

# **City of Chandler**

## **Response to Gang Activity:**

Police  
Code Enforcement  
And  
Programs

February 2, 2007

## INTRODUCTION

According to the 2005 National Gang Threat Assessment, violent street gangs now affect public safety, community image, and quality of life in communities of all sizes throughout the United States. Gangs impact society at all levels, causing heightened fears for safety, violence, and economic costs. In Chandler, the issue seems to be at least twofold-- a recent increase in gang activity documented by Police reports, and a recurring problem of gang formation, recruitment, and expansion. With respect to the current problem that recent gang activity has created, the Chandler Police Department has found that known gang members previously arrested and imprisoned have now completed their sentences and returned to their previous locales (whether in Chandler or elsewhere) and their previous gang activities. In response, the Police Department has been increasingly aggressive in its deterrence efforts.

However, law enforcement alone cannot address all aspects of this problem. Stemming neighborhood deterioration, partnering with community non-profit agencies, and investing more City resources in the areas most affected by gang activity are just some of the ways in which the various City departments work together to strengthen these areas and discourage gang activity. Additional effective means of combating this problem may be found by better integrating other City programs and departments with a larger collective strategy. One example of planned activities in this regard is the upcoming merge of the Neighborhood Programs and Neighborhood Services Divisions, which will provide improved services for residents and provide better internal communication regarding neighborhood issues. Staff will continue to identify similar opportunities for collaboration and integration as they work to better define the gang issue and identify the respective roles, responsibilities and strategies of all entities involved.

The purpose of this document is to outline the current and proposed enforcement activities and programs administered by various departments in the City of Chandler that help fight gang activity and prevent neighborhood deterioration. The bulk of this activity has been focused in the central area of the city bounded by Ray, Alma School, Pecos, and McQueen Roads. To the extent possible, departmental activities have been broken up under the headings “**Police**” (for enforcement activities specific to the Police Department), “**Code Enforcement**” (for activities undertaken primarily by the Neighborhood Services Unit in enforcing the property maintenance code) and “**Programs**” for non-enforcement activities such as those offered through the Planning and Development Department and the Neighborhood Programs Office. Unfortunately, no municipal strategy may ever be able to fully address the underlying social issues (such as poverty and the breakdown of family) that lead individuals to participate in the gang lifestyle, and therefore it is unrealistic to believe that any city will ever be able to completely eliminate the gang problem. As such, these current efforts and future planned activities mark staff’s best attempt to prevent and deter gang activity.

## POLICE

### *Overview*

The City of Chandler’s Police Department plays an integral role in combating gang-related crime through their Gang Liaison Officers (GLO), Criminal Intelligence Unit, and numerous

community programs. The Department continues to take steps to curtail gang activity and identify emerging areas of concern.

The December 2004 Chandler Police Department Organizational Assessment recommended the addition of two Gang Detectives to the Criminal Investigations Section of the Criminal Intelligence Unit. These detectives were assigned in April 2005 with the intent of ensuring that the Chandler Police Department was proactive in its ability to address potential increases in gang activity. These gang officers were tasked with providing a comprehensive gang tracking and intelligence gathering function, including the update of gang member intelligence cards (GMIC) and reimplementation of the GLO program.

Once assigned, these detectives began updating the GMIC files to get a comprehensive grasp on the number of active gang members within the City of Chandler. The GLO program was reimplemented to enlist the assistance of and improve interaction between the Departments two gang detectives and the patrol officers that interact with gang members during street contacts. This program provided additional training to patrol officers on completing GMIC cards and documenting and tracking gang activity, and helped to provide timely and direct communication between field operations (GLO's) and criminal investigations (gang detectives).

As a result, the Criminal Intelligence Unit identified a noticeable increase in gang related incidents in July of 2006. Once the increase was noted, the Department identified the area of the city that had the most significant increase in violent crime; the four mile square from Ray Road to Pecos Road and Alma School Road to McQueen Road. The Criminal Investigations Unit, in conjunction with Field Operations, then initiated saturation patrols and increased street contacts within this area. The intelligence unit issued several department-wide bulletins identifying areas of concern and officer safety issues within the target area since July 2006.

#### *GAP Package*

During the month of October 2006, the Criminal Investigations Unit submitted a GAP package requesting the addition of one sergeant and two gang detectives due to the noted increased gang activity. During December 2006, an additional detective was added to the GAP request to allow for participation in the State Gang Task Force (GITEM). Packages will be reviewed for possible funding in the FY07-08 budget. The Arizona Department of Public Safety received \$25 million in funding to reinstitute this program in order to combat increased gang activity throughout the State in July, 2006

#### *Ongoing Efforts*

Since April 2005 the Criminal Intelligence Unit and Gang Detectives have taken several proactive steps including:

- Developed two Gang Intelligence Detective positions, authored intelligence collection plan and department enforcement model;
- Overhauled and reimplemented the Gang Liaison Officer (GLO) program;

- Updated existing gang member intelligence cards (GMIC): GMIC submissions went from an average 2 per month to 15 per month;
- Conducted numerous special surveillance projects targeting Gang Member related crimes;
- Tracked numerous cases of interest since October 2005 and provided gang expertise to enhance investigation or prosecution. Using department enforcement model, 27 gang members have been arrested since October 2005 and 25 guns and various other weapons removed from street. This is an ongoing effort that provides a view of the level of gang activity on the street, as well as providing Gang Intelligence detectives the ability to identify cases that can be enhanced;
- Disseminated numerous gang intelligence bulletins regarding current activity on streets that Field Operations Officers use to enhance proactive enforcement activity;
- Developed a number of sources of information that provide real time information on gang activity within the community;
- Implemented and managed two warrant details resulting in the arrest of 50 plus persons on outstanding warrants and \$250,000 of bonds recovered;
- Implemented a joint partnership between Gang Intelligence detectives and the US Marshals Violent Fugitive Task Force, East Valley Gang Intelligence Committee and GITEM;
- Actively participated (by instructing) in the statewide Basic and Advanced Gang training sponsored by GITEM;
- Conducted multiple instructional presentations for the AZPOST Police Academy's introductory gang class;
- Attended numerous citizens' academies and providing instruction on local gangs and trends in our community;
- Provided multiple presentations in gang awareness to community organizations such as ICAN, Boys and Girls Club, Parents of Murdered Children "Target Communities", Chandler Unified School District, Downtown Redevelopment Committee, Juvenile Probation/Juvenile halfway house counselors, and the Young Marines.

