

# Maryvale Weed & Seed

Site Evaluation Report



A R I Z O N A   S T A T E   U N I V E R S I T Y

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## Site Evaluation Report

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Operation Weed and Seed was developed by the U.S. Department of Justice in 1991 for the purpose of reducing crime (particularly violent and drug-related offenses) in high-crime neighborhoods through a mixture of focused policing techniques and community organization. Weed and Seed procedures are administered by the Community Capacity Development Office (CCDO) under the jurisdiction of the DOJ Office of Justice Programs. In the two decades since Operation Weed and Seed's inception, over 300 officially recognized sites have been established (CCDO, 2010). The key element of the program's crime reduction strategy is the development and maintenance of a dedicated working relationship between the community and the police department. While this is a difficult goal to master, it is also the greatest strength of the Weed and Seed program, due to the efficacy of pooling community and police resources to achieve a common goal based on quality of life.

### **Organizational Structure and Strategy of Weed and Seed**

The Weed and Seed strategy operates under a basic principle of criminogenic social circumstances: the physical and social disorders of disorganized and disadvantaged communities are as much of an inherent problem as the state of violence, theft, and substance abuse that exists within them. In order to address the challenge of crime in these neighborhoods, it is necessary to formulate a strategy that incorporates both diverse resources and varied approaches towards crime reduction. Rather than simply increasing policing efforts, the Weed and Seed strategy seeks to undermine sources that contribute to crime (disordered social circumstances in neighborhoods, for example) at the same time that it focuses on the actual commission of crime.

Four components make up the core strategy of Weed and Seed: 1) law enforcement; 2) community policing; 3) prevention, intervention, and treatment; and 4) neighborhood restoration. The former two are considered 'weeding activities' and involve active pursuit and prevention of criminal activities carried out by law enforcement professionals. The latter are 'seeding processes', and are the responsibility of site residents as well as social service providers, who seek to improve quality of life and remove criminogenic qualities from the site's environment. A brief summary of each component of the Weed and Seed program is listed below.

## **Law Enforcement**

The key tools of the law enforcement component are traditional policing activities such as patrolling for criminal activities, conducting investigations, making arrests, and prosecuting offenders appropriately. Law enforcement is a critical part of the Weed and Seed process, and one of the most visible of the four components. Accordingly, it is given a high priority in the planning process, as demonstrated by the central role played by the U.S. Attorney's Office in the development of each site. Formation of a steering committee, as well as the facilitation of inter-agency cooperation between all involved law enforcement agencies, is the responsibility of the U.S. Attorney, making him or her (or the designated representative) a key figure in the law enforcement component.

Issues in a site generally include, but are not limited to, high rates of homicide, assault (physical and sexual), gang activity, vandalism, robbery and burglary, auto theft, substance abuse and trafficking, and property destruction. Due to the comparatively-high rates of these crimes generally present in sites suggested for Weed and Seed consideration, the continual operation of the law enforcement component is critical to crime reduction. The most important aspect of the component is the limited geographic size of Weed and Seed sites, which enables local law enforcement to focus their resources on specifically reducing crime in that area via an increase of traditional policing strategies (patrols, targeted prosecutions, etc.) and an intensified level of response to calls for service.

## **Community Policing**

Community policing acts as a bridging point between the 'weeding' (law enforcement) and 'seeding' (social services and neighborhood restoration) processes by acting as an integrated approach. The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (2006) specifies that community policing "promotes and supports organizational strategies to address the causes and reduce the fear of crime and social disorder through problem-solving tactics and police-community partnerships". These partnerships form the basis of community policing philosophy, in that their strengthening of the relationship between the police and residents of the site addresses a basic challenge faced by law enforcement efforts (specifically, the difficulty of winning the community's cooperation in policing efforts). Support from the community is necessary in order to sustain effective policing within a site; without citizen participation in crime prevention and control, law enforcement is left to address the symptoms of the problem, rather than the source.

The intent of community policing activities is to build a cooperative relationship between the police and residents. Numerous difficulties may stand in the way of this objective, particularly the historical lack of cooperation and trust between the two groups that exists in most Weed and Seed qualified neighborhoods. In order to overcome these issues, it is necessary for officers to understand the community to which they are assigned and to effectively involve it in law enforcement and crime prevention efforts. This includes addressing community issues related to quality of life, such as public disorder complaints, neighborhood watch groups, school-based crime prevention programs, and conflict resolution between residents. Cooperation between law enforcement and community members enables these problems to be addressed in an efficient and timely fashion, prioritizing responses according to the urgency of the community's needs.

### **Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment**

The process of prevention, intervention, and treatment (PIT) is the first of the two 'seeding' processes, and serves to differentiate the Weed and Seed program from other crime-reduction systems. PIT exemplifies the community-bolstering approach of Weed and Seed by focusing on the identification, reduction, and elimination of conditions and social constructs that contribute to social disorder and disorganization, and therefore to crime. These initiatives work in conjunction with weeding processes to strengthen already-extant crime abatement efforts via the community's ability to empower itself and foster healthy, non-criminogenic opportunities and environments for its members. This is accomplished via civic programs, physical and mental health care, counseling systems, provision of job training, and similar services, usually through partnerships with independent organizations.

Often, the PIT process is undertaken in conjunction with local social service organizations, such as charities and treatment programs. The choice of organizations with whom to partner is at the discretion of the Weed and Seed leadership; one of the primary goals of PIT organizers is to attract as many partner programs as funding allows, which permits leadership to select programs that match the community's social and civic needs. Additionally, programs may already be in place within the community; these are generally incorporated into the existing PIT approach, being highly valued due to their pre-established relationship with site residents. Through these cooperative efforts, goals that would otherwise be on too large a scale to pursue can be tackled via allocation of resources and partner programs.

Weed and Seed sites receive funding to initiate programs to recruit and leverage funding from other public or private sources, and to provide supplemental support to existing programs and services that are already working with the community. Leveraging the resources allows the Weed and Seed community to attract existing social service programs into their targeted area. The leveraging of these resources allows the Weed and Seed community to achieve some of their goals of providing prevention, intervention and treatment services to residents of their community (CCDO, 2005e; Dunworth et al, 1999; JRSA, 2004c). It is through this cooperative effort that Weed and Seed site can pursue prevention, intervention and treatment goals that would otherwise be too expensive to achieve independently.

The three components of PIT each address a different issue within the community. Prevention activities revolve around reducing opportunities for crime, which may include raising crime awareness, establishing neighborhood watch groups, and providing contact information for treatment programs such as help lines and community centers. Intervention activities are programs specifically targeted at dealing with a specific group committing specific acts of deviancy. Truancy in schools is one such example, as is gang membership; in each case, programs would be instituted to intervene on the behalf of youth committing these acts and to educate them about the benefits of behaving differently. Treatment activities are the most protracted of the PIT 'triad', but are also the most intensive in their anti-criminal education. These programs treat criminogenic issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence through counseling methods and therapy.

