Safe Street Teams Initiative
Boston Police Department

Deputy Superintendent Nora Baston

October 2012

Organizational Change and Sustainability

- 2007 – started with 3 teams

- Have expanded to 14 teams with plans to create additional teams

- Included in bi-weekly Compstat and weekly Deployment meetings

- Quarterly meetings of all the teams and commanders

- Monthly progress reports and monthly BRIC crime analysis for SST team areas

Community Impact and Partnerships

Examples

Faces Behind the Badge

Peace Walks and Collaboration with VIP

Backpack Give-away

Weekly Walks with Clergy

Working as part of Neighborhood Response Teams

Daily visits with local businesses

Monthly basketball games

Dog Walks

Boxing Program

Youth Dialogues

# Use of BRIC Data to Guide SST efforts: Bromley Heath robbery problem example

- Robberies spike in May - July 2011

- Initial Response: traditional methods -- fixed post, soft cars, flyering of neighborhood, etc.

- Result: No impact on robberies

Use of BRIC Data to Guide SST efforts: Bromley Heath robbery problem example

Safe Street Team response:

- In August the team worked with BRIC data, read all the incident reports and a robbery analysis was completed – times, area and offenders.

- Team worked with community stakeholders to call in parents of offenders, then called in youth themselves, brought in YouthConnect social workers, Streetworkers, Probation and DA's Office to offer services and provide deterrence message.

- Team focused on educating people using personal electronics devices with headphones at the T station.
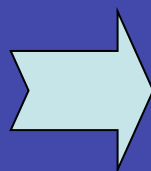
Most notable analysis:

- *85% suspects fled on foot into Bromley Heath Development*
- *69% of robberies occurred on Centre Street, using the map created by BRIC*
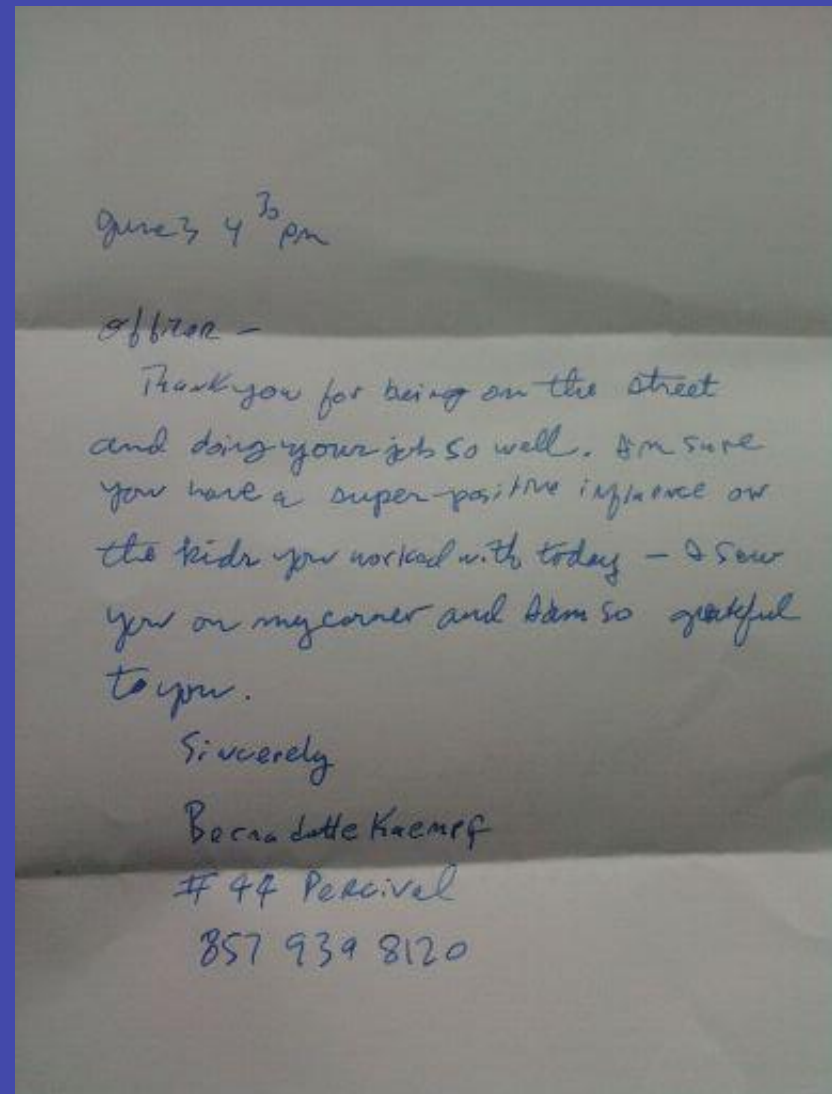- *Most frequent item taken was cell phone*
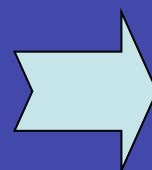
Results:

- **Robberies in the area down 18% in September**

Buy-in: Internal and External

- Demand for Safe Street Teams is High --Officers are requesting to be on teams and neighborhood residents are requesting to have their own teams.

Safe Street Teams: Building Trust

Boston Police Department
Safe Street Teams Problem-Oriented Policing Program

Herman Goldstein Award Finalist
October 2012

Research supported by
U.S. Department of Justice
Bureau of Justice Assistance
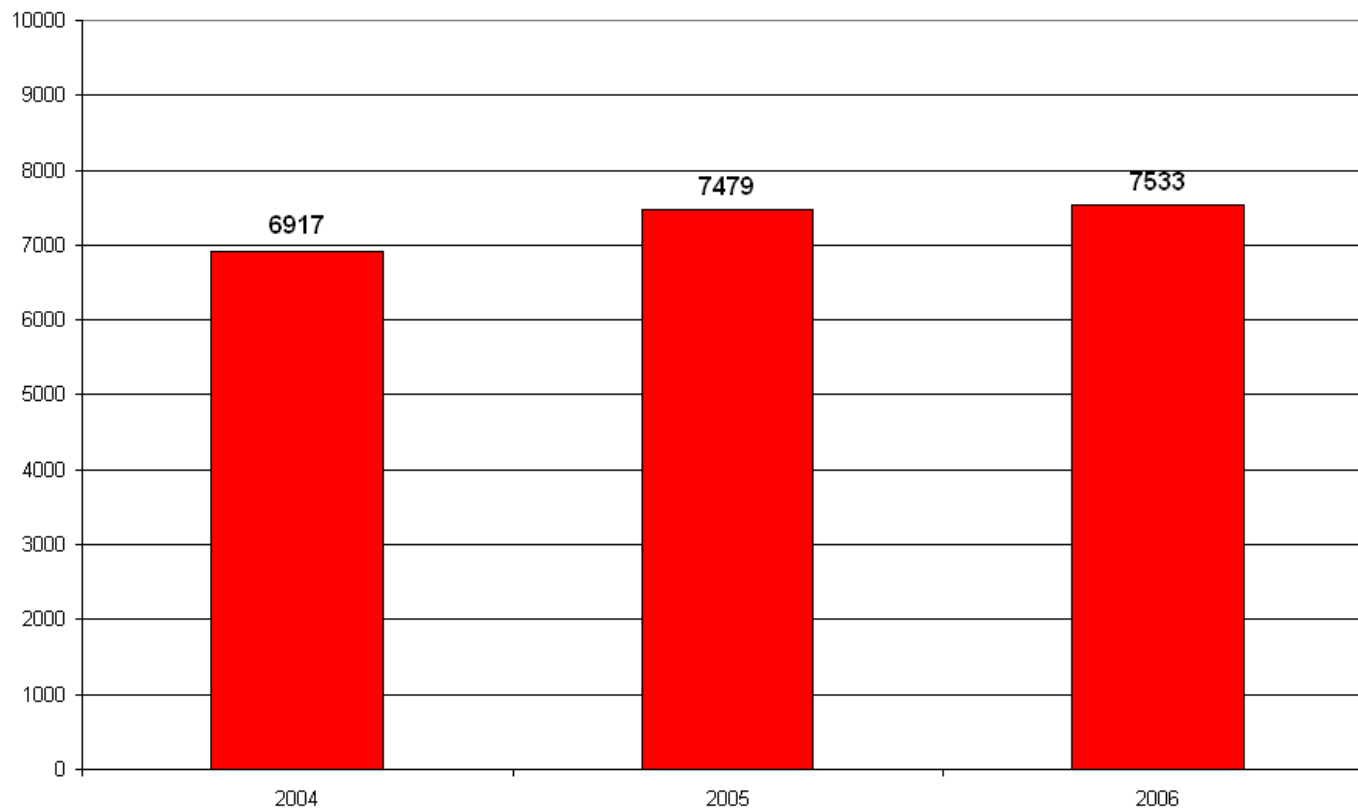Smart Policing Initiative

