

Kansas City, Missouri
Commission on Violent Crime

Update and Recommendations
March 2013

Prepared for:
The Honorable Mayor and City Council, Kansas City Missouri

Submitted by:
Commission on Violent Crime
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Executive Summary

In 2006 a special Commission on Violent Crime was convened which released 17 recommendations to reduce violence in Kansas City. The one major recommendation that was implemented under the City's sponsorship was Aim4Peace (A4P), housed in the Kansas City Health Department. Aim4Peace is a comprehensive violence reduction program modeled after the CeaseFire Program in Chicago, which is touted by the Office of Justice Program as a "Promising Program" that uses prevention, intervention and community-mobilization strategies to reduce shootings and killings.

The 2006 report did not include suggestions as to which specific organizations should take responsibility for any of the recommendations, in the hope that various groups in the City that were concerned about violent crime would take it upon themselves to address some of the recommendations. To some degree, this did happen but since no assignment of responsibility was made, no one took responsibility. Nor was the key recommendation of assigning an Implementation Board to track implementation and effectiveness followed.

Unfortunately, the pattern of homicides reported in 2006 has continued essentially unchanged. Another Commission on Violent Crime was convened in 2011 with the task of 1) reviewing the recommendations that were made in 2006; 2) determining the status of implementation and success; and 3) making new recommendations based on the current state of violent crime activity in Kansas City at present.

Major Recommendations:

1. Permanent Commission on Violent Crime

It is apparent that a permanent Commission on Violent Crime needs to be empanelled to continuously monitor the incidence and prevalence of violent crime (primarily homicide) in the city, prioritize responses to remediate it and track implementation efforts and their effects. This Commission should regularly meet as a Mayor-appointed entity operating in conjunction with other committees, task forces and commissions throughout the city to aggressively address violent crime and the social conditions that foster it. The Commission would submit an Annual Report of its activities and outcomes achieved. It is hoped that the Mayor, City Council, and City Manager would champion this recommendation.

2. Coordinator, Commission on Violent Crime

To ensure that the violence reduction efforts are implemented and tracked, it is recommended that a full time staff position be created inside City government whose priority would be implementing continuing priorities of the Commission on Violent Crime and monitoring effectiveness. The primary responsibility of this Coordinator would be working with the Commission on Violent Crime to implement and monitor the success of violence reduction strategies, including the coordination of neighborhood, criminal justice and youth efforts addressing violence reduction. This Coordinator would also identify related efforts and seek available resources that can aid in

reducing violent crime. By appointing one person whose sole responsibility is working with the Commission, communication will be ensured between those working toward the common goal of violence reduction. The Coordinator will provide a complete picture of efforts that can contribute to violence reduction—whether those of the City or other entities—for the Commission’s use in developing priorities and implementation plans.

3. Strong Neighborhoods

The Commission on Violent Crime is convinced that, to produce strong cities, Kansas City needs to recognize the role of strong neighborhoods as the basic building block of a livable and safe city. Therefore, the City should continue to work with neighborhoods to pilot efforts to develop and strengthen neighborhoods throughout the city, block by block, and replicate successful approaches. Attention should be devoted to developing strong leaders in each Kansas City neighborhood through continued organized training and celebration of these volunteers and their neighborhoods’ accomplishments.

4. Youth Consortium and Comprehensive Youth Master Plan

The Commission believes it is important to develop and implement an ongoing Youth Consortium and a Comprehensive Youth Master Plan. This recommendation will help the city address the needs of unoccupied youth, as well as improve the safety of young people and reduce the disproportionate amount of violent crime that is being committed by young men.

5. Truancy/Suspension/Discipline

In order to keep youth off the streets and in the classroom, at least during the school year, the Commission recommends the development of a Truancy/Suspension/Discipline policy which results in consistently addressing truancy throughout Kansas City. In addition, suspension and discipline policies are needed that do not automatically result in youth being ejected from the educational system.

6. Expansion of Alternative Schools and Diploma Options

A disturbing level of violence is being exhibited in the school setting and the history of some students makes it clear that they would benefit from special attention to deal with their aggressive behaviors. For this reason, the Commission strongly recommends expansion of alternative school and diploma options.

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Kansas City Commission on Violent Crime
2013 Review and Recommendations

One thousand, for perspective, that's the number of students attending two or three elementary schools in the Kansas City School District. In the 15 years between 1997 and 2011, **1,090 African Americans in Kansas City were murdered, 843 of whom were African American males.** This is among a total of **1,529 lives lost during this 15 year period.** Such continuous carnage begins to desensitize us to the horror of homicide. As a city, there is a danger that we have begun to think that is a normal state of affairs that can't really be changed.

The City of Kansas City last formally examined Violence as a serious public health issue in 2005, based on the then escalating rate of homicides during the first decade of the 21st Century. In 2005 a special Commission on Violent Crime was convened which released 17 recommendations to reduce violence in Kansas City in 2006. These recommendations were clustered in the areas of Education, Workforce Development, Neighborhoods ("At-Risk Community"), Criminal Justice and Youth. In addition, four recommendations were made to facilitate Implementation. The Kansas City, Missouri Commission on Violent Crime **Final Report** June 2006 was widely publicized and presented to many audiences and remains available on the City's website. It has been quoted ever since as a definitive look at homicide in Kansas City and a prescription for combating the problem.

Unfortunately, few formalized attempts at implementation occurred after this report and homicides have continued at the same pace. Another Commission on Violent Crime was convened in 2011 in response to the lack of progress in reducing violence in Kansas City. In fact, heightened sense of urgency ensued during the first months of 2012 when several cities (including Kansas City, Seattle, Philadelphia, Oakland, Dallas and Chicago) experienced unusual increases in homicide at the same time that the Federal Bureau of Investigation reports an overall decrease in violent crime. However, by mid October 2012, the number of homicides in Kansas City was a bit lower than in 2011 but exactly the same as 2010.

The Commission on Violent Crime convened in 2011 had a different, very specific task: Review the recommendations that were made in 2006, determine the status of implementation and success; and make new recommendations based on where the City stands at this time regarding violent crime. It is clear that many of the actual causes of violent crime are based in life-long experiences that shape later behavior. These are not the focus of the work of the current review panel; causes and short and long-term solutions were recounted in the exhaustive work presented in 2006. The focus of this report is those recommendations for strategies and activities that can be immediately attempted, that will build the foundation for longer term solutions whose effects can be gauged over the next several years.

Homicide in Kansas City

Homicide has been a long-standing problem in Kansas City that has almost become the “normal” state. The city’s homicide rates first began to rise dramatically in 1968, the first year that 99 homicides had occurred since the 1920’s. Since then, the number of homicides has remained at 100 or above for all but nine (9) years.

Table 1 – Number of Homicides in Kansas City per Year since 1926¹

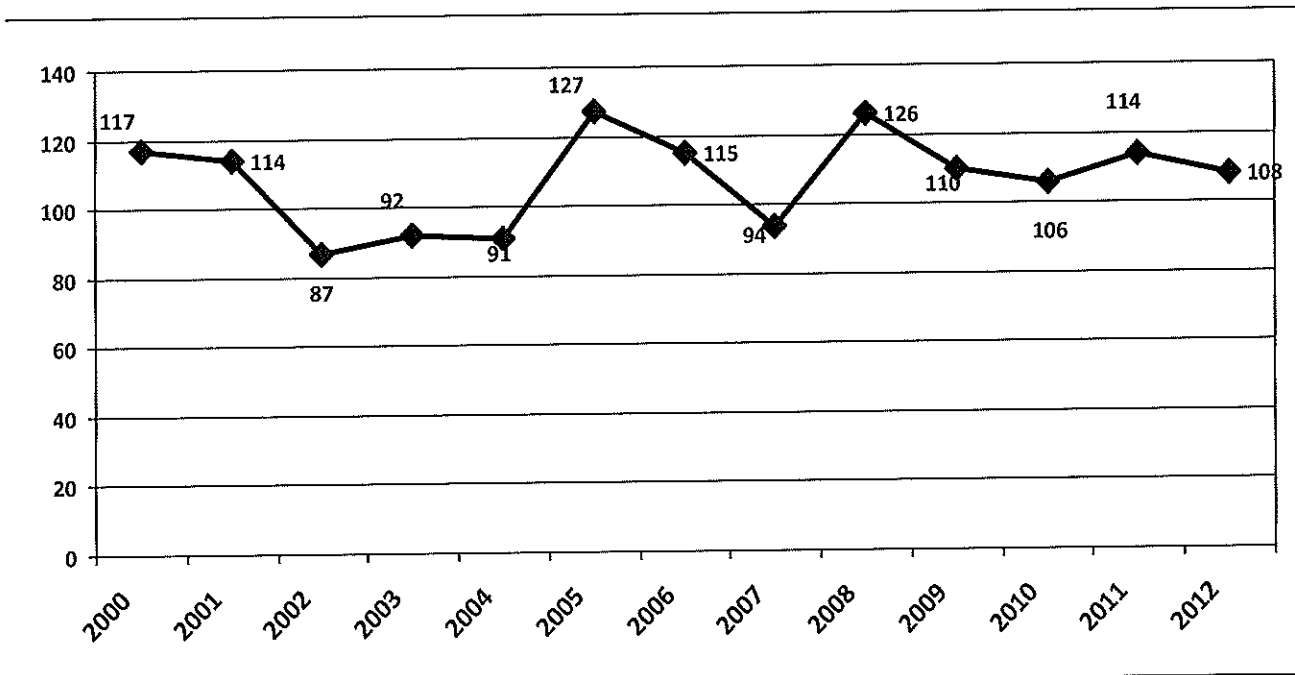
Year	No.	Year	No.	Year	No.	Year	No.	Year	No.
1926	99	1946	57	1966	70	1986	116	2006	115
1927	72	1947	49	1967	66	1987	131	2007	94
1928	92	1948	67	1968	99	1988	136	2008	126
1929	90	1949	52	1969	116	1989	140	2009	110
1930	66	1950	43	1970	134	1990	121	2010	106
1931	63	1951	58	1971	115	1991	135	2011	114
1932	74	1952	55	1972	77	1992	152	2012	108
1933	78	1953	39	1973	90	1993	153		
1934	71	1954	50	1974	115	1994	142		
1935	81	1955	36	1975	117	1995	108		
1936	73	1956	39	1976	105	1996	109		
1937	51	1957	42	1977	101	1997	104		
1938	46	1958	39	1978	120	1998	133		
1939	27	1959	46	1979	119	1999	122		
1940	41	1960	49	1980	139	2000	117		
1941	28	1961	52	1981	114	2001	114		
1942	36	1962	53	1982	94	2002	87		
1943	31	1963	67	1983	106	2003	92		
1944	22	1964	55	1984	89	2004	91		
1945	49	1965	77	1985	91	2005	127		

Homicides in Kansas City have dipped below 100 only four times since 2000, and only seven times since 1980. The decade of the 1990’s, following the era in which “crack” and gangs from Jamaica and Los Angeles invaded the City, could be considered the City’s most deadly. Between 1990 and 1999 the City averaged 127 homicides per year, and in 1993 the number of homicides reached 153, the highest level in our city’s history.

Homicide trends in Kansas City have not changed much since the start of the 21st Century.

