EAST SIDE OF SAINT PAUL

CRIME RELATED NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A REPORT TO THE SAINT PAUL FOUNDATION
FEBRUARY 2003

PREPARED BY THE COUNCIL ON CRIME AND JUSTICE

RACIAL DISPARITY INITIATIVE

EAST SIDE OF SAINT PAUL CRIME RELATED NEEDS ASSESSMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	**3-4**
HISTORY OF THE COUNCIL AND RACIAL DISPARITY INITIATIVE	**5**
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	**6-7**
PROJECT RESULTS	**8-21**
IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS	**22-25**

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, our sincerest thanks to the Saint Paul Foundation for investing in Payne- Phalen and Dayton's Bluff so that we might assess the needs of the two communities relevant to crime.

Thank you also to the many men and women who shared their personal experiences relevant to crime in their communities. There is a certain amount of vulnerability that is associated with opening up to a group of total strangers and sharing stories and experiences that are near and dear to our hearts. Stories that included, but were not limited to:

- random crimes (often senseless acts of violence, vandalism and theft)
- fear that has and continues to exist among various communities and within the hearts of community members
- potential solutions to these problems
- mixed emotions about law enforcement (the role officials currently play as opposed to the role that would best serve the community)
- and tackling the seemingly unanswerable question of what would give the community in which you live more hope that crime can be reduced.

Again, thank you for the courage and the willingness to trust and open up to us.

Thanks are also extended to the focus group facilitators: Jeff Groves, Gaoxee Yang, Lynn Adkins and Bibiano Colon for the tremendous service rendered to the Council and their community by allowing us to train them in focus group facilitation and put their new found skill to work. Further thanks are extended for identifying focus group participants. Without you, the assessment would have been ten times more challenging.

Tremendous thanks are extended to Merrick Community Services and Fran Ivory, Executive Director. Fran, without your help, we would not have had the excellent input, guidance and information/resource sharing that came from the Advisory Committee that you practically pulled together for us. Members of that Advisory Committee also deserve recognition: Vang Lo, Merrick Community Services; Michael Johnson, Saint Paul Police Department; Paul Red Elk, American Indian Self-Sufficiency Program; Roberta Elliot, American Indian Self-Sufficiency Program; Leroy West, East YMCA and Pastor C. Victor Waters, Mounds Park United Methodist Church.

Much gratitude is extended to the members of the African-American Task Force on the East Side of Saint Paul. Thank you for your acceptance and

willingness to assist in any way possible with the project. May you continue to prosper and may all your years of planning result in action that, in time, enhances the lives of African-Americans throughout Saint Paul.

I am forever grateful to have met two men like Eustolio Benavides and Sam Grant. I place them in the same sentence not to compare them, for I know of no other likeness they share other than their workplace and the gift of "telling it like it is", to whomever needs to hear it. May I one day develop a passion for something so strong that I too stand up and speak out, at whatever cost.

Finally, special appreciation is extended to Roxy Walker, who no longer resides in the State of Minnesota, but whose zeal and outspokenness, I shall aspire to pass to generations to come.

Thanks also to organizations in the two communities of Payne-Phalen and Dayton's Bluff that arranged or contributed space for the focus groups and advisory committee meetings including: Dayton's Bluff Elementary, John A. Johnson Elementary, Mounds Park United Methodist Church, Hmong American Partnership, the East Saint Paul Police Station and Merrick Community Services.

My humblest apologies if I have forgotten any one of the many contributors that led to the success of this project.

- Lauretta P. Moore

History of the Council and the Racial Disparity Initiative

The Council on Crime and Justice (CCJ or the Council) is a private, non-profit organization with 44 years of proven leadership in the area of criminal justice research, advocacy and demonstration. The Council is of the belief that the most valuable and effective way to achieve change within a given community is to focus on the existing strengths and resources within that community. This belief is the basis of the participatory, community-based research and evaluation model CCJ developed and uses to engage the community at all levels. This model includes (but is not limited to) partnerships with neighborhood organizations; community participation in research design, data collection and analysis; and finally, strong community involvement in developing strategies for public policy and action.

