



A Policymaker's Guide to  
**BUILDING OUR WAY  
OUT OF CRIME**

The Transformative Power of  
Police-Community Developer Partnerships

Bill Geller | Lisa Belsky  
Foreword by Bill Bratton and Paul Grogan





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## The Focus of this Policymaker's Guide and of the Book on which It Is Based

The material in this policymaker's guide is drawn from a new book, *Building Our Way Out of Crime: The Transformative Power of Police-Community Developer Partnerships*, by the same authors, and addresses a range of topics that normally command the attention of policymakers—elected and appointed officials at all levels of government, community development leaders, financial industry investment strategists, private foundation executives, and others. More specifically, it seeks to answer such questions as these:

- « Does this strategy work? Says who? What's the evidence?
- « Is it feasible to implement in diverse cities?
- « What are the policy or political incentives and disincentives to adopting this strategy?
- « Do established experts in public safety, community development, and government circles believe this strategy represents a cost-effective, durable solution to neighborhood crime control and revitalization?

Those whom such policymakers may assign to probe the value and feasibility of investing in public safety-community development partnerships will find useful information in the entire book, which documents the following in much greater detail:

- « The crime-reduction and neighborhood revitalization results of three case studies.
- « How the community developers and their public safety and other collaborators achieved these results.
- « How to implement these community development-public safety partnerships and how to overcome implementation challenges.
- « Lessons learned.
- « Next steps in disseminating this successful strategy to cities that will find it helpful in turning around crime-ridden, disinvested neighborhoods.

The Foreword to the book may be of particular interest to policymakers and, therefore, it is included in this Guide.

## Foreword

Police can do nothing about crime; and low-income communities are destined to remain poor and powerless. If we as a nation believe that, we might as well admit that the American dream is in serious jeopardy for a sizable swath of Americans. To the contrary, what our decades of work in two separate fields—urban policing and grassroots community economic development—tell us is that cops and community developers can contribute mightily to halting and reversing the spiral of “disorder and decline”<sup>1</sup> in poor neighborhoods throughout America.

In city after city, the police have helped cut crime in some of the most devastated neighborhoods.<sup>2</sup> And nonprofit community development corporations (CDC) have applied their street savvy, local credibility, knowledge of neighborhood problems, and ability to redevelop troubled property to replace block after blighted block with affordable, high-quality housing and viable businesses.

Indeed, in the celebrated crime drops of the 1990s, it is striking that the steepest declines (in New York City and elsewhere) typically occurred precisely where redevelopment was the most concentrated.<sup>3</sup> We believe this is no accident. Plunging crime helps create market conditions and a neighborhood ethos conducive to redevelopment. And redevelopment helps abate crime hot spots and give residents a real stake in the future of their neighborhood. They step up to maintain their properties and help establish and enforce standards for acceptable behavior.

In most urban centers in the United States, police and grassroots developers have been doing their good work in isolation from one another. There are historic reasons for this gulf, among them the balkanization of local government services (police departments and departments of neighborhood development infrequently do joint strategic planning, for instance); narrowly focused professional education for police and developers; and deeply-rooted distrust between many police and the community activists who often run CDCs. Community developers typically see themselves only as consumers of law enforcement services (seeking protection of their real estate investments and their fellow residents from crime), not as potential partners in a mutually beneficial strategic alliance. For their part, cops from street level to the chief frequently have scant understanding of the distinctive neighborhood rebuilding capabilities of community development corporations. As such, for most police, CDCs are indistinguishable among the sea of community groups clamoring for their attention.

So what’s the downside of this disconnect? When police and developers function unaware of one another’s strategies, plans, incremental victories, and challenges, they may not accomplish as much, as quickly, or as sustainably, as they could if they worked together. Sometimes, they might even unwittingly work at cross-purposes. But even in cases where their efforts, by happenstance, are complementary, a *delayed reaction* of developers to fertile conditions for community renewal may occur; that

is, although market forces may propel redevelopment when developers and their financial investors realize that an area in a neighborhood has become safer, there may be a substantial lag time between the reality and perceptions of greater safety.

If, as the case studies in this valuable book demonstrate, so much can be accomplished to stabilize low-income communities when police (and prosecutors and other public safety practitioners) and locally credible developers work together in the same places at the same time, why leave these collaborations to chance as we do in most cities today? Why merely hope that targeted crime-fighting and investments in community revitalization, by luck, will align in a manner, sequence, time frame, and dosage that produce the greatest good and the best bang for the buck? Just wishing for convergence is foolish public safety and community development strategy. While police and developers cannot and should not set each other's priorities, they can and should learn when, how, and why to make strategic investments that will appropriately leverage each other's considerable capacity.

What's needed is a shift in understanding and practice at all levels of government and among the variety of private-sector institutions that shape the nature and extent of community revitalization. This new understanding should impel widespread promotion of, and investment in, the *purposeful, formal, strategic linkage of police and community developers* on problems that will yield to their combined expertise and resources. Simply put, these collaborations work—they reduce crime; replace problem properties with quality, affordable housing; attract viable businesses in previously blighted commercial corridors; make more strategic and efficient use of public and private-sector resources; and build public confidence in, and cooperation with, local government and private organizations. To these ends, police and development organizations, propelled by results-driven, fiscally responsible leaders, should devise and adhere to new standard operating procedures that launch and support police-developer activities that are conducted—and analyzed—in an accountable, business-like way.

Over time, both separately and together, we have advocated a more intentional connection between cops and community developers that affects how both parties do business. But until this book, our fields have lacked detailed chronicles of what this purposeful, officially-sanctioned linkage looks like and accomplishes on the ground. The substantial, multiyear improvements in focus areas in Charlotte (North Carolina), Minneapolis (Minnesota), and Providence (Rhode Island), which are portrayed in this book's case studies, are remarkable. Before-after pictures illustrate the rejuvenation of low-income communities as neighborhood assets supplanted blighted homes and harmful commercial properties. And the graphs and tables show that, following police-developer interventions, there were rapid and durable declines in reported crime—mostly ranging from 55 percent to 84 percent—and sudden and sustained drops in calls for police service—ranging from 42 percent to 98 percent.

These police and development practitioners built a base of understanding and trust that allowed them to act on what cops, urban planners, and developers widely understand intuitively: that one of the greatest threats to community revitalization is crime and that a big generator of crime is community disintegration. In the language of the broken-windows theory, physical deterioration leads to crime, and physical revitalization contributes to pushing crime back. By working closely with the authors to describe their methods and rationale and to compile quantitative and qualitative documentation of crime and revitalization accomplishments, the practitioners profiled in these case studies have done a service to their professions and to the nation.

There are many experts on policing and many experts on community development, but nobody knows more about the *intersection* of public safety and community development practice than Bill Geller and Lisa Belsky. Fifteen years ago, they co-founded a program—housed at the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC, the nation’s largest community development umbrella organization)—that seeks to promote, guide, and learn lessons from police-developer partnerships in many jurisdictions. The resulting Community Safety Initiative continues as an important national LISC program.

Our belief in the value of greater, more routine police-developer interaction is confirmed by the quantitative and qualitative evidence that Geller and Belsky amassed in this book. These pages illustrate how and why police and grassroots community builders become greater stakeholders in, and defenders of, the investments made by each other to target crime and blight. The case studies show that veteran cops and developers coalesce because they find mutual advantage in the partnership. As a lieutenant working for Chief Dean Esserman in Providence put it simply, and best: “Community developers make my job easier.”

At this juncture in the 21st century, these collaborations are necessary, not only because they are effective, but also because shrinking public resources require them. We can think of no better investment at the neighborhood level than a well-conceived, ongoing alliance between dedicated cops and high-capacity grassroots community developers. Some may say that nurturing this new synergy among police, neighborhoods, and community developers is a luxury we can ill afford when terrorists and economic woes challenge the nation. Nonsense. We can and must build homeland security and economic recovery on many fronts, not least in our poorest neighborhoods. As policymakers charged with doing more with less, we will achieve greater success if we create partnerships that produce results greater than any one partner could achieve acting alone. Better still, the strategy laid out in this book creates solutions that not only endure, but seem to require minimal police attention after problem properties are transformed. With goodwill, a modest investment in relationship building, and a limited deployment of resources, the police can influence and help community developers replace the worst of a neighborhood’s liabilities with assets that will serve it for the long term—literally building our way out of crime.

As the case studies make clear, very impressive turnarounds take several years, but they can be accomplished within 4-year election cycles. With this book in hand, newly elected public officials—from mayors to the President—and their experts on public safety and neighborhood development can hit the ground running and take practical steps that support robust public-private collaborations. We recommend *Building Our Way Out of Crime* to urban leaders everywhere. It offers an effective and practical road map that we can follow to knock crime down and keep it down in low-income neighborhoods.

“Turnaround” and “comeback” are not the slogans of pessimists. Our optimism that police departments can be turned into ever-more effective engines of crime reduction and that America’s cities can be brought back as centers of population, commerce, and culture for people across the economic spectrum is bolstered by the results that these emerging police-community developer partnerships are producing. But too often, successes in policing and community development have tended to be heralded separately, in unrelated news accounts or policy analyses that look narrowly at one set of achievements.<sup>4</sup> Far-reaching replication will come only when we do more of what has been done by Geller and Belsky for Charlotte, Minneapolis, and Providence: that is, find ways to tell these stories in an integrated, analytic, and persuasive way.

The innovative linkage of hard-working, results-oriented police and community developers—organizing them to pull in the same direction at the same time—produces the multiplier effect that Geller and Belsky so appropriately highlight in this book. With a national and city-by-city commitment to replicate and adapt the kind of collaborations described here, we believe long-suffering urban neighborhoods—which influence their city’s overall well-being in many ways—will be the beneficiaries for years to come.



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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Skogan, 1990.

<sup>2</sup> Bratton and Knobler, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Grogan and Proscio, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Grogan and Proscio, 2000.

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“Dr. King said change never rolls in on the wheels of inevitability. It must be carried in on the backs of soldiers of our democracy willing to do the difficult work in the trenches, make the necessary sacrifices, to advance our nation. Community organizers, police officers, teachers—these are all people who are dealing with the everyday problems of our country and trying to find real, tangible solutions.”

—Newark, New Jersey Mayor Cory Booker, when asked by an interviewer about the contributions of community organizers to their neighborhoods.<sup>1</sup>

The old saying goes, “If the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail.” But what if the right tool for the job is a hammer, and the only tools you have are a badge and a gun?

Police departments around the nation have been discovering they can build their way out of crime problems that they have been unable to arrest their way out of. They have been doing that by working with nonprofit community developers—local builders and organizations whose goal is to transform their own blighted neighborhoods into more livable, healthy communities. As problem-oriented policing designer Herman Goldstein would put it, police in these instances have been wisely shifting to, and sharing with, other community institutions and organizations the responsibility, cost, and work of addressing crime problems and neighborhood conditions that fuel crime.<sup>2</sup>

## Why Should Police Embrace the Power of Community Development?

They should do so because it sustainably reduces crime and fosters livable communities. Figure 1 (whose data are discussed later in more detail) highlights the crime-reduction piece of the answer: As the police discovered in our three case study sites—Charlotte, Minneapolis, and Providence—they can knock crime down and keep it down in a way they had not been able to do before they attacked the problems using the full power of high-capacity community developers. In a battle metaphor, police can take ground against durable crime but rarely can they alone hold that ground for very long. Developers, however, can physically alter that ground—change a place where crime has persisted and make it highly resistant to crime without necessitating heavy police deployment.

The reason community developers—and not just bulldozers—are needed is that merely eliminating a hot spot (a crack house, problem tavern, etc.) may reduce crime in the short run, but vacant lots are not a good long-term strategy for safer, thriving neighborhoods. The value of community-rooted developers is that they replace problem properties (including vacant lots) with community-friendly land uses that generate neighborhood well-being, just as the old ones produced problems.

## Percentage Declines in Crime, Calls for Service or Arrests in Focus Areas in Three Cities After Developer-Police Interventions



### Charlotte-Mecklenburg

### Minneapolis

### Providence

**Figure 1:** Large, multiyear improvements in public safety indicators followed community developer-police joint action to replace crime-generating commercial and residential properties with high-quality affordable housing and safety- and commerce-generating businesses. In **Charlotte, North Carolina’s Druid Hills** neighborhood, crime and calls for service fell between 1998 and 2006 in three focus areas (the Park, Kohler Avenue, and Orlando Street)—considerably outpacing a comparison neighborhood and Mecklenburg County overall. In the **Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis** between 2002 and 2007, reported crime, calls for service, and arrests related to a previously out-of-control street drug market declined in a 16-square-block area (with annual calls to police about narcotics problems in this zone dropping from 291 to 5). Progress in this focus zone substantially exceeded that in the entire Minneapolis police precinct serving Phillips. In two focus areas in **Providence, Rhode Island’s Olneyville neighborhood** (the “hot spots” and “revitalization” areas) double-digit reductions occurred in levels of crime and calls for service between 2002 and 2007—as in the other studies, far surpassing the improvements in public safety indicators for the police district and neighborhood overall.

## The Policymaker’s Imperative: Foster Police-Community Developer Collaboration

Police leader Bill Bratton and community development leader Paul Grogan argue in their Foreword that crime is one of the greatest obstacles to community development and that community deterioration is one of the greatest attractors and generators of crime. A generation earlier, Justice Department official James “Chips” Stewart observed that “poverty causes crime, and crime causes poverty.” Not surprisingly, therefore, in many places where crime has declined substantially, revitalization has become easier, and where revitalization has flourished, crime has declined. For the most part, cops and developers know this and are grateful beneficiaries when a breakthrough by either party occurs in a problem part of a neighborhood. The question is not *if* police and developers welcome each others’ accomplishments, but whether they—and the mayors, city managers, and others who oversee and guide public-private collaboration—are content to leave to chance whether police and developers will decide independently to work on the same problems at the same time. Leaving things to chance risks not only reduced levels of accomplishment but even developers and police unintentionally undermining each other’s efforts to improve the neighborhood.

For years, insightful observers of policing strategy have noted the importance of police playing a role in community development. Indeed, in the 1967 landmark report of President Lyndon Johnson’s Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society*, the chapter on “The Police” reported the Commission’s reasoning on this point and the resulting recommendation for upgrading the nation’s police services:

“One suggestion that the Commission believes merits attention is the creation of municipal planning boards on which police community-planning experts would sit, along with representatives of other city departments. The work of such city departments as those dealing with housing, parks, welfare, and health are all related to crime; and often such departments have law enforcement functions. Also, community planning is needed since it has a direct bearing on crime, and therefore on police business. The police often have knowledge on such subjects as where and how to build parks, schools, housing, and commercial developments, and as to the effects on the community of urban renewal and the relocation of population—neighborhood conditions to which municipal attention should be directed.

*The Commission recommends:* The police should formally participate in community planning in all cities.”<sup>3</sup>

To be sure, the President's Crime Commission was recommending multidepartment collaboration *within* city government rather than counseling interaction between police and private community planning and development groups, but we find that distinction unimportant in light of the fact that the field of private, nonprofit community development was just beginning to take root at the time the President's Commission wrote its report. If, as many in the criminal justice field have recommended in 2008 and 2009, there is to be a new national crime commission, it would be valuable for such a commission to include the perspectives of institutions in the private sector, such as community developers, who could mightily contribute to public-private partnerships to prevent crime. As Attorney General Eric Holder, Jr., often said while serving as U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, many of the crime problems that afflict cities are ones "we cannot arrest our way out of." Rather, they require "holistic approaches" in which police, prosecutors and other criminal justice officials actively engage the community.<sup>4</sup>

### The value of police-community developer partnerships...

"Partnering with community developers can be hard work, but even though it may take a couple of years to see results, it really does work. At a lot of conferences we go to, the police think you're just blowing smoke at them when you talk about how collaborating can be effective. But police partnerships with developers really do work."

—Detective Tom Masse, Providence (Rhode Island) Police Department

The notion that police and community planners and developers should play an influential role in each others' core business—shaping priorities and methods—is easy to say but to this day still flies in the face of jealousy guarded prerogatives on each side of a potential partnership in many jurisdictions. In the current state of play, it is not surprising that where you find a distressed, crime-plagued community, you are likely to find a fair amount of concern and activity by police and *perhaps* by community developers. But police and developers have, for the most part, operated *independently* in such low-income neighborhoods. It has been a coincidence—a worthwhile one for both community and law enforcement—when they happened to target the same problem locations at the same time and in a complementary way.

Questions, therefore, arise for policymakers and those striving to successfully implement policy.

- « Can and should police and developers coordinate their efforts purposefully?
- « If so, given the different organizational cultures, imperatives, and knowledge and skill sets in each domain, how could they help each other?
- « Since each has limited resources, can police and developers justify helping each other on the grounds of self-interest?
- « Beyond merely gaining some welcomed assistance, is there potential for *synergy* between public safety and community development work? In other words, by assisting each other rather than working alone, can developers and police actually serve their own separate missions—within politically acceptable time frames—more effectively, efficiently, and sustainably?
- « If so, should organizational leaders, public policymakers, and appropriators consider community developer–police collaborations to be mission critical for each entity, or at least a recommended best practice?

### Building Away Crime Is Necessary But Not Sufficient to Create Livable Neighborhoods

Whatever value police (and other public safety workers) and collaborating developers can bring to neighborhoods through *physical* revitalization and crime control is important, but hardly sufficient to make a really unlivable place livable. Municipal leadership, police, community developers, residents of the challenged neighborhoods, and elected and appointed government officials understand that many other elements must also be addressed.

We say this because in our enthusiasm on the pages that follow for the combined power of cops and community developers, we may sometimes sound as if we think these two sets of neighborhood workers together hold the keys to the kingdom of neighborhood resurrection. There are, of course, many keys—a veritable janitor’s ring—needed to open the doors to those better places.

Some of the keys are held by private-sector nonprofit developers of commercial properties and housing. Others are held by government agencies. In these early days of President Barack Obama’s Administration in 2009, it seems clear that one of the most important objectives is for government-based community developers at the federal, state, and local levels and private-sector community developers to better synchronize their goals and strategies so that they do not work at cross-purposes. This means, for instance, that developers in all sectors should recognize the importance of building decent housing to help elevate the livability of low-income neighborhoods. By contrast, building poor housing for poor people merely feeds a vicious cycle of impoverishing the poor and makes it harder to comprehensively

address the array of problems facing low-income communities. When any developer builds low-grade housing, those properties further degrade the neighborhood, fail to attract reinvestment, and isolate their residents.

