

at venues associated with juvenile offenses (e.g. schools and recreation centers), police are absent at public places that encourage interaction and dialogue with community members (e.g. neighborhood forums). Providers suggested that police should walk through the neighborhoods and drive with their windows down to demonstrate their approachability to youth, while probation officers recommend that police be more involved with the youth's families before arrest. A gap in communication exists due, in part, to police tendency to alienate themselves from community events.

It is important to note that not all police officers practice the outlined characteristics but that subsection of the MPD is the minority. Youth also noted that they should also be recruited and integrated into the training process in order to enhance and improve perceptions of their various cultures. Departmental leadership should also cultivate an environment in which training of officers involves attention to the needs of young people in the city, as part of an effort to divert them from unnecessary detention and commitment.

During the course of a site visit in May 2001 to Boston, Massachusetts, where Commission members spoke at length with leaders of the much-lauded Youth Gang Task Force as part of an effort to learn how other cities have addressed youth crime, the subject of police and community/youth relations emerged as a key theme. Very similar to the District of Columbia in population and other demographic characteristics, Boston has worked hard to educate and train (on an ongoing basis) its officers to deal with young people. After a period in which it experienced the most homicides to date – 152 in 1990- the city reassessed its old strategies and formed new partnership. One Deputy Chief

explained that these partnerships were “not just around critical incidents,” but were part of a long-term cultural and institutional change.

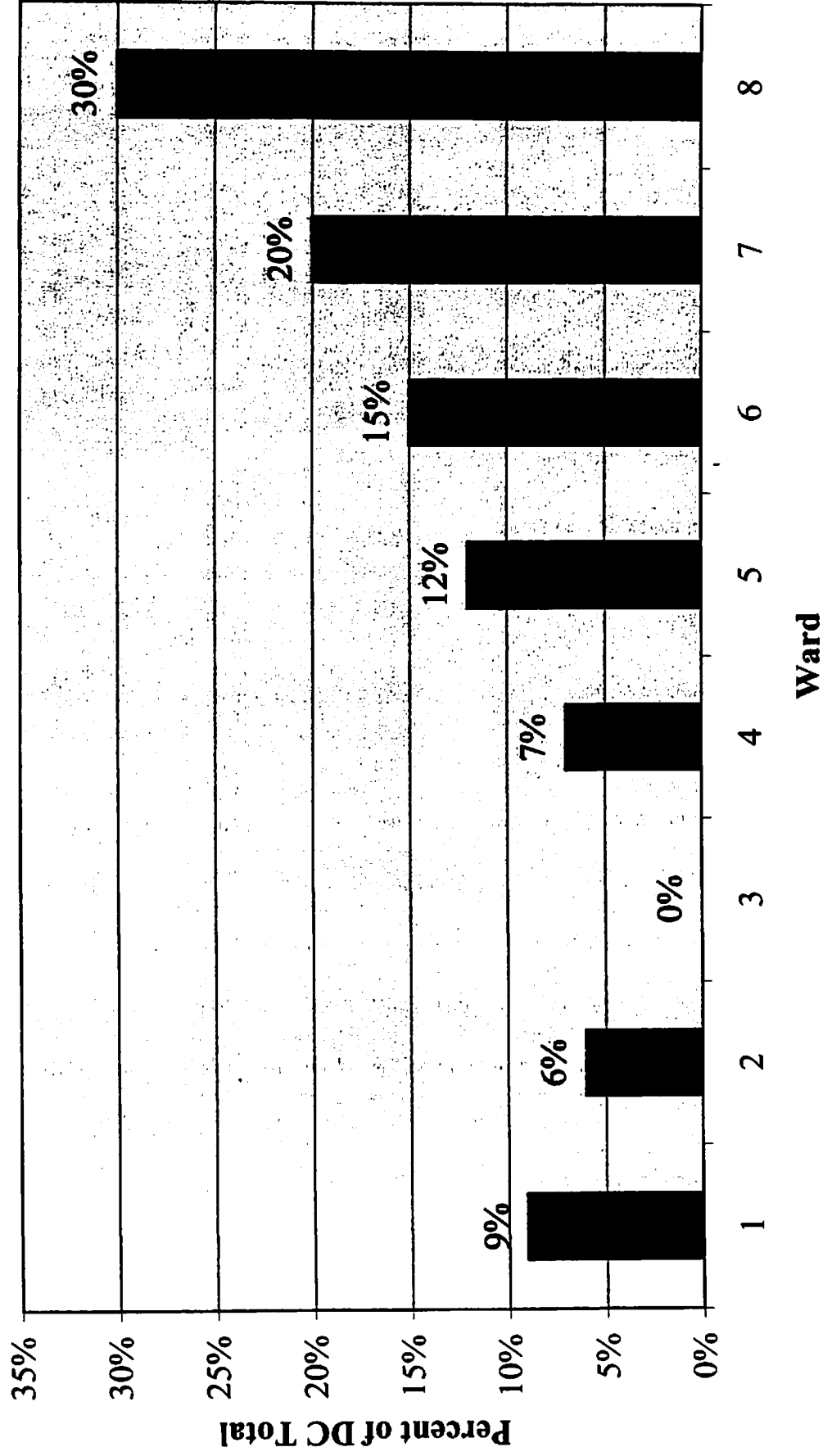
Mentoring of youth was also viewed as integral to this strategy. In addition to bolstering its technological capability to understand the spatial and temporal aspects of youth crime, police officials worked with the US Attorney, the District Attorney, and community leaders and activists to conduct outreach to youth and to prosecute gang members. Summer and school-based programs funded by John Hancock and other private industry leaders helped to keep “at risk” youth busy and sustain their attention on career development, substance abuse prevention, and other constructive activities.