Presentation Outline

- Scanning
  - Increasing violence concentrated at a few places
  - Decreasing public confidence in BPD

- Analysis
  - Persistent violent places over time

- Response
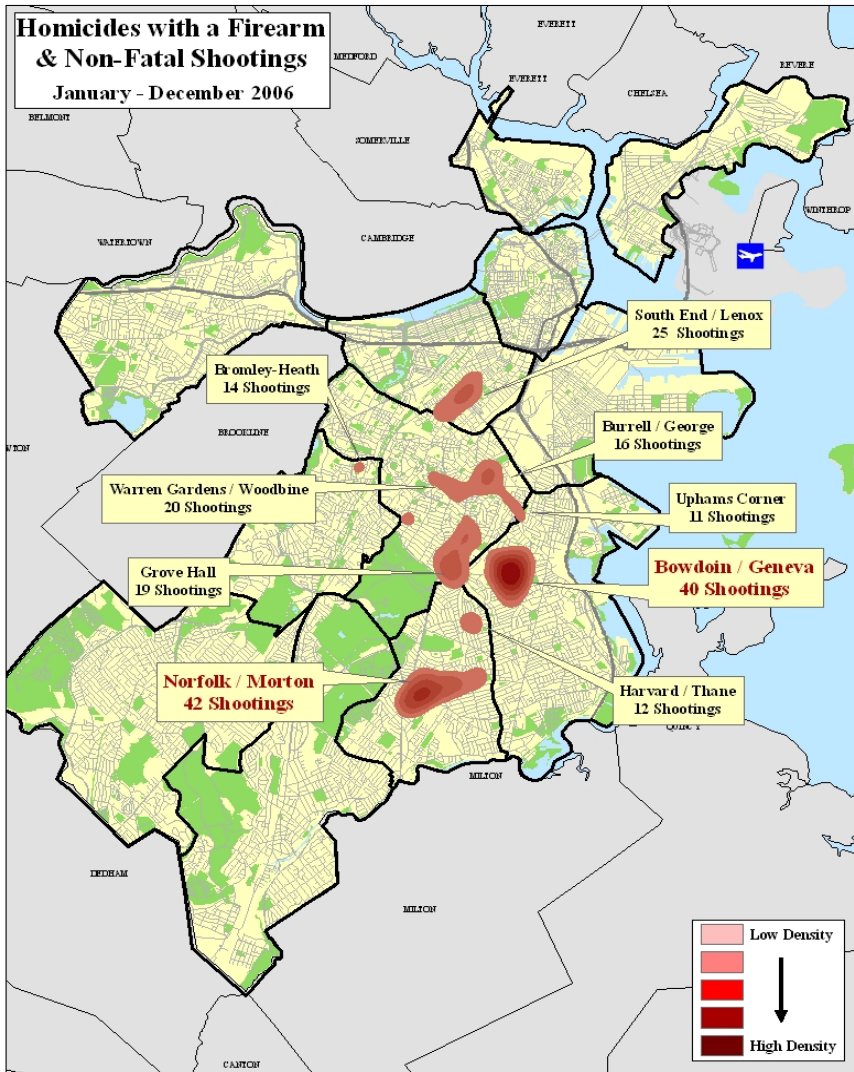 - POP interventions tailored to problems at places

- Assessment
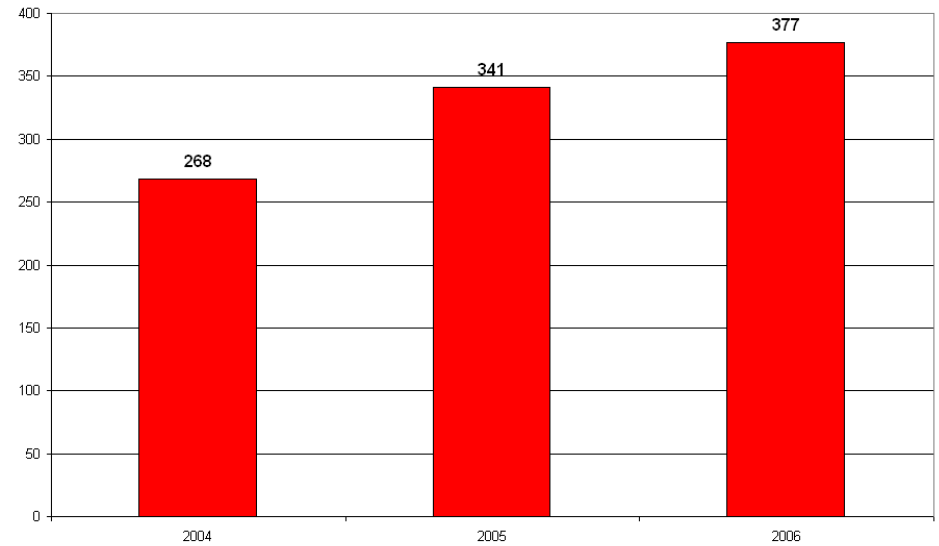
Scanning

Violent Index Crimes in Boston, 2004 - 2006

Between 2004 and 2006, violent crime increased by 9% in Boston.

