



Crime reduction: community policing, accountability & partnership

What's working

Partnerships and new initiatives are reducing crime.

- The 5th Precinct's domestic violence pilot project resulted in a 23-percent increase in convictions.
- Enabling kids in gangs to play basketball and have pizza between 8 p.m. and midnight has made things better for our neighborhood.
- Little Earth's concerted efforts have resulted in a 46-percent reduction in crime. A sign of our success is that we've gone from concerns about murder to loud music complaints. The community did this by saying it's not OK to have disrepair, saying "enough is enough" and setting aside old feelings about our bad relationship with the police. We set up a court watch to track top offenders and ensure the courts had strong victim impact statements. We also worked with legislators to strengthen trespassing laws, and we educated judges about our vision and the impact of their decisions on our community.

Improved communication has resulted in greater trust, stronger relationships and safety improvements.

- There's more dialogue between the police and the community. Officers who wave and say hello help create a different atmosphere. The community is happier with the police presence.
- We're engaging the community more, and the community is more unified. We're taking the community back block by block.
- People in the Somali community now feel they can call the police.
- City employees are talking with one another. Police are talking to inspectors and Regulatory Services staff. City attorneys are assigned to police precincts. Thanks to a lawyer assigned to animal control, we're writing warrants and going after irresponsible dog owners.
- Police are getting better results targeting chronic offenders because of improved communications with Hennepin County and the feds.

What isn't working

People don't know whether they should be calling 311 or 911.

There still aren't enough officers who want to connect with the community.

- Things are better, but we still need more officers who want to connect with the community. An officer doesn't need to walk a beat to adopt a "beat attitude."

Offenders can't get jobs.

There aren't enough recreation programs for youths.

- The Police Athletic League left Little Earth.
- The Somali community needs a system for recreation.
- The Park and Recreation Board has buildings that don't do anything for the community.
- A lot of kids aren't connected to anything.
- We see too many gang members grooming their little brothers, sisters and cousins for gangs.

Our thinking is not always helpful.

- We've lost the ability to accept that we have to negotiate our priorities. We can't do everything at once.
- There can't be a south Minneapolis and a north Minneapolis. We have to be Minneapolis.
- Neighborhood organizations with an "us" versus "them" mentality isolate people who want to do things a different way.

City staff is too "siloed."

- A lot of City employees are housed downtown so they don't see neighborhood issues firsthand.
- Community problems — such as problem convenience stores — are not just a police or a regulatory issue, but City staff is "siloed." We don't talk to one another. We don't even know what other staff does.

Not all businesses take advantage of crime prevention services.

- Some retailers don't sign up for e-mail crime alerts.
- Some rental properties and businesses have no idea what to do to reduce crime or nuisance problems.

Crime reduction: community policing, accountability & partnership

What should be done next

Think more broadly and encourage communication.

- Have precinctwide weekly meetings to talk about what's going on in the neighborhood and how it impacts the community.
- Bring people from multiple City departments together to tackle neighborhood problems.
- Place a staff member from Regulatory Services in each of the police precincts.
- Continue relationships with community agencies and neighborhood partners, even if funding is cut.
- Go to meetings and hear what residents want and listen to what's going on in their block. Do more to draw people out – they deserve to be heard.
- Use cable to communicate with residents on a variety of topics — not just snow emergencies. Cable programming in various languages works well.
- Cultivate a “community” mentality instead of an “it’s all about me” mentality.
- Share neighborhood success stories (why the effort worked, contacts, etc.) so other neighborhoods can adopt winning strategies.

Re-envision our role and change our perceptions.

- Redefine or clarify the role of 311 and 911; then tell people how to use these services appropriately.

- The Neighborhood Revitalization Program and Community Engagement need to rethink how they communicate and stop shutting people out. At the same time, the community needs to get away from feeling that if we don't have the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, we don't have anything.
- North Minneapolis and Little Earth have to make it clear that they won't be the destination for crime.
- The community needs to enforce appropriate behavior for youths — this isn't just the job of the police.

Offer more youth recreation programs – especially those that include adult role models for kids.

- Use unused or underused schools and Park Board space for youth recreation programs.
- Get kids with street smarts involved in recruiting kids for recreation programs.
- Offer early intervention/prevention programs such as the Little Earth mural project to provide job skills while reducing graffiti.

Require businesses to do more.

- Ask more of the people seeking a business license. Businesses should have to agree to our 14-point security plan and participate in our e-mail crime alert program.
- Employers must start believing that people can change and try hiring offenders.

“When the neighborhood and police work together, real progress happens.”

- Police inspector
