

Crime  
in the  
Wilmington  
Enterprise  
Community

by  
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# Introduction

**D**uring the past two decades, Americans have continuously identified public safety and security as their primary concern in local areas. Therefore, a fundamental factor of any community development strategy is a consideration of crime and criminal justice policy. The Wilmington Enterprise Community (EC) has recognized that critical issue. Wilmington has implemented various strategies to combat crime in the city including community policing and the establishment of important public/private partnerships that were designed to enhance

community outreach and consultation. These approaches were in direct response to the crime problem in Wilmington as outlined in the city's 1995 publication, *Wilmington's Comprehensive Crime Prevention and Control Strategy*. The publication lists two strategic themes that guide the city's response to crime: community mobilization and community policing. That publication also indicated the nature of crime in Wilmington.

The Enterprise Community occupies much of the east side of the city of Wilmington,

covering fifteen of the city's twenty-eight census tracts. It accounts for about 39 percent of the city's total population of approximately 71,000, and it accounts for about 31 percent of the city's juvenile population.

In this project, we considered crime in the Enterprise Community and expanded the analysis to include other crucial aspects of crime. There were obvious questions that required answers: How much crime was there in the EC? How did that level of crime compare to the rest of the city of Wilmington? What types of crime were being committed? Who was committing the crimes? Who were the victims? What was the level of juvenile crime in the EC community. How did that level of juvenile crime compare to the rest of the city of Wilmington? Were there differences in the nature of crime across neighborhoods in the city?

These questions formed the basis for the research that is reported in this document. It is a preliminary look at the nature of crime in the Wilmington Enterprise Community as revealed through information from official sources. We intend to follow this research with a survey of the residents of Wilmington regarding their experience and attitudes

toward crime and criminal justice in the city and to compare that view of crime with the picture that official data show us. But, let us first examine what we learned regarding crime in Wilmington and the Enterprise Community.

# Crime in Wilmington

**B**efore we examine the specific characteristics of the Enterprise Community it is important to understand the nature of crime in Wilmington as a whole. In this first section of the report we offer a general view of crime in Wilmington and compare adult and juvenile crime during a particular time period.

The data which formed the basis for this project were provided by the Delaware Justice Information System (DelJIS). The data base included *every* crime that was

reported in the city of Wilmington from May 1994 through June 1995, a period of thirteen months. The data base, therefore, was not a sample of crimes in Wilmington, but was comprised of *all* crimes during the most recent period for which we have complete information. The factors in the data base included the instant offense, the race, gender and age of the victim and offender, the status of the case and the location of the crime.

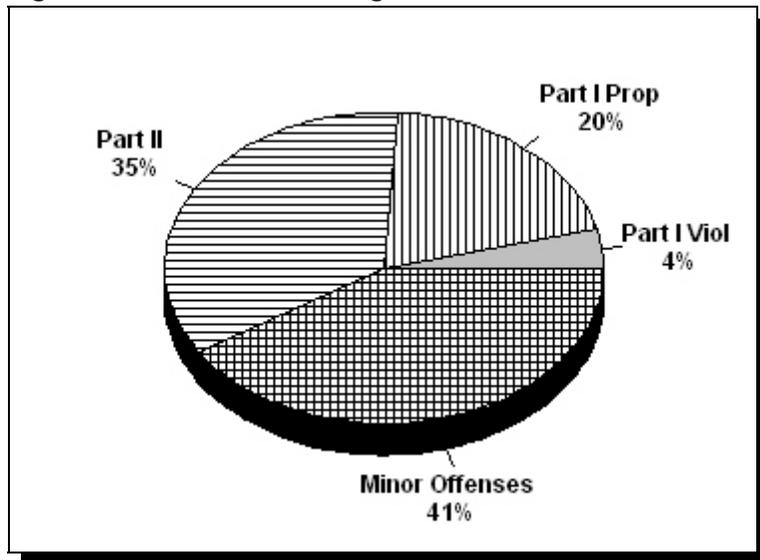
In Wilmington during the study period there were 28,012 offenses reported to the police, a significant majority of which were minor offenses. The offenses were divided into the categories used by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Report (UCR). The UCR categories provide a standard approach for identifying crime that has proved helpful when comparing crime across jurisdictions and over time. The UCR identifies two categories of crime, Part I, the most serious crimes and Part II, less serious crime. The offenses that did not fall into the Part I and II categories were placed in the Minor Offenses group.

Part I crimes are divided into two groups, violent and property crimes. Part I violent crime includes: criminal homicide; rape; robbery and aggravated assault. They accounted for only four percent of the crimes in Wilmington during the study period (Figure 1). Part I property crime is comprised of: burglary; larceny; motor vehicle theft and crimes accounted for 20 percent of the crimes in Wilmington. Consequently, serious crimes against person and property, as identified by the Part I designation, comprised about one in four

offenses in Wilmington from May 1994 through June 1995.

