

# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LANCASTER CRIME COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

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## Introduction

In 2000 Mayor Charlie Smithgall, with the endorsement of the Lancaster County Commissioners, created the Lancaster Crime Commission (LCC). The Crime Commission's charge was to develop recommendations that address the problem of crime in the city of Lancaster. The LCC was comprised of fourteen commissioners who were organized into four committees: Executive, Administrative, Resource Development and Finance. Crime Commission members also served on several other committees with persons from the community:

- Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice
- Housing and Real Estate
- Neighborhood, Community Policing and Community Relations
- Research

With the support of an executive director, a secretary and two staffers, these committees gathered information about the current efforts of social service organizations and government agencies to address crime and quality of life issues in Lancaster City. The Lancaster City Bureau of Police assigned an officer on a full time basis to assist the Commission. In its initial report, published in March 2001, the LCC adopted the "fixing broken windows" theory to support and guide the development of strategies to combat high rates of crime and disorder in Lancaster City. The "fixing broken windows" approach suggests that if communities attend to seemingly minor problems such as vandalism, noise, littering and graffiti, they will reduce more serious problems like robbery and assault. In consultation with George Kelling, one of the chief proponents of this theory, the LCC determined that this theory was applicable to Lancaster and made it the guiding principle for all its endeavors.

During the next two years, the LCC employed the "fixing broken windows" perspective in developing the following special projects: the Quality of Life Task Force, Operation Clean Sweep, the Faith Based Initiative, and the Police Reorganization Task Force. In 2002, because it was dissatisfied with the

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speed with which Crime Commission recommendations were being implemented, the LCC embarked on the “Crime Commission Strategic Initiative” program. Forty persons of diverse professional, cultural and economic backgrounds were assigned to four Strategic Initiative Task Forces. These task forces worked in concert with the LCC’s members and professional staff as well as with representatives of the Office of the District Attorney and the Lancaster City Bureaus of Fire and Police. They consulted with experts, community officials and criminal justice professionals and held public hearings to solicit the input of hundreds of persons, both public officials and private citizens. In 2003, relying heavily on the recommendations of the Strategic Initiative Task Forces, the LCC issued its *Final Report*. The report included approximately sixty-five specific recommendations designed to lower crime and improve the quality of life in Lancaster. A majority of the recommendations were directed to existing agencies/organizations. In addition, the LCC adopted seventeen resolutions that reaffirmed the recommendations made in earlier Crime Commission reports<sup>1</sup> and gave impetus to the development of four new organizations: the Public Safety Research Institute, the Lancaster Community Safety Coalition, the Lancaster Police Foundation and the East King Improvement District.

The LCC selected five major topic areas on which to focus its recommendations:

- The Quality of Life in Lancaster’s Neighborhoods
- Community Policing and Law Enforcement Organization
- Law Enforcement Response and Reaction
- Prosecution and Judicial System Relationship and Readiness
- Juvenile Justice

### ***The Quality of Life in Lancaster’s Neighborhoods***

With the theory of “fixing broken windows” as a guide, the LCC addressed the problem of the cumulative effects of minor irritants on quality of

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<sup>1</sup> All Lancaster Crime Commission reports are listed in Appendix B.

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life in Lancaster. The recommendations that addressed quality of life issues focused on nuisance crime reduction, improved code enforcement in public and private housing, changes in enforcement and supervision of Section 8 housing<sup>2</sup>, and improvement in social service coordination.

### ***Community Policing and Law Enforcement Organization***

In its *Final Report*, the Crime Commission recognized that the “linchpin” for executing the “fixing broken windows” strategy is community policing. All of the recommendations in this area focused on the improvement, implementation and expansion of the comprehensive plan for restructuring the Lancaster Bureau of Police developed by former Chief William Heim. The recommendations included acceleration of the adoption and implementation of the proposed plan, an increase in the number of police officers, expansion of the use of non-uniformed professional administrative staff members, the improved retention of police officers, the creation of a computerized internal crime tracking and accountability system, the development of an independent assessment system, and the creation of a formal, continuing police/community education and information system.

### ***Law Enforcement Response and Reaction***

The recommendations in this area addressed the numerous concerns of police and citizens about the delay in dispatching police officers. The Commission recommended the immediate implementation of the enhanced 911 system, a 911 substation in police headquarters, a new county wide telephone dispatching system, and the formation of a new unit in the police department to manage the new 911/311 system. The final recommendation in this area advocated an “aggressive, long term marketing and informational campaign” that would educate the members of the public on the use of 911 and help them differentiate between emergency and non-emergency reporting.

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<sup>2</sup>Section 8 housing refers to the Housing Choice Voucher Program, which is federally funded subsidized housing for low-income families and individuals.

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### *Prosecution and Judicial System Relationship and Readiness*

The LCC expressed its strongest dissatisfaction with the judicial system. Citing high recidivism rates, heavy caseloads in the District Attorney's office, non-enforcement of all Drug Free Schools Zone codes, and an understaffed police force, the LCC recommended reorganization of the judicial system. It proposed that the reorganization include the creation of a drug court, a night court, and a community court. It recommended the use of the accelerated docket system in Lancaster County civil and criminal courts and the aggressive and consistent enforcement of all drug laws. In order to support this reorganization, it recommended that eight new prosecutors be added to the District Attorney's office.

The LCC addressed the issue of recidivism by recommending that the city "aggressively pursue" the federally funded Weed and Seed program; that the Office of Probation and Parole institute a probation/parole and police officer cooperative program; and, that the Office of Probation and Parole supply police officers with a list of probationers and parolees, their addresses and status. It also recommended that a central warrant service and central booking system be instituted.

### *Juvenile Justice*

The final area of concern for the LCC was juvenile justice. In the belief that the Juvenile Probation and Parole needed to be "significantly restructured", the LCC recommended broadened hours, curfew calls and home visits; the use of electronic monitoring; the elimination of boot camp; and, a complete review of the use of the county juvenile detention center.

The LCC also addressed the issue of early intervention as a means of preventing juvenile delinquency. It recommended expanded mental health services for pre-adjudicated juveniles and dysfunctional families; screening for alcohol and drugs, learning disabilities and mental health issues for all adjudicated youth; the establishment of a Curfew Center; the placement of school resource

officers in all middle and high schools; the expansion of dropout and truancy prevention programs; the increased use of alternative punishment programs; and, a court system more open to citizen involvement.

## **Public Safety Research Institute Study**

The Lancaster Crime Commission recommended the formation of a public safety research group, composed of faculty and students from local colleges and universities, as well as community leaders. This group, founded in 2003, is currently functioning as the Public Safety Research Institute (PSRI), “a public policy research and educational resource to those in the public and private sectors who continue to be involved in the drive to make the greater Lancaster Community safer” (*Final Report*, 2003:15). Since its establishment, it has conducted research for the James Street Improvement District and the East King Improvement District, as well as for the Bureau of Police in Lancaster City and the Lancaster Community Safety Coalition. It recently began an investigation of the recidivism rates of probationers and parolees supervised by the Lancaster Office of Adult Probation.

In 2005, the Public Safety Research Institute began a study to investigate the implementation and acceptance of the LCC’s recommendations by social service organizations and government agencies. The goals of this study were:

- To pull together a total picture of the progress that has taken place since the Crime Commission report
- To inform policy makers of progress
- To identify overlapping efforts and gaps in community efforts.

(PSRI Minutes, 1/7/2005)

PSRI constructed two data collection projects to accomplish the intended goals. One project, a web-based survey, provided PSRI with some information regarding the response of social service organizations, governmental agencies and houses of worship in Lancaster City to the LCC recommendations. PSRI



presented the results of this survey to the Cross Problems group sponsored by the United Way in September 2005. The second project, which is discussed here, employed interviews with representatives of the social service organizations and government agencies that were specifically charged with implementing the recommendations of the Crime Commission. These interviews offered an opportunity to learn how well the LCC had convinced agency personnel of the usefulness of the “fixing broken windows” philosophy; how receptive the agencies were to the specific recommendations the LCC made; the extent to which the agencies had implemented the recommendations; and, suggestions for future crime reduction initiatives.

## ***Methodology***

PSRI researchers reviewed the *Final Report* of the Lancaster Crime Commission to identify the recommendations made in it and to determine which social service organizations and government agencies the LCC had charged with implementing them. More specifically, the researchers enumerated all the recommendations that emerged from the work of the Strategic Initiative task forces. In preparing these recommendations, each task force consulted experts in the field, conducted public hearings and reviewed all the prior work of the LCC, its committees and associated task forces. As such, these recommendations represent the culmination of the work of the LCC.

The researchers constructed a list of the specified social service organizations and government agencies, identified the executives in charge of those social service organizations and government agencies, and obtained contact information for them. During the first round of interviews conducted in August and September 2005, researchers attempted to schedule thirty to forty-five minute face-to-face interviews with the director or head of each social service organization or government agency. Of the thirty-two possible social service organizations and government agencies identified, representatives of twenty-two agencies agreed to be interviewed.

