

City of Gainesville Weed and Seed
Official Recognition Effort
Sites 1 and 2

Operation Weed and Seed is a comprehensive strategy to help communities bring together people and resources to prevent and control crime and improve the quality of life. It is a community-based, innovative, and comprehensive multi-agency approach to law enforcement, crime prevention, and neighborhood restoration. The Executive Office for Weed and Seed (EOWS) provides national leadership as well as management and administration of the program. The Weed and Seed strategy aims to prevent, control, and reduce violent crime, drug abuse, and gang activity in designated high-crime neighborhoods across the country. It recognizes the importance of linking and coordinating federal, state, and local law enforcement and criminal justice efforts with federal, state, and local social services and private sector and community efforts. It also recognizes the paramount importance of community involvement. The strategy empowers community residents to assist in identifying and solving problems in their neighborhood.

Official Recognition

The first step is to develop a Weed and Seed strategy and submit it for Official Recognition (OR). The OR application is a detailed description of a site's Weed and Seed strategy. Communities develop the strategy according to EOWS guidelines. Once completed and submitted to EOWS, review panels determine whether the standards set out in the guidelines have been met evaluate each site's specific strategy. If approved, a site will receive OR certification enabling it to be considered for future EOWS funding and to receive: 1) preference in obtaining discretionary resources from specific federal agencies, e.g., HUD Drug Elimination Grants; 2) priority for participating in EOWS-sponsored training and technical assistance; and 3) use of the official Weed and Seed logo.

The process for developing a Weed and Seed strategy requires a significant commitment from the local community to engage in strategic planning, collaborate with key stakeholders, and coordinate programs and services. The planning process is undertaken, and a detailed strategic plan created, before completing and submitting an OR application. Planning for a Weed and Seed strategy is beneficial in and of itself; i.e., the working relationships that develop out of the coordination process can, in the long run, be worth more than any grant funding which a site may eventually receive.

Developing a Weed and Seed Strategy

A local community undergoes a systematic process called “strategic planning” to develop the Weed and Seed strategy. The strategic planning process assists a community with identifying a future vision, managing change, and creating the best possible future for its residents. This process is appropriate for community planning (of the type required by EOWS) because of its specific method, which is characterized by:

- A focused process that concentrates on selected issues
- Explicit consideration of resource availability
- Assessment of community problems and needs
- An action-orientation, with a strong emphasis on practical results
- An emphasis on innovative approaches to problem solving

The end result of strategic planning is a multi-year, detailed plan for community action and change.

Management Structure

A. Contact Person(s)

List the contact person(s) with whom EOWS should communicate for follow-up on your application. For each person, include contact details: name, postal address, phone, fax, and internet e-mail.

B. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is critically important to the success of Weed and Seed. It is responsible for establishing Weed and Seed’s goals and objectives, designing and developing programs, providing guidance on implementation, and assessing program achievements.

There is no set number size for a Steering Committee, some sites have 18 members while others are as large as 30. The typical size is 20-25 members. EOWS recommends that the U.S. Attorney serve as the chair of the committee. A resident or private sector representative may be desirable as co-chair.

1. Describe the membership of your site’s Steering Committee. List the name, title, and organizational affiliation of each committee member. Place an asterisk next to those committee members who live in the designated neighborhood.

Your Steering Committee is required to have representation from:

- 1) The U.S. Attorney's Office for your district;
- 2) Residents of the designated neighborhood;
- 3) City or county government; and
- 4) Local law enforcement.

Also Consider State Attorney's Office, Social Service Agencies, housing organizations, recreation and employment agencies, community-based and non-profit organizations, religious leaders, and small business or corporations.