Part of the philosophy of the Weed and Seed strategy is to provide community groups the support, framework and initial resources to create a coalition in their community, with a comprehensive foundation of disparate groups and individuals gathered under a common banner (CCDO, 2005e). Aligning with this philosophy, the focal point of the prevention, intervention and treatment component is the Safe Haven. Every Weed and Seed site is mandated to establish at least one Safe Haven. The Safe Haven is a center that provides a multitude of services to both the youths and adults of the community, it may serve as a coordination center for Weed and Seed activities, be the primary location for educational and other services, and literally a safe place where residents can go to find help (CCDO, 2005e). The guiding principles for a Safe Haven require it to be a multi-service facility that is community, education, and prevention based, culturally relevant, and easily accessible. The Safe Haven must be a multi-service

facility, sometimes referred to as a ‘one-stop-shop’, serving as a clearing house and a central point of community connection. Weed and Seed recognizes the difficulties facing a disadvantaged community to be multifaceted, and developing solutions to these difficulties must be multifaceted. The Safe Haven is a place that centralizes and coordinates these activities. The Safe Haven may host afterschool activities, sports or fitness programs, adult education classes, community meetings and events or be an access point to medical or mental healthcare or substance abuse treatment providers.

The most important guiding principle for a Safe Haven is that it must be community based, meaning it must function on the needs and resources of the community it serves. The second guiding principle, that it must provide educational services to the community, illustrates its role in intervention activities, hosting community education classes. Similarly, the prevention principle emphasizes the importance of a community level commitment to prevention activities. The fourth guiding principle for the Safe Haven to be effective is cultural relevance, appropriately and effectively reflecting the local community’s culture and diversity. The fifth guiding principle, perhaps an easily overlooked characteristic, is that the Safe Haven must be easily accessible. A Safe Haven needs to be physically accessible to members of the community, easy to find and get to, as well as have sufficient hours of operation to be of service to the community when residents need it most. All of these guiding principles for Safe Havens contribute to the prevention, intervention and treatment of the Weed and Seed site, by making the Safe Haven a “home” for the community.

### **Neighborhood Restoration**

The final component of the Weed and Seed program is neighborhood restoration. As a ‘seeding’ process, neighborhood restoration focuses on the physical improvement of a community in order to decrease levels of social disorganization. Restoration focuses predominantly on leveraging resources towards civil improvement (i.e., restoration of dilapidated buildings and areas) and removal of urban blight (pollution, graffiti, etc). Generally, this process heavily involves residents, such as neighborhood associations, in cooperation with municipal departments involved with blight reduction. This includes both proactive cleanup efforts (such as neighborhood graffiti removals and trash cleanup sessions) and code enforcement (such as penalties applied to residents or landlords of rental properties who commit blight violations).

The concept of social disorganization, which suggests a criminogenic effect stemming from disuse and disorder in social and physical environments, is the primary motivator behind the neighborhood restoration component. The approach to urban blight advocated by Weed and Seed is one of persistent vigilance: if it is not tolerated, then it is less likely to persist in the area. Crime, following the logic of the program, works the same way, and can be successfully decreased to a sustainably low rate if residents refuse to tolerate it and persistently seek to eliminate it from their neighborhood. For this reason, involving neighborhoods in this self-policing mechanism is one of the most important components of sustaining crime reduction throughout the Weed and Seed site.

## **THE PRESENT STUDY**

The purpose of this study was to conduct an evaluation of the Maryvale Weed and Seed Coalition. First, a process evaluation was conducted to examine the implementation of policies, goals, and planned activities by Maryvale Weed and Seed. Afterwards, an impact evaluation was conducted to assess the efficacy of Maryvale Weed and Seed in combating crime and disorder in the designated program area. The sections below outline both the characteristics of the affected site and the methodology used to conduct the process and impact evaluations.

## **METHODS**

### **Site Characteristics**

The Maryvale Weed and Seed Coalition site, henceforth referred to as Maryvale, is located in western Phoenix, Arizona. The officially designated site consists of fourteen properties encompassing an area between West Indian School Road and McDowell Road to the north and south (respectively) and North 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue and North 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue to the east and west, totaling approximately 2.48 square miles of territory. It is roughly 1/8 mile north of Interstate 10. The area contains nearly 8,000 residences spread out among a population of 27,434, over 75% of who are of Hispanic ethnicity (U.S. Census 2000). Maryvale is a predominantly urban residential area with minimal commercial development, which sits just southwest of the Canyon Corridor Weed and Seed site and several miles southeast of the Orchard Glen site. The table in Exhibit 1 shows the key socio-demographic characteristics of the Maryvale Weed and Seed area (U.S. Census 2000 and CCDO, 2006). Statistically, Maryvale is the most violent area in Phoenix, with rates of homicide, rape, robbery, and drug crime higher than in the city proper.



## Process Evaluation

The purpose of a process evaluation is to allow researchers to examine a program's systematic procedures and activities in light of their stated goals, in order to determine whether the program was implemented and maintained as intended. Process evaluations are a critical means of examination and are regularly included in comprehensive programmatic evaluations, due to their efficacy in determining whether the program has been implemented and maintained as intended. A process evaluation often uses fieldwork to provide a descriptive understanding and definition to the issues being evaluated (Creswell, 1994).

Data collection for this study's process evaluation was made possible through a review of official site documents provided by stakeholders in the Maryvale program, as well as routine records of steering committee meetings attended by members of the evaluation team.

### **Exhibit 1: Maryvale Weed and Seed Site Characteristics**

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<b>Socio-Demographic Characteristics</b>	<b>Maryvale</b>	<b>Phoenix</b>
Geography		
Area, sq. miles	2.48	516.28
Demographics		
Population	27,929	1,321,045
Percent Males, Age 18 and Up	34.8	36.0
Percent Females, Age 18 and Up	31.6	35.1
Percent Males, Age 17 or Less	17.4	14.9
Percent Females, Age 17 or Less	16.2	14.1
Family Structure		
Total Households	7,016	465,834
Percent Households with Families	70.9	66.0
Percent Households with Children	50.7	35.7
Percent Single Parent Families with Children	20.9	8.1
Percent Non-Family Households	29.1	34.0
Education		
Percent Adult population without a high school diploma	49.4	23.4
Race/Ethnicity		
Percent White	50.0	71.1
Percent Black	6.8	5.1
Percent American Indian/Eskimo	1.9	2.0
Percent Asian/Pacific Islander	2.8	2.0
Percent Other	34.9	19.8
Percent Hispanic Ethnicity	77.5	34.1
Income/Housing		
Per Capita Income	10,520	19,833
Median Household Income	38,835	41,207
Percent Renting	44.0	39.3

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Using these resources, the evaluation was designed around the purpose of: 1) historically analyzing the procedures and activities that contributed to the formation of the Maryvale Weed and Seed initiative; and 2) examining the specific activities implemented as part of the initiative, as well as the extent and integrity of their implementation. The course of modification undergone by the program's activities was also examined, as were the specific details of implementation of selected program activities. Through these methods, the process evaluation was designed to effectively examine the methods and procedures employed to select, assess, adjust, fulfill, or replace program initiatives.

### **Official Documents**

The collected site documents of the Weed and Seed program were used to determine the original goals and plans behind the initiative, and to then compare them to the actual progression and implementation of their corresponding procedures. In total, over one hundred documents were collected from Maryvale site stakeholders (including the site coordinator, the Phoenix Police Department, service delivery agents, faith-based community leaders, and citizen representatives and community leaders). Included among the official documents were a comprehensive collection of steering committee meeting agenda and minutes, outlines and proposals for community-centric events (such as a 2010 vigil and march memorializing shooting victim Lance Taylor), copies of surveys, flyers, and other materials disseminated to the community as part of the seeding effort, action plans and subcommittee meetings from the Phoenix Police Department, photographic documentation of various program-sponsored community events and copies of all funding applications and progress reports submitted to the Community Capacity Development Office by the program coordinator. Overall, the organizers of the Maryvale site provided a comprehensive and effective collection of programmatic documents, greatly expediting the evaluation process.