Homicides with a Firearm & Non-Fatal Shootings
January - December 2006

South End / Lenox
25 Shootings

Bromley-Heath
14 Shootings

Burrell / George
16 Shootings

Warren Gardens / Woodbine
20 Shootings

Uphams Corner
11 Shootings

Grove Hall
19 Shootings

Bowdoin / Geneva
40 Shootings

Norfolk / Morton
42 Shootings

Harvard / Thane
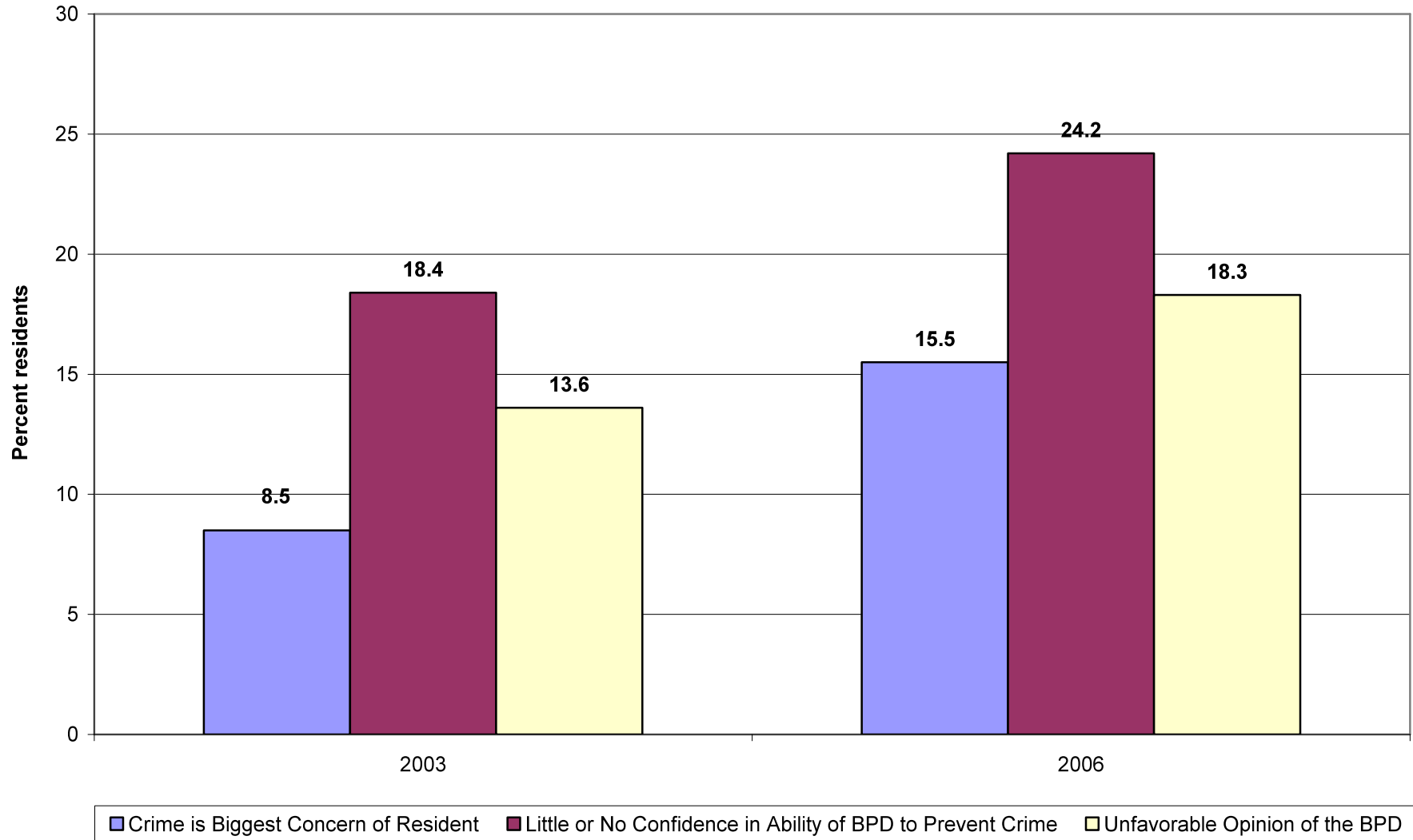12 Shootings

Low Density

High Density

Fatal and Non-Fatal Shootings in Boston, 2004 - 2006

- Between 2004 and 2006, fatal and non-fatal shooting incidents increased by 41%.

- Only 5% of Boston experienced 60% of shooting incidents in 2006.

Boston Public Safety Survey, 2003 - 2006

Percent residents

2003:
- 8.5 — Crime is Biggest Concern of Resident
- 18.4 — Little or No Confidence in Ability of BPD to Prevent Crime
- 13.6 — Unfavorable Opinion of the BPD

2006:
- 15.5 — Crime is Biggest Concern of Resident
- 24.2 — Little or No Confidence in Ability of BPD to Prevent Crime
- 18.3 — Unfavorable Opinion of the BPD

☐ Crime is Biggest Concern of Resident ☐ Little or No Confidence in Ability of BPD to Prevent Crime ☐ Unfavorable Opinion of the BPD

Analysis

- Reviewed research and best practices
- Decided on POP at violent hot spots approach
- Analysis occurred at two levels
  - Citywide analyses to identify persistent hot spots
  - Place-level analyses to understand the underlying mechanisms that cause hot spots to persist
    - Presented in Response section
    - Project progressed in a non-linear ongoing process of Analysis-Response
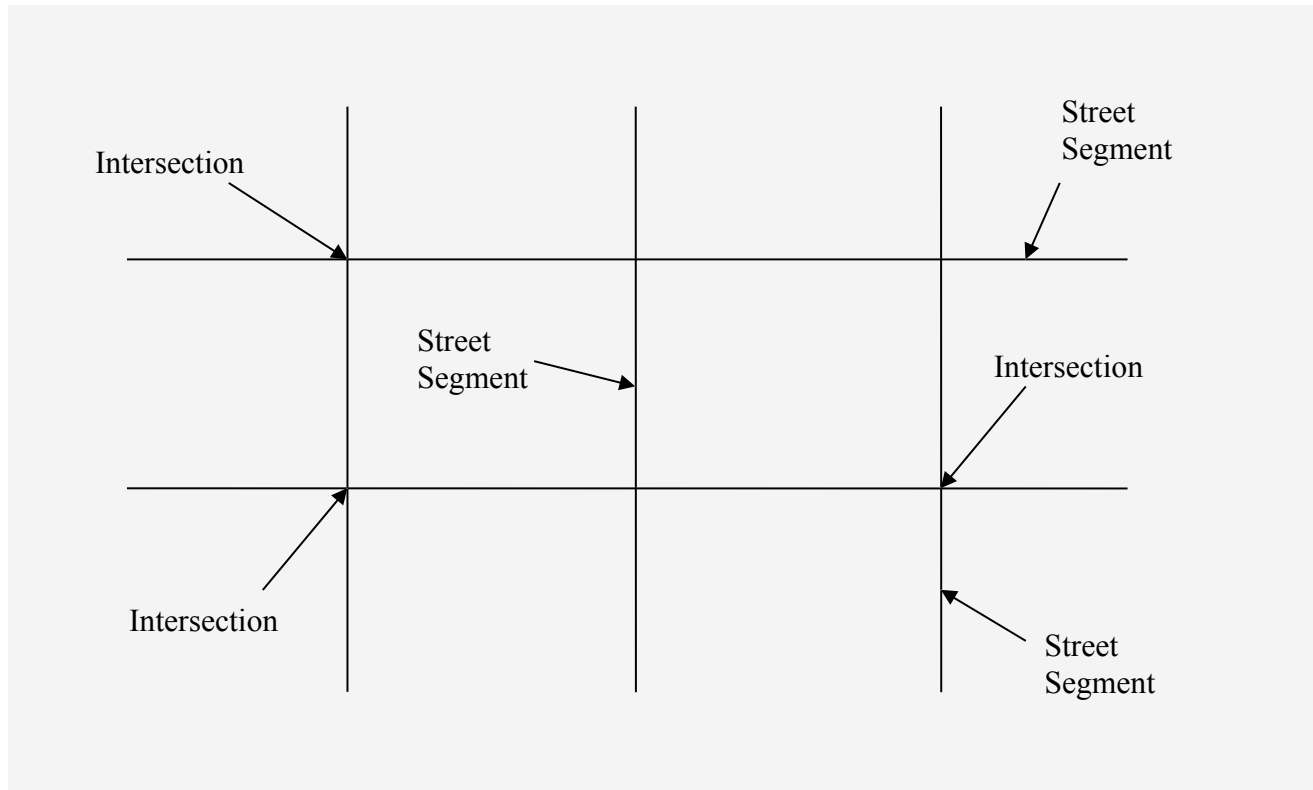
- Turned street network into "small place" database (NOT A GRID)
- N = 28,530 "street units"
- N = 7,359 shootings between 1980 and 2008