2. Describe the roles and responsibilities the Steering Committee assumed in developing the Weed and Seed strategy, and the role they will continue to assume during strategy implementation. Specifically, address the following elements:

- When the Steering Committee was formed and the frequency of meetings to date (and anticipated frequency of future meetings)
- Who was in charge of strategy development and how the work to date was accomplished
- Organization of the Steering Committee, including subcommittees, chairpersons, and officers
- Roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee to be assumed during strategy implementation

Roles and Responsibilities you should consider for the Steering Committee during strategy development:

- Develop a future vision of the designated neighborhood.
- Conduct an in-depth community needs assessment.
- Establish subcommittees for strategy development.
- Oversee development and give final approval of the strategic plan.
- Approve selection of the Weed and Seed coordinator and other staff.
- Identify resource commitments for each member.

Once the strategy is developed and implementation is underway the Steering Committee roles and responsibilities should include:

- Oversight and management of goals and objectives

- Guidance on and resolution of implementation issues
- Coordination of subcommittee activities
- Development and integration of weeding and seeding policies
- Approval of changes to the strategic plan
- Approval of grant applications and adjustments
- Approval of hiring and management of the coordinator and staff
- Monitor progress on evaluation and effectiveness of Weed and Seed strategy

Finally the Steering Committee has two additional tasks:

- Develop the decision making process to govern the Weed and Seed initiative. The Committee should define the decision making process through such tools as bylaws and written policies and procedures. These may outline such items as frequency of meetings, and consensus or majority rule.
- At the outset the Steering Committee should create an organizational structure to develop and implement the Weed and Seed strategy. This blueprint of the organization should include the Steering Committee (the governing body). Subcommittees for each component area – law enforcement, community policing, prevention, intervention and treatment, and community restoration – may be included.

C. Day-to-Day Management

Explain the day-to-day management and administration of the Weed and Seed effort. You should have a plan for how day-to-day operations will be carried out and how resources will be deployed in an efficient and coordinated manner. Specifically, address the following elements:

Roles and responsibilities of the Weed and Seed Coordinator during strategy development (if one was appointed):

Roles and responsibilities of the Weed and Seed Coordinator to be assumed during strategy implementation:

Organizational structure of the entire Weed and Seed effort: include an organizational chart and narrative explaining the lines of authority and major responsibilities of the Steering Committee, subcommittees, lead agencies, Coordinator and other staff (if applicable); and

Process for day-to-day decision making on management, administration, and budgeting.

D. Evaluation

Discuss the plan for evaluating the Weed and Seed strategy. You should have a plan for and conduct an objective evaluation of your strategy in order to measure its progress and success. An arrangement with an academic or analytic partner is strongly encouraged and may be helpful in the development and analysis of the evaluation.

In this section of your strategy, at the minimum, address the following elements (others may be added depending on specific circumstances):

- Identify who will be responsible for conducting the evaluation;
- Identify how the evaluation will be carried out; and
- Identify the frequency by which reports will be generated.

You will be asked to identify specific and detailed measurable outcome(s) for the goals and/or objectives of your strategy. These measurable outcomes should serve as the focus of your evaluation plan and should be presented in section III of your strategy (rather than here in Management Structure).

The Designated Neighborhood

Identify specific boundaries of the designated neighborhood. Include an 8-1/2" x 11" map with the boundaries marked and indicate the census tract(s) included in the site. The population level of most designated neighborhoods does not exceed 25,000 (many designated neighborhoods have a population of 5,000-15,000). The population of your designated neighborhood should not exceed 50,000 residents.

Community Needs Assessment

A systematic needs assessment involves gathering and analyzing detailed information about a wide range of neighborhood characteristics, problems, and resources. A needs assessment is **required** unless one has been completed within the past two years.

It is not limited to a review of criminal activity; rather, it also considers some of the underlying causes of crime problems, the local resources that can be mobilized to combat them, and unmet community needs.

Needs assessment implementation may require the assembly of an Assessment Team. Depending on the size and diversity of your Steering Committee, you may choose to use the Steering Committee in this role. Whichever method chosen the group tasked with assessment will be required to collect and analyze neighborhood data. The information will then be forwarded to the Steering Committee.