#### *Recent Efforts*

The Department has implemented the following gang reduction initiatives since December 3, 2006 or will implement them in the near future:

- Initiating the expansion of the School Resource Officer (SRO) gang education program;

- Initiating an Internet based gang education website;
- Increasing enforcement efforts on nuisance locations within the identified area of increased gang activity by the Neighborhood Services Unit;
- Initiating the expansion of the GLO program to two officers per team, for a total of 30 plus GLO officers;
- Additional gang training will be provided to all officers assigned to beats 10, 12, and 14 (Districts 5 and 6);
- Selecting a Gang Sergeant to coordinate gang reduction activity, GLO program, East Valley Gang Task Force participation, and GITEM support;
- Salary savings is being used to backfill patrol positions to allow for the staffing of three additional temporary full-time GLO officers. Permanent funding is requested in GAP proposals for fiscal year 2007-2008, at which time a full time permanent team would be selected;
- Continuation of saturation patrols and enforcement efforts in the identified area of increased gang activity;
- Continuation of efforts on parties, gatherings, and criminal actions by known gang members and associates with an emphasis on zero tolerance for liquor violations, loud parties, nuisance violations, warrants and criminal activity;
- Continue to identify known gang members and associates and focus on long-term suppression solutions such as the Repeat Offender Program (ROP);

Additionally, the Department continues to explore other options that will assist in the City's efforts to suppress gang activity and violence.

## **CODE ENFORCEMENT**

### *Overview*

Code enforcement is another important means of combating crime by creating safe, attractive neighborhoods that do not lend themselves to illegal activities. The goal of the Neighborhood Services Unit (NSU) is to keep neighborhoods and commercial properties free from unsightly or hazardous conditions that may lead to deterioration in the community. The NSU partners with various other City entities to identify and remedy potential code enforcement issues, and its efforts promote pride in Chandler neighborhoods.

### *Staff*

The NSU currently has seven Neighborhood Services Specialists enforcing neighborhood

maintenance standards. Each of these specialists is assigned to a specific geographic area. These areas are staffed ten hours a day, four days a week with limited weekend coverage.

Table 1- Current Neighborhood Services Unit Staffing:

<b>Position</b>	<b>FTE's</b>
Supervisor	1
Administrative Specialist	1
Neighborhood Services Specialist I	3
Neighborhood Services Specialist II	4
Graffiti Painter	1
<b>TOTAL FTE'S</b>	<b>10</b>

In a recent code review process, the Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC) recommended the City conduct a review of staffing and deployment of Neighborhood Services personnel. The NSU will address recommended changes in the upcoming budget process through two separate GAP package requests that total four additional Neighborhood Services Specialist positions. In addition, the 2006/07 budget includes funding for a reorganization that will consolidate the Neighborhood Programs and Neighborhood Services divisions into a single entity, improving the overall coordination of Chandler's neighborhood-based services. Staff will continue to analyze whether other service areas should be included in this newly created division.

*Interdepartmental Cooperation*

The NSU has also tried to increase the effectiveness of current resources by encouraging cooperation between other city departments. The Neighborhood Services Unit works closely with the following city entities:

- Solid Waste- Assists in mitigating problem alleys and illegal dumping;
- Meter Readers- Identify properties in Chandler that exhibit one of the top eight code violations (junk vehicles, abandoned vehicles, weeds, etc.) and enter violations into handheld devices as they go about their daily routines. Problem properties are downloaded and the information is sent to NSU for follow-up;
- Tax and Licensing- Identify individuals that have not registered their rental properties and are failing to pay sales taxes;
- Planning and Development- Identifying home-based businesses, sign issues, building issues, and zoning violation issues;
- Development Services- Conducts interior inspections on substandard housing (both owner occupied and rental) within the City of Chandler. These inspections deal with quality of life issues that typically occur with slumlords;

*Current Code Enforcement Activity*

Though code enforcement efforts are conducted citywide, extra resources and staffing are committed to the downtown area, from Alma School Road to McQueen Road and Ray Road to

Pecos Road. Though this area represents only 5.6% of Chandler's overall development, it is the source of a disproportionately high number of calls for service, in part due to the fact that it is the oldest part of the city and therefore has the most neighborhood maintenance issues.