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The research team developed a list of open-ended questions<sup>3</sup> to guide the conversations with the respondents. Although the interviewers used questions as a guide for the interviews, they allowed the executives to discuss freely the issues surrounding the activities of the LCC.

After allowing the respondents to express their general impressions of the LCC and its activities, the interviewers gave respondents a copy of the Crime Commission's recommendations that specifically mentioned their organization or agency. Then, the interviewers asked the respondents a series of questions regarding their reactions to the specific recommendations. Respondents sometimes engaged in lengthy discourses on topics related to issues other than the Crime Commission recommendations and had to be redirected back to the relevant issues.

In most cases, interviewers met the respondents in their office and, with their consent, tape-recorded the conversations that followed. County court-related officers requested a group interview, so interviewers met with six representatives of court-related offices as a group. Representatives of court-related agencies refused to permit the interviewers to tape-record that interview. The interview with a county commissioner was also not taped because of court regulations. Interviewers took notes of the interviews that were not tape-recorded.

Following the interviews, the research team transcribed the tape-recorded interviews and typed a summary of the unrecorded interviews. They then reviewed the interviews to identify common themes expressed by the respondents. Some of the themes emerged directly from the questions that were asked in the interviews, while others reflected issues and concerns that the researchers had not anticipated. Five themes were common to many of the interviews.

1. Awareness of the "Fixing Broken Windows" theory and strategy
2. Reaction to the overall efforts of the LCC
3. The feasibility of the LCC recommendations
4. Communication between the LCC and agency representatives and with the public

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<sup>3</sup> Appendix A - Moderator's Guide

5. Suggestions for an improved process and possible topics for future initiatives

Following the analysis of the themes, PSRI researchers prepared a list of the recommendations and noted next to each recommendation what the respondents had told the interviewers about the extent to which that recommendation had or had not been implemented. Examination of this document revealed that there was no information available for a substantial number of the recommendations. To address this information gap, PSRI researchers determined which representatives of governmental agencies and human service organizations could supply the missing information. Beginning in June 2006, two PSRI representatives conducted supplemental interviews with 18 additional people. These interviews were conducted face-to-face (four), by phone (ten) and by email (four). The interviewers provided each respondent with the specific recommendations made to the organization he or she represented and asked the respondent whether or not the recommendation had been implemented. The respondents were able to provide that information and often offered comments regarding the reasons some of the recommendations had not been implemented. The interviewers took notes on the information the respondents supplied. Adding the information secured through the supplemental interviews to that obtained in the original interviews offers a comprehensive overview of the implementation of LCC recommendations and provides additional observations on the reasons why some of them have not been implemented. Because the interviewers who conducted the first phase of interviews assured their respondents that their comments were confidential, the identity of the individuals providing any information is not revealed.

## **Findings**

### ***Discussion of Themes***

#### **“Fixing Broken Windows” Theory in Lancaster**

The “fixing broken windows” perspective dominated all Lancaster Crime Commission reports and received wide publicity. Not surprisingly, all respondents knew about this perspective and most supported it.

“Kelling and Coles came up with a book and it seemed to fit [the situation facing Lancaster City].”

“Well, I think with fixing broken windows you are looking at addressing some of the small problems, before they become big problems and what we do is we help to address those smaller problems within neighborhoods.”

“Well, we actually reorganized the whole department, as you know, to try to adhere better to a “fixing broken windows” philosophy.... I think it has some merit because if people who are prone to be disorderly or commit crimes know that there’s no repercussion from doing so, either from the police or even from the community...it’s going to be a prevalent behavior. So, it’s going to be an important part of a community strategy to prevent crime.”

Some of the people interviewed felt that although the “fixing broken windows” theory was applicable to Lancaster City, the LCC should have gone further, at least examining other theories, if not incorporating them into the development of its recommendations.

“We [the Crime Commission] latched on to a particular theory, and I don’t know that we gave other theories enough of chance or blended them. To me one of the biggest problems is that if you only rely on one theory, you only get, potentially,

one result, and it might be more appropriate to look at multiple theories and how they might apply in one place.”

“There’s the ‘fixing broken windows’ concept that take[s] care of some of the small blights and things that are in disrepair and fix[es] them and it improves the overall neighborhood and safety. But, we [our organization] take it a step farther in...there’s another study done by Dr. Felton Earls in Boston. I’m not sure if you’ve heard of it, where it’s called ‘collective efficacy’. And it stresses getting the stakeholders in the community involved, getting people around the table that live in the neighborhood to say, ‘how can we improve the quality of our neighborhood.’ And the point there is that having those people involved on an on-going basis is more sustainable change and something other than a quick fix. Now, some of the people that support ‘collective efficacy’ say its better than ‘fixing broken windows’, or that two are competing theories. We don’t say they are competing at all. They can be done in tandem and in cooperation with each other.”

### **Reaction to Overall Lancaster Crime Commission Efforts**

Most of the respondents offered their observations about the overall efforts of the LCC. The Crime Commission *Final Report*, with its pointed criticisms of current criminal justice system operations and its advocacy of substantial changes, generated both very positive and strongly negative reactions. Some people felt that the report made social service organizations, government agencies and the citizens of Lancaster more aware of the problems that Lancaster city was facing.

“When I read the Crime Commission Report, there is nothing I fundamentally disagree with. All the recommendations in there are valid ones, important ones.”

“At first there was a lot of skepticism, but at the end, I think it came out pretty good. Overall it helped the city. You can’t solve a problem until people recognize

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there is a problem. And that was part of their original charges. To find a problem and let's see how we can work around it.”

Others felt that the report's focus placed too much attention on the city itself and took attention away from efforts to improve the surrounding communities and county as a whole.

“...[I]t created some conflict between the city and the people outside of the city, in terms of law enforcement and others. So, I would say overall what it says is the philosophy of the crime commission report is that... as the city goes so does the county. That is, the city is in a decline then the whole county is in a decline, because of people from all over the county come to the city to buy drugs and use drugs and then they take them out into the county and then sell them, so that this was a real hub and that philosophy isn't shared by people outside of the city.”

“[The] Crime Commission Report has never really concerned us. [Our] focus is never just the city. Sometimes we are forced to look at the city as a population, but [we] never make decisions unique to the city, city specific.”

However, another respondent offered the opinion that the emphasis on the city was reasonable.

“I think they did focus on the city because that's where the crime and disorder is for the most part. If you dispersed the extra resources we have across the county, a lot of it would be wasted.”

And at least one county official offered the opinion that the focus on problems in the city was important because the “city is the heart of the county. If the city goes downhill, so does the county.”

Another criticism was that the LCC was mistaken about some of the issues it addressed.

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“This [the report] says that the agencies are fragmented and suffer from turf issues.... I think that is a misplaced description of reality.”

“I think I get a little uncomfortable when these new organizations kind of crop up, yet they don’t really have a real grasp on what exists already. And I think they really need to be more familiar before they decide there could be additions, changes, or that kind of thing.”

“The Crime Commission process was fundamentally flawed; the people on the commission did not understand the system or where players fall into the system.”  
“I thought it was not idealistic but sort of pie in the sky, wishful thinking, over-simplified, naïve, political.”

From the perspective of these respondents, despite the extensive research it did, the LCC failed to grasp all the important nuances in the ways government agencies and human services organizations operate.

## **Feasibility of Lancaster Crime Commission Recommendations**

Because the *Final Report* contains scores of recommendations that ask governmental agencies and community organizations to modify current programs, create new programs and/or eliminate other programs, the feasibility of these recommendations is a significant issue. Some of the agencies used these recommendations as guideposts in their planning process.

“Yeah we’ve implemented just about all of the recommendations from the Crime Commission.”

“So it helped me with goal setting and long term planning and all those sort of cliché terms, to figure out where we want to be in four years, five years in terms of hiring more [staff]... It helped to lay the groundwork for that.”

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In other cases, the LCC recommendation spurred organizations to work together to establish a new entity or initiative.

“But, the concept of an improvement district, these six [organizations] read it in the Crime Commission Report and said, ‘we can do this.’ They [the organizations] pulled together and formed a plan.... Most of what we are doing is directly working toward these points here.... Not that some of these activities weren’t happening, but pulling them together into a focused intentional program, developing the neighborhood plan, and going out and getting funding for it is a result of that recommendation, and we are now working within the spirit of that plan, and see ourselves as being very effective and instrumental in achieving one of the recommendations of the Crime Commission Report.”

However, other respondents vehemently disputed the perspective of the LCC or the wisdom of its recommendations.

“Well first of all I disagree with the assumption that the system is broken, that’s like my big problem, because the people who I interact with have a very positive experience.”

“The last thing, we do not need to create additional non-profits. In fact this is a perfect example of misplaced leadership – to recommend that a new non-profit be established.”

Other social service organizations and governmental agencies felt the recommendations were irrelevant to their organization, because they were already engaging in the activities that were mentioned in the recommendations.

“[This program] had long been initiated before the recommendations.... Our move to initiate this was not based on their recommendation.”



