



Homicide Reduction Strategy for the District of Columbia

HOMICIDE REDUCTION STRATEGY FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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United States Attorney's Office for the
District of Columbia
Office of the Attorney General for the
District of Columbia
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Drug Enforcement Administration
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency
United States Marshals Service**

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I.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This memorandum describes a comprehensive strategy that the law enforcement partners in the District of Columbia have adopted and implemented to address our most significant crime problem -- the consistently high number of homicides in the Nation's Capital. This strategy is being implemented in conjunction with other initiatives and programs -- such as the Hot Spots Initiative (described below) -- that are addressing the violent crime problem with different tools and techniques.

In developing this Homicide Reduction Strategy, we examined the historical and current trends in homicide incidence and found that a disproportionate number of these homicides (1) are committed within a limited number of neighborhoods in the city and (2) are committed by young men who are members of loose-knit violent groups within those neighborhoods. To address this problem, we devised a strategy that targets our crime suppression and deterrence efforts in those neighborhoods and against those violent neighborhood-based groups.

This strategy has the following five components:

- **Suppression:** The strategy commits the law enforcement partners to a quarterly schedule by which we identify a neighborhood, target its violent offenders, assign a federal agency to undertake investigations with the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), and then conduct a “take-down” involving the arrest of numerous violent offenders in that neighborhood.
- **Deterrence:** It adopts a deterrence program that markets the example established by our take-downs of targeted violent groups to deter members of other groups from engaging in similar violence.
- **Intervention:** It expands on a number of violence intervention programs that have proven effective here and in other cities.
- **Investigation:** It takes steps to enhance the capabilities of the MPD to investigate homicides aggressively and effectively.
- **Prosecution:** It changes the organizational structure of the U.S. Attorney’s Office (USAO) to enhance its prosecutors’ ability to prosecute homicide cases to conviction.

With our implementation of this strategy, the law enforcement community in the District of Columbia has positioned itself to achieve a lasting reduction in the homicide rate that has plagued our city for so long.

II.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The District of Columbia has suffered from a high homicide rate for the past 15 years. While the homicide rate remained fairly constant and on a par with other similarly-sized cities through the 1980s, it exploded with the introduction of crack cocaine and the resulting “crack wars” in the early 1990s. Between 1990 and 1995, 2,643 people were murdered in the District of Columbia -- averaging well over 400 deaths per year. This carnage gave the District of Columbia the unfortunate distinction of being labeled the “murder capital” of the United States.

In response, federal and city law enforcement agencies have undertaken a number of initiatives to target the city’s most violent criminals over the years. Among these initiatives are the following:

- **Federal Assistance Project.** In an effort to combat violent crime that grew out of the crack cocaine explosion of the early 1990s, the White House directed 18 federal agencies to contribute resources to the MPD in 1994. Contributions to the effort were significant. The U.S. Park Police (USPP) and the Uniformed Division of the Secret Service assigned 85 officers to routine patrol in the city. Various agencies contributed 115 vehicles and over \$2 million for police overtime and for eliminating the backlog of firearms examinations. A joint fugitive task force was created to execute outstanding warrants, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) assigned agents to various operational task forces. This infusion of federal resources significantly enhanced our enforcement efforts on the street.
- **Project Ceasefire.** Project Ceasefire was a USAO initiative in the late 1990s to combat gun violence through enforcement, aggressive prosecution and community outreach. Under this initiative, the USAO increased the number of attorneys devoted to gang prosecutions, established an Intelligence Unit, and developed a media outreach campaign using posters, billboards and videos to heighten awareness of gun violence and its consequences.
- **Homicide Prevention Project (HPP).** The HPP was implemented by the MPD in 2003 to close unsolved homicides. The HPP focuses on increasing coordination between homicide detectives and narcotics investigators and identifying homicide suspects and witnesses. The FBI has provided logistical support and backup for the HPP. The program focuses on three violent patrol service areas (PSAs) at a time and generally runs for 90 days. Currently in its sixth phase, the program has succeeded in generating leads and enlisting the cooperation of reluctant witnesses, resulting in the closure of over a dozen homicide cases.

- **The Hot Spots Initiative.** In February of 2004, the Mayor’s Office for Neighborhood Services and the MPD joined forces to bring about a significant impact on crime in targeted neighborhoods called “Hot Spots.” The Hot Spots Initiative calls for the coordinated infusion of law enforcement resources and city services in a particular neighborhood. For each of the 14 Hot Spots, there is a work plan with specific tasks, goals, and time lines for each city service agency in the Neighborhood Services “Core Team.” Core Teams consist of employees from 18 separate District government agencies in each of the city’s eight political wards who coordinate the delivery of services within each of these high-crime neighborhoods. Among the 18 participating agencies are: MPD, Department of Public Works, Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Employment Services, Department of Transportation and others. The DC-OAG has a number of personnel devoted to the Hot Spots initiative, and USAO Community Prosecutors and Community Outreach Specialists work with the Core Teams to address public safety priorities including quality of life and nuisance property issues.

