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An Evaluation of the Safe Streets Now! Approach:

Civil Remedies for Drug, Crime, and Nuisance Problems

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Introduction

Civil remedies are procedures and sanctions specified by civil statutes and regulations, used to prevent or reduce criminal problems and incivilities (Mazerolle & Roehl, 1998). Often, civil remedies are aimed at non-offending third parties, particularly property owners and landlords, to persuade or coerce them to take responsibility and action to end criminal or nuisance behavior in locations they manage. Civil remedies have become commonplace "tools in the problem-solving toolbox" and take many forms, including drug and nuisance abatement, code enforcement, curfews, injunctions, restraining orders, and asset forfeiture. They vary on many dimensions, including who applies the remedies (e.g., citizens, city prosecutors, police officers, community organizations), who the targets are (e.g., suspected offenders, third parties), what the problems are (e.g., drug sales, prostitution, blight, noise), what sanctions are used (e.g., eviction, fines, license restrictions), and the statutory basis of the civil remedy (e.g., municipal ordinances, health and safety codes, state statutes) (Mazerolle & Roehl, 1998).

Safe Streets Now!, a non-profit organization, has developed a unique civil remedy approach to location-specific crime, drug and nuisance problems. The signature activity of Safe Streets Now! (SSN) -- its primary civil remedy -- is the filing of small claims court actions against property owners who refuse to address known problems on their property. The statutory authority behind the small claims action is California Civil Code Sections 3479-3480, which state:

> Anything which is injurious to health, including, but not limited to, the illegal sale of controlled substances, or is indecent or offensive to the senses, or an obstruction to the free use of property, so as to interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of life or property, or unlawfully obstructs the free passage or use, in the customary manner, of any navigable lake, or river, bay, stream, canal, or basin, or any public park, square, street, or highway, is a nuisance (§3479).

> A public nuisance is one which affects at the same time an entire community or neighborhood, or any considerable number of persons, although the extent of the annoyance or damage inflicted upon individuals may be unequal (§3480).

Yet, the SSN approach is much more than filing small claims court actions -- in fact, the vast majority of the problems addressed through SSN are resolved prior to any court action. The SSN approach has dual aims: (1) to help citizens resolve specific neighborhood problems and (2)

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empower those citizens in ways that encourage additional problem solving and strengthening neighborhoods. Thus, in addition to training to use the small claims court "hammer," the SSN approach encompasses community organizing, citizen empowerment, and neighborhood revitalization efforts.

SSN began by training small groups of neighborhood residents in the San Francisco Bay area to apply the problem-solving tools of nuisance abatement -- how to document the problem, notify and negotiate with property owners, and proceed with small claims court only if necessary. As local successes mounted, SSN began to expand; instead of directly organizing and training small groups of citizens, SSN now helps new jurisdictions adopt the SSN approach by training a cadre of local trainers in a sponsoring organization who in turn provide the training and support to neighborhood residents facing local problems.

Overview of the evaluation. In 1998, the National Institute of Justice awarded a grant to the Justice Research Center to conduct an evaluation of Safe Streets Now! The purpose of the evaluation was to evaluate Safe Streets Now! at the local neighborhood and national replication levels to answer two questions: (1) how effective is the SSN approach in solving specific local problems? and (2) what are the benefits, costs, and consequences of replicating the SSN approach through a training of trainers program?

The evaluation relied primarily on three major methods:

1. A national survey of 35 SSN programs (the questionnaire is attached in Appendix A).

2. Case studies of four SSN programs with different local sponsors. Case studies were completed in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where the SSN program is city-sponsored; in Moreno Valley, California, where SSN is sponsored by the sheriff's department; Riverside, California, which is police-sponsored; and San Diego, California, where a non-profit organization funded by the city sponsors the local SSN program. Two site visits were made to each city (except Milwaukee, which was visited once and follow-up interviews were conducted by phone). Interviews were conducted with SSN directors and staff, police officials, small claims court judges/commissioners, city attorneys, code enforcement officers, elected officials, and leaders of SSN neighborhood teams, and program materials were gathered (the interview protocol is attached in Appendix A). The Moreno Valley SSN program was observed from its beginning, with the training of trainers in April 1999, to the present. The other three programs were underway when the case study began, and interviews and program materials were used to document past history.

3. Impact studies were conducted for seven neighborhood studies: five in San Diego, four of which were conducted in real-time and one retrospectively, which ended up in small claims court; and two in Riverside, which were retrospective cases which also went to small claims court. Retrospective studies involved interviews with neighborhood team leaders, team members, and SSN staff, and the collection of calls for service data. Real-time

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studies involved interviews with neighborhood team leaders and members, place managers, and SSN staff; structured observations of physical and social conditions on the face block surrounding target properties; and the collection of calls for service data (the interview questionnaires and observations forms are attached in Appendix A).

The evaluation also included an ongoing literature review and the observation of the SSN training of trainers workshop in Huntington Beach, California, in January 1999.

The Use of Civil Remedies for Drug, Crime, and Nuisance Problems

Since 1992, the United States has experienced decreases in violent and drug-related crime. Although the reductions have not been realized in every community, the national trend is positive: in 1999, the national crime index (the number of Part I crimes per 100,000 citizens) was the lowest it has been since 1973 (FBI, 2000). Different explanations for the welcome decrease abound, including more effective policing, changes in demographics, an improved economy, more and longer prison terms, and the community's willingness and effectiveness in working with police against crime and launching its own "take back the neighborhood" strategies.

The community-based anti-crime and anti-drug efforts that flourish today in all shapes and sizes did not appear overnight. Citizen action in the 1960s contributed to the expansion of community crime prevention efforts in the 1970s and early 1980s, when it became apparent that mobilized and committed neighborhood residents could be an effective force in crime deterrence (DuBow & Emmons, 1981). Two theoretical frameworks dominated this era of community crime prevention. One, informal social control theory, stated that high rates of crime are found in socially disordered neighborhoods (DuBow & Emmons, 1981; Byrne & Sampson, 1986) and led to the strategies of community organizing, building cohesion, strengthening agents of social control, and prevention programs. The second, opportunity reduction theory, is based on thwarting the offender by removing and reducing opportunities for crime (Rosenbaum, 1988). The roots of neighborhood watch programs, individual target hardening and protective behaviors, and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) can be traced to opportunity reduction theory.

The theoretical underpinnings of civil remedy approaches include the related theories of the "broken windows" or "incivilities" theory (Wilson & Kelling, 1982, 1989), situational crime prevention (Clarke, 1992), rational choice theory (Cornish & Clarke, 1986), and routine activity theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Felson, 1986, 1994). Civil remedies aim to reduce physical incivilities (broken windows, graffiti, etc.), social incivilities (public drinking, youth hanging out, etc.), and crime and drug problems -- problems which may indicate little informal and formal social control in a neighborhood and, if left unabated, lead to neighborhood deterioration, increased victimization, and increased fear of crime.

Research in community crime prevention indicated that the neighborhoods most in need of positive citizen action against crime were the most difficult to organize (Skogan, 1989).

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Community crime prevention models based on informal social control and opportunity reduction theories needed a critical mass of involved citizens to succeed (25% of the target population became a popular estimate) and those involved tended to be homeowners, parents, and middle class -- those with a stake in the neighborhood (Greenberg, Rohe, & Williams, 1985; Skogan & Maxfield, 1981; Lavrakas *et al.*, 1981).

More recent research found that several of these generally accepted tenets of community crime prevention did not hold up in regard to community-based anti-drug efforts. Skogan and Lurigio (1992) found that severe drug problems in some of the neighborhoods "most in need" stimulate rather than undermine neighborhood activism. And unlike the requirements for a successful neighborhood watch program, citizen action against drug trafficking can succeed in a neighborhood drug problem with only a handful of residents, or even one extremely determined individual (Davis *et al.*, 1991), even in the "toughest" neighborhoods (Smith *et al.*, 1992).

Today, while much crime prevention research and policy continues to be dominated by an emphasis on offenders and potential offenders, a new approach has emerged which shifts the focus from people who commit crimes to the places in which crime occurs (Weisburd, 1997; Eck & Weisburd, 1995; Clarke, 1992). Realizing that a small number of hotspots command the lion's share of law enforcement resources (Sherman, Gartin, & Buerger, 1989; Spelman, 1995) has led to the development of a variety of problem-solving efforts under the community policing and civil remedy umbrellas.

Recent studies have noted the effectiveness of civil remedies for a wide range of criminal behaviors, including drug dealing, hate crimes, domestic violence, and "chop shops" (Finn & Hylton, 1994), drug and disorder problems (Mazerolle & Roehl, 1999; Mazerolle, Price, & Roehl, 2000), and chronic drug problems (Eck & Wartell, 1998; Lurigio *et al.*, 1998). Prosecutor's offices (Lurigio *et al.*, 1993), multi-agency task forces (Smith *et al.*, 1992), and police departments (Green, 1996) are successfully using civil abatement processes in community-based drug control strategies. These public agencies enforce municipal ordinances, state statutes, and health and safety codes through lawsuits in civil and special housing court, typically filed by a city or state attorney.

Citizens and community groups also use civil remedies to combat drug trafficking and drug-related crime and violence in their neighborhoods. Community groups and organized residents, using existing ordinances, health and safety codes, and state statutes, pressure public agencies to apply appropriate civil remedies for particular buildings, to force landlords and owners to maintain decent, crime-free properties (Weingart, 1990). Similar tactics are used directly to pressure landlords and owners to "clean up" properties, i.e., evict problem tenants, seal or renovate vacant buildings, clean up blight, etc. (Feldman & Trapp, 1990; NCPC, 1992). Roehl, Wong, and Andrews (1996) found that the use of civil remedies by community groups had grown in the past decade, since the first use of New York's bawdy house law for drug abatement, and was most prevalent in urban areas, in low income neighborhoods with high rates of drug dealing and related crime. Community organizations report general success in these efforts and work

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closely with police, prosecutors, and city agencies. Where no municipal ordinance or state statute is available for civil remedies, community organizations and citizens have taken the lead in writing them and lobbying for their passage (Roehl, 1998).

The evaluation of Safe Streets Now! was designed to document and assess its overall operations and key features. Before presenting the evaluation's results, we will review the history of SSN and describe the approach at the local and replication levels.

History of Safe Streets Now!

The beginning of SSN. In 1987, a drug house opened on a quiet block in Berkeley, California. Over a two year period, drug dealers and their customers took over the neighborhood -- the playground became their marketplace, litter and speeding increased, and robbery, burglary, and gunfire became common events. Public areas and front yards were avoided by children and adults alike, as violence and offensive encounters increased. Vacancies grew as residents moved away.

The residents called on the police, who helped the neighborhood form a block watch program, raided the drug house, arrested drug dealers and prostitutes, and fined the property owner for abandoned cars and housing code violations. The dealers resumed their business after a short jail stay; the property owner towed the cars, paid the fines, then left, allowing the drug dealing to continue.

One of the residents, Molly Wetzel -- whose teenager had been robbed at gunpoint in daylight on the block -- read about a group of 300 people in San Francisco who viewed noise from the nearby airport as a nuisance which harmed the well-being of the neighborhood, and found a civil remedy for their problem -- they successfully sued the airport in small claims court. Ms. Wetzel suggested to her fellow residents that they consider tackling the drug problem in a different way, namely as a public nuisance destroying the peace and harmony of the neighborhood. As a public nuisance rather than a crime, the problem could be addressed using civil, rather than criminal remedies. Molly Wetzel organized a neighborhood team which documented the drug dealing business and demanded that the property owner resolve the problem, perhaps by evicting the tenants or forcing them to enter a drug rehabilitation program. The owner refused. Eighteen neighbors, aged 3 to 65, sued him in small claims court, each filing a $2,000 claim for an $8 fee,[1] claiming that the nuisance he knowingly allowed to continue prevented the neighbors from the "comfortable enjoyment of life and property." Within 30 days, the small claims judge heard the case and awarded the neighbors their full claim, $36,000. Within days the drug dealers were evicted, the drug house closed, and the neighborhood began to mend.

The new neighborhood leaders went on to plant over 30 street trees, renovated a playground, matched at-risk teens with neighborhood mentors, advocated for first time home

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[1]The small claims limit in California is now $5,000 and the filing fee has risen to $20.

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ownership, educated residents in drug prevention and rehabilitation, lobbied for a four-way stop sign on the corner, established an annual garage sale and street party (now in its tenth year), and supported the construction of 18 units of low-income housing in the newly drug-free neighborhood. Media coverage and word-of-mouth brought many requests from residents desiring to learn how to use the SSN approach, and in 1990 Molly Wetzel established Safe Streets Now! to pioneer the innovative use of small claims courts by neighborhood residents for drug, crime, and disorder abatement.

Direct Services: How the SSN Approach is Applied to Neighborhood Problems

SSN offers citizens a generic approach to neighborhood problems, but one which is readily customized to individual situations. Below, we will describe the basic SSN approach, based on SSN materials and observations of two training of trainers workshops. As we describe the steps involved in approaching a problem, we will discuss some of the important issues underlying the SSN strategy. In the case studies which appear later in this report, we provide information on how the approach is altered in different situations.

Step 1: Forming a neighborhood problem-solving team

A SSN effort begins when a neighborhood resident contacts a trained SSN staff member. Residents learn about their local SSN program and are referred to it in a variety of ways that differ from city to city and sponsor to sponsor. The primary sources tend to be police officers, elected officials, city agency officials, media coverage, and community organizations.

The SSN approach is grounded in the notions that citizens can and should resolve problems in their neighborhood, with assistance, and that taking responsibility for problem-solving is inherently empowering. To support this basis, most SSN programs require that citizens be actively involved in the problem solving process -- they will get significant help and some protection of confidentiality, but they must be willing to do the work themselves. Thus, if a neighborhood resident calls SSN and receives information and help in forming a problem-solving group, and that resident never calls back, is unable to get other residents to participate, or, after formation, if the problem-solving group declines to take necessary steps, the SSN action will go no further. In short, SSN staff will provide training and technical support, but will not -- with one major exception (Step 4, as explained below) -- take active steps for the residents.

Community organizing for the SSN approach is different from the traditional neighborhood or block watch approach. To begin a neighborhood watch, citizens are alerted by posting flyers, making announcements in community newsletters, going door-to-door, and other organizing strategies which aim to get as many residents as possible to the block watch meeting. A resident is typically appointed or elected to become the block captain, a gatekeeper who serves as the liaison between the watch group and the police or city agency. The gatekeeper typically has a number of responsibilities, while members have more passive roles revolving around looking out for their neighbors, serving as the "eyes and ears" of police, taking personal and property security

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measures, and getting city agencies to respond to their priorities.

To start a SSN action, one or two residents typically initiate and organize a meeting between neighborhood residents and the SSN trainer. After that, the group has a flat organization, with no gatekeeper. Although one individual may serve as the spokesperson for convenience and clear communication, every member of the group has a specific responsibility or task.

To organize the initial meeting, the residents who contact SSN are asked to identify one or more neighbors who are impacted by the problem. These residents, in turn, are asked to invite a few trusted neighbors to the initial SSN meeting, focusing on residents who are directly affected by the problem -- who can "see, hear, and feel the problem," in the words of SSN's founder. A date, time, and place are set for the initial meeting, which should be held in a safe place in the neighborhood. The goal is not to get a critical mass of residents at the meeting (it has often been said that 25% participation is needed for an effective neighborhood watch), or a large crowd that may include the problem people. The goal is to organize a group of between three and 15 residents who are willing to work together on the problem; every member will participate in one way or another, rather than relying on one or two people to do the work of the whole. The initial meeting is not viewed as a public meeting; if the problem people attend, they will be asked to leave. If they decline, the group will receive some educational material on SSN and the meeting will be ended, to be re-scheduled in private.

Step 2: Documenting the problem

It is imperative that the problem be located on a specific property for which a property owner can be identified for the SSN approach to work. It the vast majority of cases, the problem property addressed by SSN is a single or multiple family (e.g., a duplex, fourplex, apartment building) home or a business. In rare instances, the SSN approach can work on a hotspot such as an open-air drug market -- if one or more of the tools of the trade (such as a pay phone or bathroom used by drug sellers) can be identified on a specific property. SSN is not appropriate for crime or nuisance problems which are not tied to a specific property and/or the perpetrators are unknown (e.g., a rash of neighborhood burglaries or cars speeding down a residential street).

At the initial meeting, the SSN trainer explains the entire SSN approach, and provides specific information on the "retail" business of drug selling, the signs of a drug house, the legal responsibilities of property owners, and state law on public nuisances and remedies based on the emotional and mental distress they cause. The trainer then provides specific details on the first task of the neighborhood team (should it decide "to accept the mission"), which is to conduct a thorough, written documentation of the problem and how it affects them. This entails the following:

1.   Creating a phone tree, which (1) lists the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the neighborhood team and (2) formalizes procedures for the neighborhood team members to

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contact each other should an incident occur.

2.   Finding out who the owner of the problem property is and how to contact him or her by mail. This may require some research through county and/or state records if the owner is a corporation or partnership.

3.   Documenting the problem in detail, including calling relevant agencies for action, including the police. This is a critical step for the SSN approach, and substantial time is spent describing what the documentation should include. The team members will receive training on how to keep a written activity log of incidents, including date, time, activity taking place (such as "Pretty Face in front of 2345 State Street" or "Woman drove up in van (license place #123456). Went into 2345 State Street for five minutes. Similar traffic between 8pm and 11pm."), and the police job number, if any.

The neighborhood team will be encouraged to not confront the problem people, and to take safety precautions when recording license plate numbers, etc. The team is advised to give drug dealers and problem individuals code names to assist in describing them to the police. The neighborhood team *will* be encouraged to call the police (911) when an incident occurs, to both attempt to resolve the problem and to provide documentation should court action be necessary.

Step 3: Writing the "demand letter"

By law, a property owner is negligent if s/he "knowingly" allows a problem to exist on the property. The demand letter is designed to let the property owner know of the problem and informs him or her that legal action will start if steps to resolve the problem are not taken. In most situations, the neighborhood team members want to remain anonymous, as they are often fearful of retaliation from the property owner or problem tenants. The demand letter directed to the property owner provides factual information on the public nuisance activities documented, including copies of the neighborhood team members' activity logs, and describes, briefly, the fear and emotional upheaval experienced by the families and residents of the neighborhood. The demand letter informs the property owner that the owner has the responsibility to eliminate the problem, or will face legal action in small claims court. The owner is given a short amount of time to respond (e.g., 10 days), and given the name, address, and phone number of who to contact to discuss a plan for resolving the problem. The contact person may be a member of the neighborhood team, or may be the SSN trainer, signing in behalf of the "Concerned Residents of State Street" or another name the neighborhood team has selected.

A demand letter is sent regardless of who the owner is -- including if it is a government agency (e.g., the local Housing Authority) or if the problem property is owner-occupied or relative-occupied (i.e., the problem tenants are relative of the property owner). The demand letter is sent by certified mail and to add a strong message, a copy may be sent to the mayor, police chief, city attorney, or other responsible authority.

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Step 4: Negotiating a resolution

If the property owner responds to the demand letter by calling the contact person, who has been empowered by the neighborhood team to negotiate a settlement, the contact person and the property owner discuss possible resolutions and agree to a schedule. Resolutions may include evicting the problem tenant, cleaning up or otherwise rectifying a blighted property, taking steps to eliminate a nuisance problem around a business (e.g., removing pay phones or making them able to call out only, providing additional lighting, changing closing hours, etc.), etc., and should have a specific timetable attached to them.

If the owner is cooperative -- as the majority are -- the problem may be resolved promptly. If the owner does not respond to the demand letter, or responds and then fails to follow through, the neighborhood team may decide to respond by filing small claims court actions.

Step 5: Filing a small claims court action

In California, anyone who is 18 years of age or older and has not been declared mentally incompetent can sue in small claims court. The parent or legal guardian of a minor can sue on behalf of the minor. The youngest plaintiff in a SSN case to date is a six-month-old baby who could not be strolled up and down the street because of a drug house and who woke up crying at night because of the noise; the baby was awarded $2,000 (the upper limit at that time) plus court costs. The current small claims court limit in California is $5,000.

The foundation of a SSN small claims action in California is that the property owner is responsible for maintaining his or her property in a manner which is not "injurious to health" and does not interfere with the "comfortable enjoyment of life or property." Each plaintiff must prove the property owner has been properly identified and notified, that s/he has not resolved the problem, and that the resident has been unable to enjoy life or property and/or has been "injured" by the ongoing nuisance. Residents are encouraged to understand that it is not (for example) the drug dealing that is the focus of the small court action; rather the court will base its ruling on the emotional and mental distress caused by drug dealing and the property owner's failure to take appropriate action.

At a second meeting of the neighborhood team, the SSN trainer provides assistance to the residents in filing small claims actions. Each resident must file an individual claim and pay individual filing fees (currently $20, which may be waived depending on the plaintiff's income). The forms are relatively easy to complete. The description of the reason for the claim is brief, such as "the defendant allowed illegal activity to occur on his property at 2345 State Street, which causes me emotional and mental distress." The type and extent of this distress is sometimes recorded on activity log, but need not be presented to anyone until the court date.

The individual claims are then taken to small claims court by one or more designated members of the neighborhood team and filed at the same time. Advance agreements with the

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small claims court judges or commissioners have typically resulted in the individual cases being consolidated so that they may be heard at one time, but this procedure does not constitute a class action suit. When the court date is set (within 30 days of filing, by California law), the property owner, the defendant, must be legally served with court papers. This step is typically done by a professional process server, paid by the neighborhood team.

Step 6: Preparing and going to court

When the court date nears, a third meeting is convened to enable the SSN trainer to advise the neighborhood team. The small claims court judge will hear the neighborhood team's cases as a group, in one hearing, often specially scheduled at the end of the day for SSN. The hearings may last two to three hours, and all neighborhood team members who filed suits must be present. In California, attorneys may be present in small claims court only as advisors to their clients; they may not take part in the conduct or defense of a small claims action (California Code of Civil Procedure §116.530).

The small claims court hearing is likely to begin with designated members of the team presenting basic information on the problem to the judge, which will may include a map of the neighborhood showing the location of the problem property and the plaintiffs' homes, a vivid board presenting pictures of trash at the property or physical samples of litter and drug paraphernalia left behind, a summary of the nature, extent, and history of the problems at the property, and a listing of recent police calls-for-service. These data are obtained from the police department for the problem property, and may be attested to by a police officer who is formally subpoenaed to appear (this is usually required by law enforcement agencies and should not be interpreted as a reluctance for the officer to appear). Activity logs may be presented. The designated presenters should also cover what the residents did to solve the problem and what the owner's response was, and the demand letter is submitted as evidence. This summary presentation for the group spares both the judge and the other members of the neighborhood team from going over the same information. At the third SSN meeting, this designated member is selected and the team works together to summarize the needed information.

The second part of the hearing will involve each team member testifying to the court about the impact of the problem on him or her individually, stressing the mental and emotional distress experienced. At the third SSN meeting, the team members are prepared for this testimony, which often includes descriptions of the effects of fear and the deterioration of the quality of neighborhood life (such as children being unable to play in the outside yard, family members sleeping in the living room for fear of bullets coming through the bedroom window next to the problem property, anxiety and fear on the street, etc.). The presentation of each team member may also be submitted in writing to the judge, and each member requests monetary damages for the distress the public nuisance has caused them (usually the small claims maximum) and court costs (filing, serving, and subpoena costs).

The property owner will then have time to present his or her case, and may be cross-

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examined by the designated neighborhood team presenters. The judge may ask questions, and will then take the information "under submission" and render a written decision with a few weeks of the court date. The decision will be mailed to all parties. If the decision is in favor of the neighborhood team (as the vast majority are), monetary damages will be awarded to each individual plaintiff depending on the judge's estimation of their degree of distress. Many will receive the maximum amount and others may receive less. Homeowner's property insurance may cover the judgment against the owner.

Step 7: After Court — Appeals and Collecting the Judgment

A defendant who loses in small claims court may appeal to the Superior Court, and if he or she does so, all plaintiffs and defendants are notified by the court of the new hearing date and time. In Superior Court, attorneys are allowed to represent the parties involved, and neighborhood teams may want to recruit an attorney -- a team member if possible, an attorney to serve *pro bono* if not -- to represent them. At the appeals hearing, however, the neighborhood team members are advised to present their case as they did in small claims court (after conducting a *post mortem* of the hearing that enables the group to decide what worked well and what did not).

Collecting the small claims court judgment may require additional action. SSN provides neighborhood team members with "how to" books to help them collect the judgment and trainers will provide information on collection strategies such as placing a lien on the property, garnishing wages, targeting bank accounts, etc.

1989-1995: SSN Neighborhood Projects in Oakland, California

During the first five years after SSN was formed, the non-profit organization was funded by city of Oakland to provide direct services to neighborhood residents and was also the recipient of foundation support. The small central staff trained groups of neighborhood residents to apply the problem-solving tools of nuisance abatement outlined above -- how to document the problem, notify and negotiate with property owners, prepare and file actions in court, testify, and follow through on judgments as necessary. Residents were taught to abate the problems caused by drug houses, gang hangouts, disruptive liquor stores and bars, motels harboring prostitutes and drug users, and blighted properties, and reportedly received small claims court judgments of over a million dollars. In two contracts with the city in 1993-94 and 1994-95, SSN began and completed at least 49 new projects involving 438 residents (California Highway Patrol, 1995).

In Oakland, it appears that SSN had substantial success in resolving neighborhood projects. The approach was not without controversy, however. Although the city's contract with SSN was overseen by the police department, SSN was often viewed as a competitor of the Oakland Police Department's Beat Health Unit, which also relies on civil remedies for addressing location-specific drug and disorder problems. SSN was criticized for its "adversarial relationship with the city in 1995, due to its application of the SSN approach to city-owned property

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(California Highway Patrol, 1995). SSN was also attacked by some community activists, particularly those from an African-American group who accused SSN of evicting African-American residents from their homes. In 1995, a SSN community organizer was arrested and convicted of buying drugs. A city-ordered audit cleared the organization of any wrong-doing in that case. These controversies and a cooling of local political support for SSN resulted in the ending of city funding for SSN and the organization stopped providing direct services in Oakland.

Throughout the years of direct services in Oakland, SSN received substantial local and national recognition. In 1993, SSN was one of ten finalists selected for the prestigious Innovations in American Government honor awarded by Harvard's Kennedy School of Government in partnership with the Council for Excellence in Government. Positive media coverage appeared in local (e.g., the Oakland *Tribune*, San Francisco *Chronicle*, and San Francisco *Examiner*, as well as radio and TV), state (SSN was featured in a Department of Justice video covering what citizens can do to create drug-free zones), and national markets (e.g., a Peter Jennings' special). As successes mounted and news spread, SSN began to get requests from cities outside of Oakland on SSN and how it could be implemented in their jurisdiction.

1990 to 1999: Replicating SSN in Other Jurisdictions.

In 1990, in addition to directly organizing and training small groups of citizens, SSN! developed a training of trainers (TOT) program designed to train a small cadre of trainers in a sponsoring organization to prepare *them* to train local groups in the Safe Streets Now! approach -- the organization's signature strategy of the use of small claims court, embedded now with neighborhood empowerment and revitalization tactics. For several years, the TOT was used only in Oakland. In 1993, SSN was replicated in Concord, California, using the TOT model.

To replicate SSN locally, a local agency or organization hires SSN to conduct a two-to-three day training of trainers workshop; along with the workshop, SSN typically agrees to help the local organization prepare for the program implementation by educating key officials such as the small claims court judges, provides a citizen's guide for dealing with drug problems, and provides storyboards and training materials to enable the new trainers to train neighborhood groups. The curriculum of the TOT focuses mainly on describing the basic seven steps of the SSN approach as presented earlier, along with the tools and knowledge needed to train others to apply them. As an example, the two days of TOT provided to police officers, the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator, code enforcement officers, Neighborhood Services staff, and an assistant city attorney in Huntington Beach, California, covered the following topics:

1. Strategies citizens can use to rid their neighborhoods of drugs.

2. The history of SSN.

3. Specific problems faced by the Huntington Beach officers and city officials, how they have dealt with them, and how SSN might be applied to them.

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4. The "Retail Business of Drugs," including the "crack in the box" model, "walk and drop" sales, and "drug delivery services," and how SSN applies in each type.

5. The SSN approach, starting with how nuisances are defined in California state law, and moving through forming a neighborhood team, organizing and running the first meeting, teaching residents how to document the problem using activity logs, writing the demand letter, negotiating with the property owner, preparing for court, going to court, and handling appeals and collection. This material occupied the bulk of the two days of training, and included discussions of citizen involvement in problem solving, different models of neighborhood organizing, city concerns about SSN strategies led by city employees, differences between SSN and the "professional" problem-solving model, obstacles to citizen involvement, and neighborhood development and revitalization.

Between 1993 and March of 1999, Molly Wetzel and SSN central staff trained 35 cities in 5 states on the Safe Streets Now! process of using small claims court to resolve nuisance problems at a specific property. A number of cities in the San Francisco bay area requested the training, and many in southern California did likewise. Twenty-eight of the "SSN expansion" cities are in California, two were in Massachusetts, and there is or was one each in Wisconsin, New Mexico, Florida, Louisiana, and Washington. The national evaluation of SSN began with a survey of these 35 cities, to gather information on the sponsoring organization and jurisdiction (type of sponsor; size, type, ethnic makeup, and severity of problems within the jurisdiction), the background of the local SSN program (who initiated bringing SSN to the city, how the jurisdiction first learned about SSN, why they thought it would be useful, etc.), the SSN Training of Trainers (date, cost, attendees, ratings of training components), the local SSN program (how many teams have been trained, on what topics and by whom, who initiates the projects, which agencies or individuals work with the teams, type and locations of problems, outcomes, and post-TOT assistance), and issues, obstacles, and lessons learned. The results of this survey -- and a summary of the current status of SSN programs in local jurisdictions -- are presented in the next chapter.

1999-2000: A Time of Reflection and Regrouping

Beginning in about 1998, the number of TOT workshops declined for complex and interrelated reasons. Negative publicity stemming from the activities in Oakland several years earlier led SSN Board of Directors members to leave. Debt was incurred as the result of Oakland's abrupt withdrawal of funding support and SSN became essentially a one-person organization; the director successfully retired the debt after several years. At the same time, the director noted that several of the new SSN programs were encountering substantial political problems in their jurisdictions, and several small claims court judges were rejecting the notion of using small claims court in the SSN manner. These cities requested additional assistance from SSN headquarters at the same time the founder and executive director's family responsibilities grew. Significant and needed activities such as outreach, fund raising, and program development were put on hold.

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Believing strongly that SSN was a workable strategy for community-based problem-solving and neighborhood empowerment, the SSN director felt an independent evaluation was needed if the program was to continue to expand nationally and become institutionalized in local communities. In 1998, the national evaluation began. In early 2000, the director took a sabbatical for six months and has recently taken steps to rejuvenate the Board of Directors, recruited a program development/grant writer, and has begun to develop a new long-range strategic plan for Safe Streets Now!, taking into account the evaluation's findings.

Chapter 2: The National Survey of
Safe Streets Now! Programs

To begin the survey, information was collected from the headquarters office of SSN, then each of the 35 cities was contacted by telephone to verify sponsor information, collect preliminary information on current SSN activity, identify an appropriate SSN contact for this study, and inform the contact of the purpose of the national evaluation and survey. In six of the 35 sites, no legacy of SSN could be found -- the local program was either no longer active or had never been implemented, and those with knowledge of the history of the program could not be located.

In March 1999, surveys and cover letters explaining the purpose of the survey were mailed to the twenty-nine SSN! sponsors identified through the initial telephone contacts. The survey was mailed a second time, accompanied by a letter restating the purpose of the survey and the value of participation by all local SSN! programs, to all non-respondents in April 1999. After the second mailing and reminder telephone calls to the individuals identified during the preliminary call, nineteen surveys had been returned. Of the ten sites that did not respond, six were currently inactive or were never implemented. Thus, prior to analyzing the survey results, we knew that a third of the sites (12 of 35) which had received the training of trainers workshop had either never implemented the program or had operated it only for a brief period of time.

Of the nineteen cities that did respond, sixteen are in California, one in Massachusetts, one in New Mexico, and one in Wisconsin. Information on their sponsors, jurisdiction served, and local SSN program follows.

SSN Sponsors and the Jurisdictions They Serve

Sponsorship of local SSN programs is unevenly divided between law enforcement agencies and other agencies (see Table 1 at the close of this chapter). Over half (11 out of 19) of the local programs are sponsored by a police or sheriff's department and are housed within the COPS Unit, Crime Prevention, Community Policing, or a POP Team. Of the seven programs sponsored by the city, three are housed within Neighborhood Services, one is in the Human Services Department, one is in the Recreation Department, and one is in the Housing Department. Just one of the local programs responding to the survey is sponsored by a non-profit organization, which is the city-funded SSN program in San Diego. All nineteen respondents identified their entire city as the jurisdiction served by their agencies.

Three of the nineteen sponsors, as of the date of the return of the survey, had not implemented a SSN program. These include a police department in Massachusetts, a sheriff's department in California, and a city agency in New Mexico.

The cities served by SSN programs tend to be small to mid-size, with twelve cities ranging in population between 50,000 and 150,000 (see Table 2). Three programs, however, are in large

cities of over 500,000 people, with San Diego (1.25 million) being the largest. The cities reflect California's rich ethnic diversity, with several reporting majority populations of Hispanics and Asians.

Survey respondents were asked to judge, on a four-point scale, the seriousness of various crime and nuisance problems within their jurisdictions (see Table 3). On average, blighted properties topped the list with a mean of 3.11, followed by property crimes at 3.00, and drug use at 2.97. Open-air drug dealing came in last with a mean of 2.00.

Why SSN?

In most cities, one specific agency or resident was responsible for initiating a SSN training of trainers (TOT) session. In a few locations, however, two or more agencies and/or residents worked together to promote the establishment of a local program. Those most commonly involved in initiating a SSN TOT were law enforcement agencies (in seven cities) and city departments (also in seven cities). While nearly every law enforcement agency reported first hearing about SSN at a conference (typically the problem-oriented policing (POP) conference held late each year in San Diego, at which SSN usually makes a presentation), city departments heard about SSN almost equally from conferences, the media, and by word-of-mouth. "Other" groups or individuals were listed as initiators in four cities, and residents in three. The mayor and, separately, the city council, each initiated a TOT in two cities.

Respondents were asked to explain why their jurisdictions sought the SSN training of trainers. The two most common responses (6 out of 19) were: (1) that other solutions or responses employed by the city were not adequately resolving nuisance problems related to a specific property and (2) that the sponsoring organization sought to empower city residents to solve their own neighborhood problems through SSN. In four cities, the sponsors envisioned SSN not as a program with dedicated staff but as another "tool for the toolbox" -- one strategy among many used for nuisance problems. Less frequent responses, described by either one or two cities, were: the belief that SSN was an appropriate tool for solving the city's problems, the sponsor was looking for a more effective or quicker approach, the program fit into the city's philosophy, residents were already using the concept, and the sponsor hoped to increase the quality of life in city neighborhoods.

