



RESEARCH REPORT

# Assessment of the Los Angeles Community Safety Partnership

*Jesse Jannetta*

URBAN INSTITUTE

*Meagan Cahill*

URBAN INSTITUTE

*Samantha Lowry*

URBAN INSTITUTE

*Emily Tiry*

URBAN INSTITUTE

*Diane Terry*

HARDER+COMPANY

*with*

*Lorraine Park*

HARDER+COMPANY

*Alfonso Martin*

HARDER+COMPANY

*Jenny Moore*

HARDER+COMPANY

*November 2014*



## ABOUT THE URBAN INSTITUTE

The nonprofit Urban Institute is dedicated to elevating the debate on social and economic policy. For nearly five decades, Urban scholars have conducted research and offered evidence-based solutions that improve lives and strengthen communities across a rapidly urbanizing world. Their objective research helps expand opportunities for all, reduce hardship among the most vulnerable, and strengthen the effectiveness of the public sector.

## ABOUT HARDER+COMPANY

Harder+Company Community Research is a leading research, evaluation, and planning firm that works exclusively with the social sector. Since 1986, we have served hundreds of nonprofit, philanthropic, and public sector clients—providing them with the information and tools they need to do their work effectively. With offices in San Francisco, Davis, San Diego, and Los Angeles, we are locally and nationally recognized for work that is rigorous, policy-relevant, and practical.

# Contents

<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>vi</b>
Crime and Perceptions of Safety	vi
Police-Community Relations	vii
Community Engagement and Neighborhood Cohesion	viii
Youth Outcomes	ix
Recommendations	ix
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
The Community Safety Partnership	1
Methodology	2
Community Crime and Safety Focus Groups	3
CSP Programming Focus Groups	4
CSP Stakeholder and Partner Interviews	5
Youth Risk Factors	6
Crime Trend Analysis	6
Community-level Public Safety Data	6
Community-level Analysis	7
<b>Defining the Community Safety Partnership</b>	<b>8</b>
The CSP Approach	8
CSP Goals	8
CSP Partners and Roles	9
The Role of LAPD	9
Other CSP Roles	11
Leadership	12
Communication Among Partners	13
CSP Programming	13
The CSP Logic Model	17
<b>Crime Trends in CSP Sites</b>	<b>19</b>
Crime Trend Analysis	20
Trends in the CSP Sites	20
Trends in CSP Sites Relative to Comparison Sites	24
Analyzing the Differences Between CSP and Comparison Sites	26
HACLA Emergency Transfers	28

<b>Perceptions of Safety</b>	<b>30</b>
Resident and Stakeholder Perceptions of Community Safety	30
Perceptions of Safety	30
Perceptions of the Causes of Crime	31
Perceptions on Factors Improving Safety	32
<b>Police-Community Relations</b>	<b>33</b>
Resident Views of the Police	33
Resident Distrust of the POLice	33
Crime Reporting	35
Support for the Police	35
CSP and Police-Community Relationships	36
Resident Views of CSP's Effect on Police-Community Relationships	36
CSP Stakeholder Views on Police-Community Relations	37
<b>Community Engagement and Neighborhood Cohesion</b>	<b>40</b>
Neighborhood Cohesion and Community Engagement in the CSP Sites	40
Views of HACLA'S ROLE in the Community	40
Neighborhood Cohesion and Community Engagement in the Comparison Sites	41
Racial/Ethnic Tensions	42
CSP Impact on Neighborhood Cohesion and Community Engagement	43
Parental Involvement	44
<b>Youth Engagement</b>	<b>45</b>
Youth Risk Factors	45
CSP Engagement with Youth	47
Mentorship and Positive Youth Relationships	47
School Performance	48
<b>Suggestions for Strengthening CSP</b>	<b>49</b>
Sustaining CSP	51
<b>Conclusion and Recommendations</b>	<b>53</b>
CSP Successes	53
CSP Challenges	54
Recommendations	56
<b>Notes</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Appendix A: Focus Group Respondent Characteristics</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Appendix B: Watt Youth Survey Respondent Demographics</b>	<b>61</b>

# Acknowledgments

This assessment was supported by funding from the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles. The authors wish to thank HACLA, LAPD, the GRYD Office, and all the stakeholder and resident participants whose perspectives and honesty were invaluable in understanding the Community Safety Partnership.

Urban strives for the highest standards of integrity and quality in its research, analyses, and policy recommendations. Urban scholars believe that independence, rigor, and transparency are essential to upholding those values. Funders do not determine research findings or influence scholars' conclusions. As an organization, the Urban Institute does not take positions on issues. Urban scholars and experts are independent and empowered to share their evidence-based views and recommendations shaped by research.

The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees, or its funders.

# Executive Summary

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) was formed in November 2011 as a collaboration between the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). The goals of the partnership are to promote safe living environments and improve public safety within public housing developments in the Watts and Boyle Heights neighborhoods of Los Angeles and to develop a positive relationship between residents and the LAPD. To assess the success of CSP in achieving these goals, the Urban Institute and Harder+Company Community Research undertook a comprehensive assessment of the program, including analysis of crime data trends, review of program materials, interviews with 49 CSP partners and stakeholders, and focus groups addressing crime and safety issues in CSP and non-CSP comparison developments (n=97) and of residents with youth involved in CSP programming (n=35).

The assessment found that CSP has realized substantial accomplishments in the four participating housing developments, in improving public safety, enhancing the relationships between police and community residents, and involving youth in positive social activities and educational enrichment programs. However, much work remains to be done to create positive relationships with the community and improve quality of life in the developments by meeting the many challenges facing these communities.

## Crime and Perceptions of Safety

Reducing crime and gang influence and increasing residents' sense of safety in the developments is a key intended outcome for CSP. To assess progress towards these goals, we identified comparison sites and analyzed gang and violent crime in CSP and comparison sites. All crime in both CSP sites and comparison developments was on a steady downward trend from 2005-2011, when CSP started. Violent crime was likewise trending downward from 2005-2011. Immediately following the start of CSP, violent crime dropped sharply in the CSP sites, while in the comparison areas it followed the same steady downward pace. Crime hot spots were persistent in and around the Watts sites.

We also conducted a simple difference-in-differences (DID) analysis, which considers the average monthly rate of crime in the CSP and comparison sites for the two years before and after CSP was implemented. Significant changes were observed in all crime, violent crime, and gang crime. All crime and violent crime both decreased significantly; violent crime dropped, on average, 4.21 crimes

## DIFFERENCE-IN-DIFFERENCES RESULTS

	CSP Sites vs. Comparison Areas	CSP Sites 1/4 mi buffer vs. Comparison Sites 1/4 mi. buffer
All Crime	-4.83*	-4.08
Violent Crime	-4.21**	-8.29*
Gang Crime	2.38*	2.33
Violent Gang Crime	0.54	-0.80
Property Crime	-1.71	3.21

\*\*Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

\*Statistically significant at the 0.1 level.

per month across all sites *over and above any drop observed in the comparison sites*. All crime dropped 4.83 crimes per month over and above what happened in the comparison sites. Gang crime also changed significantly, but it increased relative to the comparison areas instead of decreasing, by 2.38 incidents per month, which is not unexpected; officers are likely getting more information in CSP sites about gang involvement and are better able to identify gang-related crimes. We also tested the change in crime in the areas surrounding the CSP sites to test for any diffusion of benefits, finding that violent crime dropped significantly, by more than 8 crimes per month over what was experienced in the comparison areas. These results provide evidence for the fact that CSP is likely benefitting nearby areas, especially in Watts, where the CSP sites are close together.

The trend in this area has been positive: crime and violence have gone down in the CSP developments relative to other similar housing developments that do not have CSP. However, the analysis presented here is very simple and should not be used as a final answer as to the success of CSP. This information, combined with reports from the stakeholders and residents can provide a fuller picture of the overall effects that CSP had in its first two years of implementation.

## Police-Community Relations

The interview respondents and the resident focus group participants (particularly those connected to CSP programming) believe CSP is changing perceptions of police. Many residents and stakeholders noted that the way the CSP officers are working in the developments “humanize” or “put a face” to policing in a way distinctly different from the past. Many residents and stakeholders described the demonstrated commitment of CSP officers to the community-oriented mission and philosophy of CSP, who go above and beyond expectations of them to work with the community, responding to community

concerns and outreach when off-duty, and working creatively to find resources and solve community problems. Still, despite the progress made in mitigating distrust of the police, it is clear that suspicion of LAPD and its activities is persistent and deep-rooted in the developments.

In describing the reasons for this distrust, residents voiced dissatisfaction with police they perceive as unresponsive to many offenses, alongside the assertion that police over-enforce minor offenses and harass young men. In other words, the community has criticism about LAPD related to both insufficient presence and overbearing presence. A challenge of CSP work in this context is to strike the right balance between CSP Officers' community engagement and enforcement roles. Officers, other CSP stakeholders and development residents all expressed uncertainty on this point.

Residents also expressed deep concern over the confidentiality of complaints they make to LAPD and HACLA about crime or issues with other residents. There is a perception among residents that LAPD and HACLA tell residents when their neighbors have brought forward concerns or complaints about them, and a desire to avoid conflict with those neighbors specifically and to avoid being viewed negatively as a "snitch" generally makes residents reluctant to come forward with issues.

Also emerging from the assessment were the ways in which police engaging the community creates new community relations challenges. While greater communication and engagement between law enforcement and the community is desired by many residents, many residents expressed the belief that the police favor particular groups of residents, variously defined by race/ethnicity, gender or age. They also felt that police efforts to communicate with residents were for the purpose of gaining information for enforcement purposes, which was sometimes interpreted as encouraging "snitching."

Greater community engagement also contributed to CSP work feeling overwhelming for officers. CSP officers work long hours, have used their own money to support the programs they oversee, and are juggling extensive and sometimes competing duties. They also make themselves available to community members who bring forward issues, and the more relationships they build with the community, the more likely residents are to raise additional concerns. This situation raises the issue of officer burnout, a substantial threat to CSP integrity given the intent to maintain consistency in the officers assigned to developments.

## **Community Engagement and Neighborhood Cohesion**

The developments have substantial strengths in terms of resident relations with one another and activities that bring them together. However, there are also a number of challenges, including many disengaged residents and tensions between black and Latino residents. These tensions interact with

existing mistrust of LAPD and HACLA, as various actions undertaken by both are sometimes perceived as siding with one group or the other.

Many residents described a greater degree of participation in the community as a result of CSP, with space created for them to participate in RAC meetings, bring their concerns to the attention of the broader community, and work effectively to address community issues and enhance opportunities for residents, particularly the youth. At the same time, there was a common desire to increase parental engagement, to spread the community benefits of CSP and share the work of community programming to support sustainability of the program. It was also suggested that the location of many CSP youth programs outside of the developments might reduce the amount of engagement from the community.

## Youth Outcomes

Results of the Watts Youth Survey demonstrated substantial levels of challenges for youth, including the presence of gangs in their lives and involvement in delinquency. This validates the CSP focus on youth programming. Residents strongly support a focus on working with youth, and think that such programming was lacking in the developments before CSP. Stakeholders and residents describe the CSP officers as playing powerful roles in the lives of many youth in the developments through mentoring and guiding them. Many residents note that officers have gone above and beyond expectations in working to help youth thrive.

At the same time, residents saw one of the greatest shortcomings of CSP as being the lack of positive connection to older teens, who tend to experience CSP primarily through enforcement. They want to see more CSP work with older teens, and the perception that the police “harass” rather than assist older youth negatively influences resident perceptions of both the police and CSP. CSP stakeholders acknowledge that the older youth population is a particularly difficult population to engage with positively.

## Recommendations

*Clarify how CSP Officers should balance their community engagement and enforcement responsibilities.* LAPD officers, other partners, and residents view the community engagement and enforcement work of CSP officers as distinct, and to some degree competing and contradictory responsibilities. The way in which these responsibilities are integrated and complementary needs to be articulated and conveyed to CSP officers in concrete terms related to expectations of them. Once the

CSP approach to balancing these roles is clarified, it should be communicated to current CSP Officers, new CSP Officers, and CSP partners and residents of CSP developments.

Consider whether CSP expansion should be broadening or deepening. Based on the assessment, CSP is a highly promising approach and expansion seems warranted. However, there is a question about what the priority for expansion should be. There were many recommendations and suggestions regarding how CSP could be extended or deepened within the developments where CSP is already present, and there was a definite sense that CSP had not fully realized its potential in the four current sites. At the same time, the comparison area focus groups indicated that the issues CSP is intended to address are strongly present in other developments as well, which would support the extension of CSP to new areas. This tension between taking an intervention to more places and strengthening it where it already exists is common among new interventions. Given the challenge of matching CSP resources to demands on CSP in the current developments, the trade-off between enhancing CSP work in the current sites and extending the program to new places should be carefully considered.

Consider conducting more CSP youth activities within the developments. Doing more of CSP's programming and activities for youth within the developments would have a number of beneficial effects. Primary among them would be making CSP's positive youth engagement and the role of LAPD officers within it more visible to residents, who may be unaware of the extent of LAPD's role unless they have program participants in their family. This creates a dynamic in which they see enforcement activity undertaken by CSP officers much more than the community engagement activities, which contributes to the perception that CSP is not what it purports to be.

Clarify whether CSP programming should be reserved for residents of CSP developments. This emerged as a source of tension with development residents, who understand CSP to be resources dedicated to their communities, which badly need them. This does not square in their minds with allowing participation from youth outside the developments. If such participation is part of CSP's plan, this should be clarified in messaging to residents about what CSP is.

Strengthen CSP engagement with young men. Residents strongly expressed the belief that young men bear the brunt of police scrutiny and enforcement (often characterized by residents as "harassment"), and that consequently young men are particularly alienated from the police. Resident perceptions that the police continue to over-police young men in their communities undermine efforts to improve LAPD-resident relations with more positive interaction. Given its aims and the dynamics of the developments, increased attention and outreach to young men will be critical to CSP's success in forging more positive relationships with the CSP communities

*Enhance the public profile of CSP.* CSP does not have particularly strong “brand” recognition among residents who do not have youth participating in CSP programs. This was particularly noticeable relative to GRYD and SNL, which have much stronger general recognition, although both have also been operating longer than CSP. It is not clear to what degree a strong CSP brand is necessary to the success of the program, as opposed to positive recognition of what LAPD, HACLA and other partners are doing in the developments. But if a strong brand for CSP is desired, greater efforts to communicate what is (and is not) CSP will be needed.

*Commit to sustaining CSP.* Although CSP has been operating in the developments for several years, many of the community residents without direct experience of the program appear to be taking a “wait and see” attitude about whether LAPD and HACLA are committed to the new way of engaging with them that CSP represents. Given the high degree of mistrust still present among community residents, failure to stay the course on CSP could be tremendously damaging to the improvements in community connection realized by CSP.



# Introduction

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) was formed in November 2011 as a collaboration between the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). The goals of the partnership are to promote safe living environments and improve public safety within public housing developments in the Watts and Boyle Heights neighborhoods of Los Angeles and to develop a positive relationship between residents and the LAPD.

The Urban Institute (Urban), together with Harder+Company Community Research, conducted an assessment of CSP to examine its implementation process; produce a logic model that links the effort's goals, activities, and expected outcomes; provide a snapshot of resident perceptions of safety, police effectiveness, and police-community relationships in each of the four targeted sites and two comparison sites where CSP is not being implemented; deliver information on the perceived effectiveness of programming offered through CSP; and conduct a preliminary assessment of changes in a number of official measures of crime levels in and around the neighborhoods. This report details the findings of the assessment, which will be complemented by a stand-alone evaluation design that can be used to guide any future evaluation efforts of CSP.

