Effective Crime Prevention in Toronto, Canada

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Introduction

Toronto (population 2.7 million), Canada's largest city, lies on the north-western shore of Lake Ontario, the easternmost of North America's Great Lakes. The provincial capital of Ontario, Toronto is the fifth most populous city in North America behind Mexico City, New York City, Los Angeles and Chicago. It is the nation's economic and employment hub, and an important artistic, cultural, research and health services centre.

The City of Toronto is part of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), one of the fastest growing urban areas in North America. Formerly a smaller municipality of 650,000 people, in 1998 the megacity of Toronto was created through the amalgamation of Metropolitan Toronto with five surrounding municipalities (Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, York and East York). One of the most ethnically diverse cities in the world, Toronto is home to people from over 200 nations who speak more than 100 languages and dialects. It is also one of Canada's primary immigrant reception centres, welcoming nearly 70,000 newcomers each year. The resulting cultural diversity is reflected in the numerous ethnic neighborhoods and enclaves in the city.

Despite its population size, growth, and heterogeneity, crime rates in Toronto are quite low compared to other North American cities of more or less comparable size. For example, in 2004 Toronto's homicide rate was less than 1/10th of that in Philadelphia and Dallas, and was also substantially lower than that in Vancouver. Similarly, Toronto's robbery and burglary rates were also a fraction of the rates in these other cities (See Table 1). Canadian cities, in general, have lower rates of serious crime than do their American counterparts, in part because economic inequality in Canada is lower. Relative to the United States, Canada's lower levels of criminal violence, in general, and Toronto's low homicide rates, in particular, are also long-standing and have been linked to Canada's distinctive historical origins and cultural development[1].

Table 1: Crime Rates (per 100,000 population) in 2004

| City	Homicide Rate	Robbery Rate	Break& Enter Rate
Philadelphia	22.2	657	710
Dallas	20.2	608	1882
Chicago	15.5	552	847
Houston	13.3	498	1327
Vancouver	2.6	148	1325
Toronto	1.8	103	449
Montreal	1.7	150	894

Source: Julie Sauve, "Crime Statistics in Canada, 2004." Juristat, Volume 25, No. 5, 2005; Crime in the United States, 2004 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 2005).

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[1] Lipset, 1990; Hagan, 1989

Crime rates in Toronto have also not increased over the last decade, as shown in the following graph.

Figure 1: Violent and Property Crime Rates in Toronto, 1993-2005
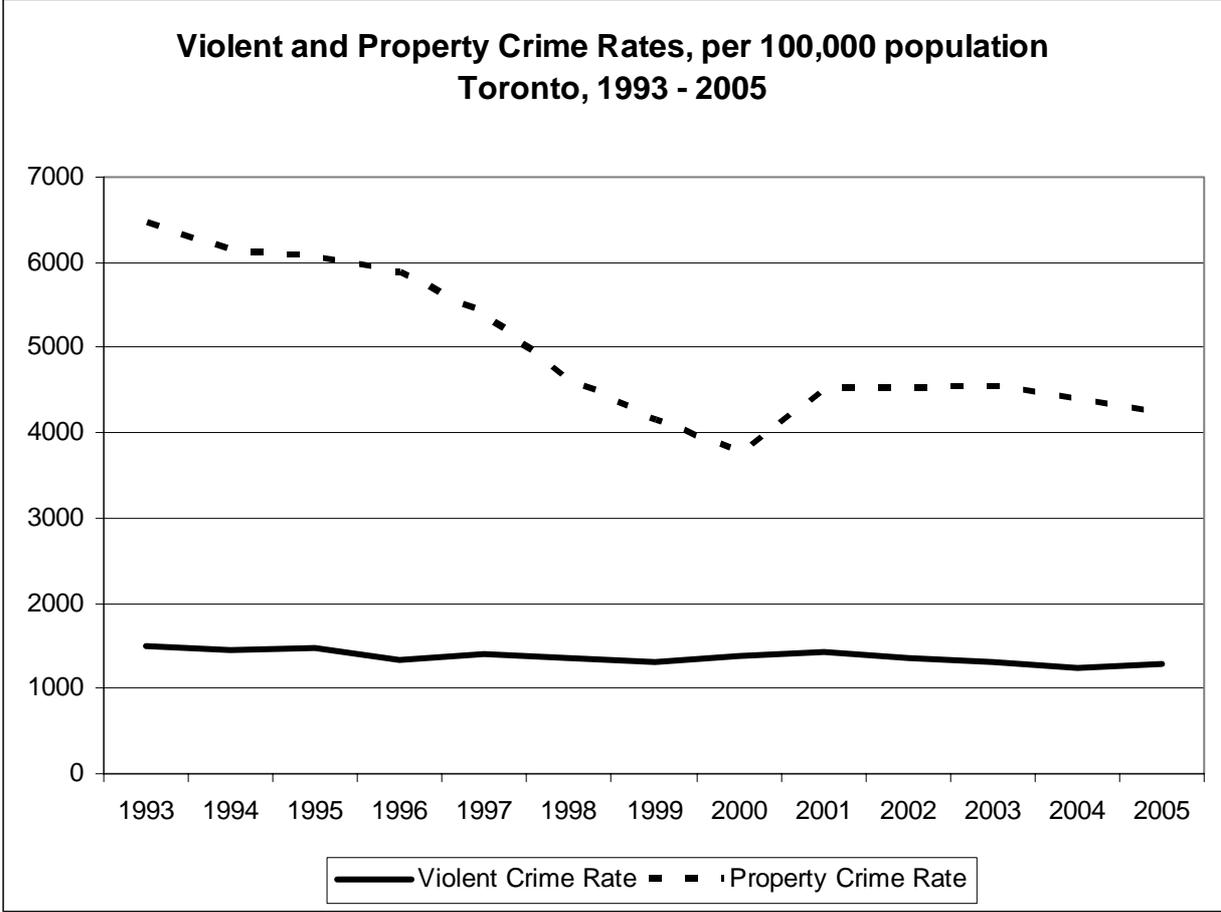
Although Toronto is a relatively safe city, it is facing challenges with crime and violence in some neighborhoods and among some segments of the population. Homicide is the crime that attracts the most public attention and concern, and is also the crime for which we have the most detailed longitudinal data, thus the following discussion will use the homicide rate since the mid-1990s as an indicator of serious criminal violence in Toronto. Toronto's homicide rate has been more or less stable over this period, and indeed since the mid-1970s, fluctuating between 1.8 and 2.8 per 100,000 population.