Part II crimes include: simple assault; forgery; fraud; receiving stolen property; vandalism; weapons offenses; prostitution; sexual offenses; drug offenses; gambling; offenses against family (e.g., endangering the welfare of a child); violating liquor laws; disorderly conduct; conspiracy

**Fig 1: Most crimes in Wilmington were Part II offenses.**



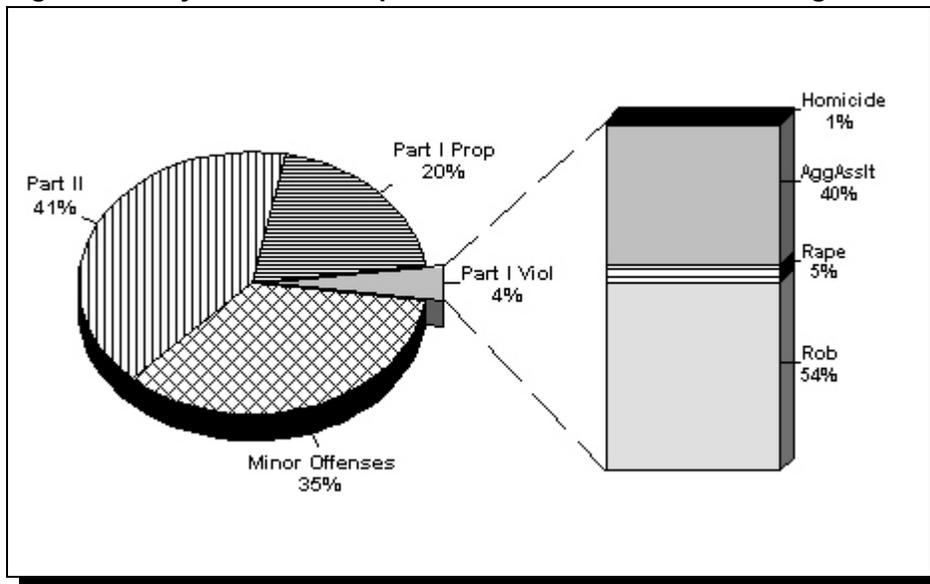
and kidnap. These crimes are considered less serious than those designated as Part I offenses and they accounted for the most numerous crimes (41%) in Wilmington.

Over one third (35%) of the crime in Wilmington were minor offenses. This category

is comprised of a wide variety of offenses such as: contempt of court; trespass; public drunkenness; non-moving traffic violations e.g., abandonment or tampering with a vehicle; resisting arrest; harassment by phone, mail or wire; cruelty to animals; DUI; violation of health and safety regulations and obstructing a criminal

The picture of crime that this analysis presents is a broad brush. However, it is useful to understand the crime activity within the Part I and II categories. For example, the distribution of the offenses *within* the Part I violent category showed that robbery was responsible for over half of the violent crime in

**Fig 2: Robbery was the most prominent violent crime in Wilmington.**



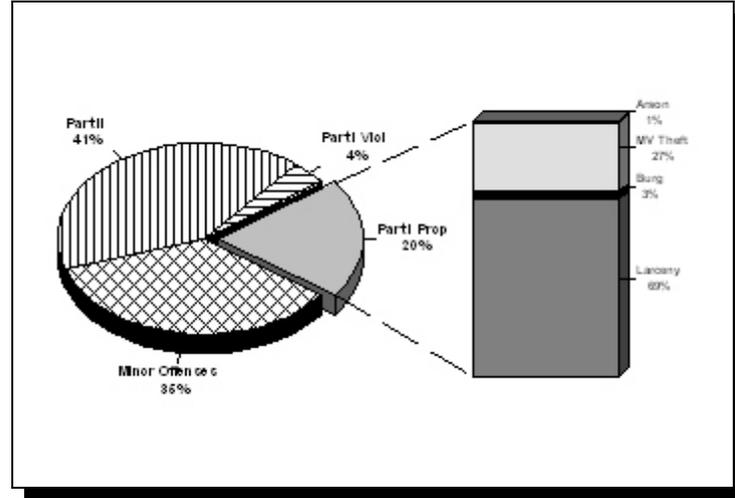
investigation, among others. It is important to note that it was these minor crimes occupied a significant portion of Wilmington's crime picture. As a result, any discussion of the level of crime in the city must be tempered with the understanding that a substantial number of the offenses do not pose a serious threat to the public order.

Wilmington (Figure 2). Further, aggravated assault accounted for another 40 percent of crime. By contrast, homicide was only one percent of the crime in the city. Rape comprised five percent of violent crime.

One out of five offenses in Wilmington fell into the Part I property crime category. By

definition, Part I crimes comprise the more serious offenses. A closer look at Part I property crime reveals that larceny accounted for a significant majority (69%) of the more serious offenses against property (Figure 3). Motor vehicle theft comprised about another quarter of property crime. Burglary and arson accounted for very small fractions, three percent and one percent, respectively. The protocol of the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) includes a series of offenses not listed

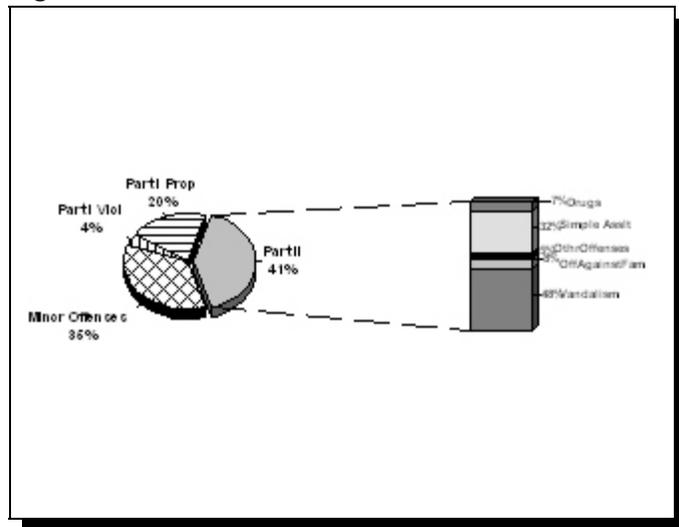
**Fig. 3: Larceny accounted for a significant majority of serious property crime in Wilmington.**



largest proportion of crimes in Wilmington (41%). A breakdown of the Part II category (Figure 4) reveals that almost half of the offenses

(48%) were vandalism, with simple assault accounting for almost another third (32%).

