

FINAL REPORT OF THE EVALUATION OF THE
NEW BRITAIN WEED AND SEED PROGRAM

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The New Britain Weed and Seed Steering Committee

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New Britain Weed and Seed program received full Federal funding for 1997 and 1998 from the Executive Office for Weed and Seed, U.S. Department of Justice. The grant provided funding for a two-pronged approach to reduce crime and improve residents' quality of life in the Broad Street neighborhood. First, the police department conducted "weeding" activities to rid the selected high crime area of violent criminals, drug dealers, and illegal weapons. The weeding strategies consisted of targeting illegal weapons and drug dealing through the Gun Abatement Program, utilizing a newly created Community Action Team to decrease open-air drug markets and nuisance-related incidents with aggressive police patrols, and assisting the Chief State's Attorney's MARCH program which organized fire, health, liquor, and building code inspections of local businesses.

Second, the police department collaborated with private and public agencies along with community organizations to "seed" the target neighborhood with an array of social, economic, and housing improvement programs. The Weed and Seed program funded neighborhood revitalization as well as youth and adult programs for residents in the target area. Furthermore, the Weed and Seed Coordinator was instrumental in developing partnerships with non-Weed and Seed service providers to bring additional programs to the target area.

Evaluation Summary

The primary evaluation activity analyzed police data before and after New Britain received Weed and Seed funding. The analyses showed that trends in calls for service, drug calls for service, personal crimes, and property felonies were different in the Weed and Seed target area than the rest of the city following the inception of Weed and Seed funding.

The most noticeable differences were in overall calls for service and drug calls for service. The total number of calls for service increased at the beginning of the program. The increase was likely due to the assignment of community police officers to the Weed and Seed neighborhoods. It was believed that more positive interaction between residents and community police officers resulted in residents calling the police more often. Hence, it was likely that crime did not actually increase, but residents' perception of the police improved to where they believed the police would respond to their concerns. The lower number of calls for service during the second year of Weed and Seed suggested that crime was decreasing. If residents felt more comfortable calling the police, even for minor offenses, a decrease in calls can be interpreted as a decrease in activities to report.

The increase in drug calls for service in the Weed and Seed area occurred during the activities of the Gun Abatement Program and the at the onset of the Community Action Team. These units were created to investigate and decrease drug trafficking in the target area. Since these units were active in the target area, drug calls were expected to increase. As these units continue to be active, it is anticipated that drug calls will eventually decrease regardless of their level of activity.

Program Recommendations

Even though the Weed and Seed program appears to have produced positive changes in the target area, the following recommendations were presented:

Weeding Activities

1. The police department should re-evaluate the need to work with prosecutors and bail commissioners to identify and process Weed and Seed cases.
2. More formalized information-sharing between the community police officers, the Gun Abatement Program, and the Community Action Team may be beneficial in better coordinating the weeding activities.
3. The educational component of the Gun Abatement Program should be implemented on a widespread scale.

Seeding Activities

1. The programs and the Weed and Seed Coordinator need to be more proactive in publicizing the programs.
2. The Steering Committee should be given periodic progress reports from the seeding programs.

Steering Committee

1. The Steering Committee should perform more program oversight for both weeding and seeding activities.
2. The Steering Committee should consider adding a member from the City Planner's Office.
3. The Weed and Seed Coordinator would benefit by having administrative assistance.
4. The Steering Committee needs to begin discussing program retention and institutionalization of Weed and Seed activities once Federal funding ends.

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INTRODUCTION

Operation Weed and Seed was created by the U.S. Department of Justice to provide resources to cities with targeted high-crime neighborhoods. The primary goal of this project is to improve citizens' quality of life through a comprehensive, coordinated effort to control crime. Operation Weed and Seed is administered by the Executive Office for Weed and Seed (EWOS) and has funded over 100 cities since 1991.

To receive grant funding for Operation Weed and Seed, local police departments are required to use of a two-pronged approach to eliminate violent and drug-related crime and provide a safe environment for citizens to live and work. This approach attempts to "weed out" serious and violent offenders using police enforcement strategies and prosecution while "seeding" the neighborhood with a broad array of social, economic, and housing improvement programs.

There are three objectives in local Weed and Seed initiatives. First, cities need to develop a multi-agency strategy that includes criminal justice, social service, housing, community development, and health care agencies. Second, cities are asked to concentrate existing and new Federal, state, local, and private sector resources in targeted areas to maximize their effect on decreasing crime. Third, local Weed and Seed sites should promote positive involvement from the community in assisting the police department in identifying and removing violent offenders from their

neighborhood and promote citizen participation in deciding where human service resources are most needed.

Individual strategies to achieve these objectives are divided into four Weed and Seed program components. These are (1) law enforcement, (2) community policing, (3) prevention, intervention, and treatment, and, (4) neighborhood revitalization. The goals of law enforcement are the identification, arrest, prosecution, conviction, and incarceration of serious violent offenders operating in the target area. Community policing is believed to be the "bridge" between weeding and seeding by establishing trust between the police and the community. Police officers serve as neighborhood problem-solvers and the community helps to identify crime patterns and offenders. The component of prevention, intervention, and treatment is intended to reduce risk factors that are known to cause violence, crime, and drug abuse in the target neighborhood. Prevention, intervention, and treatment programs are often coordinated through "safe havens" in the target neighborhoods. At the center of many local Weed and Seed initiatives is neighborhood revitalization. The end objective of Weed and Seed is to assist in restoring neighborhoods so that police and social services remain intact once Federal funding has been expended.

Overview of the Evaluation Report

New Britain is one of several cities across the country to receive funding from the U.S. Department of Justice to implement a Weed and Seed program. New Britain is at the end of its second full year of funding. This report is an evaluation of the first

two years of the New Britain Weed and Seed Initiative. It will present a summary of the program and an assessment of its perceived effects on calls to the police and reported crimes.

Two primary purposes of the evaluation were to assess whether New Britain's Weed and Seed program was consistent with the mission of the Executive Office for Weed and Seed and to determine positive and negative effects of each program component. It is important to note that the goal of this evaluation was not to "grade" the program or make a simple determination of program success or failure. The evaluation was meant to provide program and policy recommendations to the Steering Committee for program improvement.

The evaluation of this program focused on four areas. These areas were the Steering Committee activities, weeding activities, seeding activities, and budget allocation.

Steering Committee Activities. The role of the Steering Committee is very important to the overall success of Weed and Seed programs. That is, the Steering Committee should assure that all activities are consistent with the mission of the Weed and Seed program and address any problems that may arise. An effective Steering Committee is usually representative of city agencies, private agencies (businesses and social services), and individual citizens having a vested interest in the Weed and Seed area. The evaluation attempted to answer the following questions pertaining to the Steering Committee:

- 1) Is the Steering Committee representative of the community?
- 2) What role does the Steering Committee take in planning Weed and Seed programs and addressing problems with the project?

The evaluation activities addressing these questions consisted of attending Steering Committee meetings and interviewing Steering Committee members. Steering Committee members were asked about their overall perception of the Weed and Seed program, problems believed to hinder program effectiveness, and recommendations to improve the program.

Weeding Activities. There were three types of weeding activities for this project. The first weeding component was a Gun Abatement Program for increased gun and narcotics enforcement. Second, a special unit was created by the Chief of Police to address quality of life concerns in the target area. Third, the Connecticut Chief State's Attorney's Office coordinated the MARCH program that inspected local businesses for various code violations. The evaluation of weeding activities consisted of interviewing supervisors of the units conducting the weeding activities. The evaluation addressed the following questions:

- 1) What type of weeding activities have taken place in the Weed and Seed areas?
- 2) Have these efforts been coordinated with other Federal, state, and local agencies?

Seeding Activities. Several programs throughout the city of New Britain have received Weed and Seed funding. Some of these programs were the Boys' and Girls' Club, Police Athletic League, the YWCA, music lessons, a bicycle repair program, and KDARP (landlording classes). Evaluation questions of the seeding activities were:

- 1) What programs have been implemented?
- 2) How much have residents participated in these programs?

