



# Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative Overview

**Mayor Greg Nickels' 2009-2010 Proposed Biennial Budget includes more than \$9 million (a combination of about \$5.5 million of new and \$3.5 million of redirected money) for the Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative. The initiative will focus on about 800 children a year who are at highest risk of perpetuating or being victimized by violence. The initiative efforts will be coordinated through three neighborhood networks in southeast, southwest and central Seattle, where indicators of future violent behaviors, such as discipline rates in schools, are the highest. In each neighborhood, we will identify these children, and surround them with services tailored to their specific needs – we'll give them productive things to do with their time; we'll teach how to manage their anger; we'll help them learn job skills; we'll help them stay in school. We will intervene at a crucial time in their lives and offer them a better path.**

## **Our Challenge**

This year four teenagers have died from gun violence on Seattle streets. Seattle's crime rate is the lowest it has been in 40 years, but that is absolutely no solace to the families who have lost loved ones. Between 2003 and 2007, the number of juvenile violent crime incidents remained constant, hovering around 800 a year. Seattle has a problem with youth violence and it is focused in neighborhoods in southeast, southwest and central Seattle:

- Indicators of future violent behaviors, such as discipline rates, are highest in schools located in the southeast, southwest and central areas of the city. Middle schools in these areas have more incidents than high schools.
- Shootings and juvenile violent crime rates are also highest in these parts of the city.

## **Our Focus**

We're taking a new approach and intensively focusing on 800 young people living in central, southwest and southeast Seattle facing the highest risk for perpetuating or being victimized by violence. These youth include:

- repeat offenders;
- middle school truants or students at risk of suspension;
- youth arrested for crimes, such as shoplifting, that do not automatically require detention; and
- victims of violence and their friends and relatives.

These young people are the most overlooked in our community – except by law enforcement and the juvenile justice system – and the most likely to engage in violence in the future.

## **Our Research**

Seattle has a strong tradition of investing in its young people and serving a broad range of youth. This year, the City is investing \$62 million in Seattle’s children. This work is good and important and will be continued. Despite this investment, when we studied the nature of youth violence in Seattle, we found we could do more for the young people who most need our help.

We developed this new approach by taking a hard look at what works and what does not when it comes to preventing youth violence. Best-practice research shows the types of programs that are successful with helping troubled youth include:

- Intensive case management, which involves a partnership among a young person, his or her family, friends, teachers and providers that focuses on meeting that youth’s full range of needs.
- Mentorship, which provides a caring adult who spends one-on-one time with a high-risk youth, adding value to a young person’s life.
- Anger management training, which focuses on social skills, such expressing a complaint, preparing for a stressful conversation, responding to anger and dealing with group pressure; anger control; and moral reasoning.
- Street outreach, which involves one-to-one outreach to youth by someone with “street credibility.” This person establishes relationships, conducts home visits, makes referrals, intervenes in conflicts before violence escalates, prevents retaliation, and steers individuals away from violence toward positive endeavors.

City staff also talked with community members about their concerns and possible solutions. Community groups supported intensive case management, mentorship and street outreach.

We also studied what works in other cities, such as New York, Baltimore, Chicago and San Jose.

- In Chicago, “violence interrupters” perform outreach directly on the streets, helping prevent retaliatory violence because they are privy to information on the streets.
- In Baltimore, youth-focused neighborhood networks identify specific children who need help and make various resources available to them, based on their individual situations. A similar program in Washington, D.C., has enjoyed equally impressive results.
- In San Jose, extended-hours youth centers offer safe places for children to hang out and for police to take youth other than detention facilities. A successful street outreach program, similar to Chicago’s, also operates in San Jose.
- In Los Angeles, a peer-mediation program based in middle schools offers an alternative to suspension with trained students serving as mediators.