In April of 2000, CCJ began the Racial Disparity Initiative (RDI), an action-oriented, multi-year, multi-project examination of racial disparities within Minnesota's criminal justice system with the intent of effecting systemic change. RDI has two main components; projects that define the disparities and those that examine collateral effects. Defining the Disparities means looking at the causes of racial disparities throughout the criminal justice system, while Collateral Effects Projects look to demonstrate the costs - how individuals, families and communities are affected by the disparity. RDI's ultimate goal is to bring about change in policy and practice to eliminate racial disparities in Minnesota's criminal justice system.

Project Implementation

The project was implemented with funding provided by the Saint Paul Foundation. As a Minneapolis based non-profit organization, CCJ began by building relationships and trust with community leaders on the East Side of Saint Paul. To assist us in this process, we partnered with Merrick Community Services'; Fran Ivory, Executive Director. Merrick had a reputation that preceded itself as one of the East Side's premiere social service organizations. In our initial meeting with Fran, it was agreed that Merrick would identify key leaders that we might target to advise us throughout the project. An Advisory Committee comprised of system and community stakeholders on the East Side was formed. The Advisory Committee had representation from both target neighborhoods and all but one of our target racial/ethnic communities.

The Advisory Committee played an integral role in assisting with the start-up phase of the assessment. During our initial meeting, the committee allowed us to pilot five research questions. Based upon the committees' responses and conversations initiated therein CCJ developed the instrument to use with each focus group. For example, one of the five research questions asked what is needed to deal with major crime related problems on the East Side. Based partially on one Advisory Committee members extensive involvement with the Health Realization Model of Understanding, and other members spirituality, a discussion was sparked about "hope". As one Advisory Committee member put it, "people have to feel as though they can rise above their circumstances". This discussion about hope prompted one of the questions posed to all focus group participants "do you think that members of your community lack hope that crime can be reduced?" Part B of the question asked what would give the community in which you live more hope that crime can be reduced.

After meeting a few times with the Advisory Committee, the next step was to develop the training guide and identify and train community members to facilitate the focus groups. Both Fran Ivory and the Advisory Committee members contributed to this process by sharing the names of specific individuals that could potentially serve as facilitators. Interested parties were approached, interviewed, hired, and trained. In sum, five facilitators were trained.

The third step was to conduct focus groups with each of our five target communities; this was no simple task. CCJ's freshman status (newcomers to the two communities) combined with the fact that we were from across the river (equated with an assumed unvested interest in the

East Side of Saint Paul) made gaining trust a tremendous barrier for some. Toward the beginning of the data collection stage many appeared uninterested in participating in yet another research project. What became abundantly clear was that a great deal of research had previously been conducted on the East Side that had not always resulted in shared outcomes or action planning. The majority of respondents were eager to share their views and experiences relevant to crime, but wanted some type of assurance that their concerns and potential solutions would be heard and addressed. Combating the trust factor was an ongoing concern that initially delayed data collection. To help facilitate trust, each focus group was held on the East Side of Saint Paul in a location that was accessible, familiar, and comfortable to participants.

Project Results

African-American Respondents

The African American focus group was the first completed. The successful outcome of this group was due largely in part to the ability to collaborate with a pre-existing group of African- American parents in Dayton's Bluff. The main themes of their conversations and input from several key informant interviewees' (also of African and African-American decent) follow.

Youth and Drugs

Members of the African-American focus group felt that youth and drugs (both the selling of drugs by youth and the solicitation of drugs to youth) was an area of major concern. Comments that supported these notions were made eleven times throughout the one and a half-hour session. "You can't even send your kids to the store for fear that they will be approached by one of these drug dealers", stated one respondent. At least four of the parents agreed that they kept their children inside to help keep the youth safe. As one respondent said, "you don't even see kids out being kids anymore".

Solutions to youth and drug issues suggested that there was a need for more:

- recreational centers with structured activities for kids
- affordable activities that kids and parents could participate in together
- positive mentors
- residents working together to support one another, specifically around parenting

Police

In the midst of a discussion about concerns facing African-American youth, a mixed response around the role police play within the African-American community arose. At least three focus group members went on record to say they feel police are not doing their job. "The police to me aint helping the situation and they know they aint, because this is all a business, that's why they out here targeting African-American males" was the point of view of one respondent. At least two other respondents shared his and similar frustrations. Another response was "I know the police are out there, but I don't think they are out there looking for crime, they are looking to create problems." One respondent spoke out on behalf of the police by sharing that increased police patrolling (in

squad cars and on foot) was directly associated with a decrease in crime on her block; a block that previously maintained a reputation for high crime and violence. Although she was the only focus group member that spoke out on behalf of the police, later comments suggested that there is still hope for improved police/community relations.