Budget Allocation. While a financial audit of the Weed and Seed grant was beyond the scope the evaluation, some fiscal information will be reported due to its relevance in future funding decisions. For instance:

- 1) How much funding has been allocated to the Weed and Seed activities?
- 2) Are programs utilizing this funding?

Summary of The Report

The following sections of this report will describe the first two years of full Weed and Seed funding. This will include a description of the selected target neighborhood, weeding activities, and seeding activities. The background description of the program will be followed by a presentation of police crime data that compares crime in the target area to that throughout the rest of New Britain. The final section of this report will summarize the findings of the evaluation and present recommendations for future programming.

DESCRIPTION OF NEW BRITAIN'S WEED AND SEED PROGRAM

Program Background

The strategy for the New Britain Weed and Seed program emphasizes neighborhood initiatives that have been implemented in conjunction with the neighborhood revitalization zone process (NRZ). There are two revitalization zone organizations in the Weed and Seed area. One of these, the Broad Street NRZ, has been in place for several years. The North-Oak Street NRZ has been organized but is still relatively new. These organizations have been important to the Weed and Seed area by promoting economic growth, neighborhood restoration, and resident involvement. The Weed and Seed strategy and programs draw heavily on the established partnerships with the NRZ organizations.

New Britain's Weed and Seed program is a collaboration between the city of New Britain, the New Britain Police Department, and Neighborhood Housing Services of New Britain (NHS). NHS has served as the fiduciary agent for the seeding activities of the grant.

Selection of Target Area

The Executive Office for Weed and Seed requires local initiatives to be geographically focused in small, high crime neighborhoods. The Broad Street neighborhood was selected as the Weed and Seed target area because of its drug, gang, violent crime and social disorder problems. The Broad Street neighborhood comprised

12% of all police calls for service prior to the Weed and Seed program although it comprised less than 1% of the city's total land area and 5% of New Britain's population.

Demographic Characteristics of the Weed and Seed Target Area

The target area encompasses the Broad and North Street neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are located on the eastern edge of New Britain's downtown business district and cover 24 street blocks. The Weed and Seed area is the most densely populated and poorest area in the city. It is culturally diverse with more than 50% of the residents having Spanish as their primary language, 21% speak Polish, and approximately 16% cannot speak English. The median household income is 42% less than the city average of \$17,452 and over 33% of residents do not have a high school diploma.

Budget Summary

The U.S. Department of Justice provided funding to police departments beginning in 1991. New Britain originally applied for Weed and Seed funding for the 1994-1995 fiscal year. The city received \$35,000 for the 1996-1997 fiscal year that was allocated to seeding activities (Table 1). Since the initial year of funding, New Britain has been recognized as an official Weed and Seed site and has received full funding. The majority of funding has been allocated to seeding activities and personnel associated with seeding activities. For instance, 65% of Federal funding for the years 1997-1998 and 1998-1999 have been used for seeding activities and personnel

Table 1. New Britain Weed And Seed Budget Summary

| | 1996-1997 | 1997-1998 | 1998-1999 | 1999-2000 (Proposed) |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Total Funding | \$35,000 | \$175,000 | \$225,000 | \$225,000 |
| Weeding Activities | | | | |
| Gun Abatement Program | \$0 | \$50,000 | \$50,000 | \$50,000 |
| Seeding Activities | | | | |
| Community Policing Training | \$0 | \$1,200 | \$1,200 | \$1,200 |
| Community Police Overtime | \$7,500 | \$22,334 | \$49,716 | \$49,716 |
| Community Newsletter | \$0 | \$0 | \$7,560 | \$5,400 |
| Boys and Girls Club | \$0 | \$26,104 | \$13,520 | \$10,140 |
| YWCA Victim Assistance Counselor | \$0 | \$7,722 | \$5,122 | \$5,122 |
| Music Lessons | \$0 | \$2,792 | \$2,177 | \$7,260 |
| Bicycle Program | \$0 | \$0 | \$2,400 | \$2,000 |
| Girls' Teen Network | \$0 | \$0 | \$1,440 | \$700 |
| Police Athletic League | \$14,700 | \$0 | \$6,000 | \$6,031 |
| Police Reserve Program | \$2,000 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Junior Police Cadet Program | \$4,000 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Girls' Basketball Program | \$4,800 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Drug Education for Youth (DEFY) | \$2,000 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Youth Scholarships | \$0 | \$10,000 | \$9,000 | \$10,000 |
| Youth Employment Program | \$0 | \$2,400 | \$2,400 | \$2,520 |
| Senior Network | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$400 |
| Total Seeding | \$35,000 | \$72,552 | \$100,535 | \$100,489 |
| Personnel | | | | |
| New Britain Housing Services | \$0 | \$19,281 | \$15,675 | \$7,381 |
| Weed and Seed/Safe Haven | \$0 | \$21,030 | \$32,500 | \$35,000 |
| Total Personnel | \$0 | \$40,311 | \$48,175 | \$42,381 |
| Other | | | | |
| Travel | \$0 | \$4,477 | \$5,072 | \$8,772 |
| Equipment | \$0 | \$0 | \$3,800 | \$0 |
| Supplies | \$0 | \$3,374 | \$5,327 | \$11,800 |
| Cell Phones/Pager Fees | \$0 | \$2,666 | \$3,686 | \$4,896 |
| Substation Maintenance | \$0 | \$1,620 | \$3,620 | \$1,620 |
| NHS Audit Expense | \$0 | \$0 | \$1,875 | \$0 |
| Support for Seedtech Award | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$5,042 |
| Project Evaluation | \$0 | \$0 | \$2,910 | \$0 |
| Total Other | \$0 | \$12,137 | \$26,290 | \$32,130 |

associated with these activities. Additionally, less than 30% has been allocated for weeding activities (29% in the 1997-1998 fiscal year and 22% in the 1998-1999 fiscal year).

Steering Committee

The Executive Office for Weed and Seed requires that all Weed and Seed sites have Steering Committees that are responsible for creating the program's goals and objectives, provide oversight on implementation, and assess program achievements. Members of the Steering Committee are to be stakeholders in the community who will have input on decisions that will effect the Weed and Seed target area. Stakeholders can be from the police department, other city agencies, representatives from the private sector, members of community organizations, and neighborhood residents.

The core members of New Britain's Steering Committee consist of members from the police department, Office of the U.S. Attorney, Mayor's Office, Chief State's Attorney's Office, Neighborhood Housing Services of New Britain, North-Oak Street and Broad Street Neighborhood Revitalization Zone presidents, Boys and Girls Club, two business owners, and two residents. Steering Committee meetings are held on a monthly basis at the Broad Street Police Department Substation.

Weeding Activities

The weeding component of Weed and Seed attempts to rid the neighborhood of criminal activity. The goal of this component is to reduce citizens' fear of crime and improve their quality of life so that the seeding activities can operate in a safe

environment. The weeding component usually consists of the police department collaborating with local, state, and Federal agencies to target certain crimes and develop enforcement strategies. There have been three types of weeding activities that have taken place in New Britain. These have been a Gun Abatement Program, the Community Action Team, and the MARCH program.

Gun Abatement Program

The weeding funding is primarily allocated to overtime for a gun abatement program (GAP). This initiative was modeled after the Kansas City Gun Experiment, in that, it uses directed police patrols and investigations in gun crime “hot spots”. The goal of the program is to reduce gun-related crimes by arresting and prosecuting offenders and seizing illegally carried guns.

