

San Antonio Violent Crime Reduction Plan: Year 1 Evaluation

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Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	I
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	III
CITY-WIDE RESULTS.....	III
HOT SPOT RESULTS.....	IV
OTHER MEASURES.....	IV
CONCLUSION.....	IV
OVERVIEW	1
METHODOLOGY	2
CITY-WIDE ANALYSES	3
CRIME INCIDENT TRENDS.....	3
INTERRUPTED TIME SERIES ANALYSIS.....	8
PHASE 1: HOT SPOTS	9
COMPARATIVE ANALYSES.....	9
DIFFERENCE-IN-DIFFERENCES ANALYSES.....	13
GRIDS CONTRIBUTING TO CITY-WIDE CRIME.....	14
ARRESTS.....	16
VIOLENT CALLS FOR SERVICE.....	18
FIDELITY.....	19
PHASE 2: POPBP	20
BACKGROUND ON POPBP.....	20
CONCLUSION	21
REFERENCES	23
APPENDIX A: TIMELINE OF TREATMENT AND COMPARISON TIME PERIODS	24
APPENDIX B: SAN ANTONIO VIOLENT CRIME: 2019-2023	25

Figures

Figure 1: San Antonio Violent Crime Incidents, 2019-2023	4
Figure 2: San Antonio Violent Crime by Offense Types, 2022-2023	6
Figure 3: San Antonio Violent Crime by Substation, 2022-2023	7
Figure 4: Time Series Analysis of Violent Crime in San Antonio: Jan 2019-Dec 2023	8
Figure 5: City-Wide, Treatment & Catchment Grid Crime	10
Figure 6: Treatment & Catchment Grid Crime by Substation	12
Figure 7: % Treatment Grid Crime Contributing to City-Wide Crime	15
Figure 8: Arrest Comparisons, City & Treatment Grids	17
Figure 9: Violent Calls for Service Comparisons, City & Treatment Grids	18

Tables

Table 1: Year 1 Grid Summary	9
Table 2: Difference-in-Differences Models: Year 1 Treatment Effect	13
Table 3: Fidelity Summary	19

Executive Summary

Beginning in January 2023, the San Antonio Police Department began executing a three-part strategic plan to reduce violent crime (hereafter referred to as the “Crime Plan”). As of January 2024, the first phase of the plan – hot spots policing – has been fully implemented, and the second phase – Problem-Oriented, Place-Based Policing (POPBP) is about to begin. The Crime Plan includes a short-term hot spots policing strategy, a mid-term POPBP strategy, and a longer-term focused deterrence strategy, which has not yet begun. These three strategies were purposely designed to work together to help reduce violent crime in San Antonio by focusing on the relatively few places where violent crime is prevalent and the relatively few individuals responsible for committing it.

This document serves as the Year 1 report on the results of the San Antonio Crime Plan. It summarizes the methodology and results of an independent, empirical assessment of the implementation and impact of the hot spots strategy during the first year of the Crime Plan: January through December 2023.

Hot spot treatment locations were identified based on reported violent crime in the short term (previous 60 days) and over the longer term (12 months). The analyses reported herein examined crime in hot spots before and during treatment and included an assessment of crime in 1,000 foot catchment areas surrounding each hot spot to evaluate potential crime displacement effects. Police hot spot treatment involved the deployment of stationary, lighted patrol cars to high crime grids for 15-minute periods during peak crime hours and peak crime days of the week. Hot spots were reassessed and police resources redistributed every 60 days based on reported crime.

To measure the impact of the hot spots strategy on city-wide crime, linear trends, difference-in-differences and an interrupted time series analysis were used to compare crime before and after treatment began.

City-Wide Results

Overall, the **City of San Antonio experienced a 7.3% decrease in violent street crime incidents in Year 1 of the Crime Plan** compared to the previous 12 months (Jan – Dec 2022). At the same time, the number of individuals victimized by violent crime in San Antonio fell by a similar 7.4% compared to the previous year. The interrupted time-series analysis confirmed that the downturn in violent crime started with the onset of the Crime Plan, which likely was responsible for flattening what had been a four-year (2019-2022) rising trend in violent crime prior to implementation of the plan. However, yearly violent crime counts remain substantially higher in San Antonio than they were prior to the Covid 19 pandemic, and substantial work remains to be done to reduce violent crime to pre-pandemic levels or lower.

Hot Spot Results

Violent crime in treated hot spots was down 37% compared to the previous year, and it was down about 5% in surrounding catchment areas, indicating that crime displacement did not occur as a result of the hot spots treatment. A difference-in-differences analysis, which compared pre- and post-treatment crime in treated hot spot grids to all untreated areas of the city, showed an 8.7% reduction compared to the prior year. This technique provides the most conservative estimate of the hot spots treatment effect. Additional analyses confirmed that the treated hot spots contributed less to overall levels of reported violent crime in San Antonio during Year 1 of the Crime Plan than they did the year before.

Other Measures

Total arrests were up slightly city-wide (4%) and up in hot spots by about 15% during Year 1 of the Crime Plan, but **violence-related arrests were down substantially (-44%) in treated hot spots**, which is consistent with the expected treatment effect. Similarly, violence-related calls for service to the police were up slightly city-wide during Year 1 of the Crime Plan compared to 2022 but **were down 13% in the treated hot spots** as expected. SAPD officers were at their assigned hot spots in accordance with period treatment plans more than 90% of the time, on average, which indicates a high level of commitment by the SAPD to the careful implementation of the Crime Plan.

Conclusion

Taken together, the hot spot results, along with an interrupted time-series analysis of violent crime pre- and post-implementation of the Crime Plan, provide **strong evidence that the Crime Plan's focus on hot spots was likely responsible for a 7.3% reduction in city-wide violent crime compared to the previous year**. At the time this report was written, San Antonio city and community stakeholders were in the final stages of developing a POPBP plan for a site on Rigsby Avenue that recorded some of the highest levels of violent crime, arrests, and calls for service over a three-year period. Implementation of this plan is expected to begin soon, and additional POPBP sites will be identified for treatment in Year 2. Future UTSA reports will continue to evaluate the impact of hot spots policing and also will assess the implementation and impact of the City's POPBP efforts.

Overview

Beginning in January 2023, the San Antonio Police Department began executing a three-part strategic plan to reduce violent crime¹ (hereafter referred to as the “Crime Plan”). The Crime Plan includes a short-term hot spots policing strategy (Phase One), a mid-term problem-oriented, place-based policing (POPBP) strategy (Phase Two), and a longer-term focused deterrence strategy (Phase Three). These three strategies were purposely designed to work together to help reduce violent crime in the City of San Antonio by focusing on the relatively few places where violent crime is prevalent (hot spots) and the relatively few individuals responsible for committing it.

This document serves as the Year 1 report on the results of the San Antonio Crime Plan. It summarizes the methodology and results of an independent, empirical assessment of the implementation and impact of the short-term strategy since the Crime Plan began in January 2023. As of December 2023, short-term hot spots policing strategy has been fully implemented across six periods (each period lasting approximately 60 days). Planning for Phase Two began in September 2023, with POPBP trainings successfully completed for city department directors (September 2023) as well as the POPBP working group (November 2023). The operational plan for the initial site is being developed, but no POPBP activities have taken place yet, and no analysis or results from that phase of the Crime Plan are reported here. However, the mid-Year 2 report (anticipated in August 2024) will include an assessment of POPBP during its first few months of implementation.

The report that follows is organized into several main sections. Following this Overview, we outline our Methodology, including the data we relied upon for this report and our analytic strategies. The City-Wide Analyses section examines overall city-wide trends and substation trends in violent crime since the inception of the Crime Plan by examining violent crime incidents, violent crime victims, and specific violent crime offenses. This section also examines crime, arrests, and calls for service in and around the treated hot spots across the first year of the Crime Plan. In this section, we also analyze hot spots treatment fidelity, or the degree to which officers were present at designated hot spots in accordance with the treatment schedules. We wrap up the report with a Conclusion that summarizes the results of the Crime Plan to date.

¹ For the purposes of the Crime Plan, a “violent crime” is defined as any reported *incident* involving a murder/non-negligent manslaughter, robbery, or aggravated assault (not including family violence-related aggravated assaults) with at least one victim. Incidents with multiple offenses (e.g., a murder and a robbery) or multiple victims (three individuals assaulted) were counted as a single incident for the purposes of identifying hot spots and in the analyses reported below, unless otherwise noted.