Toronto Homicide Rate, per 100,000 population
1975 - 2005
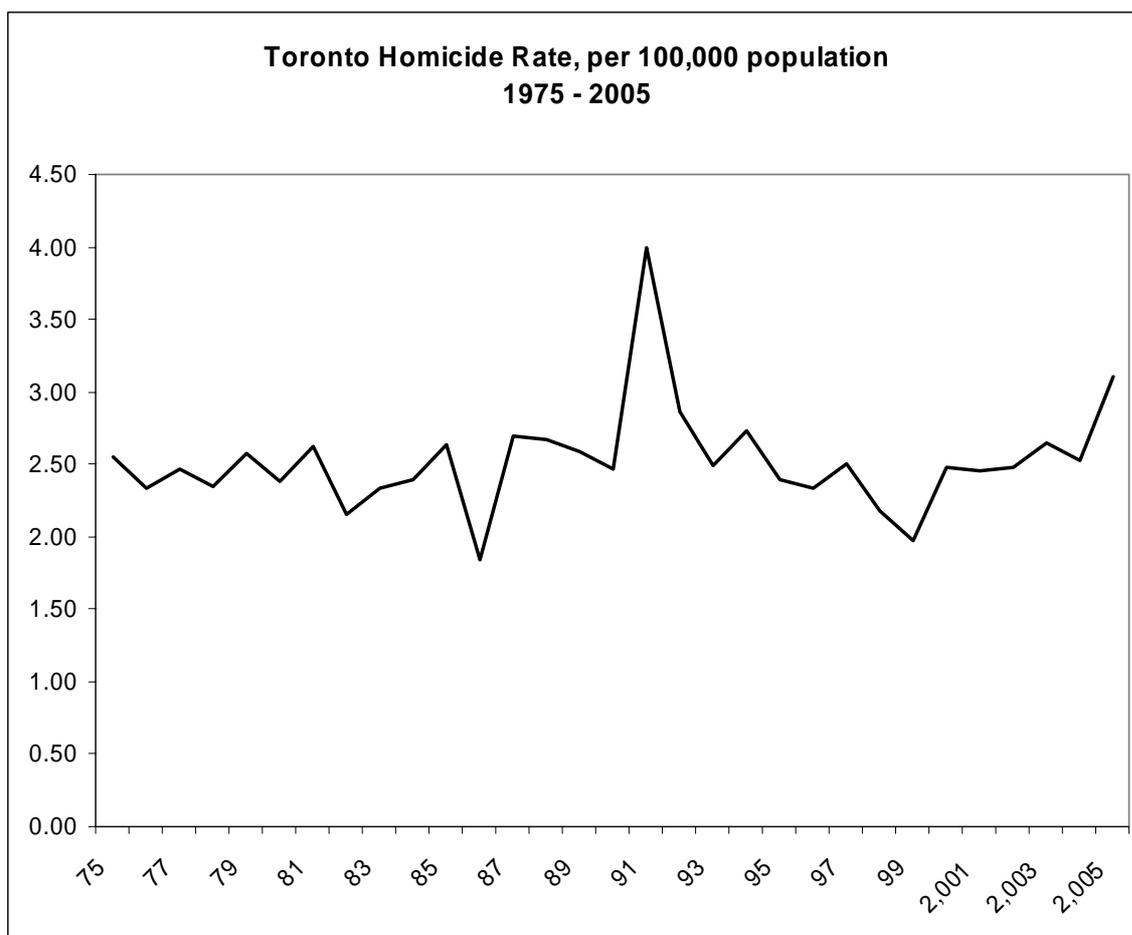
Nevertheless, the risk of homicide victimization is higher for some groups and changing for others. For example, the gender gap in homicide victimization has grown over time: female victimization rates have declined, while male rates have increased. Prior to the 1990s, males accounted for 64% of homicide victims, a figure that rose to 73% of victims by the early 2000s.[2] The age of homicide victims has also changed; in the 1970s, the average age of victims was 37, and only 25% of victims were under the age of 25. Since 1998, however, the average age of victims declined to 33, and 40% of victims were under the age of 25. Homicide victimization in Toronto has thus become more dominated by males and young people over time. This is also true for homicides in Canada generally. The proportion of homicide victims who are female has dropped steadily, from about 40% in the 1960s to 32% in the last decade; and the age group at highest risk for victimization has declined from 25 – 29 to 18 – 24 year olds (Statistics Canada, 1976; Statistics Canada, 1987; Dauvergne and Li, 2006). Systematic efforts to explain this shift in the sex and age distribution of homicide victims have yet to be undertaken.

