

Assessing the Community Impacts of Sex Offender Concentration

MPP Capstone Paper

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Executive Summary

This paper is the final product of a capstone research project that provides an analysis of the community impacts of sex offender concentration in Minneapolis. It serves as part of a larger research initiative started by the Action Research Team facilitated by the University of Minnesota Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC) to address the disproportionate sex offender concentration in socioeconomically disadvantaged Minneapolis neighborhoods.

The methods of data collection and analysis utilized are primarily qualitative: a literature review, news media review, sex offender policy analysis and stakeholder interviews. This data reveals the negative social, economic and public safety impacts of disproportionate sex offender concentration. Additionally, it draws attention to the community context in which it occurs. The overabundance of disparities (i.e. low-income, high unemployment, low educational attainment, low home ownership) and historical disenfranchisement is evident in the affected Minneapolis neighborhoods that are comprised primarily of residents of color. Therefore, disproportionate sex offender concentration adds another layer of disparity that raises equity concerns.

Along with the findings articulated in this report, recommendations are provided for the consideration of ART in its effort to move toward action in a manner that is both equitable and effective. Recommendations to help minimize the social, economic, and public safety impacts of sex offender concentration:

1. Educate policy makers about the sex offender concentration patterns in Minneapolis to avoid ineffective policies.
2. Solicit the input of affected neighborhoods and encourage their active engagement in problem solving.
3. Conduct a multi-level implementation analysis of MN Statute 244.052
4. Avoid legislation advocating sex offender residency restrictions in Minneapolis.
5. Collaborate with local policy makers and County agencies on existing initiatives to increase the availability of accessible and affordable housing for sex offenders.

Assessing the Community Impacts of Sex Offender Concentration

Sex offender concentration has been the subject of various academic studies, news reports, political debates, community-wide conversations and policy creation. There are a plethora of stakeholders with differing levels of interest and influence on this issue- each harboring strong opinions on what the impacts of concentration are and what policy responses (if any) are warranted. In Minnesota, various state and county agencies, law enforcement personnel, non-profit service providers, community-based organizations and individual residents have been involved in addressing the growing concern of the highly skewed distribution of sex offenders in socioeconomically disadvantaged Minneapolis neighborhoods. The high stakes and strong opinions involved make this a relatively controversial yet extremely important topic that continues to need addressing in Minnesota.

Minneapolis is the largest city in the County and is home to the most sex offenders. Some neighborhoods in particular, including Jordan in the north side and Phillips in the south side, house a disproportionate number of registered sex offenders relative to other neighborhoods. The response from residents to this concentration has been concern and frustration towards state policy makers and county officials who have neglected to address this issue at the policy level.

At the city level, the Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights reacted to this frustration by convincing the Minneapolis City Council to pass a resolution that first, declares there is in fact a disproportionate concentration of sex offenders in some Minneapolis neighborhoods. More specifically, the Near North, Jordan, Camden, Harrison and Phillips neighborhoods have been the focus of the media and policy discourse on concentration in Minneapolis. Secondly, it frames this concentration as being a civil rights violation as it adds to the already existing layers of disparities in these areas.

Additionally, the Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights approached the University of Minnesota's Urban Research Outreach- Engagement Center (UROC) in 2013 to conduct research on the concentration of sex offenders in socioeconomically disadvantaged Minneapolis neighborhoods. This inter-organizational partnership formed what is now the Action Research Team (ART). The team is comprised of a diverse set of local leaders working in various local agencies, nonprofits and community organizations.

ART's primary objective is to understand the existing patterns of sex offender concentration in Minneapolis neighborhoods and assess the various community impacts of this concentration. This is done through an action-based research method that begins with a statement of a problem or an identified need. It searches for greater understanding through rigorous information gathering to determine an appropriate course of action. Most importantly, it values the diversity of expertise and experiences of community members by employing a collaborative problem-solving approach to reach reliable results.

ART has established three phases of research for addressing sex offender concentration in Minneapolis neighborhoods. In the first phase, ART focuses on understanding the demographic characteristics, residency patterns, offense details, as well as policies determining supervision and release from confinement for sex offenders. More specifically, ART spent part of Phase I painting the Sex Offender Picture with quantitative data by exploring the following research questions:

1. What is the current picture of sex offender re-entry in Minneapolis and Hennepin County?
2. What are the policies and procedures surrounding sex offender release and supervision?

Data was collected to answer these questions from the Minnesota Department of Corrections, Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation, the Minneapolis Police Department, and the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. This phase is not yet complete as there remains data on sex offender residency patterns that has not been collected.

This capstone research reflects the second phase of ART's work-that is, understanding the impact of concentration on the communities in which sex offenders are clustered at disproportionate levels. In the context of this research, community refers to both a shared geographical location and shared characteristics and circumstance of geographical locations. Thus "community" for this paper exists at the neighborhood level (as defined by the City of Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development), including the various census tracts¹, BlockGroups, and corresponding zip codes. Additionally, there are two specific communities that are key to this research. The Near North, Jordan, Camden, and Harrison neighborhoods are within the boundary of an area referred to as "North Minneapolis." The Phillips neighborhoods are located in South Minneapolis. Local policy makers and journalists have identified these communities as having the highest concentration of sex offenders in the city.

Thus, the ultimate objective of this research is to assess impact by analyzing the determinants of where sex offenders choose to reside, the key factors contributing to disproportionate concentration, and the consequences that result from this concentration within the communities that are most affected.

¹ Census tracts are relatively permanent small-area geographic divisions of a county or statistically equivalent entity defined for the tabulation and presentation of data from the decennial census and selected other statistical programs. Census tracts are also used to tabulate and publish estimates from the American Community Survey (ACS) after 2010. The primary goal of the census tract program is to provide a set of nationally consistent small, statistical geographic units, with stable boundaries, that facilitate analysis of data across time. (City of Minneapolis Department of Community Planning & Economic Development-CPED & U.S. Census Bureau)

Research Question

We collaborated with the ART point of contact for this project, to identify the goals the team established for the second phase of research. With this information, we formulated a research question to guide our data collection and analysis. Our research asks, “*What are the specific social, economic, and public safety impacts of sex offender concentration?*” The specific Minneapolis neighborhoods that serve as the focus of this research are described as socioeconomically disadvantaged and suffering from two or more disparities. Residents in these neighborhoods experience greater levels of poverty, crime, unemployment and other disparities relative to the entire city of Minneapolis, which makes addressing the disproportionate concentration of sex offenders compelling and necessary. This also makes it difficult to distinguish the specific impacts on these neighborhoods that are solely the result of sex offender concentration. Understanding the community context in which concentration occurs is highly important, particularly because the issue has been framed as a civil rights violation. Disproportionate concentration as a disparity is inevitably intertwined with other existing disparities that act together to create livability concerns.

It is important to note that this second research phase is being conducted concurrently with Phase I of ART’s research, as there remain quantitative data collection and analysis steps still in progress. Thus, while the problem of sex offender concentration has been a repeated topic of concern and exploration for certain areas of Minneapolis such as the north side, the quantification of the current sex offender concentration at the county level and city level is yet to be determined. This capstone research project exists within these data constraints. Therefore it analyzes the community impacts of sex offender concentration grounded in the facts presented in

the Minneapolis City Council's resolution, which establishes the problem and declares it to be a civil rights violation.

According to the City of Minneapolis City Council Resolution, there were 2,522 registered sex offenders living in the city of Minneapolis by January 1, 2013. The 2012 estimated population for Minneapolis was 392,880 (U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts), indicating there were approximately 64 sex offenders per 10,000 residents in the city. The Minnesota Department of Corrections sex offender database indicates that there are currently 133 level 3² predatory offenders living in Hennepin County and 127 of these offenders live in the city of Minneapolis. Further mapping analysis and additional data is needed to infer the exact number of offenders located in the individual neighborhoods that make up Minneapolis. However, the following data is available based on groupings of neighborhoods by zip code (See Appendix A for map):

- 59 level 3 predatory offenders reside in the 55411, 55412, 55405, 55430 zip codes which encompass the Jordan, Willard Hay, Hawthorne, Near North, Harrison, Webber-Camden, and Camden-Industrial neighborhoods (MN Department of Corrections).
- 13 level 3 predatory offenders reside in the 55404 zip code, which includes the north area of Phillips West, Midtown Phillips, and East Phillips neighborhoods (MN Department of Corrections).