Exhibit 1- Size of Target Area as Percentage of Area Served

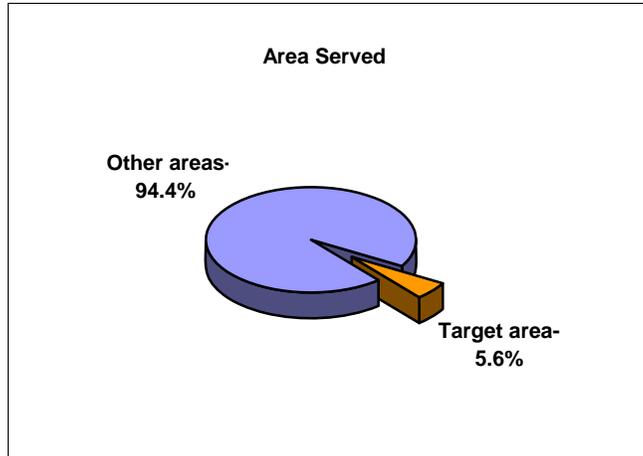


Exhibit 2- Calls for service in Target Area vs. Other Areas

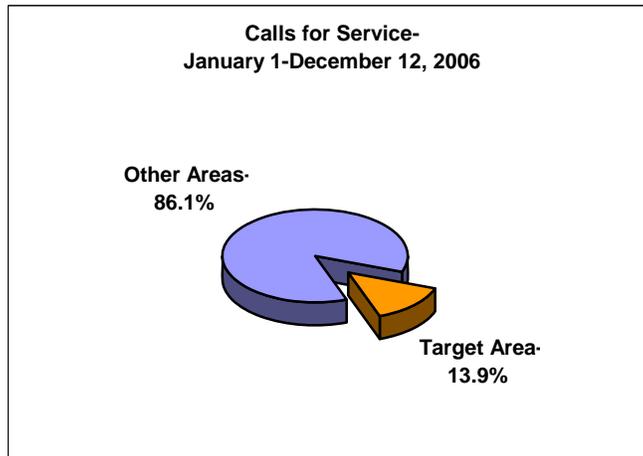
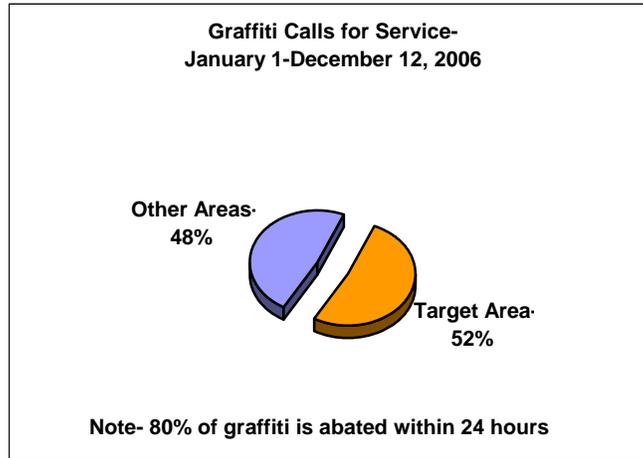


Exhibit 3- Graffiti Calls for Service in Target Area vs. Other Areas



In addition to code enforcement calls for service, the NSU has initiated proactive inspections in the Neighbors in Action (NIA) focus area. The NIA program focuses City resources on the revitalization of mature neighborhoods where residents have expressed concerns about possible decline. Staff chose two neighborhoods for participation in the NIA program for 2006/2007: Park Manors, bounded by Galveston Street to the north, Chandler Boulevard to the south, Hartford Street to the west, and Arizona Avenue to the east; and Oregon Street, bounded by Knox Road to the north, Ray Road to the south, Arizona Avenue to the east, and Hartford Street to the west. These calls are not counted in the calls for service listed above.

Table 2- Park Manor NIA Inspections

Total homes inspected	200
Total violations	116
Houses without any violation	84

Table 3- Oregon Street NIA Inspections

Total homes inspected	375
Total violations	139
Houses without any violation	236

### *Code Review*

Property maintenance issues are the number one concern voiced by Chandler’s organized neighborhoods. As such, the NAC initiated a review of the City’s property maintenance code to ensure Neighborhood Services staff has the tools needed to assist in addressing property maintenance issues in Chandler neighborhoods.

In short, the NAC recommended the approval of a new property maintenance code, which spells out specific property maintenance violations in language that is easier for staff and residents to interpret and understand. Another proposed addition to Chapter 30 was the inclusion of a means to enact a “clean and lien” process. This process will allow the city to abate problems when

property owners refuse to do so within a specified time period. The price of the abatement would then be placed as a lien on the property if the owner refuses to pay.

The second recommendation was the creation of a Code Enforcement Policy, a vital tool that enhances the neighborhood maintenance ordinance by outlining how staff will enforce the code in the field. This policy tightens up the time frame between initial inspection and re-inspection, and provides for a recidivist or repeat offender policy. Staff is of the opinion the Code Enforcement Policy is as important or more so than the newly written code.

The final recommendation was the initiation of proactive code enforcement for the eight most frequent property maintenance violations identified in our neighborhoods. While such enforcement may increase the number of complaint calls and emails submitted to the Mayor and Council, proactive enforcement is the most requested item made by local neighborhood leaders. Council approved these recommendations at the January 24, 2007 meeting, and NSU staff is now working to implement the new changes.

In addition to local ordinances, the NSU will utilize state rental and slumlord statutes. The new residential rental inspection process as outlined under A.R.S §§33-1904, which allows for interior inspection of rental units under certain conditions (such as when a complaint has been made, criminal activity, etc.), will help the NSU to better address rental property issues.

#### *Recently Implemented Procedures*

The NSU has also recently implemented procedures that will make it more productive when dealing with neighborhood maintenance issues:

- Civil Citations- Neighborhood Services Specialists now have the ability to issue a majority of the citations needed to clean up neighborhoods. Certain areas of code, however, remain criminal violations and as such require a sworn officer to issue a criminal citation or file for long form prosecution;
- Inspection Warrants- Inspection warrants allow specialists to enter property to properly document a case for legal purposes;
- Publishing Citation Notice- There are times when specialists are unable to locate the owner of a property to serve them a civil citation. The NSU has worked on a process with the courts to allow for the publication of citations in local newspapers. This publication serves as legal notice, which then allows the court to take action against these property owners.

### **PROGRAMS**

Various City of Chandler departments have implemented a number of programs aimed at eliminating blight in Chandler neighborhoods, increasing public participation and awareness and creating safe and welcoming urban environments. Aside from the Police Department and Neighborhood Services Division, whose activities are discussed in detail above, the Neighborhood Programs Division, Planning Department and Community Services Department

are primarily responsible for implementing these programs. The Solid Waste Services Division and the Traffic Engineering Division provide additional services that complete the scope of the City's activities in this area.

### ***Neighborhood Programs***

#### *Overview*

The Mayor and Council identified preservation and enhancement of Chandler neighborhoods as an ongoing priority for the City. Since staff's 2004 review of the City's neighborhood outreach efforts, the Neighborhood Programs Office has been moved to the City Manager's Office and a second full-time Neighborhood Program Administrator position has been added to assist in preservation, enhancement and outreach efforts. Neighborhood Programs continues to serve as a conduit between organized neighborhood groups and the other City departments.

