

RECREATION AND CRIME  
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

48752

CRIME PREVENTION UNIT  
OFFICE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE PLANNING  
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## INTRODUCTION

The intent of this report is to discuss the relationship between recreation and crime in the City of Jacksonville. In 1975, persons under the age of 24 accounted for 62.8% of all persons arrested for Part I Crimes in Jacksonville. This percentage increased to 66.8% in 1976.

A tremendous amount of effort and time has been placed in the study of recreation by governmental and private agencies in Jacksonville. It seems that a good portion of the work is devoted to recreational areas and facilities in a general application to all ages of the community. The concern of crime reduction by recreation devices is addressed to a greater degree in the area of juveniles. Therefore, information and data in this report will be juvenile oriented. Juveniles account for almost half of all arrests for serious crimes in the nation. In Jacksonville, the arrests of juveniles in 1976 for Part I Crimes represented 30.4% as compared to 22.8% in 1975.

## PURPOSE

This information was compiled by the Crime Prevention Unit of the Office of Criminal Justice Planning as a service to the Crime Prevention Sub-Committee of the Jacksonville Metropolitan Criminal Justice Advisory Council. In an effort to better educate its members concerning prevention in Jacksonville, the subcommittee will be meeting to explore this and five other topics which are current within the field of prevention during this year.

## RECREATION DEFINED

Recreation has been evident in all societies of human beings from time immemorial. But to different people, recreation means different things. A definition broad enough to encompass many points of view was used in a 1970 demonstration project by the California Youth Authority:

"Recreation is the joyful exercise of body, mind and social spirit, of performing and creating skills; that is to create anew, to restore to good condition the body and the mind, to refresh...Recreation can be mental, physical, social, or a combination of all three. It may be organized or unorganized, planned or spontaneous, pursued individually or in groups. Recreation provides the opportunity for release and realization of desires for recognition, for adventure, for achievement, for belonging and for self-discovery. Leisure is the time away from work or other necessary activity. Play is the spirit of true recreation. To be truly recreation, an activity must involve voluntary participation. While it has no single, universal form, it must be determined by the motivation of the doer. It is serious and purposeful. It is flexible."

## PAST STUDIES

Keeping in mind the broad definition of recreation, many studies have been conducted in the past to try to show a relationship between recreation and crime.

In 1918, H. W. Thurston, in a study Delinquency and Spare Time, concluded that 2,587 delinquents in Cleveland (Ohio) were delinquent of the habitual misuse of their leisure. During the period 1927-1931, Frederic M. Thasher studied gangs in Chicago. His study, The Gang, noted that "The common assumption that the problem of...delinquency will be solved by the multiplication of playgrounds and social centers in gang areas is entirely erroneous...The real problem is one of developing in these areas or introducing into them leaders who can organize the play of boys, direct it into wholesome channels and give it social significance..." R. C. Brown, Jr. conducted a survey in 1956 to examine delinquency rates before and after the establishment of a boy's club in a particular area. It showed a decrease in recorded delinquency subsequent to the introduction of the boy's club program. A key factor in these studies is supervision, and it was found to be of prime importance in other delinquent prevention summary's which were examined.

There have been other studies dealing with the same subject. There have been failures and some which did not produce either a positive or negative result. Still, the opinion exists that recreational activities can and do contribute to the prevention and even reduction of delinquency.

## RECREATION AND CRIME IN JACKSONVILLE

In this initial study, the findings are restricted because time allowed only a limited number of agencies to be contacted. We intend to further pursue this study and to broaden our base of resource information for a more comprehensive understanding.

Private and governmental agencies in Jacksonville have devoted a tremendous amount of effort and time in the study of recreational needs in the community. The approaches by these interested groups are varied and the objectives different which will require that the broad definition of recreation be kept in mind. The Crime Prevention Unit approach was to try to ascertain a relationship between recreation and crime. We were hoping to find a study or system in Jacksonville which based its recreational determination from an application of crime statistics. The agencies which we contacted were concerned about the prevention of juvenile delinquency and the juvenile crime factors, but only indirectly alluded to crime statistics and basically used socio-economic factors.

