

**The author(s) shown below used Federal funds provided by the U.S. Department of Justice and prepared the following final report:**

**Document Title: Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI) in Rochester, NY**

**Author(s): John M. Klofas, Ph.D. ; Christopher Delaney ; Trisha Smith**

**Document No.: 220488**

**Date Received: November 2007**

**Award Number: 2001-IJ-CX-K009**

**This report has not been published by the U.S. Department of Justice. To provide better customer service, NCJRS has made this Federally-funded grant final report available electronically in addition to traditional paper copies.**

**Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.**

# **Final Report**

## **Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI) In Rochester, NY**

**By**

**John M. Klofas, Ph.D.**

**Christopher Delaney**

**Tisha Smith, M.A.**

**Department of Criminal Justice  
Rochester Institute of Technology**

**1/1/05**

# Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>A. History of SACSI in Rochester</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>B. Problem Identification and Research</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Supplemental Material</b>	
Problem Identification	26
Data Sets Maintained by New York State Agencies	33
Follow-up to Grand Homicide Review	35
Victim and Suspect Ages	44
Drugs and Homicide 1992-2000	45
Clinton Neighborhood Focus Group	47
Three Kinds of Murder	52
Maple Neighborhood Focus Group	71
Genesee Neighborhood Focus Group	76
Focus Groups at Monroe Correctional Facility	80
Estimates of the Size of the Rochester Drug Market	95
The Link Between Drugs and Homicide	97
Analysis of Homicide Victim Toxicology Reports	105
Criminal Records in High Crime Neighborhoods	114
<b>C. Intervention</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>Supplemental Material</b>	
Intervention Notes	124
General Recommendation Regarding Interventions	128
General Recommendation Regarding Interventions 2	131
Notification of Special Enforcement	134
SACSI Summary	138
Proposal Review Form	140
<b>D. Assessment</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>151</b>

## **ABSTRACT**

The Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative in Rochester, New York was supported by the National Institute of Justice from Spring 2001 through 2004. It involved a collaborative research process focused on the problem of homicide. Extensive local research helped define the problem and form the foundation for developing strategic interventions. Strategies based on deterrence, incapacitation and service were devised and implemented and have yielded positive results during the past year. Investment in a research based collaborative planning process continues in the jurisdiction and the project has served a model for wider distribution.

## **Executive Summary**

The Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI) began in Rochester in the Spring of 2001 when the United States Attorney for the Western District of New York led an effort to make it possible for participation of the City of Rochester. Here SACSI built in a long foundation of criminal justice cooperation that included the development of Project Exile in 1995.

The SACSI program developed based on work done in Boston which demonstrated the potential for collaborative strategies, which include strong research components, to reduce crime through developing strategic interventions. Initiatives in five cities were supported in the first round of SACSI and five more, including Rochester's were added in a second round of funding through the National Institute of Justice.

The Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative employs a collaborative problem solving approach in which leaders in the local criminal justice system scan to identify specific crime problems, research the specific characteristics of those problems and design strategic interventions based on the research. The project is managed through the Office of the United States Attorney. In Rochester an Assistant US Attorney was assigned to oversee the day to day SACSI effort.

The Rochester leadership group selected homicide as the crime problem to address through the SACSI process. Research early in the process supported the choice

by demonstrating that Rochester had a history of high homicide rates compared with other cities, and that they appeared to be rising despite contradictory trends elsewhere. Finally, the initial scan showed that Rochester was unexceptional with regard to patterns of other crimes.

An extensive and multifaceted study of homicide in Rochester was undertaken by the SACSI research team under the direction of the leadership group. A wide range of methods and analyses were employed including analysis of official data, interview studies, forensic studies and systematic observations. The research employed action research principles in which the work group helped define appropriate research questions, considered research design issues, reviewed analyses and planned further study. The iterative process moved from broad examination of homicide to increasingly focused analyses uncovering the details of the nature of the local problem.

The analyses showed that in Rochester homicide victimization and offending was concentrated geographically in a small section of the city and demographically such that rates for young Black men were nearly 70 times those in the nation as a whole. Furthermore, the most frequent homicides involved disputes and arguments, between young Black men, that fester overtime, and are resolved with lethal force delivered through a hand-gun. A second frequent category involves drug related robberies. Over one quarter of homicides involved multiple offenders and over sixty percent involved some form of group dynamic. The evidence also showed that even in high crime neighborhoods, where arrest rates were high, criminal records of those involved in homicide were far more serious than those of their peers. Examination of the role of drugs in homicides indicated that drug involvement was often accompanied by a group

social process that was associated with increased risks of homicide victimization and perpetration.

The research supported a strategic planning process that led to the development and continuous refinement of strategic interventions designed to reduce homicide in Rochester. An external consultant with experience in strategy development was also brought into the process. The resulting strategies reflected a mix of deterrence, incapacitation and service perspectives. A complex of strategies involving nearly all aspects of the criminal justice system evolved and has been in place for over a year. These strategies include changes in prosecution practices, group focused intelligence gathering, targeted law enforcement efforts, delivery of a deterrence message and service alternative through offender call-ins, intensive supervision of designated probationers and saturated patrol practices.

Evaluation of the overall strategy shows promising results with significant declines in homicides during the past twelve months, particularly among the target population of young, Black males. Process evaluation shows that the strategies have involved significant engagement in the collaborative problem-solving process and many instances of changes in agency activity and system improvements.

It is also clear that SACSI has built on and extended the legacy of collaborative problem solving in criminal justice in Rochester. The collaborative planning process continues under Project Safe Neighborhoods and is also being applied to other problem areas, drug markets in particular. The violence prevention interventions are being institutionalized through training in the key criminal justice agencies. Researchers continue to play a significant role in these efforts. Finally, the process in Rochester has

served as a model for problem analysis in national training for Project Safe Neighborhoods and is being used by the Division of Criminal Justice Services in New York State as a model for enhancing local analytic capacity and implementing interventions to reduce violence.



## **The History of SACSI in Rochester, New York**

### Introduction

The Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI) project in Rochester New York represents one example of the application of a particular model of data based problem solving approaches. The roots of that model are long and spread widely in and out of criminal justice. They can be seen in the 1967 Presidents Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice which encouraged the scientific study of crime and the efforts to control it. They are reflected in the wide body of work associated with Problem Oriented Policing (Spelman and Eck 1987) where local problems become to focus of study and remedy. The tenets of the problem solving approach are found in the spread of community policing (Skolnick and Bayley 1986) across the United States and reflected in recent developments such as community prosecution and problem solving courts.

More direct roots of the SACSI program can be seen in the violence reduction efforts that took place in Boston in the mid 1990s. There high rates of youth homicide prompted concern among local officials. The Boston Gun Project and the Cease fire strategy to emerge from it helped defined the principles which would come to underlie the SACSI efforts:

1. Assembly of an interagency working group to address the problem

2. Using quantitative and qualitative research techniques to understand the dynamics of a particular crime problem
3. Using the research to develop interventions designed to have a substantial impact on the crime target in the near-term
4. Implementing and revising the intervention based on real world experience
5. Evaluation the impact of the intervention (Kennedy, Braga and Piehl 2001).

The principles described above are reflected in the SACSI program including the one in Rochester. Beyond these key practical directives, however, is the most powerful assumption of the problem solving process. Underlying the SACSI approach is the assumption that crime problems and their solutions have uniquely local features and character. That is, while there may be many common features with regard to victims and perpetrators of crime there are also important local attributes. The study of crime at the local level is thus necessary as is the formulation or at least remolding of interventions to match local circumstances. Thus while SACSI efforts in different cities share a common philosophy and methodology they also reflect the unique contexts of the problem solving effort.

Rochester, New York

Rochester, New York is a city of approximately 220,000 people and 35 square miles located in upstate New York (US Census 2000). In many ways it is the model of the compact northern industrial city, and in many ways it is not. The city shares with others many common urban problems. Manufacturing jobs have fallen dramatically,

poverty rates have risen and a concern about a growing “underclass” is reflected in the continued population decline and drain of the middle class to the suburbs. The city has lost over a third of its population since its census peak in 1950. As of the 2000 census the population of Rochester was 48% White, 39% Black, and 13% Hispanic (85% of those being Puerto Rican).

But Rochester’s history also makes it stand apart from other urban centers. In 1950 when its population peaked there were few minority residents. Unlike other great lakes cities to which southern African Americans immigrated to find manufacturing work beginning in the 1930s the minority population of Rochester remained small into the 1960s. For many years, the city’s largest employer, Kodak, attracted few minorities to its relatively high-tech chemical processing jobs. Rochester’s African American population, instead often came to the city as migrant farm workers pushed into the urban areas from surrounding rural towns. In 1964, Rochester was the first US city to experience the urban riots that grew to wider social unrest in cities across the country.

This unique historical legacy continues to mark Rochester today. Its story has been described as a tale of two cities: One rich and white and another poor and minority. It ranks high on educational achievement and per capita giving to United Way and also high on child poverty and on rates of sexually transmitted disease. And it has ranked high on rates of homicide for some time with those homicide concentrated in the city’s poorest neighborhoods.

## SACSI comes to Rochester

Based on the success of violence reductions efforts in Boston and the elaboration of key elements of the program SACSI efforts were funded in five other cities and then five additional cities in a second round of funding. Rochester joined the list in the second round. It was then United States Attorney Denise E. O'Donnell who saw in Rochester both a significant problem in the form of high homicide rates and significant resources for addressing those. She spearheaded an effort to bring SACSI to Rochester. Her commitment was later matched by that of her successors Kathleen M. Mehlretter and Michael Battle.

The key resource that convinced the US Attorney to pursue the project was Rochester's history of collaborative efforts. That history was seen in the pattern of strong business leadership in the community but more importantly on the pattern of cooperation among the directors of local criminal justice agencies. An active law enforcement council brought together chiefs from across the city and suburbs. Investigators from departments met regularly to review cases. And perhaps most important, a successful Project Exile program existed which brought together much of the criminal justice community including federal prosecutors and federal law enforcement. The critical players in Rochester knew one another and had a history for working together.

As SACSI in Rochester emerged, an Assistant US Attorney, Lori Gilmer was assigned to manage the project and the research partner John Klofas came on board bringing with him Chris Delaney and Tisha Smith as graduate assistants. The key group of participants then included:

US Attorney Denise O'Donnell, later Kathleen Mehlretter and Michael Battle

AUSA in Charge of Rochester Office, Brad Tyler

Rochester Police Department Chief Robert Duffy

District Attorney Howard Relin, later Michael Green

Mayor's Chief of Staff William Faucette, later Marisol Lopez

County Executive's Special Counsel James Mulley

Director of Probation, Robert Burns

Director of Pathways to Peace Outreach program, Keenan Allen

Rochester Police Department, Lt. Michael Wood, later Lt. Mark Case and Lt. Jeff Clark

AUSA Lori Gilmer

Research Partner Dr. John Klofas

Researcher Chris Delaney

Researcher David Kennedy joined the process in 2003

Prior to the appointment of the research partners this group met and selected homicide as the crime problem to be the focus of the SACSI effort.

The SACSI Process in Rochester

Apart from its local focus, a second fundamental assumption underlying SACSI is that problem solving is a process. That is, problem solving involves taking steps over time, building on what is learned and moving forward. The process advances by defining the problem in meaningful ways and then developing, implementing and

evaluating interventions consistent with that problem definition, and them repeating the process. Key to problem definition under SACSI, of course, is the role of research.

In Rochester a process emerged that has been relatively consistent since the earliest meetings. In that process the core group or leadership group met regularly. A monthly schedule of meetings was maintained with few exceptions. That schedule continues today. On some occasions working groups formed around specific projects or ideas. These groups tended to mix line personnel with some of the members of the leadership group. The working groups addressed such issues as tactical planning for law enforcement events, and special areas such as dispute resolution and planning of specific offender call in sessions. Apart from those periodic or ad hoc groupings became increasingly important to the process. They depended on the expertise of their members rather than any particular office. They included non criminal justice personnel, including community members on an as needed bases. Efforts to bring in community members into the larger planning process were not successful.

While the occasional working groups completed concrete tasks, the more general planning and much of the ongoing oversight has been maintained by the leadership group. That group, however, has also expanded to include greater representation by organizations including the state police, parole and federal law enforcement authorities.

The practice of problem solving to emerge with the leadership group involves a mixture of strategic discussion and data review and analysis at each session. Overtime the blend of strategy discussion and data has changed but both components have remained central to the process. In the early stages of the process more time was spent reviewing data, and planning further analyses than in strategy development. In the later

stages reviews of strategic issues have become common. This tweaking of the interventions, however, is still accompanied by data based discussions often of an evaluative rather than problem defining content.

The presentation of data has emerged as a formal part of the local problem solving process. This has been accomplished within the smaller leadership group through the production and dissemination of working papers which were intended to provide a foundation for data based discussion. The working papers are including in the problem definition part of this report. The papers would be sent electronically to members of the leadership group, delivered as hard copies at the next meeting and posted on a secure web page for easy access. As the project progressed with its focus on group conduct and group dynamics tracking group emergence and involvement has become important in the meeting. Monitoring the impact of interventions has also become more central to the group process. Reviewing of data tracking monthly levels of crimes has become a standard part of the meetings.

The experience of SACSI in Rochester has demonstrated the process of problem solving in this sort of program. And the point should not be missed, that the most obvious part of the program may be its tendency to change over time. Frequent face to face meeting have been critical to progress but the nature of those meetings, their membership and agenda have changed substantially overtime. Key elements of the process, such as incident reviews, have been continuously rethought and reworked. Transition and refinement and occasionally whole sale redirection have been hallmarks of the process. Despite these changes, however, there have been three elements that have remained central to Rochester's SACSI efforts. These have been collaboration (as

discussed here,) the use of data, and strategic thinking (both of which are discussed below).

### Key Research Concepts in Rochester SACSI

A fundamental element of SACSI since its inception has been the use of research for strategic planning in criminal justice. That simple, declarative statement, however, disguises the wide variety of ways in which research can be incorporated in the planning process. Data may sometimes be seen as the purview of experts and true believers who wield it as a sword to support a preordained course of action. Research may be piled on to coerce agreement where there is little. Or research may be a source of struggle for understanding by encouraging questioning and reexamination. This last use of data has been described as its most potent use (Toch, 1982) in that it enhances the problem solving capacity of individuals and organizations. It becomes a general tool to apply to understanding problems and developing solutions. That has been the goal in using data in the Rochester SACSI effort.

Action Research has been the term coined to describe the model of research we have sought to employ in Rochester. With its roots in the work of Kurt Lewin (1946), whose dicta was “no action with research, no research without action,” action research seeks to broadly encourage learning through participation in the research process. In criminal justice the tradition is best reflected in the work of Hans Toch, Douglas Grant and Ray Galvin (1975) who used violence prone police officers to study the problem of violence and devise solutions. Toch and Grant (1982) also used action research methods to enable corrections officers to redefine some aspects of their work in prisons.



Actions research typically reflects the following key principles:

- 1) It is applied research focusing on addressing real word problems
- 2) It involves partnerships between researchers and subject matter experts
- 3) Those partnerships typically involve high levels of participation in defining research problems, carrying our studies and interpreting results.
- 4) It is most often directed at developing interventions that have real, measurable results.
- 5) It is an process where analyses is refined, refocused and repeated for greater and greater understanding

According to Lewin (1947) and others, action research should not be methodologically inferior to other research approaches but it should place a premium on wide engagement in the iterative research process.

In the local SACSI effort we have sought to build the problem solving capacity of the local criminal justice system by encouraging participation in the research process and by seeking to build research into the ongoing processes of the organizations

#### Key Intervention Concepts in Rochester

Relatively early in the SACSI process the issue of intervention became a common part of executive groups meeting agenda. Emphasis was placed on developing interventions that could be implemented and have real effects in the short term and were consistent with the local research. Concern with roots causes would often arise in meetings but would eventually lead to refocusing on how to understand the homicide

problem is a way that allowed for immediate action and the offered the potential for near-term results. The SACSI leadership group engaged in frequent and wide ranging discussion of the intervention process. These discussions often involved consideration of established programs and practices in other jurisdictions (see Sherman, 1997).

Given the constraints faced in the project, the theoretical models of crime and prevention that were of most interest to the group included the models of rational choice and related concepts such as environmental factors and routine activities. The process seems to favor developing situationally oriented models of the target offenses. Those approaches would seem most related to topic areas including victimology, environmental criminology (Brantingham and Brantingham, 1991), and most recently rational choice models (Clarke and Cornish, 2001) and routine activity theory (Felson, 1998). In terms of intervention, the SACSI process would seem to favor what have been described as situational crime control models (Clarke, 1997).

Models where cause lay in underlying individual or social conditions were seen as less appropriate given the project's focus. Interest in treatment often arose and was favorable viewed based on available research and understanding of local conditions. The group supported treatment interventions such as the drug court and service brokerage roles for outreach workers but also included different approaches in their own program design.

Strategies involving incapacitation and deterrence were at the core of interventions designed in the Rochester SACSI process. The group focused in incapacitation for serious known offenders and developed intensive law enforcement actions focused on that group. Additionally, deterrence based strategies were seen as

more efficient strategies particularly for the large population of lower serious offenders or group members seen has having high potential for criminal involvement.

An interest in “hot spots” and police led crackdowns emerged from the groups analysis of the homicide problem. Such practices were also recognized as broadly supported in the criminal justice literature. In evaluations of crackdowns Sherman (1990), and Sherman and Weisburd (1995) found such focused police tactics provided attention to specific offenses and provided short term and longer term deterrent effects. Likewise Eck (1995) and Eck and Gersh (2000) have described the geography of local drug markets and the ability to deter sales at specific locations (with minimal displacement) through law enforcement crackdowns. The planning group would periodically engage on local crackdowns, some of which involved saturation patrolling by Rochester police working with the local Sheriff’s department and State Police.

The interest in deterrence based strategies was also supported by knowledge of the Boston Ceasefire Project from the mid 1990s (See Kennedy, Braga and Piehl 2001). The “pulling levers strategy” (Kennedy 1997) was also employed successfully in other jurisdictions. A team from the Rochester SACSI visited Indianapolis to observe the process. These strategies found additional support when David Kennedy was brought into the strategic planning process in Rochester.

A variety of actors converged to provide a foundation for the specific strategies developed in the SACSI process. The goal of near term impact helped shape the search for interventions. Incapacitation and deterrence strategies resonated with the specific details of the local research. Established programs in other jurisdictions also provided models on which to build.

## **Problem Identification and Research**

The Rochester SACSI program employed a data based planning process leading to the development, implementation and evaluation of strategies focused on reduction and prevention of homicide. The research model was an iterative action research model in which the planning team worked collaboratively on the development of relevant research questions, consulted on methods, in some cases assisted in data collections, and reviewed analyses in connection with the planning process. Given that the research was essentially a case study design it was decided that the most appropriate approach would involve a wide variety of research methods all focused on various aspects of the homicide problem. This effort at triangulation allowed for detailed analyses and in depth study from a variety of vantage points thus strengthening our findings as well as providing additional directions for the research.

The analysis of data regarding homicide became the main ingredient in the SACSI group deliberation and planning for strategic interventions to reduce homicide. The analyses were written up in the form of working papers and were distributed as email attachments to group members prior to meetings. Hard copies of the working papers were made available at the group meetings and were available to everyone involved in the SACSI project through a secure Web page.

The analysis began with an examination of official crime data for Rochester and comparison communities. Data from the Uniform Crime Reports were examined to identify patterns of crime which stood out for Rochester when compared with other New York Cities, and similar sized cities around the country. The research also provided a

view of homicide rates in Rochester over time. Finally the official measures combined with census data also enabled examination of homicide rates disaggregated by demographic characteristics and geography.

The analysis of UCR data was supplemented by analyses of a data file compiled to include information on all homicides in Rochester from 1991-2000. This 10 year data file was compiled from several separate data files assembled by the Rochester Police Department over the years. It includes a number of variables not available from the general UCR data. These variables include information of victims and suspects, locations of the crimes and data on underlying motive.

The analyses revealed that Rochester had a very high homicide rate compared with most other cities, that rate had escalated and was continuing to grow overtime and that problem was concentrated demographically among young African-American Males and geographically among those living in a small section of the City which became known as the “crescent.”

As a supplement to other methods the research team also conducted systematic ride along as with the Rochester Police Department. Each of the three members of the research staff rode with police at least once a month during the first two years of the project. This systematic observation in the high crime neighborhoods provided valuable insights into the problem of violence. It also helped establish credibility with members of the police and it provided a venue for discussion of the research process and tentative conclusions.

The examinations of official data and the ride-a-log process provided valuable insights into the homicide problem. The characteristics of homicide events were

elaborated as well as the data would permit and findings were bounced off experts in the field. Nonetheless, it was clear that additional data would be needed to elaborate the specific details of the homicide problem which would be needed as a foundation for strategic planning. To enrich our data the SCSCI team visited Indianapolis, Indiana and returned committed to an expanded process of incident review which would provide insights and details on specific cases of homicide in Rochester.

In Indianapolis incident reviews had been carried out for approximately two years. The Rochester team observed the process, added features to meet our needs and resources and began conducting reviews in spring of 2001. The first review involved over 90 participants and the review of all homicides from the previous year. Following that monthly reviews were initiated involving near 50 participants. Later reviews were changed to include an examination of assault cases, cases linked by evidence including ballistics, and finally a focus on groups themselves. In late 2003 the incident review process was revised to focus on building intelligence information on groups of young men engaged in serious violence in Rochester. This matched the team's growing focus on groups in the prevention of serious violence. Those reviews continue.

The incident review process is fully described in the attached CD which was put together as a guide for other jurisdictions interested in the process. The CD has been distributed through Project Safe Neighborhoods. The working papers describing the analysis of data from the incident review process also follow. The process proved to be a rich source of information on the cases. Among other things the reviews helped identify and describe the problems of dispute related homicide which account for over half of all local murders, the problem of drug market robbery homicides (25%) and the problem of

“wrong place/wrong time” murder and that fact that many of those killings were also linked to disputes. The reviews also highlighted the group connection to homicide by revealing that 37% of killings involved multiple assailants and over 65% had some link to group dynamics such as friends spurring others on to resolve disputes with violence.

The incident reviews too prompted additional thinking in the SACSI group about how building on the new knowledge of the nature of the local murders. The suggestion that jail inmates could offer further insight into the dynamics of violence emerged from the group. The research team conducted a series of focus groups with male inmates and one with female inmates serving local sentences at the Monroe County Jail. The focus groups provided additional important evidence regarding dispute and drug market homicides, guns and drug markets.

The geographic concentration of homicide in Rochester also help guide the research. Since any intervention would likely focus on the “crescent” area and on the identified demographic group in that area focus groups were conducted in the three neighborhoods associated with the area and demarcated by the relevant police sections or precincts. The focus groups are described in the attached papers. They provided valuable information on the resources available in the neighborhoods to address the violence problem.

During the period of SACSI research several additional methods were employed to provide additional information about the homicide problem. For one six month period the researchers were called to all homicide scenes in the City of Rochester. Observations at the scenes provided valuable insight into neighborhood response to homicide and to the dynamic activities on the street in the wake of a murder.

The research effort for this project also extended to an examination of issues surrounding victimization and the impact on family and friends. Researchers conducted interviews with ten family members of homicide victims and attended the funerals and/or wakes of nine homicide victims. These interviews and observations provided insight into the lives of homicide victims, and the impact of their loss on family members and on their neighborhoods and communities. The research was written up as a master's thesis.

The SACSI research also involved a number of other specific studies. For example, the working group wanted to know the school records of homicide victims and suspects. Data collection from local school records showed considerable deficiency in achievement of both groups. Team members suggested that, like criminal record, the underachievement in school might be a shared characteristic relevant to planning interventions. That assertion necessitated examination of others' school records. The broad level of failure among Rochester City School district children then was seen as evidence that lack of educational achievement was not likely to be of importance for intervention since it was not unique to those involved in serious violence.

The finding that school failure did not help identify those involved in violence prompted the researchers to reexamine the relevance of criminal history. The presence of a criminal record had been seen as a shared characteristic among homicide victims and suspects and one believed to differentiate them, somewhat at least, from their non-violence involved peers. The question raised in the group dealt with whether the common criminological finding that a small group of offenders were responsible for a large amount of crime also held when only looking at high crime neighborhoods.



To examine the issue researchers used school records to identify a sample matching the geographic home locations and demographic characteristics of the homicide suspect and victim group. Analysis showed that criminal records were widespread among the residents of the high crime neighborhood but that seriousness of record (violence, gun and drug offenses) did distinguish the victim/suspect group from their peers. These analyses supported development of interventions focusing on known groups of active offenders with established significant criminal histories.

The SACSI planning group was also very interested in understanding the relationship between drugs and homicide in Rochester. To study this problem the researchers a) examined the role of drugs in homicide as described in the incident review process, b) searched homicide investigation files for information regarding drug involvement by victims or suspect. And, finally we examined toxicology reports for murder victims that were part of the medical examiners records. The results revealed that victims and suspects had considerable involvement in drugs but only much less involvement was implied from the medical examiner data. The apparent conflict in finding was resolved by recognizing that the social context of drugs including sales, and related thefts may be more significant than the physiological impact.

The analysis of data in the Rochester SACSI effort was critical to the development of intervention strategies and remains so today. That analysis progressed from a “big picture” perspective drawn from the official data on crime to intimate portraits resulting from the incident reviews, and to specialized investigations suggested in the earlier findings. The list below summarizes the data used in the analyses:

Analysis of Official Crime Data (UCR)

Analysis of 1990 and 2000 Census data

Compilations and analysis of data on 10 years of homicides (Rochester Police Data)

Systematic Ride-a-longs with Police

Incident Reviews and analysis

Observation at homicide Scenes

Interviews with family members of homicide victims

Observations at funerals of homicide victims

Review of homicide files for drug involvement

Focus groups with jail inmates

Focus groups with residents of high crime neighborhoods

Analysis of autopsy and toxicology reports form medical examiners office

Examination of school records for homicide victims and suspects

Examinations of School for a matched sample of peers

draft

## Working Paper #1

### Problem Identification: Crime Rate Comparisons of Selected Cities including Rochester, New York

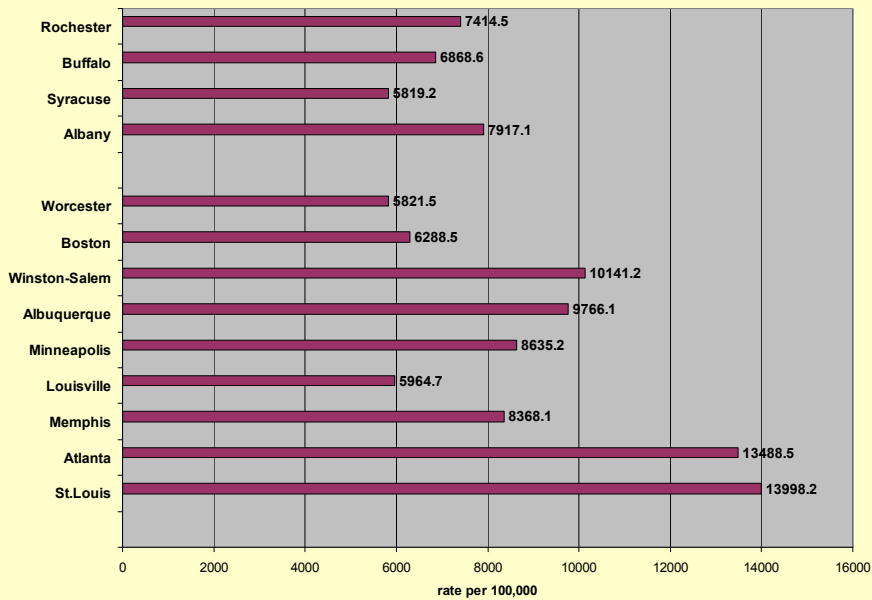
These slides compare UCR rates per 100,000 for overall crime and all part 1 crimes and offer further analysis of homicide.

