonds for suspects and fewer arrestees being released on their own recognizance. When courts send offenders to federal or state prisons for extended sentences, offenders are off the streets, providing for safer neighborhoods. The PSN project specifically targeted

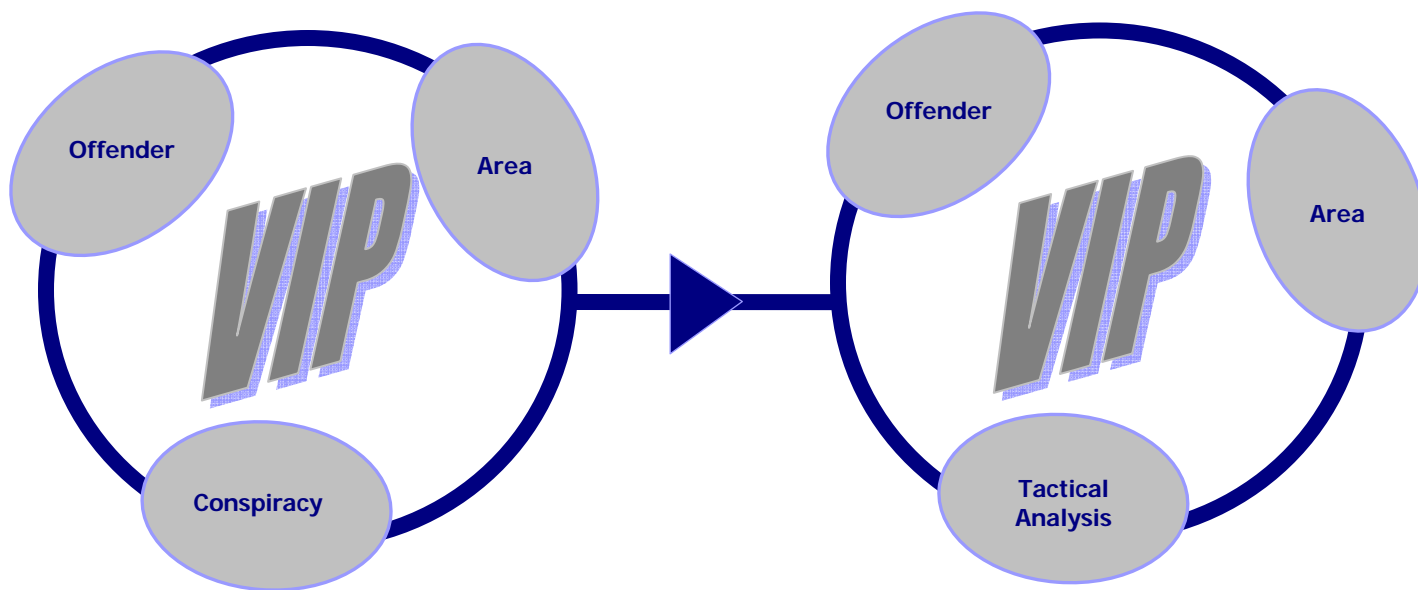
known offenders and those with outstanding felony warrants to remove serious offenders from the community. Enhanced prosecution of these offenders allowed for specially trained prosecutors to prosecute the cases to the fullest extent allowed by law, increasing prison times for offenders.

While Central City VIP resulted in increased enforcement, and presumably increased prosecution, specific statistics were not available from the prosecuting agencies. The lack of data reduced the ability to effectively evaluate the project in terms of prosecutions of violent offenders. In future evaluations, data on prosecutions of VIP cases, along with sentencing information, would allow for a more thorough analysis of the effectiveness of the program.

Strategic Approach to Future Implementation and Evaluation

The Central City VIP was the first implementation of this partnership designed to impact violent crime. It is adaptable and able to be monitored to create a model of best practices for future endeavors. During the operation, elements of the project, tactical approaches, and managing processes evolved to meet the objectives of the partners. Many of these improvements have been incorporated in the second area, Black Canyon VIP, which began July 2004 based on the experiences of the first area, and their significance is already evident. These practices stem from experimentation, experience, and outcomes in both the process and evaluation arenas.

The strategy during VIP was modified in terms of the way the steering committee identified targets. At the onset of the project, one of the core elements was Conspiracy. During the initial stages for this effort, the VIP Steering Committee decided to target large organizations in an effort to halt crime at the highest possible source. Once the enhanced enforcement efforts began, it became clear that within the established timeline of the plan, and learning it was difficult to connect how much of the crime was centralized or organized, it was not an efficient use of resources to pursue such intermittent targets. Some progress was made in the area of conspiracy during the Central City VIP and this effort will continue in future projects, but it was decided that the third focus area should change. Understanding the characteristics of the crimes within the established boundaries is critical prior to strategizing goals of a directed enforcement effort. In future operations, conducting thorough tactical analysis of the crime characteristics can assist in developing practical and appropriate objectives, from which statistically driven enforcement efforts can be drawn.



The role that statistical data played was diverse and impacted many aspects of the VIP model. One example was the process and methodology of capturing crime statistics, which evolved during the enforcement effort. Much of the reporting efforts specific to VIP action plans was in the form of a follow-up memorandum or E-mail, but there was no coordinated procedure to capture this information for additional application in the project. A reporting tool was not standardized prior to the rollout of the project, and until one was implemented, a great deal of data and intelligence was lost. For the second implementation of VIP, a database was created to track action plans and enforcement efforts that were part of the program.

The use of data to drive resource assignments and decision-making is a critical aspect of many successful policing efforts and an integral part of Project Safe Neighborhoods. In similar fashion, the Black Canyon VIP Steering Committee elevated the importance of data for use in directing the law enforcement efforts. The committee established a policy that coordinated the capture, analysis, and sharing of data. This system allows for the collection of relevant information, as well as a standard tool through which all reports would be provided. The Crime Analysis and Research Unit (CARU) of the Phoenix Police Department acts as a centralized unit to track the earliest indications of trends, identify critical issues, and the share feedback regarding specific police efforts.

The role of the Phoenix Police Department's Crime Analysis and Research Unit (CARU) has been expanded in several areas such as the way crime fluctuations are being monitored. CARU will not only measure the crime fluctuations within the established boundaries, but the surrounding areas as well. Observing displacement of crimes could be a good indicator of potential resurgence once the Black Canyon VIP action is concluded. The Crime Analysis and Research Unit (CARU) is presenting weekly information on crime incidents and emerging trends. The unit is also producing weekly reports to identify top locations and repeat offenders on the area to help guide action

plans. The Crime Analysis and Research Unit is tracking the progress and maintenance of each VIP area over time.

An offender assessment is in the process of being developed to measure the perceptions of offenders arrested in the VIP areas. Questions relating to the VIP implementation will be utilized to allow offenders to be interviewed while they are incarcerated. Once this assessment is completed, the resulting data will be examined for information relating to how VIP can be better implemented in the future.

Community involvement was successful in the Central City VIP, which was evident through the continuous attendance at neighborhood meetings and the end-of-project resident focus group feedback. The establishment of solid lines of communication, collecting intelligence from neighbors, and monitoring the perception of safety in the community were all integral parts of the relation-building process. To build upon that, the Black Canyon VIP has distributed a community survey via mail in two groups, one using letters and the other postcards. This survey is being implemented once at the beginning of the program and once at the end. It is hoped that this method of information gathering provides a more representative sample of resident opinions.

Through continuous evaluation and modifications, the Violence Impact Project is a model that can be molded to fit the problems experienced in violent crime hot spots in Phoenix. Already, changes have been made to increase the role of data gathering and analysis in order to make informed action plans and better evaluate VIP implementations. By assessing community, officer and offender perceptions, program changes can be made based on those findings.

Impact

The impact evaluation used three measures to triangulate the effectiveness of the VIP implementation overall: 1) Crime in the VIP target area 2) Community Focus Group and 3) Officer survey. In this section, we discuss these measures were used to evaluate effectiveness of the Violence Impact Project.

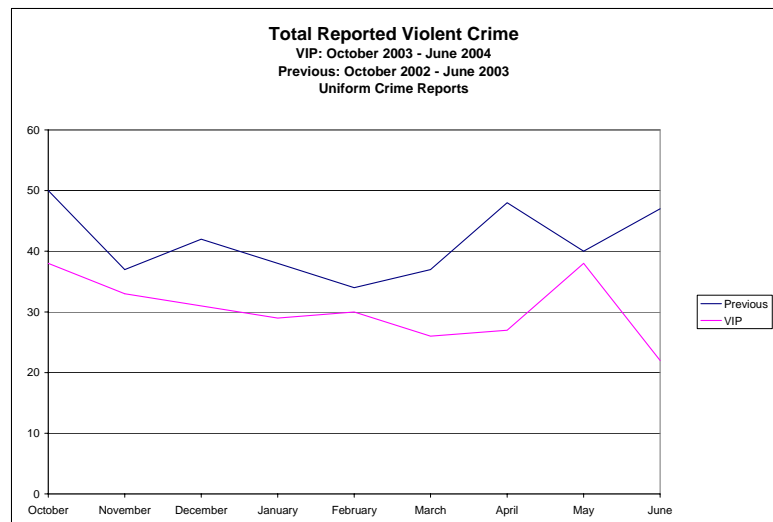
Crime

The Central City VIP implementation took place between October 2003 and June 2004. The table below compares reported violent crime during the VIP implementation and the prior year (October 2002 through June 2003). Overall crime during the implementation phase went down in every violent crime category (26.5 percent overall). The most dramatic decrease was in homicide, which decreased 69.6 percent, and the lowest decrease was robbery, which decreased 17.5 percent.