Just how are the recreational needs determined in Jacksonville? Though the answers had variances, the prevailing determinations were need and demand. The 1980 Recreation Master Plan, published by the Jacksonville Area Planning Board, is intended as a projection of recreational facility development needs for all ages and groups through 1980 in Jacksonville. The need in this study was based on acreage deficiency for facilities in the city. Demand concentrated upon the socio-economic factors of income, mobility, and density of the people. 1970 census tract boundaries with updated information were used as a geographic base for these applications.

The Jacksonville Recreation Department has, as part of its organization, four (4) activity regions and provide a variety of programs for all ages throughout the city. The Department provides recreational programs based upon need and number. The socio-economic factors play an important role in the selection and place-

ment of the program. They will try to set up a program in any area of Jacksonville if there is an interest and large enough demand. It was pointed out that the success in organizing a park for supervised recreation is greater in the areas of low socio-economic status. Crime statistics are not used in planning, but the department does try to provide programs which will be wholesome to the participants. There is the belief that the supervised park activities do prevent delinquency and reduce crime in the area. Weekly in-service training sessions for the recreational leaders are conducted so they can improve their programs in meeting the needs of the park participants.

There are approximately 31 supervised parks and 16 community centers which operate year-round. In addition, numerous special events and seasonal programs are conducted during the year. Summer-time activities increase the number of supervised parks throughout the city.

The Community Education Consortium provides programs in all parts of the city through the community schools in the area. Socio-economic factors have a strong influence in the type of programs offered at each of the schools. The community school programs cooperate with many agencies by providing facilities and coordination for programs to be established. Again no evaluation study has been made as to the affect of the community schools in relation to crime; however, all of the community school coordinators who have programs in the NIM neighborhoods believe that the programs do reduce and prevent delinquency. Several of these coordinators placed strong emphasis upon the value of and need for more supervised recreation.

In our efforts to seek a relationship between recreation and crime, we talked with representatives of several private agencies dealing with juveniles. The programs offered by the Camp Fire Girls, Boy's Club, Girl's Club, Girl Scouts... are varied and seek to meet the needs of those participating. The effectiveness of these groups is affected by need and demand within the area they are serving. Also, public and financial support affect the intensity and broadness of the pro-

grams. Without trying to discuss and analyze each of the group's programs in detail, the following general comments were made:

1. Programs are varied in each group. Some were more comprehensive than others.
2. Evaluation showing relation between programs and crime were not available.
3. Recreational programs do prevent and reduce juvenile delinquency.
4. Concern for increase in female juvenile delinquency.
5. Recreational needs for male and female are different and more effort should be placed in planning.
6. Supervised recreation is of prime importance.
7. Desire for more cooperation with schools.
8. Peer pressure has strong influence on activities of juveniles.



## STUDIES IN FLORIDA

There are at least two evaluative programs in the State of Florida which deal with a comprehensive recreational program aimed at delinquency prevention. One program is in Manatee County and the other is in Baker County. Both of them are funded through LEAA grants.

The Manatee County grant was given to the East Bradenton Girl's Club. The club is a supervised planned program of after-school and vacation-time care primarily concerned with the prevention of female juvenile delinquency and providing an alternative to girls who are known as truant, ungovernable, or as having maladaptive behavior.

The program is available to any girl between the ages of 6 through 18. The project director says that the program has demonstrated its effectiveness by the resultant lowering of the number of female juveniles referred to the Division of Health and Rehabilitative Services Single Intake from the East Bradenton area. In a period of 18 months from when the program was initiated, statistics provided the Manatee County Girl's Club stated 50% of all female juveniles referred to the Division of Youth Services from the entire county resided in East Bradenton area. At the end of the 18 month period, that percentage had dropped to 19.5%.

The Baker County grant from LEAA was awarded to the Police Athletic League. The purpose of the program is to involve youth who are considered high risk and who are thus likely to enter the criminal justice system if not helped.

The plan is designed to organize and coordinate six sports programs for 300 boys and six sports programs for 200 girls. The ages of the youth range from 11 through 17. Part of the evaluation method requires comparing past referrals to the Division of Youth Services with subsequent referrals during the year. The Youth Officer said that a year after the inception of the program the results have proven successful.