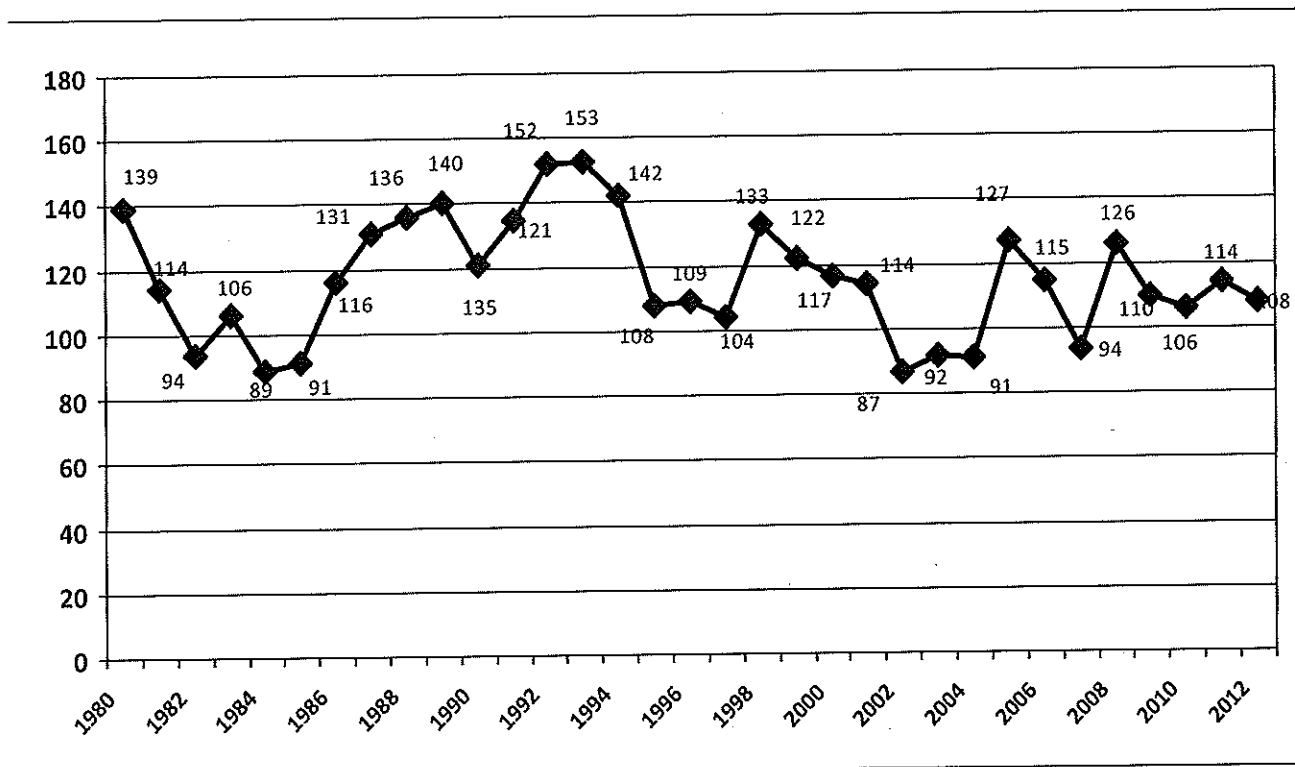
¹ Years of 100 homicides or greater appear in bold.

Figure 1 - Kansas City Homicides 2001- 2012



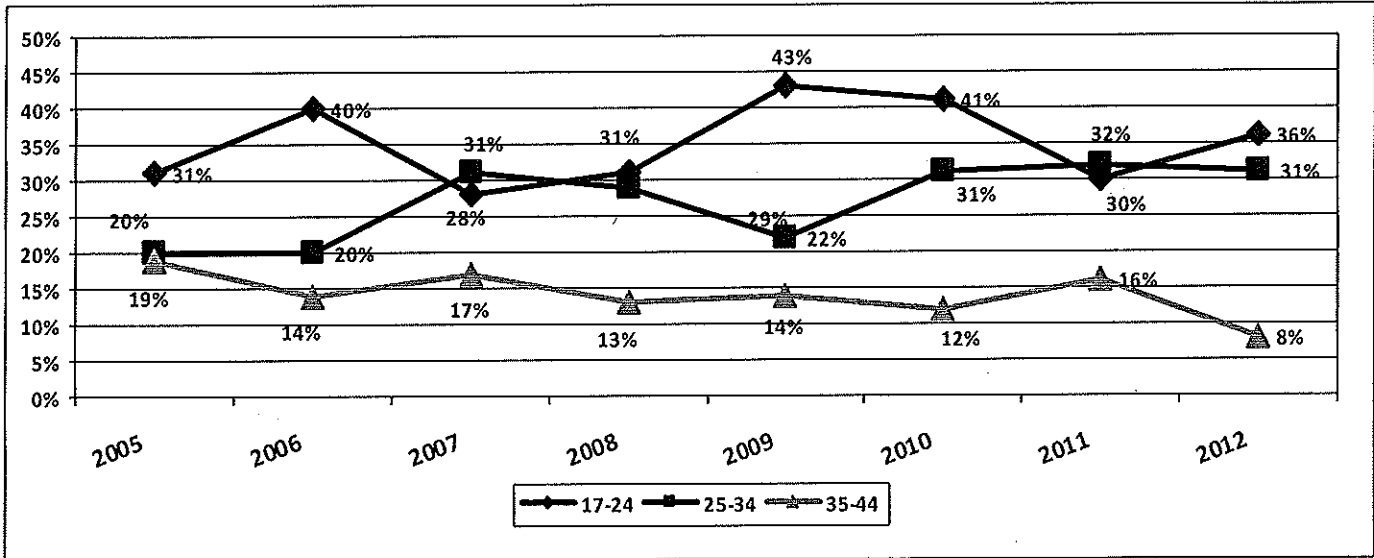
In fact, the cyclical nature of homicides has changed little in Kansas City since 1980.

Figure 2 - Kansas City Homicides 1980 – 2012



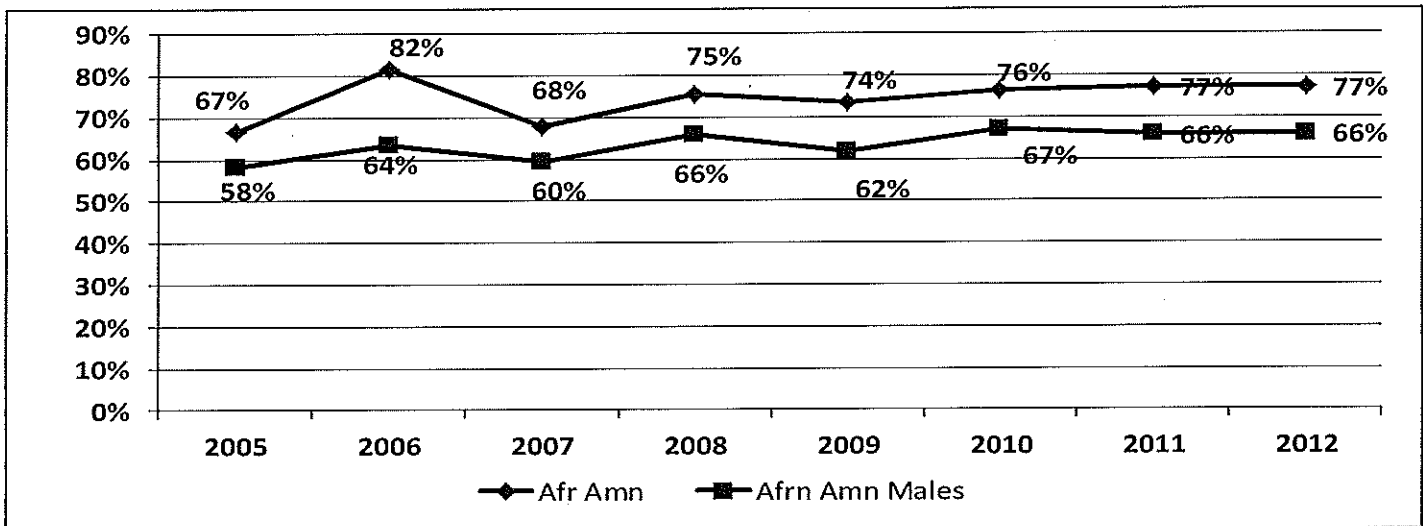
Most homicide victims are between the ages of 17 and 44.

Figure 3 - Kansas City Homicides 2005-2012 - Age of Victims



For some time African Americans have overwhelmingly been the predominant group victimized by homicide in Kansas City. Although various hypotheses have emerged about homicide and how it has changed in the last few years, recent data reveal only minor differences: Between two-thirds and three-fourths of all victims each year are consistently African American, and approximately 60% of the African American victims are males.

Figure 4 - African American Homicide Victims in Kansas City 2005 – 2012



Although the makeup of Kansas City now includes an increasing percentage of Hispanics, their number among homicide victims and suspects has not risen appreciably in the past five years.