Combined Segments and Intersections that had at Least One ABDW w/Gun Incident in Boston, 1980 - 2008

3,294 "street units" has at least one ABDW w/Gun during this time period (11.5% of 28,530)
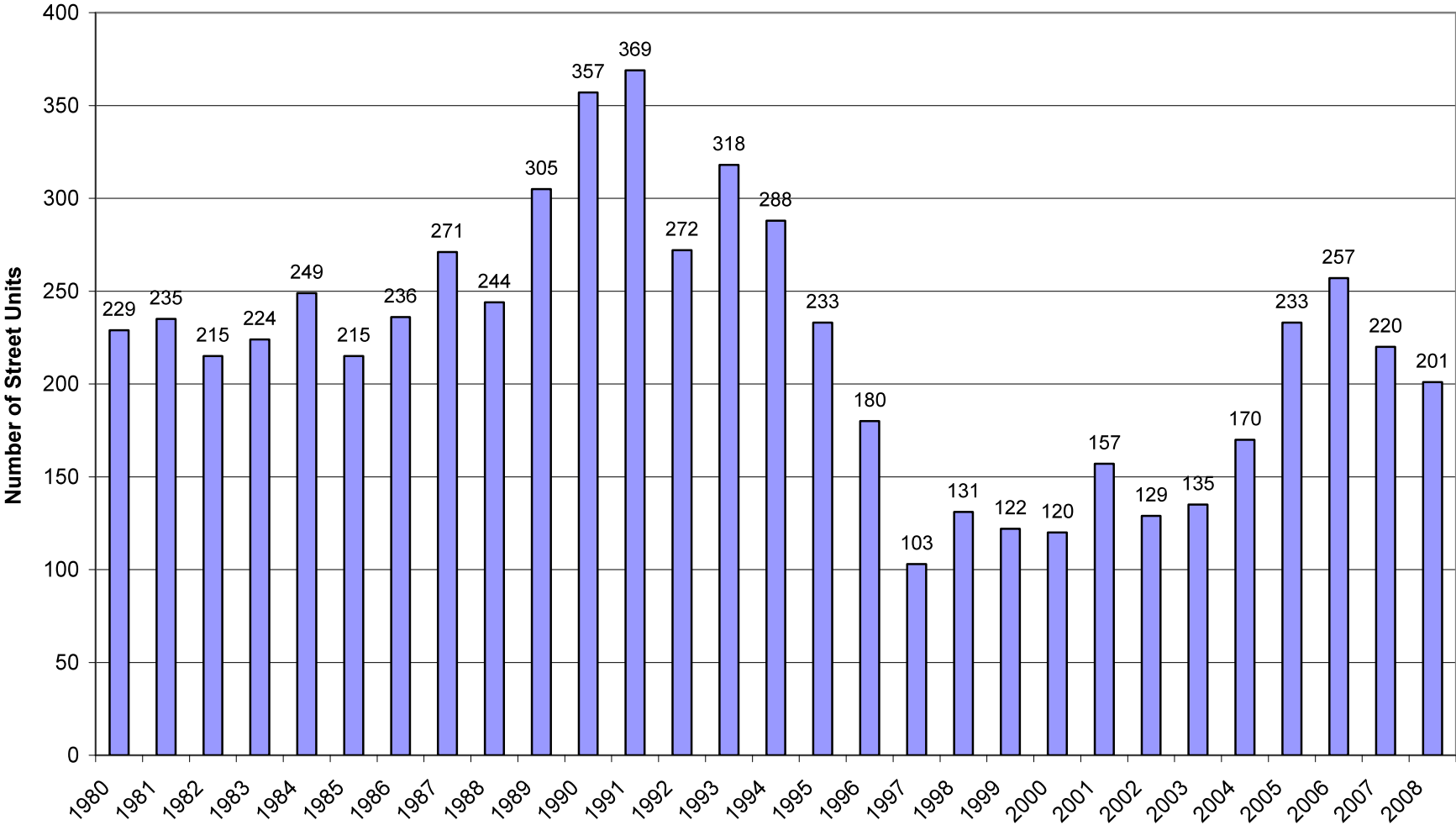
Distribution of Street Units and ABDW-Gun Incidents in Boston, 1980 – 2008, Among Quartile Groups Defined by Growth Curve Regression Models

Group	N of Street Units	% of 28,530 Street Units	Sum of Incidents	% of 7,359 Incidents
1	571	2.0	1,519	20.6
2	201	0.7	413	5.6
3	332	1.2	1,157	15.7
4	267	0.9	2,347	31.9
Total	1,371	4.8	5,436	73.9
Stable (Groups 2, 3)	533	1.9	1,570	21.3
Volatile (Groups 1, 4)	838	2.9	3,866	52.5
One incident only	1,923	6.7	1,923	26.1