The six agencies that sought SSN training because other approaches were not producing adequate results and five of the six agencies that wanted to empower city residents all developed SSN programs following the TOT and remain active. One Massachusetts-based sponsor motivated by the objective of empowering city residents discovered that the civil laws supporting a small claims court action for nuisance in California do not exist in Massachusetts, and thus does not use SSN. In three cities, a mayor, a city council, and a city department initiated the training of trainers without integrating the residents or the police department into the process. Of these cities, one never implemented the program, one is inactive but distributes written information to residents upon request, and one reports itself as active, but has provided only one neighborhood

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● group with SSN training.

The Training of Trainers

      The central office of SSN (referred to in this report as SSN Headquarters) conducted TOT workshops in five cities between 1990 and 1994; the majority of the new SSN programs were started by TOT workshops between 1995 through 1998. The average cost of bringing SSN to a city, which was to include assistance in preparing key agencies to implement SSN, conducting the TOT workshop, SSN training materials and neighborhood guides, and ongoing technical assistance and legal support, was $7,000.

      The attendees of the TOT workshops were, in order, police officers, city agency staff from community and housing departments, code enforcement officials, the community-at-large, business representatives, and representatives from city attorneys' and mayors' offices. Law enforcement officers were present at every training of trainers workshop except one. Interestingly, the one city with no law enforcement present at the training is the most active city-sponsored program. Housed within a neighborhood services department, city staff train residents in three languages and rely on "alumni" to assist newly-formed teams with similar problems. Both activities are rare, if not unique, among local programs.

      City staff from the areas of community development or neighborhood services were present in twelve of the nineteen workshops, code enforcement staff were present in nine, housing officials in three and a public works representative attended one workshop. Representatives from the city attorney's office and the Mayor's office were each present at four training workshops.

      Community residents were present in fewer than half of the workshops (eight), and individuals from businesses and other private sector enterprises were present at seven. Of the eight programs where residents attended the training, five are city or non-profit sponsored programs, and three are law enforcement sponsored programs. No differences were observed in the level of resident participation (willingness to use the SSN process, additional revitalization efforts, etc.) in the program among those cities where residents did attend the training, and those where they did not.

      Respondents rated the quality of the training of trainers in five areas. Based on a scale of 1 (excellent) to 5 (poor), the averages for each area are:

Clarity of how the SSN program works:	1.63
The trainer(s)	1.79
Training materials (presentation boards, manuals, etc.)	2.05
Provided the knowledge and tools to implement SSN in your area	2.18
Detail on how the SSN program works	2.47

Thus, the TOT ratings were generally satisfactory, ranging from very good to good. Twelve out

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of eighteen respondents replied positively to the question "Were there any gaps in the training, any topics or techniques missing, that you now feel would be helpful?" Three of the twelve who responded positively are located outside of California and needed information on how to apply SSN, which is based largely on California law and procedure, to their own states. Other sponsors described a need for more information on implementing the program. Additional information was desired on how to deal with different types of nuisances and properties, how to establish, operate and customize SSN to suit the needs of the city, on the court process and handling slap/counter suits, and how to locate and secure funding for a local program.

When asked if the SSN program could have been implemented locally without formal SSN training, the majority of sponsors (ten of sixteen) replied "yes." Half, however, explained that implementation would have been more difficult or less effective without the training. One of these respondents pointed out that although they probably could implement the program without training, it "would have taken longer...so why reinvent the wheel." Two respondents explained that similar training was available from other sources, and one respondent felt his team could do their own research and provide residents direction as needed. Of those who said they could not have implemented SSN without the training of trainers, three specifically stated that implementation would be too difficult without proper instruction.

Activities of Local SSN Programs after the Training of Trainers

The majority of the cities (sixteen of nineteen) participating in the SSN training of trainers implemented local programs after their training, as previously described. In this section, we present information on the size of the local programs (i.e., the number of problems addressed, number of neighborhood teams trained, etc.), the problem-solving targets and activities of the neighborhood teams, individuals involved in training and working with residents, and the outcomes of the SSN strategies.

Neighborhood projects: Number, initiation of projects, training of residents. Thirteen of the 19 program respondents reported on the number of neighborhood teams trained since the TOT (see table below). The number of teams trained (which represents the minimum number of problem locations addressed) had a wide range, of 1 to 575 (mean = 63.3, median = 10.0). Removing the most active program, which is San Diego, with 575 teams trained between the TOT in 1994 and the survey in 1999, provides a more representative view: mean = 20.7 teams trained, median = 10.0. Since receiving the training of trainers, the 13 responding cities estimate they have trained a total of 9,655 people, with perhaps 7,000 in San Diego alone; the average number of residents per neighborhood team is about a 11.8, with a range of 1(this situation is very rare) to 45.

Number of Neighborhood Teams Trained since TOT	
Number of teams	Frequency
<1	1
4	1
5	1
6	2
9	1
10	2
15	1
27	1
46	1
55	1
60	1
575	1

Focusing on 1998 and 1999 activity provides a clearer picture of recent program activity. As a group, the 13 responding cities trained 298 teams in 1998 (140 teams in San Diego alone), and 93 teams in the first four months of 1999 (45 teams in San Diego). With San Diego included, these figures mean that each local program trains an average of two neighborhood teams per month. Excluding San Diego, each local program trains just one neighborhood team per month, on average. As described in the next chapter, the non-profit San Diego SSN works closely with about 15 neighborhood teams each month.

New SSN projects are initiated by residents and/or city agency officials as follows (more than one answer per program respondent was recorded): projects are initiated by residents in 11 of the 19 cities completing the survey, and by police officers in eight cities. The mayor or city council initiates new projects in two cities, as does code enforcement. Once a neighborhood team is formed, some combination of those who attended the TOT provide training and support to the residents, as follows.

In the majority of the cities (n=12), neighborhood teams are trained by either sworn police officers, civilian staff (e.g., community organizers) from the police department, city agency staff, or non-profit organization staff (e.g., community organizers) (see Table 4). In four cities, representatives from two of these groups work together to present the SSN process to neighborhood teams. Overall, responsibility for training is split almost equally among sworn officers (in six cities), civilian staff (in six cities), and city agency staff (in seven cities). Non-profit staff lead training sessions in only two cities.

Neighborhood Team strategies. It appears that the SSN approach taught at the TOT and outlined in the first chapter is followed, for the most part, in the cities which have adopted SSN. There are some differences between local programs, as described below.

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Strategies taught to neighborhood residents. There are few differences among the SSN programs in their approach to training neighborhood teams, as shown in Table 5, which presents the strategies taught to residents broken down by the type of sponsor and the agency affiliation of the primary trainers. Three activities were taught by all sponsors: forming a SSN team, doing surveillance and documenting the problem, and calling for police service. Other areas typically covered by local sponsors (ten or more covered these areas) include working with the police to solve the problem, filing a small claims court action, writing a demand letter to the owner, working with the owner to resolve the problem, forming a block watch, and preparing for a small claims court hearing. All these activities are covered in the training of trainers, except for the formation of block watches, which is not generally considered a SSN strategy. Other areas included in the neighborhood team training by four to six SSN sponsors were fighting an appeal of a court judgement, requesting health and safety inspections, and collecting a small claims court judgement. Only three sponsors, all law enforcement agencies, indicated that they train teams how to "confront the problem people." This strategy is not an activity recommended by the national SSN staff, and no city- or non-profit-sponsored program trains residents to confront the problem people.

Some differences are apparent between the activities taught by the city-sponsored and law enforcement-sponsored programs. The city sponsors tend to provide slightly more training on the basic steps of the SSN process. While all sponsors provide training on forming a SSN team, more city sponsors train teams how to (1) research property ownership, and (2) write a demand letter. Whether the sponsors complete these tasks themselves or simply do not train on these topics is unclear. The SSN model, however, assigns these tasks to the neighborhood team. The model assumes that team members, to be empowered and to build community, each need to take responsibility for resolving the conflict in their neighborhood.

There are few other variations in the components of training promoted by different types of trainers. The greatest variation is again on the subject of writing a demand letter to the property owner. Half (3 out of 6) of the programs where civilian staff from the police department are involved in the training report that they teach teams to write a demand letter; it is likely that these civilian staff are accustomed to writing the demand letter themselves. Five out of the six programs where sworn officers are involved in the training, and all programs where city staff are involved in the training, teach teams to write a demand letter.

In the interest of protecting the identity and safety of neighborhood team members, staff from the sponsoring agency serve as the contact points between the neighborhood team and property owner in the majority of the programs (14 of 16 reporting). In the other two programs, someone from the neighborhood team serves as the main contact point.

Types of problems addressed by neighborhood teams. As shown in Table 6, neighborhood teams tend to address, in order, noise and/or nuisance problems, drug problems, blight, neighborhood disputes, and other problems. City sponsored programs use SSN to address a greater percentage of neighborhood drug problems than do law enforcement agencies. Two law

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enforcement agencies have never used SSN on drug problems (these two have handled only a small number of problems which have involved noise, blight, and other non-drug issues), and four report that just up to 50% of the problems addressed with SSN are drug problems. Drugs are involved in over 75% of problems in the other three law enforcement programs. In comparison, among the five city sponsored programs, five say drugs are involved in 60 to 85% of the projects, while one says in 25%. As seen in Table 7, however, respondents as a whole are split evenly among those locations where drug problems are addressed in 0 to 50% of the projects (8 cities) and in 51 to 100% of the projects (8 cities).

Table 8 indicates that the majority of neighborhood teams deal with problems in single-family homes, both rented and owner-occupied, and multi-family homes. The extent to which each city uses the process in these three types of properties does not vary by sponsor; responses are spread fairly evenly among the categories ranging from 1 to 100%.

The SSN process is used much less frequently, and by fewer programs, on commercial buildings, condominiums and open-air locations. Five sponsors (one law enforcement, one non-profit and three city) report that from 1 to 25% of their SSN projects involve a commercial building. Three city-sponsored programs use SSN on condominiums, though all at different levels. Only one program, sponsored by the city, reports using the SSN process to resolve nuisance problems at an open-air location.

Police and city agency participants in SSN activities. When asked who works together with neighborhood teams using the SSN approach, all respondents indicated that their teams work together with both law enforcement officers and city or county agencies (Table 7). Those least involved with neighborhood teams are private attorneys (in three cities) and legal aid (in one city). The one non-profit sponsored program is the only program in which teams do not work together with city or county attorneys, the housing authority, or the probation or parole department.

The one notable difference among sponsor types is that city or county attorneys work together with the neighborhood teams in more city-sponsored than law enforcement-sponsored programs. City attorneys work with neighborhood teams to enforce code compliance violations and review situations in regard to other possible civil abatement measures. These numbers do not appear to be exclusively related to the filing of small claims court actions by neighborhood teams. As shown in Table 5, small claims court actions were filed by teams of three city-sponsored programs and three law enforcement sponsored programs.

The composition of neighborhood teams (i.e., city staff, police, others) seems to have no little or no impact on which agencies work with neighborhood teams. For example, teams trained by sworn police officers may be just as likely to work with other city departments as are teams trained by city staff.

Outcomes of neighborhood team problem-solving strategies. According to the majority of the survey responses, most of the problems addressed with the SSN approach are successfully

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resolved. Six local sponsors reported that all of their local projects had been successfully resolved, five reported their success rate at 90% and above, and three sponsors reported that 80% or more of their local projects had been successfully resolved. Only two respondents reported their success rate was below 80%. One reported that only 25% of their projects (1 out of a total of 4 projects) were successful, but also cited a lack of neighborhood participation and a need for additional information on resolving blight problems. Another sponsor reported a 70% success rate, but did not provide further information on why some projects were unsuccessful. These success rates are based on between 1 to 84 SSN projects in any specific city. The only exception is San Diego, where 625 SSN projects have been completed with a self-reported 98% success rate.

Most problems are successfully resolved without resorting to small claims court. In seven out of fourteen reporting cities, no neighborhood teams have ever filed a small claims court suit; every successful project was resolved without going to court. In the other seven cities, between 1 and 20 percent of all projects have involved the filing of a small claims court action. Of all cases reported as filed, eleven cities reported that forty cases were appealed (35 in San Diego) and all cases were decided in favor of the neighborhood team.

The survey, case studies, and interviews with the SSN director turned up only two cases filed in small claims court which were not decided in favor of the residents. In the seven cities reporting in the survey that neighborhood teams have filed and won small claims court actions, financial compensation awarded by the court has ranged from $30,000 to $500,000 for the entire team. In five cities, teams have collected between $8,000 and $350,000; in two cities cases, no award has yet been collected.

The SSN approach aims to empower residents, to teach them skills and lend them confidence to take on other neighborhood problems as the needs arise. Ten out of sixteen sponsors responding to this question note that one or more neighborhood teams have pursued other neighborhood revitalization efforts after completing a SSN project, and five of 13 reported that their neighborhood teams had worked on more than one problem property. Three sponsors also reported that they had trained new SSN trainers. Presented with a list of possible revitalization activities, all ten sponsors reporting additional neighborhood activity indicated that teams had formed a neighborhood block watch. Seven sponsors also indicated that teams had worked on other crime prevention or problem solving projects, six on neighborhood clean-up projects, four on neighborhood beautification, three on lobbying for city services, two on alternatives for youth, and two on collective efforts to change policies/laws. As shown in Table 9 below, city agency and non-profit sponsors are more likely to report that their neighborhood teams moved on to other neighborhood revitalization efforts than law enforcement-sponsored programs.

Additional Training and Technical Assistance Needed by SSN Sponsors

The majority of respondents (13 out of 19) indicated that they did not need any additional

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training or require any technical assistance from the SSN Headquarters. Of the remaining six programs (one city agency and five police departments), three indicated they need additional information on legal proceedings and issues: court proceedings and outcomes, handling counter/slap suits, and landlord-tenant laws. Two needed additional information on resolving specific nuisance situations (blight and owner-occupied homes), and one needed to train additional facilitators.

Ten out of sixteen received assistance from the SSN central staff after the TOT at no additional cost. Two programs have paid additional fees for special assistance, such as receiving the storyboards in Spanish and Cambodian. Assistance was provided in the form of site visits (in six cities), technical advice/guidance by phone (in 13 cities), and legal assistance (in 5 cities). Among those who had been visited by SSN central staff, four had been visited as many as ten times. Four out of the five sponsors who received legal assistance also report being assisted by SSN central staff at least ten times. Technical advice or guidance by phone was provided between 1 and 20 times to each city. Asked to rate their satisfaction with this assistance on a scale from 1 (very satisfied) to 5 (very dissatisfied), the average reply was 1.50, midway between very satisfied and somewhat satisfied.

Problems Encountered

Respondents were given a list of potential problems or obstacles they may have encountered in using the SSN approach; their responses are presented below:

Problem or obstacle	No. of programs (out of 19) reporting they have encountered this problem
Lack of neighborhood participation	9
Concerns about the city's liability	8
Securing funds for the training of trainers	6
Securing funds to support staff to work with residents	5
City or county attorney resistance	5
Retaliation against neighborhood teams	4
Concerns about civil rights violations	3
Concerns about sponsors or trainers "taking sides"	2
Law enforcement resistance	2
Turf issues (e.g., competing strategies)	2
Small claims court resistance	1
Other	1

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Neighborhood residents bring the problem properties to the attention of the sponsoring agency and request help in resolving the problem. The "lack of neighborhood participation" problem appears to be primarily one rooted in fears of retaliation due to the residents' involvement in problem-solving becoming publicly known. Several programs reported that neighborhood residents were reluctant to go forward with a small claims action, at the point in problem-solving where their identity would become known; this was especially true in neighborhoods with the biggest problems/needs.

Four sponsors reported that neighborhood teams experienced retaliation due to their participation, but the survey does not provide information about the form of retaliation. In our case study sites, a few neighborhood team members reported retaliation in the form of harassment (such as name calling), acts perceived as threatening (e.g., walking a pitbull slowly around an apartment complex), and threats of bodily harm. In one situation, an altercation between problem tenants and a neighborhood team member after several tenants had been arrested on drug charges resulted in the team member firing a shot into the ground. We are not aware of any physical harm or vandalism resulting directly from involvement in SSN activities. In many instances, the problem individuals and their surrounding neighbors had a variety of negative interactions prior to SSN getting involved, and problems between them cannot be attributed directly or solely to SSN participation.

In some sites, "turf" issues and resistance from various agencies appear to be problems primarily raised at the beginning of implementing a SSN program locally, and once the program is established and demonstrated, resistance may be substantially reduced. In others, these concerns persist. Some of them have to do with turf -- as in "these cases are rightfully a police problem only" or "you're taking my cases or funding away from me." Others resist what they see as SSN's hard line or confrontational approach in the form of the demand letter.

Legal Issues and Concerns

A number of the respondents encountered obstacles or problems having to do with legal concerns or resistance from city/county attorneys. Of the 17 sponsors answering the question, eight of them reported complaints, controversies, or threats of lawsuits received about the SSN approach. Of these eight, six reported complaints by individual property owners, three reported complaints by apartment or property owner associations, one reported a complaint by a tenant, and one reported a complaint by the city attorney (several programs reported more than one complaint). The last "complaint" was really a concern about city employees running the program, as elaborated on below.

Throughout most of its existence, no complaints or law suits from civil rights organizations, such as the ACLU or similar local entities, were received. Very recently, an ACLU representative visited the San Diego SSN to inquire about a SSN project the property owner felt was racially motivated. The facts of the situation (see San Diego's case study in Chapter 4) indicated otherwise, the problem was resolved when tenants moved out, and no further word was

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heard from the ACLU.

Four sites reported counter suits filed against neighborhood teams due to their small claims actions. The counter suits usually allege that the property owner has been slandered, defamed or otherwise suffered emotional distress from being sued by neighborhood team members, and are typically generally heard at the same time as the SSN neighborhood team suits. In one counter suit, *Coltrain v. Shewalter*, the neighborhood team members filed a special motion, saying the owner's suit was a SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation; California and 14 other states have anit-SLAPP statues) suit. The owner withdrew the complaint, and the neighborhood team members were awarded attorney fees. The owner appealed this and lost in appellate court, with a ruling upholding the award of attorney fees to team members. All other counter suits were dismissed, and no lawsuits involving civil rights violations were reported by survey respondents.

Respondents were told legal research would be conducted as part of the evaluation and asked if they had any legal questions requiring additional research. Six respondents answered the open-ended question:

Two requested additional research on city liability.
One asked how to have a conservator appointed for a defendant deemed incompetent to stand trial.
One asked for assistance on filing appeals and answering counter suits.
One, from outside California, asked for specifics on state statutes and city ordinances that could be used for nuisance problems.
One, from outside California, looked for similar help, saying that their state statutes hindered the SSN process since financial penalties could not be imposed without out-of-pocket loss by the plaintiffs.

Our preliminary calls to sponsors and attendance at two training of trainers sessions (primarily Huntington Beach) support the survey finding that the primary legal concern voiced by potential SSN sponsors is liability -- specifically, a city's potential liability in housing the program with city employees (police officers or city agency staff) providing the training and support to neighborhood residents. This is usually put in terms such as whether city employees are "practicing law without a license" or whether police officers should "take sides" in a dispute or take an active role in a civil matter. Other concerns about liability are more vague, focused on concerns (typically voiced by city attorneys) that the city may be opening itself to being sued by implementing the SSN program.

These concerns about potential liability have prevented several cities from starting a SSN chapter. For example, during the training of trainers in Huntington Beach, police department and city attorney representatives expressed these concerns, and to date, the police department does not formally sponsor SSN actions (the department does provide information to citizens about the SSN process upon request, but does not work with them on the strategy). Yet other cities with

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police department and city agency sponsored SSN programs appear to have no such concerns.

We are aware, however, of one city where a lawsuit was filed against the team members and the city itself (i.e., against the SSN project coordinator and city). The lawsuit was also viewed as a SLAPP suit designed to limit citizen and city participation in problem-solving, and was dismissed in favor of SSN and the property owner was ordered to pay the legal bills of the SSN sponsor and neighborhood team members.

In our site visits, two small claims court commissioners or judges reported confusion at the start of the SSN program, about whether nuisance cases such as those brought by residents after SSN training were appropriate for small claims court. One small claims court has developed a special calendar for SSN cases, scheduling them at the end of the day when several hours are available for the hearing. Another judge suggested that a packet be put together for small claims court judges containing one or more sample opinions and a checklist outlining what is necessary to prove a nuisance.

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Table 1
Type of Sponsor Agency

	Cases	Inactive Program	Active Program
Sponsor Type			
Law enforcement agency	11	2	9
City agency	7	1	6
Non-profit organization	1	0	1
Total	19	3	16

Table 2
Population and Ethnicity of the Sponsor's Jurisdiction

	N	Count	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Ethnic Breakdown	14				
White			12%	83%	45.7%
African-American			0%	27%	10.9%
Hispanic			11%	70%	29.5%
Asian Pacific			1%	54%	12.9%
Other			0%	5%	1.2%
Population	19				
0 – 49,999		0			
50,000 – 99,999		6	59,000	91,000	73,167
100,000 – 149,999		6	103,439	145,000	122,740
150,000 – 499,999		3	250,000	446,227	348,742
500,000 – 999,999		3	600,800	900,000	716,933
1,000,000 and over		1	2,800,000	2,800,000	2,800,000

Table 3
Local Problems

Problem	Mean
Blighted properties	3.11
Property crimes (e.g. burglary, vandalism)	3.00
Drug use	2.97
Gang Activity	2.90
Violent crime (e.g. assault, shootings)	2.74
Residential drug dealing	2.74
Fear of crime	2.71
Social disorder	2.66
Open-air drug dealing	2.00

Table 4
Affiliation of Trainers, by Type of Sponsor Agency

Sponsor Type (n=15)	Sworn officers	Civilian staff from PD	City agency staff	Non-profit staff
Police Department	4	6	2	0
City agency	2	0	5	1
Non-profit organization	0	0	0	1
Total	6	6	7	2

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Table 5
Activities Taught to Neighborhood Teams, by Type of Sponsor and Affiliation of Trainer

Trainers teach teams to..?	Yes (n=16)	SSN Sponsor (%)			Neighborhood Trainers (%)			
		Non-profit (n=1)	City (n=6)	Law (n=9)	Non-profit (n=2)	City agency (n=7)	Sworn officers (n=6)	Civilian staff (n=6)
Form a SSN team	16	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Do surveillance and document the problem	16	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Call for police service	16	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Work with police to solve problem	14	100	83	89	100	85	100	83
File a small claims court hearing	14	100	67	100	100	71	83	100
Write a demand letter to the property owner	12	100	100	56	100	100	83	50
Work with owner to solve problem	12	100	67	78	100	85	67	83
Form a block watch	11	100	50	78	50	57	67	83
Research property ownership	10	100	83	44	100	85	50	50
Prepare for a small claims court claim	10	100	50	67	100	43	50	67
Fight an appeal of a court judgement	6	100	33	33	100	29	33	33
Fight an appeal of a court judgement	6	100	33	33	100	29	33	33
Collect a small claims court judgement	4	100	33	11	100	29	17	0
Request health and safety inspections	4	0	33	22	50	29	17	17
Confront the problem people	3	0	0	33	0	100	33	17

Table 6
Types of Problems Addressed

What percentage of problems addressed are... (n=16)	0%	1 to 25%	26 to 50%	51 to 75%	76 to 100%	Totals (1-100%)
Noise/nuisance problems	1	7	3	1	4	15
Drug problems	2	2	4	5	3	14
Blight problems	4	8	1	3	0	12
Neighborhood disputes	7	6	2	1	0	9
Other problems	12	1	1	0	2	4

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Table 7
Agency Partners of Neighborhood Teams, by Type of Sponsor and Affiliation of Trainers

Who works with the neighborhood teams using the SSN approach?	Yes (n=16)	SSN Sponsor			Neighborhood Trainers			
		Non-profit (n=1)	City (n=6)	Law (n=9)	Non-profit (n=2)	City agency (n=7)	Sworn officers (n=6)	Civilian staff (n=6)
Law enforcement officers	15	100	100	89	100	100	83	100
City or county agencies	15	100	100	89	100	86	83	83
Housing authority	7	0	33	56	0	43	33	50
Probation/parole dept.	6	0	33	44	0	14	33	33
City or county attorneys	5	0	67	11	0	43	33	17
Private attorneys	3	100	17	11	50	14	0	17
Legal aide	1	0	17	0	50	14	0	0

Table 8
Location of Problems

What percentage of problems are in... (n=16)	0%	1 to 25%	26 to 50%	51 to 75%	76 to 100%	Totals (1-100%)
Single-family homes, owner occupied	3	10	1	0	2	13
Single family homes, rented	2	3	5	2	3	13
Multi-family homes	5	5	4	2	0	11
Commercial buildings	11	5	0	0	0	5
Condominiums	13	1	1	1	0	3
Open-air locations	15	1	0	0	0	1

Table 9
Revitalization Efforts of Neighborhood Teams

Have teams gone on to other neighborhood revitalization efforts?	Yes	No
Sponsor Type	10	6
Law enforcement agency	4	5
City agency	5	1
Non-profit organization	1	0
Affiliation of Trainers	12	11
Sworn officers	2	4
Civilian staff in police department	3	3
City agency staff	5	2
Non-profit staff	2	0

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Chapter 3
Case Studies of Four Local SSN Programs

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Overview of the Milwaukee SSN Program

SSN Milwaukee began serving the public in June of 1998, and ceased operations in December of 1999 due to citywide budget cuts, although it is hoped that funding will be re-instated in 2001. Ms. Karin Long from the Department of Neighborhood Services, City of Milwaukee, secured the program's original funding and simultaneously coordinated both SSN and Milwaukee's Landlord Training Program. During the lifetime of the program, approximately 53 neighborhood teams were trained and formed, only one of which sued a property owner in small claims court. The nuisances addressed by the teams were evenly distributed among drug use and sales, noise, blight, and neighborhood disputes. The majority of these nuisances (75%) occurred in multi-family homes, followed by single-family homes, tenant-occupied (15%), commercial buildings (10%) and single-family homes, owner-occupied (5%). The program, having enjoyed significant support from within the city government and the community, has collaborated with a variety of city agencies and community groups.

City and Program Context

Milwaukee. Metropolitan Milwaukee, with a population of nearly 1.5 million, is woven together by over two dozen distinct communities. Some of these communities, with their own shopping districts and active community associations, resemble small, organized towns. Other communities are more similar to an unfinished puzzle, made up of residents and business owners who are disconnected from their neighbors and their city governments.

The city of Milwaukee's population of over 600,000 makes it the 17th largest in the nation. An average commute time of only 22 minutes, among the lowest in the nation, encourages residents to use and enjoy resources throughout the city. Milwaukee's economic and social well being depend largely on the individual health of its 40-some diverse neighborhoods, each of which is known for its own style, concerns and loyalties. An estimated 56% of the city's residents are Caucasian (including a large German and Polish constituency), 35% African-American, 8% Hispanic, 2% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% American Indian.

Milwaukee has been a center of commerce and industry in the Great Lakes Region for years. In the 1990s, employment rates reached historic levels with the creation of new jobs, particularly in the service, finance, insurance and real estate sectors. Approximately 22% of the workforce are employed in manufacturing, and more than 25% are skilled white-collar workers in professional specialty and managerial occupations. In recent years, the downtown area has resurfaced as a center of economic and social activity. This revitalization was a result of the city's

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efforts to attract new businesses and create additional housing by converting unused breweries and other vacant buildings into townhouses, condominiums and apartments. The city has simultaneously implemented strategies to improve the quality of life in a bordering neighborhood that was in 1994 labeled as having the third fastest growing rate of poverty in the United States.

In 1989, a new Chief of Police, hired from outside the community, began to integrate the philosophy of community oriented policing into the Milwaukee Police Department. In 1996, the next Chief of Police (now the current Chief and the first African-American to hold this position) initiated a policing strategy based upon the "broken windows" theory, whereby officers regularly enforce ordinances against acts of disorder. The Milwaukee Police Department considers gang activity, drug use, and a general fear of crime to be the more serious problems in the city, followed to a lesser degree by residential drug dealing, violent crime, drug use and social disorder (loitering youth, disruptive neighbors). By comparison, open-air drug dealing and property crime are minor problems. The city website bills Milwaukee as "one of the nation's safest big cities," noting that the 1996 crime rate was "5.5 % below the composite rate for metropolitan areas in the United States".[1] Part I crimes have consistently declined since then, falling from 49,623 in 1998 to 46,058 in 1999.

SSN Milwaukee: Sponsor, philosophy, and competing programs. SSN Milwaukee was, during its eighteen-month existence, housed within the Department of Neighborhood Services (DNS), City of Milwaukee, and coordinated by Ms. Karin Long. Ms. Long served as both the Landlord Training Program Coordinator and the SSN Coordinator.

The department's strategy to improve the quality of life in individual neighborhoods by dealing directly with property owners involves educating rental or income property owners, organizing them into supportive networks, and holding them accountable for the condition of their properties and the activities that occur on their properties. Apart from SSN, these objectives are pursued by the city through two channels: the Landlord Training Program, and the City Attorney's Nuisance Receivership Program. The Nuisance Receivership Program, though backlogged for a number of years, is hailed by both the Mayor's Office and various aldermen as an effective strategy for restoring neighborhood stability and peace. The process, which begins with an alderman's request to the City Attorney's Office, lasts from six to eight months and carries a costly price tag of approximately $150,000 per project. The receivership process is most often used to combat chronic nuisances and/or drug dealing.

The Landlord Training Program (LLTP) was developed in 1993 through a Federal Drug Abatement Grant, and has since received matching funds from the city. The Landlord Training Program was patterned after the similar program developed by John Campbell in Portland, Oregon; Mr. Campbell trained the SSN Director and other staff to use the LLTP. In the early 1990s, community based organizations (CBOs), trying in good faith to provide services to

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[1]City of Milwaukee, Quality of Life: Safety. http://www.milwukeebix.com/ life_safety.html.

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neighborhoods when city resources were stretched, had begun to treat landlords as the "bad guys" after their initial efforts to work cooperatively with property owners had failed. In an attempt to offset the negative relationships developing between landlords and their communities, Ms. Long, the new LLTP Coordinator, encouraged the CBOs to co-sponsor landlord training sessions by providing a training location, volunteers to assist with logistics, advertising in their newsletters, and snacks and refreshments. At this same time, property owners were beginning to form Landlord Compacts, groups that meet regularly with police to exchange information, identify problem addresses, and talk about how to solve problems on their own property and neighboring properties. The Compacts have continuously been used to pressure non-complying property owners into improving their properties and screening procedures, and to hold other compact members accountable to commonly held property management and business practices. As a result of these practices, CBOs began to move away from regarding property owners with hostility and suspicion and began to support and collaborate with property owner networks. The compacts, often unable to handle the administrative work involved with their operations, were adopted by CBOs that provided secretarial support.

Not included in the compacts, however, are the "mom and pop" property owners, who generally do not view themselves as business people and often do not know how to access city services they need to improve their property or to solve nuisance problems. To prevent tenants evicted from a compact area into moving in next door to a "mom and pop" area, Ms. Long works with community groups to distribute information on "good property management" and city services in these neighborhoods. She also tries to reach the "mom and pop" owners by promoting the Landlord Training Program at community meetings.

The Commissioner of Neighborhood Services encourages this type of collaborative environment by instructing departmental staff to pursue compliance over force, and to solve problems by building relationships among the city, residents, property owners and CBOs. This philosophy manifests itself in the SSN program through its use of a citywide network of resources, its successful negotiations with property owners, and the nearly non-existent use of small claims court.

The story of Milwaukee's first SSN case demonstrates how SSN and the Landlord Training Program are mutually supportive. The first SSN team was formed by a multi-family property owner who had learned of SSN through the Landlord Training Program, and wanted to use the process on a neighboring property. The owner had first tried to resolve the problem through a Landlord Compact, but had not succeeded and was losing tenants. The SSN Director and the Housing Coordinator at a CBO trained a group of tenants organized by the property owner and the property manager. Upon receiving the demand letter, the neighboring property owner agreed to meet with both the SSN Director and a CBO Housing Coordinator. Together, they discussed each complaint lodged by the team. After fully understanding the nature of the nuisance, the property owner evicted the problem tenants.

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SSN Milwaukee

Structure and funding. While coordinating the Landlord Training Program and working with the CBOs and Landlord Compacts, Ms. Long recognized the need for an organized problem-solving approach that assisted residents who rented property or did not own large multi-unit properties. Having heard of the SSN process from John Campbell of Portland, Oregon, she initiated the process of bringing SSN to Milwaukee. With support from the Commissioner of DNS, Ms. Long proposed a SSN budget that used leftover Drug Abatement Grant funds, and negotiated approval for the program with the State of Wisconsin. Funds were approved for a SSN training of trainers (TOT) workshop in May 1998, and the training was held in June 1998. Present at the training of trainers were representatives from the police department, code enforcement, neighborhood services, and the private sector. Although the elements of the training session were rated by DNS as average or above average, DNS was disappointed that SSN could not provide more state-specific information, as both the training and the training materials were based on California law. Following the training, Ms. Long became Coordinator for both the Landlord Training Program and the SSN program. Because the Mayor's Office promotes the role of the city government as a facilitator, rather than the traditional role of service provider, the SSN philosophy of equipping and empowering residents to solve neighborhood nuisance problems was widely accepted among elected city officials, city offices serving the public, and non-profit neighborhood associations.

The cost of running the SSN program has been approximately $120,000 per year. This figure included salary and benefits for one SSN Coordinator and one SSN Assistant, office space, telephone fees and supplies.

SSN cases: Referral sources, types, and statistics. Fifty-three teams comprised of approximately 1,071 citizens were trained during the lifetime of the program by the Housing Coordinator from a CBO, Ms. Long, or a Property Management Coordinator working at the Department of Neighborhood Services. Problems addressed by the teams included drugs, noise, blight, and neighborhood disputes. The majority of these problems (75%) were located in multi-family homes, followed by single family homes, tenant-occupied (15%), commercial buildings (10%), and single-family homes, owner-occupied (5%).

Referrals were received from numerous city and police sources, such as Weed and Seed Community Partners, aldermen, Crime Prevention Officers, Drug Abatement Liaisons, police officers, CBOs, and Property Management trainers for the City of Milwaukee. Said by many interviewees to be the "last solution" to a neighborhood nuisance problem, cases referred to Ms. Long are often individuals or groups who have used one or more methods previously to solve a nuisance problem but have seen no lasting results.

Over 90 percent of SSN cases were resolved to the satisfaction of the team members, and only one team (out of 53 formed) has filed a suit in small claims court. The case was heard by a Commissioner (as in all small claims cases in Milwaukee) who did not rule in favor of SSN. Those

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close to the case believe that the Commissioner did not approve of citizens instructing the court on the nuisance law and its proper application. The case was appealed, and will soon be heard by a judge.

The SSN process in Milwaukee. The strategies used to train a neighborhood team in Milwaukee depended on the characteristics of the neighborhood. In the area described as having the third fastest growing rate of poverty in the United States, neighborhoods are fragmented, marked by deteriorating homes, abandoned buildings, and vacant, littered lots. According to one Community Development Officer from the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority, residents feel abandoned and even betrayed by the city, are wary of outsiders, and fear retaliation by neighbors, some of whom are involved in gangs and drug sales. Efforts to form a SSN neighborhood team in this area may involve over one year of meeting with residents at a neutral location outside the neighborhood on a regular basis, before they even agree to begin the process.