The Gun Abatement Program employs a three stage process: planning, operations, and education. The planning stage gathers information on the usage of illegal firearms. This is done by analyzing and mapping crime data, interviewing residents in the “hot spot” areas, interviewing arrested offenders, and using informants. The information collected in the planning stage is used to obtain and execute search warrants, trace ownership of all recovered/seized weapons, process and transport illegal firearms evidence to the Connecticut State Police Forensic Lab, and work with the U.S. Attorney and local prosecutors in convicting serious offenders. The third stage, education, provides awareness education to youth and residents on the dangers of gun

use. The education stage also includes a gun hotline for reporting locations of illegal firearms and informational services related to gun abatement.

The program is comprised of uniformed police officers and investigators who are assigned to the initiative on an overtime basis. The uniformed police officers provide increased police presence at gun and drug-related “hot spots” through the use of directed patrol. Investigators are responsible for collecting information for obtaining and executing search warrants.

To date, the Gun Abatement Program has been responsible for arresting 44 individuals on firearms or drug-related charges. This program has also been successful in seizing 57 weapons. Of these, 26 were either shotguns or rifles and 31 were handguns (Table 2).

Table 2. Summary of Gun Abatement Program Activities

| Types of Illegal Guns Seized | Number |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Handguns | |
| .22 caliber revolvers | 12 |
| .38 caliber revolvers | 5 |
| .32 caliber revolvers | 2 |
| .380 semi-automatics | 5 |
| .40 caliber revolvers | 2 |
| 9 millimeter semi-automatics | 4 |
| Total Handguns | 30 |
| Rifles | 6 |
| Shotguns | 18 |
| Sawed-off Shotguns | 2 |
| Total Guns Seized | 56 |

Community Action Team

The Community Action Team is a specialized unit of five police officers that was formed by the Chief of Police in August of 1998. The unit was created to deal with persistent problems effecting residents' quality of life in an area of New Britain adjacent to the Weed and Seed target area. These issues consisted of open-air drug sales, loitering, graffiti, loud music coming from vehicles, and a large number of illegally parked automobiles. Due to concern of crime displacement to the Weed and Seed area, the assigned area was expanded to include the Broad Street neighborhood.

The Community Action Team conducted aggressive patrol in high crime areas as well developed positive relationships with key stakeholders in the neighborhood. The aggressive patrol resulted 104 drug-related arrests in the initial five months of the team's existence. In addition, they conducted 87 motor vehicle stops that resulted in 55 misdemeanor summons or infractions. This unit has also filed for more than 100 arrest warrants.

This unit has also emphasized positive community interaction to problem-solve noncrime-related issues. For instance, the unit worked with Mayor's Office and the City Public Works Department to restore a park being used for drug trafficking. A wooded area in the park was of primary concern because it not only provided an avenue of escape for drug dealers, it was littered with discarded hypodermic needles. The Community Action Team also participated in a "Kids Fun Day" with other city agencies (namely, the Fire Department and the Emergency Medical Services). Over

100 neighborhood youth attended this event that gave youth an opportunity to positively interact with police officers while playing basketball, football, and baseball.

MARCH Program

The MARCH Program (Multi-Agency Response to Community Hotlines) ^{sub} is organized by the Connecticut Chief State's Attorney's Office. The purpose of this program is to promote responsible ownership of rental properties and businesses by conducting simultaneous inspections with the Health Department, Fire Inspector, Building Inspector, Liquor Commission, and Licensing Bureau. The police department provides the Chief State's Attorney's Office with complaints against businesses by residents and community police officers. The Chief State's Attorney's Office organizes a one day inspection of establishments with numerous and/or serious code violations. On the selected day, the Chief State's Attorney's Office and other agencies make unannounced inspections. A range of sanctions can be given to businesses not in compliance with the various codes. Sanctions can range from minor violations, such as removing boxes blocking emergency exits or properly marking emergency exits to sanctions for more serious code violations (health concerns, illegal sale of alcohol, immediate fire hazards) which would require the business to close. The MARCH program conducted inspections on two days early in 1999. Overall, fifteen businesses were inspected. The inspections resulted in 175 code violations and twelve arrest warrants.

Summary of Weeding Activities

The three types of weeding activities have addressed separate crime-related issues in the target area. The Gun Abatement Program has dealt with serious violent offenders while the Community Action Team has been active in decreasing daily activities of street-level drug dealing and nuisance issues (illegally parked cars, loud music). The MARCH program has complimented these efforts by enforcing building, health, licensing, and fire codes on business owners.

Seeding Activities

New Britain has allocated Weed and Seed funding to numerous seeding programs associated with neighborhood revitalization, youth, and adult. In addition to these activities, the Weed and Seed Coordinator has been involved in several community outreach activities.

Neighborhood Revitalization

Neighborhood revitalization is at the center of New Britain's Weed and Seed efforts. These efforts have included community policing initiatives, partnering with Neighborhood Housing Services of New Britain, and crime prevention.

Community Police Officers. ^{During} Ten community police officers have been assigned community policing duties in the Broad and North Street neighborhoods. These officers are assigned to this duty on the morning and evening shifts. The assignment consists of patrolling the neighborhoods on foot or on a bicycle, attending community meetings, and working with other units in the police department.

The Weed and Seed Coordinator has organized training sessions for the community police officers on a variety of topics, including crime prevention, legal aspects of tenant/landlord requirements, diversity, nonverbal communication, and availability of social and human services. Many of the community police officers attended a training course facilitated by Bowmac Educational Services. This course focused on the officers' ability to control community meetings, problem-solving, and project planning.

Police Substations. Two semi-mobile police substations have been opened since the beginning of the Weed and Seed program. One substation is located in the Broad Street neighborhood and the other is in the North Street neighborhood. The substations were opened to allow the community police officers more involvement and interaction with the neighborhood residents. Many of the training sessions, Steering Committee meetings, and youth programs are housed in the Broad Street substation.

KDARP classes (Keep Drugs Away from Rental Property). Neighborhood Housing Services of New Britain sponsors KDARP classes to empower landlords to use existing laws and community support to decrease illegal activities on their rental properties. Specifically, these classes teach landlords how to screen tenants, maintain their properties, and handle problem tenants. The classes were developed through a process that included developing a program manual specific to the needs of landlords in New Britain. Weed and Seed provided funding for the development of the training

manual. NHS offers the classes to interested landlords for a small fee (approximately \$20).

Neighborhood Clean-ups. The Weed and Seed program gave out McDonalds' gift certificates to children in payment for keeping a park clean in the target area. The police department worked with residents, community organizations, and other city agencies to restore this park by cleaning up litter, removing graffiti, and increasing lighting at night to deter drug dealing. Additionally, the city purchased new playground equipment. New Britain is currently planning to expand the park to provide more open green space to the neighborhood.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). The Weed and Seed Coordinator has been providing information to residents and property owners to increase security by making physical changes to their property. Thirty-five CPTED mini-grants have been given to residents for physical improvements to their property. The maximum amount a residents' received was \$750. Physical changes could include replacing front doors with more secure ones, installing new locks, having trees and bushes trimmed to make the property more visible, and installing lights.

Community Newsletter. A bimonthly newsletter is sent to residents in the target area. The newsletter informs residents of activities, programs, and provides household and safety tips.

Crime Prevention Awareness Week Activities. A series of activities were held over a one week period revolving around crime prevention. Each day of the week

featured a different theme. Many of the activities focused on resident awareness of crime and how to avoid victimization. The initiative was held in the Broad Street neighborhood and surrounding areas. Some of the activities that involved the Weed and Seed target area consisted of the opening of the Broad Street substation, an ice cream social, and back to school safety issues.

SeedTech Award. The Weed and Seed Coordinator recently received notification that New Britain was a recipient of a SeedTech grant award. SeedTech is part of the Weed and Seed Technology Initiative that seeks to prepare community residents with technological skills that will help them compete in the job market. The New Britain SeedTech will house a computer-based training center that will be open to all residents in New Britain.

Youth Programs

An early concern of the Steering Committee was that there were limited opportunities for youth in the Weed and Seed neighborhoods. Due to this concern, a high number of the seeding activities revolve around youth. The youth programs encompass a broad spectrum of issues and activities. These programs are facilitated by many different individuals and organizations.