## Our New Approach

Based on what we learned from our research, we know we must take a very different approach to reach the children at the highest risk of perpetuating or being victims of violence. We will establish three youth-focused neighborhood networks in central, southeast and southwest Seattle to identify the children at-risk for violence, and surround them with services tailored to their specific needs. In addition, within each network, we will now:

- **Go to where these youth are** – we know we cannot wait for children to come to us for help; we must seek them out. Street outreach will be a key component of our new initiative.
- **Offer services that meet these young people’s specific needs** – rather than require children conform to existing programs, we’ll design programs that conform to them. The service mix will include:
  - case management
  - mentorship
  - anger management training
  - peer mediation
  - family support services, which work with low-risk juvenile offenders and their parents to teach the consequences of continuing delinquent behavior, help the family set goals, review the strengths of the youth and family, and explain what resources are available for helping to achieve a positive future for the youth.
  - youth employment programs, focusing on building work readiness skills and paid internships in conjunction with tutoring, other academic support services and post-high school planning; and pre-apprenticeships to help gain the skills needed to be successful competitors for building and construction trade apprenticeship programs.
  - recreation programs, offering positive ways to spend time in safe environments.
- **Ensure our efforts for each child being served are coordinated and focused across agencies, volunteers, schools and providers** – we need to eliminate our fragmented delivery of services and instead take a holistic approach to ensure effective and lasting change.
- **Work closely with community partners** – government cannot do this alone; the community has a significant role to play. Our community partners will help design the neighborhood networks and deliver services. With these at-risk youth, they will also design and implement community projects that will benefit both the young people and the community, they’ll offer them jobs, and they’ll mentor them.
- **Work closely with middle schools** – middle school is a critical transition period for young people. If they fail middle school, their chances of success are greatly diminished. We’ll work closely with the middle schools to ensure at-risk youth stay in school and succeed academically. One key component will be placing police officers in schools to provide crime prevention education, work to deter criminal activity, and assist schools in

addressing the needs of youth through mentoring, as well as information and referral of services.

- **Establish youth centers with extended hours** – Youth need a safe place to be from late afternoon to late night. They need a place to go to avoid trouble and to get away from it, especially when they have no other safe place to be. Each center will also give police officers a safe place to bring youth who have been arrested for crimes that do not meet the juvenile detention intake criteria (e.g., shoplifting). These juveniles have to be released, often with no connections that will keep them out of trouble in the future.

## Our Results

Simply tracking how much money we spend and how many young people receive services is not a meaningful measure of success. We have set a serious overall goal: to prevent youth violence. Unless we set high expectations for ourselves, our youth and our community, we will not be able to stop the shootings and stop the killings.

The initiative will include strict measures of accountability at two levels:

