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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE
Research in Brief

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Community Policing in Seattle: A Model Partnership Between Citizens and Police

When citizens and police in South Seattle banded together to fight crime, quarterly crime statistics showed dramatic improvements in the quality of life. Citizen activity spread in the city's other three police precincts; now community policing is a going concern throughout Seattle—a citywide success.

The story of this success shows what can happen when citizens work in partnership with the police to prevent crime and create safer neighborhoods.

Community policing

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) has been a leader since the mid-seventies in the development and implementation of what is now called community policing.

NIJ's early research on comprehensive crime prevention programs focused on policing, community involvement, and environmental security strategies as exemplified in Hartford's Crime Control Program.

"Fear of crime" studies in Houston and Newark confirmed that community conditions, the "Broken Windows" of which James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling wrote,[1] help to define crime's interaction with community life. Also, "problem-oriented policing" studies in Norfolk demonstrated how police, as individuals and as an institution, can assume an innovative and participatory role in community life.

As part of its efforts to increase information about community policing, NIJ granted funding in 1988 for the Seattle Police Department to conduct a descriptive research project on the South Seattle crime prevention efforts that led to community policing in the city.

A city's postwar changes

South of downtown Seattle and the city's racially mixed Central Area lies Rainier Valley (see figure 1). Businesses along its main thoroughfares, Rainier Avenue and Martin Luther King Way, focus on lower middle-class and working-class needs. (To the west is a heavily industrial area and, further still, West Seattle—geographically separated from the rest of the city and reached by bridges and causeways.)

Rainier Valley once resembled the rest of Seattle: prosperous, progressive, demographically two-thirds white with fair-sized

From the Director

The outlines of a new direction for police, known as "community policing," emerged in the 1980's in response to a rising tide of crime in the 1960's and 1970's. The approach affirms the importance of police and citizens working together to control crime and maintain order.

NIJ has been conducting research in community policing for more than a decade and a half. Early field experiments tested various police-citizen partnerships and ways in which foot patrol, door-to-door contact, and other positive contact between police and citizens could reduce the fear of crime and improve neighborhood life.

Later, the Institute explored various facets of the problem-oriented approach to controlling crime, particularly drug trafficking. This approach calls on police to exercise both initiative in identifying the source of problems and imaginativeness in enlisting community help in developing solutions.

NIJ is currently engaged in a comprehensive program of research, technical assistance, and training to encourage innovations in community policing and police-citizen partnerships to combat crime and drugs. The Institute is also evaluating neighborhood policing projects funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

We believe in community policing's potential for better, smarter law enforcement. This *Research in Brief* on South Seattle's police-citizen partnership is the first in a series of new NIJ publications on community policing in urban areas. Other publications are planned on projects in Madison, Wisconsin, and Houston, Texas.

We also know that citizens have a stake in their neighborhoods and, when given a chance, will work hard with police to take back their streets from drug traffickers and other criminal elements. In South Seattle that is exactly what citizens and police did, working together. By putting their story on these pages, NIJ encourages citizens and public servants in other communities to take heart and do likewise.

Charles B. DeWitt
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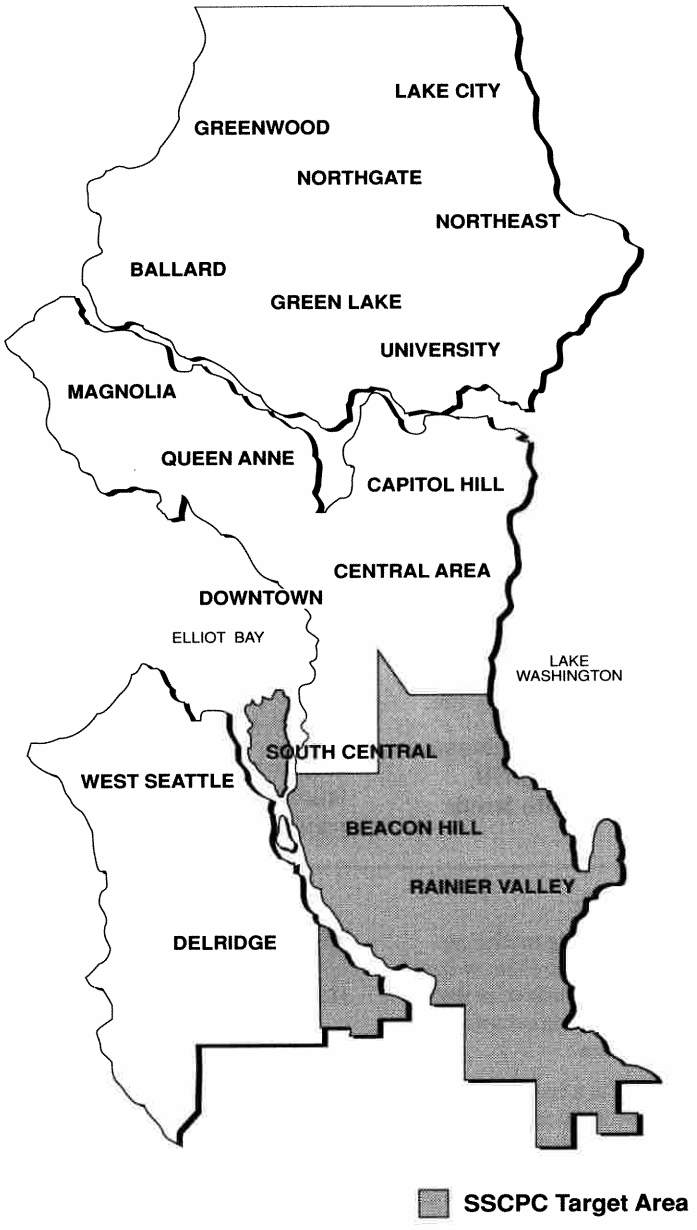
Figure 1

City of Seattle

Seattle is located on a peninsula in Puget Sound. The shaded area is the Southeast, loosely referred to as Rainier Valley, where formation and activities of the South Seattle Crime Prevention Council began in 1987.



