



National Evaluation of WEED & SEED

Case Study



Akron, Ohio Research Report



Executive Office for Weed & Seed



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RESEARCH REPORT

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1.0 Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Funded sites were divided into officially recognized sites and demonstration sites. Officially recognized sites were currently implementing Weed and Seed strategies in their jurisdictions and had submitted documentation to EOWS summarizing their strategy but had not yet received full funding. After EOWS officially recognizes a site, it becomes eligible for demonstration status and full Weed and Seed funding.

2.0 Case Study Objective and Methodology

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Akron's Weed and Seed efforts, however, were markedly different from the other seven sites chosen for the national evaluation. Akron received a small amount of Weed and Seed funding in FY 1995 (\$35,000), which was not enough for the city to fund any substantial efforts. Further, the city's application for FY 1996 was not funded. In FY 1997, Akron received a more substantial amount of money, which has allowed the city to begin fully implementing its Weed and Seed plan. Therefore, although this case study is prepared in the same fashion (and discusses the same topics) as the other seven sites, this report's commentary on implementation and effects must be interpreted differently.

It remains too early in the implementation of Weed and Seed efforts to draw any definitive conclusions about program impacts. However, the report does detail crime trends, as well as community perceptions, which will be important to reexamine if Akron decides to conduct a local program evaluation when Weed and Seed has been fully implemented. In addition, Akron has a number of social service and law enforcement programs in place (which are noted throughout the report) that complement its Weed and Seed plan and that may have affected crime patterns and community perceptions.

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

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

3.0 Site History and Description

3.1 City Characteristics

The city of Akron is located in northeastern Ohio, approximately 35 miles from Cleveland. The city has confronted significant economic problems since the 1960s due to the loss of skilled trade jobs, primarily in the tire and rubber industry. From 1980 to 1992, the population of Akron decreased 5.7 percent to 223,621 persons, while drug use, criminal offenses, and the number of school suspensions and expulsions increased dramatically. The U.S. Bureau of the Census (1990) reported that 20.5 percent of city residents live below the poverty level. Nonetheless, manufacturing continues to employ nearly one-quarter of the workforce in Akron and, recently, many new manufacturing plants have located in the area. A downtown revitalization project is also underway.

3.2 Target Area Characteristics and Nature of Problems

A 3.95-square-mile area on Akron's west side has been designated as the city's Weed and Seed target area; the area has a population of close to 24,000. Exhibit 3.1 shows the location of the target area within the city of Akron. The west side target neighborhood contains seven public schools—one high school, one middle school, four elementary schools, and one primary school—with a population of more than 3,500 students. More than 72 percent of elementary students in the target area receive free or reduced-price lunches. Target area schools recorded the highest expulsion rate in the city between 1988 and 1991 and, in 1993, only 20 percent of ninth-graders in target area schools passed the Ohio Ninth-Grade Proficiency Exam, which is required for graduation.

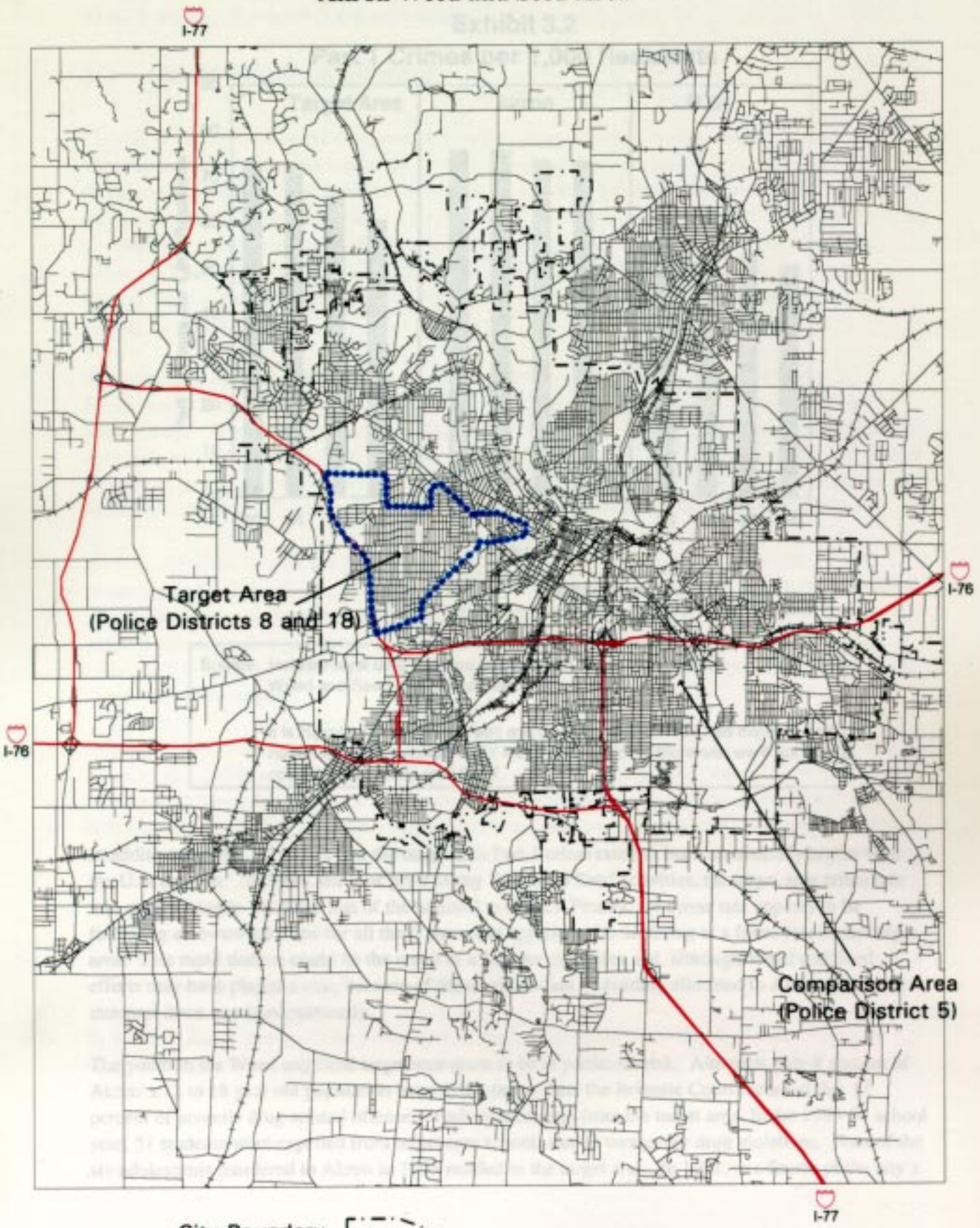
The target area also includes three retail/business areas and 9,574 housing units. The west side has the highest concentration of Section 8 and Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority scattered site housing in the city. In addition to public housing, the west side has a higher rate both of owner-occupied housing (62 percent) and of vacant housing (7.7 percent) than is the case citywide. One-third of neighborhood housing is classified as “substandard.” The percentage of households below the poverty level is higher in the target area (23.6 percent) than in the city as a whole. The unemployment rate of 9.7 percent is also higher than the citywide rate.

Exhibit 3.2 shows the average crime rates from 1993 through 1996 for the city of Akron, the Weed and Seed target area, and the United States. There are a number of interesting things to note about this graph. First, although the overall average Part 1 crime rate for the target area has been consistently lower than for the city as a whole, the average violent crime rate has been consistently higher in the target area.³ A Weed and Seed community police officer indicated that the west side of Akron was chosen as the target area because of its high level of violent crimes—in particular there had been a number of high-publicity homicides in the area around the time of the target area selection.

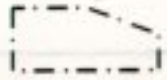
3 Part 1 crimes include violent crimes (homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) and property crimes (burglary, larceny, and auto theft).