Drug Education For Youth (DEFY). The DEFY program is designed to reinforce positive values and teach life skills to help youth between the ages of nine and twelve years old resist drug use and gang involvement. A major part of the DEFY program is a one week summer camp that teaches basic life skills such as conflict

resolution, goal setting, and refusing drugs. A DEFY camp was held in August of 1998 at Camp Rowland and was staffed by volunteers from the police department, police explorers, U.S. Attorney's Office, National Guard, and the Weed and Seed program. Thirty neighborhood youth attended the camp. Another camp is scheduled for August of 1999.

Bicycle Program. A bicycle repair program is operated by two New Britain police officers for neighborhood youth. The police officers, who are also part of the police bicycle patrol, teach youth how to repair and maintain bicycles. Bicycles have been donated to the program by the police department. A process is currently being developed to allow youth to keep the bicycles after they have been repaired.

Approximately ten to fifteen neighborhood youth actively participate in this program.

Police Athletic League (P.A.L.). The Weed and Seed program has partnered with the P.A.L. program to provide outreach programs to youth in the target area. It is estimated that over 250 youth participate in P.A.L. sports leagues, many of which live in the target neighborhoods.

Music Lessons. A resident of the Broad Street neighborhood teaches piano lessons to area youth. The resident teaches beginning and advanced piano over an eight week period. Over 25 youth have participated in these lessons.

Boys' and Girls' Club Memberships. The Boys' and Girls' Club of New Britain is located in the Weed and Seed target area. It is open to youth between the ages of six and eighteen years old. The Club offers several types of youth programs including a

one week summer camp, an afterschool learning center, teen programs that operate on weekend evenings, youth at-risk programs, sports programs, and career and employment programs. The Weed and Seed program provides funding for 50 memberships to the Boys' and Girls' Club. Community police officers give out applications to youth they feel could benefit from participating in the Club's programs.

Computer Lab (Boys and Girls Club). A computer lab was set up at the Boys' and Girls' Club with computers donated by the Boys' and Girls' Club and Central Connecticut State University. The lab offers a variety of classes to parents and children in both English and Spanish.

Girls' Resource Group. The purpose of the Girls' Resource Group is to provide positive activities for neighborhood girls. This group consists of nine to thirteen year old girls and meets on a weekly basis at the Broad Street substation. The Weed and Seed Coordinator facilitates these meetings.

Art Program. Art classes were provided through funding from a State Safe Neighborhood grant. Neighborhood youth attended an eight week program in freehand sculpting and dance. Following the program, youth were invited to exhibit their artwork to the public.

Youth Employment Program. A youth employment program was created to promote businesses in the area to hire youth from the neighborhood. The program would reimburse business owners for one-half of the youth's wages. The program had a difficult time getting started due to the unwillingness of businesses to participate in

the program. However, an agreement has been reached between the Weed and Seed Coordinator and the Urban Oaks program to hire neighborhood youth.

Homework Club. A homework club is housed in the Broad Street substation and is facilitated by the Weed and Seed Coordinator. This program is open to neighborhood youth interested in having a safe place to get assistance with their schoolwork.

Adult Programs

The number of adult programs funded by Weed and Seed is limited due to the emphasis placed on neighborhood revitalization and youth programs. While this was a concern of the Steering Committee, they believed that other organizations had been providing adult programs and attention should be given to youth and neighborhood revitalization.

Volunteers at the police substations. The police department has residents serving as volunteers at the two police substations. The volunteers promote positive community/police interaction and allow the community to further work with the police department in the target areas. The presence of volunteers also permits the police department to keep the substations open to the public when community police officers are on foot patrol or attending community meetings.

YWCA Sexual Assault Crisis Worker. In the 1994 Weed and Seed proposal, sexual assault and domestic violence were identified as major problems in the Weed and Seed target area. Incidents of domestic violence had doubled in the early 1990s.

Approximately 20% of calls to the police made by the Prudence Crandall Center for Women involved victims from the Broad Street area. Weed and Seed funding has provided for a counselor at the New Britain YWCA for 6 hours per week. The Sexual Assault Crisis Worker conducts various outreach programs such as school presentations on victimization and women's self-defense.

Senior Network (TRIAD). The TRIAD program is a senior support group facilitated by the police department. The purpose of this group is to encourage the participation of elderly residents in various activities. The Weed and Seed Coordinator participated in a Senior Awareness Day held at Central Connecticut State University in August of 1998. This program was a half-day event providing instruction to senior citizens on health-related issues and crime prevention.

Community Outreach

Besides overseeing the program, the Weed and Seed Coordinator has established working partnerships with several community-based programs and organizations. These activities not only promote the Weed and Seed program, but also encourage positive police/community interaction. For example, community police officers often accompany the Weed and Seed Coordinator to these programs and activities.

Broad Street and North-Oak Streets Revitalization Zone Committees. The Weed and Seed Coordinator has been very active in both of the NRZ committees located in the target area. She works very closely with the community coordinator of the Broad

Street NRZ to create, plan, and facilitate joint activities and programs. In addition, she has been assisting in the organization of the North-Oak Streets' NRZ committee.

Public Safety Council. The Public Safety Council is a citywide committee created by the Mayor's Office to better address crime and quality of life issues throughout the city. A major function of this committee is to distribute mini-CPTED grants (this function was originally handled by the Weed and Seed Coordinator). The Weed and Seed Coordinator is a member of this committee along with the Chief of Police and representatives from several other city agencies and community organizations.

Urban Oaks Organic Farm. The Weed and Seed Coordinator has been assisting the owner of an urban organic farm restore a reopen a vacant greenhouse in the target area. The re-establishment of this business will provide tremendous physical and financial support to a blighted area of the city. In addition, the owner has expressed willingness to participate in the youth employment program.

New Britain Coalition. This is a citywide organization that promotes partnerships with existing agencies to address quality of life issues. The Weed and Seed Coordinator has become a member of this committee to be able to expand the human service partnerships of Weed and Seed with other organizations throughout the city.

Community Service Officer Program. The New Britain Police Department provides a volunteer service to assist in noncriminal police-related activities. The

Weed and Seed Coordinator is a member of this program and actively participates by maintaining the Broad Street Police Substation.

Summary of Seeding Activities

The New Britain Weed and Seed program has provided funding to or is currently funding several different types of seeding activities. These include neighborhood revitalization, youth programs, adult programs, and community outreach. These programs have been successful in serving a large number of residents in the Weed and Seed area. Many of the seeding programs are small, but contribute to the overall strategy of the program to promote positive relationships with police officers, provide youth with positive activities, and promote community cohesiveness by getting residents to interact with each other, the police department, and other city agencies.