**Fig. 4: Most Part II crimes were vandalism.**



under the Part I crime category as Part II offenses. Part II offenses accounted for the

# Comparing Juvenile Crime

In order to examine juvenile crime in Wilmington during the study period, we extended the analysis regarding Part I, Part II and minor offenses to those persons who were 17 years of age and younger. In this examination, we separated juvenile crime from the total crime in Wilmington. First, it is important to note the number of crimes committed by juveniles. In that regard, only about six percent of the total crime in Wilmington were attributed to juveniles (1,777 of 28,012 offenses). The question is what

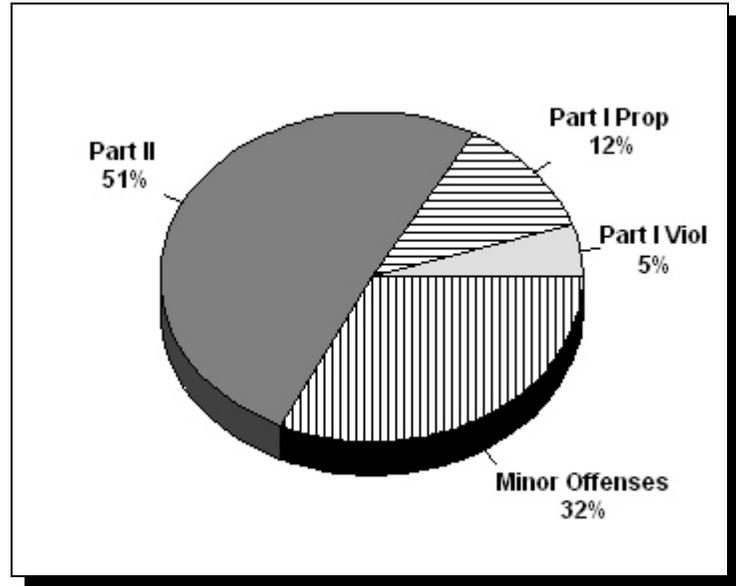
were the characteristics of those 1,777 offenses.

In general, the offenses committed by juveniles somewhat mirrored the total crime picture in Wilmington. The major differences between the two populations occurred in Part I Property and Part II offenses. Specifically, juveniles committed fewer serious crimes. That is, one-fifth of the crimes for the total population were serious Part I crime (see Figure 1).

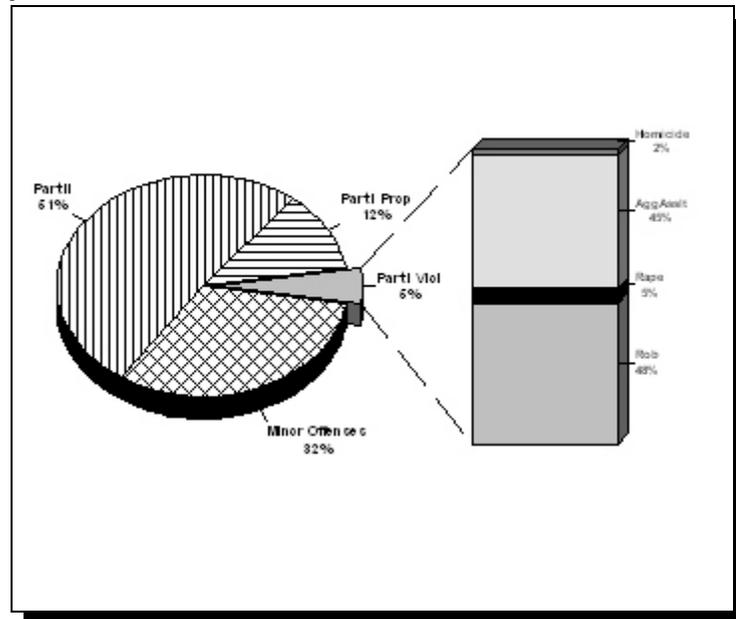
However, that proportion dropped to twelve percent for the juvenile population (Figure 5). On the other hand, Part II crimes increased for juveniles to over half of their offenses (51%). Part II offenses accounted for 41 percent of crime for the total population (see Figure 1). Part I violent crime remained relatively the same for the total population and the juvenile population at four and five percent, respectively. Minor offenses occupied roughly a third of the crime for both populations. In short, juvenile crime saw an increase in relatively less serious crime (Part II) and a decrease in more serious crime (Part I Property) as compared to the crimes of the total population.

As we did with the total population, we examined the crimes activity of juveniles within each of the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) categories. Juvenile crime was defined as an offense by a person 17 years of age or younger. Like the total population, robbery and aggravated assault accounted for over ninety percent of the Part I violent crime committed by juveniles, 48 and 45 percent, respectively (Figure 6).