Once the Assessment Team has been established, a methodology for collecting the information must be established. The type of information collected also must be determined. This data may take the form of both primary information, from sources such as one-on-one interviews, to secondary information from reports and studies already published.

The needs assessment also provides baseline information – which is critical to evaluating the Weed and Seed effort. Community consultation is an important component of the needs assessment. Input from local residents should be an integral part of the analysis and included in your responses below.

1. Discuss the demographic characteristics of the designated neighborhood relevant to the strategy. These characteristics provide a picture of the character, qualities and unique elements of the designated neighborhood and its residents. For context, compare and contrast key demographic indicators with those for the city or county in which the designated neighborhood resides. Include statistics which best describe the designated area; i.e., number of residents, poverty rate, household income, unemployment rate, percent of renter- and owner-occupied households, school dropout rate, racial/ethnic composition, etc.

2. Discuss the signs of neighborhood deterioration and potential. Integrate into your responses the residents' views and perspectives. Specifically, address the following elements:

- Identify and explain the most serious crime problems of the designated neighborhood. Provide a detailed description and relevant statistics for each crime problem. For context, compare and contrast key indicators with those for the city or county in which the designated neighborhood resides. Include the most serious and/or intractable problems facing local residents; e.g., homicide, drug-related crime, gang-related violence, domestic violence, high number of residents under correctional supervision, etc. Use the following types of indicators in your discussions. (Other indicators may be used if they are more appropriate.)
- Identify and explain other neighborhood problems and signs of neighborhood deterioration. Provide a detailed description and relevant statistics for each neighborhood problem. For context, compare and contrast key indicators with those for the city or county in which the designated neighborhood resides. Include the most serious and/or intractable problems facing local residents; e.g., high unemployment, high dropout rate, high teenage pregnancy rate, high number of absentee landlords and abandoned property, etc.

Discuss the signs of economic revitalization. Is the designated neighborhood a designated Empowerment Zone/Enterprise (EZ/EC) site or does it have a similar state or local designation? Are other economic initiatives occurring?

3. Prepare an inventory of neighborhood resource providers. List the resource providers residing in, or currently serving the designated neighborhood, that may be important to your

strategy. Indicate the resource providers that will be partnering or collaborating in support of the Weed and Seed strategy.

The inventory may include schools, hospitals or health clinics, libraries, parks, recreation centers, police stations, human services and other social service agencies, treatment facilities or programs, shelters, churches, businesses, transportation, community organizations, neighborhood associations, private sector programs, and government programs (local, state and federal).

4. Identify the most serious unmet needs of the community that you hope to address in the Weed and Seed strategy. List the unmet needs in order of priority from highest to lowest. Your priorities should directly correlate to the conditions defined in your description of neighborhood characteristics and signs of neighborhood deterioration and potential. You should integrate into your response the residents' views and perspectives on unmet needs.

Example #1:

City A identified juvenile crime as a serious crime problem in the designated neighborhood. Police data indicates a 37% jump in juvenile arrests in the designated area in 1998. Total calls for service in the designated area increased by 12.5% in the same year – with particularly high increases in the number of calls for service regarding juveniles (a total of 364 calls for service involving juvenile crime and 270 involving juvenile runaways). This represented 20% of all calls for service involving juveniles in the city; a disproportionately large share of juvenile crime since the designated neighborhood represents just 11% of the city's total population. The community identified youth recreational facilities and programs that encourage students to stay in school as serious unmet needs.