January 31, 2001

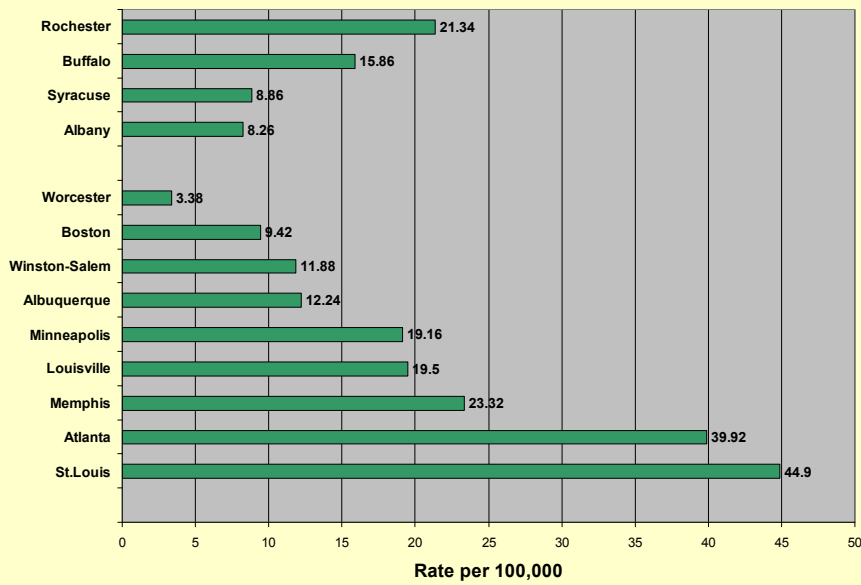
SACSI Project

compiled by J. Klofas, T.Smith, C. Delaney

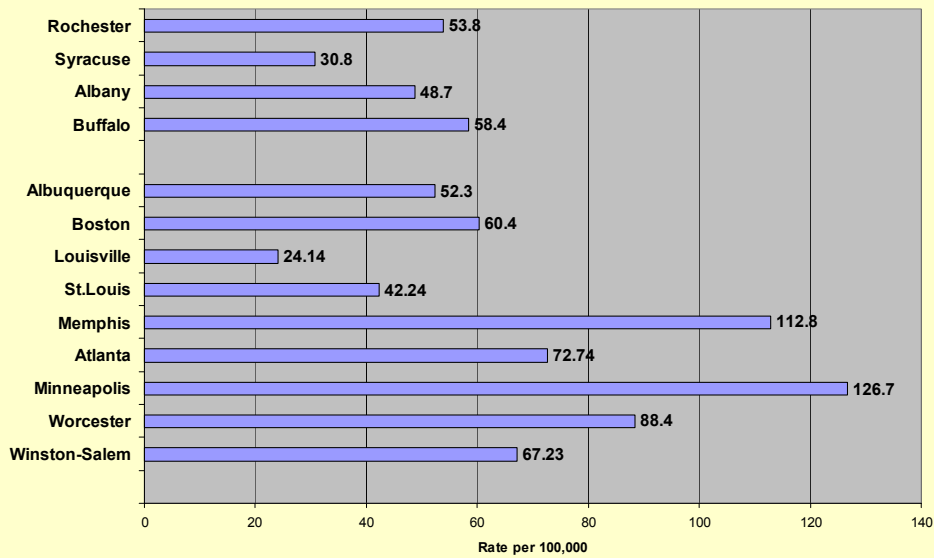
Multi-City Crime Rate Comparison  
UCR Rates, 1999



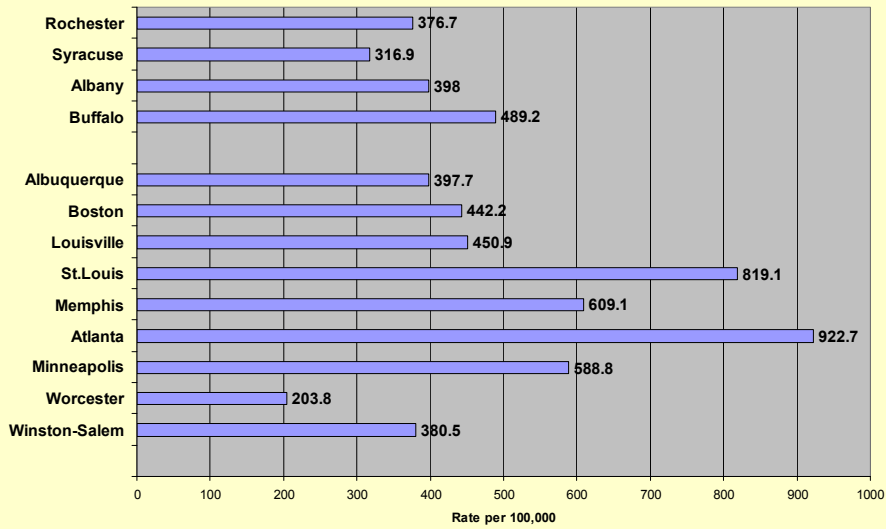
### Multi-City Homicide Rate Comparison (5 year Average Rates, ending in 1999)



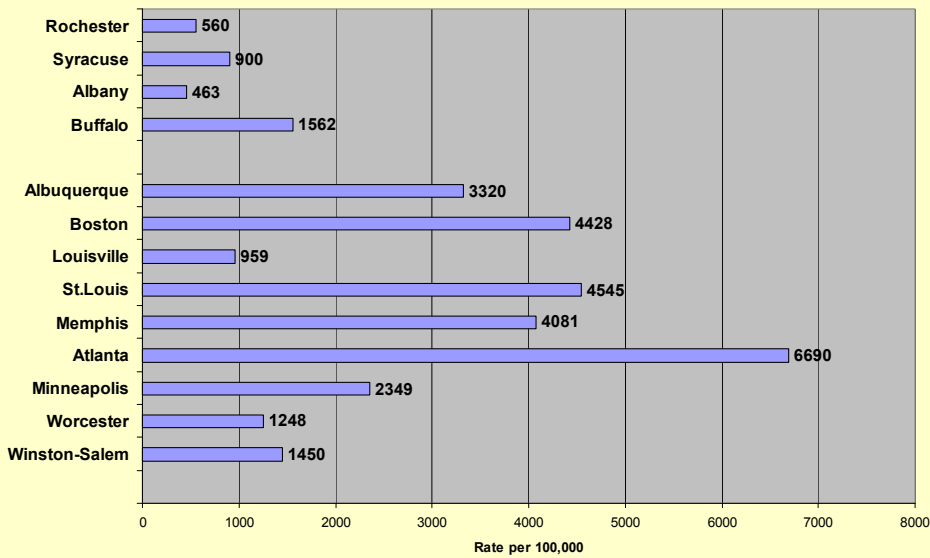
### Rates of Rape



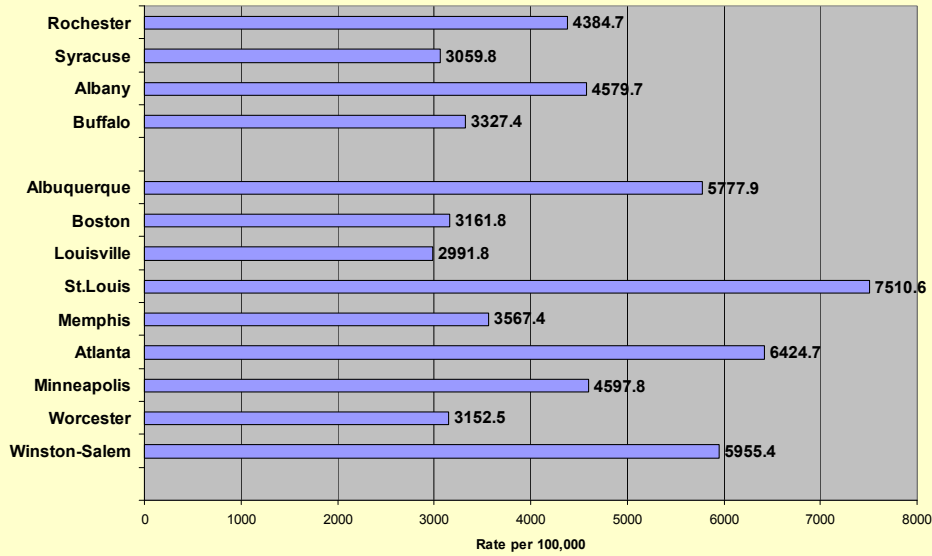
### Rates of Robbery



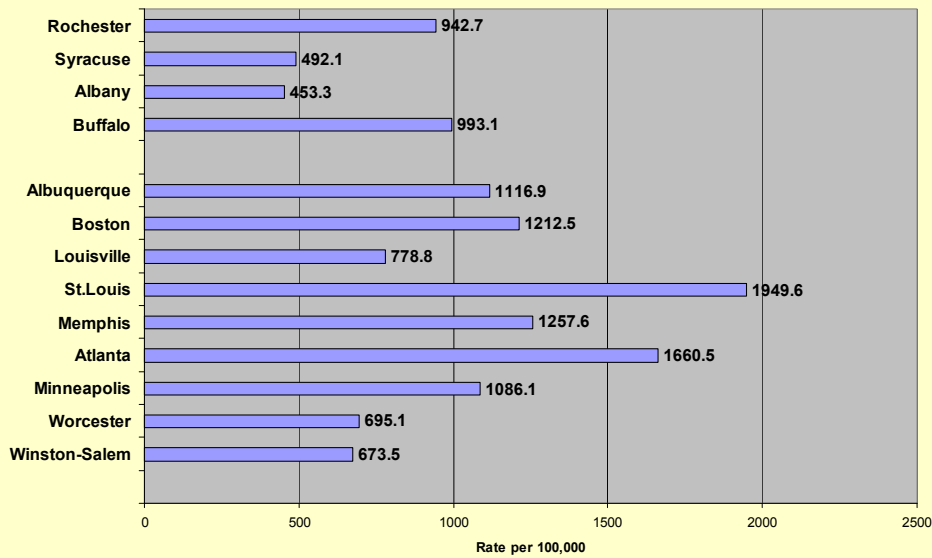
### Rates of Aggravated Assault



### Rates of Larceny



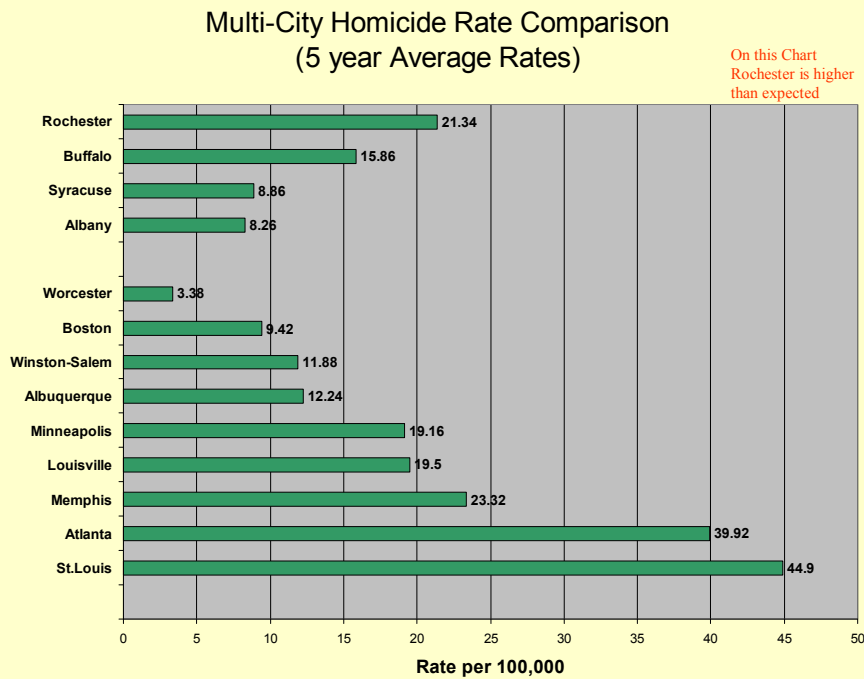
### Rates of Auto Theft

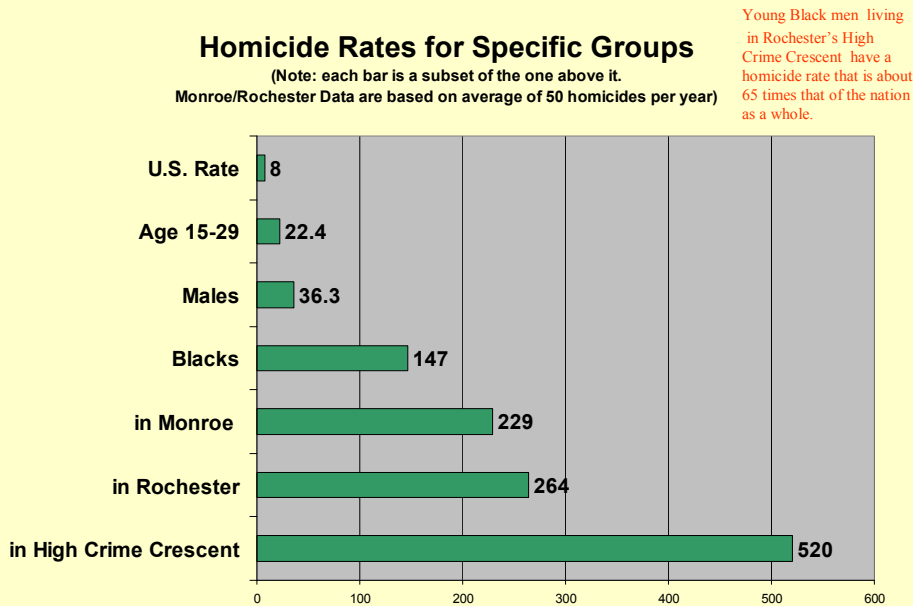


### Summary thus far

- **On most offenses Rochester does not appear to stand out as either unexpectedly high or low.**
- **The greatest exception does seem to be homicide, where Rochester is higher than expected. But that does not hold for Aggravated Assault.**
- **Rates for auto theft also seem high in this comparison.**

The following slides provide a closer look at homicide.

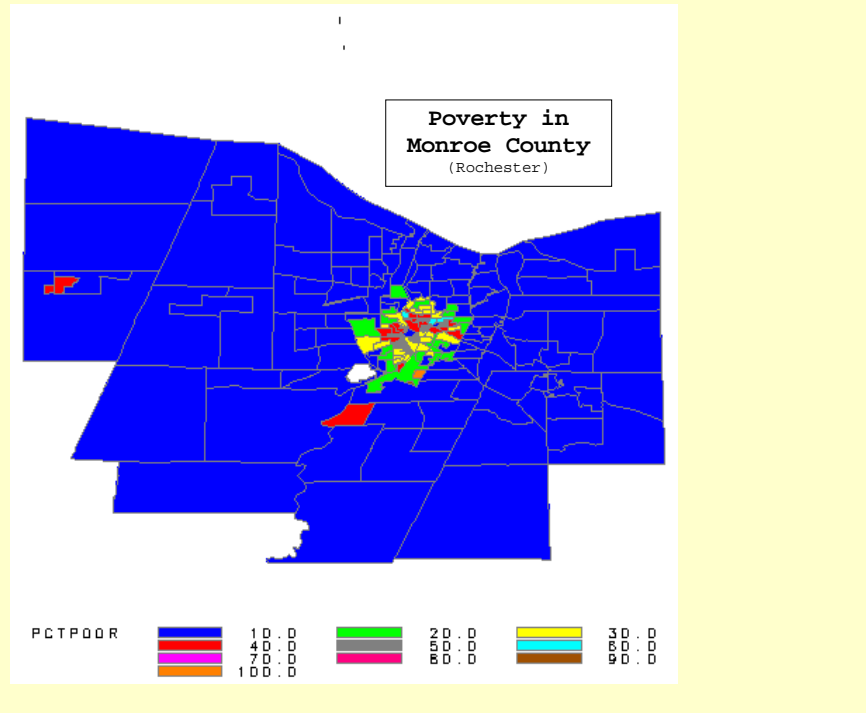




## An expanded definition of the homicide problem among young black men in the high crime crescent of Rochester

- Victimization rate 520/100,000 or about 1/200
- Assume the same offender rate, 520
- Make a conservative assumption that victim and offender have 5 friends who are affected. (10 X 520) 5200
- Hypothetical total Young Black Men directly affected 6240/100,000 or 6.2% or 1/16 each year. The same figure outside of the crescent is 1/1000.





## Rochester SACSI Research

### Working Paper #1

#### Data sets Maintained by New York State Agencies

A. Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) Contact person: Marge Cohen (518) 457-8381

##### 1. Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)

This provides counts of (1) crimes reported to local police (by police department), and (2) Counts of Arrests by age (including juveniles), gender, race and offense. It is useful for comparisons overtime and across jurisdictions

Note- DCJS also manages the new UCR system known as Incident Based Reporting (IBR). This is planned as the eventual replacement for the UCR. The IBR system contains a very large number of variables. No Monroe County Police Agency currently reports IBR data.

##### 2. Computerized Criminal History System (CCH)

This database contains information on all fingerprintable arrests (including juveniles if fingerprinted for a felony. It is the data used to generate rap sheets. It also provides data on processing and dispositions for adults. It can be used to track types of cases. (For example, it can show the disposition of all drug sales cases for a period of time and what sentences were given). It can also be used to identify offenders based on offense related queries. (For example, it will generate a list of all persons arrested by RPD who have three or more prior violent crime arrests).

##### 3. Indictment Statistical System

District Attorneys report these data. They provide information on felony case processing including disposition and sentence data.

##### 4. Bias Crime Reporting System

Reports of bias crimes voluntarily reported by police departments (predates the NY hate crimes laws). Is regarded as incomplete.

##### 5. Missing Children Register

Contains data on persons under 18 who are reported to police as missing.

B. Department of Correctional Services (DOCS) contact person: Paul Korotkin (518) 457-3007

DOCS maintains records of prison admissions and releases by indictment county. Data include sentence length, length of stay. Separate DOCS data systems contain inmate adjustment data.

C. Office of Court Administration (OCA)

D. Parole Contact Person Terry Salo (518) 473-5199

Left mess fri 12/1 she will call back

E. Commission of Corrections (518) contact person: Scott Steinhardt 485-2346.

Keeps reports on reportable incidents, unusual incidents, deaths etc in local jails contains information on assailants co-defendants, etc.,as available in narrative reports.

F. Office of Children and Family Services (518)473-8437

Donna Keys (518) 474-6749

**Rochester SACSI Research  
Working Paper # 3 March 14, 2001**

**Follow-up to Grand Homicide Review, March 7, 2001**

The grand review of all homicides in Rochester for the year 2000 took place on Wednesday March 7<sup>th</sup> at Rochester Institute of Technology. Approximately 90 people attended the review. A complete list is attached. The list includes approximately 60 members of the Rochester Police Department and 30 other from across a wide range of agencies. These included Monroe County District Attorney's Office, Monroe County Probation, New York State Parole, Monroe County Department of Social Services, Monroe County Sheriff, City of Rochester, County of Monroe, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, United States Attorney's Office. Erin Dalton of the National Institute of Justice also attended the review.

This document will seek to organize the information gained in the grand review of year 2000 homicides. It should be seen as a supplement to the review material and the Year 2000 Homicide Report completed by the Rochester Police Department. It will also tentatively address questions regarding a research agenda and an intervention agenda.

**A. General Conclusions**

The case review was successful in that we achieved a high degree of involvement in discussion covering all 40 cases. Specifically, the following benefits were achieved:

- a. The review did increase information available on patterns across the homicide cases. For example, it highlighted common motives, common weapons and even individuals common across cases.
- b. The review did provide new information regarding individuals and groups linked to the homicides. For example, individuals were identified as known across several agencies and as involved in a variety of criminal acts and thus as appropriate for targeted interventions.
- c. The review increased information available on how the local criminal justice system works including information about what individuals and agencies maintain specific kinds of records. For example, parole officers indicated their willingness to share prison visitation lists and other information with police and others.
- d. The review did contribute to improved communication across participants and has the potential to have a sustained effect in that area. For example, probation, parole, Assistant U.S. Attorneys and others all contributed important information and in some cases have scheduled separate meetings to discuss approaches to particular cases.

## **B. General Information**

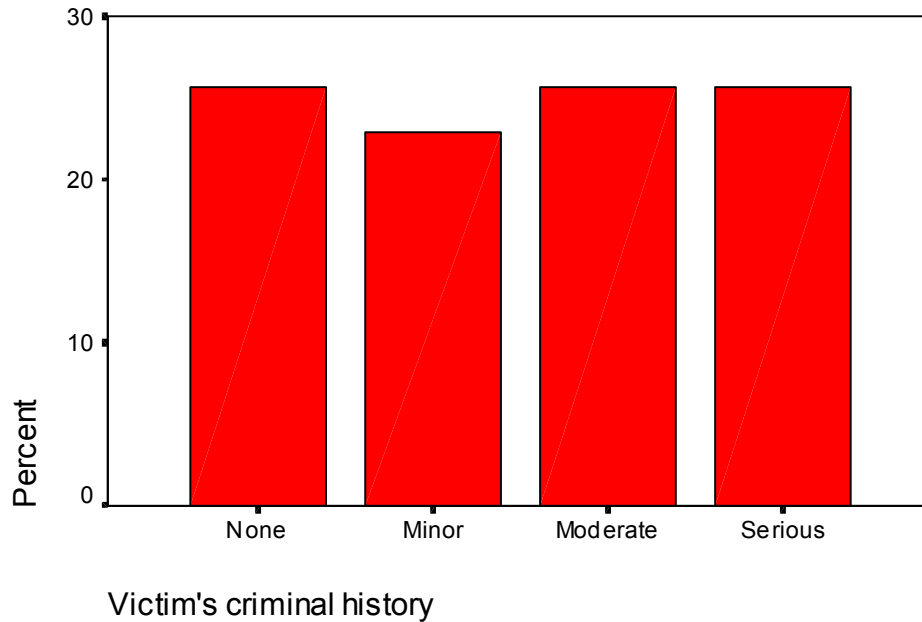
Below is a listing of major points that arose or were affirmed in the review of cases. Included are brief notes on the implications for intervention.

1. **Geographic Concentration of Homicide.** This continues to be a critically important point. It is probably related to many factors including the high proportion of homicides that appear to be linked to drugs. Any intervention should be consistent with the geographic concentration of violence.
2. **Guns.** Hand guns account for 57% (n=23) of homicide and long guns account for an additional 14 % (n= 6) for a total of 71%. Interventions that focus on gun deterrence, enhanced penalties for guns, and removal of guns before crimes may be effective. The origin of crime guns seems quite varied without any obvious implications for targeting programs.
3. **Drugs.** Drugs are at the center of a large amount of Rochester violence. Drug-Related robberies (16 cases or 40% of the total) appear to be a particularly significant problem. That is also consistent with the geographic concentration of violence. The overwhelming majority of drug related murders involved “street-level” dealers.
4. **FIFs.** Nineteen of 40 victims (47.5%) had a record of FIFs. Of 22 cases where suspects were identified, 10 (45.4%) had a record of FIFs. The files show that the number of field interview forms completed varies with suspect and victim age. Men who are 16 or 17 or 18 years old are much more likely to have FIF's in their files than older victims and suspects.
5. **Group Related Violence.** Eight out of 20 (40%) of the homicides where circumstances are known are believed to have been connected with more than one assailant. The consensus seemed to be that these were not necessarily highly organized gangs but rather small groups of friends. They may however, be appropriate for interventions that focus on the peer group.
6. **Level of Planning.** A total of 33 of the 40 cases (excluding all domestic violence cases) could be classified as either opportunistic, spontaneous or planned. Seven cases or 21% of those classified were classified as opportunistic. The robbery and murder of two young men eating pizza is an example. Ten cases or 30% of those classified were seen as spontaneous. Those include sudden arguments or road rage. Sixteen or 48% were classified as planned. Those include such cases as drug house robberies.
7. **Criminal Histories.** In many cases victims and suspects had significant criminal histories.

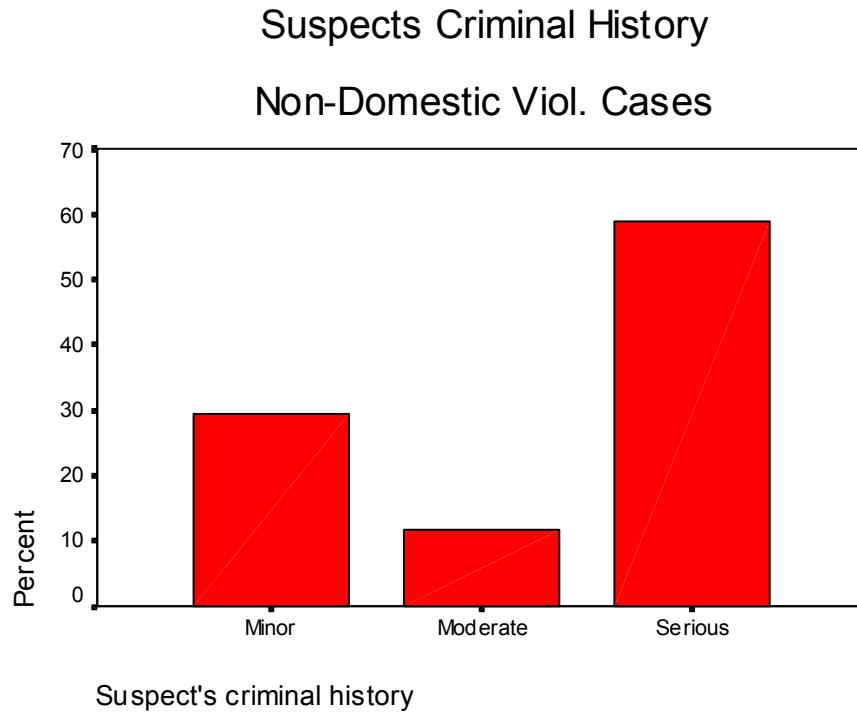
**Victim and Suspect Criminal Histories  
in Year 2000 Homicides (non-Domestic violence)**

	Victim (n=35)	Suspect (n=18)
Percent with FIFs	54.3%	47.1%
Percent with Criminal Record	74.3	100
Prior Violent Crime Arrest	42.9	82.4
Prior Weapon Arrest	28.6	41.2
Prior Drug Arrest	54.3	58.8

**Victim's Criminal History in  
Non-Domestic Viol. Cases**



The above chart shows that in non-domestic violence cases victims criminal records varied significantly but that about 25% of victims had serious criminal records.



The above chart shows that in non-domestic violence cases suspect often had serious criminal histories.

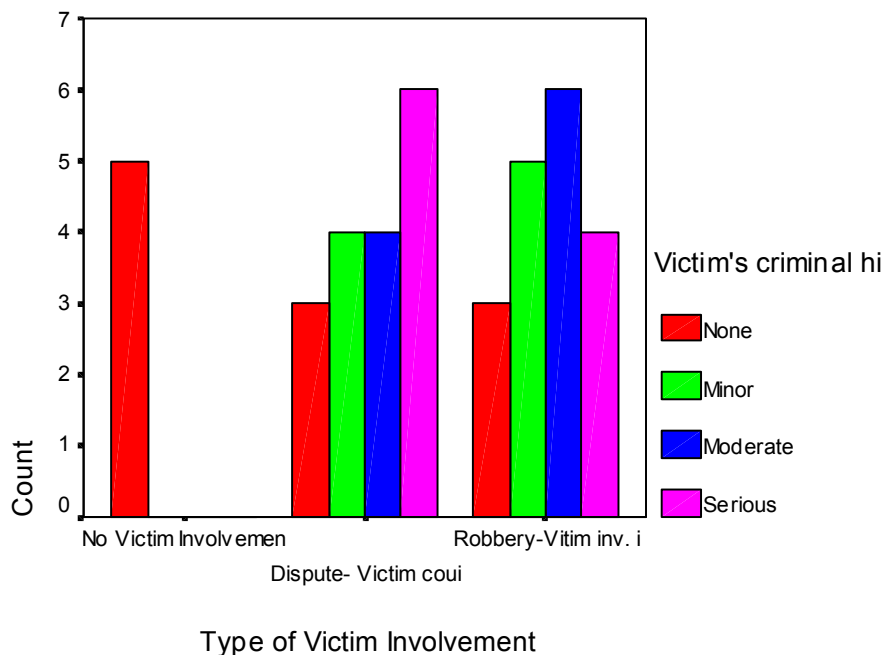
8. Anticipated or Should have been Anticipated Violence. A significant number of the homicides would seem to have been either anticipated or should have been anticipated by the victims. That is, victims, either did, or should have recognized the high likelihood of their victimization.

This last point suggests a way of typing the cases based on degree of victim involvement. In that typology the cases would break down as follows.

## Typology based on victim Involvement

- A. No Victim Involvement N= 5 (12.5% of total)
  - 1. Child victim (1 case)
  - 2. Wrong place at wrong time (1 case)
  - 3. Robbery victim (3 cases)
- B. Dispute, Victim could have anticipated problem N= 17 (42.5% of total)
  - 1. Short term dispute (5 cases)
  - 2. Domestic violence (4 cases)
  - 3. Long running dispute (6 cases)
  - 4. Past ripoff/bad debt (2 cases)
- C. Robbery, Victim involved in illegal behavior N= 18 (45% of total)
  - 1. Drug-related street robbery (3 cases)
  - 2. Other robbery of illegal gains (2 cases)
  - 3. Drug house robbery/assassination (13 cases)

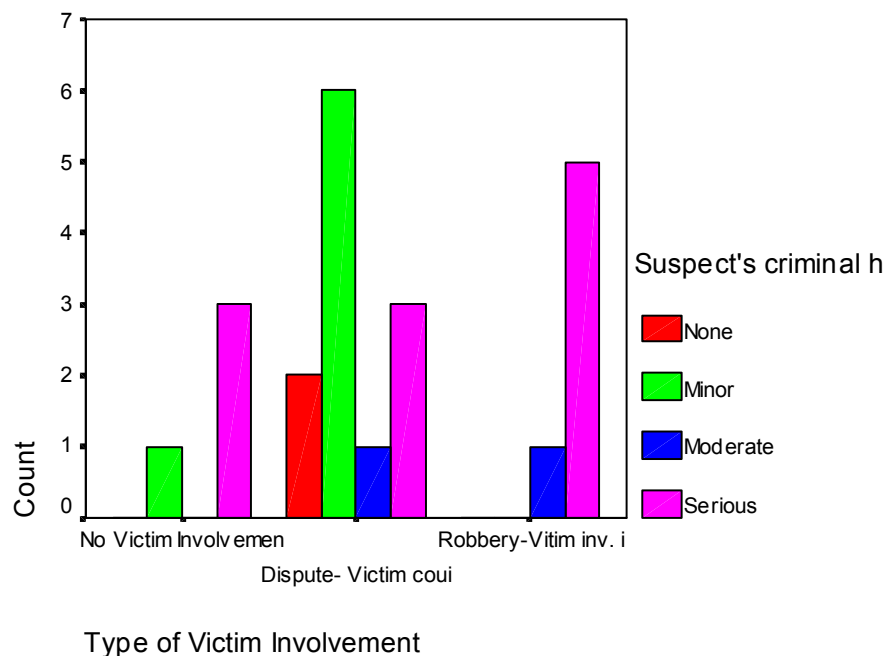
## Victims Criminal History by Type of Case



The chart above shows that victims had no criminal history in cases where they had no involvement in the crime. Victims had the most serious criminal histories in disputes in which the victim could have anticipated violence. And, in cases of robbery where the victim was involved in illegal acts, victims had moderate criminal histories.



### Suspect's Criminal History by Type of Case



The chart above shows that in cases where the victim was not involved in crime, suspect 3 of 5 suspects had major criminal histories. In cases of dispute in which the victim could have anticipated violence, suspects tended to have relatively minor criminal histories. In cases of robbery where the victim was involved in illegal acts, suspects tended to have major criminal histories.

Together these charts indicate that 1) the vast majority of cases involve victims who are not entirely innocent with regard to the cause of the homicide, 2) When victims are involved in disputes they trend also to have serious criminal records, and they have less serious records when robbed of illegal drugs or profits.

Suspects in robberies of illegal drugs or profits have the most serious records and those in disputes have minor or moderate records.

All of those support 2 ideas: 1) In many cases victims are not innocent and 2) in many cases victims and suspect appear to have trouble resolving problems without violence.

## Recommendations regarding Interventions

These data suggest the following areas be considered in developing interventions focused on reducing homicide.

- a. Interventions should be developed to address the problem of drug house robberies.
- b. Interventions should be developed to encourage alternative ways of solving disputes.

## Research Recommendations

1. In the wake of the successful day-long review we should seek ways to continue to improve communication across the criminal justice system as well as with some other relevant organizations. One way to accomplish that would be to develop the web page and email approach to providing review team participants with close to real-time information on incidents as they occur. This would initiate a continuous process of information exchange.
2. The grand review also demonstrated the potential value of an ongoing review process. The group should design an ongoing process which is smaller in scale but which provides regular reviews of major violent crime in Rochester. The web/email information exchange system discussed above would supplement this effort.
3. Everything we look at supports continued focus on the geographic concentration of violence in Rochester. The work done in preparation for the review and the annual homicide report provide a foundation for public engagement in the topic. A structure to support that engagement also exist in the form of the sector planning groups developed by the City of Rochester. The group should consider abridged version of the presentation of cases and the homicide report to be presented to key neighborhood groups. The presentation could form the foundation of focus groups to engage neighborhood associations in problem analysis and solution.