Methodology

The period of analysis for this report is January 2023 through December 2023. To date, there have been six completed hot spots treatment periods², with a seventh period currently underway. Treatment periods involved the allocation of police resources to selected spatial grids (100 m x 100 m) based on violent crime activity in the previous 60 days and within the previous year. During each of the treatment periods, locations received either a high visibility treatment, which involved placing patrol cars in selected locations with their emergency lights illuminated during peak crime times and days of the week, or a high visibility “plus” treatment which involved the standard high visibility treatment augmented by officers leaving their parked cars to patrol on foot within the treatment locations, check on suspicious circumstances or vehicles in the area, and interact with community members. The high visibility plus treatment type began in Period 4. As the SAPD transitioned from one period to the next, some locations remained in the treatment protocol while new ones were added and those that were no longer ‘hot’ were removed.

To assess the broader context of violent crime in San Antonio, city-wide trends in violent crime incidents, violent crime victims, specific violent crime offenses, and violent crime incidents at substations are analyzed and presented. These trends were assessed by comparing the one year of activity during the Crime Plan (January 2023 – December 2023) to the same time period in the previous year (January 2022 – December 2022) and summarized with a percent change. To further assess city-wide trends in violent crime, an Interrupted Time Series Analysis (ITSA) was estimated. ITSA is well suited for tracking and comparing data before and after treatment over long periods of time (Cook, Campbell, & Shaddish, 2002). The ITSA examined crime patterns in San Antonio from January 2019 through December 2023 with treatment beginning in January 2023 to evaluate the impact of the Crime Plan on violent crime in San Antonio during the first year of implementation.

At the local level, treatment grids and catchment³ areas were evaluated during the Year 1 period using three outcome measures: violent crime, arrests, and calls for service. Descriptive analyses of violent crime, arrests, and calls for service across the city and in treatment grids during the treatment periods were conducted and compared against the full year prior (the previous 12-month averages). Catchment areas surrounding each hot spot were assessed for potential crime displacement or diffusion of benefits. Results are shown within the treated grids, in the catchment areas surrounding the grids, city-wide, and within substations as described below. To further assess the impact of crime reductions in hot spots treatment grids, we conducted a difference-in-differences (DiD) analysis. Using untreated grids as a control group, difference-in-differences

² Period 1: January 2023-February 2023; Period 2: March 2023-April 2023; Period 3: May 2023-June 2023; Period 4: July 2023-August 2023; Period 5: September 2023-October 2023; Period 6: November 2023-December 2023.

³ Catchment areas extend approximately 1,000 feet in all directions from targeted hot spots. It is here that crime displacement is most likely to occur, if at all.

analysis measures *change in crime in the treated grids compared to pre-treatment levels while also considering pre-post treatment change in untreated grids*. DiD is an effective and appropriate assessment strategy to evaluate the effectiveness of the hot spots strategy at reducing crime in the treated grids.

City-Wide Analyses

Crime Incident Trends

Figure 1, below, shows the count of violent crime incidents and victims per month in San Antonio from January 2019 through December 2023. The start of the Crime Plan, January 2023, is delineated by the vertical blue bar. San Antonio's violent crime *incidents* per month are represented with a solid red line prior to the start of the Crime Plan and with a solid green line after the Crime Plan began. A dotted red trend line is also provided to indicate the trend in violent crime incidents before the start of the Crime Plan. Overall, **San Antonio experienced a 7.3% decrease in the monthly number of violent crime incidents** after the start of the Crime Plan compared to the same time last year (January 2022 – December 2022). San Antonio's violent crime *victims* per month are shown with a dotted red line prior to the start of the Crime Plan and with a dotted green line after the Crime Plan began (January 2023). Overall, **the average monthly number of violent crime victims in San Antonio has fallen 7.4%** since the start of the Crime Plan compared to the same time last year (January 2022 – December 2022).

Overall, monthly violent crime *incidents* and *victims* are lower since the start of the Crime Plan compared to the previous year. Post-treatment, violent crime incidents continue to demonstrate a seasonal pattern (i.e., higher in the summer months), but the overall trajectory has flattened considerably.

Figure 1: San Antonio Violent Crime Incidents, 2019-2023

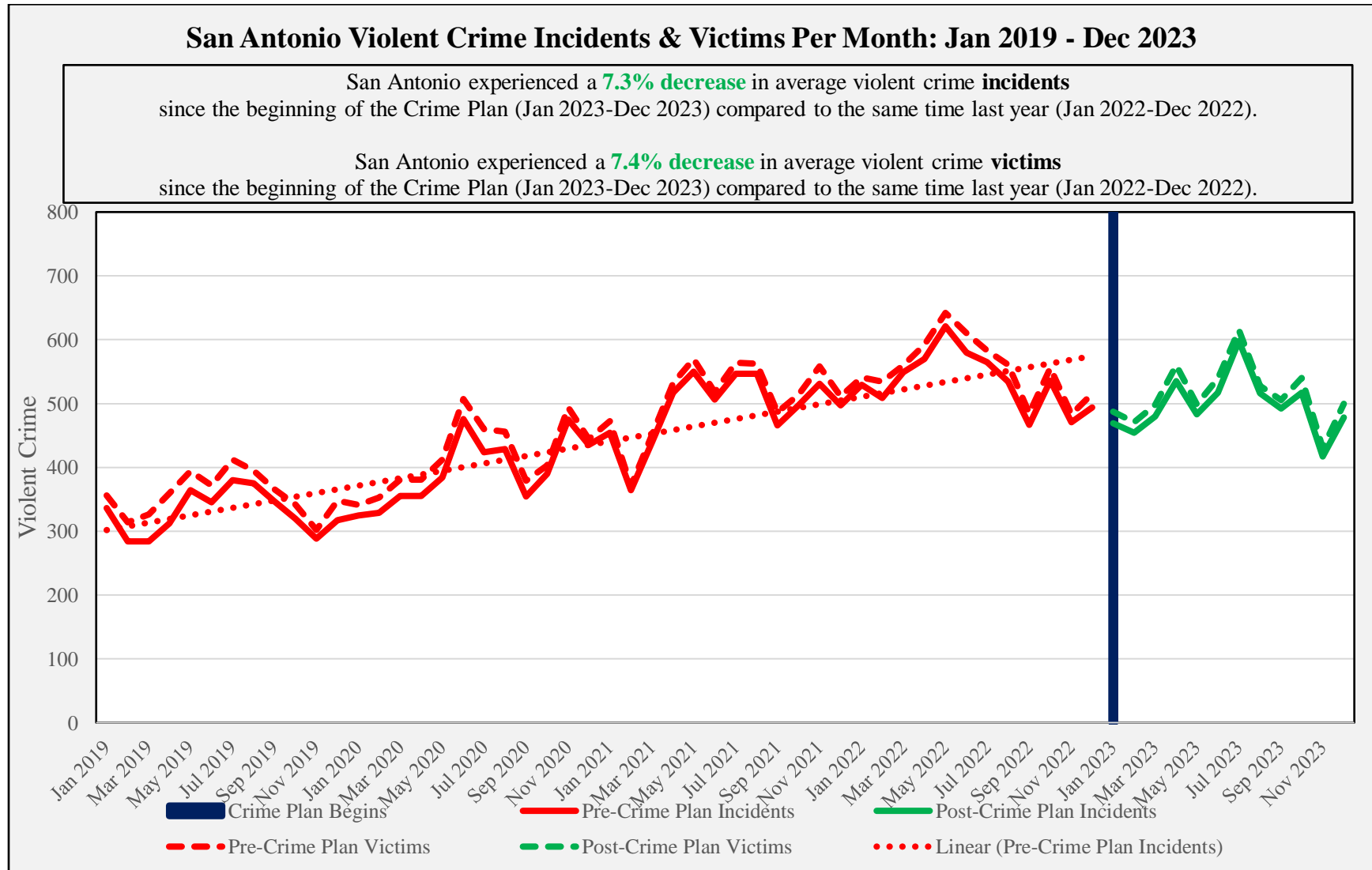


Figure 2, below, displays the average monthly violent offenses since the beginning of the Crime Plan (January 2023 – December 2023) compared to the same time last year (January 2022 – December 2022). The Crime Plan year is shown in green, and the previous comparison year is shown in blue. **Overall, all violent crime offense types saw a decrease, except for business robberies**, which saw a 2.5% increase. Otherwise, murder (9.0%), individual robberies (1.7%), non-family related aggravated assaults (5.4%), and deadly conduct (21.7%) all experienced decreases since the initiation of the Crime Plan compared to the prior year.