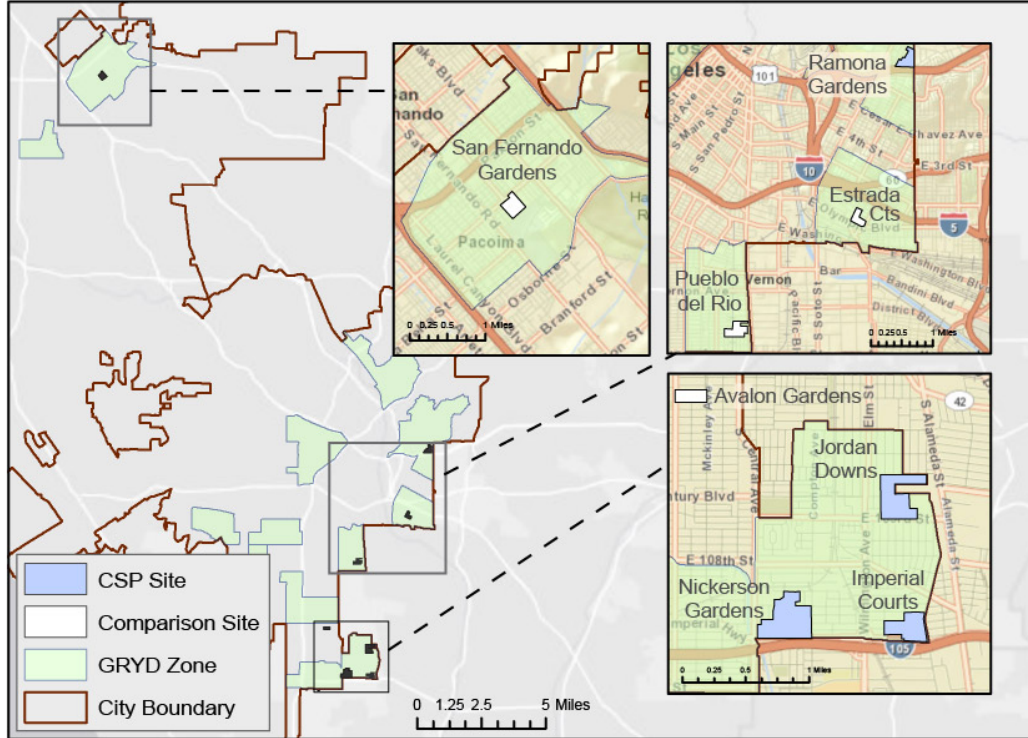
## The Community Safety Partnership

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) focuses its efforts in four public housing communities in Los Angeles: Imperial Courts, Jordan Downs, and Nickerson Gardens in Watts, and Ramona Gardens in Boyle Heights (see Figure 1). These neighborhoods have a history of gang activity and violence and a consequent need for increased community safety (Buntin 2013); that need is particularly acute within public housing communities (Advancement Project 2011). Lack of safety in housing developments can inhibit residents and children from comfortably performing daily activities, such as traveling to and from school or spending time in parks, recreational facilities, and other community spaces, impacting overall health and quality of life (Roman & Chalfin, 2008).

CSP's approach to addressing these issues is centered on community policing, in which both police officers and residents are actively involved in identifying and preventing crime. Through community policing, CSP pursues three goals (Advancement Project 2011):

1. Reduce crime, gang influence, and residents' and communities' perceptions of a lack of safety in and around the four housing developments;
2. Improve community relations with law enforcement, through increased cultural competency and improved trust; and
3. Increase youth educational achievement and improve youth academic outcomes.

FIGURE 1: MAP OF CSP SITES AND COMPARISON SITES



Note: Comparison sites were selected by research team for use in assessment.

Each CSP site has a dedicated team of full-time, specially-trained police officers who, in addition to standard policing responsibilities, work to strengthen relationships between law enforcement and residents and collaborate with HACLA, community stakeholders, and service providers to promote safe living environments. Many of these officers also develop and implement ideas for programming initiatives in collaboration with schools, youth services and intervention agencies, and recreational and park facilities.

## Methodology

This assessment is intended to produce meaningful early indicators of CSP's implementation successes and challenges and preliminary insight to its crime and violence-related impacts in the four public housing developments targeted for the program. The assessment was guided by the following questions:

- What are the main goals and objectives of CSP as carried out in each site, and is implementation proceeding as intended?

- How is CSP functioning across the four implementation sites, programmatically and in fostering communication and collaboration across the core partners?
- What are the current resident perceptions of safety and police legitimacy, resident engagement with police, and other important factors in the four CSP sites, relative to past perceptions in the CSP developments and compared to those of residents in non-CSP sites?
- To what extent is CSP affecting various measures of crime and safety at the community-wide (e.g., housing development) level?

In order to answer these questions, the research team collected information directly from community residents, families specifically involved in CSP activities, CSP service providers, and stakeholders from LAPD and HACLA. The methods used to gather information from each of these groups are discussed in greater detail below.

## Community Crime and Safety Focus Groups

Community dynamics and resident perceptions of safety were explored during focus groups held in both CSP and non-CSP sites. Participants discussed community relationships, relationships with the police, and changes in these dynamics over time. The groups were conducted with residents at the four housing developments where CSP operates: Jordan Downs, Imperial Courts, Nickerson Gardens, and Ramona Gardens. Separate focus groups were conducted in English and Spanish in each development. Similarly, focus groups were also held at Estrada Courts and Pueblo del Rio, for the purposes of comparing how community members felt about safety conditions in a housing development where CSP services are not available. Information from the focus groups with residents was compiled and major themes were extracted from the range of opinions expressed during data collection.

Recruitment for the focus groups varied at each site but typically involved joint outreach efforts with neighborhood Peace Ambassadors,<sup>1</sup> HACLA staff, and Resident Advisory Councils (RACs). Participation in the focus groups was voluntary, and residents available and willing to participate may not have been representative of residents of the developments generally. While the English-speaking groups were open to both black and Latino residents, and some had both, the English-speaking groups were predominantly (and in many cases exclusively) composed of black residents, and the Spanish-speaking groups were entirely composed of Latino residents. Nearly 100 residents participated in this component, with 63 attending the Spanish-speaking sessions and 34 attending the English-speaking sessions. Each participant was provided with a \$10 cash incentive for participating. Most of the participants at each site were women, and represented a range of age groups. Most participants had

lived in the development for over ten years, and most were parents. Participant demographics for each site are provided in Appendix A.

## **CSP Programming Focus Groups**

A second type of focus group was conducted with residents who had knowledge of CSP programming, either via their own or their children's participation in the programs/services. These focus groups gathered information on residents' awareness of and satisfaction with CSP program activities, their perceptions of the effects of the CSP programming, and their perceptions of whether outcomes for youth—educational, behavioral, or gang-related—have changed in the sites. Because parents are typically not required to attend all youth activities, it was difficult to locate and recruit them for focus groups. The research team partnered with specific CSP programs and recruited parents through advertisement at sports practices and regular group meetings. Average attendance was just under 20 participants per location (see Appendix A) and each participant was given \$10 for his/her involvement.

In Ramona Gardens, recruitment was aimed at all residents over the age of 18 who either participated themselves or had children who participated in CSP programs/activities. Flyers were shared with the community in both Spanish and English to advertise the session and CSP officers assisted with recruiting residents that would have knowledge about CSP through their family's participation in programs or other contact they may have had. This particular focus group (N=19) was bilingual, where discussions were conducted in both Spanish and English depending on the preference of the attendees. Respondents were mostly Latinas between the ages of 50-59. They were all parents, and they had lived in the development 23.8 years on average.

Focus groups in Watts targeted two large and popular CSP programs that operate across developments and in the larger community as well—the Girl Scouts and the Watts Bears football team. Parents from both groups were asked to participate and discuss their child(ren)'s involvement in either program and the subsequent impact on their families and the community. The research team spoke with a total of 16 parents for these two groups.

The parents who attended the Watts Bears focus group were predominantly Black women between the ages of 30-39. Half of the group had 1-2 children, while the other half had 3-4 children. None of the participants lived in the developments where CSP has been implemented or the comparison sites. The attendees at the Girl Scouts focus group were all Latina women ranging in age from 20-59 with fairly equal representation from each age group. Most were mothers of three or more children. Only one of the participants lived in one of the CSP program sites.

A third program was invited to help recruit its parents for a focus group, but due to scheduling conflicts, only the key leadership contributed to the discussion.

## **CSP Stakeholder and Partner Interviews**

The research team conducted nearly 50 interviews with individuals involved in CSP—as officers, supervisors, program leaders, or service providers (see Table 1). These interviews provided insight into stakeholders’ perspectives on CSP and its mission, how the goals of CSP are being achieved, and what, if anything, could be changed should CSP continue or expand. LAPD and HACLA provided the research team with rosters of contact information for all key stakeholders considered part of CSP, including representatives from HACLA, LAPD, GRYD, and community service providers.

To participate in the assessment, interested parties simply had to respond to an email invitation and schedule a time to discuss their involvement with CSP. E-mail invitations were sent several times to each candidate and follow-up calls were made if phone contact information was available. Given that the research team began with a roster of participants, the result was a purposive sample that provided insight from people who have been identified as participants or partners in CSP and cannot be generalized to represent the viewpoint of their larger organizations—HACLA or LAPD—or the community on a whole.

The identity of the participants has been anonymized and summary information is provided below. HACLA representatives included investigators, assistant and development managers, and other leadership. From LAPD, all CSP officers, sergeants, and leadership were invited to be interviewed, covering ranks from Police Officer III to Lieutenant. Officer representation from all four sites was similar, with an average response rate of 50 percent within each site. A total of 16 service providers and other types of CSP partners were interviewed.

Service providers came from a wide range of backgrounds and specialties, including sports, counseling/mentorship, gang prevention/intervention services, youth activities/field trips, and educational programs/tutoring. Service providers were also asked about their organization’s role in CSP, perspectives on the mission and how the goals of CSP are being addressed, and what, if anything, should be changed should CSP continue or expand. In addition, they provided insight on how their organization may have operated in the area without CSP and the sustainability of their current level of involvement.

TABLE 1: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS BY TYPE

Type of Organization	Number of Interviews
Housing Authority (HACLA)	9
Law Enforcement (LAPD)	24
Service Providers and Other Partners	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>

## Youth Risk Factors

As part of Urban’s evaluation of the GRYD Program, Urban and Harder staff conducted the Watts Youth Survey in four Watts housing developments—three of which are CSP sites. Data gathered through that survey are used here to provide greater detail on the risk factors and general situation of youth in the developments.<sup>2</sup> The survey was completed by 345 youth between December 2013 and April 2014. Flyers with information about the survey were sent to every unit in each of the four developments, and outreach workers encouraged youth to participate in the survey. Because the survey respondents are a convenience sample, their responses may not be representative of the entire 10- to 15-year-old population in those developments.

## Crime Trend Analysis

The final piece of the assessment included a systematic review and analysis of reported crime from LAPD. Outcomes at the community level focused on changes in public safety measures that may have occurred as a result of CSP’s implementation in the four targeted housing developments. This portion of the assessment addresses the following questions: (1) Has the implementation of CSP been related to reductions in gang crime? and (2) Are gang crime trends in CSP sites improvements over similar public housing locations where CSP is not being implemented? Results from the analyses shed light on the early impacts of CSP in targeted areas.

## COMMUNITY-LEVEL PUBLIC SAFETY DATA

The centerpiece of the community outcome data is the reported crime data collected from LAPD and the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department for the period 2005 through 2013. All records are geocoded, allowing them to be matched to CSP-targeted public housing areas and public housing sites where CSP is not being implemented. The data also support an assessment of the level of crime within a certain distance of public housing, for example within one to several blocks of a public housing site, to look for a diffusion of benefits of the program beyond where it was directed. In short, the data allow analysis at a

number of different geographic levels and shows whether the impact is in areas larger than the targeted space.

The data include violent crimes (aggravated assault, robbery, and homicide), property crime (burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, theft from vehicle, and vandalism), and any of these crimes that were flagged by LAPD or LASD as a gang-related.

Data on emergency transfers (ETRs) to other housing were requested from HACLA as an additional measure of disorder.

### COMMUNITY-LEVEL ANALYSIS

Quantitative analyses were conducted on the crime data, which included significance testing to measure the difference in crime rates before and after CSP was implemented. A variety of crime types were assessed, but the focus was on violent and gang-related crimes as specified in the research questions.

At the community level, the analytic effort included the identification of hot spots of different types of crime and a descriptive analysis of trends over time within CSP and comparison sites. The availability of data for at least two years before and following the start of CSP in 2011 enabled the research team to conduct difference-in-differences analysis for CSP sites and the selected comparison areas. This analysis compares change in crime measures for the CSP sites relative to what happens in the comparison sites.

The results contribute to our understanding of public safety levels in the targeted public housing sites and how those measures of public safety have been changing over time, beginning prior to implementation of CSP. As this is a preliminary assessment, we caution that the results may not be strongly attributable to CSP's efforts. The findings from this effort, however, do provide an early indication of the direction of trends in the targeted public housing sites.

# Defining the Community Safety Partnership

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) was developed to address crime and quality of life in housing developments through improved relationships between the police and the community. LAPD and HACLA led the CSP development process, with the assistance of the GRYD Office and the Advancement Project, which convened CSP partners and provided assistance to get the initiative underway. Initially conceived for the Jordan Downs housing development in Watts, CSP's scope was soon expanded to the three other housing developments discussed in this assessment.

## The CSP Approach

The main methods for achieving CSP's goals are community-oriented policing and increased programming and activities focused on youth in and around the participating developments. In the past, the policing approach to these neighborhoods, as described by interview subjects, was enforcement-driven, rather than focused on the dynamics that produced high crime rates in these areas, such as low levels of educational attainment, unemployment and decreased community cohesiveness. The community did not respect or trust the police. Through CSP, LAPD and HACLA were interested in reaching young people before they became involved in gang activity and developing relationships with residents to increase trust in the police.

CSP funding from HACLA pays for the CSP officers as well as programs, activities and other community engagement initiatives, although officers and other CSP partners are encouraged to seek external sources of support for such activities as well. The intent was to spend CSP monies in ways visible to the community and dedicate no more than half of CSP expenditures to officer salaries. In the first year of CSP implementation this was achieved, but in the second year a greater proportion of the CSP budget went to officer salaries, primarily due to promotions.

## CSP Goals

CSP partners expressed a very clear understanding of what the program aims to achieve, which was consistent with the three articulated CSP goals. Residents in the focus groups also understood CSP's

purpose consistent with its main goals, and similar to the stakeholders interviewed, considered promoting socialization between neighbors to be one of CSP's aims.

In addition to the three main goals (reduce crime and increase perceptions of safety, improve community relations with law enforcement, and increase youth educational achievement and improve youth academic outcomes), two additional goals emerged from the discussions about CSP. First was the importance of increasing resident engagement with their communities generally, including getting residents more involved with programming and events, empowering them to change their own communities, and simply getting them out of individual units and into the wider community.

Second, changing the mindset and approach of LAPD officers to policing in the developments was mentioned. This would be achieved by training to develop the cultural competency and community policing skills of the CSP officers. Demonstrating the value of this type of policing by proving the approach's impact on crime and community relations could also change the dominant approach to policing in the developments. Indeed, stakeholders mentioned the hope that CSP officers would serve as models for how all LAPD officers could successfully engage with communities.

## **CSP Partners and Roles**

Four groups of people are partners in CSP: (1) LAPD; (2) HACLA; (3) service providers and community organizations; and (4) housing development residents. Both LAPD and HACLA have designated CSP coordinators who work closely with each other and are in constant communication, but LAPD has the primary responsibility and direction of the program.

### **THE ROLE OF LAPD**

LAPD deployed a team of 40 dedicated, full-time CSP officers and sergeants in each development. LAPD officers had to apply to CSP specifically; when LAPD first announced the opportunity to join CSP, officers submitted 200 applications for the 40 positions. The initial cohort of officers was given CSP-specific training, and turnover has been low among CSP officers, ensuring officer continuity as CSP intended. CSP officers are the face of CSP in the community, through their consistent presence in their assigned developments and direct participation in CSP programming.

CSP officers work in "soft clothes" as opposed to standard issue LAPD patrol uniforms to distinguish them from non-CSP officers. CSP officers were given very hands-on objectives for working with community members and identifying areas of need. CSP officers and their supervisors described themselves as playing many roles. They ran youth programs, mentored neighborhood youth,

communicated with neighborhood residents, assisted with conflict resolution, identified priority issues to address, developed partnerships and new programs, and engaged in enforcement work. Officers described these varied roles as being overwhelming, and other stakeholders expressed concerns about CSP officers being overextended, with competing demands on them, particularly given the extensive needs and issues present in the developments.

### **Balancing community relations and enforcement**

Given the centrality of CSP officers in building better relationships between the police and the community, everything they do and how they do it are important aspects of the program. Several stakeholders mentioned the importance of CSP officers acting as role models, both through their participation in youth programming and in their interactions with the community broadly. This role modelling was mostly discussed in terms of youth in the developments, but others suggested that CSP officers could be role models for others in LAPD.

Officers described finding the right balance between cultivating community relationships and engaging in enforcement activity as very challenging. A variety of stakeholders noted that the relative emphasis on these two roles has shifted over time, further complicating the process. Early on, CSP focused more on programming and less on enforcing lower-level offenses. However, the emphasis has shifted back toward enforcing quality of life issues, such as drinking in public, based on feedback from the community. While some residents wanted more enforcement, others indicated that seeing CSP officers engaged in enforcement work fed doubts that CSP was actually committed to engaging the community positively. The tension between these two viewpoints both underscores the importance and contributes to the challenge of clarifying the balance between the two roles.

