



National Evaluation of WEED & SEED

Case Study



Las Vegas, Nevada Research Report



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RESEARCH REPORT

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1.0 Introduction

Unveiled in 1991, Operation Weed and Seed represents an ambitious attempt to improve the quality of life in America's cities. The ultimate goals of Weed and Seed are to control violent crime, drug trafficking, and drug-related crime in targeted high-crime neighborhoods and to provide a safe environment, free of crime and drug use, in which law-abiding citizens can live, work, and raise their families. Weed and Seed, administered by the Executive Office for Weed and Seed (EOWS), is grounded in the philosophy that targeted areas can best be improved by a two-pronged strategy of "weeding" out violent offenders, drug traffickers, and other criminals by removing them from the targeted area and "seeding" the area with human services and neighborhood revitalization efforts. Community policing is intended to serve as the bridge between weeding and seeding.

Three key objectives emphasize the government-community partnership spirit that is at the heart of Weed and Seed:

1. To **develop a comprehensive, multiagency strategy** to control and prevent violent crime, drug trafficking, and drug-related crime in targeted high-crime neighborhoods.
2. To **coordinate and integrate existing and new Federal, State, local, and private sector initiatives, criminal justice efforts, and human services**, concentrating those resources in the project sites to maximize their impact on reducing and preventing violent crime, drug trafficking, and drug-related crime.
3. To **mobilize community residents** in the targeted sites to assist law enforcement in identifying and removing violent offenders and drug traffickers from their neighborhoods and to assist other human service agencies in identifying and responding to service needs of the target area.

Weed and Seed sites thus draw on the resources of a variety of agencies at all levels of government, private and other public organizations, and individual residents.

Specific strategies and program components designed to achieve these three objectives fall into one of four Weed and Seed program elements:

1. **Law enforcement.** Weed and Seed's law enforcement goals are the identification, arrest, prosecution, conviction, and incarceration of narcotics traffickers and violent criminals operating in the target area.
2. **Community policing.** An objective of community policing is to establish mutual trust between law enforcement and the public. This is the bridge between weeding and seeding: law enforcement officials enlist the community for help in identifying criminal activity and locating perpetrators; simultaneously, police help the community solve problems.

3. **Prevention, intervention, and treatment.** This element of the program is intended to reduce risk factors and to enhance protective factors that are associated with drug abuse, violence, and crime in the target area. “Safe havens” in the target areas typically coordinate the prevention, intervention, and treatment activities.
4. **Neighborhood restoration.** The goal of this element is to enable residents in the target area to improve their community morale, their neighborhood’s physical appearance (buildings, parks, streets, lighting, and so forth), and local business conditions.

An important structural feature of Weed and Seed is the local steering committee. EOWS requires that each site have a steering committee, formally chaired by the U.S. Attorney for the district in which the site is located, that is responsible for “establishing Weed and Seed’s goals and objectives, designing and developing programs, providing guidance on implementation, and assessing program achievement.”¹

Steering committee members include representatives from key local, State, and Federal agencies, as well as other stakeholders in the Weed and Seed target area, such as business leaders, tenant association leaders, and other community activists. The requirement to convene a steering committee reflects EOWS’s belief that, for neighborhood revitalization to work, all key stakeholders must participate in decisions that affect the target area.

Funded sites were divided into two groups: officially recognized sites and demonstration sites. Officially recognized sites were currently implementing Weed and Seed strategies in their jurisdiction, had submitted to EOWS documentation summarizing their strategy, but had not yet received full funding from EOWS. After EOWS designated a site as “officially recognized,” the site was eligible for demonstration status and full Weed and Seed funding.

2.0 Case Study Objective and Methodology

This case study is one of eight completed for the National Evaluation of Weed and Seed, under the direction of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). In 1994, NIJ selected the following eight sites for the national evaluation:

- Four demonstration sites that first received funding in FY 1994:
 - Hartford, Connecticut
 - Las Vegas, Nevada
 - Sarasota and Manatee Counties, Florida
 - Shreveport, Louisiana

¹ Executive Office for Weed and Seed, “Operation Weed and Seed Implementation Manual,” p. 2–1.

- Two demonstration sites awarded continuation funding in FY 1994:
 - Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
 - Seattle, Washington

- Two officially recognized sites:
 - Akron, Ohio
 - Salt Lake City, Utah

Three of these sites (Pittsburgh, Salt Lake City, and Sarasota/Manatee) were also recipients of funds from the National Performance Review Laboratory (NPRL).²

This case study documents the activities implemented under the Weed and Seed program in Las Vegas and assesses the program’s impact at this site. The final cross-site evaluation report compares the eight sites and presents overall conclusions on the Weed and Seed program.

The evaluation activities undertaken for this case study included: (1) onsite observation of program activities; (2) inperson interviews with program staff, key law enforcement personnel, community leaders, service providers, and participants; (3) review of program documents; (4) a survey of target area residents; and (5) analysis of computerized crime and arrest records provided by the local police department.

3.0 Site History and Description

The Las Vegas Weed and Seed site is in transition. The transitional state is a consequence of uncertainties regarding the funding arrangements for the grant. Since the program’s inception, the city of Las Vegas had been the grantee. Although the city announced its intent to relinquish that role in April 1997, it now has resumed the grantee role. Weeding efforts have been run through the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD). A Weed and Seed manager and two safe haven coordinators have been responsible for the seeding efforts, operating out of a program office in the community. Two neighborhoods within the city of Las Vegas were designated as Weed and Seed target areas: Meadows Village and West Las Vegas.

3.1 City Characteristics

Las Vegas is Nevada’s largest city and America’s fastest growing major city. Between 1990 and 1996, the city’s population grew by 13 percent, from 393,521 to 443,391. In 1990, 72 percent of the city’s population was white, 11 percent was black, 12 percent was Hispanic, and the balance of the

² The National Performance Review Task Force (now renamed the National Partnership for Reinventing Government) designated a number of governmental organizations or activities as National Performance Review Laboratories (now Reinvention Laboratories) to test "reinventing government" initiatives. These labs have developed more efficient ways of delivering government services by creating new partnerships between entities, streamlining bureaucratic processes, and empowering organizations to make substantial changes. The mission of the Weed and Seed Reinvention Laboratory is to develop more effective mechanisms that combine and deliver Federal, State, and local resources in Weed and Seed sites.

population was Asian, American Indian, or “Other.” Nearly one-quarter of the population was less than 18 years old. Although 76 percent of Las Vegas residents in 1990 had graduated from high school, only 13 percent had attained a college degree. The median income in the city was \$30,590, and 11.5 percent of residents lived below the poverty level. Unemployment, measured at the time of the 1990 census, stood at slightly more than 6 percent, but has since declined as the city has experienced a major construction boom. Job opportunities in the construction and service sectors have attracted large numbers of immigrants, especially Hispanic residents.

Las Vegas is large in geographic area, covering 83 square miles, and is situated in the northwest corner of Clark County—Nevada’s most populous county, with 1.2 million residents. The county includes seven other cities, including North Las Vegas, which has recently been approved for inclusion in the Weed and Seed effort.³

The entertainment industry is the city’s economic base. As a magnet for national and international tourism, Las Vegas hosts more than 29 million visitors each year. This creates a variety of challenges for the city, in both law enforcement and social services.

3.2 Target Area Characteristics and Nature of Problems

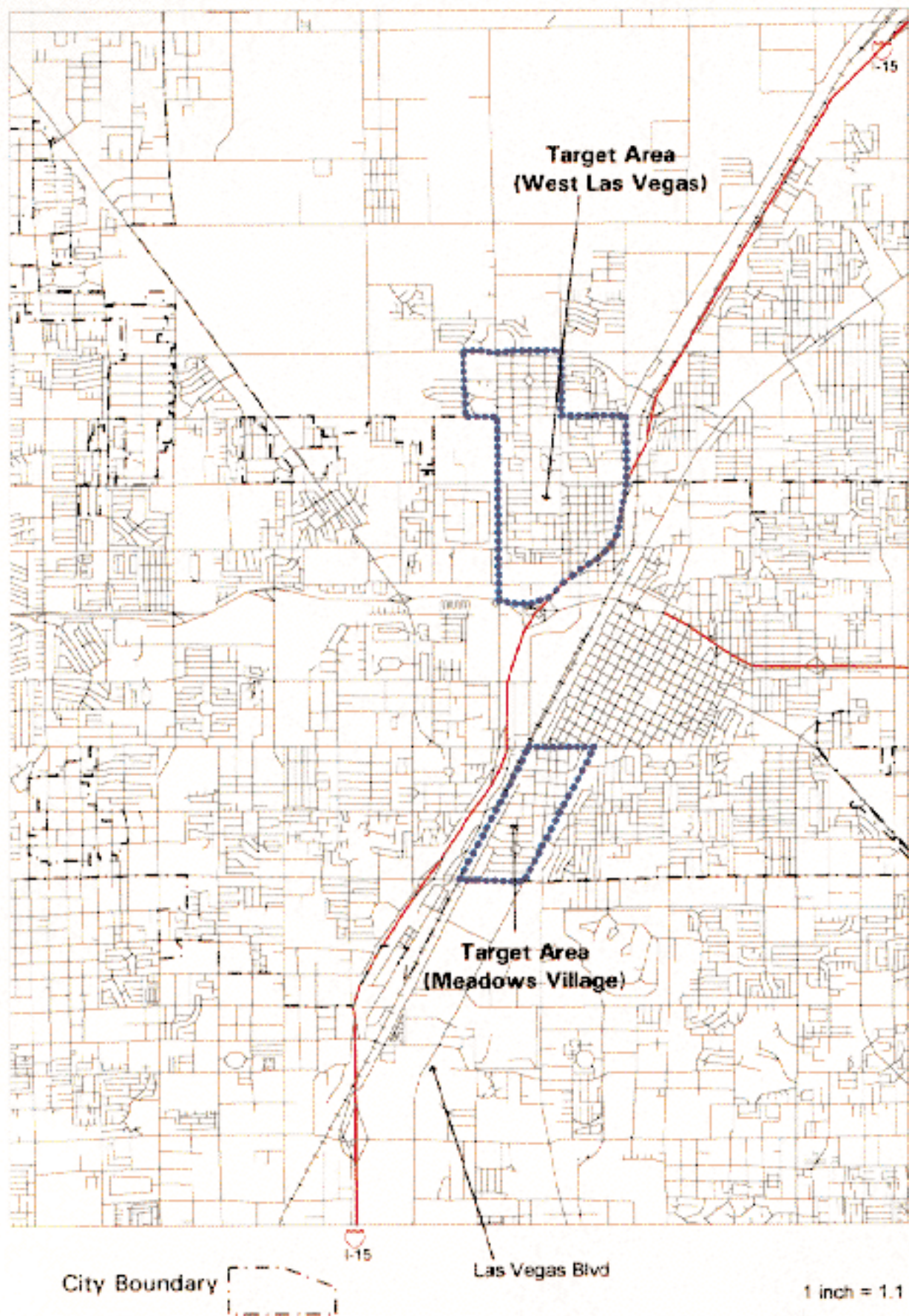
Meadows Village and West Las Vegas were each designated Weed and Seed target areas because of their experience with crime, particularly drug sales, violence, and youth crime. As such, these neighborhoods were viewed as appropriate sites for Weed and Seed-type interventions. Exhibit 3.1 shows the location of the two target areas within the city’s boundaries.

Meadows Village, formerly known as the “Naked City” from its days as home to many of the city’s dancers, is located at the north end of “the strip,” the axis along Las Vegas Boulevard where the city’s major casinos, resort hotels, and tourist attractions are located. Meadows Village lies in the shadow of the Stratosphere, one of the city’s largest casino-hotels.⁴ The community occupies a small and shrinking geographic area, as residential property has been increasingly taken over for commercial or business purposes. This has caused a decline in the neighborhood’s population, which was 4,867 in 1990. The majority of residences are rental units. Hispanics comprise nearly one-half of the population (47 percent). A substantial fraction of the Hispanic residents do not speak English as their native language. The balance of the nonwhite population is about equally distributed between black (7 percent) and Asian/Pacific (7 percent) residents. The area’s 1990 unemployment rate was 14.4 percent, more than twice the citywide rate. Gang problems are significant in the community.