Figure 3, on the following page, displays the average monthly violent incidents by substation since the beginning of the Crime Plan (January 2023 – December 2023) compared to the same time last year (January 2022 – December 2022). Again, the Crime Plan year is shown in green, and the previous comparison year is shown in blue. **All six substations experienced decreases in average monthly violent crime incidents: Central (5.9% decrease), East (3.6% decrease), North (8.6% decrease), Prue (15.3% decrease), South (11.5% decrease), and West (0.8% decrease).**

Figure 2: San Antonio Violent Crime by Offense Types, 2022-2023

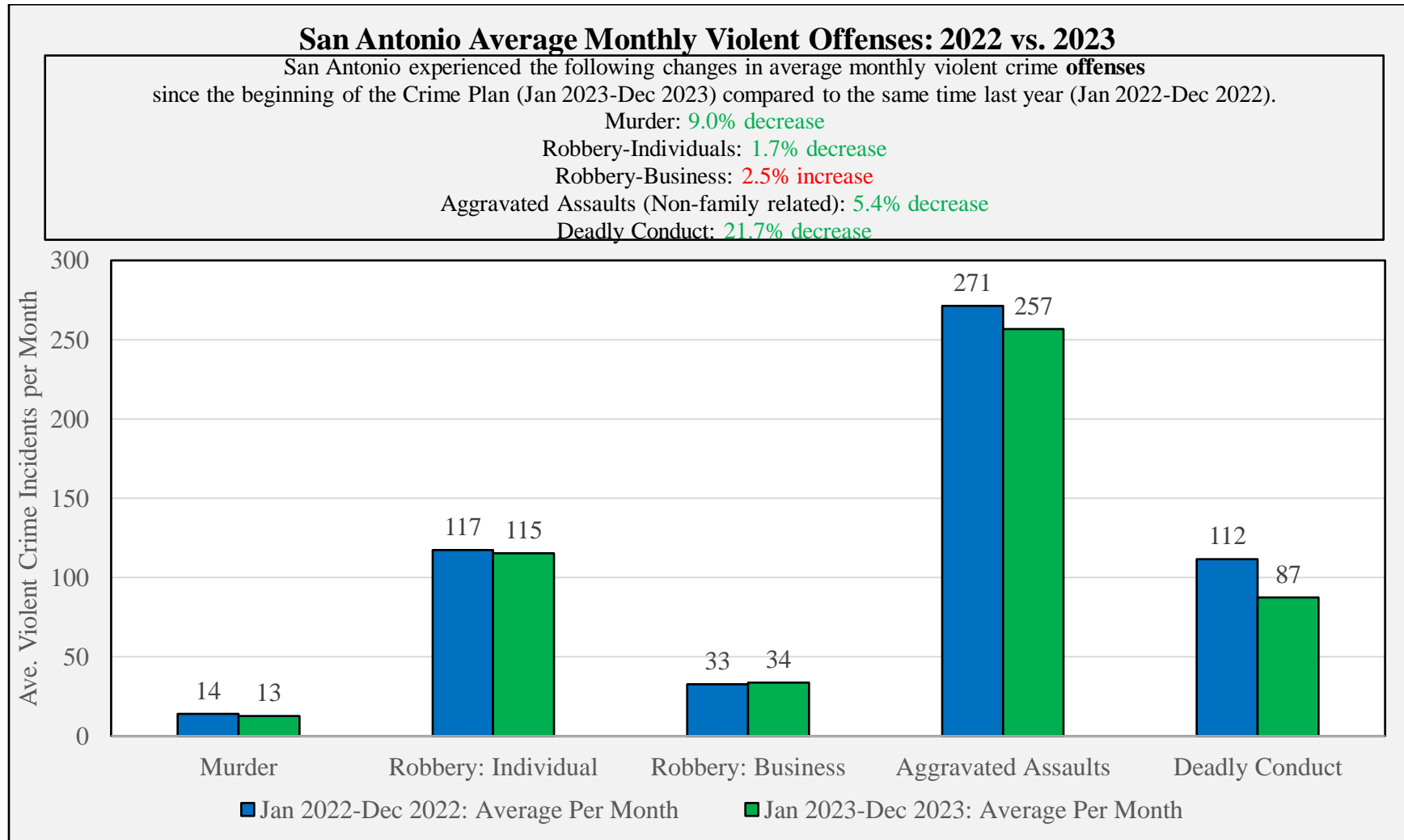
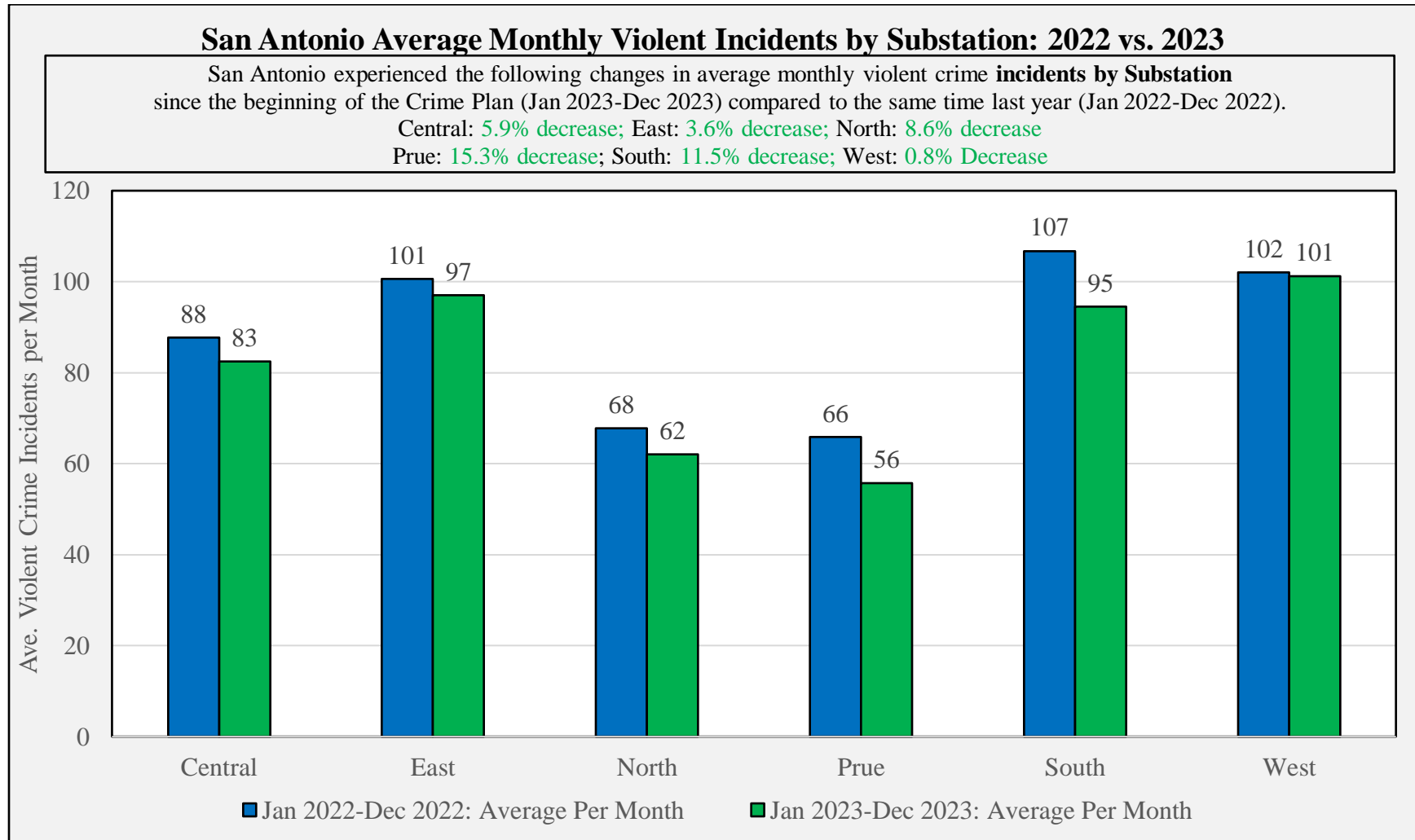