Two specific recommendations made by the group were for communities and individuals to begin to hold police accountable and try to build better community/police relations so there would be more good cops policing neighborhoods out of a sincere desire to protect and serve.

Employment

At least four times, the issue of unemployment and the need to secure jobs that provide "livable wages so parents can spend less time working and more time with their children" arose. The group felt that unemployment and underemployment were both main causes of crime in their community.

The Effect of People Returning From Prison to the Community

Respondents were asked, "If a study was done examining the effects of ex-offenders being released to neighborhoods on the East Side of Saint Paul, what would you like to know?" Respondents stated that they would want to know the type of crime the ex-offender had committed, whether it was a sexual offense or an offense against children, and where exactly the ex-offender would be living. "Have it posted that this person is a sex-offender or a murderer, or a big time drug dealer. Do them just like they do the sex-offenders" was one respondent's request.

When respondents were asked if their community was prepared to receive ex-offenders, their responses changed from fear to concern about addressing the needs of ex-offenders. The group seemed to agree that either there are no re-entry services for ex-offenders in Dayton's Bluff (i.e. halfway houses, rehabilitation centers) or there needs to be more information sharing among residents and community organizations about what is available. Either way, the group agreed that dialog (conversation with one another and city officials) would be a major progressive step toward Dayton's Bluff becoming better prepared to receive people from prison.

Hmong American Respondents

The ability to partner with Hmong American Partnership was what finally led to the success of a focus group that was attempted on more than one occasion. Two separate focus groups were held. The themes the Hmong group shared, integrated with an individual interviewee's response follow.

Youth and Gangs

Hmong Americans thought kids needed more structured activities to keep them out of gangs, to ensure their safety, and to keep kids off the streets at night. Comments that supported these notions included, "I had my car stolen three times in two consecutive months. There is a lot of gang related stuff that goes on. A lot of teens like to run away and go hang out with kids and not because they are homeless, but because they want to hang out in the streets and their parents don't approve of it. So they run away and wander the streets in the night and find trouble to get into". "There are kids that walk around in the middle of the night with guns and shoot down the block, literally (for no reason), shooting every car down the whole block. Some nights that happens".

Safety of Youth

Similar to the African-American focus group responses, a concern for the safety of Hmong children was expressed. "I have small siblings and my mom is always worried that someone might do something to my little sisters so she doesn't let them play in the front yard at all. She is afraid that there will be a drive by shooting or something". Three other respondents shared similar stories.

The group offered the following suggestions for what is needed to address concerns for youth safety:

- instilling in youth the values and philosophies of non-violence and non-violent conflict resolution
- bridging the communication gap between young people, adults and elders
- developing programs that emphasize the importance of community service
- purposely creating programs that educate cross culturally and celebrate youth, as it pertains to their individual religious and cultural backgrounds

Police

The Hmong American group expressed concerns about the role police play in their community. Specifically, they noted a lack of police involvement. The Hmong group wanted to know what they could do to facilitate personal relationships with the police. One business owner in the Payne-Phalen Community questioned how he might get the police to stop by his store more often. He felt it would not only make his customers feel safer, but perhaps it would assist in his shoplifting and loitering problems as well.

A language and cultural barrier concern also arose from the Hmong respondents as it pertains to interacting with police. At the heart of this concern lied the sense of helplessness that emerges when a Hmong American resident with a language barrier calls 911 and tries to explain the emergency situation to an English speaking dispatcher. An English speaking officer is generally dispatched that will try to assess the situation and at best will offer some type of pamphlet or brochure that is written in English. "If a Hmong resident struggles with speaking and or reading English, it makes no sense for them to call 911". The issues with police ranked extremely high as one of the most important to the respondents. There were a total of nine comments made about police that ranged from needing:

- Hmong speaking officers/dispatchers
- literature written in Hmong
- more police presence
- personal relationships between officers and the Hmong American Community as a whole.

Potential solutions for improved resident/police relations included: "More police would give business owners hope. When a patrol car comes by without the police lights and sirens on, it makes me feel better; safer". "Police should get more involved with the community, especially with community members in the high crime areas".