This initiative is complemented by a number of MPD neighborhood-focused programs. For example, MPD and its partners in Operation Fightback go into Hot Spot areas and remove abandoned autos, clean the streets and evict drug-dealing tenants from public housing units. During an operation, MPD deploys a roving force of officers into the particularly neighborhood, setting up roadblocks if necessary, to enable the operation to move swiftly and efficiently. MPD also has initiated Daily Crime Briefings, where each MPD district chief briefs the Chief of Police about crime problems in his or her district and the strategies being used to address those problems.

- **Project Safe Neighborhoods.** Project Safe Neighborhoods is a national anti-gun violence campaign that stresses partnerships among law enforcement agencies. The core of the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative in the District of Columbia is our effort to enhance the number and quality of firearms prosecutions. The USAO implemented aggressive intake guidelines for gun cases, and the USAO and the MPD have developed guidelines to improve the quality of firearms cases through better collection, preservation and analysis of evidence. The USAO has also participated in MPD training regarding the investigation of firearms cases and the recovery and preservation of firearms evidence.

As part of the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative, the USAO, MPD, Court Services and Offenders Agency (CSOSA), and the Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia (DC-OAG) began a neighborhood-based crime suppression and deterrence program. This program is designed to identify the most violent neighborhoods in the city; target and apprehend the most violent groups and criminals in those neighborhoods; and use the example of their prosecution and incarceration to deter groups in other neighborhoods from resorting to similar

violence.

This effort was recently concluded in the Sursum Corda neighborhood, and we have begun similar efforts in several other neighborhoods. Since we have adopted this approach -- and expanded upon it -- in this strategy, we will discuss its logistics in more detail below in the Suppression and Deterrence sections of this memorandum. See Sections V.A. and V.B, *infra*.

III.

THE CURRENT HOMICIDE RATE

Law enforcement efforts in D.C. have succeeded in bringing the homicide rate down from a peak of 454 murders in 1993, to 248 murders in 2003, to 198 murders in 2004. While the 2003-2004 homicide rate is a significant improvement, it remains a relatively high per capita murder rate among major cities with similar populations.

Moreover, while the total number of victims per annum has decreased, the percentage of child victims has remained alarmingly high. In 2004, 24 juveniles were murdered in Washington, D.C., up from 12 juvenile victims the year before. Ballou Senior High School alone lost three of its students to violence this past year, including one who was shot to death in a school hallway between class periods. The following is an excerpt from one of many news stories about the increase in youth homicides:

May 5, 2004

The Washington Post

A Surge in Killings of Children

Access to Guns Linked to rising toll of Violence in District

When a bullet crashed through a window in the Deanwood neighborhood, . . . 8-year-old Chelsea Cromartie became the 13th youngster to die at the hands of someone else this year in the District. Already the number of homicide victims younger than 18 in the District has surpassed last year's total, even as crime in general and the homicide rate in particular have continued to fall. What lies behind the rise in young people being killed is a question with no sure answers, police and prosecutors say. But what they are certain of is that the more people turn to guns to settle scores on the street the more likely it is that children will end up dead – unintended victims of violence that is often unsparing.

These juvenile deaths have continued throughout the year, each one as tragic and meaningless as the last.

- James Richardson, age 17 -- shot to death on February 2, 2004, inside Ballou Senior High School during the school day. Richardson's death was part of a running feud between two rival neighborhoods. He was a junior at Ballou Senior High School and a standout running back on the school football team.
- Timothy Hamilton, age 15 -- shot to death on April 25, 2004, as he was sitting in the back seat of a stolen car. Timothy was a freshman at Ballou Senior High School, and the third Ballou student to die violently during the school year. His parents had often warned him about the dangers of street life and hanging around with the "wrong crowd."
- Myesha Lowe, age 15 -- shot in the head and killed on July 24, 2004, while sitting in a parked car. Myesha was not the intended target of this retaliatory shooting stemming from a neighborhood feud. She was an honors student who was scheduled to travel to Canada for a college preparatory program the week after she was murdered.

In addition to juvenile murders, we have seen an increase in the number of shootings in which uninvolved bystanders have been killed by exchanges of gunfire between warring gangs or criminal groups.

July 5, 2004

The Washington Post

Piercing Bystanders' Innocence

Stray Gunfire Scars Survivors -- and City

The .45 caliber bullet is still lodged in Mia Adgeron's rib cage, close to her heart. For the rest of her life, she will carry it around – a permanent reminder of how close she came to being killed by a bullet intended for someone else.

The District has a long history of high-profile cases involving random gunfire, which first attracted wide notice during the drug-turf wars of the 1980s. The drug wars have calmed, but random shootings have remained a part of life in the city.

These shootings are different from other forms of violence, their impact often more powerful and unsettling. When a stray bullet pierced the window of a Northeast Washington home May 3 and killed an 8-year-old girl as she played with her dolls, parents across the region were reminded that they never can really shield their children from violent crime. Three weeks later, a 12-year-old girl in Northwest was shot and wounded while sitting on her

front porch. In a city where gunfire is common, the public fear seemed justified: A grandmother walking down a street or a group of children splashing in a pool were all potential victims.