**Exhibit 3.1
Akron Weed and Seed Area**

Exhibit 3.2

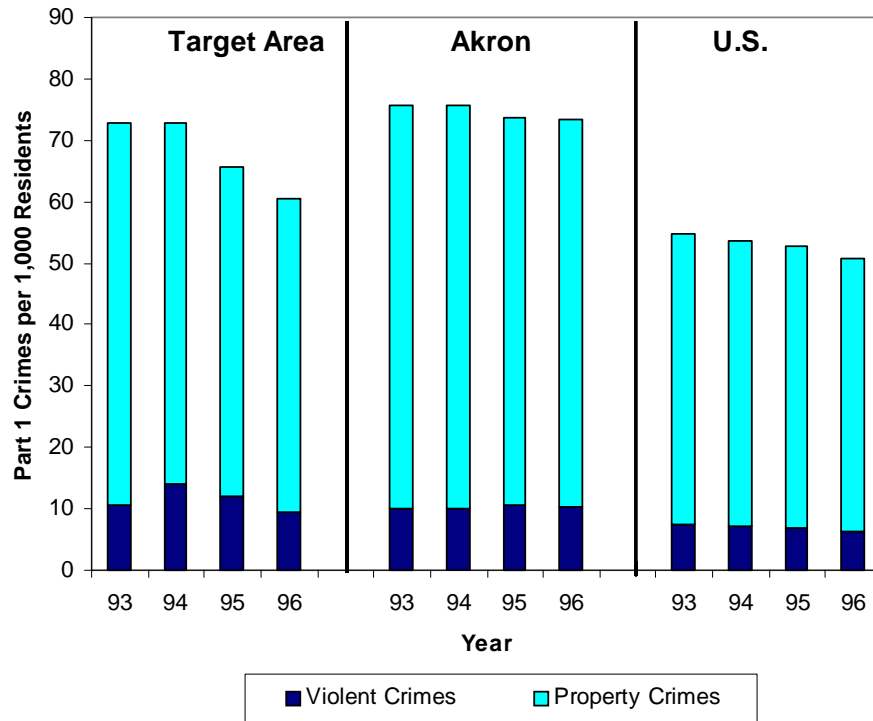


City Boundary



1 inch = 2.1 miles

Exhibit 3.2 Part 1 Crimes per 1,000 Residents



Source: Incident-level data supplied by the Akron Police Department. Weed and Seed activities started in October 1995.

It is important to note that Weed and Seed funding in FY 1995 was minimal, and no funding was received in FY 1996. Funded efforts, therefore, were not fully operational in Akron until FY 1997.

In addition, exhibit 3.2 shows that the target area Part 1 crime rate has been consistently higher than the U.S. average. (In 1994, the year prior to any Weed and Seed activities, the target area crime rate was approximately 1.4 times that of the national average.) Finally, the crime rate appears to be following a downward trend for all three areas but appears to be declining at a faster rate in the target area. This rapid decline could be the result of many factors and, although Weed and Seed efforts may have played a role, one must interpret these numbers cautiously because of the small amount of funding allocated to Akron.

Youths in the target area seem to be at particular risk. Although only 8 percent of Akron's 12- to 18-year-old population lives in the target area, the juvenile court recorded 14 percent of juvenile drug-related offenses as involving teenagers from the target area. In the 1993-94 school year, 51 students were expelled from target area schools due to weapon or drug violations. Four of the six adolescents murdered in Akron in 1993 resided in the target area. In 1991, one-fourth of the city's total homicides occurred in the target area. The Weed and Seed target area also contains an estimated 50 crack houses, 25 percent of the city's total.

3.3 Other Funding Sources

The city of Akron has been very aggressive in seeking and successfully obtaining Federal funds. There are a variety of operational law enforcement and social service activities in Akron that will complement Weed and Seed activities, as well as overlap with the Weed and Seed target area. This success in mobilizing complementary resources seems to be the result of several factors. First, the city planning department is well-organized and aggressive, and it has the support of elected officials in taking the lead on grant proposals. A second reason for Akron's Federal grant writing success is the environment created by political leaders who have made such funding a high priority.

An example of this additional funding is a Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) office grant received by the Akron Police Department (APD) that has been used to hire 17 officers to date. Approval has been received to hire six more. These officers have been assigned to patrol duties, allowing additional officers to be assigned to specialized tasks, including community policing, street narcotics undercover detective units, and gang units in the Weed and Seed target area. APD has also received additional COPS office grants, such as COPS MORE 96 and COPS Ahead, totaling \$475,000.

Further, additional Federal and State funds are spent on the Crouse Caring Communities (CCC) program which will be the focus of the seeding activity in Akron when the program is fully operational. The CCC program fosters coordination among residents, churches, businesses, social service agencies, and others. CCC was selected in 1993 because it served an area with high crime, high levels of parental involvement in schools, an economic and racial mix, and a high level of community organization.

The city of Akron also has an Urban Ounce of Prevention grant (\$120,000) that works directly with the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Foundation (ADAM), a local community drug board relation group. The Ounce of Prevention grant works out of Edgewood Homes, a public housing project with identified problems of crime, delinquency, drug sales, and other problems related to youths and parenting, which is located in the Weed and Seed target area. The Ounce of Prevention grant moneys are used to provide a variety of services, including tutoring, domestic violence counseling, drug counseling for women, and teen drug rehabilitation.

Akron is also a designated Enterprise Community. The Enterprise Community grant (\$3 million) funds the effort to improve Akron's housing stock in areas such as the Weed and Seed target area. This effort has been quite active and is viewed by Akron public officials as a success.

In addition, Akron received approximately \$8 million in community development funds, largely a result of Community Development Block Grant programs. That money will also be used to improve the housing stock in the target area through active code enforcement.

Finally, the Akron Police Department provides Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) in Akron schools. Four APD officers are assigned to D.A.R.E. efforts. The program is currently not operating at full capacity but, when the Weed and Seed program is operational, the Akron Police Department hopes to develop a substation in CCC as part of its Weed and Seed activities.

One of the challenges in assessing the Akron Weed and Seed program is differentiating the effects of Weed and Seed measures from other federally funded crime prevention/reduction projects in the city. Akron has a broad base of additional Federal support, and most of these grants are for more money than the Weed and Seed grant. Further, most of these grants support the goals and objectives of Weed and Seed, which makes it difficult to discern the effects of a given program or grant project on the community.

4.0 Program Structure and Chronology

4.1 Formal Organization and Structure for Weed and Seed Program

The city of Akron's Weed and Seed program will be launched by a Weed and Seed steering committee led by the U.S. Attorney for northern Ohio. Other members of the steering committee include the Summit County Prosecutor, the Akron Chief of Police, target area residents, local business representatives (who have a vested interest), and community service organizations. The steering committee, with 24 members, is responsible for guiding and managing the Weed and Seed program. The steering committee members were selected by identifying individuals who have expertise in both law enforcement and social services, who are active in community-based organizations, and who live in the target area.

In addition to this steering committee, Akron will have a weeding committee and a seeding committee. These committees will have respective decisionmaking authority regarding the day-to-day operations of the weeding and seeding efforts in Akron when they become fully operational. The seeding committee will be based out of the Crouse Caring Communities program. CCC has been in existence for 4 years and will serve as the safe haven. This committee will include approximately seven to eight members. The weeding committee will be somewhat smaller and will be coordinated by an Akron police officer. In addition, the Akron Police Department will serve as the administrator of the grant. It will disperse the funds, form contracts with subgrantees and subcontractors, and have financial oversight responsibility.

Finally, the Akron Weed and Seed effort will work collaboratively with the United States Attorney in Cleveland. The LECC will be involved in the operation of the Akron Weed and Seed effort, and good cooperation exists between the Cleveland U.S. Attorney's Office and the U.S. Attorney's Office in Akron, as well as with local prosecution.

4.2 Proposed Goals and Strategies

The overall Weed and Seed strategy stated in Akron's applications has not substantially changed in terms of the objectives stated in the original 1992 application, but it was refined and detailed in the extensive narrative format of the 1994 application.

In Akron's application for FY 1994 funding, the proposed Weed and Seed strategy had four elements that were aligned with the tenants outlined by EOWS (law enforcement, community policing, prevention/intervention/treatment, and neighborhood restoration). These four elements were: combining Federal, State, and local resources to apprehend and prosecute the most violent offenders

plaguing a neighborhood of high crime; initiating community policing to improve crime prevention by involving neighborhood residents in developing solutions to remove crime; coordinating and directing prevention, education, and treatment programs to equip residents to lead productive lives; and concentrating resources on the rebuilding of the neighborhood.