Example #2:

City B identified poor quality housing as a serious problem of the designated neighborhood. According to a recent housing survey, 29% of houses in the designated neighborhood were considered to be in sound condition (no repairs required), 20% were in serious condition (deteriorating and dilapidated), and 50% were in need of minor repairs. This compares to a citywide estimate of 69% of houses in sound condition and only 2% in serious condition. The high need for minor repairs is the result of a majority of homeowners being elderly or living on fixed incomes and unable to perform everyday maintenance to their property. The high number of houses in serious condition is the result of a dramatic influx of methamphetamine labs to the designated neighborhood. In 1997, the Drug Enforcement Administration identified 109 methamphetamine labs in all of City B; 106 of these labs were found specifically in the designated area. The community identified removal of drug houses and nuisance properties, homeowner maintenance assistance programs, and affordable housing opportunities (owner occupied and rental housing) as serious unmet needs

5. Identify the consultation methods employed to gain resident input into the community needs assessment. If you held community meetings, focus groups, or consultations with existing community organizations, state the number and type of meetings and how many residents attended. If you conducted a community survey, discuss the type of survey, date of survey administration (results should be less than two years old), number of responses received, and a brief summary of the results.

The Planning Process

Based on the collaborative structure and the community needs assessment, you should now present your strategic plan. This plan must include your major goals, objectives, tasks, implementation plans, and evaluation criteria for addressing the problems and unmet needs of the designated area and affecting long-term change. The systematic process you use to identify this strategic information will enable you to build commitment among the stakeholders, focus on areas of greatest need and priority, and ensure that everyone involved is working toward the same goals.

Components of the Strategy

Weed and Seed requires a comprehensive response to neighborhood problem solving; thus, a multi-level strategic plan must be developed. There are four basic components to the strategy – Law Enforcement, Community Policing, Prevention/Intervention/Treatment, and Neighborhood Restoration. Goals, objectives, tasks, implementation plans, and evaluation criteria should be developed for, and relate to, each of the component areas. Your community should devote roughly equivalent time, resources, and effort to each of these components (although the timing of program implementation may vary, weeding strategies may predominate the first year and seeding the second and third). The four components are described in detail below.

Law Enforcement. The Law Enforcement component of your strategy should focus on the removal of chronic and violent street criminals from the designated neighborhood. It should consist primarily of suppression activities designed to identify, apprehend, and incapacitate violent street criminals. Interagency collaboration among federal, state and local law enforcement agencies should be a primary emphasis. There are four program elements involved in crime suppression -- law enforcement, adjudication, prosecution and supervision (probation, parole, and community corrections). Law enforcement strategies should address all four elements (to the extent possible).

Community Policing. The Community Policing Component of your strategy should serve as a bridge between your weeding and seeding activities. The idea here is that neighborhood problems require a comprehensive, coordinated approach where criminal justice agencies work in partnership with human service agencies, the private sector, and the community. It is important to establish linkages between community policing and the other components of your strategy.

Community policing strategies should integrate four basic concepts:

1) pro-active problem solving, 2) partnerships, 3) permanent assignment of police officers to the designated neighborhood, and 4) an emphasis on youth crime prevention.

Prevention/Intervention/Treatment

The Prevention/Intervention/Treatment component of your strategy should help prevent crime and violence from recurring by concentrating a broad array of human services on the designated

area to create an environment where, simply put, crime cannot thrive. Linkages among law enforcement and social service agencies, the private sector, and the community will need to be maintained and strengthened. EOWS believes the Safe Haven should be a central focus of any community-based prevention, intervention, and treatment efforts. (The Safe Haven is a mechanism to organize and deliver an array of youth- and adult-oriented human services in a multi-service center setting such as a school or community center.) A range of prevention, intervention and treatment strategies should be developed; however, it is required that at least one Safe Haven is established in the designated neighborhood.

Neighborhood Restoration

The Neighborhood Restoration component of your strategy should focus on economic development activities designed to strengthen legitimate community institutions. Three areas may be addressed: economic development, employment opportunities for residents, and improved housing conditions and physical environment. EOWS recognizes that planning and managing a successful restoration program is difficult, and Weed and Seed cannot control many of the socioeconomic forces that affect a neighborhood. At a minimum, you should create processes for stabilizing the community and promoting restoration.