Figure 5 - Kansas City Homicide Victims by Race, Ethnicity 2005 – 2012

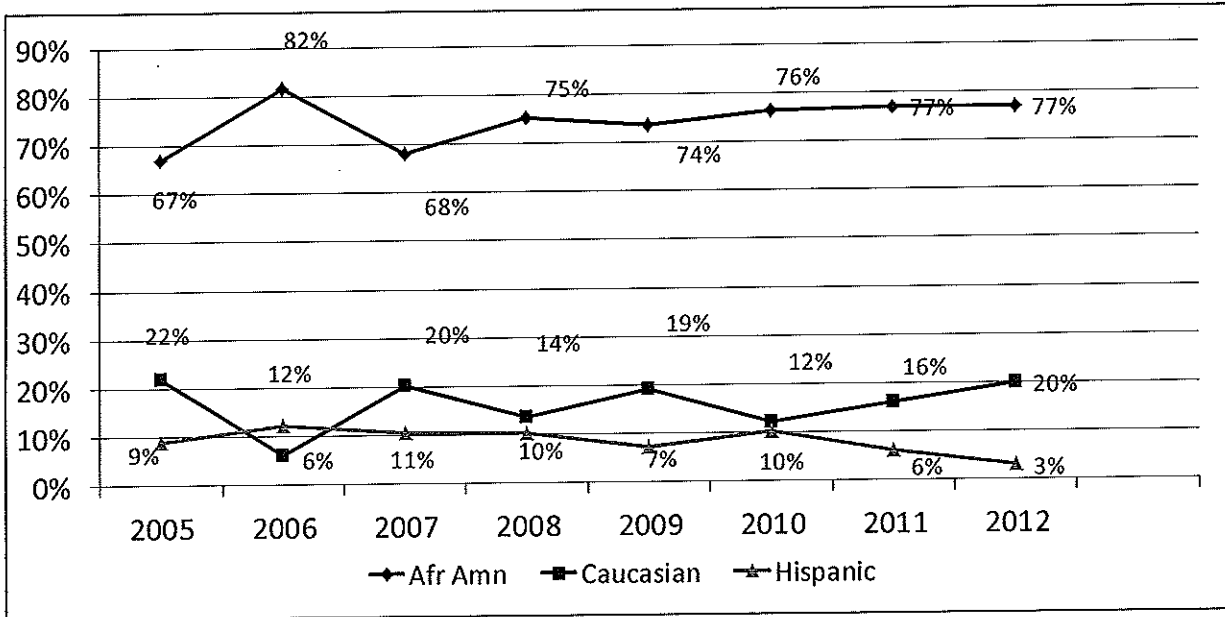
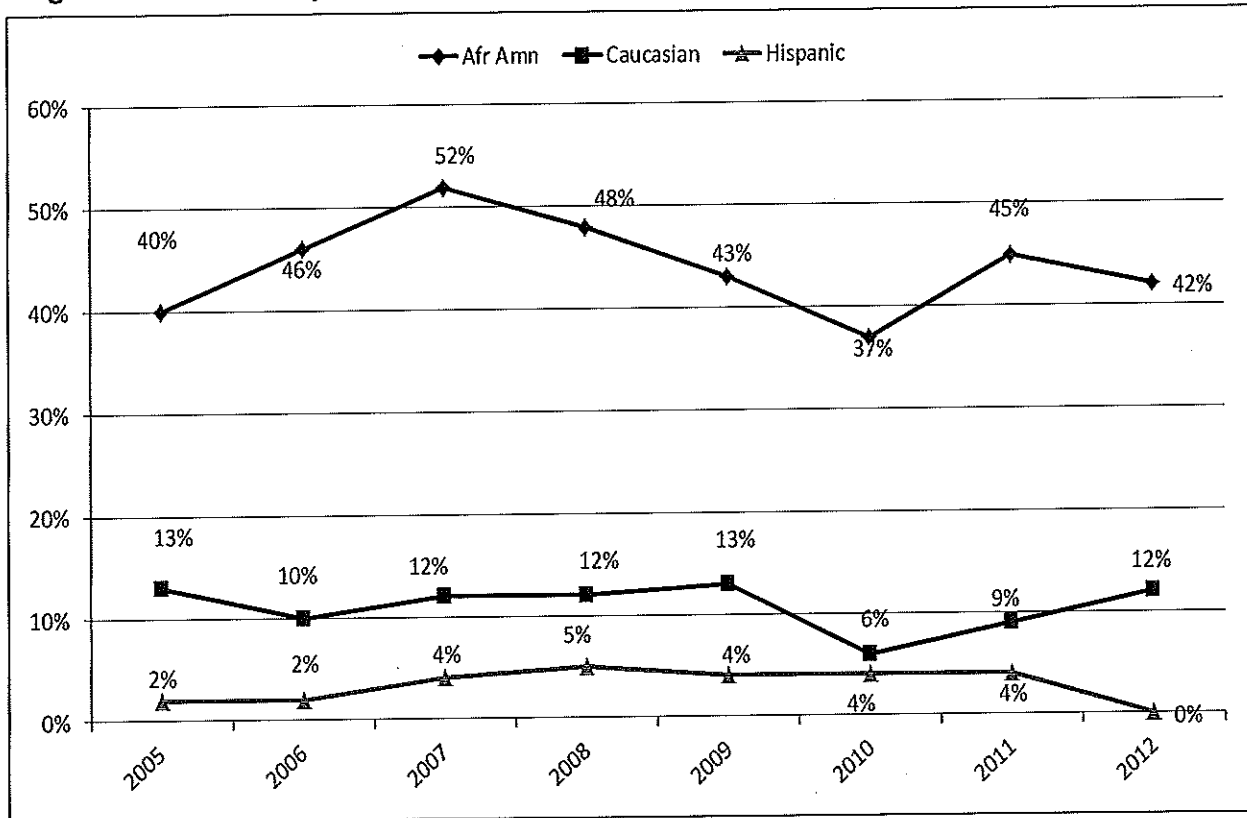


Figure 6 - Kansas City Homicide Suspects by Race, Ethnicity 2005 – 2012



Before a solution can be found, we need to know what causes homicide.

Researchers have found obvious relationships between homicide and poverty, ex-offender status, lack of employment and poor education. African American males are the largest group affected by homicide in most American communities, and are often afflicted with one or more such societal risk factors:

- High poverty—in several cities there is a correlation between poverty and homicide rates **(but why is this correlation not there for some cities, such as Kansas City?)**.
- Substance abuse is often associated with homicide—whether the homicide is due to conflicts over turf or drug sales; the fact that suspects and/or victims are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs; or simply the fact that drugs are present at the homicide scene.
- Environmental problems, such as lack of affordable housing and the presence of lead in older housing stock have been related to aggression and violence that can result in homicides.
- Poor nutrition interferes with ability to learn and is associated with violent behavior.
- Early abuse, neglect or contact with the court system are overwhelming associated with poor outcomes as an adult (including violence).
- Children who have been in foster care who have not been able to develop a strong support system are much more likely to have poor outcomes in education and employment, and experience more criminal behavior as adults.
- Single parent families in general experience more problems, especially economically, and their children are likely to have problems associated with the lack of a positive male role model in the home.
- Teen parents are not as developmentally ready to be good parents for needy children, and the children of teen parents are much more likely to grow up in poverty and remain in poverty as adults.
- Lack of adequate behavioral health services results in mentally ill persons entering the criminal justice system unnecessarily. Co-occurring substance abuse and mental health problems are often found among those in city jails.

That there is some relationship between homicide and racial minority status is evident in many large cities. A definitive causal relationship, however, is not clear. In some cities (such as Milwaukee) the increased incidence of homicide among racial minorities is directly correlated with poverty (O’Hear, 2010). In Kansas City, however, poverty is lower than the level of homicide would be observed if the correlation was direct. In others (such as Detroit and Chicago) homicide appears to be clearly related to segregation (“Segregation: Neighborhood Exposure by Race and Dissimilarity Indexes, 2010”). Segregation in metropolitan Kansas City decreased by 11 points between 2000-2010, making it only the 23rd most segregated area in the nation. However, the “Isolation Index”² in the nation’s large metropolitan areas, including Kansas City, means that African Americans most often live in neighborhoods where they are the majority or near majority. Although the Kansas City area’s Black-White Isolation index has dropped 24.2 points from 1990-2010 (as opposed to only 0.6 points in Detroit, 3.9 points in Milwaukee and 8.2 points in New York), it is apparent that the largest segregation

² The % of minorities in the neighborhood in the neighborhood where the average minority group member lives.

in Kansas City metropolitan area occurs in the central city of Kansas City itself, which corresponds to the area experiencing the most extreme rates of homicide. This is the same area that is most impoverished due to lack of jobs, poor transportation to jobs outside the area, poor schools and lack of the hallmarks of healthy neighborhoods. The most obvious racial aspect of homicides in Kansas City is the differential concern with the subject among different racial groups. In the completion of the 2006 report the COVC found that business persons or community leaders who did not live in Kansas City were unaware of the devastation to the city caused by homicide. Only the fact that a high homicide rate can depress business recruitment to the City seemed to catch the attention of many non-minorities who lived outside the city of Kansas City itself.

So what can a community do to affect violence in a community? Where can a community use its influence and "community will" to affect those factors that lead to violence? A Chicago minister pitched a tent atop an abandoned hotel for 94 days to publicize gun violence in that city in the first half of 2012, culminating in successive weekends between May 26-27 and June 16-17 in which a total of 151 were injured and 28 were killed. After coming off the roof, he noted that similar outbreaks of violence were observed in Chicago over a century ago between immigrant populations, leading to the establishment of Hull House by Jane Addams, followed by continued emphasis on the need for social services to combat societal problems.

For Kansas City the focus now becomes, *what can a community do to really affect the performance of societal institutions marching to their own drummers, so that they will instead unite in a coordinated fashion to effect societal change?*

It was agreed by the 2011 Commission on Violent Crime that many of the factors underlying homicide in Kansas City remain the same as those exhaustively reviewed in the 2006 report. The Commission began its work by building a Logic Model to identify problems and risk factors associated with homicide and those factors that could be addressed over the next few years. Then the Commission targeted strategies that could methodically lead to the long term objective of reducing violence and homicide in Kansas City.

In light of the City's history, the goal was set at reducing homicides at less than 100 per year for a continuous period of at least five years, then to consistently reduce the number through implementation of successful societal interventions and improvement in the lives and futures of those most at risk.

Table 2 -Logic Model - Long Term Goal: Reducing Violence and Homicide in Kansas City

Needs/Problems/Risk Factors	Factors to be Addressed	Strategies
Culture where violence has become acceptable for problem solving.	Alternative problem-solving skills.	Make conflict resolution skills available to children and adults.
For some, violence is the preferred way to respond to conflict.	Exposure to different options and alternative skills to make choices other than violence	Increased availability of situationally and culturally appropriate mediation.
Gangs and crime in neighborhoods	Lack of reporting of crime because of fear.	Develop strong neighborhoods, one block at a time, through leadership recruitment and training.
	Isolation in community may hamper aspirations & future hopes of youth.	Pilot test use of restorative justice approach in neighborhoods; replicate.
Lack of jobs; also need for workforce development	Lack of employable skills	Increase workforce readiness & address education needs
Lack of education	Truancy	Seek changes in implementation of MO Safe Schools Act that allow schools discretion related to a.) guns in proximity to schools and b.) dealing with long term suspensions and
		Evaluate; expand Truancy Courts.
	School dropouts	Expansion of schools such as Hope Academy that focus on aiding dropouts in getting a diploma.
	Lack of school success Poor education of returning ex-offenders.	Address underlying reasons for dropping out & poor attendance and their role in violence.
Lack of positive activities for youth leads to idle time, possibilities for negative behavior.		Develop Comprehensive Plan for Children & Youth.
Problems related to high incarceration rates:	Legal barriers to opportunities for successful lifestyles for ex-offenders.	Develop willing employers, increase workforce readiness & address education needs of ex-offenders.
Drug and alcohol abuse	Easy access to alcohol by youth	Publicize effective treatment, youth development & prevention programs and how to replicate them
	Substance abuse among families and their children → youth crime.	
Easy access to guns	Policies allow pawn shops to sell guns in high risk areas.	Investigate how to limit the supply and proliferation of guns within the requirements of MO statutes.
	No-background check person-to-person sales allowed at gun shows	
Lack of effective parenting		Find way to spread Parenting skills (e.g., follow example of Head Start)
Poor relationships with police	Lack of relationships reduces the willingness of community members to trust and cooperate with police.	KCPD emphasize desirability of assignment in needed communities & remaining assigned in these areas.
	Police force does not adequately represent the population it serves.	KC communities assist in recruitment of diverse populations for careers at KCPD.
	Language, other communications problems between police force and populations it serves.	Encourage efforts for increased communication and non-enforcement contacts with KCPD.

Review of 2006 Recommendations

While the recommendations of 2006 were thorough, in hindsight, several problems are now apparent that impeded their successful implementation. They were not accompanied by suggestions as to which specific organizations should take responsibility for any of them. By not assigning specific duties it was hoped that various groups in the City that were concerned about violent crime would take it upon themselves to address some of the recommendations. To some degree, this did happen and some talented organizations in the City identified areas appropriate for their skills and expertise to launch responses to address some recommendations. However, the fact that no groups were assigned responsibility meant, as is often the case, no one took responsibility.

The one major recommendation that was implemented under the City's sponsorship was Aim4Peace (A4P), housed in the Kansas City Health Department. Aim4Peace is a comprehensive violence reduction program modeled after the CeaseFire program in Chicago that uses prevention, intervention and community-mobilization strategies to reduce shootings and killings. CeaseFire was created based on strategies adapted from the field of public health. The program was launched in Chicago in 1999 by the Chicago Project for Violence Prevention at the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health. CeaseFire is listed as a "Promising Program" on the Office of Justice Program's CrimeSolutions.gov site of programs that have been found to be effective for violence reduction, based on rigorous research. Ceasefire has been the subject of an award winning film featured on the Public Broadcasting System's Frontline, which chronicles the experiences of three violence interrupters who seek to protect their communities from the same type of violence in which they once engaged. This is a major facet of the Ceasefire approach: utilizing the talents and credibility as staff those persons who are familiar with the violence-laden communities where they work. This is also a key strategy being replicated in Kansas City's Aim4Peace. These staffpersons are familiar with the neighborhoods targeted by A4P for violence interruption in the form of immediate conflict resolution when serious issues such as assaults and shootings occur. In some cases they are indigenous to the neighborhoods, and often the street outreach workers have been ex-offenders or former gang members. Their goal is to intervene in situations that may escalate into violence, often after a homicide or assault has occurred.