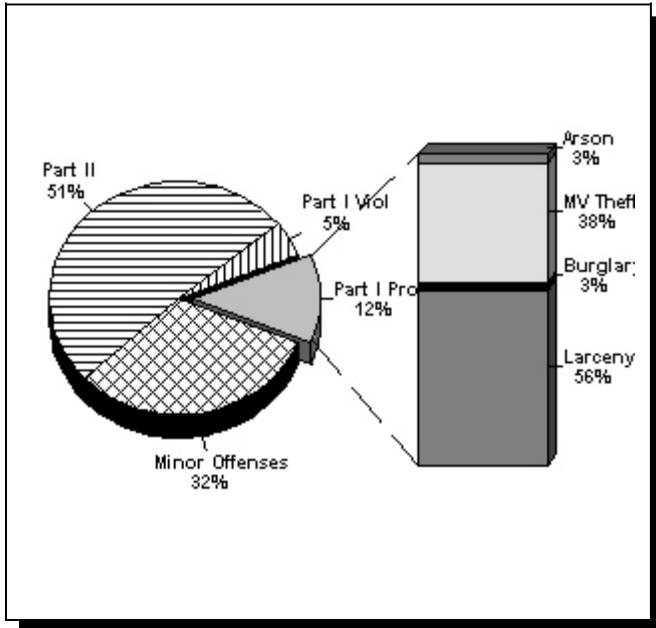
**Fig. 5: Half of the offenses committed by juveniles were less serious Part II crimes.**



**Fig. 6: Almost half of the violent crimes committed by juveniles were robberies.**



**Fig. 7: Larceny was the most prominent serious property crime committed by juveniles.**

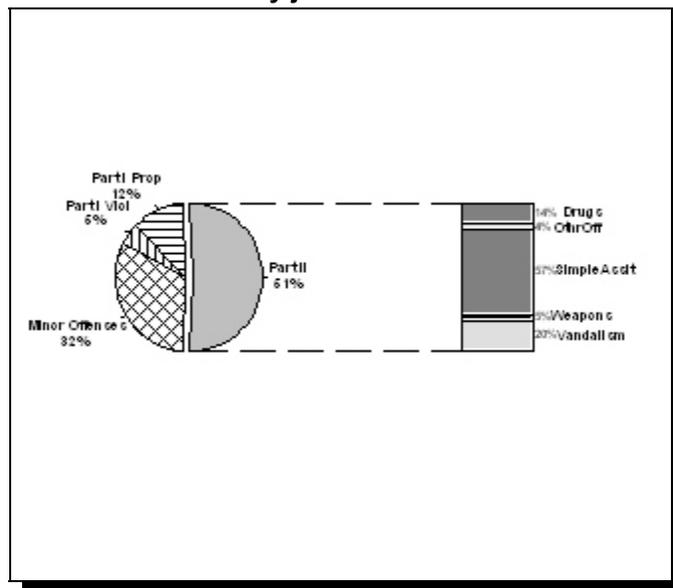


turned around. Simple assault cases accounted for the majority (57%) of juvenile Part II offenses while vandalism comprised one-fifth of the crimes (Figure 8). In short, the less serious Part II offenses which occupied over one-half of juvenile crime were, nevertheless, most often directed at

For juvenile offenders, over half (56%) of the Part I Property crimes were larceny with motor vehicle theft accounting for another 38 percent (Figure 7).

There was a striking difference in the pattern of Part II offenses between the total population and juveniles. For the total population, only one-third of the Part II offenses were simple assault with vandalism accounting for almost half of the cases (see Figure 4). For the juvenile population, however, those proportions essentially

**Fig. 8: Simple assault was the most numerous Part II offense committed by juveniles.**



# Crime Inside & Outside of the Enterprise Community

**T**he most obvious comparison that arose in this project is that of the crime activity in the Enterprise Community and the rest of the city of Wilmington. In this section we look at all crime in the city, adult and juvenile. The following information offers a look at that comparison.