At the other extreme, some well-established neighborhood associations operate their own outreach and problem-solving programs. The Washington Heights neighborhood bordering suburbia on the west side of town, for example, is served by a Community Care Team within the Housing & Appearance Committee of the Washington Heights Neighborhood Association. The Community Care Team, comprised of residents who have a history of dealing with crises, such as social workers, psychiatrists, and judges, mediates neighborhood disputes and provides emotional support and guidance to residents. Washington Heights has also formed a corporation that purchases homes viewed as a "threat", and then repairs these homes and sells them to owners who agree to occupy them for a minimum of five years. Active, organized neighborhoods such as Washington Heights are known for documenting nuisances and illegal activities and providing police with written activity logs even before hearing about the SSN process.

Somewhere in the middle are neighborhoods with limited experience in collective action (such as the German and Polish neighborhoods in the south end of town) that require varying degrees of organizing, directing and handholding. Regardless of the neighborhood, says Ms. Long, the entire SSN process lasts only a few months when residents are diligent in documenting nuisances and the owner can be persuaded to cooperate with the residents.

The training of neighborhood residents typically involved at least three separate neighborhood meetings. The objectives of the first meeting were to define the problem, ascertain where the residents were in the problem-solving process, explain the SSN process, and explain alternative problem-solving approaches. If residents decided to move ahead with the SSN option, a second meeting was planned specifically to train the neighborhood team on the SSN process. During the third meeting, staff reviewed all activity logs and, if necessary, instructed team members how to more accurately describe the nature and effects of the nuisance. In addition, a collective decision was made regarding the language and tone of the demand letter. Although Ms. Long wrote the letter at a later time, one or more team members were asked to review and approve the letter before delivery.

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The contact on the demand letter was one of the trainers associated with DNS or the CBO Housing Coordinator, if the neighborhood team was located within the area served by his CBO. After an owner responded to a demand letter, the neighborhood team was asked to decide upon a course of action, and arrangements were made to discuss their concerns and demands with the property owner. Safe Streets Now used whatever combination of people it deemed necessary to persuade the property owner to enter into dialogue. Most meetings occurred between the property owner and (1) one or more of the neighbors, together with a DNS, non-profit, or police representative (or any combination of these), (2) Ms. Long and a Crime Prevention Officer, or (3) a Crime Prevention Officer.

Meetings between property owners and SSN were often held at the CBO (a neutral location) serving that neighborhood. The purpose of the meeting was two-fold. First, to openly discuss the nuisance, and second, to develop a plan to abate the nuisance. In keeping with the philosophy of compliance over force, and to avoid the use of small claims court, Ms. Long used a variety of tactics to persuade an unwilling owner to participate in the SSN process. Some of her tactics included playing "good cop - bad cop" during a meeting with the owner, and "planting" information during a community meeting (knowing it will be passed on to the property owner). She also pressured the owner using outside sources. For example, she could work with code enforcement to uncover all violations at the property in question, or contact the company holding a mortgage on the property. Team members could also apply pressure by tracking code violations on the city's website, and bring unmet obligations and unpaid fines to the attention of code enforcement officials and police officers. Searchable by address, the city's website provides the date and type of violation, the fine and/or the conditions of improvement or repair, and the outcome (i.e. did the resident pay the fine or make the improvements).

At face value, these tactics appear to promote force over compliance, rather than supporting the philosophy of compliance over force. They are used, however, not to force a property owner to comply with the wishes of SSN, but to move the owner into a position where he is actively participating in problem solving efforts concerning his property.

The cost of filing a small claims court suit in Wisconsin is $63.00 per person, and residents unable to afford this fee can submit a fee waiver application. Attorneys from a local non-profit organization called Legal Aide were, through communication with Ms. Long, aware of SSN and were prepared to represent low-income residents in court if, and when, a SSN case was appealed. The one team that went to appeals court, however, did not financially qualify for assistance from Legal Aide, and the team's task of identifying an affordable attorney stalled the appeals process.

Ms. Long reports that many neighborhood teams, encouraged by their accomplishments, continue as a group with other neighborhood revitalization and problem-solving efforts. These activities include forming a neighborhood block watch, lobbying for city services, organizing a neighborhood clean-up, organizing other crime prevention or problem-solving projects, and creating alternatives for youth.

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Because SSN is usually the last problem-solving approach residents use, and the nuisance has existed nearly unchallenged for a lengthy period of time, there is an "ownership vacuum" in the neighborhood. The SSN Director believes SSN works because, as they use the approach, residents begin to reassert their ownership of the neighborhood and regain, or establish for the first time, a sense of community. One neighborhood team, located in an upper-middle class neighborhood with no history of collective activity (such as community associations, a block watch, etc.), reported that the process of collaborating with city agencies and their Alderman through SSN gave them a new understanding of their roles as citizens, and a new respect for their city government. One situation, in which SSN has been particularly successful where other problem-solving approaches have failed, is in simultaneously addressing nuisance problems at the multiple properties of one owner.

SSN appears to work in Milwaukee without relying very often on small claims court. The program's success may be partially attributed to the organizational culture of the Department of Neighborhood Services. The Commissioner of Neighborhood Services is known for promoting and rewarding innovative, incremental improvements in departmental systems, and, as was mentioned earlier, for encouraging his employees to pursue compliance over force. The department seeks compliance largely by building relationships among the city, residents, property owners and CBOs. Plugging into this network of people and agencies, says the Commissioner, is a natural first step to solving nuisance problems.

A number of those interviewed also attributed the program's effectiveness to the character and abilities of Ms. Long, who is known among her peers for her facilitation and negotiation skills. Her ability to build working relationships with other people and agencies, as demonstrated by the comprehensive referral system, "no-cost" assistance from the CBO Housing Coordinator, and unique negotiation and persuasion tactics, also appear to have contributed to the program's development and success.

Relationships with other agencies. A conscious attempt has been made to weave the SSN philosophy into other neighborhood-based programs, as well as to educate key individuals on the use of SSN. Twenty-four community organizers involved with the Weed and Seed program have been trained on the SSN process, and walked door to door in an intensive high crime area, inquiring on the needs of the residents. When applicable, they provided residents with SSN information, and contacted Ms. Long with the specifics of possible projects. Several alderman refer cases to SSN and attend team meetings; the local alderman is nearly always informed when beginning a SSN project in his or her district. SSN also has a good working relationship with the crime prevention officers of Milwaukee Police Department.

Originally four Drug Abatement Liaisons, housed in CBOs, worked in four areas of the city teaching residents how to recognize and report the use and sale of drugs. The liaisons were educated on the SSN process, as some situations identified by residents did not warrant action by the police department or other city departments. Due to a decrease in funding, only one Liaison position remained intact by the end of 1999.

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As part of the Property Management Training Program, a consultant to the city trains property owners on topics not covered in the Landlord Training Program, such as how to handle evictions, and how to use different types of leases. The classes are held twice a month, and are often attended as a social gathering for property owners. The instructor (also the Chairman of the Milwaukee Rental Housing Task Force) would refer property owners to SSN. The code enforcement department has also provided SSN with documentation that supported the complaints of a neighborhood team.

Despite the fact that SSN Milwaukee is no longer active, Ms. Long's relationship with SSN Headquarters continues to develop. Having coordinated one of the country's most successful city-sponsored SSN programs, Ms. Long was asked to serve on Safe Street Now's new National Advisory Committee in September 2000.

Obstacles encountered. Since the first mention of SSN, opposition has surfaced not from a specific agency or group of residents, but from individuals scattered throughout the city structure, some of whom are said to oppose the program on a personal level and will not endorse it on a professional level. In one instance, a city employee who opposed the program was known to be the owner of a nuisance property. Most opposition and/or concerns were based largely on assumptions and fear. Some interviewees, for example, believed that the police have failed in their duties if neighborhoods resort to using SSN. Others believe that because the courts are already overburdened, the use of SSN would further jam the court system and judges would resist the use of the courts for nuisance issues. One city employee in a high-ranking office believes SSN is too powerful a tool to be in the hands of a community, and the city (rather than a non-profit organization) should always lead the process.

Wisconsin has no law similar to California's statute against SLAPPs (strategic lawsuits against public participation) that protect citizens against counter-suits intended to frighten and intimidate. Concerned for the legal protection of SSN team members, Ms. Long questions whether small claims court is an appropriate venue for suing a property owner in Milwaukee. Although a suggestion was made that Circuit Court may better suit the needs of SSN, this possibility has not been investigated.

Institutionalization

Milwaukee's SSN program officially ended in December 1999 after the city of Milwaukee did not allocate funds for SSN in the 2000-2001 budget. Months prior to that, Ms. Long had to begin denying requests for SSN training sessions. Still receiving calls today for SSN training and still believing the program to be worthwhile, Ms. Long and others are lobbying for new funding in 2001-2002. As of October 2000, Ms. Long was working actively with an Alderman to demonstrate the past successes of SSN Milwaukee and re-establish SSN funding for the coming fiscal year.

Having already witnessed the life and death of the program, city employees have definite

ideas about how to build lasting support for SSN. A number of interviewees suggested that the potential SSN sponsor meet face-to-face with those who will be involved in, or impacted by, the SSN process. Key players include the Mayor's Office, the City Council, the City Attorney's Office, Code Compliance or Neighborhood Services, community-based neighborhood organizations, and the police department. Others suggested that the stakeholders review and approve the training manual after the TOT and before the first neighborhood team training. All believe that by keeping people informed during the development of the program, opposition (or declining interest) is less likely to surface during the implementation of the program. The Commissioner of the Department of Neighborhood Services suggested a specific formula for establishing a SSN program in any city: (1) Request funding for a SSN pilot program, (2) provide evidence of success in other cities, (3) build consensus by including potential opposition in the design and implementation of the pilot program (as described above), and (4) show the benefits of the pilot program to the stakeholders, request more funding and expand the program.

Moreno Valley, California

Overview

The Moreno Valley Police Department officially began its SSN program on May 15, 1999. The program is coordinated by the Team's two Community Service Officers (CSOs) and is overseen by the Problem-Oriented Policing (P.O.P.) Team Sergeant. Fifteen SSN neighborhood teams were trained in 1999, and six were trained between January 1 and August 30, 2000. Of these twenty-one projects, ten were closed due to a lack of participation, seven were resolved successfully without going to court, and four were still open at the time of this writing. The types of nuisances addressed include drug sales and use (30%), gangs (30%), noise, such as fighting and parties (20%), and neighborhood disputes (20%). Nearly all projects involve nuisances in single-family homes. After a rocky start characterized by substantial staff turnover, SSN appears to be institutionalized in Moreno Valley as one of many problem-solving tools.

City and Program Context

Moreno Valley. The Moreno Valley area experienced explosive growth during the 1980s, marking a change from rural life to urbanization. Families from metropolitan areas, attracted by affordable housing, family-oriented lifestyle, good schools and quality-of-life amenities, migrated by the tens of thousands. A need for managed growth soon became apparent, and in 1984, after 2 failed attempts, three separate valley communities were incorporated as the City of Moreno Valley. The population of Moreno Valley, now over 141,000, has nearly tripled since then, making it the second largest city in Riverside County.

Today, Moreno Valley is a youthful, family-oriented community with 66% of the households consisting of parents and children. The city's ethnic profile is largely Caucasian (55%), followed by Hispanic (20%), African-American (15%), Pacific Islander (3%) and Other (6%). Nearly one-third (29%) of the residents have lived in Moreno Valley for less than five years. Half of Moreno Valley's households move to the area from either Los Angeles County or Riverside County (32% and 16% respectively), and one-fourth (26%) move from within Riverside County. Three-fourth (76%) of Moreno Valley residents own their own homes. The labor pool is fairly well educated, with nearly two-thirds of the city's workers having some college education[2]. March Field, an Air Reserve base, today employs more people than any other organization in Moreno Valley. As in other southern California cities, serious crime has been decreasing in recent years. In 1997 Total Crime Index for Part I Crimes was 8,269, compared to 8,733 in 1996.

SSN Moreno Valley: Sponsor, philosophy, and competing programs. SSN Moreno Valley is coordinated by the Problem Oriented Policing (P.O.P.) Team of the Moreno Valley

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[2]Moreno Valley 1998 Demographic and Labor Force Study. Community and Economic Development Department, City of Moreno Valley.

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Police Department, which provides law enforcement services to the city under contract with the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. Community-oriented policing, though reportedly not yet widely accepted by the Moreno Valley Police Department, is slowly gaining support from city agencies. The Moreno Valley P.O.P. Team was established in the mid-1990s, and began with one officer assigned to one neighborhood. Since then, the Mayor and the City Council have supported the P.O.P. Team both financially and politically. Funded by CDBG grants, the team now consists of 11 people, including a sergeant and two Community Service Officers, and works in all sectors of the city. The goal of the P.O.P. Team is to integrate community-policing concepts so thoroughly into the practices of the Moreno Valley police force that the Team will no longer be needed.

Although several interviewees described the city of Moreno Valley as being innovative and open to new concepts and solutions, P.O.P. officers described the Police Department as "traditional" and believe it is more comfortable with the routines of responding to calls, making arrests, and conducting investigations than it is with implementing community policing tactics. Some P.O.P. officers also feel that the Riverside Sheriff's Department does not fully support P.O.P. principles and are concerned that if a political or legal controversy involving their unit arose, official support would be weak.

Safe Streets Now is one of several formal nuisance abatement methods used by the P.O.P. Team. To combat blight, the Team joins forces with code compliance, building and safety, animal control, and the Moreno Valley Fire Department to conduct sweeps of target areas. To combat crime and noise problems in apartments and condominiums, the P.O.P. Team operates a Crime Free Multi-Housing (CFMH) Program, and works closely with apartment managers and multi-complex owners, both individually and through the Moreno Valley Apartment Manager's Association. The Sheriff's Nuisance Abatement Program (SNAP) is a less popular problem-solving option as it requires extensive data collection and reporting, and may take a year to abate a problem.

The Team also work closely with the Community and Economic Development Department (CEDD) (which houses code compliance and the Neighborhood Preservation Division) to encourage residents to combat blight and decrease opportunities for drug activity in their neighborhoods. Code Compliance Officers and/or P.O.P. Officers personally deliver flyers to residents and invite them to participate in a neighborhood clean-up organized by CEDD. P.O.P. Officers can also refer sub-standard housing cases to CEDD, who then contacts the property owner directly. Informal methods of dealing with problem properties include contacting, or working with, Child Protective Services, Health Inspectors, and Section 8 Housing.

SSN Moreno Valley

Structure and funding. In the late 1990s, after seeing a SSN presentation at a San Diego P.O.P. Conference, a Moreno Valley police officer proposed incorporating SSN into the Moreno Valley Police Department. The department, in favor of the idea, originally planned to

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divide SSN responsibilities between Crime Prevention and the P.O.P. Team. As Crime Prevention resisted, saying the unit was too busy, the job of developing and implementing SSN was assigned to the P.O.P. Team. In early 1999, the city agreed to pay for SSN training, and a Training of Trainers (TOT) session was held in April at the Moreno Valley City Hall. The TOT was attended by nine P.O.P. Team members (Sgt. Craig Petree, 6 Officers and 2 Community Service Officers), one Crime Prevention Officer, one Senior Code Compliance Officer, and one Financial Analyst from the city.

The two Community Service Officers (CSOs) were assigned the responsibility of coordinating the program under the direction of the unit's sergeant, who is equivalent to a program director. These officers have many other responsibilities in addition to SSN, and funding for needed administrative help has been unavailable. The two CSOs were promoted in early 2000, and soon after, the sergeant was rotated off the P.O.P. Team. The newly assigned CSOs did not receive formal training in the SSN process, but were informally trained and guided by Sgt. Petree. After experiencing the transition of SSN Coordinators, Sgt. Petree recognized the need for a more formal method of "passing the baton."

After the TOT, one officer contacted SSN Lake Elsinore and SSN Riverside for advice on implementing the program. Both programs are within Riverside County and are housed within a police department; the Lake Elsinore Police Department, like Moreno Valley, is under contract with the Riverside Sheriff's Department. The SSN Riverside Coordinator shared information with the SSN program with the Moreno Valley P.O.P. Team. As a result of this contact, the Moreno Valley City Attorney's Office followed the example of Riverside's City Attorney and drafted a waiver (to be signed by each resident trained in the SSN approach) that releases the City and the Moreno Valley Police Department from liability for personal injury and property damage resulting from the use of the SSN program.

To educate the community and gain political and community support, Sgt. Petree and the CSOs presented SSN to key groups within the city. One month after the TOT, the Sergeant led a mini-SSN training session and presented information on how other cities successfully used the program for a meeting of the Public Safety Sub-Committee of the City Council; the City Council voiced support for this new method of abatement. The CSOs presented the program to all Neighborhood Watch Captains and, together with the Sergeant, to the Moreno Valley Apartment Managers Association in July of 1999.

The presentation to the Moreno Valley Apartment Managers Association (established early in 1999 through the joint efforts of the P.O.P. Team and an owner of a large apartment complex) was incorporated into the Association's one-hour monthly meeting. The purpose of the Association is to inform complex owners of housing laws, to provide a forum for problem-solving among complex owners/managers, and to encourage complex owners/managers and police to work cooperatively in reducing crime in the city's multi-housing units. Each monthly meeting is hosted at an apartment complex but is planned and facilitated by the P.O.P. Team.

A second presentation at this meeting, given by a representative from the Fair Housing Council of Riverside County, Inc., provoked questions regarding the legality of sharing eviction information among managers and owners. These concerns surfaced while apartment managers and P.O.P. officers were discussing how to avoid passing a "bad" tenant, who is evicted through the SSN process, from complex to complex. While P.O.P. officers were encouraging the managers to use this forum to inform each other of problem tenants, the representative from the Fair Housing Council mildly cautioned the group on engaging in discriminatory renting practices. According to the representative, a manager must provide written evidence (such as SSN activity logs, court papers, or an eviction notice) when advising another manager against renting to specific tenants.

The local paper, the Press-Enterprise (Moreno Valley edition), also played a role in educating the community about SSN. During Ms. Wetzel's visit to Moreno Valley for the April 1999 TOT, a reporter interviewed both Ms. Wetzel and the Sgt. Petree and ran an article soon after. At that time, the paper also demonstrated an interest in printing follow-up articles on the use of SSN by Moreno Valley citizens. At least three additional articles have appeared in the paper, generating calls from both neighboring cities interested in adopting the SSN approach, and from local citizens interested in using the approach in their own neighborhoods.

The operating costs for SSN are primarily the time of the CSOs and P.O.P. Sergeant. The amount of police time devoted to SSN is unknown, as no one officer is assigned exclusively to SSN. Rather, the program is one of many problem solving approaches available to the Team and the community. The start-up costs included $9,000 for the Training of Trainers session and all written materials.

SSN cases: Referral sources, types, and statistics. In a typical month, the P.O.P. Team is informed of approximately 30 new nuisance properties, either through referrals or direct complaints. The CSOs evaluate each call or referral and determine an appropriate course of action. Referrals come from patrol officers, Code Compliance, and the front desk of the police department. Some residents call the P.O.P. Team directly after reading about SSN in the newspaper or seeing a recording of the P.O.P. Team's SSN presentation to the City Council on the City's cable TV channel. The first team formed, however, after the police department informed a group of residents about the newly developed SSN program.

Between May 15 and June 30, 1999, the first six weeks of the program, the P.O.P. Team recorded 38 contacts with citizens specifically regarding the use of SSN in a neighborhood environment, and five teams were trained on the SSN process. SSN activity continued at a that pace through the end of the year. By December of 1999, 15 neighborhood teams had received training. The CSOs reported that nuisance complaints decreased during the winter and spring months of 2000, and only six teams were trained between January 1 and August 30, 2000. In addition, calls specifically requesting information on SSN have averaged only two per month in 2000. The types of nuisances handled by SSN Moreno Valley include drug use and sales (30%), gang activity (30%), neighborhood disputes, including unsupervised children (20%) and noise, such as loud cars, parties and fighting (20%), and are nearly always located in single-family

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homes.

At the time of this writing, of the 21 neighborhood projects, seven had been resolved without going to court, four were still active, and ten had been closed due to a lack of participation. One successful case involved a neighborhood which had filed complaints with the Police Department and code enforcement for over two years regarding a family that used their home as a mechanic's shop and a meeting place for a motorcycle gang. In another, a neighborhood had worked for nearly three years with the P.O.P. Team, animal control and code enforcement to address the use and sale of drugs in their cul-de-sac. Both problems were finally resolved using the SSN process. According to the current SSN Coordinators, some residents reject the SSN option for opposite reasons -- because they fear retaliation or the nuisance is not yet serious enough to move the neighbors to action. These residents may continue to request assistance from the P.O.P. Team.

The SSN process in Moreno Valley. During the first few months of the program, the CSOs did not follow any standard procedure for training, documentation, or the use of documentation, and residents reported confusion regarding their role in the process. In one situation, team members were not informed that activity logs would be mailed to the property owner. According to one resident, the property owner could use the content of the activity logs to identify the families involved with SSN. Team members were greatly distressed, as in the past, complaints made by neighbors to the property owner were passed on to the tenants, who then threatened the neighbors making the complaints. Therefore, the neighborhood team felt that the P.O.P. Team had betrayed their trust.

In a separate case, an officer informed a resident that the P.O.P. Team was beginning a program called SSN, and encouraged him to begin documenting the problem. While this news encouraged the residents, the efforts were premature and a lack of information on SSN procedure resulted in confusion, misunderstandings between the residents and the P.O.P. Team, and a delay in beginning the SSN process.

The process did, however, become more defined as the CSOs continued to gain more experience. After a neighborhood had formed a team, the CSOs worked with the residents to arrange a training time, and one or both of the CSOs trained the team (either at a home or a substation) using the Power Point presentation developed by one of the P.O.P Officers. The original SSN Coordinators found that the "bulky" storyboards began to show wear after only five neighborhood training sessions, and claimed that a Power Point presentation was easier to present and more engaging. The new CSOs, however, found the presentation difficult to use and reverted to using the storyboards.

Sgt. Petree listed all SSN projects in the bi-weekly P.O.P. newsletter (the P O.P. Team's primary communication tool with the Department) asking all officers to forward reports concerning these properties to the CSOs. A CSO maintained contact with a team representative, and together they decided when to stop the documentation process. The CSO then wrote the

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demand letter and served as the contact for the owner. All seven cases that were resolved satisfactorily were done so using part or all of this process, and under the direction of the original CSOs who were promoted and replaced in early February 2000. No cases have been successfully resolved under the direction of the new SSN Coordinators.

Agency and political support. The SSN program is fully supported by the City Council, the Mayor's Office, and the City Attorney's Office; no opposition to the program has surfaced. According to one Councilwoman, neither the city nor the police department in past years has adequately addressed the repetitive nature of neighborhood nuisance; the city believes SSN will fill this gap. Unfortunately, while the city's leadership appears to be knowledgeable about SSN, many city and police employees have either never heard of SSN, or have heard the name but know nothing about the program itself.

Obstacles encountered. While SSN Moreno Valley's staff have been generally pleased with the SSN approach and procedures, SSN headquarters took months to deliver copies of the neighborhood manual. These manuals, necessary for training neighborhood teams, were to be given to the Moreno Valley P.O.P. Team during the TOT. Also, since a basement fire in April 1999 destroyed files, phone lines, and equipment in SSN Headquarters, the SSN toll-free technical assistance line did not function for at least five months, and calls left by Moreno Valley SSN staff on the SSN Headquarter's answering machine were not returned. Without proper training materials and with unanswered questions, officers were forced to improvise in the development of materials and procedures. Areas where they needed assistance include the development of training sessions, the development of the demand letter, and questions about potential lawsuits against members of a SSN neighborhood team.

Interviews with neighborhood team representatives and P.O.P. officers highlighted some tension between the two. Neighborhood team members described a high fear of retaliation among residents. The P.O.P. officers, who say fear is common in cases of neighborhood nuisance, expressed frustration with these residents. Conversely, residents reported that some officers (not only P.O.P. officers) were unsympathetic regarding their concerns of personal safety during the SSN process. Both a Councilperson and a number of officers interviewed believe neighborhood team members overreact to the reality of the situation. The Councilperson does, however, believe that "police need to be more understanding with (the) unbased fear" of team members.

Institutionalization

According to the P.O.P. Team, SSN has so far been a valuable tool. In many instances, the problems addressed by a SSN team are problems the Police Department and the city have been unable to resolve. Whereas legal issues have delayed or hindered SSN efforts in other cities, Moreno Valley seems comfortable by simply following the same legal preparations as SSN Riverside. Furthermore, the City Council believes that the MVPD has proven itself as trustworthy and foresees no legal problems surrounding its sponsorship of the SSN program. It appears that SSN will remain a problem-solving tool within the Moreno Valley Police Department.

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Overview

In November 1996, ten Riverside police officers and one local community activist were trained on the SSN process. Since then, SSN Riverside has been housed within the Office of Community Policing at the Riverside Police Department and funded by Community Development Block Grants. Approximately 50 new inquiries come into SSN each month, only one or two develop into SSN cases, most of which involve drug sales and use, noise, or neighborhood disputes. The majority of SSN cases are resolved prior to small claims court. Since 1996, two teams have filed cases in small claims court; both judgements were in favor of the neighborhood teams. The SSN approach, coordinated by a non-sworn employee of the police department, is one of several civil abatement processes used by the department and appeared to be institutionalized within the city.

City and Program Context

Riverside. Riverside was incorporated as a city on October 11, 1883, at a time when horticulturists and businessmen were beginning to develop what would become a booming agricultural industry in inland southern California. Citrus, in particular, was an essential part of the city's economic, social and cultural life well into the first half of the twentieth century. With the introduction of the automobile, and the onset of WWII, manufacturing became the center of economic life. Today, manufacturing continues to dominate the economy alongside retail sales, and the business and research activities of the city's four universities. The city is also making progress toward establishing itself as a center for international trade, improving its technological competitiveness, and recruiting and retaining new businesses.

In 1999, the ethnic makeup of Riverside was listed as follows: 65% Caucasian, 8% African American, 6% Asian and 21% Other[3] [Hispanic? need additional information]. The nearby cities of Ontario, Rancho Cucamonga, Redlands and Temecula, each with an ethnic makeup nearly identical to Riverside, have gradually emerged as the major business and technological centers of the region. Riverside, by far the largest of these cities with a population of 254,262, has recently developed its own strategies to regain its position as a regional leader.

A January 2000 progress report presented by the Mayor of Riverside addresses three goals identified in the previous year's State of the City report: Riverside as a Civic Capital, Riverside as a Livable City, and Riverside as Capital City of the Inland Empire. The report expands on these goals by proclaiming the city's commitment to renewing its commercial and residential areas, preserving and promoting its rich citrus heritage, improving health, spurring technological advancement largely through its four institutions of higher education, and establishing itself as a

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[3][web site] National Decision Systems.

regional leader, international center, and the "Downtown of the Inland Empire." The renewal of the historical downtown business and residential area is of particular concern to the city government and residents alike, as vagrancy, crime and prostitution have plagued the area for years.

In moving toward these goals, the city has emphasized the importance of clean, family-friendly neighborhoods. A cornerstone of their efforts to mobilize and equip residents is the 5-year old Riverside Neighborhood Partnership (RNP), a "community-based organization which gives residents the tools and support needed to form successful neighborhood associations." Formed around natural neighborhood boundaries and historical districts, the associations cover areas of three to six square blocks, and operate such activities as quarterly meetings, neighborhood newsletters, block parties, alley clean-ups, and neighborhood watch programs.

In early 2000, the city proudly reported that total Part I crimes were continuing to decline, falling from 12,372 in 1998 to 11,666 in 1999. The 1999 figure is a decrease of nearly 50% since 1994, and the current crime rate per capita is at its lowest since WWII. One tragic incident, however, has overshadowed the city's advancements in crime reduction and neighborhood revitalization: the 1999 shooting of African-American teenager Tyisha Miller by four white police officers. Thrust into the national media spotlight, Riverside has cautiously struggled with issues of racism, police conduct and police review. The fallout from the Miller case continues to affect city business as residents remain divided, some wary of its own police force, and others angered over the firing of the four officers. Division within the city staff and the police force has hampered efforts to restore normality and establish a system of police review, as called for by both the Mayor and the community at large. And amid ongoing legal cases and investigations by county, state and federal agencies, the city has wrestled with the task of replacing the Chief of Police who resigned in 1999 due largely to internal disagreements and a loss of support. A new Chief of Police from outside Riverside County was sworn in over one year later in September 2000.

SSN Riverside: Sponsor, philosophy, and other programs. SSN Riverside is housed within the Office of Community Policing at the Riverside Police Department, and is coordinated by a non-sworn Police Service Representative (PSR). The PSR, whose sole responsibility is to manage the SSN program, works at one of the city's nine Neighborhood Police Centers that are designed to "serve a the cornerstone of Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving by providing a variety of safety and crime prevention information"[4]. Ms. Vicky Hoffman, PSR, ably serves as the coordinator of the Riverside SSN.

City and police officials interviewed agree that SSN is one of many tools that can be used to abate problem properties, and that the point at which to begin using SSN is decided on a case by case basis. They also see, however, limits on its use. The Office of Community Policing sees SSN as one method it can use to abate nuisances involving drugs and noise in single-family homes. Other ordinances and programs are used first (before SSN) to combat blight and drug

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[4]Riverside Police Department 1999 Annual Report, page 19.

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and/or noise nuisances in multi-family homes. In order to build relationships and maintain communication between officers and managers/owners, CFMH handles all cases involving multi-family homes.

Housed in the same Neighborhood Police Center as SSN, CFMH occasionally uses SSN as a supplemental tool. There is some competition and tension in between the two approaches, particularly in situations in which a multi-family building has been certified as a "Crime-Free Multi-Housing" unit, then becomes a SSN case when problems return. And as shown in the description of a neighborhood project at the end of this section, small claims court judges sometimes force an unhappy marriage between the two approaches.

SSN Riverside

Structure and funding. In the mid-1990s, a Riverside police officer proposed the development of a local police-sponsored Safe Streets Now (SSN) program after attending a presentation on SSN at a San Diego P.O.P. Conference. The officer secured CDBG funding to hold a SSN training for eleven people (ten P.O.P. officers and one resident) in November of 1996. Since then, SSN Riverside has been housed within the Office of Community Policing at the Riverside Police Department and funded by Community Development Block Grants. The program staff initially consisted of ten sworn officers and one non-sworn Police Service Representative (PSR) who provided administrative support. Within four months, however, the PSR gradually became the "expert" and the primary contact for the neighborhood teams. To increase program efficiency, the officers were eliminated as SSN staff, and the PSR became the SSN Program Coordinator. On an annual basis, the Coordinator must justify her position to a panel of representatives from the city's nine Neighborhood Advisory Committees (NACs), groups of residents who oversee the allocation of CDBG funds in their respective geographic areas. In past years, nearly every NAC allocated some funds for SSN; more recently, the NAC covering the downtown area has provided most of the $72,000 needed to cover the cost of the Coordinator's position (salary and benefits).

SSN cases: Referral sources, types, and statistics. On average, the SSN coordinator is notified of approximately 50 new neighborhood nuisance problems each month. Referrals come to SSN through dispatch, the police department's operator, and beat officers. Many referrals are passed from agency to agency until they reach SSN. Additional referrals originate at the Mayor's office, and are passed down through the City Council to the Police Department to the SSN Coordinator. Residents also call SSN directly after seeing a SSN advertisement on the city's cable channel, reading about the program in a neighborhood watch newsletter or a newspaper article, or hearing the SSN Coordinator speak at a group meeting of organizations such as Neighborhood Watch and the Chamber of Commerce.

In past years, approximately three to five new SSN teams were formed each month (a total of 41 teams were trained in 1998 and 51 in 1999). More recently, in 2000, only one or two new SSN teams have been formed each month. This decline has been attributed to winter

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weather, the resolution of problems before and because of SSN, and the reluctance of citizens to do the work themselves. In the past four years, the types of problems handled have remained consistent: approximately 30% involve drug use or sales, 30% involve neighborhood disputes, and the remainder involve noise. Nearly all the problem locations are single-family homes (90% rented and 10% owner-occupied). Those cases that do not qualify for SSN (blight issues, personal disputes, or teams of less than three households) are sometimes referred to the city's Dispute Resolution Center or the Mayor's office. Some referrals and inquiries never develop into SSN cases due to a lack of citizen initiative or follow-through.

In the majority of cases handled by SSN, the problems are resolved without resorting to small claims court. As of September 2000, only two SSN neighborhood teams have filed cases in small claims court, both in 1996. Both cases were decided in favor of the residents and one has been appealed. The court has awarded a total of $39,630 in damages to SSN team members. These cases are described at the end of this section.

The SSN process in Riverside. The roles of both the Coordinator and the neighborhood team members are clearly defined. While the Coordinator serves as a supportive guide and director, the residents initiate the process, and collect and prepare documentation to substantiate their claims. The Coordinator's primary responsibilities include training the team, providing direction for appropriate team action during all phases of the SSN process, maintaining communication with the neighborhood team leader, writing the demand letter, and negotiating with the property owner. The team members' primary responsibilities include: forming a neighborhood team, contacting the Coordinator to request a SSN training session, attending SSN training sessions, faithfully documenting nuisances, delivering the documentation to the Coordinator, reviewing the demand letter before it is sent to the property owner, and preparing a court case under the Coordinator's direction, if necessary.

The SSN process usually begins with a telephone call from a resident. Using a Citizen Inquiry Information form, the following information is captured during the course of an initial conversation: caller contact information; problem location information; definition of the nuisance; efforts the caller, or other neighbors, have made to resolve the problem; the dates and results of those efforts.

After the Coordinator determines that SSN is an appropriate method to use in a neighborhood and that the caller is indeed interested in the program, the following steps are taken: (1) SSN information is mailed to the contact person, (2) the contact person is asked to call the Coordinator after a Neighborhood Team (consisting of at least three households) has been formed, and (3) the Coordinator trains the team on the SSN process, usually at a location outside the neighborhood. The Coordinator also has the address of the problem property "red-flagged" in dispatch, ensuring that SSN will be notified of any calls regarding that location. If SSN is not an appropriate method to use in a certain situation, the Coordinator refers the caller to other agencies or departments, such as Crime-Free Multi Housing, Narcotics or Code Enforcement.

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Training usually takes place in the evening and lasts from 1 ½ to 2 hours. The Coordinator's goal is to facilitate organized, focused meetings that provide citizens with the encouragement and tools they need to both immediately begin the process of documentation and to proceed with minimal assistance from the SSN office.

At the beginning of the first SSN training session, every family is required to read and sign a waiver prepared by the City Attorney's office. The waiver, titled "City of Riverside Police Department: Voluntary Waiver, Release and Indemnity Agreement," is a variation of other waivers written by the City Attorney's Office and used with other city-sponsored programs. By signing the waiver, a citizen (1) releases the City of Riverside and the Riverside Police Department from liability for personal injury and property damage resulting from the use of the SSN program, (2) accepts all risks involved in using the SSN program, and (3) recognizes that "no part of the Safe Streets Now! program is intended as legal advice nor is considered a substitute for property owners' responsibility of being familiar with the law."

After presenting a brief description of the background, philosophy and goals of the SSN program, residents are taught how to document neighborhood problems using the Activity Log, and how to create and use a Phone Tree. To begin the SSN process, the team members are asked to document nuisances for a minimum of two weeks, to use the telephone tree to alert each other of bothersome and illegal activities at the problem property, and to notify relevant police and/or city offices when these activities occur. They are also asked to assign a team member the task of collecting and delivering the logs to SSN at the end of the two weeks. The Coordinator reviews the Activity Logs, and determines whether the team has enough evidence to proceed with a demand letter or if additional documentation is required. The team, meanwhile, continues the documentation process until it hears otherwise from the Coordinator.