The goal of the **law enforcement** element was to create a safe environment for residents and businesses of the target area to live, invest, work, play, and raise a family. Officials focused on both eliminating drug markets and crack houses through enforcement in areas of high drug activity and violent crime and reducing violence and criminal activity by youths. Another strategy was to expand effective alternatives to incarceration.

Goals of the **community policing** element were to restore pride in the targeted neighborhood, to raise the percentage of students who stay in school, to improve relations between citizens and police officials, and to increase safety. Objectives included increasing the police presence in the neighborhood, organizing citizens to help police remove violent offenders from the neighborhood, and giving students the skills to be drug free.

The **prevention/intervention/treatment** element of the grant included goals geared toward the Crouse Caring Communities project and the Akron Public Schools. For the Crouse neighborhood, the goals were to develop a model for integrated service delivery to children and families, to increase the number of families benefitting from these services, and to counteract antisocial behavior by improving the sense of community. A process was to be developed under a neighborhood advisory committee that would foster greater cooperation among health and human services providers, government, families, businesses, churches, and neighborhood organizations. Strategies included the development of a youth employment program, a community newsletter, the establishment of family mediation services, and increased collaboration between school and community, including a part-time school nurse.

In the public schools, stated goals were to increase educational achievement and reduce counterproductive behavior among neighborhood youths. The application proposed to add case managers and health care services, as well as to increase educational support services such as summer school, tutoring, and health and parent education. Alternative classrooms or alternative school placement with counseling services and case managers were also proposed, as well as increased drug education, peer mediation, conflict resolution and gang and weapon prevention programs.

Neighborhood restoration focused on housing and neighborhood rehabilitation, employment strategies for area residents, and business district development. To improve housing in the target area, objectives were to upgrade and restore substandard housing to city housing code, preserve existing housing with improvement incentives, provide low-income home ownership opportunities, remove blighting influences, and upgrade all public improvements/utilities within the housing rehabilitation areas. The goals of this focus were to improve the physical condition of the housing to enhance its livability and marketability, increase owner commitment and pride in the neighborhood, and improve neighborhood infrastructure.

Goals of the employment strategy were to increase the employability of target area residents through better academic skills development, to train residents in job skills and prepare them for the work environment, and to expand new job opportunities with pay scales that enable a person to support a

family. The plan included expansion of employment access to Akron businesses, as well as to target area businesses, and hiring incentives for these businesses.

The neighborhood goals also included business district development, including improving the district's physical environment; improving the security of proprietors, employees, and clientele; and creating a climate of enterprise where goods and services are deemed important to both residents and businesses. Listed objectives were to provide public funds to support commercial property improvement and new business development, to develop programs that provide training and technical assistance to new business entrepreneurs, to expand opportunities for minority/business development, to encourage business associations, and to organize ongoing business crime watch programs.

Akron Weed and Seed priorities for law enforcement have remained largely the same since the 1994 application, with focus on youth crime, drug trafficking, crimes of violence, and burglaries in residential areas. Citizen priorities have added prostitution to the list, which plagues several areas in the eastern (expanded site boundary) neighborhood of West Hill/Highland Square. Further, since the original Weed and Seed application and subsequent 1994 application, crime conditions changed in some areas east of the original boundaries. In 1997, the city of Akron expanded its Weed and Seed target area boundaries to include contiguous high-crime areas and deleted an area of lower risk.

4.3 Budget Information

Akron is a unique Weed and Seed sight for a variety of reasons. Because they did not receive substantial Weed and Seed funding prior to FY 1997, they have yet to set the formal mechanisms of Weed and Seed in place. Akron received \$35,000 in FY 1995 and \$123,172 in FY 1997 in grant money from EOWS (see exhibit 4.1). However, the city has received funding from a variety of sources to start other related programs. So, despite having no formal Weed and Seed mechanisms established, Akron has a substantial base from which to implement its Weed and Seed-funded plan.

4.4 Information Systems

Once operational, Weed and Seed grant moneys will provide one computer for the detective bureau, one for planning and research, and a laptop to do presentations for Geographic Information System (GIS) plotting. APD plans to collect data on the city's crime hot spots and make that directly accessible to officers. The Akron Police Department will also engage in GIS training. To date, no such training has been scheduled.

4.5 Site Monitoring, Reporting, and Local Evaluation

There is no formal plan for a local evaluation at this time. However, regarding monitoring of seeding efforts, there is a plan to conduct exit surveys with participants of seeding programs and activities.

**Exhibit 4.1
Akron Weed and Seed Allocation Plan**

Total	FY 1995 \$35,000	FY 1996 (Not Funded)	FY 1997 \$123,172
Budget Category			
Personnel			\$40,215
Fringe Benefits			\$10,510
Travel			\$2,032
Equipment	\$35,000		\$0
Supplies			\$9,363
Construction			\$29,500
Consultants/Contracts			\$9,968
Other			\$21,584

Source: Compiled from Weed and Seed grant applications and Executive Office for Weed and Seed working documents.

5.0 Key Implementation Issues and Interpretation

5.1 Role of Weed and Seed Site Designation

The city of Akron did not receive funding for its grant applications in 1992, 1994, and 1996. This led to considerable local dismay, as the city has an excellent track record in receiving Federal funds. There was some sentiment and consideration given to not applying for funding in future cycles, owing to concern about how cities were selected. However, support from the mayor's office, the planning department, and the police department led to submission of the currently funded 1997 application. Despite the fact that the amount of funding is relatively small compared to other grants in the city, Akron officials cited the potential role of the Weed and Seed grant as a means to focus and better integrate city efforts to solve crime and crime-related problems.

5.2 Management Structure and Control

Decisionmaking authority will rest with the steering committee, which had yet to begin meeting as of October 1997. The weeding and seeding subcommittees will also be active in making decisions regarding priorities for activity. All three of these committees (the overall committee and the weeding and seeding subcommittees) will be, in part, comprised of local residents. In addition, the city planning department will be actively involved, as will staff of Crouse Caring Communities. Crouse has an advisory board comprised of 15 members. All institutional members of the board have made either a financial or inkind commitment to Crouse.

Currently, there is also the need to create strong weeding management within the APD. The current weeding coordinator does not hold command rank, and the program therefore lacks command support

within the department. The need for visible, consistent command support is critical for preventing the program from being marginalized within the police department. The danger is that without such support, Weed and Seed in Akron may come to be seen as “not real police work.”

5.3 Local Politics

There have been no notable political problems with implementation of Weed and Seed in Akron. However, it is important to note that, due to little funding, there has been very little in terms of Weed and Seed-funded activities and almost no publicity in the community regarding Weed and Seed efforts. Therefore, it remains unclear whether problems will arise. It is likely that the perception of Weed and Seed as having received too little money may be an initial hurdle for those involved in managing the efforts.

5.4 Operational Goals

The operational goals of the Weed and Seed efforts in Akron have not been defined. However, Weed and Seed is viewed as a catalyst to sharpen the focus for community involvement and enhance community policing within the department. Thus, it may be that the primary contribution of Weed and Seed in Akron is its role in strengthening other programs. Weed and Seed will complement the comprehensive approach already adopted throughout the city.

Although formal goals do not exist, the goals that are beginning to emerge are the product of informal conversations among local officials, APD, local residents, and social service programs. This collaborative process of goal setting should ensure a better chance for acceptance.

5.5 Approach to Weeding

The primary difference between the Akron weeding approach and other enforcement in the city is the extent to which the community policing philosophy, especially problem solving, dominate the response strategy. The traditional view of law enforcement, however, may be difficult to overcome within the Akron Police Department. To help institutionalize community policing within APD, the current chief has instituted a policy whereby initial assignments of academy graduates have been to community policing units. That has helped to distribute the community policing and problem-solving philosophy more broadly throughout the department, especially as there has been considerable turnover within the department. In addition, the chief will be ordering two “park and walks” per night for each patrol officer. It is hoped that these will help alter the culture of the police department.