As the Obama Administration begins to address such problems, urban policy expert Robert Weissbourd describes the comprehensiveness of the Administration's strategic thinking: "Housing is part of a community's assets and can contribute to healthy, *mixed income*, *mixed use* communities, if developed at least in the context of, and ideally in coordination with, transit, amenities and family and community asset building." He cautions that any one intervention—housing improvement, better public safety services, better transportation to jobs, etc.—done in isolation is unlikely to yield rapid, significant and sustainable neighborhood improvement.<sup>5</sup>

The necessity but insufficiency of building away crime to lift up challenged neighborhoods was emphasized as well by Alexander Polikoff, a desegregation law and policy reformer. For devastated neighborhoods to become better places to live, he argued, there must be simultaneous, integrated improvements on many fronts—housing, education, jobs, safety, health, etc. An advance in any one area, such as jobs or safety, "really rests on layers of supporting programs." Absent those supports, he says, "it's like pointing to the apex of a pyramid and saying, 'build that.'"<sup>6</sup>

The more comprehensive the community development, the easier it should be for police to help safeguard a neighborhood. The practical importance of multidimensional development to police is that sometimes progress on one development front can be undone by failure to address other aspects of building a healthy community. Even worse, single-issue development progress may intensify problems in the neighborhood. For instance, developing real estate without ensuring that there is sufficient progress in building "social capital" among the neighbors on the block and without attending to vocational needs and gang resistance for area youth could lead to an increase in home burglaries. Higher-value homes, unprotected by various means, including watchful neighbors, make higher-value targets for those who choose to commit burglaries.<sup>7</sup> And a thief who discovers a resident at home and persists in the crime has gone beyond burglary and committed a personal crime, perhaps including violence. Thus, from the police point of view, there are powerful crime-control incentives to encourage and contribute to the success of multifaceted community development.

To decide whether to support the kind of strategic alliances described here, police and community development leaders, and mayors and other policymakers will have a number of threshold questions, among them: What kinds of neighborhood crime-related problems do such strategic alliances typically address? What kinds of outcomes have they achieved?

# Evidence That Community Developer–Police Partnerships Have Converted Crime Hot Spots into Safety-Generating Community Assets

## Brief Sketches of Pioneering Efforts

In more than 15 years of working closely with police-community developer partnerships in many cities, the authors have amassed evidence of the physical transformation of hot spots into attractive, affordable homes, desirable retail businesses, wholesome and safe recreational spaces, and other assets. Included here are a few pioneering examples (discussed more fully in the *Building Our Way Out of Crime* book), after which key findings from the book’s three main case studies are highlighted.

### Seattle, Washington: Chinatown-International District

Two accomplishments during the mid-1990s illustrate the power of the developer-police strategic alliance: (1) A tavern known for violent customers was converted into a family-friendly Cambodian restaurant that served better food, hired more staff from the neighborhood, made better profits, and attracted peaceful customers. (2) For decades, a block-long homeless camp under an Interstate highway overpass a stone’s throw from Seattle’s historic Skid Row (now Pioneer Square), menaced the neighborhood with disorder and property and violent crime and endangered police officers. The camp was transformed into the multimillion dollar Pacific Rim Center, a multi-use facility that provided retail, office, and residential space, and generated community jobs. This and other work in this Seattle neighborhood was actively supported by LISC’s national Community Safety Initiative (CSI). The partners’ accomplishments were examined and hailed in Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government case studies and an analytic paper.<sup>8</sup> More recently, excellent “building away crime” progress also has been made through commercial development and affordable housing development in another Seattle neighborhood, Columbia City.

### Kansas City, Missouri: Swope Parkway-Elmwood and Town Fork Creek Neighborhoods

In a blighted tract of a primarily African American neighborhood near downtown—a neighborhood long widely regarded as “the worst in Kansas City” and where no significant development or infrastructure improvements had occurred for more than 30 years—a high-capacity community developer transformed a generator of crime, health hazards, and disinvestment into a sterling community asset. With strategic assistance from police—including captains presenting accurate crime statistics to prospective investors to dispel myths that the neighborhood was hopelessly crime-ridden—the community developer created a 70-acre, \$135 million commercial

and residential development called the Mt. Cleveland Initiative. The development project included building from the ground up a hospital-size community health center; 192 units of affordable housing and a 54-unit senior housing facility; a \$35 million shopping center (including national retail stores and a substation donated to the Kansas City Police Department); acres of parkland; and a \$20 million, 85,000-square-foot regional service center for H&R Block that brought the neighborhood a \$14.2 million payroll for several hundred year-round employees and approximately 1,000 during tax season. In 2008, the Mt. Cleveland Initiative area remains attractive, livable, commercially successful, and safe. And this development forms a bridge between this once disenfranchised section of town and Kansas City's thriving downtown commercial center (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** The CDC-developed H&R Block Call Center was part of the Mt. Cleveland Initiative, which provided affordable housing, neighborhood services, retail outlets, and integrated community health services. H&R Block decided to become an anchor for the project based on police statistics that dispelled myths about the area.

## St. Paul, Minnesota: Payne Avenue Commercial District

The serious decline of a once-thriving business district was reversed through determined collaboration over several years by a local CDC, the St. Paul Police Department, a local merchants association, and city government. While police worked with merchants to more actively control aggressive panhandling and other street disorder, the developers made more than \$24 million in improvements to 69 places of business (about half the establishments along Payne Avenue). Investments included major rehabs, façade improvements, painting, new awnings, and better signage. Attracted by Payne Avenue's new vitality and safety, more than a dozen new, desirable businesses moved into the Payne Avenue corridor. During a 3-year period, the commercial district enjoyed declines in both major crimes (26 percent) and calls for service related to quality-of-life crimes (25 percent)—whereas in comparison neighborhoods, which lacked police-developer collaboration, there were double-digit *increases*. An enduring emblem of Payne Avenue's turnaround was the transformation of a crime hot spot—the Payne Reliever strip club—into a building housing a restaurant, community meeting space, and bingo hall.

## New York City: East New York Neighborhood

A police chief once introduced himself at a national meeting by saying, “I’m from East Palo Alto, and in America you really don’t want to be from *East Anywhere*.” His quip certainly applied to the 5.6-square-mile East New York neighborhood of Brooklyn, which from the late 1970s until the late 1990s was a densely-packed, disinvested, dangerous slum in the New York Police Department’s (NYPD) 75<sup>th</sup> Precinct, where 129 homicides took place in 1993. By some reckonings this precinct and neighborhood were the most violent and destitute in America. With strategic guidance from a technical assistance expert and the encouragement of then-Police Commissioner Bill Bratton, 75<sup>th</sup> Precinct officers and a local CDC tackled the worst 20-square-block area of East New York in hopes of reversing the entire neighborhood’s fortunes. By shutting down a multiblock street drug market and converting the worst stretch into a barricaded play street for area youth, the NYPD created an environment of livability and hope and paved the way for much needed reinvestment. A CDC-developed youth center flourished, housing antitruancy programming (one of the best in the city), tutoring, sports, police-youth dialogs, etc. A youth-run bicycle repair shop employed local kids, trained them in bike maintenance, and provided them with legitimate income. And crime dropped dramatically—outstripping adjacent precincts. The CDC’s housing development sky-rocketed. The Parks Department teamed up with the community developer, other community groups, the NYPD, and AmeriCorps volunteers to create the block-long Success Gardens, one of the first attractive parks in the entire neighborhood. The park provided a vibrant, popular, and safe gathering place both day and night. Writing in 2000, a Harvard University case writer described the area 5 years after the police and developers joined forces:

“The neighborhood that had once been East New York’s worst was now considered by the police to be one of the safest. ‘We still have our drug problems, but it’s mostly marijuana-related,’ says Officer Hinchey. ‘Three years ago, four years ago, five when it was the worst, you’d never see anybody out on the streets. It wasn’t a safe place. You’d see people running to the store and running back home. Now you go down there any time of the day, especially when school’s out, and there are people everywhere. There’s kids on every corner—young kids. I mean, parents will sit on the stoop and let their kids roam the streets. I like to see that. To me, that means there’s an improvement. Four years ago, somebody would have gotten shot if they’d done that.’ ... Throughout the [neighborhood], new shops had appeared... Property values..., once rock bottom, shot upwards. Ten years ago, Rosa Fenton, [a target area] resident..., had wanted to sell her house and move out. She couldn’t give it away. ‘I could sell my house now for \$150,000,’ says Fenton. ‘Before no one would touch it.’ However, Fenton no longer wanted to move. Instead, she was renovating.”<sup>9</sup>

Beyond the preceding sketches of success, the most detailed evidence amassed to date is in the book’s three lengthy case studies—in Providence, Rhode Island; Charlotte, North Carolina; and Minneapolis, Minnesota. The public safety improvements and physical revitalization accomplishments in these three urban neighborhoods are highlighted below.

## Highlights of the Three Main Case Studies

### Providence, Rhode Island: Olneyville Neighborhood— Collaboration between the Olneyville Housing Corporation and the Providence Police Department

#### Providence and Organization Facts

- « City population (2000): 173,618, living in 18.2 square miles
- « Police Department (2008): 482 sworn personnel; budget = \$43.3 million
- « Olneyville Housing Corporation: 2007 budget=\$450,000; full-time staff = 9
- « Rhode Island LISC: From 1991 to 2008, invested more than \$210 million and leveraged another \$400 million in community development state-wide, producing more than 6,000 affordable homes and more than 600,000 square feet of community, child care, and retail space.

#### Olneyville Neighborhood Facts (2000 Census)

- 6,495 residents in 0.55 square miles
- Race/ethnicity:
  - « 57% Hispanic (various races)
  - « 22% Non-Hispanic White
  - « 14% African American
  - « 7% Asian-Pacific Islander
  - « 2% Native American
- 30% foreign born
- 65% speak a language other than English at home
- 2nd poorest Providence neighborhood (Median family income = \$19,046)
- 82% housing units are renter occupied (but many, especially 3 flats, have owner + tenants)
- Of 2,644 housing units...
  - « 12% single family
  - « 19% duplexes
  - « 70% multifamily

**Figure 3:** Facts about Providence and Olneyville

## Anatomy of a Neighborhood's Decline

A prosperous hub of New England's textile mills and other manufacturing for nearly 3 centuries, Olneyville and many communities like it fell on hard times after World War II.

“Industries moved out of the city for cities in the southern United States or shut down altogether. The effect of this demise on the Olneyville neighborhood was devastating. Thousands of jobs were lost and were never replaced... As jobs declined, Olneyville became severely depopulated as more and more residents left the neighborhood to seek new employment. This flight was exacerbated by the construction of the Route 6 connector in the early 1950s [which] ... had the effect of destroying a great deal of affordable, working-class housing.”<sup>10</sup>

With the mills largely vacant and a 15-mile long river that had powered the mills significantly polluted from factories' chemical waste and raw sewage discharges, the residential and commercial properties near the river were substantially abandoned. A tract just north of the river, between the commercial artery of Manton Avenue and Aleppo Street, was filled with vacant lots and abandoned properties and had become a haven for prostitution, drug dealing, drug abuse, and violence. In 2002, Olneyville had the third-highest rate of violent crime (murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) among the city's 25 neighborhoods: 13.9 such crimes per 1,000 residents. The previous year, three murders occurred within this half-square-mile neighborhood.

Olneyville Housing Corporation (OHC) Executive Director Frank Shea recalled: “For four or five years, ‘you saw a neighborhood that was all but forgotten. If it wasn't for drugs and prostitution, there really wasn't any reason to be on Aleppo Street at all.” The area between Aleppo and Manton Avenue was off-limits for children growing up in Olneyville. One young woman recalled that 10 years ago “her mother had a strict rule. Don't walk on Manton Avenue and don't cross over to the area south of Manton.... You can get kidnapped. You can get shot. There's a lot of bad people there.”<sup>11</sup> A great Olneyville edifice, Riverside Mills, burned to the ground on its Aleppo Street site in 1989, leaving a 9-acre brownfield that added health hazards to the area's crime dangers.

Figure 3 provides current facts and figures about Olneyville and Providence.

## A New Policy Environment Catalyzes Community Developer-Public Safety Collaboration

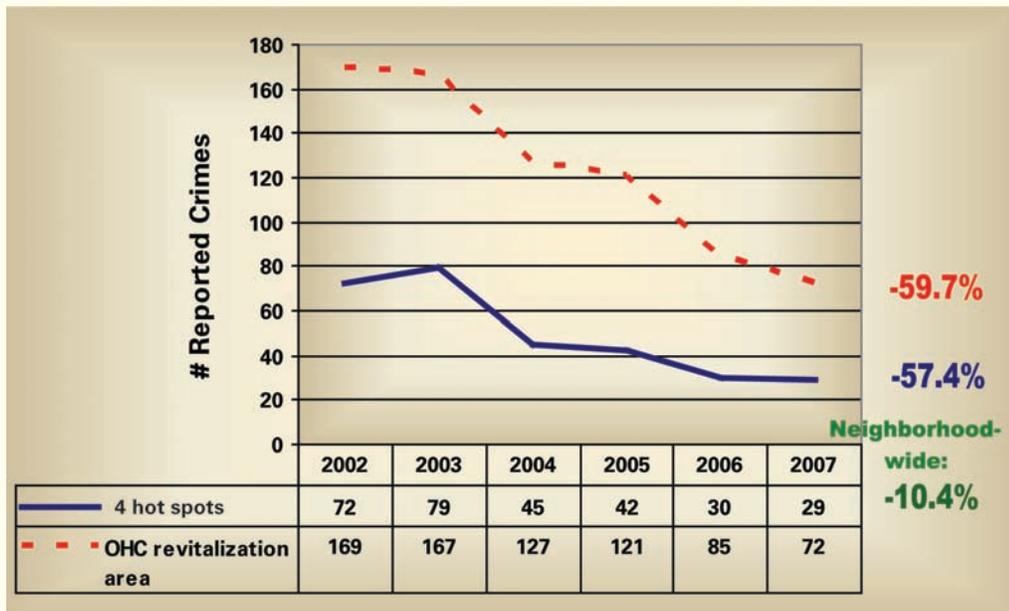
OHC's Frank Shea and several of his key allies, particularly Rhode Island LISC Executive Director Barbara Fields, saw a golden opportunity for Olneyville with the election in 2002 of reformer David Cicilline as Providence mayor and his appointment in early 2003 of community policing expert Dean Esserman as chief of police. After extensive planning, a broad public-private coalition established a game plan: They would resuscitate the polluted river and convert the brownfield into a 9-acre park with a bike path that connected to downtown Providence. Across from these new public attractions, along Aleppo, Manton, and streets in between, OHC would begin building a new community featuring high-quality, affordable homes for ownership and rental.

The housing would rise on the area's vacant and abandoned lots, replacing or rehabilitating the three worst residential and commercial properties in Olneyville, which were within a few hundred yards of each other. The blocks containing these three properties, which constitute the "Hot Spots Area" in Figures 4 and 5, in 2002 were just 3 percent of Olneyville's area but accounted for 15.8 percent of the entire neighborhood's calls for service to the Providence Police Department. OHC's larger "Revitalization Area," which included the hot spots, was just 7.8 percent of the neighborhood's geography but produced 24.7 percent of all neighborhood calls to the police. The worst of the three hot spots was on Manton Avenue, at the intersection that would be the gateway to the planned Riverside Park. Police, developers, community members, and all other stakeholders agreed that the fate of this corner on Manton would make or break the park, which in turn would determine the success of the entire neighborhood turnaround plan.

## Investments and the Neighborhood Turnaround

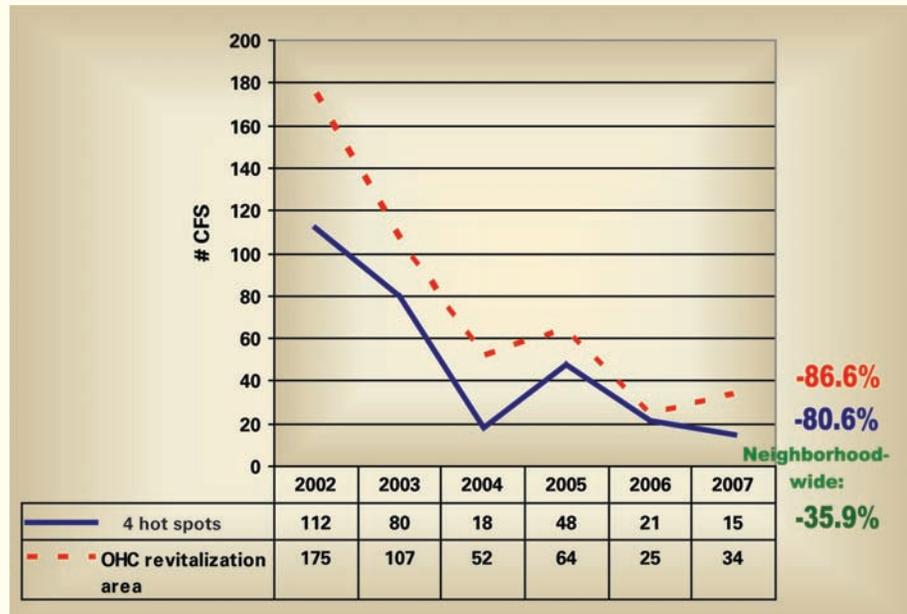
With considerable assistance from the police and the Nuisance Abatement Task Force of then-Rhode Island Attorney General Sheldon Whitehouse (now a U.S. Senator from Rhode Island), OHC was able to acquire the Manton property and the other hot spots, relocate their problem tenants, and invest \$12.1 million in the construction of 60 new units of affordable housing. This investment was coupled with another \$4 million in public and private expenditures for river reclamation, brownfield remediation, park and playground construction, and road rebuilding. The tangible and intangible returns on this \$16 million investment are suggested in the following graphs and photos, which highlight the public safety improvements and revitalization of this once-forlorn part of Providence.

## Reported Crimes, Olneyville Areas



**Figure 4:** Reported Crime, Focus Areas in Olneyville Neighborhood, 2002–2007. Reported crime includes murder, rape, robbery, felony assault with (and without) a firearm, burglary, motor vehicle theft, larceny from a motor vehicle, “other larceny,” simple assault, other sexual assault, drug-related offenses, vandalism, “liquor” violations, and other “weapons” crimes. (“Other Larceny” includes shoplifting, pickpocket, purse snatch, from building, bicycles, motor vehicle parts or accessories, and other.)