The Coordinator prepares the demand letter, then has it approved by a member of the team. The Coordinator makes photocopies of the activity logs and any supplemental documentation, and sends the entire package to the property owner via certified mail. For the safety of the Coordinator, the return address on the demand letter is not the physical location of SSN.

The next step in the process depends entirely on the response of the property owner. The property owner has seven days to respond to the Coordinator after receiving the certified demand letter. When a property owner does agree to work with SSN, the Coordinator's role is to educate the property owner on the eviction process, speak on behalf of the neighborhood team, and act as a negotiator until both sides agree on an acceptable and reasonable plan of action. A property owner will usually give tenants a 30-day notice of eviction. When the property owner does not comply, a common tactic is to use CFMH as a bargaining chip, promising to give the landlord additional time to abate the problem in return for attending CFMH classes and securing "good" tenants. In most situations, the nuisance is abated three to five months after the initial telephone inquiry.

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A second SSN training occurs only when a property owner refuses to work with the neighborhood team, and the team sues a property owner in small claims court. Safe Streets Now cases are heard by a Commissioner at the Small Claims Court in Moreno Valley or by a Superior Court Judge at the Riverside Courthouse. Both commissioners and judges are randomly assigned to SSN cases.

One Riverside Superior Court Judge has heard three SSN cases: two from Riverside (one of them an appeal), and one from nearby Lake Elsinore. He developed his own courtroom procedures to accommodate an entire team during one hearing:

1.   One-half day is set aside to hear all SSN team members present their cases during the same hearing.

2.   Each side is asked to appoint a spokesperson.

3.   Following a presentation by the SSN spokesperson, each team member provides a personal account of how s/he has suffered as a result of the activities at the property in question.

4.   One opinion is written for all individual cases. It begins with a judicial justification for the use of SSN in small claims court, details how the property was mismanaged, provides quotes from the historical Lew case, and outlines his remedy.

The judge's remedies are based on his theory that an overwhelming sentence will not provoke a property owner to improve his property, but will either "kill" him (destroy him financially) or force him to continue resisting SSN through the court system. Therefore, the judge may choose to grant financial compensation to team members, order the property owner to immediately pay a percentage of each individual judgement, and stay the remainder provided that the owner (1) becomes certified by the Crime Free Multi Housing program, and (2) crime rates decrease and remain at a specific lower level. Most SSN team members, he believes, are more interested in creating a safe, peaceful neighborhood than in collecting a judgement, and are willing to use part or all of the judgement as leverage for positive change.

Aside from the strengthened personal relationships and overall neighborhood cohesiveness reported by local officials, there appears to be little evidence in Riverside of SSN leading to other problem-solving processes within a neighborhood. According to those who implement and support the program, most neighborhood teams (with the exception of those who were already involved with a Neighborhood Association or a block watch) are content with their successes and do not participate in further neighborhood revitalization, crime prevention or problem-solving efforts.

When asked why SSN is effective in resolving neighborhood nuisance problems, city employees and officials provided explanations that largely reflected their own positions and

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involvement in city issues. The Superior Court Judge, for example, believes SSN works well at the court level because some property owners will alter their style of management only when the old style is no longer economical. While fines imposed by the city (i.e. code enforcement) may be minimal compared to a landlord's profits, judgements awarded by the court cut more deeply into earnings and may be used as leverage to negotiate improvements in property management. From the perspective of code enforcement, SSN is effective because residents receive personal attention and guidance from an individual who both represents authority and has expertise in helping people solve problems (the Coordinator's former dispatch experience). Code enforcement, while it would like to, does not have the manpower to provide this type of assistance to all residents. Code Enforcement and police representatives also believe SSN puts a softer tone on the police department by encouraging one-on-one interaction and by building relationships among agencies and residents. As one officer stated, SSN is effective because it "puts the police department back into the community".

Agency and political support. Although most of the Coordinator's efforts are spent working with residents who never form a SSN team, the success of those inquiries that do turn into SSN cases depends partly on the Coordinator's relationships with other agencies and SSN programs. Perhaps the Coordinator's most important relationships are within the police department, with the Captain of Community Policing and individual beat officers. The Coordinator relies on beat officers to provide her with written reports that can be used during negotiations with property owners, and relies on the influence of the Captain to ensure the reports are completed. The Coordinator (not always receiving the police cooperation she hopes for) and members of the Riverside P.O.P. team both believe the police department would benefit by integrating SSN more carefully and thoroughly into police operations.

When SSN Riverside was in its earliest stages, the Coordinator often asked Code Enforcement to inspect problem properties, hoping to pressure the owner from all possible angles. Code officials, however, found that complaints from SSN team members sometimes revolved around civil issues or marginal code problems that did not justify the department's involvement. To improve the quality of requests, a senior code officer provided the Coordinator with a code criteria manual. Today, Code Enforcement continues to welcome requests from, and provide referrals to, SSN. This reciprocal relationship is strengthened by the shared belief that grass-roots efforts and person-to-person contact are key to solving neighborhood problems.

The City Attorney's Office plays a minimal, but crucial, role in SSN operations. It periodically reviews SSN documents and procedures to (1) ensure the program is operating within the limits of the law, and (2) protect the city from possible litigation. The office, however, has no regular contact with the Coordinator.

Relationships with other SSN programs have always been vital to the growth and success of Riverside's program. During the program's infancy, the Coordinator sought advice from SSN Coordinators in neighboring cities Lake Elsinore and Rialto. A few years later, the Coordinator turned to Lake Elsinore a second time for advice on a court case. More recently, the Coordinator

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teamed up with the San Diego SSN Coordinator to serve a San Diego resident with a certified demand letter concerning his Riverside property. Although communication with SSN headquarters has been sporadic over the years, and requests for assistance have not always been answered, the lines of communication remain open.

Obstacles encountered. For all the successes of the program, SSN Riverside has also had its share of mishaps and misunderstandings, been a source of complaints, and been used as a political tool. The most well known and publicized misunderstanding began when a resident of Riverside was invited to attend the Training of Trainers session. Having tried unsuccessfully to rid her neighborhood of drug dealing and prostitution, she formed her own neighborhood team immediately after the TOT session, and before the police department had implemented the program. Erroneously operating under the assumption that the City Attorney's office would guide them through the process, problems arose when the property owner filed a defamation suit against the team. Not understanding that the role of the City Attorney's Office is to represent the city (rather than the residents of the city), the team was angered at its refusal to represent them in court. The team publicly announced it had been encouraged, then abandoned, by City Hall. In response, the mayor solicited one of Riverside's largest law firms to represent the team *pro bono*.

In May of 1997, the team won their small claims judgement against the property owner. The owner appealed the judgement, only to have it upheld in February 1998 and the award increased from $1,750 to $9,000. The SSN headquarters director also helped the team by securing a lawyer who runs the California Anti-SLAPP Project in Oakland. This attorney filed a motion to strike the defamation suit, based on California's statute against SLAPPs (strategic lawsuits against public participation). The property owner dropped his case, and was ordered by a judge to pay $73,000 in legal fees to the SLAPP attorney. Although the case ended well and the name Safe Streets Now was kept out of the media, the city's first experience with this problem-solving method was both troublesome and time-consuming.

The City Attorney's Office reports that confusion over the role of their office is common. Although team members sign a waiver acknowledging the possibility of a counter-suit during the SSN process and releasing the city from responsibility, and the Coordinator verbally informs the team that the city is not responsible for the collective action of the homeowners, misunderstandings persist.

One complaint, believed by some to be the result of heightened sensitivity following the shooting of Tyisha Miller, came from a property owner who objected to language used on the activity logs. He claimed the remarks were racist, and demanded a letter of apology from the Riverside Police Department that included a statement regarding the department's position on racism and hate crimes. Under a request from her direct supervisor, the Coordinator, who trains residents to "be factual and emotional" in their activity logs, began to ask residents to think carefully about the words they choose to describe other people, and refrain from using such terms as 'dirtbag', 'gangbanger', or 'black woman'.

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In respect to political challenges, the Coordinator feels that those who provide her with the greatest percentage of her annual funding expect her to give priority to problems in their neighborhoods. As mentioned before, the Coordinator's position is funded on a year-to-year basis by CDBG funds allocated in different amounts by each of the nine Neighborhood Action Committees (NACs). The Coordinator, therefore, finds herself in a position of needing to maintain amiable relationships with the NACs while responding appropriately and fairly to residents in all areas of the city.

Lastly, although the residents of Riverside are supportive of SSN, they are often afraid to act outside the safety of a meeting. According to the Coordinator, this reaction is common among those living in the high-crime, predominantly Hispanic and African-American areas.

Institutionalization

Historically, says a Riverside Superior Court Judge, the courts have reacted and changed according to the needs of the public, and the use of small claims court for the abatement of problem properties is, therefore, in "the grandest tradition of jurisprudence." The process leading up to small claims court, though a bit bumpy during the developmental stage of the program, has been sharpened by the Coordinator, earning the respect and support of city and police officials alike. Although not all police officers readily supply the documentation necessary to build a case, the officials above those officers can be relied on to place pressure when and where it is needed. As has been done for the past four years, the Coordinator continues to educate police officers on the SSN program and process during roll calls.

Unique to this SSN program is the Coordinator's ability and willingness to abate nuisances and resolve disputes, without using the SSN process, by presenting residents with a variety of problem-solving options. Although this method deviates from the original SSN model, city officials approvingly notice how the Coordinator has adapted the program to Riverside's needs, taking full advantage of the skills she developed as a dispatcher. In more than one interview, people attributed the success of the program largely to the Coordinator's public relations, mediation, and negotiation skills.

SSN appears to be crucial to the city government, as its activities contribute directly to two goals listed in the City's Vision, Mission and Goals 2000-2001 report: (1) To improve neighborhood livability, and (2) To continue to improve community policing and public safety. SSN was acknowledged in this report for its contributions toward empowering residents and creating safe neighborhoods. In a significant show of support for SSN, CDBG funding for 2000-2001 was secured personally, for the first time, by the City Manager.

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Neighborhood Projects

Superior Apartments[5]. The Superior Apartments project is significant for three reasons: (1) it is the first SSN case (of two) that went to small claims court, (2) neighborhood issues in the historical downtown area are highly politicized, and (3) the team was victorious in court, despite the Coordinator's struggles with implementing a new program and disagreements between the team and the Coordinator regarding the use of the program. The Superior Apartments are located in the Historical Downtown District, approximately 6 blocks from the Civic Center. Although a major four-lane street and two auto stores lie within a block to the east, the areas to the north, south and west are residential, and connected by quiet, tree lined streets. The two-story, two building apartment complex is bordered by streets on the west and south, an alley on the north, and a 7-unit apartment on the east. Located directly across the alley is an attractive apartment complex with a well kept garden, a definite contrast to the littered grounds and deteriorating facilities of its neighbor.

A woman owning rental property near Superior Apartments contacted SSN in 1997, complaining of "midnight alley traffic," indoor furniture kept on the front lawn, and tenants "hanging out" and yelling at people passing by the complex. Police were responding to complaints regarding the Superior Apartments nearly every other day. According to SSN guidelines, teams should consist of people who can "see, hear and feel" the problem. The woman, therefore, was informed that although her tenants could form a SSN team, she should not be a part of it. Discouraged by this response, she pressured city administrators and wrote letters to the Coordinator's superior until she was allowed to participate as a team member. Known as an activist concerned with the preservation of the historical downtown area, some interviewees suspect she and fellow team members considered the property an eyesore and wanted it kept to the higher standards of nearby properties. According to officers involved in the SSN process, could not be convinced to document criminal activity or disruptive behavior, and continued to focus on the physical condition of the property.

A judge of the Superior Court heard the case in mid-1997. The property owner was ordered to pay each team member $2000 in damages for the nuisance being suffered, plus court costs of $40. According to court records, "payment of all but $100 of this amount (was) stayed for sixty days to allow the defendant to complete and implement the City of Riverside's Crime Free Multi-Housing Program for tenant screening and real property upgrading."[6] All damages would be due, however, if the defendant failed to complete the program and prove that crime had been reduced at the apartments by 60 percent. Although he did complete the program and maintained low crime rates for six months, the crime rate reportedly increased after this period was over, resulting in the removal of CFMH status. The SSN team members, discouraged, chose

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[5]Names of neighborhood projects have been changed to protect the privacy of those involved.

[6]Minutes of Superior Court, Number 126338. June 6, 1997

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not to reactivate the case. At the time of this writing, the property has been somewhat cleaned up (though it is still an eyesore compared to its neighbors), and no one on the team had collected the awarded damages.

The calls for service data for 1998-2000 are presented in Figure 3-1 at the end of this case study. As shown, calls for service to Superior Apartments were steady in 1998, averaging 3.3 per month, decreasing to 2.5 per month in 1999. In the first half of 2000, however, the calls for service increased, to an average of 4.1 per month.

Allen Street. The Allen property is located at the noisy intersection of two four-lane streets. The immediate area is primarily residential, with one church and one religious non-profit organization within a block of the property. Quieter, two-lane streets branch off from the two major thoroughfares. Although most of the surrounding streets do have sidewalks, there are none bordering the Allen property. A bus stop is located directly alongside the unfenced yard of dirt and grass.

From the early 1990s until 1996, the Allen property had been the target of a P.O.P. project. The property owner had rented the house to a string of "bad" tenants who disrupted the neighborhood with loud music, loud cars, and fighting. The property was an eyesore with cars and garbage strewn among the overgrown grass. The P.O.P. officer met and worked with nearby neighbors, had the owner cited for code violations, and carried out a drug raid. When the disturbances escalated to public scenes of wife assault, and police intervention failed to curb the violence, one neighbor called SSN.

The woman who made the initial call to SSN became a leader to a team of five families. Aside from the usual procedure of documenting the problem in writing, the team also created video documentation. When the property owner was not persuaded to comply with the demands of the team, the team proceeded by filing a small claims suit. Each family member had the opportunity to give testimony, including the six year-old granddaughter of the team leader. The Commissioner who heard the case ruled in favor of the team, and awarded damages to each team member. The owner immediately took the case to Appeals Court, and argued specifically against an award to the child.

According to the Superior Court judge who heard the appeals case, the owner attempted to intimidate the team by applying more than once for a continuance. Team members who had used vacation and personal time to appear in court were discouraged when the case was assigned to a future date. The number of team members involved in the appeals case began to decline. The judge recognized this unwarranted tactic, disagreed with the owner's stance on an award to a juvenile, and not only upheld the original verdict, but ordered the property owner to pay twice the original award to both the young girl and her mother.

Although the team was victorious in the sense that the tenants were evicted, the team leader was discouraged by the confusing process of collection, and was upset that the Police

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Department did not assist her with the process. The team dissolved after winning their case in Superior Court. Following the 1998 judgment in Superior Court, neighbors reported few complaints regarding the tenants at this property until early in the year 2000. Recognizing that the behavior of his new tenants was disrupting the neighborhood, the property owner called the SSN Coordinator for advice. His intentions, however, were not born out of a newly found good will toward his community, but from a fear of being sued a second time.

Calls for service data for 1998-2000 (see Figure 3-2) indicate few problems are the Allen property. There were three calls for service in 1998, two in 1999, and three in the first half of 2000.

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Figure 3-1: Superior Apartments, Target property only
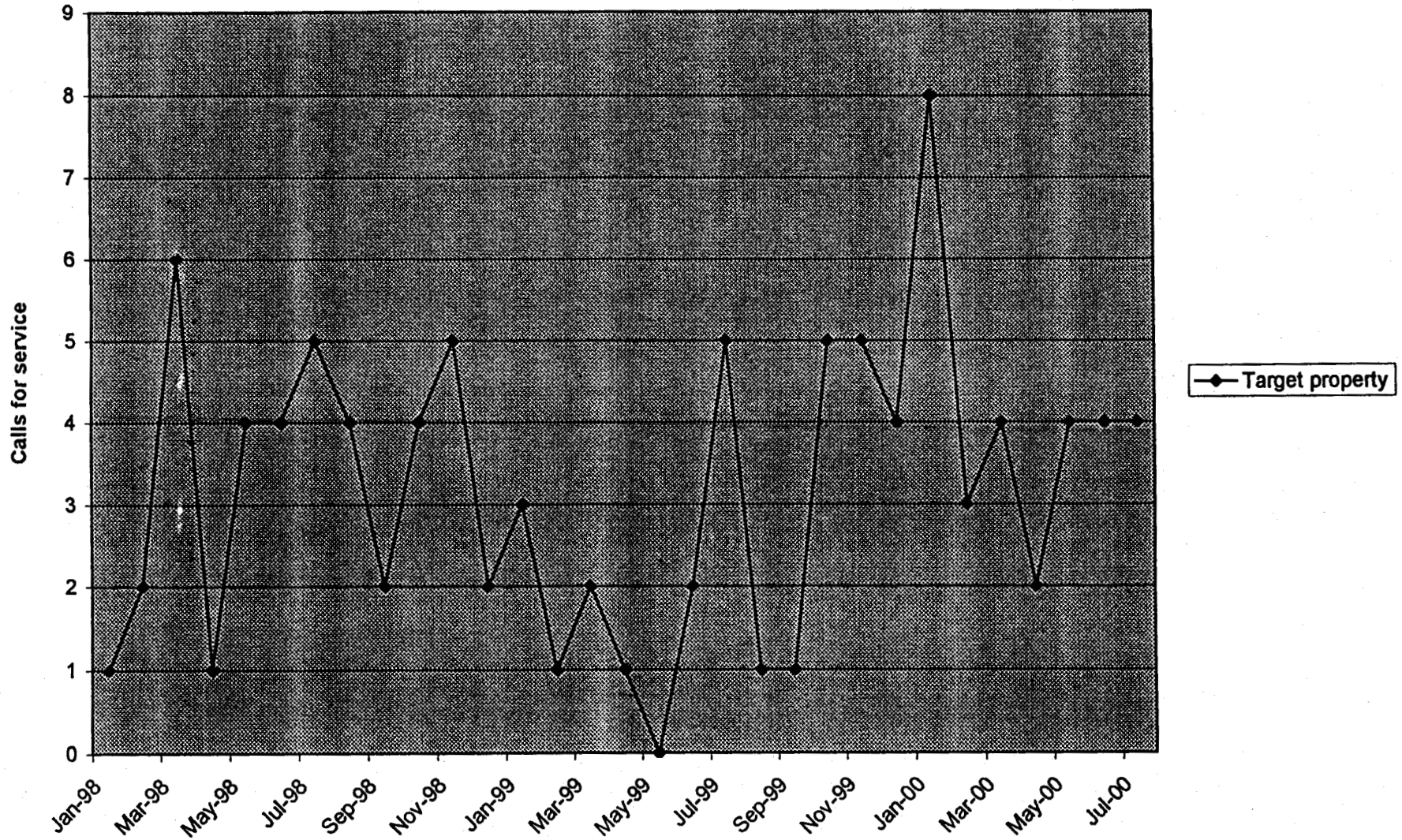
Figure 3-2: Allen Street, Target property only

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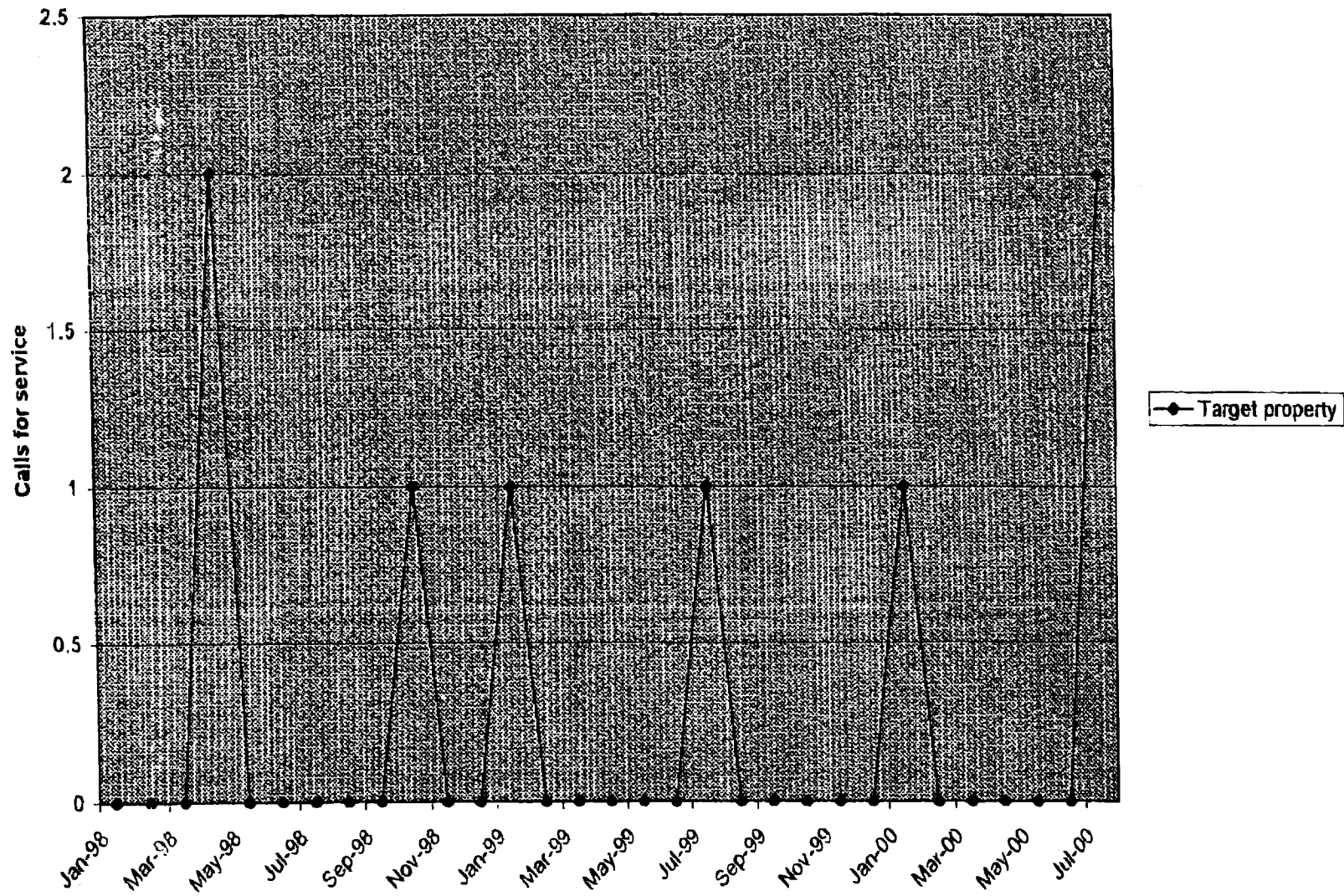
San Diego, California

Overview

SSN in San Diego was established in 1995 as a non-profit organization funded by the city. It was founded and continues to be directed by Bob Heider, who also runs the city's large Citizen's Patrol. SSN San Diego has the largest caseload of the local SSN programs, receiving 50-60 calls per month which result in initiating about 15 SSN projects. Nearly half of the problem properties involve drug problems, with the remainder involving (in order) noise and nuisance issues, neighborhood disputes, and blight. SSN San Diego has close working relationships with the police department and other key agencies, appears to be well-known throughout the city to resident and property owners alike, and is highly regarded, due in large part to the dedication and hard work of the director. The program has recently expanded to serve the entire county, and while funding is always tight and never certain, it appears that SSN San Diego is a valued program with long-term support.

City and Program Context

San Diego City and County. San Diego, on the border of California and Mexico, has a population of 1.25 million and is the sixth largest city in the U.S. San Diego County is about the size of Connecticut and has 2.8 million people. Settled by the Spanish, then ruled by Mexico for 25 years, San Diego remains culturally diverse: 61% White, 24% Hispanic, 9% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 6% African-American. For decades, the defense industry anchored San Diego's economy. While the Navy and Marines maintain a strong presence, the agriculture, high

economy stable for the past decade. Unemployment was 3.6% in 1998 and dropping.

people in 1999 and 34.52 property crimes per 1, 000 population. San Diego's crime rate is substantially below cities of similar size (Philadelphia, Phoenix, Detroit, and Dallas) and the substantially larger cities of Los Angeles and New York. As shown in the table on the following page, violent crime in the city has been falling since its peak in 1992, and property crime has been decreasing since 1989. The homicide rate has fallen from 167 murders in 1991 to 57 in 1999

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Part I Crimes in San Diego[7]			
Year	Population	Total violent crimes	Total property crimes
1999	1,245,500	7,410	42,175
1998	1,214,000	8,744	45,677
1997	1,190,200	9,789	49,172
1996	1,183,100	10,148	51,425
1995	1,197,676	11,077	53,158
1994	1,184,814	12,599	64,126
1993	1,171,608	13,463	71,764
1992	1,149,598	14,791	77,466
1991	1,130,034	13,830	82,951
1990	1,118,279	12,047	89,517
1989	1,087,772	10,124	92,867
1988	1,058,700	9,171	87,585
1987	1,031,800	9,112	79,115
1986	1,007,000	8,521	71,225
1985	979,300	6,250	61,643

The San Diego Police Department is nationally known for its early embrace of problem-oriented policing, willingness to experiment and evaluate, and role in expanding the knowledge and practice of problem-oriented policing in the U.S. "Neighborhood policing" is the department's label for its concept of community policing. At the root of neighborhood policing, according to the SDPD, is a recognition of "a shared responsibility and connection between the police and community in making San Diego a safer, more livable city. Neighborhood policing encourages a problem-solving partnership between citizens and police." The SDPD uses the four-step SARA model (Eck & Spelman, 1987) to craft problem-solving strategies: (1) scanning reports (calls for service, citizen reports, etc.) to identify problems, (2) analyzing the problem from all possible angles, (3) responding to the problem with a customized strategy based on careful analysis, and (4) assessing the outcomes of the strategy.

San Diego's long history of community crime prevention and problem-oriented policing has resulted in the creation of a number of different problem-solving programs, including:

1. A Landlord Training Program conducted by the SDPD to promote positive and responsible partnerships between landlords, tenants, and the SDPD to prevent drug dealing and other illegal activities in rental properties, and the San Diego County Apartment Association's bi-annual *Drug and Crime Free Housing* seminars.

2. The Crime-Free Multi-Housing Program,

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[7]Reported by the San Diego Police Department.

3. A Drug Abatement Unit in the city attorney's office.

4. The city's Graffiti Control Hotline.

5. The city Neighborhood Code Compliance Department's Citizens' Complaint Intake Line, where citizens report housing, zoning, weed abatement, noise, etc., violations to inspectors.

6. Conflict resolution programs, including the San Diego Mediation Center, the Victim-Offender Reconciliation Program, and the San Diego Mediation and Restitution Services.

As described below, SSN San Diego has successfully established working relationships with the majority of these problem-solving programs, turning potentially competing forces into complementary services.

SSN San Diego: Sponsor and philosophy. San Diego's Safe Streets Now! program, established in 1995, is a non-profit organization, with a 501(c)(3) status. It has been funded by a city contract since that time. As described below, the San Diego SSN was founded by Mr. Bob Heider, who also established the Greater San Diego Citizens Patrol program in 1993, which remains an active organization with thousands of citizen volunteers. Prior to creating SSN, Mr. Heider carefully laid the groundwork with the police department, elected officials, relevant government agencies, the court, and the community. San Diego boasts a number of potentially competing programs, like the police department's landlord training program, but as described below, SSN tends to complement these programs rather than create turf battles.

The SSN program in San Diego, in the main, follows the national model. According to Mr. Heider, program aims to improve the quality of life in "one neighborhood at a time by focusing on one problem at a time and dealing with one property owner at a time." A central underlying assumption is that SSN actions can serve as a step toward community empowerment, helping citizens fashion the type of neighborhood they desire. Mr. Heider stresses that 80% of the work and leadership must come from the neighborhood residents involved.

SSN San Diego's director also believes that SSN should be a "last resort," used after other avenues such as direct contact with the owner, calls to the police, code compliance, etc., have been tried. He sees SSN as an extension of other community crime prevention and intervention programs -- from the basic building block of neighborhood watch, a substantial number of neighborhoods go on to form a citizen's patrol group, and then may use the SSN approach for nuisance and criminal problems that cannot be effectively handled by the police or other city agencies.

SSN San Diego

Structure and funding. In 1993, Bob Heider was the head of the citizens patrol program

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and had an excellent working relationship with the San Diego Police Department. He heard about the SSN process from police officers who attended the 1993 problem-oriented policing conference and heard about SSN, and knew of Bob and his work with Citizen's Patrol. At the same time, a key official in the city's Code Compliance Department had read about the SSN program in Oakland and hoped to bring it to San Diego. Funds for SSN training were not available at that time. Mr. Heider spent time during the next year learning more about SSN, partly through contacting Ms. Wetzel directly, and attended the 1994 POP Conference himself.

Following the 1994 POP Conference, Mr. Heider raised private funds to pay for a SSN training of trainers workshop conducted by Ms. Wetzel, although with the intention that those who attended would not become SSN trainers (that would be primarily Mr. Heider himself), but would be individuals whose support was needed for the new program. Representatives from the police department, mayor's office, city attorney's office, and code compliance, and key community members attended the TOT. After the TOT, Mr. Heider visited city council members and the chief of police to explain how he intended to implement the program. The city council members understood the importance of empowering citizens. At the same time, the San Diego Police Department was cultivating greater citizen involvement in problem-solving. Mr. Heider did not seek city funds until the program had been operating for several months and city officials supported his initiative.

Although SDPD encouraged officers to use SSN for neighborhood problem-solving, a deputy chief close to and supportive of SSN worked to prevent SSN from being housed within the police department and aimed to have officers participate in SSN projects only as part of their normal duties such as responding to calls or testifying in court. The deputy chief's decision stemmed from three inter-related beliefs: (1) social disorder is best dealt with by residents and businesses, (2) law enforcement should not be the leaders of a civil process, and (3) police officers should be used for what they are trained for and do best: law enforcement.

There appears to have been no known opposition to SSN during its early stages. Key to the smooth development of the program were the director's skills, reputation, and planning, and the "perfect fit" of SSN with neighborhood policing efforts in San Diego.

Since its creation, SSN San Diego has had a lean, stable budget and staff. The city, through the Social Service Department using CDBG and general funds, currently provides $69,500 annually for SSN and about $24,000 for Citizen's Patrol. Very recently, the program received $20,000 per year for two years to provide SSN programs throughout San Diego County. These funds support Mr. Heider, the director; a part-time attorney who keeps abreast of the legal issues, coordinates activities with various groups, and does record keeping; and a part-time staff person responsible for clerical and administrative work, data entry, and reporting. In its five year history, there has been no staff turnover. Only Mr. Heider becomes directly involved with training and assisting neighborhood residents. The attorney used to write briefs for SSN cases on appeal, but that task is now done by one of three attorneys who are paid by neighborhood team members. The attorney fees are generally recouped after the appeal, as judges can and do award $150 per

neighborhood team member in attorney fees.

SSN and Citizen's Patrol share a 14-member Board of Directors composed of the chairs from each of the major Citizen Patrol groups and other community activists interested in crime prevention. SSN shares office space with a rarely staffed SDPD neighborhood office on the second story in a shopping center which includes a major grocery store, coffee and copying shops, a fitness center, etc. The office space is donated by the owners of the shopping center as part of community policing business partnership, Citizens do walk in for service, from SSN and, more often, from the police department, but most of the contact between Mr. Heider and residents is by phone and mail.

SSN cases: Referral sources, types, and statistics. SSN San Diego receives 50 to 60 calls per month from citizens with a problem property in their neighborhood. The citizens are referred to SSN by a variety of sources: police officers, SDPD dispatchers (who are trained by SSN), code compliance, the mayor's office, and elected officials. Mr. Heider makes many presentations to organizations of all types about SSN, and word-of-mouth and press coverage also results in citizens calling the office. All referrals are placed into a "book of inquiries," and about fifteen projects are opened each month for the full SSN approach. For the other problems, Mr. Heider may do some problem-solving directly, such as calling the property owner, or provides information to the citizens. His reputation has grown so large that some property owners, on hearing that SSN is involved, immediately improve the situation.

Between the creation of SSN San Diego in late 1994 and the completion of evaluation survey in mid-1999, SSN San Diego trained 575 neighborhood teams, or an estimated 7,000 citizens, who have worked on an estimated 625 problems. Between January 1998 and May 1999, 195 teams were trained, or approximately 11-12 per month. It is estimated that 45% of the projects opened involve drug problems in specific properties, 20% involve noise and nuisance issues, 20% involve neighborhood disputes (such as barking dogs, unruly children, etc.), 10% involve blight problems of excessive litter or home disrepair, and 5% are "other" problems. SSN estimates that the vast majority (90% or higher) of the projects opened are resolved, with only a fraction, perhaps 6%, proceeding all the way to small claims court.

The SSN process in San Diego. Each SSN project unfolds a little differently, depending on the nature of the problem, the involvement of neighborhood residents, response of the owner, etc., but the seven steps described in Chapter 1 are generally followed. When a problem property comes to the attention of the SSN director, he begins by meeting with a neighborhood team and training them to document the problem, create and use a phone tree, call the police when appropriate, etc. If the he is unable to meet with the neighbors in a reasonable period of time, he asks the neighborhood leader to ask each neighbor to write a letter documenting the nature of the problem.

SSN believes that two months of problem documentation is often required. In some instances, neighbors have begun the documentation process prior to involvement with SSN, and

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this period is shortened. When the documentation is complete and the case judged strong enough to proceed by the SSN director, a demand letter is written. The letter is sent by certified mail and usually signed by the "Concerned Citizens of 17th Street" or other name selected by the neighborhood team. In these cases, however, the SSN director is identified by name and a phone number is provided to reach him. The SSN director may also call the property owner in lieu of a demand letter, and/or talk to the tenants directly.

Less demanding letters may be sent to property owners in situations where the problem is a non-criminal nuisance that is not egregious or has been insufficiently documented. These letters also spell out the problems at the property and ask for resolution, but do not threaten the owner with a small claims court action. The SSN San Diego director feels that the "heavy hammer" of the demand letter is not always appropriate, and that a constructive dialog leading to problem resolution may be opened via a less threatening letter.

If the documentation is never completed -- because neighbors don't want to participate or whatever -- the SSN director will weigh the remaining alternatives. In some situations, nothing more happens from SSN's point-of-view, concordant with the philosophy that this civil remedy approach must come from the community itself. In others, the SSN director may work with the original respondent to notify the owner, negotiate a resolution, and, even in some cases involving just one couple as complainants, proceed with a small claims court action.

If the hoped for effect of the demand letter comes about, the property owner will call the SSN director and begin to work out a resolution that satisfies both the owner and the residents. An agreement may be created that specifies a timetable and the steps to be taken. Depending on the nature of the problem, resolutions often involve the eviction of problem tenants, property clean-up, renovations, changes in behavior, etc.; examples are provided in the neighborhood projects described below.

If the demand letter is ignored, Mr. Heider will assist the neighborhood team in preparing for small claims court filing and the hearing, again following the SSN national model. In San Diego, the small claims court commissioners typically schedule SSN cases at the end of the day. The hearings last two to three hours, and follow the model described previously -- first a presentation of the problem is made by spokesperson, then team members speak individually to the impact of the problem on them, then property owner presents his or her side of the case. Commissioners provide a written judgment in the case several weeks after the hearing.