Parenting

Seven of the ten respondents thought parenting issues were also of concern for the Hmong community. One of the main causes of crime offered was that parents are too busy to give their children the attention they need, thus they begin to seek it elsewhere. There is also a noted cultural divide among teens, their parents and elders within the Hmong community that is not uncommon for an immigrant population attempting to adjust to new norms, laws and traditions.

One solution offered to the parenting problems was parental education classes. Another solution offered was that it may be effective to adopt a

form of the current truancy approach and begin to hold parents accountable for their children's illegal behavior. In addition, one respondent stated that parents need to face reality and entertain the notion that their child may be capable of wrongdoing and there may be practical solutions. Finally, respondents felt that more parent-youth activities and opportunities for communication were needed.

Domestic Violence and Homicide

Hmong couples tend to face challenges while adjusting to the cultural differences/dynamics between Asia and the United States. While there was admittance that often members of the Hmong community try to sweep the issue under the rug and deal with it internally, the fact remained that nine of the ten respondents felt that domestic violence and domestic homicide was of key concern to Hmong Americans especially on the East Side. The group specifically requested that CCJ explore the possibility of researching this issue.

Other Crimes

Focus group participants also expressed concerns about:

- auto theft
- stealing items from (and parts off) automobiles
- vandalism
- destruction of property (specifically broken windows).

Hope

The group unanimously agreed their community lacks hope that crime can be reduced. When asked what would give residents hope that things could change suggestions among many included:

- more community resources specifically for Hmong Americans
- more organizations to advocate for the best interest of Hmong American citizens (especially for those with language and educational barriers)
- stronger punishments for petty crimes (in an attempt to deter petty copycat offenders)

The Impact of Crime

The impact crime and violence has on community residents encompass a range of emotions including (but not limited to): fear, anger, frustration, initiative and self-empowerment. While some are empowered to advocate for change and take action, others feel empowered to better their situation and protect their families by relocating. Two members expressed concerns that friends and families either have moved or plan to move out to the suburbs in an attempt to escape from the current

crime and safety issues. Several respondents felt that if crime issues weren't resolved, the community would continue to lose good people.

The Effect of People Returning From Prison to the Community

The group prided itself on their cultural norm of openness and acceptance, but just like the African-American respondents their first reaction to a study about ex-offenders returning to the community was to protect their safety and that of their children. The group particularly wanted to know all the: who, what, when, where and why's about ex-offenders entering their community. Overall the group thought "90% of the residents would be interested" in a study of how it affects the community when ex-offenders are released from prison to their community. "There are no resources, no information on people being released. We have no idea how to prepare the community". However, the group thought the community might become better prepared by having more information on the needs of ex-offenders and designing programs to help educate the community on how to receive ex-offenders.

Hispanic/Latino Respondents

Members of the Latino community met in a conference room inside John A. Johnson Elementary School to share crime related concerns relative to their culture.

Discrimination

In many ways, members of the group felt the Latino community is highly discriminated against and overlooked by the majority. Reference was made to a recent US census report that indicated the Hispanic/Latino population currently outnumbers that of African-Americans (long since one of the largest minority groups). The report further projected that by 2005 the Hispanic/Latino population will assume the role of the largest minority group, far surpassing African-Americans and all other minorities. "We need more information. We want to own homes too. We want to send our kids to college. We want to know how to write for grants. We want the same treatment white people get!" Members of the Hispanic/Latino community feel very strongly about having their concerns heard and addressed.

Language Barriers

The group talked about the difficulties associated with language barriers. Language barriers pose a hindrance to their ability to understand and adhere to Minnesota laws and cultural norms. In addition, language barriers make it more difficult to find honest, living wage jobs.

The Police

The group also discussed language and cultural barriers in their dealings with the police. As did the Hmong respondents, the Latino respondents were concerned about the lack of bilingual, culturally competent officers. They were concerned about the difficulty language barriers created in effectively communicating with the police and 911 dispatchers.

Also consistent with concerns expressed by the Hmong Community, the group felt the dynamics of the Latino community are complex and therefore it is equally as important to be able to speak the language as it is to understand the culture. Whereas cross cultural training and bi-lingual officers and dispatchers may address their concerns, the solution would be more Hispanic/Latino officers.