3 This report does not address the Weed and Seed program activities in North Las Vegas.

4 The neighborhood is bounded by Industrial Road on the west, Commerce/Las Vegas Boulevard on the east, Oakey on the north, and Sahara on the south. It is contained wholly within census tract 11.

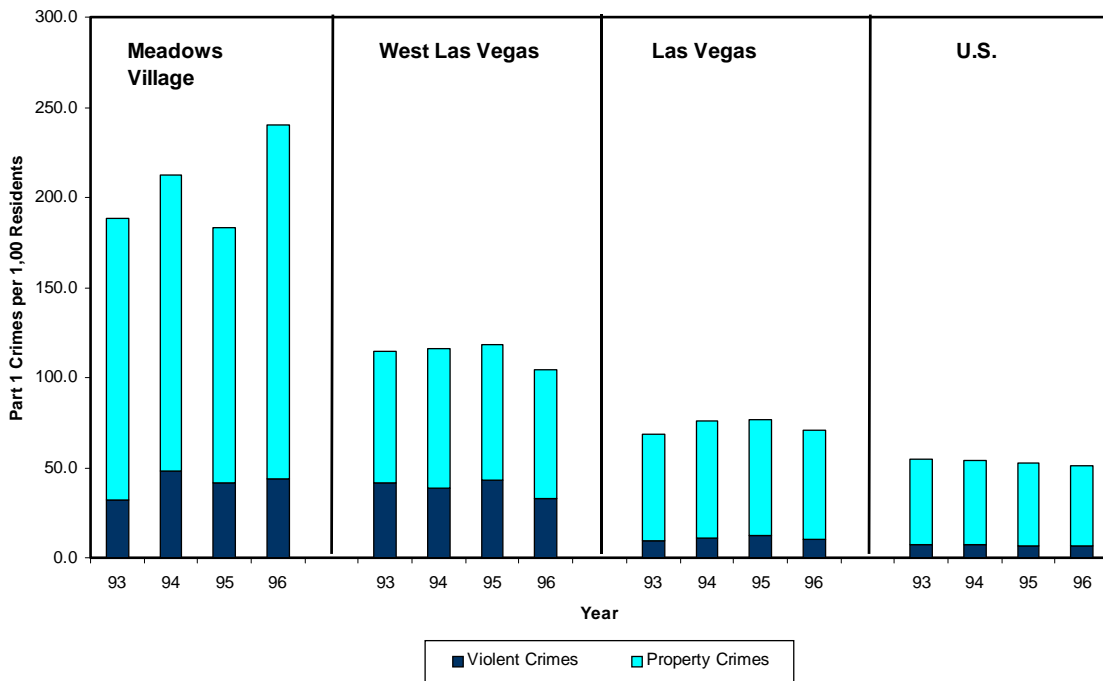
**Exhibit 3.1
Las Vegas Weed and Seed Areas**



West Las Vegas, the other Weed and Seed site, had 15,629 residents in 1990 and has experienced modest recent population growth.⁵ There are a number of subsidized housing developments in the neighborhood, and the majority of residences are rental. Blacks are the predominant ethnic group, making up 78 percent of the residents in 1990. Whites make up 16 percent of the population, and the balance is a mix of other ethnic groups. The unemployment rate was 17 percent in 1990, even higher than Meadows Village. The crime problems in West Las Vegas consist primarily of drug use and violence related to both drugs and gangs.

Exhibit 3.2 shows the trend in annual crime rates between calendar years 1993 and 1996 for Meadows Village, West Las Vegas, the entire city of Las Vegas, and the Nation for Part 1 crimes per 1,000 residents.⁶ The Las Vegas Weed and Seed program started in October 1994, nearly midway through the 4-year time interval shown in the exhibit.

Exhibit 3.2
Part 1 Crimes per 1,000 Residents



Source: Incident-level crime data supplied by the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department.
Note: Weed and Seed activities started in October 1994.

5 The West Las Vegas neighborhood is bounded by Comstock Street, Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, Interstate Highway 15, and the Oran K. Gragson Highway. It includes census tracts 30.1, 30.2, and 35.

6 This crime measure includes four categories of violent crime—homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault—and three categories of property crime—burglary, larceny, and auto theft.

Throughout 1993–96 the crime rates for the two target areas and Las Vegas citywide exceeded the nationwide average, both for violent crime and property crime. The rates for Meadows Village were three to four times the national average in 1993 and then rose substantially between 1993 and 1996, with a dramatic increase in 1996. For West Las Vegas, the rates were approximately twice the corresponding nationwide level in 1993. Then, as occurred citywide, the West Las Vegas crime rates rose in 1994 and 1995, then decreased in 1996.

Of particular interest are the differing trends in the two neighborhoods in the first 2 years following implementation of Weed and Seed, 1995 and 1996. As shown in exhibit 3.2, the Meadows Village crime rate first fell, then rose. The reverse occurred in West Las Vegas, with crime rising in 1995 and then falling in 1996. In section 6, we will return to an analysis of the crime rates in the two target areas, and seek to explain these patterns in light of the differing characteristics of the communities and their Weed and Seed efforts.

3.3 Other Funding Sources

In addition to Weed and Seed funding, which is detailed in section 4.3, Las Vegas receives funding for a variety of services provided to areas that overlap, in part or in whole, the two Weed and Seed neighborhoods. In West Las Vegas, the city's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is quite active. These Federal moneys are used to supplement seeding activities not funded by Weed and Seed. In addition, West Las Vegas is part of the area that has been federally designated as an Enterprise Community. These two funding sources have been supplemented by a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) technical assistance grant that has developed eight neighborhood associations and boards (known as the West Las Vegas Neighborhood Advisory Boards) to provide training and to develop neighborhood-level improvements through cleaning up empty lots and improving properties.

The Federal AmeriCorps program also provides support for ongoing seeding initiatives in the Weed and Seed target areas. The Las Vegas office of the University of Nevada–Reno secured funding for six AmeriCorps volunteers, who worked in both Meadows Village and West Las Vegas.

A hallmark activity in Las Vegas is the Southern Nevada Enterprise Community (SNEC). SNEC is a state economic development program that serves to develop and help implement locally and federally funded grant initiatives, including initiatives in both Weed and Seed neighborhoods. It has served as a catalyst, particularly in West Las Vegas, for the expansion of seeding efforts. Similarly, the Las Vegas School District has been active in supporting and enhancing seeding activities.

With respect to community policing, it is interesting to note that the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department has not participated in any of the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grant programs of the U.S. Department of Justice until quite recently.

4.0 Program Structure and Chronology

4.1 Formal Organization and Structure for Weed and Seed Program

The management structure for the Las Vegas Weed and Seed program has undergone several changes since its inception in 1994. In the first 2 years of operation, a large Weed and Seed steering committee functioned as the key decisionmaking body. This steering committee had representatives from a variety of law enforcement and social service groups and was chaired by the U.S. Attorney for the region. The Weed and Seed program manager had broad responsibility, and a representative from the city planning agency played a substantial role in program management.

Under this early arrangement, the Weed and Seed steering committee played an active role in management and goal setting for the Las Vegas effort. The committee's monthly meetings were well attended and typically covered a full agenda, with most decisions reached by consensus.

In 1996, this structure changed significantly. A Weed and Seed executive committee was installed as the first-line management structure. The chief executives—or their designees—of the key agencies were represented in this group: the U.S. Attorney, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Special Agent in Charge, the mayor of Las Vegas, the deputy chief of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, and the Clark County executive. The U.S. Attorney and the FBI Special Agent in Charge were the most active participants in this group. A city fiscal analyst worked with the Weed and Seed program manager in submitting required financial reports. The Weed and Seed steering committee was chaired by the U.S. Attorney.

The other change of substance wrought by this new structure was the separation of Weed subcommittees from Seed subcommittees. The Weed and Seed program manager was also designated seeding program manager, with supervisory responsibility for the safe haven coordinators in both West Las Vegas and Meadows Village. Five Seed subcommittees (grants, community empowerment, planning and strategies, youth focus, and administration/budget) were developed, each with its own chair. These subcommittee chairs formed the seeding committee, which reported to the Weed and Seed steering committee, not the seeding program manager. The police captains from the target areas served as the community-oriented policing patrol supervisors, and were represented in the Weed subcommittees.⁷

U.S. Attorney's Office. Since the inception of Weed and Seed efforts in Las Vegas, the U.S. Attorney's Office has played an important role in the program. In addition to chairing the executive and steering committees, the U.S. Attorney has committed resources for Federal prosecution of Weed and Seed cases. In addition, the Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee (LECC) coordinator has

⁷ A decision on the future structure of the Las Vegas Weed and Seed operation has not been made. EOWS recommended the re-introduction of a large steering committee, similar to that which functioned during the first several years of the grant. In addition, EOWS provided technical assistance in forging a new management structure, and a "Vision 2003" strategic planning committee was appointed to oversee the implementation of a reorganization plan recommended by an EOWS-funded consultant. At this time, it is unclear whether the structural problems that have surfaced in Las Vegas will ultimately hinder the ability of the program to continue to provide effective Weed and Seed interventions.

remained exceedingly active and effective in Weed and Seed efforts in Las Vegas, chairing the steering committee in the U.S. Attorney's absence and running the meetings when the U.S. Attorney is present. The coordination role played by the U.S. Attorney's Office has been a substantial part of the success achieved by Las Vegas.

FBI Special Agent in Charge. The FBI Special Agent in Charge has also taken a very active role in management and oversight of the Weed and Seed effort. In addition to supporting weeding efforts with staff, resources, and space, the FBI Special Agent in Charge is familiar with the operation of the seeding side of the program. He was instrumental in the change in administrative structure in 1996, which he viewed as essential to establishing the credibility of Weed and Seed and strengthening its fiscal management. He was also active in the 1997 creation of academic scholarships for low-income youths in the Weed and Seed target areas. This initiative, spearheaded by the mayor of Las Vegas, provided funds for tuition and books for disadvantaged high school graduates attending the Community College of Southern Nevada.

Weeding committee. The weeding committee is composed of high-ranking and operational representatives from both the FBI and LVMPD, and the U.S. Attorney. As described later in section 4, the weeding strategy has remained consistently focused on overtime community-policing patrols in both target neighborhoods, with a joint FBI–LVMPD task force targeting its efforts on drugs in the West Las Vegas neighborhood. The LVMPD supervisory representative assigned to the task force has played an important role, as a visible and active bridge between seeding and weeding efforts. One characteristic of Weed and Seed in Las Vegas was the exceptional level of cooperation between law enforcement and seeding efforts. This was facilitated by the involvement of LVMPD personnel in seeding efforts and the willingness of seeding participants to include law enforcement groups in their activities.

Seeding committee. The seeding committee has undergone more change than the weeding committee. The current structure has allowed for five subcommittees, each of which reported regularly to the steering committee. The meetings of the seeding committee were less frequent and broader in scope than those of the weeding committee. Although those involved in weeding have made frequent suggestions for seeding strategies, there was less feedback regarding strategy and targets from the seeding committee to the weeding group.

Grantee. The grantee for the Las Vegas Weed and Seed project has been the city of Las Vegas. Initially, this process worked smoothly. However, a number of factors have conspired to make this arrangement less satisfactory. The movement of the grant from the jurisdiction of the city manager to more direct control by the mayor created most of these dilemmas. It is clear that the mayor and the city manager did not share the same vision for the city, nor did they share a common vision regarding the best process by which grants should be managed. In December 1996, the mayor and city council created an Office of Federal, State, and Local Initiatives and appointed a director of this office. Less than a year later, in April 1997, the city announced its intention to withdraw as the fiscal agent for the Weed and Seed grant. In addition, invoices and reimbursements were slowed considerably by this process. The University of Nevada–Reno was proposed as a possible replacement for the city as fiscal agent when the city announced its intention to withdraw. However, this arrangement could not be finalized, and the intervention of the EOWS director was required. The outcome was that the city continued in the role that it planned to renounce, and the director of the Office of Federal, State, and Local Initiatives once again became responsible for fiscal management.