Inclusion of steering committee meeting agenda and minutes, as well as similar reports from other policymaking groups (in particular the Neighborhood Restoration Subcommittee and Law Enforcement Subcommittee, both of which provided extensive and detailed records of each meeting) allowed us to form an image of the intended program strategies, which could then be compared to their actual implementation. Implementation was assessable to a degree through examination of the project reports (which included summaries and extensive photographic documentation of community events), as well as copies of numerous materials sent to the public to encourage

participation in the Weed and Seed program and talking points outlined for press conferences on the program's aims and methods.

The Phoenix Police Department (PPD) is perhaps one of the more important stakeholder groups involved in the weeding efforts of the Maryvale Weed and Seed site. The steering committee membership focusing on weeding efforts Maryvale Weed and Seed includes representatives from the Phoenix Police Department command staff for the precinct serving the area, a Commander, Lieutenant, and community action officers serving the Maryvale area, the Arizona U.S. Attorney's Office, Special Agents from the Phoenix offices of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF), and a supervisor from Maricopa County Adult Probation Department.

Representatives for the seeding efforts included membership from a wide-ranging array of community organizations. Most notably was the extensive representation and participation of Golden Gate Community Center which served as the site's primary Safe Haven facility. No less important were the continuing involvement of active neighborhood residents from the Mitchell-Golden Gate neighborhood association, the Amigos Blockwatch and other residents from the site who volunteered time and effort to the program. The steering committee included representation from the following groups: faith community leaders serving the area, particularly from the Maryvale Church of the Nazarene and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; representatives from TERROS and the Carpenters Union; the Jerry Colangelo Boys and Girls Club; educational partners from Pueblo del Sol Middle School and Joseph L. Zito Middle School; business partners from Basha's Food City; City of Phoenix representatives from Parks and Recreation and Neighborhood Services (which was the fiscal agent and had the primary role of coordination and implementation of the program.). Representatives from a handful of other groups regularly participated and attended steering committee meetings, these included representatives from Phoenix City Council, specifically the office of Councilman Tom Simplot; the Phoenix Mayor's Office; and the Executive Director of the Center for Prevention for Abuse and Violence.

## Impact Evaluation

The goal of the impact evaluation was to determine the level of influence the Maryvale Weed and Seed program (and related activities) had on crime within the confines of the Maryvale site, compared with programmatic expectations. This information was then used to determine the program's efficacy in meeting its stated goals, by examining the data for significant differences in the targeted area or population coinciding with the implementation of programmatic interventions. To evaluate Weed and Seed sites, program impact is generally measured according to reductions in crime and improvements to quality of life in the targeted area.

Our primary data source for the impact evaluation was the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) from the Phoenix Police Department, ranging from October to September for the 2006-2007, 2008-2009, and 2009-2010 time periods. A staple of crime rate statistics since its inception in 1930 (and currently the most commonly distributed and referenced set of crime rate statistics used in the United States), the UCR is a compilation of data reported from local law enforcement agencies to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). After collecting these data, the FBI organizes and disseminates the resulting reports nationally on a yearly basis. The data consist of all crimes reported to police (known offenses) over the course of the year, categorized into specifically-designated classifications of offenses. UCR data provided to evaluators for the Maryvale Weed and Seed site consisted mostly of Part I offenses (specifically: homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, automobile theft), as well as a small selection of Part II offenses (prostitution and narcotic drug violations).

After collecting the data, its utilization in the evaluation relied on a quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test design compared to the City of Phoenix (Campbell and Stanley, 1963). A pre-test/post-test study is useful when the involved populations are of great magnitude, as in the case of Maryvale, in which the experimental population receives a treatment, whereas a second population serves as the control (or comparison) group by foregoing treatment. Our experimental population, for the purposes of this evaluation, was the Maryvale Weed and Seed site and its inhabitants, compared against the control population of the remainder of Phoenix. The comparison is further strengthened by our inclusion of data from as far back as 2006, two years prior to the implementation of the Weed and Seed program. By including these data, we were able to examine the crime patterns in Maryvale prior to initiation of program activities, and compare them to post-implementation patterns in the Weed and Seed site in

order to ascertain a causal effect. Additionally, the use of a control population allowed us to compare the Maryvale site to Phoenix at large, enabling examination of the Weed and Seed program's relative impact compared to a natural, unaltered progression of crime patterns.

## **Analysis**

The data were examined in order to extrapolate changes in the rates for the following crimes: homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny theft, motor vehicle theft, arson, and drug crime, as well as an aggregated rate of all violent crime, all property crime, and all crime combined. Conducting these tests enabled us to examine the progression of the rates of crime and disorder in the Maryvale Weed and Seed site, and subsequently to compare it to corresponding progression in Phoenix (which served as a control group, in order to account for criminogenic variables that were not site-specific).

Variables depicting measures of crime were constructed using the UCR data collected and reported by the Phoenix police department, in the form of a sum total of incidents occurring every month. Using this data, we constructed variables representing the rate of each crime by population. This was accomplished by dividing the number of crimes in each given month by the estimated population for the appropriate calendar year, and then multiplying the result by 100,000. The resulting rates represent the number of crimes per 100,000 persons in the given population. The purpose of converting raw frequencies into rate values was to standardize the data, with the intent of controlling for population changes when comparing the changes in crime frequency between Maryvale and the greater Phoenix area.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Process Evaluation Findings**

Evaluation of the Maryvale Weed and Seed project was accomplished by examining the development and maintenance of their goals, as defined by the four components of the Weed and Seed strategy: 1) law enforcement; 2) community policing; 3) prevention, intervention, and treatment; and 4) neighborhood restoration. Goals were developed around these four strategic components, and adherence to them was an important factor in process evaluation of the Maryvale site. In particular, approximately seventeen goals (fitted to these four categories) were

made explicit in the official proposal put forward in the Maryvale application for entry into the Weed and Seed program. They are as follows.

## **Law Enforcement**

### ***Goal 1: Reduce number of violent offenses.***

The first goal of the weeding process was to reduce the level of violent crime within the site. This was to be accomplished by specifically targeting offenders at the street level, both through community-policing techniques and other methods, including the establishment of a Violent Offender List for wanted suspects drawn from the Phoenix Police Department's Violent Crimes Bureau (VCB). Furthermore, efforts to reduce violent crime were not to be limited solely to measures against offenders. Programs revolving around gun control were also put forward for consideration, such as a proactive approach to incapacitating armed offenders via use of the Gun Squad and ATF to arrest violent offenders with weapon charges on their histories, as well as an increase in undercover investigation into gun trafficking and a heavy emphasis on immediate follow-ups to weapon-related arrests and incidents.

In addition, a heavy emphasis on gun safety and responsible usage was highlighted in a community-wide program called Keep Your Family Safe – Prevent Gun Violence, which hosted several events with the intent of educating citizens about gun violence and prevention methods. This program was heavily advertised in the Maryvale area through the use of flyers, handouts, and similar media, with at least two weeks' worth of advertisement in advance before each event. All of the above measures were maintained and regulated by a violence-focused subcommittee, which met regularly to discuss implementation of these measures and modify them accordingly as situations warranted. In order to gauge both community needs and efficacy of the measures, public safety surveys and crime statistics were employed.