During most of 2000, Mr. Heider served as the national director of SSN, as the founder and executive director was on "sabbatical." His responsibilities were to answer questions, address requests for assistance and training, and provide training upon request. No training was delivered except for training provided to one staff person joining an existing SSN program.

It nearly goes without saying that much of the success of SSN San Diego is attributable to the personality and working style of the current (and only) director. The word used most

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frequently to describe him is "dynamic," and most of the agency representatives contacted credited him personally with SSN's success. By several accounts, property owners have remedied problems immediately after receiving a demand letter signed by Bob Heider, solely on the strength of his reputation. It is unclear how this small non-profit organization would fare without Mr. Heider's dedication and capabilities. As he says, "This is not a job. It is a commitment." Yet Mr. Heider also clearly enjoys his job; with a grin, he admits "empowered citizens scare the heck out of people."

Relationships with other agencies. SSN San Diego has had an excellent working relationship with the San Diego Police Department since the program's inception. As discussed previously, the SSN director established his reputation with the police department through the Citizens' Patrol program, and carefully laid the groundwork for the implementation of SSN. SSN is seen by the department as a perfect fit with San Diego Police Department's problem-oriented policing style. On the SDPD webpage (www.sannet.gov/police), four examples of neighborhood policing are described; SSN is one of them.

An Assistant Chief of SDPD has been SSN's main contact. He supports the underlying SSN concepts of citizen empowerment and community-based problem-solving, and also strongly believes that the police department should not be involved as a non-neutral party in a civil process such as SSN. SSN is seen as "one tool among many," yet one that should be used after other avenues have been tried. The SSN director's personal qualities and knowledge of police mentalities and priorities were also cited as reasons for the strong support of law enforcement.

SSN has a similar, albeit newer, working relationship with the county Sheriff's Department. SSN has recently begun to work with residents in the county, outside of the city limits, and received high praise from the sheriff's department main contact. He believes SSN is partially responsible for the county's 48% decrease in crime over the past two years.

SSN San Diego has a solid reciprocal working relationship with the city's Code Compliance Department, which includes housing and building inspection services. The Code Compliance Department is also a working partner with the police department's neighborhood policing efforts. Code compliance officers inspect problem properties at the request of SSN neighborhood teams and make referrals to SSN as appropriate.

A half a dozen small claim court commissioners hear SSN cases, but most have been heard by two commissioners. One reported that SSN cases were well-prepared, and similar in nature. He cited the Berkshire Motel case -- the first SSN case to go to court, and one with constant criminal problems -- as a model case for using public nuisance law to solve a problem. He cautioned, however, that the SSN process not be used to resolve the "problems of living together" such as "barking dogs and blight." Again, the SSN director was cited as critical to the program's neutral application and ultimate success.

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SSN has referred approximately 60 cases to the San Diego Mediation Center. According to the mediation center's main contact with SSN, the cases are very suitable for mediation and have a higher mediation rate in comparison to other cases handled by the mediation center. This may be partially attributable to the SSN director's preparation of neighborhood team members prior to mediation hearings.

SSN San Diego is strongly supported by the city council. One council member credits this support for the program to its fit with neighborhood policing, effectiveness and perceived fairness, emphasis on citizen empowerment, and exceptional director.

Competition from agencies and organizations involved in problem-solving, other forms of nuisance abatement, and crime and drug prevention efforts appears to be minimal. Much of this good will appears to stem from Mr. Heider's stance that each agency and organization "has a role to play" and SSN should be used after other strategies have been tried, coupled with his support and recognition of other alternatives.

Obstacles encountered. SSN has an excellent reputation in San Diego. It is a well-used and well-thought of program. Its working relationships with other city agencies and programs are excellent. The main problem the program wrestles with is obtaining adequate and continuing funding. The city's financial support for the program (just under $70,000 per year) limits staffing and therefore the number of projects that can be addressed. Mr. Heider believes the caseload could easily be doubled, perhaps tripled, with additional staff; the number of problems brought to his attention simply exceed the time available. Recently, Mr. Heider was successful in securing an additional $20,000 per year from county funds, to expand the program into county areas.

Until September 2000, the time of the last site visit to San Diego, no SSN program had been accused of any civil rights violations. Just prior to that visit, however, an ACLU representative visited SSN San Diego, to talk about a project in which the property owner (believed to be the one who called the ACLU) thought the neighborhood team's motivation was racial, that they wanted the African-American family out of the neighborhood. The team's response was outrage, as they pointed out the other half a dozen African-American families in the neighborhood and the five years worth of calls to the police about the one problem property. Before the neighborhood team took any court action, the problem tenants moved out. No further word was heard from the ACLU.

Institutionalization

Although SSN San Diego relies on soft money which must be re-awarded each year, its political support is very strong and ongoing funding is expected. The program's director is clearly very hard working, yet is not quite able to keep up with the demand. Additional funds are needed to handle all the problem properties brought to the program's attention.

Neighborhood Projects

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Our aim was to conduct face-to-face interviews with up to ten neighborhood team members and other residents or business representatives around each problem location in the impact study. As we have found in other recent criminal justice studies, the community interviews -- and even observations -- around some locations were difficult to conduct due to the high level of suspicion and fear of neighborhood residents. In most of the San Diego projects, our interviewers met with neighborhood team members during their first meeting with the SSN director, yet many were still reluctant to talk for fear of their participation somehow getting back to the problem tenants or property owner. Some interviews were held in safe places (e.g., a church) near the neighborhood project. Some residents also refused to be interviewed a second time, in spite of much diligence on the part of our interviewers. Thus, fewer than ten residents were interviewed for each of the projects described below. While percentages are used because they help make quick sense of differences pre- and post-intervention, no significance tests were conducted and the percentages based on small numbers should be viewed with extreme caution.

Astral. The Astral Drive problem property is one of 30 condos in complex of five buildings of six units each. Of the 30 condos, about ten are owner-occupied and the rest are rented. The Homeowner's Association reported the problem property to SSN in February 2000.

The problems were reported to include lots of short-term visits interpreted as drug buys, a high volume of traffic and parking problems due to the visits, strangers sleeping in cars, public drug use and intoxication, loud music and other noise, trash and liquor bottles thrown in the common area. The condo is owned by a woman whose boyfriend, young adult children, and grandchildren lives there in different combinations at different times. All of the adults are alleged to be involved in the problem behaviors. The problems had been going on for about a year.

Representatives have talked to the property owner to no avail, and the association sent a letter of complaint and fined the owner for the parking and noise violations. A private security guard was hired for six months, and the police were called several times in regard to specific incidents. Several residents have been intimidated by the owner and other tenants.

The SSN director met the with Homeowner's Association in February 2000 to explain the process. He explained the next step would be the formal documentation of the problems, which the Association members did not move forward on. Individual members expressed different views, but it appears that the majority of the Association's board was reluctant to move "aggressively." A police "raid" in July 2000 resulted in the arrest of several people and in the property owner entering a drug rehab program. One team member also filed a complaint with the Health Department about trash in the property's backyard. The SSN director has kept in touch with Association's main representative and the problems reportedly continue.

Interviews were conducted with seven neighborhood team members in February 2000. In September, four were re-interviewed (see Tables 3-1 to 3-3); one team member had moved and the other two could not be contacted after numerous tries and one canceled appointment. The neighborhood team members indicated a fairly high degree of satisfaction with the block.

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Residents generally reported feeling fairly safe, especially during the day; perceptions of safety increased slightly between the pre- and post-interviews (again, we caution that these differences are based on very small numbers and should be viewed cautiously). On the negative side, the small number of residents interviewed indicated an increase in problem behaviors, particularly involving drugs, although they and their family did not report crimes committed against them.

As shown in Table 3-3, few of the neighborhood team members interviewed participated in community crime prevention efforts, but most of them had taken specific actions against the problem property, including calling the police, working with the Homeowner's Association, and speaking to the people causing the problems.

Pre and post observations of the parking area and short drive into it from Astral Drive (see Table 3-4) indicated some trash, but not much, little traffic, and little human activity of any kind.

The calls for service data provided by the San Diego Police Department (Figure 3-3) show few calls for service at the problem property in 1998 and 1999 (2 and 5 per year, respectively). Calls then increased 2000, to 4 in May and 6 in June, then dropped again to one to two per month through September. The drop after June may be attributable to the police action in July.

Deacon Street. The Deacon Street problem property is a single-family home located on a street of similar houses in a low to middle class neighborhood. The owner lives in Colorado and rents the house; the current tenants are a couple and their two teenage boys who moved in two and a half years ago.

Nearby neighbors called SSN in February 2000. They reported constant traffic from the alleged drug sales, with many people making five minute stops at the house. The neighbors also said the tenants have four dogs they are training to attack, and the teenage boys have harassed neighborhood children. Noise is also a problem. The neighbors reported a high level of fear about the problems and generally did not allow their children to play in the front yard or street.

The residents said they had already tried several strategies, including frequent calls to the police, the installation of a "Drive Slow -- Children At Play" sign, calls to a narcotics detective, and numerous contacts with the father at the problem property and the property owner.

The SSN director met with six neighbors from four families in March 2000. As they had already begun documenting the problem by taking photos and writing down dates, times, and license plate numbers, he advised going directly to the demand letter and said he would send it the next day, giving the owner until May 1st to respond. Soon after the meeting, several of the tenants were arrested on theft and/or drug-related offenses, angering the tenants further. There was also an altercation between the tenants, their friends, and a neighbor, which ended with a shot fired into the ground. While the police were called, no arrests were made.

The SSN director reported that he sent a demand letter to the property owner, and then

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talked by phone and met with him. The owner was reportedly reluctant to do anything to address the problem, saying the tenants were "nice people." Several residents interviewed in September 2000 thought SSN had not done anything about the problem and rated its services very low. Follow-up interviews were conducted with three of the residents interviewed prior to SSN's involvement, including two neighborhood team members. One person declined to participate again, saying he had nothing to add except for noting speeding cars and the "smell of cocaine" at night, and the others could not be contacted.

In follow-up interviews, residents reported that the problems -- cars coming and going, speeding, shots fired, drug sales and use -- have continued. One involved in the recent altercation with the problem tenants reported that her family was very fearful of retaliation and that she understood all the drug charges had been dropped. She also reported that the owner had tried to evict the tenants but backed off when their attorney threatened to sue.

As shown in Table 3-6, residents around the Deacon Street property reported little change in their satisfaction with the block or perceptions of safety, although they also reported a lower level of most problems except for violence in the area. On the other hand, the respondents experienced a lower degree of victimization during the intervention period (Table 3-7) and report a high degree of satisfaction with the police. Observations made pre- and post-intervention (Table 3-8) show little change.

The calls for police service data (Figure 3-4) show few calls in 1998 and 1999 (2 and 0 respectively) about the problem property. There were four calls in February 2000, one in March 2000, and none each month since.

It appears that the problem property on Deacon Street continues to be a problem six months after SSN began working with the concerned residents. The SSN director feels that neighborhood team should now move to file a small claims court action, but the residents are reluctant, due in part to their fears of retaliation.

Katz Street. Katz Street is in a neighborhood of modest single- and multi-family homes characterized by small but steeply-walled ravines. The target property is a duplex very similar to others; the duplexes tend to be grouped in pairs, with the units facing one another across a shared driveway. Half of the property was rented by a family of five in February 2000, four children aged 7 to 16 and their mom. At the time of the pre-intervention observations, the problem property was a "center of activity" on the block, where people -- typically teenage boys -- congregated. The mother's boyfriend, also a frequent tenant at the property, was reportedly in jail due to drug dealing.

According to neighborhood team members, the family at the problem property has lived at about five different locations in the immediate neighborhood. They had reportedly been evicted from other properties after neighbors' complaints but always found another home nearby. In early 2000, the problems reported at the Katz Street property were many. Drug use and sales were

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evident, with many cars coming and going frequently. The oldest teenager was believed to be involved in gang activities, and numerous instances of the teenagers harassing and hitting other neighborhood children were reported.

Prior to calling SSN, the neighbors around the problem property complained to each other, but according to one of the neighborhood team members, would not come forward or go to community meetings to try to resolve the problems. The neighborhood team leader had talked to the property owner in the past about problems at the duplex. He also called code compliance about the garage at the problem property being used as an apartment (by the boyfriend) and the amount of garbage there. At a police-community meeting the neighborhood team leader brought up the problems on Katz Street, resulting in advice from the narcotics strategy team on gathering license plates numbers and the arrest of the boyfriend. This neighborhood leader also knew of Bob Heider and contacted SSN for help.

The SSN director met with the neighborhood team in March 2000, gathered information about the problem and their documentation, and sent a certified letter to the property owner, which the owner refused to pick up. Several non-certified letters were sent also, some of which were returned, and the SSN director also left several messages. The neighborhood team leader and other team members finally reached the owner and put pressure on him to resolve the problem. The mother was evicted in early April 2000 and her ex-husband received custody of the children. While the mother has been seen in the neighborhood occasionally since then and her children have returned to her one by one, they are no longer neighborhood residents. The neighborhood team leader reports that "People on Katz Street are enjoying the new freedom that they have..." and expressed wishes that the mother receive help with her drug problems.

Pre- and post-intervention interviews were conducted with two members of the neighborhood team. Many attempts were made to talk to other tenants, with the help of the neighborhood team leader. They refused to meet with the evaluation interviewers even outside of the neighborhood and expressed a high degree of fear of the problem tenants. The answers of those two individuals appear in Tables 3-9 to 3-11. They reported an increased sense of safety in the neighborhood and reductions in the extent of many neighborhood problems. Both have been active in the community and with the specific SSN intervention, and report a high level of satisfaction with the police and SSN. Independent observations by the evaluation team (Table 3-12) pre- and post-intervention indicated a slight increase in trash and garbage in the neighborhood and also a slight increase in the positive use of public and private spaces.

Calls for service at the Katz Street property have not been high. During the first half of 2000, one or two calls per month were made to the police (see Figure 3-5). From July onward, no calls for service have been received.

All signs are that the problem on Katz Street has been eliminated through the efforts of the neighborhood team leaders assisted by SSN. The neighborhood team has also talked about contacting other property owners where the family resides to inform them of past problems and

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SSN actions.

Ventura Place. The problem property consists of three buildings (ten individual rental units) located steps off the very popular boardwalk along San Diego's Mission Beach. The boardwalk is a colorful place loaded with restaurants, bars, shops, small motels, and rental properties, frequented by residents and tourists alike. The problem property has been rented for years by successive groups of college students. The current owner lives in Colorado and bought the property about three years ago.

According to interviews with neighborhood residents, the problems include theft, vandalism (slashed tires), music and party noise until the wee hours of the morning, public drinking and urination, excessive traffic and unauthorized parking, trash, and harassment by the tenants of neighbors who they believe have reported problems to the police. Prior to SSN's involvement, the residents had spoken to the tenants and property owner about the problems, called code compliance about the noise, and made calls to the police at the time of specific incidents, with little relief. The residents say the problem tenants have reacted aggressively, taunting residents and calling the police in retaliation. The residents report that the owner has been cooperative, has met with them, and developed a list of rules for the tenants, but he has no control from afar. A deputy district attorney referred the residents to SSN.

The SSN director met with the neighborhood team in March 2000, trained them in SSN procedures, and asked for the usual documentation. No documentation had been received by the time the summer vacation arrived and the SSN director decided to delay any further action until the fall semester began. The property was rented over the summer by families, and no problems were reported by the neighborhood team leader beyond the noise resulting from outside conversations in close quarters. He continues to want to work with owner to get an on-site manager for the property. Other residents reportedly have a lawsuit pending in regard to the harassment and noise from the property which is not related to SSN; efforts to interview this couple were not successful.

Eight residents were interviewed before SSN got involved, four of them involved in the neighborhood team and four living nearby (two of these four were not aware of the problems at the property on Ventura). Their views of the immediate neighborhood are presented in Tables 3-13 to 3-15. The residents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the block and a high degree of safety, and described the residents are closeknit and happy to help each other out. The area's problems appeared to be primarily thefts from vehicles, blight, nuisances, and people hanging out. The residents expressed a fairly high level of satisfaction with police services, and several of them were involved in community crime prevention activities. The majority of them had called the police about the problem property or talked to neighbors and the tenants about them. Several actively worked with other to resolve the problems.

Calls for service data (Figure 3-6) indicate that there were 0 to 3 calls for service per month up to January 2000, with none in summer. Between February and May 2000, however, the

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number of calls for service jumped to 6 to 12 CFS per month. Calls decreased to 0 to 4 per month during the summer.

Of the eight people we tried to re-interview in September 2000, one was on vacation, two had moved, one could not be reached, and three refused to be interviewed. One of the refusals was believed to be due to the resident avoiding the interviewers because he was seen as part of the problem, and another was believed to be due to the resident's fear of affecting their rental business by discussing neighborhood problems.

It appears that the problems on Ventura Place remain unresolved. In Spring 2000, no SSN actions were taken because no documentation was forthcoming except that kept by the neighborhood team leader. The SSN director has considered working to get a police-run program, the Community Assisted Party (CAP) Program in effect on Ventura. This program gives the police special authority to "cap a house" after receiving documentation of nuisance and noise problems. If the problems persist, arrests may be made. As this approach also relies on documentation by neighbors, its implementation is uncertain.

Toyon Drive. The neighborhood project on Toyon Drive came to our attention at the beginning of the SSN evaluation, as it was brought to a successful resolution. Through interviews with the neighborhood team leaders, another team member, and a review of the extensive documentation and supporting materials submitted to the small claims court, we reconstructed the problem and its resolution through SSN.

The problem property has reportedly been causing problems for twenty years. It is an unusual situation for a SSN case in that it is owner-occupied -- a couple and their three children aged 8, 14, and 16, live there. The male half of the couple inherited the house years ago. the problems include alleged drug sales involving the children, burglary (also involving the children, including the youngest, who has crawled through pet doors to open locked doors for the older siblings), harassment, stalking, intimidation, vandalism, gun shots, grenades thrown in the nearby canyon, noise, profanity, speeding, reckless driving, trespassing, and child abuse. The property is blighted, covered with weeds and trash, with rags serving as curtains.

The effects of these problems have been tremendous. In their letters to the court, neighborhood residents summarized about the impact of their fears and victimization. Several families have sold their houses and moved. Others keep their children inside, and sleep in rooms as far as away from the problem property as possible. The neighbors have tried to help and feed the kids, and have called Child Protective Services on their behalf. One youth has been arrested for thefts. Over an eighteen month period, the neighbors called for police service 25 times.

In late 1998, a police officer referred the neighborhood leader to SSN. A neighborhood meeting was convened with fourteen neighbors and one police sergeant attending. Twelve residents wrote detailed accounts of the history of the problem and its effects on them and their family. One letter was 19 single-spaced pages; another was 15 single-pages long. As suggested

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by SSN, the San Diego Mediation Program also sent a letter to the problem residents, requesting their participation in a mediation hearing. The letter received no response.

In January 1999, a letter was sent to property owner by the SSN director on behalf of the neighborhood team. The property owner did not respond. Eleven neighbors subsequent filed small claims actions and prepared a notebook for the judge. On April 28, 1999, the case was heard in small claims court. Several weeks later the neighborhood team received a judgment of $33,500. Within weeks, the problem property had been sold, reportedly at $100,000 less than similar homes in the neighborhood.

By June 1999, a "wonderful" new couple and their cat had moved into the former problem house. The neighbors were reportedly enjoying peace and quiet in their neighborhood, and reported that they had much more contact with their fellow residents than previously. Plans for a block party were underway.

In a follow-up phone call in mid-2000 it was learned that the court-ordered judgments had yet to be received by any neighborhood team member. The problem parents had filed for bankruptcy and payment appeared unlikely although the neighborhood team planned to continue to pursue it. The neighborhood team leader reported the residents had formed a neighborhood watch, were maintaining their phone tree, and adults and children alike were out and about in the neighborhood now.

Calls for service data (see Figure 3-7) show that one to four calls for police service were made each month between January 1998 and January 1999 about the Toyon Drive property, when SSN became directly involved. Between February 1999 and September 2000, not a single call for police service was recorded.

The Toyon Drive neighborhood project was wildly successful. After years of severe, neighborhood-destroying problems, dozens of calls to the police, and other problem-solving strategies, the use of the SSN process resolved the problem quickly and restored the neighborhood to a higher quality of life.

Table 3-1: Results of Pre and Post Interviews on Astral Drive

Respondent Characteristics

Interview question	Pre-intervention (n=7)	Post-intervention (n=4)
Gender:		
Male	1 (14%)	-
Female	6 (86%)	4 (100%)
Age (average)	43 years old	54 years old
Ethnicity:		
African-American	-	-
White/European-American	7 (100%)	4 (100%)
Hispanic/Latino	-	-
Asian/Pacific Islander	-	-
Other	-	-
Employment:		
Working full-time	4 (57%)	1 (25%)
Working part-time	2 (28%)	2 (50%)
Student	1 (14%)	1 (25%)
Not working	-	-
Income:		
Less than $15,000	-	1 (25%)
$15,001 to $30,000	5 (71%)	1 (25%)
$30,001 to $45,000	-	2 (50%)
$45,001 to $60,000	1 (14%)	-
$60,001 to $75,000	1 (14%)	-
Over $75,000	-	-
No. of children under 18:		
None	5 (71%)	3 (75%)
One	1 (14%)	1 (25%)
Two or more	1 (14%)	-
Tenure in neighborhood (average in years)	3.9 years	4.6 years
Own or rent house?	4 (57%)	2 (50%)

Table 3-2: Results of Pre and Post Interviews on Astral Drive

Perceptions of the Neighborhood

Interview question	Pre-intervention (n=7)	Post-intervention (n=4)
<u>Satisfaction with neighbhood</u>		
Satisfaction with the block (1=very dissatisfied, 4=very satisfied)	3.00	3.00
In the past six months, has the block become better or worse? (1=worse, 3=better)	2.00	2.50
<u>Fear of crime</u>		
Perceptions of safety during the day, alone on the block (1=very unsafe, 4=very safe)	3.43	3.75
Perceptions of safety during the day today compared to six months ago (1=less safe, 3=more safe)	---	2.50
Perceptions of safety after dark, alone on the block (1=very unsafe, 4=very safe)	3.00	3.67
Perceptions of safety after dark today compared to six months ago (1=less safe, 3=more safe)	---	2.00
Security measures taken:		
Alarm, bars, gates, other security	2 (28%)	1 (25%)
Gun at home for protection	-	1 (25%)
<u>Type of neighborhood</u>		
Likelihood of neighbors stopping youth painting graffiti (1=not likely at all, 4=very likely)	md	md
Likelihood of neighbors taking steps to get city agency to fix problems (1=not likely at all, 4=very likely)	md	md
Level of agreement (1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree) with statements:		
People around here are willing to help their neighbors.	2.00	2.25
This is a "close-knit" community.	3.00	3.25
Ratings of problems in neighborhood (1=no problem, 4=big problem)		
People "hanging out"	2.29	3.00
Violence (shootings, assault)	1.00	2.33
People selling drugs	2.43	4.00
People using drugs	2.57	4.00
Property stolen	1.57	1.50
Vehicles broken into or stolen	2.14	2.25
Blight (trash, graffiti, etc.)	3.00	3.50
Nuisances (noise, barking dogs)	3.14	3.50
Prostitution	1.00	1.67
Vacant/abandoned buildings	1.00	1.00
Gangs	1.71	2.00

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**Table 3-3: Results of Pre and Post Interviews on
Astral Drive**

Respondent Victimization, Satisfaction with the Police, Involvement in
Crime Prevention and Community Activities

Interview question	Pre-intervention (n=7)	Post-intervention (n=4)
Number of crimes committed against respondent or respondent's family in the immediate neighborhood in past six months, by type:		
Burglary (break in to house or garage):	0	0
Damage or vandalism to home:	0	0
Vehicle theft or theft from vehicle:	0	0
Stolen property from outside home:	0	0
Robbery or attempted robbery by force:	0	0
Attacked or threatened with a weapon:	0	0
Physically assaulted or attempted assault:	0	0
Satisfaction with the job police are doing (1=very bad job, 5=very good job)...		
preventing crime in the neighborhood:	3.33	3.25
protecting people's lives and property:	4.00	3.50
dealing with problems we care about:.	3.14	3.75
keeping order:	3.57	3.50
Percent of respondents who have done the following in the past six months...		
Attended a community meeting about neighborhood problems:	md	3 (75%)
Participated in a neighborhood project:	0	0
Participated in a neighborhood/block watch program:	1 (14%)	0
Called 911 about a problem *not* at the problem location:	0	0
Talked to a police officer informally about neighborhood problems:	3 (43%)	3 (75%)
Worked with police or city agency on problem-solving:	0	0
Worked with a community group or neighbors on problem-solving:	1 (14%)	0
Other:	1 (14%)	0
Actions taken in regard to the problem property:		
Called 911:	3 (50%)	1 (25%)
Talked to neighbors about the problem:	0	0
Spoke to the tenants about the problem:	2 (33%)	2 (50%)
Spoke to the owner or manager about the problem:	2 (33%)	2 (50%)
Called a city agency about the problem:	5 (83%)	2 (50%)
Took direct steps to resolve the problem:	0	1 (25%)
Called or met with a community organization to resolve the problem:	5 (83%)	0
Worked with police or other agencies to resolve the problem:	3 (50%)	1 (25%)
Worked with neighbors to resolve the problem:	1 (17%)	1 (25%)
Other:	4 (67%)	4 (100%)
Percent who have heard of Safe Streets Now!	6 (85%)	4 (100%)
Average rating (1=poor, 5=excellent)	---	4.5

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**Table 3-4: Results of Pre and Post Observations on
Astral Drive**

Measure	Pre-intervention (n=4)	Post-intervention (n=4)
Blight: Extent of (1=almost none, 4=almost everywhere):		
Garbage	1.00	1.00
Trash, litter, junk	1.50	1.75
Cigarette or cigar butts or packages	1.50	2.00
Needles, syringes, other drug paraphernalia	1.00	1.00
Beer or liquor bottles	1.00	1.00
Graffiti	2.00	1.00
Traffic		
Number of parked cars:		
1-5	3	3
6-10	1	0
11+	0	1
Number of mobile cars:		
1-5	1	1
6-10	0	0
11+	0	0
Volume of traffic (1=no traffic, 6=very heavy traffic)	1.25	1.25
Security and safety		
Police present?	no	no
Private security present?	no	no
School crossing guards present?	no	no
Positive and negative behavior: Average number of:		
Children playing in private yard	0	0
Children playing in public area	0	0
People outside, on private property	0	0
People greeting, talking	.25	0
People waiting at bus stop	0	0
Pedestrians	0	.25
Bicyclists	0	0
Other foot traffic	0	0
People on pay phones	0	0
People loitering	0	0
Homeless people, panhandlers	0	0
People selling drugs	0	0
People drinking	0	0
People smoking	.25	0

Figure 3-3: Astral Drive, Target property only

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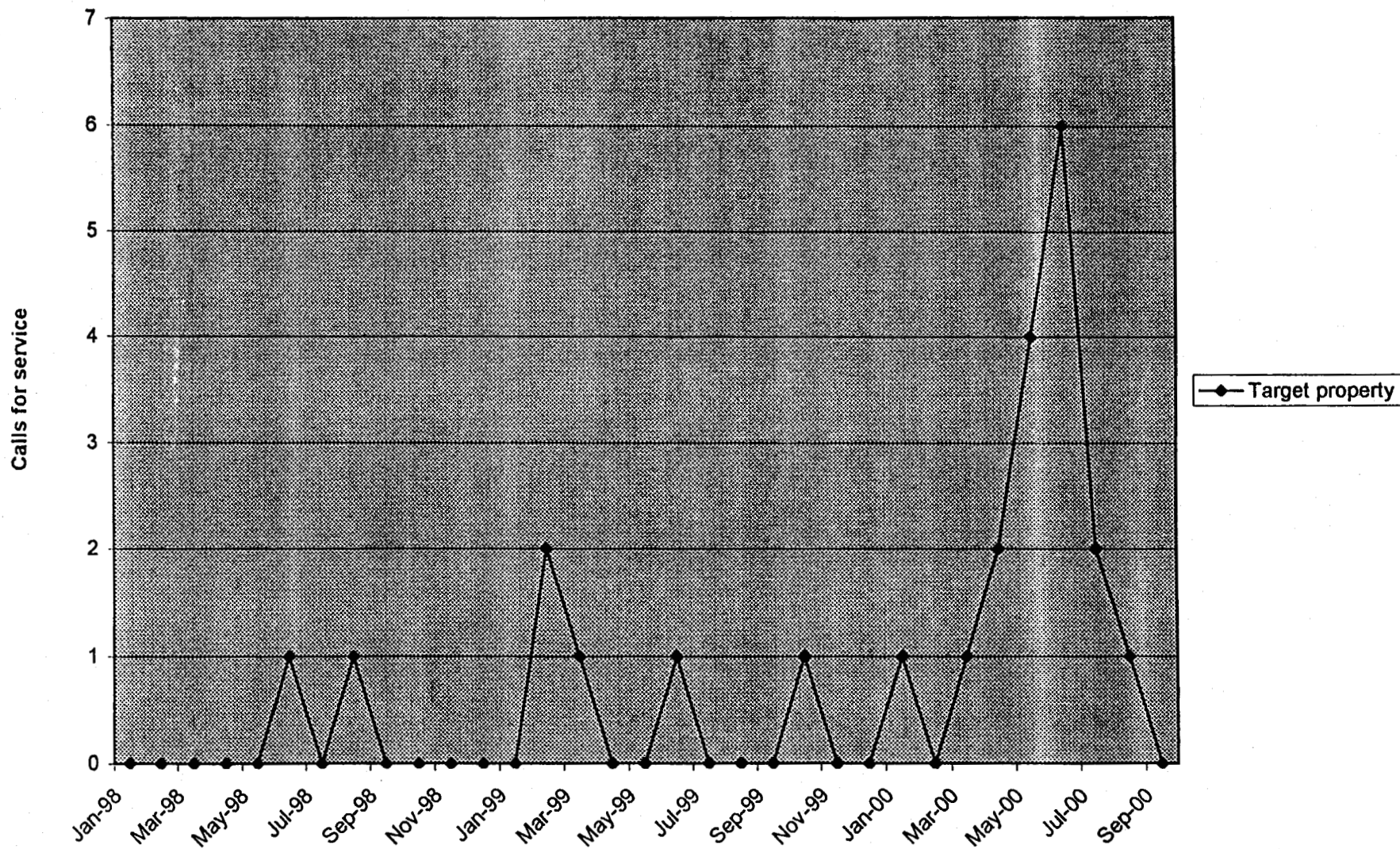
**Table 3-5: Results of Pre and Post Interviews on
Deacon Street**

Respondent Characteristics

Interview question	Pre-intervention (n=7)	Post-intervention (n=3)
Gender:		
Male	4 (57%)	-
Female	3 (43%)	3 (100%)
Age (average)	46 years old	44 years old
Ethnicity:		
African-American	-	-
White/European-American	4 (67%)	2 (67%)
Hispanic/Latino	1 (17%)	-
Asian/Pacific Islander	1(17%)	1 (33%)
Other	-	-
Employment:		
Working full-time	4 (57%)	2 (67%)
Working part-time	-	-
Student	-	-
Not working	3 (43%)	1 (33%)
Income:		
Less than $15,000	-	-
$15,001 to $30,000	2 (29%)	1 (33%)
$30,001 to $45,000	4 (57%)	2 (67%)
$45,001 to $60,000	-	-
$60,001 to $75,000	1 (14%)	-
Over $75,000	-	-
No. of children under 18:		
None	1 (14%)	-
One	3 (43%)	-
Two or more	3 (43%)	2 (100%)
Tenure in neighborhood (average in years)	12.6 years	13.4 years
Own or rent house?	6 (86%)	3 (100%)

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Table 3-6: Results of Pre and Post Interviews on Deacon Street

Perceptions of the Neighborhood

Interview question	Pre-intervention (n=7)	Post-intervention (n=3)
Satisfaction with neighbhood		
Satisfaction with the block (1=very dissatisfied, 4=very satisfied)	3.29	3.67
In the past six months, has the block become better or worse? (1=worse, 3=better)	2.14	. 1.67
Fear of crime		
Perceptions of safety during the day, alone on the block (1=very unsafe, 4=very safe)	3.43	3.33
Perceptions of safety during the day today compared to six months ago (1=less safe, 3=more safe)	---	2.00
Perceptions of safety after dark, alone on the block (1=very unsafe, 4=very safe)	2.86	3.00
Perceptions of safety after dark today compared to six months ago (1=less safe, 3=more safe)	---	2.00
Security measures taken:		
Alarm, bars, gates, other security	1 (14%)	1 (33%)
Gun at home for protection	4 (57%)	2 (67%)
Type of neighborhood		
Likelihood of neighbors stopping youth painting graffiti (1=not likely at all, 4=very likely)	md	md
Likelihood of neighbors taking steps to get city agency to fix problems (1=not likely at all, 4=very likely)	md	md
Level of agreement (1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree) with statements:		
People around here are willing to help their neighbors.	1.29	1.00
This is a "close-knit" community.	1.71	1.67
Ratings of problems in neighborhood (1=no problem, 4=big problem)		
People "hanging out"	2.57	1.67
Violence (shootings, assault)	1.29	2.33
People selling drugs	3.14	3.00
People using drugs	2.57	3.00
Property stolen	1.14	1.33
Vehicles broken into or stolen	2.29	1.67
Blight (trash, graffiti, etc.)	2.71	1.33
Nuisances (noise, barking dogs)	2.86	1.67
Prostitution	1.00	1.00
Vacant/abandoned buildings	1.00	1.00
Gangs	1.71	1.00

Table 3-7: Results of Pre and Post Interviews on
Deacon Street

Respondent Victimization, Satisfaction with the Police, Involvement in
Crime Prevention and Community Activities

Interview question	Pre-intervention (n=7)	Post-intervention (n=3)
Number of crimes committed against respondent or respondent's family in the immediate neighborhood in past six months, by type:		
Burglary (break in to house or garage):	0	0
Damage or vandalism to home:	0	0
Vehicle theft or theft from vehicle:	5	2
Stolen property from outside home:	2	0
Robbery or attempted robbery by force:	0	0
Attacked or threatened with a weapon:	1	0
Physically assaulted or attempted assault:	0	0
Satisfaction with the job police are doing (1=very bad job, 5=very good job)...		
preventing crime in the neighborhood:	3.43	4.00
protecting people's lives and property:	3.71	4.00
dealing with problems we care about:.	3.33	4.00
keeping order:	3.43	4.33
Percent of respondents who have done the following in the past six months...		
Attended a community meeting about neighborhood problems:	0	0
Participated in a neighborhood project:	0	0
Participated in a neighborhood/block watch program:	3 (43%)	0
Called 911 about a problem *not* at the problem location:	0	0
Talked to a police officer informally about neighborhood problems:	2 (29%)	1 (33%)
Worked with police or city agency on problem-solving:	1 (14%)	0
Worked with a community group or neighbors on problem-solving:	2 (29%)	0
Other:	0	0
Actions taken in regard to the problem property:		
Called 911:	3 (60%)	2 (67%)
Talked to neighbors about the problem:	0	0
Spoke to the tenants about the problem:	3 (60%)	1 (33%)
Spoke to the owner or manager about the problem:	3 (60%)	1 (33%)
Called a city agency about the problem:	0	0
Took direct steps to resolve the problem:	2 (40%)	1 (33%)
Called or met with a community organization to resolve the problem:	4 (80%)	0
Worked with police or other agencies to resolve the problem:	0	2 (67%)
Worked with neighbors to resolve the problem:	5 (71%)	3 (100%)
Other:	0	0
Percent who have heard of Safe Streets Now!	5 (71%)	3 (100%)
Average rating (1=poor, 5=excellent)	---	1.00[1]

Ratings based on 1 responent except for one item, which was answered by two respondents.