4.2 Proposed Goals and Strategies

The goals of the Weed and Seed program are simple but ambitious:

- “Weed” out violence, gangs, drug trafficking and drug-related crime from high-crime neighborhoods.
- “Seed” these neighborhoods with social services and economic revitalization, providing a safe and healthy environment for citizens to live, work and raise their families.

In planning its weeding efforts, the joint FBI–LVMPD task force had as its primary goal the suppression of gangs, drugs, and juvenile violent crimes. This has been done primarily through a strategy that used drug arrests as a tool to gain access to offenders involved in violence or gangs. The task force has worked as an undercover unit with an intelligence-gathering strategy that linked intelligence to ongoing and new investigations. Part of the task force strategy involved developing a list of the 50 most disruptive and violent offenders. This list was developed in a process that included intelligence, gang, narcotics, and repeat offender units. These investigations were of a long-term nature and in general have been targeted at high-level drug dealers.

The second weeding goal was of a more immediate nature, to strengthen community-oriented policing in both Meadows Village and West Las Vegas. Community-oriented enforcement efforts have been implemented through traditional patrol, foot patrol, and bicycle patrol. These policing patrols have worked with local businesses. Enforcement efforts have been coupled with active police participation in community events, including job and safety fairs, bicycle rodeos, and school open houses.

A primary seeding goal was the early prevention, intervention, and treatment of community problems. This goal was accompanied by the strategy of trying to engage community-based organizations and nontraditional service providers in grant writing efforts. This engagement was accomplished by issuing a request for proposals to community groups, providing technical assistance in the form of grant writing workshops, and reviewing proposals to determine which groups would receive funding.

Neighborhood restoration is another primary seeding-related goal of the Las Vegas effort. This effort has focused on improving existing housing stock, improving the appearance and utility of existing property, and attracting new investment to neighborhoods. The strategy for achieving this goal involves work with the West Las Vegas Neighborhood Executive Board and the Meadows Village Neighborhood Advisory Board to support existing community activities. In addition, this strategy includes a public relations component designed to advertise the efforts and accomplishments of the program in the area. The funding of service providers is the key strategy to achieve the goal of neighborhood restoration.

Weed and Seed program activities

The weeding activities included the joint FBI–LVMPD task force and the three overtime community-oriented patrol units, two in West Las Vegas and one in Meadows Village.

Seeding activities were more extensive. For Meadows Village, the seeding efforts focused on the different cultural needs of neighborhood residents. The issues of literacy and education have been critical in this neighborhood, and the mix of activities was designed to address these needs.

- Positive Choices received \$12,903 to teach parents and their children about substance abuse prevention techniques. The program focuses on interpersonal skills.
- Boy Scouts of America received \$10,000 to fund a scout troop in the Fremont School, located in Meadows Village.
- Classroom on Wheels received \$20,000 to provide a comprehensive bilingual preschool program for children ages 3–5. Bilingual parenting classes are also available to parents.
- Community Leadership received \$5,000 to offer civics education regarding the functions of government at the State and Federal levels.
- Get Smart Homework received \$8,560 to provide direct assistance to students with their homework. The high rate of illiteracy and lack of English skills among parents in Meadows Village makes this a critically needed program.
- Yes We Can Learn English received \$30,000 to provide English as a second language (ESL) training several times a week.
- Horizon Project received \$20,596 to provide high school classes for students in need of remedial help or seeking a graduation equivalency diploma.

Many of these services have been provided at the Stupak Community Center, where the safe haven coordinator’s office was located. For example, the Horizon Project has utilized a computer lab available at the Stupak Center.

Although there has been some movement in and out of the seeding funding mix in Meadows Village, each of these agencies has received funding for a considerable period of time, and most have been funded from the outset of seeding in late 1994.

The seeding activities in West Las Vegas have involved an average of 1,300 youths per month. There is a program administrative office in the neighborhood, but—unlike Meadows Village—there is no single community center out of which these programs operate. Each of the West Las Vegas service programs noted below was funded as a subgrantee through the competitive Weed and Seed review

process described above. One consequence of adopting this strategy for funding subgrantees was that these organizations gained sophistication in grant writing skills, thereby enabling them to better compete for other funds, both during and after the Weed and Seed funding.

- Variety Day Home received \$5,000 to train staff to implement peacemaking strategies as a way of disciplining the children and encouraging nonviolent and nonconfrontational behavior.
- The HHD Youth Organization received \$7,000 to help low- and moderate-income at-risk youths become contributing citizens. It accomplished this goal through programs available before and after school and through a summer day camp experience.
- The Community Health Center received \$10,000 to increase the percentage of women receiving prenatal care during the first trimester of pregnancy.
- Project Youth received \$5,000 to provide life skills training to at-risk youths. Classes in conflict resolution and self-esteem building are offered based on the *Teens, Crime and the Community* model.
- Las Vegas Stealth Track Club received \$15,000 to provide alternative nontraditional activities for at-risk youths. Clinics stress the importance and value of life skills.
- Committed 100 Men Helping Boys received \$5,000 to conduct Rites of Passage Instructional programs during the summer. These programs stress the importance of individual responsibility and decision making.
- Prince Hall Masonic Youth Group received \$10,000 to provide leisure activities, vocational skills, and conflict resolution skills. Education and academic achievement are stressed by this program.
- Austin Dancers received \$10,000 to provide low-income youths an opportunity to learn about and develop their skills in the performing arts.
- Agassi Boys and Girls Club received \$3,000 to provide career-related leadership and training activities to low-income youths.
- Doolittle Community Center received \$12,000 to provide sports and related activities for low-income youths.

Note that these West Las Vegas activities focused exclusively on youths. In contrast, Meadows Village targeted a substantial share of its seeding efforts on parents and other adults.

Mix of Weed and Seed activities

The Las Vegas Weed and Seed effort shows considerable balance. That is, the effort could not be characterized as emphasizing weeding over seeding, or vice versa. In the first 2 years of the program (1994–1996), there was considerable negative local publicity regarding the Weed and Seed program, and the publicity surrounding the results of the local evaluation (described later in section 4.5) contributed to a generally negative perception among several community groups. In particular, there was concern that the program would target only young minority males. There was organized opposition to the program, culminating in negative publicity in the local newspaper, as well as a challenge to the even-handedness of the enforcement efforts in the courts. These concerns were mitigated as Weed and Seed progressed, particularly as the seeding effort gained momentum and genuinely involved grassroots community groups and met fundamental community needs.

The fact that both weeding and seeding administrators actively participated in steering committee meetings reflected their respective desires to achieve program coordination. In addition, weeding groups helped plan the seeding aspects of the program. For example, officers from both the community-oriented policing groups in the target neighborhoods and LVMPD headquarters regularly attended, participated in and, in some instances, helped direct seeding activities. This was true of a recent job fair held at a West Las Vegas school. In addition, the seeding coordinators continued to work closely with their respective community-oriented policing patrols, providing information regarding problem areas, suspects, and community concerns. LVMPD personnel, including the sheriff, undersheriff, captain, and lieutenant, consistently expressed the belief that too much weeding creates suspicion in the community and is counterproductive. Although this anecdotal evidence did not prove the balance between weeding and seeding in Las Vegas, it was typical of the activities that characterized program operation.

Training and socialization

There was a considerable amount of training on both the weeding and seeding sides of the program. The overwhelming majority of training occurred within each functional group; that is, weeding and seeding training sessions were conducted separately. The exceptions to this practice were general training sessions held early in the life of the program, which were designed to introduce providers to the broad outlines of the program.

Training for weeding providers (FBI and LVMPD officers) began with a visit to San Diego, California, by command personnel from each agency to observe the operation of that city's initiative. Based on that visit and the programmatic and strategic goals of the Las Vegas effort, a local training program was developed and implemented. This training included the following elements: (1) completion of firearms training system; (2) training by SWAT personnel in building entries, searches, downed officer rescues, and firearms; (3) search and seizure training provided by the former district attorney; (4) defensive tactics instruction; (5) cultural awareness training; (6) training in foot and mobile surveillance techniques; (7) training in the preparation and submission of cases to the prosecutor; and (8) street survival techniques.

All officers, Federal and local, who participated in the task force received this training, and officers who transferred into the task force were required to receive this training as well. An advantage of this training is that it was offered by individuals outside the current organizations, thus adding to the

knowledge base of participants rather than reinforcing training already received or available within the department.⁸

Training for potential seeding providers included a 2-day workshop in grant preparation and management. The goals of the workshop were to improve skills in grant preparation and to enhance the quality of funding proposals. In addition, the seeding manager and the two safe haven coordinators attended training conferences held by EOWS in a variety of locations, including an employment conference hosted in Las Vegas and a training conference in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1997.

4.3 Budget Information

Las Vegas submitted its first application for Weed and Seed support in June 1994, became an officially recognized Weed and Seed site in September 1994, and received its first Federal funding under the program in October 1994. An earlier grassroots effort dating back to October 1992 had produced a number of decisions that shaped the emerging program with respect to problem area identification, general strategic decisions, and the forging of public-private partnerships. In addition, the city was designated as a Southern Nevada Enterprise Community (SNEC) in 1994. That decision had an impact on the further formulation and definition of Weed and Seed goals.

The fiscal year (FY) 1994 application requested funding in the amount of \$222,688, with \$173,161 allocated for seeding activities and the balance for weeding activities. The city of Las Vegas was designated as the grantee. The Weed and Seed committee initiated the hiring process for a program manager at that time, and a manager was hired in March 1994.

Activities in this first year of funding were oriented initially toward law enforcement. Toward this end, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (using Bureau of Justice Assistance funds and asset forfeiture funds approved through Weed and Seed) provided two overtime neighborhood patrol units in West Las Vegas and one similar patrol unit in Meadows Village. All three patrols were funded as overtime units, with a strong commitment to community-oriented policing. A Weed and Seed task force was also organized, comprised of officers from the LVMPD and the FBI. This task force targeted drug, gang, and gun activity in the West Las Vegas area and has been the centerpiece of that area's weeding efforts.

FY 1995 funding was requested (in the amount of \$254,457) to create a balance between law enforcement and prevention during the second year of funding. The major focus of seeding programs was to provide child care in Meadows Village and to coordinate programs and services in both Meadows Village and West Las Vegas. In the first year of Weed and Seed funding, nine different seeding programs received funding: Classroom on Wheels, Clark County Social Services' Community Health Centers, Horizon School Project, Family Cabinet (a program that includes three separate interventions focused on interpersonal skills, English language skills acquisition, and homework support), School District Project Arts, Frontier Girls Scouts, Family and Youth Parenting Project, HABLE (afterschool tutoring in the math area), and Project Youth Life Skills. In addition, a

⁸ In FY 1997, task force members provided training for officers in Reno, Nevada, as they attempted to develop and implement a Weed and Seed task force.

survey to determine area needs assessment was completed. The program expansion for FY 1995 included economic development efforts in both target neighborhoods; education; home environment; day care; leadership development; and the HUD training program, Step-up.

The application for FY 1996 requested \$540,000. As was the case in the preceding fiscal year, the city of Las Vegas was the grantee, and the city manager's office was the organizational unit designated to manage the grant. The overtime neighborhood patrol squads (one in Meadows Village and two in West Las Vegas) continued in FY 1996. A new item in the proposal was funding for cultural sensitivity training, in response to the diversity of both neighborhoods. Bicycle patrol was an additional ingredient added for the FY 1996 weeding effort. Funds were requested for eight bicycles, their maintenance, and related equipment.

The seeding side of the FY 1996 proposal continued much of what had been in place the previous year. The Weed and Seed program manager continued in his position, with a full-time coordinator to be hired in West Las Vegas and a second part-time coordinator in Meadows Village (to create a full-time coordinator in Meadows Village). The budget proposed hiring an administrative assistant, but this position was combined with the part-time position in Meadows Village. Rather than specifying individual seeding projects in the proposal, a request for proposal process was initiated. Under this scheme, groups in the target areas could submit proposals for funding to support program efforts in five specific areas: (1) ESL; (2) substance abuse programs; (3) parenting education and support; (4) youth activities/gang diversion; and (5) education for youths and adults. A total of \$181,735 was requested. Finally, \$37,500 was requested for the purposes of a local evaluation.