### **Communication among CSP Officers**

Regardless of the overall balance between the two roles, many stakeholders reported that some CSP officers tend to gravitate toward the role (i.e., community relations or enforcement) in which they feel most comfortable and also gravitate toward officers who prefer the same role. Respondents described that often the communication within these groups is more open and frequent than the communication between them. Respondents who were CSP officers also differed on whether they would like more direction from their supervisors as to what role they should play as part of CSP. Officers also varied in their preferences towards problem solving and decision making in the developments—some desired more direction from leadership while others were happy to use their expertise and discretion to make those decisions themselves.

## OTHER CSP ROLES

### **HACLA**

HACLA provides support and feedback for CSP program activities, but its primary contribution to CSP after the initial conception of the initiative has been funding support and acting as the fiscal agent, while LAPD has played the primary role in the further development and implementation of CSP in the participating developments. HACLA staff on site in the CSP developments routinely collaborate with the CSP officers, sharing knowledge and information. HACLA staff bring issues to the attention of CSP officers, sometimes related to crimes that have occurred that residents have been willing to bring to HACLA's attention but not report to LAPD. In other instances, HACLA staff inform CSP officers regarding tensions between neighbors that have the potential to escalate. This allows CSP to try to "nip it in the bud," by addressing disputes proactively.

### **Service providers in the area**

CSP activities—outside the role of LAPD and HACLA—are provided by local service providers, schools, and community organizations. This includes new programs—with organizations funded to provide services in the CSP areas—and existing programs that began coordinating with CSP to better address the needs of the community. For example, CSP has helped with transportation to services and with recruiting participants from CSP areas.

The GRYD Office has been a particularly central partner. HACLA has provided funding (through the Watts Regional Strategy) and space to CSP in the three CSP developments in Watts. Officers saw their relationships with GRYD intervention workers as important, as their community connections allow them to engage with individuals who might not otherwise want to talk to police, and then get them involved in CSP programming. Similarly, GRYD staff reported that the partnership with CSP enhances their work through partnership on Safe Passage, events, meetings, and joint LAPD officer-GRYD intervention worker responses to critical incidents.

One challenge mentioned in some interviews related to CSP's approach of coordinating with existing programs rather than operating only separate CSP-funded programming. Some stakeholders reported the possibility of confusion about what CSP affiliation means. In some cases, this has resulted in tension about who should appropriately receive credit for activities. Some stakeholders, for example, felt that CSP was taking credit for GRYD and Saturday Night Lights (SNL) programming that it did not deserve. But others described CSP as an integral partner in both activities, one that brought valuable assistance to the table.

## Housing development residents

Housing development residents are key partners in CSP. Residents help facilitate activities, identify the needs of the area, provide feedback, and have responsibility for sustaining the effort. Several CSP stakeholders noted in interviews that sustainability and success of community-based programs can only be achieved when the residents take an active role in the program and become responsible for leading the effort into the future. In addition, residents or their children are participants in CSP programming; while most CSP activities target youth, stakeholders noted that involving the parents of participants in youth activities was a critical aspect of CSP.

## Leadership

LAPD and HACLA jointly provide leadership for CSP. Most CSP officers and HACLA staff identified Sgt. Emada Tingirides, who was selected to lead CSP and helped to design the initiative and get it up and running in the year preceding its launch, and members of the LAPD command structure (starting with their sergeants) as the leadership of CSP, and some also mentioned Joel Lopez of HACLA and the RACs as well.

CSP operates with a decentralized structure that allows considerable freedom for CSP officers and other stakeholders to identify priority needs in the developments and to develop programs and partnerships in an entrepreneurial fashion. CSP's decentralized structure allows it to be flexible and responsive to local contexts and priorities of residents, and to take advantage of partnership opportunities as they present themselves. As one CSP officer put it, "Everyone is a leader because everyone has the ability to make a difference, no matter what their rank is."

Offsetting these advantages (e.g., flexibility, independence, and entrepreneurship) is what many described as a degree of confusion regarding which individuals were in charge of which decisions, and how things get done or decided in CSP. For example, some respondents felt there had been a lack of transparency in how funding decisions were made, especially decisions about which programs are approved or receive funding. Other respondents reported feeling frustrated at times by bureaucratic processes and delays.

CSP creates much more frequent communication among the partners, particularly between LAPD and HACLA. Some HACLA managers and CSP officers report daily contact by phone and email, a degree of communication that they said did not exist prior to CSP. Communication between the HACLA manager level and CSP leadership is less frequent (weekly or monthly), but still regular. Contact between CSP officers and CSP leadership varies by site as well as by officer role, with officers in the

Watts developments reporting more frequent communication with CSP leadership, facilitated by daily CSP roll call meetings, than officers in Boyle Heights.

## COMMUNICATION AMONG PARTNERS

The degree of communication between partner community organizations and CSP staff or leadership is variable. Some partners, such as GRYD Office staff and school staff, reported daily or near-daily interaction with CSP staff. Other community partners communicate with CSP officers and staff more intermittently, with more intensive contact around arranging specific joint activities (such as planning trips and events), or at the point of establishing an initial partnership. In general, CSP partners characterized communication among the partners as effective, and did not note significant problems or issues related to this area.

While stakeholders described communication and collaboration within CSP as broadly effective, some issues emerged around roles, and ways in which relationships built with residents were sometimes perceived as leading partners to interfere in the work of other partners. Examples of such tensions raised by stakeholders included concern regarding the extent to which CSP officers become involved in HACLA matters such as evictions, and concern about whether the roles of LAPD officers and GRYD intervention staff conflict with regards to enforcement work in the CSP sites.

CSP communication with residents occurs in a variety of ways, from daily, informal interactions between CSP officers and the community to more formal presentations at resident meetings or RAC meetings. CSP stakeholders believe that communication between residents and the police in particular has improved through CSP but noted that there was still work to be done in connecting with “hard to reach” residents, such as older youth.

## CSP Programming

The communities in which CSP operates are plagued with high crime and gang activity, where youth tend to loiter on street corners, have high levels of truancy and low educational outcomes, and are often recruited by gang members at a very young age; CSP’s third goal (increase youth educational achievement and improve youth academic outcomes) reflects these challenges. When asked about the most critical CSP activities for accomplishing its mission, stakeholders overwhelmingly cited youth programming as being the initiative’s primary strategy—indicating a strong connection between this CSP goal and the initiative’s activities.

CSP’s youth programming is meant to keep kids off the streets and occupied with pro-social activities, preventing their involvement in delinquent behavior or being recruited by gangs. The

community was in need of structured activities and CSP provided the resources to fill those needs. At the start, decisions on CSP's youth-based programming were made in an ad hoc fashion, but with input from local youth. One officer described the process of creating a "CSP program" as being as simple as finding a group of youth that frequently loiter in areas that are unsafe and asking them what they might like to do. Particularly in its initial stages, CSP had to figure out how to respond to the variety ideas coming from all of the CSP officers, determining priorities, and determining how to get resources to support promising ideas. At least one respondent suggested that CSP had become much more efficient in the program selection process.

CSP's programming mix is unique in that it combines existing programs that fill some needs with CSP-led programs that feature officers as facilitators or active participants of the program, and funding for these programs varies. Many CSP officers have contacts with people and organizations in private industry outside of the community who have agreed to provide low cost or free services to residents. Other affiliated programs receive funding directly from CSP and some are run by officers. The mix of youth programming supported by CSP through funding, officer time, or partnerships is thus varied (see Table 2).

CSP-affiliated programs offer structured pro-social activities such as field trips, sports, dance and outdoor recreation. There are also intensive mentoring programs, a substantial number of academic enrichment and tutoring activities, and gang prevention (for at-risk youth not yet gang involved) and intervention (for gang-involved youth) services delivered by partnering with GRYD in the CSP developments.

Through the variety of youth programs, officers take kids under their wings and serve as role models for youth who might otherwise be lacking positive adult guidance. Officers serve as coaches for the Watts Bears football team and are troop leaders for the Girl Scouts program. Officers also participate in field trips and camping, where CSP officers and youth participate in team building activities together in a wilderness area. These types of activities provide opportunities for kids to interact with the officers in a supportive and non-enforcement-oriented setting, also helping to strengthen the relationship between the community and police.

It is worth noting that many of the CSP programs take place outside of the developments, and draw youth participants from outside the developments. This was noticeable in the CSP programming focus groups, in which many of the participating parents of Girl Scouts and Watts Bears youth did not reside in the developments. This may have beneficial effects, both in ensuring that programs have the optimal number of participants and diffusing youth conduct benefits beyond the borders of the developments, which could have crime ramifications given that many residents perceive crime problems to come into the developments from the surrounding areas. At the same time, substantial participation from outside

the developments may dilute the impact of CSP on building relationships with the community. It could even exacerbate some existing tensions between residents of the developments and those in the larger community. Many development residents feel that the lack of programming for youth is a serious issue, and some noted and expressed dissatisfaction with CSP programs being delivered to youth who do not reside in the developments.

While all of the developments except for Nickerson Gardens have programming that is unique to that development, many offerings are available to youth in the three Watts sites, but not to those in Ramona Gardens. This suggests the benefit of CSP operating in “clusters” of developments, allowing programs to attract participants from a larger community—but one that is also part of CSP—and make programming viable that might struggle for sufficient participants if targeted to a single development.

**TABLE 2: CSP-AFFILIATED PROGRAMMING, 2014**

Program	Description	CSP Sites	Participants
Football - Watts Bears	Pee Wee football team	IC, JD, NG	30
Football - Lincoln Heights Giants	Pee Wee football team	RG	20
Track - Watts Jaguars	Watts track team	IC, JD, NG	60
People 4 Parks - Sports League	Sports League based out of Markham focused on Watts developments	IC, JD, NG	20
Running / Walking Club	Running and walking club started by CSP	RG	15
Watts Girl Scouts	Based out of Grape St School	IC, JD, NG	160
UCLA Tutoring / Resident Services / CSP	Residents transported weekly to UCLA for tutoring	IC, JD, NG	20
USC Tutoring	USC fraternity students come weekly to provide tutoring to youth	JD	25
Debbie Allen Dance Academy	Dance classes will be held at the developments	IC, JD, NG	15
Tiger Woods	Educational enrichment and golf lessons at City of Orange Tiger Woods Academy	JD	20
Step Study Program	Self-evaluation and awareness program for women who have experienced traumatic events.	JD	8 (adults)
STAR BASE Stem Academy	Busing Watts 5th Graders to STEM school	IC, JD, NG	200
Sunburst Youth Academy	California National Guard At Risk Youth Camp/Education program.	IC, JD, NG, RG	15
Operation Progress	Scholarship/CSP Mentor Education Program	IC, JD, NG	18
1st Tee	Golf lessons at Southwest College	IC	25
Peace Ambassador Program- HACLA Planning, CSP, GRYD	Conflict resolution and Leadership training conducted by Cal State Dominguez Hills	IC, JD, NG, RG	60
Cal Elite Girls Basketball	Women Basketball league	IC	10
Canyon Creek	Camping	IC, JD, NG, RG	100
Forest Home	Camping	IC	25
ELAC Classes	Photography and Anthropology classes and at- risk camp	RG	12
*Positive Results Corp Counseling	Healthy Relationships for women and leadership development seminars	IC, JD, NG, RG	n/a
GRYD -Watts Regional Strategy	Gang Intervention and case management services for Watts Developments	IC, JD, NG	134
GRYD - Barrio Action	Gang Prevention services	RG	20
GRYD - Legacy LA	Gang Prevention services	RG	15
GRYD – Soledad Enrichment Action	Gang Intervention services	RG	20

Source: Community Safety Partnership

Notes: \* Program in the planning stage

All participants are youth unless otherwise specified

Table includes programs directly supported by CSP and those with which CSP partners

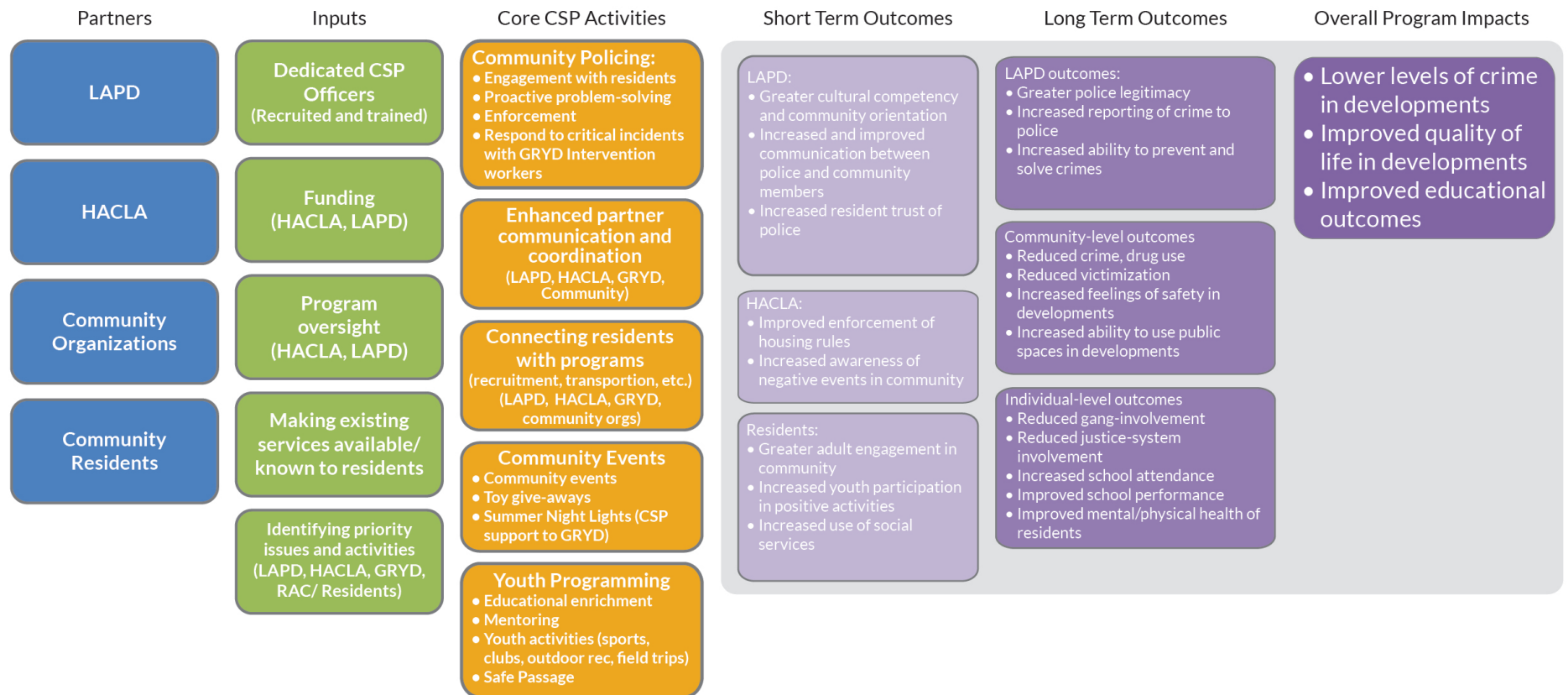
## The CSP Logic Model

With input from stakeholder interviews, resident focus groups, program materials, and discussions with all levels of CSP management, the research team developed a logic model to describe the CSP program as it currently stands. This exercise is designed to help program partners identify strengths and weaknesses in CSP, identify the areas where CSP will likely have the strongest impact given its current form, and determine the best methods for measuring CSP's impact.

Figure 2 presents the CSP logic model, which depicts how CSP's core activities are intended to produce immediate outcomes, such as CSP officer presence in the developments increasing cultural competency and the community orientation of the LAPD, as well as increasing and improving communication between police and community members. The immediate outcomes of CSP activities then contribute to intermediate outcomes such as greater police legitimacy and better school attendance and performance among the youth. Some of these outcomes are interrelated. For example, greater police legitimacy should positively influence the level of gang involvement among individuals. These intermediate outcomes in turn are intended to bring about CSP's long-term impact: less crime and more feelings of safety in the developments, improved educational outcomes for youth, and enhanced quality of life in the developments.

The logic model highlights the complexity and breadth of activities and partners that CSP coordinates. This complexity is needed to address the extensive problems that exist in the CSP sites, but may also soften CSP's focus and spread resources thinly. A logic model like this can help keep partners across CSP focused on the main goals. In addition, the logic model highlights the timeframe on which different elements of the program are most likely to result in change, so that evaluation efforts can be focused there in the future.