Although police do not keep separate records on such incidents, they acknowledge that each time another innocent bystander is shot, the psyche of the community is further damaged.

“Whenever one of these events happens, it really brings home to a city the fact that you could be standing anywhere and be struck down by a bullet,” D.C. Police Chief Charles H. Ramsey said. “All you need is one or two of these shootings to really shatter a city.”

The phenomenon of random killings of innocent bystanders is devastating to a community. If gun-play becomes so common that innocent bystanders are at risk, law-abiding citizens lose confidence in law enforcement and start to disengage from their neighborhood, thereby leading to its decline. We cannot allow that corrosive process to take hold in our neighborhoods.

IV.

THE PROBLEM: VIOLENCE BY NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED GROUPS

An analysis of crime statistics and trends reveals the following two characteristics of violent crime in the District of Columbia: (1) a disproportionate number of the District’s murders occur in a limited number of neighborhoods; and (2) a large percentage of these murders are committed by members of loose-knit groups or “crews” of offenders within each neighborhood who identify themselves by their affiliation with that neighborhood.

This trend has been borne out by the findings of a statistical study commissioned by the Project Safe Neighborhood partnership. This Homicide Incident Review analyzed the affiliations and motives behind the District’s murders and determined that neighborhood group dynamics play a central role in violence in this city. Sixty-one percent of all murder suspects and almost 40% of all victims were members of identifiable street groups or “crews,” most of which were small, low-order organizations with little formal structure. A large percentage of these murders were linked to “beefs” between individuals and neighborhood-based groups over turf and “respect.”

This trend has been confirmed by the work done by David Kennedy, Senior Researcher at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Professor Kennedy has significant experience studying violent crime, and he is nationally known for his work on the Boston Gun Project. When he started his work in Boston in the 1990s, homicides had doubled in number and youth homicides were averaging over 44 per year. Professor Kennedy and the Boston Police Department undertook to identify the offenders, and they ultimately determined that 60% of the homicides were being committed by group members who were active in only 8.1% of the city’s neighborhoods.

This finding of a concentrated incidence of murders was further confirmed by the success that Boston achieved when it focused its resources and attention on the relatively small number of violent, group-involved youth whom they had identified. Between 1996 and 1998, Boston experienced a 60% reduction in youth homicides. Similar targeted enforcement efforts have produced positive results in Indianapolis, Indiana and Rochester, New York.

V.

THE HOMICIDE REDUCTION STRATEGY

This research and these statistics convinced the law enforcement partners in the District of Columbia that we needed to target our operations and resources against those neighborhood-based groups that are committing so many of the city's homicides. We all recognized that the above-listed law enforcement initiatives, while successful in lowering the homicide rate considerably, did not provide the comprehensive approach that is necessary to neutralize permanently the threat posed by these violent groups. To meet that need, we devised and agreed upon a joint strategy.

This Homicide Reduction Strategy builds upon the neighborhood enforcement approach that the FBI Safe Streets Task Force has used so successfully over the years. It also builds upon the fine work that the MPD, the USAO, the DC-OAG and CSOSA began through Project Safe Neighborhoods. Under this strategy, we are expanding the Project Safe Neighborhoods approach into a permanent and regularized law enforcement process and extending its reach with a commitment to join the effort by the FBI, DEA, ATF and the United States Marshals Service (USMS).

The essence of this strategy is the coordinated, pro-active application of law enforcement authority, and it requires the cooperation of the Department of Justice and District of Columbia agencies involved in law enforcement. It was adopted upon agreement of each contributing agency, and its implementation is being coordinated by a Steering Committee comprised of representatives of each core participating agency -- the MPD, FBI, DEA, ATF, USAO, USMS, CSOSA and the DC-OAG -- and chaired by the Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department.

This comprehensive Homicide Reduction Strategy includes the following five components:

- **Suppression:** Prevent homicides by conducting "neighborhood projects," in which we target and dismantle those neighborhood groups that killing people in our city.
- **Deterrence:** Use the examples of those violent groups we incapacitate with our neighborhood projects to deter others from engaging in similar violence.
- **Intervention:** Partner with the city's anti-violence groups, continue our outreach and mentoring with youth and at-risk individuals, and employ the media to spread an anti-violence message.

- **Investigation:** Enhance the capacity of the MPD to investigate homicides and apprehend the perpetrators.
- **Prosecution:** Improve the capacity of the USAO to prosecute homicide cases and secure prison sentences that will prevent killers from victimizing others.