APD has identified the following major crime problems in the Weed and Seed target area: violent crime, vehicle theft, drug trafficking and usage, crack house operation, youth crime, and local gang activities. The law enforcement strategy to deal with these problems includes a number of components:

- The deployment of patrol and narcotics division personnel to suppress drug trafficking and to arrest drug dealers. The Street Narcotics Uniformed Division (SNUD) of the Akron Police Department has extensive experience in targeting drug trafficking.
- Coordinated efforts with State and local agencies to close crack houses. The police department can combat crack house operation through invocation of civil nuisance abatement laws to close the houses, to prosecute owners of such buildings if they are found to be involved in drug trafficking at the houses, and to demolish houses that violate relevant housing code provisions.
- Establishment of a gang prevention and intervention program. The Akron Police Department Gang Intelligence Officer gathers information regarding gang organization and activities and collaborates with patrol personnel, the narcotics division, and community policing officers in the targeting of gang operations.
- Enforcement of the youth curfew statute. Akron police officers are authorized to detain youths less than 18 years old who are out between the hours of 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. without the permission of their parents or guardians. The officers take such youths to a juvenile detention facility, and they are subsequently released into the custody of relatives or guardians.

The early Akron Weed and Seed applications (which were not funded) sought funding support for 1,100 hours of police overtime to intensively carry out these strategies in the target area. The funding would have led to the establishment of a weeding unit within the department that would have been managed by an officer of command rank (lieutenant or above). In the absence of grant funding, the department carried out these strategies, albeit at a lower level of intensity than would have occurred had the grant been received. Further, the department continued to collaborate with relevant Federal law enforcement agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), both citywide and in the target area. Now that Weed and Seed moneys have been designated to Akron, these strategies can intensify.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for northern Ohio played a major role in the design of the Akron Weed and Seed program but decided to rely upon local prosecutors to handle cases arising from the target area. Arrests in the Weed and Seed target area are prosecuted by the Summit County Prosecutor's Office and the Akron City Prosecutor's Office. However, the Summit County District Attorney's Office has had very limited involvement in the planning and implementation of the Weed and Seed program.

The district attorney in Summit County is elected to a 4-year term. The district attorney's office employs a staff of 250—of whom 50 are assistant district attorneys (ADAs). In 1995 the Summit County District Attorney's Office handled more than 4,000 felony and misdemeanor cases. The average caseload per ADA is approximately 300 cases per year. The district attorney reported that a direct indictment system is being developed to expedite case processing. Nevertheless, the Weed and Seed cases referred to the Summit County District Attorney's office are not identified as such and, therefore, are not tracked or handled in any special manner.

The district attorney stated that her office, as a State-funded office, did not receive funds specifically to assist in the prosecution of Weed and Seed cases. Instead, the Weed and Seed funds were earmarked for the city of Akron, with the city prosecutor receiving a portion of these funds.

5.6 Approach to Community Policing

The initial 1992 Weed and Seed proposal prepared by Akron included funding for four community police officers to serve the target area. As earlier noted, the funding was not received. The Akron Police Department has received other Federal funding for the support of eight community police officers citywide, however. These officers have been assigned in pairs to four target areas of the city (the sections are dispersed with one each in north, south, east, and west portions of Akron). Approximately 80 percent of the Weed and Seed target area on the west side is in one of these community policing service areas.

The community policing officers perform a variety of functions in the Weed and Seed target area, including:

- Working to identify problems confronting the community and seeking to assist the community in solving recurring problems (e.g., helping mobilize city departments to respond to severe housing code violations, eliminating abandoned cars, and so forth). Problems have been identified through a survey of residents. The survey form lists 29 potential problems and asks local residents if they believe the problems exist in their neighborhood.
- Helping organize the community to deal with crime and disorder, including developing neighborhood and business crime watches, as well as working to form links across existing organizations.
- Engaging in public education efforts around personal safety.
- Working with neighborhood youths to provide opportunities for constructive activities, while also continuing to enforce the law and the youth curfew mentioned earlier.
- Mobilizing law enforcement resources to target patterns of crime. Some major successes have occurred in this area. For example, after one block watch group complained about a drug dealer in the neighborhood, the local community policing officer arranged for a narcotics officer to make an undercover buy from the offender. The operation worked; the offender was arrested within one week of the complaint and removed from the street, and the community policing officer reported that the local citizens were “ecstatic” because the system had worked effectively and quickly.

When interviewed, the Akron community policing officers noted that they have time to deal with neighborhood problems in depth. Officers assigned to district patrol cars serving neighborhoods, in contrast, are continuously responding to calls for service and do not have time for intensive engagement in individual problems. The community policing officers seek to keep district patrol car personnel informed regarding their activities and their perceptions of ongoing and emerging problems in the community. Community policing officers fill out field interrogation cards dealing with neighborhood problems. These cards are routed to relevant personnel, including drug units if the interrogation deals with drug problems, and to district patrol car personnel. If major recurring problems are identified (e.g., drug dealers operating in the neighborhood), community policing officers develop writeups describing the offenders and their modus operandi and distribute this information to district officers to enhance the targeting of offenders.

5.7 Approach to Seeding

The Crouse Caring Communities project was established in 1993 and is the centerpiece of seeding activities in the Akron Weed and Seed target area. The project has established a safe haven at the Crouse Elementary School. The project performs a wide variety of functions including: (1) coordinating the provision of services from 35 social service agencies to community members;⁴ (2) sponsoring family-oriented activities and parenting skills training seminars at the school; (3) preparing and distributing a community newsletter; (4) developing a community garden site and community clothing bank at the Crouse school; (5) sponsoring family mediation services; and (6) operating a mentor program and related activities for local youths. A major contributor to the project has been its director. She initially became involved in CCC when she moved to the target area and was faced with a decision about where to send her oldest child to school. She considered private schools, but decided to try Crouse Elementary School first. Her child's enrollment in the school led to her efforts as a volunteer, efforts which led to an expanded role and a permanent position with CCC in August 1995. She has been the catalyst for a number of programs and, more specifically, for the approach adopted in the Akron seeding site.

The Crouse Caring Communities project is also guided by a neighborhood advisory committee. The project fosters coordination among residents, churches, businesses, social service agencies, and others. The target area population is predominantly black, and CCC activities are structured to be culturally relevant and to foster maximum participation by black residents.

As a result of Weed and Seed funds, Crouse will experience a number of benefits. First, the existing programs will continue to build on past success. In a sense, seeding efforts in Akron will enhance an already successful program that has experienced growing pains. Further, Weed and Seed moneys will serve to secure the safe haven space (located in the local school), which has been in jeopardy as a consequence of the Akron school board's decision to reduce the size of classrooms.

4 The types of agencies range widely and include the Akron Health Department, the Community Drug Board, Planned Parenthood, and the YMCA.

As discussed, the Akron Public Schools sponsor a variety of activities to combat violence and drug abuse. Student peer mediation and conflict resolution programs have been developed in target area schools to encourage the peaceful resolution of disputes among students. The schools also sponsor D.A.R.E. programs to enhance student awareness of the dangers of drug abuse and to strengthen their skills to resist becoming involved with drugs.

Also, the target area's housing stock has experienced significant deterioration, and Akron has used Federal Community Development Block Grant funding to support housing rehabilitation and neighborhood improvements. Two community recreation centers have been renovated in the Weed and Seed target area with funding from the Akron Department of Planning and Urban Development. The Copley Road business district in the target area has also received funding support from the city for business property improvements.

5.8 Operational Relationships with Other Organizations

There are a number of social service agencies already providing services in the target area, and the early coordination among them will be critical to the Weed and Seed program's success. The relationship between Crouse Caring Communities and the Ounce of Prevention program exemplifies this type of coordination.

Regarding weeding efforts, although relationships exist between Weed and Seed community policing officers and regular patrol officers, these relationships need to be strengthened and the community policing role expanded throughout the department. Community policing officers need to be seen as better integrated into APD, and patrol officers need to call on community policing officers and strategies more often. It is expected that Weed and Seed, as part of its training and resocialization, will help accomplish these goals.

In addition, as previously discussed, APD provides funding and personnel for the D.A.R.E. program. Other officers operating in the public schools are hired as part of a joint Akron Police Department and Akron Board of Education program to increase security in the schools. Off-duty APD officers provide these services by walking the halls and engaging in informal mentoring. The officers get to know the kids, as officers may work up to 3 days per week in the schools.

5.9 Concluding Observations

As the funding for Weed and Seed efforts is so recent, there are few specific lessons to be learned from efforts to date. The planning department in the city of Akron is impressive in its scope and capability and plays a central role in many grant efforts. This is a valuable lesson that other cities could benefit from emulating. In addition, the involvement of the police department in the public schools in both a formal and informal manner enhances the likely impact of the police department.