### ***Goal 2: Reduce criminal gang activity***

This was an activity partially centered around community activities, with bimonthly community meetings established to educate community members about gang violence and prevention, as Maryvale contains a high rate of gang violence (with every major gang in Phoenix represented). The aim was to increase community awareness of gang activity through the exchange of relevant information. However, police patrols were also conducted in order to facilitate monitoring and prosecution of documented gang members. This process was expedited by the use of the Police Gang Squad, which kept detailed records of documented gang members in order to make identification and

prosecution easier. Measures were also taken to involve the adult and juvenile probation programs, for the purpose of monitoring recently-incarcerated gang members who had gotten out on probation. Finally, the Keep Your Family Safe anti-violence initiative included gang education (a critical component of the community-based approach) and encouraged citizens to divest themselves from gang activity, connecting it with gun violence and homicide, as well as the drug trade.

### ***Goal 3: Reduce drug activity in area***

Drug crime, at the inception of the Weed and Seed site, was a particular problem in Maryvale, and was therefore addressed with heavy emphasis. The goal of the weeding procedure set forth in the official plan was to address the availability of drugs within the community by removing potential sources, rather than simply trying to stem the flow as it came. As such, this included further community education, in the form of community meetings with presentations on drug awareness as well as household “knock and talk” visits to evaluate suspected drug dealers. Participants in the aforementioned Keep Your Family Safe meetings were instructed on the importance of drug awareness, as well as proper procedure for alerting the authorities with regards to drug trafficking. Additionally, with the cooperation of the County Attorney’s Office, the Phoenix Police Department served multiple search warrants in an attempt to implicate and arrest drug dealers within the site, as well as leading task force operations in cooperation with other agencies such as the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

### ***Goal 4: Reduce prostitution***

Reduction of prostitution was primarily a policing-oriented measure, although it had several community-oriented aspects as well. The Phoenix Police Department kept and regularly maintained a “top ten” list of prolific traffickers in prostitution, who were understood to be of a higher priority than others due to their high contribution to the prostitution rate. Customers of prostitution were equally targeted, via undercover police work and the institution of a customer apprehension program that focused on shadowing repeat-offender prostitutes and arresting their clients. Increased vigilance was also made possible through a partnership with various neighborhood patrols within the site; all activities in cooperation with these watch programs were documented as part of the weeding process and reported at the bimonthly meetings of the steering committee.

### ***Law enforcement summary***

Evidence was found of efforts made towards the weeding process on the part of both the Phoenix Police Department and the community itself, as a part of attaining programmatic goals. The majority of measures taken were formalized in nature (for example, both the increased police patrols and community education events), but limited documentation was found for informal actions such as community interaction as well. Activities were documented in the minutes of the Law Enforcement Subcommittee, mostly with regard to frequency of commission, and numerous promotional materials for community awareness meetings were included. Additionally, copies of police reports relevant to the goals were included among the files.

Each meeting of the Law Enforcement Subcommittee involved a discussion of recent citizen complaints and how best to adapt the approach of police in the area to deal with these problems. Inasmuch as their approaches were fluidly incorporated to fill a constantly-shifting need in the community, the subcommittee demonstrated flexibility in their adherence to their stated goals. In addition, a three-year plan was established in which the subcommittee detailed their agenda for accomplishing the assigned goals under the Weed and Seed plan. This included cooperation with the Violent Crimes Bureau in order to deal with gang violence, home invasion, and robbery, as well as liaisons with federal programs for the purpose of reducing drug crime and prostitution. Databases were created in order to keep track of “party crews” and gang members, and repeated violent offenders were referred to the specialized Repeat Offender Program in an attempt to lower their recidivism rate. Specialized procedures were also set up for auto theft and vandalism (notably involving a cooperative effort with the Neighborhood Restoration Subcommittee to organize “neighborhood cleanup days” in which graffiti was erased by community members). Overall, programmatic measures were implemented according to the stated goals and then adapted as necessary when the site’s law enforcement needs changed.

### **Community Policing**

#### ***Goal 1: Increase citizen participation in graffiti prevention and abatement***

This task was partially the responsibility of the Neighborhood Restoration Subcommittee, and consisted primarily of activities that revolved around increasing community awareness of graffiti and vandalism. A membership drive in the neighborhood “Block Watch” program was undertaken concurrently with a series of training programs for Block Watch members on how to identify and detect graffiti-based vandals. Community presentations were planned for



the purpose of training Block Watch on graffiti abatement, specifically focusing on 1) detection of graffiti vandals and 2) graffiti abatement, which included training and provision with tools (in this case, paint sprayers) for the removal of graffiti on a neighborhood level.

### ***Goal 2: Stimulate interest within schools in graffiti prevention and abatement***

Particular emphasis in the anti-graffiti movement was placed on schools within the site, due to vandalism demographics being heavily skewed towards school-age youth. Through the use of school resource officers, graffiti-education programs were instituted that promoted the involvement of students in reporting vandalism. Incentives were utilized in the form of two school-wide art contests with an anti-graffiti theme. In addition, school resource officers were consulted with in order to gain referrals for the construction of a database of school-age graffiti vandals, as well as a common lexicon for various graffiti symbols and gang “tags”. The Neighborhood Restoration Subcommittee documented the occurrence of at least two school-wide presentations on graffiti, as well as at least one art contest.

### ***Goal 3: Increase Phoenix Neighborhood Patrol participation***

The Phoenix Neighborhood Patrol (PNP) is a citizen-populated neighborhood watch organization that works in conjunction with law enforcement to assist with community-centric policing issues. As part of the efforts to increase citizen participation, the program was advertised through presentations at local crime fairs, as well as the PPD’s Planning and Communications Bureau. Furthermore, officers from the PPD organized community meetings in which 15 Spanish bilingual PNP members were trained in effective neighborhood patrol techniques. By training and motivating the neighborhood watch organization, the PPD sought to increase the community’s level of self-policing in order to reduce minor crimes such as (in particular) graffiti-oriented vandalism.

### ***Goal 4: Increase active patrols for curfew violators***

It was observed by the steering committee that the majority of vandalism offenses occurred after curfew hours. For this reason, one of the goals for reducing graffiti involved increased aggression and vigilance with regards to violations of curfew. Four additional officers were assigned to supplement the PPD’s curfew resources, and curfew patrols were made to adopt a ‘zero tolerance’ approach towards violations, aiming for an increased number of curfew-related arrests. Additionally, arrest reports indicated that follow-up contact was established in the cases of curfew violators, presumably to ensure that they were continuing to abide by the site’s curfews after their release instead of further contributing to neighborhood graffiti.

### ***Goal 5: Establish relationships with City Prosecutor's Office to gain enhanced prosecution of graffiti violators***

The purpose of this particular measure was to decrease recidivism rates among graffiti offenders by establishing an increased conviction rate for vandalism offenses. This was to be accomplished by persuading the City Prosecutor's Office (CPO) to examine their policies towards vandalism and adjust accordingly, a task to be undertaken by a graffiti crimes liaison within the CPO. Follow-up examinations would be conducted during monthly meetings, featuring participants from the PPD, the CPO, and the department of probation in order to review program progress and adjust policies accordingly if the need was present.