Crime

Focus group respondents identified the following crimes as an issue in their community:

- vandalism
- assaults
- gang fights
- drugs use
- drug dealing
- auto theft
- theft from auto (by breaking windows)

Youth

Discussion about youth varied from transportation and safety concerns for youth forced to walk to and from school to the need for more structured activities for young people to participate in. "People committing crimes are setting poor examples for youth; they see and they follow." "At my sister in laws apartment complex, you can smell the drugs all out in the hallways." While this comment was made by a respondent in an attempt to show what a poor example youth are left to follow, the health concern of inhaling fumes or second hand smoke and the irreversible damage it has on a persons lungs was also pointed out. Mention was also made of the possibility of a contact high depending upon what drugs were being used.

Finally the group felt youth needed more to do and more places to do it. Youth need places where they can concentrate more on being kids and less on negative distracters like selling drugs, joining gangs, stealing, using drugs, vandalism, etc.

The Impact of Crime

The group agreed that crime has a negative impact on community residents. "Good people wind up leaving the area and more bad ones come in." This transition makes it hard to establish a sense of community. As residents of Dayton's Bluff and Payne Phalen, they feel embarrassed when members of other communities see bars on windows and glass barriers separating store clerks from customers. Not only are they embarrassed as residents, but they believe visitors immediately feel unsafe.

Things needed to deal with the negative impacts of crime were:

- more protection
- more opportunities (i.e. jobs and home ownership)
- more police presence (specifically bilingual and Hispanic officers)

Hope

A sense of hope is lacking among residents of the Latino community. "I think it will be a long time before we see change", but ideas of what could restore hope included:

- more good paying jobs
- more educational opportunities
- less discrimination
- more activities for teenagers
- elected officials that walk the talk, with a clear concise plan of action for how to restore the East Side, while addressing the concerns of the Latino community

The Effect of People Returning From Prison to the Community

Information the Latino community felt was important to know about ex-offenders transitioning into their community from prison was identical to the information the African-American and Hmong groups wanted. There was a great deal of discussion about the compassion the Latino communities possess for those that have been rehabilitated and sincerely want the same honest opportunities as everyday citizens. In the meantime and throughout the process, there is a need for the safety of the overall community and their individual families to be protected. One respondent appeared frustrated by the conversation itself. "Why is it that it has to focus on criminals that come out and get put into your neighborhood? That would not happen in the suburbs; that would not happen in Forest Lake, White Bear Lake and Minnetonka; they would not just dump ex-offenders into your community, that wouldn't happen. But because the East Side is so heavily populated they think, put 'em in this neighborhood, they'll get lost in the hustle and bustle, they won't stand out. People will complain, but it's no big deal" The respondent felt inner city residents, regardless of race experience a certain amount of

discrimination based upon where they live, not who specifically makes up the community.

The group did not believe that their community was prepared to receive ex-offenders and felt that they would not be until officials began to alert the community of the ex-offenders presence and allow for the community to come together and dialog about how to prepare and receive the individuals.

Native American Respondents

A group of Native American residents met at the Dayton's Bluff Elementary School to talk about crime, its impacts, and what they see as problems and possible solutions. The themes that emerged from the group follow.

Crime Related Problems
Drugs ranked as one of the highest crime related problems, followed secondly by robbery, and third burglary. Other problems mentioned were guns and gun violence, grand theft auto, sex crimes, gang intimidation and discrimination.

Fear
Fear was one of the main impacts the group felt crime has on community residents. Fear:

- for their own personal safety
- of stepping outside their homes and becoming active community members "People become hostages in their own homes"
- for the safety of their children and families
- of what younger children experience when older youth and teenagers try to intimidate them into leading negative lifestyles
- that promotes racial tension. People become leery of all persons of another race or ethnicity based on a crime that was perpetrated against them by a person of that same race or ethnic background

Causes of Crime
The group felt poverty was a big issue for Dayton's Bluff residents. They also felt there needs to be more job training and job placement sites within the community.

Residents don't know one another and consequently, they don't dare further jeopardize their safety by "getting involved" (meaning calling the police, sharing a description of the perpetrator with the police or naming the individual(s)) they saw committing the crime(s). "If you try to speak

up for what is right and turn people in you are labeled as a snitch and risk being beat up."