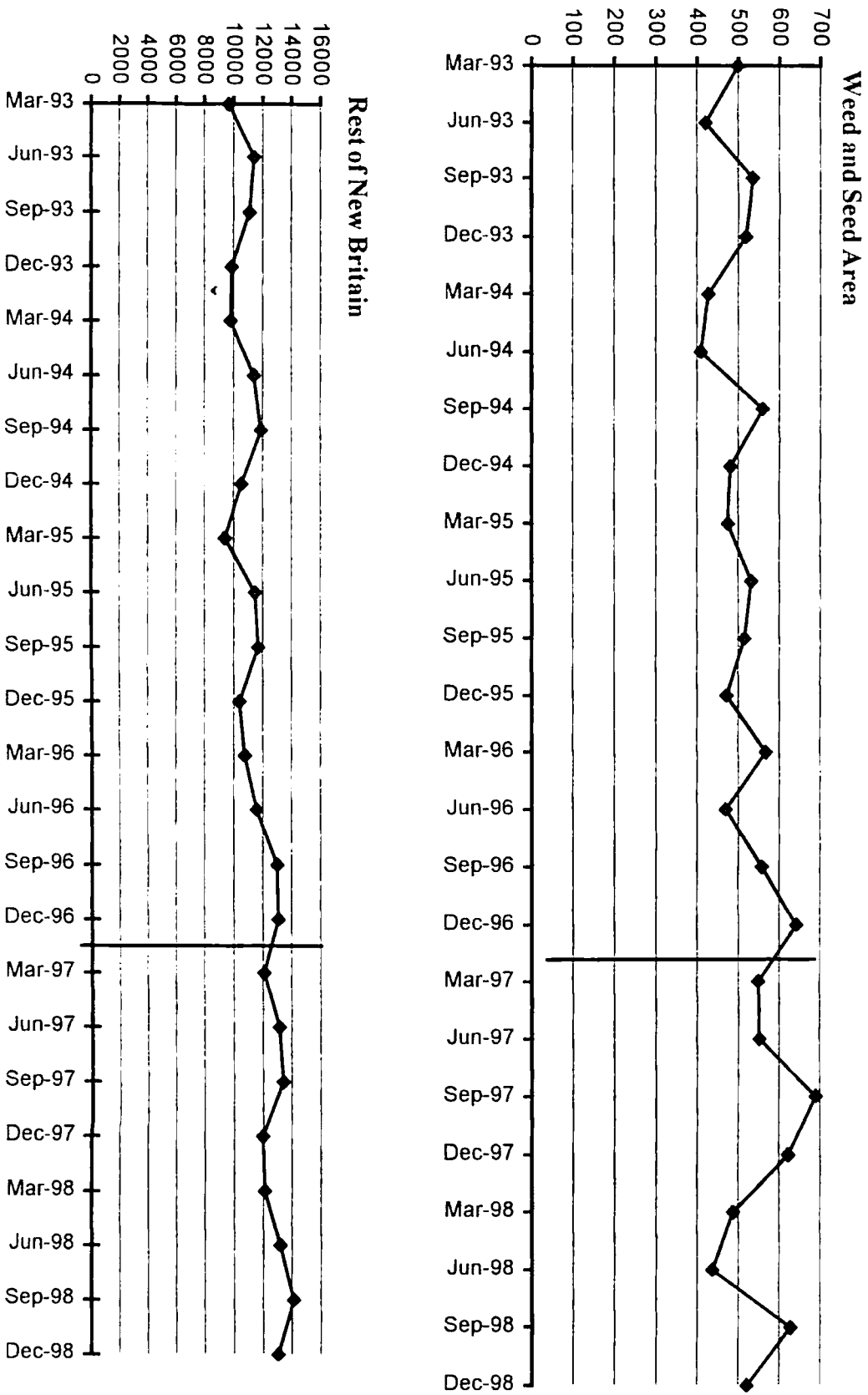
ANALYSIS OF POLICE DATA

One goal of the Weed and Seed program was to reduce the amount of crime in the target area. To assess this goal, police data were collected from the years 1993 to 1998. Specifically, data were collected for calls for service, drug calls for service, number of personal crimes, and property felonies for the Weed and Seed target area and the rest of the city. It was believed that inclusion of the years 1993 through 1996 would be important in identifying changes in trends in the Weed and Seed area before and after the program began. Police data for New Britain, outside of the Weed and Seed target area, were used to compare crime trends in the target area to trends throughout New Britain. Since New Britain did not receive full funding from the Executive Office for Weed and Seed until 1997-1998, data for the initial year of Weeding and Seed funding (1996-1997) were considered as pre-Weed and Seed.

Calls for Service

Figure 1 presents the number of police calls for service for the Weed and Seed target area and the rest of New Britain by quarter from 1993 to 1998. From 1993 to 1996, the number of calls for service steadily increased in the Weed and Seed area from 1,971 for all of 1993 to 2,234 for the year of 1996 (an increase of 13%). Calls for service in New Britain also increased over the same time periods (an increase of 15%).

Figure 1. Calls to the Police, 1993 to 1998



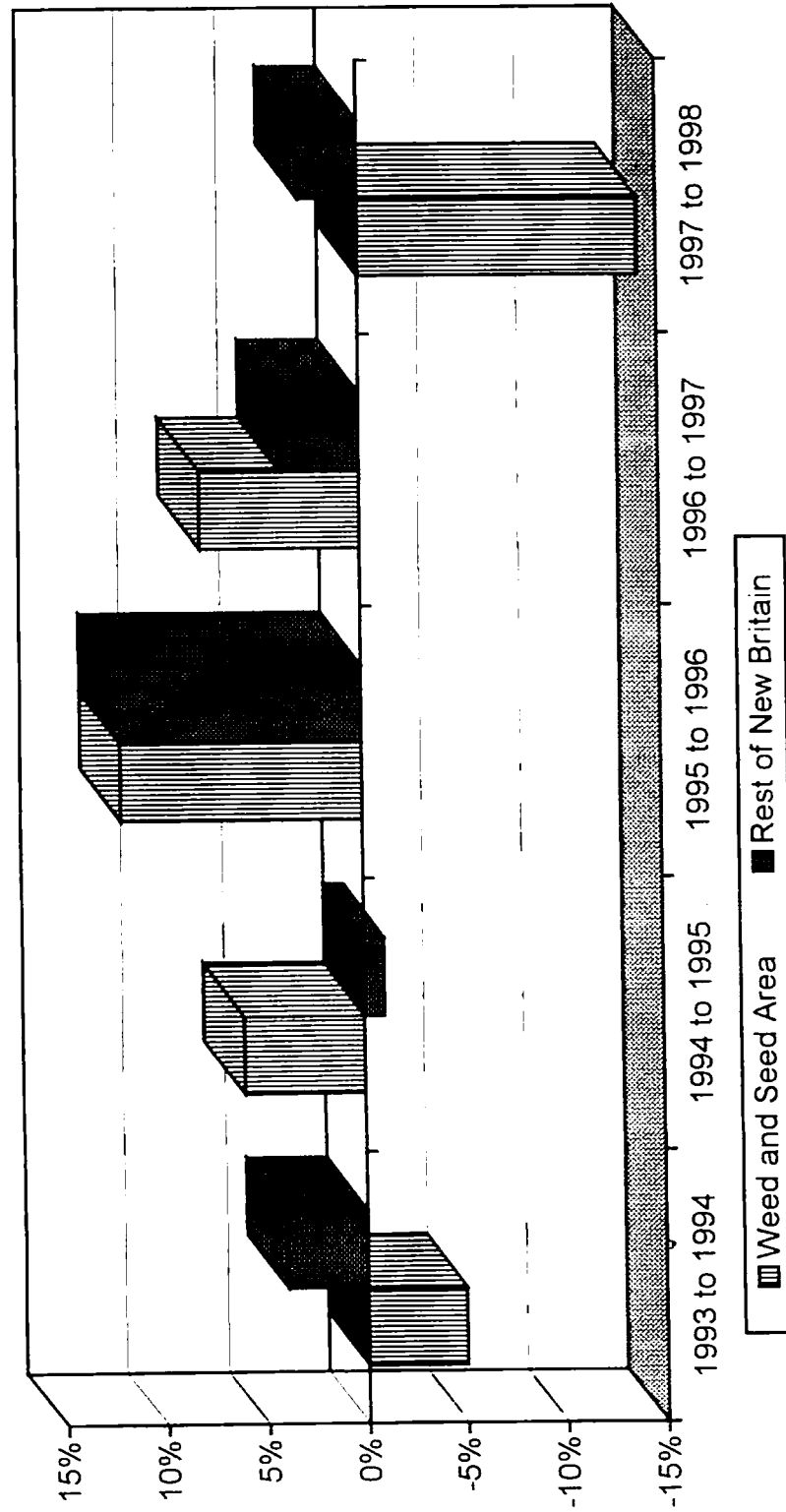
The number of calls to the police increased for each of the first three quarters during the first year of full Weed and Seed funding (1997-1998), but decreased the next three quarters. Calls increased during the last two quarters of 1998. For the other parts of the New Britain, calls for service have steadily increased over the past four years.