### ***Goal 6: Reduce speeding violations in area***

Reduction of speeding violations was mentioned in the goals as an important component of increased community safety, due to lessened risk of vehicular fatalities or injuries. To expedite this goal, the steering committee arranged for PNP members to be trained in the use of radar guns akin to those used by police, increasing the level of surveillance in low-speed areas. Additionally, photo radar was to be implemented in school zones in order to ensure apprehension of offenders, who would then receive enhanced citations in order to further deter high-risk driving in residential or school areas. To supplement this approach, a public safety announcement campaign would also be initiated, dealing with the dangers of speeding and the necessity of following traffic law, particularly in areas with high levels of pedestrian traffic.

### ***Goal 7: Increase police officer involvement with neighborhood youth***

Tying in to the necessity of establishing anti-crime programs in schools, program directors recognized the importance of establishing rapport between the Phoenix Police Department and the community, in order to prevent the development of an adversarial relationship. Accordingly, steps were arranged to strengthen the relationship between the community and the PPD, including the initiation of the Pathfinder program (a mentoring program designed to improve the academic and lifestyle choices of students) at the local elementary school, as well as advertisements and presentations by the PPD at job fairs and school assemblies. The purpose of these presentations would be to raise crime awareness among students, specifically focusing on drug crime, gang violence, child molestation ("stranger danger"), and violence prevention (including gun safety). Program outlines also addressed the need for bilingual presentations, ensuring that Spanish-speaking audiences would be included as well. This detail was particularly critical for Maryvale, whose Hispanic population rate of 75% is more than double the citywide rate.

## Community Policing summary

Outlines and advertisements for school-oriented events and assemblies were included among the list of materials forwarded to us. For example, the Law Enforcement Subcommittee (LES) planned, organized, and distributed advertisements for a speech about gun safety to be given at Zito Elementary School. In addition, progress updates include discussion of the Pathfinder program's progress, as well as a mention of the similar Explorer program. Multiple arrest reports were included that deal with vandalism, graffiti, and curfew violations. Updates on the progress of the Phoenix Neighborhood Patrol were included in minutes of the Law Enforcement Subcommittee, indicating that training activities were underway, although the anti-graffiti programs mentioned in the objectives were not specifically mentioned.

The Maryvale Weed and Seed community policing strategy utilized a law enforcement committee based on the proven model used in Phoenix's Garfield and Capitol Weed and Seed sites. The Maryvale law enforcement committee was set up to allow residents to interact in a direct way with the police department and other city agencies. Bridging the gap between law enforcement and community policing this committee met once a month in the evening to allow for maximum resident participation. It included not only representation from police but also a representative from the probation department, Neighborhood Services Department and local businesses. Spanish language translation was also provided. The monthly meetings were structured in a way so that people did not feel intimidated. The meeting rooms were set up so that there was no sense of hierarchy.

The Police Department's Community Action Officers would begin the meetings by giving a report about enforcement efforts from the previous month and how they dealt with properties or criminal activity complaints that were raised as issues during the previous meetings. Each meeting of the subcommittee featured the examination of previously-reported complaints and concerns with citizens, which included speeding, street racing, drug use, and possible violence. A heavy emphasis was placed on speeding in residential areas (in keeping with one of the stated goals), but the subcommittee demonstrated flexibility in their estimation of a problem's urgency, depending on the needs of the community. While the Law Enforcement Subcommittee tended to focus on weeding processes (dealing directly with offenders), community policing efforts were evident as part of the overall enforcement/community policing strategy implemented in Maryvale. Officers established a Property of the Month program and recognized several property owners each month for maintaining clean, blight free properties. Officers

worked with apartment complexes to implement the Crime Free-Multi-Housing Program and coordinated with residents and Neighborhood Services Department staff to implement community cleanup projects aimed at cleaning alleys and removing graffiti. Officers also partnered with residents and city staff to distribute Shannon's Law flyers to 6,000 residences in the Weed and Seed site to educate residents about the dangers of random gunfire during the New Year's holidays. Officers attended other subcommittees such as Neighborhood Restoration to deal with community issues in a comprehensive manner with other community partners. . .

## **Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment**

### ***Southwest Behavioral Health Services Reentry Program***

The Southwest Behavioral Health Services Reentry Program (SWBHS) is designed around the concept of a comprehensive mental health program that addresses children and families who have been affected by the incarceration of a family member, in order to help family members through the coping process and prevent possible criminogenic circumstances. Members of the program functioned as a counseling service who met with participating family members and, after establishing mental health goals for each, developed a plan for reaching those goals. Overall aims included the reduction of depressive or maladaptive behaviors and the augmentation of healthy coping skills (particularly among children and reentry inmates), leading to a decreased level of stress within the families of inmates during and immediately after their incarceration. Subcommittee reports indicate that by 2010, the SWBHS was conducting reentry/coping classes for over fifty students at a time.

### ***Pima Prevention Partnership Reentry Program***

Like the SWBHS, the Pima Prevention Partnership Reentry Program (PPP) was largely targeted towards the children of current and reentry prison inmates. The PPP's design incorporates the one-on-one approach of mentoring programs, using the federally-funded STARS program to assign mentors in order to provide stable support to children of prisoners. Law enforcement and service providers were given awareness training for potentially PPP-applicable situations, and given access to a database designed to assist caretakers of inmates' children by providing information on community-based services. Advertisement for the PPP was conducted via informational presentations (thirty were planned, with each lasting an hour) and distribution of relevant literature, including brochures titled "Are You Raising Someone Else's Child?".

### *Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment summary*

Materials for both programs were included in the forwarded documents. The Treatment, Intervention, and Prevention Subcommittee (TIPS) thoroughly documented all activities involving these programs, ensuring that they underwent regular operation and maintenance. Inter-goal cooperation was noticeable with the TIPS' assistance in several of the gun safety programs mentioned in violence prevention, as well as with anti-drug advertisements. Additionally, the files contained multiple copies of advertisements, including door hangers describing the benefits of both the PPP and SWBHS and an informational brochure about the dangers of crystal meth (part of the cooperative anti-drug use measures mentioned above). The advertisements were comprehensively informative both about the programs involved and how to access them (locations, contact information, etc.).

Updates on the progress of all counseling programs, as well as the campaign to spread information about them, were given at each meeting and demonstrated adherence to the pre-set goals. Evaluators also found evidence of other programs being brought in according to the changing needs of the community. Examples of these included the Cesar Chavez Foundation (an anti-drug and violence program focusing on community safety and upkeep), as well as Arizona Junior Achievement (a nonprofit organization that provides lessons on academic and life-skill achievements to students).

The most significant achievement in the area of prevention, intervention and treatment was the leveraging of resources provided by the Golden Gate Community Center without Weed and Seed funding. The principle Safe Haven for the Maryvale site, Golden Gate Community Center is a multi-service facility that provides a multitude of services to both the youths and adults of the community. Golden Gate Community Center hosts afterschool activities, sports and fitness programs, adult education classes, community meetings and events such as medical care through a series of health fairs throughout the year. In addition, the Golden Gate Safe Haven provides activities for seniors and houses a head start program for children. Steering committee and other community meetings are held at the Golden Gate Community Center.