#### *Neighbors in Action*

Over the past six months, Neighborhood Programs has coordinated the Neighbors in Action Program (NIA) in two Chandler neighborhoods. Staff evaluated five neighborhoods based on age of structures, neighborhood involvement, median income level, percentage of owner-occupied housing, the condition of housing stock and increased need for services such as Neighborhood Services, Police, and Solid Waste. Based upon the assessment of the criteria and City staff recommendations, staff selected the Park Manors and Oregon Street neighborhoods as the 2006/2007 NIA program areas.

Over the past six months, staff has been working with the Park Manors NIA area, bounded by Galveston Street to the north, Chandler Boulevard to the south, and Hartford Street to the west, and Arizona Avenue to the east. This partnership has completed several projects including:

- Proactive code inspections of all single family homes by Neighborhood Services staff;
- Implementation of an alley block wall program;
- Installation of speed humps on Tulsa Street;
- Collection of 87 tons of trash via five weekend cleanups.

The Park Manors NIA group continues to meet and discuss additional future projects. Upcoming anticipated projects include:

- Public right-of-way (ROW) landscape improvements;
- Exterior paint & rock program for low-income homeowners;
- Creation of Block Watch teams on all streets in the neighborhood in partnership with the Police Department.

The Oregon Street NIA area is bounded by Knox Road to the north, Ray Road to the south, Arizona Avenue to the east, and Hartford Street to the west. Over the past four months, the group has formed six committees to address priority areas, including neighborhood beautification, social issues, business community, traffic, alleys, and rental issues. This partnership has completed several projects including:

- Proactive code inspection of all single family homes by Neighborhood Services Staff;
- Collection of 27 tons of trash via four neighborhood cleanups;
- Installation of a traffic circle along Orchid Lane;
- One-way traffic flow conversion of the Oregon Street alley;
- Weekend alley clean sweeps.

The Oregon Street NIA group continues to meet and discuss additional projects. Upcoming anticipated projects include:

- Installation of rock landscape and block fences for low-income property owners;
- Conversion from alley to curbside trash collection in several areas;
- Creation of Block Watch teams on all streets in the neighborhood in partnership with the Police Department.

#### *Neighborhood Registration, Grant Program and Special Projects*

Since August of 2005, organizing downtown (Ray Road to Pecos Street and McQueen Road to Alma School Road) neighborhoods has been a major focus of this program. Currently, there are 240 registered neighborhoods citywide. Thirty of those neighborhoods are in the downtown area. Of the thirty, fourteen are governed by an HOA, with the other sixteen being traditional neighborhood groups.

Once registered, neighborhoods become eligible to participate in the Neighborhood Grant Program. From 2001-2005, grant program funds were almost exclusively used for wood to block fence conversions. In that timeframe, \$42,000 was spent in the downtown area. With Mayor and Council approval, the grant program was modified in 2005 to expand the options and to ensure funds were going to those neighborhoods with the greatest need. Slightly over half of the funds budgeted for this program (\$40,000) was set aside for traditional neighborhoods, and the maximum grant amount was increased from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

In the past year, three traditional neighborhoods in the downtown area have been awarded grants, the most recent being the Silk Stocking Neighborhood, which received a grant for ROW improvements this past December. The other two grants awarded in the downtown area included speed humps for the California Street Neighborhood (south of Frye Road) and landscape

improvements in the San Tan Horizon Neighborhood, which is bounded by Tulsa Street, Galveston Street, Exeter Street, and Fresno Street.

In addition to the grant program, Neighborhood Programs coordinates special projects with community volunteer groups. Over the last year downtown area projects have included the following:

- Large scale cleanup on Hartford & Dakota streets;
- Removal of an abandoned structure on Exeter Street;
- House painting and rock installation for a handicapped resident on Galveston Street;
- Cleaning of three empty lots near Wall Street;
- Landscape maintenance on Delaware Street;

In addition, Neighborhood Programs partnered with Community Development staff and the Church of the Nazarene in the coordination of the Homework Project on California Street. This project included the painting of many homes and the improvement of landscape along California Street, south of Frye Road. Finally, Neighborhood Programs sponsored numerous clean up weekends in the downtown area, placing 89 dumpsters throughout the area and collecting 445 tons of trash in the past year.

#### *Continuing Efforts*

As mentioned previously, Neighborhood Programs serves as a conduit between registered neighborhoods and City departments. The Division frequently coordinates neighborhood meetings with Chandler residents involving staff from Municipal Utilities, Police, Public Works, and other departments. The concerns and needs of our neighborhoods span the services provided by the City. As such, accomplishing the goal of neighborhood preservation and enhancement requires the integration of all City programs and departments. Neighborhood Programs will continue to work with our City partners to ensure the needs of Chandler neighborhoods are being addressed.

#### ***Planning and Development***

The Planning & Development Department administers a number of programs, either directly or in concert with other social agencies that add to the City's overall efforts to discourage neighborhood blight and criminal activity.

#### *Residential Infill Program*

In response to Mayor and Council policy direction in December 2001, Staff initiated the Residential Infill Program for developing single-family dwellings on infill parcels located north of Pecos Road and east of the Loop 101/Price Freeway.

The program provides financial awards from the City to applicants building owner-occupied dwellings on infill sites. The program was amended in 2004 to increase the financial award from \$2500 to \$5000 per dwelling unit, and further, to award \$5000 for each unit found to be substandard and in need of demolition. To approve any agreement with an applicant wishing to build infill units, the Mayor and Council must find that the development quality of the project is at least equal to, if not greater than, the character of the surrounding area. The program is aimed at providing the following benefits to the community:

- Provide incentives for private interests to demolish substandard units;
- Increase the limited number of infill sites available in this area;
- Prompt fix-up/spruce-up activities by others in the immediate area.