The 1976 Standards and Goals for Florida's Criminal Justice System places importance in the use of recreation as a strategy in preventing delinquency. The recommendations include expanding recreation programs to serve the total youth community. Counseling, job training and placement, and education services should be included. Recreational leaders need to be intelligent and realistic. Participants need to help in deciding the type of recreation they desire and parents need to be encouraged to participate in leisure activities with their children. To determine whether youth are being diverted from delinquency, continued evaluation should be a part of all programs.

## RECREATION AND CRIME SURVEY IN SEVEN REPORTING AREAS

The Crime Prevention Unit was unable to find an evaluation of recreation and crime by any group interviewed in Jacksonville. The unit decided to try to determine a relationship, if any, between recreation and crime in Jacksonville. The first problem encountered was that the juvenile Part I Crimes are not separated from the adult figures as they pertain to the individual reporting areas. Another problem was pin-pointing the concentration of juveniles and the presence or absence of recreational programs in an area. These problems were very much evident when we tried to apply the statistics of a census tract in a survey. The over-lapping of reporting areas with census tract boundaries or vice-versa was another problem which made it difficult to try to analyze, especially where a commercial district with a high crime rate was located near a small residential area with an active recreational program.

Finally, we decided to look at seven (7) reporting areas basing the selection of them upon the known presence or absence of five (5) recreational activities. The crime data is based on the Part I Crimes for 1975 and 1976 within each of the reporting areas.

The recreational activities used are:

1. Park - Supervised
2. NIM Recreational Specialist
3. Community Center
4. Community School
5. Club or Group
  - Girls Club
  - Boys Club
  - PAL
  - Scouts
  - Girls
  - Boys

Crime in this survey refers to the seven (7) index or Part I Crimes:

1. Homicide
2. Rape
3. Robbery
4. Assault
5. B & E Burglary
6. Larceny
7. Auto Theft

ARRESTS  
PART I CRIMES  
Jacksonville

	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>DIFFERENCE</u>	
ALL AGES	7620	7917	297 +	4%
ADULT	5886	5512	374 —	6%
JUVENILE	1734	2405	671 +	39%

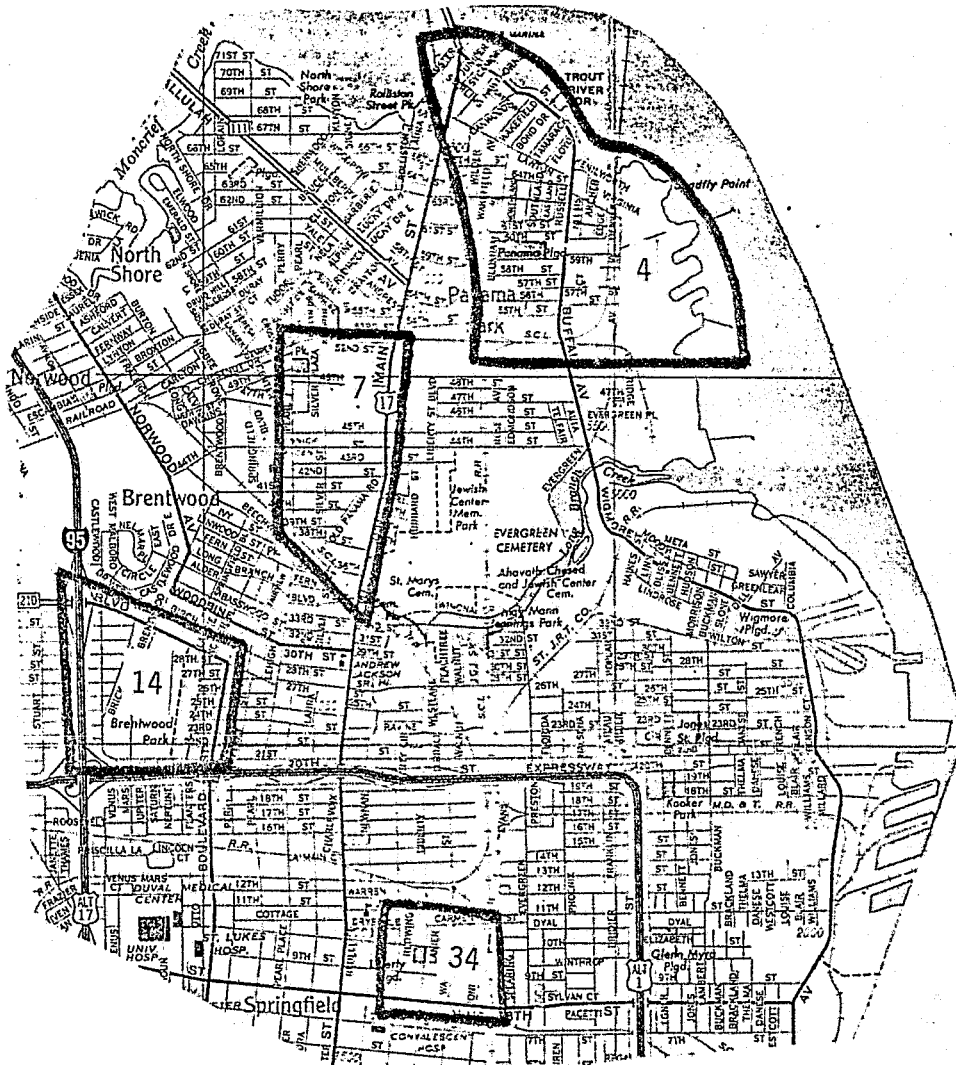
Data - Office of the Sheriff - Jacksonville, Florida