## Appendix 1

### Cases by Type of Victim Involvement

#### A. No Victim Involvement N= 5

#	Victim	Description
08	Janet Welch	Office Mngr at Maynard's Electric
15	Antwan Wilson	Leather Jacket Theft
19	John Noble	Stabbed in Kitchen after girlfriend cut by intruder
35	Blase Kelly	Robbed of chain
38	Cedreuna Williams	2 yr old beaten by stepfather

#### B. Dispute, Victim could have anticipated problem N= 17

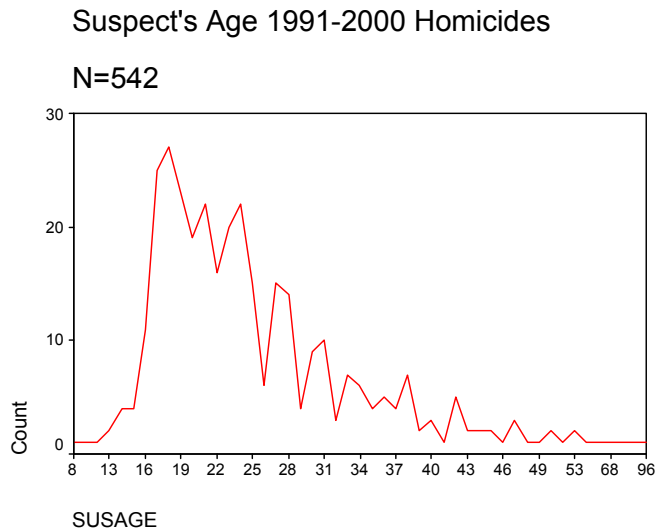
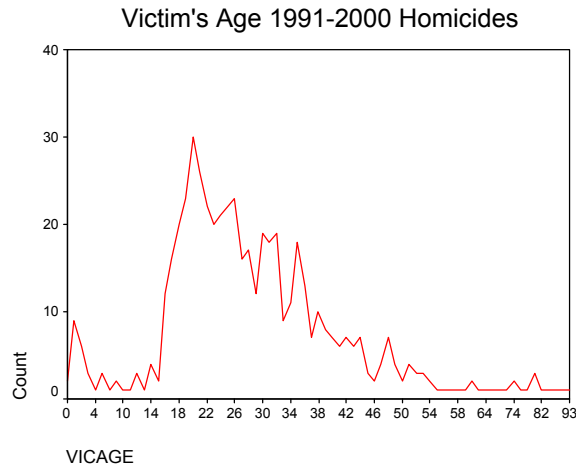
01	Maria Rivera	Ongoing domestic violence
03	Edgardo Lespier	Ongoing dispute, ended in barbershop assassination
04	Sysesman Brown	Ongoing domestic violence
06	Maria DeJesus	Ongoing domestic violence
09	Pallie Monroe	Shot in car while checking on story that stepson was shot
12	David Pellow	Sexually active gay man killed by man he picked up
14	Tyrone Harvey	Drug fight over territory
18	Thomas Scott	Stabbed by girlfriend
20	Luis Saoz	Run down by car as part of long-term feud
24	Fernando Ortiz	Abused suspect's sister-in-law, shotgunned after dispute
25	Mack Austin	Beaten near House of Mercy after arguing over gin
27	John Williams III	Presumed road rage revenge
28	Charles Knight	Beaten w/ pipe- owed gambling debt
29	Ervin Pittman	Shot in head- believed to have recently stolen drugs
33	David Nesmith	Shot in head by person who shot him 1 month earlier
36	Cory Crumity	Shot as part of ongoing argument
39	Maurice Green	Shot w/asslt rifle, in figth with masked man

#### C. Robbery or other crime, victim involved in illegal behavior N= 18

02	Alain Fabre	Drug dealer shot in his apartment
05	Thomas Bertola	Heart Attack after robbery of his gambling joint
07	Michael Lee	Drug seller killed in drug house
10,11	Melvin Chatman Ray Hernandez	Drug dealer killed in drug house
13	Eric Kounnavong	Robbed & killed for money he got in robbery
16,17	Will Barnwell	Robbery of drug sellers eating pizza

	Eric Jenkins	
21,22,23	Josh Calloway	Drug house robbery
	Soeuth Heme	
	Gary Green	
26	Phillip Skellen	Shot while being robbed of drugs
30	Clifton Frazier	drug related argument
31	Javier Porfirio	Drug seller shot at house
32	Felton Henderson	Drug seller shot?
34	Stephen Hewitt	Suburban contract shot in face buying cocaine
37	Miami Bolling	Drug Seller shot with 45
40	Thomas Scoll	Marijuana grower- drug related robbery

Rochester SACSI Research  
 Working Paper # 4 March 15, 2001  
 Victim and Suspect Ages



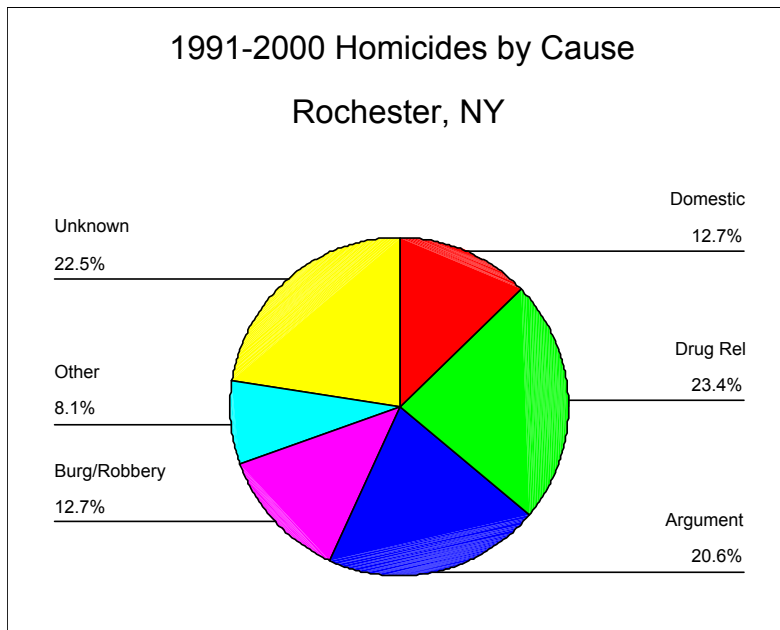
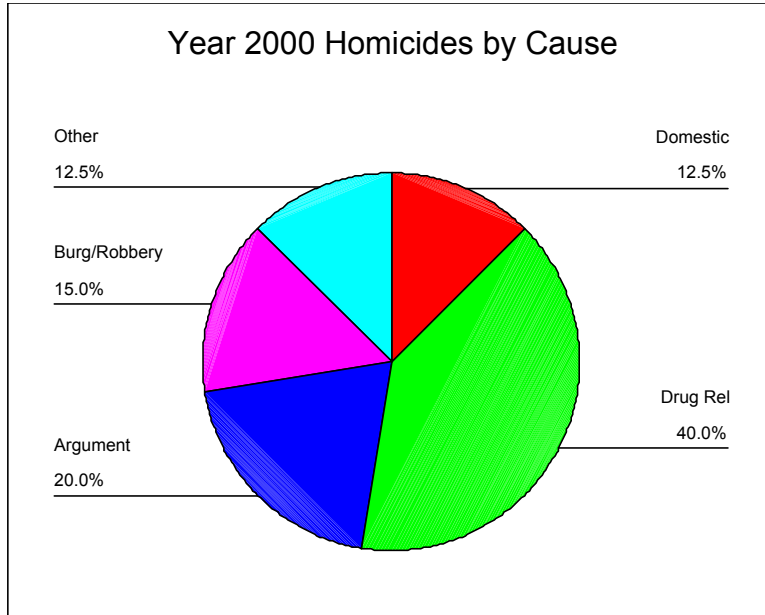
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
VICAGE	542	0	93	29.00	14.15
SUSAGE	341	8	96	25.99	10.65
Valid N (listwise)	341				

**Rochester SACSI Research  
Working Paper # 6 April 4, 2001**

**Drugs and Homicide 1992-2000**

The chart below shows that drugs were classified as the leading cause of homicides in Rochester in the year 2000. This classification is based on the best information available to the police and probably underestimates the drug connection to homicides.



When examined together 1992-2000 homicides show that drugs have also been reported as the leading cause of homicides although their overall percentage is lower than the year 2000.

When the data are reviewed for each year we see that drugs accounted for a low of 9.1% of homicides in 1998 and a high of 40% in 2000. The pattern, however, does show considerable variation over the years. Argument also ranks high among common causes of homicide in this time period.

### Homicides 1992-2000 by Cause

CAUSE# \* YEAR Crosstabulation

		YEAR									Total
		1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	
Domestic	Count	7	16	7	4	7	5	1	8	5	60
	%	14.0%	23.5%	10.6%	6.7%	13.0%	8.3%	2.3%	27.6%	12.5%	12.7%
within YEAR											
Drug Rel	Count	6	25	13	19	10	7	4	10	16	110
	%	12.0%	36.8%	19.7%	31.7%	18.5%	11.7%	9.1%	34.5%	40.0%	23.4%
within YEAR											
Argument	Count	14	9	14	12	8	12	15	5	8	97
	%	28.0%	13.2%	21.2%	20.0%	14.8%	20.0%	34.1%	17.2%	20.0%	20.6%
within YEAR											
Burg/Robbery	Count	11	5	11	9	8	6	3	1	6	60
	%	22.0%	7.4%	16.7%	15.0%	14.8%	10.0%	6.8%	3.4%	15.0%	12.7%
within YEAR											
Other	Count	2	2	5	7	6	6	3	2	5	38
	%	4.0%	2.9%	7.6%	11.7%	11.1%	10.0%	6.8%	6.9%	12.5%	8.1%
within YEAR											
Unknown	Count	10	11	16	9	15	24	18	3		106
	%	20.0%	16.2%	24.2%	15.0%	27.8%	40.0%	40.9%	10.3%		22.5%
within YEAR											
Count		50	68	66	60	54	60	44	29	40	471
% within YEAR		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

**Rochester SACSI Research  
Working Paper # 7 June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2001**

**Clinton Neighborhood Focus Group**

A neighborhood focus group on violence in North East Rochester was held at the Martin Luther King School (No. 9) on Wednesday June 6<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-9:00 pm. Prior to the meeting leaders of community organizations in the area were invited and given posters to share with their members and neighbors. An effort was made to canvass major roads in the neighborhood with information regarding the forthcoming meeting.

Twenty people attended the session at which data on violence were reviewed and discussed with the group. The discussion was generally well focused and informative.

**1. Participation**

Twenty people attended the session. With few exceptions these were individuals who had long-standing commitments to the community and were active in community organizations including anti-violence efforts.

Although the turnout from the neighborhood was disappointing it is itself important information. It is consistent with a concern raised frequently in the discussion. Several speakers made the point that they believed there was an acceptance and complacency about violence levels in the neighborhood. One speaker described violence as a norm that is accepted and maintained in the neighborhood.

**2. Neighborhood Organization**

During the discussion several participants described the neighborhood as weak and lacking effective organization. They described the neighborhood as limited in the ability to engage residents collectively, and to get things done. They also noted that the high proportion of rental properties contributed to a lack of sense of community. Furthermore they noted that many small business and landlords had little real connection to the neighborhood and thus tended not to respond to neighborhood interests. Others extended the point by saying that the lack of a sense of community meant that neighbors exercised little control over children and young adults in the area. Some looked to the possible role of local churches in efforts to strengthen the community but they felt that these institutions were not currently making significant contributions to these efforts.



Participants described a sense of hopelessness that they believed was widely shared among the residents of the area. They did not feel that local government, religious institutions or neighborhood organizations were succeeding in responding to the problem. And, perhaps most striking, participants described the central issues as a lack of will in the neighborhood to affect real change.

This concern is consistent with research on violence that indicates that the strength of neighborhood organization is related to level of crime and violence. High crime neighborhoods tend to have weak neighborhood organizations and weak informal mechanisms for social control.

Crime reduction strategies that depend on neighborhood organizations are not likely to succeed unless they also involve efforts to strengthen neighborhood organizations. Research on community organization has shown that to be a difficult task. The view that the level of organization of this neighborhood is weak is particularly disappointing since the city of Rochester has made such efforts to organize neighborhood through such efforts as the NET program Neighbors Building Neighborhoods (NBN). It is also disappointing because the section of the City has a fairly large number of community organizations and other non-profit organizations.

One other important finding is clear from the discussion. The data on the geographic distribution of homicides in Rochester was striking and also consistent with participants' experiences. That led to wide support for concentrating resources in this area and considering intensive special interventions to address the problem.

### **3. Attitudes toward the Criminal Justice System**

Participants in the meeting were largely ambivalent about the criminal justice system. They described a strong sense of dependence on the police and the rest of the criminal justice system to solve their problems but did not think the system was responsive enough and also did not, for the most part, see themselves as taking an active role with the criminal justice system to address the issues. Overall, the discussion suggested a strong sense of dependence on the criminal justice but not a strong interest in engagement with the criminal justice system. With few exceptions the neighborhood did not appear to have groups or individuals who would be strong partners in criminal justice system responses to violence.

One general exception to that appeared to be with the representatives of Rochestarians Against Illegal Narcotics (RAIN) who were present at the meeting. Members of Rain expressed a strong commitment to an active agenda that was largely consistent with the expressed interest of residents and the criminal justice system.

Finally, on this subject there was some disagreement about the potential deterrent effects of criminal justice interventions. One speaker in particular, felt that young men did not fear the CJ system because it was not regarded as having real teeth. That is, in

this speaker's view, the CJ system failed to provide certain and severe sanctions. Others at the meeting, however, felt that the large volume of arrests, convictions and sentences was evidence of sanctions but that even severe sanctions were not enough to address the problem.

#### **4. Root Causes of Violence**

There was considerable discussion of the root causes of violence in the neighborhood. Problems with the local schools were highlighted. Poverty and the lack of economic strength in terms of local ownership of homes and businesses were discussed. Similarly, a sense of alienation was discussed as participants noted that ownership of local business and housing is often in the hands of people, outside of the neighborhood, who some felt had little commitment to the area.

There was also discussion of the problem of drugs. This subject was approached in much the same way as the discussion of root causes. Participants identified drugs as a major issue underlying violence. They did not however, discuss it in terms that lent themselves to interventions but rather saw general and long-term approaches as needed.

The discussions of root causes of violence seemed reasonable and consistent with data on social conditions in the neighborhood. It did not, however, lend itself to discussion of specific strategies and particularly to strategies that were likely to have an immediate impact or impact in the near term.

#### **5. Manageable Aspects of the problem**

In contrast to the discussion of root cause issues there was a group of participants who emphasized the manageability of the problem of violence in the North East. Members of RAIN led this discussion. The conversation contrasted sharply with some of the discussion noted above.

The discussion leaders made several key points: 1) the geographic concentration meant a small area and small number of people were involved. 2) The data provided significant direction for intervention. While drug house robberies may require complicated efforts to intervene, (3) disputes should be easier to deal with. In fact, participants argued, neighborhood leaders should be able to work with young men to identify and intervene in disputes. They suggested a very hands-on approach to the problem.

#### **6. Conclusions**

Focus groups methods can provide useful data, however, they also have their limitations. We cannot claim that our group was representative of the North East

neighborhood, but the group was made up of people who made a deliberate decision to participate and most of whom had established records of commitment to the neighborhood. While recognizing the limitation of the process the following tentative conclusions should be considered.

- a. In general, the neighborhood seems to have little ability to define the current problems of violence as a critical issue or to muster resources to address the problem in a clear and urgent manner.
- b. Strategies that depend on strong community organizations are not likely to succeed in this neighborhood. There may be many reasons to work to increase the strength of community organizations but given the current state of the neighborhood, those efforts are likely to be long term and are not likely to have an immediate impact on the problem of violence.
- c. The apparent dependency on the criminal justice system and the recognition that special resources should be focused on this neighborhood suggest the community may be supportive of significant criminal justice led interventions to reduce violence. The neighborhood seems ready for such interventions although it is not organized to make significant contributions to them.
- d. There is a substantial interest in root cause issues and some potentially useful activity directed at addressing those issues. The root cause interest, however, is not consistent with triage approaches and possible interventions responding to violence as a crisis. Representative from RAIN, however, seemed attuned to defining the problem and intervening in that manner. Neighborhood churches may also contribute to understanding the issue in this manner.
- e. SACSI partnerships should probably focus on organizations with the most potential for crisis-oriented approaches. Participation of other groups should involve encouraging a crisis orientation.

## **7. Suggested Areas for Additional Research**

The focus group process suggests the following areas for additional research.

- a. An inventory of all neighborhood organizations, not-for profits and other organizations and agencies housed or working in North East Rochester. That inventory would focus on identifying programs and activities aimed at reducing violence. It would distinguish between programs with a long term or root cause focus and those with potentially immediate effects.

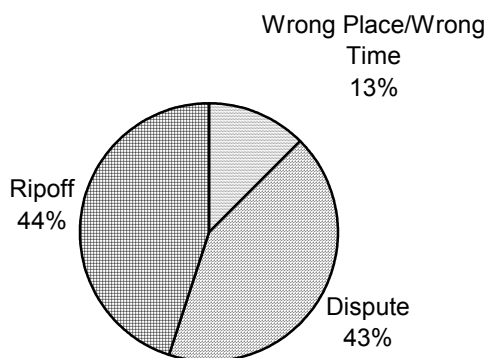
- b. Interviews with leaders in these organizations to determine why violence levels are not perceived as critical and what might be done to change that and what resources might be available if violence were defined as a crisis in the neighborhood.
- c. Use of standardized observation and measurement methods that would allow comparisons across neighborhood in Rochester and across cities.

**Rochester SACSI Research  
Working Paper # 8 June 15, 2001**

**Three Kinds of Murder**

The goal of this paper is to empirically examine the three types of homicide that were originally identified through the review of all year 2000 homicides. In that review, all 40 homicides could be placed into these types. The types have also been relevant to the cases described in subsequent reviews. Given the small number of cases (n=40) caution should be taken in interpreting these results. Data tables are in the appendix.

**Types of Homicide, Yr. 2000**



Typology based on Victim Involvement (Year 2000 Homicides)

D. Wrong Place/Wrong Time. N= 5 (12.5% of total)

These cases include instances in which the behavior of the victim appears to not to have contributed significantly to the homicide.

E. Dispute, Victim could have anticipated problem. N= 17 (42.5% of total)

These cases involve disputes in which one party is murdered.

F. Rip-offs, Victim involved in illegal behavior N= 18 (45% of total)

In these cases the victim was robbed and killed as a result of engagement in some illegal activity, usually the sale of drugs.

## Basic Conclusions:

1. The sort of random violence, which is most frightening, happens rarely even in those sections of the city with high homicide rates, and even among those with the demographic characteristics associated with high homicide rates.
2. In the vast majority of homicide cases, victim and offender were engaged in some sort of relationship or behavior that raised the risk of violence.

## Further Analysis of Each Type

### A. Wrong Place/Wrong Time. N= 5 (12.5% of total)

These cases include instances in which the behavior of the victim appears not to have contributed significantly to the homicide. The year 2000 cases in this category included:

1. Child victim (1 case)
2. Wrong place at wrong time (1 case)
3. Robbery victim (3 cases)

### Data Analysis

1. These homicides, though small in number (5), are spread out across the police sections of the crescent, across seasons, and across weekdays.
2. Victims in these cases have minor or no criminal records.
3. Identified suspects (3/4) in these cases tend to have serious criminal records with prior violent (3/4) arrests but not prior gun (1/4) or prior drug (1/4) arrests.
4. The weapon used in these cases varied across all weapon types.

## Summary

These homicides are rare and the data on the cases show that they appear to be more random than the other two types of cases. Suspects in these cases appear to have significant criminal histories.

## Additional Research Issues

1. From the victim perspective these homicides appear nearly random. However, examination of the suspects raises the question of whether they are identifiable early through intelligence, identification from review of criminal histories, or the case review process.

2. The criminal histories of suspects also raise the question of whether these offenders are best viewed as similar to the rip-off offender group.
3. While these 2000 cases did not involve people on probation or parole, the criminal records suggest greater attention to those possible connections.

#### Action Issues

1. Given the small number of these cases, separate interventions for this group may not be feasible.
2. Interventions designed to identify and control high rate offenders may have an effect on this category of murders.

#### **B. Dispute Homicides. N= 17 (42.5% of total)**

These cases involve disputes in which one party is murdered. In the cases the victim or suspect could probably have anticipated the potential for violence. The year 2000 cases in this category included:

1. Short term dispute (5 cases)
  1. Domestic violence (4 cases)
  2. Long running dispute (6 cases)
  3. Past rip-off/bad debt (2 cases)

#### Data Analysis

1. The dispute cases appear to be most common in Clinton Section (8/13) and they are the most common type of homicide in Clinton Section (8/17).
2. These cases are spread across all seasons and all days of the week.
3. They involve male victims (14/17) although most of the female homicide victims (3/5) fell into this category.
4. Most victims are Black (11/17) although the greatest number of Hispanic victims (5/7) are in this category.
5. Victims in this category are older than expected, with 13 of 17 being over 25 years old and 5 being over 40. Thirty-one to 35 was the largest age category accounting for 6 of 17 murders in this category.
6. Victims and Offenders in dispute cases have similar criminal histories. In fact more victims (6/17) than suspects (3/12) fell into the serious criminal history category as shown below. Specific history variables are presented below.

	Victims	Suspects
No (0) FIFs	65%	58%
Prior Violent crime Arrest	41%	50%
Prior Drug Arrest	47%	42%
Prior Gun Arrest	24%	17%

7. In dispute cases handgun was the most common weapon accounting for 41% of cases (although handguns accounted for 60% of all homicides). The remaining dispute cases were split nearly evenly among long-guns, knives and blunt force.

Distinguishing between domestic violence cases and other disputes.

The dispute category includes 4 cases involving domestic violence and 13 other disputes. When these cases are examined separately the non-domestic cases involve younger victims, greater likelihood of FIFs, and more serious criminal records especially for violence and drug offenses. This suggests that for some purposes the domestic violence cases should be separated from the other disputes.

## Summary

The dispute related homicides make up nearly half of Rochester's murders. These are most likely to be in Clinton section and to involve similar victims and suspects with similar moderately serious criminal histories. Victim and suspects are more likely to be Hispanic than is expected.

## Additional Research Issues

1. Is there some historical, demographic or other reason why these homicides are most common in Clinton Section?
2. How widely are these disputes known among family, neighbors, police or others before they become lethal?
3. Are participants responsive to deterrence measures or to dispute resolution procedures?
4. Do suspects, friends, family members or others have ideas as to what may have prevented the dispute from becoming lethal?
5. Do people with expertise in domestic violence have information that may be helpful in understanding and addressing other categories of disputes?

## Action Issues

1. Are there ways to identify these disputes before they become lethal? For example through street workers, neighborhood leaders, hot lines or others.



2. What resources do we have to intervene in disputes to prevent them from becoming lethal if we learn about them?
3. Do we have an intelligence network that can provide information to police or others who might intervene?
4. Are there dispute resolution methods that can address illegal issues that may underlie some disputes?
5. Since dispute victims and suspects have similarities with regard to criminal records are they identifiable targets for deterrence through notification meetings?

**C. Rip-off Homicides. N= 18 (45% of total)**

In these cases the victim was robbed and killed as a result of engagement in some illegal activity, usually the sale of drugs. The year 2000 cases in this category included:

1. Drug-related street robbery (3 cases)
2. Other robbery of illegal gains (2 cases)
3. Drug house robbery/assassination (13 cases)

Data Analysis

1. These homicides are most likely to occur in Maple Section (10/18) and are the most common type of homicide in Maple Section (10/15).
2. One third of these homicides occur on Friday and a total of over two thirds occur on the weekend. This is the only strong day-of week pattern in the homicide data..
3. The Rip-off homicides also show a seasonal pattern favoring Spring (5/18) and Summer (6/18).
4. These homicides also show a strong association with age of victim. In 2000, 50% of the victims were in the 16-20 year old age group.
5. There is also a strong relationship with age of suspect.. Of 8 suspects in Rip-off cases 6 were between 16 and 20 years of age and one was 24 years old.
6. Handguns were also the overwhelming choice for weapon in these cases. Fully 83% of cases (15/18) involved handguns compared with just over 60% for all homicides.
7. As the data below show, victims and suspects in the Rip-off cases had the most serious criminal records and suspects tended to have more serious records than victims. Ten of 18 Victims and all (6/6) suspects in the Rip-off cases had moderate or serious criminal records.

	Victims	Suspects
No (0) FIFs	33%	67%%
Prior Violent crime Arrest	50%	100%
Prior Drug Arrest	56%	83%
Prior Gun Arrest	33%%	67%%

## Summary

The rip-off homicides account for almost half of Rochester murders and are most prevalent in Maple Section. They are most likely to occur on weekends and they involve the victims and suspects with the most serious criminal records. Suspects and victims are also very young.

## Additional Research Issues

1. Why are these types of homicide so prevalent in Maple Section?
2. How representative are the victims of other drug sellers? Are sellers usually so young? Why are victims so young? Does youth make them easy targets?
3. What explains the seasonal and day-of-week variation? Is it that drug markets work like liquor stores and restaurants- busy on weekends?
4. Do efforts to control drug markets have positive, negative or no effect on drug related violence?
5. Were the drug houses where murders occur identified as drug houses before the homicides?
6. How are drug houses identified and what is done about them when identified?

## Action Issues

1. Weekends may be particularly dangerous times for these crimes and thus also appropriate times for intervention efforts.
2. Can potential victims of these crimes be protected without supporting the drug trade?
3. These victims and suspects and suspects have serious criminal records. Are they identifiable early and amenable to deterrence models such as notification meetings.
4. Are there emergency or short-term steps, which are independent of drug control strategies, and which can be developed to address these types of homicides?

## Overall Conclusions and Recommendations

Three types homicide were identified in the Year 2000 case review and appear to be relevant to understanding subsequent case reviews. Those three types are supported as distinct from each other through the analysis of statistical data on the events. Wrong Place/Wrong Time, Disputes and Rip-offs provide descriptions of different types of homicide. For some purposes, however, it may also be helpful to separate the domestic violence cases from the other disputes.

These types of homicide thus present opportunities for intervention. The greatest impact would lie in addressing the dispute and rip-off types of cases. These may involve targeting different interventions in different sections.

As we move forward with additional research that focuses on these types murders, the Scope Team should begin to discuss movement toward interventions designed to address the problems of disputes and drug house rip-offs.

Appendices: Data Tables **Table 1- Section By Type**

**Crosstab**

			Type of Victim Involvement			Total
			No Victim Involvement	Dispute-Victim could have known	Robbery-Vitim inv. in Illegal Activity	
SECTION	Clinton	Count	1	8	4	13
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	20.0%	47.1%	22.2%	32.5%
	Genesee	Count	2	2	3	7
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	40.0%	11.8%	16.7%	17.5%
	Goodman	Count	1	2		3
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	20.0%	11.8%		7.5%
	Highlan	Count		1		1
		% within Type of Victim Involvement		5.9%		2.5%
	Lake	Count			1	1
		% within Type of Victim Involvement			5.6%	2.5%
	Maple	Count	1	4	10	15
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	20.0%	23.5%	55.6%	37.5%
Total		Count	5	17	18	40
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 2: Season by Type**

**Crosstab**

			Type of Victim Involvement			Total
			No Victim Involvement	Dispute-Victim could have known	Robbery-Vitim inv. in Illegal Activity	
SEASON	1	Count	2	3	5	10
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	40.0%	17.6%	27.8%	25.0%
	2	Count		6	6	12
		% within Type of Victim Involvement		35.3%	33.3%	30.0%
	3	Count	2	3	3	8
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	40.0%	17.6%	16.7%	20.0%
	4	Count	1	5	4	10
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	20.0%	29.4%	22.2%	25.0%
Total		Count	5	17	18	40
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 3: Day of Week by Type**

**Crosstab**

			Type of Victim Involvement			Total
			No Victim Involvement	Dispute-Victim could have known	Robbery-Victim inv. in Illegal Activity	
DAYOWEEK	Sun.	Count	1	4	3	8
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	20.0%	23.5%	16.7%	20.0%
	Mon.	Count	1	3	1	5
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	20.0%	17.6%	5.6%	12.5%
	Tues.	Count	1	3	1	5
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	20.0%	17.6%	5.6%	12.5%
	Wed.	Count		1	2	3
		% within Type of Victim Involvement		5.9%	11.1%	7.5%
Thurs.	Count		3	2	5	
	% within Type of Victim Involvement		17.6%	11.1%	12.5%	
Fri.	Count	1	1	6	8	
	% within Type of Victim Involvement	20.0%	5.9%	33.3%	20.0%	
Sat.	Count	1	2	3	6	
	% within Type of Victim Involvement	20.0%	11.8%	16.7%	15.0%	
Total	Count	5	17	18	40	
	% within Type of Victim Involvement	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

**Table 4: Weapon by Type**

**Crosstab**

			Type of Victim Involvement			Total
			No Victim Involvement	Dispute-Victim could have known	Robbery-Victim inv. in Illegal Activity	
WEAPON#	Hand Gun	Count	1	7	15	23
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	20.0%	41.2%	83.3%	57.5%
	Long Gun	Count	1	3	2	6
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	20.0%	17.6%	11.1%	15.0%
	Knife	Count	2	3		5
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	40.0%	17.6%		12.5%
	Blunt Force	Count		2		2
		% within Type of Victim Involvement		11.8%		5.0%
Physical Force	Count	1	1	1	3	
	% within Type of Victim Involvement	20.0%	5.9%	5.6%	7.5%	
Other (Veh)	Count		1		1	
	% within Type of Victim Involvement		5.9%		2.5%	
Total	Count	5	17	18	40	
	% within Type of Victim Involvement	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

**Table 5: Victim Race by Type**

**Crosstab**

			Type of Victim Involvement			Total
			No Victim Involvement	Dispute-Victim could have known	Robbery-Vitim inv. in Illegal Activity	
VICRACE# Black	Count	4	11	10	25	
	% within Type of Victim Involvement	80.0%	64.7%	55.6%	62.5%	
Hispanic	Count		5	2	7	
	% within Type of Victim Involvement		29.4%	11.1%	17.5%	
White	Count	1	1	5	7	
	% within Type of Victim Involvement	20.0%	5.9%	27.8%	17.5%	
Asian	Count			1	1	
	% within Type of Victim Involvement			5.6%	2.5%	
Total	Count	5	17	18	40	
	% within Type of Victim Involvement	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

**Table 6: Victim Age by Type**

**Crosstab**

			Type of Victim Involvement			Total
			No Victim Involvement	Dispute-Victim could have known	Robbery-Vitim inv. in Illegal Activity	
victim age (broad categories)	0-9	Count	1			1
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	20.0%			2.5%
	16-25	Count	1	4	9	14
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	20.0%	23.5%	50.0%	35.0%
	26-40	Count	2	8	7	17
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	40.0%	47.1%	38.9%	42.5%
	over 40	Count	1	5	2	8
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	20.0%	29.4%	11.1%	20.0%
Total	Count	5	17	18	40	
	% within Type of Victim Involvement	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

**Table 7: Suspect Age by Type**

**Suspect Age in 5yr Inc. \* Type of Victim Involvement Crosstabulation**

			Type of Victim Involvement			Total
			No Victim Involvement	Dispute-Victim could have known	Robbery-Vitim inv. in Illegal Activity	
Suspect Age in 5yr Inc.	16-20	Count	1	4	6	11
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	33.3%	33.3%	75.0%	47.8%
	21-25	Count	1	2	1	4
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	33.3%	16.7%	12.5%	17.4%
	31-35	Count	1	1		2
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	33.3%	8.3%		8.7%
	36-40	Count		1		1
	% within Type of Victim Involvement		8.3%		4.3%	
	41-45	Count		2	1	3
		% within Type of Victim Involvement		16.7%	12.5%	13.0%
	over 45	Count		2		2
		% within Type of Victim Involvement		16.7%		8.7%
Total		Count	3	12	8	23
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 8: Suspect's Criminal History by Type**

**Suspect's criminal history \* Type of Victim Involvement Crosstabulation**

			Type of Victim Involvement			Total
			No Victim Involvement	Dispute-Victim could have known	Robbery-Vitim inv. in Illegal Activity	
Suspect's criminal history	None	Count		2		2
		% within Type of Victim Involvement		16.7%		9.1%
	Minor	Count	1	6		7
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	25.0%	50.0%		31.8%
	Moderate	Count		1	1	2
		% within Type of Victim Involvement		8.3%	16.7%	9.1%
	Serious	Count	3	3	5	11
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	75.0%	25.0%	83.3%	50.0%
Total		Count	4	12	6	22
		% within Type of Victim Involvement	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 9: Suspect’s Criminal History by Type**

**Suspect's criminal history \* Type of Victim Involvement Crosstabulation**

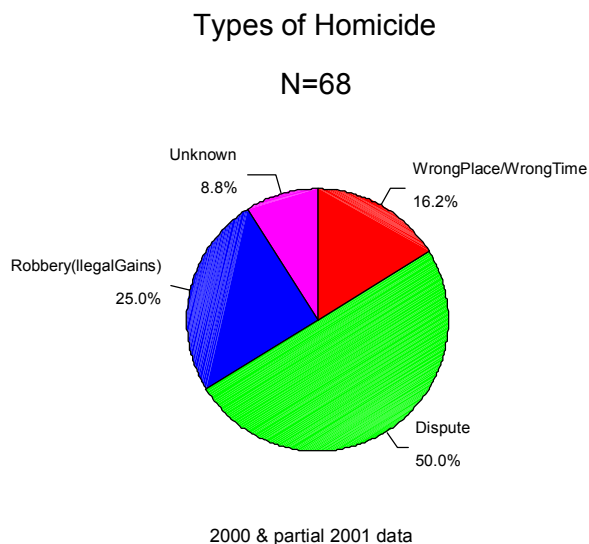
			Type of Victim Involvement			Total
			No Victim Involvement	Dispute-Victim could have known	Robbery-Vitim inv. in Illegal Activity	
Suspect's criminal history	None	Count % within Type of Victim Involvement		2 16.7%		2 9.1%
	Minor	Count % within Type of Victim Involvement	1 25.0%	6 50.0%		7 31.8%
	Moderate	Count % within Type of Victim Involvement		1 8.3%	1 16.7%	2 9.1%
	Serious	Count % within Type of Victim Involvement	3 75.0%	3 25.0%	5 83.3%	11 50.0%
Total	Count % within Type of Victim Involvement	4 100.0%	12 100.0%	6 100.0%	22 100.0%	



## Rochester SACSI Research Addendum to Working Paper # 8, October 22, 2001

### Three Kinds of Murder

This paper extends the examination of cases begun in Working Paper # 8, “Three Kinds of Murder.” In preparation for the SACSI Intervention Retreat we reexamined all year 2000 and 2001 homicide cases. We began by considering whether the typology of cases developed out of the original grand review of cases was continuing to be useful in understanding homicide in Rochester. We then examined a variety of additional variables.