The FY 1997 grant continued the major outlines of the three previous years' grants. First, the Weed and Seed task force continued using asset forfeiture funds. Second, the overtime community-oriented patrols were extended another year, with the same balance between Meadows Village and West Las Vegas. Third, the Weed and Seed program manager continued to manage the two neighborhood coordinators, one in Meadows Village and one in West Las Vegas. The request for proposal process for local seeding grantees continued, but the local evaluation was deleted from the budget.

During FY 1997, a number of important issues emerged, including the decision to seek recognition as a Weed and Seed training site. This decision stemmed from the Weed and Seed steering committee's view that this was the only way to continue local funding. At the same time, administrative problems began to emerge as it became clear that the fiscal and management oversight by the city of Las Vegas had not functioned effectively. In April 1997, the city announced its intention not to continue as the fiscal agent.

By that time, a considerable amount of FY 1997 funds were unused, resulting in part from the city's reluctance to process funding requests. Among service providers, attention focused on unexpended funds and the availability of carryover money. There was growing antagonism toward the city's role, especially following the city's decision to withdraw as fiscal agent for the grant. These circumstances created misgivings among steering committee members and confusion regarding program goals.

**Exhibit 4.1
Weed and Seed Budget Summary**

	FY 1992	FY 1993	FY 1994	FY 1995	FY 1996
TOTAL	N/A	N/A	\$668,066	\$750,000	\$790,000
WEEDING TOTAL			\$274,786	\$250,500	\$255,500
Enforcement (Overtime)			\$134,280	\$91,440	\$100,500
Enforcement Equipment			\$115,650	\$105,500	\$125,000
Training/Travel			\$0	\$5,000	\$12,500
Special Prosecution			\$0	\$33,000	\$0
Administration			\$21,125	\$10,560	\$0
Office Supplies			\$3,731	\$5,000	\$17,500
COMMUNITY POLICING			\$100,880	\$127,300	\$121,300
Patrol Officers			\$88,000	\$107,800	\$107,800
Bicycle Patrol Equipment			\$11,280	\$10,000	\$10,000
Training			\$0	\$2,500	\$1,500
Community Events			\$1,600	\$7,000	\$2,000
SEEDING TOTAL			\$243,020	\$209,135	\$278,535
Seeding Activities			\$142,020	\$152,135	\$221,735
Safe Havens Coordinators			\$45,000	\$45,000	\$46,350
Seeding Coordinator			\$10,000	\$0	\$0
Public/Private Sector Liaison			\$20,000	\$0	\$0
Transportation			\$26,000	\$12,000	\$10,450
OTHER TOTAL			\$155,300	\$163,065	\$134,665
Administration/Employees			\$85,000	\$90,000	\$71,800
Travel/Training			\$27,800	\$20,625	\$9,425
Supplies/Equipment/Rentals			\$5,000	\$14,940	\$5,940
Miscellaneous			\$0	\$0	\$10,000
Local Evaluation			\$37,500	\$37,500	\$37,500

Source: Compiled from Weed and Seed applications and EOWS working documents.

These structural problems caused considerable delay and confusion about the application for FY 1998 funding. Despite a number of obvious successes in goal-setting, implementation, and outcomes, as of mid-1997, Las Vegas lacked an entity to function as the recipient for grant funds. A considerable amount of scrambling ensued to find a suitable agency to fill this critical role. A relatively new member of the Weed and Seed steering committee, from the University of Nevada–Reno (UNR) College of Cooperative Extension–Southern Area, stepped forward. This member had considerable experience working with youth programs and direct service delivery to youths in extension and school systems. In addition, she had written a number of grants, enhancing her suitability for the task of submitting the new proposal. UNR prepared a proposal for FY 1998 funding. Ideally this would have been submitted to EOWS in June 1997. Submitting the proposal in a timely fashion was critical, given the change in fiscal agent, the large volume of carryover funds, and concerns about the program’s future in light of the city’s withdrawal of support. At the same time, the city initiated a “close-out” process that would deobligate unexpended funds, requesting a fiscal and programmatic summary from each agency that received Weed and Seed funds.

However, procedural delays within UNR prevented the proposal for FY 1998 funding from moving forward in a timely fashion. The proposal finally cleared the UNR signature process and went to EOWS. In early December 1997, the EOWS staff member monitoring Las Vegas informed UNR that the budget would need to be revised due to reduced funding. At the same time, there was growing concern among several members of the Weed and Seed steering committee regarding the process used to develop the proposal. The UNR representative stated the position that the proposal, until it was approved at EOWS, was a confidential university document; in essence it was embargoed. This position was challenged by a number of steering committee members who argued that the program was owned by the community and, as a consequence, must be reviewed and approved by the community. This debate consumed substantial time at many of the Weed and Seed steering committee meetings and led to heated debate on several occasions.

The UNR proposal ultimately was withdrawn in December 1997. This process occurred in conjunction with a site visit from the director of EOWS. The director and the EOWS program monitor for the Las Vegas site spent 2 days in meetings with the Weed and Seed steering committee, individual committee members, and Las Vegas city officials. These meetings led to a decision by EOWS that UNR would not serve as the fiscal agent for the grant during the next year.

Although the process for selecting a fiscal agent had not yet been specified, several things had become clear at this juncture. First, the Las Vegas site was viewed as an important and successful site and would not be abandoned by EOWS. Second, EOWS wished the city of Las Vegas to resume its role, perhaps in a revised form, as the fiscal agent for the grant. Third, the Las Vegas Weed and Seed site would be allowed to carry over unexpended funds.

4.4 Information Systems

The Weed and Seed operation in Las Vegas has made limited use of information systems. The joint FBI–LVMPD task force has made use of computers to record surveillance information, keep track of “buy” money, and link the task force to other crime data. The money to pay informants has been especially critical in aiding investigations, as the informant base has grown substantially.

4.5 Site Monitoring, Reporting, and Local Evaluation

The monthly steering committee meeting was a site for much of the reporting of Weed and Seed efforts. Each safe haven coordinator and the seeding coordinator spoke to the operation of their program, its impact, and future plans. In addition, the weeding participants representing the joint FBI–LVMPD task force reported on their activities to the extent that ongoing investigations allowed for the release of details. These individuals were joined by the appropriate supervisor of the community-oriented patrols in each target neighborhood.

The issue of monitoring was a bit more formal. One consequence of the expanded role of the executive committee was the requirement for greater accountability in monitoring seeding expenditures. A monthly report was required that detailed the services provided, the number of individuals who received those services, the funding amount for each agency, and the plans for the next month. In addition, the seeding program manager met monthly with the FBI Special Agent in Charge. Monitoring of law enforcement activities was done within the LVMPD, and the accountability of the chain of command typically was the vehicle through which this was achieved.

The local evaluation in Las Vegas initially was conducted by faculty in the criminal justice department at the University of Nevada–Las Vegas (UNLV). The report concluded that the program had been ineffective, and that community- and problem-oriented policing had not been effectively implemented. The evaluators offered five recommendations: (1) better integration of goals and strategies; (2) development of a strategic plan with specific objectives; (3) determining the extent to which community-oriented policing is being offered in Meadows Village; (4) increased community participation; and (5) better documentation of services by funded agencies. This report, presented on November 15, 1995, was not well-received by program administrators, who considered it ill-informed and misguided. The report’s conclusions were reached after less than 2 full years of funding had been received—well before implementation had been completed—and were generally regarded by the program administrators as premature. The evaluation provided little information that was used by the program administrators to guide subsequent action.

Prior to the presentation of the report, the UNLV coauthors had attended a number of steering committee meetings. Following the report, the relationship soured between the local evaluators and the Weed and Seed participants, as the evaluators were quoted in local media regarding the ineffectiveness of the program. This led to the termination of the relationship between the UNLV evaluators and the Las Vegas Weed and Seed site.

5.0 Key Implementation Issues and Interpretation

5.1 Role of Grantee Organization

As noted above, the city of Las Vegas has been the grant recipient for the Weed and Seed initiative in Las Vegas since the program’s inception. This arrangement has produced both the best of times and the worst of times for the Las Vegas Weed and Seed program. Early in the city’s tenure as grantee (i.e., during the first 2 years of the program), this arrangement operated quite effectively. However,

by 1996, it became clear that the city no longer desired to be the fiscal agent for a program over which it did not exert supervisory control. A variety of signals were sent by the city regarding its desire to withdraw from a more active role in the management of grant funds. The director of the mayor's Office of Federal, State, and Local Initiatives brought this issue to a head, advising the mayor in April 1997 that the city should no longer serve as the fiscal agent for the grant.⁹

This decision created a variety of dilemmas for the Las Vegas Weed and Seed effort. For example, EOWS had planned to recognize Las Vegas for its achievements at the annual Weed and Seed training conference in August 1997. It was in the midst of these plans, however, that the city decided to withdraw from its role in the program. When questioned about that decision, the mayor indicated that it was made by a member of her staff and that she accepted the recommendation as a matter of course.

5.2 Management Structure and Control

One of the most important aspects of the decisionmaking process in Las Vegas' Weed and Seed program has been the transition from a management structure in which the steering committee was supplanted by the executive committee. One of the consequences of this move was to isolate key operating staff, including the program manager and the safe haven coordinators in Meadows Village and West Las Vegas, from any strategic discussions and decisions. In the early stages of the Las Vegas effort, the steering committee made most management and operational decisions. The expanded role of the executive committee in the second and third year of the grant caused some concern among steering committee members.

Ironically, even in the face of a strong executive committee, operational decisionmaking remained decentralized. This was equally true on both the weeding and seeding sides of the program. For example, local community residents and community policing officers provided most of the day-to-day direction of community policing activities. Similarly, the safe haven coordinators made important decisions in the daily lives of their programs that were not subject to the scrutiny of either the executive or steering committees.

Thus, although the arrangement of centralized policy decisions and decentralized operational decisions created tensions, it did not interfere with the implementation of ongoing weeding and seeding activities.

9 In subsequent communications with the Office of Federal, State, and Local Initiatives, the director indicated that:

It was through attendance at a steering committee meeting that the city first learned that the Weed and Seed initiative might not receive funding to continue its programming beyond the 3-year demonstration period. Based upon this information, the city manager indicated that unless the Department of Justice (DOJ) continued to fund this project, the city would not continue as grantee. The mayor was made aware of the possible loss of funding by the city manager and indicated that unless funding was available from DOJ, the city's general fund could not continue as grantee of the Weed and Seed program.

5.3 Local Politics

Because the city of Las Vegas had served initially as the fiscal agent for the grant, this had placed the mayor—a highly visible and charismatic leader—in a prominent role in the local Weed and Seed effort. It is apparent that city programs are strongly identified with the mayor. During the early years of the program, the mayor had disagreements with the city manager, whose authority had blocked some of the mayor’s initiatives. In early 1998, the city manager resigned. In addition, the Clark County Sheriff is an elected official whose first-term election occurred early in the Weed and Seed tenure, in January 1995. The sheriff and the mayor had a public disagreement widely reported by the local media regarding the level of weeding in the Meadows Village neighborhood. (The issue partly involved the Stratosphere, a major hotel and tourist entertainment attraction located on the edge of Meadows Village, one of whose owners was a highly visible supporter of the mayor.) These public disagreements made very visible the effect of political forces on the allocation of resources and level of effort.

The location of the Weed and Seed program within the city government was important for other reasons. The appointment to Weed and Seed jobs, especially the seeding manager and the two safe haven coordinators, were important ways for the mayor to be seen as reinforcing her ties to the community (even though these hiring decisions were formally made by the steering committee, in conjunction with the program manager). In addition, the fiscal management of Weed and Seed through the mayor’s Office of Federal, State, and Local Initiatives was also portrayed as another example of the mayor’s commitment to diverse neighborhoods in the city. City politics did not appear to have influenced day-to-day decisionmaking; rather it affected the broad structure of programs and personnel.