Another reason it is now difficult to gauge effectiveness from the work of the 2006 COVC is that, other than the evaluation efforts of Aim4Peace, the city failed to put in place any systematic method for evaluating violence prevention efforts. Nor was there any mechanism to periodically collect information about the status of violence in the city or about the status of any recommendations that had been implemented in whole or in part and by whom, or progress toward implementation. Unfortunately, the key recommendation of appointing an Implementation Board that would guide implementation and monitor results was never addressed. So, no assignment of duties was made, and no systematic monitoring of violence, prevention efforts, or accomplishments was assured.

Another problem which may have hampered implementation of COVC recommendations was that no one identified champions, funding, or opportunities to institutionalize approaches through policy and advocacy efforts. It is not surprising that five years later the City again responded to a crisis in violent crime by asking a Commission to look at the problem. The continuing rate of homicide that consistently exceeds 100 lives lost in most years is unacceptable for us as a City.

Update of Criminal Justice Recommendations

The 2006 Commission Report included four recommendations in the area of Criminal Justice:

1. Establish a regional **Criminal and Juvenile Justice Board** to bring private and public financial support, influence, and human resources to comprehensively work on regional justice projects.
 - ◆ We found no evidence that this recommendation has been operationalized.
2. A joint partnership should be established between regulated industries, KCPD and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to revise city codes and/or ordinances pertaining to pawn shops in order to deter unlawful possession of guns.
 - ◆ There is no evidence that this recommendation has been operationalized. However, it would be difficult to implement as state law forbids cities from regulating guns: “ No unit of local government shall adopt any order, ordinance or regulation concerning the sale, purchase, purchase delay, transfer, ownership, use, keeping, possession, bearing, transportation, licensing, permit, registration, taxation other than sales and compensating use taxes, or other controls on firearms, components, ammunition and supplies.” *Mo Section 21.750, Missouri Revised Statutes*
3. The Kansas City Police Department should adopt a **Criminal Incident Review** policy for all homicides.
 - ◆ After much investigation and discussion with relevant parties, it was determined that such a policy largely exists. Many members of the COVC Criminal Justice Committee felt that the review efforts should include the collection of more sociological and/or demographic data that provide clues as to the nature of the homicide and its possible preventability.
4. The City should expand **conflict/dispute resolution programs** which would include volunteer mediators.
 - ◆ There is no evidence that this recommendation has been operationalized. In fact, since the time of the 2006 COVC report, the mediation program based in City Hall has been ended.

Update of 2006 Neighborhood Recommendations

1. A **Landlord Policy** - needs to be established certifying landlords in Kansas City, Missouri, particularly in neighborhoods east of Troost Avenue. Several surrounding metro cities have successfully implemented standards and policies for landlords, resulting in greater accountability and responsibility for rental units, neighborhood sensitivity, and means of enforcement.
 - ◆ The City Council has enacted legislation authorizing additional regulation of residential rental properties. Ordinance No. 071046, adopted October 18, 2007, established a prioritized property inspection and rental housing registration program. It established minimum standards for occupancy and the maintenance of the building and grounds surrounding such building. It required annual registration of each rental dwelling and identification of owners, with contact information. Owners not residing within the City of Kansas City, Missouri must designate a local agent to receive notices, orders or summons issued because of violations. Ordinance 081277, adopted Feb 5, 2009, was enacted to protect residential neighborhoods from decline and

devaluation. It provides for the identification of city properties that are vacant or foreclosing and obtaining contact information for code enforcement and emergency situations. It is meant to protect neighborhoods from becoming blighted through the lack of maintenance and security of vacant properties and foreclosing properties.

2. **Predatory Lending** - Predatory lenders are preying on minorities and low-income communities. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on predatory lending in the city to protect citizens with the consumer education tools provided by HUD.
 - ◆ The City Council has enacted legislation establishing restrictions on obtaining conditional use permits, check-cashing and title loan establishments. Communities Creating Opportunity is leading the effort locally to educate the public and greater regulate the payday loan industry, including lower the annual percentage rate that these entities can charge. Legislation to this effect has been proposed in the Missouri Legislature and is currently being debated.
3. **Adopt-A-Neighborhood** - A Memorandum of Agreement should be signed between the Concerned Clergy which has agreed to find churches to adopt neighborhoods.
 - ◆ The Concerned Clergy group had been identified as champion but there is no evidence that this was initiated on a large scale.

Update on 2006 Youth Recommendations

1. **Youth and Family Comprehensive Master Plan and Centralized Youth Information Service** - Kansas City's support of efforts to establish a "Youth Master Plan" would provide continued support and monitoring to protect the investments made by KC citizens, children, youth, and young adults. This will match the efforts of the Kansas City Civic Council's Prep-KC plan which addresses education reform, and has secured funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to implement reforms.
 - ◆ Research of other cities' plans is reported to have taken place through the Youth Advocacy Office. There is no evidence of a plan developed for Kansas City Metropolitan area.
 - ◆ The City's Office of Civic Engagement has implemented collection of centralized youth information (see www.kcmo.org). A visit to the website shows fragmented information which does not appear to be regularly updated. It may not be accessible or user friendly enough for youth or parents with varying levels of computer/web savviness or availability of internet. It is not even clear when it was created and who is responsible for its updating.
2. **Consolidated Youth Program Budget** - The city should create a consolidated youth program budget to ensure the success of the *Youth and Family Comprehensive Master Plan*, as well as tying allocations to programs enabling greater analysis and elimination of duplication.
 - ◆ There is no evidence of a developed, dedicated Youth Program Budget, although youth services are addressed in different departments in the City's budget.
3. **Professional Development for Youth Program Staff/ Fund Quality Early Learning and Afterschool Programs** - : Similar to the infrastructure provided for primary and secondary education professionals (e.g., universities, professional associations, accreditation, etc.), the city needs

professional development venues for continued training for the organizations that address the positive advancement of our youth. Elements of the training should include: strategic planning; implementation of quality standards; information collection and dissemination; space analysis; financial investment; capacity building; an informed and organized constituency; research; documentation, and evaluation. In addition, research overwhelmingly proves that quality afterschool programs are effective in changing and improving behavior of youth. Studies also show for every \$1 invested in afterschool programs, there is a \$10 return when kids grow up and become a productive part of a workforce in a community. City officials, along with community organizations, need to determine the costs of ensuring *quality* out-of-school programs for school age youth (K-12); building upon existing programs; and over time filling in gaps in service across the community.

- ◆ The United Way of Greater Kansas City and the Francis Center for Child Development have developed Quality Matters, which trains directors, program and line-staff of organizations and programs that work with youth to advance quality out-of-school time opportunities. The program is currently in its fourth year, and is based on a process developed by the Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, recognized for championing research-based approaches for advancing program quality, youth worker professional development, and sustained commitment to improving the odds for children and youth. The effort is being evaluated by the University of Kansas. The United Way notes that "Effective programs in non-school hours are proven to reduce negative behaviors, such as delinquency. Reduced crime and delinquency alone are documented to yield approximately a \$5 return for every \$1 invested in quality out-of-school time programs." To date, 749 staff and managers impacting over 5,000 youth at representing 46 youth serving sites in the metropolitan area been trained. Funding is provided by the United Way.
- ◆ In addition, the Local Investment Commission has addressed professional development in the field of early child care and for youth workers. Educare trains "childcare providers and all who care for children in our community." In addition to managing after-school sites in several Kansas City school districts. LINC's work continues to focus on the provision of quality before-and-after school sites for children that are safe and developmentally appropriate. LINC provides out of school care in seven school districts, serving over 4,500 students, with a modest enrollment fee of \$10 for those students eligible for free lunch at their participating schools.
- ◆ There is a Missouri Professional Development Portal for child care, early education and after-school workforces. It provides online resources and training information for owners of family child care, directors or teachers in child care, Head Start or preschool, and site facilitators or youth workers in after-school programs. Resources available on the www.modpdportal.org site include Codes of Ethics for related professional associations, a directory of Missouri certificate and degree programs, after-school standards and self-assessment tools.

4. **Single Mother Support Group** - Safety could also be promoted through the creation of a support/information group for mothers who are single-handedly raising male, adolescent children. The objective would be to provide these parents with information skills; appropriate discipline; negotiation tactics; and how to use law-abiding and spiritual values in raising a crime- and drug-free child.

- ◆ The recommendation suggested a City supported effort modeled after the Esperanza Para Los Ninos/Hope for the Children Program offered by the Health Department and The Family

Conservancy. Attempts to reach the program were unsuccessful, with no program listed on the message service, nor any staff person's name attached to select from the phone system.

- ◆ However, the Family Conservancy continues to provide a variety of family and parenting resources. The agency offers programming specifically targeting Single Mothers residing at Housing Authority of Kansas City housing centers near downtown, Kansas City, and the agency's website includes "Tips for Single Parent Success Strategies." The organization provides an online calendar of parenting class opportunities from a variety of agencies and facilitators throughout the metropolitan area. The Family Conservancy provides Parenting Spots on Fox4 News, which are also posted on YouTube. The agency specializes in the needs of families and parents, providing counseling, support and education as well as information on parenting by child age.
- ◆ LINC's training network also includes parent training.

Recommendations for 2013

Several new approaches have been initiated to increase safety in Kansas City since the 2006 Commission on Violent Crime report. The Mayor's Nights initiative of the Summer of 2012 successfully provided teens weekend activities through their own Club KC. The need for the Club KC approach was evidenced by the throngs numbering over a total of 7,000 young people who congregated safely, without incident, at four community centers over the summer of 2012. Both the office of the Jackson County Prosecutor and the Kansas City Police Department had new leaders who were appointed to their positions in 2011. They are working together well and are coordinating efforts, including on one initiative that also has the Mayor of Kansas City, the United States Attorney and Missouri Probation and Parole as key partners: Kansas City No Violence Alliance (**NoVA**). NoVA is a new initiative based on successful national models to fight and prevent crime in the urban core. Key law enforcement agencies, including the Kansas City Police Department, the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office, Missouri Board of Probation and Parole and the U.S. Attorney's office, have collaborated with Mayor Sly James, the University of Missouri-Kansas City's criminal justice and criminology program and the Kansas City Metropolitan Crime Commission to launch the new effort. It will involve building new intelligence on key offenders and their associates and employing a variety of tactics to deter them from crime. A project manager for the new project began in August 2012, with funding from Greater Kansas City Local Initiatives Support Corporation for this purpose and to initiate the program's research component.

In addition, while each had separately begun to identify **Hotspots** for focus on violence prevention, the Chief of Police and the Jackson County Prosecutor are now working together and coordinating their information. The police focus is saturation, the Prosecutor focus is getting information on perceptions of crime while working collaboratively with the police department to get frequent and/or violent offenders off of the streets. It is encouraging that these two agencies have begun this approach and are now coordinating their hotspot areas. Expanding coordination and combining information obtained via the "hotspot" approach with other strategies could multiply effectiveness of violence reduction. In addition, others, such as community mediators could quickly respond to issues identified in hotspots.