FIGURE 2: COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP LOGIC MODEL



# Crime Trends in CSP Sites

Reducing crime and gang influence and increasing residents' sense of safety in the developments is a key intended outcome for CSP. This section presents evidence on crime trends in the CSP developments relative to other areas in Los Angeles. This portion of the evaluation will address the following questions:

- (1) Has the implementation of CSP been related to reductions in gang crime, violent crime, and overall levels of crime?
- (2) Are gang crime trends in CSP sites improvements over similar public housing locations where CSP is not being implemented?

Several challenges were associated with assessing the impact of CSP on community-level crime indicators. First, the sites are all located within existing GRYD sites; CSP partners with the GRYD program, and GRYD providers serve youth from inside the developments. In addition, GRYD Community Intervention Workers (similar to street outreach workers) help to address gang crime and prevent retaliations or escalations in violence in each GRYD Zone, which could be reasonably expected to impact crime levels in and around the developments. The existence of GRYD in the CSP areas makes it difficult to attribute any change specifically to CSP efforts. To address this we chose comparison sites that are also located in GRYD Zones, so that the CSP and comparison sites are equivalent on that characteristic.

Second, the CSP sites are all located directly on or very near to the border of the City of Los Angeles. While we did collect data from the LA Sheriff in order to assess data around all sides of each site, the Sheriff does not provide police services to some locations directly across the border from the City of Los Angeles, and therefore no data are available from those areas. This is particularly true for Jordan Downs and Imperial Courts, where no data were available directly east of the developments.

Third, CSP was targeted at the housing developments with the worst gang and violent crime problems. The sites chosen are also large relative to most of HACLA's properties; Nickerson Gardens and Jordan Downs are the two largest housing developments that HACLA manages. Because there are no other developments as large as the CSP sites, and most developments have lower levels of crime and gang violence than the CSP sites, it was difficult to identify appropriate comparison areas. We selected four developments similar in racial/ethnic makeup, in GRYD Zones, and as close to size and crime levels as possible. Because selecting comparison groups was difficult, we did not do a 1-to-1 selection—we did not select specific comparison developments for each CSP site but instead selected four that together

would provide the best match for all four CSP sites together. The analysis is thus presented for all CSP sites and all comparison sites.

Table 3 provides statistics for the CSP sites and the selected comparison sites: Avalon Gardens, Estrada Courts, Pueblo del Rio, and San Fernando Gardens.

**TABLE 3: SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF CSP AND COMPARISON SITES.**

	Group	Residents	Hispanic	Over 60	Poverty	Average Monthly Income
Imperial Courts	CSP	1,457	57%	4%	48%	\$1,181
Jordan Downs	CSP	2,388	68%	5%	70%	\$1,216
Nickerson Gardens	CSP	3,199	58%	14%	67%	\$1,069
Ramona Gardens	CSP	1,183	95%	9%	46%	\$1,471
Avalon Gardens	Comparison	442	72%	14%	46%	\$1,140
Estrada Courts	Comparison	1,259	96%	13%	55%	-
Pueblo del Rio	Comparison	2,060	77%	8%	45%	\$1,351
San Fernando Gardens	Comparison	1,759	94%	8%	49%	\$1,693
Source: HACLA Statistical and Demographic Overview, January 2011						

## Crime Trend Analysis

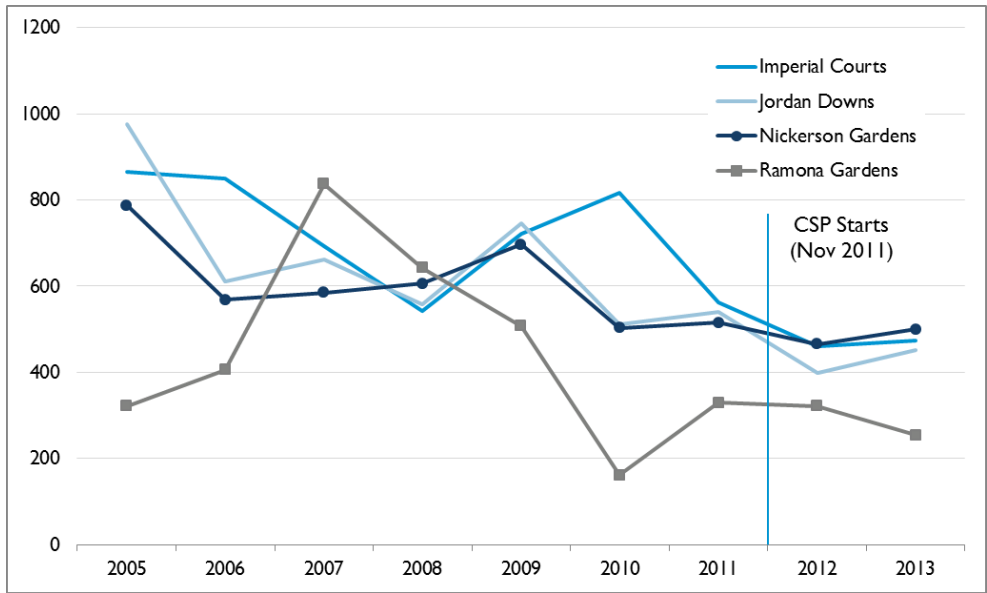
This analysis considers crime in the CSP and comparison sites for a number of crimes, but our main focus is on gang and violent crime, given CSP’s attention to those types of incidents. Because the comparison sites were smaller than the CSP sites, we used rates of crime per 10,000 persons instead of actual counts of crime, in order to ensure that the CSP and comparison sites were as similar as possible for the analysis. Because CSP started late in 2011 (November), we consider all of 2011 to be ‘pre-CSP’.

### TRENDS IN THE CSP SITES

We first considered trends over time in the CSP sites. Figure 3 provides a graph of the rate of all crime—both violent and property—per 10,000 persons for each of the four CSP sites. The graph indicates that crime rates in the three Watts sites were remarkably similar, and, except for 2010 when crime rates jumped in Jordan Downs, the trends over time in the sites tracked very closely to each other. Crime rates in Ramona Gardens were much lower than in the Watts sites but jumped up in the middle of the study period. The site then experienced very low crime in 2010, the year before CSP started.

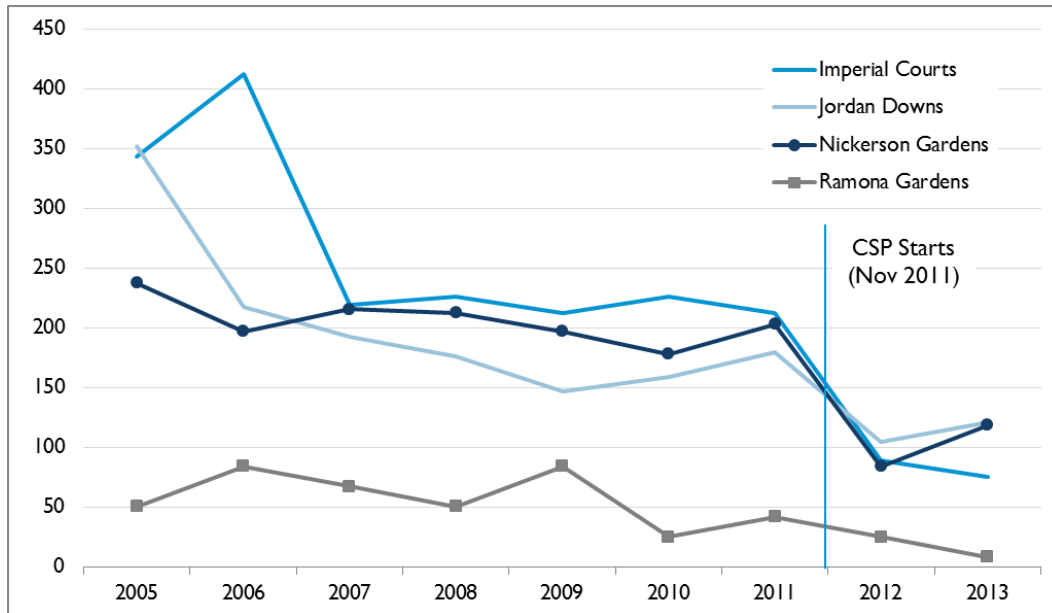
Similarly, the graph of violent crimes over time in the CSP sites (Figure 4) shows a strong downward trend, after very high rates were observed in 2005-6, especially in Imperial Courts and Jordan Downs. As with the rate of all crimes in the sites, the violent crime rates for the three Watts CSP sites trended together very closely. This measure also appears less volatile from year to year than the all crime measure. Violent crime dropped noticeably between 2011 and 2012, when CSP was implemented, but a small uptick in violent crime rates was noted in 2013, after CSP implementation. Violent crime rates in Ramona Gardens were much lower than in the Watts sites, and dropped throughout the study period.

FIGURE 3: ALL CRIME RATES PER 10,000 PERSONS IN CSP SITES, 2005-2013



The graph of violent crimes over time in the CSP sites also shows a strong downward trend, after very high rates were observed in 2005-6, especially in Imperial Courts and Jordan Downs. As with the rate of all crimes in the sites, the violent crime rates for the three Watts CSP sites trended together very closely. This measure also appears less volatile from year to year than the all crime measure. Violent crime dropped noticeably between 2011 and 2012, when CSP was implemented, but a small uptick in violent crime rates was noted in 2013, after CSP implementation. Violent crime rates in Ramona Gardens were much lower than in the Watts sites, and dropped throughout the study period.

FIGURE 4: VIOLENCE RATES PER 10,000 PERSONS IN CSP SITES, 2005-2013

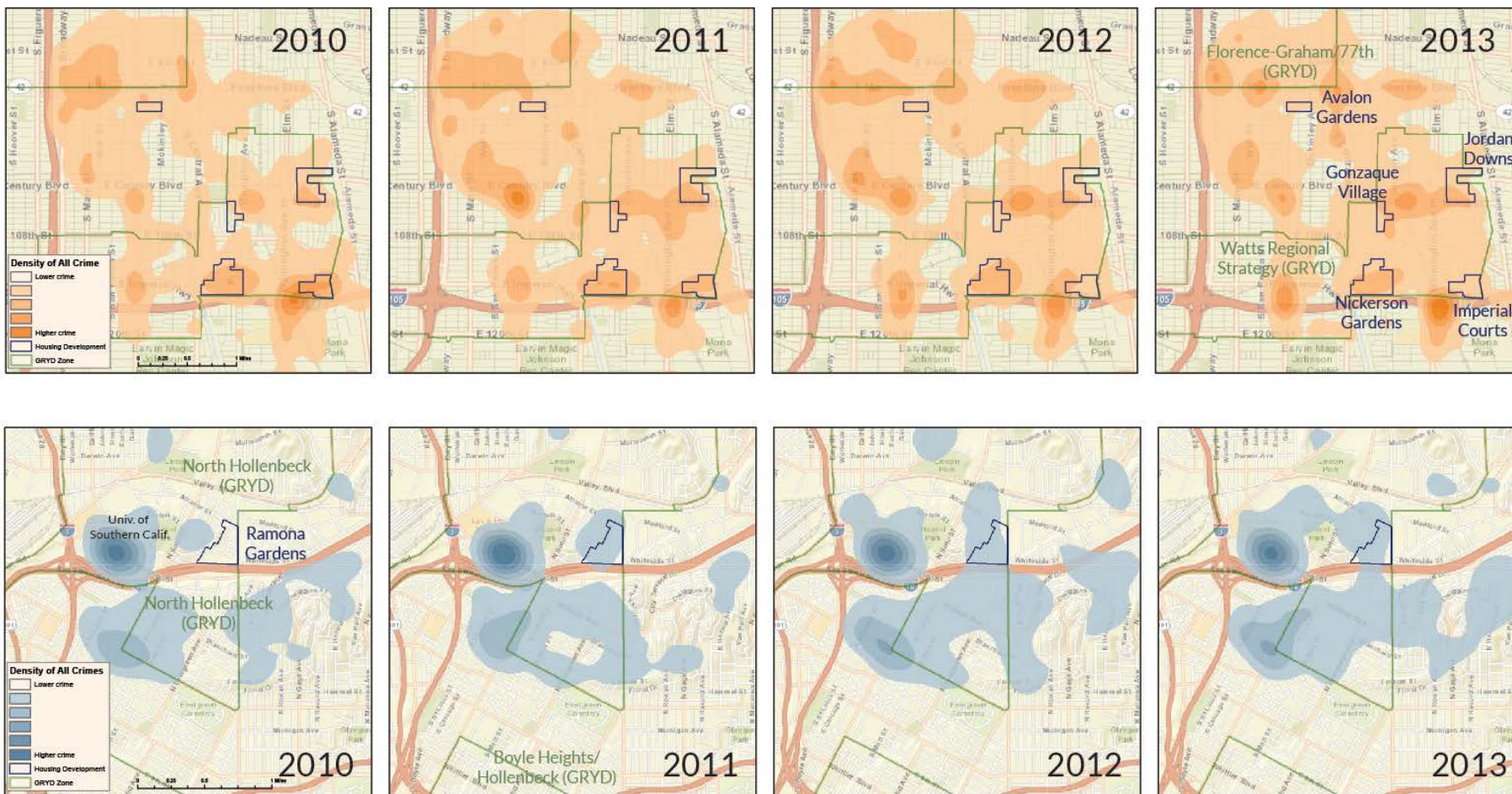


We also mapped the distribution of crime in CSP sites over time. Because the comparison sites are more spread out than the CSP sites, and because they were intended to be analyzed as a group, we did not map crimes in the comparison areas. Two series of maps are provided in Figure 5 and display densities of all crimes for two years prior to the start of CSP (at the end of November 2011), and two year following its start.

The Watts sites are mapped separately from Ramona Gardens, which is in a different part of the city. The maps of the Watts CSP sites also include Avalon Gardens, which is one of the comparison sites, and Gonzaque Village, which is very close to the three CSP sites. These sites are significantly smaller than the three Watts sites, but at the time of this report, CSP stakeholders were considering expansion of the program to both Avalon and Gonzaque.

The maps show that all three Watts CSP sites had higher levels of crime than surrounding areas in 2010 and 2011. A persistent hot spot shows up just outside and to the southwest of Imperial Courts, and Nickerson Gardens is also the location of a persistent hot spot. Crime levels in Avalon and Gonzaque, especially beginning in 2011, are similar to levels in the three CSP sites. Other hot spots are located in the southern portion of the Florence-Graham/77th GRYD Zone (at the northern edge of the map) and along Avalon Boulevard, east of the Watts CSP sites at E Century Boulevard and at Imperial Highway. Near Avalon Boulevard and Imperial Highway are several schools—both middle and high schools—that may contribute to the concentration of crimes in that strip.

FIGURE 5: YEARLY DENSITIES OF ALL CRIME, WATTS SITES (TOP) AND RAMONA GARDENS (BOTTOM), 2010-2013.



In 2012, hotspots outside of the CSP sites had become stronger and more concentrated, although the location of the hotspots remained relatively stable. The main hot spot near Imperial Courts moved further south and the concentration of crime inside the site started to lessen. By 2013, the locations of crime hot spots across the Watts area had not changed significantly overall, although the strength of the concentration had changed. The most notable change was the shift in the Imperial Courts hot spot to the south. Also, a hot spot emerged between Gonzague Village and Jordan Downs. The hotspot in Nickerson Gardens did not appear to change over the time period studied.

Like Jordan Downs and Imperial Courts, Ramona Gardens is on the border of the City of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County. However, the LA Sheriff provides police services in that part of the county, so crime data cover the entire area. In the Ramona Gardens area in 2010, the development itself was in the lowest density of crime. The development is located near University of Southern California, which had a strong and persistent hotspot during the years studied. By 2011, Ramona Gardens had a higher density of crime, but crime there was still relatively low, which remained true throughout the study period.

#### TRENDS IN CSP SITES RELATIVE TO COMPARISON SITES

The above descriptive analyses demonstrated that crime, and specifically violent crime, was trending downward for several years prior to the start of CSP. This trend was experienced in a number of cities across the country, so the trend is not surprising here. However, the levels of crime, even though dropping, were still high. In order to assess whether CSP contributed to further decreases in crime after its start, and to what degree, we also consider what happened to crime in the comparison sites.

Figure 6 provides change over time in the rate of all crimes per 10,000 persons in the CSP and comparison sites. The graph of all crime rates clearly indicates that crime in both CSP sites and comparison developments was on a steady downward trend from 2005-2011, when CSP started. The graph also demonstrates the very volatile nature of crime in small areas—the CSP developments are small and overall crime is low enough that small variation from month to month or year to year can be appear as large changes. Thus, a long time period is needed to accurately assess the direction (upward or downward) of any trends.