At bottom, Boston officials incorporated youth development theory and practice into their policing strategies. Subsequent to the formation of these collaborative partnerships, they experienced an almost two year period without a single youth homicide. Public officials and police leaders continue to reach out to young people and youth serving agencies through many community-based contexts. The Ella J. Baker House in the Dorchester section of Boston, for example, has convened weekly meetings with police, social service agencies, juvenile justice advocates, and United Way and other critical funders to identify youth needs and opportunities (See Appendix D). The District Attorney also maintains a school violence prosecutor who works with schools and with social workers to ensure that school conferences take place before problems result in truancy and expulsion.

The Commission's conversations regarding MPD's work with youth have uncovered several major initiatives in the area of youth safety. However, staffing and lack of resources to conduct comprehensive outreach appear to be barriers to change. The Office of Youth Violence, which conducts extensive outreach in Wards 7 and 8, runs many programs with Boys and Girls Clubs, the Clergy Police Community Partnership, the East Capitol Center for Change, and other community-based organizations. Currently, however, the Office of Youth Violence has 3 officers who are assigned to areas covered by the 6th and 7th Police Districts. Though it has no designated youth corps, the Youth and Preventive Services Division works to divert youth before they enter the juvenile justice system. Attendance at various police and community-sponsored events by members of both of these divisions also reveals that many officers are making efforts to bridge the chasm between youth cultures and themselves. But, it appears that a consistent group of officers attend the same events.

Unlike Boston, with approximately twice the number of police districts as DC and where approximately 50 of its 2,400 officers form a high status youth police corps, police officials who lead the MPD youth-serving divisions do not hold Assistant Chief designations. Boston police officials shared that the information-sharing processes needed to build effective youth policing strategies must be anchored in achieving accountability from across a number of divisions and not just those working with youth. This means that the youth-serving divisions are able to communicate information across all divisions, which -to use the words of one Assistant Chief in Boston- "suppress crime but mentor youth."

Children on Cash Assistance, Ages 0-17 by Ward, 1998



SOURCE: The Urban Institute, Capacity and Needs Assessment (1999)

and academic researchers have also identified protective factors such as the level of neighborhood and community support networks and resources (often termed “social capital”). Longitudinal studies, such as the Chicago Neighborhood Human Development study conducted by Dr. Felton Earls of Harvard University, have noted the strong influence of “collective efficacy,” where the degree to which neighborhood residents are willing to work together has been linked to rates of victimization and perpetration. Taken together, these bodies of research affirm that youth need strong support networks, both at home and in a variety of community contexts to increase their safety.

National and local research related to juvenile crime and violence patterns has also found that a small percentage of youth- overwhelmingly boys- are often responsible for a high percentage of violent incidents in a particular neighborhood. In her analysis of several of Washington, D.C.’s neighborhoods, Marcia Chaiken (1998) found similar delinquency and demographic patterns as in other cities. Chaiken reported that most boys involved in crime had little after school adult supervision, along with a set of basic unmet needs. Conversely, those who were engaged in sports or other structured activities were less likely to engage in crime. Truancy and expulsion were common among 76% of boys in her sample. As the level of seriousness related to delinquency increased, drug use and firearm or weapons carrying rates also increased. In addition, 15% of the boys in the sample of 213 reported belonging to gangs.

Finally, the Commission's analysis of this area finds that policies and procedures related to "Handling Juveniles" (title of policy memo) need to be updated in official Police Department training manuals and policy memos (See Appendix F). *General Order 305.1*- "Handling Juveniles"- is the official policy and procedure for dealing with youth. Established on December 10, 1990, it has not been updated since April 19, 1991. It is outdated. For example, it makes reference to the Receiving Home that closed in 1995 as the place to take youth. There is no mention of the Central Processing Unit, range of diversion programs or protocols, or leading MPD officials who handle such matters.

Out of School Time Programming Options

Many programs exist to serve youth of various ages in a variety of contexts. However, it is apparent that gaps in programming options for certain age groups and limited slots in existing programs sometimes make it difficult for all youth to feel like they belong to a program or take part in out of school activities. The Commission has found that special attention is needed to bring programs to scale, and that public efforts to market these programs to young people must be enhanced. While an updated capacity and needs assessment would certainly provide a more authoritative documentation of the geographic distribution of need, Commission conversations with public officials, youth, and youth providers disproportionately identified the following needs:

- **Programs that link employment with academic mentorship.** There is a need for more integrated programs, such as the Department of Employment Services'

(DOES) *Passport to Work Program* and *School to Careers Initiative*, which provide mentoring. *Passport to Work* provides year round employment readiness experiences, academic enrichment programs, and pre-employment work maturity skills training for those aged 14-21 years of age. Funded by the *Workforce Investment Act*, the program also focuses on occupational skills that youth need to maintain long-term employment. Components include a summer employment opportunities program and employer partnership initiatives with the federal government and private sectors.