Another notable change in the character of homicides in Toronto is an increase in the proportion of homicides committed with guns. During the 1970s and 1980s, 25% of homicides in Toronto were committed with guns, but by the 1990s that proportion had

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[2] The subsequent discussion of homicide in Toronto is based on an analysis reported in Gartner and Thompson (2004).

increased to 32%. Since 2000, fully half of all homicides in Toronto have been committed with guns. 2005 was a peak year for gun homicides, with 49 of 78 homicide victims (or 63%) killed with firearms. In 2006, this figure dropped to 31%, similar to levels during the 1990s.

Key Issues:

A particular concern in Toronto has been the extent to which the risks of homicide victimization vary across racial and ethnic groups. Documenting race or ethnic-specific victimization risks in Canada is difficult, due in part to the fact that Canadian census data do not provide measures of the racial and ethnic composition of the city's population that are comparable over time, but also as a result of what amounts to a ban on the release of race-based crime statistics in Canada. Nevertheless, using census-based estimates of Toronto's black population, along with information on the race or ethnic background of victims from newspaper reports, we were able to calculate the homicide victimization rate for Toronto's black population for the years 1992 through 2001. During these years, the average annual homicide rate per 100,000 blacks in Toronto was almost five times higher than the overall homicide rate (10.1 compared with 2.4 per 100,000 population). Thus, although the overall risks of homicide victimization for both blacks and non-blacks have been relatively stable over the last decade, black Torontonians have faced higher victimization risks than non-blacks since at least the early 1990s. This pattern parallels that in the U.S., where African-Americans also have higher homicide victimization rates than other racial groups. Whether the reasons for these disproportionate risks are similar in Canada and the U.S. has yet to be studied.

Just as there is evidence that the risk of homicide and other serious violence in Toronto is unequally distributed across social groups, there is also some evidence to suggest that incidents of serious violent crime tend to cluster in particular neighborhoods. According to the Toronto Police Service's Annual Statistical Report, some police divisions have substantially higher rates of serious violent crime (homicide and homicide related offences, assaults, sexual assaults, abduction and robbery) than the average rate reported for all police divisions. A number of areas within these divisions have been identified by the Toronto Police Service as 'at risk' and designated as a 'service priority'.