Additional approaches being undertaken by KCPD to reduce violence in the City include:

- The reinstatement of Foot Patrols, with the assistance of continuation of grant funding.
- Shot Spotters (with the assistance of a grant from the Kansas City Area Transit Alliance and the City of Kansas City), which is meant to use acoustic sensors to pinpoint the precise location of gunfire.
- Community Services Division, which, as its name suggests, will work to build needed relationships with communities and offer Victim Services immediately after homicides occur. It is also hoped that the relationship-building function of this division with neighborhoods will increase and improve communication with neighborhoods that is not necessarily related to enforcement, and even spread to other parts of the Police Department.

The Jackson County Prosecutor's Office initiated some new programs in 2012, all aimed at decreasing violent crime. In 2013, these programs remain or they are being incorporated into the new Kansas City No Violence Alliance effort. Those programs:

- ◆ New Start, which helped offenders under the age of 22 who were facing a first-time felony, non-violent in nature. With mentoring and other services, including life skills and anger management, the prosecutor's office deterred several of these young offenders from future violent crime. The experience will be used in KC NoVA, which will focus on similar individuals.
- ◆ Re-entry, in which a new caseworker in the prosecutor's office works with violent felons who are returning to Kansas City from prison.
- ◆ Neighborhood Prosecution, which has launched 10 teams in Kansas City neighborhoods troubled by violent crime.

The City's Neighborhood and Housing Department reports several neighborhood focused efforts that help to encourage community participation and empower neighborhoods. The department maintains a database of neighborhoods, and several staff are currently working on community engagement and neighborhood crime prevention efforts. Several neighborhoods have their own community organizers and conduct their own training for residents. There are also Neighborhood Service Sites that work with a coalition of neighborhoods to give them tools and bring in additional partners to address their identified needs. The Department provides some services in partnership with specific neighborhoods, or targeting a defined area through grant funding. This type of neighborhood partnership may arise from an idea by a specific neighborhood or by City staff. Some of these include:

- ◆ A Community Leadership Program, in partnership with the Mid America Regional Council trains individuals to be leaders in community service learning, in which community residents can teach one another. This is in concert with the COVC recommendation of pairing strong neighborhoods with less developed ones.
- ◆ The Kansas City Neighborhood Prosecution program, operating in the City's East Patrol Division, is also funded through a JAG grant. Similar to how police officers are assigned to a particular area of the City, a City Prosecutor is responsible for a community within the City. Neighborhood Prosecution is a pro-active approach to prosecuting quality of life crimes that affect a particular community. Varied approaches are used to prevent and reduce crime, including working with law enforcement, residents, schools and businesses within the community to develop long-term problem-solving strategies.

The COVC learned from the problems which resulted in poor implementation since 2006 in formulating the current recommendations. New recommendations were to be made by the current Commission through the lens of:

- ◆ Is the strategy currently being implemented in some format? If so, by whom, with what results?
- ◆ How would the strategy be funded? Are there currently natural funding streams that may be accessed?
- ◆ How would success/effectiveness of the strategy be gauged?
- ◆ What are related policy implications or opportunities?
- ◆ Who are possible champions and partners?

The COVC found itself making recommendations in areas that were similar to those recommended in 2006. It was immediately apparent that a permanent Commission on Violent Crime needs to be empanelled to continuously monitor violent crime (primarily homicide) and implementation that

attempts to remediate it. A Commission on Violent Crime should regularly meet as a Mayor appointed entity operating in conjunction with other committees, task forces and commissions to ensure the implementation and its recommendations. The areas where efforts are needed to attempt violence reduction are also similar to those of the 2006 report: Neighborhoods, Youth, Education and Criminal Justice. It was unanimously concluded by the COVC that working on the identified recommendations clustered in these areas can produce concrete, immediate results that can lead to violence reduction in the long term. Committees were assembled in these areas to develop recommendations that should be immediately implemented that will support sustained violence reduction and prevention.

The Commission hopes that legislation is enacted by the appropriate governmental entities to allow swift, successful implementation and connect existing policies. While portions of current budgets may be able to be re-assigned, it is clear that new funding sources will also be needed. We are optimistic that other funding bodies that are interested in the public health issue of violence will see the value in reducing its associated costs, such as emergency room admissions (with possible uninsured care) and lack of neighborhood development. The presence of violent crime in an area often discourages citizens from venturing outside to exercise or enjoy the City's amenities.

Criminal Justice Recommendations:

The Criminal Justice committee undertook a review the current state of all three elements of the criminal justice system locally: law enforcement, the courts and corrections. During the course of its activity, the committee received input from these representatives of the following organizations:

Sgt. Darrel Rocker, KCPD, Community Support Division
Officers Singer and Halford, KCPD Crime Free Multi-Housing
Jean Peters Baker, Jackson County Prosecutor
Judge Joseph Locascio, Municipal Drug Court
Jackie Dunn, Regional Administrator, Missouri State Probation & Parole
Theresa Byrd, Jackson County Family Court
Dr. Alex Holsinger, Professor of Criminal Justice, UMKC
Vince Ortega, COMBAT

The Committee also reviewed studies of crime prevention strategies from Baltimore, New York, Boston and Kansas City.

After gathering information from all levels of the criminal justice system, including the police, prosecutors, courts, jails, prisons and community agencies, the Committee recognized that the entire system often struggles to find a balance between being reactive (how to respond after a crime has been committed) and being proactive (how to intervene appropriately and effectively before a crime is committed). Every agency has its own comprehensive plan to reduce crime; however the success of each plan is contingent on the cooperation of the other agencies.

Following are the Criminal Justice Committee's Recommendations:

1. The Committee recommends that the **City's Commission on Violent Crime** remain a permanent **body** whose mission is to support the comprehensive efforts of each agency. This is also a consensus of other cities who have found themselves in the position of re-visiting efforts to reduce

violent crime because of repeating patterns of violence. This standing commission would be responsible for the monitoring the incidence and prevalence of violent crime in Kansas City, prioritizing implementation of the recommendations in this report (or other needed responses), and tracking progress in an annual report of outcomes. On an ongoing basis, the Commission would reassess and prioritize continued efforts necessary to reduce violent crime.

2. The Committee also strongly recommends the **creation of a full-time position within city government as a Coordinator** who would implement the functions of the Commission on Violent Crime. An important role of the Coordinator would be communicating with other criminal justice agencies/entities, both public and private, and assisting the leveraging of efforts of these agencies/entities. This person would also be responsible for coordinating the provision of resources for these purposes. The Committee recommends that the position be placed outside City Hall in a community-based City owned facility. As opposed to being located in the Neighborhood and Housing Services or the Police Department, this would provide easy access to the public and emphasize the varied nature of the work: increasing safety through coordination of various functions while developing neighborhoods and partnerships with residents. The Commission has been in communication with representatives of bodies similar to the COVC in other cities working on similar issues. All agree that it is vitally important to have a dedicated staff person in city government who is responsible for advancing the issues necessary to consistently address violent crime efforts by working with citizens and monitoring results. For reporting purposes, we recommend that the position reside under the organization of the Mayor's Office.
3. **Implement policies to prevent weapons and shootings near schools.** These policies should allow no weapon to be sold within so many feet of a school, and no weapon discharged within so many feet of a school. The Kansas City Neighborhood and Housing Services Department currently has a Safe School initiative, in partnership with Legal Aid and LINC, to create a zone around Safe Schools to get penalties doubled if there is a crime (as well as drug activity) within the zone. This initiative that currently only involves one school, should be expanded to all schools in the City.
4. **Determine the role of youth and adult gangs in violent crime in Kansas City.** The presence of gangs in Kansas City has been debated for many years. The consensus from law enforcement and those working in the field of violence prevention has long been that Kansas City does not have entrenched long-standing gangs such as can be found in Chicago and other cities. However, Kansas City does appear to have neighborhood based associations that operate as gangs. A 2012 report on gangs prepared for the United States Attorney's Office in the Western District of Missouri recounts the presence of "community based gangs" and that members may change affiliation and/or claim affiliation with more than one gang set. Even with this loose alignment, these gangs are said to have a "significant" impact on the community. However, even this report did not give a good demographic breakdown of whether these members are adult or youth.
5. **Identify ways to increase recruitment of candidates for the Police Department who exhibit a desire to relate to the unique and diverse cultures of those who reside in largely ethnic and minority neighborhoods.** Deciding to do this is the first step. Partnering creatively with the varied Kansas City community resources and groups interested in safety toward this end will increase the success of the police department in enforcing its mission.

6. **Programs to improve the success of ex-offenders, including elimination of barriers to employment.** Currently, at any given time there are approximately 15,000 adults on state or federal probation or parole in metropolitan Kansas City, with the vast majority of these individuals living within the boundaries of Kansas City, Missouri. The average national recidivism rate is 67%, and multiple area corrections systems contribute to recidivism rates in Kansas City. Those at highest likelihood for recidivism need the highest degree of programming to prevent re-offending, and Missouri uses assessment tools that can predict with a high degree of reliability whether an individual is at high, moderate or low risk of re-offending. University of Missouri-Kansas City Criminology Professor Dr. Alexander M. Holsinger and Second Chance Program Director Lora McDonald completed research in 2010 to determine gaps and needed approaches to enhance the success of this growing population that will continue to impact the Kansas City area for years to come (Examining Offender Reentry in Metropolitan Kansas City: A Gaps Analysis). This research included focus groups of area experts: people with criminal histories (incarcerated, jailed, and in community) and professionals (corrections, social services and treatment providers) who determined which policies, programs and systemic issues could be addressed or implemented to reduce the re-offense and recidivism rate in Kansas City and improve successful outcomes for offenders, their families and their communities. The COVC feels that it is important to consider ways to help former offenders make successful transitions back to the community and become resources for their families, instead of becoming those who commit further crime and return to the correctional system.

Key findings of gaps to be addressed can be found in the appendix of this document. A major problem that must be addressed is elimination of barriers to employment. Many researchers have consistently found a positive correlation between reducing crime and increasing employment opportunities for offenders. The Committee urges the City to undertake efforts to eliminate barriers to employment that may exist at the City level and advocate for changes in state law that impede the ability of offenders to find meaningful jobs that pay a living wage.

Neighborhoods Recommendations

The recommendations for Neighborhoods were surprisingly consistent with those of the Criminal Justice Committee, although they were independently derived.

1. **Develop and strengthen neighborhoods throughout the city, block by block.** Strong neighborhoods are viewed as the linchpin around which crime free communities grow. COVC believes that simple incentives that encourage residents to engage in their communities can lead to greater community awareness, bonding and mobilization. This recommendation would encourage providing incentives for neighborhoods or residents who participate in community building activities such as voter registration, volunteering in local schools, neighborhood organizing and clean-up. It would identify, support, and empower current neighborhood groups that are currently involved in building strong neighborhoods that ultimately contribute to violence reduction. This strategy will lead to empowered neighborhoods of active residents who know one another and are the first line of defense in safe communities. The ultimate outcome of the resulting neighborhood associations would be improved quality of life for residents. Incentives could be as simple as awards and acknowledgement by the City or the Chamber of Commerce, or even tangible awards such as gas cards or bus passes for extraordinary individual contributions.

The basic function envisioned for these strongly developed neighborhood associations is to serve as an information mechanism:

- between residents, local businesses, churches, schools and the City;
- to facilitate advocacy on behalf of neighborhood identified issues and needs; and
- to provide a mechanism for locally determined issues of importance to be identified and remediated (e.g., graffiti removal, problems associated with abandoned houses)

In neighborhoods where no strong association is functioning, the first step is identifying Block Leaders who would communicate regularly with neighbors and provide an information mechanism with the larger neighborhood and secure immediate attention to visible needs. Ultimately, Block Leaders will learn neighborhood codes so that they can appropriately use existing policy and apply procedural solutions to neighborhood issues, or propose new solutions when no appropriate ones currently exist. This will help ensure violations can be quickly identified and remediated and residents will see the value of participation. Regular neighborhood association meetings would be held, with periodic attendance by a City Liaison, police department representative, and elected representation to discuss the impact of existing or upcoming policies and learn issues which may need to be addressed by new policies.