In CSP sites, the downward trend from 2005 continued from 2011 to 2012 at an even steeper rate. In 2013, crime in CSP sites went up slightly, but this may just be a slight variation and not signal a turn in the over trend. During 2011, crime rates in the comparison developments had bumped up slightly, and stayed level through 2012, before dipping down again in 2013.

FIGURE 6: RATE OF ALL CRIME PER 10,000 PERSONS, CSP AND COMPARISON SITES

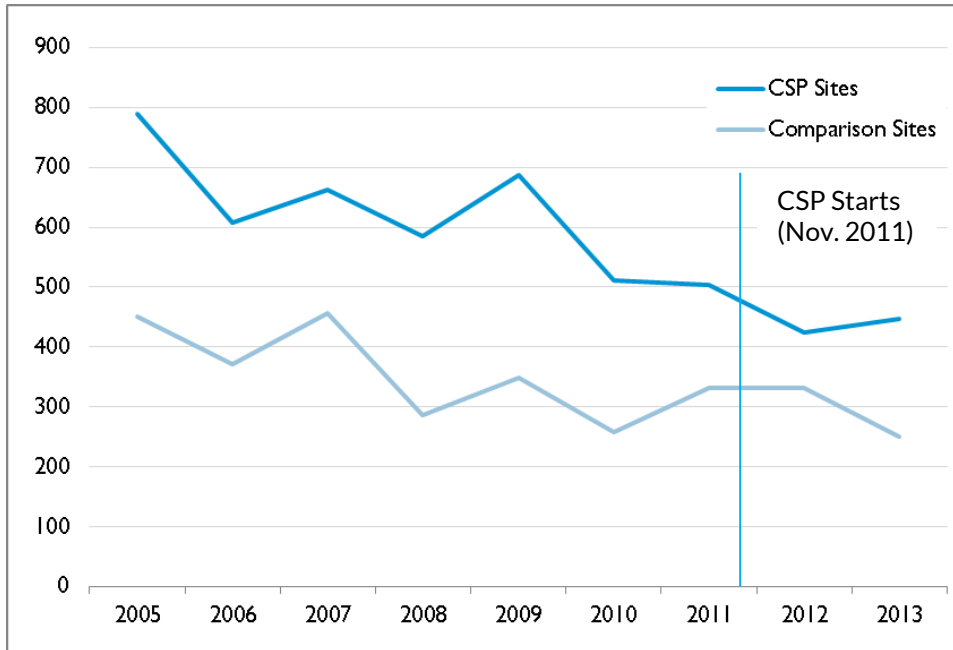


FIGURE 7: VIOLENCE RATES PER 10,000 PERSONS IN CSP AND COMPARISON SITES, 2005-2013

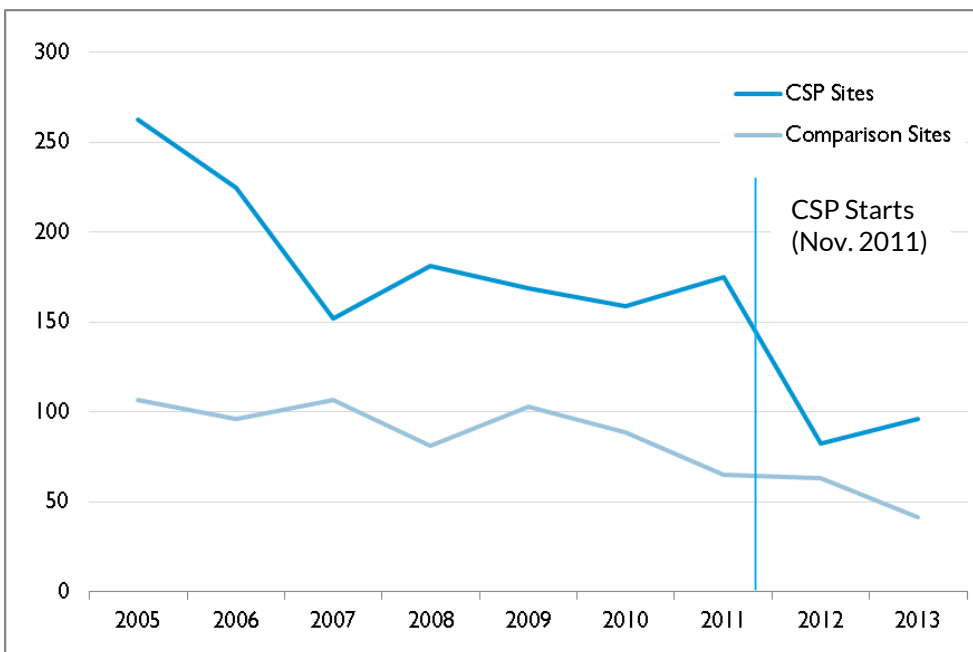


Figure 7 provides the trend in violent crimes over time in the CSP and comparison areas for the same time period. As with all crimes, the violent crime trend is noticeably downward. Immediately following the start of CSP, violent crime dropped sharply, while violence in the comparison areas followed the same steady downward pace. A slight uptick in violence in the CSP areas occurred in 2013, although because of the volatility of monthly crime trends, this is not yet indicative of any trend reversal.

#### ANALYZING THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CSP AND COMPARISON SITES

In order to assess the actual size of the change in crime in CSP sites and comparison sites, and to assess whether crime dropped to a greater degree in CSP sites than in comparison sites, we conducted a simple difference-in-differences (DID) analysis. This analysis considers the average monthly rate of crime in the CSP sites for the two years before and after CSP was implemented. The analysis is done over the same time period for the comparison areas as well. We assume that what happened in the comparison areas is indicative of what would have happened in the CSP sites had CSP not been implemented, so if crime drops more in CSP sites than in the comparison sites, that is an indication that CSP may have an impact on the crime rates.

We conducted the DID analysis with a number of crimes and geographic areas. We looked at 5 different crime measures (all crime, violent crime, gang crime, violent gang crime, and property crime) crime in the sites together, in the sites and surrounding areas, and by individual site. Because monthly crime counts were small in the site-by-site analyses, and DID results are sensitive to the volume of crime being analyzed, we are not presenting the results of those analyses here.

Table 4 provides the results of the analyses. The numbers represent the average change in monthly crime counts in CSP sites, *relative to what happened in the comparison areas*—we subtract the change in crime in the comparison area from change in the CSP areas. That is, if both areas (CSP and comparison area) experienced declines in crime over time, a positive result indicates that the monthly crime level in the CSP area decreased less than in the comparison area, by that amount. A negative result indicates that crime decreased in CSP areas more than in the comparison area.

For the models where just the sites themselves were considered—no surrounding areas were included in the analysis—significant changes were observed in all crime, violent crime, and gang crime. All crime and violent crime both decreased significantly. The size of the drop was similar for each model, suggesting that change in violent crime was driving what was observed with all crime. The results indicate that violent crime dropped, on average, 4.21 crimes per month across all sites—over and above any drop observed in the comparison sites. All crime dropped 4.83 crimes per month over and above what happened in the comparison sites.

TABLE 4: DIFFERENCE IN DIFFERENCES ANALYSIS RESULTS

	CSP Sites vs. Comparison Areas	CSP Sites 1/4 mi buffer vs. Comparison Sites 1/4 mi. buffer
All Crime	-4.83*	-4.08
Violent Crime	-4.21**	-8.29**
Gang Crime	2.38*	2.33
Violent Gang Crime	0.54	-0.80
Property Crime	-1.71	3.21

\*\*Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

\*Statistically significant at the 0.1 level.

Gang crime also changed significantly, but it increased relative to the comparison areas instead of decreasing. Gang crimes increased by a very small amount in the CSP areas (about 0.6 gang crimes per month), but it dropped but nearly 2 incidents per month in the comparison areas. Therefore, the change in gang crime in CSP areas was higher than in the comparison areas by 2.38 incidents per month. We believe this change is not wholly unexpected. LAPD flags crimes as gang-related or not given information officers have about the incident and who was involved. Because CSP officers spend more time in the developments speaking with residents and getting to know them, it is likely they have also become more aware of who is involved in different gangs, which has in turn allowed reporting on gang crimes in the sites to be more accurate. Therefore, the upward shift in gang crimes may represent a change in classification rather than a change in the actual volume of crimes. If this is true, gang crime should start to decrease with the other types of crime after the program reaches some level of maturity.

In addition, the overall level of gang-related crimes in the CSP and comparison sites was very low. The number of gang crimes was even lower in the comparison areas, because it was hard to identify a comparison area with levels of gang crime similar to those in the CSP sites. DID analysis is sensitive to small numbers, so any volatility in the monthly gang crime measures—common when numbers are so low—may have caused the unexpected significant increase in gang crimes.

We also tested the change in crime in the areas surrounding the CSP sites to look for any diffusion of benefits. This is most likely in Watts, where the three CSP sites form a triangle, and it seems likely that the areas in between the sites would benefit secondarily from the CSP efforts. For that analysis, we considered areas that were within ¼ mile of the sites. We used the same size area around the comparison sites as well. Violent crime dropped significantly according to this analysis, by more than 8 crimes per month over what was experienced in the comparison areas. Changes of similar magnitude to

the site-only DID analysis were observed for the other types of crime, although those changes were not statistically significant.

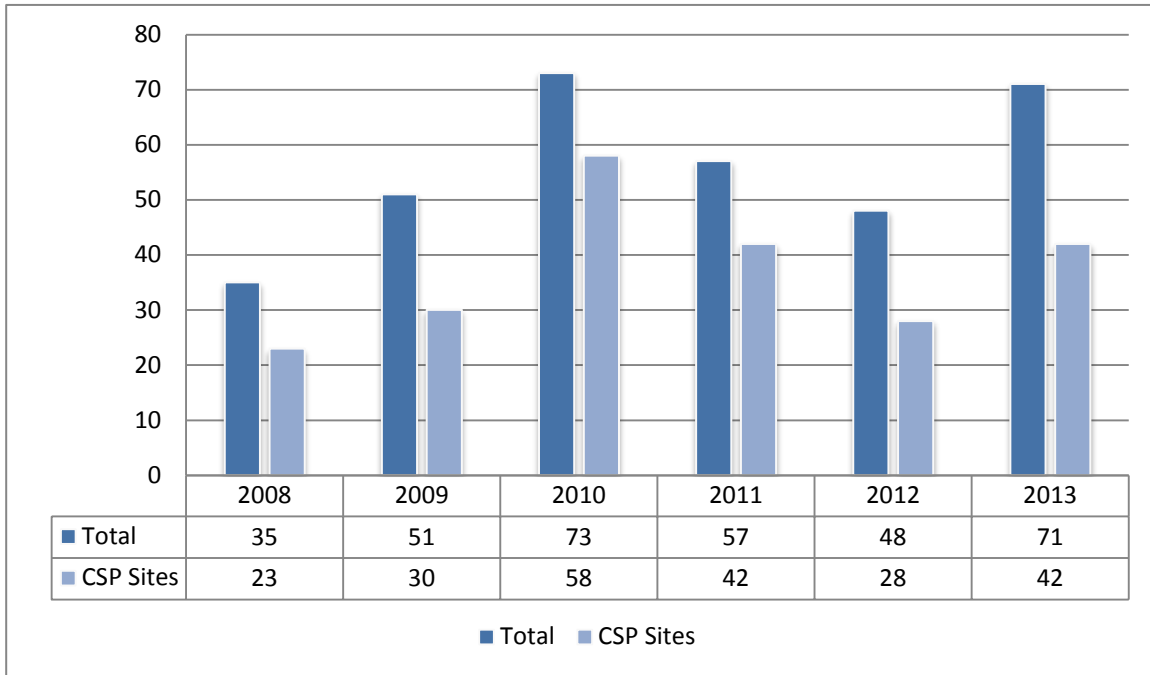
These results provide evidence for the fact that CSP is likely benefitting nearby areas, especially in Watts, and that violent crime reductions seem to be driving the overall drop in crime in the CSP sites. While we observed from the line graphs above that crime experienced a slight uptick in 2013 in the CSP sites, that uptick didn't appear to be strong enough to reverse the effects of the prior downward trend.

The trend in this area has been positive: crime and violence have gone down in the CSP developments relative to other similar housing developments that do not have CSP. However, the analysis presented here is very simple and should not be used as a final answer as to the success of CSP. This information, combined with reports from the stakeholders and residents can provide a fuller picture of the overall effects that CSP had in its first two years of implementation. The positive changes in violent crime can be taken as an indication that continued analyses of this type should continue with additional years of data as the program matures.

#### **HACLA EMERGENCY TRANSFERS**

Another measure of crime impacts on the developments is the number of instances of HACLA granting emergency transfers due to residents being vulnerable to criminal activity. As Figure 8 indicates, the four CSP developments represent the majority of emergency transfer requests (ETRs) initiated by HACLA due to the imminent threat of criminal activity.<sup>3</sup> The peak number of ETRs recently occurred in 2010, right before CSP was initiated, when nearly 80% of the ETRs occurred in the four CSP sites. By 2013, with overall ETRs returning to 2010 levels, slightly less than 60% were in the CSP developments. While this trend is not definitive, it is a valuable measure of what's happening in the community that should be tracked over time.

FIGURE 8: EMERGENCY TRANSFERS DUE TO CRIMINAL ACTIVITY, CSP AND NON-CSP SITES



Source: HACLA

# Perceptions of Safety

## Resident and Stakeholder Perceptions of Community Safety

### PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY

Residents in the CSP development focus groups described a number of concerns related to crime, violence and gangs, while generally noting positive trends in crime reduction. At three of the sites—Imperial Courts, Jordan Downs, and Nickerson Gardens—residents identified gang activity and crime as significant problems within their developments. Ramona Gardens was the only site whose members did not indicate that gang activity and crime represented major problems within the development.

However, respondents from Jordan Downs, Imperial Courts, and Ramona Gardens observed that gang-related violence and crime had lessened in recent years. Some residents of Nickerson Gardens suggested the same, but there was less agreement on that point. Residents in Jordan Downs, Nickerson Gardens and Ramona Gardens mentioned issues related to public order and comfort in public spaces, such as graffiti, youth congregating in groups and drug use out in the open, as issues in their developments. Other site-specific observations include:

- Multiple CSP stakeholders noted that there had been no homicides in Jordan Downs since CSP began, a considerable source of pride. But Latino residents in particular at Jordan Downs felt that violence was prevalent in their neighborhoods, and could occur at any time.
- Younger residents from Imperial Courts (both black and Latino) similarly reported that violence was prevalent in the development, even while the majority of participants (young and old) felt safe inside their homes.
- In Nickerson Gardens, residents also felt safe while in their homes, but not necessarily out in the development generally.
- Participants in the Ramona Gardens CSP programming focus group expressed the hope that the reduction in gang activity would result in their neighborhood shedding its “stigmatized” reputation as a gang-infested area.

Residents from the comparison sites of Estrada Courts and Pueblo del Rio had mixed views about safety in the development. Residents at both comparison sites acknowledged the presence of gangs within their neighborhoods. Respondents from Estrada Courts felt that gang violence within the development had lessened from previous years. It was also notable that the Estrada Courts respondents, when asked about problems and issues in their development, focused intensely on

facilities maintenance and upkeep and frictions among neighbors, and crime problems were of secondary importance to them. Still, most respondents in the comparison developments expressed some safety concerns about their neighborhoods, and they echoed sentiments made by residents at Imperial Courts and Nickerson Gardens that residents are safe as long as they stay in their units.

Respondents from Pueblo del Rio expressed a higher level of worry about community safety and violence. Latino residents explained that the community is fairly safe during the day, but becomes much more dangerous at night, especially in certain parts of the development. Similar to residents from Nickerson Gardens and Jordan Downs, they also felt that drug activity, including use and sales, made the neighborhood unsafe, especially for youth. Both black and Latino residents noted that the development does not offer safe spaces for younger residents. English-speaking respondents at Estrada Courts were the only comparison development group to report feeling mostly safe in the development.

#### PERCEPTIONS OF THE CAUSES OF CRIME

In addition to gang issues, focus group respondents identified several contributors to crime in the developments.

- ***Negative influences from outside the community.*** At three of the CSP sites (Ramona Gardens, Jordan Downs, and Imperial Courts) and in the Estrada Courts comparison site, community members noted that people outside of the development often incited violence. For example, residents from Imperial Courts explained that rivalries with other developments often resulted in violent crimes in the neighborhood. In a variant on this theme, respondents from Ramona Gardens felt that the insular nature of their community possibly contributed to crime, in that residents sometimes cause problems for anyone in the development who they perceive to be a stranger.
- ***Drugs.*** Residents from Nickerson Gardens and Jordan Downs in particular felt that the presence of drug addicts contributed heavily to neighborhood crime. In addition to issues related to crime, several respondents expressed discomfort with being out in public in the developments where overt drug use was present, particularly if they had their children with them.
- ***Conflict among youth.*** The English-speaking Nickerson Gardens group described a dynamic in which conflicts among school-aged youth in the development draws in their parents and escalates the conflict to one among adults.