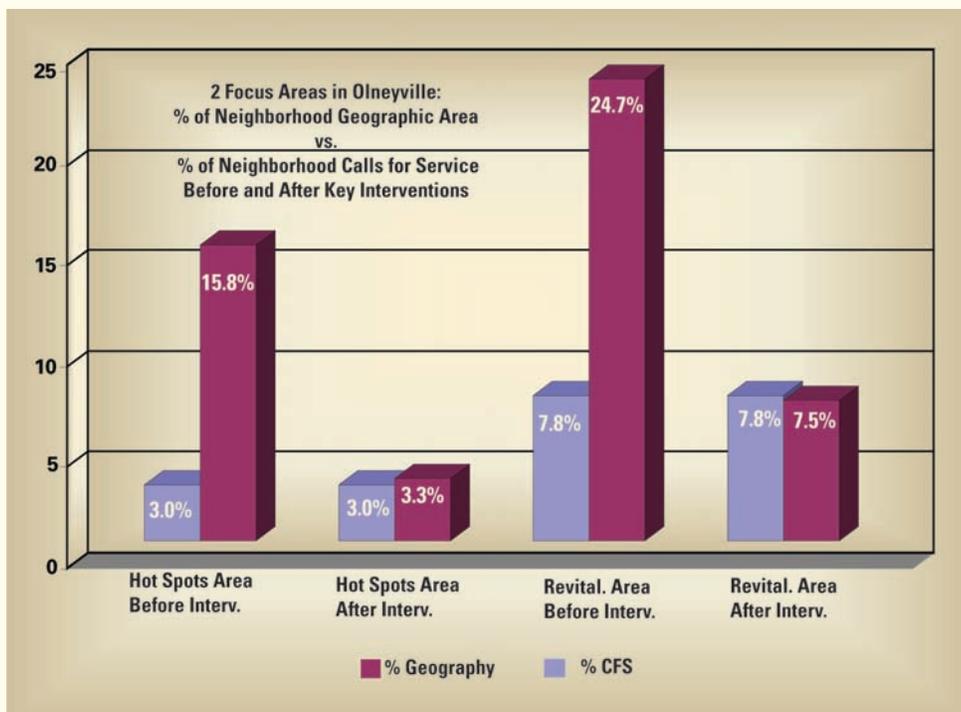
## Calls for Service, Olneyville Area



**Figure 5:** Calls for Service, Focus Areas in Olneyville Neighborhood, 2002-2007. The CFS include shots fired, person with a gun, drugs, and loud music/party.

Figure 6 illustrates that the Hot Spots Area and the Revitalization Area, *before* the interventions, consumed a considerably larger share of the neighborhood’s police services than one might expect considering their physical area. After the interventions, these two focus areas claimed a much smaller proportion of police attention—almost identical to what their land area would predict. Specifically, the Hot Spots Area, which constitutes 3 percent of the Olneyville land, accounted for 15.8 percent of the entire neighborhood’s calls for service before the principal interventions, a demand level that fell to 3.3 percent after the interventions began in earnest. Similarly, the OHC Revitalization Area (7.8 percent of the neighborhood land) used to account for 24.7 percent of Olneyville’s calls for service, but after interventions that percentage dropped to 7.5 percent. The handiwork of the developer-public safety team reduced these areas of Olneyville from police service hogs to normal consumers of these important and expensive public services, freeing the police, developers, and others to work more intensively in other areas of great need.

## Impact Of Interventions on Equitable Distribution of Police Service to Olneyville Areas



**Figure 6:** Before data are from 2002, when the Hot Spots Area had 112 of Olneyville’s 708 calls for service and the Revitalization Area had 175 of Olneyville’s 708 calls for service. After data are from 2007, when the Hot Spots Area had 15 of Olneyville’s 454 CFS and the Revitalization Area had 34 of Olneyville’s 454 calls for service. The calls for service include shots fired, person with a gun, drugs, and loud music/party.

## Perspectives on the Partnerships, Outcomes, and Replicability

After an awards ceremony honoring the Olneyville turnaround, policing expert Herman Goldstein, who attended the event at Chief Esserman’s invitation, told a reporter: “What has occurred in Olneyville, in many respects, is a ‘perfect example’ of problem-oriented policing... Rather than repetitively respond to crimes at the dens of prostitution and drug-peddling and prosecute their habitués in the criminal justice system, according to problem-oriented policing, it is much preferable to eliminate those dens.”<sup>12</sup> In problem-oriented policing terms, as Herman Goldstein put it to Bill Geller some years earlier, the problem being addressed here is community disintegration, and the response is multidimensional community development and production of safety.

Figures 7 and 8 show the profound changes that took place in the Olneyville neighborhood.



### From brownfield to sprouting community.

**Figure 7:** An environmentally and criminally hazardous swath of Providence's Olneyville neighborhood gave way to dozens of beautiful, affordable new homes, a park, a bicycle path, and a community garden. The homes are part of the Olneyville Housing Corporation's Riverside Gateway development along Aleppo Street, a part of Olneyville where, a community leader noted, "nobody used to come before except for drugs and prostitution."



**Figure 8:** Riverside Park and a bicycle path are safe, attractive amenities for the residents of Riverside Gateway.

The authors asked police and community development leaders in Providence to reflect on the strategy they have used together over the past several years and tell them whether, all things considered, they would invest in similar collaborations again. Not one person hesitated about making further investments, notwithstanding the economic hardships facing their organizations. Chief Esserman said:

“What I’ve realized as a police chief facing budget challenges is that investing police resources in working with community developers becomes a *force multiplier*. We’re investing dollars beyond the immediate response to crime. And those investments have paid off in lower crime rates, safer, stronger neighborhoods and better working relationships between cops and communities.

Our work with developers has also had benefits in terms of police satisfaction with the job. Because of work over the past few years, we now have several lieutenants, plus one who has gone on to be a captain, who have gotten enormous satisfaction out of leading their Police District’s partnerships with developers. Each of them came to this kind of collaboration as crime fighter purists who had to be convinced. Well, their experiences *did* convince them, and as they say, converts make the best preachers.

I see the passion that our field commanders are developing about building homes, about providing their neighborhoods with a good gym, boxing rings and other recreational facilities. It's very exciting to see. Among other things, those lieutenants are asking themselves, 'What can I do to help build capacity in the neighborhood?' Those are great questions for our Department and our community partners to be addressing together."

Frank Shea expressed confidence that continuing to invest in his agency's close working relationship with the police is time and money well spent. Each of the four lieutenants who have commanded the district that serves Olneyville during the past 6 years has been a great partner for the Olneyville Housing Corporation. The current commander, Dean Isabella, honors that tradition, according to Shea: "He really gets what we are doing and how it all fits. But this really works," Shea said, for reasons beyond individual personalities and talents. It works "because structurally our work is so complementary. With support from the top (mayor and chief), it will succeed because our work makes it possible for them to reach their community policing goals and vice versa."

A November 2007 ceremony honoring the accomplishments of OHC, the police, and others was held in the children's playground at the new Riverside Park (see Figure 9) nestled between the reclaimed river and the attractive, affordable new homes on Aleppo Street—the street where, as Frank Shea once said, nobody used to come except for drugs and prostitution. Surveying this landscape and reflecting on the creative, diligent, collaborative efforts that produced it, Rhode Island LISC Executive Director Barbara Fields told the assembled crowd: "I think we need to take a moment to appreciate the 'wow' of what has happened in this community." She added in a Rhode Island LISC newsletter: "And to think that in the early '90s I was told that the best plan for Olneyville would be to knock it down and pave it over for an industrial park. Fortunately, OHC board and staff have the vision, persistence, and determination that is turning a disinvested neighborhood into a strong and resilient community."

To the question of whether she will continue to invest in a building our way out of crime strategy, Fields replied: "Would I do it again? Yes, over and over again.... It was worth every ache, every pain—and there were many. Through persistence, goodwill, and hard work, we changed the way development gets done in Olneyville."



**Figure 9:** At an award ceremony in Riverside Park, Providence Mayor David Cicilline hailed Olneyville as setting a new standard for neighborhood transformation in Providence. During a prior OHC ribbon-cutting, the mayor noted the profound effects of the collaborators' work on peoples' lives: The apartments and condominiums being dedicated will "allow working families to enjoy the benefits of safe, decent housing in a neighborhood of their choice."<sup>13</sup> (Photo: Joe Vaughan, for Rhode Island LISC, 11/07)

Mayor Cicilline also described the strategy behind these results: "Poverty is, fundamentally, a lack of opportunities and a deficit of supports. In Providence, we've sought to address this reality head on. We know that you can't fight poverty and stimulate neighborhood-based economic development without focusing on crime prevention and reduction—and vice versa. We also know that public-private partnerships—built between stakeholders, the community and the men and women of our police force—can make all the difference. But while many jurisdictions see these as parallel tracks, Providence's success has been based on the intentional merger of the public safety and community development strategies—a joining of forces that has resulted in better housing, better organized citizens, safer streets, and sustainable change." (Cicilline, 2009)

The neighborhood resident quoted earlier, whose mother a decade ago forbade her to walk on Manton Avenue or cross over south of there, offered her take on what has happened in Olneyville and her own involvement in the transformation:

"It was an amazing experience being able to help with planning the playground and coming out with my children to build the park.... [As a young teen] I knew not to come down by the old burned down mills on Aleppo Street where today it is Riverside Park. Now I don't have to react as my mom did with me scared and worried because I was on the 'other side'. I now feel safe about my own children playing down at Riverside Park with no worries.... Where once laid pieces of burned wood, knocked over trees, trash and bricks today stands a beautiful playground surrounded by beautiful homes, providing my old neighborhood security and life."<sup>14</sup>

## Charlotte, North Carolina: Genesis Park and Druid Hills Neighborhoods—Collaboration between The Housing Partnership and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department

### Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Organization Facts

- « Population (2007 estimate of population served by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department): 753,000, living in 450 square miles
- « Police Department: sworn personnel (2008) = 1,638; 2007 budget = \$174 million
- « The Housing Partnership: 2006 budget = \$6.2 million; full-time staff = 40. From 1989 to 2007, THP invested \$186 million, producing 2,850 units of affordable housing in several Charlotte neighborhoods. The Housing Partnership's investment in Druid Hills as of 2006 was \$12.8 million

### Druid Hills Neighborhood Facts (2000 Census)

- 2,287 residents in 1.5 square miles
- Race/ethnicity:
  - « 81.5% African American
  - « 4.9% White
  - « 2.4% Asian
  - « 2.5% Other
  - « 1.2% "Two Plus"
  - « 7.5% Hispanic Origin (of any race)
  - « < 1% Indian
- Median household income = \$21,181
- 886 housing units, of which 67% are renter occupied

Figure 10: Facts about Charlotte-Mecklenburg and the Druid Hills Neighborhood.

## An Urban Policy Response to the Affordable Housing Challenge

The Housing Partnership (THP, which originally was called Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership) was established in 1988 by the city of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County governments and a number of Charlotte's leading banks to address "a gap of housing affordability between families served by the public housing authority and those served by the market." The organization is a "private, nonprofit housing development and finance corporation organized to expand affordable and well-maintained housing within stable neighborhoods for low and moderate income families...." It conducts its work with "a continuing interest in the ability

of occupants to more fully enter the economic mainstream.” (THP web site) THP is committed to aggressive development and revitalization, integrated with proactive police approaches, which together will erode crime and create stable, mixed-income neighborhoods without displacing good low- and moderate-income residents from their improving communities. See Figure 10 for facts about the area.

## A Housing Developer in the Crime-Control Business

Having crime reduction as a core purpose is a characteristic that The Housing Partnership shares with the other community developers in the main case studies. For each featured developer, this crime-control mission means both suppressing crime to make development possible and doing the kind of neighborhood revitalization that will contribute to durably cutting crime. The front-end crime suppression relies heavily on the police; the long-term suppression happens organically in the healthy functioning of the renewed neighborhood and considerably reduces demand on the police and other components of the criminal justice system.

## Genesis Park—The Beginning of Active Developer-Police Collaboration

One of the first neighborhoods where The Housing Partnership chose to work—at the urging of local pastor and community organizer Barbara Brewton-Cameron—had a miniscule footprint of 35 acres or about 1/20th of a square mile, but during the 1980s and 1990s produced the biggest violent crime problems in Charlotte, with 21 murders on two main roads between 1988 and 1993. Indeed, police said the drug dealing and associated violence and death emanating from these few blocks was the worst crime concentration in the Carolinas. “The deteriorated dwellings and overgrown yards contained many squatters and numerous drug and shot houses (where liquor is sold by the drink). The streets were open-air markets for a variety of drugs.”<sup>15</sup> The worst block of all was Wayt Street, which “was ruled by drug dealers peddling heroin and cocaine.”<sup>16</sup> A close second was Gibbs Street. The *Charlotte Observer* wrote:

“a stroll down Gibbs Street...might have been worth your life. Drug dealers sold death in small plastic bags there; and when they weren’t paid to their liking, they filled the street with gunfire. Residents lived and sometimes died in squalid duplexes where the paint hung in tatters, the plumbing worked intermittently and cardboard replaced glass in the windows.”<sup>17</sup>

**Forging a neighborhood tipping point strategy.** The data the authors collected focus on the development project The Housing Partnership and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police launched immediately *following* their work in this hot spot, but other data and photos are available to document this early project, during which the

police and developer forged their potent working relationship. Pat Garrett, president of The Housing Partnership, readily admits that in their Genesis Park days (the early 1990s), she and her staff were heavily reliant on the police to teach them how to do revitalization that would durably support neighborhood safety. She told us:

“The first time we did one of these ‘take back the neighborhood’ deals, we were relying a lot more on police guidance than they were on us because we didn’t have a clue as to what we were getting into. In a crime-ridden area with three to four streets that had serious problems, we thought we could buy 40 houses and fix it. But there were really 150 [problem properties] in the neighborhood. We found out we had to buy houses behind the 40, and it just kept going like that. We were pretty naïve. What we relied on a lot was police advice about what we have to do to get control. For us it really is a control issue: What do we need to do to get control of the properties, to get rid of the bad guys?”

Garrett and her colleagues (just like community developers in Providence and Minneapolis) proved to be open-minded, excellent consumers of the sound crime-control advice they got from police. For Garrett, those recommendations came principally from then-Captain Stan Cook (who after retirement joined THP’s staff as an in-house public safety expert and project liaison to the police and other units of local government). With the help of the police, THP acquired the blighted homes that harbored the drug merchants and murderers, relocated their occupants (in many cases to prison), and converted the dwellings from dilapidated duplexes to attractive, affordable single-family homes. Starting in 1992, THP bought and converted nearly 200 units and assisted approximately 100 families on their path to homeownership by providing counseling and below-market financing. Scaling the housing development program to the size of the neighborhood’s problems was key, for as Cook suggested, “If you build a single home in an area that has a lot of disorder, then sure somebody gets a roof over their head but they may not feel safe living there.”

The transformed neighborhood was renamed Genesis Park. An Abt Associates study funded by the Justice Department’s National Institute of Justice reported:

“Genesis Park provides an example of a complex intervention in a troubled, low-income neighborhood, with the goal of reducing crime and improving the quality of life for residents.... According to police statistics, crime in Genesis Park dropped by 74 percent from 1993 to 1994, and the neighborhood moved from number 1 to number 41 in a ranking by neighborhood of violent crime rates in the city.”<sup>18</sup>

A cover story in *The New York Times Magazine* in 1996 by antipoverty policy writer Jason DeParle lauded the turnaround agents who created Genesis Park:

“Pat Garrett is what a housing solution might look like if the country had more money and will. She’s just the sort of streetwise character that a housing organization needs—part social worker, part bottom-line banker. Her precepts are those of other successful managers: screen tenants, tend to maintenance and evict troublemakers. ‘If you don’t have a good property manager, you’re going to be in a world of hurt,’ she says.”<sup>19</sup>

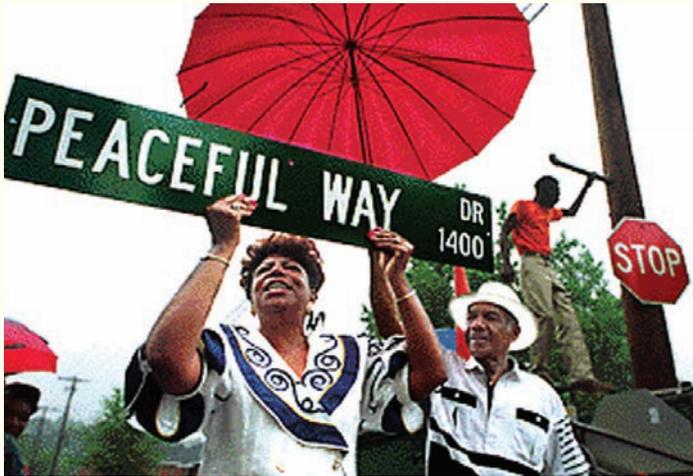
Citing the dramatic drop in violent crime between 1993 and 1994 in Genesis Park, DeParle applauded the “civic concern” that prompted city, bank, and business leadership to invest local money—not just federal funds granted to Charlotte—in producing and making available decent, safe, affordable housing for low-income families in Charlotte. At the time, the city’s investments in such housing, including grants to THP and other groups, ran about \$10 million per year, only about 40 percent of which came from the federal government.<sup>20</sup> DeParle concluded: “No neighborhood shows the payoff [for these investments] more than Genesis Park. The neighborhood was a drug market of such renown that even the adjacent housing project put up a wall to protect itself.”<sup>21</sup> See Figure 11.



### Genesis Park Before and After

**Figure 11:** Prior to their collaboration in the Charlotte neighborhood of Druid Hills, the police and THP worked together to transform a nearby downtrodden neighborhood, notorious for the worst and most violent drug market in the Carolinas, into the renamed Genesis Park community. To rejuvenate the neighborhood, dilapidated homes were significantly renovated, as illustrated by the before and after photos of this house. (Photos c. 1989 and 1994)

At a news conference announcing the renaming and reclaiming of the neighborhood, a developer on the board of Reverend Brewton's housing organization recalled, "You couldn't believe how many people said, You're crazy. It will never work. Nobody wants to live there."<sup>22</sup> See Figure 12:



**Figure 12:** Rev. Barbara Brewton-Cameron in a July 18, 1994 street-renaming ceremony celebrates the conversion of Genesis Park from a “drug supermarket” to a safe, stable community. Rev. Brewton’s husband several years earlier was one of the neighborhood’s homicide victims.

### On to Druid Hills

With Genesis Park now producing safety rather than danger and disinvestment, THP was able in the late 1990s to launch a development agenda a few blocks away in the adjacent neighborhood of Druid Hills.

Once again, THP was tackling a beleaguered community. Druid Hills residents lived in fear—their neighborhood was at the mercy of street-level drug dealers, prostitutes, and criminals whose acts ranged from larceny to homicide. Residents said they were tired of what they faced on the streets each day. The hawking of drugs, sex, or both was relentless. Druid Hills was one of the few Charlotte neighborhoods that lacked even a single park. With no public recreation space, residents were forced to seek playgrounds, parks, and green spaces far afield. People were afraid to walk or drive through Druid Hills after dark because the night air was so often filled with gunfire. The market for decent, affordable housing was bleak. “It’s hard to sell houses if people are running around the street shooting,” observed former Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department Deputy Chief Stan Cook.

In September 2003, The Housing Partnership and its collaborators cut the ribbon on their first major development in Druid Hills, The Gables—a \$4.9 million, beautifully landscaped, three-story, 63-unit housing complex for “active adults over 55 years old and earning below 50 percent of the area median income.” Stan Cook said that The Gables, located on Kohler Avenue, has strategic importance because “it’s the southern gateway to the Druid Hills neighborhood.” The area had a significant need for seniors housing and by beginning to meet this need “The Gables provided a foundation for what further development would look like in the Kohler area.”