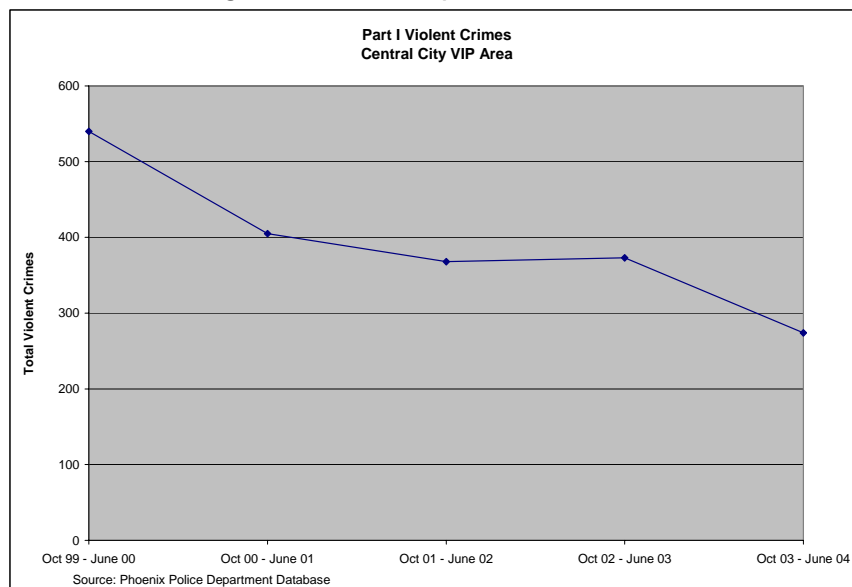
Violent Part I Crime Comparison of Central City VIP Implementation Period and Previous Year										
	Homicide		Rape		Robbery		Aggravated Assault		Total Violent Crime	
	Previous	VIP	Previous	VIP	Previous	VIP	Previous	VIP	Previous	VIP
October	0	0	2	4	23	13	25	21	50	38
November	1	1	0	0	9	10	27	22	37	33
December	2	1	4	1	15	15	21	14	42	31
January	2	2	2	2	20	14	14	11	38	29
February	2	1	0	0	9	7	23	22	34	30
March	5	0	1	2	15	12	16	12	37	26
April	5	0	2	0	11	11	30	16	48	27
May	3	2	2	3	16	12	19	21	40	38
June	3	0	6	1	8	10	30	11	47	22
Total	23	7	19	13	126	104	205	150	373	274
% Change	-69.6%		-31.6%		-17.5%		-26.8%		-26.5%	

Source: Uniform Crime Report data from Phoenix Police Department database.

The total number of crimes reported each month during the VIP implementation was lower than each month of the prior year. The reduction in aggravated assaults was the primary factor in the lower total violent crimes during the VIP implementation. The chart to the right depicts the reduction in violent crime by month compared to the previous year.



A five year comparison of the October through June time period shows that there had been an overall trend of decreasing total violent crime in the VIP area.



However, in the three years prior to the implementation of Central City VIP, this decrease had flat-lined for two years, and was not maintaining the overall decrease that was seen citywide. Only the time period between October and June is examined in order to allow for

comparability with the VIP implementation period. In the year prior to Central City VIP, there was a sharp increase in homicides and forcible rape in the target area. While robbery and aggravated assault decreased slightly during this period, the rates were still much higher than overall crime citywide.

Central City VIP Five Year Trend Part I Violent Crime					
	October 1999 - June 2000	October 2000 - June 2001	October 2001 - June 2002	October 2002 - June 2003	October 2003 - June 2004
Homicide	8	11	5	23	7
Forcible Rape	21	10	15	19	13
Robbery	215	170	132	126	104
Aggravated Assault	296	214	216	205	150
Total	540	405	368	373	274

Source: Phoenix Police Department database

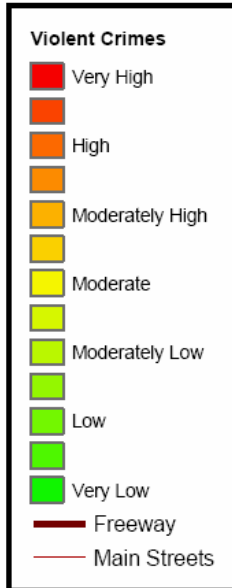
These results are part of an overall trend citywide of violent crime reduction. However, the 26.5 percent decrease in violent crime during the implementation of Central City VIP was much higher than the 3.4 percent decrease seen in the rest of Phoenix during that time period (October 2003 through June 2004) and compares to a 1.4 percent increase in the VIP area during the same time period one year prior.

Central City Crime

As an overall percentage of crime committed in Phoenix, the percentage of violent crime in the Central City VIP area decreased from 5.1 percent of total violent crime to 3.9 percent during the VIP implementation. The maps on the next two pages show hot-spot analysis conducted from October 2002 through June 2003 and another for October 2003 through June 2004. These maps show that the density of violent crime in the Central City VIP area when compared to Phoenix as a whole. Violent crime on these maps included all Uniform Crime Reports of homicide, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assaults. (See Appendix D).

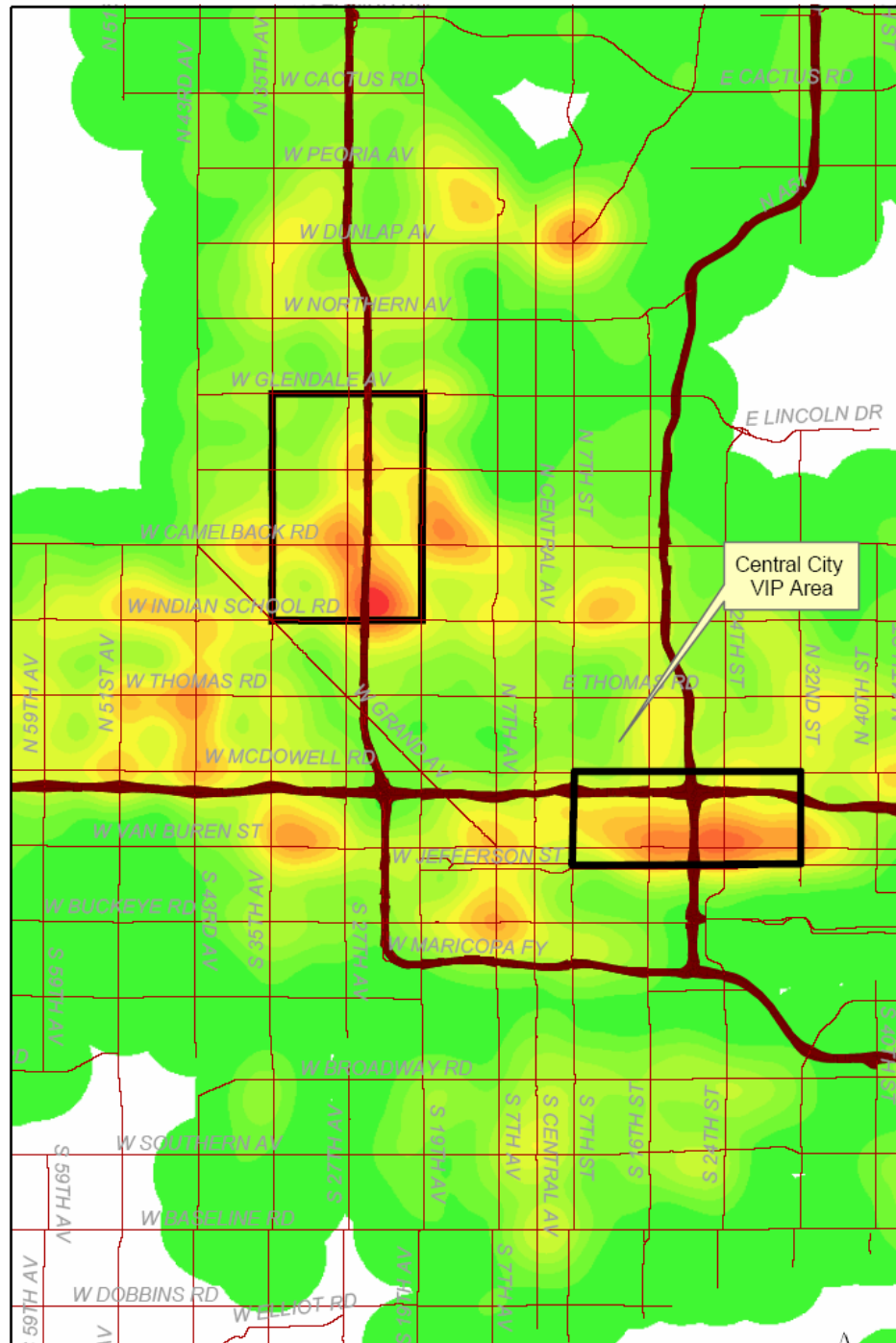


Density of Citywide UCR Violent Crimes October 2002 Through June 2003



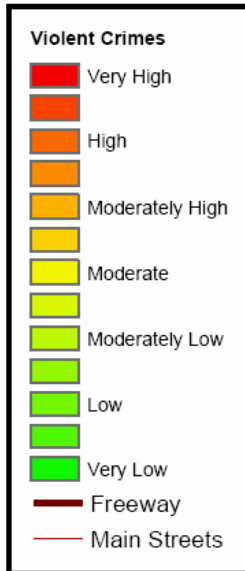
This report is based on Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) statistics. UCR violent crimes include homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assault. Density created with a cell size of 100 ft and a search radius of .75 miles. The Central City Violence Impact Project area is from 7th Street to 32nd Street and McDowell Road to Washington Street.