5.4 Operational Goals

As noted earlier, the seeding goals included the early prevention, intervention, and treatment of community problems. Neighborhood restoration is another primary goal of the Las Vegas effort. Weeding goals were defined in a more concrete fashion and included the suppression of gangs, drugs, and juvenile violent crimes. In addition, the task force strategy developed a list of the 50 most violent offenders. A related goal was to provide community-oriented policing strategies and enforcement in both Meadows Village and West Las Vegas. One issue that arose regarding the setting of goals was whether weeding could ever fade away and be fully supplanted by seeding. The consensus among Weed and Seed participants in Las Vegas was that this should never happen and that continued weeding was a necessary component for program success.

Did the goals change over time? The goals did not change substantially from their identification in proposals to their implementation. Because the seeding goals were defined in general terms, they could include a variety of intervention outcomes. The weeding goals, which were well defined and carefully implemented from the outset, remained relatively constant. One of the goals that emerged over the life of the program was the strategy of weeding and seeding participants working together. Although this was not a formally articulated goal at the outset of the program, it later became a central and important focus of the Las Vegas effort. Underlying this evolution was the appreciation for partnership that grew out of joint meetings between Weed and Seed participants.

How were goals defined operationally and who defined them? The monthly steering committee meetings provided the forum in which goals were operationally defined. Particularly in the early stages of the grant, these meetings focused on formative issues, such as trying to forge consensus regarding goals and objectives, as well as strategies and coalitions to be pursued. It is interesting to note that law enforcement played an active role in helping to define seeding goals.

How well-accepted were these goals? The goals appeared to be well-accepted among Weed and Seed partners. There were some occasional political concerns regarding the goals, but such intrusions were infrequent.

What were the criteria for success? For law enforcement, success was defined in terms of the arrest and successful prosecution of the 50 individuals identified as the most violent criminals. In addition, drug and violent crime arrests were operational measures of the community policing goals. For seeding participants, operational definitions produced an emphasis on the number of clients served; this was the primary criteria for success.

5.5 Approach to Weeding

Differences between weeding activities and other previous enforcement efforts

The primary difference between weeding and other enforcement was found in the activities of the Joint LVMPD–FBI task force that operated in West Las Vegas. The task force expended 80 percent of its effort on long-term investigations to address major or violent offenders and 20 percent on short-term investigations that addressed the more immediate complaints of citizens regarding crime in their neighborhoods. The task force was not responsible for responding to radio calls (except for exceptional events) and had the freedom to pursue the links between cases and focus its efforts on long-range investigations. As such, it could target higher-level offenders than might be possible under traditional methods of patrol or detective investigation. The opportunity to draw upon the expertise, experience, and resources of the FBI enhanced the quality of the output from the task force. The cooperation between the two groups had other positive benefits, as well, including the creation of stronger bonds between the organizations. Finally, Weed and Seed grant funds provided resources not normally available to LVMPD, enabling it to accomplish objectives requiring more resources, for such items as training, “buy” money, and specialized equipment.

The community-oriented patrols in the target neighborhoods expanded community- and problem-oriented policing in Las Vegas. Although some general debate continues regarding the long-term impact of overtime, it is clear that the overtime patrols in the target neighborhoods have reinforced the value of community-oriented policing for the LVMPD. Officers began to see community policing as an important mission, and their successes led to further reinforcement of this strategy. Successes included community involvement in addition to traditional measures of law enforcement success, such as arrests.

Implementation strategies

The implementation of these weeding strategies depended largely on training, selection, and the chain of command. The joint task force received extensive training and was closely monitored by the police command structure.

Operations and arrests. A large volume of arrests and prosecutions can be linked directly to the task force. As of March 17, 1997, the task force was responsible for 137 arrests for State crimes, 40 Federal arrests, 50 search warrants executed, 147 firearms seized, and \$182,666 in assets acquired by the LVMPD. A number of the more successful cases were handled by the task force. A number of their investigations focused on activity in and around the Colony Club, a long-time venue for drug dealers in West Las Vegas. The Colony Club was closed, 12 Federal arrests and convictions were obtained, and 5 arrests were made on State charges. Perhaps the most notorious case involved a West Las Vegas landlord long suspected of having ties to gangs and drug sales. He rented property to the Back Street Crips in return for a share in their drug profits. Over a 2-year period, 25 search warrants were executed at properties owned by this landlord. The warrants resulted in 9 arrests for Federal charges (with the landlord found guilty on four of these), and 43 State felony or misdemeanor arrests. At the time of this report, the landlord was awaiting sentencing on Federal charges. He has been a significant focus of community attention and a strong symbol of the effectiveness of Weed and Seed to the West Las Vegas neighborhood.

Prosecutions

There have been 40 Federal prosecutions of Weed and Seed task force cases. In 27 of these cases, the defendant pleaded guilty prior to trial and received felony convictions. Two went to trial and were convicted following trial, and 11 are awaiting trial.

Between February 1995 and March 1997, 137 subjects were arrested on State charges and were presented to the State district attorney. Among these, 57 had their charges dismissed, 9 of which are being reviewed for recharging. Another 29 of the 137 subjects are awaiting trial, 9 are wanted, and 9 were arrested on outstanding warrants. A total of 14 received felony convictions, and 11 received misdemeanor convictions.

5.6 Approach to Community Policing

The Las Vegas approach to community policing—most evident in the overtime patrols, but also present in the task force—was quite straightforward. The community policing focus was to improve the quality of life for residents by responding to the most visible forms of crime and disorder in target neighborhoods.¹⁰ One squad of LVMPD officers provided the community policing and was supplanted by a squad of bicycle patrol officers. In addition, the involvement of weeding officers in seeding events—such as bicycle fairs, school activities, and safe haven events—was instrumental in establishing the view in the community that cooperation with officers was not a one-way street. Being

¹⁰ These crimes most often include drug sales and gang activity but have been extended to weapons possession and use, as well as other forms of violent crime.

seen interacting with residents and acting on their concerns was understood to be the best way to gain their trust and ensure their cooperation.

As part of the community policing approach, a “First Tuesday” series of meetings between area captains and neighborhood residents was implemented in the target neighborhoods. These meetings provided good followup to citizen concerns and increased the accountability of law enforcement. The police became more likely to take seriously and act upon the concerns expressed by residents at these meetings due to the presence of command rank personnel.

It should be noted that not every relationship between police and residents in the target areas has been so positive. A gang member was shot in 1997 by a police officer, and many grassroots individuals have been concerned in the wake of this incident about the relationship between the police department and the community. The police department acted quickly in investigating this act.

5.7 Approach to Seeding

Community organizations and organizing

In each Weed and Seed target neighborhood, community outreach and organizing were central to the seeding activities. This was especially so in Meadows Village, where outreach to new immigrants—many of whom did not speak English—was crucial for their involvement in program activities. The community is small and quite dense, making the Stupak Community Center a true center for neighborhood activities. The presence of a full-time safe haven coordinator in both Meadows Village and West Las Vegas enabled each community to staff its safe haven for most daytime and many evening hours.

From the start, outreach has been viewed as an important objective of both safe havens, as such efforts were seen as involving more participants in the program and strengthening the bonds between safe haven activities and the broader community. Such outreach has proven more difficult in West Las Vegas, however, as the target community is much larger, more dispersed geographically, and consequently less likely to see the safe haven site as a center of activity.

It is important to note that both target communities lack much in the way of social fabric. Accordingly, community organization activities by the seeding personnel have helped strengthen that fabric, making it more likely that the community can heal itself and provide its own solutions over the long term.

Focus of seeding programs

Seeding programs had a strong community focus, accounting for the differences between the seeding efforts in the two target neighborhoods. In Meadows Village, the need for acculturation—including training in English, American customs, life skills, and the value of education—was great. As a consequence, the safe haven coordinator in this neighborhood emphasized programs and outreach efforts that deal with these needs. In West Las Vegas, on the other hand, there was a considerable need for afterschool programs, mentoring, and community involvement. The safe haven coordinator in this neighborhood solicited programs designed to achieve these ends. In each neighborhood, a

sensitivity to cultural issues was at the forefront of program selection, implementation, and oversight. Absent attention to such issues, it was unlikely that programs would be well-received by residents.

Community involvement in seeding activities

There was at least anecdotal evidence that the participation of community residents in social services programs in general has increased as a consequence of the seeding activities specifically supported by Weed and Seed funds. For example, the LifeLine (adult education and parenting training) program in Meadows Village reaches out to the extended families of individuals identified as directly in need to create a support network and expand the breadth of the services. The demand for programs in English as a second language (ESL) was great in Meadows Village, as well. Graduates of the ESL programs offered through Weed and Seed have returned to the Stupak Community Center to tutor and teach additional participants, demonstrating the ripple effect that such programs have had.

There was similar evidence in West Las Vegas that community participation in non-Weed and Seed social services was increased as a consequence of Weed and Seed funding and the attention that Weed and Seed has drawn to the community's needs. The Dog Catchers Club held a free summer camp in 1997 to meet the needs of 5- to 17-year-olds with no activities. Using very modest funds from Weed and Seed, this organization served more than 1,000 children, using funds donated by residents, businesses, and other individuals. This program received mention for its efforts in *USA Today* in mid-July 1997. These examples show the effect seeding activities had in drawing new support to the program and the community.

Scope, reach, and intensity of seeding activities

The following list identifies the service providers funded by Weed and Seed in Meadows Village, as well as the number of individuals they served:

- LifeLine, a family life center, served 16 fathers and 18 women.
- Positive Choices, which teaches fundamental skills and values, provided 50 sessions each with 18 families in 1996.
- Yes We Can Learn English, which provides ESL training, ran 4 classes with 30 to 40 students in each class at 3 different locations and offered 500 hours of training per year.
- Camp Stupak, an 8-week summer camp, served 100 children per day.
- Alternative Education, aimed at at-risk high school students, served 70 students per year.
- Boy Scouts, which provides traditional scouting experiences with an urban focus that emphasizes self-esteem and mentoring, had between 24 and 28 boys participate in the local troop.

In West Las Vegas, the following service providers were funded:

- Community Health Centers, which provided early prenatal care to 140 women per month.
- Doolittle Community Center, which provided sports activities for nearly 1,000 women per year.
- Prince Hall, which provided training in manners and appropriate behavior to 24 boys and 55 girls each year.
- The Austin Dancers, which provided encouragement for education and appropriate behavior through dance with 10 boys and 20 girls receiving instruction twice a week.
- The Variety Day Home, which provided day care services for 218 children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years.
- Project Youth, which provided life skills training through outreach to 150 to 200 youths in their housing projects.
- Stealth Track Club, which provided mentoring and involvement in neighborhood projects for 136 boys and girls by involving them in track activities, including national-level competitions.
- HDD, also known as the “Dogcatchers,” provided summer camp and afterschool activities to more than 1,000 children each year and sponsored 12 boys’ and 3 girls’ basketball teams in 1997.
- Committed 100 Men Helping Boys, which provided mentoring and role models during 8- to 10-week sessions for 20 young men.

Improvement in community services

Seeding participants have sought and received funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as well as the Nevada Arts Council. Both Weed and Seed sites also received State of Nevada juvenile justice funds and State family preservation and support funds. In each of these instances, service providers received a request for proposal (RFP) and need to prepare a funding proposal. Weed and Seed administrators felt that the success of these providers in competing for such funds was in some part a result of the requirement that seeding participants go through an RFP process and receive training in proposal preparation.

5.8 Concluding Observations

One of the most important outcomes of the Weed and Seed effort in Las Vegas was the involvement of law enforcement in seeding efforts. The regular, supportive presence of police at seeding activities was perhaps the single most remarkable aspect of the effort in Las Vegas. In particular, the LVMPD

command person on the task force was a visible presence at nearly every seeding activity. This was noted by seeding personnel, including safe haven coordinators and groups funded by seeding efforts, and was an important factor contributing to the support of law enforcement by seeding participants, and ultimately by neighborhood residents. This was mirrored by the neighborhood community-oriented patrols, whose members also became involved in seeding activities. For example, a Back-to-School Fair, cohosted by the West Las Vegas Weed and Seed site, drew substantial law enforcement participation and support. Such support was not limited merely to attendance. Law enforcement officers also became involved in trying to find jobs for program participants, generate support in the local community, and participate in programs.