While The Gables successfully replaced vacant property that had been a reasonably active crime spot, it soon became clear that a growing menace to The Gables’ sustainability—and to Genesis Park—was coming from a block-long violent drug market across the street from the seniors’ complex, in the 1200 block of Kohler Avenue, a cul-de-sac. Chief Darrel Stephens said that that block was “a hotbed of the heroin trade in Charlotte.” Thus, as they had before, THP and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, working with residents and many others, crafted a plan to safeguard previous accomplishments and further advance the neighborhood’s revitalization.

#### **Part of the local policymakers’ commitment to focused interagency**

**teamwork.** The collaborators worked with, and as members of, a city manager-initiated Neighborhood Action Team (NAT) that included representatives, assigned to “fragile” Charlotte neighborhoods, from such city departments as police, Neighborhood Development, and Engineering. The NAT’s purpose was to address a variety of problems including crime; housing stock; neighborhood infrastructure such as curb, gutter, and sidewalks; lack of access to transportation; social services; job creation; and community appearance. The establishment by the city of the NAT constituted a commitment to concentrate both financial and personnel resources in one area for an extended period until monitoring revealed acceptable progress on enumerated goals, and the neighborhoods were no longer classified as fragile.

THP was a potent component of this multiparty approach to improving Druid Hills. The police, knowing they could rely on THP to follow heavy police enforcement with more durable, physical development solutions, clamped down on Kohler Avenue, assigning four officers to work at this and other locations in Druid Hills. As the police brought the drug market under control, THP—with funds that a deputy police chief helped persuade the city to make available—bought the entire block, razed it, and will redevelop the property as part of a large-scale affordable housing plan for 86 acres adjacent to and including Kohler Avenue.

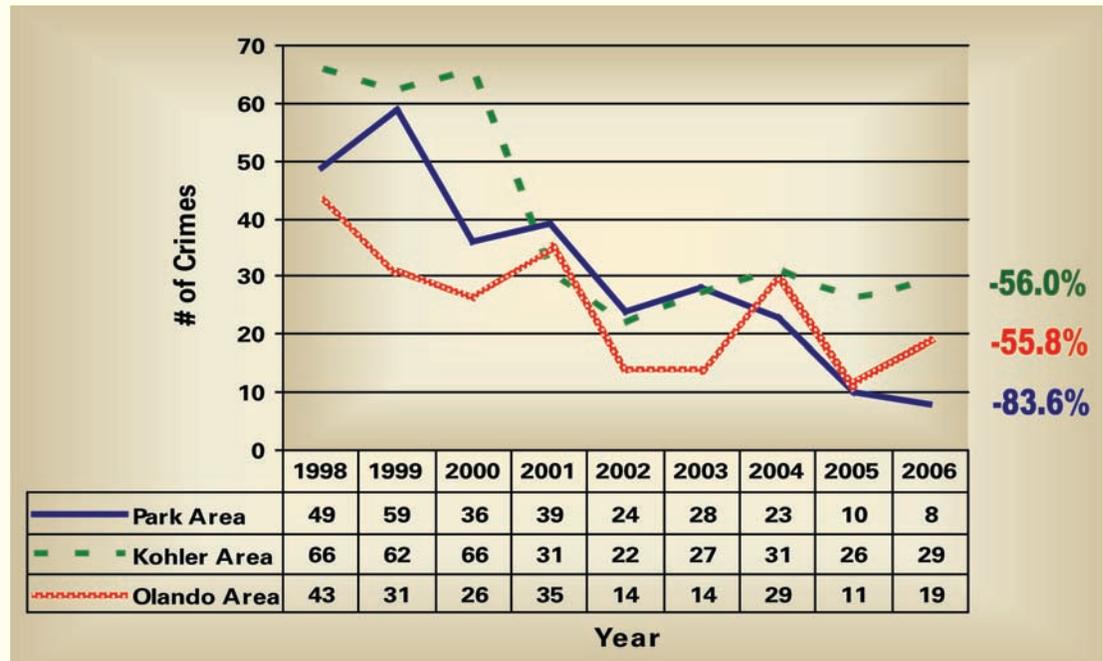
Kohler Avenue was one of three focus areas for the development-public safety partnership in Druid Hills. Another was a residential area surrounding Olando and Rachel Streets. The third came to be called the Park area because the objective was to work with the county to buy and remove decrepit and crime attracting/generating houses and have the County Parks Department replace them with the first public

recreational area ever in Druid Hills. THP, for its part, would purchase parcels rimming the new park site and develop affordable homes for families who would have a stake in the success of the park and be able to keep watchful eyes on it.

**Public safety improvements.** The public safety improvements that followed the partnerships’ concerted actions in these three focus areas in Druid Hills are highlighted in Figures 13 and 14. They depict improvements in the three areas ranging from 56 percent to 84 percent drops in reported serious crimes and declines from 64 percent to 93 percent in the public’s calls for service about disorder problems.

The big declines in crime and calls for service in Druid Hills’ three focus areas generally coincided with THP gaining control in 2000 and 2001 over the trouble-making residential units. The salience of site control is that the developer, working with law enforcement collaborators, was able to build away crime-generating conditions (blight, drug houses, etc.) through renovation or demolition and was able to remove criminals and enablers of criminal activity from the properties through relocations, voluntary departures, evictions, or convictions. Reflecting the views of many who know Druid Hills well, Stan Cook said: “At the end of the day, the evidence is absolutely clear that the acquisition of the troubled property is what caused the reduction in repeat calls for service because the times of purchase correlate directly with the reductions.”

### Druid Hills Neighborhood Reported Part 1 Crime



**Figure 13:** Reported Part I crime includes homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, auto theft, arson.

### Police involvement is a reflection of a problem-solving approach to crime

**control.** The philosophy that guided Stan Cook and his police colleagues in judging whether and how to engage robustly with a high-capacity community developer was the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department's strong interest in community policing and problem-oriented policing. That interest, in turn, came from having two consecutive police chiefs, Dennis Nowicki and Darrel Stephens, who were nationally admired for their strategic, innovative leadership in the policing field. Nowicki brought ideas from the outside world into the department in many ways, including a year-long residency in the organization for University of Wisconsin Professor Herman Goldstein, the "father" of problem-oriented policing. Stephens, in several police leadership posts before coming to Charlotte, was a pioneer in implementing and helping Goldstein and his protégés hone the methodology of problem-solving police work. Both chiefs served stints on THP's board of directors.

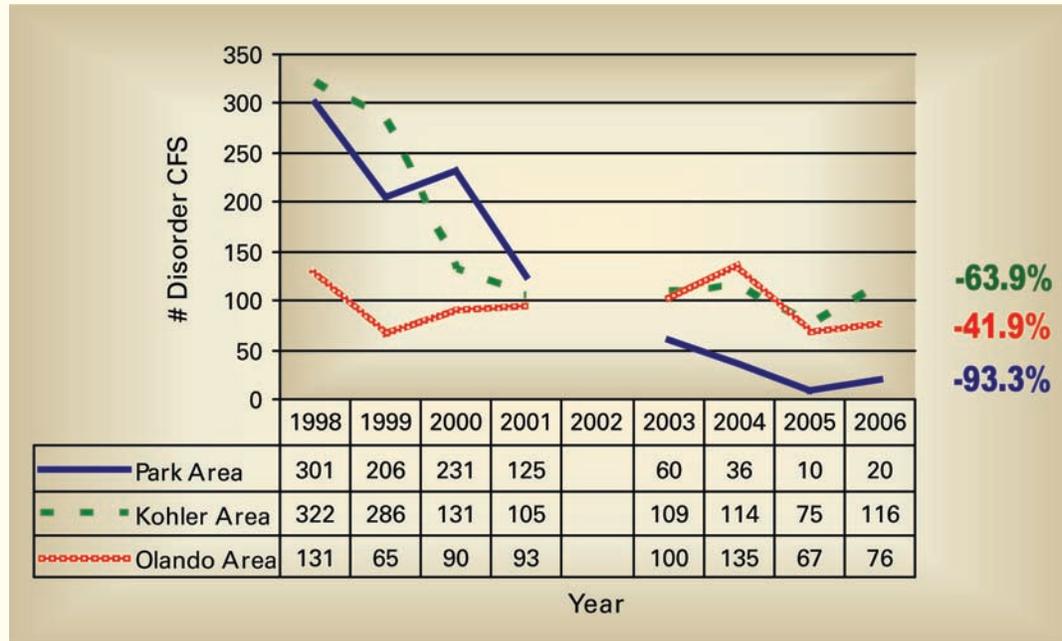
The authors interviewed Nowicki, who was chief from 1994 to 1999, for a 2002 LISC Community Safety Initiative newsletter, during which he recounted some of his thinking about the police becoming actively involved with community developers:

"A lot of research links crime to economic conditions. If you accept that research, as I do, then police who are worried about preventing crime should assist in improving the economic status of the communities they serve. We can't do everything of course, but we should do the things that make a difference. When I was chief in Charlotte, the police department confiscated a strip mall-type shopping center because it was hosting drug sales. Under the asset forfeiture laws, the City of Charlotte became co-owner with the federal government of this shopping center. A CDC approached the police and wanted us to give them the shopping center. I thought that was a good idea. I approached our U.S. Attorney, Mark Calloway, who said we could not give the CDC the shopping center unless it was a Weed and Seed site, but he was willing to go to bat for us and get the site declared a Weed and Seed site. The police backed him up, and we succeeded. The CDC took ownership and did an excellent job renovating it and lining up good retail occupants.

If the police agency is doing real community policing and problem-solving—spending its resources and reputation to support officers who work effectively with the community—I don't think structural changes are required [to spur active police-developer partnerships]. Such an agency should jump on opportunities to significantly improve the neighborhood, which is what a talented CDC is good at. If the mission of police is to prevent the next crime—which I believe is 'job 1'—working with CDCs is just common sense. Where police may need to change if they are to be really helpful to CDCs is by becoming more informed about and cooperative with other parts of local government (department of neighborhoods, budget, public works, etc.).

A multi-agency team we assembled in Charlotte worked with a CDC as a full partner to convert a convenience store that hosted drug dealing into a responsible store that really served the community. In turn, the CDC helped the police by providing space for a police storefront office.”<sup>23</sup>

### Druid Hills Disorder-Related Calls For Service



**Figure 14:** The types of disorder calls included here are those that Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) Crime Analyst Mike Humphrey told us had long been particularly troublesome in Druid Hills: drug-related issues, fights, alcohol-beverage control problems, weapon-related events, prowlers, and suspicious people or vehicles. The double-digit declines in calls to the CMPD about these disorder problems in Druid Hills’ three focus areas (the highest-crime areas in the community) had ripple effects throughout Druid Hills; the drop in disorder calls neighborhood-wide over this period was 58.7 percent. These accomplishments outpaced progress on the same call types over the same period in a comparison Charlotte neighborhood, Smallwood, where the decline was only 8.9 percent. And over the Department’s entire jurisdiction (Mecklenburg County), during these years the number of calls to police about these problems increased by 26.6 percent. None of these percentages adjust for the county’s and city’s large population increases during these years. Data for 2002 are not presented due to a change in the Department’s computer-aided dispatch system, which makes comparison to other years misleading.

The authors also asked Dennis Nowicki whether police-community development corporation partnerships are just too time-consuming for local police, given their other pressing obligations. “If police are willing to ignore their mission to prevent crime just because everyone is focused on terrorism, shame on us,” he said. “If anything, [today’s] economic stresses...justify more than ever that police form powerful, productive alliances with groups such as CDCs.”

Former police executive Stan Cook agrees with Nowicki that police departments should see great value in working with effective developers. Budget, workload, or officer competency issues, Cook argues, are not plausible excuses for most police agencies to refrain from engaging in these collaborations:

“All police departments have the *capacity* to work with developers to achieve results. But all police departments do not have the *will* to do it. I’m convinced of that. The problem is where folks’ attitudes are at. If you value problem solving, and you’re willing to look at problems from many different perspectives and determine how you fit in, as an organizational partner, to making this problem-solving work successful, then you can bring to bear whatever resources you have, in a very concentrated and effective way.”



**Figure 15:** After the transformation of Genesis Park, the adjacent Druid Hills neighborhood became the site of the region’s worst drug market, based on Kohler Avenue in homes such as that in the photo on the left. The Kohler Avenue crime hot spot threatened the sustainability of a recent \$4.9 million Housing Partnership development (The Gables Seniors Housing complex, right photo), down the block on Kohler. The Housing Partnership acquired and razed the entire problem-block on Kohler and will build high-quality affordable housing there as part of an 86-acre development plan. Besides providing much-needed housing for Druid Hills’ low-income elderly, The Gables stands at the southern gateway to the Druid Hills neighborhood, setting a tone of optimism and reinvestment for the entire community. (Photos c. 2000 and 2003)



**Figure 16:** Elsewhere in Druid Hills, The Housing Partnership and the county worked together to purchase and remove crime-generating, blighted housing stock (left photo) and in its place to construct the first-ever public park in the entire neighborhood. Finally, Druid Hills’ families have a safe and attractive playground for their children in their own resurging community. (Photos c. 2002 and November 2007)

## Some Lessons for Policymakers

**In the absence of homeownership, good property management is key to safe, stable rental properties.** This is a proposition on which Pat Garrett, Stan Cook, and others firmly concur.<sup>24</sup> When Darrel Stephens was chief, the Department analyzed crime patterns in different types of owned and rented residential properties.<sup>25</sup> Stephens summarized the findings:

“The key variable may be not the percentage of properties which are rentals but how well the rental properties—especially multifamily rental units—are managed. The CMPD’s experience suggests (to me anyway) that for multifamily rentals management is in fact the key issue as it relates to crime and police calls for service.”

According to Cook, starting in 1998 police, developers, and others helped increase the level of code enforcement, a crucial step in stemming crime. “Where there’s poor management of low-income properties, you’re going to have crime problems,” he declared.

**Strategic approaches that build critical mass.** THP President Pat Garrett and the police have honed their strategy since their early projects. They have realized that a key success factor is achieving “a critical mass of stability” (in the words of THP’s long-term Statesville Avenue Corridor Plan, adopted in 2001). To reach critical mass—a tipping point for a neighborhood—police experts believe that the scale of the solutions has to match the scale of the problems. Building a handful of high-quality affordable homes in the midst of uncontrolled blocks of blighted, crime attracting-generating units will not turn a beleaguered neighborhood around.

**An orderly, persistent process.** One of the main takeaways from the Charlotte partnership between developers and public safety practitioners is that there is a relatively orderly *process* at work. The history of this collaboration certainly includes—and, indeed, embraces and takes sustenance from—instances of police officers, community organizers, and others who have taken entrepreneurial, sometimes beyond-the-call-of duty action against the daunting realities of crime, grime, and hopelessness. Those heroics, however, mostly belong in the color commentary to this methodical success. The main story of Charlotte’s success is about a long-term, business-like, planned, budgeted, structured, and infrastructured program driven by competent managers in the community development, public safety, and other industries.

The champions and technicians of Charlotte’s systematic process follow it not out of spurts of adventurism or as departures from their *real* jobs but because they believe, based on accumulating evidence, that this process has succeeded and will continue to succeed. The day-to-day challenges and setbacks are survivable because there is a long-term vision, strategic plan, and expectation of success to be achieved through dutiful implementation of the plan. For people like THP President Garrett and former Deputy Chief Cook to abandon a joint development-public safety strategy because of setbacks in one or more projects would be like Amtrak deciding to get out of the railroad business because a couple of trains derailed.

Still, as we caution in each of our case studies, the public safety-development strategy at this time in America is young and fragile. It is very much alive and growing because of those in leadership positions who believe it is a better way to do business, especially in an era of very tight municipal resources. Cops and community members everywhere can attest that a valuable strategy that took years to build and has begun to hit pay dirt can be undermined if it is neglected by those who hold the purse strings and direct public safety operations.

## Would You Do It Again?

From the developer's perspective, Garrett told the authors:

"Absolutely. It was really expensive for us to do. We spent lots of staff time and lots of money doing things that cannot be tied to an actual house—we had to clean up lots, plant extra bushes, etc.... We believe...the return eventually exceeded the cost. The thing that I would worry about the most is that elected officials don't realize the importance of 'patience' money (money that gives someone the ability to write a check when the slum landlord is ready to sell). In addition, practitioners should realize that this is a long-term project. It took us years to complete and cost us lots of unrestricted money. I also caution other developers that money with federal restrictions cannot do everything that needs to be done in an area such as Genesis Park. Still, I absolutely would do this kind of project again. It was the right thing to do, and it was extremely rewarding to see it happening despite all the challenges."



"You can see clear results in neighborhood after neighborhood where The Housing Partnership has been working. It changes the quality of life. We will usually see a spike in the number of calls when revitalization efforts begin because residents are starting to exert control over their community space. Then it really drops off as the environment becomes stable. From a public safety standpoint, the more people feel like they own part of their neighborhood, the less difficulty there is. Kohler Avenue is a perfect example. There were 12-13 rental duplexes on a short, dead-end street where we repeatedly arrested and evicted drug dealers. The

Housing Partnership was able to come in and buy the units and tear them down. This made long-term change possible.

When The Housing Partnership builds—or rebuilds—they do an excellent job of managing the property. This is extremely important. Problems arise when absentee landlords and investors are not concerned about their properties or the communities surrounding them. In fact, I wish that we could somehow use The Housing Partnership as an example of how everyone should manage property."

**CMPD Chief Darrel W. Stephens, quoted in The Housing Partnership's 2005 annual report.**

Besides comments that we have presented from other CMPD executives, we asked “would you do it again” of former Deputy Chief Stan Cook and current Deputy Chief Ken Miller.

Stan Cook said that problem-solving police will keep working with highly effective community developers, over and over, because police

“can’t achieve these kinds of sustainable crime reductions without dealing with specific problem properties. You need a plan that changes what goes on there—better management of rental properties, acquisition and demolition, etc. You can’t solve that problem with enforcement, short of parking a police car there 24 hours a day. Sustainability comes from changing the environment. Without a partner who can help change the environment—by tackling specific locations and doing revitalization—the police are swimming upstream all the time because they are not really treating the problem, they’re treating symptoms.”

Ken Miller is the deputy chief for the Administrative Services Group, and part of his job is to mind the budget and think about questions like return on investment of police resources. Earlier in his career, Miller commanded the district that serves Druid Hills, and he has kept a keen eye on progress there in the years since he was promoted. Deputy Chief Miller told us:

“I don’t think you can overstate the value of the police collaboration with housing redevelopment groups like The Housing Partnership. They do good work in the revitalization of housing and neighborhoods and in management of tenants in their rentals. They turn neighborhoods around. I worked in Druid Hills. It was amazing how they turned around those houses. In Druid Hills there were a few homes nicely maintained but most were not. I remember going into one home on a search warrant, where the floor joists were broken and they were cooking on a stove that was leaning about 30 degrees.

Stan Cook and Mike Humphrey (of our Research, Planning and Analysis unit) have spent a lot of time looking at the right properties for THP to acquire so they can build their way out of crime. They’re careful about it and good at it...