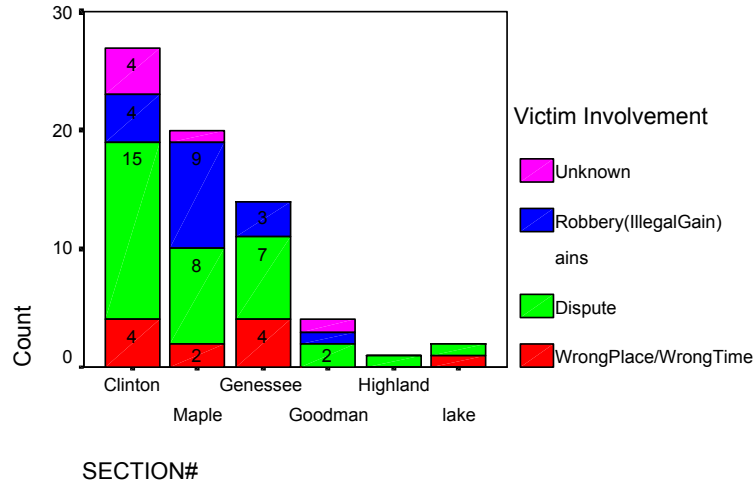


This chart shows that the original identification of types holds in the current data. Disputes remain the largest cause of homicides. Robbery of illegal gains has declined somewhat in 2001 but remains important. A small number of homicides fall into the Wrong Time/Wrong Place category.

The distribution of homicide across the police sections also remains consistent. Clinton Section accounts for 40% of all Rochester homicides and over 50% of dispute related murders. Maple section accounts for 20% of all murders but over 50% of drug robbery homicides.

### Types of Homicides By Section

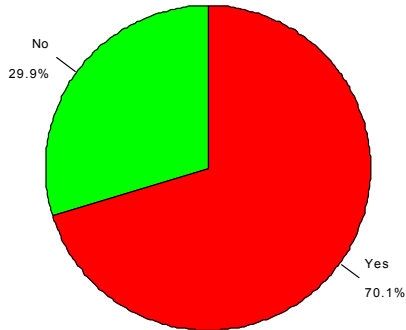
N=68



We also examined whether the murder victims and suspects lived in the section where the murder occurred. Both tend to live in the section although the relationship is stronger for victims. This also holds for all types of homicide.

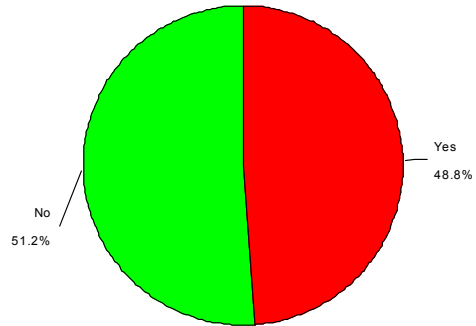
#### Did the Victim Live in the Section

Where the Homicide Occurred? N=67



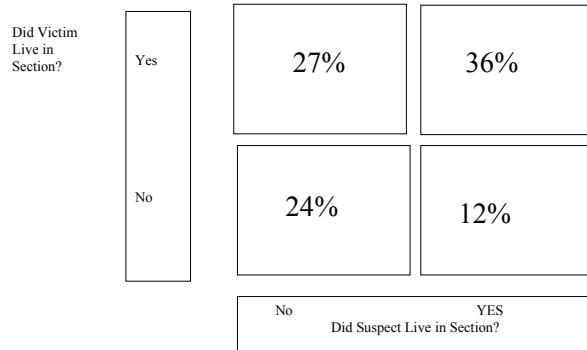
#### Did Suspect Live in Section

Where Homicide Occurred? N=41



When the victim and suspect information are combined, however, it reveals that in only 36% of cases do the parties live in the section where the homicide occurred. Closer examination does reveal, however that suspect often live in nearby sections, with Maple being the most likely after the section where the offense occurred.

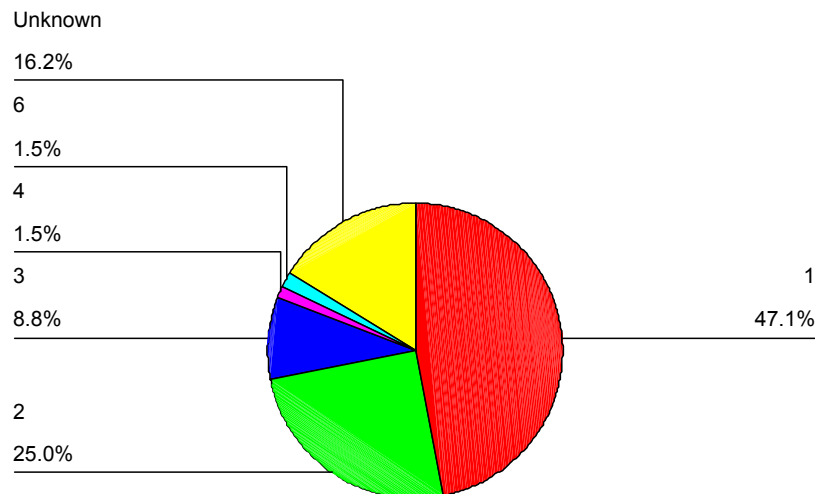
### Do Victim & Suspect Live in Section Where Homicide Occurred?



We also examined whether the cases involved a single suspect or a group and what the size of that group was. The chart below shows that more than one person was identified as involved in over a third of all homicides and over 44% of those with known suspects.

### Size of Suspect Group

N=68

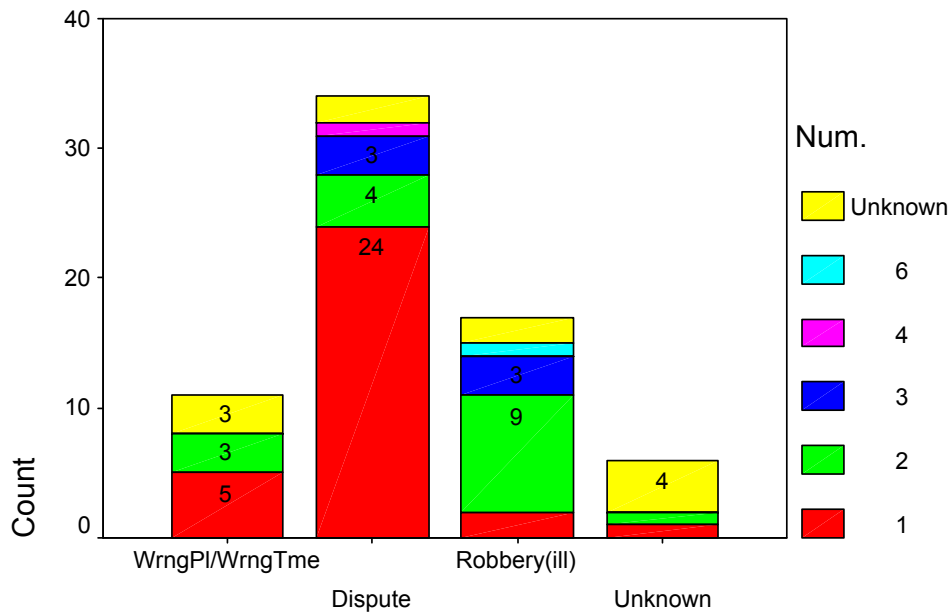


The chart below shows that more than one individual was most likely to be involved in the drug related robbery murder category and least likely to be involved in the dispute

homicides. Further analysis shows that dispute homicides that result from personal arguments, and drug related disputes, often involve more than one individual suspect.

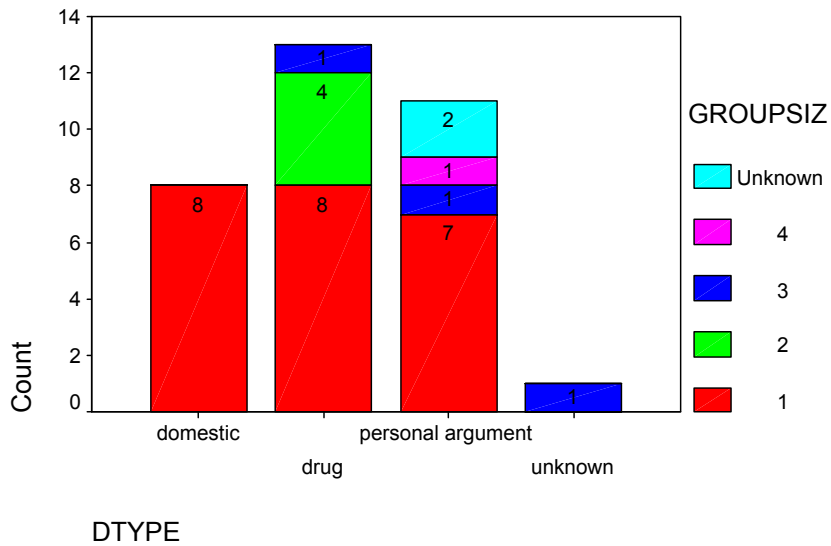
## Size of Suspect Group by Homicide Type

N=68



## Group Size by Type of Dispute

N=32

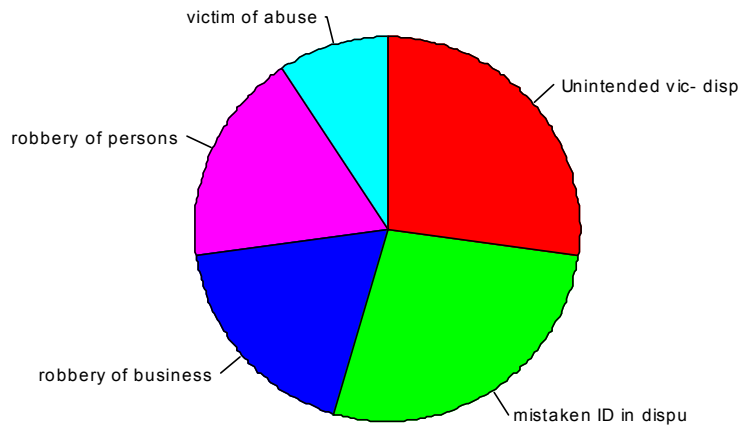


### Review of Types of Homicide:

We also examined the three types of homicides more closely. Although Wrong/Place Wrong Time homicides are the least common, the analysis showed that half of them are actually tied the disputes as either mistaken identity cases or cases of unintended victims of disputes.

### Types of Wrong Place/ Wrong Time Cases

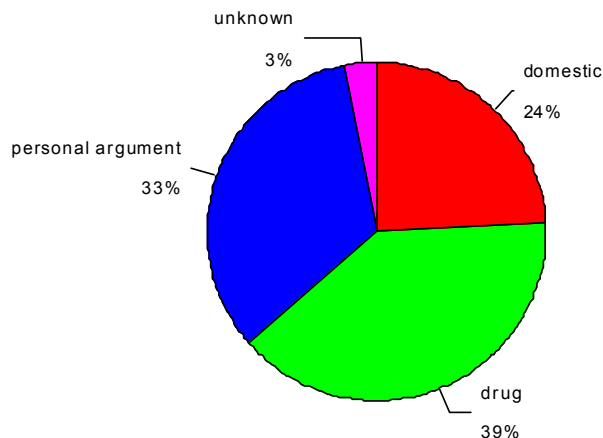
N=11



The disputes were also examined more closely and revealed that 24% involved domestic violence, 33% involved personal arguments and 39% involved drugs.

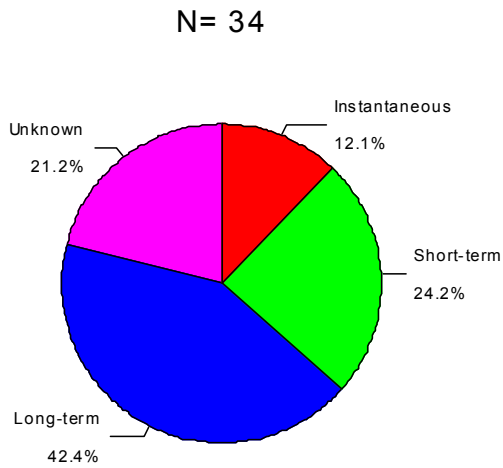
### Types of Disputes

N=34

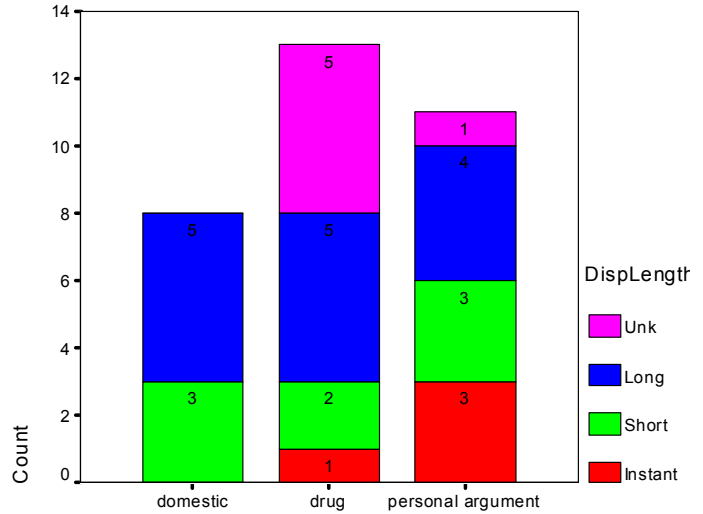


We examined the length of disputes and found that most lasted considerable time with 24% lasting between 1 and 10 days and 42% lasting more than 10 days. This distribution also held for each type of dispute.

Length of Dispute in Dispute Homicides



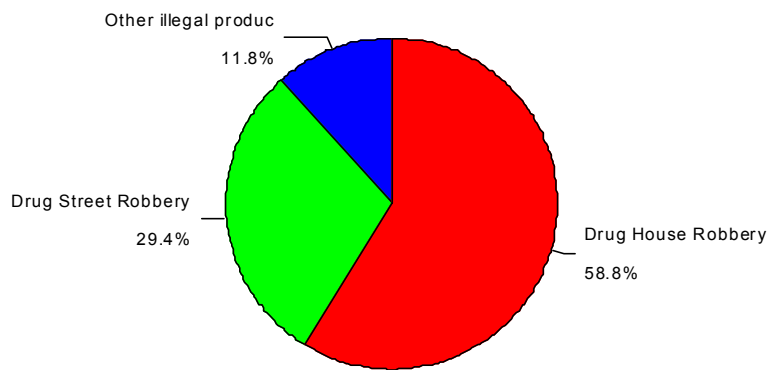
Length of Dispute by Type of Dispute



The final type of homicide, the Robbery of Illegal Gains category could be divided as follows. Drug house and drug street robbery account for almost all of these cases.

Types of Robbery Homicides (Illegal Proceeds)

N= 17



## Conclusion

The continuing analysis of Rochester homicides supports the original description of three main types of events, WrongPlace/WrongTime cases, Disputes and Robbery of Illegal Gains . Of those disputes remain the most common and even appear to account for some cases in the other categories. The new analyses show that most homicides are very local events with victim or suspect or both living in the police section where the event occurred. The data also show that a significant number of homicides involve a group associated with the key suspect. The data on dispute related murders also show that a large number of the underlying disputes go on for a long period of time before the homicide event.

Overall, the data on residence, group affiliation, length of dispute, and type of robbery all support the focus on developing interventions to address disputes in Clinton Section and drug related robbery homicides in Maple Section.

**Rochester SACSI Research  
Working Paper # 10 August 10, 2001**

**Maple Neighborhood Focus Group**

A neighborhood focus group on violence in the Maple Section was held at the Enrico Fermi School (No.17) on Thursday August 9<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:30 pm. Prior to the meeting leaders of community organizations in the area were invited and given posters to share with their members and neighbors. The goals of the meeting were to share the data on homicide with the neighborhood and to gather information on the neighborhood's perspective on this problem and on resources to address it.

Karyn Herman of ABC, Hanif Abdul Wahid of RAIN and Alan Whitcomb of the Task Force to Reduce Violence played key roles in informing people about the meeting, as did Mr. Ralph Spezio, Principal of School 17. In addition, the murder of 10 year old Tyshaun Cauldwell in this neighborhood on June 29<sup>th</sup> served as a rallying call for the neighborhood. A mass email and phone a thon to remind or notify people about the meeting also paid off- a lot of the attendees were from the phone-a-thon and email/faxes.

**1. Participation**

Approximately 50 people attended the session. Most people were from the neighborhood others were involved with citywide organizations. Among those from the neighborhood approximately half were affiliated with a neighborhood or other type of organization. Many who spoke described themselves as long-term residents of the neighborhood.

Maple section is a very diverse section of Rochester in terms of ethnicity and economics. There are at least 7 recognizable neighborhoods in the section. The diversity of the section was well represented.

Attendance was very strong for this meeting especially when you consider that it was held on one of the hottest evenings of the year. The turnout clearly reflects the interests and efforts of a number of key people who are working to organize the community.

**2. Neighborhood Organization**

Much of the discussion centered on the need for and the virtues of organizing the community. The discussion tended to be quite general in that it often did not tie



organizing to any specific problems and it did not cover how organizing would produce specific solutions. However, three somewhat different but interrelated approaches to organizing seemed to emerge in the discussion. First, there was discussion of organizing for political power. In this approach neighborhood organization was seen as improving the ability of the neighborhood to compete for resources. A second form of organizing appeared to center on organizing for activism. That discussion seemed to center on increasing the capacity of the neighborhood to take collective action. The focus of that action mentioned most often was drug houses. Finally a more subtle form of organizing was discussed. This involved more of an asset building approach in which the neighborhood would be strengthened by increases in familiarity and recognition of shared interests amongst neighbors.

The discussion of organizing took place against a backdrop of the limited level of organization that currently exists. When compared with Clinton section, Maple section seems to have a smaller number of paid professionals in organizations. The section does, however, appear to have a significant number of voluntary associations and other similar organizations. The discussion indicated that many times these organizations are seen as quite parochial in their interests with each one carving out its own area of attention and with little in the way of coordinated effort. It is also clear that an effort is being mounted through School 17 and its Principal, Ralph Spezio, to address this problem.

There was little discussion about community organizations and crime or violence. Of the organizational efforts discussed only one appeared to be concentrating directly on these issues. Councilman Robert Stevenson described his efforts with PACTAC (Police and Citizens Together Against Crime). Mr. Stevenson is directly engaged in this effort which does afford opportunities for concrete action and observable results.

### **3. The Place of Homicide in the Neighborhood Agenda**

Just a few weeks prior to this meeting Tyshaun Cauldwell, a ten year old neighborhood boy, was killed while standing in proximity to a drug house. In the year 2000 this neighborhood had the highest number of drug related rip-off homicides. We began the meeting with a review of those murders.

Discussion of the homicide problem, however, occupied relatively little of the meeting. Rather than a direct discussion of murder, the main focus was on the problem of drug houses and the quality of life issues that they raise. There was extensive discussion of the drug house problem and recommendations for increasing penalties and changes in laws were made.

One link between the drug house problem and homicide was suggested. Several participants argued that poverty lay at the root of the neighborhood's problems. Drug

selling was seen by some as a response to that poverty, and homicide was seen as a byproduct of the illegal economy

One interpretation of the limited attention to homicide at the meeting might be that dealing with drug houses, community organizing, and other topics such as home ownership and children's issues all reflect a focus on long term solutions to current problems, including murder. Some people in attendance appeared to reflect that perspective. But perhaps equally apparent was the view that quality of life concerns are widely shared among residents while homicide was mostly seen as a criminal problem most affecting people who were not viewed as legitimate members of the community. With the exception of Tyshaun, homicide victims, and offenders seemed to be regarded as members of a lost generation with whom the neighbors had little interest or concern.

For the most part the meeting attendees spent little time discussing possible short-term solutions or even direct interventions to address homicide. There was no separation of the problems of homicide and drug houses or alternately there was little concern with the problem of homicide. Instead, the main interest was in organizing and in long term solutions to neighborhood problems.

#### **4. The Drug House Focus**

The problem of drug houses occupied considerable attention. Drug houses were regarded as the most significant problem faced in the neighborhood. The most common suggestions for dealing with this problem came from a traditional police perspective. The view was prevalent that drug houses could be closed by the police and that citizens should be more active in reporting drug activity. Even after it was mentioned that at least 108 drug houses currently exist in the section there was a call for more police and more arrests. It was also noteworthy, however, that there was no criticism of the police during this meeting.

For the most part the drug house problem was presented as a traditional criminal justice problem. One participant, however, did remark that drug houses were a misnomer and the issues were people and not houses. Another remarked that the occupants and customers of drug houses were the fathers, brothers and sons of the neighborhood.

One different and noteworthy view of the problem was presented. Hanif Abdul Wahid of Rochestarians Against Illegal Narcotics (RAIN) noted that drug houses often contained a wide range of problems including unsupervised children or health problems and that perhaps focusing on those problems rather the drugs directly could be more productive.

## 5. Conclusions

Focus groups methods can provide useful data, however, they also have their limitations. We cannot claim that our group was representative of the Maple section, but the group was large and diverse and composed of people who made a deliberate decision to participate. While recognizing the limitation of the process the following tentative conclusions seem warranted.

1. A sense of frustration (but not hopelessness) with quality of life issues was clear throughout the meeting. The frustration, however, was not with the police, but rather with the lack of effective neighborhood responses to problems.
2. There was a strong sense of the neighborhood being in transition and there was shared belief that “legitimate” residents need to do a better job in managing the neighborhood.
3. There is significant interest in community organization in this neighborhood. These efforts do not appear to be directly linked to violence but rather they discuss recent violence as a rallying point.
4. The first task in organizing may be to deal with the existing fragmentation of organizations and the perception of parochial interests.
5. Most community organizing efforts appear to be geared at long range solutions to unspecified problems. These efforts might benefit from greater specificity of goals.
6. The one clearly specified effort to address crime and violence was the PACTAC effort discussed by Councilman Stevenson. Few others picked up on this discussion, however, and support for further organizational efforts with PACTAC would seem beneficial.
7. There was little interest in understanding or addressing homicide as an independent problem. Homicide was not widely recognized as an urgent or critical problem. There seemed to be limited resources in the neighborhood for addressing homicide in that manner.
8. There was great concern over drug houses. This was described as the primary source of quality of life problems. The problem was generally defined in antagonistic terms in which there was only begrudging recognition that those involved with drug houses also had some other ties to the community. The favored approach seemed to be for a police and criminal justice response. There was limited discussion of alternatives to the law enforcement approach.
9. There appear to be a variety of individuals who are resourceful in pursuing organizing which may offer a means to impact crime and violence. Key among

those are School 17 Principal Ralph Spezio who is working to organize the neighborhood and Karyn Herman who is working to strengthen the neighborhood through an ABC sponsored effort.

10. People working to respond to crime and violence issues more directly include Councilman Stevens who is actively engaged in direct action through PACTAC and Hanif Abdul Wahid who is engaged in action through RAIN and who can suggest alternative approaches to problem solving in this area.

**Rochester SACSI Research**  
**Working Paper # 11 August 16, 2001**  
**Genesee Neighborhood Focus Group**

A neighborhood focus group on violence in the Genesee Section was held at the James Madison School of Excellence on Tuesday August 14<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:30 pm. Prior to the meeting leaders of community organizations in the area were invited and given posters to share with their members and neighbors. The goals of the meeting were to share the data on homicide with the neighborhood and to gather information on the neighborhood's perspective on this problem and on resources to address it.

Pat Jackson of South West Area Neighborhood (SWAN) was extremely helpful in organizing this meeting. A mass email and phone a thon to remind or notify people about the meeting also was useful.

### **1. Participation**

Twenty-seven people attended the session. Most people were from the neighborhood, others were involved with citywide organizations. Among those from the neighborhood most were affiliated with a neighborhood or other type of organization.

Genesee section is a diverse section of Rochester in terms of ethnicity and economics. The diversity of the section was well represented.

### **2. Reactions to the data**

The meeting began with a review of the data on homicide. That data shows that Genesee section has ranked closely with Clinton and Maple section in terms of the annual number of homicides over the past decade. Genesee section, however, had lower homicide numbers in the past two years.

Member of the group focused on the past two years of data to argue that this area did not share a homicide problem similar to that in other parts of the city. Some respondents argued that the discussion of homicide focused on the negative and that even the demographic data showing high homicide rates for young African American and Hispanic males overstated the problem.

Throughout the discussion there was a general disagreement among participants- with some addressing the data on homicide and such topics as gun carrying and arguments and others focusing on the view that this area has made considerable progress

and did not have the type of problems the data suggested. It was also suggested that what problems do occur are often the result of people coming in from outside the neighborhood.

The group did not reach a point of discussing specific issues of homicide such as disputes and drug house rip-offs but instead the conversation often turned to the success of the community in dealing with quality of life issues.

### **3. Neighborhood Organization**

Participants pointed out that this section has a long history of effective neighborhood organization that is in evidence today through such organizations as SWAN, the 19<sup>th</sup> Ward Association and the area's PACTAC program. It was pointed out that, unlike the Maple Section, this area is currently rich in effective organizations. This was attributed to the high quality of leadership that had emerged in this section of the city. Those leaders were described as committed and persistent.

It was also pointed out that the organizations here have worked especially hard over the past 7-8 years to improve the neighborhood. Specific factors were mentioned including wide participation in PACTAC, a code of conduct for businesses and the "uplifts" that brought in a wide range of agencies and resources to target specific problem areas. It was also noted that this community has a wide range of services available for youth.

Discussion of solutions to any perceived problems also focused on organization. Participants argued that the area was successful in pulling together appropriate neighborhood resources and in utilizing government resources to address problems such as drug houses and nuisance properties including vacant buildings and corner stores believed to be sites of illegal activity.

### **4. The Place of Homicide in the Neighborhood Agenda**

When it came to the specific problem of homicide there appeared to be two separate and generally unrelated conversations occurring at the meeting. In one of those conversations the problem of homicide was subsumed under larger issues of neighborhood organizing and in the other violence was recognized as a distinct and immediate problem.

In other section meetings there was often a view that homicide and other forms of violence were the result of root causes that were difficult or impossible to address. In this section root causes such as poverty were acknowledged but speakers often argued that major problems could be and were being overcome by neighborhood organization and activism.

In that conversation there was little discussion of the specific problems of homicide or of its victims or offenders. Efforts to discuss the dynamics of homicide events, such as gun carrying or the nature of disputes, yielded little because of the strong belief that community organization addresses underlying issues of cause. The idea of looking for interventions geared to prevent specific types of events here and now found little place in that discussion. Instead, speakers focused on their view that the neighborhood was addressing underlying problems through its organizing efforts. Widespread pride in what the neighborhood was doing had an important place in that conversation

The parallel conversation about homicide was quite different. In it a young girl noted that men often carry guns in the neighborhood for protection. Others argued in favor of early family intervention to address expectations of failure. There was also discussion of drug houses and drug problems.

One speaker argued that sustained community outrage over some events such as homicides was needed but not present in the neighborhood. Without it “kids were out of control.” But, he noted, efforts to engage role models to address young men were limited in their success. The speakers here provided a specific focus on the problem of violence in the neighborhood as well as an effort to analyze it and think of interventions to address it.

To the extent there was a bridge between these conversations it was presented by Hanif Abdul Wahid of RAIN, who has been present at each of the sector meetings. He supported the view that organization in Genesee section had yielded some important results and was continuing to do so. He also focused on the current state of young people and argued that the community needed to create a sense of belonging among them, and he spoke about the need for active intervention in places and with people engaged in violence. Those points seemed to connect the issues of organizing with those of engaging in specific interventions.

## **5. Conclusions**

The group in this section was composed of many people who have made a commitment to the neighborhood through their activism in the community. They represent the formal and informal leadership of the community. As such they are in a unique but not necessarily representative position to identify, analyze and resolve neighborhood problems. While recognizing these limitations of the focus group process the following tentative conclusions seem warranted.

1. Leaders of the neighborhood have great pride in what appears to be real accomplishments in addressing quality of life issues in the Genesee Section.

2. There is a strong organizational structure of a kind that was not seen in the other sections where these meetings took place.
3. The problem of homicide is not widely defined as a critical issue in this neighborhood.
4. Participants believe that the organizational structure of the neighborhood has had an impact on homicide through its attention to quality of life issues.
5. For many, analysis of the specific problem of homicide is unnecessary given their belief in the power of community organization to address problems that are regarded as more fundamental.
6. That organizational structure of this neighborhood may provide a useful example for others but it also has historical and geographical roots which makes it unique and not likely to be easily transferred.
7. In the absence of defining homicide as a critical issue, the organizational structure of this section, which seems to provide an effective way of addressing mid range problems, may impede analysis and development of short-term interventions to address homicide.



**Rochester SACSI Research  
Working Paper # 12 August 21, 2001**

**Guns, Disputes and Drug Sales:  
Focus Groups at Monroe Correctional Facility**

**A. Introduction**

During the week of August 3, 2001 the SACSI research team conducted three focus groups with inmates in the Monroe County Correctional Facility. The groups discussed a wide range of topics but focused on the data on homicide, guns, disputes and drug house robberies. The purpose of this paper is to report those discussions. Conclusions and implications of the data will be developed in a separate working paper.

**B. Group Selection**

The Director of Substance Abuse Services at the Monroe Correctional Facility invited inmates to participate in the focus groups. The treatment director gave interested inmates a one-page summary of the project. No invitees refused to participate. Invitees all shared the experience of participating in substance abuse treatment programs either currently or in the recent past. They also had a range of experience with drugs including long-term use and drug selling. All participants were serving criminal sentences. They reported criminal records that ranged widely but included property, drug and violent offenses. All participants were serving criminal sentences of less than one year at the facility.

The three groups we composed as follows.

1. Older drug users. This group of 12 included 6 Black males, 4 White males and 2 Hispanics and ranged in age from 22 to late 40s.
2. Young drug sellers. This group of 9 included 6 Black males and 3 White males all between 17 and 25 years old.
3. Female drug users and sellers. This group included 11 Black women whose age ranged from 19 to early 50s.

The focus group meetings each last approximately 2 ½ hours and were held around a conference table in group meetings rooms. Soda and chips or donuts were served. Researchers kept copious notes of the discussion. The meeting began with a brief presentation by the researcher on the SACSI project and the homicide data. The data on homicide were discussed, including city comparisons, demographic data, causes, weapons and locations. The three types of homicide that have emerged from the analysis thus far were also reviewed. The discussions with the groups then focused on guns, dispute related homicide and drug houses.

### **C. A Note on Method**

Focus groups can provide a useful way of gaining factual information as well as the opinions and attitudes of the participants. Focus groups also permit consideration of the dynamics of the group and the impact of those dynamics on the information. We approached our groups by arguing that we needed to consult them as experts in an area where we had limited information. The presentation of data supported our requests for their expertise. We then followed a general list of areas to guide the inquiry and discussion.

Each of the groups provided rich data with participants willing to discuss matters in an apparently frank and forthcoming manner. No one refused to answer any particular question or to discuss any subject. Occasionally one participant would make a statement that seemed to others to be untruthful or an exaggeration. In such cases the group would routinely question and cajole the speaker into providing what was seen as more plausible answers.

Our groups were composed of inmates serving local sentences of less than one year in the county jail. Their views and opinions should be regarded as reflecting that set of experiences they carried to the discussion. This is clearly not a random sample of residents of their neighborhood. Participants' views are best seen as deriving from their own experiences and behavior and that of their friends or of others with which they are familiar or believe they are familiar.

### **D. General Themes Emerging from the Groups**

Before discussing the specific findings of the focus groups we will review six major themes that ran through the groups and seemed relevant to the discussion of nearly every topic. These themes were widely shared among the group members and often framed the discussion of particular points.