Timeframe

Identify the timeframe for the Weed and Seed Strategy. Is this a 2-year, 3-year, or 5-year plan, or is some other timeframe being used? Be sure to justify why this timeframe was selected.

Strategic Plan

- 1. For each component area, identify the goals of your strategy.** Each goal should be a broad statement of what you intend to achieve in the long-term. Taken together, your goals should describe a “future vision” of the designated neighborhood. They should specifically address one or more of the neighborhood problems and unmet needs identified in section II. In short, they should clearly establish what you expect to accomplish.
- 2. For each goal, identify the major objectives of your strategy.** Objectives should be precise, measurable statements that identify courses of action for achieving the goals. Objectives are action-oriented. In developing objectives, you should consider whether the action would have a high or low impact on the problem it is designed to resolve and whether it is feasible to implement (considering such issues as resource availability and the level of coordination required). You should strive for high impact and feasible objectives.
- 3. For a set of related objectives, identify major tasks of your strategy.** The tasks should be specific actions and activities that will be undertaken to accomplish the objectives. A set of tasks should relate specifically to one or a few objectives.
- 4. For each task, identify an implementation plan, that is, the organization responsible for accomplishing the task and the start and end date for completion.** A timeline displaying the start and completion date for each task is also appropriate.

5. For each goal of your strategy, identify evaluation criteria, that is, some measurable outcome(s) that will enable you to determine if your goals and objectives have been achieved. For each goal and/or objective, you should identify one or more specific measures or outcomes to determine whether or not you accomplished the intended outcome, and in what timeframe. You may consider using, but are not limited to, the following examples:

- Decreases in specific crime rates (data source: police records)
- Increases in perceptions of public safety (data source: resident surveys)
- Increases in the number of community activities in local parks (data source: newly created Weed and Seed database)
- Increases in the number of people graduating from job training programs (data source: program records)

An arrangement with an academic or analytic partner is strongly encouraged to help you develop measures which are appropriate to your strategy and for which data is (or can be made) available.

Memoranda of Agreement

Provide Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) from all partnering agencies involved in the Weed and Seed effort. The purpose of the MOA is to identify the type and level of commitments each partnering agency is willing to make in support of Weed and Seed. By identifying specific roles and obligations and requiring signatures of all Agency Heads, each agency will feel a high level of commitment to the overall partnership and its decisions and actions. The MOA should identify general commitments that are not dependent upon grant funding, i.e., providing staff to serve on the Steering Committee or sub-committees, reprogramming staff for service provision in the designated neighborhood, change of agency priorities to better serve designated neighborhood residents, etc. The MOA should state the type of resource(s) being provided, for what purpose, and length of time.

You will be expected to update the MOA with additional details and commitments (including those which are dependent on grant funding), if Weed and Seed funding is awarded to your site subsequent to receiving OR.

Example:

City A prepares a single MOA. The document begins with a general statement of support for the Weed and Seed strategy. Following is a listing, by agency, of the commitments each is making in support of Weed and Seed. At the end of the document are signatures of each Agency Head. Below is information contained in the body of the MOA:

The United States Attorney or their designee will serve as Co-Chair of the Weed and Seed Steering Committee and will facilitate bimonthly/monthly meetings of the members.

The Prosecutor's Office will prosecute misdemeanants known to be gang members or drug dealers from the designated neighborhood, vigorously opposing suspended sentencing, home detention, and "OR" releases for these defendants.

The YWCA will assign a staff member to work five days a week from the Safe Haven site offering counseling services for victims and families involved in domestic violence.

The Probation Office will assign two probation officers to work with probationers and parolees in the designated neighborhood for one year. The cost of these assignments will be covered by appropriated funds. These assignments will be renewed for one additional year subject to the availability of Weed and Seed grant funding.