They will look at dilapidated housing and match it up with crime to prioritize THP’s investment. THP is trying to stabilize communities, so what better way to do it than to pick off the houses that are causing the most trouble?

The only [kind of analysis of return on investment] we can’t do until we start tracking *people* is to see whether, when we build our way out of crime here, we move it somewhere else. All the research on displacement suggests that crime doesn’t come back at the same level. Beyond crime reductions, one of the additional benefits of our collaboration with The Housing Partnership and the residents of the revitalizing neighborhoods is improvements in trust. We

are keenly aware that it's a hard climb to the top of public trust and a short fall to the bottom. We have to be vigilant to protect the public trust and act in the public interest. I think our work with The Housing Partnership is really important in that regard."<sup>26</sup>

A recent study by THP compiled data on police workload that adds a dimension to the return-on-investment consideration. In one of THP's first revitalization areas, the miniscule neighborhood of Genesis Park, the amount of time police spent annually responding to "citizen-initiated calls for service" declined about 80 percent—from "a high of over 1,000 hours in 1989 to the 2006 level of approximately 200 hours."<sup>27</sup> That diminution in police activity had been achieved in Genesis Park in 2003, hot on the heels of the revitalization, and has not ticked up since. In Druid Hills, where THP intervened more recently, the high-water mark for police time spent on calls was 3,000 hours per year (which remained remarkably consistent from 1996 through 2000). By 2003, following concerted developer-police interventions, that number fell to about 1,300 hours and hovered between that level and about 1,500 hours through 2006, representing about a 50 percent reduction in the number of hours police had to dedicate to Druid Hills' service needs.<sup>28</sup>

### Taking Stock of Progress in Druid Hills

Reflecting on their work in Charlotte thus far, developers and police concede that there is still work to be done in Druid Hills—especially attracting new stores and restaurants that serve the neighborhood and give it a stronger sense of community—but they feel they have made substantial progress. Blocks once dominated by dilapidated housing and criminal activity have given way to Druid Hill's first park which, though still in the early stages of development, is already proving to be a stabilizing and unifying force for the entire neighborhood. Parents no longer have to drive their children to another neighborhood to use a playground. New homes being constructed on the perimeter of Druid Hills Park will have front porches that encourage "eyes on the park" by neighbors. For the first time in decades, there is safe, attractive, affordable rental housing for many Druid Hills seniors. See Figures 15 and 16.

One officer assigned to Druid Hills said, "When I patrol Druid Hills, I no longer see the past; I see the future. There is so much potential." Residents reinforce that view, reporting that they feel safer and trust police. Since THP's early work in Genesis Park, and even before that in the adjacent neighborhood of Greenville, dedicated officers have done much to earn community members' trust. Officers were regularly among the volunteers giving of their personal time in neighborhood cleanups, construction of Habitat for Humanity homes, and other community rebuilding efforts. Community reactions were predictably positive: "They're not just officers, they're more or less friends," said community leader Thomas "Pop" Sadler of Officers Mike Warren and Pat Tynan, who devoted themselves on- and off-duty to the communities of Genesis Park and Greenville.<sup>29</sup> Mike Warren said at the time how good it felt to be able to form positive relationships with neighborhood kids, who "are so used to seeing us arresting their aunts and uncles."<sup>30</sup>

A 45-year old Druid Hills resident, when asked to describe his neighborhood in 1997, said: “In the evening when the stars came out, the gunfire did too.” But by 2008, he said, “when the stars come out, the people come out. They walk their dogs, sit on their porches, and take evening walks for exercise. When the stars come out, the sound they now hear is owls hooting, a welcome change from the gunfire of the Druid Hills of a decade ago.”

## Minneapolis, Minnesota: Phillips Neighborhood Collaboration between the Great Neighborhoods! Development Corporation and the Minneapolis Police Department

### Minneapolis and Organization Facts

- « City Population (2000): 382,618, living in 52 square miles
- « Police Department (2008): sworn personnel = 879; budget = \$122 million
- « Great Neighborhoods! Development Corporation (GNDC): 2008 budget = \$3.1 million; as of 2008 holds \$13.6 million in commercial real estate assets; serves 50 businesses on GNDC-owned property with more than 500 employees and about 30,000 customers, clients, patients, and visitors annually. Staff (2008) = 5 full-time, 2 part-time, plus 35 to 40 contractors

### Phillips Neighborhood Facts (2000 Census)

- 19,805 residents (5% of city total) in 1.6 square miles (2.7% of city's 59 sq. miles)
- Race/ethnicity:
  - « 22.1% Hispanic (various races)
  - « 24.4% Non-Hispanic White
  - « 29.1% African American
  - « 5.9% Asian-Pacific Islander
  - « 10.8% Native American
- Phillips is the city's poorest community (median family income = \$22,044)
- 13% of Phillips residents are unemployed (more than twice the city-wide rate)
- 34% of residents below poverty level – double the city-wide poverty rate
- 78% of the 6,734 housing units are renter occupied

Figure 17: Minneapolis and Phillips neighborhood facts and figures.

## The Debris of Urban Renewal

The Minneapolis community of Phillips, just eight blocks south of the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome and downtown, is the largest, poorest, and most racially and culturally diverse neighborhood in Minnesota (See figure 17). At least through the 1990s, it was home to the nation's largest community of urban Native Americans.<sup>31</sup> Between 1980 and 2000, Phillips' Black population rose from 8 percent to 22 percent, mostly driven by a wave of East African and Somali immigrants. The main thoroughfare through Phillips, East Franklin Avenue, was once "a vital, working-class commercial artery"<sup>32</sup> "that mixed neighborhood groceries and hardware stores with homes and apartment blocks."<sup>33</sup> But for decades following World War II, Phillips and its commercial corridor declined in the face of suburban migration and urban renewal—and urban renewal's characteristic sundering and isolation of neighborhoods ringing the resurgent downtown:

"The 1960s bracketing of the neighborhood on three sides by highways and the city's reclamation of the Nicollet Island, Washington Avenue and Loring Park areas gutted and isolated large segments of the neighborhood and flooded it with thousands of working poor whose old dwellings were demolished to make way for parks, skyscrapers, condominiums and other urban renewal. Businesses and neighbors moved. Storefronts went vacant. Soup kitchens and bars flourished and crime rose. Property values fell, despite the best efforts of some residents, businesses and urban pioneers."<sup>34</sup>

The hardware stores and mom-and-pop groceries gave way to an endless string of porn shops, liquor stores, and gin joints along Franklin Avenue. Theresa Carr, CEO of Great Neighborhoods! Development Corporation, recalled in an August 2008 conversation with the authors that "Franklin Avenue in 1975 was just bar, bar, bar, liquor, liquor, liquor. You'd see people passed out on the street." The executive director of the National Business Incubation Association offered a vivid recollection of conditions in Phillips during the late 1980s: "I saw people in the street selling their blood to make a living," she told a reporter.<sup>35</sup> A 1990 newspaper story said that during most of the 1980s, the 1-mile stretch of Franklin Avenue that runs through Phillips was "a place for most people to avoid, or ignore."<sup>36</sup>

It became harder to ignore when Phillips became the driver of a spike in homicides which, in 1995, had local and national press calling the city "Murderapolis." A convenience store-gas station at a busy intersection on Franklin Avenue was the subject of 517 calls for service to the police in just 1 year, 1999. A bar across the street was another driver of neighborhood violence, drunk and disorderly behavior, and disinvestment. It had been decades since Phillips—with a large population of elderly, a low rate of motor vehicle ownership, and poor public transportation—had a full-service grocery store, a pharmacy, or a real bank. To paraphrase a journalist who grew up in the community, Phillips was frayed and afraid.

## A Vision of Community Renewal through Commercial Corridor Transformation

Many years earlier, spurred by ancestral pride and a belief born of the 1960s that “we could change the world,” a small group of American Indian women who lived in Phillips decided to band together to revive their neighborhood. In 1975 they created the American Indian Business Development Corporation, the CDC which today is called Great Neighborhoods! Development Corporation (GNDC). (For simplicity, on these pages the organization will be referred to by its current name.) They saw their mission as “empowering American Indian people and others through business development in distressed Minneapolis neighborhoods,” and their principal strategy was to reimagine and rebuild the Franklin Avenue commercial district.

With the help of corporate business executives on their board and dedicated community bankers, the group in 1983 built a strip mall—the first shopping center in the nation ever developed by a nonprofit organization. The two-block-long Franklin Circles Shopping Center, managed by the CDC, was greeted with great hope but over the years was unable to prosper amidst the durable open-air drug markets, disorderly bars, and porn establishments that surrounded it to the east and west along Franklin Avenue. Franklin Circles’ challenges were compounded by its inadequate design for safety and natural surveillance and by the developer’s inexperience with screening commercial tenants. Several of the shopping center’s stores and the parking lot became prime locations for drug dealing, prostitution, and assorted other commerce-suppressing problems. A \$3.8 million small business incubator the CDC established in 1989 brought the area some much-needed jobs, but during the next 8 years these startups proved to have neither the staying power nor the scale to have a transformative impact on the community.

Beginning in 1997—and marked by the start of Theresa Carr’s tenure as CEO—the CDC began to make some real headway, animated by a broader vision for what Phillips could be. What others viewed simply as the poorest community in the city, Carr saw as a richly diverse set of cultures. If those cultures, as expressed through ethnic emporia and in other ways, were properly showcased, GNDC believed, Phillips would appeal to shoppers and diners from throughout Minneapolis and to tourists from around the globe. Among the benefits for neighborhood residents would be enhanced pride, jobs, income, quality of life, and empowerment.<sup>37</sup> By August 2000, the organization owned “200,000 square-feet of commercial real estate in the Phillips neighborhood—more than six city blocks” on East Franklin Avenue. Many of the CDC-developed businesses showed promise and were beginning to foster renewal in Phillips, but they were continually buffeted by Franklin Avenue’s seemingly irrepressible drug markets, prostitution, and disorder. The police did their best, but enforcement tactics were not making sustainable improvements.

## A Policymaker's and Community Developer's Priorities Coincide

Over breakfast one morning in that summer of 2000—at a popular restaurant that Carr and her colleagues had attracted to the CDC's shopping plaza (now renamed Ancient Traders Market), Carr had intended to ask Minneapolis Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton for money for several projects. “But she turned the tables on me,” Carr said in 2008. As a news account put it, the mayor asked Carr to “help clean up the northwest corner of 11<sup>th</sup> Ave. S. and E. Franklin Ave.”<sup>38</sup> That corner, diagonally across the intersection from where the mayor and Carr were breakfasting, was the site of the convenience store-gas station that was preoccupying police, demoralizing the neighborhood, and tamping down revenues for Ancient Traders Market and GNDC's other commercial tenants. “When the mayor asks you to help, you help,” Carr said,<sup>39</sup> plus she knew that the mayor had accurately identified one of the main properties that was holding back neighborhood revitalization. Another of these hot spots was a one-block stretch of 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which intersected Franklin and had long harbored a busy open-air drug market, whose effects rippled widely through the community. Drug unit prosecutors working for Hennepin County Attorney Amy Klobuchar cited as the facts of life in Phillips “kids who can't go to playgrounds because of drug dealers” and “mothers getting harassed at bus stops.”<sup>40</sup>

## Creating Fertile Ground for Development: Focused, Collaborative Crime Suppression

Carr convened a wide-ranging group of community leaders, business operators, and public agency representatives to figure out how together they might make greater headway against these founts of fear, crime, and disinvestment than any of them had been able to make acting alone. The GNDC had long cooperated with and communicated with the police, but now they hatched an idea to substantially increase the presence of police on these blocks and to promote a much more effective, trusting, problem-solving relationship among the public safety practitioners (city police, county prosecutors, and probation officers), the area's businesses, and residents. Heightened police presence and positive community-police interaction, the group agreed, were important building blocks of revitalization, at least until an unstable area such as the Franklin corridor is stabilized.

Of great assistance to Carr and her development team in brainstorming and implementing a plan of action were Minneapolis Police Chief Bob Olson (who served as chief from 1995 through 2003—key years in the Phillips turnaround story), Third Precinct Commander Sharon Lubinski (who now runs the department day-to-day as the assistant chief, serving under the leadership of Chief Tim Dolan), Hennepin County Attorney (and now U.S. Senator from Minnesota) Amy Klobuchar, city council representatives, and other policymakers.

“They find the place very useful, so they come there. If you don’t create something useful, you will beat your head against the wall complaining the police aren’t using it. We never let anyone call the place the ‘cop shop.’ It’s not. A cop shop is a little 10 by 10-foot room, and cops are told they have to go sit in it. Nobody wants to. Elected officials can boast that they have a cop office in a neighborhood, but actually it’s not very useful to anyone. We wanted an office that really is used. It’s a high-tech location linked to the MPD’s [Minneapolis Police Department] computers, and that’s what makes it tremendously useful. Putting probation under the same roof has been very useful to both them and the police. With some of the cop shops in Minneapolis, the Police Department pays pretty high rent. Not so with our Safety Center, which remains rent-free to the MPD. We believe this type of safety center is an important new model.”<sup>41</sup>



“It is a driving value in Minneapolis that economic development leads to crime reduction and crime reduction leads to economic development. The solutions to both objectives are intertwined and must work hand-in-hand. By harnessing the power of collaboration between our police and community developers, we have turned tough neighborhoods around. Areas once known for crime are now producing jobs, building housing, and attracting businesses large and small.

You’ve got to meet the tough challenges of crime with tough law enforcement, but know that you can’t arrest away crime. Attacking crime also means getting at its root causes, many of which are economic. We more effectively fight crime and more effectively grow local neighborhood economies when our police and our entrepreneurs work together as a united team to improve our neighborhoods. We have seen first hand the power of this strategy.”

—R.T. Rybak, Jr., Mayor, City of Minneapolis (2009) (Photo: 2009/City of Minneapolis)

The police department's annual report hailed the facility: "The Safety Center has grown into a crossroads of police and community action. It provides meeting space for numerous community groups and gives the neighborhood cops a place to interview victims or suspects while remaining in the heart of the neighborhood."<sup>42</sup> The police department promptly moved the base of neighborhood operations into the Center. Prostitution and drug stings began to be routinely based out of the Safety Center rather than the Precinct Center, which is more than 2 miles away on Minnehaha Avenue. To the police, the Center's informal, clean, and inviting facilities have proven an effective venue for doing paper work, gathering information from local residents and merchants, and making pit stops. To many who live or work in Phillips, the Center's familiar, neighborhood-rooted feel is less intimidating than conventional police stations. The extensive foot traffic in and out of the Center magnifies the visible presence of safety work throughout the area.

Mike Sandin, a Hennepin County juvenile probation officer, reported that not everyone loves this Community Safety Center: "Criminals hate it because we are tightening the net of information, and we are more effective in the neighborhood."<sup>43</sup> So besides improving police-community relations in a neighborhood which had long-held grievances on both sides, the Safety Center has facilitated sharing mission-critical information. Theresa Carr told us how the Safety Center fits into their overall game plan for neighborhood transformation:

"It's a way of bringing police and community together, but it's a second step after the bedrock piece: acquiring site control over problem properties so we can turn them into neighborhood assets. I don't want to emphasize the Safety Center as a part of our strategy so much that it puts all the responsibility for our safety on the police. That would be like putting the responsibility for my health on the heart surgeon when I've been eating a high-fat diet. We need the police help in various ways, but the foundation if we're going to build our way out of crime is that we must own the real estate. That way we become responsible for what goes on there."

## The Elements of a Commercial Corridor Turnaround Strategy

The GNDC's core strategy consists of four basic elements:

1. Own and responsibly manage the real estate.
2. Do development that adds esthetic value, highly desired services and retail outlets, is pedestrian friendly, and fosters safe streets by making them busy during the day and evenings with healthy commerce and other attractions.
3. Use crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) techniques to design or redesign safer buildings and outdoor public spaces.
4. Create close partnerships between the community development organization, police, probation and other partners and stakeholders, facilitated by working under one roof in a community safety center.

This is how GNDC implements its mission, which today is to “develop real estate to house businesses that provide jobs, goods and services to distressed neighborhoods, and, at the same time, reduce crime in surrounding areas” within the city. Like the two other community developers featured in *Building Our Way Out of Crime*, GNDC is notable for its explicit focus on reducing crime. The CDC thinks of its crime-busting role in language widely used by crime-control theorists and strategists: “Every crime has a perpetrator, victim, and place,” said Carr. “If you remove one of these elements, you don’t have a crime. We deal with place.” She adds: “Because we work in areas of concentrated poverty and crime, we put as much effort into crime and safety as we do into economic development. If a developer doesn’t do that, crime will erase all of your hard work.”

The results of teamwork to steadfastly implement their philosophy and strategy are measured in public safety improvements and a rejuvenation of Phillips’ commercial corridor, which in turn has fueled the rebirth of hope, job creation and retention, neighborhood livability, and civic engagement by community residents. The returns on investment and cost-savings for the criminal justice system have been appreciatively acknowledged by developers and their public safety partners alike.

By the time the mayor and Carr had their productive breakfast in the summer of 2000, the city had already recovered from their homicide spike (Professor David Kennedy had been brought to town by the Police Executive Research Forum in 1995 to help the city strategize a plan that proved successful). But by 2000, the mayor and Carr agreed, most of the daunting problems forestalling the further revitalization of Phillips sprang from the persistent open-air drug markets and the assorted problems those markets attracted and spawned. Thus, the developer-police partners took square aim at the Franklin corridor’s durable drug markets.

## Key Interventions to Stabilize and Rejuvenate the Commercial Corridor

The book on which this Guide is based goes into considerable detail, but for present purposes only a few of the most important interventions made during an 18-month period are highlighted (these interventions are placed on a timeline in Figure 19 that will show the sequencing of activities and crime improvements).

The team opened the Franklin Avenue Community Safety Center, staffed it full-time with a crime-prevention specialist, and used it to bring police, probation officers, residents, and businesses into regular, productive problem-solving collaborations (such as a very successful court watch program that prosecutors credit with meaningful sentences for chronic neighborhood offenders). Next, after efforts to curtail the area’s crime by reducing the 24-hour convenience store-gas station’s hours of operation failed (the city council cut its hours but then promptly reversed course when lobbied by the multinational oil company that owned the facility), GNDC decided to just buy the property. In short order, bulldozers accomplished what endless hours of police response and nuisance abatement efforts had not.

Heavy equipment carried the day, too, against the notorious drug market on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue. As part of a plan to reinvigorate Ancient Traders Market, GNDC worked with the city to close the problem block on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue and convert it into an attractive brick pedestrian plaza, which created a campus feel for Ancient Traders by linking its original and newer buildings.