African-American and Asian minorities and smaller groups of Hispanics and Native Americans. After World War II, two large new public housing projects and an influx of African Americans from the Central Area increased the proportion of low-income minorities.[2]

However, the Southeast failed to keep pace economically. New construction declined. The crime rate rose.

Confident of their long-standing political clout, community activists met in the 1970's with city and county officials, including the county prosecutor, to express their concern over what they perceived to be a crime wave. Their Court Watch program helped defeat two judges perceived as lax on offenders. Furthermore, a precinct police commander promoted team policing and community involvement, a proposal that won much citizen support.

In 1979, the mayor established the Economic Renewal Task Force of Rainier Valley. This was preceded by a Block Watch program to cut the rate of residential burglary; the Nation's first Business Watch program to tackle commercial burglaries; and the Crime Prevention League to serve as the southeast Seattle business community's private crime fighting agency.

Narcotics and street crime

Then crack cocaine came to Rainier Valley.

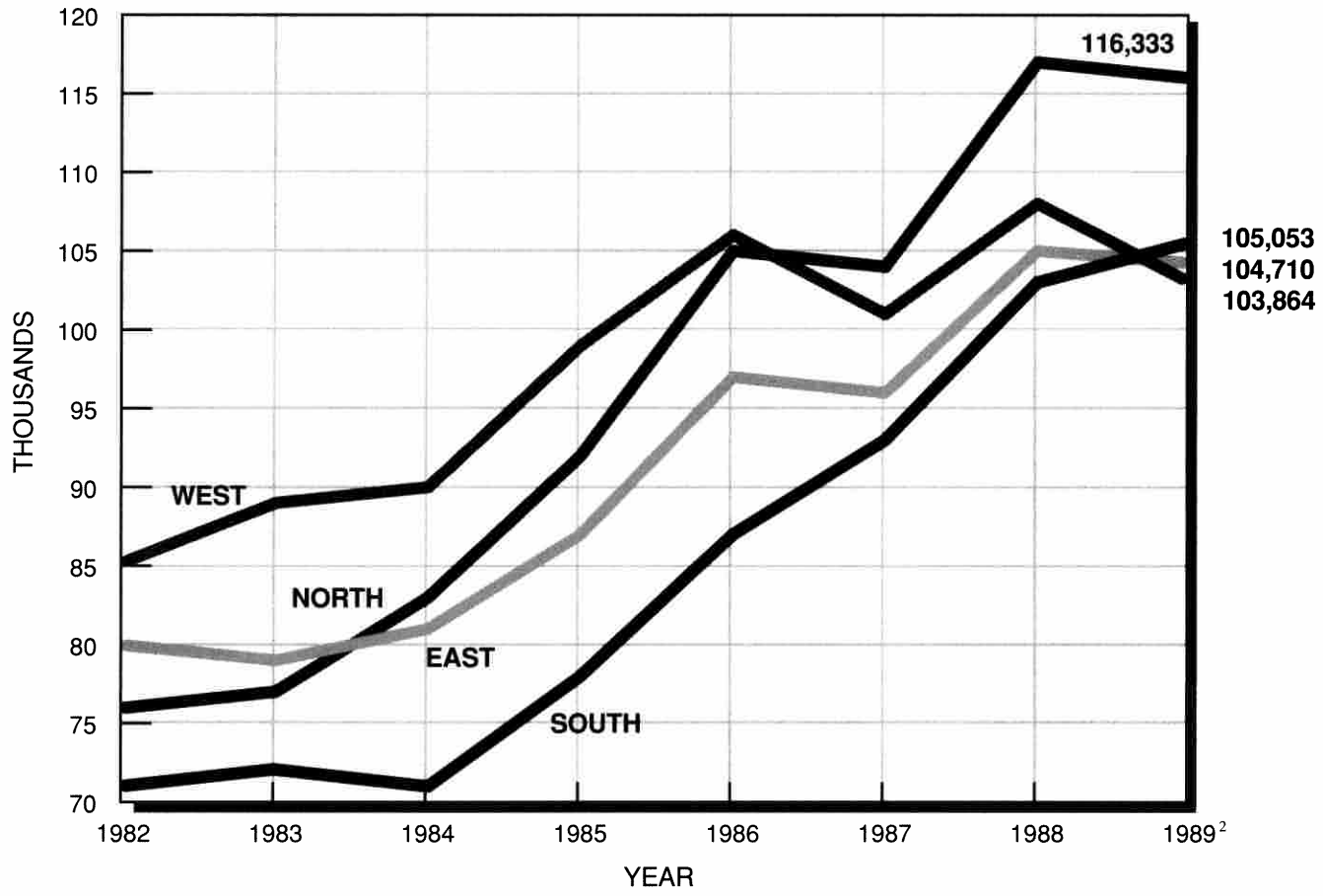
Paralleling developments in the rest of the city, State, and Nation, cocaine use spread in minority areas, especially the housing developments. The city's narcotics violations rose from 582 in 1983 to 4,850 in 1989. Police discovered fortified homes dealing cocaine, and street gangs infested parks, parking lots, and other public areas. Calls for service started to climb in 1984 (see figure 2).

Community organizations and police tried tough new tactics. A black activist whose father was a police officer became security officer for the housing projects and gave police information they needed to get search warrants. The Rainier Chamber of Commerce also launched a cleanup and antigraffiti drive.

For its part, the Seattle Police Department set up a precinct Anticrime Team (ACT)

Figure 2

Calls for Service
Seattle Police Precincts: 1982–1989



Calls for service[1] rose sharply throughout Seattle from 1984 onwards. While they declined slightly beginning in 1988 for other parts of the city, in the south they continued to rise. This trend may reflect a rise in public awareness of police services following the formation of SSCPC. (See figure 3 for a picture of crime trends during the same period.)