As discussed in the following section, the City of Toronto has also classified a number of neighborhood as in need of "priority investment", which is intended to strengthen neighborhoods 'supports' and, ultimately, reduce crime. To identify these neighborhoods, the City used the United Way's *Poverty by Postal Code, 1998-2001* report, which examined the spatial concentration of poverty across Toronto's neighborhoods, the demographic characteristics of neighborhoods with concentrated poverty, and the deficits in the social infrastructure they tend to experience. Although these 'neighborhood profiles' were developed as part of the City's Community Safety Plan, they have not yet been linked to any crime statistics. As a result, the mapping done by the City and the Toronto Police Service has been carried out in different ways and according to different criteria. In other words, a systematic analysis of the spatial distribution of crime and violence in Toronto has yet to be undertaken. Nevertheless, an 'eyeball' comparison of the City's neighborhood profiles and the Toronto Police Service's 'at risk areas' suggests some overlap, and indicates that lethal violence tends to cluster in areas characterized by higher and concentrated levels of poverty, deficiencies in community services infrastructure, large numbers of visible minority and immigrant residents, and high levels of unemployment.

In addition to variation in the distribution of lethal violence across social groups and neighborhoods, the nature of homicide has also changed, with a clear trend toward more public killings in Toronto. Since 1991, over 75% of homicides have occurred in the city's public spaces, such as bars, clubs and restaurants, streets, parks and parking lots. Guns have also figured more prominently in Toronto's homicides over time. During the 1970s and 1980s, 25% of homicides were gun-related; that proportion increased to 32% in the 1990's and since 2000, fully half of all homicides in Toronto have been committed with guns. Canada has stringent gun control laws, thus the increase in gun-related violent crime in Toronto has elicited great public and political concern, and is typically attributed to Toronto's proximity to the United States, as well as to increased gang activity in the city. Though little is yet known about the origin of the supply of illegal guns in Toronto, police sources suggest that approximately half are smuggled across the border, while the other half are stolen from legal gun owners in Canada.

In sum, the issues of particular concern with respect to lethal violence in Toronto have involved higher victimization levels among blacks, increasing rates of public and gun killings, and an apparent concentration of homicide victimization in particular neighborhoods.

Changes in the character of lethal violence in Toronto likely have much to do with changes over the past ten to fifteen years in social and economic policies and practices that have affected Toronto's social welfare, public health, and educational systems, as well as the infrastructure and cohesion of local communities. For example, in the mid-1990s the provincial government instituted a 21.6% cut in welfare payments for families with children, which affected an estimated 1.3 million people. This meant that the monthly allowance for a single man or woman in the province of Ontario was reduced from $663 to $520. The $2 billion dollars' worth of budget cuts that occurred in 1995, the first tangible effects of the then-Conservative government's "Common Sense Revolution", were justified as a means of reducing the province's $10.6 billion deficit. Yet because more than 25% of budget cuts came through reducing welfare payments, the government's budgetary reductions did not affect middle- and upper-income Ontarians as deeply as they did those less well off. Young, economically disadvantaged males – and their families – were among those whose lives have been most affected by such policies. Thus, it is perhaps not surprising that lethal violence among young males has not shown the same stable or downward trend as lethal violence among other groups in Toronto. To the extent that structural inequalities have created a sense among this group that they are competing with each other for scarce resources within a larger societal context that offers them little hope for the future, violence can become a part of a repertoire of behaviors for coping with problems and conflicts in their lives. Unfortunately, this process has a self-reinforcing element to it, especially among those who, in part because of strained relations with legal authorities, feel outside of law's protection. For example, as violence escalates among young disadvantaged males in certain communities and as more young males gain access to guns, it can become a rational choice to carry a gun oneself as protection. This in turn raises the chances that conflicts among young males will have lethal outcomes and give rise to retaliatory violence, a pattern that was observed in many cities in the United States in the late 1980s and early 1990s - and more recently, in Toronto, particularly during the summer of 2005.

The changing nature of who is at risk of homicide victimization and the contexts in which lethal violence tends to occur have guided the development of a host of crime prevention and violence reduction policies in Toronto over the past several years. The following sections

provide an overview of select policies and initiatives put in place by various levels of government and civil sectors in Toronto. Particular emphasis will be placed on a recent development that guides crime control policy in Toronto – the proliferation of the 'partnership' or multi-agency approach to community safety.