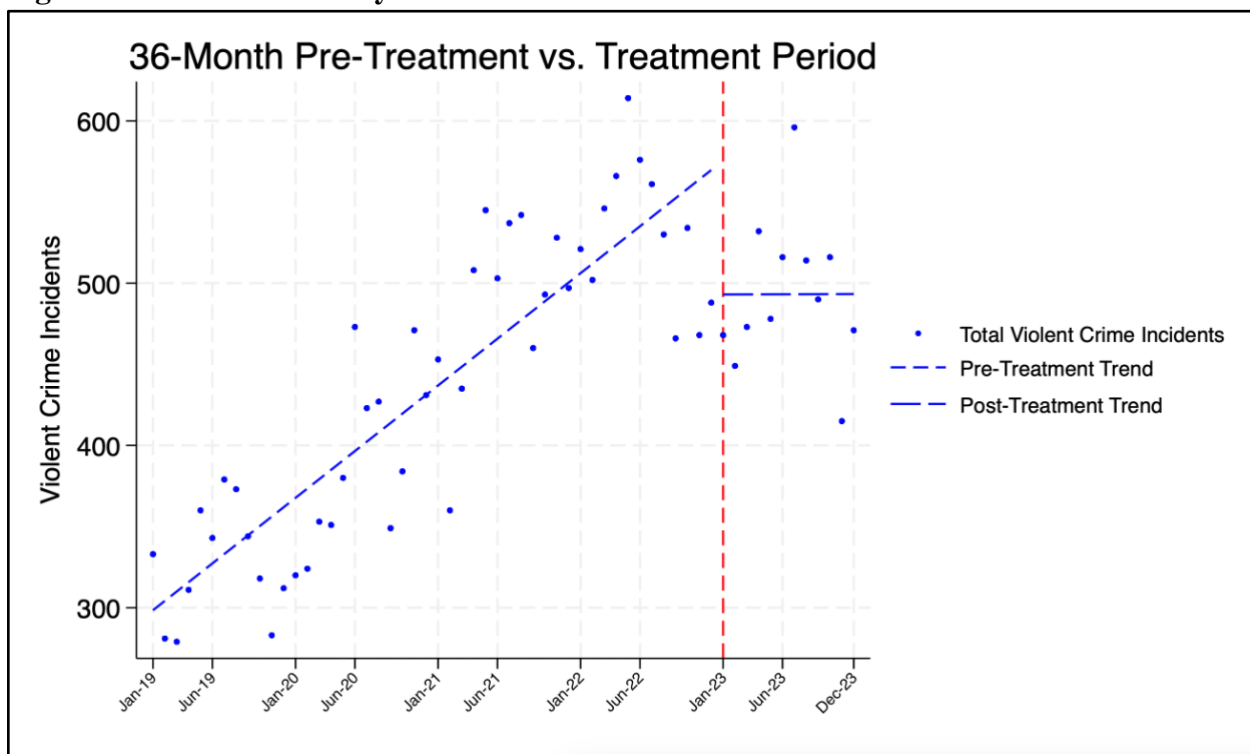
Figure 3: San Antonio Violent Crime by Substation, 2022-2023



Interrupted Time Series Analysis

To better understand overall treatment trends before and after the crime plan began, an interrupted time series analysis (ITSA) was applied. ITSA is well suited for tracking and comparing data before and after treatment over long periods of time (Cook, Campbell, & Shaddish, 2002). The ITSA examined crime patterns in San Antonio from January 2019 through December 2023 with treatment beginning in January 2023. Figure 4 (below) shows violent crime trends during this period. The first full month of treatment (January 2023) is indicated by the vertical dotted red line.

Figure 4: Time Series Analysis of Violent Crime in San Antonio: Jan 2019-Dec 2023



While our research design is not experimental and does not allow for definitive cause-and-effect conclusions to be drawn, **the ITSA results suggest that the observed three-year upward trend in violent crime flattened following the hot spots intervention.** The scatterplot also shows evidence of an immediate post-treatment effect as evident by the level change in monthly crime counts following the intervention. These results, coupled with the difference-in-differences findings from the hot spots analysis (detailed below), provide strong evidence that the San Antonio Crime Plan likely resulted in a city-wide reduction in violent crime.

Phase 1: Hot Spots

This section of the report examines the impact of Phase 1 of the Crime Plan – the hot spots policing strategy – by focusing on crime changes within and around the treatment grids. Changes in city-wide, treatment (high visibility and high visibility plus), and catchment violent crime incidents are examined by comparing the one-year treatment period (January 2023 – December 2023) to the same months last year (January 2022 – December 2022).

Comparative Analyses

Figure 5, below, summarizes the city-wide, treatment, and catchment grid crime change between the treatment period and the same months last year. **As noted previously, city-wide violent crime incidents decreased by 7.3% compared to the previous year.** The treatment grids experienced a more substantial decrease in violent crime incidents (36.9%) compared to the same months last year. When stratified by treatment type (i.e., high visibility vs. high visibility plus treatment), the results are similar: compared to the same months last year, high visibility treatment and high visibility plus treatment reduced violent crime incidents by 37.8% and 34.3%, respectively (see Table 1 for a summary of grid treatments by type). Catchment grids also experienced reductions of 5.4% compared to the same months last year. Collectively, the catchment area results show no evidence of crime displacement to areas adjacent to the treatment grids; rather, the results show evidence of a diffusion of crime reduction benefits to the nearby catchment areas.

Table 1: Year 1 Grid Summary

	Total	HV	HV+
Grids Treated	196		
Unique Grids Treated	126		
Period 1 Grids Treated	28	28	--
Period 2 Grids Treated	26	25	--
Period 3 Grids Treated	35	35	--
Period 4 Grids Treated	34	22	12
Period 5 Grids Treated	39	23	16
Period 6 Grids Treated	34	18	16

HV+ began in Period 4.