[1]This includes all on-views/calls for service.
[2]Citywide total CFS 1989 = 429,960.

comprising a sergeant, a detective, and two uniformed officers—not to make arrests but to disrupt or destroy drug operations. Although the team's efforts drew wide community support, a department review of its tactics led to a restructuring of the ACT operation.

The department directed the new Anticrime Team to adhere strictly to established departmental procedures, with more emphasis placed on making arrests. Yet even though the new ACT squad made 422 arrests in 2 months, the increasingly involved community voiced continued support for the original ACT procedures. Furthermore, the commercial burglary rate continued to rise.

Raising a new community voice

At an informal gathering at the Rainier Chamber of Commerce in the spring of 1987, some citizens questioned the motivation of patrol officers in the South Precinct. While the immediate concern was the rising commercial burglary rate, an ultimate concern was the economic and social future of the Southeast. Many of those at the meeting had businesses there; most still lived there.

The editor and publisher of the *South District Journal* had called the meeting. He had close ties with Chamber of Commerce members and with police officials both in the South Precinct and throughout the city.

The police precinct commander, who frequently attended subsequent meetings, convinced the businessmen and women that the commercial burglaries were tied to the prevalence of crack houses and drug use. The business leaders then met with the mayor to propose a program that included:

- A community review committee to set priorities for reducing crime.
- Greater productivity and better communication within the police department and other city departments.
- A proactive, not reactive, police response to citizen concerns.
- Standards of achievement for police from the chief on down.
- Reporting procedures to assure citizens the police were making progress.

The mayor expressed faith in the police chief who, in turn, encouraged police supervisors to meet frequently with the citizen group. At those meetings, the police stressed the legal, administrative, and budgetary restraints they faced. Although discouraged by this, the community group considered its previous years of cooperation with the police and decided the community itself would have to supply the "vision and imagination" to solve its problems.

The police, for their part, discovered they faced not a group of mere complainers, looking for quick fixes, but people seeking broad-based, long-term solutions to the problem of crime. Rather than using information supplied by the police to attack the police, the citizen group lobbied before the city council and legislature for more police funds and powers.

In September 1987, the Rainier Chamber of Commerce submitted a plan to the mayor that proposed:

- Increasing South Precinct staff by 15 sworn officers and several civilians.
- Creating a Community Advisory Committee "to develop the program" and its guidelines.
- Obtaining "total support" from the chief of police, the mayor, and the advisory committee for the precinct commander, who would head the program.
- Giving special training for precinct personnel "to provide liaison between the community, the [advisory] committee, and the South Precinct."
- Providing special community support "if the [Police] Department has insufficient funds."

Although police department negotiators were unable to promise additional resources for the South Precinct without disrupting citywide patterns, they did point out ways of stretching available precinct resources.

Community negotiators felt the word "advisory" meant "partnership," that the community truly would exercise a strong voice in selecting police targets and goals. Police felt they had the legal power to run their own operations. Still, they were aware that the Chamber had the power to take its case to the press.

Neither side overplayed its hand. The advisory committee's powers remained ambiguous, but a pattern of cooperation developed. In testimony before the city council, the police chief praised the community's intervention into their social problems.

Crime prevention group reborn

In January of 1988, the Chamber resurrected the corporate shell of the defunct Crime Prevention League (a private crime fighting agency formed in 1984 that had since faded because of a lack of funds) and changed its name to the South Seattle Crime Prevention Council (SSCPC).

This became a self-perpetuating assemblage of community organizations, not an open membership association. The lightly publicized regular meetings were attended only by approximately 17 members (whose attendance record ran about 80 percent) and a few invited guests. Either the precinct captain or one of his lieutenants attended as a full participating member.

The police "members," high ranking as they usually were, talked as frankly as the civilians. They freely discussed police plans and tactics that, in a group considered less "a part of the team," would have been considered strictly confidential.

Choosing police targets

SSCPC discussed targeting of crime problems at an early meeting, 2 weeks before its activity became official, but adjourned for lack of a quorum. The clear implication was that when a quorum was present, this community organization, despite having no formal government status, could decide where police would concentrate their efforts.

A truly radical departure in American policing was now under way. At subsequent weekly meetings, with police command staff present, targets were selected, added, or classified as "pending" or "resolved"—all by formal parliamentary motion.

The chosen targets were, for the most part, those the police determined were the principal hot spots in the Southeast. The community agreed. The issue of "power" or "control" as opposed to "advice" did not yet arise because there was no controversy over the action itself.

With the dominant initiative in selection coming from the police, police targets could be specific locations and offenses or more general problems, such as abandoned cars. The precinct captain's biggest concern over abandoned cars was their use for drug dealing. The citizens were more concerned with appearances in the neighborhood. Yet even before the citizen concern had been made known, SSCPC went along with the captain's suggestion.

Dealing with targets

Police action consisted of aggressive patrol with special attention to the targets. Officers were expected to visit these at least twice each shift, fully documenting the visits in special log entries.

In addition, police reviewed crack house reports from the community hotline. Confirmed reports were added to the target list. By the end of the first year, police were working on 39 targets, successfully "completing" nearly half. By the end of the following year, the other half had been taken care of. Twenty crack houses were included in the initial 39 targets, and most were closed within the first year. Yet police and community had to persist in efforts to drive crack houses permanently out

of an area since these tended to move from place to place.