JUVENILE - PART I CRIMES 1976  
(Arrests)

		10 & Under	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Total Under 18	TOTAL	Juvenile % to All Ages
HOMICIDE	M						1	1		2	2	2.7
	F									0		
RAPE	M					2		6	5	13	13	8.7
	F									0		
ROBBERY	M	1	1	2	2	7	18	24	28	83	91	19.7
	F				1	2	2		3	8		
ASSAULT	M	6	1	1	13	16	16	18	13	84	107	11.9
	F	1	1	2	1	4	2	3	9	23		
B & E	M	41	31	43	41	62	76	77	85	456	484	32.6
	F	5	3	3	4	4	3	5	1	28		
LARCENY	M	103	53	116	134	146	170	174	159	1055	1612	35.4
	F	20	19	46	82	110	107	99	74	557		
AUTO THEFT	M	1	1	3	6	11	22	22	19	85	96	32.9
	F				2	4	1	2	2	11		
	M	152	87	165	196	244	303	322	309	1778		
	F	26	23	51	90	124	115	109	89	627		
		178	110	216	286	368	418	431	398		2405	30.4

Data - Office of the Sheriff - Jacksonville, Florida

## REPORTING AREA BOUNDARIES



### Reporting Area 4

North - Trout River  
 South - Seaboard Coast Line Railroad  
 East - St. Johns River  
 West - Seaboard Coast Line Railroad

### Reporting Area 14

North - Golfair Boulevard  
 South - 21st Street  
 East - Boulevard Street  
 West - I-95