Phoenix Police Department
Planning and Research Bureau
Crime Analysis and Research Unit (CARU)
calkel created 09/27/2004
Source: UCR 2003-2004 UCR Address Info
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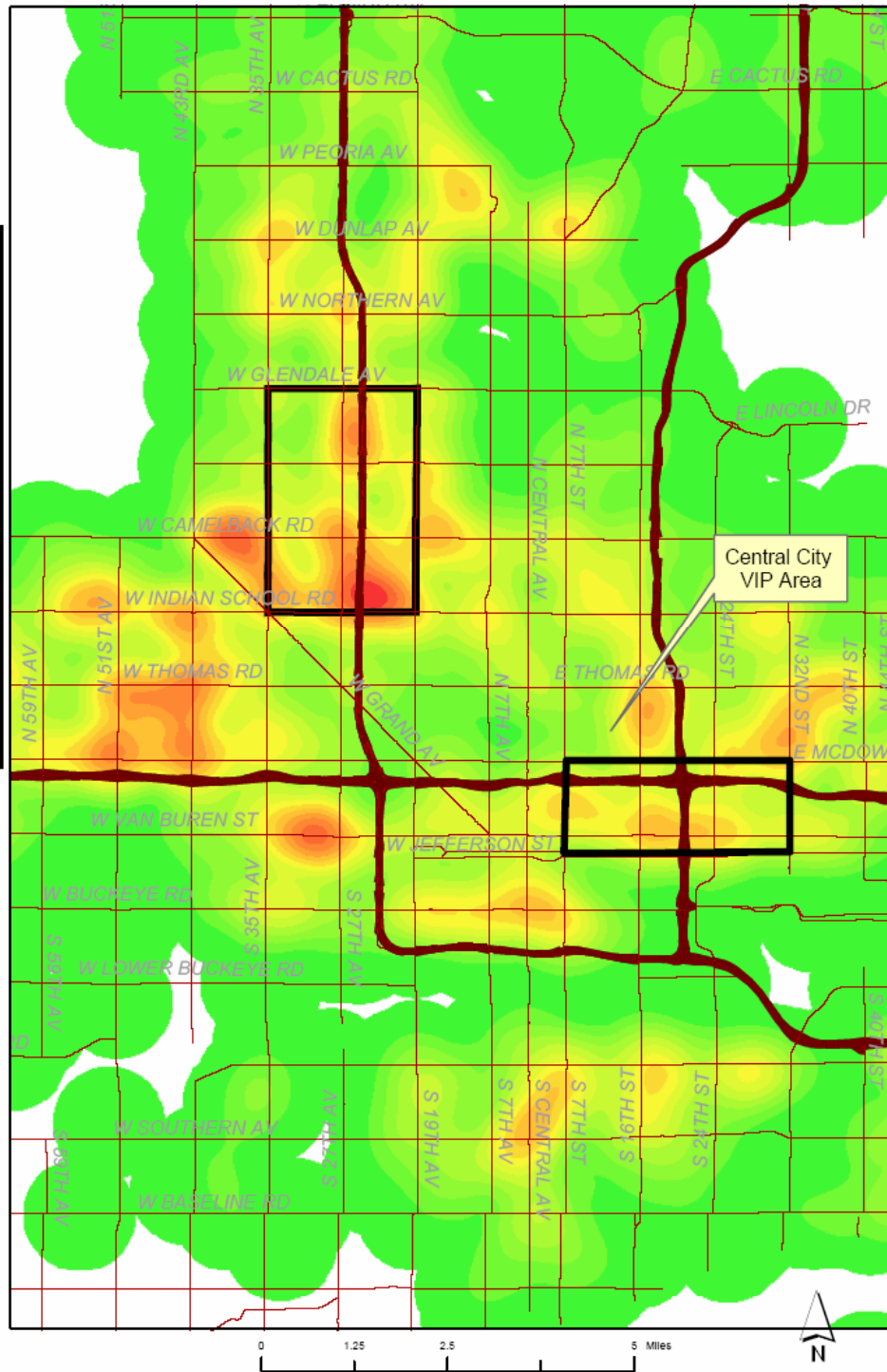


Density of Citywide UCR Violent Crimes October 2003 Through June 2004



This report is based on Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) statistics. UCR violent crimes include homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assault. Density created with a cell size of 100 ft and a search radius of .75 miles. The Central City Violence Impact Project area is from 7th Street to 32nd Street and McDowell Road to Washington Street.

Phoenix Police Department
Planning and Research Bureau
Crime Analysis and Research Unit (CARU)
cark@cityofphoenix.gov
Source: UCR 2003-2004 UCR Address Info
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As shown in these maps the Central City VIP area was a hot spot prior to the implementation, but it was no longer as dense during the program period. The map provides a visual representation of the change in violent crime in the Central City VIP initiative from the prior year.

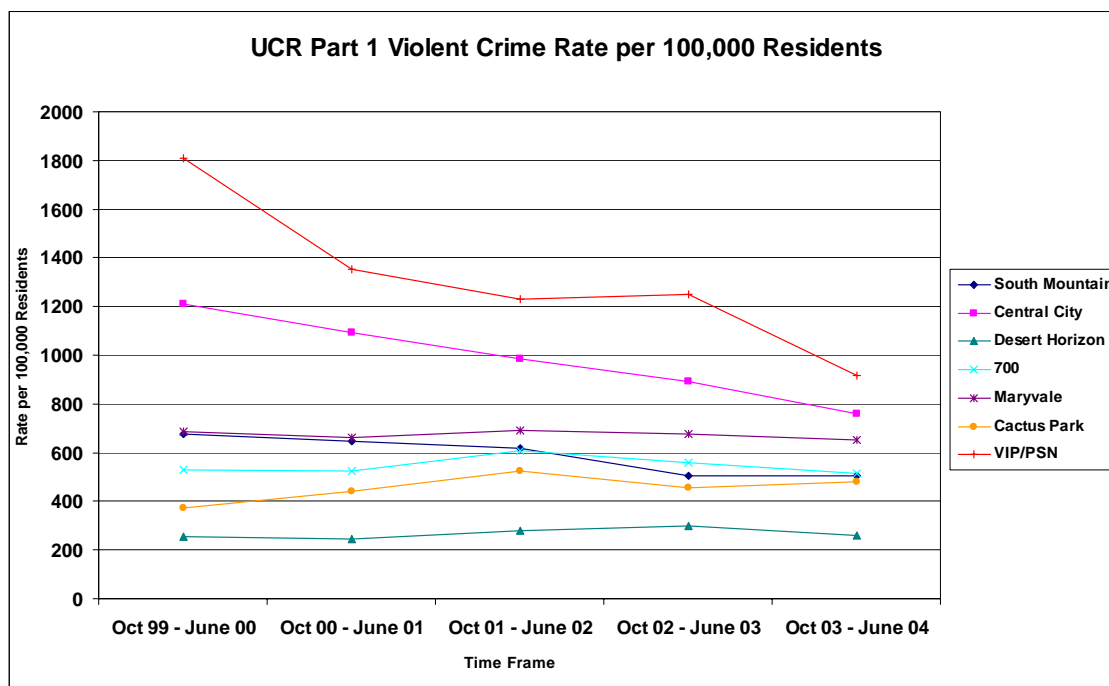
Comparative Analysis Among Precincts

A comparative analysis was done for the time period of the Central City VIP implementation, as well as the four years prior to the implementation for the Central City VIP area and the six patrol precincts in City of Phoenix. As can be seen in the chart below, overall crime was on a downward slope in the majority of the precincts during the time period examined. While the violent crime rate for the Central City VIP area had decreased in the four years prior to the implementation, the major decrease occurred in the time period examined as demonstrated in the chart below. A 26.5 percent reduction in violent crime was found in the VIP area with no other individual precinct recording a double-digit decrease. The Central City VIP area is contained within the Central City precinct, which did realize a 13.3 percent decrease in violent crime during this evaluation period. This area had a larger decrease in crime than any other precinct during the VIP implementation period.

period of the Central City VIP

Percent Change in Violent Crime between time periods Oct 02 – Jun 03 and Oct 03 – Jun 04	
South Mountain	3.8
Central City	-13.3
Desert Horizon	-12
700 Precinct	-6.8
Maryvale	-1.1
Cactus Park	7.6
VIP	-26.5
Phoenix	-3.4

Source: Phoenix Police Department database



Population estimates are based on the Phoenix corporate limits as of June 30th each year. Data was obtained from the City of Phoenix Planning Dept. Based on precinct boundaries that were effective Sept. 1, 2003