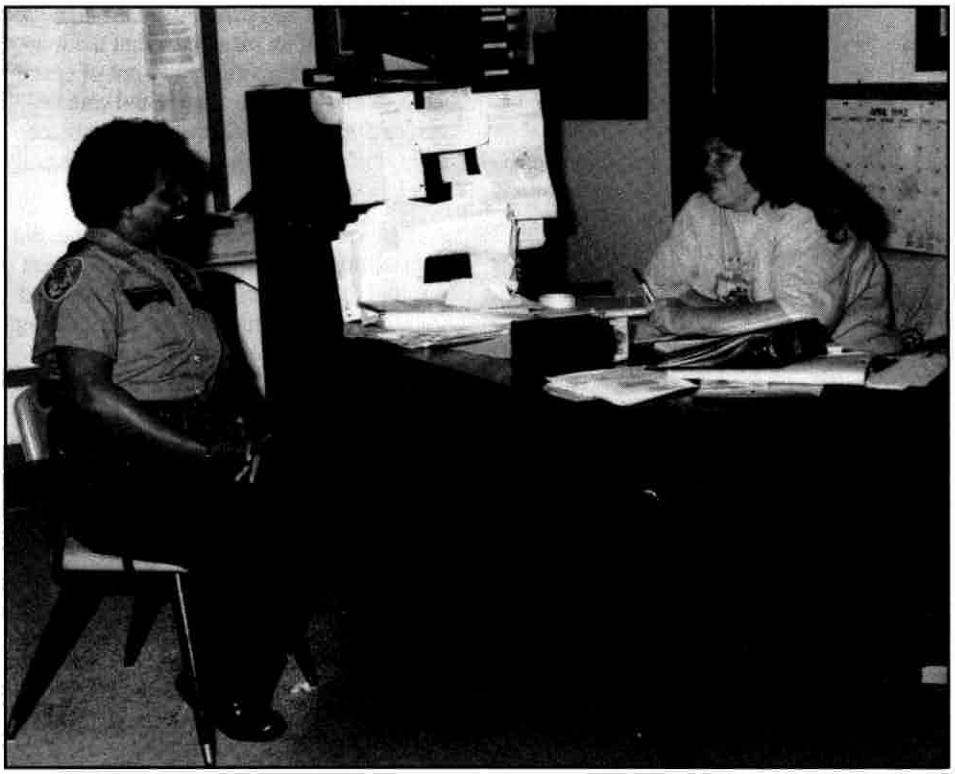
At SSCPC meetings, police reported in detail on criminal or disorderly behavior at the targets. Citizen representatives reported, too—on how citizens, no longer afraid of being accosted by drug dealers at bus stops, began to use public transportation again and how graffiti or prostitution declined in a given area.

The targeting procedure reaped other benefits as well. It gave the police a chance to interact with the community around specific public safety issues. This went beyond "public relations." Citizens learned how the criminal justice response to crime works (or doesn't work). For example, when arrested drug dealers showed up on the streets again, people realized that arrests alone did not assure public safety; the rest of the criminal justice system had to follow through.

Targeting also broadened the police's outlook. When the community put pressure on landlords who were not cooperating in the civil abatement process to evict tenants who deal in drugs, the connection between a community's pressure and a suddenly cooperative landlord was soon clear to the police.

Thus encouraged by the community's help, the police viewed their work differently from before. The target selection process directed their attention away from mere response to individual calls toward broader responsibility for dealing with community issues.

Despite a few administrative problems, including some dissatisfaction with a lack of patrol officer input into the target selection, the procedure was successful in either displacing or ending illegal activity at the targets.



Police had an active presence in many neighborhoods, including several housing projects where resident managers were concerned about drug-related crime. Officer Marsha Wilson talks with the manager of Martin Luther King Apartments.

Programs aid crime control

Concerns were wide ranging and led to the development of several key programs and strategies. These included the following:

Narcotics activity reports (NAR's). Citizen complaints of drug activity were received by phone or in person, at the station, on the beat, or through the community hotline. Each NAR was forwarded to the Narcotics Division, which assigned it for followup investigation by patrol, the Anticrime Team (ACT), the narcotics street team, or narcotics detectives. Usually a precinct officer in the area of narcotics activity did a followup investigation to substantiate the activity. If further action was required, the officer notified ACT, the narcotics street team, or other detectives. If the activity was not substantiated, an officer or sergeant contacted the complainant to report this fact. Police followed up 1,219 such reports in one year.

Criminal trespass program. Property owners gave police advance permission to enter private property such as parking lots or exterior stairs to investigate and potentially arrest loiterers. Police could cite or arrest individuals who might have been loitering to do drug transactions, even though the transactions were not taking place at the time. The trespass program required a first warning (either in person or through posted signs) that trespassing was illegal and that violators would be cited. More than 100 businesses signed up, and 1,044 persons received citations.

Pay telephone program. Standard pay phones were put on a "call out only" status. Once the phones could not receive incoming calls, drug dealers could no longer use them to receive messages. During 1988, 13 phones were put on "call out only" status.

Owner notification (drug trafficking civil abatement program). This program gave property owners quick notice that their tenants faced legal action for using their property for drug-involved purposes. Originally started by the police department as a mere warning that illegal activity was being carried out on an owner's premises, the program became part of the city's implementation of the State's 1988 Abatement Law.

Two warnings are given to the owner of a property where narcotics activity has been observed and documented through search warrants. If the problem is not corrected after the second search warrant, a final abatement notice is mailed and abatement proceedings are initiated. The large majority of owners (90 percent) have been responsive, and only a small number of premises actually go through the entire abatement process.

A landlord education component was incorporated into the abatement program. SSCPC sponsors a series of training sessions for apartment owners and managers on how to keep their property drug free. SSCPC's strong link to the real estate community, heretofore seen as an obstacle to building a broader base in the community, turned out to be an asset in this case. SSCPC could reach into the network of apartment owners and operators to encourage them to attend the workshops. SSCPC representatives and the South Precinct captain showed the landlords how they could legally screen renters for previous drug involvement, require that tenants keep the apartment drug free, and obtain police assistance during evictions.

Antigraffiti program. "Paintouts" were a popular activity for anticrime volunteers. Launched by the Rainier Chamber of Commerce, the program gained the support of both the police and SSCPC, which promotes the program in its information packet. Some police officers have participated in the paintouts in addition to looking for and citing people making graffiti. In 1989, Seattle's engineering department received funding for an antigraffiti coordinator as well as paint for the program. In addition, the city's Summer Youth Employment program (a supervisor and seven staff) joined the effort, and a graffiti hotline was established, with calls relayed to the engineering department coordinator for followup.