→ 5%

→ 74%

Group Yearly Counts of ABDW-Firearm Incidents in Boston, 1980 – 2008

N of incidents

Volatile Group

Stable Group

One Incident Group
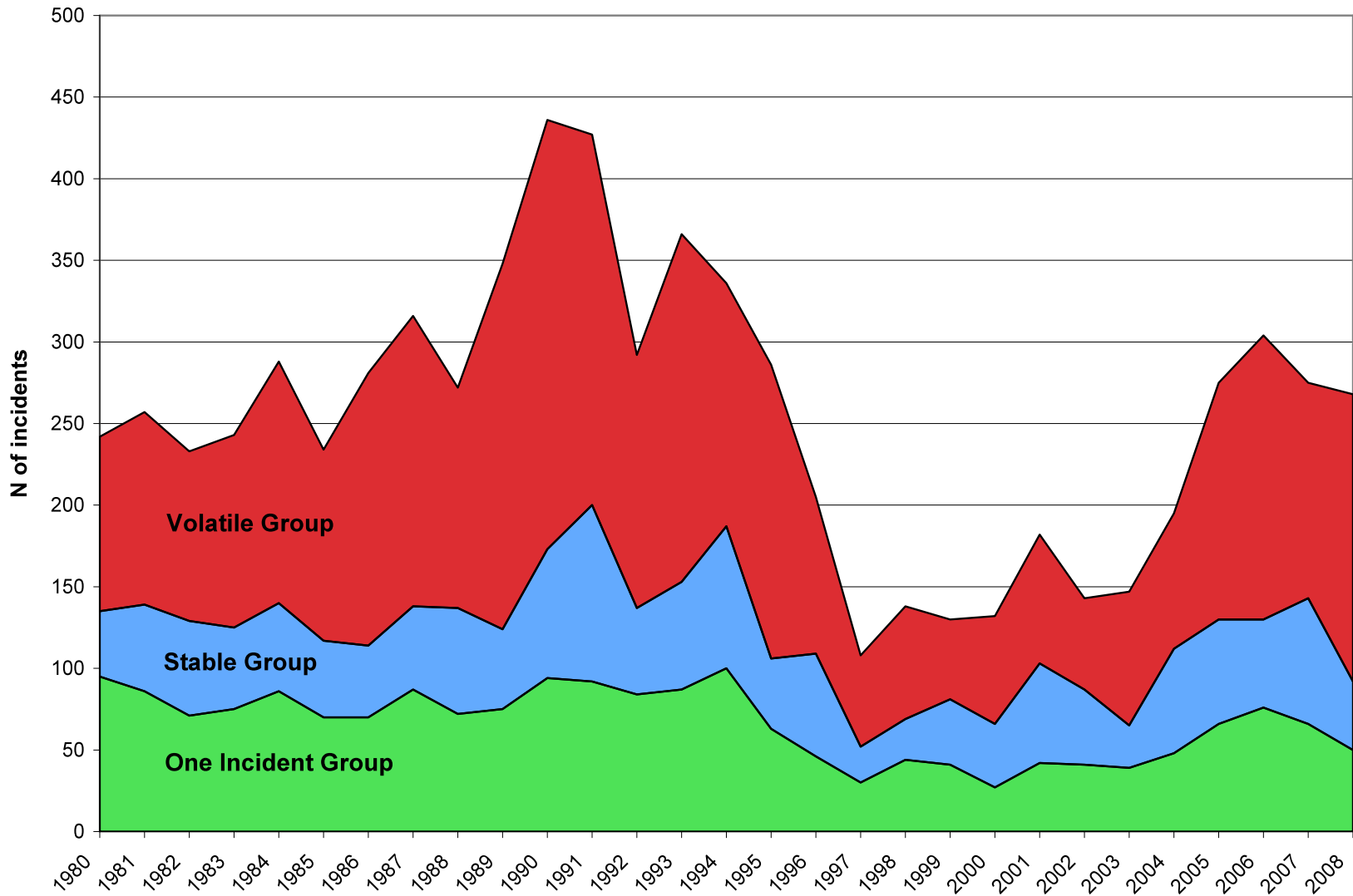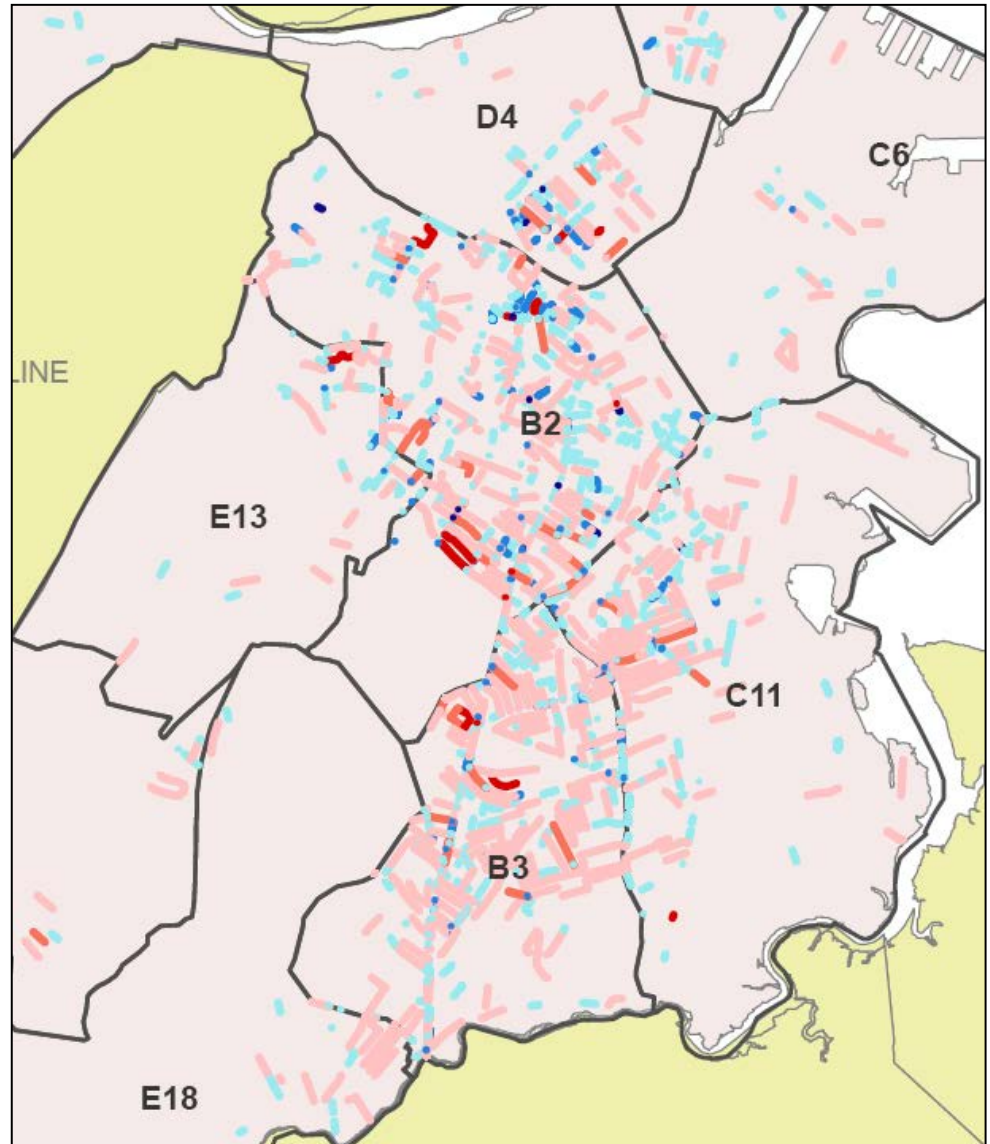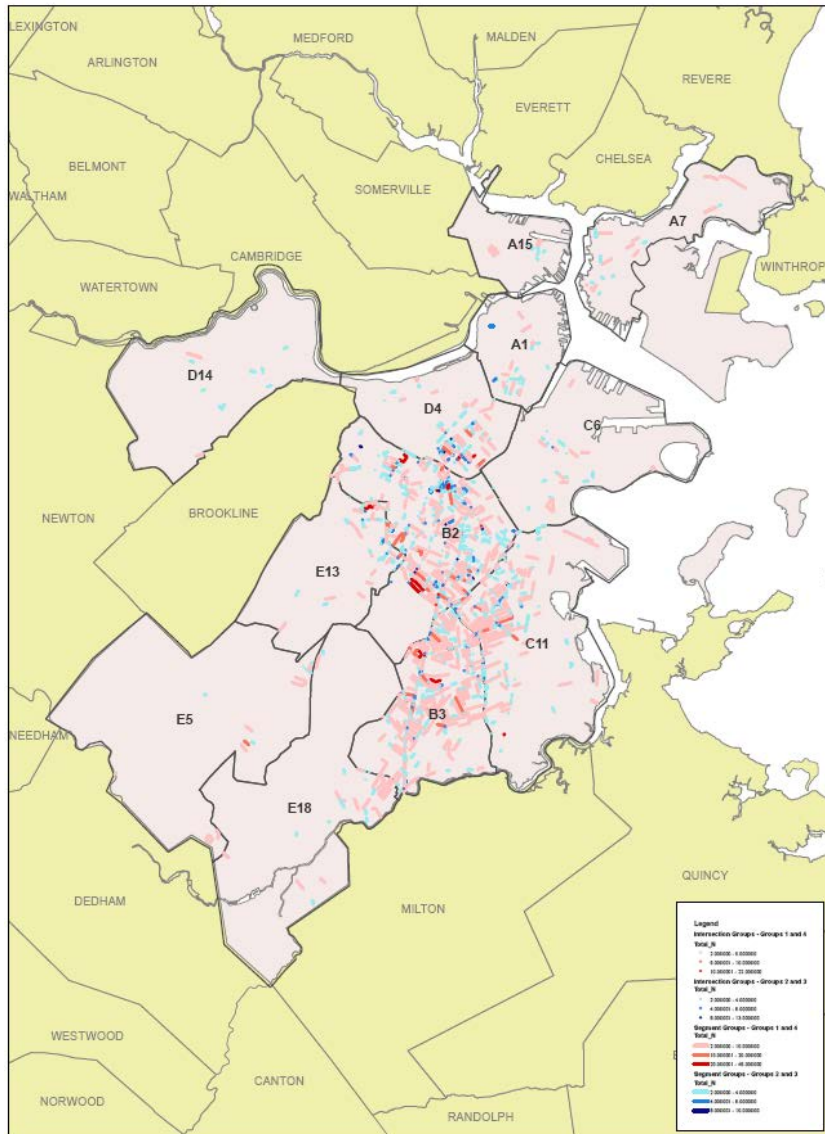
Collective Efficacy in Boston