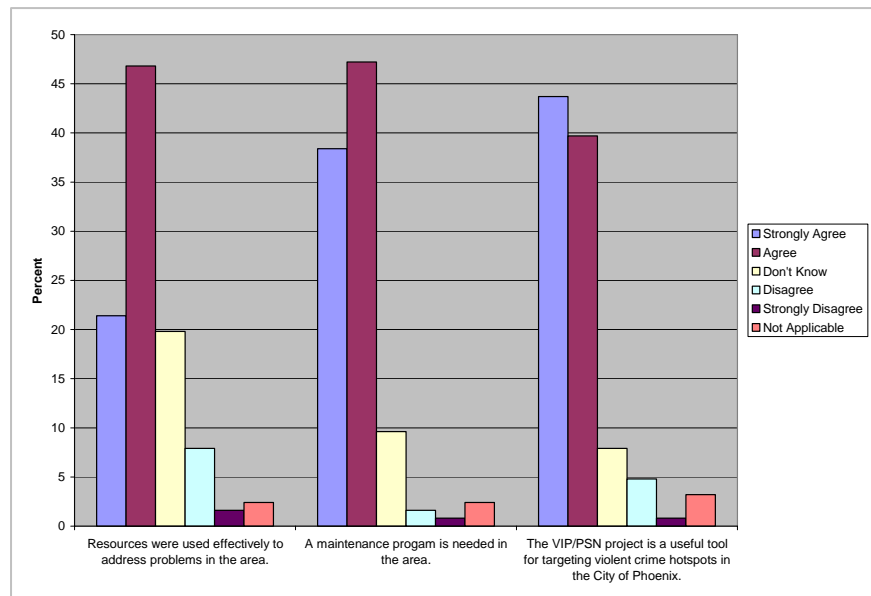
Officer Perception

A survey was given to law enforcement officers within the Central City Precinct who were involved in the VIP project and other participating bureaus to ascertain the effectiveness of the VIP implementation from an officer perspective. Surveys were handed out at briefings and sent electronically for wider distribution. Of those surveys, 126 were returned. While all surveys were anonymous, surveys were distributed by command staff and participation was strongly encouraged. In addition to measuring the overall successfulness of the project, the survey was designed to look at whether the project was conducted as originally designed from an officer perspective. In the survey (Appendix C) a series of questions asked officers to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each statement.

Over three-fourths of all responding officers believed that the VIP project was a success, while only 3.2 percent disagreed. The majority of officers (73.6 percent) thought that violent crime had been reduced in the area because of the VIP project. However, when asked whether the project had improved citizens' perception of safety in the area, a large percentage (38.9 percent) did not know. A majority (52.4 percent) of responding officers did believe that the project improved citizen perception of safety.

Successfulness of the Project						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
The Central City VIP project was a success.	34.1	42.1	18.3	2.4	0.8	2.4
The project reduced violent crime in the area.	34.4	39.2	16.8	5.6	1.6	2.4
The project improved citizens' perception of safety in the area.	22.2	30.2	38.9	4.0	2.4	2.4

In addressing how successful the responding officers thought the program was, the survey sought to measure whether the officers thought the program was an effective use of resources, whether future maintenance programs were necessary in the VIP area, and whether the project was a useful tool for targeting areas in Phoenix with high violent crime rates. In each of



these questions, officers overwhelmingly supported the project as an effective use of resources (68 percent) and a useful project for replication (83 percent). It is important to note that officers also saw a need for a maintenance project in the area with 85.6 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing.

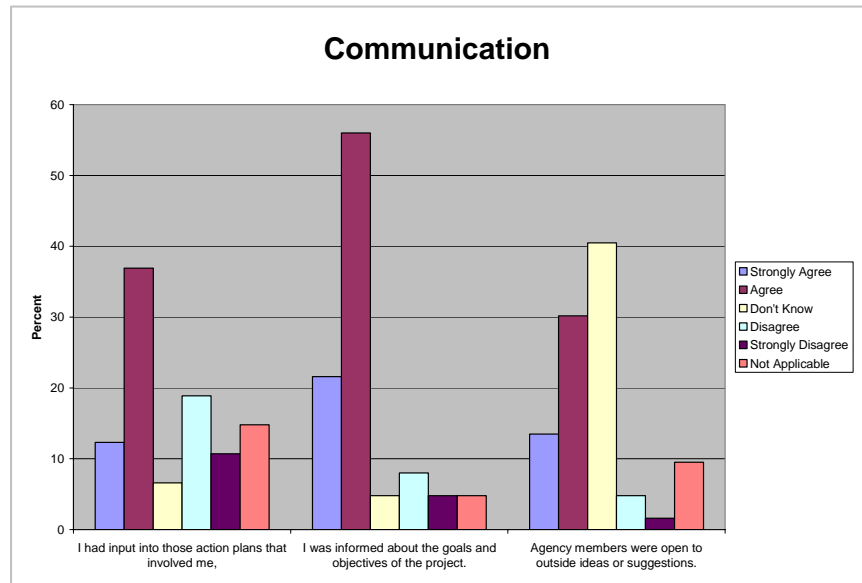
Resource Allocation						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
Resources were used effectively to address problems in the area.	21.4	46.8	19.8	7.9	1.6	2.4
A maintenance program is needed in the area.	38.4	47.2	9.6	1.6	0.8	2.4
The VIP project is a useful tool for targeting violent crime hotspots in the City of Phoenix.	43.7	39.7	7.9	4.8	0.8	3.2

Enforcement in the VIP project was intended to be based on informed, planned actions, rather than simply on intensive patrol. In the planning process, crime mapping, hot spot analysis and officer feedback was used to create action plans and officers were encouraged to use the SARA (scan, analyze, respond and assess) problem solving model during operations.

Of the responding officers, 48 percent thought that the problem solving model helped direct their efforts, and 23.2 percent thought it was not helpful, leaving room for improvement in future efforts. The remaining respondents either were unsure, or the response was not applicable to them. While 42.7 percent agreed that there were clearly defined roles and responsibilities, 36.3 percent indicated that they did not know if there were clearly defined roles and responsibilities and 11.3 percent of respondents disagreed that roles and responsibilities were clearly defined (9.7 percent indicated "not applicable"). This again suggests some areas for improvement in future VIP efforts.

Specific Planned Enforcement						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
The problem solving model helped direct my efforts.	11.2	36.8	19.2	19.2	4.0	9.6
There were clearly defined roles and responsibilities.	15.3	27.4	36.3	8.9	2.4	9.7
Crime analysis information was used to understand problems and guide activities in the area.	12.9	40.3	29.8	4.8	.8	11.3
The enforcement efforts that I was involved in were based more on specific action plans than on intensive patrol.	10.4	39.2	13.6	24.0	4.0	8.8

A majority of officers (53.2 percent) were aware that crime analysis information was used to understand and guide activities in the VIP area, while only 5.6 disagreed or strongly disagreed. Of respondents, 49.6 percent felt that the enforcement efforts conducted in the VIP area were based on specific action plans more than on intensive patrol, while 28 percent disagreed.



Part of the planning process involved making sure that those in command received information from patrol regarding the needs and issues surrounding VIP/PSN. The vast majority of officers (77.6 percent) felt well informed regarding the goals and objectives of VIP, while only 12.8 percent did not. As this operation was largely dependant on making sure that everyone involved knew what was planned, this shows that the command staff succeeded in informing those on patrol and in specialty units.

However, the replies from officers regarding whether they had input in plans that involved them, or whether agency members were open to suggestions, were not as positive. While 49.2 percent of officers felt that they had input into action plans that involved them, 29.6 percent felt that they did not. While very few officers (6.4 percent) disagreed with the statement that agency members were open to outside suggestions, nearly as many officers felt agency members were open to outside suggestions and ideas (43.7 percent), did not know if they were open (40.5 percent). This again leaves room for improvement in future projects.

Open Lines of Communication						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
I had input into those action plans that involved me.	12.3	36.9	6.6	18.9	10.7	14.8
I was informed about the goals and objectives of the project.	21.6	56.0	4.8	8.0	4.8	4.8
Agency members were open to outside ideas or suggestions.	13.5	30.2	40.5	4.8	1.6	9.5

Weekly meetings were held with all officers and agencies involved in order to facilitate communication between partners and make sure that everyone involved had adequate information about the project. More than one quarter of all recipients answered, "Don't

Know” on the questions regarding cooperation between agencies and the effectiveness of interagency meetings with more than 40 percent indicating a favorable response. More than one half of respondents saw different agencies working together cooperatively and observed greater interagency communication than in previous projects.

Cooperation between Agencies and Interagency Meetings						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
The different agencies involved worked cooperatively.	15.1	39.7	28.6	7.9	2.4	6.3
I observed greater interagency collaboration and communication than in previous projects.	15.9	34.9	27.0	10.3	0.8	11.1
The recurring meetings helped give me the information I needed.	12.1	29.8	29.0	8.9	3.2	16.9
The recurring meetings allowed me to interact with other people/agencies involved.	11.2	30.4	27.2	9.6	4.0	17.6

Officers also suggested increased involvement from some key internal groups such as the gang and vice squads as well as external agencies such as the Maricopa County Attorney's Office and ICE. Officers also commented that the program could be improved through items such as continued resources for VIP; more input from those working the area; on-going training; focus on the cost/benefit of the program; and an emphasis on dealing with issues related to “illegal” immigrants. In terms of the strengths of the program, respondents mentioned the impact on crime, teamwork, community support, interagency cooperation, and focus on career criminals.