Telephone hotline. This is basically an anonymous tipline. However, callers were urged to use it for any public service problems that were *not* "911 emergencies." If they wanted to sacrifice anonymity in order to learn the results of a call, they could leave a phone number or address.

Much to the surprise of SSCPC and some of the police, 40 percent of the calls concerned abandoned cars. Police arranged for the removal of so many cars that the towing company temporarily ran out of space to store them. As the abandoned cars began disappearing from the streets, citizen calls shifted to calls about drugs, especially crack houses.

At first volunteers manned the hotline, but later an answering machine that had been put into use for after-hours calls was used for all calls. The recorded hotline greeting, originally very brief to conserve storage capacity, was expanded for more effective police followup. The expanded greeting encouraged callers to supply details needed about the address, date, and time of the incident.

Garden police car program. A two-officer police car was dedicated to work in two housing projects located in the South Precinct area. The officers, who were not responsible for responding to any but extreme emergency radio calls, used conventional neighborhood-oriented police tactics, even though the layout of the projects did not encourage a walking beat. They checked on drug activity and made arrests when needed. Usually the same two officers were assigned to the car, and the residents grew to feel they "owned" the garden car.

Gaining broader participation

Heightened police presence and activity eventually led to broad community support for the SSCPC-police partnership. Although dominated from the start by members of the powerful, politically sophisticated, mainly white Rainier Chamber of Commerce, SSCPC acknowledged its responsibility to extend its activity and power to the broader community.

Early efforts were not promising. When SSCPC delegated two white members to seek out additional black representation, they discovered that membership in black organizations and churches tended not to be geographically based and that few were located in the South Precinct (most were in the Central Area to the north).

In mid-1989, however, a large middle-class neighborhood group met at the South Precinct station to express its anger over a rash of burglaries. SSCPC sent representatives, though few from the aggrieved neighborhood had ever heard of SSCPC. At a followup meeting, an SSCPC member took one of the incensed protestors aside to compare notes, converting him instantly to an SSCPC activist.

Transferring its efforts less from race to race than from neighborhood to neighborhood, SSCPC gradually spread its umbrella. Neighborhood leaders seeking empowerment and self-respect found they could quickly tie their own anticrime crusades to the larger effort of SSCPC. Spreading its geographic influence gave SSCPC the ethnic diversity it sought.

Police liaison broadens

A different lack of diversity appeared in the original arrangement in which the citizen group, arguably a somewhat elite one, communicated mainly with precinct command-level police officials: the precinct captain, occasionally a lieutenant, but only rarely a sergeant, much less a patrol officer.

The police department's Crime Prevention Division, staffed mainly by civilian employees rather than sworn officers, was responsible for such activities as Neighborhood Block Watch and Business Watch. But the division had little rapport with the Rainier Chamber of Commerce and received public criticism from the Chamber.

Only after the Crime Prevention Division was reorganized in 1989 did relations improve. The Crime Prevention Division began to assign Block Watch organizers permanently. Before then, once Block Watch was established in a neighborhood, the organizers were reassigned to other neighborhoods.

Relations between SSCPC and the Crime Prevention Division now became more positive. Even the crime prevention organizers began to stop into the South Precinct station more frequently.

Involving other city agencies

Inevitably, other public agencies were affected by the SSCPC-police partnership. The Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) had already developed a tough policy of evicting tenants found with drugs and worked in close cooperation with the police. The second-ranking SHA official participated

in SSCPC meetings. Although at first SHA did not feel participation in SSCPC needed to extend to the housing projects' onsite managers, pressure and encouragement from SSCPC led to SHA's advocacy of increased resident manager involvement in controlling drug-related crime and participation in community cleanup programs.

SSCPC lobbied legislative branches and various agencies of the city government. Its purpose was twofold: to obtain more resources for the police and to further the goals it shared with the police. Particular efforts were directed to the strengthening of State antidrug legislation that the police had long desired. All the top commanders in the Seattle police joined in the lobbying, as did a number of city organizations.

Pressure was similarly applied to other parts of the criminal justice system—to the prosecutor's office to urge that drug traffickers be charged with the most serious crime legally possible—and to other city agencies to solve community public safety problems such as poor lighting in the parks.

This pressure showed that successful collaboration between SSCPC and the police was taking place. The police reported the problems that needed to be solved, and SSCPC applied the pressure that brought about action.

Spreading to other parts of the city

SSCPC operated in only two of the three "sectors" of one of the city's four police precincts. But when quarterly crime statistics indicated the South Precinct was showing substantial improvement (see figure 3), a loosely formed group in the East Precinct (the Central Area and Capitol Hill) sought guidance from SSCPC. The group obtained a grant to hire away an SSCPC activist to work in the East Precinct. Bylaws, loosely patterned after those of SSCPC, were used to establish the East Precinct Crime Prevention Coalition.

Originally interested in a broad range of social problems such as teen pregnancy, housing, and substance abuse prevention, the East Precinct decided by the end of 1988 to concentrate on criminal justice issues. Rather than complain about problems and demand police action, the group discovered it could play a positive role in controlling crime.

The West Precinct lies mainly in the downtown Seattle area encompassing the central business district. It houses a host of social service agencies, including release centers for parolees, food and shelter missions for street people, shelters for battered women, alcohol and drug treatment centers, and shelters for runaway or abandoned youth.

It also has a growing number of luxury condominiums; two popular tourist areas, the Pike Place Market and Pioneer Square; and a nationally known sports facility, the Kingdome.

Downtown has a number of small business groups such as the Pioneer Square Business Association and the Pike Place Market Association. There is also a large umbrella organization, the Downtown Seattle Association, that conducts some of the most effective lobbying in the city, typically in favor of police budgets.

The Pioneer Square Business Association helped lead strong lobbying efforts for better control of work release probationers; enforcement of liquor laws, including prohibition of open bottles in public; and for foot and bicycle police patrols in downtown areas where young people congregate.

Citywide coordination

In spring 1989, the city and police department brought in a management consulting firm to recommend improvements in public safety. The consultants recommended the addition of 147 sworn and civilian positions to the police department as well as citywide expansion of the South Precinct partnership. This involved developing citizen-based advisory councils in all precincts to play a strong role in advising precinct commanders on community affairs.