After city budget woes threatened the Safety Center's loss of full-time staffing, heroics by GNDC and Chief Olson maintained the salary, and great fortune brought the Center an unusually creative, proactive crime-prevention specialist who helped fully realize the community organizing, police-community trust-building, and business support objectives of the Safety Center. "I really want to highlight the crime-prevention specialist's importance to the success of a Safety Center," Assistant Chief Lubinski told us: "That CPS is the face of the Safety Center and the constant there.... We learned we need that full-time presence so when cops come and go there is someone there who knows what the crime problems are and knows when meetings need to occur." Developers and police tell us the full effects of having this full-time manager in the Safety Center began to be felt in the neighborhood starting in 2003.

The GNDC attracted one of Minneapolis' successful wholesale and retail bakeries, Franklin Street Bakery, to the corner where they had bulldozed the convenience store. The bakery had a small wholesale operation several blocks away but was on the verge of fleeing the neighborhood entirely until the owner sensed the progress the developer-police team was making. With construction from the ground up of a \$4.9 million, 20,000 square-foot facility, featuring huge windows on Franklin Avenue in both the retail and production areas (for marketing and natural surveillance of both the street and the bakery's interior), GNDC had accomplished a community developer's dream: Franklin Street Bakery is a wholesome business that serves Phillips and draws customers to the neighborhood from throughout the region for its prize-winning cakes and pastries. Its wholesale bakery runs 24 hours a day; and by staying in the neighborhood the bakery saved dozens of jobs for local residents and, in fact, added 50 more. An article in a trade journal, *Modern Baking*, reported that many retail experts were skeptical that the venture could succeed in Phillips, saying, "If you build it, no one will come."<sup>44</sup> But as dough rolled out, the dough rolled in: In its first year at the new location, the bakery's gross revenues nearly tripled, from \$2.5 million to more than \$7 million. The intersection of Franklin and 11th is now filled, day and night, with the aroma of baking and signs of productive work and commerce rather than junkies, dealers, drunks, and dismay.

Following these several steps, which knocked the crime down and enlivened the neighborhood, GNDC continued with a series of stabilizing and revitalizing developments along Franklin, one of which is especially notable: After 2 decades of one after another unsuccessful and crime-harboring grocery stores on the east end of Ancient Traders Market, GNDC brought an ALDI Foods to the property in 2004, and for the past 5 years the neighborhood has enjoyed its first full-service

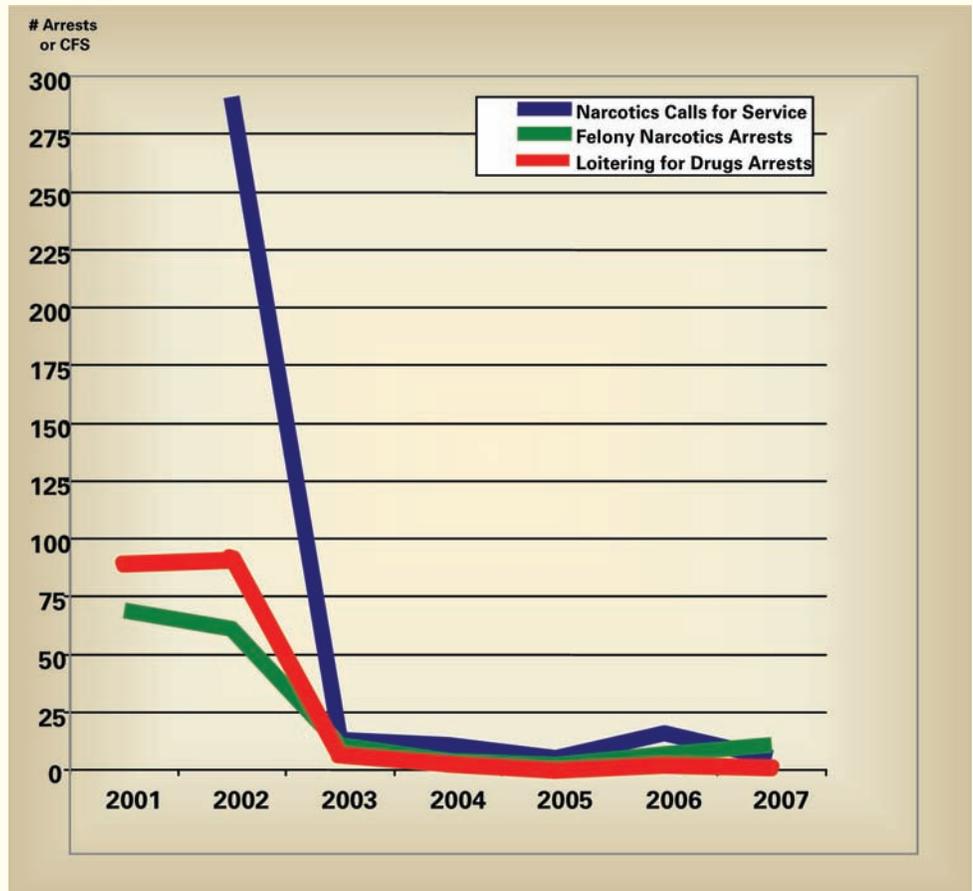
supermarket. And ALDI has enjoyed its customers: reflecting the sometimes underestimated purchasing power of Phillips' nearly 20,000 mostly low-income residents, they made this ALDI store, as Carr said, "the second highest grossing ALDI in Minnesota."

## Results

Figures 19 and 20 depict the dramatic fall-off in the drug-dealing problems in a 16-square-block area that police and developers agreed should be the most immediate impact area for their turnaround work. Figure 19 shows the reductions in arrests and calls for service; Figure 20 adds to that information a sequence of key interventions by the developers and police, showing how closely the huge improvements coincide with the partners' building-away-crime activities.

In reporting in connection with this and the other two case studies that developer-police interventions and improving public safety coincided, the authors appreciate that, as social scientists caution, "correlation is not necessarily causation." They welcome others bringing appropriate analytical methodologies to explore the impact of targeted community development-public safety interventions. For these case studies, however, they take encouragement from community residents, merchants, developers and criminal justice workers who believe, based on their experience and observations, that specific improvements are linked causally to the identified interventions.

## Arrests and Calls for Service, Phillips Neighborhood Focus Area, 2001–2007



**Figure 19:** The focus area for which the Minneapolis Police Department pulled data on calls for service and arrests is approximately 15 square blocks centered on the intersection of East Franklin Avenue and 11th Avenue South. Calls for service data begin in 2002. Due to a database change, 2007 data are for 3/27/07 to 12/31/07. “Loitering for Drugs Arrests” are arrests made to attack open-air drug markets.

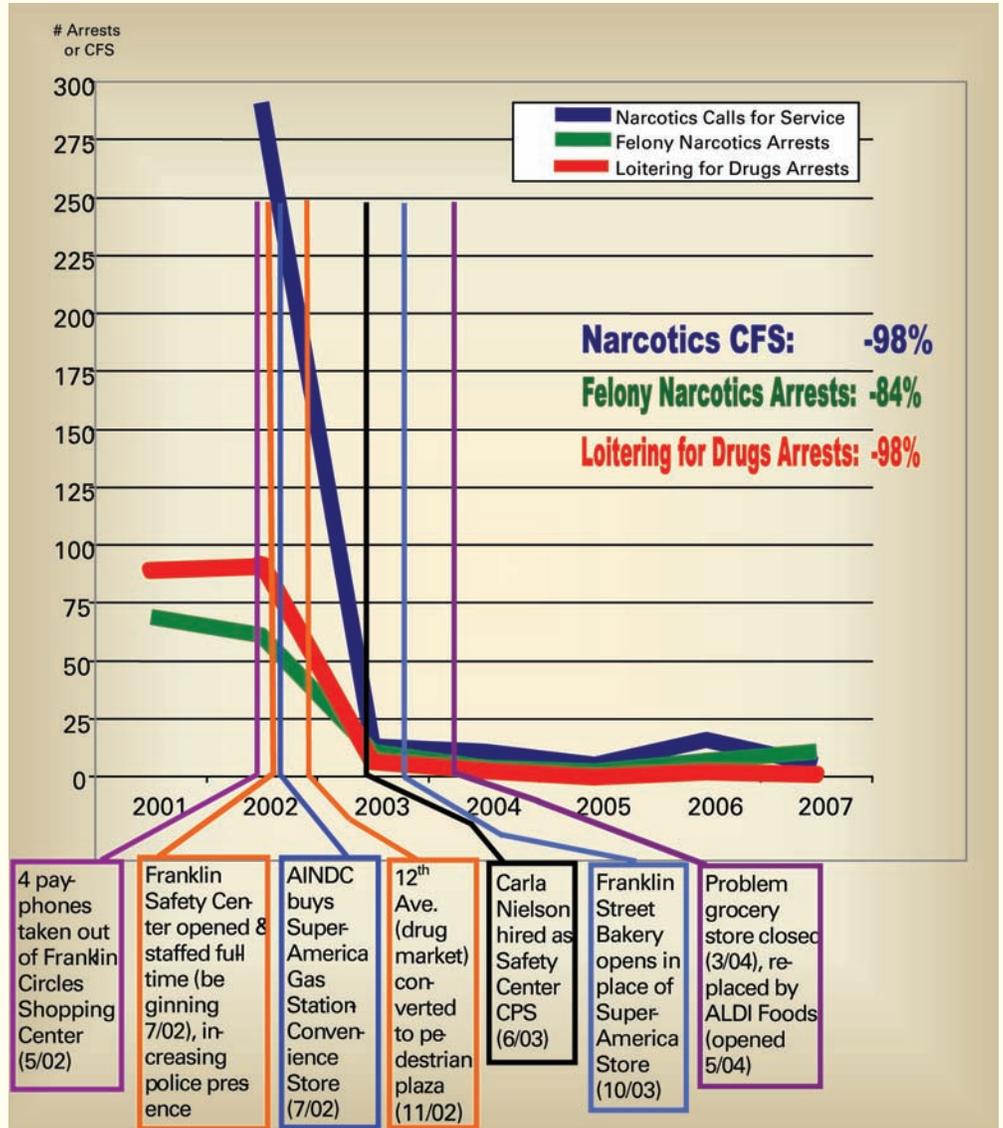
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The decline from 2002 through 2007 in calls for service complaining of narcotics crimes in this vicinity was a whopping 98 percent (from 291 to 5 calls). Assistant Chief Sharon Lubinski reported: “The reduction of 911 calls for service means that citizens were not seeing narcotics dealing, and thus the area was fairly clear of dealers. This neighborhood is a very savvy area, and if they saw dealing, they would certainly call.”

Robberies (those against businesses and persons, including robberies in which a gun was used or which resulted in demonstrable bodily harm) by 2001 happily were not very prevalent in the area around 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Franklin Avenue, but they, too, declined—by 18 percent from 2001 to 2007. This reduction was not as dramatic, of course, as the declines in narcotics-related calls and arrests; yet, the 18 percent fall-off in robberies stands against *increases* in robberies during the same period in the entire Phillips neighborhood (which had an 8 percent rise) and in the Third Precinct (which had a 12 percent increase).

Figure 20 shows the time frame during which these crime indicators changed suddenly—and durably—and plots against these improvements the sequence of several key community development-public safety interventions described earlier.

## Arrests, Calls for Service and Interventions, Phillips Neighborhood Focus Area, 2001-2007



**Figure 20:** In a focus area in Minneapolis' Phillips Neighborhood, enormous, rapid declines occurred in narcotics activity (measured by three indicators) following the indicated community development and public safety interventions in 2002 and 2003. Strong-arm and armed robberies also declined 18 percent. After pushing crime down, it was kept down during the ensuing years—and Phillips was further reinvigorated—by several more development projects along the neighborhood's main commercial corridor, Franklin Avenue.

The calls for service are calls from the public to police about narcotics offenses. The arrests are felony narcotics arrests and arrests for loitering related to open-air drug markets.

Figure 21 shows run-down buildings that were replaced or completely renovated in the Phillips Neighborhood development project. The Franklin Street Bakery and a portion of the reinvigorated Ancient Traders Market are depicted in Figure 22. In addition, in early 2009, after 4 decades without a real commercial bank, Minnesota's largest neighborhood welcomed to GNDC's Ancient Traders Market the Woodlands National Bank—the sixth branch in the state of this Native American-owned financial institution. Over the years, developers tried unsuccessfully to get Woodlands and two other banks to come to Phillips, but today, as GNDC's Theresa Carr said, "The Woodlands' analysis showed there are enough viable businesses in the area to make the deposits the bank needs to function. Our development helped jump start things, but now the neighborhood's economy is working on its own. And that's exactly the way revitalization is supposed to work."



**Figure 21:** During 1999, a convenience store/gas station (left) at the intersection of East Franklin Avenue and 11th Avenue South accounted for 517 calls for service to the police. One block away (right), an uncontrollable street market flourished on 12th Avenue South at Franklin Avenue.



**Figure 22:** Great Neighborhoods! Development Corporation worked closely with the police to build their way out of this commercial corridor’s disinvestment and safety challenges. Buying and transforming seven blocks along East Franklin Avenue, GNDC turned the street into an engine of neighborhood employment, commerce, safety, and pride. The convenience store gave way to the Franklin Street Bakery, a 24-hour wholesale bakery with an award-winning retail store; 12th Avenue was closed, converted into a pedestrian plaza in the GNDC-developed Ancient Traders Market shopping center, and became a popular spot for relaxation and ethnic celebrations.



**Figure 23:** In early 2009, after four decades without a real commercial bank, Minnesota’s largest neighborhood welcomed to GNDC’s Ancient Traders Market the Woodlands National Bank—the sixth branch in the state of this Native American-owned financial institution. Over the years, developers tried unsuccessfully to get Woodlands and two other banks to come to Phillips, but today, as GNDC’s Theresa Carr told us, “The Woodlands’ analysis showed there are enough viable businesses in the area to make the deposits the bank needs to function. Our development helped jump start things, but now the neighborhood’s economy is working on its own. And that’s exactly the way revitalization is supposed to work.” (Photos: 5/09/Margo Geffen for GNDC)

By 2006, Great Neighborhoods! Development Corporation had developed seven blocks of commercial real estate, encompassing almost 50 businesses: a grocery store, pharmacy, restaurant, bakery, florist, American Indian gift store, American Indian medical clinic, and many others. As of August 2008, more than 500 people are employed in the enterprises GNDC developed. See Figure 23.

### Would You Do It Again?

Actions speak louder than words. They *are* doing it again—launching the most ambitious commercial corridor turnaround development project in GNDC’s history. This time they are working on the north side of Minneapolis, with police leadership support and active collaboration with one of their long-time and favorite police partners from Phillips, Mike Martin, who was promoted from lieutenant in a south side precinct to commanding officer of a north side precinct.

Once again, GNDC is marching into a forbidding challenge—a community with a well-deserved reputation for violence and disinvestment. A Minneapolis journal called the area “an economic wasteland—few jobs, little private investment, and only a handful of promising businesses.”<sup>45</sup> Yet, in conducting her needs assessment of the neighborhood, Theresa Carr also saw what many for-profit developers don’t know how to perceive: A community whose potential is waiting to be tapped. From a financial point of view, she found “a population with significant purchasing power (some \$191 million annually, according to city estimates) and sufficient density to support a large commercial district....”<sup>46</sup> “Northway Community Trust, a nonprofit devoted to creating wealth and reducing poverty in north Minneapolis, estimates that roughly 75 percent of disposable income on the North Side is currently spent outside the community.”<sup>47</sup>

GNDC is eager to replicate its close partnership with police and other public safety organizations, confident that it now knows what the cornerstone of this partnership must be: “We simply could not have accomplished a fraction of what we have with our many, valued partners if we had not brought to the table our *ownership of the property*.” The partners’ pioneering work in Phillips leaves them sharing optimism about addressing neighborhood challenges. GNDC’s pitch to investors and possible commercial tenants is grounded in their insight into the latent capacity of forgotten neighborhoods. As Carr told a reporter, “We don’t say, ‘Come here because it’s the right thing to do.’ ... We say, ‘Come ... because it’s a great business opportunity.’”<sup>48</sup> Echoing the perspective of her police collaborators about their commercial corridor turnaround strategy, Carr says simply: “We have figured something out that’s really effective. Neighborhoods don’t have to stay down—they can do this.”

## Taking Stock of the Phillips Renewal

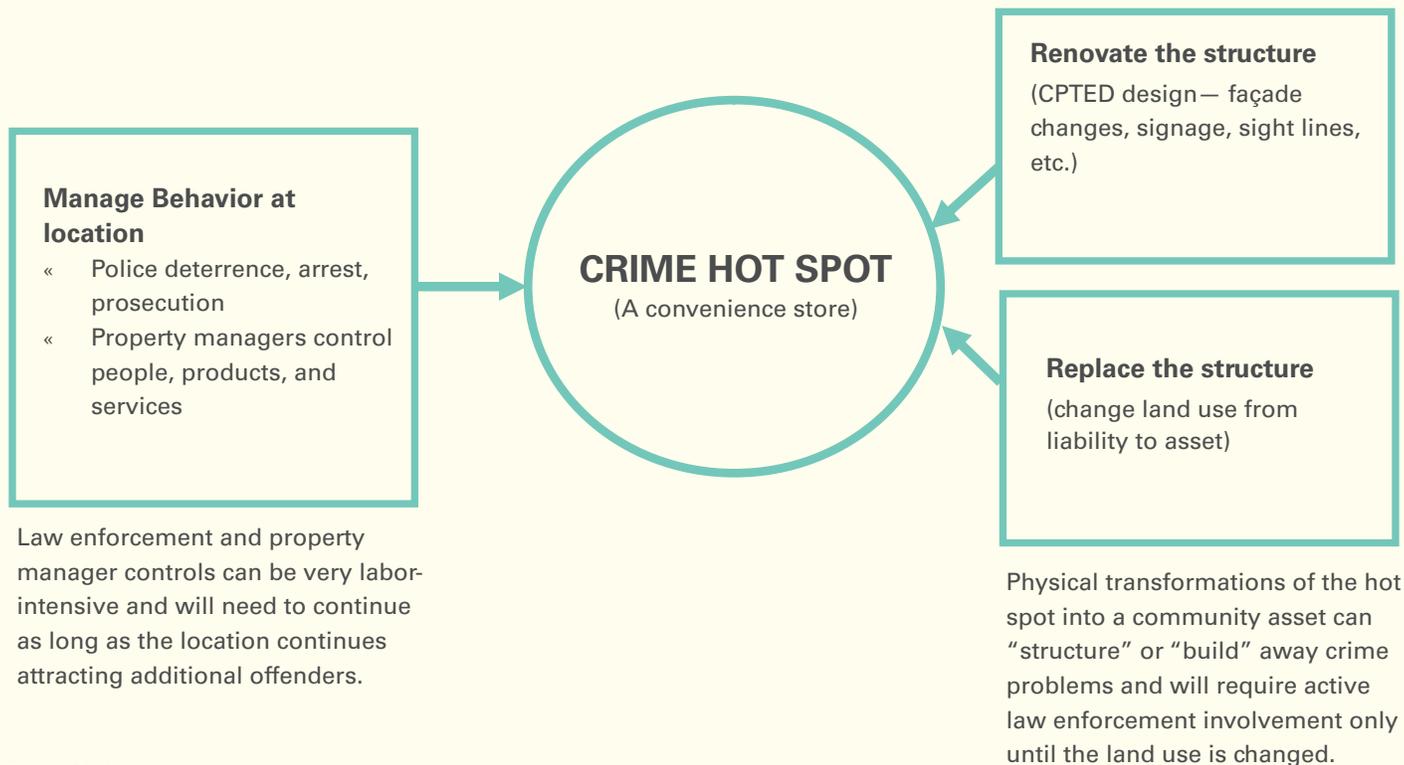
The pride of Phillips is nourished by what its residents and visitors see in every direction today when they stand at Franklin and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenues: the popular and prosperous Franklin Street Bakery, the bustling Ancient Traders Market, a great florist, a respected housing developer, an arts center in place of a porn theatre, dining alfresco, and cultural festivals on the pedestrian plaza that used to be a brazen street drug market, and a host of other busy, safe, family-friendly, job-creating and profitable businesses, services, and cultural attractions.