Strong Link to Shootings
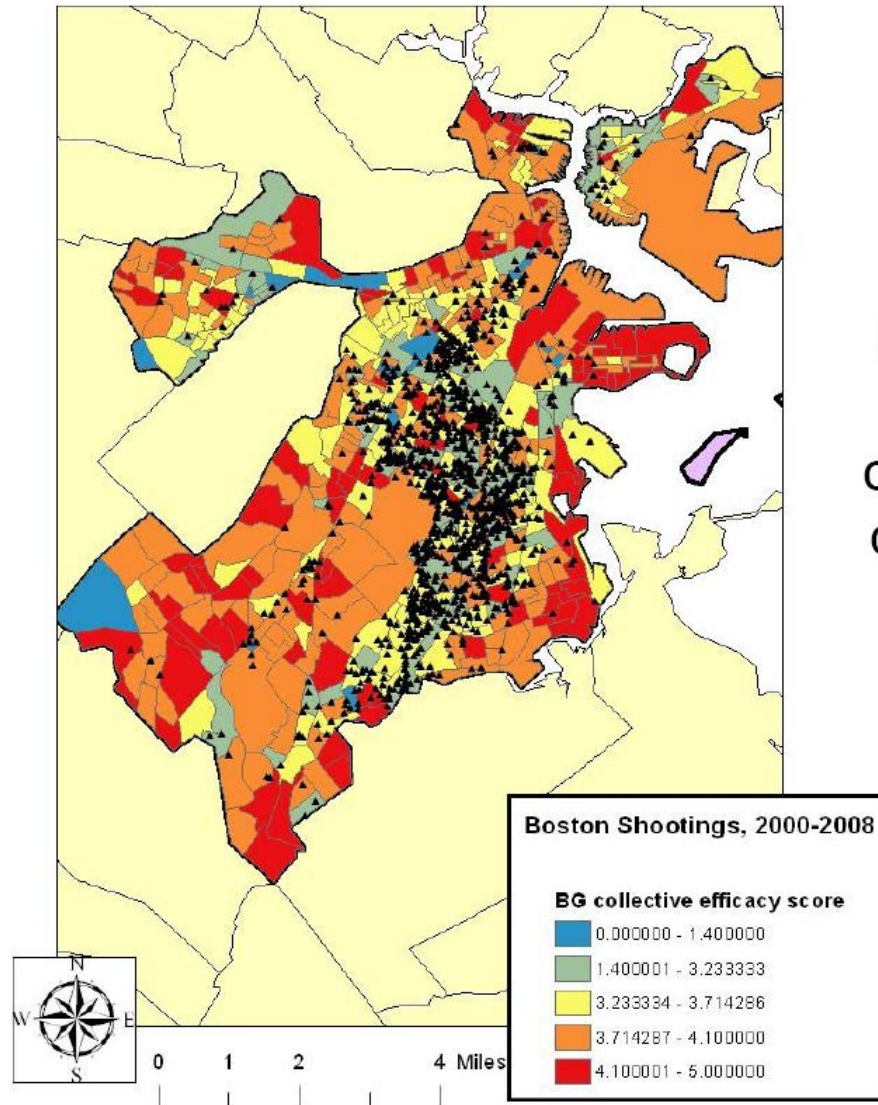
Relationship holds after controlling for concentrated poverty

Boston Shootings, 2000-2008

BG collective efficacy score
- 0.000000 - 1.400000
- 1.400001 - 3.233333
- 3.233334 - 3.714286
- 3.714287 - 4.100000
- 4.100001 - 5.000000