Figure 5: City-Wide, Treatment & Catchment Grid Crime

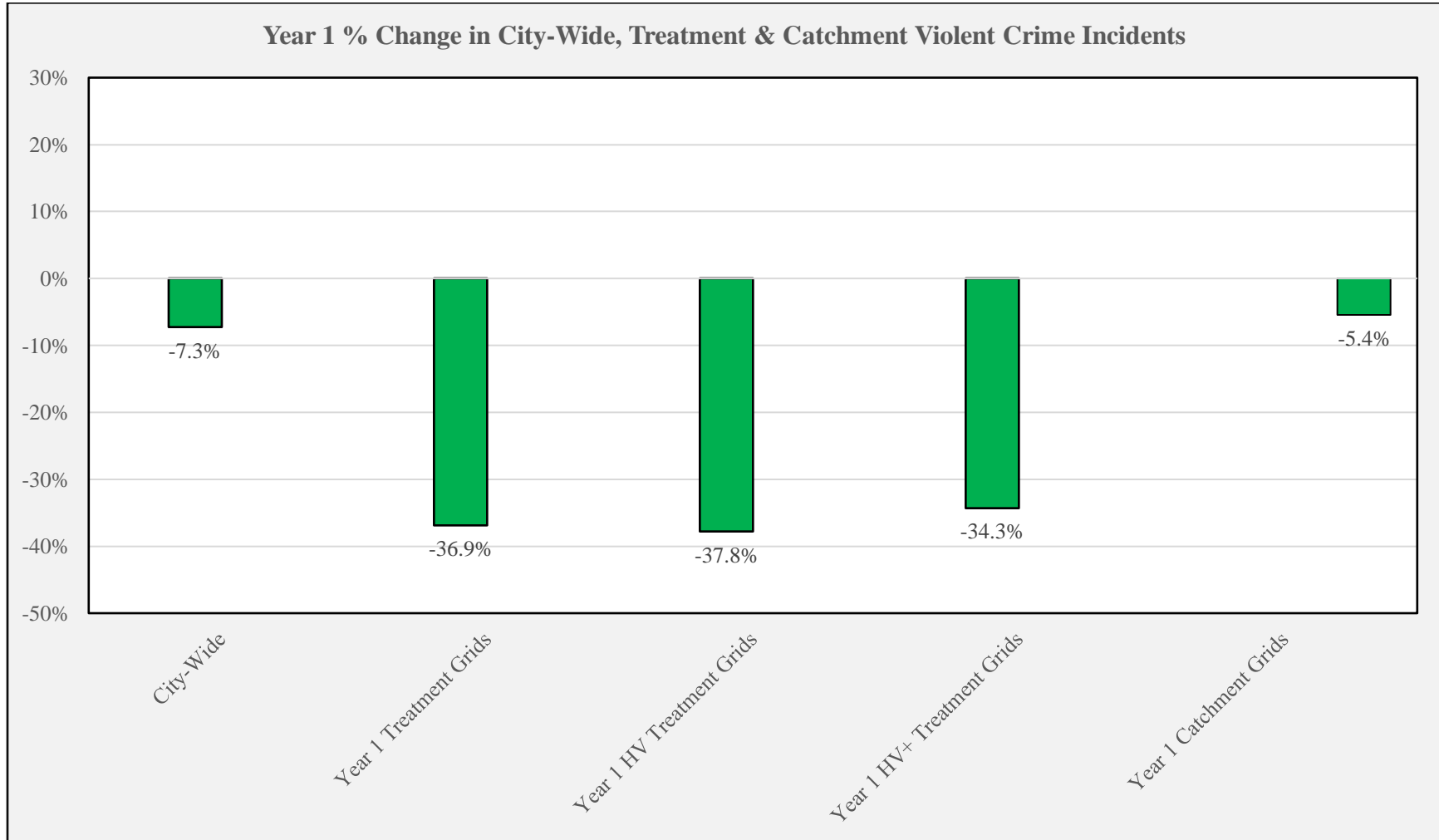
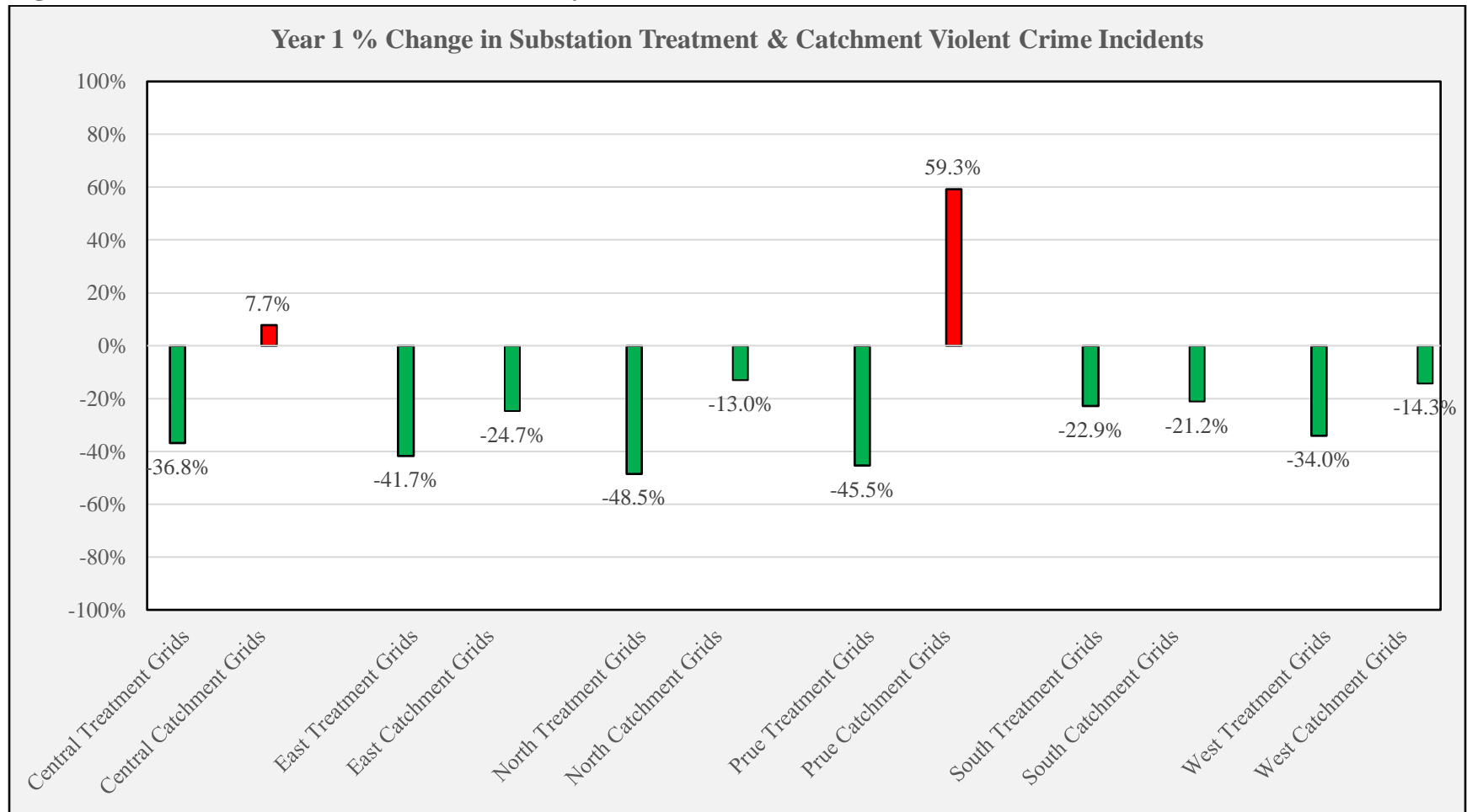


Figure 6, below, shows the percent change in average monthly crime incidents *at the substation level* during the one-year treatment period (January 2023 – December 2023) compared to the same time last year as well. Across all treatment grids in all six substations, there were sizable decreases ranging from a drop of 22.9% in the South substation hot spots to 48.5% in the North substation treated grids when compared to the same months last year. Four of the six substations experienced reductions in their catchment areas when comparing the treatment period to the same months last year. Decreases ranged from 24.7% (East substation catchment grids) to 13.0% (North substation catchment grids), while the Central substation catchment grids increased 7.7% and the Prue substation catchment grids increase of 59.3% compared to the same months in the previous year. The large increase in catchment area crime in Prue was anomalous but consistent with findings from the mid-year report as well. The UTSA research team will investigate to help further diagnose the increase.

Notably, since the start of the Crime Plan, all substations demonstrated considerable reductions in treatment grid crime and most of the substations demonstrated a diffusion of benefits when assessing their catchment areas.

Figure 6: Treatment & Catchment Grid Crime by Substation



Difference-in-Differences Analyses

As part of the Year 1 evaluation, the UTSA research team conducted a difference-in-differences (DiD) analysis that compared the change in crime levels in the treated locations to the change in crime levels in untreated locations. Difference-in-differences is a useful econometric technique for examining the change in hot spot crime following treatment relative to the change in other areas that were not treated (Goodman-Bacon, 2021; Wooldridge, 2010). In this application, *difference-in-differences compares average violent crime in treated locations before and after treatment to average violent crime in non-treated locations during the same periods*. This difference-in-differences analysis expands upon regular period-to-period analysis in two ways. First, it allows for the use of a control group (non-treated locations) within San Antonio against which trends in hot spot crime can be compared across the entire first year of the Crime Plan. Second, the approach controls for the regression to the mean effect that occurs when locations are selected for treatment at peak crime levels, recognizing that crime will likely return to lower levels regardless of treatment.

Table 2, below, shows the effect of the hot spot treatment on violent street crime in the treated locations compared to non-treated locations during Year 1 of the Crime Plan. Effects were measured during treatment, one-month post-treatment, and two-months post-treatment. For this analysis, the data were limited to the period of January 2022 to December 2023, which allows for a comparison to the 12 months preceding treatment. Additionally, controls were placed into the model to account for the rise in crime in the three months prior to treatment. Thus, this model provides the ability to conservatively estimate the change in crime at hot spots attributed to the hot spots treatment throughout Year 1 of the Crime Plan. Finally, each location was tracked at the grid level to account for repeated treatments, thereby ensuring that no location was concurrently analyzed as pre- or post-treatment during active intervention periods.

The negative coefficient for the treatment period shown in the table (-.087) is statistically significant, with a p -value of .038. This suggests that there was a decrease in crime in treated hot spots when compared to untreated grids in the city. Although the coefficient for one-month post-treatment period (-.063) was not statistically significant, it was negative and thus in the expected direction. Two months post-treatment, however, the size of the coefficient increased, remained negative (-.133), and was statistically significant ($p = .028$), indicating a reduction in crime in treated hot spots in the second month after treatment ended.

Table 2: Difference-in-Differences Models: Year 1 Treatment Effect

	Coefficient	Robust Std. Err.	p
Average Effect During Treatment	-.087*	.042	.038
One Month Post-Treatment	-.063	.062	.308
Two Months Post-Treatment	-.133*	.061	.028

*** $p \leq 0.001$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, * $p \leq 0.05$. This model controls for 3 months of pre-treatment crime.

The results from the difference-in-differences analysis again confirm the effectiveness of the hot spots strategy in reducing violent crime at the targeted hot spots. **The difference-in-difference models demonstrated a statistically significant 8.7% decrease in crime during treatment and a 13.3% decrease in violent crime at the treated hot spots two months after treatment ended.** These results suggest that the crime reduction benefits may continue at least two months after treatment.