Background: New City, New Plan

As noted earlier, the megacity of Toronto was created through the amalgamation of the regional government of Metropolitan Toronto and six surrounding municipalities. Prior to amalgamation, many of these municipalities had their own separate community safety initiatives in place, which meant that an important task for the new City Council was to develop its own comprehensive safety plan. To facilitate this process, the Task Force on Community Safety was formed. Chaired by two city councilors, the Task Force included representatives from the police, school boards, neighborhood crime prevention groups, ethno-cultural groups and organizations, businesses, and social service agencies. In 1999, based on extensive consultation with these and other stakeholders working to prevent crime and promote community safety, the final report *Toronto, My City, A Safe City: A Community Strategy for the City of Toronto* was released. Informed in large part by Safer Cities initiatives that gained popularity in Britain, the Netherlands, France, Germany, and Australia in the 1980s, and that had guided some earlier crime prevention initiatives in Toronto[3] and elsewhere in Canada, the report set out the City's community safety agenda. This 'healthy communities' strategy emphasized a coordinated multi-agency approach to investing in children, youth and families, promoting community policing and justice initiatives, and implementing, evaluating and monitoring the progress of these initiatives[4].

In early 2004, following the election of Mayor David Miller, a new Community Safety Plan was introduced in Toronto. Implemented in large part in response to the increases in gun violence and youth crime described above, the Plan is a toolbox of crime prevention initiatives designed to improve public safety in those neighborhoods where gun and gang-related violence is thought to cluster. The Community Safety Plan (CSP) emphasizes collaborative efforts that work across authority and agency boundaries at the local level, and that involve provincial and federal governments with respect to the development and evaluation of social policy. Using a strategic model that rests on the twin pillars of Crime Prevention through Social Development (CPTSD) and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), the CSP promotes both urban crime prevention and crime reduction. While recognizing the central role that policing plays in the control of crime, the CSP also argues that in order to be successful, enforcement-based strategies must be balanced with preventative approaches. The latter involves both physical changes to the urban environment and community investment to address the root causes of crime and violence. Recent CPTSD, CPTED and enforcement-based initiatives that have been implemented in Toronto are discussed in the sections below.

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[3]   see Wekerle and Whitzman, 1995

[4]   "A Community Safety Strategy for the City of Toronto." Accessed at:
       http://www.toronto.ca/safety/sftyrprt1.htm 17 September, 2006

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Crime Prevention through Social Development

Among the more prominent policy developments have been the introduction of spatially targeted or area-based interventions aimed at specific neighborhoods in Toronto. The privileging of such initiatives stems from the recognition that the causes of crime are rooted in a complex mix of social and structural factors that can vary across urban neighborhoods. As such, the Community Safety Plan emphasizes that solutions cannot be of the "one size fits all" variety, but rather that resources and support be tailored to address the specific needs of each neighborhood.

In May 2004, the Strong Neighborhoods Task Force, a collaborative effort between the City of Toronto and the United Way, was established to assess needs in the City's neighoburhoods, and identify how and where neighborhood-level investments should be directed. The Task Force examined indicators of both demographic and physical assets for each of Toronto's neighborhoods. Among the demographic indicators were median household income, percent unemployed, educational attainment, immigrant share of the population, percentage of private dwellings requiring major repairs, and rate of low birth weight babies. Physical assets indicators included the number of schools, community health centres, children and youth services, food banks, and recreation and community centres, as well as the accessibility of those resources and services.

To date, thirteen 'at risk' neighborhoods have been identified for targeted programs and resources that build on existing neighborhood strengths: Jamestown, Jane-Finch, Malvern, Kingston-Galloway, Lawrence Heights, Steeles-L'Amoureaux, Eglinton East–Kennedy Park, Crescent Town, Weston-Mt. Denis, Dorset Park, Scarborough Village, Flemington Park-Victoria Village, and Westminster Branson (map available at: http://www.uwgt.org/who_we_help_social_issues.html).

To assist these neighborhoods, the City, in collaboration with residents, community leaders, the police, and local agencies, develops Neighborhood Action Plans. The Action Plans involve the identification of neighborhood-specific deficiencies and concerns, and guide the design and implementation of a range of interventions to build the local community's capacity to increase safety and prevent crime, particularly violent crime. Of the thirteen 'at risk' communities, the Community Safety Plan has designated four – Jamestown, Jane-Finch, Malvern, and Kingston-Galloway - as 'priority neighborhoods', in need of immediate and focused attention. Neighborhood Action Plans for each of these neighborhoods are currently at different stages of development. The prevention and development-based programs and services not in place are provided through a broad network of government, community, public and private supports. Many of these programs and services have recently been implemented or are about to be implemented, and as a consequence, a comprehensive catalogue has yet to be compiled. Nevertheless, examples include:

- **Youth Opportunity Initiatives: Training** - A variety of apprenticeship and internship opportunities and other employment skills training programs have been created to assist youth in developing employment-related skills and experience. This has involved a collaborative effort between the City, community organizations, businesses, and trade unions. Many of these programs also help youth obtain permanent employment once their training/apprenticeship program is complete. For example, Centennial College, with funding from the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, offers free summer skills development programs to young

people living in one Toronto neighborhood, and plans to extend the program to other communities in the future. The Carpenter's Union, Local 27, in collaboration with the City, the YMCA and various neighborhood associations, also offers a nine-week pre-apprenticeship carpentry training program to youth in Toronto's priority neighborhoods.