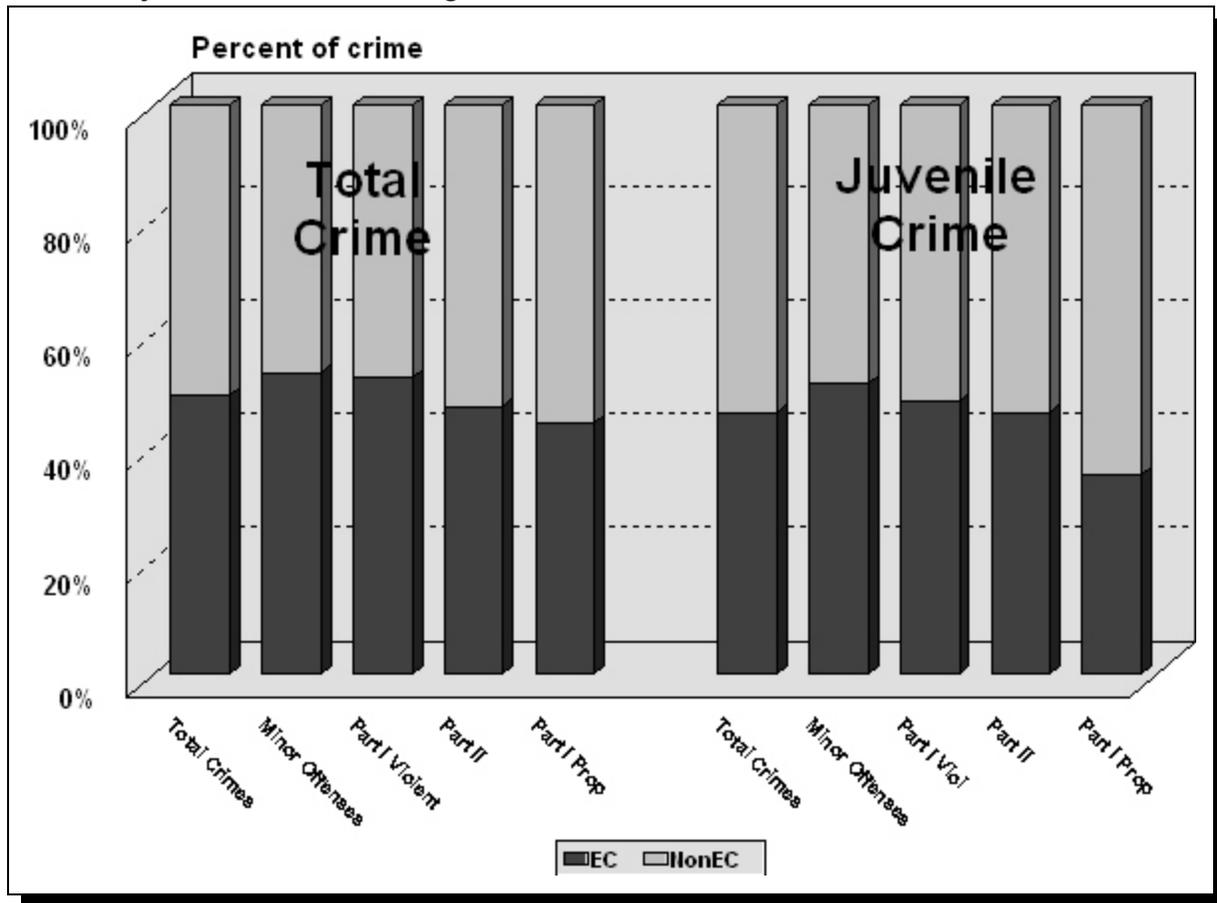
Although the Enterprise Community accounts for almost, four out of ten people in Wilmington, almost half of the crime in the city occurred in the area. As a result, during the study period, total crime was

relatively evenly distributed (Figure 9) between the EC community and the rest of Wilmington (for our purposes the area outside the Enterprise Community will be referred to as the NonEC). Just slightly over half of the Minor offenses and Part I Violent crime occurred in the Enterprise Community and more than half of the Part II and Part I Property offenses took place in the area outside of the Enterprise Community.

The Enterprise Community accounted for about 31 percent of the juvenile population of Wilmington, as we mentioned earlier in this report. However, the majority of the total crimes committed by juveniles

Property crimes were the most heavily concentrated with almost two-thirds occurring inside the EC.

**Fig. 9: Total crime and juvenile crime were relatively evenly distributed between the Enterprise Community and the rest of Wilmington.**



(54%) occurred in the EC community (Figure 9). Further, except for Minor Offenses, the majority of all other juvenile crime occurred inside the Enterprise Community. Part I

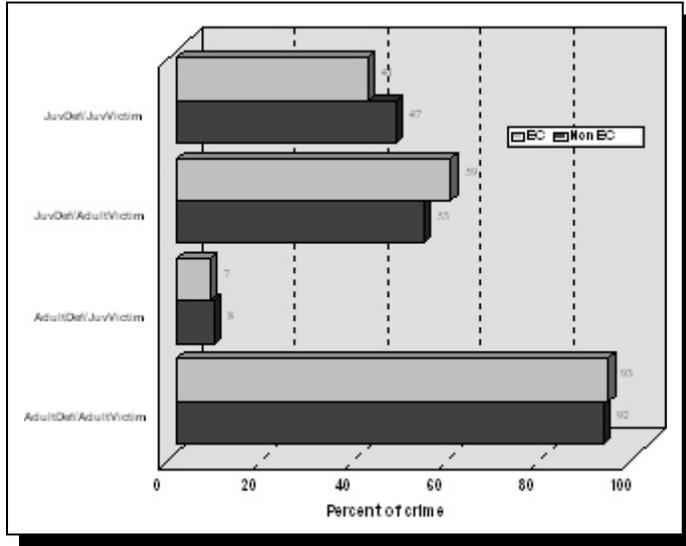
# Who Victimizes Whom?

**A** fundamental feature of crime is who are the victims and the perpetrators. We looked at that comparison for the Enterprise Community and the area outside of it. The first question we examined is the age relationship between victims and defendants. We found that, in general, adults were greatly inclined to victimize adults both inside (93%) and outside (92%) of the Enterprise Community (Figure 10). juveniles, on the other hand, were more evenly distributed. Although juveniles most often victimized adults

both inside and outside of the Enterprise Community (59% and 53%, respectively), they also targeted other juveniles in a significant proportion of offenses (41% and 47%, respectively). One explanation for such an occurrence may be that adults have more resources that would make them the object of crime.