These numbers indicate that the highest risk predatory offenders are disproportionately represented in these neighborhoods. These affected neighborhoods share a number of similar demographic characteristics such as high minority population, low household income, low educational attainment, low employment status and more, making the assessment of predatory

² Level 3 predatory offenders are considered the most likely offenders to re-offend. Level 3 is the highest assessed risk level that can be assigned to predatory offenders in the State of Minnesota.

offender concentration impact on one neighborhood applicable to that of the others. Additionally, these neighborhoods, with the exception of Phillips West and Midtown Phillips, are located in one general area of the city of Minneapolis (North Minneapolis), and are adjacent to one another.

The descriptive data on the Jordan neighborhood in North Minneapolis and Phillips West Neighborhood in South Minneapolis illustrate the disparities present in these communities in comparison to the overall city of Minneapolis (see Appendix B for all groups/categories of descriptive statistics of the Jordan and Phillips neighborhoods in comparison to the city of Minneapolis). To provide context, below are the descriptive characteristics of the Jordan and Phillips West neighborhoods in comparison to overall Minneapolis characteristics to represent the similar and shared characteristics of neighborhoods affected by sex offender concentration in Minneapolis:

- 55.7 percent of residents in the Jordan neighborhood and 57.9 percent of Phillips West residents identify as Black or African American in comparison to the 19.9 percent of all of Minneapolis' residents that identify as Black or African American (American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates 2008-2012).
- While only 29.6 percent of Minneapolis residents have a high school diploma or lower as their highest level of educational attainment (including those who did not complete high school), 59.7 percent of Jordan residents and 58.6 percent of Phillips West residents did not complete more than a high school education (American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates 2008-2012).

- 51.6 percent of Jordan neighborhood residents and 75.9 percent of Phillips West residents had incomes under \$35,000 in 2012 in comparison to 37.7 percent of Minneapolis residents. (American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates 2008-2012).
- In 2012, the unemployment rate for the city of Minneapolis was 9.5 percent, significantly lower than the 30.8 percent in Jordan and 23.7 percent unemployment rate in Phillips West (American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates 2008-2012).

Methodology

For the purpose of this capstone project and per the request of ART, the methodological approach utilized for assessing the social, economic, and public safety community impacts of sex offender concentration is largely qualitative. The primary forms of data collection included a literature review and stakeholder interviews. Although this research approach is primarily qualitative, there was some quantitative data collection and analysis utilized to substantiate and supplement some of the research carried out by the ART in the first phase of research.

Data Collection

Literature Review

In order to understand the policies and context of sex offender concentration, we first reviewed the research products and methodology provided to us. This provided us with background information on the work that had already been conducted, had not yet been completed or found, and has yet to be done to appropriately carry out this research phase. The research products included data on the number of sex offenders living in Minnesota and Hennepin County, previous reports and research conducted in Minnesota about the state of affairs regarding sex offender concentration, state and county documents outlining the policies and procedures related to sex offender re-entry into the community, as well as information related to the ground rules and ways in which the ART conducts themselves as a research group.

In addition to the thorough overview of provided materials and information, we conducted a scan of the academic peer reviewed publications and local level reports on causes and consequences of sex offender concentration in order to help narrow the scope of our research question. After completing an initial scan of the existing literature and local reports, we began

the process of problem definition in order to further clarify our research question(s). Our problem definition process included a reconciliation of the language used by ART to describe the issue of sex offender concentration with the language used by academic peer reviewed publications and local level reports.

We listed the similarities and differences in terminology and understanding of the problem and categorized the possible impacts sex offender concentration has on a community. With this process, we developed a problem statement from which we would work to investigate- that is, to test our research question against what is already known. From here, we conducted a review of the academic peer review articles more closely to discover the argued social, economic, public safety, and social service effects on a community with sex offender concentration. A total of 42 articles were read as a part of this literature review.

Additionally, part of the literature review process included a media review, an investigation of the Minnesota specific news stories that covered sex offender concentration during the 2000-2013 time period. This time period was selected in order to fully capture the discourse and rhetoric that occurred during the time our collection of academic articles were published.

Stakeholder Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-Structured Interview was selected as a research method in order to gather qualitative information about the effects of sex offender concentration in Minneapolis, stakeholder involvement in work regarding sex offender concentration, and insights on social, economic, and public safety impacts of sex offender concentration. Before reaching out to

participants, we developed a list of potential questions to guide our conversations with stakeholders regarding their perceptions of:

- sex offender concentration.
- impacts on a community affected by concentration;
- locations where sex offender concentration occurs and what types of communities it affects;
- Who is most affected by sex offender concentration;
- What strategies (if any) should be pursued to mitigate concentration

Participant Selection

Participants interviewed met at least one of the following criteria in the screening process:

1. Active involvement with a policy initiative addressing sex offender concentration
2. Works directly with sex offenders (both civilly and uncivilly committed)
3. Is an organizational leader working in communities with disproportionate sex offender concentration

Data Analysis

Literature Review Findings Analysis

Notes were recorded of the following aspects of each article used in the literature review:

- Article title and citation
- Impact Category or Categories (i.e. social, economic, public safety)
- Hypothesis or Research Purpose
- Key Words
- Findings

News media resources were reviewed in the following manner:

- Article/story title and citation
- Community Impact Category or Categories
- Main Argument
- Key Words

Semi-Structured Interview Findings Analysis

Interviews were transcribed and organized by level of impact: social, economic, public safety, and social service. Additionally, analysis was conducted by doing the following.

- Identifying key Words
- Identifying main arguments
- Identifying suggested strategies for action
- Noting agreement and disagreement with Literature Review findings

Literature Review

In Minnesota, convicted sex offenders are charged based on five different categories of criminal sexual conduct (CSC) ranging from the first degree to fifth degree. First degree CSC denotes the most severe charges of sexual offense and the harshest legal penalties while the fifth degree indicates the least severe charges and the lowest amount of penalties (See Appendix C).

Convicted offenders who fall under any of the five degrees of CSC are required by law to undergo a predatory offender assessment toward the end of their prison sentence. Involvement in a few other illegal sexual acts, including indecent exposure and offensive phone calls, also subject the offender to assessment. The court orders the offender's participation in a treatment program if the assessment deems it necessary (Diebel, 2012).

The Minnesota Sex Offender Program (MSOP), administered by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), provides two programs located in Moose Lake and St. Peter that serve civilly committed offenders. The courts, as authorized by the Minnesota Commitment and Treatment Act, determine civil commitment by assessing whether offenders are deemed mentally unstable and pose a danger to either themselves or others, after they have completed their prison sentences. These offenders are often sent from the Minnesota Department of Corrections and are required to participate in MSOP for an indefinite amount of time. In the Moose Lake program there are 691 sex offenders currently participating in MSOP. The court decides when an offender is ready for discharge from these two programs.

Risk assessment and community notification

The 1996 Community Notification Act requires and authorizes the Minnesota Department of Corrections (MDC) to administer the risk assessment of soon to be released sex offenders. The Department's End-of-Confinement Review Committee (ECRC) is charged with determining the risk level of sex offenders 90 days before their release from a Minnesota state prison, based on their likelihood of recidivism and the threat they pose to their communities. This committee is located in each of Minnesota's state prisons and treatment facility. Additionally, there is one ECRC located at MDC that specifically works with federally charged and/or out-of state offenders. Offenders who served their sentence in another state or federal prison and are expected to relocate to Minnesota (with or without supervision) must also be assigned a risk level (Minnesota Department of Corrections, 2010). However, Juveniles and offenders sentenced to probation are not required under law to have an assigned risk level (Diebel, 2012). There are three risk levels assigned to offenders:

Level 1: Least likely to reoffend

Level 2: Moderately likely to reoffend

Level 3: Highly likely to reoffend

Sex offenders serve their last third of their prison sentence time outside of confinement. They are placed on supervised release or probation and are provided shelter in transitional or halfway houses. The Hennepin County Department of Corrections is responsible for providing supervision and monitoring for these sex offenders during this time. Once they have finished their prison sentence, sex offenders are free to choose where they reside (Nobles County Government Center, n.d.)