The primary purpose of this program is to encourage the development of new ownership dwellings on older “passed over” parcels within the developed area of the City and to make more efficient use of services and utilities already in place. The amendment in 2004 was made not only to increase the limited number of vacant infill lots in the area, but also to encourage private interests to demolish problem structures found to be substandard under Chapter 10 of the Uniform Housing Code. In at least one area, Staff observed subsequent examples of various cosmetic improvements done by others in the immediate vicinity, perhaps prompted by seeing new investment in their neighborhood.

Since the program began nearly five years ago, a total of twenty-two new single-family units have been completed by builders and occupied, and agreements for another seven units have recently been approved by the Mayor and Council for financial awards when completed, all within the area bounded by Ray, Alma School, Pecos, and McQueen Roads.

#### *Habitat for Humanity*

Habitat for Humanity (Habitat) was awarded \$235,000.00 in fiscal years 05/06 and 06/07, totaling \$470,000, to undertake acquisition of property in a Housing Development Area bounded by Pecos Road, Elgin Street, California Street, and Delaware Street. The Chandler Industrial Development Authority contributed an additional \$30,000 to this effort. Staff in Planning and Development has been working to assist Habitat in implementation of the grant. The goal is the construction of at least five homes per year in this designated Housing Development Area. To date, Habitat has acquired seven parcels with construction on at least four homes to begin in the current year.

The construction of “infill” housing which is owner occupied will assist in stopping neighborhood transition while also providing eligible low-income families the opportunity for home ownership.

#### *Support for Social and Youth Services*

The needs of low and moderate income residents are a priority for the City of Chandler, with an emphasis on homelessness prevention, fulfillment of basic human needs, neighborhood

preservation and planning, education and/or job training, youth programs, senior programs, and affordable and safe habitable housing.

The four square miles surrounding downtown Chandler contain a larger than average number of moderate-income households. The health of a neighborhood can depend on the services available to assist residents in maintaining a decent living environment. Needs of moderate income families can range from the provision of the very basic services (for families of the least means) to the repair or rehabilitation of their homes, which for many working class families is out of reach without incentives. Providing these services in an efficient and cost-effective manner depends upon the work not only of city and other government programs but also, in the case of Chandler, non-profit partners that undertake much of the work. In terms of funding, five of the major sources are Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and HOME funding (federal) and Youth Enhancement Program (YEP), Social Services Funds (SSF) and A-OK (local resources). Over \$26 million has been contributed from these sources toward human services and neighborhood stabilization efforts (i.e. housing rehabilitation, demolition, acquisition, etc.) over the past ten years.

#### *Upcoming Initiatives*

In 2005, Mayor and Council formed the Housing and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to consolidate the allocation of resources and assist in planning issues related to social service delivery. HHSC and staff have worked over the past year to repackage the way in which the City distributes its human service dollars in the community and to strengthen those agencies (i.e., non-profit partners) carrying out this vital task. To these ends, the following actions have been undertaken in the recent past or are planned in the near future:

- Increasing our non-profit partners' capacities to deliver services:
  - Construction of new Community Action Program building;
  - Improvements to My Sister's Place;
  - Acquisition of and renovations to the ICAN facility (Youth Programs/Gang Prevention);
  - Renovation and increased capacity of Chandler Christian Community Center;
  - Renovation of a facility for South Chandler Self -Help to be used as a youth facility and neighborhood resource;
  - Improvements to the San Marcos Wellness Center;
  - Improvements to the Boys and Girls Club;
  - Assisting in Board recruitment and providing technical assistance through seminars sponsored by the city in the areas of grant writing, fund development and board training;

- Outreach to the Chamber of Commerce to include the business community in human service strategies;
- Tapping community generosity through increased marketing of the A-OK Program;
- A proposed (mid-2007) Human Needs Assessment to further guide the prioritization of local funds;
- Improvement of the allocation process:
  - Move to a single allocation process (one application and process for all of the City's human service funds- CDBG, YEP, SSF, A-OK);
  - Move to an "on-line" application using a system most non-profit partners are familiar with (e-Cfund);
  - Work to maintain service delivery through ongoing operational support of non-profits emphasizing youth (ICAN, Si Se Puede, Boys and Girls Club, San Marcos Wellness Center, etc.);

#### *Neighborhood Assistance*

The aforementioned funding sources have contributed to many of the neighborhood stabilization initiatives taken by the City of Chandler over the past decade. The City funds programs that provide for the rehabilitation of owner-occupied structures and has assisted in the construction of new housing (i.e., Habitat for Humanity) for many years. The housing rehabilitation programs operated by the City and its non-profit partners have taken many forms. In the past, the City has funded emergency repairs, small grants for exterior improvements, grants to homeowners with disabilities to make accessibility upgrades to their homes and several other programs (see Exhibit "A", Redevelopment Activity 1995-2006). Hundreds of Chandler homeowners throughout the City have benefited from these assistance programs.

#### *Housing Rehab*

Eight years ago, the city began targeting some of its rehabilitation resources to specific neighborhoods. Dozens of homes in the Silk Stocking and Galveston neighborhoods in particular have benefited directly from this program (see Exhibit "A", Redevelopment Activity 1995-2006). In addition to working with homeowners specifically on construction issues in both the Silk Stocking (in the late 90's) and Galveston (through 2005) neighborhoods, staff performed outreach to residents in these areas, identified leaders and fostered relationships. Input received not only improved delivery of the Housing Rehabilitation Program but also gave staff real insight into the kind of capital improvements (on a neighborhood level) that residents were in support of. Through this dialogue, actions occurred on specific projects including improvements to Gazelle Meadows Park, referrals to Public Works for speed control humps, and working with the Neighborhood Services Unit to accomplish their initiatives.