Dealing with the Causes of Crime

Unity within the community was considered most important to deal with the main causes of crime. Similar to the other respondents, there was mention of work that has been done in other Saint Paul Communities; namely the Summit-University area where neighborhoods come together and form watch groups, have block parties and get to know one another.

Another cause for crimes among youth was that laws have become too strict on disciplining children; to the point that parents feel somewhat helpless. "The law will not allow us to discipline our kids like we were."

Racial Tension

Racial tension was a concern for the Native American group. "The Hispanic community is growing and there is a lot of animosity because of that, people feel like they are taking all the jobs and cutting us out (us being Native-Americans, Blacks and Whites)." There needs to be a place where people from all cultures can come together to discuss the problems they are facing, learn more about one another and come up with solutions. "We need to stop discrimination and the divide among the communities of Hmong, Hispanics, Blacks and Natives."

Hope

The group agreed that hope is lacking in the Dayton's Bluff Community. "A lot of people feel damned if you do and damned if you don't." "People are scared; war is coming, welfare might be cut."

Among the solutions to what would give the communities more hope a conversation about the role police and parents play in the grand scheme of things emerged.

Police

The group felt crime can be reduced and hope can be restored if community residents find a way to work together with police to address crime. As fear rises with the uncertainty of war, cuts in the state budget, the rising national unemployment rate, etc. the group felt increased criminal activity is inevitable. "People are going to turn to committing more crimes."

While some admitted that it is not the sole responsibility of the police "We can't leave it all up to the police; we have to hold ourselves accountable for what goes on in our communities." Others felt there is lack of protection from the police; they felt hope could be restored if

police resumed traditional methods of walking up and down the streets and interacting with people. "You never really see them out of their cars unless they are giving you a ticket."

Parents

The group agreed that parents are the key to saving young people. They also thought parents frequently struggle with:

- Not being involved with their children and for some it's not knowing how to be actively involved with their children
- A lack of support, especially for working single parents
- A lack of money to participate in activities with their children

A final thought, one of the parents shared, was a need for kids to feel loved and for more parents to address this concern by informally adopting surrogate children; children they would interact with on a regular basis, that have a biological mother, father or both. The group thought it important that parents begin to support one another in their struggles.

The Effect of People Returning from Prison to the Community

Consistent with the other groups, the Native American population felt "everybody wants to know who their neighbor is and what they have done." Specifically they wanted to know: what crimes were committed; how serious it was; where will the offender live; will the offender get any extra help upon release; what type of rehabilitation have they undergone; will they be monitored; are their any curfews or limitations to what they can or cannot do to prevent them from committing crime again?

The group agreed that their community is not prepared to receive persons from prison and thought perhaps if background checks were conducted by landlords' people might gain a better sense of safety and security. Community newspapers and cable access might be another useful tool in alerting community residents of the presence of ex-offenders.

Final thoughts/concerns

A final issue the group felt deserved mention was a high pregnancy rate and increased sexual activity among Native Americans youth/teens. "I know 6 and 7 year old kids that are already trying to get involved in sexual activities. I don't think they even start some type of sex education for kids that young, but if they want to know that young, they need to know the truth."

Caucasian Respondents

Individual interviews of Caucasian residents of both Dayton's Bluff and Payne-Phalen were conducted. The themes that emerged follow.

Crime Related Problems

The crime related problems the two communities face are drugs, burglary, drive-by shootings, gangs, teenagers stealing, and teen vandalism (i.e. breaking windows, pulling up plants and flowers/tearing up gardens in people's yards).

Causes of crime

Crime was attributed to lack of jobs and the fact that those with jobs are compensated at low wages. In addition, there is not enough for kids to do; they need longer hours at existing recreational centers.

Police are the key to dealing with crime

Increased police presence was an idea that the respondents seemed to agree would not only help to deal with crime, but also give residents hope that things can change. We need "more police patrol, on foot. Foot cops don't have to be on the beat 24/7, but there needs to be a sense of safety for residents." "Occasionally you might observe a school truancy officer patrolling the area around the school, but we need more police. Police presence supplies a greater sense of security." Residents want to see cops (or perhaps even security guards) and know that cops are out arresting the teens and arresting gangs. "We want proof that they are actually doing something."