In summary, officers indicated that they felt that the Violence Impact Project/Project Safe Neighborhoods operation was a successful tool in reducing violent crime and that it would be useful to implement in targeted violent crime hotspots in the City of Phoenix. The vast majority of responding officers felt that they had been kept well informed of the program's goals and objectives, and nearly half felt that they had input into those goals. Nearly half of respondents felt that the problem-solving model that had been implemented with the program was useful in solving problems. The respondents felt that while the program was successful, a maintenance program was needed to continue the gains accomplished in the area. The officer feedback also provides direction for future projects to focus on the enhanced use of problem solving and increasing officer involvement in the VIP process.

Citizen Perceptions

In addition to reducing the number of incidents of violent crime, citizen perceptions of safety in the area where residents live and work is important for numerous reasons. Residents who believe that the police will respond to problems are more likely to report crime. Also, residents who are fearful are less likely to take a stand against future

criminal activity. In order to make and sustain any gains made from the implementation of the Central City VIP project over time, it was critical to involve the residents of the area. One of the main goals of the VIP program was to get input and involvement from residents and community members and ensure that officers were responsive to residents' concerns and the community was involved in solving problems in the area.

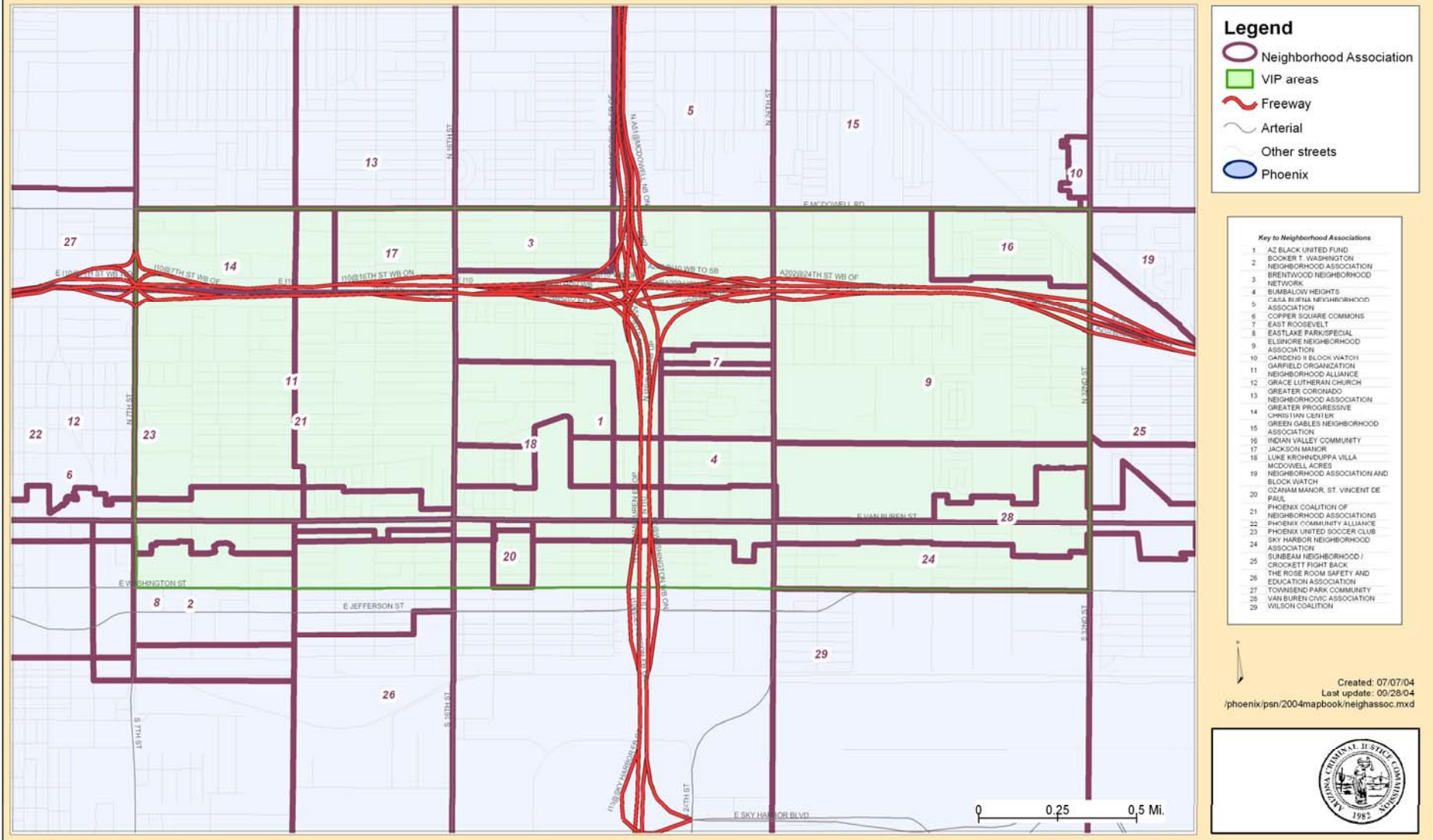
In order to gauge the perceived effectiveness of the program, a citizen focus group was held at the end of the VIP implementation. By soliciting feedback from the citizens and community leaders in the area who were involved in the VIP effort, it was hoped that there would be the ability to evaluate whether citizens perceived that the program worked and whether residents felt safer once the program had been implemented. In addition, a goal of this process was to solicit suggestions and concerns for future programs.

Involvement of Community Groups

Community members and leaders from seven neighborhood associations and business groups within the Central City VIP area were included in the various stages of the VIP implementation. By making sure that these groups were kept informed, these community leaders were able to pass information to members of the community. This also had the effect of spreading information about how the VIP strategy worked. Members of the Van Buren Civic Association and numerous neighborhood associations agreed to be listed as victims for crimes committed in the community. This allowed for easier prosecution of crimes, updates of case progress, and a connection to the community. The map on the following page shows a map of known neighborhood groups in the Central City VIP area, including the seven neighborhood associations that participated in the project.

Community Groups
Garfield Organizational Neighborhood Alliance
Sky Harbor Association
Bumbalow Heights Association
Van Buren Civic Association
Coronado Neighborhood Association
Elsinore Neighborhood Association
Booker T. Washington Neighborhood Association
Eastlake Park Neighborhood Association

Phoenix Police Department Central City VIP area and Neighborhood Associations



Citizen Focus Group

After the completion of the Violence Impact Project concentration in the Central City VIP area, a Citizen Focus Group meeting was held on August 4, 2004 to discuss the effect of the program on the neighborhood and to assess the overall feeling of safety in the community. In attendance were eight community group members/association leaders, one research supervisor and two crime analysts from the Crime Analysis and Research Unit (CARU) of the Phoenix Police Department and one secretary from the Drug Enforcement Bureau to assist with note taking. During the focus group, a discussion was held regarding the Violence Impact Project/Project Safe Neighborhoods that had been conducted between October 2003 and June 2004 in the area. (For a list of questions see Appendix B.)

Participants were asked questions to determine whether the respondents felt that it was safe to go outside in their neighborhood during the day or at night. While all respondents felt that it was "safe" or "very safe" to go outside during the day, answers were more hesitant at night. Half of respondents indicated that they felt safe, while the other half were unsure. Comments indicated that late night parties and littered streets remain problematic.

Another question dealt with whether the neighborhood was safer now than it was a year ago. All respondents indicated that they felt it was safer now than a year ago. There was remaining concern among a few participants that once enforcement ended or offenders were released from jail/prison, the problems would return. Several participants noted that there was increased contact with individual officers, and that this was the most concentrated effort that had been done in the area.

Crime and safety issues that were noted by respondents included speeding, drug dealing, robberies, prostitution, scooters and small motorcycles, graffiti and shoes hanging on electrical lines. It was noted that some of these problems were not as bad as they had been before the program and the focus had changed somewhat toward traffic issues and away from serious violent crime. Graffiti and shoes hanging on electrical lines were noted as marking gang territory and were therefore a concern.

One respondent noted that while drug dealers, prostitution and crime were the main problems in the community a year ago, the largest problem the community faced now was scooters and other traffic issues. The respondent felt that this was indicative of the success of the program. Another respondent saw less "coyotes" (traffickers of illegal aliens) in the neighborhood than prior to the implementation of VIP. On the down side, one respondent perceived an increase in home invasions.

These community leaders were knowledgeable about the VIP effort and they learned about the program from meetings that had been held in the community as well as from mailers, phone calls, and neighbors who had told them about it. One of the main

benefits that the community leaders noted was that they had increased personal contacts with officers who let them know that they were assigned to the area and passed out business cards with an invitation to call with any problems. It was noted that these officers were responsive and returned calls promptly. Also mentioned positively was that community problems were listened to during the meetings and followed up on. However, there were concerns about what would happen to the community when the program ended.