A. Suppression

As explained above, this Homicide Reduction Strategy draws from the current Project Safe Neighborhoods program in that it calls for identifying the most violence-plagued neighborhood and focusing MPD attention and personnel on the violent actors in that neighborhood. However, it goes beyond the current Project Safe Neighborhoods program by (1) including the Department of Justice agencies as investigative partners and (2) devoting investigative and prosecutive personnel to each neighborhood long enough to catch those particularly dangerous criminals who often cannot be investigated and apprehended in the few months that the MPD is able to devote to each neighborhood. These enhancements to the program allow us to undertake the comprehensive neighborhood investigations that are necessary to break the cycle of group violence that plagues so many neighborhoods in our city.

1. Stages of the Suppression Plan

The suppression component of our strategy proceeds in the following stages:

a. **Intelligence-Based Targeting.** We have a standing intelligence process for determining which of the troubled city neighborhoods should be the subject of this homicide reduction effort. We have convened a series of “Group Audits” in which we assemble MPD officers and USAO prosecutors who work in particular police districts. They share information about the groups that are responsible for the violence in the neighborhoods within that district. They also review other information, including the following:

- Statistical data regarding types and incidence of violent crimes;
- Results of the review of open homicide jackets and other violent crime reports;
- Debriefings of cooperators and other sources of information regarding the major players and sources of violence in the area;
- CSOSA data reflecting which crew members are under supervision, their conditions of supervision and levels of compliance, and whether any have recently returned to the area or may do so in the near future; and
- Information from law enforcement records regarding criminal history, prior

contacts (traffic stops, etc.), and known associates of targeted violent offenders.

Based on their review of this data, the Group Audit participants make recommendations to the Steering Committee about which neighborhood groups to target, and they formulate lists of the violent individuals in those groups who should receive investigative attention.

Every two weeks, the Steering Committee of principals and other staff from the USAO, CSOSA, DC-OAG, MPD, ATF, DEA and the FBI meet at MPD Headquarters. They review the recommendations and results from the Group Audits, and they select the neighborhoods for upcoming neighborhood projects.

b. Staffing of the Neighborhood Project. Upon selection of a neighborhood, each participating agency commits the following manpower to that neighborhood project:

- *Metropolitan Police Department:* The MPD provides the patrol officers, undercover officers and personnel necessary for the initial 90- to 120-day focused operations within the target neighborhood. The MPD also commits at least one detective to the ongoing investigation beyond that period of focused operations.
- *Federal Law Enforcement Agencies:* With the FBI, DEA and ATF actively fighting violent crime on the streets of the District of Columbia, we can rotate responsibility for each neighborhood project among them. The agency principals decide which agency participates in each neighborhood project, based on their assessment of factors such as each agency's available resources and the investigative experience that each agency might have with the target neighborhood. The participating federal agency then commits at least one special agent upon the inception of a neighborhood project, and that agent sees the investigation through to its conclusion. The participating federal agency also will assist by deploying personnel for various operations (e.g., execution of search warrants and arrest warrants) and it will perform forensic services in connection with these investigations.
- *United States Attorney's Office:* The USAO commits one prosecutor to each neighborhood project. That prosecutor is assigned at the inception of a neighborhood project, and he or she works as part of the "Neighborhood Team" with the designated MPD detective and the assigned federal special agents until its completion.
- *D.C. Attorney General's Office:* The DC-OAG has committed one Public Safety Division manager and one Assistant Attorney General to the Homicide Reduction Strategy. These personnel share information with the Neighborhood Teams, where appropriate, about individual juvenile offenders

in each targeted neighborhood. The USAO and DC-OAG determine the availability of criminal or juvenile charges and coordinate the development of cases against those individuals with MPD and the participating federal agency.

c. Targeting of Violent Offenders. The Group Audit participants use the intelligence sources identified above to develop a list of those criminals who are responsible for the violence in that neighborhood.

d. Focused Operations. The following occurs in the first 90 to 120 days of a neighborhood project:

- The USAO determines the availability of criminal or juvenile charges -- possibly relating to a previously-closed but still viable criminal case -- against individuals on the list of suspected violent offenders from the neighborhood. It coordinates the development of cases against those individuals with MPD, DC-OAG (for juvenile matters) and the participating federal agency, and helps secure arrest warrants based on those cases.¹
- The MPD, in conjunction with the participating federal agency, initiates enforcement operations -- including undercover drug operations -- and other relevant investigative activity in the neighborhood. The MPD also joins CSOSA to undertake intensive supervision of those targets who are on probation or parole through joint MPD/CSOSA home visits.
- At the appropriate time, MPD and the participating federal agency jointly conduct the “take-down,” i.e., the execution of all arrest and search warrants relating to the targeted offenders against whom they have developed probable cause of criminal conduct.
- Once the take-down is completed, the bulk of the MPD resources devoted to the suppression effort in that neighborhood -- the undercover officers, the arrest teams, etc. -- are freed up for assignment elsewhere in the city.

e. Long-Term Investigation. Making a show of force and taking a number of criminals off the street has an immediate impact on the neighborhood. Often, however, more

¹We also explore other options for disrupting the activities of criminals in that neighborhood. For example, we coordinate with the District of Columbia Housing Authority to evict offenders from public housing in that neighborhood. We also disseminate information regarding conditions of release (such as stay-away orders) for offenders in that neighborhood who are on release pending court proceedings or under supervision by CSOSA; this information can provide the basis for arrest by an officer who witnesses the violation of those conditions.

laborious and in-depth investigation is necessary to make cases against the most violent criminals in the neighborhood. This is the job of the Neighborhood Team.