## **Neighborhood restoration**

### ***Goal 1: Reduce the number of properties with blight violations***

An area specific action plan was formulated in order to deal with the number of blight violations (pollution, littering, etc.) within the confines of the Weed and Seed area. A presentation would be made to inform residents of the details of the Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance (NPO), which included code compliance and the role of the resident in preventing and removing blight violations. The Neighborhood Services Department staff and the Phoenix Police Department's community action officers took a proactive approach towards blight by training and recruiting residents to do most of the cleanup efforts, which had the dual purposes of increasing citizen awareness of blight and increasing efficiency in cleanup efforts. Extensive documentation was found of cleanup projects, including an entire folder dedicated to photos of one cleanup outing that had been jointly undertaken by residents, police, and the Neighborhood Services Department.

### ***Goal 2: Enhance economic opportunities through development, education, job creation, and small business expansion***

In the interest of improving quality of life within the site, steps were taken to encourage business development and job creation that would specifically favor local residents. A list of rental and business properties in the area was drawn up, after which assistance was rendered to deal with blight issues surrounding the properties in question (such as graffiti), along with encouragement to expand and enter into partnerships with other local businesses.

Additionally, a network of identified providers of training and placement services was put together; the list specifically emphasized city-based providers, including some that were located within the boundaries of the Weed and Seed site. A corresponding objective of this goal was to create a business association for the Maryvale area by developing and encouraging relationships between various local businesses; the work done toward this end heavily involved procedural suggestions and feedback from stakeholders in the process of its development.

### ***Goal 3: Improve housing conditions and appearance of neighborhood***

This goal featured a twofold process: before improvement to local conditions could be undertaken, they needed to be assessed first in order to identify risk factors and signs of deterioration in housing conditions. These inspections were also used to identify any properties that qualified for property rehabilitation services, including painting, landscaping, and fencing repairs, plus a plumbing rehabilitation program designed to install water-efficient faucets in up to 350 eligible households. Additionally, educational brochures were developed that detailed processes for repairing common structural, energy, and landscaping problems, encouraging a 'do-it-yourself' system of home

maintenance. (Note that the brochures also contained referrals to qualified local businesses and operations that could perform the necessary operations, in the event that the citizen was somehow unable.) Both the Arizona State University College of Design and the Stardust Center for Affordable Homes and the Family participated as volunteers in the anti-blight education and evaluation effort.

#### ***Goal 4: Improve the physical appearance of the community***

Two neighborhood cleanup events were organized in order to bring citizens into the anti-blight movement, with the intent of specifically focusing on residential properties and high-traffic public areas. Education was made available through publicly-distributed literature that explained blight violations and how best to use the available resources for dealing with blight in a residential area. The plan for this objective allotted specific resources towards dealing with graffiti in affected neighborhoods, with sections of the anti-blight training materials dedicated specifically to graffiti procedures (including educational training seminars). Monthly graffiti sweeps were arranged for neighborhood patrol groups such as the PNP, in conjunction with the Phoenix Police Department, in order to utilize and develop the skills that citizens gained from the informational seminars. In this case, the objective was not only to persuade residents to clean up blight issues (including graffiti) in their neighborhood, but to educate them in order to ensure they could continue to eliminate the problem of blight without oversight in the future.

#### ***Neighborhood Restoration summary***

The Neighborhood Restoration Subcommittee kept the most detailed and thorough supply of information among all subcommittees. Neighborhood cleanup activities were thoroughly documented (via photographs as well as textual summaries). Additionally, the planning process was likewise detailed; documents from the beginning of the Weed and Seed period include a list of rental properties with plans to contact owners and request their involvement and cooperation in the anti-blight measures. Minutes of the subcommittee's meetings indicate regular upkeep of the affected properties through police-sponsored neighborhood cleanup patrols. In addition, literature was distributed regarding graffiti and other blight-related issues, copies of which were made available in the provided documents. Residents were encouraged to maintain a proactive role in blight cleanup, and to report any maintenance issues as soon as possible; as an incentive to do so, the subcommittee established a Property of the Month award, with a prize going to the property with the least amount of blight.

Documentation was available for the implementation of neighborhood restoration programmatic goals involving graffiti abatement and enforcement of property maintenance issues in semi-annual progress reports to the U.S. Department of Justice. During the first year of the program over 4,400 graffiti sites were painted out by Neighborhood Services Department utilizing coordinated graffiti sweeps through the area. Another 1500 graffiti sites were painted over by resident volunteers efforts for an approximate total of 5,900 graffiti sites removed from the area. Neighborhood Services Department (NSD) partnered with the Maryvale police precinct to develop a graffiti enforcement apprehension project. Police were trained in the use of the NSD graffiti data base to identify common graffiti tags and work with school resource officers to identify graffiti vandals. Hot spot mapping of graffiti sites in Maryvale Weed and Seed site are provided to police by NSD.

In November of 2007, Neighborhood Services Department staff completed a baseline assessment survey of 5,233 residential parcels in the Weed and Seed site for the eight most common blight violations of the City of Phoenix Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance. The assessment revealed that 48% of all residential parcels or a total of 2,559 parcels had at least one of the most common blight violations (vegetation, trash, outside storage, inoperable vehicles etc.). Neighborhood Services Department utilizes three code enforcement inspectors whose inspection areas overlap with the Weed and Seed site to conduct proactive enforcement of property maintenance issues in the area. Community-level maintenance (street lights, graffiti cleanups, street repair, etc) was documented with updates from each neighborhood restoration meeting. Furthermore, discussion of bolstering local businesses is regularly present in the same updates, along with comprehensive lists of rental properties, businesses, and local sponsors acquired for the cleanup efforts. For example, the local Wal-Mart agreed to provide gift cards as an incentive prize for the Property of the Month award. Outreach efforts were not strictly limited to businesses, as the subcommittee also sought out individual citizens to serve in a pseudo-community-representative position for the purpose of blight mitigation. As a whole, the neighborhood restoration approach was both comprehensively thorough and able to adapt to changing circumstances in the site.

### ***Process Summary***

A review of the official documentation sent to evaluators revealed that overall the organizers of the Maryvale Weed and Seed initiative had largely adhered to pre-set goals. Over the course of implementation, goals were streamlined or adjusted as necessary when the direction of crime, blight, or other issues within the community began to manifest



differently. One element of this adaptability was highlighted by the tendency of the subcommittees (particularly Treatment, Intervention, and Prevention) to introduce new programs or resources that had not been detailed in the goal-planning process, once it became evident that these programs would be the best solution for an unforeseen need.

In addition, each subcommittee took deliberate steps to include the community in its implementation in accordance with stated goals. This took the form of including staging public presentations to raise awareness or educate community members about crime or similar risks, as well as organizing community members to perform community-improvement projects (neighborhood patrols and graffiti cleanups were the most common subjects of these activities). Besides attacking directly-criminal problems within Maryvale, program officials also sought to address potentially criminogenic quality-of-life issues in the site, such as property maintenance, psychological counseling for family members of incarcerated offenders, and academic assistance for schoolchildren. These programs were advertised and delivered bilingually, accounting for the comparatively high rate of Hispanic citizens in Maryvale compared to the rest of Phoenix.