- **Services for youth transitioning from juvenile justice system.** Youth who are transitioning out of the juvenile justice system are often caught in a gap, where they do not get the same services and opportunities that other youth in schools have received. The Department of Employment Services, which receives funding for these youth under several federal grants, has failed to maintain a consistent “safety net” for these youth as they re-enter communities. YSA, which has a number of transition programs for youth as part of their aftercare services network, has initiated communication with DOES to expand programming options for youth who are making the transition from the juvenile justice system but has had little success in the release of funds to create a seamless transition through collaboration. Both the *Youth Opportunity Program* and the *Passport to Work Program* provide significant financial support to create experiences for both in-school and out-of-school youth.

- **More comprehensive outreach and resources for older high school aged youth (13-17 yrs of age).** Often the most vulnerable in terms of risk for crime and violence, this group is often without creative options in neighborhoods and communities. The lack of a movie theater “east of the River,” for example, severely limits the ability of poor and often minority youth to spend time in their communities engaged in activities that are enjoyed by their counterparts in other parts of the city. In addition to stimulating academic and employment opportunities, there are many unexplored opportunities for industry partnership. Summer and school-year job opportunities and/or job readiness programs were cited as critical by young people and Commissioners in a variety of contexts. Even with awareness of opportunities, youth testified that they were confused about timelines and application process.
- **Dropout Prevention/Truancy.** A high priority must be placed on the prevention of truancy and the lowering of dropout rates. The absence of significant in-school suspension options produces lost opportunities for intervention to prevent truancy and other risks for crime and violence. With a report that 39 secondary schools have suspension options, DCPS is working with the Courts to divert chronic truants, as well as to ensure that Attendance Intervention Programs conduct extensive outreach. DCPS has recently made this a priority in its planning efforts, according to Superintendent Paul Vance. Specifically, DCPS is working to ensure that youth who are at risk for truancy receive help before they drop out of school rather than just expand the number of truancy centers. In 1999-2000, the

Metropolitan Police Department picked up 831 truants; in 1997-1998, it picked up 643 truants.

Creation of recreational spaces and enjoyable neighborhood places for youth using currently vacant and under utilized property.

Commissioners recognize that vacant and under utilized properties present the City with an opportunity to utilize public space to meet demand for enjoyable recreational centers and other activities for youth. Efforts should be made among agencies serving children and youth to expand the number of vacant properties that can be converted into high quality programming environments for children and youth. For example, the Department of Parks and Recreation and DC Public Schools might work with appropriate District Offices to identify properties in need of restoration and/or reclassification to open up new opportunities for community-based sites. An important first step is also recognition that children and youth should be a part of the economic goals of the city, and that these sites could enhance the quality of life for youth and the long-term sustainability of the communities in which they live.

Addressing the need for supportive health and social services: substance abuse and mental health among children and youth.

Substance abuse

The lack of community and school-based substance use prevention and treatment alternatives for youth is of crisis proportions in the District of Columbia. The DC Department of Health's Addiction, Prevention, and Recovery Administration (APRA) has elevated this to a high priority, but current practice finds that only adjudicated youth receive any kind of comprehensive services in this area. This is extremely critical, given the high proportion of youth testing positive for substances at intake - reported as 60% by the Director of CSS. Drug-related offenses compromise approximately 40% of committing offenses and almost 20% of those in residential placement.

Supportive services are needed to address risk for substance use at early stages of children's development. According to the 1999 school-based *Youth Risk Behavior Survey*, eighteen percent (18%) of youth admitted that they "smoked a whole cigarette" before the age of 13. Approximately 28% admitted that they "drank more than a few sips of alcohol" and 12.3% admitted that they "tried marijuana" – both before the age of 13. Youth in Washington, D.C. fell significantly below the average for the Nation in answering the questions related to smoking a cigarette and alcohol. They scored one percentage point above the national average on the question about marijuana.

The Commission recognizes that early prevention messages must come from multiple contexts, including home, neighborhood, and school. Given the high correlation between drugs and risk for violence among youth, it is imperative that the District take immediate steps to adopt primary and secondary prevention opportunities to address drug use among its youngest citizens.

Mental health services

Commission members found that children and youth are assessed in a variety of contexts in child and youth serving agencies, including agencies that exist as a part of the juvenile justice system. As a matter of practices, different agencies use different risk assessment instruments (sometimes not validated) to recommend a diverse array of mental health services and other supports. The Department of Mental Health Services has initiated processes to establish school-based mental health services in every school in the District of Columbia. Commissioners also recommend that the Department of Mental Health Services continue its work with the Department of Human Services to ensure that there is a comprehensive continuum established for children and youth in need of critical services, both inside and outside of the juvenile justice system.

DC Public Schools is also working more closely with the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth, and Families and the State Education Office in a “Transforming Schools” initiative to identify students in low performing schools as part of a broader effort to provide supportive enrichment and supportive services. In addition, DC Public Schools is engaged in a survey of their Non Public Day School students, many of whom have severe emotional and learning disabilities and require intensive case management. According to the most recent data obtained from DC Public Schools, 18% of students in the public school system are classified as special education.