The Neighborhood Team's first -- and greatest -- challenge is to develop witnesses who can testify against these violent individuals. Because of the understandable fear and reluctance to testify against such persons, we often cannot find voluntary witnesses, and must instead develop witnesses out of defendants who agree to cooperate for consideration in their own criminal cases. The focused operations stage provides the opportunity for developing such witnesses. The arrests resulting from the take-down generate an abundance of potential cooperators, and it is the Neighborhood Team's job to seize this opportunity. The detectives and agents interview all arrestees who are willing to talk to them, and the prosecutor approaches each arrestee's attorney regarding a possible cooperation agreement.

f. Prosecution. While the apprehension and incarceration of the most violent neighborhood offenders is the overriding objective in all of these operations, the type of criminal charges used to accomplish that objective varies from neighborhood to neighborhood and from offender to offender. In some neighborhoods, it is appropriate to indict numerous offenders in an over-arching racketeering conspiracy case. In others, it makes more sense simply to develop a number of stand-alone cases that can incapacitate offenders one by one. Regardless of which method is used, the focus is on getting the offenders off the street in the most effective and expeditious manner. The Neighborhood Team members decide which approach to take in each neighborhood, and the team remains intact and continues to work on that neighborhood through completion of the prosecutions they generate.

2. Benefits of the Suppression Plan

While this law enforcement strategy for homicide suppression draws from prior and existing initiatives, it takes us beyond those initiatives by establishing a regularized and comprehensive process for addressing neighborhood-based violence. This approach has the following benefits:

a. Consistent Engagement of DOJ Agencies. The DOJ law enforcement agencies historically have not been uniform in their contribution to street law enforcement in the District of Columbia. For many years, the FBI, through its Safe Streets Task Force, was the only DOJ agency taking a large role in the group-based violence efforts in the city. In recent years, we have seen more DEA and ATF participation, as evidenced by the deployment of DEA's MET Team and ATF's Violent Crime Impact Team in the District. While these efforts are having a positive impact on the city, none is permanent and each is subject to being discontinued or diverted at any time. This strategy ensures the continued and coordinated engagement of the federal agencies in this type of enforcement.

b. Mechanism for Inter-Agency Coordination and Resource Allocation. Historically, there has been no regularized mechanism for deciding where and how to deploy law enforcement resources against violent neighborhood groups. We have not had a forum in which the relevant federal and city agencies jointly decide which neighborhood most urgently needs law

enforcement attention. The decision to start a particular group investigation has often been determined by factors such as the occurrence of a high-profile crime in a neighborhood, or the fact that a particularly enterprising detective or agent has been active in that neighborhood. It typically has not been based on an intelligence-based finding that group-related violent crime is more prevalent in that neighborhood than in others. This strategy puts structure into that process. Every two or three months, the Steering Committee will select a neighborhood based on intelligence and crime-trend data showing that it suffers a high incidence of group-based violence.

c. Intelligence Integration. Law enforcement agencies in the District of Columbia -- including the USAO -- have never achieved a level of coordination in our intelligence operations that matches the strong coordination of our law enforcement operations on the street. By establishing a joint process for developing the intelligence that the Steering Committee will use to make its targeting decision, this strategy encourages the participating agencies to share their information and coordinate their intelligence functions.

d. Comprehensive Approach to Enforcement. As explained above, previous attempts to address neighborhood-based violence have often been too short-lived to catch the most serious criminal actors in a neighborhood. Historically, we have had no continuing investigative presence in a neighborhood after the MPD conducts its take-down and redeploys its personnel elsewhere. Therefore, we have had no capacity to capture and exploit the intelligence and cooperation available from those arrested in the take-down. This strategy addresses this deficiency by ensuring that the Neighborhood Team remains in place to convert that intelligence and potential cooperation into prosecutable cases against the neighborhood's most violent criminals.

B. Deterrence

These focused operations have a dramatic impact on the level of violent crime in a particular neighborhood. In addition, these operations and their effect on the offenders in that neighborhood can have an impact on other neighborhoods that suffer from group-based violence.

To have that impact, we need a process that broadcasts the lesson that violent neighborhood groups can expect a coalition of federal and MPD personnel to descend on their neighborhoods and lock up the violent offenders. The process we have adopted is known as "The Call-In Program." This program, which entails calling offenders together to hear a deterrence message, was designed by Professor Kennedy and has already been successfully implemented in several other cities.

This deterrence program is predicated on the effectiveness of our suppression efforts. Before initiating a call-in, we undertake a neighborhood project and apprehend many of the violent crew members in that neighborhood. We then use the example of this neighborhood project as a deterrence message to other violent individuals. We do that in the following steps:

- We identify members of crews or gangs in other neighborhoods through consultation with MPD officers, CSOSA Community Supervision Officers and neighborhood-assigned AUSAs.