Source: Hureau, 2011

Robbery in Boston, 1980 - 2008
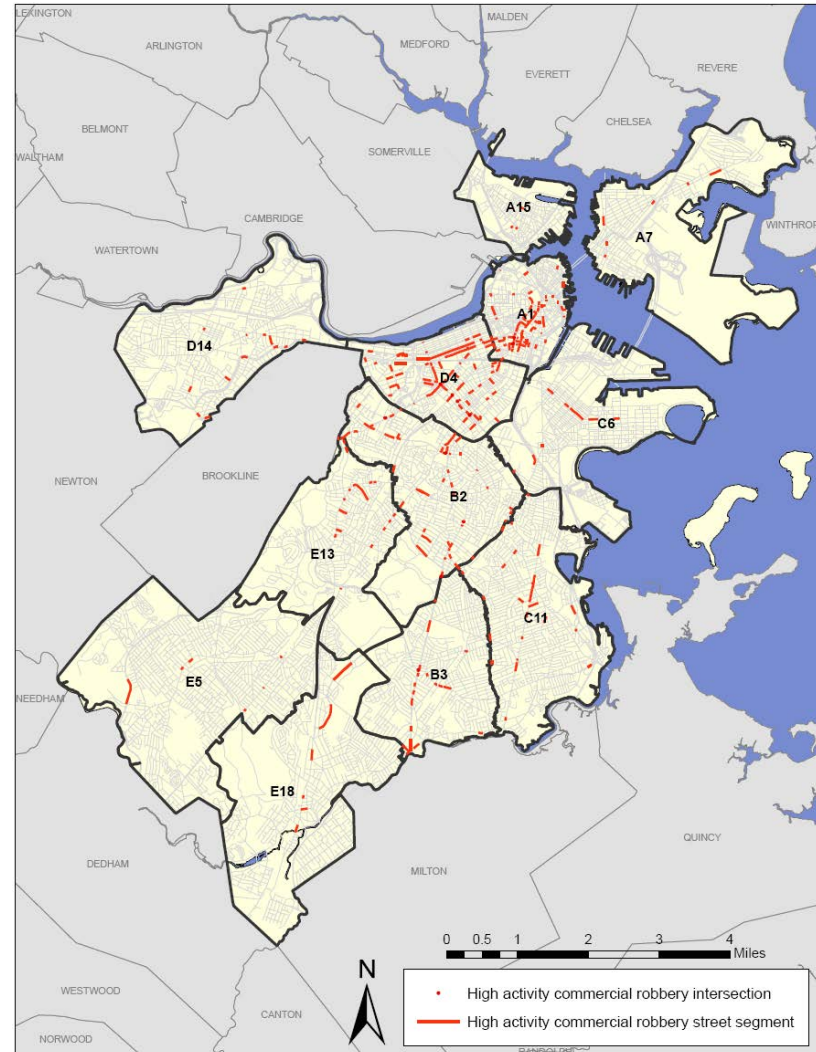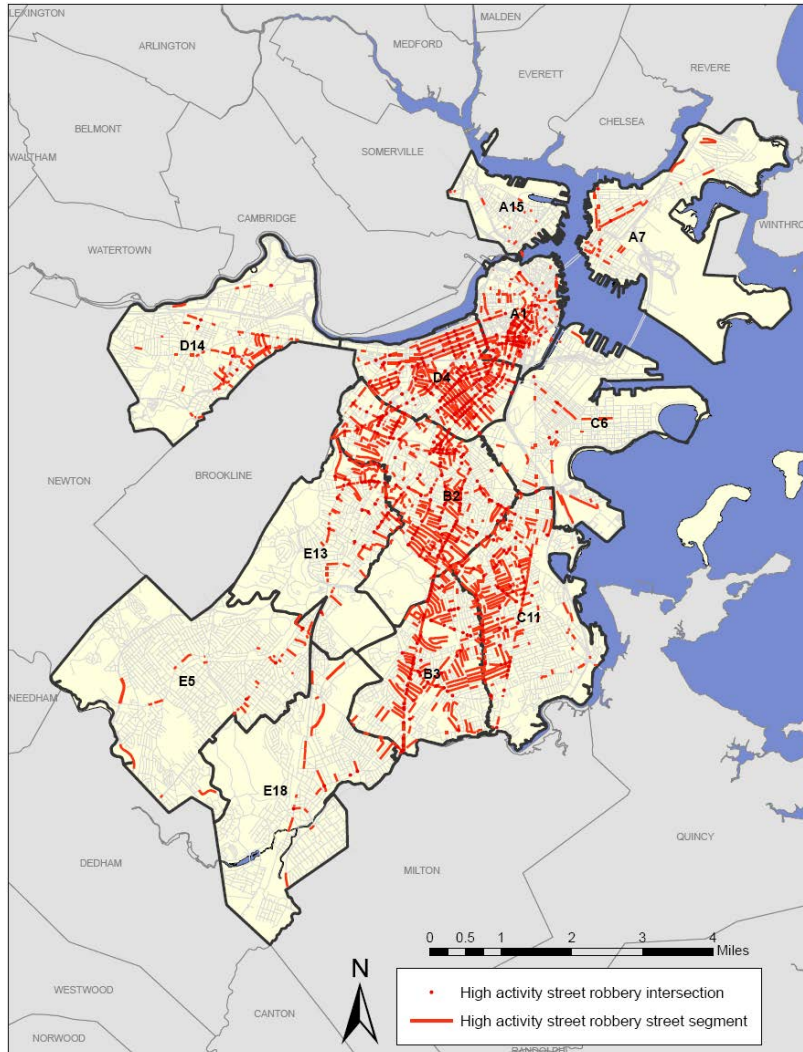
- Street robbery: 8% generates 66%
- Commercial robbery: 1% generates 50%

Response

- **Safe Street Teams Problem-Oriented Policing**
  - Implemented by Commissioner Davis in 2007
  - Crime mapping and subjective assessments used to identify 13 SST hot spot areas
  - Each team comprised ~1 sergeant and 6 officers

- **Responsibilities**
  - POP to Identify and Address Problems in Hot Spots
  - Maintain Visible Uniformed Presence in Hot Spots (Walking, Bicycles)
  - Establish Relationships with Local Merchants and Residents
  - Make Arrests, Keep Contacts with Known Offenders

Place-Level Analysis / Response Development

- Each team was required to:
  - Interview local residents and business owners
  - Analyze crime incident and call data
  - Talk with offenders, use own qualitative assessments
- Problems and underlying causes varied considerably
  - 3 to 7 violent crime problems per place
  - On average, each place had 4.5 problems per place
- Routine POP / Accountability meetings
- EXAMPLES

Problem-Oriented Policing Interventions Implemented by Safe Street Teams

Interventions	N
Situational / Environmental Interventions	
Removed graffiti	29
Removed trash from street / park	27
Secured / razed abandoned building	23
Added / fixed lighting	15
Inspection / regulatory action on bar or liquor store	15
Regulatory actions against illegal rooming house / problem property	12
Removed abandoned car / trailer / boat	9
Fixed locks at public housing / apartment building	8
Posted / fixed signs (e.g. no trespassing, no loitering, etc.)	8
Installed CCTV (in partnership with local partner)	8
Removed overgrown vegetation	7
Evicted problem tenant	6
Repaired sidewalk	5
Secured / cleaned vacant lot	4
Fixed / installed fence	3
Dispensed crime prevention literature	3
Added trash receptacles	3
Inspection / regulatory actions against other private business	3
Removed other site feature that facilitated drug activity	2
Removed benches from park to prevent loitering	2
Change bus route / address public transportation problem	2
Rebuilt community room at housing project	1
Enforcement Interventions	
Focused enforcement on drug selling crews / drug market areas	38
Ongoing order maintenance to manage social disorder (public drinking, loitering, etc.)	13
Focused enforcement on street gangs	12
Focused enforcement on robbery crews / repeat robbers	7
Focused enforcement on burglars / shoplifters / stolen goods	6
Focused enforcement on public housing trespassers / unregulated vendors	3
Community Outreach / Social Service Interventions	
Planned and held a community event (e.g., block party, youth dialogue)	72
Established new recreational opportunities for area youth (e.g., basketball league)	27
Partnered w/ local agencies to provide youth with social services / opportunities	12
Street outreach to homeless, clinicians initiative	5
Provided school supplies / toys to local children	4
Other social service / opportunity provision activity	2

Safe Street Teams Implemented a Total of 396 Problem-Oriented Policing Interventions

Types of Problem-Oriented Policing Interventions Implemented by Each Safe Street Team

Team	Situational	Enforcement	Community / Social	Total
Orchard Park	44	19	20	83
Grove Hall	16	6	25	47
Codman Square (B3)	18	6	14	38
Upham's Corner	20	4	12	36
Eagle Hill	29	4	2	35
Codman Square (C11)	12	6	15	33
Bowdoin / Geneva	13	3	8	23
Franklin Field	9	6	7	22
Downtown Crossing	10	6	2	18
Heath / Centre Street	6	5	7	18
Lower Roxbury / S. End	8	5	2	15
Morton / Norfolk	5	2	7	14
Tremont / Stuart	5	7	1	13
Total	**195**	**79**	**122**	**396**
Mean	**15.0**	**6.1**	**9.4**	**30.5**

Assessment

- Quasi-experimental design
  - Street segments, intersections
  - Propensity score matching
    - 2006 violent crime, disadvantage index, street unit type, density of nearby hot street units
  - Growth-curve regression models
    - 2000 – 2009 violent crime trends