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“[O]ur move to initiate this was not based on their recommendation, so I don’t want to take the thunder from this, but I think we were simultaneously going down the same path, the same direction.”

“You see the other thing that escaped them was that we always have worked together. [W]e continue to be very cooperative with all the city agencies, bureaus, and departments, whatever they may be.”

“Yeah we have made a ton of changes in our organization but nothing related to the crime commission.”

Another concern expressed by some respondents was the cost of implementing all of the LCC recommendations.

“As for some of the other goals I really think in terms of public reception, there were concerns that this would result in higher taxes for everyone throughout the county, and I think that has been a negative area of feedback that they have received.”

### **Communication and Publicity**

Communication is an important part of an undertaking that attempts to accomplish goals as ambitious as those of the Lancaster Crime Commission. Because the LCC viewed the issue of crime reduction very broadly, interaction with diverse social service organizations and government agencies was necessary. Although issues of communication between the LCC and governmental agencies and social services agencies did not emerge in most of the interviews, the perspective of some respondents on the nature of their communication with the LCC was highly critical. For example, the head of one agency complained,

“I never felt that I was given an opportunity to explain to the commission why the [program] of Lancaster was not the monster that some of those programs are

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in those very large cities.... I went prepared to share information. I had handouts, I had facts, I had figures.... And it was a little inquisition where I was hammered for 2 hours....”

Another respondent described a colleague’s reactions in similar terms.

“The [individual called to testify] felt that he was being asked questions with an end in mind.... The hearing felt like an investigation, an interrogation.“

On the other hand, representatives of other organizations commented that their testimony before the crime commission provided them with new insights and led to specific recommendations being made that they viewed as constructive.

“No, like I said, they didn’t even know who we were or what we did until I went in there.”

“I thought they were well received. I think it showed how our concerns translated into how the crime commission articulated their concern about...and those kinds of issues.”

The Crime Commission also attempted to elicit information from the general public and to educate them regarding its preferred strategies to improve public safety in Lancaster city. One respondent expressed approval of the LCC’s efforts to recruit citizen input.

“You know I think that, I like the fact, as I understand it there was a lot of citizen involvement, in the front end, getting people’s information, understanding, and perceptions. I’d like to see as much grow out of citizen involvement as possible. It always feels like it is the same people making the same recommendations and the same decisions...”

However, others questioned the extent to which the community remains aware of the Commission’s efforts.

“But if I were to go out on the street now and say to somebody, ‘Do you know about the Crime Commission Report and what is in it’, very few people would probably know about it. The organizations that are working in the area would, but I don’t think the residents knew that much about it.”

“There is just so much information that the neighbors didn’t have, that residents didn’t have, you know. And it is stuff that shouldn’t be that complicated but to find the information, to understand the processes, you know for the average resident who doesn’t want to carve out that much time, it is very hard. So, part of it is people don’t understand the details about what the police can and can’t do, they don’t understand the city’s budget, all those sorts of things, it is very hard for people to understand that in an easy way.”

## **Recommendations for Future Initiatives**

The Crime Commission has dissolved, leaving several newly created organizations, a list of recommendations, and, some believe, a number of loose ends. Many respondents, especially those with generally positive views of the Crime Commission, thought it should have remained in existence longer.

“One thing is the Crime Commission sun-setted. You know, it was in existence for just a few short years, not enough to make sweeping changes. So, that’s the first thing I would advocate, that you don’t have a sunset date, that you’re around for a long time.”

Some referred to the LCC resolution calling for the creation of “The Lancaster Committee of 100,” an independent, political and community action organization to advocate for full implementation of the “fixing broken windows” strategy of public safety enhancement and quality of life improvement.

“Yeah a committee to follow through and reorganize it...I don’t think that this is that old that a committee couldn’t still be established to go back through, which

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is what you are doing here, checking out what was done and what wasn't done, and maybe come up with a recommendation that a committee, I don't know about a committee of 100, but a committee be created to get back into this and from your report find out what was or wasn't done, ok these things were done, these weren't, let's get someone moving on these things that they did recommend."

"I think that I would have kept it in existence longer. I would have had a phase of doing all the research, because their research was so well done, put together. I would have had an implementation aspect of it. Now, I know that there are some things that were divided up, the Lancaster Alliance took part of it and created the Lancaster Safety Coalition, and those types of things, but there is no meeting point at which the Lancaster Crime Commission oversees the implementation of the recommendation. So, I would change that."

Another view expressed was that implementation of the LCC recommendations would progress further if stronger and more centralized leadership directed the changes.

"It would be nice to have someone with a lot of 'oomph' in charge to get everybody to do what they need to do.... You know if we had some charismatic person with some weight who could bring this together.... I mean it would be nice to have a czar. If we had, you know some counties have a single county executive...and a person like that, if they're really good might be able to have a good effect on the County's mission."

Other respondents made specific recommendations.

"I'd like to see it keep trying to help the housing division.... But the big need is more housing inspectors.... So better litter enforcement would be helpful.... And we need a lot emphasis on code enforcement."

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“And maybe more funding to help property owners get paint, or even to get an elderly person who doesn’t have the ability mentally or physically to take care of their property – have more to assist the elderly people in getting their properties painted and make sure the roof doesn’t leak.”

“I would like it to focus on the greater integration of police, courts, probation, corrections, to see if we couldn’t get more on the same page with how the entire criminal justice system responds to crime and disorder.”

Some people mentioned the need for additional resources to implement changes.

“I talk and I listen to people talk about how they are going to change the world, but the fact is somebody needs to muster the political will you know to invest more in the people who are delivering the services. You can’t spend \$300,000 to criticize the people in the system; you need to spend money to get better people in the system.... [U]nless you fundamentally change the resources that are committed to your area of interest, you are not going to change it.”

“I’m also a big fan of law enforcement in general, but somebody needs to win the lottery and give [the police chief] a couple of million dollars for better computers and software.”

One respondent saw the potential contribution the LCC could make in obtaining those resources.

“[T]he Crime Commission can keep the heat on the city and the community. We do need community support and the community has been coming forward with funding for computers to bring the housing staff up to modern age. That’s been very good. Getting grants, that continues to need to be done. But if our housing stock declines, there goes the city.”

Another respondent noted the necessity of involving municipalities other than Lancaster City. He observed that from the perspective of public officials and

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police officers from outside the city, it was unclear how they would benefit from addressing the city's crime problem. In the future, he said, it is important to involve people from outside the city to build support for changes to the county court system.

“A lot of the major issues were focused on the city and how the city would benefit from an improved county court system. When that message was delivered to the public, a lot of people outside the city a lot of municipalities and other police forces [were] saying, wait a minute you want to increase our taxes and raise all this money...and people saying, no we are not going to fund the city's crime problem. So you have, if you were to do it again you need to involve people from outside the city, public officials and law enforcement officials if we are going to address any wide sweeping changes to the county court system.”

Someone with a similar perspective offered the opinion that in the future, work needed to be done to coordinate efforts to address problems of crime and disorder.

“We have a lot of organizations that are basically trying to do the same thing, and there is a lot of redundancy. And they're not big enough or powerful enough to get things done, but they're all kind of spinning their wheels, getting little bits of money from the same sources or different sources, and having their own little programs and not being really effective.”

One respondent recommended that future efforts include input from a more diverse population. She said, “More women, more minorities, might have participated”. Another agency head commented favorably on the degree of citizen involvement in the LCC and said, “I'd like see as much grow out of citizen involvement as possible”.

One respondent, who commented critically regarding the Crime Commission's recommendations for his agency, nevertheless concluded by saying:

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“It [the Crime Commission Report] served a wonderful, useful purpose.... I mean I hope it doesn’t get stale. I hope that there are other grass roots groups out there looking at other crime commissions’ recommendations and working to build whatever it might be that is needed.... I just hope it doesn’t get stale and gather dust.”

## **Implementation of Crime Commission Recommendations**

This section summarizes the extent to which each of the recommendations of the five Strategic Initiative task forces of the LCC has been implemented as of September 2007. Following each Strategic Initiative task force recommendation (printed verbatim, in bold) is a commentary taken from the words of the people interviewed describing **their view** of how the recommendation is being implemented or offering their opinion regarding the lack of implementation. The extent of implementation and the reasons for a lack of implementation are the opinions of the persons interviewed. Other persons may have different explanations or may believe that not all of these recommendations are implemented as fully as the respondents claimed in their interviews.

This systematic examination of the recommendations of the Crime Commission is an effort to insure that the *Final Report* does not “get stale and gather dust”. It is designed to provide a foundation for future efforts and to call attention to the issues that have impeded change and that may limit the success of future efforts to implement LCC recommendations.

### **1. The Quality of Life in Lancaster’s Neighborhoods**

#### **Nuisance Crime Reduction**

**A. “Fixing Broken Windows”:** The full and immediate implementation by the Lancaster Bureau of Police, Lancaster Bureau of Fire, Lancaster Parks and Recreation Department, and the Lancaster City Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development of the Fixing Broken Windows strategy. The result will be better-managed public safety, improvements in the quality of life in all of the neighborhoods, and the provision for 24-7 citywide community policing coverage.