With respect to critical substance abuse and mental health issues, Commissioners also recommended that the District of Columbia strengthen the following areas:

- **Prevention and treatment alternatives.** A prioritization of juvenile prevention education and youth-serving substance use treatment programs and mental health services is needed as major goals of the District's *Healthy People 2010* public health objectives is elevate attention to mental health and substance abuse.
- **Coordination at Mayoral level.** Establish liaisons between the proposed Youth Services Coordinating Commission and the Mayor's Substance Abuse Advisory Council and the Department of Mental Health as a strategy to ensure seamless delivery of services.
- **Interagency diversion strategies.** Establish an interagency framework for the Office of the Corporation Counsel (OCC) to work with Court Social Services (CSS) and the Metropolitan Police Department to design and implement alternatives to incarceration and diversion opportunities for youth who are in need of treatment and counseling for substance use and mental health issues.
- **Services for juvenile reentry population.** Establish departmental liaisons with the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth, and Families to continue work on the provision of supportive wraparound youth mental health and substance abuse services as part of a comprehensive reentry strategy for juvenile offenders reentering communities.

- **Department of Health programming.** Direct the Addiction, Prevention, and Recovery Administration (APRA) to bolster its efforts to aggressively target all children and youth- preschool through post-secondary ages - with consistent prevention education messages. Engage private sector, faith community, after school and recreation centers, and parents and other community members. In addition, promote the establishment of a framework to create dual diagnosis residential treatment options with outpatient components.

Chapter 2

Youth Interactions with the Juvenile Justice System

In addition to an exploration of youth experiences in the context of cultural, social, and economic indicators, the Commission proceeded to examine primary and secondary data, engage in conversations with public officials, and conduct additional research and investigation of the intersections among the multiple agencies and actors involved in the “processing” of juveniles. The first task of the Commission entailed a mapping of the juvenile justice system and study of the trends and themes related to youth crime and violence in the District of Columbia. What the Commission learned about the initial interactions of youth with the “front door”- the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, Court Social Services, and the Metropolitan Police Department- and the “back door” – the Youth Services Administration and a network of community-based programs and networks – is contained in this chapter.

Mapping Youth Crime and Violence

In the course of mapping of youth crime and violence, the Commission realized that poor data, information, and research inhibit a full portrait of young people’s experiences. This is particularly true of any investigation of the historical context in which rates and offenses have fluctuated. Data and information may be collected in some agencies, but there is often no analysis on a regular and systematic basis. Commonly, requests for information- such as the Commission’s request for what should be basic Metropolitan Police Department data related to youth arrests and diversion criteria- result

in back and forth communications that still do not produce meaningful results. Or, there are inconsistencies in coding.³ Although the Commission's inquiries found that many agencies do not share data and information easily because of territoriality and fear of accountability, the results of not having full and easy access to MPD data had strong implications for the level and quality of analysis of youth safety patterns that the Commission could conduct in a timely manner.

The Urban Institute has conducted several studies which supply the best available analysis of violence among youth in the District of Columbia. At the outset, it is important to note that youth in the capital city have experienced a marked decline in rates of crime and violence in recent years. As public health researchers, community activists, public officials, and others have worked together to trumpet a message of violence prevention, rates have fallen in a number of the city's neighborhoods. It is important to note, however, that declines- both nationally and locally- have not been without some degree of disparity in terms of the social groups and geographic areas that are often impacted by these trends. Between 1994 and 1999, juvenile arrests in Washington, D.C. declined from 4,433 to 2,918.⁴ The attached diagrams of juvenile bookings by Ward and Police District, as well as Commitments by Ward, illustrate this point in terms of the geographic concentration of arrest and commitment.