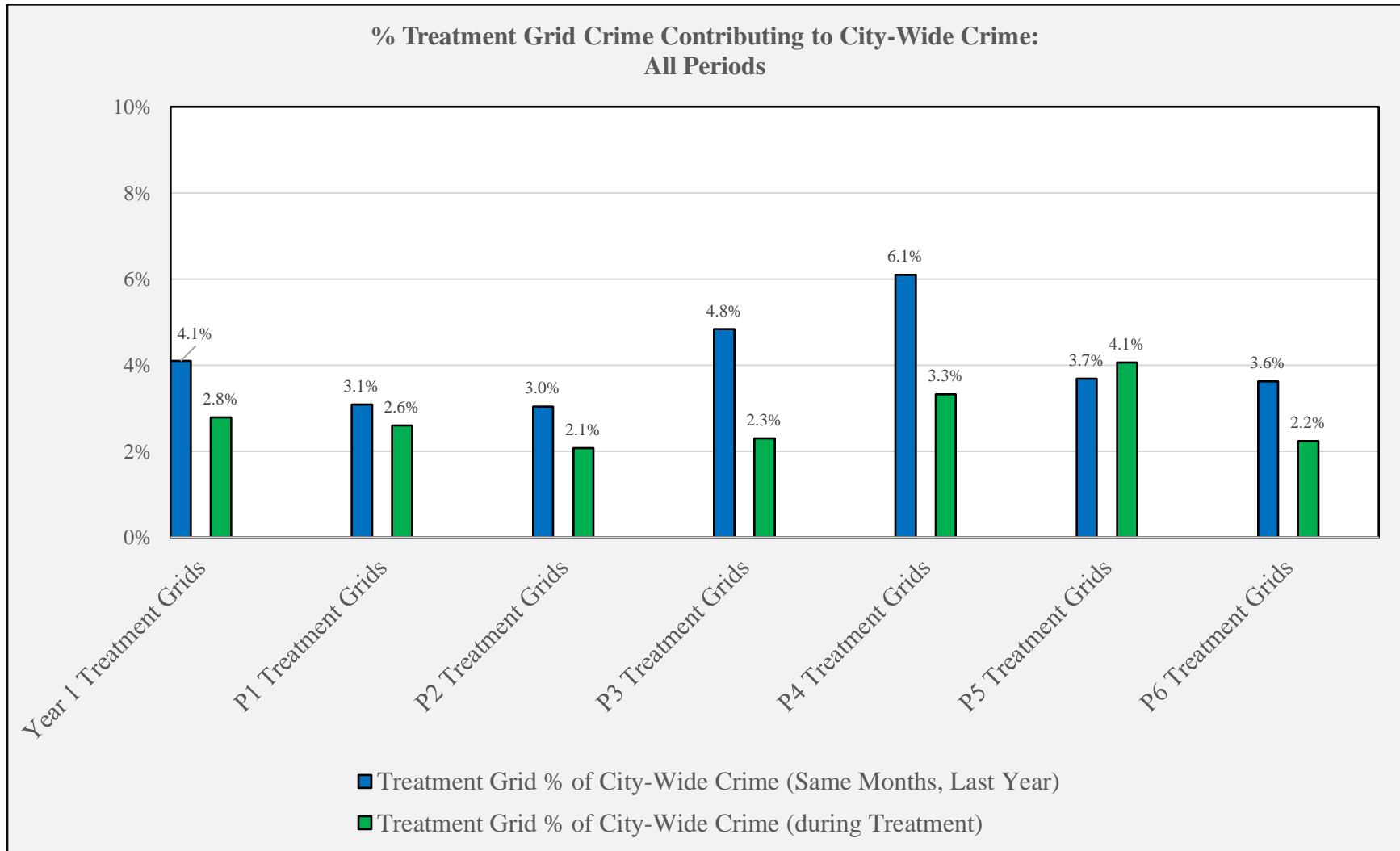
Grids Contributing to City-Wide Crime

Figure 7, below, displays the extent to which treatment grids contributed to *city-wide* violent crime across all six periods before and during the Crime Plan. The blue bar on the far left side of the chart shows that in the same months last year (January 2022 – December 2022), treatment grids contributed to 4.1% of city-wide crime in the 12 months leading up to the start of the Crime Plan. During treatment, that percent contribution dropped to 2.8% (green bar).

Figure 7 also shows the before-and-after contribution of treated grids to city-wide violent crime by each of the six treatment periods. With the exception of Period 5, treated hot spot grids contributed *less* violent crime to city-wide totals in each of the Year 1 treatment periods, which illustrates effectiveness of the hot spots strategy at reducing overall violent crime levels in San Antonio.

Taken together, these results indicate that focusing police resources on the city's highest crime grids reduced the contribution of those grids to *city-wide* violent crime. **Along with difference-in-differences results and the city-wide ITSA analysis, these results provide additional evidence for the potential of hot spots policing implemented in the most crime-prone places to reduce what otherwise would be higher levels of violent crime in the treated areas, thereby lowering violent crime counts across the entire City of San Antonio.**

Figure 7: % Treatment Grid Crime Contributing to City-Wide Crime



Arrests

Figure 8, below, displays various aspects of arrest activity in San Antonio during the Crime Plan in comparison to 2022. Average monthly arrest counts were calculated for all arrests, violent crime arrests⁴, weapon arrests, drug arrests, disorder arrests⁵, and warrant arrests. The solid dark blue bar indicates an increase in arrests city-wide between 2022 and 2023 and the solid light blue bar indicates a decrease in arrests city-wide between 2022 and 2023 (both shown on the far-left hand side of the graph). The hatched dark blue bars indicate an increase in arrests in the treatment locations between 2022 and 2023, and the hatched light blue bars indicate a decrease in arrests in the treatment locations between 2022 and 2023.

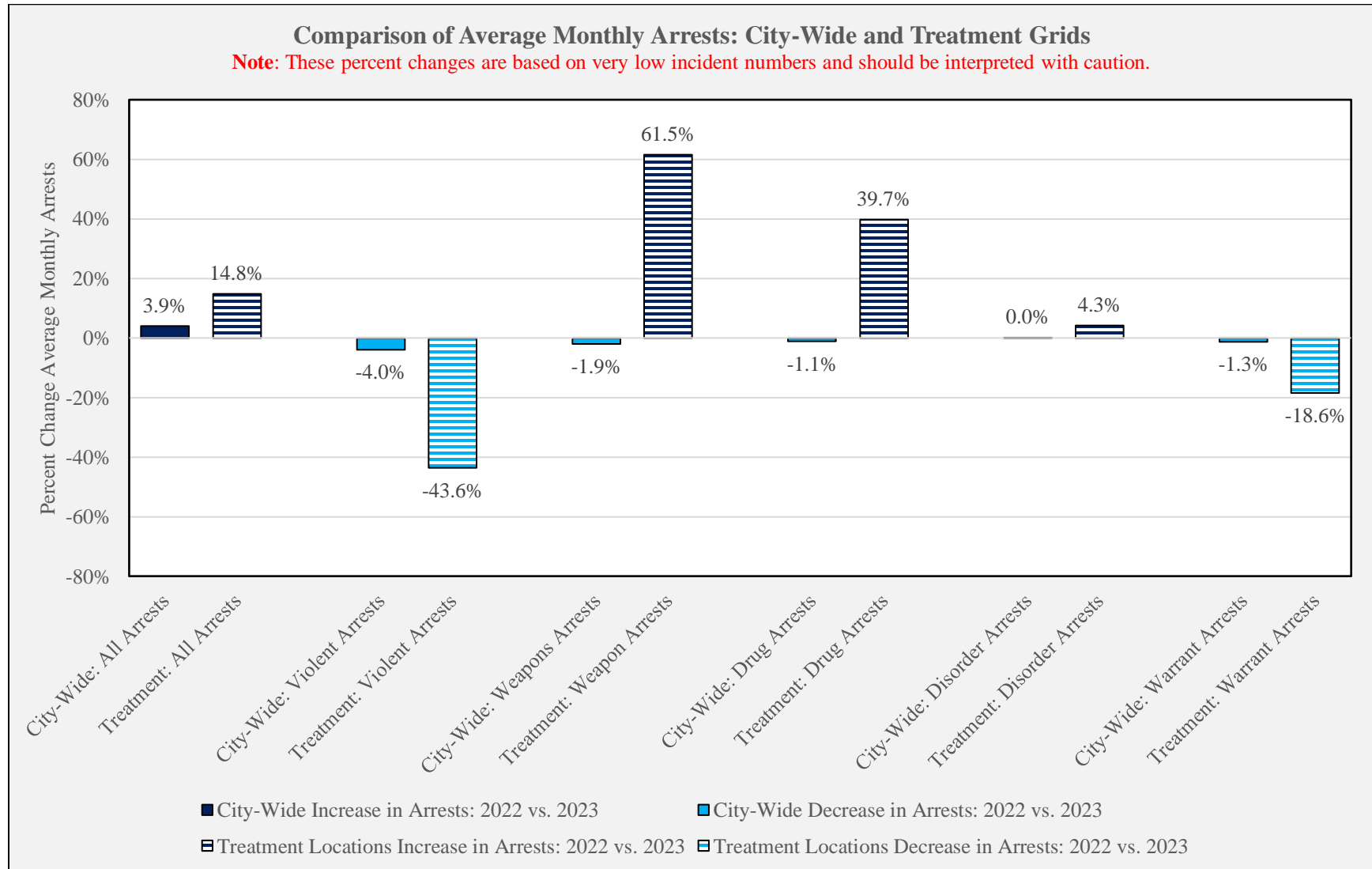
Total arrests increased by 3.9% city-wide and increased 14.8% in treated hot spots compared to last year. When comparing arrest types *city-wide* to last year, all types of arrests showed a decrease, except for disorder arrests, which remained unchanged (0.0%). City-wide, violent arrests decreased by 4.0%, weapons arrests decreased by 1.9%, drug arrests decreased by 1.1%, and warrant arrests decreased by 1.3% compared to 2022.