Another benefit of the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program, in regards to combating criminal activity, is the provision within Promissory Notes that prohibits criminal activity on properties receiving loans from the program. It should be noted that while the program has enforced this provision, it is rarely necessary. This provision provides another tool (absent from the pure grant programs we once offered) that can be used in assisting in efforts to not only improve neighborhood standards, but also to decrease crime in and around Downtown.

### *Building Demolitions*

Primarily a “tool of last resort”, a program for demolishing dilapidated substandard buildings was initiated in 1999. Phase I of the program involved demolition of vacant structures with the owners’ permission, and by 2001 was largely completed. At that same time Phase II of the program began, involving demolition of occupied structures, but still with owners’ permission. In 2002, a third phase of the program was considered, involving condemnation of occupied structures together with some form of relocation by the City. However, by 2003 it became clear that the internal processes and procedures would need to be altered in order to enable this particular phase. Staff is still seeking options to expand this phase beyond these current limitations, and in the meantime Phase III has been redefined to include only structures owned by the City.

All demolitions done by Development Services were done in the area from Ray Road to Pecos, and Alma School to McQueen except for three, which were done for other public entities. There have been twenty-four demolitions in the defined area at a cost of more than \$66,387 (see Exhibit “A”, Redevelopment Activity 1995-2006).

- Demolitions by Public Means:
  - City sponsored demolitions include the demolition program as well as property acquisitions for ROW, property acquired for redevelopment, scattered site housing and others;
  - The school district has demolished a number of structures for site development such as new schools, parking lots, athletic fields, etc.
- Demolitions by Public/Private Means:
  - The City, as a result of development agreements such as the town home project known as 123 Washington Street (Sites 1,2,3, & 7), has facilitated some demolitions. In other cases, the City provided roll-off containers but the owners did the demolition.
- Demolitions by Private Means:
  - Private owners, for a variety of reasons have, done some demolitions. Some have occurred because it was cheaper/easier for the owner to do them rather than have the City do them. Some have been done because they were ordered

demolished by the City and the owners demolished them. Others were done as a result of the needs of the owners.

A GAP proposal will come forward as part of the FY2007/08 budget preparation, which will take the Development Services demolition program to the next level. The City Manager will provide support for revisions to the approval process, which will allow a manageable flow through the various departments and divisions of the City. This will allow an orderly process to advance the program.

The intended program will be somewhat more aggressive than the original plan for two reasons: 1) the original program eliminated many of the “easy” sites, i.e., vacant structures where the consent of the owner was easily obtainable, and 2) the new program will be part of a larger effort designed to assist other departments and divisions in a comprehensive effort to support the revitalization of aging neighborhoods.

#### *South Arizona Avenue Entry Corridor Study*

As part of the recent South Arizona Avenue Entry Corridor Study (accepted by Mayor and Council on Sept. 28, 2006), staff broadened the planning area to include each of the residential neighborhoods directly to the east and west of Arizona Avenue, directly north of Pecos Road. Because staff felt that the residents in these areas were not fully engaged in the earlier stages of the planning process, six additional neighborhood meetings were held from March through July of 2006. All meetings were noticed by direct mail to property owners and business occupants in the planning area, and each notice included a copy of the land use and circulation plan as it evolved during the process. 50-80 people attended each meeting. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the land use and traffic circulation findings of the study and how those findings would impact area residents and property owners. Highlights of the study’s recommendations include:

- Property assembly by private interests to develop new residential projects at low, medium, and high densities;
- Public acquisition of some existing parcels for the rights-of-way needed to widen, extend, and connect certain local streets to improve public safety and access (pedestrian as well as vehicular);
- City processes, strategies, and timing for implementation.

When fully implemented, the South Arizona Avenue Entry Corridor Study will significantly change the commercial as well as residential composition, function, and physical character of the corridor area. Full implementation will require City acquisition of properties (or portions of properties) for public rights-of-way, together with subsequent relocations (where necessary); building demolitions and clearances; street design, construction, and widening; utility upgrades and other improvements. City staff has made preliminary estimates of costs for all of these actions, which will come forward as part of the citywide bond issue tentatively scheduled for election on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Hence the funding to fully implement the corridor study depends largely on the bond passage and subsequent sale.

Staff will be scheduling additional neighborhood meetings in January or February for the purpose of amending the current General Plan to accommodate the findings of the Corridor Study, and at the same time will present an alternative alignment for the area immediately north and east of Arizona Avenue and Pecos Road, and an update on the Council call for the May 15<sup>th</sup> bond election.

### *General Plan Update*

As part of the current fiscal year budget, the Mayor and Council approved funding for updating the Chandler General Plan, with particular focus upon the following key elements:

- Redevelopment Element;
- Neighborhood Planning;
- Housing Element;
- City Build-Out Implications.

The Redevelopment Area as currently designated by Council covers a significant portion of the central four square miles of the city bounded by Ray, Alma School, Pecos, and McQueen Roads. (see Exhibit “A”, Redevelopment Activity 1995-2006). The Redevelopment Element will update land use issues and strategies for this area (i.e., will integrate the recent findings of the Arizona Avenue study) while addressing planning issues, goals, and strategies for the Silk Stocking neighborhood (north and east of Arizona Avenue and Chandler Boulevard), the Chandler Boulevard corridor between Delaware Street and McQueen Road, and the remaining areas east of downtown to McQueen Road

Albeit not required by State statute, Neighborhood Planning is an element deemed important by staff to incorporate with the City build-out strategy as it continues to evolve. Among the issues, goals, and strategies to be identified in this element will be the concept of “carrots & sticks” for neighborhood services (i.e., combining maintenance incentives with enforcement actions in a single entity); the re-use potential of existing neighborhood residential and commercial centers, and other preservation measures.

The Housing Element will focus upon housing accommodations citywide, including an affordability analysis as required by State statutes. The implications of City build-out will be addressed throughout the entire General Plan Update, i.e., all fifteen required elements plus Neighborhood Planning.

### *Community Services*

The Community Services Department provides a variety of programs in the target area. These activities give Chandler’s young people positive alternatives to gang involvement and help them develop the vital skills and relationships that ultimately contribute to an overall sense of belonging and personal self-esteem.