The city accepted the team's recommendations and incorporated them in a referendum, the Public Safety Action Plan, which was placed before the voters in November 1989. It gained overwhelming approval and furthered the joint interests of SSCPC and the police by strengthening not only the police but a number of community organizations that were helping in the crime prevention effort. The plan had several provisions.

Crime Prevention Councils. The plan authorized the city to allot $95,000 each year to increase citizen involvement in precinct work. This took the form of grants to SSCPC and other crime prevention councils to pay for recordkeeping, mailing lists, board support, and other expenses.

Police Department Advisory Councils. Funds were also earmarked for the development of citizen-based councils that would advise the precinct commanders on community issues. Precinct commanders would have input into the selection of board members as well as agenda items.

Community-Police Teams. A key recommendation of the consultants' study that was incorporated into the Public Safety Action Plan was to introduce into each precinct of the city a community policing team composed of five officers and one sergeant. The team would give full-time attention to community policing and would be specifically excluded from the responsibility of answering 911 calls. The purpose of creating the specialty teams was to lock the concept of community policing into each precinct.

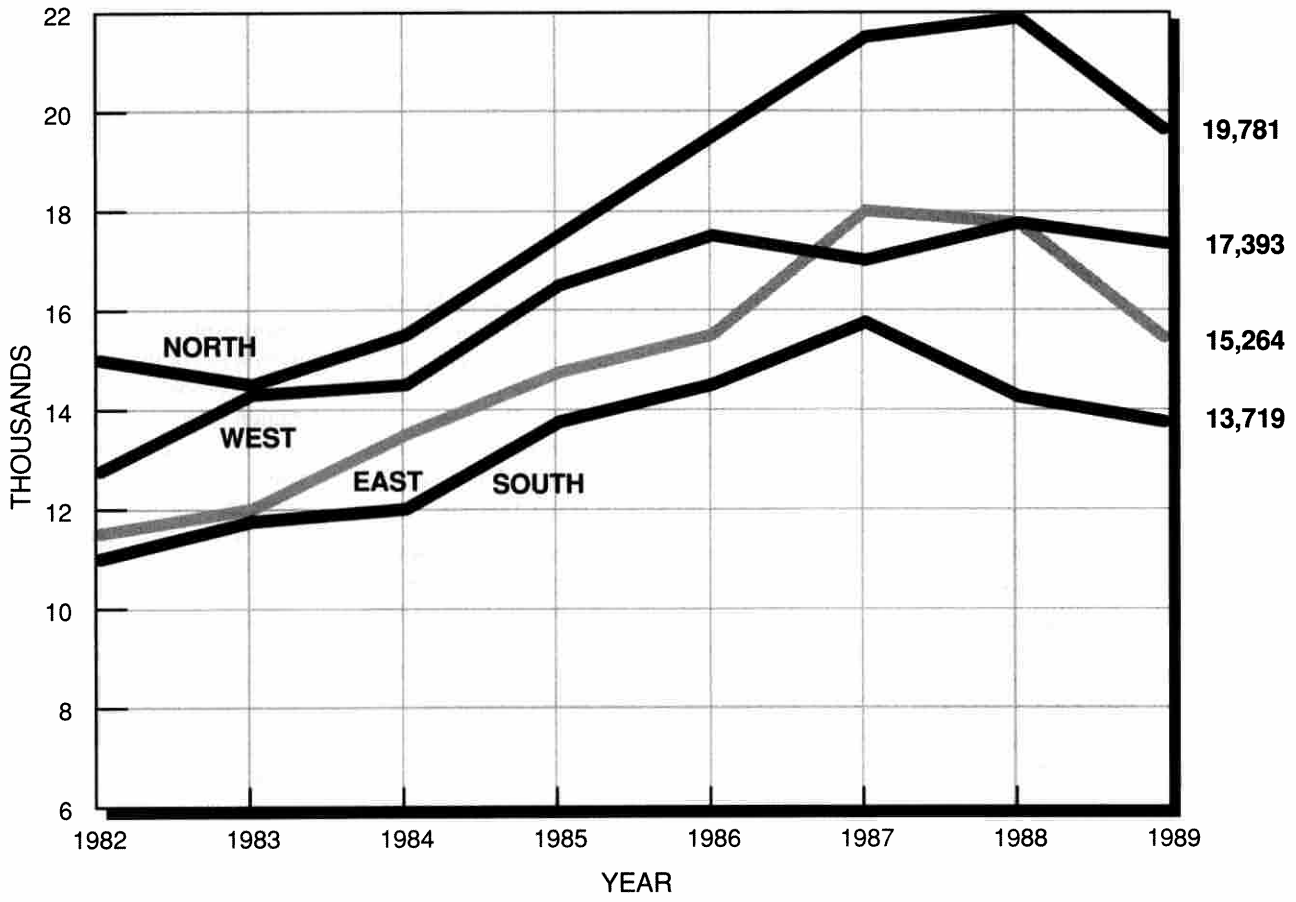
The East and South Precincts actually implemented the team idea ahead of the funding package. This served to test the concept and identify potential problems, such as the perception that the teams had "soft" jobs and the need to develop special training, operating procedures, and performance evaluation criteria for the officers on the teams. Close communication and coordination within the department, together with judicious selection of targets appropriate to the specialized team approach, were deemed important in mitigating these problems.

Joint Parks Department and Police Guild Program. Funds were allocated to a program in which police union volunteers would work with older youth in an evening hour recreational program. The Police Guild had been eager to work with the Parks Department in developing such a program.

Youth Intervention Program. The plan called for a program to be jointly planned by the police, the Department of Human Resources, the schools, and community

Figure 3

Part 1 Offenses
Seattle Police Precincts: 1982–1989



Serious crime rose throughout the city beginning in 1982 and 1983. The reverse in this trend that began in South Seattle in 1987 and in other parts of the city in 1988 indicates the positive effects of SSCPC's and eventually other precincts' police-citizen partnership.