Landlords

Issues with landlords and rental properties arose on more than one occasion. Caucasian respondents felt landlords need to be better connected with residents. They felt that creating livable conditions for people and helping them take pride in their homes and their community would give residents motivation to stay, clean up and try to make things look nicer. "There is no reason people should be living in Minnesota in January, in rental properties that are without heat. Somebody needs to step up and take responsibility for what they are renting."

Youth

Identical to the concern all out groups shared, Caucasian respondents felt more needed to be done to keep youth safe. "They need to keep drugs and guns out of the schools." Another concern was for adults to better model positive behaviors for young people to emulate.

The impact of crime

The impact of crime was reported as increased mobility of residents and fear.

Crime impacts a community by increasing the rate of mobility, "people move in hopes of finding something better." If crime happened less, people would be more apt to stay; a lot of people just don't feel safe."

Crime also creates fear. "You don't dare go out at night alone; you keep your doors locked. If you live in an apartment, you don't peek your head out the door to see what's going on, you could get shot or stabbed."

Hope

When asked if they thought members of their community lacked hope, some were uncomfortable speculating, while others thought definitely yes. "I am beginning to believe that; yes. I've been here eight years and it is only getting worse. I think it's difficult to maintain hope, I don't believe hope is gone, but it is difficult to maintain; especially for those struggling to meet their basic needs."

Hope restoration

Thoughts about what would help to restore hope prompted another discussion about police visibility, better living conditions, and more affordable housing for people to own as opposed to renting.

The Effect of People Returning from Prison to the Community

The Caucasian group wanted to know where they will be living. They want reassurance that the individual(s) will be monitored, at least until they have proven that they are not going to re-offend. They also felt the community should be alerted to their presence, much like level 3 sex-offenders. They would want to know what they did and the amount of time they served for the crime.

The respondents thought there would be interest in a study on the impact of prisoner mobility on communities (especially among parents). "I think there will be some privacy issues to combat, but I want to know everything that is within my legal rights to know."

Prepared to receive people from prison

"Right now with such a high gang and drug rate, I don't think we are" [prepared to receive people from prison]. One respondent shared an original view point that allowing ex-offenders into their community might be setting them up to fail. "If we put them here, where the gangs are, where the lower class people are (according to the national average) the poverty conditions would make them more likely to offend. My

understanding from district is that this area in Payne-Phalen is the ghetto of the East Side. If you put them in the same conditions, they are 'ripe for picken'."

One respondent suggested that a way to possibly become prepared as a community is to bring the ex-offender to a Council meeting, let them be introduced, state their intentions and future plans; "don't just dump them on us."

Implications for Future Projects

After consulting the Advisory Committee, it was determined that future projects would generate from themes that consistently arose across all five target populations. That is not to say that individual requests for research will not be honored, but project planning and funding solicitation priority will be given to those themes consistent across all groups.

Themes consistent across all groups were:

- Youth (concerns for youth both as criminals and victims)
- The relationship between community and police
- Employment
- Drugs (selling and solicitation of)
- Community members becoming more involved with one another

Notably, vandalism and drugs were the two crime related problems that gained the most attention throughout the study. While vandalism and drugs cause a considerable amount of damage to individuals, families, and communities; both physically and financially, members of both communities agreed that addressing the issue of vandalism and drugs don't appear high priority to police. This obviously poses a potential problem for the relationship between police and community. Yet community members undoubtedly want to be involved in the solution, but need help understanding how to go about doing so.

<u>Parent and Youth Project Proposal</u>
Currently CCJ is proposing a youth and parent project in an attempt to address the theme of youth; the need to embrace their culture, dialog with adults/elders and to be kept safe. The project has four parts: a strategic planning process, a summit, parent and teacher workshops, and culturally relevant, art-based recreational activities for parents and youth.

Part 1: Strategic Planning
The difference between a plan that is implemented successfully, versus one that gets filed in a drawer or put on a shelf is buy-in and ownership. This is achieved by eliciting input and involvement from key stakeholders throughout the planning process. In order to effectively ensure that the perspective of key stakeholders is represented throughout the project, the Council will form a 10-12 member strategic planning committee to include Council staff, professionals in the field of crime prevention, professionals working to develop parent-youth relationships, professionals in the field of education including local school staff, local

artists, and community stakeholders. The strategic planning committee will be brought together to identify community strengths and to apply these strengths to plan parent workshops, teacher workshops, a summit, and parent-youth recreational activities.