### *Library Programs*

The Chandler Public Library offers a number of opportunities for residents to achieve their goals and develop important skills. Programs offered by the Library include:

- Adult Education Program- Provides no-cost classes and support services that assist residents age 16 and older in achieving their personal learning goals;
- Learning Lab- A drop in program for children grades K-12 and adult learners who need assistance in a variety of areas including; with homework or GED preparation; using computers, the internet or other library resources; with the English language; and in developing positive study habits;
- Teen Advisory Group- This group consists of teens ages 12-18 who meet on a monthly basis to provide input on creating programming and services geared toward teens;
- Techno Teens- This grant project gives neighborhood teens ages 16-18 the opportunity to obtain work experience, develop positive and professional relationships with adults and peers, and utilize their technological skills through contractual employment providing library customers with computer support;
- Teen Volunteer Program- Teens ages 13-17 volunteer to help with the summer reading game, special programming and other projects and activities throughout the year;
- Summer Reading Program- This reading incentive game is mean to encourage teens to continue reading during summer vacation. More than 2,500 students participated in the summer 2006 program;

### *Recreation Division*

The City has several community and recreation centers offering classes and programs for residents of all ages. In addition to these activities, the Recreation Division runs the satellite recreation center program, which provides lunchtime recreation, after school education and evening open gym and weight room opportunities at Willis Junior High School.

### *Non-Profit Special Events*

Non-profit groups that target at-risk youth in the city's central area receive funding for special events. These events help educate, inform and entertain residents and provide additional opportunities for positive youth participation. Agencies sponsoring these events include:

- Chandler Coalition for Civil and Human Rights;
- Si Se Puede Foundation, Inc.;

- South Chandler Self Help Foundation;
- Improving Chandler Area Neighborhoods (ICAN);

### *Area Capital Improvements*

Many park and recreational facilities in the target area have been improved and upgraded in the past three years, providing more inviting environments for neighbors to congregate and additional opportunities to engage area youth in recreational activities. Recent improvements include:

- Ramada and playground installation in Gazelle Meadows Park;
- Playground replacements in East Mini, Harris and Winn Parks;
- Ramada replacement, installation of a lighted flag football field and upgrades to general lighting in Folley Park;
- Lighting for soccer field and basketball court, basketball court resurfacing and restroom replacement at the Boys and Girls Club (as matching funds for a grant from Arizona Sports Authority).
- Addition of the Diamondback baseball field at the Boys and Girls Club.
- Inclusion of \$8.5 million in the upcoming bond election to fund construction of a 30,000 square foot Boys and Girls Club facility that would also be made available to other social service agencies.

### *Solid Waste Services*

#### *Alley Conversions*

The presence of trash and debris in alleys contributes to the overall impression of deterioration and blight in aging neighborhoods. The City's Solid Waste Services Division works to eliminate such problems in Chandler alleys, and is currently engaged in helping neighborhoods convert from alley to curbside refuse service to further discourage illegal dumping.

Solid Waste Services, through the City's contractor Waste Management, provides alley garbage pickup to 4,875 households in the four square mile downtown area. The number of customers using alley service in the downtown area has been slowly decreasing as some neighborhoods, such as Galveston, convert to curbside service. City and contractor staff members are in many of the alleys on a regular basis as a result of standard pick-up days and service calls. The downtown area generated 1,744 calls for service during calendar year 2006. Many of these calls for service required more than one trip to the neighborhood to resolve the issues. During this same period, 154 alley dumpsters were emptied prior to their normal collection day and the contractor completed 143 special cleanups in the alley.

The City has a contract with Maricopa County Superior Court utilizing citizens completing community service sentences imposed through court system. This service is used exclusively for cleaning alleys. While cleaning excess debris from the alley, these community service workers also cut the weeds. This inexpensive service helps to clean selected alleys and appease residents requesting the service in their alley.

Staff has observed that some alleys in the four square mile downtown area attract significantly more illegal trash dumping and nuisance activity. While Waste Management crews and county community service workers clean the alleys approximately every six weeks, a portion of the downtown area alleys generally become strewn with trash shortly after cleanup, and the process starts over. Conversion to curbside garbage collection may help mitigate this problem. For example, the Galveston neighborhood was a pilot cleanup project for Neighborhood Services. During this cleanup, all but two of their alleys were converted from alley dumpsters to rollout garbage service. This change resulted in the alleys remaining much cleaner with less nuisance activity. The remaining alleys with garbage dumpsters continue to have significant problems with trash and graffiti. Other alley conversions have shown similar results.

### ***Traffic Engineering***

#### ***Street Lighting***

Streetlights enhance neighborhood safety, and may help reduce crime, loitering, illegal dumping, etc. Recently, City crews inspected the streets in the Downtown area during nighttime hours and identified 23 locations where streetlights could be installed to improve light levels based on dark spots and comparisons to typical light pole spacing used elsewhere in the City. Some of the proposed locations would fill gaps between existing streetlights, while others are for areas that do not yet have street lighting. Estimated capital costs for this project would be \$54,000, and estimated annual operating and maintenance expenses would be \$2,200. The Traffic Engineering division will be investigating potential funding sources for these improvements and will be providing an update of their findings in the near future.