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In its initial report released in March 2001, the Lancaster Crime Commission affirmed, “fixing broken windows” as the model for its efforts to fight and prevent crime and disorder. By the time the final report was released, the Lancaster Bureau of Police had begun the process of establishing problem-oriented policing throughout the department and implementing the “fixing broken windows” strategy. The Lancaster Crime Commission gave impetus to this reorganization of the department by creating an environment in which broad changes became possible. The changes were also facilitated by the media’s focus on crime issues, help from the federal government and the flexibility and willingness of the District Attorney to entertain new ideas. The Lancaster Bureau of Police, through a reorganization plan establishing problem-oriented policing throughout the department, sought to implement the “fixing broken windows” strategy. However, according to an internal survey of Lancaster city police officers, their response to the reorganization plan was mixed. Some officers endorsed the plan and understood what was expected of them. Others supported problem-oriented policing but were not sure what was expected of them. A third group endorsed problem oriented policing but disagreed with how it was being executed. Finally, some officers dismissed problem-orienting policing as a form of social work.

Since fall 2006, police have stepped up enforcement of quality of life violations as measured by increased numbers of citations for speeding, noise, and other quality of life violations. In addition, officers are making meaningful connections in neighborhoods resulting in stakeholders and residents complimenting the behavior of officers.

The Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development has merged with the Department of Economic Development. This produces a more cohesive and unified approach to addressing quality of life issues. Housing Inspectors have begun using a new software system that allows for

computerized tracking of code violations and complaints. This helps identify problem properties. The Bureau of Zoning and Inspections is working to develop a team approach with the Bureau of Fire to conduct systematic inspections of the City's rental housing stock. The Bureau does work closely with the Bureau of Police to enforce City housing codes. Finally, the Department of Public Works /Bureau of Streets and Parks has received funds to develop a comprehensive master plan for all City parks.

**B. Ordinance Enforcement: The development by the Lancaster Bureau of Police, the Lancaster Bureau of Fire, the Lancaster City Housing and Neighborhood Development Department of a coordinated and aggressive action plan for consistent enforcement of the full range of quality of life ordinances in all neighborhoods of the city.**

The Bureau of Police, Bureau of Fire and Lancaster City Housing and Neighborhood Development Department (now known as Economic Development & Neighborhood Revitalization) have cooperated to implement this recommendation. The police now give more attention to smaller crimes. The Lancaster Bureau of Police and the Lancaster Bureau of Fire meet on a regular basis. A computerized database shared by housing and police is being established.

The East King Improvement District (EKID) has established a neighborhood assessment team to facilitate coordination between police, fire and housing departments and block coordinators in addressing the problems of problem properties in the EKID area. The Northwest Safety Coalition works with the James Street Improvement and Downtown Improvement Districts.

**C. Code and Zoning Review. The systematic review of all city ordinances, including zoning, should be undertaken by the Bureau of Planning and City Council to guarantee the consistent and aggressive setting of high standards for the quality of life and public safety of residents.**

Prior to the Crime Commission report, the City Planning Commission had recommended revisions in some zoning ordinances to provide crime prevention through environmental design methods and to address quality of life concerns associated with dance clubs. One of the goals of the Lancaster City Comprehensive Plan passed in 1993 is “to strengthen neighborhoods and to make all neighborhoods desirable, safe places to live”. In some respects, the Crime Commission supported the work of the Planning Commission rather than vice versa.

The Lancaster City Council felt that the recommendations the Crime Commission addressed to their organization were appropriate and relevant. They responded to these recommendations by establishing an ongoing process of review of the city ordinances, with particular attention to those ordinances that impact quality of life, economic development, public safety and taxes. Following is a brief description of the ordinances amended or passed as a result of this review:

- Urban Redevelopment Law – amended definition of blighted property to allow for quicker redevelopment
- Amended City Code to speed the process for which properties with underlying contamination can meet DEP requirements
- Amended the city code to eliminate the occupation tax and replace it with earned income tax
- Amended the zoning ordinances to prepare for implementation of the comprehensive plan, shape development, promote economic development, protect the character and residential areas of the city and improve the quality of life
- Amended the noise ordinance to provide greater control and regulation of excessive sound
- Amended the city code to bring regulations regarding the food code into state and federal compliance

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- Passed resolutions authorizing application to DCED for Elm Street programs which provide grants to communities for streetscape improvements, planning and project management. Grants were approved by DCED and are funds are currently being used for improvements in two neighborhoods
- Amended the city code to change evaluation procedures for promotion in the police department allowing the department greater flexibility in developing procedures for promotion
- Amended the city code to standardize the building code in compliance with the Uniform Construction Code
- Amended the code to permit housing inspectors and other employees designated by the Director of Public Safety to issue parking tickets
- Rezoned tract of land at the Kerr Glass site to allow for mixed use development
- Passed an ordinance providing for tax exemption for improvements to deteriorated property
- Authorized the transfer of certain city-owned property to SACA to allow for building of new homes and increasing home ownership
- Passed an ordinance to increase fines for curfew violations
- Applied for HUD grants to improve the welfare of the homeless
- Passed an ordinance to increase fines for code violations in the area of housing, brush, grass and weeds, health standards, electrical standards, public nuisances, traffic and vehicles
- Established the Central Market Trust to oversee the business of Central Market
- Authorized the purchase of computer software to automate the process of the Bureau of Housing and Structural Inspections
- Adopted major changes in fines and enforcement procedures for many sections of the Traffic Code
- Reorganized city departments to consolidate department of economic development and created an office of grants to centralize all grant applications
- Submitted an application for a keystone grant to support an expansion of the library in downtown Lancaster City
- Passed a resolution to authorize the administration to submit a planning grant application to PA DCED to engage the Brookings Institute to develop a strategic development plan for the City of Lancaster
- Amended zoning ordinance to allow for expansion at Lancaster General Hospital
- Amended the neighborhood police ordinance to expand the number of community police officers
- Passed a resolution supporting a county-wide Department of Health to coordinate efforts aimed at safeguarding the health of children and families
- Passed an ordinance amending the city code to expand the animal control to include cats
- Passed a resolution to execute an amendment to a cooperation agreement between the city of Lancaster and the PA Academy of Music governing a redevelopment assistance capital program grant for the expansion of the Academy's current facility. This increases the grant amount from 6 million to 8.5 million.
- Approved application for numerous historic preservation projects

**D. Aggressive Prosecution and Adjudication: The public and formal commitment by the Lancaster Bureau of Police, the office of the Lancaster County District Attorney and the individual District Justices of the City of Lancaster to the aggressive prosecution and adjudication of ordinance and summary offense quality of life crimes.**

The reorganization of the Bureau of Police made issuing citations for minor violations a priority. Police have increased the number of charges filed for noise violations, speeding, littering, public urination and other quality of life violations since the reorganization. Code enforcement officers are also much more aggressive in bringing charges of sanitation violations and in citing properties that do not meet the standards of the city code.

**E. Simpler Complaint Procedures: The development of a streamlined and simple complaint procedure for citizens reporting quality of life crimes that will be implemented and can be expanded by the Lancaster Bureau of Police and the Lancaster County District Attorney's Office.**

It does not appear that this has occurred. The Bureau of Police developed a Citizen's Crime Report for minor theft and vandalism but it was not used much.

**F. 911-311-211 Telephone System: The creation of a new countywide telephone dispatching system which includes provision for emergency calls (911), calls for non-emergency municipal services (311), and calls for social services (211).**

The costs associated with establishing a 311 line (about \$1 million) seem to have precluded its establishment. Also, if establishment of 311 and 211 lines resulted in more calls to Lancaster County-Wide Communications,

its staffing needs would increase, also increasing costs. Current revenues are based on the \$1.25 monthly fee charged per phone line. Consumer abandonment of landlines in favor of cell phones jeopardizes that source of revenue. Legislation will be needed to permit the fee to be charged on cell phones also.

Currently, Lancaster County-Wide Communications receives calls regarding municipal services on their non-emergency line. By using their electronic internal phone directory, they are able to refer to appropriate offices within one minute.

**G. 211 Clearing House: The development of a clearing house/referral service to support the establishment of 211 social service telephone dispatch system.**

United Way LINC currently provides information and referrals to people seeking information about social services. LINC is advocating for establishment of 211 service but it is currently not available in Pennsylvania.

**H. Pro-Bono Prosecution Program: The expansion of the existing pro bono prosecution program of the District Attorney's office to supplement DA staff in the prosecution of nuisance crime. Similarly, the abilities of the Lancaster City Solicitor's Office should be expanded in a pro bono manner to handle an expected increased load of civil offense litigation. The Lancaster Bar Association is encouraged to become the leading partner taking on the responsibility for the recruitment of attorneys to serve in the aforementioned pro bono programs. Participating attorneys are afforded unique opportunities to serve their city and county, while receiving invaluable legal experience.**

The District Attorney's office has worked with local attorneys on curtailing public nuisances, especially bars and nuisance properties. Volunteer attorneys succeeded in having one bar closed down. This action encouraged other bars to implement changes to avoid being closed. The office of District Attorney has also completed a manual for police officers to use as a guide for drug and alcohol related nuisance enforcement. In addition, an assistant District Attorney has been assigned responsibility in this area.