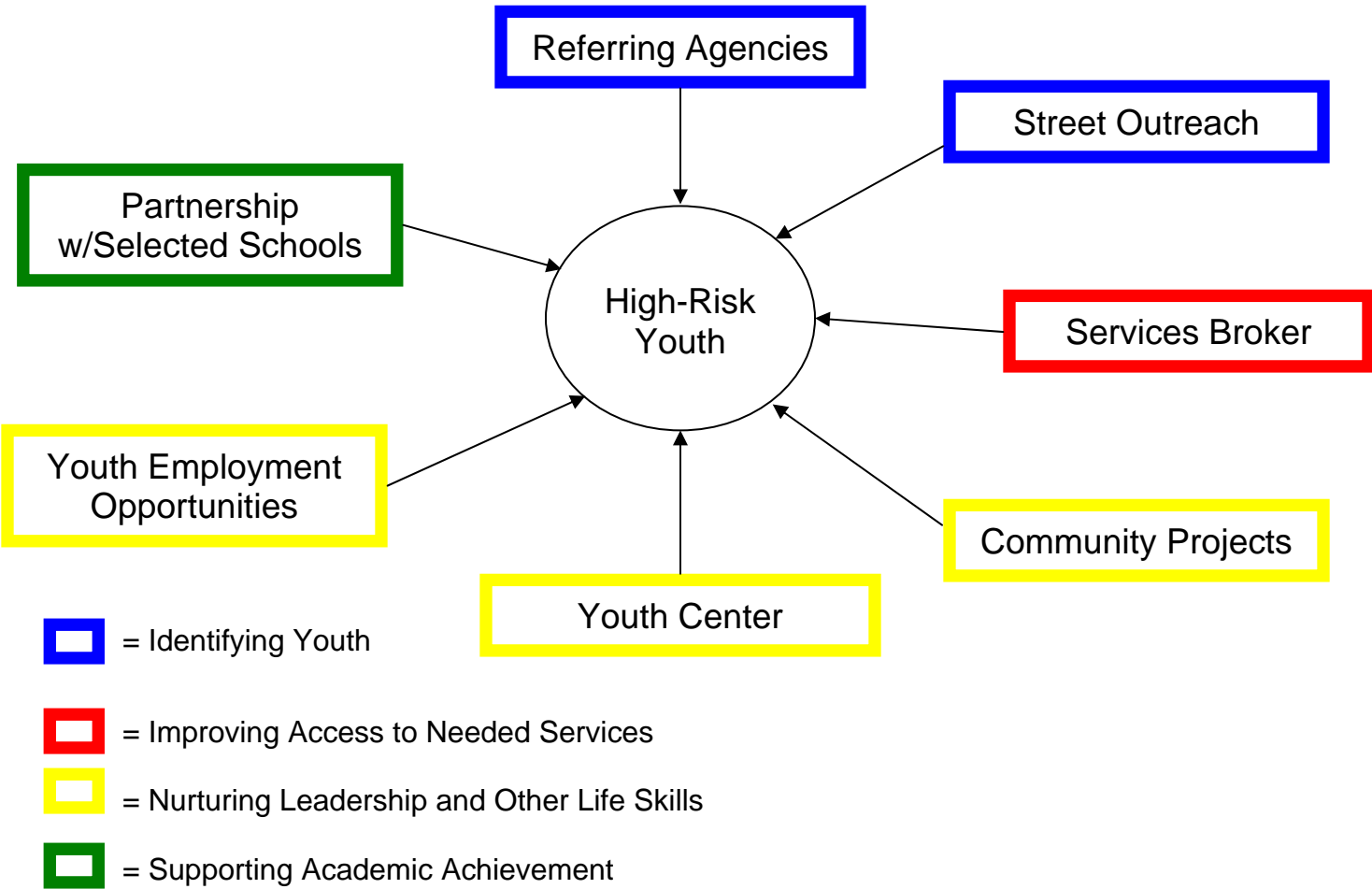
- **Individual lives are transformed** – reduction in school failure; reduction in criminal involvement and recidivism; and increase in social/life skills.
- **Neighborhoods and schools are safer** – reduction in gun-related violence; reduction in the juvenile violent crime rate; reduction in the number and rate of violent incidents in selected schools; reduction in the number and rate of suspensions due to violence in selected schools.

The initiative would begin in January and be in full operation by May 2009. Our goal is to prevent youth violence and to cut the juvenile violent crime rate by 50 percent within the first full year of operation.