- We determine which of those individuals are under some sort of supervision -- probation, parole or supervised release.
- CSOSA issues notices to 40-50 such individuals, ordering them to appear at the U.S. Courthouse at a designated time as a condition of their supervision. The notices are delivered in person by Community Supervision Officers and MPD officers.
- We develop full profiles of these individuals, based on a review of criminal records and case files and input from MPD patrol officers, prosecutors and the Community Supervision Officers who know about their activities on the street.
- We assemble the selected individuals at the U.S. Courthouse for the call-in. A judge (from either the U.S. District Court or the D.C. Superior Court) opens the proceeding by taking roll and asking CSOSA to prepare warrants or show cause orders for any individuals who did not appear pursuant to the CSOSA notice. The judge then leaves the courtroom, and a panel of law enforcement officials takes over. The panel includes the U.S. Attorney, the MPD Chief, the D.C. Attorney General, the CSOSA Director, the Chairman of the Parole Commission, the Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI Field Office, the DEA Special Agent in Charge, the ATF Special Agent in Charge, the U.S. Marshal for the District of Columbia, representatives from the U.S. Probation Office and the District of Columbia Housing Authority, two veteran MPD detectives and several service providers and clergy members.
- The presentation makes several points:
 - Our panelists introduce themselves, demonstrating that all of the law enforcement agencies in D.C. are committed to supporting this effort and following through on its deterrence message.
 - We bluntly tell them that we believe that they and/or their associates are engaged in violence. To demonstrate our knowledge about their activities, the MPD detectives sprinkle their presentation with anecdotes and things we know about each of the attendees -- such as which crew they hang with and where they sell drugs.
 - We explain how we have been focusing on violent neighborhoods and methodically arresting and prosecuting violent criminals from those neighborhoods. To emphasize the point, we detail the most recent neighborhood projects we conducted. For maximum effect, we project photographs of the defendants arrested under these projects and cite the prison terms they are facing.
 - We follow that presentation with the following simple message:

The groups we targeted in our neighborhood projects did not heed our warnings to stop the violence. As a result, we decided to direct our consolidated resources and attention against their members. The result is that a large number of them will now be spending a significant amount of time in prison.

We are talking to you today because we know who you are; we know who your associates are; and we know you and your associates are engaged in violence. We want you to understand that there are consequences if you or any of your associates decide to pick up a gun.

We are presenting you with a very simple choice: Refrain from violence and keep your associates from engaging in violence, or allow violence to continue in your neighborhood and run the risk that we will come down on you and your associates as we did in these other neighborhoods.

If you are smart, you will heed our warning and spread the word to all your associates that we mean business.

- After delivering this deterrence message, the law enforcement representatives leave the courtroom. A defense attorney reinforces our message by warning the offenders that they should not expect their attorneys to rescue them if they get in trouble. Clergy members and service providers then offer counseling, treatment and other assistance to those who want to turn their lives around.
- After the call-in, we reinforce the deterrence message through a variety of means, including the following: increasing the number and regularity of visits by CSOSA officers and MPD officers to the homes of targeted individuals and their associates; enlisting community leaders, the faith community, youth-serving organizations and schools to focus attention on the targeted individuals and their neighborhoods; and engaging “Roving Leaders” -- a group of trained individuals working with city agencies and acting as mentors to at-risk youth -- to target their gang intervention and conflict resolution energies in those neighborhoods.
- To put teeth into our deterrence effort, we are committed to delivering the severe consequences we promised to those who do not heed our warning. We expect to conduct at least four neighborhood projects per year, and we will direct them against those crews that

ignored our warning. At subsequent call-ins, we will emphasize that we delivered on the severe consequences we promised at the prior call-ins.

We recently concluded the first call-in cycle in the District of Columbia. The sweep took place in Sursum Corda, a chronically-violent neighborhood several blocks north of Union Station that was the site of the highly-publicized murder of 14-year-old Princess Hansen on January 23, 2004. Over the course of a week in December, we executed four search warrants, indicted 14 defendants on federal narcotics and conspiracy charges, and arrested 13 others on Superior Court charges (with three warrants outstanding). Those arrests brought to 39 the total number of identified violent offenders -- in addition to approximately 400 other criminal defendants -- who were arrested in Sursum Corda since the MPD initiated targeted operations there in the aftermath of the Princess Hansen murder.

On January 13, 2005, we held our first call-in of 43 probation and parole supervisees. The supervisees filed into Courtroom 5 of the United States Courthouse and sat down facing a line of law enforcement principals from MPD, USAO, FBI, ATF, DEA, CSOSA, the D.C. Housing Police, the DC-OAG, the USMS, the U. S. Parole Commission and the U.S. Probation Office in the District of Columbia. U.S. District Judge Reggie B. Walton called the proceedings to order. He took roll, requesting that CSOSA seek bench warrants for the three supervisees who failed to appear, and delivered heartfelt remarks about personal responsibility and the need for positive role models for our youth. Judge Walton then retired to chambers, and the law enforcement principals took over and delivered the deterrence message, followed by a separate presentation by clergy members and social services representatives.