The Code Enforcement Office will assign a full-time Code Enforcement Officer to the designated neighborhood for one year. The cost of this assignment will be covered by appropriated funds. Renewal of this position will be dependent upon the availability of Weed and Seed grant funding.

The Community Development Corporation will be responsible for hiring and contracting with the Weed and Seed Coordinator and overseeing administration of the Weed and Seed grant.

Linkages and Information Sharing

Describe how the four components of the Weed and Seed strategy are linked together to accomplish common goals. Your response should reflect the commitments set forth in your MOA(s). At a minimum, address the following elements:

- **Coordination Within and Between Components.** Discuss how you will ensure that the various partnering agencies involved in your Weed and Seed strategy will communicate with one another, coordinate their activities, and provide referrals to each other.
- **Community Policing Linkages.** Discuss how the community policing strategy will be coordinated with the other components of your strategy (law enforcement, prevention/intervention/treatment, and neighborhood restoration). These linkages are particularly important because community policing should serve as a bridge between the weeding and seeding components of your strategy.
- **Prevention, Intervention and Treatment Linkages.** Discuss how you will ensure that prevention, intervention, and treatment programs are coordinated in order to avoid duplication or gaps in services. How will these linkages be facilitated through management of your Safe Haven(s)?

Role of Residents in Strategy Implementation

Describe how residents will participate in the implementation of your Weed and Seed strategy. Specifically, address the following elements:

- Role of residents in the community policing component of your strategy: specifically discuss how residents will work with community policing officers to resolve neighborhood problems;
- Role of residents in the prevention/intervention/treatment component of your strategy: specifically discuss the role of residents in the operation of your Safe Haven(s); and
- Role of residents in the neighborhood restoration component of your strategy.

Outreach and Mobilization

Describe your outreach plan to communicate with and mobilize neighborhood residents. This final element of your coordination efforts is key to generating community participation, interest and involvement. Specifically, address the following elements:

- How will you inform residents of your strategy's goals, services, and programs?
- How will you mobilize residents to participate in Weed and Seed and help to achieve your overall goals and objectives?
- What communication tools will you be developing and distributing to keep residents informed and promote Weed and Seed, i.e., newsletters, brochures, flyers, press releases, public meetings?

Safe Havens

A Safe Haven is a multi-service center where a variety of youth and adult services are coordinated in a highly visible, accessible facility that is secure against crime and illegal drug activity. It is a place where youth and other residents can access needed services, develop relationships, and find opportunities to be productive and successful, and enhance skills.

Through its visibility, proximity, and program diversity for residents of all ages, it fosters resistance to drugs, crime and other neighborhood problems. A Safe Haven provides an environment for residents and service providers to revitalize their neighborhood. It encourages them to identify existing core problems as well as to develop programs and services to ameliorate these problems through prevention, intervention, and treatment activities.

The Safe Haven should provide a variety of services and supportive programs, e.g., educational, cultural, recreational, health, and justice-related, with emphasis on coordinated delivery of these services. Using the risk and protective factor assessment, local communities decide on the priority risks to be addressed as well as fill existing gaps in the service delivery systems. Case management should be closely coordinated for all family members based on their unique assessment and needs.

A Safe Haven should be a safe and secure facility. A neighborhood school is the ideal place to locate a Safe Haven and maximize the coordination of services. The school is usually a well-

known and well-respected facility with ample room for a broad variety of activities. It is usually very defensible against crime and often protected by the drug-free school zone laws.