The Lancaster Bar Association operates a *pro bono* program, in which approximately one half of the county's lawyers participate. It handles 3,000 to 4,000 cases per year and is already overtaxed. In response to this crisis, the Lancaster Bar Association established a foundation that raised enough money to pay the salary of an attorney at Mid-Penn Legal Services who will exclusively handle custody cases. This appointment may help to free up some of the Bar Association's resources to handle other matters, for example landlord tenant issues.

**I. Crime Mapping System: the creation of a crime and disorder incident mapping system and database that is secure, operates in real time and is able to provide all law enforcement, code enforcement, education and social service professionals with the current information they need to coordinate their quality of life improvement efforts.**

The Bureau of Police purchased a crime mapping system but it has not been used much, for a variety of reasons, including the challenges of meshing information obtained from different systems. The Bureau of Police continues to work on improving its ability to map incidents and make that information available to the public. However, the community is a long way from implementing a comprehensive system as described in this recommendation.

## **Code Enforcement**

### **A. Computerization of the Housing and Neighborhood Development Department**

Installed and operational.

### **B. More officers. Net addition of five new professionally trained code enforcement officers.**

The Housing Bureau has nine housing inspectors, an increase of four.

### **C. Minimum residential leases. The codification of minimum residential lease requirements for all city properties.**

A Rental Housing Task Force that is reviewing the rental housing ordinance and licensing program and making recommendations for revisions will address this.

### **D. Higher fees. Increase in fees and fines to liquidate additional costs.**

The city will begin enforcing existing city ordinances that permit it to charge for follow-up inspections if all required improvements are not completed when the first follow-up inspection is scheduled and held.

### **E. Property inspection. Inspections of properties every four years (minimum).**

The city will soon be implementing systematic inspection of property interiors and exteriors. This will replace the current complaint based system of inspections.



**F. Accountability for repeat offenders. The city should regularly publish the names of our most recalcitrant landlords and inform insurers and mortgage holders when repeated offenses occur.**

The Rental Property Task Force and City Solicitors are reviewing the legal implications of this approach.

## **Section 8 Scattered Site Housing**

**A. Rigorous HUD Enforcement. The rigorous enforcement by the Lancaster City Housing Authority of all HUD tenant-screening guidelines.**

The Lancaster City Housing Authority enforces HUD tenant screening guidelines.

**B. Section 8 Housing Supervision. The development and implementation by the Lancaster City Housing Authority of a rigorous supervision program for all Section 8 participants (tenants and landlords). Such a program should require:**

- **Monitoring of all police and code enforcement activity on site**
- **Monitoring criminal activity by participants**
- **Monitoring quality of life crime and disorder complaints**
- **Maintaining a record of identity of all site residents, and**
- **Providing the Lancaster Bureau of Police, Lancaster Bureau of Fire and the Lancaster City Housing and Neighborhood Development Department with current monthly lists of all city Section 8 program properties.**

Although the Lancaster City Housing Authority does not publish monthly lists of Section 8 properties for other agencies, it does provide updates on Section 8 units to the Lancaster Bureau of Police. The Lancaster Bureau of Police and the Lancaster City Housing Authority have worked cooperatively to address

problems posed by problem properties and problem tenants. The Housing Authority reviews incident reports that the city police provide them to determine which are associated with Section 8 or other public housing sites. It tracks violations, monitors the quality of life and investigates crime and disorder associated with all the properties over which the Housing Authority has jurisdiction. When appropriate, it refers concerns to the Bureau of Fire. The Housing Authority also enables Lancaster police to conduct a training session with parole officers regarding removal of tenants from Section 8 Housing for drug violations. The size of its staff limits the Housing Authority's ability to supervise rigorously all Section 8 tenants.

**C. Living Conditions Monitoring and Social Service Access. The development by the Lancaster City Housing Authority of a program that insures that the living and economic conditions of all Section 8 tenants, and their impact on neighborhoods, are being monitored and that they are provided access to the appropriate range of social services.**

The Lancaster City Housing Authority currently contracts with Tabor Community Services to run two programs for Section 8 tenants, the Family Self Sufficiency Program and the Home Ownership Voucher Choice Program. The Department of Housing receives the funds for these programs from HUD, who mandates that both of these programs must be offered to all Section 8 tenants. Currently there are more than 700 Section 8 tenants in Lancaster. Of these, 70 are enrolled in these two programs. All clients are notified twice a year that the programs are available but participation in the programs is voluntary. However, if more tenants were interested in the program, they would have to be placed on a waiting list because there are not enough funds to increase the staff that would be needed. At one point, HUD did fund 2 full-time positions but recently has cut the funding to one full-time position.

As time allows, Housing Authority caseworkers do make an effort to facilitate contact between their clients and whatever help they need.

## **Social Services Coordination**

### **A. The creation of a permanent council of representatives of city social service, criminal justice and law enforcement agencies with the goal of providing better coordination, greater information sharing and cooperation between agencies, community policing officers and residents of the city's neighborhoods.**

Social service, criminal justice and law enforcement agencies have not formed a permanent council. Previous efforts to do this include a Lancaster County initiative to set up a Family System Services Reform Board that would have established a single point of entry for clients into the social service system. However, it was unsuccessful because of the variety of funding sources involved, inconsistencies in the information each agency requires and issues pertaining to client confidentiality. Even though many organizations share information informally, challenges to establishing a formal council remain. Several respondents disputed the assertions of the Crime Commission that social services in Lancaster County are fragmented and that agencies do not cooperate with each other.

The organization that most closely approximates the services of the recommended council is United Way LINC. It provides free confidential information and referral services to people throughout Lancaster by phone, mail, email or in person. It has also compiled a searchable community services resource database listing all agencies that provide programs on a regular basis to people living in Lancaster County. In addition to providing information and referral services, United Way LINC also holds monthly Cross Problems meetings at which representatives from agencies and non-profits share information and have an opportunity for networking.

Other examples of existing interagency collaborations include the Office of Special Offenders Services and the Lancaster County Homeless Management Information System.

There has been significant improvement in the cooperation between local, state and federal law enforcement agencies, particularly in the areas of drugs and guns. Examples of collaborative efforts include Project Safe Neighborhoods and the Route 222 Corridor grants. The District Attorney's Office also initiated the development of the Special Emergency Response Team, which consists of 40 members from 13 police departments. Beginning in spring 2007, a State Parole agent has attended weekly Criminal Investigative Division briefings at the Lancaster City Bureau of Police to facilitate the sharing of information and coordination of efforts. The Lancaster City Police are also collaborating with the Boys and Girls Club to insure that youth cited for curfew violations receive services if necessary.

The federal Weed and Seed program also allows for collaboration between law enforcement, social service agencies and the faith based community.

**B. The adoption of a system of organizing the delivery of services of all human service agencies and institutions around the geographic structure of the neighborhood-based Lancaster City Community Policing District system (including but not limited to MHMR, Probation and Parole, Children and Youth, SDL, CAP, Neighborhood Services, the Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development and the United Way Agencies).**

This recommendation has not been implemented and seems to have little support. One respondent indicated practical problems of work assignment, supervision, consultation and triage when all of the agency's workers are not housed under one roof. Another expressed the view that

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more resources for social service agencies are a higher priority than a new delivery system. A third suggested that better trained and more highly paid police and social service staff is necessary to insure that services are delivered appropriately.

## **2. Community Policing and Law Enforcement Organization**

### **Community Policing**

**A. Acceleration and Accountability - The acceleration of the adoption and implementation of Lancaster City's proposed plan for community policing and the adoption of an internal measurement standard of individual and collective performance based on safety and the quality of life of the individual neighborhoods of the city.**

In order to evaluate the efforts of the department's reorganization plan, the Lancaster Bureau of Police developed a new performance appraisal for police officers geared to Problem Oriented Policing.

**B. More police on the street - the expansion of the authorized complement of sworn officers of the Lancaster City Bureau of police by 24 before the end of 2004. In addition, the planned quota for sworn officers in each district should be brought up to full complement as quickly as possible.**

The effort to increase the number of sworn officers in the Lancaster Police Department was partially successful. This was due to a large degree to the Lancaster Alliance and the Lancaster City Council who raised money to hire additional officers. Progress was made on assigning a planned quota for officers in each district. However, there are still holes, some of them unavoidable due to retirements, illness, etc.

**C. Non-Uniformed Assistance - The expansion of the complement of non-uniformed professional administrative staff members of the Lancaster Bureau of Police by 12 before the end of 2004.**

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The complement of non-uniformed professional administrative staff member was increased by four or five persons. The Bureau of Police planned to use these new staff members as a trial to see if additional members were necessary.