Citizen perceptions of the strength of the program mainly focused on the personal attention from officers and the reduction of crime in the area. One respondent noted that he “knew the names of officers in the area.” The fact that the community was asked to be involved and asked for suggestions was regarded positively among respondents. One respondent voiced regrets that some community organizations in the area had not participated because they had felt that it would not make a difference. Other strengths noted included the cooperation between multiple agencies, involvement from the community, and the teamwork attitude. Benefits of the program also included cleaning up the neighborhood and drug houses being closed.

Suggestions for future VIP projects included having prosecutors charge offenders more frequently, increasing bonds for those arrested, and simplifying the process of finding which agency was responsible for what community problems. Also noted was the fact that there were less officers deployed on weekends, even though there were more crimes occurring on those days. Additional comments from focus group attendees included a strong emphasis that they did not want the project to stop and a concern for the neighborhood once the program was over.

In summary, respondents appreciated the fact that they were listened to throughout the project. There was a consensus that crime had been reduced and that there had been more visibility of officers. The fact that officers were personable and responsive was noted as a positive of the program. However, given the past history in the neighborhood of short-term programs having short-term effects, the community leaders voiced concern over the sustainability of the program. Respondents felt safer than they had one year prior; however they remained concerned about the problem returning once offenders were released from custody.

CONCLUSION

In 2003, the Phoenix Police Department determined that the violent crime rate in the city was unacceptably high, and Phoenix was heading for a record year in homicides unless an effective intervention was developed. This began the initial stages for a coordinated and directed enforcement effort that would be targeted at an area of the city that was disproportionately high in violent and gun-related crime. This area became known as the Central City Violence Impact Project area.

In the same year, Arizona was awarded a Project Safe Neighborhoods grant to reduce gun violence around the state. It quickly became evident that both missions were closely related. In the fall of 2003, the two projects joined together and the partnership between the VIP and PSN initiatives was born. This joint venture highlighted the potential success that is possible when agencies cooperate, share resources, and combine individual expertise to reduce violent crime in a community.

The impact of the VIP operation was primarily measured using Uniform Crime Report statistics. These findings compared area crime trends historically and against those of the entire city to determine if the VIP had a measurable impact on violent crime. During the operation, the number of violent crimes decreased 26.5 percent, while the city experienced only a 3.4 percent decrease. The largest decrease in violent crime was for homicide, which fell 69.6 percent as compared to the same period one year prior. Other decreases in crime included rape (31.6 percent), aggravated assaults (26.8 percent), and robbery (17.5 percent).

Between 1999 and 2003, the Central City VIP area, along with Phoenix and Arizona, had seen a steady decrease in overall crime rates. However, in 2003, the homicide rate per 100,000 residents in the Central City VIP area jumped from 26.8 in 2002 to 90.3 in 2003. Crime rates per 100,000 people remained 2-3 times higher than the City of Phoenix as a whole and statewide. During the VIP implementation there was less than one-third the number of homicides as the same period one year before the implementation. Overall, there was a substantial reduction in violent crime as the result of the coordinated enforcement efforts of the Violence Impact Project.

To determine the prevalence of firearms in the project area, ATF firearm recoveries were tracked. During the VIP effort, 145 weapons were recovered in the Central City VIP area. This area had a rate of 485.2 recoveries per 100,000 residents, compared to a rate of 200.1 in the City of Phoenix as a whole. When the same period is reviewed for the year prior to the PSN implementation, a similar pattern is seen. During this period, the Central City VIP area had a recovery rate per 100,000 residents of 839.9 compared to 126.1 for the City of Phoenix as a whole. While the gap is considerably lower during the PSN implementation, this area remained an area where a large percentage of illegal guns were seized.

Since one of the major focuses of the Violence Impact Project was to increase the perception of safety among residents in the Central City VIP area, a concerted effort was made to include, educate, and foster relations among the community. Neighborhood leaders were invited to meetings and provided updates on the project's progress. At the end of the operation, a focus group was held with leaders to determine their perception of the results of the project. All participants in the focus group felt that the VIP area was safer than it had been one year prior, however there was some concern regarding the maintenance of that safety once the project ended. Community leaders noted the level of information they were provided and the personal contact they had with officers as benefits of the project.

In addition, feedback was solicited from officers involved in the Central City VIP operation. The results reported that more than 75 percent of the officers felt that the program had been successful, and a large majority felt that the project had actually decreased violent crime in the area. The responses also indicated that the program was a good allocation of resources, but that the area needed a maintenance phase in place to continue the project's success. The overall responses from officers participating in the VIP operation were quite positive.

It was recommended that a maintenance phase be part of the overall project plan so that a more gradual return to typical policing practices can be accomplished. Also, it is important to measure crime displacement to adjacent neighborhoods. Other observations that will be useful when repeating this model in other communities include better data collection and management through the increased utilization of the Crime Analysis and Research Unit (CARU). The importance of data driven decisions was realized during the process, but was not used to its full potential during the pilot project. This unit's expertise in identifying targets and tracking the efforts of specific action plans will enhance the effectiveness of future initiatives.

Currently, in the Black Canyon VIP effort that began in July 2004, many of these enhancements have been implemented. The role of CARU has become much more prominent and their products are being used to proactively address the critical issues. Their assistance has also improved the project's ability to collect and maintain data as a standardized recap form, and database have been implemented early in the operation. Strategies for improving data collection and community feedback already have been instituted for this project and will assist evaluators in better assessing the perception of change from a community perspective.

Along with ATF and the United States Attorney's Office, there were numerous partnerships formed or enhanced through the efforts of VIP. Federal partners included the Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Probation, and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Local resources involved with VIP include the Arizona Department of Corrections Parole Services, the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission, the Maricopa County Attorney's Office, Maricopa County Adult and Juvenile

Probation, the City Prosecutor's Office and the City of Phoenix Neighborhood Services Department. The Phoenix Police Department dedicated resources from Central City Precinct, the Violent Crimes Bureau, the Drug Enforcement Bureau, the Organized Crime Bureau with gang and vice enforcement, motor officers from the Traffic Enforcement Bureau, Crimes Unit, Patrol units, Neighborhood Enforcement Teams and the Crime Analysis and Research Unit. The newly formed partnership is an outstanding example of governmental agencies working together using a process of data-driven decision making directed toward targeted solutions. Past successes of Project Safe Neighborhoods partnerships have demonstrated that such collaborations are effective strategies in combating crime (Braga, et al, 2001).

The Phoenix Police Department should be commended for taking a leadership role in facilitating the development of the VIP and PSN partnership. The department's coordination of project activities through weekly meetings was a major contribution to the overall success of the project. It is not commonplace that governmental entities are able to work together in a coordinated fashion as demonstrated in joint VIP and PSN initiative. The Phoenix Police Department's commitment to this partnership demonstrates the City of Phoenix's goal to provide "seamless service" to all customers. The Violence Impact Project (VIP) was very successful in reducing violent crime, which was facilitated by the additional funding that was made available to support this effort. In order to replicate this success, additional funds may be needed to allow for the development of action plans targeting specific criminal behavior in areas identified to have high rates of violent crime.

The Central City Violence Impact Project is an outstanding example of a multi-governmental cooperation in addressing a common problem identified by data analysis. By combining the resources, intelligence and training of several governmental agencies, this project was able to reduce violent crime in the Central City VIP area. Officers, community members and participants in the program all provided positive feedback regarding the success and teamwork seen in this program. The framework of success generated from the pilot Violence Impact Project provides a model that can be replicated in additional sites. Initial results received from this evaluation are encouraging and provide policymakers and criminal justice leaders with potential alternatives for directing limited resources in addressing violent crime in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Officer Participation and Input

1. Early and continuous feedback should be solicited from officers, participating agencies and the community in future VIP initiatives. This feedback will allow both for changes to be implemented when needed, and for concerns to be addressed.
2. Participating officers should be made aware that their input is valued and implemented suggestions should be highlighted. Police officers should be encouraged to form an understanding of the reasoning behind strategies that are employed, and to take ownership of those plans. Many officers surveyed did not believe that their input was taken into account. When an idea put forth by an officer is implemented, the officer should be made aware that the implementation stemmed from the officer's feedback. Letting other officers know when new directives stem from officer feedback would reinforce that suggestions are valued and considered.
3. Officers should be encouraged to use the SARA model to develop action plans as appropriate for the project. The SARA model assists officers in planned action, rather than reactionary enforcement.

Documentation and Evaluation

4. Major events, ongoing meetings, and specific action plans during VIP implementations need to be better documented. Documentation of these events allows evaluators to compare results to planned actions in order to determine whether the actions were successful.
5. Better methods for the ongoing collection and analysis of data specific to the VIP are needed, including both crime information and other data related to enforcement activities. This data collection will provide a more thorough basis for evaluating the success of specific action plans in order to provide direction for future VIP implementations.
6. Strategies for evaluating program effectiveness should be developed earlier. This would provide a more accurate method for assessing changes based upon officer and community feedback.
7. The role of the Crime Analysis and Research Unit (CARU) of the Phoenix Police Department should be increased to provide more data driven analysis to the VIP team. These analyses can be used to assist in drafting the action plans, and explain those plans to participating agencies.

8. Action plans specific to the area should be based on analysis information, officer experience, and measurable results. These three criteria would provide a soundly derived action plan that can be evaluated for effectiveness based on predetermined measures of success.