Figure 2 compares percentage changes in calls for service by year for the target area and the rest of the city. The target area had a higher percentage increase in calls for service during the first full year of funding, however, there was a sharp decrease in the target area the following year (14%) while the rest of the city continued to increase (3%).

The increase in calls for service in the Weed and Seed area for the first year of funding is not unusual for programs of this nature. The presence of community police officers in the Weed and Seed area likely improved residents' relationship with police. Moreover, community police officers attending community meetings informed residents that the police department would assist them in quality of life issues as well as crime-related problems. As citizens felt more comfortable interacting with police officers, they were more likely to call the police.

The sharp decrease during the second year of Weed and Seed appeared to be directly related to decreases in the actual number of crimes in the target area, especially since this decrease was not present throughout New Britain. Again, this finding is not uncommon for this program. During the first year of Weed and Seed, residents had a

Figure 2. Changes in Calls for Service, 1993 to 1998



more positive attitude towards the police that improved the likelihood that they would report serious and nonserious events. As residents' perception of the problem decreased during the second year, so did their need to call the police.

Drug Calls for Service

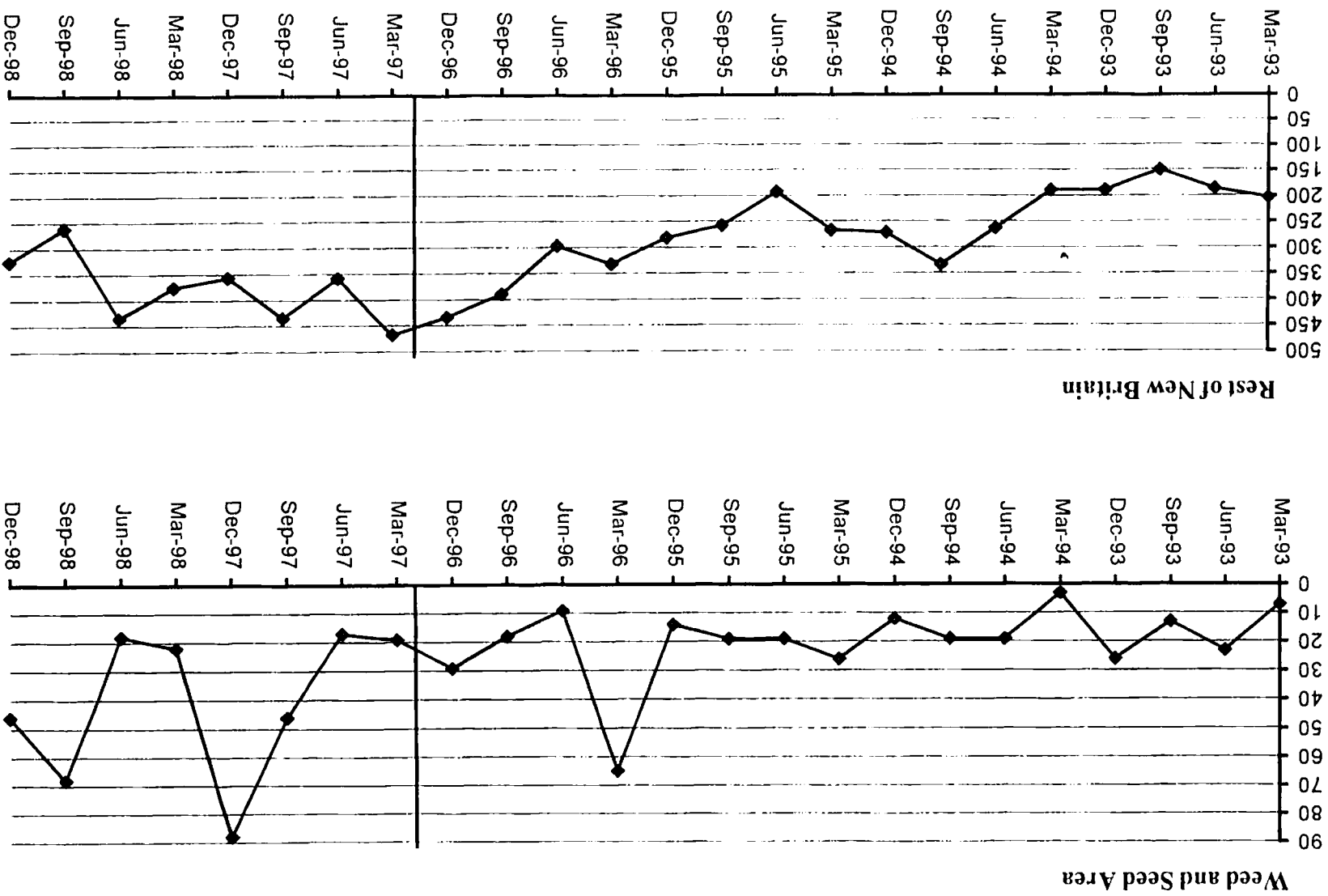
The number of drug-related calls for service increased during most of the quarters from 1993 to 1996 for all of New Britain, including the Weed and Seed area (Figure 3). Drug calls increased 200% across New Britain during this time. Following the start of Weed and Seed, drug calls in New Britain has decreased by 5% while increasing 27% in the target area.

The increase in drug calls for the Weed and Seed area can likely be attributed to two of the weeding activities. The increase during the third and fourth quarter of 1997 is related to the activities of the Gun Abatement Program. Although this program initially was created to target gun offenses, they discovered a serious link between drug-related activities and illegal weapons. The number of drug-related calls increased 171% the first quarter and 91% the second quarter following the start of this program.

The second increase, during the third quarter of 1998, can be attributed to the activities of the Community Action Team. This team was created in August of 1998, after which, drug calls for service increased from 18 to 68 (an increase of 278%).

These increases should not be interpreted to mean the Gun Abatement Program or the Community Action Team caused an increase in drug crimes. Residents in drug infested neighborhoods tend not to report these activities because they often fear