Another factor in the relationship between victims and perpetrators is race/ethnic origin. The analysis revealed that we could divide the population into two groups:

**Fig. 10: Adults overwhelmingly victimized adults while juveniles victimized other juveniles.**



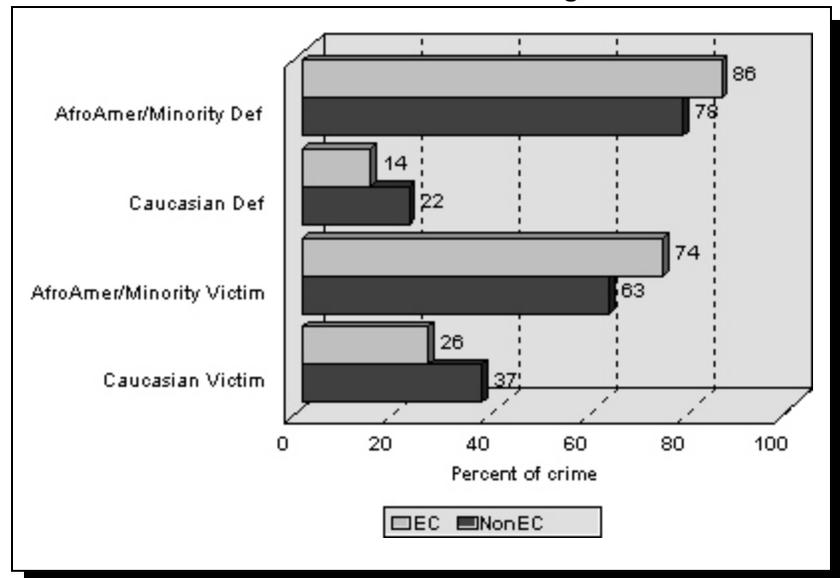
defendants and victims Inside and outside of the Enterprise Community. Afro-Americans and minority citizens were the majority of defendants inside and outside of the Enterprise Community, 86 and 78 percent,

Afro-American/Minority and Caucasian. The Afro-American/Minority group consisted of approximately 99 percent of Afro-Americans with the remaining one percent comprised of Hispanic and Native Americans.

Among all crimes in Wilmington, 80 percent of the defendants were in the Afro-American/Minority group with the remaining 20 percent in the Caucasian group. The distribution among the victims was 57 percent Afro-American/Minority and 43 percent Caucasian.

respectively (Figure 11). Likewise, they were the

**Fig. 11: Afro-American & Minority citizens were the majority of defendants and victims of crimes in Wilmington.**



An obvious question is what was the comparison for

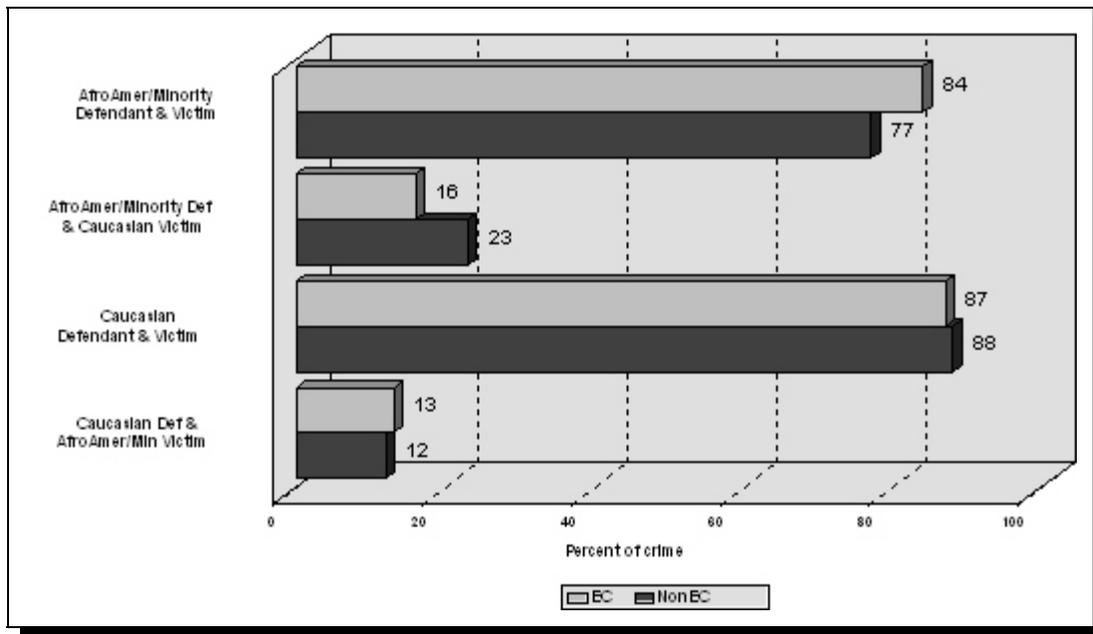
majority of victims; about three-fourths within the EC and just under two-thirds outside of the

EC. In short, Afro-American and minority citizens were involved in a majority of the crime activity reported to the Wilmington police.

What was the relationship between the defendants and the victims regarding race/ethnicity? In the overwhelming majority of cases, the defendants and the victims

a Caucasian defendant were committed against Caucasian victims the overwhelming majority of time within and outside of the Enterprise Community, 87 and 88 percent, respectively. In short, the offenses committed in Wilmington relatively rarely crossed racial/ethnic lines.

**Fig. 12: Defendants & victims were the same race/ethnicity in the significant majority of cases.**



were the same race or ethnicity (Figure 12). Within the Enterprise Community 84 percent of the cases involving an Afro- American/Minority defendant were directed at an Afro- American/Minority victim; that proportion outside of the EC was just over three-fourths of cases. Likewise, crimes with

# Crime in the Neighborhood Planning Councils

**T**he distinction between the Enterprise Community (see Appendix A) and the rest of Wilmington is very important, however, the city operates through even more "local" definitions of community. The city is divided into seven Neighborhood Planning Councils (NPC) that are surrounded by their constituent communities that occupy various combinations of census tracts.