Federal and County Prosecution

9. An impact analysis should be conducted concerning the prosecution of PSN cases at the federal and local level. An evaluation of the prosecution component of PSN would provide valuable information regarding the effectiveness of the strategy. Data for conducting this evaluation was not available during the current study.

Community Involvement

10. Increased involvement of the community, neighborhood groups and community leaders would strengthen the program. This increased involvement would involve more citizens in the program, potentially increasing residents' perception of safety. It also decreases the possibility of specific groups feeling targeted by the enforcement aspect of the program.
11. Solicit broader perspective from the community regarding perceptions of the project including safety and fear of crime issues. By soliciting community feedback on safety and fear of crime issues, future VIP implementations can focus on reducing the most troubling aspects of crime for residents, thereby increasing the perceptions of safety.

Outside Participant Agencies

12. Participating agencies should be engaged individually throughout the implementation to determine their perceptions of the program, and suggestions on how it can be improved. This increased engagement will allow other agencies to be more involved in the program and alert policy-makers to potential problems early on.
13. Given the feedback from participating officers in the Central City VIP initiative, stronger participation of key outside agencies is encouraged to assure the success of the project, specifically, the Maricopa County Attorney's Office and the ICE.

Maintenance and Long-Term Evaluation

14. The Central City VIP area needs to be continually monitored to assess the long term impact of the project. Monitoring would have a dual benefit of providing information for future VIP implementations, and would serve as an early warning if violent crime rates started to rise or if displacement of crime occurred, allowing for early intervention.

15. Each VIP area, including the Central City VIP area needs to be continually monitored to assess the long term impact of the project. This monitoring will provide the dual impact of evaluating the long-term effectiveness of the program, thereby allowing for changes where necessary, and will provide information needed for maintenance efforts.
16. Strategies should be implemented to assure that progress made during the program is continued after the completion. Residents and officers expressed concern that the progress made during the Central City VIP area would decrease once the enforcement ended in the area. In order to decrease that possibility, strategies should be implemented to maintain the progress made during the program.

Resource Allocation

17. Additional resources were dedicated to the Central City VIP initiative and contributed to success found in this region. Consideration should be given to dedicating additional resources, including officer overtime, to develop specific action plans for targeting criminal behavior in high crime areas.
18. Resources need to be directed toward developing methods for tracking offender perceptions regarding the impact of VIP and related PSN initiatives. This tracking will provide a better picture of the offenders that are committing crimes in these areas, thereby allowing for better directed enforcement.

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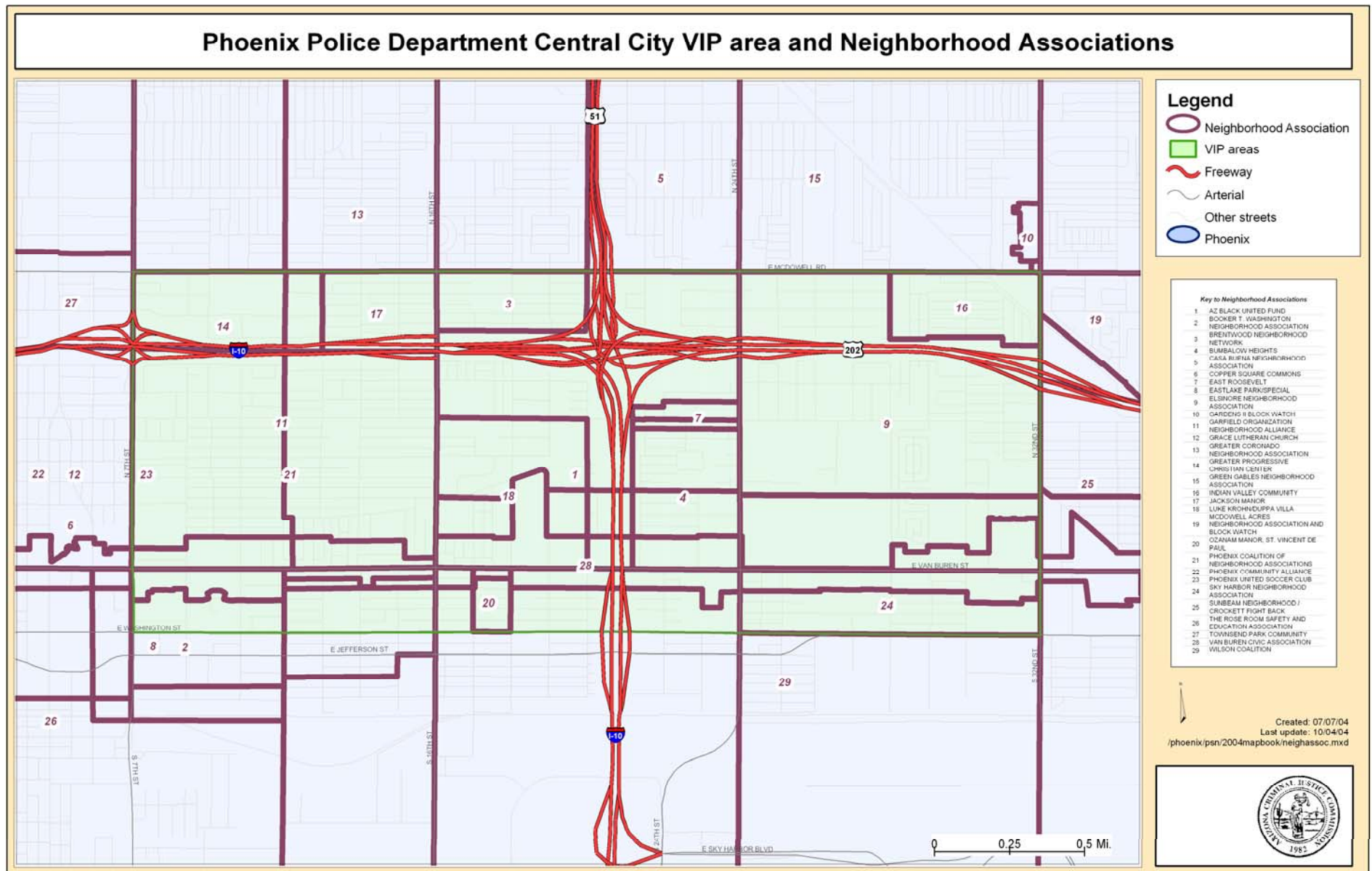
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APPENDIX A



APPENDIX B



Central City VIP Focus Group August 4, 2004



Introduction:

- The purpose of this meeting is to get input and feedback on safety issues in your community as part of an overall effort to evaluate particular projects undertaken by the Phoenix Police Department.
 - All responses will be kept confidential. Notes will be taken, but will not be connected to individuals.
 - The only record of names will be a list of those attending the meeting.
 - Please feel free to speak openly, but we will try to keep the discussion on track with the topics at hand.
 - We are looking for input from each member of the group and ask that you treat other group members with respect during the discussion.
 - We have a number of questions to address, but plan to keep the meeting to less than one hour.
 - Any questions or concerns before we start?
1. To begin, how safe do you feel being out in your neighborhood during the day?
 2. How safe do you feel being out in your neighborhood at night?
 3. Do you believe your neighborhood is safer now than a year ago? Why or why not?
 4. What do you feel are some of the primary crime or safety issues affecting your neighborhood?
 5. What do you know about the Violence Impact Project (VIP) /Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) effort that was recently conducted in your neighborhood?
 6. How did you learn about the VIP/PSN efforts?
 7. What were your overall experiences with VIP/PSN?
 8. In your opinion, what were the strengths or benefits of VIP/PSN?
 9. In your opinion, what problems or weaknesses were associated with VIP/PSN?
 10. What do you believe was missing from VIP/PSN that would be beneficial in future projects?
 11. Any additional comments?

Closing: Thank you for taking the time to participate in this discussion. Your insights were valuable and will help to set some direction for future projects for the department.

APPENDIX C



CENTRAL CITY PRECINCT VIOLENCE IMPACT PROJECT PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS (VIP/PSN)



For each statement below, please indicate which response best fits your **personal opinion**. Your input will provide valuable feedback on the VIP project in Central City Precinct. All responses are confidential.

Overall View

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
I was involved with the Violence Impact Project (VIP) in Central City Precinct	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am familiar with the efforts of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Problem Solving Process:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
The problem solving model (Scan, Analyze, Respond, and Assess) helped direct my efforts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The enforcement efforts that I was involved in were based more on specific action plans than on intensive patrol	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I had input into those action plans that involved me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I was informed about the goals and objectives of the project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Multi-Agency Approach:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
The different agencies involved (Local, County, State, Federal) worked cooperatively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I observed greater interagency collaboration and communication than in previous projects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agency members were open to outside ideas or suggestions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There were clearly defined roles and responsibilities for each individual and agency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Meetings:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
The recurring meetings helped give me the information I needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The recurring meetings allowed me to interact with other people/agencies involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crime analysis information was used to understand problems and guide activities in the area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

General Assessment:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
The Central City VIP project was a success	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The project reduced violent crime in the area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The project improved citizens' perception of safety in the area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Resources were used effectively to address problems in the area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A maintenance program, (ongoing review of statistics and targeting of 'hot spots'), is needed in the area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The VIP/PSN project is a useful tool for targeting violent crime hotspots in the City of Phoenix	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What agencies should have been included or should have been more involved in the project?