## PERCEPTIONS ON FACTORS IMPROVING SAFETY

While there was a strong consensus that the developments had become safer, opinions regarding why varied. Residents in the *crime and safety focus groups* did not cite CSP in particular as a meaningful contributor to the reduction in crime. However, their responses suggest that they may see the effects of CSP but not attribute it to CSP. Residents in the CSP developments attributed changing crime to programs such as GRYD and Summer Night Lights—for which CSP is a partner, gang injunctions that were enforced by housing management and LAPD—which is made possible in part due to the increased communication between those two organizations, and the removal of problem tenants, also something with which LAPD has increasingly assisted HACLA.

Residents in the CSP developments also mentioned the presence of police cameras, but they were not always seen as effective: some felt that the presence of the police cameras in the developments contributed to lower crime rates, while others felt that people simply conducted illegal activity out of the camera's view and the cameras were thus not contributing to public safety.

In the comparison developments, respondents reasoned that gang injunctions had helped to curb gang activity there.

By contrast, participants in the *CSP program focus groups*—there to discuss the impact of CSP programming—did believe that CSP was effective in reducing crime, primarily through the presence and operations of the CSP officers. Participants of those focus groups who lived outside the development indicated that some of those impacts were also felt in the surrounding neighborhoods, and singled out CSP officer participation in Safe Passage as making youth feel safer and reducing problems related to travel to and from school.

There was a firm consensus among the stakeholders interviewed that CSP was positively impacting crime and safety in the CSP sites—a finding borne out by the crime analysis above. LAPD personnel, and particularly the CSP officers, strongly believed that CSP had contributed to reducing crime and increasing a feeling of safety among residents. HACLA respondents agreed on this point. It was also among the successes of CSP identified by program provider partners working with CSP.

# Police-Community Relations

CSP operates in communities that have a long history of tension with and mistrust toward the LAPD. While CSP has made progress in addressing these negative relationships, it is apparent that it will take time for residents' perceptions of LAPD to shift. Continuing issues of suspicion toward LAPD's motivations and criticism of its actions came through strongly in the resident focus groups. For residents close to CSP, positive views of CSP appear to have a positive influence on their view of LAPD generally. By contrast, for many residents with less direct experience with CSP, their preexisting (and largely negative) views of LAPD color their perception of CSP, making them skeptical. This section details the relationships between the community and the police and how CSP has influenced those relationships, as described in the focus groups and interviews.

## Resident Views of the Police

### RESIDENT DISTRUST OF THE POLICE

Distrust toward the police among community residents emerged as a theme in all four crime and safety focus groups in the CSP developments, with particularly strong feelings of mistrust expressed in Jordan Downs, Imperial Courts, and Ramona Gardens. Clearly, residents' interpretations of LAPD activities in general and CSP in particular take place against a backdrop of longstanding skepticism and suspicion. There were three primary reasons for this distrust.

The first was the belief that the police side with certain segments of the resident population in the developments, defined by race/ethnicity, age or gender. Many participants expressed the belief that the police were overly hard on young men, and favored women and older residents. Different groups of residents had contradictory perspectives on how the police related to different racial and ethnic groups. For example, the English-speaking participants at Imperial Courts felt that the police were harder on black residents, and often sided with Latino residents on neighborhood disputes. In contrast, Latino residents at this development felt that the police favored black residents as evidenced by not holding them responsible for criminal activity.

Secondly, many focus group participants reported that they, or their family members or neighbors feel harassed by police who work in the developments, with harassment defined in part as the enforcement of relatively minor infractions (i.e., drinking in public or failing to lock one's bike properly). Among those describing police harassment as a problem, there was consensus that young men bore the brunt of it. Sentiments about police harassment were particularly strong in the Ramona Gardens

English-speaking focus group. (CSP programming focus group participants in Ramona Gardens also noted that their community had a particularly negative history with LAPD.) Young men in this group explained that the police were “two-faced” in the sense that they were nice to young men when inviting them to CSP events, but then harassed them while in the presence of other officers. For this reason, some of these young men reported feeling uncomfortable walking in their own neighborhood and said they often go out of their way to avoid the police. Their experiences also made them stay away from CSP programming.

The third source of police distrust described in the focus groups was the perceived lack of responsiveness by police to community concerns. Some residents complained that they cannot count on the police to respond to their calls about crime or neighborhood disputes, and that only very serious crimes got any attention. Another major concern was that police responding to complaints inform residents which of their neighbors was the complainant, which exacerbates tensions between residents. A final variant of this critique was that the police simply do not have a sufficiently visible presence in the development.

Focus group participants from both comparison sites also criticized LAPD based on similar concerns to those expressed in the CSP site focus groups. Community members from both comparison sites echoed the sentiment heard in the CSP districts that the police harass men in the developments. They also felt that the police respond inefficiently to residents’ calls, and are only present in the development during the day. They indicated that the way officers get and respond to information from residents feeds distrust. For example, English-speaking men from Estrada Courts asserted that the police encourage residents to “snitch” on their neighbors and try to pressure them into giving them information about neighborhood happenings. They also said they felt uncomfortable reporting criminal activity within the development because they believe the police will tell other residents who called the police.

These experiences represent residents’ two distinct and somewhat contradictory critiques of LAPD’s responsiveness to the community and operations on the street. In many groups, participants complained that officers were slow to respond, or only responded to the most serious incidents and neglected other crime problems of concern to residents. At the same time, many residents felt that the police harassed residents, particularly young men, for minor offenses or on suspicions that the residents did not feel were legitimate. These parallel critiques (often voiced within the same groups) indicate the difficulty in conducting community-oriented policing in communities that view both insufficient enforcement around relatively low-level public order problems and very hands-on enforcement of the same offenses as problematic. Similarly, residents indicated that they appreciated the LAPD foot patrol

and lamented what they perceived to be reductions in it recently, while also linking foot patrols with harassment.

Concerns about the balance between positive community engagement and overly-intensive enforcement impacted the perspectives of the comparison site residents on whether or not they would welcome a program such as CSP. They appreciated that CSP provided positive opportunities for youth participants; however, they were mindful that an increased police presence could heighten levels of police harassment for residents.

### CRIME REPORTING

Because residents expressed largely negative perceptions of the police in their neighborhoods, they were less prone to involve the police in personal or neighborhood concerns. At every site, CSP and comparison, respondents expressed that they do not typically call the police when they are having problems with their neighbors. They felt that one-to-one communication represented the most effective solution to dealing with neighborhood disagreements, and that it was unnecessary or undesirable in most cases to involve police or HACLA staff. Spanish-speaking residents at Imperial Courts, Nickerson Gardens, and Jordan Downs by contrast, and said they did not feel comfortable confronting their neighbors when problems arose. They reported that even if they had a complaint with their neighbor over a minor concern (e.g., loud music); they were less likely to directly address them about it, and the problems would therefore go unresolved.

The perceived lack of confidentiality for those reporting issues to the police mentioned earlier contribute to the disinclination of residents to report issues to the police. Furthermore, English-speaking residents at Imperial Courts and Nickerson Gardens asserted that individuals who do call the police are judged negatively by other residents.

### SUPPORT FOR THE POLICE

While critical comments regarding the police generally predominated in the focus groups, positive attitudes towards the police were present as well. Spanish-speaking residents at Nickerson Gardens and Ramona Gardens reported highly positive perceptions of the police, as did black residents from the Pueblo del Rio comparison site. Even in groups with largely negative perceptions of the police, residents did not regard all officers as the same; many groups noted that there are good officers and bad officers (while generally asserting that the latter were more common).

Interestingly, a different picture of perceptions of the police came from the surveys provided to crime and safety focus group participants at the conclusion of the groups. The primary purpose of the surveys was to capture the demographics of the focus group participants, but it included open-ended

questions for additional comments. The first question asked for any additional comments about crime and safety issues in the community or ways in which the community is preventing crime and safety issues. While the question did not specifically mention the police, 20 respondents provided an answer having to do with the police. Of those, three gave critical responses on issues related to over-policing of young men. Of the other 17, seven gave responses complimentary of the police and their roles in reducing crime, and the other ten requested greater police presence or more patrols. Of the respondents indicating a positive view of the police, four were in the CSP program focus group and their positive views are likely affected by that connection (which is consistent with the goal of CSP), and they were spread across Jordan Downs, Imperial Courts and Ramona Gardens. Of the individuals indicating a desire for more policing, they were spread across Jordan Downs, Imperial Courts, and Pueblo Del Rio. This data suggests the possibility that the shared discourse about policing that emerged in the focus groups may differ from what residents would say in private.

---

*“Before CSP, residents would never talk to the police. Now both kids and adults will talk to them.”*

---

## CSP and Police-Community Relationships

### RESIDENT VIEWS OF CSP’S EFFECT ON POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Perspectives on whether police engagement with communities had been improved by CSP varied. Crime and safety focus group participants generally did not describe improving relationships with the police. However, Spanish-speaking residents from Nickerson Gardens and Ramona Gardens felt that the police had made efforts to build positive relationships with community members. For example, respondents at Nickerson Gardens felt that the police now respond when they make complaints, look out for residents’ needs, and they have a strong presence at the neighborhood schools. Residents at Ramona Gardens similarly reported that the police are friendlier, and they play a more positive role in the community than they had in the past. A small group of English-speaking residents from other sites also acknowledged that while they did not completely trust the police, the police had improved upon their communication with residents, and that they were less corrupt than they used to be.

By contrast, parents engaged in CSP programming had largely favorable opinions of CSP officers, and described many ways in which CSP made for a more positive dynamic between LAPD and CSP site

residents. Community members from Ramona Gardens described CSP officers as “good-hearted” officers who care about residents. Seeing these officers engage with youth in a mentorship capacity played a large role in their positive perceptions. They also felt that in the CSP context, the police are also more transparent about crime and safety and how LAPD is addressing issues in the area, and demonstrate greater openness to addressing community concerns. They also asserted that the CSP officers go out of their way to help residents. For example, one participant described how a CSP officer assisted her with a legal issue, and even though the matter has been resolved, still comes by to check on her and provide her with service referrals.

Respondents in the CSP programming groups described the police in CSP sites as more visible, which increases the perception of safety and allows residents the opportunity to interact with officers and notify them of any concerns they may have. Several residents expressed that they can trust CSP officers, and they feel comfortable calling them when they problems. Along these lines, some mentioned that there are noticeable differences in the way that CSP officers treat them compared to other LAPD officers. Finally, CSP program focus group participants observed that CSP collaborates with local organizations in the neighborhood such as the church and the local schools, which they felt benefits the entire community.

The CSP program focus group participants made a much stronger distinction between CSP officers and other LAPD officers than did the crime and safety group participants. Further, they observed that non-CSP officers do not always respond to crime in the development, which caused them to question if these officers actually care about their community.

### CSP STAKEHOLDER VIEWS ON POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

CSP stakeholders strongly believe that LAPD’s reputation had improved over time, and their explanation for how this had occurred echoed the perspectives of the residents in the CSP program focus groups. One of the sources of this improvement identified by the stakeholder was changes CSP has produced in how officers understand the communities and the approach they take to policing them. CSP officers expressed having a better understanding of the community than in the past; a representative observation by a CSP officer was, “CSP has given us a better understanding of the dynamics of the community—what resources are there and why residents may not be using resources.” Some officers described the experience of working through CSP as improving or changing policing. As one summarized the effect, “LAPD has become more innovative and creative in its thinking.” Reflecting on the implications of CSP policing for the department generally, another CSP officer said, “It would be good for all LAPD officers to work CSP for a while because it helps you become more patient.”

Many stakeholders of all types (LAPD, HACLA, and community organization) noted a change in the mentality of CSP site residents to more positively relate to the police. LAPD and HACLA staff working on CSP noted that residents were not immediately receptive to CSP, but especially among the kids, the attitude toward the police had become more positive and residents were more comfortable reporting crime. From their perspective, CSP has begun to break down the barriers with the community resulting from the long history of negative relations with LAPD. As a HACLA staff member observed about Ramona Gardens: “Before CSP, residents would never talk to the police. Now both kids and adults will talk to them.” They did note, however, that some residents only identify positively with CSP officers, who they feel are different from other LAPD officers. In this way, experience of CSP-style policing may be raising resident expectations for how the police engage the community, and setting a new standard of expectations.

---

*“The developments have hundreds of residents who have different points of view. The ones who have faced intimidation generally want more enforcement, and the ones who have kids generally want more programs.”*

---

### **Challenges in CSP Community Relations**

CSP stakeholders were well aware that challenges remain in many aspects of the community relationship-building work. Many described the difficulty of positively engaging older youth. As one put it, “The persistent challenge is the teenagers. They already tend to have negative associations with police and are subject to a lot of peer pressure.” They also recognized the difficulty of responding to varied, and somewhat contradictory, community expectations of the police. As one CSP stakeholder described the dynamic, “The developments have hundreds of residents who have different points of view. The ones who have faced intimidation generally want more enforcement, and the ones who have kids generally want more programs.”

The day-to-day work of establishing more positive community relationships presents huge challenges for CSP officers, who described the difficulty of working on community relationship-building tasks and also engaging in enforcement. While officers describe trying to identify and achieve the right balance between relational and enforcement work, for residents it is clear that many find these two types of police work as contradictory, or find it confusing and frustrating to find CSP officers operating

in different modes in different situations. Officers also described some of this confusion coming from differing priorities communicated by department leadership, for example with an emphasis on programming one week, followed by demands to focus on enforcement the next.

Many stakeholders felt it was important to recognize how difficult the work of CSP officers is—consistently engaging with the issues in the developments and trying to build good relationships in the context of a long negative history of police-community relations there. As one put it, “CSP officers are mentally exhausted. They not only have to address past historical challenges but confront the hostility from community members who remain apprehensive about their intentions in working within the community.”

# Community Engagement and Neighborhood Cohesion

A number of CSP stakeholders and residents identified increasing levels of community engagement and neighborhood cohesion as important desired outcomes of CSP work. In this section we lay out resident perceptions of neighborhood contextual factors relevant to CSP, and discuss CSP's effect on community engagement and cohesion.

## Neighborhood Cohesion and Community Engagement in the CSP Sites

Residents across the CSP sites were able to identify multiple strengths of their communities. The most commonly reported strength was that the developments offer a number of programs, activities, and resources for residents, although they did indicate that more was needed in this area, specifically mentioning job training programs, cross-cultural awareness activities, and programs geared towards a wider range of ages. Respondents said that while tensions exist among neighbors at times, people generally get along on the CSP sites. Spanish-speaking residents at Ramona Gardens in particular noted that they are happy living in the development and have no desire to move. Residents also noted several improvements within the developments over the years. For example, Spanish-speaking residents at Nickerson Gardens reported that the neighborhood has appeared cleaner over the last three years.

Residents were also able to identify spaces within the development where they felt comfortable voicing neighborhood concerns and seeking support when needed. At Nickerson Gardens, residents said they could address pertinent issues through HACLA, while respondents at Jordan Downs identified the Watts Center resident Latino meetings as a place where they could find support. Across sites, residents had mixed views regarding the Resident Advisory Councils (RACs). Some thought the RAC meetings were a helpful space for dealing with smaller community problems (e.g., noise complaints), while others said that the meetings were not well-attended, or attended by mostly older residents, and were not a place where more serious concerns could be addressed.

## VIEWS OF HACLA'S ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY

There were a number of criticisms voiced in the CSP crime and safety focus groups about HACLA and its role in the community, many of them similar to resident issues with LAPD. English-speaking residents

from Nickerson Gardens and Spanish-speaking residents at Jordan Downs in particular felt that HACLA played a negative role in relations within the community. Nickerson Gardens residents felt that HACLA favors some residents over others, particularly in terms of hiring. Community members from Jordan Downs perceived HACLA staff as being more aligned with black residents, and as such, they did not feel they could go to them to help resolve challenges they encountered in the neighborhood. Ramona Gardens program focus groups respondents also thought that HACLA staff could do a better job reinforcing rules within the development so people do not feel comfortable committing crime.

## **Neighborhood Cohesion and Community Engagement in the Comparison Sites**

There were several similarities between the CSP and comparison site focus group perspectives on resident relations. English-speaking respondents from the comparison sites shared mostly positive opinions about their neighbors. They generally felt that residents in their neighborhoods got along with each other, and that tensions arose over relatively minor incidents (e.g., noise complaints). The majority of respondents reported that they dealt directly with their neighbors when problems arose, rather than calling the police. Respondents from Estrada Courts were the only group of residents from any of the program and comparison sites who could not readily identify strengths of their community.