The 1999 Predatory Offender Registration Law requires convicted offenders who are charged with criminal sexual conduct of any degree at the state or federal level (or in any other state) to register in Minnesota if they intend to reside in the state. The court is responsible for notifying the offenders of the need to register.

The Hennepin County Department of Corrections is responsible for the community notification process in Minneapolis. Under law, information on level 1 offenders is only provided to the victims, witnesses, law enforcement agencies and prosecutors. For level 2 offenders, information may also be provided to organizations that harbor at-risk populations such as schools and daycare facilities. Public notification is mandatory by law enforcement agencies for level 3 offenders prior to prison release. In Minnesota, this often involves holding a neighborhood notification meeting without the presence of the offender (Minnesota Department of Corrections, 2012).

Understanding the Issue of Sex Offender Concentration

Sex Offender Concentration is not Universally Defined

One key aspect of understanding the concentration of sex offenders and its impacts is defining what concentration really means. “Concentration” can be best described by looking at the language and definitions used in the various policies and research studies that discuss the grouping of sex offenders within a particular area. The literature on this unfortunately does not apply a uniform definition of concentration.

Tewksbury and Mustaine (2008) explicitly define “a high concentration of registered sex offenders” as a census tract with 10 or more sex offenders. This definition is discrete in

comparison to other measures of concentration. For example, Socia and Stamatel (2011) use the terms “high concentration,” “concentration”, and “large concentration” throughout their article. However, the authors never prescribe specifics of what constitutes the concentration they describe. Additionally, Socia and Stamatel (2011) report data on the number of registered sex offenders per 10,000 neighborhood residents controlled for populations in each neighborhood. These data are reported visually on a map displaying the density of different neighborhoods on a scale of 0 offenders, 0-10 offenders, 10-20 offenders, 20-30 offenders and 30 or greater offenders. Displaying concentration in this way provides a good frame of reference for how neighborhoods experience concentration relative to surrounding areas, but does not provide a clear definition of concentration.

Another variation on the term concentration is the use of the phrase “clustering” in various spatial analysis and spatial equity studies. Socia and Stamatel (2011) use clusters to refer to neighborhoods that are adjacent to one another. Their research indicates that the concentration of sex offenders in one neighborhood is correlated with the concentration in neighborhoods, that is, concentration of sex offenders occurs in “clusters” of neighborhoods. This is similar to the stance of Grubestic and Murray (2008) who in their research of *Sex Offender Residency and Spatial Equity*, reference “clustering” as the byproduct of legislation that pushes sex offenders into areas outside of restricted zones. In addition to clustering, these authors also use terms such as “spatial distribution”, “spatial concentration”, and “concentration” to describe the ratio of sex offenders to a specific population. Grubestic and Murray (2008) use spatial distribution when specifically discussing exposure of convicted sex offenders and of sex offender residences in general. Spatial concentration is used when describing the number of offenders within a

residential area and concentration is used similarly, as a short form of the full phrase spatial concentration.

In his solo research of *Sex Offender Clusters (2009)*, Grubestic prefaces his findings on sex offender “clusters” by stating, “Interestingly, while there are no generally accepted guidelines or municipal benchmarks for defining exactly what constitutes an offender cluster-subjective observation, and more generally, public perception appear to be the major inputs for cluster identification and related legislation” (p. 1). This declaration highlights that there is no established, universal definition of clusters and synonymously concentration, but also emphasizes the subjectivity in determining levels of concentration/clustering.

Academic peer reviewed published research is not the only place we find discussions of concentration/clustering of sex offenders. This language has also been adopted by local news media. Minnesota Public Radio featured a news article on their website in 2004 using the same language as the academic articles. Just as in many of the academic research articles, neither concentration nor cluster is clearly defined.

Given the lack of one universal definition for concentration of sex offenders, this paper uses the term concentration to refer to the density of sex offenders in an area relative to the population of that area. The boundaries or size of the area exist at the block group (a group of blocks), census tract, neighborhood, city, county levels.

Determinants of Sex Offender Location/Concentration: Policy, Personal Agency, Resources, and Affordable and Accessible Housing Availability

There are various policies across the nation enacted at the state and local levels that impact where a sex offender is able to reside. The most common policy can be described as residency restriction. Residency restriction policies range from restrictions on distances sex offenders can live from schools, child-care facilities, areas where children congregate, parks, and other places with vulnerable groups. Other policies place residency requirements on how far a sex offender can live from accessible facilities where they must check-in and/or be supervised. These types of policies most often apply to a certain type of offender, level 3.

Within the city of Minneapolis, the determination of any residency restrictions at the time of release from confinement into the community is done on a case-by-case basis by the local supervising agencies. These agencies are not legally able to “place” sex offenders who have finished their prison sentences and are no longer on probation in any particular area or prohibit them from living where they please. Thus, sex offenders choose their place of residence based on varying factors including, access to treatment and social service options, employment opportunities, transportation, the availability of support systems (family, friends, etc...) and most importantly, the availability of accessible and affordable housing options. These resources are imperative to their successful reentry into the community.

The Suresh, Mustaine, Tewksbury and Higgins (2010) study examining the concentration of sex offenders in Chicago revealed that the availability of housing is a major factor that determines where sex offenders chose to live. In search of available options, sex offenders tend to migrate to neighborhoods that exhibit higher levels of poverty, unemployment and other disparities. The authors echo an argument of several studies that assert a direct relationship between compounding disadvantages and social disorganization in these neighborhoods, leading to greater levels of registered sex offender concentration.

The literature highlights the role residency restrictions (of any type) play on the availability of housing. Grubestic and Murray (2011) specifically state that areas with local level residency restriction policies limit housing availability for sex offenders (p. 8) because large areas of potential housing in communities become off limits. According to Levenson and Cotter (2005a), sex offenders face difficulty finding housing outside of restricted areas in addition to finding housing that is affordable and outside of restricted areas.

A report by the Minnesota Department of Corrections (2003) indicates that when residence restrictions create a shortage of housing options for sex offenders, they are pushed out of metropolitan areas into rural areas where they become isolated and have unsuccessful re-entry. This is part of the reason residency restrictions at the state level were not implemented in Minnesota. In addition to housing availability, sex offenders returning to society must consider employment opportunities and familial/friend support when choosing where to reside. Since offenders are re-entering society from being incarcerated, they tend to have minimal connections to the outside world, thus finding employment and affordable housing becomes difficult (Levenson, 2008).

Though there are researchers who have argued the connection between residence restriction policies and sex offenders' location, Socia and Stamatel (2011) did not find a causal relationship in their study of neighborhood characteristics and social control over sex offenders. These authors attribute this to not accounting for land use outside of restricted areas and housing affordability.

The last important factor sex offenders must consider when choosing where to live is how well they can blend or fit into a community. As further described in the upcoming section on communities with high sex offender concentration, offenders tend to gravitate towards

neighborhoods where they can blend into the community or go un-noticed. These neighborhoods exhibit less social control over their communities, thus making them a desirable location for sex offenders to reside (Socia & Stamatel 2011).

Communities with Disproportionate Sex Offender Concentration

Many of the studies addressing sex offender concentration apply social disorganization theory to determine why sex offenders reside in certain types of neighborhoods. This theory, developed by Shaw and McKay (1942), asserts that both formal and informal methods of social control are necessary to prevent crime. A greater emphasis is placed on informal methods illustrated by social networks. The stronger the relationships between residents in a neighborhood, the more able people are to prevent crimes from occurring. The assumption is that a greater level socialization and accountability through the development of strong social networks increases social control over outcomes within a neighborhood (Socia & Stamatel, 2012).