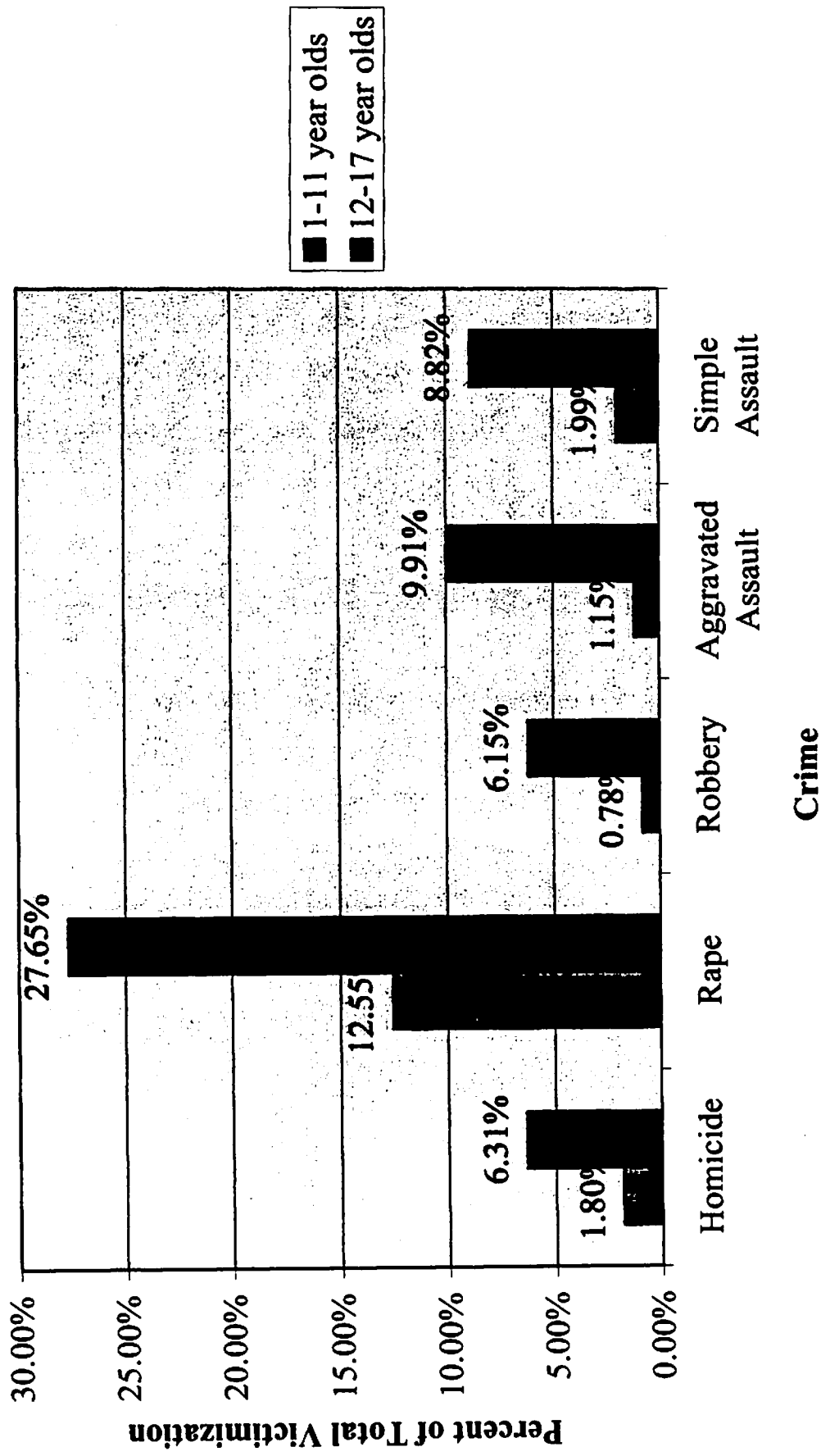
³ The use of different coding and classification systems for youth in terms of offense also has implications for programming. As discussed in the overview of programming best practices in Chapter III and in the proposal to amend confidentiality statutes in Chapter IV, agencies should be able to coordinate and share information to preserve an effective continuum while still preserving confidentiality. Commission researchers and Program Subcommittee members found that youth occasionally get lost because of the broad use and lack of reconciliation of youth social file numbers with MPD and YSA classification systems, for example.

According to the most recent data analysis from the Urban Institute's *Violence in the District* study of 1999 violent crime data in the District, children and youth under the age of 18 have some distinct victimization and perpetration patterns relative to other age groups (See Figures 9 and 10). Individuals under the age of 18 constitute just under 6% of total violent crime arrests in the District. The highest rate of arrest for violent crime is found among the 18-24 year old group, which has a rate of 42.94 per 1,000 residents compared with 17 per 1,000 for the age group 1 to 17 years of age. This finding indicates, first, that popular stereotypes of youth under 18 years of age as the prime generators of violent crime are false, and, second, that there are many reasons to continue an investment in age-appropriate violence prevention programs for younger teenagers. These initiatives will likely deter them from experiences of victimization and perpetration in later teen years.

Although the Urban Institute data represent one year and the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) is very limited in its capacity for research, analysis, and report generation, the findings of the 1999 Urban Institute's analysis of MPD offense and arrest data help us to understand the complexity and disparate impact of youth crime and violence based on age, crime type, race/ethnicity, temporality, and geography. With respect to age and crime type, for example, they illustrate that in 1999 27% of all reported sexual assaults in the District occurred among 12-17 year olds. This latter finding from the Urban Institute is also consistent with what the Commission heard identified in focus groups as area in need of more structured and specialized programming for an increasing