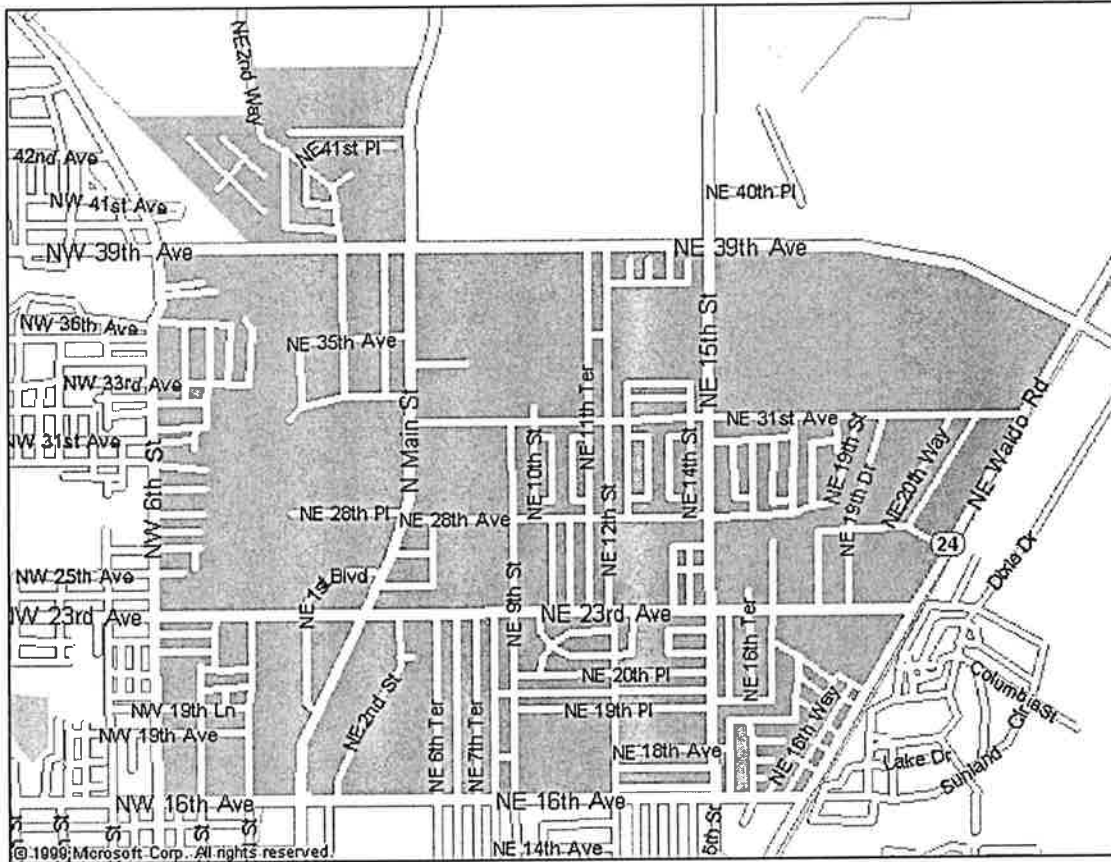
A Safe Haven should be accessible to a wide range of individuals from the targeted neighborhood. The Safe Haven will provide youth, parents and other residents with a safe place to go, and productive activities. For example, parenting classes will teach how to strengthen family bonds; teachers will be able to enhance their skills in proactive classroom management; and neighborhood groups can learn how to advocate for their community.

A Safe Haven should have trained paid and volunteer staff available. Training provided to Safe Haven staff should emphasize principles of collaboration, enhanced adult and youth case management skills, drug and alcohol abuse prevention and education, volunteer training, and planning.

A Safe Haven should be open outside of normal school and work hours. It should also be open on weekends and during summer vacations.