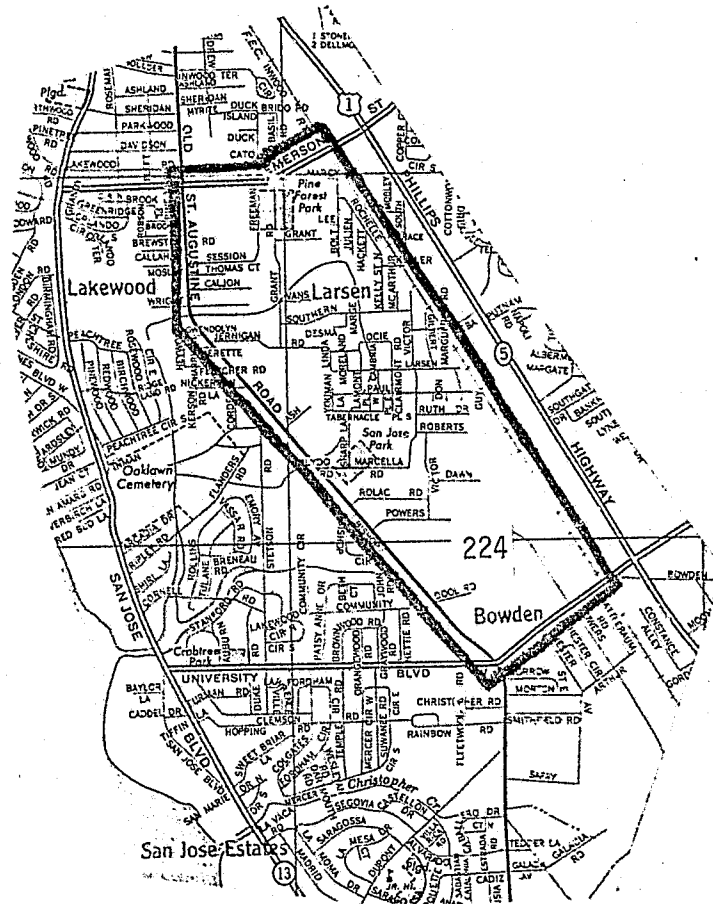
### Reporting Area 7

North - Seaboard Coast Line Railroad  
 South - Seaboard Coast Line Railroad  
 East - Main Street  
 West - Pearl Street

### Reporting Area 34

North - East 11th Street  
 South - East 8th Street  
 East - Seaboard Coast Line Railroad  
 West - Market Street

# REPORTING AREA BOUNDARIES

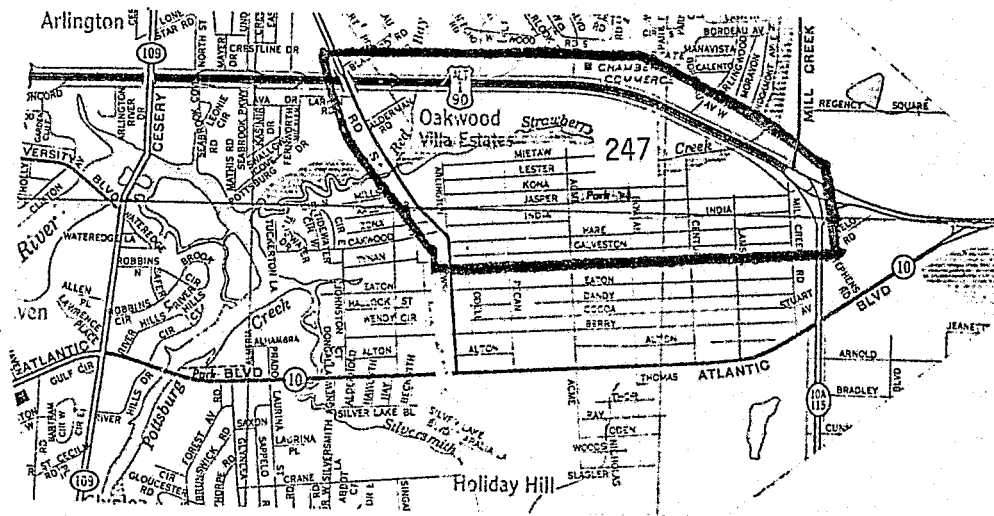


Reporting Area 224

- North - Emerson Street
- South - University Boulevard
- East - Florida East Coast Railroad
- West - Old St. Augustine Road