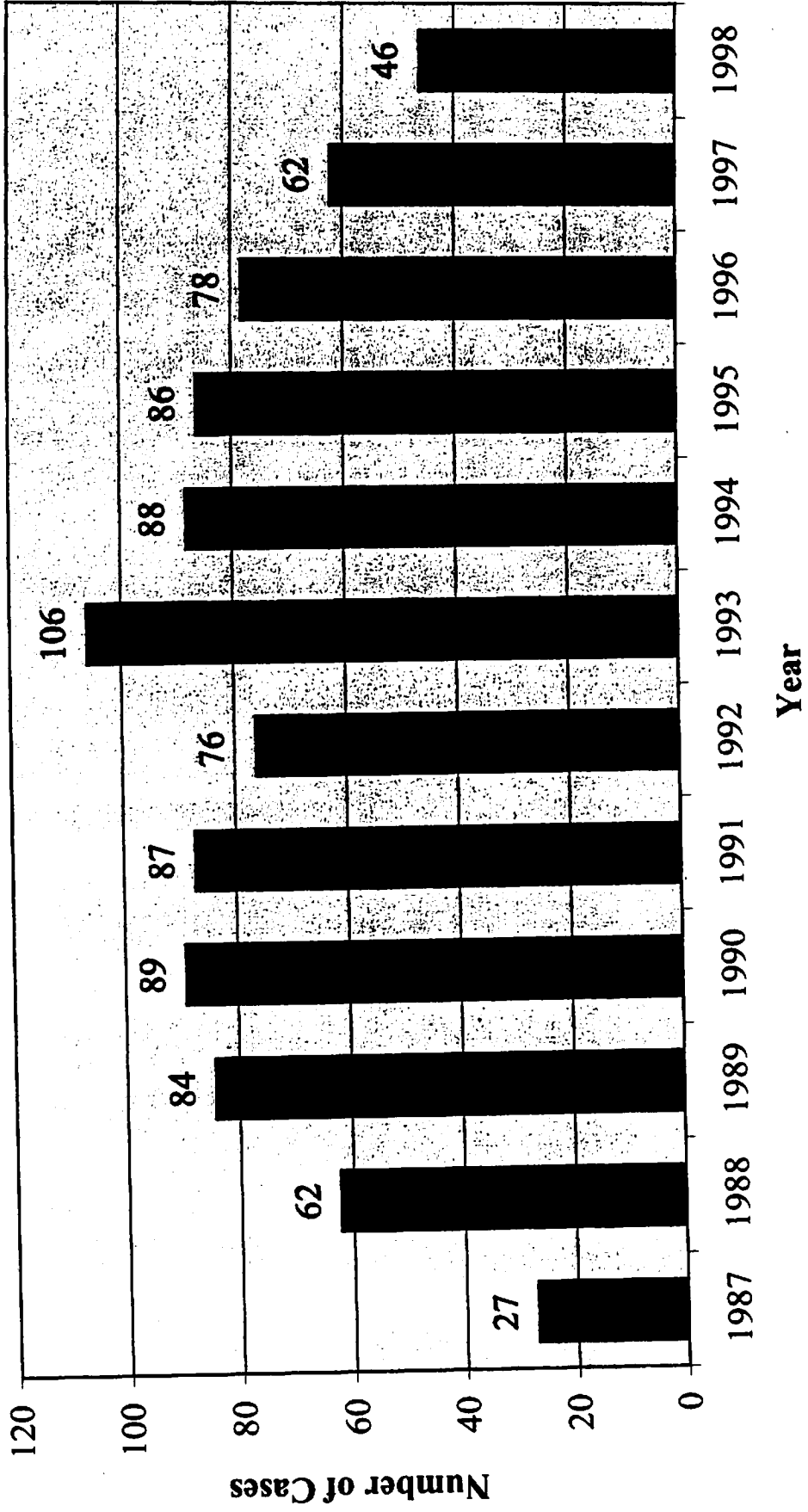
⁴Metropolitan Police District data shared with the Blue Ribbon Commission.

Violent Crime Victims by Age Group 2000



SOURCE: Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice

Violent Deaths of Teens Ages 15-19 District of Columbia, 1987-1998



number of youth- particularly young women- who are entering the juvenile justice system.

The Superior Court of the District of Columbia also provides some valuable insight into the types of crimes for which juveniles are being arrested, as well as the abuse and neglect referrals which provide a window onto broader trends that put children and youth at risk for violence and crime. According to the Court's 2000 *Annual Report*, there has been a 6% decline in the number of new referrals for "Acts against Persons" between 1999 and 2000. Between 1996 and 2000, there was a decline from 1,102 to 676. In terms of "Acts Against Property" over the same period, there was a decline from 1,343 to 766. With respect to Persons In Need of Supervision (PINS), there was a 31.4% decline between 1999 and 2000.⁵ Figure 11 also presents a breakdown of total number of Part I committing offenses among the youth in the custody of YSA during the period June 16, 2000-June 15, 2001.

MPD has also supplied the Blue Ribbon Commission with more recent 2001 juvenile bookings data to illustrate where crime and violence may be occurring in a contemporary context (See Figure 12). According to an analysis of MPD bookings data conducted by the Blue Ribbon Commission, there were a total of 1,362 bookings between January and June 2001. Approximately 84% (1144) occurred among males; 16% (217) among females. In terms of racial and ethnic breakdowns, 94% (1283) of those bookings involved "Black" juveniles, while approximately 5% are listed as "White." "Hispanics"

⁵Analysis completed by Blue Ribbon Commission, with assistance from Torrey Lee, Office of Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice.