- **Youth Opportunity Initiatives: Jobs for Youth** – The provincial government has provided 28.5 million in funding over three years so that the City can offer summer employment opportunities to youth from the priority neighborhoods. Community-based organizations administer the funds, recruit and select job candidates, and work with employers. In 2004, over 300 young people living in Toronto's 'priority' neighborhoods secured summer employment. The City is also working with the corporate sector, industry groups and trade unions to expand job opportunities for youth, while local agencies find candidates for the available jobs.

- **Youth Challenge Fund** – The Ontario government has earmarked $15 million to sponsor local programs, training and jobs for youth living in Toronto's 13 at-risk and priority neighborhoods. The Youth Challenge Fund supports ideas to improve community safety that come from people living in each neighborhood, and community organizations are encouraged to apply for funding to cover the costs of new or existing local programs designed to prevent violence and enhance community safety. In April of 2006, the Premier of Ontario challenged the private sector to match the government's investment, and pledged that the provincial government would then match private sector contributions up to an additional $15 million over the next three years.

- **The Community Crisis Response Program** – A coordinated program of city services (including the Toronto Police Service, Toronto Community Housing, and community groups) that provides support to neighborhoods following 'trauma inducing events', such as killings and violent assaults. Program staff work with neighborhood residents and community organizations to identify and implement appropriate and culturally sensitive interventions and support that are intended to facilitate the recovery process.

- **Community Use of Schools** - The Toronto District School Board, funded by the provincial government, opened schools in a number of neighborhoods during evenings and weekends and through the summer months for free access to community and recreation programs. Priority is given to programs for children and youth. The aim of the program is to break down financial barriers and to promote participation in a broad range of community activities.

- **Grassroots/Community Based Youth Services** – A number of not-for-profit, community-based agencies provide programs and services to youth in Toronto's 'at risk' neighborhoods, including violence prevention, anger management, conflict resolution, mentorship and peer support, individual and family counselling, academic programming, life skills training, and gang prevention/exit programs. Many of these programs are designed to engage and mobilize marginalized youth to work with program staff to contribute their ideas and solutions to address the problems and issues they face. These and other programs and initiatives are supported with funding from the federal, provincial and city governments, as well as by donations from the corporate sector and private individuals. For example, Tropicana Community

Services, a not-for-profit organization that focuses on the needs of youth, the Black and the Caribbean communities in East Toronto, offers a number of programs and services. *START* – Success Through Aggressions Replacement Training – is a skills training curriculum designed to deal with problems of violence, and *Each One Teach One* is a youth mentoring program. East Metro Youth Services, a community-based children's mental health centre, offers the *Violence Intervention Project* (VIP), an umbrella of strategies and initiatives that work with local youth who design and conduct community safety surveys, lead anti-violence workshops for their peers, and work as members of the project advisory committee. The organization also offers after school programs that offer activities designed to improve socialization and life skills among young people with developmental challenges. Activities are designed to foster a sense of cooperation, responsibility and achievement among participants and life skills training focuses on leisure planning, street-proofing, sexuality and relationship building.

- **Expanded Health Care Centres** – The provincial government is funding the creation of one new Community Health Centre and eight satellite CHCs (local branches of the centres) in Toronto's 'at risk' neighborhoods. The centres have teams of health care professionals including physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, counselors, community workers and dieticians who deliver a range of programs and support services for youth, young children and families.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

In addition to identifying thirteen "at-risk" neighborhoods and working to develop localized social prevention strategies, other initiatives under Toronto's Community Safety Plan include those aimed at identifying 'at risk' areas *within* those neighborhoods. This is accomplished by way of a safety audit, a 'community action tool' designed to address issues of public safety, with a particular focus on women, children and marginalized groups who are most vulnerable to violence.[5] The safety audits stress partnerships between local government, community groups, and residents as active co-producers of crime prevention and public safety. They are premised on the idea that residents are experts in the issues that face their community, and involving them in the audit process is an important means of identifying local 'problem areas' and coming up with innovative and site-specific solutions. Grounded in the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, an approach that links crime prevention and reduction to changes in physical design, safety audits involve a close evaluation of buildings, parking lots and garages, streets, open spaces and parks in each neighborhood, with the goal of identifying and attending to factors that may be creating opportunities for crime to occur. The audits consider a host of features that are thought to influence residents' sense of safety: lighting, graffiti, security, isolation, accessibility, sightlines, maintenance, and access to public transportation.[6]