Several studies argue that sex offenders tend to concentrate in neighborhoods that are socioeconomically disadvantaged and have a lower sense of collective efficacy resulting in less control and monitoring (Socia & Stamatel 2011; Tewksbury & Mustaine 2006). This lack of strong social control also impacts the ability of residents in these neighborhoods to protect vulnerable individuals. Other important characteristics of neighborhoods that have disproportionate concentrations of registered sex offenders include higher unemployment and poverty rates, low level of home ownership, relatively lower education outcomes, and lower house values (Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2006).

The Tewksbury and Mustaine (2009) analysis of registered sex offender concentration data in Orange County, Florida revealed that these offenders are more likely to live in communities suffering compounding disadvantages including low socioeconomic standing and higher crime rates. Two key reasons for this type of concentration in disadvantaged neighborhoods is residency restrictions and other forms of social control as well as a lack of available affordable housing for sex offenders in economically well off communities. Most researchers who study this topic have the same findings.

Additionally, Hughes and Kadleck (2008) argue that wealthy neighborhoods are better socially organized which enables them to assert greater control over sex offender residence in their communities. On the other hand, economically disadvantaged neighborhoods are less likely to be as socially organized and therefore lack the same capacity to mobilize against concentration. A lack of social efficacy and a feelings of powerlessness discourage residents in these neighborhoods from actively fighting against the arrival of more sex offenders through civic engagement and/or other processes.

Public Safety Impacts of Concentration

The vast literature on recidivism reveals a low rate of re-offense by registered level 3 sex offenders once released from prison. In a 2004 study conducted by the Colorado Department of Public Safety Division of Criminal Justice, the state's "high-risk" sex offenders were much less likely to commit both criminal and probation violations when placed in shared living situations compared to when living on their own. Those who were homeless or living in shelters were the most likely to commit a criminal violation. This study emphasizes the impact of a sex offender's

living situation on the likelihood and any type of re-offense (Matt R. Nobles, Jill S. Levenson & Tasha J. Youstin, 2012).

The Minnesota Department of Corrections' 2003 report to the legislature on level 3 sex offender placement issues argues that recidivism decreases as a result of these sex offenders living with one another. It asserts that Hennepin and Ramsey County can more easily supervise those living together because a supervising agent is able to visit two or more offenders at the same time if they live in the same building. Additionally, sex offenders who live together are better able to keep one another accountable for adhering to their probationary requirements and prevent recidivism (Minnesota Department of Corrections, 2003).

While residency restrictions are assumed to be effective methods of preventing recidivism for level 3 sex offenders, the literature indicates the weakness of these policies as strategies for crime prevention (Kang, 2012). Cadue (2013) argues that these restrictions are based on false assumptions held by the public that all sex offenders are bound to recommit the same crime and that treatment is not effective.

The Minnesota Department of Corrections' (MDC) report to the state legislature in 2003 investigated the type, location and target of re-offense for 224 recidivists between the years of 1990-2002 to determine whether or not residency restrictions have any identifiable impacts. The report concluded that these policies had an extremely limited effect on these re-offenses. It also found no positive relationship between enacting a residency restriction and a decrease of recidivism rates. Conversely, it argues that these restrictions may actually encourage re-offense by making reentry difficult for sex offenders.

According to MDC, these policies have forced offenders to relocate to rural regions of the state where they have the least social networks, family or support. Forced migration out of metropolitan areas has reduced their access to work, education and options for treatment programs. Furthermore, it has made it increasingly difficult for county workers to monitor and provide supervision for these offenders due to distance (Minnesota Department of Corrections, 2003).

Songman Kang's (2012) study on the impact of sex offender residential restriction in North Carolina on the criminal behavior of sex offenders found no relationship between these policies and a decline in recidivism. In fact, these policies increased the likelihood of sex offenders committing a felony. In addition, he found that limiting residential options increases the likelihood of an offender moving into socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods. The Levenson and Cotter (2005) survey of sex offenders in Florida revealed the negative impact of housing restrictions, some of which include emotional and economic stress as well as social isolation. Additionally, Levenson's (2005) report to the Florida state legislature on residence restrictions supports the general argument found in the literature that these restrictions, although popular with the public, have very little to no positive impact on recidivism. It is also unclear how well these restrictions prevent sex offenders from committing other types of crimes.

Economic Impacts of Sex Offender Concentration

While there are not many studies that focus on the economic impacts of sex offender concentration in communities, there have been a few reports of the effects of concentration on property values and desirability of neighborhoods. These studies primarily focus on the relationship between property values and general crime, and additionally provide some insight

on property values and sex crimes. Linden and Rockoff (2008) emphasize that there is an inverse relationship between property values and local crime rates. Their findings suggest specifically “homes near sex offenders decline considerably following an offender’s arrival in the neighborhood” (p. 1104). The decline (estimated at about 12 percent) applies to homes that are directly adjacent to the residence of an offender. It is important to note that the researchers’ evidence applies only to homes located within one tenth of a mile of the offenders’ location (p. 1104).

A similar study conducted in Hillsborough County, Florida indicates that housing prices fall by 2.3 percent when a sex offender moves into a neighborhood (Pope 2008). This study also emphasizes that housing prices rebound as soon as the offender moved out of the neighborhood. An important aspect of this study is that there was not a full benefit-cost analysis of the notification law (Megan’s Law). Additionally, the findings in this study reflect the estimated impact on housing prices based on household (buyer) perception. Thus, the fear of crime is what contributes to the decline in housing prices/property value.

A part of having a strong economy in a community is dictated by the perception and desirability of the community for business and residency. The perception potential business owners have of a neighborhood affect decisions of where and when to start or expand business in that area. The literature on public perception does not specify that business owners have different perceptions of sex offender concentration from the general public, and therefore it can be assumed that economic development in terms of new and continued business is affected in a similar manner as property values, negatively.

Social Response to Sex Offender Concentration

It is well studied and documented that the general public is overwhelmingly supportive of legislation to restrict where sex offenders live in order to ensure the safety of children and the general public from any possible harm should the sex offender re-offend or commit any acts of crime, especially violent crime. This support from the general public comes from a place of fear and lack of knowledge about the actual rates of recidivism for sex offenders.

In *Public Perceptions about Sex Offenders and Community Protection Policies* (Levenson, Brannon, Fortney, & Baker, 2007), we are presented with confirmation of the hypothesis that the public holds inaccurate beliefs about sex offenders. More specifically, the authors found that “community members believe sex offenders have very high recidivism rates, view sex offenders as a homogenous group with regard to risk, and skeptical about the benefits of sex offender treatment” (p 137-138). This study of residents in Melbourne, Florida looked at perception in relation to sex offenders and also the community notification process, similar to research conducted in Wisconsin.

The U.S. Department of Justice National Institute of Justice assessed the impact of sex offender community notification in Wisconsin. While most of the findings revealed shortcomings of the notification process and issues relating to resources, the study also emphasized the need for greater awareness in the public about the purpose of notification and the general fear of being victimized (Zevitz & Farkas, 2000). The anxiety and frustration of community residents receiving notification of sex offenders moving into their communities is common and these fears cross boundaries into all types of neighborhoods in the country and therefore are relevant to the Minneapolis neighborhoods experience with sex offender concentration.

Stakeholder Interview Findings

Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Minneapolis Neighborhoods Experience

Disproportionate Sex Offender Concentration

All of the participants agree that concentration is found in only some Minneapolis neighborhoods which they described as disadvantaged, disenfranchised, low income, overwhelmed, vulnerable, and poverty stricken with a high level of minority residents. Additionally, interviewees named specific neighborhoods/areas in which concentration occurs including: North Minneapolis, the north side, Harrison, near North, Jordan, Hawthorn, Willard Hay, and Phillips.

The perception that sex offender concentration disproportionately occurs in disadvantaged neighborhoods is largely supported by research. Tewksbury and Mustaine (2006 & 2009) and Hughes and Kadleck (2008) argue that concentration occurs in areas with low socioeconomic standing/economic disadvantage, and higher crime rates. Suresh, Mustaine, Tewksbury, and Higgins (2010) similarly argue that offenders migrate to neighborhoods with higher levels of poverty, unemployment and other disparities.