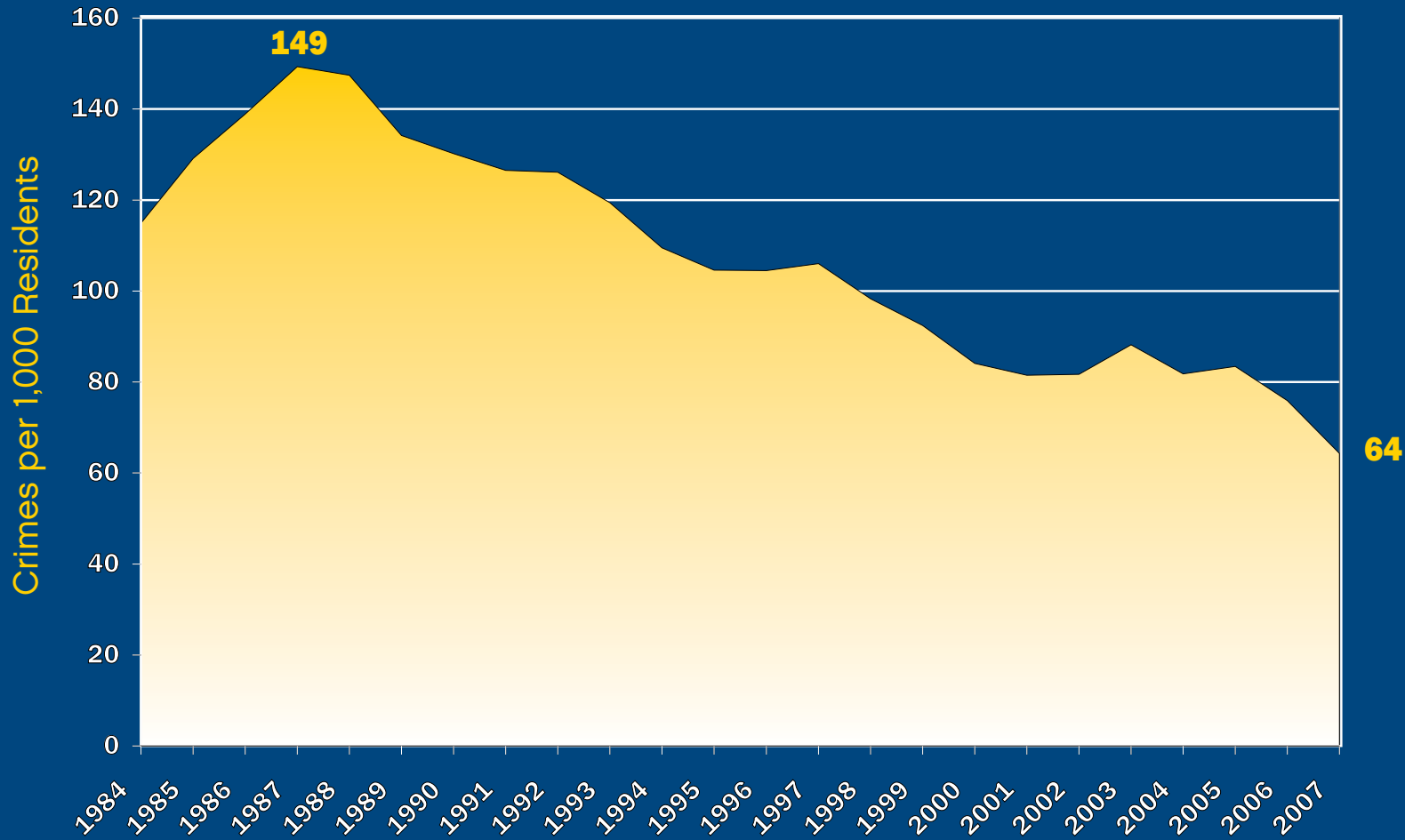
## Our Next Steps

- Design youth-focused neighborhood networks with help of community partners:
  - Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle for central Seattle;
  - Southwest Youth and Family Services for southwest Seattle; and
  - Atlantic Street Center for southeast Seattle.
- Develop partnerships within each neighborhood to work with youth in that neighborhood.
- Council reviews Mayor's proposed budget.
- Implementation phase-in (e.g., hire staff, organize services, work with school district to identify schools on which to focus, find sites for youth centers, etc.).
- Begin operation in January 2009.
- Full implementation in May 2009.
- First results report in June 2010.