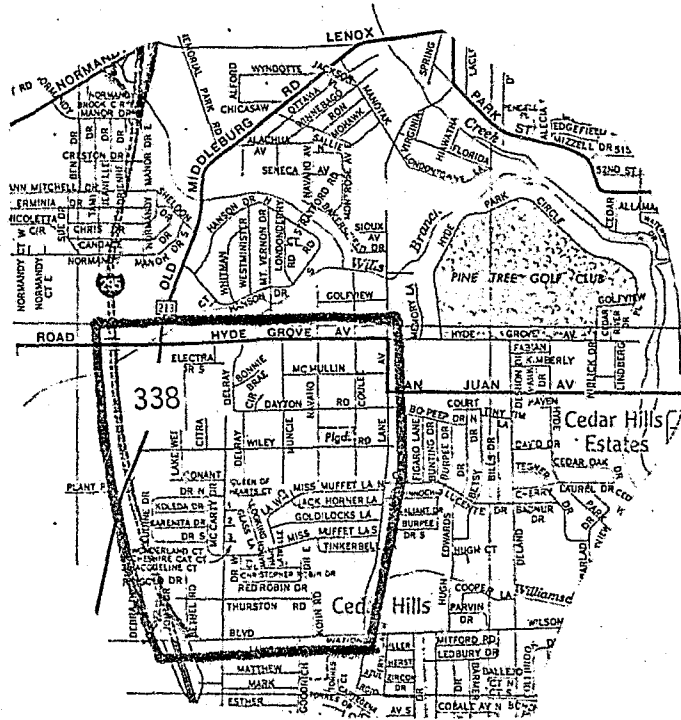
# REPORTING AREA BOUNDARIES



Reporting Area 247

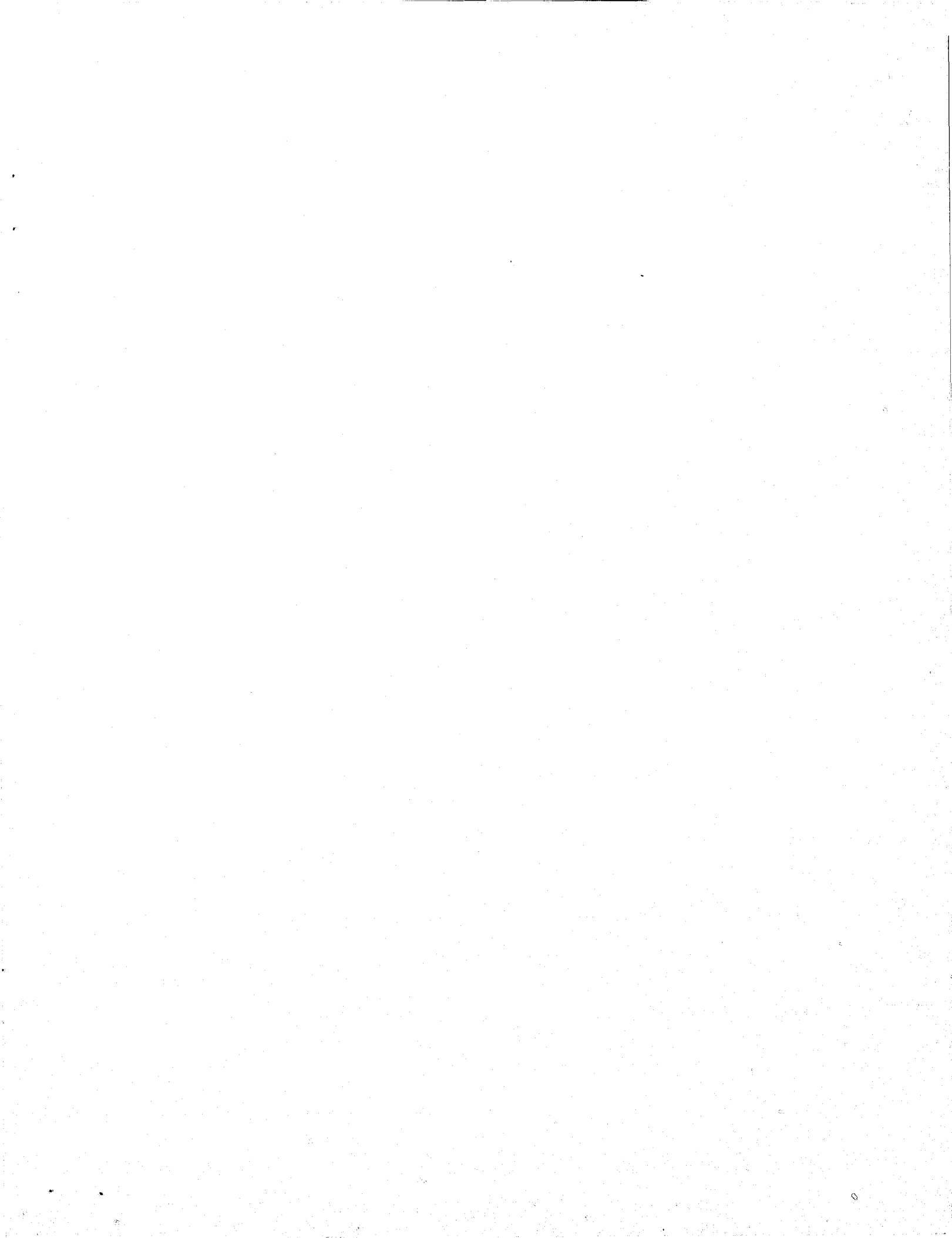
- North - Arlington Expressway
- South - Galveston Avenue
- East - Southside Estates Boulevard
- West - Arlington Road South