Community meetings involve local residents in the identification of problem areas and including them in 'designing out' crime is also intended to have positive social and communal

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[5]   City of Toronto news release "Safety Audits Help Make Streets Safer in Toronto's Priority Neighbourhoods" August 3, 2006. Accessed at: http://wx.toronto.ca/inter/it/newsrel.nsf 17 September, 2006
[6]   "What is a Safety Audit?" Accessed at: http://www.toronto.ca/safetyaudits/whatis.htm 17 September, 2006

effects: reduced levels of fear of crime, increased resident involvement in neighborhood affairs, a greater commitment to the neighborhood and, consequently, a greater concern with conditions and behaviors within it.

Enforcement-based Strategies

In 2005, 52 of the 78 homicides that occurred in Toronto were committed with guns, twice as many as the year before. Many of these killings were believed to be gang-related and retaliatory in nature. In order to stem that violence, a group of senior officers in the Toronto Police Service (TPS) came together to research how other North American police forces responded to high levels of gun and gang-related violence in their cities.

One recent initiative that came out of those meetings is the Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy (TAVIS), a plan that is part of a packet of anti-violence initiatives implemented by the TPS's Community Mobilization Unit and funded by the provincial government. Like the programs and initiatives that comprise the City's Community Safety Plan, TAVIS is an area-based, targeted approach to combating violent crime in the neighborhoods where it tends to occur. Yet unlike zero-tolerance, indiscriminate enforcement strategies of old, TAVIS is instead intended to be a target-specific, risk-focused initiative that couples intelligence from specialized units like the Drug Squad and the Gun and Gang Task Force with 'on the ground' information received by local officers and divisional Community Response Units. The Toronto Police Service reports that in 2006, TAVIS was responsible for nearly 6,000 arrests and the seizure of 346 firearms. According to Chief William Blair, the reduction in violent crime in Toronto in 2006 was due to TAVIS-related activities, however, as yet, no systematic analyses have been conducted to determine the validity of that claim.

Perhaps the best known and most visible aspect of TAVIS is roving teams of 18 officers who move around the city, ready for quick deployment to neighborhoods that have recently experienced incidents of violent crime and to those where intelligence suggests that it is likely to occur. While blanketing a particular neighborhood, team members patrol what local officers have identified as 'problem areas', gathering intelligence and making compliance checks on violent offenders and known gang members who have been paroled or released on bail. The idea is to convey the message that as violence and other problem behaviors increases in the neighborhood, so too will the police response. It is believed that high visibility policing has a preventative aspect, and will reduce crime to levels that can be effectively managed by local divisions. The increased police presence is also intended to make local residents feel safer and reduce levels of fear in the community. The TPS stresses that the rapid deployment teams are only one aspect of the TAVIS approach. Another key tenet of TAVIS' mandate is a renewed emphasis on community policing, moving officers out of patrol cars and back onto the streets, where they are in regular contact with residents and work to develop relationships and build trust. This involves assigning uniformed officers to specific neighborhoods on a longer-term basis, rather than the short one-week stints undertaken by members of the roving units. In order to avoid the perception that the police are an 'occupying army' - particularly in communities where the relationship with local residents has traditionally been strained – aggressive and short-term enforcement-based initiatives like TAVIS work in tandem with longer-term initiatives undertaken by the Toronto Police Service. For example, the Community Mobilization Project, a service wide initiative, plays a key role in preparing local residents for an incoming, heavy police presence. This is accomplished by way of a strong

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emphasis on communication with the community to build public awareness and support for programs like TAVIS.

Once crime has been stabilized with enforcement-based initiatives, the Community Mobilization Unit works with the local police division and community stakeholders to enhance the ability of the neighborhood to organize for collective action that is aimed at improving safety and quality of life for local residents. Consistent with the philosophy of the City's Community Safety Plan, this 'mobilization' process is a multi-pronged approach that rests on establishing working partnerships among local residents, local institutions, local leaders, and community groups, as well as the police, the City, and a variety of social service agencies. The goal is to help neighborhood residents identify and maximize local resources and, where necessary, provide additional supports, to advocate on their behalf, and to empower them to work toward their own solutions to a variety of shared problems. These supports are intended to 'build community' and help neighborhoods become more self-directed, which, it is hoped, will translate into an increased capacity to assert their collective authority over the behaviors that take place in their midst.