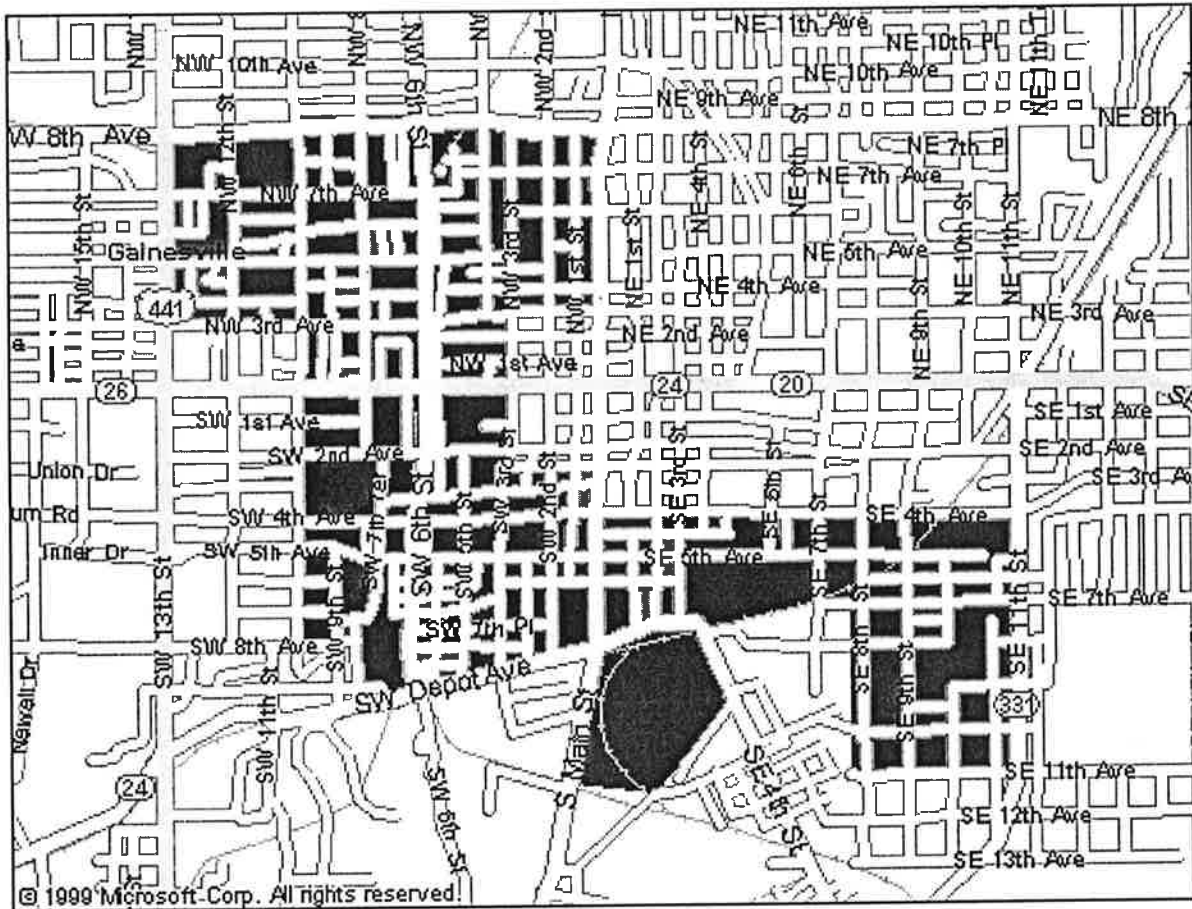
A Safe Haven can play a role in any broad neighborhood revitalization effort. Successful neighborhood restoration requires a comprehensive strategy which coordinates efforts by law enforcement, community groups, schools, public and private social service agencies, government, and the private sector, working together to restore distressed neighborhoods. Program selection and implementation in a Safe Haven are guided by a "risk and protective factor" approach. Risk factors are identified and prioritized, then addressed with a comprehensive strategy that reduces risks while enhancing protective factors that can lessen the impact of being exposed to these risks.

Weed and Seed Site 1



The first site is located in the Northeastern portion of the City and encompasses the Pine Forest, Carroll Estates, Village Green, Highland Court Manor, Tree Trail, Varsity Villas Mobile Home Park neighborhoods.

Weed and Seed Site 2



This area encompasses the Pleasant Street/5th Avenue neighborhoods as well as Porters Community before moving east to include the Springhill neighborhood.