When comparing average monthly arrests in *treated grids* to last year (January 2022 – December 2022), the results are mixed. Violent arrests in treated areas fell significantly (-43.6%) compared to last year while drug and weapons arrests were up significantly in those areas. Warrant arrests also fell in the treatment locations by 18.6%. Given the focus of the Crime Plan on reducing violent crime, it is not surprising that violence-related arrests decreased at treated hot spots while weapons and drug arrests increased. There is a well-known empirical linkage between guns, the drug trade, and violent crime. Taken together, these results provide evidence that the presence of officers in the treated locations may be exerting a suppressive effect on violent behavior, including the presence and/or use of illegal weapons. Moreover, the presence of SAPD officers in hot spots may lead to more drug-related arrests as drugs and weapons are closely linked in violent areas.

⁴ Murder; Robbery; Non-family violence, aggravated assault.

⁵ Disorder arrests include the following types of offenses: Mischief, Trespass, Public intoxication, Prostitution, Graffiti, Loitering, etc.

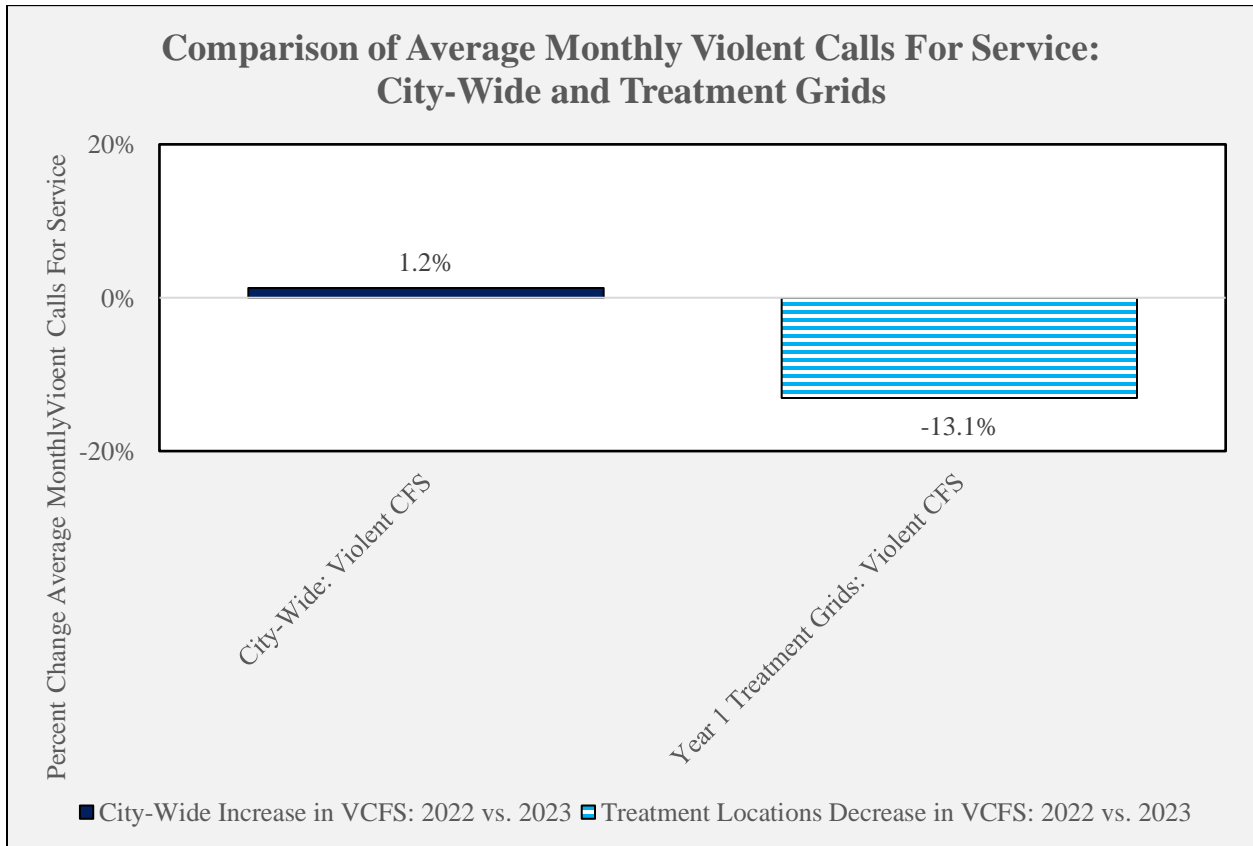
Figure 8: Arrest Comparisons, City & Treatment Grids



Violent Calls For Service

Figure 9, below, displays the percent change in the average number of violence-related calls for service (V-CFS) city-wide and in the treatment areas during the one-year treatment period (January 2023 – December 2023) compared to the previous year (January 2022 – December 2022). City-wide, violent CFS increased slightly during Year 1 of the Crime Plan compared to last year (solid blue bar), but importantly, they fell by 13.1% in treated hot spots (hatched light blue bar). A decrease in violent CFS in the city’s most violent hot spots indicates a positive treatment effect since the start of the Crime Plan.

Figure 9: Violent Calls for Service Comparisons, City & Treatment Grids



Fidelity

This section of the report examines treatment plan fidelity across the six, Year 1 treatment periods and signals the extent to which SAPD officers were deployed to the designated treatment areas during the appropriate days and times identified by the hot spots analysis and treatment plans. Table 3 below displays the fidelity rates starting in Period 1 (92%) through Period 6 (88%). Overall, SAPD officers have shown steady commitment to fidelity as the violent crime reduction plan moves forward. Fidelity rates of approximately 90% (or greater) demonstrate that the Crime Plan is being implemented as intended and maximize the potential for a positive impact on violent crime.

Table 3: Fidelity Summary

Treatment Periods	Fidelity Rate
Period 1	92%
Period 2	96%
Period 3	88%
Period 4	94%
Period 5	92%
Period 6	88%

Phase 2: POPBP

Background on POPBP

The mid-term strategy of the San Antonio Violent Crime Reduction Plan calls for the implementation of a place-based strategy to reduce violence and the underlying conditions that create violent places. Problem-Oriented Place Based Policing (POPBP) is based in evidence-based approach to violence reduction grounded in criminological theory and successful evaluation that focus on the spatial distribution of crime in communities and the role of unguarded places used by individuals and criminal networks to facilitate crime. A POPBP strategy is intelligence-driven, requires the involvement and commitment of multiple stakeholders, and may involve the expenditure of money and other resources by city agencies and community-based organizations (CBOs). By focusing on the most violence-prone locations, though, POPBP has the promise of significantly impacting violent crime, reducing victimization, and improving the quality of life in and around the affected locations.

On September 15, 2023, the UTSA team led a training session for the POPBP advisory board made up of various city department directors and a working group member training on November 2, 2023. The POPBP working group consists of mid-level managers designated by the department directors to analyze the nature of the problems at POPBP sites, develop creative solutions, and oversee implementation and data collection as solutions are put into place. Broadly, the training included an overview of the POPBP strategy, its different elements, and the steps the board and working group members need to take to develop operations plans designed to address problems at the chosen site. Based on an historic analysis of crime, arrests, and calls for service at addresses in San Antonio conducted by UTSA research partners, the group selected 1303 Rigsby Avenue – Rosemont at Highland Park Apartments – as its first POPBP pilot site.

Since that time period, the POPBP working group has been meeting regularly and has begun to identify the nature and scope of the problem(s), with the intention to generate solutions in the coming months. Site-specific operations plans are in development with implementation expected during the first quarter of 2024. To date, an operations plan for Rigsby Avenue has not been finalized and no POPBP activities have been implemented. However, the mid-Year 2 report (anticipated in August 2024) will include an assessment of POPBP by the UTSA research team during its first few months of implementation.

Conclusion

The San Antonio Crime Plan began in January 2023 and has been underway for one year. This report evaluates the implementation and impact of the Crime Plan from its inception through December 2023. The Crime Plan consists of three primary strategies: hot spots policing, problem-oriented, place-based policing (POPBP), and focused deterrence. These strategies were purposely chosen for their strong evidence base, and they were intentionally layered to help reduce violent crime in San Antonio over the short, mid, and longer terms. To date, the hot spots policing strategy has been fully implemented, and SAPD and other city stakeholders are working on developing a POPBP plan for an initial treatment site on Rigsby Avenue. Future reports will include evaluations of these mid-term and longer-term strategies as they are implemented.