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Table 3-8: Results of Pre and Post Observations on
Deacon Street

Measure	Pre-intervention (n=4)	Post-intervention (n=4)
Blight: Extent of (1=almost none, 4=almost everywhere):		
Garbage	1.00	1.00
Trash, litter, junk	1.00	1.00
Cigarette or cigar butts or packages	1.00	1.00
Needles, syringes, other drug paraphernalia	1.00	1.00
Beer or liquor bottles	1.00	1.00
Graffiti	1.00	1.00
Traffic		
Number of parked cars:		
1-5	4	4
6-10	0	0
11+	0	0
Number of mobile cars:		
1-5	2	2
6-10	0	0
11+	0	0
Volume of traffic (1=no traffic, 6=very heavy traffic)	1.50	1.75
Security and safety		
Police present?	yes, foot patrol	no
Private security present?	no	no
School crossing guards present?	no	no
Positive and negative behavior: Average number of:		
Children playing in private yard	.25	0
Children playing in public area	0	0
People outside, on private property	.50	.25
People greeting, talking	0	0
People waiting at bus stop	0	0
Pedestrians	.75	1.25
Bicyclists	0	0
Other foot traffic	0	0
People on pay phones	0	0
People loitering	0	0
Homeless people, panhandlers	0	0
People selling drugs	0	0
People drinking	0	0
People smoking	0	0

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Figure 3-4: Deacon Street, Target property only
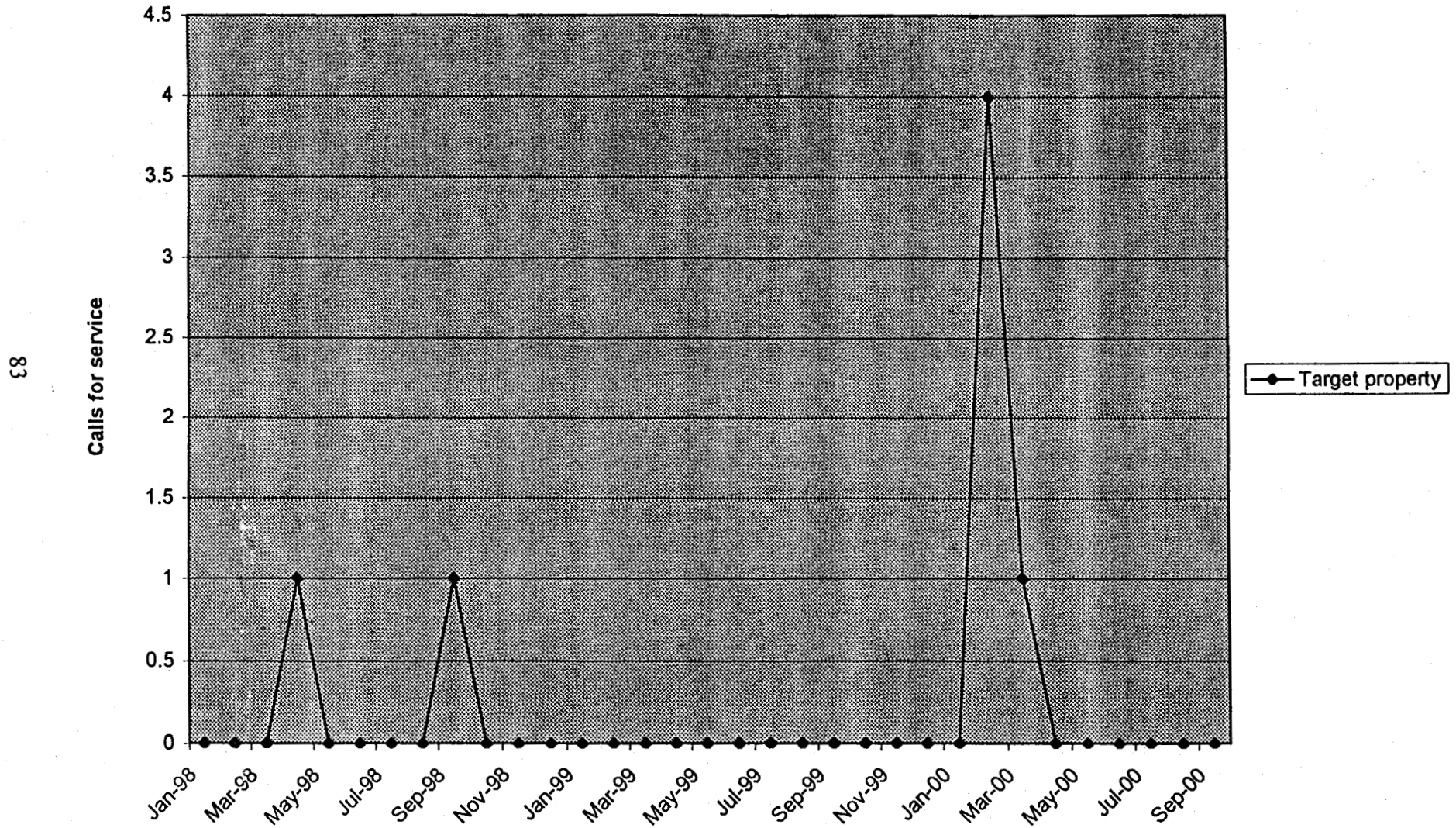
Table 3-9: Results of Pre and Post Interviews on
Katz Street

Respondent Characteristics[1]

Interview question	Pre-intervention (n=2)	Post-intervention (n=2)
Gender:		
Male	2	2
Female	-	-
Age (average)	62 years old	62 years old
Ethnicity:		
African-American	-	-
White/European-American	2	2
Hispanic/Latino	-	-
Asian/Pacific Islander	-	-
Other	-	-
Employment:		
Working full-time	-	-
Working part-time	-	-
Student	-	-
Not working	2	2
Income:		
Less than $15,000	1	-
$15,001 to $30,000	1	1
$30,001 to $45,000	-	-
$45,001 to $60,000	-	-
$60,001 to $75,000	-	-
Over $75,000	-	-
No. of children under 18:		
None	2	1
One	-	1
Two or more	-	-
Tenure in neighborhood (average in years)	17.5 years	17.5 years
Own or rent house?	2	2

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[1]Of all the presentations of results based on small numbers, this is the most egregious. Just two individuals were interviewed pre- and post-intervention on Koe Street.

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**Table 3-10: Results of Pre and Post Interviews on
Katz Street**

Perceptions of the Neighborhood[1]

Interview question	Pre-intervention (n=2)	Post-intervention (n=2)
<u>Satisfaction with neighbhood</u> Satisfaction with the block (1=very dissatisfied, 4=very satisfied)	2.50	2.50
In the past six months, has the block become better or worse? (1=worse, 3=better)	2.50	3.00
<u>Fear of crime</u> Perceptions of safety during the day, alone on the block (1=very unsafe, 4=very safe)	3.50	4.00
Perceptions of safety during the day today compared to six months ago (1=less safe, 3=more safe)	---	3.00
Perceptions of safety after dark, alone on the block (1=very unsafe, 4=very safe)	3.00	4.00
Perceptions of safety after dark today compared to six months ago (1=less safe, 3=more safe)	---	3.00

Security measures taken:
   Alarm, bars, gates, other security
   Gun at home for protection
	1
	1
		1
		1

<u>Type of neighborhood</u> Likelihood of neighbors stopping youth painting graffiti (1=not likely at all, 4=very likely)	md	md
Likelihood of neighbors taking steps to get city agency to fix problems (1=not likely at all, 4=very likely)	md	md
Level of agreement (1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree) with statements: People around here are willing to help their neighbors. This is a "close-knit" community.	2.50 2.50	2.50 2.00

Ratings of problems in neighborhood (1=no problem, 4=big problem)
   People "hanging out"
   Violence (shootings, assault)
   People selling drugs
   People using drugs
   Property stolen
   Vehicles broken into or stolen
   Blight (trash, graffiti, etc.)
   Nuisances (noise, barking dogs)
   Prostitution
   Vacant/abandoned buildings
   Gangs
	3.00
	2.00
	3.50
	3.50
	2.00
	1.50
	3.50
	4.00
	1.00
	1.00
	3.00
		2.00
		1.00
		1.50
		3.00
		1.00
		1.50
		2.50
		2.50
		1.00
		1.00
		1.00

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[1]Of all the presentations of results based on small numbers, this is the most egregious. Just two individuals were interviewed pre- and post-intervention on Koe Street.

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**Table 3-11: Results of Pre and Post Interviews on
Katz Street**

Respondent Victimization, Satisfaction with the Police, Involvement in
Crime Prevention and Community Activities[1]

Interview question	Pre-intervention (n=2)	Post-intervention (n=2)
Number of crimes committed against respondent or respondent's family in the immediate neighborhood in past six months, by type:		
Burglary (break in to house or garage):	0	0
Damage or vandalism to home:	1	1
Vehicle theft or theft from vehicle:	0	0
Stolen property from outside home:	0	1
Robbery or attempted robbery by force:	0	0
Attacked or threatened with a weapon:	2	0
Physically assaulted or attempted assault:	0	0
Satisfaction with the job police are doing (1=very bad job, 5=very good job)...		
preventing crime in the neighborhood:	4.00	4.00
protecting people's lives and property:	3.50	3.50
dealing with problems we care about:.	4.00	4.00
keeping order:	4.00	3.50
Percent of respondents who have done the following in the past six months...		
Attended a community meeting about neighborhood problems:	2	2
Participated in a neighborhood project:	2	2
Participated in a neighborhood/block watch program:	1	2
Called 911 about a problem *not* at the problem location:	1	1
Talked to a police officer informally about neighborhood problems:	2	2
Worked with police or city agency on problem-solving:	2	2
Worked with a community group or neighbors on problem-solving:	2	2
Other:	1	1
Actions taken in regard to the problem property:		
Called 911:	1	1
Talked to neighbors about the problem:	2	2
Spoke to the tenants about the problem:	1	1
Spoke to the owner or manager about the problem:	0	2
Called a city agency about the problem:	1	1
Took direct steps to resolve the problem:	0	1
Called or met with a community organization to resolve the problem:	2	2
Worked with police or other agencies to resolve the problem:	1	1
Worked with neighbors to resolve the problem:	2	2
Other:	1	2
Percent who have heard of Safe Streets Now!	2	2
Average rating (1=poor, 5=excellent)	---	4.5

[1]Of all the presentations of results based on small numbers, this is the most egregious. Just two individuals were interviewed pre- and post-intervention on Koe Street.

**Table 3-12: Results of Pre and Post Observations on
Katz Street**

Measure	Pre-intervention (n=4)	Post-intervention (n=4)
Blight: Extent of (1=almost none, 4=almost everywhere):		
Garbage	1.50	1.75
Trash, litter, junk	2.00	1.75
Cigarette or cigar butts or packages	2.00	1.75
Needles, syringes, other drug paraphernalia	1.00	1.00
Beer or liquor bottles	1.00	1.50
Graffiti	2.00	1.75
Traffic		
Number of parked cars:		
1-5	0	0
6-10	3	0
11+	1	4
Number of mobile cars:		
1-5	1	3
6-10	3	0
11+	0	0
Volume of traffic (1=no traffic, 6=very heavy traffic)	3.00	2.00
Security and safety		
Police present?	no	no
Private security present?	no	no
School crossing guards present?	no	no
Positive and negative behavior: Average number of:		
Children playing in private yard	3.25	.5
Children playing in public area	0	0
People outside, on private property	1.50	3.00
People greeting, talking	0	0
People waiting at bus stop	0	0
Pedestrians	.25	3.75
Bicyclists	1.00	1.00
Other foot traffic	.50	0
People on pay phones	0	0
People loitering	3.75	3.00
Homeless people, panhandlers	0	0
People selling drugs	0	0
People drinking	0	0
People smoking	.25	.25

Figure 3-5: Katz Street, Target property only

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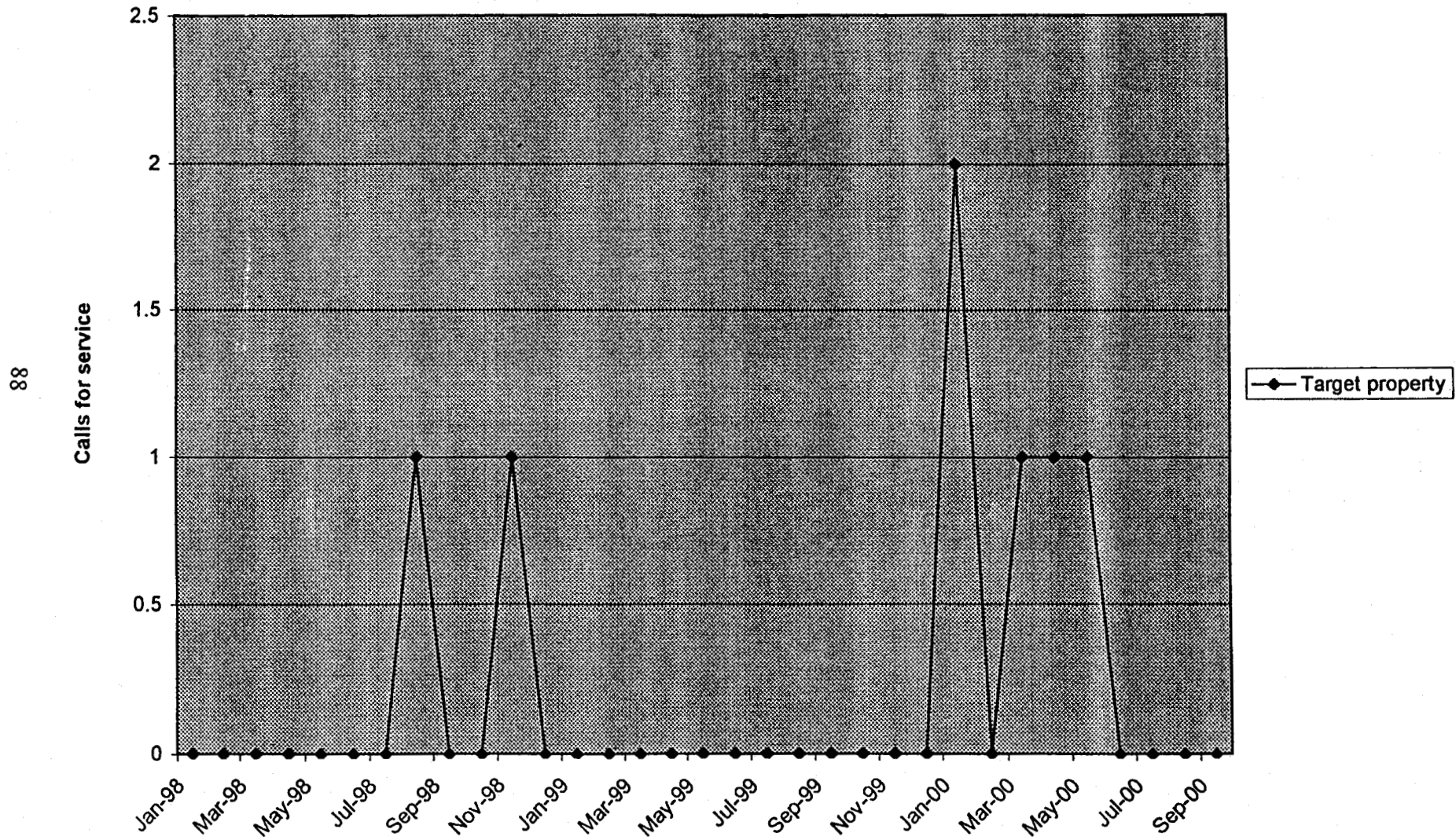
**Table 3-13: Results of Pre and Post Interviews on
Ventura Place**

Respondent Characteristics[1]

Interview question	Pre-intervention (n=8)	Post-intervention (n=1)
Gender:		
Male	5 (63%)	
Female	3 (38%)	
Age (average)	42 years old	
Ethnicity:		
African-American	1 (13%)	
White/European-American	6 (75%)	
Hispanic/Latino	1 (13%)	
Asian/Pacific Islander	-	
Other	-	
Employment:		
Working full-time	6 (75%)	
Working part-time	-	
Student	-	
Not working	2 (25%)	
Income:		
Less than $15,000	1 (20%)	
$15,001 to $30,000	1 (20%)	
$30,001 to $45,000	1 (20%)	
$45,001 to $60,000	2 (40%)	
$60,001 to $75,000	-	
Over $75,000	-	
No. of children under 18:		
None	4 (67%)	
One	1 (17%)	
Two or more	1 (17%)	
Tenure in neighborhood (average in years)	10.5 years	
Own or rent house?	3 (50%)	

[1]As explained in the text, only one person was interviewed post-intervention and his views are incorporated in the narrative.

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Table 3-14: Results of Pre and Post Interviews on
Ventura Place

Perceptions of the Neighborhood[1]

Interview question	Pre-intervention (n=8)	Post-intervention (n=1)
Satisfaction with neighbhood		
Satisfaction with the block (1=very dissatisfied, 4=very satisfied)	3.50	
In the past six months, has the block become better or worse? (1=worse, 3=better)	2.00	
Fear of crime		
Perceptions of safety during the day, alone on the block (1=very unsafe, 4=very safe)	3.75	
Perceptions of safety during the day today compared to six months ago (1=less safe, 3=more safe)	---	
Perceptions of safety after dark, alone on the block (1=very unsafe, 4=very safe)	3.25	
Perceptions of safety after dark today compared to six months ago (1=less safe, 3=more safe)	---	
Security measures taken:		
Alarm, bars, gates, other security	5 (63%)	
Gun at home for protection	1 (14%)	
Type of neighborhood		
Likelihood of neighbors stopping youth painting graffiti (1=not likely at all, 4=very likely)	md	
Likelihood of neighbors taking steps to get city agency to fix problems (1=not likely at all, 4=very likely)	md	
Level of agreement (1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree) with statements:		
People around here are willing to help their neighbors.	1.00	
This is a "close-knit" community.	1.33	
Ratings of problems in neighborhood (1=no problem, 4=big problem)		
People "hanging out"	2.50	
Violence (shootings, assault)	1.13	
People selling drugs	1.25	
People using drugs	1.88	
Property stolen	1.63	
Vehicles broken into or stolen	3.00	
Blight (trash, graffiti, etc.)	2.75	
Nuisances (noise, barking dogs)	2.88	
Prostitution	1.00	
Vacant/abandoned buildings	1.00	
Gangs	1.50	

[1]As explained in the text, only one person was interviewed post-intervention and his views are incorporated in the narrative.

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**Table 4-15: Results of Pre and Post Interviews on
Ventura Place**

Respondent Victimization, Satisfaction with the Police, Involvement in
Crime Prevention and Community Activities[1]

Interview question	Pre-intervention (n=8)	Post-intervention (n=1)
Number of crimes committed against respondent or respondent's family in the immediate neighborhood in past six months, by type:		
Burglary (break in to house or garage):	1	
Damage or vandalism to home:	4	
Vehicle theft or theft from vehicle:	1	
Stolen property from outside home:	2	
Robbery or attempted robbery by force:	0	
Attacked or threatened with a weapon:	3	
Physically assaulted or attempted assault:	1	
Satisfaction with the job police are doing (1=very bad job, 5=very good job)...		
preventing crime in the neighborhood:	4.25	
protecting people's lives and property:	4.00	
dealing with problems we care about:.	3.88	
keeping order:	3.75	
Percent of respondents who have done the following in the past six months...		
Attended a community meeting about neighborhood problems:	3 (38%)	
Participated in a neighborhood project:	2 (25%)	
Participated in a neighborhood/block watch program:	4 (50%)	
Called 911 about a problem *not* at the problem location:	2 (25%)	
Talked to a police officer informally about neighborhood problems:	2 (25%)	
Worked with police or city agency on problem-solving:	1 (13%)	
Worked with a community group or neighbors on problem-solving:	1 (13%)	
Other:	1 (13%0	
Actions taken in regard to the problem property:		
Called 911: -	5 (83%)	
Talked to neighbors about the problem:	4 (67%)	
Spoke to the tenants about the problem:	4 (67%)	
Spoke to the owner or manager about the problem:	2 (33%)	
Called a city agency about the problem:	1 (17%)	
Took direct steps to resolve the problem:	2 (33%)	
Called or met with a community organization to resolve the problem:	2 (33%)	
Worked with police or other agencies to resolve the problem:	3 (50%)	
Worked with neighbors to resolve the problem:	3 (50%)	
Other:	0	
Percent who have heard of Safe Streets Now!	4 (50%)	
Average rating (1=poor, 5=excellent)	---	

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[1]As explained in the text, only one person was interviewed post-intervention and his views are incorporated in the narrative.

**Table 3-16: Results of Pre and Post Observations on
Ventura Place**

Measure	Pre-intervention (n=4)	Post-intervention (n=4)
Blight: Extent of (1=almost none, 4=almost everywhere):		
Garbage	3.00	2.00
Trash, litter, junk	2.75	2.25
Cigarette or cigar butts or packages	3.00	3.00
Needles, syringes, other drug paraphernalia	1.00	1.00
Beer or liquor bottles	2.67	1.25
Graffiti	1.00	2.00
Traffic		
Number of parked cars:		
1-5	0	0
6-10	0	1
11+	4	3
Number of mobile cars:		
1-5	4	3
6-10	0	0
11+	0	0
Volume of traffic (1=no traffic, 6=very heavy traffic)	1.50	2.75
Security and safety		
Police present?	no	no
Private security present?	yes, once	no
School crossing guards present?	no	no
Positive and negative behavior: Average number of:		
Children playing in private yard	0	0
Children playing in public area	0	0
People outside, on private property	.33	3.00
People greeting, talking	0	0
People waiting at bus stop	0	0
Pedestrians	5.33	8.33
Bicyclists	1.00	3.33
Other foot traffic	1.33	0
People on pay phones	0	0
People loitering	1.00	2.00
Homeless people, panhandlers	.33	0
People selling drugs	0	0
People drinking	1.00	.33
People smoking	1.33	.33

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Figure 3-6: Ventura Place, Target property only
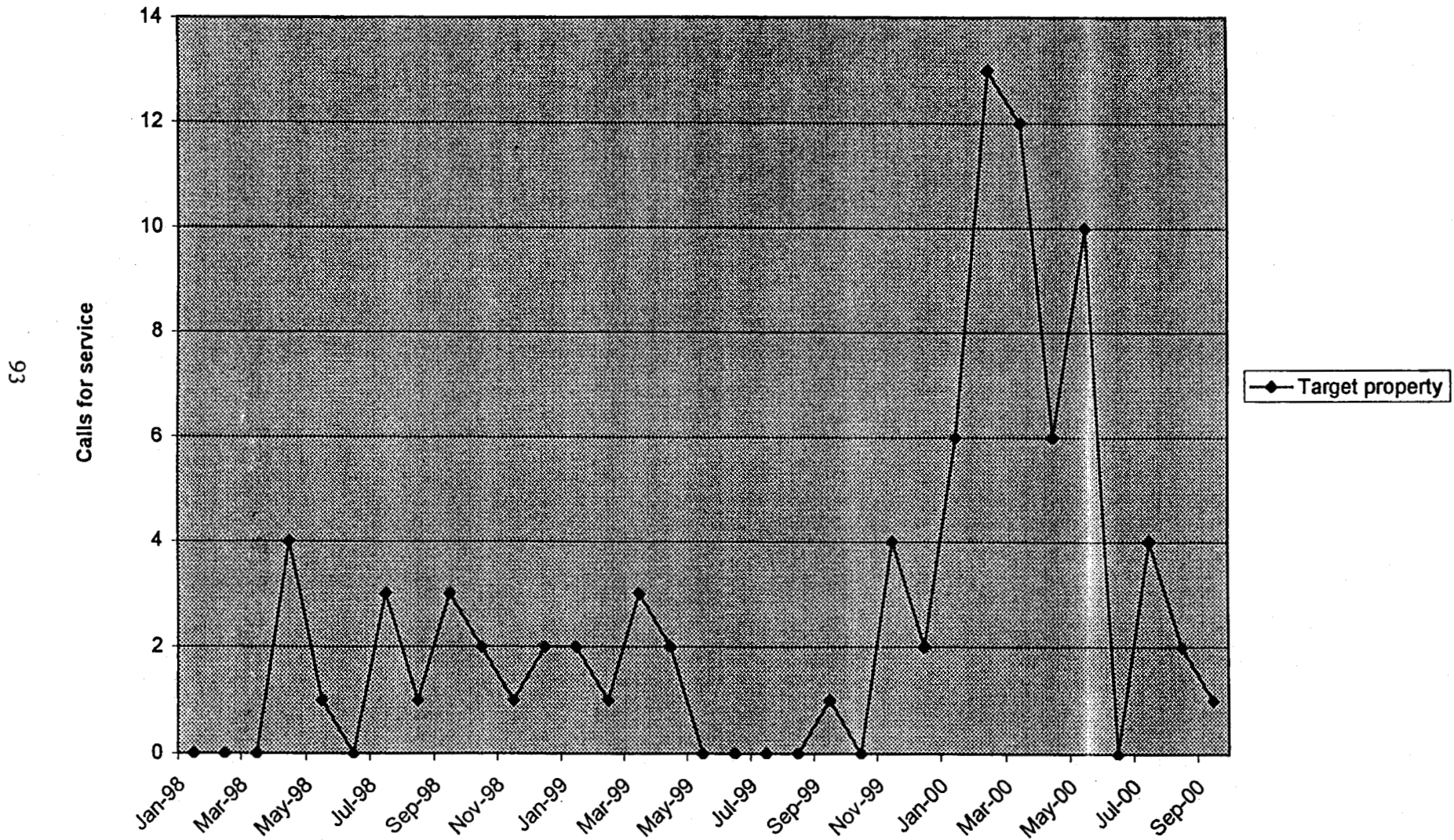
Figure 3-7: Toyon Drive, Target property only
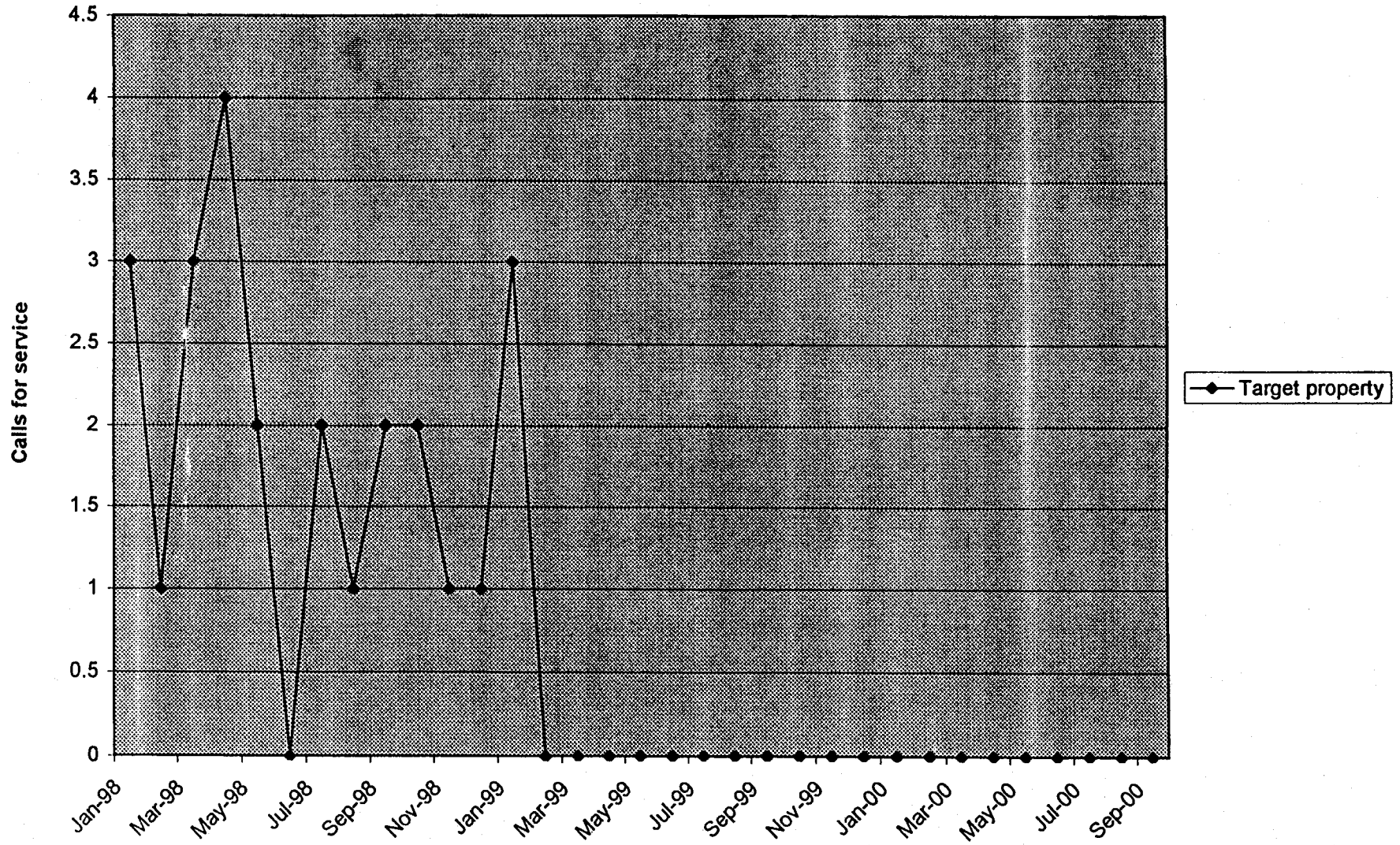
Chapter 4
Summary and Recommendations

The evaluation assessed Safe Streets Now! at the local and national levels, to answer two central questions: (1) how effective is the SSN approach in solving specific local problems? and (2) what are the benefits, costs, and consequences of replicating the SSN approach through a training of trainers program? The SSN process, on the surface, is a simple and direct problem-solving strategy, yet individual projects may become quite complex given the number of unpredictable reactions of residents and property owners. Program replication is also affected by the different sponsoring agencies, use of other problem-solving strategies, state statutes, and characteristics of local jurisdictions. In this final chapter, we summarize the findings of the SSN national evaluation and suggest several recommendations for the future.

We note that this evaluation is primarily descriptive, based on a small number of intensive case studies and neighborhood projects, and encountered substantial difficulties in field work (which is increasingly the case in criminal justice projects which require direct data collection from citizens very worried about retaliation). The evaluation did not systematically assess every SSN program or follow-up every SSN case, and certainly some unanswered questions remain. The information gathered and assessed through the evaluation, however, provides useful information to SSN, jurisdictions considering implementing the SSN program, and to potential supporters and funders of SSN strategies.

Summary

Overall, it appears that the SSN approach is an excellent one for eliminating or reducing problems in specific properties. At the local level, the process is effective in the vast majority of cases in which SSN is diligently implemented by residents with the assistance of SSN coordinators. The vast majority of cases are also resolved without resorting to filing small claims cases; most are resolved through notification and negotiations with the property owner. Very few -- fewer than 5% -- of the cases are filed in small claims court, but when they are, the residents prevail most of the time (residents have only lost two cases out of 100s). A good number of the small claims judgments are appealed, but none have been overturned to date. Although citizen fears of retaliation from problem tenants and property owners are high and affect local participation, actual acts of retaliation have been few and minor.

Cost-benefit analyses were not part of the evaluation study, but there are indications that SSN is a cost-effective approach. Most programs are coordinated by a single person, often working part-time, assisted by others as necessary. Program costs in the case study sites ranged from $69,000 to $120,000 annually. The only costs to neighborhood team members are small claims court filing fees, process server fees, and legal fees if the case is appealed, and in most cases, these costs are included in the judgments in favor of the neighborhood teams.

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The SSN approach does face the same criticism as many other civil (and criminal, for that matter) remedies, of possibly displacing problems rather than completely eliminating them. Yet although we found evidence of displacement in at least one neighborhood project, where the problem tenants were working on moving into their sixth residence in the immediate neighborhood after several evictions for problem behaviors, there is anecdotal evidence that the majority of property owners take steps to avoid future problems through more careful tenant screening, regular upkeep of property, etc. While slum landlords are likely to always exist, the San Diego SSN director says, "We rarely work with a property owner more than once."

Although a number of concerns have been expressed about the potential for abusing the SSN approach or applying it in biased fashion, only one complaint about possible violations of civil rights has been lodged in the program's ten year history. This complaint, brought to a local SSN program by a representative of the ACLU, was believed to be instigated by the property owner (the target of the SSN process) and alleged racial discrimination on the part of the neighborhood team. After the problem tenants moved out and the problem ceased, no further word was heard from the ACLU.

Several counter suits have been filed by property owners, usually alleging slander, defamation, libel, emotional distress, and/or other claims. None of these suits have prevailed, and several have been rejected by the courts as SLAPP suits (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) designed to chill residents' use of nuisance abatement actions and have awarded attorneys' fees to the neighborhood team members.

Other questions have arisen in individual projects. In Moreno Valley, questions have been raised about information sharing among managers and owners about "bad tenants" leading to accusations of housing discrimination. A small claims court commissioner in San Diego has also voiced an opinion that residents could only claim damages from the date of the demand letter forward, not for the whole time the problem persisted. In many cities, the application of the nuisance abatement statute in small claims court has been questioned by city officials, city attorneys, and small claims judges. Although these questions have apparently been satisfactorily answered -- particularly through the case law that has resulted from the appeal of one case all the way to the California Supreme court -- they, and new ones as they arise, must be continually answered by SSN

When problem properties are brought to the attention of SSN locally but no systematic SSN process is applied, it is often because the residents do not take the initiative and follow through -- often because they are afraid of retaliation from the problem tenants or property owner. Although SSN coordinators are usually those named in demand letters and negotiate resolutions with property owners, they adhere to the belief that citizens themselves must be involved in the process, to document the problem themselves and be prepared to speak to the emotional distress it has caused.

Although neighborhood team members did not become involved in other problem-solving

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or neighborhood revitalization efforts after their SSN experience in the half a dozen local projects we followed closely, two-thirds of the program directors surveyed report that their teams often do move on to other such projects. Residents have established other crime prevention projects, worked on neighborhood clean-ups and beautification efforts, and taken on the hard tasks of providing alternatives for youth, lobbying for city services, and working to change local policies and laws. The majority of residents interviewed in relation to the neighborhood projects also report enhanced personal relationships with neighbors and a general increase in neighborhood cohesiveness.