Overall, program coordinators adhered to the stated goals of the Weed and Seed project, and when necessary, adapted the means by which they were to achieve the goals to be more situationally relevant. Adequate documentation was provided for a majority of activities, although several goals, particularly relating to community policing, seem to have been delegated to the various subcommittees without being sufficiently documented (as such, it may be to the program's benefit in the future if a single subcommittee was assigned to each goal, with a database that recorded delineations of goals to their respective committee).

## **Impact evaluation**

### **Methodology**

The purpose of examining the UCR data was to determine the change in crime rates before and during the Weed and Seed implementation period, both in the site and in the greater Phoenix area. In accordance with Maryvale crime data provided by the Phoenix Police Department, individual categories were made for each 'category one' offense (homicide, rape, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary, larceny/theft, vehicle theft, and arson) and individual rates were calculated on a 'per hundred thousand citizens' basis by dividing the known raw sum of each offense by

100,000. This operation was performed for each year of the Maryvale Weed and Seed project, as well as the period prior to program implementation (2006), in order to better portray the pre- and post-test dynamics of crime in the site. Exhibit 2 details the overall changes in various offense rates over the course of 2006-2010, as well as the results of independent samples t-tests comparing the UCR means of pre- and post-test offense rates (located under the column labeled as “Pre-Post Change”).

**Exhibit 2: Change in mean crime rate (# crimes per 100,000 population) per year**

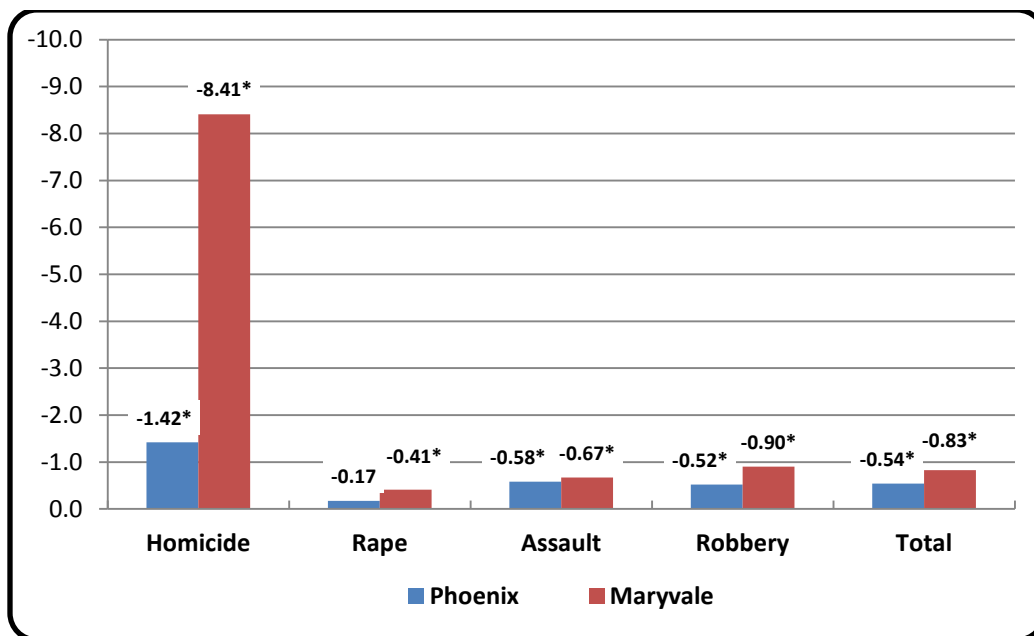
	Site				Pre-Post
		2006-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	Change
Homicide	Phoenix	-.4449	-.3669	-.2256	-1.4206*
	Maryvale	-1.0079	-.6032	-1.9224	-8.4073*
Rape	Phoenix	-.1862	.0703	-.0595	-.1684
	Maryvale	-2.0119	.6660	-.4028	-.4111*
Assault	Phoenix	-.2566	-.1634	-.0787	-.5770*
	Maryvale	-1.1035	.2278	-.0276	-.6690*
Robbery	Phoenix	.0620	-.2957	-.2529	-.5228*
	Maryvale	-.2402	-.4344	-.0678	-.8995*
Burglary	Phoenix	.1081	-.1640	-.1300	-.1732
	Maryvale	.4304	-.6219	.0182	.0931
Larceny Theft	Phoenix	-.0613	-.2390	-.0648	-.4003
	Maryvale	.1062	-.1552	-.0625	-.0970
Vehicle Theft	Phoenix	-.6417	-.5843	-.2829	-2.3367*
	Maryvale	-1.0206	-.4135	-.1190	-2.1961*
Arson	Phoenix	-.1514	-.0920	-.3014	-.6364*
	Maryvale	.0000	1.0000	-.5586	.00000
Total Violent	Phoenix	-.0830	-.2093	-.1481	-.5404*
	Maryvale	-.5202	-.0518	-.0764	-.8227*
Total Property	Phoenix	-.1022	-.2702	-.1096	-.5925*
	Maryvale	-.1435	-.3145	-.0553	-.4769*
Drugs	Phoenix	-.1292	.0272	-.1188	-.2493*
	Maryvale	-.4773	-.1775	.1450	-.0884
Total Crimes	Phoenix	-.1001	-.2631	-.1140	-.5866*
	Maryvale	-.1974	-.2691	-.0589	-.5357*

\* Significant at  $p \leq 0.05$

Our results are moderately heartening. In the majority of measured crimes, the rate within the Maryvale Weed and Seed site dropped over the course of the program’s implementation, often to a degree significantly different from the greater Phoenix area. Violent crimes in particular (specifically homicide) saw a comparatively large reduction, although property and drug-related offenses also fell accordingly.

Examining the rates for homicide, assault, and rape produces results that are extremely favorable to the Weed and Seed program. The ‘weeding’ processes targeted towards violent offenders and gang members, in conjunction with community-level awareness programs focusing on gang membership, gun safety, and other topics, clearly had the intended effect. Homicide in Maryvale fell at almost eight times the rate of Phoenix (particularly during the post-test period of 2009-2010), while other violent crimes decreased at a less dramatic, but still statistically significant rate. We can extrapolate that the drop in robbery is also related to these initiatives, particularly the ones targeted at weapons-violation offenders (the majority of the robberies in the UCR data were carried out with firearms). Overall, the Weed and Seed program’s attempts to reduce violent crime resulted in a decisive success, one that greatly counteracted the unusually high violence rate in Maryvale.