Further, the most important context for interpreting Weed and Seed in Akron is the rich array of supportive programs currently in place. Because Akron did not initially receive funding, the city had time to lay the foundation for Weed and Seed efforts. Unlike many cities that struggle for a period of time after receiving funding, Akron appears ready to start with a minimum of preparation.

However, while this time enhanced the prospects for Weed and Seed efforts to make an impact, it also diminished the ability to isolate and evaluate Weed and Seed.

There is evidence that the city of Akron has the capacity to build cooperative community alliances between groups, in large part because it has done so in a variety of ways. The city has taken strong, positive steps toward revitalization through efforts to bring buildings up to code and to evict residents of public housing who violate the law; the infrastructure in place is indeed impressive. This lends hope to the belief that the city can effectively implement the Weed and Seed programs and philosophy.

6.0 Crime Patterns and Community Perceptions

6.1 Overview

As discussed, due to limited Weed and Seed funding, Weed and Seed efforts have not been fully implemented in Akron. Therefore, the information presented below should be examined in the context of other social service and law enforcement efforts that are already operational in Akron, as well as provide a backdrop for what may evolve into a fully operational Weed and Seed program. Further, the information may be used by Akron public officials in the future if they are interested in examining the effects of the Weed and Seed program on the city.

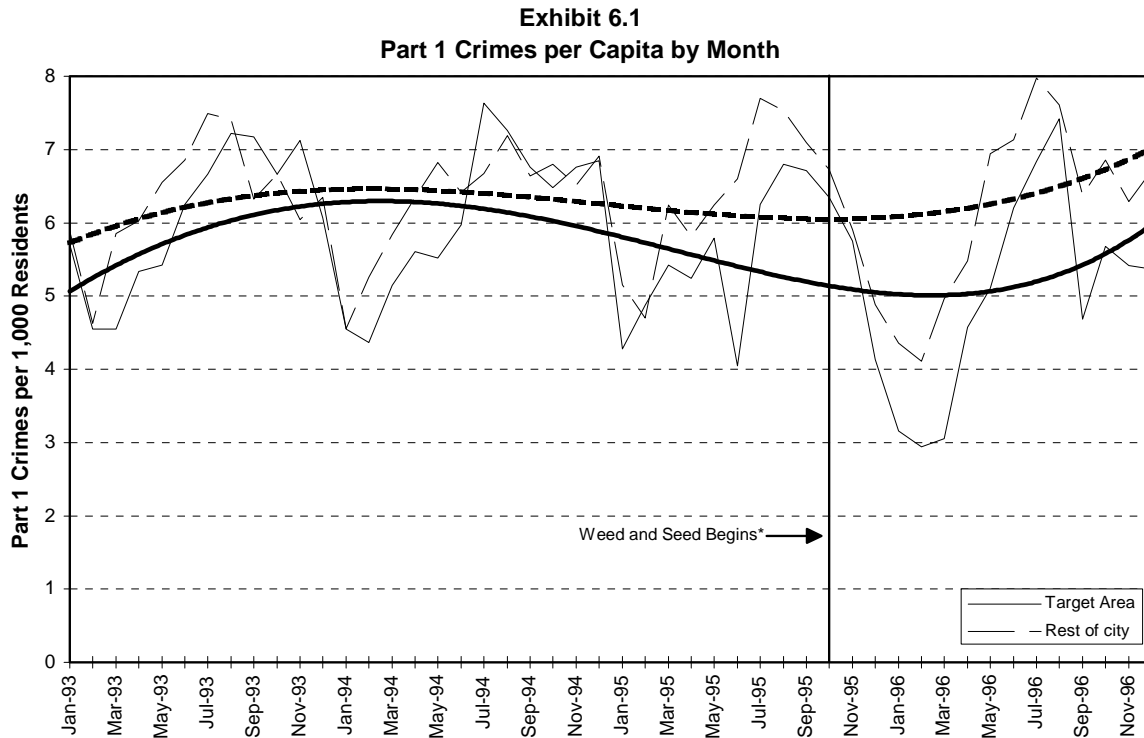
6.2 Analysis of Crime Data

In this section, police data is used to analyze the trends in crime rates before and after implementation of Weed and Seed. At the outset, it is important to note that any observed changes in crime rates in the target area during this time period might reflect factors other than Weed and Seed. For instance, changes in crime reporting may cause the reported crime rates to rise or fall, independent of any shift in true crime incidence. Changes in the regional or national economic context may also affect the trends in local crime, either favorably or unfavorably. Additionally, an observed reduction in crime for the target area may occur through displacement of crime to adjacent or nearby areas, where crime rates would rise correspondingly. Further, it is important to note that although Akron received a small amount of funding in October 1995 (which we have designated the start date of Weed and Seed on the graph), Akron received no funding in FY 1996. Finally, as noted, there are a number of other contributing factors in Akron, such as the other social service and law enforcement efforts that have been discussed, that also may have affected the crime rates.

Incident-level police data and geomapping methods have been used to identify the crimes that have occurred in the target area and in the rest of the city combined. The rest of the city provides a logical comparison area in which to monitor possible changes in local crime reporting, shifts in local economic conditions or other conventional factors, and the possibility of crime displacement to other areas within the city.⁵

⁵ In addition, Akron has been having considerable problems with their computerized crime records. This must be considered when examining the data.

Exhibit 6.1 shows the overall trend in Part 1 crimes from 1993 through 1996.⁶ The graph details the number of Part 1 crimes by month per 1,000 residents. As previously mentioned, it is interesting to note that the Part 1 crime rate for the target area is generally lower than the Part 1 crime rate for the rest of Akron.⁷



*It is important to note that Weed and Seed Funding in FY95 was minimal and no funding was received in FY96. Funded efforts, therefore, were not fully operational in Akron until FY97.

As shown, the average number of Part 1 crimes decreased in the target area in 1995. The number of crimes committed in the target area then began to increase in 1996. One possible explanation for this increase is that as crime rates in the target area went down, less time and resources were devoted to law enforcement efforts there. The decreased intensity, therefore, opened a window for drug dealers and gang members to intensify their criminal activities. However, it is also interesting to note that the average number of crimes committed in the target area actually decreased by approximately 13 percent from October 1995 through December 1996. This average decrease, however, cannot definitively be attributed to Weed and Seed efforts for two reasons: (1) the sum total amount of money allocated to Akron for Weed and Seed efforts was very small and it would be odd to notice a major shift in crime from such funding; and (2) as evidenced by the graph, this trend of decreasing levels of crime began in 1994, before Akron received any funding from Weed and Seed. In fact, in 1994 APD formed its first Drug Enforcement Unit (without Weed and Seed funds), and most of their activity focused on the Weed and Seed target area.

6 Part 1 crimes include homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and auto theft.

7 These calculations are based on our analysis of incident-level crime data provided by APD. The calculations assume that the target area population is 23,930, which is the figure stated in Akron's 1994 Weed and Seed proposal. Further, the violent crime rate (which is part of Part 1 crimes) is actually higher in the target area.

6.3 Survey of Community Residents

Survey methods used in 1995 and 1997

In each of the eight sites participating in the national evaluation, a survey of target area residents was conducted at two separate intervals. During March–July 1995, the Institute for Social Analysis conducted 1,531 interviews among the eight sites. In December 1997–January 1998, Abt Associates conducted 1,995 interviews with a separate group of residents in the same eight target areas. In the following material, we refer to these data collection efforts as the 1995 and 1997 surveys.

General survey design and operations

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

- For each site, the geographical boundaries of the survey area were the same in 1995 and 1997.
- The verbatim wording of questions from the 1995 survey was retained in 1997. In selected items additional response categories were added in 1997 to provide a more complete range of possible responses. For these items, care was taken in the analysis to aggregate responses in ways that would preserve the comparability of the findings across the two surveys.⁸

Nonetheless, there were notable differences in the methods used in the two surveys, as follows:

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

The decision to proceed in 1997 with telephone interviewing and a shortened instrument was based on difficulties experienced in 1995 in completing the targeted number of 400 interviews per site. In none of the sites was this target reached. In Akron, 155 interviews were completed. The 1997 survey

⁸ For example, in questions on “how good a job are the police doing” in different aspects of law enforcement, the 1995 survey allowed respondents to indicate “a very good job, a good job, a fair job, or a poor job.” The 1997 survey allowed respondents to also indicate “a very poor job.” The findings presented have aggregated the “poor job” and “very poor job” responses for 1997 before comparing the pattern of responses with 1995.

design called for 300 completed interviews per site, including Akron. In 6 of the 8 sites (all but Hartford and Manatee), 300 or more interviews were completed.