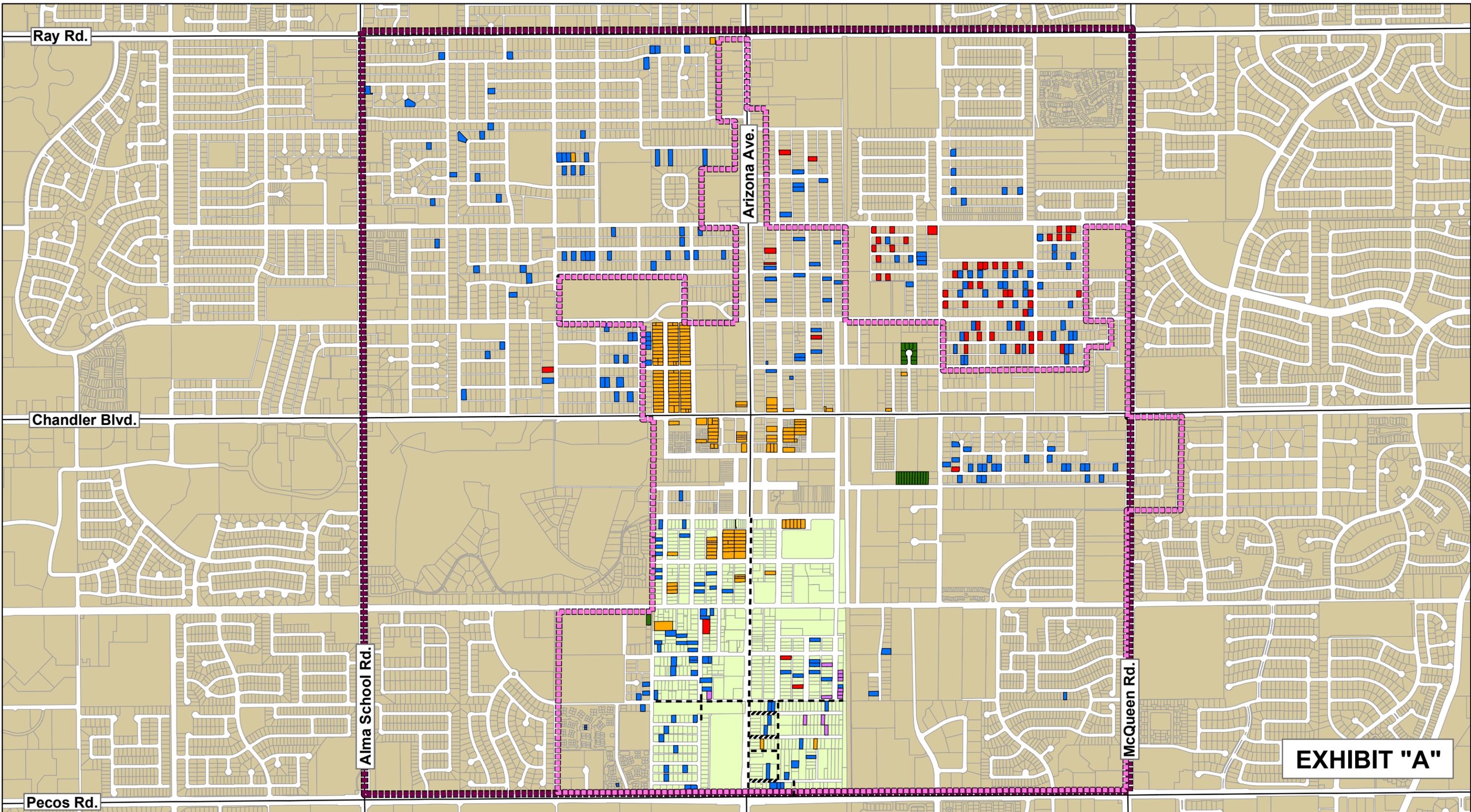
### **CONCLUSION**

This report outlines the current and proposed anti-gang activities currently being undertaken by the City of Chandler. Departments and divisions from Police to Neighborhood Programs to Solid Waste Services are actively engaged in creating safe and secure neighborhoods throughout the City of Chandler, and are committed to finding new and innovative ways to deliver these programs and services. In the near future, departments will be submitting GAP package requests as part of the budget process, in the hopes of adding additional resources to the Planning and Development Department's Demolition Program and additional staff for the Police Department's Criminal Investigations and Neighborhood Services Units. The Police Department will also be: initiating an expansion of the School Resource Officer gang education program and GLO programs; creating a gang education website; and providing additional gang training for officers working downtown beats. The Neighborhood Programs and Neighborhood Services Divisions will merge, giving residents a single point of contact to which to address their neighborhood concerns. This division will be charged with, among other duties, proactive enforcement of the revised property maintenance code under the guidelines promulgated in the City's new Code

Enforcement Policy. Alley conversions and increased street lighting will continue to be investigated as a means to promote safer, clean neighborhoods that residents can be proud of. City staff will be meeting quarterly to review recent efforts, identify best practices and discuss additional opportunities in combating this problem, and the City Manager's Office will be coordinating an upcoming meeting between departments and other service organizations providing programs and services to residents in this area.

Unfortunately, not all aspects of this problem are within the scope of influence of municipal government. Specifically, the Arizona Drug and Gang Prevention Resource Center ([www.azprevention.org](http://www.azprevention.org)) lists "economic and social deprivation" and "family conflict and management problems" as significant risk factors for gang activity. While government may be able to influence some of the symptoms of these socio-economic issues (through after school programs, support for low income residents, etc.) government's ability to directly impact economic conditions or family structure is minimal at best. Partnering with community and non-profit organizations may be one way to better address these important concerns, and staff continues to seek out opportunities to do so.

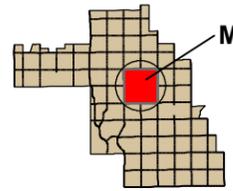
The responsibility for resolving Chandler's gang problem does not lie with any individual department or unit, but instead will be the result of collaborative efforts on the part of the City, non-profits, and residents. Staff is working hard to identify opportunities and practices that will protect residents from the threat of gang-related crime and violence and will be happy to provide additional updates as necessary.



**EXHIBIT "A"**

**REDEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY 1995-2006**

Map produced by the Planning and Development Department January 4, 2007



Map Shown in Detail

- Rehabs
- Demolitions

- Habitat For Humanity
- In-fill Project Award

- Exterior Improvement Grant
- South Arizona Avenue Study Area

- Chandler Redevelopment Area
- Planned Street Improvement
- Planned Street Abandonment