1. **Dangerous World.** The group members held a view that they lived in a very dangerous world. They often noted that anything they owned, which could be regarded a "nice," was subject to being stolen from them. They believed that they were likely to run into conflicts at any time and that many or most people in their neighborhoods had experienced or were experiencing serious beefs with others. Furthermore, they expressed beliefs that weapon carrying and violence were common in their neighborhoods

This view of the world as dangerous appeared to be supported by the group members' own personal experiences. All of the 32 participants said they knew someone who had been murdered. All but 4 (3 women and 1 man) knew someone who had been arrested for murder. Fourteen of 21 males and 3 of 11 females said they had been robbed of money or drugs. None reported the robberies to the police. All of the participants were in agreement that carrying weapons was

common and that the reason for most people carrying was protection. That reason has been associated with high degrees of participation in street crime in other research.

2. **In the life.** A second general theme to emerge from the group discussions was that many participants viewed themselves and others as being absorbed in a fast criminal life style. They believed there were benefits to the lifestyle including excitement, respect, money and friends. And they saw violence, jail and prison as the cost, or negative side of living that lifestyle. The older male group members seemed to believe that these costs now outweighed the benefits, but younger men and women did not hold that view.
3. **Fate.** A theme to emerge from the group discussions was the common view that the individual lives of the participants were directed by fate rather than conscious or deliberate choice. Many of the group members felt that their lives were not in their own control. Instead, they expressed the view that friends, family and neighborhood exerted powerful influences and that they were likely to continue in a life of crime and drugs. They reported the belief that chance encounters would pull them back into crime. Many participants seemed to see that the paths they were on were not healthy and were not likely to lead to success but they felt ambivalent, at best, about their prospects for changing those paths.
4. **Flash and Respect.** These two often interrelated ideas also figured prominently in the discussions. The participants spoke of flash as a sort of brassy style of presentation marked by bravado and such accoutrements as gold chains and expensive jackets and sneakers and in some cases, cars. Respect was the demand that someone be treated with respect or even fear in some cases. Excessive flash led to envy by young men and ultimately was seen as a way of not respecting other males. Too much flash is at the root of many conflicts and even some drug robberies. In those robberies, too much flash not only signaled a lot of money but also caused others to want to see someone put in their place. Claims of insufficient respect were at the heart of many disputes. Such disputes often occurred over seemingly trivial matters but raised underlying issues of respect. Participants reported that in some cases walking away from disputes would be perceived as disrespectful and would trigger a violent response.

The concept of respect also seemed relevant to the discussion of criminal justice sanctions. Participants viewed all sanctions as negative and undesirable. The strongest negative reaction, however, was to probation. Participants objected to probation officers working with police, and to home visits, and to being accountable for scheduled appointments. They generally found this demeaning but recognized the need for compliance in order to avoid other penalties.

5. **Endless Drug Demand.** The groups developed a theme in much of their conversation that suggested that much of criminal life is based on the apparent endless demand for drugs in the poor neighborhoods of Rochester. Members

agreed that there was little competition for customers; there were plenty to go around: numerous drug houses could exist in close proximity to one another without reducing demand: and that drugs of differing quality were often sold suggesting demand limitation did not raise quality.

- 6. Fear of the Police.** A final theme to emerge centered around the view that the police were generally effective at identifying drug houses and sellers and arresting them. The participants feared the police and believed the police would identify them as drug sellers and arrest them if they did not take some sort of evasive action. The common choice was to change selling locations frequently. The group members believed police would eventually identify the locations and make undercover buys or use informants to do so.

In these discussions the participants were not indicating that they thought the police efforts were having an impact on overall drug use or sales but rather they believed the police were effective at recognizing and closing particular drug selling locations.

### **E. Reactions to the General Data**

All of the participants were surprised by the homicide data, particularly the high rate of homicide experienced by young minority men in the crescent area. Although they all seemed well aware that rates would be highest for their group, none seemed to anticipate the magnitude of the difference. The fact that that rate is 67 times the national average shocked all of the participants. The older men also seemed to find the figures depressing and appeared to believe that those homicide rates alone should convince others to change their lifestyles. But the younger males and the women did not share that deterrent value of the statistics. Members of these groups indicated that the homicide rates were simply the consequences of living a fast life- a risk taken by people who were involved in crime and drugs. The participants also expressed the idea that they did not feel they had the ability to make the decisions that would change their life and lead to lower homicide risks. The young men in particular argued that in their view chance and fate governed their lives. That is, the people they would run into and the situations they confronted determined the types of criminal behavior they would engage in, and also determined the risk being a homicide victim or offender.

The groups also reviewed the three types of homicide derived in this project from other analyses. Their discussion supported the view that the small number of innocent victim offenses and the greater number of disputes and drug rip-offs captured the major types of homicide events with which they were familiar.

### **E. The Discussion of Guns**

We began our discussion by focusing on guns since nearly 70% of Rochester homicides involved that choice of weapon.

**Extent of Gun Carrying.** In a discussion of the extent of weapon carrying, the groups all made very high estimates. They reported that everyone involved in the drug trade carried a gun or had ready access to one. They also indicated that guns have now spread out beyond the drug trade and that carrying was quite common for young men not necessarily connected with drugs. When asked how many out of 100 people on the street at 11 pm in crescent neighborhoods would be expected to be carry a gun, the groups estimates that 90-95% would, and they added that anyone not carrying would have easy access to one nearby. There was general agreement when one person explained, "in every group someone will be carrying a gun."

The women reported that gun carrying has become more common among women and that as many as 60% of women on those streets at that time could be expected to be carrying weapons. While these estimates may seem high for men and women they may very well reflect the experiences and expectations of the focus group members.

Participants also discussed stashing guns. They indicated that is was common for gun carriers who might be going to a bar, or other closed-in setting, to leave their weapons at nearby houses with friends. The guns thus remained accessible but the carrier was protected in case of being stopped by the police.

**Reasons for Gun Carrying.** Participants also reported that the main reason for carrying a gun was "for protection." For the men that protection was from a general, non-specific threat. They felt a gun offered protection from robbery or unspecified beefs with other males that may explode into violence on the street. These respondents tended to view their environments as generally dangerous. One person stated that having a gun didn't mean "you were caught up in something (the drug trade or beefs)." A telling response followed: "Who do you know that don't have a beef or don't hustle?"

The women indicated that they and other women also carried guns for protection but that they were more likely to want protection from a specific person- usually another women with whom they had a preexisting conflict.

Other research in Rochester by Terrence Thornberry provides general support for the material above. Thornberry reported very high levels of criminal involvement among youth who said they carried guns "for protection." Our respondents suggest the other side of the coin- high levels of carry guns for protection among those with high levels of criminal involvement.

**Where the Guns Come From.** One common view of this was that "guns just pop up." They are available everywhere and these group participants and others like them run across guns frequently. When asked about the sources of illegal guns the first and most frequent response was that they often were purchased out of corner stores. This answer was given by men and women from across the crescent area. Some guns sold this way were used guns and others were new in the box. Participants estimated that  $\frac{3}{4}$  of all the stores were "dirty" in that they sold guns and or/drugs. They also reported that in order to

buy a gun a person would need to be established as a criminal type in that neighborhood or be vouched for by someone the store operator had dealt with before. Several participants said they believed the police knew these shops were dirty and they saw this as evidence of police corruption.

A second commonly mentioned source of guns was "fiends." These heavy drug users would often come around and sell anything for drugs including guns. Suburban users were also mentioned as good sources of guns that were presumed to be reported stolen or were actually stolen from parents or neighbors.

Several women also reported that they knew of women who had purchased guns in Florida and Georgia for resale in Rochester. Working as "mules" for males, these women used the necessary drivers licenses to purchase large numbers of guns (37-50) and then returned them to Rochester in a number of separate cars. They believed that women doing this were less likely to be suspected than their male counterparts.

Maybe the most telling point made by the participants was that anyone who wanted a gun in their neighborhoods simply had to tell a friend or acquaintance that they needed a "tool." They would, in short order, be taken care of or referred to someone who would get them a gun,

**Project Exile.** All of the participants knew of Project Exile. They had all seen the billboards. Some even quoted Johnny Cochran's commercial. Most described the program with a high degree of accuracy. About 1/5 reported knowing someone who had been sentenced under the program. Everyone thought the penalties were severe and some reported that ordinary sentences for guns were not severe enough. They said that there was fear of Exile among people with felony records. But most participants did not think the penalties were certain. Many knew cases they thought would have gone to Exile but did not. They, therefore, thought the program was generally arbitrary in its application. That was the basis for most people saying that it did not serve as a deterrent, although some felt that a relatively naïve criminal might be deterred. The most common position was that the streets were dangerous and protection was necessary and that outweighed the deterrent value of Project Exile in its influence on gun carrying by these and similar offenders.

**Other Gun Programs.** When asked whether they thought anything else might be done to reduce gun carrying the participants could not come up with other options. Some did suggest gun buybacks but also said that a considerable amount of money (in the area of \$500) would be needed for them to give up a gun. However, everyone also admitted that they would simply acquire another

## **F. The Discussion of Disputes**

The case reviews and other analyses have shown that disputes are at the heart of a large number of Rochester homicides. We discussed this problem with each of the groups.

**Frequency of Disputes.** All of the participants were familiar with disputes and arguments that they viewed as having the potential for becoming lethal. They argued that such disputes are common especially among young men. Most were also concerned about the ability of anyone, including themselves, to avoid such disputes. They noted that the potential for getting in potentially lethal disputes was a side effect of a life of hustling. As one young man noted, “Everyone is out there hustling, everyone is bumping heads.”

Women also reported that disputes among men were common. Disputes among women are growing in frequency but are less likely to erupt unexpectedly. Disputes among women are more likely to involve some longer-term problem between two antagonists.

**Generational Differences and a Changing Climate.** Participants agreed that disputes were primarily a phenomenon among young men. Older males were less likely to take offense as quickly as the young and were less likely to resort to lethal violence once offended. Younger men were seen as more envious of one another than older men were.

The general view, expressed in each group, was that many young men are out of control. They are quick to anger and likely to resort to lethal violence. Where in the past, physical fights would occur, today gun violence is more likely among these young men. One participant noted “the stickup kids are the worst.”

**Participants.** All young men seemed to be eligible candidates for these disputes. They could occur between friends or among complete strangers who happened to bump into one another. They seemed to be less frequent and less spontaneous among women.

The participants indicated that any dispute between young men could have the potential for violence. They did note, however, that some young men are more likely than others to get into disputes and to resort to serious violence. These young men have reputations for violence or being “out of control,” and they are often supported by friends and associates. A reputation as “out of control” is earned by repeated incidents of violence, especially in the presence of others. The participants also noted that, in many cases, these combatants are also believed to have serious criminal records that include violent crimes.

**Causes of Disputes.** Disputes arise out of many situations. Trying to leave prematurely with winnings in dice games, unsatisfactorily resolved deals over drugs, complementing another person’s girlfriend (“stepping to her”), insulting another person’s girlfriend, stealing another’s property or showing off one’s own possessions were all mentioned as proximate causes of disputes.

While none of these seem to be unusual events in the lives of young men each was discussed as triggering a heightened concern over respect. That concern was described as the main and most frequent cause of potentially lethal disputes. Throughout the discussion the focus was the view that the cause of disputes often lay in one party's being embarrassed and the perception that they had been "disrespected" as in having their manhood, machismo or sense of power insulted.

**Dynamics of Disputes.** The participants distinguished between arguments that were resolved quickly and disputes that lasted over some period of time. Disputes begin with someone taking offense over some perceived insult. A fight may or may not ensue. A party may lose a fight and return with a gun. Even if one party simply chooses to walk away and not engage the other, it may be perceived as an insult and thus demand retaliation. Some participants spoke of disputes in which one party "tried to rock [another] to sleep" and then would come back with violence when the adversary least expected it. Other disputes were discussed in which hostilities would exist between two people but would break out in the open when a chance meeting would occur. In other disputes, friends and associates of the parties would egg them on until a confrontation was forced.

Although these disputes center on claims of respect and honor, these apparent virtues do not often seem to have a place in the resolution of the disputes. There seems to be no sense of the value of a fair fight or of a measured response. The insult of being disrespected seems so powerful and so personal that retaliation though overpowering means such as shooting, and through tactics such as sneak attack, often results. Those tactics, however, do not appear to be seen by others as unfair or unmanly.

**Outsiders' Roles.** Participants indicated that outsiders often play important roles in disputes. The disputes are frequently widely known among friends of the involved parties and sometimes are well known in the neighborhood. They become known in three ways. Either the parties "tell others their business" or friends egg the parties on by spreading the word, or both of these occur. Either way it seemed that the most volatile disputes were ones that were known by friends and others in the neighborhood. The fact they are known seems to be both an effect and a cause of excitement that increases the pressure on parties to resolve the matter through violence.

**Gangs.** Almost all of the participants agreed that Rochester did not have a gang problem that resembles the way such problems are often portrayed on television. Rochester does not have large established gangs with complex organizational structures that recruit members into them. Instead, Rochester has many cohesive groups of young men who are friends who grew up together and hang around together and who engage in criminal conduct together. They collaborate in such crimes as robberies and drug sales and they provide the peer pressure that leads to the violent resolution of some disputes.

The women we met with also indicated that women are increasingly finding a leadership role in these quasi-criminal organizations. They indicated that, as males were getting



arrested and imprisoned, women were playing a more active role, particularly in drug sales. The women would do usually work for men (often boyfriends) but they were increasing in importance in the enterprise.

One young male argued strongly that Rochester had significant gangs and pointed to his own involvement with the “Outlaws” in North East Rochester. He argued that the influence of this group spread across a defined territory and that the group functioned for him much as a family would.

**Possible Mediators.** Group participants argued that there are a variety of responses when people learn about ongoing disputes. In many cases friends and associates would egg parties on toward confrontation. In cases where the parties had reputations as highly violent, many others would distance themselves from the disputes, aware that serious problems were likely. In a few cases, however, older males would serve to temper disputes and encourage resolution without violence. These males were often themselves involved in criminal matters and would council disputants as to the possible negative consequences of violent resolution to conflicts. However, in cases, when these males were viewed as “still out there hustling,” they would not be respected as mediators.

The group also reported that there are others in the community who could play such a mediator role by virtue of the respect they command. These people were described as older males who were now successful in legitimate enterprises but who have past histories of significant criminal conduct including violence.

African American Ministers from neighborhood churches were also seen as potential mediators of disputes. The participants noted that this group was generally well respected. In some cases, some young men might not listen to the ministers but they would respect them enough to leave them alone. What seemed to matter was that potential mediators were adult males connected to the neighborhood and that they would spend time on the streets. Walking the streets and dealing openly with young men was critical to having the respect of people who might find themselves in disputes. Willie Lightfoot and Rev. Sam McCree were mentioned as examples of people who had filled that role.

## **G. The Discussion of Drug Houses and Drug House Robberies**

The case reviews and other analyses also show that a significant number of Rochester Homicides fall into the category of drug and drug house robbery/assassinations. We discussed this problem with each of the groups.

**What kinds of drug houses are there?** There are a wide variety of drug houses. A small number sell a variety of products including marijuana, crack and heroin. Most

specialize. Marijuana houses are the least lucrative but most stable. Crack houses are the most lucrative but least stable.

There are also a variety of crack houses. There are “smoke houses” which rent space for smoking but may or may not sell drugs. The group participants had little regard for these places. They were unclean and unsafe, made little money and were mostly frequented by fiends.

There are also “open houses.” These houses have no external security. Customers simply walk in to buy drugs. They are the easiest to open but are regarded as unsafe from robbers and from the police. There are also “secure houses” in which transactions occur through a slot in the door or a slightly opened window. These are regarded as the safest. There are fiends who work as carpenters and specialize in securing the premises of these houses. That includes bolting the doors and windows on the first floor and cutting slots or limiting window openings. Participants estimate that about half of all crack houses are open houses and half are secure. Some operate as open house during the day but limit entry in the nighttime.

There are also houses that specialize in selling “weight” (large amounts) and others that do retail. Retail houses are regarded as more dangerous.

**How many are there?** The group participants all agreed that their neighborhoods supported a large number of drug houses. It was not unusual to have four or five houses on some streets particularly in more run down neighborhoods. Each of these houses would be making money. Big dealers would tolerate small dealers in their immediate vicinity because the demand was large enough. Big dealers would tend not to tolerate others if their business got too large and it started cutting into profits.

**Why do sellers pick some houses?** The participants reported that drug dealers selected properties for a variety of reasons. Run down neighborhoods were seen as desirable for two reasons: 1) they have a ready supply of fiends and prostitutes as customers and 2) the dealers feel that neighbors will not oppose their presence and are less likely to call the police than in better neighborhoods. In better neighborhoods opposition would lead to police intervention more quickly than in bad neighborhoods.

Participants also discussed several other criteria. One important issue involved selecting settings where the volume of customers would not be obvious. Some said sellers prefer side streets rather than main streets so they can monitor traffic carefully and so that the volume of traffic coming to the house wasn't obvious from main roads. They also said that properties with paths through the back yard, where customers would not be seen, were desirable.

Group members also discussed features of the houses that provided safety. The same features were viewed as providing safety from robbers and from the police. Second floor locations were seen as desirable, especially if the first floor could be boarded up to limit entry. Additional boarding up of second floor entries and easy access windows was also

desirable. Little lighting was preferred. That disguised the volume of traffic but did increase the danger from robbers.

Participants also indicated that an area where the police had recently closed a drug house would be seen as a desirable location. Those areas already had a built in customer base and pent up demand.

**Why do buyers pick some houses?** The primary criterion used to select a location to buy drugs is the quality of drugs for sale. Quality apparently varies significantly from location to location and even over time at the same location. Among drug users the word gets out about where the best quality is and that becomes the main criteria for selection of a retail outlet. Quality may change frequently so there is an active effort to locate and buy the best drugs. There seemed to be little sense of customer loyalty.

Beyond quality, buyers often have interests that seem at odds with the interests of sellers. Many buyers prefer locations they regard as safe. That may mean good lighting and no winding paths to a darkened back door. They prefer easy access to clear and open streets. Buyers favor areas where they have minimal fear of being ripped off from fiends who are waiting in nearby bushes and alleys to rob them of money and drugs. Fiends, however, have little regard for safety and will buy anywhere they can.

Focus group participants also reported that some buyers will also select a drug house by the reputation of its proprietor. Sellers with reputations for violence or being out of control will be avoided by many, except of course, not by those regarded as fiends.

**Drug House Operations.** In their discussion the participants made it clear that the operations of drug houses ranged greatly. Below, however, are some generally agreed upon points.

1. **Customer Base.** Most crack houses (secure or open) will have a customer base of approximately 50 –100 customers. As discussed below these numbers may increase at certain times.

The vast majority of customers (85-90%) will be from the neighborhood immediately surrounding the crack house. Only a small group is not from the neighborhood and a much smaller portion (5%) is believed to be suburban white buyers.

Those white suburban buyers are prized by sellers because they buy in weight, often spending \$3-6 hundred dollars a day. As such they are protected from fiends who might rob them going in or out of the drug house.

White suburban looking customers will not automatically be sold to. They will need to be vouched for and will often need to establish themselves as legitimate customers by

smoking crack in the sellers presence and or by securing the services of a crack house prostitute.

Participants said that about 40% of customers were more or less casual drug users who held jobs and pursued a range of other interests. About 60% of customers could be characterized as “fiends.” Fiends are heavy drug users whose life revolves around getting and using drugs. A small group, perhaps 10% were described by some as “crack-heads.” These people were extreme fiends and had little or nothing in their life besides the pursuit of crack.

2. **Drug Supply.** Participants reported that there seemed to be no limit to the demand for drugs but that supply was often a problem. At times good quality drugs could be obtained and at times lower quality was all that was available. A small number of drug houses would close rather than sell inferior product but most would not. At times the supply would run out entirely and houses would close until more drugs became available.
3. **Pricing.** Drug prices do not seem to vary with supply. With constant demand, drug supplies often run out at particular locations. Customers are told approximately when drugs will be available. These temporary shortages do not affect price.
4. **Hours of Operation.** Many drug houses are open around the clock (24-7) until they run out of drugs. Some drug houses are open more limited hours. These are usually houses that sell weight or sell only to a select group of acquaintances. They tell their customers their hours of operation. They close in an effort to control the volume of traffic that approaches the house. Those sellers want to avoid calling too much attention to themselves. The most lucrative hours of operation are from 9 pm to 3am.
5. **Interior Design.** Group members described a range of interior layouts for drug houses. These depended greatly on the type of house. In some cases drugs were sold from fully furnished homes. For the most serious enterprises, however, sellers preferred minimalism in interior design. “A chair and a gun” was all that a “good drug house” should have in it according to one respondent. The explanation for this was that other accoutrements diverted attention from the main task and thus created opportunities for the police and for robbers. Business oriented sellers preferred to stay focused on the business.
6. **Security.** All drug houses have guns in them. Armed sellers are the principle form of security in most locations. Open drug houses will have no other security. In open houses guns will be readily at hand whenever anyone approaches the house. Secure houses will have physical barriers preventing speedy entry. Pit bulls were also mentioned as common in secure houses. Customers are discouraged from bringing guns with them to drug houses. Sellers will usually see entering an open drug house with a gun as a threat.

7. **Personnel.** Here too there was variation according to the type of house. Some houses were operated by as few as two persons. Open houses with two sellers were considered dangerous. Appropriate staffing of an active house was considered to be between four and six. Of those, two would work in the house managing the sales. One or two would be on the street in front and the same number in the rear yard of the house. These workers would provide security against fiends robbing customers on their way in or out, they would watch for signs of surveillance by police, and they would steer prospective customers to the house.
8. **Gross Revenues.** Reports of revenues varied somewhat. Revenues of \$1000 between 9pm and 3am were considered good for a busy house. Others reported that a “good house” could produce \$4000-\$5000 in income a day when it was busy and had good drugs.

**Drug Houses and the Police.** The discussions with the focus groups indicated that drug sellers are very concerned about detection by the police and about subsequent arrest. In fact, the participants agreed that the police were very likely to identify any drug house and close it through arrests. Their view on this was so strong that it included the belief that drug houses only stay open as long as the police allow them to. Participants believed that drug houses were very likely to be reported to police by neighbors. They indicated that sellers were constantly concerned that too much traffic and activity by customers would bring police surveillance. They also viewed the police as very efficient and effective at making undercover drug buys or using “rats” to make buys on their behalf. This contributed to a great mistrust of all unknown customers.

Drug sellers’ opinions that the police are very effective also influence the way drugs are sold. Sellers believe that police response to an active drug house is almost inevitable. They respond to this belief by moving drug houses frequently within the same neighborhood. Active drug houses may typically be open only a month or six weeks in a location before moving to a new nearby location. Sellers thus try to keep their local customer base while avoiding arrest.

**The Natural History of a Drug House.** Focus group participants described the operation of a drug house as a process influenced by a variety of external factors. Their description can be summarized as a series of steps or stages that a house goes through.

1. **Opening.** Drug houses open fairly quietly with sales to people the sellers know personally and then to people who are vouched for by friends and acquaintances.
2. **Good Drugs.** New houses often have the best quality drugs. That helps attract customers. Houses may also offer free samples or two-for-one deals so customers

spread the word to others. Such promotions are regarded as especially beneficial with white, suburban customers who can bring in large volumes of business.

3. **Control Efforts.** “Smart sellers” will make real efforts to manage their business. They will worry about the level of traffic on the street, where people park and the volume of customers coming to the door. They will attempt to tell customers where and where not to park and they will encourage customers to exit the area quickly. Some will close during the day to avoid looking too busy.
4. **“Poppin.”** Word will spread in the neighborhood if the drugs from a house are of good quality. With that, a house will start “poppin,” that is it will become very active or “hot.” New and unknown customers will come to the house and fiends will constantly be around. The house will not be able to close for certain hours and the street will be “jammed” with drive-up and walk-up traffic.
5. **Loss of Control.** “Smart sellers” will see a poppin house, or a house that gets hot, as increasingly difficult to control. They will see the house as an increasingly risky enterprise because they feel more vulnerable to robbers and to the police. But they will also like the increased revenues resulting from being a hot house.
6. **Response.** The perceived increase in risk will prompt many sellers to respond. Some will respond by closing the house and opening a new one down the street in an effort to maintain the same customer base. Others will hire young and inexperienced sellers to man the house while the original sellers open a second location. They thus transfer the risks to the novice employees.

Group members also reported that, in some cases, landlords assist in moving drug houses. Several participants reported knowing of cases where landlords had been informed by the local NET office or city officials that their property was suspected of being used to sell drugs. Landlords then informed the drug sellers of this and assisted them in relocating to another property owned by the same landlord. In some cases this was repeated several times.

**The Dynamics of Drug House Robberies.** The focus groups also discussed the problem of drug house robberies directly. All of the members were familiar with locations that had been robbed. All of the young men and 5 of the 11 women said they had been in houses during a robbery.

The group members regard drug house robberies as very dangerous, high-risk activity for both the “spot robbers” and their victims. The obvious presence of a lot of guns makes these robberies very volatile. They also reported that most drug house robberies are highly organized activities, usually committed by teams of four or more robbers who are often hooded and heavily armed.

The participants reported that robberies were most likely to occur at houses that were “hot” at the time. These places were easily identified by “spot robbers” and were likely to yield significant quantities of drugs and money. Sellers who openly displayed wealth (flossing) were also seen as likely candidates for robbery.

Spot robbers have several means of identifying targets. They may know locations from their own drug purchases or that of friends, they may follow “flossing” sellers, and they will also use fiends to tell them where the hottest houses in a neighborhood are.

Once a possible robbery target is identified, spot robbers will often study the location closely. They may purchase drugs there themselves or have female accomplices purchase drugs and even smoke in the house while they case it for the robbery. Secure houses that cannot be easily entered may discourage robbers.

The robbery itself is sudden, quick and organized. Most robberies do not involve assaults or shootings but all have a high potential to. The group indicated that they believed that robbers that are not masked are more likely commit homicide in the course of the robbery or that homicide might result if victim’s were reluctant to give up the money and drugs.

**Rochester SACSI Research  
Working Paper # 13 August 22, 2001**

**Estimates of the Size of the Rochester Drug Market  
and their Implications for Addressing Homicide**

**A. Introduction**

There have been many efforts to estimate the size of illegal drug markets. Most often these estimates occur at the national level and involve projections based on assumptions about the proportion of drugs that are seized at the border. In other cases, some people have sought to estimate the effect of police activity on drug markets by tracking the purity, potency and cost of illegal drugs.

None of these efforts is ever completely satisfactory. Estimating illegal activity is complicated and difficult. There is, however, some value in such estimates particularly if their limitations are recognized and they are used in general ways that do not require high degrees of accuracy.

Information is available that may allow coarse estimates of the size of the illegal drug market in Rochester. Such estimates may provide useful information for the SACSI focus on homicide in Rochester.

The information used below is derived from Rochester police estimates of the number of active drug selling locations, and customer and revenue estimates made by inmates in focus groups held at the Monroe County Correctional Facility by the SACSI research team.

**B. The Figures:**

Police estimates indicate that there are approximately 300 known or suspected drug-selling locations in Rochester.

The inmate focus groups suggest that drug houses commonly have 50-100 customers. The focus groups also suggest that gross revenues of \$1000 a night are not uncommon and that "hot" houses may bring in \$4000-\$5000 a night at times.

**C. The Estimates:**

**Total buyer/user population**

The figures allow estimation of the total Rochester drug buyer/user population as follows.

300 houses X 50 customers per house = 15,000 total customers.

Please note that this figure uses the conservative estimate of 50 customers per house.



## **Total Revenue**

We can also estimate total revenues as follows.

Again being conservative, if average houses make only \$500 a night for only 4 nights a week they gross \$2000 a week or \$104000 a year.

300 houses X \$104,000 = \$31.2 million

### **D. Are These Estimates Reasonable?**

A very conservative approach is taken to develop these estimates. A less conservative but still defensible approach would yield estimates over twice the size of these. These estimates are conservative because 1) they do not include estimates of the number of unidentified drug selling locations, 2) they use the lowest estimate of the number drug house customers and 3) they use an estimate that actually reduces the lowest estimate of revenues that was made by the focus groups.

The estimates indicate that buyer/users make up 6.3% of the population of Rochester. The National Household Survey on Drug Abuse show that over 10% of the population over 12 yrs old have used illicit drugs during the past year. The figure is approximately 8% for marijuana and 1.7% for cocaine. It is difficult to make direct comparisons between those numbers and the Rochester estimates but the figures do not suggest the local estimates are unreasonable.

The estimates also indicate that each buyer/user spent on average \$2080 year of \$40 a week on illegal drugs. On its face this does not seem unreasonable.

### **E. What These Estimates Say About Drug Related Homicide.**

In the year 2000, sixteen of the forty homicides in Rochester were described as drug related. Using that figure and these estimates this means:

There was one drug related homicide for every 937.5 drug buyer/users (15000/16).

There was one drug related homicide for every \$1.95 million in gross drug revenues (31.2m/16).

### **F. Conclusion**

These last figures suggest that affecting homicide indirectly through interventions designed to address drugs will be extremely difficult. They support development of interventions which target homicide directly and which may or may not have an effect on drug sales or use.

## **Rochester SACSI Research Working Paper # 15: July, 2002**

### **The Link Between Drugs and Homicide**

#### **Introduction**

Connections between drugs and homicide are widely acknowledged. Belief in those links has helped to understand the nature of homicide, to direct homicide investigations and to develop approaches to homicide prevention. These connections, however, have rarely been specifically delineated. Thus no common vocabulary for describing the connections between drugs and murder has developed and no common set of variables to consider has been recognized.

As a result of this lack of standardization, estimates of the links between drugs and homicide can range widely. Furthermore, the potential significance of those links for understanding and preventing homicide may not be fully considered due to this lack of a shared methodology.

The detailed information available to the researchers on homicides in 2000 and in 2001 has allowed us to revisit the question of drug and homicide connections (see Working Paper #6). In this paper we attempt to describe the specific ways in which homicide and drugs are linked in a set of Rochester homicide cases.

#### **Methodology**

SACSI researchers began by developing a conceptual model of the possible links between drugs and homicide (see figure 1). This model treats homicides as events in which drug experiences of victims and/or suspects, or drug related motives could all be identified as drug links. Drug links in this model was viewed as an ordinal scale running from no link through weak links and on to strong links. We attempted to operationalize that model with the available data.