It is still too early to assess whether the call-in program will have the same success it has had in Boston, Rochester and Indianapolis. Gauging from the sober looks on the attendees' faces, however, it appeared that our warning -- and the message that law enforcement is unified in its determination to stamp out violence in this city -- got through loud and clear.

C. Intervention

In order to sustain a reduction in homicides, the law enforcement community is conducting extensive intervention efforts through a comprehensive network of community-based programs and initiatives. This effort spreads the anti-violence message, particularly to at-risk youth, and offers meaningful and viable alternatives to violence. The following lists a few examples of our intervention efforts throughout the city:

1. Anti-Violence Media Campaign. In April 2005, the Project Safe Neighborhoods partnership launches the first phase of a media campaign, designed to heighten awareness of gun crime and its consequences. The campaign features four print advertisements targeting both the general community and the offender population. The campaign, supported by a \$50,000 donation of Public Service Advertising space, will consist of 30 large signs in Metro transit stations, 50 bus taillight signs and 500 interior bus placards. In addition, the ads will be produced as posters and

palmcards for mass distribution throughout the city.

A second phase of the media campaign -- to include print, radio and television -- is planned for this summer, and will build upon the themes and feedback from the first phase. We plan to profile several of the high-profile gang prosecutions -- such as the Kevin Gray, Tommy Edelin, and Rayful Edmond crew cases -- and feature members of those crews who will be spending the rest of their lives in prison as a result of their violent conduct.

2. Project L.E.A.D. The USAO currently teaches a year-long anti-violence curriculum entitled Project L.E.A.D. to over 350 fifth grade students in 17 District of Columbia Schools. Each week, teams of AUSAs and other USAO staff teach classes on a variety of subjects ranging from gang participation and drug use to peer pressure and self-esteem.

3. Weed and Seed. The Weed and Seed Program offers viable alternatives to crime through tutoring, mentoring, and recreational programs in its three Weed and Seed Sites in the city. Currently, Weed and Seed Safe Havens in each of our sites serve youth through after-school programs, summer camps and midnight basketball tournaments. In partnership with the MPD and the D.C. National Guard, the USAO also hosts the Weed and Seed Drug Education for Youth ("DEFY") Program, which provides a residential summer camp and a nine-month intensive tutoring and mentoring program for approximately 60 children between the ages of 9 and 12 who reside in Weed and Seed neighborhoods.

4. CSOSA Offender Orientations. CSOSA requires all offenders who are new to probation and parole supervision to attend a group orientation. This orientation reviews the terms and conditions of their release and reinforces the CSOSA credo of offender accountability. The offenders are told, in no uncertain terms, that CSOSA will hold them accountable if they return to a life of crime.

5. Partnership with Survivor and Activist Groups. The USAO, MPD and DC-OAG have a strong relationship with survivor groups, such as Survivors of Homicide, and activist groups that are dedicated to violence reduction, such as No Murders D.C. and Reaching Out To Others (ROOT). These groups represent diverse perspectives and are an essential part of community outreach.

6. Gang Intervention Partnership. The MPD has joined forces with the Latino community to establish the Gang Intervention Partnership (GIP) to fight gang violence in the Columbia Heights Weed and Seed site. GIP was created after a spate of gang-related homicides and violence that victimized both gang members and innocent bystanders. GIP members assist the MPD and the USAO with the identification, apprehension and prosecution of individuals who are actively involved in gang violence. They have also implemented innovative suppression and intervention strategies, such as: disrupting "skipping parties" where Latino gangs recruit young boys and girls; follow-up on truancy, runaways, tagging, tattooing and other early indicators of gang participation; conflict resolution and mediation strategies aimed at defusing tensions among rival gangs; and provision of a range of programs and resources for individuals who are being recruited for, or are

currently involved in, gang activity.

D. Investigation

On those occasions where suppression, deterrence and intervention fail to head off a killing -- as happened 198 times in 2004 -- it is critically important that law enforcement is equipped to identify and apprehend the killer. Most of the homicide investigations in this city are conducted by the Violent Crimes Branch of the MPD. That branch, which was previously called the Homicide Branch, has a storied tradition of professionalism and dedication. After going through a period of change and some dislocation, the Violent Crimes Branch is now experiencing a revitalization under the leadership of Chief Charles H. Ramsey and his officials.

Chief Ramsey has undertaken several important steps over the past few years to improve the MPD's homicide investigations, including the following:

- In December 2001, the MPD removed its homicide investigators from each of the seven police district stations and re-consolidated them in a centralized Violent Crimes Branch, where they receive focused training and develop expertise in homicide investigations.
- The MPD has raised the bar for the performance of its homicide detectives, recruiting the most talented investigators into the Violent Crimes Branch and establishing high performance standards.
- The MPD has instituted management systems by which Violent Crimes Branch officials more closely supervise their detectives' investigative work.