On the weeding side, the use of a high-level task force along with community-oriented patrols appeared to bring favorable results in West Las Vegas (as will be discussed further in section 6). The task force targeted high-level offenders with long-term investigations, the kind that routine neighborhood patrols cannot deal with effectively. The neighborhood patrols provided the regular interaction and support of citizens that cannot be achieved through a task force approach. This combination of enforcement strategies was well thought out and provided comprehensive and complementary forms of enforcement.

The use of Federal prosecution, especially for task force cases, was another noteworthy lesson from the Las Vegas effort. Federal prosecutions allowed for the commitment of more resources to high-profile cases and typically resulted in convictions carrying longer sentences or a more certain nature. In addition, the burden on local prosecution resulting from additional law enforcement resources could be shared with another agency.

The use of community centers as safe haven sites also proved an effective strategy for promoting participation in seeding activities. The community centers conferred a certain degree of legitimacy to programs hosted there. They also provided a ready-made clientele (of residents already served through other activities based at the center), shortened start-up time, and reduced costs. In addition, they were well-known to residents and typically had a number of constituencies, including other program services.

6.0 Effects of Weed and Seed

This chapter examines the effects of the Weed and Seed program in Las Vegas, with respect to:

- Rates of crime, as estimated through analysis of data provided by LVMPD.
- Attitudes toward public safety, police responsiveness, and neighborhood quality of life, as measured through a survey of residents in West Las Vegas.

In both analyses that follow, the available data do not allow one to attribute effects specifically to the Weed and Seed program. The findings must therefore be interpreted as very preliminary indications of program results.

6.1 Analysis of Crime Data

This analysis uses police data to examine the trends in crime rates before and after the implementation of Weed and Seed in Las Vegas. Of course, any observed changes in crime rates in the target area during this time period might reflect factors other than Weed and Seed. For instance, changes in crime reporting may cause the reported crime rates to rise or fall independently of any shift in true crime incidence. Changes in the regional or national economic context may also affect local crime trends, either favorably or unfavorably. Additionally, an observed reduction in crime for the target area may occur through displacement of crime to adjacent or nearby areas, where crime rates would correspondingly rise.

Citywide, incident-level police data and geomapping methods were used to track crime patterns in Las Vegas. The incident-level police data identify each reported crime by its date and its street address. Geomapping methods then enable one to associate each reported crime with a particular geographic subarea within the city. For each subarea and specified time period, one can then construct a crime rate in terms of crimes per 1,000 residents.

Of particular interest here is the comparison of crime rates between Meadows Village, West Las Vegas, and all other areas of the city combined. The rest-of-city jurisdiction provides a logical comparison area to measure possible changes in local crime reporting, shifts in local economic conditions or other contextual factors, and the possibility of crime displacement. In evaluating Weed and Seed, it is also important to align the data to examine whether any shift occurred after October 1994, regarded as the start date of the city's Weed and Seed program.

Exhibit 6.1 compares average monthly Part 1 crime rates between Meadows Village, West Las Vegas, and the rest-of-city area, as measured over annual periods from October–September and expressed in terms of crimes per 1,000 residents. For the year prior to Weed and Seed, October 1993–September 1994, the Part 1 crime rates for the two target areas were much higher than the rest-of-city average—for Meadows Village, more than twice as high.

The 2 years following implementation of Weed and Seed was a period during which the crime rate remained stable in the rest-of-city area. In Meadows Village, a first-year drop in the crime rate (from 17.2 to 16.0) was more than offset by a second-year rise (to 18.8). In contrast, West Las Vegas experienced a steady drop in its crime rate, first from 9.8 to 9.4 and then to 9.2.

The two target areas clearly underwent differing experiences during the early Weed and Seed years. For Meadows Village, one possible interpretation is that initial weeding activity had a favorable impact on crime, but these gains were reversed because weeding was not sustained and seeding efforts never “took root.” Given the transiency of this and nearby neighborhoods, it is perhaps not surprising that a crackdown effort would yield only short-term results at best. That is, briefly heightened enforcement has little deterrent effect when one wave of perpetrators is soon replaced by another. Similarly, if those who participate in seeding efforts soon leave the community, there can be little lasting impact in preventing crime.

**Exhibit 6.1
Annual Part 1 Crime Data, Las Vegas**

Time period	Total number of Part 1 crimes	Monthly Part 1 crimes per 1,000 residents	Percentage change from preceding year
Meadows Village			
10/93–9/94	962	17.2	---
10/94–9/95	856	16.0	-11.0
10/95–9/96	962	18.8	12.4
West Las Vegas			
10/93–9/94	1,192	9.8	---
10/94–9/95	1,139	9.4	-4.5
10/95–9/96	1,119	9.2	-1.7
Rest of City			
10/93–9/94	52,937	6.1	---
10/94–9/95	56,763	6.2	7.2
10/95–9/96	58,713	6.1	3.4

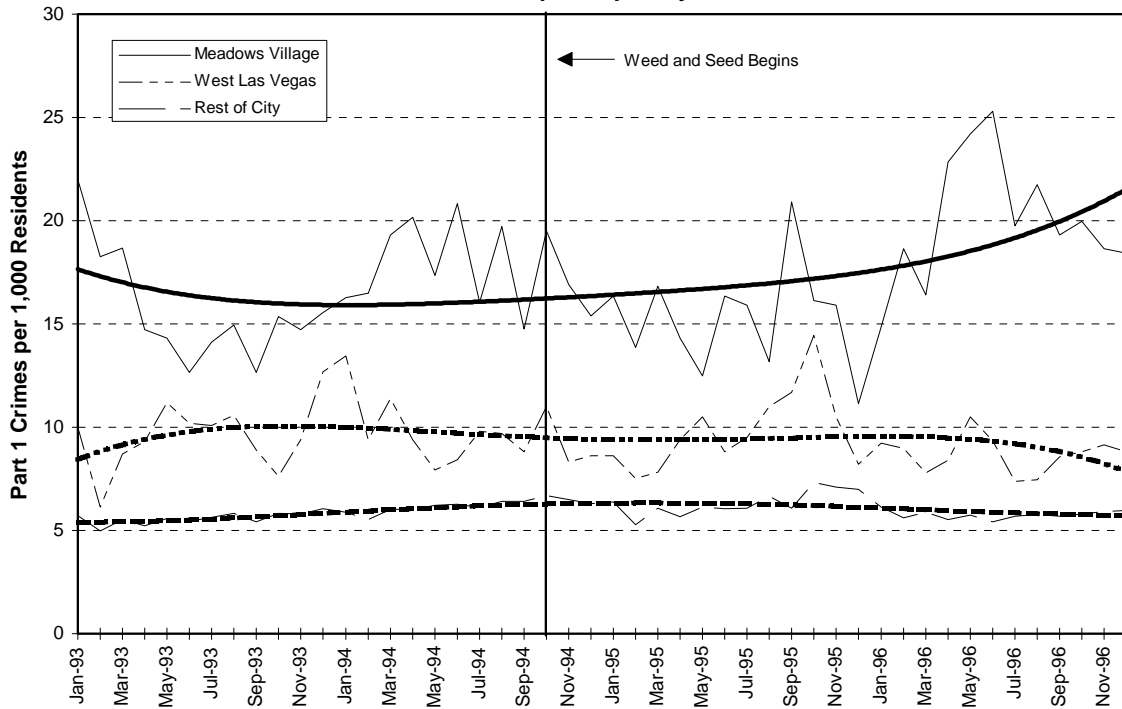
In contrast, because the West Las Vegas area is a more stable population with established community infrastructure, both weeding and seeding activities could (and seemingly did) produce a more favorable result. It may also reflect the fact that, as the second Weed and Seed area, West Las Vegas stood to benefit from what city officials and program staff learned from their initial experience in Meadows Village. Moreover, West Las Vegas was the focus of additional resources not committed to Meadows Village. These included the forms of non-Weed and Seed funding mentioned in section 3.3, an additional community-oriented policing unit (two, versus one in Meadows Village), and—perhaps more importantly—the joint LVMPD–FBI task force devoted to antidrug enforcement in the West Las Vegas community.

The contrasting crime trends in the two target areas is displayed graphically in exhibit 6.2, using monthly data for Part 1 crimes per 1,000 residents. Separately for Meadows Village, West Las Vegas, and the rest-of-city area, the exhibit shows the monthly Part 1 crime rate and a fitted curve that reflects historical trends from January 1993 through December 1996.

This exhibit shows how the Meadows Village crime rate increasingly diverged upward from the relatively stable rest-of-city rate. Over the same time period, the West Las Vegas crime rate has moved toward convergence with the lower, rest-of-city rate.

Exhibit 6.2 shows the month-to-month volatility of the crime rate, especially for a relatively small community such as Meadows Village. Note that the fitted curve for Meadows Village does not capture the downturn in this area’s crime rate that occurred in late 1996. If this latter trend indeed continued into 1997, the previously described divergence from the rest-of-city area may have been only a short-lived pattern.

Exhibit 6.2
Part 1 Crimes per Capita by Month



6.2 Survey of Community Residents

Survey methods used in 1995 and 1997

In Las Vegas, as in the other seven cities participating in the national evaluation, a survey of target area residents was conducted at two separate time intervals. During March–July 1995, the Institute for Social Analysis conducted a total of 1,531 interviews among the eight sites. In December 1997–January 1998, Abt Associates Inc. conducted a total of 1,995 interviews with a separate group of residents in the same eight target areas. The following discussion refers to these data collection efforts as the 1995 and 1997 surveys.

General survey design and operations

The objective of the survey data collection and analysis was to measure changes in citizens' awareness of the Weed and Seed program and their opinions about police activity, crime, public safety, and the general quality of life in their neighborhoods. In the interest of comparing the findings obtained from the two surveys, the 1997 survey was designed with the following features:

- For each site, the geographical boundaries of the survey area were the same as in 1995.
- The wording of questions from the 1995 survey was retained verbatim in 1997. For selected questions, additional response categories were added in 1997 to provide a more complete range of possible responses. For these items, care was taken in the analysis to

aggregate responses in ways that would preserve the comparability of the findings between 1995 and 1997.¹¹

There were also some notable differences in the methods used in the two surveys, as follows:

- The 1995 survey consisted of inperson interviews, based on city-provided address lists. The 1997 interviews were conducted by telephone, based on listed telephone numbers for residential addresses within the survey area.
- The 1995 survey consisted of 83 substantive items. The 1997 survey included only a subset of these, 31 substantive items. (For both surveys, the count excludes items related to respondent demographic characteristics and other basic interview data.) The 1995 interviews required 30 to 40 minutes. The 1997 interviews typically lasted 12 to 15 minutes.

The decision to proceed in 1997 with telephone interviewing and a shortened instrument was based on the difficulties experienced in 1995 in completing the targeted number of 400 interviews per site. (In none of the sites was this target reached.) The 1997 survey design called for 300 completed interviews per site.

Survey details specific to the Las Vegas site

For Las Vegas, the survey area in both 1995 and 1997 was West Las Vegas. The 1995 survey was conducted during April–June 1995, with 246 completed interviews. The 1997 survey was conducted during December 1997–January 1998, with 300 completed interviews. Note that both surveys occurred after the date considered here as the start date for the Weed and Seed program in Las Vegas, October 1994.

Survey findings

The findings from the interviews conducted in Las Vegas in 1995 and 1997 are shown in exhibits 6.3 through 6.9 and are discussed below.

Demographic characteristics of survey respondents (Exhibit 6.3)

The average age of respondents was 47 and 50 years in 1995 and 1997, respectively. The employment status of 1997 respondents was better in comparison to those interviewed in 1995, with 41 percent working full time in 1997 versus 20 percent in 1995. Additionally, the percentage of respondents reporting themselves as unemployed was lower in 1997 (8 percent) than in 1995 (14 percent).

11 For example, in questions on “how good a job are the police doing” in different aspects of law enforcement, the 1995 survey allowed the respondent to indicate “a very good job, a good job, a fair job, or a poor job.” The 1997 survey also allowed the respondent to indicate “a very poor job.” The findings below have aggregated the “poor job” and “very poor job” responses for 1997 before comparing the pattern of responses with 1995.