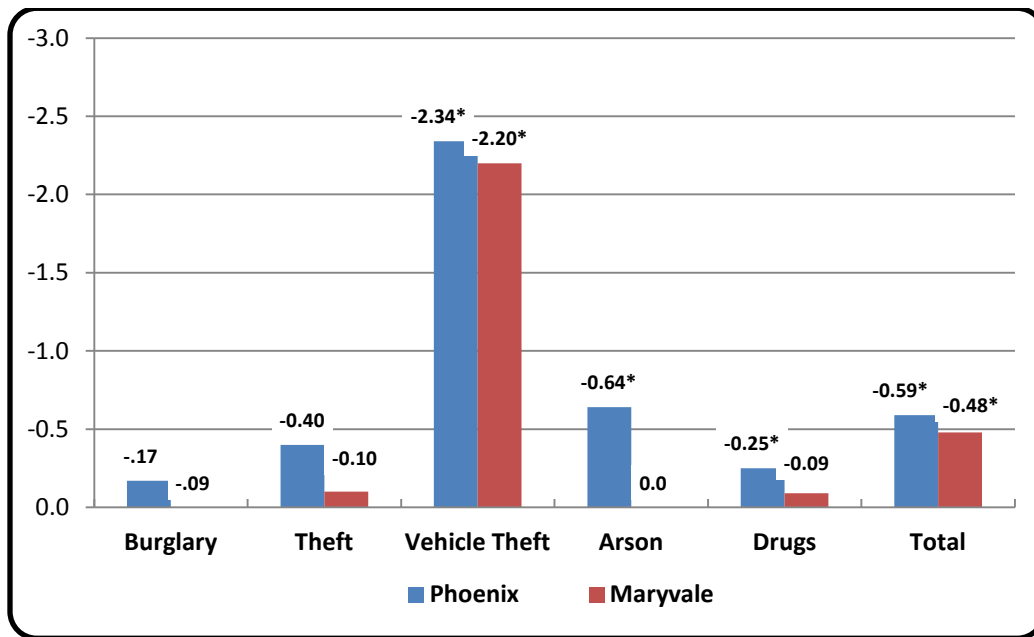
**Exhibit 3: Violent Crime Rate Declines by Type in Phoenix and Maryvale**



\* Significant at  $p \leq 0.05$

Efforts at reducing property crime were slightly less successful. The majority of property-related crime rates saw negligible or statistically-insignificant changes. Vehicle theft was an exception, but it decreased at a rate similar to the rest of Phoenix, suggesting that nothing about the Weed and Seed program was particularly responsible for this reduction (an assertion which also applies to the overall pre-post change in general property crime). However, we can still see signs of the efficacy of Weed and Seed: specifically, the immediate post-test change (from 2008 to 2009, immediately after the program was implemented) featured a sharp drop in overall property crimes that later evened out during the 2009-2010 period. This suggests dramatic initial success followed by a period of reduced efficacy as time went on, to the extent that policing may have served more as a deterrent to property crime than as an active reductive factor.

**Exhibit 4: Property and Other Crime Rate Declines by Type in Phoenix and Maryvale**



\* Significant at  $p \leq 0.05$

Drug crime varied over the course of the four-year period. While the Maryvale area initially saw a greater decrease than the rest of Phoenix, the rate of drug crime crept back up over the course of 2009-2010. The overall mean change was fairly negligible, essentially evening out. While this invites comparisons with arson (which achieved similar results), the prolific nature of drug crime compared to arson suggests that a low rate of commission is not responsible for the smaller mean change. Nonetheless, total net change for the Maryvale area was a decrease in drug

crime, and two-tailed t-tests revealed it to be significantly different from the net change for Phoenix, suggesting that the site's fluctuations in drug crime occurred independently of trends in the city.

The overall fluctuation of crime in the Weed and Seed area, while less extreme than in Phoenix in general, cannot be attributed solely to trends in Phoenix. As with the rate of property crime, total crime rates dramatically decreased the year after the establishment of the Weed and Seed program, suggesting that implementation of the procedures resulted in an immediate effect on the crime rate followed by a gradual lessening of efficacy. Although the mean violent rate in particular was decreased significantly and continuously over the course of the testing period, we can extrapolate that non-violent crimes may not have received as intensive targeted enforcement efforts, possibly due to the focus placed on violent crimes in the Weed and Seed committee's priorities.

## Limitations

In the interest of maintaining perspective on the above data, it should be noted that complete UCR data for the Maryvale site was not available for all of the 2007 programmatic year. The most obvious effect that this absence of data may produce is a misrepresentation of pre-test changes in the Maryvale crime rate. In the absence of 2007, we used 2006-2008 for the pre-test period (as 2008 was the year of implementation) in order to gauge the crime rate's fluctuation in the site prior to the implementation of the Weed and Seed program. However, this process is obviously not as effective as a thorough month-by-month, year-by-year comparison.

In addition, data on prostitution was spread over three different variables in the statistics, which created problems with precision in measuring the exact programmatic effect and change. This methodological concern prohibited valid and reliable comparison of rates between Maryvale and the rest of Phoenix. As the reduction of prostitution was one of the primary goals of the law enforcement subcommittee, this lack of direct comparative analysis is an unfortunate loss with regards to evaluating the efficacy of the program specific to prostitution. However, all other offenses were clearly and concisely represented within the data, ensuring that there were, at least, no duplications of this analytical limitation.

## CONCLUSION

Process and impact evaluations were conducted to determine the efficacy of the Maryvale Weed and Seed program in reducing site-wide crime following its first two-year cycle. The Weed and Seed strategy is a community-based approach that seeks to undermine criminogenic factors in the local environment while simultaneously reducing the active commission of crime via aggressive policing.

By conducting a process evaluation using documents provided by the Weed and Seed site coordinator, evaluators determined the goals of the project and conducted a process evaluation to compare those goals against the efforts being made to reach them. Overall, it was discovered that those involved with the Weed and Seed program (particularly the law enforcement and prevention, intervention, and treatment divisions) were not only formulating and employing strategies to reach their given goals, but adapting those strategies to the circumstances and needs of the community as events warranted. Additionally, evaluators found that Weed and Seed committees proved capable of gathering and employing resources from community and humanitarian organizations in addition to using the resources provided to them.

Impact evaluation revealed an overall decrease in crime roughly concurrent with the greater Phoenix area. However, evaluators found that of the components making up this decrease, violent crime (homicide in particular) had dropped dramatically over the course of the post-implementation period, suggesting that the Weed and Seed strategies for dealing with street and gang violence had been extremely effective. Decreases of property and drug crime were essentially equivalent, but not parallel, to those in Phoenix: in both cases, there was an immediate drop in each type of crime post-implementation, followed by a gradual lessening of the decrease in the crime rate until, by 2010, the decrease was fairly small. These results suggest an initial efficacy of the Weed and Seed strategies, but also a need to adapt to the changing needs of the community to the extent that the anti-violent crime measures were able to accomplish. Overall, the Weed and Seed program has unquestionably had beneficial effects on the Maryvale crime rate, and with time (if effort in anti-property and drug crime measures is commensurate with that in the anti-violent crime implementation) should be able to achieve further significant changes in the community's level of non-violent crime, reducing its disproportionately high crime rate to a level hopefully similar to the rest of Phoenix.

# About the Center for Violence Prevention & Community Safety

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Arizona State University, in order to deepen its commitment to the communities of Arizona and to society as a whole, has set a new standard for research universities, as modeled by the New American University. Accordingly, ASU is measured not by whom we exclude, but by whom we include.

The University is pursuing research that considers the public good and is assuming a greater responsibility to our communities for economic, social, and cultural vitality. Social embeddedness – university-wide, interactive, and mutually-supportive partnerships with Arizona communities – is at the core of our development as a New American University.

Toward the goal of social embeddedness, in response to the growing need of our communities to improve the public's safety and well-being, in July 2005 ASU established the Center for Violence Prevention and Community Safety. The Center's mission is to generate, share, and apply quality research and knowledge to create "best practice" standards.

Specifically, the Center evaluates policies and programs; analyzes and evaluates patterns and causes of violence; develops strategies and programs; develops a clearinghouse of research reports and "best practice" models; educates, trains, and provides technical assistance; and facilitates the development and construction of databases.

For more information about the Center for Violence Prevention and Community Safety, please contact us using the information provided below.

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