The revitalization and stabilization of Phillips remains a dynamic and continuous process, and the troubled national economy certainly challenges this community as it does so many others. But in the quest to make this a sustainable, great neighborhood, the restoration of East Franklin Avenue as a vibrant commercial corridor has been a real game-changer. Important, rather than build away the rich historical cultures of Phillips, the community's restoration draws heavily on its nourishing, multicultural roots. As French political thinker Alexis de Tocqueville remarked, "When the past no longer illuminates the future, the spirit walks in darkness." But, thanks to a remarkable team of community builders, the past does indeed help light the path forward for Phillips. Wherever that path may lead, one thing seems clear, and it was best expressed by that great American philosopher, Yogi Berra: For the community of Phillips in 2009, in the happiest way, "the future ain't what it used to be."

## How Police Fit into this Strategy

In each of the preceding highlights of these case studies, the authors touched briefly on some of the roles police played in converting places that generated or attracted crime and blight into neighborhood assets—highly desired commerce, places for leisure activities, and/or quality, affordable housing. The case summaries showed, too, how those new assets helped reduce crime and disorder, thereby fostering sustainable revitalization. The police were a key element in interrupting a cycle of crime and blight and setting in motion a new powerful cycle of viability.

While details about how this strategy works operationally and can be implemented are discussed at length in the *Building Our Way Out of Crime* book, policymakers should understand that when this approach is used, valuable police resources are deployed in a more laser-like way against specific elements of problem locations. Police, of course, will always retain general "serve-and-protect" responsibilities for all areas in their jurisdiction, but their roles in trying to break the cycle of crime and decline at hot spots are determined by the strategic importance of catalyzing community developers and community members to produce sustainable neighborhood improvements. Figure 24 highlights the general difference between conventional, law enforcement-only strategies for stemming crime at a hot spot (the example used is a convenience store) and the building-away-crime model.



**Figure 24:** Strategies for controlling crime at a commercial hot spot.

In the kinds of commercial and housing transformations summarized above, the police played various roles—some labor-intensive, some not. In all cases, the police were willing and able to come to and stay at the table because they took the time to understand what community developers can do and how that work can facilitate police mission success. And the police made the effort to form trusting, collaborative relationships with the developers. In all of these jurisdictions, it was easier for the police and community developers to explore how to work together efficiently for mutual advantage because a number of policymakers supported these innovations.

### Sequencing of Safety and Development Interventions

When police resources are viewed as integral components of a multifunctional neighborhood turnaround strategy, the sequencing of interventions by each partner organization becomes an important operational consideration. While the whole team should be represented in planning how best to implement policy and strategy, the question remains whether the community development and public safety operational pieces should be launched simultaneously at the target location and its problems. In other words, which comes first—crime control or physical redevelopment? The short answer for policymakers is that it depends. In the

dynamic interaction between restoring order and cutting crime, on the one hand, and physical redevelopment of crime hot spots, sometimes crime doesn't decline significantly until a physical transformation or repurposing of a property occurs. In many situations, the physical redevelopment cannot occur (because financing can't be secured or owners or renters can't be identified) until after demonstrable progress in tamping down crime. Sometimes physical redevelopment is the point of the spear in puncturing a persistent crime problem; in other cases concerted law enforcement must be done first, after which redevelopment can sustain the progress.

Whatever the proper sequencing in any given project, the core strategic idea is the same: a mutual reinforcement between police and developer activities and between the resulting crime reduction and community revitalization. Those whom policymakers task with implementing the strategy should find helpful the case studies in the *Building Our Way Out of Crime* book, which detail how progress was made, the roles police and developers played, and the sequencing of specific physical development and other interventions to safeguard the area.

## The Type of Community Developers Involved in these Strategic Partnerships

A threshold question for many policymakers will be whether they have—or can help communities create—in specific neighborhoods of interest the kind of community development capacity it takes to build our way out of crime. To clarify what is meant by some key terms in this Guide, the terms “community developers” and “community development corporations” are used in conventional ways. That is, they are resident-led, locally accountable, politically influential nonprofit agencies that work during prolonged periods to transform distressed communities and neighborhoods into healthy ones—good places to live, do business, work, and raise families. They do so by organizing residents, accessing mainstream capital markets, rebuilding infrastructure, developing residential, recreational, commercial, and industrial space, working to attract investors, businesses, and jobs, and reknitting the fundamental social networks that characterize healthy neighborhoods.

But, as one could surmise from the chosen case study sites, the focus is not on all 5,000 of the CDCs that work in various useful ways in cities and rural areas throughout the United States.<sup>49</sup> Rather, for public safety turnarounds, the community developers who matter the most are those who do *physical* development. These are the developers who have the capacity to acquire a neighborhood's key blighted, crime-generating properties and transform them into brand new or renovated residential, commercial, and other community assets. Such developers, with vital support from policymakers at all levels of government and in the private sector, operate on a scale sufficient to create a critical mass of neighborhood revitalization. When police work closely with such developers, each party typically finds that it achieves its own missions more effectively, efficiently, and enduringly. As they adopt new roles, their collective capacity to change places grows.

## Grassroots Community Developers Are Not in the Business of Gentrification

The kind of community developers who are commended in *Building Our Way Out of Crime* as partners to public safety organizations are *not* in the gentrification business. Community developers exist, to be sure, to change the physical and economic structure and nature of places—but *not* to displace a neighborhood’s hardworking poor. Upward mobility is a desirable goal—but upward mobility that includes *existing* residents and their families. By reinvigorating both the face and functionality of individual communities, community developers create opportunity for low-income populations where little has existed before.

As many policymakers understand, rising property values in a poor community need not lead to pushing residents out of the community nor to the elimination of affordable housing options for new low-income residents. A range of strategies can help develop and maintain a stock of affordable homes, among them several identified by an Urban Institute report: housing trust funds, inclusionary zoning, low-income housing tax credits, split-rate taxes, tax increment financing, code enforcement, rent control, affordable housing subsidies, tax relief and assistance.<sup>50</sup>

## Policymakers Need to Help Police Leaders Differentiate CDCs from Other Types of Important Community Organizations

Among other things the police need to understand about nonprofit community development corporations is that they are not community-based *advocacy* organizations responsible for addressing the entire range of community issues as they come and go. CDCs focus on gathering capital and making financial and other investments in neighborhood improvement. As such, they are businesses and can be courted by police *in a business-like way*.

As a local institution with staff and board members drawn primarily from the neighborhood, a CDC may well have strong opinions about police-community relationships and events that drove wedges and/or forged bonds between police and the neighborhood’s residents and workers. CDC staff may publicly express their opinions from time to time, both lauding and lambasting the cops. *But the brass ring for which a CDC reaches is not police reform; it is community improvement*. To be sure, police improvements—in how they treat people and the strategies they use to fight crime—may be seen by a CDC, rightly, as *instrumental* in pursuit of successful neighborhood revitalization. Any nonprofit businesses or homeowners seeking to safeguard their investments in distressed neighborhoods understand how much they need the help of the police because crime is one of the greatest threats to the sustainability of community revitalization.

A Kennedy School of Government analytic paper on police-CDC partnerships being supported by LISC's Community Safety Initiative in the 1990s noted that police-CDC partnerships offered advantages different from those police found in working with other kinds of community based organizations:

“Police-CDC partnerships are not simply another version of the police-resident partnerships that have become popular in community policing. They are a specific type of relationship that commands the distinct resources of an important institution... It seems especially important to recognize the breadth of strategies that police and CDCs can pursue together.”<sup>51</sup>

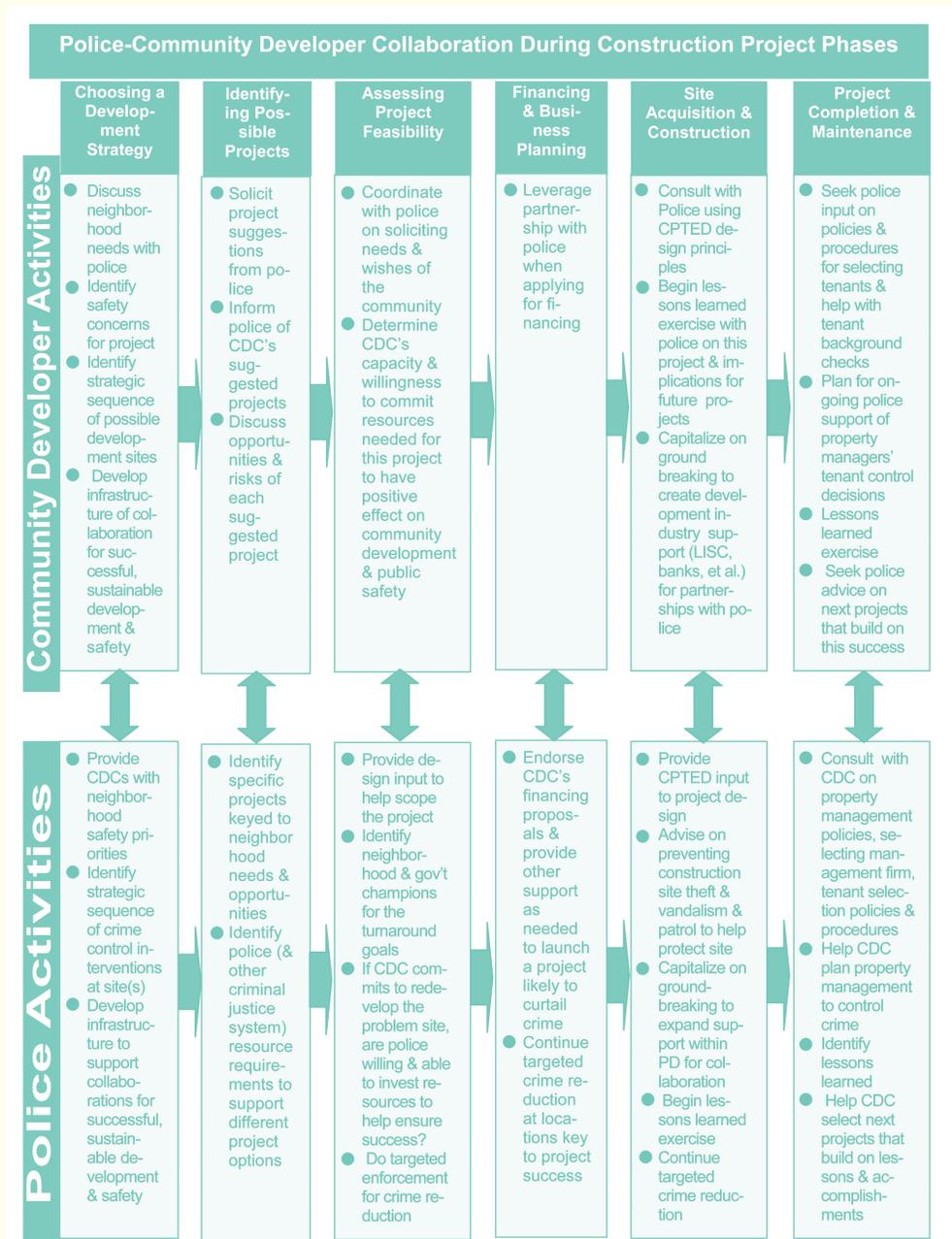
Because of the significant, tangible assets that high-capacity community developers can contribute to strategic alliances with police, long-time advocates of community policing see a golden opportunity for building-our-way-out-of-crime partnerships to reinvigorate community policing. People who have been dismissive of community policing as feel good but ineffectual against crime will have to reconsider their criticisms when they see the kind of results that community focused, problem-solving police officers have achieved in concert with community developers.

## Some Ways Police Can Capture and Support the Power of Community Development

The book from which this Guide draws delineates in detail the many ways police can support, harness, and focus the significant neighborhood credibility and physical development capacity of community developers to address complex public safety challenges. The following are a few key recommendations to help policymakers guide the implementation of this collaborative strategy:

- « Think about what it might take for local police (and community developers) to usefully contribute to—and, therefore, help a city leverage—meaningful turnaround. Finding the right people for the job is critical—creative, partnership-minded, hard-working, critical thinkers who will be consistent collaborators.
- « The good news is that there need not be a large contingent of police participants who fit this description. Success in these partnerships will neither require a wholesale transformation of police agency approaches or employees nor necessitate the enlargement of police forces.
- « Acknowledge that the conversion of challenged neighborhoods does not happen overnight, but with the right problem solvers in the right roles, these turnarounds can come within just a few years—frequently within the election cycles of the public officials whose support will be needed in various ways. Understand that this pace may be anathema to traditionalist police practitioners more accustomed to a work ethic dedicated to “the need for speed,” even if solutions are fleeting.

For police departments willing to diversify some of their employees' roles in pursuit of less-fleeting solutions, Figure 25 touches on many of the roles police and community developers perform to catalyze and support one another. The graphic arrays these roles in a way that will be much more familiar to developers than to the police: according to the stages in a typical multiyear physical development project.



**Figure 25:** Police-community developer collaboration during the phases of a construction project.

## Increasing the Amount of Police–Community Developer Collaboration

As noted earlier, the more robust types of police–community developer cooperation and collaboration are not yet common practice in the United States. Indeed, the idea of strategic engagement between police and developers is not even on the radar screen of many police and community development leaders, notwithstanding diligent work done during the past 15-plus years by some of the leading community development umbrella organizations (Local Initiatives Support Corporation [LISC] and Enterprise Community Partners leading the pack) and by individuals with both urban planning and policing expertise. The principal organized, national effort to promote police–community developer partnerships is the Community Safety Initiative (CSI) of the LISC. CSI was founded in 1994 by LISC with advice from the Police Executive Research Forum and analytic support from the Kennedy School of Government’s Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management.

Paul Grogan, who was president of LISC at the time the CSI program was established, wrote that the early demonstration sites (East New York in Brooklyn, Seattle’s Chinatown-International District, and Kansas City’s disenfranchised east side) provided settings in which “the community and the police worked out a set of mutual responsibilities that reflected a strong perceived link between physical and social disorder and crime.”<sup>52</sup> Positive examples have emerged in other cities. But much remains to be done if these productive partnerships are to become prevalent throughout urban America. The strong leadership of policymakers in many quarters will be required to move in that direction. “Based on our work over the years with dozens of dedicated community developer–police partnerships in cities large, medium, and small,” CSI Program Director Julia Ryan said recently, “I can say with confidence that there is far too much to be gained for policymakers to ignore this powerful and efficient revitalization and public safety strategy.”<sup>53</sup>

Since the terms of engagement of police and community developers can be complex and delicate, especially for practitioners unaccustomed to each others’ worlds and ways, it is understandable why robust community developer–police partnerships are not yet evident in all urban areas. There is an essential quid pro quo among the parties to high-output police–community developer collaborations that needs the guidance of policymakers. One issue will be what police need to invest of their authority, reputation, and resources to persuade a capable CDC to aim its development talents at local crime attractors/generators. Strategic guidance is also needed on the kind of investments a CDC needs to make to attract appropriate police attention to the problems that can undermine community revitalization.

But now there is enough experience on these and other crucial topics—what does and does not work, under what circumstances—to be able to help a great many police and community developers come together in a way that advances the core goals of both organizations. Drawing on lessons learned over the years and on research conducted for *Building Our Way Out of Crime*, our goal in presenting these findings and recommendations is straightforward: to kick into a higher gear public policymakers' and policy influencers' understanding that it is possible and important for cops and community developers to forge strategic alliances that will benefit their communities.

### Broadening the Impact and Opportunities to Hone the Strategy

In sharing lessons learned and urging wider adoption of these partnerships, the authors wish to emphasize that they do so based on a smaller-than-desirable set of cases and useful program evaluations. A lot more needs to be learned about whether the practices the authors describe will work over time and in a large variety of settings, at the hands of different kinds of people and organizations than those portrayed.

But there is good reason today to commend the existing experiences and insights of public safety and community development practitioners to their colleagues and to policymakers, for the learning process will be advanced by having more practitioners thoughtfully *do the work* recommended in this Guide, thereby adding a broader set of experiences from which to learn. It is important, as police and developers experiment with this work, that policymakers ensure that the practitioners and others rigorously assess what they do, how they do it, why they do it, what their return on investment is, and how they might proceed even more efficiently and effectively in future building-away-crime collaborations.

### Policy Leadership in Institutionalizing Police-Community Developer Collaboration

When policymakers decide—as their counterparts in these case study sites have—that mutually reinforcing community development and public safety is a strategy worth strongly supporting, a policy challenge becomes how to institutionalize this approach as part of the core operating strategies of police and development organizations. Without going into the detail contained in the book, suffice it to say here that priority steps toward institutionalization include clear and convincing accounts which show that community development *works* to cut crime, coupled with modified systems and processes that create *expectations, incentives, and user-*

friendly *procedures* for police to work with community developers on appropriate types of crime problems. At bottom, employee performance management systems of the sort being developed in a number of cities, such as CompStat and CitiStat,<sup>54</sup> must be adapted or invented to support these collaborations. That support includes developing systems for data collection and analysis that alert practitioners in user-friendly ways to emerging problems and problem-solving opportunities. Such information systems should also provide on-demand block-level crime statistics and other data to allow convincing before-after comparisons when interventions seem to have produced meaningful results.

Many police agencies today do not have data retrieval and analysis systems adequate to the task, leaving crime analysts, operational leaders, and policymakers with mostly anecdotes to rely on as they work to continually improve public safety methods. As an option to building substantial data analysis capabilities *within* budget-strapped police organizations, policymakers should look to the sort of “data intermediaries” affiliated with the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (a project coordinated by the Urban Institute).<sup>55</sup>

In the absence of various organizational changes to institutionalize a public safety-community development strategy—many of which will not occur without strong encouragement from policymakers—the future of police-developer collaboration will remain ad hoc and dependent on the personalities and interests of individual leaders. Since this strategy employs physical neighborhood transformations that take several years to hit pay dirt, unless it becomes institutionalized, this strategy is unlikely to have the range and depth of impact that many communities need.