Researchers reviewed all Rochester homicides<sup>1</sup> from the years 2000 and 2001 (N=81) in an effort to investigate and describe the possible links between the cases and drugs. In this process we examined a variety of data sources including victim and suspect arrests records and records of documents interviews with the police (FIF's), information

---

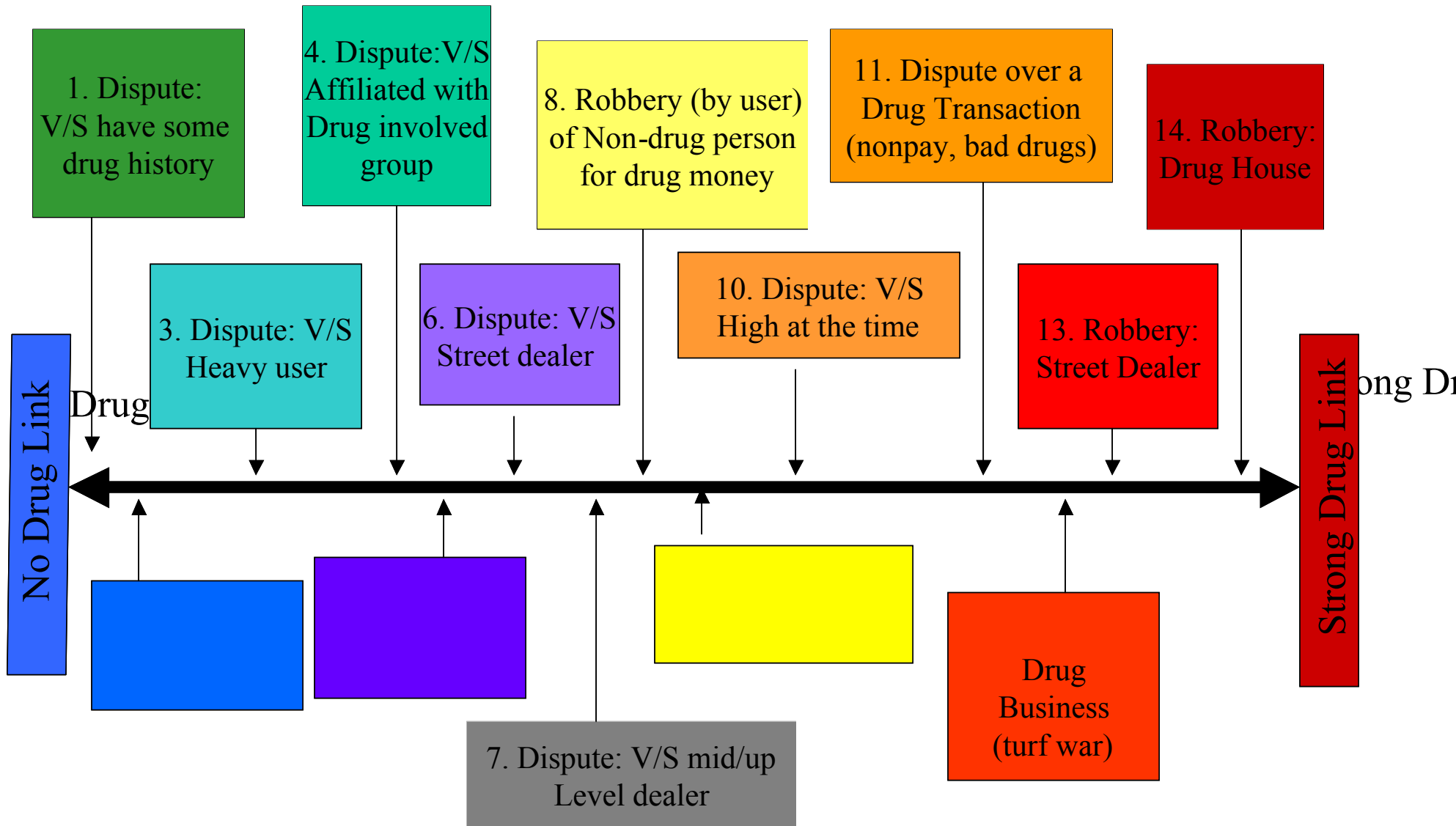
<sup>1</sup> Of all cases 54% were cleared with an arrest, in 20% of cases there was a suspect but an arrest had not occurred and in 26% of cases there were no suspects. The decision was made to include all cases in the analysis because there was substantial information available on cases even where there was no data on suspects. The difference between the proportion of cases with drug links across cases where arrests had been made and where there was no suspect averaged 14.9% for the seven possible drug links. Thus the effect of including the cases where there is no suspect is to underestimate rather than overestimate the links to drugs.

in the homicide case files, and the content of presentations and discussions of formal incident reviews of the homicide cases. These sources provide a wide variety of information including the informed opinions of homicide investigators about specific drug links.

The review of data allowed us to examine seven drug related measures. We included evidence of a serious alcohol problem in this list.

# How Drugs May Be Related to Homicide

Fig 1



V/S= victim or suspect

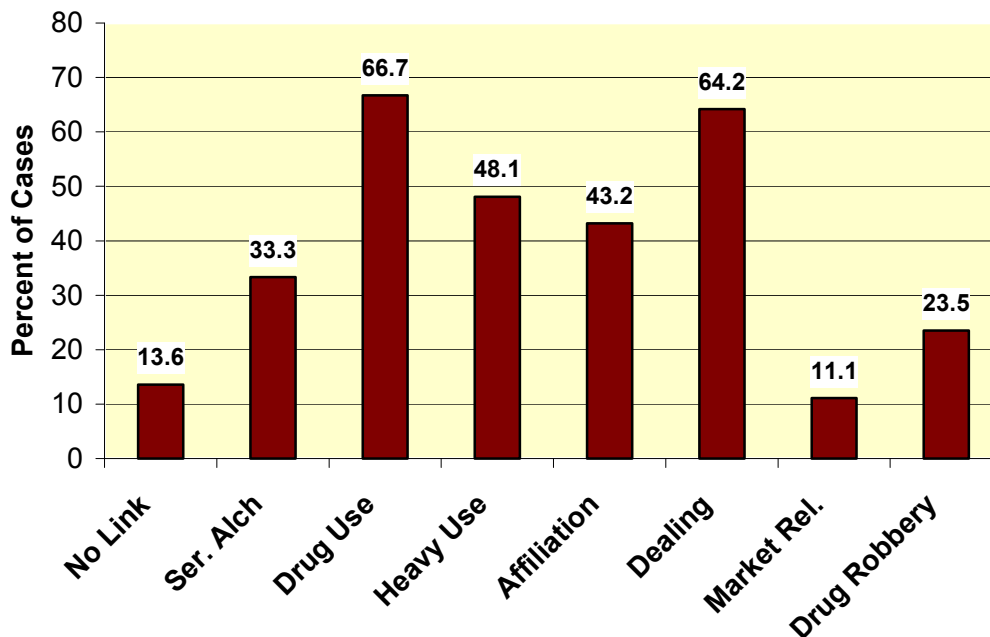
The chart below shows how each of the seven variables representing different types of drug links was measured.

Table 1: How Variables were Measured		
Variable Name	Description	Measurement (any indicator yields positive measurement)
Ser. Alch	Vic/Susp Serious Alcohol Problem	Prior DWI, DWAI arrest, statement in reports of heavy alcohol intoxication at time of offense
Drug Use	Vic/Susp evidence of drug use	Prior FIFs for use or presence in drug area, possession arrests
Heavy Use	Vic/Susp known as heavy drug user	Present in police report, interviews or police knowledge reported at incident review
Affiliation	Vic/Susp Affiliated with known Drug Group	FIFs, arrests with known drug offenders, present in police reports or reported at incident review
Dealing	Vic/Susp evidence of drug sales	Prior arrests, present in police reports or presented at incident review
Market Rel.	Drug Market Related (turf, transaction)	Conflict over turf or transaction gone bad as reported at incident review or documented in police file
Drug Robbery	Drug Related Robbery	As reported at incident review or documented in police files, robbery of person for drug money, robbery of street dealer, robbery of drug house.

## Findings

Using these seven measures, links between homicide and drugs were found in 86.4% of the homicide cases. Figure 2 below shows the most common link was that there was a police record of drug use for the victim or suspect (66.7% of cases). The second most common link was for a police record of drug sales for victim or suspect (64.2%). Heavy drug use or affiliation with a known drug group was also present in more than 40% of cases. The homicides most directly linked to drugs include 23.5% involving drug related robberies and 11.1% involving drug transactions gone badly or battles for turf.

**Figure 2: Type of Drug Link to Homicide Cases (N=81)**



Since there may be more than one type of drug link in any homicide case we also examined the number of links found for the murders. Figure 3 presents these findings. In 44% of the homicides there were 4 (out of 7 possible) or more links to drugs.

As suggested above, it is rare that homicides have only one link to drugs. That is true in only 19% of homicides. In only one case was the link limited to evidence of drug use by victim or suspect. Likewise, there was only one case where heavy drug use was the only link. In four cases each, drug dealing and affiliation with a known drug related group was the sole link between homicide and drugs. In all murder cases involving drug transaction problems or drug robberies the participants also had other links to drugs. The link most often found alone was evidence of a serious alcohol problem. That was the only link found in 6% of homicide cases.

The most common set of two links together in a case was for the presence of evidence of drug use and of drug dealing.<sup>2</sup> That was present in 58% of the homicides.

<sup>2</sup> The correlations between the seven variables are presented below

The most common set of three links was for drug use, serious use and dealing. That was present in 39% of cases. The next most common connection involved affiliation with a known drug group. Taken together these findings suggest that a nexus of drug use, heavy use, dealing and affiliation with a known drug group is significant among homicide cases.

**Figure 3: Number of Drug Links in Homicide Cases**

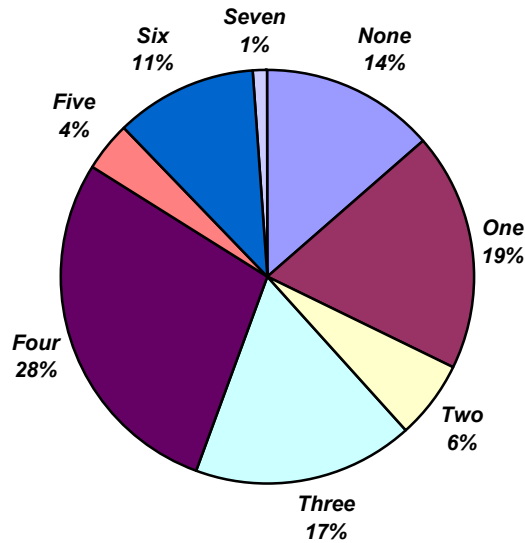


Table 4: Correlations	1. Ach. Prob	2. Drug Use	3. Heavy Use	4. Dealing	5. Drug Affiliation	6. Mkt related
1. Alcohol Problem						
Drug Use	.22					
3. Heavy Drug Use	.31	.58				
4. Drug Dealing	.02	.35	.06			
5. Drug Group Affiliation	-.07	.67	.36	.44		
6. Drug Market related	.33	.25	.21	.33	.18	
7. Drug related Robbery	.10	.27	.23	.23	.17	.18

## Summary of Findings

1. There is some link to drugs in a large number (86%) of homicide cases.
2. A police record of drug use is the most common link but it is also often tied to a record of selling and reports of heavy drug use.
3. Links to problems in the drug market, including robberies are found in over 1/3 of homicide cases.

## Discussion

Great care must be exercised in interpreting the results of this research. This is especially true because we do not have measures of drug links that are independent of the criminal justice system and also because we do not have similar data outside of the realm of homicide. That is, our ability to know the significance of findings about levels of use or selling for understanding homicide is limited by the absence of comparison groups.

We have, however, touched upon the link between drugs and homicide in several recent working papers. Those findings may be seen as complimentary to those suggested here. An examination of toxicology reports (Working Paper #16, forthcoming) found a relatively low proportion of victims with drugs in their systems. This suggests that intoxication may make a limited causal contribution to homicide.

We also examined the criminal records of homicide victims and suspects and compared them with the records of a matched sample of young minority men from the same neighborhoods (Working Paper #17, forthcoming). This showed that while arrests are frequent in the matched sample, arrests for serious drug crimes and violence are rare when compared with the homicide victims and suspects. Homicide victims and suspects are more likely to be tied to drug markets and culture, as identified by the police, than their neighbors.

Describing the relationship between drugs and homicide is a complicated task. Even where that link may appear to be strongest, it may not necessarily mean that drugs caused the homicide. Drug related robbery murders, for example, might have little to do with drugs and much to do with robbery. Drug robbers may simply rob drug dealers for the same reason Willie Sutton robbed banks; because “that’s where the money is.”

The SACSI research suggests however that describing indirect causal influences of drugs on homicide may be most appropriate. In Rochester young minority men living in poor neighborhoods are over represented in homicides. Their criminal records and their level of involvement with drugs often distinguish them, not only from the population at large, but also from other minority men in their neighborhoods.



This suggests that the influence of drugs on murder may best be understood as most often indirect and reciprocal. Drug connections thus influence and are influenced by behaviors, attitudes and values that increase the likelihood of involvement in homicide. That is, high degrees of engagement in drugs, in terms of heavy use, selling and affiliation with known drug related organizations, could be understood as part of a limited subculture also marked by high potential for violence, intolerance of perceived insults and access to illegal weapons. Of course, that subculture also shares the problems of poverty, educational failure and limited employment

### **Implications for Policy and Intervention**

This research provides some useful information for interventions intended to prevent homicide.

1. It highlights the significance of efforts to keep young minority men in poor neighborhoods away from drug involvement and particularly from intense involvement in drug use, heavy use, selling and affiliation with known drug related organizations.
2. It supports the notion that homicide prevention efforts should focus on individuals identified through records of prior violence and, in particular, involvement in heavy drug use, drug sales and affiliation with known drug groups. This support intervention through efforts such as Project CeaseFire and the Notification of Special Enforcement program (NOSE). And it supports using record of heavy drug use, selling and drug group affiliation among the selection criteria for those programs.
3. The research supports the need to focus on the problem of drug robberies. That is, to improve intelligence about the extent of the problem and to improve efforts to identify and incapacitate drug robbers and to utilize methods such as “knock and talks” which may help prevent drug robberies.
4. Finally the research supports the idea of finding ways of identifying disputes in poor neighborhoods and intervening particularly when the disputants involved have records of heavy drug use, selling drugs and affiliation with known drug groups.

**Rochester SACSI Research**  
Working Paper # 16 7/17/02

## **Analysis of Homicide Victim Toxicology Reports**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Much speculation exists over the connection between homicide and the physiological effects of drug use. While drug intoxication clearly has effects on sensory perception and decision-making, we do not know the extent to which physiological effects are a factor in homicide victimization. In order to further understand the relationship between homicide and the effects of drug use, we examined the toxicology reports of the victims of homicide from 2000-2001 (n=81).

These reports were consulted to identify the proportion of homicide victims with any of four drugs in their system at the time of death. It is important to bear in mind that these data provide information only about homicide victims. However, the similarity of victims to suspects in age, sex, race, criminal history and school performance as well as the nature of most homicide events would suggest that, as a group, victims and suspects would be more similar than dissimilar on drug use behavior. The drugs considered in this report include alcohol, marijuana (cannabinoids), cocaine, and heroin (opiates). Overall, our research provided little evidence of an association between victimization and drug intoxication.

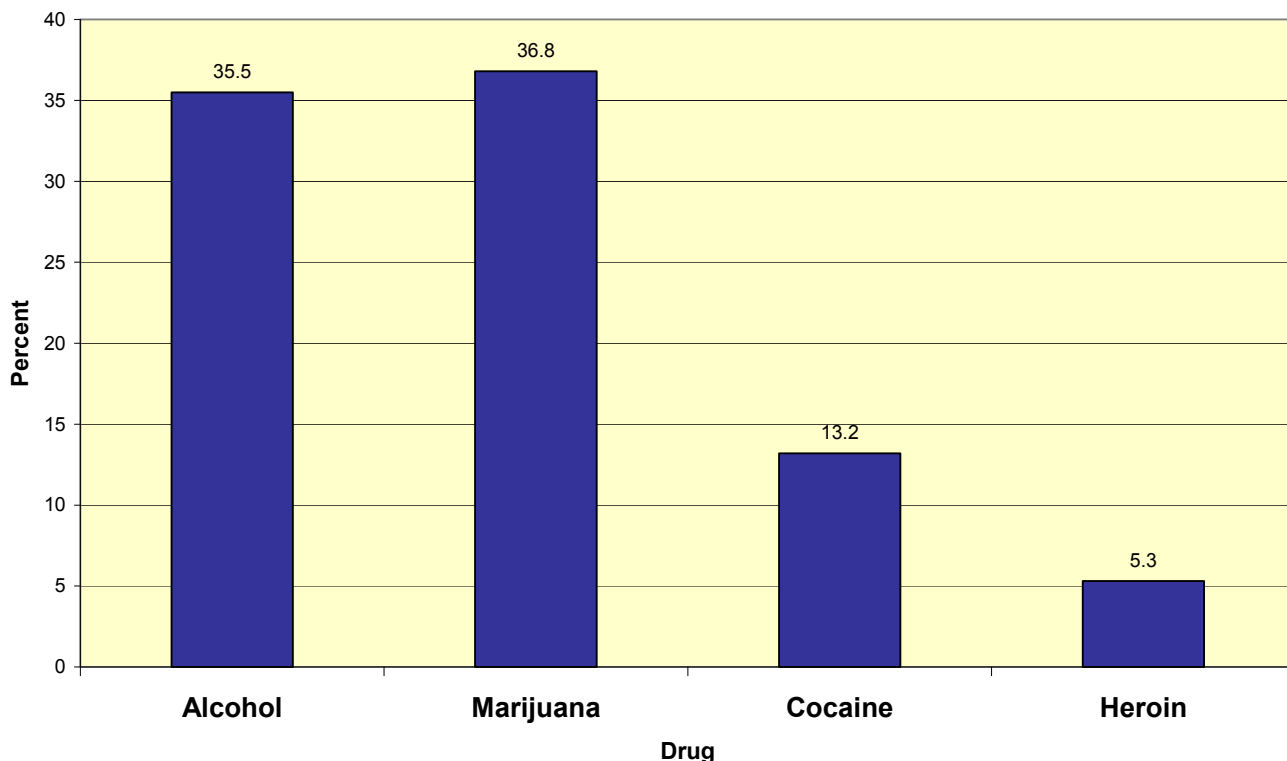
### **FINDINGS**

In conducting our analyses, we ran general frequencies on the toxicology data as well as crosstabulations with chi-square analyses. Any relationships found statistically insignificant by the chi-square tests are not included in the findings of this paper.

#### General Results

Examination of toxicology reports revealed that 69.7 % of victims had some drug (including alcohol) in their system at the time of death. For illegal drugs the figure was 47.4%. The data for individual substances are presented below.

### Percent of Victims Testing Positive



### Reasonable Comparisons

We compared our findings to three studies of drug use: the Department of Health and Human Services' 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Use (which looks at the U.S. population), the 1999 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (a national survey of high school students) and the National Institute of Justice' 2000 Preliminary Report of the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Program (which looks at arrestee populations in 27 cities). When compared to the nation as a whole, a substantially larger percentage of homicide victims had engaged in recent illegal drug use (6.3% to 47.4%). The percentages of cocaine, opiate, and cannabinoid use by homicide victims also were substantially higher than national averages. When compared with the High School Survey differences were considerably smaller. However, when compared to data from the A.D.A.M. program, the rates of use among our homicide victims looks remarkably similar to median drug use rates among male arrestees (Note- we believe this is a fair

comparison considering 87% of the homicide victims in our study were male, and 75% of the victims had a criminal history).

2000 National Household Survey on Drug Use (U.S. Population Data- Ages 12 and older)	1999 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System Data for a males in a national sample of High School Students	Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Program (A.D.A.M) (Median Data- Male Arrestee Populations in 27 Cities)	Homicide Victims: 2000-2001 (Data from Toxicology Reports)
- 6.3% used an illegal drug in the last 30 days		- 65% used an illegal drug	- 47.4% had a drug in system
- .5% used cocaine in the last 30 days	5.2% current cocaine use	- 30% used cocaine	- 13.2% tested positive for cocaine
- .1% used opiates in the last 30 days		- 6% used opiates	- 5.3% tested positive for opiates
- 4.8% used marijuana in the last 30 days	30.8% current marijuana use	- 40% used marijuana	- 36.8% tested positive for cannabinoids
- 20.6% engaged in binge drinking last month	52.3% current alcohol use	- 56.7% engaged in binge drinking last month	35.5% tested positive for alcohol (indicating recent alcohol use)

Based on the A.D.A.M. data, we believe the rates of drug use among our sample of homicide victims are well within the general rates of use among people arrested from crimes. Therefore, we conclude that homicide victims from 2000-2001 were not engaging in drug use behavior which put them at a greater risk for homicide than anyone else with a recent history of criminal activity. In fact, drug use may not look much different than much of the city population. A recent report by the Rochester Metro Council for Teen Potential indicated recently that 43% of city teenagers had smoked marijuana within 30 days.

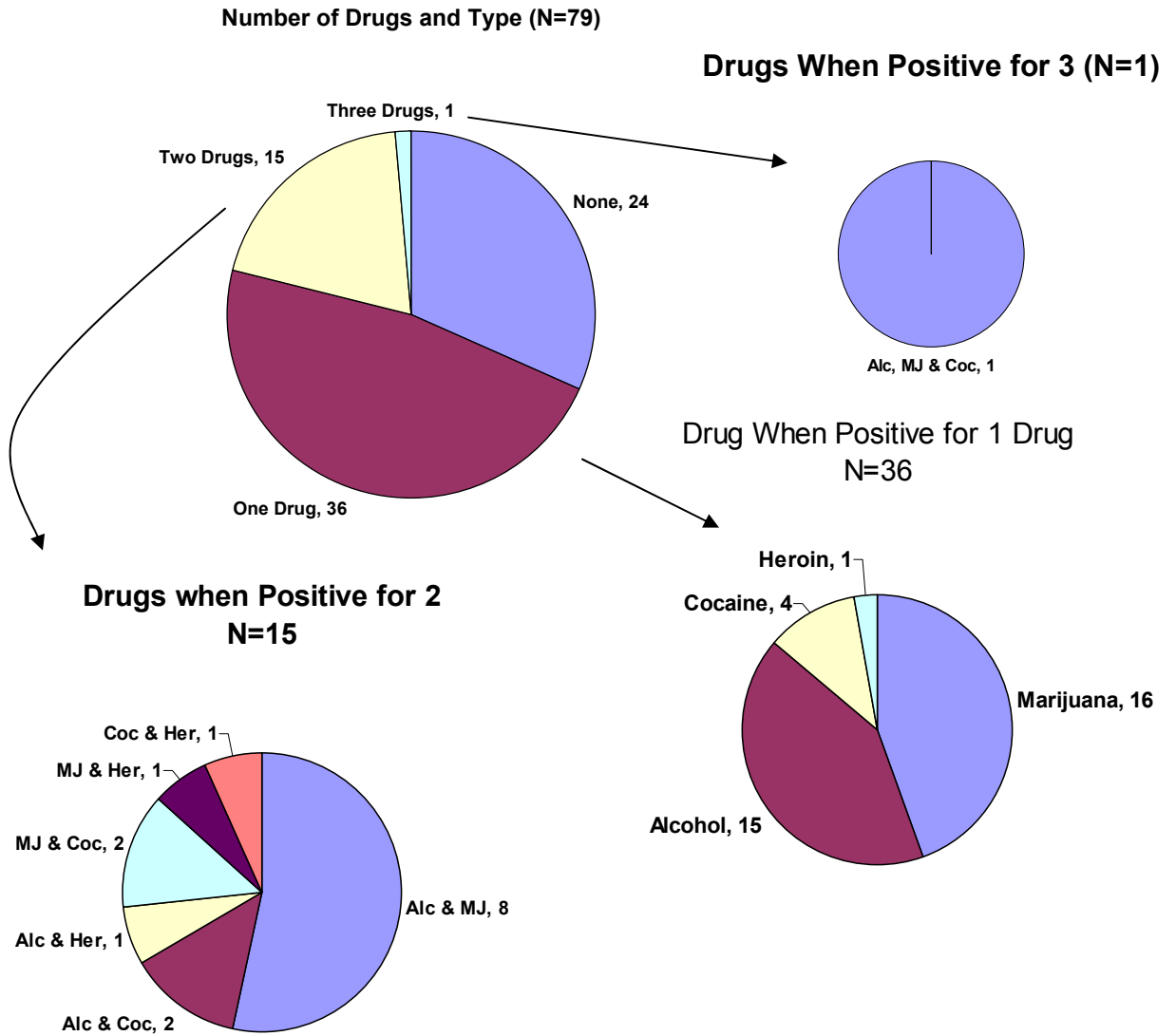
### **Polydrug Use**

Of the homicide victims with alcohol and/or drugs in their system, very few victims showed traces of multiple drugs at the time of their death. Of all the possible combinations of alcohol, cocaine, marijuana, and opiates, the most frequent combination of drugs was alcohol and marijuana, with 12.2% of the sample testing positive for both drugs. No other combination exceeded 4% of the total sample. Although somewhat

surprising, the data tells us two important things: First, that homicide victims were not “drugged out” on a variety of drugs at the time of their death, and second, that alcohol and marijuana are the most frequently used drugs in tandem for homicide victims during 2000-2001. The combined use of alcohol and marijuana was alluded to in our jail interviews, as inmates suggested that good drug dealers would not use harder drugs, but might be drinking and smoking marijuana while selling. Based on this data and the data obtained from the jail interviews, we believe marijuana and alcohol are widely used together among populations similar to the homicide victims, and because the drugs are so widely used together, they cannot be said to have a large impact upon homicides.

Figure 1 shows the number of drugs present in the homicide victims. When toxicology tests were positive for one drug that drug was most likely to be marijuana or alcohol. Multiple drugs were found in 21% of cases. With the exception of one victim who tested positive for three drugs, the other multiple drug cases involved two drugs. The most common combination was for the presence of alcohol and marijuana. Other combinations were rare as the Figure below shows.

**Figure 1:**



**Additional Analyses: Drugs & Age**

When our age variable (*vicageca*) was tested with the toxicology variables, we found evidence of statistically significant ( $p < .10$ ) association between the *vicageca* variable and the toxicology variables *drugsys* and *cannibin*. Our testing indicated that drugs were found more often than expected in the bodies of homicide victims in the 16-25 year old age group. This finding is consistent with the overall distribution of homicide victims, as the victims in the 16-25 age group account for 48.7% of the total number of

victims from 2000-2001. As 36.8% of the total sample tested positive for marijuana, we believe the finding that drug use occurred more often in the 16-25 age group further substantiates the hypothesis that the rates of drug use among homicide victims resembles not only drug use among criminal populations, but among the city youth population in general. Although the analysis did not find a statistically significant association between *vicageca* and *opiates* or *vicageca* and *cocaine*, the lack of statistically significant associations is likely due to the relatively small incidences of their appearance within the dataset compared to cannabinoids.

### Drugs & Police Section

We also analyzed our toxicology variables by section and found further evidence suggesting Clinton and Maple sections are the best sections in which to begin interventions. Our testing found a statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ) association between the *section* variable and the toxicology variable *drugsys* (see exhibit B). Drugs (alcohol and illegal drugs) were found more often than expected in the bodies of homicide victims found in Clinton and Maple sections (note- Goodman section homicide victims also had higher than expected incidences of drug presence, but fewer than five cases occurred in the section, making a conclusion inappropriate).

### Drugs & Season

Our analysis of toxicology variables by section found associations between the *season* variable and the toxicology variables *cannabis* and *alcohol*. At a statistically significant level ( $p < .05$ ), marijuana was found more often than expected in the bodies of homicide victims in the fall months. At a statistically significant level ( $p < .01$ ), alcohol was found more often than expected in the bodies of summer homicide victims. These findings have limited utility, however the association between alcohol and the summer months further illustrates how alcohol-related violence is exacerbated by the increase of social interaction which occurs during the summer months.

### Drugs & Prior Drug Arrest

When comparing our toxicology variables with incidences of prior drug arrest for homicide victims, we found the presence of drugs in a homicide victim's body to be closely related to prior drug arrest. At a statistically significant level ( $p < .01$ ), we found prior drug arrests more often than expected among those homicide victims with drugs (alcohol and illegal) and illegal drugs in their system. Likewise, those homicide victims who had never been arrested for drugs were found to have no drugs in their system more often than expected. Clearly, those homicide victims who were known to be involved in drugs (via criminal history) were much more likely to have had drugs in their system at their death.

### Drugs & Victim Involvement

Of all the testing of the toxicology variables, the interaction between type of homicide and the presence of drugs is possibly the most significant. Our *type* variable divides homicides into three major categories: dispute, drug-robbery, and wrong place/wrong time. Those victims in the wrong place/wrong time category were the least likely to have drugs in their systems, while more than expected levels of illegal drugs were found in the bodies of victims of drug robbery homicides. We attribute this finding to those homicide victims being involved in or around the drug business, and therefore more likely than dispute or wrong place/wrong time victims to have engaged in some sort of illegal drug use. Finally, a larger than expected number of victims of disputes had alcohol in their systems. The correlation between alcohol and disputes seems clear, but in this sample is probably exacerbated by the large number of domestic dispute homicides in which the victim and suspect had been drinking prior to an argument

### **Implications for Intervention**

Taken together, Working Paper 15:[Drug Links to Homicide](#) and this report of toxicology data are suggestive about the role of drugs in homicide cases. The analyses indicate the importance of social rather than physiological links between drugs and murder. That is, social networks which may be tied to reputations for heavy use, selling, and links to known drug related groups appear to be more significant influences than the physiological effects of drugs.

This reinforces the potential value of programs intended to limit connections to such networks by providing alternatives to young, minority males in poor neighborhoods. It also supports considering connections to drug networks as part of the process of identifying candidates for deterrence and incapacitation based programs such as Project CeaseFire and Notification of Special Enforcement (NOSE).

### **A Note on Methodology**

Toxicology data in this analysis comes from homicide victim toxicology reports produced by the Monroe County Medical Examiner. Initially, we gathered from the Rochester Police Department, however we were unable to obtain all of the reports from RPD (because of the transition to the new Public Safety Building) so the Monroe County Medical Examiner's Office graciously provided us access to their records for the missing records. Of the 81 reports, 5 victims did not undergo toxicology tests due to prolonged hospital stays prior to death. The 5 reports with missing information were excluded from further analysis.

Using a standardized coding sheet, we recorded the presence (of lack thereof) of the following drugs: alcohol, nicotine, cocaine, opiates (heroin, opium, peyote), and cannabinoids (marijuana). From the coding sheets, we developed 8 variables which were added to an existing database of the 2000-2001 homicides.



<b>VARIABLE (database variable name)</b>	<b>DATA SOURCE</b>
Does victim have a toxicology report? ( <i>toxreprt</i> )	-Existence of Medical Examiner (ME) toxicology report, obtained from either RPD or the Office of the Medical Examiner
Did victim have one or more drugs in his/her system? (Includes both illegal drugs and alcohol) ( <i>drugsys</i> )	-Positive result on ME toxicology report for one or more of the following drugs in victim's body: alcohol, cocaine, opiates, and/or cannabinoids
Did victim have one or more illegal drugs in his/her system? ( <i>ildrgsys</i> )	-Positive result on ME toxicology report for one or more of the following illegal drugs in victim's body: cocaine, opiates, and/or cannabinoids
Did victim have cocaine in his/her system? ( <i>cocaine</i> )	-Positive result on ME toxicology report for the presence of cocaine in victim's body
Did victim have opiates in his/her system? ( <i>opiates</i> )	-Positive result on ME toxicology report for the presence of opiates in victim's body
Did victim have cannabinoids in his/her system? ( <i>cannibin</i> )	-Positive result on ME toxicology report for presence of marijuana in victim's body
Did victim have alcohol in his/her system? ( <i>alcohol</i> )	-Positive result on ME toxicology report for the presence of alcohol in victim's body

The following table indicates additional variables used in the toxicology database. We regularly record the data in these variables as part of an ongoing homicide database, and chose to use them for comparison purposes in the toxicology database

<b>VARIABLE (database variable name)</b>	<b>DATA SOURCE</b>
Age of victim- in categories ( <i>vicageca</i> )	-Reporting from Incident Reviews (categories: 0-9, 10-15, 16-25, 26-40, over 40)
Section where homicide occurs ( <i>section</i> )	-Reporting from Incident Reviews (categories: Lake, Downtown, Goodman, Maple, Clinton, Genesee)
What season the homicide occurred in ( <i>season</i> )	-Reporting from Incident Reviews
Did the victim have prior drug arrests ( <i>vdrug</i> )	-Reporting from Incident Reviews -RPD Criminal History records
Type of victim involvement ( <i>type</i> )	-Reporting from Incident Reviews (categories: no victim involvement, dispute, drug robbery)

Tests of significance are reported in these analyses for convenience of interpretation. No effort is being made to suggest that these homicide victims are a representative sample of all homicide victims.

One caution should be clear in this research. Metabolism rates across people vary and tests detect different drugs for different lengths of time. For example detection of marijuana may continue up to 30 days after use while 4-5 days is common for most other drugs. This may help explain difference in detection rates across drugs. It also means that these data, as we collected them, tell only if a substance was detected and not the victims condition at the time of death.