# REPORTING AREA BOUNDARIES



Reporting Area 338

- North - Hyde Grove Avenue
- South - Wilson Boulevard
- East - Lane Avenue
- West - I-295



(Reported Offenses)  
 CRIMES PART I 1975 AND 1976  
 All Ages

Reporting Area	4		7		14		34		224		247		338		Juvenile%
	1975	1976	1975	1976	1975	1976	1975	1976	1975	1976	1975	1976	1975	1976	
Total Crimes	91	107	286	295	197	233	119	113	292	181	464	321	101	172	
Difference	17.6%+		3.1%+		18.3%+		5.0%+		38.0%+		31.0%+		70.0%+		
Homicide	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	2.7%
Rape	1	0	1	1	4	5	2	2	4	1	6	4	1	0	8.7%
Robbery	3	5	5	14	10	19	8	6	7	1	3	7	0	2	19.7%
Assault	9	18	6	28	28	40	14	18	31	22	44	32	13	11	11.9%
B & E and Burglary	19	22	60	61	76	81	40	29	115	60	100	88	32	70	32.6%
Larceny	51	56	206	178	73	77	48	50	121	88	284	169	46	80	35.4%
Auto Theft	8	6	8	11	5	10	7	7	12	8	27	21	9	9	32.9%

Data - Office of the Sheriff - Jacksonville, Florida

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES SURVEY

Reporting Area	4	7	14	34	224	247	338
Park - Supervised	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
NIM Recreational Specialist	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Community Center	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Community School	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Club or Group							
Girls Club	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Boys Club	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
PAL	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Scouts							
Girls	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Boys	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No