Some focus group participants expressed concern regarding HACLA's work in the comparison sites as well. Residents from Estrada Courts explained that there were residents who regularly “snitched” on their neighbors to HACLA. Further, they thought HACLA staff violated confidentiality by disclosing which neighbors had made a complaint. This viewpoint paralleled what the CSP residents shared about the police not keeping resident complaints private. Latino respondents from Pueblo del Rio felt that there were definite consequences to filing complaints against one's neighbors. They described incidents where residents had retaliated against those who filed complaints, including one person who set a neighbor's apartment on fire. Residents from Estrada Courts and Pueblo del Rio did not perceive the RAC meetings as an effective space for resolving important community concerns.

Focus group participants in the comparison developments lamented the lack of program opportunities, and expressed a particular desire for youth-oriented, educational, and recreational activities. They felt that HACLA encountered significant bureaucratic challenges that made it difficult to implement new programs in their developments. The Latino residents at both comparison sites felt particularly frustrated by the lack of programming in their neighborhood. They wanted more programs, and they felt that no one was particularly concerned with improving the quality of life for their community.

## Racial/Ethnic Tensions

Racial tension between Black and Latino residents emerged as a common theme across the focus groups. The neighborhoods in which the CSP developments are located have witnessed major demographic shifts in the past decades, with Latino residents moving into communities in which black residents once predominated. The focus groups revealed how tensions between these groups is a major impediment to neighborhood cohesion.

Relationships between black and Latino residents often intersected with residents' perceptions of community safety and neighborhood relations. For example, the Jordan Downs and Imperial Courts focus groups revealed that Latino residents frequently perceive their black neighbors as violent, and they are often afraid to directly engage them. Respondents from Imperial Courts were particularly frustrated by the negative dynamics between black and Latino residents, and they explained that negative stigma from past incidents can taint Latino residents' impressions of the black community. They felt that black residents are responsible for much of the crime and neighborhood tension, yet they receive special treatment in that the police do not arrest them for their unlawful activity. They perceived black residents as receiving special treatment in terms of programming in the development as well.

By contrast, black residents at Imperial Courts explained that they often feel pushed out and harassed by Latino residents. For example, they perceive their Latino neighbors as being more apt to report them to the police or to the public child welfare system. Interestingly, Spanish-speaking residents in this neighborhood confirmed that they do call the police when problems arise with their black neighbors. An English-speaking resident at Jordan Downs further explained that tension between the two racial groups also stems from turf wars related to the drug trade. Community members from Nickerson Gardens felt that race relations were worse for new people who move into the development, and for younger males in the neighborhood. Despite this tension, Spanish-speaking residents from Jordan Downs and Imperial Courts felt that even though racism still exists, race relations have improved and they feel safer around black residents than they did previously.

The comparison development focus groups described similar racial and ethnic tensions. Latino focus group participants in Estrada Courts described a sense of racial tension in the development. For example, they felt that HACLA staff often favored black residents, which caused them to feel somewhat displaced in the neighborhood. Racial divides were noted at Pueblo del Rio as well. Latino residents felt that black and Latino residents were united within their own communities, but they were completely divided against each other. Black residents felt that they received unequal treatment from HACLA staff. However, they did not share the same level of frustration about these dynamics compared to the residents from Nickerson Gardens, Imperial Courts, and Jordan Downs.

## CSP Impact on Neighborhood Cohesion and Community Engagement

CSP stakeholders and CSP programming focus group participants generally agreed that prior to CSP, there were few programs in the community and the community's level of involvement in programming was minimal, both of which CSP has improved. Many of the participants in the CSP programming focus groups felt that the partnership between CSP and the RACs has created more of a literal and figurative space for senior residents to express their concerns and engage in the community. For this reason, they expressed how appreciative they were of CSP because it has allowed them to feel "more comfortable" in the neighborhood. This observation was consistent with the belief expressed in interviews with HACLA staff and community organization partners, who indicated that residents are becoming more engaged as a result of CSP, especially the Latino community which was primarily homebound or socially operating in different areas than other residents.

Some stakeholders expressed the impact of CSP on cohesion in terms of enhancing community pride, due to more positive things occurring in the development. This idea is reflected in the hope expressed in some focus groups that CSP may be change the external reputation of the developments, so that they are less associated with gangs and crime. HACLA has also observed changes in the willingness of tenants to live in the CSP developments and reduction in problems related to new tenants moving in. "At one point," said a HACLA interview respondent, "no one wanted to lease in Nickerson. Now folks are more accepting."

Across the crime and public safety and CSP programming focus groups, how much residents knew about CSP varied. Predictably, the understanding of CSP was much stronger among residents who participated or had children participating in CSP than among residents generally. In the CSP programming focus groups, residents from Ramona Gardens possessed a good deal of information about CSP's mission and program activities and who was involved in those activities. In the other programming focus groups, a substantial number of the participants lived outside of the developments, and knew that special LAPD officers were involved but were unaware that either program was part of a larger community safety initiative. Residents in the public safety focus groups, who did not usually have a direct connection to CSP programming, thought of CSP in terms of the presence of the CSP officers in the developments. Their knowledge of CSP's programmatic efforts was spotty, and many did not express a strong grasp of what CSP was or what it was intended to accomplish. It is likely that the ability of CSP to impact community engagement among the residents more distanced from and less aware of the program is limited.

## PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The participants from the Watts Bears and Girl Scouts focus group, all of whom lived outside of the CSP developments, expressed that the parents who live inside the development have limited participation in their respective programs. In the Girl Scouts focus group, they felt that the parents were only somewhat involved. The respondents from the Watts Bears group felt that parents from the developments supported their children by attending games, however, they did not participate in ways that other parents did such as bringing food and water for the kids at their games. They expressed frustration over the lack of parent participation, especially because they perceived CSP as a program that should be community and parent-driven. Further, they explained that there have been times when CSP officers have had to stop program activities to respond to police emergencies; greater parent participation would ensure that parents could step in and help run the program when these types of situations arise.

CSP officers and other CSP stakeholders also often felt that parent engagement was less than what is needed, but there was also support for the strategy of using youth programming to engage parents. As one officer described the long-term plan, “Focus on reaching out to kids first, and the parents will follow.” There was evidence in favor of this approach in the Ramona Garden CSP programming focus group, several members of which participate in the Seniors Group at the development, and also had children or grandchildren who participated in CSP programs aimed towards. For this reason, they perceived CSP as a program that benefits and engages the entire family unit, and were more supportive of CSP as a result.

# Youth Engagement

Youth are the primary focus and participants in CSP programming, and stakeholders and residents consistently emphasized how great the challenges were facing youth in the developments and how important it was to have programming focusing on youth. In this section, we present further information about the prevalence of youth risk factors in the CSP developments and discuss perceptions of the impact of CSP on youth.

## Youth Risk Factors

The Watts Youth Survey results provide insight into the prevalence of risk factors within the youth population aged 10- to 15 of the three Watts developments participating in CSP (as well as current non-CSP site Gonzague Village). Demographics of the survey respondents are summarized in Appendix B. The survey mirrored the Youth Services Eligibility Tool (YSET), which the GRYD Office uses to determine whether youth are sufficiently at-risk to be eligible for Secondary Prevention services. Just over 19 percent of the survey sample exceeded the risk threshold for GRYD Prevention services, with the highest eligible proportion among Jordan Downs respondents (25 percent) and the lowest among Nickerson Gardens respondents (14 percent). The overall portrait of youth in the developments that emerges is of a population with some significant sources of strength, but facing a number of risk factors in their environment and with a small but concerning minority of respondents exhibiting delinquent and risky behaviors.

Youth in these developments tend to have some form of family structure and supervision. About 80 percent of youth responded that when they are not at home or school, their parent or guardian always or often knows where they are and who they are with. A majority of youth (67 percent) also reported that they can get help with problems from another family member when adults are not around. However, family rules are often not consistently enforced. Nearly half (48 percent) of respondents reported that there are only sometimes, rarely, or never consequences if family rules are broken.

Experiences of difficult life events were common. A full 46 percent of the youth reported that someone they were close to died or was seriously injured in the last year. With regard to drug use, less than ten percent of youth reported ever using alcohol or cigarettes (nine percent) or inhalants (seven percent), but eleven percent of them reported ever using marijuana or other illegal drugs. About five percent reported ever selling marijuana or other illegal drugs. A substantial minority of youth reported risk-taking behavior. For example, 17 percent of youth agreed that they like to do dangerous things just

for the fun of it, and 30 percent agreed that they like to have fun when they can, even if they will get in trouble for it later.

Participation in delinquent or criminal behavior varied by type of behavior (Table 5), with no more than 20 percent of respondents having participated in any single criminal behavior from the survey. However, this is a relatively high level given the youth of the sample. About 20 percent admitted skipping classes or avoiding paying for things like movies, bus rides, or subway rides. Eighteen percent reported purposely destroying or damaging someone else’s property, while ten percent reported ever doing graffiti. Reporting of property offenses such as theft and burglary hovered around ten percent, with ten percent reporting ever stealing or trying to steal something worth \$50 or less, and seven percent reporting ever trying to enter a building to steal something.

**TABLE 5: YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN CRIMINAL OR GANG ACTIVITIES**

Type of activity	Youth reporting participation
Ever purposely damaged/destroyed other’s property	18%
Ever used marijuana or other illegal drugs	11%
Ever stolen or tried to steal something worth < \$50	10%
Ever painted graffiti	10%
Ever used a weapon/force to rob someone	6%
Ever been a member of a gang	11%
At least one gang member in family	43%

**Source:** Watts Youth Survey.

**Notes:** The denominators for each category are slightly different due to different amounts of missing data for each question.

In terms of violent behavior, about 30 percent of the youth reported getting very angry and losing their temper always or often, and 18 percent reported ever hitting someone with the idea of hurting him or her. However, more youth tend to believe that violence is justified when someone else initiates it: 36 percent agreed that it would be okay to beat someone up if they were hit first, and 40 percent agreed that it would be okay if they were doing it to stand up for themselves. When asked about weapon use, 14 percent of youth reported carrying a hidden weapon for protection. About six percent ever attacked someone with a weapon or robbed someone with a weapon.

Many of the respondents had had experience with gangs, with 43 percent reporting having at least one family member who belongs to a gang and 40 percent having at least one friend who is a gang member. Fewer reported direct participation or gang membership. About 11 percent of youth responded that they had ever been a member of a gang, and nine percent reported ever participating in gang activities.

Youth in these developments have a mixed perception of the police. Forty-eight percent of them responded that police always or often treat people fairly, and slightly over half (54 percent) responded that the police can be trusted to make decisions that are right for the people in the neighborhood. Most youth (64 percent) reported being treated with respect by police, although nearly 17 percent reported that they or someone they know were searched or hit by police for no reason.

## CSP Engagement with Youth

### MENTORSHIP AND POSITIVE YOUTH RELATIONSHIPS

Participants in the CSP program focus groups perceived CSP as having a positive impact on youth in the development, explaining that youth feel more motivated to succeed because the CSP officers play a hands-on, caring role in their lives. The parents from the Watts Bears focus group praised CSP officers for positively engaging youth program participants. For instance, one parent shared that a CSP officer was currently serving as a mentor/tutor for her child, and that when any of the children on the team are struggling in school, officers will intervene by going to the school and/or offering tutoring services. Parents in the Girl Scouts group felt that they had seen positive growth in their children since they joined Girl Scouts. One parent described her child as more social and more focused on school. Others generally thought that the program gives youth something positive to do and it teaches them values. The Watts Bears respondents said that an additional benefit of the program is that it allows their children to forge new friendships with other youth on the team that they otherwise never would have met, and it has facilitated friendships among their parents too.

---

*“The parts of the program that target kids are the best parts and have worked the best. I find it very rewarding.”*

---

The connection with youth has also been a critical part of building and maintaining officer commitment to CSP. In a representative comment from the interviews with CSP officers, one said, “The parts of the program that target kids are the best parts and have worked the best. I find it very rewarding.” It is clear from the interviews that the connection with the youth in the programs is a major contributor to the officers’ sense that CSP is accomplishing change and adding value to the community.

An important gap in CSP's work with youth noted by both residents and stakeholders was working with older youth, those in their mid- to late teens. They were older than the target population for most CSP programming, and were often described as a "hard to reach" population for CSP. If anything, these youth (particularly young men) were described as interacting with CSP officers in the enforcement context. It should be noted that GRYD programming does work with older youth, so that partnership allows CSP to assist with services to them, but residents generally perceived that GRYD was separate from CSP, so this alliance did not alleviate their sense that CSP was not doing enough for older youth. It was clear in the focus groups that seeing CSP working positively with these young men was a necessary condition in order for them to fully support the program, and view the core partners positively.

### SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Many of the stakeholders spoke about youth successes and changes in their mentality toward school. CSP officers felt that youth were more interested in higher education and thoughtful about their future. Much of the youth programming is focused on educational outcomes through mentoring or private school, and service providers have access to school test scores and report cards. Although the research team did not have access to these data, interviews revealed that school achievement had significantly improved. Service provider partners working in or with schools said that they had seen test score improvements and that CSP youth were thriving in school and feeling more supported due to the mentoring they received through the program. CSP officer participation in Safe Passage was also mentioned as an important contributor for youth success. Parents described how CSP officers often monitor the streets to ensure that kids can walk to and from school safely. In their opinion, this helps kids to feel protected, and also assures parents that the police are looking out for their children.

# Suggestions for Strengthening CSP

The focus groups and stakeholder interviews produced many recommendations for how to improve CSP. In the interest of representing all the perspectives and ideas encountered throughout the assessment, this section presents all of these suggestions. We recognize that some of them may be infeasible given current resources, and some of them are contradictory. Including them all, however, presents the broadest picture of where changes in CSP are desired, and what residents and stakeholders want more of from the program.

It is also important to note that several residents, when asked what could be changed or improved in CSP, said that they perceived the program as excellent and did not have changes to suggest. Stakeholders (who were interviewed) were more prone to offer suggestions for improvement, with only two saying no changes were needed.

- Increase funding and dedicate more officers. There was a sense from many informants that CSP could accomplish more in the current sites if more funding resources and officers could be dedicated to the program. Both LAPD respondents and residents were emphatic in this recommendation.
- Expand programming in the CSP developments. There were many suggestions, mostly from residents, about how CSP programming might be expanded, both in terms of target populations (e.g. more programs for older youth) and types of offerings (e.g. more employment-related services). This was strongly desired due to the high levels of need in the developments and insufficient resources to address those needs. It should be noted that the constraint on expanding programming may be officer time, not funding. As one stakeholder framed the issue, “The challenge is not getting more money for programming, but in getting more police officers for the program.”
- Engage older youth. For the reasons discussed in the previous section, residents want CSP to reach older youth in a positive manner, either through programming or by modifying their interactions with them in the community to be less enforcement-focused.
- Narrow the focus. In a different take on the same issue, it was suggested that CSP should more carefully focus its activities, to avoid being pulled in so many directions by resident and partner requests that resources were spread too thin to be effective and the CSP officers experience burnout.
- Clarify CSP officer enforcement responsibilities. As discussed throughout the report, there is a common sentiment that there was uncertainty regarding how CSP officers should integrate

their enforcement responsibilities into the rest of their work. Officers in particular described the difficulty of switching between “modes” of policing.

- Have CSP officers patrol in the evenings and on the weekends. Residents noted that there were many times that CSP officers were not on duty, and regular LAPD officers were patrolling or responding to issues in the developments. Residents who appreciated the CSP approach to the community, and there were many, essentially wanted CSP policing to be available all the time. For example, in Ramona Gardens residents explained that the development is fairly safe during the week because CSP officers are there, but that problems tend to arise on weekends when there is less of a CSP presence and more of a general police presence.
- Increase parental involvement. Residents, CSP officers and other stakeholders thought that greater parental involvement in CSP programming would strengthen the programs, increase community engagement, and alleviate the burden on CSP officers by sharing the work or running the programs.
- Increase LAPD officer buy-in beyond CSP officers. Residents in particular felt it was important for LAPD officers not directly involved in CSP to support the mission and approaches of CSP, so that all policing in and around the developments would reflect CSP values. This relates to the resident belief that CSP officers act differently—are more enforcement-oriented—when non-CSP officers are around. Residents want the influence to go in the other direction.
- Ensure the dedication of all CSP officers. There were a variety of suggestions related to ensuring that CSP officers had the right qualities. LAPD stakeholders emphasized that it was imperative to make sure that new CSP hires are “truly passionate” about the type of community engagement practiced by CSP. One officer suggested rotating officers in and out of CSP duty regularly to “keep enthusiasm up.” This might mitigate CSP officer exhaustion, but would not fit CSP’s model of maintaining consistency in the dedicated officers, and would also require a sufficiently deep pool of LAPD officers who are the right fit for CSP. Some CSP officers also thought it was necessary to ensure that sergeants overseeing CSP were fully committed to the program philosophy and understood it.
- Increase community awareness and understanding of CSP. It was noted that many in the CSP communities are not aware of what CSP is and does. There appears to be a lot of work to be done in this area, given the problematic beliefs and interpretations of CSP and LAPD practice evident among the residents. A CSP officer observed, “Educating the community is key—especially on police activity, why they do what they do, what happens when they arrest someone. A lot of times people don’t understand what is happening and it contributes to mistrust.”