Figure 3. Drug Calls for Service, 1993 to 1998



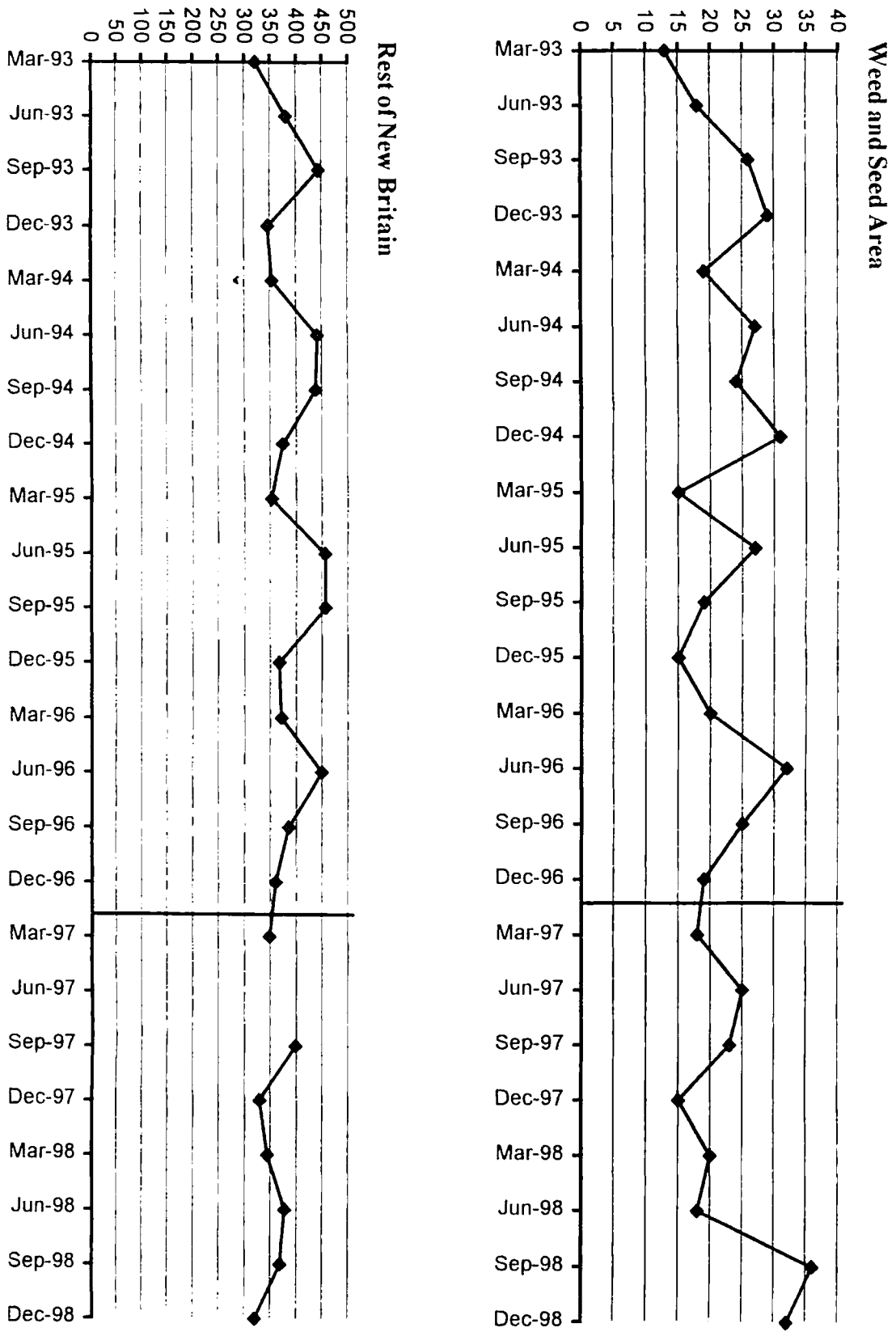
retaliation, believe the police will not respond, or are willing participants in the drug trade. Increases in drug calls to the police typically signify that the police department is more proactive in drug enforcement and/or residents are observing the police arresting drug offenders and feel more positive about reporting drug crime.

Personal Crimes

Figure 4 presents the number of personal crimes known to the police from 1993 to 1998 for the Weed and Seed area and the rest of New Britain (homicide, robbery, sexual assault, and assault). While the number of personal crimes fluctuated by quarter from 1993 to 1996, the average steadily increased during this period for both the Weed and Seed area and the entire city. However, personal crimes in the Weed and Seed area increased at a higher rate (11 % from 1993 to 1996 and 5 % outside the target area).

The number of personal crimes decreased by 10% throughout New Britain from 1996 to 1998 while personal crimes increased 23% in the target area. When looking at the personal crimes known to the police in the Weed and Seed area, it is important to notice that the number of personal crimes decreased until the third quarter of 1998 (July through September). Similar to drug crimes, the increase may be attributable to the Community Action Team. It is reasonable to believe that many of these personal crimes became known to the police as a result of the proactive tactics of this unit.

Figure 4. Personal Crimes known to the Police, 1993 to 1998



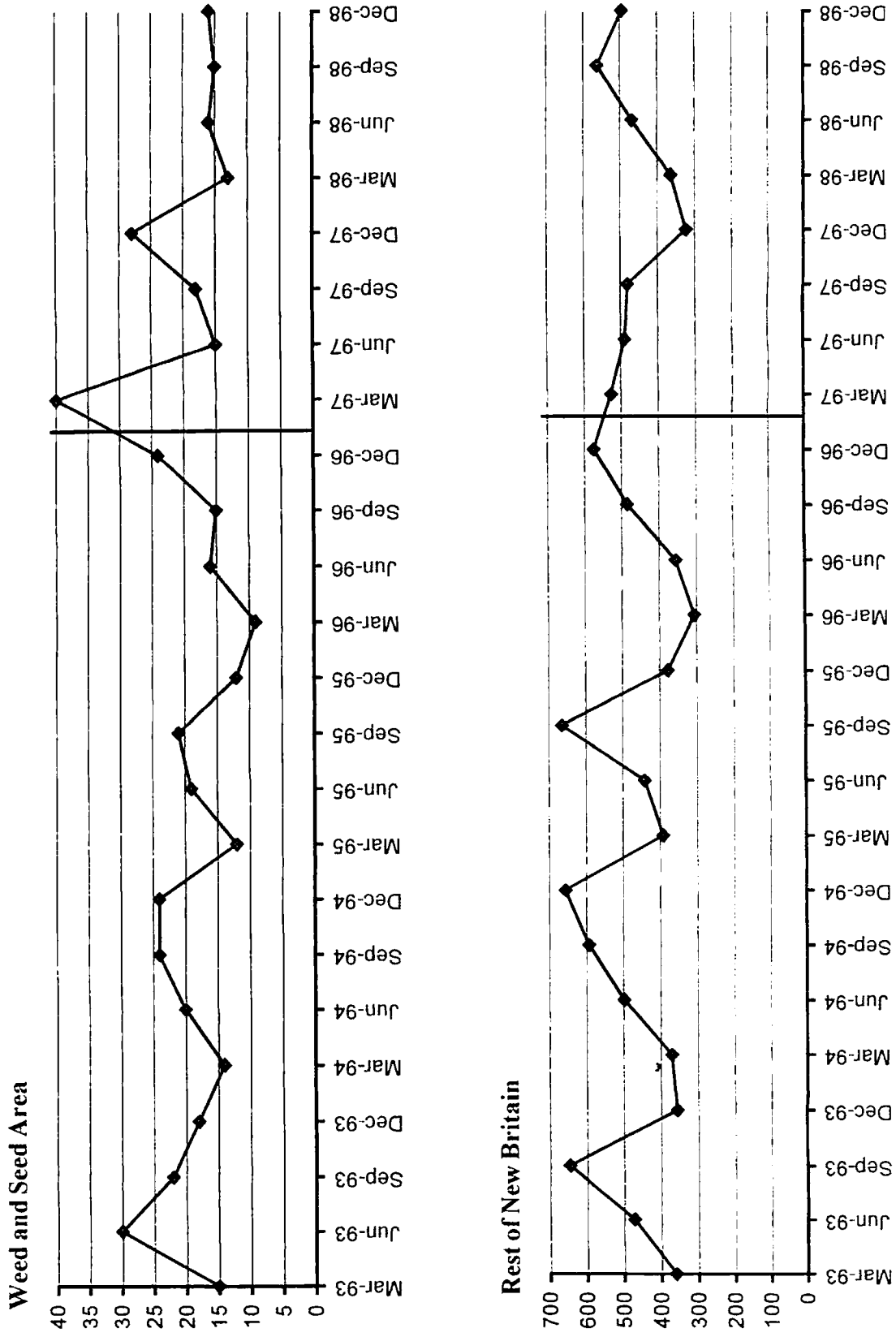
Property Felonies

Figure 5 presents the number of burglaries and motor vehicle thefts from 1993 to 1998. Before the Weed and Seed program, the number of property felonies decreased 22% in the target area and 18% for the rest of the city from 1994 to 1996. Property felonies in the Weed and Seed area increased in 1997 due to several burglaries taking place during the first quarter of 1997. Since that quarter, property felonies have continued to decrease in the Weed and Seed area. During the same time period, the number of motor vehicle thefts and burglaries has increased 10% for the rest of New Britain.