Childless households accounted for 49 and 66 percent of respondents in 1995 and 1997, respectively. Households containing 3 or more children decreased from 23 percent in 1995 to 10 percent in 1997. The distribution of respondents with respect to the number of adults in the household was very similar in the two surveys; the proportion of respondent households with 1 or 2 adults was 72 percent in 1995 and 76 percent in 1997.

The ethnic and gender distribution of respondents differed little in 1997 from 1995. Blacks made up 82 percent of respondents in 1995 and 78 percent in 1997. Respondents were disproportionately female in both surveys, 59 percent in 1995 and 57 percent in 1997.

Perceptions of the neighborhood (Exhibit 6.4)

There was no significant difference between the responses from the 1995 and 1997 samples with respect to either the general satisfaction of residents with their neighborhood “as a place to live” or the extent to which residents felt safe out alone during the day. Respondents did feel somewhat safer after dark in 1997 than in 1995. The 1997 respondents were also more likely than those in 1995 to indicate that their neighborhood had become a better place to live in the past 2 years—28 percent in 1997 versus 21 percent in 1995. Among the remaining questions in this portion of the survey, there was a significant difference between the two samples in perceptions of burglary and violent crime; residents were less likely in 1997 than in 1995 to regard either as a “big problem.”

Victimization (Exhibit 6.5)

Reported victimization was significantly lower the 1997 respondents compared to the 1995 respondents for robbery, personal assault, and assault with a weapon. There was no significant difference between the responses for the two survey samples with respect to burglary victimization.

Police response (Exhibit 6.6)

There were significant differences in the responses for 1997 (versus 1995) in residents’ perceptions of police effectiveness in controlling the street sale and use of illegal drugs. With respect to visible police presence in the neighborhood, residents were less likely in 1997 to report having observed police officers “walking around or standing on patrol” or “chatting/having a friendly conversation with people in the neighborhood.” There was, however, a significant difference in the perceptions of general police responsiveness to community concerns. Those regarding the police as “very responsive” constituted 37 percent of respondents in 1997, compared to 26 percent in 1995.

One possible interpretation of these seemingly contradictory findings is that the perceived presence of police in the neighborhood is a result of both proactive and reactive police activity. Even if the proactive police presence is greater—as one expects with community policing—the overall perceived police presence may decline, with fewer calls for service. Residents might then regard the police as more responsive, even though the police are not as visible in the neighborhood.

Community involvement (Exhibit 6.7)

The reported community involvement among West Las Vegas residents was significantly higher among the 1997 respondents than among the 1995 respondents, in all areas addressed by both surveys. This included attendance or participation in antidrug rallies, vigils, and marches (an increase from 2 percent to 8 percent), citizen patrols (an increase from 5 percent to 10 percent), neighborhood watch programs (an increase from 12 percent to 20 percent), and neighborhood cleanup projects (an increase from 18 percent to 27 percent in 1997).

Perceptions of social services and other programs (Exhibit 6.8)

Compared to their 1995 counterparts, the 1997 respondents reported significantly higher satisfaction with all categories of social services and other programs addressed in the surveys. The percentage indicating that they were “very satisfied” increased from 20 percent to 30 percent between 1995 and 1997 with respect to the availability of sports, recreation, and other programs for youths; drug treatment services increased from 7 percent to 18 percent, and satisfaction with job opportunities grew from 9 percent to 18 percent.

Perceptions of the Weed and Seed program (Exhibit 6.9)

The 1997 survey showed a significant increase in name recognition for the Weed and Seed program (53 percent versus 22 percent in 1995). Among the 1997 respondents, however, there was relatively low recognition of particular neighborhood-specific programs. Only 15 percent were aware of the Las Vegas Stealth Track Club, and only 17 percent had heard of Prince Hall Masonic Youth Group. Finally, 35 percent of the 1997 respondents were familiar with the Austin Dancers performing arts group.

**Exhibit 6.3: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents
Las Vegas**

	1995 Survey^a	1997 Survey^a
<i>Age of respondent</i>	n = 246	n = 300
18–29	45 (18%)	40 (13%)
30–39	40 (16%)	42 (14%)
40–49	26 (11%)	43 (14%)
50–59	30 (12%)	39 (13%)
60 or older	89 (36%)	123 (41%)
Other	16 (7%)	13 (4%)
Total	100%	100%
Mean Value	47.2	50.4
<i>Employment Status</i>	n = 246 ^b	n = 300 ^b
Working full time	48 (20%)	123 (41%)
Working part time	18 (7%)	23 (8%)
Unemployed and looking for work	34 (14%)	24 (8%)
<i>Number of people in household less than 18 years old</i>	n = 246	n = 300
0	121 (49%)	197 (66%)
1–2	68 (28%)	74 (25%)
3 or more	57 (23%)	29 (10%)
Total	100%	100%
Mean number of minors	1.4	0.7

**Exhibit 6.3: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents
Las Vegas**

	1995 Survey^a	1997 Survey^a
<i>Number of people in household more than 18 years old</i>	n = 246	n = 300
0	10 (4%)	2 (1%)
1–2	178 (72%)	227 (76%)
3 or more	58 (24%)	71 (24%)
Total	100%	100%
Mean number of adults	1.9	2.0
<i>Ethnic Identity</i>	n = 246	n = 300
Black	202 (82%)	235 (78%)
White	14 (6%)	33 (11%)
Hispanic	10 (4%)	10 (3%)
Asian/Pacific Islander	2 (1%)	2 (1%)
American Indian	0 (0%)	6 (2%)
Something else	18 (7%)	10 (3%)
Refused	0 (0%)	3 (1%)
Don't know	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)
Total	100%	100%
<i>Gender</i>	n = 237	n = 300
Male	92 (39%)	129 (43%)
Female	145 (61%)	171 (57%)
Total	100%	100%

^a Columns may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

^b Respondents were allowed to make more than one selection.

**Exhibit 6.4: Perceptions of the Neighborhood
Las Vegas**

	1995 Survey^a	1997 Survey^a	Chi Square Statistic^b
<i>In general, how satisfied are you with this neighborhood as a place to live?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Very satisfied	109 (44%)	137 (46%)	
Somewhat satisfied	82 (33%)	108 (36%)	
Somewhat dissatisfied	22 (9%)	26 (9%)	
Very dissatisfied	29 (12%)	26 (9%)	
Don't know	4 (2%)	2 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>In general, how safe do you feel out alone in this neighborhood during the day? Do you feel...</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Very safe	125 (51%)	167 (56%)	
Somewhat safe	89 (36%)	98 (33%)	
Somewhat unsafe	16 (7%)	21 (7%)	
Very unsafe	13 (5%)	11 (4%)	
Don't know	3 (1%)	2 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	
Total	100%	100%	

**Exhibit 6.4: Perceptions of the Neighborhood
Las Vegas**

	1995 Survey ^a	1997 Survey ^a	Chi Square Statistic ^b
<i>In general, how safe do you feel out alone in this neighborhood after dark? Do you feel...</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = *$
Very safe	48 (20%)	82 (27%)	
Somewhat safe	87 (35%)	100 (33%)	
Somewhat unsafe	39 (16%)	40 (13%)	
Very unsafe	54 (22%)	35 (12%)	
Don't go out at night	15 (6%)	39 (13%)	
Don't know	3 (1%)	1 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	3 (1%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>In general, in the past 2 years, would you say this neighborhood has become a better place to live, a worse place to live, or stayed about the same?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = ***$
Better	52 (21%)	85 (28%)	
Worse	62 (25%)	47 (16%)	
About the same	106 (43%)	153 (51%)	
Did not live here 2 years ago	23 (9%)	11 (4%)	
Don't know	3 (1%)	3 (1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	
Total	100%	100%	

**Exhibit 6.4: Perceptions of the Neighborhood
Las Vegas**

	1995 Survey^a	1997 Survey^a	Chi Square Statistic^b
<i>Do you think drug dealers on streets, or in other public places are a big problem, small problem, or no problem in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Big problem	94 (38%)	94 (31%)	
Small problem	51 (21%)	77 (26%)	
No problem	79 (32%)	114 (38%)	
Don't know	22 (9%)	15 (5%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>Do you think drug sales out of homes or apartments are a big problem, small problem, or no problem in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Big problem	72 (29%)	86 (29%)	
Small problem	48 (20%)	59 (20%)	
No problem	83 (34%)	116 (39%)	
Don't know	43 (18%)	39 (13%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	

**Exhibit 6.4: Perceptions of the Neighborhood
Las Vegas**

	1995 Survey ^a	1997 Survey ^a	Chi Square Statistic ^b
<i>Do you think burglary and other property crime are a big problem, small problem, or no problem in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = *$
Big problem	48 (20%)	43 (14%)	
Small problem	74 (30%)	115 (38%)	
No problem	101 (41%)	129 (43%)	
Don't know	23 (9%)	13 (4%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>Do you think robbery and other street crime are a big problem, small problem, or no problem in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Big problem	44 (18%)	54 (18%)	
Small problem	66 (27%)	91 (30%)	
No problem	106 (43%)	141 (47%)	
Don't know	30 (12%)	13 (4%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	
Total	100%	100%	

**Exhibit 6.4: Perceptions of the Neighborhood
Las Vegas**

	1995 Survey ^a	1997 Survey ^a	Chi Square Statistic ^b
<i>Do you think violent crimes, such as shootings, assault, and so forth, are a big problem, small problem, or no problem in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = **$
Big problem	78 (32%)	87 (29%)	
Small problem	56 (23%)	101 (34%)	
No problem	92 (37%)	106 (35%)	
Don't know	20 (8%)	6 (2%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>Do you think gang activity is a big problem, small problem, or no problem in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Big problem	67 (27%)	75 (25%)	
Small problem	62 (25%)	79 (26%)	
No problem	89 (36%)	125 (42%)	
Don't know	28 (11%)	21 (7%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	

**Exhibit 6.4: Perceptions of the Neighborhood
Las Vegas**

	1995 Survey ^a	1997 Survey ^a	Chi Square Statistic ^b
<i>Do you think drug use is a big problem, small problem, or no problem in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Big problem	93 (38%)	110 (37%)	
Small problem	56 (23%)	67 (22%)	
No problem	70 (29%)	92 (31%)	
Don't know	27 (11%)	31 (10%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	

^a Columns may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

^b Significance of differences between 1995 and 1997 in the distribution of responses for each survey question.

*** Statistically significant at 1-percent level

** Statistically significant at 5-percent level

* Statistically significant at 10-percent level

n.s. Not statistically significant

**Exhibit 6.5: Victimization
Las Vegas**

	1995 Survey ^a	1997 Survey ^a	Chi Square Statistic
<i>In the past 2 years, has anyone broken into your home, garage, or another building on your property in this neighborhood to steal something?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Yes	52 (21%)	65 (22%)	
No	177 (72%)	234 (78%)	
Don't know	17 (7%)	1 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>In the past 2 years, has anyone stolen something from you or a member of your family by force or by threat of force in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = **$
Yes	32 (13%)	23 (8%)	
No	197 (80%)	275 (92%)	
Don't know	17 (7%)	2 (1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	

**Exhibit 6.5: Victimization
Las Vegas**

	1995 Survey ^a	1997 Survey ^a	Chi Square Statistic
<i>Other than the incidents already mentioned, in the past 2 years, have you or a member of your family been beaten up, attacked, or hit with something such as a rock or bottle in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = ***$
Yes	22 (9%)	11 (4%)	
No	206 (84%)	287 (96%)	
Don't know	18 (7%)	2 (1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>Other than the incidents already mentioned, in the past 2 years, have you or a member of your family been knifed, shot at, or attacked with some other weapon by anyone at all in this neighborhood to steal something?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = *$
Yes	18 (7%)	12 (4%)	
No	210 (85%)	287 (96%)	
Don't know	18 (7%)	1 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	

^a Columns may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

^b Significance of differences between 1995 and 1997 in the distribution of responses for each survey question.