During the first year of the San Antonio Crime Plan, overall violent street crime incidents have dropped by about 7% compared to the year before the Crime Plan went into effect, and a similar reduction has occurred with violent victimization. Reductions by crime type include a 9% reduction in murder, a 2% reduction in business robberies, a 5% reduction in non-family violence aggravated assaults, and a 22% decrease in deadly conduct. In contrast, business robberies increased by about 2.5% compared to the previous 12-months. Interrupted time series analysis shows that the overall reduction in violent crime began with the onset of the Crime Plan, which flattened what had been a four-year increasing trend in violent crime in San Antonio before the Crime Plan began. However, violent crime remains substantially higher than it was prior to the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic (see Appendix B for yearly crime counts), and much work remains to be done to lower violent crime to its pre-pandemic level.

Violent crime in treated hot spots was down more than 37% compared to the previous year, and it was down about 5% in surrounding catchment areas, indicating that crime displacement did not occur as a result of the hot spots treatment. Additional analyses confirmed that the treated hot spots contributed less to overall levels of reported violent crime in San Antonio during Year 1 of the Crime Plan than they did the year before.

The impact of the Crime Plan on arrests and calls for service also was analyzed. Total arrests were up slightly city-wide and by about 15% in hot spots during Year 1 of the Crime Plan, but violence-related arrests were down significantly (-44%) in treated hot spots compared to last year. Conversely, drug and illegal weapons arrests were up 40% and 62%, respectively, in the hot spot areas, which is consistent with empirical linkage between drug sales, weapons, and violent crime. Violence-related calls for service to the police were up slightly city-wide but were down 13% in the treated hot spots as expected.

The Crime Plan's intense focus on violent crime hot spots has been its greatest success so far. The contribution of the treated hot spots to overall levels of city-wide violent crime decreased

compared to the prior year, with almost all treatment periods showing reductions in the overall contribution of hot spots to city-wide crime levels compared to last year. This is significant because reducing violent crime at the city's most violence-prone grids can potentially reduce aggregate counts of violence across the entire city. Even a conservative difference-in-differences analysis that compared treated hot spot areas (100m x 100m grids) to untreated areas before and after the Crime Plan began showed a reduction in violent crime at hot spots of approximately 9%. Taken together, these findings, along with an interrupted time-series analysis of violent crime pre- and post-implementation of the Crime Plan, provide strong evidence that the Crime Plan's focus on hot spots was likely responsible for the 7.3% reduction in city-wide violent crime compared to the year before. Finally, SAPD officers were at their assigned hot spots in accordance with the treatment plan more than 90% of the time, on average, depending upon treatment period.

In September and November 2023, the UTSA research team provided training to San Antonio city leaders on the mid-term phase of the Crime Plan – POPBP – which seeks to analyze the proximate causes of violent crime at persistently violent places and design creative solutions to help ameliorate the underlying conditions that make these areas conducive for crime. At the time this report was written, SAPD and other city stakeholders were in the final stages of developing a POPBP plan for a site on Rigsby Avenue that recorded some of the highest levels of violent crime, arrests, and calls for service over a three-year period. Implementation of this plan is expected to begin soon, and additional POPBP sites will be identified for treatment in Year 2. Future UTSA reports will continue to evaluate the impact of hot spots policing and also will assess the implementation and impact of these POPBP efforts.

References

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Appendix A: Timeline of Treatment and Comparison Time Periods

Treatment Time Periods:

- Year 1: January 2023-December 2023
 - Comparisons
 - (Previous 12 months): January 2022-December 2022
 - Period 1: January 2023-February 2023
 - Comparisons
 - Previous 12 months: January 2022-December 2022
 - Same months, last year: January 2022-February 2022
 - Period 2: March 2023-April 2023
 - Comparisons
 - Previous 12 months: March 2022-February 2023
 - Same months, last year: March 2022-April 2022
 - Period 3: May 2023-June 2023
 - Comparisons
 - Previous 12 months: May 2022-April 2023
 - Same months, last year: May 2022-June 2022
 - Period 4: July 2023-August 2023
 - Comparisons
 - Previous 12 months: July 2022-June 2023
 - Same months, last year: July 2022-August 2022
 - Period 5: September 2023-October 2023
 - Comparisons
 - Previous 12 months: September 2022-August 2023
 - Same months, last year: September 2022-October 2022
 - Period 6: November 2023-December 2023
 - Comparisons
 - Previous 12 months: November 2022-October 2023
 - Same months, last year: November 2022-December 2022

Appendix B: San Antonio Violent Crime: 2019-2023

San Antonio Violent Crime by Offense Type. Pre-Treatment: 2019

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
All Crime Incidents	336	284	284	312	364	345	380	375	347	320	288	317	3,952
<i>Murder</i>	7	8	6	11	6	7	10	5	7	8	6	6	87
<i>Robbery Ind.</i>	112	114	97	109	132	121	141	131	118	104	112	130	1,421
<i>Robbery Bus.</i>	46	25	37	16	28	26	43	51	43	44	28	51	438
<i>Agg. Assault</i>	139	115	112	151	166	167	164	155	147	134	118	117	1,385
<i>Deadly Conduct</i>	34	24	35	33	38	25	29	35	32	37	26	19	367

Crime offense counts do not sum to the incident total because some incidents have multiple offenses. Figures 1-2 offer a visual representation of this data.

San Antonio Violent Crime by Offense Type. Pre-Treatment: 2020

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
All Crime Incidents	325	329	355	355	384	476	424	429	354	390	475	435	4,731
<i>Murder</i>	11	7	8	8	10	11	8	10	11	6	11	11	112
<i>Robbery Ind.</i>	106	108	129	128	132	158	123	143	114	121	126	108	1,496
<i>Robbery Bus.</i>	40	58	39	20	25	29	43	26	18	34	45	57	434
<i>Agg. Assault</i>	128	129	145	161	171	236	198	209	187	198	223	187	2,172
<i>Deadly Conduct</i>	43	33	42	45	53	53	62	49	35	37	76	77	607

Crime offense counts do not sum to the incident total because some incidents have multiple offenses. Figures 1-2 offer a visual representation of this data.

San Antonio Violent Crime by Offense Type. Pre-Treatment: 2021

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
All Crime Incidents	454	364	439	517	550	506	547	547	466	497	531	497	5,915
<i>Murder</i>	12	10	8	13	15	12	14	9	20	11	8	18	150
<i>Robbery Ind.</i>	120	89	94	120	131	102	129	120	117	110	124	125	1,381
<i>Robbery Bus.</i>	42	26	28	16	31	36	28	33	21	27	31	25	344
<i>Agg. Assault</i>	206	185	250	280	277	274	281	299	248	270	271	240	3,081
<i>Deadly Conduct</i>	83	60	69	100	107	86	107	93	71	91	113	100	1,080

Crime offense counts do not sum to the incident total because some incidents have multiple offenses. Figures 1-2 offer a visual representation of this data.

San Antonio Violent Crime by Offense Type. Pre-Treatment: 2022

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
All Crime Incidents	529	509	549	570	621	580	565	534	467	536	471	494	6,425
<i>Murder</i>	12	15	16	10	16	20	12	19	10	15	7	15	167
<i>Robbery Ind.</i>	112	102	112	126	130	123	119	110	116	129	106	123	1,408
<i>Robbery Bus.</i>	20	36	37	29	47	29	31	41	25	31	42	26	394
<i>Agg. Assault</i>	270	254	277	310	308	296	296	263	243	270	224	245	3,256
<i>Deadly Conduct</i>	122	117	112	110	131	130	118	116	81	104	102	97	1,340

Crime offense counts do not sum to the incident total because some incidents have multiple offenses. Figures 1-2 offer a visual representation of this data.

San Antonio Violent Crime by Offense Type. Treatment: 2023

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
All Crime Incidents	469	454	480	535	483	517	598	516	491	517	417	478	5,956
<i>Murder</i>	16	15	12	12	9	16	13	15	8	11	10	15	152
<i>Robbery Ind.</i>	101	108	111	126	101	130	146	130	107	126	100	98	1,384
<i>Robbery Bus.</i>	42	22	27	48	35	34	30	30	40	31	25	40	404
<i>Agg. Assault</i>	231	223	262	264	273	256	311	274	246	261	231	247	3,079
<i>Deadly Conduct</i>	91	94	74	99	75	88	112	74	94	99	54	95	1,049

Crime offense counts do not sum to the incident total because some incidents have multiple offenses. Figures 1-2 offer a visual representation of this data.