Conclusions

In a report on Toronto's Community Safety strategy (2000), the City stressed:

> *"Partnerships will be developed with key institutes or agencies involved in research and evaluative studies on crime prevention and funders of crime prevention programs. These partnerships will help the City remain current on evaluative initiatives and tools, and to develop a resource base of evaluative studies that will be available to communities."*[7]

It is, as yet, difficult to comment on the efficacy of the breadth of crime prevention initiatives implemented under the Community Safety Plan (2004), for the simple reason that many are new and have yet to be subject to evaluation. Many of the earlier initiatives implemented as a result of the Task Force on Community Safety's final report (1999) have been in place for several years now, though despite various attempts, we were unable to locate information on the process by which these programs and initiatives are evaluated, and/or results that suggest that evaluations have been conducted in a systematic way. Criminological research has consistently highlighted the importance of evaluating and monitoring the effects of crime prevention initiatives to ensure that they are having the desired impact. This is in part because some well-intentioned interventions have been shown to have negative or harmful effects in the past.[8] As such, it is perhaps timely to restate Hope and Murphy's (1983) warning that it not be assumed that the mere implementation of a program will necessarily proceed in a logical sequence toward crime prevention. Careful program evaluation and monitoring are also important in light of the limited resources that are available for investment in crime prevention and reduction programs – thus, an understanding of what programs and

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[7] Social Development and Administration Community and Neighborhood Services, City of Toronto (September, 2000). Toronto's Community Safety Strategy: Turning Words into Action to Make Toronto Safer, p.14.

[8] Doob, 2004

interventions are the most effective use of scarce resources is important from a cost-benefit perspective.[9]

Further, though a multi-agency or 'partnership' approach to crime prevention has been widely endorsed in Toronto, it appears that crime prevention strategies are more segmented and compartmentalized than they are collaborative. For example, the City of Toronto, the Toronto Police Service, Toronto Community Housing, and a variety of community groups and social agencies each have their own independent safety plans in place. While these plans may be consistent with the central tenets of the City's Community Safety Plan, a single joint operational plan does not exist. There does, however, appear to be some movement toward greater collaboration, with protocol linkages and the establishment of interdivisional committees and sub-committees that are comprised of people from the City, the police, public health, various social service agencies, and members of the community.

Though the concept of a partnership approach has been one of the more prominent developments in crime control policy over the last decade[10], research that has been conducted on partnerships and crime prevention has produced mixed results. While the advantages of interagency approaches are widely heralded, the difficulties involved are seldom addressed. For example, ideological differences and competing interests have been shown to prohibit effective collaboration[11],[12] and policies that aim to combine situational and social prevention approaches can serve to exacerbate inter-agency conflicts and struggles.[13] Therefore, policy-makers and practitioners in Toronto will face some challenges with respect to fostering an environment that is conducive to the development of inter-organizational trust and collaboration. This should be a primary goal of those who wish to take part in multi-agency approaches to crime prevention, so that such enterprises can move beyond the level of policy rhetoric and into genuine and worthwhile practice.

On the whole, crime prevention initiatives in Toronto appear to be one facet of more generalized public policy aimed at empowering 'distressed' neighborhoods and fostering the growth of healthy and self-governing communities. Research[14],[15] has shown that "non-crime" policies – for example, building neighborhood-level social and economic capital, increasing levels of community cohesion, and promoting collective action among residents - may, in fact, have important effects on crime. As such, if the obstacles to interagency collaboration outlined above are addressed early on, it may well be that the integration of crime-targeted interventions with more general policies that address social and structural deficits will have lasting effects on crime and violence in Toronto's neighborhoods.

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[9]   Doob, p. 93

[10]   Crawford, 1998

[11]   Blagg et al., 1988

[12]   Sampson et al., 1988

[13]   Walters, 1996

[14]   Sampson, 1995)

[15]   Bursik and Grasmick, 1993

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The primary lessons learned from crime prevention and reduction strategies in Toronto have largely to do with issues related to partnerships approaches and program evaluation. Co-ordination and collaboration among government agencies, NGOs and citizen groups in Toronto are, in part, made more complicated because of recent changes in municipal structure and organization, by the decision to provide neighborhood-specific interventions, and by an emphasis on balancing enforcement with prevention. The sheer number and breadth of programs and services currently in place make it difficult to determine which, if any, are having the intended effect. The desire to quickly respond to changes in the nature and distribution of violence in Toronto speaks to the level of concern over community safety in the city's neighborhoods. However, the speed with which interventions were implemented limits the ability to put evaluation strategies in place and to co-ordinate the activities of different agencies incorporated into partnership structures.

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