The Neighborhood Planning Councils (including census tracts and percentage of the population of Wilmington for which they account) are:

➔ **West Center City**--tracts 1, 1.6 & 21 and about seven percent of the population

➔ **Northwest**--tracts 2, 3, 4 and 5 with 23 percent of the city's population;

➔ **Northeast**--tracts 6.01, 6.02, 7 and 8 with thirteen percent of the city's population;

➔ **East Side**--tracts 9, 17, 18, 19 and 20 with eleven percent of the population;

➔ **Delaware Avenue/Bancroft Parkway**--tracts 10, 11, 12 and 13 and twelve percent of the population;

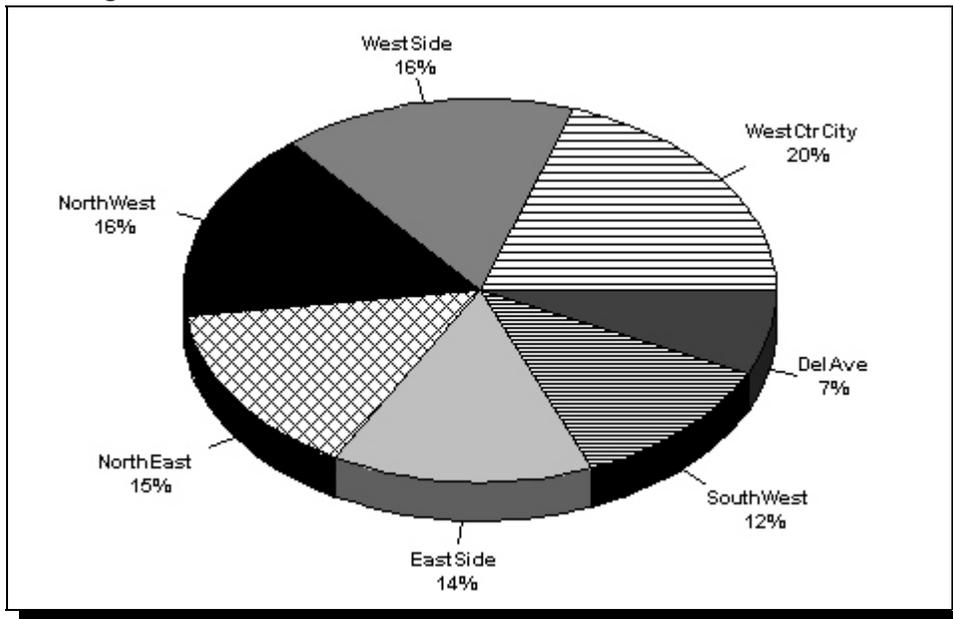
➔ **West Side**--tracts 14, 15, 22 and 23 with seventeen percent of the population;

➔ **Southwest**--tracts 24, 25, 26 and 27 with seventeen percent of Wilmington's population.(For a map of the Neighborhood Planning Councils, see Appendix B.)

How was crime distributed across the neighborhoods of

crime also exceeds the proportion of Wilmington's population in the West Side, Northeast and Eastside NPC's but not to the extent that occurred in the West Center City NPC. Conversely, crime in the Northwest NPC was lower than its percentage of the population (16 % of crime as against 23% of Wilmington's population). The same was true for the Delaware

**Fig. 13: Crime was relatively evenly distributed across the Neighborhood Planning Councils.**



the Neighborhood Planning Councils? The most striking feature of crime in the NPC's reveals that the West Center City NPC accounted for 20 percent of the crime in Wilmington, but only has seven percent of the population (Figure 13). The proportion of

Avenue/Bancroft Parkway NPC (7% of crime and 12% of the city's population and the Southwest NPC (12% of crime and 17% of the population). In summary, crime across the Neighborhood Planning Councils is not proportional to population and

some NPC's are more at risk than others.

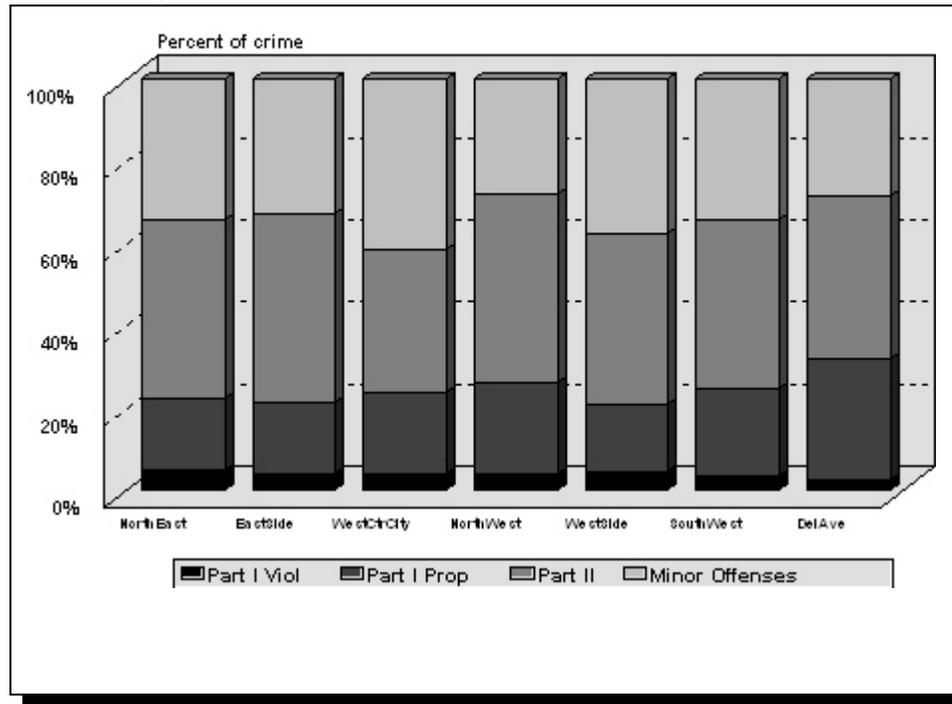
Now that we know the general level of crime in each of the Neighborhood Planning Councils, the question is what types of crime were committed in each of them. In short, what was their crime profile? Looking at the crime categories from the Uniform Crime Report (UCR), we found that the Northeast and the Eastside NPC's had very similar crime profiles with the Part II offenses accounting for the plurality (about 45%) of crime