Summary of Police Data

The analysis of police data for the Weed and Seed area suggests that the program activities have had effects on crime. The total number of calls for service may be the most meaningful statistics drawn from these data. Calls for service include quality of life issues as well as crimes. Calls for service increased at the onset of the Weed and Seed program but has decreased thereafter. This increase was expected with the implementation of community police officers to the neighborhood. As residents feel more comfortable with the police, they are more likely to report all crimes, even minor offenses. The increase in calls for service occurred when community police officers were being assigned to the target area. Following this increase, residents did not call the police as often, likely because there were fewer activities to report. Moreover, this trend was different from calls for service for the rest of New Britain.

Figure 5. Property Felonies Known to the Police, 1993 to 1998



During the same time, calls for service increased for the areas outside of the Weed and Seed neighborhoods.

The other police statistics show the implementation of two of the weeding activities. The activities of the Community Action Team can be directly observed from the police data. Following the creation of this unit, drug calls and personal crime promptly increased in the Weed and Seed area. The Community Action Team was responsible for 104 drug-related arrests during the unit's first five months of activity.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Program Summary

The New Britain Weed and Seed program fully began in 1997 upon receiving a \$175,000 grant from the Executive Office for Weed and Seed. The grant provided funding for a two-pronged approach to reduce crime and improve residents' quality of life in the Broad Street neighborhood. First, the police department conducted "weeding" activities to rid the selected high crime area of violent criminals, drug dealers, and illegal weapons. The weeding strategies consisted of targeting illegal weapons and drug dealing through the Gun Abatement Program, decreasing open-air drug markets and nuisance-related incidents with aggressive police patrols, and forcing business owners to maintain their properties through strict enforcement of fire, health, liquor, and building codes.

Second, the police department collaborated with private and public agencies along with community organizations to "seed" the target neighborhood with an array of social, economic, and housing improvement programs. The Weed and Seed program funded neighborhood revitalization as well as youth and adult programs for residents in the target area. Furthermore, the Weed and Seed Coordinator was instrumental in developing partnerships with non-Weed and Seed service providers to bring additional programs to the target area.

Evaluation Summary

The primary evaluation activity analyzed police data before and after New Britain received Weed and Seed funding. The analyses showed that trends in calls for service, drug calls for service, personal crimes, and property felonies were different in the Weed and Seed target area than the rest of the city following the inception of Weed and Seed funding.

Analysis of Police Data

The most noticeable differences were in overall calls for service and drug calls for service. The total number of calls for service increased at the beginning the program. The increase was likely due to the assignment of community police officers to the Weed and Seed neighborhoods. It was believed that more positive interaction between residents and community police officers resulted in residents calling the police more often. Hence, it was likely that crime did not actually increase, but residents' perception of the police improved to where they believed the police would respond to their concerns. The lower number of calls for service during the second year of Weed and Seed suggested that crime was decreasing. If residents felt more comfortable calling the police, even for minor offenses, a decrease in calls can be interpreted as there being fewer activities to report.

The increase in drug calls for service in the Weed and Seed area occurred during the activities of the Gun Abatement Program and the at the onset of the Community Action Team. These units were created to investigate and decrease drug

trafficking in the target area. Since these units were active in the target area, drug calls were expected to increase. As these units continue to be active in the target area, it is anticipated that drug calls will eventually decrease regardless of their level of activity.

Limitations of the Evaluation

The evaluation is limited by two separate factors. First, although improving residents' quality of life was a key aspect of the Weed and Seed program, an evaluation that measured changes in residents' quality of life was beyond the resources available for the evaluation. A study of this magnitude would have required surveying a large number of residents at the beginning of the program and following its completion. Such a study would have been extremely difficult and time consuming due to language barriers of residents in the target area (a large percentage of residents speak primarily Spanish or Polish) and the transient nature of a residents living in the target area (it is estimated that 75% of all housing units in the Weed and Seed area are renter-occupied).

Second, the timing of the evaluation limited the ability to make comparisons before and after the start of Weed and Seed. The evaluation began in December of 1998, almost two years following the start of Weed and Seed funding. Many of the individuals involved in the early stages of Weed and Seed were not available. Some program descriptions and summaries were largely based on earlier reports written to the Executive Office for Weed and Seed. Moreover, police officers, seeding program staff, and residents were asked to describe retrospectively the neighborhood conditions

as they existed more than two years prior to the current evaluation in which they were taking part.

Program Recommendations

Even though the Weed and Seed program appears to have produced positive changes in the target area, there are several issues that need to be addressed. These issues involve weeding and seeding activities as well as the Steering Committee.

Weeding Activities

The police department should re-evaluate the need to work with prosecutors and bail commissioners to identify and process Weed and Seed cases. A serious concern of community police officers was that arrestees quickly returned to the Broad Street neighborhood. Initial meetings with prosecutors and bail commissioners were held early in the program, but no standard procedures for processing arrests in the Weed and Seed area were implemented. Currently, prosecutors are notified of Weed and Seed arrests on a case-by-case basis. The Gun Abatement Program and Community Action Team individually request special attention for their cases. However, arrests made by community police officers and patrol officers in the target area are not identified as Weed and Seed arrests.

More formalized information-sharing between the community police officers, the Gun Abatement Program, and the Community Action Team may be beneficial in better coordinating the weeding activities. The members of these units do share information, but it appears to occur on an informal basis. The recommendation is for

the creation of a weeding committee that would meet on a monthly basis to review weeding activities and plan future tactics and strategies. The weeding committee could include the Chief of Police, supervisors of the Gun Abatement Program and the Community Action Team, community police officers, and crime analyst.

The education component of the Gun Abatement Program needs to be better publicized. This part of the Gun Abatement Program provides valuable preventative information as well as a source to report illegal firearms. However, it is unclear how the general public would know about this program. The telephone hotline number should be advertised in local newspapers, community newsletters, public schools, police substations, and other avenues to the public.

Seeding Activities

There are two general recommendations for seeding programs. First, the programs and the Weed and Seed Coordinator need to be more proactive in publicizing the programs. While there are an abundant number of available programs for youth and adults, there does not appear to be widespread efforts to recruit potential participants. Similar to the educational component of the gun abatement program, attempts should be made to inform the community of these programs.

Second, the Steering Committee should be given periodic progress reports on seeding programs. Many of the Steering Committee members have heard of the various seeding programs but few could describe them in any detail. These reports would not have to be formal written evaluations, but simply brief presentations at

Steering Committee meetings on program attendance, residents' participation, implementation problems, and success stories.

Steering Committee

This report concludes with four recommendations for the Steering Committee. First, the Steering Committee should perform more program oversight for both weeding and seeding activities. This could be accomplished through brief written reports or oral reports at Steering Committee meetings. Similar to seeding programs, several members of the Steering Committee were not sure what weeding activities were taking place. The Weed and Seed Coordinator did receive reports regarding these activities. However, this information was not presented at the monthly meetings. Although it would not be feasible to have every program provide reports for every Steering Committee meeting, a few reports could be given at the beginning of each meeting.

Second, it is recommended that the Steering Committee have representation from the City Planner's Office or a community development committee. A central aspect of the New Britain Weed and Seed program is neighborhood revitalization using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). A Steering Committee member involved in the physical redevelopment of the target area may provide assistance and insight in environmental design programs and decisions.

Third, the Weed and Seed Coordinator would benefit by having administrative assistance. The Weed and Seed program requires the coordinator to perform many

different responsibilities (program coordination and oversight, seeking and applying for new funding opportunities, facilitating some of the programs, organizing training and equipment for community police officers, and cultivating relationships with new agencies and organizations). The Weed and Seed Coordinator in New Britain appears to spend a significant amount of time writing reports, typing memos, and filling out grant applications. These are activities that support staff could perform on a full-time or a part-time basis.

Fourth, the Steering Committee needs to begin discussing program retention and institutionalization of Weed and Seed activities. The program is currently beginning its final year of Federal funding. The goal of Operation Weed and Seed is to provide short-term funding to cities to establish long term solutions to problems in the Weed and Seed neighborhoods. At the present time, New Britain does not appear to have the organizational or financial resources to continue the Weed and Seed program at its current level once Federal funding ends.