- Deliver transparency in funding decisions and equitable distribution of resources across the developments. Some CSP stakeholders found it unclear how decisions to fund programs and activities were made within CSP. Residents expressed concerns about whether CSP resources and attention were spread equitably across all the participating developments. Greater transparency and clearer communication on these points was desired to address these concerns.
- Streamline processes and trust officers on what's needed. Some officers said that the process of getting activities approved and funded was overly cumbersome and slow, and that a quicker process that followed officer recommendations more closely would be more effective. In a comment that encapsulated a lot of opinions on this, an officer said “There needs to be more understanding and trust in the officers from leadership and donors about why they need what they need. They are basically the ‘boots on the ground’ and have the best point of view to see what is needed in the communities.”
- Expand CSP to other developments. Service provider partners recommended expanding CSP to other public housing developments. They felt that partnering with CSP greatly improved their effectiveness, and were eager to see it extend to other communities with which they work or hope to work.

## Sustaining CSP

CSP Stakeholders and many residents, especially those directly involved in CSP, felt strongly that CSP needed to continue and be sustained. They believed it was generating the benefits that it was designed to achieve, and that discontinuing CSP in the developments would undo the progress in police-community relations that had been realized. Given the suspicion about the true level of commitment by LAPD voiced by many residents in the focus groups, it is easy to see how ending CSP would validate and reinforce their jaded view of police motivations.

The main threat to sustainability identified in the assessment was the overextension of CSP resources, particularly the CSP officers. CSP officers were consistently described as going over and above the requirements of the job, while constantly having competing demands on their time related to both enforcement work and community problem-solving. In a sense, this challenge is exacerbated by CSP success—the stronger and broader the relationships built with the community by CSP officers, the more community members want to bring problems to those officers and get their assistance in solving them. The more effective the CSP officers are, the more overwhelming their jobs can become.

Three possibilities were raised by assessment respondents (residents and stakeholders) to address this issue. The first was to devote more resources to the CSP developments, and particularly to assign more CSP officers. The second was to tighten the scope of CSP activities, so that there were clearer boundaries between what was and was not expected of CSP officers. The collaborative problem-identification and problem-solving approach at the center of CSP inherently creates a situation in which CSP is open-ended and a huge variety of things can be appropriate CSP undertakings. This allows for maximal flexibility and responsiveness to community priorities, but may also be unmanageable over the long term. It is possible that a more narrowly focused CSP with clearer boundaries would better meet resident expectations in the long run. The final possibility was to get more contributions from partners aside from LAPD. Many respondents expressed the hope that parents, service providers, and other partners could “step up” and shoulder more of the work of running CSP programming. Sharing the CSP work more broadly could ease the burden on CSP officers, and create deeper partnerships and collaboration within CSP.

# Conclusion and Recommendations

CSP is a complex and multi-faceted undertaking, tackling deep-rooted issues of crime, police-community relations and youth development in challenging community environments. This assessment found many heartening indications of CSP success, as well as surfacing remaining and ongoing challenges. In this section, we present the main conclusions regarding CSP's success, highlight the most significant challenges for CSP, and conclude with recommendations for improving CSP, intended to guide refinement of CSP where it currently operates and inform potential expansion.

It should be noted that this assessment, while comprehensive in many ways, is not a full impact evaluation of CSP. It integrates input from many sources, but particularly in terms of the CSP site residents, the findings may not be fully representative of opinions in the entire development. Urban will separately provide a design for what a rigorous impact evaluation of CSP should include, which would expand upon the findings of this assessment and provide a deeper and more definitive picture of the effects of CSP in the communities in which it operates.

## CSP Successes

*Crime and violence have gone down in the CSP developments.* The improvements in crime, violence and safety in the CSP developments are broadly recognized. This opinion was supported by the analysis of violent crime in the CSP sites presented above. The crime reduction is a source of great pride among the LAPD officers involved in CSP, and it makes the lives of residents much better. There were differing views on the extent to which the crime reduction is attributable to CSP in particular or LAPD policing in general. CSP officers strongly believed that their work was reducing crime. Some residents credited CSP for helping bring crime down, but others believed non-CSP efforts such as gang injunction enforcement and installation of cameras played a greater role.

*Youth are receiving mentoring and support that they need.* CSP officers are playing powerful roles in the lives of many youth in the developments through mentoring and guiding them, within the programs. Many residents note that officers have gone above and beyond expectations in working to help youth thrive.

*CSP is changing perceptions of police.* While the distrust of the LAPD remains a substantial issue in the developments, many residents and stakeholders noted that the way the CSP officers are working in the

developments “humanizes” or “puts a face” to policing in a way distinctly different from the past. A strong desire for all policing to be like CSP policing emerged through the assessment.

*More CSP is wanted in the CSP developments.* The assessment found residents and other stakeholders requesting more CSP in a variety of ways, including wanting all LAPD officers to operate like CSP officers, having CSP officers present in the developments at all times, and expanding CSP programming to older youth. While finding the resources to respond to these desires will be difficult, the fact that residents in particular want more of what CSP offers is a vote of confidence in the approach.

*CSP has created functional collaboration among its partners.* Collaboration and communication between LAPD, HACLA, GRYD, and community partner organizations is characterized as strong and functional. Collaboration between CSP partners and residents is more mixed, in part because of the inherent diversity within the resident population, but CSP has effectively engaged many segments of the resident population.

*CSP is enhancing community engagement among residents.* Many residents describe a greater degree of participation in the community as a result of CSP, with space created for them to participate in RAC meetings, bring their concerns to the attention of the broader community, and work effectively to address community issues and enhance opportunities for residents, particularly the youth.

*CSP officers demonstrate tremendous dedication to the CSP approach.* CSP officers universally express strong support and commitment to the mission and philosophy of CSP. They demonstrate that commitment tangibly through going above and beyond expectations of them to work with the community, responding to community concerns and outreach when off-duty, and working creatively to find resources and solve community problems.

## **CSP Challenges**

*Youth programming and activities are greatly needed in the developments.* Results of the Watts Youth Survey demonstrated substantial levels of challenges for youth, including the presence of gangs in their lives and involvement in delinquency. This is a great advantage for CSP, in that it is delivering something that development residents highly value and feel is lacking. It also presents a challenge for maintaining focus for CSP programmatically, as the community and other stakeholders are pushing for more youth program offerings, in more places, with broader participant populations. Clearly the needs that CSP is intended to address are much greater than CSP’s current resources to meet them.

*Uncertainty about the best balance between CSP Officers' community engagement and enforcement roles is common.* Officers, other CSP stakeholders and development residents all expressed confusion on this point, confusion that appears to create challenges for CSP Officers in their work, and to feed community mistrust of LAPD.

*CSP work is overwhelming for officers.* CSP officers demonstrate tremendous dedication, working long hours, using their own money to support the programs they oversee, and juggling extensive and sometimes competing duties. This situation raises the issue of officer burnout, a substantial threat to CSP integrity given the intent to maintain consistency in the officers assigned to developments.

*Substantial distrust of police remains in the CSP developments.* While there are signs that CSP has made some progress in mitigating this distrust, it is clear that suspicion of LAPD and its activities is persistent and deep-rooted. Adding to the challenge of reducing this distrust are the somewhat contradictory concerns that residents identify as underlying this distrust, for example the assertion that police are unresponsive to many offenses or do not take them seriously, alongside the assertion that police over-enforce for minor offenses and harass young men.

*Different opinions surfaced on the degree to which CSP resources need to stay within the developments.* Some residents expressed dissatisfaction that CSP resources or programming were made available to people who were not residents of the CSP developments. At the same time, respondents acknowledged that crime and safety issues sometimes stemmed from people coming in from the neighborhoods surrounding the developments, which would suggest that improving safety in the developments cannot be achieved solely by interventions confined to residents within the developments. Transportation and siting issues also made it necessary to provide many CSP-related activities in locations outside the developments.

*Police engaging the community creates new community relations challenges.* While greater communication and engagement between law enforcement and the community is desired by many residents, it also creates new complications. Many residents expressed the belief that the police favor particular groups of residents, variously defined by race/ethnicity, gender or age. They also felt that police efforts to communicate with residents were for the purpose of gaining information for enforcement purposes, which was sometimes interpreted not as a legitimate undertaking but as encouraging "snitching." In short, for residents who distrust the police, more police engagement with the community was not necessarily perceived as a positive development.

*Racial/ethnic tensions are a problem in the CSP developments.* While not all residents perceive this as a problem, tensions between black and Latino residents came up frequently among the problems facing

the developments. These tensions interact with existing mistrust of LAPD and HACLA, as various actions undertaken by both are sometimes perceived as siding with one group or the other.

## Recommendations

*Clarify how CSP Officers should balance their community engagement and enforcement responsibilities.* LAPD officers, other partners, and residents view the community engagement and enforcement work of CSP officers as distinct, and to some degree competing and contradictory responsibilities. The way in which these responsibilities are integrated and complementary needs to be articulated and conveyed to CSP officers in concrete terms related to expectations of them. Once the CSP approach to balancing these roles is clarified, it should be communicated to current CSP Officers, new CSP Officers, and CSP partners and residents of CSP developments.

*Expand CSP programming and officer presence.* Residents strongly desire more programming and services where CSP already operates, given the high levels of need in the developments and the perceived lack of sufficient programming. Stakeholders concurred on this point, but it is clear that more CSP officers will be needed to realize more programming and more coverage of evenings and weekends by CSP officers. The optimal times and places to deploy more CSP officers is an open question, as residents appear to want both more youth engagement and more crime suppression from CSP. Where and when CSP officers would be working for each of these purposes is likely to be very different.

*Consider whether CSP expansion should be broadening or deepening.* Based on the assessment, CSP is a highly promising approach and expansion seems warranted. However, there is a question about what the priority for expansion should be. There were many recommendations and suggestions regarding how CSP could be extended or deepened within the developments where CSP is already present, and there was a definite sense that CSP had not fully realized its potential in the four current sites. At the same time, the comparison area focus groups indicated that the issues CSP is intended to address are strongly present in other developments as well, which would support the extension of CSP to new areas.

This tension between taking an intervention to more places and strengthening it where it already exists is common among new interventions. Given the challenge of matching CSP resources to demands on CSP in the current developments, the trade-off between enhancing CSP work in the current sites and extending the program to new places should be carefully considered.

*Consider conducting more CSP youth activities within the developments.* Doing more of CSP's programming and activities for youth within the developments would have a number of beneficial effects. Primary among them would be making CSP's positive youth engagement and the role of LAPD officers within it more visible to residents, who may be unaware of the extent of LAPD's role unless they have program participants in their family. This creates a dynamic in which they see enforcement activity undertaken by CSP officers much more than the community engagement activities, which contributes to the perception that CSP is not what it purports to be.

*Clarify whether CSP programming should be reserved for residents of CSP developments.* This emerged as a source of tension with development residents, who understand CSP to be resources dedicated to their communities, which badly need them. This does not square in their minds with allowing participation from youth outside the developments. If such participation is part of CSP's plan, this should be clarified in messaging to residents about what CSP is.

*Strengthen CSP engagement with young men.* Residents strongly expressed the belief that young men bear the brunt of police scrutiny and enforcement (often characterized by residents as "harassment"), and that consequently young men are particularly alienated from the police. Beyond the young men, resident perceptions that the police continue to over-police young men in their communities undermine relationship improvements from more positive interactions. Given its aims and the dynamics of the developments, increased attention and outreach to young men will be critical to CSP's success in forging more positive relationships with the CSP communities

*Enhance the public profile of CSP.* CSP does not have particularly strong "brand" recognition among residents who do not have youth participating in CSP programs. This was particularly noticeable relative to GRYD and SNL, which have much stronger general recognition, although both have also been operating longer than CSP. It is not clear to what degree a strong CSP brand is necessary to the success of the program, as opposed to positive recognition of what LAPD, HACLA and other partners are doing in the developments. But if a strong brand for CSP is desired, greater efforts to communicate what is (and is not) CSP will be needed.

*Commit to sustaining CSP.* Although CSP has been operating in the developments for several years, many of the community residents without direct experience of the program appear to be taking a "wait and see" attitude about whether LAPD and HACLA are committed to the new way of engaging with them that CSP represents. Given the high degree of mistrust still present among community residents, failure to stay the course on CSP could be tremendously damaging to the improvements in community connection realized by CSP.

# Notes

1. Peace Ambassadors are trained and employed by the GRYD Office to work in the GRYD Zones as liaisons with the community, assisting with activities such as Saturday Night Lights and supporting positive community relationships. The GRYD Office describes the role as providing “assistance to the youth, families and community...[with] developing and implementing programs to promote peace throughout the Watts community.”
2. The survey was conducted in an effort to create a comparison group for use in evaluating GYRD’s prevention services. Because three of the four survey locations are also CSP sites (Imperial Courts, Jordan Downs and Nickerson Gardens), the GRYD Office agreed to allow the Urban research team to incorporate the survey results into the CSP assessment.
3. As described in the HACLA 2012 Admission and Continued Occupancy Policy, the criteria for emergency transfers due to criminal activity are: “To protect a Resident or a Household Member from a factually verifiable or documented threat of real and imminent criminal attack that is specifically directed towards that Resident, Household Member or other occupant of the Residence. In making such a determination, the President/CEO or designee may consider facts and circumstances including, but not limited to, recommendations by the District Attorney or a sworn peace officer with a rank equivalent to LAPD Detective II or higher attesting to the factual need for a transfer.”

# References

- Advancement Project. (2011). *HACLA-LAPD Community Safety Partnership: Community Assessment*. Advancement Project: Los Angeles, CA.
- Buntin, J. (2013, July 10). What Does It Take to Stop Crips and Bloods From Killing Each Other? *New York Times*. New York, NY.
- Roman, C. G., & Chalfin, A. (2008). Fear of walking outdoors: a multilevel ecologic analysis of crime and disorder. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, *34*(4), 306-312.

# Appendix A: Focus Group Respondent Characteristics

## Focus Group Participant Characteristics

	Total Count	Ramona Gardens	Nickerson Gardens	Imperial Courts	Jordan Downs	Estrada Courts	Pueblo Del Rio
<b>Crime and Public Safety</b>							
English-Speaking	34	10	6	5	1	9	3
Spanish-Speaking	63	5	2	16	14	19	7
<b>CSP Programming</b>							
	Total	Ramona Gardens	Girl Scouts	Watts Bears			
CSP Programming	35	19	11	5			

## Demographics

		Crime and Public Safety (n=97)	CSP Program (n=31)
Gender	Male	24%	6%
	Female	76%	94%
Race/Ethnicity	African-American	24%	16%
	Latino	71%	84%
	Other	4%	0%
Age	Under 20	12%	0%
	20-29	17%	13%
	30-39	13%	29%
	40-49	21%	19%
	50+	34%	39%
Tenure in Development (yrs)		20.1	22.5*
Children	None	19%	3%
	1-2	28%	32%
	3-4	30%	48%
	5+	16%	16%
CSP Participation	No	52%	13%
	Yes	8%	71%
	Have not heard about CSP	33%	6%

**Source:** Focus Group participant survey.

**Notes:** Percentages may not sum to 100% due to respondents not answer all questions.

\* 15 of 31 respondents (48%) indicated living in a HACLA development

# Appendix B: Watt Youth Survey Respondent Demographics

## Watts Youth Survey Respondent Demographics

	Percent
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	52
Female	48
<b>Age</b>	
9-11	36
12-13	34
14-15	29
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
African-American	48
Latino	41
Multi-racial/ethnic	4
White	3
<b>Site</b>	
Gonzaque Village	8
Imperial Courts	28
Jordan Downs	29
Nickerson Gardens	35

**Source:** Watts Youth Survey.

**Notes:** The denominators for each category are slightly different due to different amounts of missing data for each question.



2100 M Street NW  
Washington, DC 20037

[www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org)