The photos of the award ceremonies in Figures 26 and 27 show government officials and policymakers who support emerging community development-public safety strategies and solutions.



**Figure 26:** Providence Police Chief Dean Esserman speaks at the MetLife Foundation Community-Police Partnership Award ceremony in Olneyville in November 2007, backed by police and community developers and the affordable homes and other improvements they made possible. Seated facing the camera (L-R) are Providence Mayor David Cicilline, U.S. Senator and former Rhode Island Attorney General Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Rhode Island LISC Executive Director Barbara Fields. Seated with his back to camera in the front center of photo is police scholar—and problem-oriented policing architect—Herman Goldstein. (Photo: Rhode Island LISC)



**Figure 27:** Also celebrating a MetLife Foundation first-place award (in September 2007) for their revitalizing work in Druid Hills, are public officials and community leaders in Charlotte. Holding award certificates are The Housing Partnership's President Pat Garrett and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Chief Darrel Stephens. Council Member Patsy Kinsey is in the front row in the tan suit, and Charlotte Mayor Pat McGrory is in the far right of the photo. (Photo: The Housing Partnership)

A golden opportunity to advance adoption of the community development-public safety approach presented by the challenges facing the nation and the solutions to these problems is being devised by policymakers at the federal level. Indeed, during the past several years this strategy has attracted growing numbers of powerful advocates on both sides of the political aisle in Congress. Thought leaders on urban, metropolitan, and crime-control policy echo the enthusiasm that Bratton and Grogan express in their Foreword for what police and other components of government can do to stimulate community developers' and grassroots community involvement in rebuilding challenged neighborhoods. In this way, the proposed police role in forging safe neighborhoods exemplifies the "catalytic," "enabling" function that the current administration sees as a productive role for government in helping people improve their communities and their lives.

Emerging crime-control policy must synchronize with broad-based solutions to a variety of complex urban challenges. As we noted earlier in this Guide, Attorney General Eric Holder, for one, has long insisted that "we cannot arrest our way out of the [crime] problem" as it exists in many cities. One of the ways that he put his commitment to active government-community engagement into operation was by organizing an admired and replicated community prosecution program when he was U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia.<sup>56</sup> Prosecutors who have worked around the country in the kind of programs that Holder established as U.S. Attorney strongly concur that by engaging actively and flexibly in problem-solving partnerships they can accomplish results that conventional criminal justice processes usually do not (see, for example, the sidebar reporting the perspectives of a Los Angeles community prosecutor). Such perspectives and time-tested lessons about what works, we hope and expect, will shape not only strategies for collaborative work by federal and local prosecutors nationwide but also strategies for Department of Justice support of state and local crime-control initiatives.

## Why a City of Los Angeles Neighborhood Prosecutor Actively Supports and Works with a Community Developer-Police Partnerships

Former Los Angeles City Attorney's Office Neighborhood Prosecutor Anne Tremblay worked closely for several years with the LAPD and two community development corporations in South Los Angeles (previously known as South Central LA, one of the most troubled parts of the city). In 2005, the authors interviewed her for an LISC Community Safety Initiative newsletter, when she reflected on why she does what she does:

"I work with CDCs to improve the quality of life of this area. Instead of just dealing with something after it's happened we're looking for a proactive way to solve problems. For instance, we often deal with location-based issues, such as a problem liquor store or bar or a problem property—a park or a vacant or occupied apartment or single family home. My office and the LAPD have worked together for some time to remove such problems. We have boarded and secured vacant properties, evicted narcotics offenders, etc. But then we have another empty place which could become a problem. By including the community development component in our strategy, we're trying to go beyond abating the nuisance and replace the problem with something good. Our goal is to make a lasting change by putting problem properties back into productive use.

Even though the City's Community Redevelopment Agency addresses a lot of problem properties, they can't possibly take over the number of properties that need attention. So community development groups with good track records bring additional capacity to come up with plans and the financing required to put good things in place of the problem properties.

The police and I give our input on how we think a property could be made safer and more productive for the community. For instance, there's a gang-dominated apartment building in South LA which the police and I recommended converting from rental to owner-occupied spaces. Bringing the benefits of home ownership to this location will require a substantial renovation since the apartments are too small and run-down now to attract owner-occupants. The expertise of developers is required to produce the necessary property transformations.

Generally, neighborhood prosecutors try to think outside the box, to use that cheesy term. The criminal law has not been a useful tool against many types of low-level offenses, which produce real harm to the community. The jails are full, so if we get a misdemeanor conviction the person is going to be put on probation or at most serve 10 days of a 90-day sentence, so we can't incarcerate our way out of the problem. I find I usually can do more for the community by using non-litigation tactics to achieve compliance with the Municipal Code, say in the case of a problem property owned by an absentee landlord. In about 90 percent of our abatement cases, the City Attorney's office is able to get voluntary compliance from the property owners (such as providing better lighting or security guards) by showing them evidence of the crimes occurring on their premises and explaining their obligations and their legal jeopardy if they don't cooperate.

A large role I play is as a 'professional nudge' to get everyone in our partnership to follow through on agreed problem-solving tactics and not be distracted by the crisis of the week. Despite what a bad rap lawyers get, I find that many people in the neighborhood are more comfortable with me than with people in police uniforms and also show me more deference or respect than they show cops, so that helps me be an intermediary to get police-community trust going. I've also been able to help police become more confident that it's useful to work with some community-based organizations. Together, we're starting to build our way out of problems."

Beyond public backing at the federal level, cost-conscious, results-oriented state and municipal officials should invest in police-community developer partnerships. They should also support the establishment of information intermediaries such as The Providence Plan as vital parts of the infrastructure for building-away-crime partnerships. Any such investments are hard to swallow in disastrous economic times, but they should loom as a high priority in maintaining domestic tranquility as economically as possible. Such approaches deserve serious consideration as components of a much-needed *new investment strategy for crime control*.

Policymakers are increasingly realizing that the singular voice of historically unnatural allies—high-impact police officials and leading community developers—is a powerful yet not fully tapped tool. More must be done to raise the volume of this collective voice—and to carry its message to elected officials. And more should be done by community development leadership to advocate for their brethren across the partnership table. The community developer perspective would offer a fresh take on the implications of improving and funding police-driven public safety efforts, and much more action on this front is warranted.

Additionally, opportunities to institutionalize the building-our-way-out-of-crime strategy are presented by several types of federal legislation that cry out for the collective voice of both developers and police. Recent examples are the Second Chance Act and the housing relief bill that passed in 2008. The public safety implications of the prisoner reentry and property foreclosure issues addressed by these legislative initiatives are profoundly interwoven with the direct interests and fundamental capacity of both community developers and police, but these public safety implications have been marginalized in the industries' debates. Public safety must find a place at this table. Indeed, we need to imagine the myriad future legislation—both progressive and regressive—that will call out for collective input and advocacy by police and community developers.

Approached thoughtfully and with the combined wisdom and support of public safety and community development experts, the opportunities to marshal untapped resources to turn around crime-ridden and disinvested communities are enormous. Synergies between government and communities can create capacity that neither has acting alone. Just as government can catalyze dormant community capacity, an energized community—robust civic engagement—can reinvigorate community policing and other vital functions of local government. High-performing local government and high-performing communities can produce a spectacular spiral of ever safer, more desirable neighborhoods throughout America.

## The Economic Environment—Still More Impetus for Collaborative Action

With the real estate boom of the mid-'90s growing unchecked until the recent mortgage crisis and the ensuing recession, many began to believe that the era of community development productivity and value was fading—that *private* development (with its greater efficiencies of scale and relative independence from subsidy needs) would become the hallmark of urban revitalization. Indeed, CDCs were finding it harder and harder to realize their land acquisition ambitions (let alone build) as property values rose exponentially. But the collapse in mortgage lending—fed by laxity in regulation, deepening of corporate greed, and growing debt-frenzy—has reopened the door for nonprofit developers. Indeed, it underscores their long-term importance.

The rampant rates of foreclosure—and the pace at which even less at-risk homeowners are facing default—offer an opportunity for nonprofit community development as both a viable and locally controlled answer to housing recapture and resale, and, perhaps more important, a chance to meaningfully address the inevitable public safety challenges that have accompanied the increasing vacancies and abandonment. Vagrants, drug users and dealers, prostitutes, and the like are drawn almost magnetically to this growing supply of hideaways and bases of operation. And police are increasingly feeling the pain of this new resident population.

According to a Chicago-based study that has been widely cited in the past few years, there is evidence of a causal link between foreclosures and violent crime: “A one-percentage-point ... increase in foreclosure rate,” the researchers wrote, “is expected to increase the number of violent crimes in a tract by 2.33 percent, other things being equal.”<sup>57</sup> This looming devastating impact on the still somewhat fragile gains that many low-income, formerly high-crime communities across the U.S. have enjoyed should be powerful impetus for policymakers to widely adopt a community development-public safety strategy.

With new housing subsidy and mortgage relief opportunities, the time is ripe to test (once again) how community developer-driven revitalization—undertaken in the context of police-developer partnerships—efficiently and sustainably advances vital goals: rebuilding and repopulating in responsible, defensible, crime-cutting ways. Through the wisdom and collective action of community developers and police, hot spots—crime attractors/generators—can be transformed into real assets—places that attract and generate the kind of positive behavior that marks healthy neighborhoods.

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## A Final Note

Stepping back from the productive collaborations in the three case study sites and other places, it seems very clear that community development and policing are two industries that need each other and can work compatibly and compellingly if sensible incentives, staff preparation, and collaborative processes are devised and used. This Policymaker's Guide has built on this mutual need and opportunity and proposed that the prevailing current pattern—parallel but uncoordinated action by public safety workers and developers—is not enough. In these times when municipalities face growing agendas and shrinking resources, the public safety and community development industries' natural overlaps cannot go unnoticed, and their complementary tools must be purposefully and efficiently linked. Doing so is a matter of governing competence, sound public policy, and fiscal responsibility. And, as seen through the broken windows and shattered dreams of destitute and dangerous neighborhoods, doing so is a moral imperative.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Booker, 2008.
- <sup>2</sup> Scott and Goldstein, 2005.
- <sup>3</sup> President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967, pp. 98–99; see also Wald, 1967.
- <sup>4</sup> Shapiro, 2009.
- <sup>5</sup> Weisbourd, 2009.
- <sup>6</sup> Polikoff, 2006, p. 376.
- <sup>7</sup> See St. Jean, 2007.
- <sup>8</sup> Buntin, 1999(a), 1999(b), 1999(c), 1999(d); Thacher, 2000.
- <sup>9</sup> Thacher, 2000, quoting a Kennedy School case study.
- <sup>10</sup> Providence Plan web site, "Olneyville Neighborhood Profile."
- <sup>11</sup> Smith, 2007(b).
- <sup>12</sup> Smith, 2007(a).
- <sup>13</sup> Davis, 2006.
- <sup>14</sup> Vega, 2008.
- <sup>15</sup> Feins et al., 1997.
- <sup>16</sup> Wright, 1995; Morrell, 1992.
- <sup>17</sup> Vaughan, 1992.
- <sup>18</sup> Feins et al., 1997, pp.6–7.
- <sup>19</sup> DeParle, 1006.
- <sup>20</sup> Flono, 1994.
- <sup>21</sup> DeParle, 1996
- <sup>22</sup> Rhee, 1991.
- <sup>23</sup> Geller, 2002.
- <sup>24</sup> Roberts, 2008.
- <sup>25</sup> Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, 2008.
- <sup>26</sup> Miller, 2008.
- <sup>27</sup> Roberts, 2008, p. 39.
- <sup>28</sup> Roberts, 2008.
- <sup>29</sup> Dempsey, 1993.
- <sup>30</sup> Blair, 1992.
- <sup>31</sup> Taylor, 1999; Kersten, 2008(a); Kersten, 2008(b).
- <sup>32</sup> St. Anthony, 2003.
- <sup>33</sup> Brandt, 2003.
- <sup>34</sup> St. Anthony, 2003.
- <sup>35</sup> DePass, 1993(a).
- <sup>36</sup> Inskip, 1990.
- <sup>37</sup> Taylor, 1999.
- <sup>38</sup> Her, 2003.
- <sup>39</sup> Her, 2003.

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- <sup>40</sup> Chanen, 2002.
- <sup>41</sup> See also Chanen, 2002.
- <sup>42</sup> Minneapolis Police Department, 2003.
- <sup>43</sup> American Indian Neighborhood Development Corporation, 2007.
- <sup>44</sup> Odesser-Torpay, 2005.
- <sup>45</sup> *Minneapolis Observer Quarterly*, 2006.
- <sup>46</sup> *Minneapolis Observer Quarterly*, 2006.
- <sup>47</sup> Kersen, 2008(b).
- <sup>48</sup> Kersten, 2008(b)
- <sup>49</sup> National Congress for Community Economic Development, 2005.
- <sup>50</sup> Levy et al., 2006(b); see also Levy et al., 2005(a), and Kennedy and Leonard, 2001.
- <sup>51</sup> Thacher, 2000.
- <sup>52</sup> Grogan and Proscio, 2000.
- <sup>53</sup> Ryan, 2009.
- <sup>54</sup> See Behn, 2007.
- <sup>55</sup> Kingsley, 1998; Kingsley and Pettit, 2007; see also Brookings Institution and RW Ventures, 2003, and Weissbourd, 2006.
- <sup>56</sup> Shapiro, 2009.
- <sup>57</sup> Immergluck and Smith, 2005, p. 15; see also Spence, 2008.

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**Bill Geller** and Lisa Belsky cofounded the Community Safety Initiative (CSI) of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation in 1994. Since then, Geller has served as CSI's senior public safety consultant and technical assistance provider. During the past 3 decades, he has also served as the research and executive director of the Chicago Law Enforcement Study Group; project director at the American Bar Foundation; associate director of the Police Executive Research Forum; special counsel for public safety and internal security to the Chicago Park District in the administration of Chicago Mayor Harold Washington; Law clerk to Justice Walter V. Schaefer of the Illinois Supreme Court; search manager in the White House Office of Presidential Personnel; and, currently, director of the Geller & Associates consulting firm. The books that he has been the editor or coauthor of include *Building Our Way Out of Crime: The Transformative Power of Police-Community Developer Partnerships* (forthcoming, with Lisa Belsky); *Deadly Force: What We Know—A Practitioner's Desk Reference on Police-Involved Shootings in the United States* (with Michael S. Scott); *Police Leadership in America: Crisis & Opportunity*; the International City-County Management Association's *Local Government Police Management* (1991 edition and, with Chief Darrel Stephens, the 2003 edition); *Managing Innovation in Policing: The Untapped Potential of the Middle Manager*; *Split-Second Decisions: Shootings of and by Chicago Police*; and *Police Violence: Understanding and Controlling Police Abuse of Force* (with Hans Toch). In the 1980s, for the U.S. Department of Justice, Geller conducted the first national study of videotaping to document interrogations and confessions and recommended the technique to foster more effective, efficient, and legitimate police stationhouse interrogations. With his mentor, the late University of Chicago Law Professor Norval Morris, Geller was coauthor of a policy examination of sensible role divisions between federal and local police, published in the University of Chicago Press volume *Modern Policing*. During the past 30 years, Geller has served as consultant to police agencies spanning the nation, from the New York Police Department to the Los Angeles Police Department, and to community organizations, civil rights groups, the U.S. Department of Justice, mayors, city managers, think tanks, universities, and the news media. He assists clients with strategic, policy, communications, program implementation, and leadership and management challenges. His leadership work has ranged from devising a strategic plan for the John Jay College of Criminal Justice's Police Leadership Academy to conducting executive searches for major city police departments. Geller holds a J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School. He was awarded the Richard J. Daley Police Medal of Honor, the highest award given to a civilian by the City of Chicago for work in support of policing.

**Lisa Belsky** has been active in community development for the past 20 years, launching her career as special assistant to the president of Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), the country's largest community development intermediary, in 1989. She went on to become LISC's first national program officer (1990); and, in 1992, cofounded the Community Safety Initiative (CSI), a program that she launched in East New York during New York Police Department Commissioner Bill Bratton's tenure and ran nationally until 2007. During her tenure as director of the CSI, she raised more than \$15 million to support innovative linkages between police departments and community development corporations (grassroots nonprofit development agencies that are LISC's core constituents). She continues to support LISC's efforts in this endeavor as a senior consultant to the program, now active in more than a dozen cities throughout the country. Belsky serves as the lead technical assistance provider to three Rhode Island-based, award-winning police–CDC partnerships, among them the Providence Police Department–Olneyville Housing Corporation collaboration profiled in the *Building Our Way Out of Crime* book. She has also teamed with Bill Geller in providing technical assistance to celebrated police–CDC partnerships in Los Angeles, Kansas City, and Seattle. Belsky has worked with police officials across the United States through a range of other forums, including the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Board and the board of directors of the Institute for the Development of Police Leadership, spearheaded by Nancy McPherson. Most recently, she has developed various programming and new curricula to address the challenges of prisoner reentry (beginning with a pilot project in Boston's Dorchester Bay neighborhood). Belsky is author of an in-depth case study, to be published by LISC's CSI, on community liability and asset mapping that has guided the work of the Providence Police Department's partnership with CommunityWorks Rhode Island. In 2007, she was coauthor with Paul Grogan of an analysis of the contributing factors behind New York City's dramatic progress in reducing crime and enhancing neighborhood livability, *New York: Public Safety Outlier*. Previously, she and Grogan co-wrote a chapter on "The Promise of Community Development Corporations" in a Police Executive Research Forum-published book, *Community Policing: The Past, Present and Future*, edited by Lorie Fridell and Mary Ann Wycoff. From 1986 to 1988, Belsky worked as a case writer with the Institute of Politics at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, where she provided research support to a variety of national and international public policy analyses, focusing, for example, on the effect of the press on federal policymaking and the role of politics on the passage of international treaties. Belsky helped develop programming for the Kennedy School's New Members of Congress Conference and New Mayors Conference and assisted in orchestrating programs and enlisting speakers for Harvard's John F. Kennedy, Jr., Forum, one of the world's premiere arenas for political speech, discussion, and debate. Belsky holds a bachelor's degree from Princeton University.

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# Summary Contents of *Building Our Way Out of Crime: The Transformative Power of Police-Community Developer Partnerships*

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About the Authors

*A Policymaker's Guide to Building Our Way Out of Crime: The Transformative Power of Police-Community Developer Partnerships* describes and analyzes innovative efforts in communities across the United States to reduce crime in and improve the economic vitality of blighted neighborhoods. By working together, local police, nonprofit community developers, elected and appointed officials, financial strategists, and community leaders can do more with less, converting crime hot spots that ruin entire neighborhoods and consume considerable police services into safety-generating community assets. Case studies, photographs, charts, and lessons learned demonstrate the power these partnerships have for transforming troubled neighborhoods in cost-effective ways into stable, healthy, and sustainable communities.



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