The City of Kansas City's Neighborhood and Housing Services Department is already providing Block Watch training in partnership with the Kansas City Police Department, funded through Justice Assistance Grant. Its training, in concert with a KCPD Community Interaction Officer, is to encourage neighbors to "be watchful," reporting suspicious activity on unoccupied property in their neighborhoods. Multiple neighborhoods can be trained at a time, so the COVC recommendation could help encourage the identification of potential leaders in each block to be trained to build their own neighborhoods.

Many pilot efforts are being explored by the Neighborhood and Housing Services Department. Neighborhoods should continue to be encouraged to develop ideas that they can implement, including partnerships with police and prosecutors.

2. To make the first recommendation successful, the Neighborhood Committee agreed that **it is vital that an individual be identified to take on the role of Commission on Violent Crime Coordinator** to implement Neighborhood, Criminal Justice and Youth-focused approaches to reduce violence. This recommendation was also identified by the Criminal Justice Committee. Some of the duties of this person would be providing training; serving as a voice for unified communication to and between neighborhoods, and facilitating collaboration between different systems that can contribute to improved community safety (such as the Criminal Justice system, the City's Neighborhoods and Housing Services Department, and local school systems). In general, the Commission on Violent Crime recommends that more neighborhoods adopt the successful strategies currently being implemented by the Neighborhood and Housing Services Department, see strategies, on a stratified basis that matches need and readiness. Having one person who works closely with all neighborhoods will also advance the Adopt-A-Neighborhood concept first proposed in 2006, which would match strong, experienced neighborhoods with those that are more newly organized.

Other approaches discussed by the Neighborhoods Committee:

3. **Creation of Neighborhood Accountability Boards**, which can be responsible for managing a Restorative Justice process. This strategy, which the City Prosecutor has already begun with the creation of Neighborhood Accountability Boards in East patrol, is constructed with the cooperation of courts as an alternative to prosecution. Neighborhoods volunteer to go through training and cases that fit the model can be referred for disposition. The victim and the offender come together to talk about the impact of the violation on the neighborhood and the individual. If no signed agreement ensues with the agreement of both parties the case goes back to the judicial system for resolution. For the offender, the Restorative Justice alternative could result in community service and restitution. (Note: Vineyard Neighborhood is currently scheduled for training in Restorative Justice, which can be used as a test of the model before replication). Neighborhoods that have successfully implemented Neighborhood Accountability Boards have been found to have lower recidivism rates. If the efforts in Kansas City are as successful as those elsewhere, the Committee recommends that funding be allocated within the City budget and sought from other sources to expand the program to more neighborhoods, and other judicial systems.
4. **Conflict Mediation** to resolve neighborhood issues before they escalate. This expansion of Conflict Mediation was recommended in the 2006 report, but the City-sponsored Resolution/Mediation program has been discontinued since that time.
5. Develop an **anti-violence Public Service Announcement (PSA) campaign** involving youth, to develop ideas to counter the prevailing culture of violence being an acceptable method of addressing conflict. There have been few concerted campaigns in Kansas City targeting violent crime other than domestic violence. One of the goals of the recommended campaign would be to elevate the issue of violence to the priority level it deserves as a citywide, public health issue. The major feature of this recommendation is the youth-led creation of anti-violence PSAs. Nationally, many cities (including St. Louis, Chicago, New York and some college campuses) have used youth-led anti-violence PSAs, addressing community violence, bullying, and violence against gays. Some of these have enjoyed sustained activity and involvement by youth in ongoing social media efforts. Since these efforts are youth-led, they are followed by youth, lead to the involvement of additional youth, and address issues important to youth. The campaign recommended by the Neighborhoods committee envisions combining arts/self-expression with neighborhood resources to provide anti-violence messaging. This recommendation would also identify, support, and empower neighborhood groups that are currently involved in violence reduction to recruit and encourage area youth to develop anti-violence messaging using poetry, spoken word, plays, and other art forms and provide forums for expression.

Youth Committee Recommendations:

Youth represent the hope of a community, so addressing ways to strengthen their development by concentrated City attention is important. The Youth Committee held eight (8) separate meetings, and sought input from the following experts who spoke to the COVC or the committee interviewed them individually:

Doug Wisher, KCPD Director of Community Support Division

Sgt. Darrel Rocker, KCPD Sgt.
Dr. Luis Cordoba, Kansas City MO School District Executive Director of Student Support
Bridgette Nicholson, KCMSD Social worker
Operation Breakthrough inner city bus tour "the city you never see"
Northeast High School, ROTC students
Dr. Leigh Anne Taylor Knight, Kansas City Area Education Research Consortium

One overarching recommendation for Youth again emerged: **Implement an ongoing Youth Consortium and a Comprehensive Youth Master Plan.** This recommendation is based on the successful model of the Child & Youth Master Plan created for Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County. Key to the continued progress on this plan was the assignment of a high level staff person in the Nashville Mayor's office. The Coordinator of the COVC would serve this role, with responsibility for convening the Youth Consortium and coordination of the myriad partners involved in plan construction and work on its components. Participants should include youth, representatives from youth serving agencies, educators (including early child educators), juvenile justice, teen health, and parent groups. The plan should address these priority objectives:

1. **Safety** - Reduce the number of children and youth exposed to violence, including family violence. The United States Justice Department recognizes the importance of Children Exposed to Violence, and Kansas City should do the same.
2. **Out of School Time** – Increase access and participation of children and youth in safe, high quality, developmentally appropriate out-of-school time activities. These out-of-school activities should include a balance of academic, creative and physical activity programs. They need to provide learning opportunities that also provide life and soft skills youth need to succeed. For those aged pre-teen and older, programs should include opportunities for youth to contribute to their communities through service learning while developing leadership. For this recommendation to be realized, parents and youth need to be aware of what is offered in the community in out-of-school time.

Currently, these opportunities are not uniformly available throughout the City—some school districts have after-school programs and some programs are in youth serving agencies that are not evenly distributed geographically. Planned development should keep the availability of youth opportunities in mind.

3. **Stability** – Increase the chances for stability of youth that can help them develop into successful adults. This involves:
 - ◆ Increasing number of youth who experience active consistent parenting, positive communication and emotional support from their families:
 - ◆ Increasing the number of children, youth, and families who are literate.
 - ◆ Increasing the number of youth who are exposed to and have access to needed school, community and social supports.
 - ◆ Decreasing the number of youth committing or are victims of delinquent acts.
 - ◆ Decreasing the number of youth who are influenced by gang culture.

It is obvious that creating a seamless supportive environment that addresses these goals requires the cooperation and coordination of those interested in the welfare of youth that would be accomplished in the Youth Consortium and Comprehensive Youth Plan.

Education Committee Recommendations

To develop strong youth, addressing the impediments to education city-wide is necessary. Recognizing that for youth to learn, they must first attend school regularly. The Education Committee developed two Recommendations that address children and youth who are at particular risk for poor school attendance, impeding their possibilities for school success:

1. The development of a "city-wide" **Truancy/Suspension/Discipline policy** which would then result in a Truancy/Suspension/Discipline **program**. The COVC recommends that all Kansas City school districts (including private and charter schools) address truancy consistent with the federally promoted model proposed by the US Departments of Education and Justice. This model provides elements of a comprehensive community and educational strategy to combat truancy. The federal model is in the process of being thoroughly evaluated, but it has shown some evidence of reducing crime during school hours where it has been fully implemented. Relevant elements in the federal model:
 - Involve parents in all truancy prevention activities.
 - Ensure that students face firm sanctions for truancy.
 - Create meaningful incentives for parental responsibility.

We are pleased to note that this recommendation has already been recently addressed by the adoption of a Truancy ordinance by the Kansas City, Missouri City Council, which provides the necessary enforcement teeth to complement the ability of schools to identify truant students and provide an incentive for their families to address the problem of truancy. The Kansas City Missouri School District's Office of Student Support and Community Services, created a task force to design policies and implementation. With the assistance of the Kansas City Police Department, the Kansas City Prosecutor's Office, Kansas City Municipal Court, Jackson County Family Court and Jackson County COMBAT, the Kansas City Missouri School District has begun pilot Truancy reduction efforts, including Truancy Court at one high school. It is anticipated that these initiatives will begin to be implemented throughout the district in 2013. Other school districts in the City are examining ways that they can take advantage of the City's Truancy ordinance.

The committee further recommends the adoption of policies and practices that utilize restorative discipline to reduce suspensions and drop out rate. This includes faculty and staff training, addition of conflict resolution skills, mediation, and learning circles.

It is also recommended that each district establish "**Continual Learning Suspensions**," whereby students who were suspended from school for three days or more would be required to spend one day at home for a cooling off period. After the cooling off period the student would spend the three day suspension or more at their designated alternative school. The student would then be placed back into his/her school upon completion of the "**Continual Learning Suspension**," which

would include these benefits that would be incorporated into policies and practices of individual school districts. Benefits:

- ◆ Continuous learning
- ◆ Increased adult supervision
- ◆ Reduction in further conflicts
- ◆ Students received conflict resolution support,
- ◆ Decrease in credit loss
- ◆ Increase in graduation
- ◆ Increase in Average Daily Attendance (ADA)
 - An incentive would be an increase in the amount of funding recovered for Average Daily Attendance (ADA) and ultimately, better performance, and graduation rates.
- ◆ Decrease in Out of School Suspensions (OSS)
 - We strongly recommend those students who receive an OSS be mandated to spend that time reporting to an alternative school. The school would offer relevant academic content based on the student's grade level and counseling support in hopes of resolving possible future conflicts. We also encourage that students be offered greater access to conflict resolution and restorative justice support. To ready schools for the use of these strategies, counselors and teachers must be equipped with the tools necessary to conduct sessions with the purpose of improving communication and easing tensions before they escalate into a confrontation.

2. Expanded Alternative School/Diploma Options

Alternative options have been described in detail in a Choice Learning Centers Proposal prepared by the Kansas City Missouri School District June 2010. The Kansas City School District has stated an intention to re-institute two alternative schools: one at the elementary level and one at the secondary level

The Education Committee recommends that local school districts (primarily Kansas City Missouri School District, Hickman Mills School District and Center School District) and charter schools first set up alternative school options for students. The outcome of these Alternative School Centers will be retaining suspended students in a school setting instead of exposing them to the hazards of unsupervised time out of school. In addition, being in a school setting will provide students with enhanced time spent on education so that they are able to obtain a diploma, as opposed to becoming comfortable with not being in school. The students' time at the alternative site would be supported by academic instruction and conflict resolution. We recommend that the districts offer more than one alternative school option, strategically using separate sites to separate students who are involved in conflicts. The objectives for this recommendation (which could easily be assessed for effectiveness) would be as follows:

- ◆ Average Daily Attendance at par with surrounding, metropolitan districts
- ◆ Graduation at par with surrounding districts

The Education Committee recognizes that the City of Kansas City is served by numerous school districts and charter schools. Therefore, its remaining recommendations support improving the continuum of education for all children and youth:

3. Kindergarten Readiness.

Standards for children entering Kindergarten are too often higher than the readiness of the children presenting themselves at the schoolhouse door. The importance of early childhood education, in addition to quality care, has become more apparent than ever as a first step to a lifetime of success in learning. However, many parents assume that they cannot afford high quality early education, and Head start has not been expanded to the needed levels. The City does not have direct responsibility for early education, but we recommend that the City continue to support this funding at the state and federal levels.