General observations on the survey findings

Although one could interpret each of the trends noted in the charts as reflecting unfavorably or favorably on the Weed and Seed program, it would be incorrect to attribute the observed changes to Weed and Seed efforts alone. The measured changes may, in part, be the result of the different survey methods used in 1995 and 1997. Further, it is important to remember that Weed and Seed-funded efforts did not become operational until FY 1997 in Akron (only a short time before the 1997 survey was conducted). In addition, although the observed changes in residents' attitudes may indeed have resulted from various community changes set in motion by the program, one could also make the case that improving economic conditions in the United States are instead primarily responsible. Finally, it is important to note that the demographic differences reported between respondents in 1995 and 1997 could account for some of the difference in perceptions reported in 1997 versus 1995. With all that in mind, the survey findings can serve as a useful tool later in assessing the impact of the Weed and Seed program and therefore are important to report.

Survey findings

The findings from the interviews conducted in Akron in 1995 and 1997 are shown in exhibits 1 through 7 and discussed below.

Demographic characteristics of survey respondents (Exhibit 6.2)

Respondents having lived on the west side of Akron for more than 2 years are, for purposes of data analysis, considered to be long-term target area residents. Such residents made up 79 percent of 1995 respondents and 89 percent of 1997 respondents. The average age of respondents was 39 years in 1995 and 48 years in 1997.

Respondent employment status remained stable between the 2 survey years with the exception of an increase in the percentage of those "retired or otherwise not looking for work" (12 percent in 1995 and 36 percent in 1997) and those who report being "disabled" (4 percent in 1995 and 26 percent in 1997). Respondents identifying themselves as "homemaker[s]" increased from 10 percent in 1995 to 64 percent in 1997 (this sizable difference is largely attributable to differences in survey methodology between the 2 years, which may have caused the 1995 number to be underrepresented). The percentage of respondents reporting student status increased slightly for both full-time (4 percent in 1995 to 5 percent in 1997) and part-time students (1 percent in 1995 to 6 percent in 1997).

Household composition in the target area saw an increase in "zero children households" from 51 percent in 1995 to 67 percent in 1997. Respondent households containing people less than 18 years of age decreased from 38 percent in 1995 to 27 percent in 1997. Households with 3 or more children fell from 11 percent in 1995 to 6 percent in 1997. Households containing 1 or 2 adults made up 77 percent of respondents in both survey years, while households with 3 or more adults increased from 20 percent in 1995 to 22 percent in 1997.

There was a shift in the ethnic composition in the target area between 1995 and 1997. Eighty-three percent of 1995 respondents were black, but only 65 percent of respondents were black in 1997.

Likewise, 15 percent of 1995 respondents were white, as compared with 24 percent in 1997. There was also an increase in American Indian respondents, from none in 1995 to 2 percent in 1997. The male-to-female respondent ratio remained similar between survey years, with only a slight increase in the number of females in 1997 (69 percent versus 66 percent in 1995).

Perceptions of the neighborhood (Exhibit 6.3)

Differences in responses regarding levels of neighborhood satisfaction and feelings of safety both during the day and after dark between the two survey years were not statistically significant. Perceptions of neighborhood improvement in a 2-year time period, however, were up significantly ($p < 0.01$). People reporting feeling “better” about their neighborhood increased from 11 percent in 1995 to 21 percent in 1997 and declined equally in the “worse” category, from 23 percent in 1995 to only 12 percent in 1997.

Consistent with improved neighborhood perceptions is a significant perceived reduction in neighborhood problems. In 1995, drug dealers on the streets were identified as a “big problem” by 19 percent of respondents. This proportion decreased significantly ($p < 0.05$) in 1997 to 16 percent. Similarly, drug dealers in homes or apartments were perceived as being significantly less of a “big problem” ($p < 0.01$) in 1997 (16 percent, compared to 21 percent in 1995). Burglary and other property crime, however, have significantly increased as a “big problem” ($p < 0.01$), rising from 10 percent in 1995 to 13 percent in 1997. The percentages of street crime and violent crime considered “big problems” were also up significantly ($p < 0.01$) in 1997, from 8 percent to 10 percent and from 13 percent to 15 percent, respectively.

Although both gang activity and drug use as “big problems” were down in 1997 (6 percent in 1997 versus 7 percent in 1995, and 22 percent versus 23 percent in 1997), they both made a significant shift ($p < 0.05$) from being “no problem” to “small problems” in 1997. Regarding gang activity, 64 percent of 1995 respondents chose the “no problem” category, and 18 percent chose the “small problem” category. In 1997, only 57 percent of respondents said that gang activity was “no problem,” but 29 percent said it was a “small problem.” Regarding drug use, 45 percent of 1995 respondents chose the “no problem” category, and 15 percent chose the “small problem” category, while 33 percent of 1997 respondents said drug use was “no problem” and 28 percent reported it to be a “small problem.”

Victimization (Exhibit 6.4)

When asked about incidences of victimization in the neighborhood, only property break-ins have exhibited a significant change ($p < 0.1$) in the target area. Incidences of break-ins among 1997 respondents were 16 percent, down from 22 percent in 1995. Change in responses among the remaining questions in this section are insignificant.

Police response (Exhibit 6.5)

Respondent perception of police performance in keeping order in the target area is up significantly ($p < 0.1$) from 1995 (16 percent in the “very good job” category in 1995 versus 24 percent in 1997). Police are also reportedly performing significantly better ($p < 0.01$) in controlling the street sale and use of illegal drugs in the neighborhood. Responses in the “very good job” category rose from 15 percent in 1995 to 22 percent in 1997. Respondents who saw police “chatting/having a friendly

conversation with people in the neighborhood” also rose significantly ($p < 0.05$) over 1995 levels, from 16 percent to 26 percent. Differences in the remaining observation of police response are statistically insignificant. Respondent perceptions of general police responsiveness to neighborhood concerns has remained constant (35 percent considered actions “very responsive” in 1995, 39 percent in 1997).

Community involvement (Exhibit 6.6)

Community involvement on the west side of Akron increased markedly since 1995. There was a significant difference in all questions pertaining to program and project attendance or participation between survey years. Attendance or participation in anti-drug rallies, marches, or vigils in the neighborhood was up significantly ($p < 0.05$) in 1997 (11 percent compared to 5 percent in 1995). Citizen patrol attendance or participation improved significantly ($p < 0.05$) from 3 percent in 1995 to 9 percent in 1997. The percentage of respondents attending or participating in neighborhood watch programs in 1997 was 26 percent, up significantly ($p < 0.01$) from 12 percent of 1995 respondents. Neighborhood cleanup projects have shown the most significant ($p < 0.01$) improvement in participation, rising from 7 percent of respondents in 1995 to 22 percent in 1997.

Perceptions of social services and other programs (Exhibit 6.7)

City services and other programs received higher marks across the board in 1997. Satisfaction with the availability of sports, recreation, and other programs for youths is up significantly ($p < 0.01$), with 26 percent of respondents “very satisfied” versus 10 percent in 1995. Respondent satisfaction with the availability of drug treatment services is also significantly higher ($p < 0.01$), with 18 percent of 1997 respondents “very satisfied” versus 10 percent in 1995. Satisfaction with job opportunities in the neighborhood is up significantly ($p < 0.01$), from only 3 percent of households “very satisfied” in 1995 to 15 percent in 1997.

Perceptions of the Weed and Seed program (Exhibit 6.8)

Name recognition for the Weed and Seed program remained at 10 percent between 1995 and 1997. Not surprisingly, awareness of neighborhood-specific seed programs was also low. Respondent awareness of neighborhood programs was as follows: the safe haven for youths at the Crouse Elementary School (27 percent), the community clothing bank at the Crouse Elementary School (16 percent), mentor programs for local youths (34 percent), and parenting skills training seminars (33 percent).