*** Statistically significant at 1-percent level

** Statistically significant at 5-percent level

* Statistically significant at 10-percent level

n.s. Not statistically significant

**Exhibit 6.6: Police Response
Las Vegas**

	1995 Survey ^a	1997 Survey ^a	Chi Square Statistic ^b
<i>In general, how good a job are the police doing to keep order on the streets and sidewalks in this neighborhood these days? Would you say they are doing a...</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = n.s$
Very good job	43 (17%)	67 (22%)	
Good job	66 (27%)	93 (31%)	
Fair job	84 (34%)	95 (32%)	
Poor job	33 (13%)	14 (5%)	
Very poor job	0 (0%)	17 (6%)	
Don't know	20 (8%)	14 (5%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>How good a job are the police doing in controlling the street sale and use of illegal drugs in this neighborhood these days? Would you say they are doing a...</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = **$
Very good job	22 (9%)	53 (18%)	
Good job	84 (34%)	87 (29%)	
Fair job	61 (25%)	72 (24%)	
Poor job	49 (20%)	28 (9%)	
Very poor job	0 (0%)	27 (9%)	
Don't know	30 (12%)	33 (11%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	

**Exhibit 6.6: Police Response
Las Vegas**

	1995 Survey ^a	1997 Survey ^a	Chi Square Statistic ^b
<i>During the past month, have you seen a police car driving through your neighborhood?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Yes	215 (98%)	254 (85%)	
No	57 (11%)	44 (15%)	
Don't know	4 (2%)	2 (1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>During the past month, have you seen a police officer walking around or standing on patrol in the neighborhood?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = **$
Yes	73 (30%)	63 (21%)	
No	168 (68%)	237 (79%)	
Don't know	5 (2%)	0 (0%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>During the past month, have you seen a police officer patrolling in the back alleys or in the back of buildings in your neighborhood?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Yes	90 (36%)	105 (35%)	
No	151 (61%)	182 (61%)	
Don't know	5 (2%)	12 (4%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	
Total	100%	100%	

**Exhibit 6.6: Police Response
Las Vegas**

	1995 Survey ^a	1997 Survey ^a	Chi Square Statistic ^b
<i>During the past month, have you seen a police officer chatting/having a friendly conversation with people in the neighborhood?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = *$
Yes	90 (37%)	90 (30%)	
No	151 (61%)	204 (68%)	
Don't know	5 (2%)	6 (2%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>In general, how responsive are the police in this neighborhood to community concerns? Are they...</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = **$
Very responsive	65 (26%)	110 (37%)	
Somewhat responsive	101 (41%)	107 (36%)	
Somewhat unresponsive	35 (14%)	32 (11%)	
Very unresponsive	14 (6%)	12 (4%)	
Don't know	31 (13%)	38 (13%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	
Total	100%	100%	

^a Columns may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

^b Significance of differences between 1995 and 1997 in the distribution of responses for each survey question.

*** Statistically significant at 1-percent level

** Statistically significant at 5-percent level

* Statistically significant at 10-percent level

n.s. Not statistically significant

**Exhibit 6.7: Community Involvement
Las Vegas**

	1995 Survey ^a	1997 Survey ^a	Chi Square Statistic ^b
<i>During the past 2 years, have you attended or participated in an antidrug rally, vigil, or march in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = ***$
Yes	6 (2%)	24 (8%)	
No	224 (91%)	274 (91%)	
Don't know	16 (7%)	2 (1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>During the past 2 years, have you attended or participated in a citizen patrol in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = **$
Yes	11 (5%)	30 (10%)	
No	219 (89%)	268 (89%)	
Don't know	16 (7%)	2 (1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>During the past 2 years, have you attended or participated in a neighborhood watch program in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = **$
Yes	29 (12%)	59 (20%)	
No	201 (82%)	240 (80%)	
Don't know	16 (7%)	1 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	

**Exhibit 6.7: Community Involvement
Las Vegas**

	1995 Survey ^a	1997 Survey ^a	Chi Square Statistic ^b
<i>During the past 2 years, have you attended or participated in a neighborhood cleanup project in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = **$
Yes	44 (18%)	81 (27%)	
No	186 (76%)	219 (73%)	
Don't know	16 (7%)	0 (0%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	

^a Columns may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

^b Significance of differences between 1995 and 1997 in the distribution of responses for each survey question.

*** Statistically significant at 1-percent level

** Statistically significant at 5-percent level

* Statistically significant at 10-percent level

n.s. Not statistically significant

**Exhibit 6.8: Perceptions of Social Services and Other Programs
Las Vegas**

	1995 Survey^a	1997 Survey^a	Chi Square Statistic^b
<i>In general, how satisfied are you with the availability of sports, recreation, and other programs for youths in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = ***$
Very satisfied	50 (20%)	91 (30%)	
Somewhat satisfied	75 (30%)	103 (34%)	
Somewhat dissatisfied	23 (9%)	34 (11%)	
Very dissatisfied	61 (25%)	36 (12%)	
Don't know	37 (15%)	36 (12%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>In general, how satisfied are you with the availability of drug treatment services in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = ***$
Very satisfied	17 (7%)	53 (18%)	
Somewhat satisfied	67 (27%)	72 (24%)	
Somewhat dissatisfied	26 (11%)	30 (10%)	
Very dissatisfied	53 (22%)	44 (15%)	
Don't know	83 (34%)	100 (33%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	
Total	100%	100%	

**Exhibit 6.8: Perceptions of Social Services and Other Programs
Las Vegas**

	1995 Survey^a	1997 Survey^a	Chi Square Statistic^b
<i>In general, how satisfied are you with the availability of job opportunities in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = ***$
Very satisfied	22 (9%)	53 (18%)	
Somewhat satisfied	48 (20%)	79 (26%)	
Somewhat dissatisfied, or	34 (14%)	37 (12%)	
Very dissatisfied	110 (45%)	79 (26%)	
Don't know	32 (13%)	50 (17%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	2 (1%)	
Total	100%	100%	

^a Columns may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

^b Significance of differences between 1995 and 1997 in the distribution of responses for each survey question.

*** Statistically significant at 1-percent level

** Statistically significant at 5-percent level

* Statistically significant at 10-percent level

n.s. Not statistically significant

**Exhibit 6.9: Perceptions of the Weed and Seed Program
Las Vegas**

	1995 Survey^a	1997 Survey^a	Chi Square Statistic^b
<i>Have you heard of the Weed and Seed program?</i>	n = 246	n = 300	$\chi^2 = ***$
Yes	54 (22%)	159 (53%)	
No	183 (74%)	135 (45%)	
Don't Know	9 (4%)	6 (2%)	
Total	100%	100%	

1997 Respondents Only^a

<i>Are you aware that the following programs are available in this neighborhood?</i>	Yes	No	Don't know	Total
				n = 300
Las Vegas Stealth Track Club	44 (15%)	251 (84%)	5 (2%)	100%
Prince Hall Masonic Youth Group	51 (17%)	245 (82%)	4 (1%)	100%
Austin Dancers, for performing arts projects in drama, dance, music	105 (35%)	193 (64%)	2 (1%)	100%

^a Columns may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

^b Significance of differences between 1995 and 1997 in the distribution of responses for each survey question.

*** Statistically significant at 1-percent level

** Statistically significant at 5-percent level

* Statistically significant at 10-percent level

n.s. Not statistically significant

7.0 Future Directions and Degree of Institutionalization

Given the political turmoil and organizational instability that has marked Las Vegas' experience with the Weed and Seed program, it is to the credit of those implementing the weeding and seeding activities that the program appears to have contributed to some favorable outcomes. In particular, as described in section 6, both the police data and survey data for West Las Vegas indicate some reduction in Part 1 crimes (relative to the rest of the city) and improved perceptions of public safety and police responsiveness. Meadows Village has not shown any similar reduction in crime, perhaps reflecting the profound challenges to law enforcement and social services presented by a highly transient neighborhood, one substantially populated by foreign-born residents with limited literacy and language skills.

In both target areas, however, program participants have reported improvements in their quality of life, in terms of new-found personal efficacy and increased social capital. These outcomes can be seen most clearly in improved life skills, language proficiency, and job readiness. Community leaders reported significantly improved neighborhood housing conditions and increased willingness of residents to report illegal activity. "Troubled" properties, locations where drugs were openly sold, have been more effectively targeted by the police. Weeding participants have provided input to the Las Vegas Housing Authority regarding design features for enhancing safety. These recommendations are being implemented in the Weeks Plaza housing project and include controlled access, license plate checks, security fences, and other measures.

There are many ironies in the Las Vegas experience. On the one hand, the city's program had a number of features that would normally point to success—strong early support from the city, a committed joint task force to plan and implement weeding activities in West Las Vegas, a combination of high-level enforcement efforts ranging from active Federal prosecution to community-oriented police patrols, police involvement in neighborhood seeding efforts, and competent staff in key positions, including the program manager and safe haven coordinators. Indeed, the program was slated for national recognition by the Executive Office for Weed and Seed, and the city applied to become a national training site.

On the other hand, the program has been plagued by a lack of consensus and leadership at higher levels. The senior staff within the city government were perceived by those overseeing the program as unable to effectively handle the necessary fiscal and administrative arrangements. The city's decision to withdraw as the fiscal agent for Weed and Seed, and the subsequent inability of the University of Nevada–Reno to assume this responsibility, caused disruptions in funding and the delivery of services and distracted the attention of the steering committee and program administrative staff.

This experience may suggest the need for greater Federal oversight of local fiscal management, and perhaps even some greater degree of Federal fiscal control. Although either approach would violate the local control principle that guides Weed and Seed, closer Federal monitoring and possible direct

assistance may be appropriate in some situations. At a minimum, effective Federal oversight requires sensitivity to the administrative capacities within the local government, with attention to early warning signals that may indicate program distress and may sometimes call for a more active Federal role.

After the timeframe for completion of this case study, additional changes to the Weed and Seed program in Las Vegas were discussed among the key local actors and the staff of the U.S. Attorney's Office and EOWS. The options included the administration of the program through a newly created tax-exempt organization. Information was requested regarding these plans, but none was provided. The specific nature of the changes and their potential for restoring stability to program funding and oversight were thus unclear.

About the National Institute of Justice

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ), a component of the Office of Justice Programs, is the research agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. Created by the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended, NIJ is authorized to support research, evaluation, and demonstration programs, development of technology, and both national and international information dissemination. Specific mandates of the Act direct NIJ to:

- Sponsor special projects, and research and development programs, that will improve and strengthen the criminal justice system and reduce or prevent crime.
- Conduct national demonstration projects that employ innovative or promising approaches for improving criminal justice.
- Develop new technologies to fight crime and improve criminal justice.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of criminal justice programs and identify programs that promise to be successful if continued or repeated.
- Recommend actions that can be taken by Federal, State, and local governments as well as by private organizations to improve criminal justice.
- Carry out research on criminal behavior.
- Develop new methods of crime prevention and reduction of crime and delinquency.

In recent years, NIJ has greatly expanded its initiatives, the result of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (the Crime Act), partnerships with other Federal agencies and private foundations, advances in technology, and a new international focus. Some examples of these new initiatives:

- New research and evaluation are exploring key issues in community policing, violence against women, sentencing reforms, and specialized courts such as drug courts.
- Dual-use technologies are being developed to support national defense and local law enforcement needs.
- The causes, treatment, and prevention of violence against women and violence within the family are being investigated in cooperation with several agencies of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- NIJ's links with the international community are being strengthened through membership in the United Nations network of criminological institutes; participation in developing the U.N. Criminal Justice Information Network; initiation of UNOJUST (U.N. Online Justice Clearinghouse), which electronically links the institutes to the U.N. network; and establishment of an NIJ International Center.
- The NIJ-administered criminal justice information clearinghouse, the world's largest, has improved its online capability.
- The Institute's Drug Use Forecasting (DUF) program has been expanded and enhanced. Renamed ADAM (Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring), the program will increase the number of drug-testing sites, and its role as a "platform" for studying drug-related crime will grow.
- NIJ's new Crime Mapping Research Center will provide training in computer mapping technology, collect and archive geocoded crime data, and develop analytic software.
- The Institute's program of intramural research has been expanded and enhanced.

The Institute Director, who is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, establishes the Institute's objectives, guided by the priorities of the Office of Justice Programs, the Department of Justice, and the needs of the criminal justice field. The Institute actively solicits the views of criminal justice professionals and researchers in the continuing search for answers that inform public policymaking in crime and justice.