(The FBI's Part 1 offenses comprise the following serious crimes: murder, rape, robbery, burglary, aggravated assault, larceny-theft, arson, and motor vehicle theft.)

agencies. The program's purpose was to prevent youth from getting involved in gangs and to intervene with youth who were already at high risk of involvement.

Lessons learned about communities and police

Many definitions of community policing exist, but they all have one element in common: a cooperative approach to working with citizens and other agencies based on the concept of shared responsibility for community security.

Yet too often, the neighborhoods where crime is worst and poses the greatest problems for police and citizens are precisely the neighborhoods where police have had few positive contacts with residents and no experience of cooperation. Their relationship to citizens in these areas is more likely to have been marked by distrust, confrontation, and hostility.

Despite this, the Seattle experience indicates there is cause for optimism. Even when the climate is at first confrontational, police and citizens can still forge a positive working partnership. But the partnership must be built step by step. These are the stages that communities can often expect to go through:

Stage 1. This is the *challenging/venting* stage, when citizens vociferously criticize police methods and instances of abuse of power or fault the police for doing "too

'ittle, too late." The police, put on the defense, can do little but explain their lack of resources and power. Many of their accusers may abandon the fray once they have vented their anger.

Stage 2. At this *organizational* stage, participants agree to "play ball." Community members start to attend meetings regularly, ready to work on specific issues. A stable relationship is developed within which police and community can hammer out a mutual agenda.

Stage 3. Now police and community, having formed a stable relationship, commit to action. This is the *success* stage. Actions are accomplished. Success breeds not only more success but also a trusting relationship. The group is even secure enough to weather turnover and changes in leadership.

Stage 4. In the final *long-term stability* stage, the group can mount continuous efforts to resolve problems as well as recruit wider community representation.

New roles for the community

In cities that have successfully implemented community policing methods, citizens and citizen groups have fulfilled a variety of roles to help police enforce the law. In Seattle the community:

- Supported traditional police efforts by helping select targets for police action.
- Sent a message to potential lawbreakers that a neighborhood was off bounds, for instance by painting out graffiti with police officers painting beside them.
- Served as the "eyes and ears" of the police by manning a hotline for receiving crime information from citizens.
- Obtained legislative help for police by lobbying and testifying on behalf of laws and ordinances that would give police forceful tools, especially to stop drug loitering on private property.
- Provided feedback to police on the success of their efforts by organizing dinners and special events where officers and supervisors were thanked for work well done. These special occasions provided the formal vehicle for recognizing police that is frequently missing under traditional policing methods.
- Brought the need for adequate police services to the attention of the State legislature, the mayor, city council, and upper echelons of city government. While this activity has the potential for inducing neighborhoods to compete with each other for services, in Seattle police managers were able to prioritize and allocate resources in a way that was fair to all groups.

Some conclusions

In addition to identifying the steps toward fruitful cooperation, one can distill several other lessons from the Seattle experience in community policing:

Traditional policing and community policing must remain partners.

Traditional police methods are not, as many fear, incompatible with community policing. Community policing is not just a joint problem-solving process. It can also involve arrest-oriented, get-tough solutions. The difference is that under community policing, the "tough" police action is not a surprise to the law-abiding community. In fact, it may have been requested by residents and citizens working with the police. Seattle is having little difficulty blending the traditional and community-oriented policing approach. Community-Police Teams work in tandem with regular patrol to handle the full range of public safety problems.

Some community policing programs are natural.

A more livable neighborhood is good for its own sake. The argument, for example, that painting over graffiti and removing abandoned cars should reduce crime is intuitive to citizens in livable neighborhoods. Such activities unite the community and send a message that residents care about what happens to their neighborhoods and are watching. It tells would-be lawbreakers that criminal activity will no longer pass unnoticed. But in Seattle, it is also clear that the removal of "bad actors" from the neighborhoods is what most encouraged the residents to act. Police cleaned drug trafficking out of a park and outlying streets. Reducing the criminal element meant reducing fear of crime; it allowed neighborhood residents to reclaim their parks and streets.

Community policing may create turf problems.

Other public agencies are often surprised at the amount of work created for them when police become concerned with community problems; some may not be able to respond as quickly as police and citizens would like. For instance, some agencies must follow a very slow and careful legal process in dealing with such problems as building code violations. A housing agency does not want the police to dictate its processes and priorities any more than the police want to be managed by a citizens league.

A related problem arises when it is clear that a call by a business leader to the mayor's office brings a faster agency response than one from the neighborhood police officer. In Seattle this politicization became a two-edged sword. On the one hand, officers were in a position to mobilize some action by the community to produce a response by the agency. On the other hand, if the agency perceived that the police played such a role, interagency conflict resulted.

Community policing, and the workload it implies for other agencies, suggest the need for municipal leadership to mandate some common interagency goals and chart a new way for agencies to operate together.

New coordination links must be created by police.

Community policing may involve conscripting the entire department into solving broader community problems, or it may focus on establishing specialized units, freed from responding to 911 calls. One of the problems with specialty units is that they become isolated from other units and from patrol.

Although it is often prudent to get the programs going with specialized teams like Seattle's Community-Police Teams, or by initially testing the program in certain parts of the city, the whole department needs to be brought on board as local conditions and constraints permit. In any event, community policing will require more coordination and enhanced information sharing

not only between police units, but ideally within city government as a whole.

When implemented, community policing may influence citizen calls for service and neighborhood crime levels.

Community policing tactics presume an understanding that not all calls for service require the immediate, car-on-the-way response of decades past. In the Seattle South Precinct, however, calls for service have actually increased since SSCPC began, while declining in the rest of the city. Although the number of serious crimes declined throughout the city, the decline was most dramatic in the South Precinct areas where SSCPC was most active.

Incorporating community policing into a department's operational structure may require sensitivity to issues of police accountability.