**Exhibit 6.2: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents
Akron**

	1995 Survey^a	1997 Survey^a
<i>Age of respondent</i>	n = 155	n = 302
18–29	30 (19%)	31 (10%)
30–39	28 (18%)	47 (16%)
40–49	30 (19%)	58 (19%)
50–59	18 (12%)	50 (17%)
60 or older	30 (19%)	99 (33%)
Other	19 (12%)	17 (6%)
Total	100%	100%
Mean Value	39.4	48.4
<i>Employment status</i>	n = 155 ^b	n = 302 ^b
Working full time	71 (46%)	140 (46%)
Working part time	9 (6%)	25 (8%)
Unemployed and looking for work	11 (7%)	16 (5%)
Retired or otherwise not looking for work	19 (12%)	110 (36%)
Homemaker	16 (10%)	194 (64%)
Disabled	6 (4%)	41 (14%)
Full-time student	6 (4%)	16 (5%)
Part-time student	2 (1%)	17 (6%)
Other	45 (29%)	10 (3%)
Refused	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)
Don't know	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Mean Value	2.7	2.4

**Exhibit 6.2: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents
Akron**

	1995 Survey^a	1997 Survey^a
<i>Number of people in household less than 18 years old</i>	n = 155	n = 302
0	79 (51%)	201 (67%)
1–2	59 (38%)	82 (27%)
3 or more	17 (11%)	19 (6%)
Total	100%	100%
Mean Value	1.0	0.6
<i>Number of people in household more than 18 years old</i>	n = 155	n = 302
0	5 (3%)	6 (2%)
1–2	119 (77%)	231 (77%)
3 or more	31 (20%)	65 (22%)
Total	100%	100%
Mean Value	1.9	2.0
<i>Ethnic identity</i>	n = 155	n = 302
Black	128 (83%)	196 (65%)
White	23 (15%)	73 (24%)
Hispanic	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)
Asian/Pacific Islander	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)
American Indian	0 (0%)	5 (2%)
Something else	4 (3%)	11 (4%)
Refused	0 (0%)	13 (4%)
Don't know	0 (0%)	2 (1%)
Total	100%	100%
Mean Value	1.2	1.5

**Exhibit 6.2: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents
Akron**

	1995 Survey^a	1997 Survey^a
<i>Gender</i>	n = 155	n = 302
Male	53 (34%)	95 (31%)
Female	102 (66%)	207 (69%)
Total	100%	100%
Mean Value	1.7	1.7

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

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

**Exhibit 6.3: Perceptions of the Neighborhood
Akron**

	1995 Survey^a	1997 Survey^a	Chi Square Statistic^b
<i>In general, how satisfied are you with this neighborhood as a place to live?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	x ² = n.s.
Very satisfied	78 (50%)	157 (52%)	
Somewhat satisfied	55 (36%)	101 (33%)	
Somewhat dissatisfied	12 (8%)	25 (8%)	
Very dissatisfied	9 (6%)	17 (6%)	
Don't know	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	2 (1%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>In general, how safe do you feel out alone in this neighborhood during the day? Do you feel...</i>	n = 155	n = 302	x ² = n.s.
Very safe	87 (56%)	159 (53%)	
Somewhat safe	59 (38%)	124 (41%)	
Somewhat unsafe	8 (5%)	15 (5%)	
Very unsafe	1 (1%)	3 (1%)	
Don't know	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	

**Exhibit 6.3: Perceptions of the Neighborhood
Akron**

	1995 Survey^a	1997 Survey^a	Chi Square Statistic^b
<i>In general, how safe do you feel out alone in this neighborhood after dark? Do you feel...</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Very safe	29 (19%)	60 (20%)	
Somewhat safe	69 (45%)	126 (42%)	
Somewhat unsafe	17 (11%)	57 (19%)	
Very unsafe	19 (12%)	27 (9%)	
Don't go out at night	20 (13%)	30 (10%)	
Don't know	1 (1%)	2 (1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>In general, in the past 2 years, would you say this neighborhood has become a better place to live, a worse place to live, or stayed about the same?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = \text{***}$
Better	17 (11%)	63 (21%)	
Worse	35 (23%)	36 (12%)	
About the same	86 (55%)	198 (66%)	
Did not live here 2 years ago	15 (10%)	4 (1%)	
Don't know	2 (1%)	1 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	

**Exhibit 6.3: Perceptions of the Neighborhood
Akron**

	1995 Survey^a	1997 Survey^a	Chi Square Statistic^b
<i>Do you think drug dealers on the streets, or in other public places are a big problem, small problem, or no problem in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = **$
Big problem	29 (19%)	49 (16%)	
Small problem	27 (17%)	84 (28%)	
No problem	82 (53%)	151 (50%)	
Don't know	17 (11%)	18 (6%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>Do you think drug sales out of homes or apartments are a big problem, small problem, or no problem in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = ***$
Big problem	33 (21%)	47 (16%)	
Small problem	19 (12%)	75 (25%)	
No problem	70 (45%)	130 (43%)	
Don't know	33 (21%)	50 (17%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	

**Exhibit 6.3: Perceptions of the Neighborhood
Akron**

	1995 Survey^a	1997 Survey^a	Chi Square Statistic^b
<i>Do you think burglary and other property crimes are a big problem, small problem, or no problem in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = ***$
Big problem	15 (10%)	38 (13%)	
Small problem	43 (28%)	135 (45%)	
No problem	85 (55%)	119 (39%)	
Don't know	12 (8%)	10 (3%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>Do you think robbery and other street crimes are a big problem, small problem, or no problem in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = ***$
Big problem	13 (8%)	31 (10%)	
Small problem	32 (21%)	115 (38%)	
No problem	91 (59%)	131 (43%)	
Don't know	19 (12%)	24 (8%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	
Total	100%	100%	

**Exhibit 6.3: Perceptions of the Neighborhood
Akron**

	1995 Survey^a	1997 Survey^a	Chi Square Statistic^b
<i>Do you think violent crimes (such as shootings, assault, and so forth) are a big problem, small problem, or no problem in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = ***$
Big problem	20 (13%)	44 (15%)	
Small problem	24 (15%)	99 (33%)	
No problem	98 (63%)	151 (50%)	
Don't know	13 (8%)	8 (3%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>Do you think gang activity is a big problem, small problem, or no problem in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = **$
Big problem	11 (7%)	18 (6%)	
Small problem	28 (18%)	87 (29%)	
No problem	99 (64%)	173 (57%)	
Don't know	17 (11%)	24 (8%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	

**Exhibit 6.3: Perceptions of the Neighborhood
Akron**

	1995 Survey^a	1997 Survey^a	Chi Square Statistic^b
<i>Do you think drug use is a big problem, small problem, or no problem in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = **$
Big problem	35 (23%)	66 (22%)	
Small problem	24 (15%)	84 (28%)	
No problem	70 (45%)	99 (33%)	
Don't know	26 (17%)	52 (17%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	
Total	100%	100%	

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

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

*** Statistically significant at 1-percent level

** Statistically significant at 5-percent level

* Statistically significant at 10-percent level

n.s. Not statistically significant

**Exhibit 6.4: Victimization
Akron**

	1995 Survey ^a	1997 Survey ^a	Chi Square Statistic ^b
<i>In the past 2 years, has anyone broken into your home, garage, or another building on your property in this neighborhood to steal something?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = *$
Yes	34 (22%)	47 (16%)	
No	119 (77%)	255 (84%)	
Don't know	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>In the past 2 years, has anyone stolen something from you or a member of your family by force or by threat of force in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Yes	14 (9%)	20 (7%)	
No	139 (90%)	282 (93%)	
Don't know	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>Other than the incidents already mentioned, in the past 2 years, have you or a member of your family been beaten up, attacked, or hit with something such as a rock or bottle in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Yes	5 (3%)	18 (6%)	
No	148 (96%)	283 (94%)	
Don't know	2 (1%)	1 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	

**Exhibit 6.4: Victimization
Akron**

	1995 Survey ^a	1997 Survey ^a	Chi Square Statistic ^b
<i>Other than the incidents already mentioned, in the past 2 years, have you or a member of your family been knifed, shot at, or attacked with some other weapon by anyone at all in this neighborhood to steal something?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Yes	5 (3%)	10 (3%)	
No	149 (96%)	291 (96%)	
Don't know	1 (1%)	1 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	