**D. Officer Retention - The adoption of the principle of maintaining parity in pay, overtime, and benefits of uniformed officers as the core of the ongoing effort to retain current and recruit future community policing officers. It is important that the city stop losing its officers to neighboring communities and that it be able to recruit the best officers of other departments to staff its new community policing system.**

There has been no progress made on this. City financial difficulties make it unlikely that city police officers will receive salaries and benefits comparable to those of other departments.

**E. Computerized Tracking System - the creation of a computerized, internal crime tracking and accountability system similar to the COMPSTAT system used successfully in NYC. The model provides for immediate sharing of intelligence among districts, rapid and coordinated deployment during peak crime times at likely crime locations, relentless follow-up of all recommendations and accountability and evaluation of each officer's performance.**

The Bureau of Police has begun using computerized crime data to identify problem locations. After implementing problem solving strategies at these locations, computerized data provide information regarding the effectiveness of these strategies. Despite some successes, obtaining information in a timely fashion still remains a challenge.

**F. Independent assessment - the creation of an independent assessment entity to establish objective criteria for determining success that includes, yet goes beyond crime statistics. Such an entity would determine what data should be routinely gathered, compared and analyzed to track exactly how the police are performing, and would establish a process for the regular distribution of this information to police and city managers, to community groups, to the media and to the general public.**

This has not been done. The Public Safety Research Institute does provide independent assessment of some police activities upon the request of the Lancaster Bureau of Police.

**G. Police-Community relations - the creation of a formal, continuing police-community relations education and information program to be conducted by the Lancaster Bureau of Police and the Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development aimed at:**

- **Informing individual residents how community policing and community police officers will work in their neighborhoods and how they and their neighbors may assist the community police officers in improving the safety and quality of life of their neighborhoods;**
- **Informing (training) the individual citizens of the city how they can most effectively access police and other city services in emergency and non-emergency situations, outlining the kinds of responses that can be expected from calls for service and communicating the parameters of a citizen complaint procedure;**
- **And establishing a formal ongoing dialogue between the assigned community policing officers and the individuals and groups of each policing district which will allow the officers to better understand their neighborhoods and allow the residents to learn to better trust their assigned community officers.**



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There are a number of ongoing efforts to improve police-community relations and to educate the community regarding the police. These include quadrant meetings at which police meet with members of the community to address issues. Unfortunately, these meetings are often poorly attended. A number of landlord/tenant educational seminars were held. The Bureau of Police conducted a citizens' and students' police academy. The Bureau of Police is considering repeating it. The Lancaster Bureau of Police is planning to create a citizens' advisory board with 6-8 persons of diverse backgrounds including representatives of businesses and faith-based groups.

The Lancaster County Human Relations Commission Police-Community Committee organizes activities and programs to build better rapport between police and citizens. The Police-Community Committee was responsible for initiating Community Day.

### **3. Law Enforcement Response and Reaction**

#### **Law Enforcement Reaction**

##### **A. Immediate implementation of the “enhanced 911”**

Some features of this had already been done at the time of the recommendation. Lancaster County-Wide Communications is now in Phase 2, which allows it to identify the location of persons calling on cell phones.

##### **B. The deployment of a 911 substation for the city of Lancaster located within the new police headquarters.**

This has not been implemented. In fact, policies have gone in the opposite direction. Although the Bureau of Police recognizes that creating a 911 substation in the city would be costly, it believes that there would be advantages. Despite receiving more calls than any other municipality, Lancaster Bureau of Police has no more influence than any other municipality in shaping the policies of Lancaster County-Wide Communications. Differences persist in city police preferences and Lancaster County-Wide Communications’ policies. Lancaster County-Wide Communications records only the information provided by the first person who calls regarding an incident whereas when it handled its own dispatching, the Lancaster Bureau of Police recorded information from everyone who called. It also maintained communication with callers throughout the incident.

##### **C. The creation of a new countywide telephone dispatching system that includes provisions for emergency calls (911), call for social services (211), and calls for non-emergency municipal services (311).**

The costs associated with establishing a 311 line (about \$1 million) seem to have precluded its establishment. Also, if establishment of 311 and 211 lines resulted in more calls to Lancaster County-Wide Communications, its staffing needs would increase, also increasing costs. Current revenues are based on the \$1.25 monthly fee charged per phone line. Consumer abandonment of landlines in favor of cell phones jeopardizes that source of revenue. Legislation will be needed to permit the fee to be charged on cell phones also.

Currently, Lancaster County-Wide Communications receives calls regarding municipal services on its non-emergency line. By using its electronic internal phone directory, they are able to refer to appropriate offices very quickly. United Way LINC also provides information and referrals to people seeking information about social services.

**D. The development and staffing of a new administrative unit of the police department which would manage the new 911-311 system as it impacts municipal services as well as manages the handling of non emergency police calls. Special emphasis would be placed on calls and complaints regarding quality of life crimes.**

This recommendation is relevant only if the other recommendations regarding 911-311 are implemented.

### **Non-Emergency Phone System**

**A. 91/41/811 Public Information Campaign. The development and execution by the county of an aggressive, long-term marketing and informational campaign. Such a program would be designed to acquaint the public with the new 91/41/811 system, to help the residents of all of the communities of the county to understand the difference between emergency and non-emergency reporting, and to educate the public about expected response time.**

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It is not clear what the “91/41/811 system” refers to, but might possibly be a misprint. Regardless, Lancaster County-Wide Communications does not experience much inappropriate use of the emergency number and does not see the need for a campaign to educate the county residents regarding the difference between emergency and non-emergency reporting.

#### **4. Prosecution and Judicial System Relationship and Readiness**

##### **Judicial System Reorganization**

**A. The creation of a Drug Court to handle certain kinds of drug offenses. The idea is to find alternatives to incarceration as punishment for drug users, as opposed to drug dealers.**

The plans to implement a Drug Court preceded the publication of this recommendation in 2003. The Drug Court began operation in January 2006. In its first year, it enrolled 77 clients and graduated 5. The recidivism rate for those enrolled is 21%, lower than that of a comparison group.

**B. The creation of a Night Court at which district justices are routinely available after normal hours.**

There is no plan to implement this recommendation. Magisterial district judges are on call to do arraignments. There are practical problems associated with having the Magisterial District Justice courts operate outside of normal business hours.

**C. The creation of a Community Court with one Common Pleas judge dedicated to accelerating the adjudication of quality of life prosecutions and civil complaints related to quality of life offenses.**

When cases involving quality of life violations arise, they are assigned to a judge just as other cases are. There is no delay associated with handling these cases; therefore dedicating a single judge to them is unnecessary.

**D. The application of the accelerated docket system in Lancaster County civil and criminal courts.**

There is no plan to change the way cases move through the Lancaster County Court of Common Pleas. Criminal and civil courts are held every month except August. The addition of several new judges in 2008 will necessitate some changes in the way cases are scheduled.

**E. The countywide insistence that the police and the district attorney's office aggressively and consistently enforce all of the drug related enhanced prosecution and sentencing laws. These laws include, but are not limited to: the Drug Free School Zone Law; the Federal Gun and Drug Laws; and the former Pennsylvania House Bill 417 as it becomes law.**

It is currently the policy of the police and the district attorney's office to enforce aggressively and consistently the drug-related enhancements available under Pennsylvania and federal law.

**F. The staff and budget of the office of district attorney should be expanded to handle the new strategies of energetic enforcement of quality of life laws and enhanced prosecution and sentencing laws. Eight new prosecutors should be added and trained before January 2004.**

The Office of the District Attorney added six new prosecutors and increased the starting salary.

**Probation System**

**A. Lancaster city's participation in the federally funded Weed and Seed Program should be aggressively pursued and driven by the "Fixing Broken Windows", community policing, neighborhood quality of life enhancement**

**strategies for crime control and prevention espoused in the initial and subsequent reports of the Crime Commission.**

After arduous efforts, Lancaster received a federal Weed and Seed designation and approval as a federal Weed and Seed funding site. Its programs initially included a curfew center and a computer-training program for inner city youngsters. In 2007, the curfew center closed and the money that supported it was redirected to support enforcement of all quality of life offenses and wrap around services for youth apprehended for curfew violations.

The initial effort to obtain federal Weed and Seed designation preceded the recommendations of the Lancaster Crime Commission although the Lancaster Crime Commission did advocate strongly on behalf of the program.

**B. The office of Probation and Parole should institute a 12-month pilot Probation/Parole Officer-Community Police Officer Cooperative Program. The pilot program should be limited to a targeted policing district geography, use only volunteer probation and parole officers and community policemen and be designed to address the training, safety, manpower, mission conflict and jurisdictional concerns raised by the President Judge in reviewing the programs operating successfully in other cities. The goals of the program would be to:**

- **Develop ways that community police officers and probation/parole officers can work together to enhance the safety of the neighborhoods of Lancaster City**
- **Insure that the terms of the sentences of the court are abided to by the convicted felons who continue to live in the city, and to**
- **Provide those sentenced to probation or parole the highest possible likelihood of reform**

Lancaster County Court of Common Pleas and Adult Probation and Parole Services do not support implementation of this program. Their view is that proactive involvement with the police conflicts with the probation officers' responsibility to detect violations and enforce court mandates. Pennsylvania State Parole agents sometimes ride with Lancaster city police officers. A State Parole agent also attends weekly Criminal Investigation Division briefings at the Lancaster City Bureau of Police.