Figure 11

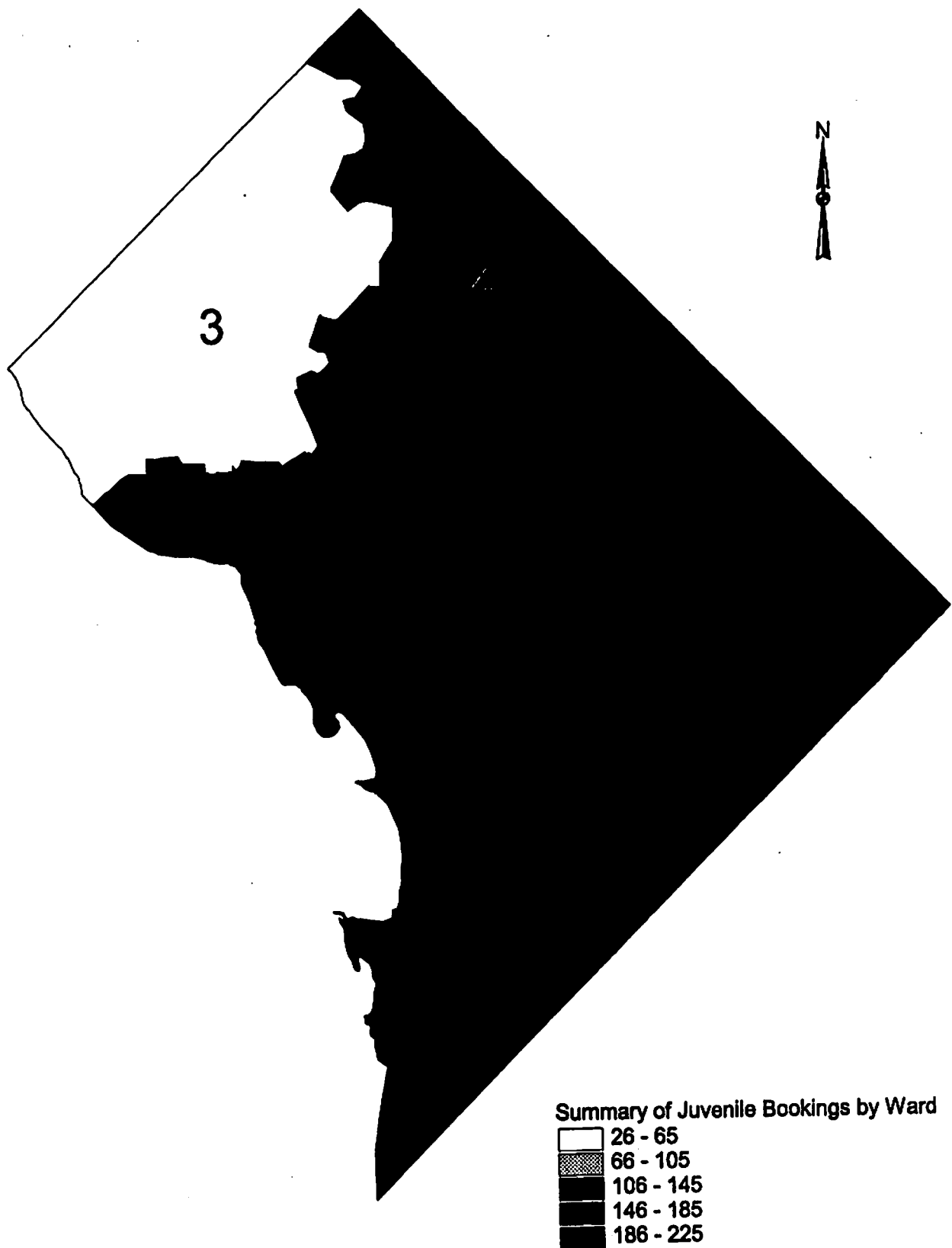
Part I Crime: Offenses for Committed Youth, June 16, 2000 to June 15, 2001

	<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>Total</u>
Total Homicide		15
Murder 1	9	
Murder 2	5	
Manslaughter-Voluntary	1	
Total Rape		5
Rape	4	
Assault with Intent to Rape	1	
Total Robbery		27
Robbery	22	
Assault with Intent to Rob	5	
Aggravated Assault		28
Assault with a Deadly Weapon	23	
Assault with Intent to Rob	5	
Burglary		5
Burglary 1	0	
Burglary 2	5	
Larceny		18
Theft 1 st Degree	7	
Theft 2 nd Degree	11	
Auto Theft		51¹
Arson		0