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

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

*** Statistically significant at 1-percent level

** Statistically significant at 5-percent level

* Statistically significant at 10-percent level

n.s. Not statistically significant

**Exhibit 6.5: Police Response
Akron**

	1995 Survey ^a	1997 Survey ^a	Chi Square Statistic ^b
<i>In general, how good a job are the police doing to keep order on the streets and sidewalks in this neighborhood these days? Would you say they are doing a...</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = *$
Very good job	25 (16%)	73 (24%)	
Good job	59 (38%)	123 (41%)	
Fair job	50 (32%)	80 (26%)	
Poor job	12 (8%)	11 (4%)	
Very poor job	Not a response category	8 (3%)	
Don't know	9 (6%)	7 (2%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>How good a job are the police doing in controlling the street sale and use of illegal drugs in this neighborhood these days? Would you say they are doing a...</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = ***$
Very good job	24 (15%)	66 (22%)	
Good job	35 (23%)	110 (36%)	
Fair job	43 (28%)	61 (20%)	
Poor job	18 (12%)	14 (5%)	
Very poor job	Not a response category	9 (3%)	
Don't know	35 (23%)	41 (14%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	
Total	100%	100%	

**Exhibit 6.5: Police Response
Akron**

	1995 Survey ^a	1997 Survey ^a	Chi Square Statistic ^b
<i>During the past month, have you seen a police car driving through your neighborhood?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Yes	136 (88%)	265 (88%)	
No	18 (12%)	35 (12%)	
Don't know	1 (1%)	2 (1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>During the past month, have you seen a police officer walking around or standing on patrol in the neighborhood?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Yes	11 (7%)	17 (6%)	
No	143 (92%)	285 (94%)	
Don't know	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>During the past month, have you seen a police officer patrolling in the back alleys or in the back of buildings in your neighborhood?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Yes	19 (12%)	52 (17%)	
No	134 (87%)	235 (78%)	
Don't know	2 (1%)	15 (5%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	

**Exhibit 6.5: Police Response
Akron**

	1995 Survey ^a	1997 Survey ^a	Chi Square Statistic ^b
<i>During the past month, have you seen a police officer chatting/having a friendly conversation with people in the neighborhood?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = **$
Yes	25 (16%)	79 (26%)	
No	129 (83%)	214 (71%)	
Don't know	1 (1%)	9 (3%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>In general, how responsive are the police in this neighborhood to community concerns? Are they...</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Very responsive	54 (35%)	119 (39%)	
Somewhat responsive	63 (41%)	120 (40%)	
Somewhat unresponsive	13 (8%)	16 (5%)	
Very unresponsive	5 (3%)	10 (3%)	
Don't know	20 (13%)	37 (12%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	

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

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

*** Statistically significant at 1-percent level

** Statistically significant at 5-percent level

* Statistically significant at 10-percent level

n.s. Not statistically significant

**Exhibit 6.6: Community Involvement
Akron**

	1995 Survey ^a	1997 Survey ^a	Chi Square Statistic ^b
<i>During the past 2 years, have you attended or participated in an antidrug rally, vigil, or march in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = **$
Yes	7 (5%)	32 (11%)	
No	148 (95%)	270 (89%)	
Don't know	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>During the past 2 years, have you attended or participated in a citizen patrol in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = **$
Yes	4 (3%)	27 (9%)	
No	151 (97%)	273 (90%)	
Don't know	0 (0%)	2 (1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>During the past 2 years, have you attended or participated in a neighborhood watch program in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = ***$
Yes	19 (12%)	80 (26%)	
No	136 (88%)	219 (73%)	
Don't know	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	

**Exhibit 6.6: Community Involvement
Akron**

	1995 Survey ^a	1997 Survey ^a	Chi Square Statistic ^b
<i>During the past 2 years, have you attended or participated in a neighborhood cleanup project in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = ***$
Yes	11 (7%)	67 (22%)	
No	144 (93%)	234 (77%)	
Don't know	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total	100%	100%	

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

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

*** Statistically significant at 1-percent level

** Statistically significant at 5-percent level

* Statistically significant at 10-percent level

n.s. Not statistically significant

**Exhibit 6.7: Perceptions of Social Services and Other Programs
Akron**

	1995 Survey^a	1997 Survey^a	Chi Square Statistic^b
<i>In general, how satisfied are you with the availability of sports, recreation, and other programs for youths in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = ***$
Very satisfied	15 (10%)	77 (26%)	
Somewhat satisfied	36 (23%)	114 (38%)	
Somewhat dissatisfied	31 (20%)	31 (10%)	
Very dissatisfied	44 (28%)	38 (13%)	
Don't know	29 (19%)	41 (14%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	
Total	100%	100%	
<i>In general, how satisfied are you with the availability of drug treatment services in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = ***$
Very satisfied	15 (10%)	55 (18%)	
Somewhat satisfied	24 (15%)	81 (27%)	
Somewhat dissatisfied	17 (11%)	24 (8%)	
Very dissatisfied	30 (19%)	25 (8%)	
Don't know	69 (45%)	116 (38%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	
Total	100%	100%	

**Exhibit 6.7: Perceptions of Social Services and Other Programs
Akron**

	1995 Survey^a	1997 Survey^a	Chi Square Statistic^b
<i>In general, how satisfied are you with the availability of job opportunities in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = ***$
Very satisfied	4 (3%)	45 (15%)	
Somewhat satisfied	34 (22%)	85 (28%)	
Somewhat dissatisfied	24 (15%)	52 (17%)	
Very dissatisfied	44 (28%)	51 (17%)	
Don't know	49 (32%)	68 (23%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	
Total	100%	100%	

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

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

*** Statistically significant at 1-percent level

** Statistically significant at 5-percent level

* Statistically significant at 10-percent level

n.s. Not statistically significant

**Exhibit 6.8: Perceptions of the Weed and Seed Program
Akron**

	1995 Survey^a	1997 Survey^a	Chi Square Statistic^b
<i>Have you heard of a program called Weed and Seed?</i>	n = 155	n = 302	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s}$
Yes	16 (10%)	30 (10%)	
No	136 (88%)	269 (89%)	
Don't Know	3 (2%)	3 (1%)	
Total	100%	100%	

1997 Respondents Only^a

<i>Are you aware that the following programs are available in this neighborhood?</i>	Yes	No	Don't know	Total
				n = 302
Safe haven for youths at the Crouse Elementary School	81 (27%)	217 (72%)	4 (1%)	100%
Community clothing bank at the Crouse Elementary School	47 (16%)	251 (83%)	4 (1%)	100%
Mentor programs for local youths	103 (34%)	193 (64%)	6 (2%)	100%
Parenting skills training seminars	101 (33%)	197 (65%)	4 (1%)	100%

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

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

*** Statistically significant at 1-percent level

** Statistically significant at 5-percent level

* Statistically significant at 10-percent level

n.s. Not statistically significant

6.4 Seeding Program Participant Interviews

As no programs were funded with Weed and Seed moneys as of November 1997, no seeding program participant interviews were conducted.

7.0 Future Directions and Degree of Institutionalization

As the program has yet to be fully implemented, it is premature to discuss plans following the termination of funding. However, the city has been aggressive and successful in attracting other Federal and State funding for services in the target area. This lends confidence to the belief that Akron will be successful in attracting funding once the Weed and Seed effort has been concluded.

Postgrant goals have been defined and include enhancing the effort to build partnerships within the community. Public officials are both hopeful and confident that Akron's target area residents will continue to work together after the grant.

In addition, Crouse Caring Community has a strong reputation within the community and may be a magnet to attract future funding. However, one need that was identified was to expand seeding efforts beyond Crouse Caring Community as the single provider.

A recent incident on Copley Road regarding community involvement illustrates Akron's potential to continue improving the target area. A young white male who purchased a pager was jumped and nearly stomped to death on his way out of the store by four young black males. The community policing officers discussed the incident and decided that had a black youth been stomped by four whites, the racial outcry would have been substantial. They decided to take this as an opportunity to respond with the community to oppose violence and held a prayer vigil. The vigil was attended by more than 250 people. Officials are optimistic that such community turnout will increase in the future.

About the National Institute of Justice

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

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

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

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

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