# Youth-Focused Neighborhood Networks

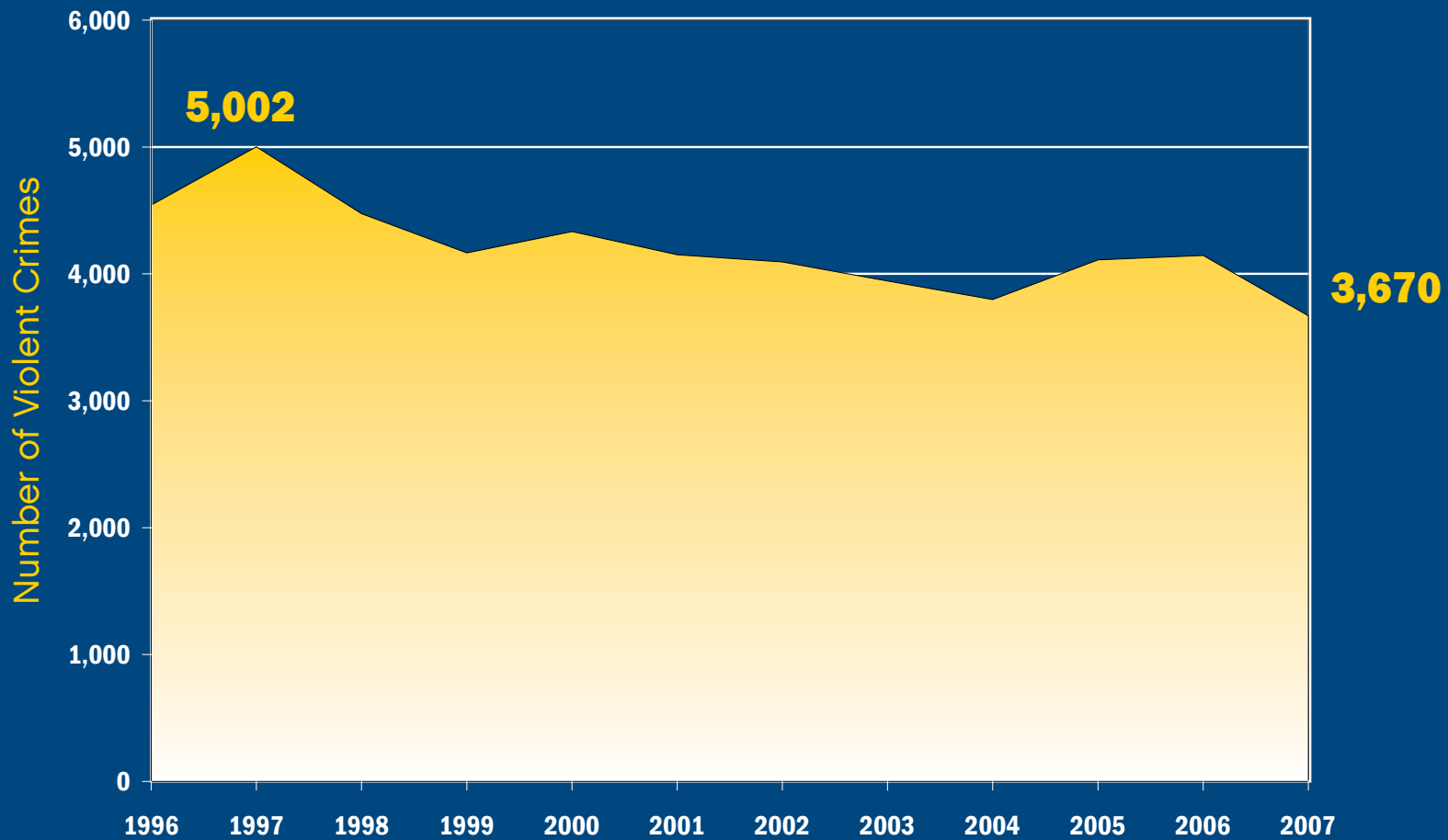


# TOTAL CRIME RATE IN SEATTLE 1984 -2007



SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

# REPORTED VIOLENT CRIME IN SEATTLE 1996 - 2007

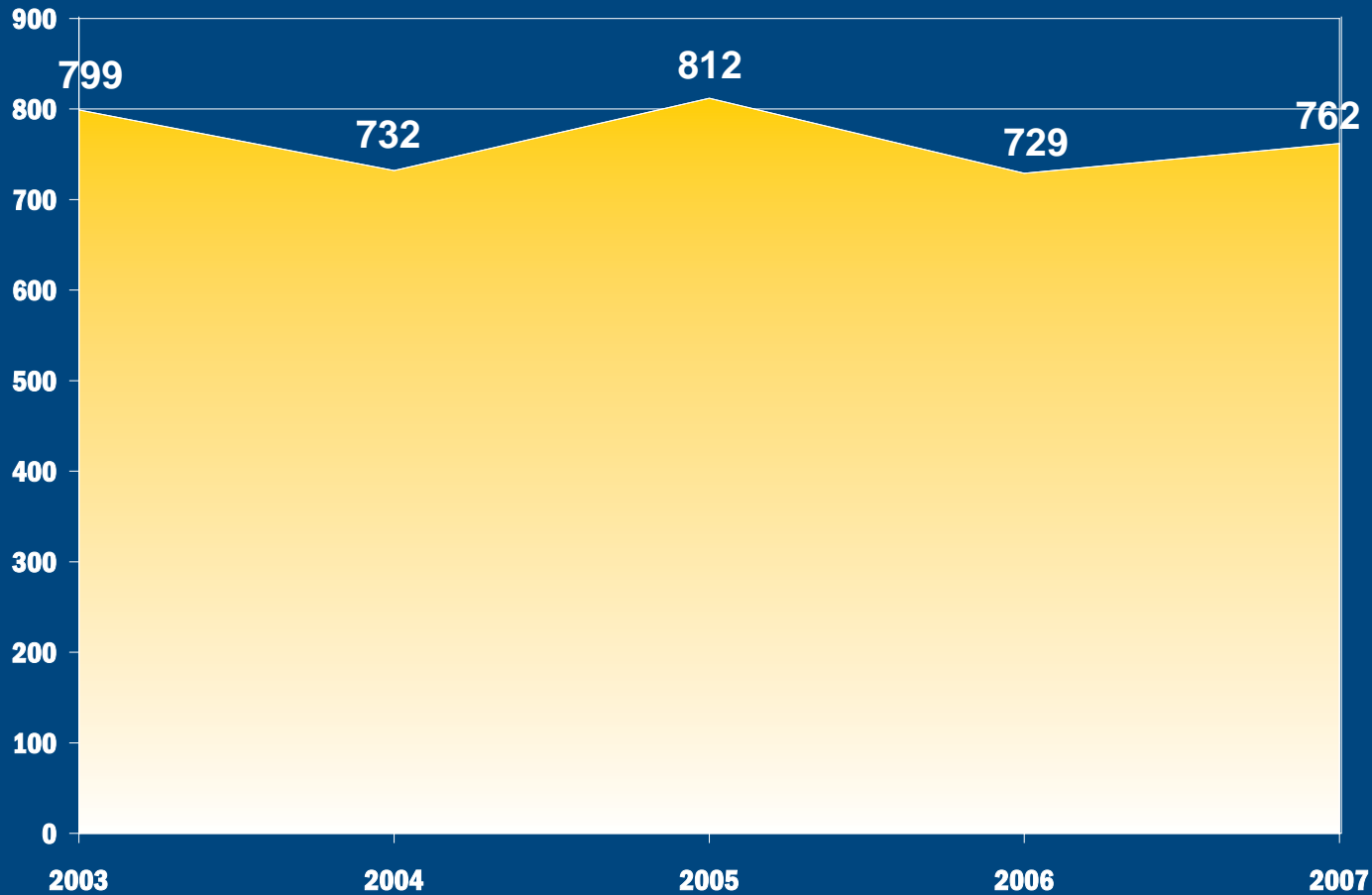


SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

# VIOLENT JUVENILE CRIMES

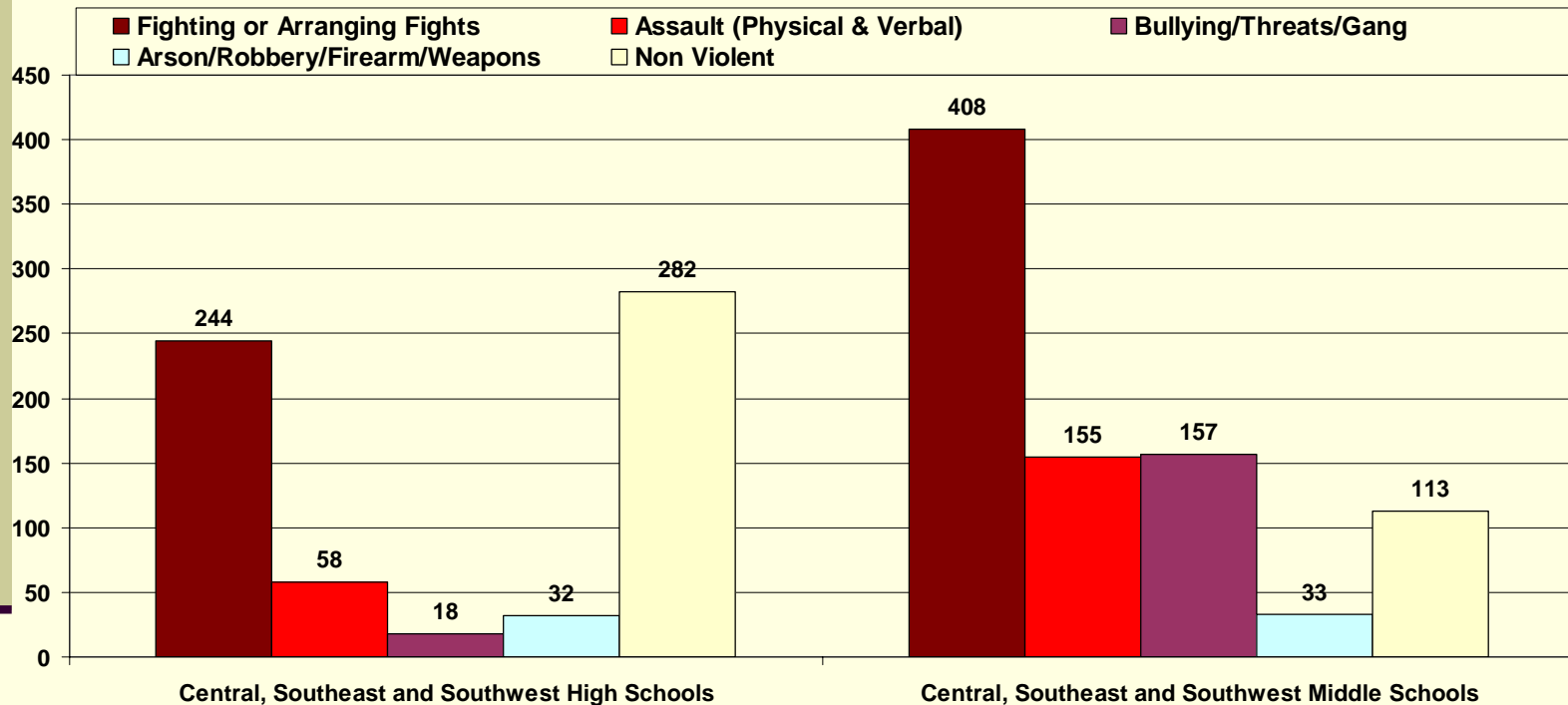
## Referred for Prosecution

### 2003-2007