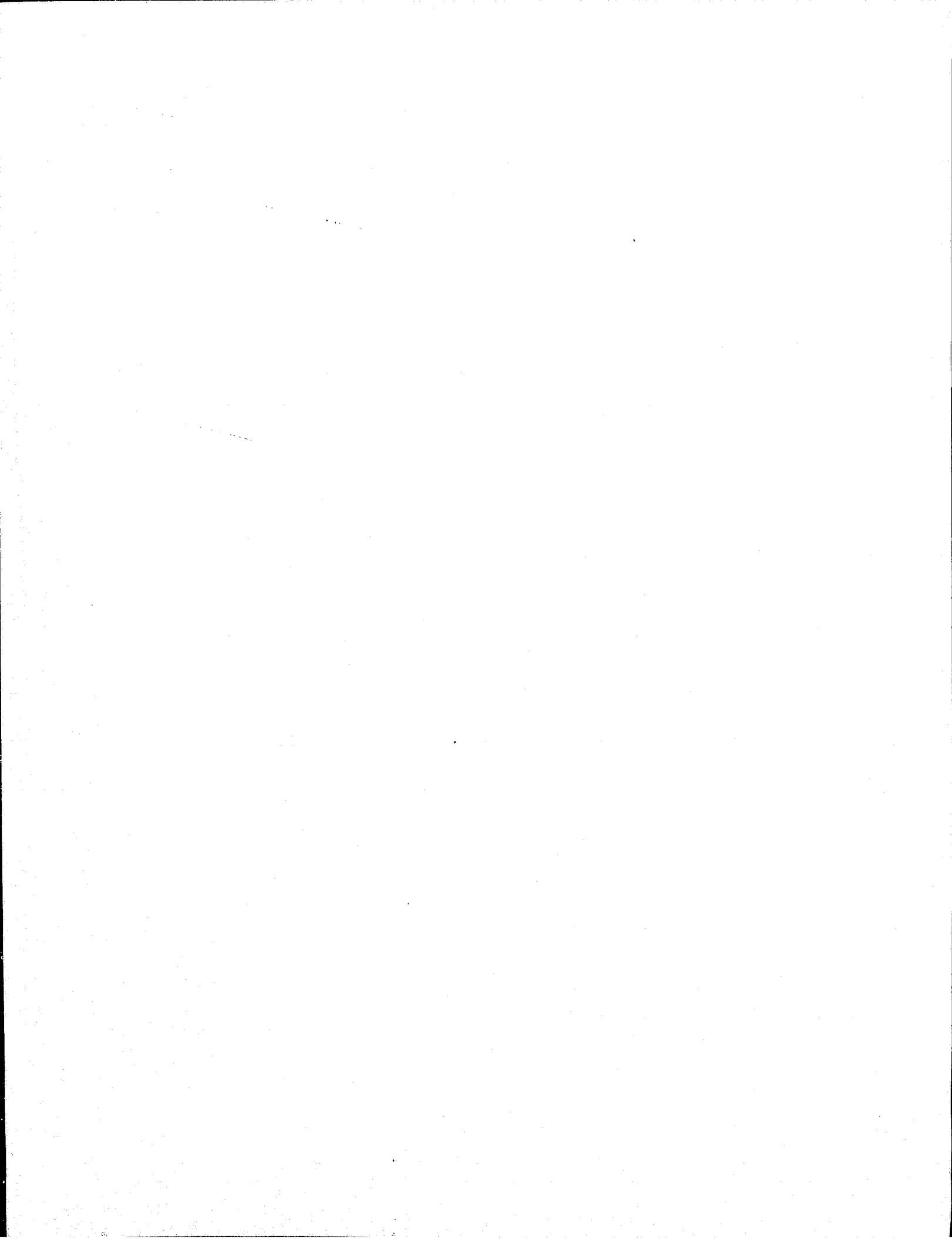
## SUMMARY

The data which we used is by no means all inconclusive, but merely a starting point to emphasize some of the problems encountered trying to evaluate the affect of recreation on crime in Jacksonville. The information about the clubs and groups was supplied from Community Education Consortium recreation resource material, the Girl's Club, and the Boy's Club. The crime data was obtained from the Police Planning Division of the Sheriff's Office. Because of time limitations, we did not take into account probable recreation activities offered by churches and civic organizations in the areas.

What were we able to determine about recreation and crime in the seven (7) reporting areas? First, numerous recreational opportunities exist within the seven reporting areas studied; however, the incidence of crime and number of recreational programs vary. Secondly, among those interviewed, there was a subjective opinion that properly supervised recreation has a wholesome affect on the juveniles. Thirdly, there are probably other variables which have an influence on crime in the areas. In the end, we still do not know for sure if the reduction or increase in crimes is the result of recreation activities affecting juvenile behavioral patterns.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) Information should be provided by the police officer at juvenile intake regarding the location of an offense with which a juvenile is charged. This location should be recorded by police reporting area.
- (2) When a juvenile is referred to intake by someone other than a police officer, the address of the alleged offense should be recorded and submitted to the police department for identification of a reporting area.
- (3) Location of juvenile offenses by reporting area should be provided to the staff of the Criminal Justice Information system for computer processing.
- (4) A project should be developed to determine those areas within the City which have experienced higher levels of juvenile disruption.
- (5) A compromise should be encouraged in the boundaries of census tracts and reporting areas in order that socio-economic conditions may be compared with crime rates.
- (6) Innovative approaches related to the prevention of juvenile delinquency through recreation should be encouraged.
- (7) Greater attention should be given to the development of evaluation criteria for programs in the field of recreation.
- (8) More supervised recreation by qualified personnel should be developed through increased funding or increased use of volunteers.
- (9) Greater cooperation should be encouraged among the many agencies providing services in the field of recreation.





**END**