**C. The Office of Probation and Parole should adopt the policy of supplying local police departments with a current listing of the addresses of all probationers and parolees and a description of their status in the system.**

Police officers are able to obtain computerized information regarding people on county probation and parole. However, Adult Probation and Parole does not supply local police with this information.

**Warrant and Booking**

**A. Central Warrant Service. A county-wide, county-funded central warrant service force should be established within the Sheriff's Department and charged with serving warrants on behalf of all county police agencies.**

This would require a substantial transfer of expense from individual police departments to the county. It would require support from the county commissioners, individual police departments and the Sheriff's Department. Until all of these parties are interested in pursuing this recommendation, no action to establish a county funded central warrant service force is expected.

**B. The Lancaster County court system should institute a countywide central booking system equipped with video arraignment capability.**



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The Lancaster County Court is looking very seriously at implementing such a system. Video arraignment is a logical outgrowth of increased police use of Live Scan, technology that provides for the digital capture of fingerprints and the immediate transmission of fingerprint records. The infrastructure for video conferencing is in place. Police departments from south and west of the city are booking suspects at the Lancaster Bureau of Police. Eventually, all bookings countywide will occur there.

## **5. Juvenile Justice**

### **Juvenile Court**

**A. Broadened Hours, Curfew Calls, and Home Visits.** The office of Juvenile Probation should institute sweeping changes in when and how juvenile probation officers deal with their probationers, including:

- **Creating work shifts that cover the 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. period daily**
- **Adding routine “curfew calls” to the prescribed supervision procedure**
- **Mandatory once-a-month in-home visits, as well as mandatory parent/family contact.**

**We also believe that Lancaster County’s Juvenile Justice system is not making the most effective use of available resources, often relying on full-scale residential placement programs, which are extremely expensive (\$150-220 per day) and achieve very disappointing results with recidivism rates of 70 percent and higher. These youth are therefore consuming most of the resources available at precisely a time in their lives when it is too late – and the “help” will do the least good. We strongly recommend the use of alternatives to provide certain youthful offenders opportunities for treatment before they are deeply enmeshed in the juvenile justice system, when the chance of saving them is diminished.**

Establishing a new work shift for juvenile probation officers would require currently unavailable financial resources to pay the probation officers and other courthouse personnel. Juvenile probation officers do have some contact with their clients during non-traditional hours and outside the courthouse.

It has been standard procedure for more than 30 years to assign curfews to juveniles. Probation officers, with the assistance of parents, monitor

adherence to curfews. The policy of the Office of Juvenile Probation is to maintain regular contact with parents, to educate them regarding their responsibilities to supervise their children, and to engage them in efforts to do so.

Juvenile court operations have changed to some degree since the issuance of the Crime Commission Final Report. Funding from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency is currently paying the salaries of an assistant district attorney and a public defender with exclusive responsibility for juvenile cases.

**B. The county should expand the use of electronic monitoring as an alternative to more expensive and less effective juvenile offender supervision.**

Electronic monitoring is used in some cases as an alternative to detention of juveniles at the Youth Intervention Center. It is not used for youth alleged to have committed possession with intent to deliver drugs, drug sales, weapons offenses and sex offenses. In some instances, youth on electronic monitoring are not in school and assistance is not available to help them with problems while at home. At the Youth Intervention Center school is provided 12 months of the year, and youth detained there are assessed for mental health and drug and alcohol problems. When necessary, detained youth are referred for mental health services.

**C. The Boot Camp program should be eliminated.**

The County of Lancaster does not have a Boot Camp program.

**D. A utilization and review study should be undertaken concerning current and potential uses of the Juvenile Detention Center. Using the facility as a temporary shelter for child welfare cases is not appropriate.**

There is ongoing review of the operations at the Youth Intervention Center. Since the county began accepting out-of-county youth for detention, utilization of the Youth Intervention Center has improved. Eventually, the county could consider locating a community based mental health or drug and alcohol facility for juveniles at the Youth Intervention Center.

The Youth Intervention Center provides shelter care for youth who would otherwise be detained in private shelters with youth from large urban areas who have more serious behavioral and emotional issues. Finding stable foster care for these youth is very challenging.

## **Early Intervention**

**A. Greater Investment. The greater Lancaster community must invest more heavily in early intervention and treatment programs for at-risk youth.**

**Interventions should include providing:**

- **Expanded mental health services for pre-adjudicated juveniles**
- **Mental health counseling for dysfunctional families**
- **An expansion of school outreach programs to identify at-risk youth and families and link them to prevention programs.**

The Children and Youth Agency responded to this recommendation by setting up an early intervention program for pre-juveniles, ages 9-13, who had been involved in minor legal skirmishes. The program was run under the auspices of the Boys and Girls Club. It involved quick, in-home response. Lack of funding required that the program be discontinued but some of the services continue to be provided through the Adolescent Response Unit.

Mental health services are available for youth detained at the Youth Intervention Center under contract with a private provider.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice have awarded a three-year grant to the Lancaster Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative. This project is a partnership between the School District of Lancaster, Lancaster Bureau of Police, Juvenile Probation & Parole, Lancaster County Mental Health & Mental, Retardation Services and the School & Community Network. The goal is to expand prevention and intervention services to at-risk youth.

**B. Youth Screening. The County of Lancaster should require that all adjudicated youth receive mental health, drug and alcohol, and learning disabilities screening.**

Lancaster County Court relies on a myriad of community professionals in their respective fields to assess the needs of juveniles. The Court has utilized the Problem Severity Index (PSI) that is now called the Intervention Needs and Competency Assessment (INCA). The Youth Intervention Center utilizes a validated screening instrument called the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI-II) that screens for drug and alcohol as well as mental health issues. The Court relies on the local school districts and the Intermediate Unit to provide assessments for learning disabilities. Pennsylvania is in the process of selecting both screening and assessment tools that are validated for use throughout the state.

**C. Drug/Alcohol Treatment Centers: County government, the courts and the social service community should work together to extensively expand the capacity and effectiveness of Drug and Alcohol Treatment Centers. This would help insure that all drug or alcohol dependent juvenile offenders, with adjudications including dependency treatment, have a program immediately available to them.**

Reduced funds for drug and alcohol treatment have made it impossible to increase the resources available for drug and alcohol treatment. A serious problem is the loss of money for drug and alcohol treatment from the Temporary Aid to Needy Family funds.

**D. The City of Lancaster should establish at least one continually operating Curfew Center to hold juvenile curfew and truancy violators until their parents or guardians can assume responsibility for them. Ideally such a center should be operated under contract by one of the youth agencies of the city, and would be staffed by early intervention social service professionals. A Curfew Center could serve as an entry point in the County social service system and educational support services system.**

A curfew center began operating in February 2005 two nights per week, one weekend night and one weekday night, staffed by employees of the Boys and Girls Club and held on the premises of Neighborhood Services. Over the course of more than a year, curfew violations decreased and the need for the center lessened. Under the guidance of the federal Weed and Seed administrators, the center closed on October 1, 2007 and money set aside for rental of the space and payroll for the staff was redirected in two key areas. First a significant amount of the money was added to the police overtime details to enforce Quality of Life violations in the Weed and Seed target area. Secondly approximately \$8,000 will fund a “Wrap Around Program” administered by the Boys and Girls Club. Their staff will follow-up with curfew violators to determine why they were out after curfew hours and, if appropriate, will enroll the youth in a guidance program.

**E. School Resource Officers: The Bureau of Police and the School District of Lancaster should cooperate on the occasional placement of uniformed community police officers in city middle and high schools. These School**

**Resource Officers will allow the police to better understand the youth of the community and provide students a view of police in a non-adversarial situation. The Team Program currently in operation with the police should continue and grow.**

The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative has provided funding for five school resource officers. The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative has supported the TEAM program.

**F. The Lancaster School District dropout and truancy prevention programs should be dramatically expanded to enlist the aid and participation of all youth serving agencies, organizations and institutions in the city as well as the police department and the business community.**

The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative has led to a significant increase in programs to assist with dropout and truancy issues. The Phoenix Academy has increased the number of students in its program. There is also a program called Twilight, where students can make up missed work and graduate on time. The School Resources Officers are involved in student programs designed to help with the truancy and dropout problems.

**G. Alternative Punishment Programs: Restorative justice programs such as LAVORP (Lancaster Area Victim Offender Reconciliation Program) and Youth Aid Panels should be established in the neighborhoods of the city as alternatives to traditional adjudication of minor juvenile offenses such as truancy and quality of life crimes. Juvenile probation and the minor judiciary should be encouraged to divert minor offences into these alternative programs.**

The District Attorney's Office hired a retired police officer part time to recruit, train and oversee the Youth Aid Panel program. He works with an assistant district attorney to promote the expansion of the program. There are ongoing efforts to train volunteers for new Youth Aid Panels and to promote their use. Both the Youth Aid Panels and the Office of Juvenile Probation refer cases to the Lancaster Area Victim Offender Reconciliation Program.