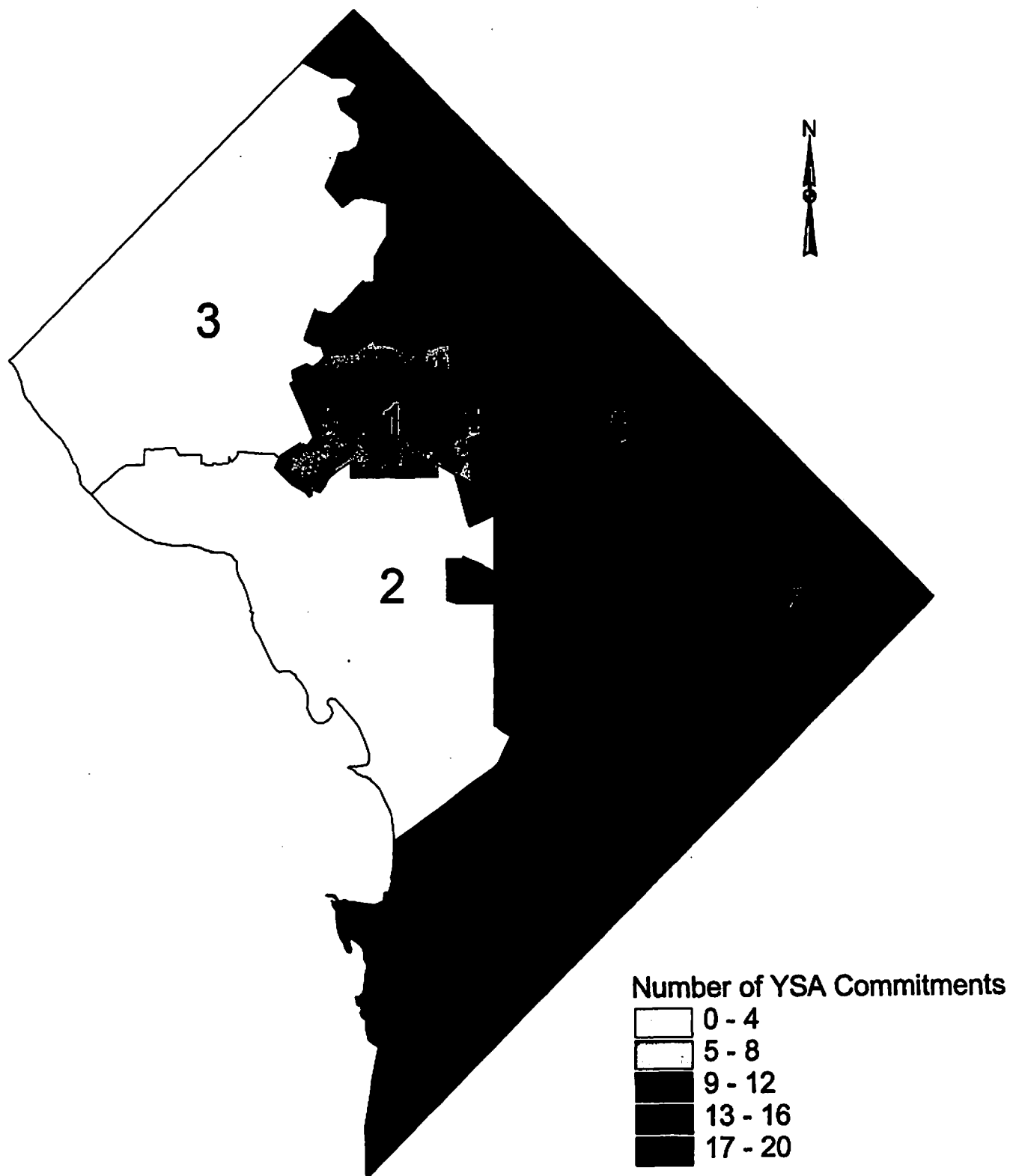
Part I Crime Expressed as a % of Total Committed Population: 30.2%

SOURCE: Youth Services Administration

¹ YSA does not break out Unauthorized Use of a Vehicle (UUV) committed offenses according to UUV Passenger and UUV Driver, and given the assumption that UUV Driver captures carjacking (Part I Crime), we have extrapolated from 2000 data reported by Moses McAllister from Court Social Services that 67% of annual UUV offenses are Part I Crimes (or 135 out of 201 offenses). Thus, as reported by YSA, 67% of 76 UUV committing offenses, or 51 dispositions, are Part I Crimes.



**FIGURE 12 - Summary of Juvenile Bookings,
By Ward, January through June, 2001
Washington, DC**



**FIGURE 13 - Total Number of YSA Commitments,
By Ward, January through June, 2001
Washington, DC**

account for almost 2% of total bookings.⁶ In terms of age, approximately 6% of those booked were under the age of 13. Youth aged 15-17 years accounted for 77.5% of all bookings, while youth aged 13 and 14 years accounted for approximately 16.5% of total bookings.⁷

There are also differences based on arrest locations. In terms of arrest location, Wards 7 and 8, which have been the focus of extensive outreach efforts from the MPD Office of Youth Violence, account, respectively, for approximately 13.5% and 16.5% of total juvenile bookings. Ward 6 accounts for 16.4% of total bookings for January to June 2001, followed by Wards 1 (12.3%) and 2 (12.3%), respectively. 91 arrest locations are listed as "Unknown."

There are also other sources of data which the Commission reviewed to create a context for a discussion of youth development and programming initiatives. YSA, for example, has begun to conduct more systematic analysis of its data on its committed population. A review of the committed population from June 16, 2000 to June 15, 2001 (timeframe with the best available consistent high quality data) found several notable characteristics related to offense. Of the total number of committing offenses for this period:

⁶The quality of the data submitted to the Commission is extremely poor in terms of analysis and coding. With respect to demographics of offenders, for example, MPD lists 1,293 as Black, 68 as White, 1 as Unknown under "Race." Under "Ethnicity," 25 are listed as "Hispanic," while 1,337 are listed as "Unknown." Under "Offense," there is no way to sort out those youth who have had multiple charges assigned to them, the number of youth who are arrested for specific offenses based on age and residence, or the type of crime reported in each police district.

⁷MPD reports that it has no age for 80 of the 1,291 individuals.