## **Rochester SACSI Research**

**Working Paper # 17 7/19/02**

# **Criminal Records in High Crime Neighborhoods**

## **Summary**

This paper examines the arrest records of sample of young minority men living in high crime neighborhoods in Rochester and then compares them with records of homicide victims and suspects. In a random sample of 303 minority men over age 17 years old whose home schools were in the crescent area of Rochester, 39% had a record of arrest within the past four years. The data indicate that records of arrest are common among males in high crime neighborhoods but that arrests for serious charges, especially violence, gun crimes and drug offenses, are relatively rare when compared with those of homicide victims and suspects.

## **Context**

The SACSI research in Rochester has been consistent with research in other SACSI cities showing that both suspects and victims in homicide cases often have significant criminal histories. One interpretation of this fact may be that those involved in serious violence are likely to have prior records of violence and other serious crime. A basic assumption in criminal justice has been that significant criminal records can help predict further involvement in serious crime. This view has found support in other well-known findings such as the fact that research has frequently demonstrated that a large amount of crime is committed by a small group of serious repeat offenders.

Prediction of further involvement in crime has been both complicated and controversial. Advances in the accuracy of prediction have been limited. Systematic study of the process continues to show that high levels of false positives (predicting future crime when none actually occurs) plague the prediction process. However, the logic of prediction based on past criminal behavior and the hope for improvements remain significant influences in criminal justice.

One serious problem affecting this area of work has been limited information about the criminal records of persons not identified through the criminal justice system. To draw conclusions about the value of criminal records in predicting crime it is important to have information regarding the criminal records of ordinary people, not just those who are identified when involved in serious crime. This is especially true when

crime is concentrated geographically. The small number of serious offenders in one study could also be a significantly higher proportion of people in high crime neighborhoods. The extent to which a small group of offenders is responsible for a large proportion of crime, and more particularly the usefulness of that conclusion, may depend on the base or population selected for the research.

There is evidence to suggest that criminal records may be quite common among people living in high crime neighborhoods. Research has shown high rates of arrest and incarceration among minority males in cities. Furthermore, a review of field interviews by the police in Rochester shows that those interviews are concentrated in high crime neighborhoods and that 80% of persons stopped by the police and interviewed have arrest records with the police.

## Methods

SACSI research has shown that homicide victims and suspects tend to have significant criminal records. A sample of persons that might be compared with the data on homicide victims and suspects was sought to determine how distinct those criminal records might be. The goal was to find a sample that was not drawn from criminal justice data sources and to examine sample members' criminal records.

A sample was drawn from the records of the Rochester City School District. The district is approximately 80% minority and 90% poor as measured by eligibility for participation in the free or reduced price lunch program. To maximize comparability with the homicide victim and suspect data, a random sample was selected comprised of minority males who were in the 1<sup>st</sup> through the 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 1990 (expected approximate current age 17-25) and whose home schools<sup>3</sup> were in the "crescent area" where most homicides occur. Researchers examined criminal histories on this sample. Those histories covered a time period of 4 years<sup>4</sup> for which data was archived by the Rochester Police Department.

The Neighborhood sample of 303 was compared with 52 identified suspects and 78 homicide victims.<sup>5</sup> In first check of comparability of the groups indicated that the median ages of the groups were quite similar: For the Neighborhood Sample median age is 24.3 years, for victims it is 28.5 and for suspects it is 25.1.

---

<sup>3</sup> The home school in Rochester is that school closest to a student's residence where the student would go if he or she made no other choice. Home school is used here as a surrogate measure of neighborhood of residence.

<sup>4</sup> Criminal records data were available from the Rochester Police Department for four years. This period was therefore examined for each group. This may lead to similar underestimations of arrest records in each group since some arrests may predate the data.

<sup>5</sup> Homicide victims and suspects under age 17 were excluded from this analysis.

The most significant limitation of these data is that they will underestimate the proportion of the sample that actually has a criminal record. The sample does not permit tracking of individuals who may have moved out of the City of Rochester since 1990. Therefore, sample members meeting those conditions may have accumulated more lengthy arrest records but that data is not available. The data also do not allow for the deaths of some sample members. It is important to note that this limitation would lead to underestimating but not overestimating the level of criminal history in the group. This sample does, however, include people who may have been sentenced to prison while living in Rochester. Their criminal records will show the arrest and charges that led to confinement.

## Findings

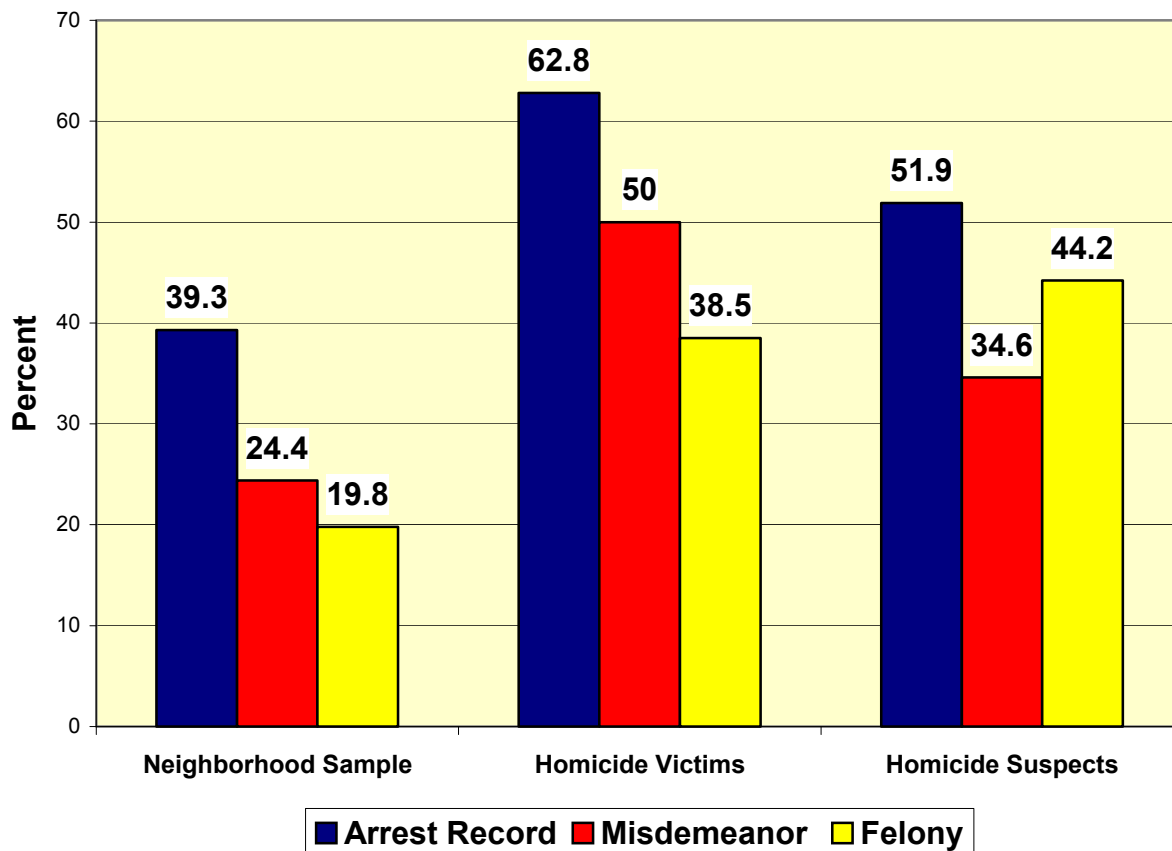
Findings are presented below. In the neighborhood sample a record of arrest was present in 39.3% of the cases.<sup>6</sup> That is a substantial level but below the levels for homicide victims and suspects. Unexpectedly, the proportion among victims was somewhat higher than the proportion of persons with arrest records among the suspects.

<sup>6</sup> The more complete data are presented below:

	Neighborhood Sample	Homicide Victims	Homicide Suspects
N	303	78	52
Median Age	24.3	28.5	25.1
Mean # of Arrests (sd)	1.56 (3.0)	1.35 (2.0)	1.75 (2.4)
Mean # of Charges (sd)	4.7 (11.8)	6.9 (9.4)	5.0 (7.1)

Offense Category	% of Neighborhood Sample (n=303)	% of Victims (n= 79)	% of Suspects (n= 52)
Any Arrest	39.3%	62.8	51.9
Misdemeanor Charge	24.4	50.0	34.6
Felony Charge	19.8	38.5	44.2
Public Order Off.	22.1	44.4	42.9
Property Off	12.5	44.4	17.1
Violent Off	8.6	11.1	45.7
Drug Off	14.9	31.5	31.4
Gun Off	3.0	14.8	17.1

## Proportion of Groups with Arrest



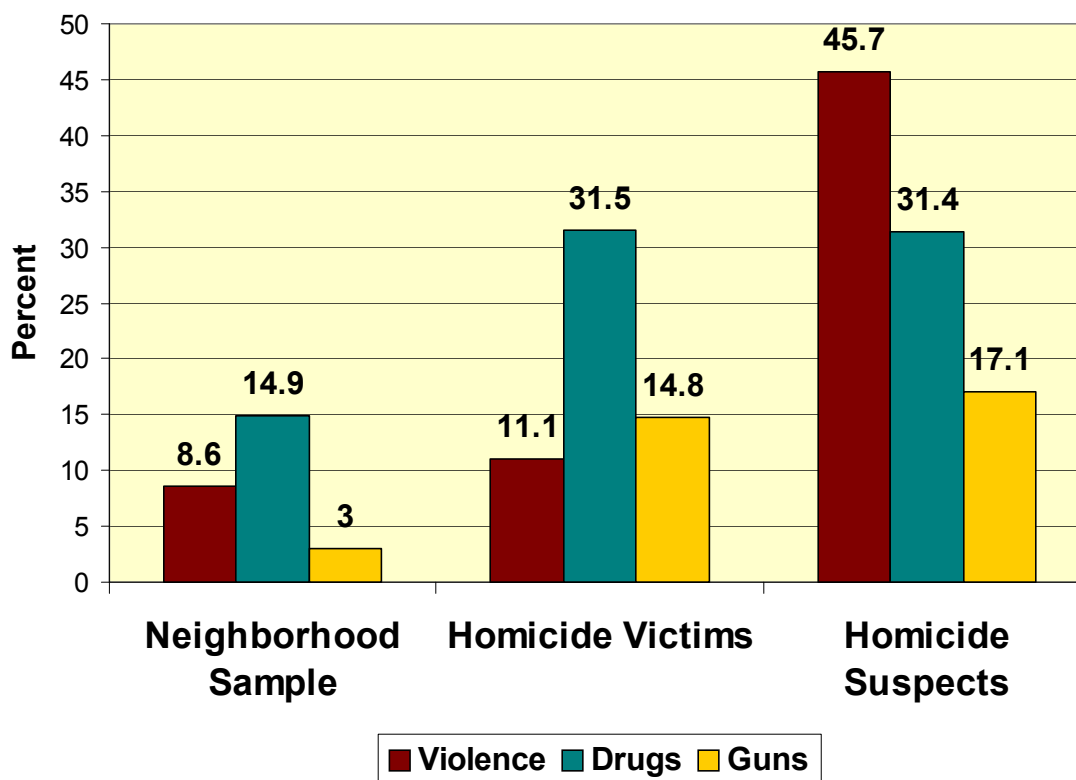
When level of charges is considered a more complete picture begins to emerge.<sup>7</sup> The proportions of people with misdemeanor and felony charges are both lower in the neighborhood sample than in the other groups. Felony records are more prevalent among homicide suspects than any other group.

Examining the specific type of charges helps to clarify the emerging pattern.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> All relationships shown are significant beyond .05 using Chi Square.

<sup>8</sup> In these data violent crimes include: murder, rape, assault and robbery. Drug Offenses include CPCS (Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance) and CSCS (Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance) in any degree, UPM (Unauthorized Possession of Marijuana). Gun crimes include possession of a firearm in any degree.

## Proportion of Group with Violence, Drug or Gun Arrests



Gaps between the neighborhood sample and the other groups grow when the nature of criminal records is considered.<sup>9</sup> The neighborhood sample has the lowest level of persons charged with a violent crime while the suspects show the highest rates by far. With regard to being charged with drug offenses, homicide victims and suspects are similar and reach a level approximately twice that found in the neighborhood sample. Arrest on gun charges also separates the neighborhood sample from the victims and suspects.

These data indicated that a substantial proportion of young minority men in Rochester's high crime neighborhoods have records of arrest. They are, however, not as likely as homicide victims and suspects to have such records. When types of criminal

<sup>9</sup> Since multiple charges often occur on a single arrest, the sum of charges will not equal the sum of the number of arrests. Individuals may also have felony and misdemeanor arrests and arrests for any or all types of offenses. Therefore, charts are not intended to add to 100% for each group. Data on suspects does not include charges for the current homicide in which they are a suspect.

records are considered the victims and suspects show some important similarities and they are quite distinct from the neighborhood sample. Records of violence are much higher among suspects than in the other groups. Taken together records of arrests on charges of violence, guns and drugs distinguish the homicide victims and suspects from the neighborhood sample.

### **A Check on our findings**

The fact that our data do not follow individuals in our neighborhood sample over time could bias the study if large numbers in the sample have moved out of Rochester or died. The problem would lead to underreporting of arrest records overall, as well as for specific offense types. Such underreporting, however, would not affect the ratio of arrests for specific types of crimes to the overall proportion of those with arrest record. We examined this ratio as a second means of determining whether the victims and suspects showed different criminal records than the neighborhood sample.

Ratio of proportion arrested for each crime type to proportion with arrest record	Neighborhood Sample	Homicide Victims	Homicide Suspects
Violence	.22	.18	.88
Drugs	.38	.50	.60
Guns	.08	.23	.33

The data show that for each offense type (except violence in the victim group) the proportion of the arrest record that is accounted for by the charge types is higher among the victim and suspect groups. This means that suspects have a higher proportion of these offenses in their records than do victims who in turn have a higher proportion than in the neighborhood sample. This supports the overall conclusions.

### **Conclusion**

These data add to our understanding of high crime neighborhoods. They show that even in such neighborhoods, where many residents may accumulate a record of arrest, a record of arrest on charges including violence, guns and drugs appears to help distinguish homicide victims and suspects from their neighbors.

### **Implications for Intervention**

The data suggest that the presence of an arrest record alone should be of little value in identifying individuals for interventions seeking to prevent homicide. However, arrests for violence, gun offenses and drug offenses should be among the criteria used to select candidates for CeaseFire, Notification of Special Enforcement (NOSE) and other interventions.



## **Intervention**

The SACSI team developed a definition of the problem of homicide based on the research. That definition was subject to continuous review and refinement based on additional study or newly developing patterns in the data. The basic elements of the problem definition however included:

- 1) A geographically concentrated problem
- 2) A demographically concentrated problem among young , Black, males
- 3) A problem supported by group and neighborhood related dynamics
- 4) A problem manifesting itself as dispute related murders and drug robbery related murders concentrated in different part so the City.

From its inception the SACSI working group was directed toward the development of interventions based on the research. Concern over progress toward developing interventions was often a part of reviews of the research. As the research progressed, members of the SACSI working group continued to ask questions that directed additional research, and also began to consciously address the issue of intervention. As part of that process the research team circulated several basic statements in the form of “Intervention Notes,” intended to move the conversations forward. Additionally the research team developed working papers on theoretical perspective underlying intervention and on the meaning of the research findings with regard to those perspectives.

The SACSI team discussed and ultimately adopted a complex set of strategies focusing on drug related murders and dispute related murders. The drug related

interventions included deterrence based enforcement models using knock and talk strategies and mobile field force, a quick response team. A working group continued to meet and address dispute related homicide using street outreach workers and seeking out others to assist in identifying and resolving disputes. The process of incident review continued and later evolved from focusing on homicide to including assaults, then focusing on groups of offenders. The incident review process continued to evolve into an intelligence collection process which continues to take place in the two major police sections on a bi-weekly basis. In addition training of officers to participate in the case review and intelligence gathering process has been incorporated into regular and academy training processes.

Offender notification meetings have emerged as a common strategy in several SACSI sites. This process was also adopted in Rochester. In fact, an earlier iteration of these meetings had occurred a year before SACSI began based on the experience of crime reduction in Boston, Massachusetts, and under the direction of the Mayor of Rochester, William Johnson. The revitalized notification meetings took place nearly monthly during late 2002 and early 2003. In mid 2003 The Rochester Chief of Police invited David Kennedy of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University to Rochester to consult on the anti-violence efforts in progress. Mr. Kennedy had been a key figure in the development of offender notification meetings in Boston. His involvement led to a further refinement of the process of notification meetings and a set of interrelated practices within the criminal justice system.

The collection of related strategies has become known as Project Ceasefire in Rochester. At the center of these strategies are notification meetings in which group

members who are on probation or parole are brought together for the delivery a strong message of deterrence and an opportunity for referral for services. In conjunction with those meetings a related law enforcement action is taken against some other group based on its involvement in a particular homicide. The overall process is supported by other components of the criminal justice system. The District Attorney has substantially changed his plea process to require plea to top charge in gun cases. Probation has placed all those called into Ceasefire meetings on it intensive supervision list. Federal investigation and prosecution resources are used against active criminal groups. The New York State Police, Monroe County Sheriff and Rochester Police have implemented joint saturation patrols in high crime neighborhoods. And, at the center of the process is the revised incident review process which has emerged as the key process for collecting intelligence effort on active criminal groups. The information from that process serves as the foundation for the array of interrelated Ceasefire interventions.

The Rochester SACSI program involved development of a detailed and comprehensive understanding of the local homicide problem. The process included the development of valuable research approaches at the local level and significant tools including refinements of the incident review process. The process of moving forward from research to intervention, while by no means smooth, moved forward with the development of interventions based on prevention and ultimately consistent with incapacitation and deterrence models. Those interventions have been in place for approximately one year.

The process of moving from research to intervention may be the most complex and difficult part of the SACSI program in Rochester as it appears to have been

elsewhere. Implementation of interventions is a complex and difficult task. In Rochester some period of discussion and discovery was followed by implementation and continued refinement of intervention efforts. The strongest influence on that process has been the collaboration which is so central to SACSI and the leadership of executives in the criminal justice system including the Chief of Police, The District Attorney, the Director of Probation and leadership of the City's outreach program- Pathways to Peace.

The efforts to reduce homicide and serious violence in Rochester continue and also continue to evolve. It is worth noting that the path has not been as linear as it might first appear. There have been fits and starts and some elements have been brought to bear primarily because an environment marked by collaboration is also open and willing to experiment. The efforts in Rochester have benefited from external consultation and external resources but the strongest and most meaningful resource has been the ability of the leadership of the criminal justice system to work together and to adopt research as a central component of their collaborative methods.

#### Additional Material on Intervention

1. Intervention Notes
2. Theory, Method and Intervention under SACSI
3. Using Jail Exit Interviews in Violence Prevention
4. Working Group Intervention Presentation
5. Clinton Section and Maple Section strategy discussion
6. Intervention Proposal Checklist
7. NOSE Program Draft
8. Rochester Violence Prevention Initiative Summary Presentation

Rochester SACSI  
Intervention Notes

**#1 Research and the Seduction of Small Ideas**

Since we got started, the Rochester SACSI process has been geared toward using research to develop interventions to reduce homicide. Developing interventions, however, is not the only problem we face. Even seemingly successful intervention efforts can trivialize both the research and the problem being addressed. The risk is that the research will inspire a series of targeted interventions which, when examined together seem more of a hodgepodge than a coherent strategy. We could wind up with interventionist kitsch when we need great art.

What we should hope for from our efforts is not simply projects and programs, as good as they may be. Instead, we should seek to formulate a shared understanding of the problem of violence and we should develop a coherent, coordinated and lasting approach to addressing it. That will be a product worthy of our effort.

The scope of our enterprise is a matter worthy of discussion among members of the SCOPE group. As we move forward it will be important to agree on what our scope should be and on the personal and agency resources that implies.

Rochester SACSI  
Intervention Notes

**#2 Homicide as the Target.**

The Scope group has identified homicide as the target problem. That is a good choice because Rochester has the highest homicide rate on New York and an epidemic of homicide in some neighborhoods.

The selection of homicide should serve to direct our focus but the implications of that choice should also be carefully considered. Some of them are highlighted below.

1. It will important to distinguish between approaches directly addressing homicide and more general approaches which may focus on other areas such as guns or drugs but have a less direct relationship to homicide. General crime reduction strategies may have little impact on homicide.
2. We should also consider the possibility that the focus on homicide may not be widely understood in the neighborhoods because of the view that offenders and many victims

don't merit such attention and because of greater neighborhood concern with drug houses or other sources of disorder. These differences in interests will be relevant to community partnerships.

3. Our success will be demonstrated by an effect on homicide. But, as we go along, it will be important to consider both how we expect a program to work and what intermediate outcomes we believe will be affected by the interventions we develop. In many program evaluations the first hurdle is to find out if a program is delivered with enough clarity and intensity to even reasonably expect an effect. These considerations will be especially important when the target addressed is statistically rare as it is in homicide.

Rochester SACSI  
Intervention Notes

### **#3 Field of Dreams**

The types of interventions that might be developed to address violence seem almost endless. Without narrowing the field somehow we risk an overly broad discussion that could lack focus and be unproductive. So we need to find ways to narrow our discussion.

We have already agreed on one key narrowing principle. We chose homicide as our target and thus as the direct focus of interventions

A second and key dimension to consider is the time period in which we expect to have an effect. Some efforts may address underlying causes and have an effect over the long term. The truth is that those efforts are often easy to think of and hard to evaluate.

On the other hand some interventions can be intended to have an immediate effect. With regard to homicide they would answer the question of "what can be done to keep people alive now." Such interventions can be more difficult to think of but easier to evaluate.

Interventions where we seek an immediate effect will not address issues such as poverty or criminal culture, or perhaps even drugs or guns, directly. Instead they are more likely to focus on situations that result in homicide. They will seek to prevent such situations from occurring or to change those situations in ways that reduce the likelihood of homicide resulting from them.

Rochester SACSI  
Intervention Notes

#### **#4 The Geographic Concentration of Homicide**

The geographic concentration of homicide has important implications. If we are to affect the number of homicides in Rochester it is most likely to be accomplished by focusing on the area of geographic concentration. This raises some important issues.

1. There has been discussion about the commitment to direct resources to this geographic area. As yet, however, the scope team has not discussed a plan for the redirection of resources or the coordination of resources to this area. Even independent of other interventions, it may be useful to review how relevant criminal justice and other resources are currently directed and whether that should be altered or adjusted..
2. The finding of geographic concentration does not necessarily mean that interventions should be implemented to address all of the area of geographic concentration. It may be useful to consider parts of the crescent (such as one of the police sections) for intervention, particularly if those interventions are regarded as trial measures. That would prevent the possible dilution of interventions. Successful programs could always be expanded later.
3. Just as interventions need not cover the entire crescent, there could also be different interventions in different areas of the crescent. For example, intervention dealing with drug house rip-offs could be developed for Maple section and interventions to deal with disputes could be developed for Clinton Section.

Rochester SACSI  
Intervention Notes

#### **#5 Guns and Drugs**

##### **Guns**

Over two thirds of homicides involve guns. It is logical, therefore, that programs designed to reduce the availability of guns would have an impact on homicide. But estimating the strength of the impact of gun intervention on homicides requires additional data. The important questions revolve around the probability of any given gun being involved in a homicide. Gun buybacks fail that test because of their tendency to attract non-crime guns.

In Rochester there appears to be a very large supply of illegal guns. That is apparent from our interviews with inmates. There is no doubt that getting some of those guns off the street is a desirable program goal. However, given the statistically small number of homicides compared with the very large number of guns it will be difficult to have an impact on homicide through general programs designed to remove guns from the street.

In other words, even the best gun programs are not likely to have a strong impact on homicide in the short run. This reinforces the view that we should develop interventions that are aimed directly at affecting homicide. Specific, targeted efforts that affect homicide by addressing gun possession by dangerous individuals will be more fruitful than general gun strategies.

Here are the numbers to back up the example. 1) Say you have a pretty good general gun program that takes 350 guns off the street every year. 2) There are 35 homicides by gun every year. 3) Let's estimate that there are approximately 10,000 guns on the street in Rochester. Then, a) the probability of any particular gun being used in a murder is  $35/10,000$  or  $.0035$ . b) The probability of the gun program getting any particular gun off the street is  $350/10,000$  or  $.035$ . c) Therefore, the probability of the gun program getting a gun that would be used in homicide in a given year is  $.0035 \times .035$  or  $.0001225$ . That means that the odds of the general gun program preventing a homicide in any year are a little more than 1 in 8163. The more targeted the gun strategy the more it will improve those odds.

## **Drugs**

As with guns, the impact of general drug control strategies on homicide is likely to be limited. Although many homicides may be related to drugs, homicide is a comparatively infrequent event in the very large business of drugs. The large number of drug selling locations and the evidence suggesting great and unsatisfied demand for drugs, and estimates of the size of the local drug market indicate that it will be difficult to impact homicide with general drug strategies.

None of this suggests that drug enforcement strategies are not beneficial. In fact, the inmate interviews clearly indicated that drug enforcement has a clear impact by disrupting the drug market.

But drug control strategies are not equivalent to homicide interventions. Murder is more likely to be affected by targeted strategies, which seek to prevent lethal violence by intervening in situations where such violence is most likely.



*Draft-Confidential SACSI Research Material*

## **General Recommendation Regarding Interventions to Prevent Dispute Related Homicides in Clinton Section.**

### **Key data points.**

1. Disputes are a major cause of homicide.
2. Dispute homicides are most prevalent in Clinton Section
3. Fatal disputes are over legal and illegal issues
4. Fatal disputes are often known to many people
5. Fatal disputes often go on for some time

### **Key Strategy elements**

1. Develop ways of learning about ongoing disputes before they become fatal.
2. Develop ways to prevent disputants from coming together
3. Develop ways to mediate disputes
4. Develop ways to train potential disputants in conflict reduction approaches

### **General Strategies**

1. Current SACSI efforts. The Incident Review process and NOSE program can be useful in identifying and addressing disputes.
2. City of Rochester. Consider the potential for Pathways to Peace to be central to this effort and examine assignments to concentrate on disputes in Clinton Section. Focus their efforts on 1) identifying disputes, 2) Mediating and/or referring disputes for mediation, 3) Identifying and recruiting residents who are respected by young minority makes on Clinton section. Concentrating this effort would give it the intensity needed to gauge its impact and it may support meaningful expansion of the program.
3. Probation. Reinvigorate Cease Fire meetings particularly with Clinton section probationers and be sure there is a clear focus on disputes.
4. Center for Dispute Settlement. 1) Train Clinton section police, Pathways to Peace and others in identifying potentially lethal disputes. 2) Develop a system for referrals of disputes to CDR. 3) Develop a strategy for mediating legal and illegally based disputes in Clinton Section.

5. Camp Good Days. Work with Gary Mervis on the development of a media campaign (similar to the Exile campaign) which is intended to provide information about handling disputes and who to contact if you know of disputes and who might help mediate legal and illegal disputes.
6. Monroe County Sheriff's Office. 1) Develop a process for identifying disputes that arise in the jail or pre-exist but may spill over to the street upon release of inmates. 2) Develop a protocol for sharing that information with the police. 3) In conjunction with RPD and Probation, develop a program of intervention similar to NOSE for potentially dangerous inmates being released from the jail. Work with CDR and others to develop a treatment program dealing with disputes and conflict reduction for sentenced inmates.
7. Alternatives for Battered Women (ABW). Work with Alternatives to Battered Women to improve identification and handling of ongoing domestic violence disputes in Clinton Section.
8. Community Organizations and Ministers. 1) Identify Community organization members and ministers who can help identify and mediate disputes. 2) Use CDR to train individuals in identifying and dealing with disputes. 3) Support "walk the street" approaches by ministers and community organization members. 4. Support dispute related interventions by ministers and others including such things as establishing emergency response teams for emerging disputes and safe houses for the short term protection of disputants.
9. Policing Approaches to Homicide Prevention Focused on Disputes in Clinton Section.

We know several important things

1. Many homicides are the result of disputes
2. Lethal disputes often involve participants with serious criminal histories
3. These disputes often occur over time- days, weeks, even months
4. The police often get information about active disputes. They are told about them or find out about them through assaults, shootings or shots fired.

Based on this information, the following goals of police intervention in this area seem appropriate.

1. Systematically collect and analyze information on disputes
2. Deter, refer, incapacitate, or protect participants in lethal disputes.

Law Enforcement Interventions with these elements would be consistent with these goals.

1. Make identifying potentially lethal disputes a high priority among Clinton Section patrol officers. Perhaps provide special training through CDR.
2. Support and encourage the use of FIFs to identify disputes and disputants. Review FIFs for dispute information.
3. Use existing processes to identify disputes and disputants, including incident reviews, CrimeStat, Coordinators meeting.
4. Develop Knock and Talk Intervention Team of officers in Clinton section to respond to all known serious disputes. The Knock and Talk intervention would include delivering a message of individual deterrence as well as providing referral services for dispute resolution.
5. Develop Knock and Talk intervention strategies with family and friends of all homicide and serious assault victims and suspects.

*Draft.*

## **General Recommendation Regarding Interventions to Prevent Drug Robbery Related Homicides in Maple Section.**

### **Key data points.**

1. Drug Robberies are a major cause of homicide.
2. Those homicides are concentrated in Maple Section.
3. Drug Robbery-Assassinations seem most likely to occur at drug houses which are 1) relatively new, 2) crack houses, 3) that had become “hot” or extremely busy and 4) are “open houses” and do not have exterior security.
4. Drug Robbery- Assassinations appear to occur most frequently in the late evening and early morning and on weekend evenings.
5. Drug Dealers believe police are efficient and effective in identifying and closing drug houses

### **Key Strategy elements**

1. Develop or refine methods of identifying drugs houses which fit the type most likely to be places where robbery-assassinations occur.
2. Focus efforts to close houses that are most likely to be places where robbery-assassinations occur.
3. Develop ways to prevent drug houses from becoming “hot.”
4. Continue general efforts to identify and close drug houses.
5. Focus investigation on identification of drug house robbery suspects.
6. Intervene with NOSE type approaches with all identified drug house robbery suspects.
7. Develop strategies in which community members can engage drug dealers in a positive way as a supplement to criminal justice efforts.

### **General Strategies**

1. Current SACSI efforts. The Incident Review process and NOSE program can be useful in identifying people involved in drug dealing and, perhaps those involved in drug house robberies.

2. Community engagement. Work with Rochesterians Against Illegal Narcotics (RAIN) to develop a citizen based knock and talk strategy for drug houses. This would involve approaches aimed at connecting occupants of drug houses to neighborhood institutions and services. The goal will be integration rather than isolation from the neighborhood. It will serve as a balance to strong criminal justice based strategies.
  
3. PAC-TAC. Increase the use of PACT TAC in the poorest parts of Maple Section as a means of discouraging drug buyers from outside the neighborhood.
  
4. Policing Strategies. The following are reasonable goals for police based interventions to address drug robbery homicides in Maple Section.
  1. Disrupt sales at new houses by increasing dealers' fears of arrest.
  2. Make it more difficult for strangers or new buyers to buy at new drug locations.
  3. Make it more difficult for a house to get "hot" by increasing fear of selling to police or confidential informants.
  4. Identify and intervene with suspects in drug house robberies.

These goals could be pursued through the following strategies.

1. Continue aggressive efforts to close drug houses. The inmate interviews made it clear that these are successful.
  
2. Position patrol officers near locations that are believed to be new crack selling locations. This will help deter sales as well as robberies. The time of these efforts seem important and the best times may be 9pm-3am on weekends.
  
3. Focus intelligence and investigation resources on drug house robberies even though they are not reported to police. Use intelligence to identify suspected groups of robbers. Intervene with NOSE like efforts with suspected drug house robbers, and use all other available means such as appropriate federal statutes.
  
4. Develop an individual deterrent approach to drug houses and focus on houses that are identified as becoming hot. Dealers are frightened of the police and do change behavior based on assumptions about surveillance. Dealers also know of police tactics including undercover buys and confidential informants. All of this suggests an individual deterrence approach might help meet the goals outlined above.