**H. More open Court System: Lancaster County courts—juvenile and adult—should explore ways to allow greater openness and more routine citizen involvement in its activities. Inviting public scrutiny and sharing with the public the measures the court uses to evaluate the success of the components of the Lancaster County judicial system would engage the community more fully in the responsibility for improving and maintaining public safety and justice.**

All proceedings in criminal court are open to the public. By law, certain juvenile court hearings are closed for the protection of the welfare of the child who is the subject of the proceedings. The public is entitled to communicate its views on the court system to the court and to the county. However, statutes and case law primarily dictate the court's actions in the administration of justice.



## **Discussion**

In assessing the implementation of the LCC recommendations presented above, it is important to keep in mind several points. First, this is a snapshot view of a fluid situation. All persons interviewed answered based on their knowledge of what their organization or agency had done in response to the recommendations at a particular point in time. Subsequent to the interviews, these actions may have been abandoned or changed or other initiatives may have begun. Between the end of the interviews and the final report, PSRI representatives received information through informal communications suggesting that there continues to be movement with regard to the implementation of some recommendations. However, it would have been inappropriate to make ad hoc modifications to the information systematically obtained during the interviews. Therefore, any steps taken after October 2007 are not included in the section describing the implementation of recommendations.

Second, the information obtained regarding the implementation of the LCC recommendations is reported in the words of the people interviewed. In some cases, their statements are condensed, but to the greatest extent possible, the report strives to let the people charged with implementation of the recommendations explain what they did or did not do and why. The statements reported reflect **their** perspective on the recommendation they are addressing, not a neutral party's objective and validated determination that this is exactly what has been done. In some cases, others may disagree with the accuracy of what is reported. For example, people may question whether the steps that have been taken to implement a recommendation are sufficient or they may dispute a respondent's assertion that a certain recommendation is unwise or unnecessary. The goal of this report is not to resolve these disagreements, but simply to provide a starting point for forward-looking discussions of how much of what the LCC recommended has occurred and what additional efforts community members would like to undertake.

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A key component of this discussion is a review of the recommendations that respondents reported as being not implemented. In some cases, the reason is a lack of funds. For example, the Community Policing and Law Enforcement Organization section of the report recommends improving officer retention by “the adoption of the principle of maintaining parity in pay, overtime, and benefits of uniformed officers as the core of the ongoing effort to retain current and recruit future community policing officers”. The financial difficulties of the City of Lancaster make it unlikely that it will be able to offer salaries and benefits comparable to those of suburban departments. The adoption of a new countywide telephone dispatching system that would provide a 311 line for non-emergency calls for municipal services is another recommendation that requires money that is not currently available. The LCC offered support for a 911 substation in Lancaster City, but without a change in the way funds are allocated for emergency dispatch, that is also unlikely to occur. The lack of financial resources also prevents the creation of 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. shifts for juvenile probation officers.

In some instances, inadequate funds have not prevented adoption of recommendations entirely; however, they have limited their implementation. This is particularly evident in the recommendations for preventive services and interventions for at-risk youth found in the Juvenile Justice section of the report. For example, the Children and Youth Agency responded to the LCC recommendations for greater investment in early intervention and treatment by creating an in-home, quick response program for pre-teens who had minor skirmishes with the law and were at-risk for becoming more seriously delinquent. However, a loss of funds resulted in discontinuation of some aspects of this program. Despite the well-established link between substance abuse and crime, inadequate funding for drug and alcohol treatment persists. This lack of funds has undermined the ability of the juvenile justice and child welfare systems to address effectively the LCC recommendation that all “drug or alcohol dependent juvenile offenders...have a program immediately available to them.”

In other cases, there are substantive differences of opinion between the LCC and the agencies charged with implementing recommendations regarding the

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wisdom of the recommendation. These conflicting views are most apparent with regard to the LCC's view that there is need to coordinate the delivery of social services and criminal justice services and its recommendation that probation officers and police officers pilot a cooperative program. With regard to the latter, representatives of the Lancaster County Court of Common Pleas and the Lancaster County Office of Adult Probation consistently expressed their disagreement with this proposal. Probation officers are expected both to offer support to their clients' efforts to address the problems that led them to criminal activity and to enforce the terms of their probation and parole. This enforcement sometimes entails sending a client to prison for non-compliance or because of an arrest on new charges. Probation officers are challenged to balance the demands of those two aspects of their role. The difference of opinion between the LCC and the local court over having probation officers work in partnership with police officers stems from conflicting views over whether the job of a probation officer is primarily to assist client rehabilitation or primarily to enforce the conditions of probation. Progress in implementing this recommendation will depend on the court and the Office of Adult Probation becoming convinced that having probation officers take a more proactive role in enforcing conditions of probation will not necessarily impair their ability to be effective in helping clients deal with problems and desist from crime.

Two recommendations for social services coordination also received little support. One recommendation was to create a permanent council of representatives to facilitate better coordination, greater information sharing and better cooperation among social service and criminal justice agencies. Several respondents disputed the need for such a council and contradicted the LCC's assertion that agencies did not share information and collaborate. They provided examples of existing interagency collaborations, such as the Office of Special Offender Services and the federal Weed and Seed program. Others pointed out that previous efforts to establish a single point of entry into the social service system had failed due to differences in the information each agency requires and issues pertaining to client confidentiality. The second recommendation, to

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organize the delivery of social services in conjunction with neighborhood policing districts, received little support. One agency head saw too many logistical problems associated with decentralizing its staff. Other respondents noted that more funding for services and better training for police and staff would accomplish more than reorganizing the delivery of services.

Reviewing the recommendations of the LCC has revealed them to be complex and ambitious. In light of that, it is important to note that the agencies and organizations charged with implementing recommendations made good faith efforts to cooperate. In general, they accepted the intent and overall philosophy of the report, even if they did not agree with all the specific suggestions. As a result, the recommendations of the LCC resulted in the initiation of new programs, the revision of old programs and facilitated the development of programs already in process. The activities of the LCC also resulted in extensive publicity on issues of public safety, effective policing and community concerns regarding more effective crime prevention. This publicity, and the ongoing discussion of the best ways to control crime and improve the quality of life of Lancaster residents, has created a climate that supports innovations such as the Drug Court.

Although in its *Initial Report*, the LCC endorsed “The ‘Fixing Broken Windows’ strategy for fighting **and preventing** (emphasis added) crime and disorder” most of its recommendations primarily address the effectiveness or efficiency of law enforcement, the court system and the various agencies and organizations to which the recommendations were addressed, as opposed to focusing directly on the issue of prevention. Furthermore, there was less progress in implementing prevention recommendations, such as expanded mental health services for at risk families and drug and alcohol services for juveniles, as opposed to changing the staffing of the police department or securing more code enforcement. While system improvement is important, it will not necessarily result in a significant reduction in crime. It is also important for the community to address underlying factors that contribute to high crime rates—the social and cultural isolation associated with poverty, the unavailability of affordable

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housing, limited access to medical and dental services, and educational failure – and to intervene early to identify and treat mental health disorders and addiction. If a review of the Crime Commission’s recommendations leads to a continued conversation about public safety enhancement and quality of life improvement, both examining the underlying causes of crime and finding the resources to address them should be a part of it.

## **Appendix A: Moderator's Guide**

- Are you familiar with the work of the Crime Commission?
- Did you have any involvement with Crime Commission meetings, activities or volunteer work?
- What do you know about “Fixing Broken Windows”?
- What was your immediate reaction to the recommendations?  
(Feelings, action taken)
- Do you feel the recommendations were congruent with the goals and programs of your agency?
- In other words, did you feel that your organization should have been held responsible for carrying out the recommendations charged to you?
- In the past two years, how have you responded to the Crime Commission recommendations? Such as:
  - Change structure
  - Form partnerships
  - Strengthen existing partnerships
  - Reallocation of funds
  - Initiating new programs
  - Strengthen existing programs
  - Drop old programs
- Did you think that any of the recommendations made to your agency were important enough to modify or drop current programs in favor of the recommendations?
- Was it possible for you to make the changes you wanted to make?

## **Appendix B: Lancaster Crime Commission Reports**

Lancaster Crime Commission, *Initial Report*, March 2001.

*Report of the Task Force on Code Enforcement*, March 2002.

*Report of the Police Reorganization Task Force*, March 2002.

*Final Recommendations of the Committee on Housing, Real Estate and Quality of Life*, August 2002.

*Lancaster Neighborhoods: Perceptions of Disorder, Crime and Community Life*, August 2002.

*Annual Report*, Mayor's Quality of Life Task Force, August 2002.

Lancaster Crime Commission, *Final Report*, February 2003

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