Community policing holds that neighborhood officers should be able to use their judgment in taking whatever action is necessary to solve a problem. These elements, however, may create concerns about the appearance of corruption, excessive force, and "letting the officer own too much of his beat."

Typically, modern policing employs rotation of assignment (among other tactics) to prevent such abuses. Arbitrary rotation, however, is antithetical to the idea of community policing. Under this style of policing, an officer is encouraged to get to know the community, become aware of a neighborhood's dynamics, and develop open lines of communication. All of this takes time and would be undermined by the normal police rotation cycle.

Another important aspect of community policing—target selection—need not create the risk of payoffs or corruption that some critics might predict. In Seattle officers were dealing with an organized group of neighborhood citizens rather than with individuals in defining issues to be addressed and targets to be selected.

Community policing duties require officer skills different from those used in traditional policing.

Officers using community policing strategies need to think independently and creatively. They must be able to develop appropriate steps for solving problems.

Seattle's lesson is that departments implementing community policing techniques must modify their recruitment, selection, and training programs to develop a core of officers with the initiative and instinct for working with the community and with government agencies. A first step for police departments is to develop standards for recruiting, training, and evaluating staff assigned to community policing duties.

A successful citizen-police partnership expands its goals and membership to include broad segments of the community.

While at first the partnership may address only a selected group of issues that are of concern to a limited number of residents, the success of the police-community partnership requires an expansion of both its goals and participants. This is clearly the course taken in Seattle, where SSCPC and the police found that many resources they needed to solve their local problems rested with the State legislature, the city council, or public and private agencies. In reaching out to these entities and to the diverse elements within their own community, SSCPC and the police not only achieved their initial goals but also were able to see them eventually adopted citywide.

Having identified the lessons learned in Seattle, NIJ's reporting team offered 17 community-police program recommendations and 14 recommendations for research. A partial list follows.

Program recommendations

- Strongly consider the community policing approach in all police agencies and jurisdictions. This is in keeping with present NIJ theory and policy, which holds that in recent years discussion of the *rhetoric* of community policing has slowed its actual implementation, and that developing and implementing successful community policing models should take immediate priority.
- Establish the partnership nature of the community-police relationship in the early stages.
- Develop clear and reasonable goals and time schedules; pushing too fast involves a large degree of risk.
- Secure the commitment of city and elected officials at an early stage.
- Develop programs (and communications mechanisms) with other city departments and service delivery groups.
- Begin with an evaluation plan.

Research recommendations

- Update and extend research on the relationship between decay, physical disorder, fear, and crime.
- Study the financial impact on police and cities of the community-oriented approach.
- Explore whether and how community-oriented programs may *displace* crime (move it from one neighborhood to another).
- Review the coordination needed between police and other departments in order to enhance this process.

Evolution of a true partnership

The Seattle experience offered no new answers to the frequent definitional demand, "What *is* community policing?" It has, however, underscored the need for police and citizens to share responsibility for community security and has emphasized the usefulness of target selection and a problem-solving focus. Usually, ad hoc neighborhood groups organize around specific problems, but interest fades when the problem appears solved. In Seattle, the community and police continued their partnership.

In 1987, when the SSCPC revolution was growing rapidly, a new police captain took command in the South Precinct. He soon met with SSCPC and established his dedication to its principles.

When potential investigators asked him about crime, he pointed out that crime in the South Precinct was decreasing and

ing confined to smaller areas. A newsphoto showed him brush in hand, in civilian work clothes, at a graffiti paintout. He repeatedly pointed out that he was raised in South Seattle and still lived there. Best of all, he told SSCPC:

> In essence, what you are doing here is asking [the police] to do what I used to do as a young officer 20 years ago. You're asking us to come out to the neighborhoods and get to know the people.

Even more than this, the Seattle experience can provide useful guidance and serve as a model for other communities that are interested in developing meaningful partnerships involving citizens and the police. Several elements in the SSCPC-police partnership experience in Seattle are particularly noteworthy:

- The partnership has enabled the community and the police to work together on a day-to-day basis in the joint task of controlling crime and increasing public security. Together, citizens and police define the problems, select the targets to be addressed, and in many cases share in developing the strategies to deal with them. In short, the basis for the partnership is a sense of shared responsibility for community security.

- The partnership has provided benefits for both parties that sustain and reinforce the relationship between the police and the community. When citizens feel more safe and secure, and when police experience the support of citizens who lobby for better legislation and more resources for police work, the partnership is continually reinforced.

- SSCPC's evolution from a committee of the Rainier Chamber of Commerce to a working partner with the police has involved many discussions and decisions about each side's responsibilities for achieving common goals. At each juncture, decisions have been jointly taken and formalized. These form the foundation for a workable collaboration between the police and citizens.

- Over time the partnership has developed into an effective means of increasing community security by expanding its focus to encompass a range of issues that affect the quality of neighborhood life. It has demonstrated that crime prevention, broadly defined, benefits from the joint attention of police and community.

The seeds of the partnership between police and citizens were sown 5 years ago in the Rainier Valley section of Seattle. In the short time since then the partnership has spread to the entire city. The citizens of Seattle have endorsed the partnership's goals in a referendum and committed public funds to a stronger, safer community. The Seattle experience offers a useful model of strategies for other cities to study and make their own.

Notes

1. In *Atlantic Monthly*, March 1982.

2. Citywide, based on 1987 data: 67 percent white, 10 percent African-American, 9 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 3 percent Hispanic, 1.4 percent Native American. Rainier Valley: 40 percent white, 30 percent African-American, 5 percent Hispanic, and 25 percent Asian and "other."

This *Research in Brief* summarizes a descriptive study of the South Seattle Crime Reduction Project conducted for the National Institute of Justice by Dan Fleissner, Nicholas Fedan, Ph.D., and David Klinger of the Seattle Police Department; and Ezra Stotland, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of the University of Washington.

The full report of the study will also be available in the near future. For information on this publication as well as other NIJ reports on community policing, write NIJ/NCJRS, Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20850, or call 800–851–3420.

The National Institute of Justice is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

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