Kindergarten readiness should include components of education, such as literacy via partnerships with local libraries, peer mentor programs with local school-aged students, and additional support for before/after school and summer school programs. Ideally, there should be wrap-around services to support the child's health such as partnering with dental clinics, immunizations and clinics that offer speech/language therapy, occupational and physical therapy as well as psycho-social therapy. Parents and families need support in connecting with schools' Kindergarten Readiness requirements:

- ◆ Pre-Kindergarten programs should offer stimulating activities and learning experiences to help prepare children for success in Kindergarten and beyond.
- ◆ Children should attend a full-day program with small class sizes and certified teachers.
- ◆ Children should participate in fun and engaging daily lessons designed to build language, literacy, math, science and other skills.
- ◆ Socializing skills should be introduced for children in the culture and academic language of school.
- ◆ Children should be involved in regular activities that offer physical development.

4. Reading Readiness.

At the individual level, low-literacy skills have an impact on people's ability to support themselves and their families. Low literacy is associated with low income, poor health and social. At the economic and societal level, how literacy skills can be a barrier to having the highly skilled productive work-force and strong thriving communities that underpin a high standard of living. Mayor Sly James has drawn attention to the importance of the reading level of Kansas City children, citing that only a third of our city's third graders read at a proficient level. His Turn the Page initiative galvanizes "collective community action to achieve reading proficiency" for third graders. Others, such as the Kansas City Freedom School, have also taken up this call to action. As a City, the Commission on Violent Crime encourages all citizens to become involved in improving child and family literacy, by either taking advantage of the existing literacy efforts, or supporting these initiatives and other ways to do their part.

- ◆ Family literacy nights supported by school family involvement specialist
- ◆ Support and expansion of adult literacy programs

5. Post-Secondary Readiness.

The Commission on Violent Crime's Education Committee recommends that all schools in Kansas City place a stronger emphasis on post-secondary outcomes for its students. Placing importance on post-secondary outcomes with a clear emphasis on post-secondary goals is essential for increasing students' opportunities for a successful transition from their high-school setting for intentional and sustainable professional options following High School graduation. Post-Secondary Planning can:

- ◆ Prepare students to lead productive and independent adult lives
- ◆ Provide students with effective transition services in order to promote post-secondary employment and education/training
- ◆ Meet the unique needs of individual students in a diverse urban setting such as the Kansas City metro area
- ◆ Provide resources to parents, districts, community agencies, and other interested stakeholders;

Post-Secondary planning is life planning supported by transition planning, individual prescriptive assessment and engagement. As a set of coordinated activities, transition services should focus on improving the academic and functional achievement of students, whether these activities are provided through specially designed instruction or related services, leading students to post-secondary activities. Discussions and planning should begin by a student's 8th grade year and follow a series of pathways leading to post-secondary goal achievement. Options should include vocational, technical skills, and higher education. Early planning will result in future success...for our children and our community.

Champions, Partners, and Possible Funding Resources

It is fortunate that many of the necessary partnerships for the Criminal Justice Recommendations already exist. As discussed, police and prosecutors are working together on many strategies, and many pilot efforts also involve neighborhoods. Federal funds are regularly sought from the Criminal Justice system and have been successfully applied to such efforts.

Expected champions of Neighborhood recommendations include the KC Chamber of Commerce/United Way's "Big 5" Urban Neighborhood Initiative; community groups such as the Concerned Clergy, the Ad Hoc Group against Crime, and Community Creating Opportunity; the Kansas City Neighborhood and Housing Department, and local social service agencies. Champions for the public health strategies include the KC Health Department, local hospitals, and health insurers; also KC arts community, local universities, and local arts foundations. It is anticipated that coordination with existing Neighborhood and Housing Services operations could be accomplished within the current City structure, or it may be necessary to redirect some related functions to the Commission on Violent Crime Coordinator. Other funding could be sought by those funders with interests in violence reduction.

In his State of the City address for 2013, the Mayor revealed plans to assess an additional \$5 on municipal parking fines to be used for youth purposes. This is a bold, refreshing recognition that the youth of Kansas City deserve concentrated attention that sometimes needs to be funded by our City. The City has a history of coming together to partner for the good of youth, as evidenced by the many agencies that have partnered in the past (often with the City) to produce safe summers for youth, ongoing quality training for Youth Workers, and opportunities to develop youth leadership. Possible Champions/Partners for the strategies outlined by the Youth Committee include local foundations, school, the juvenile justice system, government, and youth serving agencies, researchers, and neighborhood and parent groups— in short, anyone with an interest in the success of our youth.

Possible Champions/Partners of Education strategies include all Kansas City school districts; the Jackson County Family Court; Charter Schools; Parent Teachers Associations; Chambers of Commerce; and the Kansas City Police Department. Funding for could be provided by school districts through from the State of Missouri (*Missouri Revised Statutes Chapter 167 Pupils and Special Services Section 167.091: "The board may also establish and maintain from the public school funds, either within or without its district, a parental school for the care and education of any child resident of the school district and committed to it by a juvenile court under the provisions of section 211.181. For every child committed to the school there shall be paid to the board of education out of the treasury of the city or county the sum of ten dollars per month for the support, maintenance, clothing and other expenses of the child from the time of its entrance into the school until its discharge there from."*). Increasing ADA will increase the funding for which affected districts and schools can be reimbursed.

Evaluating Effectiveness

The newly charged Commission on Violent Crime will construct a Logic Model based on its prioritized plan of implementation, similar to the model on page 12 that was used to assess local contributors to violence so that implementation, outputs and outcomes can be tracked.

Initiative - 2013	Outputs from Implementation	Outcomes of Initiative
Standing COVC		
COVC Coordinator		
Criminal Justice		
Policies to prevent weapons and shootings near schools		
Programs to improve the success of ex-offenders		
Neighbors		
Develop and strengthen neighborhoods, block by block.		
Creation of Neighborhood Accountability Boards		
Youth		
Establish Youth Consortium and Comprehensive Youth Master Plan		
Safety		
Out of School Time		
Stability		
Education		
Truancy, Suspension and Discipline Programs		
Expanded Alternative School and Diploma options		
Kindergarten Readiness		
Reading Readiness		
Post-Secondary Readiness		

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Kansas City, Missouri Commission on Violent Crime Final Report June 2006

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Segregation: Neighborhood Exposure by Race and Dissimilarity Indexes. **CensusScope**, December 14, 2010, <http://www.censusscope.org/segregation.html>

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Job Description – Coordinator, Commission on Violent Crime

Excerpt from Examining Offender Reentry in Metropolitan Kansas City: A Gaps Analysis

Commission on Violent Crime Member Biographies

Charles E. Atwell is in private practice at Foland, Wickens, Eisfelder, Roper and Hofer. Until December 2012 he served as Presiding Judge of the 16th Judicial Circuit Court of Jackson County Missouri. He taught high school for several years after graduating from the University of Kansas in 1972 with a degree in secondary education, before receiving his law degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 1978. He has also worked as an assistant Jackson County prosecutor and as an assistant U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Missouri. He was a trial attorney with emphasis on criminal defense when he was appointed to the bench in 1996 by Gov. Mel Carnahan. He has also served as an Adjunct Faculty member at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law.

Richard Bryant is a lawyer in Kansas City who has practiced for over 30 years and is licensed in Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Washington DC, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. He serves on the National Executive Committee for the FBI National Citizens Academy Alumni Association as General Counsel and Treasurer, and is also the local Board Treasurer. This Association works closely with the FBI at each of its 59 field offices to establish strong community relations with area residents, business owners and law enforcement. He is President-Elect of the Missouri Society of the Sons of the American Revolution and a Knight Templar. He has served as a police legal advisor for Lenexa and Westwood, Kansas, and as the Administrative Hearing Officer for the Housing Authority of Kansas City, Missouri for over 20 years, hearing cases involving Section 8 and public housing disputes. He formerly Chaired an *ad hoc* City Council committee considering matters involving the prosecution of drug crimes in city and state court.

Dr. Stacey Daniels-Young is Director of Jackson County's COMBAT and responsible for coordinating the law enforcement, prevention, and treatment approaches to reducing substance abuse and violent crime of the Community Backed Anti-Drug Tax. She has also served as President/CEO at the Black Health Care Coalition, a non-profit that provides health education and prevention for medically underserved persons and was the Director of Research and Evaluation for 15 years at the Ewing M. Kauffman Foundation. She has a Ph.D. in Psychology and has conducted research in the prevention of alcohol and other drug abuse, homicide and teen pregnancy. She has also taught in the Psychology and Sociology departments of several area colleges and universities.

William D. Dowdell is a community activist and researcher, having graduated from the College of Saint Scholastica and University of Minnesota Duluth, in Russian Language and History with a B.A. and the University of Kansas where he did his graduate studies in Public Policy and Eastern European Studies. Currently, Mr. Dowdell is pursuing an advanced degree in education at the University of Missouri Kansas City. He served as the Director of Males2Men for Kauffman Scholars Inc. He has worked as a political strategist, has served on the Truancy Task Force for the Kansas City Missouri School District and worked on truancy reduction approaches with the Kansas City Missouri City Council. In addition, he serves as Board Treasurer for Hope Academy Charter Schools, is South Hyde Park Representative for the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association and is a member of 100 Black Men of Kansas City. He is a recipient of the 2012 Urban Summit Young Professionals annual award.

C. Stan Henry is a Kansas City native who has lived in neighborhoods throughout the City. He has become deeply woven into Kansas City's fabric through nearly 20 years as the General Manager of the Hurricane in Westport and as the Manager of Community Outreach and CID Operation for the MainCor-Main Street Community Improvement District. He is a member of the Regulated Industries

Alcohol Advisory Group representing neighborhoods of the 4th City Council district, the Homeless Task Force (Law Enforcement Judicial Subcommittee), former Board of Trustees of the All Souls Unitarian Church, and former Board Member of the Walk in Westport Association.

Rodney Knott, Executive Director of ReEngage, Inc., is a local leader and resource in fatherhood initiatives in Kansas City. Mr. Knott has an extensive background in working with men and juveniles in both Kansas City, MO and KS, Atlanta, and St. Louis. His program seeks to combine manhood and work ethics training to a population that has been underserved and difficult to engage, including fatherless males and the reentry population are a couple that come to mind. He has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Management with a minor in Marketing from the University of Kansas.

Lora McDonald grew up in rural Missouri and received a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from the University of Missouri. She has worked for public and private organizations including the Division of Family Services, The Children's Place, Metro Lutheran Ministry, and Cross-Lines Community Outreach, providing both direct service and macro level program development and administration. She started the Coalition of Homeless Youth Service Providers and, at the Kansas City Metropolitan Crime Commission, organized the Kansas City Metropolitan Reentry Coalition, the nation's first bi-state multi-level public/private coalition to address a broad range of topics related to prisoner reentry. In August of 2009, she completed National Leadership Training with Gamaliel Foundation of Chicago (whose most renowned former affiliate leader and trainer is President Barack Obama). In 2012 she became Executive Director of MORE2, "more-squared," Metro Organization for Racial and Economic Equity.

Sister Rose McLarney is an Adjunct Faculty member at Avila University, teaching Restorative Justice. She has 25 years of experience, including strategic planning and serving as a member of the leadership team of the Sisters of St Joseph of Carondelet. She has also served as Executive Director of the Center for Women in Transition, a prisoner re entry program and in the Catholic Charities of Kansas City TurnAround prisoner re-entry program. Her community and civic involvement has included serving on the Boards of Directors of St. Teresa Academy, Fontbonne University and the Missouri Association of Social Welfare; and Co-chair of the Missouri Restorative Justice Coalition.