At the national level, SSN has existed for just over a decade. Its heyday was the mid-1990s, particularly the years 1994 to 1996, when the bulk of local SSN programs were formed in California and six other states. The SSN Executive Director deserves substantial credit for developing an innovative approach to community problem-solving and establishing a national program introduced in 35 cities. Since that peak of activity in the mid-1990s, however, the number of national staff, SSN funding at the headquarters level, and attention to supporting existing programs and starting new ones has dwindled. While the SSN Executive Director attributes this to the fallout of the Oakland experience and her desire to wait for the national evaluation results before moving ahead, it is also evident that part-time management, a seeming lack of organization, and little Board oversight and assistance have contributed to the diminution of the national program and technical assistance to local programs. By 1999 -- ten years after SSN began -- fewer than half of the local SSN programs formed were still operating, and several were functioning at a fairly low level.

A major factor in SSN failing to be implemented at the local level is the concern cities, usually through the city attorney's office, have expressed about municipality liability in sponsoring a SSN program. Their concerns revolve around the issues of city employees (including police officers) being accused of "taking sides" in a dispute and "practicing law without a license," with the city being held legally accountable. Two cities, both with the police department as SSN sponsors, have been sued as a result of a SSN case; one case has been settled in favor of the city and the other is pending. No other cities have reported liability problems. Through the evaluation, two legal briefs on these issues have been prepared by an experienced attorney for the use of SSN sponsors. Attached in Appendix B, one brief concludes that "public entities, as well as its employees and volunteers, [have] absolute and total immunity when advising small claims litigants." The other brief concludes that "...one who assists a small claims litigant cannot be said to be engaging in the practice of law." A third brief (also in Appendix B) prepared for the evaluation, updates the case law that underlies SSN's small claims actions in the form of a fill-in-the-blank plaintiff's claim for small claims court actions.

Police departments, city agencies such as housing or neighborhood services, and non-profit organizations have served as SSN sponsors. SSN programs have continued the longest within (in order) police departments, non-profit organizations, and city agencies. Only about a third of the city-agency sponsored SSN programs still exist, compared to nearly 70% of those formed by police departments. Both city agency and police sponsorships, however, are

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susceptible to failing to institutionalize the program and having competing priorities for staff, resources, and attention. In regard to the lack of institutionalization, a number of programs fail because SSN-trained personnel are transferred and no in-service training is provided to the newly assigned personnel. Competing programs include the popular Crime-Free Multi-Housing Program in southern California that is used instead of SSN in a number of cities with problems with multi-unit housing; turf battles among agencies are also not uncommon. Non-profit organizations, on the other hand, benefit from their focus on SSN but are likely to face difficulties in obtaining steady, reliable funding.

In police departments, it appears that SSN tends to become another "tool in the toolbox," one tool used among many for problem-solving, rather than being a separate program with dedicated staff. Where the police-sponsored program is run by dedicated non-sworn personnel (i.e., Riverside), the program tends to be more robust, yet the SSN process remains viewed as one tool among many. Among the four case studies in the evaluation, the two law enforcement-based SSN programs handle about one case per month; the city-sponsored program works with about three cases per month and the non-profit-sponsor handles approximately 15 cases per month.

In our case studies, it was abundantly clear that the success of a local SSN program may be closely tied to the expertise, reputation, and charisma of the program director. In San Diego, Milwaukee, and Riverside, the constant and competent direction of the lead coordinator was repeatedly cited as a major reason for local success. Careful preparation of pertinent agencies and stakeholders and intensive work with neighborhood teams were also cited as factors in local program success.

Successful local programs, in summary -- and notably the experience of the San Diego program -- indicate that SSN is a valuable "tool for the problem-solving toolbox." It is an effective tool that any city or county could benefit from, and it is a worthwhile program to rebuild nationally. That is, in fact, happening. After taking a sabbatical in early 2000, the Executive Director of SSN is taking steps to re-establish and strengthen the national SSN headquarters. Recruitment efforts are underway for a new Board and advisory committee, a developmental consultant has been recruited, and proposals for funding are being developed, to include funds to support a new day-to-day operational director as the current Executive Director focuses on policy, program development, and fundraising.

Recommendations

Our central recommendation is that local jurisdictions will benefit from the implementation of a Safe Streets Now! program, and would do well to take steps to do so. The evaluation findings indicate SSN is an effective and relatively inexpensive way to resolve neighborhood problems, and may boost neighborhood empowerment and capacity along the way. The SSN strategy must be carefully and diligently applied under the direction of trained individuals, however, and local and national staff must be ever vigilant for potential problems and abuses. To that end, we suggest the following steps be taken in SSN's rebirth:

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- A solid headquarters for SSN should be established, which houses staff available to offer training, technical assistance, a clearinghouse, and other support services for new and established SSN programs. In addition to providing training of trainers workshops for new programs, the SSN headquarters would provide ongoing technical assistance and support to programs as outlined below.

  At an average cost of $7,000 for preparation, training, and follow-up technical assistance per site, SSN has been out of reach of some jurisdictions. The cost does not seem excessive if all the preparation and follow-up support is indeed delivered. Yet a number of cities would like to receive the training of trainers workshop and full SSN program, but are unable to find funds for it. Private and public local, state, and federal funds should be sought to support the national headquarters and replication efforts as needed.

- The training provided by SSN should allow for full programs like San Diego's to be established, but also accommodate police departments and others which may want to adopt SSN as one approach among many. Abbreviated training workshops, perhaps as a part of national conferences such as the annual problem-oriented policing conference in San Diego, regional community policing institutes, and/or other existing training forums, should be considered.

- A book should be written about Safe Streets Now!, incorporating its history and details of the approach. The founder of SSN has often said that the SSN strategy cannot be learned from a book, that it must involve direct training, technical assistance, and follow-up support. Certainly these are needed and several cities have encountered problems when residents have applied SSN without benefit of training or support, but we believe that a book could inform many jurisdictions about SSN and educate them about the basic approach. The need for training and technical assistance should be continually stressed, however, with SSN headquarters prepared to provide it. Such a book could do much for spreading the word of SSN across the U.S.

- New and established SSN programs need technical assistance and support. The headquarters staff must be able to consistently deliver these services, including advance preparation of key participants, a manual tailored to nuisance problems rather than drugs, an active 800 line, and telephone and on-site assistance when needed. *Pro bono* legal assistance has been provided through SSN headquarters, and several cities have taken advantage of it.

  We believe that additional support and assistance is needed for new programs, and those facing funding and/or technical difficulties. SSN programs would benefit from being part of a strong, interactive network which shares specific information and general support. Such a network might be developed and maintained via a SSN website which includes (1) news of new innovations, legal challenges, success stories, etc., based on the activities of different SSN programs, (2) links to informative sites, (3) literature sources, (4) legal

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briefs, judgments, etc., (5) the SSN manual, and (6) downloadable documents; a listserv and/or newsletter for regular communication among program directors and staff; and annual training workshops for SSN programs offering basic and advanced courses in relevant topics such as civil remedies, community policing, neighborhood organizing, etc. Much of this information would be offered free of charge from SSN headquarters; training and specific technical assistance would be offered at appropriate fees.

SSN should also strive to develop mutually beneficial partnerships with key criminal and civil justice organizations, in order to disseminate knowledge, practice, and training to the widest possible audience. These organizations include, but are not limited to, the Police Executive Research Forum, Police Foundation, Community Policing Consortium, National Crime Prevention Council, National Training and Information Center, and housing and drug prevention organizations.

- At the local level, new programs will need to prepare pertinent institutions, especially small claims court judges and officials, the city attorney's office, police department, and city agencies, in advance of the SSN program. Key individuals in these institutions should be educated on the SSN approach, its bases in law, and its general and specific approaches. The headquarters staff should have a strong role in this -- in both advising local program developers on how to present the SSN approach and doing some of the educating themselves. The legal briefs on municipal liability and practicing law without a license will go a long way toward answering the questions of many city attorneys and others.

- Consideration should be given to preparing a special educational package -- or in-person presentation -- for small claims court judges. Many of these judges are unfamiliar with the nuisance statute which underlies SSN actions, and are not happy to learn of it from plaintiffs. The generic plaintiff's claim prepared under this evaluation grant would certainly be a part of this package, but additional information such as prior judgments might be helpful.

- At the local level, there should be enough staff to meet the demand, so that neighborhoods in need are not kept waiting. Additional staff are also needed to do more organizing and training in some neighborhoods, particularly in fragmented, fearful communities. Residents in these neighborhoods may need additional support and assistance in using the SSN approach. Without adequate and competent staff, SSN programs run the danger of losing credibility by being unable to meet the demand of neighborhoods -- and their elected officials.

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Appendix A

Evaluation Instruments

Program Survey

**Evaluation of the Safe Streets Now!
Approach to Neighborhood Problems**

I. Sponsor Information

1. Check the type of your agency:
   ___ Police department
   ___ City agency. Specify:_____
   ___ Nonprofit organization. Specify:_____
   ___ Other:_____

2. What is the (approximate) population of your jurisdiction?

   Population:_____

3. What type of jurisdiction does your agency serve?
   ___ County
   ___ City
   ___ Several neighborhoods
   ___ A single neighborhood
   ___ Other:_____

4. What percentage of the residents are:
   White ____%
   African-American ____%
   Hispanic ____%
   Asian/Pacific Islander ____%
   Other:_____ ____%

5. How big a problem is each of the following in your jurisdiction? *(Circle one number per problem)*

	Almost no problem	Minor problem	Moderate problem	Serious problem
a. Open-air drug dealing	1	2	3	4
b. Residential drug dealing	1	2	3	4
c. Violent crime (e.g., assault, shootings)	1	2	3	4
d. Property (e.g., burglary, vandalism)	1	2	3	4
e. Gang activity	1	2	3	4
f. Drug use	1	2	3	4
g. Blighted properties	1	2	3	4
h. Fear of crime	1	2	3	4
i. Social disorder (loitering youth, disruptive neighbors)	1	2	3	4

II. Background of your SSN! Program

1. Who initiated bringing SSN to your jurisdiction?
   ___ Mayor/ mayor's office
   ___ City council
   ___ Police department
   ___ City department:_____
   ___ Resident
   ___ SSN
   ___ Other:_____

2. How did your jurisdiction first learn of Safe Streets Now!?
   ___ Word-of-mouth
   ___ Media coverage
   ___ Conference (e.g., San Diego POP Conference):
   _____
   ___ Federal or state program (e.g., Weed and Seed):
   _____
   ___ Other:_____

3. Why did your jurisdiction seek the SSN Training of Trainers (i.e., why did you think it would be useful to your jurisdiction)?

4. Provide an overview of how your SSN program operates *(feel free to send us any written materials describing the program)*:

5. What activities are the neighborhood teams taught to engage in by your SSN trainers (*check all that apply*)?

___ Forming a SSN neighborhood team
___ Forming a neighborhood or block watch
___ Property ownership research
___ Surveillance and documentation of the problem
___ Calling for police service
___ Working with the police to solve the problem
___ Writing a demand letter to the property owner
___ Other activities:

___ Working with the owner to solve problems
___ Requesting health and safety inspections
___ Confronting the problem people
___ Filing a small claims court claim
___ Preparing for a small claims court hearing
___ Collecting a small claims court judgment
___ Fighting an appeal of a court judgment

6. Which, if any, of the following work together with neighborhood teams using the SSN approach (*check all that apply*)?

___ Law enforcement officers   ___ City or county attorneys   ___ Housing Authority
___ City or county agencies   ___ Private attorneys   ___ Probation/Parole Department
___ Others:

7. Who serves as the SSN contact person to the property owner for the team (for example, whose name and address are put on the demand letter)?

___ The neighborhood team
___ A member of the neighborhood team
___ Your agency, the sponsor
___ Other third party:

8. a. Have the neighborhood teams worked on one or more problem locations?

___ One problem location
___ More than one problem location

b. In your estimation then, how many problem locations have been addressed locally through the SSN approach? _____

9. What types of problems are addressed, in percentages?

___% Drugs (ex. drug sales, crack houses)
___% Noise/nuisance (ex. loud parties, fights)
___% Blight (ex. excessive trash/litter, disrepair)
___% Neighborhood disputes (ex. dogs, unruly children)
___% Other:

10. Where are these problems typically located?

___% Single family homes, rented
___% Single family homes, owner-occupied
___% Multi-family homes
___% Commercial buildings (e.g., stores, motels)
___% Open-air locations (e.g., street corners)
___% Other:

11. Of the problems addressed through the SSN approach, what percentage would you say have...

a. Been successfully resolved?
     ___% [Or ___ out of ___ problems]

b. Involved the filing of a small claims court action?
     ___% [Or ___ out of ___ problems]

12. Of all cases filed, how many...

a. were decided in favor of the residents? ____
b. have been appealed? ____

13. a. What is the total amount of judgments awarded to residents? $_____

b. How much has been collected? $_____

14. Have any of the neighborhood teams gone on to work on other neighborhood revitalization efforts? Yes/No (*circle one*). If yes, what types of activities (*check all that apply*)?

___ Neighborhood/block watch
___ Other crime prevention or problem solving projects
___ Neighborhood clean-up (trash and graffiti removal)
___ Neighborhood beautification (plantings, etc.)

___ Alternatives for youth (e.g., mentoring)
___ Lobbying for city services
___ Collective efforts to change policies/laws
___ Other:

15. Since the Training of Trainers, have you or others trained additional trainers? Yes/No (*circle one*). If yes, who?

16. a. Since the Training of Trainers, have you or others received assistance from SSN central staff? Yes/No.

If yes, indicate the number of times each type of assistance listed below was received:

___ Technical advice/guidance by phone
___ Site visit from SSN staff
___ Legal assistance arranged by SSN
___ Other:

b. Was there any additional cost (outside of the original contract) for this assistance? Yes/No.

c. How satisfied were you with this assistance?
___ Very satisfied
___ Somewhat satisfied
___ Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
___ Somewhat dissatisfied
___ Very dissatisfied

III. The SSN Training of Trainers

1. Month and year of the SSN training:_____

2. Who attended the training? (*Write the number of attendees from each agency or category*)
   ___ Police Department   ___ Code Enforcement
   ___ Fire Department   ___ Public Works
   ___ City Attorney's office   ___ Community Development/Neighborhood Services
   ___ Mayor's Office   ___ Housing Department
   ___ Community-at-large   ___ Business/Private sector
   ___ Others:

3. Please rate the following elements of training (*skip if you did not personally attend*):

	Excellent	Above average	Average	Below average	Poor
a. Clarity of how the SSN program works	1	2	3	4	5
b. Detail on how the SSN program can be implemented in your area	1	2	3	4	5
c. Training materials (manual, presentation boards, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
d. Trainer(s)	1	2	3	4	5
e. Provided the knowledge and tools to implement SSN in your area	1	2	3	4	5

4. Were there any gaps in the training, any topics or techniques missing, that you now feel would be helpful? Yes/No (*circle one*). If yes, please describe:

5. What was the total cost of SSN, including the Training of Trainers, materials, and ongoing technical assistance?
   Cost: $_____

6. If your jurisdiction had been unable to receive the training provided by SSN, could the SSN approach have been implemented locally? Yes/No (*circle one*). Please explain:

IV. Your SSN! Program

1. Since the SSN Training of Trainers, have any neighborhood teams been trained in the use of the SSN approach?
   ___ Yes
   ___ No. Why not? (*Please explain, then skip to Section V on the last page*)

2. Who usually trains the neighborhood teams?
   ___ Sworn police officers
   ___ Civilian staff (e.g., community organizers) from the police dept.
   ___ City agency staff (e.g., community organizers) from:_____
   ___ Nonprofit organization staff (e.g., community organizers)
   ___ Other:

4. Who generally initiates local SSN projects to address neighborhood problems?
   ___ Residents or neighborhood groups
   ___ Police department
   ___ Mayor or city council
   ___ Other:

3. a. How many neighborhood teams have been trained (estimates are OK)?
      Since the Training of Trainers: ____
      In 1998 only: ____
      So far in 1999: ____

   b. How many individual citizens have been trained (estimates are OK)? ____

   c. What is the average size (number of citizens) of the neighborhood teams? ____

V. Issues, Obstacles, Lessons Learned

1. a. Do you have additional training or technical assistance needs? Yes/No (*circle one*). If yes, in what areas?

   b. As part of the evaluation, legal research will be conducted on topics related to the SSN approach. If your jurisdiction has encountered thorny legal questions or issues needing additional research, please list:

2. a. Has your organization encountered problems or obstacles in the use of the SSN approach? (*Check all that apply*):

   ___ Concerns about civil rights violations   ___ Retaliation against the sponsoring agency
   ___ Concerns about the city's liability   ___ Retaliation against neighborhood teams
   ___ Securing funds for the Training of Trainers   ___ Law enforcement resistance
   ___ Securing funds to support staff to work with   ___ Small claims court resistance
         neighborhood teams   ___ City or county attorney resistance
   ___ Lack of neighborhood participation   ___ Turf issues (e.g., competing strategies)
   ___ Concerns about sponsors or trainers "taking sides"   ___ Other:
         in a problem situation

   b. Please briefly describe the problems or obstacles checked:

3. Do any local small claims court rules, or local or state statutes, make it difficult to use the SSN approach in your area? Yes/No (*circle one*). If yes, please explain:

4. a. Have there been any complaints, controversies, or threats of lawsuits about the SSN approach? Yes/No (*circle one*). By whom (*check all that apply*)?

   ___ Civil rights organization (e.g., the ACLU)   ___ Individual property owner(s)
   ___ Apartment or property owner association   ___ City or county attorney(s)
   ___ Other:

   b. If yes, please explain:

5. a. Have your organization or any of the neighborhood teams been sued by any of the above, or others, due to the use of the SSN approach? Yes/No (*circle one*). If "yes," check which group and type of suit:

Sponsor	N. Team	
____	____	a. "Slap suit" (ex., property owner suing for slander)
____	____	b. Counter/cross suit (ex. counter suit for nuisance)
____	____	c. Suit for civil rights violation(s)
____	____	d. Liability suit

   b. If yes, what was the outcome?

6. Would you recommend the SSN approach to cities or neighborhoods with problems such as those your jurisdiction has been working on? Yes/No (*circle one*). Why or why not?

7. Please include any suggestions you have for changes in the SSN approach:

THANK YOU!

Please return to: Kristin Guertin, Justice Research Center, 591 Lighthouse Avenue, Suite 24, Pacific Grove, CA 93950

Safe Streets Now! Study
Neighborhood Survey for Neighborhood Team Members
Revised 11/30/99

Project at [project location address]: _____ ID #: _____

Date of interview: _____   Resident Type: _____ Neighborhood team member
                                                          _____ Resident (not on team)
Resident's address: _____   _____ Manager/owner
                                                          _____ Other place manager

Let's begin with your views of the problem. The location is [address] , correct?

1a. Please tell me what the problem is (describe nature of the problem, when it began, history, how it has affected you and your family).

1b. Who lives there, and who is really causing the problem?

1c. What has been done about the problem so far, and who has done it? (Try to get at sequence of events (what was done first, then second, etc.), who led the problem-solving efforts, who participated, and what were the outcomes?)

2. Which, if any, of the following actions have <u>you</u> taken in regard to the specific problem at [address]? (circle "yes" for all that apply). Have you...

		No	Yes
a.	Called 911 (or a non-emergency police number).	1	2
b.	Talked to neighbors about the problem.	1	2
c.	Spoken to the tenants at the problem location.	1	2
d.	Spoken to the owner/manager at the problem location.	1	2
e.	Called a city agency about the problem location (ie. not the police).	1	2
f.	Taken direct steps to resolve problem (ex., personally boarded up windows).	1	2
g.	Called or met with community organizations to try to solve the problem.	1	2
h.	Worked with police and other agencies to resolve the problem.	1	2
i.	Worked with neighbors to resolve the problem.	1	2
j.	Other (describe).	1	2

3a. In general, if some young people were spray painting graffiti on a building in this neighborhood, how likely is it that your neighbors would tell them to stop?

Very likely	4
Somewhat likely	3
Somewhat unlikely, or	2
Not likely at all?	1
Don't know	9

3b. If there was a problem in this neighborhood which required services from a city agency, how likely is it that your neighbors would take Steps to get the agency to respond?

Very likely	4
Somewhat likely	3
Somewhat unlikely, or	2
Not likely at all?	1
Don't know	9

4. How strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements about your neighborhood?

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a.	People around here are willing to help their neighbors.	1	2	3	4	5
b.	This is a "close-knit" community.	1	2	3	4	5

Let's talk about your neighborhood, and the block you live on, a little...

5. How long have you lived (or worked) at your present location?

_____ # of years
_____ or months

6. Do you own your home or rent your home?

Own	1
Rent	2

7. In general, how satisfied are you with this block as a place to live/do business? Are you...

Very satisfied	4
Somewhat satisfied	3
Somewhat dissatisfied, or	2
Very dissatisfied	1
Don't know	9

8. In the past six months, would you say this block has become a better place to live/do business, a worse place, or stayed about the same?

Better	3
Worse	2
About the same	1
Don't know	9

9. In general, how safe do you feel out alone on this block during the day? Do you feel...

Very safe	4
Somewhat safe	3
Somewhat unsafe, or	2
Very unsafe?	1
Don't know	9

10. How safe do you feel about being out alone on this block after dark today? Do you feel...

Very safe	4
Somewhat safe	3
Somewhat unsafe, or	2
Very unsafe?	1
Don't know	9
Don't go out at night	7

11. Next, I am going to mention several crime and disorder problems. Please tell me whether each item is currently a big problem, somewhat of a problem, a little problem, or no problem at all in this immediate neighborhood.

		No problem	Little problem	Some problem	Big problem
a.	People "hanging out" on the street	1	2	3	4
b.	Violence (shootings, assaults)	1	2	3	4
c.	People selling drugs	1	2	3	4
d.	People using drugs	1	2	3	4
e.	Property stolen from homes or businesses	1	2	3	4
f.	Vehicles broken into or stolen	1	2	3	4
g.	Blight (trash, junk, graffiti, etc.)	1	2	3	4
h.	Nuisances (noise, barking dogs, etc.)	1	2	3	4
i.	Prostitution	1	2	3	4
j.	Vacant/abandoned buildings causing problems	1	2	3	4
l.	Gangs	1	2	3	4

12. During the past 6 months, how many times have any of these things happened to you, or your family, <u>in your neighborhood</u>?

	No	Once	Twice	Three + times
a. Has anyone broken into your home or garage to steal something?	1	2	3	4
b. Has anyone damaged or vandalized you home?	1	2	3	4
c. Has anyone tried to steal your vehicle, or taken anything from it?	1	2	3	4
d. Have you had anything stolen from your property outside your home, including your mail?	1	2	3	4
e. Has anyone robbed or tried to steal something from you by force?	1	2	3	4
f. Has anyone threatened you or attacked you with a weapon?	1	2	3	4
g. Has anyone physically attacked you, or attempted to do so?	1	2	3	4

13. During the past six months, have you done any of the following (in your immediate neighborhood?)

	No	Yes
a. Attended a meeting of a community group concerned with neighborhood problems.	1	2
b. Participated in a neighborhood project (clean-up, graffiti removal, etc.)	1	2
c. Participated in a neighborhood block watch program	1	2
d. Called 911 about a problem (not at the problem location)	1	2
e. Talked to a police officer informally about local issues	1	2
f. Worked with police, city agencies to resolve a neighborhood problem (not at the problem location).	1	2
g. Worked with a community group and/or neighbors to resolve a neighborhood problem (not at the problem location).	1	2
h. Other (explain)	1	2

14. Have you taken steps to make your home secure by...

	No	Yes
a. using an alarm, gates, bars, or other security devices?	1	2
b. keeping a gun in your home for protection?	1	2

15. Currently, how good a job are the police doing in your neighborhood, in...

	Very bad job	Bad job	Okay job	Good job	Very good job
a. preventing crime in your neighborhood?	1	2	3	4	5
b. protecting people's lives and property?	1	2	3	4	5
c. dealing with problems that you and your neighbors really care about?	1	2	3	4	5
d. keeping order on the streets and sidewalks?	1	2	3	4	5

16. Have you heard of the program called Safe Streets Now!?

No   1
Yes   2

17. [If yes] In a few words, can you tell me what Safe Streets Now! is all about?

Finally, I have a few questions to ask about you. Please remember your answers are confidential. We ask these personal questions to learn more about the individuals who answer our survey.

18. Respondent gender:

Male   1
Female   2

19. In what year were you born?

Year   _____
Refused to answer   8

20. Are you presently employed full-time, part-time, a student, a homemaker, or unemployed? [circle one or two categories as needed.]

Working full-time   1
Working part-time   2
Homemaker   3
Unemployed   4
Retired   5
Disabled   6
Full-time student   7
Part-time student   8
Other   9
Refused   88
Don't know   99

21. What is your racial or ethnic identity? Are you...

Black/African-American   1
White   2
Hispanic/Latino   3
Asian/Pacific Islander   4
American Indian, or   5
Other   6
Refused   8

22. What is your current annual <u>household</u> income from all sources?

Less than $15,000   1
$15,001 to $30,000   2
$30,001 to $45,000   3
$45,001 to $60,000   4
$60,001 to $75,000   5
Over $75,001   6

23. How many children, under the age of 18, reside in your home?

No. of children   _____
Refused   8

24. Finally, my supervisor checks my work by calling a small number of those I interview, to confirm the interview was done. Could I please record your first name only, and telephone number, for this purpose?

Name _____   Telephone number _____

Refused   8
No telephone   2

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Safe Streets Now! Study
Neighborhood Survey for Place Managers
Revised 11/30/99

Project at [project location address]: _____ ID #: _____

Date of interview: _____   Resident Type: _____ Neighborhood team member
                                                              _____ Resident (not on team)
Resident's address: _____   _____ Manager/owner
                                                              _____ Other place manager

Hello, my name is _____. I am conducting a survey for the Justice Research Center, a private research firm. Under a grant from the Department of Justice, we are evaluating a community-based program that helps to resolve local problems. Your views as a neighborhood resident (or store owner, or whatever) are important to our study. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential, with individual answers seen only by the research staff, and the survey results will be reported in group form only.

Your participation is strictly voluntary. The survey will take about 10 minutes. May I proceed? (If yes)Let's begin by talking about your neighborhood, and the block you live on, a little ...

1. How long have you lived (or worked) at your present location?

    _____ # of years
    _____ or months

2. Do you own your home or rent your home?

    Own   1
    Rent   2

3. In general, how satisfied are you with this block as a place to live/do business? Are you...

    Very satisfied   4
    Somewhat satisfied   3
    Somewhat dissatisfied, or   2
    Very dissatisfied   1
    Don't know   9

4. In the past six months, would you say this block has become a better place to live/do business, a worse place, or stayed about the same?

    Better   3
    Worse   2
    About the same   1
    Don't know   9

5. In general, how safe do you feel out alone on this block during the day? Do you feel...

    Very safe   4
    Somewhat safe   3
    Somewhat unsafe, or 2
    Very unsafe?   1
    Don't know   9

6. How safe do you feel about being out alone on this block after dark today? Do you feel...

    Very safe   4
    Somewhat safe   3
    Somewhat unsafe, or   2
    Very unsafe?   1
    Don't know   9
    Don't go out at night 7

7. Next, I am going to mention several crime and disorder problems. Please tell me whether each item is currently a big problem, somewhat of a problem, a little problem, or no problem at all in this immediate neighborhood.

		No problem	Little problem	Some problem	Big problem
a.	People "hanging out" on the street	1	2	3	4
b.	Violence (shootings, assaults)	1	2	3	4
c.	People selling drugs	1	2	3	4
d.	People using drugs	1	2	3	4
e.	Property stolen from homes or businesses	1	2	3	4
f.	Vehicles broken into or stolen	1	2	3	4
g.	Blight (trash, junk, graffiti, etc.)	1	2	3	4
h.	Nuisances (noise, barking dogs, etc.)	1	2	3	4
i.	Prostitution	1	2	3	4
j.	Vacant/abandoned buildings causing problems	1	2	3	4
l.	Gangs	1	2	3	4

8. During the past 6 months, how many times have any of these things happened to you, or your family, in your neighborhood?

		No	Once	Twice	Three + times
a.	Has anyone broken into your home or garage to steal something?	1	2	3	4
b.	Has anyone damaged or vandalized you home?	1	2	3	4
c.	Has anyone tried to steal your vehicle, or taken anything from it?	1	2	3	4
d.	Have you had anything stolen from your property outside your home, including your mail?	1	2	3	4
e.	Has anyone robbed or tried to steal something from you by force?	1	2	3	4
f.	Has anyone threatened you or attacked you with a weapon?	1	2	3	4
g.	Has anyone physically attacked you, or attempted to do so?	1	2	3	4

9. During the past six months, have you done any of the following (in your immediate neighborhood?)

		No	Yes
a.	Attended a meeting of a community group concerned with neighborhood problems.	1	2
b.	Participated in a neighborhood project (clean-up, graffiti removal, etc.)	1	2
c.	Participated in a neighborhood block watch program	1	2
d.	Called 911 about a problem (not at the problem location)	1	2
e.	Talked to a police officer informally about local issues	1	2
f.	Worked with police, city agencies to resolve a neighborhood problem (not at the problem location).	1	2
g.	Worked with a community group and/or neighbors to resolve a neighborhood problem (not at the problem location).	1	2
h.	Other (explain)	1	2

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10. Have you taken steps to make your home secure by...

	No	Yes
a. using an alarm, gates, bars, or other security devices?	1	2
b. keeping a gun in your home for protection?	1	2

11. Currently, how good a job are the police doing in your neighborhood, in...

	Very bad job	Bad job	Okay job	Good job	Very good job
a. preventing crime in your neighborhood?	1	2	3	4	5
b. protecting people's lives and property?	1	2	3	4	5
c. dealing with problems that you and your neighbors really care about?	1	2	3	4	5
d. keeping order on the streets and sidewalks?	1	2	3	4	5

12a. In general, if some young people were spray painting graffiti on a building in this neighborhood, how likely is it that your neighbors would tell them to stop?

Very likely	4
Somewhat likely	3
Somewhat unlikely, or	2
Not likely at all?	1
Don't know	9

12b. If there was a problem in this neighborhood which required services from a city agency, how likely is it that your neighbors would take Steps to get the agency to respond?

Very likely	4
Somewhat likely	3
Somewhat unlikely, or	2
Not likely at all?	1
Don't know	9

13. How strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements about your neighborhood?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. People around here are willing to help their neighbors.	1	2	3	4	5
b. This is a "close-knit" community.	1	2	3	4	5

14a. Are you aware of any problems associated with the property at _____? If so, please describe the problem(s).

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3

14b. [Ask if "yes" to 14a.] Are you aware of any actions taken by residents, the police, or others to resolve the problem(s) at _____ ? If so, please describe:

15. Which, if any, of the following actions have you taken in regard to the specific problem at [address]? (circle "yes" for all that apply). Have you...

		No	Yes
a.	Called 911 (or a non-emergency police number).	1	2
b.	Talked to neighbors about the problem.	1	2
c.	Spoken to the tenants at the problem location.	1	2
d.	Spoken to the owner/manager at the problem location.	1	2
e.	Called a city agency about the problem location (ie. Not the police).	1	2
f.	Taken direct steps to resolve problem (ex., personally boarded up windows).	1	2
g.	Called or met with community organizations to try to solve the problem.	1	2
h.	Worked with police and other agencies to resolve the problem.	1	2
i.	Worked with neighbors to resolve the problem.	1	2
j.	Other (describe).	1	2

16. Have you heard of the program called Safe Streets Now!?

No   1
Yes   2

17. [If yes] In a few words, can you tell me what Safe Streets Now! is all about?

Finally, I have a few questions to ask about you. Please remember your answers are confidential. We ask these personal questions to learn more about the individuals who answer our survey.

18. Respondent gender:

Male   1
Female   2

19. In what year were you born?

Year   _____
Refused to answer   8

20. Are you presently employed full-time, part-time, a student, a homemaker, or unemployed? [circle one or two categories as needed.]

Working full-time	1
Working part-time	2
Homemaker	3
Unemployed	4
Retired	5
Disabled	6
Full-time student	7
Part-time student	8
Other	9
Refused	88
Don't know	99

21. What is your racial or ethnic identity? Are you...

Black/African-American	1
White	2
Hispanic/Latino	3
Asian/Pacific Islander	4
American Indian, or	5
Other	6
Refused	8

22. What is your current annual <u>household</u> income from all sources?

Less than $15,000	1
$15,001 to $30,000	2
$30,001 to $45,000	3
$45,001 to $60,000	4
$60,001 to $75,000	5
Over $75,001	6

23. How many children, under the age of 18, reside in your home?

No. of children	_____
Refused	8

24. Finally, my supervisor checks my work by calling a small number of those I interview, to confirm the interview was done. Could I please record your first name only, and telephone number, for this purpose?

Name _____   Telephone number _____

Refused	8
No telephone	2

Observation Form:
Safe Streets Now! Neighborhood Study

Project at [problem location address]:_____ ID No:_____

Date:_____ Start time:_____ End time:_____ Observation No.____

1. Below, draw a street map of the block you are observing, noting residential and commercial properties, schools (etc.), and significant street places (bus stops, phone booths). [Map needed only on first observation]

2. Is there a "center of activity," where people are congregating (e.g., in front of the problem location, around the phone booth, behind the liquor store)? If so, describe below:

1

Physical observations of the general area of the face block:

1. Is there garbage or broken glass in the street or on the sidewalks?

    _____ Almost none
    _____ Yes, but not a lot
    _____ Yes, quite a bit
    _____ Yes, almost everywhere

2. Is there paper trash, litter, or junk (e.g., old shoe) in the street or on the sidewalks?

    _____ Almost none
    _____ Yes, but not a lot
    _____ Yes, quite a bit
    _____ Yes, almost everywhere

3. Are there cigarette or cigar butts or discarded cigarette packages on the sidewalk or in the gutters?

    _____ Almost none
    _____ Yes, but not a lot
    _____ Yes, quite a bit
    _____ Yes, almost everywhere

4. Are there any needles, syringes, condoms, or drug-related paraphernalia on the sidewalk, in gutters, or on the street?

    _____ Almost none
    _____ Yes, but not a lot
    _____ Yes, quite a bit
    _____ Yes, almost everywhere

5. Are there empty beer or liquor bottles visible in streets, yards, or alleys?

    _____ Almost none
    _____ Yes, but not a lot
    _____ Yes, quite a bit
    _____ Yes, almost everywhere

6. Is there much graffiti?

    _____ Almost none
    _____ Yes, but not a lot
    _____ Yes, quite a bit
    _____ Yes, almost everywhere

Traffic:

7. On the face block (both sides), record the number of:

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6-10	11+
parked cars	0	1	2	3	4	5	6-10	11+
mobile cars	0	1	2	3	4	5	6-10	11+
abandoned cars	0	1	2	3	4	5	6-10	11+
delivery vans	0	1	2	3	4	5	6-10	11+

8. Volume of traffic:

_____ No traffic
_____ Very light traffic
_____ Light
_____ Moderate
_____ Heavy
_____ Very heavy

Security and Safety:

9. Are any public police visible (check all that apply)?

_____ Police mobile patrol car visible
_____ Police foot patrol visible
_____ Mounted police patrol visible
_____ No police visible

10. Are any private security personnel visible?

_____ Yes
_____ No

11. Are any school crossing guards present?

_____ Yes
_____ No

Social Observations on Face Block: Tally the number of people engaging in the following behaviors, which are not mutually exclusive:

		Supervised	Not supervised
12	Pre-school children playing in: a private yard		
13	the street		
14	a school yard		
15	public park or playground		

		Males	Females
16	People sitting, working, or playing in their yards, or on the porch, etc., on their own property.		
17	Elderly people stopping to talk, greeting one another		
18	Adults stopping to talk, greeting one another		
19	Youth stopping to talk, greeting one another		
20	Mixed ages stopping to talk, greeting one another		
21	Adults loitering, congregating by (enter place):		
22	Youth loitering, congregating by (enter place):		
23	Youth carrying or playing "boom boxes"		
24	Homeless people or panhandlers		
25	People selling drugs		
26	People drinking, or obviously intoxicated		
27	People smoking		
28	People on bus stop, waiting to get on or just getting off		
29	People talking on pay phones		
30	Pedestrian traffic: Adults		
31	Youth		
32	Children		
33	People on bicycles: Adults		
34	Youth		
35	Children		
36	People going in and out of commercial establishments		
37	Other behaviors:		

4

Project at [target location address]: _____ ID #: _____

Date of interview: _____ Resident Type: ——— Neighborhood team member
                                                    ——— Resident (not on team)
Resident's address: _____   ——— Manager/owner
                                                    ——— Other place manager

As you know, we have been following the problems and activities at [give target address] for the past six months. I'd like to ask some questions about your views of the problems and attempts to resolve them.