# Number of Incidents Resulting in Suspensions or Expulsions (Selected High and Middle Schools, 2006-2007 SY)



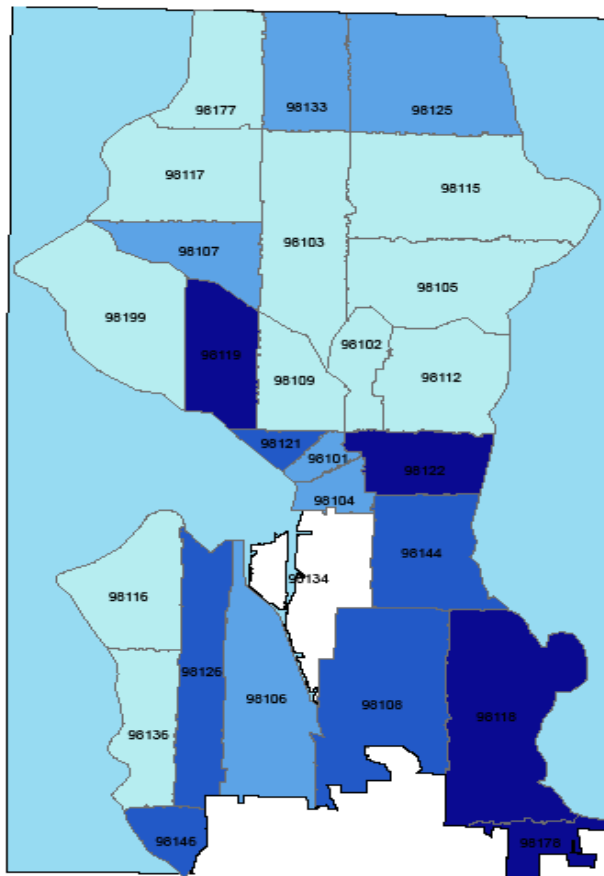
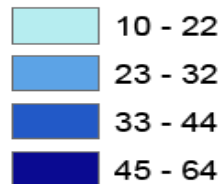
# Juvenile Violent Crime Rate