These reforms are steadily improving MPD's homicide investigative capacity. To supplement this effort, Department of Justice components are providing assistance in several areas:

- *Witness Security.* The primary obstacle to successful homicide investigation and prosecution in the District of Columbia is the reluctance of witnesses to provide the information that is essential to secure arrests and convictions at trial. Given the high incidence of witness intimidation and witness killing in the District of Columbia -- as tragically highlighted by the killing of 14-year-old Princess Hansen in Sursum Corda on January 23, 2004 -- many witnesses are understandably reluctant to step forward. As a result, murders committed in the full view of, or with the full knowledge of, numerous witnesses all too often go unsolved or unprosecuted due to a lack of willing witnesses.

The Department of Justice is helping MPD address this problem in a number of ways. The USMS has devoted substantial energy and resources to the protection of our witnesses with their short-term and long-term witness security programs. The USAO relocated over 200 witnesses and their families through the Emergency

Witness Assistance Program (EWAP) in Fiscal Year 2003 at a cost of \$765,000, which is approximately 50% of the total EWAP budget for the entire country. In addition, the USAO, MPD and DOJ have arranged for the use of \$210,000 from the Fees and Expenses of Witnesses (FEW) appropriation to meet lodging and subsistence needs of witnesses who are awaiting entry into the USMS witness security programs.

- *Shot Spotter.* The FBI has begun a pilot program to install Shot Spotter sensors in the highest crime areas in the Fifth, Sixth and Seventh MPD Districts. These sensors detect gunshots fired, triangulate the location of the shots, and immediately alert the FBI and the MPD that shots have been fired at a specific location.
- *Training by AUSAs.* In July 2004, the USAO appointed its first Special Counsel to the United States Attorney for Police Training, a senior-level attorney who develops and presents comprehensive legal training for MPD officers of all ranks. In addition, the USAO's Homicide Section recently resumed a legal training program for homicide detectives that was originally established by Bob Mueller when he served as Chief of that Section.

E. Prosecution

We will have a lasting impact on violence in this city only if we can translate MPD's homicide investigations into successful prosecutions that send murderers to prison and deter others from violence. As the chief prosecutor in the District of Columbia, the USAO has a duty to do everything in its power to convict guilty homicide defendants.

The USAO recently changed its organizational structure for that very purpose. On October 4, 2004, the Office created two new sections -- the Homicide Section and the Major Crimes Section -- out of the previously combined Homicide/Major Crimes Section. The new Homicide Section is staffed with approximately 30 of the most experienced violent crime prosecutors, who focus exclusively on the demanding task of investigating, preparing and litigating homicide cases.

The creation of a separate and more experienced Homicide Section has improved the USAO's capability to prosecute murders in a number of important ways. It puts our homicide cases in the hands of the most experienced and most highly-qualified prosecutors in the Superior Court Division. It ensures that these cases receive the careful and sustained attention they require. With their caseloads limited to murder cases, which are afforded ample pre-indictment and pretrial intervals under the bail statute, Homicide Section prosecutors have the time to conduct the probing grand jury work and thorough trial preparation necessary to prosecute homicides successfully. It enhances coordination with MPD by creating a single group of homicide prosecutors who work closely and daily with the newly-consolidated MPD homicide detectives. Finally, by creating a group of homicide specialists, this organizational change permits the Homicide Section prosecutors to develop expertise in the distinctive demands and nuances of homicide prosecution.

In adopting these changes, the USAO also is continuing to develop its community prosecution effort, which reflects its overarching objective to be more responsive to the communities it serves. In most sections throughout the Superior Court Division, the USAO assigns cases by MPD Districts so that prosecutors better understand the residents, the problems and the needs of the neighborhoods they serve. The USAO also established a Community Prosecution/Intake Section and appointed a Community Intelligence Counsel to continue to expand our community outreach effort and to collect and disseminate the information we receive from the community and from the daily case intake process.

VI.

CONCLUSION

The incidence of homicide in the District of Columbia calls for bold and comprehensive action by the law enforcement community. We have responded with a strategy that attacks the problem from all fronts and builds upon the fine efforts that have already cut the homicide rate in half over the past decade.

This strategy is making a difference. The combined approach of suppression and deterrence through the ongoing cycle of focused operations and call-ins is having a targeted impact on the city's most violent neighborhoods. Our engagement in an array of intervention programs is helping to turn individuals away from a life of violence. Finally, the enhancement of our performance in homicide investigation and prosecution is ensuring that those who engage in deadly violence will be brought to justice and incapacitated with lengthy prison terms.

We are proud of this comprehensive strategy, and we have all committed our resources and attention to it for the long term. We also are proud of the law enforcement partnership that underlies this effort. We expect that our partnership and our sustained focus on this strategy will lower the homicide rate and save many lives in our Nation's Capital.