All of the participants also agree that the greatest concentration is found in the neighborhoods within North Minneapolis, in particular, the Jordan and Harrison neighborhoods. The Phillips neighborhoods in South Minneapolis were also mentioned as having a fair amount of offenders. All of these areas are among the most economically disadvantaged communities in the Twin-Cities metro area. There are some key factors identified in the interviews that help explain why sex offenders tend to reside in these areas.

Housing

The participants identified affordable and accessible housing (including halfway and transitional houses) as one of the biggest determinants of where sex offenders choose to reside. The literature supports the argument that housing plays a major role, and in particular, the landlords who are willing to rent to offenders at a low price. In some cases, Minneapolis landlords in low-income neighborhoods have actively sought out sex offenders to rent their units by going as far as recruiting them from prison prior to their release. Additionally, word of mouth serves as a major method of transferring information among sex offenders regarding where affordable housing is available.

Services

The greater availability of social services, treatment centers and transportation in Minneapolis' inner city neighborhoods were also identified as important determinants of concentration. The high concentrations of sex offenders found in the Twin-Cities metro areas reflect the findings of various studies that reveal a positive relationship between sex offender concentration in particular regions within large cities and the level of available services in those areas (Suresh, Mustaine, Tewksbury & Higgins, 2010).

Support systems

The availability of support (i.e. friends, family, church, social service organizations) is very important to the re-entry of sex offenders after their release from prison. Access to support also reduces the likelihood of recidivism. Therefore, it is not surprising that both the literature and the interviews show that sex offenders are more likely to live in areas where they have a greater support system in place. In Minneapolis neighborhoods, this is one of the driving forces of concentration.

The interviews reveal that sex offenders are less likely to commit a felony or re-offend if they have adequate support. This support comes in many forms, and living in close proximity to (even in the same apartment building or halfway house) other sex offenders helps them keep each other accountable for complying with their probation requirements. Additionally, it enhances the ability of county probation officers to provide greater supervision.

Employment

Another determining factor is employment. Sex offenders have a difficult time acquiring jobs with their criminal record and lack of work experience. This is even more difficult in suburban areas where job opportunities are much more scarce than in the Twin-Cities metro region. Therefore, it is obvious why sex offenders would choose to reside in Minneapolis neighborhoods where they have greater access to employment.

The Perceived Community Impacts are Negative

Interviews with stakeholders regarding the issue of sex offender concentration in Minneapolis revealed a number of perceptions regarding its effects on communities. These perceived community impacts include public safety, economic, and social effects.

Sex Offender Presence and Concentration is a Threat to Public Safety

All of the interview participants voiced concern over the threat of sex offenders to the public's safety. For neighborhoods with high sex offender concentration, interviewees did not specifically call out sex offender recidivism as a concern, however some stakeholders described an issue of the possible unknown, unreported, or under-reported sexual offenses/ criminal activity that could be perpetrated by sex offenders. These interviewees were mainly referring to

the idea that there are possibly unmonitored offenders and/or un-convicted sexual predators residing in these same neighborhoods. While the literature reveals that re-offense for sex offenders is unlikely and recidivism rates are low (and therefore should not be a major public concern), stakeholders strongly suggested that residents of these neighborhoods, and the public in general, hold strong beliefs about the presence of a public safety concern.

Sex Offender Concentration Drives Down Property Values and Deters Potential Home Buyers

In addition to the public safety issues described, interview participants indicated that sex offender concentration negatively affects the economic outcomes of a community. The primary opinion of stakeholders is that a high concentration of sex offenders drives property values in the area down as a result of the negative perceptions the general public holds about living near a sex offender. Interview participants described neighborhoods with sex offenders, and especially multiple sex offenders, as undesirable communities in which to live. This undesirability was complemented with opinions that areas with low property values and sex offenders contribute to the disincentive of economic growth and development in the community such as new businesses. These perspectives are confirmed by research demonstrating property values decreased (sometimes for only a relatively short period of time) in areas where sex offenders recently moved. Studies by both Pope (2008) and Linden and Rockoff (2008) indicated that property values fell 2.3 and 12 percent in areas nearby sex offender residences. No data was found on property values specific to Minneapolis communities with sex offender presence.

Sex Offender Concentration Causes Fear and Anxiety among Residents

Also in line with the literature are the perceived social impacts of sex offender concentration on communities. Interview participants repeatedly described the negative social

impact of sex offender presence in a community. Residents of affected Minneapolis neighborhoods were described to live in fear, frustration, and anger. Interviewees also described these effects as psychological. These feelings of fear, frustration, and anger were described as a result of the abundance of offenders in their neighborhoods who could possibly victimize them or their children.

Some interview participants described that tension ran high among residents at community notification meetings and other planned conversations about sex offender placement towards government representatives. This sentiment rings true to the findings of studies that have theorized the reactions of community members with sex offender presence. The most compelling example of this is a study of a comparable Midwestern State's resident reaction conclusions. In the Zevitz and Farkas (2000) study, participants voiced fear of victimization and consequently anxiety and frustration with sex offender placement. These sentiments were expressed at community notification meetings, where residents also demonstrated mixed understanding of the purpose of these meetings. Additionally, Levenson, Brannon, Fortney, and Baker, 2007 argue that these feelings generally occur because the public holds inaccurate beliefs about sex offenders.

Disproportionate Sex Offender Concentration in Disadvantaged Minneapolis Neighborhoods is an Issue of Equity

There are stakeholders who argue that disproportionate sex offender concentration within socioeconomically disadvantaged and minority neighborhoods in Minneapolis should be viewed as a civil rights issue because the communities in which sex offenders tend to reside are subject to compounding disadvantages. Neighborhoods within North Minneapolis face some of

Minnesota's most pressing disparities including low income, high poverty and high crime rates as well as high unemployment. This area of Minneapolis has a reputation of being "unlivable" by those on the outside. Having a high sex offender population further erodes its reputation.

Residents of these disadvantaged neighborhoods as well as concerned policy makers feel that the government has "forgotten" these residents.

In March of 2013, The Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights sent a request to the city council committee to sign off on a resolution to prevent the disproportionate concentration of sex offenders in Minneapolis neighborhoods. Any person who feels they have been discriminated against may file a complaint with the Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights on the city's main website within one year of victimization. Residents with high concentrations of sex offenders in Minneapolis who feel unsafe and fearful for their wellbeing or suspect their property values are being negatively impacted are encouraged to file a complaint under discrimination.

Minneapolis Neighborhoods with Disproportionate Sex Offender Concentration Exhibit

Minimal Active Engagement

Our interviews reveal that residents of North Minneapolis, where the greatest sex offender concentration has been identified, have become accustomed to having a large number of level 3 sex offenders enter and live in their neighborhoods. This does not mean residents have become any more comfortable with this concentration over the passing years. Conversely, they have grown more concerned and angry with local government. However, their anger and frustration has translated into limited active mobilization and rallying around this issue in their area.

There have been several community notification meetings for level 3 sex offenders over the years, and apparently attendance at these meetings by residents has experienced a sharp decline. So sharp in fact, that Hennepin County now only holds these meetings if the neighborhood-based organizations in North Minneapolis feel it is necessary. This attendance issue was stressed in multiple interviews.

According to the stakeholders interviewed, residents no longer feel they have any power to reverse or prevent this high concentration. Therefore, there is very little (to no) active engagement on this issue within these neighborhoods. Neighborhood organizations say that the community is not rallying around this issue or attempting to force the county (or the landlords in the area renting out units to large amounts of sex offenders) to address the situation.

As one of the interviewees argues, *“If it were somewhere else, the community would get up in arms and drive them out.”* However, this low level of mobilization in North Minneapolis can be attributed in large part to the compounding disadvantages that prevent the community from addressing neighborhood issues. Residents simply do not have the luxury of time or energy to actively participate in solving this community-wide issue. As another interviewee put it, *“people in the north side are having trouble making ends meet-they don’t have the time to spend on these types of issues.”* The assumption held by many in these neighborhoods that resident voices will not be heard and that their engagement will do little to impact change has prevented a more active response to sex offender concentration led by the residents themselves. This sense of powerlessness and victimization continues to be prevalent in these communities.