What individual deterrence would look like:

Individual or specific deterrence seeks to change the behavior of specific identified individuals by increasing fear of sanctions. In this case it means something like this-

telling individuals who are suspected of selling drugs that the police are aware of their activity and that all available resources will be used against them.

This could be accomplished through a letter that could be hand delivered by the police to a specific individual or location. It could be tested in Maple section as part of our intervention efforts there. The letter, signed by the Chief of Police might read something like this....

We have received information that illegal drugs may be being sold from this location. We will investigate these allegations using all available means including increased surveillance, purchases by undercover officers and confidential informants. If our information is not correct we apologize for any inconvenience the investigation may cause you.

If however, we determine that drugs are being sold from this location we will make every effort to arrest those involved and close this property. We will seek severe criminal penalties for all those involved and civil sanctions for property owners if appropriate. We will work with the Monroe County District Attorney and United States Attorney, and with agencies such as probation and parole, and City or Rochester code enforcement to use all appropriate statutes and resources to respond to this problem. Those may include federal conspiracy charges, Project Exile and other programs designed to remove drug dealers from the community or close nuisance properties.

If you believe that the identification of this property as a drug selling location is a mistake we would be happy to discuss this matter with you. Please call \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely,

The letter would then be followed up by increased surveillance of the property. An approach like this might have some merit in disrupting new drug houses and perhaps reducing the likelihood of drug robbery assassinations.

DRAFT

## **Notification of Special Enforcement (NOSE)**

### **Program Description**

#### **Background**

Research on local violence supports several key conclusions. Young minority men in Rochester's poor neighborhoods suffer high rates of violent victimization and are also over represented among violent offenders. In many cases victims and suspects both have extensive criminal records, which include histories of violence.

Interviews with Monroe County jail inmates have also shown that victimization, including being robbed and assaulted, is a common experience among those who are also the most likely to be offenders in these same types of crimes. In fact, those interviews indicate that some young men find themselves in social networks in which they seem to have an equal chance of becoming a victim, offender or witness to violent crime

These findings have also been supported in detailed reviews of all recent homicide cases. Reviews of all year 2000 and 2001 cases have been conducted by participants from across the criminal justice system. Some serious assaults have also been examined in these reviews, with consistent results.

The case reviews have also provided additional important information. In these reviews a number of individuals have been identified as playing a variety of roles across multiple cases over the past 18 months. They have been witnesses, suspects, associates of participants and, in some cases, victims.

This suggests that the case review process can be useful in identifying individuals who may have a higher than average chance of involvement in violence, as either victim or suspect, by virtue of their links to current offenses, their prior record and their behavior. Furthermore it suggests the value of developing interventions that are designed to prevent involvement in further violence by these individuals.

#### **Program Summary**

The Notification of Special Enforcement Program (NOSE) seeks to use the case review process to identify individuals who are likely to be involved in serious violence as offenders or victims and to deliver a strong message of individual deterrence to them as well as provide increased supervision and additional services when appropriate.

#### **Program Partnerships and Administration**

The Notification of Special Enforcement (NOSE) program is a partnership effort of the Rochester Police Department, Monroe County Sheriff's Department, Monroe County District Attorney, Monroe County Probation Department, Rochester Office of the New York State Division of Parole, and the United States Attorney for the Western District of

New York The program will be administered through the Crime Analysis Section of the Rochester Police Department.

### **Identification of Participants**

Candidates for the NOSE program will be identified through an analysis of individual cases of serious violence. Following the review of cases, the program partners will recommend participants based on the view that the individuals have a higher probability than others of being involved in violence as either offenders or victims or both. Partnership agencies may also make recommendations of NOSE candidates which are not identified through the regular case reviews. In the use of their discretion to make recommendations, the partners will consider links to violent crime and individuals known to be involved in violence, links to activities associated with violence, and other factors believed to be useful.

After candidates are recommended each will be screened to be sure that participation in NOSE is not inconsistent with other criminal justice system interests. The candidate's involvement as a suspect or witness in other cases will be among factors considered at this stage.

The crime analysis section of RPD will produce the final NOSE list. At any time the list will include approximately ten individuals. Expansion of the list will be controlled through efforts to remove individuals as others are added. The partners can agree to remove individuals based on a revised view of the likelihood of involvement in violence or for other agency interests.

The NOSE list, along with identifying information and summaries of other significant information will be distributed to the partner agencies by the RPD Crime Analysis unit..

### **Surveillance, Supervision and Service**

After an individual has been placed on the NOSE list a representative of the appropriate partner agency will meet with him or her to inform them of their selection as a participant and to describe the program (see attached). The description will include a message of deterrence, and a description of increased surveillance, supervision and service efforts. If the individual is on parole or probation his or her parole or probation officer will deliver the message. Members of the Rochester Police Department will notify others.

When appropriate probation and parole will use their own processes of increased supervision, surveillance and service. For NOSE cases not currently under supervision, the Rochester Police Department will be the lead agency and will respond with increased use of field interviews and referrals as needed.

Activity involving NOSE cases will be reviewed at subsequent case review meetings.



## Evaluation Issues

As this program is developed it will be important to bear in mind issues that will be relevant to the evaluation of the program. Below is a list of some of those issues. Critical to many of these will be the selection of an appropriate control group that should also be selected through the review process.

1. How many people are actually identified through the case review process and placed in the program?
2. For those identified by the review process, can the potential for involvement in violence be empirically verified (using such things as criminal records, associations, current behavior)?
3. Do those identified and selected as participants receive the original NOSE briefing and what is the content of the message of that briefing? Is the case status noted in records and is the briefing documented?
4. To what extent do NOSE cases seek services and what services do they seek?
5. Are those designated as NOSE cases actually treated differently than other cases? For example, do case supervision notes show differences in levels and types of supervision? Are there differences in frequency of field interviews or field notes by police and others?
6. Are NOSE cases less likely to commit crimes or violate supervision conditions than other similar individuals?
7. When designated NOSE cases do commit crimes are they actually treated differently by the criminal justice system? Are they more likely to be arrested, jailed and prosecuted? Are they more likely than others to be prosecuted under special programs such as Project Exile? Do they receive harsher penalties than other comparative non-Nose cases?
8. Over time, does the number of NOSE candidates identified through case reviews decline? That is, are there fewer and fewer people associated with multiple events of serious violence?
9. Can an association be identified between the NOSE program and levels of homicide and serious violence over time?

***Sample Message for Initial Notification of Selection for the NOSE Program***

Your name has come up in investigations and reviews of recent violent crimes in Rochester. You are not currently a suspect in those crimes but because of your connection to them, your criminal record, and your current behavior, we believe that you may be involved in violence in the future either as a perpetrator or as a victim. Because of that you have been selected as a participant in the Notification of Special Enforcement Program.

Under this program all of the agencies of criminal justice are working together to prevent violent crime and to respond to any crimes you may commit.

The Rochester Police will pay special attention to you and will arrest you for any crime or violation you commit.

The Monroe County District Attorney's Office will seek severe sentences in your cases.

If you are on Probation or Parole those agencies will increase supervision and will seek to violate you if that is appropriate.

The US Attorney may use its resources to put you in Federal Prison under such programs as Project Exile or Federal Conspiracy laws.

So you should understand that you personally have been identified as having a substantial risk of involvement in violent crime as either an offender or victim and that all of the agencies of the criminal justice system are working together to prevent that. That means we have placed a high priority on arresting you and seeking severe penalties for any crimes you commit.

It also means that we will assist you with a variety of services such as drug treatment, counseling, education and employment if you are interested. If you are interested we will be happy to refer you to the Pathways to Peace program. They can help provide the assistance you need.

Whether or not you seek services we will continue our special enforcement efforts against you.

Do you have any questions?

**Proposal:** (describe it here)

<b>Does this pass Kennedy's Rules?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>No</b>		
1) Would doing this have an impact on homicides?	1	2	3	4	5
2) If yes, would that impact be in the near term?	1	2	3	4	5
3) Is it really possible to do this?	1	2	3	4	5
4) Is this something we would want to do?	1	2	3	4	5

**Force Field Analysis**

<b>Driving Forces (list them)</b>	<b>Restraining Forces (list them)</b>
(What will help get this done?)	(What things hinder getting this done?)
1)	1)
2)	2)
3)	3)

**What action steps should be taken to make this happen? Who should do them?**

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

## **Rochester, New York**

### **Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI)**

#### **Summary**

**Target problem:** Homicide

**Goal:** Analysis shows that Rochester routinely has the highest homicide rate among New York cities and ranks among cities with the highest rates in the nation. High homicide rate have persisted overtime and reveal a widening gap between the City's rate and national trends.

A core team including local police, local and federal prosecutors and representatives of the City and County worked with researchers to direct analysis of the problem. Analysis revealed a problem that was highly geographically and demographically concentrated among young minority males in high crime neighborhoods. Incident reviews were used extensively to identify specific details of offense patterns and those involved. Criminal and education histories were examined and ten years of cases were reviewed to verify patterns.

Two particular types of homicide were identified which accounted for the overwhelming volume of incidents. Dispute related cases and drug robbery murders were the prevalent patterns of homicide in sections of the city. Focus groups with jail inmates were used to expand the base of knowledge on these types of homicides.

In additional analyses the core group examined data on the role of drugs in these homicides and on the prevalence of criminal records in the high crime neighborhoods.

The Core groups used the information to design 2 different models of interventions: one dealing with dispute homicide and one dealing with drug house robbery murders.

Targeted deterrence strategies were relevant to both categories of intervention. Notification of Special Enforcement or NOSE was developed as a way to deliver an individualized deterrence message, as well as to offer services, to individuals identified in crime incident reviews as having a high potential for engagement in serious violence. Cease Fire meetings, our form of offender notification meetings were used to deliver the appropriate deterrence and service message to selected probationers and parolees in three police precincts.

In addition to those interventions, the dispute homicide problem is addressed through enhanced intelligence to identify disputes and disputants, strategies of incapacitation when necessary and referral and mediation where appropriate. There is extensive community involvements in several of these functions.

Drug house robbery homicides are addressed through efforts to increase intelligence about drug house robberies and robbers. In additions focused deterrence messages are

delivered through knock and talk strategies which confront suspected drug sellers. Various forms of open surveillance and undercover work are used to discourage open drug markets and make robbery homicides in them less likely.

Working Papers reviewing the analysis and intervention –plans are available from the Rochester SACSI program. A CD describing Crime Incident Reviews is also available.

## Assessment

In principle, the Rochester SACSI program moved through the stages of problem assessment, strategy development, implementation and finally evaluation of the impact of interventions. Of course that sentence makes things look far more orderly than they are in reality. The intervention process is at best sloppy and generally frustrating. It seems always to be full of fits and starts, dead ends, sometimes difficult interpersonal relations, organizational and inter-organizational politics, unavailable resources, and, at the very moment at which things seem to be coming together and all those barriers may be overcome, unanticipated change. Sausage makers, no doubt, have fewer secrets than social scientists pursuing supposedly rational change.

Perhaps another way of making the same point would be to say that the process from collaboration, through research, intervention and evaluation, is less linear than a Request for Proposals might suggest. The process clearly involves a journey and a destination. But along the way almost anything can happen. Resources suddenly appear and/or disappear. Research findings may be manifestly potent at one time and more broadly informative at another. The one constant does seem to be change: change in project directors, change in the political backdrop of the project, and frequently, change in agency leaders.

Despite these complexities, however, there has been a discernable process that can be described as SACSI in Rochester, it has resulted in describable interventions, and those appear to have real impacts. Perhaps most significant of all, though, the experiences shared by people from across the local criminal justice system and

community under the label of SACSI and its successor Project Safe Neighborhoods, appear to be having an impact on the way criminal justice is done in Rochester, particularly in the role of research and the place of strategy in daily operations.

The core of a process assessment must recognize that the most critical element of SACSI, a collaborative strategic planning process, flourishes in Rochester. Regular meetings of leaders or representatives from the key criminal justice organizations continue on a monthly basis. A foundation for collaboration clearly preceded SACSI in Rochester but that program strengthened the process and encouraged its institutionalization around the specific interventions that emerged.

The process also was fruitful in supporting research into the homicide problem in Rochester. A complex and detailed analysis of issues was part of the process. Beyond that, however, research has become a core element of collaboration across the system. Leaders in the criminal justice system appear to have recognized the potential contributions of research and have become active partners in the process by frequently seeking out additional data and analyses and by joining in the interpretation of results. A grant funded research assistant to the SACSI project director has been brought in to the Rochester Police Department to work on the interventions. A second research assistant has recently been placed in the District Attorney's Office and the probation director is seeking a counterpart for his office. The SACSI research also recently received a service award from the Rochester Police. Finally, the Division of Criminal Justice for New York, that state's criminal justice planning office, has approached the SACSI researchers to provide support to other local jurisdictions in building their capacities for planning through the development of local research resources.

The analyses of the homicide problem in Rochester have also influenced the production of identifiable strategies designed to impact that problem. In Rochester a complex of strategies has been associated with the term Cease fire. While the strategies share the moniker with the earlier Boston program they include other key elements. In Rochester the Cease Fire strategies include:

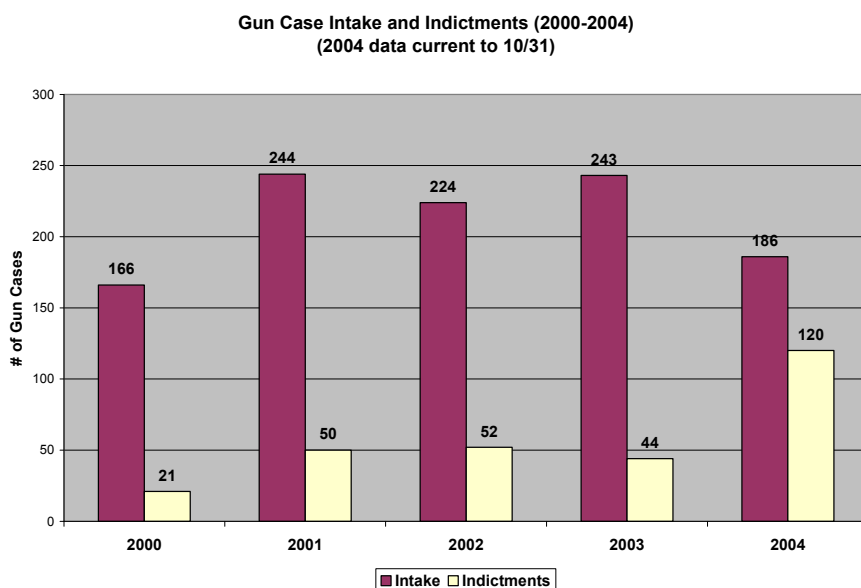
1. A process of intelligence review of local criminal behavior and group affiliation- the most recent iteration of incident reviews.
2. Focused intensive law enforcement strategies on groups identified with recent homicide.
3. Call-ins and delivery of a deterrence message to representative of other groups.
4. Intensive probation supervision of group members identified for the call-ins
5. Changes in local prosecution practices to increase indictment and severity of sanction, as well as continued collaboration with federal prosecution in appropriate cases.
6. Periodic crackdowns through Rochester Police Department's mobile field force.
7. Periodic saturation patrolling in high crime neighborhoods by joints teams of Rochester Police, Monroe County Sheriffs and State Police officers.



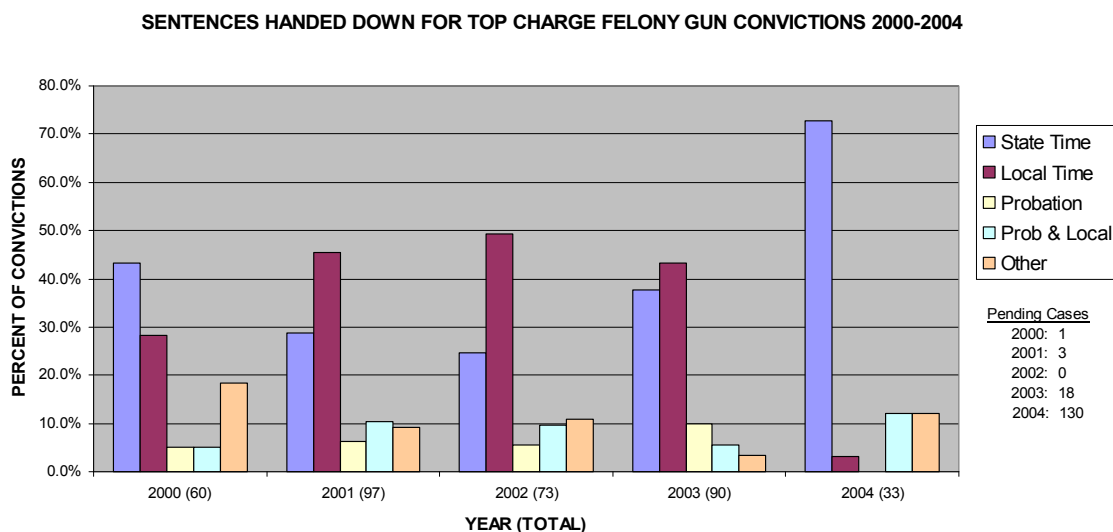
This complex of strategies has been in place in Rochester for approximately one year. During that time the leadership team has met on a monthly basis and the intelligence review have occurred separately on the east side and west side of the city at two week intervals. The joint patrols have occurred on three separate occasions:

- First and Second Impact Phases: Targeted areas of the city identified as violence “hotspots” and executed warrants on violent individuals
  - First Impact Phase (4/6/04-5/1/04)
  - Second Impact Phase (6/29/04-7/31/04)
- Third Impact Phase (10/19/04-11/6/04): Targeted Robbery “hotspots” at the beginning of high season for Robberies

The changes in local prosecution practices are reflected in case processing data. As the charts below demonstrate, the District Attorney’s office has greatly increased its proportion of felony indictments arising out of gun cases.



There has also been a shift in sanctions in gun cases, from local time to state prison sentences. And for those cases resulting in prison time sentence length has risen from three years to four years in the past year.



Beyond changes in prosecution, four separate focused law enforcement actions have occurred against four groups believed to be involved in homicides:

- Thurston Zoo- 14 arrests (13 Felony)
- Dipset- 12 arrests (10 Felony)
- Trust St. Crew- 13 Felony arrests
- Murder Unit- 11 arrests, all Federal charges

There have been a total of six offender notification call-ins (10/3/03, 1/30/04, 7/30/04, 9/10/04, 11/5/04). Those meeting involved 98 probationers and parolees who represented a total of 34 active groups or gangs from the City of Rochester.

There are many signs of ongoing commitment to these strategies and to a process of developing others. The leadership group is committed to extending the problem solving process to the consideration of dealing with drug markets, for example. And in another example, the group has recently agreed to find ways of further institutionalizing the Cease Fire effort. Toward that end training programs engaging front line staff in the data, the theory and the method of intervention, have occurred or are occurring with the police, assistant district attorneys, and probation and parole officers.

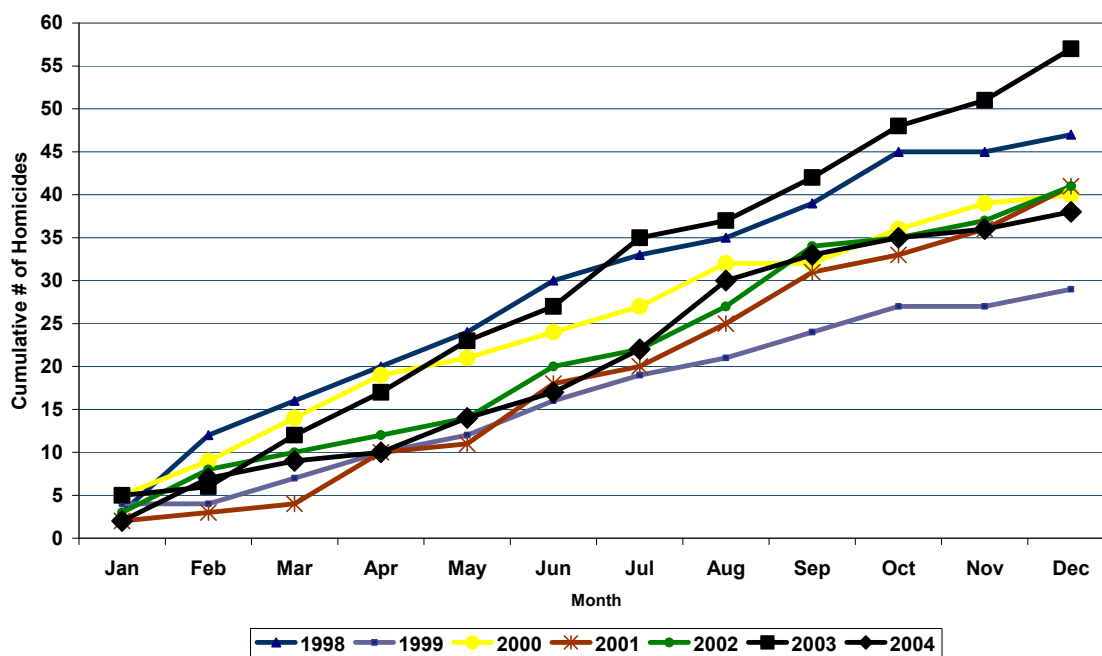
The value of a process that enhances the capacity of a community to understand its problems and to design interventions to address them probably cannot be overstated. But the ultimate value will depend not only on understanding and intervening but also on solving or at least reducing those problems. Assessment then must move forward from a focus on process alone, to consideration of outcomes.

When examining outcomes from a project like SACSI, there are a number of things to consider. First, it is clearly too early in the process to draw too strong a conclusion on effectiveness. The most appropriate methods for examining our data, time series analyses, cannot yet be conducted due to a limited number of observations. What is offered below is thus tentative and suggestive at best. A still more difficult problem must also be faced. Cease fire represents a complex set of interventions. At this point, the impact of any one of them cannot be separated from whole of them. For this reason the material below considers the possible impact of the totality of ceasefire components on crime. Finally, the charts below do not control for any other variables outside or inside the process. Thus unexamined variables could influence the outcome data.

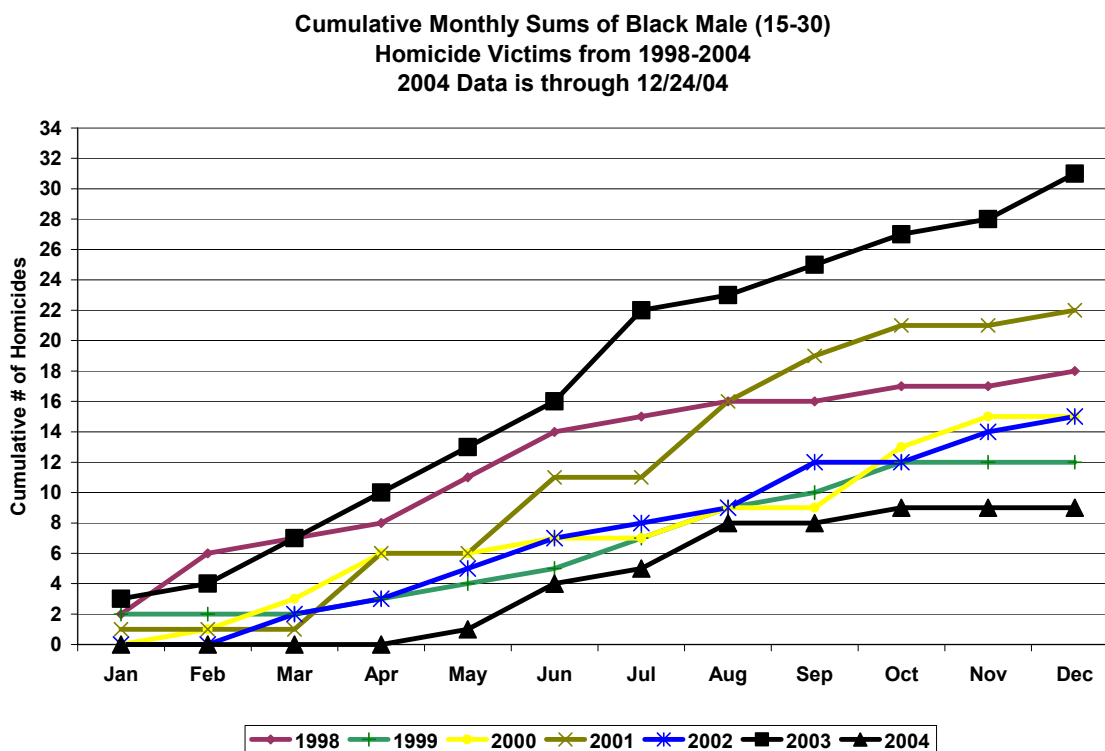
The chart below depicts the cumulative number of homicides by month for the past several years. This method of charting the data has become popular among members of the project's leadership group. It's advantage over other approaches such as a single line chart by month or a bar chart, lie in the way it depicts changes over time. The angle of rise each year and each month show how well or how poorly we have done compared with the same time in previous years. Thus over all numbers of homicides are presented as are the dynamics of the growth in those numbers over time.

The chart shows that in the number of homicides has been moderately stable, but the year 2003 showed a notable increase to 57. This year, with the interventions in place shows 38 homicides total, a substantial improvement over last year. When compared with other years, however, the improvement is clearly more modest.

**Cumulative Monthly Sums of All Homicide Victims from 1998-2004**  
2004 Data is through 12/24/04



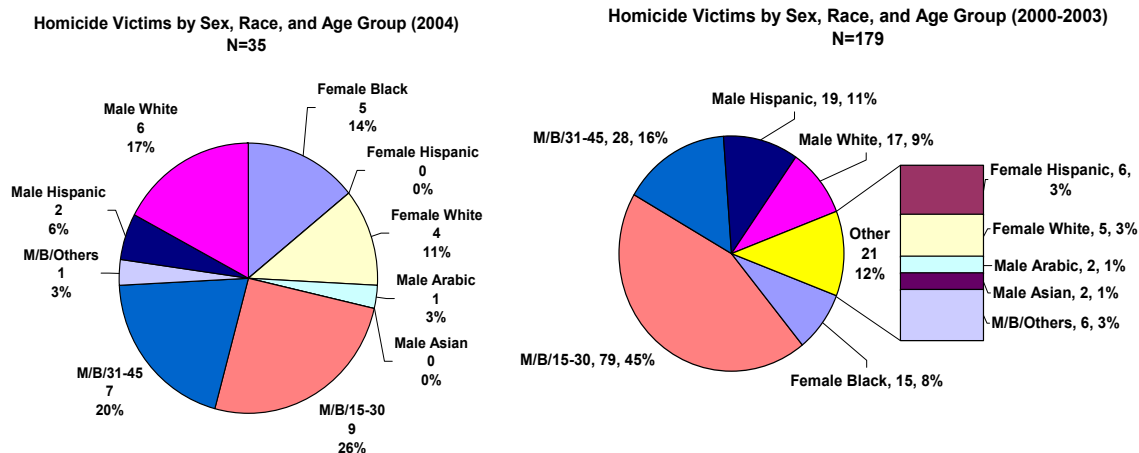
Although the examination of overall homicide numbers may be informative, it may not offer the most useful test of the impact of our strategies since our focus group for the interventions has been young, African-American men. The chart below shows that homicides in that group are well below the level last year as well as levels in the previous years. In 2003 there were 29 homicides among young Black men in Rochester. This year the number was 9.



The chart also shows how this reduction was achieved overtime. There were no homicides in the focus group in the Spring and only one in the Fall. This year, as in past year, the summer months proved most lethal.

In testament to the local commitment to research even these data have prompted further questions. The modest gains in overall homicide reduction and the more substantial declines in the target group raised concerns that a new trend in homicide

might be emerging, one not likely to be suppressed by our interventions. The charts below address this issue. The demographic characteristics of victims this year, when compared with recent years, shows only slight increases in most categories outside the target demographic. This suggests that our target group has not been replaced by some other concentrated victim group.



Further analysis, however, raises rather than reduces concerns about long term trends. The distribution of serious assaults overtime, even among young Black males, does not show the same declines as are seen in homicide. This lack of expected correlation suggests caution against over interpreting homicide drops.

The leadership group has tracked these numbers over the year and has examined the year end figures. There is strong belief that these numbers show an impact of the strategies employed. At the same time the group realizes that a single year does not make a trend and that since we have had fluctuations in the past, continued attention to our strategic interventions will be important.

Earlier in this section SACSI was described as a journey with a destination. Perhaps these charts help define that destination. They are hopeful summaries of the effect of a lengthy planning process. But in another sense the charts may mark only another waypoint in the journey rather than its destination. More meetings are scheduled, additional research is being done as this is written, old strategies will be reviewed and new ones devised. The process begun under SACSI has been extended under Project Safe Neighborhoods. In addition, numerous spin-off's, including a community prosecution grant, a developing community court, problem solving assistance to other jurisdictions and an emerging drug crime strategy, have occurred or soon will. These and other projects have ties directly to SACSI and offer hope that the problem solving process at the heart of the program will continue to be of value in criminal justice here and elsewhere.

## REFERENCES

Braga, A., Kennedy, D., Piehl, A and Waring, E. (2001). Measuring the Impact of Operation Ceasefire. in Reducing Gun Violence: The Boston Gun Project's Operation Ceasefire. Office of Justice Programs: Wash. D.C

Brantingham, P.J. and Brantingham, P.L. (eds.) (1991). Environmental Criminology. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Prospect Heights, IL. : Waveland.

Clarke, R.V. (ed.) (1997). Situational Crime Prevention: Successful Case Studies. Albany, NY: Harrow & Heston.

Clarke, R.V. and Cornish, D. B. (2001). Rational Choice. In Paternoster, R. and Bachman, R. (eds.). Explaining Criminals and Crime: Essays in Contemporary Criminological Theory. Los Angeles: CA: Roxbury.

Eck, J. (1995). A General Model of the Geography of Illicit Retail Marketplaces. PP. 67-93 in Eck, J & Weisburd, D.(eds.) Crime and Place: Crime Prevention Studies, V.4. New York: Criminal Justice Press.

Eck, J. and Gersh, J. (2000). A Geographical Analysis of Illegal Drug Markets. PP. 203-218 in Natarajan, M & Hough, M (eds.) Illegal Drug Markets: From Research to Prevention Policy: Crime Prevention Studies, V.11. New York: Criminal Justice Press.

Felson, M. (1998). Crime in Everyday Life 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge.

Glaser, B. and Strauss, A. (1967). The Discovery of Grounded Theory. Chicago: Aldine.

Kennedy, D. (1997). Pulling Levers: Chronic Offenders, High Crime Settings, and a Theory of Prevention. Valparaiso Law Review 31:449-487.

Kennedy, D., Braga, A. and Piehl, a. (2001). Developing and Implementing Operation Ceasefire. In Reducing Gun Violence: The Boston Gun Project's Operation Ceasefire. Office of Justice Programs: Wash. D.C.



Lewin, K. (1947). Group Decision and Social Change, in Newcomb, T. and Hartley, E. et al., Readings in Social Psychology. New York: Holt & Company.

President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, (1967), The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society. Wash.D.C.: USGPO.

Skolnick, J. and Bayley, D. (1986). The New Blue Line. New York: Free Press.

Sherman, L. (1990). Police Crackdowns: Initial and Residual Deterrence. In Tonry, M & Morris, N. (eds.) Crime and Justice: A Review of Research, V12. Chicago:Univ. of Chicago Press.

Sherman, L. and Weisburd, D. (1995). Gneral and Deterrent Effects of Police Patrol in Crime "Hot Spots.:" A Randomized Controlled Trial. Justice Quarterly 12: 635-648.

Sherman, L. (1997). Thinking About Crime Prevention. in Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising. Univ. of Maryland, Dept. of Criminology (ed.) Wash.D.C.:Office of Justice Program

Spelman, W. and Eck, J. (1987). Problem Oriented Policing. Wash .D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Strauss, A. (1987). Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.

Toch, H. and Grant, J.D. (1982) Reforming Human Services: Change Through Participation. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Toch, H., Grant, J.D. and Galvin, R. (1975). Agents of Change: A Study in Police Reform. Cambridge, MA: Schenkman.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.