Rev. John Modest Miles was licensed as a minister in 1963 at Paradise Baptist Church in Los Angeles, California at the age of 18. He served as pastor of churches in Detroit, Michigan and Little Rock, Arkansas before coming to Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church in 1987. He was also a teacher in the Little Rock Public School System and an instructor at Arkansas Baptist College. Rev. Miles is currently a Chaplain for the Kansas City Police Department, and serves on numerous civic and community boards. He is married to Mrs. Jeanette Richard Miles and they have three children.

Gene Morgan began his career in corrections in 1969 when he was employed by the Jackson County Juvenile Court. He worked 17 years as a Superintendent with the Missouri Department of Corrections and 20 years as an Executive at the Kansas City Community Center serving as President from 1996 until his retirement in 2010. He graduated cum laude from Rockhurst College in 1968 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration. He also has a Master of Science degree in Corrections from Central Missouri State University and a Masters of Public Administration from the University of Missouri at Kansas City. Mr. Morgan is a member of the COMBAT Commission and is an instructor in correctional courses at Penn Valley Community College.

Jalilah Otto serves as a Special Assistant United States Attorney with the United States Attorney's Office in the Western District of Missouri. Since 2010, she has focused on prosecuting narcotic and violent gang offenses in Kansas City and St. Joseph. Prior to this she was as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney with the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office, prosecuting homicides, assaults, robberies, and other violent offenses. She has also served as a judicial law clerk at the Missouri Court of Appeals, Western District. She holds membership in several community and legal organizations and currently serves as the chair of the Criminal Law Committee of the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association, and is on the Kansas City Municipal Officials Ethics Commission. A native of Kansas City, she serves on the boards of the Kansas City Youth Court and Awesome Ambitions. Ms. Otto received a Bachelor of Arts from Tulane University with majors in both Communications and Political Science, a Juris Doctorate from the University of Missouri, Columbia School of Law, and has studied extensively abroad.

Rachel Riley has experience in business management, as well as grassroots community crime reduction. She has worked with diverse communities, youth, police, prosecutors, and clergy in efforts to reduce gang and drug influences in neighborhoods. She has also worked with neighborhood organizations in implementing prevention plans to bring youth programs, jobs, housing and education to poverty-stricken areas.

Sister Berta Sailer is a long term, tireless advocate for Missouri children and families. In 1971, she and Sister Corita Bussanmas co-founded Operation Breakthrough to provide childcare and other social services for working-poor families in Kansas City. This not-for-profit agency is now the largest single-site childcare center in Missouri, caring for more than 600 children each weekday who come from homeless shelters, foster homes and struggling single parent families. She and co-founder Sister Corita have gone beyond their work at Operation Breakthrough and are licensed foster parents to and have adopted four children ranging in age from 9 to 16. Many have been motivated by Sr. Berta to act on behalf of children.

Angela Torres has a long history working in both the business and not-for-profit sectors. Until 2012 she worked at Don Bosco, where, as Community Organizer, she gained detailed knowledge of Kansas City Northeast communities and their needs. While Director of Youth Services she led the Commission on Violent Crime's Youth Committee. She now works in community outreach for Blue Cross Blue Shield, and serves on the Board of Directors for Escuela Vita Nuevo Charter School.

Dr. Marjorie Williams became Hickman Mills School District Superintendent of Schools in July 2000, and immediately took an active role in education and community issues and organizations in the Greater Kansas City. Prior to this appointment, she worked in the Kansas City Columbia and Ferguson Florissant School Districts, and as an adjunct professor with Baker, Ottawa and Kansas State Universities. After retiring in 2012, Williams founded The Marste Group, a consulting firm, specializing in organizational management services, and constructing and implementing educational programming, strategic planning, mentoring and evaluation services for school districts and businesses. She has served on various community and civic boards including the Advisory Board of the Missouri-Kansas Superintendents Forum, the Board of Directors for Kansas City Public Television (KCPT), Derrick Thomas Third and Long Foundation, The Missouri Safe Schools Advisory Board, and the Urban Superintendents of American Association. In 2012, Williams received the Outstanding Local Educator award from the National Council on Educating Black Children.

Special Acknowledgements:

Genaro Ruiz, *Senior Advisor, Mayor's Office, Community and Intergovernmental Affairs*

Kimiko Gilmore, *Assistant City Manager*

Col. Randall Hundley, *Deputy Chief, Kansas City Police Department*

Committees:

Criminal Justice

Gene Morgan
Dick Bryant
Stan Henry
Randy Hundley, Kansas City Police Department
Jalilah Otto
Sister Rose

Neighborhoods

Rodney Knott
Stan Henry
Sister Rose McLarney
Rev. John Modest Miles
Angela Torres
Gene Morgan
Rachel Riley
Randy Hundley, Kansas City Police Department

Youth

Sister Rose McLarney
Sister Berta Sailer
David Watsula, Operation Breakthrough
Dawana Wade
Rodney Knott
Miguel Jaramillo, Synergy Services
Angela Torres
Melissa Robinson, Black Health Care Coalition

Education

Wil Dowdell
Sr. Rose McLarney
Dr. Marjorie Williams

COORDINATOR, COMMISSION ON VIOLENT CRIME
Position Description

Summary

The City of Kansas City is seeking a dynamic leader who is an experienced community organizer and/or policy advocate and has significant knowledge of and experience in Kansas City to serve as Commission on Violent Crime Coordinator.

The Coordinator is responsible for the overall management and implementation of initiatives and priorities of the Commission on Violent Crime. The position is unique in that its approach to public safety requires criminal justice, neighborhood and youth priorities working together to create safe streets and strong communities. The Commission on Violent Crime's goal is to produce a city in which police and neighborhoods work toward the same goal of public safety.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

1. Serve as staff support to the Commission on Violent Crime, including organizing regular meetings; implementing the priorities of the COVC and providing status updates; and establishing work groups to advance issues of criminal justice, neighborhoods, youth and education.
2. Maintain regular contact with Neighborhood volunteer leadership to communicate the status of crime and crime reduction accomplishments.
3. Maintain regular communication with the Kansas City Police Department to keep apprised of public safety status and operations related to the COVC priorities. Establish and maintain regular communication with other criminal justice system representatives working on similar issues.
4. Serve as a communications source and distributor of information between neighborhoods and City Hall.
5. Coordinate criminal justice and neighborhood efforts to reduce crime and enhance safe communities. This includes criminal justice agencies/entities, both public and private, and assisting in any way possible in co-coordinating the efforts of these agencies/entities.
6. Advance issues to strengthen neighborhoods such as Adopt-A-Neighborhood, Neighborhood Accountability Boards and neighborhood training opportunities.
7. Coordinate youth serving agencies to produce Youth Master Plan, with commitments from necessary parties.
8. Seek funding for implementation of COVC initiatives through submission of grants and partnerships with others with similar goals.

Examining Offender Reentry in Metropolitan Kansas City: A Gaps Analysis

Program Gaps

- **Transitional Employment** - Research shows that high degree of correlation exists between unemployment and recidivism. Those who are at risk of re-offending tend to be individuals who have not developed their ability to find and especially keep a job. Transitional jobs pay an hourly wage, engage in real work projects, and offer wrap around services while teaching participants the skills they need to obtain and retain full time employment. These skills include responding to supervision, punctuality and attendance and being a part of a professional team. The most successful transitional jobs programs perform contract work, as not-for-profits for municipalities (e.g., buffing floors at city hall, mowing vacant lots, working with parks departments, etc.). Although transitional jobs programs exist throughout metro Kansas City, all are in need of expanding capacity.
- **Life Skills/ Cognitive Development** - Cognitive/ Behavioral Programs have been demonstrated to have the best results as compared to all other types of interventions if they're administered according to research principles. In order to be effective, programs need to offer approximately 200 contact hours to students (Edward Latessa). Missouri does not now ensure a high number of cognitive contact hours but does offer Cognitive Behavioral Programming, called Pathways, to impact criminal thinking, both in prison and in community. More Life Skills/Cognitive Development programming is especially helpful in assisting ex-offenders improve job retention.
- **Child Support Programs** - Child support can be debilitating to a person who is trying to get their life on the right track. A former federal program, known as Parents-Fare-Share, offered noncustodial parents in child support debt the opportunity to have some debt waived and other incentives for maintaining regular payments and working with a case manager. This government program was eliminated due to budget cutbacks in 2010. This program or one much like it should be considered for refunding. Further, this group recommends the State of Missouri consider a partnership with Child Support Enforcement that would allow those entering into incarceration to immediately (upon booking) request a stop to their accrual of payments and respond to other child support related situations (missing court dates, etc.). Governor Nixon signed an Executive Order in 2009 which required all the state departments to work together on reducing recidivism; the MO Department of Corrections and the Department of Social Service's Child Support Division could model an approach whereby the state could further develop a recidivism reducing partnership between these departments.

Basic Resource Gaps

- **Transportation** - The cost of transportation is high and Kansas City's transit system fails to get riders too many centers of employment around the metropolitan area. One municipality in Ohio offers a promising solution to temporary transportation for ex-offenders by providing a release from prison ID card that also serves as a 30 day bus pass upon release; if adopted in this area, the newly released offender could travel easily to employment destinations that are on bus routes.
- **Housing for Mentally Ill Offenders** - In 2010, as a result of a partnership between the Missouri Department of Corrections and the Department of Mental Health, the first and only community residential facility for up to 20 offenders with a mental health disorder was opened. It is know as Benton Arms. Although filling a much needed service, Benton Arms doesn't have the capacity to meet the needs of everyone in the metropolitan area and capacity should be expanded by replicating this program throughout the metro.

Public Policy Gaps

- **Housing** - Housing authorities make local decisions whether to rent to people with felonies. The Housing Authority of Kansas City, Kansas has made the greatest strides in this area in terms of renting to people with criminal histories. Those permanently barred from housing include people convicted of a sex offense and those who have manufactured drugs on public housing property or other HUD property in the past. An edict from President Obama in the past year encourages local housing authorities to consider ways to open doors to people with criminal histories. Local housing authorities should explore ways to better create opportunities for residents with criminal convictions while remaining mindful of the safety of all their residents.

Systemic Gaps within the Missouri Department of Corrections

- **Identification and Legal Documents** - The Missouri correctional system has means to ensure everyone leaves their facilities with identification documents as a part of their discharge; yet, Missouri offenders continue to leave some facilities without proper identification documents. This delays the timeframe when these persons can become employed, seek housing or access other community agency benefits.
- **Returning without Adequate Supply of Meds** - Some offenders leave jail or prison with a 30 day or less supply of mental health or physical health medications. In some cases, it takes in excess of this time frame to meet with a physician in the community. It is dangerous to the individual's health and sometimes to community safety for the person to be off of needed medication for any length of time. This has been an ongoing and historical problem.
- **Social Security** - The Social Security Administration will not allow offenders to apply for benefits while in a community-based facility. When offenders return to the community and reside at the state funded halfway house they cannot apply for Social Security or Social Security Disability income. This is, at times, the person's only source of income and the only way they can find suitable housing or get medication. Some offenders ultimately end up returning to prison from the halfway house as a result.
- **Improved Access to Workforce Centers** - Offenders sometimes find it difficult to access employment as private employers do not wish to employ people with criminal histories. It would be ideal to offer a WIA One Stop Career Center ONLY for people with criminal histories in addition to the other facilities. Both Baltimore and Philadelphia have examples of such centers.