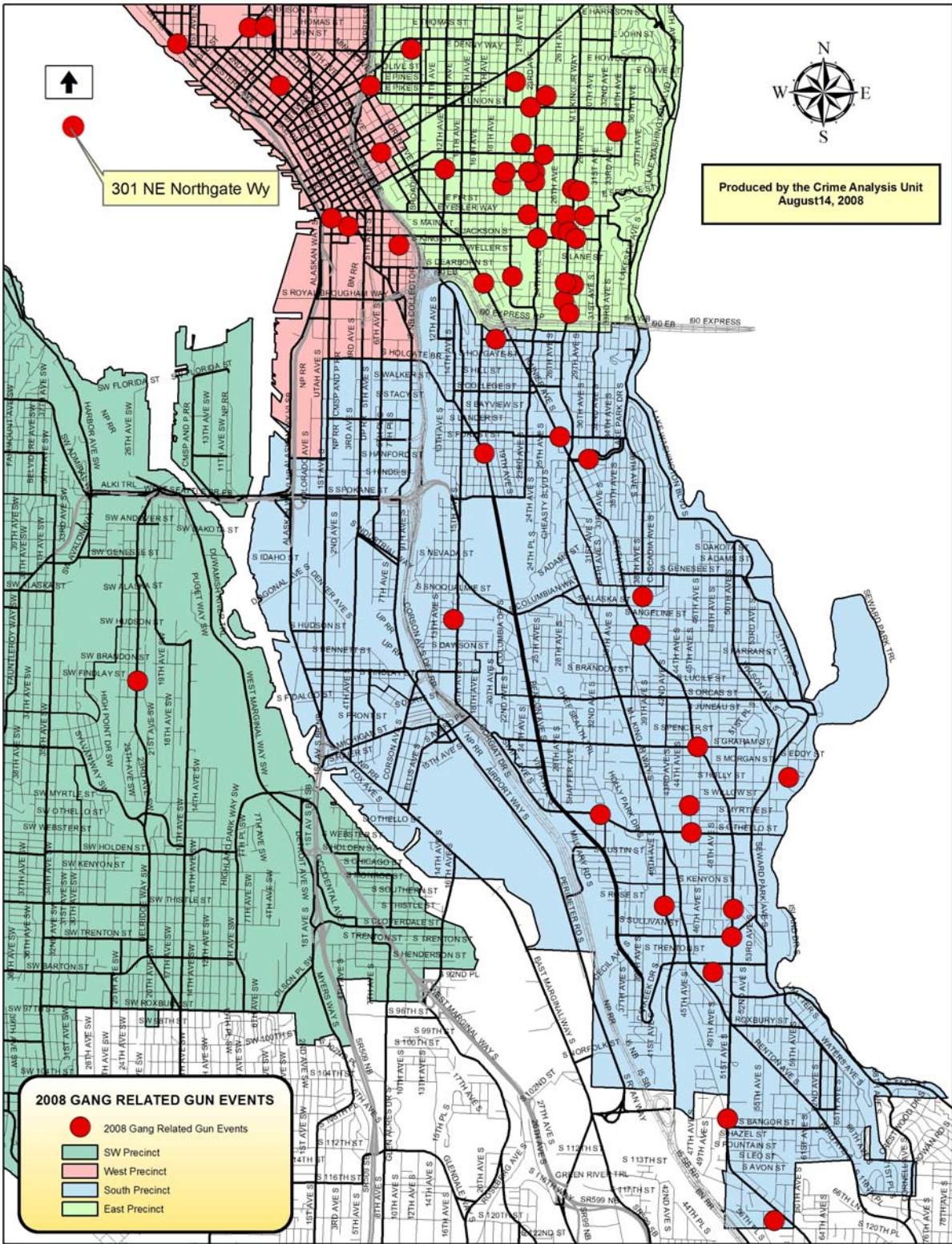
Juvenile Violent Crime Rate  
by ZIP code of Residence  
Ages 10-17

2003 to 2007

## Violent Crimes

Annual Referrals per 1,000 Residents





# Population At Risk for Violence

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- Youth and Young Adults in SE, SW and Central Seattle.
- Youth who have already engaged in violent behavior or are engaged in persistent anti-social behavior.
  - Repeat juvenile offenders released from supervision by the state or county, or who are under minimal supervision, and are considered a continued risk to re-offend.
  - Youth arrested but not detained.
  - Youth subject to repeat suspension from school due to acts of violence.
  - Youth with a history of truancy.
  - Youth and young adults who are victims of violence and may retaliate.

# City of Seattle 2008 Children's Budget

Seattle is spending \$62 million on children this year

Pre-K: \$15 million; K-5: \$10 million;  
Youth: \$28 million; All Ages: \$9 million