Disadvantaged Communities Have Very Little Influence on Sex Offender Policies

All of our interviewees agree that the communities most affected by high sex-offender concentration have arguably the least amount of influence on the issue. More generally, the average citizen in Minnesota as well as the counties have no control over where sex offenders reside once they are “off-paper.” In other words, once they are off probation, sex offenders are legally able to live in any community they please. When it comes to sex offenders on probation, particularly level 3 offenders, residents still have little control. The only level of influence they can exert is through their elected officials. More economically well off communities in suburban areas of Minnesota have been better able to utilize this method to exercise their influence on this issue. For instance, Cambridge Minnesota residents were able to resist plans by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to place 6 low functioning civilly committed sex offenders into a state owned facility in their community. They quickly mobilized to put pressure on their local state representative and DHS to prevent the state’s plans from moving forward (Star Tribune, 2013).

Elected officials admit that economically disadvantaged communities in the inner city neighborhoods of Minneapolis exhibit weak social networks and limited awareness of community-wide issues that hinder quick and effective mobilization. However, a few of the interview participants point to the historical disenfranchisement, the lack of policy attention, and institutional barriers that have served to limit the accessibility of information and pathways necessary for involvement for these neighborhoods. They argue that policy makers must take some accountability for the disengagement and low sense of self-efficacy these residents exhibit. Doing so requires that the silenced voices within these disadvantaged neighborhoods are better represented in the policy arena and at the decision making table so that the disparities in influence are lessened.

Local Policy Efforts to Address Sex Offender Concentration are Ongoing

The majority of the interview participants agree that the state government, county law enforcement agencies and policy makers hold the greatest responsibility (as well as the greatest influence) in addressing concentration. The government has a responsibility and an obligation (by law) to mitigate concentration. It must be accountable. The different stakeholders involved propose varying methods for how this can and should be done.

There have been a variety of efforts at the policy, county and city level to mitigate concentration. Bills have been proposed at the state legislature over the years that advocate for greater residency restrictions. These restrictions are not as popular a method in Minnesota as they are in other states. However, Representative Joe Mullary was instrumental in the passing of a bill, which includes language requiring the probation officer assigned to a sex offender's case to attempt as much as possible to mitigate concentration (Minn. Stat. § 244.052, subd. 4a.). His effort has moved to increase the amount of affordable housing available to sex offenders in the state. For now, the goal is to get both state and counties in Minnesota to purchase housing that is dispersed around Hennepin County and around the state to mitigate sex offender concentration in a few neighborhoods.

In 2013, Hennepin County declared to the Department of Corrections that it would no longer accept sex offenders in the North Minneapolis zip codes. Currently, newly released level 3 sex offenders are no longer able to reside in North Minneapolis. Also in 2013, Don Samuels wrote a resolution in city council that came out of the ongoing communication with community residents to get policy makers to begin thinking about sex offender concentration in disenfranchised minority Minneapolis neighborhoods as a civil rights issue needing immediate attention.

When asked what policy initiatives need to be pursued in the future to mitigate concentration, the interviewees agree that the most important issue that needs addressing is the availability of affordable housing. They argue that the government needs to lead the effort in increasing the amount of choices sex offenders have in where they can find housing to prevent homelessness and reduce the likelihood of recidivism. Furthermore, they argue for the increase of treatment centers in regions other than Hennepin and Ramsey County in addition to better assistance with job search as unemployment leads to negative outcomes for sex offenders.

Implications

While it is important to gather and understand the quantitative data on sex offender concentration, understanding sex offender concentration in the context of disadvantaged communities is equally important. Research shows there are negative social and economic impacts on any community with high sex offender concentration, however the impacts on communities like those in North Minneapolis are met with a number of other negative factors impacting their community such as unemployment, poverty, crime, and more. These factors in combination amplify the need for strategic, meaningful actions when it comes to addressing sex offender concentration.

Understanding the Community Context is Imperative

The communities affected by sex offender concentration share similar demographic and economic features which highlight some conclusions that are important to consider when determining future research and action items on the issue of sex offender concentration. Historical disenfranchisement has led these communities to be passive and disengaged from issues that directly impact their neighborhoods. Compounding disadvantages and layers of disparities limit the influence and power these residents have on issues that directly impact them. People of color are disproportionately impacted by these disparities in Minnesota, a state with some of the highest levels of disparities when it comes to education, employment, incarceration and health.

This Issue Raises Equity Concerns

The discussion of sex offender concentration as a civil rights violation frame this issue as one that adds an additional layer of burden on disadvantaged and disenfranchised communities in

Minneapolis that are already struggling to cope with compounding disparities. It is clear, that in the context of North Minneapolis and the Phillips neighborhood in South Minneapolis, the issue of sex offender concentration cannot be detached from the other socioeconomic issues prevalent in these areas. It is the contextual situation of these neighborhoods (including high poverty, crime and low income housing) that have helped to attract the high concentration of sex offenders.

The disproportionate sex offender concentration in North Minneapolis and similar neighborhoods clearly raises an equity concern. There is an unequal distribution of sex offenders residing in their neighborhoods and therefore residents are disproportionately exposed to any risks and impacts associated with sex offender presence in a community. Additionally, these residents are forced to deal with a disproportionate number of burdens caused by multiple layers of disparities that serve as barriers to active participation in any public policy discourse, including actions around sex offender concentration.

This equity issue emphasizes the fact that these communities are less likely to be aware of the “access points” for involvement. In other words, they don’t know who they need to contact (their representatives, community leaders, etc...) and who holds what power/level of influence around the issue. In more well off communities like Cambridge, Minnesota, the community was able to organize quickly and push their area representatives to take the issue to government. Thus, these disadvantaged communities are not only less socially organized than wealthier communities in Minnesota, they also lack the level of social capital, political influence, and necessary social networks to quickly organized/rally and have their voices be heard.

Affected Minneapolis Neighborhoods Lack Active Engagement and Influence

“Those in disenfranchised communities, low income, children & women, are overwhelmed by the plethora and variety of social ills and are pre-occupied by the basic needs in life.”

-Interview participant

According to the interview participants, socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods in Minneapolis with the largest sex offender concentration are not effectively being engaged by local government to address this issue at the policy level. They do not “own” the problem. Instead, residents are being led rather than co-leading the effort. The observed lack of active mobilization in these neighborhoods around this issue raises many questions. Why are these residents, who very obviously feel it is negatively impacting their community, not organized in masses to attempt policy change? Why are they no longer attending community notification meetings if they fear their public safety is at an even higher risk with such a concentration?

While observers may be led to assume that these residents just don’t care or have become accustomed to the high level of sex offender concentration in their neighborhoods, this assumption is false. It is evident there continues to be a lot of anger and frustration in these neighborhoods regarding the placement of registered sex offenders. Several local news outlets including Minnesota Public Radio, the Star Tribune and Daily Planet have been reporting on the negative social response to this concentration for years. However, in comparison to more wealthy and suburban communities, these inner-city neighborhoods in Minneapolis have not engaged in a significant enough protest as to get immediate attention from policy-makers. This is in large part due to the historical disenfranchisement and the layers of disparities that exist within these communities.

Minneapolis neighborhoods with high proportions of minority residents often face the highest unemployment rates, the lowest home ownership rates, as well as the worst educational outcomes. The neighborhoods with the highest sex offender concentration in Minneapolis are no exception. Consistent with the literature on this topic, the socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods in Minneapolis have served as a popular destination for sex offenders seeking affordable housing and other resources. The North Minneapolis area in particular exhibits some of the worst social conditions in the state. The prevalence of high crime and an enormous amount of housing foreclosures has deemed this area as “undesirable” and “unlivable” by many outside of the north side residents.