As mentioned, the primary goal of each of these activities will be to help parents keep their children from being a victim or a perpetrator of crime. We will be sure to include in our planning the specific concerns identified in the needs assessment we are currently completing of each of our target populations. Thus, activities for African American parents and youth will center on drug-related crimes whereas activities for Hmong parents and youth will center on gang activities and street violence. These themes will inform every aspect of the project and each aspect will build upon the other. Thus, the content of the summit will be based on the themes expressed by focus group participants. Best practices identified in the summit will inform workshop content and strategy. Resources and concerns identified and collaboratives formed in the workshop will inform the content and type of art-based recreational activities offered. Moreover, the arts will be included in every aspect of the project, from the Summit to the workshops to the recreational activities as a means of communicating ideas, inspiring participants, and linking a diverse array of community resources together.

Once the plan for all project activities is completed, the strategic planning committee will continue to meet throughout project implementation to evaluate the projects progress, to address barriers and identify successes, and to make project improvements where needed. The strategic planning committee will also identify outcomes by which the success of each project component and the project as a whole can be measured.

Part 2: Summit

A summit will be held to bring professional and community stakeholders together to define best practices in culturally specific youth crime prevention. Several programs in the Twin Cities work on youth crime prevention or building stronger parent-child relationships, but these programs rarely, if ever, have a chance to share innovations, successes, and concerns. In this summit, professionals with experience in crime and drug prevention programs, programs designed to build stronger parent- child relationships, and programs related to the impact of racial disparities in the criminal justice system on families will be brought together. While the summit will be held locally, we will seek a nationally renowned key note speaker. Presentations on programs will include those providing more traditional interventions as well as those providing "cutting edge" services. Professionals representing services that include an evaluation component by which to assess the program's success will

be specifically encouraged to attend. Opportunities for sharing successes and strategizing around common problems will be provided. Participants will leave with a better understanding of what works and what doesn't and with new ideas to implement and evaluate. In addition, information collected on best practices will be utilized to design the parents and teacher workshops discussed below.

Part 3: Parent and Teacher Workshops
Workshops will be conducted for parents and teachers. Workshops will be designed based on what was learned in our previous work on the East Side and the best practices defined in the abovementioned strategic planning and summit. Workshops will be culturally specific, providing parents and teachers with crime prevention strategies that build upon the cultural strengths and values of specific racial and ethnic communities. Workshops will also provide participants with the opportunity to meet with representatives of community-based resources willing to support parents and teachers in their crime prevention efforts. Workshops for parents will focus on building parent-youth communication and empowering parents with strategies and resources to help keep their youth from both participating in and being victimized by crime. Workshops for teachers will also focus on keeping youth crime free and will include curriculum that can be used in their classrooms. The curriculum will be developed by a consultant with knowledge of best practices in school-based youth crime prevention strategies.

Workshop participants will have the opportunity to learn from the workshop presenter and from each other. Both parents and teachers who participate in the workshops will leave with clear, practical strategies they can implement immediately to help keep youth safe from crime. In addition, they will leave with information about community-based resources willing to support them in their efforts.

Part 4: Cultural Art-based Recreational Activities
The project will assist the community in developing ongoing recreation activities featuring culturally specific art forms to parents and youth. Our goals are two-fold. First, we want to offer art-based recreation activities that will strengthen parent-child relationships and provide opportunities for communication and the sharing of interests and values. Through our work on the East Side we have consistently heard that parents need more opportunities to engage in recreational activities with their children. In addition, parents have emphasized the importance of and lack of opportunity to share their cultural heritage with their child. These cultural art-based recreational activities would meet these needs and would provide an opportunity for artists to become more involved in their communities. The specific type of art activities offered will be determined through the strategic planning process. However we have

already contacted a few local art organizations and their response was enthusiastic.

Second, we want to build community capacity to continue offering these and similar activities even when our project ends. In the end, this project will link community resources as diverse as local artist, law enforcement professionals, community-based organizations, parents, and youth. The project will identify best practices for assisting parents and teachers to keep their youth safe from crime. And the project will help the community identify needed resources to continue this work.

Additional projects

Other projects CCJ might seek funding to address were around the issue of community/police trust and a specific request for a study on domestic violence/homicide within the Hmong Community.