Please describe any positive and/or negative aspects of this VIP/PSN project:

Please provide any other feedback and/or suggestions for improving the VIP/PSN project (use back if necessary):

Optional Years of Service: _____ Shift: _____ Rank: _____ Assignment: _____

RETURN IN A SEALED ENVELOPE VIA INTEROFFICE MAIL TO **PLANNING AND RESEARCH/CARU/VIPSURVEY** by **AUGUST 10, 2004**

APPENDIX D

UCR Part I Violent Crime Comparison Phoenix Police Department Precincts 1999-2004*								
	Central City VIP area		Citywide		South Mountain Precinct		Central City Precinct	
	Violent Crimes	% Change	Violent Crimes	% Change	Violent Crimes	% Change	Violent Crimes	% Change
1999	751		10,266		2,082		2,071	
2000	679	-9.6%	9,793	-4.6%	2,074	-0.4%	2,021	-2.4%
2001	533	-21.5%	10,588	8.1%	2,003	-3.4%	1,827	-9.6%
2002	525	-1.5%	10,309	-2.6%	1,779	-11.2%	1,730	-5.3%
2003	490	-6.7%	9,763	-5.3%	1,667	-6.3%	1,500	-13.3%
Oct 02 – June 03	373		7,364		1,196		1,177	
Oct 03 – June 04	274	-26.5%	7,114	-3.4%	1,241	3.8%	1,020	-13.3%
	Desert Horizon Precinct		700 Precinct		Maryvale Precinct		Cactus Park Precinct	
	Violent Crimes	% Change	Violent Crimes	% Change	Violent Crimes	% Change	Violent Crimes	% Change
1999	1,296		1,510		2,069		1,238	
2000	1,135	-12.4%	1,349	-10.7%	1,953	-5.6%	1,261	1.9%
2001	1,321	16.4%	1,574	16.7%	2,241	14.7%	1,622	28.6%
2002	1,367	3.5%	1,536	-2.4%	2,235	-0.3%	1,662	2.5%
2003	1,306	-4.5%	1,504	-2.1%	2,232	-0.1%	1,554	-6.5%
Oct 02 – June 03	1,073		1,120		1,667		1,131	
Oct 03 – June 04	944	-12.0%	1,044	-6.8%	1,648	-1.1%	1,217	7.6%

*Information from Phoenix Police Department database

APPENDIX E: 2000 CENSUS DATA

Demographic Information 2000 Census				
	VIP area	Phoenix	Maricopa	Arizona
White alone	56.9%	71.1%	77.4%	75.5%
Black or African American alone	6.1%	5.1%	3.7%	3.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	3.0%	2.0%	1.8%	5.0%
Asian alone	0.4%	2.0%	2.2%	1.8%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Some other race alone	29.3%	16.4%	11.9%	11.6%
Two or more races	4.3%	3.3%	2.9%	2.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Hispanic or Latino	78.5%	34.1%	24.8%	25.3%

Source: 2000 Census Corresponding Tables, Race_Hispanic Origin: SF1, P7 and SF1, P11

The VIP area was matched to census data at the block group level. Of the 24 block groups in the Central City VIP area, 20 matched exactly. All 24 block groups were included in the analysis.

Education Level Attained Age 18 and Older				
	Less than High School	High School diploma or equivalency	Some college/ associate degree	Bachelor's or higher
VIP area	62.9%	19.1%	12.9%	5.1%
Phoenix	26.0%	23.5%	30.6%	19.9%
Arizona	20.6%	24.7%	33.6%	21.1%

QT-P20. Educational Attainment by Sex: 2000

Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) - Sample Data

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3, Matrices P37 and PCT25.

Employment Rate 2000 Census				
	Employed		Unemployed	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
VIP area	7,769	84.3%	1451	15.7%
Phoenix	611,019	94.4%	36,278	5.6%
Arizona	2,233,004	94.4%	133,368	5.6%

Source: 2000 Census Corresponding Tables, Employment: SF3, QT-P24

Median Household Income 2000 Census	
VIP area	\$21,126
Phoenix	\$41,207
Arizona	\$40,558

Source: 2000 Census Corresponding Tables,
Median HH Income: SF3, P53

Median Household Income 2000 Census	
VIP area	\$21,126
Phoenix	\$41,207
Arizona	\$40,558

Source: 2000 Census Corresponding Tables,
Median HH Income: SF3, P53

APPENDIX F: PERCENTAGE OF GUN CRIME

Percent of Murders Where Firearm is Used					
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
United States	65.2%	65.6%	63.4%	66.7%	70.9%
Arizona	71.1%	70.8%	71.4%	75.8%	70.7%
Maricopa	73.1%	69.7%	76.1%	79.6%	72.6%
Phoenix	78.0%	72.3%	79.4%	84.7%	74.7%
Central City VIP	71.4%	75.0%	76.9%	75.0%	51.9%
Percent of Robberies Where Firearm is Used					
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
United States	39.9%	40.9%	42.0%	42.1%	41.8%
Arizona	43.4%	41.7%	46.5%	47.3%	48.3%
Maricopa	48.3%	47.2%	53.6%	54.3%	52.4%
Phoenix	49.5%	48.2%	55.4%	56.4%	54.8%
Central City VIP	44.9%	40.3%	44.2%	56.6%	48.4%
Percent of Aggravated Assaults Where Firearm is Used					
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
United States	18.0%	18.1%	18.3%	19.0%	19.1%
Arizona	26.1%	24.0%	24.0%	23.6%	26.9%
Maricopa	30.9%	29.2%	29.4%	30.2%	30.5%
Phoenix	39.0%	37.2%	37.9%	37.9%	35.2%
Central City VIP	37.4%	42.2%	36.6%	39.0%	46.3%

Crime in the United States reports, Crime in Arizona reports, Phoenix Police Department database.

**Not Available.*

APPENDIX G: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Crime

- There was an overall 26.5 percent decrease in Violent Part I crime when the VIP implementation period (October 2003 to June 2004) is compared to the same period one year prior.
 - There was a 69.6 percent decrease in homicides when comparing October 2003 to June 2004 to the same time frame one year prior.
 - Forcible rapes decreased 31.6 percent when comparing October 2003 to June 2004 to the same time frame one year prior.
 - Robbery decreased 17.5 percent when comparing October 2003 to June 2004 to the same time frame one year prior.
 - There was a 26.8 percent decrease in aggravated assaults when comparing October 2003 to June 2004 to the same time frame one year prior.
- Arizona and Phoenix have a higher proportion of violent crimes that involve a firearm than the United States as a whole.
- Action plans focused on prostitution, robbery and gangs as well as a variety of other issues in the community.
- Overall violent crime in Phoenix was on a continuous decline since 1999.
- Historically, violent crimes rates in the VIP area have been higher than the rest of Phoenix.
- The decrease in violent crime in the Central City VIP area was higher than in the city overall during the implementation period.
- In 2002, Phoenix was ranked 11th in homicides of cities over 500,000 population, with 13.4 per 100,000 people, more than twice the national average.
- In 2003, Phoenix had one of the lower overall violent crime rates (9th) when compared to crime rate of the 10 largest U.S. cities.

Community

- Seven neighborhood associations and many business groups were involved in the action plans prior to, during and following the operations of Central City VIP.

- Community feedback indicated that community leaders saw Central City VIP as successful in reducing violent crime, and that their neighborhoods were safer at the end of the project than they were prior to the project.
- Residents noted personal contact with officers as one of the main strengths of the program, as well as the fact that they felt the officers listened to their concerns.
- Residents indicated that the collaboration and implementation for VIP was better than during prior programs in the area.
- Community leaders and officers noted a need for a continued maintenance program for the Central City VIP area.

Officers

- More than three-fourths of all responding officers believed that the VIP project was a success, while only 3.2 percent disagreed.
- Forty-eight percent of respondents stated that the SARA problem-solving model helped them direct their efforts.
- More than half of the officers indicated that the different agencies involved (in the VIP) worked together cooperatively and more effectively than in previous projects.
- More than 77 percent of officers acknowledged that they were well informed regarding the goals and objectives of VIP.
- Nearly 30 percent of officers stated that they did not have input into action plans that involved them leaving room for improvement for future projects.
- Officers attributed some of the success to the effectiveness of collaboration with other agencies during the program and felt more agencies could have been involved.
- Additional resources including officer overtime were dedicated for the Central City VIP.

Demographics

- The Central City VIP area was an area defined by poverty and high crime density.

- The VIP area is a predominantly Hispanic area, with low levels of education based on the 2000 Census.
- The unemployment rate in the VIP area was more than double the Phoenix rate in 2000.
- While 36.8 percent of the population in the VIP area was under 18 during the 2000 Census, only 29.0 percent of the Phoenix population was under 18.
- Most families in the VIP area consist of more persons than families in Phoenix as a whole.

ATF

- The number of gun seizures for the City of Phoenix increased between the VIP implementation (October 2003 to June 2004) and one year prior, but decreased during the same time frame in the Central City VIP area.
- During the Central City VIP implementation, the rate for gun recoveries per 100,000 residents was 485.2, considerably higher than the rate of 200.1 for Phoenix.