1. Over the past six months, have the problems at [the target address] gotten better, worse, or stayed about the same? Please describe the nature and extent of the current problems.

2. Over the past six months, what has been done to try to resolve the problems at [the target address]? What has been your involvement in these activities? What have been the outcomes?

3. Which, if any, of the following specific actions have <u>you</u> taken in regard to the problems at [the target address]? (Circle "yes" for all that apply). Have you...

		No	Yes
a.	Called 911 (or a non-emergency police number)?	1	2
b.	Talked to neighbors about the problem?	1	2
c.	Spoken to the tenants at the problem location?	1	2
d.	Spoken to the owner/manager at the problem location?	1	2
e.	Called a city agency about the problem location (i.e., not the police)?	1	2
f.	Taken direct steps to resolve problem (ex., personally boarded up windows)?	1	2
g.	Called or met with community organizations to try to solve the problem?	1	2
h.	Worked with police and other agencies to resolve the problem?	1	2
i.	Worked with neighbors to resolve the problem?	1	2
j.	Other (describe).	1	2

4. a. Have you heard for a program called Safe Streets Now!? [If yes], how have they been involved in attempts to resolve problems at [the target address]?

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b. Please rate SSN on the following, using a scale of one to five, with one meaning "poor" and five meaning "excellent." From one to five, how would you rate Safe Streets Now's...

		poor.............excellent
1.	Responsiveness to neighborhood residents?	1 2 3 4 5
2.	Training and assistance provided to neighborhood residents?	1 2 3 4 5
3.	Effectiveness in resolving the target problem?	1 2 3 4 5
4.	Ability to empower neighborhood residents?	1 2 3 4 5

c. Would you call Safe Streets Now! in the future for assistance on a similar problem? Why or why not?

5a. In general, if some young people were spray painting graffiti on a building in this neighborhood, how likely is it that your neighbors would tell them to stop?

Very likely,	4
Somewhat likely,	3
Somewhat unlikely, or	2
Not likely at all?	1
Don't know	9

5b. If there was a problem in this neighborhood which required services from a city agency, how likely is it that your neighbors would take steps to get the agency to respond?

Very likely,	4
Somewhat likely,	3
Somewhat unlikely, or	2
Not likely at all?	1
Don't know	9

6. How strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements about your neighborhood?

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a.	People around here are willing to help their neighbors.	1	2	3	4	5
b.	This is a "close-knit" community.	1	2	3	4	5

7. How long have you lived at your present location?

_____ # of years
_____ or months

8. Do you own your home or rent your home?

Own	1
Rent	2

9. In general, how satisfied are you with this as a place to live/do business? Are you...

Very satisfied,	4
Somewhat satisfied,	3
Somewhat dissatisfied, or	2
Very dissatisfied?	1
Don't know	9

10. In the past six months, would you say this this block has become a better place to live/do business, a worse place, or stayed about the same?

Better,	3
Worse, or	2
About the same.	1
Don't know	9

11. a. In general, how safe do you feel out alone on this block during the day? Do you feel:

Very safe,	4
Somewhat safe,	3
Somewhat unsafe, or	2
Very unsafe?	1
Don't know	9

11. b. Compared to six months ago, how safe do you feel out alone on this block during the day? Do you feel...

More safe,	3
Less safe, or	2
About the same?	1
Don't know	9

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2

12. a. In general, how safe do you feel out alone on this block after dark? Do you feel...

Very safe,	4
Somewhat safe,	3
Somewhat unsafe, or	2
Very unsafe?	1
Don't know	9
Don't go out at night	7

12. b. Compared to six months ago, how safe do you feel out alone on this block after dark? Do you feel...

More safe,	3
Less safe, or	2
About the same?	1
Don't know	9
Don't go out at night	7

13. Next, I am going to mention several crime and disorder problems. Please tell me whether each item is currently a big problem, somewhat of a problem, a little problem, or no problem at all in this immediate neighborhood.

		No problem	Little problem	Some problem	Big problem
a.	People "hanging out" on the street	1	2	3	4
b.	Violence (shootings, assaults)	1	2	3	4
c.	People selling drugs	1	2	3	4
d.	People using drugs	1	2	3	4
e.	Property stolen from homes or businesses	1	2	3	4
f.	Vehicles broken into or stolen	1	2	3	4
g.	Blight (trash, junk, graffiti, etc.)	1	2	3	4
h.	Nuisances (noise, barking dogs, etc.)	1	2	3	4
i.	Prostitution	1	2	3	4
j.	Vacant/abandoned buildings causing problems	1	2	3	4
k.	Gangs	1	2	3	4

14. During the past 6 months, how many times have any of these things happened to you, or your family, in your neighborhood?

		No	Once	Twice	Three + times
a.	Has anyone broken into your home or garage to steal something?	1	2	3	4
b.	Has anyone damaged or vandalized you home?	1	2	3	4
c.	Has anyone tried to steal your vehicle, or taken anything from it?	1	2	3	4
d.	Have you had anything stolen from your property outside your home, including your mail?	1	2	3	4
e.	Has anyone robbed or tried to steal something from you by force?	1	2	3	4
f.	Has anyone threatened you or attacked you with a weapon?	1	2	3	4
g.	Has anyone physically attacked you, or attempted to do so?	1	2	3	4

15. During the past six months, have you done any of the following in your immediate neighborhood, not connected to the problems at [the target address]?

		No	Yes
a.	Attended a meeting of a community group concerned with neighborhood problems.	1	2
b.	Participated in a neighborhood project (clean-up, graffiti removal, etc.).	1	2
c.	Participated in a neighborhood block watch program.	1	2
d.	Called 911 about a problem (not at the problem location).	1	2
e.	Talked to a police officer informally about local issues.	1	2
f.	Worked with police, city agencies to resolve a neighborhood problem .	1	2
g.	Worked with a community group and/or neighbors to resolve a neighborhood problem (not at the problem location).	1	2
h.	Other (explain)	1	2

16. Have you taken steps to make your home secure by...

		No	Yes
a.	using an alarm, gates, bars, or other security devices?	1	2
b.	keeping a gun in your home for protection?	1	2

17. Currently, how good a job are the police doing in your neighborhood, in...

		Very bad job	Bad job	Okay job	Good job	Very good job
a.	preventing crime in your neighborhood?	1	2	3	4	5
b.	protecting people's lives and property?	1	2	3	4	5
c.	dealing with problems that you and your neighbors really care about?	1	2	3	4	5
d.	keeping order on the streets and sidewalks?	1	2	3	4	5

Finally, I have a few questions to ask about you. Please remember your answers are confidential. We ask these personal questions to learn more about the individuals who answer our survey.

18. Respondent gender:

Male	1
Female	2

19. In what year were you born?

Year	_____
Refused to answer	8

20. Are you presently employed full-time, part-time, a student, a homemaker, or unemployed? [circle one or two categories as needed.]

Working full-time	1
Working part-time	2
Homemaker	3
Unemployed	4
Retired	5
Disabled	6
Full-time student	7
Part-time student	8
Other	9
Refused	88
Don't know	99

21. What is your racial or ethnic identity? Are you...

Black/African-American	1
White	2
Hispanic/Latino	3
Asian/Pacific Islander	4
American Indian, or	5
Other	6
Refused	8

22. What is your current annual <u>household</u> income from all sources?

Less than $15,000	1
$15,001 to $30,000	2
$30,001 to $45,000	3
$45,001 to $60,000	4
$60,001 to $75,000	5
Over $75,001	6

23. How many children, under the age of 18, reside in your home?

No. of children	_____
Refused	8

Thank you!

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Project at [target location address]:_____ ID #: _____

Date of interview: _____   Respondent type: _____ Neighborhood team member
                                                              _____ Resident (not on team)
Respondent's address: _____   _____ Manager/owner
                                                              _____ Other place manager

Hello, my name is _____. I am conducting a survey for the Justice Research Center, a private research firm, under a grant from the Department of Justice. I may have talked to you about six months ago, as we are now conducting follow-up interviews in this area to discuss local problems. Your views as a neighborhood resident (or store owner, or whatever) are important to our study and will be kept strictly confidential. Individual answers seen only by the research staff, and the survey results will be reported in group form only. Your participation is strictly voluntary. The survey will take about 10 minutes. May I proceed

1. How long have you lived (or worked) at your present location?

    _____ # of years
    _____ or months

2. [If resident] Do you own or rent your home?

    Own   1
    Rent   2

3. In general, how satisfied are you with this block as a place to live/do business? Are you...

    Very satisfied,   4
    Somewhat satisfied,   3
    Somewhat dissatisfied, or   2
    Very dissatisfied?   1
    Don't know   9

4. In the past six months, would you say this block has become a better place to live/do business, a worse place, or stayed about the same?

    Better,   3
    Worse, or   2
    About the same.   1
    Don't know   9

5. a. In general, how safe do you feel out alone on this block during the day? Do you feel...

    Very safe ,   4
    Somewhat safe,   3
    Somewhat unsafe, or   2
    Very unsafe?   1
    Don't know   9

5. b. Compared to six months ago, how safe do feel out alone on this block during the day today? Do you feel...

    More safe,   3
    Less safe, or   2
    About the same?   1
    Don't know   9

6. a. In general, how safe do you feel out alone on this block after dark? Do you feel...

    Very safe,   4
    Somewhat safe,   3
    Somewhat unsafe, or   2
    Very unsafe?   1
    Don't know   9
    Don't go out at night   7

6. b. Compared to six months ago, how safe do feel out alone on this block after dark today? Do you feel...

    More safe,   3
    Less safe, or   2
    About the same?   1
    Don't know   9
    Don't go out at night   7

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7. Next, I am going to mention several crime and disorder problems. Please tell me whether each item is currently a big problem, somewhat of a problem, a little problem, or no problem at all in this immediate neighborhood.

		No problem	Little problem	Some problem	Big problem
a.	People "hanging out" on the street	1	2	3	4
b.	Violence (shootings, assaults)	1	2	3	4
c.	People selling drugs	1	2	3	4
d.	People using drugs	1	2	3	4
e.	Property stolen from homes or businesses	1	2	3	4
f.	Vehicles broken into or stolen	1	2	3	4
g.	Blight (trash, junk, graffiti, etc.)	1	2	3	4
h.	Nuisances (noise, barking dogs, etc.)	1	2	3	4
i.	Prostitution	1	2	3	4
j.	Vacant/abandoned buildings causing problems	1	2	3	4
k.	Gangs	1	2	3	4

8. During the past 6 months, how many times have any of these things happened to you, or your family [or co-workers], in this neighborhood?

		No	Once	Twice	Three + times
a.	Has anyone broken into your home [or business] to steal something?	1	2	3	4
b.	Has anyone damaged or vandalized your home [or business]?	1	2	3	4
c.	Has anyone tried to steal your vehicle, or taken anything from it?	1	2	3	4
d.	Have you had anything stolen from your property outside your home [or business], including your mail?	1	2	3	4
e.	Has anyone robbed or tried to steal something from you by force?	1	2	3	4
f.	Has anyone threatened you or attacked you with a weapon?	1	2	3	4
g.	Has anyone physically attacked you, or attempted to do so?	1	2	3	4

9. During the past six months, have you done any of the following (in this immediate neighborhood?)

		No	Yes
a.	Attended a meeting of a community group concerned with neighborhood problems.	1	2
b.	Participated in a neighborhood project (clean-up, graffiti removal, etc.)	1	2
c.	Participated in a neighborhood block watch program	1	2
d.	Called 911 about a problem (not at the problem location)	1	2
e.	Talked to a police officer informally about local issues	1	2
f.	Worked with police, city agencies to resolve a neighborhood problem (not at the problem location).	1	2
g.	Worked with a community group and/or neighbors to resolve a neighborhood problem (not at the problem location).	1	2
h.	Other (explain)	1	2

10. Have you taken steps to make your home [or place of business] secure by...

		No	Yes
a.	using an alarm, gates, bars, or other security devices?	1	2
b.	keeping a gun in your home for protection?	1	2

11. Currently, how good a job are the police doing in this neighborhood, in...

		Very bad job	Bad job	Okay job	Good job	Very good job
a.	preventing crime in the neighborhood?	1	2	3	4	5
b.	protecting people's lives and property?	1	2	3	4	5
c.	dealing with problems that you and your neighbors [or co-workers] really care about?	1	2	3	4	5
d.	keeping order on the streets and sidewalks?	1	2	3	4	5

12a. In general, if some young people were spray painting graffiti on a building in this neighborhood, how likely is it that your neighbors [or co-workers] would tell them to stop?

Very likely,	4
Somewhat likely,	3
Somewhat unlikely, or	2
Not likely at all?	1
Don't know	9

12b. If there was a problem in this neighborhood which required services from a city agency, how likely is it that your neighbors[or co-workers] would take steps to get the agency to respond?

Very likely,	4
Somewhat likely,	3
Somewhat unlikely, or	2
Not likely at all?	1
Don't know	9

13. How strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements about this neighborhood?

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a.	People around here are willing to help their neighbors.	1	2	3	4	5
b.	This is a "close-knit" community.	1	2	3	4	5

14. Over the past six months, have you been aware of any problems associated with the property at _____? If so, have the problems gotten better, worse, or stayed about the same? Please describe the nature and extent of the current problems.

15. Over the past six months, have you been aware of actions to try to resolve the problems at [the target address]? If yes, what has been your involvement in these actions? What have been the outcomes?

16. Which, if any, of the following specific actions have you taken in regard to the problem at [address] during the past six months?   (Circle "yes" for all that apply). Have you...

		No	Yes
a.	Called 911 (or a non-emergency police number)?	1	2
b.	Talked to neighbors about the problem?	1	2
c.	Spoken to the tenants at the problem location?	1	2
d.	Spoken to the owner/manager at the problem location?	1	2
e.	Called a city agency about the problem location (i.e., not the police)?	1	2
f.	Taken direct steps to resolve problem (ex., personally boarded up windows)?	1	2
g.	Called or met with community organizations to try to solve the problem?	1	2
h.	Worked with police and other agencies to resolve the problem?	1	2
i.	Worked with neighbors to resolve the problem?	1	2
j.	Other (describe).	1	2

17. Have you heard of the program called Safe Streets Now!? [If yes], how have they been involved in attempts to resolve problems at [the target address]?

18. How effective have the efforts of SSN been in resolving the problems at [the target address]?

Finally, I have a few questions to ask about you. Please remember your answers are confidential. We ask these personal questions to learn more about the individuals who answer our survey.

19. Respondent gender:

Male	1
Female	2

20. In what year were you born?

Year	_____
Refused to answer	8

21. Are you presently employed full-time, part-time, a student, a homemaker, or unemployed? [circle one or two categories as needed.]

Working full-time	1
Working part-time	2
Homemaker	3
Unemployed	4
Retired	5
Disabled	6
Full-time student	7
Part-time student	8
Other	9
Refused	88
Don't know	99

22. What is your racial or ethnic identity? Are you...

Black/African-American	1
White	2
Hispanic/Latino	3
Asian/Pacific Islander	4
American Indian, or	5
Other	6
Refused	8

23. What is your current annual <u>household</u> income from all sources?

Less than $15,000	1
$15,001 to $30,000	2
$30,001 to $45,000	3
$45,001 to $60,000	4
$60,001 to $75,000	5
Over $75,001	6

24. [If resident] How many children, under the age of 18, reside in your home?

No. of children	_____
Refused	8

Thank you!

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Appendix B

Legal Briefs

TO: SAFE STREETS NOW!

FROM: PAUL N. HALVONIK

RE: WHETHER THERE IS
             LIABILITY FOR ASSISTING PERSONS BRINGING
             SAFE STREETS NOW! SMALL CLAIMS ACTIONS

DATE: July 17, 2000

A.   LIABILITY OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

Public entities, employees and volunteers working with a public entity have absolute

immunity when advising small claims litigants. Government Code §818.9 provides:

> A public entity, its employees and volunteers shall not be liable
> because of any advice provided to small claims court litigants
> pursuant to the Small Claims Act (Chapter 5.5 (commencing with
> Section 116.110) of Title 1 of Part 1 of the Code of Civil
> Procedure).[1]

Whether the state, or any of its subdivisions, or anyone working with either may be sued

at all is, under California law, solely a question for the legislature. "In short, sovereign immunity

is the rule in California; governmental liability is limited to exceptions specifically set forth by

statute." Cochran v. Herzog Engraving Co., 155 Cal.App.3d 405, 409 (1984). Government

Code §818.9 unambiguously establishes that no public entity, its employees or volunteers is open

to liability because of any advice provided to small claims court litigants. The state has

---

[1] The legislature, in addition to providing complete immunity to all public employees
and public volunteers advising small claims litigants, has expressly encouraged the providing of
such assistance. See Code of Civil Procedure §116.260 and 116.940 as well as Rule 1706,
California Rules of Court.

exercised its power of immunity thoroughly and, it can be stated, unequivocally, that

governmental employees providing Safe Streets Now! assistance to small claims litigants are not

vulnerable to suit.[2]

B.   ASSISTANCE BY NON-GOVERNMENTAL PERSONNEL.

The legislature had not confined non-attorney assistance in small claims matters to public

employees or volunteers working with public entities. Code of Civil Procedure §116.531

provides, in pertinent part:

> "Nothing in this article shall prevent a representative of an insurer
> or other expert in the matter before the small claims court from
> rendering assistance to a party . . . except during the conduct of the
> hearing . . . unless otherwise prohibited by law . . .." (emphasis
> added)

Unless the person assisting the small claims litigant is, at the same time, engaged in the

violation of some other law, then, CCP §116.531, by its express terms, authorizes the Safe

Streets Now! expert to provide assistance. Furthermore, Civil Code §47(b)(2) and (3) extends a

privilege to any communications made in any judicial proceeding or any other official

proceeding authorized by law. That means, for example, that one may not be sued for

---

[2] Until forty years ago, governmental immunity, for the most part, was the product of
common law, that is to say, judge-made rather than legislative law. Its rather unrepublican
provenance is in the legal fiction "that the king can do no wrong." People v. Superior Court
(Pierpont), 29 Cal.2d 754, 756 (1947). 5 Witkin Summary of California Law, "Torts", §105,
pp.181-182 (9th ed. 1988) and authorities therein collected. In 1961, the California Supreme
Court decided to discard the rule of governmental immunity, leaving the state as vulnerable to
suit as any other entity. See Muskopf v. Corning Hosp. Dist., 55 Cal.2d 211, 213 (1961). The
legislative response was swift. First, in 1961, it enacted a moratorium on the effect of the
Muscopf decision, reenacting governmental immunity as a rule of decision in the California
courts. Then, in 1963, it adopted a statutory law of governmental immunity and, in 1990,
adopted the sweeping immunity which currently appears as Government Code §818.9. Stats.
1990, see 1305 (S.B. 2627) §10.

defamation because of statements made in pleadings filed in the small claims court. Nor can one

be sued for emotional distress allegedly sustained by virtue of statements contained in pleadings

filed in small claims court. Indeed, the only action which is not foreclosed by privilege pursuant

to Civil Code §47 is the tort of malicious prosecution. Fellows v. National Enquirer, Inc., 42

Cal. 3d 234, 244 (1986); Ribas v. Clark, 38 Cal.3d 355, 364 (1985); Abraham v. Lancaster

Community Hosp., 217 Cal.App.3d 796, 824 (1990). Malicious prosecution suits, however, may

only be pursued where the underlying case was brought in a court other than small claims court

(e.g., Municipal Court, Superior Court, whether of limited jurisdiction or not) for the tort of

malicious prosecution is not applicable to litigation occurring in small claims court. Pace v.

Hillcrest Motors, Co., 101 Cal.App.3d 476, 479 (1980); Accord, Cantu v. Resolution Trust

Corp., 4 Cal.App.4th 857, 880 (1992); Jellinek v. Superior Court, 228 Cal.App.3d 652, 658

(1991); Lossing v. Superior Court, 207 Cal.App.3d 635, 638 (1989); Camarena v. Sequoiah Ins.

Co., 190 Cal.App.3d 1089, 1096 (1987); Chauncey v. Niems, 182 Cal.App.3d 967, 973-974

(1986); Cooper v. Pirelli Cable Corp., 160 Cal.App.3d 294, 295 (1984); Black v. Hepner, 156

Cal.App.3d 656, 660 (1984).

CONCLUSION

Government Code §818.9 provides public entities, as well as its employees and

volunteers, with absolute and total immunity when advising small claims litigants. Moreover,

those Safe Streets Now! workers who are not formally associated with a public agency have

virtual immunity when the communication privilege of Civil Code §47(b)(2) and (2) is combined

with the authorization of Code of Civil Procedure §116.531 and the rule prohibiting actions in

malicious prosecution for small claims litigation.

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MEMORANDUM

TO: SAFE STREETS NOW!

FROM: PAUL N. HALVONIK

RE: WHETHER THE SAFE STREETS NOW! PRACTICE OF ASSISTING SMALL
            CLAIMS APPLICANTS IS AN UNAUTHORIZED PRACTICE
            OF LAW

DATE: July 17, 2000

The practice of law is, in truth, discouraged in small claims court. Indeed, it is hardly

tolerated. Lawyers are only permitted to appear when they are, themselves, litigants, or members

of business associations in which all partners, officers or directors are attorneys. Code of Civil

Procedure §116.530. In sum, lawyers are only permitted in small claims court in those situations

where it is impossible to exclude them.

Business associations, such as corporations, have to be represented by a natural person,

but the legislature has provided that, in small claims court, the natural person representing the

corporation need not be a lawyer. And, indeed, Code of Civil Procedure §116.540 provides for a

number of situations in which non-attorneys may appear in small claims court as representatives

of a litigant. In addition to §116.540, permitting non-attorneys to represent litigants in small

claims matters, Code of Civil Procedure §116.531 provides that the small claims act should not

be read to prevent an "expert on the matter before the small claims court from rendering

assistance to the party in the litigation except during the conduct of the hearing . . . unless

otherwise prohibited by law . . ..

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In sum, the legislature has authorized certain non-attorneys to represent litigants at the courtroom hearing itself (Code of Civil Procedure §116.540) and other non-attorneys to render assistance except at the hearing itself. Code of Civil Procedure §116.531. See also Code of Civil Procedure §§116.260, 116.940, Rule 1706, California Rules of Court, Government Code §818.9.

Does the legislature have the authority to grant non-attorneys the power to assist and appear in small claims matters? The answer is that the legislature does have that power and the Court of Appeal expressly so held in Prudential Insurance Co. v. Small Claims Court, 76 Cal.App.2d 379 (1946). Would the legislature have a similar authority to permit non-attorneys to advise and appear in municipal court hearings? The answer is that it does not have such power. The California Supreme Court ruled, in Merco Const. Engineers v. Municipal Court, 21 Cal.3d 724 (1978), that former Code of Civil Procedure §90, which purported to authorize non-attorney corporate employees to appear on behalf of the corporation in municipal court, an unconstitutional exercise of legislative authority, invading the judiciary's power to regulate the practice of law.

Why have the appellate courts drawn such a sharp distinction between the municipal court and small claims court for purposes of allowing a corporation to be represented by someone other than an attorney? The answer is that small claims courts are not regular judicial proceedings. See, Merco, supra, 21 Cal.3d at 731-732. Small claims court, because it does not permit the parties to be represented by lawyers, is not a conventional due process judicial forum. If its decisions were final, small claims hearings would violate due process requirements of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution which guarantee the right to be

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represented by counsel. See <u>Mendoza v. Small Claims Court</u>, 49 Cal.2d 668 (1958). But the

decisions of California's small claims courts are not final. The defendant, should plaintiff

prevail, is entitled to an appeal in which there will be a new hearing where there is an absolute

right to be represented by counsel. That the defendant may have to participate in a preliminary

hearing (i.e., small claims court) where counsel in prohibited does not render the proceedings

unconstitutional <u>because</u> such hearings are <u>only</u> preliminary. The constitutional right to counsel

in civil proceedings:

> ". . . does not mean that the Legislature cannot create a small
> claims court where informal hearings may be held without the
> assistance of counsel, as long as the right to appear by counsel is
> guaranteed in a real sense somewhere in the proceeding."

<u>Brooks v. Small Claims Court</u>, 8 Cal.3d 661, 665 (1973).[1]

<u>Prudential Insurance Co. v. Small Claims Court</u>, <u>supra</u>, 76 Cal.App.2d 379, is a square

holding that the legislature has the power to authorize non-attorneys to function in the small

claims context, even to the extent of representing a corporation in court, even though the

legislature has no power, pursuant to the <u>Merco</u> ruling, to authorize such conduct in conventional

courts, including the municipal court. The legislature has exercised its power to introduce non-

attorneys into small claims proceedings in Code of Civil Procedure §116.531 which provides for

non-attorney assistance to the party in the litigation <u>except</u> during the conduct of the hearing

itself. Because the legislature has the power to authorize non-attorneys to represent litigants

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[1]The plaintiff has no right to appeal from the small claims court because plaintiffs are deemed to have waived the right to a constitutional hearing by filing the action in the small claims court rather than the municipal or superior court. <u>Superior Wheeler Cake Corp. v. Superior Court</u>, 203 Cal.384, 387 (1928); <u>Parada v. Small Claims Court</u>, 70 Cal.App.3d 766, 769 (1977); <u>Cook v. Superior Court</u>, 675, 677-678 (1969).

during hearings, there seems no rational argument that the legislature does not have a similar power to permit non-attorneys to provide small claims litigants with advice in preparing their litigation.

CONCLUSION

Small claims court is not a court in the conventional sense. That is because lawyers may not represent parties in small claims court and proceedings where a party is prohibited from having a lawyer violate the Federal Constitutional guarantee of due process of law. Small claims courts, nevertheless, do function as a quasi-judicial body because the plaintiff, by electing to file in small claims court, waives the right to a proceeding in which plaintiff may be represented by a lawyer and the defendant is bound by the judgment only when electing to do so. The defendant need not be bound by the judgment and may, instead, file an appeal where there will be a full hearing in which counsel may appear for both sides.

Because small claims is a quasi-judicial proceeding where lawyers are not even permitted to appear, except in the most narrow of circumstances (e.g., where the lawyer is a party to the proceeding), one who assists a small claims litigant cannot be said to be engaging in the practice of law.

The legislature has provided for non-attorneys to assist litigants in preparation and, in some instances, even during the hearing itself. The courts have held that non-lawyer assistance in this quasi-judicial setting is a matter of legislative judgment and does not interfere with the courts' power to determine the qualifications of those who assist litigants in conventional courts.

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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
[IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY: MUNICIPAL COURT]

COUNTY OF _____

[IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY, _____ JUDICIAL DISTRICT]

SMALL CLAIMS DIVISION

_____,

Plaintiff

vs.   TRIAL BRIEF

_____,

Defendants.
_____/

INTRODUCTION

Plaintiff ____[name]_____ is one of __[state number]__ individuals suing

defendant ___[state name(s)]_____ in small claims court for maintaining a private nuisance

and for keeping her/his/its property in a dangerous condition. Plaintiff ___[name]____

submits the following brief on the factual and legal bases of her/his and the other plaintiffs'

claims.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff ___[state name]_____ resides at _____[state address]_____. He/she has

resided there for the past ___[number]____ years/months. Plaintiff's residence is located

__[state number]____ blocks ___[direction]____ of defendant's rental property.

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[Here plaintiffs should include facts indicating the various problems they have encountered as a result of the criminal conduct which is occurring around defendant's property. Each community's facts will be a little different. This is a very important and persuasive part of the brief and should be set forth in some detail.]

PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff ___[state name]_____ and the other plaintiffs in this consolidated action are members of ____[state name]_____, an informal neighborhood group which formed in ___[state year or month]____ in order to take steps against the frequent criminal activity in the neighborhood. It was immediately apparent that most of the observed criminal activity was centered around the property owned by defendant, located at ___[state address]_____.

On or about _____[date]___, the _____[neighborhood group name]_____ gave notice in writing to defendant of the serious problems with criminal activities at the property of defendant. They asked that the tenants responsible for creating a public nuisance be immediately evicted. [Alternative: They asked that those persons using the property for illegal purposes be excluded from defendant's premises.] (See Attachment ___).

When plaintiffs' claims were not adequately resolved through an informal process with the defendant, these small claims lawsuits followed.

LEGAL ARGUMENT

Plaintiff alleges that defendant is maintaining a private nuisance and has kept his/her/its property in a dangerous condition.

I

CONSOLIDATION OF THESE CASES
IS APPROPRIATE

Consolidation of these small claims cases is appropriate pursuant to California law.

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<u>Lew v. Superior Court</u>, 20 Cal.App.4th 866, 872 (1993) and authorities therein collected.

II

DEFENDANT'S PROPERTY IS A NUISANCE

Civil Code §3479 defines a nuisance as anything injurious to health, indecent or offensive to the senses, or an obstruction to the free use of property, "so as to interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of life or property . . .." An action may be maintained for damages "by any person whose property is injured or affected, or whose personal enjoyment is lessened" by a nuisance as defined by §3479. Code of Civil Procedure §731; <u>Lew v. Superior Court</u>, <u>supra</u>, 20 Cal.App.4th at 872.

Squarely on point is <u>Lew v. Superior Court</u>, <u>supra</u>, whose seventy-five plaintiffs, in a consolidated action, prevailed against the owner of an apartment house that had become a "drug house" when the defendants had not taken all reasonable measures available to them to control the illegal activity on their property. 20 Cal.App.4th at 874. Damages totaled $218,325.00.

The instant defendant is maintaining a similar nuisance. Indeed, defendant is involved in a nuisance *per se*.

> "The concept of a nuisance per se arises when a legislative body with appropriate jurisdiction, in the exercise of police power, expressly declares a particular object or substance, activity or circumstance, to be a nuisance. Generally a nuisance is defined as '[a]nything which is injurious to health, or is indecent or offensive to the senses, or an obstruction to the free use of property, or unlawfully obstructs the free passage or use in the customary manner, of any navigable lake, or river, bay, stream, canal, or basin, or any public park, square, street or highway . . ..' (Civ. Code §3479.) This requires consideration and balancing of a variety of factors,. [Citations.] However, where the law expressly declares something to be a nuisance, then no inquiry beyond its existence need be made and in this sense its mere existence is said to be a nuisance per se. [Citation.] But, to

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rephrase the rule, to be considered a nuisance per se the object, substance, activity or circumstance at issue must be expressly declared to be a nuisance by its very existence by some applicable law."

Jones v. Union Pacific Railroad Co., 79 Cal.App.4th 1053, 1068 (2000), quoting from (Beck Development Co. V. Southern Pacific Transportation Co. 44 Cal.App.4th 1160, 1206-1207 (1996).

Health and Safety Code §11570 provides:

"Every building or place used for the purpose of unlawfully selling, serving, storing, keeping, manufacturing, or giving away any controlled substance, precursor or analog specified in this division, and every building or place where or upon which those acts take place, is a nuisance which shall be enjoined, abated and prevented and for which damages may be covered, whether it is public or private nuisance."

Because defendants' property is maintained in violation of Health and Safety Code §11570, it is a nuisance *per se*. Lew v. Superior Court, supra, 20 Cal.App. 4th at 871.

A.   Defendant's property is a private nuisance.

Because of defendant's mismanagement, his/her/its property has generated violent crime, gunplay, noise, vandalism, garbage, drug trafficking and other serious interferences with the quiet enjoyment of adjacent property. (See Plaintiff's Factual Background.) This unwholesome condition may also qualify as a public nuisance but the fact that a nuisance is public does not deprive the individual of action in cases where, as to her/him, it is private and obstructs the free use and enjoyment of his/her property. [Citations.]" Lew v. Superior Court, supra, 20 Cal.App.4th at 873 quoting from Fisher v. Zumwalt, 128 Cal. 493, 496 (1900).

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B.   Defendant's nuisance has injured plaintiff.

· Plaintiff will show that he/she has endured constant harassment by tenants of the subject property and their drug-dealing friends. He/she will show that his/her enjoyment of life has been seriously interfered with by the criminal activities in his/her neighborhood and that plaintiff is in a continuous state of fear that he/she will be the next victim of crime in his neighborhood.

[Plaintiff, as a neighbor and a landowner, is entitled to damages including diminution of property value resulting from the drug activities on another's nearby property. Lew v. Superior Court, supra, 20 Cal.App.4th at 871.] [Plaintiff, though he/she does not own the property, may nevertheless, maintain this action to vindicate his/her property interest as a tenant and damages for the diminution of plaintiff's leasehold value. Institoris v. City of Los Angeles, 210 Cal.App.3d 10, 20 (1989); see also Stoiker v. Honeychuck, 101 Cal.App.3d 903, 919-920 (1980).] Plaintiff is, further, entitled to recover for emotional distress and mental suffering. Lew v. Superior Court, supra, 20 Cal.App.4th at 873-874 and authorities therein collected.

II
DEFENDANT IS LIABLE FOR KEEPING HIS/HER/ITS PROPERTY
IN A DANGEROUS CONDITION

A.   A landlord is liable for dangerous conditions on its land that harm neighbors. The test of a landowners liability to its neighbors for dangerous conditions is "whether in the management of his property the possessor of land has acted as a reasonable person under all circumstances." Sprecher v. Adamson Companies, 30 Cal.3d 358, 372 (1981). Where a landowner has not acted reasonably in the management of his property, liability may be found to those harmed outside of the land by dangerous conditions on the land. Id. Where criminal

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activity occurs on property, the landowner is liable unless he/she/it has taken "all reasonable measures available to them to control their property . . .." <u>Lew v. Superior Court</u>, <u>supra</u>, 20 Cal.App.4th at 874. It is beside the point that the criminal activity is conducted by third-parties who are neither owners nor tenants of the property. In <u>Lew v. Superior Court</u>, <u>supra</u>, liability was imposed where it was established that drug dealers, though not residents of the property, had easy access to defendant's property and defendant had not taken all reasonable measures available to exclude them from the property. See also, <u>Oscar v. University Students Cooperative Association</u>, 939 F.2d 808 (9th Cir. 1992) (neighbors of building in which drug dealing occurred have valid RICO cause of action).

<div align="center">CONCLUSION</div>

For all the reasons mentioned, plaintiffs are entitled to legal redress for the harm they have suffered as a result of defendant 's maintenance of a nuisance and negligent maintenance of his/her/its property.

<div align="center">_____</div>
<div align="center">PLAINTIFF</div>