The interview findings also show that the different layers of disadvantage and past negative experiences with local leaders who have ignored the plight of these neighborhoods has encouraged passivity on these type of community-wide issues. Residents are often too busy dealing with the daily-life struggle to make ends meet and keep their children safe from gang violence as well as other type of crime to mobilize around an issue over which they feel they have little control. This response is not without warrant. Historically, the local county government has not effectively brought these residents’ voice to the decision-making table by actively soliciting their input. Additionally, the access points for involvement are not effectively being communicated to these communities.

Consistent with the literature on social disorganization theory, socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods in Minneapolis exhibit weak social networks and therefore are not able to force their issues onto the agenda in local government successfully. It took the City of Minneapolis many years to finally push for and pass a resolution on this issue. It took Hennepin County just as long to ban any more level 3 sex offenders from residing in North Minneapolis.

The reality is that, even with the City resolution and the ban on any new sex offenders from living in North Minneapolis, these communities are still impacted by the already existing concentration in their neighborhoods.

Since the presence of sex offenders in a community is such a contentious issue, there is a fine line between creating awareness by educating and informing the public that may be affected and instilling fear and uncertainty in the public. As evidenced in the stakeholder interviews, documentation of previous community conversations and notification meetings regarding sex offenders in Minneapolis and throughout Minnesota, and the literature on public perception, the average resident's initial response is for their community and personal safety. This type response can be described as a defense against the unknown and their own presumptions of negative outcomes as a result of sex offender presence. Research demonstrates that this response is common and expected. This should be taken into consideration when approaching and informing any member of the public about sex offenders and the reality of the risks and impacts they bring to a community.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

ART would benefit from building upon and modifying past efforts led by the Minneapolis Civil Rights Department and local leaders to educate policy makers on sex offender concentration patterns in Minneapolis. This can be done through the dispersal of informational pamphlets, research reports, or stakeholder meetings. Providing these actors with factual data on the proven risks that sex offenders pose to the communities in which they reside will help displace falsely held assumptions about their level of threat and recidivism. These false assumptions have led to policies that restrict the availability of accessible and affordable housing where sex offenders are able to live. As various studies argue, restrictive policies on housing and residency encourage the concentration of sex offenders in disadvantaged neighborhoods where affordable housing may be more accessible but are low quality.

Recommendation 2:

Local government officials and leaders should actively solicit the input of affected neighborhoods and encourage their active engagement in problem solving. This requires that their voices are adequately represented at the discussion table and in the policy arena.

Strategy 1

Conduct a survey of residents living with the highest concentration of sex offenders. This can include Jordan, Harrison and Phillips and any other affected neighborhoods in Minneapolis. This survey should seek to measure 1) the perception residents have of sex offenders including the rate of recidivism and the physical danger they pose on the community, 2) the level of engagement residents have on this issue, 3) the level of social efficacy residents feel (their ability

to affect change through their involvement on this issue), 4) residents' level of knowledge regarding the political actors (including their elected officials) that the community can contact to voice concern on issues, and 5) resident's perception of the most pressing issues impacting their communities (ranking gang violence, poverty, unemployment, housing, etc...)

Strategy 2

Actively recruit community based leaders from neighborhood organizations operating within communities most affected by sex-offender concentration to join ART and contribute their expertise. Through their involvement, ART will be better able to utilize the lived experiences and knowledge of residents to gain a comprehensive understanding of how sex offender concentration affects their day-to-day life. Such knowledge will strengthen ART's research moving forward and guide its actions. The City of Minneapolis' Neighborhood and Community Relations Department should play a role in soliciting community input and bringing residents' voice to the discussion table. Further, do not hold any more community-wide meetings regarding this issue until the county/city is prepared to not only listen but also take action on the concerns presented.

Recommendation 3:

A Multi-level implementation analysis of MN Statute 244.052 is needed to avoid further policy changes: analyze what's going wrong in the implementation process that has resulted in concentration and focus change efforts there. "Policy and program implementation reflect policy and program content" (Sandfort, nd). Policy implementation occurs in a complex, multi-level system comprised of actions at the policy field, organizational, service provider, and front-line levels. In this sense, the language in Minnesota Statute 244.052 specifically outlines that,

“When an offender assigned to risk level III is released from confinement or a residential facility to reside in the community or changes residence while on supervised or conditional release, the agency responsible for the offender's supervision shall take into consideration the proximity of the offender's residence to that of other level III offenders and proximity to schools and, to the greatest extent feasible, shall mitigate the concentration of level III offenders and concentration of level III offenders near schools.”

As evidenced by the concentration in north side Minneapolis, somewhere in the implementation process things went wrong. This analysis should result in a report that unveils successes and weaknesses in the policy implementation process at different levels within the process and provides recommendations for modifying or re-designing the implementation, without modifying the statute itself (or making other policy changes). This is necessary for maintaining government and agency accountability around the mitigation of sex offender concentration.

Recommendation 4:

Avoid legislation advocating sex offender residency restrictions in Minneapolis. While this has been the policy response of other cities dealing with the issue of sex offender concentration, research shows that residency restrictions contribute to concentration. Additionally, this type of action cannot adequately address the fact that there are already neighborhoods with a concentration of sex offenders. While residency restrictions may limit additional offenders from moving to the area, communities with sex offender concentration will continue to deal with the effects that are already there.

Recommendation 5:

Collaborating with local policy makers and County agencies on existing initiatives to increase the availability of accessible and affordable housing for sex offenders in Minnesota would help to make a large impact on this issue. Housing is one of the most important determinants of sex offender's choice of residence as well as concentration. Therefore, helping to enhance housing options in not just Hennepin County but all over the state will mitigate further concentration in a few neighborhoods and regions of the Twin Cities area. Representative Joe Mullary has been working to push for greater government involvement on this issue and the Minnesota Department of Corrections has been considering the expansion of housing options as well. Joining and strengthening these efforts through its professional networks and ongoing research will make a long-term impact on the issue of sex offender concentration.

Conclusion

Addressing sex offender concentration is not an easy task. The complexity, high stakes and contentious nature of this issue make it a challenge for policy makers and leaders seeking to respond to community concerns. As Minnesota continues to grapple with how best to mitigate high concentration in Minneapolis neighborhoods, this effort should be approached with care as various stakeholders with differing perceptions, interests, points of view and levels of expertise advocate conflicting strategies from policy to community organizing.

Disproportionate concentration should be dealt with in an equitable manner that takes into account the context in which communities, particularly those that are socioeconomically disadvantaged and experiencing compounding disparities, experience its impacts. This also means that these communities should be given a voice at the discussion and decision making table. It is equally important to be mindful of the barriers to successful re-entry that many sex offenders continue to face including limited housing and employment options when considering policy options and other strategies.

ART has an opportunity to play an important leadership role in this effort by offering much-needed expertise and advocacy for solutions that are directly supported by its research. It is the hope of this second phase of research, which has focused on the specific impacts of sex offender concentration, to provide ART a direction for its next steps through the recommendations provided. It presents a situational analysis of the challenges disadvantaged communities face, identifies the major determinants of sex offender concentration, presents the main concerns of local stakeholders and assesses the effectiveness of differing policies that seek to address it. With this information, ART can now narrow its unit of analysis to specific

neighborhoods in Minneapolis and collect front-line data in order to better understand how residents are directly impacted.

Through expanded data collection, engagement of key stakeholders, and assessment of statewide as well as county-level policies designed to lessen the impact of high concentration, ART can assist in responding to the concerned voices of Minneapolis neighborhoods still waiting for a long-term solution.