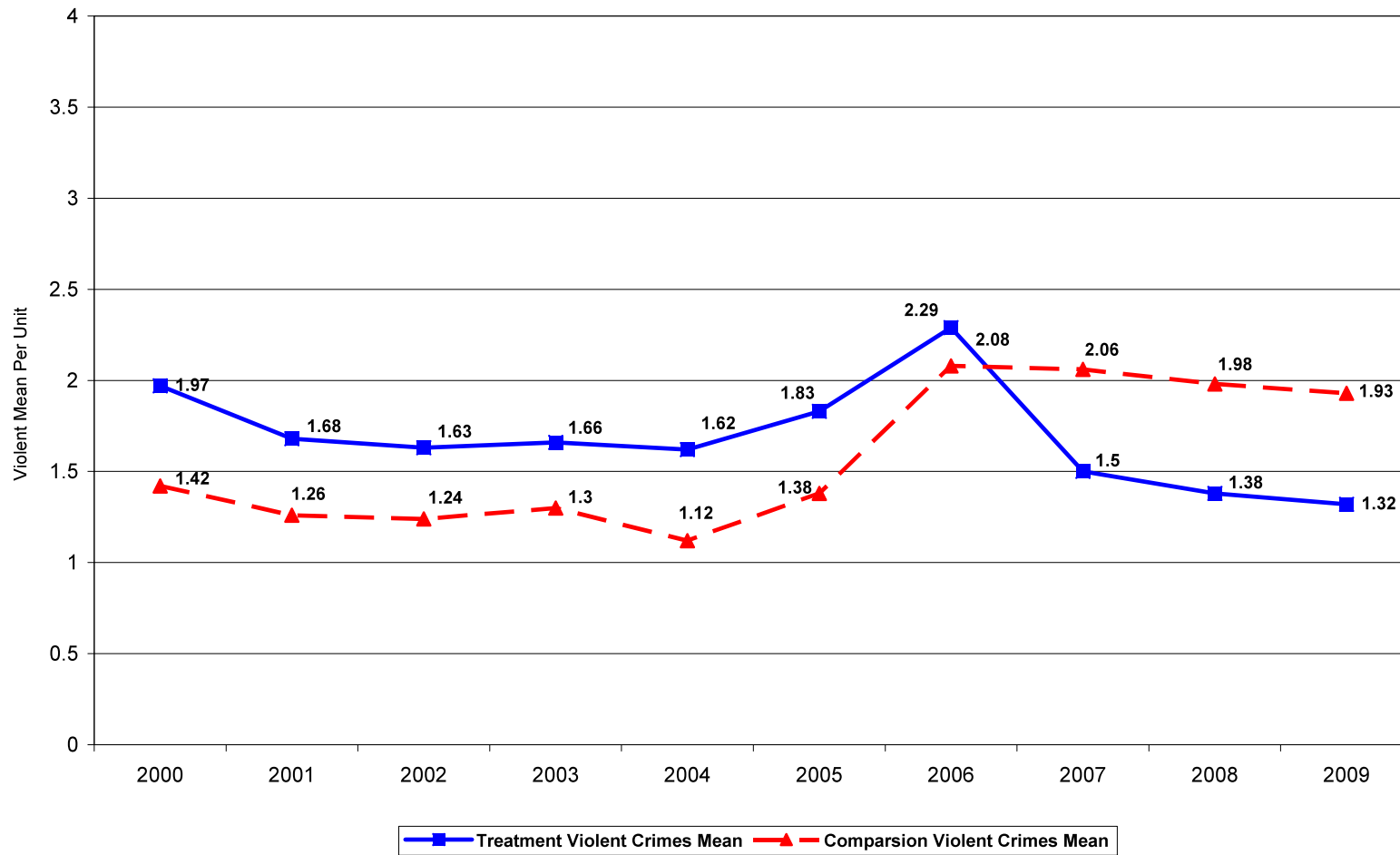- Displacement and diffusion of benefits
  - Two block buffer zones

Treatment and Control Units

N= 478 treatment
N = 564 control

Legend
- Comparison Unit
- SST Unit
- SST Area
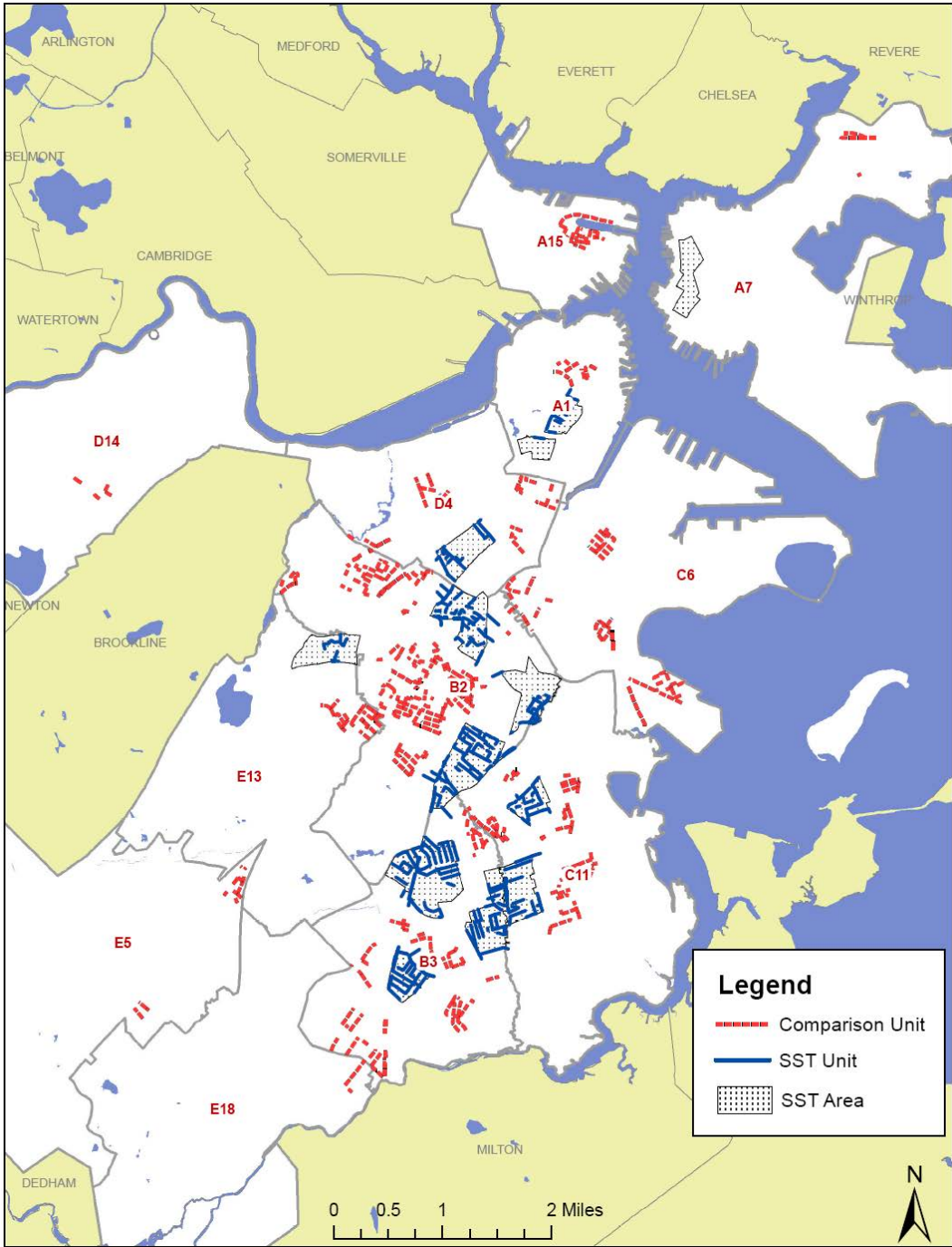
Yearly Mean Violent Index Crimes at Treatment and Control Street Units, 2000 - 2009
N = 478 treatment units, N = 564 comparison units

Evaluation Results

- 17% reduction in violent crime incidents
  - 19% reduction in robberies
  - 15% reduction in assaults

- No evidence of spatial displacement
  - NS diffusion of crime control benefits

- Anecdotal evidence that police-community relations improved