(Figure 14). Given that West Center City NPC comprised a proportion of crime that far exceeded its percentage of the population, it is

useful to examine its crime profile. We found that, unlike all

of the other NPC'S, Minor Offenses accounted for a plurality (41%) of crimes in its crime profile. That is, while Minor Offenses were significant in the other neighborhoods, they were the most prominent in the West Center City NPC. That may explain the finding that West Center City had the largest difference between the percentage of Wilmington's population it represented (7%) and the proportion of crime (20%) that occurred in the area. The crime profile of the

**Fig. 14: The West Center City NPC had the highest level of minor offenses in its crime profile.**



Delaware Avenue/Bancroft Parkway was also revealing in

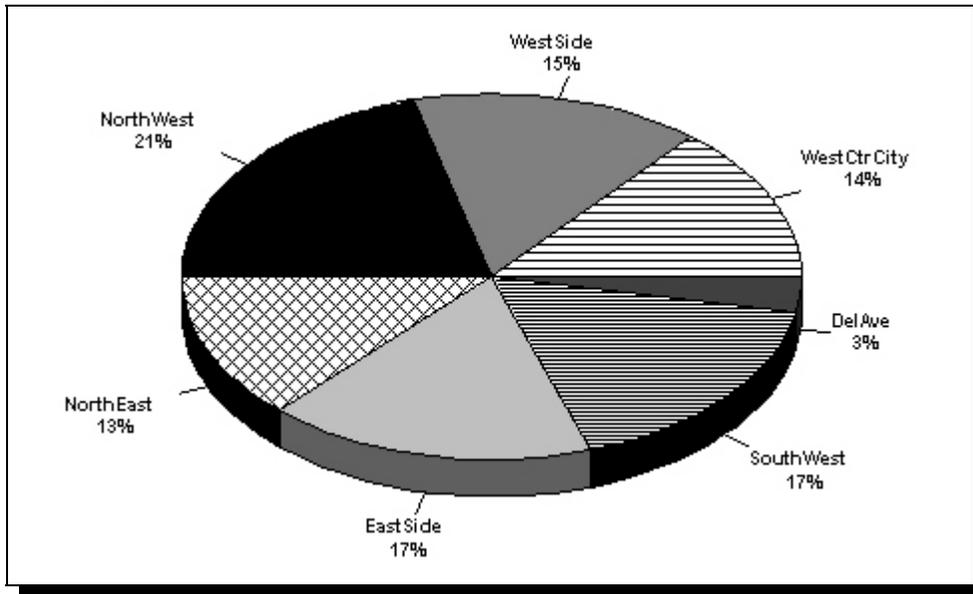
that Part I Property offenses were higher as a portion of crime in that area than in any other NPC.

### Juvenile Crime in the Neighborhood Planning Councils

We know how crime in general was distributed across the Neighborhood

accounted for 21 percent of juvenile crime (Figure 15), but also represented 22 percent of the juvenile population. The Northeast (14% of juvenile crime and 14% of the juvenile population), Southwest (17% of crime and 16% of the juvenile population) and Northeast (17% of juvenile crime and 15% of the juvenile population) NPC's had similar outcomes.

**Fig. 15: Juvenile crime was not evenly distributed among the Neighborhood Planning Councils.**



Planning Councils and the crime profiles of each of them. But, what was the picture of juvenile crime across the NPC'S? In several instances the level of juvenile crime closely matched the proportion of juveniles in the NPC area. For example, the Northwest Planning Council area

The juvenile crime profiles of the areas of the Neighborhood Planning Councils revealed quite different mixes of crime. The Northeast NPC experienced relatively lower levels of Part I crime, both violent and property offenses (Figure 16). However, almost half of the crime in that NPC

were Part II offenses. Further, Part II offenses accounted for a plurality of offenses in most of the NPC areas. That is in stark contrast to the juvenile crime profile of the Delaware Avenue/Bancroft Parkway NPC area where almost half of the offenses fell in the Part I Property category. That proportion is more than triple the Part I Property crime in any other NPC. In addition, the West Center City NPC was the only area in which Minor Offenses occupied almost a majority of crime (49%).

In short, the juvenile crime across the Neighborhood Planning Councils revealed that juvenile criminal activity is quite different in the areas. In fact, it has much more variation than the total crime picture.

# Conclusion

**T**he analysis reported here represents a preliminary view of crime in Wilmington, the Enterprise Community and across the Neighborhood Planning Councils. There are other questions that require investigation: How do these findings compare to crime in Wilmington one year ago? Five years ago? What happened to these cases in the system? How does this official view of crime from official sources compare with the public's perception of crime in Wilmington and its neighborhoods? With this

analysis, we offer a first step in the examination of those issues directed specifically at the crime and Justice in the Enterprise Community.