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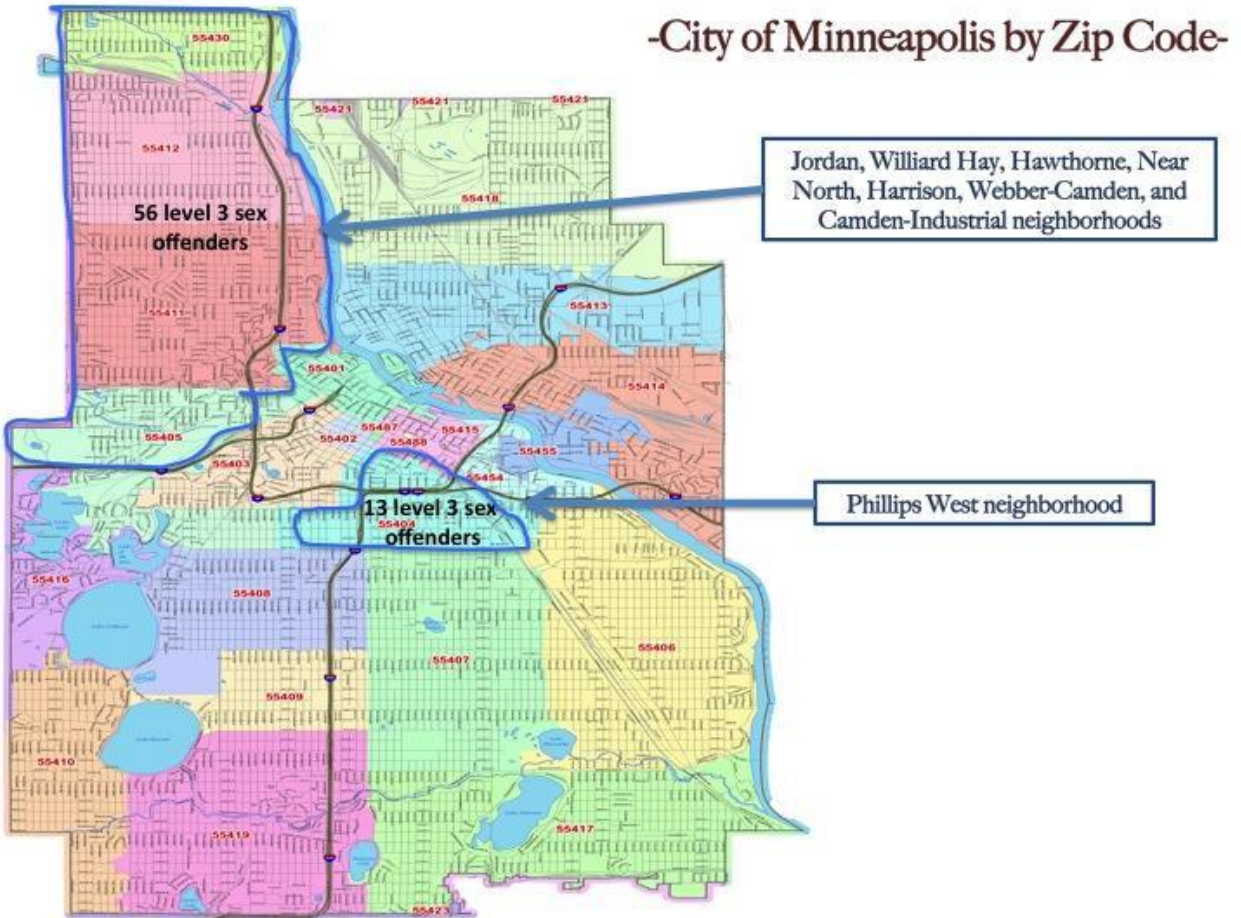
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Appendix A: Map of Minneapolis by Zip code



Source: City of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development

Appendix B: Neighborhood Level Characteristics

| Race and Ethnicity (alone or in combination with one or more other races) 2012 | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
| | Jordan Neighborhood | | Phillips West Neighborhood | | Minneapolis | |
| Total Population | 7,689 | | 4994 | | 385,023 | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| White | 1798 | 23.4 | 1850 | 37.0 | 276,501 | 71.8 |
| Black or African American | 4280 | 55.7 | 2892 | 57.9 | 76,653 | 19.9 |
| American Indian and Alaska Native | 435 | 5.7 | 95 | 1.9 | 11,466 | 3.0 |
| Asian | 1540 | 20.0 | 132 | 2.6 | 24,268 | 6.3 |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander | 40 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | 539 | 0.1 |
| Some other race | 431 | 5.6 | 206 | 4.1 | 12,530 | 3.3 |
| Hispanic or Latino (any race) | 608 | 7.9 | 819 | 16.4 | 38,156 | 9.9 |

| Educational Attainment (population 25 and older) 2012 | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
| | Jordan Neighborhood | | Phillips West Neighborhood | | Minneapolis | |
| Population | 4,008 | | 3,111 | | 251,656 | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Less than 9th Grade | 392 | 9.8 | 734 | 23.6 | 14,085 | 5.6 |
| 9th-12th No Diploma | 574 | 14.3 | 326 | 10.5 | 16,192 | 6.4 |
| High School | 1,425 | 35.6 | 762 | 24.5 | 44,140 | 17.5 |
| Some College | 956 | 23.9 | 454 | 14.6 | 46,686 | 18.6 |
| Associate Degree | 181 | 4.5 | 233 | 7.5 | 16,157 | 6.4 |
| Bachelor Degree | 378 | 9.4 | 442 | 14.2 | 71,488 | 28.4 |
| Graduate/Professional | 112 | 2.8 | 160 | 5.1 | 42,908 | 17.1 |
| High School or below | 2,391 | 59.7 | 1,822 | 58.6 | 74,417 | 29.6 |

Employment Status in Civilian Labor Force (16 years and over population) 2012

| | Jordan Neighborhood | | Phillips West Neighborhood | | Minneapolis | |
|---|---------------------|-------------|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Population In Civilian Labor Force | 3374 | 64.5 | 2056 | 55.6% | 231,216 | 73.4 |
| Employed | 2334 | 69.2 | 1568 | 76.3 | 209,346 | 90.5 |
| Unemployed | 1040 | 30.8 | 488 | 23.7 | 21,870 | 9.5% |

Household Income and Benefits in the last 12 Months 2012

| | Jordan Neighborhood | | Phillips West Neighborhood | | Minneapolis | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Total Households | 2082 | | 2103 | | 166,193 | |
| Less than \$10,000 | 279 | 13.4 | 580 | 27.6 | 18,475 | 11.1 |
| \$10,000-\$14,999 | 158 | 7.6 | 392 | 18.6 | 9,661 | 5.8 |
| \$15,000-\$24,999 | 233 | 11.2 | 251 | 11.9 | 17,723 | 10.7 |
| \$25,000-\$34,999 | 404 | 19.4 | 373 | 17.7 | 16,727 | 10.1 |
| Income under \$34,999 | 1074 | 51.6 | 1596 | 75.9 | 62,586 | 37.7 |

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2008-2012

Appendix C: Sexual Criminal Conduct

| Name of crime | Type of activity | Maximum penalty provided by statute | Presumptive Sentencing Guidelines sentence (no criminal history) |
|--|---|--|---|
| 1 st degree criminal sexual conduct | Sexual penetration; certain sexual contact with victim under 13 years old | 30 years; \$40,000 fine | 144 months in prison; Statutory law presumes an executed sentence of 144 months for all violations |
| 2 nd degree criminal sexual conduct | Sexual contact | 25 years; \$35,000 fine | 90 months in prison; 36 months stayed sentence for "statutory rape."* Statutory law presumes an executed sentence of 90 months for crimes where the perpetrator uses or threatens to use force or violence, causes injury, uses a dangerous weapon, or creates significant fear on the part of the victim of imminent great bodily harm |
| 3 rd degree criminal sexual conduct | Sexual penetration | 15 years; \$30,000 fine | 48 months in prison; 36 months stayed sentence for "statutory rape"* |
| 4 th degree criminal sexual conduct | Sexual contact | 10 years; \$20,000 fine | 24 months stayed sentence; 18 months stayed sentence for "statutory rape"* |
| 5 th degree criminal sexual conduct | Sexual contact; certain lewd conduct | One year; \$3,000 fine (gross misdemeanor). Certain repeat violations punishable by 5 years; \$10,000 fine | 15 months stayed sentence; Sentencing guidelines do not apply to gross misdemeanor violations |

Source: Minnesota House of Representatives Research Department